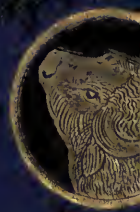


WILSON'S
TALES OF
THE BORDERS
HISTORICAL, TRADITIONAL
& IMAGINATIVE





Edwin
Harris

HIS BOOKS

O for a booke and a shadie Arke
To sit in a chaire or cell:
With the green leaves over head
Or the streete eyes all about:

Whee I may reade all at my ease
Both of the Newe and Olde
For a foliie good booke where
on to looke
Is better to me than a stile

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WILSON'S
 TALES
 OF THE
BORDERS.
 HISTORICAL,
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WILLIAM & MACKENZIE
 LONDON GLASGOW & EDINBURGH



W I L S O N ' S

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONAL, AND IMAGINATIVE

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF

S C O T L A N D ;

WITH AN

Illustrative Glossary of the Scottish Dialect.



V O L . I I .

L O N D O N :

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, 69 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.;

GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH.

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WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

MADLINE OF ROECLEUGH;

OR,

THE HILTON PROPHECY.

In the heart of the Lammermuir hills are still to be seen the grey ruins of an ancient baronial pile, perched, in spectral gloom, upon the rugged margin of one of those dark ravines by which that wild district is here and there intersected.

At the time of the commencement of our tale—namely, the latter part of the seventeenth century—it belonged to a branch of the ancient family of Sinclair, and, indeed, had done so for centuries before. Sir George Sinclair, the present proprietor and occupier of the castle, had had several children, whom, with their mother, the hand of death had, one by one, carried away—one young and beautiful daughter alone remaining, to be the joy and solace of his declining years. The family of Sinclair had long been noted as staunch Catholics; and though their present representative did not display such an ardent zeal in promoting and defending the interests of the Church of Rome as had been evinced by many of his predecessors, he kept in his service none but Catholic retainers, and caused his daughter to be educated in the principles of that faith by an aged Catholic priest who resided in the castle. Under the care of this venerable individual, Madeline Sinclair—for that was her name—acquired a pretty accurate acquaintance with the various branches considered necessary in the education of a female of her rank at that day. But, independent of her acquired accomplishments, the natural sweetness of her disposition, aided by a share of personal beauty which even the least susceptible of mankind could scarcely have beheld without admiration, caused Madeline to be regarded by all with interest; but by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village, most of whom had experienced her kindness when suffering under poverty or disease, her delicate form tripping lightly toward the abode of sorrow, was viewed rather as that of an angel, than as an ordinary frame-work of human clay.

The retirement in which Madeline and her father lived, was but seldom broken in upon till the former had reached her sixteenth year. Their most frequent visiter was the young Lord Avondale, a near relative of Madeline's mother, who, during his boyhood, had been annually in the habit of spending a few weeks at Roecleugh Castle. Her time had always glided away most happily during young Avondale's visits; and the fall of the leaf, which never failed to bring him to Roecleugh, had always been looked forward to with pleasing anticipations. He used to accompany her during her favourite walks by the side of the streamlet, read to her, and render her a thousand little attentions, trifling no doubt in themselves, but which seldom fail to prove gratifying to the individual to whom they are directed.

The friendship thus early formed had increased and ripened with years into the more impassioned feeling of attachment known to all by the familiar name of *love*.

It has been remarked, that there is no subject whose details are so insipid to a stranger as those of love-making; though, perhaps, nothing is more interesting to the parties

themselves. As we are much disposed to concur in the accuracy of this statement, it will at once be sufficient for us to state, that that important process had been gone through, and the critical question answered by the guileless blushes of the fair Madeline.

But let not the reader suppose that Lord Avondale was the only suitor for her hand. Johnston, the Baron of Hilton, had also sought for it, but in vain. He was somewhat older than Avondale, and of a fiery and resentful disposition, which led him to nourish within his bosom feelings of the darkest kind against his successful rival. He, first of all, resorted to the lowest methods of vilifying Avondale in the eyes of his mistress; but the diabolical artifices which he resorted to for effecting his purpose, had become apparent even to her to whose mind suspicion was a stranger.

The people in the village looked upon the match between Avondale and Madeline as fixed, but, at the same time, most of them could not help regretting that the daughter of their master was about to be wedded to one so deprived as they had been led to consider Avondale, through the calumnious reports that Johnston caused to be circulated amongst them.

"Hech! wha would hae thoct that siccan a weel-faured, warm-hearted leddie as Miss Madeline, wad hae had sae little regard for hersel' an' her faither's house, as to thrav awa hersel' an' her braw tocher on sic a rampagin', hair-brained, guid-for-naething as this young Avondale. I'm sure it's as weel that her puir leddy-mither's dead an' gane; for it wad hae broken her heart to hae seen her bairn sae far left to hersel' as to forgether wi' siccan a hard-hearted loun. Ye wad hear tell, nae doubt, o' his roupin' out ane o' his puir tenants in Loudon for no haeing his bit rent ready to pay him at St Jude's day. I could maist wish a curse to fa' on his head, gin I thoct pairt o't wadna licht on Leddy Madeline, puir lassie, wha we're a' sae muckle beha'den to"—said Lucky Cruickshanks to a neighbour, who was seated with her at her "chimney nuik," discussing the gossip of the village.

"In troth," replied the other, "it's e'en a pity that siccan a bonny an' winsome lassie suld hae made sae puir a bargain, gin a' be true that ye say; but the word ye've gien, neebor, I maun tell ye, disna correspond awa wi' what he gets aboot his ain place, whar he's muckle lauded and respectit."

"Haud ye there, cummer," interrupted Mrs Cruickshanks, not a little piqued at the air of incredulity assumed by her visiter; "ye maun e'en ken that what I've tell't ye anent the roupin' o' the puir body's guid's and chattels, is something mair than an auld wife's haver, sin' it was tell't to my guidman by nae less a body than the Laird o' Hilton hisel'—tak' ye that, cummer!"

"The Laird o' Hilton!" repeated the other, with an ill-disguised air of triumph; "an' think ye, what ye tell me's the mair likely to be true, that it's come frae his mouth? Hae ye nae mair sense than to believe that the laird wad slack his tongue to uphau'd the man that's won the leddy ower his head; nae sic thing, my woman—the laird's no the man; an' I hac guid reason to think that, gin the truth was kend, Hilton's at the bottom o' a' thir stories that are fleicin' about o' young Avondale."

"Sae ye're nae better than the lave—I took ye to hae

been a person o' mair sense and discretion," retorted the other, whose pique had now assumed an aspect bordering upon anger—"ye're like the lave, neebor—there's nae reason in ye—mair by token that ye opine that the hale acts o' a man's life are to be judged by a single deed. Think ye, lass, that 'cause he freed frae the claws o' justice, a thieving cut-throat, Rob o' the Muirs, wha, nae doubt, had lifted nae sma' bouk o' his nowt, that he's aye to be the same compassionate man? It's a' ye ken about it, cummer, it's a' ye ken," said she, at the same time rising from her seat, and recommencing some household operations which she had left off upon the entrance of her acquaintance. The latter forthwith withdrew, observing her temper somewhat ruffled, adding, as she wished her "guid e'en," that "time wad tell whilk o' the twa was i' the richt."

The obstinacy with which lucky Cruickshanks had resisted any favourable impression being made on her mind regarding the young suitor of Madeline, was rather to be attributed to a natural inherent feeling of self-consequence, which prevented her from acknowledging anything as new, which emanated from one whom she considered so far below her in intellectual capacity, as her neighbour, than to any particular aversion that she entertained against him. It must be observed, however, that the inhabitants of Roe-cleugh generally had a decided predilection in favour of Johnston, which induced them to consider him as by far the most suitable husband for their young mistress. The calumniating reports spread abroad by the latter, in prejudice to his rival, and the undoubted superiority he enjoyed in point of wealth, afford the only way for accounting for this; for, in every other respect, he was incomparably surpassed by Lord Avondale; or, perhaps, the dignified, or, as they supposed it, haughty bearing of the latter, might have prevented him from gaining that place in their estimation, which the affability of his rival had procured.

Such was the state of affairs at Roe-cleugh, and such the estimation in which the respective suitors for Madeline's hand were held, when it became generally circulated that the nuptials between the young heiress of Roe-cleugh and Lord Avondale, were on the point of being consummated.

Before spreading abroad the calumnious reports by which he had endeavoured to blast the reputation of his rival, the Baron of Hilton had become well aware, from the reception he had uniformly met with from Madeline, that there remained no prospect, even the most distant, of her ever consenting to be his bride. Still he had endeavoured to lull his feelings, by the hope that Avondale would not succeed in winning the hand of her on whom he had resolutely, though in vain, set his affections. It was on a Saturday evening, when carousing with a party of convivial acquaintances in the mansion house of Hilton, that Johnston first became acquainted with this, to him, startling fact.

"And sae," said a farmer, who was one of his boon-companions, "it's true enough, after a', that Lord Avondale's to be buckled to the fair rose of Roe-cleugh. The wedding, I'm gien to understand, is fixed for Monday week; and rich and mony are the braws that hae been ordered frae the Edinburgh milliners: my conscience! they say there's as muckle coming out as 'll fill Pate Thamson's twa double carts."

Johnston heard these sayings of his visiter, as will readily be supposed, with feelings of no very pleasing description, but struggled hard to suppress any outward demonstration of his mental emotion. Immediately seizing the bottle which stood before him upon the table, he replenished his glass to the rim, and as quickly swallowed its contents, apparently with the view of drowning the galling sensations with which wounded pride and enmity had filled his breast. The departure of his visitors, which did not take place till a very late, or rather early hour, imparted no alleviation to his distracted feelings. Wild and sleepless, he paced backward and forward in his chamber; at intervals, vainly at-

tempting to allay the agony of his spirit by renewed applications to the wine-flask. But such means, he, like many before and after him, found inadequate to

"Minister unto a mind diseased;
Or pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow."

In this wretched state did he continue till the following morning, when he was aroused from his frantic reveries by the bustle occasioned by the country people on their way to the church. In a state of madness, he resolved to seek there, for his mental sufferings, a mitigation which he had sought for in vain within the walls of his own dwelling. Accordingly, wrapping his cloak around him, he hastened thither, and seated himself in a pew immediately in front of the pulpit. The appearance of his features, agitated by his internal emotions, as well as by the means which he had resorted to for quelling them, exhibited a striking contrast to the calm and serene expression of face borne by the rustics, who sat around him contented and happy.

At length an aged and venerable man stalked up the aisle, entered the pulpit, and gave out the psalm. He was Daniel Douglas, who, with Sir Patrick Hume, the celebrated knight of Polwarth, had been obliged to abdicate his charge and seek refuge for some years in Holland, during the evil days of the persecution; but whom the more tranquil period subsequent to the Revolution had reinstated in the pastoral charge of the parish of Hilton. He was a staunch and unbending advocate of the rules and doctrines of what was called the Reformed religion, which he had boldly asserted and defended, when to have done so was considered a crime.

The psalm sung and the prayer ended, "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," was the text announced by the venerable parson. "You lie," exclaimed his abandoned patron, at the same time rising from his seat; but almost immediately re-assuming it—"You can give no rest—no rest."

For a moment the divine lifted his eyes from the page of the sacred volume which was spread out before him, and directed them toward the individual who had so indecorously interrupted him; but almost instantly he repeated, in a yet louder and more emphatic tone, the words which had given rise to the interruption. The rustic audience did not, however, so speedily recover from their surprise, but in silent wonderment continued to gaze upon the laird.

"There be," said the preacher, commencing his discourse, "divers classes of individuals unto whom the words which I have just now read unto you from the holy book are addressed. Some be there, who, overwhelmed with the cares and sorrows of this transitory scene, and finding here below no place of refuge from the fury of the tempest that has gathered around them, in the spirit of meekness and of humility, come unto Him who is both able and willing to rescue them; others be there, who, thwarted in their vain schemes of ambition or of pelf, with the leaven of passion or of pride still rankling in their breasts, impiously resort to Him for succour."

Scarcely had these words passed from the lips of the speaker, before the door of the pew in which Johnston was seated was flung violently open, and its occupant darting across the passage, flew up the pulpit stair, grasped the preacher by the throat, and, in another moment, dashed his head with such violence against the desk as caused the blood to flow forth in a copious stream from his nostrils. At this juncture, the whole congregation rose hurriedly from their seats, and several individuals sprang forward to rescue their minister from the hands of his infuriated assailant. The latter was no sooner secured, than Daniel Douglas, composedly wiping away with his napkin the blood with which his mouth was besmeared, turned towards Johnston, and, in an emphatic tone, exclaimed aloud:—

"Unhappy man! unto this very sanctuary which thou

hast now irreverently profaned, shall thy mangled carcase be brought, not many days hence; yea, the very dogs shall lap thy heart's blood from off the floor."

The morrow's dawn found the Baron of Hilton threading his intricate way up one of the longest and narrowest defiles in the range of the Lammermuir mountains. In its bottom flowed a small brook, here and there impeded, in its onward course, by huge and ungainly masses of rock, which, in the lapse of years, had been hurled down from the lofty cliffs by which it was overhung. At last, the baron paused, and, looking upward to one of those craggy steeps, the summit of which was clothed with the dense foliage of the stunted birch and dwarf oak, he drew forth from beneath his cloak a small bugle-horn, and made the wild echoes of the glen respond to its wild music. Three times had the blast been repeated, when the figure of a man appeared, crouching behind the foliage at the top of the cliff, reconnoitering the individual who had intruded himself so near his solitary abode. Apparently satisfied with the result of his scrutiny, he stood up erect, and displayed a tall athletic figure, which, at the place from which it was viewed by the other, corresponded exactly with the ordinary description of a giant. He was attired in a tight, close, party-coloured dress, formed of the skins of hares and the other furry tenants of the bleak region in which he lived; and the rays of the morning sun, which had now begun to peep forth above the hills, were reflected from the clear hilt of a dagger, stuck in a belt that surrounded his waist. He beckoned the baron to approach towards the base of the cliff, and commenced lowering down a strong rope or cable, to the end of which was suspended a swing seat. Hilton having seated himself in it, was quickly raised, by means of a revolving lever, to the ledge of rock that protruded at the feet of the robber—for such was the calling of the individual whom he had gone to visit. His countenance bore an expression of haughtiness that indicated the utter contempt in which he held the laws and their administrators. During several years of the earlier part of his life, he had served as a private soldier in the persecuting ranks of the bloody Claverhouse, whom he had beheld expire in the arms of victory at the Pass of Killiecrankie. After the annihilation of the Stuart dynasty, he had abandoned the profession of a soldier, though we cannot add that he had also laid aside that of arms. Retiring to this wild region of the Lammermuirs, he had sought out for himself a suitable lurking place, whence he occasionally sallied forth and levied unwilling contributions from the lairds and farmers of the Merse.

Many attempts had been made to seize Rob o' the Muirs—the name by which he was usually called—but all of these, with two exceptions, had proved unavailing. On these occasions, which occurred upon his first commencing the profession of freebooter, his spoiliations being of a comparatively venial description to those which he had latterly been in the habit of carrying on, he had been suffered to escape. He had once, as was adverted to by Lucky Cruickshanks, been detected in the act of driving away several heads of cattle from the lands of Avondale Castle; and, after being firmly bound and lustily belaboured by the rustics, had been thrust into an out-house for the night. But he had been released from this state of "durance vile," by Lord Avondale, who was then a boy, and had wished to enjoy their amazement, when they should go, on the following morning, to carry him off to gaol, at finding that he had escaped. At another time, he had been arraigned at Jedburgh for highway robbery, committed on the person of a Lammermuir laird; but, from some flaw in the indictment, and the interference of some persons, among whom was the Baron of Hilton, in his behalf, he had also been acquitted and suffered to return to his lawless vocation.

In strict justice to Rob, it must be added that the acqui-

sition of *spuilzie*, rather than the perpetration of acts of bloodshed, was his exciting object; though it will readily be supposed, that, in the course of his long practice as a freebooter, occasions must have occurred when he had found it expedient, from a regard to his own safety, or to insure the successful accomplishment of his object, to *killie* underneath the ribs with his poniard, or send a bullet unceremoniously whizzing through the head of a refractory drover.

The Baron had no sooner disengaged himself from the apparatus by which he had been swung up to the mouth of the bandit's cave, than the latter thus addressed him:—

"To what good fortune, Laird of Hilton, am I to consider myself indebted for so early and unexpected a visit from you? But I forget—the mist of these wild hills must have sharpened your lowland appetite."

So saying, he crouched himself downwards, and bidding his visiter follow his example, he disappeared through a narrow aperture which led into his rude citadel. It was a large and irregularly-shaped cavern, obscurely lighted by a lamp that was suspended from its roof. Along one of its sides was a range of seats, composed of a number of layers of turf piled alternately one above another; and in the centre of the apartment was a sort of table, constructed of the same material, over which was inverted the dried skin of a bullock. The walls glistened with swords, pistols, and pieces of armour of various descriptions; and in one of the corners was suspended the red military cloak which had been worn by Rob when a soldier during the civil wars. In a recess at its farther extremity, lay, stretched out upon some hides that supplied the place of a mattress, the individual who took charge of the garrison when the robber was engaged in his midnight spoiliations.

"Had the sun not been so far up, I would have treated you to some warm refreshment for breakfast; but smoke, you know, is not the most fitting thing that can be seen issuing from the mansion of a gentleman of my profession," said the robber, smiling; "you will therefore have to make what cheer you can upon such cold provender as I may be able to set before you."

"I can eat none, Rob," said Johnston; "so you may spare yourself the trouble of bringing forth any of your viands. You talked of the mists of the hills having given me an appetite—they have not; let me try what effect may be produced by a cup of your own purer mountain-dew, which, I guess, that huge bottle beside you contains."

"And that you shall quickly have," said the other, producing the bottle and a large wooden drinking cup or *quegh*, which he filled up with its contents, and wishing his visiter "health and happiness," drank it off. Then filling up the cup again, he handed it to the other, who, before draining it, said:—

"You have drunk health and happiness to me, Rob—will you bring out another of your cups, and, in a bumper, pledge me that you will lend me a helping hand in the accomplishment of what can alone insure to me either of these blessings?"

"That will I do cheerily," replied the freebooter, at the same time rising from his seat in quest of another vessel; "do you doubt me, man? I have not so soon forgot the good word you spoke for me at the Jeddart court, when I was like to have got a trip beyond seas, merely for having helped myself to a few golden portraits of his Majesty from the Laird of Stobswood's leather purse, when I first began business for myself. No; Rob has not let that good turn slip so quickly from his memory."

"Well, then," said the other, when his entertainer had once more seated himself and plished his cup to the brim, "you have heard of Lord Avondale, who?"

"I have; and a better young fellow, barring yourself, does not call himself master of an acre of land between the Tweed and the Forth" interrupted the bandit.

"Well," continued Johnston, impatiently; "but you know that he has stepped in between me and Madeline of Roecleugh. The wedding is fixed for Monday week, and I have resolved that it shall never take place. I have now come to ask your assistance in putting a stop to it."

"How and by what means, then, do you purpose to carry your threat into execution? By carrying off the wench, eh? and keeping her shut up, like a caged lark, in your old ghostly mansion down by, till such times as she consent to accept the Baron of Hilton for her mate? If that be what you wish, then will I lend you a helping hand, provided you will promise me that there is to be no bloodshed in the way."

"You have guessed my intentions with wonderful exactness, Rob," answered the other; "but more or less bloodshed there must be, for how otherwise would it be possible to get Madeline forced from the castle, occupied as it will now be by a numerous host of friends and kinsmen, who will have assembled to be present at the bridal?"

"Leave that to me;" replied the robber; "only promise me that you will keep your sword buried in its scabbard, and you shall have Madeline, as you call her, mounted behind you on your horse ere another week goes round. Come now, pledge me that Avondale shall be safe, or, by my troth, I wont stir a foot in the business."

"I pro—mise, then," drawled forth the baron, reluctantly, at the same time grasping the proffered hand of Rob o' the Muirs; "and, in event of your managing the matter as successfully as you have said, I will cheerfully give you what gold you may be pleased to ask from me for your good services."

"A bargain be it, then," replied his companion. "You say the wedding is to be on Monday week—hold yourself in readiness waiting for me on that day, about nightfall, among the ruins of the old nunnery of St Bathans; and then, else my name's not Rob, will I deliver up into your hands Madeline of Roecleugh. But forget not to bring with you your fleetest steed, as there is chance of a hot pursuit."

We must now leave this worthy couple to arrange matters for the capture of Madeline, and request the reader to accompany us back to Roecleugh, where active preparations had, for some time previous, been making for the approaching nuptials. Many of the friends of Sir George Douglas had, as Johnston conjectured, arrived at the castle, where the greater part of the day was spent in the amusements of the field, and the evening in festivity. Avondale was also there; and, as might naturally be supposed, the greater part of the time which he could contrive to snatch from the company of the other visitors, was devoted to that of his young bride. But, while such was the state of affairs at the castle, the inhabitants of the village were not idle. Though the match scarcely accorded with their wishes, now that they saw that it was finally fixed upon, they contended with each other who should be the most forward in evincing their respect and attachment to their young mistress. A meeting was forthwith called, to be held in the shop of Jasper Middlemass, the blacksmith, for the purpose of taking into consideration what would be the most suitable method of demonstrating their feelings upon the occasion. At the appointed hour, not only the male dignitaries of the village, but likewise the greater part of their wives, crowded together within the walls of the smithy. Their children also congregated in noisy groups around the door, and not a few annoyed the members of the assembly, by thrusting their bare heads through between their legs, with a view of seeing, or rather hearing, what was to be done. Silence being called and procured, on the motion of Peter Purdie the tailor, the parochial schoolmaster, Gabriel Whackum, was unanimously called to the chair, or rather stithy, for such was the only seat of honour that the

place of convention afforded. Accordingly, having mounted the rostrum, the individual in question, who was a tall, thin, sallow-complexioned man, after a few introductory *hems*, and having assumed such a look of importance as the occasion demanded, proceeded to address the audience nearly in the same words as follow:—

"My friends and fellow-townfolk," he said—"It appeareth from sundry passages in the ancient writers, that the Greeks and Romans were wont to celebrate their matrimonial alliances with the voice of festivity and rejoicing; as is apparent from Tenocretes, page 162, as also from the writings of Theopastus, (Screwilius' edition,) at page 56, nigh unto the bottom thereof. The same custom, moreover, obtained among the Jews of old, as the beginning of the second chapter of the Gospel according to St John doth also duly evince. A practice thus universal and ancient, it little behoveth us, in these present times, to let fall into desuetude, the more especially as sundry whom I behold here present, have been singularly beholden unto the virgin who is about to be wedded, when placed in great straits and jeopardy by reason of lack of sustenance. But while I hold it to be laudable for you to shew forth unto the world some public testimonial of your esteem, I would, at the same time, counsel you against letting loose your reins unto drunkenness, the which lowereth a man even unto a level with the beasts of the field. Also touching the matter of the barrel of ale, which the consideration of Sir George hath sent, to enable us the better to keep up the hilarity of the occasion, I would take it upon me to suggest, that, on the evening whereon the nuptials are to be solemnized, the said cask—'*diota Sabina*,' as Horatius Flaccus would have called it—should be deposited in the charge of three trust-worthy persons, to be elected by a majority of the suffrages of the assembly, the same to be empowered to mete out in due moieties unto every man his equable share of liquor. And, lastly, my friends, I may add that any one who may have a motion to bring forward shall be listened to, on my part, with all due attention."

The assembled villagers looked with pride upon the dominie, whose

"Words of learned length and thundering sound,
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew."

A minute elapsed before any one opened his mouth to speak. At length Simon Littlejohn, the ruling elder, a man of diminutive stature, and a weaver by profession, raising his head to a propel level, by suspending himself upon the shoulders of those between whom he was crushed, in a speech of some length, moved, that, on the night in question, a large bonfire should be lighted on the top of Dirington Law, that "the hale warld," as he expressed it, "atween John o' Groat's and the Land's End nicht ken the young leddy o' Roecleugh had been that nicht buckled to Lord Avondale."

This motion was cordially seconded and agreed to. It was also arranged, that, a little before the hour appointed for the celebration of the nuptials, the villagers, dressed in their best attire, should convene before the gate of the castle, and there form themselves into a procession, to escort the bride to the chapel. Agreeably to the proposition advanced by Mr Whackum, the barrel of ale was formally consigned over to the charge of three members of the meeting, himself among the number, and it was resolved that it should be dispensed to them in the schoolhouse after the marriage ceremony had been gone through. These important arrangements being concluded, the meeting was dissolved by the president, and the villagers proceeded to depart, every one "unto his own dwelling."

It has been already remarked that the Knight of Roecleugh and his daughter were Catholics. This fact will

explain to the reader why the nuptials were appointed to be celebrated, not in the parish church, as usual, but within the walls of an old Catholic chapel, of Gothic architecture, which stood upon a patch of haugh land, about three hundred yards further down the rivulet than the steep whereon the castle was reared. It had formerly been the parish church; but, at the Reformation, having suffered not more from time than from the destructive ravages of the modern Vandals, it was allowed to fall into decay, and its place was supplied by a modern building erected in the neighbourhood of the village. The ecclesiastic, by whom the marriage ceremony was to be gone through, was the aged Catholic priest, formerly noticed as the individual to whom the superintendance of Madeline's education had been assigned.

It was now about the middle of November, and the weather, which had previously been mild and settled, became suddenly broken up. For several days, the snow-flakes continued to descend in copious showers, so as to clothe the hills with a white mantle of several feet in depth. The day appointed for the wedding was, however, serene and beautiful; and the feathered tenants of the moorland groves twittered joyfully upon the leafless sprays, apparently in anticipation that the storm was at an end. Towards evening, the visitors assembled at the castle were summoned into the hall to partake of some refreshment previous to accompanying the bride and bridegroom to the chapel.

Madeline alone did not attend, but remained seated at her chamber window, musingly gazing upon the stars which were already beginning to peep out from above the summits of the Lammermuirs. She had not sat long ere a bustling noise, followed by a loud groan, which proceeded from the court-yard beneath, recalled her from her reveries. She rose from her seat, and on looking downwards, to her horror and amazement, beheld the body of one of the pages, bloody and lifeless, stretched out upon the pavement, and a man, muffled in a huge cloak, making his way upwards to her apartment by a ladder. Her first effort was to scream and bring the inmates of the castle to her assistance, but terror divested her of the power, and she sank back into her chair in a state of insensibility.

The sash of the window was violently thrown open, and the intruder entered. Stripping himself of the cloak in which his person had been enveloped, he flung it rudely around the insensible Madeline, and, lifting her in his arms, he conveyed her from the apartment by the same way in which he had obtained access to it.

The villagers had assembled in front of the gateway, and the repast in the hall had just been finished, when the castle bell tolled the hour of six. As the sound died away, the priest arose from his seat, and, addressing a matron who sat at the foot of the table, he said—"The hour appointed for the bridal hath come, the wedding guests are ready convened, I pray thee let the virgin be brought forth, that we may proceed unto St Agnes' chapel, to solemnize the nuptials."

Hereupon the matron withdrew, followed by several of the female visitors. Many minutes had not elapsed when Mr Morris the butler entered, with a pale and agitated countenance, and announced that Madeline was nowhere to be found—that the casement of her window had been found thrown wide open, and a ladder planted against it from the court-yard beneath. It would require a much more vivid pencil than ours to pourtray the expression which the countenances of all present assumed upon this announcement being made to them. All rose up hurriedly from their seats—some applying their hands menacingly to the hilts of their swords, while others paced hurriedly to and fro upon the floor, in vain endeavouring to account for the disappearance of the bride. No sooner, however, had the astound-

ing intelligence been brought, than the bewildered bridegroom rushed from the hall, and fruitlessly searched every apartment in the castle in quest of his fair one. Failing in his object, he hurried to the stables, and, seizing the first horse that presented itself, he mounted it and galloped frantically across the moor. The rest of the visitors were also quickly mounted and on the pursuit, and Roccleugh castle was that night left destitute of male occupants.

"Didna I tell ye that nae luck could come out o' Leddy Madeline takin' up wi' siccan a scape-grace as this Lord Avondale?" said Lucky Cruickshanks, forcing her way through the crowd of astounded villagers, and grasping the arm of her acquaintance, whose conversation with her in the village some time previous we have related at the commencement of our tale. "Didna I tell ye that marrying him was nae better nor throwin' hersel' awa? but ye wadna believe till the truth's been bored into yer vera een. But the puir lassie's come to the same thocht as mysel' at the hinder end, and taen leg bail for it, I'se warrant. What hae ye to say about the made-up reports noo, cummer?"

About the same time that Madeline was discovered to be amissing at the castle, the Baron of Hilton rode up the vale of Whitadder toward the ruins of the Abbey of St Bathans, an ancient Bernardine convent, which was the place that had been agreed upon for his meeting with Rob o' the Muirs. Having secured his horse to an iron stanchel which protruded from the wall of what had been the transept, he had paced beneath the broken arches for some time, his mind agitated by a tumult of discordant feeling, when a suppressed note from a bugle apprised him that the robber was at hand. In about a minute the latter rode into the ruins, bearing before him the apparently inanimate body of Madeline Sinclair.

"You see Rob is no a man to break his promise to a friend," said he, as he deposited his burden upon the pavement. "Let me see now how many of your gold boys you're going to give me for the good turn I've done you; but you must needs be quick about it, else we'll have the hounds upon us, and the snow is not the best carpet for a man to tread upon in a moonlight night, who does not wish his way to be known."

"Take all you can find there, and you shall have more for the asking," said Hilton, throwing him his purse; and at the same time stooping down and removing the cloak from the pale face of the lady—"by Heavens, she is dead!"

"Perhaps a tasting of my pure mountain dew, as you call it, will bring her to life again," said the bandit, laughing; and untying from around his neck a leathern flask, similar to what is now carried by sportsmen and anglers, and then putting it to Madeline's mouth.

A distant halloo now broke upon their ears. Hilton lifted the lady in his arms, and both hurried to the place where their horses were fastened; and in a few minutes they were galloping over the moor, as fast as the snow would allow, in a direction opposite to that whence the sound seemed to proceed. Thus they had travelled for a considerable distance, when the horses became unable to go farther for the drifted snow. Hilton then dismounted, and consigning Madeline to the care of the freebooter, plunged on, as best he could, in a direction in which the latter assured him he would find a shepherd's hut, where he might take refuge for the night. Scrambling forward with great difficulty to the summit of an eminence, he at length descried a light proceeding from the small window, or hole of the mud-built cot; in the interior of which the *guidman* and his wife were seated by the side of a blazing fire of peats, engaged in the following conversation:—

"There's mony a puir body waur off than huz tae nicht, Eppy, my woman," said the *guidman*, glancing cheerfully around the little room every corner of which was illumined

by the blaze of the peats. "They may ca' this the deil's den gin they like; but gin the deil hae but as snug a berth as this in a cauld winter nicht, I'm thinking he'll no be that ill off."

"Ay, ay, Robin, my man, mony a anc, that's true, hasna siccan a cozy fire to roast their taes at afore they tumble in; and mony a anc that has a bigger, disna feel sae happy and contented," responded Eppy, at the same time drawing the cutty stool nearer to the joyful hearth.

"I'm doubting we'll hae a stormy winter after a'," said Robin—"it's set in sae sune; and we've had sic mild anes sin' our Bauldy was born, an' that 'ill be sax years come the time. Hech! that was an awfu' storm—the hale road atween Dunse and Enabro' was blockit up for the best feck o' twa months: I'll ne'er forget, that mornin' when I rase to drive our farrow cow to Lauder Fair, how queer I lookit when I saw the snaw maist up to the easin' o' the house."

"I mind weel about it, now that ye speak o't—it was the very same winter that Rob o' the Muirs was caught liftin' Lord Avondale's nowt, that there was sic a clishma-claver about. Odd, wasna it daft-like to let siccan a reivin' monster 'scape, after gettin' him into their clutches?"

"I'll no say but what ye're richt, Eppy," responded Robin; "but grit folk hae queer ways o' doin'. Reivin' loun as Rob is, howsoever, we maun e'en say this muckle for him, that he's never laid his reivin' paw on onything belangin' to huz. But what's garrin Whalp bark that gate?"

"It canna be Tam Inglis bringin' o'er the tatties siccan a nicht as this—no 'deed, it canna be Tam, for Whalp wadna said a word to him. Kennel up, ye deevil ye."

By this time a loud knocking was heard at the door; and Robin rising from his seat, and seizing a piece of rudely shaped wood, which served as an apology for a candlestick, proceeded towards the door, to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. After some questions put, and apparently satisfactorily answered from without, Robin undid the latch of the door, and the Baron of Hilton entered. With some scruples, Robin was induced to put on his big coat, and accompany the latter with his lighted lanthorn to the spot where he had left the lady and the freebooter, to assist them in disengaging their horses from the drift. With considerable difficulty, this was accomplished, and the latter led into Robin's cow byre, and Madeline, in a state of utter insensibility, deposited in a chair by the side of the fire. "Lord hae mercy on us! what's aillin' the puir lassie?" exclaimed Eppy, holding the candle, and gazing on the pallid features of Madeline of Roeclough.

The circumstances being explained to her as arising from the fatigue of her journey and the extreme cold, the guid-woman put the kettle on the fire, with the intention of preparing a posset which she had often before found serviceable on similar occasions; while the others endeavoured to restore circulation, by rubbing the palms of her hands before the fire. This they had continued for some time apparently without any effect, when, suddenly, with a convulsive throb, the lady opened her eyes and stared wildly around her; she almost immediately, however, relapsed into her former state of insensibility, and the others had recommenced operations for her restoration, when the sound of several voices was heard at the outside of the door, followed by a thundering blow upon the window-shutter. Hilton dropped the lady's hand which he was chafing, and, guessing the cause of the interruption, he unsheathed his sword, and planted himself in a determined posture behind the door; while Rob of the Muirs, with an air of greater composure, proceeded to adjust his fire-arms before the very face of the terrified Eppy.

Immediate entrance was demanded from without. Robin stood hesitating as to the expediency of opening the door, when the robber hinted to him, by a significant glance at his firelock, that it would be at his peril to budge from the

spot where he stood—a hint which the shepherd did not think fit to misunderstand. A second application being also unattended to, the door was forcibly burst open, and two men rushed violently into the room; while, at the same moment, a bullet from the bandit's carbine penetrated the shoulder of the first that entered. A desperate struggle ensued, which lasted for some minutes, and promised to have turned out favourably for Hilton and his coadjutor when a reinforcement, on the part of Lord Avondale—for he it was who had first rushed into the house, and received the bullet of the robber in his shoulder—entirely changed the aspect of affairs. Rob, after discharging his carbine, had continued for some time to employ the butt end of it with considerable success, and had once more raised it with the intention of bringing it into vehement contact with the cranium of one of his now numerous assailants, when a successful slash, from the cutlass of another, sent his weapon, and the hand that wielded it, in social company to the ground. The two rival suitors, in the meantime, had not been inactive, when a shot from one of the party stretched Johnston upon the floor. The serious privation which the robber had met with in the loss of his hand, had not so effectually dispirited him as to have prevented him from inflicting, with a stool which he snatched from the floor with his remaining member, considerable molestation on the persons of those who, at this crisis, rushed forward to secure him. His efforts at resistance, as might have been expected, were unable to withstand, for any length of time, the superior numerical force of his antagonists. He was at length overpowered, and being firmly bound, he was dragged to the cow-house, and five or six of his opponents stationed as a guard upon him for the night.

During this scene of confusion, Eppy, with her help-mate, had prudently ensconced themselves behind the wooden panel of the bed. There they stood, locked in each other's embraces, in momentary expectation of a lodgement being effected by a bullet in one or other of their persons; nor did it require a small degree of persuasion to induce them, when the conflict was at an end, to venture forth from the covert of their "wooden walls."

While the rest of the pursuers were contending with their antagonist, Sir George Sinclair hung mournfully over the body of his swooning daughter, whose head he supported upon his shoulder.

The baron, who lay groaning at the entrance of the apartment, was, with his confederate, deposited upon some straw in the cow-house. One of those who carried him out, perceiving the copious jets of blood that issued from his side, was proceeding to arrest the hemorrhage, by applying a napkin tightly round his waist, when the wounded man, over whose eyeballs the lowered lanthorn exhibited the film of death fast gathering, asked, in broken accents, whether Avondale and Madeline yet lived.

"I fear thou hast done for them," answered one of the servants.

"Then shall I die content," muttered the baron, his eye for a moment brightening up, but immediately resuming its lack-lustre appearance. "Madeline of Roeclough can never be the bride of Lord Avondale."

On the forenoon of the ensuing day, Rob o' the Muirs, after making several bold but unsuccessful attempts to escape from the custody of the persons who conveyed him thither, was firmly secured with iron fetters in a dungeon below the prison-house of Dunse, to await trial for his numerous breaches of the law. A messenger was, at the same time, despatched to Hilton to inform his retainers of their master's situation. In the afternoon, a number of the latter arrived at Robin's cottage, and proceeded to carry homeward on a litter his bloody and lifeless body. When they had reached within a few miles of the mansion-house, a heavy snow-fall, which had continued for some time, rendered the roads, previously

bad enough, almost impassable. Attaching a rope to the end of the litter, and each taking hold of it, the men had continued to plunge forward, dragging the corpse over the surface of the snow till they reached the wall of Hilton churchyard. In a state of exhaustion, they resolved to deposit their burden within the church all night, as they felt too wearied to allow of their proceeding onward to the house, which stood about half a mile to the eastward. They accordingly raised the body from the bier, and deposited it in the same pew of the church which its wretched owner had occupied and profanely violated on the Sunday of the preceding week. As they did so, the bandage slipped from off the wound, and a large mass of coagulated blood fell upon the floor, which was immediately seized and gobbled up by the hungry hounds that had been following at their master's heels: and thus were the prophetic words of Daniel Douglas verified.

Many weeks elapsed ere Madeline of Roecleugh evinced symptoms of returning sensibility; and even after these had become apparent, the slightest unguarded allusion to the scenes of the eventful bridal night invariably occasioned an alarming relapse. About a week had elapsed afterwards, when it was discovered that one of the grooms belonging to the castle had abetted Rob o' the Muirs in his successful attempt at carrying off the young heiress; and what was worse, had stabbed one of his fellow-servants who had detected Rob when on his way up the ladder to his mistress's apartment. He was immediately, upon the discovery being made, apprehended and committed to prison.

The wound which Avondale's shoulder had sustained by the bullet from the robber's carbine, turned out to be of a much more serious nature than had been at first expected. Perceiving the lamentable state in which Madeline was, he had returned to Avondale castle, where he had no sooner arrived, than acute febrile symptoms followed by delirium supervened.

A couple of months had elapsed, when the physicians who attended upon Madeline, recommended a change of air and of scene, as the means best calculated for the restoration of her health and spirits; and the small village of Eyemouth upon the coast—then a more fashionable resort on such occasions than it happens to be at the present day—was the place where Sir George and his invalid daughter took up their abode for the purpose of enjoying these benefits. They had been for some weeks absent from Roecleugh, when Avondale, finding his strength sufficiently recruited to permit of his leaving his chamber, returned thither to visit them. He found the Castle almost wholly deserted; Morris the butler and the old housekeeper being its sole occupants. After the murder of their comrade, on the evening appointed for the bridal, the servants had, one by one, resigned their posts. The idea which then prevailed throughout Scotland, that the spots where murder had been perpetrated, must, of necessity, become haunted by the spirits of the deceased, had so effectually overcome their courage, that they had refused positively to remain longer in a dwelling where such supernatural appearances were likely to be manifested. The housekeeper was still assisted in the performance of the more menial operations, 'tis true, by one of the peasants' daughters, who, tempted by the goodly usage which the old lady held out to her as an inducement, had enlisted into the service, under the express provision that she should not be required to remain within the castle after sunset—the time at which the evil spirits first became visible.

Morris having conducted his Lordship into the hall, proceeded to apologize to him, in statements which will not admit of a very close scrutiny, for the absence of the other domestics. Having requested him to supply him with writing materials for the purpose of preparing a packet for his master; he also asked him whether he thought it possible for him to procure a messenger to convey it to him.

"Easy that—easy that, my lord," readily replied the butler; "there's hunders ready to rin up to the neck i' the Whitadder, at your honour's biddin', and think it a favour to be asked—there need be nae lack o' messengers, gude truly." And immediately he left the hall, and taking in his hand a silver-mounted cane, proceeded to the cottage of one Peter Treddles, whose oldest son, a lad of about fifteen years of age, he pitched upon as an eligible individual for despatching upon the embassy.

The family were busily engaged in discussing their four-hours, when the tapping of Morris' cane upon the door arrested a large hornspoonful on its way to Peter's throat. His eyes were instinctively elevated from his bicker toward the door, as the butler entered, while the children scampered out in various directions, to hide themselves from one so intimately connected with the haunted mansion.

"Oh! it's you, Maister Morris," ejaculated Mrs Treddles. "I'm clean sorry yer honour suld hae ca'd and seen our house in siccan a confusion; but the bairns mak' siccan a slaister and dirt, that it's no easy keepin' a' thing as ane coud wush, Sir."

"Your house is to a marvel, lucky," said the important personage addressed; and then turning to Peter, he inquired, "Do ye think yer auldest callant, Peter, coud gang east the length of Eyemouth wi' a bit parcel for the laird?"

"Our callant," said Peter, turning round embarrassedly toward his wife, who usually spoke for him on important occasions like the present—"our callant's no very weel the noo, Maister Morris."

"I'm sorry for that," replied the other; "what may it be that's ailin' the bairn, puir thing?"

"Ye'll aiblins ken what an income is?" said Lucky Treddles, bustling forward from the cupboard where she had set aside some of the dinner utensils, the better to maintain the character which the butler had been pleased to give her house."

"Perfectly," answered the other.

"Weel, ye maun ken that the bairn 's fashed wi' a maist tremendous ane in the heuch o' his knee; so, I'm vexed that he'll no be able to do yer honour's service, Maister Morris; and it wad hae been siccan a braw job for him to hae walked doon to Eyemouth—ay, weel suld I ken Eyemouth—I've heard my puir auld mither, wha's been in the moulds this twenty year, say, as how it was a great place for catching fish, and how"—

Here Morris thought proper unceremoniously to break in upon Mrs Treddles' reminiscences of her mother, by saying—"But, my guid woman, yer callant wadna need to walk a single fit o' the road, as he wad get Leddy Madeline's grey powny, to ride baith there and back again, and as muckle siller in his pouch as wad buy him a pair o' new shoon for Sundays."

"But I was just gaun to tell ye, when yer honour interrupted me," rejoined the guidwife, resolved in this emergency to stretch any point, even at the expense of truth itself, rather than allow her boy to go upon the mission—"that the puir callant's troubled wi' a bile upon the very pairt that wad be maist exposed to the saidle."

This argument against her son's being employed as an ambassador on the occasion, was, of course, unanswerable; and Morris withdrew, not, however, without a private doubt as to the urchin's bodily incapacity. Mortified with the result of his application to Lucky Treddles, he at last resolved to resort to the manse and solicit the minister, with whom he was not upon the best of terms, to allow the boy who took charge of his horse to set out upon the errand. Accordingly, he had proceeded in that direction for about fifty yards, when he observed a person kneeling by the side of the road. On approaching nearer, he discovered it to be his troublesome acquaintance, Sandy Watson—one of those ood-natured idiots who are to be found in almost every

neighbourhood. Sandy's peregrinations were usually confined within a circuit of one or two miles round Roeleugh; but the execution of Rob o' the Muirs, and his accomplice, Andrew Todd, the groom of Sir George Sinclair, had caused him on this occasion to exceed the usual limits by a journey of ten miles. When the poor idiot, therefore, recognised his friend Morris, he came running towards him, and cried out exultingly—

"Braw news the day—braw news the day frae Dunse, canny Maister Morris: Andrew Todd and Rob o' the Muirs are baith clean dead; and I'm gaun alang to tell the laird and the ledly a' about it."

"So, ye've been seeing your acquaintance, Andrew, hanged," said Morris; and taking some silver from his pocket, and shewing it to the idiot, he added, "A' *that* is to be gien, Sandy, to the person whom I am gaun to send upon a message."

Sandy's eyes glistened at the sight of the money; and Morris perceiving that his plan had taken the desired effect, whispered to him—"Now, Sandy, gin ye'll walk straight down to St Bathan's—ye ken that place weel enough, I'm sure—and syne to Edincraw—that's where the auld witches lived, ye ken—and then speer the gate doon to Eyemouth, and deliver this letter into the laird's ain hand, ye shall hae a' that siller and a piece o' currant pasty when ye come back."

This proposal met with the most cordial acquiescence from Sandy, who manifested his joy by a multitude of uncouth gestures and shrugs of his shoulders. Perhaps it might be considered tedious were we to describe the adventures which the idiot encountered on his journey; suffice it for us to say, that, on the evening of the second day from his departure, he succeeded in making his way into the presence of Sir George Sinclair, not without encountering great opposition from the servants, to whom he had doggedly refused to explain whence he had come, or what was the object of his visit. Having delivered the packet, he was remunerated in a manner much more ample than he had looked forward to, even as a reward for rehearsing the tragical events of the execution, till, at length, growing troublesome, Sir George rang the bell and ordered a servant to conduct him from the apartment. As the door was rudely slammed behind him, Sandy thrust his hands into his pockets, and muttered to himself—"I ay took the Laird of Roeleuch to hae been a man o' mair manners than to hae used ane sae badly that had come sae far to see him. Sae muckle for my braw story;—but, puir man, I see the servants hae the upper hand o' him."

A few days had only elapsed after the ejection of Sandy, when Sir George Sinclair and the fair Madeline arrived at Roeleugh Castle, when the latter, in the course of the ensuing week, changed her name to that of Lady Avondale.

THE THRIFTLESS HEIR.

HAVING occasion, in the summer of 1833, to pay a visit to the town of Langholm, in the south of Scotland, where I was detained for several days, I spent all my spare time—and the nature of my business afforded me a good deal of it—in making excursions into the beautiful environs of that delightfully situated little town. One day, I roamed by the green banks of the winding Esk, where it gracefully sweeps round the beautiful holms of Netherby; another day, I sought the flowery margins of the Ewes and the Wauchope, or revelled in the luxuries of the bright green willows, shady woods, and romantic dells, ringing with the melody of birds, or the music of the waterfall, which, combined or quickly alternating, meet the rover in every direction in the vicinity of this favoured spot.

Tempted by the offer of a seat in a friend's gig, and by the singular fineness of the day, aided by my friend's glowing description of the beauties of the scenery on the route by Canobie and the Scots Dyke, to the English border, I was induced, on another occasion, to go as far as the confines of the sister kingdom. Arrived there, I was easily prevailed upon to accompany my friend, who had some business to transact with a farmer, who lived just within the limits of the English soil; and, before I returned to Langholm, I was able to say, what I could not, with truth, say before, that I had been in England.

Finding, on our arrival at the farmer's whom my friend had come to see, that his business with him would occupy some time, as they were shortly up to the elbows in papers, and each, with pen in hand, busied in calculation, I left them to explore some of the beautiful scenery that lay around.

In the course of that excursion, I came to a delightful sequestered little plain, or flat, of the brightest verdure, overhung, on one side, with natural wood, which grew from a steep back-ground of jutting rock and abrupt hill, and skirted in front by a brawling little river with a white pebbly shore.

In the centre of this charming little holm, there were the ruins of what appeared to have been a small cottage, but of the better order; for the stones were large, and had all been regularly fashioned by the chisel of the stone-hewer. There were, besides, other marks of it having been a respectable residence.

At the moment that I visited this spot, there were two men engaged in surrounding the ruins with a high, stout, and rather elegant pailing. I made up to the men, and, struck with the contrast between the formidable and costly fence, and the insignificance and apparent worthlessness of that which it was evidently intended to protect, I expressed the surprise which I felt, to one of the workmen, who turned out to be a Scotchman, and asked the reason of such a proceeding, remarking that I did not think the jewel worthy of the casket.

"The reason, Sir," replied the man whom I addressed, suspending his labour while he spoke, "is, that Mr Musgrave, the proprietor o' this property, an' a hantle mair besides, a' round about here, has a particular regard for thae ruins, an' 'll no' allow them to be disturbed on any account as lang as the four wa's 'll hing thegither—a' that's left, ye see; and he has fand out that some o' the neeborin' farmers, frae the ither side o' the water, whilk is no his property, hae been takin' awa the stanes for jobs o' their ain, and he's puttin' up this fence to prevent them repeatin' their depredations."

"Singular," replied I; "and do you know, honest man," I added, "for what he regards these insignificant ruins so much?"

"Weel do I ken that," rejoined my informant. "There's a queer story connected wi' that bit housie; but Mr Musgrave's no ower fond about its bein' generally known, and I'm no sure that he wad like me a whit the better if he thoct that I kent it; and yet, though near aneuch to become his successor, he's only distantly related to the Mr Musgrave who is the subject o' the story I hae been alludin' to."

(To be continued.)



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE THRIFTLESS HEIR.

(Concluded.)

My curiosity was excited, and I attempted to elicit the tale referred to, by some indirect inquiries; but the man, whose name, on my asking him, he informed me was John Christison, perceiving my object at once, told me that the "story was ower lang to begin whar we war, mair especially as he expected Mr Musgrave every minute." "But," he added, laughingly, "if I could meet ye, Sir, the morn's nicht at Langholm, whar I'm gaun on some little business o' my ain, I wad gie ye a screed o't wad weary ye, I'm thinkin'."

To the man's surprise, I took him at his word. He was, indeed, for some time incredulous of my sincerity in accepting of the meeting, which, after all, he had but jocularly proposed; but, on my convincing him that I was in earnest, he readily promised to call at the inn where I put up, on the following evening.

This arrangement settled, I made the best of my way back to the house where my friend was, and found that I had arrived in good time, as they had just completed the business with which they had been engaged.

Faithful to his appointment, Christison called upon me the following evening at my inn in Langholm; and, after partaking of some refreshment which I ordered for him, and, thereafter, having manufactured for himself a good stiff tumbler, after an example which I gave him, he proceeded to the fulfilment of the promise he had given me; and, in less than an hour, I was put in possession of the whole story about the cottage and Mr Musgrave; and, good reader, I now impose upon myself the task of giving it to you; but, in place of relating it to you in the manner of John Christison, which was neither a very lucid nor a very elegant one, I purpose throwing it into the form of a regular tale; and shall therefore begin it as if no introductory matter of this kind had intervened. Premising, then, that the cottage spoken of in the course of the story I am about to record was the identical one on which I had stumbled, I proceed.

About seventy years ago, there lived, in one of the Border counties of England, a wealthy family of the name of Musgrave.

The possessions of this family—which was not only one of the wealthiest, but one of the oldest also, in the kingdom—were of great extent; and the magnificent mansion in which they resided, and the splendid style in which they lived, accorded with the princely revenue they possessed.

At the period of our story, Mr Musgrave, the owner of all this wealth, found himself in very advanced years, with only one child, a son, to inherit his vast possessions.

On this son every indulgence was lavished, which wealth could command or affection suggest, by his doating parents, but more particularly his mother, whose love for her darling child knew no bounds, and, unfortunately, was guided in its expressions by no considerations of prudence or propriety. He was gratified in every whim, and supplied with money in unlimited measure, long before he knew its value or how to

employ it. Young Musgrave was, in short, a spoiled child; and the natural consequences followed, as these pages will, by and by, shew. As he grew up, he became headstrong, wayward, and extravagant; in this last to such a degree, though he was yet but a mere youth, as to excite his father's most serious fears for his future destiny.

His fond mother, however, knew no such apprehensions, and continued to supply the thoughtless young man with money as fast as he could contrive to dissipate it; and, thus encouraged, he acquired habits of extravagance that increased with his years, and extended with their gratification.

On attaining his seventeenth year, young Musgrave, as was then the custom, proceeded to the continent to travel for two or three years, to improve his manners and complete his education.

On this occasion, the young heir to the vast possessions of the house of Musgrave, was fitted out in a manner at once becoming his prospects and betokening their extent. Splendid carriages, richly liveried servants, and every other appendage and convenience which could secure his own comfort, and command the respect of others, were provided for him.

Having made the tour of Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and other countries in that quarter of the world, young Musgrave finally arrived at Paris, where the splendour of his equipages, his immense wealth, and the profusion with which he dissipated it, procured for him great eclat in this emporium of fashion and folly. In all places of public resort, the rich young Englishman, when he appeared, was an object of marked interest and curiosity. His boundless riches were the general topic of conversation, and no less universal was the fame of his liberality. With this reputation, aided by some letters of introduction, young Musgrave found ready access to the best society in Paris. But the first, without the last, was quite sufficient to enable him to find equally ready admission to a very different class of persons. These were, professed gamblers and ruined spendthrifts. At the rouge-et-noir table he staked largely, and lost on a proportionable scale. Thousand went after thousand, until his father, alarmed at the amount and frequency of his drafts, intimated to him that he would no longer supply him unless he confined himself to a reasonable expenditure; and, at the same time, urged his immediate return home—a command which young Musgrave found it necessary to obey, in consequence of the restriction with which he was threatened. But his return to his father's house had no effect in eradicating, scarcely in checking, the extravagant habits he had acquired. Provided with means by his doating mother, and encouraged and led on by associates as dissipated and sensual as himself, but not so wealthy, he plunged into the most reckless courses, and indulged in every species of debauchery. While in the midst of this wild career, however, young Musgrave's mother died; and, for a time, her son—who, with all his faults, yet owned some good qualities, and amongst these, a sincere regard for his departed parent—withdrew himself from the worthless companions of his debaucheries, and gave himself up to an unfeigned sorrow for her loss. These feelings, however,

soon passed away. In a few weeks, his mother was forgotten, and the reckless career which her death had interrupted, was resumed with increased appetite and with redoubled energy. But, in a short time after the occurrence of the latter event, his father also was seized with a fatal illness. On finding his end approaching, the old man called his son to his bedside, and thus addressed him:—"My son," he said, "I am about to rejoin your beloved mother. I am dying. In a few hours, you will be without a father. I leave you, my son," he continued, after a short pause, "an ample fortune; but, I grieve to say it, I fear, from your past conduct, you will soon dissipate it, when there is no longer any one to control you or restrain your extravagance; and that you will one day be without a friend, without a house to shelter you, and without a shilling to procure you even the necessaries of life. All this I fear for you. Now, to prevent, if possible, this last deplorable consequence of your thoughtlessness, promise me, my son—and remember that the circumstances under which you give it, render it one of the most solemn that can be given between man and man—that, however straitened you may be at any time, however desperate your situation, you will retain the little cottage and the grounds around it, where your mother and I used to rest during our walks in the summer evenings. It is associated with many pleasing recollections to me, James, even in this the hour of my dissolution. Promise me, my son," said the dying old man, "that, although you should sell every other stone of building that belongs to me, and every other acre of my lands, you will not part with these. They may stand you in good stead, my son, when you have no other home to go to, and no other means to subsist upon."

Young Musgrave thought the request of his dying parent a sufficiently absurd one; but, of course, made no difficulty in complying with it.

On the death of the old man, which soon after took place, the heir of his vast possessions, now freed from all control, gave full scope to the wild extravagance of his disposition, and indulged in every excess which an uncontrolled appetite could suggest. His house was filled, from morning to night, and from night to morning, with gamblers, ruined spendthrifts, and crowds of needy, unprincipled dependents, who pandered to his vicious appetites, encouraged his follies, and drained him of his substance.

The great wealth to which young Musgrave had succeeded, enabled him to hold on his desperate career for a considerable time; but no fortune, however large, could long endure the wild profusion with which he dissipated his; and, accordingly, in a very few years, he found himself occasionally at some loss for money. This was a new thing to him, and the feeling was a strange one; but it did not continue long so, for these occasions, in course of time, came more and more frequently, and, with each recurrence, became more and more difficult, but without having the slightest effect towards checking the extravagance of the thrifless heir, who, instead of benefiting by the lessons which these difficulties should have taught him, only became the more reckless and profuse after his wants were supplied.

A little time longer, and the improvident young man found all his resources entirely exhausted, and that no means were left to him of raising money but the selling of his estates. In this strait, he bethought him, for the first time, of seeking counsel from his father's steward, Mr Golding, a man of morose and uncourteous manners, penurious habits, and blunt speech. With his dying breath, young Musgrave's father had entreated him to solicit and walk by the advice of this man; but, until now, the former had never dreamt of seeking any such aid. He had never liked Golding, and he had no reason to believe that he had ever been any great favourite of Golding's—as the latter had

taken every opportunity of reprehending, and that in no very measured, and, as young Musgrave thought, no very becoming terms, his extravagance; and had been very officious, since his father's death, in intermeddling with his pursuits, and impertinently interfering with his enjoyments.

Young Musgrave, in short, conceived him to be a meddling, mean, interested, selfish man, who would neither enjoy the world himself, nor allow others to do it, if he could prevent it. He, moreover, had no very high opinion of his honesty. The steward was reputed wealthy, and there were not wanting persons to insinuate that his wealth had been acquired by unfair means—that he had, in truth, enriched himself at the expense of his employer.

These rumours young Musgrave readily believed; for, although no instance of Golding's dishonesty had ever come under his own observation—nor, indeed, had any distinct or specific charge ever been brought against him by others—yet, from all he had heard, he thought him capable of any baseness which had for its object the acquisition of money, and was, therefore, firmly of opinion that his father's confidence in him had been misplaced.

Golding, however, was wealthy; and this circumstance alone was enough to induce young Musgrave, in his present straits, to overlook his antipathy to him, and to seek his assistance and advice.

He, accordingly, waited on the surly steward—for circumstances had now reversed their relative positions—laid his difficulties before him, and concluded by saying that he wanted an immediate supply of money, but that he did not very well know how it was to be obtained.

"Don't you?" said Golding, gruffly, and at the same moment most uncourteously going on to finish a letter which he was engaged in writing when Mr Musgrave entered. "Why, Sir, that's very easily done. Sell your estate, to be sure. There, Mr Musgrave, is a fine, short, easy way for you. It will keep you going primely for a long while."

Mr Musgrave felt deeply insulted, at once by the levity of this speech and the marked incivility of Golding's manner, and it was with much difficulty he was able to restrain himself from expressing his resentment. This, however he did, feeling that it was no time to quarrel outright with Golding, as he had some hopes of obtaining an advance of money from him. To Golding's suggestion, therefore about selling his estate, he replied, as composedly as he could—

"Indeed, Mr Golding, I suppose I must, after all—at least a part of it. Do you know where I'd find a purchaser?"

"Why, if you give me a fair bargain, Mr Musgrave," said Golding, still without condescending to raise his head from the paper on which he was engaged, "I don't care if I myself become the person you want."

"No objection at all," said Mr Musgrave, glad to have found a purchaser so readily. But there was mortification in Mr Musgrave's look when he said this; for, although he did not intend asking any pecuniary assistance from Golding, he yet expected that it would have been offered him.

In a few days, the necessary deeds were made out, and a large portion of the estate of the ancient family of the Musgraves became the property of Golding, at considerably less than a fourth of its real value; for the spendthrift's wants were pressing, and the convenience great of finding in his father's steward a purchaser—while that purchaser himself was pitiless, and without conscience.

Mr Musgrave was perfectly aware of the advantage which had been taken of his necessities by Golding, and it confirmed him in the bad opinion which he had always entertained of him; but, as the exposure of publicly seeking a purchaser was avoided by treating with him, he continued to avail himself of the convenience it afforded, and sold him portion after portion of his lands, until he had disposed of

his last acre ; a consummation which his unabated career of dissipation, and of every species of extravagance, very soon accomplished.

In Golding, Mr Musgrave had never discovered, throughout all their transactions, the slightest appearance of sympathy or compassion. On the contrary, he had always treated him with a degree of rudeness approaching to contempt, and had apparently made a point of seizing every opportunity of making him feel the humiliations to which his extravagances had reduced him. He talked much, in his presence, of his new possessions, of the changes and improvements on them which he contemplated, and, in short, left nothing unsaid, at their interviews, which could impress on the thoughtless, unhappy young man, a sense of his altered condition, and of his own superiority.

If, therefore, he met with little show of commiseration from this man—for the reality seemed out of the question—while he had yet something to bestow, it will readily be believed that he met with still less when he had nothing. During his latter visits, he was made to wait Mr Golding's leisure ; and, after doing so for perhaps an hour or two, was often dismissed with a careless intimation from Golding himself that he really had not time to attend to him or his business, but that he might call on him some other day when he should be more at leisure. This treatment made a deep impression on the unfortunate young man, placing, as it did, in a very striking point of view, the consequences of his misconduct ; yet so strongly had evil habits attached themselves to their victim, that it did not induce him to abandon his ruinous courses. He still continued, so far as his fast decaying means would allow, to pursue the same career of dissipation which had first led to his destruction ; but his debaucheries gradually assumed a lower and a lower character, until the heir of the house of Musgrave—the rich, the gay, the fashionable—finally sunk into the needy and grovelling debauchee—his face care-worn, pale, and emaciated, and even his apparel shabby and threadbare.

In this deplorable condition, without a friend—for of all those who crowded around him when he had wealth at his command, not one remained either to console, assist, or advise him—without a home—for the noble mansion of his fathers, with all its costly furniture, was now the property of Golding—and without a shilling, or the means of raising one—young Musgrave, in the desperation which overwhelmed him, applied to his father's steward for the loan of a guinea, to procure the necessaries of life. He made the application in person, and was kept waiting in the lobby of the unfeeling upstart's house until the answer to his humiliating request should be brought to him. Here, then, in the passage of his father's servant's house, an humble suppliant for a paltry sum of money—a borrower, a beggar—sat he who had been the heir and proprietor of one of the finest estates in England—the master of thousands ; and so far reduced, that the menials of Golding, who passed and repassed him—there being a large dinner party in the house at the time—did not think it insulting him to address him in the most familiar language, and even to offer him their commiseration. The unfortunate gentleman felt it all keenly ; and bitterly, bitterly did he at that moment repent of the conduct which had reduced him to so humiliating a condition. But he bore it, although not without dignity, yet meekly ; for adversity had broken his spirit, and the wisdom which it had taught him prevented him indulging in impotent efforts to command that respect which had been yielded to his wealth, or in unbecoming expressions of impatience or irritation. He felt that he deserved his fate, and he determined to bear it with resignation. Mr Musgrave was now, in short, an altered man. Mistortuné, and the experience it had brought along with it, had laid the spirit of whatever was evil in his nature, and called into active existence the better qualities which his Creator had

bestowed on him, and these were neither few nor insignificant. There had been much to blame in the wealthy heir of the house of Musgrave, but there was still more to praise and admire in the forsaken and destitute outcast.

After waiting in the humiliating situation described for nearly an hour, an answer was brought to his request, from Mr Golding, by a servant. It was a refusal ! and a refusal conveyed in the plainest and most unqualified terms, and unaccompanied by the slightest attempt at apology. The bearer of the ungracious message, who chanced to be a person who had been long in the service of Mr Musgrave's father, and who felt, in consequence, sincerely interested in the distresses of his son, seeing the withering effect it had upon the unhappy applicant, ventured to suggest to him, in the most delicate language he was master of, that he had still the cottage at the foot of the wood—so he described its locality—to go to ; for he knew of this provision of old Musgrave's, and added that the lands around it, which were also still his, though of small extent, might, if well managed, afford him a means of decent support.

"You are right, James," said Mr Musgrave, after he had recovered from the shock which Golding's refusal of the paltry sum he had asked had inflicted ; "you are right ; I thank you. I never thought of it. Go back to Golding, James," he added, in a bolder tone, "and demand the key from him in my name. It was put into his hands by my father when on his deathbed, and has been in his possession ever since." The man obeyed, and, taking Mr Golding aside, delivered the message with which he was charged by Mr Musgrave.

On hearing it, Mr Golding appeared to be struck with some sudden perplexity. He became confused and agitated ; but, after a few minutes, this gave way to an expression of joy and triumph ; and he hurriedly and eagerly inquired if Mr Musgrave meant to take possession of the cottage that night. This question the man could not answer ; and he was, therefore, despatched to Mr Musgrave to make the inquiry.

"Certainly, this night, this instant," replied Mr Musgrave, firmly, when the question was put to him.

"Very well, very well," said Mr Golding, on this intimation being conveyed to him. "Shew Mr Musgrave into the parlour, and say that I will bring the key to him myself."

Mr Golding, now addressing himself to his party, begged that they would excuse his absence for a short while, as he was unexpectedly called away on some pressing and important business. Having said this, he took his hat and hurriedly left the house. In about half an hour he returned, and entering the apartment in which Mr Musgrave was waiting him—"Here is the key of the cottage, Mr Musgrave," he said, presenting it to him, but without making any apology for detaining him. "I wished to deliver it into your own hands myself. The house is not a bad one, as you will find ; but," he added, sneeringly, "there are neither stables nor dog-kennels attached to it." And with this, he turned round on his heel, and, without saying another word, left the room, to rejoin his party.

Maddened by the humiliating treatment he had just experienced, and by the unfeeling sarcasms of Golding, which all his philosophy could not enable him to bear with patience, Mr Musgrave rushed out of the house, and, scarcely knowing what he did, or whether he was going, hurried towards the only place of refuge that was now left to him out of all his large possessions. He entered the little garden in front of the cottage ; and here we may stop to notice what poor Musgrave's excited and agitated state of mind did not permit him to observe, that the grounds around the cottage, as well as everything within it, were in excellent order, having been carefully attended to by the keeper, Golding. Entering the cottage, Mr Musgrave soon found

himself in a neatly furnished, though small apartment, where, overcome by the agitation of his feelings, he flung himself down on a sofa, and gave way to the most gloomy reflections. A moment afterwards, his eye was caught by a very singular and appalling exhibition, which he had not at first observed.

From the centre of the roof of the apartment, there depended a rope terminating in a running noose, and underneath it a stool—in short, an apparatus of death, ready for the purposes of the suicide. Musgrave glared wildly on the terrible temptation for a moment. In his present frame of mind, it was irresistible; and, in the next instant, without waiting to conjecture how so extraordinary a preparation had come there, or by whom it had been provided, he was on the stool, and the fatal noose around his throat. Resolute in his dreadful purpose, the desperate man kicked the support from beneath him, and, of course, expected to find himself instantly suspended by the neck. This, however, was not the result. The rope was fastened to an iron hook, which again was secured to a square piece of board inserted in the roof. This gave way with the unfortunate man's weight, and he fell to the ground. For a moment, he was stunned by the fall; but it was only for a moment. He sprang to his feet, with a determination still to carry his fatal purpose into effect; but, at this instant, his attention was attracted by a paper which lay on the floor beside him. It had fallen with the detached board. He picked it up, and, to his amazement, found it addressed to himself. He opened it, and read:—"My dear son, I foresaw that this would happen to you—I foresaw that your misconduct would drive you, one day, to the desperate act which you have just now attempted. Perhaps, however, it is not yet too late to save you. This communication—which you may look upon as a voice from the grave—may induce you to reform your conduct, and to endeavour to regain your character. Remove the sun-dial in the garden, and, beneath the pedestal, you will find an iron box filled with gold. Make a good use of it, my son, and you may yet be all that your father could desire. Farewell!"

It would not be easy to say what were Musgrave's sensations on perusing this singular paper; but the mingled feelings of surprise, incredulity, and perplexity, which the circumstance altogether occasioned, had the effect, at any rate, of totally altering the current of his thoughts, and of recalling him to himself. Without well knowing by what impulse he acted, he obeyed the directions given in the mysterious letter, and, to his farther astonishment, found the box of gold as described. Here, at least, there was no deception, no imposition. He would not, indeed, allow himself to believe that the letter was really his father's writing, although it certainly bore a strong resemblance to his manner—much less could he think that his father could have foreseen that all should have happened precisely as it did; and that he could, by anticipation, have calculated with such nicety the adjustment of circumstances. Still the whole was within the reach of probability, however barely; and it was possible that designs formed on plausible conjecture and likely occurrences, might thus have been perfected by a chance combination of according events. Mr Musgrave, in short, did not know what to think of the extraordinary circumstance; but of this he felt assured, that it was the act of a friend, whoever that friend might be.

One result, however, attended the occurrences of this night. The thoughtless heir became a new and a totally different man. A new light suddenly broke in upon him, and shewed him, in their most hideous and revolting forms, the vices and follies of his past life; and in that hour he formed resolutions, which, in time, enabled him to regain the respect and regard of all around him.

Mr Musgrave's first step, after his new and most unexpected acquisition of wealth, was to wait on Golding, to see

whether or not he could prevail upon him to restore to him the lands he had sold him, at a reasonable advance of price. From his experience, however, of Golding's selfishness and utter want of feeling, he had little hopes of succeeding; and he was not altogether mistaken. Golding, who received Mr Musgrave, on this occasion, with his usual haughty, insolent, and offensive manner, did not, indeed, absolutely refuse to resell Mr Musgrave his lands; but he insisted on a large premium on the transaction. It was paid him; and the thoughtless heir, now no longer so, found himself once more in possession of his birthright.

From this period, Mr Musgrave saw nothing more of Golding for twelve months. They had no communication whatever with each other; and, from mutual dislike, carefully avoided every opportunity that might, by the most remote probability, present any likelihood of bringing them in contact. Thus, though near neighbours, they had not even seen one another more than three or four times during the period above mentioned, and, on these occasions, they were a long way distant from each other.

Mr Musgrave, who had cordially disliked Golding when the latter had it not in his power to injure him, and when he was a great deal more than independent of him, now looked upon and thought of him with all the loathing and detestation which his insolent and unfeeling conduct towards him, when he was a houseless and a penniless man, was so well calculated to excite—and in this feeling towards Golding, Mr Musgrave stood not alone; for the former had incurred a very general odium throughout the country, on account of his transactions with Musgrave, which, in despite of the caution and secrecy observed by both parties regarding them, found their way to the public ear, and were considered highly discreditable to Golding, and, in the last degree, base and infamous.

As to the feelings, again, which Golding entertained towards Musgrave, no one knew precisely what they were; for he never spoke a word to any one on the subject, and always studiously avoided taking any part in any conversation that had the slightest reference either to Mr Musgrave himself or his affairs. But, as people could judge of his sentiments regarding that gentleman only by his conduct towards him, by what they saw and knew, they inferred that his feelings were far from being friendly. One thing they observed, that Golding always carefully avoided meeting with Mr Musgrave; for he had been frequently seen stealing out of his way, when the latter happened to be coming in a direction which would otherwise have brought them in contact; and this conduct was, of course, and very properly, ascribed to the well-known principle in human nature, which makes us at once hate and fear those we have injured. Mr Musgrave, too, it is true, as has been stated, always desired to avoid Golding; but he would not, as he did, condescend to take to flight for this purpose; he would avoid him, if he could, to save his own feelings, but by no means fly from him. He had no reason.

Taking this state of matters, then, between the parties into account, it will no less surprise the reader to learn, than the fact itself did Mr Musgrave to experience, that Mr Golding appeared one morning, at the end of a year after his last transaction with Mr Musgrave, at the door of that gentleman, desiring to see him.

"Mr Golding, Sir," said the servant, who carried up the request to Mr Musgrave, "is at the door, and wishes to speak with you."

"Mr Golding!" exclaimed Mr Musgrave, agitated and surprised at the announcement. "Mr Golding at my door, and desirous of seeing me? Very extraordinary, very surprising—and he of all men! What can the fellow want with me?" This he said, pacing up and down the room in great agitation. Then, suddenly turning to the servant who waited his commands, and whom he had for a moment

forgotten in the confusion of his feelings—"Oh, surely, surely," he said, "shew Mr Golding up;" and, in the interval, he endeavoured to compose himself, and to meet the man on earth whom he most hated and despised, with becoming dignity.

Mr Golding entered the room—there was a smile upon his face—he bowed graciously to Mr Musgrave, and "hoped he saw Mr Musgrave well."

Mr Musgrave looked sternly at his visiter, and, without condescending to reply to his courtesy, fiercely asked him what was his business with him.

Nothing daunted by this reception, Mr Golding continued to smile and to look most provokingly civil and courteous—

"My business, Sir?" he said, still smiling; "it will require a little time to explain; and, with your leave, therefore, Mr Musgrave," he said, "I will take a chair." And he immediately seated himself.

Mr Musgrave, though astounded at the familiarity, cool impudence, and consummate effrontery of his visiter, took no notice either of what he said or did, but, with his eyes indignantly fixed on him, waited in stern and sullen silence for his disclosures.

"In the first place, Mr Musgrave," now went on Mr Golding, heedless of the displeasure which he saw in his countenance—"In the first place, Sir, here," he said, putting his hand into a side pocket, and pulling out a large bag of money, and placing it on the table before him—"here is some money I owe you, or rather, some money of yours which I have had in keeping, and which I now restore to you."

"Money of mine, Sir!" exclaimed Mr Musgrave, in amazement. "What do you mean? You never had any money of mine in your keeping, that I am aware of."

"But I had, though, Mr Musgrave," replied Golding, with the provoking smile still upon his countenance; "and there it is"—pointing to the bag.

"Pray, Sir," said Mr Musgrave, angrily, "be good enough to have done with this mystification, and tell me at once what is the meaning of this."

"Why, Sir, to explain fully what this means," replied Golding, with the most perfect calmness and self-possession, "I must begin at the beginning, and explain some other things besides." After a short pause, he then went on:—

"No doubt, Mr Musgrave, you think you see before you, you think you see in me, one whom you have good reason to hate and detest—one who has deeply injured and deeply insulted you?"

"Most assuredly I do," said Mr Musgrave, slowly and emphatically; "and I am glad you have afforded me an opportunity of telling you so."

"Exactly," rejoined Golding; "but I have thought the time now come for undeceiving you, Mr Musgrave; and I hope that when I leave this room, I shall leave you with very different impressions regarding me and my conduct towards you, than those you have hitherto entertained."

"That, Sir, I believe to be impossible," rejoined Mr Musgrave, fiercely; and, at the same time starting to his feet, he began to pace the room hurriedly, as if irritated by the very idea of Golding's threatened attempt to defend his conduct towards him.

"Be patient, Mr Musgrave," said Golding, calmly, "and hear me out, at any rate, if you please."

"Go on, Sir," shouted out Musgrave.

"I will, Sir," replied Golding. "The year's probation, Mr Musgrave—excuse my freedom—which you have undergone with such credit to yourself, and, believe me, with such sincere satisfaction to me, assures me that I may now, with perfect safety, entrust you with a certain curious secret connected with your present condition. Know then, Mr Musgrave, that I was, the contriver of that scene in the

cottage which has been followed by such happy results. It was I that wrote the letter, and it was I that placed the box of money where you found it."

"You!" exclaimed Mr Musgrave, interrupting him. "You!" he repeated in amazement. "It cannot be. I always believed that matter to be the device, the contrivance of a friend; but certainly, Mr Golding, I should never have dreamt of your being the man. You are, indeed, the last person on earth whom I should have suspected."

"Ay, because there was gold in the case, I suppose," said Golding, laughing. "You could have believed it possible that I might have done all the rest; but that I should have put you in possession of a box of gold, you would have thought to be a thing wholly incredible."

"It is even so," replied Mr Musgrave. "The circumstance of my finding the gold, put you beyond the reach of all suspicion, in my mind, of having had anything to do with the affair of which we are speaking."

"What I have said is true, nevertheless," continued Golding. "But observe. Sir the money was your own, not mine; it was part of a sum put secretly into my hands by your late worthy father, shortly before his death, for your behoof, and to be so applied by me, in such way, in such manner, and at such time as I thought proper."

"With regard again, Mr Musgrave, to the hard bargain which I drove with you in the purchase of your estate—a purchase which was, of course, made to prevent the property falling into other hands—you will allow, I dare say, when you are informed that that purchase also was made with your own money, that your interest was not sacrificed by beating you down on these occasions. The less I gave you, the less you would have to spend, and the more would remain to you when you should become more disposed than you then were to take care of it."

"Your father foresaw, Mr Musgrave, that you would one day sell your estate, and he provided for this occurrence, by placing a sum in my hands sufficient to enable me to become the purchaser for your interest, although without your knowledge, when such an event should take place."

"Now, Sir, as to my treatment of you personally," continued Mr Golding—"which," he added, laughing, "I am afraid you will never forgive—however harsh it may have appeared to you, it was well meant. I studiously adapted it to the purpose of operating on your feelings, that it might shew you—which I conceived it was well calculated to do—the miseries of a state of dependence, and have the effect of urging you to a reformation."

Mr Golding then added, that the money he now restored, was the balance of that left in his hands by Mr Musgrave's father, including the last purchase money, premium and all, which Mr Musgrave had paid him for the estate.

"My motive," he subjoined, laughing, "to tell you a truth, Mr Musgrave, for demanding so large a price from you, and clapping on so smart a premium on your purchase, was to lessen your resources as much as possible, in case my plans should have failed in producing the effect desired, and you should have again betaken yourself to your former courses."

When Mr Golding had done, Mr Musgrave, without saying a word—indeed he could not for emotion—took the former by the hand, while a tear glistened in his eye, and endeavoured to look those feelings which he could not express. After recovering himself a little, however, he succeeded in conveying to Mr Golding an impression of the deep sense he entertained of the friendly part he had acted towards him; and concluded by assuring him that he should never again have reason to complain or be dissatisfied with any part of his conduct.

By this promise, Mr Musgrave faithfully abided; and the thrifless, but long lived one of the most exemplary and respected men in that part of the country where he resided.

THE FOUNDLING;

62.

THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE GOWER.

ONE of the oldest of the Nova Scotia knights belonging to Scotland, was Sir Marmaduke Maitland of Castle Gower, situated in one of the southern counties of the kingdom. Sir Marmaduke held his property of Castle Gower under a strict entail to heirs male, whom failing, to heirs female, under the condition of bearing the arms and name of the Castle Gower family; and he was married to Catherine Maxwell, a near relative of the family of Herries, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright—a person of no very great beauty, but sprightly, and of good manners. She had been brought up in France, and was deeply tinged with French feelings. She had French cooks and French milliners about her in abundance; and a French lackey was considered by her as indispensable as meat and drink. She was represented as being a proud, imperious woman, with a bad temper; which was rendered worse, by her continued fretting, in consequence of not having any children to her husband; whereby, the property would go away to a son of her husband's brother. Sir Marmaduke and his lady had a town-house in Edinburgh, in which they lived for the greater part of the year. This house was situated so as to look to the North Back of the Canongate. There was an entry to it from the Canongate; but the principal gate was from the north side. There was a garden attached to the house; and the stables and coach-houses were situated at the foot of the garden. All these premises are now removed; but Sir Marmaduke Maitland's house—or, as it was styled, the Duke's house—at the period of this story, about 200 years back, was a very showy house, and very well known to the inhabitants of Edinburgh.

At the foot of Leith Wynd, there lived, about the same time, a poor widow woman, called Widow Willison, who had a son and a daughter. She was the widow of a William Willison, who earned a livelihood by the humble means of serving the inhabitants of Edinburgh with water, which he conveyed to their doors by the means of an ass: he was, in consequence, called Water Willie. He was a good, honest creature; much liked by his customers, from whom he never wanted a good diet; and had no fault, but that of disliking the element in which he dealt. He said he liked very well to drive water to the great folks, and he wished them "meikle guid o't; but, for his ain pairt, he preferred whisky, which, he thocht, was o' a warmer and mair congenial nature, and better suited to the inside o' a rational animal, like man."

It was to William Willison's dislike to water that people attributed his death. It would have been more logical—but scandal is a bad logician—to have attributed his death to the water; for, though it will not conceal that Willie was drunk when he died, it was as notorious that it was not because he was drunk that he died—but he died because his water cart went over him when he was drunk. However that may be, and there is no use in wasting much reasoning on the point, William left, at his death, a widow and two children, with nothing to support them.

Widow Willison was a good, religious woman, of the old school, believing in the transcendent influence of mere faith, as carrying along with it all the minor points of justification by works, election, and others, in the same way that a river takes with it the drops of rain that fall from the heavens, and carries all down to the ocean. She was an excellent example of the effects of a pure religion—kind and generous in her sentiments; and, though left with two children, and no food to satisfy their hunger, patient and hopeful—placing implicit trust and confidence in the Author of all good, and viewing murmuring as a sin against His providence.

George Willison, her son, was an extraordinary individual apparently destined to be more notorious than his father, in so much as his character was composed of that mixture of simplicity, bordering on silliness and shrewd sagacity in the ordinary affairs of life, which is often observed in people of Scotland. The character, though common, is nearly inexplicable to the analyst; for the individual seems conscious of the weaker part of his character, but he seems to love it, and often makes it subservient to the stronger elements of his mind, by using it at once as a cloak and a foil to them. George, like the other individuals of his peculiar species, follows no trade. He sometimes acted as a cadie, a letter-carrier, a messenger, a porter, a water-carrier—in any capacity, in short, in which he could, with no continuous labour, earn a little money. To work at any given thing for longer time than a day, was a task which he generally condemned, as being wearisome and monotonous, and more suited to the inferior animals than to man. His clothes were, like his avocations, many-coloured, and suited the silly half of his character, without altogether depriving him of the rights of a citizen, and making him the property and sport of school-boys. His earnings were, like his employments, chancy and various, ranging between a shilling to five shillings a-week, including gratuities, which his conceit prompted him to call "helps," with a view to avoid the imputation of living upon alms—a name, in the Scotch language, "awmous," which did not sound agreeably in the ears of Geordie Willison.

His sister was the very reverse of George—a black-eyed beauty of great intelligence, who earned a little money, to support the family, by means of her needle. She was a great comfort to her mother, seldom going out. She felt much annoyed by the strange character of her brother, and often endeavoured to improve him, with a view to his following some trade. He was now twenty years of age, and if he did not "tak' himself up" now, she said, "he would be a vagrant a' his days." Geordie, on the other hand, quietly heard his sister, but he never saw—at least, he pretended not to see (which was the same thing)—the force of her argument. The weak half of his character was always presented to an attack of logic; and the adroitness with which he met his opponent by this soft buckler—which, like a feather-bed presented to a cannon bullet, swallowed the force and the noise at the same time—was worthy of Aristotle, or Thomas Scotus, or any other logical warrior.

"Whar hae ye been the day, Geordie?" said his mother to him one day.

"I hae been convoying Sir Marmaduke Maitland a wee bit on his way to France," said Geordie. "He asked me to bear him company and carry his luggage to Leith, and I couldna refuse sic a favour to the braw knight."

"An' what got ye frae him?" said his mother; "for I hae naething i' the house for supper."

"Twa or three placks," said Geordie, throwing down some coppers on the table.

"This is the 21st day o' April—your birthday, Geordie," said the mother; "an' as it has aye been our practice to hae something by common on that occasion, I'll gang down to Widow Johnston's an' get a pint o' the best to drink yer health wi'." And Widow Willison did as she said.

"Is Lady Maitland no awa wi' Sir Marmaduke, Geordie?" resumed his mother, when they were taking their meagre supper.

"Na! na!" said Geordie; "they dinna like ilk ither sae weel; an' I dinna wonder at Sir Marmaduke no likin' her for I dinna like her mysel'."

"For what reason, Geordie?" asked his mother.

"Because she doesna like me," answered the casuist.

On the 19th day of February, after the conversation now detailed, George Willison was wandering over the grounds of Warriston, on the north side of Edinburgh. He had been with a letter to the Laird of Warriston, and, in con-

ing back, he, as was not uncommon with him, was musing, in a half dreaming, listless kind of state, as he sauntered through the planted grounds in the neighbourhood. His attention was in an instant arrested by the sounds of voices, and he stood, or rather sat down, behind a hedge and listened. The speakers were very near to him; for it was so very dark that they could not observe him.

"I will stand at a little distance, Louise," said a voice, "and thou canst do the thing thyself. I could despatch thine, but I cannot do that good work to myself; for the mother rises in me, and unnerves me quite. Besides, thou didst promise to do me this service for the ten gold pieces I gave thee, and the many more I will yet give thee."

"*Oui! oui!* my lady; but de infant is so *fort*, so *trong*, dat it will be difficult for me to trottle her. Death, *la mort*, does not come ever when required; but I will do my endeavour to trangle de leetle jade, vit as much activity as I can. Ha! ha! de leetle baggage tink she is already *perdir*—she *tombles* so—be quiet, you *petit* leetle deevil. It will be de best vay, I tink, to do it on de ground. Hark! is dere not some person near?—my heart goes *en palpitant*."

"It is nobody, thou fool," answered the lady; "it is only a rustling produced by a breath of wind among the trees."

"Very vell, very vell, my Lady Maitland; dat is right. Now for de work."

"Stop until I am at a little distance; and, when thou hearest me cry 'Now,' finish the thing cleverly."

The rustling of the lady's gown betokened that she had done as she said. The rustling ceased; and the word "Now," came from the mouth of the mother.

All was silent for a minute; a quick breath, indicating the application of a strong effort, was now heard, mixed with the sound of a convulsed suspiration, something like that of a child labouring under whooping-cough, though weaker. The rustling of clothes indicated a struggle of some violence; and several ejaculations escaped at intervals:—" *Mon dieu!* dis is de *triste* vork; how *trong* de leetle she velp is!—now, now—not yet—how *trange!*—*diable!* she still breaths!"

"Hast thou finished, Louise?" asked the lady, impatiently.

"Not yet, my lady," said Louise; "give me your hair necklace; de leetle she velp vont die vitout *tronger* force dan my veak hands can apply."

"I cannot go to thee," said the lady; "thou must come to me. Lay the babe on the ground, and come for the necklace."

Louise did as she was desired.

The sounds of a struggle again commenced, mixed with Louise's ejaculations:—"Now, now—dis vill do for you—*une fois*—voince, twice, trice round—dat vill do—quite sufficient to kill de giant, or Sir Marmaduke himself. Now, my lady, I tink de ting is pretty vell done; I will trow her into de hedge—dere—now, let us go."

The two ladies went away. Geordie rushed forward to the place where they had thrown the child. It was still convulsed. He loosened the necklace, which had been left by mistake, and blew strongly into the child's mouth. He heard it sigh, and in a little time breathe; and, carrying it with the greatest care, he took it home with him to his mother's house.

"Whar hae ye been a' day, man, and what is this ye hae in your arms?" said Widow Willison to Geordie, when he went in.

"It's a wee bit birdie I fand in a nest among the hedges o' Warriston," said Geordie. "Its mither didna seem to care about it, and I hae brought it hame wi' me. Gie't a wee pickle crowdie, purr thing."

Astonished, and partly displeas'd, Widow Willison took the child out of her son's arms, and seeing its face swollen and blue, and marks of strangulation on its neck, her maternal sympathies arose, and she applied all the articles of a mother's pharmacopœia with a view to restore it

"But whar got ye the bairn, man?" she again inquired. "Gie us name o' yer nonsense about birds and hedges. Tell us the story sae as plain folk can understand it."

"I hae already tauld ye," said Geordie, dryly and slowly; "and it's no my intention at present to tell ye ony mair about it. Ye didna ask whar I cam frae when ye got me first."

"An' wha's to bring up the bairn?" asked the mother, who knew it was in vain to put the same question twice to Geordie.

"Ye didna ask that question at my faither when I cam hame," replied the stoic, with one of his peculiar looks; "but, if ye had, maybe ye wadna hae got sae kind an answer as I'll gie ye: Geordie Willison will pay for bringing up the bairn; and I'll no answer ony mair o' yer questions."

Geordie kept his word with his mother. He would tell neither her nor his sister anything about the child. They knew his temper and disposition, and gradually resigned an impertunity which had the effect of making him more obstinate. At night, when the child's clothes were taken off, with a view to putting it to bed, Geordie got hold of them and carried them off unknown to his mother. He locked them up in his chest, and, in the morning, when his mother asked him if he had seen them, he said he knew nothing about them. His mother, annoyed by this conduct on the part of her son, threatened to throw the child upon the parish as a foundling; and yet, when she reflected on the extreme sagacity which was mixed up with her son's peculiarities, and read in his looks (which she well understood) a more than ordinary confidence of power to do what he had said as to bringing up the child, she hesitated in her purpose, and at last resolved to go in with the humour and inclinations of her son, and do the duty of a mother to the babe.

"It's a braw day this, my Leddy Maitland," said Geordie, bowing to the very ground, and holding in his hand a clean sheet of paper, which he had folded up like a letter, as a passport to her ladyship's presence.

Lady Maitland, who was sitting at her work-table, stared at the person thus saluting her, and seeing it was Geordie Willison, who had offended her at the time of his carrying down Sir Marmaduke's luggage, by asking jocularly if "ony o' the bairns were gaun wi' their faither," she asked him sternly what he wanted, and, thinking he had the letter in his hand to deliver to her, snatched it in a petted manner and opened it. On finding it a clean sheet of paper, with her address on the back of it, she got into a great rage, and ran to the bell to call up a lackey to kick Geordie down stairs.

"Canny, my braw leddy—canny," said Geordie, seizing her hand; "ye are hasty—maybe no quite recovered yet—the wet dews o' Warriston are no for the tender health o' the bonny Leddy Maitland; for even Geordie Willison, wha can ban a' bield i' the cauldest nicht o' winter, felt them chill and gruesome as he passed through them yestreen."

On hearing this speech, Lady Maitland changed, in an instant, from a state of violent passion to the condition and appearance of a marble statue.

Eyeing her with one of his peculiar looks, as much as to say, "I know all," Geordie proceeded.

"I dinna want to put yer ledyship to ony trouble by this veesit; but, being in want o' some siller in thir hard times, I thocht I would tak the liberty o' ca'in' upon yer ledyship, as weel for the sake o' being better acquainted wi' a ledy o' yer station and presence, as for the sake o' gettin' the little I require on my first introduction to high life."

"How mucn money dost thou require?" asked the lady, with a tremulous voice.

"Twunty pund, my ledy, twunty pund at the present time," answered Geordie, with the same knowing look; "ye ken the folk haud me for a natural, and ower fu' a cup is no

easy carried, even by the wise. Sae, I wadna like to trust mysel' wi' mair than twuntyn pund at a time."

Lady Maitland, without saying a word, went, with trembling steps, and a hurried and confused manner, to her bureau: she took out her keys—tried one, then another, and, with some difficulty, at last got it opened. She counted out twenty pounds, and handed it over to Geordie, who counted it again with all the precision of a modern banker.

"Thank ye, my leddy," said Geordie; "an' whan I need mair, I'll just tak the liberty o' makin yer leddyship my banker. Guid day, my leddy." And with a low bow, reaching nearly to the ground, he departed.

The result of this interview satisfied Geordie that what he had suspected was true. Sir Marmaduke had not yet returned, and his lady, having been unfaithful to him, and given birth to a child, had resolved upon putting it out of the way, in the manner already detailed. He had no doubt that the lady thought the child was dead; and he did not wish in the meantime, to disturb that notion; for, although he knew that the circumstance of the child being alive would give him greater power over her, in the event of her becoming refractory, he was apprehensive that she would not have allowed the child to remain in his keeping; and might, in all likelihood, resort to some desperate scheme to destroy it.

On returning home, Geordie drew his seat into the fire, and sat silent. His mother, who was sitting opposite to him, asked him, if he had earned any money that day, wherewith he could buy some clothes for the child he had undertaken to bring up. With becoming gravity, and without appearing to feel that any remarkable change had taken place upon his finances, Geordie slowly put his hand into his pocket, drew out the twenty pounds, and gave his mother one for interim expenditure. As he returned the money into his pocket, he said, with an air of the most supreme nonchalance, "If ye want ony mair, ye can let me ken."

The mother and daughter looked at each other with surprise and astonishment, mixed with some pleasure, and, perhaps, some apprehension. Neither of them put any question as to where the money had been got; for Geordie's look had already informed them that any such question would not be answered.

No great change seemed to have been produced in Geordie Willison's manner of living, in consequence of his having become comparatively rich. He lounged about the streets, joking with his acquaintances—went his messages—sometimes appeared with a crowd of boys after him—dressed in the same style—and, altogether, was just the same kind of person he used to be.

Precisely on the same day next year he went to Lady Maitland's. In the passage, he was met by the housekeeper, Louise Grecourt, who asked him what he wanted. He looked at her intently, and recognised in this person's voice the same tones which had arrested his ears so forcibly on the night of the attempted murder of the child. To make himself more certain of this, Geordie led her into conversation.

"I want my Leddy Maitland," answered Geordie—"are ye her leddyship?"

"No," answered the housekeeper, with a kick of her head, which Geordie took as a sign that his bait had been swallowed; "I am not Lady Maitland—I am in de charge of her ladyship's house. Vat you vant vit her ladyship? Can Louise Grecourt not satisfy a fellow like you?"

"No exactly at present," answered Geordie; "tell her leddyship that Geordie Willison wants to speak to her."

Louise started when he mentioned his name, certifying Geordie that she was in the secret of his knowledge. Her manner changed. She became all condescension; and, leading him up stairs, opened a door, and shewed him into a room where Lady Maitland was sitting.

"I houp yer leddyship," began Geordie, with a low bow, "has been quite weel sin' I had the honour o' yer acquaintanceship, whilk is now a year, come twa o'clock o' this day. Ye might maybe be thinking we were gaun to fa out o' acquaintanceship; but I'm no ane o' yer conceited creatures wha despise auld friends, and rin after new anes, merely because they may think them brawer—sae ye may keep yer mind easy on that score; and I wad farther tak the liberty to assure yer leddyship that, if ye hae ony siller by ye at present, I winna hesitate to gie ye a proof o' the continuance o' my freendship, by offerin' to tak frae ye as meikle as I may need."

"How much is that?" asked Lady Maitland.

"Twuntyn pund, my leddy, twuntyn pund," answered Geordie.

The money was handed to him by the lady, without saying a word; and, having again made a low bow, he departed.

Next year, Geordie Willison went and paid a visit to Lady Maitland, got from her the same sum of money, and nothing passed to indicate what it was paid for. The lady clearly remained under the impression that the child was not in existence.

Some time after the last payment, Geordie was on the pier of Leith, with a view to fall in with some chance message or carriage to Edinburgh. A vessel had newly arrived from the Continent, and one of the passengers was Sir Marmaduke Maitland. Geordie was employed to assist in getting his luggage removed to Edinburgh. On arriving at the house, Lady Maitland, with Louise behind her, was standing on the landing-place to receive her husband. They saw Geordie walking alongside of him, and talking to him in the familiar manner which his alleged silliness in many cases entitled him to do; but whatever they may have felt or expressed, by looks or otherwise, Geordie seemed not to be any way out of his ordinary manner, and they soon observed, from the conduct of Sir Marmaduke, that Geordie had said nothing to him. Geordie bustled about, assisting to take out the luggage, while Sir Marmaduke was standing in the lobby with his lady alongside of him.

"Is there any news stirring in these parts, Geordie, worth telling to one who has been from his own country so long as I have been?"

"Naething worth mentioning, Sir Marmaduke," answered Geordie? "a' thing quiet, decent, and orderly i' the toun and i' the country—no excepting your ain house here, whar I hae missed mony a gude luck-penny sin' your honour departed."

"Has Lady Maitland not been in the habit of employing you, then, Geordie?" asked Sir Marmaduke.

"No exactly, Sir Marmaduke," answered Geordie; "the last time I ca'ed on her leddyship, she asked me what I wanted. I didna think it quite ceevil, and I haena gane back; but I canna deny that she paid me handsomely for the last thing I carried for her. She's a fine leddy, Sir Marmaduke, and meikle credit to ye."

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FOUNDLING;
or,
THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE GOWER.
(Concluded.)

At any subsequent period, when Geordie's yearly pension was due, he generally contrived to call for Lady Maitland when Sir Marmaduke was out of the way. He took always the same amount of money. The only departure he made from this custom, was in the year of his sister's marriage, when he asked and got a sum of forty pounds, twenty of which he gave to her. Her husband, George Dempster, had at one time been a butler in Lady Maitland's family; but her ladyship did not know either that he was acquainted with George Willison, or that he was now married to his sister. George Dempster was in the family at the time when Geordie brought home the child; and, in some of his conversations with his wife, he did not hesitate to say that he suspected that Lady Maitland bore a child to a French lackey, who was then about the house; but the child never made its appearance, and strong grounds existed for believing that it was made away with. Geordie himself sometimes heard these stories; but he affected to be altogether indifferent to them, putting a silly question to Dempster, as if he had just awakened from sleep, and had forgot the thread of the discourse, and, when he got his answer, pretending to fall asleep again.

In the meantime, the young foundling, who had been christened Jessie Warriston by Geordie's desire, grew up to womanhood. She became, in every respect, the picture of her mother—tall and noble in her appearance. Her hair was jet black, and her eye partook of the same colour, with a lustre that dazzled the beholder. Her manners were cheerful and kind; and she was grateful for the most ordinary attentions paid to her by Widow Willison, or her daughter—the latter of whom often took her out with her to the house of Ludovic Brodie of Birkenhaugh, a nephew of Sir Marmaduke Maitland, with whom George Dempster was serving as butler, situated about a mile south from Edinburgh.

This young laird had seen Jessie Warriston, and been struck with her noble appearance. He asked Dempster who she was, and was told that she was a young person who lived with one of his wife's friends. Brodie, whose character was that of a most unprincipled rake, often endeavoured to make up to Jessie, as she went backwards and forwards between his house and Widow Willison's. In all his endeavours he had been unsuccessful; for Jessie—independently of being aware, from the admonitions of the pious Widow Willison, that an acquaintanceship with a person above her degree was improper and dangerous—had a lover of her own, a young man of the name of William Forbes, a clerk to Mr Carstairs, an advocate, at that time in great practice at the Scotch bar. Forbes generally accompanied Jessie when she went out at night, after she told him that Brodie had insulted her; and she discontinued her visits to George Dempster.

Foiled by the precautions which Jessie took to avoid him, Brodie only became more determined to get his object

gratified. He meditated various schemes for this purpose. He turned off Dempster, who might have been a spy upon his conduct; and it was remarked, by the people living near to Widow Willison's, that a woman, rolled up in a cloak, had been seen watching near the door. Geordie, though apparently not listening to any of these transactions, was all alive to the interests of his foundling. He kept a constant eye upon the neighbourhood, and did not fail to observe, that a woman, of the description stated, came always, at a certain hour, near his mother's door, about the time that Jessie generally went out.

Geordie was determined to know, by some means, who this was; and, as the day was now drawing in, he thought he might disguise himself in such a way as to get into conversation with her.

Having equipped himself in the garb of a cadie of more respectable appearance than he himself exhibited, and put a black patch over his eye, and a broad slouched hat over his head, Geordie took his station to watch the woman in the cloak.

"Wha may ye be waitin' for?" said Geordie, in a feigned voice, to the woman, whom he at last found.

"Are you von of de cadies?" asked the woman.

"Yes," answered Geordie.

"Do you live in de neighbourhood?" asked again the woman.

"I wadna live in ony ither place war ye to pay me for't," answered Geordie.

"Very good—dat is a very good answer," said the woman; "dere is a leetle money for you."

"I dinna tak siller for tellin' folk whar I live," said Geordie; "but, if there's onything else I can, in my capacity o' cadie, do for ye, maybe I may then condescend to tak yer siller."

"*Mon Dieu!* vat a trange fellow!" ejaculated the woman. "Vell, can you tell me if a young woman, carrying de name of Jessie Varriston, lives up dat stair?" pointing with her hand.

"I ken the lassie as veel as I ken mysel'," answered Geordie; "she lives just whar ye hae said."

"Very goot—very goot—dat is just vat I vant—*un sage homme* dis—excellent goot chap. Now, tell me if de girl lives vit an imbecille, dat is von idiot, called George Villison, and how long she has lived vit him, vere she comes from, and vat is her history?"

"Ye hae asked four questions a' in ac breath," said Geordie, who wanted a prologue to give him time to consider how much he could say so as to serve the two purposes of safety and drawing out the woman at the same time. "It's no quite fair to an ignorant man like me to put sae mony questions at a time; but it's my wish to serve ye, an' I'll do my best to answer them. Jessie Warriston lives wi' the idiot cratur Geordie Willison's mither, and she has lived wi' her for seventeen years, that is, since she was a bit bairn. I'm thinkin' she'll be a granddochter o' Widow Willison's—dinna ye think sae yersel'?"

"De brute!" muttered the woman to herself—"de brute is begun, like all de rest of his countrymen, to put de interrogation ven he should give de respond. You do not know den de girl's history, do you not?"

"No, but maybe I may be able to get it for ye," answered Geordie, unwilling to be dismissed *simpliciter*.

"Very vell, anoter time—I vish you, in de meantime, to carry dis letter to Ludovic Brodie, Esq., of Birkiehaugh. Do you know vere he lives?"

"I will carry it wi' the greatest o' pleasure, madam," answered Geordie.

The woman handed him the letter, with some more money, and departed.

Geordie got the letter speedily read to him by a person in his confidence. It was in these terms:—

"Mon cher Ludovic,—Jessie Varriston lives vit de idiot, Geordie Villison, in Leit Vynd. De bearer of dis knows her very vell, and vill assist you in de abduction. My Lady Maitland and I both tink we know her too; bot we do not vish at present to let any von know dis, for certain reasons, vich we cannot explain to you. Ven you arrange vit de bearer to carry her off, let me know, and I vill do every ting in my power to assist you, as my lady has a grand vish for de abduction of de vench vitout procrastination. My lady does not know of my having given you intelligence of her being up to de affair.—Yours till death. "LOUISE GRECOURT."

From this letter, Geordie saw plainly that Lady Maitland and Louise had, at last, got some information regarding Jessie, which had led them to suspect that she was the child they had supposed to be dead. It was clear, however, that Brodie knew nothing of their suspicions, and the two parties were, undoubtedly, after the same game, with different objects and for different reasons. Having folded the letter and sealed it, so as to avoid suspicion, Geordie went out and delivered it into the hands of Birkiehaugh.

Brodie having read the letter, examined Geordie from head to heel—"Canst thou be trusted, man, in an affair requiring secrecy and ability to execute it?" asked he.

"Do you see ony thing about me to produce ony doubt o' my ability or my secrecy?" answered Geordie. "Nae man will coup wi' Peter Finlayson in ony expedition whar death, danger, or exposure are to be avoided, or whar ability to plan, an' quickness to execute, and cunning' to conceal, are things o' consideration or importance."

"Well, Peter, I believe thou art the man. I wish to carry off the girl, Jessie Warriston, to-morrow night—canst thou assist me in that enterprise?"

"It's just in the like o' thae bits o' ploys that the genius o' Peter Finlayson lies," answered Geordie. "I ken the lassie maist intimately, and can bring her to ony appointed spot at ony hour ye please to name."

"To-morrow night, then," said Brodie, "at eight o'clock, at the resting-stone at the top of the Leith Lone; knowest thou the place?"

"I do," answered Geordie; "and shall attend; but ye ken, I suppose, the difference that lies atween the ordinary jobs o' us cadies, and the like o' thae mighty emprises whar life and limb, and honour and reputation are concerned. In the first case, the pay comes after the wark—in the ither, the wark comes after the pay; an' it's richt natural, whan ye think o't; because I hae often seen the city guard kick the wark and the warkmen to the deevil in an instant, and the puir cadie gets only broken banes for his pains."

"There, then," said Brodie, "there is half of thy fee; the other shall be given when thou bringest the girl."

"Vera weel," said Geordie, counting the gold pieces; "and thank ye. I wanna fail in my duty, I warrant ye."

Next night, at the time and place appointed, Geordie attended with his charge. He found Brodie in waiting with a carriage, in which was seated Louise. Jessie was told to enter, and complied. Brodie jumped in, and Geordie held out his hand for the other half of the fee, which he received. He now slipped a piece of twine round the handle of the carriage,

so as to prevent it from being opened; and, in a moment vaulted up beside the coachman, whose hat, as if by mere accident, he knocked off.

"Gie me up my bannet, ye whelp," said the coachman, angrily.

"Cadies are no cadies to coachmen," answered Geordie, dryly; "your brains maun be far spent, man, when they canna keep a house ower their head."

The coachman jumped down for his hat, and Geordie, applying the whip to the horses, was off in an instant. The coachman cried, "Stop the coach!" Brodie, thinking it was a chase, cried to drive like the devil. Geordie obeyed to the letter, and dashed on like lightning.

The coach stopped, and was instantly surrounded by a number of people, who opened the door, and pulling the three inmates out, led them into a large building, the door of which was double-bolted, and made a tremendous noise as it revolved on its hinges. The party were taken up stairs, and introduced (Geordie leading the way with his hat in his hand) into a large room, where several people were present, apparently waiting for them.

"I beg leave to introduce," said Geordie, bowing low, to yer honour, the sheriff—wha has dune us the honour to receive us at this time in sae safe a place as the jail, whar we are perfectly free frae a' interruption—his honour, Ludovic Brodie, Esq. o' Birkiehaugh, and her highness, Louise Grecourt, a French leddy o' repute. They are anxious to receive yer opinion on a point o' law in whilk they are personally concerned, a favour whilk, I doutna, yer honour will condescend to grant."

The sheriff immediately set about taking a precognition, for which he had been, by Geordie, previously prepared. Brodie was committed on a charge of abduction; but Louise, on the intercession of Geordie and his ward, was allowed to get off. Some time afterwards, Brodie was tried, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Geordie had now occasion to call upon Lady Maitland for his yearly allowance. Louise having been liberated without trial, it had not yet reached the ears of her or Lady Maitland that Peter Finlayson was, in fact, Geordie Willison. Brodie had made no communication of that fact as yet, and neither Louise nor Lady Maitland could have any idea that Geordie knew of the hand they had in the attempted abduction, or of their knowledge or suspicion that Jessie Warriston was the intended victim of their cruelty.

"My leddy," began Geordie, with his accustomed bow, but with more than his usual significance of look, "this is the first time for these seventeen years that I hae been awantin' in my attention and duty as yer leddyship's freend; for I am ae day ahint the usual time o' my veeisit to yer leddyship, for whilk mark o' disrespect I beg leave to solicit yer leddyship's pardon, upon the condition whilk, as in duty bound, I offer, that I shall promise, as I here most solemnly do, that I shall not be again wantin' in my duty to yer leddyship. Can I say I hae yer leddyship's pardon?"

Crucified by Geordie's cruel humour, but compelled to be silent, Lady Maitland signified her favour.

"Yer leddyship's condescension is a great relief to me," resumed Geordie. "They say Sir Marmaduke's nevey, Brodie o' Birkiehaugh, is in jail for attemptin' to rin awa' wi' a young lassie. What he was to do wi' her, God only kens, but there can be nae doubt that he would get sma' favour and grace frae yer leddyship to ony attempt on the puir cratur's life. Na, na—a nobility sae nichtie as yer leddyship's, an' a saftness o' heart whilk far excels that o' the bleatin' ewe for the puir lambie that lies deein' by its side, couldna patroneeze onything like the takin' awa' o' God's breath frae the nostrils o' innocence."

Geordie, whose cruelty was refined, paused, and fixed his

eyes on the lady, who appeared to be in agony. She rose quickly, and went, as usual, to her bureau to give him money.

"Stop," said Geordie; "I haena asked ye for't yet. I dinna like avmous. It's only when I want to favour yer leddyship that I tak siller frae ye, and naething I hae yet said could warrant yer leddyship in supposing that I was to confer sic a favour on ye, at least at the particular time when ye rose to open yer kist; and I dinna need to say, that favours quickly conferred are sune repented o'. Weel, the bit lassie wham Birkiehaugh was after, is a young creature ca'ed Jessie Warriston, wha lives wi' my mither. Few folk on earth ken meikle about her; but my mither swears that her mither maun hae been hanged, for she has a ring round her bonny white craig, like that on the neck o' the tumbling doo. I laugh, an' say to the bonny bairn, that it will stan' in place o' a coral or carnelian necklace to her.—Ha! ha! I see your leddyship's inclined to laugh too—eh?"

And Geordie again eyed the lady, who was as far from laughing as the criminal at the stake.

"Weel," resumed the crucifier, "Birkiehaugh didna succeed—thanks to Peter Finlayson, honest fallow—and the lassie is safe again; but I hae made a vow, and I hope sae gude a ne will be regularly recorded whar it should be, that the first person wha tries to lay sae meikle as a finger on that bonny bairn's head, or blaw a single breath o' suspicion against her reputation, will meet wi' the just indignation o' Geordie Willison. An' noo, my leddy, I will favour ye by accepting, at yer hands, twunty pund."

Geordie received, and counted the money, as usual, and with a bow, retired.

The six months of Birkiehaugh's confinement expired, and, about the same time, Sir Marmaduke Maitland died. Having had no children by his wife, the title and fine property of Castle Gower fell to Brodie, who was his brother's son—Brodie being the name of the family who had succeeded to the title. No time was lost by Brodie's man of business to take out a brief from chancery, for getting him served heir male of taillie to the estate and title. The brief was published, and no doubt anywhere prevailed of the verdict which would be pronounced under it.

About this time it was observed that Geordie Willison had long interviews with Advocate Carstairs; but neither his mother, nor his sister, nor, indeed, any person, could get him to say a word on the subject. His manner, in regard to the story of Jessie, had been all along quite uniform, and many years had passed since his mother had given up in despair all attempts to get him to divulge it. He was, at present, apparently very absent, as if something of great importance occupied his mind.

One day, on leaving the advocate, he went direct for the house of Lady Maitland. He was admitted as usual. He said he wished to see her ladyship and Louise together.

"I hae heard," began Geordie, "that my worthy freend, Sir Marmaduke, is dead. He was a gude man, and may the Lord deal mercifully wi' him! Ludovic Brodie, they say, is the heir, an' I dinna say he has nae richt to that title—though, maybe, it may cost some wigs a pickle flour to mak that out. Noo, ye see, my Leddy Maitland, I hae dune ye some favours, and I'm just to tak the liberty to ask ane in return. You an' yer freend, Louise, maun admit, in open court, that yer leddyship bore, upon the 19th day of February o' the year 16—, a dochter, and that that dochter is Jessie Warriston."

Geordie waited for an answer, fixing his eyes on Lady Maitland.

Lo use immediately began to make indications of a spirit of opposition; and Lady Maitland herself, gathering up any traces of dignity which the presence of Geordie generally dispersed, replied—

"Thou hast no proof, Sir, of the extraordinary charge thou hast now, for the first time, brought against me; and I cannot convict myself of a crime."

Louise blustered and supported her lady.

"Vat, in de name of God, is de meaning of dis fellow's demand? *Parbleu!* He is mad—*de fou*—bad—vicked—mechant. Vere I your ladyship, I would trust him out, and give him de grand kick, and tomble him down de marche de stairs. Vy, Sir, could you have de grand impudence to tell my lady she be de bad voman?"

Geordie heard all this with calmness and silence.

"It's o' sma' importance to me," he resumed, "whether yer leddyship comply wi' my request or no; for, indeed, though politeness made me ca' it a favour conferred upon me, the favour is a' the ither way. Let yer leddyship be silent, an' I'll prove that yer leddyship bore the bairn; but ye maun ken that Geordie Willison has nae power ower the law—when the seals are broken, the judgment will come; and I canna prove the birth o' the bairn without, at the same time, and by the same prufe, proving that ye attempted to strangle it, and left it for dead in the hedges o' Warriston. Here is yer leddyship's necklace, whilk I took frae the craig o' the struggling cratur, and here are the claes it had on, marked wi' draps o' blude that cam frae its little mouth. I shew thae things no as proofs on whilk I mean a'thegither to rest, but only to testify to ye what ye sae weel ken, that what I say is true. Speak, noo, my leddies—your lives are i' the hands o' the idiot cratur Geordie Willison. If ye gang to the court, ye are saved—if ye winna, ye are lost. Will ye gang, or will ye hang?"

The women were both terrified by the statement of Geordie. Reluctant to make any such admission, they struggled with the various emotions of indignation, pride, and fear, which took, by turns, possession of their bosoms. Lady Maitland fainted, and Louise was totally unable to render her assistance; for she lay in a hysterical state of excitement on the floor. Geordie locked the door, and kept his eyes fixed on the females. He yielded them no aid; but stood like a destroying angel witnessing the effects of his desolation. Lady Maitland at last opened her eyes, and having collected her senses, resolved to comply with Geordie's request. She said to him that, provided nothing was asked beyond the questions, whether she bore the child on the day mentioned, and whether Jessie Maitland, whom she had secretly seen, was that child—she would answer them in the affirmative. This satisfied Geordie, and he departed.

On the day of the service of Ludovic Brodie, a brief was taken out in name of Jessie Warriston or Maitland, as heir female of taillie to the estate and title of Maitland of Castle Gower. Brodie and his agents had no notice of the brief until they came into court.

The briefs being read, Brodie's propinquity was proved, and no person had any idea that the existence of a nearer heir could be established. But the door of the court opened, and Lady Maitland and Louise Greecourt stood before the inquest. They swore to the birth of the child on the day mentioned, and that Jessie Maitland, who was presented to them in court by Geordie Willison himself, was that child.

An objection was taken by Brodie's agents, that the child was illegitimate, because it was born ten months, minus two days, after Sir Marmaduke went to the continent; but the judge overruled the objection, stating that it was the law of Scotland, that every child born within ten months of the husband's departure, is a legal child.

Jessie Warriston was, therefore, served heir, according to the terms of her brief. She went in her own carriage, in which sat Geordie Willison, to take possession of her estates and titles. She was now Lady Jessie Maitland of Castle Gower, and was soon afterwards united to William Forbes, her old lover.

THE FATAL SECRET.

SOMEWHAT more than two hundred and fifty years ago, there lived in the town of Eyemouth—a small sea-port on the coast of Berwickshire—a decent old man, called Robert, or, more generally, Robin Sprot, who, by labouring hard at his business of a weaver for several years, had contrived to save as much money as he supposed would enable him to support himself and his family comfortably during the remainder of his life. Robin's family circle was by no means large, as it was composed merely of his helpmate, who was considerably younger than himself, and of a son called George, who, at the time of the commencement of our tale, might be in his fifteenth or sixteenth year. At an early age, George had been sent to the parish school, where the character of his mind being decidedly bookish, he, in the course of a few years, rendered himself master of the various branches of scholarship taught in that seminary. He had now arrived at that period of life when it is customary for youths to make choice of some trade or profession as a means of support during its subsequent stages. One evening, when he was engaged in some abstruse calculation, his father—who had been sitting by the side of the fire, reading the celebrated work of John Knox, then greatly in vogue among the common people, entitled, "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women"—laying aside the book, addressed him in the following words:—

"Ye'll sune be a man noo, George, and it's full time ye were makin' up yer mind whilk line o' life ye'll turn yer hand to for makin' yer bread, whan yer mither and me's laid i' the mools; and that, ye ken, i' the course o' nature, canna be vera lang. What wad ye think o' learnin' the herrin' curin'? They tell me that Roger Kirkwood, wha left Burnmouth just as it were the ither day, a pair fisher callant, is like to mak his fortune, by that tred, at Dunbar. Or, aiblins, ye'll be for tryin' yer hand at the loom, whilk is the line o' life followed by yer forbears for three generations bygane?"

George had raised his eyes from the regiment of figures which covered his slate, and was studying a reply to the momentous question addressed to him, when his mother, who was sitting spinning at the opposite side of the hearth, interposed, and said—"Dear me, Robin Sprot, wull ye no listen to reason? Didna the vera schulemaister himsel' tell ye, as plain as words could speak it, that our bairn was far ower gude to be set to ony o' thae handicraft ways o' fendin' for his bread? There he's stood, dux o' his class, for maist a hale twallmonth—and noo ye wad be for settin' him to saut herrin' like Roger Kirkwood, or ca' the shuttle like yersel' and the maist feck o' yer douce forbears. It's a grit sorrow to me, Robin, to think that an auld head like yours, whilk suld haud mair sense, suld gie vent to sic nonsense as ye've been talkin'. E'en tak my counsel, Robin, and mak George a minister;—there's ane no vera far aff hasna sae muckle gumption about him, and yet wags his head i' the poopit ilka Lord's day."

Robin kept fidgetting upon his chair, while his better half was making the above expostulation, in which the calling whereby his ancestors and himself had long honestly supported themselves, was somewhat contemptuously alluded to. "I wadna grudge, Janet woman, mair nor yersel', layin' oot the pickle siller, that wad doubtless be required to prepare him for siccan a grit office as the ministry; nor will I tak it upon me to say that there isna mair in his head than it's been the Lord's wull to put i' my ain, or some o' my forbears; but losh, woman, whar's the kirk to come frae?—can ye answer me that? Alloooin' that the bairn had a' the wisdom o' Solomon's sel'—and that, truly, wasna sma'—he wad ne'er, i' this warld, get a surplice to wear ower his shouthers, sae lang as the abomination o' patron-

age continues. But wull ye let George say himsel' whilk callin' is maist o' his ain likin'?"

George was no stranger to the difference of opinion that subsisted between his parents, in regard to the most suitable mode of life for him to follow. He felt rather inclined to coincide with the views of his mother, though the reasons which have just been alleged led him to disregard any predilection which he might have entertained towards the clerical profession. In reply to the question now put to him, he expressed a desire of applying himself to the study of the law—a choice which he conceived would, at the same time, prove satisfactory to both parties: to his father, inasmuch as it was usually accounted a money-making vocation; and to his mother, as it would not interfere with her ambition of having her son brought up to one of the learned professions, as those of law, physic, and divinity, are usually styled. Nor did this supposition turn out to be erroneous. Both parties simultaneously acquiesced in the wish of their hopeful son; and e'er a week had elapsed, a letter had been dispatched to Mr Peter Scrivener, writer and notary-public in Dunse, who agreed to receive the youth into his office, as a clerk, upon the payment of a certain initiatory fee. In this situation he continued till the expiry of the term of his apprenticeship, when a favourable opportunity having occurred of commencing the practice of his profession in his native place, he resolved to embrace it. On his arrival, he found that his father had a house close upon the beach, ready fitted up for him; over the front door of which, through the instrumentality of his mother, a large sign-board was suspended, upon which were painted, in large letters—Maister George Sprot, Gentleman of the Law and Notary-Public; which ostentatious title our hero, who was naturally a rather modest lad, was, with considerable difficulty, persuaded to allow to remain, to gratify the feelings of his doating parent. He had been about a year in business, when, like many young people before and after him, he fell deeply in love; and the object upon whom his affections were bestowed, was a young, beautiful, and delicate looking girl, called Susan Grey, the daughter of one of the small proprietors in the neighbourhood. From Susan his addresses received all the encouragement that his heart could have desired; and it was arranged between the friends of both parties, that she should become his wife as soon as he should be able to say that he realized, by the profits of his profession, the sum of a hundred merks yearly. A less honest lawyer than George at this period was, would not have scrupled long about declaring his income to have reached, or even exceeded, that amount; but this drawback upon his happiness only served to stimulate him to greater exertion towards advancement in his profession. The acquirement of a factorship appeared to be the most likely means of enabling him to accomplish his wishes; and applications to several of the neighbouring gentry were made by his friends in his behalf; but all of them turned out unsuccessful.

At length, one day, in the summer of the year 1600, while he was seated at his desk, his fingers busily occupied in wielding the pen, but his mind's eye gazing upon the pure and spotless image of Susan Grey, an elderly gentleman drew up his horse, and dismounted at the door of the office. He was a tall, strong-built man, somewhat inclined to corpulency. His features were very strongly marked; and his face bore that rubicund aspect usually ascribed to over-frequent applications to the bottle. He was attired in a large cocked hat, and a Spanish riding cloak; underneath which he wore a loose jerkin of blue cloth, similar to those odd-looking upper garments with which some of our veteran gentry still continue to invest their persons. His legs were incased in a pair of bear's skin boots, that extended considerably above the knee; and, from their heels, protruded two long-rowelled spurs of gold. Behind him rode a serving

man, apparently much about the same age, upon one of those diminutive horses, called Galloways, which were then in common use upon the eastern Borders. He was a little shrivelled man, scarcely exceeding five feet two in height; the very opposite to his master in personal appearance. His countenance bore a singularly ludicrous aspect, occasioned, in a great measure, by the loss of several of his front teeth, and a peculiar squint in his left eye. He also alighted from his pony, and laid hold of the reins of his master's horse, and knocked at Mr Sprot's door with the butt of his master's whip. On its being opened, Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig and Fastcastle walked into the lawyer's consulting-room.

"By my saul and conscience," said the burly knight, eyeing attentively the lawyer, whose face became suffused with a glow of deep crimson, partly at finding himself in the presence of such an important personage as the knight of Fastcastle, and partly from a sense of shame that he felt at the idea of his having observed the pompous sign—"By my saul and conscience, but ye're a young birky, to be an eident professor o' the laws o' auld Scotland. Certes, yours maun be an auld head on young shouters—ha! ha! ha!" And, as he spoke and laughed, the fumes of cogniac became diffused through the atmosphere of the apartment.

The lawyer made a respectful obeisance to his visiter; and, presenting him with a chair, requested him to be seated, and to inform him wherein he could serve him.

"*Opere peracto ludemus*, ye would say, young scribe," rejoined the other; "and ye're richt. I wunna tarry lang without comin' to the point wi' ye; but come tell me first, man, gin ye're fastened to the leading-strings o' a woman?"

George represented to him that he was unmarried.

"Then ye find yersel' a' the better for the word ye've spoken, young fallow; for nae man, be he wha he may, shall e'er ken aught business o' mine, wha's buckled to ony o' thae she-deevils incarnate. There's mine awn wife, auld Sir Patrick Hume's daughter, after leevin' wi' her in a state o' helldom for four hale years, I was forced to drive forth out o' the castle at the hinder end, for meddlin' wi' matters wi' the whilk she had nocht to do. Ha! ha! ha! *Sed ad negotium*. Ye maun ken, that I hae an auld servitor, James Bour by name, the same auld man wha's at present haudin' my horse at yer door; an auld glee'd carle, but wondrous honest; and, in sooth, wha wad e'en ride to hell's yetts to serve me, though I'll no tak it upon me to say that he'd venture muckle farther. Atweel, ye maun ken, that I'm purposin' to mak a bit Edincraw laird o' him, in return for his mony gude services; and, gin ye'll step along bye wi' me to Lucky Leevinston's, at the sign o' the Boar's Head, we'll hae him infested into his lairdship; and syne a cup o' Burgundy, to clear our throats o' the stoor."

The lawyer readily acquiesced in Sir Robert's proposal, and forthwith accompanied him and Bour to the change-house, where the latter was duly infested by "yird and stane," which he had brought with him in a knapsack, into twenty-four husband lands, lying in the territory of Auchencraw, and barony of Coldingham—so runneth the infestment. Immediately after the conclusion of this important piece of legal business, which had converted a servitor into a laird, Sprot received from Sir Robert a handsome fee, with an assurance of future employment, in case of the services of a lawyer being again required. This, coupled with an invitation to dine with the knight at Fastcastle on Wednesday of the ensuing week, tended, in no ordinary degree, to elevate his spirits, inasmuch as the prospect held out to him of future patronage and employment, inspired him with the hope of being soon able to realize the income stipulated as a condition of his marriage with Susan Grey.

Now, many of our readers are already aware, and such as are not, it will, at this stage of our story, be necessary to

inform, that the knight of Fastcastle had, for some time previous to this interview, been engaged in a criminal correspondence with John Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Alexander, the Master of Ruthven—two young noblemen who sought to revenge upon the person of King James the Sixth the fate of their father, whom that monarch had caused to be beheaded, for his concern in the plot called the Raid of Ruthven. In Sir Robert Logan, he quickly found a willing and resolute coadjutor—one, in short, who not only declared himself, but actually proved himself to be ready to risk his life and property in the cause. The mode in which revenge was designed to be taken, is not very well understood; some supposing that the actual assassination of the king was contemplated, while others, with more probability, conceived that the object of the conspirators was to secure his Majesty's person, by keeping him shut up in Logan's stronghold, on the coast of Berwickshire, according to a usage not unfrequently practised by the seditious nobles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However that may be, it is very certain that the knight of Fastcastle had taken a very active part with the Earl in the arrangement of the plot; and that the donation of land, which we have just seen made to his serving-man, Bour, was in consequence of that individual's faithful services in the conveyance of their treasonable letters.

We have said that George Sprot was much elated at the thoughts of being employed in a legal capacity by the knight; and, we may add, that they were no less cheering to the heart of his mother, by whom intelligence of the transaction in which her son had been engaged, and of the invitation with which it had concluded, was spread over the town by a species of lingual telegraph.

"What think ye o' yer gaun to send George to saut herrin' and drive the shuttle noo, Robin? Whilk o' the twa o' us had the maist discernment, after a' that's gane by?—mair by token that ye've aye been grudin' and grumblin' ilk time ye've had to louse the strings o' yer purse to pay ony bit sma' debt the puir lad wasna just able to answer; and hae been like to deeve me outright wi' ravin' about ha'in' to pay ten placks to David Swanston for paintin' the muckle signboard. My certes, the signboard's like to be the makin' o' George's fortune; but tumble into bed there, and ne'er again, sae lang as ye leeve, ca' me a claverin' wife o' vanity again; for ye maun noo see plainly that I've been i' the richt, and yersel', wha suld had mair sense, has been i' the wrang, as sure as my maiden name's Janet Patterson"—said Mrs Sprot on the night in question, as she was assisting her aged partner to undress, previous to going to bed. Robin's reply to this triumphant harangue has not been recorded by any of the historians of the time.

At length the day arrived on which the young lawyer was to have the honour of dining with Sir Robert Logan. The dwelling of the latter was situated about eight miles west from Eyemouth, in a situation of deep gloom and solitude. Its embattled towers reared their hoary heads upon the summit of a proud and precipitous sea-cliff, nearly detached from the mainland by a steep chasm about thirty feet in width, over which a drawbridge was flung. The margin of the rock was fortified by a rude and massive rampart wall, furnished with exploratory turrets and loop-holes; and in the area stood a lofty quadrangular tower of red sandstone, on the summit of which its proprietor was sitting when the notary arrived, anxiously gazing upon a little boat that had just weathered the "East Neuk o' Fife," and was sailing before the wind in the direction of the castle. A boy—who officiated as serving-man and cook during the absence of Bour and two other menials, whom Sir Robert had dispatched, on the Monday previous, on a mission to the Earl of Gowrie, at St Johnston—announced to his master that Sprot was below.

"Shaw him up, ye deil's bucky—shaw him up here," said

the knight; "he'll no be the waur o' a breathin' o' sea air to set the neb on his appetite; and tak ye tent, ye limmer, that ye dinna let the guse singe, or, by St Duthac, I'll toss ye head owre heels frae the tap o' the craig into the sea, like a wild duck wi' leaden ballast aneath its wings. But confound my politeness," continued he, as the urchin disappeared, "that I suld hae been sae far left to mysel' as to invite that writer loun till his denner on the vera day that I'm expectin' nae less a man than James, by the grace o' God, King o' Scots, to tak pat-luck wi' me! The cat 'ill be out o' the pock, as sure's my name is Robert Logan, gin I dinna gie him a rent-free lease for the rest o' his life o' the secret chamber, whilk Francis, Yerl o' Bothwell, tenanted o' me for sax hale months, and then absconded, without payin' me a plack for his uppittin'. But come awa, Maister Sprot, gentleman o' the law and notary-public," he added, at the same time turning to our hero, whose head had just appeared above the trap-door that opened upon the balcony; "come awa an' sit doon here aside me, and tell me what's the news o' Eyemouth." And here he grasped the proffered hand of his visiter so tightly as almost made him bawl out with the pain, and his face to become as red as the wattles of a turkey cock. "Truly, lad, ye were lecin' when ye said ye had nocht to do wi' the women folk; for ye canna look an honest man straight i' the face without blushin' up to the brow like a maiden when first wooed. But come, tell me gin ye've heard o' ony vessel that's expectit at Eyemouth frae ony o' the ports i' the north country; for yonder's ane, ye see, comin' scuddin' across the Firth at a fine rate."

"There's nae that I've got word o', Sir Robert," answered the other; "but, perhaps, ye mayna hae heard o' the news that's come, o' deadly treason devised against the King by the Earl o' Gowrie, and his brother Alexander, the Maister o' Ruthven, whereby"—

"Heard ye naebody else reportit to hae a hand i' the pie?" inquired the knight, impatiently, and fixing his eyes steadfastly upon his visiter's face.

"Nae mair were named, Sir Robert; but divers others are suspected o' bein' airt and pairt wi' them."

"That's sae far gude," added Logan, apparently considerably relieved, "for mair nor ane here present; but let me hear how the treason, as ye ca' it, has turned out."

"It appeareth," replied Sprot—"according to my authority, Elspeth Huldie, wha keeps the change-house at the Press, whereat a post arrived this mornin' on his way to London—that yesterday, while the King and his nobles were a-huntin' on Falkland muir, Master Alexander Ruthven rode up to the King and persuaded him to leave off the hunt and accompany him to his brother's palace at St Johnston, where he tauld him that he had a man shut up i' ane o' the rooms wha had fund a great treasure o' gold and silver coins in a large earthenware pot. The King, suspectin' nae evil, went wi' him to the palace, whither he was sune followed by his courtiers; and, after partakin' o' some refreshment, he was conducted by Ruthven through mony windin' passages to a closet in ane o' the turrets, where, instead o' findin' a treasure, he was confronted wi' a man in armour, haudin' in his hand a drawn dagger, whilk the Maister snatched out o' the man's hands and pointed it to the King's breast, sayin'—'Remember ye o my father's murder? Ye shall now die for it.' Hereupon the King craved sair for his life, and Ruthven, biddin' him keep quiet, locked the King and the man together into the closet, and went below to speak wi' his brother."

"Was ever there siccan an ass?" muttered the knight.

"And when he cam back," continued Sprot, "he found the King had opened the window, whereupon he clapt his hand on his Majesty's mouth, and strove to bind his hands wi' a garter; but the King struggled hard, and, gettin' the Maister's hand off his mouth, called out to the Yerl o' Mar, wham he saw below i' the courtyard, to come up and help

him, for he was like to be murdered. The Yerl hastened and tauld the other nobles what was like to happen, and they all rushed up to the chamber, but couldna win in, the door bein' lockit. At last, Sir John Ramsay havin' wots o' a private door, got entrance thereby, and seein' his Majesty in great peril, he stabbed the Maister, and syne the Yerl, wha at that same moment rushed into the room."

During Sprot's recital of this tragical event, Logan paced impatiently backward and forward upon the balcony; but as it drew to a conclusion, and the fate of his unfortunate colleagues was announced, he stood stock-still, and, for a moment, a cadaverous paleness overspread his cheeks. His face, however, almost instantly became suffused, with even more than its wonted redness, and a volley of oaths and imprecations, too gross to be repeated, burst forth from his mouth.

"Either ye or Elspeth Huldie," he said, when the first burst of passion had somewhat subsided, "hae fabricated a maist notorious lee, Sprot; and bauld hae ye been, I trow, to venture to threep it doun my throat, within the wa's o' my ain stronghold. But yonder comes a boat," continued he, pointing to the vessel which was now within a mile or two of the castle, "that hauds ane wha'll speak me true; an', gin yer tale be as fause as I tak it to be, mony minutes 'ill no pass till there be a vacance for a lawyer at Eyemouth." So saying, he thrust his head down the trap, and vociferated to the urchin below, that it would be at the peril of his life to allow any one to cross the drawbridge without his special permission.

The notary continued to sit upon the balcony, by no means in the most agreeable mood, when he considered that his person was in the power of so irascible a knight; and that its safety depended upon the truth or fallacy of a report which he had accidentally heard, and as accidentally repeated; and this to be decided, too, upon the assertion of a stranger, who, for aught he knew, might be as little qualified to vouch for its accuracy as himself. The knight continued to pace about the balcony hurriedly, ever and anon stamping with his boot upon the pavement; and, in reality, giving much more credence to the notary's narration than he was willing to allow. At length the vessel, which was a large fishing boat, arrived so close to the base of the cliff, that the persons of its occupants became readily distinguishable.

"By my saul and conscience," said the knight, as he observed that the crew merely consisted of Laird Bour and the two servants who had been dispatched with him, to assist in the project for carrying off his Majesty, "I'm doubtin' yer words are gaun to turn out but owre true, else ane o' gentler bluid wad hae been i' that boat." And then turning to the trembling scribe, whose anxiety and trepidation increased as the little vessel bounded over each successive billow—"Ye maun e'en forgie me for the hasty words I've spoken to ye; and gin ye'll promise me ne'er to mention owre again aught ye hae seen or heard, or may yet see or hear, and that ye'll abjure a' womankind, before four-and-twenty hours gae round, George Sprot o' Eyemouth, gentleman o' the law, shall be dubbed factor to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Logan, Baron of Restalrig, Fastcastle, and Gungreen. What say ye to that, sir?"

The revulsion which this unexpected change in the aspect of affairs created in the notary's mind, was similar to that experienced by a wretched criminal who has been led out for execution, on the arrival of a reprieve of his death-warrant. In this state of feeling, he readily acquiesced in Sir Robert's stipulation; though he had not long done so, e'er his mind wandered to the youthful fair one, to whom, on many a twilight eve, he had uttered vows of eternal fidelity, which he had invoked the Deity to look down upon and witness.

The sail of the boat was now lowered, and the vessel

slid into the mouth of a huge cavern at the point of the castle rock. The knight hereupon, conducted his visiter to the hall, where he left him, and descended to the cavern by a rude spiral stair-way, constructed in the heart of the cliff, to hear from his *employeés* the result of their enterprise.

The hall of Fastcastle, in which the notary was, in the meantime, left seated, had little to recommend it, either in regard to size or internal decorations. The apartment occupied the whole area of the second story of the tower, about thirty feet long, and a third less in breadth, as its mouldering ruins at the present day testify. From its vaulted roof, a sort of tapestry of red cloth hung down the sides of the walls, on which were wrought, with gold thread, many curious figures of olden warriors; and, at one extremity, upon a large hearth-stone, (for there were no fire-grates in those days,) blazed a huge fire of peats. In the middle of the apartment stood a long thick-legged table of oak, on the upper surface of which were rudely carved grotesque figures of griffins, dragons, lions, tigers, bears, and other animals, real or imaginary, too numerous to be particularized. Around were ranged several old-fashioned high-backed chairs, constructed of the same species of timber, one of which, that stood at its head, being the seat occupied by the proprietor of the mansion, was, *par excellence*, dignified by a cushion covered with red woollen cloth. It was lighted by two narrow oblong apertures in the side walls, secured without by an iron grating, and gradually becoming wider towards the interior, to admit a greater proportion of the rays. At one of these windows—which commanded a beautiful and extensive view to the westward, embracing the wide expanse of the Forth, amid whose waters the isles of Bass and May, leviathan-like, raised their grey heads above the deep, and the hills and dales of Fife and Lothian—sat George Sprot, musing upon the prospect of worldly aggrandizement held out to him, and of the singular conditions upon which it depended. From the deportment of the knight, when he had informed him of the result of the plot, and from the words which he had casually overheard him utter to himself as he was ascending to the balcony, together with the circumstance of his having said that there was one in the boat who would be able to prove the accuracy of his report—a much less intelligent observer would have concluded that Logan was, in some way or other, in league with the conspirators. He had been ruminating on these subjects for some time, when his attention was diverted by loud screams, that proceeded from the court-yard below the window; and, on looking out, he beheld the choleric knight in the act of belabouring lustily, with a ladle, the person of the urchin whom we have already noticed, who, as it afterwards appeared, had allowed the goose to come into too close communication with the flames. He, therefore, to the silent horror of Sprot, carried the terrified boy to the top of the rampart wall, over which he held him for a minute or two, threatening to toss him over into the abyss of waters, in the event of his committing a similar delinquency in time to come. At length, to the infinite relief of the spectator, he released the poor fellow from his awful situation, whereupon he hurried off, to resume his culinary avocations, with all the speed of which his legs were capable.

In a few minutes afterwards, the knight, followed by Bour, entered the hall, and, addressing the notary—"By my saul," said he, "that deil-begot callant's let ane o' the wings o' the guse singe to a vera cinder, after a' the warnin' he's got; but I trow I've gien him siccan a gliff, as 'ill keep him frae trying the like again. Hal ha!" The sobbing urchin almost immediately followed, bearing in his arms a huge dish, whereon lay the goose, which he set down in front of his master's seat, having, at the same time, his eye fixed attentively upon Sir Robert, so as to be able to avoid any blow which the first sight of the fowl might induce him

to level at his head. He then brought in another platter, containing a large haggis, which he deposited, with a look of greater confidence, at the foot of the table. The knight then placed himself in the seat of honour; and the others, by his directions, took seats at the side, while the boy-cook demurely planted himself behind his master's chair. A muttered benediction being invoked, the goose was, in a short time, sliced down, and a respectable allotment of its substance distributed to the company; and from the despatch and evident satisfaction with which it was gobbled up, we feel warranted in asserting that the knight had erred, in subjecting to such harsh treatment the urchin to whom its preparation had been intrusted. The repast being ended, the dishes were removed, and two huge bottles, the one containing wine, the other brandy, were set before the knight, and silver flagons, or drinking-cups, distributed to the trio.

"Ken ye what's the Latin for guse, man?" asked the chairman, addressing Sprot, and plenishing his flagon with brandy.

"Anser, I believe," responded the other.

"Anser yersel', man—I ne'er kent the like o' that—wad ye hae a man baith spier an' anser his awn question? Lawyer though ye be, I hae to teach ye Latin, yet, I see. Here's what's the Latin for guse, man," said Sir Robert, quaffing off the flagon of spirits that stood before him, and directing his companions to do likewise; and then turning to Bour, whose face, which naturally bore a most ludicrous appearance, was yet more comic by the dread which he entertained of being detected to be an agent in the plot—"Bour, man," said he, "thae auld een o' yours are glowerin' out frae the sockets, like a howle tthat's no tasted meat for a week or mair. Cheer up, man, an' drink aff a bumper, and ne'er trouble yer head about what's happened. Come, drink, man. Here's to the memory o' them that's awa'."

"For Godsake," said the Laird, in a suppressed tone of voice, "tak tent what ye're sayin', Sir Robert; the notary may be mair gleg i' the uptak' than ye're thinkin', aiblins."

"Ne'er fash yer head, man; I'm gaun to mak him my factor, an' he'll be far lost to his awn interest gin he tell owre again whatsoever he may see or hear i' my auld dwellin'; but gang ye awa and fetch ben the airm kist, and I'll let him see the parchments and title-deeds o' whilk he's to hae the charge."

Hereupon the old man left the hall, and shortly returned, dragging after him, with some difficulty, a strong chest of iron, secured by six or seven padlocks, which its proprietor unlocked. He then raised the lid, and displayed to view a countless number of old musty charters and deeds, to the former of which were attached large oval or circular pieces of molten wax, bearing the impressions of the donor's seals. One of these, which, from the style of the writing and its tattered appearance, seemed to be of greater antiquity than the others, he raised from its receptacle, and, holding it up with a look of satisfaction—"This," said he, "is the first royal charter granted to my forbear, Sir Hubert Logan, by the gude King Malcolm Canmore!—rest his soul—o' the barony o' Restalrig, in Mid-London; whilk, after passin' through mair than thirty generations, has been handed down to mine awn worthy sel'. Ha! ha! ha! But I maun send them a' down to yer awn hoose the morn, and ye can read them and put them a' to rights at yer leisure, for presently they're in great confusion." So saying, he picked out several letters from among the parchments, and, having locked the chest, consigned the key to the lawyer.

During the sequel of the entertainment, the knight continued to ply the bottle freely, and more than once, to the horror of Laird Bour, gave vent to expressions which tended to convince the notary, more and more, of his connection with the Gowrie treason.

Next day the charter chest was, as the knight had promised, sent to the office of Sprot. On looking over its con-

tents, with a view of arranging them, he came upon two modern looking letters, which he had the curiosity to read. One of these, from Logan to the Earl of Gowrie, ran as follows:—

“My Lord,—My maist humbil dewty, wi’ service maist heartily remembered. At the receipt of your lordship’s letter, I am so comforted, especially at your lordship’s purpose communicated unto me therein, that I can neither utter my joy nor find myself able to encounter your lordship with due thanks. Indeed, my lord, at my being last in the town, Master Alexander, your lordship’s brother, impartit unto me somequhat of your intencion anent that matter; and, if I had not been busied aboot some turns o’ my awn, I thought to have come owre to St Johnstoun, and spokin wi’ your lordship. Yet, always, my lord, I beseech ye, baith for the safety o’ your honour, credit, and mair nor that, your life, my life, an’ the lives o’ mony others, an’ likewise the wreakin’ o’ our lands an’ hooses, an’ extirpautin’ o’ our names, look that we a’ be as sure as your lordship—an’ I, for my awn part, shall be—an’ then I doot not, but, wi’ God’s grace, we shall bring the matter to an end that’ll bring contentment to us a’. I doot not but Master Alexander has informed your lordship what course I laid down to bring a’ your associates to my house o’ Fastcastle, by sea, when I should hae a’ materials in readiness for their safe receivin’ an’ landin’ into my hoose—makin’ it, as it were, a matter o’ pastime in sic fair summer tyde, and nane other strangers to haunt my hoose, till he hae concluded on the layin’ o’ our plot, whilk is already devised by your brither an’ me. An’ I wald wish that your lordship wald either come or send M. A. to me; an’ thereafter I wald meet you at Leith, or, quietly, at Restalrig, where we should hae preparit ane fine hattit kit wi’ succar comfits and wine.* An’ the sooner we bring our purpose to pass, it were the better, before harvest. Let not Maister William Rhynd, your auld pedagog, ken o’ your comin’; but rather wald I, if I durst be sae bauld, entreat your lordship to come an’ see me at my auld hoose o’ Fastcastell, quhair I hae kept my Lord Bothwell in his greatest extremities, say the king an’ his council quhat they wald. An’, in case God gie us ane happy success in the errand, I hope to hae baith his lordship an’ your lordship at ane gude denner here, afore I dee. Always, I hope, that the king’s buck-huntin’ at Falkland will prepare some dainty cheer for us against the next year. *Hoc jocosè*, till animate your lordship at this time; but afterwards we shall hae better reason to mak merry. I protest, my lord, before God, I wish naething with a better heart, nor to achieve that whereunto your lordship wald fain attain, an’ my continual prayer shall tend unto that effect. With the large spendin’ o’ my lands, goods, yea, the hazard o’ my life, shall not affray me from that, although the scaffold were already set up, before I should falsify my promise to you, and persuade your lordship thereof. I trow you have ane proof o’ my constancy already or now. But, whereas your lordship desires me, in your letter, that I crave my brother’s mind anent this matter, I alvertly dissent from that he should ever be ane counsellor thereto; for, in gude faith, he will never help his friend, nor harm his foe. Your lordship may confide mair in this auld man, the bearer hereof, my man, Laird Bour, nor in my brother; for I lippen my life and all else I hae, in his hands, an’ I trow he wald not spare to ride to hell’s yetts to pleasure me. Always, my lord, when ye hae read my letter, deliver it to the bearer agane, that I may see it brunt with mine awn een, as I hae sent your lordship’s letter back to you again; for so is the fashion I grant. An’ I pray to rest fully persuaded o’ me an’ a’ that I hae promised; for I am resolved, howbeit I were to dee the morne. I maun expedie you to expedie Bour, an’ give him strait derection, on pain

o’ his life, that he never tak a wink o’ sleep till he see me again, else he will utterly undo us. Ever committing your lordship to the protection o’ the Almychtie God, from Fastcastell, the twenty-nynth o’ July 1600, your awn sworne and bund man, to obey an’ serve, with his utter power, till his life’s end.

“RESTALRIGE.

P.S.—“Prays your lordship to hald be excused for my unseemly letter, whilk is not sae weel written as Maister’s was; ffor I durst not let ony o’ my writers ken o’ it, but took twa syndry hail days to it mysel’.”

If a shadow of doubt remained upon the lawyer’s mind, the perusal of this treasonable document entirely removed it. He continued to read it over and over again, and at each successive reading, his mind became distracted with various contending emotions. At one time he resolved immediately to apprise the civil authorities of the discovery he had made; but no sooner had he done so, than the demon of avarice whispered into his ear, and urged him to remain silent. In this state of perplexity, he was sitting in the evening, when he received an unexpected visit from the knight, who, on looking over his letters, had missed the one which Sprot had discovered among the charters, and had, in a state of the greatest alarm, come to recover it. The charter chest, with its lid thrown open, was standing upon the table when he entered, with his countenance indicative of the greatest anxiety.

“Ye’ve sune begun,” said he, with a forced laugh, “to put my auld charters to rights; but, tell me, lad, gin ye’ve found among them a bit screed o’ my ain pen, that suldna be there.” And, as he spoke, he bent his eyes fixedly upon the lawyer, as if he would dive into the very recesses of his heart.

The latter was about to deny having seen any such letter, when his treacherous countenance discovered to the knight the fact.

“Dinna tell a lee about it, man—ye couldna help yer een seein’ what cam afore them—and ye’ll ne’er be a whit the waur o’ kennin’ that Robert Logau was gaun to gie the Gowries, puir fallows, the lease o’ a bit chaumer in his castle, to lodge his Majesty in for a season. But gie me back the letter, lad, and I’ll mak ye a compliment o’ something, whilk ye’ll find o’ mair uteelity than a screed o’ auld parchment.”

With a trembling hand, Sprot drew forth, from his pocket, both of the letters, and delivered them to Logan, who thrust into his hand a purse well lined with gold; and, before leaving him, he extorted from him a solemn oath, that he would keep secret from all living whatever he might have seen or heard.

From the date of this interview, a singular change for the worse became conspicuous to all in the department of George Sprot. Heretofore kind and attentive to his parents, he now became dogged, petulant, and altogether indifferent to their wants; and many a silent tear did the aged pair let drop upon a sleepless pillow, when they thought that the privations to which they had subjected themselves for his advancement, were thus ungratefully repaid. Nor did she, who had offered up to him the sacrifice of her young and guileless heart, remain long insensible to the blight that had passed over the kindlier feelings of her suitor.

(To be continued.)



* The dish known in Scotland by the name of “Corstorphine cream,” and “sour cogue.”

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FATAL SECRET.

(Concluded.)

George Sprot's visits, which Susan Grey had been wont to look forward to as the invalid watches for the first dawning of the morning sun, became, gradually, less and less frequent, till they were, at length, altogether discontinued; and those hours that had formerly been devoted to her society, were now spent in inglorious revelry in the hall of his dissolute patron. Years glided on, but in their train brought no symptoms of reformation in the object upon whom she had concentrated her affections; and yet, such is the constancy of a woman's love, though disappointment and grief had withered the bloom upon her cheek, she looked eagerly forward to the day, when, as formerly, storm or tempest would not keep him from her side. Alas! Susan Grey was not the only maiden who has been thus left to tell, nightly, to the pale moon, her tale of slighted love.

Six years rolled on, and Robert Logan, to whom all this distress was ascribable, was gathered to his fathers. From this event there seemed to be some reasonable grounds for expecting an amendment. But, no; George Sprot continued the same abandoned man. The bottle, which had formerly been resorted to as a solace to the remonstrances of his conscience, had now, from long-continued habit, become his indispensable companion; and his conduct was such as may generally be expected from one who has leagued himself to so degrading an ally. On his deathbed, Logan had consigned to his charge several other treasonable papers, with a request that he would forthwith commit them to the flames. This injunction of his dying patron, Sprot, unfortunately, did not comply with; but continued to retain them in his possession, and, indeed, often to carry them about with him in his pocket. On one occasion, at an election dinner, when excited with wine, the Gowrie conspiracy having become the topic of conversation, he made some statements relative to the object which the conspirators had in view, which, from their novelty, attracted the general attention of the meeting. A gentleman seated near him laughed at his assertions, and declared them to be utterly extravagant. In an evil moment, the infatuated notary took from his pocket two of the treasonable papers which contained the signatures and seals of Logan and the Earl, and handed them round for the inspection of the company.

Tidings of this singular discovery soon reached the ears of the Privy Council, who resolved to adopt immediate measures for ascertaining their accuracy. Accordingly, about a week afterwards, while the lawyer, with a worthless boon-companion, was engaged at the bottle, two messengers-at-arms entered the house and announced him their prisoner. He was immediately loaded with fetters, and, together with all the papers found in the house, hurried through the crowd which speedily assembled, to a carriage which stood ready for him at the outskirts of the village, and conveyed into Edinburgh, where he was consigned to a gloomy dungeon in the Tollbooth.

In this miserable apartment, debarred from his customary stimulus, the images of his aged and neglected parents, and of the injured and uncomplaining Susan Grey, were con-

jured up in his imagination; and he spent the night in all the horrors and agony of despair. When morning came, he was conducted before the Privy Council, which sat in the great hall of the Parliament House, for the purpose of examining him. The letters found in his possession were shewn to him; and he was interrogated as to the time and manner of his having acquired them. The now humbled notary, with a tremulous voice, related faithfully the whole of the circumstances that had taken place, from his first interview with Logan, at the infetment of Laird Bour, till his patron's death; and was then required to subscribe the deposition which had been taken down by the clerk. The frankness of his confession astonished the audience; and one of the macers, who stood by his side, whispered in his ear—"Are you mad, man?—consider what you're doin'; the words you've spoken are enough to hang you."

At the suggestion of one of the Lords, who was generally held in abhorrence by the common people for the stern manner in which he administered the law, the doomster was ordered to apply to the notary's leg the instrument of torture called the *boot*. At each successive stroke of the mallet, he was asked whether he still adhered to his deposition, and an answer in the affirmative as often proceeded from his quivering lips; till at last the splint bone of his leg having given way before the pressure of the wedge, to gain a moment's respite from his agony, he was induced to recant. No sooner, however, had the horrid apparatus been disengaged from his limb, and a partial abatement of the pain been experienced, than he ratified his former confession, and was remanded for trial. Strenuous efforts were made by his friends, and many gentlemen of celebrity in the law, to induce him to state that the treasonable papers had only come into his possession after the death of Logan; but the unhappy man continued steadfast to his resolution. "I have sinned," said he to such as kindly wished him thus to avert his fate, "and have made up my mind to pay the penalty." When the day of trial came, still persisting in avowing his guilt, he was sentenced to be hanged on the Friday following, and his body to be quartered, as that of a traitor.

It was a bleak, raw day, on which the wretched culprit was to undergo the sentence of the law; the sun being concealed by dark, black clouds, which, in dense conglomerated masses, hung over the town. At an early hour, the various roads which led to it were crowded with people who hastened towards it; some actuated by feelings of sympathetic curiosity, others to gratify the vulgar appetite for the horrible. Long ere the appointed hour, all the windows and eminences, from which the apparatus of death was visible, were occupied, and the neighbouring shops closed. At length, the deep toll of the bell of St Giles' announced, to the anxious multitude, that the criminal had left his cell, and was moving towards the scaffold. He appeared, leaning upon the arm of a clergyman, and followed by the sheriff of the county, the magistrates, and clergymen, attired in the insignia of their office. After a fervent prayer had been offered up, and the truth of his confession had been once more ratified, the executioner stepped forward and adjusted the fatal rope. At that moment, a piercing scream was uttered by a female, who was wedged in among the crowd, at a little distance from the gallows.

But the spectators were too much engrossed in contemplating the tragic scene, to attend to the individual from whom it proceeded. George Sprot, notwithstanding the awful situation in which he was placed, could not forbear turning round towards the object who seemed to be so deeply affected by his fate. He looked. It was Susan Grey. His eyes grew dim, the handkerchief dropped from his hand, and, in a moment, the world closed on him for ever.

THE OUTLAW;

OR,

THE MAIDEN OF LEDNICK.

IN the village of Comrie, so beautifully situated in Strathearn, there lived, about the time of the Forty-five, a person of the name of John Comrie, who followed the trade of cotton-weaving, which is the only staple one of the town. He was a close and greedy man—hard in his dealings, though perfectly honest. He was a widower, and had a daughter, Marion, whose character, as it was of an elevated and noble kind, though, in other respects, peculiar and eccentric, will require a little attention.

Marion Comrie—or, as she was called, the Maiden of Lednick, in consequence of her fondness for wandering by moonlight on the banks of that magic stream—had, at an early period, imbibed strong feelings of a romantic character, derived from having heard, from the mouth of her grandmother, the many “juskals,” or tales, which prevail in that neighbourhood, concerning the famous pool, or basin of water, called, in Gaelic, “Sloch’an Donisk,” or, the Deil’s Caudron, formed by a cataract of the river from which she derived her poetical appellation. When very young, she delighted to view the place where the brownies, elves, or “men of peace,” used to keep their revels; and she often wandered farther away, to view the “Spirit of Rolla”—at least, to hear his voice in the thundering fall, called the “Spout of Rolla;” forming, also, one of the beauties of the charming Lednick.

The fountain’s fall, the river’s flow,
The woody valleys warm and low,
The windy summit wild and high,
Roughly rushing in the sky—

were, to Marion Comrie, of more interest and importance, than to the mere lover of the picturesque; for they were to her the microcosms, or little worlds, peopled with those imaginary beings, which, in one form or another, have got a local habitation and a name in every nation of the world.

Nor was it only in extreme youth that Marion Comrie’s mind was imbued with these feelings. Her poetical fancy retained them as a birthright; and the magic of the Deil’s Caudron, and Rolla’s Spout, vindicated, amidst the more rational thoughts of the young woman, the sovereignty it possessed over the heart of the child.

The true influence of these feelings can only be properly estimated by the lover of wild scenery being placed in those positions which nature has, as it were, moulded and formed for the especial purposes of exciting them. Sitting on the edge of the basin alluded to, in a deep glen overhung with thick trees and shrubs, amidst the roars of the falling waters, and the hissing and boiling of the labouring caldron, lashed into a thousand eddies—like twisting and agonized serpents hissing their eternal hatred against the stream, the unceasing cause of their agony—and, in addition to all this below, hearing the noise of thunder in the heavens above—a person, more apt to become a disciple of the modern school of utilitarianism and dry fact than Marion Comrie, could scarcely have denied some faith to the existence of the *daona shigh*, or men of peace, in the neighbouring caverns, or been perfectly sceptical to the existence of the sound of the voice of what Collins styles the “lubber fiend,” calling on the spirit of Rolla to send down water for his caldron. No description can give any idea of the feelings

of “ever-musing melancholy,” that dwell in places like these; and he that is hard in his belief, can only be referred to those schools of nature, where many things, not dreamt of in his philosophy, will find their way to his understanding and his heart.

These scenes had charms for Marion at all seasons; though the summer months, bringing many visitors and a less supply of water to her favourite stream, were not relished by her to the same extent as the advanced autumn, when the floods, which generally prevail at that time, come down red and swollen, and “the angry spirit of the waters shrieks.”

In her almost daily and nightly wanderings in these secluded and bewitched places, Marion was generally alone. A companion ceases to have that character, when the wrapt fancy does not regard him, or if it does, regrets his presence as a burden upon its wings, and an impediment to its flight; yet, sometimes, she did condescend to take with her, to the favourite temple of her poetical devotion, one individual. This favourite was her cousin, Walter Comrie—a son of a brother of her father’s, who had gone abroad and died, leaving a large fortune to Walter, who was under the charge of his uncle John. Walter did not possess Marion’s enthusiasm, in prosecuting her study of natural mythology; but he was a young man of high and chivalrous notions, which, as will immediately appear, carried him farther than prudence warranted. He loved Marion with all his soul; and she, in spite of the many lovers she had in her own exclusive world of imagination, still found some place in her affections for so fair an inhabitant of this world as Walter Comrie was admitted by many rivals to be. He had been brought up in England, and his style of speech and manners was, therefore, materially different from Marion’s. This circumstance did not abate, perhaps it increased, their interest in each other; for, while Marion’s soft Scotch cadences sounded sweet to the ears of Walter, his more tuneful sentences came, like the music of her own “men of peace,” on the ears of Marion.

Fired with the spirit of the times, to which his combustible nature afforded a ready material, Walter resolved to join the Pretender. When he communicated this intention to Marion, she first, perhaps, felt the true force of her affection to him, and the difference which exists between feelings founded on creations of the fancy, and the throbbings of a heart that is formed of flesh and blood.

“An’ ye are to become a soldier, Walter,” said Marion to him, one night, when they were sitting on the edge of the Deil’s Caudron, “and leave me and my bonny fairies to our ain company on the banks o’ the Lednick? An’ ye had as meikle faith in the existence o’ the *daona shigh* as I hae, ye might be laith to trust yer Marion to the freits o’ the little men o’ peace, and far mair laith to leave her to the care o’ the *lubber fiend*, wha cries to the *spirit o’ Rolla* to bring him his kettle wharin to boil her as he does his faes. But maybe ye think I am nae fae to the elfin race—and, in truth, neither am I; but ye ken that even their friends are but strangely treated by them at times; for Lancelot o’ the house o’ Comrie, wha fand himsel’ ae day in their subterranean abode, couldna get awa again without meikle trouble, and even when he did, they sent aye o’ the Comrie earthquakes to shake him back again.”

“O Marion, Marion! when wilt thou give up thy non-sense?—and yet thy sportive imaginations are pleasant to me, for they seem to aid nature in making thee more like an inhabitant of some other world than thou already art. Comrie has been long famed for its earthquakes and its fairies—it may some day be famous for having produced my bonny Marion. When I am fighting for the scion of our ancient kings, under the renowned James Duke of Perth, I shall not be the less bold for being the lover of an enchanted damsel.”

“An’ whan do ye gang to join the Duke o’ Perth?” asked Marion; “my puir heart, I fear, after a’ wunna be content

wi the elves o' the Lednick pool; for every shriek o' the angry spirit o' the storm, that blaws o'er the hills o' Cowden, will mak it beat wi' the fear o' yer death. O Walter, Walter! what if ye fa' i' the field o' battle?—what shall become o' yer Marion, left to mix her wail wi' the awfu' sounds o' that boiling caudron and thae echoing rocks? The guid folk o' Comrie will nae langer disbelieve the reality o' at least ae Lednick sprite; for I will be here, dead or living, to answer their cries, and shake their craven hearts wi' my mournfu' wail. Stay at hame, Walter—stay at hame!" And Marion fell upon the breast of her lover, and sobbed.

Walter Comrie was "out" in the Forty-five; and, having signalized himself, and become conspicuous in the final struggle which terminated that unfortunate enterprise, a price was set on his head, and he flew for his life. It was supposed that he secreted himself in some part of Strathearn; though even his faithful maiden was not intrusted with the place of his retreat.

One night, two of the inhabitants of Comrie—one a person called James Robertson, an old dismissed servant of John Comrie's, and the other Malcolm Baxter, a person whom John, in his greed, had prosecuted for a debt due to him—were passing by the top of the rocks that rise from the Deil's Caudron, when their attention was arrested by the sounds of voices.

"Haud him, haud him, John!" ejaculated a Highlander; "and gie me te knife, an' I'll to te teed. Tak care o' his mou—haud his shafts, for fear o' his spakin. Whisht, whisht—noo, noo—Lord, what a fuss he maks—grip him—hoo tough te teevil be! Ane o' us couldna hae tune te teed—heh! heh! but I'm sair forfoughten. There's a braw hole in his craig, but he's nae tead yet."

"He canna live lang," said John Comrie—for the listeners knew his voice—"an' I wush it were owre, for I dinna like death. He moves yet, Sandy, man. Gie him anither stab; but tak care o' the bluid, and dinna mark mæ wit."

"Tat I will," answered Sandy; "tak tat, ye teevil. I had meikle trouble gettin' ye te nicht, for ye kenned brawly we were after ye; but ye've got it noo, my shap, for gieing me sick a shace. He's compleat tead noo, an' ye may lat go his shafts—he'll no spake ony mair i' this world."

"Ay, ay, Sandy, he's dead. He'll no rin sae fast noo, as he did the day—just as if a price had been put upo' his crown. Ye tak his head, ye ken."

"To be surely—tat's my bargain. Heads, noo-a-days, are o' some value; but I wad rather hae a lord's. 'Tat wad mak' fine kail!"

"We maun get him into the cave, noo, Sandy, and cover up the blude wi' grass and leaves."

The listeners were now scared from their place, by the appearance of a white female form, which, to their excited imaginations, appeared to be the disembodied spirit of what they conceived to be the murdered man. They took to their heels, and arrived at Comrie in a state of the greatest excitement.

"That's murder, Jamie," said Malcolm—"clear, bluidy murder. I think it maun be the puir nephew laddie, Walter Comrie; for, ye ken, auld John, nae doot, wanted him dead, because he would then get a' his brither's gear, amounting to mony thousands. He'll hae gien this puir chield, Sandy M'Nab, the head, to get the reward for't; and then, ye see, he pockets the gear, without onybody kennin' aught aboot his hand i' the death."

"Ye're richt, Malcolm," answered James; "the thing's clear—but we'll wait and see if Sandy M'Nab brings in the head."

The friends waited accordingly at the end of the village, and saw John Comrie come in first. Then Sandy arrived, with something rolled up in a cloth. This satisfied them entirely of the truth of their suspicions.

Two or three days afterwards a Highlander, carrying a

bundle, went into Perth. He was observed inquiring, at various people, where the Provost lived; and, having been directed, he went up to the house, carrying his bundle in his arm.

"Hoo toes yer honour to, te tay?" inquired the man, with a most profound bow.

"What is it, lad, you want?" inquired the Provost.

"I cam here because yer honour's proclamation bade me," answered Sandy; "I hae a bit head i' my pock here, o' some sma' value."

"Wha's head is it?" inquired the Provost.

"Tat tammed rascal, Walter Comrie's, wha fought like a lion at Culloden," answered Sandy. "Noo, gie me te haw-bees."

"Is the head proven, man," inquired the Provost.

"To be surely—look at him tere," answered Sandy; "onybody may ken te head o' a traitor. Did ye ever see een like thae i' the head o' ony loyal subject?"

The Provost laughed, notwithstanding of the ghastly spectacle presented by the object, which was so much cut and disfigured, that it was only possible to say that it was a human head.

"Ye are a fule, man," resumed the Provost. "Hae ye ony witnesses to prove that that is the head o' Walter Comrie?"

"I dinna think it needs ony proof," said the resolute Sandy; "te ting pruves itsel'. Tak it into yer hand, yer honour, and ye'll find the smell o' gunpowder in't—isn't tat aneugh?"

"Come, come, I hae nae time to consume in this nonsense," said the Provost, angrily. "If ye hae nae witnesses to prove the head, ye get nae reward."

"Whar am I to get te witnesses?" asked the determined Scot. "It's braw and easy to say, bring te witnesses; but te proclamation (here it is, yer honour) says naething aboot witnesses. Te word o' Sandy M'Nab is just as goot as yer honour's; and ye hae te leevin' proof o' te noddle itsel' owre an' abune a'."

"Turn him oot, Geordie," cried the Provost to a town officer, with a red neck on his coat, standing near.

"He'll no better try tat," cried Sandy, shaking his hand, "unless he wants his head as cauld as Wattie Comrie's tere. Heugh! heugh! I find my birse gettin' up. Haud aff, Sir.—Yer honour, I tak tat man to witness, I hae offered ye te head o' Walter Comrie, te traitor, an' ye winna gie me te reward."

And Sandy turned to go away without taking the head with him.

"Tak' your bluidy head wi' ye, ye nasty whelp," cried the Provost, in a rage.

"Na, na," answered Sandy, with a leer in his eye; "I hae carried the thing far aneugh. If ye winna buy it frae me, ye may mak kail o't."

And, saying this, Sandy flew out of the house; but, as he went out of the street door, the head came tumbling down upon him, and knocked off his bonnet. Recovering himself, he seized it again, and made it fly through the window, glass and all, taking flight as fast as his feet could carry him.

This transaction very soon found its way to Comrie. It appeared to be so complete a corroboration of the suspicions entertained by James Robertson and Malcolm Baxter, and already circulated through the village, that no doubt now remained that John Comrie and Sandy M'Nab had killed Walter, with the double object of the one getting his wealth, and the other the price of his head. Some reasonable people opposed this conclusion, as being ridiculous—seeing that John Comrie had no object in doing so heinous a thing—his nephew and daughter being in love with each other, and a match the probable consequence. This was replied to again by some logical gossip, who said that there was a difference between a man's getting ten thousand pounds into his hands,

she stood there rivetted to the spot. How often had she sighed for a single whisper of those silvery tones which are attributed to the tiny race!—how often inclined her ear, to endeavour to extract, from the noise of the roaring waters, some note of music, as a voice of pity among the ravings of despair!—yet all in vain. But now she was satisfied. She heard a voice; and, as she listened more attentively, she was more and more certain of the fact.

“The ‘lubber fiend’ disna speak in thae saft accents,” she said, loud enough, as she thought, to be heard by the being from whom the sounds came.

“Teed na,” answered a voice, strong as an onion with Highland flavour—“teed na, my leddy, te lubber fiend has a voice something like my ain; but wadna ye be better at hame wi’ yer faither, tan walking hear at this eery oor? Tak te advice o’ Sandy M’Nab, and gae yer wa’s hame, my bonny leddy.”

This real indication of a mortal presence, dispelled the illusions of Marion’s fancy, as well as the hopes of realizing, in the sounds she heard, those of her friends. She directed her steps homewards.

The rage of the populace against John Comrie had not abated; on the contrary, it continued to increase—crying for something to take off the keen edge of its appetite. Several parties had been seen in various parts about Comrie, apparently consulting as to the best means of satisfying the public vengeance. They proceeded no farther at first, than in setting fire to some houses belonging to their victim; round which, as they blazed, the angry faces of the people, disdainingly to aid in extinguishing the flames, shone with a fiend-like satisfaction, in viewing the devastation produced by the devouring element. Some voices cried out, that John Comrie should be thrown into the midst of the burning pile; and it is probable, that if he had been laid hold off at that time, the threat would have been executed: but John and his daughter had taken refuge in a neighbouring farmer’s house, where they remained until the fury of the people—increased, as it had been, by the analogous energies of the fire—had, in some degree, subsided.

The news of these proceedings reached Edinburgh; and a letter was transmitted, by the king’s advocate, to make some investigation into these fires, as well as the circumstances that had given rise to them. Government, though anxious to quell the rebellion, had a steady eye to the conservation of public morals; and, if it could have been established that murder had been committed, under the cloak of a devotion to the cause of the reigning family, the crime would not have been allowed to be merged in the penal consequences of the sentence of outlawry. But, besides, if Walter Comrie had been killed, there was, of course, a count and reckoning as to his forfeited effects, which, being in the hands of John Comrie, would require to be given up to the crown.

The procurator-fiscal, accordingly, set about taking a pre-cognition. Malcolm Baxter and James Robertson were first examined; and they had no hesitation in stating, that they heard John Comrie and Sandy M’Nab kill a man on the night alluded to, whose head was cut off by M’Nab, and carried into Comrie in a bag, with a view to being taken to Perth to get the reward.

The next witness examined was Sandy M’Nab.

“Well, Sandy,” said the procurator-fiscal, in a conciliating tone, knowing the reputation of Sandy for cunning and obstinacy, “is it true that you took the head of Walter Comrie, the traitor, to Perth, and offered it to the provost for the reward?”

“There’s teevilish little use in spaking about te head noo,” answered Sandy, “when te evidence o its being Walter Comrie’s head be destroyed. It was as bonny a head o’ a traitor whan I offered it to that idiot o’ a provost as ye could wish to see on a summer day.”

“True, Sandy, but it is a fact that you *did* take the head of Walter Comrie to the provost of Perth?”

“Tat’s a teevilish cunning way o putting a question to an ignorant simple cratur like me, wha taks nae care o’ what gaes in or what comes oot o’ his mou,” answered the cunning Gael. “I said it was te head o’ Walter Comrie—tat is, tat was my notion; but the provost said te head was no proved to be te head o’ Walter Comrie—terefore, it was maybe no te head o’ Walter Comrie. Noo, tat’s plain, I’m shure, isn’t it?”

“Not to me, Sandy,” replied the fiscal, who now saw that Sandy, not having got the reward, wished, for some reason he could not well see, to leave it in a convenient state of doubt whether it was Walter Comrie’s head or not. “But you can surely say whether, in your present opinion, it was or was not the head of Walter Comrie?”

“Hoo can I hae ony opinion o’ te head noo,” answered the cautious Gael, “when its no before me?—besides, it wouldna become a puir cratur like me to treat te provost o’ Perth sae unceevily as to say I had an opinion tifferent frae his.”

“Well, Sandy,” said the fiscal, “you can at least say where you got the head? There is no doubt of that. I am sure you are too acute a person to think you can evade a question like that.”

“I deny tat I am acute,” ejaculated Sandy; “if your honour didna ken tat Sandy M’Nab is a fule, ye wouldna try to teceive him be flattering him to gie ye a goot answer. I tinna mind whar I got te head noo.”

“Was it off or on the body when you got it?” asked the fiscal.

“Aff te body, to be shure,” answered Sandy, who here had the advantage of an awkward question, and saw it instantly.

“Yes, Sandy, I know it was off the body when you got it; but where was it before you got it?” asked the unfortunate questioner.

“On te body, to be shure,” answered Sandy.

“Did you see it on the body?” asked the fiscal again.

“I tinna mind,” answered Sandy; “but tere can be nae toot tat it was ance on te body—so tere is nae use in putting tat question.”

“Where is the head now?” asked the fiscal.

“Whar it should be,” answered Sandy—“in te grave.”

“How did you part with it, after the provost refused to give you the reward?” again asked the fiscal.

“I sent it to te provost, wi’ te compliments o’ Sandy M’Nab,” answered Sandy, grinning.

“You need not wait longer,” said the fiscal.

“Ay, ay,” said Sandy—“tat is te way—when ye hae got every thing ye want out o’ a simple shiel like me, ye turn him awa. It’s shust te way o’ te ward.”

Several other witnesses were examined; and the precognition was sent to the crown lawyers, when it was expected that a writ of extent would be issued for seizing the effects of Walter Comrie, in the possession of his uncle. The consequence of this step would, it was anticipated by his enemies, be the ruin of John Comrie; because his funds, being distributed in various parts of the country in the course of his business, could not be collected in time to pay the crown creditor, while, if his houses, goods, and effects at Comrie, were, by the diligence of the crown, exposed to public sale, such was the inveteracy of the public, that no one would bid for them; and hence, the most valuable articles would go for nothing, and all the money of John Comrie himself, as well as all that he held as trustee for his nephew, would not together satisfy the demands of the crown, which extended to £10,000—being Walter’s fortune left to him by his father. The next step would be, that John Comrie would be committed to jail—one, the anticipation of which, on the part of Marion, added, if addition was possible, to the griefs of a heart already nearly broken.

In the midst of all these proceedings, indicating the ruin of a parent, and poverty, and misery, and death to his innocent daughter, and presenting the appearance of that collection of black clouds which come from every direction

to contribute their fiery elements in the production of thunder, Marion Comrie's imagination reverted continually, as the ship-wrecked mariner eyes the cynosure of his hope, to the sounds she had heard at the Lednick pool. Her visits to that enchanted spot were still continued; and, just in proportion to the darkness of her prospects at home, her hopes and wishes of some kind of relief from her imaginary friends increased and brightened. She listened again for the sweet sounds she had heard on the former evening, and was again surprised to hear them repeated. Thinking they came from below, she threw herself down upon the earth, and, scarcely breathing, caught, with the avidity of hope-clinging despair, at every whisper. What was her surprise—how exquisite her delight—how bright her hopes—when she heard a soft, mournful voice, in low accents, pronounce her name! She waited, in breathless expectation, for a repetition of it, or for more being said by the speaker, but in vain. She heard no more; and, after a long period of the greatest excitement, suspended by curiosity, hope, love, and apprehension, she sat down by the side of the caldron, in a state of exhaustion.

"Cruel mockery o' a puir maiden's waes!" she ejaculated; "is it no aneugh that, ane by ane, a' my hopes hae been taen awa frae me—my lover, my father, my means o' sustaining this flickering smoky flame o' life—a', save that which ye hae produced and fed wi' dreams o' yer siller palaces, made bricht wi' their chrystal lamps set wi' emeralds? Is it no aneugh that a', save that ae hope, should be taen frae me, and noo, that that hope itsel' should find nae resting place save the cuckoo sound o' a wandering voice? When ye said, in sae saft and bonny accents—'Marion Comrie,' ye might hae added ae word mair, and that word is 'come,' and yer maiden o' Ledrick would hae dashed in a moment into that caudron o' boilin' waters. But, na! na! Marion Comrie is destined to seek a refuge frae her sufferings in the embrace o' a mere vision sent frae yer bowers o' bliss, to tell her hoo happy she might be, and yet hoo miserable she is. Cruel, cruel elves! hoo lang will ye sport wi' the love o' yer faithful maiden?" And, rising disconsolately, Marion sought again her unhappy home, where she found matters assuming a still more threatening aspect. A number of officers had entered the house, and taken an inventory of everything contained in it. They put seals on every desk and drawer, which they locked, and pocketed the keys. A crowd had gathered round the door, exulting in the retribution which was thus visiting John Comrie, and many cries were heard, to seize him and drown him in the Earn. Some days after, an advertisement appeared in the town, to the effect that all the goods and effects of John Comrie would be sold on that day eight days; and a person, who had been in Perth, told the delighted but revengeful inhabitants, that John Comrie had been caught in Crieff, and carried to the jail of Perth, upon an exchequer warrant, for payment of Walter Comrie's confiscated effects. In the evening, a bonfire was lighted in the middle of the village, round which all the lovers of the unfortunate Charles safely exulted in the punishment of one who had murdered his nephew, under the cloak of betraying his cause. An effigy of the unhappy man was next paraded, and then burned, amidst the groans of hundreds of people who had collected from places round the village, to add to the number of the inhabitants.

Marion Comrie, who had been turned out of the house when the writ of extent was executed, and who had been taking in by a feeling neighbour, saw this scene. The fire lighted up the whole village; and bells, and trumpets, and every kind of noisy instrument, added their rough voices to the cries of the mob. The poor maiden became almost frantic. She turned her back upon the frightful scene, and sought her usual place of consolation. Resuming her accustomed seat, she sat and listened for the voice she had previously heard; but her frame of mind had been so shattered by the scenes she had witnessed, that she felt a feverish

restlessness in her spirits; and the calmness and confiding hope with which she had formerly waited for the sweet sound, had given place to a fretful impatience and confusion of thought. After sitting some time, the voice was heard. It appeared to utter the words, "Would that thou wert with me, my sweet Marion. Come, oh, come, and heal up the wounds of my broken spirit!"

On hearing these words, the unhappy Marion sat in solemn silence, as if wrapt in some enthusiastic dream. She started up and exclaimed—

"Gratefu', gratefu' friends! and hae ye now proved the love and faith o' the maiden o' Lednick? The fires o' Comrie are burning bricht i' the licht o' our ain mune, but brichter lights are waiting me in the braw ha's o' yer enchanted palaces. Shine out, ye bonny siller-horned maiden, and bring yer tinsel frae Benlomon and Auchincharry; collect a' yer beams frae the siller waves o' Earn, the Ruchill, and the Lednick, and licht me lame to my bowers, where there are nae consuming fires, nae cruel fathers, nae murdered lovers, and nae relentless faes." And, saying these words, she, with a wild scream, flung herself into the boiling caldron.

Next day, it was generally reported in the village of Comrie, that John Comrie's daughter, overcome with the grief of the loss of her lover, and the misfortunes of her father, had thrown herself into the Deil's Caudron and been drowned. In consequence, a great crowd of people immediately repaired to the spot, and every means were resorted to to find the body. Instruments, called drags, were used at various parts of the river, but without success; no trace of the body could be found, and the people returned under the impression that it had got into some of the deep recesses of the gulph, where it was impossible to reach it.

This additional misfortune to the family of the Comries, added to the sensation already so strongly produced by the previous extraordinary circumstances. The fates of Walter and Marion drew many tears from eyes which had been red with revenge against the author of their wrongs; and it was now thought that heaven had interfered to vindicate the rights of justice and humanity. When the first emotions of grief had given place to a calmer recollection of the many endearing qualities of the unhappy Marion, it was resolved, by the inhabitants, to erect, on the banks of her favourite stream, and near the place where she died, a monument commemorative of her virtues, of her love to Walter, who was so cruelly taken from her by the avidity of an avaricious father, and of the circumstances which had obtained for her the name of the Maiden of Lednick. Many subscriptions were procured to this generous project; for not only the admirers of Marion, but also the revengers of the crimes of her father, came forward to contribute their proportion.

On the day previous to the sale of John Comrie's effects, a commotion was observed in the streets of Comrie, greater than had been experienced in the memory of the oldest person in Strathearn. Every person who could walk was out, and those who could not walk had their old stiff necks extended like cranes out at the windows. In the midst of the crowd there stood Walter Comrie, with Marion leaning on his arm, and alongside of them was Sandy M'Nab with a paper in his hands, purporting to be a proclamation of pardon. This paper was read by a person present. It set forth that—"Whereas a person of the name of Walter Comrie of Sheriffbrae, in the county of Lanark, had, in consequence of the prominent part he had taken in the late rebellion, been outlawed, and a price set on his head by a proclamation, which contained an erroneous designation of the said Walter Comrie, having described him as an inhabitant of Comrie in Perthshire, where another person of the name of Walter Comrie resided, whereby the said Walter Comrie

residing in Comrie, had suffered great hurt and prejudice in his person and effects: Therefore, it was necessary to rectify the said error, and to free the said Walter Comrie of Comrie from any further disturbance, hindrance, or obstruction in going about his lawful calling, and all persons were called upon to observe the said proclamation, and commanded to desist from any further interference with the said Walter Comrie of Comrie, accordingly."

When this proclamation was read, the effect produced by it, added to the joy which the appearance of the two youthful favourites, coming, as it were, from the grave, excited in the bosoms of all who saw them, was so great, that the people of Comrie seemed to have all gone out of their reason. Young and old thronged round the happy pair, hugged them, kissed them, shook them by the hands, and exhibited every other indication of frantic joy.

Another feeling of a powerful nature soon took possession of the populace—shame and sorrow for their conduct towards the innocent victim of so many persecutions, John Comrie. In proportion to the strength of these feelings, was the ardency of the desire to render him justice and satisfaction. It was known that an order had been transmitted from Edinburgh to liberate him from the jail, and it was, therefore, proposed, and received with loud roars of enthusiastic approbation, that a party should proceed to Perth, and bring him to Comrie in a coach, drawn by themselves. This project was put into immediate execution, and John Comrie, in the midst of many hundreds of people, who, a short time before, thirsted for his blood, was brought into Comrie in the form of an ovation.

Next day, John Comrie gave a dinner to a number of the respectable inhabitants of Comrie, at which some conversation took place, which may give some explanation of the circumstances which led to so much mischief, error, and confusion.

"And was Walter Comrie secreted all the time in the cave at the Deil's Caudron?" asked Mr Moodie, a respectable merchant of Comrie.

"Yes," answered John Comrie. "After reading the proclamation, we thocht it best to conceal him there. I often visited him mysel'; but my messenger wha managed our communications, was Sandy M'Nab, a richt trusty freend, wha took his victuals to him, and led folks aff the scent wha were makin' ony inquiries about the caudron. We didna think it proper to tell Marion onything about the matter; because, though a fine cratur, she is a little eccentric and fancifu', an' we war feared her feelings for Walter might hae wrought upon her sac meikle as to mak her do something that would lead people to suspect our plan."

"But how did the story of the murdered man arise?—and, more than that, why did Sandy M'Nab carry a head to Perth as Walter Comrie's?"

"Hoot toot," said Sandy—"tat's plain enugh. We war afraid to be seen takin' meat to Walter every day, and thocht it wad be better to gie him as meikle as wad keep him for a gay while; so, as I had broken the leg o' a buck ae day, we agreed to kill him at nicht, and conceal his body in the cave. Te people, wha heard te wark, tocht we war killin' te nephew, Walter. I got te head o' te buck, wi' te horns, to mak a present o' to the laird o' Comrie House. Neist day, I heard te people sayin' tat John and I had killed Walter, to get his head for te reward; and I hinted to John, tat it would be a good way to put te officers off te scent, if I got a head o' a dead sodger and took it to te provost as Walter's head: an' sae it was dune. Whan te folk began to be so wild, I wasna clear about saying meikle to te fiscal about te head."

"That is quite satisfactory," replied Mr Moodie; "but there is yet one mystery—how was Marion saved?"

"That was a dangerous concern," answered Walter Comrie. "I was in the cave when Marion leaped into the

water. Her shriek alarmed me, and running out, I saw her in the act of falling into the fearful caldron. I knew the eddies of the pool, from having often thrown floating things into it to see them rise and revolve, and sink and rise again, and I knew that Marion would rise at a certain spot. To that I hastened, and by good fortune, as much as by good guidance, I succeeded in getting her on the bank. I then took her to the cave, where she remained until the day when the proclamation was issued."

This explained everything. The dinner went off in fine style. There was a dance in the evening, to which all the inhabitants were admitted; and all was joy and satisfaction.

Walter Comrie was soon married to Marion. She became a mother; and it was remarked that she was never again seen at the Deil's Caudron. Some fearful ideas were associated in her mind with that place. Her faith in the existence of fairies very likely degenerated into scepticism, as her fondness for them gave place to a mother's feelings for the little elves she soon bore to Walter; and which, notwithstanding of her strong affection for them, she sometimes thought were as mischievous as the little inhabitants of the Lednick banks are represented to be. Marion became an excellent wife, and a kind mother, without losing any part of the affection and duty she owed to her parent.

PATRICK O'FLANIGAN'S BIOGRAPHY OF HIS GRANDSON.

IN one of my solitary rambles, during the summer of 1829, in the suburbs of the village of T——, I was abruptly startled from the reverie into which I had fallen, by a ragged urchin, apparently about the age of twelve or thirteen, suddenly bolting past me, panting and blowing as if his heart would have leaped from his breast. On turning round, and casting my eyes in the direction from which he fled, I discovered a savage-looking old man, armed with a large hedge-knife, dogging, at his utmost speed, the steps of the young fugitive. We shall have a *scene*, thought I, presently. But, on the pursuer coming up to me, instead of continuing in the chase of the terrified boy, he unceremoniously stopped short, and drawing up before my face, vociferated, in a hasty, nettled tone, and in a tongue that partook largely of the brogue of *ould Ireland*—"Why didn't you hould that rogue of a 'scape-the-gallows, and be hanged to yees? Don't you know, Sir, he's kill't my Katey with a stone?" On stating my ignorance of such a catastrophe, and expressing a hope, at the same time, that his Katey would be more terrified than hurt. "Thin, sure enough, you're right, hastily added he; "for I heard her spake at last; but it was jist by chance, afther a manner, that she was not murdered clane; for I saw the great stone whiz past me, and strike Katey, without givin' warnin', as we stood by aitch other in the garden—And wasn't it true that the young villyan o' the airth left the other childer, and run for it in a minute, jist to save his life?" I readily subscribed to the latter part of his narration, and hinted it was well the little rogue's nimbleness of foot had not failed him in his need, as I apprehended the fright he had got would prevent him from again indulging in the dangerous practice of stone-throwing. "Of a truth," rejoined he, "I'm glad in the heart the bould divil has escaped with a whole skin; for he may have come of decent Christian people; and for their sakes, and the sake of our own 'scape-the-gallows, I'm glad you didn't hould him." I now began to perceive that Patrick O'Flanigan—for such was the name of the old gentle-

man—was growing pleasantly cool after his *heat*; and as I knew him, from report, to be a genuine *original*, I at once determined to improve my untoward introduction to him to the best advantage. On being pressed, therefore, to accompany him back to his house, I cheerfully accepted the blunt invitation; and in a few minutes had the gratification of finding myself seated under the cover of the *ould roof*, as he was pleased to term a neat white-washed cottage of one story, nearly overgrown with ivy and honeysuckle, and skirted with a small garden, abounding with fruits and flowers. Here, however, the feast of humour, which I had anticipated in the society of my eccentric, yet warm-hearted host, was threatened with a serious rencontre; for the old dame, whom Patrick had given out as “kill’t with a stone,” no sooner saw her husband enter, in company with a stranger, than she burst into tears, and eagerly inquired of me, “If Patrick, in his madness, had hurt anybody’s child?” I was about to relieve her fears on that head, when my new acquaintance angrily exclaimed—“Is it after making a fool of me, you’d be, Katey? Where’s the use of raisin’ sich a pace of work about nothin’? I didn’t mane to hurt the ill-looking thaif—forgive me, both on you, for calling him by so bad a name—I was only aiger to give him a riglar batin’ in a panceable manner; and an’ yer honour,” added he, turning to me, “can bear witness to that same.” “Come, come,” said I, addressing myself to Mrs O’Flanigan, “I am glad you are not seriously injured; and I can vouch for the innocence of your husband having avenged your wrong.” “Jist so,” returned Patrick; “and now, Katey, you must bring us the bottle, and get biling water ready, and the sugar along with it, as the young gintlemin and I must be takin’ a drop of whisky, by the way of refreshment.” I learned in a moment that, with Mrs O’Flanigan, “to hear was to obey;” and, in a few minutes, Patrick and I were seated at a table, well stocked with liquors and drinking utensils. I had now leisure to investigate the disposition of my entertainer; and it was not long before the ludicrous mixture of his character shone forth in its true colours. He wept and laughed alternately, with his little grey twinkling eyes, and ever and anon circumscribed his lean, puckered lips with his long sharp tongue; while a constant flow of unsophisticated Irish feeling and humour fixed my interest, and rendered him, for the time, a most agreeable companion. Our conversation turned upon various subjects; until having, by accident, fixed my eyes upon a frigate in miniature, suspended by a cord from the ceiling, the old man, on observing me, became suddenly silent; and I could perceive, from his altered look, that he laboured under some strong emotion, which he strove in vain to shroud. I thought, within myself, that, in all probability, the ship might have belonged to some favourite child, now no more, and I hesitated to inquire the cause of his agitation, lest I should give additional bitterness to the gushings of sorrow that seemed welling from his heart. My uneasiness, however, was speedily removed by Patrick himself; for, raising the tumbler to his lips, and, thrusting his hand into mine, “I find, Sir,” he exclaimed, “I cannot hate the reprobate by no manner of manes—he’s my own grandson, rogue as he is and that bit frigate you say hangin’ there, is all that we have of poor Tom; so, with yer honour’s lave, we’ll drink to his better conduct, and may God bless and save his heart and sowl for everlastin’!”

“My poor Tommy!” sobbed Mrs O’Flanigan, when Patrick had finished his benediction; “perhaps he is now mourning over the yearning hearts he has all but broken.”

“Is it spakin’ you are about the raskil, my darlint?” ejaculated Patrick. “Sure you’ll not be after denyin’ that Tommy was born a villyan; but, if the gintlemin, Katey, would like to hear his bigrophy, as the praist calls it, I’ll tell that same without more ado.”

Having signified my wish to be made acquainted with the

particulars of his grandson’s life, the old gentleman, after rummaging for some time in an old trunk which stood at the extremity of the room, returned with two or three soiled letters in his hand, and reseated himself at the table.

“You must know,” commenced Patrick, “the boy is now nearly thirty years ould. He came to stop with Katey and me when his mother died at Ballyshanny. He was thin out six, and he was jist the same age of Morris Nowlan to a day; for he and Morris were born within a month of aitch other. Well, while his granny kept him riglar at his Reading-made-aisy, I larn’t him the Paternoster by heart, and tould him, at nights, how Saint Patrick, of blessed memory, drove the sar-pints and other varmint out of Ireland; and though Katey didn’t like the saint in the laste, yet little Tommy would have me spake for hours, about the nine great boult of the iron chest that held the sar-pint; and, when we went over to Ireland that same year to say after some property, the pretty boy asked me to shew him the lake where the varmint is to this hour for certain. This proved, Sir, that the child had a nate uptake; an’, barrin’ the alphbit, he larn’t everything else like a praist; but I didn’t press him sore with the letters, for the child could spake dacintly without them; and as readin’ and writin’ come by nature, I couldn’t bear to say Katey botherin’ the darlint’s life out with a book. I dont wish, by no manner of manes, to blame her; but sure and it was she that sint him to school, to prevint him fallin’ intil loose company; and he wasn’t two months there, yer honour, till we saw that the devil had got intil the lad.”

“Yes, yes, Patrick!” retorted Mrs O’Flanigan, impatiently, while a tear trembled for a moment in her eye, and then fell on her cheek; “I sent the child to school; and when I think of the affection he once bore me, all my old feelings gush over my heart; and, prodigal as he has been, I feel I can never stifle the yearnings of kindness towards the homeless orphan of my own poor Peggy!”

“Homeless orphan!” cried Patrick, with a wicked smile lurking about the corners of his mouth, and his eyes cast up to me—“homeless orphan!” cried he; “never say the thing twice, Katey—here’s my word fresh and fastin’ for you, Sir, this blessed mornin’—howandiver it’s afternoon now—the ‘scape-the-gallows might have lived with us all the days of his life, and a great dale longer, if he pleased, had he not taken it intil his head, with his aisy assurance, to destroy our pace, after recaivin’, since iver he first set foot under our ould roof, everything he see’d that made him onaisy. Och! Sir, none of the sons of the esteated ginty could bate the bould raskil, after a bit, on the Holy Gospels; for Katey gave him the learnin’ of a praist, till he could spake like a furriner; an’, barrin’ his being a curiosity of a boy, bad sorrow may come over me if father Brady himself could have any dispute upon the head of sayin’ that Tommy aither wanted sinse or raison!”

“No, indeed,” replied Mrs O’Flanigan, mournfully, without lifting her eyes—“the boy’s indiscretions proceeded from his head—no one, who ever looked upon his blithe open countenance, could harbour a suspicion of the goodness of his heart.”

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

PATRICK O'FLANIGAN'S BIOGRAPHY OF HIS GRANDSON.

(Concluded.)

"Troth, and that's what I call mighty polite, Katey," cried Patrick, with a particular draw up of his mouth and eyebrows; "but whether his bouldness proceeded from his head or his tail, you'll not be after denyin', if you please, that the goodness of Tommy's heart had nearly broken mine into three halves. You sae, Sir," continued he, turning quickly round and addressing himself to me, "the boy was given, by natur, to roguery in all kinds and sizes; and he thought no more of his thaivory in the face o' noon-day than if it was pitchdark night. Once he pertinded he could driss hooks—sarra a one of him could do so—and what do you think, in the 'varsal world, he did to get feathers? Why, he cut the head off a decent woman's drake, and, when she came to our house to charge him with it, the bould thaif denied it, with the identical head in his hand. 'Woman,' said he, impudent and aisy, 'how d'yo know a drake?' 'By it's quack,' answered she. 'So I thought,' said he; 'you're a credit to him that owes you.' And, as he spake, he marched off whistlin'

"Ower the water to Charlie."

And no better tratement would the poor widow have gotten, had not Katey slipped a half-crown intil her lap, to make up for the iggs she might loss by the murder of her drake. But, if you please to read that bit letter which he, sint to his cousin, Richard, I'll engage you'll be sick at heart with the cratur of the world, afore you get half through it; indeed, his aisy wickedness makes us laugh at laste; but it's on the wrong side of our mouths, your honour."

A clumsily folded letter, much soiled and worn—apparently through age—was now deposited in my hands. I found it had been written by their grandson when at school, probably a short time after he had completed his third lustrum, and addressed to his quondam school-fellow, who was then an idler in the country. The mother of the boy, hapening to lay her hands upon the letter, was sensibly alarmed at the juvenilo wickedness which it breathed; and, to save her own child from the contamination of such a companion, she returned the letter to the writer's grandfather, with an injunction that young Tom was not, upon any account, to be allowed to visit Blinkbonnie. The proscribed letter was to the following effect:—

"T——, April (I've forgot the day of the month) 1815.

"DEAR DICK,—What do you think? The school breaks up on Friday, and I don't believe granny will send me back again. It's of no use, for I'm just as good as I can be; and it's only throwing away her money to keep me at it longer. Isn't it famous, Dick? I can safely say I haven't written my own Latin Exercises these six months. We make Ned Darling do all these things for us, without troubling our heads about the matter. Grandpapa would call me a 'decaiven raskill,' did he know; but I've only to clap my tongue in my cheek and spout gibberish, as all goes down with him for Latin, that he does not understand; and

the old fellow is sure to call me 'a curiosity of a boy.' The fact is, I don't think I've opened my Rudiments these two years—no, not since I flung Cæsar and Ovid, with old Ainsworth,* into the brewery pond. My eye! what work we had to get the beggars to sink! But it's no matter? sailors don't need Latin, Dick, and it's all the same in the Greek, you know.

"Have you heard that old Tawsie is like to get buckled to the little woman with the red eyes, whom we used to call the 'Fern Island Doe?' I'm pretty certain, marry when they will, they'll never get both home alive again from the church. What choice fun we have now with Old Hickerie! I'm sure it would do your heart good to join us! Mo and Jack Thompson sent him home from school, last Friday night, with a long tobacco-pipe stuck through the band of his old greasy castor; and we had the glorious satisfaction of seeing him strut across the bridge, and make a land-fall at Currie the bookseller's. We followed him to the very door, and nearly split our sides with laughing. It's almost as good, Dick, as the 'STOLEN OR STRAYED GREYHOUND' label that we battered in front of Parson Grimshaw's hat. Don't you know, the priest goes by the name of the *Stolen Greyhound* ever since? But, I'll tell you—only you needn't be going to say anything to your mother; there's something about her I don't like—but you'll find that out yourself in the long run. Well, as I was saying, us two is going to play old Tawsie a fine trick before the vacation comes round. You must know, we steal his snuff every day—for he's never done sleeping; and when he sends Jack out again for some fresh, he's going to buy half-an-ounce of pepper to mix up with his 'Irish blackguard.' Isn't it prime, Dick? Oh! it's a famous good joke as you over heard—it will burn the old savage to the quick. I'll never forgive his tying me up by the thumbs last year for cutting off the drake's head; and I should like nothing better than to get a sly shot at him, some of these odd days, with your father's old volunteer musket. I don't think there would be any sin in it, especially if I took a low aim. Jack and me's the biggest that he has, and we're never out of mischief. We let off squibs and crackers all hours of the day, and old Tawsie daren't play peep: if he did, us two would soon put him through his facings! Wur nearly as good as him; and Jack is far better at writing and counting.

"See, Dick, and don't let the young crows off till I come. I'm a capital speeler; it was but last week I palmed up to the Lively's cross-trees and sat *stridies*. That's your sorts, my buck! I could easily have turned the vane, you know—but what was the use? I pity your mother's pigeons; us two will riddle them beautiful with the old volunteer. Have you any young pigs this year? What do you say to catchin' two or three on the sly, and giving them a sail through the pond in the washing tub? Do you mind what royal battles we used to have with your mother's crawdin

* "Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary." It may be as well to mention here, that the incidents and scenes inscribed in this tale, forced and exaggerated though they may appear, are *stubborn facts*; and we dare to say, hundreds of our readers will not fail to recognise, in our pen-and-ink sketches, the characteristics and faithful portraits of well-known "village characters."

and the bubblyjock? Is the old fellow still strutting about yet, with his wattles? I hope you haven't potted him. Be sure you don't pelt the frogs, Dick, till I get out—it's a cruel way of going to work; I don't think I've killed above a score or so ever since Jack Thompson learnt me how to blow them up and skin them alive without hurting them. It's capital fun!

"You needn't be taken up, Dick, about the road to Shields; for Dod Tait, the chaise-driver, told me we can't go wrong, as it is straight by the finger-post; and he intends to keep a sharp look-out for us when we reach Belford. I gave him my grandfather's tobacco-fob last week—poor soul! he was just chewing out of his bare pocket. He also had my granny's net-purse from me, with four and sixpence in't, to keep for us till we see him. That's always something we know of; and I shall be on the look-out in the meantime. I've a good many coppers stitched into the waistband of my cordroys—that's the spot for your money, Dick; your mother couldn't make it jingle when it is well sewed up, were she shaking your breeches to rags. To be sure, I've been caught sewing often enough; but when my grandmother asked me what I was about, I told her, with the best grace in the world, that I was merely fastening on a *gallows button*!

"I'll be out, not the morn, nor the next day, but the next.

TOM HALL."

"And sure it is a swate thing of the kind, the gallows-rogue," said Patrick, significantly, as I lifted my eyes from the letter; "and but for that same, Sir," continued he, taking the letter from my hand, and shaking it in my face, "sarra a one of us would have found out his bould thavbery; for the thing's as plain as pais, that neither man nor baste could have conceived that a mare boy could possess sich a ganius for wickedness."

I felt so provokingly tickled with the ingenious cunning, the barbarous cruelty, and, withal, the traits of simplicity, which the letter I had just read exhibited, that I was at a loss what opinion to offer upon the subject; but, regarding it as the ebullition of a juvenile mind, fraught with folly, yet uninitiated in crime, I observed that I hoped the indiscretions of his youth would not be persisted in when he grew up to manhood.

"I hoped so, too," ejaculated Patrick O'Flanigan, while the tears stood in his hollow eyes; "but he was wicked in his youth, and ouldness has not mended him at all, Sir; and I'm free to bet, this afternoon, the king's own picture in ould goold, there isn't his match, by sae or land, in the three kingdoms. But what was I going to say? Yes. Well, I gave him a riglar batin' when I got the letter, and threatened I would pack him off in less than no time, if ever he did the like; but, in good troth, he went on for long after in a mighty dacent sort of a manner, the cratur. 'Here's a fine mornin', Tommy,' said I—'God bless it; are ye bravely, boy?' as he lift the house on a Sunday afore breakin' his fast. 'Is it to the riglar sarvice you're going?' 'No,' replied he; 'I'm going to sae ould Tawsie's weddin'. 'Take care of yourself,' said I, 'and be quiet and aisy afore your taicher.' Soon after he was gone, we heard a great noise in the middle of the street, as if the murder of the world was in it. 'What can that mane?' cried I to Katey; and, whin we opened the door to sae, there they were—God hilp thim!—the taicher and his bride, with Parson Grimshaw, in his long illigint white gown, walkin' at their head; and all the parish, ould and young, marchin' at their tails. I felt for the little dacent woman, as if she had been my own daughter; for the crowd kept laughin', and jokin', and shoutin', and pushin', forgetting clane it was Sunday; and myself thought it was as good as all over with her, when I saw the wet turf flyin' about all ways at once, and lots of it fallin' upon one of the purtiest white dresses, any way, savin' the parson's, that I ever see'd. I was sertain shure, too, the bould divart-

in' of the boys would raise the sport of Mister Grimshaw, for I saw a wicked mainin' in his two eyes, as he kept takin' down their names with a pincil on a bit of paper. But, whin the weddin' came fornept us—thunder and turf!—whom did we sae, but our own 'scape-the-gallows, Tommy, runnin' afore all of thim, with a book in his hand, and cryin' out to the parson, in solemn mockery of Father Brady, '*Ovis doxis glorioxis.—Amin.*' I breathed not the wind of a word, and I had my raisins; for, soon and suddent, the parson went mad, and swore a big oath—savin' your presence—and thin sprung at Tommy like an ould she tiger. But the boy took leg-bail for it, and banged through the crowd; for well he knew that Parson Grimshaw would not dale civilly by him; and my wonder at Tommy was great above all things, when I saw him bother the parson round and round the latter's well, till the good man cursed and blew like a born trooper. At long and last, the boy slipped his foot, and fell his long length in the wet; and who should tumble clane over him, with the downrightest clash in the gutter, but the enraged parson his own silf, in his natg illigint white gown, that was made a perfect baste of, forbye havin' gotten the bridge of his nose broke in two places at once, and his useful life nearly spilt out of him? Tommy, the bould cratur, rose as soft as anything, after a while, and slipt amongst the crowd; but not one of thim offered to hold him, or clane the parson whin he got on his legs agin. By the book, it's himsilf the moral of pity, for he could not conceal himsilf from the people's eyes, as he wint skulkin' by the taicher's side—miserable lookin', as if he had pais in his shoes—and the murder of it was, that, all the way to the church and back agin, there was nothin' heard but pales of laughter. Och, Sir, the taicher's weddin' will never be forgotten in T—. But, sure, we had our own vexatious times of it after; for, when we thought that everything had wint clane out of the parson's head, what should he do but drag Tommy afore the Justices of the Pace, and all the gintry of the parish, who would not let the matter rest—shame to thim, a thousand thousand times!—till the boy would answer in the public paper to the name of Sabbath-breaker and disturber of the pace, and ask pardon of Mister Grimshaw for the insult he had offered him at the taicher's weddin'. Yet, sure, there were hundrs oulder and badder than Tommy that day. But I'll let ye into the sacret, maybe:—The parson was once turned out of my house for laying his hand upon my daughter's wedded shoulder. Do you understand me, now? And this was the revinge he had of us, the poor malishus cratur! Indeed, and it was, your honour; though Katey and I would sooner have lifted the boy from the cowlid pavin' stones of the street, a dead corpse, than been witness to the black burning shame that he put on the face of all of us."

"I never wished a wish on a living creature," said Mrs O'Flanigan, reddening with indignation at the recollection of her grandson's shame and the author of it—"but I have seen it fulfilled; and, God knows, whether or not, in the case of the persecutor of my Peggy's child, my wishes have been answered. Priest I will call him not; for he was a foul blot upon the religion he professed, and a public disgrace to the cloth which he wore. I had said, often and often again—and, Patrick there, where he's sitting, can bear witness to the truth of what I say—that Grimshaw's wickedness would bring down the frown of Heaven upon his guilty head; and my prediction was strikingly verified; for, wearied with his profigacy, that God, whose holy altar he polluted by his presence, found means to remove the wolf in sheep's clothing; and, oh, Sir, when once left to himsilf—with every moral and religious feeling deadened in his heart, for never did he rule a passion—how low were the depths of degradation into which he plunged!"

"Och! there's no occasion in life, Mistress Katey," ejaculated Patrick, "for troublin' the gentleman with sich a

long sermon about the parson. You know, darlint, his on-goings have been the talk of the country round; and, though there isn't a man, for rale larnin', fit to hould a candle to Mister Grimshaw, to be found anywhere—barrin' Father Brady, lave him alone for that;—yet his want of dacency, and dislike to hear rason, gave rise to some mighty ugly reports, which reached the ears of the bishop, so that he ordered him to strip off his iligint gown, and deliver up his braw sate in the pulpit to another gentleman. But it was not me nor Katey was the downfall of him; for may I never spako more if we had any hand in it at all, at all! Oeh! they little know us, ould woman," continued he, laying his hand on his wife's arm, "who would go to drame that aither you or I would answer to the name of *informers!* No, no; we never know what double-dalin' was. We hate it."

There was a tremulous movement in his watery eyes, and a quivering on his lip, as the honest Irishman uttered this last sentence. I was about to reply, by urging the continuation of his grandson's history, when Patrick, as if unwilling that any one should speak but himself, seized me by the hand, and exclaimed, "With your lave, Sir, I have more to say. A thing comes into my heart of a sudden—for, sure, I have not tould you about the poor young eratur of whom we were spakin'.—(Whisht! Katey, don't be after ratthin' the tay-cups in sich a way; you'd be lookin' straight in my face if I didn't want you.) And where was I at? Well, now, give ear to me, Sir. About two months after the parson left the parish, Tommy kicked at the school altogether, and went about in a blagardly way, with all the tag-rag and bob-tail in the village. But it's an ould sayin' and a truo one, that an idle head is the devil's own workshop; for very soon the eratur wouldn't go to the riglar worship, or do anything he was tould in the commands. I went down afore him, on the knees of my heart, and, said I, 'Tommy, will you give up your on-goings, and mend your ways, to please your grandfather? Don't you know, boy, you were bequaethed to me by your dying mother; and that I promised, afore the face of Heaven, to be a mother to you, and far more; and, by my love for her, whose blessed spirit now looks down and spakés to you through my ould lips, I'd give you the right eye out of my head—ay, give up the ghost and die—if you will only make answer to me in the truth, that you'll give up all thoughts of the sac, and be no longer a born eye-sore to nie nor your poor granny.' 'What would you have me to be?' cried he, as bould as you please. 'Hearken to me well, with both your ears, you crooked spawn of a boy,' said I; 'for now that you want to be tould, Master Tommy, I'd have you know, I'd rather see you sit upon a board, with your legs anunder you all the days o' your life, than consent to your larnin' the sac farin' business.' 'A whip-the-cat, do you mane?' roared he; 'I'd sooner grind brimstone to the'—'Cromwell's curse to you,' cried I, stoppin' his mouth; 'will you dare to breathe so much as the Evil One's name on my flure. You're good for nothin', you bould *divil*, but atin' and slapein'; and the sooner you shift for yourself the better for us all.' But I did not mane what I said, I'll tell you. Four days after, howandiver, when I rose in the mornin', and walked down stairs to unfasten the bolt of the fore-door, what should I see, but the door standin' wide to the walls! It crassed me at once that the boy was off, root and branch, on the divil's arrand; and, slippin' intil his room, I whispered out—'Are you slapein', Tommy?' but not one livin' sowl was there to inake answer. So I stepped up to Katey, and tould her, without more ado, that the *bird was flown!* May the Lord purtect and guide my motherless boy! ejacuated Katey, fervently. 'Amin,' cried I. 'But,' said she, 'I'll never slape aisy, Patrick, till I see him sittin' agin at our own hearth-stone; so jist take the coach this moment, and run after him to Shields, afore he gets shippin'.' 'Not, were you to make me the

King of Morrocco, Katey, replied I; 'I'll do penance on myself by not going after him.' 'Thin,' cried she, sorely agitato, as you may belave, 'I'll go and find out his retrate, if I should pirish by the way, and save my Tommy from himself and from a bad world.' 'Mighty mate!' rejoined I; 'but to please you darlint—for Katey was beginnin' to cry sore—I'll make myself the world's wonder, I will, and go and bring the 'scape-the-gallows back, if I can do it. With that word, away I went, and took my sate in the coach for Newcastle; and, all the road there, I kept lookin' all ways at once, for I was sartin shure I would catch the thairf by the way, afore he guessed my mainin'. Howandiver, he contrived to keep out of sight; and I could hear nothin' of 'im, aither in Belford, or Alnwick, or Morpeth; and, when I got to Newcastle, it was pitch dark night; so I inquired out a decent lodgin', and as there was heavy trouble on my mind, I slipt early to bed, and, after sayin' a handful of nice prayers, fell asleep till the mornin' came back. And, now, listen, as I tould you to do. With the blessin' of Heaven I walked out of my warm bed, intil the cold streets, in search of Tommy, as soon as iver I had traited myself to the last taste in life of whisky. I was lost, more than once, in the long lanes, tho' I always found myself agin by the corners of the big houses; but, as I clapt my two eyes upon a nabo bookseller's shop in the Royal Arcade, I saw a long, lano man, for all the world like a 'natony, comin' walkin' out with a black tin pitcher in his hand, and make straight towards me. 'A bright good mornin',' said I; 'an' I hope you're well, Sir, whoever you are.' 'Don't you know me, Patrick?' replied he—'my name's Grimshaw!' 'I'll not belave it from your mouth,' rejoined I—'it couldn't happen; but maybe you'd be kind enough to tell me what you've gotten in the pitcher there?' 'It's good black ink,' said he; 'I now dale in it.' 'Take hould of my arm,' cried I—for it went to my heart like a knife, to see the poor parson in sich a wretched condition—'Im hearty sorrow for your trouble, or else it's not an inch of Patrick O'Flanigan himsilf that's standin' afore you.' Accordingly, I took him to a tavern; and, after givin' him plinty to ate and drink, and wishin' that luck and grace might be round him, I slipped half-a-crown intil his hand, and tould him he might thin go about his business. 'But, how is Katey?' asked he, as he was openin' the door to go out; 'is the Christian woman still alive?' 'Oeh, ay,' answered I; 'my Katey will never die till the Carr Rock melt into potashes. Good-bye, Parson Grimshaw, and much good may it do you what you'll get.' I thin went in search of Tommy, over and over agin, through Newcastle; and it being a raw wet day, there soon wasn't a dry stitch upon my body. At long and last, when I couldn't find him at all, I went forward to Shields all the way, and waited there two whole days, in the hope of pickin' him up. Howandiver, it wouldn't all do; so I jist had to go back to Katey with my finger in my mouth, the same way I came. 'Tis the wonder of my life iver since, it is, how she bore the bitter disappointment; but so it was, and for wakes and months she went about like an ould clocker that's lost all her purty birds, and I was dilicate of hurtin' her feelings by spakin' about the infatuate young eratur. Well, on a cold stormy day, when the wind was rockin' the ould house like a cradle, and the hail-stones, as big as praties, were peltin' on the crackin' window panes—'Oh, the poor sailors!' exclaimed Katey, wringin' her two hands—'this day will be heard tell on at sae! What would my dear Tommy not give to have a house to crape intil for shelter in sich an awful storm?' 'Spako of the divil and he'll appare, Katey,' ejacuated I, as Tommy, his own silf, bounced into the house, wet as splash, and flung his arms round her neck, and rapidly kissed her all over the face and eyes. 'Strip off your wet things, my jewel,' cried Katey, when she got her spache, 'and put on your grandfather's Sunday clothes.' 'I'm not at all could—sailors don't mind a wettin', granny,' replied

Tommy; 'there's plenty of that going in foul weather, I guess.' 'But you're not a downright sailor, Tommy,' retorted I—'you're not the make of one, nor do you smell of tar in the laste, and, sure, you've left the sae-farin' for good and all.' 'Not so fast, ould ship-mate,' said he; 'I've only had a turn up with the skipper, because he wouldn't take in a reef of his loose tongue; and I've marelly run into a snug harbour, and dropt anchor, you know, till the storm that was brewing blows over.' 'What did you and the captain quarrel about, Tommy?' asked I, aigerly. 'Why, it's a long story, grandfather,' replied he; 'but the first of it was, that he sluced me with a bucket of water, and thin kicked me like a baste, because I wouldn't tell him who stole a bottle of rum from the cabin. I've led a dog's life iver since with him; and, on Thursday, when we arrived at Shields, as he was tellin' a passenger as how his feet were sore with pacin' the hard decks, I happened to laugh at the long yarn he was twistin'—for we all knows he lies in bed the whole voyage, coiled up like a boiled lobster. This was enough for him; so he took me by the cuff of the neck, as I was coming up the companion ladder, and swore he would let day-light through me, if I did'n't tell him, afore we got on shore, who it was that drunk his rum. I said I wouldn't—with that he let fly at me with a bloody rope; and, as there was no choice, I turned round and saized a hatchet that was lyin' on the deek.—'Och! Tommy,' scramed Katey, when he had got this far—'and did you kill the captain?' 'No,' replied Tommy, 'he kilt me.' 'Whisht!' cried I, 'both on you; don't you hear a loud rappin' at the oulder-door?' 'It's the wind liftin' the broken sneck,' said Katey. Agin the door of the house was violently assailed—'Botheration to you!' roared I, as I rose from my sate and walked to the entry—'Who's there? What's your business here?' 'Open the door,' bawled a voice, in the canny Newcastle tongue—'smash me! open the door to the king's messenger.' The next minute, and Tommy stood handcuffed afore us; and it's I was the moral of sorrow, as two blackyvised men dragged him off to the coach, to take him back to Shields to work in a house of correction!'

As Patrick coneluded, I saw his frame tremble; and the mute misery of his look, as he sorrowfully folded his hands over his breast, told how deeply his love for his prodigal grandson was entrenched in his memory, and how bitterly his misconduct had pierced the heart which, in spite of the pain his ingratitude had inflicted, still clung to him with its warmest and deepest sympathies. I discovered, too, that the recapitulation of his grandson's early follies and sufferings afforded him a kind of pleasing satisfaction; while, at the same time, I was sorry to witness the grief and agitation which were necessarily the purchase of such a gratification. Whether or no he had divined what was passing in my mind, I know not, but, wiping with his handkerchief the tears from his eyes, he continued, in a more subdued tone of voice—'Don't be after thinkin', Sir, it's to bring me new grief that I spake of Tom's conduct.' 'Och, no! I only rehash it for you, because it plaises me; and, though I can nick-name him my own silf, sittin' on this chair afore you, I cannot dale civilly by aither man or woman, no matter whether they deserve it or no, who would come and tell me, with their harmless sheep's faces, that it's ill that Tom does. It's not very aisy, your honour, for you to understand my natur all at once; but Katey does, and she knows—tho' its the ould palaver—that although I could hang him from my very heart, when he puts me in arnest passion, the next moment I could make him my heart's own brother, and drown him with tares! And what more could we do with the infatuate boy when he wouldn't give up the sae? Besides, he never came back to us, when he got out of the correction-house; but, runnin' up to London with a collyer, he went on board of the Carthage, a merchant vessel, and sailed to the East Hindies, for tae. He was away five whole years, and we never heard

of a bit of him, till, one afternoon, a tight sailor, as yellow as a chaney orange, with large black bushy whiskers, came intil our house, and tould us he had been in the same ship with Tom; and that he had sent him with a kapesake from the Hindies for both of us. 'And is yourself,' cried I, to the big rough sailor, 'come all the road from the Hindies with Tom? Where did you lave him?' 'Why, he dropt astern in the moznin', replied the sailor with a quivering voice, while a tare stole out of his eyes. 'I don't half like a sailor's wape-in', whispered I; 'and tell us the truth, without any dilly-dally on the matter, *is poor Tom dead?*' 'Come, come,' shouted he, 'I sae there's no fun of pipin' my tares aboard, I can't say as how I like it at all;—so dry your look-outs, my ould woman; for if Tom hadn't chated Davy, strike my tops if you'd seen me to day—that's all.' 'What Davy has the bould lad chated?' asked I. 'Why, blow me,' rejoined the sailor, 'an't it Davy Jones?—I'm not too deep for you this tack, I guess, old boy.' 'I don't know the gentleman,' replied I, 'unless you mane Paul Jones. But shew us the face of the kapesake that Tom's sent me and Katey from the Hindies.' 'Ay, ay,' cried he, throwin' down a great roll of tobacco, 'there's a pound of granny's delight for you; and, 'stead of a monkey, here's Tom himself to chew a quid of it alongside of you. A pretty sort of a place you've sarved your time in, I guess, not to know your own grandson! An involuntary exclamation of surprise and joy burst from both of us, and we could do nothin' but wape and stare at the sailor in silent wonderment. We saw at once he was our own Tom, and we didn't wait to put any more questions; but, throwin' our arms around him, we gave vint to our feelings, and thanked God, with hearts runnin' over with spacheless gratitude, for sindin' the lad back to us whole and sound. Och! how glad was I that he was agin under the same ould roof with me, for it made the heart within my body proud to sae the gallant lad stannin' on my floor and crasiu' my thrashold. But, och! Sir, we should never make an idol of aither man or baste, or ONE that's above will soon let us sae its worthlessness. I was built up in Tom, as never man was in another; but sore was I punished for makin' him my heart's chaif good, and thinkin' myself happier and better than other people. It was on the first of August—and well may I remember the day—our goodson had died across the water, and we had been to his berryin'; and as I couldn't well enter the church-yard myself, Tom was made chaif-mourner. 'I know you are only a wake mortal,' said I to him, when he came back from the grave; 'so be on your guard against *sperrits* of all kinds; and as dacent manners are no burthen to carry, I hope you'll not suffer yourself to get over the score, or do anything that's at all out of the way.' 'I'm blow'd,' replied Tom, 'if I like sperrits any better than a stripped marine does the drummer, 'specially as them 'ere land-lubbers don't drink grog. But as for the matter of behavioir, I'll do 'em all brown, every mother's son of them, or my name's not Tom Hall.' 'Don't attempt it,' said I; 'you'll only put yourself in a perplexity. Stay at home to-night, for it's not dacent to be seen out with the mournin's on you.' 'Shan't I clue down,' cried he, 'takin' hould of the band that was pinned to his hat, 'this here mournin' flag afore I shove off? I've a quare notion, d'ye see, as how I'm like a wet swab or methody parson!' 'Lave it alone, will ye,' ejaculated, I 'as you value your grandfather's dyin' blessin'. But is it manners to ax where you'd be going with your blacks? for it's yourself was always a bit of the divil, Tom.' 'I'm blow'd if I can tell,' roared he; 'I was thinkin' of having a yarn with George Spence, as was a messmate of mine aboard the Carthage, afore I turn into my hammock.' 'Go your ways,' said I, 'to your George Spences; for I sae it's aginst your grain to stay here, and you'll not be said or led by me.' With that he left our roof, and went across the water; and he had only been three or four hours away, when Walter Mason, our neighbour, walked into our flure,

and, takin' me by the hand, said, with a downcast look, 'It's well, Patrick and Katey O'Flanigan, you have not witnessed the cryin' disgrace that Tom Hall has brought upon you this night. I can well believe, you could have borne up better against the sorrow, had he been laid in his grave this day, 'stead of his uncle.' 'Has he committed murder?' asked I, in a whisper. 'No,' rejoined Walter, shakin' his head; 'but, up at the mountebanks this evenin', afore the eyes of thousands and hundreds of dacent people, did he crack jokes with the paid fool, and even lind him his hat, *with the band on't*, to go round the ring, while Tom drew on the merryman's cowl, and made wry faces to the childer.' 'Spake no more, Walter Mason,' stammered I, as the candle fell out of my hand; 'how can I live after this sore trial?' The same minute, my own Katey, for want of breath and collectedness, sank on the flure with a low scrame. I raised her up, howiver, in an instant, and clashin' a full tay-cup of water in her face, I saw the symptomatics of her revival staein' over her; so satein' in the arm chair, and beckonin' to Walter to go away, I locked and boulded the doors, and put the keys in my pocket, resolved that the bould wretch should never darken our door more. A heart of marvel, sir, would have pitied us; for that night we had both a dead and a livin' sorrow to wail over. I tould you afore that the doors were boulded; so, havin' put out the light, we went to bed, still runnin' on Tom's indacent on-goings in our minds. It might be twelve o'clock, or thereabouts, as Katey and I were just going over to slape, we heard a quare kind of stirrin' and moanin' that made our very skin crape in dread. 'Make your own heart give over its hollow batin, Katey,' whispered I, 'and let's hear what it is.' 'It's the small worms tick, tickin', in the rotten wood of the ould chest o' drawers,' responded Katey. 'I wonder at your ignorance,' muttered I, as a deep groan caught our ears; 'it's either an evil spirit, or somebody at the last gasp! But rap through the plaister to Walter, Katey, and don't give way to your asterisks agin, for there's not a drop of water in the room to give you, and I can't sae a stime.' 'I've not the power,' whispered she, with her head below the clothes. 'Then, by the powers!' roared I, quakin' with fear, 'I'll do it my own silf.' Here there were four or five low deep groans uttered in succession. 'Heaven mark our sinful sowl's with grace,' cried I, 'what's that?—will anybody tell us? Oh! that some one human being would spake to us now, afore we die through tripidation! Agin we heard a fearful smudder'd noise, as if it came from the chimbley. I started up in bed—Katey clingin' to my side all the time, like a burnin' blister—and roar'd out, 'I hear you, whoever you are; and, in the name of all that's good, this night, I command you to tell us if you're a sperit, and what it is puts trouble on you, that won't let your body rest in pace.' Another groan, louder than the last, reached us, and our paraokysm of terror shook the very bed anunder us, as if it had been a willow-wand. The next moment a heavy weight came rattlin' down the chimbley, all of a plump, and fell clane intil the middle of the room where we lay. We both raised a piercin' cry; and, fearin' that Katey would never come to her seven sines agin, I jumped into the flure, and tried to get to the door, when something close by me muttered, in hollow broken tones—'I've been up with a sarvin'-mallet—(hiccup)—nailin' the Union-Jack to the fore-royal-mast-head, blow me!—(hiccup)—and I've fallen, I should suppose—(hiccup)—through the tattered shrouds in the fore-riggin'—(hiccup)—upon this here bloody deck—(hiccup.) Nothin' like boardin, after all—(hiccup.) Shiver me! how the beggars tumbled! A-hoy, there; swing your ship's stern clear of my timbers.' Here I fell over a livin' cratur; but I smelt, in no time, that it was none other than *hangie* Tom, who had fallen down the chimbley, mortal drunk. 'Aisy, aisyy, Katey,' cried I, gropin' my way to the bed-side 'don't be alarmed, darlint—it's your own

infernal divil that's come back to torment you.' We thin got a light; and the first sight we saw was the drunken raskill, in his good *blacks*, lyin' on his back, half insinsible, with a handful of his ribs smashed to paces. Everything was covered with soot, and his clothes weren't worth a tin-penny; for the murtherin' cratur, on findin the door boulded, had wheeled a cart to the aisin' of the house, to raise himsilf up—for we didn't live here thin—and, crapin' over the pan-tiles, like a thaif o' the night, had gone down the chimbley, for want of a better door. We thought, indeed, he was past the help of man; but sailors, like cats, have nine lives; and, in a few days, we saw there wasn't a dyin' bit about him. He stayed three weeks with us after his fall, and thin went to Hull in a small sloop, with the intintion of going a Greenland voyage. But, och, sir, it's the truth I spake to you, neither Katey nor mysilf were our own silves for many a day; for we thought that God had abandoned and given up our reprobate sailor to follow his own wicked courses; and, night after night, when we went to slape, have we cried over him, till, maybe, our heart's blood came with the burnin' tares."

After a long pause, only interrupted by the sobbing of Mrs O'Flanigan, Patrick proceeded:—"Maybe you'll think it quare, Sir," continued he, "that our affection for the lad wasn't dried up clane—but we liked him in spite of our silves, and we couldn't help it at all. He went to the Arkic Ocean, as I tould you, in the Resolution, of Hull; but whin the ship had penetrate as far north as she could get, the floes began to overlape aitch other, and thraited her sore. So the crew made her fast, as they thought, to an icebarge; but, the gale still increasin', the ice began to strike her in an alarmin' manner, and soon destroyed her starn and kale. The huge floe at last broke clane away, and dashed against the ship's sides with great fury; so that, in less time than I take to tell you, the fine tight veshel was torn to paices, and a hunder and fifty-nine sailors, with Tom among the rest, flung upon the frozen saes, amidst nothin' but monster-whales. They were all picked up, howandiver, by the William and Mary, of Laith, though they lost all their blubber and whalebone, with every stitch of their clothin' in the draifful tempest. As soon as I heard of the ship's arrival at Laith, I sint three pounds to the captain, to give to Tom, and tould him to sind the shipwrecked lad home to us; but, as he was never like to come at all, I took the coach at Berwick, and procaided to Edinburgh, to look after him my own silf. I wasn't long in going on board of the Mary, at the kay; but he wasn't there. So I lift my name with the mate, and tould him to let Tom know that I was up in Edinburgh, at the Commercial Lodgings, facin' the new Thaetre. Back I came, thin, along Laith Shore, when, all at once, I felt myself hugged behind by a stout man, as if a Greenland bear had got hould on me; and, presently, a rough sae-farin' voice bawled out—

'Who call'd me once an idle dog—
A bould, deaeavin', lying rogue—
And cursed me with his Irish brogue?
My Grandfather!'

"'Lave off your hould,' cried I, nearly strangled; 'and if that's you, Tom, for the love of him that's gone, let me catch your hand!' But he still kept half carryin' me, till we came to some steps which led to an under-ground dwellin', where they sould Tom and Jerries; and, givin' me a great shuv, down I went, head foremost, intil the dacent people's flure, with Tom above me. 'Death alive!' roared I, 'will you kill your ould grandfather, with your bastely on-going?' 'My eyes and limbs!' cried he, 'haven't I backed you old boy, like a trump? Sarve us out, mistress, with some more of your grog. I'm the boy as can melt their shiners!' 'It's myself,' said I, 'that likes to be lookin' into you. pockets, Tom. How much money have you left?' Shiver my timbers! bellowed he, 'I sarved my time to the sae

and don't keep that sort of reck'nin'. Hurrah! for Black-eyed Susan! I'm blaw'd if Jack Cranstoun and I ain't going to have a play to-night.' 'A quare play,' said I; 'and what would you and Jack be goin' to do?' 'Didn't I tell you,' cried he crabbedly, 'we were going to see Black-eyed Susan to be sure?' 'Does the dacent woman belong to Laith?' asked I; 'or maybe she's blood-cousin to Jack Cranstoun himself, that he knows her so well?' 'Belay your jawin' tackle,' shouted he; 'and let's aboard Jack's craft, to see if he has any biscuit to crack for dinner;—he's the boy as can box the smack about.' 'Its you that would have your own way,' said I; 'but I'll do a dale for pace and quietness; so come your ways to the shippin'.'

"We thim sought out Master Jack's veshel, and stopped on board till six o'clock, when we were tould, by the cabin-boy, that a coach was waitin' at the end of the shore, to take us all three to the thaetre. I attempted to raise them out of it; but they were as cross as a bag of weazles, so I was jist forced to lave them alone. Well, we got to the door of the thaetre, when Tom cried out on a suddent—'Stow yourself away, ould boy, in the hould; for Jack and I, d'ye see, are going to the shrouds to keel-haul the fiddlers.' 'May I never see the light of day agin,' said I, 'if I do!' 'Let's aft, thin,' roared Jack, 'and pack all into one jolly-boat.' Accordinless, we were put into the pit, and we sat all down on a sate facin' the play. I trimbled from head to foot at their on-goings; for we hadn't been a minute on our sates, till Jack bawled out to Tom, afore all the ladies and gentlemen—'Let's sing out, Tom, for thim lubbers to clue up the mainsail, and pipe Black-eyed Susan aboard.' But jist at this time, the play was hawled up, and the characters began their spaches, while I begged I wouldn't hear another word out of the mouth of the twosome. At long and last the fiddlers struck up the 'Sailor's Hornpipe,' while one of the characters danced to the tuuc. 'Sarve 'em out, Tom,' cried Jack; 'sure you won't be beat with that there gemman!' With that they both stood up on the sate and shuffled like mad, mid nothin' but pales of laughter; and when they were givin' over, 'Come Jack,' bawled Tom, 'freshen your nip, and rig your roarer, and let's give them three thunderin' chares.' And so they did, in the most indacent manner, (only think of the bould mortials,) while the ginteel paeple kept cryin' out on all sides—'Who are they? who are they?' 'Why,' replied Jack, lookin' up in their faces, 'we're two of the smartest young fellows that ever stepped in leather shoes.' 'And no mistake,' rejoined Tom: 'either you or me's a tailor, Jack, if we couldn't make a lane through the beggars in a trap stick.' 'Och, sir,' said a gentleman, takin' hould of my arm, 'I believe I've split my sides!—This is as good as a play!' 'Maybe,' answered I; but, if you had to pay for the pipin', it's tellin' a different story you'd be.' The characters, howandiver, went on with their palaver, and Susan kept wapein' afore our eyes, while William, the sailor, was partin' his clothes among his messmates. There wasn't a mouse stirrin' now in the whole thaetre; and when I looked round upon Tom and his crony, what should I see but the drunk mortials burstin' out cryin' for the misfortunate William. Said I to thim, 'It's not rale what you see this night, so don't distress yourselves like mare chulder.' 'Avast there,' cried Jack, half choked with grief, 'don't be after pitchin' us any of your sly twistlers, my fine old fellow;—I knows the whole of 'em, and there's not a mother's son in the fleet as could rig an upper-yard-arm smarter nor poor Bill.' 'Come, Tom, make a lane through 'em there superfine lobsters, for I'm blaw'd if Jack Cranstoun can stand to see the sweetheart of Black-eyed Susan put in irons.—Haul in your slack, old ladies,' bawled Tom, makin' to the door, 'and keep your timber toes right in midships; or swing me, if I don't jerk some of you off the coop.' So the two ould fools staggered out of the thaetre, arm in arm, and went until my lodgings, and sat down and called for grog. There was a slender

lookin' young man sittin' in one of the coffee-boxes as we entered, whom I had conversed with in the mornin', and who had come from about Berwickshire to the great paintin'-show, with some beautiful doings of his own genius. He couldn't have less than twenty scanes of men and bastes, and ships and saes, with him; so, after they had all drank together, out of one glass, Jack and Tom asked him if he would have the laste bit of objection to give them a sight of his sae paces? 'You're not in a hurry, gintlemii,' said the painter; 'what do you say, if we have somethin' to ate first? Who says a beef-stako?' 'By the hookey,' shouted Tom, 'send down half-a-dozen hands; Jack, to the Atlas, for a hunderweight of biscuit and a barrel of oysters to pitch into his hould. I sees, by the cut of his jib, as how the gintleman has been on short allowaice.' 'You sailors,' said the painter, risin' upon his legs, as if he intended to give us a spache, 'don't care about atin', I find; but you must know I belong to the flesh-and-blood school of paintin', called the *vaterati*, and that at all times, and in all seasons, I prefer a reekin' Scotch haggis to a smokin' Italian mountain; and the crisp, well-browned fat and lane, so beautifully blinded and swately rinnin' into aitch other, of roast-pig, to the meetin' of all the waters in the world. I have attended dinner parties, pic-nic parties, aquatic parties in the stamer, fetes-champetres.—Thim were his words, if I was dyin', sir; so I cut his spache short by obsarvin' that *champ't parties* weren't fit for hogs, lave alone gintlemen. 'I hope as how you won't be fended, Sir,' cried Tom, pullin' him down by the tails; 'if I tow you into your berth agin. Bless your eyes and buttons! you're laid on a wrong tack, d'ye see; for though Jack and I knows all very well a marlinespike from a handsaw, I'm blawed if we've larin' enough on board for swallowin' all the outlandish pic-nics you've ate in your time;—so luff up to port, my heartie, without more ado, and pitch us some of your sae paces.' 'Do,' said I to the gintleman, 'if it's agreeable, for there's no one here to take thim off. *Take thim off*,' ejaculated the painter, with a particular wink of his eye, 'that's jist what I want.' 'By the hole in my jacket,' cried Tom, 'when I grow as rich as Davy Jones, I'm blaw'd if you shan't paint me a whole fleet, with their sky-scrapers, and royals, and stud-sails to the nines. But give me a dollar's worth, in the meantime, to send to old Moll of Wappin.' 'There,' said the gintleman, houldin' up an illigant scanic in one hand, and shadin' the light on it beautiful with the other, 'how do you like that? Old saenien reckon it a very fine thing.' (This was a ship of his own doings, as natural as the life.) 'I can only say,' roared Jack, 'that your old saemen deserve to be flung overboard as so many landlubbers. Look ye, Tom, d'ye see what a raskilly run along the bends she's got?—and thim her yards and spars, my eyes! with that loblolly boy of a shark's head of hers! I'm thunderstruck if she don't lie on the spray like a dead dolphin; and may I go to Davy this moment if I can tell whether she's tackin', or close-hauled, or under bare poles. Avast there, Jack, my lad,' cried Tom, 'd'ye see you're makin' the gintleman look as blue about the look-outs as if he had seen the Old One himself. I sees as how he's sarved his time in a bumboat; for if that there, which he calls a ship, ain't a peg-top, I'm a sae-serpent, that's all.' 'It's you that's the fool of us, Tom,' said I, 'you haven't the laste taste in the world of sich doings.' 'Smite my timbers,' bawled he, 'd'ye think as how Tom Hall's going to be caught with a handful of salt on his tail, like an old sick cod fish! I'll throw up the sae first.' 'As I've often done aboard of the stamer,' cried the painter, with another wink of his eye. 'Come come,' said Jack Cranstoun to the gintleman—'stow away your Trojan gallies and your Chinese junks, my youngster, and brush off Tom and I on a bit of your canvas; two sich beauties will be a sae-fortune to any mother's son of ye.' 'How would ye like to be taken?' inquired the painter. Why we're two old sharks, to be

sure,' cried Tom; 'and I think as how it will take the largest bower anchor, baited with a mermaid, to hook us!' 'Oh,' said the painter, 'you don't believe, do you, that there's sic a thing as a mermaid?' 'I'm a coil of cable, thin, and you're a snivelin' powder-monkey, that's all,' roared Tom, fiercely—'Why, Sir, when I was on board the Carthage, as I was pacin' the quarter-deck one night, when we lay at anchor in the island of Johanna, I saw as beautiful a mermaid rise from the sae's bottom, and comb her long blue hair on the top of the swell, as I ever clapt my two eyes on. If ye don't like to believe me, you've only to look into my log-book, and you'll see it there on black and white, upon oath. Here's to Nancy Dawson, Jack.' 'And do'st recollect, Tom,' added Jack Cranston, 'when we were moored in Linton Roads, as how a mermaid took me quite aback, and cut Bill Lewis' life-lines adrift? It was a fine moonlight night, and we were lyin' in the bight of a small bay, about four hundred yards from the shore—the sae stretchin' on our starboard side as smooth as glass—when all on a sudden, without the laste splash on the water, I saw a silvery streak or two come bubblin' up on the rim of the sae, and presently up gets a mermaid, and runs across our bows in a winding sheet, with long white hair fallin' ower her face like snow, cryin' out the name of Bill Lewis; and you knows, Tom, as well as me, ere four bells in the mornin' watch struck, poor Bill was off on his road to purgatory or elsewhere.' 'Gentlemen, it's two o'clock i' the mornin', if any of ye would be wishin' to know,' cried the landlord of the house, openin' the door, and shuttin' it in his face agin. I took the hint, and slipt to bed, lavin' the two beauties and their mermaidens sittin' with the painter gentleman. The next mornin' I found Jack and Tom aslape on the long-saddle jist as I had left thim; and when they wakened up, I told my grandson to hold himself in readiness, as we were going to Berwick on the coach at one o'clock precisely. Well, the time came that we should go off; and, when we got to the coach-office, what should we see, but the coach cranmed inside out with passengers, and the driver fightin' and ragin' with a gentleman at the door. 'Give us our sates,' cried I to him; 'for we took thim out o' the coach last night, and they're our own.' 'There's not room for a pair of ye,' bawled he. 'I can't say as how I like this,' cried Tom, steppin' forward and burstin' open the coach door; 'here, old shippie, pack into the cabin, and I'll eat up the swab like a cockroach who turns the wrong side of his mouth to you.' With that I got intil the inside sates; and, shortly after, Tom cried down, from the top of the coach, 'I'm aloft, grandfather; and if there's like to be a mutiny below, I've a fancyman along side of me, peepin' through his bring-em-near, so they may look out for squalls, that's all.' 'Fling down the cratur's luggish,' roared the driver to the outside people; 'we canna gie him a sate; beside, he's mare rubbish wi' him than would lade a waggon.' 'I'll bring you up, my saucy fellow,' cried a voice from above, which I knew at once to be the painter gentleman's—I'm well known in Edinburgh to the faculty; and if you give me any more of your tongue, I'll promise you a night in the Calton—whatever more.' 'I'll have you doon, Sir, were ye the blood-cousin o' his Majesty King George the Fourth,' roared the enraged driver, springin' upon the coach and layin' hold of him; and, afore any one could prevent him, the poor painter was stretched on the wet pavin'-stones, and his beautiful doings, that he had stowed away so carefully upon the top of the coach, scattered about the street. Vexed at sic on-goings, Tom seized a hamper, with a live whelp in't, that stood by him, and flingin' it at the head of the driver, vociferated, 'I'm blow'd if I don't come off second best—there goes Jonah out at port, hammock and all; so coil in the haws, coachee, and shove off.' But sic a row took place the next minute as you cannot conceive in these degenerated times; for the painter, happenin' to have a score

or two of specimen cards on him, beside his own, which he had gotten from an engraver to shew to his friends, in the hate o' the moment pulled out the wrong ones, and distributed thim amongst the crowd, to let thim see that the driver had insulted a rale gentleman! 'Who is he?' cried the paeple. 'A Colonel Lacey,' answered one—'A Captain Bogtrot,' cried another—'A John Raw,' replied a third; jist as the specimen cards turned up. 'Who's laid an embargo on the veshel's sailin'?' shouted Tom, in the midst of it all—'All right there, I hope, to the nor'ard; and, graspin' the reins, he applied a lady's umbrella to the horses' backs, and set them off like fire, lavin' the painter to make out his pedigree in the best manner he could; and, at ten o'clock the same night, Tom and I put forward our feet, with Katey, and warmed thim at our own hearth-stone. But, och, Sir the few weeks he stayed with us, he was like a fish out of the water; for he couldn't settle on shore in pace, or find the laste bit of amusement in the garden or anywhere else. In truth, he did nothin' but chew tobacco, drink rum, and go about with a spy-glass, lookin' at the veshels as they passed the bay; and he was no company in the world, for he could talk of nought but the sae and the shippin'. 'Heigho! what shall I do?' he would have cried, when we've all been sittin' comfortable. 'I'm blow'd if this beggarly life won't kill me.' 'Take a book intil your hand,' Katey would have said. 'Books!' he would have bawled; 'I've got Robinson Crusoe by heart, and I don't read ballants, for I knows thim all. Let me get my foot agin on salt-water, with the creakin' of the ship, the rattlin' o' the ropes, and the whistlin' of the wind, heard on all sides of me, for I'm the boy that was never sick of a squall.' So back he went agin to the sae; and from that day to this, which is now going on eight years, we haven't had a scribe of a pen from him, nor heard a single syllable of him by word of mouth; and whether he's in the land of the livin' or at the bottom of the sae we jist know as much as the dead who are in their graves.'

Patrick, on concluding, lifted his tumbler to his lips; and, after emptying its contents, pushed it from him into the centre of the table, significantly hinting, as I thought, that I might now take my departure. Thanking him, therefore, for his hospitality and the recital of his amusing biography, I took my leave, silently ruminating on the eventful and chequered life of his prodigal grandson.

THE AVENGER.

THE Castle of Eaglesmonicht, some centuries ago, graced, with its high towers, the banks of the river Annan—perhaps one of the finest of the Scotch rivers, if all the elements of beauty are taken into account. The castle stood towards the Solway, and was the seat of a family that had risen to some distinction as commoners, from the possession of considerable wealth, which had been acquired by an ancestor, who had got possession of some lucrative monopolies from the first of the Jameses. The family name was Ashley, of English origin; but the more early members having intermarried with daughters of Scotland, and their fortunes having flourished, for the first time, on her then poor uncultivated soil, they gradually came to lose every quality and mark of the country from which they originated except the name.

Robert Ashley, the proprietor of this lordly residence at the time our story commences, was a widower, having an only-son alive, the heir-expectant of his father, and the proprietor, in anticipation, of all the rights of the property. This young man, whose name was also Robert, was possessed of high feelings of love and poetry; but, as is often the case, he allowed these to outstep the bounds of morals—living a luxurious life of pleasure, suited to his strong insensibilities, but altogether unsanctified by a single

restraint, which the greatest libertines often offer, as a sacrifice to the offended god of virtue. The only palliation that the most partial friend of young Ashley could offer for his extravagant conduct, was, that his amours, of which he had many, were not the result of a grovelling propensity of lust, cultivated for its own sake, and unredeemed by any concomitant affections of the heart. His intrigues, though all ending in gratifications of gross passion, began in the excitement of love; not that love, of course, whose influence tends to elevate and refine the other sentiments; but still a love which, in the world, very often passes for its more pure ally—using the same language, exhibiting the same external marks, and, unfortunately, so completely personating it, as to deceive the confiding hearts of the objects to whom it is directed. This easily lighted, fickle, heartless, and seducing passion, was the bane of young Ashley—springing up, with sudden violence, on the first contemplation of beauty—rendering him uneasy till it was communicated and miserable till it was gratified—too often by the ruin of his victim. His fine form and expressive countenance, his command of the language of the heart, and his riches, rendered him one of the most dangerous companions of the fair sex of his time; yet, paradoxical as it may be, his character for success in rendering miserable that sex whose happiness ought to be the object of the exertions and the subject of the pride and satisfaction of him who has arrogated to himself the character of lord of the creation, instead of keeping victims out of his way, seemed to lure them into his power; at least, there could be no doubt that Robert Ashley had always more sweethearts and admirers than any other young man on the north of the Solway. So it seems to be, that vice is sometimes ordained to be fed to that reptile which, as in a physical view, produces in the end the ruin of its powers and properties, which, otherwise, might have been exercised for greater evil.

On the lands of Eaglesmouicht there was the little port, which we must disguise under the name of Fairhaven, where resided Gilbert Lee, a fisherman, whose boat was often required by young Ashley for pleasure excursions on the Solway. Gilbert had a daughter, Mary, whose youth, being eight years younger than Ashley, had, for a time, protected her from the dangerous attention of the young laird. Mary Lee was a peculiar girl; she was accounted the handsomest in Fairhaven; and her father had only one fault to impute to her—a most unforgiving spirit. Kind and affectionate to all who exhibited those qualities to her, Mary seldom forgot or forgave an injury or an insult; and so strongly marked was her character in this respect, that her school antipathies remained with her, and increased as she grew up—no kindness or conciliation having the effect of modifying or mollifying the determination and bitterness of her hatreds. So is it often in the world, that the most opposite feelings and passions—like the nerves of the human system, which, operating with equal powers on the gall-bladder and the heart, are bound up in the same sheath—are found in the same individual, acting with equal and antagonist forces, and realizing a species of manichæism which has perplexed optimist moralists from the beginning of the world. As the good is strong, so often is the evil, in the same individual; and it would have been hard to say whether Mary Lee's loves were stronger or weaker than her hatreds. It was remarked by her father, that, when seven years of age, she refused to taste an old man's burial bread, because, a year before, he had pulled her auburn locks.

"O Mary," her father would say, "he will be a happy or a miserable man who gets ye for his lot on earth; he will get frae ye either the sweet honey o' yer young and loving heart, or the sting which, as in the bee, receives its poison frae that very honey itself: sac do we see a' sweet things mair productive o' sourness than the bitters which

we avoid; and darkness is ne'er sac visible as when licht is its nearest neighbor, and hauds the candle to its ill favour'd face."

Mary understood, perhaps, but little of her father's quaint remarks, and little did she know of the possession of qualities which were destined to stand out in such prominent and startling relief from the mellowed hues of our Christian faith. Has God, for his own purposes, hid us from ourselves, that our sense of free agency should remain unimpaired by the knowledge of the connate bent of our apparently fated inclinations? Poor Mary Lee acted from her impulses; nor did she see the depth of the "mid deep," which the sailors of the Solway point out to the passenger who looks on the fallacious calm which hovers on the graves of many a drowned mariner.

As Mary Lee grew up, she came necessarily under the view of young Ashley, who, as he called for the boat, noticed the young maiden sitting on the beach, throwing the glances of her blue eye on the mirror of the silvery Solway; a fair type of her own nature, though she was unconscious of the similitude—beautiful in its soft and playful undulations, but terrible in its rage.

"Have we got a mermaid sitting here?" said Ashley, one day, to a companion, who was stepping with him into the boat. "How like she is to the pictured fancy of that creature of imagination! She has only to let her hair fall over her shoulders, and send forth one of those plaintive seductive cries which, like the singing of the Sicilian virgins mentioned by Ovid, tempt poor passengers ashore to their destruction, to realize the type in its greatest perfection. By the way, I think I would have risked myself in the arms of those famous sirens, who are represented to have been so cruel as to kill their lovers—at least I would trust myself with that fair one. What thinkest thou of my courage?"

"Indeed, Ashley," replied his friend, George Henderson, a neighbouring laird's son, "I fear the danger which Ovid represents as being all on the side of the sailors, who listened to these feathered virgins, would, in your case, be transferred to the charmer; and yet they say that Mary Lee, with all her beauty and apparent mildness, has all the siren about her but the fledged tail; and, if the feathers are there wanting, I fear the deficiency is supplied by a sting."

The hint thrown out by Henderson increased the desire of Ashley to get acquainted with Mary; for such is the fate of those who are consigned to the intoxications of vice, that they indulge in morbid desires, which, as in the case of the gourmand, produce in their gratifications all the effects of poison. "A fury for a lover!" ejaculated Ashley to himself. "Excellent! I have had too many soft, breaking hearts, whose very softness have palled upon my appetite; and, as the lover of gourmandize requires stimulants to whip up the jaded powers of his over-wrought stomach, my wearied heart longs for a spice of piquant amativeness, to resuscitate its flagging energies."

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND

THE AVENGER.

(Concluded.)

These reflections are but too common with the young rakes of the nineteenth century; Robert Ashley acted upon them, and he was not long in producing an effect upon Mary Lee. He spoke to her at first merely as the daughter of the fisherman; putting questions to her, which he could himself have answered—but, while he was apparently a careless putter of unnecessary interrogations, he did all in his power, by the exhibition of his beauties, to become a querist of a heart which had hitherto been left to question itself, and to answer its own questions. Few young women can withstand the graces of a handsome youth—and how often is the poison drunk by the heart, before the mind is conscious of the draught! Mary Lee thought, as she looked upon the youthful, dashing Ashley, that the young fishermen of Fairhaven were surely not made of the same flesh and blood. Ashley knew the force of his natural endowments, and he brought in aid of those the flatteries of the deceiver. What more is required to complete the work of love? A good regard of the flatterer, followed by a good regard of the flattered, is, alas! often all that is necessary in the composition of female devotion.

The frequent meetings which Ashley had with Mary produced the usual effects. Her heart was what every woman's ought to be—that is, if there were no bad men in the world—she loved at once and for ever. Every pulse of life acknowledged the power which had come like a spirit and thrown a charm over her existence; the world was now centred in the object of her affection; her father and her home lost their magic influences of early associations; and even the shade of her mother, which was enshrined in her imagination as a part of the mind itself, faded into a thinner existence than even that of a vision, as she revelled in the first enthusiastic enjoyment of maiden affection. Ashley saw with delight, mixed with some misgivings as to the responsibility of such a devotion, the absolute resignation of a full and bursting heart to the dissembled schemes of a professed libertine. Proud of his victory, he paused, as the cruel lord of the jungle, to play with the victim which was destined to a protracted immolation; and she, deluded creature! received, with panting eagerness, the caresses which she considered the fruit of a love equal to her own. As she hung upon his bosom and fed his eyes with the soft beams of a first love, shining through tears of kindness and devotion, who could have observed, in that light, more danger than belongs to so innocent a thing as a woman's smile? Robert Ashley had known by experience, that a woman's eye that does not shine on her seducer, generally shines not at all, unless it be in the phosphorescent brightness of the corruption of the grave. Mary Lee was, like other women, an object to be possessed, not feared; and Ashley enjoyed her present devotion in the exultation of pride, and her subsequent ruin in a certain hope of reality.

Wandering through the thick woods of Eaglesmonicht, Mary Lee drank deeper of the intoxicating draught, as her appetite was increased by the inspiring influences of romantic scenes.

How is it, Robert," she said, with the familiarity which

love begets on innocence—"how is it that now the woods of Eaglesmonicht are to me sae dear, and I ever think that every mavis and blackbird in the thick groves are to me little messengers o' guid news. Before you spoke to me, I was fond o' the rippling waves that come as if they were sent by the corpses in the 'dead deep,' to tell their griefs to us on land. But now my thoughts are aff the sea, and Eaglesmonicht, wi' a' its braw trees and flowers, is aye present to me, as used to be the shade o' my mither."

"Thou art fond of reasons, my gentle Mary," replied Ashley, "and perhaps thou canst say why thou wast formerly so fond of the sea. Perhaps some young fisherman had then a part of the heart which now I hope is all my own."

"An' weel may ye say its a' yer ain," said Mary; "for, sleepin' or waukin', I think only o' you, an' the faes that wad tak ye an' mak ye the lover o' Catherine Hamilton o' Castle-green. She kenned naething o' my heart yesterday, when, as ye left the village, she saw me looking at her as she looked at you. The lady ca'ed the fisherman's dochter 'wretch,' but she heard nae answer frae me. At that time ye looked back to her and smiled, and she forgot me; but I will mind her to the day I dee. I could hae forgien her if she hadna been sae bonny, and if ye hadna gien her the glance that should hae come to me. But it's only in the thick woods that Robert Ashley kens the fisherman's dochter o' Fairhaven."

"Come, now, my Mary, none of thy reproofs. Thou knowest that I was a favourite of Catherine Hamilton's before I knew thee, and it would not have been courteous to shake off an old acquaintance because my Mary was present and requested all my attention."

"Weel, weel, ye ken I forgie ye," answered Mary, "and my forgiveness was as real as my love, but I hae ae request to mak, and that is—that, if ye dinna choose to ken me in Fairhaven when Catherine Hamilton is in the village, ye will keep within the bounds o' Eaglesmonicht. That leddie lies far out o' my way, if she crossna yer path when I am near; but the blasts that blaw owre the Mull o' Galloway are nae sterner to the boatmen o' the Solway than will be my scorn if Catherine Hamilton comes atween me and my love."

And, as she concluded, she evinced a degree of determination in her voice and manner, which caught the attention of Ashley. But he saw nothing in it, except a little jealousy, which only measured by its intensity the strength of her love; and his pride was inflamed by the demonstration, while the ardour of his purpose was increased. Throwing his arms around the waist of the still somewhat excited maiden, he removed her jealousy by blandishments, and vowed that he had no affection for Catherine Hamilton, who could never stand in a nearer or dearer relation to him than that of acquaintanceship.

For a long period the groves of Eaglesmonicht were frequented by the lovers. The affection of Mary engrossed all her thoughts and feelings, and lent an eloquence to her words and looks, which, to Ashley, seemed different from any demonstrations of affection he had yet witnessed. His feelings became interested to a degree beyond what he could have expected as the result of a few meetings with a fisherman's daughter; and he felt it as a reproach to his true and genuine character of libertinism, that he was in this instance

more in earnest, and more sincere in his love, than he had been in any former instance of seduction. This feeling was increased by the apparent determination of Mary to defend the fortress of her virtue. Ashley had been so fortunate in his former amours, that success had made him domineering and impatient of restraint, while a firm opposition hurt his pride, and increased his desire of victory. In this instance, his love—bastard in its nature as it still was—became increased by Mary's firmness, and he was compelled to have recourse to expedients which implicated his honour in a greater degree than the ordinary schemes of the seducer, bad as they are, generally do. Finding all his endeavours to overcome her virtue unavailing, he had recourse to promises of *honourable intentions*—those fatal sappers of female innocence, which, directed only where there is strength, are relied upon as the last resources of insidious assailants.

The heart of Mary, occupied as it was with one of the strongest affections of human nature—in her instance, all engrossing and resistless—did not so far act the traitress to her understanding, as to resign her honour, without a condition, to the power of her lover. Her youth and innocence, rendering her unacquainted with the arts of the world and its vices, suggested, as the only result of a mutual attachment, a union of the parties in holy wedlock; and, when Ashley spoke of marriage, as a thing to take place between them, after the death of his father, she only felt surprised at the ceremony being postponed. That these expectations of Mary did not please Ashley, is not unlikely; but the only other effect produced by them, was to make him promise more fervently, and with stronger protestations, that he would abide by his word, as he was a gentleman and a man of honour. The love of woman is credulous, as well as blind; and if we did not believe those who are dearest to us of all the world, who is there in it to whom faith should be attached? Mary believed; and, like millions who have had the same faith, and the same apparently irrefragable grounds whereon to build it, she was undone. He who takes the honey sometimes gets the sting; and the little insect which supplies the figure of speech fulfils a wonderful purpose in nature, when, after its support, during the period when no flowers exist, from which to get a supply, has been taken from it, and it is consigned to want and death, it throws away in its vengeance on the spoiler, the life which is only of use to dart the sting, and leave its spark of vitality along with the poison in the wound.

The ruined Mary felt her passion increase, and saw her lover's decay. He came now no longer to the grove where the sweet dalliance of a new passion ruffled the silence with the music of muffled sighs. She went at the accustomed hour, and at the hour not accustomed, and she returned without bringing with her a token that the hope of the morning had found a restingplace. The willow where they had met retained its charm, and, long after she had given up hopes of his coming, she sat under it, and wept bitterly for a loss which no power on earth could make up to her. But her tears flowed in vain—for Ashley came not; and her groans only awakened the dull and drowsy ear of the hind, who, driving his cattle from the field, thought it strange that a woman should weep, and whistled his tune, which her sobbing had interrupted for a moment. The breaking heart of love has no consolation unless when its sorrowful indications imitate the vulgar hues of corporeal disease, and then it can command a prescription; yet sometimes it finds for itself, and in its own recesses, a poison, which has more virtue than all the simples of the leech.

A considerable time had passed without any intelligence of Ashley, when, one day, as Mary sat under the tree, she saw a gentleman approach, whom she recognised as Ashley's friend, George Henderson. He accosted her in a bold and familiar style; and told her that her friend and lover had gone to Edinburgh, in the company of Miss Catharine

Hamilton, and had commissioned him to yield her what consolation was in his power, in the shape of supplying his place as a new and fresh lover—a commission which he could have no inclination to disobey, when he contemplated her beauty, and recollected the favours she had bestowed on his fortunate friend. This salutation struck the unhappy girl dumb, and Henderson mistook the benumbing effects of incipient despair as a passive acquiescence in his ribald sentiments, and a consent to his unhallowed purposes. Under this impression, he was about to clasp his arms round her waist, when the enraged and frantic girl struck him a blow, concentrating in its force the collected strength of her frenzied energies, and stunned him beyond what could have been conceived to be the effect of a woman's uplifted arm. But injured virtue—and poor Mary Lee's feelings had still a virtue in them—has a power which proud man has been often brought to acknowledge and to feel. The cowardly braggart, only brave in pseudo love was so tamed by the blow, and so humiliated by the noble attitude of the asserter of her dearest rights, that he slunk away as if he had been caught in an act of larceny, or stung by a serpent.

"Gae," cried she, "an' tell him wha commissioned ye, hoo weel ye hae done your duty, an' how I hae performed mine. Think, as ye look on the earth—for ye canna face heaven—that there is the connach worm crawlin' amang yer feet, claimin' the kindred o' ane wha wasna formed to look in the face o' a woman! Shun, as the screechowl does the licht o' day, yon eagle that perches on the trystin' oak o' Eaglesmonicht; for the gleam o' its bright e'e will, as the sun extinguisches the humble peat-moss ingle, blind the dastardly wretch, wha canna abide the look o' the woman he has insulted. If Robert Ashley sent ye to me, tell him that I hae sent ye to him, to say that Mary Lee has in the wreck o' her feelin's, enough left to fire the heather that may consume the house an' hearth o' his new affections. Awa—awa!"

This strange speech was delivered with the impassioned mien and voice of the Pythoness. A new and hitherto unfelt power and energy had seized her frame, and the instinctive enthusiasm of a deep revenge had come upon her like an inspiration. She turned her eyes from the direction in which Henderson had gone, and, with downcast look and a brooding melancholy, sought her home.

Some time after, it was currently reported in the village that Robert Ashley was about to be married to Catharine Hamilton. From that period, the whole character of Mary underwent a change: she was never seen to smile, yet she never wept. Her griefs had left her heart, where they operate to soften or to break, and seized her brain, where they generate dreams of revenge, and frenzied illusions of the fancy. Her blue eye now burnt with a sterner fire than even in her former fits of anger she had ever exhibited; and her demeanour, shewing fits and starts, and a general disturbance of all her feelings, told, to the most careless observer, that the change which had come over her extended to the fountain of her feelings, and the springs of her hope. All her usual sympathies seemed to be dried up, and nothing was left but the simoom of a stern and deadly hatred, which shewed itself in sudden exclamations, clenching of the hands, and wild looks. The report was soon circulated, that Mary Lee was mad; but those who knew her better, saw, in her strange conduct and demeanour, only the workings, on a larger scale, of the same spirit which had been noticed by her father at a very early period.

The rumours as to the intended marriage of Ashley were true; and they were soon followed by an announcement of a more certain nature, that the marriage was to take place at Eaglesmonicht within a month. This intelligence reached the ears of Mary; but its effect was only to add to the gloom which had apparently taken its eternal seat in her coun-

tenance. She spoke to no one of the marriage, and gave no answer when any question regarding it was proposed by the neighbours. Her father, who had watched her conduct, and suspected an undue intimacy between her and Ashley, conjectured the cause of the change that had taken place on his child; but from his knowledge of her peculiar temper, which had uniformly resisted every attempt to draw from her her secrets, or to change the character and hue of her feelings, he despaired of being able to acquire any proof of the reality of his conjecture: he, therefore, followed the course suggested by his paternal feelings, and endeavoured to soothe his daughter under her affliction, and soften the obduracy of her apparent misanthropy. His efforts were, however, vain—the change on his daughter's heart, was as complete and lasting as if it had been effected by an organic mal-disposition of its functions; her looks, and short ejaculations of bitter scorn of the higher sanctions of love or marriage, evinced a settled spirit of demoniac feeling; and every indication proved the existence of that extraordinary state of the female mind, produced by a deluded or scorned affection, when the heart, instead of giving way to the revulsion of rejected feeling, and breaking, secretes and nourishes a poison, which, like the saliva of the serpent which has bit itself, proves destructive to the destroyer and the victim.

On the day fixed for the marriage of Ashley, there were great preparations made for rejoicings at Eaglesmonicht. A dinner was prepared for the tenants on the lawn opposite to the castle, and all males and females, residing on the estate, were invited to attend, to partake of the liberality of the young laird, and wish him and his lady joy. An immense number of people were collected, and the dinner was pronounced worthy of the spirit of the young bridegroom. The repast being finished, the party were regaled with drinks of various sorts; and Ashley and his bride came down from the castle to witness the gay scene. It was resolved that the whole guests should rise with queghs in their hands, and drink to the health and happiness of the young and handsome pair. This was accordingly done; and the shouts of the boisterous labourers of the land rent the welkin in honour of the toast. Ashley rose, as his guests resumed their seats, and returned thanks for the kindness which had been exhibited to him. He made large promises of reductions of rent, when fate should be so unkind as to remove his father from this earthly scene; and told them that the man who had never broken his pledge, had that day a right to demand their faith and trust in a profession which filled the hearts of the poor farmers with joy. These sentiments were responded to by louder shouts, and a scene of joyous uproar was exhibited which had never before been witnessed from the windows of Eaglesmonicht. Ashley sat down; and, nearly opposite to the place where he now sat, there was seen to rise a figure wrapped up in a cloak, as if in the attitude of one intending to address the assembly. This person was no other than Mary Lee. Pointing her finger over to Ashley, and fixing her eye with the sternness of one who is determined not to be shaken from a desperate purpose, she said, in a tone of voice which suited itself with wonderful pathos to the style of her speech—

“I hae waited for this day, Robert Ashley, as I would hae waited for my ain wedding—and it has come. Ye are richt, ye men o' Galloway, to believe this man, whom ye hae this day come to meet, and whose bread ye hae broken, that he will reduce your rents; for he never broke his word. Sae did I believe him when I put my faith and troth in his hands, and yielded to his desires, on condition o' his promise that I should stand in the place o' this braw bride. That promise he falsely broke; and will he keep that which he has this day made to ye? Never!—believe me, who stands here a wretched victim o' his falsehood, whose love he sought and wan, whose peace he has destroyed, whose heart he tried to break—tried—aye, but only tried; for he has

changed it to the tongue o' the hary adder that basks i' the moss o' the swamps o' the Ken. I hae hated the yellow-wamed ask that sleeps i' the mud o' the lazy Nith, the moon baying tyke, the charking whutthroat, and the taed that carries its poison on its back among the seggs o' the banks o' the Solway. Ay, sair, sair hae I hated them, wi' a' the hate o' a heart that had only twa pairs, ane for lovin' and ane for hatin'; but waur, ten thousand times waur, and tens o' tens, do I hate the vile and loathsome reptile, wha, puttin' on the appearance o' man, and coverin' his lym' tongue wi' the Almighty's words o' promised faith, wiles frae the trustin', lovin', defenceless woman a' that she has to care for on earth, and wha yet hasna courage enough to stab her to the heart, and end her misery and her life thegither. But, thanks to the power wha befriends the poison-struck, and engenders frae the venom o' the destroyed a spirit a thousand times stronger, to feed the heart which love has betrayed!—sweeter to me—ay, hear me, ye men o' Galloway, hear the victim o' the seduction o' your demi-god—sweeter to me is that poison than would be to me his kisses, now sour as the green bullister, and loathsome as the milk on the taed's back. But the day lengthens frae the shortest to the langest, and, as the earth turns, they wha, but some hours syne, stood upon our heads, shall, as many hours after, lie under our feet. Sae may the day o' Mary Lee's joy follow the nicht o' her grief—and that joy will be revenge!”

As the last word, “revenge,” rang round the silent scene, the excited damsel waved her hand and disappeared. The effect of her speech was electric. Every one looked at his neighbour, mutterings and whisperings ran round the company, and glances of a suspicious nature were thrown upon Ashley. Some of his friends, for the sake of saving him, suggested that the woman was insane; and the company, glad to find a pretext for disbelieving the charge brought in so extraordinary a manner against their landlord, adopted the suggestion. Ashley, however, was struck deeper than he would avow, or than might have been expected, in the case of a man dead to ordinary pity, and to the moral sense. Rising from his seat, he again thanked the company for their attention, and retired.

Next day, a messenger called at the house of Mary's father, and requested to see her. He was commissioned, he said, to give her—provided she would receive it with grace and favour—renouncing the ill-will she bore to Ashley—a considerable sum of money, amounting to two hundred merks. Mary, contrary to the man's own expectation, seized the money with the greatest avidity; but without uttering a syllable wherefrom he might draw an inference that she was placated in any degree by the gift. As soon as he retired, she locked the money in her trunk, apostrophising the despised and worshipped dust, with the spirit of an enraptured Mammoness—“Lie there till vengeance needs ye.”

Time rolled on without producing any change on Mary Lee. At Eaglesmonicht, things were different. The old man died, and Robert succeeded to the estates. He gradually softened down to the condition of a sober-minded husband, and experienced the ordinary effects of early baldry and dissipation, in a deep, heartfelt regret, and a wish to make amends to heaven and earth for an abuse of the gifts of both. He had one son, whose name was Hector, whom he loved with all the devotion of a father. Being an only son, the boy was, as usual, spoiled, both by his father and mother; having concentrated on himself affections which, in other circumstances, might have been, with advantage to parents and child, spread over a family of sons and daughters. To such an extent was affection carried, in the case of this spoiled child, that the mother would scarcely let him out of her sight. With his heart also garnered up in his son, and happy in the possession of a kind gentle, though constitutionally weak wife, Robert Ashley might have been pronounced as happy as the regret produced by the loss of the best part of his life would permit him to be.

As regarded the victim of his seduction, Ashley conceived he had now little to fear, seeing she had received his peace-offering, and had, it was reported, contracted an intimacy with Hans Gerstendorf, a German smuggler, who had been in the practice of running his good frau, "Unsere Mutter," (Our Mother,) an old lugger, into the port of Fairhaven, with contraband goods. The report was, to a certain extent, true. Hans had conceived an affection for the still beautiful Mary, and it was certain that she had, in some degree, unbent her stern misanthropy in favour of the German, though with what aim, or for what object, the gossips of Fairhaven knew not. It was not without credence among some, that Hans, whose appearance justified the suspicion, had used some unlawful means—and fancy supplied German charms—to open the heart which all supposed shut against human efforts. Speculation, however, might rack itself with curiosity—and Mary's attentions to the foreigner remained unaccounted for. She often visited his craft, and this supplied others, less indulgent, with the idea that the German charm was nothing else than good Hollands; yet those who knew Mary better, ridiculed the suspicion as unworthy of her character; for her sobriety, in the midst of her unearthly feelings, was never questioned. One thing, amidst all this doubt, remained certain, and that was that, whatever favour Hans Gerstendorf had in the eyes of the relentless fair one, no other person ever saw her smile, and few heard her speak. The same gloomy melancholy haunted her, and the same bitterness of scorn of all social relations, was observable in her eye, and trembled on her lip.

One day a horseman, well mounted, arrived in Fairhaven, in a state of breathless anxiety and haste. He called for a number of the fishermen of the village, and requested them to fly with him to the Fisher's Cairn, a mile beyond the village, to give them assistance in searching for the body of Hector Ashley, who, he said, had fallen into the Solway, and was supposed to have perished. The fishermen seized their dead drags, and ran with their greatest speed to the place pointed out. On arriving there, they found a number of persons collected, among whom was Robert Ashley, apparently occupied in searching for the body of the drowned youth. The clothes of the boy lay on the top of the cairn, from whence it was supposed and reported that he had been bathing, at that part of the Solway which was full of dangerous eddies, and had perished. The father stood in a state bordering on despair, witnessing the unavailable efforts, on the part of the people, to recover his son. Every exertion was used—the dead drags applied in every direction—and the fatal announcement made, that the body was irrecoverable. The tide was receding, and it was the opinion of the fishermen, that the body must have been carried, by the eddies, into some of the deep clefts of the rock, from which it was, in all likelihood, impossible to extricate it. The people gradually disappeared, with the exception of one or two, who undertook to wait the receding of the tide; and Robert Ashley, the disconsolate parent, was conveyed home, in a state of insensibility, to witness the second grief of a mother wailing for the loss of her only child. As the carriage which conveyed Ashley home passed through the village, Mary Lee was sitting, in her usual melancholy mood, at her father's door. On observing the crowd, she suddenly started up, and, with a loud laugh, pointed to Ashley, and retreated into the house. This circumstance caught the attention of the crowd, and formed a part of the melancholy theme which fate had supplied to the evening gossips of Fairhaven. Some hours afterwards, it was reported that the tide had receded to its utmost extent, and no trace could be found of the lost heir of Eaglesmonicht.

The conduct of Mary Lee had given rise to suspicions of her being, in some way, connected with the death of Hector Ashley; and an investigation was, by the orders of the fa-

ther, set about, with the view of ascertaining what grounds there existed for these suspicions. It was, however, clearly ascertained that Mary Lee had not been out of her father's house for hours preceding the disappearance of the unfortunate boy, and the inquiry was relinquished; while no hope was now entertained that any less disastrous fate had befallen him than being drowned, while in the act of bathing, which, it was discovered, he had been in the habit of doing, unknown to his mother, who had enjoined the strictest prohibition against the indulgence.

The effect of this calamity, in the mind of Mrs Ashley, was such as to produce strong apprehensions of the most dangerous consequences. No consolation could be administered to her with the slightest chance of abating a grief which had sunk too deep for human aid to relieve. After some months, it was discovered that a hereditary tendency to consumption had received a fatal increase of strength, from the decayed state of her constitution; and the disease having progressed with that rapidity which is often observed to be one of its most appalling symptoms, the bereaved mother breathed her last, in the arms of the fate-stricken and inconsolable husband.

It was on a rainy day in December, that the remains of Mrs Ashley were to be conveyed to her father's vault, a few miles distant from Eaglesmonicht. A large cavalcade of mourners attended, and the funeral was conducted with a state and pomposity suited to the rank of the deceased. The procession glided silently along, by a road passing through the dark forests of Eaglesmonicht, and by that spot where the unhappy victim of Ashley's perfidy resigned her honour and her peace for ever. The trysting-tree was still there, with its branches bending under a load of December snows, which the thaw had not yet been able to dissolve. There Mary Lee took her station; and, as the mournful procession passed, the woods resounded with the same wild laugh that had met the ear of Ashley, on the disappearance of his son.

Years rolled on, but the bereaved husband and father finds little assuasive power in the effects of time. Robert Ashley experienced this melancholy truth, and sought assistance from a fountain whose perennial consolations flow over the hearts of the rich and the poor. The extraordinary manner in which the early victim of his heartless seduction had triumphed over his misfortunes, appeared to him as the supernatural effects of Divine retribution. The idea haunted him like the invertible companions of Orestes. A deep melancholy took possession of his spirits, and made its usual inroads upon a constitution which early vices and unprecedented bereavements had made susceptible of the despoiling effects of disease. His mind became occupied with a presentiment that the death of every member of his family would alone atone for the ruin he had brought on that individual, whose fate seemed to have constituted her an avenger of wrongs, which could only be expiated by the greatest of misfortunes, visited on the head of him who had blasted the prospects of one of God's creatures, and expelled his victim from the sanctuary of grace.

In these states of bodily disease and mental dejection, the proud lord of Eaglesmonicht was brought to feel not only what it is to be a man, but a sinner. He felt how vain were all the advantages of fortune, when they are not accompanied with peace of mind. The woods around the castle used to afford him a retreat from the fevered excitements of gay life. The song of the blackbird, full, mellow, and sorrowful, soothed the ear which had been poisoned by the flatteries incident to favoured sons of fortune. The merry reveille of the lark banished unpleasant recollections and many a sigh was drowned in the rich flow of the music of the thrush. All these things were experienced with joy and satisfaction, when the salient energies of health and youth made his muscular limbs jump with the exuberance of animal spirits. They were welcomed as good tidings, when no pang of

aroused conscience stung him with its peculiar pain, and no morbid fancy made to dance in the green woods the images of misery he had brought on the hearts of unsuspecting victims.

Now, all was changed when he rode out into those beautiful retreats—the pleasure he formerly derived from them was the parent of the evil he now felt. The contrast was itself a grievous pain; and he felt that he would have been happier in the abodes of sorrow. Pleasure is not the soother of griefs, that ask the nourishment of a morbid appetite for an accession of wo. It is a cataplasm applied to a sore, under the mistaken idea that its softness will atone for the pungency produced, not from its own asperity, but the tenderness of the part diseased. The joys of Eaglesmonicht were now dead to its lord. If the soothing influences of rural scenery, with its trees, plants, flowers, birds, bees, and butterflies, could not assuage the pangs of a diseased body, a bereaved heart, and an awakened conscience—what could be expected from the entertainments of the castle? Ashley knew too well the vanity of these, even in the heyday of youth, health, and pleasure, to have recourse to them when his views were blasted, and his hopes had fallen into the sere and yellow leaf. All company he avoided; and no attempt, on the part of the surrounding gentry, or his old friends, was available in getting him to relax the rigid discipline of sorrow which he had, in his despair, imposed on himself.

As he rode out, for the benefit of the air, he was always under an apprehension. Vague fears, the result of an evil conscience, haunted him. The ruffle of a leaf disturbed him, and the slouching, fearful look he threw on intruders on his solitary walk, were in sad contrast with the proud bearing of the once eagle-eyed lord of the proudest castle on the western marches. His timidity rendered him incapable of managing his horse—a proud creature, which vindicated the untainted character of its stock, under the crest-fallen demeanour of its once haughty master. In going over a small fence, he one day fell into an old ditch, and the weakness to which he was reduced prevented him from rising. In this condition, Mary Lee, in one of her wandering fits, came upon him.

“I wish ye joy,” she commenced, “o’ the elevated position ye occupy in the heart o’ yer ain wuds. He who exalteth himself is debased, and he who humbleth himself shall be raised. Ye hae lang inhabited a proud castle; but fate, wha richts the oppressed, can mak the craven-hearted dastardly betrayer o’ woman’s troth, lie whar the meg-o-mony-foot crawls, on the green and yellow carrion that courts the slimy mouth o’ the hairy adder. A short distance frae this, ye lay wi’ me on a green bank, whar roses encircled us wi’ their sweet-scented flavours, and poured into my credulous ear the poison o’ yer love. A stagnant ditch now contains yer diseased body, and the hisses o’ the vengeance o’ a ruined woman pierce and wound the ear that was ance charmed wi’ her honied love. Twice hae I laughed o’er yer misfortunes; a third opportunity has gratified a heart that is only prevented frae breaking by the wish that I hae lang nourished, to see the auld taff o’ the kirk-yard cover the moil that keeps ye frae the sicht o’ her ye hae ruined. The adder has its venom, the taed its milk, the ask its poison—Mary Lee has naething but the wishes o’ a revengful heart, and this spittle, that she now throws on the reptile that stung her honour, and made her fame bleed and perish, to shew that a woman is no without a part o’ that power that is vouchsafed to the trampled worm.”

As the infuriated creature finished these words, she spat on the poor victim of her hatred, now unable even to reply to her dreadful expressions of a morbid thirst for revenge. Having thus gratified her passion, she disappeared among the woods. Ashley lay for a considerable time, before assistance came to him. His feelings may be conceived—they cannot be expressed. His conscience was enough for him,

without the exhibition of so deadly a hatred in her whom he now pitied. The reaction of injured virtue overcame him. He groaned in the depth of his agony; burning tears of remorse flowed down his cheeks; the pains and penalties of vice stung him in mind and body, with the malignity of demons; he would have given the proud domains of his forefathers, for one drop of mercy to his burning soul. He tried to pray; he was unable. The fiends still clung to him. The Almighty did not think it time to pluck them away. In his struggles, he fainted, and lay on the cold earth for several hours.

The servants of the castle came out to seek their master. They searched the woods, and found the horse which had strayed away from him. His groans attracted their notice; and, in the awful plight we have described, they found their unhappy lord. When taken home, he was put to bed, where he lay for some months. The aids of ministers of religion afforded him consolation, but were ineffectual in banishing the presentiment which had taken so firm a hold of his imagination. They recommended to him travel; and he consented to remove to France, where the change of scene might produce its accustomed effects, in withdrawing his mind from the contemplation of a subject which preyed on his vitals. Arrangements were made for the journey, and everything was ready for his departure; but the journey which was destined for the unhappy victim of his own crimes, was of a different kind from that he had in view. On the day on which he was to depart, he was seized with a hæmorrhage from the lungs, and died before any medical advice could be afforded him.

In a moonlight night, some weeks after the interment, Mary Lee stood upon the grave of Robert Ashley.

“The proud Eagle o’ Eaglesmonicht,” she soliloquized, “wha condescended to come to earth only for garbage, now lies whar I hae lang wished him to be. Robert Ashley has met his deserts, an’ nae tear has wet the cheek o’ Mary Lee. Na—that tear shall only be the clammy rheum that oozes frae the closing ee o’ death, and only maks the cheek o’ the heart-broken mair dry. Did I no say, that I hated the connach worm? Ay, but I wha hae nae love for mortal on earth, could love that hairy reptile now, for it will nestle in the heart o’ my destroyer e’en whar I hae nestled. Fear nae guile noo, ye brawnet reptile—that was a’ wasted in my ruin; an’ bluid will be yer repast as it has been my vengeance. Thrice hae I laughed in triumph; an’ I would lauch my lood lauch again, if the ears o’ Eaglesmonicht war open to hear’t; but I hae yet anither victim, and my last shout shall be o’er the fate o’ the remainin’ rafter o’ the ruif tree o’ Eaglesmonicht. Then shall be the weird o’ my hatred fulfilled; an’ the staff o’ the stern wizard, wha guides me on through the dark ways o’ revenge, be broken an’ cast on the waters o’ the Solway.”

As Mary was in the act of pronouncing the last words of her speech, she was interrupted by a voice, apparently that of a man. It was Gerstendorf, who had not been in these parts for many years. He seemed in great agitation, and spoke confusedly, and as if in fear of being overheard.

“What brings ye here, wi’ that craven look, and these broken sounds?” inquired Mary.

“What may that be to you, mein gut child? Donner! have I no power left to look after mein safety, and by returning the knabe, Hector Ashley, to the house of his vater, get a riddance of the outlawry against me and mein crew?”

“Hans Gerstendorf,” replied Mary, “is this the faith pledged to me langsyne, when I put into your hand twa hunder siller merks, as the apprentice fee o’ Hector Ashley, and the reward o’ eternal silence as to his birth and lineage? This may be German troth, but it belangs na to the honour o’ Galloway.”

“The faith, and the promise, and the covenant,” replied the German “belong to the men who live under the laws

—Der teafel! are not the sharks and the hounds, by the sea and by the land, smelling for us, and baying for us?—and doesna the hang-tief stand on the lang sands o' Leith, to mak langer by twa inches the craigs o' the pirate and his gang? Ha! mein gut Maria, what is the troth to the life, the breath, and the soul that kensna repentance for ten thousand crimes?—One chance is left, and that is to tell Peter Fleming the secret o' his parentage and his history, from that day when I kidnapped him at the Fisherman's Cairn, and left his cla'es on the stones to beguile his father. Once in the Castle o' Eaglesmonicht and we are safe."

The resolution, intention, or wish, thus expressed by the German, deeply affected Mary. For some time, she replied not—her hand was on her forehead, and she was apparently musing in deep thought; at last she started.

"Weel, weel," she said, in a choked voice—"weel, since it is as ye say, that your lives are in danger, let your way be as ye wish. But whar are ye concealed?"

And, as she put the question, her eye watched the looks of the German.

"My men are amang the high bent that grows on the drifted sand, twa miles down the coast. But wha is now the proprietor o' Eaglesmonicht? for I maun tell Peter the name of the man wha is to be his enemy; and we may hae to fecht our way to headquarters."

"There is naebody in the Castle," answered Mary.

"Blut! that is the good tidings," ejaculated Hans, in joy. "Hurra! then, for Eaglesmonicht!" And he dashed through the willows that overhung the burial-ground, where they stood.

On that night, three hours after, intelligence was said to have been given by Mary Lee to the procurator-fiscal of the stewardry, that the outlawed pirates lay in the sea bent at the banks of the Solway. A band of armed men repaired to the place, and Hans Gerstendorf and his men, among whom was Peter Fleming, no other than Hector Ashley, were seized and put in irons, and carried to the jail or Dumfries. The unhappy men were afterwards removed to the jail of Edinburgh, tried, and four of them, including Fleming, condemned to be executed on the sands of Leith, for the crime of piracy on the high seas. They were executed accordingly.

A new family came to occupy the Castle of Eaglesmonicht—far removed in relationship to the Ashleys. Mary Lee continued to live on, for many years, exhibiting the same peculiarities of character—the same silence—the same scorn of social relations. Her desire of revenge was satisfied—but that satisfaction was no more powerful, in its assuaging effects, than revenge is generally found to be. It even added to her moroseness; for the evil which she had removed, had been the only good she ever enjoyed, and the thirst for revenge which she had indulged, when slaked by the blood of all her enemies, left her nothing to wish for in the world. She took no interest in passing events, and as she increased in years, her faculties decayed. Latterly, and towards the termination of her life, she fell into temporary fits of idiotcy—which, however, did not conceal from her all her sorrows, for her lucid intervals were periods of misery; all her recollections seemed painful as the searing-iron of a roused conscience; but she never displayed a symptom of remorse for the dreadful vengeance she had taken on the head and house of her seducer.

THE LORD OF HERMITAGE.

GREAT was the surprise of the peaceful congregation assembled in the little church of Etleton, in Liddisdale, on a Sunday forenoon, somewhere about one hundred and fifty years since, to see the Lord of Hermitage come in amongst

them, just as the service of the day had begun. A surprise, this, not without good and sufficient cause; for, although the patron of the parish, and living in the immediate neighbourhood of the church just named, the Lord of Hermitage had not entered it for many a long year. Some of those present thought it not unlikely, that he had begun to repent of his ways, which were indeed evil—for a vicious, dissolute and tyrannical man was he—dreaded and detested by all who knew him; and that his coming to church, on this occasion, was not improbably meant as a public intimation of his having commenced the work of reformation; and that it might, therefore, be looked upon as the first overt act of contrition. Others, incredulous of so sudden a conversion in a man so notorious for his wickedness, dreaded that his appearance, on this occasion, boded no good; although they could not conjecture, either, how any evil should arise from it.

In the meantime, while all eyes were fixed on him, the dreaded Lord of Hermitage, slightly bowing to the officiating clergyman, took a seat and seemed to listen for some time, with decent attention, to his discourse. But it was only for a short time that he continued to exhibit this becoming respect for the devotional proceedings that were going forward. His eye was soon observed wandering over the assembly, as if in search of some object, and was at length seen fixed, with a steady and insolent gaze, on the beautiful countenance of Isabella Foster, the daughter of a respectable farmer, and one of his own tenants, who resided in the lower part of Liddisdale. In this circumstance, simple as it was, or rather would have been, but for the well-known character of the Lord of Hermitage, some of the congregation felt assured that they had discovered the secret of his appearance amongst them on this occasion, while all considered it matter for strong suspicion of evil intentions.

Isabella Foster was, on this occasion, accompanied by her father and her acknowledged lover—a young man of considerable property, but who was, nevertheless, much better known in the country by the familiar, Border-like soubriquet of, "Joek o' the Syde," than by his real name, which was Armstrong. Isabella herself marked, and she did so with fear and trembling, the ominous gaze of the unprincipled Lord of Hermitage; and she clung closer and closer to her father and her lover, both of whom were also aware of the circumstance at which she was so much alarmed. Her father saw it with a feeling of dread and horror; for he knew well the infamous character of the man, and he knew, too, that he would perpetrate any villany, and have recourse, without the smallest hesitation or compunction, to any measures, however violent or atrocious, to accomplish the gratification of his passions; and he felt how vain would be all his precautions, how unavailing all the means he could employ, to defeat the designs of a man at once so determined, so unprincipled, and so powerful.

On her lover, however, the discovery that his Isabella had attracted the special notice of the Lord of Hermitage had a different effect. It roused his young blood; and in the look with which he contemplated him, as he gazed upon her, there was plainly to be read a proud defiance at once of his personal prowess and his power. Armstrong felt, at that moment, that his single arm, furnished with his own good sword, was alone sufficient to protect his lover from all the Lords of Hermitage that ever existed, although they all came upon him in a bundle.

With more experience of the world, Isabella's father, as we have shewn, thought and reasoned differently. He feared the worst; and these fears were much increased when, on the dismissal of the congregation, the Lord of Hermitage rode up to him, complimented him on the beauty of his daughter, and informed him that he meant to do himself the pleasure of paying him a visit soon, when he hoped, he said—at the same time turning towards and bowing to

Isabella—that the fair lily of Liddisdale would not be absent.

Isabella's father made no further reply to this remark, than by bowing politely, and saying, with equivocal hospitality, that his house should always be open to the Lord of Hermitage.

Isabella's lover, who was also of the party on this occasion, mechanically felt for the hilt of his sword, while this conversation was passing—a motion which did not escape the notice of him who had excited such an evidence of hostile feeling: neither did the stern look, with which he contemplated the speaker, pass unobserved.

"What chafes thee so much, young man?" said the Lord of Hermitage, turning to the person whom he addressed, with a contemptuous smile. "Is yon fair maiden your sweetheart, my flint-spark; and are you afraid I shall run away with her?"

"No names, if you please, my Lord Hermitage," replied Armstrong; "I take no by-names but one—that by which everybody knows me. All others I am apt to acknowledge in a way that is pretty generally allowed to be disagreeable. And as to this lady being my sweetheart," he went on—"perhaps she is, and perhaps not; but whether she be or no, should you entertain any thoughts of running away with her, take my word for it—take the word of 'Jock o' the Syde'—that you'll run pretty fast, and pretty far, too, if I dont overtake you."

To this blunt language, the Lord of Hermitage merely replied, evidently desirous of giving the whole matter the turn of a joke, "that he was glad to find the young lady had such a redoubtable guardian." Having said this, and made his obeisance to Isabella, bowed to her father, and waved his hand slightly and coldly to Armstrong, the Lord of Hermitage rode off towards his own residence, whither we shall take the liberty of accompanying him.

On entering the gate of his castle, the Lord of Hermitage was met by a person who seemed to be a retainer—for such his dress bespoke him; but there was a familiarity in his manner, mingled with a sort of careless respect, that at once shewed that his lord and he were upon a much more intimate footing than is usually displayed between master and servant.

"Well, my lord," said this person, as he assisted his master to dismount, "have you seen her?"

"I have, Maxwell," replied the Lord of Hermitage; "and, on my soul, a most lovely creature it is. Strange that I should not have heard of her before. Thou hast an admirable taste, Maxwell," he went on; "and I owe thee something for this scent, which thou shalt forthwith have. 'Tis a rare prize, Maxwell, I assure thee, and does thy diligence infinite credit."

"I guessed as much," replied the person addressed, and who was, if such an official can be recognised, the confidential villain of the Lord of Hermitage, in the shape of a domestic servant or personal attendant—"I guessed as much, my lord," he said, with a fiendish smile; "I felt assured that I had at last caught something worth looking at."

Here the conversation dropped for a time. The Lord of Hermitage being now dismounted from his horse, proceeded into the castle, whither he was followed by Maxwell; when the two having shut themselves up in a small retired apartment, resumed the discourse which the movement just spoken of had interrupted; and proceeded to discuss the question as to which was the best method of getting Isabella Foster into their power.

"Carry her off, to be sure—carry her off bodily," was the reply of Maxwell to this query—"why should there be any hesitation?"

"Why, I don't know, Maxwell," replied the Lord of Hermitage, musingly. "It would make a stir in the country, and set the fools a-talking. I'd rather it were quietly

done, if at all possible. I have told Foster," he added, after a pause of some minutes, "that I would pay him a visit one of these days."

"Then, my Lord, excuse me, you were wrong," said Maxwell, interrupting him—"you were wrong. He'll bundle the girl out of the way directly; and, if he does, we may look long enough ere we find her again."

"Faith! I dare say, thou'rt right, Maxwell," replied the Lord of Hermitage; "although I scarcely think the scoundril would dare to do that either. I should have a right to consider such a proceeding as a personal insult, and feel myself warranted in resenting it accordingly."

"No doubt, no doubt, my Lord," said Maxwell; "but, in the meantime, observe you, the girl may be gone—a loss, this, for which the satisfaction of running her father through the body, would be but an indifferent compensation."

"Right again, Maxwell, right again," replied his master, "why, then, suppose, after all, we do the thing boldly and at once." A proposition, this, which ended in an arrangement that the Lord of Hermitage, accompanied by Maxwell, and other three or four trusty knaves, well armed with concealed weapons, should, on the following day, set out for Foster's residence, and, seizing a fit opportunity, carry off his daughter.

On the day following, accordingly, a party of five horsemen were seen, towards evening, riding up the avenue, at the head of which Foster's house was situated; when the latter, having observed them approaching, and recognising the Lord of Hermitage amongst them, hastened out to receive them. On their coming up—

"I promised you a visit, Foster," said the leader of the party, at the same time flinging himself from his horse; "and I am now come to redeem my promise."

Foster made no reply, but bowed and requested his visitor to walk in, an invitation with which he immediately complied; but when a similar one was extended to his followers, they, one and all, declined, saying that their master intended staying so short a time, that it was not worth their while dismounting—an apology with which Foster was, at the time, satisfied, although some circumstances soon afterwards occurred that made him doubt its sincerity. One of them was, his observing two of the horsemen who *had* dismounted, notwithstanding what they had said just a moment before, skulking about the door of the apartment in which he and his guest were.

After the latter had sat for some time, and had partaken of some refreshment that had been introduced, he inquired of his entertainer, with an affected carelessness, what had become of his "fair daughter." Foster replied, that she was unwell, and confined to her own apartment; which was, indeed, true.

"Unwell!" exclaimed his guest, starting to his feet; "you do not say so! Ha! unwell!—I must see her, then. Perhaps I may be able to restore her to health. I have some skill in the healing art. Come, Foster," he added, with a sudden ferocity and determination of manner, which contrasted strongly with the benevolent purpose he affected, "conduct me to her this instant—this instant, I say, Foster." And he drew a sword from beneath the cloak in which he was enveloped.

"What means this conduct, my Lord?" inquired his amazed and alarmed host.

"Mean, sirrah! mean!" replied the Lord of Hermitage—"why, it means, that I am about to do your daughter an honour." And, without waiting for the guidance he had demanded, he rushed out of the apartment—when he was instantly joined by two of his followers, with drawn swords in their hands—and proceeded to search for the chamber in which the object of his villany was confined. Having quickly found the apartment, the ruffians, after in vain

soliciting admittance from its inmate, whom the previous noise had alarmed, began to force the doors. While they were thus employed, Foster, who had, in the meantime, armed himself, and brought two or three of his men to his assistance, suddenly rushed in amongst the assailants, and a close and sanguinary contest immediately ensued.

At this moment, the unfortunate young lady, hearing her father's voice raised in anger, and the clashing of swords in the passage which led to her apartment, undid the door, and frantically rushed into the midst of the conflict. Fatal indiscretion! She had scarcely stepped from her room, when the thrust of a sword (not, however, meant for her) reached her heart, and she fell, lifeless, amongst the feet of the combatants.

In a few seconds afterwards, her unhappy father also fell, mortally wounded; when the fiends, perceiving the purposes of their villany thus fearfully frustrated, instantly quitted the house, mounted their horses, and fled.

This new atrocity of the Lord of Hermitage's—for he had been guilty of many, although, perhaps, this was the most hideous of all—excited, when it became known, such a universal feeling of horror throughout the country, that the miscreant, powerful as he was, was obliged to fly the kingdom, and betake himself to a foreign land, to avoid the popular vengeance with which he was threatened. But his crime was of too deep a dye to escape due punishment, even on earth. There was one whose fierce and enduring thirst for revenge he could not evade—one to escape whom all his windings and doublings were vain, and from whose arm, neither distance of place or time could ultimately protect him.

On hearing of the dreadful catastrophe, Isabella's lover, Armstrong, vowed he would have a deadly revenge, and that he would never cease from the pursuit of the Lord of Hermitage, while both remained in life, till he had accomplished his destruction; and, in pursuance of this oath, (which he swore on the grave of his lover,) he abandoned home and friends, assumed the habit of a palmer, and set out in quest of the murderer of Isabella Foster and her father.

On leaving the country, the infamous Lord of Hermitage directed his steps to London, where he remained for some time in concealment; for the singular atrocity of his crime, which he had no doubt would soon be known far and wide, made him consider himself unsafe, even in the heart of the English capital; and unsafe, even here, he certainly was, although unaware of the particular character of the danger that threatened him; for Armstrong had traced him, and he only escaped him by the chance circumstance of his leaving London for the continent, one single day before his pursuer had discovered his retreat. Similar fortuitous circumstances saved him, at various subsequent turns in the chase; but the bloodhound that tracked him, though often thrown out, kept steadily to his purpose, and as often regained as he lost the scent of his victim.

For two full years, the lover of Isabella Foster pursued her murderer with unabated eagerness and unflagging zeal; and, for two full years, the former, from various accidental circumstances, escaped the vengeance that was thus, although unknown to him, so closely pursuing him.

At the expiry of these two years, however, the Lord of Hermitage, guided, in some measure, we suppose, by a similar instinct with that which directs the hare back to her form, however wide and numerous may have been the evolutions of her intermediate career, sought his own castle again; entertaining also, doubtless, a hope that his atrocious crime, though it could not possibly be forgotten, would now be contemplated with less intensity of feeling than on its first occurrence.

It was on a dark and stormy night in November, that he arrived at his own gate on horseback, and alone. Their

lord's return being wholly unexpected by his domestics, he had some difficulty in gaining admittance; but having at length satisfied the porter, who kept the gate, that he was indeed his master, the former was thrown open; and, all dripping with wet, and perishing with cold, the Lord of Hermitage once more entered his own castle, where, in the enjoyment of the luxuries of a blazing fire and an ample repast, he quickly forgot the sufferings to which, for the last ten or twelve hours, he had been exposed.

In little more than an hour afterwards, however, the Lord of Hermitage's arrival was followed by that of another person, who rode furiously up to the gate, and inquired, in an eager and anxious tone, if he had yet appeared. Being answered in the affirmative, the stranger called on the porter to open the gate, saying that he was an attendant of his master's, whom the latter had hired some days previously, and that he had lost both him and his way in the dark, being a stranger in that part of the country. The man's story was plausible; and he was instantly admitted. On entering the court-yard, and seeing some lights in the windows that overlooked it, the stranger inquired of the person who admitted him, whether any one, and which of these windows belonged to his master's sleeping apartment. The porter, naturally thinking that the question was put by the stranger with the view of affording his master his services, pointed out the apartment he inquired after, and gave him particular directions how to find it. Desiring his informant now to hold his horse for a few minutes, till he should have informed his master of his arrival, when he would return, he said, to take charge of the animal himself, the stranger disappeared. In an instant after, the door of the Lord of Hermitage's apartment was suddenly opened, and "Jock o' the Syde" stood before its horror-struck inmate, who at once guessed the intentions of the intruder. What followed was the work of a moment. Armstrong—his eyes dilated with a fearful joy, and with a deadly smile playing on his haggard countenance—seized the unhappy Lord of Hermitage by the throat; and, as he struck a dagger to his heart exclaimed—"Villain! most atrocious of villains!—the hour of vengeance is come. I have caught thee at last. This, and this, and this," he said, as he repeated his stabs, "is for Isabella Foster, and her murdered father!"

Elated beyond bounds at this successful termination to all his weary toils and watchings, and gratified to think that his vengeance had been, after all, consummated in the very stronghold of the murderer—Armstrong flew to the court-yard, leaped on his horse, and having called to the porter, in a voice of fierce exultation, to open the gate, as his master had ordered him on a pressing and important mission, "Jock o' the Syde" galloped out of the castle; and his loud and triumphant, but most appalling laugh, as he cleared the gate-way, rang wildly through the darkness and solitude of the night, and struck those who heard it with awe and dismay; for it was indeed unearthly.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND

MARY MERTON

THE poet has said—and in many a melancholy tale has the truth of the oft-quoted saying been exemplified—that “The course of true love never did run smooth;” but I am not sure that it ever took a more unhappy turn than in that of Mary Merton and James Brooks.

Mary was the daughter of a fisherman, who lived in a solitary cottage on the east coast of Scotland. Her father was a sober industrious man, and pursued his calling with a degree of perseverance and success that made him ultimately independent of the world. The house in which Merton lived was, I have said, a solitary one—so it was; but he was not the only tenant. Next door to him—the building consisting of two houses outwardly conjoined—lived Henry Brooks, who also followed the business of a fisherman, and with nearly as much success as his neighbour. In his labours the latter was assisted by his son, James, an active, stout-built, daring young man of five-and-twenty, of a kind and generous disposition, free and open in his manners, warm-hearted and lively, and a first-rate seaman; but his temper was irascible, and in his anger he was somewhat fierce and ungovernable—a combination of opposite qualities unfortunately but too often found in one and the same person. As, however—from the retired situation in which he lived bringing him but seldom in contact with strangers, and the peaceful and industrious life which he led, together with the perfect harmony which subsisted in his own family, and between the latter and their neighbours—few occasions had occurred to elicit the warmth of his temper under provocation, or to bring it under the notice either of his friends or others; and it was, therefore, scarcely known that he possessed such an infirmity. Almost the only instances, indeed, in which James’ remarkable irritability of disposition had discovered itself was, in occasional little bickerings with Tom Merton, a brother of Mary’s, who was about the same age with himself, and similarly situated, as he followed the same occupation, and was also a sharer in *his* father’s labours.

The occasional differences, however, that occurred between the two young men were generally of but a very slight and temporary nature, and they happened but seldom—a circumstance this, however, entirely owing to the frank and generous disposition of Brooks, who, as if at once aware of his weakness, and resolved to guard against it, always put an end to any angry altercation with Merton into which he might be betrayed, by some humorous joke or remark; and was always the first to tender the hand of reconciliation after such differences. In this frank and manly conduct, however, he was far from being imitated by Merton, who was of a dogged and sullen disposition, envious, sarcastic, and unforgiving—in short, the very opposite of Brooks; and, as he never got into a passion, however angry he might be, he had, in this particular, greatly the advantage of him in their quarrels.

Notwithstanding all this, however, the young men lived, on the whole, on sufficiently friendly terms. They had been brought up together from their infancy; and the close and intimate footing which had always subsisted between their families, furnished a bond of union which almost supplied the want of personal regard.

Very different, in disposition, in manner, and in mind, from Tom Merton, was his sister Mary, at the period of our story, in the twenty-first year of her age. Singularly handsome in her person, gentle and mild in her disposition, warm and sincere in her affections, and gifted with more than an ordinary degree of intelligence, Mary Merton was, altogether, one of the most amiable and agreeable young women which could be met with.

As a matter almost of course, her first affections were fixed on young Brooks; and most sincerely and ardently was her pure and virtuous love returned.

The mutual attachment of the young pair early attracted the notice of their respective parents, who rejoiced in the circumstance, and looked forward, with delight, to its termination in their union; an event which, at length, appeared to be at hand, as James had prevailed on Mary to name the day. Their parents were duly apprised of this arrangement, and joyfully set about making preparations for the happy occasion. A room was appropriated for the youthful couple, until a cottage could be built for them. Little articles of furniture were, from time to time, picked up, as bargains, real or imaginary, presented themselves; and bandboxes, containing articles of bridal finery, began to appear, *in transitu*, going to and from Mary Merton’s door. In short, one lazy fortnight only had now to elapse before Mary should become the happy wife of a doting husband.

As the day of their union approached, the mutual fondness of the loving pair seemed to increase; if, indeed, such ardent and devoted affection as theirs could admit of addition. For hours they might be seen, at this period, walking hand in hand, in the twilight, on the sea-beach, at some distance from their homes, where a sudden turn in the rocky shore screened them from the view of prying curiosity, and where the smooth, firm sand, presented an easy and pleasant footing. There, with the little wavelets of a placid sea murmuring at their feet, while the deepening shades of evening gathered around them, Mary Merton and James Brooks talked, with rapture, of their future hopes and prospects; and exquisitely delightful was it to these two fond hearts to speak, as they did, much and often of the little household arrangements which their union would render proper or necessary. Delightful was it to them to talk over the little plans and systems of domestic economy which they proposed to act upon when their interests should have become one.

On one of these occasions, Brooks, after walking in silence for a few minutes absorbed in thought, with his arm affectionately encircling the waist of his beloved companion, as if suddenly struck with the greatness of his felicity, and a consequent doubt of its stability, all at once stopped short, and, gazing tenderly in the face of his betrothed bride—“Mary,” he said, “I can scarcely credit my own happiness; I cannot believe either that I am deserving of it, or that I can be permitted to enjoy it. It is too much—too much, Mary. Think you not so, my love? Will it endure, think you?”

Mary blushed; and, under the impulse of the moment, flinging her arms around the neck of her lover, and burying her face in his bosom, gave way to the emotion which the ardent attachment manifested to her by the expressions of

her intended husband, excited. After a short pause—"I hope it will endure, James," she said, softly. "I'm sure I shall strive to make you as happy as I can." And tears of tenderness and love glistened in her soft blue eye.

"That I am sure of, too, Mary, my love," he said—and he embraced her tenderly. "My happiness is safe, I know, so long as it is in your keeping."

At this moment the lovers were interrupted by the approach of some person on horseback. The gloom of twilight did not permit the parties to recognise each other, until they were within the distance of a few paces, when Brooks discovered in the horseman, Mr Edmunds, a gentleman of large landed property in the neighbourhood, to whom he was well-known, as he had often, by way of amusement, gone out with his father and him to the fishing. He was, moreover, always a regular and large purchaser of the commodity in which they dealt—*viz.* fresh fish.

"Ha! Brooks. What! courting, eh?" exclaimed Mr Edmunds, on recognising the young fisherman; "and, on my word," he immediately added, peering in the face of Brooks' blushing companion as he spoke, "a very pretty fish, indeed, you have hooked; I always knew you were expert at your business, James; but this is the most striking proof of it I have yet seen. But why," he continued, "does this pretty mermaid of yours appear to be so abashed, James. She should know that you and I are old acquaintances, and have been often shipmates."

Poor Brooks felt the awkwardness—conceiving that there was such in it—of this meeting nearly as much as his companion; and colouring almost as deeply, stammered out some confused replies to Mr Edmunds' remarks, endeavouring, at the same time, not very successfully, to answer him in the same bantering spirit in which he had been assailed.

Brooks would perhaps scarcely have been pleased with so much levity on such an occasion, in another; but Mr Edmunds he knew to be a generous hearted, and every way most excellent man; and he was one, moreover, from whom he had experienced much kindness, and for whom he entertained the most sincere respect.

To be displeased with him, therefore, even if there had been much more cause than there was to be so, was out of the question; but poor Brooks felt terribly embarrassed in his presence, in consequence of the peculiar and delicate circumstances in which he stood. From this awkward feeling, however, he was relieved by what immediately followed.

"I am glad I have met you, Brooks," said Mr Edmunds—after preparing for a turn in the conversation by a concluding piece of badinage—"as I was desirous of seeing you, and was, in fact, just going to call at your father's for that purpose. I have bought a small yacht," he continued, "somewhere about fifteen to twenty tons; a smart little vessel, cutter rigged. Now, Brooks," he went on, "if we can come to terms, I should like that you took charge of her. I do not mean, just now, to go beyond a day's sail from home, and even that only on occasions; so that your taking the command of her, will not greatly encroach on your regular employment, nor keep you a single night out of your own house; and for what interruption to the former it may give, I hope to satisfy you amply. What do you say to it, Brooks? I have given you the preference in this matter, because I know you to be a steady, active fellow, and an excellent seaman."

Brooks thought for a moment; then, thanking Mr Edmunds for the good opinion he had expressed of him, the confidence he was willing to repose in him, and for the preference which he gave him to the appointment in question, which he knew hundreds would be glad and proud to be chosen to—he intimated his willingness to take charge of the yacht; and this, well knowing Mr Edmund's usual liberality, without waiting to inquire the terms on which the latter might

be disposed to engage him. These, however, were readily adjusted; and Mr Edmunds and Brooks parted on the understanding that the latter should call on him on the following day, to take a look of the vessel with him, and to be fairly inducted into the command of her.

On Brooks' return from this mission next day, he met Merton, whom he had not seen since he had obtained his new appointment, within a few yards of his own door.

"Well, *Captain*," said the latter, sneeringly, and laying an offensive emphasis on the title—"you're a great man now, I hear. What sort of a ship have you got, captain?"

"Oh! a regular out-and-outer—a smart little craft," replied Brooks, good humouredly, although he both saw and felt the taunting manner of Merton; "sits in the water like a duck, and 'll sail, I'll be bound for it, like a wild one."

Merton curled his upper lip contemptuously, and, with a sarcastic smile wished the *captain* good morning, saying, "he was going away to tar the bottom of his boat—a sort of employment with which, he supposed, the captain would not now require to dirty his fingers."

Though Brooks, as already said, felt, and felt keenly, the insulting manner of Merton, who, it will at once be seen, was envious and jealous of the appointment which had been conferred on Brooks, he controlled the resentment which he felt rising within him. Merton was the brother of his Mary; and, for her sake, he not only bore patiently, or at least without giving way to any expressions of an opposite feeling, the treatment he now met with, but determined to abide by the same course on every future occasion of a similar kind; and always to avoid, if at all possible, the slightest quarrel with the man who was soon to be so closely connected with him by the ties of relationship.

Without, then, taking any further notice of the sneering manner of Merton, than by jocularly remarking that, having now got the length of captain, he expected soon to be admiral of the red, he walked into the house.

Although determined, however, as already said, not to resent Merton's conduct to him, or to take any notice of the mean feeling of jealousy by which it was dictated, he could not help complaining of it to Mary.

"It's hardly fair, of Tom, I think," he said; "I'm sure I would very sincerely rejoice in any piece of good fortune that would befall him."

"For heaven's sake, James!" said Mary, who was aware of her lover's fiery temper—"for my sake"—and her eyes filled with tears as she spoke—"do not let this be a cause of quarrel between you. Tom is cruel, and most unreasonable, and most unjust, to entertain any grudge at you, because Mr Edmunds has preferred you to the command of his vessel. But, O James, do bear with him as well as you can, for my sake, for all our sakes. I know his provoking manner; and I know what it must cost you to refrain from resenting it—but, oh! my dear, my beloved James, consider it would break my heart—a heart that dotes on you—if any mischief should arise between you and him." And here the poor girl's feelings overcame her, and she flung herself, weeping, into her lover's arms.

Greatly affected by her emotion, Brooks tenderly supported her, kissed the tears from her cheek, and assured her of his determination to avoid all quarrel with her brother, and never to resent, with violence, anything he might say or do, however offensive it might be.

"For your sake, my beloved Mary," he said, "I will do this; and much more than this would I do, on the same account, if it were required of me."

Satisfied with his assurances, Mary regained her wonted cheerfulness, and resumed, with her usual alacrity, the domestic employment which the occurrence just related had interrupted.

The numbered days which intervened between this period and the happy hour that was to see Mary Merton and James

Brooks united in the holy bands of wedlock passed, (although the lovers by no means thought so,) rapidly away, until one only stood between them and the consummation of their felicity. During this interval, everything, with one exception, had gone on "merry as a marriage bell." From morning to night, the laugh and the joke—nine in ten of them, as is usual in such cases, at the expense of the blushing bride-elect, and her betrothed—rang through the humble, but happy and comfortable, dwellings of their parents. There was the sly insinuation, drawn often from the most trifling and most remote circumstances; and there was the direct bantering allusion, suggested often, also, by the most unlikely things; but, in the joyful excitement that prevailed, everything took, and everything was instantly understood, as if by intuition, however indirect or obscure the connexion might be. Yet, in this overflowing cup of happiness, there was, after all, one drop of bitterness; and that drop fell to the lot of Brooks. Tom Merton—his morose and malicious nature in no way softened by the joy he saw around him, but, on the contrary, having its evil energies increased by it—continued to avail himself of every opportunity of taunting Brooks with his new title; this having become with him a favourite mode of provocation, an art in which he excelled, and which he delighted to practise. The word "captain," always pronounced with an expression of the most bitter contempt, was never out of his mouth, whether he addressed Brooks himself, or had occasion to allude to him when speaking to others; and this last part of his conduct, in particular, Brooks felt to be especially offensive. He bore it all, however, with the utmost magnanimity, although it cost him many a severe struggle to practise this virtue under the provocation he endured; and often did he find himself almost in the act of springing on his heartless insulter, to trample him beneath his feet—a feat which, as he was by far the most powerful man of the two, he could easily have accomplished; but the recollection of his promise to Mary never failed, on these occasions, to allay his wrath, and to restrain his arm.

But it was impossible that this could last—that a system of determined persecution on the one hand, and of passive sufferance on the other, especially with such a spirit as Brooks', could long endure. Human nature was unequal to it; and it was alarmingly probable, that some serious consequences would one day ensue from it.

These consequences did ensue, and in a most appalling shape; and it is now for us to say what they were.

On the day preceding that fixed for the celebration of his marriage, Brooks went to town, a distance of about three miles, to make some final purchases for the approaching occasion; and with these he was about returning home, when, as he passed the window of a public-house, at the extremity of the town, some one inside tapped on the glass, and beckoned him to come in. Readily obeying the invitation, Brooks entered the apartment where the signal had been made, and there found two intimate friends, who were amongst the number of those invited to be present at the ceremony on the ensuing day; and along with them was, to Brooks' surprise, and not a little to his regret and disappointment, his neighbour, and intended brother-in-law, Merton, who, the moment the former entered the apartment, cried out, with his usual sneer—"Oh! here comes the captain—make way for the captain—off hats to the captain!" And he laughed contemptuously while he spoke.

Brooks coloured a little at these studied insults, rendered more intolerable by the circumstances under which they were offered, being evidently calculated to place him in a ludicrous light before his friends. He took no notice of them, however, but sat down, and endeavoured to be as merry as his companions, who were all in great spirits. They, as might be expected, treated themselves to some 'cakes at his expense, in allusion to the approaching event;

and Brooks not only bore them with great good humour, but gave them himself additional point, by a clever application of a ready and natural wit, which he possessed in a very remarkable degree; and so pleased did he soon become, both with himself and his friends, in despite of the disheartening circumstance attending his first entrance into the room, that he almost forgot, in the merriment which followed, the insulting conduct of Merton; and would, perhaps, have entirely forgotten it, had not the latter repeated it more than once in the course of the evening.

The party sat for two or three hours; and, in that time, had drank a considerable quantity, although none of them were at all of dissipated habits; but the approaching marriage of their friend Brooks, and the unexpectedness of their meeting, was thought a sufficient excuse for a little extra indulgence on this occasion.

On leaving the house in which they had been enjoying themselves the two friends of Brooks and Merton accompanied them some distance on their way home. At parting, the former happened to remain for an instant behind the latter, to speak to one of the young men with whom they had spent the evening, when Merton, impatient of the delay thus occasioned, called out to Brooks—"Captain, I say, are you coming?"

"Yes, I am coming, Merton," replied Brooks, haughtily, if not somewhat fiercely; his natural irascibility of temper excited at once by the liquor he had drank, though by no means intoxicated, and the insults he had received during the evening. "I am coming," he said, approaching Merton while he spoke; "and, friend Merton," he went on, after he had joined him, and the two were proceeding on their way together—"I would advise you to drop that sneering manner of yours towards me, in the presence of other people; or," he said, "you may fare all the worse for it. You have insulted me this night repeatedly, as you have often done before; but beware of broken bones. Now, there's a bit of my mind for you, my lad," he added; "and I will tell you more, Merton—if it had not been on your sister's account, I would have taught you better manners long since. I've borne too much from you; but, blow me, if I bear it any longer, let what may be the consequence."

"So, so, captain," said Merton, with one of his bitterest and most contemptuous sneers; "you are getting large upon it, and"—

At this moment, Brooks, excited to fury, by this cool repetition of the offensive term, and forgetting, in one instant, all that he had promised, and all that he had resolved, seized Merton by the throat, and exclaiming—"What! captain again, Merton—captain again!" shook him fiercely, then dashed him violently to the earth, and, in the whirlwind of his passion, planted his foot, while he lay there, with such tremendous force on his stomach, as almost instantly deprived him of life. One appalling groan announced to the wretched survivor the fearful crime he had committed. Overwhelmed with horror, he flung himself on the body of his murdered companion; and, in the madness of his agony, implored his Creator to deprive him of a life which he could now no longer endure.

The unhappy man saw, in one instant, all the horrors of his dreadful situation. He saw himself, by the perpetration of one rash act, and, in the space of a very few moments, hurled from the summit of human felicity, to the very lowest depths of human suffering and misery.

A few minutes before, he could have defied the world—a few minutes before, he feared the face of no man—a few minutes before, he was innocent of crime, respected and esteemed by all who knew him. Now, what a change in his position! Now, he should be an outcast from society; loathed, shunned, and abhorred by men; and an object of the sternest vengeance of the laws of his God and his country. Now he was to tremble at the approach of the meanest and

most insignificant of the human race, and to look no more in the face of man, but with shame, and fear, and trembling; for now his hands were red with murder. The unfortunate, the miserable man, thought of all this, till he felt his brain burning as if it were a mass of molten lead, and until his senses reeled under the distracting pressure of these harrowing reflections. But, horrible and withering as these reflections were, there were others yet more so. To-morrow was to have been his wedding-day. To-morrow, the greatest happiness of which human nature is capable was to have been his. But, alas! now, to-morrow would, in all probability, find him the inmate of a dungeon, a fettered felon, bound down to await the stroke of the sword of justice; and, anon, the wretched man's thoughts turned on his unfortunate Mary, and, in the reflections associated with that beloved being, he experienced a sense of misery that threatened to unseat his reason.

Prompted, however, by that instinct of self-preservation, and the natural horror of a violent and ignominious death—which he had no doubt awaited him if taken—common to all men, the unfortunate man now sought to escape the penal consequences of his crime, by flight. Without knowing whither he went, or whither he should go, he rushed wildly from the fatal spot—the scene of his dreadful crime; and, avoiding all paths and frequented places, flew across the neighbouring fields, regardless of the falls, contusions, and other injuries which he was every moment receiving, in consequence of the ruggedness of the route which he pursued, and was lost to human observation.

Availing ourselves of this circumstance, we will change the scene for a time, and make the relations of the murderer and his victim the subjects of our narrative. We will not, however, attempt to describe either the feelings of these unfortunate persons, or the appalling scene which their once happy homes presented, when the intelligence of the horrid catastrophe above recorded reached them.

Loud and long continued, and heart-rending was the weeping, and wailing, and lamentation that was then heard within their once-peaceful and cheerful abodes; and deep, deep was the mourning of the stricken families who inhabited them. The mothers deplored the fate of their unfortunate sons, with the loud and unutterable grief that marks the sorrowing of the female heart under sudden affliction. The fathers groaned inwardly; and though they restrained the expressions of their sorrow, yet keenly did they feel that the chastening hand of God had, indeed, fallen heavily upon them.

But there was one in these houses of mourning, on whom the dreadful intelligence had yet a more dismal effect, than on even the mothers that bore the unfortunates, whose fate all were deploring. This one was Mary Merton. On hearing the fearful tale, she uttered a piercing shriek, staggered a few paces, and sunk senseless on the floor. In this condition she was carried to bed, where she lay for nearly an entire hour, so still and motionless—not the slightest respiration even being perceptible—that the distracted parents thought that she, too, had been taken from them. But it was not so—better it had. Mary awoke from her lethargy; but her reason was fled. On opening her eyes, she perceived her weeping and heart-broken mother hanging over her; and, after gazing on her earnestly for some time—

“Mother,” she said, emphatically, but in a faint and low voice, “I have had a fearful dream.” And she fixed her eyes wildly on her terrified parent. “A fearful dream, mother,” she repeated. “But, hush, hush,” she added, hurriedly, “there’s James and my brother coming, and I don’t wish them to hear it. They would laugh at me.” Here the unfortunate girl assumed, for a moment, the attitude of one listening attentively; and then resumed—“Oh! it’s nobody after all; so I’ll tell you, mother, what I dreamt. I dreamt that James had murdered Tom—our own Tom, mother; I saw him weltering in his blood, with a dreadful gash in his

forehead, and James standing over him with a naked sword. Did ever any one hear such nonsense, mother?” said the poor deranged girl, and she laughed hysterically. “But this is not the whole of it, mother,” she shortly afterwards went on: “I dreamt, I dreamt,” and she laughed louder and louder as she spoke, “that I saw a gibbet, mother, a great black ugly looking thing, with an immense crowd of people around it, and they were waiting to see the man who was to be hanged on it; and I was waiting, too, amongst the rest. Well, the man came at last, mother, all clad in white, and he was surrounded with a great number of fearful looking men, with naked swords in their hands—and, mother! mother!” she said, suddenly lowering her voice, and assuming a look of horror—“who do you think this man was?” Here she seized her afflicted parent by the hand, with a convulsive grasp, drew her towards her, and whispered in her ear—“As God is to be my judge, mother, the man I saw on the scaffold, all in white, was no other than James Brooks, my own dear James.” Then suddenly flinging her mother’s hand from her, she burst into a loud fit of laughter, and again inquired, “if any one ever heard of so strange and ridiculous a dream.”

The poor girl’s strength, however, was unable longer to support this violent excitement, and she again sunk into a state of the most profound apathy, in which she continued for the next twenty-four hours.

At the end of this period, she appeared more composed, and seemed to have gained a little accession of strength; but the vacant and unquiet expression of her eye but too plainly indicated that reason had not returned. It never did return. But her derangement had already assumed the character which it was ever afterwards to bear. It was marked by great gentleness of manners, and by a mild and melancholy tone of speech.

When the unfortunate girl awoke the second time, she started hurriedly from her bed, and gently reproved her mother for allowing her to sleep so long. “Dear mother,” she said, “why did you not awake me sooner, when you know I had so much to do? Did you forget, mother,” she added, smiling, as if the thing was incredible, “that this is my bridal day, and James expects to find me dressed early? He’ll be here immediately; and what can I say to him, mother, if he finds me in this state?”

Having said this, she proceeded to the drawers where her wedding clothes were deposited, and began to dress herself with great care and neatness—an employment in which her parents, judging it best to allow her to indulge her fancy, would not permit her to be interrupted, nor the slightest hint to be given that should have any tendency to dispel the illusion.

On completing her toilet, which she did as perfectly, and correctly as if she had been in full possession of her judgment, and having made, with equal accuracy and propriety, some other domestic arrangements, which would really have been required had the ceremony of her marriage actually been to take place, she seated herself in an arm chair, and seemed to await the arrival of the wedding party; and a more melancholy, or more affecting sight than the poor girl presented—thus bedizened, and thus expecting what was never to happen—cannot, we think, be very readily conceived.

Beautiful, exceedingly beautiful she still looked, though pale, nay, white as her own bridal robes, and though now at once sad and vacant was the expression of that soft blue eye that once beamed with tenderness and love.

It was a striking, nay, an awful sight; for, to increase its appalling effect, she sat motionless, and this for hours, with her eye intently fixed on the door of the apartment, as if in momentary expectation of some one entering. But, of course, they came not. Yet, day after day, for weeks, ay, for months afterwards, did the poor decayed girl go through, precisely the same process as that we have described, and wonder-

ing each day as freshly as if she had not been disappointed before—"What could be keeping James, and the rest of the people;" and, to sooth her distracted mind, new reasons were every day assigned for their non-appearance.

In course of time, however, she began gradually to desist from arraying herself in this manner; but, for ten years after, when her death took place, she employed herself constantly, and for whole days together, in preparing and arranging her bridal clothes—cutting down, or ripping up at one time, and sewing together, or altering, at another; and for these ten years, every returning sun, as poor Mary imagined, brought about her bridal day, and found her singing such scraps of old songs as the following:—

Oh! my true love, he speer'd at me
Gin I wad be his bride?
And my true love, he swore to me
His love should aye abide.
And I have said to my true love,
His willing bride I'd be:
And to him prove a faithfu' wife,
Until the day I dee.

To the melancholy story of Mary Merton, there falls now little to be added; for, although a principal personage of the tale, whose subsequent fate the reader, it is presumed, will feel some curiosity to know, has not been accounted for, his story, the remainder of it at any rate, is short.

From the night of the murder, James Brooks was never heard tell of; and he thus, at all events, escaped the last penalty of the law, which he would assuredly have suffered, had he been taken. It was supposed by some, that he had found his way abroad; by others, that he had been drowned, either by accident, or by his own act, and died on the very night the murder was committed; as, from that hour, he had never been seen by any one. As neither of these conjectures, however, were ever supported by any evidence of their accuracy, the subsequent fate of James Brooks remains a mystery, and will, in all probability, ever continue to be so.

THE BLACKSMITH OF PLUMTREES.

A WEARY, *drucken* wight—as we say, in Scotland, of a certain description of persons, whom we may negatively distinguish as not being members of the Temperance Society—was Archy Drummond, blacksmith at Plumtrees, in the south of Scotland, and who flourished about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Archy, though notoriously much more fond of handling the ale-cap than the forchammer—doubtless, because it was more easily managed—and otherwise a little wild, was, nevertheless, an obliging, good-natured fellow, somewhat blunt and boisterous in his speech and manners, but full of fun, and glee, and good humour. His laugh was decidedly the loudest and the heartiest in the parish, and it is certain that it was, by far, the oftenest heard. Archy, moreover, possessed a great deal of what is called mother-wit; and there were few who could successfully encounter him in a trial of strength in this way. He was a universal favourite, too; and even those who despised his habits could not help liking the man.

At the period of our story, immediately preceding the well-known battle of Philiphaugh, Archy was in his forty-fourth year—a stout, rattling, care-for-nothing fellow, ready for any frolic, and especially ready at all times to do his best endeavours to quench the burning spark that was lodged in his throat; the common calamity, it is said, of all belonging to his craft.

Strenuous had been Archy's efforts, during all his bygone life, to extinguish this annoying little fiery particle, so dangerously located; and many scores of gallons of ale had he poured down with the view of effecting this desirable rid-

dance; but in vain—nay, worse than in vain; for, the more he swallowed, the more fiercely burned the little tenacious malignant point. In the hope, however, of ultimately gaining the day, Archy continued to pursue the drenching system with the most laudable perseverance; and he determined to do so, as long and as often as he could get liquor wherewith to practise—ale, of course; for he had a great contempt for, and no faith whatever in, the virtues of water, as an extinguisher, and always said that it was a drink fitted only for the brute creation.

It cannot be denied, however, nor do we desire to deny it, that Archy's veneration for, and devotion to, the ale-cap, had a very sensible effect upon his meal-ginzel, which it kept always at a most uncomfortably low ebb. In truth, though Archy was a remarkably clever tradesman, and did, occasionally labour at the anvil, with most exemplary assiduity—often putting through his single pair of hands, in one day, the work of two; yet, as this was only by fits and starts, he had great difficulty in making the two ends meet. He was, in fact, in considerable straits, as his wife and family but too sensibly found.

For weeks together, Archy's pocket was unpolluted with coin; and, although he always contrived, by some means or other, to get fully as much drink as was calculated to do him any good, his family had frequently but too much reason to complain of both the quantity and the quality of their food.

But better days were in store for them, and for Archy, too; little, as it must be confessed, he deserved them.

One day, while working in his smithy, a gentleman, on horseback, rode up to the door, and asked if Archy would give him a cast of his office, by securing one of the shoes of his horse, which had got loose.

"I'll do that, Sir, in the turnin' o' a cart wheel," replied Archy; at the same time beginning to bustle about in quest of the necessary tools. The gentleman dismounted, and his horse was fastened to a ring in the wall by the side of the door, to secure him during the impending operation. Before proceeding to work, however, Archy remarked that it would be as well to remove from the animal's back a certain pair of enormous, and apparently well-filled saddle-bags, which were strapped across, just behind the saddle; and he was about to perform this preliminary duty, when the stranger eagerly intercepted him, saying, rather sternly, that he would take them off himself. He accordingly removed them with his own hands; but with a difficulty, from their extraordinary weight, which not a little surprised the blacksmith, who observed, besides, that the stranger endeavoured to place them on the ground as softly as possible; but in this he did not succeed so far as to prevent Archy from discovering, by the heavy jingling sound they emitted, when they came in contact with the ground, that they were filled with coin, a circumstance which confounded the blacksmith altogether. "My word," quoth Archy to himself, in making this discovery, "that chield, whae'er he may be, an hoo'er he may hae come by't, has gotten his ain share at least o' this world's gear. Oh! gin I had a pickle o't!" The saddle-bags, or money-bags, as they might have been with equal propriety called, in short, fairly sent Archy's wits a wool-gathering. At one time, he was lost in admiration and wonder, at the enormous amount which, he had no doubt, they contained. At another, he was grievously puzzled in endeavouring to form some plausible conjecture as to who the gentleman could be, where he could have got all the money, and whither he could be going with it.

Although thus troubled in mind, however, Archy went through the job he was engaged to perform, cleverly, and much to the satisfaction of his employer, who seemed pleased with his activity, and with his intelligence; of which last he had obtained some proofs, in the course of the conversation which he held with him while the work on which he

had employed him was in progress. This work having been completed, Archy was paid, and he had no reason whatever to complain of his remuneration; but the stranger evinced no hurry to depart—on the contrary, he rather, as Archy thought, and he could not understand what it meant, seemed studiously to protract the preparations for the continuance of his journey. This certainly was the case, and there was a reason for it.

"Are you well acquainted, friend," said the stranger, addressing Archy, "with the road from this to Philiphaugh—the shortest and quietest way?" he added.

Archy replied that he "kent that as weel as he kent the road to his ain bellows. Montrose," continued Archy, with an unnecessary amplification, which was one of his besetting sins, "is encamped there just now, I hear."

"So I have heard," answered the stranger, drily; and, after a short pause, added—"I am going to Philiphaugh, friend; but I am desirous of taking the quietest and most unfrequented route. Will you undertake," he said, abruptly, "to guide me by such a route, if I pay you well for it."

Archy, who now began to smell a rat—that is, began to suspect, what was indeed, true, that the money the stranger carried was for the use of the Royalist army—at once expressed a willingness to undertake the office proposed to him; at the same time assuring the stranger that he would conduct him by a route so quiet and unfrequented "that it might be sawn," he said, "wi' half crowns, without the least fear o' any o' them being e'er picked up."

"That's exactly what I want," replied the stranger; "but you must mount, smith," he added—"you must provide yourself with a horse."

"I'll do that, too, sir," said Archy, smartly, and already beginning to undo his apron strings, and to make other preparations for evacuating the smithy. "Willie Dowie, or Haggis Willie, as we ca' him here, sir, 'ill len me his broon powny, in a minot, for the askin'; and though its nae great beauty, maybe, to look at, it's as tough a bit o' horse flesh as e'er I ca'd a shoe on. A real deevil, Sir, at a brastle wi' a brae."

Having delivered himself to the above purpose and effect, Archy went in quest of Willie Dowie's pony, which, as he expected, he readily obtained; and, in a few minutes, having previously informed his family of the expedition he was about to be engaged in, Archy re-appeared, mounted on a rough, shaggy, but hardy-looking little animal, a shepherd's plaid folded about his person, and brandishing a huge cudgel in his right hand, which, as he applied it often and vigorously to the poney's flanks as he advanced, brought him up to where his employer waited him, at a swinging trot. Having joined company, the travellers now proceeded on their way in silence—a silence which Archy Drummond by no means approved, but which had been strictly enjoined by his employer. After three or four hours pretty hard riding, the stranger and his guide found themselves entering Minchmoor, within a short distance of Philiphaugh, where Montrose was, at the time, encamped with his army. They had not, however, proceeded far on the moor, when they were alarmed by the noise of musketry. On first hearing it, the stranger suddenly reined in his horse, and listened attentively for a few minutes to the firing, when he again pushed forward, remarking to Archy, that it was only Montrose exercising his troops.

"My feth, sir," said Archy, "I'm dootin' that it's sic exercise as them that's engaged in't'll no like vera weel. That firin' is far owre irregular to be mere field exercise. There's fechtin' there, tak my word for't; Leslie's douz upon them, an' there at it tooth an' nail, or I'm sair mistaen. I could wad my best forehammer on't."

To these confident assertions of Archy's, the stranger made no reply, but rode on; and the former immediately

relapsed into the silence which had been enjoined him. In the meantime, however, the firing continued with increasing vigour; and, with all the wild irregularity which had at first attracted Archy's notice, and from which he had so sagaciously drawn the conclusion above recorded—a conclusion which his employer soon found to be but too correct. This was made sufficiently manifest soon after, by the appearance of several flying horsemen from Montrose's army, who, on coming up to them, hastily informed them, that they had been suddenly and unexpectedly attacked by Leslie; that a total rout of the Royalists had been the consequence, and that they, themselves, expected every moment to see some of Leslie's dragoons in pursuit of them. On hearing this intelligence, the stranger instantly turned his horse's head—struck his spurs into his sides, and, without taking any further notice of his attendant, vigorously, and apparently most cordially, joined in the flight of the fugitives. Archy, however, was not to be balked in this way. He, too, joined in the race; and, though he had no spurs wherewith to urge his pony's speed, he applied the huge cudgel he carried with an effect to his sides that soon brought him up with the runaways, who, in a short time afterwards, found themselves, as they had feared, hotly pursued by a party of Leslie's dragoons. On, on, however, the flying horsemen rode; Archy, the while, keeping up with the best of them, till they arrived at a rising ground, which they must necessarily ascend, when the stranger, finding his horse jaded and worn out with the weight it carried, unequal to the task, flung himself from his back—leaving saddle-bags and all behind him in his panic—and earnestly besought Archy to let him have his pony; saying, that if he was taken by the enemy, he would certainly be put to death; while Archy, who was in no way concerned with either party, had nothing to fear. Moved by this appeal—and we will not say, altogether unswayed by certain sudden, but indistinct thoughts that began to occur to him regarding the saddle-bags, which their owner evinced every intention of deserting—Archy readily complied with his request; and leaping from his pony, which the former lost no time in mounting, he transferred himself to the richly-laden, but now almost useless steed of the stranger, and endeavoured to urge him on, but in vain. The poor, worn-out animal could scarcely draw one ieg after another. In this awkward predicament, deserted by his late associates—every one of whom, stranger and all, had disappeared—and hard pressed by the pursuing horsemen, Archy adroitly took advantage of the fortuitous circumstances that presented themselves at this moment, and promised to favour some rather delicate designs which he had formed on the saddle-bags. Getting out of sight of the dragoons, by turning the base of a hill, and finding there a deep pool of water, he canted the saddle-bags into it. This done, he left the horse to shift for himself—took to the hill, and clambering up, through a series of steep and rocky places, where no horseman could possibly follow him, easily baffled the pursuit of the troopers, who, indeed, never got another sight of him.

On the third night after the occurrence of these circumstances, and in the dead of the night, Archy Drummond arrived at his own house, seen by no one; and, for about a year subsequently, went on precisely in his usual way; wrought occasionally in his smithy—indeed, very *nearly*, but, certainly, not *quite* so much as before; and dressed and lived exactly after his former fashion. And, pray, what of all this? Why should he have done otherwise? Really we do not very well know. We had rather decline speaking out, however. But let us go on. At the end of about a year, mark, it began to be observed by Archy's neighbours, that a gradual improvement was taking place in his circumstances—and greatly did they wonder how it came about, for there were no known or visible reasons for such a

change. We do not, by any means, say that the circumstance we are about to mention had any connection with Archy's mysterious prosperity; but it is a fact that he was always, during the whole of his subsequent life, particularly shy of speaking of his adventure with the Earl of Traquair—for it was no other, and no less a personage, whom Archy conducted towards Philiphaugh; and it is certain, also, that he, on no occasion, ever made the slightest allusion to the saddle-bags; much less, did he ever mention that they were filled, as they actually were, with good hard dollars, to the amount of some thousand pounds.

Certain it is, that everything about and belonging to Archy Drummond gradually began to exhibit signs of prosperity, and that the smith of Plumtrees died a wealthy man. Leaving our readers to draw their own conclusions, we finish our tale by saying that the saddle-bags and the dollars were never heard tell of after Archy threw them into the pool.

THE FAITHFUL WIFE,

A PASSAGE FROM THE TALE OF FLODDEN.

THERE is very prevalent, along the Borders, an opinion, that the arms of the town of Selkirk represent an incident which occurred there at the time of the battle of Flodden. The device, it is well known, consists of a female bearing a child in her arms, seated on a tomb, on which is also placed the Scottish lion. Antiquaries tell us that this device was adopted in consequence of the melancholy circumstance of the wife of an inhabitant of the town having been found, by a party returning from the battle, lying dead at the place called Ladywood-edge, with a child sucking at her breast.

We have not the slightest wish to disturb this venerable legend. It commemorates, with striking force, the desolation of one of Scotland's greatest calamities; and, though the device is rudely and coarsely imagined, there is a graphic strength in the conception, which, independently of the truth of the story, recommends it to the lover of the bold and fervid genius of our countrymen. We must, at same time, be allowed to say, that the very same story, with some changes of circumstances and localities, is to be found in the legends of others of the Scottish towns which have suffered by the chariot wheels and scythes of war. Thus, it is reported, that the first thing that put an end to the indiscriminate murder which the soldiers of Monk, in their fury, committed in the storming of Dundee, was the corpse of a female, found lying in the street of that town, called the Murraygate, with an infant sucking at her breast. We do not mean to say that the one story destroys the authenticity of the other. Two corpses might have been found in these situations, and under these circumstances; but the generality of legends of that kind must, in the minds of lovers of truth, detract, in some degree, from their authenticity; and, as regards that of Selkirk, we are the more inclined to call it in question, in consequence of having heard another version of the story possessing more of romance in its composition, and not much less of absolute probability than that which is so generally credited.

This new version we intend, shortly, now to lay before the public, without vouching for its superiority of accuracy over its more favoured and cherished brother; and rather, indeed, cautioning the credulous lovers of old legends to be upon their guard, lest Dr Johnson's reproof of Richardson be applicable to us, in saying that we have it upon authority.

When recruits were required by King James the Fourth for the invasion of the English territory, which produced the most lamentable of all our defeats, it is well known that great exertions were used in the cause by the town-clerk of

Selkirk, whose name was William Brydone, for which King James the Fifth afterwards conferred on him the honour of knighthood. Many of the inhabitants of Selkirk, fired with the ardour which the chivalric spirit of James infused into the hearts of his people, and with the spirit of emulation which Brydone had the art of exciting among his townsmen, as Borderers, joined the banners of their provost. Among these was one Alexander Hume, a shoemaker, a strong stalwart man, bold and energetic in his character, and extremely enthusiastic in the cause of the King. He was deemed of considerable importance by Brydone, being held the second best man of the hundred citizens who are said to have joined his standard. When he came among his companions, he was uniformly cheered. They had confidence in his sagacity and prudence, respected his valour, and admired his strength.

If Hume was thus courted by his companions, and urged by Brydone to the dangerous enterprise in which the King, by the wiles and flattery of the French Queen, had engaged, he was treated in a very different manner by Margaret, his wife, a fine young woman, who, fond of distraction of her husband, was desirous of preventing him from risking his life in a cause which she feared, with prophetic feeling, would bring desolation on her country. Every effort which love and female cajolery could suggest, were used by this dutiful wife to keep her husband at home. She hung round his neck—held up to his face a fine child, five months old whose mute eloquence softened the heart, but could not alter the purpose of the father—wept, prayed, implored. She asked him the startling question—who, when he was dead, and die he might, would shield her from injury and misfortune, and cherish, with the tenderness and love which its beauty and innocence deserved, the interesting pledge of their affection? She painted, in glowing colours—which the imagination, excited by love, can so well supply—the situation of her as a widow, and her child as an orphan. Their natural protector gone, what would be left to her but grief, what would remain for her child but destitution? His spirit would hear her wails; but beggary would array her in its rags, and hunger would steal from her cheek the vestiges of health, and the lineaments of beauty.

These appeals were borne by Hume by the panoply of resolution. He loved Margaret as dearly, as truly, as man could love woman, as a husband could love the partner of his life and fortunes. He answered with tears and embraces; but he remained true to the cause of his King and country.

"Would you hae me, Margaret," he said, "to disgrace mysel' in the face o' my townsmen. Doesna our guid King intend to leave his fair Margaret, and risk the royal bluid o' the Bruce, for the interests o' auld Scotland; and doesna our honoured provost mean to desert, for a day o' glory, his braw wife, that he may deck her wimple wi' the roses o' England, and her name wi' a Scotch title? Wharfore, then, should I, a puir tradesman, fear to put in jeopardy, for the country that bore me, the life that is hers as weel as yours and sacrifice, sae far as the guid that my arm can produce, the glory o' my king, and the character o' my country? Fair as yer face is, Maggy, and dear as is to me the licht o' that bonny bue e'e, reflectin, as it does, the smile o' that bonny bairn, I canna permit ye to wile frae me the faith and the troth I hae pledged to my companions, and the character o' loyalty I hae already earned in the estimation o' the brave men o' the Borde."

Margaret heard this speech with the most intense grief. She was incapable of argument. What loving woman is? She was inconsolable. Her husband remained inexorable, and entreaty gave way to anger. She had adopted the idea that Hume was buoyed up with the pride of leadership; and she told him, with some acrimony, that his ambition of being thought the bravest man of Selkirk, would not, in the event of his death supply the child he was bound to work

for, with a bite of bread. Her love and anger carried her beyond bounds. She used other language of a harsher character, which forced her good-natured husband to retaliate in terms unusual to him, unsuited to the serious subject which they had in hand, and far less to the dangerous separation which they were about to experience. The conversation got more acrimonious. Words of a high cast produced expressions stronger still, and Hume left his wife in anger, to go to the field from which he might never return.

Regret follows close upon the heels of incensed love. Alexander Hume had not been many paces from his own house, when his wife saw, in its proper light, the true character of her situation. Her husband had gone on a perilous enterprise. He might perish. She had, perhaps, got her last look of him who was dearest to her bosom. That look was in anger. The idea was terrible. Those who know the strength and delicacy of the feelings of true affection, may conceive the situation of Margaret Hume. Unable to control herself, she threw her child into its crib, and rushed out of the house. One parting glance of reconciliation was all she wanted. She hurried through the town with an excited and terrified aspect, searching everywhere for her husband. He had departed with his companions; and Margaret was left in the agony of one whose sorrow is destined to be increased by the workings of an excited fancy, and the remorseful feelings of self-impachment.

In the meantime, Hume having joined his companions, proceeded to the main army of the King, which was encamped on the hill of Flodden, lying on the left of the river Till. The party with which he was associated, put themselves under the command of Lord Home; who, with the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, led the left of the van of the Scottish army. This part of the King's troops, it is well known, was opposed to Sir Edmund Howard. They were early engaged, and fought so successfully, that Howard soon stood in need of succour from Lord Dacre, to save him from being speared on the field.

In this struggle, Alexander Hume displayed the greatest prowess. He was seen, in every direction, dealing out death wherever he went. He was not, however, alone. His companions kept well up to him; and, in particular, one individual, who had joined the party as they approached the field, fought with a bravery equal to that of Hume himself. That person kept continually by his side, and seemed to consider the brave Borderer as his chosen companion in arms, whom he was bound to defend through all the perils of the fight. A leather haubergeon, and an iron helmet, in which there was placed a small white feather, plucked from a cock's wing, constituted the armour of this brave second of Hume's gallantry. When Hume was attacked by the English, with more force than his individual arm could sustain, no one of his companions was more ready to bring him aid than this individual. On several occasions he may be said to have saved his life; for Hume's recklessness drew him often into the very midst of the fight, where he must have perished, had it not been for the timely assistance of his friend. On one occasion, in particular, an Englishman came behind him, and was in the very act of inserting his spear between the clasps of his armour, when his companion struck the dastardly fellow to the earth, and resumed the fight in front of the battle.

This noble conduct was not unappreciated by Hume; for where is bravery found segregated from gratitude and generosity? He called upon him, even in the midst of the battle, for his name, that he might, in the event of their being separated, recollect and commemorate his friendship. The request was not complied with; but the superintending and saving arm of the stranger continued to be exercised in favour of the Borderer. They fought together to the end of the battle. The result of the bloody contest is but too

well known. The strains of poetry have carried the wail of bereavement to the ends of the earth; and sorrow has claimed the sounds as its own individual expression.

The Scottish troops took their flight in different directions. Hume and his companions were obliged to lie in secret for a considerable time in the surrounding forests. He made many inquiries among his friends for the individual who had fought with him so bravely, and saved his life. He could find no trace of him, beyond the information that he had disappeared when Hume had given up the fight. The direction in which he went was unknown, nor could any one tell the place from which he came.

The people of Selkirk, who had been in the fight, sought their town as soon as they could with safety get out of the reach of the English. Their numbers formed a sorry contrast to those who had, with light hearts and high hopes, sought the field of battle; and it has been reported that, when the wretched wounded and blood-stained remnant entered the town, a cry of sorrow was raised by the inhabitants collected to meet them, the remembrance of which remained on the hearts of their children long after those who uttered it had been consigned with their griefs to the grave.

Hume, who had also grievously repented of the harsh words he had applied to his beloved wife on the occasion of their separation, was all impatience to clasp her to his bosom, and seal their reconciliation with a kiss of repentance and love. Leaving his companions as they entered the town, he flew to the house. He approached the door. He reached it with a trembling heart. He had prepared the kind words of salutation. He had wounds to shew, and to get dressed by the tender hand of sympathy. Lifting the latch, he entered. No one came to meet him. No sound, either of wife or child, met his ears. On looking round, he saw, sitting in an arm chair, the person who had accompanied him in battle, wearing the same haubergeon, the same helmet, the individual white feather that had attracted his attention. That person was Margaret Hume. She was dead. Her head reclined on the back of the chair, her arms hung by her side, the edge of her haubergeon was uplifted, and at her white bosom, from which flowed streams of blood, her child sucked the milk of a dead mother.

On making inquiry, the disconsolate Hume found that, his wife had, shortly after he went away, borrowed the armour from one of the bailies of the burgh, on the pretence that it was wanted by a young person who intended to join her husband in the expedition. She left her babe in the charge of her mother, with directions to take the greatest care of it till her return. The part of the story comprehending the battle has been told. When she came back, her mother had gone out to make inquiry as to the issue of the fight. The child was lying in the cradle. The wounded mother, forgetful of her own preservation, in the love she bore to the child, had, to stop its crying, attached it to her wounded bosom. The milk and the blood flowed together. The child was saved. The mother perished.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FREEBOOTER OF COLDSTREAM

ALTHOUGH the Borders have generally been considered as a kind of legalized arena for the display of predatory warfare amongst its greater feudal proprietors, who led in their train their retainers or villeins as so many hired thieves, it is not the less true that there existed in that district—as the head-quarters of the “moon’s minions”—many smaller robbers, who disdained predatory vassalage, and set up the trade of cattle-lifting and general peculation on their own account. These gentry, while they gloried in their independence, generally took so much of the advantage of the protecting shadow of the larger robbers, as to pass, when occasions required, as the retainers of some family; being in possession of the war cry—that is, the catcall of cattle-stealing—or some other sign or token, equally respectable, by which its members were distinguished. These independent robbers were, no doubt, called into existence by the example of the great; and how could a poor weaver of Gala-shiels, a souter of Selkirk, or a gypsy of Yetholm, be blamed for doing, in a small way, what some of the great feudal barons did on so extended a scale, as that some of the great titled figurants of the present day, claiming the honour of representing them, owe their wealth and their family pride to their robberies and territorial encroachments?

One of the most extraordinary of these Border robbers, who chose to steal on their own individual account, was Andrew Swinton, a weaver, whose place of birth was Coldstream. This person was peculiar in many respects, exhibiting a mixture of simplicity and cunning, cowardice and daring, immorality and religion, seldom to be met with in the same individual. Though poor and uneducated, he founded a claim to personal distinction among those of his own humble grade, on an alleged descent from the Swintons of Swinton, an ancient family in the neighbourhood, from whom, he said, he inherited a pride which induced him to despise the trade to which fate had made him descend, and to aspire to the more independent occupation of imitating the great in vindicating an equality—by the levelling power of force—of worldly possessions.

In truth, Andrew Swinton had sagacity and cunning enough to see that advantage might be taken of the frequent predatory excursions of the gentry in the neighbourhood, to do a good turn to himself, without joining any party, and without subjecting himself to much danger. The bodily powers he possessed—though at the bottom cowardly—enabled him to realize these views in perfection. There was no man on the Borders who could cope with him in mere animal strength; his swiftness was unequalled by any running footman in the kingdom, exceeding that of the famous John Robson, who, if he had lived in the days of Swinton, would have resigned to him the palm of the football; and his capability of enduring hunger and cold was not equalled by Jock Short, the servant of Wallace, and the sharer of his privations and dangers, but latterly his betrayer. These qualities quadrated completely with the desire he possessed of living without working, and vindicating the privileges of a descendant of a Border family of some name, by showing how far the qualities of mere

muscle ought to raise a person in the social relations of life.

In carrying on his depredations, Swinton proceeded upon three principles: the first was, never to lay hold of any person’s property, unless under the protection of the name of some family of distinction. In that case he had every chance of escaping punishment, as it very seldom happened in those days (much about the time of the “red Fiodden”) that a gentleman suffered for robbing his neighbour of his cattle, or burning his house about his ears. In the second place, Swinton never allowed himself to be ranked as one of the retainers of the person under the cover of whose attacks he thus carried on his own exclusive trade. His reason for this was clear: his patron would have taken from him what he had earned by his prowess; and Andrew did not understand that, though there did exist some feudal obligations which rendered it imperative upon a vassal to fight for his lord, there was any law or practice which rendered it obligatory for one man to steal for another. But the most important principle of Andrew’s conduct was, that he contrived to overturn the law of *meum et tuum*, without affecting his conscience. This was truly a most ingenious part of his plans; and deserves as much consideration as it was worthy (at least, in such times as he practised it) of imitation. When he heard of any aggression, on the part of a genteel Border Ketheran—more often a baron than a boor—he prepared for work, because he knew that the aggression would be retaliated. This was the time for Andrew’s interference. He was scrupulous to nicety in having nothing to do with an *aggression*, because that was not justified by his religion; but he conceived that he was acting a legal, as well as a just and feeling part, when he fought and stole under the banner of a retaliator. Even in that case, however, he acted for himself; allowing first the attack to be made, then the battle to expend its rage on both sides, and then, when all was comfortably still, to come in fresh and supple, and carry off as much as he could from the house or persons of the aggressing party, passing, with the most scrupulous honour, the bodies of the retaliators, though lying stretched on the field covered with rich armour.

In these excursions, Swinton thought himself safest to dispense with heavy arms, because, as he said, he had generally so much to carry away from the house of a beaten party, that he could not afford to bear armour; unless, indeed, it was a basnet or helmet, which, he said, was very convenient for concealing him from the observation of the party whom he assisted in the spoliation. The only piece of armour besides the basnet which he used, was, what was of old called the acton, but what may now be better understood by being described as a leather jacket—an article of defensive armory, of particular utility in times when the weapons used were spears, and other piercing and cutting instruments. He carried in his hands a battle-axe, and in his belt a hunting knife; and, thus equipped, he was ready to assist any baron to resent an injury, though never to make an aggression. In addition to these accoutrements, Swinton carried with him, on his expeditions, what he called his awmous bag, a large leather sack suspended

from his girdle, in which he put his spoil. This was by far the most important article of war in his armoury; and, indeed, as all his fighting was directed merely to the filling of that necessary appendage, it stood nearly in the same relation to his hunting-knife or battle-axe, than an angler's basket does to his rod, or a beggar's wallet does to his exposed broken arm, which, when the wallet is full, generally becomes whole. These bags for booty were by no means uncommon in the days of the Border wars, and were called "the scaumer's girdel;" the word scaumer being an old word for freebooter, or cattle-lifter.

Swinton was well known for his luck in filling his girdel; cattle were, in his estimation, rather too unwieldy; besides, he had no ground to feed them on, and it was impossible to put them into a kist. By his success he gradually became reputed to be rich, though he denied stoutly that he had anything in the world beyond his accoutrements. He was, in consequence of his great strength and agility, (his want of true courage being concealed,) courted by the Border chiefs when they had any purpose to serve; but never, in any instance, did he engage for them. His answer invariably was, that he would look how the affair went; and, if his conscience were clear that it was a just retaliation, he would, with God's will, lend a hand in his own way. It was seldom, however, that the wily Scot ever "lent a hand," without adding to it, before it was withdrawn, ample usury for the loan.

It happened that the Laird of Crailing, a proprietor in the neighbourhood, intended to commit some depredations on the property of Innerwick; and conceiving that Andrew, in consequence of his strength and agility, would be a valuable assistant in his enterprise, he sent for him. Andrew obeyed the summons. He found Crailing sitting in his library, with his lady alongside of him. Crailing was a man of small stature, thin and emaciated, with a burning eye in his head, which shone like a cinder in a skull. His manner was nervous—every thought that arose, of any particular importance, operating upon the small, tiny fibres of his system like a great energy, making him all quiver. His voice was also nervous, sharp, and clear, but trembling as the intensity of his feelings increased, giving an appearance of anger when he was merely excited. His long thin fingers were in eternal motion—like worms in agony—obeying, apparently, every motion of his brain; and his legs and feet, also, bespoke the restlessness which seemed to pervade his whole system.

Alongside of Crailing, stood a person of a very different caste. This was his wife, who, like the ladies of her time, who were fortunate enough to get the greater vassals of the crown for husbands, went under the appellation of the Lady of Crailing, or Lady Crailing. This dame was of high and majestic carriage, presenting, at first view, the appearance of a virago—a character, however, which a few glances of her dark, bright eye very soon changed into that of a proud woman, who made love the handmaid of her pride. She was the counterpart of her husband in everything—twice his size—beautifully formed, though on a large scale—mild, though majestic—with a mellifluous voice, which rolled its soft numbers on the entranced ear of the listener like the music of the ocean on a calm summer eve. Lady Crailing was all symmetry, elegance, and composure, while her husband was a mere scrag—the cinder of a man burned up with evil passions—a creature all over the victim of nerves, like one under the dominion of an eternal ague, presenting no more of a human being than what might be supposed sufficient to give consistency to his muscles to stand the shaking of his nerves, and afford a scream.

Such were the pair before whom the stout Andrew Swinton presented himself. He looked first at the one, and then at the other, and wondered what fortuitous course of circumstances—for intention or predisposition

there could be none—could produce a union without one single connecting point, or a single trace of agreement, either in mind or body. On the one part, Andrew was greeted with the glare of Crailing's fiery twinkling orb—on the other, by the soft glance of the lady's dark eye, filled with cogitations suggested by the mighty contrast produced by the two men before her—the one placed beyond her hope, by his birth and her condition; and the other equally beyond her wishes, by the crazy nature of his mind and body—and seeming to say, "Oh, that Andrew Swinton were a gentleman, and that my Lord Crailing were gathered to his fathers!" On the one hand, again, were Crailing's harsh squeaking tones—and, on the other, the gentle accents of a beautiful woman. These contrasts rendered Andrew's situation one of most peculiar interest; and he looked at the one person and at the other, with the most embarrassed and amusing expression of wonder and curiosity.

"Thou art a man of great muscle," squeaked Crailing "and only requirest to have sent through thy big shanks and bullock flesh, some of my fire and mettle. Thou mayest be useful to me, man, and do thyself some service."

"Ay! ay!" replied Andrew, with an affected modesty, exhibiting, through the disguise, a leer he could scarcely conceal—"Yer honour is weel kened throughout the Borders for yer awfu' courage, and the name o' Crailing is mighty in these parts; it's a pity, however, that sae muckle fire should hae sae little flesh to warm; but they say brave spirits can work without the body, and set flame to a hail army o' mere flesh and bluid—sae our guid King Robert, when the leprosy had seized him at his palace o' Cardross, ance rade oot wi' naething under his armour but banes and the spirit o' The Bruce, and sae inflamed the minds o' his warriors, that they made the English skip before them, as I sometimes, when I'm hungry, do the goats o' Cheviot." As he finished this speech, he turned his eye to the lady, who seemed perfectly to enjoy the sarcastic eulogy of the apparently simple Andrew.

"I see thou understandest the difference between spirit and brute matter," responded Crailing, with his accustomed scream. "Wilt thou assist me against Innerwick, my deadly foe? I intend to seize his castle and spoil his house, on Wednesday next, and require some lads like thee to give effect to my mental energies, and gratify my hatred."

"I dinna ken," replied the nettled Scot, "what yer honour means by brute matter; and, in presence o' this braw leddie, I wanna inquire, though, maybe, I may yet tak the liberty o' asking yer honour for an explanation o' the remark which carries wi' a curious signification, nae doot. But wi' mair reference to the subject in hand, may I hae the bauldness to ask if Innerwick ever did ye an injury, which it may become a man to seek satisfaction for?"

"What hast thou to do with that?" asked Crailing, in a rage—his eye getting redder, and his scream sharper—"What hast thou to do with the quarrels of gentlemen?—and if I were to explain to thee wherein Innerwick has insulted Crailing, how couldst thou presume to understand it? All I asked of thee was to fight for me, and thou requirest of me to say for what thou shalt fight—ha!" and the little man shook his physical taper till the flame almost expired. Andrew, like a true cunning simpleton, kept his temper.

"Nae doot, nae doot," he replied; "the like o' us hae little to do wi' the quarrels o' gentlemen, unless—unless—in ae case—that is, yer honour, when oor consciences are concerned, ye ken. Though I hae nae pretensions to hae ony mair o' a gentleman about me than a drap o' the boar's bluid that upheld the shield o' the Swintons; yet, as the abbot o' Kelso weel kens, I hae some bit conscience about me—a fack, indeed, weel proved by the awfu' number o' my confessions, an' the great charge and expense they cost me in the bulks o' the confessional o' the auld Convert o' Linnel, whar I confess, maybe, twice in ae week. Sae, yer

honour may see that it's merely to save my purse that my conscience maks me sae bauld as to ask whether yer honour's plea against Innerwick is a lawfu' or an unlawfu' ane."

This speech, which was delivered with the greatest coolness and apparent simplicity, roused, to a still greater extent, the rage of Crailing. The lady seemed to enjoy the scene; and, as the manikin rolled about in his chair until he got sufficiently recovered to speak, she threw several glances at Andrew, equally expressive of derision of her husband, and of approbation of him who had tormented him. When able to speak, Crailing screamed out—

"Take the bullock out of my sight. He is the first animal who ever asked Crailing his plea of battle. Where is my butler, that I may have the satisfaction of seeing him tumble down stairs this presumptuous fleshy piece of inanimation? Hallo, Jenkins!" And he continued bawling for Jenkins at the top of his voice.

"Ye needna be in sic a pother, yer honour," said Andrew, quietly—"I hae dunc naething to anger ye, an' my leddy can bear testimony to my being as calm and peaceable as ane o' her ain sex; albeit, I hae had some reason to be angry, seein' yer honour was pleased to denominate my flesh brute matter. But, sin' ye hae expressed yersel' dissatisfied wi' my question anent the lawfulness o' yer quarrel wi' Innerwick, maybe ye can hae nae objection to my askin' Innerwick himsel', as I pass his tower, what may be the cause o' yer intended attack on him on Wednesday."

This announcement of Andrew's intention to put Innerwick upon his guard against the intended invasion, was, if possible, worse to bear than the former cool inuendoes of the scamer; and Crailing, unable longer to resist the impulse of his imbecile fury, started on his feet, and fairly asked his lady to assist him in turning out the villain. Lady Crailing, looking kindly upon Andrew, curtsied, and begged to be excused; and Crailing, opening the window, bawled out into the courtyard for Jenkins, who had been at a distance and was now returning, to come up and clear the house of a beast of burden that had broken into the library. Jenkins came up, and Andrew prevented any violence by offering to retire quietly.

"I'm sorry for havin' put ye to sae muckle trouble, yer honour," said Andrew; "but I canna help mentionin', afore I gae, that, if ye attack Innerwick in a bad cause, ye'll gie him and me an invitation to pay oor respects to ye the first braw moon; an' as there are twa things I hae a desire for—namely, to feel the hardness o' yer honour's hide, and pree the sweetness o' yer leddy's mou'—I may, peradventure, in Innerwick's service, vindicate his just cause, an' please mysel' by accomplishin' my wishes. Fare ye weel, yer honour." And Andrew went quietly down stairs.

It was not Andrew's business to apprise Innerwick of Crailing's intention; that would have deprived him of a chance of filling his girdle honestly in Crailing's house—that is, if he ascertained that (as he suspected) Innerwick's attack, which would not fail to follow in retaliation, would be justified by the illegality of Crailing's aggression. It was, therefore, Andrew's duty to stand quietly by, to observe the course which matters would take, and regulate his conduct accordingly.

It was not long before the neighbourhood was roused by one of those predatory attacks, with which the history of the Borders abounds. Crailing, feeble and decrepit, yet filled to the very throat with the most rancorous hatred towards his intended victim, led on his retainers to the sacking of Innerwick on the night stated. It had been previously ascertained that Swinton had not given intimation; indeed those who knew him were well aware, that it was no part of his trade or tactics to scare the game he was in the constant habit of hunting. The attack was virulent and obstinate, but the defence was spirited and determined. The tower of Innerwick was one of those buildings between

a castle and a dwelling-house, which were often possessed by the more wealthy crown-vassals in those times of commotion, though they could boast of no title or other mark of royal favour. It was a place of considerable strength, adjoining to the dwelling-house, from which there was a passage into the stronghold. When Crailing's men attacked the dwelling-house, with a view to get into it, which was the principal object of their hostile visit, Innerwick and his retainers poured on the assailants, from the tower, such a shower of arrows, as for a considerable time, prevented them from making an entry into the house. The besieged's jactiles, however, failed them; and their only remedy now was, to make a sortie on the assailants. This was done with great spirit; but the venom of Crailing seemed to have taken possession of his adherents; for, amidst the unnatural screams of their master, who appeared among them like a starved sleazy vulture screeching for food, they pushed on, and forced their antagonists back again to their retreat. They then entered the house, and carried away a great quantity of furniture, jewels, and other portable articles, destroying, in their fury, a great deal more than they transported. Loaded with the spoil, they left the scene of their desolation; and, as they retreated, Crailing turned up his fiery eye to the tower, and, with a loud laugh of scorn, such as he alone could send forth, greeted the ears of the exasperated proprietor.

The news of this attack soon reached the ears of the watchful Swinton, who knew, what the assailants themselves must have known, that a retaliatory expedition, on the part of Innerwick, would follow as surely as an ordinary effect does its cause. This certainty of retaliation was, indeed, a very peculiar feature in these predatory or vengeful proceedings; not as indicating a natural disposition to vindicate and avenge, for that is self evident, but as shewing the blind character of that ruthless violence that loves to prey upon the misery which it inflicts, and will not open its eyes to consequences which the nature of man makes inevitable. It was seldom, indeed, that any Border affray was checked or prevented by any terror of retaliation, though that was nearly as certain as the aggression. The effect of the revenge was only felt when it came, and then it only produced a more bitter spirit in the aggressor, and another and stronger desire to institute a second attack.

Well versed in this *per contra* warfare, Andrew set about inquiring when Innerwick's turn would arrive, as he then intended to change that exquisite connection between man and dead matter, which is commonly called property, as that existed between Crailing and some parts of his silver plate, which Andrew's simple but inquiring eye observed in the house on the occasion of his visit. There was, in particular, a silver casket, which stood in a recess in the library, towards which Andrew felt his attention directed in a manner as natural and artless as a young, unthinking, simple-minded girl would contemplate a becoming feature in the face of her lover. He saw nothing improper in his affection for this casket; the law of property was, in his estimation, so simple, that it quadrated exactly with the locality of the thing itself. Being in Crailing's house, it was his; in Andrew's house, it would, in like manner, be his; and, in the event of its proprietor making an unjust aggression upon Innerwick, there would be no impropriety in him, as one of Innerwick's well-wishers, changing the locality of the casket in that canny way, called, by the civilians, *brevis manu*.

The day after the attack upon Innerwick, Andrew called upon the discomfited laird, with a view to ascertain whether and when he intended to take his revenge.

"Wilt thou assist me, sirrah?" asked the laird, who was a tall, good looking man, nearly a match for Andrew himself. "Thou art a seemly youth, and a few of thy kidney would work well under such an arm as mine."

"Did ye ever gie Crailing ony cause o' anger?" inquired the cautious Scot, with his national interrogative respond.

"Never, my good fellow," answered Innerwick. "The wretch is stung with envy, because I got from our good King a grant of the pendicle of land called Crailing's Muir, which, from the name alone, the creature conceived to be his, as part and pertinent of his property; for he could shew no right to it, and I had myself pastured cattle upon it for many years. This is all my crime; but envy, like the whale, gets fat on small grubs, and my house has been pillaged, because my King has shewn me a kindness. Thou may'st see, then, my good fellow, that my plea against Crailing has honour and justice on its side, and thou canst well spare a goodly stream of thy plentiful blood on so good a cause. Can I trust to your joining us on the eve of St John?"

"I hae nae doot o' yer cause, yer honour," answered Andrew, "and will endeavour to be at Crailing on the eve o' St John; but it's no my practice to join, that is gang along wi' my comrades on thae occasions, seeing I am gien to quarrels, and very apt to brak their banes, and sae injure the cause we are engaged in. I like, too, to bring my assistance only where there's danger or defeat; for it's only on great occasions, and when I hae an opportunity o' shawin' my valour, by turning the fortune o' the day, by my single arm, that I allow mysel' to be engaged in a lawfu' battle. I shall not fail to be upon the ground; and if I see any symptoms o' yer men gettin' alarmed, and shawin' the enemy their backs, I will come wi' my graith, and settle the contest in a moment."

As Andrew finished this speech—conscious that he seldom or ever interfered in a contest, unless when the victory was won, and there was a fair opportunity of carrying off spoil without danger to himself—he eyed Innerwick, to see if he was swallowing, with easy deglutition, the specious harangue he had been making. In this he was not disappointed, for the laird could have had no doubt that such a quantity of bones and sinews, muscle and marrow could, by the plastic powers of nature, have been collected together into one heap, for the mere purpose of show, and unaccompanied by a spirit sufficient to animate the mass, and render it available for the purposes of war. Yet he thought it strange that Andrew should not wish, like every brave man, rather to be in the first rank, and the foremost in battle, than a tactician in the rear, husbanding his great resources, until an imminent degree of danger demanded his interference. Giving some credence, however, to Andrew's story—and looking upon him as a man who was too proud of his strength to wear it out on common occasions, and only, as he said, brought it to play, when he could, by it, decide the issue of a fight—he thanked him for his offer.

On the eve of St John, accordingly, Andrew was at his post—that is, snugly concealed behind a hedge, at some distance from the house of Crailing. His spirit, bold and *entreprenant*, required, as he said, a hedge to restrain its ardour; for, if there had been nothing between him and the fight, he would have rushed forth and deprived well-disposed decent warriors of their glory—a result which his philanthropy did not wish to produce. The hedge, however, did not conceal him from the eye of Innerwick, who, as he passed at the head of his retainers, saw the great massive bulk of Andrew crouching behind it like a wounded hare. Happily, he alone saw him; for, if any of his retainers had observed the living paradox, concealing his strength in ambush, they would have forced him to join their ranks, and stand forward in the fight. Innerwick, weak enough to give credence to Andrew's story, was well pleased to see him lying, as he thought, in a state of tremendous repose; ready, when the danger was sufficiently great to call him out, to burst forth like a rocket, scattering death around him and deciding against despair itself, the fortunes of the day.

The battle soon raged. Crailing, who had been made

aware of the intended attack, was strongly situated behind a high barbican, which he had thrown up to keep the assailants from his house. He had also contrived to make a kind of moat beyond the barbican, and in the ballium, or space enclosed by the raised mound, his men were arranged in scientific style, while he crawled about directing their energies, with screams and screechings, and sputtering venom around him on all sides.

Innerwick was not at all prepared for anything in the shape of an escalade. Crailing's house had very little the appearance of a fortified place. There were, as was common in the semi-fortified habitations of the greater vassals, some small jutting turrets, at the corners of the building, with loop-holes, and the lower windows were narrow; but the door was on the ground, and there was no draw-bridge or donjon, or any exterior work sufficient to keep besiegers at a distance. Trusting, therefore, to being able to break the gate, Innerwick had brought no scaling ladders, or projectile instruments of any kind, his only resource lying in an old mangonel which he had brought for the purpose of breaking open the oak door.

The besiegers were, therefore, received in a manner very different from what they expected. The besieged, lying over the breastwork, discharged upon the enemy an immense shower of arrows and stones, which committed great havoc; but Innerwick, who was a man of great courage, rushed forward, crying, with a loud voice, to his men to follow him and climb the mound, leave their lances behind them, and fight their way with their swords and hunting knives. The cry was responded to by a loud shout, and the assailants, stung with the pain of the wounds produced by the stones and arrows, rushed forward and began to ascend the mound. Their career was, however, soon stopped, for the besieged thrust down upon them their long spears, and compelled them to desist and retire, leaving several of their number dead and wounded in the moat.

In this emergency, Innerwick's mind turned to the huge and athletic Andrew, who was lying husbanding his powers behind the hedge. He conceived that the time was come for his shewing his prowess, and looked about him for the expected aid; but no Andrew was to be seen. Innerwick, accordingly, in great haste, sent a messenger to the place where he was concealed, requesting him to inform the warrior that he had now a very good opportunity of exhibiting his great strength, and that he was expected instantly, as the battle was raging in its greatest fury, and the assailants had been repulsed with great loss.

The messenger soon found the reposing warrior, and communicated to him, in a breathless state of agitation, the words of Innerwick. Andrew turned up his eyes upon the bloody messenger with an affected composure; though a person who knew his real character, might have discovered that he did not at all relish the sanguinary appearance of the messenger or the urgency of his suit.

"Ye are repulsed, are ye?" he began, after a silence that ill suited the occasion, and less the breathless dispatch of the man-at-arms. "So, I thought I heard something like a retreat; but ye maun just to t' again. There's naething, I hae often seen—there's naething, I say, in war, like perseverance—determined, bluidy, desperate perseverance—which, in fact, may be said to be the very soul o' a battle. I recollect very weel—it's just five years syne—when I was stormin' the Castle o' Roxburgh, a very strong place, as ye may weel ken, I was left clean alane, hanging frae the side o' the south curtain, just like a bat 'lingin' to an auld wa'! In this awfu' situation"—

"I did not come here, sir, to hear your stories," interrupted the messenger, with impatience; suspicious that Andrew was speaking against time, in the hope, no doubt, that, in a short period, the affair would be finished, by the assault being carried, or a final retreat sounded. If you do not intend

to fight, say so, and I will inform Innerwick of your cowardice."

"A man o' my size," rejoined Andrew, with affected coolness, and wishing a subject to speak about—whether it was the storming of Roxburgh or the chastising of impudence—"a man wha can haud forth an arm like that, micht wi' great ease redress the impertinence o' a stripling; but I think that that micht be dune in a still easier way by telling him, without ony affectation, what a man o' my prowess has performed in former times, when it was my pleasure to shaw what I was capable o' doin' in the face o' an admiring army. Weel, when I was in that awfu' situation, stickin' to the wa' like a bat, a sodger frae the ramparts sent down a spear, wi' the intention, nae doot, o' ascertainin' what kind o' brains were under my basnet;—but he didna ken the man he was dealin' wi', and far less did he think he was himsel' doin' everything in his power to let me into the castle, the very thing I wanted;—for I laid haud o' the spear, pulled mysel' up the wa', and, getting on the tap o' the battlements, speared the sodger wi' his ain weapon, and took the castle by storm, without the assistance o' a single man. But that wasna a', for"——

"Well, sir," interrupted again the messenger, "it is very clear you do not intend to storm Crailing." And leaving Andrew, with a contemptuous look, he hurried back to the fight.

"It's very true that," soliloquized the lazy warrior. "Hoo meikle time hae I gained by my account o' the stormin' o' Roxburgh? Ten minutes, I warrant. Weel, my next care maun be to change my place. Waes me, how their shields are clangin'—puir fallows! It's an awfu' trade war, and wha should pity them if I didna do't, seein' they are workin' for me, wi' the object, though they are ignorant o't, o' lettin' me into the house o' Crailing, to get possession o' yon bonny silver casket that lies i' the lebrary, containin', nae doot, the savings o' many years' rents o' the braw barony. Ay, ay—thump, hack, stab, and shoot awa—it costs naething to pity ye—and I am sure I pity ye frae the very bottom o' my stout, though maybe at present trembling, because feeling heart."

Ending his soliloquy, Andrew sought a safer retreat, where he would not be interrupted by Innerwick's messengers. He sat down again, and listened to the clang of the arms and the yells of the warriors. After some desperate fighting, the sounds seemed to cease, and Andrew augured that the assailants had got into the house. In this opinion he was justified by seeing a number of Crailing's men pass in great haste, as if escaping from pursuers. After a few minutes more he saw some of Innerwick's retainers in full chase, and then came Crailing himself, flying on a horse, which, when it came to the spot where Andrew lay, stopped and reared, whereupon Andrew started up, and, seizing the bridle, asked Crailing how the battle went.

"What is that to thee, thou mutton-mountain," screamed the infuriated and impatient rider. "Get out of my way, or I will sink my spear three feet in thy carcase."

"I merely wished," replied Andrew—twisting, as he would have done a twig of birch from the fingers of a child, the lance from Crailing's hand—"I merely wished yer honour to tell me if the way was yet clear to the house, as I intend to look in and see hoo things are gaun on, or maybe gaun out; for I can assure yer honour that Andrew Swinton has owre muckle sense o' justice to stand quietly by and see Innerwick carry aff a' yer chattels, without makin' an effort to secure some o' the braw things to himsel', merely that I may hae the satisfaction to say that I am proprietor, in fee simple, as the lawyers say, o' some o' Crailing's property."

With these words, he let go the reins, and Crailing bounded off, muttering to himself imprecations of vengeance. At a little distance, one of Innerwick's men overtook the unhappy laird, and a battle having ensued, the latter fell from his horse dead on the ground. Andrew, in

the meantime, came up, just as the victor was leaving the scene; and seeing how matters stood, he searched the dead man's pockets, and succeeded in securing several gold and silver trinkets of considerable value.

"Ye'll be some lichter, I ween," said the scamer, as he left the corpse to proceed to the house; "ye'll be considerably lichter noo, yer honour; an' it's clear, frae what the monks o' Kelso hae aften tauld me, that ye require naething on the journey ye are aboot to tak, if ye haena already set oot. The plack to Charon is a mere catchpenny; but there's a bodle, an' ye can mak the best bargain wi' the auld fallow ye can."

Hurrying away to the house, Andrew found matters in a very convenient posture. The door was open, as well as several of the windows, and the sacking was going on with spirit. Vaulting into what he conceived to be the nearest window to the library, he very soon found his way to the object of his search—the silver casket, which he had so long thought about. On seizing it, he was a little disappointed in finding it much lighter than he anticipated; but the article itself was valuable, independently of its contents; and he secured it carefully by putting it into his bag.

As he was busy making himself master of as many portable valuables as he could, he was encountered by Innerwick, who chided him for not being present at the battle, and for refusing to come when sent for. Andrew, without appearing in any way out of countenance, answered him with his accustomed promptitude and loquacity.

"But did yer honour think that I was idle when ye were busy? I kenned weel aneugh that ye wad tak the place, an' I couldna think o' interferin' wi' the richts o' yer sodgers; but, what is mair to the point, as ye will, nae doot, perceive—wha, do ye think, killed Crailing, eh?"

Innerwick, who had not yet heard of the death of his enemy, replied earnestly—

"Is Crailing dead? Who killed him? Tell me, that I may reward my benefactor."

"Do ye ken the ring he used to wear," replied Andrew coolly—"is that it, do ye think? There's some o' the cratur's bluid on't, I declare; ye may ken it, I'm sure, for it's as like to that o' ordinary men, as it is to the juice o' a nettle. The man's dead, yer honour, an' there's the hand that did the deed. He lies in the cospie at the foot o' the garden, an', nae doot, the corbies will find him out."

"I thank thee, honest fellow," said Innerwick, "for thy deed. Here is thy reward." And he handed to Andrew a bag of gold, containing many pieces.

The house being entirely sacked, Andrew went home as quietly as he could, well loaded with articles of great value. Having reached home, he set about examining his booty, and was overjoyed to find it so valuable. He had not yet opened the casket, for it had resisted his endeavours, and he was loath to break so beautiful a piece of workmanship; but after a long investigation and many efforts, he discovered that it opened by a concealed spring, placed in the bottom of it, by pressing which the lid flew up, and exposed the inside to his eager eye. He was, however, greatly disappointed; for he saw nothing but a small piece of sheep's skin, which he (unable to read) could make nothing of. Conceiving the scroll to be of no use, he threw it aside, and afterwards used it as a cover to protect him from the wind which came through a hole in the window.

About a fortnight after this affair, Andrew Swinton was one night, sitting quietly at his own fireside, ruminating on the riches he now possessed, and perfectly reconciled to himself, in consequence of having procured absolution from a monk in Kelso for the part he had taken in these transactions. His door opened, and a tall, majestic looking woman, dressed in black, stood before him. The apparition frightened him, and he sat and gazed—his eye without meaning, and his lips unable to utter a syllable.

"Thou art Andrew Swinton?" asked the lady, who was no other than Crailing's wife.

"I am," replied Andrew, "and altogether at yer leddyship's maist unqualified and humble service," bowing to the ground.

"I see lying here," said the lady, pointing to the casket, "an article which is my property, and of great importance, as containing something which is to me of so much value that it is not in the power of man to replace it by the most cunning workmanship. Does it still contain that relic?" And she went forward and opened the casket. Finding it empty, she turned pale, and would have fainted, if Andrew had not supported her in his arms, carried her to a seat, and applied some water to her temples.

"I see yer leddyship is anxious," said Andrew, "about the bit sheep's skin contained in the casket, whilk I fand lying on the ground near Crailing, after thae cruel villains o' Innerwick's had plundered the bonny hoose. An' sae the bit thing is o' value, is it?" (half soliloquizing, half addressing the lady, and going forward and securing the parchment by putting it into his pocket.) "I didna think it was onything o' importance, otherwise it wad hae been at yer leddyship's service; but, although I am muckle afraid the bit thing is clean gane—lost, I mean, yer leddyship—we may, by the advice o' wise Eppie, wha lives at Linnel, discover whar it is; and yer leddyship may, in the meantime, just to quicken my efforts to recover it, tell me what it is, an' o' hoo muckle value it may be?"

"Thou knowest, Sir," answered the lady, "that the estate of Crailing, belonging to my late husband, is now claimed by his nephew as his heir; and he has taken possession of it, to the exclusion of my rights as widow, denying that I was ever married to my husband, and daring me to a proof of the status I have so long enjoyed. Unfortunately, on that awful night when Innerwick attacked our house, I neglected, in my hurry and agitation, to secure this casket, in which was contained my marriage contract—whereby I had right to myself and to my heirs, to every inch of the property of Crailing—besides a written proof of my having been the lawful wife of my deceased husband. Now, Sir, you will see the importance of that document; and if thou wilt bestir thyself in the search for it, and obtain it, there is scarcely a boon thou couldst ask of me that I would not grant."

"Weel, my leddy," replied Andrew, on whose imagination a far vista opened, replete with prospects of the most romantic character, "I will do my endeavour to discover the object o' sae muckle care, for now I plainly see its great importance; and if yer leddyship wad just tak the trouble to gie me a ca' the morn, it's no impossible but I may hae something to communicate to ye, o' some interest, baith to yersel' and to me."

The lady, accordingly, departed, and Andrew sat down to the deepest cogitation of which he was capable. The first thought that arose, was in the shape of a question—"Wharfor may I no mak my boon the hand o' this braw leddy?" The question startled even Andrew himself; but he gradually came to sit more easy under its high sound and import, and, finally, he found himself strutting about, already, in imagination, the Laird of Crailing. It was clear, he argued, that the lady was, without her contract, no better than a concubine and a beggar; and every hope and prospect she had in the world, of ever again being respectable or happy, depended upon him. Besides, he had observed, on the occasion of his call at Crailing, that the lady eyed him with some satisfaction; as well she might, he thought, considering his appearance, when contrasted with her husband, or when contrasted with that of any man that ever crossed the Cheviots. The resolution was taken, and Andrew determined upon asking the lady to become his wife, on consideration of his giving her up the contract of marriage.

Next day the lady called, and Andrew, with some bashfulness, commenced his suit.

"I hae been thinkin' deeply, my leddy, o' what yer leddyship said yesterday. If my memory serves me, ye said that ye wad grant me ony boon I micht ask, provided I delivered to ye yer marriage contract. Noo, my leddy, I confess that, frae the day I saw ye at Crailing, I hae been able to get ye oot o' my mind. My dreams hae been haunted by yer form, and my ears hae tingled wi' the sweet sounds o' yer voice, frae that day even to this. It was that luv, my leddy—forgie the word—it was that luv that sent me awa in sic a hurry that day o' the sackin' o' Crailing, to render ye some assistance, by endeavouring to get into the house, an' wi' my matchless strength—for yer leddyship, nae doot, observes that—beat aff the enemy, an' save the braw leddy an' the braw hoose frae the violence o' the followers o' Innerwick; but, as I hastened to accomplish that purpose, I met ane o' yer leddyship's enemies, an' bein' obliged to slay him, whilk took up some time, I was owre late to do ye ony service; but, noo, my leddy, I am richt glad to find that I hae something in my power; an' to be plain—for plainness becomes an honest purpose—would ye hae ony objection to gie Andrew Swinton, a descendant o' the Swintons o' Swinton, yer hand, in consideration o' delivering up to ye the contract ye are sae anxious to recover?"

This speech was received by the lady with much favour. She thought for a little, and cast her eyes over the stalwart seamer, as if she had before her mind's eye, a comparison between him and her deceased husband. She knew some part of his character—that he was a freebooter, and poor; but she also knew that he was truly a relation of the Swintons; and, what was better, the stoutest and handsomest man in the shire. In addition to all this, she was in his power; for she knew well, that, if she rejected his suit, she would never see her contract; and the wife of Swinton and the lady of Crailing was better than an outcast, without a house and without a character. Holding out her hand, she accepted the offer; and, in a short time, Andrew Swinton led to the altar, the Lady of Crailing, vindicating her right to the property by the marriage contract.

It was reported that Andrew changed his conduct and his manners, became a good husband and father, and lived to be long respected in the country.

THE STEPMOTHER.

THE prejudice against stepmothers, which still prevails in this country, is one of those stubborn plants of the soil, which, although attacked by every species of refined exterminators, shoot up their bristly heads among soft exotic beauties, as determined to vindicate their right to a part of their native earth. The prejudice, indeed, is founded in human nature viewed in masses; and all the cases of stepmothers who have disproved the ground of the feeling as applicable to them, have only tended to shew that the exception proves the rule. The feeling is most likely to have been strongest in the earliest period, when the passions, less restrained by the laws, usages, and manners of society, are felt most strongly, and acted upon most vigorously; but if, in modern times, the cruelties of stepmothers are not marked by those traits of violence which distinguish them at earlier periods, they are often not less painful and disastrous to the victims exposed to them, however they may be attempted to be covered or concealed by that accomplishment of civilized life which enables a well-bred votary of fashion to stab while he smiles; or, as it is quaintly expressed in an old writer, to carry "on his lips honey, and in his heart gall." The following story, illustrative of the truth of the prejudice, is founded on fact.

In a part of Tweeddale, not far from the town of Peebles, may be seen an old house, built in a semi-Gothic style, and

apparently intended to be used, as it likely had been, as a monastery, but, at the time of the Reformation, economically altered, so as to make a very good mansion-house to the estate of Redhill on which it is situated. Some very ancient oak trees surround the house—so old, apparently, as to justify the entertainment of the idea, that they had shielded the monks from the inclemency of a sky not very congenial to bald crowns. One of these, having the lower part of the trunk hollowed out, so as to afford room for a seat to be placed within it, was called the Abbot's Oak, not unlikely in consequence of its having been used by the convent chief as a cool retreat from the refectory, when a sleep in the shade might mitigate the fevered pulse of repletion.

This mansion, and the small estate to which it was attached, was owned, about eighty years ago, by an old gentleman of the name of Adam Ferguson. He had been first married to a relation of the family possessing the property of Longacres, not far distant, by whom he had a daughter, called Agnes, or, as she was generally styled in familiar conversation, Nancy; and, secondly, to Barbara Bruce, the daughter of a merchant residing in London, by whom he had also one daughter, called after her mother.

This second wife of Adam Ferguson was much younger than himself, scarcely, indeed, reaching one half of his years; and, as it frequently happens, she obtained that influence over the old lover, which is sometimes quaintly said to be in the inverse ratio of their ages, increasing, in married pairs, according to the decrement of the wife's years. The power of Mrs Ferguson was unbounded; for, by the influence she, by arts and pretended affection, acquired over his mind and feelings, she could not only think for him, but speak for him, and act for him, according as best suited her wishes and interests. To a disposition originally light and frivolous, and imitative of all those floating fashions and customs of the day which are thought to go to the constitution of a fine lady, she added, what was much less innocuous, a total want of all proper feeling and sympathy; substituting, in place of the real affections and emotions of the heart, a fashionable pseudo timidity and sensibility, which, bold as a lion in acts of cruelty wrought through the influence of pride and selfishness, bled at the embowelling or impaling of a fly.

Her daughter, Barbara, was the type of her mother. Every attention was exhausted in feeding, educating, dressing, and palpating her. Masters were brought from various places—from London itself—to impart to her those accomplishments which would suit her for the wife of the man who, in consideration of Redhill, would doubtless bring her wealth and a title. The useful and everyday feelings and conversation of life, were reckoned vulgar. To speak to a cottager, so as he might understand her, was deemed low, and a thing to be avoided. It was necessary to impress on vulgarity a proper sense of its offensive character, by turning up the nose and eyes in its presence; and, if it should shew any indication of a presumptuous wish to vindicate any right supposed to be natural to man, to seem surprised and offended, and depart; threatening to punish the rebellion by a sudden visitation of fashionable displeasure. Besides being naturally unfeeling, and inclined to domination and oppression, Barbara was regularly trained to cruelty—much in the same way as young people, by having the instruments of gymnastic exercises placed within their power, are, by daily application, made accustomed to do deeds, bear pain, and become familiar with violence, which, to untrained people, would be intolerable and oppressive. Poor Agnes Ferguson stood in place of these gymnastic instruments to Barbara.

Agnes Ferguson was the very reverse of these characters. Her mother died in giving birth to her, and her father having married very soon after, she fell into the tender keeping of the new wife, who, before she had acted the part of nurse

for six months, contrived to let her fall and dislocate her spine. This barbarian act was represented to the father as an accident. The old man believed it; and, in place of blaming his wife, sympathised with her in being exposed to the grief of witnessing pain, when her whole time should be devoted to pleasure. This misfortune created a deformity in Agnes, a circumstance the more to be regretted that she would otherwise have been a creature of exquisite beauty. The delicate lines of her face, beaming with sympathy and love, charmed every eye, and called forth the affection of every heart; while the dreadful condition attached to gifts so rare and excellent, imparting, as it did, a tinge of sweet sorrow to her beautiful face, did not fail to excite, in all who saw her, that pity which was denied to her by those who were bound to give her consolation. Her disposition was so kind and benevolent, and her sensibility to distress and misfortune so refined and acute, that the sufferings of others made her forget her own. While everything which inherent badness of heart could devise to render her miserable, was daily visited upon herself, she was as continually occupied in relieving the wants and assuaging the sorrows of others; shewing, in her individual case, a rare example of a departure from the rule that misery is selfish.

The persecution of Agnes originated in a wish, on the part of her stepmother and her daughter, for her death; whereby the estate of Redhill would descend entire to Barbara. The feeling of dislike and enmity thus formed received, as it is known often to do, however unaccountably, increase and strength from the meekness and gentleness of the unresisting victim; and, as there is, in some persecutors, a participation of that feeling which is observed among the lower animals—a natural repugnancy to a deformed individual of the species—so Agnes' enemies conceived (such is the selfishness of interested malice, and the facility with which bad people may deceive themselves) that the poor girl's misfortunes—produced, too, by them—was a kind of excuse, at least to their own minds, for the bitter feelings with which they pursued her.

This feeling of enmity towards Agnes proceeded and increased with her years. She was dressed differently from Barbara; and, though older, served after her at table, getting the fare which Mrs Ferguson knew she disliked, and seeing Barbara receive, with delighted eyes, every kind of dainty. Anything touched by her hands was polluted. "Would you eat *that*, Barbara?—Agnes has had it in her hand!" "Would you wear *that*, Barbara?—Agnes has been using it!"—were everyday phrases used by Mrs Ferguson. Even if Barbara had been observed sitting too close to Agnes, her mother took notice of the circumstance. It was often alleged by the servants, that the poor victim was annoyed by Mrs Ferguson in many secret ways; for, before she was able to tell her griefs, she exhibited, over her body, many blue marks, as if she had been severely pinched. After she grew up a little, these marks disappeared; but she had often sores about her, which she contrived to conceal from the servants, but which they attributed to the cruelty of her stepmother, in the conversation among themselves, of which the following is a specimen:—

"Agnes is confined to bed, the day, Joan," said Jean Henderson, to her partner, Joan Palmer, the cook at Redhill. "Her enemies will gie her nae rest, but that o' the grave, puir deformed thing—it's enough to mak ane's heart break to see her thus treated. Nae farther gane than yesterday, that cruel Jezabel insisted upon bathing the puir creature's feet, to cure her o' a cauld she got sittin at the Abbot's Oak, that night when they dressed her up like an antique, to sit beside Captain Johnson to be laughed at, and she flew for shame to the open air, half dressed, and sat i' the cauld wind for twa hours, and naeboddy durst ask her to come in. Weel, as I was sayin, that she Nicanor wanted to bathe her feet. 'What's this o't?' said I to mysel'—there maun be

some devilry under this.' Sae I watched her, as she poured in the water—first a drap het, and then a drap cauld. Weel, at last she said it would do, and the puir unweel lassie was plunged into the scalding water, screaming as if her life was in her mouth. 'The water's owre het,' I said. 'Ye lee,' said she, and still kept the screaming cratur i' the tub. My heart could stand it nae langer—I snatched the puir bairn frae her hands, and the moment she was oot o' the water, she was quiet."

"That's ill enough," replied Joan; "but the month afore ye cam to the monastery she was waur treated than being scauded; for she was nearly killed ootricht. John Somers had put Agnes upon that glaikit creature Barbara's sheltie, ae day—for weel he likes the bonny bairn, crooked though she be. Weel, Jezabel—a gude name for her, Jean—was looking oot o' the window, and saw the puir creature amusing hersel' wi the sheltie. Doun she comes—seizes the whip oot o' John Somers' hand—maks a fashion o' licking nim, but taks gude care to strike the beast; awa it flees—Agnes tumbles aff, and when John Somers gaed to tak her up, he found the puir lassie's arm broken cleanthrough. Three months she was confined wi' that arm; and mony a thraw the cruel woman gae it, whan she pretended to dress it; for poor Agnes never screamed when I dressed it. Ah! lassie, lassie! nae mortal kens what she has suffered; for she winna tell her waes—a' she says, when a question is put to her, is just, 'Agnes Ferguson maun wait God's time to tak her oot o' her affliction. Though she, wha ocht to hae cherished and been kind to me, taks, as the king did the mither o' the seven brethren, me like a fury oot o' this present life, the King o' the world shall raise me up.' Aften hae I grat for her, puir sweet creature, till my een were sair wi' the wark; but it does nae guid, for their hearts are as hard as whunstones, and hers is as saft as the leaves o' thae bonny roses, bloomin' i' the window there."

"An' sae kind an' charitable she is, too," said Jean: "nae puir body ever comes to the door, without inquiring for Agnes; for she's the only freend they hae in the monastery. Were it no for her, the house wad be banned throughout the country as a place whar the hand o' charity was never stretched out, an' nae feeling for oor fellow-cratur had ony dwelling; and yet she's abused even for being kind. Twa days syne, Barbara dashed frae her hand the bowl o' milk wharwi' she intended to feed a cratur whose life seemed to depend on the gift. If there's a power aboon—an' wha can doot it?—Agnes Ferguson, will get her reward."

"An' she has mair learnin' and guid sense than a' the rest o' the monastery put thegither," rejoined Joan: "noo, whan she's a woman, she speaks like a prophet; an' mony a day she shames my puir ignorance, and brings the tear o' pity to my ee, to think that sae meikle treasure should be concealed in a broken earthen vessel. But it canna be lang concealed; for she only abides the time o' the Lord."

The persecuted victim sometimes indulged in a train of reflections on the unhappy circumstances of her condition, and this she was fond o' doing on her mother's grave, for there she felt that all her sorrows must end, as in that untimely tumulus they had had their beginning.

"Shade of a mother, who never saw her daughter!" she would ejaculate; "how little dost thou know of my griefs—how little are these known to any. What human tongue can tell the woes of a spirit broken by the secret and never-ending schemes of a cruel stepmother! Who is there now, when thou art no longer here to guard thy poor child, to put forth the hand that will break the force of the unkind infliction of blows, and gibes, and sarcasms, and every species of unkindness? None, alas! none; for my father is too old to hold authority, and too credulous to the tongue of falsehood and deceit, to believe his daughter when she complains, or to feel for her when she mourns. Unhappy fate

—to be first weakened by deformity beyond the bounds of resistance, and then, as a lamb is led to the slaughter, to be forced to submit, without the solace of a murmur, to the heart-breaking cruelties of one whose only object is to see me lying under this earth with thee! Oh! how thankful I am to Him, who, even when the heart is broken, can bind up the fragments, and, out of the union, call forth a new spirit, that I have been led early to know the four things, which the prophet hath said do appear in this earth—good and evil, life and death; and that, while my persecutor tries to deprive me of the choice of these, and would force death upon me as my inheritance, before I have known life, I have, out of the sorrows she has heaped upon my poor defenceless head, extracted a balm—even as out of the clay which our Saviour applied to the eyes of the blind, the power of vision of the fair things of this world was obtained, and the man saw the glorious light! May I be ever grateful that sorrow guided my footsteps to the habitations of poverty! Oh! what were my sensations, when I first came to know that poor Agnes Ferguson was not the only unhappy person in the world! How my depressed heart leaped, till it shook my tender frame, when at last I found a fellow creature in whose miseries I could, without hindrance, sympathise, and whose sorrows I could alleviate. The world was no longer a blank to me, or a place of persecution. My heart danced with an unknown joy; and the glorious feeling sprang up within me, that I was not destined to be merely a sufferer—a burden to myself and to the world—but an active, useful being, capable of filling up a part of the scheme of this mighty and mysterious world. Thenceforth, my way was clear. The cruelties of my tormentor fell less heavily upon my weak frame; and the consciousness of being *something* beyond a thing created for the gratification of her wish to render me miserable, made me glad, even in my tribulation. Gracious shade! aid the purposes of your Agnes. Fill her heart with the desire, and quicken her energies with a power, to be a guardian angel to the distressed—to cheer up their broken spirits, and infuse into their trembling limbs the energies of new life; and, above all things, to lead them to the fountain of living waters, where the draught of eternal life is alone to be obtained!"

This scheme which Agnes had formed, of making herself useful, by founding an extensive system of bestowing charity and kindness, and giving religious instruction to the poor in the neighbourhood, was soon known to Mrs Ferguson and her daughter, who took every means that lay in their power to destroy or counteract her good intentions. They often condescended to get hold of the small packages of presents, which she sent by her favourite, John Somers, to her poor dependents, and to substitute, in place of the articles contained in them, something different, so as to excite feelings of anger or disgust on the part of the poor creatures to whom they were sent. When any great love had been exhibited by her towards any particular tenant, Mrs Ferguson very soon got him turned off. She contrived to get the old man to sign a note to his man of business, a person of the name of William Fortune, a writer in Peebles, containing such instructions as would suit her purpose. In this way all the good that Agnes did was counteracted by the inhumane efforts of her stepmother, acting upon a principle of intense bitterness towards one who had never done her any injury.

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE STEPMOTHER.

(Concluded.)

About the time when Agnes arrived at nineteen years of age, she lost the companionship of her friend, John Somers, who went to William Fortune, to become an apprentice to the profession of the law. William Fortune was a very old man, having been an early friend of Adam Ferguson. After John Somers' departure, Agnes had the greatest difficulty in getting her plans of charity carried into effect; for she had no charitable emissary to go between her and her patients, and the interference of Mrs Ferguson and her daughter often neutralized the effects of her best and most benevolent energies. About his time, a circumstance happened which nearly cost Agnes her life. Her stepmother and daughter had seen a dead mule lying in a ditch, about two miles from Redhill; and they at once proposed to get Agnes to take a journey that distance, by exciting her benevolent sentiments towards a misrepresented object. They, accordingly, pretended to narrate to Adam Ferguson, that they had seen a poor creature dying in a ditch at the Witch's Knowe, a place well known to him. Agnes, touched to the heart by the tale of her persecutors, slipped out, taking with her some cordials, and travelled two miles, in a December night, to afford some assistance and solace to this dying individual. When she came to the place, she saw the dead animal, and at once discovered the design to mock her charities and injure herself. She caught cold by the exposure, and her tender frame received a severe shock, which it required a whole month to remove. This also formed a subject of conversation among the servants.

"Hoo did ye trust to them, Agnes, woman?" asked Jean Henderson, when Agnes was still confined to bed. "Ken ye see little o' their tender mercies as to think they could be serious in sympatheesin wi' ony cratur, whether deen in a ditch or on a feather bed. Waes me! but they may yet come to lie whar that puir beast had drawn its last breath, maybe discarded by an auld hard maister, in whase service it had worn oot a' its bluid and strength, and wha could get nae mair wark out o' its sapless banes. Ay, ay, my bonny Agnes, the day may come whan ye may walk as far to see yer cruel faes, wha are now persecuting ye, lying as ill provided for as that puir beast; and weel I ken that ye wad gang as blithely as ye did that night, to render them a service, and to do them guid, heedless o' a' they hae dune to distress ye—ay, and to kill ye—that they may get bonny Redhill to themselfs, and to that Captain Johnson, wha has nearly taen up his quarters at the auld monastery, and will nae doubt marry Barbara and the property at the same time."

"I wish them no ill, Jean," answered Agnes, calmly, 'notwithstanding of what I have suffered, and am daily suffering from them. Our Holy Book enjoins us to return good for evil, and I hope that I may have it in my power to bring a kind shame upon their heads, by shewing them that the unfortunate being they have so often despised could love them even as they hate her. If they would not interfere with my charities, I can well forgive all they have done against me; but my poor patients are concerned in the annoyances they heap upon me, and that affects me more than

my own sufferings. How much I regret the loss of my good friend, John! By his assistance I succeeded in comforting many a victim of wretchedness."

The Captain Johnson alluded to by Jean Henderson was a gay military man, who had nothing to boast of but his regimentals and a genteel appearance. He had been introduced to Mrs Ferguson and Barbara at an assembly in Edinburgh, and was invited by the ladies to pass a few days at Redhill. He soon saw the convenient position of the fort its easy access, its valuable contents; and he set about besieging it in form. The vain Barbara was an easy triumph; for all that any gay man had to do with her was to praise her beauty and run down her deformed sister, in both of which Johnson succeeded to perfection.

"Whom dost thou think I met to-day, Miss Barbara?" asked the Captain one day. "Whom, but the little crooked spiritual Quixote, arm-in-arm with a dapper fellow, whom she called John Somers. Ha! ha! it was a pretty sight to be sure, 'pon my honour. Thou wouldst almost have said the creatures were in love, if love ever does visit such things. They do tell me, though, that a hunch is no protection against the arrows of the little god. They were carrying a bundle of something in their hands, from which I thought myself fairly entitled to ask, if they were on their way to Gretna-Green. The dapper turned round in a fury, and said he could cudgel me for my impertinence if I did not walk off. The crooked Quixote, proud to think there was any chance of blood being shed for her, interfered, and implored us not to fight. Wasn't it very good?"

"It was, indeed, most excellent, Captain," said Mrs Ferguson. "But I hope you chastised the impudent dog."

"No, 'pon my honour, I thought it beneath me. I had no stick in my hand; and you know that man never condescends to chastise the lower animals without a stick or a whip."

"You should have seen what was in the bundle, Captain," said Barbara. "You would have had an excellent treat. A charity bundle is one of the most curious jewel-boxes you ever saw. Pandora's was nothing to it. It contains something for the person, for the stomach, and for the soul. A Psalm Book is greased by the leg of a capon; a Book of Common Prayer has a mutton chop between the leaves, where there occurs a prayer for meat; a rag and a box of ointment for a cut finger are rolled up in a religious tract for mending the soul; butter, tea, sugar, coffee, are all panoplied with the coats of mail from the Religious Tract Society's arsenal; and a pig's cheek, lying in John Bunyan, like a hog in armour, lies smiling in anticipation of the religious crusade on which it is sent."

"Ha, ha! that is good, 'pon my honour!" replied the Captain; "but the half of Redhill will soon be spent in this manner."

"If she gets it, Captain," whispered the mother; "but I have a few words to say to you about that at another time."

About a week after the conversation now detailed, Mrs Ferguson, accompanied by her daughter and Captain Johnson, called at the office of William Fortune. They inquired for the old gentleman, and were shewn into a kind of consulting room, immediately off his office. John Somers was

sitting writing at his desk, and pretended to pay no attention to the visitors, allowing them to pass into the consulting-room, as if he did not see them. When the parties met for their consultation, they spoke so unguardedly loud, that it was not difficult for John to hear almost everything that took place.

"Mr Fortune, we have called in consequence of a request from Mr Adam Ferguson," said Mrs Ferguson, "which you will see contained in this note, which he desired me to put into your hands."

"What does my old friend want?" answered Mr Fortune, putting on his spectacles to read the note. "Is it anything regarding the disposal of Redhill? Ay, ay," he continued, after perusing the letter—"he wishes a will, but a very curious one—Redhill to Barbara, and £20 a-year to Agnes. Is that really my old friend's wish? Who writes the letter to me? In whose handwriting is it, I mean?"

"That's of no consequence, sir," answered the lady. "The signature is Mr Ferguson's; and that, you know, is enough."

"Why, madam," answered Mr Fortune, "it is of no consequence to me who writes the note; all that I have anything to do with, is the consent of Mr Ferguson. I shall prepare the will, and get it executed in due form."

"That is enough, sir," answered the lady. "When will you call with it?"

"The day after to-morrow," answered the old gentleman of the law.

The parties went away in good spirits, thanking Mr Fortune for his attention.

After they went away, Mr Fortune handed over the note to John Somers, desiring him to take down the title-deeds of Redhill, and draw out a will for Adam Ferguson.

John Somers did as he was desired; took down the charter-chest of Redhill, and began to make out the will. He laboured assiduously at it all day, and had it finished on the following morning; when Mr Fortune revised it carefully, muttering, at times, to himself, as if he felt displeased at his old friend's disposal of his wealth.

The deed having been revised, was engrossed on a large sheet of paper, by John Somers; and an hour was appointed next day for going to Redhill, to get it executed. Mr Fortune took John Somers with him, to witness the deed—a step strongly opposed by Mrs Ferguson, who endeavoured to advise Mr Fortune, when he arrived, to get some of the people about the neighbourhood to witness it. Mr Fortune silenced them, by telling them that John Somers knew already what was in the deed; and, therefore, that the evil (if it was any evil) which they wished to avoid, was already done, and that they should have cautioned him at the time, if they wished John Somers to remain ignorant of what the deed contained.

A consultation was immediately held, by the mother and daughter, and Captain Johnson, at which they agreed that it would now do no service to get a new deed prepared, seeing that that would not take away John Somers' knowledge of their intention; besides, John Somers could do nothing more than tell Agnes that she was disinherited—a circumstance rather to be wished than avoided, as it would agnify her, and do them no injury. It was, therefore, resolved to get the deed executed by the old man, who would sign any paper which Mrs Ferguson chose to lay before him.

Mr Fortune and John Somers were accordingly told to wait for some time. About an hour afterwards, they were requested to walk up to Adam Ferguson's bedroom, where, upon entering, a strange scene was presented to them. Adam Ferguson was in his bed, supported by pillows; alongside of him sat his wife, with her arm round his back, as if endeavouring to support him. At the foot of the bed was Barbara, smiling all kindness in the old man's unconscious eyes; at a little distance sat Johnson looking at the scene

that was about to be acted, as if he had a very material interest in the result. Agnes was not present. She was visiting a sick neighbour.

An attempt was made by Mrs Ferguson to introduce Mr Fortune; but it was a mere device. Adam Ferguson was apparently unconscious of everything that was taking place. Mr Fortune shook him by the hand, and asked him if he knew him.

"Oh, ay! oh, ay! my auld friend, Willie Fortune; but I thocht he was dead."

"I am come, Mr Ferguson, with your will prepared according to your directions," said Mr Fortune. "Will you listen to it, while John Somers reads it?"

"Oh, ay! oh, ay! the will—the will; but I hae a will already, hae I no? I thocht sae."

This last part of the speech was drowned by the coughing of all the three schemers, who, as if by concert, made a noise whenever old Ferguson said anything they did not wish the writer or his clerk to hear.

"Are all these folk collected to see me dee?" again asked the old man, falling back into his unconsciousness; but his words were rendered inaudible by the concerted cough of the triumvirate.

"Read the will," cried Mrs Ferguson, alarmed lest the cough might not be sufficient to prevent an exposure of her husband's decayed condition; and John Somers, taking up the settlement, proceeded to read it.

After he had finished it, old Ferguson said—"I hae heard that sermon afore, and"—but the cough again drowned his words—while Mrs Ferguson was busying herself to get the pen put into his hands. By the aid of leading his hand, the deed was signed; and Adam Ferguson, when their purpose was served, was allowed to fall back upon his bed, just as if all they required of him had been obtained and he might now die with all the speed of dissolving nature.

Mr Fortune told Mrs Ferguson that it would be necessary for him to take the deed home with him, to get the testing clause filled up—an operation requiring so much delicacy that he always wished to do it leisurely at home; besides, it was proper that the deed should lie, along with the rest of Mr Ferguson's papers in his possession, regularly secured in the charter-chest. To this, Mrs Ferguson at first objected; but Captain Johnson whispered something in her ear, which very soon changed her purpose; for she then appeared rather to wish that the deed should be in Mr Ferguson's charter-chest, along with the rest of the papers. Mr Fortune accordingly put the deed in his pocket, and went up to bid farewell to his old friend. He found him, however, asleep, or rather in that dosing condition to which very old people are subject, partaking something of a medium between sleep and incipient death. The attorney and his clerk departed.

In the afternoon of the day on which the will was signed, a great feast was prepared by Mrs Ferguson, to which all the neighbouring lairds were invited. It happened to be the anniversary of Barbara's birth; and that circumstance was given out as the cause of the feast, though the true one consisted of the high feeling of exultation and satisfaction felt by the three plotters at the success of their scheme to cut Agnes out of her just rights. At this party, Agnes was requested to be present. She modestly excused herself, but her excuse was not accepted; a fantastic dress was put down for her to wear, and she was threatened with her persecutor's displeasure, if she endeavoured to excite surprise, and mar the pleasure of the company, by her absence. This mode of argument had some effect upon Agnes, who, anxious to avoid producing any inconvenience to any person, agreed to be present at the feast, in order that her absence might not be attributed to a mark of disrespect, on her part, to her who stood in the place of her mother.

The evening came, and the party assembled. Nothing

could be more gay than this scene. Buoyed up with the joy of having at last effected a long settled purpose, the mother, the daughter, and the lover, were all gaiety and sprightliness. Agnes crouched away into a corner, ashamed to appear in the absurd dress which she had been forced to wear; but she was not safe from her tormentors, who, mad with unrestrained exultation, determined upon drawing her out.

With this view, Captain Johnson requested a brother officer, who had been invited, to ask Miss Agnes Ferguson to dance—as a favour to him, and a mark of respect to her mother. The officer consented, partly also from a wish to enjoy some sport at the expense of the feelings of a person who was as much superior to him in mind as he was to her in person. The ceremony of asking her was performed, in the face of the company, in a style of the most extravagant gesture androdomontade. The company tittered and laughed; but Agnes' heart sunk within her; and, if a kind friend, with whom she was sitting, had not lent her some assistance, she would have fainted on the spot. Recovering herself partially, she excused herself, while the blush of shame mounted up to her temples, and her eyes sought the ground, as their only refuge against the gaze of the whole company, whose attention was fixed on the scene, as if it had been a part of a play. Not understanding the low accents in which Agnes' refusal to dance had been given, and taking her blush and downcast eyes as a modest consent, the young cavalier laid hold of her by the hand, and, somewhat rudely, endeavoured to raise her from her seat. This was more than she could bear. Her sensitive nature shrunk even at the idea of being in company at all; but to be conscious of being the object of the concentrated attention of fifty individuals, and in a position so adverse to her feelings and habits, as to be dragged to exhibit her deformed person in a dance, was beyond the power of her delicate nature to sustain. She fainted at the feet of the officer, and was carried senseless out of the room.

The hilarity of the company was not affected by this circumstance; for Mrs Ferguson told them that her stepdaughter was epileptic, and often took a fit of the same kind—that she would soon get out of it, and would return again to the party. Captain Johnson joked about it—imputed the fit to the force of the officer's attractions—rallied him upon his conquest of a fair lady, and a half of Redhill estate, and wished him joy of his triumph. In this way, the evening passed, and the company at last departed.

The nuptials of Barbara and her lover were now fixed to take place in a month. The Captain had delayed them until the scheme was carried into effect, whereby the whole of the Redhill property would come into his power; for his debts and extravagant habits required some large resource of this kind; and, if he had not been certain of his game, he would not have entered into matrimony at all. In the meantime, Agnes, unconscious altogether of what had been going on, was engaged in her charitable offices; being now, when she could no longer do them any injury, allowed to follow her own inclinations, with a little more freedom from torment than she formerly enjoyed. Indeed, the time and attention of Mrs Ferguson, and the young couple, were so completely engrossed with the important business in which they were engaged, that so insignificant a wretch as the disinherited Agnes now was, was entirely unworthy of even having visited upon her the effects of their spleen.

The marriage was accordingly solemnized. It went off with the greatest eclat. Agnes was not invited to be present; and was occupied, during the whole of the day, attending at the death-bed of a poor old friend, whose life she had been the means of preserving, and whose death she now did everything in her power to render as easy as that great king of terrors, quailing under the power of a Divine religion, will permit. Just about the period, when Barbara

and her lover set off in a coach and four, to enjoy their honeymoon, Agnes saw, with weeping eyes and a sobbing heart, the soul of her friend—melted with gratitude to her as an earthly benefactor, and love to God as the source of all consolation—take wing for the regions of everlasting rest.

About a fortnight after Barbara's marriage, she and her husband were recalled, by a letter from Mrs Ferguson, stating that Adam Ferguson was on the point of death. The attentions of Agnes to her parent had never been permitted; but now, when the ear could receive no more poison, and the heart was dead to the feeling of a daughter's love, there was no longer any reason for preventing her from doing the last duties of a child to a dying parent. She hung about the bed night and day, and received the chiding of her stepmother with her accustomed meekness, holding the duties in which she was engaged, to be beyond the influence of small worldly feelings. In the midst of all the friends—for Barbara and Captain Johnson had now returned—the faithful and kind Agnes was left to soothe the departure of her father's spirit, and to close his eyes in death. Even in this awful scene, when mirth is distant even from the fool, and hardness of heart from the villain, the heartless triumvirate could not resist the joke that Agnes required to be well remembered in the will, for all the trouble she had taken with her father Agnes heard the gibe, but it received from her no answer.

Immediately when it was known that Adam Ferguson's breath was out, Captain Johnson assumed the character of universal proprietor. He went about, and put his seal upon all the doors and drawers of the house, commanded the servants in a high style of magisterial authority, and received the tenants as their landlord. He talked to them of their leases, and the productiveness of their farms; told them that they must expect to be now treated with a little more salutary rigour, than had been applied by Adam Ferguson, whose softness and backwardness had relaxed the energies of his tenants, and destroyed the productiveness of the estate; and assured them that it would be better for them, as well as for him, if they were kept strict to their payments, and to their various prestations and duties. The poor farmers sighed and wished they had old Adam Ferguson back again.

Barbara was also in high spirits and authority. She entreated the Captain to send off immediately for a new carriage of the most fashionable kind which Edinburgh could produce. Mrs Ferguson recommended to her to wait till after the funeral; but the Captain joined his wife, and the letter was dispatched, accordingly, containing the order.

A whisper now got ground, that Agnes was disinherited. The news spread around for miles, and as far as the scene of her bounty extended. It produced the greatest grief; for the sphere of her usefulness might, by limited means, be contracted; and many poor people had so long depended upon her charity, that, to be deprived of it, might bring them to the grave. They said nothing to Agnes of the rumour; but many a sore heart waited the reading of the will with trembling anxiety.

The day of the funeral came. It was conducted in a manner suited to the rank of a landholder, and many attended it from far and near. Just before the corpse was lifted, a letter came from John Somers, stating that Mr Fortune had died the preceding night, and that he would attend and read the will.

The funeral being over, the friends collected, according to the custom of the country, to hear the will read. Wine and confections of all kinds, were handed about in the greatest profusion; and it was clear, from the faces of the parties, who were to be benefited by the settlement. Mrs Ferguson had insisted upon Agnes being present; and, according to her former tactics, she got her placed in the most prominent part of the room, with a view, likely, to see her discomfiture on hearing her doom of poverty sounded in her ears.

All being present and silent, John Somers rose up and

said, that, in consequence of the death of his master, he had been entrusted with the important duty of reading the deceased's settlement, which he would now do. He then read as follows :—

"I, Adam Ferguson, of Redhill, considering it to be every man's duty, in this life, to settle his affairs in such way as to avoid all disputes after his death, do hereby give, grant, assign, and dispoise to and in favour of my beloved daughter, Agnes Ferguson, and her heirs, executors, and successors whomsoever, heritably and irredeemably, all and hail the estate and lands of Redhill, lying in the parish of ———, and the county of Peebles; and I further appoint the said Agnes Ferguson to be my executor and intromitter with my movable means and estate, burdening her with the annual payment of £20 a-year to my other well-beloved daughter, Barbara; and declaring that my spouse is already provided for by her marriage contract, entered into with me on the occasion of her marriage; and I reserve to myself my life-rent of the premises, and have power to revoke or alter these presents, in whole or in part, as I may hereafter think proper."

"This, gentleman," said Somers, "is Adam Ferguson's last will and settlement."

A silence prevailed for a few minutes, the result of astonishment. This was followed by a scream from Barbara, who had fainted, and the mother, rushing forward with the fury of a demon, cried out, shaking her hands in John Somers' face, that the will he had read was not Adam Ferguson's will—that it was a forgery and a fabrication—that she had heard John Somers himself read the proper will, when it was executed, which was precisely the reverse of this, giving the whole property to Barbara, and £20 a-year to Agnes—that she had prevailed upon her husband to dispose of his property; and she would have the law for it; besides pursuing the perpetrator of this weak device with her everlasting vengeance.

The friends sat petrified with astonishment at this extraordinary scene. They were generally adverse to the claims of Mrs Ferguson, and had a sympathy for Agnes; and the very admission which she had in her fury made—viz. that she endeavoured to influence the old man in disinheriting the poor girl—tended to arm them against her still more, and afforded room for satisfaction that her scheme had been by some means reversed.

John Somers again stood up and said—

"Gentlemen—I am accused of fabricating a will. You can judge for yourselves. Is not that the handwriting of Adam Ferguson? I appeal even to this angry woman if that is not the signature of her deceased husband.

"But, gentlemen, I have evidence in my pocket sufficient to free me from this imputation. What will this woman say, who thus brands me with forgery, when I inform her, and all of you, that it was not in Adam Ferguson's power to make a will in any other terms than that I have now read to you? To enable you to understand this, I have to inform you, that, when Adam Ferguson married his first wife, one of the Nydie family, it was conditioned, by the lady's friends, that the property of Redhill should be provided to the children of that marriage. Accordingly, a marriage contract was entered into by the parties, which I have here to shew you, whereby Adam Ferguson bound and obliged himself and his heirs, to settle and devolve the property of Redhill on the heirs of the marriage, whether male or female. Now, gentlemen, every person knows that, by the law of this country, a contract of marriage is one of the most sacred, onerous, and binding instruments that a person can enter into; and, having once signed it, he has no power to retract or to alter it. You are further aware that Agnes Ferguson is the only daughter of that marriage, and therefore entitled to take advantage of the provisions in the marriage contract of her father and mother and it follows,

as a matter of course, that Adam Ferguson had not the power, even if he had had the will, to make any other settlement regarding the estate of Redhill, than that which I have now read. The £20 a-year given to his daughter Barbara will exhaust his movable estate, so that she has no ground to go upon in objecting to the will.

"But, gentlemen, independently of all this, you have heard it admitted by this angry lady herself, that she endeavoured to influence her husband to disinherit his daughter Agnes—a circumstance that would be sufficient of itself to have cut down the settlement, even if it had been as favourable to her daughter as she could have wished; no such influence can be proved to have been used by the gentle and disinterested Agnes; and, therefore, even if there were no marriage contract, this settlement cannot be so much as touched."

The friends were satisfied with John Somers' account of the settlements, and departed; John Somers himself went away soon after, taking with him Agnes, whom he placed in the keeping of one of her neighbouring friends, until the house should be got cleared for her residence. He deemed it unsafe to allow her to remain at the monastery in the present excited state of those persons who had so long pursued her life and her happiness with such a determined spirit of hatred.

After the first paroxysm of rage and disappointment had subsided in the minds of the disappointed trio, they had recourse to legal advice; and all set off together to Edinburgh, to consult a lawyer. They were at once informed, by an eminent counsel at that time, that, if the marriage contract was good, it signified nothing that the will could be proved bad; because, if they could not both be reduced, no benefit could accrue from any reduction. There seemed to be nothing, however, to be said against the validity of the marriage contract, and therefore they had no case. He did not think, however, that they could even reduce the will; because, from their own account, they had been interfering personally, in getting a will made out, disinheriting Agnes; and this alone would so completely taint their proceedings, as to prevent them from succeeding in any attack upon the will as prepared. The counsel added, that he suspected Mr Fortune had seen through their scheme, and had defeated it by making out a proper will, in terms of the contract, and getting his clerk to read it in such a way as to pronounce the name of Agnes for Barbara, wherever it occurred. Mr Fortune, however, was dead, and the clerk not being bound to criminate himself, they had no evidence even of this. He recommended to them, therefore, not to enter into any law plea with Agnes; for they would most certainly be defeated in it.

Mrs Ferguson took up her residence in a small flat in Edinburgh, where she lived on a small sum secured to her by her marriage contract. Captain Johnson and Barbara lived, for some time, on his half-pay; but that was not a life suited to the aspiring temper of the man. He was, besides, sore at the disappointment he had met with, and taxed his wife and Mrs Ferguson with knowing very well that the marriage contract existed; and insulted them by saying that the matter of the will was got up by them merely to catch him. These altercations grew into quarrels. The Captain left his wife to become a gambler; and, having gone to France, was not heard of in Scotland again.

Mrs Ferguson, some time after, died; and Barbara, with her twenty pounds a-year and a child, continued to live in the very humblest manner, in one of the lowest streets of Edinburgh.

In the meantime, Agnes had taken possession of the property, which was only valuable to her in so far as it allowed her to extend her charities. She was not suited for marriage—a circumstance she was well aware of; and having little sympathy with the joys of this world, she was con-

tented with those more exquisite feelings, derived from a devotion to the service of God, and to the amelioration of the condition of His unfortunate creatures. Having heard of the misery of Barbara, she wrote to her, and offered her a house and a living at Redhall. Barbara accepted the offer, and received the benefits of the charity bundle, which she thought she had so well ridiculed.

John Somers would not speak as to the mysterious affair of the will; but nobody had any doubt that the Edinburgh lawyer's construction of the matter was the correct one.

THE SEVEN LIGHTS

THE following tale is one of those wild traditional stories, for which the Highlands of Scotland are, or, more happily, rather were so celebrated; and will be found, we think, sufficiently characteristic of that highly imaginative, but superstitious people.

John M'Pherson was an extensive farmer and grazier in Kintyre—a well-known district of Argyleshire—and highly respected for his integrity, and for the general excellence of his character.

M'Pherson was, in every respect, a genuine Highlander. In person, though of rather low stature than otherwise, he was stout, athletic, and active; bold and fearless in disposition, warm in temper, friendly, and hospitable—this last to such a degree that his house was never without as many strangers and visitors of different descriptions, as nearly doubled his own household.

To the needy and the destitute, his house and meal-chest were ever open; and to no one, whatever was his condition, were a night's quarters ever refused. M'Pherson's house, in short, formed a kind of focus, possessing a power to draw towards itself all the misery and poverty in the country within a circle whose diameter might be reckoned at somewhere about twenty miles. The wandering mendicant made it one of his regular stages, and the traveller of better degree toiled on his way with increased activity, that he might make it his quarters for the night.

Fortunately for the character and credit of M'Pherson's hospitality, his wife was of an equally kind and generous disposition with himself; so that his absences from home, which were frequent, and sometimes long, did not at all affect the treatment of the stranger under his roof, or make his welcome less cordial.

But the indiscriminating hospitality exercised at Morvane, which was the name of M'Pherson's residence, sometimes, it must be confessed, subjected him to occasional small depredations—such as the loss of a pair of blankets, a sheet, or a pair of stockings, carried off by the ungrateful and unprincipled vagabonds whom, unknowingly, he sometimes sheltered. There were, however, one pair of blankets abstracted in this way, that found their road back to their owner in rather a curious manner.

The morning was exceedingly thick and misty, when the thief (in the case alluded to) decamped with his booty, and continued so during the whole day, so that no object, at any distance, however large, could be seen. After toiling for several hours, under the impression that he was leaving Morvane far behind, the vagabond, who was also a stranger in the country, approached a house, with the stolen blankets snugly and carefully bundled on his back, and knocked at the door, with the view of seeking a night's quarters, as it was now dusk. The door was opened; but by whom, think you good reader? Why, by M'Pherson.

The thief, without knowing it, had landed precisely at the point from which he had set out. Being instantly recog-

nised, he was politely invited to walk in. To this kind invitation, the thief replied by throwing down the blankets, and taking to his heels—thus making, with his own hands, a restitution which was very far from being intended. Poor M'Pherson, however, did not get all his stolen blankets back in this way.

This, however, is a digression. To proceed with our tale. One night, when M'Pherson was absent, attending a market at some distance, an elderly female appeared at the door, with the usual demand of a night's lodging, which, with the usual hospitality of Morvane, was at once complied with. The stranger, who was a remarkably tall woman, was dressed in widow's weeds, and of rather respectable appearance; her deportment was grave, even stern, and altogether she seemed as if suffering from some recent affliction.

During the whole of the early part of the evening, she sat before the fire, with her face buried between her hands, heedless of what was passing around her, and was occasionally observed rocking to and fro, with that kind of motion that bespeaks great internal anguish. It was noticed, however, that she occasionally stole a look at those who were in the apartment with her; and it was marked by all (but whether this was merely the effect of imagination, for all felt that there was something singular and mysterious about the stranger, or was really the case, we cannot decide) that, in these furtive glances, there was a peculiarly wild and appalling expression. The stranger spoke none, however, during the whole night; but continued, from time to time, rocking to and fro in the manner already described. Neither could she be prevailed upon to partake of any refreshment, although repeatedly pressed to do so. All invitations of this kind she declined, with a wave of the hand, or a melancholy, yet determined inclination of the head. In words she made no reply.

The singular conduct of this woman threw a damp over all who were present. They felt chilled, they knew not how, and were sensible of the influence of an undefinable terror, for which they could not account. For once, therefore, the feeling of comfort and security, of which all were conscious who were seated around M'Pherson's cheerful and hospitable hearth, was banished, and a scene of awe and dread supplied its place.

No one could conjecture who this strange personage was; whence she had come, nor whither she was going; nor were there any means of acquiring this information, as it was a rule of the house—one of M'Pherson's special points of etiquette—that no stranger should ever be questioned on such subjects. All being allowed to depart as they came, without question or inquiry, there was never anything more known at Morvane, regarding any stranger who visited it, than what he himself chose to communicate.

Under the painful feelings already described, the inmates of M'Pherson's house found, with more than usual satisfaction, the hour for retiring to rest arrive. The general attention being called to this circumstance by the hostess, every one hastened to his appointed dormitory, with an alacrity which but too plainly shewed how glad they were to escape from the presence of the mysterious stranger, who, however, also retired to bed with the rest. The place appointed for her to sleep in, was the loft of an outbuilding, as there was no room for her accommodation within the house itself; all the spare beds being occupied.

We have already said that M'Pherson was from home on the evening of which we are speaking, attending a market at some distance. He, however, returned shortly after midnight. On arriving at his own house, he was much surprised, and not a little alarmed, to perceive a window in one of the outhouses blazing with light, (it was that in which the stranger slept,) while all around and within the house was as silent as the tomb. Afraid that some accident from fire had taken place, he rode up to the building, and

standing up in his stirrups—which brought his head on a level with the window—looked in, when a sight presented itself that made even the stout heart of M'Pherson beat with unusual violence.

In the middle of the floor, extended on her pallet, lay the mysterious stranger, surrounded by seven bright and shining lights, arranged at equal distances—three on one side of the bed, three on the other, and one at the head. M'Pherson gazed steadily at the extraordinary and appalling sight for a few seconds, when three of the lights suddenly vanished. In an instant afterwards, two more disappeared, and then another. There was now only that at the head of the bed remaining. When this light had alone been left, M'Pherson saw the person who lay on the pallet raise herself slowly up, and gaze intently on the portentous beam, whose light shewed, to the terrified onlooker, a ghastly and unearthly countenance, surrounded with dishevelled hair, which hung down in long, thick, irregular masses over her pale, clayey visage, so as almost to conceal it entirely. This light, like all the others, at length suddenly disappeared, and with its last gleam the person on the couch sunk down with a groan that startled M'Pherson from the trance of horror into which the extraordinary sight had thrown him. He was a bold and fearless man, however; and, therefore, though certainly appalled by what he had seen, he made no outcry, nor evinced any other symptom of alarm. He resolutely and calmly awaited the conclusion of the extraordinary scene; and when the last light had disappeared, he deliberately dismounted, led his horse into the stable put him up, entered the house without disturbing any one, and slipped quietly into bed, trusting that the morning would bring some explanation of the mysterious occurrence of the night; but resolving, at the same time, that, if it should not, he would mention the circumstance to no one.

On awaking in the morning, M'Pherson asked his wife what strangers were in the house, and how they were disposed of, and particularly, who it was that slept in the loft of the outhouse. He was told that it was a woman in widow's dress, of rather a respectable appearance, but whose conduct had been very singular. M'Pherson inquired no further, but desired that the woman might be detained till he should see her, as he wished to speak with her.

On some one of the domestics, however, going up to her apartment shortly after, to invite her to breakfast, it was found that she was gone, no one could tell when or where, as her departure had not been seen by any person about the house.

Balked in his intention of eliciting some explanation of the extraordinary circumstance of the preceding night, from the person who seemed to have been a party to it, M'Pherson became more strengthened in the resolution or keeping the secret to himself, although it made an impression upon him which all his natural strength of mind could not remove.

At this precise period of our story, M'Pherson had three sons employed in the herring fishing, a favourite pursuit in its season, because often a lucrative one, of those who live upon or near the coasts of the West Highlands.

The three brothers had a boat of their own; and, desirous of making their employment as profitable as possible, they, though in sufficiently good circumstances to have hired assistance, manned her themselves, and with laudable industry performed all the drudgery of their laborious occupation with their own hands.

Their boat, like all the others employed in the business we are speaking of, by the natives of the Highlands, was wherry-rigged; her name—she was called after the betrothed of the elder of the three brothers—"The Catherine." The *take* of herrings, as it is called, it is well known, appears in different seasons in different places, sometimes in one loch, or arm of the sea, sometimes in another.

In the season to which our story refers, the fishing was in the sound of Kilbrannan, where several scores of boats, and amongst those that of the M'Phersons, were busily employed in reaping the ocean harvest. When the *take* of herrings appears in this sound, Campbelton Loch, a well-known harbour on the west coast of Scotland, is usually made the headquarters—a place of rendezvous of the little herring fleet—and to this loch they always repair when threatened with a boisterous night, although it was not always that they could, in such circumstances, succeed in making it.

Such a night as the one alluded to, was that that succeeded the evening on which M'Pherson saw the strange lights that form the leading feature of our tale. Violent gusts of wind came in rapid succession down the sound of Kilbrannan; and a skiffing rain, flung fitfully but fiercely from the huge black clouds as they hurried along before the tempest that already raged above, swept over the face of the angry sea and seemed to impart an additional bitterness to the rising wrath of the incipient storm. It was evident, in short, that what sailors call a "dusty night" was approaching; and, under this impression, the herring boats left their station, and were seen, in the dusk of the evening in question, hurrying towards Campbelton Loch. But the storm had arisen in all its fury long before the desired haven could be gained. The little fleet was dispersed. Some succeeded, however, in making the harbour; others, finding this impossible, ran in for the Saddle and Carradale shores, and were fortunate enough to effect a landing. All, in short, with the exception of one single boat, ultimately contrived to gain a place of shelter of some kind. This unhappy exception was "The Catherine." Long after all the others had disappeared from the face of the raging sea, she was seen struggling alone with the warring elements, her canvass down to within a few feet of her gunwale, and her keel only at times being visible. The gallant brothers who manned her, however, had not yet lost either heart or hope, although their situation at this moment was but too well calculated to deprive them of both. Gravely and steadily, and in profound silence, they kept each by his perilous post, and endeavoured to make the land on the Campbelton side; but, finding this impossible, they put about, and ran before the wind for the island of Arran, which lay at the distance of about eight miles. But alarmed, as they approached that rugged shore, by the tremendous sea which was breaking on it, and which would have instantly dashed their frail bark to pieces, they again put about, and made to windward. While the hardy brothers were thus contending with their fate, a person mounted on horseback was seen galloping wildly along the Carradale shore, his eyes ever and anon turned towards the struggling boat with a look of despair and mortal agony. It was M'Pherson, the hapless father of the unfortunate youths by whom she was manned. There were others, too, of their kindred, looking, with failing hearts, on the dreadful sight; for all felt that the unequal contest could not continue long and that the boat must eventually go down.

Amongst those who were thus watching, with intense interest and speechless agony, the struggle of the doomed bark, was Catherine, the beloved of the elder of the brothers, who ran, in wild distraction, along the shore, uttering the most heart-rending cries. "Oh, my Duncan!" she exclaimed, stretching out her arms towards the pitiless sea. "Oh, my my beloved, my dearest, come to me, or allow me to come to you, that I may perish with you!" But Duncan heard her not, although it was very possible he might see her, as the distance was not great.

There were, at this moment also, several persons on horseback, friends of the young men, galloping along the shore, from point to point, as the boat varied her direction, in the vain and desperate hope of being able to render, though they knew not how, some assistance to the sufferers. But the distracted father urged on by the wild energy of despair

outrode them all, as they made, on one occasion, for a rising ground near Carradale, from whence a wider view of sea and sea could be commanded. For this height M'Pherson now pushed, and gained it just in time to see his gallant sons, with their little bark, buried in the waves. He had not taken his station an instant on the height, when "The Catherine" went down, and all on board perished.

The distracted father, when he had seen the last of his unfortunate sons, covered his eyes with his hands, and for a moment gave way to the bitter agony that racked his soul. His manly breast heaved with emotion, and that most affecting of all sounds, the audible sorrowing of a strong man, might have been heard at a great distance. It was, however, of short continuance. M'Pherson prayed to his God to strengthen him in this dread hour of trial, and to enable him to bear with becoming fortitude the affliction with which it had pleased Him to visit him; and the distressed man derived comfort from the appeal.

"My brave, my beautiful boys!" he said, "you are now with your God, and have entered, I trust, on a life of everlasting happiness." Saying this, he rode slowly from the fatal spot from which he had witnessed the death of his children. It was at this moment, and while musing on the misfortune that had befallen him, that the strange occurrence of the preceding night recurred, for the first time, to M'Pherson's mind. It was obtruded on his recollection by the force of association.

"Can it be possible," he inquired of himself, "that the appearances of last night can have any connection with the dreadful events of to-day? It must be so," he said; "for three of the lights of my eyes, three of the guiding stars of my life, have been this day extinguished." Thus reasoned M'Pherson; and, in the mysterious lights which he had seen, he saw that the doom of his children had been announced. But there were seven, he recollected, and his heart sunk within him as he thought of the three gallant boys who were still spared to him. One of them, the youngest, was at home with himself, the other two were in the army—soldiers in the 42d regiment, which then boasted of many privates of birth and education. M'Pherson, however, still kept the appalling secret of the mysterious lights to himself, and determined to await, with resignation, the fulfilment of the destiny which had been read to him, and which he now felt convinced to be inevitable.

The gallant regiment to which M'Pherson's sons belonged, was, at this period, abroad, on active service. It was in America, and formed a part of the army which was employed in resisting the encroachments of the French on the British territories in that quarter.

The 42d had, during the campaigns in the western world of that period—viz., 1754 and 1758—distinguished themselves in many a sanguinary contest, for their singular bravery and general good conduct; and the fame of their exploits rung through their native glens, and was spread far and wide over their hills and mountains; for dear was the honour of their gallant regiment to the warlike Highlanders. Many accounts had arrived, from time to time, in the country, of their achievements, and joyfully were they received. But, on the very day after the loss of "The Catherine," a low murmur began to arise, in that part of the country which is the scene of our story, of some dreadful disaster having befallen the national regiment. No one could say of what nature this calamity was; but a buzz went round, whose ominous whispering of fearful slaughter made the friends of the absent soldiers turn pale. Mothers and sisters wept, and fathers and brothers looked grave and shook their heads. The rumour bore that, though there had been no loss of honour, there had been a dreadful loss of life. Nay, it was said that the regiment had made a mighty acquisition to its fame, but that it had been dearly bought.

At length, however, the truth arrived, in a distinct and

intelligible shape. The well-known and sanguinary affair of Ticonderago had been fought; and, in that murderous contest, the 42d regiment, which had behaved with a gallantry unmatched before in the annals of war, had suffered dreadfully—no less than forty-three officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, and six hundred and three privates having been killed and wounded in that corps alone.

To many a heart and home in the Highlands did this disastrous, though glorious intelligence, bring desolation and mourning; and amongst those on whom it brought these dismal effects, was M'Pherson of Morvane.

On the third day after the occurrence of the events related at the outset of our narrative, a letter, which had come, in the first instance, to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, and who also had a son in the 42d, was put into M'Pherson's hands, by a servant of the former.

The man looked feelingly grave as he delivered it, and hurried away before it was opened. The letter was sealed with black wax. Poor M'Pherson's hand trembled as he opened it. It was from the captain of the company to which his sons belonged, informing him that both had fallen in the attack on Ticonderago. There was an attempt in the letter to soothe the unfortunate father's feelings, and to reconcile him to the loss of his gallant boys, in a lengthened detail of their heroic conduct during the sanguinary struggle. "Nobly," said the writer, "did your two brave sons maintain the honour of your country in the bloody strife. Both Hugh and Alister fell—their broadswords in their hands—on the very ramparts of Ticonderago, whither they had fought their way with a dauntlessness of heart, and a strength of arm, that might have excited the envy and admiration of the son of Fingal."

In this account of the noble conduct of his sons, the broken-hearted father did find some consolation. "Thank God!" he exclaimed, though in a tremulous voice, "my brave boys have done their duty, and died as became their name, with their swords in their hands, and their enemies in their front." But there was one circumstance mentioned in the letter, that affected the poor father more than all the rest—this was the intimation, that the writer had, in his hands, a sum of money and a gold brooch, which his son Alister had bequeathed, the first to his father, the latter to his mother, as a token of remembrance. "These," he said, "had been deposited with him by the young man previous to the engagement, under a presentiment that he should fall."

When he had finished the perusal of the letter, M'Pherson sought his wife, whom he found weeping bitterly, for she had already learned the fate of her sons. On entering the apartment where she was, he flung his arms around her, in an agony of grief, and, choking with emotion, exclaimed, that two more of his fair lights had been extinguished by the hand of heaven. "One yet remains," he said, "but that, too, must soon pass away from before mine eyes. His doom is sealed; but God's will be done."

"What mean ye, John?" said his sobbing wife, struck with the prophetic tone of his speech—"Is the measure of our sorrows not yet filled? Are we to loose him, too, who is now our only stay, my fair-haired Ian. Why this foreboding of more evil—and whence have you it, John?" she said, now looking her husband steadfastly in the face; and with an expression of alarm that indicated that entire belief in supernatural intelligence regarding coming events then so general in the Highlands.

Urged by his wife, who implored him to tell her whence he had the tidings of her Ian's approaching fate, M'Pherson related to her the circumstance of the mysterious lights.

"But there were seven, John," she said, when he had concluded—"how comes that?—our children were but six." And immediately added, as if some fearful conviction had suddenly forced itself on her mind—"God grant that the seventh light may have meant me!"

"God forbid!" exclaimed her husband, on whose mind a similar conviction with that with which his wife was impressed, now obtruded itself for the first time; that conviction was, that he himself was indicated by the seventh light. But neither of the sorrowing pair communicated their fears to the other.

Two days subsequent to this, the fair hair of Ian was seen floating on the surface of a deep pool, in the water of Bran; a small river that ran past the house of Morvane. By what accident the poor boy had fallen into the river, was never ascertained. But the pool in which his body was found, was known to have been one of his favourite fishing stations. One only of the mysterious lights now remained without its counterpart; but this was not long wanting. Ere the week had expired, M'Pherson was killed by a fall from his horse, when returning from the funeral of his son, and the symbolical prophecy was fulfilled—and thus concludes the story of 'The Seven Lights.'

THE MONKS OF DRYBURGH.

THESE worthies were celebrated for "guid kail;" but they were no less remarkable for their ingenuity in directing the wealth of their neighbours and dependents into their own coffers.

In common with others of their profession, they assailed the deathbeds of the wealthy, and persuaded the dying sinner that he had no chance of Heaven, unless he came handsomely down for their holy brotherhood before his departure.

They were thus constantly on the alert when the death of a person in good circumstances was reported to be at hand. This intelligence no sooner reached them—and they were always well informed on such subjects—than they hastened to the couch of the dying person, at once to prepare him, by spiritual discourse, for the approaching change, and to secure what they could of the sinner's temporal possessions in return.

It was for such purposes as these that two of the brethren of Dryburgh set out, one day, in great haste, to visit the old Laird of Meldrum, whom, they had been informed, was suddenly brought to the point of death; and the information was but too true—for the old man had not only arrived at the point of death, but had passed it, and that ere they came. In other words, the laird was dead when they arrived, and their services, of course, no longer required.

This was a dreadful disappointment to the holy men; for they had reckoned on making an excellent thing of the job, as the laird had been long in their eye, and had been carefully trained up for the *finale* of a handsome bequest.

It was with long faces, therefore, and woful looks, that the monks returned to their monastery, and reported the unlucky accident of the laird's having slipped away before they had had time to make anything of him in his last moments. The disappointment was felt by all to be a grievous one, for the laird had been confidently reckoned upon as sure game. While in this state of mortification, a bright idea occurred to one of the brethren, and he mentioned it to the rest, by whom it was highly approved of.

This idea was to conceal the laird's death for a time to remove his body out of the way, and to procure some one to occupy his bed, and pass for the laird in a dying state: then to procure a notary and witnesses; having previously instructed the laird's representative how to conduct himself—that is, to bequeath all his property to the monastery: this done, the living man to be secretly conveyed away, the dead one restored to his place again, and his death publicly announced.

This ingenious scheme of the monk met with universal approbation, and it was determined that it should be instantly acted upon.

Fortunately, so far, for the monks, there was a poor man a small farmer in the neighbourhood, of the name of Thomas Dickson, who bore a singularly strong personal resemblance to the deceased—a circumstance which at once pointed him out as the fittest person to act the required part. This person was, accordingly, immediately waited upon, the matter explained to him, and a handsome gratuity offered him for his services.

"A bargain be't," said Thomas, when the terms were proposed to him; "never ye fear me. If I dinna mak a guid job o't, blame me. I kent the laird weel, and can come as near him in speech as I'm said to do in person."

The monks, satisfied with Thomas's assurances of fidelity, proceeded with their design; and, when everything was prepared—the laird's body removed out of the way, Thomas extended on his bed, and the curtains closely drawn round him—they introduced the notary, to take down the old man's testament, (having previously intimated to the former that he was required by the latter for that purpose,) and four witnesses to attest the facts that were about to be exhibited.

Everything being in readiness—the lawyer with pen in hand, and the witnesses in the attitude of profound attention—one of the monks intimated to the dying man that he might now proceed to dictate his will.

"Very well," replied the latter, in a feeble, tremulous tone. "Hear me, then, good folks a'. I bequeath to honest Tammas Dickson, whom I hae lang respektit for his worth, and pitied for his straits, the hail o' my movable guidis and lyin' money. Put doon that." And down *that* accordingly went. But, if the house had flown into the air with them, or the ghosts of their great-grandfathers had appeared before them, the monks could not have expressed more amazement or consternation than they did, at finding themselves thus so fairly outwitted, by the superior genius of the canny farmer. They dared not, however, breathe a word of remonstrance, nor take the smallest notice of the trick that was about being played them; for their own character was at stake in the transaction, and the least intimation of their design on the laird's property would have exposed them to public infamy—and this Thomas well knew. It was in vain, therefore, that they edged round towards the bed—concealing, however, their movements from those present—and squeezed and pinched the dying laird. He was not to be so driven from his purpose. On he went, bequeathing first one thing and then another, to his honest friend, Thomas Dickson, till Thomas was fairly put in possession of everything the laird had worth bequeathing. Some trifles, indeed, he had the prudence and discretion to bestow upon the monks of Dryburgh; but trifles they were, truly when compared to the valuable legacy he left to himself.

When the dying laird had disposed of everything he had, the scene closed. The discomfited monks returned to their monastery—the notary and the witnesses departed—and Thomas Dickson, in due time, stepped into a comfortable living, and defied the monks of Dryburgh, on the peril of their good name, even to dare to hint how he had come by it.



W I L S O N S
 Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
 AND OF SCOTLAND

RED ERIC AND LORD DELAVAL.

"The eagle hearts of all the north
 Have left their stormy strand;
 The warriors of the world are forth,
 To choose another land."

MOTHERWELL.

THE spirit of romance is departing from the land in which we dwell. Our forests are felled where the freebooters of former days flourished—the salmon are chased from our rivers by steam-boats and the pestiferous drainings of manufactories—the hills of heath, where the dun deer roved, are enclosed, and ploughed, and harrowed, and sown periodically—the green slopes and dusky dells, where Queen Mary and her nobles once chased the roe, and the sunny glades of the forest into which she emerged, with all her gallant train, their bridles ringing, and their hunting gear glittering in the glorious sunlight of the olden time—all, all are gone; and, as we wander over the land, we find only drains and furrows, and stone dykes and straight fences, where the heather hung its blue bells, unseen from year to year, save by the gorcock or the hare, or the myriads of wild bees that circled round the breathing flowers, and, humming within their tiny cells, sought out the sweet treasures which nature had hidden there. Our castles and cathedrals are in ruins—our Border keeps are mouldering to the ground—our battle grounds have been torn up by the plough—our briery glens and leafy shaws, consecrated by immortal song to past loves, have been ruthlessly desecrated—our ancient sports are at an end—we are a changed people—alas! alas! for the olden time!

"It seems to me, as the blackbird sang
 More sweetly in the wildwood,
 That the skies were lovelier even than those
 That rose above our childhood,
 And the hills and the streams of England's clime
 Were fairer than now, in the olden time."

Let it never be thought that we rejoice not in the present because we regret the past. We feel, and are thankful for the blessings and comforts which the improved arts of the age impart to us; we exult in the progress of science throughout the land; we can even look with complacency upon a rail-road, though it intersect, with its prosaic line, the woodlands where we first felt the poetry of life—though the very hawthorn, beneath which we breathed our vows of eternal fidelity to her who now lies nightly in our bosom, has been rooted up to prepare a path for it; we can even listen without disgust when we hear a Sheffield manufacturer pass his highest eulogium upon Britain—"Sir, she is the *workshop* of the world." A strong sense of duty compels us to this; but, though our reason consents, our imagination only answers—"The spirit of romance is departing from us—alas! alas! for the olden time!"

And therefore it is—for imagination is the faculty in which we most delight, and phrenologists say that men are happy only in the active exercise of their faculties—therefore it is that, leaving the practical speculations of the arts and sciences, we have chosen to luxuriate in a world of our own, wherein imagination may fly her boldest flight, eagle-

winged as she is, and able to gaze upon the sun, or stoop down upon her quarry, with the rapidity of light and the pride of conscious security. Therefore it is that we have allowed our fancy to rove amid hundreds of scenes of fictitious bliss or wo, or have loved to depict the real sorrows and joys of many an "owre true tale."

"The Borders" is a term of wide signification; stretching from the blue Forth to the yellow Humber—from the Northern Ocean to the Atlantic—holding, in their territories, the richest valleys, the wildest mountains, the dreariest moorlands, the greenest meadows, the most barren rocks, the thickest and most verdant forests, the boldest shores with their "towers along the steep;" the sweetest villages, many of whose inhabitants have never seen the ocean; the smoothest rivers, which the salmon loves to haunt; the darkest and most turbulent mountain streams, in whose dark pools, here and there, the speckled trout finds a dwelling-place; the gayest garden flowers, the loveliest heaths that ever grew wild, the highest hills, the deepest mines, the most gallant nobles, the most stalwarth yeomen, and the loveliest maidens of the whole land. Does any one say that this is vain boasting—the wordy exaggeration of one who dotes with an exclusive fondness on the land of his birth? We refer him to the "Border Minstrelsy." Can any part of this country—can any other country, not excepting Provence itself—hold forth such a body of evidence to the loveliness of its natural scenery, the gallantry of its warriors, the loveliness of its maidens? Can the chronicles of any country record deeds of nobler daring, or recite tales of more thrilling interest than those of the Yarrow, the Tweed, the Tyne, the Coquet, and the Teviot? Have the poets of any land sung the praises of maidens so sweetly as he of Ellisland or Altrive?—where is the "Flower of Yarrow" of other lands, or the "Barbara Allen" that makes the southerners weep?

But besides being a part of the land famous for beauty, and gallantry, and song, ours is one peculiarly favourable to the lovers of old legends; ours is an atmosphere wherein fancy most delights to soar and to hover. The Border feuds are full of the materials of romance: "a thousand battles have assailed the banks" of every stream—some of the strongholds yet stand, wherein the mossstroopers, clad in steel from head to foot, issued forth in the morning light—the hills are there with the heath, across which they sped on gallant steeds, with lances outstretched, and gleaming helmets—the paths are yet green amid the dun moor along which they drove their spoil—and in solitary farm-houses, or lonely cottages, ancient dames may yet be met with, who can repeat, in song or story, the wild deeds which their mothers saw and their sires performed.

Not only, therefore, are the domestic joys and sorrows of the Borderers interesting to all, "because that we have all one human heart," but their fierce feuds and stormful on-goings are also full of an overwhelming interest; and that for the very opposite reason, because they are peculiar to themselves.

To "Tales of the Borders" then—and our myriads of readers will rejoice to hear it—there can be no end for lack of materials. Had we the eyes of Argus, and the arms of Briareus and were we to live for centuries, we should still

be able to behold aspects of humanity amid these hills and streams, fitted to occupy the heart and inform the reason—we should still find enough to endite of matter which comes home to the “business and bosoms” of men.

The Eastern Borders contain also a vast quarry of the materials of romance, yet almost untouched. Until the twelfth century, the inhabitants of Scandinavia were continually making descents upon the coasts of North Britain; and many and terrible are the legends which relate to the atrocities they committed. There does not stand an abbey or priory, upon the shores of Northumberland, Durham, or Yorkshire, which has not been once, or oftener, committed to the flames by these fierce warriors. We are about to tell a tale of one of these descents, made by the Danes, headed by Red Eric, or Eric the Bloody, one of the most savage and successful of the northern heroes; and we shall introduce it by a few preliminary observations.

A few centuries ago, the power of the Scandinavians, or Norsemen—that is, the inhabitants of the coasts of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden—was as great as, considering their present comparative insignificance, it seems incredible. They were the Algerines of the North Sea and northern shores of the Atlantic. Their leaders took the title of sea kings. At various times, they swept the shores of Britain, France, and Spain; in which latter country, during the time of Charlemagne, they were driven back into the sea, by the highlanders who dwelt upon the Asturias, which has frequently been the refuge of liberty when the rest of that romantic land was oppressed by tyrants. After more than once ravaging France to the very gates of Paris; and, at one time, sacking the metropolis itself, they obtained the territory of Normandy; whence, at a later period, new adventurers issuing forth, under Robert and Roger Guiscard, became masters of Apuleia and the two Sicilies; and whence, also, came William the Norman, whose descendants so long filled the English throne.

The boats of the ancient Scandinavians were commonly composed of hides, stretched upon hoops or ribs of wood; and in these frail barks they fearlessly crossed the Northern Sea, in the most tempestuous seasons, and thus succeeded in surprising the inhabitants of the coasts against which their attack was directed. When the Saxons, or the Gauls, were taking refuge from the storm in their dwellings, these rugged warriors descended from their ships, and, before the tempest had passed away, or the daylight appeared, there were smouldering ashes, and injured women, and murdered men, where there had been quiet and plenty; while the perpetrators of the outrage were tossing upon the ocean, many a league from land, quaffing deep draughts of the mead and ale which they had carried off from the cellar of some wealthy franklin. Like the followers of Ali Pacha,

“The wealthy they slaughtered—the lovely they spared.”

As might be expected from the dark barbaric dispositions of the Norsemen, and the nature of the element on which they chiefly lived, they cherished a belief in the wildest superstitions. The curious reader will find an account of the most common of these in the notes to the “Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,” and in Pinkerton’s notes to the Maitland Manuscript. Among other matters, they had a magic banner, or battle flag, the presence of which ensured victory, but at the certain expense of the death of the standard-bearer. Motherwell, in his magnificent poem of the “Battle-flag of Sigurd,” has immortalized the memory of this superstition. Their devout belief in the mysterious influence of their banner was, no doubt, one cause of their almost constant successes, since they fought beneath its folds in the fearless confidence of victory. Perhaps, also, as the flag was intrusted only to the bravest where all were brave, the victory of the host, and the death of the standard-bearer, were the natural consequences of the rash daring with which the banner was carried forward into the thickest

of the fight, thus rendering it absolutely necessary for the Norsemen to struggle fiercely onward to prevent its being captured.

Ancient and modern history furnish us with many instances of battles being won by the devoted daring of the banner-man. But it is as great a pity to strip off the fine old poetical mystery of these Runic superstitions, as it would be to tear away the thick clustering ivy from the ruin whose crumbling walls and decayed columns its dark verdure conceals.

In the twelfth century, John Lord of Delaval, was one of the bravest knights that adorned the court of the English monarch. He was open in heart and countenance—sincere, generous, and merciful. He had borne away the wreath in ten tournaments, and had knelt to have it placed on his brows by the fair hands of ten of the fairest and noblest of England’s maidens, before his heart acknowledged the power of love. Edith Beaumont was the sweetest flower that dwelt on the banks of the Tyne; nay, at the last tournament which was held at York, she had been acknowledged *the peerless*—she had been chosen to plant the crown or triumph on the victor’s brow. The young Lord of Delaval was that conqueror; and, as he advanced, after a terrific struggle with Gaston de Umfraville, tottering with weakness and covered with wounds, to receive the reward of his gallantry, the flush that sprang into Edith’s cheek, and the deadly paleness which succeeded, were not unnoticed by the admiring barons and the envious dames that surrounded the spot.

Whether the young Lord of Delaval had also perceived her emotion, or whether the loss of blood had overpowered him, could not be known; but certain it is that Edith’s hand trembled to such a degree that the wreath fell from her grasp, and the victor, stooping to raise it, fell forwards and remained insensible. There was one moment in which the pride and retiringness of maidenhood struggled with Edith’s feelings for the young knight; but nature would have her way—she rose from her seat, and, in the words of the ballad which records the circumstance—

“She lifted up his bluidy head,
And set it on her knee;
She washed a’ his gory wounds,
Wi’ the saut tears frae her e’e;
She laid aside the links o’ gowd,
Frae aff his bluidy brow;
And aye between his closing een,
She pressed her honey mou.”

When the heart is taken by surprise, how completely are ceremony, and all the sillier and more superficial forms of society, annihilated! There was not one among all these stately barons and courtly dames, who did not, for the moment, forget their established forms of propriety, and sympathize with the strong emotion which dictated Edith’s conduct. There was not one who did not give utterance to some expression or other, which discovered the recognition of the universal principle of humanity—the love that links all mankind into one family. But, alas! how seldom is that link seen entire!—into how many thousands of fragments do the envious passions, the heartless sentiments of human beings, shatter it! The beautiful self-abandonment of the Northumbrian maiden was admired for one moment—the next, it was greeted with sneers and titters of contempt. The devil runs a good second in the race of emotion; and, when he does arrive at the winning-post, is sure to lay claim to and to receive the prize.

The conduct of Edith formed the nine days’ slander of the court. “All lips,” as Byron says, “were applied unto all ears;” and their theme was the absurd sincerity of Edith’s nature. Knights joined in the malicious discussions, for the beauty of the Northumbrian flower had fallen upon many a warrior’s heart; and ladies re-echoed their slanders

for the Lord of Delava. had filled the midnight dreams of many a fair dame.

Meantime, where were Edith and the victor—and how did they bear this storm of courtly abuse? They were happy, and unconscious of it all! Nor, had they known of every slander that was spoken and every sneer that was spent upon them, could it, for a moment, have interfered with their bliss. They were armed in the panoply of love! Their world was in their own hearts, animated by one principle, though beating with different pulsations. Oh! who will not agree with the heartless French philosopher, in his resolution of all our best feelings into selfishness? and yet with what a different meaning! How selfish is love! How it shuts out the world! How it despises the petty machinations of men! Yet, how purifying, ennobling, and expansive a sentiment is it! It unfolds to us more than the intelligence of science, and is, like Christianity itself, a revelation and a boon from God.

When the Lord of Delaval advanced from the *mêlée* to receive his prize, he came alone. When he fell at Edith's feet, the crowd closed presently in upon them; for the laws of the barriers were broken up after the fight, and his attendants were unable to come to his assistance. He was carried, therefore, to the temporary residence of Edith's father, Sir Herbert Beaumont. The severity of his wounds prevented the possibility of his being removed for some time afterwards; and, as the females in those days were the churgeons, Edith became his medical attendant.

Had the Lord of Delaval been a mysogonist, (or hater of women,) here were circumstances enough to convert him. But he was the most remote possible from such a character, though it had often been ascribed to him. The truth was, that he had too high an estimate of the nature and capabilities of women, to fix his love upon the butterflies of the court. No one cared so little as he did for the smooth cheek, the bright eye, and the glossy ringlets, if these were the sole charms of their possessors—and all the world knows that, in the days of ignorance and warlike life of which we are writing, these were considered the chief charms of women;—but then few felt so keenly as he did the bland and gracious influence which women *might* exercise over society—ameliorating the nature, soothing the passions, and harmonizing the feelings of men; smoothing their path and their pillow; spreading the road they have to tread with flowers, and beckoning them along that road to bliss.

On the second day after the tournament, Lord Delaval became conscious that Edith was watching over him. He awoke from the sleep which nature kindly sheds upon her exhausted children, with a dim reflection of the scene of the tournament upon his mind—the clattering of spears and shields, the glittering of armour, the dust flung up by the coursers' feet, the clanging close of the combatants, and the fierce stabbing or ghastly feeling of daggers thrust through between the links of mail into an enemy's heart, or quivering in his own. Gradually these lurid clouds shifted away from his mind, and he beheld, like a beautiful sun issuing forth from them, the countenance of Edith bent upon him, full of benignity and commiseration, yet tempered with the proud retiringness of a Norman maiden, whose sires had never suffered dishonour. Gradually the whole scene opened up to him. He had not seen nor heard the effect of Edith's love—he knew not that she had sacrificed to him the dignity and pride of womanhood—her kisses were not now upon his lips, nor her tears upon his wounds—the pressure of her soft arms upon his crushed frame, as if she would have bound up his bruises with that bandage of love, was gone; and he looked on her timidly, as one whose gratitude is tempered or repressed by reverence and humility. But when did it ever happen that love spake in a language unintelligible to her votaries? In articulated sounds, or in the expression of the eyes—in the pressure of the hand or arm—in the

movement of the frame—in the wording of the simplest note—she develops herself to her pupils, in a manner which overleaps ceremony, and sets deceit at defiance. Yes, love is the universal philologist, whose derivatives are taken from the heart of humanity. It was soon, therefore, that the leech and the patient comprehended each other, and the soft touch of Edith's hand upon the closing wounds was felt with more than the feeling of gratitude by Lord Delaval. Her gentle step in his chamber; her soft glances that met his and then fell; the merciful sweetness which occupied her eyes whilst she listened to his complaints; the tender commiseration which filled them as she carefully examined his wounds; and the holy light of humanity, for it was purified by the peculiar and individual affection with which she watched each closing cicatrice, and each receding gash; all, all were noticed and felt—all sank deeply, and with a pure and grateful sensation, into his soul. For his consciousness had returned. The full powers of his heart and intellect re-developed themselves. He knew what Edith had done and suffered for him; he knew that she had now sacrificed everything that maidenly modesty, according to the worldly acceptation of the term, could sacrifice. Did he love her the less—did he admire her the less—for thus having given up the privilege of her sex? Oh, no! His was one of those souls which, in the twelfth, as in the nineteenth century, may exist, which "love them that love us." His was one of those hearts which can subscribe wholly to the sentiment of Burns—

"But aye my lassie's dearest charm,
She says she loes me best of a'."

The bewitching sweet stolen glance of kindness of which the same poet speaks—the dear smile when "nobody does mind us"—these were the most fascinating of all charms to Lord Delaval, these were the qualities best calculated to search out and secure to themselves the finest and dearest fibres of his heart. For he was no libertine, who could rejoice in the *eclat* of such an exhibition of passion as Edith had shewn for him, and then heartlessly turn from her and lead the laugh of derision in which he would have found hundreds of the unprincipled courtiers to join. He had now met with a creature who had given proof that she loved him for his own sake—the strongest proof that woman can give to man—the abandonment of her sex's privileges; one who had bid defiance to, or, rather, resolved to suffer the scorn and contumely of her sex, that she might pour out the fullness of her heart into the bosom of him whom she loved;—and he was grateful to her for this frankness, which suited his nature, and gratified, without unworthily exciting his self-love—and thus it was, that, by the same avenue through which pride and dishonourable thoughts have entered a man's heart, the purest and most disinterested love made its way into the heart of Lord Delaval.

Why have we dwelt so long on this little incident?—why have we pointed out the peculiar manner of the lady's love and attempted, so carefully, to indicate the nature of the lord's disposition and sentiments in this minute transaction? We have drunk of the primeval fountain of humanity, and we hold sympathy with man's heart, though it beat in the antipodes, or although its pulsations have ceased for centuries.

"Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto."

It is a pleasant, though a mysterious thought, to be conscious that human beings, a thousand years ago, were subject to the same vacillations of fortune and feeling as we are to-day—that the change from misfortune to success, in ambition or in love, generated the same exultation, in the primitive ages of the world, as they do in the present times—to see, in fact, and to feel the links of that golden chain which joins heart to heart throughout the wide world, and makes the dead seem to the living as though they were still instinct with emotion.

This is the secret of our love for all tales—romantic or real, or both. We love to rejoice with them that do rejoice or have rejoiced, and to weep with them that weep or have wept. Lord Delaval and Edith Beaumont were betrothed. We would fain linger a little while over their loves—we would fain spend a few sentences upon their courtship, that millennium in man's life—and in woman's too, or the ladies prevaricate; but time and our tale press, and we must get onward. Suffice it to say that the rich woods of Prudhoe were conscious of their affection; that the wood-pigeons learnt to be familiar with their loves, as they wandered amid the glades of the forest; that, locked in each other's arms, thrilled with the glad emotions which we feel only in one period of our lives—and that, alas! too brief—they gazed, by moonlight, and starlight, and in the wakening dawn, upon the broad bosom of the Tyne—that all which the human heart knows of ecstatic bliss was theirs, during many a sunny day and peaceful night.

Time rolled on, and the day of their nuptials arrived. Fifty knights, with their squires and attendants, accompanied Lord Delaval from his residence, on the eastern coast of Northumberland, about six miles from Tynemouth, to the dwelling of Sir Herbert Beaumont. The guests were bidden, and they came. The bride was fairer than all her bridesmaids, and than all the maidens that graced the galliards of the festival—the young knights tilted with blunted spears, and the old ones looked on complacently—a bright sun shone over all—a fairer wedding feast was never given in merry England.

We must leave the knights and ladies in the dance, and come down to Delaval.

The beach near the ancient dwelling of the Lords of Delaval is rocky, and unfitted for the landing of vessels of any kind. Between Blyth and Hartley—which last mentioned place is contiguous to the Delaval grounds—a long, sandy beach stretches; but, at Seaton Sluice—(where the last of the Delaval family cut out a commodious harbour from the solid rock, and erected various buildings for the benefit of the inhabitants, so that it has been for years a place of some commercial interest)—at Seaton Sluice there lies a small but safe natural harbour, where small boats may land at all times of the tide, and on the sandy beach of which they may be drawn up, so as to be out of the reach of the waves.

The night of Lord Delaval's marriage was a night of boisterous glee among his vassals at Delaval. Sheep were roasted whole, rushes were strewed on every cotter's floor, the mead and the ale were circled about freely; fires of turf (for coal had not yet been found at Delaval) were blazing at every door; and the youths and maidens, forgetting they were serfs, or glad to be those of Lord Delaval, spent the night in the wild dances in which the Saxons indulged. The head of the wild boar was placed at the upper end of the board; wild fowl, in abundance, which then bred in the mosses between Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth, were roasted, boiled, and baked; the flesh of porpoises (for in the days of which we write those fish were eaten) mingled with the more delicate turbot and sole, and the rich trouts of the Blyth, (still considered the finest in all Northumberland,) smoked at the sides; boiled barley occupied the place where potatoes, six or seven centuries afterwards, would have been; and rabbits and hares, stewed up together with vegetables, formed the finishing dish, much after the fashion of the pillau of the eastern countries. In eating, drinking, dancing, and hallooing, the night had passed merrily away among the serfs of Lord Delaval. The morning star was peering over the eastern coast, Orion was steeping his feet in the Atlantic, and Charles' Wain seemed to have lost its way in the skies. The dancers and drinkers were beginning to grow tired of their revels. The goodwives were urging their husbands to go to bed, and the maidens began to drop away from the gallants. The sound of the advancing sea could

be heard at intervals, booming along the rocky shore. Bye and-by, the harbingers of morning came forth in the sky. The grey mantle of night disappeared from the east; and presently, through bars of gold and azure, the sunlight began to throw its glances. The stars disappeared the ocean began to reflect the light of advancing day, and seemed to heave and throb with new life beneath its influence—the revellers were just about to retire to their several dwellings—when a terrific yell burst upon their ears, so harsh, so loud, so unearthly, that every being remained rooted to the spot, unable to speak or stir. Another yell, more wild, more fierce and thrilling, than the last; and this time many of the more ancient men recognised the cry which had often been the precursor of bloodshed, plunder, and sacrilege—the war-cry of the Norsemen! “The Norse!—the Norse!” burst from every lip. Old men, who had been unable to move for years, staggered up, and struggled to move away; and maidens, who had been too timid to give their hands to their lovers in the dance, now hid their faces in the bosoms of those who were strangers to them.

A party of the young men ran to the summit of the cliff, in order to see whether they should fight, fly, or submit.

About fifty boats, each holding ten or a dozen warriors, were within an arrow's flight of the strand. A larger vessel was in the van; a flag, that flapped heavily in the morning breeze, hung over its prow, and half hid a gigantic warrior, who, grasping the forestay, seemed eager to spring upon the strand. The keel grated on the pebbles, the warrior detached the battle-flag from its fastenings, and, leaping into the waves with it held aloft, waded to the shore. A hundred spears were struck against a hundred shields, as Red Eric (for it was none other than the bloody Scandinavian chief) planted his standard in the sand, and crossed himself as he kneeled before it.

To the superstitious Norsemen, this was equivalent to a solemn sacrifice of himself for the sake of victory; for the bearer of the battle-flag was a certain victim in whatever conquests were won. That Eric the Red, the bloody chief of a thousand fights, should have thus, in an obscure onslaught, wished to sacrifice himself, seemed strange to his followers; but the die was cast, and he must now abide the hazard of it. Many thought that Eric had thus placed himself as the allotted victim of death, because he despised the superstition which made his followers imagine destruction to be necessarily connected with the office of standard-bearer. Others had noticed in Eric a carelessness of his own life, of late, which belonged not to the warrior, but to the man disgusted with existence. Others thought—and they thought truly—that his hour was come, and that his doom, though unconsciously to himself, was closing upon him.

Red Eric rose from his knee, and called together his savage band of warriors.

They drew their ships far up on the beach—they tightened the belts which confined their short swords—they shook, exultingly, their quivering spears—they pulled down their helmets fiercely over their brows; and then, animating each other, by wild shrieks and yells, they rushed forward to their work of carnage and crime.

We cannot recite how the unfortunate vassals of Lord Delaval suffered on that terrific morning. The castle and every cottage was fired; every one who attempted resistance was butchered; and the young and good looking among the women were carried into captivity. If most of the men were spared, it was rather to be ascribed to their own adroitness in escaping the enemy, than to any merciful feelings on the part of the latter. The Danes did not lose a single man; and, as Red Eric came, laughingly, into the circle of his warriors, with a Saxon's heart spitted on the point of his sword, and holding a lovely maiden by the wrist, he laughed at the prophecy which doomed to death the bearer of the

battle-flag, and called for his comrades to pledge him to the fair dames of Northumberland.

The Ides of March were come, but not gone. Their stormy feast was over, and the Norsemen embarked, bearing with them a number of the young women, and every valuable article which they were able to carry away. Under the influence of Lord Delaval's good mead, and ale, and wine, they launched their boats merrily, and, with the chorus of triumph, pulled out to the open sea.

The sun was setting upon the Hallowell woods, as a gallant troop of Norman warriors, armed from head to foot in steel, with the light jennets of a few ladies ambling in the midst, passed down the valley towards Delaval. A body of men-at-arms rode in the van; then, at a little distance, mounted on a dark-grey steed, which had borne him triumphantly in many battles, came the young Lord of Delaval, with Lady Edith, on a dun Flemish pony, by his side; behind were the bridesmaids and bridesmen, bandying many a significant joke; and in the rear trotted fifty men-at-arms, with lances erect, and shields hanging carelessly at their saddle-bows. The train had reached that part of the path which ran through the wood beneath the ancient village of Hallowell; the troopers, taking advantage of the license of the time, were amusing themselves with encouraging some dogs that accompanied them to chase the rabbits, which bred in myriads on the spot; the descending sun shot through the trees that lined the southern bank, and just tipped the spears and helmets of the cavalcade—when a loud howl of misery smote upon their ears; and, presently, emerging from the glades of the wood, in whose recesses they had till now concealed themselves, terror-stricken, crouching, wounded, some of them idiotic, came forth the discomfited vassals of Lord Delaval.

They knelt round his horse in crowds, they seized on his lady's bridle-rein, they told their tale of wretchedness; and, while some wrung their hands, or sobbed aloud, or flung themselves to the ground in a frenzy of despair, others, with piercing cries, besought their lord to restore them their wives, daughters, and goods. Whilst they yet spoke, above the woods to the east, a red light flashed up into the skies. Lord Delaval spurred his horse up the slope, and, with feelings of bitter indignation and rage, beheld his castle—the home to which he was leading his lovely bride—wrapped in flames. He came slowly down from the hill—he listened, with an abstracted air, to the complaints of his serfs for a few moments—he even returned no answer to the inquiries of his lovely Edith; but, leaping from his horse, he knelt down upon the green sward by the banks of the burn, and, raising his helmet from his brow, he looked up to heaven, and spoke with a loud voice:—

“I vow to God and St Cuthbert, that I will punish this Norse savage before I lie down upon the bridal couch by the side of my beloved Edith. I swear to undertake no enterprise, and to eat nothing, save bread and water, until I fulfil my vow—whether it be on the land or the ocean, by day or by night, in my own country or in domains of foreign monarchs. I swear and vow that I will pursue him until I destroy him or he slays me—so help me God and St Cuthbert!”

Few words and brief arrangements passed. The cavalcade was to return to Sir Herbert Beaumont's, Edith and her bridesmaidens riding in the centre of the troop. In these days, knights were frequently called on to sacrifice their ease or their pleasure, and to essay daring achievements; and bride and bridegroom were often severed never more to meet. Edith clasped her lord again and again, in the fondest embrace of passionate love; but they were at length compelled to part. She returned, with a gallant guard of troopers, to her father's dwelling by Tyne side; and he, refusing to be accompanied by a single man-at-arms, walked his horse away, gloomy and alone. As he surveyed the

devastations which the Danes had committed, his soul swelled with feelings of the most bitter indignation; and baulked love, and desire of revenge, assisted to increase the storm which raged within him.

He rode along the coast from Delaval to Tynemouth searching closely every cove, and rounding every head-land. The ships of the Norsemen were nowhere to be seen. The wind, however, had been from the east, and he felt confident that they must still be on the coasts of Northumberland. A hundred times, as he galloped along Whittles and Cullencoats sands, or rode his steed more cautiously along the summit of the cliffs, he cried—“Come to me, bloody pirate! and I will steep my battle-axe in thy base blood.” The wind alone, eddying among the caverned rocks, replied to him, as if in mockery.

Slowly and wearily he rode up to the entrance of Tynemouth Abbey; he knocked at the gate, no one answered; he struck heavily upon the private portal, but no one acknowledged his call. The porter was asleep, or had deserted his post. As he was at length turning away, he perceived a man-at-arms standing beneath the shadow of one of the little towers that flanked the gate.

“Who art thou?” cried Lord Delaval.

“A friend or a foe,” was the reply.

“A comprehensive answer,” said the Baron; “but though I love a friend well, I think I could willingly give the store of all I possess to meet with one foe.”

“That is no Saxon sentiment,” said the stranger, with strong and gratified emphasis. “Thou, too, then, art one of those who love the hauberk better than the mantle of peace—who choose rather to mingle in the dust of the meleè, than in the chaunt of the churchman! I honour thee for it. I come from a distant land, to spoil the carlin Saxons, and the upstart dogs, who, calling themselves Normans, pretend to derive their blood from the warriors of Scandinavia. I am come down to these coasts, to sweep the wealth and the beauty which they possess utterly away.”

“Ha! thou art a follower of bloody Eric, then,” cried Lord Delaval, grasping the battle-axe which hung at his saddle-bow.

“I am a friend of the first of Runic chiefs,” answered the stranger.

“Lead me into his presence, and I will enrich thee beyond thy imaginings,” said Lord Delaval.

“I thank thee not, Norman,” replied the stranger scornfully. “My sword is my right, my spear is my title, to the spoil which I desire; my shield is my defence against insult. I accept gifts from none. But descend from thy steed, and I will bring thee to the Scandinavian hero briefly. He fears to meet no man; but few men, save his friends, willingly seek his presence.”

Lord Delaval answered nothing to this taunt; he sprang from his horse, hung the bridle on the spikes that surmounted the postern; and, while his lips breathed a prayer to God, and besought the assistance of St Cuthbert in the approaching danger, he followed the stranger to the high grounds that look down upon the sweet little recess which is now used as the principal bathing-place by the frequenters of Tynemouth. It still retains its Saxon name, and is called the Haven.

In silence they trode round the walls, and climbed over the edge of the ditch which surrounded the outworks of the building; until at length, emerging into the star-light, the stranger turned suddenly on his heel, and pointing down to the haven, where the boats of the Norsemen were riding at anchor, while the whole of the strand was a-flame with the fires of the mariners, he cried—“These are the warriors who plundered your vassals, and gave your castle to the flames, and I myself am your foe, Eric the Bloody.”

The words had scarcely fallen from the Norseman's lip ere the sword of Lord Delaval had sprung from its scabbard, and was already at the throat of the pirate.

"Come with me this way," cried Red Eric, leaping back and unsheathing his blade; "thou art worthy of the arm of a Norse chief. Come this way, and let me kill thee as a warrior should be slain."

"Willingly, if that thou canst," replied Lord Delaval, following the dark form of his foe, as he strode towards what is now called the Spanish Battery; "and if thou hast the fortune to sheath thy weapon in my heart, thou art welcome to the domain and the bride of Delaval."

Beneath where the Spanish Battery stands, there was, at the time of which we write, an open space of level ground, shut in by the precipitous cliff above, and descending sheer down to the water beneath. The tide was at its full as the combatants stepped upon this natural platform; the noise of the waters dashing against the rocks, preventing all other sounds from reaching the hosts of the Norsemen; and even the challenges of the antagonists, as they closed in their deadly strife, being scarcely audible to each other.

No third party was there to witness the combat, yet it was worthy to have been beheld by assembled nations, beneath the light of the sun of Austerlitz. No sound was heard, as the deadly strokes were given and received, save the monotonous wail of the ocean—fit accompaniment to such a melody. The sward whereon they stood became slippery with gore, and as they staggered back and forward in the deceptive footing—while their blades and bucklers kept up an incessant clanging, and their steel armour glanced gloomily in the star-light—they seemed more like demons combating in the regions of darkness, than creatures with human hearts, standing upon the green sod, which the god of love had planted with flowers.

At length, wearied and gasping, they, by common agreement, rested on their blades; and each, through the rents of his armour, began to look after his wounds. The scene would have formed a fine study for an artist who loves to depict the dark, the gloomy, the lurid aspects of humanity.

The peaceful purity of the starry skies; the dark heaving bosom of the ocean; the waves rushing through among the rocks at the foot of the cliffs, or leaping, in foam-fountains, up its sides; the silent and dark forms of the two warriors, so differently accoutred, and, even in the dubious light, evidently diverse in country and kindred; their rent armour hanging in splinters about their frames; their weapons dark, in the star-light, with the stain of blood; their relaxed and languid gestures; their pale and gasping features: all would have formed a group upon which Fuseli would have rejoiced to exercise his imagination.

The gigantic Dane, with his leathern tunic arranged above his iron armour, his barbaric head-gear and murderous weapons of offence, contrasted well with the slighter frame, and more elegant equipment of the young Norman noble, whose gleaming mail, inlaid with gold, and whose light battle-axe and slender shield, seemed totally unfitted to cope with the crushing weight of the iron mace and brazen buckler of Eric. But skill supplied the lack of strength. The massive armour of the Danish chief was shivered into as many pieces, as the lighter but better wrought mail of Lord Delaval, and the sharp steel of the latter had not drank less deeply of Eric's blood, than had the weightier weapons of the Scandinavian of the life-fountains of the Norman.

They gathered up their arms, and again joined in the fight. The contest continued, with varying success, for some time; wounds being given and received nearly of like consequence by both. Lord Delaval at length felt his frame sinking, and his brain reeling; the prospect of discomfiture and disgrace seemed opening up to him; and, worse than all that earthly fortune could inflict upon him, the possession of Edith seemed sliding from his grasp. A pang struck through his heart, and its electric force communicated itself to his whole frame. New and supernatural vigour shot into

his limbs; his bosom heaved with fresh energy; he grasped his long blade with both hands—for his battle-axe had shivered in pieces—and, wheeling it with the force of a giant around his head, he brought it down, full and unresisted, upon the neck of his foe, crying, as he struck, the name of his lady love. The severed head of his enemy rolled, gasping upon the sward; his body, instinct with the last energies of life, remained, for a few moments, quivering in its place; and then springing headlong over the precipice, plunged sullenly into the tide, that heaved and swelled at the foot of the cliff.

While yet under the influence of the energy which had achieved his victory, he snatched up the head of the Danish chieftain, and made his way across the green peninsula which divides the spot where they had fought from the high grounds which overlook the Haven. The fires were blazing merrily—the Norsemen were seated round them, relating their adventures, or gambling with each other for the spoils which they had won. The captives stood in groups near each fire, chained together, in bands of eight or ten individuals.

Little does the delicate maiden and spruce gallant of the present day, who parade back and forward on the yellow sand of the Haven—little do the doughty clerks and bold haberdashers, who hebdomadally lave their limbs in its clear waters, dream that a scene so wild and savage was ever presented by the quiet little recess wherein they pursue their loves, or draw on, with a shiver, their light duck inexpressibles.

From the green height which looks down upon the southern side of the Haven, Lord Delaval gazed, for a moment, upon the groups of warriors who were carousing around their fires. It was but for a moment. Swinging aloft, by its gory locks, the head of the Danish chieftain, and crying the war-cry of his family, he hurled it from the cliff into the midst of a party who were busily employed in gambling. The grisly head fell, with a rebound, upon the rock around which they sat. It could not remain a moment unrecognised. The light sandy locks, and protruding underlip, the acquiline features and long grey shaggy eyebrows, at once informed the terrified spectators of the victim. A panic struck through the whole Danish host. The cry of terror flew from mouth to mouth—the whole troop rushed to their galleys; and, leaving their prisoners and spoil, sought safety on the bosom of the ocean.

When Lord Delaval recovered his sensibility, he was surrounded by the monks of Tynemouth Abbey, and found himself stretched on a soft couch, in the regal apartments of that noble building. He listened, with amazement, to the relation of the terror and the flight of the Norsemen; and it was with feelings which there are no words to describe, that he beheld the maidens whom he had rescued kneel and thank him as their deliverer from worse than death.

Our tale is nearly told. But we have one striking instance of retributive justice to relate, before we can lay down our pen. The night hours, which followed the events we have been relating, brought a storm upon their wings. The north-east wind awoke slowly, as it were, at first, and reluctantly; but, at length, having gathered up its unwieldy energies, swept howling over the waste of waters, and dashed against the Northumbrian cliffs, as if it would have torn them from their foundations. The small vessels of the Norsemen were unable to withstand the force of the raging elements. Many foundered: the rest were driven, unresisting, upon the Northumbrian coast, as if to indicate in the clearest possible manner, that the direct agency of Providence was displayed in the transaction. The greater number of the vessels were driven upon the beach near Delaval—that very beach, whereon, twenty-four hours before, they had raised their exulting battle-cry; and where the tower,



RED ERIC.



and cottages were yet smoking, which they had fired. The unhappy wretches, in reaching the shore, reached no place of safety or ease. The beach was lined with the vassals of Lord Delaval, who had gathered there to watch and to assist in the destruction of their savage enemies. In the fury of their desire for revenge, they waded up to their middle amid the billows, and struggled to snatch the pirates from a death in the ocean, that they might butcher them with their own hands. It was fearful to behold the wrath of the elements and of the human heart, thus displayed side by side, and devoted, with a horrid rivalry, to the same object of destruction.

“Elemental rage is tame
To the wrath of man,”

says Byron; and here the truth of the saying was manifest. It is not in our power, nor, if it were, would we wish minutely to detail the horrors of the scene which we have sketched out. Almost the whole of the Scandinavians either perished in the open ocean, or were dashed to pieces amid the rocks, or butchered on the sand by the furious Saxons. It was not till the thirst of blood had been slaked by many a murder, that the vassals of Lord Delaval began to desist from their work of vengeance. A few of the Norsemen who remained, were carried up to the smoking cottages; and, being chained together, were left thus exposed to the inclemency of the elements. They became, afterwards, the slaves of the very serfs themselves, and were compelled to labour in the erection of the dwellings which they had given to the flames. Under this treatment nearly the whole pined away and perished; or, unable to bear up against the confinement and disgrace which they suffered, found the means of destroying themselves.

Three months afterwards, the castle of Lord Delaval had risen from its ruins, and stood in more than its former splendour. The cottages of his vassals shone along the banks of the little burn, where now their very sites are unknown, and where we have found the nest of the linnet and the yellow-hammer possibly built over the very hearthstone of a Saxon serf. A gallant tilting match, held on the southern side of what are now called Blyth Links, had occupied the morning, and Lord Delaval, recovered from his wounds, was again, as usual, victorious. Edith Beaumont—for though wedded, she still held her maiden name till after this, the night of her second nuptials—was willingly acknowledged the fairest dame where all were fair. Night came, and a gayer galliard never graced the halls of a Norman noble, than was then held beneath the roof of Lord Delaval. One circumstance was curious, and displayed the barbarous taste of the age—at one end of the hall wherein the feast was held, appeared the grisly and blackened head of Red Eric, stuck on the top of a spear, and surrounded by four flaming torches of pine wood.

Even in the days of daring gallantry of which we speak, when warriors loved to engage in what seemed superhuman enterprises, and when deeds of the wildest intrepidity were the common occurrences of the day, the fame of Lord Delaval's conquest over Bloody Eric, and his discomfiture of the northern host, occupied all tongues, and was hailed as the most gallant action of the age. Knights prayed that their deeds might rival the slaughter of the Scandinavian hero; and ladies, in the imaged lovers which fancy brought them in their dreams, found that the conqueror of Eric was fashioned before them. Children chaunted, in rude measures, the fight of Tynemouth Haven; and minstrels strung their harps in regal halls to the praises of John, the Lord of Delaval.

We shall close our tale, by reciting one of the ballads which (modernized that it may be intelligible to the whole of our readers) records the events we have related.

THE DEATH OF RED ERIC.

Red Eric, the Dane, o'er the ocean has come;
His course was as fleet as the wind-driven foam;
As the storm-risen sea rushes wild o'er the strand,
He has swept the fair shores of Northumbria's land;
There was wailing and weeping, in cottage and hall,
O'er the plundered domain of the Lord Delaval.

The gallant young Baron went forth with his train,
To bring home a bride to his princely domain—
'Twas the lady Editha, the flower of the Tyne—
In beauty, how peerless! in grace, how divine!
Oh, ne'er was there maiden, in cottage or hall,
More fair than the bride of the brave Delaval!

The bridal train trooped a-down Hallowell dale;
The last rays of sunlight yet gleamed on their mail,
And brightened their banners and steel-headed spears—
When, hark! a loud wail fills each warrior's ears;
And the towering flames leapt aloft o'er the wall,
And whirled round the castle of Lord Delaval.

His vassals came crowding, in tears, round their lord:
They had fled from the fierce Scandinavian horde;
Their daughters were stolen, dishonoured their dames;
Their cattle were slaughtered, their roofs were in flames
Thus wretched they knelt, and for vengeance did call
On Eric the Bloody, from Lord Delaval.

Dark red grew his brow, and his glances more keen,
He leapt from his steed, and he knelt on the green;
Then, raising his helm—“May I never,” he cried,
“Press the couch of Editha, my beautiful bride,
If ought else I think of, ere vengeance shall fall
On the savage destroyer of fair Delaval.”

“On the land, on the ocean, by night or by day,
Alone, or amid his barbaric array
Of savage despoilers, I swear to pursue,
And my steel in the best of his blood to imbue;
Or, a blood bolter'd corse 'neath his weapon to fall—
St Cuthbert, so speed me!” quoth brave Delaval.

Again to her home Lady Edith has gone,
And away rode her lord on his war-steed alone.
He sought every bay, and each cliff, on the coast,
For the ships of the fierce Scandinavian host;
And often in rage on Red Eric did call—
“Fierce savage I prepare thee to meet Delaval.”

As the gates of the Abbey of Tynemouth he passed,
The warder was fled, and the gates were all fast;
But a warrior stood near, in full armour arrayed.
His courteous saluting, brave Delaval said—
“Know'st thou aught of Red Eric, whom fiends shall enthral,
For the woes he has wrought upon fair Delaval?”

“Leave thy steed and I'll shew thee,” the warrior cried.
In an instant brave Delaval stood by his side.
“Dost thou see those dark galleys drawn up on the sand
And their crews round their watchfires that blaze o'er the strand?
Then, these are the Norsemen who fired your fair hall,
And I am Red Eric, thy foe, Delaval!”

“Ha! have I then got thee?” the Baron exclaimed,
And forth in the moonlight his falchion flamed;
And there, all unseen, was such valour displayed,
As the sun should have witnessed, the world have surveyed.
Oh! ne'er did such strokes upon habergeon fall,
As when Bloody Eric fought Lord Delaval.

They struck and they parried, they wounded, they bled,
Till the turf which they trampled grew slippery and red;
Their bucklers were splintered, their helmets were riven,
In their flesh the sharp edge of the fragments was driven:
Till a heart-splitting stab caused Red Eric to fall,
With a howl of despair, before brave Delaval.

He has hacked off the head, ere the blood ceased to flow
He has hied to the herde who were feasting below—
He flung it among them; his war-cry he raised—
The Norsemen all rushed to their galleys amazed;
They have left the lost maidens, their plunder, and all
And have fled, terror-stricken, from young Delaval.

Nor yet they escaped—for a tempest arose,
And wrecked on her beach fair Northumbria's foes;
Some perished, engulfed in the depths of the waves,
And some to the serfs they had mock'd, became slaves:
Now, his bride in his arms, and his knights in his hall,
Oh! who is so happy as brave Delaval?

THE CLERICAL MURDERER

THE story which has been told of John Smithson, the minister of Berwick, who was, in the year 1672, executed for committing a crime which has seldom stained the hands of the ministers of the religion of Christ, is as true as it is extraordinary. There are connected with it some circumstances which have communicated to it a character of even deeper interest than what generally invests tales of blood. Sympathy for the victim, disgust and hatred towards the perpetrator, and a general feeling of horror at the contemplation of the crime, are the usual emotions excited by the commission of an aggravated murder; but there are sometimes afforded, by these melancholy exhibitions of the weakness and sinfulness of our fallen nature, certain lights "burning blue," which lay open, with their mysterious glare, recesses in the heart of man which no philosophy has ever been able to reach and develope.

It was remarked that Smithson was one of the best of sons. His aged mother was supported by him for a long period, and at a time when he could very ill spare the means. Indeed, such was his filial affection, that he once travelled fifty miles in one day to get payment of a small sum of money that had been due to his father; and to procure which for his mother, he required to beg his way to the residence of the creditor. When he returned, he presented to her the whole sum; and when asked upon what he had supported himself on the journey, he replied that the cause in which he was engaged procured him the means of subsistence, for he was not refused alms by a single individual whom he had solicited.

It was in consequence of his kindness to his father and mother that he was assisted by a rich friend to acquire education fitted for his becoming a clergyman. For this patron he ever afterwards felt the strongest esteem; and his gratitude kept pace with his affection. He attended his friend on his deathbed, and administered to him that knowledge and consolation which the clerical education he had received enabled him to bestow on his dying benefactor. Nor did he consider that the gratuitous assistance, which had thus been extended to him, could be repaid alone by affection towards the vicarious giver, but declared that, as it came from Heaven, so ought the gratitude of his heart to be directed to the origin of all gifts that are bestowed on the deserving.

Gratitude is not only its own reward, but the cause often of the means of its own increase; for Smithson's benefactor was so pleased with his attention to him when dying, that he left him a large legacy in his will, which relieved him from that state of dependence which he found had limited his means of doing good. He soon afterwards married a very beautiful woman, and got himself placed in the church of Berwick.

His ministerial duties were performed with the greatest devotion and zeal for the welfare of the people intrusted to his charge. His attention to his parishioners was unremitting—his prayers for the dying, or the sorrow-smitten, were fervent—and the poor and aged not only tasted of the consolations afforded by his pious sympathy, but often had their wants relieved by his charitable hand. No mortal eye could discover in this any insincerity, far less any cloak put on to cover evil already done, or any false assumption of a good and devout character to avert the eye of suspicion from deeds intended to be perpetrated.

His character had, indeed, in other respects, been tried and found not wanting. A relation of his had died, and left a large sum of money to be divided among his nephews and nieces. The money was recovered by Smithson, and upon the young heirs arriving at majority, was divided among them with

so much honesty that they all combined in addressing to him a letter, wherein they extolled his character for justice, honour, and piety, and attributed to him all the qualities of a saint.

In addition to all this, his conjugal character was unspotted. His attentions to his wife were what might have been expected from a good husband and a minister of the gospel; the breath of scandal never dimmed the purity of his fidelity, nor could the most querulous exacter of conjugal obligations have found any fault with the manner in which he fulfilled not only the duties of a husband, but the more generous and less easily counterfeited attentions of the lover. His wife seemed to be grateful for his kindness, and respected his official character as much as she loved those private virtues from which she was as much benefited in her moral, as she was edified in her personal and conjugal capacity.

On a Sunday previous to that on which the Sacrament was to be dispensed, he preached in the church of Berwick. His text was the sixth Commandment—"Thou shalt not kill." His sermons, always animated and vigorous, and possessing even a tint of devout enthusiasm, were much relished by his congregation; but, on that day, he outshone all his former efforts of pulpit eloquence. He painted the character of the murderer with colours drawn from the palette of inspired truth; the cruel, remorseless, blood-thirsty heart of the son of Cain, was laid open to the eyes of his entranced audience; the feelings of the victim were described with such power of sympathy that the tears of the congregation fell in ready and heartfelt tribute to the power of his delineation; his own emotion, equalling that of his people, filled his eyes with tears, and lent to his voice that peculiar thrilling sound, which calls forth while it expresses the strongest pity. The man of God seemed inspired, and he communicated the inspiration to those who heard him. His hand was observed to tremble; his eye was bloodshot—his manner nervous, tremulous, excited, and enthusiastic; his voice "broken with pity;" and, at times, discordant with the overpowering excess of his emotion. His whole soul seemed under the influence of divine power; and his body, quailing under the energies of its nobler partner, shook like a thing touched by the hand of the Almighty.

On that morning, the preacher had murdered his wife. By the time the congregation came out, the news had begun to spread. Nobody would credit what they heard, while they exclaimed that his sermon was strange, and his manner remarkable. A determination not to believe was mixed with strange insinuations, and the town of Berwick was suspended between extravagant incredulity and unaccountable suspicions. But the report was true, and the fact remains as one of those occurrences in life, which no knowledge of the heart of man, though dignified with the proud name of philosophy, has been, or perhaps ever will be, able to explain.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND

THE LOST HEIR OF THE HOUSE OF ELPHINSTONE.

"THERE are few men," says a peculiar moralist, 'however much they may have been loved and esteemed in their day, whose return to life, after any considerable interval, would not be regarded with feelings of regret.' In this observation there is some truth. The places once occupied by the departed have been supplied by others; their return to life would be regretted by those whom they would "push from their stools;" and it may be very well believed that, if the rightful heir of a great estate were to make his appearance in life, after having been long lost and regarded as dead, the feelings of the person whom he would supplant, whose possessions, prerogatives, and ostensibility, he would take away, would not be particularly pleasant. But, when no personal interests are at stake, and no feelings of malign selfishness are awakened, there are few things from which a person well constituted in heart and mind, will derive a more vivid delight, or a more exquisite excitement, than the return, and an unexpected meeting with, a long lost and long absent friend. Mark, in proof, the stare of astonishment, the eyes eagerly looking into each other, while the mind gradually opens into recognition, and such exclamations as, "Guide me! it's no possible!—can this be really you?—eh, it's lang since I hae seen ye!—hoo hae ye been a' this time?" In no place are such feelings more vivid, or such exclamations more rife, than on the Scottish Borders, whose good humoured natives have always been distinguished for enterprising energy, as well as warmth of heart, producing a disposition both to rove and to return.

On the east coast—somewhere between Berwick and St Abb's Head—a village is situated at the mouth of a small stream, which gives it an immediate access to, and egress from, the open sea. Its harbour does not admit vessels of any considerable burthen; but there is good anchorage ground in the offing, and its situation being favourable for the irregular discharge of a cargo, it is said to have been, in former times, notorious for the contraband trade. It continued to enjoy an honourable prosperity, however, after this infamous and most pernicious traffic had been put down by the vigilance of government, owing to its permanent local advantages. The chief employment of its inhabitants is fishing; and its coasting trade is considerable, affording to the tenantry of the adjoining country a ready market for farm produce of all kinds—grazing, pastoral, and agricultural. In this village, long before the formation of those regularly constituted clubs which now exist in every considerable market town, a number of persons, whom business had brought together, used to hold regular meetings in the evening of the market day. These meetings, of which, when a young man, I was a constant attender, were generally composed of nearly the same persons, who, by tacit agreement, used to assemble at the same time and in the same place; one particular apartment of the principal inn being always reserved for their use. On these occasions, there was much innocent enjoyment and little variety. In

allusion to the chief avocations of the persons present, and the commodities which formed the staple of the market, it was customary to give, as the toast of the evening—

"The life of man, the death of fish,
The boat, the crook, the plough;
Horn, corn, lint, and yarn,
Flax, and tarry woo."

The chief transactions of the day having been talked over, and the party having gradually diminished as the evening advanced, to a few intimates who dwelt in the immediate neighbourhood, many a tale, anecdote, and legend used to be told, while the glass circled round. The appetite for legendary lore, orally delivered, had not begun to abate in the days of my youth.

I remember well a particular evening in which many stories were told, of "hair-breadth 'scapes," strange coincidences, and remarkable incidents of various kinds; but generally connected with the departure and return of Scottish adventurers. Mr Plainworth, and the patient butt of his playful humour, Mr Wonderlove, two respectable Septuagenarians, and the venerable fathers of the club, occupied, as usual, the two arm chairs which stood one on each side of the fire. At length, after having been long a silent listener, Mr Plainworth stated that an incident as remarkable as any that had yet been told, had occurred in the very apartment in which we were sitting, and when he himself was present. "Did any of you," said he, "know the late William Elphinstone, Esq?"

"I for one knew him well, for a most excellent and worthy man," said Wonderlove; "and his family is said to be the first of their line that ever did well. I have heard of a dule (doom) which was formerly laid upon that house, by a mother cursing, in the anguish of her heart, and on her bare knees, the bearing of which was, that the sword would never be off the race, till their pride had been humbled—till their head had wedded a maiden of low degree."

"That," said Plainworth, "I regarded as a mere folly of the olden time. Some aggravated case of seduction, in which family pride was exhibited, and innocence ruined and forsaken, had suggested the idea of a suitable doom, which was supposed to hang over the house; or a curse may have been pronounced under such awful circumstances; and, as there would be no black and white upon the matter, its import and bearing might easily be made to correspond with subsequent events. An obliquity of disposition—a transmitted depravity of character—will sometimes be hereditary for two or three generations in a particular race; on the removal of which, the evils to which, by natural consequence, it had led, and which might seem to flow from a hereditary fatality or doom, will also pass away. The fortunes of the house of Elphinstone seem to have improved with the improved character of the race."

"You are a deep thinker, Mr Plainworth," said the other; "but it is well-known that, for a long period of time, the sword never was off that house. Deeply involved in the troubles that preceded and followed the civil wars, they always came off with the worst. Some fell in battle; some bled on the scaffold; and when others ceased to kill them, they began to put an end to themselves."

"You allude," said Plainworth, to the death of Edward Elphinstone, the brother of the late laird. Poor unhappy young man! I knew him well."

"Sir," said Wonderlove, "I could tell you of a strange thing, which, I cannot help thinking, is somehow connected with his death. I was acquainted with the son of the parish minister. He and his father had occasion to go down to the churchyard, on account of something which had gone wrong with the cattle. A loud scream was heard at the west-end of the church, in a little while followed by another. The son, who hurried forward to see what was the matter, beheld a light streaming from the window of the Elphinstone aisle; and, on looking in, he could perceive a human figure lying on the central grave-stone, under a white sheet. He stood and gazed till, from below the white sheet, another scream came pealing, exactly like the two he had heard before; and then he ran back in terror to his father, and both made the best of their way home. Next morning, Edward Elphinstone was found dead in the neighbouring woods. He had fired his own gun through his head, by means of a string attached to the trigger, and passed round the butt end. Now, sir, what is your opinion as to that?"

"I would say," replied Plainworth, "that it must have been the poor youth stretching himself in life, in the place where he was shortly to lie dead—put down, alas! by his own hand—one of the strange fancies of a mind meditating suicide, and therefore labouring under a degree of frenzied excitement. Had he been conveyed home, the catastrophe might have been prevented."

"An admirable explanation," said the other, "and a true."

"What!" cried Plainworth, "and is Wonderlove so ready to give up such a likely and well-authenticated tale of diablerie? Well, in return for your candour, I assure you that William Elphinstone, the first of the line who seems to have been freed from the dread hereditary doom, really did marry 'a maiden of low degree.' I was his friend, and the confidant of his innocent and honourable love."

"And the thing you mean to tell us of—does it concern him?" asked Wonderlove.

"It does, as you shall hear," replied Plainworth. "After the death of Edward, the second son," continued Plainworth, "there remained of the family of Elphinstone, only the Laird, and William, the youngest son, my particular friend. The health of the laird had been irreparably injured, both by early excesses, and by a fall which he got from his horse while hunting. After this accident, his life was despaired of; and, although he partially recovered, his constitution, owing to an injury in the head, was ruined for ever. A cousin, who would have succeeded to the estates, failing him and his brother, made various abortive attempts to sow dissension between them; which, being ascribed to their true motive, caused the laird to hate him most cordially. To defeat the crooked policy of this bad man, he was anxious to keep William at home; and he endeavoured to effect a marriage between him and an heiress of good family, great fortune, and greater expectations. The lady was favourable—her friends not less so. But William had placed his affections in a lower sphere. He had long loved the only daughter of a Mr Constant, the humble proprietor of about fifty acres of poor land, called Sanditof's. Mary Constant was a young woman who had everything to recommend her, except fortune. William had succeeded in gaining her heart; but, with a noble disinterestedness, she persisted in discouraging his addresses to herself, and did her utmost to prevail on him to gratify his elder brother, by preferring the more advantageous match.

"Of this ground of difference, the first which had existed between the brothers, the wicked cousin endeavoured to make the most. He contrived to have unworthy suspicions of the

innocent object of William's love, insinuated into the mind of the laird; and that there might be some foundation for these suspicions, the fiend had insidiously pointed her out to the notice of a Sir Charles Ranger—a man of fashion and profligate manners, who happened at the time to be resident in this part of the country. Observing something peculiar in William's manner one day, I wrung from him the secret cause, which was, that he had been given to understand that Mary was in the habit of receiving, and with encouragement, the attentions of Sir Charles. 'If that should be true,' said he, with a sigh, 'how inconsistent in a creature who, in mind as well as in person, seems to be all perfection!' On my demanding his authority, he stated that his brother had been his first informer, who had got his information from one lady, who had got it from another, and so on; but that he thought he had been able, very nearly, to run up the slander to his cousin, with whom it must have originated."

"What can be the villain's motive?" cried I, indignantly,

"Evidently," said he, "to give my brother an unfavourable opinion of Mary, that he may be induced to set his face, like flint, against my being united to her in marriage; in which case he may anticipate that such a quarrel might arise between him and me as would admit of no reconciliation; and that, as I might then have to lead the precarious unsettled life of an adventurer, the extinction of the elder branch of the family would become more likely. That may be his policy, for, in my brother's infirm state, I am certainly the chief obstruction to his hope of eventually succeeding to the family inheritance; but why speculate about the motives of such a man? I beat him soundly on the occasion you know of, when he attempted to do me ill offices with my brother."

"Beat him, did you?" cried I.

"That I did," said he, "and with right good will. I began with mild expostulation, which was all I intended at first; but his shameless attempts at justification, and at maintaining the character of a mutual friend, made him appear so vile in my eyes, that I threw him on the ground, told him that I would make an impression on his body, if not on his mind, and beat him with a sapling, till I had tired my arm, rather than exhausted my wrath."

"He well deserved all he got," said I; "but a mind like his will never forgive a blow—far less a long succession of blows, most energetically laid on—although he may not have the spirit to shew his resentment openly."

"He hates me from his soul," said he, "while he fawns upon me; and he well knows that to let fly an envenomed shaft at poor Mary, is the likeliest way to give me a deadly wound."

"You have acted most rashly towards him," said I; "for he is a dark, deep, dangerous man; the deadly enmity of such as he ought never to be unnecessarily provoked; under the sting of a reptile will a lion die."

"He is indeed a reptile," replied he, "whom I pity and despise, and whom you will have some difficulty in persuading me to fear. I am not free," he added with perceptible agitation, "I am not free from the hereditary imperfection of our ill-fated race; but I endeavour to restrain my mind by those means by which the mind can best be restrained. As for the inheritance of our house, which seems to excite my wretched cousin's cupidity, I could almost wish he had it, with the hereditary curse along with it; so that I had only a moderate competence, with God's blessing, a peaceful mind, and Mary's love."

"A few days after the above conversation took place, as William Elphinstone and I were sauntering about, without any particular object, who should we see coming over the hill but Mary herself, along with Sir Charles Ranger! 'Now, Elphinstone,' said I, on observing them, 'keep your temper, and don't allow yourself to be flung off your guard—that is indeed Sir Charles; but the meeting has been

unintentional on Mary's part. The poor girl could not drive such an intruder away, as easily as the wind would a piece of thistle-down.'

'They are walking wide apart, on opposite sides of the road,' said he, with considerable emotion.

'As we moved towards them, keeping on the inside of a hedge, which afforded us concealment, we lost sight of them for a little while; but, on turning a corner, they again came in view. She was evidently walking too fast for her gallant attendant; and William seemed to be amused with his efforts to maintain his fashionable swagger at the unusual pace. As we continued to follow them unobserved, we could see him in several instances come over to her side of the road; but she always crossed to the other, and quickened her pace. At length, having come to a turn of the road, where Sir Charles perhaps thought that he behoved either to desist, or to make a bold effort, he sprang forward, and placed himself before her, so as to obstruct her passage, and began to pour forth all manner of professions, protestations, and unmeaning extravagances. Mary, with indignation and disdain in her every look, peremptorily demanded to be permitted to pass on unmolested. At length he went so far as to catch her in his arms, earnestly imploring that she would give him for one moment a hearing. Upon which she screamed in terror; and young Elphinstone, springing over the hedge, seized the unprincipled libertine by the collar, and dashed him to the ground. On my coming forward, he delivered the trembling girl into my care; and then turning to Sir Charles, as he was attempting to rise, he quietly begged to know who it was that had pointed out that young woman to him, as a fit person for such as he to accost.'

'Well thought of, Elphinstone,' cried I; 'bring an answer to that question out of him, one way or other.'

'Mary did her utmost to put a stop to further violence; but I prevented her from interfering, and encouraged William to proceed. Upon which, fixing on his prostrate foe a look, in which was expressed all the fire of his race, he repeated his question. Sir Charles refused to answer—William threatened; the one hesitated—the other kept holding him down. At length, finding himself compelled to speak, Sir Charles pronounced the name of William Elphinstone's cousin.

'All's well,' cried the latter, assisting him to rise. 'You may now go away, sir; and if you should think that the punishment inflicted has been in this case greater than the evil you have been able to do, you will perhaps remember passages in your life, in which the balance was the other way.'

'As the baffled profligate withdrew, he tried to put on a menacing look, and hinted that, as Elphinstone's conduct was dissonant to the usages of society, he was determined to demand the satisfaction of a gentleman, and that he should hear from him shortly. This threat, however, was never put into effect; for, although bold enough toward an unprotected female, he was not over-fond of confronting an antagonist such as Elphinstone.

'In excuse for our having continued violent measures ill-suited to her presence, after protection had been afforded, I shewed to Mary, as we were escorting her home, the importance of the disclosure which had been wrung from Sir Charles, which would enable us to ascribe not merely the insults to which she had been exposed, but also the slanders by which her good name had been secretly assailed, to the malice of William's cousin, whose name Sir Charles had been compelled to give up. I spoke, also, of the distress which we had both had on her account for some time past. Whenever she became aware of the painful fact, that she had been an object of suspicion, she stopped, her features became agitated, and she burst into tears. Nothing that we could say would pacify her—stung to the heart with the

anguish of offended female pride. When she had somewhat recovered from this agitation, young Elphinstone began to press his suit with impassioned earnestness; while Mary, on her part, persisted in giving him no encouragement, but pointed out the great advantages of the other match intended for him by his brother; and extolled the lady as being far superior to herself in every respect. She spoke firmly, but yet with the air of one who is rather acting on high principle than from inclination. William had evidently a powerful advocate in her heart. Long did she hesitate, nevertheless; and much did she say about the impropriety of her allowing him to sacrifice to his passion for her, the favour of his elder brother, and such great expectations. But at last the lover's importunities were successful. Mary—her countenance becoming pale and then crimson—faintly, yet distinctly, pronounced the words—'Speak to my father.'

'Soon after this, we heard the sound of a horseman, who was coming up behind us, at a rapid trot. This was none other than Mr Elphinstone, the brother of William, who began with accusing him of having acted in a most ruffian-like manner toward Sir Charles Ranger, whom he had met, and by whose representations a most unfavourable impression had been made upon his mind. William attempted to explain; the former, however, would not hear; but harshly added, with a look of cruel meaning, directed to the most interesting person present—'I find you, sir, in most improper society.'

'William, forgetting himself for an instant, made a grasp at his brother's rein, and also at his collar, saying—'Not one disrespectful word, sir, of that young woman; a more innocent and a nobler the world does not hold.'

'Unloose your hand from my rein and collar,' vociferated the elder Elphinstone, fiercely; 'after this insolence, we can never meet more.' With that he immediately rode off.

'The laird will soon be informed of the true state of matters,' said I, soothingly; 'and he is not a man to retain his anger long.'

'This is the first time,' replied William, 'that a harsh word ever passed between my brother and me; and I can only regret that our feud should have originated in such a cause.'

'The humble habitation of Mary now came in sight—a low cottage-looking building, with agricultural appurtenances behind it—neat and comfortable, though plain in its appearance, and betokening the residence of a person in easy circumstances, who was not disposed to live above his sphere. On our approaching the house, Mary's father came out to welcome us; and, perceiving, from our appearance, that something more than ordinary had happened, he looked inquiringly. Mary and her lover entered the house, each, with a look, devolving the task of explanation upon me; and, between Mr Constant and myself, a long conversation followed, in which everything was told. Entering then the house where he was anxiously waited for, he bent over the chair which William Elphinstone occupied, and exclaimed—'My dear young man, accept a father's thanks for the protection which ye have this day afforded to his only child. As for what ye further intend, there are difficulties, but none shall arise from me. Had ye been of our own sphere of life, there is none in the country on whom I would have been more willing to have bestowed my daughter.'

'We spent the evening there; and I never saw William appear to such advantage. If he could not raise his wife to the sphere in which he had been bred and born, he was to go down contentedly into hers; to constitute her happiness was to be the delight of his life. Mr Constant—who had long esteemed him highly, but had never before seen him open, throwing forth, in rich profusion, the treasures of his noble heart and vigorous understanding—was in amazement. As for Mary, her heart seemed to be overflowing

with happiness, while she contemplated, with a woman's pride, the high qualities of the man who had chosen her for his own. Every doubt as to the propriety of the momentous step which she had taken, having been removed by her father's knowledge, concurrence, and approbation—

“ ‘————— she pleased resigned
To tender feelings all her lovely mind.’ ”

“ Next day, William sent to his brother a plain unvarnished statement of all that had happened, expressed in a fair manly style—asking for nothing, apologizing for nothing, and conceding nothing; and, after having discharged this act of fraternal duty, he came and met me early in the afternoon in the town here, for the purpose of bringing me back with him to Sanditofits. It was the market day, and, wherever he went, his old friends gathered in congratulating groups around him; for he was a universal favourite. On our proposing to leave them, they absolutely laid violent hands on us; and so, having sent off a card to apologize, and bring Mr Constant to meet us, we sat down along with them to their usual dinner in this same room. I could easily see that poor William would rather have been at Sanditofits, where his heart was; but, making a virtue of necessity, he exerted himself to please, and was successful. His affair with Sir Charles was brought on, or rather it insensibly stole upon the carpet. One person accidentally made a very distant allusion to it; a second reproved him for so doing; a third, a fourth, a fifth made observations, pointing, though from afar, to what had happened. Pleased and amused at the delicacy which was so visibly restraining the general feeling, William threw open the subject at once, by giving a modest statement of the whole affair. He added—‘ I would have done as much for any other young woman under the like circumstances; and what could I have done less for her who has been for long the object of my fondest love—a love now sanctioned by her father!’ ”

“ The importance of this disclosure, and the deep pathos of his voice, produced an instant silence, which was first broken by Mr Macquill, the lawyer, who gave his opinion as to the legal bearings of the case. He assured us that Sir Charles had no ground for an action whatsoever, having been guilty of accosting rudely, and with evil intent, a lone woman—the most sacred of all objects in the eye of the law.

“ ‘ I remember a case,’ said he, ‘ in which a rude person having merely used, in female society, some expressions not suitable for a female ear, a young officer of the army present, seized upon and twisted his nose. Upon which an action was raised against the officer; and, the case having come before the fifteen, sixpence of damages only was awarded, with no expenses at all.’ ”

“ Thus did the evening pass on, none of us apprehending that it was to have such a woful termination. As the party separated, each, as he retired, came and grasped William by the hand, testifying the highest approbation of the part which he had acted, in simple warm-hearted language. In these feelings, all the great proprietors around participated. They are strictly moral, the *real* gentry, and they have noble hearts. They detested Sir Charles for his dissolute life; and they suspected him of being, what he afterwards really proved to be, a ruined profligate, flying from English creditors to this side of the Border.

“ All those members of the company whose homes were at any distance, had now retired; and the party had become such a one as we have at present. The fine spirits which William had maintained throughout the evening, had vanished; his attitude, and the expression of his countenance, had become thoughtful and strangely sad; and I thought he looked fearfully like his brother Edward. At length he started up from his reverie; and I, approaching him, looked anxiously into his countenance, and asked him how he did. He assured me that he had never been better

in his life—that he had never enjoyed so much of the best happiness which can irradiate the heart. ‘ But,’ said he, ‘ my quarrel with my brother hurts me. I never loved him so much in my life as when that spark of his old fire, which my rude grasp struck out of him, made him look so like what he was in other days. And, Mary—to think of her having at length given up her opposition to my wishes in such a manner! Altogether, it is too much for me; and I have been silly enough to allow shadowy imaginations of evils, which may affect my relations with her and my poor brother, and mar the happiness of us all, to disturb my ruminations. That is the fact; and I apprehend that you, regarding my foolish features with friendly anxiety, have been speculating thereon.’ ”

“ This explanation, which agreed well with what I knew of the character of his mind, in which there was not a little of an undue ascendancy of the imagination, seemed to me quite satisfactory; and I said to him—‘ Everything is to go right; you and your brother will soon be reconciled.’ ”

“ ‘ I am not entirely dependent on my brother,’ said he; ‘ as I shall shew you all to-night, when we talk seriously over certain arrangements.’ ”

“ ‘ Where are you going just now?’ said I to him, as he was moving toward the door.

“ ‘ Merely to have a look at the evening,’ said he—‘ I will be back to you in five seconds.’ ”

“ Thus did he retire; and I, relieved from apprehensions which, in the issue, seemed to be very like ‘ coming events casting their shadows before,’ fell fast asleep on resuming my chair. Meanwhile, Mr Constant came in and awoke me, to inquire after William. He told me that he had received his card, but had been prevented from being with us earlier, by a visit which he had received from Mr Elphinstone, the laird, who had spent the day with them, and was with them still; and he gave me the gratifying information, that the letter which William had that day sent to his brother had removed every bad impression from his mind, that, instead of opposing his inclinations, he was anxious that his marriage with Mary might take place as soon as possible; and that he was impatient to see himself personally, that everything might be satisfactorily arranged for it, and that they might be reconciled after the unpleasant affair of yesterday, which, he said, was the only serious difference they had ever had.

“ ‘ I have just come down,’ continued he, ‘ to bring you both to Sanditofits, for that purpose.’ ”

“ ‘ In that case,’ said I, ‘ every obstacle to my friend's happiness is completely removed;’ and I assured him that William had just gone out, but that he would return immediately. He did not return, however, although, as one of the company observed, he must have intended to do so, his hat having been left behind him. After waiting for some minutes longer, I became very uneasy; a feeling of apprehension began to steal over my mind, and I hurried out to make inquiries, followed by Mr Constant. On reaching the foot of the stairs, we were informed that William had gone out by a back passage which led down to the sea-beach, and we turned our steps thither.

“ The evening was pleasant. A gentle breeze was blowing off the land, and a yellow radiance faintly tinging the east, and sharply cutting with the black water in the offing, shewed that the darkness was on the point of being lightened by the rising of an unclouded moon. We proceeded onward, my anxious friend and I, for a great way along the rocky margin of the sea, until we gained a commanding station, and the moon more than half risen threw a clearer light upon our view. But no traces did we discover of the object of our search. As a last resource, raising our voices together, we shouted aloud the name of William. As we stood long and anxiously listening, we became aware of a sound which came booming over the water and which

after having been once heard, we could again distinguish, as it ever and anon recurred, at irregular intervals. While looking toward the point from which these sounds seemed to come, we beheld for an instant the upper spars of a two-masted lugger distinctly portrayed on the face of the moon. She was so diminished by distance, as not to do more than fill the moon's disk, and she seemed to be crowding all sail. Shortly after the single mast of a fore-and-aft rigged vessel, also under a press of canvass, was beheld in the same way; and the smoke, curling in wreaths among her rigging, seemed to indicate that it was from the latter vessel that the sounds which we heard proceeded.

"I wonder," said my companion, "if that can have any connection with the disappearance of Mr William."

"It's merely a revenue cutter," replied I, "in chase of some smuggling vessel."

"Having returned to the apartment in the inn, we found the company still assembled, and reported to them our want of success, my poor friend casting a long and wistful look at the hat of William, which was hanging, and which long continued to hang, on that very pin. On its being suggested that there was a chance that he might be found in some house in the town, all with one accord separated to make inquires. The whole place was soon in commotion, and so was the whole country side. Every place in which it was possible for William to be, dead or alive, was searched in vain.

"They sought him that night, and they sought him next day,
Oh! vainly they sought him, till a week passed away;—
And years flew by, and their sorrow at last,
Was told as a mournful tale that is past."

"If, among the friends of him who had so strangely disappeared, his intended bride felt the most acutely, it was on his brother that the blow fell most heavily. Mary long refused to be comforted; and was only sustained by young health, and by hopes which we all laboured to infuse into her dejected heart; but the sickly frame of William's brother never recovered from the shock it received. He always reflected on himself for having parted from his brother in anger; the fate of Edward, which was ever before his eyes, seemed to afford too natural an explanation of the mystery of William's disappearance; and his exhausted frame yielded at last to death, after an interval of about three years, during which his chief solace was the society and the kind attentions of the amiable family of Sanditofts. His last words were—

"Whither is he gone?—what accident
Hath rapt him from us?"

The title of his wicked cousin was contested by another claimant, which kept matters in abeyance, else he never could have been prevented by us, the executors, from entering into possession. At last, after a long litigation, the case went in his favour, of which I was first informed while engaged in the market here; and, although I had long anticipated such a result, the impression which the intelligence made upon my mind was most painful. At the weekly dinner, whither I repaired as usual, from long habitude rather than inclination, I felt feverish and uncomfortable; an insatiable thirst made me drink rather more than my wont, and in the course of the evening I sank into a heavy bilious slumber. How long I remained in that state I know not. But I remember well, that, feeling a hand laid on my arm, which kept tightening its grasp till it awoke me, I turned to my next neighbour, who was staring as if at some object of terror; and that, following his affrighted look, I beheld William sitting before me, with features wasted, care-worn, and wofully sad, and in the well-remembered attitude in which I had seen him, a little before his strange disappearance. Confounded, incapable of speech and action, did I remain for some time. At length, having caught his eye, we both started up together.

"William," cried I, "can this be really you?—O man where hae ye been a' this time?"

"Mary! Mary!" cried he; "tell me about her!"

"I told him that she was alive and well.

"But, but!" said he.

"She is still unmarried," said I, "and as devoted to you as ever, which is more than you were entitled to expect, after having left her in the manner you did."

"I have been a prisoner," said he, in a mournful tone, "in a land of which till lately I knew not the name, and I was carried away by force."

"Amid exclamations of wrath, which came from all parts of the room, and the tumultuous flocking of his old friends around him, his voice was again heard.

"And my brother?" said he; "tell me also about him."

"He has been dead," said I, "for about two years. In the arms of your beloved did he breathe his last sigh."

"Upon this his tears began to flow; but he checked them immediately, adding—'Enough for the present. In a little while, my kind friends, I will tell you all. But my heart is now heavy, and the crisis is urgent. Will you, for old friendship's sake, have the goodness either to go or to send down the coast, a little to the northward of this. A party of poor fellows will be found in the same plight as I am. Bring them all hither, and provide for them, in my name, dry clothing, a good supper, plenty of drink, and comfortable bedding.' All with one accord readily undertook the charge. 'And now, then,' said he, 'this old hat shall be again fitted to my head; for the billows are sporting with the one I lately wore.' Perceiving his clothes to be wet, we adverted to the circumstance. 'Pooh,' said he, 'I have just been shipwrecked, that's all.' With that he hurried me out of this house, and entering that of a mutual friend, where comfortable dry clothing was provided for him, and a chaise having been procured, we flung ourselves into it, and drove off to Sanditofts.

"As we drew near the house, painful feelings began to arise in his mind, as to the reception he would meet with, and the construction which might have been put upon his involuntary absence. Dismissing the carriage, therefore, I hurried on before him, at his earnest request, and finding, on entering the house, the father and daughter by themselves, my first words were—'William has been a prisoner in a strange land—he was carried away by force, poor fellow.' Amazement, mingled with many other feelings, was visibly depicted in each countenance. Poor Mary began to weep profusely. Diffidently, and with her eyes earnestly fixed on mine, she was just inquiring when they might expect to see him or to hear from him, when her ear was caught by the sound of an approaching foot; and, immediately the door opening, William stood before her. With a cry of joy, she and her father flew to welcome him. For long did she remain clasped in his arms; and, what a scene was exhibited in the outpourings of their innocent and faithful love—a love which had withstood the most perilous of all trials—a long separation, which had been connected with so many doubts and anxious fears, and over which so thick a veil of mystery had hung! The father and I stood silently regarding them, as they wept in sadness and were rapturously joyful by turns.

"Weel," said the father, rubbing his hands together, with a look of inexpressible satisfaction, "that's really a sight guid for sair een. Puir things!—lang hae they loved each other, and sair has their love been tried."

"When our excited feelings had a little subsided, curiosity became the prevailing sentiment. Mr Constant and I began by detailing the particulars of our ineffectual search along the coast. William, on his part, declared, that, when he left me on going out, it really was his intention to have come back immediately, and to have returned to Sanditofts where he had been invited and had promised to pass the night; but he stated that, having felt somewhat oppressed by the

heat of the crowded apartment, he had been unhappily induced, by the refreshing coolness of the evening, to walk a little way by the sea-side, where he had apprehended no evil.

"To all appearance," said he, "there was nothing but solitude around me; only, I heard carts at a distance which seemed to be driven inland; and my curiosity was excited by a low rumbling sound which came from the other side of a small projecting promontory. I ran hastily in the direction of the latter sound. After having proceeded a little way, I heard footsteps coming up behind me; but I continued to move on, without slackening my pace, until there came a shrill whistle followed by the sound as of a number of men rushing towards me. I then attempted to fly, but was prevented by two stout fellows, who placed themselves right in my way, and a numerous party of men quickly surrounded me, one of whom, eyeing me attentively, exclaimed—'The very man we want. We shall be able to do our friend's work with very little trouble.' On my attempting to expostulate and resist, I was overpowered and forced into a boat. The boat rowed off to a smuggling vessel which was lying in the offing; and which, soon after I was put on board, stood out to sea under a press of canvass—chased, as it soon appeared, by a revenue cutter, which continued for long to fire at her."

Here he was interrupted by our mentioning the two vessels which we had seen passing over the moon.

"I was in the first of these vessels," said he; "the two-masted lugger, which, unfortunately, was able to escape, by superior sailing, from the second vessel—a revenue cutter, fore-and-aft rigged, with one mast—by which she was pursued.

"My captors continued, for two or three weeks, to land goods on different parts of the eastern coasts, sustaining so many losses that I could not help saying that, if their trade was a paying one, the goods which they could afford to lose in such quantities could not be honestly come by—an observation at which great offence was taken. After having parted with her original cargo, and shipped another, which was chiefly composed of provisions of all sorts, the vessel left the German Ocean, going north about; and she then pursued a south-westerly course across the Atlantic for many weeks, until she was accosted by a notorious pirate, Gonsalvo by name, the terror of the West Indian seas; for whom, as I could observe, a careful look-out had long been kept. This ferocious ruffian, having come on board our vessel, had a long interview with our captain—the two worthies being, to all appearance, on terms of most courteous and familiar intimacy—and our cargo of provisions was put on board the pirate's vessel; while hogsheads of sugar, puncheons of rum, and other articles of West Indian produce, were received in exchange. This transaction clearly explained the mystery of the contraband trade. The smugglers of the present day are connected with the Buccaneers, who, not daring to bring their ill-gotten goods to a regular market, willingly barter the bulky part of them on any terms, for the necessaries of life. These goods having been taken originally for nothing, and subsequently sold for little or nothing, if one cargo out of three escapes seizure, the concern will pay. Hence it is, that the contraband trade is maintained, in spite of every effort to put it down.

"After another long interview which our captain had with this Gonsalvo, some of my shipmates came to me with joyful countenances, looking like men from whose minds some heavy burden had just been removed; and they told me, that 'my life was to be safe; only,' said they, 'take care of your tongue.'

"My life!" cried I, in astonishment. Hitherto I had been under no apprehensions about my life; although I had discovered, in course of conversation with the men, that my

villanous cousin, to whose secret stores the carts I had heard were no doubt proceeding, had been long and deeply engaged with the smugglers—that he had been of immense service to them—and that it was to gratify him, and, at his request, that I had been carried away." Gently checking, with his upraised hand, the exclamations which this disclosure drew from his hearers, he thus proceeded:—"You may guess what my feelings were, when I was put on board the vessel of the odious Gonsalvo. All my former shipmates regarded me with compassion; and a poor fellow, from this part of the country, called James Stray, who, in an evil hour, had been tempted to engage in the illegal traffic, told me at parting, with tears in his eyes, that he would regret what had happened to the last day of his life; for that I was 'the best o' the twa.'

"After cruising about for some time, Gonsalvo made for a numerous group of small rocky islands, which were scattered over a great extent of sea; and, entering them by a labyrinth of intricate passages, he moored hard by one larger than the rest, and pleasantly wooded, which had a good roadstead, where the hulks of several captured vessels were observable, seemingly in the act of being broken up for firewood. Here I was put ashore. Before leaving the pirate vessel, I made bold to enter—and it was for the first time—the principal cabin, where I collected a number of books in the Spanish language; loaded with which, and moved by restrained indignation to do something ludicrous, I presented myself before Gonsalvo on the quarter-deck, with the easy confident air of a gentleman gifted with considerable assurance, who has been presuming somewhat too far upon the good nature of another. Never shall I forget the look of cold, cruel, malign contemptuousness, with which the ruffian regarded me. That look said to the eye, although not to the ear—'Wretched creature, I see you have been making very free with my property; but it matters not.'

"In this unknown spot, and within the power of this ruffian, did I remain for about four years, more or less. My chief employment was fishing. I became an expert boatman—I made occasional visits to another piratical station to the south of us: thus did I endeavour to pass my lonely hours. I sometimes found a kind of pleasure in exploring the intricate navigation of the islands; and, in time, became acquainted with many a place where a boat could pass in certain states of the tide, through rocks which had the appearance of being continuous. The sheet of water at the back of our island, was bounded, on the north-west, by a long and seemingly unbroken chain of high precipitous rocks, through a cleft in which I discovered a winding passage of this nature, leading to a small secluded island, not distinguishable from numberless others which lay scattered, like black sea-fowl, over the surface of the water. With all my thoughts bent on escape, I endeavoured to attach to me a lad of sixteen, residing on the island, along with his widowed mother; having, with the aid of Gonsalvo's books, mastered the Spanish language. He was a stupid cub; manageable when we went out together a-fishing; but without any character of his own. I therefore trusted him in nothing. I once carried him far west into the open sea beyond the islands; but, when we found the formidable high heaving swell below our frail bark, he began to cry, and, my own nerves being somewhat shaken, I returned with a heavy heart, while on the point of attempting something great—of running off with the boat and boy altogether.

"This incident made me anxious to have a vessel of larger dimensions; and a barge of peculiar construction, high raised, and with a deck at bow and stern, occurred to me, which I had seen at the other station. Proceeding thither by myself, and saying that we had need of such a thing, I offered to purchase it with part of a sum of gold, which I had on me when carried away, and had carefully

preserved. The men regarded me with a stare, but seemed quite willing to sell a thing which was not their own, and for which they had no use. The bargain being struck, they assisted me in navigating it, by a long circuitous course of many weeks, by which I brought them to the small secluded island, which was my favourite place of refuge. While carrying them back in my boat by the same road, we became very friendly; and, at their suggestion, I purchased, with the rest of my gold, a large cargo of such things as were of use for repairing the barge, and perfecting her equipment. On returning to Gonsalvo's station after this perilous transaction, I found the mother of the boy on whom I had formed designs, in tears. He had been taken on board Gonsalvo's ship, who had effected a return and a departure in my absence. During the period of my stay, the pirate had kept ever and anon returning at irregular intervals; but his arrival was the signal for my flight; and, that flight might at all times be in my power, the boat which I had been allowed to appropriate on account of my fishing services, always lay on the back of the island, over against the secret opening through the north-western line of rocks. Gonsalvo, on his part, never, so far as I could learn, inquired after me; and, as years had slipped away, during which I had never seen him, nor he me, I had insensibly become less cautious, concluding that he had forgotten me altogether. Narrow was the escape which I in consequence made.

"Motives of humanity had led me to pay some attention to the widowed mother, after the loss of her son, for which she seemed to be very grateful. On one occasion, when I had secured my boat in its usual place at the back of the island, I was not deterred by the sight of the pirate's pendant glancing above the trees, which shewed that his ship was in the roadstead, from paying her a visit, and making inquiries after her son. There was much embarrassment in her manner when she saw me; she seemed to be agitated by conflicting feelings; and, at length, she hesitatingly stated that Gonsalvo had been inquiring after me, and, as she believed, for no good. 'Your son,' said I, 'would he befriend me?'

"'He is now become as bad as the rest of them,' said she; 'much I said to him on your account; and, oh, what usage he gave his mother!'

"The information of the poor woman made me anticipate the worst. Leaving her some fish, I hastily ran to the highest point of the island, and threw myself on the ground under cover of the hill, where I had immediate access to my boat, and could observe every movement of the enemy. I was in a state of desperation; gall and wormwood were in my heart. Had I then stood by Gonsalvo's magazine, with a lighted match in my hand, I would have blown them all up, that they might have perished along with me. While in this state of feeling, the thought flashed like lightning upon my mind, that I might go to the other station; that I might join the other piratical crew, to whose leader I was unknown; that, having gained their confidence, I might betray and hang them all, and return home. The new idea giving a new excitement to hope, I was presently meditating upon the result, rather than upon the means; and, in a little while, sinking into slumber, I was dreaming of my distant home and betrothed love. Meanwhile, the sound of British voices had so softly entered my dreaming ear, that it was some time before the reality awoke me. Awakening at last, I was startled to find myself surrounded by a number of the pirate's men, when I gave myself up for lost. But there was a compassion in their looks, and tears in their eyes. 'My good friends,' said I, in confusion.

"'O sir,' said they, 'you have small reasons to call friends, the persons by whom you were so villainously carried away. We thought we knew you as you lay asleep; now that you have spoken, we are certain.'

"'My dear fellows,' said I, recognising them for part of

the crew of the smuggling vessel, 'I only remember now your former kindness, and your anxiety that my life should be safe.'

"'God bless you!' said one of them, by name Jack 'Id; 'could you bring your noble heart to taste with us?'

"Willing to gratify him, I received his offered flask, and drank from it a mouthful of rum.

"In the course of the long conversation which followed this act of courtesy, I learned that the captain of the smuggling vessel in which I had been carried away, had fallen in an affray with the revenue officers; that his crew, having been so ill advised as to aid the illegal traffic by fire-arms, and thus to become guilty of a capital crime, had been induced to betake themselves, in their perplexity, to Gonsalvo; and that he, making very light of what had happened, had received part of them on board his own vessel, and put the rest of them on board another smaller armed vessel, which he had fitted out.

"'Poor James Stray,' said I, 'what has become of him?'

"'Hanged, sir, at New York. The other small vessel in which he sailed was taken, and he suffered along with all the rest.'

"They stated farther, that their late captain, a little before his death, had got a letter from my cousin to Gonsalvo, which they had been careful to deliver, supposing that it might respect my return. Having explained the motives by which my cousin had been actuated in having me carried away, and mentioned the ominous words of the poor widow, from which it appeared that Gonsalvo was seeking my life, I made them sensible that my cousin's letter must have had a very different object in view from what they had supposed; and then they growled deep execrations against my unnatural kinsman. I soon found that they had not yet received on board a sufficiency of depravity for the kind of service in which they were engaged; that they were all most anxious to return to an honest course of life; and that they could not bear to live with the abominable wretches among whom they were. With unfeigned horror, they spoke of the miserable end of a poor young woman, who had lately fallen into the hands of the monsters, and whose body—after she had died under their outrages—they had carelessly flung into the sea, like a soiled garment. They gave a most woful account, also, of two captives of superior rank, whom the pirates at that moment had in their power—a father and his daughter; and they said that the daughter, if not speedily rescued, would meet the same fate as the other woman; for that Gonsalvo restrained neither himself nor his crew. One of them, whose name was Tom Clewgarnet, and who had a singularly soft expression in the rough outlines of his weather-beaten features, declared that he would willingly peril his life at any time, to deliver the innocent young creature out of their hands. Regarding the poor fellows, first with compassion, then with love, and then with confidence, I told them of all my plans for escaping; of my boat; of the secret passage through the rocks to the secluded island; and of the bark which I had there. 'Like the Yorkshireman,' said I, 'who is in possession of saddle, bridle, whip, and spurs, and wants nought but a horse, I have long had a vessel, and everything necessary for her equipment. It remains with you to determine whether I am still in want of a gallant crew.' Upon this they joyfully declared, one and all, that they would faithfully follow me to the death; and immediate flight was resolved on.

"'If we could but carry that poor young woman along with us,' said Tom Clewgarnet, 'what a blessed deed it would be!'

"He spoke with great earnestness of manner; and my observation was, 'Could we not try?'

"While commenting upon the fearful danger and the utter madness of such an undertaking, we observed a boat leaving the pirate vessel and moving toward the shore,

A pocket telescope having been directed to it, we discovered Gonsalvo and the identical girl who had excited our commiseration, seated in the stern. 'My life on't,' cried I, 'she will be removed to some secluded spot in these woods below.' And I was right. We saw Gonsalvo land with a small party, and move inland from the shore. Marking well the road he took, we then ranged ourselves in a long line across the woods, so as to communicate with each other; and, having received intelligence which enabled me, well acquainted as I was with the locality, to guess at the exact spot where Gonsalvo and his party would halt, I stationed myself near by, along with Tom Clewgarnet, so as to see without being seen. Onward, in a little while, came the darkly-scowling villain, with the poor trembling girl, dragged along by two armed attendants. My heart burned within me. The attendants were dismissed; she remained struggling in his arms; and then, laying my hand on Tom's cutlass, giving him at the same time a sidelong look, I softly drew out the weapon, and, bounding forward toward Gonsalvo, I plunged it into his side. He uttered a stifled groan, which brought back his two attendants; when Tom, having taken up the sword of the fallen miscreant, he and I furiously set upon them, and in a moment they also lay dead at our feet. Turning now compassionately to the girl, while our weapons were red and reeking with blood, I addressed her in French, which she seemed to understand, assuring her, that she was now in honest hands, where she would find honourable protection. Our companions having rejoined us, with the gratifying intelligence that our fell deed had escaped observation, we were on the point of proceeding toward my boat, which was lying ready to receive us, when a most vexatious difficulty occurred. Nothing that we could say would persuade the girl to move without her father, whom she long and earnestly implored us to save. I mentioned to her the horrid end of the other poor woman, and somewhat angrily shewed to her how ungenerous it was to urge her deliverers on to certain death, in vainly attempting to deal with more than two hundred armed ruffians; upon which she sunk to the ground, sobbing piteously. She was an uncommonly interesting looking creature, delicately formed, wofully wasted with suffering, and very young. My heart was melted. A scheme occurred to me, by which it was at least possible that her father might be saved; and, having spoken soothingly to the girl, and applauded the heroism of her devoted filial love, I declared that we really would make the fearful attempt to which she urged us, if, in return, she would promise to follow and be obedient to Tom, in whose care I meant to leave her for a time. Having obtained from her assurances to that effect, I unfolded my plan, first to her in French, and then to the men in English;—which was, that, having rowed off to the pirate vessel in the very boat from which Gonsalvo had just landed, and which then lay awaiting his return, I would endeavour to pass myself off for a French officer, belonging to the pirate ship known to be at the other station, who, being on a visit to Gonsalvo, had been deputed by him to bring the father of the girl ashore, for the purpose of extorting an exorbitant ransom; and, that on our return, we would double the south-eastern point of the island, where there was an intricate passage well known to me, through which we could find our way into the sheet of water on the north-west side of it, where Tom and the girl might wait for us in my boat.

"To this perilous scheme the men agreed, although with visible reluctance; and it was immediately put in execution. The body of Gonsalvo was stripped of its gay vestments, which I shudderingly drew on, while wet and warm with his blood; and from which every distinctive ornament was carefully removed. It was a fearful venture; but the squalid rags which I previously wore, would have worse accorded with the character I had to sustain. Tom was then sent

off, along with the girl, toward my boat, while I and the rest of the men ran down to the opposite shore, sprang into the boat of Gonsalvo, rudely tumbled out three men who had been left in charge of her, and rowed off to the pirate vessel, leaving the men standing on the beach and looking after us in stupid amazement. While on our way, we were deeply meditating upon, and carefully arranging all that was to be said and done, feeling how perilous it would be in a matter which required such extreme delicacy, to be compelled, '*capere consilium ex improviso.*' A boat cloak, thrown negligently around me, aided in concealing my borrowed and bloody garments; several of the men who seemed to have the firmest nerves were instructed to go on board and remain carelessly sauntering about; while one of them brought off the father of the girl, and I endeavoured to keep the chief officer in play. On approaching, I gallantly hailed; begged to see the chief officer; gave up my assumed name; spoke of my pretended visit to, and of the pretended errand on which I had been sent by Gonsalvo; and mightily wondered how he, Gonsalvo should have thought such a poor squalling wretch of a creature good for anything, but to extort an exorbitant ransom from her father, whom for that purpose I was forthwith to bring ashore. I began with speaking in French, in which the foreign accent would be less perceptible to a Spaniard, and then in such imperfect Spanish as a French officer might be expected to use. My masquerade escaped detection, and the bait took. The father of the girl, with his woe-gone, yet noble looking features, was received into the boat; all my companions leisurely followed one after another and resumed their oars. Jack Fid came last of all, carrying in his hand a huge greybeard of liquor, and having in his features a peculiar twist, which seemed to say—'How we are doing the scoundrels!' and at which we afterwards laughed very heartily. It was no time for laughter then.

"'I see a boat putting off yonder,' cried the chief officer, applying a telescope to his eye, 'with a dead body lying in her stern.'

"A deadly terror struck through my heart; but, with assumed indifference, I replied—'Ay, Gonsalvo has got that fellow at last;' making it seem that the dead body seen from afar was my own.

"'It is fortunate that he has been caught,' said the other, laying down his telescope; 'Gonsalvo has made the widow and her son answerable for him with their lives.'

"The last words were scarcely audible, by reason of the distance which we had interposed between us and the vessel. With the strokes of our oars gradually increased both in frequency and in length, we flew rapidly through the water. As we receded from, the other boat with Gonsalvo's blood-boltered carcase, which the chief officer had seen from afar, drew near the vessel. When far beyond the reach of small arms and of grape, although still within the longest range of the cannon, we could see her come alongside the vessel; and then multitudes of faces were stretched over, or thrust out of bulwark and port-hole; a great commotion was observable on board; the vessel, making a yaw round, turned her broadside towards us; twelve columns of smoke darted from her side, and as many thunders opened their voices, while through the air a shower of iron came hurtling towards us. Every bullet fell beyond, or short, or wide of us, and in a little while the projecting south-eastern point of the island screened us from the fire and from the view of the enemy.

(To be continued.)



WILSONS

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND

THE LOST HEIR OF THE HOUSE OF ELPHINSTONE.

(Concluded.)

“After having doubled this point, two passages opened before us—one wide and inviting, which led eastward into the Atlantic—the other narrow, and not distinguishable from numberless other similar openings in the rocks which led to nothing. Into the former, we threw our hats, that our pursuers might be led to suppose that our boat, injured by a random shot, had foundered; through the intricacies of the latter, to me well known, we wound our way north-westward, until we had gained the sheet of water on the other side of the island, where we found Tom and the girl in my boat, awaiting our approach in the deepest anxiety, their ears having been startled by the thunder of the broadside, while they knew not the result. At the sight of the lonely desolate girl, sitting, in terror, by the side of her rough-looking, but kind-hearted conductor, my heart was thrilled with compassion; and when we drew near, I pointed, delightedly, to her father, on whom she continued to fix an eager, wistful look, until Tom, lightly lifting her up, and leaping on board of us as we brushed by, had placed her in his arms. Tom, at my instance, came and seated himself by me in the stern, where he kept gazing for some time at the outpourings of the purest of all affections—filial and parental love; and then turning to me, and speaking with deep emotion, he told me that it was by him that James Stray had been first led away; that, since his miserable end he had made frequent attempts at prayer, but that then an awful pang had always shot through his head and heart. ‘If,’ continued he, ‘we shall be able to save that father and daughter, will that pass away?’ Anxious to give the poor fellow useful and innocent advice, I told him that what he spoke of arose from conscience, which, slumbering at other times, always awoke during prayer; that there was nothing pacified the conscience like a good deed, humbly offered to God in the Redeemer’s name; that, after having returned to an honest course of life, he would obtain what good people called peace of conscience; and that then his devotions would be as soft and sweet as they had ever been when a child at his mother’s knee. He seemed very grateful for these words of instruction, declaring that he was ready to shed for me the last drop of his blood. Bending forward now toward the father, and addressing him for the first time, I assured him that his daughter had been restored to him unscathed, that we were ourselves in the act of escaping from the pirates, and that we would either save him or perish along with him.

“A little before sunset we came under the north-western line of rocks, whose long shadows concealed us from distant observation; and, entering the passage through them, which I had so often traversed, we soon arrived at the place where my bark was lying snug in the secluded island. At the sight of her, the seamen were delighted. They all leaped on board simultaneously, and began tumultuously to examine her in every part. ‘To work, lads,’ cried I, ‘that she may be made ready for sea as soon as possible.’ To

work accordingly we fell. Fires were kindled, pitch melted, oakum, and all things necessary, were found in my stores. The work was continued during the night—when the ebbing tide left her high and dry—by the light of torches of pinewood, smeared with tar, which were stuck around, or borne in the hands of the father and daughter; and, after seven or eight hours of unremitted labour, the outer planking of the vessel was carefully caulked, and her hull thoroughly repaired in every part. Leaving the carpenter and two other hands to keep watch and repair the water casks, the rest of us turned in to enjoy a few hours of sleep. The light of day beheld us again at work; and several hours behoved still to elapse before the masts could be hoisted, the sails bent, and the running rigging rove. Meanwhile, an anchor was carried out to sea, and the cable laid over the windlass; my long hoarded stores of biscuit, junk, and dried fish, were put on board, with a few culinary utensils, a sufficiency of loose timber for fuel, and of ballast for trimming the vessel; and the water casks, filled at a neighbouring fountain by the father and daughter, were rolled down to the beach, one by one. The work being nearly over in every department, we continued, some on board, and some on shore, patiently to await the rising of the tide, now nearly at the full; and the father had very judiciously thought of climbing a neighbouring height to reconnoiter. On gaining the summit, he was observed to return in all haste, and seemingly in great terror. The daughter was running off to meet him, but, arrested by me, she was given in charge to her old protector; while I cried out—‘To the water casks, one and all.’ So, while they were in the act of being swung on board, she continued to struggle and to scream in Tom’s arms. The poor girl’s agitation proceeded from an interesting cause; but it was very provoking to be unnecessarily deprived, at such a time, of a valuable hand. However, the last water cask was safely stowed, when the father arrived with the alarming intelligence, that a number of boats, full of men, were on the east coast of the island; and that a party, landed from one of them, were in the act of ascending the opposite acclivity. The daughter was on the point of springing into his arms; but I had her very unceremoniously swung on board, calling her an unmanageable vixen. The father, and all the rest of us immediately followed; and then, having thrust our handspikes into the windlass—just as the party of which we had received information were seen on the top of the neighbouring height—we made, with our united strength, one desperate heave. A grinding sound, heard at the bottom of the vessel, shewed she had been dislodged; but the cable had snapped, and I threw myself down in despair, giving up all for lost. The dexterity of the seamen saved us. The cable, while on the point of escaping, was caught, jammed, and held fast, until it was spliced in such a manner as to be capable of enduring as great a strain as ever. Laying our strength on more cautiously, the grinding sound was again heard, and we affected a quarter turn of the windlass. Coil after coil of the cable now passed over the revolving beam, without farther accident; and at length the vessel, floating smoothly in deep water, was hauled out to the offing, just as a hundred armed

ruffians, having surmounted the neighbouring heights, were rushing down, with infuriated yells, towards us. The ample folds of our pointed lateen sails were then spread to the winds; and we joyfully proceeded on our way, while the baffled scoundrels stood looking at us from afar; and we sat in safety looking at them, with the prey that we had rescued out of their merciless hands.

"When our feelings had a little subsided after this excitement, and while the most skilful seamen were superintending the adjustment of the ballast, and studying the properties of the vessel, I went and sat down by the father and daughter. I begged of the daughter that she would excuse the hasty words which I had been led to use, in my anxiety to leave such a dangerous shore. Her father assured me that he could easily see the kindness of my heart amid the prompt decided manner which the hour of danger required; and I assured him that there was not a man on board who did not regard the saving of him and of his daughter as the best part of the enterprise. He began to pour forth the warmest expressions of gratitude, when my attention was called to the pilotage of the vessel, and nothing more passed between us at that time. To conduct the vessel through such intricate and precarious passages, required the utmost care and unremitting attention; but at length, just as the sun was gilding the watery waste with his setting radiance, we reached the open sea, at the very place where I had been some years before with the Spanish boy. I now asked the father where he would wish to be carried.

"'To Havannah,' said he, with tears gushing down his cheeks.

"Upon this we directed our course, at a venture, a good way southward from the point at which the sun was setting; and, as we had no compass, we resolved to steer by the wind, which was blowing steadily from one point. We then made all snug for the night, keeping as much sail up as the little vessel could safely carry; and, a proper watch having been set, the remainder of the weary crew were sent to rest.

"The father and daughter were led by me into a small cabin under the stern deck; and they, aware of the scantiness of our accommodation, insisted that I should stay with them, when I was on the point of withdrawing that they might be left by themselves. The father was placed in the middle, his daughter on one side of him, and I stretched my weary limbs on the other. I remained for long supine, motionless, and unable to sleep; and thus I came to overhear the following dialogue, which was carried on in the purest Spanish, between the father and his daughter:—

"'Papa,' said she, 'are the French all so much better than the Spanish?'

"'My dear Carolina, why that question?'

"'He spoke to me first in French.'

"'He speaks French well, but with a strong English accent. His companions are all British sailors; certainly the most extraordinary people in the world. A party of these men, lately landing in a drunken frolic, took one of the strongest fortresses in Spain, which the Spanish King would give half the wealth of his dominions to recover.'

"She then gave him a detailed account of all that had befallen her—greatly exaggerating my prowess and that of Tom—and dwelling much on our kindness, in having, at her instance, made such a perilous attempt to save him.

"'Well,' said he, 'the British are truly a noble people; I feel easy now that I am in their hands, although there is a mystery in our deliverance, and in that extraordinary young man to whom his companions seem so devoted, which I cannot fathom. Having joined in their discourse with an apology, I fully explained the mystery he spoke of, telling him who I was, and under what unhappy circumstances I had been carried away from my native land, while on the very eve of marriage. I told him also of his daughter's devoted filial love; how she had refused to escape, unless he

could be saved along with her; and how she had absolutely forced us on to do what we did, when we were all shrinking from the risk, and unwilling to incur farther danger. While straining to his heart his dutiful child, he made me acquainted with his own history. It appeared that he, Don Pedro by name, was a Spanish gentleman well known in Havannah, who, notwithstanding the war between our countries, could easily procure for me a speedy return home; that an attachment having arisen between his daughter Carolina, and Alonzo, the eldest son of a noble family, at whose haughty bearing he had taken offence, he had sent her away to a sister of his, resident in one of the Windward Islands; that Alonzo's father and he, having afterwards come to a better understanding, he had gone, in person, to bring back his daughter, with a view to her immediate marriage; and that, while on their way home, they had the misfortune to be taken by the pirates. 'What became of the vessel in which we sailed,' added he, 'and her crew, I know not; but I apprehend the worst.'

"After this exchange of confidence, gratitude on their parts, and the inexpressible satisfaction of having achieved such a deliverance on mine, united our hearts together; and in the society of the noble Spaniard and his amiable daughter, I, after my long years of lonely wretchedness, felt for a time the hours pass rapidly away. There was I know not what of romantic interest in our peculiar situation. A hurricane would soon have drowned us all; but the wind blew fair and steady. The prospect around us was unvarying, but one of which the eye could not soon grow weary. At noon, when the sun, vertical in that latitude, poured down his irradiation from the zenith, he appeared like a glorious ornament in the centre of the canopy of the heavens, from which they descended in a uniform arch of unclouded blue, until they rested on the farthest edge of the waste of water, over whose billows our little bark was gallantly bounding, and which, wherever the eye was turned, seemed to stretch

"Far into silent regions, blue and pale."

One cloud there was which rested on my mind. All seemed to regard me with confidence—to look on me for direction; but I had no confidence in myself. Unaided by compass or nautical science, we were steering almost at random, vaguely guessing at a south-westerly course, from the position of the rising and setting sun.

"In this manner, week after week passed away, until one morning, when I was awakened by the hand of Don Pedro, laid on my shoulder. He seemed to be in great agitation; and I hastily arose and followed him forward. When we reached the open part of the vessel, he raised his arm and pointed to where, over a little aft the weather-bow, we could observe, hung high in air, the inverted images of a number of ships, with a large vessel in the centre, and a line of coast stretching hard by.

"'Sir,' said he, 'I know that to be the coast and shipping of Havannah.'

"'All's well,' cried I; 'who is at the helm?'

"'Bill Bowline,' your honour.

"'Bill, lay your bows right upon the main-mast of that large vessel which you see looming in the distance.' 'Ay, ay, sir.' 'Steer directly towards her, and try to keep your course exactly, guided, as usual, by the position of your sails, relatively to the wind.' 'Ay, ay, sir.' Turning now to Don Pedro, I said—'Admirably has he done his work; he seems a perfect sailing made easy, or every mariner his own compass.' Without noticing my pleasantry, my poor friend said, with a very serious look—'You see the care with which the mother of God watches over the children of the true church. Carolina having asked me, the day before, what I would do to my wicked cousin; and I having said that I would merely give him a long forgiving look, she farther asked if I belonged to the *true church*; and on my saying that I belonged to a very humble church, which, however, was faith-

ful in teaching all her children to look up to God, in the Redeemer's name, with the desire of being good, that they might obtain good, Don Pedro seemed to wish that such a delicate subject should be dropped. Now, however, he conceived himself to stand on high vantage ground, and appealed to the aerial reflection as a splendid miracle wrought for his behoof. I told him that what he saw was a common natural phenomenon, with which our able seamen were all quite familiar; but he shook his head, doubting or disbelieving. 'Noble, sir,' said I, 'you understand English; listen;—Bill Bowline, at what distance may these ships be, on which you are now steering?'

" 'Sure to raise them, sir, in the course of the day.'

" 'Mark that,' said I, assuring Don Pedro that in all likelihood he would be at home and in the bosom of his family before night. If the blush of shame which the children of the true church are wont to exhibit when their supposed or pretended miracles are most satisfactorily accounted for on natural principles, did for a moment pass over the features of Don Pedro, it was soon chased away by excessive joy. During the day, he suffered much from impatience; hope and fear had by turns the possession of his mind. But, at length, after many a long, tedious hour of watching, he beheld a line of blue land rising above the edge of the horizon, which gradually unfolded itself into the town, coast, and shipping of Havannah.

" At the request of her father, no information as to what we had seen and were led to expect, was given to Carolina. He was afraid that our hopes might not be realized, and that she might have to endure the pangs of disappointment. Accordingly, she was in the very act of speaking of her home, of her family, and of her lover, as dear objects that she might never again see, when her father entered the cabin in an ecstasy of joy, crying—'Here they are all now, just as we saw them in the morning; only, their masts point upward, and not down. Not a moment longer,' cried he, 'shall my dear daughter be kept in ignorance.' So catching her in his arms, he led her forward to the bows, and pointed out to her the distinct outlines of her native shore. She silently gazed on it for an instant; then tears of joy flowed down her cheeks. To me, to Tom, to all our companions, severally, she testified her gratitude in broken accents, calling us her dear deliverers, and invoking the blessings of Heaven upon our heads. The men were in raptures with her; and, wishing to improve the opportunity afforded for drawing vividly forth their best affections, I said to them—'Only to think, now, that there should be hearts, either in earth or hell, capable of misusing a fine creature like that!' A low murmuring sound, as if of profound deliberation, followed these words; after which Bill Bowline arose as the orator of the party, and, having given his trowsers a hitch, he said that it was the contraband trade that had thrown them among such abominable wretches as the Buccaneers; and that they were resolved never to break the laws of Old England any more, for that they now saw, that when once people began to do evil, there was no saying where they might end; which resolution gave to Don Pedro great satisfaction. The greybeard of Jack Fid was now handed round as long as it contained a drop of liquor; after which it was broken, its fragments, along with a variety of other movables, were thrown into the sea, and three hearty cheers were given.

" In a little while, the bark lay alongside of the quay of Havannah. Don Pedro and his daughter, having been safely handed out, sunk down on their knees, and the men went and sat down at a little distance, as if anxious to avoid the appearance of wishing to intrude. Feeling sympathy for the brave fellows, and admiring their motives, I went and seated myself in the midst of them, saying—'From me, at least, you shall not be parted;' while an unpleasant suspicion arose in my mind lest we should, after all, be left in a land of

strangers, lonely and unowned. In this I did our kind friends wrong. Having devoutly rendered their thanks to Heaven, they came and begged us to follow them. By way of giving effect to the feelings of my companions, I said that we would be sorry to distress their hospitality; upon which Carolina looked first amazed, then angry, and then burst into tears—'This from you!' said she—'from my preserver—from my second father!' Forthwith she and her natural father drove us all before them, like a flock of reluctant geese, to their residence—a splendid one it was, in which we met as warm a reception as grateful hearts could give, or the unfriended desire.

" Next day several high officers of the Spanish army and navy waited upon me, and made particular inquiries respecting the pirate islands, with whose locality my long residence had made me well acquainted. Our nations were at war, but my heart took fire at the idea of terminating my exile by a noble stroke—by contributing to the fall of the Buccaneer, the common enemy of the civilized world. I, therefore, offered my own services, and those of my companions, on the express condition that, having left our large armed vessels so soon as we had arrived off the islands, we should venture among their intricacies in boats, with a sufficient force, and endeavour to take the enemy by surprise, and to carry him by boarding. This plan having, after some hesitation, been agreed to, off we set immediately; and, in three weeks, we returned in triumph, having captured both the pirate vessels, which were found lying, in supposed security, at their two stations, and completely destroyed that nest of odious ruffians, to the great joy of all the West Indian islands. My companions fought like lions; two of them fell, and several were wounded. On our return, we were loaded with honours; a great sum of money was given to me, for the purpose, as was said, of buying a sword; handsome sums were also given to each of my companions, which they put into my hands, and which, with what I shall add to them out of mine, will enable me to settle them all comfortably in life. During our absence, Don Pedro and his daughter had suffered much from anxiety on our account; they received us with the liveliest joy on our return—they mourned for the slain—they nursed the wounded with the tenderest care, and their house became, for a time, our home. Their kindness led us to prolong our stay far beyond the time necessary for the recovery of the wounded; and I had the satisfaction of assisting at the marriage and of being assured of the happiness of Alonzo and Carolina. At length, we parted from our grateful and warm-hearted friends; and a government packet conveyed us all safely across the Atlantic to Cadiz.

" At Cadiz, I found that the letters which Don Pedro had given to me, and procured for me, would enable us all, notwithstanding the war with France and Spain, to pass unmolested through both countries; and so, having converted our wealth into bills, payable in Antwerp, I travelled over land to this neutral port, along with my companions, as the readiest way to obtain a safe and a speedy passage to Britain. At Antwerp, I again converted my foreign bills into others which were payable in England; while my companions went down to the quay at my request, to look out for an immediate passage thither. On finding that no immediate passage could be procured, I purchased, at their suggestion, a small sloop, which was lying in one of the docks for sale; on board of which, confident in my lately acquired nautical science, and in the long-tryed seamanship of my companions, I proceeded straight across the German Ocean; steering direct, not for the latitude of any of England's great sea-ports, but for that of the home of my fathers, and the mouth of my native river. Having a good wind, we drove our little vessel, at a gallant rate, through the water. Our hearts being gay, our spirits high, and our stores supplied with abundance of everything, our voyage became

one continued scene of fun, festivity, and folly, in which I largely participated, until an event occurred which brought us to our senses. On the sixth morning of our passage, it was found that the vessel had sprung a leak—that there was four feet of water in the hold. The pumps enabled us to sink it a little; but it afterwards gained upon us to such an alarming degree that the carpenter was in doubt whether the vessel could be kept afloat for twenty-four hours longer. The wind also began to die away, and so thick a fog settled around us that we could see nothing but our foundering vessel, and the water into which she was ready to sink, looking black and dismal below. While matters were in this state, a thickening of the darkness came to be observable right a-head, at the lower part of the fog; which, while every eye was fixed upon it, rose higher, and shewed an irregular outline. It was declared to be land; and we were not long kept in suspense. In a little while, a grinding sound was heard at the bottom of the vessel, followed by a slight concussion; and, in about fifteen minutes, during which the vessel, stripped of every inch of canvass, continued to grind and to strike, she settled down and remained fast. I immediately secured my valuable papers on my person, and the men set about making preparations for leaving the vessel. We had neglected to provide ourselves with a boat; but two or three of the men swam to the shore, which proved to be at no great distance, carrying the end of a rope along with them; by the aid of which all the rest of us were enabled to reach the land in safety.

“Thus did my seven companions and I terminate our adventures. Once in safety, I began to laugh heartily at our mishap. ‘*O passi graviora necum*,’ cried I, gaily, as they seemed to stand down-hearted in their dripping garments; ‘it is on no desolate or inhospitable shore that we are now cast. Stay there for a little, till I see where we are, and look out for shelter.’ With that I went a little way inland, until, having observed the appearance of distant lights on my left, I ran in all haste in that direction, scarcely feeling the ground under my feet. In about half an hour, I came to a number of buildings which I seemed to know; I found a narrow lane, at the end of it a door, and within the door a stair, which I seemed to know. My heart began to beat violently. Having mounted the stair, and gone along a dark passage at the head of it, I came to a door, on opening which, the forms of the very friends, after leaving whom I was carried away, seemed to appear before me, as at their usual meeting. All gazed on me; but none of them spoke except old Adam Muzzy, who was in his usual state of inebriety, which so strangely brightens one part of his faculties and darkens another. Recognising me, and having some very indistinct perception of circumstances, he exclaimed, in the usual style of his address to a retired and returned bottle-companion—‘Guide me! ye hae been lang away; but we aye thocht that ye would be back, for ye left yer hat ahint ye. Sit doon, man, and tak aff yer glass.’

“The sight of my hat hanging where I left it, and the daized dreamy look of the creature with his half-shut eye, so affected me, that I sunk unconsciously down into the chair to which he pointed, painfully impressed with the idea that I had only been dreaming of home, as I had often done, in the lonely isles of the West-Indian seas. It was my name loudly pronounced by the friendly voice of Plain-worth which first awoke me from my stupor.

“‘My dear Mary,’ said he, as he concluded, ‘he will tell you what were the first questions which I asked.’

“‘Indeed,’ said I, addressing her, ‘his two first questions were both about you; and the second of them was, whether you were still unmarried?’”

“Amid the deep silence which followed this narrative, the effect of which was heightened by the near interest which each had in the principal actor, a soft diffident tap

was heard at the outer door; which, having been opened, the whole party of old friends, whom William had so startled by his unlooked for appearance among them that evening, came pouring in tumultuously, with the trampling of many feet, and the sound of many voices mingled together. We could have seen them far enough off, being in that quiet kind of heart-absorbing felicity, to which boisterous intrusion is most irksome. But it presently appeared, that, in their coming, there was no want of consideration. Besides attending to the wants of the shipwrecked mariners, as they had undertaken, they had employed a number of the resident fishermen, with their boats, to look after the wreck, now lying dry upon a ledge of rocks, with her bottom saved in, by whom every article of value on board had been saved. They described William’s companions as the strangest set of fellows whom they had ever met with. ‘They were close enough at first,’ said they. ‘Many significant looks having been exchanged between them when the glass began to circle round; but when they did open, what strange stories they told of the scenes which they had passed through! And, oh, how they spoke of you, Mr William! They said that you were the best and bravest of landmen—one whom no dangers could daunt, whom no difficulties could subdue, and who had so kind a heart withal, that you were always more attentive to their wants than your own. One of them, whom they called Tom Clewgarnet, declared it to be his firm belief that you were just a kind of an angel, who had been sent down to save them all from the pit.’ It appeared, in short, that our kind friends had been most attentive to the poor fellows; and that, with the powerful aid of the fishermen whom they had employed, and who had joined them after having finished their work, they had succeeded in sending them all to bed in a very comfortable state of inebriety; they themselves, also, as their appearance strongly testified, having suffered somewhat in the cause.

“After this gratifying intelligence had been given, which was received with the warmest acknowledgements, the whole party earnestly entreated William to consent to act his part in a notable ploy of Mr Macquill; which was, that, as his cousin was taking steps for entering into possession, and was to visit Elphinstone House the next day, he should make his first public appearance in the very heart of his proceedings.

“‘The people of the house where you threw off your wet garments,’ said they, ‘enter heartily into the plan; and, as we have been careful in keeping the secret, there is no person, either in town or country, who has any knowledge of your return.’

“William gratified them by a ready acquiescence; indeed, the proposal coincided exactly with his own previous intentions; the mortification which his cousin would receive being all the punishment which he intended for him. The necessary arrangements having been agreed on, and committed to Mr Macquill, the first projector of the plan the whole party were permitted to withdraw, on condition that they would favour us with their company to dinner next day, when William promised to make a full disclosure of all that had befallen him. When we were again by ourselves, William said to me, in a whisper—‘You must aid me, my friend, in making immediate arrangements for facilitating the escape of my cousin. The testimony of those people whom I have with me, would be sure to convict him; and, as they hate him most cordially on my account, that testimony, though it would implicate themselves, would be given with great good-will. Heaven knows, that I have no wish that, on the scaffold, kindred blood should flow!’

“Mary expressed an extreme desire to see the men who had passed through such strange scenes; and she begged of William, that he would take her with him for that purpose; adding, diffidently—‘I believe that, after this, I will always be afraid when you are out of my sight.’

“Early next morning, the long disused wardrobe of Wil-

William was procured from the mansion of the Elphinstones. While William was still sleeping profoundly, exhausted with the toils of the preceding day, Mr. Macquill and I made a careful selection of such articles of dress as we judged most suitable for him to appear in, on the approaching great occasion. We made choice of a suit which nearly resembled his ordinary forenoon attire—clothed in which, it was impossible for any who knew him to mistake his identity. His features were thinner than before; but he was immensely improved in his general appearance. His person was more firmly set—his carriage more staid and dignified; and, while he retained the same winning mildness of manner, there was in his eye that manly, resolute look, indicating energy, intrepidity, and force of character—which familiarity with toils and dangers, gallantly borne and nobly triumphed over, alone can give. Of the feelings of Mary, when she beheld her lover arrayed once more in his former vestments, looking so noble, so kind, and so like what he was before, it is impossible to speak. Their happiness, when they met next morning, was more tranquil than the evening before, but not less profound. At breakfast, Mr Macquill was the principal speaker—full of the all-engrossing project which he had in view. Immediately after breakfast, we were to have set out; but, hour after hour passed away, while the lovers remained together, ‘all the world forgot;’ and while poor Mr Macquill and I and the horses were waiting impatiently at the door. The impatience of Mr Macquill began to exceed all bounds; and a scout having brought intelligence that the chariots and horsemen of the enemy had been beheld approaching at a distance, he became very angry. He broke in abruptly upon the lovers—he took William by the arm, and led him off—promising, however, by way of comfort, that that separation should not be of longer duration than half an hour.

“Once in the saddle, off we set at full gallop, through by-roads, which brought us to a thicket in the rear of Elphinstone House, where some old domestics of the family, with delight vividly expressed in their countenances, were ready to receive our horses. Entering the house by a back door, and ascending the stairs, we heard, as we were passing the main entrance hall, the party without loudly thundering for admittance at the front door, while a little urchin of a boy, evidently in the secret, was pertly screaming to them through the key-hole—‘The key—the key! Can ye no stop a wee? What signifies a bit minute or twa?’ Proceeding forthwith into a spacious apartment, which directly opened into the entrance hall, and which had been fixed upon as the most proper place for the scene which was to be enacted, Mr Macquill conveyed William into a small by-room, where he was to remain in concealment until the proper time for his appearance: and shutting the door with a triumphant bang, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

“Events now rapidly followed each other. The preconcerted signal that all was prepared was given—the impatient party at the front door were admitted—and presently the cousin stalked into the room, followed by the sheriff, his officers, and our friends, with many other spectators whom they had brought along with them. I was standing at the window; Mr Macquill was pacing up and down the room with a huge white handkerchief applied to his eyes, and uttering uncouth sounds of wo, which, however, sometimes had a greater resemblance to laughter than to lamentation.

“‘Sir,’ said the cousin, ‘we come here for business, and have no time for nonsense.’

“‘I assure you,’ said the other, ‘that it is far from being my wish that the proper heir of this house should be longer kept out of his goodly heritage. You will find the only obstacle to your being put into immediate possession in that closet; and there is the key.’

“‘Hold,’ cries the sheriff; ‘too fast, sir, by one half.’

“A look of peculiar meaning from Mr Macquill arrested for an instant, the sheriff’s attention.

“Meanwhile the cousin having received the key, hurried to the closet, opened wide the door, and William walked forward into the room. He was recognised in an instant as was evident from the acclamations which followed his appearance.

“‘Ha! ha! ha!’ quoth the sheriff, ‘who could have expected this from you, Mr Macquill? You are positively become as arch as a romping, roguish young boarding-school girl of fifteen. Mr Elphinstone, give me leave to say that I never was more delighted—never more happy.’ Briefly returning the compliments of the worthy sheriff, William fixed his eyes upon his cousin with a look in which there was reproach, but no malignity.

“‘Cousin,’ said he—‘one with me in lineage, in kindred, and in blood—I have been indebted to you for a long and involuntary excursion abroad, which has been attended with most woful results. Sir, while I abhor, I forgive—I pity; in proof of which, I give you timeous warning that there is intelligence from the other side of the Atlantic, which concerns you more nearly than any farther interest which you can possibly have in my inheritance.’ With that, the bad man grew deadly pale—he trembled from head to foot—he looked fearfully at the sheriff—and he hurried out, followed by me. After a long pause, during which he seemed to be thinking profoundly, the sheriff said—‘There is really a strange meaning in your words, Mr Elphinstone!’—

“‘Which,’ replied William, ‘I will fully explain in a few days.’

“Whenever the facts of the case came to be known, the officers of justice were sent in full cry after the criminal; but, with the aid of the generous kinsman whom he had so foully wronged, he effected his escape, and was never heard of more.

“In a short time Elphinstone House again became the residence of its rightful proprietor; and, within less than a fortnight from the date of his return, William and Mary were united in the holy bands of wedlock, to be separated no more. I was the best-man; and a happier pair never was seen. They were happy in themselves and in their family.”

“Yes,” said Wonderlove, “from that family the dule passed away.”

“And you observe,” replied the other with a smile, “that the head of that house really did marry a maiden of low degree!”

“Well, now, is not that a strange—a strange—a very strange!”—

“It is a strange coincidence,” said Plainworth, “but nothing more. What more natural than that such a woman should engage the affections of such a man? and as for the subsequent prosperity of their numerous and bonny family, it is an old saying and a true—‘That being good, naturally leads to the obtaining of good.’”

THE SIEGE OF COCKLAWS.

COCKLAWS, a small insignificant Border tower, which reared its little armed battlements in proud perching majesty, about the time of the regency of the deceitful Albany, was, as is pretty well known, the scene of a siege, memorable for the object with which it was undertaken, and not less so for the ludicrous circumstances with which it was attended.

This warlike bantam, so appropriately termed Cocklaws, was owned by John Greenlaw, a person not unlike, in his physical attributes, to the little tower of which he was proprietor. He was a man about five feet in height, with gray eyes, which had a peculiar fiery brilliancy, indicative of the

spirit with which he was endowed. Active and nimble, he was as restless as an imprisoned popinjay, and did not fail to escape from the small tower which he called the seat of his strength, to imitate the great robbers of the time, in making free with the property of his neighbours, under the shade of the disorders which prevailed at that unhappy period.

Though small and insignificant in his person, Greenlaw considered himself a very powerful man, and nothing annoyed him more than being neglected as a person whom it was beneath the dignity of elevated revenge to chastise. His excursions were like those of a hornet. He did little execution, but made a great noise. His tower was so insignificant, that he had nowhere to put his spoil, even when it was secured; but this did not prevent him from exercising eternal "herschips," all around him, not, indeed, to any extent sufficient to draw upon him the attention of the great, but still sufficient to goad, while there was no power to destroy. Nothing, however, would have given the Laird of Cocklaws greater pleasure, than to have seen the Earl of Douglas, or some such great personage, stoop to notice his aggressions. He laboured incessantly to be thought a great Border raider, but found himself still classed among the insignificant herd of petty depredators.

He did not fail to make himself well known, for his clever, fiery bickerings, and pertinacious excursions, carried his name everywhere, but his fame nowhere. His ambition to be thought a great "king of the foray," was notorious;—the common people smiled at his weak and innocuous vanity, while the great barons looked upon him as a bumbling wasp, which, though a little annoying, did not deserve to be killed by the honourable arm of a knight. Occasionally, he was honoured with a hearty chastisement from some of the common people, when he ventured to meddle with their property; but when this happened, he saved his honour, by pretending that the proprietor of Cocklaws considered it beneath him to give battle to a person who could not even boast of being a simple esquire.

Occasionally he made an attack upon the castles of the great barons; but he did this merely to gain a character, and to keep up his self-deception of being a great Border warrior. It was seldom that much attention was paid to his skirmishes; it was sufficient that the attack was made by Greenlaw; and if any fears were entertained that he might terrify the women, it was only necessary to send out a few men, who very seldom had much trouble in making the little warrior retire, which he generally did with the nimblest celerity, giving out as his apology, that if the baron did not choose to head his men, he could not expect a fair battle from Cocklaws.

Like other little men, Cocklaws had a large wife. She was the very opposite, in every respect, to her husband—a fat, gaucy, good-humored Englishwoman, who looked upon the warlike bantam, with whom she was mated, when very young, by the command of her father, with the determination to be amused with what she could not get rid of. When he came in from his forays, he generally made a tremendous clamour for refreshment, stating, that the soldier was surely worthy of his hire, and that, if he devoted himself to the hardships and dangers of war, she might, at least, contribute to assuage, in so far as lay in her power, the pains and sufferings of the warrior, when he returned to his castle. The lady was, by no means, awanting in attention to her domestic duties, and knew that her husband had recourse to these compliments, to make him appear, in her eyes, a person of importance in the country, who drained his blood and exhausted his strength in Border warfare.

The good-natured lady heard these murmurings with the greatest good humour, and contrived to extract from the foibles of a person, who had no other qualities calculated to give her any satisfaction, as much amusement as she could.

He had seldom any wounds to shew, except occasionally a puncture with a lance or sword in the back; and when such required to be dressed by his wife, her operation was always accompanied by expressions of admiration on her part of the extent of the injury, and of the fortitude with which he could bear it; and, by long apologies by him, as to the locality of the wound, mixed up with big curses against the white livered caitives, who would not fight a man face to face, but basely got behind him and wounded him, while he was engaged in dealing out death against his enemies in front.

Sometimes she complimented him on the success of exploits which she knew had turned out unfortunate; and then, with the greatest adroitness, she would make an allusion to the tower which, she supposed, owed its safety entirely to the terror of his name. This was a very sensitive point with Cocklaws. He could get no one to attack his stronghold. It was so insignificant a turret, that no person would be at the pains to carry a mangonell to batter it to the earth; and then, like all the rest of these small erections, it could easily defy the force of ordinary arms. Nobody meddled with it, while the laird's depredations were confined to his mock system of noisy innocuous warfare. The lady adroitly found a cause for this in the terror of his name. He allowed her to retain this idea, which, indeed had been suggested by himself; but he secretly wished for nothing more ardently than an attack, not that he courted an opportunity to fight in a serious deadly way, but that he might derive some eclat and status, from his place being considered worthy of that notice, and have an opportunity of shewing his wife that, though a small man, he was possessed of the mettle of a great warrior.

His boastings were in proportion to his ambition of being considered brave and terrible. He was particularly fond of having a hit at the English; not that he wished to oppose himself to the Lady of Cocklaws, an Englishwoman, in whose eyes, like every well-disposed husband, he wished to appear deserving of her affection; but he depreciated the neighbouring nation, because he might thereby have an opportunity of forming a contrast—he being the representative of one of the contrasted parties. He could see no merit in Percy or Owen Glendower, or even in Henry of Lancaster himself, and dared his wife to shew where it lay.

"There's naething I wish mair fervently," said he, "than to hae a tourney wi' some o' thae Southerns; and mair especially wi' that brainwud cratur, Harry Percy, whom they call Hotspur. He wadna escape the point o' my lance, as he did Douglas's at Otterbourne; and I canna but think it was a sad disgrace to oor nation, that they allooed him the advantage he got at Homildon-hill. If the Regent had called upon me at my castle, and offered me fair terms, or even if he had graciously asked the assistance o' the representative o' the ancient family o' Greenlaw o' Cocklaws, I might hae been prevailed upon to gie them the benefit o' a day's wark o' my arm; but, I suppose Albany was afraid I might acquire owre muckle power, by shewin' the contrast between me and other men, and prudently did without me. But hoo did he do? He got a' his army pierced wi' the cloth-yard shafts o' England. Hoo foolish people are, to sacrifice themselves to illiberal suspicions! I wadna hae made a bad use o' my superiority. A' I might hae asked, wad hae been to mak me a knight, Sir John Greenlaw o' Cocklaws. I may yet hae an opportunity o' measuring arms wi' Percy; or, may be, that renegade March, wha has sauld his country to the ungratefu' Lancaster."

"It is very extraordinary," said the Lady of Cocklaws, "that, in all these Border feuds, neither English nor Scots shew themselves before oor castle. It's very honorable to your courage, and the character of your powers of defence; yet, my dear Cocklaws, I doubt much if, with all the superiority of your warlike qualities you could stand out against

the armies of my countrymen. I mean, of course, if they were very numerous."

"Let them be as numerous as locusts," cried Cocklaws—"ay, as the motes that dance i' the noonday sun; I an' my auld castle wud be a match for them a'. What! woman! is that a' your boasted sense, is that a' the knowledge ye hae o' yer husband, is that a' the respect ye hae for the bluid o' the Cocklaws, an' the honour o' Scotland? Let Percy and Douglas try their hand at opening the door o' the castle o' Cocklaws. Stane and lime, though put thegither as firmly as in the castle o' Jedburgh, are naething without the saul within. Nae castle could be stormed wi' me in't. It's impossible, my Lady Cocklaws. Our faes ken that too, or why have they no tried their mangonells on my towers lang ere this? They've mair sense. Percy winna face me, I warrant him."

Some days after this conversation, in which Lady Cocklaws yielded a dutiful assent, her only object in opposing her husband being merely to draw him out for her own humour, a messenger came running up to the tower in breathless haste, and said, that the whole English army was marching to besiege Cocklaws. The lady smiled at the intelligence, thinking it was some device of her husband to produce a fear which he would have the merit of contrasting with his coldness and courage. She observed in Cocklaws, however, no indication of a previous knowledge of the fact; and his manner, which exhibited more solicitude than ordinary, rather falsified her suspicions. Her doubts were soon put an end to by the appearance of the army before the tower. The whole English troops seemed to have collected at that spot. The number seemed equal to the taking of all Scotland. What did they mean by directing the strength of an elephant in crushing a gnat? The matter seemed incomprehensible to the lady, and even Cocklaws himself could not conceal that he thought there was *some* chance of his being obliged to succumb. While hesitating what step to take, a messenger delivered to him a message from the regent Albany, to hold out until succours were sent him, which would be soon; and Cocklaws' men thought that all the indifference with which he had been formerly treated was to be made up by the immense accumulation of honour now heaped upon him.

"What are you going to do, Cocklaws?" inquired his lady.

"Fecht them to be sure, sae lang as there's a drap o' bluid in the kame o' our cock's crest," answered the little warrior. "The Regent Albany has sent me a confidential message, desiring me to hauld out as lang as I can. My castle is to be the bane o' contention between the twa kingdoms. Cocklaws will decide the strife. Percy and Albany will shake hands owre my table, an' I canna fail to be knighted by them baith."

This communication appeared to the lady more remarkable still. There must be some humour in the case she thought. The Duke of Albany write to Cocklaws to oppose his cockleshell of a castle to the army of England! The thing appeared so utterly absurd, that, were it not verified by the absolute presence of Hotspur and Douglas, with their army sitting before the tower like a swarm of locusts, about to attack a single stalk of barley, she would at once have set it down to the credit of her husband's ingenuity in devising modes of enhancing his warlike character. The supposition of an attempt to turn her husband's weakness to account of frolic or amusement, was as much out of the question as the seriousness of the intended attack. Armies are often collected, marched for hundreds of miles, and supported by food snatched from the hungry mouths of the inhabitants of an enemy's country, often to please the whim, or humour the caprice of an absolute monarch; but so much trouble is seldom taken to make a conquest of a little fun or merriment, at the expense of so insignificant a being as Cocklaws.

This supposition appeared to the lady equally hostile to reason and common sense. What other supposition could she imagine? There was none. The affair was beyond the wits of a woman to understand, and she therefore trusted to the chapter of consequences for an explanation. She continued to watch the motions of the army from the loop-hole adjacent to her bed-room.

The English proceeded to make preparation for attacking the little march tower. The hero of Homildon Hill sent his herald to blow his horn, almost sufficient to blow the cockle shell to pieces, and demand the master of Cocklaws to surrender his tower to the arms of Henry of Lancaster, King of England. This extraordinary announcement greeted the ears of the lady, and she listened to hear the answer that would be given by her husband. Cocklaws, who placed himself in such a position as his wife could have no difficulty in hearing him, and perched upon one of the little jutting lateral turrets of the fortification, like a jack-daw on an old chimney top, cried out, in the affected and jaunty tone of a true knight—

"Gae and tell your master, Percy, commonly called Hotspur, to tell Henry o' Lancaster, wha sits on a throne that belongs to Richard the Second, and to which he has nae mair richt than I hae to the throne o' Scotland—or maybe less, if the pedigree o' the Cocklaws were traced—that the kaird and governor o' Cocklaws has nae intention o' desertin' his country, his wife, his castle, or his honour, an' that he will defend them a' wi' the last drap o' the bluid that can be wrung frae the cock's kame o' his auncient crest."

"Bravo, Cocklaws!" cried the herald, unable to retain the severe and serious tone of his office, while the good lady sat smiling through the loophole.—"This is a right noble speech," thought she, "and worthy certainly of a better cause. That immense army surely cannot seriously intend to injure us, and our small fortified hut. The nobility of the lion disdains the small victims of humbler animals. Hotspur and Cocklaws! Such a combination of sounds! Surely there can be no intention of an attack."

The lady's thoughts deceived her. In a short time, every preparation seemed making for a serious attack. The castle of Jedburgh itself could not have been the object of more serious displays of hostility. There was, in the first place, hurled up opposite the tower, a number of these fierce looking engines, more terrible in their aspect than the catapults and battering-rams of Roman celebrity, called trebuchets and mangonells. It seemed as if one stroke of these engines would be enough for the destruction of the turret; and the disproportion between the numbers of the besieging army, and the few men contained in the fortified place was not greater than that between these engines or destruction and the thing to be destroyed.

The ambition of Cocklaws was now about to be gratified. He looked down upon the terrible display of power with the highest pride. "Nae wonder," he said, "that my stronghold has been sae lang o' gettin' a visit. It cost nae sma' pains to bring thae engines to Cocklaws. I suppose they hae been made on purpose. The English hae at last been obliged to acknowledge my importance; and I only wonder they didna try to conciliate me by bribes and promises, and thereby endeavour to get me to gie up my allegiance, and carry owre my knowledge and experience o' war, wi' my extraordinary courage, to mak up the deficiency o' the renegade March, and cast the balance o' war in favour o' England. But they hae judged better o' their man. They kenned I wadna surrender, and sae they hae prepared this immense array o' unwieldy engines, ignorant that they want the saul that animates my castle."

The engines having been erected, the army approached, and the twang of the cloth shafts leaving the cords, and the booming of the engines upon the wall, announced the beginning of the attack. Cocklaws was upon the tower, in the

midst of his men, exhibiting the courage of a terrier, in attacking a bull. He let fly his arrows at the English, and made a noise in crying and bellowing to his adherents, which was intended to reach the ears of his wife, whom he visited at intervals, with a view to keep up her courage, saying, "We shall beat them a', Marjory, my dear. They will soon see the man they hae to deal wi', if they haena already felt the force o' my arrows."

The noise increased; and there appeared, both without and within, all the haste and confusion of a regular siege. The lady, however, was astonished to find that the battering of the engines produced no effect on the walls, and the arrows and missiles killed none of the besieged. Her astonishment increased, when, in a little time, the battering ceased—the army, deserting the attack, fell back—and the siege seemed for a time, at least, to be abandoned. The moment this occurred, Cocklaws ran to his wife, exclaiming—"Noo, ye see, my love, the effects o' true courage. The men, wi' their steel jackets, their braw armour, their trebuchets, an' batterin'-rams, want heart. Ae perfeck warrior, wi' the assistance o' a handfu' o' men, has put to the rout the hail army o' England.—I wunner if they'll try me again."

"I think they will better let you alone, Cocklaws," replied the lady, whose astonishment was still unabated. "How many have you killed do you think?"

"I couldna count them—they were sae numerous," replied Cocklaws. "I saw them fa'in' either in death or fright on ilka side, as thick as sparrows peppered wi' sparrow hail. I wunner if Albany will mak me a lord, without stoppin' at the knight!"

The next day the attack was renewed with the same display of power. The farce of the previous day was repeated. A battering was kept up for a time—a number of arrows discharged, and then a recession, the very same as the day before. Cocklaws' pride waxed stronger and stronger. He was already, in imagination, Lord Cocklaws!

In the evening, the herald's trumpet sounded a parley; and a request was made that Cocklaws would allow Hotspur and Douglas to visit him in the tower, with a view to adjust terms of peace. The request was admitted; and the proud governor waited the arrival of his humbled enemies.

The parties arrived, and, along with them, the Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland. Cocklaws received them with the condescension and kindness that was due to brave men whom he had beaten.

After the warriors had taken seats, the conqueror conceived that it was incumbent upon him to shew the expected generosity of the lion. It was, he thought, a noble opportunity for a display of that feeling which, from the days of Alexander and Cæsar, had been exhibited in the hour of triumph and victory, by all conquerors, to the victims of their arms. He thought he saw, in the bright eye of Albany, a lurking request of forgiveness and pity towards the heads of the besieging army; and he did not hesitate to give the Regent as much encouragement on this delicate subject as he considered consistent with the dignity of his character, and the peculiarity of the position in which he stood. The Regent of Scotland was one individual—doubtless a great one—seeing he had the power of making, as he no doubt would, John Greenlaw Lord Cocklaws; but the respect due to a person having so much authority must, he saw, be tempered, at least, in the presence of those whom he had conquered, as any improper display of it would at once lower his dignity and depreciate the boon of mercy he intended to vouchsafe to them. After looking, therefore, to Albany with a condescending kindness, enough to shew, that, while he would grant his request of mercy and forgiveness, he would only do it on condition of its being appropriately and humbly solicited; he turned his little twinkling orbs on Hotspur and Douglas, with just enough of fire and fury to shew them that he had not altogether

forgotten the insult which they had offered and he had chastised; and to impress upon their minds a recollection of his extraordinary character, and a memory of the warlike energies which had overcome them, and which they were soon to see changed for the placable indications of a kind and forgiving spirit.

While these thoughts were passing through the mind of Cocklaws, very different were the cogitations of his visitors. Albany was unfolding a paper; and the three greatest men of their time were, with grave faces and serious thoughts, whispering some important things to each other, which they did not wish Cocklaws to hear. As they were not in any hurry to leave off these rather unpolite indications, Cocklaws attributed their conduct to irresolution and delicacy in presuming to approach the subject of their errand. He therefore thought himself bound to assist their bashfulness; and, rising from his chair, he said, with much show of condescension—

"My Lords—Dinna think I'm unable to appreciate the feelin's wi' which yer noble breasts are nae doot at present filled. He wha fechts best can best forgie; an' there's nae sae guid at askin' as he wha has experienced the pleasure o' grantin'. I hae nae wish that ye should think I'm incapable, in the hour o' victory, an' in the exultation o' triumph, o' feelin' for the situation o' my enemies, wham the fortune o' war has put in my power. Though I, mysel, am ignorant o' what it is to be beaten, I can easily conceive that the situation is far frae bein' pleasant; an' it's no my wish to mak it mair disagreeable than ye already seem to feel it. Ye need, therefore, hae nae hesitation or fear in tellin' me yer minds. Cocklaws' bark is waur than his bite; an' ye already ken the sound o' the ane as weel as the force o' the ither."

On hearing this speech, Hotspur was clearly inclined to carry on the joke; and was actually, according to his rapid manner, about to throw himself at Cocklaws' feet to ask for mercy, when the grave and austere Albany, having seized him by the arm, and whispered something which made him desist, proceeded to accost Cocklaws, as follows:—

"Cocklaws," said he, "your good sense will tell you that the English have not been serious in this attack upon your castle. One proper blow of one of these manganells would shatter this tower to atoms. The object of this sham siege is, to make Henry of England believe, that his Generals, Hotspur and Douglas, have seriously attacked Scotland, while they, with my co-operation, and we being all friends, have a very different object in view. As my subject, then, I request of you to sign this treaty, whereby you promise, unless relieved by me within six weeks, to surrender your tower to the English. We will explain to you, afterwards, our intentions more fully; and I shall take care to reward you for the part you have already played."

The request of a sovereign cannot be denied. The thunder-struck Cocklaws signed the treaty, and the Generals departed. He afterwards heard, what became known to the world, that this farce was acted, with a view to blind Henry, King of England, and to operate as a cover for the rebellion which soon broke out in the north of England, and which ended in the famous battle of Hartlefield, where Percy was slain. It has generally been supposed that Cocklaws should have been knighted, but, Albany, when the subject was mentioned to him, expressed his displeasure at being put in mind of a circumstance which was, in the end, unfavourable to Scotland.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE VICTIM OF PRIDE;

OR

THE BEAUTY OF ROXBURGH.

At one period, in Scotland, there existed a species of rivalry among the towns, as regarded the beauty of the young women who inhabited them. The origin of this feeling, which does not now appear, except in the competing eulogies of poets singing the beauties of their birth-places, may be traced to the mixture which, at an early period, took place in Scotland of various races of people. The Celts, when forced by the Saxons to retire beyond the Grampians, left behind them a number of stragglers, who preferred the more cultivated and comfortable habits of the stranger to the rude customs which then prevailed throughout Scotland. Societies of these Celts took up their residence in certain small towns; and, being inclined to be peaceable and to receive quietly the yoke of their masters, were allowed to exercise their callings, and lead, so far as their *ingenium perfervidum* would allow, something like civilized lives.

Another town, again, or, indeed, a whole county—such as that of Angus, or Fife, and some of those farther south—were entirely occupied by Saxons, the traces of whom may still be found in the curious old local words, which, to a person acquainted with modern German, seem to have come only yesterday from the banks of the Oder or the Weser. A third class, again, were the Normans, who, shortly after the time of William the Conqueror, began to mix with the Scoto-Saxons; so that, in this way, without taking in the Flemings and some other continental people, who came over for the purposes of traffic and often remained altogether in the country, Scotland may be said to have been peopled with a mixture of these three tribes, which, however much the powers of neighbourhood and the relations of life may have forced together, retained, for a long period, their national characteristics, and vindicated, in their chosen localities, the excellence of their several institutions, manners, customs, and physical attributes.

The emulation produced by the neighbourhood of these different races was often very strong, and directed to the most trifling circumstances of mental and physical superiority; and it is to this that must be attributed the feeling of rivalry which existed as to the superiority of beauty of the young women inhabiting towns situated near to each other. This spirit remained long after all the traces of the difference of origin had entirely disappeared. The blue-eyed Saxon and dark-eyed Norman told, at first, their respective origins by their complexions; but, afterwards, neither the colour of the hair, the shade of the eye, the tint of the skin, nor the contour of the face, was sufficient to point out a beautiful woman, as originally belonging to the one race or the other. New combinations, equally beautiful as the original elements, arose out of the mixture of the races; and the Celt, the Saxon, and the Norman enjoyed, with equal satisfaction, the eternal and unchangeable attributes of grace and beauty.

What, therefore, was originally a national prejudice, became subsequently one merely local; and there are few

instances in Scotland where the rivalry of different races was better shewn, in times when no difference could be traced in the people, than that which, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, might be found in the emulation exhibited between Roxburgh and Jedburgh, in regard to the beauty of the maidens of the respective towns. It would no doubt, be, now-a-days, much beyond the effort of the antiquary to trace that emulation to the difference of original races, which we have pointed out as the cause of several rival feelings of a similar kind; but the fact is certain, that the emulation in great strength did exist, and we have the authority of at least one old writer to the fact, that it had its origin in the same cause which produced many bloody frays at wappenschawings and tournaments, and subsequently at frays, throughout the kingdom.

The emulation or feeling of rivalry which existed in these two Border towns, on so fine and delicate a subject as female beauty, would seem to have shewn and strengthened itself for a long time in vapid boastings among the inhabitants, changing, however, sometimes, as suited the temper of the parties, to some indications of a more serious nature. Broils are, indeed, said to have originated in this feeling; and, at a very early period, a regular pitched battle was fought in the old forest of Jedburgh, between two parties from the rival towns, who vindicated, by their arms, their mutual claims in favour of the sweethearts who asserted a supremacy over their affections, obscured the light of their reason, and sent them to end their lives and their loves in asserting their envied superiority over their fair neighbours.

This warlike spirit, however, gave place to another and perhaps a better mode of vindicating the claims of the rivals. It was suggested, by a simpleton of Jedburgh, that, in place of the two towns eternally wrangling about the beauty of their respective women, they should send two fair damsels to a romantic spot, called the Hunter's Well, in the forest of Jedburgh, there to compete for the prize of beauty. This place was resorted to by horsemen for rest and refreshment. It was peculiar as being an open plain, extending a considerable way in the very heart of the forest, and supposed to have been produced, at an early period, by a fire which ravaged a large part of the wood, and cleared the place entirely of trees, leaving what, in a short time, became a beautiful area of green sward, enclosed on all sides by thick foliage. The two maidens might there be judged of, and "tried for beauty," by arbiters regularly chosen for that purpose. The suggestion was followed; and the first occasion on which this trial took place, was recollected for many years, and boasted of by the Roxburghers, who gained the day, and carried off the prize, which was awarded to a black-eyed damsel, the daughter of a smith called James Harris.

The trial took place occasionally afterwards, but at no precise period. It seems to have been resorted to as a kind of resource for allowing the emulation of the towns to expend itself in a civil and peaceable manner; and very much in the way that a disease of the system may often be cured, by puncturing a boil in which the poison which produced the complaint has been collected. At the time of which we speak—viz. in the reign of James IV. of Scotland—the trial

of beauty had not taken place for a long period. But the repose which Scotland enjoyed for some time before the battle of Flodden, had courted the tortured inhabitants of the Borders to some of the civil and discreet "gestes" of peace and humanity; and it was resolved, by the Roxburghers and Jedburghers, that they should hold a court at the Hunter's Well, in the forest, for the purpose of deciding which of the two towns could produce the most beautiful maiden.

The proposition was accepted on all hands, as a notable mode of affording to the victims of Border war, a little pastime, and as a praiseworthy attempt to keep alive ancient customs, besides reviving somewhat the spirit of chivalry, which, in those times, and in that part of the country, tinged, with all its glittering hues, even the humble amours of the working citizen.

The green area in the forest was prepared for this great occasion in the same manner as it had been, hundreds of years before, for the celebration of alike ceremony. Palisades were struck in the ground, enclosing the space where the trial was to take place, imitating, in this respect, the preparations for the tournaments or wappinshawings of which so much is said in the histories of those times; and, in the middle of this enclosure, there was a slight elevation, in the form of a small table-land, very likely formed by an accumulation of earth at a former period for a like purpose and now beautifully covered with a green sward, more like velvet than the ordinary vestment of nature. On this height the judges were to sit, as on a judgment-seat, and the damsels were to be brought before them, to have their various charms analyzed by the taste of those days, not less refined, perhaps, than that which now obtains, as respected the discovery and appreciation of female beauty, which, retaining in all ages its lineaments, finds equally, at all times, able and willing appreciation.

In the two towns, meanwhile, the most active preparations took place for producing a proper show or procession, composed of the most wealthy of the citizens on horseback, and the more humble on foot. The richest robes that could be procured—and in these days very rich stuffs were in use in Scotland—were in requisition; and insignia of various kinds—banners, gonfannons, and devices of heraldry—were expected to flutter in the breeze and glitter in the sun. All these things were then well supplied by the usages of chivalry;—the gaudy patchwork of after days, when the freemasons rose into notoriety and pagantry, could not compete with the accoutrements and embellishments of these warlike and chivalrous times. What the citizens could not procure within the limits of their own territory, they borrowed from the neighbouring gentry, who, in a cause where female beauty was to be the object of competition, readily granted all the facility in their power to the furtherance of a scheme so intimately connected with those feelings which nerved their arms, and filled their warlike hearts with all the aspirations of true knights.

Before choosing upon the favoured young women, who were to compete for a prize the most valuable in the estimation of their sex of any guerdon that could, in any circumstances, be awarded, the citizens of either town sat in judgment upon the merits of their maidens. It was needless, they conceived, to carry to the court of beauty, as they called the green area in the forest, a great number of competitors. The award was to be given in favour of one, and there could exist no such doubt as to the respective beauties of many young women in the same town, as to render it likely that the universal voice of the citizens would err in making the best choice. The selection formed an awful crisis in the proceeding. Hearts, young and ambitious, fluttered in every quarter, in the expectation of being asked to come forward; and it would have formed a curious chapter in the history of human nature, embracing the perplexed question of the

mutability of truth, in self-estimation, to have given an account of the existence of hopes and trembling anticipations, where nature had not been sparing of smallpox, and had even dealt largely in kingsevil. Those with black hair and black eyes, presumed on the intensity alone of their atramental hues; while those, again, with red hair and blue eyes, founded great hopes on a brightness, which, though much prized in romance and poetry, finds but few admirers in real life. Roman contours, not forgetting the curve of the most ticklish part of the female countenance, were opposed to pure Gothic shapes, with a high elevation of the rostral point, generally denominated, in vulgar speech, the nosle. Fortunate it was, that, in these days, Hogarth's line of beauty had not yet been discovered; but, however fortunate it might be for the damsels, whose brief space of hope would not otherwise have had any existence in the calculations of time, it was equally fortunate, for the expediting of the choice, that no such artificial rule-and-compass modes of coming at this truth, not purely mathematical, were resorted to by the inhabitants. They took a broader view of the subject; and, including in one polymixia all the elements of beauty, *ex capite ad pedem*, they came to a conclusion, by the mode in which perplexed lawyers arrive at a result in a confused case, where, as sometimes happens, no truth lies—viz., by judging purely from general impressions, aided, perhaps, in the case of some of the higher citizens, by a lurking passion which generally sets truth at defiance, or puts it entirely to the rout.

In this way the inhabitants of each town chose a maiden from each, for the purpose of competing for the honour of the award. The two damsels were, of course, as happy as women could, in any situation, be supposed in this world to be. Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, those who were rejected were not unhappy; for the only consequence which resulted from the announcement that the favoured damsels had been selected, was, simply, a slight quiver of discomfiture, followed, in an instant, with a sudden jerk of the head, commonly called, from the quickness of the motion, "a kick of the head;" then a look into that great restorer of self-complacency, the mirror; then the expectoration of some tiny drops of "sweet venom," extracted, as the bee's is from its honey, from a determined consciousness of their own beauty—and then all was right. This shews how exquisitely, and at how small an expense of material, nature performs her handiwork, thus curing a thousand hearts without having recourse to a single elixir, and using nothing but the reflection of a mirror to do the work of a thousand plasters. It would not, indeed, be too much to say, that the young women of Jedburgh and Roxburgh, who experienced a rejection, had a better idea of their beauty after the ceremony than before—thus truly drawing good out of evil, and transforming a misfortune into a benefit.

The damsel chosen by the Roxburghers, was the daughter of a Widow Scott, who lived in an obscure manner, in a small street of the town. Her name was Anne, being called after an aunt of that name. The daughter had nothing to expect from her mother, and had been occupied in the ordinary employment of young women of her time—viz., plying the distaff. Her natural temper exhibited a strong mixture of pride, and there occasionally appeared in her manner a greater portion of self-will, than her mother would have desired; but she was open-hearted and generous, and capable of very strong and permanent affections. That she was beautiful, there could be no doubt; and it did not require the selection of the inhabitants of the town to satisfy the gazer that Anne Scott had been already selected, by nature, to operate as a living prism, to divide the solar beam into its beautiful elements, and send back into the eyes of the ravished beholder, that wonderful effect of form and colour, which no production of nature has ever exhibited in such perfection as in the female figure. When Anne came home and told

her mother she had been selected as the fairest of her townswomen, the old woman heaved a deep sigh—an answer to so brilliant an announcement which few understood, and which she did not at that time explain. Anne was not what every one expected—all joy: she received the congratulation of the neighbours, rather as a tribute of right than as a voluntary compliment, and looking into the mirror, asked them, if it was wonderful that she should be the fairest young woman of Roxburgh? If it had been Edinburgh, she said, in place of that insignificant Border camp, there might be something to be proud of; but the rose-garland of Roxburgh was but a child's play-thing, of which she was determined to be no more proud than she had formerly been of a bunch of flowers, given to her by her schoolmaster, as a reward for giving him the largest candle at Candlemas.

“Anne, Anne!” cried the old mother, unable longer to restrain herself—“Ane o’ the seven things which the Lord hateth, is a proud look, and he has marked it by a law o’ nature I hae ne’er seen fail, when it was written that pride goeth before a fall. I hae lang seen this day, like a shadow o’ a hill which meets the traveller in his path, and tells him he has sair travail before him; for I marked yer beauty, an’ fearfu’ o’ the blight it throws invariably on the heart o’ its possessor, though scatterin’ sunshine on everything else, I concealed it frae ye, an’ saw my efforts pairtly crowned by being able to restrain your pride. Ye had some shame before this day—ay, even that which a wise man said was glory and grace; but there is anither which bringeth sin, and meikle, I fear, that the folly o’ this occasion, an’ mair o’ that, when ye are to try the strength o’ yer favours wi’ the lass o’ Jedburgh, will turn yer puir head, and gie ye only the sweet savour of the frankincense, which is made an offering to sin. Refuse, my bonny bairn, to gang to the trial in the forest, and seek not these things; for, believe an auld woman, wha has kend baith pride, an’ power, an’ poverty, an’ the perils o’ them a’, that the pottage an’ the broken bread which Habakkuk carried to Daniel in the den o’ lion’s, were better than the fine flour, an’ the sheep, an’ wine, which were daily devoured by the priests o’ Bel.”

“I dinna see, mother,” replied the disobedient maiden, “why I shouldna be present at this trial as weel as our friend in Jedburgh, Grace Stewart, wha, as report says, has been made choice o’ by the folks o’ that town as the bonniest lass that ever went a-nutting in the auld forest. She is richer than I am, for her father left her the bonny lands o’ Braidmeadow, and she can choose a husband among twenty suitors. I hae nae lover but that silly carle, James Melville, wha brags o’ his five hunder acres as if they were able to make amends for the want o’ a knightly bearing; though yesterday, I might hae listened to his croons, this day has brought me better hopes, and if I can carry the gree awa frae the beauty o’ Jedburgh, it winna be five thousand acres that will win the heart o’ the bonniest lass o’ the Borders.”

These sentiments filled the heart of Anne’s mother with grief. It had long been her wish to see a union between her daughter and James Melville, the person alluded to in her undutiful answer; for he was reputed wealthy, and, what was better in her estimation, he was gifted with that wisdom which comes from above. Hitherto, Anne’s feelings towards him had been at least kindly; his love towards her was of the most devoted and enthusiastic character; and, until the day of the selection, no decided indication had been manifested by the damsel, that the wished-for union would not take place. Anne’s ideas were now, however, apparently changed; and the only hope that remained to her poor old mother and to her devoted lover, was, that she, Grace Stewart, might, in the day of trial, be pronounced the fairer maiden—a circumstance which, while it would not materially affect the sentiments of the one, might bring back those of the other to that grade of elevation which suited her rank and prospects of life.

The young woman, Grace Stewart, who had been selected by the inhabitants of Jedburgh, was the daughter of the chief magistrate of that town, who, having died, left her sole heiress of the lands in the neighbourhood, called Broadmeadow, besides three large houses in the town, and a considerable sum of money. She need scarcely be called beautiful; for, small as the town of Jedburgh was at that time, it would, as a Scotch town, have been small, indeed, if it could not have boasted one fair daughter. But, beautiful as Grace Stewart was, in all the attributes of person, concentrating in herself the finest proportions and the loveliest hues, she had that within which gives the fairest, the noblest, and the most useful charm to the beauties that reign without. Her modesty and good temper threw a softness, approaching to languor, over her fine features, which was only changed to a more lively expression, by the wish she possessed to please every person around her. If she had many lovers, as Anne Scott alleged, they were not of her seeking; unless, indeed, it might be said, that a wish to make every person happy, was intended as a mean of gaining all hearts, and making every person who had the misfortune to see her, and love her, miserable. When it was proposed that she should stand forward as a candidate for the honour of competing with the Roxburgh damsel, she expressed the greatest dissatisfaction which her gentle nature was capable of; but her scruples were overcome by her mother, a proud dame, who, once a beauty herself, wished ardently to see her daughter carry off the prize at the trial in the forest. She hoped, moreover, that the eclat attending a victory of such a kind, would bring in about her knights and nobles, who would, in their turn, compete and joust for the hand and affections of the fairest lass of the eastern marches.

The day having arrived for the trial, a great stir was observable in the morning, in both the towns. Great collections of people, including all ranks, assembled at the market cross of each burgh, bearing banners, badges, gonfannons, and flowers of every possible form and colour. The chief baile of each town had volunteered his services, on the occasion, to keep the peace, and place the garland on the head of the happy maiden. The umpires were three county knights, who were too happy to attend the ceremony, in the expectation of receiving a glance from the eyes of the favourite to whom they should award the palm. They appointed to meet the cavalcades at the place fixed on for the trial, arrayed in the brilliant dresses of that chivalric age, and followed by their numerous retainers, all dressed in the style of the family to which they belonged, mounted on war horses, and bearing pennoncelles and other insignia of chivalry.

In each town, the prominent figure was the damsel, mounted on a white charger, covered with a rich fringe round the chest, composed of pure scarlet cloth, and hung with tassels. The saddle, which was peaked and highly ornamented, according to the fashion of that age, lay upon an embroidered saddle-cloth, bearing the arms of the respective towns. The dress of the damsels was of the richest kind, supplied at the expense of the citizens, who spared no cost to procure the finest garments which the times could produce. Anne Scott, who was, in this respect, as fastidious as Queen Emergald herself, was dressed in a style of the greatest splendour. Her jacket, a very prominent part of the dress of the fifteenth century, was of rich velvet, with sleeves reaching to the wrist, and terminating in a border of gold. It was made to sit close to the waist and bosom, and intended, like the upper part of the riding habits of the present day, to shew the outline of the figure. This elegant garment had been sent into the town by a rich lady of the neighbourhood, and made to suit the figure of the damsel, by the cunning fingers of a mantuamaker, who added to it what her own taste suggested as improvements. A row of rich silver buttons fastened it in the middle, and on each side of the buttons, a line of the fur called miniver, ran down from the top

of the waist. Below this jacket was the tunic, open in front, and pulled, in large folds, through the pocket holes, composed of red satin, and bordered with a beautiful embroidered hem. Under all was the petticoat, composed of white silk, brought from the east, and flowered in this country, in the rich style which some of the old dresses exhibit even in the present day. On her head was the peculiar head-gear, called the wimple, made of velvet, from beneath which, her hair flowed down the back in beautiful exuberance, and glittering like jet in the sun.

The Jedburgh damsel was arrayed in no less gorgeous style. Her jacket was of green damask satin—the tunic also green, and the petticoat a bright yellow. Her head gear was a garland of artificial flowers, and her auburn locks were plaited in various forms—the plaits being allowed to hang down the back, suspending at their points small bouquets of natural roses, which, as the breeze courted the form of the beauty, sported round her lovely shoulders as if in adulation of the universal favourite. Grace's mother eyed her, when drest, with all the allowable fondness and partiality of a parent; and as she came out of the house to mount the white palfrey that waited at the door, the welkin rang with the shouts of the happy citizens, who boasted of her beauty, as if she had been their relative.

The two cavalcades left the respective towns in time to reach the place of trial when the sun was at his height. They were preceded by music—comprehending the horn and the cymbals, favourite instruments in those days. The flute, too, lent its shrill notes, and the battle drum struck in with sombre notes, as a bass to complete the harmony. Every appearance indicated joy: the day was beautiful—the girls happy—the men in high chivalrous humour, where beauty was in question—the horses pranced to the sound of the music—the jesters, with bells in their hats, and wit in their faces, went merrily along—the scalds or errant minstrels, were ready to chant the praises of the damsels—the posture-makers were prepared to amuse the people with their contortions, and the female dancers to delight the men with the graceful turns of their lithe bodies, inspired with song, wine, love, and revelry. The scene was altogether splendid, imposing, and inviting, and long remembered, by those who witnessed and enjoyed it, as one of the grandest merry-makings that ever delighted Scotland.

The two parties met; and preparations were made to decide the rival claims of the beauties. Anne Scott was first led forward by the chief magistrate of Roxburgh. Her appearance struck the beholders like a gleam of supernatural light; and as her attendant scald recounted the beauties and charms for which she was famous, in his own extravagant style of adulatory compliment, the Jedburghers began to fear for the issue of the day. Next came the gentle, timid, Grace Stewart—apparently equally beautiful—fairer in her complexion than Anne—more lady-like and graceful—but without her rival's long swan neck and more majestic attitude and bearing. Her minstrel also chanted her praises in high-flown panegyric; and when he ended, the people of her train raised a deafening shout of approbation and applause.

The two maidens stood alone before the umpires. The crowd had been pushed back, that no obstruction might occur to the free investigation of the judges. The knights were all gallant youths, who felt the importance of the duty which had devolved on them, besides being inspired by the charms of the two angelic creatures who stood before them, more like inhabitants of another world who had dropt from heaven on the spot where they stood immoveable—waiting the decree which was to carry with it so many consequences to both. After some deliberation, Gilbert Elli ot, one of the knights, stood forward, and delivered to the chief magistrate of Roxburgh a garland of roses, requesting him to place on the head of Anne Scott, who had been unanimously

declared to be the fairer damsel. The magistrate obeyed; and while he was in the act of encircling her temples with the envied wreath, the people of Roxburgh raised a shout which resounded through the forest, and awakened echoes in places where they had slept for ages. The scene was grand—many young hearts thought it sublime—and old ones could not refuse a few throbs to the paramount importance of that quality which in other years, had made them palpitate with a pyretic power. What, indeed, could be discovered in the chase, the horse-race, the wappinschawing, the joust or tourney, to equal the competing powers of two of the fairest of the fair creations of a fair world? But, beyond all, the interest was in women, who speak to the heart in tones different from the other parts of creation; and these women represented in themselves the beauty of their native towns, who had sent them there to decide claims of rivalry which were supported in a chivalrous age with all the spirit of knight-errantry. No wonder, then, than the excitement was great when the wreath of triumph encircled the temples of the Roxburgh damsel.

The day was spent on the ground with great rejoicings, by the people of Roxburgh. Camps were spread, and sutlers were present with various kinds of refreshments. The greater part of the Jedburghers went away early, in disappointment, though many remained in good humour, and joined in the revels of the triumphant party. As night approached, the camps were struck, and the party returned in the same manner in which they came, though, perhaps, with greater noise and confusion, owing to the drink they had taken, and the victory they had gained. The queen, as they termed Anne, was taken home in a triumphal chariot, pulled by those who claimed to be her knights, and landed at the door of her mother's house, where thousands of people had assembled to greet her.

The first effect of these doings was to spread far and wide the fame of the beauty of Roxburgh. Even at the palace of Holyrood, where King James, still lamenting the death of the poisoned Lady Drummond, and ill satisfied with his consort, exhibited that strong curiosity for seeing fine women, and that love for their society, which distinguished him among monarchs and lowered him in the estimation of men. When the story of the trial of beauty in Jedburgh forest was told to him, he said it was an excellent device for putting an end to the rivalry of the towns, and wished above all things, to see the fair damsel who had, out of so many, carried off the palm of beauty. James' ideas, on these subjects, were most unsuitable to the fidelity of a husband and the dignity of a monarch; and no one knew that better than he did, for his expiations performed in his fits of superstitious devotion, in various religious houses in the kingdom, where he secluded himself for months at a time, were the consequence of a dissatisfaction he felt with himself, on the score of his intercourse with females who, of all ranks and complexions, attracted his attention, and polluted the source of his best feelings. It is, indeed, well known, that the battle of Flodden, in which he lost his life, was the consequence of a fit of gallantry towards the French queen, who, knowing his weak side, complimented him on his devotion to the fair—the best feather of the knight's cap—and requested his aid against the English king. It was only in strict unison with the character of James, that, as he used to ride forth in disguise among his subjects, in the prosecution of his amorous intrigues, he would resolve on a trip to Roxburgh, to see the far-famed damsel who had eclipsed so many by the brilliancy of her charms.

Meanwhile, Anne Scott's mother's predictions were in the progressive act of being realized. The successful maiden spurned now all rivalry, and set at defiance every lover below the degree of a knight. She affected to despise the fair and amiable Grace Stewart, who had, on her part, borne her misfortune with proper resignation; often stating, that

it was only what she deserved in allowing herself to be drawn from her innocent obscurity, to be made a stalking horse of public pageantry, to gratify the whims and caprices of foolish people. Her generosity was equal to her humility, and she was ambitious of shewing to her successful rival, whom she knew formerly, that she was far removed from the common feeling of envy, which the public, as well as Anne herself, attributed to her. She paid Anne Scott a visit at her mother's in Roxburgh. Her mother received her kindly—Anne proudly. She was invited to tea, and went. Laird Melville was of the party—a circumstance unpleasant to Anne, who hated his person, despised his suit, and sneered at his religion. Melville had observed, with sorrow, the effect that had been produced on Anne by the success attending her competition for the palm of beauty. From that day she had become more proud, more impatient of the reproofs of her mother, and more disdainful of the attentions of her lover. Yet he could not take his mind off her; and he had met no other woman who could assist him in that operation by taking his heart to herself. For a change in his affections he often prayed; and even went the length of vowing not to visit her, a remedy which was of no more avail, than shewing how impotent are the efforts of man to control the unseen and mysterious operations of the human heart. All his vows were broken, and tears bespoke the conflict between reason and passion, and the tyranny of the latter when it has got its foot on the neck of its congenial enemy.

At the meeting where Grace Stewart was present, poor Melville stood a fair chance of getting quit of his slavery, though only to change his mistress; but that change was freedom, or rather better than freedom—the bondage of a love likely to be requited. The contrast between the two beauties was, in a room, in favour of Grace; for there her meekness shone forth with so beautiful and lunar-like a radiance, that it was felt to be joy to take refuge in the beam from the scorching influence of Anne's proud, disdainful eye. In a change of affection, there is nothing so potent as contrast; and Melville felt his heart change as his eye wandered from the one damsel, who treated him coldly, to the other, who received his attentions with condescension and gratitude.

When Melville was thus employed in cultivating the good-will of his new mistress, in order to get from the chains of his former one, a tap was heard at the window. Anne, who seemed to know the meaning of it, went out.

"There," said her poor old mother; "that comes o' the trial o' beauty. Anne Scott has sin' that day been nae bairn o' mine. Gilbert Elliot, wha awarded to her the garland, seems to hae been determined to pluck the roses he presented to her, and throw them withered among his feet. My dochter can ne'er be his wife; and yet she will not consent to be the wife o' anither. Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms make an atonement for sins, but there's nae cure for a misdirected love but a broken heart, and nae salve for pride but a broken spirit. She that angereth her mother, is cursed o' the Almighty; and Anne Scott hath determined to bring my grey hairs wi' sorrow to the grave!" And the poor mother wept for the disobedience of her child.

The efforts of Laird Melville and Grace Stewart to assuage her sorrow proved unavailing, for she was one of those persons whose mind, by its strength, deals strongly with grief; analyzing its elements, and perceiving the irremedial character of human wo, when wrought by natural tendencies and dispositions, which are beyond the reach of human power. They left her in the midst of her lamentations, to that source of relief which is the only one which can yield a solace; but that solace is the reward of a renunciation of earth, and a detachment of the soul's affections alike from worldly joy, as that is generally estimated, and worldly sorrow.

Laird Melville and Grace Stewart departed—she to return to Jedburgh, and he to accompany her on the way. His

attentions to her had been rendered more acceptable, by perceiving with how much feeling he had endeavoured to assuage Widow Scott's grief; and the beautiful illustrations of Scripture he had, with so much ease, impressed into the soft service of a sympathetic heart. They shook the old woman by the hand. She contemplated, through her tears, the virtuous pair. The contrast produced by their appearance before her, apparently suited to each other—destined to make each other happy—without a wish to gratify against the usages of society, or the laws of their Maker, and yielding her a sympathy which nature did not demand of them; and the state and condition of her own daughter, who had left her society, beckoned away by the outlawed sign of one who dared not enter the house—probably indulging in unlawful pleasures—at least resigning her affections to a man who would ruin her: this contrast was but ill calculated to assuage her widowed heart. Embracing the man who she had long expected would have been her son-in-law, and giving him, as it were, in place of her own daughter, the envied child of another, she again burst into tears, and her friends departed.

Anne Scott did not return that night till a late hour. When she came in, she was ill at ease. She sighed deeply, but gave no response to the tender inquiries of her parent. She retired to rest; but she could not conceal from her mother an inquietude which shone through every action, and disturbed her ordinary demeanour. She forgot her evening sacrifice, which her parent had nightly imposed on her as a duty she owed to her Maker. When reminded of her omission, she replied by a few hasty words of displeasure, and refused to supply this indispensable part of a Christian's devotion. Her mother expected nothing from entreaty; and she knew, that an offering from her daughter in the state of mind she was now in, would be little acceptable in the quarter to which it would be directed. She performed her own devotional exercise; and implored her Maker to close her bedewed eyes in sleep, the only rest on earth to the miserable.

Next day, another lover of Anne called at the house. This was no other than the chief bailie, Mr Andrew Bruce, who had officiated in the trial. He had been struck with the supreme beauty of the maiden on that day, so eventful to her, and had got little rest since from the excited state of mind his sudden affection had entailed upon him. He did not hesitate soon to pay his addresses to her, and informed her mother that, provided she would marry him, he would settle on her a jointure the handsomest that had been given to any lady in Roxburgh for fifty years past. His suit, however, was to one who had only eyes for one object. All others appeared to her unworthy of notice, if not disgusting. Andrew Bruce was rejected with a scorn which ill accorded with the conduct he had observed towards her in the day of her pride. Her mother, who saw how advantageous a match this would be for her daughter, appealed again in vain. Anne had now no power over herself—the pride produced by her proved superiority in beauty over other women, had led her to reject Laird Melville, and flung her into the arms of a dissolute Knight, who flattered her with the high hopes of being a great lady worthy of the rank which nature had already pointed out as her right and inheritance. Her love for Elliot was a first love. The flowers which had first opened their maiden petals to the sun, had as yet experienced none of the nipping influences of winter; and to some a want of experience is a negation of knowledge. In the heyday of her affection for Elliot the suit of Andrew Bruce was only the cold glance of the harvest moon on the blossoms, which, having tasted the sweets of the sun, fold themselves up when he is gone regardless of the soft blandishments of his less successful rival. Foiled in every endeavour to soften the proud beauty, Andrew Bruce gave up his suit in despair.

Widow Scott, having lost the control she once had over the mind of her daughter, and observed her hastening to ruin, resigned herself to unassuageable sorrow. Left to herself by the night appointments which she could not prevent, the poor woman retired, in the evenings, to the houses of the neighbours, and mourned with them the backslidings of her only child. Anne returned home one night when her father was out, and sat by the fire conjuring up, by the aid of an excited fancy, images of her lover, which assumed, by the formative power of the fire, a thousand beautiful shapes. Their lights were replaced by the deadly glow of vicious indulgences. There was a joy in her heart; but it was the joy of the glow-worm, which, when love is over, lights no more its own path, or that of its mate, but retires into the darkness which follows the loss of its sensual affection. She could not look on herself, for in her bosom there was no response to self-interrogation, save groans. Her relief lay in the distance, in the hopes of a confiding heart, blind to the treachery which was fast encircling its pulses. She saw herself in the fine mansion of Castle Elliot, on the Borders, and the mistress of the affections of its lord. The pageant she conjured up, boasted only of the reality of the flickering forms of a sea coal fire, but it was bright as that of the day of her triumph. Her eye was fixed on the creation of her fancy, and a tap at the door was heard unheeded. It was repeated; she started up, and a knight dressed in green, with huge buskins, and large leather gloves, a hunting knife in his girdle, an eagle's plume in his cap, and a cross hanging at his breast, stood before her. It was King James IV. of Scotland.

"I have heard, sweet maiden," began the prince of knights, "of thy charms; and who is there in Scotland that can be ignorant of thy triumph over all the beauties of thy time, resident on the Scottish borders? It is, methinks, a pity that such endowments should be allowed to remain in their humble association with the degrading duties of the distaff and spindle, which will cloud their excellence and sully their brightness. Thou art formed surely for other things than the spinning of yarn, who wert born to charm the ear of a knight by the sweet rustle of thy silken train, spun for thee by the cunning craft of the vermicular ministers to the graces of woman. Thy russet gown is disclaimed by thy grace, and the vulgar bandeau is disdained by the bursting locks, which in spite of it, disclose in long ringlets their ineffable beauty. The tucker of cotton from slimy Egypt, and made for the dark bosoms of the sons of Mizraim, is shamed by the purity of thy white neck, and huddles up its foil to hide its shame. Such things cannot be allowed to be while knights are in the land able to appreciate beauty, and to right the evil fortunes of ill-starred damsels. Say, gentle dame, if there is aught within the limits of broad Scotland, not forgetting the Isles and the kingdom of Man, that forms the subject of thy thoughts, and the object of thy wishes; and if there be not, let thy imagination work out a desire, were it for no other aim or end, than that a knight may have an opportunity of shewing how much he is devoted to thy charms."

This strange high-flown speech, which few other men in Scotland save James himself could have gravely uttered, even when an illiterate damsel was the hearer, was received by Anne in the same way, and with the same feelings, as she had accepted the crown of garlands which constituted her the beauty of the eastern Borders. Anne had seen the king at a wappinschawing two years before at Kelso, and at once recognised the monarch by the peculiarity of his appearance, as well as by the kingly character of his speech. She saw no more in a king than in other men. She herself was a queen, and in proof thereof, a king knelt at her feet. The pageantry of the trial was still impressed with vivid colours on her fancy, and the brightness of Holyrood was but a gleam in the distance. Her heart besides, was

another's, and love holds no parley, even with kings. Drawing herself up, she replied to her lawful king and royal lover—

"Ye needna think to conceal frae me wha ye are, for I hae seen ye before at the Kelso wappinschawings, whar I admired ye for the noble bearing ye exhibited among thousands o' competitors, wharin ye, like mysel, outshone yer rivals. But if ye are King o' Scotland, I am Queen o' the Borders; and my crown, though made o' roses, is as fair and noble as the auld head-gear o' William the Lyon. My russet gown is nae mair to my natural rights than is yer green hunting dress to the ermine o' yer royal robes; and the silk has left China that is destined to make the beauty o' Roxburgh worthy o' being seen in a certain castle that looks proudly o'er the waves o' the Tweed. My affections are placed on aye o' yer loyal subjects, and it would ill become the father o' his people to force—though therein, God be praised, he has nae power—the hearts o' the dochters o' Scotland frae their lawfu' loves and honourable engagements. I expect to be married to aye o' yer honourable knights, and these are no the days when a Margaret Logie can win the lawfu' love o' a king. Ye had better return to yer wife, the dochter o' guid King Henry."

With these proud words, Anne Scott pointed to the door, and King James, stung to the heart by a refusal so spirited and so just, though so rude and disloyal, bowed to the damsel, retired, mounted his horse, and spurred on to the metropolis of his kingdom, where, amidst the blandishments of many lovers no less fair but less proud than the beauty of Roxburgh, he tried to forget the chagrin with which an humble villager had been able to fill his royal breast. No elevation of rank can protect a man from the consequences of a departure from those principles which regulate the vulgar morality of the humblest of God's creatures.

Anne Scott still continued her intercourse with her lover, but time brought no fulfilment of her hopes. Her old suitor, Laird Melville, married her rival, Grace Stewart, and their combined properties constituted a handsome living, enabling them to ride to church in their carriage, and to associate with the small barons in the neighbourhood. Andrew Bruce was married, at the same time, to Anne Scott's cousin, a young woman nearly as fair as Anne herself, but whom she despised for her humble ideas in looking for a husband among persons of her own rank. Thus were two of her suitors rejected and lost. One was retained who was shortly to treat her as she had treated them.

In a short time Anne became uneasy, and exhibited an appearance of disappointment. No longer did any indications of a nightly visiter appear. She went often out, but she came back in sorrow. She was evidently struggling under conflicting emotions of hope and fear. A hasty disjointed prayer sometimes fell from her trembling lips as she retired to rest. Nocturnal restlessness and agitation were the companions of her pillow, and dreams tantalized her with an unreal presence. She wept often in her hours of sleeplessness; her sobs struck her poor mother's ear, who wept for a sorrow she could not alleviate, and of the cause of which she was ignorant. During day, she went often out, but every return seemed to bring along with it an accession of grief. The roses of her cheeks, which had bloomed with such effect on the day of her triumph, soon withered, and her form decayed; the brilliancy of her eye dimmed, and the proud head was bowed by the strong arm of a deep grief. These symptoms increased, till the genius of despair flung his dark drapery round the macerated remnant of what was once a fair creature. She who was once a delight to the human eye became a pain. The pride of thousands became the pity of some, the scorn of many, and the curiosity of all.

On the 16th day of August, Sir George Elliot was married to Lady Anne Lindsay, his cousin. On the 25th of Sep-

tember, Anne Scott went mad. The usual symptoms of derangement of intellect manifested themselves—the unmeaning stare, the slouching gait, the suspicious eye, the careless garb, the muttering speech. From the mouth which courted the salute of a king, was seen to drop the saliya of the drivelling idiot. The town of Roxburgh now mourned as its privileged maniac, sitting on the steps of stairs, and grinning at the passers by, her who was once claimed as its pride, and admired as its beauty. The children learned her name as a part of their education; to mark her gestures and imitate her pranks, was their daily pastime. The wretched girl indulged in long solitary wanderings. There was one place she delighted to visit, and that was the Hunter's Well. She pulled reeds there, and flung them into the fountain. She laughed to see them carried away by the stream—wept when an obstruction detained them, and laughed again when they were liberated. She sat on the spot where she had been crowned queen. She wreathed round her temples a garland of soft willow twigs. If any one was present, she exhibited symptoms of pride, treating them scornfully, and then laughed, as if conscious of the mockery in which she had indulged.

One day she sat in her beloved spot. Her bonnet was lying beside her. Her shoes had been lost by the way. Her head was crowned, as usual, and she sang a mournful ballad, the notes of which the wind carried in fitful numbers among the woods. A company of horsemen appeared, and dashed past the maniac. One of them asked his companion who it was that sat on the green, and serenaded them with a maniac's song. The companion replied that the damsel was Anne Scott, the maniac of Roxburgh. The questioner was King James IV. of Scotland;—the responder, Sir Gilbert Elliot, of Castle Elliot, knight.

THE GREATCOAT.

THERE was not, in all Annandale, the quarter of the country to which he belonged, a decenter man than Andrew Rutherford. A simple, good-hearted, inoffensive creature he was, and one who would much sooner do himself an injury than his neighbour.

It happened once, that Andrew had occasion to go to Edinburgh on some particular business. After he had arrived in the city, Andrew, in going to his lodgings, had to pass through St Mary's Wynd, a well-known mart in the Scottish metropolis for second-hand wearing apparel. In passing down this wynd, Andrew chanced to see a huge dreadnought greatcoat, with manifold capes, and immense horn buttons, hanging at a door for sale; and, as it was winter time, Andrew conceived a fancy for the coat, and began to contemplate it with a look which said, as plainly as ever a look said anything—"That's a comfortable lookin' article. I wadna care though it were mine. I wunner what they'll be seekin' for't!" Then, after a pause—"Odd! if they're no very unconscionable, I'll hae't;" and he dashed boldly into the shop—found the price not far beyond his expectation—struck a bargain, paid down the money, and took possession of the greatcoat. This done, he clapped the coat on, as being the most convenient way to carry it, and stalked down the street, not a little proud of his new acquisition. The coat, although certainly a comfortable looking article, as Andrew had conjectured it to be, was a marked, and somewhat singular-looking habiliment.

He had not proceeded many yards down the street with his new purchase, when a person suddenly made up to him, and, clapping him on the shoulder, exclaimed, "Aha, friend, so I've caught you at last! Come now," he went on, "are you going to pay me that money or not?"

Andrew stared at the man for a moment in speechless surprise—then, with a slight smile of utter unconsciousness—"I'm thinkin' ye're mista'en, frien'," he said.

"Oh, not at all," replied the stranger. "No mistake whatever—so none of your blarney. I'm not to be done that way. I know your tricks too well for that. So tell me at once whether you mean to pay me the balance on the brown mare." And the stranger waxed fiercer and fiercer as he spoke.

"Wull ye be sae gude, sir, as tell me, precesely, what ye mean?" inquired Andrew, in a slow, deliberate tone, but with a face in which consternation was very strongly, and somewhat ludicrously expressed.

"Oh, I see it's no use bothering with you," replied the man, passionately, "so, hang me, if I can't have my money from you, you swindler, I'll have pennyworths out of your skin." And with that the fellow approached Andrew, *a la Belcher*, and, gave him two or three severe hits on his face, one of which stretched him in the kennel; where, after giving him two or three parting kicks, his merciless assailant left him.

Much did poor Andrew marvel what could be the reason of his being thus abused by a person whom he had never injured; but what availed his marvelling. He could make nothing of it? So, battered and bruised as he was, he hasted, as fast as his damaged legs would carry him, to his quarters, where he had to confine himself for a week till his face had recovered something of its original shape and complexion.

Well, one night as Andrew was sitting in the kitchen as usual, two drovers or cattle-dealers came in, and ordered some drink to be brought them. These persons, however, had not been seated a moment, when they began to eye Andrew with very suspicious and very offensive looks. Andrew observed the circumstance, and was greatly at a loss to comprehend what it meant; but thinking it possible that he might be mistaken, he endeavoured to enter into conversation with them; but all advances of this kind were repelled in the most uncourteous manner, and with such unequivocal expressions of dislike and impatience, that Andrew finally left the kitchen, and retired to his own apartment. Here, however, he had not been many minutes when his landlord entered, and gruffly intimated to him his desire, that he should pay his bill and instantly quit the house.

Andrew stared with surprise at the abruptness, incivility, and strangeness of this communication, and begged an explanation of it.

"I don't choose to explain," replied the man, saucily; "but perhaps I know something more of some folks than some folks are aware of, and I only wish I had known it a little sooner. So I say no more, sir, but request you will settle your bill, and leave the premises as quick as you like."

It was in vain that poor Andrew entreated his landlord to speak to him in plain English; and to tell him at once, and in language which he could understand, what he meant by such singular conduct. All explanation was refused him.

Finding he could elicit no information regarding the cause of his landlord's sudden and strangely altered conduct towards him. Andrew, whose pride began to take an interest in the matter, threw down the amount of his bill, and instantly left the house; but not before he had been told, that it was as well he shewed a disposition to walk off quietly, since, if he had not, it would have been worse for him.

If Andrew was at a loss to comprehend, for what reason he had been so unmercifully threshed, by the person who attacked him for the balance of the brown mare, he was no less puzzled to understand, why he had been thus unceremoniously thrust into the streets, by his landlord, whom he was as unconcious of having offended, as the other. Having succeeded, though not without some difficulty, as he was a stranger in the town, in finding another lodging for the night, Andrew, agreeably to a determination, which he had some time previously come to, set off, on the following morning, by the coach, for Glasgow, where he had also some business to transact, before he returned home.

When the coach, on the top of which Andrew was mounted, had proceeded a little way, the guard tapped him on the shoulder, and said—giving him, at the same time, a knowing look, and clapping his finger on his nose—"I say, friend, are you going to try your hand in the west? eh! Some good things done there, in your way, occasionally; but I'm afraid you'll find it rather hot quarters, as there's a special sharp look-out kept there, just now, for birds of passage—you understand me—eh?"

Andrew looked steadily, for some time, at the person who thus familiarly and mysteriously addressed him, to discern whether he was in jest or earnest; but, not being able to make this out—

"How, frien'," said he, "should the wast be owre het for me, mair than ither folk?—What do ye mean?"

"Ah! ha! ha!—very well, very well," said the guard, laughing, heartily—"Come, now, that's a capital one—you dont know anything about it. Oh, no, not you. And you dont know me either, I warrant?"

Andrew, with the utmost gravity of countenance, declared that he did not. "Better and better," shouted out the guard. Then stretching himself over the top of the coach towards Andrew, and, clapping his finger again, significantly, to his nose—"I say," he whispered, "do you recollect anything, then, of a certain score of blackfaced sheep, that you once drove into Morpeth, under an erroneous impression, that they were your own?—and do you recollect of the owner and I convincing you of your mistake, and of your feelings being so much hurt on the occasion, that you could not stand it, but took your heels, as if the old one himself had been after you? Dont recollect that, either, I suppose, eh?"

Poor simple Andrew gravely protested that he did not; and this he did with a steadiness and composure of countenance, that seemed to impress the guard with a very high opinion of his powers of deception.

"That's right," he said, on Andrew's denying not only all knowledge of the sheep he alluded to, but of his ever having been in Morpeth in his life. "That's right," he said, slapping him on the shoulder. "My eye, but you're a rare one. They'll be devillish clever that make anything of you, friend, with that simple-looking face of your's, unless their evidence be all the weightier. Only take care of yourself, my lad, when you go west, that's all, or they'll bother you, for there's some folks there on the look out for you."

Having said this, the guard dropped the conversation, and resumed his pace and his attention to his duties, without taking any more notice of his passenger.

On arriving at Glasgow, Andrew proceeded to a tavern, to which he had been recommended by a friend, before leaving home; and here he was just about sitting down to a comfortable dinner, which he had ordered, when two persons abruptly entered the apartment, and inquired if his name was not "Harry Thomson, alias, alias," said the man who spoke, at the same time looking at a paper which he held in his hand—"alias Crichton, alias Johnston, alias Aitkin, alias Walkinshaw, alias Dowie, alias Erwin, alias Willoughby;" and here the man, fairly run out of breath with his aliases, stopped short; and looking Andrew stoutly in the face, inquired if he knew any of these gentlemen? "The ne'er a anc o' them ever I saw, to my knowledge, atween the twa een," quoth Andrew, at a loss to conjecture what the meaning of this intrusion could be. "And my name's no Harry Thomson," he added, "but Andrew Rutherford."

"Exactly," said one of the men, "All right, my man, nothing like a stout denial. But, in the meantime, you'll please to come along with us."

"Wi' you!" said Andrew, in amazement. "For what? And wha are ye?" "We'll let you know all that, by and by," said one of the men. "In the meantime, Andrew, or whatever else your name is, we apprehend you on a charge of

sheep-stealing. Have you had any hand in any small job of that kind lately?" And, without waiting for a reply, he went on—"and here's a description of your person that fits you to a nicety;" and he read several particulars from a hand-bill, which certainly *might* apply to Andrew; but there was one which was altogether undeniable. This was a description of Andrew's singular looking greatcoat. To a very button, to a single cape, this part of the picture was correct. So correct indeed was it, that Andrew himself could not deny it. He attempted, however, to do away with the effect of this evidence against him, by explaining how he came by the coat; but the officers, for such they were, merely gave an incredulous smile, on his stating that he had bought it a few days before in St Mary's Wynd, in Edinburgh, and repeated their commands that he should instantly go along with them. Conscious of his innocence, Andrew immediately complied, and in a few minutes, found himself snugly entombed in one of the criminal cells in Glasgow jail.

On the following day, Andrew was brought before the sheriff for examination, anent the crime of sheep-stealing, with which he was charged, when the well-known and fatal greatcoat was again urged against him, in proof of his identity; and again Andrew related how he came by it. This being a point which it was indispensably necessary to have cleared up, the prisoner was remanded, and the coat sent to Edinburgh, that the police there might make the necessary inquiries on the subject. The result was, that Andrew's statement regarding the greatcoat was found to be correct—a circumstance which, added to the evidence of some acquaintances he had in Glasgow, and whom, in his extremity, he had called upon to bear witness that he was Andrew Rutherford, millar at Broonyknowes, in Annandale, and no other person whatever, finally procured his liberation. And it was now, for the first time, that Andrew learnt the history of his greatcoat—a history this which he obtained from one of the officers who apprehended him. The coat, it appeared from this account, had belonged to a notorious vagabond, for whom the police had been long on the look-out, who went about the country in the character of a horse-jockey or drover—swindling, cheating, and robbing, whenever opportunities presented themselves; and, in this simple and single fact, Andrew found at once a complete and most satisfactory solution of the mysterious occurrences which had lately befallen him. He had been taken for the original owner of the coat, and hence all his sufferings.

How the coat had come to St Mary's Wynd, it was not so easy to conjecture; but it was supposed that the original proprietor, finding, from its singularity, that it was rather an inconvenient wear for a gentleman of his profession, had disposed of it there, and provided himself with a less remarkable garment. However this might be, Andrew determined never to buy a greatcoat in St Mary's Wynd again, without being better informed of its history. We need scarcely add, that he resolved, at the same time, never again to put on the one which he had already bought there.



TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE ISRAELITE.

THE lands of Turretknowe, lying not far from Loch Ken, in the stewardry of Kirkcudbright, belonged once to a person of the name of Edward Glendonwyn, in some degree related to the family of that name possessing the large estates of Parton, in the neighbourhood, and, like the members of that family, a Catholic. The mansion of Turretknowe, situated on the lands, was a large house, built in the Elizabethan style of architecture, and, withal, handsome and commodious. The proprietor, holding the character of a gentleman of high and unsullied honour, was much respected in the neighbourhood; and it was a matter of some surprise and curiosity, why he had not long before—for he was now getting into years—taken a wife, to add some comfort to the bleak, dry bachelorism which the mansion displayed, in spite of the efforts that were made by the master, by the aid of company, to dispel the ordinary appearances of a retreat of celibacy.

Glendonwyn had two servants in his house, distinguished from the others by peculiarities which deserve some notice. The first was the house maid, a person of the name of Jean Crosbie, a Catholic, and one of the most intolerant of the followers of that faith. She was considered by the neighbours as being very handsome; and her own opinion did not shame that of her admirers—for she was vain, haughty, and overbearing. She was fond of cultivating the good opinion of her master; and it was even alleged that she aspired to have some claim on his affections. She took the greatest liberties with his name in her conversation, calling him by his surname, and always giving out obscure hints that she had a power over him that he would not be much inclined to acknowledge. These assumptions were, in some degree, borne out by facts—at least there could be no doubt that this queen of the broom exercised, with the permission of her master, great power over the other servants; and her tyranny and abuse, though complained of by them, was not attended to by their master with that sense of justice and fair play which marked the other parts of his character. Indeed, complaints of that nature ended often in the dismissal of the complainer, on the ground that disturbances, which could not be understood, were best ended by separation, whoever might be in the wrong.

The other servant, to whom allusion has been made, was an Israelite of the name of Moses Mendelsohn, certainly an unusual personage to be found in the house of a Christian. It was not well known how Moses came to take up his residence in that house; but it was generally stated that Glendonwyn found him one day lying frozen, apparently to death, on a part of his property, and directed him to be taken to the kitchen, where the heat of a large fire, and a good supply of soup, soon restored him to his wonted condition. The gratitude of the man overcame the prejudices of the exclusive sect to which he belonged, and he prayed to be allowed to remain in the house, and repay the kindness he had experienced, by assisting, gratuitously, in the meanest services to which the interest of the master might devote him. Poor Moses kept his promise with the greatest precision; for such was his devotion to inferior

offices, that he held himself utterly disqualified from even being clean—any effort made to take away the ungenial covering of dust or soot that adhered to him being in the highest degree unpleasant to him; and, when such attempt on the part of the other servants was attended with success, there was an appearance of cold discomfort about the washed Israelite, mixed with a sort of shame, as inexplicable on the common theories of the natural feelings and wishes of mankind as it was grotesque and amusing. A pair of clean shoes—and the servants often put a most perverse gloss upon them—was a grievous calamity to the Hebrew; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he could be made to part with an old garment for a new one. All exchanges of that kind were managed in secret, and unknown to him. The old habiliments were taken away, and the new were resorted to from the spur of necessity. Yet, withal, this was an *honest Jew*; the hereditary and national vice of his race—avarice—could not be discovered in any of his actions. He asked no money—would take none for his services—and never had a penny in his pocket. His meat and his clothes were afforded him by his master; and if he were left free from the abuse of Jean Crosbie, and allowed to employ himself in some occupation sufficiently humble, and far enough removed from “high life below stairs,” he was as happy as any of his race could be supposed to be.

Glendonwyn was as much attached to the simple honesty of the Hebrew as Jean Crosbie was abhorrent of his habits of uncleanness. He often amused himself with the poor creature, and flattered him by telling him that in one thing they agreed beyond the possibility of change—a repugnance to pork—a feeling in which the master was, to the full, as sincere as the servant; though in the one case it was moral and in the other physical. Moses was a Reubenite, or a descendant of the tribe of Reuben, and held the fasts and nourished the antipathies of his sect, with all the devotion of a pure anti-Nazarene. The well-known antipathy to pork—which has so often been made a subject of laughter and derision against the descendants of the tribes, with no greater claim to the production of so much vulgar merriment than the feeling they exhibit against hares or others of the *animalia immunda*—was as strong in Moses as it ever was found to be in any Reubenite from the days of Reuben himself. The rousing of that antipathy was the expiation of all poor Moses' offences; for, whenever he erred, he was cheated into the acceptance of some of the juice of the hated flesh, and then told of the sin he had committed against the law of Moses—a communication which produced such an extraordinary length of jaw—such a sorrowful cast of countenance—so much humiliation, purgation, ablution, praying, fasting, and expiation, that it was certainly difficult gravely to contemplate the contrast between so mean a cause and so great an effect. A spoonful of hare soup forced into his mouth, at the instigation of the housemaid, produced, in the otherwise simple and good-natured Moses, such a frenzy as to endanger her life. This woman was, perhaps, the only living creature of the unforbidden kind against whom he entertained a feeling of hostility; and he complained of her conduct to his master

"My good mashter," said the Hebrew, "Jean Crosbie, will not let alone the poor Jew: the deshendant of Reuben has a right to purify his shoul in the way of his faith; yet she fills me with abominations and unclean things, and then tells me I have broken the law of Moshes. On the 15th of Nisan, (March,) vich vash our feasht of unleavened bread—that ish the first day, for we have sheven days of that feasht—she forced into my mouth—oh! it vash vicked and abominable!—a piesh of bread, made with yeasht; and, on the feasht of the purification of the ark, by Shimon, vich vash on the 23d day of Jar, (April,) she sprinkled my garment vit hare's blood."

"You do not seem to be partial to the ladies, Moses," said Glendonwyn.

"Mish Crosbie dosh not chew the cud, but she dosh divide the hoof," answered Moses, desirous to bring his tormentor within the precept in Leviticus.

"I did not know that my housemaid divided the hoof," said Glendonwyn, again.

"That ish because she does not shew you the cloven foot," said Moses, sliily.

"And she only shews you that when you decline working on your holidays or fasts."

"It ish only during the feasht of the Pashover, the Pentecosht, and the Tabernacle; and I will mention the days ven I do not work. There ish the seventh of Nisan, ven I abstain from lighting a fire. There ish the fourteenth of Nisan, ven I eat no leavened bread. There ish the six following days, all of the Pashover. Then I have no feasht till"—

"That will do, Moses," interrupted Glendonwyn; "and I will speak to Miss Crosbie to let you alone. In the meantime, try to keep yourself somewhat cleaner, and do not spare my water. When did you wash yourself?"

"Ven Mish Crosbie lasht threw pork at me," answered Moses, with a leer.

"Then I shall tell her to throw pork at you every day, if you do not attend to what I have said to you," said the master.

"I vill vash myself on the 10th of Tisri, (September,) vich is our feasht of expiation," answered Moses, drily; and, bowing, retired.

Notwithstanding his national and religious peculiarities, Moses was really a favourite with Glendonwyn, who could confide in him to the uttermost; for no secret could be dragged out of him by human agency—a quality he was called upon to shew to advantage, on some memorable occasions, now to be explained.

Glendonwyn having, as he considered, been too long a bachelor, had turned his eyes kindly on a Miss Jane Gordon, a daughter of a rich merchant, residing in Castle-Douglas. The lady had returned his attentions, and a correspondence passed between the two; the medium, or love-letter bearer, being the simple but trust-worthy Jew. Few people knew anything of this love intercourse. A few surmises, some of which had grazed the sensitive ear of Jean Crosbie, had gone abroad; but they were attributed to the envy of old gossips, and passed over without apparently exciting much attention. At least, Jean Crosbie, who had been in the habit of talking so freely of Glendonwyn, hinting that, marry whom he would, he never would go out of the mansion of Turretknowe to seek for a wife, appeared not to be much roused by the rumours; though Moses did not hesitate to say, that she one night followed him to Castle-Douglas, as he went with a letter to Miss Gordon; while she denied the fact, and pretended to appear indignant at the imputation of so much condescension. Her neighbours, however, alleged that her manner had changed, and her bedfellow complained of her restlessness, her starts, mutterings, and night-walking, and sought a quieter couch. In the meantime, Moses kept his secret, and no effort of his tormentor could drag it from him.

The occupation in which Moses was thus engaged was,

however, by no means pleasant to him; for he had nearly the same antipathy towards the fair Miss Gordon, that he had towards Jean Crosbie. This lady was of a showy and elegant turn of mind, fond of fine servants and glittering equipage. She repeatedly found fault with her lover, for the careless manner in which he ordered the affairs of his establishment, recommended to him to enter more into the *beau monde*, to associate with *beaux esprits*, to get better and more elegant servants—*la bella femina che ride*, in place of the sombre Bell Semple, the cook, or the ill-natured Jean Crosbie—with many other advices. It was in vain that poor Glendonwyn said to her, in a translation of an old Latin apothegm—"Being a bachelor, what can I do?" The answer was ready, and worthy of the mistress expectant—"Take a wife, and, if she is an elegant one, her entry to Turretknowe will be the sign of the departure of such a vile creature as that Jew, who soils my letters with his abominable hands." Glendonwyn could not help thinking that his choice would be an expensive wife to him. Yet, as love has been stated, by the best authorities, from Orpheus down to Moore—not forgetting the merry Anacreon—to be blind; he considered himself altogether excluded from any attempt to shew or to act upon the result of any such demonstration, that "love has eyes;" fearful, like every sensible and humble-minded individual, of incurring the reproach in the French proverb, which sounds as well in English—"It is great folly to think of being wise alone."

That Miss Gordon hated the humble Reubenite, that individual himself well knew; for she did not hesitate, when he was waiting for an answer to Glendonwyn's letters, to treat him in the worst manner. On one occasion, Moses got wearied and hungry standing waiting for his answer. He threw back his imagination to the palmy days of the Sanhedrim, when his ancestors sat in that judicial assembly—first in Silo, and afterwards in Jerusalem—clothed with honour, and well supplied with meat, with the exception of those days when they adjudged a malefactor to die, during which they ate nothing, an exception which Moses' hunger put within a very short parenthesis. It was the fifth day of the feast of the Passover, and Jean Crosbie had not allowed a single ounce of unleavened bread to be baked during the whole period, so that the poor Reubenite had actually ate little or nothing for five days. A piece of oatmeal cake, (intended apparently for the dog,) lay on a side table near to which Moses stood. The pure yeastless appearance of the bread produced an effect upon the victim of this holy ordinance he could not resist. Not one of the twelve kinds, called the bread of proposition, that stood beyond the vail of the tabernacle, appeared so exquisite in the eyes of Moses, as did that unleavened cake; and, regardless of the suspicious glances of the lady, who eyed his marked observation and approbation of the bread with attention, he seized the object of his yearning, and with the greatest composure, sat down to eat it. The pollution was insufferable; and a whole month's concealed and restrained spleen burst upon the head of the poor child of Israel, in a moment.

"Thou dirty, unwashed, unshaven brute!" ejaculated the Miss, "darest thou pollute my bread with thy unclean abominable hands?" And seizing the cake, and wresting it from the still unwilling hand of the Jew, she threw it to a large Newfoundland dog that was lying on the hearth-rug, enjoying all the ease and luxury of a pet. "Take your answer and begone," she added, with a frown, and look of disgust; and Moses left the room muttering to himself all the way as he went down the stairs.

"The Gentile is angry vit the poor Jew," said he, "for taking a bit of bread. O Israel, ven vill thy troubles sheace, and the time appointed by the prophets come, ven He who has been promised, shall bind up our broken shpirits, and collect us again from the uttermost parts of the earth! The golden and shilver veshels which

Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple and carried into Babylon were restored—and so shall the persecuted children, by one that is greater than Sheshbazzar. We shall come again out of captivity, and will sheparate us from the filthiness of the heathen, and keep the feast of unleavened bread with joy. Ash He who parted the Red Sea once turned the heart of the King of Ashyria unto our fathers to strengthen our hands in the work of the King of Israel, so shall we be again upholden against those who persecute us, and torment us even as this fair Gentile has now persecuted me. But the poison of Aaron's rod, which was turned to a serpent, will smite the Gentiles as it once did the Egyptians; and Mish Gordon and Mish Crosbie may yet feel the vengeance of the Protector of the Jews."

These words were uttered by Moses so loud that the servants in the house of Mr Gordon heard them, and construed them into maledictions and prophetic threatenings. When he came again with any letters from Glendonwyn, he was kept at the door, from a fear that he might resent, in some fierce manner, the injury and insult he thought he had received. It was of no use that Glendonwyn told them he was a harmless creature. The evidence of their own ears was stronger than his assurances; and it was, moreover, enough that he was a Jew.

This dispute with Moses soon spread the news of Glendonwyn's courtship; for the servants gave out that it was when the Israelite was in the act of bringing letters to their mistress from his master, that he had received an affront, which he had threatened to revenge with poison. Jean Crosbie had, along with the others of the servants in Glendonwyn's house, no doubt now of the intentions of their master; and the subject was made more distressing and galling to her, from the circumstance of getting now thrown back in her teeth the vain and foolish, and, perhaps, unfounded expressions she had, for a long time, seen in the habit of using regarding her master. Her neighbouring servants, whom, in the heyday of her hope and exaltation, she had treated imperiously, and even cruelly, now asked her where her authority would be when she, and they, and Moses, and all would be driven from Turret-knowe, like the flies that dared to disregard the scented wind of Miss Gordon's fan, and rested their limbs on her vermilion cheeks. It was in vain now for Jean to retort, far less to try to regain her authority; for her tormentors, strong in combination and long smouldering fires of indignation, heeded not her vapouring. Her ferula—which was never anything else than the power of turning them away—was broken with their hope of being allowed to remain; and, snapping their fingers in her face, they laughed her to that deserved scorn, which a servant-mistress so often, by her cruelty, brings upon her own head.

The effect of all this upon Jean Crosbie was greater than her pride could bear. But she had no remedy; for the pride which gave poison to the shafts of her foes, prevented her from applying to Glendonwyn for assistance in counteracting its effect. She was as peculiarly placed with her master as with her fellow-servants; for she was displeased at both—the one for putting her in the power of the other, and that other for seeing and taking advantage of her degradation. Her heart was, moreover, it was surmised, interested in the affair, and that being wrong, what in all her personal economy could be right? Her temper changed; from being high, wordy, and imperious, it became sullen and dogged. The poor Jew was continually in her way—she buffeted and kicked him like a dog—visited, upon his head, the revengeful payment of his services for carrying the correspondence between Glendonwyn and Miss Gordon; yet attributed all to his filth, and the abomination of his religion, and his laziness in executing her commands.

Ill-treated as was poor Moses by this virago, and bitterly as he sometimes expressed himself towards her, he was so

simple and easily managed—or, at least, the gratification of his love of keeping his fasts, which was a good deal in her power, acted as so strong an instrument in ameliorating his disposition, and bending him to the will of the woman who could starve him in his days of forbidden food—that he consented often to do her most servile tasks. A piece of fish in jejune days, and a cake of oatmeal bread during the seven days of the feast of the Passover, erased from his memory the grossest insults and the most barbarous treatment, and made him a willing slave to gratify the whims or caprices, and work the dirty work of the woman, who, next moment, might have been seen kicking him out of the house. Thus was this poor member of that perverse generation, from whom the finger of the Almighty is not yet lifted, one of the most instructive examples of the divine curse pronounced against his race—"So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." Despised of man, and yet unable for a vindication of their rights as sons of Adam—rejected of heaven, yet true to their faith—the feeblest of men, the most devoted of religionists—who cannot see in this national, but unnatural juxtaposition and contrast of opposite qualities, the impression of a special interposition of Providence, and the truth of a faith purified from its predecessor, whose fate is its proof, as its bosom was the source from which it sprung and was nourished.

Jean Crosbie had the misfortune, and felt the discomfort, of seeing the courtship of her master and Miss Gordon go on with every prospect of a happy termination. A day was appointed for the young lady and her father, Mr John Gordon, along with their friends, dining at Turret-knowe, and great preparations were made for entertaining them. A general order was given to Jean Crosbie, to provide every delicacy of the season; and no expense or trouble was spared to render the dinner worthy of the guests or the occasion. All parties entered into the spirit of the entertainment; and even Jean herself appeared to have laid aside a part of the untoward feeling with which she was actuated, to contribute to the forwarding of the intentions of her master. Poor Moses did not want for plenty of inferior offices, from the twisting of the necks of pullets, to the killing of the rats which annoyed Bell Semple, the cook, by anticipating the enjoyment of the approaching dinner. There was one duty, however, which he absolutely rebelled against doing, and that was the killing and scraping of a sucking pig, which had been selected by Jean as a dainty for the delicate stomach of the fastidious visitors.

The day arrived, and everything went off with regularity and eclat. The gaiety and hilarity of the party was, in a great degree, produced by the spirit of the young lady in honour of whom the dinner had been given, whose wit was sparkling to a degree beyond what she generally exhibited—keeping the company in a continued state of excitement, laughter, and admiration—and apparently enjoying the scene herself as much as those whom she delighted. Wretched being! The coruscations of thy corybantic fancy, drunk with fate, and filled with the inspiration of death, were but as the scintillations of the meteor which the clouds of autumn wrap up in their gloom! The changing colours on thy fair cheek, the harbingers of thought, and the test of feeling, were but as the hues of the clouds which curtain the departure of the setting sun! In a short time after dinner, the happiness of the party was extinguished like the flame of a lamp, and despair threw over all the dark drapery of its awful form. Miss Gordon and her father fell in a moment from their chairs, apparently in the agonies of death. Two others of the party became sick, and all the indications of the fatal workings of a rapid poison were exhibited to the eyes of the frantic host. The greatest uproar commenced—servants flew about in every direction, some for doctors, others for appliances for the sick—friends were sent for and came, and carriages were brought to drive the victims to their resi-

dences. Mr and Miss Gordon were unable to be removed, and were attended and treated by a surgeon in the house of their host. The young lady was the only one of those affected who exhibited urgent symptoms of danger. No medicines could assuage her sufferings, and in three hours she expired in the arms of her lover and intended husband.

The other persons who had partaken of the poison were likely to recover, and an investigation was next morning set on foot to discover the author of so heinous a crime. Jean Crosbie and Bell Semple were at once fixed upon as the suspected persons. The poisoned dish was discovered to be the roasted pig, and the analytical powers of the surgeon soon discovered that the poison was arsenic. Jean Crosbie and her neighbour were at once apprehended, and carried to Kirkeudbright. Upon being examined, Jean denied all knowledge of the circumstances, and boldly accused Moses Mendelsohn, the Jew, as being the guilty person—giving, as her reasons, that she saw him go into the kitchen in the forenoon, and depart quickly and suspiciously upon being observed by her; that his hatred to pork extended to every person that partook of it; that his master hated it as much as himself, and would therefore be saved by that antipathy; but that Miss Gordon, who had insulted him, and been threatened by him, was likely to have partaken of a dainty got expressly for her. These statements were plausible, and Moses was apprehended also. His examination took place soon after, the purport of which will be interesting to the reader.

“Where were you yesterday forenoon, sir?” asked the fiscal.

“In my mashter’s shtables,” answered the Israelite.

“Were you in Glendonwyn’s kitchen during that forenoon?” again asked the fiscal.

“I vash not,” answered Moses.

Here one of the officers whispered to the fiscal, who asked Moses to take off his shoes; and this being done, they were narrowly examined, and from the edges were brushed off some fine yellow sand, the particles of which were compared with some which was contained in a paper lying on the table, supposed to be of the same kind as that with which the kitchen was sprinkled on the previous day. This hint was, it turned out, the suggestion of Jean Crosbie, who communicated it to the officer. It appeared to strike the fiscal as curious that the sand had remained on the shoes; but such was the fact, and it even appeared that it had adhered to them with a tenacity unusual to a friable loose substance—a circumstance pointing with instructive indication to the wonderful ways of Providence in detecting crimes.

“You are quite sure you were not in the kitchen yesterday?” resumed the fiscal. “What were you occupied about in the stable?”

“I vash killing rats,” answered Moses, “and cleaning the horslies.”

“How did you kill the rats?” again asked the fiscal.

“Vit arshnic,” answered Moses, simply.

“Where did you get the arsenic?” asked the now excited man of the law.

“In Castle-Douglas,” replied Moses; “in the shop of the ‘pothecary, Vatshon.”

“In Mr Watson’s. Well,” resumed the fiscal, “did you use all you got for the purpose of destroying the rats; or, is not, where is the remainder?”

“I dosh not know vere it be,” answered Moses; “vat I did not ushe I left in the shtable.”

The fiscal was again whispered to by the officer, and Moses was required to turn out the pockets of his coat. On this being done, a paper containing some powder of arsenic fell out, and was secured by the officer.

“How came this into your pocket, if you left the poison in the stable, Moses?” asked the fiscal.

“I cannot inform your honour of that,” replied Moses. “I did not put the arshnic in my pocket. I do not like

arshnic, your honour. It ish not for Jews any more than for Christians; for it ish a mosht filthy poishon, as your honour’s rats musht long ago have been informed. It vash jush as well for my mashter that rats were not of the plagues of Egypt; for Moshes Mendelshon would not have deshtroyed the frogs, the flies, and the shcorpions, which the rod of Aaron brought on the land of Pharaoh.”

“It would seem that Miss Gordon was not included in the exception from the influence of Aaron’s rod,” said the fiscal. “Did you ever threaten that lady with the poison of Aaron’s rod?”

“Yesh, onsh,” answered Moses, simply. “She called me brute; and, after I left her housh, I vished in my heart that the poishon of Aaron’s rod were applied to the Gentiles, and Mish Gordon among the resht; but I vash angry when I vished it, and I am now shorry for what I shaid when the lady ish dead.”

“Are you sure, now, Moses,” asked the fiscal, “that no part of this poison was put by your hands on the roasted pig which your master had served up for dinner yesterday?”

“Vy, yesh, your honour. If the pig had been alive I would have been very glad to have given it shome of the medshin; but there vas no ush in killing a dead pig, as your honour, who knows the law, may eashily consheive.”

After some more questions and answers of small importance, Moses was sent back to jail.

This precognition appeared to the procurator-fiscal a most extraordinary piece of evidence, insomuch as it contained a mixture of simplicity and falsehood he had never before witnessed. The admissions made by the Hebrew were most remarkable, on the supposition of his being guilty; while, on the supposition of his innocence, the lies he had been proved to have told—first, in regard to his not having been in the kitchen, and, secondly, in regard to the arsenic not being on his person but in the stable—were unaccountable. The artful character of his sect, however, accounted for his apparent simplicity; and when his deposition was studiously considered, it did not appear, after all, that he had admitted more than could easily have been made out against him. The parts he had denied, he might think reasonably could not be made out; for he might have thought, as in all likelihood he did, that no one saw him in the kitchen except Jean Crosbie, who was herself suspected; and everything depended on the fact of his having been, or not having been in the kitchen; while, in regard to the poison having been left in the stable, he might easily have escaped from any attempted contradiction of his testimony from its not being found there, by pretending that it had been removed. Still these denials seemed, in some respects, gratuitous; for, where was the difference between the poison being left in the stable and carried in his pocket, unless he might have supposed that, by putting it in his pocket, he could more easily admit or deny any question regarding it, so as to suit the circumstances which might be brought out, and the condition in which he might be placed? The fact of buying the poison was of an insuperable nature; and, joined with the threats he had used against the deceased, went a great way in making out a case against the Jew.

The apothecary corroborated the Jew’s testimony, as to the poison having been bought by him; and the servants who wrought in the stables stated that Moses was occupied in the manner he had stated. Glendonwyn himself called on the procurator-fiscal, and got an account of the evidence which had been given by the Jew; and there was an omission, which he pointed out to the man of the law, so glaring, that he might well have been ashamed at having it stated to him. Glendonwyn said, that he never gave instructions to the Jew to buy arsenic to kill rats, and far less did he give him any money for that purpose. Now, it was notorious that Moses never had any money about him. He had never asked any from his master, and had never

got any; it being the intention of Glendonwyn to keep any little sum that he intended to give him, in his hands, to be of use to him when it accumulated to something of importance. Where, then, did the Jew get the money wherewith to buy the poison? The question pointed out at once the ridiculous omission of the fiscal, who ought to have asked Moses, whether he bought the arsenic of his own accord, or as the agent of any one else? Moses was, accordingly, again examined.

"How did it come into your head to buy arsenic for the purpose of killing the rats, Moses?" asked the fiscal. "And how did you get the money?"

"It was Mish Crosbie," answered the Jew, "who asked me to kill the rats, and who shupplied the moonish for that purpose."

"Why did you not state that before, man?" said the fiscal.

"Because your honour never asked the queshtion," answered Moses, with childish simplicity.

"Did you give the arsenic to Jean Crosbie, when you returned with it?" again asked the fiscal.

"No; she bade me take a leetle of it, and lay the resht on the shelf in the shtable, vich I did; and I vas mush astonished to find it afterwards in my pocket."

This testimony appeared still more curious; for, either in the event of the Jew being guilty or innocent, it was natural for him, if it was the truth; to have stated ultro-ncously, and even-forwardly, the circumstance, that Jean Crosbie requested him to buy the poison; but while the circumstance of not having mentioned this fact evinced a simplicity approaching to idiocy—that is, in the event of the fact being true—the conduct of the Jew, who was not looked upon as a simpleton, gave rise to the strongest suspicions that he was, in this part of his precognition, telling a falsehood. The choice lay between a simpleton of the most sottish cast, and a liar of an ordinary grade; but it was acknowledged, on all hands, that Moses possessed neither character. The view more suitable to the ordinary construction of human motives, and the suspicious nature of the case, was, however, entertained by the procurator-fiscal, who had no doubt that Moses, in his second precognition, told a lie; for no reasons could be adduced to justify so absurd a construction, as that a man, with all his senses about him, and exposed to the danger of expiating a crime by death, could have retained, in his own bosom, in spite of questions that at least suggested the statement of it, a fact that seemed to be the key-stone of the case, and of his own justification.

It was naturally expected that Bell Semple, the cook, would be able to speak to some important facts; and she was next examined. She said that she had been, during the day, several times out of the kitchen, and for a considerable period at each time. She had been up stairs to speak to her master, in the dining-room, looking to the laying out of the table, and also once or twice in the back yard for articles which she required in the preparation of the dinner. She said, moreover, that, when she was coming down from her master's room, she met Jean Crosbie, who stated to her, that she should not allow that filthy Jew to prowl about in the kitchen, where she said she had just seen him; to which the cook answered, that the Jew was often in the kitchen, and had never done any harm there; and Jean Crosbie replied, that he would pollute the meat. On being farther examined, she said that she heard the servants laughing at the Jew's occupation of extirpating the rats, of which she confessed there were a very great many about the out-houses; but she conceived that Moses had resorted to that employment of his own accord, as she had often heard him vowing vengeance against them for gnawing his shoes in the out-house where he slept. This witness stated also a fact which made the procurator-fiscal start—viz., that Moses had, on the day before the dinner, come and asked her for

a loan of some pence. She at first refused to comply with his request, and asked him what he intended to do with it. He replied, that it was for the purpose of buying some arsenic, wherewith to poison the rats which infested the out-houses. She then gave him the pence, being threepence which he afterwards repaid; and she understood that he went to Castle-Douglas for the poison.

This last statement of the cook rendered it necessary to make another application to Moses. He at once admitted that he got the money from Bell Semple, with which he bought the poison; but stated, that he borrowed it from her at the request of Miss Crosbie, who gave him the means of repaying it.

"Why did you not tell me that before?" asked the fiscal angrily.

"Because your honour did not ashk who gave me the moonish," replied Moses, with his accustomed *naïveté*.

"But you stated formerly, Moses," said the fiscal, "that you got the arsenic at the request of Jean Crosbie. Why, then, did you go to Bell Semple for the money?"

"Because Mish Crosbie ashked me to borrow the moonish from Bell Shemple," answered Moses.

This additional testimony of the Jew was as incomprehensible as that formerly elicited from him. Here he had again concealed, at least not stated, when it ought naturally to have been mentioned by him, that he borrowed the money from the cook with which he bought the poison; and then the moment the question is put to him, he admits the fact in the most ingenuous manner possible, and afterwards states, that he did all this at the request of Jean Crosbie—a mixture of simplicity, idiocy, cunning, openness, and secrecy, which no searcher into human motives could resolve into elements of truth. The fiscal felt more at a loss for a true and probable theory than ever: and recourse was had to a re-examination of Jean Crosbie, to ascertain what she had to state against the imputations which the Jew's testimony cast upon the truth of her former precognition.

On being re-examined, Jean Crosbie denied, *mordicus*, that she ever told the Jew to destroy the rats, or borrow money from Bell Semple, or buy arsenic; all of which allegations, on the part of the Jew, she denominated as calumnies and falsehoods, resorted to by the cunning Israelite to save a life he had justly forfeited to the interests of humanity and the injured laws. She insisted strongly that Moses had frequently vowed vengeance against Miss Gordon; and that vengeance he had taken in such a manner as to gratify at once his feelings of revenge and his religious antipathies—having put the poison on the pork, an article of food he had been tormenting with from the first day he entered the house of Turretknowe.

Some evidence was next led as to the fear entertained by the servants, of the effects of Miss Gordon becoming their mistress. The dairymaid, who was considered to be a favourite with Miss Gordon, having once been in her service, was examined, and stated that Jean Crosbie's authority in the house was very great; and that, when it was surmised that Miss Gordon was to become the mistress of Turretknowe, she evinced apparently great disquietude, but abstained from saying anything: The other servants were more outspoken, and acknowledged, though with good nature, that their dismissal was certain, but added, that they had no fears of getting situations elsewhere. She said that Moses Mendelsohn was apparently in greater distress about the marriage than any of the other people about the house; for he complained of having been called a brute by her, and said that the poison of Aaron's rod, which was made a serpent, would destroy her, as he intended to do the rats. Other witnesses were got to swear to the same facts; and the difficulties of the case seemed to increase with the increase of the evidence.

The whole evidence was transmitted to Edinburgh, to be perused by the Lord Advocate. Authority was afterwards sent to liberate Jean Crosbie and Bell Semple; and Moses Mendelsohn was indicted for the murder of "Miss Jane Gordon, by administering to her arsenic in a roasted pig, which, in the house of Edward Glendonwyn, was served up to a dinner at which the said Jane Gordon was present; for the purpose of taking away the life of her, and of the other guests—at least of the said Jane Gordon, who died in consequence thereof."

At the next Circuit Court, held at Dumfries, the trial of the unfortunate Jew took place, with all the solemnity of that ancient and dignified tribunal. The usual forms were gone through, and the Jew denied that he was guilty of the crime charged. The Advocate-Depute then made a speech which was remarkable for its asperity against the culprit, as well as for the critical acumen with which he penetrated every part of the extraordinary case, the most extraordinary, he admitted, that had ever been entrusted to him to prosecute. A very faint outline can be given now of this speech. It was not taken down by the shorthand writer with any other view than to report the case shortly as a criminal trial, amongst many others; but some idea may be formed of its character, by what is now to be submitted to the reader:—

"My Lords, and Gentlemen of the Jury—You are well aware, as we all are, of the dreadful character of murder, committed by means of poison; for, while, in any other species of murder, the hand which directs the blow can often be detected, and the victim may have a chance for defeating the object of his slayer, by defending his life, or evading the danger—in the case of poison there is no security, no relief, no evasion—the brave and the timid, the wicked and the innocent, the master and the slave, the Christian and the Jew, are alike exposed to the concealed venom, which the murderer by poison—the worst of all serpents, for the serpent shews his fangs—employs against the unconscious victims of his cruelty and cowardice. Nor is it proper to forget what is an aggravation, though only in the cruel inconsistency it exhibits, that the staff of life is, in the general case, as it is in that in which I am now engaged, used as the barbed arrow of death. The gift of the Almighty is changed to a curse, and the very hand of the victim is made to convey the means of his own death to his own mouth, and commit an unconscious suicide. Nor are we to forget here who are the parties in this dreadful affair; for the more that contrast is viewed, the greater must be our indignation. On the one side, a beautiful woman, in the bloom of her youth, the zenith of her beauty, and on the eye of her marriage; on the other, all that can be conceived as an incarnation of preconceived ideas of filth and ugliness, squalid, foul, and ill-favoured—a Jew of the tribe of Reuben, an insulter of our Saviour, a denier of his divinity, a hater of Christians, and a disobeyer of the commands of the Almighty; one, in short, of that cross-grained, stiff-necked, perverse generation, who, the greatest favoured of the children of Adam, have at all times exhibited the least gratitude. What can be the thoughts of Christian men sitting on the tribunal of justice, that such a wretch should, by the cruel and wringing powers and pains of arsenic, deprive a creature, so fair, so interesting, and so young, of her existence, on the very eve of the happiest day of her life? Surely they must be those of indignation at the crime and pleasure in the contemplation that, though by the law of Moses there was appointed a city of refuge for murderers of a certain kind, no such city awaits the prisoner who, by his forethought felony, has forfeited not only sanctuary, but the sympathy of man. I shall be able to satisfy this court, that the prisoner at the bar, Moses Mendelsohn, conceived a savage feeling of hatred and revenge against the deceased; for the purpose of gratifying which, he, un-

nally, and according to the tricks of his sect, pretended that he intended to occupy himself in clearing Glendonwyn's house of rats, whereby, having an opportunity of purchasing arsenic, he might mix it with some of the food that was to be used at a dinner at which his victim was to be present—an intention which he put into execution with fearful determination, and in a way suited to the antipathies of his peculiar religion; having put the arsenic on a roasted pig, which was prepared in the kitchen of his master's house. By this diabolical act, this Jew got his revenge gratified, his religious feelings favoured, and, what was equal to all in his estimation, he secured his place in his master's house, which, in the event of his victim becoming, by marriage with his master, his mistress, he knew he could not for one moment retain. All this will shew you the hard-heartedness and diabolical nature of this cruel man; but you will also see in him a species of cunning, transcending any art with which I am acquainted; for, while he was concerned in a horrid and secret murder, he affected an openness, an ingenuousness, and a naïveté; talking of the arsenic—borrowing money to purchase it—stating the cause of his enmity to the deceased, that she had once called him a brute—sufficient to deceive, as it did deceive, every person in the house, except Jean Crosbie, and for a time even shook my own belief of his guilt: all which are an exaggeration of his great crime."

The evidence was now led, exhibiting nearly the same features as the precognition of the witnesses, already generally detailed. It was observed, however, by the pannel's counsel, that one most essential witness was wanting—no less important a personage than Jean Crosbie. Without her testimony, the evidence was powerful against Moses; and though there was no reason to suppose that she could be a witness for him, yet her absence gave the counsel for the culprit a handle, of which they did not fail to take advantage. Moses, himself, did not fail to perceive the extraordinary omission, and stood up with a view to address the court—a spectacle which confounded those who had known him, and conceived him to be a simpleton, as well as the judges, who, however, had no authority, and no wish to repress his attempt at justification, however clear the case appeared against him.

"A poor Jew, my Lords, hash no right to wonder at the ways of your Lordships, or to find fault with the lawsh of the land; but, in our counshel of Gazith—that ish, our Shanhedrim—the meokekim, or sheribes, explained the lawsh of Moshes; and I could vish to know vy Mish Crosbie ish not in the court thish day, for, according to our lawsh, ash delivered by Moshes, if any falsh witness shall shtand up against a man, acushing him of any crime, they shall both shtand before the Lord, before the prieshts, and before the judges in thoshe days, before Herod took away the Shanhedrim. Without thish voman, how can Moshes Mendelsholn be tried for thish crime? I am here to stand before the judges, and be veighed; and I shay that Jean Crosbie ish guilty of the crime for vich I am here tried. Let her also be veighed; for, ash Ezra shaid to twelveh of the chief prieshts—'Vatch ye, and keep the veshals of shilver and gold, and veigh them before the chief of the prieshts, and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Ishrael at Jerushalem; so are your Lordships bound to veigh ush both, and say vich of ush ish avanting. The trial ish between a Jew and a Gentile; but your Lordships are just, and can undershtand that a Jew hath feelings like other men. It vash not the poor Jew who shaid, 'Let their table become a shnare before them, and that vich should have been for their velfare, let it become a trap.' I bought the poishon, by the command of Mish Crosbie. It vash she who put it in my pocket, and sprinkled my feet vith the sand of the kitchen, putting glue thereon to make it stick; and it vash she who commanded me to borrow the moonish from the coock, and not to shay

that she requested me. Though I am poor, I am honest. Reproach hath broken my heart; as David saith—'I am full of heaviness, and I looked for shome to take pity, but there vash none, and for comforters, but I found none.' To whom can I appeal, but to your Lordships, imploring you to casht me not off, in the time of old age, and forshake me not ven my shtrength faileth. For my shupplication have reshpect, and the race vich thou leavesht shall be magnified on the earth."

As Moses finished his speech, a justice of the peace for the shire of Peebles, came forward, holding in his hands the dying declaration of Jean Crosbie, who, after she came out of jail, had been seized by a fever caught in its damp recesses, and been carried to Peeblesshire, where her friends resided. She grew worse, and, died; and, before her senses left her, emitted a declaration, in presence of the justice, which he now laid before the court. The declaration was read in court. It admitted that Jean Crosbie got the Jew to buy the poison, and afterwards used a part of it, by sprinkling it over the roasted pig, when Bell Semple was out of the kitchen. It stated also that she put the poison in the Jew's pocket, and put sand on his shoes, with glue, all with a view to implicate him in the murder. She committed the crime, because she loved her master, and desired to be revenged on her rival, whose entry to the house would have been the signal of her departure.

This evidence cleared Moses, who was acquitted, and taken home again to Turretknowe, where he lived and died.

THE BLACK AND WHITE REFORMERS.

THE first example of martyrdom for religious opinions, recorded in the history of Scotland, was, as is well known, the death of the unfortunate John Resby, an English priest, of the school of the celebrated English Reformer, Wickliff. Great as were the merits of Knox, it may be doubted if he possessed the courage of this early Reformer, who, at a time when Catholicism reigned supreme in the Church, and shewed its power in the palace and the house of Parliament, stood up for the sake of truth in a crowd of enemies, unqualified by even a mixture of open friends; and, latterly, resigned his life in the midst of a burning pile in the city of Perth, in the year 1405.

Though the enmity of the dominant Church, and especially of its great defender, Laurence of Lindores, prevented any open acceptance or approbation of the tenets of Resby, his excellent sermons—the truth they contained, and the novelty of such a thing as an attack upon usages which had obtained authority for so long a period—drew around the enthusiastic preacher a great concourse of people. His forty heretical conclusions had a secret charm in them which recommended them to the hearts of all lovers of truth; but no one durst venture to say he approved of them, for Albany, the governor, had already shewn himself a persecutor of the Lollards and heretics; and his fierce character was a guarantee for all manner of cruel visitations upon the heads of the victims of his displeasure. But the courageous Resby, despised both him and his persecutions, and continued the dissemination of his brochures and his public orations in the face of the threatened stake and its encircling flames.

In various parts of Scotland the preacher held forth; in Perth, Dundee, and many of the southern towns. His progress was narrowly watched by Laurence of Lindores; and a keen eye kept on his secret favourers. On one occasion he preached in the town of Dumfries; and there were some circumstances attending his holding forth in that town, which are, in themselves, extremely curious, and deserve the attention of the public, as much for their singularity as the effects that flowed from them.

The character of the Duke of Rothsay, the nephew of the Regent, has been drawn by pens which no other goose-quill will ever rival. His beauty, his high honour, his gallantry, chivalry, and light-hearted, perhaps mad-cap frolics, have endeared him to those who could not well defend his more unrestrained out-breakings of youthful intemperance and dissipation. He worshipped, with equal veneration, Momus and Minerva. Philosophy and fun were equally his delight; and the affairs of state, and the light gambols of libertinism were equally congenial to his pleasure and powers. His early friend, Sir John de Ramorgny, afterwards his enemy and destroyer, flattered his excesses, and joined his revels. They went through Scotland in disguise—personated their friends and their enemies, and drew out of the pleasure and pain of the humble inhabitants of Scotland food for their amusement. These two gay friends happened to be in Dumfries at the time that Resby was to hold forth to the benighted inhabitants of that ancient town. Such an opportunity for amusement could not be allowed to pass; and Rothsay's wits were employed to devise a scheme for annoying the preacher and tormenting his hearers.

"What thinkest thou, Ramorgny," said Rothsay, "of playing a trick on the old Wickliffite, Resby? The curmudgeon is not liked by my uncle, and that should be a reason against my abusing him; but my spirits are flat, and call for a stimulant, and who can so well cure my depression as the inspired curmudgeon who is to hold forth to-morrow in the old church of Dumfries. I have for this hour past been planning a project, and when thou hast heard it, I think it will be admitted that the ideas have obeyed the magic wand of my bright fancy."

"It would not be, Rothsay," replied Ramorgny, "if the invention of a scheme of frolic did not keep paco with the eternal flow of those gay dancing spirits of thine, which make even sober reason to join the gallopade of their merriment. What hast thou devised?"

"Hast thou ever heard the women sitting at the doors of our Scottish huts, singing their song on the churchman Lindores, or, as they call him, Lindares?"

"No," said Ramorgny; "but thou, who dost so much associate with the dancing girls and minstrels, in the gratification of thy reckless spirit, canst perhaps sing it."

"Oh, yes, I can," cried the prince, laughing; "but there is only one verse of it which has any connection with our subject—

'A black cat sits on Melrose aisle,
And cries—"Doon wi' Lindares!"
But a white dove sits upon its tail,
And whistles for him prayers.'

"And what is the moral of that?" inquired Ramorgny; "I see no connection between a ridiculous song and the old preacher, Resby."

"I cry thee mercy," said Rothsay; "thy wits are too heavy for the flight of my fancy. I propose to get a representative of old Mahoun, or the Devil, to sit on the top of Resby's pulpit, and grin or purr at the audience, while we enjoy the effects produced by the apparition."

"I am still at fault," said Ramorgny.

"What thinkest thou," said the prince, "would be the effect of a large black cat sitting on the top of the pulpit, while Resby is preaching? The people will take him for the arch-enemy superintending and inspiring the Reformer; a tumult will be the consequence; Resby will be seized, and in all likelihood plunged (we will save him from being drowned) in the river; while we will enjoy the scene unknown."

"Thy scheme is excellent," said Ramorgny; "but it is incomplete. Why not have the white dove in the song, besides, as the representative of a purer spirit, to produce an opposition on the part of Resby's friends to the disciples of puss."

"Better still," cried Rothsay, clapping his hands with joy; "the scheme is complete. You must procure the performers."

"I will," said Ramorgny; and they went to prepare for their recreation.

Next day, Resby held forth to his congregation. It has come down to these times, that the figure and manner of this extraordinary man were excellently calculated to accomplish the object of his ambition. He is represented as being of great height, extremely spare, and with a clear eye, which seemed to burn continually with the enthusiasm of one destined by Providence to produce a change in the frame of society. He was, in fact, a perfect example of those spirits which are produced at great distances of time, no doubt to execute purposes which, without the aid of such instruments, would not be fulfilled. To look upon him produced a kind of awe which could only be accounted for by the presence of the dominant power which held its influence over him, and gave him a sense of importance, an elevation of character, and a majesty of expression, which are not to be found in men adapted and bound to the common every-day duties and feelings of ordinary life.

Such was the effect produced by Resby in the congregation, that the two firebrand spirits who had determined to torment him, could not avoid participating in some degree in the enthusiasm with which he seemed to inspire all present. Ramorgny, in particular, almost resigned his intention; and, as he made all the efforts in his power to keep quiet the animal he had secreted in a bag, he could not help contrasting the solemnity of the scene around him with the ludicrous operation in which he was engaged. The prince, more volatile, saw only, in the gravity of the faces of the people, a better guarantee for the sport which he anticipated, and which, in a great measure, would consist in the mixture of fear, doubt, awe, and enthusiasm, which would seize the countenances which now only permitted the expression of one feeling to occupy them.

The discourse which the preacher that day thought suited to the people of Dumfries, comprehended two or three of the forty heresies which Laurence of Lindores afterwards charged against him. He denied the authority of the Pope, as the successor of St Peter, calling him by that name which, afterwards, when the Reformation had advanced, became so favourite an epithet in the mouths of the Reformers—viz. Antichrist. The use of such a phrase in those early times, was boldness itself, and some murmurs were heard in the church, as the word resounded through the place of assembly. He disanted largely on the inutility of penances and auricular confession, and asserted that a holy life was absolutely necessary in any one who dared to call himself the vicar of his great Master.

These topics were then of paramount importance, and not having previously been called in question, the eloquence of Resby, fired with his natural enthusiasm, and exerted on subjects so interesting, chained every attention—except, perhaps, those of Rothsay, and his friend, and their prisoners—and inflamed every imagination. As he proceeded, he got more enthusiastic, thundering with his clenched hand upon the pulpit, turning up his eyes to the roof of the chapel, and then darting them on the terrified and awe-stricken hearers.

A spell was upon the congregation. The preacher's triumph was complete; for that which he had laboured for he had accomplished—the chaining of the attention of his hearers. He had reached the climax of his enthusiasm, and the people had attained to the full height of their sympathy, in the feelings he so eloquently expressed. The time was come for Ramorgny to act. Having, when he entered, slipped near the pulpit, his situation was well suited to the accomplishment of his object. He opened his bag, and let out his black prisoner, who, terrified at the number of people, scam-

bled up the pulpit, and sat on the top of it with its face to the audience—an apt representative of the arch-fiend. The people were electrified. A scream issued from the females and groans from the men resounded through the church. Resby, who did not see his black companion, conceived the tumult to be the result of his eloquence. He increased his energies—lifted higher his voice, and enhanced the wildness of his gestures. At this moment Rothsay let off his dove, which, with a beautiful wheel, flew round the church and lighted on a part of the gallery opposite to the preacher and the demure grimalkin.

This additional token was viewed with superstitious awe Resby himself was deceived. He looked at the bird, and pointing his finger, cried out—"Behold a voucher for the truth of my mission." His friends were filled with enthusiasm—"A spirit!" "A spirit!" resounded from various quarters; while the enemies of the preacher, with fingers pointed to the black messenger, cried out—"Beelzebub! Beelzebub!" The cries continued, becoming louder and louder. The people divided—one joining the standard of puss, and the other that of the dove. A scene of confusion commenced, such as was never witnessed in a religious congregation before or since. The timid endeavoured to get out, which produced a crush with all its appalling effects. The preacher held up his hands, vociferated, pointed to the dove; the people continued to press forward and to scream, while the two opposing parties dealt blows around them, and a scene of wild uproar commenced which threatened the loss of many lives. The dove, in the meantime, escaped by the window, and puss secreted herself among the seats. Rothsay and Ramorgny, having placed themselves near the entrance, were among the first to get out. They stood at the door, witnessing the deplorable effects of their frolic. As the people came out, many of them fell down in a faint. Several were crushed almost to death, and some received injuries from which they never recovered.

Rothsay, who did not want feeling, was annoyed by the result of his project. The consequences went farther than he anticipated or wished. Alas! he did not yet see the end of them, and was doomed never to see them; for he fell a victim to the perfidy of his companion, before Resby, whom this very circumstance made more obnoxious to the Regent, was committed to the flames.

The secret of Rothsay's hand in this project was well kept; and, as neither the cat nor the dove were seen again, a universal belief prevailed, in these superstitious times, that they were really messengers of good and evil. The story spread, and carried with it Resby's name. The public were divided into two parts—one espousing the part of the dove, the other that of the cat. Resby was either a saint or a fiend—there was no medium; and, as his success or failure had apparently interested the powers above and below, the inhabitants of the middle world could not be blamed for viewing him in either of these lights. This simple incident may even be traced in its effects to the times of the Reformation. The spirit then raised increased in power, till filling the soul of the immortal Knox, it became irresistible and finally achieved a victory which has produced more good than any triumph of reason that ever was signalized.

The name of Black and White Reformers, derived from the incident now detailed, prevailed in Scotland long after Resby's death, and even when the circumstance which gave rise to it, was no longer remembered. Both parties were called Reformers, because their disputes tended to the advancement of the Reformation.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS.

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SOCIAL MAN.

As we look upon the title of our tale, now that we have written it, we cannot suppress a shudder of horror. Like the handwriting on the wall, it seems typical of misery, revolution, and death. Revolution and death, do we say? What revolution, in the common sense of the word—we mean in a political one—was ever productive of such deplorable effects, as that moral revolution to which the bottle bears the social man?—what death, viewed merely as a physical evil, can be compared to that moral and intellectual destruction to which the good-fellow so often subjects himself? It is no palliation of the evil to say that the social man is led by the best qualities of his heart, by the noblest faculties of his intellect, into the path which leads to utter wretchedness—to remorse, disease, and premature death in this world; and, if the combined testimony of reason and revelation be sufficient to establish any fact—to punishment in the next. Our faculties are good or bad only according as they are cultivated or controlled; and we cannot see that the unregulated social feelings which lead a man to plunge into dissipation, and to drag his friends along with him into the gulf of vice, are a whit less dangerous or fearful than the universally execrated disposition which impels him to plunge a dagger into his own heart, or to bury it in the bosom of his fellow-creature. On the contrary, they seem calculated to produce even greater mischief, and, therefore, are more worthy of general deprecation, in the same degree that a secret enemy is more deserving of universal abhorrence than an avowed one: the one stands forth with an open defiance, and a weapon drawn before the eyes of his victim, who may save himself by flight or conflict—the other “smiles, and smiles, and murders while he smiles.”

How many noble beings have we known, destroyed utterly by the disposition to what is vulgarly called good-fellowship!—in how many instances have we known splendid talents, high love of moral rectitude, nay, even strong religious principles, strangled by the social feelings! At first, doubtless, there was but a slight dereliction of duty, mourned for sincerely, and punished by severe remorse; but, gradually, and with insidious motion, the victim revolved in a wider sphere, and more remote from the orbit of virtue, until, at length, escaping entirely from the attraction which had held him in the just path, he fell, with headlong and irresistible velocity, into the shapeless void of vice—the dark chaos of crime.

Our heart sickens as we pass in review before us the numbers of our early friends who have run this terrific career, who now fill timeless graves, or are yet in the land of existence, bearing about in their bosoms a living hell—whose hearts are already sepulchres. And, but that we thought the relation we are about to deliver, may be of service to some who, already standing on the brink, are not fully aware of their danger—but that we conceived the tale of talent, generosity, and worth, miserably destroyed by the unregulated social feelings, may arrest some kindred spirit in its path to unanticipated misery—we should yield to the feel-

ings which urge us to fling down our pen, and give ourselves up to sorrow for the departed.

William Riddell was the only son of a shepherd, who dwelt upon the moorlands that overhang one of the tributaries of the Tweed. The old man was one of those characters which have been so often and so well described—a stern, grave, intelligent, religious Scottish shepherd. The broad Lowland bonnet did not cover a shrewder head than old David Riddell's; nor did the hodden grey coat, throughout wide Scotland, wrap a warmer or more honest heart.

His honesty was manifest to all—the warmth of his feelings was latent, and required to be struck by strong emotion, ere it was developed externally. The solitary influences of nature, when habitually contemplated in her more wild and solemn aspects, seem calculated to mould minds of good natural capabilities, but which are shut out from the social acquisition of knowledge, into forms like that of David Riddell's. If they all, like the nature which has breathed its spirit into them, seem somewhat rugged and stern, they all, like her also, bear the sterling stamp of sincerity. The elements, which “are not flatterers, but counsellors that feelingly persuade him what he is,” are his familiar companions—among the remote valleys, and along the precipitous mountain-sides, and upon the wide moorlands, their irresistible power leads him to look with awe up to their Creator and controller, and humility also is impressed upon him; but with these, a confident reliance on the mercy and benevolence of the Being who regulates them, is naturally produced: and thus it is, that, with this awe and humility, a slavish fear is no portion of his character; for he has been in the heart of a thousand mists, and has yet returned safely to his cottage ingle—he has braved the storms of many winters, and still looks, with a prophetic eye, upon the fresh green of approaching springs, and the purple heath-blooms of coming summers. In a mind thus constituted, duplicity can never dwell. There are millions who, shut up in cities, and shrinking from the inclemency of the seasons, look on the shepherd of the mountains as one worthy only of commiseration—who paint him as a wretch whose soul is as barren as his moorlands, and think of him as a slave, wandering, with vacant mind and wearied frame, over gloomy solitudes, earning with misery to-day the food which enables his body to bear the toil of to-morrow.

How wide is this of the truth!—The sweet and tranquil joys of home are his, enhanced a thousand fold by previous privation—the delights of connubial and filial love are more keenly felt by him, in the simplicity of nature, than by the luxurious citizen or the ermined noble; and though he has never heard the chant of the cathedral choir, or listened to the consecrated melody of an organ peal, the sublime transports of religion have thrilled his bosom beneath the solitary sky, amid the wild, or by the margin of the cataract that rolls its unvisited torrent over nameless cliffs. It is a mistaken belief that poverty and toil shut the shepherd's eyes to the loveliness of nature—nor is it true, that, because he is rude in speech, and possessed of little book-learning, he does not feel keenly, and translate faithfully, the beautiful language which she utters to the heart of man. Words-

worth has so exquisitely described what we are wishing to express, that we shall, without apology for the length of the quotation, repeat his words:—

“Grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Are things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts:
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he has breathed
The common air—the hills, which he so oft
Has climbed with vigorous steps—which have impressed
So many incidents upon his mind,
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear,
Which, like a book, preserves the memory
Of the dumb animals whom he has saved,
Has fed or sheltered; linking to such acts,
So grateful in themselves, the certainty
Of honourable gain;—these fields, these hills,
Which are his living Being, even more
Than his own blood—what could they less?—have laid
Strong hold on his affections, are to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love—
The pleasure which there is in life itself.”

It was with this well-spring of quiet happiness in his breast, that David Riddell had gone from day to day among his flock, and returned to his cottage fireside. His wife Rachel was one of those women of whom, notwithstanding the habitual discontent and sneers of men, there are thousands in this world, in this kingdom, nay, among our own Border hills—who, like the stars of heaven during the daylight, hold on their course noiselessly and unseen, but are, nevertheless, shining with a sweet and steady radiance, every one in its place, in the firmament. Placid, pious, and cheerful, with a quiet but kind heart, that ever and anon displayed its workings in the sweet light of her eyes, or in the “heartsome” smile that arranged her still lovely features into the symmetry of benevolence; in adversity—for she had lost children, and had known sickness—in adversity, patient and resigned; in prosperity—for their flocks had flourished, and many of their harvests had been abundant—in prosperity, not too much elated, but happy with a calm and grateful joy; finally, possessed of a gentle and forbearing nature, which rendered innocuous the occasional sternness or irritability of her husband, and turned insensibly aside the shafts which might have otherwise struck deadlily at their domestic peace:—such was the partner of the joys and the sharer of the sorrows of David Riddell for above a quarter of a century. Thus situated, it could not be but that he had been a happy man. For, though care and trouble had not unfrequently entered his dwelling, they had never long remained; nor do they ever continue to haunt a house in which good nature and true piety are inmates. Four sweet children had been taken from them, each at an age which seemed more interesting than the other, and sorrow had, for a time, darkened their dwelling; but the tears of those griefs were now dried, and, save an occasional sigh from the bereaved parents as some casual circumstance recalled their lost little ones to their recollections, the only traces of their former afflictions were to be found in the prodigality of affection which they lavished on their only remaining child. David Riddell was verging towards three score, when William, the subject of the following narrative, was born. The old man's heart was entirely bound up in this child of his age. Frequently, not from necessity, but impelled by love, had he performed the ministrations of a mother to him; often, on a sunny day, had he carried him, like a lamb, in the corner of his plaid, up to the hills; and often, laying the unconscious infant on the purple heath upon the mountain side, had he knelt down before him, beneath the solitary sky, and poured out his heart in gratitude to the God who had bestowed on him this precious gift. When little William was able to follow his father among the flocks, they became inseparable; and it was beautiful to behold the old man laying aside the gravity and sternness of his nature, and renewing, with his little boy, the sports which the lapse of half a century had well nigh

swept from his memory. They sought out together the nest of the lapwing and the moorfowl; they chased the humble bee over the heath in company; or, loitering down the mountain streams, assisted each other in the pursuit of the speckled trout. The old man taught his boy, amid the secluded glens, or upon the naked hill-tops, to modulate his voice to the hymns consecrated to religion throughout Scotland; the rich melody of the “Old Hundred,” or the “Martyrs,” rose in concert from their lips; or, perhaps, the aged shepherd played on the simple Scottish flageolet, on which he had been, in his youth, a skilful performer, some of the touching airs of his mother-land, and then, placing the pipe in William's hands, assisted him, by kind encouragement or skilful rebuke, to follow out the beautiful strain. Thus they lived together—

“A pair of friends, though one was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.”

Linked closer and closer together by these sweet natural ties, they were happy, and their affection was the grateful theme of all the inhabitants of the valley.

A little incident, which occurred in William's childhood, had determined his father to rear him for the ministry. While yet only five years of age, he was found one day by his father, with an old family Bible upon his knee, some of the leaves of which he had torn out, and was arranging after a fashion of his own. On being asked by his father what he was doing, he replied—“That he thought the Evangelists differed in some portions of their history, and that he was trying to discover wherein the difference lay.”* The old man retired with streaming eyes; and, from that moment, William Riddell was, like Samuel of old, vowed to the service of God.

As he grew in years, he displayed proofs of talent which astonished the shepherd, and filled old David's heart with exultation. Before he was fifteen, there was not a stream nor a legend that belonged to his native hills, which he had not celebrated in song. His pen was always ready to assist the shepherd lads in their rustic loves; and the crabbed and grasping little tyrants of the valley, had, more than once, winced under his satire or his ridicule. The old man, as we have said, rejoiced in the genius of his son, and had always, in his ample pockets, good store of the young poet's productions, wherewith to regale such of his companions as chose to listen. Rachel, however, with a more prophetic eye, saw, in the vivacity of her boy's nature, the germs of as much grief as joy to himself; and used commonly to shake her head and sigh, while her husband and his friends were convulsed with laughter at some of William's sallies.

At length the period arrived when he was to be sent to College.

I need not attempt to describe the feelings of the family when this little revolution in their domestic life occurred; the quiet but deep anxiety of Rachel—the restless and troubled looks and actions of the old shepherd—and the exulting anticipation of the bright world into which he was about to enter, which William displayed, tempered or repressed, every now and then, by natural sorrow, at leaving the hills and streams where his boyhood had been spent pleasantly, and the dear parents to whom he owed so deep a debt of love. The last words of David to his son, as he stood grasping his hand, at the foot of the glen where the path turns off to the next market town—while big tears stood heavily on his eye-lashes, visitants unknown for twenty years—were almost those of Michael to Luke, in Wordsworth's exquisite poem—

“Amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayest bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did, for that cause,
Bestir them in good deeds.”

* The same anecdote is related of Dr Thomas Brown, the philosopher.

The old shepherd and his son had never been separated for a single night—now they parted, knowing that many months must elapse before they could behold one another again. It was a bitter moment, though full of the germs of joyful anticipation.

William had taken his farewell embrace, and, with convulsive sobs, had walked hastily away to a little distance; he turned and beheld his aged father still standing on the spot with clasped hands uplifted, and eyes fixed intently on his own receding form. He was unable to withstand the sight—he rushed back again, and threw himself in an agony of affection upon the old man's neck, weeping—though a manlier heart throbbed not—weeping like a child. But, at length, they parted; a sadder heart never entered into the solitudes of nature than old David Riddell bore into the mountains on that evening—a purer never left the innocence of the country for the crowded city, than his son carried with him to the metropolis of Scotland.

For four years William attended college during the winter, and remained with his father during the summer months.

It was not that his labour was required by the old man; for he had now amassed a sufficient sum, with his moderate habits, to make him independent; but the sight of William was pleasant to the aged shepherd, among the hills where they had played together and which were consecrated to their affections. The young student had distinguished himself highly at college, and had gained the esteem, both publicly and privately expressed, to many of his preceptors. His heart was still uncontaminated, his morals pure, and his habits simple, as when he was a boy. It was at this time that Rachel died. As her life had been peaceful and, upon the whole, happy, so her deathbed was tranquil and resigned. She had rejoiced with her husband, in the promising career of their son, and, as her dim eyes descried his manly form bent over her in an attitude of deepest grief, she could scarcely but feel her natural sorrow at leaving him, quenched in the glad anticipation of his future prospects in life. Yet the misery which his ardent and imaginative nature *might* inflict upon him was still not shut out from her mind, and almost her last words were to warn him against indulging it too far. She died, and the old shepherd and his son were left to attempt to comfort each other. William was about again to depart to college, and he would fain have had his father to give up his duties and accompany him to Edinburgh. He dwelt upon his increasing feebleness, his age, already beyond the common lot of man, the solitude to which he would be left, the comfort they would be to each other if together. To all this the old man replied—"Comfort, my boy, there is none for me in this world, except in thee. Gradually the circle of my love has been narrowed: first, my own parents, then my children, last, my beloved Rachel, have been swept away; and now thou only art left for my earthly affections to embrace. Gladly for thy sake would I go to the city; but I think these hills could not bear to look on another while I lived—this cottage to shelter another shepherd while I am able to fling my plaid around me. It is a foolish fancy for an old man to cherish, yet I cannot bid it depart. Go, then alone, my dearest lad, and leave me in these scenes, which have become part of my being, to perform the duties in which my life has been spent. And still remember, William, when temptations assail thee, or bad men would lead thee by the cords of vanity or friendship, into vice, that there is a grey-haired man among these hills, whom the tale would send in sorrow to the grave—a heart, that for twenty years has been fed by its love for thee, which would break to know thou hadst become unworthy of that love. Farewell! and may that good Being who has brought me in safety out of the heart of a thousand storms, preserve thee from the deadlier tempests of the world of vice."

William returned to college, with a heart softened both by

grief and love. Strange, that out of this wholesome state of mind should have sprung the elements of wretchedness and vice! Yet so it was. He had written a poem on the subject of his late affliction, and had breathed into it the very soul of sorrow. The wild and beautiful scenery amid which he dwelt, and which he loved and knew so well, had also given its hues to the language and the thoughts of his muse: his rich and now cultivated taste imparted elegance and harmony to his numbers; the poem was at once original, chaste, and imaginative; it gained him the esteem of the highest literary circles in Edinburgh, and he became a cherished guest in the houses of many distinguished men for whom he had never hoped to indulge any feelings save those of distant and respectful admiration. He emerged into a new world, too beautiful and dazzling for him at first to see his way clearly through its mazes. His undoubted genius commanded the respect of the men—his manly feeling, and the ingenious eloquence of his address, presently made him a distinguished favourite with the female portion of his acquaintance. The tone of his thoughts and feelings underwent a perfect revolution. Once introduced into the society of the polite and the learned, the bashfulness and awkwardness of the shepherd-lad seemed to fall off from him, without effort of his own, but naturally, like the crustaceous envelope in the metamorphosis of insects. He felt as if he were a denizen of the clime in which he now luxuriated, and as if, till now, he had been living in a foreign land. He discovered, to his amazement, that those great men, whose very names he had been wont to utter with reverence, and before whose glance his eye had been accustomed to fall abashed, were the most easy, familiar, and communicative companions possible—that scarcely one of them was so severe in their morality as his old father—that they listened to his opinions with attention, and replied to them with respect. Then, again, among the satellites of these literary luminaries—those whom, till now, in the reflected light of their primaries, he had been wont to behold with respect, and almost with envy—he presently perceived weakness, dimness, and aberration; and he perceived, also, how capable he was of outshining them all; or, to speak in less metaphorical phrase, he found among the less distinguished literary persons who haunted the tables of the great, a degree of ignorance on subjects of general science, a slavishness of demeanour, and a petty jealousy which he could not but despise, and which it required very little penetration to perceive that the great man despised also. He soon acquired, therefore, a confidence in his own powers, and a conscious respect for, I had almost said pride in, the rectitude of his feelings, to which, till now, he had been an entire stranger. And if such was his success with the men, his conquest over his own timidity, in the presence of women, struck him with yet greater surprise. He who had been accustomed to blush and look down before a peasant girl, presently found himself able to gaze steadily into the eyes of a noble matron or maiden, undazzled by the jewelled coronet upon her brow, or the yet more brilliant charms in which nature and art had arrayed her brow, and neck, and bosom. The witchery of woman in all her loveliness, instead of, as he had often imagined, causing his heart to sink, and his cheek to burn, and his tongue to be dumb in his mouth, awoke the latent powers of his nature—it thrilled his heart with exulting admiration, and filled his eyes with a bold, steady radiance, and poured from his lips the eloquence which female loveliness can alone call forth. His nature was changed—that is, the external development of his nature, for his heart remained the same; and often, amid crowded assemblies and rich peals of concerted music, it called on his imagination to portray the old solitary shepherd, amid the hills of his boyhood, or to recall the simple strains which his father had taught him to play upon the rude Scottish pipe.

At the period to which we refer, the literary society of

Edinburgh was by no means distinguished for its abstemiousness. A "good" fellow, and a clever one, were almost synonymous terms. Sir Walter Scott, in his novel of "Guy Mannering," has matchlessly described the convivial habits of the Scottish advocates: the habits of the whole literary society of Edinburgh were pretty similar. Why should I detail the circumstances of William's seduction from sobriety? The example of those whom he had been accustomed to admire, respect, and love; the gay sallies of his younger associates; the witchery of the society of genius; the flowing feeling which followed the circulation of the bowl; the song, the speech, the story, the flash of wit, the jocose roll of humour, and, above all, the forgiving approval (for how else shall we designate it?) of the ladies—all assailed him at once, and, beneath their attacks, his reason and resolve,

"That column of true majesty in man,"

fell. Age, wisdom, youth, wit, humour, friendship, love, and beauty—what could a raw shepherd lad oppose to all these? "The request of his aged father, the injunction of the moral law, the direct command of God!" some stern, *perhaps* good man may reply. William tried to control his career by means of these; but the attacks were unceasing, various, distracting—the defence was in the hands of one, and he, alas! too often disposed to admit the enemy. We will pass rapidly over this part of our departed friend's career. He mingled, at first sparingly, at length more freely, in the convivial habits of his new friends; he felt the thrill of friendship; he was keenly alive to the social glow which the bowl awakens; his heart also was elated by the love of men of genius, and his vanity gratified by their loudly expressed admiration. Unfortunately, he engaged to write for a new periodical which some of his friends were then attempting to establish. Amid the solitude of his native hills he had experienced the grateful and rapid awakening of noble ideas; he was surprised to find that, in the city, amid the distractions of ambition, music, love, and wine, he could only now and then call up his natural powers to his aid. He had pledged himself to support the new periodical to a certain extent; and, in order to fulfil his promise, at the instigation of an acquaintance, he stimulated himself to its accomplishment by means of brandy. This was the first time he had ever drunk ardent spirits for the sake of the effect which they produce. The paper which he had written was universally admired, the sale of the periodical was very much increased by its influence, and he was plied by the proprietors with new and lucrative engagements.

On the very morning on which he had received these proposals, he also received a letter from his aged father, informing him, that the brother of the old man, who was engaged in commerce, and for whom he had some time ago become surety, had failed, and that the whole of the little earnings of his past life would be required to liquidate the debt.

William closed with the proposal of the proprietors of the magazine, and wrote to the old man a letter, partly of condolence, but more of triumph. He was almost glad that the resources of his father were destroyed, now that he himself had the means of supporting him; and it was with a joyous heart that he sat down to write his paper for the new periodical. But, alas! he felt what all who have so occupied themselves have felt, how the mind becomes weak, and the fancy flags, when compelled to action. He rushed into society to escape from the dreadful depression which follows high mental excitement; the warmth of friendship with which he was met, fell gratefully on his spirit; the glee and glory of social intercourse first relieved his wearied faculties, and then pleasantly excited them; the titillation of gratified vanity, and the exercise of intellectual power, combined to make the scene fascinating; he went more and more into society; it became more and more necessary to him—he was a *social man*. His father was a strange, I had almost

said a stubborn man in some respects, and he might in some measure be blamed for this gradual sliding from sobriety of his son. To the affectionate letter of William, which beseeched him, now that his little hoard had been carried away, and now that his years were above fourscore, to come to Edinburgh and dwell with his son, the old man answered that God had yet left him vigour to mount the hills, and thread the valleys; and that, so long as this was the case, he would consider it unjust to become a burden to others. There was a stern independence and lofty resolve in the determination of the aged shepherd which harmonized well with his character; but it fell like lead upon the bright dreams of William—it strangled many of his best resolutions of future virtue and industry. He did not know that his father had already heard of his relaxed habits, and had even had reported to him, in exaggerated phrase, the detail of some of his midnight carousals. William went on, gaining fame, but losing virtue. In the popular use of the word, it was *impossible* for him to resist the importunities of those who pressed him to partake of their bottle or their bowl. They grasped his hand cordially; they sang the songs which he loved, or perhaps had written; they drank his health with cheers of enthusiasm. It was *impossible* for him to resist the entreaties of those persons—it was *impossible* for him not to believe them sincere. Nor were they otherwise—but the value of the sincerity of the intemperate and the immoral, what is it?

"Ashes within beautiful fruit."

William Riddell passed the whole of his examinations, and was, as the students say, "ready for a church." Nor was he long in procuring one. Among the friends to whom his genius and character had recommended him, was a nobleman, who had the gift of the very kirk to which William and his father had been accustomed to resort. The incumbent died; the nobleman presented the living to William. With the new duties which now devolved upon him, came a crowd of new feelings and springs of action. He gave up his engagement with the literary periodical, he retired from his social companions, and he devoted himself to grave and worthy study and contemplation. The struggle was severe; but he bore up against it under the excitement of the new responsibility which had fallen upon him. He went down to the country with some of the most distinguished members of the Scottish church, who officiated at his ordination. A proud, a tumultuously happy day was it for old David Riddell, who, with wonder and awe, felt his horny hand grasped by the great men whose very names he had considered subservient to his happiness of old time, and beheld his son, little William, the boy whom he had taught the alphabet upon Scaurhock hill, with the pebbles that lie there—beheld him holding high discourse with these same dignitaries, saw that his opinions were listened to with respect and that his thoughts, according as they were solemn or ludicrous, were responded to by these great men with gravity or broad grins. A delightful day was it to the old shepherd, as he beheld the first man in the General Assembly—the greatest man in the Scottish Kirk—lay his hand upon the youthful head of his beloved son, and consecrate him to the care of the souls who dwelt in the very valley where he had been born and reared, in which his genius was known and his family, though humble, respected.

There was another, and an equally strong reason for William's giving up his convivial habits and boisterous companions. He was in love.

It was at that least romantic of all places for a lover, a ball in Edinburgh, that William Riddell, the new pastor of Mosskirk, had first met Ellen Ogilvie, the daughter of the principal heritor of his parish, the owner of the hills or which his father had watched the sheep for above threescore years. Ellen had beheld him moving, a gay and welcome visitant in noble halls; her hand had met his in the dance,

In exchange with those of countesses and duchesses; she had heard his praise echoed from house to house, and from mouth to mouth; she was now alone in the country, with nothing but ignorant or coarse men around her: let it not seem wonderful that she, though the only daughter of a wealthy landholder, should bestow her love on the poor, handsome, manly, eloquent pastor of Mosskirk. And if this does not seem wonderful, it will surely not appear singular that the proud, haughty, bigoted, and ignorant father of Ellen should forbid the match, and should threaten with his vengeance the usurper of his daughter's love.

His vengeance! How weak a word to such a being as William! Not that he would not have rejoiced, for Ellen's sake, and for the sake of decorum, to have had the old gentleman's approval; not that he would not have used every possible means, consistent with honour and the dignity of his own character, to have gained the good opinion of the father of his beloved; but the laird was a man of the world, of acres, and of hundreds; his litany lay in pounds, shillings, and pence; his affections were wrapped up in rents and lordships; and that a poor parson, however God had chosen to ennoble him by genius and generous sentiments—that a poor parson should have dared to look upon a child of his with the eyes of affection, upon the child who was the natural heir of all those riches which he had laboured for half a century to amass, smote him as a personal insult, as an indignity which nothing but blood could wipe out. The mother of Ellen had all along thought differently; and from the first moment in which she had perceived the affection that existed between them, (and, oh! how much quicker women are than men in discovering these things!) she had encouraged their intimacy.

William Riddell, the minister of Mosskirk, was out of the canons of the duello, and the laird, therefore, instead of calling him out, was compelled to be satisfied with disinheriting Ellen, who, under circumstances which fully exonerated her from her father's tyrannical wishes, became William's wife.

My friend, William, had always been one of those persons who abhorred the usual terms on which wives are sought and husbands achieved. "Keeping a wife" was a phrase of blasphemy to him, or at least it seemed desecrating women to the level of a dog, a horse, or a cow—the "keeping" of which appeared, according to their phraseology, a matter of the same general import, as the cherishing a beloved partner of all in which the human heart takes an interest. Nor, although he was a shepherd's son, could he perceive much inequality in a minister who earned four hundred pounds a-year, by looking after the spiritual interests of some hundreds of individuals, and who was to become the confident of their griefs and the sharer of their joys, their supporter in sickness and their guide in the common path of life—he could not perceive much presumption in such a man matching himself with the daughter of an ignorant and coarse person, whose worth lay only in his wealth, whose character was not esteemed by his neighbours, and whose sympathy for suffering human nature only developed itself now and then in his bestowal of a basin of hot soup upon a starving beggar at Christmas.

On the contrary, if William thought about the matter in this relation at all, he considered, and justly, that he was rather conferring an honour, than receiving one from the father of Ellen. But the old gentleman thought, as the world thinks, differently; and, accordingly, in his wrath, he disinherited her.

It was unfortunate, for the full gratification of his malice, that William was impassible to this mode of punishment, and that he beheld the whole of the old gentleman's possessions conveyed over to a charitable institution with as much pleasure as if he had signed them away of his own accord.

In the parish of Mosskirk, as in most of the country pa-

rishes in Scotland, there were a number of intelligent men who associated frequently together for the sake of cultivating scientific knowledge, and conversing on various subjects of interest in literature and philosophy. At the time when William was inducted into Mosskirk, all the ministers of the neighbouring parishes were members of this society, and it was generally held on a convivial footing. Some of the members came from a distance, others were jolly fellows naturally, and thus it happened that their discussions frequently dipped deep into the night, and sometimes were not settled until cock-crow.

Into this society William Riddell was welcomed with enthusiastic honours, and was at once made perpetual president. His fame as a poet had gone before him, and his genial warmth as a man followed up with general applause the sensation which he had created. He had natural powers capable of supporting him in the sphere to which his reputation had raised him. He had wit, humour, pathos, and fluency—and, eager to earn the kind opinion of his parishioners, he exerted himself to gain it, and he succeeded. Throughout the whole of his parish, he was admired as a man of genius and eloquence, he was respected as a man of irreproachable moral worth, and beloved as a friend, who shared sincerely in the gladness, and sympathised in the sorrows of his flock. Unfortunately, the habits of many of his parishioners, as well as of those of the literary club to which I have alluded, were the very reverse of temperate. For a time the attraction of his young wife, and presently that of his infant son, kept him from indulging in nocturnal potations. But afterwards these attractions lost their force; the glory and the glee of the musical and literary conclave overcame all his resolves; and, night after night, it happened that he returned to his manse at unseasonable hours, and greeted his wife with the leer of intoxication, instead of the steady glance of affection. We should have said that, before this, old David Riddell, moved by his son's entreaties, had given up his duties among the hills, and had come to live with him at Mosskirk Manse. A weekly delight was it to the old man to behold his son arrayed in his black gown, and with the smooth white bands drooping decently upon his bosom, delivering from the pulpit of his native parish the words of eternal truth; and pleasant was it to the old shepherd ever and anon to recognise, in the elegant but simple language of the pastor, some of those sentiments which he himself had instilled into his mind, while he was yet a shepherd lad upon the moorlands.

But it could not long be concealed from him that William was irregular in his habits. When the fact first struck him, he almost swooned away; for the forebodings of Rachel rushed into his mind, and he saw as it seemed for the first time that his son's destruction was sealed.

It was long, however, before he could bring himself to speak on the subject to William; he felt the shame which his son appeared to have abandoned; and his own temperate blood sent a blush into his withered cheek, at the idea of addressing the child of his heart, the minister of God, on the subject of his intemperance. The miserable struggles of the old man, before he gave utterance to his sentiments to William, we are utterly unable to describe—we leave them to our readers' imagination. At length, however, on a morning after the minister of Mosskirk had shamefully been supported home by two of his parishioners, in a state of deplorable intoxication, the old shepherd gathered up resolution to speak to his son. He did not denounce, insult, or even upbraid him; but, with tears in his eyes, delicately alluding to his misconduct, assured him that such another occurrence would cause him to leave the manse for ever for that, though he might not be able to prevent, he was resolved never to sanction the fearful immorality which drunkenness carries in its train, more hideous still when attached to a minister of the gospel.

William, already disgusted with himself, and humbled before his own heart, was crushed to the earth by his old father's appeal. He threw himself upon his aged parent's neck, and entreated his forgiveness. "My forgiveness, my boy!" replied the shepherd; "you cannot offend me, and therefore it is vain to ask for my forgiveness. My heart is so utterly bound up in thee, that, though it may deplore, it cannot denounce any conduct of thine. It is as it were but a servant of thine, and in good, or in evil report, will follow in its train. But, if my sufferings, and the sneers of men, have no influence over thee, think, O my dear boy! think on death, the judgment, eternity!"

Will it be believed, that, after this appeal, the remorse which he suffered, and the resolutions of reformation which he made, a single week saw the minister of Mosskirk reel into his manse, assisted by the pastor of the Methodist chapel, at two o'clock in the morning? Such was the distressing reality; and the next morning, without speaking to his son, but giving, amid heart-broken sobs and sighs, his blessing to his daughter-in-law and her children, old David Riddell removed from his son's roof; nor could all his entreaties induce him to return.

Let me hasten to conclude. The conduct of William became presently so notoriously shameful, that it could no longer be overlooked by his parishioners, and he was more than once called upon by some of them with remonstrances, which increased gradually in severity. Still the infatuated man proceeded; until at length his behaviour became a public slander to his own parishioners and to the whole church. He was yet, however, so much beloved for his generous warmth of heart, and admired for his talents, that a last effort was made to prevent the sentence of expulsion, which had been passed against him, from being carried into effect; and his punishment was commuted, if so it could be called, into making a public apology, from his own pulpit, to his people, for his shameful irregularities. On the day of this heart-rending exhibition, not more than one-fourth of the congregation were present; the remainder being absent that they might not behold the spectacle of their pastor's humiliation. But old David Riddell was there, supported, for the first, and alas! for the last time, into church by a friend. Until now, the aged man had always walked unsupported, and with a firm, nay, with something of an elastic step, up to his pew; but, during the past week, since he had heard the news of his son's public disgrace, and the public penance which he was to perform, his vital powers had sunk with fearful rapidity. To those even who had seen him, on the preceding Sabbath, move decently into his accustomed spot, and depositing the broad-brimmed hat, which, on the Lord's Day, he exchanged for the broad Lowland bonnet, smooth backwards his thin light grey locks, he appeared scarcely like the same man. His form was now bent nearly double, he shuffled his feet painfully over the ground, his head shook from weakness, not from age; his eyes were red and dim—he looked like a man who was only three or four steps from the open grave. When, after the service was concluded, William began to read the humiliating apology which he had written, the aged shepherd crept painfully down upon his knees, and, burying his face in his clasped hands, remained absorbed in prayer. The last words had fallen from the minister's lips; there was a dead stillness throughout the church, for all were penetrated with sorrow and shame at their pastor's disgrace, when a deep groan broke from the old shepherd and startled the congregation from the silence in which they were indulging. All eyes, and those of the minister among the rest, were instantly directed towards the old man; his frame remained for a moment in the attitude which we have described, and the next instant it fell heavily upon the floor—a corpse!

We shall not give pain to our readers, nor harrow up our own feelings, by attempting to describe the agony which this

event caused William Riddell. It seemed to be one of those griefs which cannot, and ought not, to be outlived—a punishment greater than man is able to bear. So thought William—if the flash of this conviction across the settled gloom of his spirit could be called thought. Yet, days, weeks, months, passed away, and he lived on, nay, performed his duties; and, at length, by the caresses of his wife and child, became even, as it were, sullenly reconciled to life. He found, however, that it was impossible for him ever to regain his former station in society. His brother ministers avoided him; and one or two of them, more harsh or orthodox than the rest, took occasion to allude to his misconduct in a public manner. The most respectable portion of his parishioners pitied, but, in general, kept aloof from him. Degraded and sunk as he was, William had a nature formed to feel, in all their most exquisite torture, these indignities and slights. The persons who came to comfort and sympathise with him, were unhappily those whose sympathy was more dangerous than their contempt. How shall we go on? William, again after severe struggles, gave way to the entreaties of some of those mistaken friends, and to the treacherous wishes of his own heart. He became a confirmed drunkard! He seemed to have at length cast behind him every thought of reverence for God and his holy vocation—every particle of respect for himself or his fellow-men. He had two or three attacks of brain fever, brought on by his excesses; and he no sooner recovered from them than he went on as before. His poor young wife exhausted every argument which reason could afford—every blandishment with which affection and beauty could supply her, to reclaim him, but in vain. He retained, or seemed to retain, even, all the warmth of his first love for her; and, in his hours of intoxication, he seemed most strongly to acknowledge her worth and loveliness; but the necessity for the violent excitement of ardent spirits had overcome all other considerations. She wept long and bitterly; then, as despair began to close in upon her, she (dreadful that we should have it to relate!) sought, in the example of her husband, to escape from her sorrow! Ellen Ogilvie, the young, the graceful, the beautiful, the accomplished, the gentle, feminine creature, whose very frame seemed to shrink from the slightest coarseness in speech or action, became a drunkard!

Many years had passed away between the time when the old shepherd had perished in the church and the time to which we now refer, and William had a family of two sons and three daughters. If Ellen's father was unfavourable to her marriage at first, it will be easily imagined that he never now acknowledged them. His young family, therefore, had nothing to depend upon except their father's exertions, and they were about to be closed for ever.

The time arrived when it was impossible for William to be suffered any longer to remain in his charge. He was thrust out of his church and expelled from the ministry. The messenger who delivered this message to him, delivered it to one more dead than alive. His excesses had at length brought on a fit of apoplexy; he was but partially recovered from it, and could only, in a dim manner, comprehend the purport of the message, when, with his wife and children, he was removed from the manse. A friend sheltered him for a time—afterwards, he was conveyed over to Edinburgh. Within a twelvemonth he died, having been chained down to bed by his disease, one half of his frame being dead, with mind enough to see poverty and inevitable misery ready to crush his helpless family, but without the power to use the slightest exertion in order to avert the impending calamity. It was in a garret in the High Street, upon rotten straw, the spectacle of an emaciated and shattered wife before his eyes, and the cries of his starving children sounding in his ears, that William Riddell breathed his last! What availed it then that he had been good and pure, full of generous sentiments, endowed with a graceful person, a noble genius,

nd a manly eloquence?—these otherwise invaluable qualities had been all sunk or scattered by the spendthrift extravagances of the Social Man.

It is now about five years ago, since, as we were hurrying past Cassels' Place, at the foot of Leith Walk, we were attracted by a crowd who had gathered round a poor intoxicated woman. She had fallen beneath the wheel of a waggon, and both her legs were crushed in a terrible manner. As two or three assistants carried her past a gas-light towards the nearest house, we were struck by the resemblance—hideous indeed, and bloated—which her features wore to some one whom we had known. We inquired her history, and, to our horror, discovered that this was indeed Ellen Ogilvie—the widow of our poor friend, William Riddell. It was useless attempting to save her; her vital energies were sinking rapidly beneath the injuries which she had received. She revived a little from the effect of some wine which we gave her, and began, incoherently, to speak of her past life. "You see me here, sir," said she, "a poor, wretched, degraded creature:—I was not always thus. There was not a happier heart in wide Scotland than mine was ten years ago. But my husband, sir, was—a Social Man!" A convulsive sob checked her words—her head sank back on the pillow—her lower jaw fell—the death rattle sounded in her throat—and in a few moments the unfortunate woman expired.

THE ROYAL GRANT TO PEEBLES.

IN the archives of the town of Peebles, there was, for a long time, retained a curious piece of antiquity, which, from its importance, was, a great many years ago, laid hold of by a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. The loss to the good town, resulting from this depredation, it would not be easy to make up. The relic was the gift of a king—no less a king than James I.—the sternest of monarchs, yet the wisest, perhaps, that Scotland ever saw. It conferred a right, or rather a privilege of exemption, in favour of an official dignitary of the town, of the greatest importance, no doubt, at the time it was granted, and, even at the more enlightened period when it disappeared, of no small value.

It is worthy of remark, that the records of our burghs are not under the very best guardianship. There are several towns in Scotland, (Peebles is, indeed, an exception,) where the archives are treated as if they were little better than waste paper. We would recommend to the official conservators of these valuable relics, to take a lesson from the irreparable loss sustained by Peebles, and to remember that there are, in this country, a great number of individuals possessed of that mania for the collection of records with which the first Edward of England was, as regards Scotland, so grievously afflicted. Antiquaries deny the application to them of the law of property. They conceive they have a right to seize a piece of antiquity wherever they can find it, whether in the shape of an old brick-bat, which formed part of the monument of King Richard II., or a grant of duties and customs in favour of a burgh.

Having made these remarks, in the spirit of justice to all Scotch towns, and, in particular, with peculiar sympathy for the people of Peebles, who have lost one of their royal grants, we proceed to state the nature of the document, and the circumstances under which it was granted. The following is an exact copy:—

"We hereby excec the ladye of the Provost of Peebles, from the sumptuarie lawe passed by our Parliament, held at Perth, on the 1st day of July 1427, and declare, that she maye, with perfect immunitie frae our Royal displeasure, wear 'purfled sleeves.' Given at Peebles, on our passage therethrow, this 10th day of August 1429.

"JAMES REX."

We do not envy the man who could either laugh or turn

up his nose at the perusal of this ancient relic. It contains a great deal more philosophy than many printed books of high and ambitious pretensions. It forms at once a chapter of the legislation of an ancient kingdom, and of the human mind. We verify these statements by the account we are to give of the circumstances attending this grant.

It is known that King James I. called together more Parliaments than all the prior Kings of Scotland put together. During the first fourteen years of his reign, he assembled no fewer than thirteen Parliaments. When these were assembled, it was of course necessary that the legislators, who had come from all parts of the kingdom to make and mend laws, should have something to do; as a legislative assembly, without some new law to make, or improvement to suggest, is in a much worse position than an artisan without work. The shoemaker who has no shoe to cobble, may conceal his want of work from everybody but his wife, who feels the want of the fees; but a great number of lords and prelates, collected from all parts of the kingdom to make laws, and without any subject on which to exercise their legislative functions, must sit and look each other in the face experiencing and acknowledging a want of trade, which it is at all times very unpleasant to make known. The king who assembles them, is even in a worse predicament; because he is in the situation of a master who has no work to give his journeymen.

When, therefore, the Parliament of James fell out of work—after having exhausted such recondite subjects as the regulation of cruives, which were measured by the length of a pig three years old, from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail, and other equally subtle points—the King found them work in regulating the dress of the women, who in those early days, began to decorate their fair persons with the most costly habiliments. As it was plain that their reason had no control over their desire to appear gay, it was thought a legitimate subject of Parliamentary enactment to regulate what kind of dresses ladies of a certain rank should wear.

It was, accordingly, enacted by a Parliament held in 1427—that "neither commoners' wives, nor their servants, should wear long trains, rich hoods or ruffs, purfled sleeves, or costly curches of lawn;" and, "that all gentlemen's wives take care that their array do not exceed the personal estate of their husband."

At a time when the rage for dress was a new passion, which had broken out from the powers and chains of feudal depreciation and bondage, an act of parliament, of the kind now mentioned, could not fail to be a grievous calamity to those who felt that their charms required embellishment. Even in these days it may be easily figured what would be the consequence of binding down the ladies to common mankies, or Aberdeen sey; and every kind-hearted individual, who sympathises in the misfortunes of her fellow creatures, must feel for the ladies of the fifteenth century, whose toilette was put under the legislative authority of a Hume or a Roebuck.

When the enactment we have mentioned was published on the kirk-doors of Scotland, the effect was just such as may, by a comparison of states and feelings, be conceived. The wife of the Provost of Peebles was, in a particular degree, aggrieved, in consequence of a rivalry she had long carried on in dress, with the lady of a knight, Sir George Cockburn, who sat in the same place of worship. Lady Cockburn had been annoyed by the exact imitation which the Provost's lady had observed in her mode of dressing; and, accordingly, she rejoiced in the provisions of the act of parliament, which allowed a knight's lady to wear "purfled sleeves," and denied that exquisite privilege to the wife of a commoner. The triumph was decided; it was sealed by the seals of the members of the Scottish parliament. It was impossible to touch it. All competition between

Mrs Purves and Lady Cockburn, was for ever at an end. There was nothing that the former could wear, that the other could not wear; but she was, by act of parliament, prevented from wearing what the other was entitled to wear.

It will come very far short of the truth to look at this matter with the eye of a cold calculating reason, applied for the purpose of ascertaining the precise amount of disadvantage, which, in a utilitarian point of view, was suffered by those in Mrs Purves' condition, in consequence of this famous statute. There is no ordained optimum for all people. The question is, how much relative unhappiness did this occasion to Mrs Purves? Unquestionably much—perhaps as much as if her husband had lost one thousand merks. But there was really justice in the lady's case. The tyranny of drawing a line of demarcation between God's creatures by act of Parliament, is admitted. If anything of the kind were attempted in our day, it would produce a rebellion, and perhaps the loss of a million of lives. Justice is the same goddess, whether she puts in her scales the fates of kingdoms, or the bijouterie of the toilette.

The competition between the two ladies having amounted, at least on the part of Mrs Purves, to a passion, the act of Parliament rendered her miserable. The husband had no powers of consolation for her. She gave up going to the church, mourned over her discomfiture at home; became peevish, sick, and heart-broken, and denied all remedies which were suggested for her relief. One thing only could cure her, and that was, an exemption from the decree which had passed against the liberty of her toilette. The husband knew that this would be attended with the greatest difficulty. The king, who had covered with blood the "heading hill" of Stirling for the sake of justice, would care but little for the griefs of the wife of the Provost of Peebles.

It happened that King James took a tour along the Borders, and, in his way, as was customary in those times, he made certain grants, by way of favour or largess, to the corporations through whose liberties he passed. To various of the towns he gave exclusive rights of pasturage over certain of the crown lands; to some a right of fishing; to some a right of levying petty customs; to some a right to hold fairs and markets, and so forth. Indeed, it is known that the greater part of the privileges and immunities of the towns of Scotland were granted in this way. When James came to Peebles, it became the talk of the inhabitants what was to be their guerdon. The members of the council deliberated upon it in their chamber; and some proposed a right of pasturage—some of levying petty customs—some one thing and some another—as suited their views of public or private policy. The charge of the petition was committed to the Provost. There was, however, a stronger power at home. Mrs Purves had a petition; and it was clear that her husband had little prospect of any further domestic bliss unless the prayer of that petition was granted.

Though an honest man, Purves knew the value of domestic nappiness as competing with public principle. A man may sacrifice much to public duty, as witness the case of Brutus; but it may be doubted if any man, however much a lover of justice, ever sacrificed for a smile of the stern goddess, the loves, the happiness of his domestic life—the comfort of his "ain fire-side." The Provost felt the delicacy of his position. He owed something to the town, and something to himself, who had done much for his fellow citizens, and got not even thanks for his pains. When the council made their suggestions to him, he said he would think of the various boons that were proposed to be asked; and, the matter being thus left in his hands, when the King arrived, he repaired to the royal presence to present his request at the feet of his sovereign.

"Well, our worthy and well-beloved servant," said the King, "who hath the charge of our loyal town of Peebles, what is the request that thou hast to make for the exercise

of our royal bounty, which, thanks to the approaching termination of our journey, hath few more draughts to be made upon it, at this time? We have always loved thy ancient burgh, for its steadiness in the royal cause, and its peaceable attitudes in times of commotion, and shall be well pleased to redress any grievances that may press upon the inhabitants, or grant such privileges as may be consistent with the principles of our government."

"Richt illustrious Sire," replied the Provost, on his knees, "it is weel kened, in these parts, that the royal bounty has been drawn upon by the Border towns, to an extent beyond what was anticipated, even by thy most liberal anticipations, and we would be richt laith to put the guid opinion that your Majesty has been pleased to entertain o' us by any unreasonable request, at a time, especially, when your Majesty is about to join your richt fair and weel-beloved Queen, Joanna, whose image is nae doot mair in your Majesty's mind, than the sma' concerns o' an insignificant, though faithfu' toun. The prayer I hae to mak is, therefore, that, when you return to your palace, ye may enjoy that domestic peace and happiness, whilk is denied to your Majesty's servant, wha noo sues at your Majesty's feet."

"We do not see," replied the monarch, "what our happiness in our palace has to do with the prosperity of Peebles, or thy own individual benefit and distinction. Thy prayer is, besides—thanks to our good Queen—unnecessary, seeing we have that which thou prayest for already; and it is not in the power even of the good town of Peebles to wish us a more faithful consort, or greater domestic happiness, than we at present enjoy. But thou hast contrasted thy own domestic condition with ours, and stated that thou hast not peace at 'yer ain fireside,' a calamity which we—sovereign of Scotland though we are—have no power, we fear, either to remove or to assuage. We can grant thee a right to levy petty customs, to cast feal and divot, and we might even extend to thee some exemption from public burdens; but we cannot interfere between our subjects and their wives; for, in our opinion, it would be unseemly in a royal crown to be visited with the 'reddin' straik.'"

As the monarch finished his speech, he laughed at his own attempt at wit; but the subject was not one of laughter to the Provost, who adhered to his point.

"Yer Majesty," he replied, "has mair power in this matter than yer modesty allows ye to think; and since ye hae condescended to smile on the occasion, wharby my boldness is greatly countenanced, I wad say, that my domestic peace and comfort is entirely in yer Majesty's hands."

"Then we have more power than we thought we had," said the King. "Canst thou unriddle this mystery?"

"If yer Majesty," said the Provost, "would tak the trouble to read this sma' petition, ye would maybe there find whar the riddle lies; and, also, the way to unriddle it to the satisfaction o' yer humble servant, and the bringing back o' his domestic peace, without which a' his honours as Provost are o' nae avail to his happiness."

The King having read the petition, smiled, and gave orders to his chamberlain to draw out the grant we have submitted to our readers.

These are the circumstances attending that extraordinary relic. The inhabitants felt disappointed; but Mrs Purves vied with Lady Cockburn, and outshone her. The grant was construed generally to imply, that all provosts' wives of Peebles might wear purfled sleeves—a privilege of which the inhabitants were as proud as if they had got the power of casting feal and divot on the surrounding muirs.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE APPARITION OF FLODDEN FIELD.

THE extraordinary fate that attended the different royal members of the house of Stuart, has impressed many, not inclined to superstition (among whom who would expect to find the name of Voltaire?) with the idea that a particular Providence wove for them the dark mantle of destiny in the form of their royal robes. No one individual of the race lived happily, or died as other men die; and, though a crown is not made of roses in the land of thistles, any more than where the wars of the roses for long made it one of thorns, the unhappiness of the Scotch monarchs, beginning with the oppressed and miserable second Robert and ending with the last James, had something in it apart from the peculiar griefs of kings.

Yet, though there may thus be some ground for the prevailing notion that a destiny overshadowed the house of Stuart, there is ground for believing that the three grim daughters of black night had not been unanimous in their verdicts against the lives and fortunes of this royal house; for it is matter of history that several of its members were, in a very extraordinary manner, warned by apparently supernatural indications from entering upon those wars, journeys, or avocations, in which they met their death. The Highland woman, who laid claim to prophetic skill, and warned the first James, when he went on his last expedition to the north, that, if he crossed the Firth, he would never return again alive, may have been, as she has been called, an impostor; but the sneers of sceptics will never divest the legend of its extraordinary character. We pass over lesser instances, to come to those strange signs made to the victim of Flodden which, though partly investigated by history, are still in a great measure buried in obscurity.

The character of the fourth James has been ably drawn by several historians, and is well known to the lovers of Scotch history. His desire to benefit the institutions of his country, and to contribute to the advancement of useful discoveries and inventions, and to the growth of what have since been termed, *par excellence*, "the fine arts," was not exclusive of accomplishments which, at that period, were reckoned incompatible with the prosecution of utilitarian objects. His maritime enterprise has produced effects which are probably felt in Scotland at this day; and, during his short life, many statutes of the law were passed, which are not yet divested of authority.

This was the reasonable side of James' character. There was unfortunately another phase. His fancy, which was too fervid, was always on the spring of invention, to cut down the results of his reason; while his conscience kept a stern and painful watch on the whimsical frolics, not destitute of matter for her animadversion, which resulted from his excited imagination. His passion for the fair sex amounted to a grievous fault, and entailed upon him the necessity of many penances, which were the more readily performed, that, ever since the death of his father, in which he acted an unfortunate and, in his estimation, a guilty part, he had been inclined to fits of melancholy and monastic seclusion from the world. The death of Lady Drummond,

whom he loved, and would have made his Queen, sank deep into his heart; and though the Princess Margaret, to whom he was united, was to him a faithful and loving wife, it has been often surmised that his old love was never overcome, and that he sought, in the exciting inebriation of an unauthorized change of female favourites, a relief from his recollection of the unfortunate object of his first affections.

Yet James was a kind husband to his English queen, if, indeed, any attention or kindness could make up to a woman for the want of any fractional part of her spouse's affections. It is certain, too, that he was greatly beloved by her, whose affections, never having been directed to another, were, besides, sanctified and confirmed by several interesting pledges. Though the Queen took no great interest in the affairs of state, she could not altogether divest her mind of some English notions, which had been early instilled into her by her father. James, who was "thorough Scotch," sometimes rallied her on her hatred of Scotland's ancient allies, the French; and sallies of half humorous and half angry badinage passed between them, which, however, never interfered with their domestic happiness.

There was strong reason, however, in Margaret's jealousy of the nation which had ever been opposed to her native country, and which had now become the ally of that of her adoption. She observed that James, according to his natural disposition, which contained a strong mixture of chivalrous feeling, was highly ambitious of appearing, in the eyes of the illustrious Anne of Brittany, the consort of Louis XII. of France, as her "faithful knight;" and she had heard enough of that ambitious woman's character, to make her tremble for the influence she might, with a view to her designs on England, exercise over the mind of the Scotch King. Her fears were, indeed, justified by a circumstance which had become known to her accidentally, while looking over some papers in a bureau in which James held such of his private documents as he did not wish to be seen by his secretaries.

Margaret had, in truth, laid her hands upon the famous letter written to James by the French Queen, and handed to him through the medium of the French diplomatist, La Motte, to which has always been attributed the mad invasion of England, which ended in the battle of Flodden, and the destruction of the flower of the Scotch chivalry. This document, which has been preserved by antiquaries, was in a strain most admirably suited to enlist in the writer's service all the most enthusiastic feelings of the royal knight. It was originally in French, but the following is a translation:—

"Right Excellent, Right High and Mighty King, as well as our Dearest and Most Ancient Ally,—I recommend me to thee, at a time when great trouble and distress has, by the Providence of God, overtaken a tender female, who looks in vain to her husband and to the knights of her own country for that protection and guidance which is due to her soft and gentle sex. The brother of your Highness' Queen, the proud and treacherous Henry, has not treated thee with greater baseness and cruelty, in withholding from thee thy consort's jewels—which, by every law of justice and honour he was bound to deliver up, as his father's executor—than he has done, and is now doing, in respect of me and my royal

husband, whom he is endeavouring, by every means, to humble and oppress. To add also to my grief, there exists between us and the Sec of Rome, an unhappy schism; so that it would seem that both heaven and earth have conspired to bring misfortunes on the head of your faithful Anne. To what quarter, in these extremities, can I direct my beseeching eyes? Where shall a disconsolate damsel find a relief from the attacks of treachery, the schemes of cunning, and the daring insolence of a royal outlaw?—where, but in the protection of a true knight, whose bosom is the appointed haven for tender damsels who have been wrecked on the rocks of a cruel adversity. The united applause of men directs my appeal to the flower of chivalry—to James of Scotland, who never turned a deaf ear to the wailings of female distress. By the laws of knighthood, I claim thy protection; and, besides a present of 14,000 crowns, which our ambassador, La Motte, will pay into thy exchequer, receive from my finger the enclosed token, sent to a faithful knight, upon whose ready aid against her oppressor, Henry of England, I implicitly rely. Advance but three steps on English ground, for the sake of thy mistress, who has already suffered much misconstruction in defence of thy honour, and in excusing the delay of thy expedition.

“ANNE.”

This cunning letter—written in such high-flown strains, to catch the feelings of a monarch who, when women were out of the way, had both good sense and justice to regulate his conduct—was seen through, by the quick eye of a female, and that female a wife, in an instant. She feared the effects of it upon the mind of James, who, she knew, could not withstand so artful an appeal. She communicated her sentiments to Sir David Lindsay, who belonged to the household of her son, the young Prince, and was informed by him that her fears for a war with her brother, in which James would himself lead the Scottish army, were but too well founded, for he had already intimated his intention to that effect, to his chamberlain, Home, who, with 8000 men, was already over the Borders.

In the evening, when the King returned to the palace of Linlithgow, then the royal residence, Margaret inquired, with tenderness and regret, if it was indeed true that he had resolved on war with England. The occasion was ill-timed; for he had some short time before received intelligence that his chamberlain, Home, had been defeated by Sir William Bulmer, at a pass called the Broomhouse. The affair was by no means creditable to the Scots, who had allowed themselves to be surprised and struck down by the English archers, who, concealing themselves among some high furze with which the place abounded, broke their ranks, and put them to flight. It was indeed surmised that Home, who bore an old resentment against the King, favoured the disaster, in order that James might thereby be incensed, and excited to head an army against England, in person—a post of danger in which he might, and, from his impetuosity, would, in all likelihood, fall. Margaret's inquiry was, therefore, answered with more asperity than was usual with one who was, in reality, a good-natured and kind husband.

“It is not,” he cried, “in the blood of King William the Lion—which, regenerated in Bruce's heart, shall not be contaminated in mine—to bear the insults of this thy haughty brother. He has withheld from me thy jewels—urged the Pope to fulminate against me an excommunication—protected the murderer of one of my barons, who, next to thee, lay nearest my heart—carried off my subjects in time of peace across the Borders—slaughtered Andrew Barton, and captured his ships; and done many more things against me and my kingdom, which it would ill become me to pass over unpunished. But, not content with insulting me—whom, as his brother-in-law, he was bound to treat with love and kindness, besides what was due to me as an independent king—he has waged war against my relative, the

Duke of Gueldres; and, to crown all his royal exploits he has carried war into France, the country of my ally, from whence has come an appeal, which I, as a true knight, can no longer withstand. When Anne of Brittany is in distress, what man, who aspires to the character of a knight, can allow the sword to rust in the scabbard?”

Margaret, stunned by the violence of James, could, for a time, find no words to reply to him as a suitable expression of her feelings required; but the fears which foreboded his danger in attempting to head personally an army against England, bore in upon her, and gave her the eloquence of grief.

“Thou hast, my dear Lord, stated many causes which ought to cool thy friendship for a man whom I am ashamed to call by the endearing appellation of brother! But, as it is a Christian duty to bear more from friends than strangers, and the act of a wise man to treat the inflamed demeanour of a violent, hot-headed youth, though charged with insolence, as beneath the application of the chivalric rules of chastisement, why should the prudent, legislating James of Scotland—who has quelled the rebellions of his nobles, introduced into his kingdom the art of printing, and built the great Michael—sully his glory, and endanger his person, in an unequal contest with populous England? It is not as sister of Henry that I use these strong words—it is as the wife of my dear Lord, who is too generous, and too noble, to fight without danger to his person, with the cold, calculating Henry, and his colder General, Surrey! Hear, then, in the intensity of a fear which my dreams have made prophetic, the partner of thy bosom—who should be dearer to thee than Anne of Brittany—the mother of your children: War not with England; and, oh! expose not thy precious person to the dangers of an unequal fight! Thy country needs thee—thy wife cannot survive thee—thy children's safety, in an unsettled country, imperatively demands thee. A King is the property of his subjects; and a blood-stained minority may cry to heaven against what posterity may denominate—suicide!”

As the excited Queen finished her spirited and just appeal, she flung herself at the feet of James, who, taking her by the hand, lifted her up only to communicate his refusal of her request. A similar appeal was afterwards made by many of the nobles; but the blood of James had caught the flame of a chivalrous enthusiasm—the ruling passion of his soul; and Anne of Brittany's complimentary letter outweighed the pathetic appeal of a nation. The infatuated monarch repelled, with indignation, the applications and remonstrances of his nobles. The Earl of Angus, who had grown old in the service of his country, and whose wisdom and experience deserved the gravest consideration and respect of the King, was treated with no more regard than the beardless mentor whom the bald imprudence of the projected invasion forced to hazard an opinion in opposition to the wishes of his sovereign.

The King proceeded with his preparations, in the face of objections and murmurings on every side. He collected a large army, comprehending the best of his subjects, and the flower of his knights and nobles, and appointed for their headquarters a small village near the Borders. Regardless, however, as he was of the expostulations of his nobles, and of the most evident prudential considerations which opposed themselves to so rash a measure, he was not insensible to those superstitious feelings which, at every period of his life, had been cultivated with more care than reason sanctioned. At Linlithgow, a few days before departing for headquarters, he attended vespers in the royal chapel. In his religious exercises, he was enthusiastically devout; and on the present occasion he seemed to seek from heaven that countenance, approval, and support of his scheme, which had been denied him on earth. The scene of a monarch offering up prayers for the success of an invasion which would pro-

duce battles in which thousands would perish, amidst the shock of contending nations, could not fail to impress the congregation with unusual feelings. But the scene was rendered one of terror and awe, by a circumstance which occurred, of a nature as unusual as it was mysterious and unaccountable.

When the vespers had finished, and the King's head was bent in silent devotion, and a stillness like that of death reigned in the cathedral, a stranger, of a venerable appearance, entered. His head was uncovered, and long silvery locks flowed down his back. A blue robe, tied with a linen girdle round his loins, fell negligently around him. A look of majesty was in his eye; and his forehead, which spoke the passage of many summers, carried the lofty aspect of one accustomed to pronounce irrevocable and unalterable decrees. His appearance operated as a spell. Every eye was fixed on him as on an apparition. The King looked intensely at him, but seemed to have no power to ask who he was, or whence he came. Unawed by the presence or the stare of the monarch, the stranger stepped forward direct to where his majesty was, and, leaning over the reading-desk where he knelt, pronounced, in a hollow voice, the following words:—"Sir, I am sent to warn thee not to proceed in thy present undertaking—for, if thou dost, it shall not fare well either with thyself or those who go with thee. Further, it hath been enjoined me to bid thee to shun the familiar society and counsels of women, lest they occasion thy disgrace and destruction!" This extraordinary speech, pronounced audibly and unflinchingly, fell on the ears of all present, like a voice from heaven. No one had power to speak. A superstitious dread locked up every mouth; whilst the figure, using neither salutation nor reverence, retreated and vanished. Whither he went, or how he disappeared, no person could tell. The whole scene was a mystery, which no one could unravel, but which every one felt as something different from the ordinary incidents of this world.

The King retreated quickly into the palace. Some said he suspected the scene to have been the result of an affectionate endeavour, on the part of the Queen, to prevent him from following his infatuated course; but there is no authority for this, while there is strong evidence against the Queen being at all concerned in the affair. The historian, Buchanan, got the particulars of the extraordinary apparition from Sir David Lindsay, the Queen's confidant, who was alongside of the King when the figure appeared, and heard and saw the whole. He believed to have known, if any person knew, whether the Queen had any participation in the affair; and yet he narrated it as a true and wonderful occurrence, after the King's death, and when all motive for deception had been removed. The Queen, moreover, was, it is said, incapable of being concerned in any measure of a secret and underhand nature; and it was plain, from the King's extreme perturbation, that he did not entertain the suspicion attributed to him, whatever he might have stated on that subject to any of his nobles.

The moment the King got into the palace, he locked himself up, and gave directions that no one should be admitted to him, except his chamberlain, Home, who was hourly expected, to report to him what had taken place on the Borders. Home soon heard of the occurrence in the Cathedral—which made so much noise, that it flew far and near, spreading wonder wherever it went—and hastened to meet his sovereign, with a speed but ill-suited to the bearing of unfavourable intelligence. Suspected of being, in a great measure, the secret cause of the projected invasion, the nobles, who had heard of the apparition, and expected a change of purpose on the part of James, wished to keep it a secret from one who would endeavour to counteract its effects; but Home, determined to free the mind of the monarch from what he called the effects of superstition, soon arrived, and was closeted with him for a long period.

When James again appeared, he had, in a great measure, resumed his former enthusiasm for the expedition.

He soon afterwards took leave of the Queen, who, with tears in her eyes, embraced her husband with all the heartfelt fondness with which she had ever regarded him, but now coloured with a deep presentiment—derived from her dreams, which she had communicated to him in vain, and the recent extraordinary scene in the Cathedral—that she saw him for the last time. Home, who was present at this interview, contrived to accelerate its termination; and Margaret remarked, as they departed, that all she had heard of Home's secret enmity against the King was justified by his indecorous desire to get the infatuated monarch hastened forward to his fate.

On arriving at headquarters, James recovered his former spirits, and forgot Margaret's predictions and the old man's warning, in the evidence he had before him of the affection and loyalty of his subjects, who, notwithstanding the unpopularity of the war among the nobles, had collected from all quarters at the call of their King. He saw himself at the head of a noble army, excellently, if not elegantly, equipped, and furnished with artillery, superior to any that had been brought into the field by any former monarch of Scotland. In the first council of his nobles, called together for the purpose of forming a plan of operations, Home recommended that, with a view to save the person of the King, and to animate the troops in the event of a battle, a number of the young nobles should array themselves in a dress of the same description as that worn by James—not even omitting the iron chain, which he had worn as a penance for the part he had in the death of his father. This device was received by James with applause; and, though no one could well see the peculiar merits of the stratagem, while many conceived that it was a part of some dark design on the part of the Earl, the plan was adopted, and ordered to be put in execution on the eve of the expected engagement.

On the 22d of August, James entered England, encamping on the river Till, a tributary of the Tweed; and from Twiselhaugh issued a proclamation, giving certain privileges to the heirs of those who should fall in battle. Having invested the Castle of Norham, he proceeded up the Tweed to Wark, of which making himself master, he then set himself down before the towers of Etal and Ford, in the latter of which was the celebrated Lady Heron, the wife of Sir William Heron, at that time a prisoner in Scotland. This lady was possessed of great beauty and consummate art; and as she rivalled the Egyptian Queen in these accomplishments, she seems to have been destined to imitate her predecessor, in directing their force against the heart of a King. She knew the King's character, and conceived that he would not be unwilling to acknowledge the gentle power of her charms, stating, with her accustomed levity, that, as he was about to storm her castle, she had a right to make a reprisal upon his heart.

When the castle of Ford was taken, Lady Heron was secured by Home, who quickly hurried her to his tent. He at once saw and appreciated her great beauty; and, ever intent on the ruin of his King, conceived that he had now in his power an opportunity of testing the truth of the mission of the alleged apparition. He had learned that a part of the warning was very solemnly directed against the King's indulgence of his well-known weakness—conversing and associating with females, more in the spirit of a young hot-headed stripling, than a man of his age. If, then, he thought, he could get James to lay siege to the heart of Lady Heron, he would accomplish several objects. In the first place, he would, by getting him to contravene the warning of the apparition with apparent impunity, prove that the whole affair was a trick—a conclusion which, although James had, to a certain extent, acquiesced in it, required all

the confirmation which could be procured, in order to make sure that the versatile monarch would not, in a fit of superstition, recede to the position from which his adviser had, with great trouble, dragged him; in the second place, by getting the King entangled in the meshes which Home was satisfied the artful lady would cast round him, he would get him to trifle away a great part of his time, so as to give Surrey an opportunity to surprise him, and force him to fight, whether inclined to it or not; and, in the last place, there was, to Home's cruel mind, a satisfaction in seeing the object of his long-concealed resentment bringing disgrace on his head, and shame on his country, by sacrificing to Momus his prudence, conjugal loyalty, time, and reputation, upon the eve of a crisis which was to decide the fate of his kingdom.

James, though generally so much devoted to the fair sex, had expressed himself unwilling to see Lady Heron, whose beauty he had heard extolled, and whose arts he, in the full recollection of the warning at Linlithgow, was not inclined, for once in his life, to put to the test of personal experience. When Home heard that the royal gallant had repudiated his darling weakness, which all the prayers and entreaties of his loving Queen had never been able to induce him to overcome, he at once saw that there was something more than prudence in his resolution, and attributed, correctly, the new virtue to the superstition produced by the warning. It was necessary, in accordance with the Earl's views, that this should by some means be overcome; because, if the statement made in the cathedral of Linlithgow was to regulate the conduct of James in one particular, it might ultimately come to be invested with the character of truth, and the expedition might, in a moment of superstitious fear, be abandoned. Master of his monarch's heart, and capable of touching, with the nicest precision, the springs of his actions, the wily Chamberlain concocted his schemes so as best to insure the result to which his wishes pointed. Repairing to the royal tent, he accosted the King thus:—

"The Lady of Ford, whose husband is in your Majesty's hands as a prisoner, hath, from my tent, sent to your Majesty her humble submission. Yet she talketh more boldly of the strength of her heart, than she did of her castle; and saith, that not even the flower of knighthood—James of Scotland—could venture to address to her ear those strains of love which have melted the heart of the Queen of France. She doth, moreover, in the conceit and pride of a beauty which could alone make her supercilious conduct in any degree tolerated, appropriate to herself the apple which Paris awarded to Venus on Mount Ida—substituting the Queen of Scotland for Juno, and the French Anne for Minerva—and daring your Majesty, as the fair Trojan youth, to award the prize to my of her competitors. Like the conceited Palæmon, who said 'that learning would live and die with him, this proud dame hath asserted that beauty was born when she came into the world and will die when she leaveth it; and your Majesty will scarcely believe that she doth allege her husband to be a more proper man than is to be found in our Scottish camp.'

"Ha! are we thus to be bearded on English ground by the ladies of our prisoners?" cried the King, who could not stand the comparison between himself and Sir William Heron, though even the wife of his rival was the judge of the competitors. "One short week since, and we could not have borne this; but even kings must acknowledge powers stronger than their loves; and our royal heart hath undergone an eclipse. But where is the chivalry of Scotland? where the descendants of the accomplished knight of Lid-disdale, Sir David Lindsay, and Sir Patrick de Graham? The time was, when no Sir Piers Courtenay, or any other white-faced son of England, could compete with us for the hand of beauty, either in dance or tournament. We do, in good faith, lament this condition of our knighthood, and

could almost impose upon ourselves the task of redeeming the character of our country. Is the lady really fair?"

"Despite of all her vaunting," replied Home, "the lady is a right fair piece of workmanship; and I question if 'Fairley fair,' the renowned daughter of Hardyknute, or Egidia, the daughter of our good King Robert, whose picture captivated the French monarch, could, if they had been living now, have competed with this saucy English beauty, who doth apparently conceive her eyes to be too precious to have their light thrown away upon what she calleth kilted caterans! Can it be borne, that there is not a knight in the Scotch army—from him of the wallet in the sutler's camp, to him of the sceptre in the royal tent—who can tame the pride of this English shrew? Your Majesty hath well expressed our shame; and I only wish that I had been endowed with the personal qualifications of my King, that it might have been in my power to have redeemed the character of our chivalry. It is one of the articles of war, that a conqueror, if he be a true knight, shall subdue the hearts of his female enemies, as well as take the lives and persons of his male foes. The practice is of the oldest time: and shall it be left for future historians to say, that the chivalric James was unsuccessful where so few have failed? The Emperor Proculus, as your Majesty knoweth, wrote to his friend, Metianus, that he had taken a hundred ladies of Sarmatia in one campaign, and subdued the hearts of them all. Hath our beloved King not one hundredth part of the gallantry of so obscure a monarch as Proculus?"

"Hold!" cried the King; "thou art too severe, good Chamberlain. Thou forgettest that this proud English lady hath not seen our royal person; and we do not opine that Proculus, or any other successful conqueror, took hearts without being seen by the maidens. Neither hath she any picture of us, as the King of France had of our Egidia. But we are somewhat in the humour to try the effect of our royal speech, manners, and proportions on this stately personage; for, doubtless, it would sound strangely in the ears of Surrey, that our first English prisoner did spurn from her feet one who hath won the affections of the illustrious Anne of Brittany. Let us equip ourselves for this interview; and, in the meantime, shew the lady to our tent."

All that Home required to do, as he was well aware, was to procure an interview between the lady and James; for, though she had been less fair than she was, her art was sufficient to overcome one who thought himself the slave of all fair women. The lady, instead of being averse to the interview, sighed for it—for she was as ambitious of subduing the heart of the monarch, as he was of conquering hers. James was not a little surprised to find that, instead of a proud dame, as Home had represented her to be, Lady Heron was all smiles and condescension; but he did not impute to his Chamberlain a wish to deceive, when he could so easily find in his own attractions a ready and pleasant solution of the apparent riddle. The result was just what Home had expected. The weak monarch submitted to the chain, instead of imposing it. His infatuation again seized him; and though about to place his life and his kingdom in the scales of an unequal fight, he spent his time in receiving the blandishments of affected love.

Thus was one part of the warning of the old man contravened; and another extraordinary manifestation was on the eve of being made, capable of adding a fearful confirmation of the divine character of the former apparition. One night, in the grey gloaming, James was returning from Lady Heron's chamber to his tent. He had a few paces to pass through a narrow lane, enclosed on both sides by high trees and a thorn hedge, and there met the Earl of Huntly, accompanied by the reverend Arran. They met and conversed; and old Arran was pointing to the moon, which exhibited a stormy aspect, as she alternately appeared and disappeared among the clouds which encompassed her when

from a breach in the thorn-hedge, the identical figure of the old man with the silver hair, who had made his appearance in the Cathedral of Linlithgow, came forward and stood before them. James started back, and the two Earls were riveted to the ground—all under the influence of an indescribable horror. The figure, holding forth a long bony hand, pronounced distinctly the following words:—"Once already have I warned thee, in language which could not be misunderstood. Once more hear my commission:—Lead back thy army to Scotland, and cease thy familiar intercourse with females. Thy heart is already captured and taken. A similar fate overhangs thy life. My authority now ends, and thy fate is entrusted to the keeping of thy judgment." Having uttered these words, the figure retreated as it had done before; and such was the effect produced on the minds of the listeners, that, before they could collect their senses and direct their steps in the pursuit of the speaker, he had disappeared, and they searched for him in vain.

Without waiting to commune with the Earls, the King hurried to his tent and shut himself up. No one knew how he was occupied; but it was suspected by Huntly and Arran, who, as they were desirous of the King's return, had told the story to their brother nobles, that he was engaged in meditation, and in all likelihood undergoing, as was usual to him, some mortifying penance. All James' acts of devotion were the result of superstitious fear or gnawing remorse; and their desultory and extravagant nature had become so familiar to his lords, that they generally paid little attention to his devout seclusions. But there was, in this instance, a cause operating upon him which was of an extraordinary character, and had extended its effects to others who possessed calm reasoning minds, and despised the dominion of fancy and its extravagant creations. The friendly nobles augured that the apparition would be productive of good, and could not suppose that what was considered a divine warning, would be disregarded by a prince who was disposed to see the finger of God in even the ordinary affairs of life, and whose fancy conjured up, in the creations of still nature, the burning bush of an Almighty demonstration. It was considered necessary to keep a watch on the royal tent; and Arran suggested that, for reasons he should afterwards explain, the Earl of Home should not be made aware of what had taken place.

In the morning, James wrote an order for returning to Scotland. He requested Arran and Huntly to keep what they had seen a secret; and was displeased when they told him that they had already communicated it to several of the nobles. He appeared dejected, and like one who had struggled for a night with some *terriculamentum* of dreadful aspect and power. His eyes were swollen and red, and big drops of perspiration stood on his forehead. His manly bearing and resolution had given place to a troubled, timid manner; and he who, the day before, saw nothing in the world of importance but love and war, seemed to recoil with horror at the thought of either. All these signs were, to the Earls, of good omen; and his order was greedily seized by Huntly; to be published and acted upon. James, ever irresolute where a retrocession from his cherished pursuits was in agitation, requested the Earls to let the order lie for some time, as his mind was in such a state of agitation that he could not say it had been written under the guidance of a cool reason. The Earls—who knew that what James called, in this instance, cool reason, was, in truth, rabid enthusiasm—endeavoured to persuade him that he had acted properly; but his hesitation remained, and he requested to be left alone to consider the important step with greater deliberation.

In the meantime, as might have been expected, the intelligence of what was going forward was secretly communicated to Home, who lost not a moment in being with the King. He found him lying on a couch, still under great

agitation; and, without waiting the expression of the royal will to enter on the delicate subject which had brought him into the King's presence, stated that he had heard the story of the new apparition, which, he was sorry to find, had disturbed his rest and dislocated his noble resolutions.

"Kings," replied James, lifting his head from the couch, "are the peculiar property of Him who has deputed them to watch over the interests of his creatures. It was to those of Judea that God delighted to communicate his behests—and they obeyed; while Pagan despots have fallen in the capital, and Scotch monarchs in their royal palaces, in culpable despite of the warnings of Heaven. Our house has experienced these things, till our fates and follies have become a by-word to fools. What power impels me onward into England against signs of divine displeasure, which, not entrusted to the construction of my enthusiasm, have appeared to the eye of reason and to the experience of age? We must return. Heaven is against us; and Surrey, the Devil's agent, may get into grace by the perverseness of our royal will. The damsel of France must remain unavenged, and the flower of English knighthood be allowed to resume his glaive, and to make the hills of Cheviot resound with the laugh of triumph over the broken threats and the hollow courage of the Scottish King.

As James uttered these words, he sighed and groaned deeply. A strong fit of his natural dejection was upon him, and everything appeared, to his morbid fancy, dark and ominous. Home, well acquainted with the secret springs of his mind, saw, in a moment, where to direct his powers of persuasion; and he did not fail to use them to the utmost of his energies.

"An humble subject may be allowed to say to his king, that, if monarchs are the peculiar property of heaven, they are also the objects of human intrigue and base imposition. I endeavoured to satisfy your royal mind, that the apparition of the Cathedral of Linlithgow was a stratagem resorted to for the purpose of preventing chivalry from enjoying its triumph. This of last night, of which I have been minutely informed, is of the same nature. Women and old men have mounted into the peaked saddle, which, of yore, was occupied by the bearer of the pricking lance and the burnished shield. The tourney is changed for the hall of the insipid morris-dance; and the gonfannon of a true knight has coiled itself up, to give place to the silken streamer of a lady's wimple fluttering in a breeze of fans. Can all this have happened in the reign of the fourth James, whom France itself, the seat of knighthood, hath looked to with beseeching eyes for a lesson of the prowess of a true knight, and for protection to beauty in distress, and that beauty a queen."

"Shew me," interrupted James, with violent energy, roused by the speech of Home, who touched him on the tenderest points—"shew me, by proof which may be palpable to human eyes, or tangible to the touch of one not yet mad, that this apparition is the work of stratagem—and I will yet be the avenger of my own and Scotland's wrongs, and the protector of injured beauty."

"I accept your offer," answered Home, readily. "The scene of last night cannot be recalled; but I can shew your Majesty that it can, by its actors, be again enacted. Withdraw thy order for a retreat, issue another for progress on the morrow, and trust to the events of the night. Meet me at the same place and hour where the pretended apparition appeared, and distinguish between thy friends and thy foes."

James consented, and Home left him to mature the scheme he had so cunningly and adroitly concocted on the spur of necessity. It was, indeed, a bold step he had undertaken. Heaven was apparently against him, and a quick-sighted monarch was to be the victim and the judge. Home was as ignorant of the true cause, whether human or divine, of the apparition, as was James himself; but he was a hard-hearted, sceptical man, who doubted even of the existence of the

Power who, having made the world and the sceptic, may well be allowed the reputation of being able to make a thing of a thinner consistence. The first thing he did, was to get an exact description of the appearance of the figure, with its dress, and manners, and mode of speech; and an account of the words which it was said to have made use of. A person answering that description could not be got from among the soldiers, who were generally young men; but the camp of the sutlers and hobblers, which was filled with old men, women, and boys, could not fail to supply him with the kind of figure he was in search of.

Home, accordingly, repaired to the sutlers' camp, and having pretended to distribute charity to the aged and infirm, fixed his eye upon an old man, who, he thought, would answer his purpose, and requested him to come to his tent at a certain hour. The man complied; and the Earl succeeded in moulding him to his purpose by offering him a considerable sum of money. The scheme resorted to was as follows:—The old beggar was to dress himself in a blue cloak, tied round his loins, with a linen girdle; to throw off his bonnet, and allow his hair, which was white and flowing, to fall down his back. Thus disguised, he was to appear before the King and the Earl at the hour appointed; and, after pronouncing impressively some words taught him by Home, allow himself to be seized, and state that he had been commissioned by the Queen to execute this stratagem, to prevent her husband from invading England. The old beggar seemed an apt scholar, and often looked askance, with a cunning, leering eye, at the crafty Earl, as if to shew how thoroughly he understood him, and with what consummate skill he could play his part. The words which he had to speak, he endeavoured to recite before Home, until he conceived he was sufficiently instructed. They were as follow:—"Sir, I told thee, last night, that my authority was ended. My commission has been renewed; and the failure of the skill of the depute, argues nought against the wisdom and power of the principal. I understand thy order for retreat is withdrawn, and another for progress issued. This vacillation will bring destruction on thy head. Return to thy first resolution, and a series of happy years will be vouchsafed to thee and thy kingdom: adhere to thy second, and Scotland will send her wail of bereavement to the uttermost end of the earth. I come not again." The old man mouthed these words with great histrionic power; and Home confessed he had never seen a better ghost.

In the evening, at the hour appointed, the King and Home went to the lane where, on the preceding evening, the apparition had appeared. The one was as anxious as the other that the mystery should be deprived of its spectral character, and the mind of the King left to the power of his presiding genius. They came to the spot, and the King pointed out, with a trembling hand, the opening in the hedge from which the figure had come, and through which it had disappeared. The scene was solitary and grand. The long vista of the lane, formed by two rows of large elms, was lighted up by the traces of the moonbeams that found their way between the trees, leaving alternate spaces of shade, and forming a chequered picture, which extended as far as the eye could reach. At times, as the moon was obscured by clouds, the lane was almost dark. There was no noise of any kind; the wind was still, and the distance of the camp was too great to allow of any sound from that quarter. An occasional scream from some hungry night bird of prey, or its dying victim, produced the only disturbance of the general silence.

Starting from a reverie, into which the scene and the occasion of his being there had thrown him, the King, with his finger pointed to the opening in the hedge, cried—"See—it comes—the identical figure! What majesty! Shall Home—shall mortal man, divest it of its power over my destiny?"

"Be calm," whispered the Earl; "what appears so full of awe, may, even by mortal, be forced to resign its high claims to supernatural power. Trust to my promise of a full discovery."

The figure approached as they spoke; and, coming up in front of the King, held out, as it did on the former occasion, a long, bony hand, and delivered, with the greatest solemnity and effect, the exact words which Home had taught the old mendicant. James was powerless. He trembled, and stood closer to the Earl. The figure slowly retired; and, as it was about to disappear through the aperture in the hedge, the Earl sprang forward, with a light step and confident manner, to seize it, crying out to James to witness the exposure which he was about to exhibit. On reaching the aperture, what was his surprise, to find that the figure had vanished. The anxious Earl proceeded onwards—no trace of it was visible; and, after a search of half an hour's duration, the task was resigned in despair.

James, overcome with terror and sullenness, returned to his tent; and Home, incensed at the failure of his scheme, and under some feeling of awe produced by the unaccountable disappearance of the figure, which he could not doubt was that of the old man, hurried away to the sutlers' camp, to ascertain, if he had returned there, what was the reason why he had left unperformed the most important part of his work, and how he had contrived to escape with so much mysterious speed. On arriving at the camp, and making the necessary inquiry, he was told that the old man with the white hair had departed on the afternoon of that day, and no person knew whither he had gone. He was surprised, too, to find that none of the people in the camp knew anything of him. He had joined them at Twiselhaugh; but he gave them no name, and no satisfaction respecting his occupation or object. He associated with none of the camp followers; and, though apparently a beggar, had plenty of money, and fared better than any of the people.

This intelligence staggered Home, and left him in doubt and confusion. "If the old man," he thought, "had not made his appearance in the lane at all, his conduct in making off would, seeing he had got his reward, have been easily accounted for; but to do a part of his task, and leave the most important part undone, was unaccountable. Yet it must be confessed," he continued, "that the most dangerous part was what had been left undone; for it was in allowing himself to be seized, and confessing a piece of deception that he ran the risk of bringing upon his head the fury of such a powerful and choleric man as James sometimes shewed himself to be. The mode of his disappearance, however, was of all the most extraordinary, seeing that Home was, when he passed the hedge, at his very heels, and neither eye nor ear could discover a single vestige or sound, to tell even in what direction he had gone.

Perplexed by the issue of his project, Home was not discomfited. The monarch had retired to his tent, where he intended to pass the night undisturbed by intruders. He was supposed to be again at his meditations, and no one could tell what was to be the movement on the morrow. Home's resentment, which, though sprung from an unknown cause, never slept, fired his fancy with a prolific power of devising expedients to make up for the late failure. He feared the issue of the next morning's deliberations. His effort to expose the hollowness of an affected mystery had made it more mysterious, and invested it with double power over the heart of the King. This effect behoved to be taken off; and the readiest mode which occurred to Home, to accomplish this, was, to get one of his retainers, by name Carbrook, to write anonymously to James, that the old man, who had appeared to him in the form of an apparition, had been shot; and, when dying, had confessed that he was employed by the Queen to practise this deception, to induce the King to relinquish his intention of invading England.

This scheme was immediately put into execution; and, in order that it might have a better chance of success, the Earl combined with it another project, which would, in all likelihood, act with equal effect. He got an Englishman who had been found loitering about the camps, and who, from a fear of death, was inclined to consent to anything, to agree to personate a straggler from Surrey's army, and to allow himself to be taken in the morning before the King, a little time after James would have read the letter sent to him by Carbrook. When confronted with James, he was, on being questioned regarding Surrey and his army, to answer in a manner pointed out by Home.

In the morning, Carbrook's letter was handed to James, who, it was reported, had passed a restless night, and had resolved to return to Scotland that day. In a short time after, intimation was made to him, that an English soldier from Surrey's camp had been captured, and waited his examination. James at first refused to make any inquiries as to the position of the army; but Home, who, after the reception of the letter, summoned up his accustomed boldness, entered the royal tent, and remonstrated with James against the rejection of evidence which, even in their retreat, would be of importance to his army. The argument prevailed, and the man was summoned to the royal presence.

"Well, sirrah," began James, "what force doth my Lord Surrey number under his banner?"

"Twenty-four thousand fighting men," replied the man; "all eager to add another conquest over the Scots to the glory of England."

"Well said, my brave fellow," rejoined James, brightening up under the fire which this small spark of chivalry had produced in his bosom; "but, by the shade of Bruce, some of these conquests—among which we suppose you English include Bannockburn and Otterburn, and all that lie between these—whatever glory they may have added to the crown of England, have taken little from that of Scotland. Where has Surrey encamped, and what are his designs respecting our army and our royal person?"

"The forces of England are encamped at Alnwick, and Lord Surrey has been waiting, anxiously expecting to hear of your Majesty's motions. Lord Dacres told him that James of Scotland would not dare to give him battle; but he replied, that there was not in Christendom a nobler king or a more valorous knight, and that he relied upon your sustaining the tone of your defiance which was transmitted to the King in France."

"And Surrey says true," ejaculated James, with fervour—the apparition having, in the midst of his rising enthusiasm, lost its influence—"and Dacres lies in his teeth. Go and tell your general that we and our army are subsisting on the produce of your English soil, and have thereby a privilege of demanding the visit of courtesy which is expected from us. Yet do we not stand on punctilio; and in a short time it may be known whether Surrey or Dacres opines more accurately of the spirit of our knighthood."

The man was accordingly dismissed, and Home had apparently succeeded. All mention of the apparition was now avoided by the infatuated King, though occasionally a dark cloud settled on his brow which required a more than ordinary glow of enthusiasm to disperse. No inquiry was made into the truth of the facts communicated by Carbrook's letter—a circumstance somewhat foreign to James' rigid modes of investigating truth. But in this instance he was inclined to grasp at any excuse for avoiding the shame of a retreat, and of the nonfulfilment of the defiance he had so imprudently dispatched to Henry. The letter, therefore, served his purpose as well as any other pretext to which he could resort for relief, and he was too much afraid of finding it a deception to risk the issue of an inquiry which might force him to put his self-preservation in the balance against his honour.

Orders were accordingly immediately given to strike the

camps and proceed down the Tweed. The efforts of Home had been hitherto successful; and the King was now about to be still farther committed to this perilous enterprise. The march of the army was interrupted by the sound of a herald's trumpet. The messenger was Roge Croix, deputed by Surrey to carry his challenge to the King of Scots. The message was in the usual style of challenges in these times, full of jaunty expressions of a kind of amicable defiance interspersed with a profusion of egotistical phrases, which were sometimes set off by a stinted allowance of knightly valour to the opponent. The challenge reproached him in the ordinary way with having broken his faith and league, which had been solemnly pledged to the King of England, in thus invading his dominions, reducing his castles, taking captive the wives of his knights, and seducing their affections from their lords. This latter charge, it was stated, had been aggravated in the case of Lady Heron, by the circumstance that her husband was at that time James' prisoner; and thus, while he retained in his kingdom the protector of the lady's rights, he basely took advantage of the absence of her lord, reduced his castle, and polluted the source of his domestic affections and happiness. It proceeded to enumerate other alleged grievances, and went on to say that the King of England had entrusted the redress of these to his trusty knight, the Earl of Surrey. If, therefore, it concluded, James still retained any part of that honour and heroism for which he had in other days acquired some reputation, he was requested to meet Surrey on the succeeding Friday, if he would be content to remain so long in England.

To this defiance Lord Thomas Howard added a message, to the effect, that, as High Admiral, and one who had taken a principal part in the capture and death of Andrew Barton, he was ready to justify that action by leading the vanguard of the English army where James, from whom he expected as little mercy as he would bestow, might find him, in the event of his being inclined to ask that or any other satisfaction which a man of honour was bound to grant.

To these defiances James replied that he was ready to justify his proceedings at the point of his spear, which, in the estimation of all true knights, was a more honourable, a more just, and a more expeditious mode of deciding differences, than by the fabrication of a set of idle phrases, blown up by wind which would be better expended in the heat of battle. The charges he threw back upon Surrey, and referred him, for an enumeration of offences on the part of his royal master, to the defiance he sent him, before entering his dominions. "As to the rude accusation of broken honour," he said, "which has been brought against us, take back to your master a broad denial. Our bond and promise was, to remain true to our royal brother, so long as he remained true to his faith with us. But this he was the first to break. We have desired redress, and have been denied it. We have warned him of our intended hostility, a courtesy which he has refused to us: and this is our just quarrel, which, with the grace of God, we shall defend." The message concluded, by stating that James desired nothing more earnestly than the encounter, and would abide the battle on the day appointed.

It has been shrewdly surmised that Surrey had recourse to this imitation of the forms of a tournament, with a view to benefit from James' high principles of honour, which, except in so far as they may have been adopted into the code of the law of war, have truly little to do with a death-struggle for victory, where things of dearer import to man than conventional rules of private conduct are staked against victory which always justifies the means. The infatuated monarch first fell into the snare of the French Queen; but her own engine was used against her ally; and James, by giving to his enemy the warning of the day of battle, afforded him an advantage which, combined with another of the same kind, cost Scotland a price which centuries were unable to discharge.

These proceedings were highly disapproved of by all the Scotch nobles, with the exception of Home, who, in his capacity of chamberlain, had opportunities of working on the mind of the monarch in the manner which has been related. It has even been asserted, that he intercepted communications to James, which might have had the effect of changing his fatal resolution. A letter from Queen Margaret, couched in the most loving terms, and communicating another ominous dream, never reached the hands of the King, and many protests and remonstrances of the nobles shared the same fate.

That, amidst these unfavourable circumstances, James' good genius had not yet deserted him, is evident from the sagacity and promptitude he exhibited in seizing on the hill of Flodden as his ground of battle. He had issued that extraordinary order, which had previously been suggested by Home, that a number of the nobles should array themselves in a dress of the same character as that intended to be worn by him. The order was complied with; though none could conceive why a monarch who gloried in the exposure of his person, and who conceived that every effort to gain an advantage by deceit was a contravention of the laws of chivalry, should in this instance have so far departed from the principles assumed by himself. Home, however, was known to be the person who suggested the scheme, and some conceived they saw more in the apparent stratagem than perhaps the originator of it himself could have discovered.

When Surrey came up and saw James so excellently situated, he cried out that the star of Scotland was in the ascendant, and that unless he could acquire another advantage from an appeal to James' sense of chivalrous honour, he could not attack the Scotch army without exposing himself to the probability of a defeat. His old stratagem was therefore again resorted to. He sent a herald to James, with a message, in which he stated he had come, according to their engagement, to try the strength of his arms against those of Scotland; and that he expected, from the known character of his opponent, that the fight would take place under circumstances equally favourable to both; but he was surprised and sorry to find that James "had putte himself into a ground more like a fortress or a camp than any indifferent field for battle to be taxed;" and, after many other complaints, concluded with the words, that "such conduct did not sound to his honour." When James was told that a messenger from Surrey waited for admittance, he was surrounded by his trusty friends, who, justly suspecting the nature of the message, and fearing that he might again be flattered into yielding an advantage, advised him to discharge the herald without a hearing. This advice was taken, and so far all as yet had gone well for Scotland; but, alas! these were only the beams that shoot from between the antagonist clouds, whose collision is to shake the earth and spread desolation among men.

Surrey, finding no resources left him but those of his daring intrepidity and military talents, betook himself to a measure which would have proved fatal to him and his army, if the evil genius of Scotland had not now got the ascendancy. He resolved to cross the river Till, at a place and in a manner which might expose him to an attack from the Scots. If that attack had been resorted to, it would have saved thousands of lives, and a nation's honour. Yet, while these movements were taking place, the Scottish King remained in his camp, a quiet spectator of the progress of an enemy who despised the scruples which prevented him from making his attack, and would soon repay his generosity with the destruction of his army, and the loss of his life. These moments were to Scotland the most important that old Time ever exhibited on his eternal dial. James' veteran officers remonstrated. They pointed out to him where and how he might destroy, by one blow, his enemies. The guns

required only to be pointed, and England lay prostrate at his feet. The aged Earl of Angus implored him either to attack the enemy on the instant, or make his retreat ere it was too late. But Home was at the side of the King, instilling into him his poisonous counsils; and James, by a cruel taunt, insulted the best of his nobles, as well as the oldest and the wisest. "Angus," said he, "if you are afraid, you may go home." Bursting into tears, the old Earl turned mournfully away, observing that his former life might have spared him such a rebuke from the lips of his sovereign. "My age," said he, "renders my body of no service and my counsel is despised; but I leave my two sons and the vassals of Douglas in the field. May the result be glorious, and Angus' foreboding be unfounded!"

While many of the other nobles were endeavouring to persuade James to attack the enemy ere it was too late, and altercations were swallowing up moments every one of which was worth a thousand lives, Surrey was busy taking advantage of the opportunity, and landing his men in safety. He thus contrived to place his army between James and his country. He was enabled to march on the rear of the enemy, and came upon them in full array, dividing his army into two battalions—each of these having two wings. On becoming aware of this, the King descended the hill, and prepared for battle, having thus been obliged to sacrifice the advantage of position he had had the good fortune to possess, but not the reason to use.

The account of the battle of Flodden is familiar to every Scotsman. Notwithstanding of the disadvantages which James' indiscretion entailed upon his army, the Scots performed, on that day, miracles of valour. The personal prowess of the unfortunate James has been praised by the generous, and condemned by the prudent; but where is the man that can, in imagination, contemplate, without a sigh, the spectacle of the generous monarch, fighting in the midst of the battle, up to the knees in blood, and his chamberlain, Home, his evil counsellor, standing apart, with his retainers, refusing to join the fight, and enjoying the death of his King and the ruin of his country? If the death of the King in battle has been contradicted, it has been by those who have reserved for him a worse death, under the hands of Home himself, who, having, after the battle, taken him to his castle, treacherously slew him, in gratification of his old revenge. The dress which the monarch wore, in common with his nobles, afforded to Home a plea that the person in the dress of the King, whom he took to his castle, was one of those who had assumed the royal garb; and it is at least certain that the numerous nobles who fell, arrayed in the same manner, rendered it difficult to tell in what way the King of Scotland was slain. Neither has the extraordinary legend of the apparition been well accounted for. Some have alleged that the old man employed by Home, was, by a strange coincidence, the person whom the Queen had selected for acting the ghost; and certainly this supposition is the most probable, on the condition of its being certain that there was no superhuman agency in the case—a condition which, in these days, will likely be conceded. Yet the ways of Heaven are like the passage of a bird in the air—the progress and the end are seen, but the secret agency is dark and inexplicable. The wisdom of the nineteenth century, which rejects everything but efficient causes, may be compared to the bridge which, having overshot the stream, and formed a way for man, is, in its pride, unconscious of the secret power of the key-stone, by which all is supported, and by the want of which, all would fall to ruins and perish.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

PRESENTIMENT.

CHARLES MOUNTFORD and HENRY BARTON were school-fellows together in the pretty little town of Dunse, somewhere about the latter end of the last century. They were nearly of the same age, and very much of the same disposition; both being clever, active, warm-hearted lads, with faces radiant with the expression of high animal spirits, and a cheerful and happy temperament. Both, too, it must be confessed, were most particularly wild, and most ingeniously and most perseveringly mischievous. Charles and Harry, however, were sworn friends, and stood by each other, through good report and bad report, with the most exemplary fidelity; no instance being ever known of the slightest betrayal of trust on either side, although the strongest temptations were often held out by the schoolmaster, who had long despaired of punishment effecting his object, to induce sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, to turn King's evidence and peach—no other way being left to him by which he could possibly establish the guilt of the offenders, of which, however, he seldom had the smallest doubt in his own mind.

Old Wiggy, alias Old Scratch, alias Nosey, alias Old Blinker—as the young rogues variously, and most irreverently, called their worthy teacher—could never, however, make anything of them in this way; and, as a proof at once of their fidelity to each other, and of their fortitude in resisting temptation, it may be mentioned, that Old Wiggy—we choose one of the least offensive of the worthy man's aliases—one day offered to return to Charles certain goods and chattels—consisting of a penknife, a leathern sucker, a tin tube for spouting oas, a dozen marbles, a pair of wooden clappers, and a string of buttons, which had been taken from him at various times in the school-room—if he would inform him who it was that tied the squib to the cat's tail. Old Wiggy knew well enough it was Barton, or rather Mountford and Barton together; but he could not prove it, for the thing had been cautiously gone about. The cat had been abstracted from the dominie's house in the course of the day, and had been shut up for the special purpose in a cellar till night, when it was brought in the dark to a back window, the apartment into which the latter opened leading directly into another in which Old Wiggy usually sat. This window having been gently raised a little way, and the squib previously well secured to tabby's tail, and ignited, she was popped in; and the result was as splendid as the heart of man could desire. On being first thrown in, puss took things quietly enough—so quietly, indeed, that the ingenious artists were afraid of a failure; but this calm was only a prelude to the coming storm, and one that, from the force of contrast, not a little heightened its effect. The ominous silence alluded to, was speedily followed by one of the most unearthly squalls that ever was heard. It ran through every note of the gamut with a peculiar prolongation of tone, that rendered it most particularly hideous; and, in the next instant, the infuriated animal, with one desperate bound, sprung into the adjoining room, overturned a small table covered with cups and saucers, and, with a tail of fire, and claws like fish

hooks, fastened on the face and wig of the terrified dominie, who was at the moment quietly employed in reading a newspaper. When thus unexpectedly assailed, the worthy man sprung to his feet with a scream of terror and agony, and shouted out for assistance. The sufferer's death-roads brought several persons instantly into the room; but the cat, from the fire behind, was unapproachable; and it was not, therefore, until the squib had given its last puff, that it was found possible to relieve him from the animal's ferocious grip.

In this awkward contest the poor dominie's face suffered dreadfully. It was scored and re-scored in all directions; and, altogether, bore a strong resemblance to the countenance of a newly tattooed Otaheitan chief. His nose, in particular, was ploughed up in the most frightful manner; and it was many weeks before he could expose that feature to public view. For this nose he would have taken deadly revenge, could he but have established the guilt of those to whom he was indebted for it; but this, as we have said, he was unable to do, even by means of the splendid bribe already spoken of.

Neither was the worthy man more successful in finding out who it was that cut off his cue—a long cherished and favourite ornament of his person. This was a daring act, and required, perhaps, fully as much courage and presence of mind as cutting out an enemy's gun-boat moored below the batteries of the foe. The particulars of this piece of roguery were these:—Charles and Harry, on entering the school-room one morning together, found their worthy master fast asleep in a chair before the fire, his head leaning back, and his cue projecting most temptingly behind. Both the young knaves, in the same instant, eyed the devoted cue, and, in the same instant, were struck with the bright idea of severing it from the head to which it was attached. A glance discovered to each the designs of the other. They stole quietly out of the school-room on tiptoe, for fear of awakening their unconscious victim. Charles ran home for one of his father's razors, while Harry kept watch over the movements of the enemy. On the former's return, he unfolded the fatal instrument, came cautiously behind the unsuspecting dominie, and, with two or three gentle cuts, detached the cue from the sapient head on which it grew, without in the least disturbing the refreshing slumber of its worthy owner. Having effected this brilliant achievement, Charlie rejoined his companion, holding aloft the glorious trophy he had just secured with an air of triumph and a feeling of exultation, that threatened every moment to burst out into a premature shout of joy, that would infallibly have led to detection. But, with great exertion, he restrained this expression of satisfaction, until he had fairly got out of the apartment, when he and Harry rushed wildly from the scene of the daring exploit, screaming with delight, and fairly overwhelmed with a perfect hurricane of merriment.

The shorn dominie, in the meantime, slept on, wholly unconscious of the grievous disaster that had befallen him, till some of the other pupils entered the school-room, when he started up and took his usual position by his desk, still, however, without being aware of the grievous, the irreparable loss he had sustained. But matters could not remain long in this state. The cue must, of necessity, soon be missed,

and for this very particular reason—the dominie's cue, like most other cues, was constantly interfering with the neck of his coat, or the neck of the coat was constantly interfering with the cue—which, as the result was precisely the same in both cases, may be said to be the same thing. Well, from the frequency of this occurrence, the worthy man had acquired a mechanical habit of passing his hand across the back of his head, to feel if all was right between the coat-neck and the cue, and to relieve the latter from durance, if he found, as he often did, that it had fallen into the former. Now, it is said, in the case of an amputated limb, that the patient, for some time after the operation has been performed, feels as if the severed member was still attached to his body; and the sensations of the dominie, on this occasion, presented a striking proof of this curious pathological fact; for, soon after taking his place at his desk, he imagined that he felt that the cue had got imprisoned in its usual place of confinement, and, as usual, he passed his hand across the back of his head to relieve it.

“Ha! strange!” said the worthy man to himself, on making the first ineffectual attempt to lay hold of the cue—“Strange! What's this?” and he grasped and grasped more and more fiercely; but, alas! no cue met the anxious, eager, and alarmed inquiries of his agitated hand. At length, however, the horrible truth burst on him. He became aware that some villainous hand had shorn him of his honours; but when, how, or by whom the daring deed had been done, he could not conjecture. A roar of laughter, however, at this moment, which Charles and Harry had long been struggling to suppress, and in which they were immediately joined by the whole school, directed the suspicions of the humbled dominie to the proper quarter, and gave him a peep into the facts of the case. He, in short, felt convinced that he had discovered the perpetrators of the atrocity. But of what avail was this? He could not prove it; and he was, therefore, compelled to pocket the affront, which he did with the best grace he could.

On completing their school education, of which such pranks as we have related formed no inconsiderable part, Mountford and Barton, whose parents were in respectable circumstances, were sent to Edinburgh to attend the University—the one to study medicine, the other law. Inseparable before, the two friends still continued so. They lived in the same lodging, studied together, ate, drank, slept, laughed, and fought together—for the latter came pretty frequently within the scope of their general practice—and performed sundry other exploits highly creditable to their Dunse education. One we may give as a specimen. It happened that the window of the room in which this mischievous couple lodged, opened on the slates of the house of which it formed a part, and afforded a ready access to an extensive range of roof on either side, a circumstance which at once caught the fancies of the ingenious youths, and presented to their fertile minds a glorious field for the exercise of their favourite diversion—namely, annoying their neighbours. Accordingly, two or three nights after they had taken possession of their lodgings, Harry went out on the roof to reconnoitre, to examine localities, and to see to what purpose they could turn the very pretty looking advantage they possessed.

On Harry's return, he reported as follows:—That the roof was easily perambulated on all sides—that there were a number of skylight-windows, some of them opening to inhabited apartments; as he had seen in one, a couple of old women drinking tea—in another, an old cobbler going to bed—in another, a party playing catch the ten.

He further reported, that there was at least a dozen chimneys under perfect control. Harry, having stated these facts—rich as the discoverers perceived them to be, in capabilities for mischief—a consultation was immediately held as to how the performances had best begin; what feat, in

snort, it would be most advisable to commence the system of annoyance they contemplated with; and it was finally resolved to *open* the campaign by *shutting* the chimneys. Having determined on this as an inchoate proceeding—to use a pet word of the day lately raised from the dead—the ingenious youths proceeded to take measures conforming. Their superior skill in all practices of the kind now contemplated, at once scouted the commonplace idea of stuffing the vents with straw, rags, or any such troublesome and bulky substances—the use of these being but a clumsy expedient, and, moreover, impracticable in their particular circumstances, for they could not command half enough of materials to effect their object—the superior ingenuity of the young men, we say, at once scouted this awkward contrivance, and substituted the neat and simple one of covering the tops of the cans with circular pieces of very thick mill-board, cut to the proper dimensions—that is, a trifle larger than the mouth of the can. These, to the amount of half-a-dozen at least, they could secret with the greatest ease in the crown of a hat; and, taking them out one by one, lay them, without the smallest trouble, on the apertures of the vents. Nothing could be simpler, neater, or more effective. Having provided themselves with these ingenious instruments of suffocation, the two youths proceeded to the roof, and clapped on about a dozen of them. This done, they crept into their room again, left the house, and took their station on the opposite side of the street, to see what result would follow this their first performance; and for this they had not long to wait. In less than a quarter of an hour, an evident commotion took place throughout the whole tenement; windows were banging up every here and there, and a vast deal of loud talking and clamour from within, distinctly heard in half-a-dozen places at once. Heads were thrust out, too, for a moment, every here and there, amidst torrents of smoke, which was making its escape by the windows. Satisfied that matters had taken the desired course, Harry and his friend Charles returned to their lodgings; and, not less cautious than ingenious, removed all the stoppers from the chimneys before they went to bed—a measure dictated by prudence, for they anticipated a scrutiny on the following morning; and had the former been found, the whole trick would have been discovered, their amusement put an end to, and themselves probably detected. With regard to the anticipated scrutiny, the young men were perfectly right. Before break of day on the following morning, it being the winter season, the house was covered with sweeps, each family having sent for their own man of business in this particular line, and a diligent search made for the causes of the previous night's annoyance, but nothing unusual could be discovered to account for it; and it was, therefore, concluded, that the vents must be foul, the only reasonable supposition that presented itself. Under this impression, a general sweeping of chimneys took place; and, with this exception, matters were left exactly as they had been found.

On the following night, the stoppers were again put in requisition, and with the same result. Windows, as before, were banged up in all directions, torrents of smoke poured out of each, and the clamour of the preceding night was increased tenfold.

“What in a' the earth can be wrang wi' the lums?” said one. “This is no endurable,” said another. “My house never smoked before,” said a third; “and now I canna see my finger before me in't.” “I'll no pay a farthin' o' rent if this gongs on,” exclaimed a fourth. “We're a' chokin' in our house,” coughs out a fifth. And, for some hours, the whole stair was in as great commotion as if the tenement had been on fire. Neighbour called upon and consulted with neighbour on the common calamity, stating his grievances, and calling for sympathy; a call which was generally replied to by the visited throwing up the doors of his own apartments,

and exhibiting the dense masses of smoke with which one and all of them were filled.

While this was going on, the noise, and confusion, and general dismay, were not a little increased by the constant slamming of doors which were ever and anon being violently shut and opened, some to keep out smoke, some to keep it in.

It is needless to say how much the ingenious contrivers of all this mischief enjoyed these scenes, nor with what delight they witnessed, almost every day, the visits of troops of sweeps and smoke doctors to the recreant chimneys. In truth, had they not tired of the joke, they would eventually have driven every tenant out of the building; but, fortunately both for the latter and their landlords, they did tire of it, and betook themselves to other modes of annoyance no less various than ingenious.

But this thoughtless and merry life was not to last for ever. Time wore fast on, and, with its progress, the joyous career of the young men was drawing to a close, and the serious business of the world threatening to involve them in its toils and cares. Having completed their education, Mountford and Barton, still keeping together, returned to their native place; and the former shortly after succeeded in procuring the appointment of assistant-surgeon on board a ship of war—an event which, it will be thought, must at length have separated the two friends. But no such thing. Their attachment to each other was too deeply rooted—their sympathies and feelings too completely interwoven, to allow of their enduring the idea of parting; and they therefore determined on still keeping together, although it was some time before they could discover how this was to be effected.

"I'll tell you what, Charles," said Harry, one day, when they were discussing this important point, and endeavouring to fall upon some plan by which they should be able to prevent the separation threatened by Mountford's appointment—"I'll tell you what, Charles," he said: "I'll kick the law altogether—it does not suit my fancy, at any rate—and turn sailor. What a glorious thing, if I could get into the same ship with you, Charlie! But I have no interest to get into the navy. There's the rub."

There was the rub, indeed. Both the youngsters felt it to be so, and forthwith began to cogitate deeply and earnestly on the subject of a patron.

"Why, Harry," said Charles, at length, "what do you think of trying old Clephane? He could do it if he liked."

"I dare say he could," replied Harry; "but then I have no access to him, except through my father; and he would be the last man on earth to second my views in any such application."

"I would not ask him," said Mountford. "Go yourself, Harry, to Mr Clephane, and tell him that you are determined to go into the navy, and request his influence in procuring you the rating of a midshipman."

"He'd laugh at me."

"Never mind. Try him. There can be no harm in that, at any rate."

"Well, hang me but I will, Charlie!" said Barton. And the very next day saw Harry threading his way up the winding avenue that led to the stately old mansion in which Mr Clephane resided.

That gentleman, we may here shortly mention, was a man of great wealth and influence, and a large proprietor in that part of the country, to whom Harry's father acted in the capacity of factor, and by whom the latter was much esteemed and respected, for his integrity, steadiness, and general knowledge of country affairs.

On being introduced into the room in which the squire was—"Ha! Harry," exclaimed the latter, "are you there? Glad to see you, my lad."

"Much obliged to you, sir," replied Harry,

"Any message from your father to me, Harry? I expected him here this forenoon."

"No, sir, I have no message from my father. I have made bold to call upon you on some little business of my own."

"Indeed! ah! business of your own, Harry, eh! Pray, what business is that, young man?" said the squire, looking a little surprised, or rather curious, perhaps.

"Why, sir," replied Harry, "I have determined to go into the navy; and I have called on you to solicit your influence in procuring me the appointment of midshipman."

"The navy!—a midshipman! Are you mad, Harry? Haven't you been studying the law? I understood, from your father, that was the profession to which you were being brought up."

"So it was, sir," replied Harry; "but I've changed my mind; and a sailor I am determined to be."

"Ah, well, if you are determined on this, Harry, we shall certainly see what can be done for you. On your father's account, I will do what I can for you; but, of course, we must have his consent, you know. Without that I do nothing."

The result of this interview was, that Mr Clephane, in a few days afterwards—Mr Barton having been, in the meantime, reconciled to Harry's change of profession, from a conviction that, his mind being bent on the navy, he would do no good in any other line of life—made application to a friend who had some interest with the Admiralty; and, in ten days more, Harry was informed that he was rated a midshipman in his Majesty's navy; and, oh! joy of joys! happiness inexpressible! was ordered to repair on board the very ship to which his friend Charles was appointed.

Hurra! hurra!—we almost think we hear the shout of maddening joy and exultation, with which the two youngsters received the intelligence of this glorious consummation of their happiness. Not half such joy did they feel when they saw the cat fasten on Old Scratch's nose—not half such joy did they feel when they amputated his cue, as they felt on this transcendantly beatific occasion. They whooped and they hallooed—and they danced, and they sang, and they shouted—till there was every appearance of his Majesty's navy receiving, in the persons of our heroes, the accession of a couple of bedlamites.

Although time did not lessen the real happiness which the youngsters felt on this occasion, it had the effect, at any rate, of sobering down a little the expressions of their felicity; and, in a day or two, they were able to set pretty steadily and rationally about the necessary preparations for their departure to commence their careers in the world in a noble but dangerous profession.

The preparations alluded to being completed, the young men—after taking an affectionate leave of their parents and friends, during which there were not a few tears shed on both sides—proceeded to Portsmouth, where their ship was then fitting out for active service, and immediately entered on their respective duties. Both soon became enthusiastically fond of their professions; and the natural consequence, in the case of young men of their superior talents, followed—both became expert in their several duties, and secured in consequence the esteem of their superiors. The general good conduct and singular gallantry of Harry in several engagements with the enemy, brought him under the special notice of Lord Nelson, then about midway in his career of glory; and, without being aware of it, the brave little midshipman was one of those whom he had marked out for promotion on the first opportunity which should present itself.

Notwithstanding Harry's love of his profession, however, and his steadiness and attention to its duties—circumstances which, it might be thought, would have somewhat abridged the wild exuberance of his spirits, or at least have directed

them in a great measure into a different channel from that in which they had hitherto flown—he continued nearly as frolicsome and mischievous as ever. Instead of the school-room, however, the midshipman's birth was now the scene of his exploits in the way of trickery; and, although greatly beloved for his many excellent qualities by all his messmates, it is certain that they, one and all, and with the most cordial consent, voted him one of the most mischievous dogs that ever entered a middy's messroom; and it cannot be denied that he was not without claims to this enviable distinction—neither ought it to be concealed that his old friend, Charlie, came in for a share of the honours derived from this laudable source, he being at all times ready to give Harry a helping hand, when any little business was to be done in the way of annoying the other middies; and it was very rarely that a day passed without something or other of this kind being done.

If a middy at any time found himself singularly uncomfortable and uneasy in his cot or hammock, from "some confounded thing" or other having got into it, he immediately bethought him of Harry; and, on leaping out to ascertain "what the mischief it could be," was very likely to discover somewhere about a pound of peas strewn beneath the sheet or blanket on which he had been lying. Of Harry, too, he instantly bethought him, when, on opening one of the jelly-pots which an affectionate mother had sent him as sea store, and which he had kept carefully locked up in his chest, but of whose rich contents he was now about to treat his messmates to a few spoonfuls—we say, of Harry he instantly bethought him, when, on opening the said pot, in the presence of a crowd of anxious expectants, he found it filled, not with the deliciously-flavoured juice of the currant, but with a horrid compost of fetid cook's slush, and tar—every particle of the jelly having been previously abstracted. But the astounded middy's disappointed associates are not to be balked in this way. They know that the same affectionate mother had supplied her dear boy with certain bottles of cordials, and they insist on having "a drop of the stuff," by way of compensation. A bottle is produced—the cork is drawn; but this is no sooner done, than each expectant's nose is fiercely seized by finger and thumb, and held close, with every expression of horror and disgust. The bottle is filled with bilge water, at least six months old! O Harry, Harry! thou'rt a mischievous dog!—well dost thou know who abstracted the luscious liquor, and who it was that replaced it with the abominations of the ship's pumps. And mayhap, Charlie, thou knowest something about the matter too.

As has been already hinted, however, neither these specimens of Harry's Dunse education, nor the hilarious disposition that prompted them, prevented him acquiring the reputation of a gallant officer and first-rate seaman. He was, as we have said, already marked for promotion by Nelson, whose keen eye had detected in him all the materials for a British sailor of the very first class; and this interest of the commodore's (Nelson's rank at this period) in the young seaman, was now to be increased to a degree that procured for him immediate promotion.

When the celebrated admiral just named, commanded the squadron by which Cadiz was blockaded in 1797, his bold and restless spirit suggested to him the enterprise of attempting to destroy the Spanish gun-boats, with which the port was in part defended; and with this view, the boats of the British squadron were manned, and dispatched on the perilous undertaking. In one of these boats was Henry Barton, who had earnestly solicited his captain to be allowed to share in the glory and the dangers of the intended attack. His request was granted; and he had the further good fortune of being placed in one of the boats next to that occupied by the commodore himself, who had determined to conduct the enterprise in person.

On arriving within range of the enemy's guns, a tremendous fire of round and grape shot was opened on the advancing boats; but the gallant crews with which they were manned, unappalled by this fearful visitation, pushed bravely on, laying themselves, as the shot thickened around them, with additional energy to their oars, and replying to each discharge with that ominous cheer which has so often heralded the British to victory.

The shot, however, which was falling so fast around them, was not falling harmless. By what might be considered an unusual fatality, even in such circumstances, every officer in the boat in which Henry Barton was, was either killed or disabled, but himself, long before they could close with the enemy. In this situation, the command naturally devolved on Henry, and his courage and presence of mind rendered him perfectly competent to the trying emergency.

When the boat, which he now commanded, arrived within a short distance of the enemy's flotilla, which it was part of the design to board and carry at the point of pike and cutlass, Harry placed himself at the bow, regardless of the showers of shot which were now discharged in almost the very faces of the invaders; and, standing erect in this exposed situation, with his drawn sword in one hand, and his hat in the other, kept waving the latter over his head, and cheering his men, till they ran aboard of the enemy, when he was the first man to leap on board of the gun-boat to which the barge of which he was in command was opposed, and which Harry, having been instantly followed by his gallant crew, carried in less than ten minutes. In this contest, Harry came personally in contact with the commander of the gun-boat, and both being expert swordsmen, the combat between them excited such an interest in those around, that they paused for an instant in the midst of their own warfare, to witness the result, and formed a sort of ring for the combatants. For this result, they had not to wait long. The encounter, though sharp, was short. After the exchange of a few cuts and thrusts, the Spaniard fell mortally wounded; when Harry's crew, raising a shout of triumph, resumed, with redoubled fury, the work of death, which curiosity had for a moment interrupted. Harry's honours on this occasion, however, were not cheaply bought; for, besides the risk he had run in common with all who shared in the enterprise, he was severely wounded by the thrust of a pike in the leg. But this did not for a moment interrupt the discharge of his perilous duties. Hastily tying a handkerchief about the wounded limb, to stay the bleeding, he fought on till there was no longer an enemy to oppose him.

The singular intrepidity of Henry Barton, in this attack on the Spanish gun-boats, instantly secured for him the promotion to which he had been previously destined. He was shortly after elevated to the rank of lieutenant. Nor was his friend, Mountford, less fortunate in his department his superior skill in his profession, his anxious attendance to his duties, and the excellence of his general conduct and character, speedily raised him to the rank of full surgeon. And thus improved in condition and circumstances, the young men, on the arrival of the ship in Britain, having obtained a short while's leave of absence, revisited together their native place, where they were joyously welcomed by all their friends and acquaintances, and by none more cordially than by their old schoolmaster, who, notwithstanding all the mischief they had played him, and the annoyance they had given him, had always loved them for their abilities and singleness of heart. The worthy man was, moreover, not a little proud of his pupils on this occasion; who appeared in their full uniforms, and were really a couple of as handsome young fellows as ever trode a quarter-deck.

It would not much interest the reader, to be told of the scenes of merriment, of feasting and rejoicing, to which the visit of Mountford and Barton gave occasion amongst

their friends in the good town of Dunse. Suffice it to say, that these were wild enough sometimes, and fully as frequent as was consistent with a perfectly sound state of the nervous systems of the revellers.

At this particular period of our story, intelligence had reached the admiralty, that a large French fleet had sailed from Toulon, and it was supposed, though not certainly known, that Egypt was their destination. As it was the intention of Britain, by all means, to prevent the French taking possession of that country, and thus securing a land communication with India, every effort was made to counteract the designs of the enemy. With this view, a number of ships were immediately put in requisition, to reinforce Nelson, who was then cruising in the Mediterranean; and to Mountford and Barton, the consequence of this sudden movement, was an order from the admiralty, to hasten to Portsmouth, to join the fleet, there preparing for the service above alluded to.

The letters of the admiralty, containing these commands, were put into the young men's hands at the moment they were about to open a country-dance at a county ball, and of course had the effect of instantly changing the current of their thoughts and feelings. They, however, remained in the room for some time after; but left it, though very unwillingly, long before the ball broke up, in order to make the necessary preparations for their departure on the following morning, when they had resolved to set out for Portsmouth.

On the succeeding morning, accordingly, Mountford and Barton were ready to commence their journey; and nothing remained for the latter to do, but the painful duty of bidding adieu to a doting mother.

The impending dangers to her son, from the particular service he was now called upon, was not unknown to her; and although she had, at all times, sufficient reason to fear for his safety, from the perilous nature of his profession, yet these fears were, on this occasion, more intense than usual, from the circumstance of their being more particular and specific. It was not, therefore, without feelings of the most distressing kind, that she now took leave of her darling son—the pride of her heart, and the solace of her declining years. As she folded him for the last time in her arms—"Henry," she said, weeping bitterly as she spoke, "excuse my weakness; for I think ye laugh at thae things; but if ye happen to find that ye hae forgotten onything, dinna turn back for't—it's bad luck; but write to us when ye get to Portsmouth, and we'll send it to you. It's an auld Scotch fret, laddie, and maybe there's naething in't after a'; but it's been pairt o' my education to believe in thae things, an' I canna help it."

"Dear mother," replied Henry, smiling at this little remnant of an idle superstition, which his education and intelligence taught him to despise, "I certainly will not; for whatever opinion I may entertain of such matters myself, I have too much regard for your feelings to give you pain, by slighting even your prejudices. But I have forgot nothing, mother," he added—"nothing; so that I will have no occasion to return."

A final embrace followed this little circumstance, and Harry left the house to join his friend Mountford, who was waiting for him.

When Harry, however, said to his mother that he had forgot nothing, he was not aware that he *had* forgot something; and this was his watch, which he had left in his bedroom. Trifling as this circumstance was in itself, its discovery gave him much pain; for he was, on the one hand, extremely unwilling to go without the article named, and on the other, no less reluctant to give his mother the uneasiness which he knew his returning for it would occasion her. Harry had not got many yards from the door, when he made the discovery of his omission; and on doing so he suddenly stopped short, and after communing with himself a moment,

determined on trying whether he could not go back for the watch without his mother's knowing of it. This he attempted; and, by taking the back door instead of the front, succeeded in gaining his bedroom, getting possession of the desired object, and making his escape with it, not only without being seen by his mother, but without being seen by any one in the house—a circumstance with which he was not a little pleased.

Having accomplished this feat, Harry joined his friend Charles, whom he found impatiently waiting him, when the two stepped into the postchaise (stagecoaches being then more rare than they are now) which they had hired to carry them so far on their journey, and drove off.

Talking over past enjoyments and future prospects, the way seemed short to Harry and his companion, who were scarcely aware how rapidly they were increasing the distance between them and the peaceful, happy homes of their childhood, which it was very possible they might never see again. The interesting tête-à-tête of the friends, however, was at length interrupted, by the circumstance of the chaise's arriving at a very abrupt ascent in the road, where it became necessary, for the relief of the horses, that they should step out, and walk up the hill. This they accordingly did, but in their progress were accosted by an old female mendicant, who was sitting on the road-side, and solicited for charity. Both Harry's and Charles' hands were instantly in their pockets; for the kind hearts of both were ever alive to the calls of the destitute, while their naturally generous dispositions never permitted them too closely to scan the merits of the claims which were urged on their humanity—the ready subterfuge of those who have not the soul to give.

In an instant, we have said the hands of Mountford and Barton were in their pockets. They were so, and in the next instant two silver coins glittered in the tawny shrivelled hand of the mendicant. She looked for an instant, in silent amazement, at the magnificent and very unwonted donation; then at those by whom it had been bestowed. "Lord bless you, gentlemen!" she at length said, "an' may He watch over you in the day o' battle, an' in the hour o' peril, frae the dangers o' the deep; for I see, young gentlemen," she added, "that you are in the service o' your king an' country."

"We are, good woman," replied Harry, "and many thanks to you for your good wishes." And with this, the young men proceeded on their way; but they had not got to the distance of more than two or three yards, when the old woman called after them:—

"I say, gentlemen, gentlemen," she exclaimed, "maybe ye wad like to hae your fortunes spaed;" and, with a faint smile which only served to exhibit more strikingly, the naturally austere expression of her countenance—"an to be told something o' your lemans?"

"Why, I don't mind if you do, old girl," said Harry, turning back, good-humouredly, to have some fun, as he said, with the old woman; "but, mind you," he added, on coming up to her, "you must promise me something worth while. Make me an admiral, and I'll give you another shilling; but begin first with my friend, here," (pushing Charles forward,) "and give him lots of prize-money."

"Give me your hand, young man," said the old woman to Mountford, solemnly, and without noticing the levity of Harry's remarks. Charles extended his right arm towards her. She took his hand, and began to examine, with affected diligence, the alleged indicative lines with which the palm is marked.

"Ay," she at length said—but still scrutinizing the hand she held—"ay, I see nothing adverse here, young gentleman—nothing; ye'll be reasonably successful in the world, and will hae little to complain o' against either love or fortune."

"Thank you, good woman," replied Charles—"thank

you ; but could you not, as my friend here said, give me a ship-load of dollars, or some such trifle, just to help me on in the world a bit."

"I can gie ye naething, young gentleman," she said ; "neither can I tak frae ye. A' that I can do is, to announce what's destined for you. Come, sir," she added, now addressing Harry, "let me see what is in store for you." And she began to subject his hand to a similar scrutiny with that already described.

"Now, mother," said Harry, "mind, admiral of the red, at the very least. I'll take nothing less ; and here's a shilling for the promotion. I could give you something ten times better for half the money, myself. Well, now, old girl," continued Barton, who was becoming impatient with the woman's delay in announcing his destiny—which was much longer in being ascertained than his friend's, "what 's it?"

"Naething guid, young gentleman, I'm sorry to say it," at length replied the fortune-teller, but still continuing the examination of the lines in the palm of his hand. "But I houp I may be mistaen ; yet here," she went on, "is the thread o' life cut short, plain enough ; and that, too, in the midst o' strife and bloodshed ! The line is lost lang before it has got half-way across the hand, and it's no to be seen again. So there it maun terminate, an' so will your life, young man, before it has reached its mid career !"

Both Charles and Harry entertained a sufficient contempt for this sort of jugglery, and had as little faith in the absurd pretensions of such impostors, as such impostors had in their own predictions—and this, as will readily be believed, was little enough ; yet the latter, in spite of all his philosophy, could not help feeling a little disconcerted, on hearing so very disagreeable a destiny read out to him. He, however, kept his feelings on this subject to himself, and good-humouredly taunted the old woman on the shabby return she had made him for his money.

"Here's the shilling I promised you, nevertheless," he added ; "it will, perhaps, soften your heart, and induce you, after all, to provide a better fate for me." Saying this, and without waiting for the old woman's reply—which, in truth, he did not care to hear—Harry took Mountford by the arm, and hurried him towards the chaise, which was now waiting for them at the top of the hill. Having resumed their seats, the carriage drove on, and the prediction of the old woman was soon forgotten in the excitation of feeling produced by change of scene, and the other stirring circumstances incident to the process of travelling.

In due time, Harry and his friend arrived safely at Portsmouth, where they found the greatest bustle prevailing in the naval department, occasioned by the fitting out of the ships intended to reinforce the fleet in the Mediterranean. To some of these, however, there was much to do, before they could be reported fit for sea ; and amongst those in this backward condition, was the vessel to which Harry and Charles belonged.

On reaching Portsmouth, therefore, they found that it would be several weeks before they sailed ; and they determined to spend the spare hours which their several duties might leave them, as merrily as they could. Much of this time, accordingly, was disposed of in visiting certain families in the town, with whom they had formed an acquaintance, and in attending the numerous parties given by the wealthy inhabitants to the officers of the fleet. Amongst the former, there was one, in particular, to which Harry's visits were most surprisingly frequent. This was the family of a respectable banker in the town, who had a pretty daughter named Margaret—a gentle, amiable creature, too, she was, as ever drew the breath of life. Harry very soon discovered that his visits to the lovely and guileless being, were not by any means disagreeable to her ; and what added greatly to his felicity, he discovered, also, that they were not

unacceptable to her parents, who, indeed, entertained the highest opinion of the merits of the gallant young officer ; although it must be confessed that the banker hoped that Harry would not think of speaking of marriage, till he had obtained the command of a ship. But this was a condition with which the latter did not think it at all necessary to fetter himself ; and, sailor-like, therefore, he continued to make love as fast as he could, and finally succeeded in cutting out the prize, in the face of at least a score of competitors, who had vainly attempted the same exploit. To drop metaphor, Henry Barton and Margaret Melville were married, after a courtship of only a few weeks, and within somewhat less than ten days of the sailing of the fleet from Portsmouth.

The father of the young lady, as has been said, would have preferred that the marriage of his daughter had been delayed till her husband should have obtained a captaincy or, at least, until his return from the expedition on which he was about to go. But Harry, impetuous in this as in everything else, would hear of no delays, and determined, happen what might, that he would secure his happiness against all chances of accident before he left England. Mr Melville, whose heart was bound up in his daughter, and who was ready, at all times, to make any sacrifice which her happiness might demand, finding that his prudential considerations were not very cordially entertained by the young people, readily waved them, and gave his consent to their union ; and thus made Barton one of the happiest men in his Majesty's navy—ay, one of the happiest in his dominions.

In the meantime, the fitting out of the ships was going on rapidly, and the hour drawing near, when Harry Barton would be compelled to separate himself from his young wife, and enter on far other scenes than those in which he had revelled for the preceding three or four weeks. The happy and cheerful hearth of home was speedily to be exchanged for the quarter-deck, and the calm delights of domestic enjoyment for the howling of the tempest and the roar of battle.

The preparations which had been making to get the ships to sea, had latterly been urged on with redoubled vigour, in consequence of the pressing solicitations of Nelson, who was prowling about the Mediterranean, in search of the French fleet, like a hungry tiger in search of the prey with the scent of which his nostrils were filled, and who was feverishly anxious for such a reinforcement as should enable him to cope with the enemy.

The preparations, therefore, which were now going on at Portsmouth, were associated with the certainty that a formidable encounter with the foe was impending, and that these preparations were destined to be very soon applied to the fearful purposes for which they were intended ; and the assurance of this imparted a more than ordinary interest to the brave men who were about to be engaged in the coming strife, and affected with fear and trembling, those who were bound to them by the ties of friendship and of love.

Many a fair bosom on this occasion heaved under the emotions of anticipated evil—many an affectionate heart sank under the pressure of sad and heavy forebodings—and many a bright eye was dimmed, as it gazed on the dark and impenetrable future, and marked the appalling phantoms of a disturbed imagination flitting dimly across the dreary void, in their thousand hideous shapes of undefined evil.

It was at this period—that is, within a few days of the sailing of the expedition—that Henry Barton called, one morning after breakfast, on his friend Charles, who lodged in one of those taverns which were under the especial patronage of the gentlemen of the navy.

This was, indeed, a regular practice with Henry ; and on these occasions, he usually burst into the room, with a shout and a laugh, the result of a superabundance of animal spirits, and of a feeling of happiness unmingled with the smallest particle of alloy.

Accustomed to his friend's joyous and hilarious manner

of making his *entré*, when the latter visited him, nothing would have surprised him more than his at any time behaving otherwise on such an occasion. This surprise he was now to feel.

On the morning in question, Henry opened the door of his friend's apartment with unusual deliberation, and with a very unusual manner walked into the room. His face was pale and thoughtful—his demeanour calm and subdued—and his voice grave and solemn. In short, Henry appeared altogether a totally changed man. This change was so sudden and so obvious, that Charles instantly asked him, with a look of friendly anxiety and alarm, what had happened—whether his wife was quite well—for he believed that scarcely any other calamity than some misfortune occurring to that beloved object of his affections could have produced such a startling alteration on his friend.

"Oh! Margaret's quite well, I thank you, Charles. Nothing has happened to me, man," said Henry, in reply to his friend's anxious inquiries, and at the same time forcing a faint smile on his pale countenance. "What induces you to think that anything has happened to me, Charles?"

"Why, Harry, to be plain with you," replied his friend, "I say, most positively, that something *has* happened to you, notwithstanding your denial of it. Your looks, your manner betray it. You know my profession teaches me to draw conclusions from symptoms, and I never was more mistaken in my life, if I am wrong in this instance."

"Pho, pho," said Barton, forcing another faint smile, 'nonsense, Charles—nonsense. Come," he added, affecting a careless manner, and seizing his hat, "are you going down to the ship?"

"Yes, Harry, I am," replied Mountford, gravely, and with a sudden severity of tone; "but, I must say, this is not friendly of you. Our long and intimate acquaintance, Harry, entitles me, I think, to more confidence at your hands. There *is* something wrong with you, Harry; I repeat it—deny it as you like; and if it is fit that a friend should know what it is—and I cannot conceive anything that should have happened you, that a friend might not be informed of—I must consider myself wronged by your silence. I say no more. Not another word shall I ever say on the subject, Harry. I am ready to accompany you to the ship." And he also took up his hat.

Henry threw himself back into his chair again, covered his face with his hat, and sat in silence for some moments, while his friend walked up and down the apartment in considerable displeasure.

"Well, Charles," said Henry at length, "I will confess to you that your conjecture is right. Something has occurred to me; and I feel, as you say, that I would wrong you, my best and dearest friend, were I longer to conceal from you what that is; although my disclosure will expose a weakness which, if known, would subject me to the ridicule and contempt of every thinking man, and, perhaps, very justly. Of this, Charles, I am perfectly aware; but as it will be known only to you, I shall escape, at least, this part of the penalty of my folly."

Charles looked amazed and perplexed.

His friend, after another short pause, looked him steadily and gravely in the face; and added, in a slow and solemn tone—"Charles, I will never return from this expedition. My doom is sealed. I am to fall."

Another stare of amazement from Charles followed this extraordinary annunciation, then a most outrageous burst of laughter. "Oh, capital! ha! ha! ha!—capital—most excellent, most excellent!" shouted out Harry's friend, leaping from the floor, and rubbing his hands in an ecstasy of delight. "Murder, murder, Harry! is this the affair? Oh, dear! oh, dear! is it come to this—the brave, the gallant Harry Barton, first lieutenant in one of the first ships in the British navy turned old wife? Oh, *gimini!* this is really

melancholy, most melancholy." And again Charles burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

"Have you had your laugh out, Charles?" said Harry, gravely, but without the slightest expression of displeasure, after the latter had exhausted his mirth. "I am not the least angry with you, Charles, for the manner in which you have received my communication. I am fair game—I know it—and it's very likely I would have done exactly the same by you, had you been in my circumstances and I in yours. But neither your laughter nor your incredulity, Charles," he went on, "will prevent me repeating my certain conviction, that I am to fall in our first encounter with the enemy. Nothing will shake my belief in this. No reasoning, no ridicule, will remove the presentiment of this fate which has taken hold of me. It is foolish, it is absurd, I know; but, as my poor mother said, with regard to a similar weakness, as I suppose it must be called, (and which, by the way, I have not forgotten—no, nor the woman we met on the road either, Charles,) I cannot help it." And here a tear glistened in the eye of the gallant young sailor, and he struggled to suppress the emotions with which it was accompanied. After a moment's pause, he added—the pride of manhood coming to his aid—"You know me too well, Charles, to think, for a moment, that fear has anything to do with my feelings on this occasion. I have braved death at the cannon's mouth before, and I'll do it again; for my own honour, and the honour of my country is dear to me. I fear not death, so far as mere mortal pain and suffering is concerned; but, oh, I feel, deeply feel, Charles, for those I am to leave behind me—for the misery, the heart-withering misery, which my death will occasion them. My wife, my poor wife, Charles, and my poor, poor mother. God comfort and protect them. It will be a dreadful blow to them, infinitely more painful than the stroke of death to me."

Little allowance as Charles Mountford made for such hallucinations as that under which his friend laboured, and much as he regretted finding his naturally strong mind under the dominion of such a weakness, he could not help being moved, nay, very much affected, by what he had just said; and therefore desisted from making it a subject of further ridicule.

"Harry," he said—and a tear glistened in his own eye while he spoke—"forgive my levity. I make no concessions to your prepossessions on this occasion, which, I must still say, are extremely foolish and absurd, and very unlike you; but I was wrong to trifle with your feelings, by making them a subject of mirth." Then, slapping Harry on the shoulder—"But do, my good fellow, try and get quit of this ridiculous idea of yours. I am sure your own good sense, if you will only give it fair play, must shew you the utter absurdity of such visionary, and, I may add, such mischievous notions. Tuts, man!" he added, giving him another slap, "you will live to be an admiral yet; or, at the very worst, to die comfortably in your bed—a 'gouty old commodore.'"

Henry gave a melancholy smile, shook his head, put on his hat, and asked his friend if he was going down to the ship; and down to the ship the friends went, without making any further allusion to the subject they had been discussing.

Three days after this, the fleet was reported ready for sea; and a proud and a glorious sight that fleet presented. Every thing about these beautiful and formidable looking vessels was perfect—everything in the highest order; and, all inanimate and unconscious as they were, each of these stately ships seemed as proud of the burden of brave hearts which it bore, as the war-horse is of its rider; and conscious, too, they seemed, that a nation's honour was entrusted to their keeping and depended on their exertions.

The fatal hour which was to separate thousands of fond hearts—many, alas! for ever—at length arrived. The signal

was made, which called every man to his post; and amongst those who obeyed the summons was Henry Barton. The last visit he made on shore, was to his wife; and the parting between them was most affecting; for, although Henry had concealed from her, as carefully as he could, the dismal presentiment which had taken possession of him, he had not been able to prevent his language from sometimes expressing, though but remotely and equivocally, a very marked despondency—a circumstance this, which had not escaped the notice of his wife, and which had the effect of increasing the bitterness of the parting hour. Harry's wife, too, had observed that her husband, for some days previous, had taken every opportunity of insinuating the possibility of his never returning, and of endeavouring to reconcile her to the event of his death; and this language, together with certain peculiarities in his manner and speech, when bidding his last adieus, filled her also with dismal forebodings of the future.

Having been at length literally torn from each other's embrace by their common friend, Charles, who had long waited in vain in an adjoining apartment to accompany Henry on board, the fond pair were sundered, and the two friends proceeded arm in arm to the boat which was to convey them to their ship.

"The worst is now past," said Harry to Mountford, the moment they had left the house. "I have nothing now to mind but my duty—and I trust God will enable me to do that with credit to myself, and with honour to my country."

In less than twenty minutes after, Lieutenant Barton and Charles Mountford were treading the quarter-deck of their gallant vessel; and, in twenty minutes more, the squadron was under weigh for the Mediterranean, where, on the 8th of June 1798, they joined the fleet under Lord Nelson.

Thus reinforced, the latter renewed his search for the French fleet with redoubled eagerness; and, after a tedious and harassing pursuit of several weeks' continuance, at length fell in with the object of his heart's most anxious desire.

On the 1st of August, at noon, the bay of Aboukir opened on the British fleet, and discovered, to the inexpressible joy, not only of the Admiral, but of every man on board, the French squadron at anchor, and strongly moored in battle array. Harry Barton was standing beside his friend, Charles, on the quarter-deck, when this cheering sight first presented itself. "There they are at last!" exclaimed the latter, exultingly. "There they are, indeed!" replied Harry; then lowering his voice to a whisper—"and precisely in the same position in which I dreamt, before I left Portsmouth, we should encounter them. This is the last day I have to live, Charles."

"Come, come, now, Harry," said the latter, half angrily, and half affectionately—"no more of that nonsense. We must now think of our duty."

"And do you think, Charles, I forget that?" replied Harry. "You will see," he added, his eye kindling as he spoke with an expression that boded no good to the enemy—"You will see," he said proudly, "ere many hours pass, whether or not I will do my duty!"

There was now time for no more conversation. Charles hurried down to the cockpit to make the necessary preparations for the wounded; and Harry was instantly over head and ears in the multifarious duties of the deck. In the meantime, the British fleet was moving steadily and majestically towards the enemy; and every preparation for the approaching conflict being completed on board, the different ships were moving along in the most profound silence. At this interesting and highly exciting moment, when all were absorbed by thoughts of the coming strife—when "the boldest held his breath for a time"—Harry suddenly appeared in the cockpit, and went up to Charles, who was busily employed in laying out and arranging his surgical instruments—unfolded a piece of paper which he held in his hand,

and shewed his friend that it contained a ring and a lock of hair—then wrapping them up again, he put the paper into Charles' hand—said, in a whisper, as there were several young surgeons in the cockpit—"Charles, give these to my wife if I should fall;" and, without waiting for an answer, or giving his friend time to make any remark, he again rushed on deck, and resumed his post.

In about fifteen minutes afterwards, the celebrated battle of the Nile commenced; and Lieutenant Barton again eminently distinguished himself by his gallantry and superior seamanship—several opportunities of exhibiting the latter having presented themselves during the manœuvring which the ever-changing circumstances of the battle demanded.

It is not our purpose here, nor is it at all necessary to our story, to enter into the details of this memorable conflict. These are already sufficiently well known to every one.

All that we need say regarding it is, that by midnight—the action having commenced about half-past six in the evening—the battle was fought and won, and Harry Barton was still untouched—a circumstance which left him fairly at the mercy of his friend, Charles, who certainly did not spare him. "What, Harry! still alive!" he said, on first seeing him, after the action was over. "Why, you ought to have been dead long since! I expected every minute to see you down at me with your head under your arm! Too bad, Harry, this—too bad, indeed. You have spoiled one of the finest sentimental stories that ever was conceived. It would have looked so pretty, in a romantic tale, to have said of you, that you died by presentiment. The young ladies would have cried their eyes out over it. Upon my word, Harry, if I was you, I would blow my brains out yet, rather than ruin so fine a piece of fudge—romance, I mean!"

"All fair, Charlie! all fair, my lad," replied Harry, in a more cheerful tone than he had hitherto spoken of his dismal prepossession. "You have certainly the advantage of me at this time; but there are other occasions coming. Time enough, Charlie! time enough! So, just you say no more about it. We'll see."

To return to the fleets. When daylight broke in the morning, an enemy's ship, which was thought to have struck on the previous night, but had not been secured, was seen drifting at a little distance from the British line; and, as she was nearer to Barton's ship than any other, a boat was manned by that vessel, and dispatched to take possession of her. The command of this boat was given to Lieutenant Barton; and his friend, Charles, partly from curiosity, and partly from the generous motive of assisting the wounded in the disabled ship, accompanied him.

As they approached the vessel, all seemed quiet on board. Not a motion was perceptible on her decks. Indeed, so still was everything, that Lieutenant Barton and his boat's crew began to think that she had been deserted during the night. But of this mistake—for it was one—they were soon fatally apprised. When the boat had arrived within about fifty yards of the ship, she was saluted with a shower of small shot from the enemy's tops, where a number of picked marksmen had been concealed. Out of all this shower of bullets, however, only one took effect. But it was enough. This bullet passed through Charles Mountford's hat, and perforated the heart of Henry Barton. On receiving the fatal shot, he sprang to his feet, and exclaimed wildly—"Ha! I told you so, Mountford. My God, my poor wife!" and fell in the bottom of the boat, a lifeless corpse.



WILSON'S
 Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
 AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE CONVIVALISTS.

WE must introduce our readers, with an apology for our abruptness, into a party of about half a dozen young gallants, who had evidently been making deep and frequent libations at the shrine of Bacchus. The loud bursts of hearty laughter which rang round the room like so many triple bobmajors, the leering eyes, the familiar diminutives with which the various parties addressed each other, and the frequent locking of hands together in a grasp the force of which was meant to express an ardour of social friendship which words were too weak to convey—all shewed that the symposiasts had cleared the fences which prudence or selfishness set up in the sober intercourse of life, and were now, with loosened reins, spurring away over the free wild fields of fancy and fun. An immense quantity of walnuts—shells—which the mercurial comotators had been amusing themselves by throwing at each other—lay scattered about the table and on the floor; two or three shivered wine glasses had been shoved into the centre of the table, the fragments glittering upon a pile of glorious Woodvilles, all speckled over, like Jacob's sheep; each man had one of the weeds stuck rakishly in the corner of his mouth, and was knocking off the ashes upon his deviled biscuits; and, to the right of the president's chair, a long straggling regiment of empty bottles gave dumb but eloquent proof of the bibulous capabilities of the company. Each man was talking vehemently to his neighbour, and every one for himself, in order, as a wag among them said, to get through the work quickly, and jump at once to a conclusion. They were, as Sheridan has it, "arguing in platoons." There was one exception, however, to the boisterous mirth of the convivialists, in the person of Frank Elliot, in celebration of whose obtaining his medical degree the feast had been given. He was leaning back in his chair, gazing, with a slight curl of contempt on his lip, at the rude glee of his associates. He had distinguished himself so highly among his fellow students, that one of the professors had, in the ceremony of the morning, singled him out, before all his contemporaries, with the highest eulogiums, and had predicted, in the most flattering manner, his certain celebrity in his profession. Perhaps the natural vanity which these public honours had created—the bright prospect which lay before him, and his being less excited than his companions—caused him to turn, with disgust, from the silly ribaldry and weak witticisms which circled round his table. Amid the uproar, his silence was, for some time, unheeded; but, at length, Harry Whitaker, his old college chum, now lieutenant in his Majesty's navy, and with a considerable portion of broad sailor's humour and slang, observed it, and, slapping him roundly on the back, cried, "Hilloa, Frank! what are you dodging about?—quizzing the rig of your convoy, because they have too much light duck set to walk steadily through the water?"

"Frank! why, isn't he asleep all this time? I haven't heard his voice this half hour," exclaimed another.

"Parce meum, quisquis tanges cava marmora somnum
 Rumpere; sive bibas, sive lavere, tace."

said Elliot, beseechingly.

"Come, come," said Harry, "none of your heathenish lingo over the mahogany. Boys! I move that Frank be made to swallow a tumbler of Port for using bad language, and to make him fit company for the rest of us honest fellows."

"*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*," squeaked a first year medical student, shoving the lighted end of his cigar, by mistake, into his mouth, when he had delivered his sentence, and then springing up and sputtering out a mighty oath and a quantity of hot tobacco ashes.

"Ashes to ashes," cried Harry, filling up a tumbler to the brim; "we'll let you off this time, as you're a fire-eater; but rally round, lads, and see this land shark swallow his grog."

"Nay, but, my friends"—began Frank, seeing, with horror, that the party had gathered round him, and that Harry held the glass inexorably to his mouth.

"Get a gag rigged," shouted the young sailor; "we'll find a way into his grog shop."

"Upon my word, Whitaker," said Frank, with a ludicrous intonation of voice, between real anger and distress, "this is too hard on one who has filled fairly from the first—to punish him without an inquiry into the justice of the case."

"Jeddart justice—hang first, and judge after!" roared a student from the silvan banks of the Jed.

"No freeman can, under any pretence," hickupped a young advocate, who was unable to rise from his chair, "be condemned, except by the legal decision of his peers, or by the law of the land. So sayeth the Magna Charta—King John—(*hic*)—right of all freeborn Englishmen—including thereby all inhabitants of Great Britain, incorporated at the Union, (*hic*) and Ireland."

Whitaker set the tumbler down in despair, finding that his companions, like the generality of raw students, were so completely wedded to their pedantry, that the fine, if insisted on, would have to go all round.

"Let's have a song, Rhimeson," cried Frank, very glad to escape from his threatened bumper, and still fearful that it might be insisted upon; "a song extempore, as becomes a poet in his cups, and in thine own vein; for what says Spenser?"

'For Bacchus' fruit is friend to Phœbus wise;
 And when, with wine, the brain begins to sweat,
 The numbers flow as fast as spring doth rise.'

"By Jove, boys! you shall have it," cried Rhimeson, filling his glass, with unsteady hand, and muttering, from the same prince of poets—

"Who can counsell a thirstie soule,
 With patience to forbear the offred bowle?"

"That is the pure well of English undefiled, old fellows and, so, here goes—"The Lass we Love!"

TUNE—"Duncan Davison."

Come, fill your glass, my trusty friend,
 And fill it sparkling to the brim—
 A flowing bumper, bright and strong—
 And push the bottle back again;
 For what is man without his drink?
 An oyster prison'd in his shell;

A rushlight in the vaults of death
A rattlesnake without his tail.

CHORUS.

This world, we know, is full of cares,
And sorrow darkens every day;
But wine and love shall be the stars
To light us on our weary way.

Beyond yon hills there lives a lass,
Her name I dare not even speak;
The wine that sparkles in my glass
Was ne'er so rosy as her cheek.
Her neck is clearer than the spring
That streams the water lilies on;
So, here's to her I long have loved—
The fairest flower in Albion.

Let knaves and fools this world divide,
As they have done since Adam's time;
Let misers by their hoards abide,
And poets weave their rotten rhyme:
But ye, who, in an hour like this,
Feel every pulse to rapture move,
Fill high! each lip the goblet kiss—
The pledge shall be—"The Lass we Love!"

After a good deal of roritorious applause, the young gentlemen began to act upon the hint contained in the song, and each to give, as a toast, the lady of his heart. When it came to Elliot's turn, he declared he was unable to fulfil the conditions of the toast, as there was not a woman in the world for whom he had the slightest predilection.

"Why, thou personified snowball! thou human icicle!" cried Whitaker.

"Say an avalanche," interrupted Frank; "for, when once my heart is shaken, it will be as irresistible in its course as one of these 'thunderbolts of snow.'"

"Still, it's nothing but cold snow, for all that," cried Harry.

"Who talks of Frank Elliot and Love in the same breath?" cried Rhimeson; "why, his heart is like a rock, and love, like a torpid serpent, enclosed in it."

"True," replied Frank; "but, you know, these same serpents sting as hard as ever when once they get into the open air; besides, Love, as the shepherd in Virgil discovered, is an inhabitant of the rocks."

"Confound the fellow! he's a walking apothegm—as consequential as a syllogism!" muttered Harry; "but come, now, Frank, let us have the inexpressive she, without backing and filling any longer."

"Upon my word, Harry, it is out of my power; but, in a few weeks, I hope to"—said Elliot.

"Hope, Frank, Hope, my good fellow, is a courtier very pleasant and agreeable in his conversation, but very much given to forget his promises. But I'll tell you, Frank, since you won't give a toast, I will, because I know it will punish you—So, gentlemen"—

The toast was only suited for the meridian of the place in which it was given, and we will, therefore, be excused from repeating it. But Whitaker had judged rightly that he had punished his friend, who, from the strictness of his education, and a certain delicacy in his opinions respecting women, could never tolerate the desecration of these opinions by the libertine ribaldry which forms so great a part of the conversation of many men after the first bottle. Frank's brow darkened, his keen eye turned with a glance of indignation to Harry; and he was prevented only by the circumstance of being in his own house, from instantly kicking him out of the room.

"Look at Frank, now, gentles," continued the young sailor, when the mirth had subsided; "his face is as long as a ropewalk, while every one of yours is as broad as the main hatchway. He has a reverence for women as great as I have for my own tight, clean, sprightly craft; but, because a fellow kicks one of my loose spars, or puts it to a base use, I'm not to quarrel with him, as if he had called my

vessel a collier, eh? Frank, my good fellow, you're too sober, you're thinking too much of yourself; you're looking at the world with convex glasses; and thus the world seems little—you yourself only great; but, recollect, everybody looks through a convex glass; and that's vanity, Frank:—there, now! the murder's out."

"Nay, Harry," cried Rhimeson, good-naturedly; for he saw Elliot's nether lip grow white with suppressed passion; "don't push Frank too hard, for charity's sake."

"Charity, to be sure!" interrupted Harry; "but consider what I must have suffered if I had not got that dead weight pitched overboard: I was labouring in the trough, man, and would have foundered with that spite in my hold. Charity begins at home."

"'Tis a pity that the charity of many persons ends there too," said Frank, drily.

"Frank's wit is like the King of Prussia's regiment of death," said the young seaman—"it gives no quarter. But come now, my lads, rig me out a female craft fit for that snow-blooded youngster to go captain of in the voyage of matrimony; do it shipshape, and bear a hand. I would try it myself; but the room looks, to my eyes, as it were filled with dancing logarithms; and then he's so cold, slow, misty-hearted"—

"That if," cried Rhimeson, interrupting him, "he addresses a lady as cold, slow, and misty-hearted as himself, they may go on courting the whole course of their natural lives, like the asymptotes of a hyperbola, which approach nearer and nearer, *ad infinitum*, without the possibility of ever meeting."

"Ha, ha, ha!—ay," shouted Harry; "and, if he addresses one of a sanguine temperament, there will be a pretty considerable traffic of quarrels carried on between them, typified and illustrated very well by the constant commerce of heat which is maintained between the poles and the equator, by the agency of opposite currents in the atmosphere. By Jove! Frank, matrimony presents the fire of two batteries at you; one rakes you fore and aft, and the other strikes between wind and water."

"And pray, Harry, what sort of a consort will you sail with yourself?" inquired Rhimeson. This was, perhaps, a question, of all others, that the young sailor would have wished to avoid answering at that time. He was the accepted lover of the sister of his friend Elliot—and, at the moment he was running Frank down, to be, as he himself might have said, brought up standing, was sufficiently disagreeable.

"Come, come, Harry," cried the young poet, seeing the sailor hesitate; "let's have her from skysail-mast fid to keel—from starboard to larboard stunsails—from the tip of the flying jib-boom to the taffrail."

"They're all fireships, Rhimeson!" replied Harry, with forced gaiety—for he was indignant at Elliot's keen and suspicious glance—"and, if I do come near them, it shall always be to windward, for the Christian purpose of blowing them out of the water."

"A libertine," said Frank, significantly, "reviles women just in the same way that licentious priests lay the blame of the disrespect with which parsons are treated on the irreligion of the laity."

"I don't understand either your wit or your manner, Frank," replied Harry, giving a lurch in his chair; "but this I know, that I don't care a handful of shakings for either of them; and I say still, that women are all fireships—keep to windward of them—pretty things to try your young gunners at; but, if you close with them, you're gone, that's all."

"I'll tell you what you're very like, just now, Harry," said Frank—who had been pouring down glass after glass of wine, as if to quench his anger—"you're just like a turkey cock, after his head has been cut off, which will

keep stalking on in the same gait for several yards before he drops."

"Elliot! do you mean to insult me?" cried Whitaker, springing furiously from his seat.

"I leave that to the decision of your own incomparable judgment, sir," replied Elliot, bowing, with a sneer just visible on his features.

"If I thought so, Frank, I would—but it's impossible; you are my oldest friend." And the young sailor sat down with a moody brow.

"What would you, sir?" said Elliot, in a tone of calm contempt; "bear it meekly, I presume? Nay, do not look big, and clench your hands, sir, unless, like Bob Acres, you feel your valour oozing out at your palms, and are striving to retain it!"

"I'll tell you what, Elliot," cried the young sailor, again springing to his feet, and seizing a decanter of wine by the neck—"I don't know what prevents me from driving this at your head."

"It would be quite in keeping with the rest of your gentlemanly conduct, sir," replied Frank, still keeping his seat, and looking at Harry with the most cool and provoking derision; "but I'll tell you why you don't—you dare not!"

"But that you are Harriet Elliot's brother"—began Harry, furiously.

"Scoundrel!" thundered Elliot, rising suddenly, and making a stride towards the young sailor, while the veins of his brow protruded, like lines of cordage; "utter that name again, before me, with these blasphemous lips!"

Elliot had scarce, however, let fall the opprobrious epithet, ere the decanter flew, with furious force, from Whitaker's hand, and, narrowly missing Frank's head, was shivered on the wall beyond.

In a moment the young sailor was in the nervous grasp of Frank, who, apparently without the slightest exertion of his vast strength, lifted up the comparatively slight form of Whitaker, and laid him on his back on the floor.

"Be grateful, sir," said he, pressing the prostrate youth firmly down with one hand—"be grateful to the laws of hospitality, which, though you may think it a slight matter to violate, prevent me from striking you in my own house, or pitching you out of the window. Rise, sir, and begone."

Harry rose slowly; and it was almost fearful to see the change which passion had wrought in a few moments on his features. The red flush of drunken rage was entirely gone, and the livid cheek, the pale, quivering lip, and collected eye, which had usurped its place, shewed that the degradation he had just undergone, had completely sobered him, and given his passion a new but more malignant character. He stood for a brief period in moody silence, while the rest of the young men closed round him and Frank, with the intention of reconciling them. At length, he moved away towards the door, pushing his friends rudely aside; but turning, before he left the room, he said, in a voice trembling with suppressed emotion—

"I hope to meet Mr Elliot where his mere brute strength will be laid aside for more honourable and equitable weapons."

"I shall be happy, at any place or time, to shew my sense of Mr Whitaker's late courtesy," replied Frank, bowing slightly, and then drawing up his magnificent figure to its utmost height.

"Let it be *now*, then, sir," said the young sailor, stepping back into the centre of the room, and pointing to a brace of sharps, which, among foils and masks, hung on one of the walls.

"Oh, no, no, no!—for God's sake, not now!" burst from every one except Frank.

"It can neither be *now* nor *here*, sir," replied he, firmly, motioning Whitaker haughtily to the door.

"Gentlemen," said Harry, turning round to his friends with a loud laugh of derision. "You see that vanity is stronger than valour. Pompey's troops were beaten at the battle of Pharsalia, only because they were afraid of their pretty faces. Upon my soul, I believe Mr Elliot's handsome features stand in the way of his gallantry."

"Begone, trifier!" cried Frank, relapsing into fury.

"Coward!" shouted the young sailor at the top of his voice.

"Ha!" exclaimed Elliot, starting, as if an adder had stung him; then, with a convulsive effort controlling his rage, he took down the swords, threw one of them upon the table, and putting his arm into Rhimeson's, beckoned the young sailor to follow him, and left the apartment. As it was in vain that the remainder of the young men attempted to restrain Whitaker, they agreed to accompany him in a body, in order, if possible, to prevent mischief; all but the young advocate whom we have before mentioned, who, having too great a respect for the law, to patronise other methods of redressing grievances, ran off to secure the assistance of the city authorities.

The moon, which had been wading among thick masses of clouds, emerged into the clear blue sky, and scattered her silver showers of light on the rocks and green sides of Arthur's seat, as the young men reached a secluded part in the valley at its foot.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the young poet to Frank, as they turned to wait for Whitaker and his companions, "how horrible it is to desecrate a scene and hour like this by violence—perhaps, Elliot, by *murder!*" Frank did not reply; his thoughts were at that time with his aged mother and his now unprotected sister; and he bitterly reflected; that to whoever of them, in the approaching contest, wounds or death might fall, poor Harriet would have equally to suffer. But the young sailor, still boiling with rage, at that moment approached, and throwing his cloak on a rock, cried, "Now, sir!" and placed himself in attitude.

Their swords crossed, and, for a brief space, nothing was heard but the hard breathing of the spectators and the clashing of the steel, as the well-practised combatants parried each other's thrusts. Elliot was, incomparably, the cooler of the two, and he threw away many chances in which his adversary placed himself open to a palpable hit—his aim being, to disarm his antagonist without wounding him. An unforeseen accident prevented this. Whitaker, pressing furiously forward, struck his foot against a stone, and falling, received Elliot's sword in his body, the hilt striking with a deep, quick, sullen sound against his breast. The young sailor fell with a sharp aspiration of anguish; and his victorious adversary, horrified by the sight, and rendered silent by the sudden revulsion of his feelings, stood, for some time, gazing at his sword, from the point of which the blood drops trickled slowly, and fell on the dewy sward. "'Tis the blood of my dearest, oldest friend—of my brother—and shed by my hand!" he muttered at length, flinging away the guilty blade. His only answer was, the groans of his victim, and the shrill whistle of the weapon as it flew through the air.

"Harry, my friend, my brother!" cried the young man, in a tone of unutterable anguish, kneeling down on the grass, and pressing the already cold clammy hand of his late foe.

"Your voice is pleasant to me, Frank, even in death," muttered the young sailor, in a thick obstructed voice. "I have done you wrong—forgive me while I can hear you; and tell Harriet—oh!"

"I do, I do forgive you; but, oh! how shall I forgive myself? Speak to me, Harry!" And Elliot, frantic at the sight of the bloody motionless heap before him, repeated the name of his friend till his voice rose into a scream of agony that curdled the very blood of his friends, and re-echoed among the rocks above, like the voices of tortured

demons. Affairs were in this situation when the young advocate came running breathless up to them, and saw, at a glance, that he was too late. "Fly, for Heaven's sake! fly, Elliot; here is money—you may need it," he cried; "the officers will be here instantly, and your existence may be the forfeit of this unhappy chance. Fly! every moment lost is a stab at your life."

"Be it so," replied the wretched young man, rising and gazing with folded arms down upon his victim—"what have I to do with life?—*he* has ceased to live. I will not leave him."

His friends joined in urging Elliot to instant flight; but he only pointed to the body, and said, in the low tones of calm despair—"Do you think I can leave him now, and thus? Let those fly who are in love with life—I shall remain and meet my fate."

"Frank Elliot!" muttered the wounded man, reviving from the fainting fit into which he had fallen; "come near to me, for I am very weak, and swear to grant the request I have to make, as you would have my last moments free from the bitter agony."

Elliot flung himself on the ground by the side of his friend, and, in a voice broken by anguish, swore to attend to his words. "Then leave this spot immediately," said the young sailor, speaking slowly and with extreme difficulty; "and should this be my last request—as I feel it must be—get out of the country till the present unhappy affair is forgotten; and moreover, mark, Frank—and, my friends, attend to my words:—I entreat, I *command* you to lay the entire blame of this quarrel and its consequences on me. One of you will write to my poor father, and say it was my last request that he should consider Elliot innocent, and that I give my dying curse to any one who shall attempt to revenge my death. Ah! that was a pang! How dim your faces look in the moonlight! Your hand, dearest Frank, once more; and now away! Keep this, I charge you, from my Harriet—*my* Harriet! O God!" And, with a shudder, that shook visibly his whole frame, the unfortunate youth relapsed into insensibility. There was a brief pause, during which the feelings of the spectators may be better imagined than described, though, assuredly, admiration of the generous anxiety of the young sailor to do justice to his friend, was the prevailing sentiment of their minds. At length the stifled sound of voices, and the dimly seen forms of two or three men stealing towards them, within the shadow of the mountain, roused them from their reverie; and Rhimeson, who had not till now spoken, entreated Elliot to obey the dying request of his friend, and fly before the police reached them. "I have not before urged you to this," he said, "lest you should think it was from a selfish motive; for, as your second, I am equally implicated with you in this unhappy affair; but *now*," continued he, with melancholy emphasis, "there is nothing to be gained and everything to be hazarded by remaining."

The generous argument of the poet at length overcame Elliot's resolution; he bent down quickly and kissed the cold lips of his friend, then waving a silent adieu to the others, he quitted the melancholy scene. The police—for it proved to be they—were within a hundred yards of the spot when the young men left the rest of the group, and, instantly emerging from the shadow which had till now partially concealed them, the leader of the party directed one of his attendants to remain with the body, and set off, with two or three others, in pursuit of the fugitives.

"Follow me," cried Rhimeson, when he saw this movement of the pursuers; and springing as he spoke towards the entrance of a narrow defile which lay entirely in the shadow of the mountain. A deep convulsive sob burst from the pent-up bosom of Elliot, ere he replied—"Leave me to my fate, my friend; I cannot fly—the weight of his blood crushes me!"

"This is childish, unjust," said Rhimeson, with strong emotion; "but, once more, Frank, will you control this weakness and follow me, or will you slight the last wish of one friend, and sacrifice another, by remaining?—for without you I will not stir. Now, choose."

"Lead on," said Elliot, rousing himself with a convulsive effort; and, striking into the gloom, the two young men sped forward with a step as fleet as that of the hunted deer.

Their pursuers having seen them stand, had slackened their pace, or it is probable the fugitives would have been captured before Rhimeson had prevailed on his friend to fly; but now, separating so as to intercept them if they deviated from the direct path, the policemen raised a loud shout and instantly gave chase. But the young poet, in his solitary rambles amid the noble scenery of Arthur's seat and the adjoining valleys, had become intimately acquainted with every path which led through their romantic recesses; and he now sped along the broken footway which skirted the mountain side with as much confidence as if he had trod on a level sward in the light of noonday. Elliot, having his mind diverted by the necessity of looking to his immediate preservation—for the path, strewn with fragments of rock led along what might well be termed a precipice, of two or three hundred feet in height—roused up all his energies, and followed his friend with a speed which speedily left their pursuers far behind. Thus they held on for about a quarter of an hour, gradually and obliquely ascending the mountain side, until the voices of the policemen, calling to each other far down in the valley, proved that they had escaped the immediate danger which had threatened them. Still, however, Rhimeson kept on, though he relaxed his pace in order to hold some communication with his companion.

"We have distanced the bloodhounds for the nonce, Frank," he said; "these ale-swilling rascals cannot set a stout heart to a stey brae; but whither shall we go now? Edinburgh, perhaps Scotland, is too hot to hold us, and the point is how to get out of it. What do you advise?"

"I am utterly careless about it, Rhimeson; do as you think best," replied Elliot, in a tone of deep despondency.

"Cheer up, cheer up! my dear Frank," said the young poet, feigning a confidence of hope which his heart belied. "Whitaker may still recover; he is too gallant a fellow to be lost to us in a drunken brawl; and even if the worst should happen, it must still keep you from despair to reflect that you were forced into this rencontre, and that it was an unhappy accident, resulting from his own violence, and not your intention, which deprived him of his life." Elliot stopped suddenly, and gazing down from the height which they had now reached into the valley, seemed to be searching for the spot where the fatal accident had taken place, as if to assist him in the train of thought which his friend's words had aroused. The dark group of human beings were seen dimly in the moonlight, moving with a slow pace along the hollow of the gorge towards the city bearing along with them the body of the young sailor.

"Dear, dear Frank," said Rhimeson, deeply commiserating the anguish which developed itself in the clasped uplifted hands and shuddering frame of his unhappy friend. "bear up against this cruel accident like a man—he may still recover." Elliot moved away from the ridge which overlooked the valley, muttering, as if unconsciously—

"Action is momentary—
The motion of a muscle this way or that;
Suffering is long, obscure, and infinite!"

How profound and awful is that sentiment!"

The sound of a piece of rock dislodged from the mountain side, and thundering and crashing down the steep, awakened Rhimeson from his contemplation of Elliot's grief; and, springing again to the brink of the almost pre-

cipitous descent, he saw that one of their pursuers had crept up by the inequalities of the rock, and was within a few yards of the summit.

"Dog!" cried the young man, heaving off a fragment of rock, and in the act of dashing it down upon the unprotected head of the policeman, "offer to stir, and I will scatter your brains upon the cliffs!"

A shrill cry of terror burst from the poor fellow's lips as he gazed upwards at the frightful attitude of his enemy, and expected every moment to see the dreadful engine hurled at his head. The cry was answered by the shouts of his companions, who, by different paths, had arrived within a short distance of the fugitives.

"Retire, miscreant! or I will send your mangled carcass down to the foot without your help," shouted Rhimeson, swinging the huge stone up to the extent of his arms. His answer was a pistol shot, which, whistling past his cheek, struck the uplifted fragment of rock with such force as to send a stunning feeling up to his very shoulders. The stone fell from his benumbed grasp, and, striking the edge of the cliff, bounded innocuous over the head of the policeman, who, springing upwards, was within a few feet of Rhimeson before he had fully recovered himself. "Away!" he cried, taking again the path up the mountain, and closely followed by Elliot, who, during the few moments in which the foregoing scene was being enacted, had remained almost motionless—"Away! give them a flying shot at least," continued he, feeling all the romance of his nature aroused by the circumstances in which he was placed. The policeman, however, who had only fired in self-defence, refrained from using his other pistol, now that the danger was past; but grasping it firmly in his hand, he followed the steps of the young men, with a speed stimulated by the desire of revenge, and a kind of professional eagerness to capture so daring an offender. But, in spite of his exertions, the superior agility of the fugitives gradually widened the distance between them; and, at length, as they emerged from the rocky ground upon the smooth short grass, where a footfall could not be heard, the moon became again obscured by dark clouds, and Rhimeson, whispering his companion to observe his motions, turned short off the path they had been following, and struck eastward among the green hills towards the sea. They could hear the curse of the policeman, and the click of his pistol lock, as if he had intended to send a leaden messenger into the darkness in search of them. But the expected report did not follow; and, favoured by the continued obscurity of the night, they were, in a short time, descending the hill behind Duddingstone, which lies at the opposite extremity of the King's Park. Still continuing their route eastward, they walked forward at a rapid pace, consulting on their future movements. The sound of wheels rapidly approaching, interrupted their conversation. It was the south mail.

In a short time they were flying through the country towards Newcastle, at the rate of ten miles an hour, including stoppages. Elliot was at the river side, searching for a vessel to convey them to some part of the Continent, and Rhimeson was dozing over a newspaper in the Turk's Head in that town, when a policeman entered, and, mistaking him for Elliot, took him into custody. How their route had been discovered, Rhimeson knew not; but he was possessed of sufficient presence of mind to personate his friend, and offer to accompany the police officer instantly back to Edinburgh, leaving a letter and a considerable sum of money for Elliot. In a few minutes, the generous fellow leaped into the post-chaise, with a heart as light as many a bridegroom when flying on the wings of love and behind the tails of four broken-winded hacks, to some wilderness, where "transport and security entwine"—the anticipated scene of a delicious honey-moon. Elliot, while in search of a vessel, had fallen in with a young man whom

he had known as a medical student at Edinburgh, and who was now about to go as surgeon of a Greenland vessel, in order to earn, during the summer, the necessary sum for defraying his college expenses. He accompanied Elliot to his inn, and heard, during the way, the story of his misfortunes. It is unnecessary to describe Frank's surprise and grief at the capture of his friend, Rhimeson. At first, he determined instantly to return and relieve him from duress. But, influenced by the entreaties contained in Rhimeson's note, and by the arguments of the young Northumbrian, he at length changed this resolution, and determined on accepting the situation of surgeon in the whaling vessel, for which his present companion had been about to depart. Frank presented the Northumbrian with a sum more than equal to the expected profits of the voyage, and received his thanks, in tones wherein the natural roughness of his accent was increased to a fearful degree by the strength of his emotion. All things being arranged, Frank shook his acquaintance by the hand, and remarked that it would be well for him to keep out of the way for a while. So, bidding the man of harsh aspirations adieu, he made his way to the coach, and, in twenty-four hours, was embarked in the Labrador, with a stiff westerly breeze ready to carry him away from all that he loved and dreaded.

Let the reader imagine that six months have passed over—and let him imagine, also, if he can, the anguish which the mother and sister of Elliot suffered, on account of his mysterious disappearance. It was now September. The broad harvest moon was shining full upon the bosom of the Teviot, and glittering upon the rustling leaves of the woods that overhang her banks, and pouring a flood of more golden light upon the already golden grain that waved—ripe for the sickle—along the margin of the lovely stream; the stars, few in number, but most brilliant, had taken their places in the sky; the owl was whooping from the ivied-tower; the corn-craik was calling drowsily; now and then, the distant baying of a watch-dog startled the silence, otherwise undisturbed, save by the plaintive murmuring of the stream—which, as it flowed past, uttered such querulous sounds, that, as some one has happily expressed it, "One was almost tempted to ask what ailed it." A traveller was moving slowly up the side of the river, and ever anon stopping, as if to muse over some particular object. It was Elliot. He had returned from Greenland, and, in disguise, had come to the place of his birth—to the dwelling of his mother and his sister; he had heard that his mother was ill—that anxiety, on his account, had reduced her almost to the grave—and that she was now but slowly recovering. He had been able to acquire no information respecting Whitaker; and the weight of his friend's blood lay yet heavy on his soul, for he considered himself as his murderer. It was with feelings of the most miserable anxiety that he approached the place of his birth. The stately beeches that lined the avenue which led to his mother's door, were in sight; they stooped and raised their stately branches, with all the gorgeous drapery of leaves, as if they welcomed him back; the very river seemed to utter, in accents familiar to him, that he was now near the hall of his fathers. Oh! how is the home of our youth enshrined in our most sacred affections! by what multitudinous fibres is it entwined with our heart strings!—it is part of our being—its influences remain with us for ever—though years spent in foreign lands divide us from "our early home that cradled life and love." Elliot was framed to feel keenly these sacred influences—and often, even after brief absences from home, he had experienced them in deep intensity; but now, the throb of exultation was kept down by the crushing weight of remorse, and the gush of tenderness checked by bitter fears. He entered the avenue which led up to the house. Yonder were the windows

of his mother's chamber—there was a light in it. He would have given worlds to have seen before him the interior. As he quickened his pace, he heard the sound of voices in the avenue. He turned aside out of the principal walk; and, standing under the branches of a venerable beech, which swept down almost to the ground, and fully concealed him he waited the approach of the speakers, in hopes of hearing some intelligence respecting his family. Through the screen of the leaves, he presently saw that it was a pair of lovers, for their arms were locked around each other, and their cheeks were pressed together as they came down the avenue—treading as slowly as though they were attempting to shew how much of rest there might be in motion.

“To-morrow, then, my sweet Harriet,” said the young man, “I leave you; and, though it is torture to me to be away from your side, yet I have resolved never again to see you until I have made the most perfect search for your brother; until I can win a dearer embrace than any I have yet received, by placing him before you.”

“Would to Heaven it may be so!” replied the young lady; “but my mother—how will I be able to support her, when you are gone, dearest Henry? She is kept up only by the happy strains of hope which your very voice creates. How shall I, myself unsupported, ever keep her from despondency? Oh! she will sink!—she will die! Remain with us, Henry; and let us trust to Providence to restore my brother to us—if he be yet alive!”

“Ask it not, my beloved Harriet, I beseech you,” said the young man, “lest I be unable to deny you. If your brother, as is likely, has sought some foreign land, and remains in ignorance of my recovery from the wounds I received from him, how shall I answer to myself—how shall I even dare to ask for this fair hand—how shall I ever hope to rest upon your bosom in peace—if I do not use every possible means to discover him? O my dear Elliot—friend of my youth—if thou couldst translate the language of my heart, as it beats at this moment—if thou couldst hear my sacred resolve!”

“Whitaker, my friend! Harriet, my beloved sister!” cried Elliot, bursting out from beneath the overspreading beech, and snatching his sister in his arms—“I am here—I see all—I understand the whole of the events—how much too graciously brought about for me, Father of mercies! I acknowledge. Let us now go to my mother.”

It is in scenes such as this, that we find how weak words are to describe the feelings of the actors—the rapid transition of events—the passions that chase one another over the minds and hearts of those concerned—like waves in a tempest. Nor is it necessary. The reader who can feel and comprehend such situations as those in which the actors in our little tale are placed, are able to draw, from their own hearts and imaginations, much fitter and more rapidly sketched portraits of the passions which are awakened, the feelings that develop themselves in such situations and with such persons, than can be painted in words.

The harvest moon was gone, and another young moon was in the skies, when Whitaker, and the same young lady of whom we before spoke, trode down the avenue, locked in each other's arms, and with cheek pressed to cheek. They talked of a thousand things most interesting to persons in their situation—for they were to be married on the morrow—but, perhaps, not so interesting to our readers, many of whom may have performed in the same scenes.

Elliot's mother was recovered; and he himself was happy, or, at least, he put on all the trappings of happiness; for, in a huge deer-skin Esquimaux dress, which he had brought from Greenland, he danced at his sister's wedding, until the great bear had set in the sea, and the autumn sun began to peer through the shutters of the drawing-room of his ancient hall.

PHILIPS GREY.

“Death takes a thousand shapes—
Borne on the wings of sullen slow disease,
Or hovering o'er the field of bloody fight,
In calm, in tempest, in the dead of night,
Or in the lightning of the summer moon;
In all how terrible!”

AMONG the many scenes of savage sublimity which the Lowlands of Scotland display, there is none more impressive in its solitary grandeur, than that in the neighbourhood of Loch Skene, on the borders of Moffatdale. At a considerable elevation above the sea, and surrounded by the loftiest mountains in the south of Scotland, the Loch has collected its dark mass of waters, astonishing the lover of nature by its great height above the valley which he has just ascended, and, by its still and terrible beauty, overpowering his mind with sentiments of melancholy and awe. Down the cliffs which girdle in the shores of the loch, and seem to support the lofty piles of mountains above them, a hundred mountain torrents leap from rock to rock, flashing and roaring, until they reach the dark reservoir beneath. A canopy of grey mist almost continually shrouds from the sight the summits of the hills, leaving the imagination to guess at those immense heights which seem to pierce the very clouds of heaven. Occasionally, however, this veil is withdrawn, and then you may see the sovereign brow of Palnoodie encircled with his diadem of snow, and the green summits of many less lofty hills arranged round him, like courtiers uncovered before their monarch. Amid this scene, consecrated to solitude and the most sombre melancholy, no sound comes upon the mountain breeze, save the wail of the plover, or the whir of the heath-cock's wing, or, haply, the sullen plunge of a trout leaping up in the loch.

At times, indeed, the solitary wanderer may be startled by the scream of the grey eagle, as, dropping with the rapidity of light from his solitary cliff, he shoots past, enraged that his retreat is polluted by the presence of man, and then darts aloft into the loftiest chambers of the sky; or, dallying with the piercing sunbeams, is lost amid their glory.* At the eastern extremity of the loch, the superfluous waters are discharged by a stream of no great size, but which, after heavy showers, pours along its deep and turbid torrent with frightful impetuosity.

After running along the mountain for about half a mile, it suddenly precipitates itself over the edge of a rocky ridge which traverses its course, and, falling sheer down a height of three hundred feet, leaps and bounds over some smaller precipices, until, at length, far down in Moffatdale, it entirely changes its character, and pursues a calm and peaceful course through a fine pastoral country. Standing on

* Round about the shores of Loch Skene the Etrick Shepherd herded the flocks of his master, and fed his boyish fancies with the romance and beauty which breathes from every feature of the scene. One day, when we were at Loch Skene on a fishing excursion with him, he pointed up to the black crag overhanging the water, and said—“You see the edge o' that cliff; I ance as near dropped frae it intil eternity as I dimma care to think o'. I was herdin' aboot here, and lang and lang I thoct o' speelin' up to the eery, frae which I could hear the young eagles screamin' as plain as my ain bonny Mary Gray, (his youngest daughter,) when she's no pleased wi' the colley; but the fear o' the auld anes aye keepit me frae the attempt. At last, ae day, when I was at the head o' the cliff, and the auld eagle away frae the nest, I took heart o' grace, and clambered down, (for there was nae gettin' up.) Weel, sir, I was at the maist kittle bit o' the craig, wi' my foot on a bit ledge just wide enough to bear me, and sair bothered wi' my plaid and stick, when, guid saf's! I heard the boom o' the auld eagle's wings come whaff, whaffing through the air, and, in a moment o' time, she brought me sie a whang wi' her wing, as she rushed enraged by, and then turning short again and fetching me anither, I thought I was gone for ever; but Providence gae me presenee o' mind to regain my former restingplace, and there fling off my plaid, I keptit aye nobbing the bird wi' my stiek till I was out o' danger. It was a fearsome time!” It would have been dreadful had the pleasure which “Kilmenny,” “Queen Hynde,” and the hundred other beautiful creations which the glorious old bard has given us, been all thus destroyed “at one fell swoop.”

the brow of a mountain which overlooks the fall, the eye takes in at once the whole of the course which we have described; and, to a poetical mind, which recognises in mountain scenery the cradle of liberty and the favourite dwelling-place of imagination, the character of the stream seems a type of the human mind: stormy, bounding, and impetuous, when wrapped up in the glorious feelings which belong to romantic countries; peaceful, dull, and monotonous, amid the less interesting Lowlands. Yet, after indulging in such a fancy for a time, another reflection arises, which, if it be less pleasing and poetical, is, perhaps, more useful—that the impetuous course of the mountain torrent, though gratifying to the lover of nature, is unaccompanied with any other benefit to man, while the stream that pursues its unpretending path through the plains, bestows fertility on a thousand fields. Such thoughts as these, however, only arise in the mind when it has become somewhat familiar with the surrounding scenes. The roar of the cataract, the savage appearance of the dark rocks that border the falling waters, and that painful feeling which the sweeping and inevitable course of the stream produces, at first paralyze the mind, and, for some time after it has recovered its tone, occupy it to the exclusion of every other sentiment.

And now, gentle reader, let us walk toward the simple stone seat, which some shepherd boy has erected under yon silvery stemmed birch tree, where the sound of the waterfall comes only in a pleasant monotone, and where the most romantic part of old Scotland is spread beneath our feet. There you see the eternal foam of the torrent, without being distracted with its roar; and you can trace the course of the stream till it terminates in yon clear and pellucid pool at the foot of the hill, which seems too pure for aught but

“A mirror and a bath for beauty’s youngest daughters;” yet, beautiful in its purity as it seems, it is indeed the scene of the following true and terrible tale:—

Philips Grey was one of the most active young shepherds in the parish of Traquair. For two or three years he had carried off the medal given at the St Ronan’s Border Games, to him who made the best high leap; and, at the last meeting of the games, he had been first at the running hop-step-and-jump; had beat all competitors in running; and, though but slightly formed, had gained the second prize for throwing the hammer—a favourite old Scottish exercise, but almost unknown in England. Athletic sports were, indeed, his favourite pursuit, and he cultivated them with an ardour which very few of our readers will be able to imagine. But among the shepherds, and, indeed, all inhabitants of pastoral districts, he who excels in these sports possesses a superiority over his contemporaries, which cannot but be gratifying in the highest degree to its possessor. His name is known far and wide; his friendship is courted by the men; and his hand, either as a partner in a country dance, or in a longer “minnet of the heart,” marriage, is coveted for by the maidens: he, in fact, possesses all the power which superiority of intellect bestows in more populous and polished societies. But it is by no means the case, as is often said, that ardour in the pursuit of violent sports is connected with ignorance or mediocrity of intellect. On the contrary, by far the greater number of victors at games of agility and strength, will be found to possess a degree of mental energy, which is, in fact, the power that impels them to corporeal excitement, and is often the secret of their success over more muscular antagonists. Philips Grey, in particular, was a striking instance of this fact. Notwithstanding his passion for athletic sports, he had found time, while on the hill side tending his flock, or in the long winter nights, to make himself well acquainted with the Latin classics. This is by no means uncommon among the Scottish peasantry. Smith, and Black, and Murray, are not singular instances of self-taught scholars;

for there is scarce a valley in Scotland in which you will not hear of one or more young men of this stamp. Philips also played exquisitely on the violin, and had that true taste for the simple Scottish melody which can, perhaps, be cultivated nowhere so well as among the mountains and streams which have frequently inspired them. Many a time, when you ask the name of the author of some sweet ballad which the country girl is breathing amongst these hills, the tear will start into her eye as she answers—“Poor Philips Grey, that met a dreadful death at the Grey Mare’s Tail.” With these admirable qualities, Philips unfortunately possessed a mood of mind which is often an attendant on genius—he was subject to attacks of the deepest melancholy. Gay, cheerful, humorous, active, and violent in his sports as he was, there were periods when the darkest gloom overshadowed his mind, and when his friends even trembled for his reason. It is said that he frequently stated his belief that he should die a dreadful death. Alas! that this strange presentiment should have indeed been prophetic! It is not surprising that Philips Grey, with his accomplishments, should have won the heart of a maiden somewhat above his own degree, and even gained the consent of her father to his early marriage. The old man dwelt in Moffatdale; and the night before Philips’ wedding-day, he and his younger brother walked over to his intended father-in-law’s house, in order to be nearer the church. That night the young shepherd was in his gayest humour; his bonny bride was by his side, and looking more beautiful than ever; he sang his finest songs, played his favourite tunes, and completely bewitched his companions. All on a sudden, while he was relating some extraordinary feat of strength which had been performed by one of his acquaintances, he stopped in the middle of the story, and exchanged the animation with which he was speaking, for silence and a look of the deepest despair. His friends were horror-struck; but as he insisted that nothing was the matter with him, and as his younger brother said that he had not been in bed for two nights, the old man dismissed the family, saying—“Gang awa to bed, Philips, my man, and get a sound sleep; or if ye do lie wauken a wee bittie, it’s nae great matter: odd! it’s the last nicht my bonny Marion ’ll keep ye lying wauken for her sake. Will’t no, my bonny doo?”

“Deed, faither, I dinna ken,” quoth Marion, simply, yet archly; and the party separated. Philips, however, walked down the burn side, in order to try if the cool air would dissipate his unaccountable anxiety. But, in spite of his efforts, a presentiment of some fatal event gathered strength in his mind, and he involuntarily found himself revolving the occurrences of his past life. Here he found little to condemn, for he had never received an unkind word from his father, who was now in the grave; and his mother was wearing out a green and comfortable old age beneath his own roof. He had brought up his younger brothers, and they were now in a fair way to succeed in life. He could not help feeling satisfied at this, yet why peculiarly at this time he knew not. Then came the thought of his lovely Marion, and the very agony which at once rushed on his heart, had well-nigh choked him. Immediately, however, the fear which had hung about him seemed to vanish; for, strange and mysterious as it was, it was not sufficiently powerful to withstand the force of that other horrible imagination. So he returned to the house and was surprised to find himself considering how his little property should be distributed after his death. When he reached the door, he stopped for a moment, overcome with this pertinacity in the supernatural influence which seemed exercised over him; and, at length, with gloomy resolution, entered the house. His brother was asleep, and a candle was burning on the table. He sank down into a chair, and went on with his little calculations respecting his will. At length, having decided upon all these things, and having

fixed upon the churchyard of St Mary's for his burial place, he arose from his chair, took up the candle and crossed the room towards his brother, intending to convey his wishes to him.

The boy lay on the front side of one of those beds with sliding doors, so common in Scotland; and beyond him there was room for Philips to lie down. Something bright seemed gleaming in the dark recess of the bed. He advanced the candle, and beheld—oh, sight of horror!—a plate upon what bore the shape of a coffin, bearing the words—"Philips Grey, aged 23." For a moment he gazed steadily upon it, and was about to stretch out his hand towards it, when the lid slowly rose, and he beheld a mutilated and bloody corpse, the features of which were utterly undistinguishable, but which, by some unearthly impulse, he instantly knew to be his own. Still he kept a calm and unmoved gaze at it, though the big drops of sweat stood on his brow with the agony of his feelings; and, while he was thus contemplating the dreadful revelation, it gradually faded away, and at length totally vanished. The power which had upheld him seemed to depart along with the phantom; his sight failed him, and he fell on the floor.

Presently he recovered, and found himself in bed, with his brother by his side chafing his temples. He explained everything that had occurred, seemed calm and collected, shook his head when his brother attempted to explain away the vision, and finally sank into a tranquil sleep.

Whether the horrible resemblance of his own coffin and mutilated corpse was in reality revealed to him by the agency of some supernatural power, or whether it was, (as sceptics will say,) the natural effect of his hypochondriac state of mind, producing an optical deception, we will not take upon us to determine; certain, however, it is, that with a calm voice and collected manner, he described to his brother, James, a scene, the dreadful reality of which was soon to be displayed.

In the morning, Philips awoke, cheerful and calm, the memory of last night's occurrences seeming but a dreadful dream. On the grass before the door, he met his beloved Marion, who, on that blessed Sabbath, was to become his wife. The sight of her perfect loveliness, arrayed in a white dress, emblem of purity and innocence, filled his heart with rapture; and as he clasped her in his arms, every sombre feeling vanished away. It is not our intention to describe the simplicity of their marriage ceremony, or the happiness which filled Philips Grey's heart during that Sabbath morning, while sitting in the church by the side of his lovely bride.

They returned home, and, in the afternoon, the young couple, together with James Grey and the bride's-maid, walked out among the glades of Craigieburn Wood, a spot rendered classic by the immortal Burns. Philips had gathered some of the wild flowers that sprang among their feet—the pale primrose, the fair anemone, and the drooping blue bells of Scotland—and wove them into a garland. As he was placing them on Marion's brow and shading back the long flaxen tresses that hung across her cheek, he said, gaily—"There wants but a broad water lily to place in the centre of thy forehead, my sweet Marion; for where should the fairest flower of the valley be, but on the brow of its queen? Come with me, Jamie, and, in half an hour, we will bring the fairest that floats on Loch Skene." So, kissing the cheek of his bride, Philips and his brother set off up the hill with the speed of the mountain deer. They arrived at the foot of the waterfall, panting, and excited with their exertions. By climbing up the rocks close to the stream, the distance to the loch is considerably shortened; and Philips, who had often clambered to the top of the Bitch Craig, a high cliff on the Manor Water, proposed to his brother that they should "scalp the height." The other, a supple agile lad instantly consented. "Gie me

your plaid then, Jamie, my man—it will maybe fash ye, said Philips; "and gang ye first, and keep weel to the hill side. Accordingly the boy gave his brother the plaid and began the ascent. While Philips was knotting his brother's plaid round his body, above his own, a fox peeped out of his hole half way up the cliff, and thinking flight advisable, dropped down the precipice. Laughing till the very echoes rang, Philips followed his brother. Confident in his agility, he ascended with a firm step till he was within a few yards of the summit. James was now on the top of the precipice, and looking down on his brother, and not knowing the cause of his mirth, exclaimed—"Daursay, callant, ye're fey."* In a moment the memory of his last night's vision rushed on Philips Grey's mind, his eyes became dim, his limbs powerless, he dropped off the very edge of the giddy precipice, and his form was lost in the black gulf below. For a few minutes, James felt a sickness of heart, which rendered him almost insensible, and sank down on the grass, lest he should fall over the cliff. At length, gathering strength from very terror, he advanced to the edge of the cataract and gazed downwards. There, about two-thirds down the fall, he could perceive the remains of his brother, mangled and mutilated; the body being firmly wedged between two projecting points of rock, whereon the descending water streamed, while the bleeding head hung dangling, and almost separated from the body—and, turned upwards, discovered to the horrified boy, the starting eye-balls of his brother, already fixed in death, and the teeth clenched in the bitter agony which had tortured his passing spirit.

It is scarcely necessary to detail the consequences of this cruel accident. Assistance was procured, and the mangled body conveyed to the house of Marion's father, whence, a few short hours ago, the young shepherd had issued in vigour and happiness. When the widowed bride saw James Grey return to them with horror painted on his features, she seemed instantly to divine the full extent of her misfortune; she sank down on the grass, with the unfinished garland of her dead lover in her hand, and in this state was carried home. For two days she passed from one fit to another; but on the night of the second day she sank into a deep sleep. That night, James Grey was watching the corpse of his brother; the coffin was placed on the very bed where they had slept two nights ago. The plate gleamed from the shadowy recess, and the words—"Philips Grey, aged 23," were distinctly visible. While James was reflecting on the prophetic vision of his brother, a figure, arrayed in white garments, entered the room and moved towards the dead body. It was poor Marion.

She slowly lifted the lid of the coffin, and gazed long and intently on the features of her dead husband. Then, turning round to James, she uttered a short shrill shriek, and fell backwards on the corpse. She hovered between life and death for a few days, and at length expired. She now lies by the side of her lover, in the solitary burial ground of St Mary's.

Such is the event which combines, with others not less dark and terrible, to throw a wild interest around those gloomy rocks. Many a time you will hear the story from the inhabitants of those hills; and, until fretted away by the wind and rain, the plaid and the bonnet of the unfortunate Philips Grey hung upon the splintered precipice, to attest the truth of the tale.

* "Fey," a Scottish word, expressive of that unaccountable and violent mirth which is supposed frequently to portend sudden death.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SCHEMER;
OR,
THE CHEVIOT LAIRD OUTWITTED.

THE triumphs of pure cunning, exercised for the gratification of purposes of selfishness, are greatly fewer and less important than is generally imagined. It has even attained the form of a proverb, that a cunning man is never more deceived than when he attempts to deceive others. The truth seems to be, that nature, which supplies antidotes to her evils, has put almost every one of her sons on guard against the secret selfishness of his neighbours. What displeases a person most at the sneaking designs of the man of cunning, is not the loss which is attempted to be caused to him by an unjust appropriation, or some wicked circumvention, but the thought that he is considered by the schemer to be less able than himself. This is the true antidote, resolving indeed into self-love, which has been so generally provided against this most abominable of all traits in the character of a man. Every one is on his guard against an attempt to depreciate his understanding; and the quick-sightedness thus produced, enabling him to discover the character of those who wish to circumvent him, exposes, in the long run, the man of wiles, and defeats his purposes.

In consequence of this liability to discovery, and of the intense disgust which such discovery uniformly produces, the man of wiles would require to be a man of courage; though, generally speaking, it may be safely assumed that he is always a coward. Continually exciting disgust, he could not indeed live, were he courageous; for the insults he is continually receiving, would render it necessary for him to go about with a pistol in his hand. His preservation, therefore, lies in his cowardice, which, joined to his character of being cunning, places him below the contempt of mankind. He is allowed to crawl about like a reptile; and it is only when he becomes troublesome, that he is shaken off. To kill him, would generally be too much trouble: yet, such is the offensiveness of the creature, that the foot is often placed upon him before one is aware that he is bringing himself within the arm of authority, for no other reason than the gratification of a little spleen.

We make these remarks, because we wish that the moral of a story we intend to lay before our readers, should be understood as it is progressively read; and we are hopeful that its effect may be felt and appreciated by all good and straightforward men.

The property of Corbetfield, on the confines of the Cheviots, was, some two hundred years ago, possessed by a person of the name of William Dryhope. He inherited the property from his father, and was reputed wealthy, as the estate was considerable, and his expenditure limited by his habits of penuriousness. He was emphatically what is called a cunning man. No project was ever pleasant to him, which did not admit of some subtlety in its accomplishment; and even plain and common acts of every-day life, were not allowed to be performed in a plain and straightforward way, but were invested with a portion of that secrecy and under-

hand dealing which nature and practice had made pleasant and familiar to him. Plain dealing had something in it offensive to his crooked mind. It seemed as if he felt the same dissatisfaction at the tame and uninteresting progress of a fair bargain, that other people do at the tardy, winding manœuvres of the man of cunning.

His appearance quadrated with this character. He had the bent body, the sly, twinkling, lurking eye, the pawky smile, the wheedling manner, the lying tongue, and the ready giggling laugh of his tribe. He paid no great attention to his external appearance. His mind was too much occupied by the formation and working out of schemes, to leave him either time or inclination to perform decently the duties of his personal economy. His continued contriving and brooding, rendered him thin and emaciated; and his timid slouched walk, and side looks, gave him the appearance of a weasel searching for an aperture in an old turf-dike to escape from the eyes of men.

That extraordinary peculiarity of cunning men—the pride of being thought cunning—attached to him, as to all the rest of his kind. At the very time he was scheming against his friend, he would boast to him slyly of his slyness—concealing, of course, with great, though often ineffectual care, the details of the operations he was at the time carrying on. This pride of circumvention, which is found in all cunning men, is surely an extraordinary gift of nature—justifying the ways of Providence, by counteracting what would otherwise be one of the greatest evils of man. The schemer is the destroyer of his own schemes, by putting every man upon his guard, and telling, before he stabs, that he intends to slay.

By the effects of this evil propensity, or rather by the greed which accompanies it—for cunning does comparatively little evil after it is known, and it cannot be concealed—Dryhope scraped together a considerable fortune, independently of Corbetfield. His wife had died some years after his marriage, leaving him a son and daughter, Hector and Maria, who were often ashamed of the ways of their father, though filial duty constrained them to conceal them; at least, to construe them in such a way as to take from them their more disgusting and obnoxious features.

Having made the most of every opportunity which chance had thrown in his way, and turned all things to account, as far as his ability would, under the opposition produced by the knowledge of his character, permit—he, after his son and daughter had arrived at a marriageable condition, began to contrive how he could best turn them to advantage. This was a notable object for the exertion of his abilities and he was determined to make them exhibit their highest mettle. He had expended a great deal of money (in his estimation) upon the two youngsters; and it would run hard with him if he had not skill sufficient to draw out of their marriages a proper reimbursement. How otherwise could he be paid? For their affections he cared nothing—their duty was of no avail to him—they were his debtors for their maintenance and education; and, as they could not liquidate the claims themselves, it must be his policy to get some persons to do that for them. These were high aims, and undoubtedly worthy of the elevated genius of a man of

cunning, who conceived that no person in the county possessed equal powers of outwitting his neighbours.

In regard to his daughter, Maria, who was a very superior girl, he expected to drive a bargain with a young proprietor, not far distant, of the name of Walter Tait, whose property of Oldbattle, would, if settled upon her and her children, form a very handsome acquisition to his family. He wished this marriage for several reasons:—The first was, that Tait being a dissolute youth, would, in all probability, soon die, and leave Maria mistress of the property for herself and her children. The second was, that, if he lived, he would become, from his ductility, a very good subject for the operations of Dryhope's schemes, whereby he would be enabled to take a great part of his property from him, and attach it to his own estate of Corbetfield.

There was another reason which operated upon him, in endeavouring to get this match accelerated. He held a bond from the father of Hugh Templeton of Templeton, another neighbour, for 10,000 merks—an immense sum in those days—but which he had long considered to be little better than a bad debt. The lands of Templeton had been burdened, previous to Dryhope's security, by the schemes of a writer, who thought it all fair to fight Dryhope with his own weapons. The sum had, it seems, never been all advanced to old Templeton; but he, in the necessities produced by youthful indiscretions, had, to induce Dryhope to lend him 6000 merks, promised to give him security over his lands for a sum of 10,000 merks. Templeton's attorney, knowing the usurious nature of the bargain, borrowed for his client 4000 merks from the father of Walter Tait, giving him a bond for the same; and thus Dryhope, keen to get his transaction finished, and overlooking a proper investigation, was only a second creditor over the property.

This bond to Dryhope young Templeton could not discharge, and the lands were not of sufficient value to pay it. But, as Walter Tait was entirely ignorant of the bad credit and reduced circumstances of Templeton, Dryhope flattered himself that he would get his intended son-in-law to take the 10,000 merk bond as the dowry of his daughter, Maria; and in this way he would accomplish two great points; first, he would get, for a false dowry, a large jointure to his daughter; and, secondly, he would accomplish his ardent wish, in the event of Tait dying, of getting the envied lands of Templeton into his family.

As Dryhope was upon the eve of making this offer to Tait, who was enamoured of Maria, a circumstance occurred which made him pause. Templeton was, it seems, making love to a daughter of Edward Whitten of Eccleshall; and he was, at same time, intimate with a daughter of James Harvey of Moorfield—both neighbouring lairds. This fact was communicated to Dryhope, who immediately saw how it would affect his interests. If Templeton married a wife with money, he would then be able to pay Dryhope his 10,000 merks, a most important circumstance, which would afford to him ample means for making a bargain with Walter Tait. But it was necessary to ascertain which of the two damsels would likely bring Templeton the most money.

To ascertain this, Dryhope set about inquiring into the circumstances of Whitten and Harvey. This was immediately accomplished, and in such a way as a man of stratagem would, according to the bent of his nature, adopt. After a great deal of trouble, many threadings of narrow channels, and crooked and dishonourable means, he ascertained that Whitten was not in such circumstances as would afford any dowry to his daughter at all; but Harvey was reputed very wealthy, and had been heard to say that he would portion his daughter with 15,000 merks, if he got for her a husband to his satisfaction.

Having got this most important information, Dryhope set his wits to work, with a view to turn it to the best advan-

tage. He was slightly acquainted with Eccleshall, and resolved to call on him. This he accordingly did. Selfishness produces boldness, if not impudence; and Dryhope, as he rang the bell of the stately mansion, muttered to himself that he must trust to chance and his own invention for a successful interview, as well as for the means of accounting for a visit the first he had made to the family.

"Hoo is my muckle-honoured neebor, Ecclesha'?" he cried out, as he advanced to shake the laird by the hand. "They're a sad plague thae turnpikes. Ye ken the auld loan that rins doon frae the green burn to the auld kist, as they ca' the big stane at the back o' the birk wood—they're threatenin' to mak' that a turnpike; an', as it bounds your property an' mine, we maun concock some plan for settlin' the marches, for dootless they'll be for makin' the road broader, an' either takin' frae you or frae me."

"I have heard nothing of this, Mr Dryhope," answered Eccleshall; "and I rather think you are wrong, for my understanding is, that the road is to be made through the property of Templeton, to the westward."

"I'm glad to hear't," said Dryhope, who knew the fact as well as Eccleshall, "for I'm just as ill able to bear a loss o' that kind as Templeton."

"It would not affect either of you much, I presume," said Eccleshall. "He has a fine property, and you are known to be rich."

"It's no my business, Ecclesha'," said Dryhope, "to interfere wi' the affairs o' my neebors. There's nae doot that Templeton has a fine property, an' they say he wadna care to sell it—but it's an auld sayin', 'He wha buys has need o' a hunderd een—he wha sells has enough if he has ane.'"

"I do not understand you, Mr Dryhope," said Eccleshall; "I never heard Mr Templeton say he intended to sell his estate; but, if he did, I suppose he would get a good price for it. I am, however, somewhat interested in this gentleman's affairs, and beg you to explain manfully your meaning."

"It's no my wish, and Heaven kens it's no my practice, to deal in secrecy," said Dryhope. "Words wound aften mair than swords; but I maun do mysel the justice to think that, when I do speak, I ken what to say. When a blind man leads another blind man, they baith fa' into the ditch. Dryhope can see as far as ither men, [with a wink,] and if I thought ye were muckle interested in the affairs o' Templeton, I could maybe gie ye a hint—for there's naebody kens better the heat o' the fire than he wha has been brunt."

"That is still all a mystery to me, my good friend," said Eccleshall. "I have told you that I am interested in Templeton's affairs. He is courting my daughter; and I should like to know, since you have roused my suspicions, whether his property is free and unburdened, and, generally, the state of his finances."

"The looker on sees mair than the player," answered Dryhope, winking cunningly. "I heard as muckle as wha ye say. Ye couldna hae applied to a better man than me; for its guid, they say, to learn at another man's cost, an' true service hangs mair by the time than the mode. Between you an' me, Templeton ayes me as muckle as wad buy his property twice owre; an' he has mony other debts on his land, besides personal debts to a maist enormous amount. He has tried to conceal a' this—but grey cats see i' the dark; an' I am glad I can, in this affair, do ye a service. Ye may hae something i' yer power as regards me—ae hand washes another, ye ken," winking again.

The servant here came in, and said that Mr Walter Tait was in waiting.

"Tell him I shall be with him presently," said Eccleshall. Turning to Dryhope—"Walter has few debts, I should imagine; but he is in bad health, poor fellow."

"Wha lives weel lives lang," said Dryhope, anxious to

create some suspicion also against Tait, whom he himself wished to catch for Maria. "There's an auld sayin, vera common, I am tauld, in Germany—'Gluttony and drunkenness hae killed mair men than the sword.' I'm vera sorry for Walter, puir lad, and wad be the last man to injure nim; but ye hae gien me some o' yer confidence the day, and I'm bound to reward ye wi' mine. Truth may be blamed, but never can be shamed. I hae gien ye a hint about Wattie, puir lad, that may be o' service to ye. He wha has wisdom is twice blessed."

Eccleshall—who was one of those men who, being honest himself, believes all others to be so—was much affected by the character he had heard of his friend and neighbour, Mr Tait. He believed it, and thanked Dryhope for his kind intentions.

"This is quite new to me," said he. "I have always understood that Walter's bad health prevented him from exceeding, or even indulging to any extent, in the pleasures, far less the luxuries of life."

"Bad health may be the effect o' intemperance," answered Dryhope. "Sobriety secures us against distempers, and sweetens life; the harvest o' diseases is reaped frae the seeds o' intemperance. Wattie's aither died owre sune. We ken hoo to tak care o' our bairns"—another wink.

"You will teach me to take care of mine, at all events," said Eccleshall; "and I am certainly obliged to you, for the open, frank, and gentleman-like way in which you have warned me of the rocks of poverty and dissipation. I shall not soon forget it."

"I'm no greedy o' thanks, Ecclesha'," said Dryhope; "for I aye think the reward o' a guid conscience is the best remuneration for a guid office. I can safely say, mine is a guid aye; for I aye carry about wi' me the proverb—that the debauchin o' the conscience is the source o' a' our errors and crimes. Ill as puir Wattie is, some ca' him even waur than I hae said; for his auld butler said to me, ae day, wi a wink—'A debauched conscience is waur than a debauched stomach.' But I never like a statement that has a wink ahint it. The cooard looks ahint him, the brave man afore him; but a leiar shuts ane o' his een. Yet auld George is an honest chiel, too."

Eccleshall was not so blind as not to see that Dryhope was himself a great winker; but this did not open his eyes. He again thanked Dryhope for his attention, and the latter took his leave. As he went out, he saw Walter Tait standing on the landing-place, having preferred enjoying the air to being shut up in an antechamber. He flew and shook hands with him.

"I'm glad to see ye lookin sae weel, Mr Walter. Maria was just inquiren about ye, yesterday. Hoo dinna ye come doon an' see us? Wha's sae welcome as you? I hae just been speakin to Ecclesha' about the new turnpike. I am glad to think it's no comin aff his land; for I understand little compensation will be gien; and [taking his friend by the button, and talking low] ye ken he's no very weel able to bear even a sma loss like that. I was tellin him, in that jocular easy way I can tak wi him, that he should get aff his dochter to some sillered chap, wha micht assist him wi a few hunder merks. My heart bluids to see a guid man in difficalties; an' I gae him that advice, contained in the auld proverb—'They wha dinna ken hoo to ask, dinna ken hoo to gie.' Ye ken what I mean, eh?"

Tait, who knew Dryhope's cunning, did not give any decided tokens of acquiescence in the truth of this speech; and knowing that Eccleshall was waiting for him, he promised, in a few words, to call and see Maria, and went into the house.

Dryhope conceived that he had managed this interview with the greatest adroitness; and, as he went down the avenue, felicitated himself upon his powers of manœuvring, ejaculating at intervals, while he rubbed his hands—"Thae

twa lads are peppered." So much was he occupied with the exultation of having, as he thought, outwitted three men, and blasted the prospects of two, that he did not even see the people on the road, who stood and stared as they saw a man running and rubbing his hands, and saying to himself, "Thae twa lads are peppered." Cunning has indeed only one eye, although it thinks itself possessed of the hundred which belonged, heretofore, to Argus, the watchman of Io. The delightful music of Mercury closed up the whole hundred; selfishness may well close up one.

The next step to be taken by Dryhope, was to pay a visit to Mr Harvey; whose daughter was, as he had heard, also in the eye of Templeton. He made no scruple to call there; and, being afraid of losing time, he directed his steps to Moorfield, where he found the proprietor occupied in his garden. In this interview, Dryhope had to encounter one who knew his true character, though the wily laird himself thought he was altogether unknown to anybody; another weakness of the engrossing quality of selfish cunning.

"I hope Moorfield is in guid health," began Dryhope. "I aye like to see my friends weel; for health gaes afore riches, an' naebody kens better what is guid than he wha has endured evil. I mysel ken what disease is. The garden is better for recreation than the drawin room. So the turnpike is to gae through Templeton's property, afta a', is it?"

"I believe it is," answered Moorfield, waiting to see the next turn.

"Weel, better he than anither," said Dryhope. "Puir Ecclesha' couldna hae borne it sae weel."

"Do you think so?" said Moorfield, with curiosity—knowing that Templeton's property was burdened with the two bonds, which, however, did not affect his estimate of the character of his friend. "Is Templeton not in debt? I'm very glad to hear it. Somebody said he was owing you money; but I presume it is false, like all the rest of these flying statements."

"No a penny, Moorfield—no a penny!" said Dryhope, quickly. "Sae far as I ken, the property is, as regards the young man's acts, as free as the blue firmament when there's nae clouds i' the air. I was just sayin to Ecclesha', he wud mak a fine match for his dochter; an', atween you an' me, [one of his winks,] it wad be a guid thing for baith o' them. Dinna ye think sae yersel?"

As Dryhope put this question to Moorfield, he directed upon him that peculiar look with which a cunning man watches the effect of a well-framed interrogatory. Moorfield read the twinkle with the greatest ease.

"An excellent thing," replied Moorfield; "and I'll tell you another, nearly as good—What do you think of my Gertrude and your Hector?"

This did not suit Dryhope, who had a lady in his eye for his son; and he was discomfited by the nonchalance with which his trying question was received.

"Ye'll no be thinkin o' Templeton for Gertrude?" he again asked.

"That depends upon circumstances," replied Moorfield. "If I could hear that he was entirely free of debt, I would have no objections to him for a son-in-law. He is a very fine young man; but it would be hard to pay 15,000 merks to his creditors."

"Sae it wad, sae it wad," said Dryhope, in anxiety; "but he has nae debt—no a penny o' debt—I hae it upon guid authority. Ye may rely upon it. But ye're richt to be sure. Mony a ane gaes oot to seek wool, an' comes hame shorn. I hae a kind o' regard for Templeton, as weel as for yersel; an' if I could satisfy ye wi' regard to yer scruples, I wad, for the sake o' his faither, exercise my puir faculties to that effect."

"I will be much obliged to you, then, my good friend," said Moorfield, fighting him with his own weapons, "if

you will make all the inquiry in your power, and inform me whether you can learn of any debts due by young Templeton. If I am perfectly satisfied of his solvency, I may indulge his suit with my Gertrude."

"I will—I will," replied Dryhope, eagerly; and, after some general conversation, he retired.

Dryhope, as he went home, thought he had also duped Moorfield. He had said that Templeton was not his debtor. There was no danger, he conceived, in that, because, in the first place, it was old Templeton who granted him the bond; and, though the young man was no doubt liable to him, yet he could scarcely be said to be his debtor in the bond. This wretched subtlety pleased him beyond measure. And, secondly, anything he could say to Moorfield, would not affect his claim, constituted by a written bond, against Templeton. This was, he thought, ingenious reasoning; and, if he was safe, he did not care how far he went in the manufacture and issuing of lies.

Moorfield, with no cunning, had more judgment. Next morning, he dispatched the following letter to Dryhope:—

"DEAR SIR,—I thank you for the extreme kindness you evinced towards me and my daughter, when you called here yesterday. I have been curious to know upon what authority you stated that Hugh Templeton was free from debt; and, in particular, I am anxious to know whether or not Templeton granted you a bond for 10,000 merks. I have heard such a thing stated, and wish to satisfy myself of the truth or falsehood of it. If your answer to me is satisfactory, and I am certiorated of the fact that Templeton owes you nothing, I will give him 15,000 merks with my daughter as her tocher.—I am, dear sir, yours sincerely,

"JAMES HARVEY."

This letter was written by Moorfield, with the view of getting Dryhope committed to paper. He could not answer for its being attended with any success; but he knew that Dryhope wanted payment of his money, and might go a great deal farther than prudence warranted, in order to fulfil that object.

The moment Dryhope got this letter, he began to consider of what he was about. He was too quick-sighted not to see that he was upon dangerous ground. Conversation, where there were no witnesses, was one thing—writing was another. Besides, he verified the characteristic of his own disposition, by suspecting there was some attempt at trick on the part of Moorfield. He accordingly called for his horse, and rode away to town with a view to consult his agent. Like all cunning diplomatists, however, he would not, indeed he could not, tell his attorney, who happened to be an honest man, his whole case; but, like many fools who consult doctors and lawyers, and think they can work by the powers of their own minds, on answers to particular questions and special interrogatories, put a number of hypothetical cases, on which he asked opinions. The principal of these was—whether a person, who had a bond from another man's father, could safely, and without endangering his debt, say to another person, an acquaintance of the son's, that he, the son, was not a debtor specified in the bond. The attorney's answer was quick and sound. "No," he replied; "there is no law for any such thing; neither will the statement be against the truth, for the young man's name is not mentioned in the bond, and, therefore, he is not the specified debtor in the bond."

With this answer, Dryhope came away, delighted with the scheme which he was now forming of circumventing Moorfield, and catching him in his own snare—the very highest triumph of cunning; for no cunning man can bear the idea that there is any person in the world more sly than himself. In riding home, the scheme was partly formed. His deep study was only at times interrupted by a stumble of his horse. On reaching home, he retired to his study, and sat with his hand on his brow for more than an hour. His object was to write such a letter to Moorfield as

would save his right to his bond, and yet, at same time, secure payment of his debt. The object was grand—the means lay in his wonderful mind. What was too difficult for his subtlety? Had he not humbugged one half of the world already? and who had humbugged him? None. Why, then, have any timidity, while the proverb maintained its force, that "a faint heart never gained a fair lady?" To succeed in this enterprise, would stamp his character for ever as a man of parts. It would do more—it would make a bad debt good, and overturn the scheme of one who had the boldness to try him with his own weapons. These reflections produced a kind of enthusiasm, or, at least, some emotion as nearly analogous to that as the mind of a cunning man, with its cold calculating views, is capable of feeling; and, seizing the pen, he wrote the first draft of an answer to Moorfield. Having finished the rough sketch, he wished to allow it to lie until his fancy cooled—a common practice with him when engaged in a wily scheme. He dined, and came back to his important work again. He read his draft. It was too unguarded, and required the application of greater caution. Another copy was written, and many more. At last, he thought the following sufficient to realize his scheme:—

"DEAR SIR,—I beg to say that I received your letter; and, in answer thereto, I now inform you that Hugh Templeton, Esq. presently of Templeton, never signed any bond to me for 10,000 merks, or any other sum. I, therefore, conceive, you are perfectly safe, and will warrant you to dower Miss Gertrude Harvey, your daughter, with the sum you have stated. I have particularly to request, that, as this answer is given in confidence, no intimation thereof shall be made to Hugh Templeton.—I am yours, sincerely
"W. DRYHOPE."

This letter was dispatched, and Dryhope thought he had executed a most notable scheme of clever circumvention.

Unfortunately, he had hitherto been too successful. Templeton, having been doubtful of the intentions of Moorfield in regard to him, had been visiting Miss Whitten, with the intention of exciting the jealousy of Gertrude Harvey, and thus working on the father, through the pain and anxiety of the daughter. He had been, however, heard to say that he could fancy Miss Whitten; and, in the event of not getting Miss Harvey, he would pay his serious addresses to her. The visit of Dryhope, however, put an end to Templeton's hopes in the family of Eccleshall; and it was equally efficacious in expelling from that house, Walter Tait; for Eccleshall, seeing no motive, on the part of Dryhope, for making the statements he had done regarding these two gentlemen, unfortunately considered them to be true; and his manner at their next visit having partaken of his feelings, soon exhibited to his visitors that their company was not desired. They accordingly gave up visiting Eccleshall; but they were left entirely ignorant of the cause of that coldness on the part of their host, which had rendered it imperative on them to cease their visits to his house.

Driven from that resource, Tait called more frequently at Corbetfield, where he was received by Dryhope with the greatest attention, and treated with the most sycophantish adulation. The efforts of the father, however, would have had little effect on the visiter, if the smiles of the daughter had not reached the heart of the lover. Tait loved Maria, and his love was requited. He hated old Dryhope for his low cunning and duplicity; and he loved his daughter for her beauty and simplicity. Dryhope saw the courtship advancing with singular pleasure; for he flattered himself that he was the matchmaker, and that Tait was merely acting upon the springs which moved his various puppets. He hugged himself in the idea, that, if he had not poisoned the ear of Eccleshall against him, he would have married Miss Whitten; thus enhancing the merit of his work, by contemplating what might have happened, if he had not brought his genius to play in that particular direction.

To add to his joy, it was announced in the newspapers, that Hugh Templeton had led to the altar, Gertrude Harvey; and the floating breath of public gossip embellished the statement with the fact, that the bridegroom had got paid down to him 15,000 merks, as the tocher of the damsel. This completed the *coup de main* of the ambidextrous Dryhope. All he had now to do, was to get payment of his bond; but, before having recourse to any measures in that quarter, he wished to get the marriage completed between Tait and his own daughter, Maria. Tait was quite agreeable that it should be solemnized immediately; and Maria had no objections to urge. Dryhope conceived that, after what had passed between him and Moorfield, it might save his faith, if he assigned away his bond to some third party; and a better opportunity for effecting this purpose could not be found than in the marriage of his daughter with Tait.

He took, accordingly, the first opportunity of having a conversation with his expected son-in-law, on the subject of the contract.

"Ye ken, Walter," began the ambidexter, "that I hae but little lȳn money, and canna, therefore, gie ye ony great portion wi Maria; but I can maybe do better than gie ye cash, o' which ye stand in nae great need. Ye ken I hae a bond for 10,000 merks frae Templeton, wha is just noo married to Gertrude Harvey, the heirsch o' Moorfield, wha has brought him 15,000 merks, and wha, when her father dies, will hae a right to his property, ane o' the best in these parts. Noo, I ken that ye hae lang had an ee on Templeton, owre which ye hauld a bond for 4000 merks. The property lies weel into ye, and, nae doubt, would mak a bonny addition to yer ain. Ye canna get it, however, wi the mere pith o' yer ain security; but, wi the assistance o' mine, ye may hae some chance o' prevailin on Templeton, to resign it to ye upon a fair bargain, payin ye, at same time, the difference atween its price and the amount o' the twa bonds. Noo, I'll gie ye my bond, if ye will pay me 4000 merks, and provide the half o' the rents o' yer property as a jointure to Maria."

This statement appeared to Tait to be fair enough; for he would much rather take the bond than the money, for the very reasons stated by Dryhope, who had indeed fathomed the wishes of his son-in-law, and laid his schemes to suit them in the way stated. Tait told him that he had no objection to the terms he proposed, and, in a short time, the marriage contract was drawn out and signed, and the marriage solemnized. Dryhope took care to receive his 4000 merks, leaving to Tait the recovery of the money from Templeton in the best way he could, recommending to him, however, to pursue Templeton, while he was, as he said, flush; and especially, and by all means, to seize him, when under the dementing influence of the honeymoon, when he would rather pay than pine in prison.

In the meantime, Hector Dryhope was taken by his father, and introduced to a rich lady of colour, who lived in the neighbouring town, with a view to his courting her, and securing her fortune with her cream-coloured person. Hector went to please his father; but he had no intention of complying with his request. He had a choice of his own, which he did not intend to renounce; at least he could see nothing in the West Indian to make him forget his own fair country-woman. His choice came out sooner than was expected.

His father, while one day walking at a little distance from Corbetfield, met Hector and Miss Whitten walking together. The young couple seemed to be caught; and truly they were, for the old man went abruptly up to them, and asked his son, in presence of the mistress of his affections, who the lady was with whom he presumed to walk, after he had introduced him to his future wife. Stung to the quick by this remark, made in presence of a lady to whom he had made honourable proposals, the young man forgot his filial duties, and turning suddenly on his father with fiery eyes,

and a countenance flushed with anger, told him that this lady, taking her by the hand, was the mistress of his heart, and would be the sharer of his fortunes. Dryhope immediately answered, that he would cut him off with a shilling, if he presumed to marry that lady, or any other lady, against his advice and approbation.

For a long time the son and father would not speak. Dryhope was here caught in his own snare; for, by turning Tait and Templeton from Mr Whitten's house, he had kept his daughter free for the addresses of his own son. There was no money to be had with Miss Whitten; and, if Hector married her, one of his schemes would be frustrated. In the heat of his anger he flew to Eccleshall, and found the laird in his study.

"I am come, Ecclesha'," said Dryhope, bowing, "to put ye on yer guard against the evil intentions o' my neer-doweel son, Hector, wha, I understand, is courting your daughter. I think it proper to gie you premonition o' the fact, which I proved by the testimony o' my ain senses some days syne, in the birk wood, at the foot o' the priest's mound. A son wha disobeys his ain faither winna be dutiful to the faither o' his wife; and a bad son canna mak a guid husband. Hector is a spendthrift, as the holes in my exchequer may weel testify; and I wad be sorry to think that, after having robbed a parent, he should extend his practices to the strong boxes o' my neighbours. Deny him yer dochter's hand, and ye will benefit yersel, yer dochter, my son, and me!"

"Pray, Mr Dryhope," said Eccleshall, "can you tell me whether I am to place confidence in a man's words, or in his actions? If Walter Tait was too debauched for my daughter, why was he pure enough for yours? If Hugh Templeton was unfit for my daughter, why was he by you considered proper for Gertrude Harvey? These are questions to which I require an answer, before I pay any attention to the character you have now given your son."

It had never occurred to Dryhope, in his anger, that Eccleshall had this good answer to make him. He was taken by surprise, and all his attempts at a proper justification resolved into mutterings and exclamations, and a mass of unmeaning jargon. Eccleshall did not deign to answer him. Having rung the bell, he ordered his servant to see Dryhope to the door—an order that was very speedily obeyed.

As he went down the same avenue where he had formerly indulged in such vehement expressions of joy in the supposed success of his schemes, he now exhibited a very different appearance. He bit his lips and clenched his hands, muttering imprecations loud and deep, exclaiming that he would rather have seen both Tait and Templeton married to Eccleshall's daughter, if the laws would have permitted it, than his son should, by marrying a proud beggar, sacrifice the prospects held out to him in the match which he had taken so much pains to settle and mature. On arriving at home, his frenzy knew no bounds. He even struck his son, who, well disposed and even kind to his parent, received, with sorrow, the outpourings of his indignation.

Next day, and while yet his anger was burning with nearly unabated fury, he got a call from Moorfield's agent, who informed him that, if Walter Tait, his son-in-law, endeavoured to make good the bond for 10,000 merks against Templeton, he, Moorfield, would sue Dryhope for damages, under his letter of guarantee written by him, on the occasion of Templeton's marriage with Gertrude Harvey. At the intimation of this intention, Dryhope stared at the man, speechless, as if he had been struck with a sudden attack of palsy. Having, in some degree, recovered from the effects of the shock, he denied that he had ever written Moorfield any letter of guarantee, and told the agent to carry to his client his mortal defiance.

This was, however, the mere bravado of a terrified man. Dryhope began to think of the terms of his letter. Every

word of it was impressed on his memory, and every word was again scanned with the eye of cunning and apprehension. As his investigation proceeded, his fears were allayed. The critical interpretation of the letter admitted of no such construction as that attempted to be put upon it by Moorfield or his agent. He had merely written, that *young Templeton* had not signed any bond to him. Was not this true? And if so, why should a man suffer for the truth? No doubt he gave also an opinion that Moorfield might safely dower his daughter to Templeton. Was not that a mere opinion? May not every man, whose opinion is asked about the propriety, or safety, or danger, of a marriage, be equally liable to be called upon to make up to the father the tocher of his daughter. The whole matter appeared, to him, to be rank nonsense, and ought not to have the effect of deranging the slightest feeling or idea of the mind of any man of common sense.

This reasoning did not, however, prevent Dryhope from getting a summons from Moorfield, to make good to him 10,000 merks—part of the 15,000, paid by him to his son-in-law, on Dryhope's authority. The appearance of a summons produces always a curious effect upon a man who relies upon his own thoughts for a conviction that he is not liable to satisfy a claim, or pay a debt. It is something like the doctor's apparatus to the man who will not believe that he carries in his body a stone. Dryhope saw the matter had now a serious aspect; and, relying no further upon the advice of his country attorney, went to Edinburgh, to consult Counsellor Shillinglaw, a famous advocate in those days, taking with him his documents, and the number of guineas necessary to make the oracle speak.

He found Shillinglaw sitting in his library dictating a paper to his clerk, who, though apparently sleeping, was making the pen skip over the sparse pages with a celerity equal to the motion of the counsellor's tongue.

"Be seated, sir," said the man of law to Dryhope. "In what manner can I assist you, sir."

"I'm no sure if ye can assist me ava, Mr Shillinglaw," said Dryhope, "if a' that this very impolite paper has tauld me be true;" holding out the summons.

"Oh! a summons on a letter of guarantee," said the advocate, glancing over the paper. "Where are the letters? I see they are copied in the libel. Are they correctly copied?"

"I believe there's nae great error there," said Dryhope. "I fear, if a' our hope rests on the discrepancy o' a word or twa between the letters and the copies o' them in the summons, we hae nae great case; an' I may gie up, for my hope will, in that event, be, as my name implies, dry enough."

The counsellor kept reading the paper; and, after taking down some large folios, and looking slightly into them, asked Dryhope some questions, eliciting the facts which have been already detailed; and without giving him any reply, resumed again his search for authorities to clear up some doubt that hung about his mind. "Ay, ay," thought Dryhope, "is there sae meikle doot o' my case, as to require the touchstane o' thae ponderous law bibles? In a law plea, doot is defeat; for the expense o' unravelling it is aften mair than the plea is worth."

"These letters which passed between you and Moorfield, you say, are correctly copied," began the lawyer. "You also tell me that old Templeton was due you 10,000 merks, by a bond executed by him. Young Templeton was his heir, and so liable to pay that bond. He was, in truth, your only debtor. You had no other. It would seem capable of proof, too, that you called on Moorfield, and stated to him that Templeton was not in debt; at least, you have not contradicted this part of Mr Harvey's letter. But, adhering more to the documents, it seems quite imperative on judge or jury, to view Mr Harvey's letter as a fair legitimate inquiry at you, as the

supposed creditor of Templeton, wheener he owed you the ten thousand merks. His letter, notwithstanding that he asks you whether young Templeton signed to you a bond, and thus in one part of it limited his inquiry, requires this fair and honest construction. Now, what does your letter say? In the first place, you take no notice of the part of his letter regarding your previous communing; and in law, in certain circumstances, silence is an admission. You then give a categorical answer to the question put to you; and your answer is true, for young Templeton never signed the bond, though he was your only debtor in it. Then—which is the most extraordinary part of your letter—you assure Mr Harvey that he is safe to dower his daughter with 15,000 merks to Templeton—meaning, of course, that the safety consisted in his intended son-in-law being free from debt; and you warrant this. The plain and common-sense import, therefore, of your letter, taken in connection with Mr Harvey's, is, that you led him to believe that Mr Templeton was not burdened with the debt of 10,000 merks in his father's bond; and you did this in answer to a letter stating that your answer would decide whether Mr Harvey would or would not pay down with his daughter the 15,000 merks, or indeed give his daughter to Templeton at all. Then, by your own admission, it appears, that you assigned your bond to your son-in-law, who has forced, or is forcing Templeton to pay the amount of it out of the very dower which you said Mr Harvey was safe in giving to his son-in-law. The next inquiry is, *cui bono*, what was your object in this proceeding. That is perfectly clear. You wanted payment of your bond, and you thought you could not get it unless your debtor got a large dowery with his wife. On putting all these things together, I am quite clear that a court of law would at once find that you have practised a deception; (excuse my freedom, but lawyers' tongues are like surgeons' knives;) and it is a principle of our law, as it is of that of nature, that no man shall enrich himself at the expense of his neighbour."

As the lawyer had taken care to use no fact in his argument, but what was furnished by Dryhope himself, the astounded ambidexter had nothing to say for himself. There was no shame in his constitution to prevent him replying; but there was discomfiture and disappointment so intense that he wished for nothing more ardently than to get out of the house, and vent his curses in the open air. Muttering a few words to the lawyer about his obligations to him for his opinion, he took up his papers, and hurried out. Before he fully recovered from the shock produced by the opinion, he had wandered considerably out of his way. In the midst of his anger, he resolved on consulting another authority, and accordingly proceeded to the house of Mr Crosbie. He received, however, no encouragement. The deception practised by him, was the foundation of the opinions that were given against him; and all his critical subtleties about constructions and readings of the letters, went for nothing.

Still, however, he would not pay. A discomfiture to a cunning man, when produced by the sharpness of his own weapons turned against himself, contains all the elements of the most unmitigated misery. The mere loss of anything, by a slight carelessness, annoys, beyond the usual effects of an equal loss produced by means beyond one's power; but to lose in the pride of an expected unjust gain—to have it proved that one has robbed his own purse and fooled his own judgment at the same time—and to be doomed to bear at once disappointment, remorse, shame, and loss, rising in a united array against one—is, perhaps, the greatest refinement of mere mental agony that a selfish, cold-blooded man, is capable of experiencing in this world. Dryhope could not stand this, and resolved to try the question in court.

The case was accordingly tried. Many other facts came out in the investigation. His manœuvres with Eccleshall, Walter Tait, and Mr Harvey, were all proved, and a clear

case of deception completely established. The case went against him, and he was obliged to pay Moorfield the whole sum.

The exposure of Dryhope, in this nefarious business, produced no effect upon him in the way of amendment; but it was peculiarly felt by his daughter, Maria. She was so much affected, that she could not be prevailed upon to visit at any of the neighbouring houses. Shame preyed upon her spirits, and produced a delicate state of health. The consequences might not have been felt in an ordinary condition of body, but they told heavily against her on the occasion of her bearing her first child. She relapsed—and, in a very short time, died; and her child, being sent to a strange nurse, experienced the fate of the mother. Dryhope's expectations in that quarter were thus disappointed, partly by his own proceedings; for it was only after the exposure of her father that Mrs Tait betrayed any symptoms of bad health.

Upon the death of his daughter, Dryhope endeavoured to prevail upon Walter Tait to repay him the 6000 merks he got with his daughter. The marriage having proved unavailing, he ought, said Dryhope, to place matters on their former footing, and pay him back the tocher. Walter Tait saw neither law nor justice in this appeal, and refused to comply with the old miser's request. But Dryhope had two objects. If he could not get the tocher, he might get Walter Tait still to marry Miss Whitten, and take her from his son.

"This is hard, Walter," said Dryhope; "I wadna hae used you in the same manner, if I had been placed in your situation. But maybe ye want the 6000 merks to stand in place o' the portion o' Ecclesha's daughter. I'm tauld she's vera partial to ye; an' her faither said to me, nae farther gane than yesterday, that he is vera sorry that ye took offence at something in his conversation and manner altogether unkennd to himsel, and ceased visitin his house as vael as speakin to his dochter. I wish the family every blessin, an' ye ken my feelings towards yersel. If I thoct ye wad resume yer auld luv, and benefit that worthy family by pittin, in the place o' my Maria, Ecclesha's dochter, I wad vera freely wish ye every joy o' the tocher ye got wi' mine."

"I do not intend to wed again," said Tait, who saw the drift of Dryhope; "but there's one thing I have made up my mind to, and that is, to assist your excellent son Hector in getting a good wife. I understand he is on the point of marriage with Ecclesha's daughter, who I know to be a very accomplished and kind-hearted girl. They will make an excellent couple; and, as I understand you are averse to the marriage, and intend to cut off Hector with a shilling, while Ecclesha has very little to give his daughter, I have made up my mind to make a present to Hector of his sister's dower. It will stand in place of a portion with his wife, and screen them against the effects of your anger and parsimony. I do not wish any remarks made on my conduct, and therefore we shall change this subject, and, if you please, speak upon something else."

Dryhope, however, could speak on nothing else. His efforts at restraining his passion were unavailing. He broke out in a torrent of abuse upon Tait, who was latterly obliged to call up his servant and shew his worthy father-in-law to the door.

Tait was as good as his word. Ecclesha had agreed to give his daughter to Hector Dryhope; and, upon their marriage, which took place as soon after Maria's death as custom and decency would permit, Tait paid to Hector the 6000 merks, which—being a large sum of money in those times—when joined to 4000 more, which an uncle of the young lady agreed to pay down, formed a very handsome fortune to the couple, who were, besides, blessed in possessing the pure affections of each other.

These repeated disappointments soured the temper of old Dryhope. The neighbouring lairs shunned his society. Books had no charms for him, and his children were dead or estranged from him. There was nothing left to him but the counting of his gold, an operation which grew so delightful to him, that he could not feel in his heart to make a will, destining it to a remote heir or to a charitable institution, even though he ardently wished to cut off his son. There was a something in the giving away, by the mere operation of writing, to take effect after his death, of so much money, which had occupied so much time in collecting, and which yielded so much pleasure in counting, that he could not, though he repeatedly sent for his attorney for the purpose, bring his mind to perform the act. He put it off from day to day, his procrastination being, by every move, strengthened by the weakness of his mind, and the increase of his sordid affections.

Having followed this course for many years, still keeping up his enmity towards his son, he gradually declined into dotage, and became unable, from the decay of his faculties, to dispose of his property. The only idea that remained on his mind with any life or vividness, was that of his wealth. So long as he could move, he visited his coffers; and even when he was confined to bed, he gratified his sole remaining feeling by getting his green charter-chest into his bed, where he amused himself with turning over, and endeavouring to read, the dry monuments of his riches. As his long bony fingers fumbled through the cracking parchment, and his dry lips muttered the sums, and debts, and lands he possessed, he realized an image which the pencil of the painter and the pen of the poet, successful as these have been, have not been able hitherto to portray. It was now in vain to think of making a settlement. The attorney declared that the time was past, and no power on earth could now prevent Hector Dryhope from enjoying the property of his ancestors.

In a short time the old man died; and his son, with his amiable wife, took possession of the house and property. The faults of his father were tower-lights to the son, which he did not lose the advantage of. It used to be a proverb of the father, that "It is guid to learn frae the misfortunes o' oor neebors." Hector recollected it; but he sighed to think that the word "father" should occupy the place of the corresponding word in the adage.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

It is said that there is honour amongst thieves; and, for the credit of the corps, we would willingly believe it; but the following story, we think, will shew that instances of bad faith have been sometimes known to occur even amongst them, to the great scandal of the profession generally.

At the period when the lucrative trade of thieving was in its high and palmy state on the Borders, there flourished a certain pair of gentlemen of the road, called Walter Laidlaw, or Watty o' the Dykes, and Richard Armstrong, or Halting Dick—a soubriquet, this, which he derived from a slight lameness in one of his legs. These two worthies were sworn brothers; yet neither of them would trust the other the length of a stirrup leather. They knew each other too well for that; but, as this was a mutual understanding, it was no cause of quarrel; and they got on remarkably well, in defiance of political economists, without the smallest particle of confidence being between them. The business they did in the way hinted at—for we feel a delicacy in employing broader terms in speaking of Walter and his friend Dick—was rather of a small kind; somewhere about fourth or fifth-rate, perhaps; although they certainly did sometimes make hits that would have done

credit to the proudest chieftain on the Borders. What trade, however, they did carry on, whether great or small, was, as often as possible, done jointly: that is, their depre-dations--we find we must use these ugly terms after all--were committed in partnership; but the proceeds were regularly divided, and appropriated by each separately; and, as they acted on all occasions with perfect unanimity, were extremely active and industrious, and rarely called in any of the other brethren to assist in their operations, their gains were considerable. Over and above all this, so loving were this worthy couple, that whenever the one heard of a promising thing, or had hit upon a good idea, he always gave notice of it to the other; and the two generally set out together to see what could be made of it.

On one occasion, however, it happened that Walter found it inconvenient to accompany Dick on a certain predatory expedition of high promise, of which the latter had given him the hint; and Dick was therefore under the necessity of going alone. This he did; and the result, after all, was most satisfactory. He secured a score of excellent well-conditioned sheep. These, Dick drove homewards during the night, from a distance of a good many miles; but, notwithstanding all the expedition he could use, morning threatened to break upon him before he could reach his own house; and in this dilemma he determined, though not without much reluctance, to quarter them with his friend Walter, whose domicile lay in the way, until the following evening.

It was with great reluctance, as we have said, that Dick came to this resolution; for he had sore misgivings with regard to their safety in Walter's possession--in other words, he by no means felt sure that he would ever get them out of his hands again, as he had the highest opinion of his friend's ingenuity in appropriating other people's goods, and of his tenacity in holding them when once in his grasp, whether they belonged to friend or foe. But, on this occasion, there was no other course left him; so he deposited the sheep with Walter, who congratulated him on his success, and promised to keep them snug and safe for him till he came for them on the following night.

On the following night, Dick came and demanded his sheep.

"Sheep!" exclaimed Walter, with well-affected astonishment. "What sheep, Dicky, my man, do ye mean?"

"What sheep, Watty, do I mean?" said Dick, in real amazement. "The sheep I left wi' ye last night, to be sure."

"Sheep ye left wi' me, Dicky!" replied Walter. "The deil a clood o' sheep o' yours ever I saw. The man's gite!"

"Are ye in jest or earnest, Watty?" inquired Dick, with increased amazement.

"Never was mair in earnest in my life," said Watty, coolly.

"Do you mean to deny that I left a score o' sheep wi' ye last night, and that ye promised to keep them safe for me till I cam for them? Do ye mean to deny that?" said Dick, emphatically.

"Most stoutly," replied Watty, with the utmost composure. "I canna confess to what's no true. My conscience forbids me to do that. I haena now, nor ever had a tail belongin to ye, Dick."

"And ye mean to stan' by that, through thick and thin?" said Dick, with one of the blankest looks imaginable; for ne saw that his sheep were gone gear.

"That I do," replied the other. "Tak my word for that. The deil a sheep yese get frae me on ony sic silly pretence as that ye hae mentioned."

By this time, Dick had recovered a little; and, moreover, by this time, also, a bright idea had struck him.

"Vera weel, Watty--vera weel," he said, with a sudden cheerfulness of manner, that not a little surprised Watty himself: "you and I'll no quarrel about twa or three sheep. Keep them in gude's name, and muckle guid may it

they do ye!" And during the short time that the friends remained together, subsequently, Dick made no further allusion to the sheep, but spoke on indifferent matters, as if nothing whatever had happened.

For some weeks after this, matters went on with the two friends precisely as before. They went on several expeditions together, and were, to all appearance, on as friendly terms as ever; neither of them making the slightest allusion to the small matter of the sheep that was between them. About the end of this period, however, Dick again appeared, one morning early, at Walter's door, with another score of sheep, and besought a similar favour with that he had asked on the former occasion--namely, that Walter would quarter them till the following night. With this request, the latter readily complied. But, on this occasion, Dick was accompanied by two or three assistants of the same kidney with himself, who counted over the sheep in Walter's presence, and saw them delivered to him.

On the following evening, Dick called for, and at once obtained his sheep, for there had been witnesses to the delivery; and Watty, aware of this, did not attempt a denial, as he had done before, as he felt such a proceeding would endanger his reputation with the craft.

Having got possession of his sheep, Dick bade his friend good night, and went rejoicing on his way.

Next night, however, Dick again called on his friend, Watty, and carefully concealing all expression of consciousness of having been there on the preceding evening, demanded his sheep over again.

"Your sheep, Dick!" said Watty, in amazement. "Did ye no get them a', every tail, last night?"

"What tails, Walter, my man, do ye mean?" said Dick, gravely.

"What tails should I mean?" replied Walter, now, in his turn, amazed at Dick's effrontery; "but the tails o' the sheep I delivered to ye last night."

"Sheep ye delivered to me, Watty!" said Dick, with imperturbable gravity. "Deil a clood ye gae me, last night. The man's gite."

"Come, now, ye're jokin, Dicky," exclaimed Walter, with a most rueful expression of countenance.

"Never was mair in earnest in my life," replied Dick.

"What! do ye mean to deny that I gied ye a score o' sheep, last night?"

"Most stoutly," answered his persevering, and determined assailant. "I canna confess to what's no true. It would gang against my conscience. Whar's yer witnesses that I got the sheep? Ye've nane; while I can prove that I put a score under yer charge, last night, and ye canna shew that they've been returned to me. Thae sheep, therefore, Watty, I still claim; and if ye refuse them, I'll expose ye, and ye'll lose a' credit wi' the craft. Sae, freen, just gie me up another score, without mair ado, and then you and I'll be quits, and no a bit waur freens than ever we war."

Wat o' the Dykes saw at once that he was in a dilemma--that Dick's ingenuity had fairly reversed their relative positions, and that he must refund. On this fact becoming evident to him, he thought for a moment, then burst out a laughing, in his friend's face, and confessed that he was "clean dune for." This admission he followed up by restoring Dick's sheep to him, and it was never understood that this little breach of confidence had the slightest injurious effect on the sincere friendship which subsisted between the two worthies.





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AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MOSSTROOPER.

"I AM determined to gie up this thieving trade, Dick. If I can only escape Sir Robert Cary this time, I'll turn honest man, hing up jack and spear, steel-cap and whinger, and lead the life o' a saint." This was said by Geordie Bourne—one of the most noted freebooters on the Borders, who flourished, in wickedness, about the end of the seventeenth century—and was addressed to one of his associates in crime. But how think you, good reader, was Geordie employed when he expressed this laudable resolution of abandoning his evil ways?—why, in driving before him a score of cattle which he had just harried in Northumberland. "If he could escape Sir Robert Cary!" Ay, but there was the rub. There was scarcely any escaping Sir Robert Cary, who was warden of the East March, on the English side—a generous-minded and high-spirited man, but the especial terror of all those gentlemen who practised the art of living at the expense of their neighbours. As warden of a march, this was his duty; and he performed it with a zeal and activity that threatened to ruin the trade altogether. His men were constantly abroad, on the look-out for visiters from the Scottish side, and those who were brought to him were hanged without mercy; and this would have been Geordie's fate long preceding the period of our story, had he not been an especial favourite with Sir Robert Kerr, the opposite warden, for whom Sir Robert Cary entertained a high respect.

At this period, the latter person lived in the Castle of Witherington, in Northumberland, and it was thither that all the Scottish freebooters were carried who were taken—and it was there that they suffered the penalty of their crimes. The residence of the warden was then, in every sense of the word, a garrison. It was filled with soldiers, both horse and foot, but chiefly the former. These were called the warden's men, and were dressed in a peculiar livery, to denote the service to which they belonged. They were placed under his command, to enable him to keep the peace of the district over which he presided, to repel aggressions, and to apprehend and bring to justice the lawless marauders with which the Borders were then infested. His men, as has been already said, were constantly employed in patrolling the country, and looking out for defaulters; so that the profession of the freebooter was one of great peril, for he had not only to brave the weapons of those whom he spoiled, but the halter of justice, which was always dangling over his head.

To return, however, to Geordie Bourne. In the little we have yet said of this gallant, we have by no means done full justice to his merits. Geordie was not simply a noted character in the times in which he lived, but an extraordinary one. The feats he had performed were the talk and the marvel of the Borders; and, certainly, if all was true that was said of him—nay, if the half of it was true—and there is little doubt that fully that proportion at least was so—he was one of the most daring and desperate ruffians that ever lived. He was, moreover, a man of great personal strength, of large stature, and ferocious courage. Altogether, he stood pre-eminent, even in those wild and lawless times, for everything

that was evil in and peculiar to the Border character. But, from what Geordie said on the occasion with which our story opens, it would appear that he had determined to reform. Whether Geordie was in earnest when he announced this resolution, and whether, if he was, it arose from compunctions of conscience, or from the terror of Sir Robert Cary's halter, it would not be easy to say. That he was serious, however, was a thing very much doubted by his friend and associate, Dick Johnston, or Long Dick, as he was more picturesquely styled, who received his communication, on the delicate subject in question, with a very hearty and a very unequivocal burst of laughter.

"You turn saint, Geordie!—you gie up thieving!" exclaimed Dick, so soon as his mirth would permit him to speak—"ay, when the Solway sands grow into green fields, and Annan Water is turned into wine—then ye'll gie up the trade, Geordie, but no till then."

"I'll no delay sae lang, though, Dick; and, laugh as ye like, that ye'll see," replied Geordie. "I'm tired o' this wark, and I'm beginnin' to think that I hae fully as much mischief scored against me already, as I'll be weel able to answer for." Then suddenly directing his attention to the cattle they were driving before them, and that with an interest which shewed pretty plainly that *their* destiny, at any rate, was to be in no way affected by his proposed reformation—"Hey, Jock," he exclaimed, "look after that brown cow, man. Do ye think folk get their guid for naething? She's gaun aff the road a'thegither. Confound the beast!—keep her till't, Jock, keep her till't, lad, till we see what kind o' kail she maks. We'll be the greens, and I'm sure she need na grudge to be the beef."

With this witticism, such as it is, the conversation terminated for a time, and the freebooters pursued their way in silence.

Remarking that they had not yet cleared the county of Northumberland, we change the scene for a moment to Witherington Castle, the residence of the warden of the East March, Sir Robert Cary, who, at the moment when we would introduce him to the reader, was engaged in writing despatches to his mistress, Queen Elizabeth, in which he was giving an account of the then present state of the country, and of his own proceedings for the previous month.

While thus employed, a person dressed in the warden's livery, entered the apartment, cap in hand, and advanced to a respectful distance from the warden, where he stood fast, and gave two or three gentle hems, to make the latter aware of his presence. He succeeded. Sir Robert raised his head, and, looking at the intruder—"Well, Watt," he said, "what's stirring now? Any interlopers across the March?"

"Why, my Lord," replied the person interrogated, "I have just been informed that Geordie Bourne, with half a dozen Scotch thieves, has been seen on the tramp, and, if my intelligence be correct, is at this moment driving before him a score of Sir Thomas Carlton's best beeves."

"Ah! Geordie Bourne!" exclaimed Sir Robert, evidently excited by the intelligence—"that fellow would be worth catching indeed. He's one of the most desperate thieves in

Christendom; but a valiant rascal withal, and, as I'm told, a very pretty fellow to boot. To horse then, Watt, my man," added the warden, "and see if you cannot fall in with him. If he is not killed, you will, of course, bring him to Witherington; and I had rather you should not kill him, if you can help it."

"How many men shall I take, my lord?" inquired this subaltern officer of the warden's—for such he was.

"Why, how many men has Bourne with him?" rejoined Sir Robert.

"Six, my Lord, I'm told," replied Watt.

"Then take a dozen with you, Watt, and see they be well armed; for these fellows don't part with their prey very readily, and there may be blows going, especially with such a desperado as Geordie Bourne."

Watt bowed, and left the apartment, and Sir Robert Cary resumed his writing. In ten minutes afterwards, thirteen well-mounted, and well-armed troopers, were seen issuing from the gate of Witherington Castle, and proceeding in the direction of the Scottish Border.

For some time the party proceeded on their way in silence, without exchanging a word—nothing being heard amongst them but the jingling of their harness, and an occasional imprecation on their horses; but this silence was at length thus broken:—

"There will be some knocks going, Jack, if we fall in with this fellow, Bourne," said Watt Tomlins, to the man who rode next him. "Geordie hits hard, and I'm told is one of the best shots in these parts; but we can strike a fair blow too, Jack, and handle a bow not amiss either; so, I think, we havn't much to fear from him, after all."

"Why, no, not a bit, Watt," replied Jack, a stout burly Northumbrian. "We're two to one at any rate, and that's some comfort—that is, Watt," he added, "if you have been rightly informed of the number Bourne has with him. If there's an error there against us, however, it will be rather an awkward business, I doubt."

The reader will at once perceive, that, notwithstanding the bravery of this talk, there was fear at the bottom of it. In truth, the warden's men, especially the two who just now spoke, would rather have had to do with half the thieves on the Borders, than with Geordie Bourne alone, of whose courage and prowess they had heard the most tremendous stories. They, therefore, went on the present errand with no very comfortable feelings; and there is little doubt that, had it not been for the fear of exposure, and the loss of their situations, they would have reported at the castle that Geordie was not anywhere to be seen. But there were others of the party composed of better fighting materials than Watt Tomlins and Jack Foster; and those, though they entertained all due respect for Geordie's strength and valour, were men who would not flinch from their duty from fear of any one. Of some of these, indeed, it was alleged that they had done a little business in Geordie's way themselves, before they entered the service of the warden; so that, in employing them, the latter had acted on the well-known principle, set a thief to catch a thief; and certainly those of this description who were in his service, were by far the most expert in detecting and apprehending depredaters.

The party had now ridden for several hours without discovering any trace of the object of their pursuit; and, as it was getting dark, they had begun to lose all hopes of success, and to think of returning home. Ah! Geordie, Geordie, lad! you are now rubbing shoulders with a certain apparatus which shall be nameless. It is touch and go with you, Geordie. If the warden's company return at this moment, you are safe. If they go on but another 100 yards, for it is only a turn in the road that conceals you from them, it is all up with you. Your fate

is trembling in the balance, and a breath will turn the beam.

The warden's men had now called a halt to consider the momentous question just alluded to—that is, whether they should proceed or return; when it was decided, *nem. con.*, that they should put about, and live in the hope of catching Geordie on some future day; and on this resolution they were about to act, when one of the troop, suddenly struck with a second thought, proposed that they should proceed precisely the length of that very turn in the road on which Geordie's fate depended, ere they abandoned the chase. As the distance was but trifling, this was readily agreed to; and forward again the whole party rode. On arriving at the stipulated point, they once more drew bridle, suspended all conversation, and, in profound silence listened attentively to ascertain if there was anything suspicious moving at a distance. While some were thus employed, others were endeavouring to peer through the gloom of the twilight with a similar view.

"Nothing to be heard or seen, Will—nothing moving," said Tomlins, to a stout, ferocious-looking Northumbrian Borderer, who rode next to him. "Geordie has escaped us this bout."

"Not so fast, Watt, not so fast," replied the person addressed, who was leaning over his horse's neck, and intently scanning the dusky road that stretched away before them in the distance—"I see something moving yonder that looks very like a drove of cattle; and hark, Watt!" he added, "there's a shout! On my life, here is Geordie, after all, comrades." This was said in a loud whisper, and the whole party looked intently, and without exchanging a word, in the direction indicated, when all agreed that there was something to be seen, of which it would be proper to have a nearer view; and, under this conviction, the troop again set forward at a hard trot, which, in a few seconds, brought them up with the object of their suspicions. These suspicions were well founded. It was indeed Geordie Bourne, his associates, and their booty. On coming up with the freebooters, the warden's men rushed in upon them, when Geordie himself, ere he was aware of his danger, or could prepare for his defence, was felled to the earth by Will Armstrong; and, in the next instant, his hands were firmly bound behind his back with cords. The superiority of numbers with which he was attacked, left Geordie, powerful and courageous as he was, without a shadow of a chance from resistance. This he perceived, and therefore made no attempt to return the violence with which he was assailed. On regaining his feet, however, being yet ignorant who they were who had thus so suddenly set upon him, he inquired, in a tone and manner which implied a threat of fierce retribution—"Who here dares—who among ye dares to avow this night's work?—Let me hear him speak."

"I dare," replied Will Armstrong—"I dare avow it, Geordie Bourne, and perhaps so will Sir Robert Cary."

"Ha! you're warden's men, then," said the freebooter, alarmed at the discovery that he was in the hands of the dreaded enemy of his profession, and becoming instantly more calm and subdued in his manner. "Weel, there's nae help for't, lads—every dog has his day—I hae had mine, and I suppose I maun now straught a tow at Witherington. Deil may care," he added, after a moment's pause—"it's no sax yards o' cord, even though there should be a loop at the end o't, that's gaun to frighten Geordie Bourne." Then instantly recovering all the natural intrepidity of his character, he began to shout out, even while his captors were in the act of still further securing his arms by additional ligatures—

And it's hey, my lads, for the bonny moonlight,
That on mountain and muirland is streaming sae bright:
Gae saddle my steed, for I maun ride the night
As far as the English Border.

"Tak tent, Jock, lad, for the warden's men
Are riding o'er hill and riding through glen."
Tuts, sax Scots lads 'ill keep twa score and ten
O' sic fockless loons in order.

And Geordie would have gone on with the complimentary stanzas, of which the first and second have been quoted, had he not been interrupted by a peremptory command to move on. The troop had now formed round the captive, who, besides having his arms bound, as already described, was secured to two horsemen, one on each side of him; and, in this order, the whole party marched on towards Witherington, where they arrived a little before the hour of supper, when Geordie was immediately conveyed to the strong room appropriated for the reception of such involuntary visitors. Having thus secured his prisoner, Watt Tomlins repaired to Sir Robert Cary, and informed him that Geordie Bourne was taken, and in custody.

"Ha! so you have caught him at last, Watt!—I am glad of it," said the warden. "Did he make any resistance?"

"None, my lord," replied Tomlins. "We were too many for him. We took him as gently as a lamb, merely by knocking him down."

"Very gentle proceeding, indeed, Tomlins. It's so far well, however—glad there's no one hurt. What like a fellow is he, this Bourne, Watt? I have heard much of the knave's valour and strength, and should like to see him. He would be an acquisition, the rogue, to my troop, if he could be prevailed upon to take to such an honest calling. Why, I would spare the rascal's life if he would, for I cannot help respecting his bravery, and am loath to put him to death, both on that account and on account of my friend, Sir Robert Kerr, who has a kindness for the knave."

"Why, my lord, as to his appearance," said Tomlins, "he is, I must say, as pretty a fellow as ever put foot in stirrup—six feet, every inch, my lord—and a chest like a horse's; but I fear we couldn't depend on him."

"I doubt that myself, Tomlins," said the warden; "however, I'll think of the matter; but I am unwilling to hang the rogue, if any good at all could be found in him. I'll think of it, however, Tomlins—I'll think of it," repeated Sir Robert; at the same time nodding his head, in a manner expressive of his wish to be left alone.

Tomlins, taking the hint, bowed and retired.

Soon after the supper hour of the garrison, and when all was quiet within the castle, the door of the strong room in which Geordie Bourne was confined, was cautiously opened, and three persons, dressed in the livery of warden's men, entered the apartment. Geordie's athletic figure was extended at full length upon a bench, when the intruders first made their appearance; but he started up on their entrance, and presented such an appalling personification of strength and ferocity, as startled for a moment those who had thus voluntarily obtruded themselves on his seclusion; and, secure as they were—for they were well armed, while he was totally defenceless—they could not contemplate his thick muscular throat, which was bare—thus giving full effect to the fierce but bold and manly countenance of the outlaw—without misgivings as to their safety with such a powerful and desperate man.

Suppressing this fear, however, which, indeed, was wholly unnecessary, as the prisoner neither entertained, nor even conceived for a moment, any intention of doing them an injury—

"Geordie," said the foremost of his visitors, "we have stolen a march on your keepers, just to condole with you a little on your unhappy mischance. We are really sorry to see a brave man like you, Geordie, in this melancholy condition, and we have come to express this to you, and to beg of you to believe that we would help ye out of your strait if we could.

"Thank ye, friends, thank ye," replied the captive; "but it's a' owre now wi' Geordie Bourne. It's a' luck,

lads, a' luck, and the chance has gane against me—that's a'. Never mind—I hae dune pretty fair wark on the English side in my day, and that's some comfort. There's twa or three there, I'm thinkin, that'll no be inconsolable for my fate, nor be at any loss whether to laugh or to cry when they hear o' my end."

"Ay, Geordie," said one of his visitors, "you have been a pretty wild gallant in your day, as we have heard. Tom," continued the speaker, now turning round to and addressing one of his associates, "go to the buttery, and get a jorum of double ale for our friend Bourne here. It will comfort him a little, and lighten heavy thoughts a bit." The order thus given was immediately obeyed, and, in two or three minutes, the messenger returned with a large tankard of the beverage just named. The vessel was handed to Geordie, who instantly applied it to his lips, and took such a copious draught of its powerful contents as soon produced a very sensible effect upon him. His eye began to glisten, and his whole countenance to beam with a savage humour; and, as a natural concomitant of these symptoms, he became extremely communicative. But hold, Geordie, lad—hold, if ye value your life. Be cautious—ye know not who is listening to you. Make no unnecessary disclosures of your little peccadilloes. You long-tongued fool, what assurance have ye that the lord-warden himself does not hear every word you are saying? You know not who are your auditors—neither, apparently, do you care. On, on ye go, little recking that you are but securing your own destruction.

"Ye say right, friends," now said the unwary freebooter; "I have been a pretty rough gallant in my day, and hae dune some things that your warden here would scarce thank me for, I'm thinkin." And, with this preface, Geordie proceeded to unfold a tale of crime that made his auditors stand aghast, accustomed as they were, from the nature of their duties and peculiar situation, to scenes of bloodshed and rapine.

Of these voluntary confessions of Geordie's, as many of them were wholly unfit to be recorded, we will enter into no details, but content ourselves with saying that they included almost every species of human wickedness, and brought on the head of the perpetrator a responsibility for almost every conceivable description of human guilt.

Nor was the horrible effect of these disclosures lessened by the manner in which they were made. The marauder chuckled and laughed as he related the various deeds of violence in which he had been concerned, either as a principal or accessory; and, with look and manner, called on his auditors for approbation of the dexterity with which some of his robberies had been conducted; and, to say truth, there certainly were many of them contrived with an ingenuity, and executed with a boldness, coolness, and dexterity, which would have gained for Geordie immortal renown, had he had the good fortune to have been born a Spartan. As it was, however, they only secured him a halter.

"Believe me or no, lads," thus Geordie introduced one of his adventures, "I ance rode saxty miles in ae night, without ever drawing bridle, excepting for about the space o' five minutes. I left my ain hoose at the gloamin—rode thirty miles—did my job, and was back again other thirty before cock-crawin, without ever being missed by ony-body."

"By my troth, an excellent night's work, George!" said the spokesman of the three warden's men. "Pray, what was the cause of you making such an extraordinary exertion on that particular occasion?"

"Why, the cause, ye see, sirs, was just this," replied Geordie:—"At the last Border meeting at Lockerby, a Cumberland man, o' the name Tinlin, comes up to me, and he says, says he—'Geordie, an' it warna for breakin' the peace, I wad like to break your head, for I dinna believe ye're the man ye pretend to be.' Weel, ye see sirs, I

drew, as I had guid cause to do, and was about to lend the fellow a lick wi' my whinger, when wha should come up behint me at the moment, and grip my sword arm, but Sir Robert Kerr, just as I was gaun to strike? 'Ha, Geordie!' said he, 'at your auld tricks again! Come, put up your whinger, my man, and dinna be breakin' the peace o' the meetin'.' Weel, you see, as Sir Robert was a good friend o' mine, and had stood my part in many a strait, I did as he bade me, but wi' a secret oath that I wad tak an opportunity after of clearin' scores wi' Tinlin. And, by my feth! it wasna lang or I got amends o' him. The very next nicht, having, beforehand, learned whar he lived, I slippit my beast quietly out o' the stable, mounted and set off at a swingin' trot for Tinlin's, where I arrived about twelve o'clock at nicht—a distance o' thirty miles; but I kent every fit o' the way. On reachin' the house, I rapped at the door. 'Wha's there?' cried Tinlin, jumpin' out o' his bed. 'A friend,' said I; and I gied him ane o' your ain names, lads—that is, the name o' ane o' your ain men whom I kent he knew—and said, I was frae the warden wi' a message to him to attend a muster. Weel, you see, on that, Tinlin opens the door. I was stan'in' ready wi' my drawn whinger in my hand; and the moment he did this, I gied him at least a foot o' the cauld airn in his wame, before he could say Tintock, and he fell dead at my feet. Having done this, I entered the house, turned out his wife and weans to the drift, set fire to the biggin, and mounted my horse by the licht o't; and, in little mair than four hours after, was in my ain house, without ony ane being a bit the wiser." And here Geordie gave a chuckle of satisfaction at the recollection o' his atrocious feat, and looked to his auditors for a similar expression of approbation. In this, however, he was disappointed. They were by far too much horrified by what they had heard, even to assume the appearance of gratification. Indeed, the feelings of him who seemed to be a sort of leading personage amongst the three, appeared, from the sudden gravity and sternness of expression which now sat on his countenance, to have undergone a complete and unfavourable change regarding the prisoner. His manner towards him was no longer marked by that frankness and familiarity which had distinguished it on his first entrance; and, in place of listening with anything like interest, or exhibiting any appearance of being entertained by Geordie's communications, as he had been for a time, he now sat with his arms folded across his breast, seemingly engrossed in thoughts of his own. Geordie perceived the change alluded to in his auditor, and immediately drew in; but it was too late. He had already said more than would have hanged a dozen. Abandoning, however, the confessional, or it might, perhaps, be more correctly called the boasting system, Geordie now took up the pathetic, and resumed, after a short pause—

"But it's a owre wi' Geordie Bourne, noo, lads; he'll hae nae mair hanlin' o' such doings as these. No, I'll see the bonny holms o' Netherby nae mair, nor the saft moonlight fain' on the Cheviot fells.

"And it's hame, hame, hame, my bonny brown steed,
And it's riderless hame ye maun gang;
The warden has me fast, and this nicht is my last,
For he swears that the morn I maun hang."

"I doubt it is even so, Geordie," said the person, gravely, to whom we have above alluded, on the former's concluding this very appropriate ditty; at the same time rising from his seat, and immediately after bidding the prisoner coldly a good-night, when he quitted the apartment, followed by his associates, the last of whom carefully secured the door with bolt and padlock.

On leaving the captive, his three visitors proceeded down the private staircase, that led to the warden's library, which they entered, when he who had acted as spokesman, during the interview with Geordie Bourne, hastily began to

divest himself of the lively in which he was attired—a process which gradually discovered the richer and more imposing dress of the lord warden underneath; the person spoken of, being no other than Sir Robert Cary himself, who had adopted the disguise which he had just thrown off, in order at once to gratify his curiosity with a sight of the celebrated freebooter who was his prisoner, and to ascertain whether he could not discover anything in the man which might afford him a pretext for sparing his life, which, as has been already hinted, he felt some disposition to do. The result, however, of this benevolent attempt, we leave the warden himself to communicate. Having thrown off his disguise, he flung himself into a chair, and leaning his head upon his hand, thought in silence for a few moments; then looking to Watt, who was one of the three that had visited the prisoner, and who was now waiting the warden's commands regarding him—"That fellow Bourne must hang, Watt," he said; "he must, by Saint Eloy. There never was such a villain on the face of this earth. I cannot spare him—I must not; it would be a gross dereliction of my duty to spare the life of such an atrocious ruffian. Hang, therefore, he must, Watt; and do you see that execution be done upon him betimes to-morrow morning."

On the following morning, when the gates of Witherington Castle were thrown open, the lifeless body of Geordie Bourne was seen hanging from a beam in one of the inner court-yards of the building.

THE FORGER.

IN a small town in the south of Scotland, there lived about seventy years since, a person of the name of Wotherspoon. He was a merchant, and reputed wealthy. But Mr Wotherspoon's wealth was not by any means the sole cause of the respect in which he was held by all who knew him; although, no doubt, it had the usual effect in this way, even in his case. He was respected for his integrity in his dealings, and for the excellence of his moral character, generally; while he was esteemed, nay, beloved, for his singularly mild, kind, and inoffensive disposition.

At the period of our story, Mr Wotherspoon was about thirty-two years of age; and, as he had been remarkably industrious in, and attentive to, the business in which he was engaged, and not a little fortunate in some speculations into which he had entered, he had, even at this comparatively early stage of life, acquired the reputation already alluded to—namely, that of being a wealthy man. But it was not in reputation alone that Mr Wotherspoon was rich. He was actually and truly so; and he was so, too, without ever having done a mean thing to obtain his wealth; more, it is suspected, than can be said of nine-tenths of those who acquire wealth by their own exertions.

Having arrived at this prosperity, Mr Wotherspoon thought he might now, with every propriety, take a step which he had long meditated, but which he had hitherto refrained from taking, at once from a sense of honour and from motives of prudence. This step was, to marry. The object of Mr Wotherspoon's affections, however, was not yet to seek. She had long been found; and it was his desire and anxiety to be previously possessed of means sufficient to secure to her that degree of happiness and comfort to which he conceived her entitled, alone, that had prevented them uniting their destinies many years before. But the period had now arrived, he thought, when this could be done without imprudence.

The lady of Mr Wotherspoon's choice was a Miss Edington, the daughter of a neighbouring country gentleman, of respectable family, but of small fortune. Lucy Edington was a singularly beautiful girl; and, in character and disposition

is estimable as in person she was lovely. But William Wotherspoon, though the favoured, was not the only lover of Lucy Edington. Her patience and good temper were severely tried by the pertinacious addresses of a young man in her own neighbourhood of the name of Lorimer. This person was the son of a farmer, and had been brought up to the profession of the law, in Edinburgh, where, however, he had, by wild and extravagant courses, destroyed his own health, and nearly ruined his father.

For some years previous to this period, he had been leading an idle life at home—ill health, brought on by his own reckless conduct, having, in the first instance, compelled him to abandon his profession; and an unsettled disposition and dissipated habits preventing him from resuming it, when he could no longer plead the apology of indisposition.

Lorimer, however, was a decidedly clever young man, and his abilities, had they been seconded by good moral principles, would undoubtedly have, in time, raised him high in his profession; but the latter were entirely wanting in his character, as he never suffered any considerations of propriety, decency, or even common honesty, to interfere with, or interrupt the indulgence of his appetites. He had acquired, moreover, a complete knowledge of, and great dexterity in, the practice of the chicaneries of law, or rather, perhaps, in the art of violating or evading it. The baser departments of legal knowledge had been his chief study. Indeed, for them he had a natural turn, and always felt more in his element when helping a man to cheat his neighbour, than when assisting him to recover his rights. In the former case, he was quite at home—all sharpness and intellect. In the latter, he was no more than a very ordinary person, evincing none of that tact or talent which carried him so swimmingly through the other. But Lorimer, though a clever knave, had none of the redeeming qualities—if such a character can be conceded them—which are frequently found in persons of his description; we mean, liveliness and good humour. He was not a facetious scoundrel. On the contrary, he was quiet, reserved, and morose. He was, in short, what is called a deep designing villain, and the saturnine and sinister expression of his countenance at once proclaimed this.

Such, then, was the rival of William Wotherspoon for the love of Lucy Edington; but he was a rival only by his own constituting, not by any encouragement which he received from Lucy, who loathed and detested him. Lorimer, however, though in part aware of this, persevered in his suit; hoping, in time, to accomplish, by the exercise of his best and favourite faculty, cunning, what honest dealing could not achieve for him.

All his ingenuity, however, could not prevent the marriage of William Wotherspoon and Lucy Edington from taking place. They were united; and the "happy occasion" was celebrated with much mirth and festivity; but the spirit of a demon was hovering over the ceremonies, in the shape of the evil wishes of Lorimer, whose worst passions, where all were bad, were excited to their utmost tension by an occurrence which at once extinguished his own hopes for ever, and consummated those of the man whom, of all others, he most detested—Wotherspoon.

From the hour in which that occurrence took place, Lorimer vowed the most deadly vengeance against his successful rival, and determined that, if ever an opportunity should present itself of doing him an injury, he would avail himself of it, although it were to the extent of his utter destruction and ruin.

Of doing Wotherspoon personal violence, Lorimer did not dream; not that he would not willingly have torn him to pieces, if he could, but, besides being something of a coward, he had a wholesome terror of those laws which his knowledge of them, seconded by his own inclinations, told him it was safer to evade than to brave.

His schemes of vengeance, therefore, took a professional complexion, if, indeed, vague as they at this time were, they could be said to have assumed any complexion at all. He hoped, in short, by some means or other, to get Wotherspoon involved in the meshes of the law. In the meantime, indeed, there was no prospect whatever of this, or of any other mode of injuring him, being likely to present itself. But the time might come, he thought; and in this hope he cherished his wrath, which, as the sequel will shew, was none the worse for keeping.

In the meantime, years passed on, and Wotherspoon continued to prosper in his business; while his domestic happiness—which had been, since the day of his marriage, all nay, more than he had ever, even in his most sanguine moments, expected—was yearly increasing, with successive additions to his little family circle. In the lover of his youth, Mr Wotherspoon found a kind and affectionate companion of his more advanced years; for Lucy Edington underwent none of those unamiable changes which so frequently attend a change of condition with those of her sex, and which so often mar the happiness of the married life, by occasioning disappointment and regret. If somewhat less volatile than when a maiden, such deficiency was more than compensated for by the matronly grace with which some years of the married state had invested her. But, in manner and disposition, Lucy Edington remained unchanged.

The time which flew thus happily and prosperously over the married pair, and saw them conduct themselves in all circumstances, and on all occasions, with a propriety that merited this good fortune, witnessed very different conduct and very different results on the part of Lorimer. That worthless person still remained an idler about his father's house; breaking the old man's heart with his wild and dissolute practices; for in these he continued to indulge whenever he could command the means; and, as to the mode of obtaining these means, he was not at all scrupulous, as his father frequently found to his cost. Young Lorimer would now, in short, do almost anything for money, for which he was often greatly at a loss, to enable him to pursue his desperate and reckless courses; and, acting on this principle, he had opened a source of occasional emolument, by practising, in a small and irregular way, the profession to which he had been bred. He became a low pettifogger, and quickly grew notorious throughout the country as legal adviser in all cases of roguery.

Leaving Lorimer thus creditably employed, we return to follow, for a time, the fortunes of Mr Wotherspoon. It has been said that, during several years succeeding his marriage, Mr Wotherspoon continued to prosper, and to deserve his prosperity—and it was so. But what measure of prudence or foresight can secure a continuance of any worldly blessing, or prevent those changes and vicissitudes, whether for better or for worse, which it is the lot of man to experience? In an evil hour, Mr Wotherspoon became a partner, to the extent of nearly his whole means, in that ruinous bubble known by the name of the Ayr Bank, which involved many families in misery and poverty. The speculation was an exceedingly plausible one; and the destruction occasioned by its failure, was proportioned to the confidence it had inspired. We need scarcely, we presume, employ plainer terms to intimate to the reader that the Ayr Bank broke down, and that Mr Wotherspoon was one of the many hundreds that were ruined by its insolvency.

Although thus suddenly and cruelly bereft of the fruits of many an anxious and toilsome year, and thus hurled at once from independence to comparative poverty, Mr Wotherspoon did not lose heart, but determined on making another effort to repair the ruined fabric of his fortunes. Having readily procured a settlement with his creditors—one and all of whom entertained the highest opinion of his integrity and pitied his misfortunes—he again commenced business

but, in this, he experienced all the difficulties incident to his equivocal position. Credit was reluctantly given, and demands were peremptorily enforced. Still Mr Wotherspoon persevered; and, though greatly straitened occasionally for means, continued not only to keep his feet, but began gradually to improve his circumstances. He was yet, however, in difficulties; and this was pretty generally known amongst those who knew anything at all about him.

It happened, about this period, that Mr Wotherspoon was one day invited to dine at the head inn of the town in which he resided, with a commercial traveller, with whom he was in the habit of dealing, and to whom he had at this time a considerable sum of money to pay. After dinner, when settling accounts with the traveller, Mr Wotherspoon, who was a little elevated with the wine he had drunk, remarked, as he handed over the money to the former, that, if he had just one other bill for £50, then running, paid, he would, notwithstanding all that had happened him, be clear with the world. "But," he added, jocularly, "I'll find ways and means to pay that too, although I should take the highway for it, and cry, 'Stand and deliver,' or clap somebody's name to a piece of stamped paper." Mr Wotherspoon's friend laughed at the absurdity of these imprudent expressions, coming, as they did, from one who was so unlikely to have recourse to the expedients alluded to; and the matter went off as a very passable joke.

In about a month after this, as Mrs Wotherspoon was one day standing at the door of her husband's shop, with one of her children in her arms, her curiosity was excited by seeing a post-chaise driven up with unusual speed to the door of the principal inn, which was directly opposite the shop; and she called to her husband, who was inside, to look at the carriage—at the same time expressing a wonder who they could be that were travelling in such haste. But, if Mrs Wotherspoon's curiosity and surprise were excited by this simple circumstance, how much more was the former increased when she saw the two persons who stepped out of the chaise, look, for a few seconds, in the direction of the shop, say two or three words to each other, and then cross the street towards it!

"They're coming here, William," she said, in amazement; and addressing her husband. "Who, on all the earth, can they be? and what can they be wanting?"

"Indeed, Lucy," replied Mr Wotherspoon, no less surprised than his wife at the impending visitation, "that's more than I can conjecture; but we'll soon see." By this time the strangers were upon them.

"Is your name William Wotherspoon?" abruptly and sternly inquired one of the strangers.

"It is, sir," replied the former.

"Humph!" ejaculated the querist, and began searching his pocket, from which he drew a slip of paper. Then again addressing Wotherspoon—

"Mr Wotherspoon, you are our prisoner. We apprehend you in the King's name, and you must immediately accompany us to Edinburgh."

"Your prisoner, gentlemen!" said Mr Wotherspoon, becoming as pale as death, and trembling violently as he spoke. "What for? What crime have I committed? What do you charge me with?"

"Ah! you don't know, I suppose, and can't guess," said one of the messengers, sneeringly; for such, indeed, was the character of the strangers.

"No, indeed, gentlemen, I cannot," said Mr Wotherspoon, in a state of great agitation.

"Very like a mouse trap, but not so small," exclaimed the messenger. "However, I always like to be civil, and I shall tell you—though I'm confoundedly mistaken, if you don't know it pretty well already. You are apprehended, Mr Wotherspoon," he continued, (and now eyeing his prisoner—

stood—with a scrutinizing glance,) "on a charge of forgery; so, if you please, we'll bundle and go."

In following out this extraordinary conversation, we have necessarily lost sight for a moment of Mrs Wotherspoon. But we do not now call the reader's notice to her with any intention of describing the effects which the appalling occurrence just recorded had at first upon her. This we think it better to leave to the reader's imagination. But her subsequent conduct is more within the power of description.

The unfortunate woman, having hastily flung down the smiling unconscious innocent that was in her arms when the messengers entered the shop, flung her arms around her husband's neck, and frantically exclaimed that no one should tear her William from her.

"My William guilty of forgery!" she wildly exclaimed. "No, no, gentlemen—it's false, it's false. He has always been an honest man, and is well known to be so. He would sooner die than commit such a crime, and I will get all our neighbours to prove this." Then throwing herself on her knees at the messengers' feet, she implored them, by every consideration of humanity and justice, not to take her William away.

"He is innocent, gentlemen," she exclaimed; "before God, he is innocent of the crime you charge him with. Oh! do not take him from me, gentlemen. Look at that babe there, and pity me, and pity us all. Do not believe what has been told you about his having committed a forgery. My William never did, and never could do such a wicked thing."

"May be so, mistress," said one of the messengers, little affected by these womanish appeals to a clemency which he had no power to shew; "but we must do our duty. Here's the warrant," he said, exhibiting a piece of paper which he held in his hand, "for your husband's apprehension, and we must see to its execution."

Having said this, he turned away from her to his associate and Wotherspoon, whom the former had already secured by handcuffs; and, in a few seconds after, the unfortunate man found himself seated in the post-chaise, to which fresh horses had been put, with a messenger on each side of him. A few seconds more, and the carriage was on its way to Edinburgh—a circumstance which was a relief to the unhappy man; for, until the chaise started, he was not out of hearing of the shrieks of his miserable wife, who had ultimately been forcibly torn from him.

On arriving at Edinburgh, Mr Wotherspoon was immediately carried to jail to abide his trial for the forgery with which he was charged.

This forgery consisted in the felonious adhibition of the name of one James Laidlaw, a wealthy farmer in Liddesdale, to a bill for £50. This bill purported to be drawn by Wotherspoon on Laidlaw, and was indorsed by the former to James Lorimer, who again indorsed it, and discounted it in one of the banks in Edinburgh.

Some time previous to this bill becoming due, Lorimer called at the bank where it had been cashed, and stated to the manager, with whom he sought a private interview, that he had discovered that the bill which he had discounted there, bearing to be the acceptance of James Laidlaw to William Wotherspoon, was a forgery, and that he could lead proof to shew that Wotherspoon was the perpetrator of the crime. The matter being immediately investigated, it was found that there were sufficient grounds to institute a criminal action against Wotherspoon; and his apprehension, as already described, was the result.

Wotherspoon, in the meantime, however, denied all knowledge of the bill, said he had no transactions whatever with Lorimer or Laidlaw, and that he did not know the latter, even by sight, or in any other way; and in this utter denial he remained firm and consistent to the last, to the great perplexity of his own counsel, who, while he

could not resist the weight of evidence which was mustered against his client, and which indeed seemed conclusive, was yet staggered by the cool and pertinacious manner in which Wotherspoon maintained and insisted on his innocence.

In due time, the trial of the latter, for the forgery, came on before the High Court of Justiciary, when a long and careful investigation of the case was entered into.

The first witness called by the public prosecutor, was Lorimer, who deponed that the bill had been paid over to him by Wotherspoon, for professional services rendered the latter at the time of his bankruptcy. That it was Wotherspoon's handwriting. That Wotherspoon had stated that he had obtained the bill from Laidlaw, in payment of an account for goods with which he had furnished him. That he had discovered the forgery, by having asked Laidlaw, whom he accidentally met some time after, if he had ever had any dealings with Wotherspoon? when the former said he never had, and knew nothing about him. Had, from some circumstances which subsequently occurred, suspected that the bill was a forgery; particularly from Wotherspoon saying, that he would be obliged to retire it himself, in the first instance, as Laidlaw had intimated to him that he could not meet it when due. Witness, knowing Laidlaw to be a wealthy man, thought this very unlikely, and hence his suspicions—suspicions, he said, which were greatly increased by a circumstance which he begged permission to state to the court. Witness then proceeded to relate the expression used by Mr Wotherspoon on the occasion of his dining with the commercial traveller, which, he said, happening to be in an adjoining apartment, he had overheard.

This witness was followed by Laidlaw, the alleged acceptor of the bill, who swore that the signature attached to it was not his handwriting; and, in this assertion, he was supported by other evidence; adding, that he had no knowledge whatever of the prisoner, and had never had any transactions with him.

James Anderson, Wotherspoon's shopman, was next called; and when asked if the bill, which was shewn him, was his master's handwriting, answered, that he could not say—that it was certainly very like; thought, however, on the whole, that it was not, but would not swear to this. Asked if he ever saw or knew Lorimer to be employed by his master; said, he did not. Asked, if he meant that he never was employed by him, or merely that such a circumstance did not consist with his knowledge? Answered, that it did not consist with his knowledge; but allowed that Lorimer might have been employed by the prisoner without his knowing it.

A person of the name of Andrew Hislop was next put into the witness-box, who swore that Wotherspoon had told him that he had settled with Lorimer, and that he had given him an indorsed bill, in payment of his account; that he had said, at the same time, that the bill was the acceptance of Laidlaw, and was in payment of an account for goods which the prisoner had furnished him.

James Bryce, stabler and innkeeper, Grassmarket, Edinburgh, in whose house the transaction, which was the subject of investigation, was said to have taken place, next deponed that Lorimer, whom he knew very well, and Mr Wotherspoon, the prisoner at the bar, came to his house on the evening of the 14th September; and that he, being asked to sit down at table with them, saw Mr Wotherspoon indorse over a bill to Mr Lorimer, saying, at the same time, that he believed that would about clear scores between them. This witness's evidence was corroborated by that of his wife, who had been also asked to join the party, she being well acquainted with Lorimer, who used to frequent the house when he resided in Edinburgh.

As these two witnesses were of highly respectable character, their evidence was held by the Court to be conclusive against the prisoner. The latter, in his defence by his

counsel, admitted that he had been in Edinburgh on the day condescended on by the witnesses who had just been examined, but denied that he had ever been in their house, or knew anything at all about them. Denied, that he had ever made use of the language, or anything at all like it, attributed to him by Hislop; denied that he ever had employed Lorimer in any way, or ever was owing him a farthing. Admitted, that he had used the expressions attributed to him by Lorimer on the occasion condescended on, and acknowledged their impropriety; but said they were spoken merely in jest and in a spirit of levity, excited by the wine he had drank.

For the rest, the prisoner had only the general respectability of his character to support him, of which he produced abundant proof to the court, and a simple denial of all that had been alleged against him; but this, of course, was of little avail in the face of the direct and positive evidence of his guilt which had been adduced.

The difficulties, too, in which Wotherspoon was known to be at the time, had a powerful influence in strengthening the belief of his guilt; while it was observed that the imprudent language used by the prisoner, when in company with the commercial traveller, and which was detailed by Lorimer, made a singularly strong and unfavourable impression on the court—an impression which was but little affected by the apology for, and explanation of it, that had been given.

In short, no doubt remained on the minds of any one present, that Wotherspoon was guilty of the crime charged against him; and the jury, in conformity with their own and the general impression, found the libel proven without retiring from the box; and the unfortunate man was sentenced to suffer death: his counsel having in vain stated, that, from the steadiness, simplicity, and consistency of all the prisoner's answers to his interrogatories, put to him while in prison, he was all but entirely convinced of his innocence. "There was a mystery in the case," he said, "which he could not solve; but a day of retribution was coming," he added, "when the cause would be tried over again, and before a Judge from whom nothing could be concealed, and on whom no plot, however well contrived, could impose."

Wotherspoon heard the terrible judgment pronounced on him with the utmost composure, and persevered in asserting his innocence both to his counsel and to those of his friends who subsequently visited him in prison. On these last, his declarations produced various effects. Some of them—those who knew him—believed that he had met with foul play from some quarter or another, and their suspicions fell on Lorimer, whose character was well known to them; but there was nothing in the whole case which could warrant them in openly asserting that he had played the villain.

By others, again, Wotherspoon's declarations of innocence were looked upon as proceeding from the natural shame of crime. They pitied the unhappy man sincerely; but, however high might have been their opinion formerly of his integrity, they had no doubt that the pressure of necessitous circumstances had broken down his principles, and that he was guilty of the forgery. And this last was the opinion generally entertained regarding the convict by the public at large; while the first was the most prevalent in the district from which Wotherspoon came, and where he was, of course, best known. With regard to Lorimer, the directors of the bank in which the forged bill had been discounted, were so pleased with his activity and diligence in detecting and proving the forgery, that they not only forgave him the amount of it—for which he was liable as an indorser—but presented him with a handsome gratuity, over and above, on the conviction of the offender.

To return to Wotherspoon. Two or three days after his trial and condemnation, the session closed, and the gentleman, a Mr Moffat, who had been employed as his counsel,

went to the country to spend a few days at a friend's residence there. On the first day of his arrival, and within an hour after that occurrence, Mr Moffat was invited, by his host, to take a stroll in the garden, to see some improvement he was then making on it.

At the moment that Mr Moffat and his friend entered the garden, there were two men employed in delving a piece of ground at a little distance from the gate—one of whom, on perceiving the Edinburgh lawyer, hastily flung down his spade and ran off. Somewhat surprised at this circumstance, Mr Porteous, Mr Moffat's entertainer, inquired of the fugitive's fellow-workman, who was his principal gardener, what it meant.

The man smiled and said that he believed he did not care to be seen by that gentleman there, pointing to Mr Moffat.

"By me!—afraid to be seen by me!" said the latter, in astonishment. "What can that mean? What's the man's name?"

"His name is Hislop, sir—Andrew Hislop," replied the gardener. "I believe he was witness in some case before the Court of Justiciary lately."

"Right, right," said Mr Moffat, already a good deal excited by the occurrence. "I thought I recollected the fellow, even from the momentary glance I had of him. Has he ever made any remark to you regarding that trial?" inquired Mr Moffat.

"Why, nothing more, sir, than saying, that it was an ugly job; and that, if he had not been very firm, perhaps somebody else would have swung in place of Wotherspoon."

"Ay, indeed," exclaimed Mr Moffat, struggling hard to conceal the emotion he felt on this first glimmering of a new light on Wotherspoon's case being thus suddenly and most unexpectedly presented to him, and which was so much in accordance with certain preconceived notions of his own regarding that unfortunate case.

"And just now!" said Mr Moffat, eagerly. "What did he say just now, before he left you? Did he say anything?"

"He said, sir, as I told you before, he did not care to meet with you again, lest you should bother him with questions."

"Very well, very well—that'll do, my man," replied Mr Moffat, who now felt convinced that he had got a clue to the mystery which had puzzled him so much in Wotherspoon's case. "That'll do," he said, at the same time leading away his friend, to whom he related the whole circumstances of the trial, mentioned his suspicions, and begged his co-operation—Mr Porteous being a Justice of Peace—in securing Hislop. This co-operation was readily conceded; and so effectively and promptly, that, in less than two hours, Hislop was apprehended, although he had got a good many miles away—for his flight had not been a temporary but a final one; and, in less than two hours more, he was hard and fast in the heart of Mid-Lothian.

On the day after his apprehension, Hislop was examined before the Sheriff—Mr Moffat, who had gone to town on purpose, being also present—when, either through fear of punishment, which he hoped to avert by his disclosures, or from the impulses of an awakened conscience, he told a tale of villany, which, whether the amazing complexity of its character be considered, the singular dexterity with which it was managed, or the astounding depravity which marked it, will scarcely be found paralleled, it is believed, in the annals of crime.

Hislop deposed, in the first place, that Lorimer, not Wotherspoon, was the actual forger of the bill, and that he had seen him write it. That he, Hislop, hired by Lorimer, had personated Wotherspoon in Bryce's house, on the occasion to which the evidence of that witness and his wife referred; and here Hislop called on Mr Moffat to mark the strong resemblance, both in person and countenance, that

subsisted between himself and Wotherspoon; which, now that his attention was called to it, Mr Moffat perceived to be indeed singularly striking.

The deponent further stated, that Lorimer had promised him £10 for his trouble, but had paid him with five. That Wotherspoon had never used the expressions to him that he had attributed to him, when giving evidence on the trial of the former. Lastly, he declared that Lorimer had frequently said to him, in reference at once to the plot against Wotherspoon, and to Wotherspoon himself, "that he would be revenged on the object of his deadly hatred, and would put fifty pounds in his pocket besides."

On the strength of this deposition, Lorimer was now apprehended, while a respite was obtained for Wotherspoon; and the trial of the former for the identical crime for which the latter was under sentence of death, soon after followed.

On this trial, the deposition of Hislop was, through the activity of Wotherspoon's counsel, corroborated in every particular, and the whole villany laid bare to open day.

The general result of the evidence against Lorimer, shewed that he had selected Hislop to be an instrument of his atrocious designs, chiefly on account of his remarkable resemblance to Wotherspoon. That, still farther to heighten this deception, so as to deceive Bryce and his wife, should they, as he expected they would, be confronted with Wotherspoon, or foreseeing, in short, exactly what had happened with regard to him, he had been at the trouble and expense of procuring for Hislop a wig of exactly the same description with that worn by Wotherspoon, and which was of rather a peculiar make and colour. That he had selected a day for coming to Edinburgh, to execute that part of the plot which was performed in Bryce's house, when he knew that Wotherspoon was also in the city; and thus his villainous design was complete in all its parts, and could only have been discovered through the treachery of Hislop. His assertions were all positive, while Wotherspoon's were necessarily all negative; and it is well known how much easier it is to prove than to disprove; and of this Lorimer had the full advantage in the case of the prosecution of the former.

At the desire of the Lord Advocate, the wig which Mr Wotherspoon wore, was placed on Hislop's head in court; the former being also present, when Bryce and his wife were called in, and asked to say which of the two was the Mr Wotherspoon they had seen with Lorimer; when both, without hesitation and at once, pointed out Hislop; that difference in look and appearance—for, however like two persons may be, some difference between them there always is—being evident, when they were seen together under the circumstances just mentioned, which was scarcely to be detected when they were seen separately by those who were not previously acquainted with them individually and personally: and thus, the most fatal evidence of all that had been adduced against Wotherspoon, was, in one instant, rendered not only innocuous to him, but destructive to his persecutor.

The result of Lorimer's trial will be foreseen by the reader. He was condemned to death, and hanged in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh; while Wotherspoon was dismissed from the bar with an unblemished character, and with the sympathy of the whole court and the public at large, for his unmerited sufferings.

Wotherspoon again became a wealthy man, and saw many happy years afterwards; but often said, that he would never again speak of forging bills, as Lorimer had declared, after he was condemned to death, that it was his having overheard his idle, but unguarded language on this subject in the inn, that had suggested to him the plot which had so nearly accomplished his destruction.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE AMBITIOUS COTTAGER AND HER FAMILY.

THERE was not, in the parish of Eccles, a more sterling character, or one who bore himself more unexceptionably towards his family, than David Nicholson; and though his patience was often severely tested, owing to the hasty and violent disposition of his spouse, yet he generally managed, in the threatening outbursts of passion to which she was subject, to pour the soothing oil of forbearance on her stormy temper, and to still the waves of her roused and agitated feelings. David was the land steward of Duncan Boyd, Esq., the proprietor of the extensive lands of Whitestrang; and his honest virtue and unaffected piety not only gained him the confidence and favour of the squire, but the esteem and regard of the minister and session, by whom he was ordained an elder in the parish church of Eccles, about ten years prior to the occurrences to which we are now about to give a "local habitation and a name." Peggy Nicholson, we have already hinted, was possessed of an untractable temper; and, when opposed in her ambitious schemes, or remonstrated with on her divergings from the right line of sober discretion, no sense of decency could impose the slightest restraint upon her tongue, in its fierce attacks of vulgar indignation and bitter reviling. She was known in the hamlet by the soubriquet of "Peggy the Proverb," being notoriously addicted, in her bickerings with her husband, to the use of Scotch sayings and adages; while their general application was so happy and pointed, that David on most occasions found himself worsted in their contentions, and was often known to wince under his wife's cutting saws and witty observations. It was even whispered that the *douce elder* was a trifle henpecked; but we are disinclined to believe this, for there was an unbending independence about David Nicholson that could ill brook to be tyrannized over. Besides, Peggy's heart, like the hearts of most women, was naturally compassionate; and sure we are, that a warm affection for her husband, in spite of their domestic broils, still continued lurking and lingering about the regions of it. Their family consisted of two sons; the elder of whom—who, at the outset of our tale, had completed his twentieth year—followed the occupation of husbandry; while the youngest, a lad of seventeen, continued at school. Thomas Nicholson, the ploughman, was a blunt young man of meagre capacity—though not without a portion of what is vulgarly termed *moher-wit*—who readily found, in the cultivation of the soil, an employment congenial to his mind, and suited to his nature and habits. But Henry Nicholson, the scholar, possessed capacity and inclination for higher and more intellectual employments. There were in him undeveloped talents, which, if subjected to judicious culture, and directed to suitable studies, could not fail to raise him to distinction. Peggy Nicholson was not slow to discover the abilities of her favourite son; and her anxious wish to rear Henry for the church, though passively opposed by her husband, became the grand aim of her life, and the darling object of her ambition.

"Get oot my white corded breeks and leggums, Peggy,"

said David, on the night preceding Berwick fair, "as I maun start early the morn's mornin wi' the cattle for the market."

"It's weel minded," replied Peggy; "and see that ye dinna forget to bring Henry a new Latin dictionar. It's no sae often he asks for onything; and it will be a dear hamecomin to ye, Dawvid Nicholson, if ye come without it."

"Dinna begin to *daur* me, Peggy," retorted David, with an evident effort to be firm; "it's a thing I canna bear."

"Daurin ye! wha's daurin ye?" cried Peggy, somewhat mollified in her tone—"losh! a body canna speak noo but their taen haud on. Where was the ill o' me remindin ye that Henry wanted a new dictionar? Ye may be owre proud to think ye hae sic a son, let alane thrawin obstacles in the way o' his learnin. But, as the auld proverb says, '*Glum fowk's no easily guided.*'"

"It's surely ill your part to complain o' what I've done for my family," replied David. "Had my faither, who is now dead and gane, laid out on me the ae half o' the siller that I've gien for Latin books alane, to mak Henry a scholar, I wad hae been a brighter fallow the day than ye now see me. But it wasna then as it's now; for, before I was five years auld, I was sent to herd nowt and swine at Ellback, to ane Maister Trunch; and at ten, I drove a double horse-cart frae Dunse Mill to Unthank Colliery, when ye couldna hae gane a dozen o' yards on the road without meetin wi' as mony chaks, ilk ane deep enough to tak the cart up till the ax-tree."

"I wad think shame," retorted Peggy, "to tell that I belanged to sic a muck-the-byre set; and, if ye had ae spark o' pride about ye, ye couldna bring yer mouth to speak o't. A faither settin his bairn frae about the house to fend for himsel afore the breeks were weel on him! 'Od, the Hot-tentots wadna hae shewn sic a want o' natural affection."

"Dinna tak yer Maker's name into yer mouth in that manner, Peggy," replied David, in a serious and admonitory tone of voice; "ye've gotten sic a use o't, ye dinna ken now when ye are doing it; and as for thinkin shame o' them that brought me into this world, I hope that nane o' ours, Peggy, will ever hae mair reason to haud down their heads for you or me, than I hae had for ony action o' theirs wha are now where the Lord pleases."

"I wad be mair o' a man than to greet like a bairn, were I you," cried Peggy, on observing that she had forced the tears into David's eyes.

"Ye ken," rejoined David—his voice half stifled with emotion—"ye ken how often ye hae ripped up them puir craturs to me; and I maun tell you, Peggy, it's no easy for flesh and bluid to bear it. Only think were I reproachin your side o' the house, as I might owre weel do, and hintin that yer faither was this, that, or the other, how it would be ta'en wi'!"

"Do ye say that that man or woman's livin," stormed Peggy, clashing the pot, which she held in her hands, with violence upon the hearth, and raising herself to her full height, with her arm thrust forth in a menacing attitude—"do ye say that that man or woman's livin wha could lay oughts to the charge o' John Henderson, the schulemaister and session-clerk o' Hutton parish? It wad hae been lang or auld Pate Nicholson, or ony o' the likes o' him, could hae borne siccan a character for nine-and-sixty years,

as my faither bore; for he was respectit far and near, by gentle and semple, in baith town and country; and no little was the murnin that was made after him, puir man, when he was ca'ed to his lang hame. Oh, ye cruel man!" continued Peggy Nicholson, bursting into tears, her voice failing her through the vehemence of her passion—"how can ye harrow up my vera heart by castin a slur on the best and only friend I've e'er had in the world, and ane, too, that's made *you* and *yours* what they are!"

"I was ne'er *that*," cried David, snapping his finger and thumb before her face, "the better o' ane belangin to ye; and it would hae been a puir time o' day wi' me, indeed, had I been driven to seek onything frae them. Thank God! I've aye had plenty to do my ain turn wi'; and though it's a sma' matter I can boast o', yet it is doubly satisfyin to think that the little I hae, cam a' by my ain honest endeavours."

"Wha, let me speer, then, learnt Henry the langages, and gied your Tam the writin and countin o' a clerk?" retorted Peggy, with marked bitterness. "Was ye no behaudin to John Henderson in that respect, ye ungratefu monster that ye are? But it will be lang or yer twa sons cast dirt on their puir grandfather's memory, in return for a' that he's done for them."

"Gif-gaff maks guid friends," rejoined David, somewhat tauntingly; "and I'm sure that for every count your faither learnt Thomas, and for every lesson he gied Henry, he had a peck o' potatoes for the ane, and a measure o' corn for the other."

"Od, syne I had ne'er seen the face o' ane belangin to ye!" exclaimed Peggy; "I was surely bewitched, or waur than mad, the mornin I gaed wi' you to the kirk. Yet I was weel tell't aforehand I could ne'er expeck onything guid frae ane o' the Nicholson name; and often and often again has my puir faither begged o' me, wi' the vera tears in his een, that I wad tak tent o' what I was doin, and no fling mysel awa on sic a coorse uneducate fallow as yersel—ane that wad rather see his bairns on the corn-rig, wi' a hoe in their hand, or slingin at a pleugh-tail, frae mornin till nicht, sae lang as they brocht him in siller, than lay out a single plack to mak them scholars. And ye'll brag o' helpin John Henderson, and talk o' being hauden down wi' him! Truly, as the auld proverb says—*Ye'll ne'er grow howbackit bearin yer freends*. But, if it werna for my Henry, as sure as I hae breath, I wad leave ye for guid and a', this vera nicht, even though I should hae to tak a pock and gang frae door to door seekin a bit o' bread."

"Hech, woman! but ye would get few to gie ye onything," answered David, coolly; "and I'm thinkin ye'll hae to keep a better tongue in yer head when ye tak to the beggin. Yet it's certainly a pity, after a', that ye should hae gotten sic a *bad* man; and, as you and Henry seem to think ye could do sae weel without him, the sooner ye get quit o' him the better, in my opinion."

"Put down yer hat this instant moment," cried Peggy, authoritatively, laying hold of David's arm, as the latter rose and proceeded to the door. "Put down yer hat this instant moment, I tell ye; for ye've naethin to do out at this time o' nicht, bangin the doors after you in your *deevlry*; and, as ye've to rise early the morn's mornin, the sooner ye turn into bed the better."

"I dinna care, Peggy," said David, solemnly, "though I should ne'er rise mair;—ye've rendered my life bitter to me; and I fear I'll be forced to do the thing I ne'er ance thoct o'. Far less has driven mony a man to the high-ways."

"A bonny elder!" cried Peggy, ironically. "Does yer minister tell ye the like o' that on the Lord's day? Think shame o' yersel, Dawvid Nicholson, for allooin the deevil to get sae muckle the better o' ye. Tak down the books there, and wale out a portion o' Scripture, for ye're no gaun to bed without readin."

"Readin!" responded David—"ye hae put me past readin; and hoo do ye think that the Almighty can accept o' our services, when our hearts are sae fu' o' hatred to each other? Sic worship is a solemn mockery, ca' it what ye will."

"If there's hatred in your heart, Dawvid, there's nane in mine," replied Peggy; "and whatever sets ye up against yer wife and family has a great sin on their head to answer for. But, wheesh!" continued she, lowering her voice—"there's the lads comin ben; and dinna, for ony sake, let them see we've been canglin, for ye ken hoo it hurts Henry."

"Hech, me!" sighed David, flinging himself down upon a chair at the bedside—"is this to last for aye?"

"What the plague's been the matter the nicht?" cried Tom, on entering and observing his father sitting with his hat on, and his head resting on his hand. "Deil o' the like o' this I e'er kent!"

"Mind what ye're saying, lad," replied David, raising his head—"the *deevil's* owre muckle amang us noo, to our sorrow; and I maun tell ye ance for a', Thomas, if ye dinna keep better hours, ye maun change yer quarters. My door recollect, is no to be kept open at a' hours o' the nicht for ony son o' mine."

"Ye're no gaun to rake out the dirdum on me," rejoined Tom; "but it's aye the way—for let you and *her* dust when ye will, the innocent's sure to suffer. I only wish," continued he, throwing off his coat, and preparing for bed, "that I was fairly out frae amang sic a set."

"Ye'll be the first that will seek to be back again," cried Peggy; "for, get wha ye will, there's nane will ever do the half for ye that yer puir slave o' a mother's done. But ye're owre weel off, lad, and disna ken."

"What has all this disturbance been about, mother?" asked Henry, who had till now remained silent.

"A' about your new Latin dictionar, my pet," replied Peggy, sharply; "and yer braw faither, there whar he's sittin, hasna left yer puir grandfather the likeness o' a dog. But ne'er mind, Henry—ye's hae yer book should I pairt wi' the vera sheets which them that's dead and gane left me to appear decent in when I'm laid out."

"Do ye ever think o' what's to follow, Peggy, after ye're laid out?" said David, seriously. "It maks little matter what we're rowed up in when our breath's out, if our hearts hae only been right towards our Maker durin our lifetime."

"Gude truly!" cried Peggy, scoffingly—"there's unco little religion in your heart, were a' kent. As the auld proverb says—*Mae than the deil wear a black mantel*."

"It's God alone that searches the heart, Peggy," replied David, "and sees what's there."

"I see your conduct, however," retorted Peggy—"ye canna hide *that* frae me; and I'm only sorry to think that wi' a' yer preachin and prayin, ye should be growin daily warse instead o' better. But it's true the auld proverb says—*What's bred in the ban's ill to come out o' the flesh*."

"It's no easy bein guid whar ye are," rejoined David—"for that man's no born that was ever tried as I hae been wi' a woman's ill temper."

"And wha's the wyte o' a' this the nicht, I should like to ken?" cried Peggy. "Wasna it yer ain doure, unforgien spirit, that's keepit up the racket till this time? I'm owre and dune wi' it at ance. But ye'll sit glunchin and gloomin like a puttin cow, for hours thegither, if a body but daur to tell ye that it's wrang ye hae said or dune. Wad it no hae been better, noo, had ye just said aff hand that ye wad bring the lad his dictionar? My certes! had it been a new whip, or the like, for Tam, there wadna hae been twa words about the buyin o't."

"Did I ever say I wadna get the book?" said David, sheepishly.

"A thousand times, and a thousand times to that," bawled

Peggy; "but I've set my heart upon bringin Henry out in the ministry, and a' the obstacles ye may thrav in the way, shall never keep back my guid and clever bairn. Ye ken what the auld proverb says—'Ye may ding the deil into a wife, but ye'll never ding him out o' her.' So, it's in vain you strivin against me; for yer son, Henry, shall be sent to the college, and haudin up, like the lave, when there, if I should work nicht and day wi' my ain hands, and rob back and belly to procure what's necessar. Wad ye hae my bairn to thrav a' his great pairs an' learnin down at a dyke side—allowin that ye had yer ain will, now?"

"No," answered David—"I wad mak him a schulemaister."

"A schulemaister!" responded Peggy. "Wad ye think o' shortenin my bairn's usefu' life in the unhealthy air o' a schule-house. O' a' trades in the world, I think the least o' that o' a schulemaister. And did ever ye see ane o' them onything thought o' in his auld age? Never, in yer born days, Dawvid—if ye leave out my ain faither; for its wi' them, as it's wi' an auld shoe that's had its sole worn out wi' sair thrashin—they're either flung to themidden, or made bachles o'. Schulemaister!" reiterated Peggy—"truly, as the auld proverb says—'Ye shape shoon by yer ain shaughtlet feet;' but it's o' nae use gaun about the bush wi' ye, for my ambition's to see Henry Nicholson a minister—and a minister he shall be. So, that's baith the lang and the short o' the matter."

"There are mair ministers than there kirks for," replied David; "and, to gang nae farther, there's that evangelical lad that comes frae about the Dunse hand, to gie our ain man a day now and then, talkin o' thravin up the preachin a'thegither, and comin out as a writer. He's been in want o' a kirk, to my certain knowledge, for five years, come Candlemas."

"A writer! did ye say?" cried Peggy. "I'm thinkin he's ane o' yer *stickit* ministers, whase preachin has spoilt a guid tailor, Dawvid! What's to hinder my Henry frae gettin a kirk, I should like to ken, as weel as Mary Cleghorn's son o' Swinton Quarter? Do ye hear what a braw sit-down her Robert's gotten somewhar about the Lothians; and a fine young lady, they tell me, wi' *siller*, into the bargain? Save us a'! I mind syne he was a barefooted laddie rinnin side by side wi' Tam there, at my faither's schule; and noo, the ane's gaun snoovin, like a dirty sow behind a muck cart, and the other's criestin his head in a pulpit wi' clean starched bands round his neck, and a braw silk gown owre his shouter, mair like a Lord Mayor o' Lunnon, than the son o' doirit Sandy Cleghorn, the weaver. But, to be sure, as the auld proverb says, 'Ye canna mak a silk purse o' a son's tug.'"

"Weel, I'll tell ye what it is," said Tom—"I wadna change situations wi' Robert Cleghorn, were I offered the lands o' Whitstrand to boot. I'm just as happy as he is, and maybe far mair, though."

"Oh, ye speeritless coof!" exclaimed Peggy, shaking him roughly by the arm—"ye may claim kin wi' that lang black *snot* that's hangin at the candle; but I'll be mis-sworn if ye're a drap's bluid to Henry Nicholson. To tell ye the honest truth, Tam—and it's a great deal for a mother to say—sooner than hae ye trudgin at a plough-tail, I could see ye tak to the sodgerin, and join the swearin militia. Did ye ever read a book through in yer life, Tam?"

"I've nae time for readin," answered Tom, good-naturedly.

"Atweel no," rejoined Peggy; "but I'll tak guid care that my Henry shall won his bread without toilin and slavin as ye do. The ministry's an easy life, and a genteel callin into the bargain; and nane yet, wha ever heard my bairn read, but agreed wi' me that the pulpit was the fittest place for him. It's the truth I tell ye, ane and a' o' ye; I never hear that lad speakin to himsel—as he often does when ye're outo' the way, and I'm in the butt-a-house—but I think o' the sublime eloquence o' Paul on the top Marshall."

"But let me ask ye," said David, devoutly, "if Henry is spiritually minded? To be a minister o' the Lord Jesus, it requires a young man to hae not only the speculative but the experimental knowledge o' the Gospel. It's no himsel that he's set up to preach, though it's ovre often dune—but Christ Jesus; and can ye think, Peggy, on the solemn vows that the Christian minister makes to his God, when he's set apart to dispense divine ordinances and preach the gospel o' peace, without tremblin through fear o' his inability to fulfil his engagements. A *genteel callin*, said ye! Oh, shame! shame, Peggy! to speak in sic a way o' the office o' the holy ministry. Reflect, for a moment, on the arduous work that a minister is engaged in, and the interestin light he's placed in to himsel and the church o' God. I wish to say naething in disparagement o' Henry's utterance—but 'a' gifts are no graces,' Peggy; and little hae play-actin gestures, lang-winded speeches, and a fine tone o' voice, to do in the conversion o' souls. It is 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' wellin out o' the warm and sincere heart, and forcin expression, as it is poured forth, that boasts sic a conquest. A *guid utterance*, lass, is no the weapon that can carry the strong-holds o' a depraved heart. Na, na. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord,' is the fight against spiritual wickedness to be fought."

"There's naeboddy listenin to ye," cried Peggy, peevishly; "so, if ye be gaun to tak yer smoke, tak it, or I'll blaw out the caule. 'Some straik the measure o' justice,' as the auld proverb says, 'but ye gie it heapit!'"

In the lapse of a few minutes, the jarring strife which reigned in the cottage of David Nicholson, was stilled, and its anxious and toil-worn inmates sunk in forgetfulness. Peggy, however, so far from being discouraged at the discomfort she had sustained, only became the more determined to have her ambition gratified; and, during her husband's absence, on the following day, she seized the opportunity to pay a visit to the manse, with the view of engaging the Rev. James Muirhead, who was extremely partial to Henry, to assist her in overcoming David's rooted opposition to the minister's scheme, which she had so long and ardently cherished.

"Come away ben, Peggy," cried Mr Muirhead, shaking her cordially by the hand, as the former stood, indulging in a little village gossip, with the servant girls in the kitchen; "Come away ben, and gie us yer cracks. There must be good news floating about your quarter, that you're astir on the market day. I'll wager a baubee," continued he, humourously, as they reached the parlour, "you've come over to give up Thomas's name, Peggy?"

"Dinna speak o' the slush to me, sir," replied Peggy, sharply. "I canna bear to hear his name mentioned; for he's a speeritless hash—an' that can hardly tell a B frae a bull's fit, were it to save his life; an' no little's the disgrace that he's like to bring upon us a'."

"Grievous must be the backsliding of a son," said Mr Muirhead, in a solemn and affectionate tone of voice, "ere his name can become hateful to the ears of a mother. It is, indeed, Peggy, an evil thing and bitter, to depart from the living God, or to be left to indulge any darling passion."

"Wha, i' the name o' a' that's guid," vociferated Peggy, starting to her feet, and rudely pushing aside the chair she had been occupying; "wha, i' the name o' a' that's guid, has dared to wag their finger at the character o' ony o' Dawvid Nicholson's family?"

"Peggy, Peggy," exclaimed the minister, interrupting her; "I'm glad to learn I have misunderstood you. You spoke of the disgrace that Thomas had brought upon you all, and I naturally thought—"

"If he ne'er puts mair disgrace upon us," cried Peggy, interrupting him, "than by drivin a muck-cart, we'll get easily through the way; an' we're only provoked to think that he should hae sae little pride about him, puir man."

But, as the auld proverb says, '*It's a lang lane that has nae turnin*;' and Tam may aiblins come yet, wha kens, to tak a pattern by Henry."

"And you may acquaint Henry," added Mr Muirhead, slowly recovering from Peggy's fierce and unexpected attack, "that I know of something to his advantage."

"Is it a kirk or a meetin-house, sir?" inquired Peggy, eagerly.

"It is neither," replied Mr Muirhead, smilin; "it is the situation of tutor in a gentleman's family."

"Tutor! tutor!" chimed Peggy, reiterating the word; "but the tutor hasna to sit down wi' the servants to his meals, has he?"

"By no means," said Mr Muirhead; "he sits at the table, on an equality with the parents of the children entrusted to his care, and is always considered and treated by them as an equal."

"My dream's read! my dream's read!" exclaimed Peggy, in a kind of transport; "I thought, sir, I was sittin by the road side, in a lang green loanin, on the tap o' a milestane, when my Henry drove up in a braw carriage, wi' a bonny leddy in't, no unlike the laird's dochter, an' flung a handfu o' goold pieces into my apron. The other nicht, too, a bit fat coal loupit out o' the fire intil my lap, as like a purse as twa twins can be to ilk other. Oh, my wonderfu bairn!" continued Peggy, "there's nae sayin what a braw fortune's comin round to him. But whar is he gaun, or wha wants him, minister?"

"Mr Boyd wishes to engage him to teach his two boys," replied Mr Muirhead, "as he does not intend to send them back to Bellgrove Academy. But I'll ride over, Peggy, on Tuesday evening, and break the matter to Henry."

"Think o' that, noo!" cried Peggy, chuckling at the idea of her son's importance. "What will Dawvid Nicholson say, when he hears tell o' my Henry's guid fortune? But guid day, Maister Muirhead, for I'll no can rest till I get them a' tell't."

Peggy Nicholson accordingly took her departure from the manse—leaving the reverend gentleman to cogitate on the scene which he had recently witnessed in his own parlour; and, in the course of an hour, she arrived at her own cottage, where she found her two sons waiting her arrival.

"Nae appearance o' yer faither, yet?" commenced Peggy, throwing off her bonnet and shawl; "I wish that naething may hae happened him, wi' them beasts."

"There's nae time owregane," replied Tom; "I wasna expectin him for as guid as twa hours yet."

"Put awa yer books, Henry," cried Peggy, ill-naturedly, piqued at the abstraction of her favourite—"sittin there, pore, porin the hail night lang! Ye're as guid as naebody in a house; for a body canna get a word out o' ye, let it be what it will they're speakin o'. My life an' lang fastin!" continued she, fixing her eyes upon the candle, and holding up her hands in amazement—"is that the penny mould ye've lightit? 'Twa ha'penny caunles in the night!—it's aneugh to ruin them that hae an income, let be folk that's just keepit atween the han' an' the mouth. Certes! Jenny Cuthbertson may bum, her gettin at the rate o' sevenpence ha'penny a-week, for caunles alane, frae ae puir family. The like o' it is no in the parish o' Eccles."

"Where's the snufflers," cried Tom, "an' I'll pit it oot—it's o' nae use haein words about it."

"Tak yer finger an' thum, Tam," replied Peggy; "ye ken fu' weel my snufflers are in twa ha'ves. Ye're pretty faither did that guid turn for me. But catch him buy anither pair! Na! As lang as the shears or the tings can be had, he'll no trouble his head about new anes, Ise warrant him. Hoo did ye like yon young birkie, Henry, we had last Lord's Day," added she, thrusting the poker into the fire, and causing the coals to blaze up. "I dinna ca' yon preachin. Naebody will ever mak me believe that a *read thing*—

though yer faither will argue to the contrar—can do ony guid. For my part, I sat on thorns the hail time; an' just cam awa as I gaed in—feint a thing the better."

"But, were you sitting with your back to the preacher," rejoined Henry, "you would not know whether he used his papers or not."

"I couldna sit wi' my back to a minister, were he a Bowston or a Matthew Henry," cried Peggy. "I mind weel aneugh, when yer faither wad hae us to sit in Rob Tamson's gousty square seat, for the sake o' the box-gatherin, I was forced, Sabbath after Sabbath, to twust my head round on my shoulters—like a weathercock pointin sou-east on a house-tap—to get a glent o' the minister, till I was like to grow glead-necked a'thegither. But, bless me!" continued Peggy, starting to her feet, "that man's ne'er come hame yet, an' the clock has warned eleven! Slip on yer shoon, Tam, an' come awa wi' me, to the loanin fit, to see if we can hear ony tongues. I'm quite uneasy about him, for he never wad hae stopped this late on a Saturday night, unless something had happened him."

"It winna bring him a minute sooner," answered Tom.

"It's easy wi' you sittin there," rejoined Peggy; "for naething mismoves ye, or pits ye aboot; but if onything's happened yer faither, lad, what's to come on us a'? There's no a family that I ken wha wad be mair to mean, little as ye may think o' him."

"I wonder ye dinna think o' agreein better when ye're thegither, then," replied Tom, sulkily, at the same time thrusting his feet into his shoes. "Ye may depend, the Berwick yill is rinnin mair in my faither's head the now, than the preachin the morn!"

Peggy Nicholson and her son now stole out, cautiously avoiding the lights which were still kept burning in some of the hinds' houses, through fear of being seen upon such an errand; while Thomas enjoined his mother not to suffer herself to be provoked—in the event of them meeting his father in a state of intoxication—to say anything until the ensuing morning, when he was more likely to profit by her rebuke. Peggy reluctantly agreed to this; as upon these conditions alone would her son accompany her on her affectionate mission; and, in less than a quarter of an hour, they reached the loaning-foot. There was no noise, however, to be heard on the turnpike, in the direction in which the "elder" must approach; and they were upon the point of returning to the hamlet, when Peggy muttered, in a whis- per—

"Wheesht! wheesht, Tam! I hear tongues now, and I think they maun be on this side o' Orange Lane; so let you and me tak a stap down the side o' the hedge, where we're no seen, till they come fornent us."

"Come awa, then," replied Tom; "but mind, should my faither be amang them, ye're no to say a word."

"No for warlds," cried Peggy, squeezing his hand fervently.

The noise grew every minute more *appalling*, as the happy group who created it, kept nearing the pasture where Peggy Nicholson and her son were ensconced, for the purpose of reconnoitering. We will not attempt to describe the suspense which the former endured during these anxious moments. She was, indeed, miserable; and the boisterous joviality of the homeward-bound rustics continuing to grow "louder and more loud," Peggy was at length constrained, owing to the agitated state of her feelings, to fling herself down upon a cairn of stones, and silently await their approach. Suddenly the whole party commenced singing; and, as all around was still, save the deep baying of the startled watch-dog, the "secreted pair" could distinctly hear the words, and distinguish the voices, of the light-hearted Bacchanalians.

"As I'm a livin woman!" exclaimed Peggy, rising to her feet "I hear yer faither's tongue amang them. Oh, my

puir neart," added she—"it's just gaun, for a' the waird, Tam, like a live laverock that's newly taen oot o' a girn."

"Be quiet, now, like guid lads," said a voice on the turnpike, which Peggy knew at once to be her husband's; "it's weel on, and ye'll be bringin the folk o' Whitestrang oot about us; and, ye ken, I hae some *canny* neighbours there, wha wadna be lang in sayin we were a' drunk thegither."

"D've hear that, lads?" cried one of the party; and the next minute half-a-dozen voices struck up the chorus of Burns' celebrated song of "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut."

"We arena fou, we're no that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The coek may eraw, the day may daw,
But aye we'll taste the barley bree."

"Oh, that I may be keepit in my richt judgment!" vociferated Peggy Nicholson, on perceiving David stagger past with a country girl holding by each arm—"Tam, Tam, do ye see thae ill-faured queans gigglin by the side o' yer puir drucken faither?"

"Will ye no haud yer lang tongue!" cried Tom, piteously; mortified at witnessing his father's weakness, and alarmed, at the same time, lest the violent and ungovernable temper of his mother should betray them—"as sure as death, if ye say anither word, I'll gang this vera nicht and droon mysel in the Leet."

Peggy could only reply to this with a *groan*, which but too well told the angry workings of her heart, and the vengeful feelings which possessed it. The thoughtless rustics had, by this time, reached the foot of the loaning, where David Nicholson must part with them, and strike off on the route of the Whitestrang cottages. Anxious, therefore, to testify their respect for his character, his jovial escort formed a ring around him; and, while two or three of the party lilted the air of "The Quaker's Wife," the others kept dancing in rapturous glee; while, ever and anon, the wild "Eh!" that may be heard at a country kirk, gave new life to their feet, and flung the happy creatures into a state of frenzied excitement. Poor Peggy, who stood behind the hedge, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," was compelled to be a silent spectator of this ludicrous scene; and when the young men and women who were the principal actors in the farce, failed, through very exhaustion, to keep it up any longer, it was proposed, by one of them, that they should give "douce David," a cheer before they parted with him. This was unanimously carried into effect, and a score of voices were instantly uplifted in honour of the *elder*. David Nicholson, now released from his thoughtless and good-natured friends, quietly proceeded home; while Peggy and her son stole forth from the place of their concealment, and dogged his steps at a respectful distance.

"A aane the nicht, I think, Henry," said David, on entering the cottage. "Where's yer mother?"

"She left the house to go down the loaning," replied Henry, "in the hope of meeting you, as she felt uneasy at your stay, and was apprehensive that something might have happened you."

"Sic foolishness!" rejoined David; "what in the world was gaun to happen me; but I've braw news to tell ye the nicht, lad—for what do ye think o' the laird's acquaintin me in the market, that he's gaun to tak ye owre to his ain house, to learn the tva young maisters the langages!"

"Now, I've but ae request to ask o' ye," bawled Peggy, bouncing into the room, and marching up to the fire where David had seated himself—"and that is, that ye'll gang down the morn's mornin, afore breakin yer fast, and thrav up the eldership. Ye're nae mair fit, there where ye sit, and man as ye are o' mine, to be an elder o' the kirk, than I'm to be the Queen o' England."

"Speak within yer ain house, Peggy, woman," said David, "and dinna let everybody hear that ye're flytin."

"Everybody hear!" echoed Peggy, at the top of her

voice, in bitter mimicry; "and do ye no think that every body kens o' yer carryings on wi' them lang-legged limmers, that ye've been sittin and drinkin wi' a' day at the Berwick market? Think shame o' yersel, ye drucken, twa-faced hypocrite! And ye'll pretend to gang round the kirk on the Lord's day wi' the ladle, as if butter wadna melt in yer mim mouth! I wonder the folk dinna rise up and knock it out o' yer hand."

"What's a' this stormin about the nicht, Peggy?" inquired David, mildly—"I'm sure it's mair than I can weel mak oot."

"Look in the glass wi' them red, glowerin een o' yours, if ye dinna ken," vociferated Peggy, with hasty vehemence, "and they'll aiblins tell ye; or, gae ask the tva vile queans that you and bad Tam Jaffray, the smith, wha licks his wife, were singin and dancin wi' at the loanin-fit. But Maister Muirhead shanna be imposed on ony langer, puir man; for if ye dinna gang the morn, as I hae said, and tell him that ye're no fit for yer office, by a' that's guid I'll do it for ye, if I should rue it to the day o' my death."

"Are ye nearly dune?" inquired David, looking up in Peggy's face, quite unmoved by her asperity, and without any apparent inclination to retaliate.

"Dune!" re-echoed Peggy, disconcerted with her husband's calmness—"I'll no be dune this nicht; nor, as lang as I live, will I forget the slight that ye hae put upon me this Berwick fair nicht, in the presence o' my ain een and the een o' my auldest lad. No little's the siller ye hac laird oot this day, or I'm a' cheated, upon yon brimstone hussies, baith at Berwick and down at Meg Brotherton's o' Orange Lane. She may buy land, truly—her gettin as muckle every market-day o' wark-folk's hard-earned winnings, as wad keep the puir o' Eccles parish frae the ac year's end to the ither. As the auld proverb says—'Some can steek their neive, but ye hae nae haud o' yer hand,' for, certes, there's nae talk o' bad times, or a scarcity o' siller, when Meg's whisky-stoup's in the way; though yer clever son, wha's a mense to us a', maun be keepit back in his learnin for the beggarly cost o' a dictionar."

"He shanna want that lang," cried David, rising and going to a table where he had deposited a few trifling purchases on his first entrance into the house—"there's the book, Henry, lad, that there has been sae muckle wark about, and I hope ye'll mak a guid use o't. Little as yer mother may think o' me, I'm no just sae bad as she's gien oot, ye sec."

"Clash it below the bars, Henry!" exclaimed Peggy, fiercely. "Shame o' ane o' me wad be behaudin to him for't; besides, ye'll no hear the last o't for a twalmont."

"I didna think I was ane o' them kind, Peggy," replied David, meekly; "and I challenge ye to say that ye ever heard me grudge onything I laid out for their schulin—I'm owre anxious for their improvement, my certes; and nae later than the day, woman, I've been makin a bargain wi' oor kind laird, to get Henry into his ain house to educate the tva young maisters. That's what has stopped me a wee bit later than I should hae been, if ye wad hae it."

"What did Mr Boyd say to you, father, regarding the boys?" asked Henry.

"I daurna speak in my ain house, lad," replied David, evidently smarting under Peggy's last attack; "it's a puir time o' day wi' me now, certainly; but, as yer mother appears to ken sae weel about it, ye can ask her."

"Tell the lad this present moment," roared Peggy, authoritatively, "what the laird said to ye about his callants; or, by a' that's guid, I'll clash this tub o' dirty water in yer face: unco little hauds my hands aff ye this nicht."

"May I ne'er be allooed to speak mair, then, if I do!" cried David, doggedly and warmly; "do ye tak me for a perfect idiot a'thegither? There's no a man within three parishes, that wad pit up wi' the ill usage that I meet

wi', day after day, in this house, in spite o' a' my strivin to keep things richt and comfortable. But I'll contend nae langer; for, sooner than live this life, and be treated as a dounricht snool wi' my ain family, I'll tak a place o' my ain, and gie somebody sae muckle a-week to look after me. Sae as I've a sowl to be saved, Peggy, if ye dinna keep yer provokin tongue to yersel, I'll mak ye bitterly rue it!"

"Ye canna mak me rue it," rejoined Peggy, tauntingly; 'but, as the auld proverb says—*When drink's in, wit's out;* and it's weel we ken the warst."

"You and I maun part, I see," cried David, seizing a plate that stood upon the table, and dashing it with violence against the back of the chimney—"I shall either be maister in my ain house, or hae nae house at a'."

"Oh, my beautiful blue-edged plate, that I've had sae lang!" screamed Peggy. "It was ane o' half a dozen," continued she, gathering up the broken pieces into her lap, "that my puir mother gied me when I set up house, to be a mense to me for a' my life; and now there are but five o' them left, and ane o' them is sair cracked. Oh, ye cruel man, ye! I wad sooner ye had smashed the best thing in the house; but, atweel, yer wickedness wasna intended against the plate, but against yer broken-hearted wife, if ye warna prevented by the presence o' yer bairns frae rakin it oot on her."

"Dinna greet, mother, aboot a ha'penny broth plate," said Tom; "it's dune now, and it canna be helped; but I'm sure I cautioned ye weel against provokin my faither, when ye kent he had a drap drink in him."

"It was a' you, and yer parritch, or it wadna hae been there," cried Peggy, striking him savagely over the head with a wet towel. "It will be lang or Peg Hope be able to set down sic a plate afore ye as the ane ye hae gotten broken to me this nicht. But I was waur than mad to do it; for surely a kit or a swine's trow is guid aneugh for ony slush o' a hind like you."

"Are you to hae peace this nicht or no?" demanded David, firmly. "I declare yer behaviour is positively waur than that o' Tibby Crichton, the bickermaker o' Birgham's wife; but I see I'll just hae to adopt Peter's plan, and try what effect stoppin the supplies will hae."

"Oh, my puir mother's bonny blue-edged plate!" sobbed Peggy, weeping over the fragments—"I wish, frae the bottom o' my heart, that I was lyin in the cauld ground wi' them ye belonged to."

"It's nonsense us strivin, callants, ony langer," said David, evidently repenting what he had done—"ye see, as weel as I do, that yer mother's determined we shanna ken what peace is. I'm glad, Henry," added he, addressing his youngest son, "that ye're like to get oot frae among us; for the daily witnessin o' sic scenes as we've had the nicht, is aneugh in itsel to drive a' the learnin o' the world oot o' yer head. Ye'll see nae sic fechtin or disagreement in the laird's house, where I've engaged ye to gang, Ise warrant ye."

"Ye're a great story teller, there where ye sit," cried Peggy, once more summoning up her courage—"ye ne'er engaged him in yer life—it's lang sin' Maister Muirhead and I kent aboot the situation; but I couldna tell my Henry, as he hadna a Latin dictionary to fit him for't. Howsomever, the minister's comin owre himsel in the beginnin o' the week, to see that he has everything that's wanted. Oh, that bonny blue-edged plate!"

"There's few has mair books than Henry," replied David; "I often wonder what he does wi' them a'."

"They didna cost you onything, hooever," retorted Peggy, with her wonted acrimony; "for the maist feck o' them that hae the lang-ages, as weel as the Greek and Latin anes, belanged a' to my puir faither. But, certes, there's mair than mere books needed; for the puir lad canna gang

owre there among my leddies squeakin shoon and rustlin silks and satins, in tacketit brogues, and a coat oot at the elbows."

"I dinna see what's to hinder him frae gaun wi' what he has," said David.

"Na," retorted Peggy; "for ye're ane wha wadna care were he walkin owre slip-shod, wi' no a hale jesp aboot him; but do ye no see that his sparables wad cut Leddy Boyd's fine carpets, and his coorse coat mak her viseters titter? Besides, it's no cut to the shape o' his back; and wi' it's bein sae bouky, it actually hangs aboot him like a sack. There's naething for it, but gettin the young tailor o' Swinton to mak him a new lang-tailed black ane, should it even cost the mair."

"The mair cost, the mair honour," replied David, sensible that any opposition on his part would be unavailing.

"Cost!" rejoined Peggy; "wad ye count the dirtin cost, when it's to be the makin o' yer son's fortune? Do ye think that a body, let him be ever sae clever, is ony thing thocht o' in a coorse coat? Na, truly; I ken the world better than that, neebour; and I'm gay certain, that, for ane wha wad look the way he's on to encourage him, a score wad toss their disdainfu heads, and curl up their noses at him. And wha, I should like to ask, is gaun to risk a bit guid braid claith in the hands o' a bunglin whip-the-cat? I'll no deny but he may do weel aneugh to shear Tam's corduroys, or your thick moleskins; but it's a different thing a'thegither, him sittin down to botch black claith at eighteen or twa-and-twunty shillings the yard."

"I doubt, Peggy," said David, "ye're takin the ready way to fill the lad's head wi' pride and vanity."

"Sae muckle the better," cried Peggy. "As the auld proverb says, *Them wha stand on a knowe are sure to be notic't;* and a young man will never get on in this world, unless he has a becomin pride aboot him. I'm tauld that young Rob Cleghorn, the minister, was mair behauldin to his fine curled head for gettin the braw kirk, and the rich young leddy, than to onything that was in't. And saw ye ever smarter claes than he wore? Ye wad hae said, to hae seen him on a Sabbath, that he had come oot o' a band-box, he was aye sae clean and starchy."

"Ye're sae muckle taen up wi' yer finery," rejoined David, "that ye're no mindin what o'clock it's. Hech! it's just gaun to strike ane!"

The parties now retired to rest; and, on the ensuing morning, there was only an occasional muttering heard, rather peaceful than otherwise; for, as the fierce tempest which desolates the face of nature is generally followed by a calm, so Peggy, having wasted her best energies on the preceding night in raising a storm of angry passions, was unable, on the morrow, to renew the strife, but gradually became oblivious to what had passed; her heart, however, like troubled waters that have settled, still retaining, *at bottom*, the polluting sediment. Long ere kirk time, her vengeful threat to inform the minister of her husband's unfitness for the office of elder, was forgotten; and the Sabbath, which boded so much evil to David Nicholson, closed over him with a greater degree of holy quiet than he had ever before experienced. Throughout the whole of Monday, Peggy was busily engaged in arranging matters for Henry's entering upon his tutorship; and, on the Tuesday evening, she was found seated, at an early hour, by her beautifully whitened hearthstone, in her Sunday gown, best cap, and clean apron, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Rev. James Muirhead, who was that night to talk with her son on the subject of the laird's offer.

"Put awa them foolish ballants, Tam," cried Peggy, rising from her seat, and bustling to the bookcase; "let's hae a volume o' Matthew, or Newton on the Prophecies, lyin on the table, no just to look like heathens a'thegither. Henry tak ye Bowston's *"Fourfold State"* into yer hand

my man, and dinna be whaupin there on that auld flute when the minister comes ben."

"Do ye think the minister ne'er reads ballants himsel?" rejoined Tom. "I see warrant does he, and sings them too, ublins."

"But, recollect, Tam, yer faither's an elder o' the kirk," retorted Peggy, "and we maun look decent like. Here, there's the Shorter Carritch to look at, and gie me them dirt to put oot o' sicht," added she, tearing the ballads out of his hand, and throwing them above the dresser; "but what in a' the world will we do for snufflers, think ye, Tam? for we canna tak oor-fingers, afore the minister, to top the candle. 'Od, we'll just hae to lift it frae before him, though it does look ill-faured, and clip it wi' the shears ahint backs—there's naething else for it that I can think o'. I'll declare, it's a perfeck staw the like o' this wark. For my pairt, I wadna hae him comin about me constantly for the parish o' Eccles; it pits a puir body sae muckle aboot, when they haena everything as they wad like to hae it; and the plague is, they've aye sae little to do wi'."

"I daur say ye've everything that's necessar," replied Tom.

"Nae thanks to you for that," cried Peggy, tartly; "but there hae I laid out thirteence on a matchkin o' speerits, forbye eightpence for a dram glass, as we hadna sic a thing in the house; and haven't I, in my stupidity, poured the whisky intil the lang sma bottle that the castor oil was in, without rangin it oot, and destroyed a' the guid dear speerits. But, if the minister canna tak it as it is, he'll just hae to want."

"What's that the minister will either hae to tak or want noo?" rejoined the Rev. James Muirhead, entering the room in company with David, having overheard the latter part of Peggy's lamentation over her mutelikin of whisky. "I'm glad to find ye a' sae weel employed," continued he, turning over the pages of the first volume of Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments, which lay upon the table before Peggy's eldest son.

"Oh, ay," responded Peggy, smiling complacently at the success of her artful scheme—"it's a book, sir, that's seldom oot o' any o' oor hands. But ye're no askin after oor Henry, Maister Muirhead; and he's owre muckle taen up wi' the Prophecies himsel to notice onybody else. Late and soon is he porin owre them weary books, and he's no sensible hoo he's hurtin his health; for, as I aften tell him in the words o' the auld proverb—*He is just hastenin to his end, like the moth to the candle.*"

"Master Henry will have heard of his good fortune, no doubt," said Mr Muirhead: "the laird is anxious that he should enter upon his duties immediately; and I hope and trust that, while he waters others, he may be plentifully watered himself."

"And weel is he fitted to learn the laird's twa laddies," exclaimed Peggy; "for, though I say it whashouldna, I dinna think he e'er had a marrow. I was just sayin to Dawvid last night, nae farer gane, that o' a' the able gospel ministers we hear, there's nane o' them a' can read a portion o' Scripture like him, savin yersel, Maister Muirhead; and wad ye believe it, he's just gotten your life way o' gaun wi' his hands, and caperin wi' his head! But, to tell ye the truth—and without meaning ony disparagement to the younger brethren—there's nane o' them a' that ye bring aboot ye, to be compared wi' yer ain sel."

"The multitude of years should teach wisdom," rejoined Mr Muirhead; "and I have gone out and come in before my peopple, in the strength alone of the grace which is in Jesus. I have had to do, in the course of my ministry, with persons of various descriptions—with the proud, the irascible, the weak, the ignorant."

"No to interrupt ye, sir," cried Peggy, "I dinna believe ye've got a mair ignorant coof than oor Tam in a'

the congregation. Deil o' the ike o' him was ever seen or heard tell o'."

"The lad's weel aneugh," said David, pressing his foot sliely upon Peggy's toe, wistful that she should set a watch over her tongue.

"Keep your clumsy fit aff my corns," cried Peggy, nettledly; "as the auld proverb says, '*Better speak bauldly oot than aye be grumphin*;' and it's highly proper, in my opinion, that a minister should be made acquainted wi' the wants o' his hearers; and if Maister Muirhead be a man worth his lugs, he'll no leave this hoose the nicht without catecheesin Tam. He'll find that he has a great want, son as he is o' mine, or I'm a' cheated."

"Perhaps you would have no objections, Thomas," said Mr Muirhead, beseechingly, "to answer a few simple questions?"

"I would hae a' the objections in the world," replied Tam, "for, to tell ye the truth, sir, I dinna think I've ever had the Carritch in my hand since ye gied up the Sabbath mornin school; and indeed I ne'er could say farer than '*Effectual Callin*' in a' my life."

"At what hour do you rise, Thomas, on the morning of the Sabbath?" inquired Mr Muirhead, anxious to draw the young man out—"and what is the first thing you do?"

"I rise generally between six and seven," answered Tom, "and the first thing I do is to put on my clacs."

"How does it happen, Thomas," asked Mr Muirhead, "that you lie two hours later than your wonted time o' rising on the morning of the Lord's Day?"

"Because I've naethin to do," rejoined Tom.

"But could you not be improving your mind," said Mr Muirhead, "by reading some portion of Scripture, or other useful book?"

"It would be a bonny thing to sit down and commence readin at that time o' the mornin," replied Tom. "I wad only get mysel leughen at—I'm gay sure o' that."

"Do you attend the church stately?" inquired Mr Muirhead.

"Stately!" re-echoed Tom, "I dinna ken vera weel, sir, what you mean by stately; I'm aye weel put on when I gaun, and just behave like the rest o' my neebours."

"Do you notice the petitions which I put up, Thomas?" asked Mr Muirhead.

"Notice them! how?" responded Tom, bluntly.

"In other words," said Mr Muirhead, "do you understand them?"

"Yes; a heap o' them," replied Tom; "indeed, I can repeat them maist as weel as yersel, for they're aye the same thing owre again."

"Do you ever sleep in the midst of the sermon?" asked Mr Muirhead, colouring at the shrewdness of the ploughman.

"When ye get sae vera dry, sir," answered Tom, "it's no easy keepin up; but I'm nae waur than ither folk; for, on Sunday last, I saw Neill Cameron, the precentor noddin afore ye was half dune."

"Do you bring any of the sermon home, Thomas?" inquired Mr Muirhead, evidently nonplused.

"I bring the text sometimes," replied Tom; "but ye're no what I would ca' a memorable preacher, Maister Muirhead; for ye get sae confused, and grow sae tiresome at times, it's no an easy matter followin ye, let be bringin yer discourse hame. Ye should aye be as short and as plain as ever possible, wi' the like o' us, sir."

"Very well, Thomas," rejoined Mr Muirhead; "I shall endeavour to profit by your strictures. Might I ask you, in the meantime, how you are engaged during the remaining part of the Sabbath?"

"I gie a bit look at the horses," answered Tom, with great simplicity; "and, in the afternoon, a few of us are in the habit o' beatin up at the smiddy corner to hae a crack."

"Ay, ay," cried Peggy; "as the auld proverb says, '*The deil's bairns are aye jain o' iher.*'"

"Can you tell me, Thomas," said Mr Muirhead, "what forms the subject of conversation between you and your companions on such occasions?"

"It's mair than I can richtly answer, sir," rejoined Tom; "I daur say we talk about naething ava, savin the horses, or the lasses, maybe."

"Then it is my duty to tell you, Thomas," replied Mr Muirhead, "that you have been living in the utter violation of the fourth commandment. Are you not aware that God hath set the Sabbath apart for his own exclusive worship?—and in what language can you make your apology, or in what terms can you justify yourself before your Maker, for sinning in the very face of that solemn prohibition—Thou shalt not think thine own thoughts therein?"

"Haud at him, Maister Muirhead," exclaimed Peggy, exultingly—"this is what I hae lang threatened; and indeed his faither is no muckle better than himsel, elder as he is o' yours, for havin allowed him to abuse his mercies in ony sic way."

"You may not," continued Mr Muirhead, disregarding Peggy's sententiousness—"you may not, Thomas, join the immoral and the vicious, in openly making the Sabbath a day of amusement or of idleness; but is it no crime to unbend your mind on the Lord's Day, from the things of God, and to engage in censurable or indecent talk? If you would avoid temptation, my young friend, you must always act under the influence of the apostolic injunction—"Touch not, taste not, handle not."

"There's nane better than my mother," replied Tom, "for makin a *handle* o' a thing—she's ane wha needs but a hair to mak a tether o'."

"There's my thanks, Maister Muirhead," cried Peggy, "for the guid counsel I hae been the humble means o' gettin conveyed to him; but, atweel, as the auld proverb says, '*Ye canna get mair out o' a sow than a grumph.*' I'm no mindin, though," continued she, rising and going to a cupboard, "that ye've no had a tastin o' our bottle. I'm maist clean out the now; but there is, aiblins, as muckle as ye'll mak awa wi'. Speerits are a usefu thing to hae about a house, minister; yet, for my part, they may stand on the shelf frae the ae twalmont's end to the other, as if ne'er sic a thing was there; for, unless it be for a pain o' the stomach, or the like, feint a drap ever weets my lips. 'Od, I'm thinkin," added Peggy, extracting the cork from a small square bottle, and applying it to her nose—"that I've keepit this sopp owre lang—it strikes me the bottle has a fusty smell."

"That beats cock-fechtin," cried Tom, archly—"ye ken, mother, it's the castor-oil that's been in the bottle that has gien it the bad smell; and as for the auldness o' the speerits, I dinna see hoo that can weel be, when they were only bocht yesterday."

"I had to tell ye that," bawled Peggy passionately, "or there wadna hae been a single drap left, had it been to set before his Majesty. There's naething in the yearthly warld, Maister Muirhead, that I can get keepit in the house for him; the very milk, I declare, has had the tap taen aff it, no ance, but twunty times, wi' his confounded greed; and he's sic a spotch, that hide a thing where ye will, he'll hae his dirty fingers on't."

The minister having tasted Peggy's bottle, and talked over the preliminaries of the tutorship with her son, took his leave of the family, promising to afford Henry all the assistance in his power, in the prosecution of his classical studies. In a few days, everything was in readiness for the favourite's departure; and, on the fifth morning subsequent to the visit of the Rev. James Muirhead, Henry Nicholson, equipped in his new black suit, was seen emerging from the cottage of his father, accompanied by his mother

and silently wending his way, not without a boding heart, to the beautiful mansion of Mr Boyd, where he was about to take up his residence.

"Fare-ye-weel, Henry, hinney," cried Peggy, with emotion, on arriving at the gate which opened on the gravelled walk, which led down to the laird's house—"Fare-ye-weel; it will be a dowy hame for me, now that my bonny bird is out o't; but it was doin naething for ye, stoppin there, an I maun just try to get owre yer 'way-gaun as I best can. I had a great deal to tell ye, as I thoct; but really I'm sae puttin about, that everything has gane clean oot o' my head. Ye'll no forget, hooever, when ye sit down, to fauld yer coat-tails frae under ye, for when they're ance crumpled, the creases will ne'er iron out again, let ye do yer life out. An' ye'll mind, Henry, no to pit yer spoon into yer cup, till ye're fairly done, or leave ony o' the cauld tea in yer saucer; an' in the mornin, ye maun aye eat yer egg, *precisely* after the first cup. Dinna mak awa wi' owre muckle, either, my pet, at a doun-sittin, for it's no reckoned genteel; an' rather tell the ledly that yer fou, though ye should be like to swoon o' hunger, than be helped a second time to ony o' her dainties. Braw folk are great pressers, yet they dinna like to see a great deal eaten, for a' that; so ye maun just cry, 'No, I thank ye, Mem,' an' haud by yer plate, when she orders the lass to bring it frae before ye. An', if I'm no mistaen, it's thoct genteel to dight yer mouth wi' the flap o' the tablecloth, after yer dune wi' denner; but as ane, unacquaint wi' sic manners, is vera apt, when he lifts it, to pou owre some o' the glasses, I think it will be better for ye to use yer napkin."

"I am not ignorant of these matters, mother," responded Henry, eager to escape; "and you may rely upon me attending to them. Good-by!—good-by!" added he, with the tears in his eyes; "I shall not be long in visitin you."

"Stop, stop, Henry," bawled Peggy, as the former proceeded down the walk; "I see a bit white worstit stickin to yer trowser-leg; an' I didna mind to caution ye against gaun into the house by the back door. March straight up to the front, my pet, no forgettin to scrape yer shoon, an' rub yer feet weel, on the bass, as ye enter; an', if ye'll be counselled by me, darlin, tak nae notice o' the idle taupie that opens the door to ye, but pass her like dirt, and mak yer manners to the ledly as soon as ye are shewn into the parlour."

The ambitious cottager having seen the front-door of Mr Boyd's mansion opened to receive her son, retraced her steps homewards, buoyed up with the most glowing anticipations of his future prospects. Henry soon became enamoured of his situation; for the family of the squire, which consisted of a daughter and two sons, vied with each other in acts of kindness to the young tutor; while Mr and Mrs Boyd, captivated with his genteel appearance, the suavity of his manners, and, above all, with his propriety of expression and fertility of idea, lauded him to his father, and held out promises of a pecuniary nature, in the event of the latter being without the means to enable Henry to complete his classical studies. Mrs Boyd, who was, withal, an excessively punctilious and proud woman, forgot her *caste*, for the time being and tacitly acknowledged that, in the son of her husband's steward, she had found an attractive and enlightened companion, as well as an effective and judicious instructor of her children.

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE AMBITIOUS COTTAGER AND
HER FAMILY.

(Concluded.)

A bond of social sympathy was not long in being formed between Henry Nicholson and the family of his patron; and, for several months, not the slightest interruption was given to the smooth current of that happy friendship which had sprung up amongst them. But there was one in Mr Boyd's household, who looked upon Henry with feelings very different from those which actuated the breasts of the rest—this was none other than Mary Boyd, who, from the first week of his entrance upon his tutorship, had regarded him with an affectionate solicitude, which the affability of Henry, and the opportunities afforded them of conversing unmolested and alone, soon ripened into a first and passionate love. Mary, though nurtured in the fashionable style which obtains in the most approved establishments for the education of young ladies, had returned to White-strand with the same modest and unassuming manners, and natural kindness of disposition, with which she had left the parental roof. The vanities and sorry conceits of the world, were strangers to her; and the serenity of her pure and happy spirit had not once been visited by the restless anxieties and imaginary evils which too often fling their shadows over the sunshine of the young heart. Henry Nicholson did not long remain indifferent to the charm of gentleness and youth which Mary habitually exercised, and the inroads it made upon his studies but too clearly indicated its potency. The hours which he was wont to spend in poring over his books, now lagged heavily; for the dominant passion of his heart crippled the energies of his mind; nor could he find pleasure in amusement or conversation, unless Mary was a sharer or a partaker of it. He, at times, too, would become silent and thoughtful; while his consciousness of talent and pride of elevated sentiment, led his heart to indulge in an undefined hope that the ambitious aspirings of his boyhood would one day be consummated beyond the summit of his proudest dreams! A change was now visible in the manners of the young pair—a slight shade of sadness was occasionally seen upon Mary's brow, while she evinced a timidity and embarrassment, when brought into contact with the young tutor, which the latter too palpably participated in; and whenever their glances chanced to encounter at table, they felt certain tingling sensations stealing over their hearts, which they had never experienced before.

*"Thus far their lives in one smooth current ran—
They loved, yet knew not when that love began;
And hardly knew they loved, though it had grown
A portion of their being, and had thrown
Its spirit o'er them."*

The distance between the laird's house and the White-strand cottages, was nearly three-quarters of a mile; and there being a sequestered path leading to the latter through some old pasture fields, skirted by a few beautiful ranges of woodland, Henry was in the habit of seeking the retirement which it afforded in paying an evening visit to his parents. His German flute, which he played with exquisite sweetness and skill, was his constant companion in his twilight

strolls; and when he drew from it the pathos and spirit of some of the wild and quickening melodies of his native land, the humble instrument became like a breathing intelligence in his hands. In one of his solitary rambles, on a fine moonlight night, when the whole sky was covered with one lovely expanse of dappled clouds, which floated in motionless repose over its bosom, the young tutor was agreeably surprised to find Mary seated on a small mound, at one of the most picturesque points of view, silently contemplating, like the bright spirit of the scene, the tranquil beauty of the evening landscape. Henry attempted to greet her, but his lips trembled; and his confusion became so great, that, with all his presence of mind, he stood spell-bound in abrupt and awkward discomposure before the fair apparition.

"Henry!" ejaculated Mary, faintly and distinctly, as if surprised at his appearance, while every nerve trembled within her with emotion.

"Mary!" responded Henry—the voice of the fair girl causing the feelings of his heart to gush forth, like the touch which drew the living waters from the rock. "How romantic the plantation appears to-night!" continued he, after a painful silence of some moments—"the still motion of the trees, and the glimpses of the water glittering through their apertures, steal over the heart like the beautiful illusions of a dream, and steep its feelings in a kind of ethereal abstraction!"

"I do not think I was ever abroad in a lovelier night," rejoined Mary, seemingly unconscious that it was the hallowing influence of that affection which possessed her whole heart, which lent to the landscape a deeper interest, and gave to the night a brighter beauty.

"Nor I," responded Henry, in faltering speech, when their attention was suddenly arrested by the dark figure of a man, crossing up the pasturage immediately in front of the lovers, as if with the intention of avoiding them; while, the next moment, the favourite pointer of Mary's father came bounding forth, and leaped and barked before the agitated girl, in token of recognition.

"'Tis my father, Henry," said Mary, in a suppressed tone, while fear of discovery restrained her steps—"I hope he has not seen us."

"I feel," replied the young tutor, scarce knowing what he said, "as if awakened from a pleasing dream, to sigh over its fallacious visions of happiness, and brood over its vanished brightness."

"And why do you sigh?" asked Mary, adroitly, fixing her eyes upon Henry, in melancholy earnestness, while passion raised upon her cheek its loveliest suffusion.

"I know not," answered Henry, abstractedly; and at the same moment, a large heron, scared from the stream where he had been wading, flew immediately over the lovers' heads, with flapping wing, uttering a hoarse creak, in his slow flight, like a bird of evil augury. Mary, sensibly alarmed at the circumstance, unconsciously clung to Henry's arm; and quickening their pace, they arrived at the gate which led down to the family mansion, at the very instant it was being opened by Mary's father. The latter took not the least notice of either; but, throwing wide the gate, with a swinging clash, he suffered them to pass down the walk before him, resolv-

ing at once, in his mind, that, on the morrow, it should be shut for ever on the presumptuous tutor. Henry Nicholson, on reaching the house of his patron, sought the parlour, where he was wont to spend the evening with the family, while Mary hurried, with a palpitating heart, to her own apartment, inwardly dreading the anger of her father, from whose stern and obstinate nature she feared the worst. Her mother happened to be from home with her two brothers, and the poor girl sat alone in her room, for nearly an hour, anxiously waiting their arrival; while her whole heart was dissolved in pity and compassion for the object of her tender solicitude, whose expulsion from her father's house, she clearly foresaw, would be the immediate result of her own indiscretion. The absent party at length arrived; and in a few minutes the bell was rung violently, summoning the trembling girl into the presence of her parents. Henry sat and audibly heard, with feelings more easily to be conceived than described, the language of remonstrance and angry reproof addressed to Mary, coupled, at the same time, with bitter reproaches against himself. The evening sped on apace, and still no one was like to intrude upon his privacy; while ever and anon the violent slamings of the doors, and the hurried paces to and fro, intimated to him, pretty distinctly, that some secret movement was going on, hostile to himself and the object of his virtuous regard. The house-maid, at last, opened the parlour door, and asked Henry, which was quite unusual, if he desired any supper to be brought him. The latter answered in the negative, when the girl withdrew, and returned shortly afterwards with his bed-room candle, and placed it upon the table. Henry took it up, and sought his sleeping apartment, which he reached without being confronted with any of the family. The night was passed by the young tutor, in painful restlessness, and melancholy reveries; and, on the morning, he descended the stairs in great agitation, and proceeded to the breakfast parlour, feeling, in all its force, the disagreeableness of his present situation. The table, he observed, was laid for *one*; and while wondering at the absence of the family, Mrs Boyd's maid entered with a letter, and delivered it into Henry's hands, without making any remark. He hastily broke the seal and read as follows:—

"Sir,—As the first fruits of your unparalleled presumption and ingratitude, covertly practised in mine own house, I have to inform you that you have forfeited my esteem, and have nothing more to expect from me. I herewith enclose the full amount of your salary, requesting, at the same time, that you will immediately leave my house, as I have no further need of your services.—Yours, as you bemean yourself.

"DUNCAN BOYD."

This sudden blow to all his hopes, was too much for Henry; it shook him to the very depths of his nature; and, with a choking sob, he sank upon the chair, and gave passionate vent in tears to his intolerable anguish. He felt for a moment convulsed by the force and variety of his feelings, while shame and despair circled his heart, and confused his head with dizzy bewilderment. Again his eye glanced over the laconic note, and fell upon its cruel mandate. The words thrilled through his very heart. Trusting, however, in the efficacy of an appeal to Mr Boyd, Henry looked tremblingly to the bearer of the letter, and begged, with a faltering voice, that she would intimate to her master his earnest desire to speak with him. The pert girl told the unhappy youth that the whole family had left Whitestrang early that morning for Berwick, as Miss Boyd was going off to Newcastle by the mid-day coach, to sojourn with her aunt. This astounding intelligence defied the mastery of mental fortitude; and the young tutor, again giving way to the natural susceptibility of his heart, resigned himself to the full tide of its bitter emotions. The interrogations of his parents, the taunts and comments of the ignorant and unfeeling, the utter ruin of his prospects, and, above all, the

torturing hopelessness of that passion which lay like a holy aspiration, in the unwitnessed privacy of his own soul, rushed over his mind, like an overpowering wave, in the very moment of his extreme agitation, and dashed against his wounded spirit. He cast his eyes sorrowfully around the room, and he even fancied that the pictures which adorned its walls glanced upon him upbraidingly, and beckoned him to be gone. His breakfast stood untasted before him, while the attendant female, to whose perfidy he was indebted for the laird's harsh resolution, looked on, with a slight smile of derision playing upon her lips. Henry, on looking up, and perceiving the malignancy of her expression, seemed to be recalled to a true sense of his situation; for he instantly left the parlour, packed up his books and papers, and departed. He bent his way to his father's cottage, a prey to the most distracting feelings; and in the lapse of half an hour, the shrill tongue of Peggy Nicholson rang upon the ear of her favourite son.

"What airt can the wind be blawin the day?" cried Peggy, good-humouredly, as Henry entered the house; "an' whar, in a' the world, is her leddyship awa gallantin till, this mornin, wi' the hail cleekin after her tail? My certes! she has a braw time on't, or she's naething. Hech, me!" added she, casting her eyes upon Henry's feet, which were ensconced in a pair of the laird's red slippers—the young tutor, in his agitation, having unconsciously walked off in them—"Hech me! I declare if he hasna his feet buskit in braw purple morroccy! What will this world come to, thinks onybody? Put them aff this instant moment, Henry, an' slip on Tam's Sunday shoon; for, if yer faither come in, an' see sic finery, he'll be neither to haud nor bind."

"I was not aware that I had slippers upon my feet," replied Henry mournfully.

"Ye didna ken that ye had slippers upon yer feet!" retorted Peggy: "what in the world can ye hae upon yer mind, lad, that ye should play sic pranks? Ane wad think, to see an' hear ye, that ye're distractit wi' the cares o' a sma family."

"I've more upon my mind than I can well bear," answered Henry, with a deep sigh.

"Yer mind!" cried Peggy, in bitter mockery: "'Od help ye, ye dinna ken that ye're born yet! But ye'll be in love, I see warrant; an' if that's the case, my young man, I wad hae ye, without mair ado, to loup intil the Leet, an' cool it. Mind ye how Sandy Tamson cam round, after he ance dukit himsel in the Lambdean Burn? Ye ken, too what Robin's sang says—

"Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his cen baith bleer'd and blin',
Spak o' loupin owre a linn—

Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Time and chance are but a tide—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
Slighted love is sair to bide—

Ha, ha, the wooing o't
Shall I, like a fool, quo' he,
For a haughty lizzy dee?
She may gae to France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't."

"Weel dune, mother," bawled Tom, entering the house, in company with his father; "ye're a match for Neill Cameron, the precentor; an' I dinna care wha heard me say sae; for ye sing as like ilk ither as twa crickets in a chimney lug."

"I'm tryin to cheer up my gentleman, there," exclaimed Peggy; "for he's in ane o' his melancholy fits. Are ye weel aneugh?" added she, going forward, and taking hold of Henry's hand. "Ye're sair flushed i' the face, an' be-grutten-like, aboot the een. I houp it's no the measles ye're takin, for they're ragin terribly down in Leitholm, the noo, as weel as up at Eccles, amang baith auld an' young. Get down Buchan, Dawvid, an' see what he says; there's

naething better, in my opinion, than a guid lick o' treacle an' brimstone. Ne'er a ane o' me can awa wi' yer doctor's drugs—they're little better than puzzin, an' it's weel kent, the maist feck o' them are made out o' deed folk. Gie owre fingerin at yer pulse, callant—it's no a thing to play wi'; an' as for findin out whether a body be weel or ill, by its beatin, ye micht as weel think o' tellin whether a cock be black or white by its craw."

"Ye're wrang there," rejoined David: "for it's only by the pulse that the weakness or the strength o' the constitution can be discovered; an' as the worth o' a clock is gathered by the even an' regular vibrations o' its pendulum, so a constant an' equal pulse tells the soundness o' the body an' the vigour o' a' the functions."

"Hae ye sae little knowledge, Dawvid Nicholson, as ye wad gie oot?" cried Peggy. "I'll tell ye what it is, an' naebody will e'er pit me aff the belief o't—the fingerin o' the pulse o' an unweelbody, is just a kind o' joukery-paukery, that doctors praeteeze, to blind puir folk, an' gar them trow, that they ken a great deal mair than they actually do. I've kent my pulse gie owre gaun for hail hours thogither, an' me in perfect health; an' at ither times I've heard it drivin awa, like the drum o' a thrashin machine, when I've been lyin at rest in my warm bed. But how do ye feel, Henry, or when did the illness come on ye?"

"I am quite well," replied Henry, endeavouring to stifle his emotion.

"Ye're no that," retorted Peggy, extracting the laird's letter from Henry's hat, where the latter had deposited it on leaving Whitestrand. "What's this we've gotten here?" added she, carrying it to the window, and holding it up to the light. "Maister Henry *Something*, I see, but I canna mak it out, for want o' my glasses. I declare my eye-sicht is clean gane."

"It's yer ain son's name, woman," rejoined David, taking the letter into his own hand; "an' I dinna think he can hae ony secrets, but what his faither may ken. *Presumption—ingratitude*," muttered he, as his eye ran over the epistle. "Why, the laird, Peggy, has turned Henry oot o' his hoose, for bad conduct."

"The red shoon! the red shoon!" cried Peggy, frantically, sinking, at the same time, *cautiously* upon a chair; "atweel, 'Pride gangs before destruction.' O Tam, bring yer mother a drink o' water, afore she fent clean awa. This is a blow nane o' us a' expeckit."

"This is worse than death," said David, throwing down the letter.

"Blame me not innocently," cried Henry, bursting int tears, while his features expressed the tumult of feeling which raged within his heart. "My crime lies solely in being the son of the humble owner of a cottage; and I have drawn down Mr Boyd's displeasure simply from having walked through the park in company with his daughter. But it was by the merest accident I met her, although her father has ungenerously thrust me from his house, without once acquainting me with the nature of my offence, or allowing me to offer one word in explanation."

"An' could ye expeck onything better," vociferated Peggy, furiously, "frae sic a dung-midden mushroom o' an upstart as Duncan Boyd? *He'll* hae the assurance to look down upon my bairn, an' turn him frae his house, for speakin to his speeder-waisted, feckless windlestrae o' a dochter. Truly, she was owre muckle honoured by the like. Do they ken what they're makin a wark about?—didna Colonel Fullarton's dochter rin awa wi' her faither's poke-broken flunkie?—love being sic a leweller; an' wasna Leddy Betty Blackett married to a singit-like dancin-maister? They're livin yet," continued she, with increased energy, "wha mind o' Duncan Boyd's faither—braw as he may think himsel the day—gaun round the country side wi' a pack, sellin shoe-ties an' prin-cushions. An' had the auld pedlar body no biggit a nest,

an' feathered it weel for him, do ye suppose that his ignorant, saucy son, wad e'er hae had a hoose o' his ain to put his stupid head intil? Atweel, no. But I'll see day an' day about wi' him, yet; for, as the auld proverb says—'If the pride o' his wife's heart disna mak them a' kiss the causey,' I'm no the mother o' Henry Nicholson."

"Tak tent what ye're sayin, woman," rejoined David; "there's aye plenty to carry an ill story; an' were the half o' what ye've said, this forenoon, reachin the ears o' the laird, I needna tell ye what wad be the upshot."

"Wad ye bemean yersel, Dawvid Nicholson," exclaimed Peggy, "to be behauden to a prood vagabond that has driven yer son frae his hoose, as if he was nae better than a gaun beggar, or a thievin Irish shearer? Tak my advice, for ance, an' let you an' Tam thraw up his beggarly service, at May-day, if we should hae to live i' the heart o' the Lammermuirs, amid naething but frost an' snaw. As I'm a livin woman," continued she, holding up the red slippers "the moment I hear their auld rumblin noddie comin up the loanin, I'll place mysel at the door, an' clash them Papish bachles through the windows o't. I'll tell her ledlyship her pedigree, if she's forgotten it. It's weel kent her faither made a' his siller, i' the Indies, by marryin black women; an' mony a ane, nae doubt, he's made awa wi', to get shot o' them—the auld wicked sinner! But he'll no gang aff the world unpunished."

For two or three months after the above colloquy took place, Henry Nicholson remained at home, subject to a deep and morbid melancholy; for his susceptible mind had received a shock, the consequences of which were not seemingly to be easily removed. It appeared from what transpired, a few days subsequent to his leaving his tutorship, that Mrs Boyd had been made acquainted, through the perfidiousness of the housemaid—who, unfortunately, happened to be in Mary's confidence—with the latter's partiality to Henry, for some weeks prior to the event of his being discharged from the family. A strict watch was accordingly placed upon the actions of Mary Boyd and the young tutor; the result of which was such as we have already described. Mary, in the meantime, continued with her aunt at Newcastle, an elderly lady, whom Henry had frequently encountered at her father's house, and with whom he was a great favourite. Her brothers were sent to an Edinburgh academy; while the laird took no farther notice of his quondam tutor, who, without any definite object in view, spent his time in the languid indifference of grief and disappointment. Fortunately, however, for the thwarted youth, the deep interest which Mr Muirhead still continued to take in him, procured for him the situation of head assistant in an academy in the southern division of Northumberland. On the morning, therefore, of his birth-day—which Peggy took occasion to remark, as being unlucky—Henry left Whitestrand, and proceeded to Falgate academy, which lay about nine miles to the south of Alnwick; and, on the afternoon of the same day, he reached the destined termination of his journey. He had already been apprized of the eccentricity and incipient vanity of Mr Hendon, the master of the school; nor had Mr Muirhead forgotten to put the assistant in possession of the 'old pedagogue's famous sixpenny Tractate on Education. Mr Hendon, moreover, was a pure, unadulterated Northumbrian clergyman, who, from infancy to age, had hawked the letter *r* up his windwipe, although, strange to say, there was not, in the whole county, a bitterer declaimer against the *burr*. The duncery of an untoward boy, he could positively bear, but one who "croaked like a rook," well nigh drove him to madness. Rapping at the door of Falgate House, our young assistant was immediately ushered into the presence of an old pert-looking gentleman, dressed in pepper-and-salt coloured habiliments.

"You're Henry Nicholson, are you?" cried Mr Hendon, quickly, rising from his chair, and taking Henry by the

hand. "Sit down, my young man. I really thought, from your letter, and what Mr Muirhead wrote me, that you were much older than you are. By the way, you're writing's not amiss, Master Henry; but we don't like a formal small-text hand, for it's reckoned ungentlemanly to write legibly—a fashionable scrawl is the thing. Wur just going to get on with wur English themes, up stairs," continued he. "There's one of my young men can compose nearly as well as Dr Philpots or myself. I make no doubt but he'll be a very great man yet. We've another not over the height of that table, a capital astronomer; and he knows as well where to look for the Bear or Charles' Wain, as Sir Isaac Newton or myself. Wur thinking he'll become a *star* yet. And there's George Maundison, as excellent a mathematician at his age as ever was brought into being. Yet, don't you know, Master Henry, when he first entered wur academy, both I and my assistants gave him up in despair? Now, however, wur proud of him; and I have no hesitation in saying that George understands the first proposition in Euclid as well as the great Simpson or myself. If he only goes on as he's begun, there's no doubt but he'll rank with the most scientific men of the age yet. I notice all the three in the *second* edition of my Tractate on Education—a work you must have heard of."

"I had no idea," rejoined Henry, a little nonplussed, "that the boys attending your seminary had already acquired such reputation. The high and varied talents they possess must place me in a very unenviable position in your academy."

"Not at all, sir," returned Mr Hendon—"you're more than a match for the best of them. Do you study hard, Master Henry?—You're rather thin looking—but we'll take care that you don't keep yourself too close at it; for, independent of your walks with the pupils at *school intervals*, I'll have you to take a little gentle exercise in wur garden, or in the seven-acre field. You'll can hoe potatoes, without cutting their tennors. Now, were you doing half a drill every morning, and say another half in the evening, at *school intervals*, it would do you more good than you can conceive. You can try a dig, too, in the garden, and get that break opposite the window ready for wur greens and savoy's. Wur garden is a capital cabbage grower; and if you're fond of vegetables, Master Henry, you need never want them. Do you not hear those mischievous boys, above!" added Mr Hendon, suddenly starting to his feet, and moving off—"there's not a soul of them working while I'm engaged here. I'll be obliged to fasten some of them down to the table, if they won't give over with their devilry."

Leaving the young assistant to his own meditations, the bustling pedagogue hurried to the school-room, to still the tumultuous noise which the future Newtons, and Simpsons, and Davies, were creating overhead. Henry, the moment he was freed from the presence of the loquacious master, began to feel a growing dislike to the academy; and he almost regretted having left his father's cottage, to enter upon a situation which, so far from being conducive to his own improvement, threatened to stunt his intellect, by bringing him into daily contact with such an associate. In a few days, however, he was thoroughly initiated into his scholastic duties, and, consequently, felt more at ease; while, at *school intervals*, the young assistant might have been seen sauntering through the fields, or wending his way by the neighbouring rivulets that descended from the romantic hills which belted Falgate academy. On these occasions, he was always closely attended by his pupils or body-guard, whose mad-cap revelry, it may easily be imagined, ill-assorted with the sadness which preyed upon his mind. He felt the companionship of his juvenile and clamorous friends peculiarly irksome, from the circumstance of his having, when in their sight, to be continually under the restraint of a formal and didactic hypocrisy. Nor

did their holidays bring him any real enjoyment: for he could not mingle in their pastime or share their glee, but wandered amidst them while they pursued their sports—

"Among them, but not of them—
Rapt in a train of thoughts, which were not their thoughts."

At night, too, when left alone, Henry would have sat at the window of his small room, which overlooked an old orchard, till the scene, and the hour, and the stillness, would have so vividly recalled the eve of his first and last meeting with Mary Boyd, that his senses would have been entirely wrapt in the pleasing yet painful remembrance. On one occasion, while this tender subject engrossed his whole thoughts, the young assistant was tempted, from a spontaneous impulse of mind, to throw his feelings into verse—conceiving it a fit vehicle for sensibility and emotion; and he accordingly gave publicity to his effusion in one of the Newcastle papers, taken in by Mr Hendon, not without indulging a hope probably, that it would meet the eye of *her* who best could understand it. The composition was of that sentimental species which embodies the feelings and emotions of the heart, while the theme was derived from no fictitious source, being nothing less than his long cherished, but unavowed passion for the daughter of his former patron. It was to the following effect:—

TO MARY.

Mary! the heart that's deepest mov'd
Its passion most will hide;
And wordless love is all I've breath'd,
When seated by thy side.

Yet thou art shrined amongst my thoughts,
Like some bright star of even,
Which sheds its hallowing light across
The voiceless vault of heaven!

And oft, before my spirit's gaze—
Amid the land of dreams—
Like moonlight trembling on the lake,
Thy witching beauty gleams!

But, though the dear illusion wears
A radiant smile for me,
I wake to see it melt into
A *memory* of thee!

For still my soul's deep privacy,
My rooted love must share,
Until thy heart interpret right
Its silent breathings there!

About a fortnight after the publication of the above effusion in the newspaper, there appeared in the same journal a few pretty verses, entitled, "The Response," which bore internal evidence of having been called forth by the composition in question. Henry perused them with ill-concealed emotion, and silently interpreted their language by his own feelings. The tears trembled in his eyes as he read, for nearly the twentieth time, by the light of his candle—which was nearly extinguished, having burned to the extremity of the wick—the insinuated earnestness and devotion with which the fair responder characterised her love; for he firmly believed that his secret affection had been traced to its retreat by his romantic avowal of its existence, while he clung to his love for Mary with increased fondness and exultation, deeming it no longer hopeless, or without an approving witness. Some days after this, a blank letter reached him, containing a ten pound note, bearing the Newcastle postmark, with the address written in a bold and scrawling hand. Henry bethought him that he had no relations in that quarter, and at once concluded that it could have come from none other than Mary's aunt. He called to mind the uniform kindness with which she had treated him, and the affectionate concern she had manifested in his future prospects, until not a doubt remained upon his mind of the identity of his beneficent donor. The midsummer vacation was now fast approaching; and the young assistant, buoyed up with his unexpected good fortune, drowned the recollection of his past sorrows and disappointments, and gave himself up to a waking dream of success; while the ambitious

thoughts that had so long distracted him, began, in his warm imagination, to assume a definite shape. But, alas! how vain are our judgments of the future!—how illusive are the appearances of earthly felicity! On the evening preceding the breaking up of the academy, as Henry Nicholson sat gazing from the window of his room, revelling in joyous anticipation, and eagerly longing for the morrow, when he would leave the scenes which surrounded him, and hasten to the cottage of his beloved parents, Mr Hendon entered the apartment, and put a letter into his hands, sealed with black. Henry glanced for a moment at the superscription, and, with a benumbing presentiment, broke open the seal. The letter was from the Rev. James Muirhead, announcing the decease of his excellent father, whose premature death had been occasioned by his having fallen backward from the top of a hay-stack, and thereby dislocated his neck. "My poor father!" cried Henry, burying his face in his hands, while his frame was convulsed by a shock like that of electricity; "and shall I never see him more?" Mr Hendon took his hand kindly, and endeavoured to soothe him, but he entreated that he might be left alone; and glancing with an indescribable thrill upon the letter, he uttered a deep sigh, and dropping his head upon Mr Hendon's breast, exclaimed, in anguish, apparently unable to utter another syllable—"O God! if thou hadst but permitted me to hear my father's kind voice once more!"

In the course of a few hours, Henry Nicholson left Falgate academy, and walked over to Alnwick, to be in readiness to start with the morning coach. During the greater part of his sorrowful journey, he gave vent to his keen and fervent feelings in sobs of anguish; but at length their painful excitation became gradually deadened, and, ere he left the coach, his heart seemed bound in such a profound abstraction as to render him almost insensible to the presence of his fellow-travellers. Early on the evening of the same day, he reached the quarter of the country where lay the habitation of his childhood; and he soon found himself amongst scenes which powerfully awakened every feeling of bereavement, of sorrow, and distress. It was a beautiful summer's eve—and the broad plane-trees which skirted the road on each side, were flinging down their rich masses of shadow, as the sun went down amid the red and spirit-like streaming of the western horizon. Henry looked up, and the old walls of his mother's cottage met his view!—those beloved walls where his infant lips first lisped the name of *Ather*, and which now contained the inanimate remains of one who was dearest to him on earth. As he turned his steps to the mean range of buildings, Feist's beautiful stanzas to the evening sun rushed upon his memory; and when he reflected on their singular appropriateness to his own case, he could not refrain from weeping aloud, as he conned them over, in the bitterness of his spirit—

"As I loiter along my homeward path,
What feelings of deep regret,
That last sweet smile of the evening sun
Awakes in my heart!—for it speaks of one
Whose sun in the grave has set.
"His farewell look, with Christian hope,
Shone as purely, calmly bright!
Alas! when it vanish'd, the night came down,
And my poor torn heart no more might own
A father's guiding light!"

Henry reached the door of the cottage, and entered the room where his mourning friends were assembled, without being able to utter a word. His mother sat by the side of the bed which contained the corpse, and had an icy look of condensed despair, which too plainly indicated that her perceptions were slightly bewildered. She uttered no complaint—expressed no grief; but it was evident that her heart was bleeding, and that she wept without a voice. Her face was colourless; and, when Henry took her by the hand, she seemed scarcely sensible of his presence, until, suddenly awakening to a full sense of her misery, she flung her arms

distractedly around her son's neck, and mournfully exclaimed—"Ye've nae faither noo, Henry, lad—the cauld clay that's lyin' i' the bed is naething to you or me!" This was uttered with an expression of such helpless grief that the heart of Henry seemed to dissolve within him. He took a seat at the bottom of the bed; and the folds of the sheet being loosely drawn over the head of the corpse, he caught the ghastly features of his dead father. It was the first time he had looked upon death! A shudder passed across his frame, and he gazed upon the glazed eyes and colourless face of the beloved form of passed humanity which lay before him, as if he were changed to stone. At this moment, two men entered with the coffin, and placed it upon some chairs which stood in front of the bed. The poor widow laid her hands upon its edge, and bent her head forward, as if engaged in reading the lettered inscription upon the lid. The neighbours gently removed her, and proceeded to deposit the body in the coffin. "Oh! my poor husband!" cried she, with a groan so mournful, that it seemed laden with her very life—"what's to come o' me noo? I had but ae friend i' the world, and he's ta'en frae me. Little did I think," continued the widow, fastening her lips upon those of her dead husband, "when ye left yer ain house on Wednesday morning, that the next sight I was to witness was ye brocht in a corpse! Dinna put on the lid," cried she, frantically, to the men who were preparing to do so, "until I cut, wi' my ain hands, some o' the hair which hangs owre that cauld and clammy brow. Now, I'm satisfied," added she, having accomplished her purpose—"this is a' that I can claim o' him that's gane." And sinking down upon a chair, her frail fabric tottering to its very foundations, she seemed almost instantly to relapse into a state of mournful isolation and vacuity. The lid of the coffin was now replaced, and the grinding sound of the screws, as they were driven down into the wood, announced to the weeping group which stood around, that the world was closed for ever upon the departed.

For many weeks subsequent to the interment of David Nicholson, his distressed widow refused to be comforted. But her grief was of too violent a nature to last for any lengthened period, and her sons had the gratification of seeing her high-wrought emotions calmed and subdued to the level of ordinary affliction. Her eldest son, through the kindness of Mr Boyd, was appointed land-steward in the place of his late father; while Henry succeeded to a school in Leitholm, vacant by the emigration of the village schoolmaster. Nor must we forget to mention the kind visits of Mary Boyd to the cottage of the widow. The causeless dislike of her father towards his *quondam* tutor, appeared to be forgotten; and, as Mary and her aunt had come from Newcastle, to spend the summer months at Whitstrand, the former had frequent opportunities afforded her of conversing with the bereaved cottager. Henry and Mary, however, preserved towards each other a somewhat distant and formal bearing; the poetical *avowal* and *response* seemed consigned to the privacy of their own hearts; while they continued to act as if duly sensible of the disparity between them, and the opposition they might expect in the event of its transpiring that they regarded each other with aught save a feeling of indifference. But it required very little sagacity to divine the true secret of Mary's visits to the house of Henry's mother. Her aunt, who was generally her companion in her calls, did not scruple to approve of the tender interest which her niece took in Henry; nor was she ignorant of the romantic avowal of attachment they had reciprocally made. Seven months had now elapsed since the death of David Nicholson; and as Henry, partly from the unwholesome atmosphere of his school-room, and partly owing to his anxious and unremitting application to study, had contracted an irritating cough, which seemed to indicate an affection of the lungs, it was urged by Mr Muirhead,

that he should resign his school, and forthwith prepare himself for the college. The widow gladly acquiesced in this proposal; for she now saw a prospect of having the cherished ambition of her heart gratified, and the ministerial scheme, which had been so long frustrated, fully wrought out. After a succession of incidents, void of sufficient interest to be noticed more particularly, the eventful morning arrived when Henry Nicholson must leave the cottage of his mother, and proceed to Glasgow to prosecute his professional studies. It may be necessary to state that, on the preceding evening, he had met Mary Boyd and her aunt at the manse, being invited to pass the last night of his sojourn at Whitestrand in the society of his steady and sincere friend, the Rev. James Muirhead. The latter being called from his guests to visit an old dying parishioner, Mrs Muirhead took a pack of cards from her escritoire, to amuse her visitors with a game at English whist during the minister's absence. The parties who engaged in the game, were the two elderly ladies already alluded to, a young gentleman named Forster, and Henry Nicholson; while Mrs Muirhead archly proposed, that they should play for the gentle Mary. Henry and Mary's aunt happened to be partners; and having got the rubber, it was announced, by Mrs Muirhead, with provoking pleasantry, that the young student had won Miss Boyd! Mary's confusion at this announcement did not pass unnoticed—she blushed, and scarce ventured to raise her eyes from the table; for, though no actual engagement existed between her and Henry, a habit of thinking had formed in her heart the idea that her fate was indissolubly tied to his, and that, one day, he would put himself in such a position as would enable him to ask her hand of her father. The party, on breaking up, took an affectionate leave of Henry; while Mary's aunt begged that he would not forget his old friends at Whitestrand.

"My dear bairn," soliloquized Peggy Nicholson, holding a candle over the face of her sleeping son—for it was yet dark, she having risen early to prepare matters for his departure—"My dear bairn, it's owre sune to disturb ye yet, and it will be lang or ye again sleep under yer ain mother's roof; but gang where ye will, there's nane will e'er hae the same care owre ye that I hae had. And, oh! if they put ye intil a damp bed, and settle down that rough, nasty cough o' yours, what's to come o' my Henry—far frae hame, amang frem folk, that hae, aiblins, ne'er had a family o' their ain, and ken naething o' the feelings o' a mother's heart?"

"The kettle's boilin, mother," cried Tom, impatiently, "if ye're gaun to let us hae oor breakfasts."

"Ye may hae something else in yer head than breakfasts," sighed Peggy, wiping the tears from her eyes with her check apron, "when yer puir unweel brother's aboot to leave the hoose in sic a cauld blawy mornin. I wonder hoo ye can hae a heart for anything."

"I dinna pit my breakfast into my heart," rejoined Tom, and slunk from the cottage.

In the course of an hour, everything being in readiness, Henry Nicholson took the key from the small trunk which contained "Caesar and his fortunes," deposited it safely in his pocket, and emerged from the cottage accompanied by his mother. His trunk was to be forwarded to Berwick, in time for the two o'clock coach—Henry being promised a ride from Swinton to the former place in the vehicle of a friend. Arriving at the road which branched off to Leitholm, Henry, with brimful eyes, bade his mother farewell, and proceeded on his journey. The anxious widow stood riveted to the spot, with her eyes intensely fixed upon the young pedestrian, so long as he remained in sight; and when, at length, a turn of the road hid him from her view, she joined her hands before her breast, and ejaculated, with deep fervency—"O my God! be You a faither to my bairn, and guide and protect him, for Your name's sake!"

For some days subsequent to Henry's arrival at Glasgow College, he appeared absent and dejected; but the ardour of his mind gradually dispelled the solitary feeling which possessed him, till his desire for literary distinction soon engrossed his whole heart. The letters of introduction with which Mr Muirhead had favoured him, gained him the notice of one of the Professors; while his amiable temper, and uniform propriety of demeanour, rendered him no less a favourite with his fellow-collegians. His thirst for knowledge, his acuteness, and unwearied application, were not without their reward; for, at the close of the session, Henry stood foremost in his class, and carried off one of the bursaries in the gift of the University. Instead of returning home, however, he embraced an advantageous offer made to him by an influential banker in the city, to whom he had been recommended by Principal B., as a companion and tutor to his sons. Happily, a great portion of his time was devoted to the prosecution of his own studies; and, as his ardour had in no degree relaxed, the recess did not fail to add to the extent and profundity of his acquirements. His attendance at College, during the second session, was equally distinguished; he carried off four prizes, and was complimented on his general excellence in Latin and Greek. On the day following their distribution, as Henry sauntered through the adjoining ground on the east of the College, exulting over his success, the subjoined letter from his mother, which was put into his hands by his fellow-lodger, plunged him into the deepest gloom, and dashed the picture which his fancy had drawn into a thousand melancholy fragments:—

"DEAR SON,—Come hame frae yer books and yer Colleges, if ye wad see yer puir mother's head laid in her coffin. Tam's listit intil the sodgerin, and my heart's broken. He's gaun off in ane o' the Berwick ships wi' the gunners, and we'll ne'er see him mair. It's weel yer puir faither's gane, for this wad hae killed him. Pray for yer distractit mother; and hurry hame to look after her buryin, for langer she canna live.—Frae yer heart-broken mother,

"MARGARET NICHOLSON."

Henry, on receiving this painful intelligence, lost no time in returning to Whitestrand. He found his mother's cottage a house of mourning. His brother having indulged too freely at the same annual fair which his father had attended three years before, in the excitement of the moment had thoughtlessly suffered himself to be entrapped by a recruiting party, then in Berwick, belonging to the Royal Artillery. Being sworn into his Majesty's service, there was no alternative; and Thomas Nicholson, on the second day of his brother's arrival from Glasgow, bade farewell, with a heavy heart, to his relations, and stepped on board of the smack which was to convey him to Woolwich—the head-quarters of the artillery. The widow, who, with her youngest son, had come from Whitestrand to witness his departure, stood upon the quay, and gazed, with the tears in her eyes, on a knot of sailors, who kept *yo-heave-hoing*, as they kept tugging at the main haul-yards. The companions of the poor recruit's folly, seeing the work too heavy for the united strength of the seamen, volunteered, in their drunken levity, to assist them; but Tom leaned silently against the vessel's side, and averted his eyes from his mother, evidently torn with remorse for the rash step he had taken.

"Puir Tam!" cried the widow, on observing him, "he's as melancholy as an owl;—atweel, this wark's no for him—for hoo can it be thoct that ane wha ne'er had heart o' graec to shoot a hoody-craw, can gang oot and fecht and kill his ain specie. Muckle sin hae they to answer for to the Almighty wha mak war a lawfu tred, and train up a wheen ignorant country lads to be human butchers! O Henry!" added she, grasping his hand, "canna a' yer books and colleges put down the heinous sin o' sodgerin?"

"We must now hasten to the pier," said Henry, leading his mother along the quay, "as the vessel is under way."

"Hech me!" exclaimed the widow in amazement, on arriving at the pier, and gaining a full view of the sea—there being a considerable swell running at the mouth of the harbour—"Hech me! and is that bit ship fit to keep thegither in that roarin, tumblin water! Are thae what they ca' the jaws, think ye, that are gaun aye out and comin aye in, like a *live thing*? Weel may they pray for them that gang down to the sea in ships."

"Let us proceed a little farther along," rejoined Henry, "and Thomas will hail us from the vessel as she passes."

"Dinna be owre venturesome, Henry," cried the widow, clinging to her son's arm—"I'm dizzy and sick-ways as it is. O Henry Nicholson!" added she, the next moment, in terror, as the vessel gave a lurch over—"the ship's owre! the ship's owre! and my Tam's a drowned man."

"There is no danger," replied Henry, as the vessel righted again; "she is merely tacking, and will pass us presently."

"Danger, hinney!" ejaculated the widow—her voice quivering with emotion—"do ye no see what a hungry lape the white water has a' along the ship's side! Yonder's my son, noo," continued she, as the vessel hauled close to the pier; "and, oh! what a shilpit, bleached look my puir lad has! He's sick, Henry! he's sick! and there's nane to haud up his head, or fetch him a drink o' water. Tam! Tam!" added she, wildly thrusting out her hands, "will ye no speak to yer distractit mother?"

The vessel sped swiftly through the water; and, in a few minutes, she was considerably out of the harbour, running at a fine rate before the wind, with the spray dashing like falling snow over her bows. Henry Nicholson and his mother took a last look of the smack, and hurried from the pier; the latter in vain striving to hide those emotions which she could not possibly restrain. On reaching Whitestrand, every thing looked sad and dismal within the cottage of the distressed widow; while the prospects of a bright futurity, which had floated before the eyes of the young student, were swallowed up in the gloom of the present. Torn with anxiety, Henry sat down and addressed a letter to the Duke of Wellington, in which he set forth the *un-English* manner in which his brother had been entrapped into the service; his natural repugnance to a military life; the ruin, owing to the step he had taken, of his mother's means of support; and concluded with imploring the exertion of that influence which he believed the noble Duke to possess in procuring his discharge. The Duke, with his accustomed promptitude, replied to the letter in the course of a few days. He regretted that, owing to the frequency of applications of a like nature, the young man must necessarily be bought off; and, although orders had been issued from the War-office, prohibiting the acceptance of discharge money, he was glad, he said, that he had been able, in this instance, to see the order departed from. The tears of joy trembled in Henry's eyes as he read the letter. His mother stood speechless with gratitude. "It is the Lord's doings," said the widow, in a fervent tone of voice; "ye've been but an humble instrument in his hands, Henry; and I can distinctly trace, in the raisin up o' this great man to befriend my misguided lad, the finger o' Him who has promised to be a 'faither to the faitherless, and a husband to the widow.'"

In the lapse of a few months, Thomas Nicholson came down from Woolwich, and resumed his usual labours at Whitestrand; while Henry, after a brief sojourn, returned to Glasgow. There was one, too, whose tender concern during the affliction of the widow, requires to be particularly noticed. We allude to Mary Boyd. Day after day, she conversed with her father's cottager, delighting to perform offices of kind attention; and, during Henry's attendance at college, the deep interest which she manifested in his success, proved

that his absence had only tended to strengthen those hopes, and fears, and wishes, and tremblings of her heart, which she felt for the young student. She fancied, indeed, that her passion was sufficiently concealed—but it was obvious to all; and, on Henry's leaving Whitestrand on the present occasion, she could not refrain from shewing very evident tokens of attachment. Four years passed by, and new and brilliant honours were the recompense of Henry's talents and assiduous exertions. The last session of his attendance at college was now drawing to a close; and the golden medal having been promised the year previous, as the University's prize for the best poem on the birth of the Messiah, the most gifted of the students, fired with an honest pride, entered themselves as candidates for the splendid honour. For some weeks, great was the excitement within the walls of the college; yet, throughout the whole of this eventful period, the subdued and calm tone of Henry's manners shewed no outward sign of his internal restlessness. But the enthusiasm of his temperament, kindled into intense ardour by this signal opportunity of obtaining lasting distinction, caused the object of his ambition to haunt his mind like a passion; and often, in the solitude of his own thoughts, the young exhibitioner for academical honours, afraid of his own taste and literary skill, sank into the deepest despondency, and trembled at the near approach of that trial of intellectual superiority where even to fail was honourable. The poems were lodged, and the day arrived when the name of the successful candidate would be made known. Henry Nicholson left his lodgings in the High Street, for the college, at an early hour; and, while passing down the west side, near the Blackfriars' Church, what was his astonishment to meet Mary Boyd and her aunt, in company with the regius professor of natural history, on their way to the college buildings! The student's face flushed, while Mary's aunt laughingly told him that her niece had found it necessary to use a little harmless deceit to bring her to Glasgow, as she felt over-anxiety for the fate of some absent lover. Mary turned aside her head to conceal the rising blushes, and in a few minutes the party reached the common-hall, where the friends of the exhibitioners were assembled, eager to learn the result of the competition. Henry sat down on the same seat with his friends, visibly agitated by hope and suspense; while Mary looked with a deep earnestness on all around, and listened with impatience to the quick, half-stifled conversation that fell on her ear. A rattling of canes upon the benches, was immediately followed by the quivering of a small door at one end of the hall; and presently a tall spare figure, clad in a black silk gown, made his appearance, and approached an enclosed reading-desk. There was a universal silence in the hall at this moment, and all eyes were fixed upon the venerable dignitary. He at length rose from the platform where he was seated, and announced, with a firm voice, that the best poem given in on "The Birth of the Messiah," was the one bearing the motto—

Non usitata nec tenui ferar
Penna

The interest felt by the spectators was now intense. A buzz of approbation ran through the hall; but, as the name of the successful competitor had not yet transpired, most of the ladies, in the brief interval of suspense, rose from their seats and looked impatiently towards the Professor, who now proceeded to break the seal of a note which he held in his hand. He mentioned the name of Henry Nicholson! A shout of applause burst from the students; and Henry, amidst the applause of his fellow collegians, glided up the hall and ascended the platform, to receive the splendid medal from the hands of the Professor. A benign smile of triumph played upon his lips—for he felt it to be the proudest moment of his life—and, as he hearkened to the high eulogium pronounced upon his talents and acquirements, the starting tears indicated the tumult of emotion in his breast. Henry

returned to his seat amid the congratulations of his friends ; while the gentle Mary rose and shook him fervently by the hand, and could only exclaim, in the excess of her feelings, "How happy! happy!" The tear of rapture was in her eye, and her expressive countenance, coloured from her guileless heart, appeared working with thought. Her partiality, delicately and involuntarily betrayed, was not without its effect upon Henry. He pressed her hand, and assured her that he deeply felt the worth of the interest which she took in all that concerned him. A host of early reminiscences stole over Mary's heart at this moment ; and the fair girl, with a graceful modesty, and a keen and half blushing look, asked the young student to accompany her and her aunt to their lodgings in the city. The invitation was gladly accepted ; and the approving smile of Mary's aunt, like a summer rainbow, was, at the same moment, cast upon the lovers with its rich promises. On the evening of the following day, a favourite opportunity occurring, Henry Nicholson avowed his passion for Mary Boyd, with candour and fervour ; and the latter, too artless and candid to conceal that his love was reciprocated, gave up a heart fraught with the most amiable and tender emotions, and returned the devotion of Henry with an equal sincerity of affection. The old lady rejoiced in an attachment which she had been instrumental in fostering ; and, ere she left Glasgow, she ordered fifty copies of Henry's prize poem to be printed on the finest paper, and superbly bound in morocco, with gold lettered titles, for private circulation amongst her friends at Whitestrand. Conceiving that a short extract from the composition may not be altogether uninteresting to our readers, we proceed to give a specimen from the opening of the poem :—

THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH.

HOSANNAH to the Son of God ! "the bright and morning star !"
Whose blessed name is glorified above all names that are ;
And may his kingdom o'er the world, still more and more increase,
Till heathen lands their homage pay unto the "Prince of Peace."

And could not honoured Bethlehem, a dwelling-place afford
The virgin mother, when she bore her infant, Christ the Lord ?
Oh ! that a stable's gloom should e'er have veiled the glorious birth
Which thus restor'd the fall of man, and sav'd a ruin'd earth !

But, while the blessed mother sat upon a bed of straw,
The reverend sages of the East, in Mary's infant saw
The faithful promise visible, and now fulfilling fast,
That, from the earliest of days, a light o'er Israel cast :

The Shiloh in a manger lay ; but, as he calmly slept,
The bright inhabitants of Heaven a holy vigil kept ;
And aged saints devoutly knelt, amid the hallowed scene
For, through the dim material, divinity was seen !

And while the meteor of his birth, in lambent glory, shone,
Like to the eye of God, above His own incarnate Son !
Far through the naked vault of Heaven, were heard celestial strains,
And an immortal blaze of light was flung on Bethlehem's plains.

The startled shepherds gaz'd in dread, until the angel broke
The spell that held their boding hearts, and his great mission spoke ;
Then were the joyous tidings breathed which God proclaim'd to man,
When He, in pitying love, made known redemption's wondrous plan.

* * * * *
The heart of th' Eternal throbb'd, and angels raised their songs
Of highest glory unto Him to whom all praise belongs ;—
For God's good-will to man was shewn, and peace to earth was given,
And Mercy clasp'd an exiled world, in the embrace of Heaven !

Henry Nicholson, having got over all his examinations at college, hastened home, where he found the aspect of things completely changed. Mr Boyd, finding that his daughter's happiness was at stake, had wisely given his consent to her union with Henry, so soon as he should be put in possession of a church ; and his cordial reception at Whitestrand shewed the high estimation in which he was held by the family. His brother, through the generosity of the laird, was placed in a small farm in the neighbourhood of Coldstream ; and, in the meantime, the Presbytery of Kelso held one of their meetings, at which Henry delivered, with great approbation, an exegesis and popular sermon, which were sustained as part of his trials. He shortly afterwards became a licentiate of the Scottish Church, and diligently prepared him-

self for his first public appearance in the kirk of his native parish. The joyful widow fervently thanked Providence that she was thus spared to witness the fulfilment of her ambition ; and as the Sabbath drew near, she daily became more profuse of her admonitions. "See, Henry," cried she, on the eventful morning, as the young preacher was walking over to the manse—"See, Henry, that ye clap the broads o' the Bible thegither, wi' a hearty clank, the moment ye gie out the text ; for ye'll be naething thocht o' unless it be seen that ye can preach without it ; and dinna attempt ony o' yer new-fangled words, or rattle and rhyme as ye often do ; but tak plenty o' time, and speak bravly oot, that the auld folk may hear ye. Ye maunna glower round the kirk aither, in the time o' the psalm-singin, or follow the ill-faur'd practice o' openin yer een when engaged in prayer ; but keep them shut in a devout and serious manner, that folk may see yer heart is suitably impressed wi' a sense o' the sacred presence ye are in." The widow indulged in a like admonitory strain till the sound of the kirk bell announced the hour of divine service, and congregated the worshipping people within the walls of the church. Henry Nicholson, on ascending the pulpit, felt strange misgivings of heart ; but having given out the psalm and prayed, he gathered confidence, and recited the words, "Not many mighty are called," for the subject-matter of discourse, with a clear and collected voice. In the course of his sermon, Henry, in denouncing the worthless honour of a conqueror, and the infamy which too often followed in the path of his ambition, took occasion to illustrate his argument by briefly glancing at the character of Napoleon, which he did with singular force and eloquence.

A vacancy occurring shortly afterwards in one of the Chapels of Ease at Aberdeen, Henry, through the recommendation of the Procurator of the University, was placed upon the list of candidates, and forthwith proceeded to the north to preach his trial sermons. This was another eventful period for Henry's friends ; and, for some time, every thing seemed forgotten in the anxiety which they felt for his success. The tidings at length reached Mr Boyd of Henry Nicholson's all but unanimous election ; while he followed on the back of them himself, to add to the joy of the family by his presence. In the lapse of a few weeks, the young preacher was ordained and inducted to his pastoral charge ; and, at the completion of the first six months of his ministry, the auspicious union of Henry Nicholson and Mary Boyd took place at Whitestrand. The happy event was celebrated by various rejoicings ; and the father of the bride, with a kind consideration for the surrounding peasantry, ordered them an ample supply of strong ale and bread, which was acknowledged by the exulting villagers with rapturous cheering, and the most hearty wishes for the health and happiness of the young couple. Joy and gratulation were the order of the day ; favours fluttered in the air ; bonfires blazed ; children shouted ; and old age forgot his cares, as he glanced on the smiling faces of the happy pair, and felt a serene pleasure in beholding the celebration of their nuptials. The glad widow kissed the glowing cheek of her daughter-in-law, and ejaculated, in the fulness of her heart—"Blessins light on ye, my bonny ane ! for noo my ambition's gratified, and my dream's read ; and may that God who has wrought out my bairn's destiny in His ain mysterious Providence, enable baith me and him to carry our fu' cup !"



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

A LEGEND OF HOLYROODHOUSE.

WILLIAM GLENDAY was a sort of sub-equery to Mary Queen of Scots; or rather he assumed that title because it sounded better than "head groom." He was a widower, and lived with his daughter, Mary, a very interesting young maiden, of about twenty years of age, in one of the houses within the precincts of the Abbey, set apart for the Queen's household. William was a quaint Scotsman, shrewd and caustic in his remarks, like many of his nation. He was reputed rich, and somewhat addicted to making more than a proper display of his riches; in other words, he was "purse proud." He was, however, a most loyal subject of the Queen, whom he held to be a paragon of beauty. He had, accordingly, given his daughter the same name; and it was even whispered that he had sought to trace a likeness between Mary Glenday and Mary Queen of Scots. There could be little doubt that Mary was a very beautiful girl.

On the other side of the Abbey strand—that is, on the unprivileged side—there was a house kept as a tavern or ale house by a person of the name of Peter Connal, very well known in those days as a place of resort for the humble retainers about the palace. Instead of placing a dry picture of a type of his trade over his door, in the shape of stoups or bickers overflowing with his famous beverage, Peter conceived that he would be nearer his purpose of letting the public know the nature of his calling, by shewing them the liquor itself, in a real quegh, and in the act of being swallowed by a real toper; at least Peter gave out as a reason for his sitting on a barrel at his door during a great part of the day, drinking his ale, that he was merely shewing the public a good example, and exercising the functions of his calling in such a manner as to fill his purse and his stomach at the same time—a reason which possessed so much of plausibility, that his wife, Janet Wilkinson, was not, by the mere power of logic alone, able to shew any fallacy attached to it. Peter had a son named John—a very fine young man, who followed his father's trade, but demurred somewhat as to the propriety of imitating his father, when he should come to succeed him, in making himself a living signboard; a piece of self-willed precocious conceit, on the part of the lad, which Peter despised.

"The callants o' thir days," Peter would say, "puffed up wi' new-fangled notions o' improvement, think themselves far aboon the like o' us. I hae made my bread by drinkin my ain drink; an' this chap, in the conceit o' youth, thinks he will keep a wife, an' bring up his bairns, by walkin about a dry gyzent bicker, whilk can only hae the effect o' tellin the folk o' the Abbey, that as he does, sae should they do. The laddie will gae to ruin. The folk will avoid his ale, as they would avoid the poison on the taid's back—an' wherefore no?—for the taid has mair sense than drink its ain poison; and why should they drink his ale, whilk he himself winna taste? This world's gane quite wrang." And Peter would take another pull at his ale.

Nor did Peter Connal stand in any want of individuals to approve of these sentiments. Among others who collected at his door, and took their station on the seat on

which he sat, were William Glenday, and an Italian called Giulio Massetto, a servant in the employ of the famous David Rizzio. These three were often seen sitting together at the door of the tavern, drinking Peter's ale, and discussing any point of interest which the strange proceedings of the palace at that time offered to their curiosity. Peter did not approve of the intimacy which existed between Rizzio and the Queen; Giulio defended his master; and William stood up for the unfortunate Mary.

"I canna see what oor royal mistress can mean," said Peter, "by sae meikle walkin, an' ridin, an' talkin an' singin, an' playin on psalters an' sackbuts, an' pipes an' whistles, wi' that Italian. It's nae farther gane than yesterday, that my son, John—wha despises his ain drink, fule that he is—saw the Queen an' him sittin in the bonny green bower, at the corner o' the King's orchard, yonder, skirlin ane o' their Italian sangs, like twa mavis. Is that like a Queen o' Scotland, an' the wife o' Darnley? Na! na!"

"Cattivo! thy son doth lie in his throat," ejaculated the choleric Italian. "My noble master is the only accomplished gentleman in this barbarous land; and my royal mistress hath made him her secretary, because thy kilted barons can only write with their swords."

"An' maybe thae kilted barons may write wi' that guidly pen the word 'death,' on yer noble master's silken sash," answered Peter. "By my troth, lad, ye hae better be at Cremona, playing an Italian strathspey, than here in oor abbey, uttering sic words as thae, if any o' oor kilted barons be within hearin."

"Wheesht! wheesht! baith o' ye," said William Glenday; "ye are baith wrang. It may be ill for Giulio to speak in this fashion; but it may be waur for you, Peter, wha's living comes frae the palace, if ye are heard speaking ill o' Rizzio and the Queen."

"I just say what I think," said Peter, pertinaciously. "That Italian piper would be better dangling at the black wuddy up the way yonder, than at oor Queen's tail." And he quietly quaffed off a jug of his ale.

On hearing these words, Giulio could no longer restrain himself. He started from his seat, and shaking his fist in the face of Peter, turned on his heel and disappeared.

This scene, though made a little ominous by the fierce expression of the Italian's face and manner, was not long remembered. Peter continued to drink his ale, and did not hesitate to speak his mind on a subject which had, apparently, become of more than ordinary interest to him. The intimacy between him and William Glenday continued; and their children, as will appear, had good reasons that it should not be interrupted.

John Connal and Mary Glenday were of nearly the same age, and their sentiments accorded as closely as their years. From their earliest childhood they had associated together, and the feelings which were generated in the games and amusements of schoolmates, ripened, as they grew up, into sentiments of the heart. When the same blue-bell which divided their affections on the "Miller's Knowe" was cast away, it was only to give place to another object of mutual sympathy. The natural elements of love, thus reinforced by early congenial habits, mutual enjoyments, and the

daily intercourse of an inseparable connection, produced, in a short time, a strong attachment in the youthful pair, which had been pledged and repledged as often as their fears suggested any impediment to their ultimate union.

These lovers had now arrived at an age when they might have been united; and they looked forward to this happy consummation with confidence and delight. John Connal, however, did not want rivals, who sued in vain for the hand of Mary. Among these was Giulio Massetto, the Italian, who had for some time solicited the favour of the maiden. He trusted much to his superior appearance and polished manners, and looked with contempt on the poor Scot who dared to dispute with him the hand of his love. Mary was much annoyed by the Italian's importunate method of wooing; partaking more, she thought, of the impassioned character of a madman's ravings, than of the quiet, rational, and sincere mode of a Scotch courtship. She had repeatedly told him that his suit was in vain; but every repulse seemed only to increase his assiduity, and add to the pathos of his protestations and serenades.

This man had earned for himself, since he came to Scotland, a reputation for every wickedness. He had been concerned in many disgraceful amours, and violent and bloody quarrels with the inhabitants of Edinburgh, which brought upon him a hatred equal to that which his master, by his imprudent conduct with the Queen, had produced against himself. It was, in consequence, suspected that his passion for Mary was a mere ebullition of that kind of love for which his countrymen were then and are to this day remarkable; and that, even if he were so fortunate as to secure the object of his desires on condition of resigning his liberty, he would, when his passion cooled, leave her to follow some other equally faithful and disgraceful amour.

Having been unsuccessful in every effort he had made with Mary, Giulio at last resolved to make an application to her father; and he trusted that the show of wealth, which, by the misplaced kindness of the royal favourite, he was enabled to make, might have the effect of tempting William Glenday to endeavour to influence the affections of his daughter.

"Thou knowest, William Glenday," said the Italian, one morning, "that I love thy daughter, Mary, with the force of affection which a true and ardent lover ought to bear towards the devoted of his heart; and I have taken every method known in our country, to induce her to forego the gratification of the infliction of her cruelty on her lover—yet she continues obdurate and determined that I shall die the victim of a passion which I cannot control. Yet, if she would but relent, how happy could I make her! My jewels amount in value to 1000 merks; and my master, on our marriage, will present me with 1000 more. Wilt thou aid me in my suit, and endeavour to persuade thy daughter that she ought to yield to the influence of my love?"

William Glenday, who was himself a little purse-proud and conceited, was by no means taken on the right side by this high-flown speech, which was, like all Giulio's conversation and manners, a gross imitation of the style of his master. William was adverse to his suit on many grounds; but the rodomontade of this address, and the attempt to bribe him by a display of ill-gotten wealth, roused him beyond his natural bearing.

"Ye seem, sir, to hae yersel stated aneugh," answered William, "to prevent me frae interfering in this matter. Ye admit that my dochter winna hae ye; and wharfor should I endeavour to force her luv? Besides, ye're no o' our country, man; and the lasses o' Scotland dinna like foreigners. Tak an Italian! Tak an Italian! Birds o' a feather gree best thegither, and the kite and the doo winna assort ava. I carena a bodle for yer thousand merks, whilk, if they were in their richt place, should maybe be in oor ain Scotch exchequer. Neither care I

sae meikle as an auld sang for yer fine speech, whilk, nae doot, comes, like yer thousand merks, frae yer maister. Ye needna, therefore, pursue ony mair this fruitless wark; whilk, it would seem, ye continue by nicht in the shape o' something they ca' serenades—or, as we would say, night-waits—as weel as in the licht o' day, by a constant use o' thae black een o' yours, aneugh o' themsels to terrify ony young leddy. In addition to a' this, John Connal has lang been my dochter's lover; an', if they wish to mak a match o't, it shanna be me that 'll prevent it."

This calm and self-sufficient oration, produced on the fiery and impatient temper of Giulio, that rage which burned on the application of every spark. It must be confessed that even a Scotchman would have resented the hints of William, rendered more provoking by the manner in which they were uttered—a wink or a smile being always at hand to give piquancy to an *inuendo*—while an imperturbable, calm, and self-confident assurance, gave the whole an aspect of dictation, mixed with contempt. Giulio rose suddenly, and, without so much as uttering a word, went away.

In the meantime, the two lovers had got matters in considerable advancement for their marriage, which was fixed to take place in the following month. The inhabitants of the Abbey were promised a grand entertainment in William Glenday's house; and the day was looked forward to by all and sundry as a kind of holiday. There was, indeed, something in the match of more than an ordinary character; for, as a pair of twigs which have fallen connected from a tree into a stream, seldom find their way together to the ocean, it seldom happens that the loves of childhood can withstand the severing impulses of the conflicting and distracting interests of a selfish and calculating world. It was even whispered that one of the maids of honour of the Queen intended to grace and honour the union by being present at the ceremony. The preparations went on with spirit. The day approached, and everything seemed to conspire to add to the happiness of a union apparently under the influence of smiling and auspicious powers.

On the evening of the day preceding that on which their marriage was to take place, one of those events occurred which arrest the attention of thousands: Peter Connal, when coming out of the house of William Glenday, was stabbed to the heart. A number of persons immediately collected on hearing his cries—the guard of the palace was roused, and search made in every direction for the perpetrator of so bloody and unaccountable an act. Amongst those who rushed out when the cry was heard, was Mary Glenday and John Connal. The latter was entirely occupied in getting his father's body carried home, in the hope of his being only wounded, and with a view to get medical aid. Mary and some neighbours remained upon the spot, searching about for any trace, by footsteps or otherwise, which might lead to the discovery of the murderer. When engaged in this search, her eye fell upon a small sword lying at a little distance from the spot where the crime was committed. Upon taking it up, she discovered, to her astonishment, that it was her father's sword, which she had not missed from the house. She instantly secreted it under her clothes, and looked about to see if she could discover her parent. He had not, however, been seen during the tumult; and though many inquiries were made for him, no person could tell where he was. She now flew to the house; and, upon getting into the inner chamber, applied water to the instrument to wash off the blood, threw the washings into a place where they could not be seen and, by means of ashes from the fire, scoured the instrument, so as to bring back its brightness. Having hung it up in the spot which it usually occupied, she turned to leave the room with a view to go again to the street to avoid any suspicion which her absence might suggest as to where she had been. As she turned, she started on observing the eyes of som

person fixed on her through the window. She trembled from head to foot; and, unable to proceed a step, fell back into a chair which stood near her, and again shook with an apprehension which she could not account for. All these acts, which she had performed during the last ten minutes, appeared to her as wanting the reality of life. She had done them intuitively; and as no proper, well-defined motive had been present to her mind during the time she was occupied, she was now equally at a loss to account for an apprehension which it was impossible there could be the least ground for. She questioned herself why did she secrete the sword—run home with it—wash it and scour it? Was she afraid of her father being charged as the murderer? Impossible! She was not afraid of that. She could defy the world even to suspect that her father was guilty of such a crime; and the idea of it was so absurd that it could not be entertained for a moment. Yet, was she not in fact alarmed? This was not to be denied. She tried to run over the acts which she had, as in a dream, performed by the impulse of a power external to herself; but, on looking to the window again, she saw the same eyes staring in at her.

At this moment the door opened, and a person came from John Connal to inform her that Peter was dead, and requesting to know if her father had yet been seen. She was unable to speak to the messenger, who went away without an answer. Mary continued to sit waiting with breathless impatience for the return of her parent. She heard the bustle in the street gradually die away. Occasional inquiries were made by the passengers for William Glenday, from whom they wished to get some explanation of the extraordinary case; but the servant answered them, and stated that he was not come back, and Mary was indisposed. Eleven o'clock came, and still no word of her father. She heard some people on the street going home, remarking it as strange that William Glenday should be absent, when the father of his daughter's intended husband had been stabbed dead at his door.

About half-past eleven, William Glenday returned home. He was met by several people who told him what had happened. He said he had been conveying a hound to a gentleman who lived in Leith, and that he had been detained beyond his usual time. He seemed to be very much affected by the death; and the more so, he said, that he and Peter had that day had some words about his daughter's tocher, which had very nearly broken off the match. He inquired particularly if any clue had been found to the murderer; and being informed that no trace had yet been got, returned home.

He found Mary sitting in the state already noticed, and attributed her apparent sorrow to the circumstance which had occurred. She looked up, and asked him where he had been when such awful doings had been going on at his own door. He answered her in the same way he had done the neighbours. She then asked him, if he had been over at Peter's house. He said that he had not, but would go immediately. On turning to go out, she observed that his coat was all wet; and, on examining it more narrowly, discovered that it was wet with blood. At the sight of this extraordinary coincidence with the circumstances attending the finding of the sword, she screamed and fainted. Her father, alarmed for his daughter, hung over her with every demonstration of affection; but, attributing her illness and the faint to the shock produced by the death of Peter Connal, he trusted to her speedy recovery, when the nervous excitement, under which she laboured, had abated.

On recovering herself, Mary looked round her, endeavouring to recollect some painful idea which she knew had been the cause of her illness. The moment the thought again struck her, she started up, as if she had found there was a necessity for something being done. Calming her speech and manner, by an effort she made for that purpose, she desired her father to take off his coat, which was wet,

and put on another, for the purpose of going over to Peter Connal's house. William complied, remarking (without examining the marks of blood which were behind) that Marion Gray—a woman of irregular habits, who lived in the precincts of the Abbey, and was well known at that time by the name of Mary's Marion, in consequence of having, in her better days, received some attention from the Queen—had, as he passed her door, thrown a basin of water upon him, and instantly disappeared.

William Glenday having gone over to Peter Connal's house, Mary, who had said nothing to him of the blood, shut the window-shutters and washed the coat. The basin in which the bloody water was contained, was standing on the table; and, just as she was about to lift it, she saw that the window-shutters had been gently opened, and the face of some person was there gazing in upon her. This apparition again disconcerted the poor girl, and threw her into fits of trembling; but she got the water emptied out, and hung up the coat to dry upon a screen at the fire.

When her father returned, Mary asked him how Peter's wife was sustaining her affliction. She did not ask if any clue had been got to the murderer. She trembled as the words were on her lips. The circumstances of the evening bore heavy upon her. She knew that William and Peter had quarrelled about the tocher, but still she did not suspect her father. She felt it even impious to say to herself that she did not suspect him; for she conceived that the mere connexion of the ideas of the murder and of her parent, could be nothing but a freak of the Devil. Yet, she could not ask her father if any clue had been got to the murderer, and she could not tell why she felt unable to do that. William talked about certain probabilities as to this one or that one being the guilty person, but came to no very satisfactory conclusion. His first idea, he said, was, that the Italian had done the deed; but he could see no proper motive that could induce him to commit the crime; and, besides, Giulio had been seen running out of the palace along with the rest of the people—no sword had been seen upon him, and none had been found by the persons who had gone to search for evidence. After indulging in some conversation of the same kind, and lamenting the death, and the consequent interference with the marriage, they retired to rest.

The search for the murderer of Peter Connal was continued for many days without effect. The funeral of the unfortunate man was attended by a great crowd of people, attracted by the respect in which Peter was held, and the unusual circumstances of his death. John Connal now took up the business, carrying his resolution into effect, not to imitate his father in the matter of the sign-post. He accordingly got a very imposing one erected, in which he fell into the error which his father had condemned in such indignant terms; for it was filled up with mere pictures of casks, bottles, and bickers—things in themselves so sacred, in the estimation of Peter, that he hated all representation of them as a species of idolatry. The very barrel on which he had so often sat, was turned in. The jaunty and gaudy signboard was not received as a compensation for the comfortable personality of Peter. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who had formerly been so delighted with his portly figure, in the very attitude of doing almost continually that which it was their wish to imitate, turned away their eyes from the dry contrast afforded by a mere picture, and sighed over all the vanities of this fleeting world.

The intercourse between William Glenday and John Connal was not interrupted by the unaccountable circumstance that had occurred; but it was soon observed that Mary was not what she used to be. Even John Connal observed a difference in her manner. She felt a reluctance to fix another day for the marriage; and the importunities of John seemed only to increase it.

"Noo, my dear Mary," said John, "when oor grief for my faither is, by the coorse o' nature, somewhat moderated, may we no accomplish that which was interrupted by that melancholy catastrophe? Twenty summers hae gane owre oor heads, and fifteen o' thae hae been cheered by the beating o' oor twa hearts, as by the sangs o' birds on a sunny day. The licht o' yer lauchin ee has been my only solace amang mony waes; and even on the occasion which has filled oor hooses wi' sackcloth, and oor hearts wi' grief, and dashed frae oor uplifted hands the cups o' pleasure which hae been a promise and a covenant between us for a fourth pairt o' the ordinary term o' man's pilgrimage on earth, I hae had nae staff o' support but ye, and nae beam o' hope but what ye hae pleased to vouchsafe to me. It canna be, then, that this misfortune which, God knows, was nane o' my doing, should be turned frae the purpose which it was by Heaven intended to serve—nae doot to check oor joy, which was owre bricht for mortals, into a total extinguisher o' a' oor pleasures, and a final end to a' oor hopes! Na, na, Mary, ye canna think that Providence will deal wi' us in that gaet. And, oh, tell me, dearest, for the sake of Heaven, why ye hae been sae changed to me o' late, and why ye winna again prepare to gang wi' me to the altar."

"It's no for me," said Mary, "to interfere wi' the ways o' God—wha, having alloed us, in his high pleasure, to be joined in oor hearts for sae lang a time—even oor hail lives—thocht proper to pairt us in the end by sic an awfu token as the death o' yer faither, on the vera day afore oor marriage. There was a sign and a meaning in that token, which my heart has read in tears and interpreted in agony; and sae lang as it pleases Heaven to conceal frae us the hand which struck the fatal blow at yer faither's life and oor hopes, sae lang, my heart whispers, maun oor union be delayed! But when that time shall come—and, oh, that it may come sune! for it will be as the dew o' Heaven to the parched and gaping earth—when the bloody hand shall be stretched forth, and the guilty ane made to stand out in the searching sun o' a bright evidence—then shall I be able to say whether it may again be that there is any chance for oor bein united in the bonds o' matrimony. Till that time shall come, never mention to me the subject o' this conversation. My heart is filled wi' a grief which nane on earth can lessen; and it is a sad change that has come owre me, when I can hae a sorrow which ye canna ken, and though ye kenned it couldna relieve. Yet, sae it is: yer puir Mary is nae langer what she was, and may never be what she was again. The flowers o' Arthur's Seat hae lost their colours and their scents—the blue bells o' the "Miller's Knowe," ring nae mair peals—and the water o' St Anthony's spring is drumly and dark, as it is when the spirit o' the storms sits on the tap o' the cat's head. "Waly, waly," is noo my sang, and the joys o' a bricht mornin hae fa'en to the bottom, like the lees o' a vessel o' wine; and I maun drink thae lees, bitter as they may be; for Heaven has said the word, and Mary Glenday is obedient to its behest."

The high-toned determination of the maiden satisfied John that it would be vain to press a suit at present, which was so clearly interdicted by some hidden circumstance. What that could be, was a subject of intense interest and curiosity; but, though he thought of it daily and nightly, he could not even approach the mysterious reason which could change a human being so entirely, as to make a light-laughing maiden, high in the hope of being married, a sorrowful and sentimental woman, giving grave injunctions that her intended nuptials should not be broached in her presence. At times, John thought that her mind was tinged with a superstitious melancholy, arising from some presentiment, that, as their marriage was interrupted in such an awful manner, heaven had set its decree against it. This opinion deserved weight, from the circumstance that the condition attached by Mary to their union still taking place

was the discovery of the author of the murder; but even that condition was itself qualified, as if it depended upon the nature of that discovery whether she would consent to become a wife. The whole matter appeared a mystery and John could make nothing of it.

The people in the Abbey discovered that Mary Glenday was entirely changed. Her cheek became blanched, and her blue eye dim; while her general appearance was that of a person labouring under a consumption. She was seldom seen going out, except to church; and even there she never looked up. Many questions were put to her, as to the cause of her dejection, but no satisfactory answers could be got from her. Towards her father, her kindness continued. It was indeed a kindness altogether overdone—the result of a wish to heap attentions on him, as if from a morbid fear that he would not long be preserved to receive or she to impart them. William Glenday was extremely pained by the change which had taken place on his daughter. He could not go out without producing terror in her mind. She was even at times seen following him; and, when he would turn round and perceive her, she would, as if caught and ashamed, slip out of his sight. If any person knocked at the door, she trembled; and if a question was put to her, as to where her father was, her answer was so confused that very often the inquirer was obliged to go away without the information sought. If any one approached the place where the sword hung, she betrayed uneasiness; and, on one occasion, one of the grooms under her father having taken down the sword to look at it, she fainted. She never allowed her father to wear the coat he had on that night when the murder was committed; and, when he asked for it, she said she could not find it, although it was carefully secreted in one of her drawers.

This state of mind in the unhappy girl was not unknown to Giulio Massetto. He observed her changed appearance and was well pleased to hear that there was at present no great likelihood of a union between her and John Conna. He was observed often to be watching about the door of the house; and his bold and blustering manner towards John, and his readiness to speak in his presence about Mary, betrayed a kind of triumph, mixed with a hope that he might yet succeed where his most ardent wishes still pointed. He had the boldness, indeed, one day, to make up to her, as she came from church; but she shrunk away from him, and left him in conversation with her father, who still kept on friendly terms with him.

William Glenday took every method of dispelling his daughter's melancholy. He proposed, one afternoon, a walk to Duddingstone, which she reluctantly agreed to. They set off, accordingly, and visited an acquaintance who resided there. After they had been there for some time, a messenger, on horseback, and holding another horse, saddled and bridled, in his hand, inquired at the door if William Glenday was within. Mary heard the question, and, having seen the messenger and the horses from the window, rushed out, and cried that her father was not within. Her manner betrayed the utmost agitation. She endeavoured to prevent the servant from stating that William Glenday was in the house; and it was not until her father, who heard the noise, came out, that the messenger could know what was the truth. The people of the house could not account for her conduct on any other principle than that she was deranged. The messenger bore a request that William Glenday should instantly repair to the palace; and having committed Mary to the charge of his friends, he departed.

Mary returned home in the evening. The weather was calm and delightful, and the sun was setting in that fine amber-coloured radiance, which, in Scotland, is often so remarkable on an autumn evening. Wearing by her day's fatigues, she sat down to rest herself. A train of images rose in her mind, which took away all perception of time,

or of the increasing shades of evening that gradually closed over her. In the midst of her reverie, she was suddenly startled by a human voice. It was that of Giulio Massetto.

"Anima mia!" cried the Italian, when he saw her. "Mary Glenday here, on the brow of the hill, in the gloom of approaching night! Io Godo! Io Godo! I am well pleased. And now we shall, if it please thee, have some conversation on a subject, which, notwithstanding thy coldness, still lies next my heart. Thou knowest how I love thee, my sweet Mary; and I am well pleased to know that thou hast discarded thy old lover, Connal, who was not, indeed, worthy of the love of such a maiden. Thy father, I shall yet appease and persuade, if thou wilt but answer to my love." And he held out his hands to embrace her.

"Stand back, sir," said the indignant Mary. "The power does not exist on this earth, that can e'er mak Mary Glenday love Giulio Massetto; an' heaven winna interfere in sic an affair. I hae tauld ye aften—an' this, I hope, will be the last time—that it is waur than useless to persevere in a suit which I can no'er gie ony favour or countenance to. Ye may perceive, sir, that I am very far frae being in a guid state o' bodily health; the bloom has gane frae my cheek, an' sorrow has flung her gloomy mantle owre the heart whar joy loved ance to dwell. Ye may, if it be yer pleasure, continue to persecute ane wha ne'er wranged ye—ye may shake doun the few lingering grains that remain in the sand-glass o' my life, an' hasten the end o' a miserable existence. Ye may do a' this, sir; an' when ye hae dune it, what will ye hae accomplished? When ye see the green turf lying on the grave ye hae helped to dig, will that be ony cause o' pride, or exultation, or thanksgiving? If it will, or if it can, then I truly say, that the heart o' an Italian is no like that o' a Scotsman. Let me gang, sir, or I will wauken the spirit o' this place, wi' the cries o' a determined and desperate woman."

"I cry thee mercy, maiden," replied Giulio, perfectly unmoved, except by hurt pride, and bitterness. "I ossevo—I perceive that something troubles thee, and thou makest that a reason for rejecting my love; but what wouldst thou say if Giulio Massetto, whom thou despisest so much, could tell thee of the cause of thy illness. It is sometimes more easy to take the grief from the heart of an unwilling maiden than to wash the gore from a sword, or from a garment which has been drenched in the heart's blood of a friend."

These words operated like lightning on the unhappy Mary. She intuitively fell on her knees, clasped the Italian's legs, clinging to them with the grasp of death—struggled for breath and power to speak, and convulsively screamed "Tak—tak back thae words, and tell me that ye never uttered them—say that ye didna see me wash the sword, and scour it, and hang it up i' my faither's room—say that I didna wash the bluid frae my faither's coat, and dry it at the fire—say that, and—and—Mary Glenday will!"

"What?" said the cold-blooded Italian; "wilt thou become my wife?" These words recalled Mary's wandering senses, but only to consign them to the power of exhausted nature. She fell senseless at the feet of her perfidious persecutor. Approaching footsteps were at this instant heard, which caused the Italian to retreat; and, when Mary recovered, she found herself in the arms of her father, who led her slowly home.

When examined by her father, Mary pretended that some unknown person had surprised her on the hill. Her father stated that he thought he perceived Giulio Massetto part from her when he came up. To this she gave no very distinct answer, pretending that she was not very sure whether it was Giulio or not. This was not at all satisfactory to her father, because he was aware that she had fainted in consequence of the violence of the person who had suddenly left her on his approach; and if Giulio had been the individual, she could not have failed to know him. He felt unwilling,

however, to press his daughter farther, because she seemed quite incapable of supporting any lengthened conversation on this subject, which seemed to be one of great pain to her.

The weight upon the mind of Mary increased; for she was now overcome by a feeling of total dependence upon the will of another. The depression of spirits produced by this accession to her disquietude, acted with increased force on her frame, which daily became more attenuated. It was observed that she now ceased entirely from speaking of Giulio Massetto with disrespect or anger. When his name was mentioned, she was spell-bound and silent. One night a noise was heard at the window, as if some person had tapped at it in a peculiar and concerted way. William Glenday looked at his daughter, and asked what it was; she replied it was rats, and that she had heard the sound often. In a short interval, however, she arose from her seat, and signified to her father that she had occasion to leave the house for a few minutes. The latter asked her whether she intended to go, adding, that, in her present weak state, she had better remain in the house. She replied, she was just going to visit a neighbour; and her father not having suspected any connection between the sound at the window and the departure of his daughter, offered no further opposition to her expressed wish.

It was about ten o'clock when Mary went out; eleven struck and she was not yet come home. William Glenday became alarmed, and sent to inquire if she was in the neighbour's house she had mentioned. The servant came back and informed him that she had not called there for many months. This increased her father's alarm, and he ran immediately over to the house of John Connal, to inquire if she was there. John said that he had not seen her for some days; but his affection for her suggested stronger dread than that felt even by her father; and seizing his hat he rushed out of the house to search for the object nearest to his heart. On going round the King's Park, he thought he observed two people standing in the shadow of a house at the corner of the clump of trees, called, at that time, the "King's Orchard." On coming nearer, he heard the voice of Giulio Massetto, and then that of Mary Glenday. He was struck with intense agony. Could it be that he was now, in his turn, the unsuccessful rival of the Italian? Everything indicated that fact; and his fancy, fired by jealousy, now saw distinctly the reason why Mary would not consent to name another day for their marriage. Her statements about the murder of his father were used as a device to get quit of her obligation and pledge to him, and leave her at liberty to wed his rival. Her bad health was produced by the intensity of a new passion, and the struggle between conscience and inclination. Her distress, on being surprised by her father on the night of their visit to Dud-dingstone, was all affectation; for, as her father himself had stated, she had been in the company of the Italian, and wished to conceal it.

Stung to the heart by this supposed baseness on the part of his lover, John went forward, determined that either he or Giulio should die on the spot. Before he came up, however, the pair separated—the Italian going one way and Mary another. John followed Mary, and overtook her.

"Is that you, Mary Glenday?" he cried. "What are ye doing here at this time o' nicht?"

"O John, dinna ask me what I'm doing here," answered Mary; "but let me get hame, where I hae meikle mair need to be than in this place at sic an untimous hour."

"Why are ye here, then, Mary?" said John, with asperity.

"Because I have need to be here," answered she. "An if ye love me, dinna, for heaven's sake, ask me ony mair about it."

"Had Giulio, the Italian, need to be here too?" asked John, significantly.

"I wanna answer that question, John," answered Mary, "nor ony ither ye may put to me. I can only say, that, if ye wish to add to the misery o' ane wha loves ye wi' a' the force o' a breakin heart—wha is worn down to the weakness o' a silly thread, by what she canna reveal to mortal—ye hae it in yer pooer noo to snap it asunder, and send yer ain Mary to sleep wi' yer murdered faither, in the Canongate kirkyard. Speak but ane or twa mair o' thae sharp words ye hae noo spoken, and ye will hae nae mair to do. I hae only to beg, that, if ye love me, ye will say naething o' what ye hae seen or heard this nicht. The chough and the crow are gane to their rest—gae awa to yours; and, as they were heedless o' what was said and heard by me as I stood yonder under their sheltering tree, be ye equally heedless and equally mute. Nae mair. The life o' Mary Glenday depends on yer discretion!"

As she said these words, she beckoned to John not to go with her. She went in the direction of home; and he, with a heavy heart, stung with jealousy—and yet satisfied by her extraordinary conduct that there was something unexplained, feeling himself bound to conceal his emotions and obey her commands—went home also.

In the morning, William Glenday called at John's house to inquire if he had seen Mary on the previous night. She had been, he said, late in returning—her spirits were getting worse—her health fast declining—and everything indicated some mental disease, or some secret of an extraordinary character, preying upon her mind. John denied having seen her, and gave a confused assent to what her father stated. This account did not agree with that given by Mary, who had said that she saw John Connal on the previous night. William Glenday became, in his turn, suspicious of John, and now began to think that he was acting dishonourably by his daughter—a circumstance that would, of itself, account for her state of health and spirits. He, however, said nothing, and departed.

Two nights afterwards, when William Glenday returned home about ten o'clock at night, he was told that Mary had gone out; and the servant said she thought there was some strange noise at the window before she departed. Her father was now satisfied that she had left the house to meet John, and resolved to go himself and ascertain the truth of his suspicions. He went and called at John's house; and having found that he had not yet come in, went away to the darkest parts of the neighbourhood to see if he could discover whither they had gone. He had not proceeded far when he met two men carrying a female. This was his daughter in a state of insensibility. She was supported by John and another person. They conveyed her to the house; and having applied some stimulants, she recovered. William Glenday, with much asperity, blamed young Connal for not acting honourably towards his daughter, whose affections he said he was trampling on. The other defended himself as far as he could, without betraying Mary. He said he had met the stranger bearing her in his arms, and that he assisted him merely in carrying her homewards. The stranger, on his part, said he belonged to Leith, and that, as he went along by the entry from the south back of the Canongate to the Abbey, he saw the young woman standing with a man—that she was supplicating him not to do something which he threatened to do; whereupon, he said, in a threatening and angry tone, that, unless she yielded to him within an hour, he would lodge an information the next day; and he swore that he would fulfil his threat. On his swearing, the young woman fell into a swoon; and her companion suddenly disappeared on seeing the narrator come up to her assistance. William Glenday could make nothing of this story, and Mary refused to say anything in explanation.

On the following day, two officers called at William Glenday's house, and shewed him a warrant for his apprehension

upon a charge for the murder of Peter Connal. Mary heard the statement of the men, and went again into a swoon. When she recovered, her father had been taken to prison.

A precognition was now led by the crown lawyers. Giulio Massetto was examined, and stated that, on the night of the murder, he saw Mary Glenday pick up a sword, which she found lying on the ground near the place where Peter Connal was slain; that he afterwards saw her, through the window, washing the blood from her father's sword and coat. Glenday's servant was next examined, who stated, that she saw Mary washing the sword and her father's coat, by looking through the key-hole of the door. Mary was next called; but she refused to say anything against her father; and she was not pressed. Several witnesses, however, were examined, who asserted that a quarrel took place between Peter Connal and William Glenday, on the day of the murder respecting the amount of the tocher which Peter's son was to get from William Glenday with his daughter. This evidence the crown-officers conceived to be very strong, and nothing that the prisoner could say tended to affect it. The gentleman to whom, on the night that the murder was perpetrated, he said he conveyed the hound, was a Frenchman, then living in Leith, who wished to introduce a breed into France, for which country he had departed. He, therefore, could not prove an *alibi*. In addition to all this, the sword itself was produced, and a coat was found in Mary's cabinet which presented all the appearances of having been washed. It was proved, too, that her father was never seen to wear that coat; and the groom referred to in a previous part of this narrative, said that Mary Glenday had nearly fainted one day when he took down the sword to look at it.

As this evidence gradually transpired and came to the ears of Mary, the effect produced upon her was of a character so intense that no person thought she could support life under its operation. A series of swoons for many days seemed to divide her life with death. Her nerves suffered alternations of high excitement and the lowest depression; and, at times, her screams were heard far from the house, and by passengers going along the street. In quieter moments, she cried for Giulio Massetto, and said she would now consent to his conditions. The people around her conceived she was raving, and paid no attention to her wild request; though they could not restrain their tears when they thought of the extraordinary fate of the unfortunate girl. Her early and romantic love for John Connal—the interruption of her marriage by the death of her intended father-in-law—her sufferings under the terror, very far from being causeless, that her father would expiate on the scaffold the crime of murdering her lover's parent;—these things became topics of ordinary conversation, and brought tears to the eyes of many; but no one on earth knew all the sufferings of Mary Glenday. Her restless nights—her frightful dreams—her cold shivering fears, real and imaginary—her dependence on the word of a villain for the life of a parent—the conduct she was obliged to pursue towards her lover, for whom her affection had not diminished—and the nervous state of body into which she had fallen, formed a load of misery which would have bowed the head of an ordinary mortal to the grave.

Nor was the poor maiden now far from that place of rest. No extenuating evidence could be procured for her father; and the trial was fixed to take place within a fortnight. Every day of this period brought her more near to the termination of a mortal's career. She gradually sank to the last stage of life. The medical gentleman who attended her, saw that she could not survive the period of the trial. John Connal was continually by her bedside. He had forgotten and forgiven all; though he had not got a proper explanation of her mysterious conduct. A faint glimmering of light, however, found its way into his mind; but any

hope produced by it was in a moment clouded by the dreadful thought that she had all along suspected her father to be the murderer of his parent, and had even taken means to conceal it, if she did not, by washing the sword and her father's coat, absolutely approve of it. When these thoughts came across young Connal's mind, he flew from the object of his love, beating his breast in agony; but pity again recalled him; and between so many conflicting passions, he was next to being a madman.

One night he had been sitting with her to a late hour. She was too far reduced to enter into anything like conversation—a few words being all that ever passed; and these were of the most ominous character. After a long pause, and when she seemed to be occupied with thoughts of her approaching death, she started up in an instant, and laid hold of John, who was sitting by her bedside. "Ken ye Mary Gray, John?" she cried, with a wild scream—"ken ye that woman that is ca'ed Mary's Marion?"

"I do," answered John; "what about her, my dear Mary?"

"Awa to her!" she cried—"awa to her! wi' the flicht o' light. A thocht has come into my head—why has it been sae lang o' coming? Ask her if she threw ony bluid on my faither's coat on that awfu nicht when yer faither was murdered?"

With the effort produced by speaking these words, she fell back exhausted. John went in search of Mary Gray. She was not in the house; but a young girl told him that she had met her with a man in the Hunter's Bog. He hurried away to that lonely place. It was now dark, but the night was quiet; and, though he could not see far, he could hear with the greatest distinctness. About the middle of the glen, he heard two persons engaged in conversation.

"For the twa gowd pieces ye gied to me," said a woman, "for assisting ye in the matter o' fat Peter's death, I dinna thank ye, Giulio, because I wrocht for it! Hang ye, for an Italian dog! do ye think that Scotch lassies are sae blate as to forget their bargains? Na, na—I hae got naething frae ye for this last fortnicht, and I'm this nicht in want—so gie me the silver piece ye are awin me."

"It is neither gold nor silver that insolence will get out of an Italian, Mary Gray," said Giulio. "It is another metal that he gives—at least to a male."

"And did puir Peter Connal," answered she, "gie ye ony insolence when ye slew him sae unmercifully wi' Peter Glenday's sword, that ye got me to steal for ye frae his house, as if ye hadna had ane o' yer ain."

"Yes," answered the Italian. "He was insolent to me when he abused my master, calling him an Italian piper, and saying he should be hanged for his services to our gracious Queen."

"An' wherefor did ye put the crime on William Glenday," asked Mary, "by using his sword, an' gettin me to throw bluid on the puir man's coat, when he passed my hoose?"

"Because," said Giulio, "he was also insolent to me. He refused me his daughter—taunted me about my money, my speech, and my country. Besides, I wished to stop his daughter's marriage with John Connal, which the suspicion attaching to him could not fail to do. I was, besides, freed from any suspicion of doing the deed myself. Other circumstances arose from chance, favourable to me; for I did not count upon Mary's secreting the sword, and washing her father's coat, which thou knowest has come out in evidence against her."

"An' it is a strange thing, Giulio," said she, "seeing that yer life is in my hands, that ye should treat me as ye are noo doin, denyin me the silver piece sae justly due to me. Are ye no feared I gang up the street yonder, to the council chaumer, an' mak a contract atween you an' the black knave wha hugs his freens sae closely about the craig?"

"Thy life would answer for it," said Giulio, sternly.

"An' what would Mary's Marion," answered she, "care for a spark, whilk only noo throws oot a glimmer to shew her her shame?"

"Thou jokest, I presume," answered Giulio.

"I will tell ye that," answered Mary, "when I get my silver piece. Tempt nae mair the wrath o' an angry woman, wha has only to say the word that will mak yer feet dance i' the air, to a tune o' yer ain whistling. It winna be Davie Rizzio that will save ye, if Mary says the word."

The Italian struck the woman violently, who fell, uttering a loud scream. As John Connal rushed forward, Giulio fled, pursued by the threats and imprecations of Mary, who, upon returning, was grateful to John for delivering her from his violence.

Next day, Mary Gray was examined by the procurator fiscal. She gave a detailed account of Giulio's having bribed her to steal William Glenday's sword; and afterwards, when he had killed Peter Connal, to throw blood on Glenday's coat, as he passed her door. John Connal gave next his account of the conversation he had heard between the Italian and Mary Gray. Other witnesses were examined to prove Giulio's quarrel with Peter, and also with William Glenday; and one man stated that, when Giulio joined the people who were rushing out of the palace, to see the fray, he seemed to come to them at an angle, as if he had not come direct from the palace. In addition to all this, Mary Glenday, who was examined in bed, gave a satisfactory account of her actings, as they have been already detailed.

The aspect of matters was now changed. William Glenday was liberated, and the Italian put in his place. He was afterwards tried, condemned, and hanged. Mary Glenday recovered, and explained everything to the satisfaction of her lover, to whom she was afterwards married.

THE MISER AND THE ELM.

THERE lived, during the reign of James I., in a small cottage at a little distance from the public road leading from Melrose, an old man, called Gilbert Perkins. At the back of the cottage, there was a small piece of ground in which grew an elm, which had attained, in a long course of years, to a great size. The house and plot of ground were held in feu from a neighbouring proprietor, who, in consideration of the poverty of the occupant, generally remitted him the few shillings of feu-duty. No person knew anything of the old man. His only mode of passing his time seemed to consist in sitting, for many hours together, at the foot of the old elm which shaded his cottage, apparently listening to the music of the rookery over his head, for the members of which fraternity he seemed to have a great affection.

His next neighbour was a feuar of the name of Andrew Garland, a wright, who, for a long time, had eyed the spacious elm in Gilbert's back yard with the eye of a Dædalus, measuring no doubt in his mind, how many brides' drawers or coffins might have been produced out of its stately trunk. He had often endeavoured to purchase it from Gilbert; and was surprised that a man accounted a miser should have rejected an offer of money for what was apparently of no use to him.

"I dinna want to disturb the craws, the only freends I hae on earth," was the only answer that was vouchsafed to the offer.

Andrew's attention was drawn more narrowly to this subject in consequence of a circumstance which took place some time afterwards. One morning, when up early at work, he was surprised to see Gibbie sprawling down from the elm by means of a ladder which he had brought from the cottage. As he descended, he looked suspiciously around

him, as if afraid he should be discovered; and having satisfied himself that no person saw him, hobbled away into his house, dragging, with great difficulty, the ladder after him. Having watched him several mornings afterwards, Andrew discovered that he ascended the tree once every day at the same early hour—going through the same operation, without a change in any respect, even in the motion of his limbs, or the putting of one leg before another.

“Ye rise early, Gibbie,” said Andrew to him one day.

“Do I?” answered Gibbie cautiously, eyeing his interrogator with intense curiosity and fear.

“There’s nae apples on oor Scotch elms, Gibbie, are there—eh?”

“No; but there’s sometimes craws,” answered Gibbie, with increased terror, mixed with some satisfaction at his prompt reply.

“Do ye breakfast on the young rooks, or, as we ca’ them, branchers, Gibbie?”

“No; but I gie them *their* breakfast sometimes,” replied Gibbie; who saw that it was better to give a reason for his ascending the tree, than to deny what was clearly known.

“Ye had better tak care o’ Jamie’s act o’ parliament,” replied Andrew, with reference to a curious statute which had recently been passed in regard to rookeries.

“There’s nae act o’ Parliament can prevent me frae feedin my ain birds,” replied Gibbie, who knew nothing of the statute.

“The shirra may tell ye anither tale,” said Andrew, as he went to resume the work he had left for the purpose of his interrogation.

The reference made by Andrew to an act of Parliament was strictly applicable to the subject of the conversation. In the first Parliament held by James, it was enacted, for the preservation of the corn, that “the proprietors of trees in kirkyards, orchards, and other places, shall, by every method in their power, prevent rooks or crows from bigging their nests thereon; and, if this cannot be accomplished, they shall at least take special care that the young rooks or branchers shall not be suffered to take wing, under the penalty that all trees upon which the nests are found at beltine, and from which it can be established by good evidence that the young birds have escaped, shall be forfeited to the crown, and forthwith cut down and sold by warrant of the sheriff.”

This strange statute was acted upon, soon after it was passed, with the greatest vigour; so much so that even the solitary elm of Gibbie, which had been proved “habit and repute” an old offender, in harbouring the outlawed birds, came under its sweeping range. It was distinctly proved that the nests had been allowed to be built, and that the young branchers had been allowed to take wing—the two tests of the contravention of the statute. Unknown to the proprietor, the stately elm was condemned by the sheriff, after being sat upon by an inquest; and, at an early hour one morning, Gibbie heard the axes of the men of the law resounding from the trunk of his favourite tree. Alarmed by the noise, he ran out half naked, and observed with consternation a crowd of people standing round the condemned elm, while two or three officers, with red necks on their coats, were superintending the work of its destruction.

“What are ye aboot, ye men o’ the law?” ejaculated the miser, as he rushed forward to seize the arm of one of the men engaged in using the axe. “What richt hae ye to meddle wi’ my property?”

“It is forfeited to the crown, old man,” said the sheriff-clerk, who stood aside.

“I’ll redeem it, I’ll redeem it, wi’ three times its value,” cried Gibbie, holding out money to the clerk.

“The time of redemption is past,” answered the clerk. “It must now be sold, but not till it is cut down. You can bid for it along with the rest.”

This answer in some degree pacified Gibbie, who sat down on a stone alongside of the tree, shivering with cold, and eyeing, with intense agony, the operations of the men.

The tree was cut down and exposed to public roup. The auctioneer entered it at half a merk. The sum was immediately offered by Gibbie, who looked wistfully round, as if imploring his neighbours not to bid against him.

“A shillin mair,” cried Andrew Garland, with a voice which shook Gibbie to the soul.

“An’ a saxpence abune that,” cried Gibbie, with an expression of grief.

“Anither saxpence,” rejoined Andrew.

“An’ ane mair to that,” cried Gibbie, with great perturbation. “Shame! shame! to bid against a man wantin his ain.” And he groaned deeply, lowering his head to his knees, and lifting it again, apparently in great agony.

Andrew, however, continued to bid; and Gibbie, after waiting till the hammer was about to fall, bade against him, until, by their alternate additions, the sum bid was twice the value of the elm. At this stage, Andrew went round to the clerk and whispered something in his ear, which produced a look of great curiosity at Gibbie, whose state of mental agitation was now such that he had rolled off his seat, and lay on the ground clutching the grass and groaning bitterly. The bidding went on; Andrew kept up his bodes, and Gibbie followed him with groans and imprecations. Five merks had now been bid, and Andrew’s spirit was not in any degree subdued. The crowd were filled with amazement—the scene was in the last degree strange—the attitude of Gibbie, and the serious countenance of Andrew, the looks of the clerk, and the whispers of the people, all conspired to lend it an extraordinary interest.

The scene continued. The bidding, which had now lasted for an hour, was in no degree abated. Ten merks—fifteen merks—twenty merks—thirty merks, were successively attained. The affair had now assumed a most serious aspect. Some people thought Andrew mad; others attributed his conduct to spite against Gibbie; and some thought it was a scheme between Andrew and the clerk to rouse the feelings of the old miser for the purpose of producing amusement. But everything bore so serious an aspect that the interest still continued to increase. The sufferings of Gibbie, in the meantime, were indescribable. Convulsive shakings took possession of him, and every successive bode produced a paroxysm; nature became exhausted; and having called out, with an unnatural voice “Fifty-one merks!” he uttered a scream and expired.

The crowd collected round the old man, as he lay dead on the ground. Andrew Garland felt he had proceeded too far. He had rendered himself guilty of the death of a fellow creature; and an explanation was demanded on the spot. He told them honestly the whole state of the case: that he suspected the tree to contain a sum of money—that the clerk had humoured the excessive bidding to see what effect it would produce on the miser—and that he had had no object to gratify beyond mere amusement. The people were satisfied, and the tree was searched. In a hole in the side of the trunk was found a leather bag, containing £300 Scots. The last bode having been given by Gibbie, the tree and its pose belonged to his heir; who afterwards came forward and claimed the prize.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE HAWICK SPATE.

THE bursting of water-spouts is a phenomenon not often witnessed in Scotland; yet that such an accident has sometimes happened there, there are not a few melancholy tales to prove; and to this testimony we would add the story with which the following pages are occupied.

About the close of the seventeenth century, the town of Hawick was visited with such a calamity as that just spoken of, although we believe it was not attended with any singularly disastrous consequences. The water-spout which burst over the town, on the occasion alluded to, was of such immense magnitude, that the deluge of waters it discharged filled the main street in an instant from side to side, to the depth of from four to five feet. But it did not remain long here. The inclination of the street gave it motion, and away it swept with the force and impetuosity of a swollen river, carrying everything before it; and in its furious career razing no fewer than fifteen houses to their foundations.

Yet, if it had not been for the danger with which it was attended, and the loss which it occasioned, an onlooker, if placed in a situation of safety himself, could not possibly help being amazed, nay, sometimes laughing outright, at the ludicrous scenes which such an unusual and unlooked for visiter as the water occasioned; and particularly at the odd display of floating objects of all kinds that were hurrying along on the bosom of the impetuous stream; and which, from their utter unfitness, in most cases, for such aquatic feats as they had been thus suddenly called on to perform, presented a very laughable appearance. There were chairs, tables, baskets, beds, stools, &c. &c.—sometimes in whole fleets, sometimes in detached squadrons—all scudding along, and apparently rivalling each other in speed, as if rejoicing in this new power of locomotion. Now, the basket might be seen giving the “go by” to the stool, and now the stool to the basket. Here might be seen a table, neck and neck with a window shutter; and there an envious chaff bed doing its best to make up with a hamper of greens, which having got into a rapid current, was bidding defiance to competition, and looking with most profound contempt on the unavailing efforts of its pursuers. All this, a lively imagination would discover in the march of the “Hawick Spate,” as the inundation of which we speak was called.

But all the objects that floated down this heaven-descended stream, were not of the same ludicrous or uninteresting character with those enumerated. There was, at any rate, one exception, and one calculated to excite very different feelings in the beholder from those alluded to. This object was a cradle; and it was tenanted. A little mariner, unconscious of his danger, was on board the frail bark. Borne on by the current, the cradle swept rapidly along, unobserved by any one; for all were too intent on seeking their own personal safety, or on saving their property, to pay any attention to the concerns of others; or, if the cradle was seen, there was no one who would venture into the rushing torrent to rescue the little voyager from the apparently inevitable fate which awaited him. On, onward, the cradle sailed on the bosom of the stream, now wheeling rapidly round in the eddies created by sudden obstructions,

and now shooting along like an arrow with the liberated waters.

But all is not lost that's in danger. In a secluded spot, at a short distance from the town, there happened to be, at the moment of which we speak, one of those gipsy encampments which, though still to be met with occasionally, are now more rare than they were then. This encampment was situated on one of the sloping sides of a deep hollow or ravine; and it so chanced that this was precisely the course which the waters took that rushed from the town; and thus everything which was borne along with them, and that had not been previously stranded, or otherwise arrested in its progress, floated past the bivouac of the gipsies—but, observe, past only, if they thought them not worth capturing; for the gipsies, with all the ready tact of their calling, in making the most of circumstances, had instantly bethought them of turning the present calamity to good account, by securing everything they could lay their hands upon; and in the end their booty was far from being inconsiderable.

Ranged along the edge of the stream, the gipsies, old and young, male and female, might have been seen at this moment, eagerly and busily employed, with long sticks, fishing in such articles as came within their reach. Some of their number, however, more daring or more greedy of spoil, might also have been seen far advanced into the water, pursuing, at the imminent risk of their lives, the same profitable pastime. It was while they were thus employed, that our little mariner and his bark came in sight of the gipsies. A general cry of surprise—not unmingled with compassion, at least on the part of the female members of the gang—burst from the gipsies when the cradle hove in sight, as they concluded that it was more than probable that it contained a child.

“Save the infant! save the infant!” exclaimed several of the women at once. But this was much easier said than done; for the cradle was floating down the very centre of the stream, which, though now a good deal diffused, and thus rendered shallower, was yet at least from four to five feet deep in the middle; and, besides this, the bottom was irregular, and interspersed with partial hollows, some of which would have taken the tallest man in the gang over the head. Aware of this, there was an evident hesitation on the part of the men to incur the risk of seizing the cradle, although there were two motives to induce them to the attempt. The one was humanity—the other, a much less creditable one, interest; a child being at all times an acquisition to a gipsy gang, for the purpose of exciting charity.

Which of these two motives was the stronger on this occasion, we will not say; but certain it is, that there was an anxious desire on the part of all to save the infant which was presumed to be in the cradle.

One of the most eager for the accomplishment of this humane purpose, amongst the females of the gang, was a stout, masculine woman of the name of Jean Gordon, who, hastily *kill*ing up her petticoats, dashed into the stream when the cradle came in sight, with the view of intercepting it; but the water was too deep for her, and she was obliged to stop short long before she reached the line of the cradle's direc-

tion. Finding this, and highly excited by disappointment and anxiety, she frantically called on some of the men to try and effect the rescue of the child.

"John Young, John Young! save the wean!—save the wean!" she exclaimed, addressing herself to a tall athletic man, who was the farthest out in the stream, and who was at the moment busily employed in endeavouring to secure a chest of drawers which were in the act of tumbling past him. "I'm sure I've seen ye do baulder things than that, John, and for far less. O man, for the love o' God, and yer ain soul, save the pair innocent!" For it had now been ascertained that there actually was a child in the cradle.

The man thus appealed to by Jean made no reply, but steadily eyed for a moment the approaching object of her solicitude, to which he was now at liberty to pay attention, as the chest of drawers had fairly got out of his reach. The cradle, in the meantime, came gliding rapidly onwards; but it was evident that it would pass at the distance of several yards from where Young stood.

Young, who was an excellent and a fearless swimmer, marked this, and took his measures accordingly; for he had determined on making an effort to save the infant. Having waded into the shoulders, he waited till the cradle had arrived within a few feet of the line on which he stood, when he made a bold and sudden push into the centre of the stream, and so well calculated his distance, that, after making a few strokes—for he had lost his footing—he came in contact with it at the exact point on which he had reckoned. Seizing now the cradle with one hand, and keeping himself afloat with the other, Young prudently gave way to the current, and allowed himself to be borne along with it until an opportunity should present itself for his striking in for the shore. The situation of Young, however, was a perilous one; but he did not want the stimulus of approbation to enable him to go through with his humane purpose. Jean Gordon ran along the margin of the stream, keeping up with the floating, rather than swimming man, and anon raising her voice with these words of encouragement.

"That's my brave man!" she shouted, as she dashed through hedge and bush in her onward progress, with her eye fixed on the cradle, and regardless of all obstructions that lay in her path. "That's my brave man! Haud on, John—haud on! Never mind the ragin o' the waters, John, but be o' stout heart; for the Lord's wi' ye, and 'll bear ye up wi' a strong arm. This way noo, John—this way noo," she added, pointing to a small inlet where there was no current, and which promised an easy landing-place. "This way, John," she said, and dashed into the water to assist the voyagers to land.

Young, approving of Jean's suggestion, made a strong effort to free himself from the current, and succeeded in getting into the still and shallow water, where he quickly gained his feet; Jean, at the same moment, pouncing on the child, which she took from the cradle and hugged to her bosom in a rapture of joy.

"Faith, it was a teuch job, Jean," said Young, now shaking himself like a huge water-dog; "but it's a guid ane, and I hou' 'll stan' against twa or three o' my sins."

"Nae doot o't, John—nae doot o't," replied Jean, gazing fondly on the infant as she spoke. "It's a guid deed, and will be remembered to yer advantage baith here and hereafter. A bonny bairn it is, in troth," she went on, now apostrophizing the infant; "and 'll be sair missed by somebody, I warrant."

Having said this, she wrapped up the child in the blankets in which it had been enveloped in the cradle, and, accompanied by Young, returned to the encampment, which they found breaking up and the gang hurriedly preparing to depart—a sudden move, indeed, but one for which there was good reason. The gipsies had rescued a number of

things from the water, which it was certain their owners would miss, and which, therefore, it was not improbable they might institute some troublesome inquiries after, if they remained much longer where they were; and it was thought best to avoid this annoyance by decamping. Urged on by these considerations, the packing up was soon completed; and, in a very few minutes, the whole troop was on the march towards Yetholm, in the neighbourhood of which they again pitched their tents.

Our story does not require, neither would it be in the least interesting, to follow any further the subsequent wanderings of the erratic tribe to which we have introduced the reader; nor would it afford any entertainment to trace the infant years of the little one whom they had rescued from the flood. It is enough to say that he grew up, under the maternal care and tendance of Jean Gordon—who had especially attached herself to him—a stout and active lad, bearing the name of his foster-mother, which had been conferred upon him by the general consent of the gang, in consequence of their mutual attachment.

Young Gordon—the name by which we will now designate the little hero of the "Hawick Spate"—evinced, at a very early period, a singularly bold and daring disposition; which, added to great physical strength, and a restless and enterprising spirit, promised, in due time, to place him at the head of the little community to which he belonged. But, though a wild and somewhat reckless character, young Gordon was not without some redeeming qualities. Gipsy though he was, he had a dash of honour and good feeling about him; and would, at any time, as soon do a good thing as a bad—perhaps sooner. In truth, all that was evil in him might have been fairly traced to the circumstances in which he was placed; while, whatever was good might, with equal truth and justice, have been attributed to his original nature.

Such, then, was Gordon in his twentieth year; for to this age had he attained when we resume our story.

As the gang to which Gordon belonged, was, one day, at this period, migrating from one place to another, they met an Irish regiment on its march to Stirling, to join the forces there assembled under the Duke of Argyle, who was preparing to march against the Earl of Mar, then in arms for the exiled family of Stuart.

Gordon, who had never seen an entire regiment before, was captivated with the warlike appearance it presented; and was suddenly struck with the desire of becoming a soldier—a desire which, in accordance with the impetuosity of his nature, he resolved instantly to gratify. With this view, but concealing his movements from his associates, he made up to a sergeant, and offered himself as a recruit. The sergeant, after eyeing him for a moment, and finding him, as he said, "a likely fellow," very gladly accepted his offer, and at once enlisted him.

Gordon, having thus secured the object of his wishes, asked permission to take leave of his friends before marching away with the regiment—a request which was at once granted, on the condition that he should be accompanied by a couple of soldiers, to insure his return. On joining his former associates, he informed them of the step he had taken, and added, that he had now come to bid them farewell. The intelligence struck them all with surprise and regret; for he was a general favourite, and, indeed, had now become the chief hope of the erratic family. But there was none among them who felt so much on this occasion as Jean Gordon.

On hearing of the step her adopted son had taken, she gave way to the most poignant grief.

"Oh, my bairn! my bairn!" she cried; "are ye goun' to leave me. Can ye hae the heart to desert her wha has carried ye in her arms through frost and snaw, through wind and weet—frae the time ye was a cradled wean till ye was able to tak the road yersel—wha has tended ye nicht."

an' day, wi' a a mother's care, frae that time till this hoor—and wha has mony and aft the time sheltered ye in her bosom frae the biting blast which was like to cut short the thread o' her ain life? Ay, warm and dry hae I aften keepit ye then, when I was mysel perishin wi' baith hunger and cauld, nane o' whilk, I trow, e'er cam near ye. But ye shanna gang wi' the redcoats, Gordon," she added, with a determined air; "rather than ye should do that, I'll tell the hail secret we hae a' keepit sae lang, although it should bring every ane o' us to the gibbet—and that'll prevent ye gaun, I jalouse."

"That ye wont, old devil," here chimed in a ferocious-looking member of the gang. "We'll tak care o' that. Ye ken we hae a way o' disposing o' tell-tales, Jean; and, if ye talk o' peaching, ye shall hae a taste o't, I warrant."

To this threat, Jean made no reply; and probably she would have entirely disregarded it, had there been no other inducement for her to keep silence on the subject she hinted at. But other inducements there were. Had she divulged the secret to which she alluded, and which was no other than that of Gordon's real parentage, she would have exposed two brothers and a husband to the vengeance of the law—and this consideration at once checked the resolution she had begun to entertain.

To return to our story. Jean's expostulations with Gordon on the step he had taken, and her appeals to his gratitude in behalf of her wish to induce him to remain with her, were not unheeded by the young man, who readily acknowledged, with a tear in his eye while he spoke, all her kindnesses to him. But it was now too late. The deed was done, and there was no recalling it; neither, it must be confessed, did Gordon wish it should be recalled.

We have said that there was none of the little community to which Gordon belonged, who felt so much at the prospect of his leaving them as Jean; but this was not strictly correct. There was another who felt even more than she did; although these feelings were not, in every particular, of precisely the same description. That other person was Jean's daughter—a little black-eyed gipsy of about eighteen years of age, and between whom and Gordon there had long subsisted a mutual attachment.

On learning of the sudden step which her lover had taken, the poor girl wept bitterly, and was not consoled until Gordon had repeatedly and solemnly assured her of a continuance of his love, and that he would very soon return to her—"When," he said—but this sentence he finished in a whisper into her ear—"you shall become my wife, Rosie."

The gipsy girl held down her head and blushed. Gordon flung his arms around her neck—tenderly embraced her—and, in a few minutes afterwards, was on the march with his regiment.

In a few days after the arrival of the latter at Stirling, the Duke of Argyle, having learned that the Earl of Mar was approaching, with the view of giving him battle, mustered his army, which included the regiment to which Gordon belonged, and marched out to meet him. The opposing armies came in sight of each other on Sherriffmuir, where, as is well known, a pretty severe encounter took place, in which both sides claimed the victory. In this engagement, the regiment in which Gordon served was stationed on the left wing of the royal forces, which was opposed to the Highlanders in Mar's army, and thus involved in the most sanguinary part of the conflict.

Soon after the commencement of the battle, our young soldier was fortunate enough to save the life of an officer of the King's army. This officer, who was mounted, was unhorsed by a Highlander, who had previously wounded him severely in the thigh with his broadsword, and was about to complete his destruction with the same weapon as he lay defenceless on the ground, when Gordon ran him

through the heart with his bayonet. In the next instant, and before the person whose life Gordon had saved, could inform him who he was, or thank him for his opportune and very effective aid, the tide of battle rolled over the spot, and they were separated. Nor did they meet again—and thus each remained in ignorance of who the other was.

It was not long after this, however, before Gordon himself required the aid which he had so timeously afforded another, and that under nearly similar circumstances. He was attacked by a ferocious mountaineer of immense stature, who made a cut at him with his broadsword; but Gordon not only adroitly warded off the blow with his musket, but succeeded in inflicting a deep wound on his antagonist with his bayonet. Enraged to find himself thus baffled by a stripling, and smarting with pain, the infuriated Celt beat down Gordon's firelock, and rushed in upon him, with the intention of dispatching him with his dirk. But this was not so easily done. Finding his musket no longer of any avail, Gordon dropped it on the ground, and, quick as lightning, sprang upon and grappled with his enemy; and thus, in turn, prevented him making use of his weapons. A desperate struggle now ensued between the combatants, each endeavouring to overturn the other; and, for a moment or two, it was doubtful which would eventually be thrown. But the superior strength of the Highlander finally prevailed, and Gordon fell, with his remorseless foe above him. In the next instant, the Highlander's dirk gleamed in the air, and was already on its descent towards the heart of the prostrate youth, when, ere the blow could be struck, both the weapon and the hand which held it fell to the ground. The arm of the Highlander had been severed, at this critical moment, by the sabre of a dragoon, who had approached the combatants unperceived by either. Thus miraculously freed from the danger of immediate death, Gordon sprang to his feet, and assisted the trooper in completing the destruction of his assailant, whom they instantly dispatched. But the perils of the day to the young soldier did not terminate with this adventure; another soon after befell him that threatened to end more fatally.

When making his way back to join his regiment, which had shifted its ground in the tumult of fight, he suddenly found himself intercepted by a party of the enemy, by whom he was taken prisoner, and immediately after disarmed, bound, and sent to the rear, where he found several others in the same unhappy situation with himself. On the termination of the conflict, the prisoners were marched to a small village, at the distance of eight or ten miles from the field of battle; and, on the following day, a kind of court-martial, formed of a few straggling officers hastily brought together, was held on them; when, after a trial which lasted only a few minutes, the whole were condemned to death, for being in arms—so ran the words of their doom—against their lawful King, James VII.; and the hour of two in the afternoon of the same day, was appointed for carrying the sentence into effect.

The unfortunate men were now remanded to the several apartments in which they had been confined previous to their trial, and recommended to pass the short time they had to live in making their peace with their God.

In the meantime, a rude gibbet was hastily erected; and, at the appointed hour, the prisoners, and amongst these, Gordon, were marched to the place of execution, surrounded by a strong party of troopers. Dreadful as was his situation, however, young Gordon blenched not. His bearing was manly; and, in that fearful hour, his indomitable spirit enabled him to contemplate his approaching death with the calmness and resolution of a martyr. There was but one thought that unmanned him in this trying hour, when he allowed his imagination to dwell on it. This thought was of his Rosie, the object of his heart's fondest affections. But

he checked the enervating reflection, and prepared to meet his doom with becoming fortitude.

The preparations for the tragical scene being completed, the prisoners were brought forward, and tied up, one after the other, to the fatal beam. Everything being now in readiness, the signal was about to be given which would have closed the world on the unfortunate men for ever, when all at once a loud and confused cry arose that the enemy was approaching. In an instant the gibbet was deserted by the troopers who surrounded it, who galloped off wildly in all directions, in utter ignorance of the quarter from which the threatened danger was coming.

Gordon, whose presence of mind had never for a moment forsaken him, perceiving the opportunity for escape which thus so unexpectedly presented itself, instantly took advantage of it. Having hurriedly desired the brother in misfortune who stood next him to unloose the rope with which his arms were bound, he freed himself from the noose which was about his neck, and, with the rapidity of thought, drew from his pocket a large clasp knife, and cut the bands by which his fellow prisoners were pinioned, and set them all at liberty. Having effected this generous purpose, Gordon leaped to the ground, and called out that every one should now endeavour to save himself—a recommendation which it will readily be believed was very soon attended to.

In the meantime, however, the troopers having discovered that they had been frightened by a false alarm, which, indeed, it had been, hastened back to carry the sentence of the prisoners into effect; when, finding that they had made their escape, they commenced a furious pursuit, and succeeded in overtaking several of the unfortunate men, whom they instantly cut down—adopting this summary procedure in preference to the more tedious and troublesome one of carrying them back to the gibbet.

Gordon, who had by this time gained a rising ground, where he had thrown himself down breathless and exhausted, saw this prompt execution done on two or three of the fugitives; and, in dread of sharing a similar fate, again started to his feet, and resumed his flight.

But this movement threatened to have been fatal to him. He was perceived by two troopers, who immediately gave chase after him; and, as the height which he had taken, though pretty steep, was free from any obstruction which could arrest the progress of horsemen, they gained fast upon him. Poor Gordon now gave himself up for lost, and thought that he had but escaped the halter to perish by the sword. Still, however, he struggled on; but his pursuers, continuing to gain on him, were soon so near that he could distinctly hear the abusive epithets and deep curses in which they at once expressed their impatience with the length of the chase, and their eagerness to accomplish the destruction of him who caused it. A few minutes more, without the intervention of some fortunate circumstance, and Gordon would have been under the sabres of his pursuers; but such a circumstance did at this moment interpose, and he was once more saved from a fate that seemed inevitable. A ledge of rock impassable to horsemen, but easily accessible by a person on foot, suddenly presented itself. For this place of safety Gordon made with all possible speed, and with a desperate effort quickly gained a sufficient height to defy further pursuit from the troopers. But, although he was out of the reach of their swords, he had not the same security from their bullets; and this he soon found. Two shots were fired at him by his pursuers, and both hit the rock so close by his head, that some of the splinters struck him in the face, and wounded him pretty severely. The aim of the troopers had been so well taken, that Gordon had no doubt, if they got another round at him, that he would be brought down; but, fortunately, he was able to clear the summit of the ledge before they had time to reload, and was thus secure, for a time at least, from all further danger from his pursuers.

Although now dreadfully exhausted, Gordon continued his flight until he became so worn out that he found it impossible to proceed. When reduced to this extremity, he crawled into a retired field that lay at some distance from any road, and flung himself at full length behind a low wall by which it was intersected. Here he soon fell into a profound sleep, in which all the dangers he had passed, and all the perils to which he might yet be exposed, were for a time forgotten. In this situation, however, he had not remained above an hour when he was awakened by some one shaking him by the shoulder. He started to his feet in the utmost alarm, having no doubt that it was an enemy who had discovered his retreat, but was soon relieved from his fears by perceiving a person in the dress of a shepherd standing before him.

“Whar hae ye come frae, honest lad?” said the man, in a kindly voice, and with an expression of sympathy in his countenance, excited by the fatigued and haggard appearance of the young man.

“From the Borders,” replied Gordon, not caring to come to particulars with a stranger in such troublesome times, and uncertain what treatment he might meet with by claiming connection with either of the contending parties between whom the kingdom was then divided.

“I’m jalousin,” said the stranger, with an expressive smile, as he eyed some of the fragments of military costume which were still about Gordon’s person—“I’m jalousin that ye hae been *oot*, young man. Do ye ken a place they ca’ Shirramuir?” he added, with a knowing, but good-humoured look, which at once induced Gordon not only to acknowledge that he did, but to tell him his precise situation together with all that had lately befallen him.

“Aweel, aweel, freen,” said the man, when Gordon had concluded—“it’s a’ the same to me what side ye war on, for I carena a sheep’s head for ony o’ them. Sae, ye’ll come along wi’ me, an’ I’ll gie ye a nicht’s quarters, and some refreshment, o’ whilk ye seem to me to staun muckle in need; for, in troth, lad, ye’re sair forfochten like.”

Having said this, the kind-hearted shepherd conducted Gordon to his house, which was close at hand, and gave him all the entertainment he had so generously promised. Here Gordon remained all night; and, on the following morning, prepared for his departure, having now resolved to return to his old friends, the gipsies.

Previous to his setting out, his kind host suggested that he should strip himself of everything about his apparel that might discover the side to which he had belonged—a suggestion with which Gordon immediately complied; when his entertainer supplied the deficiencies thus occasioned, by presenting him with a shepherd’s plaid and bonnet, to which he added a small sum of money.

Thus provided, refreshed, and, we may add, disguised, Gordon took the road; and, on the third day thereafter, arrived in safety at the encampment of his old friends which, knowing their haunts, he had no difficulty in finding.

The joy of the whole gang, and particularly of Jean and her daughter, on seeing him so soon again, was excessive. Jean hugged him to her bosom, and, in a rapture of delight, poured out upon him a torrent of the most endearing epithets; while her daughter, though not less overjoyed, sought, with maidenly modesty, to conceal the happiness she felt. But it would not hide. The smile and the tear which she could not suppress, betrayed the secret of her feelings. This excitement over on all sides, Gordon gradually fell into his former position in the little community, and resumed the habits and wandering life which his short, but eventful military career had interrupted; and in this way time ran on until other three or four years had elapsed.

About the end of this period, as Gordon, with two or three more of his associates, was one day passing through Jed-

burgh, where there was, at the time, a recruiting party stationed, two soldiers, after looking earnestly at him for some minutes, suddenly made up to him, and asked if his name was not Gordon, and if he had not once belonged to the — regiment of foot. To both of these questions Gordon at once replied in the affirmative, not being aware that he had any reason to do otherwise; for it had never occurred to him that, by not rejoining his regiment after the battle of Sherriffmuir, he had rendered himself liable to a charge of desertion; still less did he think that he had actually been all this time a deserter. But so it certainly was; and so he now found it to be.

"Then," said one of the soldiers, on his acknowledging both circumstances, "you come along with us, my lad; you are our prisoner." And both the men drew their side-arms to make good their capture.

Gordon was now carried to the quarters of the commanding officer of the recruiting party, and by him was immediately sent off, escorted by three soldiers, to Edinburgh Castle, to stand trial for desertion from his Majesty's service.

In a few days after his arrival there, a court-martial was summoned, when Gordon's identity, and the facts of his enlistment and desertion having been proven, he was condemned to be shot—the utmost penalty of military law having been adjudged him, as the desertion had taken place in time of war, and at a period when fidelity was most especially required.

Thus was poor Gordon twice exposed to the horrors of a violent death by judicial sentence; but still his natural courage did not fail him. He again boldly prepared to meet the fate which seemed determined to overtake him, and which now certainly seemed quite inevitable, as there was not the slightest chance of any circumstance occurring in this case to avert it.

The place selected for the impending tragedy, was the Portobello Sands; and thither the unfortunate culprit, accompanied by the whole garrison, was conveyed on the day appointed for his execution.

Amongst the official persons of note who were present on this melancholy occasion, was the Duke of Argyle, who had arrived in Edinburgh on the preceding day; and who, as commander-in-chief of the King's forces in Scotland, conceived it his duty to attend the execution of the criminal. All the ceremonies usual on occasions of this kind having been gone through, and the regiment formed into three sides of a square, the unfortunate prisoner was conducted to the spot, marked by his coffin being placed on it, where he was to receive his death. The execution party, consisting of twelve men, placed in three rows of four each, were advanced within a few paces of their object, when the front rank knelt down, the second stooped, and the third stood upright, that thus three several fires might be delivered, and the destruction of the victim be secured.

Gordon had now also knelt down, and there was only the signal wanting—of which the prisoner had, as is usual in such cases, the control—to complete the tragedy, when, just as the unhappy man was about to make that signal, the Duke of Argyle, who had been eyeing him attentively for some time, suddenly left those with whom he had been conversing, and waving to the execution party to withhold their fire, galloped up to the culprit, whom he thus abruptly addressed:—

"Young man, were you at the battle of Sherriffmuir?"

To this question, so unexpectedly put, it was some time before Gordon could make any reply; his mind being wholly absorbed by thoughts appropriate to his awful situation. When first put to him, therefore, he merely looked at the querist with a vacant stare, as if wholly unconscious of the purport of what had been said to him. In a few seconds, however, he recollected himself, and, with a firm voice, replied that he was at that battle.

"Did you see me," continued the Duke, on his making this answer, "in any situation of particular peril on that day?"

Gordon now in his turn looked at the Duke with a scrutinizing eye, and thought that he recognised a face which he had seen before. He began, in short, to imagine that there was a resemblance, though he did not think it by any means so strong as to warrant him in saying so, between the person who now addressed him, and the officer whose life he had saved at Sherriffmuir.

"I do not know, sir," said Gordon, in reply to the last question put to him, "that I saw *you* in any situation of particular peril on that day; but I saw an officer of our army in such a situation, and I believe I helped a little to bring him out of the scrape."

"You ran the fellow who was about to slay that officer through the body with your bayonet, did you not?" exclaimed the Duke, with eager rapidity.

"I did, sir," said Gordon, who yet knew nothing of the quality of the person who addressed him.

"Exactly," replied Argyle. "Well, sir," he continued, "the life you saved was mine, and I shall now try to repay the debt by saving yours, if I can."

Having said this, the Duke turned round and waved to the officer who was in command of the troops present to come to him.

On his approach—"Colonel," he said, "I wish this execution delayed. Do you, therefore, sir, if you please, order the firing party to retire, and let the regiment be marched back to its quarters. I, of course, take the whole responsibility of this proceeding on myself, Colonel."

The officer to whom this was addressed, bowed and retired to execute the orders given him; and in a few minutes thereafter, the regiment, in the centre of which Gordon was placed, marched off the ground to the sound of cheerful music.

On reaching the Castle, the Duke desired Gordon to be brought before him, when he proceeded to examine minutely into the particulars of his case, with the view, evidently, of eliciting as many favourable and extenuating circumstances as possible; and he evinced great satisfaction in finding that there were a good many of these. There was the youth and inexperience of the prisoner; the fact of his having been only a day or two enlisted; of his having received no bounty, (which was the case;) the evidence that his crime had proceeded from ignorance of military law, and not from design; and, above all, there was to be taken into account his treatment by the insurgents—considerations, all of which were crowned by the fact of his having saved the life of the commander-in-chief.

On the conclusion of this examination, Gordon was placed again in confinement; and for an entire week he heard nothing more of the proceedings regarding him. Early one morning, however, at the end of this period, the Duke of Argyle entered his apartment, when, pulling out a paper from his pocket—

"Gordon," he said, "your life is saved. His Majesty's clemency has been extended to you, in consideration of the extenuating circumstances in your case; and here is your pardon. Here, also," he continued, producing another paper, which he handed to the prisoner, "is your discharge. And here, again," he said, placing a purse of money in Gordon's hand, and smiling as he spoke, "is a passport. And now, my good fellow," he added, "take my advice, and return to your friends as soon as possible."

We will not take up the reader's time by attempting to describe Gordon's feelings on this occasion. Suffice it to say, that they were as wild, and tumultuous, and joyful as such a singular and unexpected change in his situation can be supposed to have been capable of exciting. These feelings, however, did not distract him so much as to prevent him following the Duke's counsel, which exactly jumped with his own inclinations.

After thanking his benefactor in the most grateful language he could command, he instantly quitted the apartment

in which he had been confined, and hurried out of the castle, neither looking to the right nor to the left, till he had reached the heart of the city, when he stopped for a moment to breathe and to reflect on his happiness, which was so great, however, that he had some difficulty in believing in its reality.

In an hour afterwards, Gordon once more set out to join his old friends, whose encampment he reached on the following day, and again resumed his old habits and station in the erratic community. Again, too, three or four additional years passed away; but they did not pass now without bringing some of the changes which are interwoven with the lot of mankind, and which fall to the share equally of gipsy and prince. During these three or four years, Jean Gordon's husband, and her two brothers, had been gathered to their fathers, her daughter had attained the stature and the years of womanhood, and she herself was beginning to feel the weakened energies of age. Another change in this little community, during these three or four years, was the elevation of Gordon to the chief place in it—a situation to which he was unanimously elected on the death of Jean's husband, who had hitherto been looked up to as the head of the fraternity.

It was about this period, that, as the gang were one day strolling up the banks of the Tweed, near a place called Upsetlington, under the conduct of Gordon, who was leading them on one of their usual wandering expeditions, a salmon cobble, in which were two persons, was seen sweeping down the river, which, being swollen to an unusual height with nearly an entire week's heavy and incessant rain, was at this moment tearing along with the most dreadful fury. The day, besides, was wildly tempestuous; and, as the wind was blowing directly in the teeth of the current, there was a roughness in the middle of the stream which would have endangered the safety of a much better sea-boat than a salmon-cobble—a truth this, which was but too evident on the present occasion.

The cobble, which was now being borne down by the stream, seemed to have completely freed itself from the control of those on board of it, and was careering along with an impetuosity, and total want of direction, which left no doubt on the minds of those who beheld it that a catastrophe was at hand. It was evident, in short, that the boat must very soon be either swamped or overset; and in this opinion the persons on board of her seemed themselves to concur, as they made no other effort to save themselves than waving their hands, from time to time, to those on the banks, to intimate their distress, and to invite their assistance.

But, although these unfortunate persons had been willing to make any effort to extricate themselves from their perilous situation, they could not; for their oars had been swept away by the current, and they were thus left perfectly helpless.

Gordon marked the desperate situation of the unwilling voyagers, and on the instant determined on making an effort to save them.

Near the spot where he stood looking on this appalling scene, there happened to be another cobble lying, which its owner had drawn high up on the bank, to keep it out of the reach of the current; and its two oars were still in it.

Gordon eyed the boat for a moment, and in that moment his resolution was taken. He seized the cobble with both hands, and being a remarkably powerful man, with one effort hurled it into the stream. This done, he leaped into it, grasped the oars, in the use of which he was singularly expert, and dashed headlong after the runaway bark, which, at the imminent risk of his own life, and with great exertion, he succeeded in capturing and bringing safely to shore.

The persons thus saved, by the gallantry of Gordon, from inevitable death, proved to be the owner of the cobble, and a Mr Riddel, from Hawick, a respectable elderly man and

reputed to be extremely wealthy, whom the former had been endeavouring to ferry across the river.

When the party had fairly landed, Mr Riddel took Gordon by the hand, and pressing it warmly, thanked him, in the most grateful terms, for the important service he had rendered him. "But, young man," he added, "I do not mean to pay you with thanks alone. It is my intention to give you a much more substantial proof of my gratitude than mere words. Thank God, I am able to do so; and the will is not wanting. You shall go with me to Hawick, my young friend, and I will then see in what way I can best shew my sense of the obligation I owe you. In the meantime, take this," he said, handing Gordon a purse, "as an earnest for the future. But you must come to Hawick with me. This you must do—I will take no denial. I am childless, man," he added, smiling, "although I was not always so; and there's no saying, if ye quit this wandering life of yours, and betake ye to an honest calling, what good fortune may arise to you out of this day's occurrences."

"Nae sayin, indeed," here chimed in Jean Gordon, who had been listening to what Mr Riddel said with intense interest, and with a degree of agitation which it would have been very difficult for a mere onlooker to have accounted for.

"Nae sayin, indeed, what guid fortune may arise to the lad, oot o' what has happened this day. To Hawick wi' ye he maun gang, Mr Riddel," continued Jean, who knew every individual in the country for fifty miles round; "an' he couldna gang wi' a nearer freen, tak my word for that."

"He could not go with one who would be more willing to be his friend, at any rate, Jean," said Mr Riddel, who also knew the gipsy well, both by sight and name, and smiling as he spoke.

"An' guid richt he has to yer friendship, Mr Riddel," replied Jean.

"That he has, Jean," said the former. "The man who has saved my life, has indeed a good right to my friendship; and he shall have it."

"He has maybe ither claims on ye forbye that, though, Mr Riddel."

"Indeed! Well, he may; although that is surely enough. But what other claims do you allude to, Jean? I should be glad to know what they are, that I may discharge them all at once."

"Then you shall know, Mr Riddel," replied Jean, with a sudden determination of manner. "They're noo awa that micht tak ony scaith frae what I'll noo tell ye; an', forbye, it's a thing I hae lang resolved upon, an' sae I'll e'en tak this opportunity o' doin't. Come aside wi' me, here, a wee bit, Mr Riddel," added Jean; "an' you, too, Gordon," she said; "come, till I speak to ye baith." And she led the way to a little distance from the other persons who were present on the occasion, and who had hitherto been auditors of all that passed.

"Mr Riddel," now said Jean, "do ye mind the Hawick Spate?"

"Mind it!" replied the person addressed—"to be sure, I do, Jean; I have but too much reason to mind it." And here Mr Riddel's voice became tremulous with emotion. "It deprived me of my only child—the only child I ever had. This you doubtless know, Jean," he continued; "as every body in Hawick, and for many miles round it, who recollects the spate, knows that my child—and a fine little fellow he was—was swept away in his cradle, by the stream, and never afterwards heard tell of. The cradle was, indeed, found," added Mr Riddel, in a melancholy tone, "but not the infant. But why do ye ask this question, Jean?"

"Just to bring to yer recollection the very circumstance ye hae mentioned, Mr Riddel," replied the gipsy. "Noo, sir," she went on, "tak a look o' that lad, [pointing to Gordon,] an' tell me if ye wad ken him to be yer ain son. And you, Gordon," she said, "look at that gentleman, an' see if ye wad tak him to be yer faither; for, as God's in hea-

ven," she continued, "that's the relationship in which ye twa staun to ane anither!"

"Woman! what do you mean?" exclaimed Mr Riddel, in an angry tone. "Are you deranged? What absurd nonsense is this you talk? I never had any son but the child that was drowned."

"I didna say ye had, Mr Riddel," replied Jean; "but that's yer son, nevertheless. This I swear, by a' my hopes o' a hereafter!"

"Gracious God!—explain, woman! explain!" exclaimed Mr Riddel, now greatly agitated—a glimmering of the possibility of what had actually occurred suddenly bursting on his mind. "Tell me, I beseech you, what you mean, at once, and without further evasion."

Thus entreated, Jean Gordon proceeded to detail the whole of the circumstances connected with the saving of the child (whom, we presume, we need not inform the reader in more explicit terms, was, indeed, the son of the person to whose paternity Jean had ascribed him) from the Hawick flood.

When she had concluded—

"Extraordinary! most extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr Riddel, now overwhelmed with a variety of new and strange feelings. "Can it be possible? O God! thy ways are inscrutable. But what proof have I of the truth of your story, Jean?" said the agitated father, gazing on his son.

"Proof!" exclaimed the gipsy; "look at the lad, Mr Riddel—look at him, closely; an' if ye dinna find proof enough in that face, ye'll be hard to convince. Is he no your very counterpart?"

This part of Jean's evidence was indeed of the most irrefragable kind; for the resemblance was remarkably striking.

"An' if that'll no satisfy ye," she went on, "is there no half a dozen an' mair o' oor folk, that saw the hail affair, an' that'll swear to the truth o' a' that I've said?—an' ye may tak them up, ane by ane, this minute, if ye like, an' examine them a' separately on the subject; an' if ye find ane o' them contradick me in the sma'est particular, dinna believe ae word o' what I hae said. An, if that'll no convince ye yet, Mr Riddel," she continued, "ye shall hae mair proof still. Come here, Gordon," she said, addressing the young man, who, in silent amazement, was listening to this extraordinary denouement—"sit down." He obeyed; and she pulled off the shoe and stocking from his left leg. Then holding up the lad's naked foot, "Do ye ken thae twa taes, then, Mr Riddel?" she inquired, pointing, at the same time, to the little toe and the one adjoining, to which the former was united.

"He is my son! he is my son! I can no longer doubt it," exclaimed Mr Riddel, in a rapture of joy, on seeing this proof of his identity. And he rushed towards Gordon, and folded him in his arms.

"Oh! cruel woman!" he said, after the first burst of emotion had so far subsided as to allow him to speak—"to keep my boy so long from me, and to cause me so many weary nights and days, and long years of sorrow and mourning, on his account! But I forgive you," he immediately added; "I forgive you, in consideration of the happiness which you have this day conferred on me, late though it be."

"Ye may forgie me, Mr Riddel," said the now repentant gipsy; "but I canna forgie mysel. I hae made some amends, noo, hoover," she continued; "an' that's a relief to my conscience. But I hae still anither score o' the same kind to pay off in another quarter; an' it shall be dune at a' hazards—but o' this, mair hereafter. I hae dune ye a great wrang, Mr Riddel," continued Jean; "but I was aye kind to yer bairn. I hae been a mother to him ever since I first took him in my arms, as I daur say he will, sae far as he recollects, bear witness. He'll say that muckle for me, I'm sure."

"That I will, Jean," said Gordon, taking her kindly by the hand; "an' may I be forgotten by Him that's aboon when I forget you, or yer motherly kindness to and care owre me!"

"Enough, enough, Francis Riddel," said his father—"for that was the name, my son, I intended to have given you, and it is the name by which I shall now and henceforth designate you—I forgive her. Nay, I not only forgive her, man; but, if she will quit this wandering life of hers, I will see to her future subsistence and comfort as long as she lives."

"Many thanks, Mr Riddel, for your goodness," said Jean, "but I'm no just yet prepared for that step. But, when I am, which will maybe be very sune, I'll no fail to seek the shelter ye sae kindly offer me."

It is, perhaps, full time, now, that we should say what were the feelings of Francis—as we, too, must now call him—in the singular circumstances in which he thus so suddenly and unexpectedly found himself placed. These were of a mingled kind. He felt all the joy natural on such an impressive occasion as that of having a lost—or, at least, an unknown—parent restored. He felt, too, a satisfaction in the promotion which his personal interests would now certainly experience, and with the idea of the respectable footing on which he would now be placed with the world. But there were two circumstances in particular that weighed against these, and tended to lessen the effect they would otherwise have had. One of these was his attachment to the wandering life to which he had been accustomed, and which he saw, with regret, he must now abandon. The other—and by far the most distressing one to him—was the probability that he would now also be called upon to renounce his beloved Rosie. On this point, however, he determined to remain obstinate, and rather to forfeit his father's favour, with all the advantages that might accrue from it, than to abandon her to whom he already considered himself bound by the most sacred ties. On this subject, however, Francis prudently resolved to say nothing, in the meantime, but just to allow matters to take their course, till proper time and place should present themselves for announcing his resolution, and carrying that resolution into effect.

Mr Riddel now, again, repeated his proposal, that his son should instantly accompany him home; and, with this proposal, Francis complied, although he certainly did not do so, without much secret reluctance and regret, for the reasons which have been already explained.

After bidding, then, a kind adieu to his former associates—a most affectionate one to Jean, whom he bound, by a solemn promise, to call upon him, in a few days, at Hawick—and whispering two or three words of consolation into Rosie's ear—Francis set off, with his father; and, in due time, both arrived in safety at Mr Riddel's residence, in the town above named, where the former was quickly installed in all the rights and privileges of a son and heir, and as such was recognised by all his father's friends and acquaintances; his mother having been by this time many years dead.

In about four weeks after the occurrence of the circumstances just related, the gipsy gang to which Francis Riddel had belonged, appeared, one evening about dusk, at their old station in the vicinity of Hawick. It was the precise spot where Francis had been rescued from the flood some seven-and-twenty years before, and was a favourite locality of the wandering tribes.

Delighted with the intelligence of their arrival, which soon reached him, Francis, carefully however concealing his intention from his father, stole down to the gipsy encampment, where, as he expected, he found his beloved Rosie, to see whom, indeed, was the chief, if not the sole object of his visit. The joy of the lovers, at meeting—for they had not seen or heard of each other since they parted on the day of the adventure on the Tweed—need not be

dwelt upon, as it was exactly what is usual in such cases; but other circumstances arose from this interview which it may be more worth while to record.

"My father," said Francis, addressing Rosie, as they sat together on a green bank, at a little distance from the gipsy encampment, "has set his face against our marriage. He has said that in nothing will he oppose me, but in that. But that, if I disobey him there, well as he loves me, he will disinherit me, and leave me penniless. 'Marry a gipsy girl,' he said, 'and bring disgrace upon your connections! Never, never, with my consent.' Ha! ha!" exclaimed Francis, contemptuously, "little does he know, honest man, what a trifle all his wealth and all his possessions are, and would be, were they ten times greater, when put into the scale against such love as mine for thee, Rosie. He may keep his wealth, for I will marry"—

"The Laird o' Upha's dochter," suddenly struck in Jean Gordon, who had approached the lovers, unperceived. "Ay, the Laird o' Upha's dochter," she repeated. "She'll be yer wife, Francis. Winna she?"

"No, indeed, Jean, not her, whoever she be," said Francis, laughingly, and flinging his arms affectionately around Rosie's neck. "Not her, but my own sweet, dark-eyed gipsy girl here—*your* daughter, Jean."

"The Laird o' Upha's dochter, I tell ye, ye'll marry, nevertheless, Francis. Not mine; for I hae nane. Yer father 'll then hae nae objection to your linkin to, I'm thinkin; for a veel tochered lass she'll be—an' o' gentile bluid has she come."

From this point, the little that now remains of our story will be best conducted to its termination, by plain and concise narrative. Francis and Rosie now learned, with overwhelming amazement, that the latter was indeed a daughter of Maitland of Uphall's, an old and highly respectable family, and not of Jean Gordon's; and that she had been stolen in her infancy by the gang with which she was now associated. Jean also now informed them that she had already announced at Uphall that their daughter still lived, and had accompanied this announcement by a promise to restore her within three days to her parents.

The circumstance of Rosie's real parentage, Francis lost no time in communicating to his father, who heard it at first with incredulity; but promised that, if the facts were found to be as stated, he would not only withdraw his objections to their marriage, but would do all in his power to promote it.

To this, we have only to add, that the identity of Rosie having been proven to Uphall's entire satisfaction, he acknowledged her as his child, and soon after gave his consent to her union to Francis Riddel, who had been equally expeditious, as in the case of his own father, in informing him of his claims on his daughter.

The lovers were accordingly married, and lived many happy years together, filling a highly respectable station in society, and esteemed by all who knew them for the strict propriety of their conduct in all the relations of life.

They left sons and daughters, who inherited their wealth, which was very considerable, but none of whom ever experienced, so far as ever we heard, any of their vicissitudes.

THE CURSE OF SCOTLAND.

A NIGHT or two previous to the battle of Culloden, three or four gentlemen, retainers of Prince Charles, and who were residing in the same house with him at Inverness, were amusing themselves with a game at cards. During the evening, one of the latter suddenly disappeared, and, though anxiously sought for, could nowhere be found. "Curse the card!" exclaimed one of the gentlemen impatiently, after looking for it for some time in vain—"I wish it were in the Duke of Cumberland's throat." The missing card was the nine of diamonds. The gentlemen, however, determined

not to be balked of their sport, contrived to do without the lost article, and played on till bed time.

Two days after this, the battle of Culloden was fought; and, as is well known, the insurgent army was totally defeated, and the hopes of the unfortunate Adventurer laid prostrate for ever.

One consequence of this event was, that Inverness was thrown open to the Royalists, and thither, accordingly, the victorious general, the Duke of Cumberland, directed his steps after the engagement.

It was a practice of the Duke's, on arriving at any town or village which had been previously visited by Charles, to inquire for the house, nay, for the very apartment and bed he had occupied, and to take possession of them for his own use, alleging, shrewdly enough, as a reason for this conduct, that they were sure to be the best in the place. In conformity with this practice, the Duke, on arriving at Inverness, inquired for the house in which Charles had stopped; and it being pointed out to him, he immediately took up his abode in it.

On the day after the engagement, it was reported to the Duke, that a great number of the wounded insurgents and others were still wandering, or in concealment, in the neighbourhood of the field of battle. The ruthless general—whose naturally cruel disposition and sullen temper seem to have been fearfully excited by the resistance he had met with, and by the trouble it had cost him to subdue the rebellion in Scotland—on being informed of this circumstance, gave instant orders that a party of military should be sent out to destroy the unfortunate men wherever they could be found.

A strong body of troops were accordingly immediately dispatched on this sanguinary mission. But the officer in command of the party, after proceeding some way on his dreadful errand, suddenly recollected that he had no written authority for the horrible atrocity he was ordered to see perpetrated, the commands of the Duke having been merely verbal. Desirous of being better secured against any consequences which might arise from the shocking proceeding in which he was about to be engaged, he hastened back to Inverness, sought an audience of the Duke, and respectfully requested him to give him his orders in writing.

"No occasion whatever," said the Duke, sternly, and somewhat irritated at the want of confidence which the demand implied. "Do as you are desired, sir. I'll answer for the consequences."

The officer, however, continued to press his request, and reiterated his desire to be put in possession of documentary evidence that what he was about to do was done by authority.

Impatient at his importunity, and desirous of getting quit at once of the subject and his pertinacious visiter, the Duke hurriedly looked about the apartment for paper on which to write the desired order; but he could see none. While looking for the paper, however, he accidentally turned up a corner of the carpet with his foot, and brought to view a card which had been lying beneath it. The Duke observing it, hastily stooped down and picked it up, exclaiming, as he did so—"Oh, here, this will do well enough for the death-warrant of a parcel of rebel scoundrels!" And he immediately wrote the fatal order with a pencil on the back of the card. This card was the nine of diamonds, the same which had been lost a few evenings before; and such is one version, at any rate, of the tradition that has given to this particular card the startling title of "The Curse of Scotland."



W I I S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

RETRIBUTION.

FANNY RUTHERFORD was decidedly the prettiest girl in the parish of Carwhinn, and one of the most gentle and amiable creatures that ever breathed. Warm in her attachments, confiding in her love, and mild and kind in her dispositions, she was altogether one of the most fascinating beings that the imagination can well conceive. Fanny was the daughter of a country gentleman, of small estate, but of great respectability, and was, at the period of our story, in her nineteenth year. Her father, though by no means wealthy, had spared no expense in her education; and her quick natural parts enabled her to derive all the benefit which that education was intended to confer; so that she was not only one of the loveliest, but, perhaps, also one of the most accomplished women in that part of the country where she resided. Fanny had two brothers, both intelligent, clever young men, bred to agricultural pursuits, in which they were largely and extensively engaged.

Mr Rutherford was a widower; and his household duties therefore devolved upon Fanny, who discharged them with exemplary propriety.

Hitherto, though of an ardent, susceptible, and even romantic disposition, Fanny's peace had never been disturbed by love. The quiet tenor of her days had passed away in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, and in the interchange of endearments with her father and brothers, to whom she was devotedly attached, and by whom she was most sincerely and tenderly loved in return. Neither a thought nor a wish beyond the sphere of this little round of felicity ever entered the pure and unsophisticated mind of the happy and innocent girl. But this was a happiness that was not to last. Love, that bane or blessing of woman's existence, as its object is unworthy or otherwise, at length found its way into the guileless bosom of Fanny Rutherford; and, oh! what a consummation awaited that unfortunate attachment!

At the distance of about a mile from Mr Rutherford's, there lived a young man of the name of Raeburn, the son of a gentleman in similar circumstances with the former—that is, a small landed proprietor. This young man, who had received a very liberal education, was possessed of an agreeable person and of exceedingly pleasing manners; but there were occasional developements of character that but very indifferently harmonized with these qualities; and there were, besides, more than one little incident in his life that betrayed a degree of selfishness, not to say heartlessness, that would by no means have been expected in one of so frank and cheerful a disposition. Still these symptoms were, after all, of so trifling a character, that they could scarcely be said to have affected the reputation which Raeburn aimed at, and succeeded with a great many in acquiring—namely, that of a dashing, careless, good-hearted, and liberal-minded young fellow.

At this period, Henry Raeburn was residing at home, waiting for an appointment in the civil service of the East India Company, which had been promised him by a friend of his father's; and much of the spare time which his present circumstances placed at his disposal, he spent at Mr

Rutherford's, where his agreeable manners and general intelligence made him at all times a welcome visiter. But to none of the members of the family were these visits more agreeable than to Fanny, over whose affections his insinuating address and handsome exterior had made a complete conquest. Nor was Raeburn himself apparently less the victim of this passion than she was. He took every opportunity of pouring into her ear the most ardent expressions of attachment. A thousand times he swore that he was hers for ever—that the sun would change his course, the stars forget to shine, ere he became inconstant to his Fanny. To all these professions of love the unsuspecting and confiding girl lent a willing ear, and listened and listened to the fascinating tale again and again, till her whole soul became absorbed by one single idea—until she found, in short, that she lived for Henry Raeburn alone.

Whether Raeburn was sincere in his professions of attachment to Fanny Rutherford, at this stage of their acquaintance, we cannot say, and have no means of ascertaining. That was a circumstance known to his Creator and himself alone.

The young people, however, made no attempts to conceal their mutual attachment—at least, Fanny made none to conceal hers. Indeed, the guileless simplicity, and open and candid nature of the amiable girl, rendered her incapable of concealing it. Neither, though she could, would she have done it; her sense of propriety and delicacy of feeling would not have permitted her.

Fanny's father and brothers, therefore, were perfectly aware of the attachment alluded to; and although, of course, the marriage of the parties was a thing not to be thought of in their present circumstances, yet, as Henry was likely soon to obtain a lucrative situation in India, it was a very probable and very desirable contingency; and with this prospective consideration, Fanny's father did not disapprove of her choice, as young Raeburn was otherwise, by birth and education, a perfectly eligible match for his daughter. All that was wanting was fortune; and this was a desideratum which there was a reasonable probability of Henry soon supplying.

When we said, however, that the visits of Fanny's lover were acceptable to all the members of Mr Rutherford's family, we said fully more than the facts warranted. There was one, at any rate, of that family to whom these visits were not only not acceptable but positively disagreeable. This person was Fanny's eldest brother, Edward. Possessed of more penetration than his father or younger brother, he had perceived something in the character of Raeburn which he did not like, and which struck him as being strangely at variance with his general pretensions and professions. He had, in short, discovered several instances of selfishness and want of principle in the young man, which, though they were but of a trifling nature, had early imbued him with a secret prejudice against him; and this he did not hesitate to avow to his own family, and particularly to Fanny—but in the latter case his avowal was always accompanied by the most tender expressions of affection for herself, as if to convince her that it was on her account alone that he feared.

One day, on her returning from Mr Raeburn's, where she had been to an entertainment, and when Henry, who had accompanied her home, had just left the house—

"My dear Fanny," said her brother, addressing her in the blunt way peculiar to him, and taking her affectionately by the hand—"I don't like that fellow Raeburn. I would not willingly or needlessly say anything harsh of any one whom you esteem; but you are guileless, Fanny, and ignorant of the ways of the world, still more so of the faithlessness of man, and therefore liable to have your judgment misled by your heart. Be cautious—be guarded, then, Fanny. Do, for your own sake, my dear sister, be cautious how you admit this man to tamper with your affections."

"Edward! Edward!" replied Fanny, bursting into tears, "what is the meaning of this solemn oburgation? I have never done, and never will do anything without my father's consent and yours, Edward. But, surely, surely you judge unfairly of Henry, Edward. He is far too honourable and upright to deceive any one, much less"—

"You, you would say," interrupted her brother.

Fanny blushed slightly, and went on: "If you had heard him, as I have often done, express his sentiments on the duties we owe to each other, and speak of the rules which ought to regulate our conduct, you would entertain a very different opinion of him—I am sure you would, Edward."

"Simple girl, simple girl!" said her brother. "He speak of the duties we owe to each other! He speak of the rules which ought to regulate our conduct!" he added, with a bitter sneer. "Well, perhaps it is all right, Fanny," he went on; "I may have judged harshly of Raeburn, and may be doing him an injustice; but, if I am, I never was more mistaken in a man in my life. But, Fanny," he added, with a sudden energy of manner, "here I swear—and I wish Raeburn heard the oath—that, if he deceive or injure you, I will pursue him to the ends of the earth—ay, through the snows of Greenland, or the burning deserts of the tropics—and seek a reparation that will cost the lives of one or both of us."

"Mercy! mercy!" exclaimed the weeping girl—terrified at the fierce looks and manner of her brother, yet, at the same time, throwing herself into his arms—"what dreadful language is this, Edward? What grounds, on earth, have you for anticipating so dreadful a catastrophe? I am sure you have seen nothing to warrant your expressing yourself in this frightful manner."

"I have not said that I anticipated anything, Fanny, regarding this attachment of yours," replied her brother. "I spoke only hypothetically. But, from this hour, I say no more on the subject. I trust, however, that what I have said, will not be without its effect upon you, Fanny. You will perceive, my dear sister," he added, embracing her tenderly, "that it is my affection, and, I will add, my fears for you, that have prompted all I have said."

"I know it, Edward—I know it," replied Fanny; "and I am grateful to you. But you will soon learn to like Henry better than you now do."

"Woman, woman—still woman to the last," said her brother, smiling. "But do, Fanny, permit what I have said, to make some impression on you." And Edward left the apartment.

Woman, woman still, as her brother had said—the warm-hearted girl's affections for Raeburn suffered no diminution whatever from what had just passed between her and her brother. In truth, as such interferences almost always do, it had the effect rather of increasing her love, by placing the object of her affections, in her sight, at any rate, in the light of one who is injured by being harshly judged of.

"My Henry deceive me!" she thought within herself on this occasion—"impossible, impossible! That kind and gentle look!—can that deceive? That benignant smile!—can there be treachery there? That frank and open manner!—is that assumed? No, no, Edward—you wrong Henry! you do, indeed, Edward. You wrong him grievously."

Such were the reflections in which Fanny Rutherford indulged when her brother had left her, and such was the

effect which his fears and suspicions had upon her unsuspecting and confiding heart.

We have already informed the reader that Raeburn was at this time waiting for an appointment in the civil service of the East India Company. This appointment he at length obtained, and was, at the same time, ordered to proceed immediately to London, to embark for his new destination; and with this order he complied, after taking an affectionate leave of Fanny, to whom he once more, and for the last time, vowed eternal constancy and love. It is almost unnecessary to add, that a mutual promise to maintain a frequent and regular correspondence during the period of their separation was also given by the lovers. But, besides all this, a distinct arrangement, to which Fanny's father and brothers were privy, was likewise made, that, so soon as Henry should be fairly settled in India, and should have ascertained that his income was sufficient to warrant such a step, Fanny, being previously informed of this, was to join him, when their destinies should be united.

These matters arranged, Henry proceeded to London, where he soon after embarked for Calcutta, which he eventually reached, in safety, at the end of the usual period occupied in that voyage.

Faithful to his promise, Henry, soon after his arrival wrote to Fanny, and gave a very flattering account of his situation and prospects, expressing, at the same time, a hope that he would soon be in a condition to invite her to come out and partake his good fortune.

This letter was followed, in due time, by another, in which the same sentiments of love and affection were expressed; but it contained a less flattering account of his circumstances. These, the writer said, had scarcely answered the expectations he had formed from them on his first arrival; and he feared, if they did not improve, that, however painful their separation was to him, he would be compelled to submit to its continuance for some time, as he could not think of bringing her there, so far from her home and her friends, until he should be able to receive her in a manner that would more unequivocally bespeak the sincerity of his love than his present means would admit of.

These two letters, as we have said, came in due time; and, notwithstanding the discouraging tenor of the last, were received by poor Fanny with the most unfeigned delight. But when the time came round that another letter should have reached her from her lover, it was in vain that the affectionate girl looked for that solace to her wearied spirit. Week after week passed away, month succeeded month, and, finally, year followed year, and still no letter came to raise the prostrate and withering hopes of poor Fanny Rutherford. For some time, she was impressed with a conviction that her lover was dead; for she could not, and would not, believe that her Henry was faithless. But in this belief—perhaps the least afflicting of the two—she was not permitted long to remain; for it was ascertained, through Henry's father, not only that he was still living, but that he was getting on prosperously, and in a fair way for soon realizing a fortune.

Unwilling, unwilling indeed, was poor Fanny to believe this account of Henry—but it was certain; and this certainty of the neglectfulness, or, yet worse, faithlessness of her lover, threatened to hurry her to a premature grave.

Nearly three years had now passed away since the receipt of her last letter from Henry; and she had long given up all hopes of ever hearing from him again, or of ever being more to him than she then was. While sitting alone, however, one morning about this period, her head leaning upon her hand, and listlessly gazing through a window that overlooked the approach to her father's house, her curiosity was slightly excited by observing the person who usually brought the letters from the neighbouring village, hurrying with unwonted speed towards the house, and, as she approached

nearer, waving a letter which she held in her hand towards Fanny. In an instant, the blood which had long forsaken the poor girl's cheeks, rushed back to its forgotten repositories. Her heart beat fast and thick, and a violent tremor seized on her whole emaciated frame. The letter was, and she now knew it, from Henry Raeburn.

Having got possession of the intensely interesting document, she rushed with it up stairs to her own apartment, bolted the door, and flung herself down on a bed; laying, at the same time, the letter, which, from excessive agitation, she was unable at the moment to open, on a small table beside her. Having, however, in a few minutes, regained as much composure as she conceived would enable her to venture on the exciting task of perusing the letter, she arose, seized it convulsively, and staggered with it unfolded in her grasp towards the window, where she began to read. The letter commenced thus—

“MY DEAREST, DEAREST FANNY,—What is the meaning of this? Cruel, cruel girl, it is now precisely two years and a half since I received your last letter, although I have written to you at least six or seven times during that period. What a relief, Fanny, it would be to my mind to know that these letters of mine had miscarried—that they had never reached you!—for, in that case, I might still hope, still believe that my Fanny was faithful. Indeed, it is in this hope that I live; for, as I have been for the last two years going from place to place, at a great distance in the interior, I think it not improbable that my letters—all of which were dispatched from these remote residences—have never found their way to you.” The writer then went on, praying Fanny not to lose a moment in relieving his mind on this, to him, he said, most painful subject. After a good deal more to similar purpose, he continued—“Will my Fanny not take it amiss—she will not, I know, if she still be to me as she once was, and what I still am to her—if I request her to send me her portrait?—that, since fortune still denies me the happiness of contemplating the original, I may, as I assuredly will, find some consolation in possessing the copy. I will then,” continued the writer, “have you present to my corporeal eye, as you are, and have constantly been, to my mental vision. Enclosed, my dearest Fanny, you have a draft for twenty guineas, which please apply to the purpose just expressed, and let there not be a moment lost in forwarding me your beloved picture.”

The writer then went on to say, that he expected to be in a condition to invite her out in the course of a twelve-month or so; and ultimately finished by a repetition of the most tender expressions of affection and love.

When Fanny had completed the perusal of this, to her, most gratifying letter—that is, after she had read it at least six times over—she rushed wildly down stairs in quest of her brother Edward; and, having found him—“See, see, Edward!” exclaimed the delighted girl, forcing the letter into his hands; “read that, Edward, and acknowledge, my brother, the injustice which you and all of us have done to Henry. I knew, I knew,” she went on, “my Henry would not deceive me. I felt assured that his silence and seeming neglect would, one day, be satisfactorily accounted for, and without impugning his honour.”

To these expressions of joy, and delight, and confidence, Fanny's brother made no reply, but sat down coolly to read the letter that had been put into his hands; and greatly disappointed was the poor girl, who was watching his countenance with the most intense interest while he read, to find that the contents seemed to excite in him no emotion whatever. When he finished—“Well, Fanny,” he said, drily, at the same time carelessly returning her the letter—“it's all very well. I am glad to find that Raeburn is not altogether the man I feared he was. He seems to think of you with unabated regard still, Fanny.”

: Oh, yes, Edward!—oh, yes! I knew Henry would not

deceive me!” again repeated the unsuspecting and delighted girl.

Edward, as we have already said, tenderly loved his sister; and it was this regard for her that prevented him saying all he thought of the letter he had just read. He would not, for any consideration, have damped the feelings of joy and happiness which it had inspired in the bosom of his sister, by making any remarks that might have a tendency of that kind; but he could not help observing sufficient grounds for such observations. He saw, in the first place, that Raeburn's assertion that he had written several letters to Fanny, was a downright falsehood, or, at best, of a very suspicious character; for his father—who lived, as the reader will recollect we have already said, in the immediate neighbourhood, and whom he frequently met with—had never made any complaint of any interruption in his son's correspondence; and he, Edward, moreover knew that Henry's father had received many letters from him during the very period of the suspension of his correspondence with Fanny. It therefore appeared extremely odd to him, that all the letters addressed to the one should have miscarried, while all those addressed to the other had reached their destination in safety and in due course of time. In the next place, Edward saw, or thought he saw, that the general tenor of the letter was forced and unnatural; and, lastly, that procrastination was apparently still the object of the writer, notwithstanding his having vaguely named a period when he should invite Fanny to share his fortunes as his wife.

All this Edward perceived in the letter in question; but the worst he thought of it was, that Raeburn had for a time forgotten his sister, probably in a temporary regard for another, and that his affection for her having returned, he was now anxious to atone for his negligence or infidelity; and, under this impression, he was willing to overlook the subterfuge to which Raeburn had had recourse to account for his silence; and, in these views of the matter, Edward's father and brother concurred.

Two or three days after the receipt of Henry's letter, Fanny, though in a very indifferent state of health, proceeded to Edinburgh, and had her likeness taken there in miniature. On her return, the picture was carefully packed in a small box or case, and, accompanied by a letter from Fanny, dispatched to its remote destination. In this letter, the poor girl, in allusion to the portrait, said—“I have, in compliance with your wishes, Henry, sent you my portrait; but I fear it will sadly disappoint you; for a more unpropitious time for transferring my miserable countenance to canvass, (I believe, however, in this case, it is ivory,) could scarcely have been chosen; for I have been extremely ill, Henry, for a long time past, and am yet very far from being well. I have been broken-hearted, Henry, and have been labouring under the worst and most hopeless of all diseases—a crushed and broken spirit.”

Thus did the poor girl allude to the misery which Raeburn's neglect had entailed on her. Her delicacy forbade her saying more, and her candid and confiding disposition would not permit her to say less.

Leaving matters in this state at Rose Vale, the name of Mr Rutherford's residence, we will, with the reader's consent, embark in the same ship with Fanny's portrait, and proceed to the East Indies, to see, with our own eyes, what, at this period, was the general conduct, character, and circumstances of him for whom that picture was intended. Having done this—an easy matter with you and us, good reader, though no trifling affair to others—we shall find Raeburn residing in a very handsome house at Calcutta; and in one of the most conspicuous places in one of the principal rooms in that house, we shall find the portrait of Fanny Rutherford suspended—and well worthy of the distinction was this likeness of the lovely girl. Beautiful! exceedingly

beautiful in her sadness! For the painter had been faithful; and but too plainly did that picture tell of sorrow and of suffering—"of hope deferred, that maketh the heart sick." Nor did Henry Raeburn seem insensible to the beauty expressed in that little picture. To every one who visited him, he shewed it with an air of exultation and triumph; pressed on their notice the soft expression of the fine dark eye, the light, delicate, and well-arched eyebrow, the ruby lip, and elegantly formed nose and chin. But, be it remarked—and it was an odd circumstance—it was to the young unmarried men alone who visited him that he shewed the picture, and that he thus dwelt on the details of its beauties. Strange distinction this—to the unmarried alone, that he shewed the picture, and enlarged on the attractions of its subject! What does this mean? Much, much it means; and a darker or more atrocious meaning never disgraced the act of man. But we will leave the full explanation of this atrocity to be developed by the progress of our story.

"Ah! you dogs, you!" Raeburn would say, with well affected jocularly, to his friends of the description already mentioned, when shewing them Fanny's portrait—"isn't that a pretty girl, now? and am not I a lucky fellow to have secured the affections of so charming a woman? What would you give, you rogues, you, for such a creature as that for a wife?" Then, holding the portrait aloft—"Come, say now, gentlemen, what you would give for her, suppose I was willing to part with her; which, perhaps, I am, if I could get a fair price for my right. Bid for her, gentlemen, bid for her!" he would say, laughingly, and *affecting* to make a joke of the matter. "I will put her up to sale, and warrant the stock to be equal to the sample!" "A thousand rupees!" "Thank you, John. Very well for a beginning! Get on, gentlemen get on." "Two thousand! three thousand!" "That's it. Go it, my spirited lads, go it; but she's worth six times the money yet." "Eight thousand! ten thousand!" "Ay, now you get on bravely, and are approaching the mark, though still at a great distance from it." "Fifteen thousand! twenty thousand!" "Very well—twenty thousand! Twenty thousand, gentlemen! Will no one bid more! Why, Tom, I thought you were a better judge of female beauty, than to allow such a bargain as this to slip through your fingers!" "Twenty-five thousand?" "Well done, Tom; I knew you were a lad of spirit, and had too much of the knight-errant in you to allow a fair lady like this to be knocked down below her value. Twenty-five thousand rupees—once, twice, thrice! There, down she goes—she's yours, Tom; pay me the money, and I'll order her out for you by the first ship."

This was a scene of frequent occurrence in Raeburn's house, when a number of young fellows had got together there, and something very like it was repeated to each of them individually when they chanced to call alone; particularly in the case of one of them—a Mr Cressingham, the son of a gentleman who held one of the highest civil situations in India, and who was enormously wealthy. This was Raeburn's friend, Tom, as he familiarly called him; and to him he was especially eloquent and importunate on the subject of Fanny's beauty.

"Well, hang me if she an't a devilish pretty creature that, after all!" said Tom Cressingham to Raeburn, as they one day sat alone smoking their hookahs in the apartment in which Fanny's portrait hung, and on which he was listlessly gazing.

"That she is, Tom," replied Raeburn; "wouldn't you fancy such a girl as that, now, for a wife, Tom?"

"Faith and I would, Harry; I'd give ten thousand rupees for such a wife."

"You're coming down in your price, Tom," replied Raeburn; "you offered twenty-five thousand for her the other night."

"Well, I don't know but I would give that sum for her

after all, Harry; for she's certainly a delightful looking creature. But why don't you bring out the girl and marry her at once yourself, Harry?"

"Umph!" ejaculated Raeburn—"that wouldn't be altogether so convenient just now. You know I'm confoundedly in debt, Tom," (this was but too true; for he was grossly dissipated, and was living in a style far beyond his income,) "and must clear my feet a bit before I think of marrying. Besides, to tell you a secret, Tom, I don't care much about standing to my Scotch bargain in that matter; and, to be plain with you, I wish you, or some one else, would relieve me of it, by taking the girl off my hands; giving me, of course, a handsome consideration for my right in the property."

This was said jokingly; but it was very easy to see that the speaker would not care to be thought serious; and this Cressingham perceived.

"Harry," he said, "are you in earnest?"

"To be sure I am," replied Raeburn; "never was more in earnest in my life."

"Then, I'm your man, Harry, if we can agree about the terms," rejoined Cressingham. "What say you about the consideration?"

"Why, I don't know: you see she is a very handsome girl, Tom; and, on the word of a *gentleman*, I assure you, she is as amiable as she is lovely."

"Well, at a word, Harry," said Cressingham, "I'll give you five thousand pounds sterling money, the day that woman becomes my wife; you being at the expense of bringing her out, and managing all that part of the business."

"Done!" said Raeburn.

"Done!" said Cressingham. And they struck hands upon the bargain.

Raeburn's villany, good reader, is now before you, fully and fairly. The conversation just recorded was no joke, but, as he himself acknowledged, downright earnest; and it will readily be conceded, we think, that a piece of more heartless depravity is not upon record. Neither, we beg to assure the reader, is this villany imaginary, nor the character of Raeburn the invention of fancy. The villany was actually perpetrated, and the villain actually lived.

Fanny's portrait had been sent for for the express purpose of turning it to the account to which we have seen it applied. He had sent for it that he might exhibit it as a sample of goods which he had to dispose of, and which he meant to sell to the highest bidder; and it was with this view—with the view of finding a purchaser—that he had hung the portrait of his victim in a conspicuous place, and had urged on the notice of his visitors the various beauties which it displayed.

To return to our tale. Raeburn and Cressingham—the latter, we need hardly say, being nearly as unprincipled as the former—having come to the understanding which we have just detailed, Raeburn insisted that their bargain should be expressed on paper; that is, that Cressingham should bind himself by a written document to fulfil his part of the transaction—in other words, should bind himself to pay the £5000 on the day Fanny became his wife; although with what face he could produce such a document in a court of justice to enforce his claim, in the event of Cressingham evading it, it certainly is not easy to conceive. But, desirous of being secure in the meantime, on such a document as that alluded to, he insisted; and it was instantly given him.

This part of the transaction settled, it was Raeburn's business to manage the rest:—the first step of which was to get Fanny out; the next, to get her palmed upon Cressingham; and he lost no time in setting about it.

As the subsequent proceedings of the villain, however, will be more strikingly exhibited by shifting the scene once more to Rose Vale, we request the reader to accompany us thither for a moment.

The year had a good while expired, which Raeburn had

fixed on, in his last letter to Fanny, as the period when he should send for her to join him at Calcutta; and the poor girl was looking fondly and anxiously for the promised invitation; but, for several months, she was again doomed to suffer all the pains of suspense and disappointment. From this, however, she was at length relieved, by the appearance of the long expected letter. This, like all its predecessors, was filled with the most tender expressions of regard and esteem. "It is now," said the writer, "with the most heartfelt—nay, this is far too tame a phrase—it is with a delight, my beloved Fanny, which I cannot find language to express—that I inform you, that the circumstances in which I now find myself, warrant me in inviting you out to share my fortunes. I enclose a draft for £150, to defray the expense of your passage, and other contingencies connected with it; and I beg of you, my dearest, dearest Fanny, as you value my happiness, nay, my existence, to lose no time in coming out to me; for I will be miserable till you arrive." To this was added a great many particular directions, as to Fanny's best mode of proceeding in the business of her embarkation; and again the writer resumed the strain of adulation with which he had begun; and with this strain, also, he finally ended.

As in the former case, Fanny instantly put this letter into the hands of her brother Edward; and again she was disappointed to find that it was read without the smallest appearance of satisfaction. Neither was it much more gratifying to her father and younger brother. But their feelings regarding it proceeded chiefly from their reluctance to part with Fanny, and to her going alone on so long and dreary a voyage; but neither they, nor Edward, even with his more serious grounds of dissatisfaction, felt that they would be warranted in preventing Fanny from availing herself of the apparent good fortune which she was now invited to partake. They felt that it would be an act of injustice towards the amiable girl, to exercise any such authority over her fortunes and affections; and, therefore, though it was not without great reluctance, they finally consented to her departure. This conceded, and every necessary preparation for the voyage being, in a few days, completed, Edward accompanied Fanny to London, saw her on board of an East Indiaman that was about to sail for Calcutta, and having consigned her to the care of the captain, bade her an affectionate adieu. In less than an hour afterwards, the ship was under weigh; and Fanny Rutherford had commenced her ill-starred voyage to the East.

On the ship's arrival at Calcutta, which she reached in safety and in due course of time, amongst the first persons who came on board of her were Raeburn and Cressingham. Fanny was down below in the cabin, and in the act of packing a small trunk, preparatory to her going ashore, when Raeburn entered. The moment the poor girl saw him, she flew towards him with an expression of the wildest delight. But, oh! fond and confiding heart, what a shock was it to thee—what a withering sensation was thine—when you found your warm and generous impulses received with a cold and distant civility!—for in such manner did Raeburn now receive the gentle, affectionate, and unsuspecting girl, who had crossed the "rude ocean," left kindred and home, to follow his fortunes—the fortunes of the man she loved—in a far distant land.

In this atrocious conduct of Raeburn's, there was policy as well as natural heartlessness; for he was desirous of disgusting her with his coldness, and thus preparing the way for the addresses of Cressingham. Of this part of the villain's design, Fanny was, of course, utterly ignorant; but the quick discerning eye of love enabled her instantly to detect the brutal and ungracious manner of Raeburn, so different from what she had expected; and the discovery fell upon her spirit with the most deadly effect. She, however, made no complaint; but it was evident that the manner of

her reception by her deceiver, had sunk deep into her heart. Poor Fanny proceeded with the packing of her little trunk in silence—a silence interrupted only by an occasional sigh, long drawn, and heavy laden with grief. Tears, too, might have been detected stealing down her cheeks, were it not that she kept her head, purposely, too closely over the trunk to permit their being seen. In the work, too, in which she was employed, he it observed, Raeburn did not offer her the smallest assistance, but continued walking up and down the cabin, whistling carelessly, and looking at the prints with which the walls were hung.

This was the scene, then, in the cabin, when Raeburn, after the lapse of a quarter of an hour or so from the time of his first descending, suddenly, and without giving Fanny the least previous notice of his intention, went to the foot of the cabin stair, and called loudly on Cressingham, who was on deck. Cressingham appeared at the cabin door.

"Why don't you come down?" said Raeburn. And he followed up this query with a significant wink.

"Why, I waited till I should be called," replied Cressingham, with a knowing smile; at the same time commencing his descent into the cabin.

"Mr Cressingham, Fanny," said Raeburn, when the former came down—"a very particular friend of mine."

Fanny, before raising her head from the trunk, hurriedly wiped her eyes, and stood up to receive the stranger; but it was wholly out of the poor girl's power thus suddenly to regain her composure, or to obliterate from her countenance the traces of the miserable feelings with which her soul was agonised. These remained but too plain; and were at once detected by Cressingham, who, in place of being moved to compassion by them for the unhappy girl, looked on them as welcome indications of feelings that promised to favour his own advances; inasmuch as they bespoke a dissatisfaction on the part of Fanny, at once with her situation and with Raeburn.

It being now Cressingham's time to begin the performance of his part of the nefarious plot, he advanced towards Miss Rutherford with one of his most gracious looks, and welcomed her to Calcutta. Then, placing himself in a chair directly opposite to her, and leaning forward towards her till he had nearly thrust his head into her face, he began a strain of the most impertinent adulation, not unmingled with expressions of a less harmless character. These last did not escape Fanny, who deeply felt the insult they involved, although she was already too much humbled in spirit to resent them.

When Cressingham had taken up the position described, and had begun the nauseous badinage alluded to, Raeburn, on some trifling pretence, left the cabin and went on deck. The motive for this proceeding will at once present itself to the reader. Cressingham, finding himself thus left alone with Fanny, was proceeding to use other liberties than those of speech; and had already, with the most impudent familiarity, thrown one of his arms around Miss Rutherford's neck, when, with a violent effort, she extricated herself from him, and rushed, in a state of great agitation and alarm, up the cabin stair, calling on Henry, who was, at the moment, standing at the stern of the vessel, and directly opposite the cabin door.

Guessing, or rather knowing very well, the cause of Fanny's outcry and terror, he went towards her, and sternly and angrily asked her, "What she made all this noise for?"

"O! Henry! Henry!" exclaimed the agitated girl, "take me out of this, take me out of this. Let us go on shore, Henry, directly. Do, do, let us go on shore for I will not go down into that cabin again."

"Pho, you silly fool, you!" replied Raeburn, harshly. "What are you afraid of? Don't you like Cressingham? He's an excellent fellow, only a little rough or so, now and

then; but not a pin the worse for that. Why, he's one of the handsomest and richest fellows in Calcutta, and half the girls in the town are cocking their caps at him."

"I have nothing to say to or of Mr Cressingham, Henry," replied Fanny. "All that I ask of you, is to take me immediately ashore."

With this request, Raeburn, seeing that it would not be advisable to push matters further at that moment, sulkily complied. A boat was ordered alongside. Fanny's luggage was placed in it, and she, Raeburn, and Cressingham, were forthwith rowed on shore, where, the moment they landed, the latter, after whispering something into Raeburn's ear, and offering some ineffectual attempts at making his peace with Miss Rutherford, left them.

Where, now, does the reader imagine, did Raeburn conduct the unhappy victim of his villany. To his own splendid mansion? No. To a decent hotel, then?—or, probably, he consigned her to the care of some respectable female friend or acquaintance? Neither of these did the heartless ruffian do. He took her to a mean lodging, in one of the meanest parts of the town, pleading some lame apology for not taking her to his own house; and there left her in the hands of strangers, without a word of consolation or comfort, or of kindness. He said, however, before going away, that he would again call in the evening, and would, in the meantime, send a female domestic from his own house, to attend her, together with some necessaries.

It would be a vain, an idle task, to attempt to describe what were the unfortunate girl's feelings, now that the hideous truth, that she had been deceived and betrayed, though with what view she could not conjecture, stood undisguised before her. They were dreadful, too excruciating, too exquisitely agonizing, to be expressed in words or in wailing. Their effect was to benumb every faculty, and to prostrate every sense; and, as one thus afflicted, sat poor Fanny Rutherford in a chair, at the window of her shabby apartment.

That evening, the first of her arrival, Raeburn, contrary to his promise, did not again visit her; but Cressingham came in his place, and dreadful was the result of this unwelcome visit on the poor girl's frame. It instantly brought on a crisis in that disease of the mind under which she was already labouring.

The moment he entered the apartment, she uttered a piercing shriek, and rushed frantically to the furthest corner of the room, in the greatest terror, calling on the intruder, in the name of Heaven, not to come near her—not to approach her. "Leave me, leave me!" she exclaimed, in a tone of bitter agony. "If there be the smallest portion of humanity in your nature, you will leave me instantly. For the love of Heaven," she again repeated, "and of all that you hold dear, leave me! I am deceived and betrayed by him in whom I put all my earthly trust. Oh! my father, my brothers, if ye knew of this. But you will never know it; for I will never see you again. Never, never, never!"

The extreme agitation, the terror and outcries of the unfortunate girl, at once arrested Cressingham's progress, and brought several persons that were in the house around her; and by these last—Cressingham having sneaked off, without saying a word—it was judged advisable to send immediately for medical assistance, which was accordingly done. Nor was it unnecessary; for a strong fever had already seized on the poor young lady, and was rapidly exhausting her strength.

The medical gentleman sent for instantly attended, and ordered Miss Rutherford to be put to bed. He then prescribed for her as for one whose danger he considered imminent; and he was not mistaken. Deeply interested in the unfortunate girl, from whom he had learned a good deal of her melancholy story the medical gentleman who had

been called in did all that man could do to arrest the progress of the fatal disease under which she was labouring. Night and day he attended her, during her severe but brief illness, and not only employed his own skill to save her, but that of some of the most eminent of his professional brethren in the town, whom he brought to his assistance.

But all human efforts were vain. From hour to hour, the fever went on, increasing alarmingly, accompanied by a proportionable diminution of the poor patient's strength, until, at length, the awful and fatal crisis arrived. On the evening of the third day after her arrival in Calcutta, Fanny Rutherford breathed her last, surrounded with strangers, and in a foreign land.

But where was the master ruffian all this time? How was he employed, and how did he feel, while this dreadful and affecting scene was enacting? Why, he was giving himself very little concern about it, further than that which proceeded from his fears for his £5000.

He had indeed called two or three times at Fanny's lodgings, during her illness, to inquire for her, and had even sent her some cordials—cordials, alas! of which she had never partaken—from his own house; but more than this he had not done, nor in any other way had he evinced the smallest sympathy for the unhappy victim of his villany.

Raeburn knew that Fanny's illness was of a dangerous nature—but he had no idea that it was to terminate, as it did, so soon; and it was under this mistaken impression that he and Cressingham called at Fanny's lodgings on the very evening on which she died, and, as it happened, within a few minutes after that melancholy event had taken place.

Having tapped gently at the door, which was slowly opened to him by the lodging-house keeper herself—

"How is your patient to-night, lady?" he said, addressing the latter, smilingly.

"She is well, sir—she is well," replied the woman, in whom Fanny's gentle nature and hard fate—of which she, too, had gathered something during the unfortunate girl's fits of delirium—had excited a strong feeling of sympathy. "She is well!—she is well!" she said, wiping her eyes with her apron, as she spoke. "She's in heaven, sir!"

"What!" exclaimed Raeburn, in a tone of voice starting from its hollowness, and becoming deadly pale; his mean and dastardly soul instantly sinking under the weight of guilt with which he felt this dreadful intelligence burthening it. "What! she's not dead."

"But she is though," replied the woman: "and there's an avenging God above that will seek out and make a terror and example of those who have been the cause of this poor girl's death."

"What do you mean, woman?" said Raeburn in an alarm which he could not conceal, and which the slightest allusion to his villany was now sufficient to excite to an overwhelming degree; "you do not mean to say that she died by violence?"

"I know what I know, Mr Raeburn," rejoined the lodging-house keeper, "and that's all I have to say about the matter." And she turned into the house.

Having by no means any wish to renew the conversation, Raeburn availed himself of the opportunity presented by the woman's retiring into the house, to sneak off, which he did, and joined his friend Cressingham, who was waiting for him at a little distance.

"She's dead, Cressingham!—she's dead!" he said, in great agitation, as he approached the latter.

"Dead!" exclaimed Cressingham—"is it possible? Why, then, Harry, your £5000 are gone—and you have been a villain for nothing."

"A villain, did you say, Cressingham?" repeated Raeburn, his lips pale and quivering as he spoke.

"Yes, surely, a villain—a double-dyed villain!" reiterated

the former. "Did you ever imagine you were anything else? My share in the transaction is bad enough, I allow it; but it's nothing to yours, Raeburn—nothing; for I would assuredly have married the girl if she would have had me. My conduct in the business was that of a profligate; but yours, yours, Raeburn, was unquestionable that—I repeat it, Raeburn, coolly and considerately—that of a double dyed villain." Saying this, he turned on his heel and left him.

The instances just mentioned were the first and the only ones in which Raeburn had yet suffered the martyrdom of hearing the opinion of others, of his conduct with regard to Miss Rutherford; but this was a species of torture to which he was now to be frequently exposed. On this very occasion, he had not proceeded twenty yards from the place where Cressingham had left him, when he encountered the medical gentleman who had been attending his victim. This person conjecturing, from the direction whence Raeburn was coming, that he had been inquiring for his patient, accosted him, and asked him how she was.

Raeburn, it will readily be believed, would have gone fifty miles about—ay, even on his bare knees—rather than have exposed himself to this meeting; but it had taken place, and he now, therefore, endeavoured to suppress his agitation, and tried to look as composed as possible; and it was with this forced and affected calmness that he replied to the physician's inquiry, that his patient was dead.

"Dead!" said the kind-hearted man; "ah! poor girl, I knew it was at hand, but I thought she might have lived for at least twenty-four hours yet. Well, then," he went on, and now looking Raeburn sternly in the face, "since it is so, I will tell you Mr Raeburn, my opinion of what your conduct has been in this most heartrending affair; for you are deeply implicated in it. My opinion then is, sir, that it has been most infamous, most atrocious; and regarding yourself, sir, I certainly think you one of the most heartless ruffians that ever lived."

"Ruffian, sir!" repeated Raeburn affecting to feel insulted, although he was quaking in every limb—"ruffian, sir! I shall have satisfaction for this, sir, you may depend upon it."

"Satisfaction, you scoundrel!" exclaimed Dr Henderson, the name of Fanny's medical attendant; "what right have you to satisfaction? Who would condescend to fight such a dastardly and disgraceful villain as you are? But, mark me, sir," he went on—"I know who the lady's friends are, and you may depend upon it, I shall not lose a moment in writing to inform them of everything connected with this shocking affair, and of your conduct towards the deceased. Take my word for that, sir; and, sir, not only will I do this, but I will inform every one I know of your conduct until you are scouted from all society."

To this Raeburn made no other reply than by turning on his heel, saying, "Dr Henderson, you shall hear from me."

"Hear from you, you basest and most infamous of men!" said the Doctor, looking with most profound contempt and hatred after Raeburn, as he receded—"the less we hear of you or from you, the better for yourself, you ruffian!"

Faithfully redeeming his pledge, Dr Henderson, on the following day, wrote to Fanny's father, whose address he had learned from her while attending her, and detailed all he knew, and this was nearly all that was to be known, regarding Raeburn's conduct to his daughter; for, although the latter had never accused Raeburn to him of ill treatment, the Doctor had, by connecting the broken hints which she had dropped from time to time, and especially by marking certain expressions which escaped her during her temporary fits of delirium, arrived at a knowledge of the whole truth. Having executed this part of his threat, Dr Henderson set diligently about the remaining portion, which was to give all the publicity he could to the story of Raeburn's infamy; and so successful was he in his efforts in this way that he had the satisfaction in a very short time of seeing him shunned by all his acquaintances, and completely debarred from respectable society.

After Fanny's death, Raeburn had evinced a disposition to take an active part in her obsequies; and even expressed a willingness to defray the whole of the funeral charges. But this Dr Henderson would on no account permit. Neither would he suffer him to interfere in any way whatever with the funeral rites; the whole expense of which he insisted on paying out of his own pocket; and Raeburn knew too well the advantage the Doctor possessed over him, to offer any resistance to these peremptory objections.

Thus stood matters, then, with Raeburn, and thus they remained for about eighteen months afterwards. He still, during all this time, continued in possession of his situation; but his superiors, who were well acquainted with the story of his villany to Miss Rutherford, were eagerly and anxiously watching for an opportunity to dismiss him. They did not feel that they would have been warranted in discharging him for his infamous conduct on the occasion alluded to, as it was a matter of which they had no right, officially, to take cognizance; but they had determined that the slightest dereliction of duty on his part should cost him his situation. Of this, Raeburn was perfectly aware; and it required all his diligence, care, and attention to avoid the visitation with which he was threatened. Such, we say, then, was the state of matters with Raeburn for about eighteen months after Fanny Rutherford's death. At the expiry of this period, however, that event occurred which winds up this tragic tale.

One evening, about nine o'clock, Raeburn was sitting solitary in his room, musing on the miseries to which his villany had subjected him, and no doubt indulging, as all villains do, in imaginary schemes of vengeance against his enemies, when a waiter from one of the hotels in town called, and said that a gentleman there desired to see him immediately on a matter of importance.

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Raeburn, conceiving that it might be on some official business that he was wanted, repaired to the hotel, and was ushered into the room where the person was who wished to see him.

That person kept his back towards Raeburn till he had fairly entered the apartment, and until the waiter who had shewn him in had retired. This done, he suddenly rushed towards the door, snatching up at the same time one of a pair of pistols which lay on a table in the middle of the room, and having locked the door in the inside, he fiercely confronted Raeburn, who, horror-struck at the sight, instantly recognised, in the person before him, Edward Rutherford, the brother of the unfortunate Fanny.

"Do you know me, villain? Do you know me?" shouted out Edward, first seizing him by the breast, and then dashing him from him with a violence that sent him reeling to the farther end of the apartment. "Do you know the brother of Fanny Rutherford, murderer. Did you think, ruffian, that you were safe from my vengeance, because the half of the globe lay between us? If you did, you mistook Edward Rutherford. But I will waste no more words on you, villain! The shade of my murdered sister—murdered by the cruellest of all deaths—is calling aloud for retribution, and in her name I am here to demand it! Here, dastard!" he said—taking up the other pistol, and presenting it to Raeburn—"here, take this, and stand to me like a man; for I would not imbrue my hands in your filthy blood, but upon equal terms. Although you but little deserve it, I will give you a chance for your life! Come, sir," he went on, Raeburn declining to take the pistol—"take it, take it; for, by the heaven above us, one or other of us, or both, must die; and your only chance

is in opposing me; for, if you do not fire, I will. By all that's sacred, I will!" At this moment, Raeburn rushed to the window, with the view of calling for assistance; and one supplicatory cry, which, however, was unattended to, he did emit. But, ere he could fully effect his object, Edward had him by the throat, and, holding his pistol within a few inches of his head, threatened, if he stirred or repeated his outcry, that that moment should be his last.

Seeing the desperate situation in which he was placed, the trembling wretch now took the pistol from Rutherford hand, being aware, as he had been told, that it was indeed his only chance for life.

The parties now took their stations, one at each end of the room, and confronted each other.

"Raise your weapon, Raeburn raise your weapon!" exclaimed Rutherford, on observing that his antagonist was not proceeding to assume a hostile attitude. "Your not firing will not save you from mine. I give you fair warning!"

Raeburn elevated, and levelled his pistol.

"Are you ready?" said his terrible opponent.

"Yes," replied Raeburn, faintly.

"Then fire, villain!" exclaimed Rutherford; and both pistols went off at the same instant, but with very different effect. A retributive power had directed the fatal engines of destruction. Raeburn's bullet struck the wall wide of its mark, while Rutherford's passed through the heart of him at whom it was aimed, and he fell lifeless on the floor.

Rutherford threw himself on his knees, and holding aloft the still reeking weapon of death, thanked heaven that he had been permitted to be the avenger of his sister's wrongs.

The house in which this dreadful scene took place was a large one, and the apartment, especially selected on that account by Rutherford, was a remote one; so that the firing was not heard by any of the inmates, at least not so distinctly as to inform them that it was the noise of fire-arms. No one, therefore, appeared to interrupt the escape which Rutherford now meditated, and lost no time in effecting. He left the apartment; and, unheeded by any one, descended the great staircase which led to it and to others, and fled from the house.

Although, however, Rutherford effected his escape in safety, the transaction which rendered his flight necessary, did not long remain unknown. It came to the ears of justice, and she uncoupled her bloodhounds after the offender; but, as the whole circumstances of the case gradually transpired, it is supposed that the pursuit was neither a very eager nor a very willing one. Certain it is, at any rate, that Rutherford could nowhere be found, although it is equally certain that several persons knew very well where he was for nearly two months after the death of Raeburn.

To these it was known, that, immediately after the fatal occurrence in the hotel, a person closely wrapped up in a travelling cloak, called at Dr Henderson's, and desired to have a private interview with the Doctor. When that gentleman entered the apartment into which the stranger had been shewn, the latter announced himself to be Edward Rutherford, the brother of Fanny Rutherford, with whose melancholy story he said the Doctor was so well acquainted.

"The brother of poor Fanny!" said the Doctor, in amazement, and at the same time taking his visitor kindly by the hand. "I am happy to see you, sir, on your poor unfortunate sister's account. Did you come with the ship that arrived from England to-day, sir?"

"I did, sir," replied Edward.

"And pray, my dear sir," said the Doctor, "if it be not an impertinent question—I assure you it is put with the most friendly intentions—What may be your purpose and views in coming out to India?"

"Vengeance, Doctor! vengeance!" replied Rutherford, fiercely, "was my sole object—and I have already had it."

"Raeburn!" exclaimed the Doctor, eagerly.

"Yes, sir, Raeburn is no more—his villainous career is ended. I have killed the ruffian; but, thank God! I killed him in fair fight. Villain as he was, I took no advantage of him, farther than compelling him to fight me." Edward then went on to detail the whole proceedings connected with the duel in the hotel.

When he had concluded—

"On my word, sir," said Dr Henderson, smiling—he could not help it—"you have made quick work of it, indeed; and I assure you, I for one am not sorry that the villain has met with his deserts. But we must now care for your safety, Mr Rutherford, from the vengeance of the laws," added the Doctor; "although I do not see how they can be very severe in such a case as this. Yet it will be as well for you to keep out of harm's way for a little. You must remain for some time in concealment; and a fitter or more secure place than I shall provide for you in my house here, you could not readily find anywhere, and I must insist on your availing yourself of it."

Edward did not know how to express the gratitude he felt for the singular and most disinterested kindness of his worthy host. He was, in truth, too strongly impressed with it, to be able to acknowledge it otherwise than by a few broken sentences; but there was in these, and still more in the manner in which they were spoken, enough to shew Dr Henderson that his friendly conduct was properly appreciated.

"Nothing at all, my dear sir!—nothing at all!" said the Doctor, in reply to Edward's attempts at acknowledgment of the generous part he was acting towards him. "I'm very sure you would do the same for me, were I placed in your situation. You have, besides, Mr Rutherford—although, perhaps, a strict morality might question your right to the step you have taken—you have, I say, notwithstanding this, a claim on the friendly services of every man who can feel for the wrongs of another, especially, most especially, such grievous wrongs as yours. It was a just, and, on the part of him who has suffered, a well merited retribution."

Edward was shortly afterwards introduced into the place of concealment, a comfortable little apartment, which had been prepared for him by the kindness of the worthy Doctor; and here he remained for about seven weeks, experiencing every kindness and attention from his benevolent host; when he was secretly conveyed on board of a ship about to sail for London, where he arrived in safety at the expiry of somewhere about the usual period occupied in such a voyage.

On his return home, Edward found his father at the point of death. The fate of his unfortunate daughter was hurrying him to the grave. Edward had not told him what was his object in going out to India; but the old man had guessed it, and had made several ineffectual attempts to dissuade him from his purpose. On the former's now approaching his bedside, therefore, "Thank God!" he said, stretching out his hand to Edward, "that I see you safe again, my son;" and added—afraid to be more particular in his inquiries—"have you seen Raeburn?"

"I have, father," was the only reply of his son; but it was said in a manner and accompanied by a look which assured him of what had taken place.

"I cannot approve, Edward, of what you have done," said his father; "but God will forgive you!" They were the last words he spoke; and Raeburn's villany boasted yet another victim!



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PRINCE OF SCOTLAND;

OR,

THE RIVALSHIP OF MARCH AND DOUGLAS.

THE character of David Earl of Carrick, better known by the title of Duke of Rothsay, is one of those which nature seems to delight in distributing among nations, at distant periods, apparently with the view of teaching mankind that, however brilliant may be the powers of mind with which an individual is endowed, however captivating the qualities of his physical attributes—his sparkling wit, his graceful manners, and polite conversation—and, however amiable the generosity, liberality, and feeling of his heart—though all combined with high rank, and even the station of a king—he has no charter of immunity from the obligations of ordinary life; and that, if he endeavours, by the aid of these, to turn serious things into frolic, and force a pastime from the sanctions of religious or moral duty, he must pay the usual forfeit of a departure from the rights of nature, and suffer destruction.

This young Prince, it is well known, was the son of Robert III. of Scotland, who allowed the reins of government to be wrested from his feeble hands by the cunning and powerful Duke of Albany. The feebleness of the father was not inherited by the son. Rothsay had powers of mind which were equal to the management of a kingdom; and these, there is reason to suppose, he would have displayed for the advantage of his country, if the current of events in which he was involved had not been influenced by the powers of his uncle, Albany, and turned to suit his schemes of ambition. The indications of great talent which, in early youth, he exhibited, were hailed by his father with pride and satisfaction; but by his uncle, the governor, with well-founded fear and suspicion. Unfortunately, it soon appeared that the fertility of the soil did not limit its powers of production to the nobler and more useful plants. Along with the Prince's great powers of intellect, there arose a love of pleasure which could be gratified only—such was its insatiable character—by every species of extravagant sally and wild frolic. His heart was untainted by any inclination to injure seriously the health, reputation, or interests of any individual, however humble; but, unfortunately, when a love of enjoyment took possession of him, all his intellectual powers, as well as some of his moral perceptions, were abused or overlooked, and a character naturally generous was shaded by the faults of vicious intemperance.

To make all this the more to be regretted, young Rothsay was a beautiful youth. His voice was full and melodious, capable of being exerted—and he had the art to do it—in exciting, by the strains of exquisite music, the tenderest feelings of the heart. His manner had in it the affability of a free romping girl, with the grace and dignity of a young prince. His hilarity seemed to have no interval, and his good humour was scarcely capable of being disturbed. His love of amusement, and his genius in contriving schemes for the promotion of the happiness of his friends and associates, made his company the desire of the aged and the envy

of the young. Yet, amidst all this, it was remarked as wonderful, that he seldom lowered the dignity of his rank. Even his frolics were those of a prince, and his humblest acts were performed with that consummate grace which can lend a charm to what, in other hands, would incur the charge of vulgarity.

But, while these fair features often set off, with greater effect, the faults which inevitably flow from the indulgence of unlawful passions, Rothsay had the power of combining his good and evil, and so mixing up his passionate sallies of intemperance or vicious sport with traits of generosity, humanity, and feeling, that it was often impossible to say whether some of his actions were good or bad, or whether the people who had apparently suffered from his unrestrained licentiousness would have escaped the injury to be deprived of the benefit which it produced from the calm reflection of the generous youth.

The friendship of Rothsay was extended to most of the young nobles of that period; but no one was so successful in securing his affections as Sir John de Ramorgny—a young man supposed to have come originally from France, and certainly justifying his extraction by his character. Originally bred to the church, he was learned beyond the nobles with whom he associated; and, while few could boast his erudition and knowledge, fewer still could cope with him in original powers of mind. But these powers were ill directed; for they were used only in base intrigues and vicious projects. A more dangerous friend or fatal enemy could not be found among insidious Frenchmen or the still savage Scots. His dissimulation, address, and elegance of personal appearance and manners, were all used, as occasion required, to cover or aid his designs of ambition, or his base seductions and purposes of revenge. Able for the weightier projects of war or diplomacy, and admirably adapted for court intrigue, he did not hesitate to descend to the most trifling and vulgar pleasures. He could play the murderer, the insidious betrayer, and the buffoon or mountebank, with equal address and with equal satisfaction. With these qualities, the more wicked and dangerous of which he could conceal, Ramorgny was easily able to recommend himself to Rothsay; and the affection with which he was treated by the Prince was no doubt the effect of a similarity in manners and accomplishments, and a congeniality of humour, which the unsuspecting and generous Prince mistook for an agreement of disposition.

Scotland is said to have been used, from one end to the other, by these dissolute companions, as the theatre of their amusements. They wandered about in disguise, laying rich and poor, old and young, under contributions for their wild pastime. They were often for weeks associated with bands of wandering minstrels and female dancers, entering into their humours, playing on their instruments, learning the secrets of their wandering professions, and imitating their performances. The protean versatility of their powers rendered their extravagant exhibitions of easy accomplishment; while their hilarity and boisterous merriment, recommended by a profusion of money, made them welcome into whatever society of vagabonds they were ambitious of entering. Nor was it by merely courting the favours of these

tribes that the companions were permitted to join in their revels. They were able to stand their ground on an equal footing of reckless hardihood, and, where occasion required, of pugilistic authority. They could sing and dance, swear and brawl, get drunk and fight, with the most profligate members of these outlawed associations.

These extravagances soon became known; and Queen Anabella, the young Duke's mother, was greatly grieved that her eldest son, and the object of her dearest hopes and most anxious solitudes, should act a part which, while it would alienate from him the hearts of the people, would enable his uncle Albany to continue longer his usurped dominion as governor of Scotland. An attempt was therefore made to unite him to the cares and solitudes of office; and he was soon installed into that of lieutenant of the kingdom—a council being, at the same time, appointed to advise with him. This step was not followed by its expected benefits; for the governor did not consider it either as incompatible with the duties of his situation or derogatory to the dignity of his high place, to resort to his old modes of pleasure and amusement. All that was required was a greater degree of care employed upon the habiliments of his disguises; and the lord lieutenant might have been detected joining in a rondeau with a singing girl, acting the fanfaron with a Hector, performing a daring croupade with a rope-dancer, or tripping to the sound of an Italian theorbo. In all these things he was still kept in countenance by Ramorgny; who, however, while he was joining him in his revels, was meditating schemes of villany and selfishness.

The affairs of state having thus little power in withdrawing the Prince from his licentious companions and unbecoming practices, it was next suggested by the Queen, that the restraining influence of a wife's affections might overcome his propensity for the outlawed pleasures to which he had become enslaved. The King seconded this measure; and, without consulting the Duke's sentiments, or ascertaining his taste in the choice of a wife, it was communicated to him that the interests of the nation required him to marry and provide an heir to the throne, and that his choice of a wife lay between Elizabeth Douglas, daughter of Archibald Earl of Douglas, and Elizabeth of Dunbar, daughter of the powerful Earl of March. Neither of these ladies had ever been seen by the Prince. It was surmised that he had a special favourite of his own, selected no doubt from a host of willing beauties with whom he associated; and the intelligence that he was called upon to resign his liberty into the hands of a woman he had never seen, could not be expected to be highly relished by a person of his spirit and habits of life.

Seeking Ramorgny, Rothsay communicated to him the intentions of his mother, and the commands of his father and the nation, and asked his advice in so trying an emergency.

"By your father's crown," cried Ramorgny, "I see nothing for it but to obey. The difficulty lies in the selection; for, if I am able to appreciate the beauty of woman, thou wilt have to choose between a crow and a rook. Elizabeth of Dunbar is the descendant of Black Agnes, who defended that old castle, in the days of the Second David, against the arms of the Duke of Salisbury; and Elizabeth of Douglas cannot fail to have in her some portion of the blood of the black Earl, who fell in Spain, trusting to the protecting charm of Robert's heart, which he carried with him in a casket. So thou seest the black choice thou hast got; and the matter is not mended by having two in thy option, if the old proverb carries faith, which sayeth, that 'Two blacks will not make a white.'"

"By the faith of a prince," replied the Duke, "it is a black business; but thou hast been talking genealogically, good Ramorgny, while I wished to have thy opinion physi-

cally. Blood doth not follow the law of the mountain stream, by getting more muddy as it descends—neither are men and women of the nature of the gaffled cocks we use to fight at the mains on the Inch of Perth, which send down their fighting propensities to the tenth gallinaceous generation. The two Besses may be whiter than their progenitors, and of less pugnacious propensities!"

"Ha! thy argument, good lieutenant," cried Sir John, "hath the goodly property of proving two things:—In the first place, it proves that the two Besses may have white skins; and, secondly, that thou mayest have a white liver; for, if courage hath no descent but in cocks, thou canst not boast of having the heart of the first Robert!"

"Hold! thou art too severe," cried Rothsay, "and not logical. Thou art mixing up actuality with potentiality—for that my liver is not white, is proved by the blue evidences I painted on thy back when, in the gipsy tent at Bothwell, I fought thee for a kiss of the brown morris-dancer, Marion of Leghorn, who, having given me the reward of my victory, dressed thy wounds for pity's sake and then cudgelled thee for mine."

"I could turn thy argument against thee," answered Ramorgny; "for thy courage was so much at fault that thou didst require the aid of an Italian morris-dancer to do that which good King Robert would have done himself. But we have wandered from the two Besses, whom it now behoves us to take up, and treat with more respect. What is thy course?"

"As lieutenant of Scotland, I commission thee, Sir John de Ramorgny, to repair to the castle of Dunbar, and, thereafter, to that of Douglas, to examine the persons of Elizabeth of Dunbar and Elizabeth Douglas—to note the height of their persons—the hue of their skins—the colour of their eyes—and the nature of their dispositions—and, thereafter, to report as becometh a trusty and faithful commissioner of the King."

"Thou shalt be obeyed," answered Ramorgny; "but, if the commissioner may be allowed to judge of the matter of his mission, I would suggest that, in my opinion, thou hast left out the most important part of my instructions."

"What is that?" inquired the Prince.

"The dowery, to be sure," answered Ramorgny. "What are complexions and dispositions to golden acres? What careth the housewife, who wanteth strong broth, for the colour of the capon's tail? ha!"

"We will leave that to the Queen," said the Duke. "Her Majesty wisheth to put me up to sale, and to knock me down to the highest bidder. We can bring the Earls up to within a few acres of each other, and of the two pigeons, both equally fat, and brought thus equally within shot, I, to please my fancy, may strike the fairest."

Ramorgny was satisfied, and proceeded on his mission. He first went to the residence of March, which, at that time, was in a castle situated near the town of Dunse; the castle of Dunbar having been, during the late wars, so much shattered that it required to be put in a state of repair. Ramorgny's rank procured him admittance to the family of the Earl, and his intimacy with Rothsay was a sufficient recommendation to entitle him to the greatest attention and respect. March viewed his visit as one of examination and discovery, and took the precaution to prepare his daughter to treat him as the friend and confidant of her future husband. A great dinner was got up in honour of the knight, at which Gawin, the Earl's son, and Maitland, his nephew, were present, and all endeavoured, by every means in their power, to acquire the good will of the Prince's favourite. It was not these, however, that Ramorgny wished to study or to please. The daughter was his subject; and his knowledge of human nature soon enabled him to form an estimate of her character, not far wide of the truth. She was dark, but beautiful; with a clear, burning eye, which occasionally exhibited

flashes of the spirit of her ancestor, Black Agnes. Her temper was clearly that of a demon—her spirit, wild and untamed. When contradicted, her anger, notwithstanding the indications of the displeasure of her parents, burst forth with ungodly energy. She disregarded the rules of ordinary politeness, by applying to her brother, Gawin, indecorous names. She scolded the servants; and even, on one occasion, when she had risen from table, and thought she was unobserved, she applied her fingers to the ears of a female, and pinched her till she screamed. The Earl, who suspected what was going forward, beckoned to her—the lady winked—the son pulled her by the gown: their efforts were unavailing. Ramorgny was satisfied that Elizabeth of Dunbar was a true scion of the stock of old Agnes.

The experience which Ramorgny had thus acquired, was completely corroborated by the common report of the Borders; where the young lady went by the name of Black Bess of Dunbar. She was represented as an incarnation of Mahoun—a fiend, whom all the efforts of her father and mother, aided by their relatives, had not been able to subdue, or soften into the ordinary flexible consistence of mortals. The excuses which were made to the knight by the parents, that she was ill, and had a headache, and so forth, only tended to corroborate his experience, and the report of others. His only wonder was, that the Earl of March could have thought of recommending such a female to the arms of a civilized man—to a Prince. No one but March could have dared!

Ramorgny next directed his steps to the Castle of Douglas, to make his survey and examination in that quarter. He was received by Earl Archibald, who was now an old man, with much cordiality, and, in a short time, introduced to Elizabeth. The contrast between this lady and the one he had left was remarkable at first sight, and before she had opened her mouth to reply to the elegantly polished compliments of the most accomplished man of his time. She was fair, with auburn hair and blue eyes—tall, and elegantly formed—imbued with so much of the spirit of a gentlewoman that her whole figure, in its easy flexible movements, seemed to obey the slightest touch of the presiding genius of grace and beauty. Ramorgny felt and acknowledged with that rapidity with which men of the world can detect the indications of an elevated soul, the power of the mute eloquence of this exquisitely formed complex piece of nature's machinery. But, when the spirit spoke, and the combination of so many charms started into new life, responding, in every turn and lineament, to music that seemed to have been formed to give them additional grace, and apparently claiming the voice as their own individual expression—the effect was completed, to the disturbance of Ramorgny's feelings and the flight of his peace. Her soft and gentle tones went straight to his heart. The silken cords of love were cast around him by every look, motion, and expression; and the Prince's deputy became, in spite of himself, his rival.

Ramorgny felt disinclined to leave the castle. Every additional circumstance that came under his observation increased his passion. The prevailing character of Elizabeth's mind and feelings, was extreme gentleness, softness, and sensibility, in which could be discovered no affectation of sentimentality. Her manner was natural and easy; and it was impossible to behold her for a moment without being sensible that she was a creature formed to sacrifice herself and her individual thoughts, wishes, and aspirations, to the happiness of the man who should be so fortunate as to secure her affections. This softness of manner extended itself to the style of her speech, which was slow, smooth, and natural, seeming to derive its sweetness from the perennial smile that played upon her lips.

Struck with an intense passion, Ramorgny forgot the object of his mission. The Prince was only recollected as an unpleasant object, that came between him and the

object of his affections. He resorted to every means of cultivating the good opinion, if not the love, of the lady; but, handsome and gallant as he was—invested with the powers of French love-making in all its details of conversation, protestation, and badinage—he could not satisfy himself that the gentle and bewitching manners of the lady received any accession from any increase, in his favour, of the regard and attention she seemed to extend to all the visitors who frequented her father's castle. Ramorgny surveyed this equability of enchanting manner, with the pain of one who, fired with a strong passion, sees ordinary companions basking in the sunshine of favour which he wishes to be confined to himself. He felt pained, but the pain was an increase of passion with a diminution of hope. His violent temper hurried him into secret cursing of the day on which he entered in so thankless an expedition; determinations to escape from his duty; and vows that he would secure Elizabeth's love, die, or sacrifice his Prince.

Ramorgny's threats were no empty sounds. Restrained by no religion—no respect for laws—no terror of punishments—no fear of man—and despising reputation and honour as gewgaws for old women and children—he was fit for the execution of any measure, executed through treachery and blood, to gratify his passions. Chagrined by the manner of Elizabeth, which retained its torturing equability of gentleness and kindness, without any exhibition of partiality, he was ill prepared for a letter which arrived from the Prince, chiding him for his delay; hinting, in his manner, that the rooks of Dunbar and Douglas had flown away with his heart, and requesting him to give up the chase and return to his friend. He added, that he understood that his mother, the Queen, had declared for the Douglas; and that he would take her if she was as black as the good Sir James himself.

"An' thou wilt," ejaculated Ramorgny, as he perused the letter, "thou shalt at least have the dowery of Ramorgny's sword!"

The incensed knight saw, in the midst of his passion, that little good would result from remaining at present longer at the castle. His efforts to produce a corresponding affection in the bosom of Elizabeth were unavailing. He resolved, therefore, to take his departure; and, having kissed the hand of his cruel mistress and bid adieu to Lord Archibald, he departed. As he journeyed to Linlithgow, where he was to meet the Duke, he occupied himself in deep meditation. His thoughts reverted continually to Elizabeth Douglas, whom he pictured to himself the loving and beloved wife of Rothsay, whose success with the fair he envied, but whose openness and generosity he despised as weakness. There already existed a rivalry between them as to the affections of a young lady who had eloped with Ramorgny from her father's house, but who afterwards left him for the more enchanting society of the young Duke. This, Ramorgny had borne with apparent indifference; but, though he was satisfied that the love of the damsel had not first been solicited by Rothsay, he could not forgive him his superiority of attraction, and imputed to him as a fault what might, with more propriety, have been termed a misfortune. To lose another object of his affections, and that, too, by ministering to his own discomfiture, would ill become his character for intrigue, and ill accord with the present state of his love for the lady and hatred for the rival. He must, therefore, endeavour to prevent the union between Rothsay and Elizabeth Douglas; and, if that should fail, he was resolved that the loss of the lady would not involve the loss of his victim. His first step was to falsify his account of the two women; and in this he could not do better than reverse their attributes, and substitute Bess of Dunbar for the fair Douglas.

"Well, Ramorgny," cried the Prince, as he met the knight in the audience chamber of the palace, "what pro-

gress hast thou made in the south? Thy tarrying indicates enjoyment; for when did Ramorgny wait when there was not something to afford him pleasure and amusement?"

"Your Grace is right," answered Ramorgny. "The pleasures of March's castle are indeed intoxicating. But thou it was who didst send me in the way of temptation; and, if Elizabeth of Dunbar has, by her enchantment, drawn largely on the time of thy commissioner, thou hast thyself to blame. Lord Salisbury, thou knowest, said, that her predecessor's love-shafts—meaning the arrows she sent from the old castle walls—went straight to the heart; and, as the lieutenant of this kingdom, and the protector of its subjects, it was thy duty to guard me against a power which seems to be hereditary in the family of March."

"Oh, then, Black Bess is fair after all!" cried the Duke. "Give me thy hand. I am right glad on't; for I thought I had no choice—the one being fair, the other ugly; and to have been forced to marry one woman, to the exclusion of the darling liberty of selection, would, though she had been as fair as Venus, have made her like the famed daughter of Phœbus, whose face was as beautiful as that of the sister of Apollo, but whose hair was writhing serpents."

"Thy choice, I fear, is not extended by the beauty of Elizabeth of Dunbar," said Ramorgny; "for what she has, Elizabeth Douglas wants. March's daughter is a dark beauty, but her colour is not derived from the dingy hues of earth; it owes a higher origin, even the beams of the son of Latona himself. Yet, the jet eyes from which she sends her hereditary love-shafts, are the softest engines of death I have ever witnessed. The fire she steals from heaven, comes from her as it does from her cognate thief, Phœbe, as soft as moonbeams. Her gentleness is that of the lamb, and the tones of her voice are like the soft strains that come from an Æolian harp, making the heart chase them as they steal away into death-like silence."

"Bravo!" cried the Prince—"a right good wench. I have ever admired softness in a woman; and I still maintain that there is the same natural fitness in that ordination, as existeth in the connection between heat and fire, light and flame, mirth and life, darkness and death! What sayest thou now to the other Bess?"

"Hast thou ever read of Omphale," replied the knight, "who took from Hercules his club, and gave him a spindle, and when he complained, chastised him with her slipper? It was well for the hero that he did not live in Scotland in these days, when brogues, filled with nails, cover the soft feet of some of our damsels. Elizabeth Douglas would certainly imitate Omphale; but, I fear, her slipper would be a brogue; and she farther differeth from her, in being as ugly as she was fair. She seemeth to me to be a limb of the devil, which, in its hurry to escape from the region of fire and brimstone, carried along with it some of these elements of wrath, of which, I doubt not, she would make good use, if a husband dared to say to her nay, in place of yea. Thou hast said that thou lovest softness in woman; but I have heard thee say, in thymad freaks, wherein, doubtless, reason had no part, that thou wouldst rejoice in an opportunity of taming a shrew. Truly, thy wish, at least to the extent of making an attempt, may be gratified by marrying Bess Douglas; but I would rede thee to consider, that she might tame thee. Dost thou observe the difference there? Ha! the noble and high-spirited Rothsay, pinned, like a silken nose-cloth, to the skirt of the linsey-wolsey tunic of a modern Xantippe!"

"Never fear, Ramorgny," cried the Duke, impatiently; "thy efforts in my behalf will save me this degradation. I am obliged to thee for thy warning, and would repay thee, according to the measure of my gratitude and thy desert, by recommending to thee, as a wife Elizabeth Douglas, while I will wed her of Dunbar."

The art by which Ramorgny thus sustained, apparently with good humour, his conversations with the Duke, regarding subjects which lay very near his heart, and invested with serious import, was one of his cleverest but most deceitful qualities. The Duke, himself, treated everything lightly; the unrestrainable buoyancy of his mind, cast off with resilient power everything which partook of a sombre character; but Ramorgny was naturally dark, gloomy, and thoughtful; and his efforts at frolic, successful as they were, were resorted to only as a means to accomplish an end. In the present instance, he was necessitated, notwithstanding the intensity of his passion, his vexation, and disappointment, to keep up his old manner; for, where truth was generally arrayed in the trappings of frivolity, deceit might have been suspected in an appearance of sincerity.

Fortunately, however, the Prince was not left altogether to the advice of Ramorgny; but such is the fate of Princes, he got counsel otherwise, only in the suspicions he entertained of an enemy, his uncle Albany. Having heard that he wished him to marry Elizabeth Douglas, and to accompany him to Douglas Castle, to see the lady on a certain day, the Prince, to escape the importunities of his uncle, and to gall him—a pastime in which he took some pleasure—rode off precipitately to March's Castle, to enjoy the society of Elizabeth, in whom he expected to find all the qualities described by his friend, who enjoyed his absolute confidence.

When Rothsay arrived at the Castle of March, the Earl was on the eve of setting out for Linlithgow, for the purpose of seeing him. The behaviour of Elizabeth in presence of Ramorgny, had filled March with solicitude as to the issue of the projected match; and he wished to counteract, as far as possible, the accounts which the favourite would, in all likelihood, give of his self-willed daughter. On seeing the Prince, began to entertain hopes that Ramorgny's account was not so unfavourable as he suspected; but his surprise may be imagined, when, in a short conversation he had with the Prince previous to his introduction to the ladies, he ascertained that Ramorgny's eulogistic description of Elizabeth had filled him with an irresistible desire to see so beautiful and gentle a creature. March looked askance at the Prince, conceiving that he was making him and his family the subject of an ill-timed frolic; but he saw nothing in the face of the Prince, but the gravest sincerity that his versatile temperament could exhibit. It is not difficult to make doubtful facts quadrate with wishes; and March soon became satisfied that the Prince had received a favourable account, and was deeply impressed with a sense of the beauty and merits of his daughter. He immediately introduced him to Elizabeth, according to the request of the Prince; but it was not until he had got a gentle hint, that he shewed any inclination to leave them together—a piece of etiquette reckoned due to a lover who had been proposed as the husband of his daughter.

Pleased with the dark beauty, though unable to observe in her eye the Cynthian beam so elaborately described by Ramorgny, the Prince approached the damsel, and, with that air of gallantry for which he was so remarkable, fell at her feet, and, seizing her hand, said, in one of his sweetest accents—

"I know not, gentle damsel, whether I have any authority thus to sue for a slight indication of thy favour; but what may be refused by thy goodness to a lover not yet permitted to approach thee with confidence, may perhaps be granted to the Lieutenant of the King? The triumphs of beauty are best celebrated by favour; and condescension, which is the prettiest foil of excellence, is exhibited to the kneeling knight, by extending a hand to grace the act of his rising to receive it."

"Thou may'st e'en rise how and when thou wilt," replied Elizabeth, snatching from him her hand—"or thou may'st kneel there till brown Marion of Leithorn or Jean Lindsay

of *Rossie* comes to help thee up. I care no more for a general lover, than I do for a general lieutenant. The only difference I see between them is, that the one hath many female slaves and the other many male ones. By the soul of Black Agnes, I shall love no man who loveth more than one woman!"

This speech soon raised the Prince to his feet. He stared at the damsel, doubtful if she was serious, or if he had his senses. Her seriousness was clear enough; for she finished her speech by a stamp of her foot, and a clenching of the hand, suitable accompaniments of a female's oath.

"Art thou Elizabeth of Dunbar, the gentle daughter of the Earl of March?" said the Prince, hesitatingly.

"They say so," replied Elizabeth; "and it is to that reputation I owe a Prince's visit. I was born shortly after the sacking of Roxburgh by my father; and, if I have any reputation for being gentle, as thou termest me, it may be owing to my birth having followed so close upon that famous occasion, on which mothers mourned the murder of their children, and children hung at the breasts of their dying or dead mothers. There is none of these things in our days: the world gets effeminate; and, in place of women defending castles, and wiping the dust from the battlements with their white handkerchiefs, as my ancestor did at Dunbar, they teach the arts of spinning and knitting to the men, who, with the Prince of Scotland at their head, vie with each other in the softness of their skin and the smoothness of their speeches. How would Black Agnes have answered to the speech thou didst now address to her descendant, thinkest thou?"

"Very likely," replied the Prince, "in the way in which she answered the English who attacked her castle, or, perhaps, in the gentle way in which thou hast done."

"Would that all men-spinsters were answered in the same way!" rejoined Elizabeth. "But I would make a distinction. To men who have the boldness to court women as they would attack a castle, I would speak softly; but to the white-lipped simperers of smooth sayings, who attack the heart with a tempest of sighs, and sap its foundations with floods of tears, I would open the sally-port of my indignation, and kill them with a look."

"Then, I suppose," said the Prince, "I owe my life to thy ladyship's mercy, extended by way of tender exception to my individual case?"

"Say rather that thou owest it to my contempt," replied Elizabeth. "Thou hast not yet experienced one of my looks. I have treated thee tenderly, because of the love I bear to Queen Anabella, thy mother, to whom I would beg leave to commit thee for a farther supply of that milk and bread-berry, of which, as thy sallow cheeks indicate, thou hast been cheated in thy infancy. Do not object that thou art too old; for thy present condition is but an extension of childhood—even now, I have heard thy rattle."

"Women are privileged," replied the Prince, losing temper.

"So are children," rejoined Elizabeth, smartly; "when thou hast arrived at manhood, thou mayest then claim my indignation; meantime, I recommend thee to the Queen."

And, saying this, she left the astonished Prince, standing in the chamber like a statue. Recovering himself, he left the castle precipitately without seeing the Earl, biting his lips and muttering curses against Ramorgny, who had deceived him, and Elizabeth who had insulted him. As he proceeded on his way homewards, he bethought himself of the different characters Ramorgny gave the two ladies; and wishing to give him credit for having confounded the attributes applicable to each, he resolved to see Elizabeth Douglas; and, changing his course, proceeded in the direction of Castle Douglas.

His arrival at the residence of the old Earl, who had contributed to place his family on the throne, brought into the mind of the Prince some recollections which produced feel-

ings which were deeply planted in his nature, and only prevented from producing useful and amiable effects, by lawless habits borrowed from dissolute companions. With his mind elevated by noble aspirations, and high hopes of being one day an ornament to his country, which he sincerely loved, he was in an excellent mood for appreciating the virtues and beauty of a woman who could, as a consort, make him a better and a happier man, and, by a necessary consequence, a better governor, and subsequently a good king. He met Elizabeth Douglas at a distance from the castle, and introducing himself in the easy and elegant manner of which no man of his time was more capable, was delighted with her conversation and inspired by her personal charms. Proceeding together to the castle, they were met at the gate by the old Earl, who complimented Rothsay, as well as his daughter, by saying that all he had sighed for was that they should meet and be able to appreciate each other's qualities; for he was assured that one hour's conversation between persons so accomplished, actuated by such motives, and inspired with such sentiments, would do more to procure an attachment than a year's diplomacy and court intrigue.

Rothsay willingly remained for some time at the Castle, and had frequent opportunities of conversing with Elizabeth alone, and of appreciating her noble qualities.

"I had got thee misrepresented to me," said the Prince; "but I believe, unintentionally, and by a transposition of names. What would Elizabeth Douglas think if she were informed that she was likened to the wife of Socrates, and the slipper-castigator of Hercules?"

"I should conceive that the reporter did not know me," answered Elizabeth, "or wished to deceive. I am not an admirer of either of these ladies, of whom I have before heard; but I plume not myself upon any other quality than a wish to use my wealth and station for the benefit of those who, though better and holier than I am, have, by the force of dire necessity, been obliged to bow their necks under the yoke of poverty and misfortune. Yet I fear all I can take credit for is a wish to do good. My actions and my aspirations have not that accordance I could wish; but, by the blessing of God, I hope to improve in my self-discipline; and, in the meantime, I trust no one will be able to accuse me of injuring the humblest of God's creatures."

"How seldom do these sentiments reach the ears of royalty," said Rothsay, whose heart swelled with his genuine sentiments long concealed, "and especially from the lips of nobility! Yet, pleasant as it is to contemplate goodness in mortals born of sin, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the influence of generous sympathy when it is found in the bosom of beauty. Do not pain me by saying I flatter thee. At present, I am not the gay son of King Robert; but by the wand of enchantment changed for a season—would it were forever!—into a sober reasoner on the rights and claims of suffering humanity."

"Report hath not belied thee, good Prince, though it hath me; for I have ever heard that thy sentiments were generous—though, excuse my boldness, they were not allowed to be called forth into action by the scenes of common life. Believe a simple maiden when she taketh the liberty humbly to suggest that royalty itself may be more ennobled by one act of charity than by a glorious victory."

"Sweet maiden," cried the Prince, seizing rapturously her hands, "thou shalt be my counsellor. Thy sentiments shall be enforced by thy beauty, and my heart and my exchequer be equally under the power of thy generous feelings."

By such conversations, Rothsay gained an insight into the heart of his mistress. He recurred frequently to the report of Ramorgny, and hinted to the Earl that he had found his daughter the very reverse of what she had been represented to him. The Earl paid particular attention to the hint, and seemed inclined to insinuate that Ramorgny might have had

some cause to misrepresent Elizabeth. The Duke, having proceeded so far, felt his curiosity excited to get an explanation of the Earl's remark; and, upon further question, ascertained that, according to the Earl's opinion, which had been corroborated by his daughter, Ramorgny had been inspired with a strong passion for Elizabeth, which shewed itself in various forms, and was the cause of his protracted stay at the castle. This discovery changed, in a great measure, all the Prince's feelings towards his old friend. He had thus convicted him of deception, practised with a view to his injury, and for the purpose of gratifying a passion cherished for the intended wife of his friend and his prince. Amidst all their departures from the rules of sober life, the Prince had never himself been guilty, or patronised in his friend, any breach of truth and good faith; and this was the first occasion on which this great cementing principle of mankind had been sacrificed to private interest. Seriously, however, as he felt it, he resolved upon stating it to Ramorgny in such a way as might not produce his enmity; for he had seen enough of him to be satisfied that he was more capable of forming a worse enemy than he was of becoming a true friend.

While the Prince had thus been engaged in the south, Ramorgny had been in the north, enjoying his favourite pastime of hunting the red deer among the hills surrounding the water of Islay. The friends arrived in Edinburgh about the same time, ignorant of each other's motions—Ramorgny still labouring under the effect of the passion with which Elizabeth Douglas had inspired him, and for a partial relief from whose engrossing influence he had gone to the hills; and the Duke smarting under the pain of a breach of confidence and friendship in one on whom he had so long placed his affections, and bestowed many favours.

"The hills of Scotland," said Ramorgny, "are exquisite renovators of a town-worn constitution. The roes of the Highlands supply the strength which has been wasted on the town hinds. Thou hadst better have been with me, exerting the powers of a master over the inhabitants of the forest, than stooping to the counsel of that grave batch of seniors appointed to advise with thee—that is, to dictate to thee—on the affairs of the state. Believe me, Prince, thou shouldst cashier these greybeards. Thy own judgment, aided by mine, is quite sufficient to enable thee to govern this small barbarous kingdom."

"Thy advice," replied the Prince, smiling, with some indication of satire, "if followed, by rejecting the counsel of my constituted advisers, would be an advice to reject advice contrary to thy advice; for my council recommend me to marry Elizabeth Douglas, and to reject the March. Dost thou think that any of the greybeards—Albany is too ambitious to marry again—have any private intentions on Bess of Dunbar. If I thought that, I would reject the Douglas, and betake myself to the March."

"And thou wouldst act sagely in so doing," replied Ramorgny, who did not yet see the Prince's satire. "If any one of these councillors act from such a motive—and I am not sure of Arran—he ought to lose his mistress and his head at the same time."

"Savest thou so, Ramorgny?" replied the Prince. "Is it thy heart that so speaketh, or thy judgment? Thou hast recommended me to the March, whom I have seen and conversed with, and well know; and hast endeavoured to terrify me from the Douglas, whom I have also seen, and can well appreciate. Art thou quite sure thy advice is purer, sounder, truer, and wiser, than that of my council?"

This question produced an evident effect upon Ramorgny. He endeavoured to escape the Prince's eye; but he found that no easy matter. Rothsay kept looking at him intensely, and plainly shewed that he was master of the secret purpose for which he had endeavoured to precipitate him into a connection that would have made him miserable for life. It

was now, however, too late for Ramorgny to retreat; and, boldly facing his danger, he replied—

"Thy question carries with it more than meets the ear. If I depreciated Elizabeth Douglas, and overrated Elizabeth of Dunbar, a spirit of liberal construction would give me credit for having been myself deceived."

"Stop," said the Prince, interrupting him; "I did not say that thou didst depreciate the one and overrate the other. Why take guilt to thyself?"

"By St Duthos," cried Ramorgny, who now saw he was caught, and resolved upon another tack, "it is time now to be grave. Will that cursed spirit of devilish frolic which I learned from thee, cling to me, even after the dreadful apparition of the first grey hair, which this morning appeared to me in my glass! But thou art thyself to blame. A master of mirth, thyself—the prime minister of Momus, as well as of King Robert, and my professor in the science of fun—wert thou unable to discover, in my outrageous and elaborate description of the two damsels, the traces of the pencil—for Momus could paint—of the laughing god? If thou wert not, didst thou not deserve the harmless deception? Say now, good Prince, condemn if thou darrest, thy scholar of a proficiency which thou hast taught. Struck by thy own sword of lath, wilt thou amputate the offending hand? Say, and if thou wilt, strike. A philosopher would laugh—what shall the merry-making Rothsay do?"

The bold, dashing, laughing manner in which Ramorgny delivered this speech, joined to a recollection of the high-flown and not serious account he had given of the two damsels, drove out of the Duke's mind the suspicions roused by the communications of Earl Douglas, and with it his anger. The boisterous good humour of his friend carried him along with him; and, answering the knight in his own way, he cried—

"Why, laugh too, perhaps, good Ramorgny. Thou hast certainly defeated me in the first instance; but I have conquered thee in the second. I found in the women what thou hast described them; only, I was obliged to substitute the name of Elizabeth Douglas for Bess of Dunbar. That descendant of old Agnes is most certainly the devil, or at least his vicegerent. What dost thou think she recommended to me, to increase the powers of my manhood? Why, milk and panado! The only woman, she thought, I would be safe in the keeping of, was my mother Anabella; the age, of which she considered me a fair example, had retrograded from the days of the sacking of Roxburgh by her father, into a state of mature infancy; and, as for our talents for war, she would scarcely allow us the mighty power of infanticide. In short, thy description of Elizabeth Douglas applied to her; and, when I say that thy description of her applied to the other, why should I say that I was charmed with the fair Douglas? Thou hast painted better than I can. She must be my wife; and I am glad that my council, my mother, and myself, thus agree on a point which they believe concerns the nation, but which I opine concerns only myself."

Ramorgny was at the moment well pleased to perceive that he had thus got out of the scrape; but to have his snare twisted round his own limbs—to have his description of his own lover adopted by a rival, in describing her perfections, and thus to have, in a manner, precipitated his own ruin; for he could not survive the marriage of Elizabeth Douglas with another—touched him, as an accomplished intriguer, on the tenderest parts of his nature. A second time deprived of the object of his affections by his own disciple in the art of love, he determined that, at least, there should never be a third opportunity for inflicting upon him such degradation. His revenge deepened, but his smiles and apparent good humour quadrated with the increased necessity of concealing his designs. These and their fatal issue are unfortunately but too well known.

Unknown to Rothsay, certain schemes had, in the meantime, been in agitation, between the Earl of March and a party at court, the object of which was to get a match brought about between Rothsay and Elizabeth of Dunbar. These, for a time, wrought so favourably, that March, who never knew what had taken place between Rothsay and his daughter, entertained the strongest hopes of success. He had offered an immense dowery, which the great extent of his estates near the Borders enabled him to pay, as the price of the connection with royalty; and it would seem that he had received from head-quarters strong pledges that his wishes would be gratified. Ramorgny secretly joined the March party; but all their endeavours could not prevent the final triumph of the Douglas, who had also offered a large sum with his daughter, and who was, besides, backed by the Queen, and by the secret wishes of Rothsay himself.

The nuptials of the Prince with Elizabeth Douglas were celebrated with great rejoicings at Edinburgh. They were graced by the presence of the King and the Queen, and all the principal nobility of the land. Among the rest, were to be seen two persons destined to supply afterwards the materials of an extraordinary chapter in the history of Scotland; the shadows of which, if presentiment had thrown them before, would have wrapped the gay scene of the marriage in the gloomy mantle of the dismal Atropos. The first of these was Rothsay's uncle Albany, who, ever since he was displaced from his governorship by the faction who awarded to the young Prince the lieutenantancy of the kingdom, had prayed fervently for the death of the royal stripling that had, with precocious audacity, dared to compete with disciplined age in the management of the affairs of the kingdom. The other was Ramorgny, who appeared at the celebration of the nuptials, dressed in the gayest style, and wearing, on his lips, the fallacious smile of the treacherous courtier, while his heart was filled with rage and jealousy, and his fancy teemed with schemes of deadly revenge. The picture, to one who could have seen into futurity, would have presented the extraordinary foreground of an apparent universal joy, filling all hearts and making all glad; and, close behind, the grinning furies of revenge writhing in their agonies of a wild desire to break in upon the unconscious victims, and spread death and desolation where pleasure was alone to be found.

Ramorgny, who knew the volatile nature of the Prince, waited patiently until the pleasures of the first moon were experienced and exhausted. He cultivated more than formerly the good opinion of one who retained no longer any suspicion of the treachery of his friend. Ramorgny knew the Prince's sentiments of his uncle—that there existed between the two relatives an inimical feeling—amounting, on the side of the uncle, to a hatred which, derived from thwarted political ambition, would not hesitate at short and ready measures of removing the object to which it was directed; and, on that of the nephew, to a youthful impatience of the surveillance and restraint which his late governor had exercised over him, and was still ready to employ when his selfish purposes required their application. That Rothsay, who, in reality, possessed a noble and generous spirit, would stoop to any base purpose to get quit of the authority and interference of his uncle, Ramorgny did not suppose; but he hoped so far to implicate the thoughtless Prince in a scheme of his devising as to make his act appear, by misconstruction, of such a nature to Albany, as would give his revenge the specious appearance of self-defence, and accelerate the fate of his victim.

In accordance with this scheme, Ramorgny continued, as he had done formerly, to fill the Prince's mind with details of his uncle's inimical feelings towards him; which was of the more easy accomplishment, that the Prince was

already aware of his uncle's disposition. The choleric youth listened to these tales with impatience, and often allowed himself to be hurried into extravagant expressions of indignation, which a servant of Ramorgny's, a servile creature, ready to commit any crime for money, was instructed, when occasion offered, to note and remember. For a time, Ramorgny limited his details to such acts as occasionally occurred, and which the unrestrainable hatred of Albany furnished in such abundance that he found no great necessity to have recourse to invention, unless it were, indeed, to add the colouring, which was generally of the most extravagant kind, and best suited to reach the heart of the Prince, and influence his anger and indignation.

Farther, Ramorgny could not venture for a long time to go. The generous youth sometimes got wearied with the recital of his uncle's indignities; and, willing to leave him to his own heart, kept on in the tenor of his own path; which, however, was none of the straightest—his aberrations, after his marriage, being, as before, the result of every new fancy which such men as Ramorgny, acting on an excited and irregular imagination, chose, by their consummate arts, to introduce into his mind. This did not suit Ramorgny. He required stronger materials to work with, and did not hesitate to use them. It is easy to work for evil in a heart originally corrupt; but to corrupt, and then to seduce, is a work of time; and it is to the credit of human nature that virtue is often strong enough to maintain its place against the attacks of the most insidious schemers.

It was now Ramorgny's effort to rouse the suspicions of the Prince as to his personal safety from the designs of his uncle. He invented a story of a conversation which had been overheard between Albany and a ruffian often employed by him to execute his purposes of revenge. The import of this conversation was, that Albany, having been superseded in his office of governor, had resolved upon acquiring it again, and that he could not succeed in that resolution so long as the Prince was alive—that he accordingly hinted to the ruffian that it would be pleasant to him if he heard that the Duke no longer lived—and that, for such information, a reward would be given sufficient to stimulate the most scrupulous executioner that ever aided an unhappy man across the Stygian stream. All this was communicated to Rothsay by Ramorgny, in a whisper, and with an appearance, tone, and manner, suited to the awful nature of the intelligence. The Duke believed the story, and, bursting forth into an extravagant sally of indignation, cried—

"It is time that Princes of the Blood Royal should exert the power in defence of themselves, which is entrusted to them for the defence of others, when villains, in broad day, lay schemes for their lives. I can plainly see, and have long seen, that this man and I cannot live in the same age. Scotland is too narrow for us; and the vice-royal chair must be polluted with blood! Yet, shall age supplant youth? Is it meet that time should go backwards, and that, by force and through blood, the order of nature should be changed? It shall not be so. If one is to fall, nature herself points out the victim—and that victim is Albany!"

These words, uttered in anger, and intended merely to indicate the injustice of Albany's scheme, and the necessity of self-defence, in the event of its being attempted to be carried into execution, were carefully noted by Ramorgny's creature, who was in hearing. They were plainly capable, however, of another construction by a person who did not hear the rest of the conversation and understand their application. They might mean that Rothsay intended to get his uncle out of the way—a construction which did not ill accord with the feelings which existed in the Prince's mind against the disturber of his peace, if these had been formed in another bosom, but unjustified by the Prince's noble disposition, which would have despised any underhand scheme to rid himself of his bitterest enemy. The words were, how-

ever, uttered, and noted, and remembered; and they were not uttered in vain.

Ramorgny having thus procured evidence of the Prince's designs against the life of his uncle, repaired to Albany, and narrated to him the statements made by the Duke, and referred him, for corroboration, to his servant. Albany wished nothing more ardently than this communication; and, even without it, he would have been glad to have joined Ramorgny in any scheme for the removal of his rival. Other enemies were brought into action. Sir William Lindsay of Rossie, whose sister the Duke had loved and deserted, and Archibald Douglas, the brother of Elizabeth, piqued by some private feeling, were willing to aid in the death of one who had courted the relative of one of them to desert her, and married that of the other to treat her with neglect. That the Prince was unkind or unfaithful to his wife, who bore a reputation of being so fair and amiable, has been treated by some historians as a mere fable, resorted to by the unnatural Earl, her brother, as a palliative of conduct which it was not suited to render in the slightest degree less revolting. There is reason, however, to suppose that Lindsay had some cause for his resentment, in the desertion of his sister, who loved the Duke, and never recovered from the effects of his unfaithful conduct.

The first project of these conspirators, was worthy of the talents of the individuals who had determined to prostitute the best of the gifts of God to destroy one of his creatures. It was resolved to work upon the King in such a way as to procure from him some token of his disapprobation of the conduct of his son. It is difficult now to ascertain how this was effected, as there is no doubt that Rothsay still held a strong claim on the affections of his father. The result, however, shews that the means must have been of an extraordinary nature; for King Robert was got to sign a writ for the confinement of the Prince. It is very probable that nothing more was intended by this than to shew the King's displeasure, which would gradually relax as the slight punishment wrought the expected amendment. It has been doubted whether such writ was ever truly signed by the King; and surely it is not difficult to suppose that the men who, holding the gates of the palace in their hands, could admit or deny whom they chose to the royal presence, would not stop at forgery, which they could conceal, if they had made up their minds to murder, which has seldom or ever been successfully concealed. But it matters not in so far as regards the fate of the Prince, whether the writ was genuine or not. It was acted upon, and the unfortunate son of a king was seized by his enemies, Douglas and Ramorgny, lashed in his royal robes to the back of a sorry horse, and hurried through Fife, to a prison adjoining to the palace of Falkland.

The unhappy Prince now saw that his death was determined; but he little suspected what was to be its cruel nature. The work of his enemies was done, but they had delegated what even their hard hearts could not accomplish to ruffians from whose bosoms every humane feeling had been long eradicated. He was put under the charge of two men, brought, it is supposed, from Aberdeen—a locality as far from the scene of the tragedy they were to perform as possible—called John Wright and John Selkirk, names that remained infamous in Scotland for many a day. The faces of these men, filled with the expression of a determination to resist every feeling of humanity, contrasted strangely with the countenance of the royal youth, formed by nature, and moulded by his sympathies, to speak eloquently the language of affection, and reflect the fair lineaments of the most beautiful of the graces. It required only one glance of the Prince's inquiring eye to see that, if his fate depended upon the feelings of these men, he had no chance of salvation in this world.

The ruffians having thrown the unfortunate youth into one of the low dungeons of the prison, without speaking a word,

were preparing to leave him, when, urged by feelings of despair, he fell on his knees and beseeched them to tell him what commission they had got from his enemies for the fulfilment of his fate.

"Tell me, good friends," he cried, "in what shape death is to come to the son of a king, that he may prepare his mind to meet his end as becometh a man. Grant me, at least, the privilege of dying by my own hand, that the descendant of Bruce may escape the fate of malefactors, or the mangled termination of the devoted victim of revenge. You are not, you cannot be so bad as the sternness of office makes you appear. Shall the Prince of Scotland sue in vain to the subjects of his father for the boon of a dagger? Merciful Heaven! am I refused this request? Then is cruelty to be added to injustice; and perhaps starvation—dreadful thought—awaits me with her attendant agonies."

As the unfortunate Prince uttered these words, he fell on the damp floor of the dungeon. His appeal produced nothing but a hollow growl, more like the sound of a mastiff's anger than the voice of a human being. Turning abruptly from him, they left him extended on the ground, and in an instant seemed to be entirely occupied about the manner in which they should secure, with double certainty, the door of the dungeon. On lifting his head, the victim heard nothing but the harsh expostulations of the two men, as they differed about the expediency of riveting the iron bars by which the door was fastened.

The wretched youth had truly anticipated his fate. Starvation was the mode of death fixed upon by his cowardly murderers. What might have been accomplished in an instant was prolonged for many days. Cruelty was, indeed, as he had said, added to injustice; and the merciful death of the malefactor on the gallows, was denied to the heart-rending entreaties of a prince. For fifteen days, according to a historian, he was suffered to remain without food, under the charge of Wright and Selkirk, whose task it was to watch the agony of their victim till it ended in death. It is said, that, for a while, the wretched prisoner was preserved in a remarkable manner, by the kindness of a poor woman, who, in passing through the garden of Falkland, was attracted, by his groans, to the grated window of his dungeon, which was level with the ground, and became acquainted with his story. It was her custom to steal thither at night, and bring him food, by dropping small cakes through the grating, whilst milk, conducted through a pipe to his mouth, was the only way he could be supplied with drink. But Wright and Selkirk, suspecting, from his appearance, that he had some secret supply, watched, and detected the charitable visitant, and the Prince was abandoned to his fate.

Such was the death assigned to the son of a king, the most beautiful, the most engaging, the most generous—what pity is it to add, the most volatile and irregular that ever was born to a kingdom, amidst the acclamations of a loving people!



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE HIGHLANDER.

I have seen war's lightning flashing!
Scen the claymore with bayonet clashing!
Through fields of blood the war-steed dashing!
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.

SCOTT.

A field of the dead rushes red on my sight,
And the clans of Culloden are scattered in flight!

CAMPBELL.

ABOUT mid-afternoon, on a fine harvest day, a party of reapers, after having taken a short breathing, whetted their sickles afresh, and prepared to recommence their labours. The season had been fine, and, of course, early; and, on this afternoon, all were joyous with the expectation that the *kirn* should be *won* on the farm of Gowanbrae. The field in which they were at work, lay towards the west, on a gentle slope; and was now all cut, with the exception of the single ridges which they were at that time engaged in cutting. An hour would be sufficient to terminate their harvest toils, and *win the kirn*.

"Hey, lads and lassies!" shouted Tam Armstrong, as he brandished his sickle, and strode with his short bandy legs to his post—"wha to be first at the lan' en! Here's at ye, Will Smith!"

"Puir knurl!" replied Smith, "whaever cuts out first, I'm sure ye hae nae chance. Muckle as ye think o' yersel, here's wee Ellen Fraser, I'll wager she'll shear ye blin' ony day."

"I wadna even mysel to sic a lassie, but"—

"Na, because ye durstna, Tam. Ye ken brawly, lassie though she be, it's no in a' yer waistband to come near her."

"Never heed him, Tam," whispered Tibby Gibson, in a voice the cracked and grating tones of which were meant to be attuned to a sweet and soothing note. "Say naething, but ply awa whate'er ye can; and though ye should leave a bit o' yer fur-brae to me, I'll no say muckle aboot it, if ye can only beat the lang-legged, ill-tongued bragger, and his bit preened-up doll he maks sic a sang aboot."

"Na, na, Tibby; ye ken weel I wadna let ye be hadden back wi' a cut o' my rig for aught. I wad far rather tak a guid skelp aff yours. But, what if we should gang on thegither, and get baith out afore Will Smith and his favourite?"

"I think I hae dune mony a waur turn i' my day. We'll e'en do sae, lad: sae, here's for't."

With these words, the two commenced operations keenly; and, in a few minutes, the alarm spread, and all the band set vigorously to work.

Their regular progress in line was soon broken; and, by the flushed face, the quick, anxious, fiery glance across the field, and the hurried step to the sheaf, it might easily be seen that the spirit of ambition and rivalry—that spirit which leads armies to conquest, and depopulates kingdoms—was holding sway as powerfully over the little reaping party on the farm of Gowanbrae, as ever it did over the hearts of armed warriors on the battle-field. In the meantime, the guidman, who was making his rounds through the field, seeing that all was properly done, and gathering stray ears of corn as he went along, observed the growing strife. "There ye go! ye're at it again, are ye?" muttered he, as he cast his eye along the broken and straggling band.

"That fractious chield, Tam Armstrong, and his envyfu' jo, Tibby Gibson, they're aye the beginners o' the mischief. I hope they'll get a settlin. Weel dunc, Ellen Fraser!" continued he; "she's nought but a perfect bairn, or I wadna say but—. The stuff is but light, and it's no far to the lan' en: troth, I'll let them tak their will o't." With this sapient resolution, he continued his progress through the field, binding up sheaves and gathering up ears with great and laudable assiduity.

It is but right, however, to give a few notices respecting the chief personages in this arduous struggle, before announcing how victory was decided. Tam Armstrong was a man of about thirty years of age, strongly but rather clumsily made. His short squat body was supported by a pair of legs, bent so wide outwards at the knees, that his walk was an awkward waddle. His features were coarse and massy—the under part of his face in particular. His chin was large; and the under-lip, hanging down, displayed a set of large, uneven teeth, fixed into something of a habitual and malicious grin. His little pinkie, ferret eye, deep sunk under his heavy brow, indicated a mind full of envy, and a prey to unsatisfied and restless malice, that fellest enemy to human happiness.

Tibby Gibson had nearly reached that most inauspicious period of woman's age, when the youthful appellation of lassie agrees but ill with an ominous lankness of cheek and dimness of eye, and when, alas! she, perhaps, has yet acquired no lawful claim to the much-longed-for title of *wife* or *mother*—an age which you may guess at as you best can; because, if I *could* mention it more specifically, I *durst* not. She was now, however, in some hopes that she had acquired a considerable influence in the little heart of Tam Armstrong. Towards this most desired end her hoiden coquetry had been, during the whole harvest, directed; and though she was not very delicate in her manner of making her advances, she appeared likely to succeed—for her gudgeon was not easily scared by a coarse bait. Her person was nothing particular as to size, and in shape might have passed without much censure, had her back only been looked on. But her face was certainly somewhat more worthy of remark. A pair of large eyebrows, widely arched over a pair of eyes not nearly large enough for the places which they occupied—a nose which brought the general contour of her face, stretching out with a gradual round above, into somewhat of a battle-axe form—and a mouth where a pair of thin lips, drawn over a set of large, ill set, and discoloured teeth, which seemed to be kept shut with an effort, and whose smile was truly frightful, completed the charms of this loving and lovely maiden.

Will Smith was the second son of a farmer in the neighbourhood, who, thinking himself rather too young to undertake the management of a farm on his own account, had gone to service for a year or two, to increase his agricultural skill, both in theory and practice. Just on the verge of manhood, he possessed all the agility of youth, with a considerable degree of strength; and his form was a happy compound of the thin and the athletic. The glance of his lively, hazel eye, spoke a mirthful and an active mind; and his ruddy cheek and bold brow, displayed cheerfulness and manly courage in a very evident manner. His frank voice

might have been termed harsh, or, at least, ill modulated, and his motions might have been censured as boisterous and ungraceful; but in his station such things were not thought of, nor their want observed.

Ellen Fraser was the only daughter of a widow, who inhabited a cottage on the farm of Gowanbrae. Her mother, terrified by the report of the devastation which the English army spread around it in its progress northward, during its pursuit of the Highlanders, in the winter of 1745-6, had left her native glen, and fled, for a temporary shelter, to the Lowlands. But the rebel army was scattered on the bloody field of Culloden; the houses of the slaughtered brave were laid desolate; the little quiet glens were explored, and their friendless inhabitants butchered, or driven forth to perish of cold and famine in the houseless wild; the helpless years of the veriest infant awoke no emotions of pity in the breasts of the licentious soldiery; and that sex which every brave and generous man feels it his duty and his pride to protect, was exposed to every insult which wanton barbarity could inflict. Terror impelled Mary Fraser to fly farther from the scene of cruelty and woe; and, with her daughter, then but a few months old, in her arms, she fled onwards, she knew not whither. She had reached Gowanbrae in her flight, and obtained a night's residence, when fatigue, want, and dreadful agitation of mind, threw her into a state of illness which threatened to terminate fatally. The greatest attention and kindness were shewn to her during her illness; and, upon her recovery, she was offered a residence in a cottage belonging to the farm, which happened at the time to be unoccupied. What better could she do than fix her abode where she had already experienced so much hospitality? She had now no home; no dwelling-place among her native mountains; no husband to give her protection there—for she had heard that he had been one of those who, by falling on the field of battle, were spared the keener pang of witnessing ravages which they could neither prevent nor avenge. In that cottage she had resided about fifteen years at the time in which our story commences, and had, like many *cottars* in Scotland, paid her house rent by her harvest labour. A severe illness, from which she was but slowly recovering, had rendered her unable to undertake her usual method of payment; but her daughter, scarcely yet fifteen years of age, had obtained her consent to attempt to supply her place on the harvest-field. The good farmer was unwilling to permit her, lest she should be unable to endure the toils of the reaper; but, after a good deal of persuasion, he said that she might try for a day or two.

When she first joined the band of reapers, they all conceived it impossible that she could bear a full share of a reaper's work. She had been rather delicate in her infancy; and though her health had for many years been quite good, she was of a somewhat delicate form. Her extreme youth caused her to appear so girlish in person, that her undertaking to perform a woman's work, seemed strange and presumptuous. But there was something in her dark and thoughtful eye, and on her pale, pensive brow, which said that her success would not be obtained by personal ability, but by the determined character of a spirit which would not yield—would not cease to struggle forward against every opposition, every difficulty, in the path pointed out by filial duty. At first, indeed, the toil was too severe for her strength, and she almost sank under it. But she was resolved, and continued to bear her equal part of every necessary duty, until by degrees she became more and more expert, and found her distress and fatigue lessen proportionally. The more generous of her fellow-labourers encouraged her, and even occasionally gave her a little assistance; but Tam Armstrong and his beautiful Dulcinea had at the first ridiculed her attempt—all along, they continued their endeavours to dishearten her; and when she became quite able to per-

form her task, they could not conceal their malicious dissatisfaction. Accordingly, they were determined, if possible, to have one triumph over her, and also over William Smith, who had several times shewn her kindness when she appeared to require it.

The farmer himself, David Graham, may be best described in a very few words, by representing him as an honest, respectable, *douce-looking* man. Thoughtful, more than his years seemed necessarily to call for, he bore the appearance of a man early sobered by deep care or misfortune, or by having witnessed scenes of distress. His heart was kind and his hand charitable—nor was he ever known to turn a deaf ear to the tale of affliction. Beloved by all who knew him, his general designation among the poor and the distressed was, "*The kind Guidman of Gowanbrae.*"

The *kemp* continued rapidly for some time, and pretty nearly equal among the most determined of the band, particularly the four above mentioned. As they neared the end, they increased their exertions, and victory began to shew for whom she would declare. Ellen Fraser, by the light activity of her action, gained ground visibly on her stronger, but heavier and less agile rivals; and it was very evident that, unless she should unfortunately be unable to continue her speed to the end, she would reach it considerably before them. Will Smith, indeed, appeared able to keep pace with her, and might perhaps have passed her had he chosen; but he contented himself with keeping equally forward, or rather a little behind her. In vain did Tam Armstrong gnaw his huge nether lip; and the malicious eye of Tibby was unable to blight the delicate but active little maiden, against whom its keenest glance was frequently directed. Ellen Fraser reached the end first, which the guidman no sooner perceived, than he shouted aloud—"Weel dune, wee Ellen! ye hae managed cleverly!" His acclamation was loudly repeated by the greater part of the reapers; and when Smith had cut out—which was very soon after her—he took hold of her by the hand and led her across the *land*, to where the other pair were bustling away in great fury.

"Tam," said he, in a tone of deep mockery, "will ye hae a *cut*? I hae brought ower wee Ellen here, to help ye a bit. Puir fellow! I'm wae to see ye beat! But keep up yer heart, Tam—ye're no the first has been obleeged to own that a petticoat was master. Na, dinna hurt yersel for ony sake, man—tak it easy! If ye speak Ellen fair, I'se warrant she'll help ye out."

"Haud ye your impudent jaw, Will Smith!—ye had as guid."

"An' for what, Tam? For fear o' ye, nae doubt! Gude help ye! ye wad lift yer hand to me, wad ye? Gin ye durst nae better steal, ye wad hae but a puir way o' makin ye're livin, I doubt!"

To this Armstrong only answered by half raising himself, and striking, with his whole force, at Smith with his sickle. Smith sprang back with such sudden agility as to avoid the otherwise deadly blow; and instantly darting upon Armstrong, wrested the sickle out of his hand, threw it to a distance, and grappling with him, seized him so firmly by the throat that his eyes seemed about to protrude; his face grew black, and he gasped convulsively, as if at the point of expiring. After holding him so for about a minute, Smith dashed him scornfully to the ground; and bending a contemptuous eye on him—"Lie there, savage brute!" said he, "and learn that when ye yoke wi' me, ye hae yoked wi' your master!"

"Will Smith," cried the guidman, from a little distance, where he had seen what was going on, but wished not to take any notice of it—"Will Smith! come here, and help up the handsmen; they're like to fa' behind. Ellen, rin awa hame an' tell the guidwife to see an' hae something ready for us; an' help her a wee, for we'll a' be on ye belyve. Tam, step ye ower the burn to John Tamson's, an' bring us

a canay keg o his best Farintosh, an' be back as suno s ye can; for we've hae a merry hour or twa, since we hae gotten the kirn sae cleverly!" These different commissions were all instantly gone about, and peace and good humour again restored; which was not a little promoted by the farmer himself cracking his joke as he passed across the field.

They had reached the end, the last handful was cut, and they were collecting their breath for the purpose of raising a loud *hurra*, when some of them perceived an old Highlander approaching. They raised the shout; and the old man, breathing an inspiring blast into his pipes, answered them with a joyous strain. "Come awa, come awa, Donald," cried the farmer; "ye could ne'er hae come in better time, wi' your bagpipes. What say ye, lassies? I hope ye hae nae objections to shaking yer shanks awee, to the merry squeaking o' the Highland bagpipes!"

"If he'll gie us music, we'll keep the dance up, guidman; nae fear o' that," was the ready reply.

"Weel, weel; I'll see to that as far as I can. Ye hear my bargain, frien: will ye help me to make it out; an' ye'se be welcome to stay twa or three days about the toun, wi' the best up-putting I can provide, considering that, being harvest-time, we're gay thrang?"

"It's kindly offered, guidman; and I shall accept it, frankly; for, indeed, rest is what I have much need of, and what I had but little prospect of being ablereadily to procure."

This reply, in a tone and words strikingly different from the language of the common people, either in the Highlands or Lowlands, at once attracted the notice of those in whose hearing it was spoken; and they gathered round him with a mixture of curiosity and respect. He was apparently fatigued with his wanderings, and stood for a short time in silence, looking back as if retracing the path he had come. Then he drew himself gradually up to his full height, took off his bonnet, and passed his hand over his forehead, scantily shaded by thin grey locks. His stature was tall, and his form had, in youth, been elegant; but it now had acquired the bend of years, of sickness, or of sorrow. Its muscular power must have been very considerable; for, in spite of slight decay, it still displayed a firm and almost a wiry elasticity; which was, perhaps, not the less striking, that all the plumpness of youth was gone, and nothing covered or concealed the form of each individual muscle. His face was of a noble cast; but, from the effects of exposure to the storms of his native hills, or from some other cause, had acquired almost a harsh and severe graveness of expression. His well-formed and open forehead was marked by a large scar, reaching from the straggling locks across it, and down to the outer bend of his right eyebrow. It was not of such an appearance as to disfigure him; it rather gave something of interest to his looks; for it suggested to the gazer's mind fighting fields and deeds of daring, and a thousand imagined scenes of peril, blood, and suffering. The whole air, appearance, and language of the man, were those of one who had seen better days; and whose better days had been rudely terminated by the ruffian blast of war, and probably of misery, its almost constant attendant. He seemed, in short, a noble ruin.

Feeling that the curious gaze of the reapers might pain the old Highlander, the farmer gave them some few orders to occupy their attention; and, pointing across the fields in direction of the farm-house, where a strong smoke, rising perpendicularly above a clump of trees, indicated the preparation for good cheer within, asked him to accompany him thither. Away together they accordingly went; and in a short time they were joined by the whole band, and their preparations for mirth and festivity went rapidly on, each doing his best to forward the sport.

During the interval, however, which necessarily occurred between their arrival and their fun and feasting being quite ready to commence, the old Highlander began to play over

some of his own favourite tunes, slowly and sweetly, and almost as if unconscious of any effort in so doing, so easily came the notes, and so pensively fixed in abstraction and distant thought were all the lines of his expressive face. The wailing strains of "The Flowers of the Forest," poured out from his half-silenced pipe, in the very tone of weeping sorrow. Again and again he varied the tune; and still returned to its sweet but heart-melting notes, so congenial was it to his frame of mind. At length his fingers bade the music's language utter that well known and oft-repeated tune, "Lochaber no more!" Darker and darker grew the shade of sorrow on his cheek, and his eye could not restrain the gathered tear; it burst forth, and rolled repeatedly in large individual drops down the furrows on his care-worn visage. His emotion was observed by the good farmer, who, in order to divert him from the indulgence of sorrow so deep, and also to pass the time which they yet had to spare, endeavoured to draw him into conversation. Approaching him in a careless manner, that he might not seem to have perceived his grief, he accosted him gaily—"Ye hae been where broken heads were gaun, freend, I can see; and got yer share o' them very tolerably. I ance saw something o' the sort mysel; but I wish ne'er to see the like again."

"It is, doubtless, no very desirable thing to face death in his bloodiest form, when the falling of your comrades around you gives you such sensible proofs of his presence; but a battle-field, in all its horrors, may be a scene of bliss, compared to some of its consequences; and a man may live to say that the sword which cut him to the skull, had been more merciful had it bit still deeper."

"Ay, ay, freend—so ye say; but I hac nae notion o' sic tender mercies. Let us leave aff sic mournfu' tunes and distressing recollections, this night. The lassies would rather hear ye play 'Our Bogie.'"

"I can easily see your kind intention, guidman; and, to shew you that I am not unreasonable, in a short time I shall join your mirth readily; but, as your festivities are not yet quite ready to commence, I shall, if you choose, relate to you what will convince you that I have some cause to shed tears and play sad tunes."

"The time was when I durst not have told what I may fearlessly own now. I was with the army of the unfortunate Prince Charles Edward, in the year 1745. Our chief had not been very forward in joining the Prince, whence it happened that I was not with him in his march into England. His return into Scotland, and the presence of his adherents in superior force, caused our chief to declare which party he meant to espouse; and, in consequence, a detachment, of which I was one, joined the army while it lay before Stirling. When I left my native glen, at the head of a small party of our clan, it was, indeed, with a heart full of dark forebodings, and little pleased with the undertaking. But, had I shewn backwardness to obey my chief—I, a *duinhe massal* and a kinsman—it would have been a disgrace a thousand times worse than death. I left my dear Mary, with a sick, sick heart; but I hid its sickness, and led on my brave lads, while the bagpipes made the gathering strain ring out loudly and boldly. We made little progress in our attempts upon Stirling Castle, and were beginning to think our situation and our prospects not very agreeable, when we received intelligence that General Hawley was on his march from Edinburgh, with the intention of compelling us to abandon the siege. This raised our spirits again, when we hoped to meet the enemy on the open plain, and not have to strive against strongly fortified places—a part of military duty for which we had neither patience, skill, nor proper artillery. We instantly marched to Falkirk to meet them, leaving the Duke of Perth to continue the siege.

"About mid-day, our right wing crossed the river Carron at Dunipace, and marched towards the hill above Falkirk,

in order to take the advantage of the rising ground. The enemy, perceiving our intention, suddenly formed the resolution to deprive us of the height; and a detachment of their cavalry came upon us, at full charge, with the hope of breaking us. We fired upon them with so true an aim that great numbers of them were killed, and the rest fell into confusion, and, wheeling about, fled back upon their own left wing, breaking its ranks, and spreading disorder and panic around them. This was immediately perceived by Lord George Murray and Lochiel, who gave orders to follow up the advantage, by a charge upon the enemy's left wing before they should recover from their confusion. At this moment, the wind, accompanied by a cold, sleety rain, blew strongly on our backs, both urging us on, and blinding the enemy. Our troops rushed down the hill like a storm from their native mountains, poured one close volley upon the enemy, and throwing down their guns, attacked them sword in hand. The charge was irresistible. They fell before us like the reedy sedge before the burst of a mountain torrent, and were scattered in every direction, as a feeble herd of deer are scattered at the shrill blast of the warrior huntsman's horn. Our hearts were roused—our courage up—our hopes again pointed to victory and vengeance. In the midst of our fierce career, a ball struck me on the knee, and I fell, less regarding the pain of my wound, than that it disabled me, and prevented my accompanying my clansmen in their glorious pursuit. Night very soon came on; and, owing to the extreme darkness, not a few of the wounded on both sides were left unobserved to pass the night on the field. The rain continued to fall—chilling and almost freezing as it fell; and I, among others, dabbled in blood, and wet with the rain, was compelled to pass the long, dark, cold hours of night, exposed to all its inclemency.

“Soon after dark, my attention was roused by the deep groans of a fellow-sufferer. The spirit of battle had, by that time, departed; and I could regard all those around me as men exposed to a similar fate with myself. I called to him; and, after some time, succeeded in getting him to answer me. He was one of the King's men—I mean, of Hawley's army—and had been very severely wounded, and stripped by some of those plunderers who follow an army, and pilage friend and foe alike. With considerable difficulty, I dragged myself near him, and wrapped part of my plaid around his exposed and mangled body. Next day, we were both carried off from the bloody field, so chilled with what we had suffered, that all power of speech was nearly gone. In him it was entirely. What was his after fate I never knew; but, unless his wounds were mortal, I think he might possibly recover: for, in a very short time, the wounded fell into the hands of the King's men, who had the means, and would surely exert them, for the recovery of at least their own wounded. I mention this incident, merely because it is almost the only occurrence in the whole course of my life, the recollection of which is unaccompanied with any feelings of pain or regret.

“The hurt on my knee was, fortunately, not very severe; so that I was soon able to endure motion, and even to move a little of myself. Many of the clans left us, and retired to their homes to secure the plunder they had obtained at Falkirk; so that when the news of the Duke of Cumberland's approach reached us, our numbers were so much reduced, that it was not thought prudent to hazard an engagement. Accordingly, we left Stirling early in February, and retired northward, determined to make a stand so soon as our forces were again collected. My wound was so much healed, that I had joined the army in the vicinity of Inverness in the beginning of April. Necessity obliged us to hazard an engagement, though very ill prepared in every respect. Misled by false reports, we marched towards Nairn, in hopes of surprising the Duke's army; but were disappointed, and had to retrace our steps to our former position on Drum-

mossie moor. There we arrived about eight o'clock on the morning of that ill-omened day, the 16th, after having passed two sleepless nights, during the last of which we had marched not less than eighteen miles, without receiving any refreshment. In this over-fatigued, hungry, and rather dispirited condition, were we when the Duke's army approached, and orders were given to prepare for battle. That word, generally so spirit-stirring to a Highlander, was heard without its having the power to awaken our wonted ardour. Alas! the spirit of confusion had entered into our leaders. One advised one measure, grounding his opinions upon intelligence derived from some source which the others despised; another gave an advice quite different, supported by information equally feeble in commanding belief. Disputes and coldnesses separated our chiefs. Their councils were noisy and contentious—their determinations were wavering and injudicious—and their measures, executed in a disarranged, irresolute manner, displayed all the bad effects resulting from the jarring of opinions biased by strife and discontent.

“The battle began by cannonading on both sides. Our artillery was of little service; but as the Duke's was well supplied with grape-shot, and managed by experienced engineers, they made a cruel havoc among the brave Highlanders. We could not endure the sight of so many gallant men falling unavenged—our comrades stretched at our feet, weltering in their own blood, and others dropping fast around—without the satisfaction of striking a blow ere they died. We gazed, and maddened—then rushed to the charge. Our onset was glorious. They could not withstand us; and when we met hand to hand, and the broadsword hewed deep in the steely ridge of bayonets, each man, when he fell, had the satisfaction to see his blood mixed with that of a foe, and death had no longer its cold and withering power. Had we been supported, the fortune of the day might have been reversed, and the scene of Gladsuir acted again at Drummosie. But the charge had not been simultaneous throughout the line; for there was no agreement of views and combination of movements among our infatuated chiefs. The greater part of the army stood still, and witnessed, without assisting, our unequal struggle. Thus forsaken by those who ought to have co-operated with us, and taken advantage of the favourable impression which we had made, our own ardour contributed to our overthrow. Opposed by an immense superiority of troops in front, we were, at the same time, exposed to the fire of cannon, from pieces which outflanked us, and assailed on all hands by infantry and cavalry. Our first attack destroyed the front rank of the enemy, but was scarcely less deadly to ourselves; and, unaided as we were, we fared like the falling bolt of heaven—the moment of our power was that of our annihilation.

“In vain did the war-cry ring its inspiring sound, while every brave clansman strove to support the renown of his name. In vain did our chiefs lay aside all distinctions of rank, and ply the claymore with dauntless vigour. The few of our devoted band which fell not where they fought, were borne backwards forcibly by the overwhelming strength of numbers. The wounded and dying yelled in unavailing agony, as they saw us overpowered and retiring, mingling their latest groans with execrations against the successful foe.

“It was then, when the unequal conflict had become a slaughter, that, after having received a number of slight wounds, and feeling myself waxing weak by loss of blood, as I was moving backwards, along with a small and yet unbroken body, disputing every step, another musket-shot stretched me among the heaps of my brave but ill-fated countrymen. The victors pressed onwards, and passed over us stabbing with their bayonets and spontoons those of the fallen Highlanders who shewed symptoms of life. One dragoon, as he charged over me, struck at me with his sabre, and cut me across the forehead, which was exposed to his blow, as I lay on my back. You see the scar. The force

of the stroke stunned me, and I lay for a time insensible to what was going on around me. When I recovered from that stupor, the Highland army had disappeared. The stragglers of the Duke's army were spreading themselves over the field of battle, plundering the bodies of the slain, and murdering while they stripped the wounded. They were not the disorderly followers of the camp—they were regular soldiers; and they were indeed a disgrace to the name of soldier. Not contented with the plunder which the dead withheld not from their vulture hands, they stripped the wounded naked, stabbed those in whom life appeared strong, and left them to die, exposed to all the rigours of a night of early spring, under the cold skies of Inverness. And often, in the wantonness of cowardly barbarity, they besmeared each other from the gathered pools of still warm and almost living blood, and raised loud hallooing yells of savage glee. The blood which encrusted my face gave me an appearance so ghastly, that they passed me over untouched; but, indeed, I am not sure that I owe my safety from their pillaging hands to ought but the intervention of darkness.

“When night put an end to their fiendish employment, and all was silent around, except the occasional deep groans of the dying, I dragged my languid body from the fatal field, supporting my feeble steps with a piece of spontoon, which had been hewn in two by the keen blade of some brave clansman. With great pain and difficulty I reached a little glen at a short distance from the field of battle, where several of the wounded had found a temporary shelter. After getting my wounds bound up, and a scanty refreshment, I continued my progress into a still more remote and concealed part of the glen, accompanied by two or three who were acquainted with the retreat. At length, we reached a place where the banks nearly closed on each side, the high jagged rocks approaching and receding in a similarly serrated manner, as if to join in the several niches and angles into which they were riven. Leaving the bed of the little stream, we proceeded along the top of the chasm, till we reached its higher limit, where the water, leaping over a ledge of rocks, formed a cascade of considerable size. Close on its brink my companions descended by the aid of some roots and stunted shrubs; and having assisted me to follow them, I found myself in a small cavern, one side of which was concealed by the roots and thickets which formed the means of descent, and the other by the sheet of falling water. Here we remained for a time in comparative safety. Impelled by an eager desire to lay waste and to plunder the country of the hostile clans, the soldiers were less keen in exploring the immediate vicinity of the bloody scene; and to this, doubtless, was I indebted for my undisturbed shelter, while my wounds were not in a condition to permit my making any exertion, either to flee from the enemy or to procure my own subsistence. No sooner, however, did I feel myself so far recovered as to be able to endure the fatigue of crossing the mountains by unfrequented paths, and of sleeping wherever night should overtake me—my couch the blossomed heather, and my canopy the starry heavens—than I forsook my retreat, and sought my native glen, in fearful anxiety to learn whether the lawless hand of war had reached it, and the fierce step of the ruffian soldier violated the peace of its distant seclusion.

“My fears increased as I approached it, and saw but too evident tokens that it had not escaped the notice of the plunderer. I proceeded up the path; but, as I went, I dared not raise my head to look before me, lest some sight too shocking to be beheld should meet my eyes. I passed places where the sound of mirth and sport, or the sweeter tones of music, had often cheered my ear; but not a sound was heard, to break the death-like silence. The noise of my own foot-fall struck loudly and fearfully on my ear; and I could fancy that I heard the deep and sad beatings of my trembling heart. My feet instinctively traced out the

well-known path, till I came where my own dwelling should have been to glad my first-lifted gaze.

“I raised my head, and I beheld—a heap of blackened ruins! I gazed wildly around, but no living thing met my inquiring looks. Every cottage lay fire-scathed, and marked the prey of desolation. All was asleep—flushed into the breathless solitude of utter misery. The remorseless hand of vindictive power had done its worst; and the place but shewed where the victims *had been*. The sight smote my heart for a time into a stupor; and I wandered among the ruins of my own once happy cottage, silent and bending, like a child seeking a lost plaything. Night found me seated where my own fireside once was—now a gathered pile of half-burned fragments; and, throwing my plaid carelessly over me, I stretched myself, not in my bridal chamber, and wished to rise no more. In spite of my sorrow, or perhaps even in consequence of it, sleep fell upon me, but not so deep as to make me forget my woes. Dreams of wanderings, and dangers most imminent, and incredible escapes, and fields of slaughter, and scenes of desolation, and griefs of yet deeper and more tender nature, crowded in rapid succession or in aimless confusion upon my mind. By degrees they became more distinct, and gave to my view what I would have gladly given all the world to have beheld with my waking eyes. I saw my Mary in life and almost in health and happiness; her face was paler and more thoughtful than usual, and she appeared as if she had endured much from danger, fatigue, and anxiety. Her little daughter lay smiling in her bosom; and, as the mother gazed on her sweet face, her own acquired an expression of greater calmness and quiet resignation. She approached me, and, holding forth her innocent charge, smiled upon me with a look of so much hope, and even comfort, that my heart felt the bitterness of its sorrow abated. She seemed to beckon me away to sunny fields, more fertile and peaceful, if not so rugged and so grand as those in our Highland wilds. Again she gave me a smile of encouragement, and passed away. I felt that I could neither accompany nor follow her; yet I felt even in my dream as if I could yet be happy.

“When I awoke, I found the sun high in the heavens; but still no solitary inhabitant, the sole relict of the desolated glen, appeared, to tell me of the fate which had reduced it to such a condition. I removed a very considerable part of the ruins of my cottage; but found no traces of ought which could tell me what had befallen my wife and child. To stay where I then was would have been death by famine, even had nothing else occurred; and was entirely unavailing. I wandered into many a glen, formerly proud of its own little population; and found there now nothing but voiceless and dreary abodes of desolation. My heart grew eager to avenge the miseries of my country upon its pitiless spoiler; and I watched an opportunity of escaping into France, where I might again face those in battle who had shewn themselves equally void of generosity and humanity.

“In a short time I gained my purpose; and, in the armies of France, again met and combated the arms of England. Why should I proceed to detail the particulars of the many battles, sieges, and skirmishes, which it was my fate to witness? I found, at length, that the French regarded the Scotch in their armies as only so far useful as they were willing to bear the brunt of danger, without looking for any share in the fruits or rewards of victory. Their generosity and gratitude was but very limited; and their partiality too evident for men of any spirit to endure. I resolved to leave them; and, taking advantage of a new spirit of moderation and mercy which now seemed to animate the minds of the British rulers, to return again to the hills and streams of my native land.

“Fifteen years, or nearly fifteen, of all the hardships and toils of war, aided by the sickness of a sorrowful heart, have made a very considerable change upon my personal

appearance. I am, therefore, not in much danger of being recognised by any who might be able to prove my connection with the rebellion, as it is now termed, of forty-five; and, in order to avoid any possibility of suspicion, I wander about as an itinerant piper. This also furnishes me with a ready passport south or north, wherever my mind may lead me; and I must own that I find it most congenial to my disposition now, to roam unceasingly over the country. My wanderings have hitherto chiefly been confined to the Highlands; and there is scarcely a glen in its whole compass which I have not explored. I have of late felt a strong desire to survey the Lowlands in a similar manner. I know not what impels me, but I feel that I cannot rest till I have traced the rivers and crossed the mountains of the low country; though the rivers appear tame, and the mountains diminutive to the eye of one accustomed to roam amidst the wild grandeur of Grampian scenery, with its headlong torrent, and lofty, rugged, and terrific mountain pass. I wander without an aim, yet I feel that I cannot cease to wander. There is a powerful whisper within my heart which urges on my steps, I know not whither; but I cannot refuse it obedience.

"And now, my hospitable friend! let me hope that the relation of my tale of woe will not prevent your enjoyment of your well-earned mirth. For me, I shall strive, as far as I am able, to promote it; though my own heart can have but little participation in joyous revelry. Not the years of toil and peril which have already elapsed—not all the years which my life may yet have to drag through—can ever, in the slightest degree, weaken my love for the memory, my sorrow for the loss, of my own Mary. But the uttering of my griefs freely to one who has a heart to feel and to commiserate them, has lightened and soothed my mind not a little; and I shall be the better able to play a lively spring to your blithe lads and lassies."

During the Highlander's story, the farmer had listened with deep attention and very marked interest. Once or twice he turned a close scrutinizing look upon the war-worn visage of the gallant but unfortunate man; and each time a concealed smile of high satisfaction half-enlightened his cheek and eye. When the Highlander's narrative was ended, and he was preparing to join the band of reapers where they were now fast assembling, he was stopped by the farmer, who, thanking him for the confidence reposed in him by the recital, asked him if his name was Fraser. He replied that it was; but, before he had time to inquire why that question was put, the farmer hurried away to see into the state of the preparations which had been going forward, or to give some directions.

"Hae a' the cottars been bidden come up and hae a blink's daffin?" asked he, as he approached.

"No," said the guidwife; "ye didna send word to do that; sae I thought ye were only gaun to gie the shearers an orra glass the night, an' hae the cottars when a' the crap was snug under thack an' rape."

"Nonsense, nonsense, guidwife; we can do that too: baith's best. Rin awa, some o' ye, lads, an' bring as mony o' them as ye can light on. Haith, we'll be as merry as we can the night; an' we'll hae anither merry nicht for a' that, belyve! Ellen, is your mother comin, bairn?"

"She hasna heard ought about it yet; an' canna be comin."

"Then gang ye owre the burn, lassie, as fast as ye like, an' tell her frae me she maun come; an' she shall come, though I should yoke the auld naig an' send the cart for her. But, when joking's done, tell her I'll tak it ill if she doesna come."

After issuing these commands, and passing a joke or two among his reapers, the blithe farmer returned towards the old Highlander, swinging his arms with a hearty air, and humming—

"Bide ye yet, an' bide ye yet,
Ye little ken what may betide ye yet."

"Weel, freend," said he, as he came forward, "after all, what do ye really think o' the Lowlands, and the Lowland folks?"

"Indeed, I can scarcely say that I have formed any opinion of them. My mind is in general so much occupied with its own thoughts, that it rarely pays much attention to what might, in another, attract notice. I must say, however, that I meet with certain hospitality—as far as supplying any of the little wants of the hour goes—and not unfrequently with real kindness, far beyond my expectation. Such as at present."

"Hoot, hoot! dinna gie me ony flattery, ye pawky carle. Wha could do less than ask ye to share the sport on the day o' winning the *kirn*? But, tell me, what places o' the Lowlands ye hae been maistly in?"

Thus the farmer contrived again to engage his guest in conversation; and, at the same time, to divert his mind from recurring to the sad recollection of his afflictions.

While the two were busy in their ideal travels, and in the midst of a most interesting excursion along the banks of the Clyde, Ellen Fraser interrupted their journeyings, to announce to the guidman that his orders had all been executed.

"That's right, lassie. Come, Donald! let us see what's to be done!"

"Duncan, if you please," replied the Highlander, with a smile.

"Weel, weel—Duncan be't, then; but a' Highland men are Donalds wi' us, ye ken. Where's yer mother, Ellen? O Mary! d'ye ken that this winnle-straw o' a lassie o' yours has won the *kirn* the day?"

"So I've heard, guidman; and I'm right glad to hear it. It proves, at least, that she has been able to fill my place tolerably well."

Duncan Fraser was directly behind the farmer; so that he had not seen her when she answered. But he started at the sound of her voice—cast round him an inquiring look—and when the advance of the farmer allowed him to see the woman whose voice had caused his heart to leap in his bosom, he fixed his eyes on her face a moment in utter astonishment and doubting hesitation. Just at that instant, she unconsciously stepped aside, and assumed a slight gesture, peculiar to herself, but which would have passed all unnoticed by a stranger's eye. At sight of the little sidelong step, the half bend of the head, and the soft pensive smile which played gently on her cheek and round her eye, the memory of past days, and of the little witcheries that had spread their charms around his youthful amorous heart, rushed in light and conviction upon his mind; and, in a voice broken and full of emotion, he exclaimed—"Mary! my own Mary Fraser! have you forgot your Duncan?" One short look of incredulity and surprise, then an exclamation of wondering joy, was her only answer; and, rushing into his extended arms, she fainted with excess of transport.

We shall not attempt to describe the happiness which filled the bosoms of Duncan Fraser and his long-lost Mary; nor the deep and proud feelings with which she presented her daughter to him, and saw her folded to her father's bosom, after so many years of almost orphan destitution. Nor shall we betray our own feebleness, in endeavouring to pourtray the glad scene around them, where every one seemed to have received a personal gratification, displayed so truly in the happy looks with which they regarded the check of the war-worn Highlander, wet with the sweet tears of unexpected joy, his sore tried and amiable wife, and their most interesting daughter. It was a scene of purest happiness.

When their first transports were abated, Fraser began to

express his gratitude to the farmer for the kindness which he had shewn to his wife and daughter. "Never speak about it," replied he; "it was nae mair nor my duty to do a' that I could for ony puir helpless creature. But, oh, man, I am glad—ay, doubly happy, an' most thankfu—that Providence put it into my power to be kind to *your* wife an' bairn, aboon a' men on the face o' the earth! I am the man that ye happed wi' yer ain plaid in the field o' Falkirk—ay, just as sure as ye're Duncan Fraser. Ye saved my life that terrible night; an' a' that I *has* done, or *can* do, is far owre little to repay ye the debt o' gratitude I owe. If ye'll stay in the Lowlands, an' accept o' my bit cottage—the ane yer wife has lived in—I mak ye most heartily welcome to it; an' I hope ye'll no refuse to do me this ae favour mair, an' just mak it yours."

We need scarcely say that this kind offer was frankly accepted; and that Duncan Fraser, after all his perils and toils, found himself possessed of a snug residence, in which he might pass the remainder of his days, in the enjoyment of blessings which a short time before he could not have dared to hope for.

It matters little to inquire whether the toils which Tibby Gibson had been preparing for the unwary heart of Tam Armstrong, were ultimately blessed with success. Those personages came in our way, and we used them as we found occasion, without thinking it necessary to keep up our accidental acquaintanceship.

The kindness which Will Smith felt for Ellen Fraser, has been gradually assuming a softer character; and it is believed that, ere long, she will probably be induced to bid adieu to the light-hearted joys of single blessedness, and enter into the graver duties, cares, and enjoyments of sober matrimony.

THE WIDOW AND HER SON.

To us there are few things that appear more melancholy or more affecting than the ruins of a deserted dwelling-house, which the hand of time has unroofed and laid prostrate. There is, we think, something impressive, sadly impressive, in its cold, desolate apartments, now exposed to the rain and the winds of heaven, its eyeless windows, and dilapidated doorway—nay, there is an interest excited even by the traces of the fastenings of the cupboard on the wall, and of the fire in the chill, gaping, and ruinous chimney. All, all speak forcibly of decay, and tell of the transitoriness of the things of this ephemeral world.

In contemplating such scenes as this—and hence, perhaps, the feelings we have alluded to—the imagination sets to work, and paints the happy groups that once assembled around the then cheerful, but now cold and desolate hearth, or recalls the joyous laugh of the deserted mansion's young inmates, with all the hilarious din and bustle of a numerous and happy family; or, mayhap, it may dwell on the hopes and fears of their elders, now both terminated for ever. And the reverie is wound up by the sad inquiry—"Where are they all *now*?" And the query is answered by a gust of wind rushing, with melancholy sound, through the deserted apartments, and waving, in its progress, the long grass and nettles with which they are overgrown.

Nor are we sure that these feelings and associations are confined to the ruins of houses of note alone, to the deserted mansions of the great or the wealthy. In our own case, at any rate, we are certain they are not; for we have felt them all, and with equal force, when contemplating the ruins of a cottage; and on no occasion were we more under their influence, than when viewing the remains of such an humble domicile as that we have alluded to, in the course of an excursion, last summer, through the wilds of Nithsdale. But, then, we must confess, there was a story, an affecting one, connected with the lonely dwelling, which might, nay, which must have added to the interest with which we

contemplated its ruins. These ruins, consisting of one gable, and a small portion of the side walls, together with the remains of a low, loose stone dyke, that once formed the boundary of the little garden, or *kail-yard*, which was attached to the house, are situated in a remote and sequestered spot in the district above named.

At the period of the story we are now about to relate to our readers, the little cottage of which we have spoken, was inhabited by a widow woman of the name of Riddel, and an only child, a son, of about thirteen years of age.

Mrs Riddel's husband, who was now dead several years, was a poor but most industrious and pious man, who wrought at such country work as the neighbourhood afforded. His gains were, it will readily be believed, but moderate; yet a frugal, abstemious, and exceedingly temperate life, enabled him to purchase the cottage he inhabited, with the garden attached to it; and, in time, to add to these possessions a cow. But, beyond this, the poor but worthy man was not permitted to increase his store. Death cut short his days, and left the widow and her son to reap the benefit of his prudence and industry; and no small matter was this found, when there was none other to assist them. The cow, the cottage, and the garden, were to them great riches. And thankful to her God was the widow, for the mercies He had bestowed on her; not the least of which was the happiness she found in her boy, who was, to her, all that she could wish. James was, indeed, such a son as a mother might well be proud of. He was mild, dutiful, yet bold and active, and gave promise of being more than usually handsome. He loved his mother with the most sincere and devoted affection; and though only in his thirteenth year, earned nearly the wages of a full-grown man; and, if any one had seen the delight and exultation expressed in his eye, as he poured his weekly wages into his mother's lap, they would have felt assured that these were the happiest moments of his life.

Thus, what with the little property she possessed, and the earnings of her son, Widow Riddel's lonely cottage presented as pleasing a picture of comfort, in an humble way, as might anywhere be seen; nor could two happier beings be found within the county—we might extend it to the kingdom—than the worthy widow and her son. But inscrutable are the ways of Providence—dark and inscrutable, indeed, since they permitted all this humble happiness to be blighted in an instant, and ruin and desolation to overtake its unoffending possessors.

It was on a fine summer afternoon, in the year 1746, about two months after the battle of Culloden, that Widow Riddel, as she sat knitting stockings on the little rustic seat in the garden, which her son had made for her accommodation, and while the former was busily employed beside her in putting some seeds into the ground, happening to look down into the little strath or valley that lay almost immediately below the cottage, saw what was to her a very unusual and alarming sight. This was a party of dragoons. She had heard much of the cruelties and atrocities that had been perpetrated by the government troops, on the persons and properties of the insurgents, whose hopes had been laid prostrate at Culloden; and she was not ignorant of the military despotism which generally prevailed over the kingdom in consequence of that victory. But she had yet to learn, and the lesson was now to be taught her by fearful experience, how indiscriminating was the vengeance of the ruthless and sanguinary ruffians, to whom the power of inflicting chastisement had been intrusted.

On observing the soldiers, Widow Riddel immediately called her son's attention to them, and wondered where they could be going to. This was soon made plain enough. In a moment after, she herself exclaimed—

"Mercy on us, Jamie! they're comin here. What in a' the earth can they be wantin?"

Next minute, the dragoons were in front of the cottage; when one of them dismounted, and advancing towards the widow, inquired if there were any rebels skulking thereabouts.

"Oh, no, sir, no," replied the terrified woman; "there's naeboddy o' that kind in this quarter, I assure you."

"Well, well, so much the better, good woman, for both you and them; but, I say, we're starving of hunger, old girl: can ye let's have something to eat?"

"Blithely, sir, blithely," rejoined poor Mrs Riddel, delighted to find matters taking so amicable a turn. "I haena muckle, sirs, but ye're welcome to what I hae." And she bustled into the cottage, and, with the assistance of her son, brought out a quantity of oaten cakes, cheese, and sweet milk, on which the soldiers made a hearty meal.

Now, after this kindness of the widow's, or even without it, into whose head or heart, but that of an incarnate fiend, or monster in human shape, could it have entered to do her a mischief? Yet such a wretch was amongst the troopers who now surrounded her humble dwelling, and had partaken of her hospitality. Just before the party started, the ruffian who first addressed Mrs Riddel, asked her, with an affected air of kindness, how she lived.

"Indeed, sir," replied the unsuspecting widow, "the bit cow there," pointing to the animal which was grazing at a little distance, "an' the bit garden, wi' what the laddie can earn, is a' that I hae to depend upon; but, wi' God's blessing, it's eneuch, an' we are sincerely thankfu'."

To this affecting detail of her humble resources, the villain made no reply; but drew a pistol from his holster, and, riding up to the poor woman's cow, discharged it through her head, when the animal instantly fell down dead. Not satisfied with this heartless atrocity, the ruffian leaped the little garden wall, with his horse, and deliberately trode down every growing thing it contained; and those that the feet of his charger could not reach, he destroyed with his sabre.

Having completed this unnameable villany, the monster rejoined his comrades, laughing and shouting out as he went, in exultation at the deed.

"There, you old devil," he exclaimed—"that will put it out of your power to harbour any rascally rebels, or, if you do, they and you must starve."

In an instant afterwards, the party rode off, laughing heartily at the mischief done by their comrade, of which they all seemed to approve.

It would be a vain task to attempt to depict the distress and misery of the bereaved widow, when she found herself thus suddenly deprived of her all. This scene is better left to the imagination of the reader. Wringing her hands in bitter agony, she rushed into the house, and flung herself on her bed, where she gave way to the sorrow that overwhelmed her. From that bed she never again arose. A violent illness, the consequence of dreadfully excited and agitated feelings, seized her, and in a few days terminated her existence.

During her illness, her poor boy never left her bedside. There he remained night and day, endeavouring to cheer the spirits of his dying parent, and to make her look lightly on the misfortunes that had befallen them.

"Dinna, mother—dinna tak it sae much to heart. Never mind it, mother," he would say; "I am strong, and able to work for you, and you shall never want sae lang as I can earn a penny; and I'll put the garden into as guid order as ever it was. It's no near sae much harmed as ye think, mother; and what's to hinder me to buy you a cow by and by, as weel as my father did. I'll sune hae as much wages as he had, and I'm sure I'll guide it as weel, for your sake." And, on one occasion, the poor boy, thinking to increase the effects of the consolation he was administering, added—"And wha kens, mother, but I may yet meet the villain

somewhere, and be revenged o' him for what he has dune to us!"

At these words, the dying woman, on whose ear all the rest seemed to have fallen unheard, suddenly raised herself on her elbow, and, looking her son affectionately but earnestly in the face, said—

"My son, speak not of revenge! It is unbecoming a Christian; and I'm sure such a spirit was never encouraged in you either by yer worthy father or by me. Leave vengeance in the hands of God, Jamie. He will deal with the destroyer in His ain way and in His ain guid time. Perhaps, my son, the misguided man even now repents o' what he has dune; and if he does, you surely would not seek to increase his punishment, which maun be, in such a case, a full atonement for a' that he has dune; for what pain, Jamie, can equal that of an awakened conscience?"

The boy was silenced by this reproof; but we can hardly say cleansed of the spirit of revenge which had been kindled in his youthful bosom against the author of their ruin.

On the following day, the widow expired; and, on the fourth thereafter, her son followed her remains to the grave. But he returned not again. At the conclusion of the ceremony he suddenly disappeared, and no one knew whither he had gone. Days, weeks, months, and years, passed away; but no intelligence ever reached the neighbourhood of what destiny had befallen the orphan boy.

Thirteen years after this, the famous battle of Minden was fought by Prince Ferdinand against the French. True; but what has that to do with the story of the widow and her son?

Patience, good reader, and you shall hear. Associated with the army of Prince Ferdinand, there was a large body of British horse under Lord George Sackville; and these shared in the dangers and glory of the victory. On the evening of the day on which the battle was fought, a party of these dragoons were assembled in a tavern, where they were boasting loudly, in their cups, of the feats they had performed, when one of them, striking the table fiercely with his clenched fist, swore, that, when he was in Scotland, he had done a more meritorious thing than any of them.

"What was that, Tom—what was that?" shouted out his companions at once.

"Why, starving an old witch in Nithsdale, to be sure," replied the fellow. "We first, you see—for there was a party of us—ate up all she had, and then I paid the reckoning by shooting her cow, and riding down her greens."

"And don't you repent it?" exclaimed a young soldier, suddenly rising from his seat at the upper end of the apartment, and approaching the speaker, as he put the question. "Don't you repent it?"

"Repent what?" said the ruffian, fiercely. "Repent such a matter as that! No, I glory in it."

"Then, villain!" said the youth, unsheathing his sword—"know that that woman was my mother; and since you do not repent the deed, you shall die for it. Draw and defend yourself."

The dragoon sprang to his feet—a combat ensued; and, after two or three passes, the latter was stretched lifeless on the floor.

"Had you repented," said the youth, looking towards the corpse as he sheathed his sword, "I would have left you in the hands of your God; but since you did not, I have made myself the instrument of his vengeance."

Young Riddel afterwards rose to the rank of Captain in the British service, and greatly distinguished himself in the German wars.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS.

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE HAPPY MEETING.

GENTLE reader! have you ever, in the course of your peregrinations in search of the picturesque and beautiful, wandered through the lovely valley where the Esk and Liddal unite their streams? You must have *heard* of it, or *read* of it; for to what Scotchman is not the name of Cannobie Lea familiar—immortalized, as it has been, by the great Border Minstrel? Cannobie Lea is a long, level green, gradually tapering to a point, where the dark Liddal pours its tributary waters into the bosom of the placid Esk. The high red scaur which towers over the Liddal, with its bright green summit, and its clefts clothed with underwood, is called the Moat Linn; on the summit of which may be traced against the sky in the back-ground the distinct and clear outline of an ancient Roman encampment. Exactly opposite to it, on the west side of the Esk, is the site, or the supposed site, of the castle of Kinnmount Willie—one of the heroes of the olden time. No traces of it remain. The hand of improvement has been there; and a modern mansion, surrounded by rising plantations, has usurped the place of the frowning tower and the barren hill. As we pursue our course up the road, which here follows the course of the Esk, the scenery increases in beauty. Immediately below, is the broad, bright river, threatening, ere long, to undermine the commanding height; opposite, is the rich greensward of Cannobie Lea; in the distance, is the beautiful vale of Liddal, opening to the eastward, with all its profusion of rocks and foliage; behind, are the hills of Liddesdale, with all the intermediate country sparkling with beauty; to the right, is the parish church, the peaceful churchyard, the rich green holm, and the river gliding placidly along below; nor does the scene lose any of its attraction or interest from being associated with the affecting story we now proceed to unfold.

The summer sun was smiling a fond and lingering farewell to the beautiful valley, while the small birds sang a parting strain, as if to usher him to his repose. It was one of those lovely evenings which have such a soothing effect upon the spirits and hearts of men—calm, still, and lovely; not a breath of air was abroad—the leaves slept upon the trees, and the voice of man, and the noise of his labours, were silent. Nothing was audible but the murmuring ripple of the river, the low clear notes of the singing birds, and the faint lowing of the distant cattle. Had it not been for the slowly and lazily rising wreaths of blue smoke, which here and there rose through the trees, and which marked the presence of man, all was so still and calm that a stranger might have fancied himself, although in a populous district, to have wandered to some deserted settlement—some lovely dwelling of the dead, where he alone was a living wanderer—“alone with nature in the solitude.” A distant rumbling sound was now heard, which gradually became more and more distinct, till at last, through the openings of the trees which shaded the high road, a post carriage was seen rapidly approaching the bridge. At this point, the horses were pulled up, and a tall gentlemanly looking man, dressed in deep mourning, sprang out; and

having directed the postilion to drive slowly on, and wait his arrival at the village inn, he remained leaning, in a musing posture, on the parapet of the bridge, and gazed mournfully, though affectionately, upon the scene before him.

“Wha can he be?—where can he come frae?—what’s he glowerin at?” were the muttered but unanswered queries of the country folks, whom the sound of wheels had drawn to their cottage doors. And yet the good folks had no cause for such surprise; for few were the travellers who crossed that bridge, who did not stop to admire the beautiful scenery. It was one of Nature’s miniature gems—a kind of pocket edition of rural beauty; wood, water, hill, dale, interspersed with partially concealed or boldly prominent cottages, were all comprised in the small confined section of the scenery viewed from this point. Beneath, ran the pure, and placid, and beautiful Esk—a moving mirror, glowing with the softened splendour of the evening sky; facing the bridge, at some distance down the stream, stood a bold precipitous red scaur of considerable height, surmounted by lofty old trees, through the foliage of which were partially seen the white walls of the village inn; and the higher green ground behind was sprinkled with picturesque-looking thatched cottages. The river broke into a torrent of considerable force as it approached the linn, as if concentrating all its energies to endeavour to force its way through the opposing rock; but, baffled in its increasing efforts, it afterwards pursued its way, in sullen silence, at right angles, to its former course. On the left, the high bank of the river was shaded by young plantations, over which towered the turret and roof of the church. On the right, was a green holm, sprinkled here and there with trees, with a cluster of thatched and white-washed cottages looking down upon it. Long and mournfully the stranger gazed. The rapid changes of his countenance shewed that thought and memory were busy within him; and he looked through the scenes around, as if his thoughts were far away, or as if they formed a sort of *telescopic vista*, through which his memory travelled back to days long past.

“This is the hour,” he murmured at length, “which I have for years longed for, hoped for, prayed for! I stand once more on my native river, and I look once again upon the long left scenes of my innocent and thoughtless boyhood. Yes! I thought, when labouring in a distant land for wealth and honours, that this hour would repay me for all my toils and privations, and that the calm sunbeam of domestic bliss would soothe and mellow the evening of my days. Am I happy now? Alas, alas!—where are the bright faces that ought to have welcomed my coming? Where are the warm hearts to beat responsive to my own? I have riches, I have honours; but I have none to share them with me. I am alone!”

He sighed, and walked slowly and mournfully onwards, heedless of the inquiring eyes that followed his footsteps, and apparently absorbed in deep and painful reflection. He paused when he reached a small cluster of cottages standing close to the high road, near where it passed over a deep ravine, whose sides, clothed with underwood, looked down upon a small burn or rivulet, which merrily sought a union

with the adjacent river. The parapet of the bridge had been destroyed years since, and never again rebuilt.

"Ah," said he, "how every footstep recalls to my mind some recollection of the past! The same bridge, the same stream, the same scenery, remain; and I am wandering a stranger amid the very haunts where I was once as well known and welcome as the flowers of spring. The features of the scenery remain the same; but the old familiar faces that smiled upon me in my childhood—where are they? A new race has sprung up, in whom I feel no interest, and who feel none for me."

Slowly he mounted the gentle ascent, and reached the spot where the village inn stood smiling its invitation to wearied travellers. He soon found himself seated in a small and comfortable parlour, much superior in appearance to the generality of road-side accommodation; the walls hung with drawings by the fair hand of the host's daughter, and the brightly burnished grate rejoicing in a profusion of holly and myrtle. Having paid and discharged the postilion, the stranger rang the bell and ordered some refreshment; at the same time expressing a wish to speak to the landlord.

"Guid evening t ye, sir," said the landlord—a good-looking, rosy-cheeked, middle-aged man, with a good-natured twinkle in his eye, bowing as he entered, and smoothing the hair over his brow—"I understand ye wish to speak to me?"

"Yes. Sit down, landlord. I wish you to tell me all about this beautiful valley of yours. In the meantime, help yourself to a glass of your own whisky."

"Ye are vera kind, sir," said Boniface; "and, as to the whusky, I'll warrant it real guid. I ken a drap guid whusky weel."

"No doubt," said the stranger, laughing; "and now, tell me who lives in that!"

But we will not fatigue the reader by repeating all the ins and outs of their conversation, but merely remark, that the landlord was surprised and confounded by the stranger's abruptly asking him, if he knew a woman called Margaret Thompson, and if she lived in that neighbourhood.

"Maggy Thompson!—ay, weel ken I Meg Thompson. A' folk hereawa ken her. She leeves in a bit cottage up by yonder, near the muckle hoose on the brae. Does yer honour ken her?—Maybe ye'd wish to see her?"

"I have a great curiosity to see her," said the stranger; "and I will thank you to send and ask her to come to me. But, perhaps, she will not like to come to a stranger?"

"Strange enouch!" muttered the landlord, draining off his toddy, and hastening to dispatch a messenger to the redoubtable Maggy.

Margaret, or Meggy, or Peggy, as the good folk of the valley, according to their several notions of harmony, called her, was the daughter of poor and honest parents, who resided in that neighbourhood. She had left her father's house when a girl, to attend an English family, who, attracted by the beauty of the scenery we have attempted to describe, took up their abode for several years in a romantic situation on the banks of the Esk, and, on departing for the south, left behind them their eldest son, a boy six years of age, whom they committed to the care of the worthy and excellent Mr Douglas, minister of the parish. Margaret, during her six years of service, had become so much attached to her mistress, that she was easily persuaded to accompany her to England. The sorest trial on this occasion, next to leaving her parents, was parting from little Claude, who had grown up beside her from his infancy, and of whom she was enthusiastically fond and proud, and who, in return, lavished his warmest affections upon his young and indulgent nurse. Loud were the wailings, and manful were the kickings, with which he repelled every attempt to separate him from "his own dear Meggy;" but all in vain. He was left to howl out his griefs alone in a corner, while Margaret as sorrowful, but less loud in the expression of her

grief, kissed and left him. Nearly thirty years had passed, and various accounts, "few and far between," had reached Margaret's parents, telling of her comfortable and happy situation, when, one stormy evening, Margaret herself made her sudden and unexpected appearance at the cottage door; and a most affecting scene of recognition ensued, which our regard for our own nerves, as well as for those of our readers, prevents our attempting to describe. Like the painter of old, we draw a veil over it, and leave it to their imagination. Margaret's parents were fast approaching the threshold of eternity, and it was a delight and comfort to them to have still one glimpse of the brightness of their early years to light them on their way. At the time of which we write, Margaret had returned home about eight years, six of which she had lived alone—for the glimmering lamp of life which, in the joy of her return, had flashed forth a transient brightness, had soon died away in the socket, and the good old people had gone, almost hand in hand, to their last home, and left Margaret alone in the world. The habits of seclusion and reserve in which she indulged, and the air of gentility which a long domestication with Southron manners had given her, rendered her by degrees an object of jealousy and aversion to the surrounding peasantry, who, with the usual charitable inferences of humanity, pronounced her reserve, pride, and her melancholy, remorse for the commission of some unknown, and, of course, very horrible crime. Besides, she had formed a very suspicious sort of intimacy with a large black cat, which had actually been known to sit upon her shoulder, with its whiskers close to her head, and purring all manner of abominations into her ear, while its tail was twitching and eyes flashing in a very questionable manner. No wonder then that Maggy was looked at with a very suspicious eye by the superstitious peasantry; particularly when we remember that tales of all kinds, whether cats are implicated or not, have the snowball propensity of increasing, as they pass from house to house and from mouth to mouth; besides, not more than thirty years from the present moment had elapsed, since a real "habit and repute" witch lived in the very cottage which Margaret now inhabited, and was known to have tripped up and thrown into the fire a young cub of a boy—she herself delighting at the time in the form of a greyhound. Such was Margaret's character among the wise ones of the neighbourhood; but her appearance, to any but prejudiced eyes, was far from betokening anything in common with that very improper gentleman whose name we will not mention—"at least," as Madam Vestris sings it, "to ears polite." She was verging upon sixty, with a tall, commanding figure, and a remarkably upright carriage; her hair was grey, but apparently more with care than age; and the expression of her countenance was mild, gentle, and downcast, bespeaking experience of the disappointments and trials of life, and resignation to bear them without repining.

A hesitating rap at the door of the inn parlour, aroused the stranger from a reverie in which he had been indulging—and, on looking up, he saw Margaret Thompson standing before him. He immediately rose, and, pointing to a chair, closed and fastened the door. An hour elapsed ere Maggy made her appearance again in the passage of the inn; her countenance bore the evident traces of tears, but its smile of contented happiness shewed that they had not been tears of grief. Numerous were the friendly salutations, and sudden and eager was the thirst for knowledge, with which the inquisitive and wonder-hunting neighbours saluted Maggy—but all in vain; the well was dry, or, at all events, the information they longed for was beyond the reach of such pumping arts as theirs. We, however, by virtue of our authorial prerogative, will raise the curtain, and lay the scene before our readers.

"Did you wish to speak to me, sir? My name is Margaret Thompson."

"Margaret! do you not know me?" said the stranger.

Slowly, and calmly, and inquiringly did her mild but penetrating glance rest upon his dark and handsome features; but she withdrew it again despondingly, as she replied—“No, sir; I cannot say that I do.”

“Fool that I was,” muttered the stranger, “to forget the lapse of time—to forget the change that thirty years of active life have made in my appearance!” Silently taking out of his writing case a small miniature, he put it into Margaret’s hand, and his eye glistened as he observed the sudden start and half-stifled scream of joy with which she gazed upon it.

“My bairn! my bonny bairn! my winsome Claude!” exclaimed she, with tears streaming down her cheeks; “mony an’ mony’s the time I hae rocked ye on my knee, when I wasna the puir despised body I am noo. O sir! can ye tell me ought o’ my bairn? ’Tis his vera sell! his wee saft dark ee, an’ the bit dimple on his cheek; and there’s the mark he gat on his bonny bree, whan he tumbled aff his sheltly! Oh! what wad I no gie to see him ance mair!” sobbed she, kissing the lifeless miniature, as though she thought it endued with animation. “O sir! can ye tell me ought o’ my bairn?”

The stranger was evidently much affected by the artless expression of her feelings; for he had seated himself at the table, and hiding his face in his hands, seemed to be striving to repress his emotion.

“Maggy!” said he, looking up, and fixing his dark mild eye upon her. Margaret started—the softened tone of that voice had struck some hidden chord of memory—she gazed long, and eagerly, and doubtfully upon him, and exclaimed—“O sir! can ye—are ye,”—

“Yes, Maggy!” interrupted the stranger, “I am Claude Russell—the wee Claude you were once so fond of, and who, amid all his wanderings and sorrows, has never forgotten your kindness to him.”

“It’s no possible!” said Margaret, who, though half an Englishwoman, always talked in the dialect of her early days, when her feelings were excited—“it canna be! And yet the sound o’ yer voice, when ye ca’d me sae saffly by my name, cam dirlin in my ear, like the sough o’ a lang-forgotten sang. Hech, sirs! it’s no possible!” The stranger lifted the dark hair from his brow, and a smile passed over his expressive features. A new light seemed to break upon Maggy; breathlessly she exclaimed, “Ay! there it is! there’s the kenspeckle mark on the bree, an’ the bonny wee dimple on the cheek.” And the affectionate creature, forgetting the lapse of years, and thinking only of the past, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed his cheek; exclaiming—“My bairn! my bairn!”—she “lifted up her voice and wept.”

Claude Russell, at the age of thirteen, had left the almost paternal roof under which he had passed so many happy years; and the grief of the Douglases at the separation was equal to his own. He was a universal favourite, and all who knew him vied with each other in expressions of attachment and regard. He was a boy of frank, open, generous disposition, yet modest and unassuming withal; warm-hearted and affectionate, he could not but feel attached to those who lavished so much kindness upon him; and it was with a heavy heart he bade adieu to persons and scenes so dear to him. The elder Russell had obtained for his son the promise of a cadetship in the Company’s service; and, after a short sojourn at the military college, Claude was sent out to push his fortune at Madras. We will not attempt to describe or analyze the varied feelings of his heart, when he found himself upon the wide and boundless sea—all that he loved and valued left behind, perhaps for ever; for who that has crossed the threshold of the world, cannot recall to his recollection, much more vividly than any language can depict them, the mingled hopes and fears with which he made his first entry upon the busy scene of life—the fond, overpowering, heart-crushing grief with which he

gazed at every memento of those he had left behind, succeeded by the warm and cheering dreams of a young and glowing fancy—dreams of wealth and honours to be shared with the beloved ones at some future happy period? Claude felt, as youth *will* feel, deeply and absorbingly at first; but his buoyant spirit soon shook off the weight of despondency and grief, and taught him to look forward—and when did light-hearted youth ever look forward but with hope?

On his arrival at Madras, he was received with the warmest kindness and hospitality by an old friend of his father, to whom he had letters, and who insisted upon his residing with him until he should be appointed to a regiment. Here, as at home, Claude soon became a favourite and every comfort and indulgence which wealth could procure, or which friendship for the father and attachment to the son could suggest, was at his command. Mr Maitland, Claude’s friend, was high in the civil service, a man of great ability and unbounded liberality. His wife had gone home by the last fleet, with her only daughter, a child four years of age, whom she intended to place under the care of her relations in England, and was then to return to her husband. Claude soon became to Maitland as a son; and never did son love father more affectionately. But this world is a scene of disappointment—of ties formed only to be broken. Claude was appointed to a regiment stationed at Hyderabad, and fourteen years passed over his head ere he returned to the presidency. During that time, however, he had not been idle: he had made himself conspicuous by his gallantry and assiduous attention to the duties of his profession; and his temperate habits enabled him to avoid the diseases which swept the path of promotion before him. His regiment had been actively engaged on several occasions; and, by the chances of warfare, and the mortality among his seniors, he rose with almost unexampled rapidity, and found himself, at the end of the period above mentioned, second in command of his regiment. Years had not effaced the recollection of the happy scenes of his childhood, and his heart yearned to return to the beautiful banks of the Esk. He had received a letter from his friend Maitland, informing him of the expected arrival of his daughter, and begging him, if possible, to come and witness a father’s joy on the occasion. Tired of an Indian life, and satisfied with the moderate competence he had acquired, Claude had serious thoughts of retiring on half pay; but before taking so decided a step, he resolved to consult his friend in person. Having obtained leave of absence, he hastened to Madras, where he found, to his grief and disappointment, that poor Maitland had fallen a victim to that scourge of the east—cholera; and his poor widow almost heart-broken, by the loss of one she fondly and tenderly loved. She now looked anxiously forward to the arrival of her daughter from England; for she felt that her weakened constitution could not much longer withstand the effects of an Indian climate.

At length, the wished-for vessel anchored in the harbour; and Claude, as the old friend of her father, went on board to receive Laura Maitland. She greeted him, who was well known to her by report, as an old and valued friend; and unconscious of the mischief she was doing, increased, by her frank artlessness, the impression her personal appearance had already made upon him; for, the first moment he beheld her, he felt that his fate was fixed—that her image was stamped upon his memory for ever. She was just seventeen, with all the grace and finish of budding womanhood and the artlessness and freshness of feeling of early youth. Her full dark eyes sparkled with animation and intelligence, and her raven hair fell in rich clusters upon a shoulder white as alabaster. Alas, for poor Laura! The news of her father’s death was a most sudden and unexpected shock to her. His last letter was full of hope and animation, and of anxious expectation of her coming. Little did she think, when she received it, that it was the last he would ever

write! Long and bitterly did she mourn for him; but her anxiety to spare her mother's feelings urged her to exert herself to conceal her own. Month after month passed away, and still Claude Russell lingered on at Madras. He had become deeply, devotedly, passionately attached to Laura; but had still prudence enough remaining to prevent his committing his happiness for life to one with whose character he was not thoroughly acquainted. Lovers are but partial judges where the objects of their affection are concerned; but, in this instance, fortunately for Claude, the choice of his heart was fully justified, not only by his own prudential observation, but by the concurrent testimonies of others. Laura's devoted attachment to her mother—her disinterested kindness to others, and total negligence of self—her graceful and polished, yet perfectly natural manners—rendered her an object of admiration and regard to all who knew her. Many were, in consequence, the aspirants to her favour; but none had succeeded in awakening her affections. But the fire was slumbering within: in her secret heart, although almost unconsciously to herself, she preferred Claude Russell to every one around her. He was the one whom her eye always sought out and distinguished amid the crowd of beaux who surrounded her on the drive; and the very sound of whose voice caused the compliments of others to fall on her ear like empty sounds. She *thought* she loved him as a brother. A ship had arrived from England, and Claude hastened to the post-office to await the distribution of the packets. On his return, he found Laura sitting alone in the verandah, anxiously expecting to hear the news from home. Claude had no letters for her; but the melancholy expression of his countenance immediately attracted her attention; and, looking tenderly and inquiringly in his face, she said—

"You look sad, Claude. I hope you have heard no distressing news?"

"I *am* sad, Laura; for I am going to leave you."

"Leave us!" said she, the tears starting to her eyes, and her cheek turning deadly pale—"why must you leave us?"

"I have received a letter from my father, who has long been in uncertain health, imploring me, in the most earnest manner, to return home that he may see me once more and bless me before he dies. I cannot resist such an appeal; and as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements for retiring on half-pay, I will sail for England. I hope to be ready in time for the Raffles in a fortnight."

"So soon, Claude! And what will we do without you?" And, in spite of her efforts to restrain them, her tears gushed freely forth.

"Laura," said Russell, taking her hand affectionately—"dear Laura! will you miss me when I am gone? Alas! how much more must I suffer from the separation! I am a plain straight-forward soldier, unused to talk soft nonsense to a lady's ear; I have known you long, and I love you, Laura, as a man should love, with my whole undivided heart. Do you think you could be lappy with a poor soldier, who has nothing but his hand to offer?—his heart is your own already."

"Claude," replied she, blushing deeply, but looking tenderly and confidently in his face, "you have spoken to me frankly, and frankly will I answer you. I have long admired and esteemed your character; but I knew not how dear you were to me, till I feared we were going to part for ever. There is my hand!—I surrender it fearlessly and with confidence to one who I know will never give me cause to repent my choice."

"Never! so help me, Heaven!" replied Claude—"my own, my beloved one!" at the same time tenderly embracing her. The blushing Laura tore herself from his embrace, just as her mother entered the room, to whom Claude rapidly and energetically detailed what had taken place, at the same time begging her consent and blessing.

"The blessing of a fond and anxious mother be upon you,

Claude!" replied Mrs Maitland; "now you are indeed my son. I have long felt a mother's love for you; but now that the favourite wish of my heart is accomplished, you are doubly dear to me. In my Laura you deprive me of a treasure which can never be replaced; but I resign her with confidence into such keeping. Cherish her, Claude, as she deserves—a dutiful, affectionate daughter, cannot fail to make a loving and dutiful wife."

It was arranged between them, that, as Russell could no delay his departure, Mrs Maitland and Laura should follow to England in the next ship, and that there the marriage should take place. We will not harass our readers with an account of all the tender adieus uttered on the occasion of Claude's departure; suffice it to say, that, within a fortnight, the Lady Raffles was seen standing out from the roads under a press of canvass.

In two months after Claude's departure, Mrs Maitland, with the active assistance of her late husband's friends, was enabled to wind up her affairs, and took her passage in the Camilla, a vessel of 400 tons, bound to Ceylon to land passengers, and from thence to proceed to England. They had a speedy and pleasant passage down the coast, and had arrived within sixty miles of their port, when one evening, the wind, which had been gradually decreasing, died away altogether; and, before night, the Camilla was plunging and rolling at the mercy of the restless ocean. Great was the disappointment of all on board; they had expected to enter Trincomalee next morning, but now there was every prospect of a lasting calm. The passengers had retired to rest, after having had a long and amusing discussion at the supper table; and the captain went on deck to give his orders for the night to the mate of the watch. Not a breath of air was stirring; black heavy masses of clouds hung lowering overhead—their edges tinged with lurid and discoloured whiteness; flash after flash of broad sheet-lightning flickered incessantly round the horizon, lighting up for a moment the fringes of the clouds, and then leaving them dull and discoloured as before; the sea was of an inky blackness, and an ominous silence reigned over the whole—unbroken save by the groaning and creaking of the timbers and bulk-heads, and the dull flapping of the sails against the mast, as the ship rolled heavily and deeply in the long *swell*.

"A *dirty* looking night, Mr Smart," said the captain. "What do *you* think of it?"

"That there will be wet jackets before long, sir; but I do not think we shall have much wind."

"Nor do I," said the Captain; "but you must keep a sharp look out for squalls. Let me know if any change should occur."

"Ay, ay, sir. Good night—good night."

The courses had been hauled up, the royals furled, and the men had just come down from furling the topgallant sails, when a sudden, vivid streak of forked lightning seemed to rend asunder the dark veil of clouds, followed by a peal of thunder, so near, so loud, and so startling, that the watch on deck, dazzled with the flash and stunned by the noise, were for a few seconds paralysed. A loud crackling of spars aloft, and the cry of "fire" from the lower deck, almost immediately followed the peal, and awakened them to a sense of their danger. The lightning had shivered the foremast, and, penetrating to the lower deck, had run along the chain cable down the main hatchway, where several jars of oil and other combustible materials were stowed, and a dense cloud of smoke burst up from the hold, followed almost immediately by a blaze of vivid and glowing flame. The alarm had brought every soul on deck; and the shrieks of the half-naked females, and the silent but more concentrated fears of the male passengers and crew, rendered the scene doubly awful. Fortunately for them all, Captain Dacre was an old man-of-war's-man—cool, active, and a thorough seaman. His loud, distinct, energetic order, "Silence, fore and aft!

—every man to his station!" awakened the men from their panic, and startled them into attention.

Captain Dacre instantly perceived that there was no chance of saving the ship, and he gave the necessary orders for getting out the boats. The men, excited by his example, and by the greatness of the danger, exerted themselves as only British seamen can do in the hour of peril; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, so rapid was the progress of the flames, that they had barely time to launch the longboat before the stays and tackles were on fire. In this boat the passengers and principal part of the crew were embarked, with a small quantity of whatever provision could be hurriedly laid hold of, and with two oars, a blanket, and a compass. The chief mate and supercargo were of the party. The captain waited till the longboat was fairly off, and then, with the few remaining hands, lowered the sternboat, and left his blazing vessel. The boats pulled rapidly to some distance; and then the crews, as if by one consent, lay on their oars, and watched, in breathless silence, the destruction of their floating home. The flames were pouring in volumes from the hull; and, glittering through the clouds of smoke, the stays and rigging were seen for a few moments brilliantly and distinctly traced in lines of living fire, while the sails were flying in blazing fragments from the yards. In a few minutes, first the foremast, then the mainmast, fell with a loud and crashing noise; and then the hull, giving a heavy roll, as if in mortal agony, sallied over to port, and was engulfed in the hissing waves. A simultaneous cry burst from the men, when they witnessed the catastrophe; it was not a *cheer*, but a shout of mingled feeling—of admiration of the splendid spectacle they had just witnessed, joy and gratitude for their present escape, and sorrow for the destruction of their good ship.

"It is all over now, my boys," said the captain, looking sadly at the cloud of smoke, which was all that remained of the unfortunate *Camilla*; "give way with a will together, and, if we are fortunate, in twelve hours we will reach Ceylon."

The men answered their brave commander with three hearty cheers, and the boats were soon moving through the water as rapidly as circumstances would admit. Captain Dacre, finding that the small boat would soon leave the launch astern, and trusting to the fineness of the night, which had cleared up almost immediately after the accident, resolved to send the chief mate in her, to make the best of his way to the shore, he himself remaining with the longboat. Within the time specified by Captain Dacre, the jollyboat arrived at Trincomalee; and the mate, after having refreshed his men, who had had no provisions in the boat, reported the loss of the ship, and delivered the packet, which had been almost the only thing saved from the wreck. Four-and-twenty hours elapsed without any sign of the longboat, and the mate became seriously alarmed for the fate of his captain and shipmates, particularly as a breeze had set in from the west, which was greatly against them. In the meantime, a ship on the point of sailing for England, had availed herself of the favouring breeze; and the captain of her sailed with the impression that the principal part of the crew, and all the passengers of the *Camilla*, were lost.

We must now return to our almost forgotten friend, Claude Russell.

He arrived at home in time to cheer the last moments of his father, who died within a month after his return, and was, in a few weeks, followed to the grave by his heart-broken widow. After the first burst of sorrow at these melancholy bereavements, Claude was cheered by the receipt of a letter from Laura, informing him of their having taken their passage on board the *Camilla*, and their hope to reach England in a month after the receipt of the letter. Poor Claude! the cup of joy was soon to be dashed from his lips! The papers announced the loss of the ship *Ca-*

milla off Trincomalee—all the passengers and principal part of the crew lost. Stunning and withering was the effect of this report upon Claude Russell's already overwrought feelings. For weeks, his life was despaired of; and, when he *did* awake to consciousness and recollection, it was but to curse the hard fate that had at once made him an orphan and a widower—widowed in heart for ever.

Restless and unhappy, as soon as his health was sufficiently re-established, he broke up his establishment, and hurried to the Continent, hoping, by change of scene, and by the bustle and excitement of constant motion, to drive away the recollection of the past; but memory, the tormentor, was busy within him; and, after two years of vain striving with his misery, he returned to England, a melancholy heart-broken man. After a short sojourn in London, Claude resolved to return to the long-left, but still fondly remembered scenes of his boyhood, and hoped to soothe his sorrows by sharing them with the friends of his youth. Accordingly, he took his passage in a Leith packet; and, after staying for a few days in Edinburgh, posted on to the Border. The sight of the well-known scenery recalled to his recollection the kind nurse and playfellow of his infancy, and occasioned the meeting we have described above.

Margaret's story was soon told; for few and short are the annals of the poor. She had left her beloved mistress, to marry an old fellow-servant, who had treated her like a ruffian, and then deserted her. Having, fortunately, saved some money in the course of her service, she returned home to spend the remainder of her days in her native place, and to cheer and comfort the last hours of her aged parents. In answer to Claude's inquiries about his old friends, she informed him that Mr and Mrs Douglas had both died some years since, that their family was scattered in various parts of the country, and a stranger had succeeded to the pastoral charge of the parish. No other change, she said, had taken place since he left home, except that a strange lady had been for some time living in the little cottage at the bend of the river; but she did not know her name.

Claude parted with the happy Margaret, with a promise that he would see her next day. "I must convince you, Maggy," said he, "that the *man* is not forgetful of the kindness shewn to the boy. We must not part again."

We must now transport our readers again to the Indian ocean, that we may make inquiries as to the fate of our friends in the *Camilla's* longboat. Now that the excitement of the moment was over, and they had time to think of their present destitute situation, sad and comfortless were the thoughts that pressed upon the minds of the little crew. Thirty persons crowded into a small boat, with barely provisions enough to last for one day—almost all half naked, and stripped, by the ruthless flames, of all they possessed—with only two oars to trust to—the prospect was certainly anything but a cheering one. But sailors are a strange class of men—a genus by themselves—perfectly distinct from any idea a landsman can form of them; the creatures of habit and of discipline, they become, in time, totally dependent upon their superiors in cases of unexpected danger or emergency, and take their tone entirely from them. If their officers are firm and unflinching, and face danger with a smile, there is nothing in the shape of peril or fatigue which sailors will shrink from. A casual joke, or pertinent allusion, has often been known to occasion a complete revulsion of feeling among them, and, in the midst of the most imminent peril, to excite their merriment, and cheer them on to redoubled exertion. Observing the gloom that was stealing over his little party, Captain Dacre exclaimed, in a cheerful voice, to his passengers, "Come, gentlemen! let us continue the argument we were carrying on in the cuddy an hour ago." This unexpected appeal occasioned a laugh among the passengers, which was immediately echoed by the men; and, with loud and hearty cheers, they urged the

rowers to redoubled exertion. By constantly relieving the men at the oars, they were enabled to make pretty good way, as the sea was smooth as glass, and, of course, not a breath of wind stirring; but, after all, their greatest speed was little more than two and a half miles per hour. After twelve hours' hard rowing, one of the oars snapt in the row-lock; and, to add to their discomfort, a breeze began to freshen up from the westward—dead in their teeth, as sailors would say. They had nothing in the boat to supply the place of the broken oar, and they were obliged to use the other over the stern as a scull, with which they were barely able to make head against the breeze. Captain Dacre now served out a small portion of the biscuit and spirits which had providentially been put into the boat, and cheered the men with the hopes of soon making the land, or of having relief speedily sent to them from the shore. Patiently and perseveringly did they toil on all day, making little or no progress; but, towards night, the breeze fell, and a bright moon rose overhead to light them on their way. Towards morning, they heard the sound of distant oars, and every voice was raised in a loud simultaneous shout; they listened—the sound of oars had ceased; again they shouted, and were answered by a faint "hallo," which came across the waters with a cheering sound, and was responded to by three hearty cheers. In a short time, they saw, to their great joy, the jollyboat approaching. The mate, anxious for their safety, had hastened to meet them, and was now welcomed with shouts of grateful pleasure. He had brought with him a supply of provisions, and eight spare oars. After the men had invigorated their strength with a hearty meal, they renewed their labours with redoubled exertion, and, with the help of the new oars, made way rapidly through the water. A few hours saw them safely landed at Trincomalee, grateful to the merciful Providence that had saved them from such imminent peril. The fatigue and agitation she had suffered were too much for the weak frame of Mrs Maitland, who was taken alarmingly ill, soon after her landing, and in a few days breathed her last. Poor Laura's distress was overpowering; she loved her mother affectionately—and to lose her thus was almost more than she could bear. To see one who she knew had been long the centre of a large circle of loving and admiring friends, dying alone and unattended, a stranger in a strange land—unsoothed by the sympathy of friendship, and with no other hand than her own to smooth her pillow—was in itself enough to wound her feeling heart. But, fortunately, she had not time to dwell upon her sorrows; there was a necessity for exertion; and the consciousness that she was thrown upon her own resources, excited her to strive to subdue her feelings. Her mother, with her dying breath, blessed her affectionate and attentive nurse, and urged her, on her arrival at home, to put herself under the protection of her aunt, Mrs Thompson. Captain Dacre superintended the melancholy rites of mortality, and, in a few weeks, placed his weeping charge on board a ship bound for England. By the provisions of her father's will, Laura found herself in the possession of a handsome independence; but he with whom she wished to share it, was absent. She wrote letter after letter, but in vain; the rapidity of his motions had prevented their reaching their destination, and no accounts of him had been received for several months. Sick at heart, she feared that death had severed the only tie that bound her to earth, and hurried down to Scotland, where she was received with open arms by her only surviving relation, Mrs Thompson. Month after month wore away, and she had received no tidings of Claude Russell. Hope at length gave way to despondency, and she began to think of him as of the dead. Mrs Thompson, by her unobtrusive kindness and genuine sympathy, soon wound herself round Laura's affections, and, in time, succeeded in soothing and moderating her excessive grief at the supposed loss of Claude. The cottage which they

inhabited was romantically situated on the banks of a beautiful river, and, hour after hour, would Laura sit at the open window gazing upon the stream, and listening to its soothing murmur, while her thoughts were with him whom she thought she had lost for ever. One evening, a stranger, whom the beauty of the scene had attracted to the spot, wandered slowly and listlessly past the cottage, just as Laura was closing the lattice to exclude the evening air. Their eyes met—Laura gave a scream of joy as she fell fainting in her chair, and, in a moment, Claude Russell, her long-lost Claude, clasped her fondly to his heart. The joy of that unexpected meeting amply repaid the lovers for all the misery and anxiety they had endured. Fondly did Claude listen to the sweet accents of his Laura, as she recounted all that had happened since they parted, and fervent was the gratitude he expressed to the delighted Mrs Thompson for the maternal care she had bestowed upon his beloved one. In three weeks after this happy meeting, our lovers were married. A union founded upon esteem and mutual affection, could not be otherwise than a blessed one. Tried in the furnace of affliction, they had learned doubly to value the blessings they enjoyed, and to bow with submission to the evils from which the happiest state of humanity cannot be exempt. They lived to see our honest friend, Margaret perform the same duty to three of their children, which she had formerly done to their father. She died at a good old age, beloved and regretted by the Russells, and by her young charge, who all dearly loved "Good Maggy."

THE GENTLE SHEPHERD.

As the story of the Gentle Shepherd, so beautifully dramatised by Ramsay, may not be so well known to our readers on the south side of the Tweed as it deserves to be, we have thought it would not be amiss to sketch the tale in prose for their entertainment, while we hope it will not be unacceptable in this shape even to our Scottish readers. To proceed then:—

Patrick, or Patie, as he was familiarly called by his compeers, was an humble shepherd lad, born and bred in the Lothians in Scotland, and within a few miles of Edinburgh. Patie, who lived about the middle of the seventeenth century, was a remarkably handsome young man, and surpassed in all those rustic accomplishments in which country swains usually delight to excel. He was, moreover, of a gay, light-hearted, and joyous disposition; and, morning, noon, and night, made the woods and echoes of the romantic spot where he lived, ring with his mirthful glee. Besides all this, he possessed, by nature, both a mind and manner superior to his station; yet in that station he was happy; and although it was sufficiently humble, he would not have exchanged it for an empire. He had no unreasonable ambition, and was tormented with no longings after things unattainable by one in his lowly condition in life.

The person (Symon Scott, a wealthy and excellent man) with whom Patie resided, and with whom he had lived ever since he was a child, was a tenant of Sir William Preston's, a gentleman of large landed property, who, to save his head—he having taken an active part with the royalists of the period—had fled his native country, and was now abroad, no one knew where.

Happy in his situation, and delighted with the natural beauties, which he could well appreciate, of the romantic district in which he lived, with its hills and its dales, its woods, and waterfalls, and limpid streams—Patie's felicity was yet more increased by a virtuous, well-placed, and fondly required attachment.

In his neighbourhood, there lived a modest and beautiful girl of the name of Peggy Forsyth, of the same humble rank in life with himself. This girl was the reputed niece of

Glaude Anderson, a respectable farmer, and a tenant also of Sir William's. But, though reputed the niece of this person, Peggy was, in truth, no relation to him whatever.

The girl was a foundling, and honest Glaude, her guardian, was, in reality, as ignorant of the circumstances of her birth and of her parentage, as was the child herself. He had found her, one summer morning, carefully wrapped up in swaddling clothes, at his own door; and being a kind-hearted man, he had adopted the little stranger; and to rivet, as it were, the affection he soon formed for her, he bestowed on her the title of propinquity alluded to; and neither the girl herself nor the world ever knew anything to the contrary. And on this girl Patie's love was fixed, to her his heart was given, and to him she yielded hers in return.

Thus stood matters with Patie and Peggy, when intelligence arrived that Sir William, who had now been absent for many years, might soon be expected home, as the king had been restored and the royal party was once more dominant.

This agreeable tidings created the most lively sensations of joy amongst Sir William's tenantry, by all of whom he was greatly beloved for his generosity of character and pleasing condescension of manners. But to none of those who acknowledged him as their lord did this news afford such happiness as to old Symon Scott and Glaude Anderson, who had always been especial favourites of the good Sir William. The moment these two worthy men heard the tidings of their landlord's expected return, they simultaneously bethought them of celebrating the event with a feast, each insisting that he should be the giver. Glaude, however, had been forestalled in this particular by Symon, who had already given orders for a sumptuous banquet to be prepared, to which he invited Glaude, and all the old and young folks in his immediate neighbourhood. After partaking of a plentiful repast, the youngsters, male and female, amongst whom were Patie and Peggy, betook themselves to the green in front of the house, to conclude the festivities of the day by a dance.

While the young people were thus joyously engaged on the green, an old man of venerable appearance, but whose dress bespoke him a mendicant, suddenly presented himself amongst them, and began to amuse them by telling their fortunes; a branch of business which he appeared to have added to his regular calling—that of soliciting charity. The knowledge, however, which the old man discovered of many circumstances connected with those whose future destinies he affected to foretell, greatly surprised all who heard him, and made such an impression on Jenny, Glaude's daughter, that she rushed breathless into the house, where the old people were enjoying themselves, and informed them that a most extraordinary old man, the most amazing fortune-teller that ever was seen or heard of, had come amongst them, and was now on the green in front of the house.

Symon—all kindness and hospitality, and resolved that no one should go past his door hungry that day—desired Jenny to bring the old man in, protesting, however, at the same time, that he had no faith whatever in the soothsayer's pretended gift of divination—a protest in which he was cordially joined by Glaude.

In a few seconds, Jenny returned, leading in the old man, who was cordially welcomed by Symon, and immediately offered entertainment and a night's lodging. In gratitude for this kindness, the old man inquired if his host had no children, whose future fortunes he desired to learn; saying, at the same time, that he would exert his utmost skill to perform his task faithfully, whether it should be for good or evil. To humour what he considered at best a joke, Symon pointed to Patie, who, with some of the other youngsters, had now entered the house; and said that he was the only child he had.

On this, the old mendicant took hold of Patie's hand, and, to the great alarm of Symon's wife, told his auditors that

there was a particular mark on the young man's body, just below the armpit—an assertion which was so true, that Symon's wife, who was the only person besides Patie himself who knew of such a mark, immediately accused the old fortune-teller of having dealings with the Evil One. Paying no attention to this remark, the prophet went on to say, that, if the young man was spared, he would, in a very short time, become a great and wealthy landlord.

All, except Symon, treated this announcement with mirthful expressions of distrust, and none with more marked disbelief and contempt than Patie himself, who said that two whistles and a couple of curs were all his property, and likely ever to be.

It has been said that Symon presented the only exception to the general incredulity on this occasion, although he was the first to express disbelief in the prophet's supernatural powers; but for this there was sufficient reason, as shall afterwards appear.

The change in Symon's sentiments regarding the old man's gifts, did not escape the notice of his friend, Glaude, who bantered him on his altered tone, and expressed the utmost astonishment that he should allow himself to be imposed upon by such absurdities. This open contempt of his fidelity instantly called down upon Glaude a rebuke from the soothsayer, who not only insisted on the soundness of his prediction, but added that they would see that all he had foretold regarding Patie would be fulfilled ere two short days should elapse. Seeing the earnestness of the fortune-teller, Glaude good-humouredly not only gave up the point, but asked him to predict the future fortunes of his own two daughters; a task, this, which the old man declined, alleging that he had the gift of prophecy only once a-day.

Having now exhausted his store of predictions, the mysterious visiter was invited to place himself at the board, and to partake of some refreshment. This hospitality, however, he begged his entertainers to delay for a while, saying, he would rather go abroad for a little and enjoy the calm air of the evening, and requested that his host, Symon, would accompany him; a request with which the latter readily complied.

On leaving Symon's house, the old man directed his steps towards the deserted and dilapidated mansion of Sir William Preston, which was in the immediate neighbourhood; and, as they approached it, asked his companion to whom it belonged. He was told; and was further informed that the joyful tidings had come amongst Sir William's tenantry, that he would soon be with them again. But what was honest Symon's joy—what his amazement—to find, as he did at this moment, that the event he announced as approaching, and to which he looked forward with so much delight, had already taken place!

Hastily throwing off the disguise that concealed him, the old mendicant—the wandering fortune-teller—in an instant stood before the almost incredulous eyes of his humble but faithful friend, Symon, Sir William Preston himself, and none other.

Astonished and delighted beyond measure at the extraordinary discovery, honest Symon flung himself on the ground, and, in a transport of joy, clasped Sir William's knees, and welcomed him to his home. The good knight kindly raised the old man; and, embracing him affectionately, asked for *his boy*.

Here our story requires a slight digression. When Sir William, who was a widower, fled his native land to avoid the vengeance of the popular party, he had, previous to his departure, secretly consigned his only son, then a child, to the guardianship of his faithful tenant, Symon, with instructions, however, that neither the boy himself, nor any one else, should ever be informed of his real descent—a course which Sir William was induced to pursue at once

to save his son unavailing regrets in after-life, should he never be able to recover his rights for him, and to reconcile him to the humble duties of the lowly station to which it was more than probable he should be, during his lifetime, doomed. It need hardly now be told, that Patie, Symon's protégée, was no other than the son and heir of Sir William Preston; and that it was of him Sir William now inquired.

To all the inquiries which the latter now made at Symon regarding his son, he received the most pleasing and gratifying replies; and was delighted to learn, amongst other things, that his education had been carefully attended to.

Satisfied of this, and with ~~other~~ particulars regarding the conduct, character, and acquirements of his boy, Sir William next anxiously inquired if his son had formed no attachment unbefitting the station which he was now about to assume.

On this important point, Symon acknowledged that he feared the worst, as he had lately discovered, he said, that there existed a kindlier feeling between the young man and Glaude's niece, Peggy, than he approved of; but added, that he hoped the change of condition which now awaited Patie, would induce him to break off the connection, and think no more of his lowly lover; and in this hope he was very eagerly joined by Sir William, who now desired Symon to bring his son to him, and to intimate openly, to all whom it concerned, that he was returned.

There being now no longer any reason for concealing Patie's real descent, the intelligence that the humble shepherd was no other than the son and heir of Sir William Preston—and, in consequence of his father's return, was now about to step into the elevated station to which that important circumstance entitled him—rapidly spread around, and created a universal feeling of surprise, and no small joy, as Patie had been a general favourite. But there was one on whom this intelligence had a very contrary effect to that of inspiring joy.

This was Peggy. In the discovery that her Patie was no longer the humble shepherd that had won her heart, but a gentleman of rank and fortune, the warm-hearted girl saw the utter annihilation of all her fondest and dearest hopes, and gave way to feelings of the deepest despair; for she dared not think otherwise than that she and her lover should now be sundered for ever. But, in coming to this conclusion, she had not made sufficient allowance for the strength of Patie's attachment, nor for the generous and noble nature of his character, which would not permit him to find, in a mere change of worldly circumstances, an apology for broken vows. But, in truth, it required no considerations of a moral kind to induce Patie to keep faith with his lover; his affection for her alone was all-sufficient for this purpose, and determined him to remain faithful to her, whatever might be the consequences. Abiding in this resolution, and determined to act up to it, he flew to his beloved Peggy, whom he found in tears and in despair, to assure her that the change in his condition had not, and never would effect, any change in his sentiments towards her, and that, as the son and heir of Sir William Preston, he should remain as constant to his love as if he had continued to be the humble shepherd who had wooed and won her heart.

On the day following these events, several persons, and, amongst them, Peggy, having assembled at Symon's house, where Sir William was sojourning for the time, the latter, attracted by the singular beauty of Patie's lover, whom he did not know by sight, and forcibly struck by a strong resemblance which he fancied she bore to his own sister, eagerly inquired who she was. Glaude, who was present, replied that she was his niece; but, instantly after, contradicted himself, by confusedly saying she was not his niece. The honest man was, in truth, perplexed at the moment with two opposing considerations, and farther led astray by the force of habit. He had called Peggy his niece on this occasion, because he had long accustomed himself to give her that title, and, in-

deed, to view her in the light of such a relative; but he, at this moment, felt that Sir William had a right to expect the truth from him; and on this, indeed, the knight now somewhat peremptorily insisted, when Glaude acknowledged that Peggy was a foundling, and proceeded to describe the circumstances connected with the finding of the infant, which have been already told; but more than these, Glaude said he could not tell. The information, however, in which Glaude was deficient, was, to the astonishment and delight of all present, more especially to that of Sir William, whose curiosity was greatly excited, furnished on the spot, and from a very unexpected quarter.

No sooner had Glaude finished his account of the foundling, than an old woman of the name of Mause Templeton, who was present, seizing Peggy by the hand, led her up to Sir William, and asked the knight if age had effected such a change on her countenance that he did not recognise in her the nurse of his sister—the nurse of the *mother* of the girl she now held in her hand. After a moment's pause, Sir William acknowledged his perfect recollection of her; and seeking no further testimony than her assurance, added to his own convictions, from the likeness he had discerned, that the girl who stood before him was indeed his niece, he tenderly embraced her and made her take a seat beside him, until he should hear from Mause, what he now requested she should give, a detail of the circumstances that had entailed such a singular fate on his niece.

Mause proceeded to say that, when Peggy was an infant, she was informed, by a person on whom she had every reliance, that the child's life, her parents being dead, was threatened by an uncle's wife, in order to come at the large property to which she was heir, and between which and this avaricious and unnatural relative the infant was the only obstacle. That, having a perfect assurance of this atrocious design, she stole away the child from its faithless guardians, Peggy's uncle and his wife, and having carried it, by easy stages of a few miles each day, at length arrived with her tender charge in that part of the country where they now were. Being afraid of a discovery, if she retained the child, she then determined on the step which put the infant into Glaude's possession. But, though soon satisfied that the child was in safe and good keeping, she resolved still to watch over it, and with this view took a small cottage in the neighbourhood, where she had lived ever since, and where, unknown to Peggy herself, or to any one else, she had watched over her with all the anxiety of a mother.

When Mause concluded her story, Patie, now Mr Patrick Preston—who had been present during the whole of this singular and interesting scene—flew towards Peggy, and at once perceiving that the discovery which had just been made of her real parentage and descent must remove every objection which his father could possibly entertain to their union, he embraced her, when they both knelt before Sir William, and besought his blessing, which the delighted father and unclereadily gave; intimating, at the same time, his determination to lose no time in stripping Peggy's unnatural relations of their ill-got gains, and restoring them to their rightful owner. And now if ever unalloyed felicity was the lot of man, it was at this moment that of Patie, the Gentle Shepherd, whose union with Peggy, we need hardly add, immediately followed.



WILSONS

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PARSONAGE :

MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE.

AFTER the lapse of about thirty years, I lately paid a visit to what had once been my father's fireside. It was in the month of October that I visited the manse of Kirkhall. My father had been minister of that parish ; and I received a kindly welcome from his worthy successor—one of the warmest-hearted and most learned men in the Church of Scotland, whom I have long known and esteemed as a brother. I found myself again seated beside the hearth in the little parlour which was once gladdened with a mother's smile—which was once cheered with the childish sports of brothers and sisters—which was hallowed by the prayers and presiding virtues of an affectionate father. They are all departed to the land of spirits!

Yet, on looking round me, every object seemed to assure me that they were still near—for almost everything else was unchanged. On looking through the window from the elbow chair in which I sat, the old and magnificent lime tree which, in the days of my youth, spread its branches and foliage in wide luxuriance over the court, and gave assurance of shade and shelter, was still unscathed. Its sweet-scented flowers were indeed faded—for the breath of approaching winter had touched its verdure ; but its variegated green and yellow leaves were the same as when I had seen them, and attempted, with boyish hands, to imitate, nearly half a century ago. A little farther off, the "decent church" peered from among the majestic ash, elm, and chestnut trees, with which it was surrounded—the growth of centuries—casting a deep and solemn shadow over the place of graves. The humble offices, and the corn-yard in which I had rejoiced to mingle in rural occupations and frolic, were near ; and nothing was wanted to realize the scenes of my youth, save the presence of the venerable patriarch and my mother, and their little ones grouping around their knees, or at the frugal board.

But the illusion was short-lived. A holly tree, in the adjoining parterre, caught my eye. When I knew it of old, it was a little bush in which the goldfinch and the linnet nestled, and were protected under my juvenile guardianship ; but, now, it had grown up to a stately tree. I saw in the mirror, over the mantelpiece, the image of my own visage, in which there were lines that time and the world's cares imprint on the smoothest brow and the most blooming cheek. The yellow locks of my forehead were fled, and the few remaining hairs were beginning to be silvered with grey. My son, too, rising almost to manhood, stood up before me, unconscious of the recollections and visions which flitted through my mind. These things dispelled my reverie ; and my wandering thoughts were recalled to the realities of the passing hour.

It was on a Saturday evening that I thus revisited Kirkhall ; and my melancholy meditations were soon partially dissipated by the cheerful, but moderate hospitalities of my host ; which were truly such as to make me feel that I was, as it were, among mine own kindred, and at my father's fireside.

What a flood of emotions and remembrances spring forth at the mental utterance of these words ! On retiring from the parlour, I was ushered into what was, of old, denominated in the quaint colloquial language of Scotland, "The Prophet's Cham'er"—that is, the apartment for study, which was to be found thus distinguished in all the old manses of our clergy. It was now a bedroom, the library being established in another apartment ; and I laid my head upon the pillow in a chamber which was consecrated, in my memory, by the recollection that within its walls good men had often thought of "the ways of God to man," and prepared their spirits, in the depths of silence and seclusion, for proclaiming in the sanctuary the glad tidings of salvation.

It was a tempestuous night ; and, though the blast was completely excluded from the manse by the dense masses of trees with which it was surrounded, the wind howled and moaned through their branches and on their summits, and, like the thunder, gave forth a solemn music to the soul. I did not sleep, but listened to the sounds of the tempest with that pleasure which philosophy cannot explain. Ere long, the current of thought reverted to my own former relations to the dwelling in which I reposed ; and busy memory, in the watches of the night, supplied, with all the freshness of a recent event, the circumstances which chequered the life and marked the character of my father. Though, perhaps, in the estimation of many, these were commonplace, yet, to me they were still full of interest ; and, as they seem to afford a true and undistorted picture of a Scottish clergyman's real character and fortunes, I have written them down to fill a spare corner in the *Tales of the Borders*.

William Douglas was the eldest son of a farmer in one of the northern counties of Scotland. The family had been tenants of the farm of Mains for five successive generations ; and, so far as tradition and the humble annals of the parish could be relied on, had borne an unspotted name, and acquired that hereditary character for worth which, in their humble station, may be regarded as constituting the moral nobility of human nature. Just and devout in their lives—sincere, unpretending, and unaffected in their manners—they were never spoken of but with respect and good will by their neighbours ; and were often, in the domestic and rural affairs of the vicinity, the counsellors and umpires, in whose good sense, and integrity, and kindness of heart, their humble friends trusted with confidence. Such characters and families are to be found in almost every rural district of this country ; for, "though grace gangs no' by generation, yet there is sic a thing as a hawk o' a guid nest." I believe in the homely proverb, though some metaphysicians may dispute it, but whether debatable or not in the abstract, William Douglas had the good fortune, as he deemed it, to grow up in the bosom of a family in which the characteristic of worth was cherished and transmitted as an heirloom.

The eldest son of the guidman of Mains shewed an early fondness for his school exercises, and acquired, under the tuition of *Roaring Jock*, the dominie of the parish, a tolerable proficiency in the rudiments of literature. The guidman, being an elder of the kirk, was often at the minister's manse ;

and the bairns from Mains were occasionally invited to tea on the Saturdays and play-days; and Paplay (the minister, was so denominated, from the name of a small estate of which he was the laird) shewed great favour to the "auldest callant," and often conversed with him about the subject of his reading. In these circumstances, and considering the religious character of the Mains family, it was almost a matter of course that Willie should be destined by his parents, and prompted by his own predilections to "the ministry." And, by the advice of Paplay and Roaring Jock, Willie was sent to the Marischal College at Aberdeen, where he gained a bursary at the competition, and prosecuted his studies with assiduity, until, at length, in the fulness of time, he became a licentiate of the church.

The only thing I remember to have heard connected with this period of my father's life, was his anecdotes of Paplay's eccentricities, which were numerous—some of them personal, and some of them the peculiarities of the old school of clergy in Scotland. He was a pious and orthodox man; but withal had a tincture of the Covenanter about him, blended with the aristocratic and chivalrous feeling of a country gentleman of old family. In the troubled times, about the years 1745-6, he was a staunch Whig; and so very decided in his politics, that, when "Prince Charlie's men" had the ascendancy in Scotland, he was either in arms or in hiding; and when he ventured to preach, he wore his sword in the pulpit, and a blue coat, girt with a belt, in which a pair of pistols were hung—more like a man of war than a preacher of peace! Even after the day of defeat at Culloden, the Jacobitism of the north was so strong, and Paplay was so obnoxious, by reason of his vehement preaching against Popery, and Prelacy, and the Pretender, that he continued long after to wear his sword, (in the pulpit and elsewhere,) which was rather a formidable concern to the nonjurors about him, in the hand of a brave and athletic champion of true Whiggery. He assigned three reasons for wearing his sword after it seemed to some of his friends to be unnecessary:—"First, Because I am a gentleman; secondly, Because I can use it; and, thirdly, Because, if you doubt, you may try." Among some of his oddities, he had a great admiration of a well-spring, a white calf, and a bonny lass; and he never passed any of them in his way without doing homage. Though travelling on horseback, he would dismount to bathe his feet in a limpid stream, as it gushed from the earth, or to caress a white calf, or to salute a female—all which fantasies were united with the most primitive innocence. And he never ate a meal, even in his own house, or when he was a refugee in a hay stack or kiln barn, without exacting from his wife and friends the most urgent *pressing*.

It was under the auspices of this warlike and singular apostle, that my father was ushered into the sacred office of a minister of the Gospel. He preached his first sermon in the church of his native parish; and, according to the fashion of the times, at the close of the service, the parish minister publicly criticised the discourses of the day. The young preacher, in this instance, found favour in Paplay's eyes; and his testimony in favour of the *plant* which had sprung up among them, was so emphatic, and rendered so piquant by his odd figures of speech, that William Douglas was long distinguished among his friends and neighbours by the familiar designation of *Paplay's Plant*.

But there was another *plant* that graced the manse, which was not unobserved or unadmired by the young preacher—Jane Malcolm, (the daughter of a clergyman in a more remote parish, and niece of Paplay's lady,) a sweet flower, that had grown up in the wilderness like "a daisy on the mountain's side." It was in the nature of things that the "loves of the plants" should be illustrated by the juxtaposition of the two favourite flowers of the chivalrous parson. An affectionate but secret attachment naturally grew out of the frequent visits which "Paplay's Plant" paid

to the manse; and these were multiplied in consequence of William Douglas being appointed assistant to his spiritual patron, whose decline into the vale of years had begun to abate the energy of his character, and to render assistance necessary. The attachment between the young people might be suspected, but was not formally made known to Paplay and "the lady," as she was called, according to the courtesy of the olden time. Indeed, such a promulgation would have been idle; for the "half-reverend" assistant (as Paplay was wont to address the young probationers of the church) had no immediate prospect of a benefice, although he was an acceptable preacher throughout the bounds of the presbytery. But an incident occurred which facilitated the union of which the preliminaries were thus established.

The Earl of Bellersdale, a nobleman in a neighbouring county, who affected to be descended from an ancient family that flourished in the days of good King Duncan, but who had really no more connection with it than with Hercules or the Man in the Moon, reared a village and seaport at a short but convenient distance from his magnificent castle. Among the other items in the arrangements which were destined to immortalize the munificence of the Earl in the establishment of Bellerstown, a church was deemed necessary for political, to say nothing of moral considerations; and the Earl, being a man of taste, thought that a church placed in a particular position, would make a fine vista from various points in the noble park which surrounded the Castle of Bellersdale. A picturesque chapel was accordingly built on a rising knoll, separated from the pleasure grounds and the castle by a river, over which a handsome bridge made no mean addition to the lordly scene.

The chapel being built, and endowed with a stipend of "forty pounds a-year," (the hint, I suppose, was taken from Oliver Goldsmith,) it was necessary to provide a clergyman to officiate in it; and William Douglas being one of the most approved young men in the district, had the honour to be preferred by the patron. The period to which I now refer, was long before the church, in its wisdom, enacted a law for regulating chapels of ease; and not only the amount of stipend, but the continuance of clergymen who officiated in such chapels, depended on the arbitrary and sovereign will of their pious founders. Bellerstown, though a sort of step in William Douglas' professional progress, yielded too scanty a revenue to admit of matrimony; but the talents, respectability, and prepossessing manners of the chaplain, made him a favourite at the castle, and rendered it practicable to eke out the slender living by the addition of a small farm, at what was called a moderate rent. But this appendage, too, was held by the same precarious tenure—Lord Bellersdale's will. The probationer was inducted as pastor of the Bellerstown chapel, according to the rules of the church; and, after the lapse of a few months, he and Miss Jane Malcolm thought—although no other person thought—that they might venture to enter into the holy bands of wedlock, and, with frugality and mutual love in their household, look forward to happiness in their humble and unambitious sphere of life. This thought ended in deed—and they were married.

The tenor of a clergyman's life is, in general, even and unvaried, consisting of a faithful and regular discharge of his peculiar duties. Such, for some years, was the fate of William Douglas. He acquired the confidence and affections of his humble flock—the esteem of his brethren—the countenance of the neighbouring gentry—and even the patronage of the great man, at whose table he was a frequent and welcomed guest. Mrs Douglas had presented him with two sons; and his parents, advanced in years, were gathered to their fathers. This bereavement was not unlooked for; but the first trial of life which wrung his heart to the core, was a fatal illness which, in a few days, snatched the object of his most tender affection from him.

Time passed on and "brought healing on its wings." After the lapse of several years, my father felt that it was not meet for man to be alone; and, whilst he cherished the fondest remembrance of his first domestic companion, he had too much good sense to go into the affectation of continuing single during the rest of his life "for her sake;" more especially as he had no female relative to whom he could confide the maternal charge of his boys in their nursery days. He accordingly discerned, in the daughter of one of his flock, a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood, those personal attractions and amiable dispositions which awakened his manly sympathies; and, too high minded to stoop to mercenary considerations, he married a second time, without hunting for a *tocher*, as is sometimes imputed sarcastically to the Scottish clergy. Isobel Wilson was lovely and virtuous.

About the time the American war ended, I came into this earthly part of the universe; but nothing occurred for several years of my father's life to diversify the peaceful enjoyments of his domestic life, or to interrupt the conscientious and zealous discharge of his pastoral duties. At length, however, a cloud gathered in the firmament, which, ere long, burst on his head, in the wrath of his patron, the Earl of Bellersdale.

Local, rather than general politics agitated the district in which his humble life was cast; and there was a vehement struggle betwixt his Lordship and a neighbouring nobleman for ascendancy in the county. The ranks of either party were swelled by the multiplication of freehold qualifications, for the purpose of acquiring votes. One of the expedients, as is well known, for the attainment of such objects, is the creation of nominal and fictitious voters, by conferring on the *friends* of a political party an apparent, but not a real interest in a landed estate; and this is practised and justified by a legal fiction, and a little casuistry, with which political agents are quite familiar. The ordinary mode in these cases, is to confer such *parchment* franchises on dependants and personal connections of the great man who needs their support—and the Earl of Bellersdale, who had the patronage of many churches of greater or less value, found, even among the clergy who had hopes of preferment from his hand, several individuals sufficiently unscrupulous to accept of such discreditable titles to a political franchise as freeholders.* Amongst others, my father, who was in good odour at the castle, was deemed a *likely* person to be intrusted with so precious a privilege as a right to vote for any tool of the Earl who might be brought forward as a candidate for representing the shire in Parliament. The factor was dispatched to Bellerstown to offer this high behest to the poor parson, whose ready compliance was expected as a *matter of course*. But he calmly and peremptorily refused the proffered vote, and intimated that he held it derogatory to the sacred nature of his office to pollute himself with such politics, and inconsistent with every principle of honour, morality, and religion, to take an oath, as required by law, that he was possessed of a landed estate, while, in truth, he had no earthly title to an inch of it. This scrupulosity gave mortal offence at the castle; and the recusant parson was doomed to ridicule as a pious fool, and to ruin. And as, in such cases, when an offending individual is completely dependent on the offended party, pretexts are never wanting for cloaking the lurking purpose of mischief, these were soon and easily discovered. If the minister of Bellerstown discoursed on integrity and truth as Christian virtues, or on the sacredness of an oath, the Earl's underlings bore the tidings to the castle, where such doctrine was deemed high treason against the electioneering morality; and the faithful and fearless minister of religion having rebuked, from the pulpit, some gross and public enormities

and violations of the Sabbath by the canvassers for the Earl's candidate, within the precincts of his pastoral charge, this was a sad and unpardonable aggravation of his rebellion. Nay, having published a little tract on the duty of attending public worship, of which he was the known author, this was regarded as a direct personal insult to the Lord of the Manor—because his Lordship was so much engrossed with politics and his other affairs, that he had, for some time, ceased entirely to go to church. These little incidents were aggravated by the perfidy of the parson of the parish within which Mr Douglas's chapel was situated. That gentleman had formed a scheme for transferring his residence from the ancient manse, in a remote part of the parish, to the more populous and flourishing burgh of barony of Bellerstown—intending to officiate himself in the chapel, (receiving, of course, the additional accommodation applicable to that cure,) and consigning the care of the souls in the parish church to the schoolmaster—a preacher whom he satisfied with a bonus of £10 or £12 a-year. And for the accomplishment of this object, it was no difficult thing, as matters stood, to ingratiate himself into the patron's favour, and to accomplish his own personal objects, by whispering into the Earl's greedy ear every remark that would suit his purpose made by Mr Douglas, in the most unbounded confidence of private intercourse and seeming friendship.

When the wrath which had accumulated in the heart of the Earl was fanned to its height, he issued his orders to the factor in the following decree:—"Rackrent—*Us*"—(a grammatical singularity which his Lordship always used, surpassing even the royal or editorial majesty, indicative of the first person plural)—"*Us* is determined to root out that rebellious fellow Douglas, and to banish him from our grounds. Rackrent, order Spulzie, the scribe, instantly to serve the fellow with a summons of removing from Stablebarns; and, do you hear, go to Bellerstown, lock and nail up the chapel door, and tell the fellow that he shall never preach there again against *us*. Tell him to go to the devil, as *us* will not suffer rebels against our will."

This mandate was instantly obeyed. Mr Douglas received the intimation from Rackrent with surprise, but undismayed; and, his "courage swelling as the danger swells," he accepted the intimation as a testimony to his fidelity, and pitied the tyrant who had thus abused his power. The Earl had the uncontrolled power—there was no appeal from his heartless decree. Rackrent speedily promulgated in the burgh the purport of his mission, and ostentatiously performed his task of shutting up the chapel—putting the key in his pocket. Consternation, and sympathy with their "ain guid minister and his wife and bairns," spread from house to house; and it was not till the shadow of night afforded shelter from observation, that even a few true friends mustered courage to venture into the house of a proscribed man, and to cheer him with their condolence.

Mr Douglas had an instinctive courage, which prompted him to bear Rackrent's message without a quiver on his countenance, save perhaps a momentary expression of scorn on his lip, and a sparkle of indignation in his keen blue eye. But, after the minion of power had retired, and he felt himself alone, a cold and chilling emotion gathered round his heart. He went immediately to the nursery, where his wife was busied in tending and amusing her children; and having desired Grace Grant (our attached and only servant, who never was in any other service) to look after her matters in the kitchen, he communicated to his dear Isobel, that she and her little ones were thrown destitute. I was too young (being only four or five years of age at the time) to understand the import of what he said. But my mother and the elder children knew it well; and I need not describe the scene. The tears which a brave man sheds are only those of tenderness and affection—but these are indeed, tears of bitterness. Such scenes of love

and agony are too sacred to be disclosed to an unfeeling world; and all I remember of the one now alluded to, was, that my heart was like to break when I saw those around me embracing and embraced, in tears, and in silence, save the sound of sobs which burst from every bosom.

It was a day of sorrow. Even the youngsters forgot, for a time, that they required their wonted frugal dinner; and it was not until twilight succeeded the last blaze of the setting sun, that Grace Grant called her mistress from the nursery, (having heard from a neighbour the adversity which had befallen,) to remind her that tea was ready. My mother was now much composed, and invited the minister to go to the parlour. It was a silent procession. My eldest brother carried me in his arms; and my father led his wife in one hand, while he bore their younger babe on his other arm. On reaching the parlour, we found tea prepared by the careful hands of Grace Grant; but, before sitting down to partake of that comforting refreshment, the minister proposed to offer up a prayer of resignation to the will of God, and of hope and trust in his providence.

"Then, kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning their Creator's praise—
In such society yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

These devout aspirations being ended, an air of calm composure reigned around my "Father's Fireside." He seated himself in his arm chair, while my mother busied herself in preparing tea, and each little one took his appointed place around the oval wainscot table. The turf fire burned cheerily on the hearth. The tea-kettle gave out its hissing sounds, indicative of comfort; and the solitary candle diffused light on the fair young faces which brightened as the oat-cake and the "buttered pieces" began to disappear. But the minister's wonted playfulness was gone; and the decent silence of a Sabbath afternoon was observed even by the younger boys.

The visits of their friends were a solace in the first hours of their unlooked-for adversity. But, after their retirement, the vague, undefined, and gloomy shadows which rose to the contemplation of my parents, with respect to their future prospects, yielded only a troubled and unutterable anxiety. Repining and supineness, however, were not suited to my father's character; for, with mildness, he united decision and even boldness of spirit. He had, for several years previous to this explosion of lordly despotism in the patron of his chapel, corresponded with some of his college friends in the new Republic of America; and had been encouraged by them, and, through them, by one of the most distinguished of the American patriots, to leave his meagre benefice and cross the Atlantic. These invitations he had declined; being warmly attached to his flock, to the Established Church of Scotland, to his friends at home, and to his country. In his altered circumstances, however—severed as he was by an arbitrary act over which there was no moral or legal control, cast destitute from the altar at which he had ministered with usefulness and acceptance, and having no claims to immediate patronage in the church—he resolved, with a heavy heart, to betake himself to that field of exertion in a foreign land to which he had been so courteously invited. Having adopted this resolution, he did not waste time in idle whining, but prepared to encounter all the inconveniences and perils of a long voyage across the deep; aggravated, unspeakably, by the accompaniments of a wife and six young children, and hampered by the scanty means which remained to him amidst this wreck of his hopes of happiness at home.

But, before his final departure from the cold and rocky

shore of Scotland for ever, he wished to take a public leave of his flock. His own chapel had been shut up; but a reverend friend, in a closely adjoining burgh, acceded at once to his request, that he might have the use of his pulpit on the Sunday after the act of ejection which I have already mentioned. The villagers of Bellerstown were speedily apprised of their minister's intention; and they and many others attended to hear his farewell sermon. The church was crowded with an affectionate and even somewhat exasperated multitude and the service of the day was characterised by a more than usual solemnity. All the energy of the preacher's spirit was called up to sustain him on so trying an occasion; and the unaffected, earnest, and native eloquence of his pulpit appearances were heightened by the emotions which struggled within his bosom.

His brief but Christianlike and dignified address, in which the tremulous voice of deep emotion was occasionally mingled with the manly tones of bolder elocution, was listened to in silence deep as death; and when he descended from the pulpit, Mr Douglas was surrounded by a throng of elders, and young men, and humble matrons, who were eager to manifest their heartfelt reverence for their beloved pastor.

It were tedious and profitless to detail all the painful circumstances which intervened betwixt the time now referred to and that of the minister's embarkation. He experienced, on the one hand, all the petty vexations which the Earl's sycophants could devise for his annoyance—and, on the other, much of that comfort which springs from spontaneous tokens of disinterested good will and of gratitude, even from the poor and humble; but the *mens conscia sibi recti* enabled him to bear the former with composure, and the latter without vain presumption.

The day of departure at length arrived—and, young as I was, I still remember as well as yesterday some of the circumstances. The family proceeded from the only home I had ever known towards the harbour, accompanied by some of the most respectable inhabitants of the village.

After passing by the chapel, which stood conspicuously on a rising ground, the party descended a steep road—like a patriarch of old going on a pilgrimage through the world, with his children around him—to the quay at which the vessel that was to bear us away was moored. The sea beach and quays were crowded. The entire population of the burgh seemed assembled. There were no shouts; but uncovered heads, and outstretched hands, and old visages glistening with tears of kindness, spoke a language more eloquent than words can utter. I was carried with my mother on board the ship. The sails were unfurled, while we were grouped on the quarter-deck. Most of the family went into the cabin; but my father sat on a coil of ropes and I stood between his knees, encircled by his arm, and looking up in his face, which was occasionally convulsed with marks of strong but suppressed feeling. The vessel bounded over the waves of the German Ocean. My father spake not. His eye was still bent on the rocky cliffs (near which stood his church and dwelling of peace) after he could not discern the people that clustered on their summits. He wrapped me in his cloak, and held me to his bosom; and, for the first time, I felt a sad consciousness that I was without a home in the world.

My first voyage in life was a rough one. The "Good Intent" of Bellerstown, in which my father and his family had embarked, as already stated, was a coasting trader, and was bound on this occasion for Leith, whence the patriarch of this intended emigration, and his partner, and little ones, were meant to be transferred to Greenock, as the port of final embarkation for the United States. To those who have had occasion to sojourn in such bottoms as the "Good Intent," ere yet the Berwick smacks and other vessels of a superior class had been established in the coasting trade of Scotland.

it is needless to offer any description of such a vehicle for the conveyance of human beings—and those who have never experienced such a transit, can form no adequate conception of the misery which it exhibits. Let them, however, imagine a small and dirty cabin, into which no one is admitted save by the companion door and a small sky-light that cannot be opened in rough weather—let them imagine, if they can, the “villanous compound of smells,” produced by confined air, the flavour of bilge water, agitated in the hold of the ship, and diffused through every creaking crevice, and pitch, and the effluvia of rancid salt meat and broth, and the products of universal sea-sickness, altogether inevitable in such circumstances—let them figure such a confined hole filled with human beings, crammed into smaller holes all around, called beds, or laid on shake-downs upon the floor, or stretched upon the lockers, in that state of despondency which overwhelming sickness induces;—and they have a picture of the Good Intent’s cabin and *state-room* during the voyage to which I refer. Nor was this all. The weather was boisterous, being the vernal equinox; the winds cross and tempestuous; and the waves of the sea so tremendous that the little vessel sunk, and rose, and rolled, as if each succeeding shock were the last ere she sank for ever into the roaring abyss; while each convulsion of the bark called forth involuntary moans and shrieks of distress, which were heard commingled with the whistling of the tempest, and the dash of the waves, that ever and anon burst on and swept over the deck. And thus, for the space of fourteen days went the Good Intent and her inmates, tossed to and fro on the German Ocean, with no comfort to mitigate the extreme of such unwonted sufferings, save the rough but hearty kindness of the skipper and crew, when their cares on deck left them a moment to go below, and offer any attention in their power. I have made many rough voyages since the time alluded to; but this one dwells on my memory like the visions in a wild and troubled dream, surpassing all I have since weathered in intensity of horror and dismay.

At length, the expected haven came in sight; and we entered it—safe but sad enough, the Good Intent entered the Water of Leith at morning tide, and my childish wonderment was strangely excited by what seemed to my inexperienced eye a forest of masts and “leviathans afloat,” as we were towed through among the vessels in harbour, until, amidst bawling and swearing on board and ashore, the Good Intent got a berth at the Coalhill of Leith. The emigrant party were all speedily taken on shore, and conveyed to a small inn, where soap, and water, and clean clothes, and breakfast, revived, in no inconsiderable degree, the spirits of the whole party, after the exhaustion of such a voyage; and the youngsters, especially, were very speedily interested in the rude bustle which the shore of Leith usually exhibits.

Leaving the little colony at Mrs Monro’s ship tavern, on the Coalhill, my father proceeded to the dwelling of his cousin, Mr Pearson, who resided in one of the western suburbs of Edinburgh, (where he and his were expected,) in order to announce the advent to a temporary home. It was afternoon ere he returned with his cousin to conduct the rest of the family; and the whole party proceeded on foot up Leith Walk, and through a part of Edinburgh, towards Mr Pearson’s hospitable abode, astonished and bewildered in a scene so new. There we all received a warm welcome from the good old man and his daughters, and experienced every attention and kindness which good hearts and the ties of kindred could suggest.

Before proceeding to Greenock, to make the necessary arrangements for the final emigration, Mr Douglas, while his family were refreshing with their relatives, for a longer voyage than they had already encountered, paid a visit to an old friend, a clergyman in the country, in whose parish was situated the noble mansion of Earl H——. The countess

of H—— was a relative of Lady B——, to whom Mr Douglas had long been known as an exemplary clergyman, and who, in the day of his adversity and unmerited persecution, had taken a lively interest in his fate. Amongst other acts of kindness, she had not only given him an introductory letter to the countess of H——, but had written previously, recommending him earnestly to her good offices with the Earl, (who was, in all respects, a complete contrast to Lord Bellersdale,) and soliciting some one of the numerous benefices in the church of which the Earl was patron, when a vacancy might occur. Mr Douglas visited his friend before delivering his introduction at the great house, and preached on the Sabbath which intervened during his stay: and the services of the day having been conducted with that simple and unfeigned devoutness which lends its highest power to pulpit eloquence, the noble family, who regularly attended on religious ordinances in their parish church, were much affected and gratified with the ministration of the stranger, on this occasion; and this effect was not marred to “ears polite,” even by the slight “accents of the northern tongue.” Next morning, the pastor of the parish received an invitation to dine at H—— House that day, and was requested to bring along with him the friend who had officiated for him on the preceding Sunday. The invitation was, of course, accepted; and, on being introduced to the Earl and Countess of H——, and his name being announced, Lady H—— inquired if he were of the north country when he took the opportunity of delivering Lady B.’s introductory letter, which shewed that Mr Douglas was the same person of whom Lady B. had previously written. His reception by both the noble personages of the mansion was more than polite; it was kind in the highest degree, and every way worthy of a generous and high-minded race, whose good qualities have, in various periods of our history, given lustre to the nobility of Scotland. The day was spent with mutual satisfaction; and the Earl, before parting, gave Mr Douglas a cordial shake by the hand, and assured him that the first benefice that should fall in his gift, should be conferred on him. Thus they parted; but Mr Douglas returned to Mr Pearson’s, with the unaltered purpose of pursuing his voyage to America—the hopes inspired by the Earl’s spontaneous promise being too faint and remote, in their possible accomplishment, to induce procrastination in his proceedings. The love of his native country yearned in his bosom, and all the perils and privations to which his little fireside flock might be exposed, passed through his thoughts as he drove along the southern shore of the Forth, on his return; but he could see no immediate alternative, save to go onward in the path which he had previously chalked out for himself in his present circumstances.

Accordingly, after a few days’ repose, he set out to Greenock, to make arrangements for the passage to New York of himself and family. He applied to an eminent merchant there on the subject, in whose service, as a clerk, a favourite brother had lived and died. From that gentleman he received every courtesy and counsel suited to the occasion, and was offered the passage contemplated gratuitously. He had spent a day or two only in Greenock, making preparations for the voyage, when, having gone into the vessel in which he was destined to embark, to hold some necessary consultation with the master, a packet was brought to him which had been forwarded by Mr Pearson to the care of Mr B. the merchant. On unsealing it, Mr Douglas found inclosed a presentation in his favour, by the Earl of H., to a living in one of the southern counties of Scotland!

It were idle in any one who has never experienced a sudden and unexpected transition in the endless vicissitudes of human life—from a position encompassed with doubts and darkness, into scenes and prospects of brighter omen—to attempt any delineation of Mr Douglas’ emotions on this occasion; for, who can express in language the throb of gratitude

to benefactors, which, in such circumstances, swells the heart beyond the power of utterance?—or who can convey any adequate notion of the devout and silent thankfulness which exalts the soul of a good man, when he sees and feels in such an event, the manifestation of that overruling Providence which it is his habitual principle to acknowledge and adore?

The American expedition was now abandoned, and Mr Douglas returned from Greenock to Edinburgh, with all the dispatch which the *Flies* of those days rendered practicable. The tidings were soon told, not with proud exultation, but with the chastened gladness which these were calculated to impress on his own spirit and all around him; and, instead of packing up for Greenock, and preparing for crossing the wide Atlantic, nothing was now talked of in Pearson's kind circle, but *plenishing* for the manse.

The day of departure at length arrived, ere yet the young folks had recovered from the astonishment which everything in the northern metropolis presented to them as wonders, and before they had become familiar with the splendours of long rows of lamps and dazzling scattered lights over the dusky horizon of the "Auld Toun" in an evening. One of the most startling of these marvels, I well remember, was the Cowgate, with its rows of lamps extending beneath the South Bridge and seen through the iron ballustrades! This was perfect enchantment to some of us; and I don't believe I have ever seen any scene of artificial magnificence, since I first looked down on the Cowgate, that made so strong an impression on me, as a specimen of city grandeur!

The vehicle for our conveyance was not, as in those latter days, a dashing stage coach and four—for there was nothing of the kind on the public roads of Scotland fifty years ago—but a caravan or waggon, having a sort of rail round three sides of it, and covered over head with a canvas cloth on strong hoops, with an aperture behind to let in the travellers, and the fresh air, and the light. Under this primitive pavilion sat ensconced the parson and spouse, on trusses of straw, and with blankets to keep warmth if necessary—the bairns being all packed in and about them, according to their dimensions; and in this fashion on jogged the cavalcade, consisting of the caravan, and another long cart with furniture. Two or three days were required for the journey—the carriers stopping each night at convenient distances in country inns for the "entertainment of men and horses," where slight and rough accommodation only was to be had.

At length, on the third day, the caravansary reached the promised land—not like that in the Orient, flowing with milk and honey, and glowing in all the richness of natural beauty; but a long straggling village of heath-thatched cottages, with about half-a-dozen slated houses, including the kirk; and, though placed in a valley, on the banks of a rivulet, yet surrounded on all sides for many miles with the wildest moorlands in one of the most elevated situations inhabited in Scotland by human beings. But, what of all this? It afforded a *home* in our native land—and we soon learnt by experience that its inhabitants were among the most kind-hearted and intelligent of the sons of Caledonia.

The humble parsonage of Muirden was but a Chapel of Ease, yielding an income under one hundred pounds per annum. Yet, with this limited benefice, the Rev. William Douglas was enabled, by the frugal housewifery of the mistress, to maintain a decent, and, in his sphere, even a hospitable household, and to discharge the petty obligations to friends which he had incurred while "out of bread" and preparing to cross the deep to a foreign land. Until this last, and, in his estimation, sacred duty was accomplished, the strictest economy was observed. The "muckle wheel" and the "little wheel" were heard humming incessantly in

the kitchen; and the bairns were clad in the good home-made cloths of the domicile; while they were early taught practically that plain and wholesome though humble fare at the board was all that they ought to desire, and that luxuries and delicacies, such as load "the rich man's table," were truly a matter of small moment, and utterly despicable when compared with those luxuries of the mind and that superiority of character which are derived from moral and intellectual culture. These latter, accordingly, were day by day pressed on their attention as the proper business of their early life—and all were habituated to regular and constant attention to their "lessons," at home as well as in school.

Nor was this remote parsonage destitute of some strong and interesting attractions to a generous mind. Muirden was situated in a region which is consecrated by many events and traditions of "the persecuted times." There are hill-sides and moss hags in its vicinity still known to the peasant as the places of worship and of refuge to the Covenanters in days of peril and alarm; and some of Scotland's martyrs were immolated at the doors of their own huts, the foundation of which may still be traced overgrown with the green turf or the heather bell. To a Scottish pastor, such scenes are classic, grand even in a higher sense than those of Marathan or Thermopylæ—for it was the immutable and holy spirit which was there kindled and formed into a flame that finally won for Scotland not only the blessings of civil liberty, but the triumphs of religious truth.

It was an inspiring task to serve at the altar among a people who, though humble, cherished with fondness the memory of their godly forefathers; and was, indeed, a labour of love, in which the teacher and the taught found mutual comfort and advantage. Nor were the exercises of the pulpit the only parts of pastoral duty to which Mr Douglas directed his attention and his heart. He visited and soon became acquainted with all his flock—not formally and pompously, but frankly and in unaffected kindness; and ere long became the friend and trusted counsellor of his parishioners, not merely in spiritual, but in their temporal concerns. And, as a proof of the impression which such a truly evangelical course of conduct made among his people, I may state that, within these few years, after the lapse of nearly fifty, I had a call from a respectable old man, who having heard I was in Edinburgh, had found me out, and announced himself to be Mr —, who had taught me the alphabet, and first guided my hand to wield the pen which now records this incident. I have rarely met with an occurrence more gratifying to my feelings, than when the old gentleman (for he was a gentleman in the best sense of the term, though a country schoolmaster) told me that years had not effaced from his heart and his memory the kindly affection which he bore to my father and all his children, who were the objects of his careful tuition, and that he had sought and found me to give utterance to that feeling. I need not say he got a warm welcome. He had then retired from the laborious duties of his office, with a moderate competency, and in a green old age. He has since paid the debt of nature. Peace to his ashes! It would be well if our parochial clergy would thus cultivate, not the vulgar arts of worldly popularity, but, by acts of real kindness, the confidence and the respect of their flocks. It is thus that the human heart is to be won; and it is thus that a Christian pastor most effectually

"Allures to brighter realms, and leads the way."

There was a peculiarity in the village of Muirden which I must not omit to notice. It was, perhaps, the first locality in Scotland, so entirely rural, that had a library established in it. I do not know precisely the history of that institution; but its supporters were the general community of the place, who were, in different grades, employed chiefly in the work-

ing of some mines in the vicinity, who devoted a small portion of their wages, periodically, for the purchase of books for the library. The fruits of this establishment were visible, in the decent and orderly habits, and in the superior information of the whole population; presenting a moral picture exactly the reverse of that which too often characterises the now liberated *ascripti glebæ* who are usually engaged in such occupations, and who are proverbially the most barbarous and ignorant class of the community of Scotland—thus furnishing an example, which is now become pretty general, of supplying an interesting and improving employment of the hours of relaxation from labour, instead of mispending the precious intervals at the ale-house or other houses of debauchery.

The village of Muirden, too, had the advantage of a resident country gentleman in its immediate neighbourhood—Mr Sterling. Such an auxiliary to the clergyman and schoolmaster in a rural district, is generally of unspeakable advantage to the moral condition of the locality, more especially when, as in this instance, he was a man every way worthy of his rank and position in society. He possessed an estate of his own in one of the most beautiful provinces in Scotland; but, being a man distinguished in science, he had a general supervision of the works to which I have alluded; and, being thus clothed with authority, as well as a magistrate in the county he was ever ready to co-operate in every measure which was beneficial, and in the repression of whatever was pernicious, in this little colony. The society and friendly intercourse which naturally arose betwixt such a country gentleman and the pastor, formed no slight addition to the enjoyments of the latter, in a sphere shut out by its position from much personal intercourse with well educated men; and, in short, amid mountain and moor all around, Muirden presented one of the most pleasing pictures that this country affords of a rural parsonage.

Mr Douglas' zealous and faithful discharge of his pastoral duties did not remain unknown to his noble patron. From the time, indeed, of his induction at Muirden, the moral movements of that hamlet were occasionally reported by its guardian, Mr Sterling, to the family that was interested in its prosperity; and the unremitting but unobtrusive ministrations of the village pastor were not of course overlooked. These were duly appreciated; and, after the lapse of only two or three years, the Earl of H— spontaneously, and without any previous communication, presented Mr Douglas to the benefice of Eccleshall, which had fallen vacant by the demise of its minister. This change had the double advantage of being on the regular establishment of the Church, beyond the risk of any such casualty as had formerly befallen the presentee, and of having a stipend nearly double the salary at Muirden—a consideration of no slight moment to a man with a family, however moderate in his views with regard to temporalities; and it possessed the further superiority over Muirden, that it was situated on the southern shore of the Frith of Forth, in a district of country highly cultivated, and within a few hours' ride of the metropolis. It had the charm of the most perfect seclusion from the great and bustling world—the church and manse being situated in a sheltered valley, embosomed amidst a cluster of ancient trees, which probably were planted ere the Reformation dawned on Scotland.

The tidings of this promotion, as it may be deemed, produced, in the humble dwelling of the pastor of Muirden, that measure of gladness which is inspired by the smiles of fortune—varying in degree among the different members of the family according to their intelligence and their years. To the heads of it, the promised improvement in their condition afforded the calm, yet exquisite satisfaction which the prospect of a competence for their little ones, and the means of educating and preparing them to act their part in life, naturally awakens; and in the younger members of it,

the reported beauties of the new parish, and the approach of a new journey, excited that joyousness and vivacity of hope which even invests what is unknown with the attribute of magnificence.

After a little while devoted to necessary arrangements—after many visits paid to all the dwellings of the humble flock of Muirden—after the interchange of kindly hospitalities among the superior classes of his neighbours—and after a public and affectionate farewell to all—Mr Douglas once more set out with his family on this, his last migration; and, with the aid of caravan and cart, the family party went on their way from Muirden to Edinburgh, retracing thus far their steps, on the journey to Eccleshall; and, in a few days, they were set down in the court before the manse of Eccleshall, over which two stately lime trees formed a cooling shade from the fervours of a summer sun.

Whether the reality corresponded with the several anticipations of the new comers or not, I will not pretend to affirm; but the arrival had scarcely been accomplished, ere every room and recess of the manse was explored, and the neat and beautiful gardens were traversed, and the glebe surveyed, and the “bonny burnside” visited, and the water laved from its channel. It was, in truth, a new world to its young visitants—and appeared, in the superior house-accommodation, and rural amenity around, a terrestrial paradise, contrasted with the circumscribed dwelling on the rocky shore of the German Ocean in the north, or in the hamlet of Muirden amid the wilderness on the southern border of Scotland. The sensations and sympathies of that day, and of seven years which followed it, are yet fresh in my recollection, and still swell in my heart, as marking the brightest and the happiest period of my existence. Everything connected with that season of my life, is still invested in my memory with charms which I have never since tasted; and my young imagination clothed the vale of Eccleshall with a brighter verdure and gayer flowers than ever to me bloomed elsewhere on earth; and the heaven glowed in more resplendent sunshine than has ever since poured its golden radiance on my vision—for it was the sunshine of the young spirit still unclouded by a speck on its moral horizon, and undimmed by a tear of real suffering and sorrow. Are such youthful enchantments realities in the condition of man? or are they visions of fancy, which are kindled by a gracious dispensation of Providence, as a solace to the heart in riper years, when the cares, and toils, and anxieties of manhood are strewn thick in our path, and frown heavily in clouds over every stage of our progress?

In a few days after the house was put in order, the induction of Mr Douglas took place; and, although not so impressive as a Presbyterian ordination, it was to all, his own family at least, an interesting scene. A numerous assemblage of the parishioners and the reverend brethren was communed; and the arrival of the latter, successively or in groups—their friendly greetings in the parlour, their progress to the church, and their solemn devoir during the service of the day—bore a character of dignity and impressiveness which does not now generally belong to such ceremonies. It may, perhaps, be unphilosophical, and not in accordance with more modern sentiment, to ascribe any efficacy to mere externals of costume. But it is a principle deeply implanted in human nature, and not to be stifled by any cold reasoning in the matter, that external decorum and suitable habiliments in any of the solemnities of religion and the administration of justice, have a powerful effect on the great mass of mankind, which it is not wise to cast aside or contemn.

It were an easy, and would be a pleasant task to paint some of the scenes and characters which presented themselves to my observation even at that early period of life; but it would be foreign to the object I had in view, and would swell this humble narrative beyond the limits assigned

to it. That object was merely to delineate some of the features in the character of a faithful Scottish clergyman, and to exhibit some of the "lights and shadows" which cheer or cloud his existence, like that of other men. I have traced his progress through various alternations of adversity and prosperity, and have placed him in circumstances such as usually fill up the measure of a Christian's ambition—a position of usefulness to those within the sphere of his influence, and of comfort in his temporal condition. During the space of seven years, it was the lot of the individual who, in real life, was the prototype of our story, to enjoy health, and strength, and domestic felicity, and to discharge his duties with zeal and advantage in the parish of Eccleshall; but, returning home after nightfall, from attending a meeting of synod in Edinburgh, he caught a severe cold in riding during a stormy night, which affected his lungs; and, ere long, his indisposition assumed all the symptoms of pulmonary consumption.

Our tale of humble life now draws to a close. In the course of a few months, the indisposition of Mr Douglas assumed all the symptoms of a settled consumption, which continued to present to his family and friends the alternations of hope and of fear, that are the unfailing companions of that subtle visitation. A sea voyage, native air, and all other expedients suggested by skill or affection, were tried in vain; and, in the fiftieth year of his age, the minister of Eccleshall returned to the bosom of his family, with a full anticipation that the distemper under which he lingered would, ere long, prove fatal. His eyes sparkled with more than wonted lustre—his benevolent and intelligent countenance glowed with the delicate hectic flush which so often marks the progress of consumption—and the healthy, but not robust frame of its victim, became emaciated and feeble. The fall of the year, 179—, brought the chilling blasts of November to quench the flickering spark of life in his bosom.

I was dispatched one cold morning on the pony, for Mr Blythe, a neighbouring clergyman and friend, to pay my father a visit. We rode together from his manse to Eccleshall; and, on his arrival, he remained alone with my father, engaged in those hallowed communings betwixt a dying man and his spiritual comforter which it is unseemly and sacrilegious in any case to disclose to mortal eyes. After a considerable space thus spent, the whole family, including the servants, were, by my father's directions, summoned to the side of his couch, in the Red Room, where he reposed. When all were assembled, he intimated, with composure and resignation, that he was conscious of the near approach of death, and addressed a few sentences of admonition and affection to them all; and, having done so, he requested Mr Blythe to unite with his household in prayer and praise—requesting that the last hymn in the beautiful collection of sacred lyrics attached to our national psalmody, might be sung. My father's pulpit psalm book was brought to Mr Blythe. It is now before me; and I transcribe, from its page, with a vivid recollection of the scene now referred to, one of the solemn stanzas of that touching anthem:—

"The hour of my departure's come,
I hear the voice that calls me home;
At last, O Lord! let troubles cease,
And let thy servant die in peace!"

Mr Blythe breathed, rather than sung the hymn, in the notes of Luther's hundred psalm; and he did it with the accompaniment of tremulous and broken accents from all around the couch. The tears of unutterable sorrow were shed by all, save my mother, whose grief could not find a vent in tears. The voice of psalms was quenched amid the sobs which burst from every heart; and, during the singing of the last portion of it, the pious man who guided these orisons, sympathized so deeply in the passion of lamentation which encompassed him, that his accents were scarcely

audible. The overpowering scene was closed by a brief and pathetic prayer to the Most High, that to His dying servant he would "stretch out His everlasting arms," and "to the friendless prove a friend."

A few hours more, and the scenes of life had passed away from the mortal vision of William Douglas. I saw him die. It was the first deathbed I had ever seen. There are many occurrences in life which fill the mind with awe; but I have never been conscious of any emotion so profound and solemn as that which possessed me during the last day of my father's life. I witnessed the expiring flame of life in those moments when time is blent with eternity, and when the last sigh seems to waft the immortal spirit into a state of existence of which no adequate conception can be formed. After all was over, and the breath of life had fled, I could not believe my senses, that the prop of my affections was gone from my love and my embrace, and that all which remained on earth of my father, protector, and gentle monitor, was a lifeless wreck on the shore of time. The world appeared to my young eye and heart as a wide scene of mere darkness and desolation.

I will not dwell on subsequent events. The funeral obsequies performed, the family councils were of a melancholy description. As to worldly matters, it was ascertained that there was very little debt—not more than could be fully paid by the current stipend and other limited means; but, beyond this, all was a dreary blank. The only means of subsistence to which my widowed mother could look with certainty, was her small annuity of £25 a-year; while one only of the family (the eldest boy, who had been educated as a surgeon, and had got an appointment in the East India Company's service) could do ought to eke out the means of life for the family. In the depth of her affliction, she would say, with pious confidence, in the language of Scripture, "I have never seen the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread."

But leaving these painful retrospects, it may not be inappropriate to note briefly the career of the Earl of Bellersdale, whom I had occasion to advert to in the earlier part of this story. He survived my father many years, and spent his life, devoid of domestic happiness or public respect, in the accumulation of wealth and the pursuits of sordid ambition. He lived detested and despised of mankind; and, dying unlamented by any one human being, he destined the vast treasures which he had amassed to constant accumulation—not to be enjoyed fully by his heirs, but for the creation of a principedom of indefinite extent and wealth. But the honours of the Bellersdale family were speedily tarnished. A spendthrift successor squandered all the revenues which he could touch; and the last time I visited that part of the country, the splendid mansion of Bellersdale Castle was stripped of all its movables; the collections of many years of aristocratic pride—the pictures, the statues, the very board destined for baronial hospitality—were all brought to the hammer, for payment of a tailor's bill for gewgaws to grace a court pageant; and the nominal inheritor of the wide domains and honours of his Lordship's house, is an obscure and useless, though good-natured dependant upon Hebrew usurers and Gentile pettifoggers—a mere cumberer of the ground—a sycophant of the vulgar!

I need not point the moral of my Tale.



WILSONS

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE BATTLE OF DRYFFE SANDS.

THE power of custom to render the mind indifferent or insensible to danger, has never been better exemplified than by the mothers, and wives, and daughters of the ancient Borderers. They were wont to regard without apprehension the departure of their dearest relatives upon perilous expeditions—neither expressing nor experiencing any feeling except a wish for the success of the *raid*. Nay, the fair dames of these stern warriors and marauders, not unfrequently hinted that the larder needed replenishing, by placing on the table, when the last bullock was devoured, a dish which, on being uncovered, was found to contain a pair of clean spurs; or by making the announcement that “hough’s i’ the pot;” or by calling, within hearing of the laird, on the herds to bring out *THE* cow; or, in short, by the thousand and one means which the ready wit of woman could devise. Rapine and war were the sole business of the chiefs and their retainers; and matrons and maidens, if they had wept and wailed whenever their natural protectors went “to take a prey,” would have been thought just as unreasonable as some of our modern ladies, who will not allow their husbands to proceed about their daily avocations, without bestowing on them tears, kisses, and embraces, in superabundance.

The mistress of Thrieve Castle, Lady Maxwell, possessed her full share of that masculine character which was deemed befitting in a Borderer’s wife; and, although she had mingled in the gaieties of the unhappy Mary’s court, that sternness which was part of her inheritance as a daughter of the house of Douglas, had not been perceptibly diminished in the course of her residence at Holyrood. The aggrandizement of her husband’s family, was the perpetual subject of her thoughts; and whatever affected their honour or their interest, was felt as keenly by Lady Maxwell as by the most devoted follower. At the time to which this narrative relates, her meditations ran even more frequently and fully than usual in their accustomed channel.

About ten years before James VI. succeeded to the throne of England, the hereditary feud which had for generations subsisted betwixt the Maxwells of Nithsdale and the Johnstones of Annandale, broke forth with redoubled violence. Several of the lairds, whose possessions lay within the district which was disturbed by the contentions of these two races, had sustained serious injury from the incursions of marauders from Annandale, and, in consequence, had entered into a secret compact, offensive and defensive, with Lord Maxwell. This transaction reached the ears of Sir James Johnstone, who forthwith endeavoured to break the league which had so greatly extended his rival’s power. The petty warfare betwixt the two barons, was carried on for some time without producing any very decisive result. The compact was still unbroken, and, to all appearance, the Maxwells were rapidly acquiring that ascendancy which would soon render resistance hopeless. But the worsted party obtained the aid of the Scotts and other clans from the midland district. Lord Maxwell, on the other hand, rallied around him the barons of Nithsdale, displayed his

banner as the King’s lieutenant, and hastened to attack his opponents in their fastnesses.

Although Lady Maxwell entertained no extravagant dread with regard to the safety of her husband and son, or even with regard to the result of a conflict for which such ample preparations had been made, she could not suppress a feeling of impatience, when the afternoon of the second day after the departure of the expedition arrived without bringing any intelligence of the result. She endeavoured, however, to check the melancholy course of her thoughts, by supposing that the pursuit of the enemy had occasioned the delay; but then she deemed it strange that her husband had sent no messenger with the tidings of his success; and again she pleased herself with the reflection, that he had reserved for himself the agreeable duty of announcing the happy issue of the conflict.

The shades of evening were descending, when Lady Maxwell, with her little daughters and younger son, proceeded to the battlements of the Thieve. This ancient stronghold—which was a royal castle, though the keeping of it was entrusted to the family of Maxwell—was situated on a small island, formed by the river Dee, in the centre of a moorish tract of country. Its gloomy appearance was, and still is, in harmony with the surrounding desolation; but it is now no longer the abode of man, and is left, a monument of departed greatness, to moulder away. Lady Maxwell had not continued long to gaze over the wilderness which stretched around, when she observed a band of *mosstroopers* approaching from the east; and the light was still strong enough to shew that these warriors had not the appearance of a host returning victorious from battle. On the contrary, their steeds were jaded; they seemed themselves to be exhausted with toil; and, instead of the shouts of laughter which usually burst from the merry bands of Borderers, silence seemed to prevail in their ranks. “Pray God, nothing evil hath happened!” exclaimed the lady, in alarm. And scarcely had she descended to the hall of the castle, when her eldest son, a youth of twenty years, stood in her presence—but he stood alone. The loss which she had sustained flashed across her mind in an instant—“Your father! where is my husband?” ejaculated Lady Maxwell, wildly. “But I need not ask—I know it all—he will return no more. Is it not so?”

The silence of her son shewed her that she had guessed aright. But, although her heart grew sick and her limbs waxed weak, she suppressed her emotion and hastened to her chamber, there to give vent to her grief in solitude. Meanwhile, preparations for the evening meal were made; the exhausted soldiers ranged themselves beside the table which extended through the baronial hall; and their young master occupied the seat of his father—though at the moment he could have wished that some less trying proof of his self-command had been exacted. But it would have been deemed a want of hospitality had he not remained beside his guests—of whom some were barons inferior only to himself in consequence.

When the hunger of the half-famished troopers was somewhat appeased, the events of the morning began to form the topic of conversation—which, however, was car-

ried on only in whispers. Lord Maxwell, it seems, had encountered his opponents at the Dryffe Sands, not far from Lockerby, in Annandale, and had been defeated, partly in consequence of the cowardice of his confederates, whose alliance with him had been the sole cause of the renewed hostility. He was struck from his horse in his flight; and although he sued for quarter, the miscreant by whom he was assailed, struck off his hand, which had been stretched forth as the sign of entreaty, and mercilessly slaughtered the unfortunate baron. Many of his followers perished in the fight, and most of them were cruelly wounded—especially by slashes in the face.* The young Lord Maxwell and his friends (having left a sufficient body of men to repel any immediate invasion) proceeded to the Castle of the Thrieve, situated in the recesses of his family possessions, and a very considerable distance from the scene of the conflict, for the purpose of concerting measures with regard to the further prosecution of hostilities.

After the deliberations of the evening were concluded, and the wearied soldiers had gone to rest, Lady Maxwell summoned her son to her presence, and asked what course it was intended to adopt.

“Orchardstone talks of a bond,” replied young Maxwell.

“A bond of alliance!—and did you listen to him?” said the lady, looking keenly at her son; “did you let him repeat the word? An eye that shrinks from the gaze of another tells no good tale; a cheek in which the blood ebbs and flows within a moment, betrays no stout heart. It must not be. Peace! who would talk of peace to one who has just suffered bereavement? Talk not to me of peace—talk not to me of bonds. Talk of revenge. Remember that the blood of him who has been treacherously slain, flows in your veins. You had no craven heart from him—you have none from me. Why then do you stand mute and wavering?”

“Madam, you have forestalled me,” said the youth. “I will have revenge. The King!”

“What! would you play the spaniel to James?—a craven sovereign, worthy of a craven suitor. Boy! will you break my heart outright? Will you doom me to disgrace as the mother of a coward?—make me curse the day in which I was wedded, and the hour in which you were born? This comes of the monkish tricks taught you by that old man whom your father brought to his house, not to make a coward of his son, but to shelter a trembling priest from persecution.”

“Madam, let me speak—if it please you. I am no coward—no craven,” exclaimed the young lord, proudly. “I am not a child that needs to be chidden with the rod or with harsh speeches; and my father’s blood boils as fiercely in my veins as the blood of the Douglas in yours. Our deliberations are not at an end; and, by daybreak to-morrow, they will be resumed.”

“Nay, but, my son, you say not that you will seek revenge,” cried Lady Maxwell; “you speak of those petty barons whom you demean yourself so far as to consult. Your father told them what was his will and never asked what was theirs. It was theirs to obey.”

“Why do you speak so hardly of me?” asked the youth. “Have I not borne myself like my equals and my race? But you shall not want revenge—you shall not want the heart’s blood that you ask. This house, these lands, these vassals, are yours, until revenge is yours. They will be employed in the pursuit of revenge. No lady shall hold your place; my life shall have but one object, till that object is accomplished; my being shall have but one end; my thoughts shall have only one aim; my heart will delight in only one hope.”

“Stay, stay, my son,” interrupted Lady Maxwell, in a calmer tone than had hitherto marked her address; “you

have said enough—ay, more than enough—to satisfy my doubts. I would not remain sole lady of this castle.”

“The oath is recorded in heaven, and may not be recalled,” was the answer of the young lord.

Lord Maxwell, after receiving a maternal benediction, retired to his chamber; and, notwithstanding the difficulties which he knew it would be his lot immediately to encounter, the fatigue of the day was more than enough to insure him a good night’s rest. His slumbers continued undisturbed, until the old man to whom reference has already been made, came to his bedside early on the following morning. This person was a clansman, who had entered the church, and had embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. About ten years before the death of Lord Maxwell, that nobleman had quarrelled with the Earl of Arran, who at that time was the reigning favourite of James VI.; and he had then brought his learned clansman to the Castle of the Thrieve. The rude wardens of the west marches—for Lord Maxwell held that office—had no taste for the religious exercises which his namesake, John, wished to introduce into the household; and it may be said that the baron’s favour for Presbyterianism was owing to the single circumstance that Arran was an object of detestation common to him and to the ministers. But, although few listeners could be found for the discourses of the aged preacher, his assiduity had enabled him to impart a share of his knowledge to his patron’s son and heir, who in some measure repaid him for his care by regarding him with strong feelings of respect and attachment.

When Lord Maxwell had dressed himself, he proceeded to the study of his aged friend, who had requested an interview with him at that early hour.

“I fear your rest has been broken by my impatience,” said the minister; “but, as I was anxious to see you before your comrades were astir, it was not easy to do otherwise.”

The young baron assured him that he was completely refreshed, and begged him to mention the cause of his anxiety.

“You will pardon me,” said the old man, “if I intrude a word or two of advice upon you. The rules of Border morality require you to avenge the death of your father. I have oftentimes shewn you wherein these rules were wrong; and you have owned that what I have said was true. Are you now ready to act upon your own independent judgment, to forego your desire for revenge, and to enter into alliance with Johnstone? Will you permit those barons who are now asleep beneath the roof-tree of your house, to make you do what you know and feel to be wrong?”

“It may not be,” said the other; “my fathers have died on the battle-field, and I must not die in my bed. But I am bound by a solemn vow—by all that I hope and enjoy—to seek revenge, by day and by night, by all honourable means; to risk life, lands, liberty—ay, happiness in this world and the next—before I abandon the pursuit.”

“Ay, but, my son,” replied the aged minister—“for so would I call thee who art dearer to me than life—a vow or oath which has an evil object in view, may be honourably broken. The honour is in breaking not in keeping it.”

“The oath is no longer in mine own keeping; and I would not break it, even if I could. It may be that an evil oath should be broken; I pretend not to skill in these matters. But I feel,” said Lord Maxwell, in an energetic tone, “I feel that this oath of mine cannot be broken. I have not taken it in haste; and sooner would I wish that my head, severed from my body, were placed over the gate of Johnstone’s castle of Lochwood, there by turns to blacken in the sun and bleach in the rain, than I would now break my vow in one particular.”

“Alas! for thee, my son!” exclaimed the minister, in the tremulous accents of age and of distress. “I deemed that

*This kind of wound is called a “Lockerby lick”—the place which bears that name being in the immediate vicinity of the field of battle.

thou wouldst prove an honour to thy kind and thy country,—that for thee might be reserved the task of healing the wounds of this distracted land.”

“Forgive me, my second father,” said the young baron, taking his aged friend by the hand; “my doom is fixed, but my deeds must be done within a narrower sphere. My objects are not like those of princes. Blood has been shed, and it must be wiped away; life has been lost, and it must be avenged. My father has perished miserably—yet not miserably, for he died on the field of battle. His blood cries aloud for vengeance.”

The aged minister’s grief would not allow him to utter the prayer that passed from his heart to heaven, on behalf of his erring pupil. Lord Maxwell silently wrung the hand that was enclosed in his own, and hastened to meet the barons, who had now assembled in the hall, and only waited until their host should assume his place, before beginning their morning’s repast.

Considerable division of opinions existed in the councils of the Nithsdale barons, with regard to the propriety of putting an end to the disturbances, by entering into league with Sir James Johnstone; but the determination with which Lord Maxwell avowed his intention of calling upon them all to act in conformity with their previous letters of *marrent*, soon put an end to the deliberations of the morning, and immediate steps were taken for pursuing the warfare with renewed vigour. Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, who was married to a sister of Sir James Johnstone, but who had, nevertheless, taken the part of his chief, Lord Maxwell, in the recent disputes, was permitted to remain inactive; but his contingency of men was required as vigorously as that of any other baron who had bound himself to give all support to the head of the clan. Day after day, incursions were made by these hostile tribes, into the territory of each other; their hatred hourly waxed stronger; those courtesies which even mosstroopers sometimes practised, were thrown aside with shameful indifference. Rapine, and crimes of every complexion, were of daily occurrence; villages were burned without compunction; neither age nor sex was spared; slaughter and conflagration was now the end and aim of the freebooters, instead of plunder. No redeeming ray was cast over the horrors of this continued warfare by any of those circumstances which sometimes shew the hearts of men in their more favourable aspects; and to describe the progress of events in this district of country for the course of many succeeding years, would serve only to weary and disgust with a repetition of the most fearful atrocities.

Is it wonderful that a familiarity with scenes of blood should steel the heart of the young baron, and make him deaf to the voice of compassion or remonstrance? Need it be said that cruelty became the characteristic of his mind; that his temper became harsh, his disposition imperious, and his spirit as untameable as it was fiery? Neither the threats nor the entreaties of his sovereign himself, could make Lord Maxwell lay aside his vindictive purpose: the former were despised, because they could not be executed; the latter were unheeded, because they were as dust in the balance compared with the revenge which the young chief had vowed to obtain. The appointment of his experienced rival to the wardenship of the middle marches, about five or six years after the battle of Dryffe Sands, made the cup of bitterness overflow. Lord Maxwell took advantage of Sir James Johnstone’s absence, to ravage that baron’s territory with greater ferocity than ever; and, on the pretext afforded by this last fearful inroad, he was prohibited from approaching the Border counties. The mandate was scorned, because it could not be carried into effect; and these hostile tribes continued to lay waste the territories of each other, until King James ascended the English throne, when, in the course of a year or two, the power of that monarch was so

much strengthened, that he was, ere long, enabled to place under the command of Sir James Johnstone, a force which was found sufficient for the purpose of expelling the refractory Lord Maxwell.

The fugitive baron, half frenzied with anger and disappointment, was invited, by his kinsman, the Marquis of Hamilton, to take up his abode in Craignethan Castle, a stronghold situated in the most fertile district of Clydesdale, upon a rock which overhangs the river. The Marquis and his father (who had died a short time before the arrival of Lord Maxwell at Craignethan) had always supported their relative whenever differences arose betwixt him and the court of King James; and this support was tendered not so much from the coarser motives, which, for the most part, lay at the foundation of noble friendships in those days, as from regard to Lord Maxwell, whose better qualities had not been so totally obscured in the course of his brief but bloody career, as to prevent him from becoming an object of affection among his own kindred and dependents.

But neither the Marquis, nor his mother, (who still lived to relate, rather for her own amusement than for the edification of her hearers, the achievements of her race,) nor his sister, the Lady Margaret, could devise any means of dispelling the gloom which marked the countenance and deportment of their guest; and he seemed even to hate the very amusements with which his friends endeavoured to draw his thoughts away from the bitter recollections that were the daily subject of his contemplation. His only enjoyment seemed to consist in traversing the romantic scenes which lay around; and scarcely a day passed without a visit to some of those spots in which the rude magnificence exhibited by nature in the rocks and ravines, was contrasted with the gentleness and beauty that characterised many patches reclaimed from the waste by the industry of the neighbouring husbandmen. At other times, he would roam through the woods until he lost himself in their mazes, and his mind was roused into activity by the effort to retrace his steps.

A beautiful dell, in which all sorts of scenery were harmoniously combined, was a favourite haunt of the baron; and here he often stretched himself at mid-day beneath the shadow of some vast oak or beech, that he might meditate in solitude and in silence on schemes for retrieving his affairs; for restoring him to his possessions in their full extent and without restraint; and, above all, for consummating that revenge which was still ungratified, notwithstanding all the rapine and slaughter of eight years.

As he was one day engaged in such contemplations—profaning, with evil thoughts, the retreats which seemed to have been consecrated by nature to peace, and holiness, and all good affections—his attention was arrested by a song familiar to Borderers, and composed by one of the men who had been executed for the murder of Sir James Johnstone’s predecessor in the wardenship of the middle marches. But, although the associations which were awakened in the mind of Lord Maxwell on hearing *Johnie Armstrong’s Last Good-night*,* were of a mixed nature, the sweet tones of the singer and the allusions to the Border made him forget, in the delight of the moment, the more painful meditations

* “The music of the most accomplished singer,” says Goldsmith, in his *Essays*, “is dissonance to what I felt when an old dairymaid sang me into tears with *Johnie Armstrong’s Last Good-night*.” Of this ballad only two stanzas (which are subjoined) have survived till modern times. The beauty of these only deepens the feeling of regret at the loss of the rest

“This night is my departing night,
For here nae langer must I stay;
There’s neither friend nor foe o’ mine
But wishes me away.

“What I have done through lack of wit,
I never, never can recall;
I hope ye’re a’ my friends as yet—
Good-night, and joy be with you all

which had been thus agreeably interrupted. The delicious dream lasted only for a minute: the voice of song was hushed; and, although the baron, with curiosity to which he had for years remained a stranger, started alertly from the ground that he might discover the sweet disturber of his thoughts, he was too late; for no one save himself stood within the dell, where he had sought solitude, though, as it turned out, he had not altogether found it.

His reveries were now at an end for the time; and he returned to the castle with that reluctance which every man feels when he is about to mingle in society without possessing the power of deriving delight from his intercourse with humankind.

In the course of the evening—which was usually devoted by the guests of the Marquis to sports varied by occasional conversations on all sorts of subjects, from lively to severe—a keen dispute arose betwixt a young French count and one of his comrades with regard to the merits of Scottish music. After arguing, and stating, and restating their opinions, until they found that the one could not convince the other, they agreed to refer the point to Lord Maxwell, who seemed to be the only person not talking or listening to talk at the moment; and they then proceeded to give specimens at once of their own vocal powers and of the beauty of the music peculiarly prevalent in their respective countries. After the trial was completed, a round of laughter greeted the competitors, whose performance, it may be supposed from this reception, was none of the most beautiful. The umpire, when asked to deliver his award, only shook his head.

“Though I don’t pretend to say which is the *better* singer,” said Lord Maxwell, “I will undertake to convince our foreign friend that Scottish melodies are at least equal to the music which he adores; but you, my Lord, must aid me, otherwise this mighty dispute must remain unsettled.”

“Speak your wish,” said the Marquis, “and it shall be gratified, if I can help you.”

“You have sometimes told me that I do nothing but mope about your woods and ravines, scarcely opening my eyes or my ears; but to-day, at least, it was not so. My day-dreams were agreeably dispelled by some songstress, who had escaped, however, before I could discover whether the lips which breathed such melody were as sweet as the song. Could you only hear *Armstrong’s Good-night* warbled as I heard it to-day, your disputes would soon be at an end. Perhaps some of the village girls may”——

“No village girl, my lord,” exclaimed the defender of Scottish music.

All eyes were in a moment fixed upon Lady Margaret, whose blushes had betrayed her. The ballad was once more sung; and need it be said that the disbeliever in Scottish melody became a convert, and, like other converts, became even more zealous than his old antagonist in praises of the song and of the songstress? Lord Maxwell began to chide himself for not having sooner discovered that Lady Margaret was not only endowed with a sweet voice, but possessed of great personal attractions. He had, indeed, frequently heard her sing; but the right chord had never been touched before; and it was only when the ballads with which he was familiar and which were the native growth of his own province, fell upon his ear, that attention was awakened, and the full beauty of the vocal powers possessed by his unseen charmer was perceived.

Margaret Hamilton was now in her eighteenth year, and possessed that irregular beauty—glowing with life and health—which wins the heart more readily than the most faultless but chilling perfection of feature. The high intelligence and elevated feeling which met “in her aspect and her eyes,” her bright complexion and raven ringlets made her such a being as the imagination delights to portray and contemplate, though the beautiful vision which flits across

the mind seldom has a living and breathing, and moving counterpart in the material world.

The excursions of Lord Maxwell were not now so solitary as they had been before the occurrence of the incident already mentioned; and a walk without a companion was now the exception from the general rule. That companion,—need it be recorded?—was Margaret Hamilton. Every scene that deserved a visit—every wondrous work of nature or curious work of man, within a range of several miles around Craignethan Castle—was pointed out by Lady Margaret for the admiration of her brother’s guest. Nor was it long before the admiration bestowed upon the lifeless scenes which they contemplated in common, was transferred to each other by the animated observers themselves. They rapidly proceeded through all the stages of that fever which in its crisis is called love. The feuds, and animosities, and revenge, of the Nithsdale baron were for a time forgotten; those better affections which had been cherished by the preceptor of his youth—the gentler feelings which produce the courtesies and kindnesses of life—the intellectual tastes which had long lain uncultivated, and had indeed borne many weeds under the influence of harsh passions—all these began in some measure to revive; his spirit, freed for a season from the operation of those motives which had hitherto guided it with so much power, appeared to be softened; his demeanour lost somewhat of its sternness; and a new passion seemed gradually to be expelling all those fiercer emotions by which he had hitherto been governed.

But these delightful days could not last for ever; and the Marquis, although he was pleased when he first saw the change in the deportment of his relative, felt that the intimacy of his sister and his kinsman could not last long without ripening into attachment. Yet he attempted to soothe his disquietude by the usual excuse that his apprehensions were outrunning the reality; and he delayed all interference until interference was in vain. Besides, he was himself about to enter into the state of wedlock; and could not be in a very fit condition for treating the affections of others with anything like severity. Autumn had arrived before the Marquis introduced the subject. He rallied his kinsman on his bachelorship.

“But why may not I remain a bachelor and be as happy as you?”

“What!—I would Lady Margaret heard you. Could *she* not make you change your mind?” said the Marquis, keenly eyeing Lord Maxwell.

The baron gave no reply—for the words died on his lips. The blood forsook his cheek; the fire was quenched in his eye; even his stature seemed to lessen; and he looked as if heaven in its wrath had struck him with its thunderbolt. The oath which he had sworn, and which he had broken even by his sloth in lingering at Craignethan Castle, recurred to his mind in all its force:—one aim, one hope, one affection, one object—revenge, bloody revenge, on the head of the clan that had slain his father, was all for which he had vowed to live, until the deed of death was accomplished, or he himself was laid in the dust. He remembered, with loathing unspeakable, the words which he had uttered; his heart felt crushed within him; and he stood without speaking a word until his horror-stricken friend seized him by the hand and roused him from the fearful reverie into which he had so suddenly fallen.

“I thank you—I thank you,” cried Maxwell, abstractedly; “but I forget. Your roof can shelter me no more. I must leave you now—ay, this very instant.”

“But, my dear friend,” said the Marquis, interrupting him, “why do you speak of departure? I did not mean offence; and let none be taken.”

“Nay, nay, I am not offended at aught: you have reminded me of my duty—and every moment that I stay here is a moment lost. I must to horse.”

‘ But not without telling me why you leave me so abruptly. You say I have not offended you ; and yet you talked not of departure until this moment. If the reason be one that can be told, why should you conceal it from your warmest friend ? ’

“ My father’s death is unavenged. I have loitered here like a dull slave shrinking from his task. I have forfeited my faith—I have broken my oath. I must redeem the one, and fulfil the other.”

“ What task ? what faith ? what oath ? ” ejaculated the Marquis, hurriedly.

“ I have told you the task—to revenge my father’s death. I have sworn that, until the life’s blood of his foe be sprinkled on the earth, I will not rest by day or by night—I will not enjoy land, power, or life itself, except as the means of accomplishing my purpose. I will remain unvedded—I will possess no hope on earth or in heaven, save one—the hope of revenge. I have broken my faith ; for I have not laboured without ceasing, but have lazily sojourned under this roof. That faith must be redeemed by the fulfilment of my vow. Should the fair lady of whom you spoke,” he added, in a tone little elevated above a whisper, “ deign to look down on one so unworthy, she will see me a suitor at her feet whenever my first duty has been discharged.”

The remonstrances of the Marquis could avail nothing, and Lord Maxwell sallied forth from Craignethan Castle. The prohibitions of his sovereign had no power to prevent the baron and his vassals from renewing hostilities against their hereditary enemies. The awakened chief hastened, despite the royal mandate, to his native possessions ; the joyous news of his return spread, in a day, from Thrieve Castle to the remotest hamlet in Eskdale—for the authority of the Maxwells extended over the vast district of country which lies on the Scottish side of the Solway. Immediate preparations were made for an incursion into Annandale. But these movements did not take place without the knowledge of Sir James Johnstone, who, on his side, mustered his vassals, and obtained reinforcements of royal troops, for the purpose of protecting his own territory, as well as enforcing obedience to the will of his sovereign, by compelling Lord Maxwell once more to retire from the Borders. The Lord of Nithsdale proceeded on his expedition, with the view of pursuing his opponent into his fastnesses in the hills ; but his schemes were baffled by Sir James Johnstone, who selected a rising ground not very far from the scene of the bloody conflict of Dryffe Sands, as an advantageous position for receiving the attack of his enemy. Lord Maxwell had expected that he would have taken his opponent unawares—that he would have found Johnstone’s retainers scattered, and his territory undefended ; but, nevertheless, with characteristic impetuosity, he resolved to risk a battle ; the disgrace of retreating without striking a blow, the dismay which anything like vacillation was likely to produce among his retainers, and those motives which addressed themselves more directly to his passions, all weighed with him, even though he learned that his force was inferior to that of his foe.

The conflict was severe and protracted ; but, although Lord Maxwell’s followers fought with desperate courage, they were unable to keep their ground against the large and well appointed force arrayed against them. Their leader rallied them once and again ; animated them by his own example ; called on them to bear themselves as they were wont ; reminded them, by one or two words, of former conflicts bravely fought ; and did all that he could to secure victory. But his efforts were in vain, and his retainers fled on every side, after the battle had been contested until not a man remained without a wound. He, however, did not join his followers, though they tried to hurry him from the field ; but he disengaged himself from their grasp, and, frantic with disappointment, rushed into the midst of his

adversaries. The cry, ‘ Take him alive, ’ was instantly heard ; and Lord Maxwell, overwhelmed by numbers, and exhausted by his unremitting exertions, was the prisoner of Sir James Johnstone.

But he was not now permitted to choose his own place of retirement ; and, after remaining for some days in Annandale, he was conveyed to Edinburgh, and immured in the castle. Solitude, instead of soothing his passions, made them more vehement than ever ; and the desire of revenge, which had been originally produced on the death of his father, now derived additional energy from his sense of personal injury and suffering.

It could not be supposed that the fate of Lord Maxwell could be regarded by his friends with that cold indifference which is the general feeling among men when misfortune overtakes their neighbours. The ties of clanship had not lost their strength in the days of King James ; and other ties which had been knit under happier circumstances, were not forgotten in the hour of danger. Lady Margaret Hamilton, who, like persons of the same rank, usually resided in Edinburgh during the winter and spring, heard of the imprisonment of the baron with grief, which, it may be, was not unmingled with joy at the anticipation of his presence in the same city ; and the resolution that she would endeavour to procure his release, was scarcely formed when she found an agent and coadjutor in the person of a retainer of Lord Maxwell’s, commonly called Charlie o’ Kirkhouse. This freebooter, who was the baron’s foster brother, was devotedly attached to his chief ; and he would have earnestly petitioned the authorities to place him in attendance on Lord Maxwell, had he not recollected that he would thereby, in a great measure, be prevented from assisting that nobleman to escape. Charlie, though a shrewd fellow, had been more in the practice of executing than devising schemes ; and as he thought it scarcely possible for himself, single-handed, to effect his object, he proceeded to the Marquis of Hamilton’s, for the purpose of obtaining an interview with Lady Margaret, who, as he supposed, would readily give him all the aid in her power. Charlie made his application on the pretext that he wished to visit his chief, and suggested that the Marquis could facilitate his free and frequent admission. But Lady Margaret recommended him rather to enlist in the royal service ; and, as he would then be received into the castle, he would be better able to assist Lord Maxwell in any attempt to escape ; while, at the same time, he would be able to co-operate with her in any schemes which she might devise for effecting the same object. By dint of perseverance, Charlie overcame the proverbial and preliminary difficulty of making the first step ; and, by abusing his chief for a tyrant and everything that was bad, (his peculiar dialect told too many tales,) he next endeavoured to win the confidence of his superiors, and thus remove the only obstacles which prevented him from obtaining access to the prisoner. This, however, was a much more tedious process than he had imagined. Will o’ Gunmerlie, a follower of Johnstone, who was stationed in the castle by his chief, with the view of making up for the deficiencies in point of vigilance on the part of the constituted authorities, retained the clannish dislike of the Nithsdale soldier, and thwarted him so often that he began almost to despair of success, but he still hoped, by ingratiating himself with some of the superior officers in the garrison, that all obstacles would ere long be overcome.

While he was one day on guard, in the immediate neighbourhood of Lord Maxwell’s prison, one of his comrades approached, accompanied by a youth, whose bonnet was pulled down upon his brows, and whose face was, in consequence, for the most part, concealed from view.

“ Wha’s this, Charlie, think ye ? ” said the soldier, laconically.
“ I canna say I ken ” replied Charlie, closely scrutinizing the stranger.

"Hae ye nae guess wna he is?" repeated the soldier.

Charlie shook his head.

"Am I not," said the youth, stepping up to the perplexed sentinel—"am I not Lord Maxwell's brother?"

"His brither!!!" exclaimed Charlie, in a tone which can only be represented by a regiment of notes of admiration.

"Yes—his brother," repeated the youth, at the same time slightly raising his bonnet so as to give Charlie a peep of a very fair complexion. "Look at me again."

Charlie's wonder ceased in a moment.

"I darna dispute what you say."

"Then he is Lord Maxwell's brother?" said the conductor of the youth.

"Wha else should he be?" replied Charlie o' Kirkhouse, at the same time resuming his duties.

Leave of admission was soon obtained for the youth; and, in the course of a few minutes, he stood in the presence of Lord Maxwell. The room into which he was introduced was small and gloomy—for the light was admitted only by a single loophole, guarded by a bar of iron; and everything shewed that this was, indeed, a prison. The tenant of this apartment was engaged at a table, placed as near the scanty window as possible, and covered with books and papers, which he seemed to be intently studying.

"Your brother, my Lord," said the gaoler. "I will return in half an hour," he added, turning to the youth, whom he then left standing in the middle of the room.

"My brother Charlie?" exclaimed Lord Maxwell, starting up, and hastening to meet his visiter. "I thought you had been in London. But how? you are not my brother. Charlie was a strapping fellow when last I saw him, and—excuse me—you have the advantage."

But, instead of answering, the youth blushed "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue"—and that so deeply that even through the gloom the baron saw the glow on the cheek.

"What! a youth—and to blush!" said he, eyeing his visiter, keenly; "it cannot be; and yet who should it be but"—

"You have not forgotten *Johnny Armstrong's Good-night*," whispered the youth.

"Nor that voice," added the baron, saluting his pretended brother. "What good spirit has brought you here, my dear Lady Margaret?"

"I have brought you the means of escape: you can disguise yourself in my cloak and hat; the gaoler will not know the difference in this dismal light, or rather darkness; the sentinel at the end of the court is Charlie o' Kirkhouse, who may be sent as your guide and guard to the gate; the cloak and hat will deceive the rest, whose recollection is, doubtless, by this time, faint enough to favour the attempt."

"It must not be; for, even though no evil were to result from the attempt, I would not have you subjected to the rudeness of menials."

"Say not so, my Lord, for nobody will dare to injure me. I never made a request before, and I may never make another."

"Nay—not so, I hope; but it cannot be that I should meanly leave you in my stead. Forgive me, my dear lady, if I refuse to avail myself of the means of escape which you propose; but deem me not so selfish as to value my own freedom above yours—as to skulk in disguise from these walls, and leave you here exposed to the insults of the angry underlings deputed by a suspicious enemy to watch my every movement."

"Would that I could prevail upon you, my dear Lord," said Lady Margaret, affectionately, "to make the attempt; and would that I could prevail upon you to cast aside your schemes of vengeance, to devote your energies to the cause of your country, and to hear in your halls the sounds of merriment rather than the wailings of sorrow over friends whose lives have been lost in feudal warfare."

"Would that I could prevail upon myself," rejoined Lord Maxwell, "and be content to pass my years in peace and in happiness, with none save one to care for. But I forget myself: these things cannot come to pass."

"And why not?—why may they not now? If you will sign a bond, disavowing all intent of renewing your hereditary warfare with your hereditary foes, you would be placed at liberty; and my brother will pledge his life and land for your word."

"No more—tempt me no more; my will was weak and wavering; but I have not yet renounced my vow. You have spoken of my hereditary foes—shall I be the first of my race to cast away my heritage? Happiness is a dream I know it now—for this moment—though bolts and bars retain me here—though the sun's blessed ray scarce reaches me—though I have passed my days in tumult and trouble which will accompany me till life has reached its close. But this is all a dream: in a little while, you, my dear lady, will leave me; and with you, the dream will depart."

"Is there no hope left? Is your heart closed against me? Is your ear deaf to my prayer? Will you not hasten from these horrid walls? Will you sign no bond?"

"Never—never: I would as soon sign my own death-warrant, or yours; for to sign my own would not wring my heart. I will sign no bond: I will give no pledge. I need no man's honour to be gaged for my forbearance. Pardon me, if I seem rude, and rough, and stern. I would that the time were come when it might not be so—that my destiny were accomplished; for it may be that, by brooding over schemes of vengeance, our minds are filled with strange presentiments. When one deed has been done—when my first task has been completed—when my vow is fulfilled—happiness may yet be in store."

Neither the tears nor the entreaties of Lady Margaret could prevail on the inflexible baron; who, however, declared his resolution to try some other means of escape; and with this view suggested the propriety of ascertaining what assistance could now be rendered by Charlie of Kirkhouse. Lady Margaret, as she was conducted from the baron's cell, communicated to the trooper the joint wishes of his chief and of herself.

Lord Maxwell now occupied his mind with projects of escape; and closely examined the aperture which admitted a scanty portion of light into the apartment; but its construction presented almost insuperable obstacles. Nothing daunted, however, he resolved to try whether by displacing a part of the wall he might not be able to open a passage; but the rate at which the work advanced was so slow, that a whole lifetime would have been required to accomplish his object.

As he had one evening arranged the rubbish according to his usual custom before meal-times, so that his operations might not be visible to the jailer, that functionary entered; but, instead of quietly placing on the table the viands which he bore, he addressed himself, in an under tone, to Lord Maxwell: "Would you like to escape, my Lord?"

"Charlie o' Kirkhouse, as I'm a living man!" exclaimed the baron. "How got you here?"

"Hush—you shall know afterwards. Let us change dresses; I will remain in your stead."

"But you must not run into danger on my account."

"Danger? What danger? They dinna care to meddle wi' sma' gentry like me. You maun do as I bid you."

"Well, well, Charlie," said the baron, nothing loath to seize the opportunity of escape, undeterred by any feeling of delicacy in the event of his substitute being discovered, and satisfying his scruples with the reflection that Charlie's insignificance would protect him from insult or injury.

The exchange was forthwith made; and so well had Charlie selected the hour, that Lord Maxwell received no interruption, except from the sentry at the outer-gate, who

wanted to crack a joke with his friend Charlie o' Kirkhouse. Though the soldier looked somewhat suspicious when his joke was acknowledged only by a "humph," yet, nothing further occurring to strengthen his suspicions, he quietly resumed his measured tread.

The baron soon provided himself with a horse; and the following morning found him at Thrieve Castle.

Meanwhile, Charlie o' Kirkhouse, who remained the tenant of Lord Maxwell's apartment, was missed by his comrades; but the story of the sentinel, that he had seen "the Nithsdale trooper in a huff trampin' doun the town," satisfied them for the night. The jailer—who had a second key, and thus was able to obtain admission—was taken aback on visiting the cell on the following morning, when he found himself rather roughly hugged by the prisoner, who thrust him head over heels into a recess filled with what was, in courtesy, called a bed. Before the astounded functionary could open his mouth, he heard the door locked, and found himself a prisoner. He shouted, kicked, and thumped, on the door, and made all the din in his power. Charlie found the key in the door at the end of a passage which led to the cell, and which had prevented him from making his escape in the night-time; but his dress attracted the notice and suspicion of some officers. He was seized without delay. His excuse, however, that he had been "a guizardin," would have served his purpose, had not the imprisoned jailer, by dint of clamour, brought some of his comrades to the door, and let them know the state of the case. Charlie was immediately pursued; and, as he had not reached the castle gate, he was captured without difficulty.

"A pretty fellow you are," said Will o' Gunmerlie, "ye lein' soon'rel! but ye'se get your ser'in for lattin aff yon villain that you used to misca' waur nor ony Johnstone. Here, Habbie, Dandie, gie him a roun' dizen—and syne anither—and syne anither."

Charlie o' Kirkhouse fdgeted a little on hearing this order issued, and he would fain have made another attempt to escape; but it was in vain. "Come ane, come a'," he recklessly cried, when no hope was left—"I carena; four dizen's nae waur nor ane." The punishment was inflicted with full vigour, by Will o' Gunmerlie's ministers of justice; and the luckless Charlie was thrust out of the castle to find comfort and shelter where he might.

Meanwhile, Lord Maxwell tried to raise the barons of Nithsdale; but the times had changed so greatly since the accession of James to the English throne, that the lairds felt themselves more independent than they were of old, when their only choice was either to join the standard of some powerful chief, or to suffer their possessions to be spoiled by his retainers. Besides, they were weary of contests with their neighbours; and most of them peremptorily refused to comply with the baron's wishes. His wrath may be more easily conceived than described. After spending some weeks in ineffectual attempts to overcome the resolution of his refractory vassals, he applied to Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, (who, as has already been stated, was connected by marriage with Sir James Johnstone,) for the purpose of obtaining an interview with his antagonist, and of trying whether that baron could not be prevailed upon to intercede for him with the King. The aged knight, gratified at the conciliatory disposition shewn by Lord Maxwell, fixed time and place for a meeting between the two chiefs, who accordingly hastened, each with a small body of attendants, to the confines of their respective territories, with the view of holding an amicable conference. Leaving most of their attendants at some distance, Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, Sir James Johnstone, accompanied by Will o' Gunmerlie, and Lord Maxwell, accompanied by Charlie o' Kirkhouse, (who had recovered from the effects of his whipping,) proceeded to enter on the business which had called them together.

"I houp yere nane the waur o' bein' i' the castle, Charlie," cried Will o' Gunmerlie, sneeringly.

"Nae thanks to you; I'll hae it oot o' yer hide some day. Tak ye tent, ma man; ye've taen gude whangs o' ither folk's leather—look to yer ain."

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the only reply of the other.

"Dinna anger me," vociferated Charlie, in a nettled tone, looking at his pistol; "I tauld ye ye would get yer ser'in. There's nocht to hinder me frae giein ye't noo. There—tak that!" And in a moment the freebooter raised his pistol and shot the unsuspecting Will o' Gunmerlie, who rolled from his horse in the agonies of death.

Sir James Johnstone, on hearing the shot and the groans of his murdered attendant, turned about to see what had happened; and (in the words of the old chronicler) "immediately Maxwell shot him behind his back with ane pistoll chaigrit with two poysonit bullets." The unfortunate chief fell from his horse; and, although he lingered for some time, his wound was mortal. He lived, however, so long as to declare his wishes with regard to various weighty matters, and to utter a word of consolation to Orchardstone, whose grief was rendered agonizing by the recollection that his credulity had been the means of hastening the death of Sir James.

Lord Maxwell immediately proceeded to the Castle of the Thrieve, where a large company was assembled for the purpose, as they thought, of celebrating the reconciliation betwixt the two clans, and also the marriage of the chief with Lady Margaret Hamilton, who had been conducted thither by her brother. On Lord Maxwell's return, he sought a private interview with the Marquis—told him what he had done—asked him to communicate the circumstances to the bride, and learn whether she would be wedded to a man whose hand was newly stained with blood.

"But he has slain his enemy in honourable battle," said Lady Margaret; "he has borne himself like a true knight; and, even though he may now depart for a season, the King has pardoned more heinous offences."

When the reply was reported to the baron, he muttered, with that sneering tone which betrays the bitterness of the heart—"In honourable fight!—most honourable! Would it had been so!—But I will not now undeceive her."

The nuptials proceeded; the festivities were commenced and continued to a late hour. Early on the following morning, the baron left his weeping bride, and, with his faithful retainer, Charlie o' Kirkhouse, hastened in disguise from his own home and country.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Marquis of Hamilton and other friends of the expatriated baron of Nithsdale, no pardon could be extorted from King James—whose virtue seems for once to have been proof against all the temptations and threats which his most powerful Scottish subjects could hold forth. Lord Maxwell's peace of mind was gone; for all that was dear to him—his country and kindred—were at a distance; the engrossing object of his thoughts for many years past had been attained; and his memory would not allow him to forget that his revenge had been accomplished by meanly assassinating his enemy. After he had remained for about three or four years, wasting the prime of his days in exile and in misery, he learned that Lady Margaret was in bad spirits; then in bad health; then that her life was despaired of; and he resolved, at all hazards, to revisit Scotland. But, before his voyage was ended, Lady Margaret had breathed her last—heart-broken in the midst of those enjoyments—wealth, power, and rank—which are fondly supposed, by those who possess them not, and by not a few who do possess them, to be the infallible means of securing human felicity. The only object which made life worth retaining, in the estimation of Lord Maxwell, was thus snatched from him; and he

would have immediately delivered himself up to justice had it not been for the remonstrances of his faithful attendant, Charlie o' Kirkhouse. The family of Sir James Johnstone, as well as the constituted authorities, hunted the baron over the whole country; until, after frequently enduring the extremity of distress, he was seized in the wilds of Caithness, to which he had ultimately been driven. The indefatigable industry of his hereditary foes pursued him even to this distant retreat; and he was brought to Edinburgh, where, once more, he returned to his old quarters in the castle.

Among the friends who came to visit him, with the view of concerting measures for his defence, was the Marquis of Hamilton.

"Do you know that they mean to rob Charles of his birthright?" said the baron, on the entrance of his friend. "Oh, my good Lord, such deeds would never have been done had some of your ancestors filled the seat of the mean-spirited prince who rules this unhappy country."

"Hush, hush, my friend!" said the Marquis; "speak nought like treason. I know it all. My lord treasurer, or his deputy, cannot want the estates; and you must therefore submit to a charge of fire-raising as well as of murder."

"May my curse or my blessing—for I know not which is more likely to bring the worse consequences—rest upon them all, if they take from my race their own inheritance, because I, forsooth, have sent a hoary villain a little before his time to his account!"

"Speak not so harshly, kinsman; your sense of your own sufferings makes you unjust. Men say that these sufferings have been self-inflicted; but I will not say so. I come to learn if in aught I can mitigate them."

"Mitigate them, did you say? I ask no mitigation; for my life is now a burden. I ask no pity; I ask no sympathy. I have but one possession which I can still call my own: it is not inherited; I cannot transmit it; it is my sole luxury, my sole treasure—and it is one which you will not covet. I have nought but my own misery that I can call my own—self-inflicted it may be; I dispute not about a word. But if it be self-inflicted, so much the more is it my own property. Forgive me, my Lord, if I seem rude and hasty in temper; but I have scarce slept under a roof since, after long absence, I last touched my native soil, until last night, indeed, when I harboured here. I have been hunted by hounds of human breed; I have skulked in mosses, forests, and caverns, as familiarly as you have trodden the courts of palaces. Need you wonder if I am worn to what I am—a mere skeleton—a wretched decrepit thing—more like a being returned from the grave, than a living man?"

"It is but too true," said the Marquis; "yet is there nought you would wish me to do? No token of affection to send to your friends?"

"Nothing—nothing."

The time of trial at length arrived, and Lord Maxwell was indicted for the crimes of murder and of fire-raising. The introduction of the latter charge was the cause of bitter complaint on the part of the prisoner; for he well knew that the object of the public authorities was to obtain the forfeiture of his estates; and the treasurer-depute, Sir Gideon Murray, was supposed to have instigated them to combine this minor accusation with the other. The crime of fire-raising, according to the ancient Scottish law, if perpetrated by a landed man, constituted a species of treason, and inferred forfeiture. The purpose of public justice, however, was, on this, as on other occasions in the same reign, sullied by being united with that of enriching some needy favourite. No difficulty was felt in proving either of the charges: the former, indeed, was not denied; and the latter was established by the evidence of some sufferers in the course of the first outrages committed after the battle of Dryffe Sands. The baron was found guilty of both crimes, and sentenced to

be beheaded. Every effort was made to obtain pardon for him; but the King and his counsellors were inexorable.

On the night before the execution, Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, who was now very far advanced in years, visited his kinsman and chief, under the guidance of the Marquis of Hamilton.

"And it has come to this at last!" exclaimed the old man; "would to heaven, my dear Lord, you had listened to the prayer of your humble clansman, eighteen years ago, when these troubles began!"

"They will soon be at an end: you will outlive me Orchardstone. Nay," added Maxwell, in a gay tone, "you would outlive me, even had I no royal road to the other world. Tell me, my Lord," said he, turning to the Marquis, "tell me, whether Orchardstone, in his green old age, or I, blasted in my prime—whether he, hale and hearty, or I withered and worn—be more likely to join our ancestors in the common course of nature?"

The Marquis could not answer. The old man seemed to be shocked at Maxwell's levity.

"Do not utter such words, my Lord—they are unworthy of you. Brief time is left to make your peace. Some holy man may be able to soothe your mind, ruffled though it be by a tumult of passions."

"Mock me not, dear uncle," said the baron, in a tone of bitterness which startled the old man with horror. "Torture me not with talk about peace and holy men. They cannot give me peace—they cannot give me happiness on earth or in heaven. I am content with the share I have enjoyed. One gleam of sunshine has crossed my path—one fair floweret has blessed my sight—one spring has gladdened the weary wilderness—one human heart has been mine; and, though it is mine no longer—though the flower has been blighted, and the bright gleam of happiness, now departed, has only made me more sensitive to the succeeding darkness, and the spring is dried, and the human heart lies in the dust—I ask no more. My cup of bliss is full—one drop has filled it. My heaven has been already enjoyed—no dotard can bring me tidings of weal or wo; I cannot part with it. Leave me, good uncle and good cousin, leave me. I would bless you, but my blessing might prove a curse."

His sorrowing friends left him as he wished; and, although his feelings of impatience occasionally burst forth, the tender assiduity of his sisters and his brother, who had been constantly in attendance upon him since his imprisonment, had the effect of soothing in some degree his feelings of irritation. The rest of his history is contained in one sentence:—He was beheaded on the following morning.

His estates, which had been forfeited, were granted in part to the treasurer-depute, a favourite of the King but, after the lapse of a few years, the attainder was reversed, and the honours and estates conferred upon his brother.

With the execution of John Lord Maxwell terminated the feud betwixt the Johnstones of Annandale and the clan of which he was the chief. During its continuance, and within the short period of thirty years, "each family lost two chieftains in this warfare: one dying of a broken heart—one in the field of battle—one by assassination—and one by the sword of the executioner."



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE GOLD RING.

SOME time about the year 1720, a young gentleman of the name of Campbell, a native of the West Highlands of Scotland, went to London with the view of availing himself of the interest of some friends there in procuring him a certain government appointment, but in this object he did not succeed; and was, eventually, after a residence of nearly twelve months in the metropolis, obliged to return to his native country in precisely the same situation, as to circumstances, in which he left it.

Campbell, however, though naturally enough desirous to improve his condition, was by no means of the class of needy adventurers. His father was a considerable landed proprietor in the Highlands, and lived with all the state which distinguished the residence of a Highland laird of that period.

Young Campbell, whose Christian name was George, had had the advantage of an excellent education, while his manners and appearance were in every respect those of a gentleman. Neither was his character at variance with these pleasing external indications. He was kind-hearted, generous, brave, and unassuming; and, in figure, tall and well made.

Although Campbell, however, had not promoted his interests during his stay in London, he had increased—at least he thought so—his happiness, by forming an attachment to a young and amiable lady of the name of Malvern. This lady was the daughter of a highly respectable and very wealthy man, a brewer in the city, into whose family Campbell had been introduced by a mutual friend. The lovers, very shortly after the first hour of their acquaintance, found that their happiness was bound up in each other, and that this could be secured to them only by their eventual union. This consummation, however, was to all appearance far distant, as the young man was still wholly dependent on his father.

The young folks, therefore, had nothing for it but to wait for a more propitious season, and, in the meantime, to love on, which they did, with the most sincere and ardent feelings on both sides.

When nearly a twelvemonth of this aimless felicity had passed away, Campbell's father, finding that his son was making no progress towards attaining the proper object of his visit to London, pressed him to return; and, with a heavy heart and reluctant step, George prepared to obey. Before he left London, however, the lovers pledged mutual vows of constancy, and made arrangements on the point of maintaining a regular correspondence during their separation. When the moment of parting at length came, George tenderly embraced his betrothed, and placing a ring on her finger, begged her to wear it for his sake. With this request, the weeping girl not only promised compliance, but vowed that death only should separate her from this token of her George's affection.

They parted; and, in due time, Campbell arrived at his father's house in Scotland. For two or three years after this, George and Isabella wrote each other regularly;

and these letters were filled with protestations of unaltered and unalterable love, and with the most sanguine expectations of future felicity. But even this shadowy happiness was not doomed to last. About the end of the period named, a letter from Isabella, which almost annihilated poor George as he read it, informed him that her father was a bankrupt, and that he had determined on leaving the country immediately, and proceeding to America, to try his fortune in the New World. "Nay, even before this reaches you, my dear George," said the fair writer, "it is more than probable we shall be embarked; for my father is impatient of a moment's delay. Soon, soon, therefore, my beloved George, will the waves of the wide Atlantic roll between us, and form what I fear will be an eternal barrier to the realization of all our fond dreams of bliss."

"Nay, by Heaven, it shall not be," exclaimed George, as he hurriedly folded up the fatal letter; "either, Isabella, you shall become mine and remain in your native country, or I shall accompany you to the land whither you are going."

Such was George's resolution in this matter; and, as he was not a man to trifle with his own determinations, the following day saw him once more on the way to London; but the journey to the metropolis was not then performed with such expedition as it is now, and it was therefore several weeks before he reached it. The consequence of this delay was, that, long before his arrival, Mr Malvern and his family, including Isabella, had sailed for America. We will not take up the reader's time by attempting to describe poor Campbell's feelings on finding the fondest hopes of his heart thus cruelly blighted. Suffice it to say that he returned home, if not absolutely a broken-hearted, at least a greatly changed man. From being one of the most affable and cheerful men in existence, he became melancholy and somewhat stern in his deportment.

At this period, Campbell held a captain's commission in the native Highland regiment then called the Black Watch, subsequently the Forty-second. This corps, at the time of our story, was distributed through the Highlands, with the view of keeping down the rebellious spirit which had broken out in 1715, and against which the Government, by a dexterous stroke of policy, had armed the friends and relatives of those who entertained it—thus giving at once, by the formation of a native regiment, a legal direction to the military enthusiasm of the Highlanders, and adding to the force of their arms against the insurgents the powerful influence of kindred, and, lastly, destroying its enemies by converting them into friends.

To this corps, then, as we have said, George Campbell was attached; and, on his return from London, he hastened to rejoin his company, which was stationed in a wild and remote district of the Highlands, called Assynt, in Ross-shire. This part of the country was at that time infested by a ferocious outlaw of the name of Donald Gorm, who commanded a band of upwards of a score of men of the same desperate character with himself.

At the period of our story, this formidable person happened to be in a small inn or public-house, whose landlord was more than suspected of standing his friend on occasions, at the very moment when Captain Campbell, who

was on his way to join his company, entered it with the view of quartering there for the night.

Macleod, the landlord, with whom Donald had been closeted on some private business, on seeing Campbell, who was on horseback, approach, started hastily to his feet, and made a hurried sign to his associate to quit the apartment. It was too late, however: the horseman had already alighted, and was now in the passage of the inn, calling loudly for the landlord. Donald, finding he could not escape from the apartment, but in such a manner as he conceived might excite suspicion in the new comer, resolved to brave out the threatened interview in the best way he could. With this determination, he resumed his seat, taking the precaution, however, against being recognised, of drawing his bonnet down over his brows, and muffling his plaid closely around him. Thus prepared, the bandit resolutely awaited the entrance of the unwelcome visitor. Unluckily for Donald, as the sequel will shew, it happened that a party of the Black Watch, consisting of about twenty men, arrived at the public house, shortly after Captain Campbell, on their march to another part of the country. These men, of whose arrival Campbell was aware, took possession of the kitchen, laid aside their muskets and knapsacks, and prepared to enjoy themselves for an hour or two before resuming their route.

In the meantime, Campbell entered the room which Donald occupied—it being the best, nay, almost the only one in the house; and, having given orders to his host to provide for his horse, which still remained at the door, placed himself at the table at which the freebooter—who still continued to maintain the same discourteous position which he had assumed previous to the entrance of the former—was seated.

The dogged silence, and equivocal appearance and conduct of the outlaw, soon attracted the notice of Campbell; and something like a suspicion of his real profession crossed his mind, as he seated himself opposite to him—a suspicion which was pretty plainly expressed by the scrutinizing glances which he threw from time to time across the table. Heedless of these, Campbell's mysterious companion maintained his silence and his position, and gave no indications whatever of his being aware of the presence of a stranger.

"Friend," said Campbell, at length, and at the same time filling up a glass of spirits, with which he had been supplied by his host, "will you drink with me?"

"I drink only when I'm thirsty," replied Donald, gruffly, and without moving from his position.

"Not a bad rule," replied Campbell; "it will prevent you drinking overmuch, if strictly adhered to."

To this the outlaw merely replied by a slight nod of acquiescence, and at the same moment raising one of his arms to adjust his plaid. While he was in the act of doing this, Campbell's eye was caught by the glittering of a splendid ring which he wore on one of his fingers; for Donald was rather tasteful in the decoration of his person, and had acquired a strong predilection for such ornaments. Campbell thought he knew the ring; and his face grew pale, and his whole frame became agitated with the feelings which this real or imaginary recognition excited. A moment's reflection, however, shewed him the extreme improbability of his conjecture, and forced on him the belief that he must have been mistaken. The motion of the freebooter's hand prevented him, for some time, from following out his scrutiny of the object of his suspicions; but the latter, at length, having unguardedly placed his elbow on the table, and rested his head on the hand which was adorned with the ring, it was thus fully and fairly placed in Campbell's view, who, availing himself of the opportunity, again fastened his eye upon it, and again the idea that he recognised in it an old acquaintance recurred forcibly to his mind. With this conviction his agitation returned; and, though unwitnessed

by his companion, his countenance at this moment strongly expressed the workings of deep, various, and conflicting feelings. In short, Campbell imagined, however improbable the circumstance, and however unaccountable, that he had discovered, in the ornament which the outlaw wore on his finger, the identical ring which, upwards of three years before, he had given to Isabella Malvern. How it had come into the possession of its present owner, or how it had found its way into this remote corner of the Highlands, he of course could not possibly conjecture; but, however these circumstances might be accounted for, he felt assured that it was indeed the gift he had presented to Isabella. It was some little time, however, before Campbell could, in the face of so many improbabilities, venture to make any inquiries on the subject of him who alone could answer them. But at length all reluctance, all delicacy of feeling towards the stranger, gave way before the impulse of the moment, and "Friend, friend," he exclaimed, in a voice rendered indistinct with emotion, "how did you come by that ring? I have particular reasons for inquiring, and I request, as a favour, that you will be explicit with me."

The outlaw, on being thus strangely interrogated, turned coolly round, and for the first time confronted his companion. "This ring?" he said, after contemplating for a second or two the earnest and agitated countenance opposite to him, and, at the same time, boldly projecting the finger on which the ring was placed. "Pray, what right, sir, have you to inquire when or how I got this ring?"

Confirmed in his suspicions of the real character of the person who was with him by his very equivocal manner, and determined to have the information he wanted, Campbell started to his feet, and, striking the table violently with his clenched fist, exclaimed, "By Heaven, sir, I *will* know how you came by that ring! It was once mine; it has been since the property of a friend, and I shall learn, before I leave this apartment, how it came to be yours, otherwise it shall be all the worse for one of us." Saying this, Campbell clapped his hand on his sword, drew it, proceeded to the door of the apartment, flung it violently open, and called on the soldiers, who were in the adjoining apartment, to come to him. These instantly answering the call, and recognising in Campbell one of their officers; and a favourite one, stood ready to obey his commands.

In the meantime, the outlaw, undaunted by the unexpected dangers which now surrounded him, remained cool and collected, still keeping his seat at the table with the same air of dogged resolution which he had first assumed, and never once casting his eye on the soldiers by whom the apartment was now filled.

On the entrance of the latter, "Now, sir," said Campbell, again approaching the table at which the freebooter sat, "you either inform me instantly how you came by that ring, or you march off to headquarters under a suitable escort, there to be dealt with as you shall appear to deserve."

"So," replied the outlaw, looking fiercely over the hand on which his head was resting, "you think this an excellent way of eliciting information doubtless. You think to frighten me into a confession—Ha, ha, ha!" he added, with a laugh of bitter scorn. "You never was more mistaken in your life. You have taken the most effectual way you possibly could have taken to shut my mouth. I tell you nothing, sir," he continued, in a resolute and somewhat contemptuous tone, "if you proceed to violence. If you do not, it's hard to say what I may do." Having said this, the intrepid outlaw resumed his first position, and awaited, with an air of apparent indifference, the result of his remarks.

Campbell instantly felt the force of these, of the latter particularly, and saw at once that the person he had to deal with was not one who was likely to yield information on compulsion, whatever might be extracted from him by other

means; and while Campbell saw this, Donald, on his part, perceived the hold he had upon Campbell, although he knew not on what it was founded, beyond its ostensible cause—the ring; and the consciousness of his advantage increased his confidence and strengthened the resolution to which he had come of reserving his information for the purchase of his personal safety, the only terms, he had determined, on which he would be communicative.

The coolness, promptitude, and dexterity with which the outlaw thus made the circumstance of Campbell's interest in the ring which he possessed available to his own advantage, shewed a degree of presence of mind worthy of a greater occasion and a better cause.

"Well, friend," said Campbell—who, as has been already said, saw the hopelessness of compulsory measures with the desperate character before him, and who now determined to try the effects of more conciliatory language—"if I order these men to withdraw, and," he added in a whisper, "if I offer you personal safety, will you give me the information I require?"

"I make no promises, sir," replied the outlaw, equally resolved to keep the vantage ground he possessed; "but, certainly, if I communicate anything, it shall not be in the presence of these fellows." And here Donald gathered himself up in his plaid, with an air of great dignity.

Campbell took the hint, and instantly ordered the men to withdraw, though not without a quiet intimation that they should not go far away.

"Now," said Campbell, when the soldiers had retired from the apartment, "now that we are left alone, may I beg of you to inform me how you came by that ring. Insignificant as it may appear to you, it possesses much interest for me. I gave it—I gave it," he added, with an emotion which he could not conceal, "to a lady" in whom I was much interested some years ago; and I know—at least I have always believed—that she would not part with it willingly."

"Ah, you ask from whom I had it?" replied the outlaw, with an air of carelessness. "Why, then, since you seem so much concerned about it, I will tell you. I had it from a lady."

"From a lady!" exclaimed Campbell, in great surprise. "What lady? Where did you meet with her? Did she present it to you? Did she give it voluntarily?"

"Present it to me!—give it voluntarily!" reiterated Donald, with a contemptuous laugh. "Oh, no, no; neither ladies nor gentlemen are in the habit of giving me anything voluntarily, and therefore what they won't give I take. I help myself in such cases."

This language was too plain to leave Campbell any longer in doubt as to the real character of the person before him; and he therefore determined to treat with him in the plain terms which his conviction on this subject warranted.

"Ay, friend," said Campbell, with a significant inclination of his head, "I understand you; and since this is the case, it may be as well that you understand me. In short, let us distinctly comprehend the position in which we are placed with regard to each other. You are in my power. You are possessed of information which I am desirous of having. If you will give me the latter, I will not exert the former. If you do not, I will."

"Very laconic, and very plainly spoken," said the outlaw. "Why, then, sir," he added, after a moment's pause, "what would you have?"

"I would have you inform me," replied Campbell, "who and where the lady is, that gave you, or rather from whom, according to your own account, you took that ring which you wear?"

"Who the lady is I don't know," replied the freebooter gruffly—"where she is I do. And I'll tell you what," he added, "to end this matter, if you will permit me to depart quietly, the lady shall be brought to this house in less than

four and twenty hours—that is, upon condition of your giving me your word of honour that no harm, through your means, either directly or indirectly, shall befall those who may bring her here."

"That proposal will not do, friend," said Campbell, smiling incredulously at Donald's promise, in which he put but little faith. "No, no; in short, I am determined not to loose sight of you, until the lady you speak of is delivered up to me; that is, if she be—as I suspect from what you say she is—in your keeping."

"I would have kept my promise, however," said Donald, haughtily; "but it matters not. Will you then accompany me yourself, alone," he went on—"and I pledge my word that no harm shall be done you?"

"I will accompany you," replied Campbell; "but certainly not alone. I will take a score of soldiers with me, and no other proposal or terms will I listen to. On this I am determined. But, in turn, I promise you, on the honour of a gentleman and a soldier, that, if the lady is delivered up to us in safety, and without resistance on your part, or on the part of those with whom you are associated, neither myself nor my men shall do you or yours the smallest injury."

The outlaw made no immediate reply to this peremptory proposition, but swung himself backwards and forwards on his chair, apparently in deep cogitation.

"Well, well," he at length said, half addressing Campbell, and half muttering to himself, "be it so. But," he added, looking full at the latter, "what pledge have I that you will keep your word with me? I have only your promise, and you refused to trust yourself to mine."

"I have promised you, on the word and honour of a gentleman and a soldier," replied Campbell—"I can give you no other guarantee, nor would if I could because I think it sufficient."

"Umph," ejaculated the freebooter—"then, I suppose I must e'en take it."

Here the conversation terminated, and was followed by an arrangement that the proposed party should set out for Donald's retreat in the mountains—where it was now perfectly understood, the lady, whoever she was, from whom the ring had been taken, was concealed—early on the following morning.

It would not be easy to say what were Campbell's feelings on this singular occasion. That the lady was Miss Malvern he, of course, never for a moment imagined. That was incredible—impossible. But who then could she be, and by what chance had she fallen into the hands of the Highland freebooter? These were questions which Campbell vainly asked himself; for, with regard to the last, which the outlaw could have answered had he chosen, he could obtain no information. To all his inquiries on this subject, the latter, either from obstinacy, or from some other motive which Campbell could not divine, merely replied, that he would learn these particulars from the lady herself—and on this point nothing farther could be elicited from him. Campbell's feelings, then, on this occasion, may be described as being those of intense curiosity only; but intense this feeling certainly was, for he had now examined the ring minutely, and found, beyond all manner of doubt, that it was the identical ring which he had given to Isabella Malvern.

On the following morning, agreeably to arrangement—Donald having been carefully looked after in the meantime—the party set out for the outlaw's retreat, and, in a few hours thereafter, began to ascend the mountainous range of hills in the midst of which it was situated. Hitherto they had prosecuted their route in silence, Campbell and the bandit leader in front, and the soldiers a few paces behind; and in this order ravines were passed, precipices scaled, and rivers forded. At length, just as the party had gained the

summit of a steep hill which seemed to terminate in a sudden chasm at some distance, the outlaw suddenly stopped short, drew a small ivory whistle from beneath his plaid, stepped two or three paces in advance of the party, and raising the little instrument to his lips, drew forth a sound "both loud and shrill."

"Beware of treachery!" said Campbell, somewhat alarmed by a proceeding of which he had not been previously made aware, and at the same time drawing a pistol from his belt.

"Treachery!" repeated the outlaw, glancing contemptuously at the pistol which Campbell now held down by his side. "No, no; I scorn treachery, I but gave the signal which prepares my fellows for the reception of strangers."

While the freebooter spoke thus, his eye was intently bent on one particular spot, at the edge of the ravine or valley in which the height where the party stood terminated on one side.

"Why, friend," said Campbell, who marked this circumstance, "I must be plain enough to tell you that both your language and your conduct seem to me to be somewhat equivocal; but, by heavens, if you attempt to trick us, this shall be the last hour of your existence." Then turning round to his military escort, "Soldiers," he exclaimed, "advance, and be ready." Having said this, he cocked his pistol, and placing himself close beside his dangerous guide, awaited the result of the signal which he had given.

In little more than ten minutes, a bonnet was seen slowly and cautiously rising above the edge of the ravine, then another and another, at nearly equal distances, until upwards of twenty could be counted. This movement was followed by another still less equivocal. Muskets were seen planting on the edge of the rock, as if for surer and steadier aim.

"Ha, ha," exclaimed the katheran leader, affecting to laugh, on seeing this latter preparation, "the blockheads imagine there's game afoot. They can't distinguish friends from foes, at a yard's distance." Saying this, he waved his hand to his men to retire; and the signal was immediately obeyed. In the meantime, Campbell and his party, now fully impressed with a belief that treachery was contemplated, cautiously advanced to the edge of the ravine, when a sight presented itself which did not tend to lessen their fears. On the opposite side of the chasm, which was intersected by a furious current, passable only by a temporary bridge of logs thrown carelessly across, some fifteen or twenty armed men were seen scattered amongst the rocks, each with a long gun or fowlingpiece resting on the ledge before him, and pointed in the direction of the approaching party. All, however, remained perfectly still, while Donald conducted Campbell and the soldiers down the narrow pass which led to the rude bridge already spoken of, and which it was necessary to pass along to reach the outlaw's retreat, which was on the other side. On arriving at the end of this bridge, the freebooter paused for a moment, threw back a hurried glance at the soldiers, looked up to his own men on the opposite side, waved his hand, then suddenly rushed along the frail and narrow passage which led over the yawning gulf beneath. This movement accomplished, he stooped down, tore up the ends of the logs, of which the bridge was formed, and hurled them into the foaming current below, thus cutting off all communication between the opposite sides of the ravine. All these proceedings, which were the work of but a few seconds, were wound up by a volley from the katherans, by which three soldiers were killed and two more severely hurt. In the midst of this scene, the voice of Donald Gorm, calling on his men to continue their fire, and to take sure aim, was heard rising loudly and hoarsely above the noise of the roaring waters between. The ferocious outlaw had by this time possessed himself of a musket, and as he took aim at Campbell with it, was heard exclaiming, in his native language, "Fool to think that Donald Gorm would trust life and

liberty to such promises as thine!" He drew the trigger, the musket missed fire, and in the next instant, the faithless weapon was tossed, with every mark of savage rage and disappointment, into the boiling torrent below.

Sudden and disastrous as were these occurrences, Campbell did not for a moment lose that presence of mind so essential to a soldier and so valuable in cases of imminent and unexpected peril.

Seeing that it would be worse than useless to enter into conflict with the outlaws in his present position, as his party were fully exposed to the fire of their enemies, while they were protected from theirs by the rocks behind which they were ensconced, he resolved on making the hazardous attempt of descending on the gang, from the precipitous rocks that overhung their retreat.

Having come to this resolution, he led off his men from their present exposed situation, and by a circuitous route conducted them to the summit of the opposite eminence, and immediately after, the whole party, still led by Campbell, began to clamber down the perilous descent, pausing every now and then to discharge their pieces on the enemy below, many of whom fell by their well-directed shot, while not a few of the soldiers also perished by the fire of the katherans. Nothing daunted by the appalling dangers of their situation, Campbell and his party continued their descent until they had fairly succeeded in gaining the level ground at the bottom of the rock, where the den of the freebooters was situated.

Previous to his reaching this place of comparative safety however, Campbell made a narrow escape from the vengeance of Donald Gorm himself, who was traversing the platform below like a caged tiger. As the former stood for a moment, during his descent, in a very exposed situation, and within sixty or eighty yards of the katheran leader, the latter, who scarcely knew what it was to miss his aim, deliberately levelled at him and fired. The bullet passed through Campbell's bonnet, ploughing up a furrow on his left temple, of two or three inches in length, but fortunately of no depth.

Donald, after discharging his musket, not doubting the accuracy of his aim, nor its results, eagerly looked for the fall of his intended victim; but he fell not. Furious with disappointment, the fierce outlaw planted the butt of his musket with great violence on the ground, and was in the act of driving home another charge, when a pistol bullet from Campbell, passed through his wrist, shattering the bone of his arm, and entirely depriving him of all use of his right hand.

"Ah, is it then so," exclaimed the wounded outlaw, on receiving the shot, and at the same time holding up and gazing on the lacerated limb; "ay, 'tis done; I am no longer Donald Gorm of the strong arm." Then dashing down the musket, which he could no longer use, and, like another Cæsar, gathering his plaid around him, he looked sternly at Campbell, and called on him to "fire again, and take better aim." In the next instant, the brave but fierce bandit fell, pierced by two bullets fired at the same moment from different quarters.

On the fall of their leader, the others betook themselves to flight, and from their intimate knowledge of the localities of the place, found no difficulty in effecting their escape.

Campbell, accompanied by three or four soldiers, with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets, now entered the outlaws' cavern, and in penetrating to its innermost chamber, which was dark as midnight, called out, inquiring if there was any one prisoner there?

The inquiry was answered in the affirmative, in a masculine voice.

"Then," replied Campbell, "here are friends come to rescue you, and to conduct you to a place of safety." And,

led by the voice of the captive, he groped his way towards him as he spoke.

"God reward you for the generous deed, sir!" replied the latter.

"You must not, sir, ascribe more generosity to me in this matter than I merit," rejoined Campbell. "My motives were not altogether disinterested. Is there not a lady here also?"

"There is, sir—my poor unfortunate daughter is here," replied the captive. "Isabella, my dear," he continued, "here is a noble gentleman, who has, at the hazard of his life, come to rescue us from this dreadful den."

"I—I—have heard what has passed, father," replied the lady to the address of the former, in a voice which overwhelming feelings rendered nearly inaudible. "The gentleman's bravery and generosity has laid upon us a heavy load of obligation indeed," she added, pausing at each word she spoke through weakness and emotion.

The tones of the lady's voice had no sooner fallen on Campbell's ear than he became dreadfully agitated. "Let us to the light! let us to the light!" he suddenly exclaimed, in wild and hurried accents. "In God's name, let us to the light instantly, that I may see whether my conjectures be right!"

In a few seconds, the whole party emerged from the cavern, and stood full in the light of day. Campbell glanced for an instant at the countenance of the lady; then folding her in his arms—"Gracious heaven! Isabella Malvern!" he exclaimed. "George Campbell!" murmured the fainting girl, and sank senseless in his arms.

The sequel of our story is soon told. The ship in which Isabella and her father—for he was a widower, and she his only child—had embarked for America, was wrecked on the north coast of Scotland; when the former, in making their way through the Highlands for the low country, were met and captured by Donald Gorm and his band. The motives which had induced the freebooter to take them prisoners, which was rather an unusual circumstance with those of his profession, were never certainly known; but they could only have been one of these two—either the lady's beauty had made a captive of Donald in turn, or he had hoped to make something of them in the way of ransom.

George Campbell's next step, after having thus singularly effected the rescue of his lover, was to conduct her to his father's house, where they were shortly afterwards married.

Campbell, in due time, succeeded his father; and often did his amiable and happy wife, when seated at the head of her own hospitable table in the Highlands, tell the story of the Golden Ring, which has now become an heir-loom in the family

THE SEERS' CAVE.

"The desert gave him visions wild—
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone seer, from mankind hurl'd,
Shap'd forth a disembodied world."

SCOTT.

In a certain wild and romantic glen in the Highlands of Scotland, there is a cave opening beneath the brow of a huge overhanging cliff, and half concealed by wreathed roots and wild festoons of brier and woodbine. Several indistinct traditions remain of this cave's having been, in former days, the abode of more than one holy hermit and gifted seer. From these it derived the name which it commonly received, Coir-nan-Taischatrin, or, The Cave of the Seers. At a little distance within the glen, upon its sunny side, stood Castle Feracht. The elevation on which it was

built, gave it a prospect of the whole glen, without detaching it from the hills and woods around; and a space had been cleared of trees, so that, though completely surrounded, their leafy screen only curtained, not obscured, it.

Castle Feracht had long been the residence of a powerful branch of the Macphersons. In that far retirement repeated generations of that daring family had grown up and rushed forth, like young eagles from their mountain-eyry, to the field of strife; and not unfrequently never to return. Such had been the fate of Angus Macpherson, in consequence of an accidental rencounter with the Gordons, between whom and the Macphersons there had long subsisted a deadly feud. The death of his father had the effect of fixing upon the mind of his son Ewan Macpherson a feeling of stern and deadly resentment against all who had ever been the foes of his turbulent clan. The stripling seemed to fret at the slow pace of time, and to long for those years in which his arm might have sufficient force to wield his father's broadsword, that he might rush to vengeance. Such had often been his secret thoughts, when he at length reached a period of life which made him able to put the suggestions of his vindictive mind into execution; but a strong and arousing spirit, to which we need not farther allude, passed over the land, and he forgot for a time his personal animosities, in feelings and purposes of a more general and absorbing nature. The powerful sympathy of thousands, lending all their united energies towards one point, and laying aside their individual pursuits, in order to contribute to the advancement of that all engrossing aim, laid its influence upon his soul, and he joined the company and aided in the general plans of those whom he would have joyed to have met in deadly combat. Those against whom his hostility had been less violent, he had learned to meet almost on terms of friendship, though dashed at times with looks of coldness.

Among those half-forgiven foes, was Allan Cameron, a younger son of that family of the Camerons which stood next in hereditary dignity to the chief. The feud between the Macphersons and Camerons had never been very deadly, and might, perhaps, have been forgotten, had Macpherson been less accustomed to "rake up the ashes of his fathers." Cameron, though still a very young man, had been obliged early to mingle with the world, and had acquired that habit of ready decision which gives its possessor an ascendancy over almost all with whom he has any intercourse. Notwithstanding his youth, therefore, he was of considerable influence; and being brought repeatedly into contact with Macpherson, there was something of a shy and distant friendship between them. Cameron soon perceived the coldness of Macpherson; but, as his own generous and cultivated mind was far superior to the influence of prejudices such as had thrown a gloom over the whole being of Macpherson, he knew not, never dreamt, that he was an object of secret dislike to him; and, with his usual frank kind-heartedness exerted himself to win the favour of a man so distinguished for personal daring as the dark-browed lord of Glen Feracht.

During the course of the operations in which they were engaged, the decisive resolution and activity of Cameron had repeatedly attracted the notice of Macpherson. Several times had he said to himself, "Were he not a Cameron he would be a gallant fellow!" At length, one day Macpherson was severely wounded, and rescued from immediate death by the fearless intrepidity and fiery promptness of Cameron. Macpherson's stern sullenness was subdued. Ere yet recovered from his wounds, he clasped Cameron's hand in token of cordial friendship; and so far laid aside his distant coldness as to invite Allan Cameron to accompany him to Glen Feracht, when their present enterprise should have come to a termination.

That termination came sooner than had been expected

and Cameron found it not only convenient but prudent to accompany his fellow-soldier to the secret retreat of Castle Feracht. Cameron, an ardent admirer of nature's beauties, yielded all his soul to the emotions inspired by the wild and rugged entrance to Glen Feracht; nor could he suppress repeated exclamations of delight when all the softer beauties of the quiet glen opened upon his sight. Macpherson observed his admiration, and paced over the daisied sward of his own valley with a more lofty step. Nor was there less proud satisfaction in his heart and eye as he conducted his guest to the hall of his fathers, and presented to him his only sister, bidding her, at the same time, know in Allan Cameron the preserver of her brother's life.

Elizabeth Macpherson rose and stepped blushing forward to receive her young and gallant guest. She was just on the verge of womanhood—that most fascinating period, when the tender and deep sensibilities of the woman begin to give a timid dignity to the liveliness of the girl. The open and rather ardent expression of her happy countenance was sweetly repressed and tempered by the pure veil of maidenly modesty; yet her graceful and commanding stature, the fire of her bright blue eye, and her free and stately step and gesture, told that the spirit of her fathers dwelt strong in the bosom of their lovely daughter. The heart of Allan Cameron bounded and fluttered in his breast as he advanced to salute this beautiful mountain-nymph. He had braved, undaunted, the brow of man when darkened with the frown of deadly hostility, but he shrank with a new and undefinable tremor before the blushing smile of a youthful maiden's cheek and eye. His self-possession seemed for once to have forsaken him; and had Macpherson been acquainted with the human heart, he must have seen that a new and irresistible feeling was rapidly taking possession of his generous preserver's bosom. He saw in it, however, but the awkwardness of a first interview between two strangers of different sexes; and, in order to relieve Cameron, led him away to see all the beautiful and romantic scenery of the glen, particularly Coir-nan-Taischatrin.

But it was not long ere the graceful person and fascinating manners of Cameron made an impression upon the artless and warm-hearted maiden. At first, her brother's intimate friend, the preserver of his life, had, in her view, just claims to her attention and grateful kindness; but she soon felt that she esteemed, not to say loved him for himself. The preserver of her brother would at all times have been dear to her; but Allan Cameron woke in her heart a feeling inexpressibly more deep, more tender, more intense.

Art had little influence in directing the conduct of the youthful lovers; and it was not long till they experienced all that heaven of delight which arises in the heart upon being assured of the mutual return of affection. They had, however, kept their love hid from Ewan Macpherson; both because his dark and gloomy manner forbade all approaches to familiar confidence, and because, from the peculiar nature of love, mystery and concealment are necessary to give it its highest zest. Whatever might be the cause, certain it was that Allan Cameron and Elizabeth Macpherson planned the little excursions, which they now frequently made together, in such a manner that they might, as much as possible, avoid being seen by Ewan.

At length, however, the suspicions of the proud chieftain were aroused. It had never entered into his mind that Cameron might, by any possibility, raise his presumptuous hopes so high as to dream of loving the sister of Ewan Macpherson; and no sooner did he suspect the truth than he dashed from his mind every friendly and grateful feeling towards the man who had saved his life; and saw in Allan Cameron only the hereditary foe of his clan, whose daring insolence had attempted to disgrace the name of Macpherson, by seeking to win the heart of its most lofty descended maiden.

full of resentment at what he deemed so deep an insult, he was ranging the groves and thickets of Glen-Feracht, in quest of Cameron, like a wolf prowling for his unconscious victim.

The evening sun was at that time throwing his long lines of slanting glory across the summits of the mountains, and lighting the clouds of the west with a radiance too dazzling to be gazed upon, yet too magnificent to permit the eye and the excited soul to wander for a moment from the contemplation of its celestial splendour. Upon a gentle eminence, whence the castle and the greater part of the glen might be distinctly viewed, stood the lovers. They gazed with silent delight on the beauty and magnificence of the scene around them; yet, amidst their engrossing raptures, they had still enough of individual feeling remaining to be sensible of that warm palpitation of the heart which, in the presence of a beloved object, so greatly enhances every feeling of delight. On a sudden, they were startled by a rustling noise in the adjoining thicket; and immediately forth bounded Bran, Macpherson's stag-hound, his master's constant attendant.

"My brother must be near," said Elizabeth, in an anxious whisper; "and we shall be discovered. Good Heavens! what shall we do?"

"Perhaps he may not have seen us," replied Cameron: "you can hasten to the castle, and I shall attempt to detain him here till you shall have reached it."

She gave no answer; but, casting around a glance of great alarm, and fixing one tender, anxious look for one moment upon Cameron, she hastened away through secret but well known paths. She did not, however, escape the eye of Ewan Macpherson, who had thus unseasonably approached the lovers in their retirement. At this discovery, madness swelled in his heart and boiled along his veins; but, suppressing his passion, he approached with haughty stateliness the spot where Cameron stood, apparently fixed in deep and all-engrossing admiration of the glowing beauties of earth and heaven.

"The beauties of animated nature appear to have charms in the tasteful eyes of Allan Cameron," said Macpherson, as he advanced.

"They have," replied Cameron; "and who could stand on this lovely spot and witness so much beauty and magnificence, without feeling a glow of rapture pervade his whole frame, and chain him to the place in delighted admiration! How happy ought the man to be who can call a place of such loveliness and grandeur his own!"

"Stay! hold! Allan Cameron; let us understand each other. Does Allan Cameron mean to say that these woods and streams of Glen-Feracht, the lofty mountains around him, the tints of the evening sky over his head, and these alone, have stirred up his soul to this pitch of enthusiasm? Or must Ewan Macpherson flatter himself that his sister's charms have also had some slight influence in producing these rapturous emotions?"

Uncertain whether Macpherson was in earnest or in jest, Cameron hesitated to answer; and continued gazing on the mountain top, bright, and crimson, and airy, as if it terminated in an edge of flame.

"Dishonour blast the name of Macpherson, if I endure this!" exclaimed the fierce Ewan, bursting into a tumult of fury. "Proud Cameron! dost thou disdain to answer the chief of the Macphersons? Are we fallen so low that a Cameron shall despise us? Speak! answer me! else I strike thee to my foot like a base hound! Hast thou dared to mention love—even to think of love for the sister of Macpherson?"

"And where were the mighty offence, though a Cameron should aspire so high as to love the sister of Macpherson?"

"Where were the offence?—I tell thee, boy, he had better never have seen the light. But I will not trifle with thee. Hast thou so dared?"

"I am little used to answer such interrogations. But I would not willingly quarrel with Ewan Macpherson. My heart must have been colder than it is, could I have enjoyed the company of Elizabeth Macpherson without yielding me to that influence of witching beauty which softens and subdues the soul."

"Thou hast not said—thou dost not dare to say—thou lovest her! Cameron, I have felt friendship for thee. Thou hast resided in the hall of my fathers. My hand is withheld from thee. But, if thou dost not renounce, at once and for ever, all pretensions to the love of Elizabeth Macpherson, thou hast looked thy last on this green earth and those glorious heavens."

"Renounce all pretensions to the love of Elizabeth Macpherson! I tell thee, proud man, that the daughter of the highest Macpherson might think herself honoured by an alliance with a Cameron."

"Insolent serf! unsay thy words, or maintain them with thy sword!—Crouch, like a low-born slave as thou art, and beg Macpherson's pardon, if thou darest not bare thy coward blade."

"Macpherson, thou didst not call me slave or coward, when, side by side, we two stemmed the stream of battle in its wildest rage;—nor was it a coward blade that hewed out a safe retreat for thee, when thine own arm waxed weak and thy steps were unequal on the field of the slain."

"Thou dost well to speak of what thou knowest will prevent me from chastising thy base treachery. 'Tis what I might have expected;—'tis done like a cowardly Cameron!"

"But that thou hast a sister, Macpherson, that taunt had cost thee dear. Thou knowest that thou speakest falsely."

"Falsely!—defend thee, villain, or die like a slave! The feud of our fathers is but renewed—their spirits behold our strife!" cried Macpherson, and, drawing his claymore, rushed upon Cameron almost before his blade was bared for the combat.

Macpherson, transported to a pitch of frenzy, thought not of artful skill, dreamt not of personal danger. He showered blow on blow with the intemperate fury of a maniac; all his aim, every effort, being directed to destroy his foe. Cameron, with less bodily strength, was possessed of calm and dauntless courage, superior skill in the use of his weapon, and unmatched personal activity. Unwilling to harm the brother of the object of his affection, he only defended himself, retiring and warding off the furious but aimless blows of Macpherson. The frowning cheek and brow of the baffled chief waxed grimmer with disappointed hate; and, changing his mode of attack, he swept circling round his young and agile antagonist, endeavouring thus to throw him off his guard. Cameron, turning dexterously on his heel, held him still at the sword's point, and allowed him to expend his strength in desperate efforts of fierce but ineffectual violence. During their combat, however, some of Macpherson's *gillies* approached the spot; and Cameron perceived them nearing him with kindling eyes, and holding in their impatient hands the *skean dhu* half unsheathed. He knew that Macpherson was as honourable as brave; and he knew that he might with perfect safety trust his life to the honour of any Highlander, under any circumstance where the peculiar honour of his clan was not concerned. But he also knew that no clansman would esteem any deed a crime which should preserve the life or the reputation of his chief. There was, he saw, but one means of saving his life. Collecting all his strength, he beat aside one of Macpherson's furious blows, and bounding upon him as a crouching tiger springs upon his prey, he wrenched his claymore from his hand, dashed him to the earth with the mere violence of the assault, wielding a weapon in either hand, struck to the ground two of the

opposing clansmen plunged into the thickets as a mountain stag bursts through his covert when the opening pack is near, and disappeared in an instant among the crashing and closing boughs of the underwood. Foaming with disappointed rage, Macpherson sprung from the ground, snatched a *skean dhu* from one of his prostrated followers, and shouting, "Revenge!" rushed into the thickets in headlong pursuit. In vain. A fleet foot than that of Allan Cameron never pressed the mountain heath; and, in a short time, he was far beyond all danger from his enraged pursuer; who, after ranging every dell and nook in vain, returned to Castle Feracht, chafing and foaming with impotent rage, and uttering dire but unavailing threats of vengeance.

What would it avail to relate the chieftain's wrath, when he found himself compelled to forego his hopes of sweet revenge, and to endure what he esteemed a new and a more daring insult? Fret and chafe as he might, he knew that his high-souled sister would not be deterred, by threats of personal injury, from following the bent of her own inclination. He therefore assembled his followers in her presence, and caused them all to bind themselves, by a deep oath, to avenge the quarrel of their chief upon Allan Cameron, should he ever dare to set foot within Glen Feracht; enforcing his commands by threats of deadliest vengeance, should any clansman shew him favour, hold intelligence with him, or meet him in terms of peace. Elizabeth Macpherson saw his purpose; but she scorned to display her emotion. A flush indeed mantled her brow; and her eye shed one sparkle of indignation—but she remained silent. Fraternal affection was banished the halls of Castle Feracht. An increasing gloom and moodiness of heart began to sink upon the rugged chief; and, at length, to prevent his dark soul's loneliness from becoming altogether insupportable, he began to take an interest in the affairs, first of his own clan, next of the neighbouring clans, and finally of the nation. He thus became acquainted with many a wild and many a wondrous legend, which might otherwise never have reached his observation; and his rather uncultivated mind was not able to resist the encroachments of superstition. Among others, a firm belief in the reality of the *taisch*, or second-sight, took possession of his mind; and he listened to the many almost incredible relations concerning it, with a wild excitement of spirit. These changes in the manners and pursuits of Macpherson, were, from time to time, reported to Allan Cameron, in spite of the stern threats which had been denounced against all who should hold intercourse with him. A youth, the choal (foster-brother) of Allan Cameron, had repeatedly, under the assumed character of a wandering hunter, entered within the precincts of Glen Feracht, where he was unknown; and, picking up all the information that could be obtained, without awakening suspicion, returned with it to his youthful chief.

Ewan Macpherson was one day informed, by his aged *henchman*, Ranald Glas, that a second-sighted man had arrived in the glen, conducted, according to his own account, by the power of the *taisch*: that he was extremely old, and his visions were appallingly vivid: his thoughts were terror, and his words were fire. The revelations of things to come passed frequent and powerful across his soul, bright and living as realities; and his language was that of one who constantly held strange communication with scenes and beings not of this world. Though his foot had never before trod the heath of Glen Feracht, he described, with the most perfect accuracy, its castle, stream, and cave; saying that he was come to lay his bones beside those of the ancient seers and holy men who had inhabited Coirnan-Taischatrin. This was enough to rouse the curiosity of Macpherson. Pursuing his inquiries, he learned that the seer had taken up his abode in the cave; and that he had already foretold to some of the clan things part of which were accomplished, and the rest expected with the utmost

confidence. In order to satisfy his curiosity, Macpherson determined to visit the hoary seer, and learn from himself the nature of his visions.

The shadows of the pine and oak were stretching far across the ravine in the slant evening sunshine when Ewan Macpherson appeared in front of the cave. His eye could not penetrate the deep darkness within it; and, yielding to a feeling of indescribable awe which crept over his soul, he remained for some time silent and motionless before its entrance. At length, he ordered one of his gillies to acquaint the wondrous inmate that Ewan Macpherson wished to hold some converse with him. Forward came the venerable man; and his appearance, in the dimming twilight, had no tendency to diminish the strange delirium of superstitious feelings which had absorbed the whole mind of the bewildered chief. The sage bent one searching glance upon his visitor; and, seeming to have penetrated the state of his mind, advanced into more open view.

A long and squared rod seemed to support his shaking frame, as he came forward, tottering and halting at every step. The shaggy hide of an enormous wolf, thrown loosely over his shoulders, served partly to clothe him, partly to disguise his form by the air of savage wildness which a garment so uncouth gave its wearer. From his belt depended some instruments, with the use of which Macpherson was entirely unacquainted; together with a *skean dhu* of exquisite and uncommon workmanship. His bonnet alone was like that of other men; for, what could a true Highlander substitute for the blue bonnet?—but he neither doffed it, nor made any motions of obeisance as he approached. A long white beard flowed half down his bosom, waving heavily and solemnly as he moved. The fire of an intensely bright eye was half hid by his deep, grey, shaggy eyebrows; yet, from beneath that grim penthouse, they emitted occasional sparklings like diamonds in the dark.

“Chief of Macpherson!” said he, in a deep hollow voice—“Man of the dark brow and ruthless hand! what seekest thou with Moran of the Wild?” But, ere Macpherson could reply, the sage cast the wolf hide back from his right shoulder—extended the long squared rod in his firmly clenched hand—raised himself up to his full height, while his eyes seemed starting from their sockets and gleaming like two balls of living fire, and his whole frame agitated, and as if it were dilating with the internal workings of his wild visionary spirit. Macpherson shook and shrunk in his presence.

“They come! they come!” exclaimed the seer—“the wild, the dreadful, the undefinable, the unutterable, the shadowy forms and seemings of things and actions to be! They crowd upon me in powers and numbers unendurable, inconceivable! Words never formed by human breath sound within my heart, and tell of things that mortal tongue may never utter. Eyes, clear, cold, dead, bright, and chill as winter moonshine, look into my soul, and fill it with all their lucid meanings! Oh, scene of blood and wo! when wilt thou end? Thou bright-haired angel, must the doom be thine! Fair lady of the stately brow! oh, let me see no more!” His lips quivered, but he uttered not another word. He remained fixed, rigid, statue-like, as if chilled into stone, bereft of life and motion, by the terrible vision. At length his extended arm dropped by his side; and, heaving a long, shuddering sigh, he leaned his drooping frame upon his rod, trembling and exhausted.

After a considerable pause, Macpherson ventured to address him, with the intention of inquiring into the nature of his vision. “Speak not to me, Ewan Macpherson,” said he. “Seek not to know the fate thou wilt and must know all too soon. Thy path through life has been blood-stained and grievous. No warnings may now avail thee. But that lady—might she be rescued from misery and horror! Chief! if the safety and happiness of thy father’s daughter be dear

to thee, bid her assume the spirit of her race, and come alone to Coir-nan-Taischatrin. Tell her that Moran of the Wild has that to reveal to her which concerns her, and thee too, deeply. And mark me, chief! unless thou ceaseest to pursue the feuds of thy fathers, thy course will be brief, and bloody will be its close.” Thus saying, he turned and feebly dragged his spent and tottering form into the dark and awe-inspiring cave.

Stunned and bewildered, incapable of thought or reflection, and staggering like one who walks in his sleep, Macpherson wandered back towards Castle Feracht. With a strange expression of vague astonishment and hesitation, he gazed upon his sister. At length, he found words: “Elizabeth Macpherson, if the honour of thy name, if thy own safety and happiness can move thee; if thy brother’s life—but that is a trifle—assume the spirit of thy fathers and go alone to Coir-nan-Taischatrin. Moran of the Wild has that to tell thee which deeply concerns thy safety and happiness. Canst thou execute his desire? He is a fearful man!” At his first words, the blood forsook her cheek, and her heart sank within her; but, ere he ceased speaking, a wild surmise flashed gleaming across her soul.

“Brother!” replied she, “the daughter of Angus Macpherson dare go alone to Coir-nan-Taischatrin, and hear whatever the sage may have to tell. Fear not for me. Do not, by impatience, or needless anxiety for my safety, rashly interrupt our interview. Ere long, you shall know what warnings or what information the seer has to impart.” Then, with a stately and determined step, and an eye kindled with an ambiguous expression of ardent hope or daring resolution, she bent her way to the dreaded cave.

The fearless maiden approached the cave. She spoke; but the voice that answered was that of Allan Cameron. The wolf’s hide was soon thrown aside, and he stood before her in the graceful garb of a mountain warrior; his noble countenance beaming with courage and triumphant love. Taking advantage of the time which Macpherson would delay at the castle, awaiting the expiration of their interview, they hastily fled from the hostile glen, and soon reached a concealment where the faithful cho-alt had horses prepared for their escape. Words would be feeble to express the fury of Ewan Macpherson when, after waiting till his patience was exhausted, he explored the cave, and found that he had been deceived, and that by the man whom he had begun to consider as his deadliest foe. He determined to take fearful vengeance upon Cameron, and all of his clan whom he might be able to overpower. Before he could get his purpose put in execution, he chanced to meet a small party of the Gordons; when, forgetting every other thought but that of his burning desire of vengeance on those who slew his father, he rushed upon them; and, bursting into the midst of them, was assailed on all sides, and wounded so severely that, though he was rescued by his own followers, and was completely victorious, he died ere he could be brought back to Castle Feracht. Dying unmarried, his estate and power passed to his sister, and from her, to one of her younger sons, upon his dropping the name of Cameron and retaining that of Macpherson alone. An amicable termination was thus put to the feud between the two families. A descendant from this auspicious union still resides in Castle Feracht, and occasionally relates, with considerable pleasure, the tradition of Coir-nan-Taischatrin.



TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WATER-CARRIER :

A LEGEND OF THE CANONGATE.

IN those good old times when as yet handicraft was not superseded by machinery, and when the women of our country had their morals preserved by the occupations of honest industry, which enabled them, moreover, to provide for themselves, and often for their families, when their husbands could do neither—the character of the female part of our population was, it may fairly be presumed, of a more independent nature than it is at present; shewing stronger features of individuality, and better suited to the purpose of the novelist. These remarks are well exemplified in the character of an old woman who was well known to the inhabitants of Edinburgh during the early part of the last century. This woman's name was Janet Dickson. She earned her livelihood by acting the part of an aqueduct, or water-carrier, when as yet no pipes existed for the purpose of supplying the town with water; and when a draught, or, as it was called, a rake of water, was of some pecuniary value, arising from the labour required in carrying it to the houses of the inhabitants.

It would be of small importance to search any genealogical archives for the ancestors of Janet Dickson. One who inherited nothing but a right to bear water, and who, in the exercise of that privilege, carried as high a head and displayed as straight a back as any gentlewoman in the Canongate, might well despise lineage, and take her stand, as she did, upon the independence which her laborious occupation enabled her to sustain. The degenerate cadies of the nineteenth century might, according to the portion of spirit still left to them, look back with pride, or with shame, upon the old woman, some of the acts of whom we are now going to commemorate; and it is not too bold a hope to entertain that some of the members of that amiable sisterhood (the fraternity we despise) may derive some elevation of character from the contemplation of the portrait we have undertaken to draw.

It was customary in the water-carriers of Edinburgh to rise very early in the morning, and supply their customers long before any of the members of the families had accomplished what in Scotland is called the first sleep. In summer, the period at which they began their operations was generally three in the morning. At that early hour, hundreds of those humble, but useful labourers, might have been seen hastening to the wells with their pitchers; and no small competition existed among them, as to the right of priority according to which they fell to be served. Scenes of no ordinary character were often enacted at these conclaves. The news of the previous day and night were industriously circulated and the characters of their various customers handled with a freedom which, if it had been applied to politics, might have emulated the liberty of the tongue or press of these days of natural rights.

One fine morning in June, Janet Dickson sallied forth from the White Horse Close, in the Canongate, where she resided, to begin her labours at the Fountain Well. She laid down her pitchers at the top of St Mary's Wynd, with

the intention of calling up the servants of a family in the neighbourhood, who required to be awakened early, for the purpose of washing. Having performed this duty, she returned and proceeded to take up her pitchers; but finding one of them heavier than it ought to have been, she turned down her eyes to observe the cause, when, to her astonishment, she found it occupied by a large bundle, apparently of clothes. She looked round to see if any person was near, who might, she thought, have put the bundle there, for the purpose of her taking care of it; but seeing nobody, she proceeded to examine it, and see what it contained. On moving the bundle, a sound proceeded from it, which Janet immediately recognised as that of a babe endeavouring to cry, but prevented by the clothes covering its head. Without taking time to undo the bundle where she was, she hurried home, and upon getting into her own little dwelling, proceeded to give liberty to the young prisoner who had been consigned to this early bondage.

The child was a female of about four months old, presenting all those ruddy chubby appearances of a hearty squaller, and turning upon the old face of its preserver a pair of large blue eyes, filled with that smile of innocence that has turned away the destroying hand which nothing else in nature could have averted. Poor innocent! that smile—an unconscious exercise of one of nature's earliest instincts, in which the will had no part, and of which the memory could record no trace—was perhaps the most important act of thy existence! Janet Dickson could not resist the sweet and innocent appeal. Bursting out in an ejaculation of pity and affection, she cried, "Ill, ill, did they wha begat ye, deserve sic a blessing as the licht o' thae bonny blue lamps to shine on their cruel and hardened countenances—cruel, cruel, indeed, my puir lammie, if indeed they ever dared to look into your sweet and innocent face. But it's no possible that a mither's ee ever received that licht; for there is nae power on earth that could hae prevented its getting to her heart, as it has got to mine, auld as it is, and shrivelled up wi' the burning wrangs o' a sinfu' warld. But come ye frae whom it has pleased Heaven to bring ye, I shall be to ye as that mither ought to hae been, if she had been formed o' common clay, or onything less hard than the whinstanes o' Arthur's Sate."

And, with these words, Janet Dickson got the little foundingling disengaged from the clothes with which it was encompassed, and having succeeded in getting it to take some milk, put it to bed, and again went forth to supply her customers with water.

In a little time, it was circulated throughout the Canongate, that Janet Dickson, the water-woman, had found a child in her water-bucket, and refused to consign it to the parish in consequence of having conceived an affection for it. Many visitors came to see it, and many contributions were made and accepted, towards defraying the expense of bringing it up. Janet, however, soon found that she might have dispensed with this assistance; for, on the second evening after the child had been found, and while she sat with it in her lap, singing to it one of her most favourite Scotch airs, her window, which looked into the next close—as is often the case with the Edinburgh houses—opened, and a

voice, unknown to her, said in a low tone, "You have acted properly, and as became the character you bear in your humble station. Take this, and more shall be given you at regular periods; but upon this condition alone, that, if you endeavour to find out the person who bestows it, the assistance shall thenceforth cease." The sum dropped was enough to satisfy Janet for keeping the child a year. She took up the money, and answered, as the hand withdrew, "Janet Dickson doesna require encouragement to do that which her conscience tells her is according to God's law. I kenna to whom the hand belongs, that has given me this gift; but this I ken, that nae act that hand can perform—ay, though it were to pour out gowd pieces in thousands and tens o' thousands—can ever mak amends for exposing an innocent bairn to the chance o' death, and takin frae it the greatest o' a' blessings, the knowledge and the love o' its parents, wha, by God's comman', written in the haly buik, as weel as upon their ain hearts, were bound to cherish and protect it, even as they themselves were taken care o' by them wha brought them to the world."

A great part of this speech of Janet's was, in all likelihood, spoken after the person who had dropped the money had withdrawn; for there was displayed an evident hurry to escape, and it was clearly not his or her object to listen to what might be termed the croonings of an old woman. The money was gratefully received; and the discreet water-woman, poor as she was, refused afterwards to take the money that was offered to her by her kind neighbours, though she did not conceive herself entitled to divulge anything relating to the mysterious manner in which she had been already partially supplied and expected again to be supplied with the means of the foundling's support.

These strange occurrences did not, in any degree, affect Janet Dickson's mode of life. She still continued to rise at the water-carrier's early hour, and to work in her vocation with all her accustomed assiduity. The child (which she called Mary, from the circumstance of her being found in St Mary's Wynd, adding her own surname) grew apace; and, about the same time of the year at which the unknown person had contributed the last money, the same hand appeared at the window, dropping the same sum; and apparently the same voice thanked Janet Dickson for her attention to the child, and enjoined her to rear it in the fear of that God which its mother had disobeyed, in exposing it to the mercy of the elements and the risk of death.

"Ye may weel speak in that way," rejoined Janet, though the person did not wait for the reply, "wha hae had at least some pairt, either as principal or assistant, in sae cruel an act. 'Burnt offerings of fatlings with the incense of rams,' as Dauvid says, winna atone for the sin o' leavin' ye, my bonny bairn," (addressing herself to the child,) "to the tender mercies o' a cauld world. But 'a faither to the fatherless is God, in His holy habitation;' and Janet Dickson, though puir and auld, shall be to ye as a mither." And she kissed the unconscious object of her simple address, while the tears trickled down the furrows which sorrow and age had worn in her old cheeks.

Years passed on without much change in the habits of the old woman, but producing in the foundling a new feature of beauty every year. The same hand supplied the assistance; but no curiosity was displayed to see the object of so much solicitude, and, at the same time, so much unnatural feeling. This might have been accounted for by a suspicion entertained by Janet that the parents of so fair and so good a daughter were not without means of satisfying their feelings of pride in beholding, when occasion offered, the interesting and beautiful girl. Trained up in the principles of religion entertained by Janet Dickson, which were daily fed by copious draughts from the fountain-head of all faith and goodness, Mary was as well grounded in her morals

as she was gentle in her manners and beautiful in her appearance.

The beauty of Mary, and her interesting history, brought many visitors to the humble dwelling of Janet Dickson. Among the rest, a daughter of Lord Minto, who then resided in the Canongate, and Miss Jane Metcalfe, the daughter of Sir John Metcalfe, an English knight also there resident, came often together to see Janet. Miss Elliot was of an amiable disposition, and rejoiced in the advancement of Mary in her education. Miss Metcalfe, who was considerably her superior in point of years, was also very solicitous about the education of the foundling; but it might have been observed that the two ladies, though apparently great friends, often exhibited great jealousy of each other's accomplishments. In particular, Miss Metcalfe did not hesitate to ridicule the work which her friend and companion had left for Mary to copy; and she even went the length of sometimes ridiculing her person; while, again, when the two ladies met, they indulged in the most turgid expressions of praise of each other, sealing their professions with energetic kisses and embraces, and presenting all the appearances of strong affection. It was observed that the more rancorous spirit was displayed by the elder; and it was only when Miss Elliot had discovered something wrong in the conduct of her friend towards her, that her spirit excited her to retaliation.

All this appeared very wonderful to the simple Mary; and even the sagacious and penetrating Janet Dickson thought the conduct of the ladies strange and incomprehensible. Yet she did not lose the opportunity of extracting from it a lesson to Mary to avoid envy and hypocrisy, two of the worst vices of human nature—and to adhere to simplicity and truth, the true sources of happiness, and the foundation of a religious education.

Fourteen years had now passed over her head, and the affection between the two beings who had been so miraculously brought together, apparently for the good of both, ripened and strengthened till it acquired the force of that love which only mothers can feel, and daughters, when dutiful, can experience. Mary was aware, so far as her youth enabled her to understand them, of the circumstances of her history; but, sobbing on the bosom of her good and kind preserver, she was accustomed to say, in her own simple way, that she rejoiced that she had never seen or known her mother, for she would not and could not divide the affection which she entertained for her benefactor with one that had brought her into the world and deserted her. Janet did not nourish in the breast of the devoted Mary any angry feelings towards her parents; on the contrary, she often told her she was bound to love them, and return good for evil. She hinted to her that she might be of good, if not noble birth, and said, with a smile which indicated her sense of the quaint application of the quotation from the psalms, "Though ye have been among the *pots*, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." These statements produced an effect upon the youthful mind of Mary, engendering feelings above what her situation could have created, and gave her an elevation of manner which added grace to the natural beauties with which she had been so exuberantly endowed.

The equal tenor of the lives of these two happy beings was in some degree agreeably interrupted by a change in the circumstances attending the leaving of the yearly allowance. On the fifteenth anniversary of Mary's exposure and recovery, the unknown person, on leaving the usual sum of money, with some words of encouragement and thanks to Janet, added that, on the next occasion, a communication would be made as to the parents of her young favourite.

"This communication," responded Janet, "has been lang expected, and langer due; when it comes it shall be 'like rain upon the mown grass—as showers that water the earth.

But let me, wha am but a puir woman, inform ye, be ye gentle or be ye semple, that Mary Dickson winna leave the humble hame o' her preserver, to tread the carpeted floor o' the palace o' Holyrood. Might may gie right amang men; but Mary Dickson is now o' an age to claim the power o' her ain disposal frae the law o' the land; and if I ken aught o' the nature o' her gentle and affectionate soul, she hersel will send forth 'the prayer o' the humble which pierceth the clouds,' to be allowed to live wi' her auld friend, till that day shall come when she or I shall become wedded—she to a sojourner upon earth, and I to the kingdom o' heaven."

Janet, as usual, got no answer to her ejaculations from the person to whom they were addressed; but she was pleased by the promise which had thus been made to her. Her hopes of an exalted parentage for Mary beat high, and the girl herself imbibed a part of Janet's enthusiastic expectations. The year passed over, and the day came when the important discovery was to be made, which would, in all likelihood, decide whether Mary Dickson was destined to be a lady or a waterwoman's adopted daughter. At ten o'clock of the evening of that day, the window opened, and the following words were pronounced in a serious and somewhat tremulous tone of voice, apparently that of a woman:—

"Mary Dickson has been too long left in ignorance of her true parentage; but reasons existed for this secrecy, which may one day be communicated to her. Lord Spynie of Forfarshire, who resides in the third house down from this close, is the father of Mary Dickson. Farther than this it is not permitted me to say. When or how this noble birth may be made of advantage to a lord's daughter, cannot be told; nor can the wish, which must lie nearest to the heart of Janet Dickson, as a religious keeper of God's sacraments, be gratified by any information as to whether Mary Dickson is legitimate or a bastard." On delivering this speech, the person deposited the usual sum of money and quickly disappeared.

This intelligence filled Janet Dickson with joy. That her lovely ward was the daughter of a nobleman, pleased her; but, as she had never entertained an idea, apparently so absurd, as that a foundling had (in a country like Scotland, where the domestic affections are so highly cultivated) any chance of being a child of lawfully married persons; and, as she now found this circumstance suspended in the balance of doubt, her pleasure was enhanced beyond her power of a suitable expression of it to that object who had the greatest interest in the intelligence. Yet she recollected herself. Lord Spynie, to whose house she carried water, was comparatively young, and known to be a bachelor. How could there be any doubt, then, as to a child of his being legitimate or illegitimate? Besides, he was reported as being the suitor of Miss Margaret Elliot—having given up for her an old love affair with Miss Metcalfe. This surely removed all doubt. What then could be the meaning of this unaccountable announcement? There was no great reason to doubt his Lordship being Mary's father, for his dissolute habits might well make that an ordinary circumstance; but even this was not altogether reconcilable with the fact of the exposure of the child, since few mothers who could claim so good a paymaster for a father, would think of throwing a child upon the public, and afterwards tell that its father was a nobleman. The whole affair was mysterious, and not quite satisfactory to Janet Dickson.

She resolved, before making any mention of the circumstance to Mary, to test the truth of the statement in a way which occurred to herself.

Next day, Janet Dickson was visited by Miss Elliot. Their conversation was turned, adroitly enough, by Janet, on Lord Spynie, whom she said she would like to see, to

ascertain if he would recommend Mary Dickson to his sisters, as well skilled in the use of the needle. Miss Elliot laughed at the apparent simplicity of Janet; and observed, archly, that Mary was not a person to be shewn for curiosity's sake to young noblemen; recommending to Janet to go to Lord Spynie's sisters herself, and recommend her young friend; and she, Miss Elliot, would give her all the assistance in her power. Foiled in this attempt, Janet resolved to adopt another course.

Next day, she went and stood opposite to the house occupied by his Lordship, waiting till she saw him come out.

"A braw day for noblemen," said Janet, accosting his lordship with a low curtsy.

"Why for noblemen, guid woman?" asked his Lordship, apparently amused at the exclusive character of the salutation.

Caught by a compliment which turned out to be nonsense, Janet, notwithstanding, gained her point in a better manner than if she had limited her salutation to the ordinary form; for she arrested the attention of the nobleman, which she would otherwise perhaps have had some difficulty in doing.

"Indeed, my Lord," resumed Janet—"I just meant that it was a braw day, and that maybe yer Lordship wad tak the trouble to see the bonny bird which has been kept at your expense in the White Horse Close yonder, for mony a day." And Janet gave a wink as she thus tried the effect of a small beginning before she went farther, in conformity with the custom of her wily country.

Led astray, in all likelihood, by Janet's significant use of her left eye, Lord Spynie responded with spirit, "When was it that Lord Spynie refused to contemplate beauty, whether in the plumage of a bird, or in the form and lineaments of a young damsel. Is she fair?"

"As like yersel, my Lord," answered Janet—who lost every part of his Lordship's speech except the question with which it concluded—"as like yersel as the same flesh and bluid can mak her. But ye can judge wi' yer ain een; and, if she doesna please ye, it's no the fault o' her teacher, for her education has been my care for mony a lang day, and a pleasant occupation it has been, as yer Lordship may hae been informed by—ye ken wha"—another wink.

"Well, my good old lady, since you say your young one is so like me, she must of necessity be fair; and it would ill become me to deny so strong a claim to friendship as that arising from a similarity of noses. You may expect me at the White Horse Close at eight o'clock, when you must be on the out-look to conduct me to the residence of this young queen of hearts."

"That will I," answered the delighted Janet, who now no longer doubted that the information she had received was correct; and, having again curtsied, she directed her steps to the White Horse Close, cogitating, as she went, on the strange events of human life, and satisfying herself more and more that she could not be wrong in imputing the paternity of Mary to Lord Spynie. "For, if he is not the father of my darling"—so she questioned herself with that strictness which a person determined to be convinced, and delighting in the posing nature of a question which leads to the wished for inference, is well pleased to use—"if he is not the father of my darling, why does he condescend to come to the house of a water-woman?" Poor Janet Dickson! How simple thy question, and how little didst thou know of the wickedness of man! Lord Spynie wished merely to gratify a youthful curiosity. He was ignorant of the intention of the old woman in requesting him to visit her house; but, fond of frolic, he agreed to comply with her strange and most unusual request.

In the evening, at the hour appointed, Janet Dickson waited at the door for Lord Spynie. She had as yet told

Mary nothing of her imputed parentage, because she wished to ascertain the true circumstances of the whole mysterious business before she communicated any part of it to her. Lord Spynie was as good as his word. He came flushed with wine, and dressed in the gaudy style of noblemen of that day, with a sword hanging by his side glittering with the spoils of the east. A large plume fell with a graceful bend from his hat upon his shoulders, and the buckles at his knee and on his shoes dazzled the eyes of the beholder with their shining gems. Janet received his Lordship with a graceful curtsy, and made all the necessary and accustomed apologies for receiving a nobleman into her humble abode.

When Spynie entered, he was struck with evident amazement at the appearances which, so contrary to his expectations, presented themselves. On a clean scoured little table, alongside of a comfortable fire, with a lamp throwing its flickering flame over the open leaves, lay Janet Dickson's Bible, which she had been reading to Mary, who sat on the other side of the fire, dressed in a neat and clean style, sewing some needle work which she had received from Miss Jane Metcalfe. Her appearance was striking. Her dress was calculated to bring out her most recondite beauties. A small sculleap, common in those days, left her beautiful hair, braided over her brow, to add its simple effect to a face where every line was so gently and elegantly convolved, that an admirer of simplicity and beauty would have trembled for the deranging effect even of a smile. Apparently aware of the striking effect of her face when left to its natural contour—unmoved, yet how moving!—Mary, when she rose and curtsied, looked at Lord Spynie as he entered, as a statue represented with its view fixed on some object. Not a muscle of her face was moved and her eye—an organ which generally defies all the efforts of its voluntary muscles to keep it in order—fell as calmly and steadfastly upon him as the light of a planetary star when aurora is rising from the sea. Spynie, still under the effect of his surprise at the unexpected appearances, was affected still more by the effect of Mary's peculiar and extraordinary manner, and stood for some time gazing upon her as if he had been suddenly entranced. It was some time before he could, by the efforts of Janet, be made to sit; and, when he had betaken himself to a chair, he was evidently entirely at a loss, and could find no words suitable to the extraordinary situation in which he found himself. Provided with a set of slang terms suited to dissolute company, and finding these put to flight by the imperial style and character of the beauty and manner of a child of nature, he had not a single word to say for himself; and the whole party for some time remained mute, till Janet Dickson broke the silence.

"I was just, when you entered, my Lord, reading to Mary that bonny psalm o' King David, whar he exorteth not to trust in man, whose breath goeth forth, who returneth to the earth, and whose thoughts on that very day perish. It's the 146th, my Lord. Isn't it, Mary? I think sae; but my memory needs glasses, like my auld een. It's a braw psalm that, my Lord; and, if yer Lordship likes, I will read it again."

"We will get it some other time, my good laȝy," said Spynie, whose eyes were still fixed on Mary as on an apparition.

"Weel, weel, my Lord, it's nae sin in yer Lordship preferring, on sic an occasion as this, to satisfy your ain een—as truly ye seem to be doing—o' the truth o' what I said to ye the day; but people in your situation are no sae guid judges o' thae things as fremmit folk, wha can see baith, and compare the features o' the ane wi' the features o' the other, and satisfy themselves."

"I certainly do feel a difficulty," replied Spynie, at a loss what to say, "to take my eyes off the young maiden; for

she has more beauty in her countenance than ever belonged to the Spynies."

His Lordship, having slightly recovered himself, began to look upon things in a different light, and apparently to blame himself for being deceived by the canting appliances of an experienced woman and a mock-simple girl, no doubt resorted to for the purpose of entrapping him into a love which might, as they thought, be followed by a marriage. Rising from his seat, he approached Mary, and, still under the influence of wine, he flung his arms about her neck. The girl started back; and, from the mere impulse of nature, threw so much offended dignity into her face and attitude, as effectually to check the libertine, and make him fall back in deep discomfiture.

"Hoot, awa, Mary, woman—ye needna be sae touchy. His Lordship has a guid richt to kiss ye; but it's no your fault, pair thing, for I haena properly instructed ye in what was necessary for this meeting."

Spynie again rose, and, repeating his salutation, was repulsed with greater energy than before, and with so unreal an affectation, that he acknowledged the art was exquisite. Janet Dickson again interfered, and told Mary that it was her duty, as she would explain to her another time, to receive kindly the attentions of Lord Spynie. At this moment, a neighbour entered the house, and Lord Spynie departed promising to return again.

The vision of Mary Dickson had struck deep into the mind of Spynie, who, though he still believed she was a trained actress, could not get quit of certain misgivings, when he brought to his recollection some of her noble attitudes of hurt pride and swelling indignation, which no art could possibly imitate; and he did not hesitate to dwell on the circumstance, that no person in the situation which she occupied, could dare to have contemned, or even pretended to have contemned, the addresses of one of Scotland's proud lords. To resolve his doubts, he instituted inquiries, and was soon informed that Janet Dickson was a respectable and godly woman, who earned an honest livelihood by carrying water to the inhabitants, and, among the rest, his Lordship himself, though she had escaped his notice; and that Mary Dickson, her adopted daughter, was a foundling of great beauty and unblemished reputation, who was supposed to be the daughter of some person of rank.

This intelligence surprised Spynie beyond measure. "Why," as he asked himself, "did the old woman invite me to her house—tell me the girl was instructed to receive my addresses, and encourage me to caress her?" There appeared something still to be explained; and that explanation became necessary from the deep and serious impression the beauty of Mary had made on his heart—now magnified and sanctified by the intelligence that she was virtuous as she was beautiful, and the whole rendered a subject of mystery by the story of her life. Ashamed to go back to the house, he slept none during the subsequent night: the calm, dignified, statue-like face and form of the maiden haunted him as a creation of monomania. Of all the women he had seen, she affected him to the greatest degree; and, in short, love in its strongest, bewitching, and maddening form, had taken possession of him—driving before it all the weak fancies which often, for want of a better name, are called by that appellation, and of which Miss Elliot had, before the accession of this real passion, been the object, as others, before her vacillating reign, had enjoyed the same privilege. What was the form of Miss Margaret Elliot to that of Mary Dickson? What were the gay faces of court beauties—with their ill assorted exhibition of pride, pretension, merriment, glee, and sorrow, all acted and imitated sometimes in succession so quick as to be destitute of perceptible, separate, acting causes, and sometimes mixed in a piebald assortment of antagonist and inconsistent feelings, producing, as an entire effect, nothing but laughter—to that elevated, solemn, calm,

cold, impressive, and spirit-stirring countenance, which fixed his attention like the magic of a spell, and could not be shaken from his fancy by all the efforts of man? Such were the questions which Lord Spynie put to his tortured mind, and to which the spirit of love responded, as an oracle whose voice lies in the impassioned womb of nature.

Occupied by feelings such as these, Lord Spynie saw a new world open upon him. Giving up the suspicions of her virtue, he tasted, for the first time, the realities of pure feeling; and the excitement thence produced gave a new tone and impulse to the moral part of his nature. He felt no desire to practise acts of seduction on the object of his affections. The form of the maiden was sanctified by a religious halo, which shed its light on the darkness of his heart, and exhibited to him forms of beauty which previously were conceived to be the mere fancies of poets. He resolved to visit the house again, and ask an explanation of the seeming inconsistencies which perplexed him.

His resolution was speedily accomplished. He found the two individuals in the same position they were in on the previous visit. As he entered, Mary rose and turned upon him that face which had haunted him in his dreams—still calm and unmoved, as if she despised the ordinary forms of expression to give dignity and beauty to what nature had, by its original cast, made perfect. Having looked at him for a moment, she curtsied, and slowly left the room, shutting the door behind her. Not a word passed during this ceremony; and Spynie looked after her as she went, with the original impression magnified and the perturbation of his spirits increased. The circumstance of her departure, and the extraordinary manner of it—without a muscle of her countenance changed, and without a word being spoken—mutually aided each other in producing an idea that she was beyond the influence of his birth, honours, riches, or charms; and this, to a proud lord, who plumed himself on his success with the fair, might, if there had been no substratum of a feeling of love to work on, have produced a desire to be revenged by seduction, possession, and dereliction. But love unrequited, or thought to be unappreciated, is love increased and sanctified; and the departure of Mary was, to Spynie, an accession of respect and affection.

Overcoming, to some extent, the effect of Mary's departure upon his spirits, Spynie sat down beside Janet Dickson; and, in the still excited state of his mind, burst forth into terms of admiration of her adopted daughter, and declared that he loved her.

"Nae doot, my Lord," replied Janet; "it's only yer duty. He's no worthy o' the name o' a father who couldna like his dochter; and it's said in the Romans, that love is the fulfilling o' the law."

Spynie conceived that this statement of Janet's was a satirical allusion to the difference between his age and that of Mary, and his pride was hurt; but turning his eyes again upon the old woman, and seeing no appearance of satirical or humorous feeling, he felt at a loss to understand her. On a sudden, he recollected some parts of Janet's former conversation regarding an imputed likeness between him and Mary, as strong as flesh and blood could produce;—and the story of her being a foundling and the reputed daughter of a nobleman, coming rapidly into his mind at the same moment, he arrived by one step at the conclusion, that Janet Dickson really thought he was the father of Mary. No sooner did this thought arise, than he resolved to get at once an explanation. Resuming, therefore, the conversation, he said he did not understand what Janet meant by her allusion to a father loving his daughter.

"And can it be," ejaculated Janet in surprise, "that sae plain a thought as that could hae met wi' nae understanding in the mind o' a lord? As the faither o' Mary Dickson, are ye no bound to love her even as ye say ye do; and as I have seen ye gie proof ye do, when wi' sich a mighty force

o' natural affection, ye kissed her on the first nicht o' your introduction? Come, noo, my bonny Lord, ye ken 'happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth;' and sorry wad I be to see in ye ony token o' repentance or backsliding in sae gude a work as a father's luv. She is nae dishonour to the braw hoose o' the Spynies o' Angus; for a bonnier, a better, and a nobler lass there is na to be fund i' the three Loudens, and that's a bigger word than Angus."

Spynie now saw the cause and origin of all those cross purposes in which he had been, for some days, engaged. He now seriously directed Janet to give him the history of her foundling, with the reasons which induced her to suppose that he was her father. This request was at once complied with. The announcement of the stranger at the window, was, Janet confessed, the only ground she had to go upon for imputing the paternity of Mary to his Lordship; and this circumstance, while allowed by Spynie to be a perfect justification of Janet, struck him in a manner evidently to give rise to some secret thoughts, which seemed to secure his attention and feelings in a way not understood by his auditor. Wrapped in deep thought, he told Janet, after she had finished, that she had been imposed upon; that, however free his manner of living might have been represented to be, or might in fact be, he never had a child in his life; and that he was the last person on earth that would have entertained for a moment the idea of authorizing a mother to expose his child, or of sanctioning such an act after he came to the knowledge of its being done. Spynie then rose and departed, evidently occupied with some thoughts which he did not wish at that time to communicate.

Next day, his Lordship called and interrogated Janet Dickson as to the sex of the person who handed her the money, the sound of the voice, the time at which she generally came, and all the circumstances attending the yearly visit. He asked her, also, whether Miss Elliot and Miss Metcalfe visited her? whether they came together or separately when they began to call? and when they had been there last? Having satisfied himself on these points, he went away, directing his steps to the house of his coachman, John Stephen, who resided above his Lordship's stables.

"You know, John," began his Lordship, drawing in a chair, and sitting down alongside of his servant, "what my reason was for withdrawing my attention from Miss Jane Metcalfe—being nothing less than a communication made by yourself to me, that it was surmised about that time that she had borne a child to her father's butler, a Frenchman, called Jean D'Albert, who afterwards died, and that the child never made its appearance."

"I ken that, my Lord, weel; but naebody, sae far as I ever heard, ever knew onything o' that affair, except mysel and your Lordship; for D'Albert tauld me the story on his deathbed, and I tauld it to yer Lordship to save ye frae the ruin which a marriage wi' Jane Metcalfe would hae brought upon the braw hoose o' Spynie."

"Well, I may be wrong in using the word surmise; but there can be no doubt of the fact that D'Albert did make that communication to you. Did he not tell you what had become of the child?"

"And did ye think, my Lord—begging yer Lordship's pardon—that John Stephen wad remain contented wi' ae half o' a curious story, when he could get the hail o't? Na, na, my Lord; I questioned D'Albert as to what became o' the bairn; but the pair fellow himsel knew nae mair aboot it than just that it had been left on the street to live or die, as God might provide; and ye ken, my Lord, we afterwards gaed to France, and since we cam back, I hae been owre muckle occupied wi' misfortunes o' my ain, to think mair o' the matter. Jane seems aye to be the same romping, care-

less deevil she was; and I hae, as yer Lordship commanded me, kept this matter to mysel."

"You did right, John; but we must now, I think, revive, in some degree, this subject. I have reason to believe that Jane Metcalfe's child is just now residing with a poor woman of the name of Janet Dickson, in the White Horse Close. I wish to make myself certain of this; and you must assist me in my endeavours."

Lord Spynie and his coachman made every inquiry in their power to get at the truth of the suspicion entertained by his Lordship; but it was not expected that any real and satisfactory evidence could be got, until the time arrived when the unknown person should visit Janet Dickson. In the meantime, his Lordship continued his visits to her house, where he gradually succeeded in acquiring the confidence and respect of Mary, who only waited for a complete refutation of the statement that he was her father, to allow her heart to open to that sentiment, with which it was Lord Spynie's greatest ambition to inspire her.

After the requisite period of time had passed, and when the period of the yearly visit of the stranger drew nigh, Spynie had again recourse to John Stephen, to whom he had communicated his plans. He now requested John to satisfy himself of the precise locality of Janet Dickson's back window, and keep watch there for a week, between the hours of seven and ten of the evening, to discover if any one, and who, should there hand in money, and communicate with the old woman.

On the third night after this interview, John Stephen came in great haste and agitation to Lord Spynie, and told him that he had seized Miss Jane Metcalfe in the act of handing in money to the old waterwoman, Janet Dickson. That, upon being seized, she screamed and struggled to get free; and a number of persons, attracted by the noise, came and interfered, and took her out of his hands, but not before she was recognised by many people present. This statement satisfied Lord Spynie; and the light which it afforded cleared up the other parts of the mystery. Jane Metcalfe, having been renounced and forsaken by Spynie, who transferred his affections to Miss Margaret Elliot, was strongly incensed against him; and, in secret, envied and hated her rival, whose marriage with her old lover she determined to do everything in her power to prevent. She had circulated a report, which had come to Spynie's ears, that Miss Elliot was afflicted with king's evil; and knowing that Miss Elliot had a strong aversion to rakes, from whose fraternity she declared she never would take a husband, she conceived that she would effectually prevent a union with Spynie, if she could impress Miss Elliot with the idea that her lover had an illegitimate child. With this view, she told Janet Dickson that Mary Dickson was Spynie's daughter; hoping that, as Miss Elliot frequented the old woman's house, she would communicate to her, if not make public altogether, the information whereby her object would be gratified.

Spynie was devising schemes for forcing Miss Metcalfe to free his name from the imputation with which she had loaded it; but he was informed that she had suddenly disappeared, and it was supposed had gone to France. Her absence was, however, supplied by the testimony of an accomplice, who, when her principal had disappeared, came forth and communicated what she knew. This person's name was Bell Simson, who had been a servant in the house when Miss Metcalfe bore the child; and who was afterwards employed, on some occasions, to hand in the money to Janet Dickson. This woman told all in presence of witnesses, admitting the important circumstance that it was she who concealed the child for four months after it was born, and who afterwards deposited it in the water-bucket belonging to Janet Dickson.

All these circumstances were communicated to Janet and

Mary, and put to flight the high notions of parentage which they had so long entertained. Their grief was extreme, but their affection was not diminished; and Lord Spynie grew more and more attached to the gentle and lovely Mary, whom he afterwards married and took home to his house; affording to Janet Dickson a yearly pension, whereby she was enabled to live happily during the remainder of her life.

THE HOSTELER'S STATUTE.

SCOTLAND is the only country in the world that ever passed a law against hospitality. Many statutes have been passed in various kingdoms with a view to enforce it; and in all parts of the world, and chiefly in those countries where there is the greatest apparent barbarism, it has been exalted among the virtues, favoured, and applauded, till its corresponding vice has been made a by-word and a term of reproach against the few places that have repudiated it. The extraordinary proceeding of the three estates, king, and council of Scotland, whereby it was solemnly declared that hospitality should thenceforth be unlawful and liable to be punished by fine and consequent imprisonment, took place in the reign of James I.; and the act (though it is not among the *black acts*) still remains a blot on the statute book of the kingdom. The law, it is true, was subsequently repealed; and, if the story be credible, the circumstances which produced its removal were as singular as the causes of its enactment were inadequate and ridiculous.

The innkeepers or hostellers of Scotland, but chiefly those in Edinburgh, made a very grievous and lugubrious appeal to James I., that, in consequence of a practice lately introduced, but which was clearly on the increase throughout the land, of travellers and temporary sojourners taking up their abodes with their acquaintances and friends, and eschewing, as if they were places of pestilence, the inns and hosteleries, erected for their individual comfort—the keepers of these places of entertainment were no longer able to keep open doors, whereby there would soon be no public place of rest in the land for man or beast. They therefore craved the interference of parliament on their behalf, promising that, if a measure were passed calculated to give them relief, there would not be a repetition of the failure they had made (very likely on purpose) in the preceding year, in the payment of their taxes into the King's Exchequer.

Among the most active of the publicans who signed this petition, was a mean, sordid individual who kept a small hostelry in St Mary's Wynd of Edinburgh, called Peter Ramsay. This man was remarkable for his penurious habits and low grovelling modes of making money. He had, by a system of extortion, terrified away from his house the people who had, during the occupancy of his predecessor been in the habit of frequenting it; and, unwilling to attribute the decay of his trade to his own conduct, resolved upon making an outcry against the lieges for exercising the virtues of generosity and hospitality to the injury of him and his brother hostellers. Unfortunately, the efforts of Ramsay were but too successful; for he got a great proportion of the publicans throughout the kingdom to sign the petition. It was presented to the sovereign personally by Ramsay himself, as the head of a deputation appointed at a meeting of the subscribers, and was, by the good-natured monarch, forthwith laid before his parliament.

The result of the application has already been stated; an act was passed, setting forth "the villanous practice of the King's lieges, who, in their travel from one part of the country to another, were in the practice of taking up their residence with their acquaintances and friends, instead of going to the regular inns and hosteleries. Therefore, the sovereign, with counsel and consent of the three estates, prohibits all travellers, on foot or horseback, from rendezvousing at any station except the established hostelry of the

burgh or village; and interdicts all burgesses or villagers from extending to them their hospitality, under the penalty of forty shillings, which shall also be exigible from the travellers themselves." The triumph of the publicans, thus signalized by the passing of this extraordinary statute, was celebrated in Peter Ramsay's house, by an immense number of the craft, collected from all parts of Scotland; and, as Peter had been at the greatest trouble in getting to his friends this boon, which could not fail to be of great service to them, he conceived himself well justified in *chalking double* against those who had so often followed the same course against the poor lieges.

The effect of this law was soon felt over Scotland. In the small towns especially, where a severe surveillance is observed by the inhabitants over each other, it was scarcely possible for a traveller to escape the rigour of the enactment. In the larger towns; it was no doubt often evaded; and if Peter Ramsay's hostelry had been taken as a test of its effect in Edinburgh; it might have been pronounced a dead letter; but so long as there was another inn within the bounds of the city wall, the statute would never have increased the customers to the Red Lion, (so his inn was called;) at least no one who had ever once been in the lion's mouth, would venture a repetition of the experiment. Peter was; however, not thus to be defeated: If the travellers would not come to him, he would go to them; if they would not pay him an exorbitant price for the contents of his bills of fare, he would force them to pay him the penalty stated in the act; if the law did not benefit him by its declaration, it would fill his pocket by the punishment; in short, he resolved upon becoming a common informer under his own peculiar statute. In pursuance of this resolution, he frequented all the parts of the town, making inquiries in every direction for strangers and travellers sojourning with their friends; and whenever he got a clue to an infringement of the act, he hastened to the burgh fiscal, gave the information, attended the trial, and claimed the penalty as his due.

Among the individuals who were thus caught in the meshes of the act by the indefatigable publican; was a person called Thomas Fleming, himself a publican, who kept an inn in the town of Dunbar, and had come to Edinburgh with the view of marrying a young woman who lived with her mother in Leith Wynd. Fleming's passion had (as love generally does) set all acts of Parliament at defiance; and he had very naturally, however illegally, taken up his quarters in the house of his intended mother-in-law. Next morning, as he was preparing to go before a clergyman to get himself joined in holy wedlock with the object of his affections; he was seized and dragged before a magistrate; on a charge of having infringed the law against hostellers, by sojourning in the house of a friend: Fleming's defence was dictated by his feelings; and he made a powerful appeal to the judge on the cruelty and impolicy of preventing marriages by prohibiting the parties from enjoying each other's society; and argued strongly that the law was never intended to interfere with the offices of friendship, far less those of honourable love. The magistrate heard the defence, and acknowledged that it was both ingenious and pathetic; but he was bound down by the act, which made no respect either of persons or avocations, and was forced to give judgment against him. Fleming was accordingly, to the great joy of Ramsay, mulcted in the penalty. Being a man of spirit and honesty, he had refused to sign the petition to the King; but, now that the law was passed, he had determined on giving it fair play; and having unheedingly sinned against its enactment, he cheerfully paid the money, and treasured up in his memory the name of Peter Ramsay, which he said was worth the money, as an assurance of the existence of a wretch whom he would afterwards endeavour to avoid.

Fleming left the court to take his bride to the altar. They were married on that day and immediately set off to

Dunbar, the place of his residence. They afterwards removed to Haddington, for the purpose of taking possession of the March Arms Inn, the principal hostelry of the town; where, from their honesty and attention, they soon acquired an extensive business. In the meantime, Peter Ramsay went on in the vocation of informer. From his frequent appearance in the court, combined with the indignation of individuals who had suffered from his ill directed activity, he became well known, and no better known than hated and execrated. That he made money by his vicious industry there can be no doubt, though what he lost by the departure of the last remnant of his trade subtracted considerably from his ill-gotten gear.

It is not very easy to conceive that such a person as Peter Ramsay could be susceptible of the tender passion; at least, it may safely be averred that, of the two gods who preside over the affairs of the heart, he who was born of Venus would not be proud of the sacrifices of a common informer. Yet Peter Ramsay did at least court. He had long visited a young woman who resided with her father, a widower, in the Canongate, of the name of Catherine Simpson; and it was often surmised that she was destined to be the mistress of the Red Lion. Her father, having gone to reside at Haddington, in the prosecution of his trade of a carrier, Catherine accompanied him, carrying with her the attractions which had produced the furlong visits of the hosteler, but might be unable to exert any power over a space of 15 miles. Indeed, both the young woman and her father had come to be of opinion, before they removed from Edinburgh, that Peter Ramsay was one of those individuals who can contrive to speak the ordinary language of a passion in the dead-thraw for the period of a whole life; thereby robbing poor maidens of all the available years of their existence, and at last dying without experiencing true enjoyment themselves, and without imparting ought but misery to others. Every one that knew the cruel tantalizing conduct of Ramsay to Catherine Simpson, sympathised with the ruined maiden, and condemned the heartless wretch who had excited hopes he had not the courage to realize.

Though Ramsay could not bring himself to the resolution of marrying, neither could he yet remain away from the object of his affections. One evening, he found himself in the town of Haddington—scarcely conscious of any precise object which brought him there—having intuitively given way to the impulse of an old feeling, without being at the trouble to question himself particularly either as to his present intentions or future purposes. He landed, as a matter of course, in the house of Thomas Simpson, and intended to return to Edinburgh that same night; but the weather having changed from a calm day to a stormy evening, he was easily prevailed upon to remain all night. It happened that Thomas Fleming, his old victim of the publican's act, who now occupied the March Arms, observed Peter as he entered the house, and resolved at once upon a just and merited retaliation on the common informer. Having allowed him quietly to enjoy his supper and go to bed, Fleming retired with the intention of rising early in the morning, and getting from the provost one of those "flying warrants" which were in the habit of being granted by the magistrates of towns against sojourners and others, who had no fixed habitation within their jurisdiction. The plan was executed precisely as laid. At six o'clock next morning, Peter Ramsay found himself in the predicament in which he had so basely placed hundreds of innocent individuals. He was dragged, half dressed, (according to instructions,) before the head magistrate, who was well aware of the extraordinary character of the individual he was about to try, and rejoiced in the opportunity of catching an informer (a character he, in common with all others, hated) in the very trap he had so industriously and successfully used against the unsuspecting public.

"You are Peter Ramsay the hosteler of the Red Lion, in St Mary's Wynd of Edinburgh?" said the provost.

"Hoo d'ye ken that, sir?" asked Peter, sternly.

"Do you dispute your personality, sir?" said the provost, looking to Thomas Fleming as a witness.

"I neither admit nor deny it," answered Peter, grinning with ill nature, as he saw Fleming standing by his side enjoying his triumph.

"Neither your statement nor your anger, sir," said the provost, "can do you any service here; we have got (smiling) the *corpus delicti*, and, God be praised, we have an excellent jail. You are arraigned, sir, for the misdemeanour of infringing the king's statute anent hostelers, by having sojourned for the night in the house of Thomas Simpson, currier."

"I deny it," replied Peter, with the same asperity.

"Call the witnesses," cried the provost.

Two witnesses were brought, and the fact proved.

"Now, sir, what is your defence?" said the provost.

"Defiance!" cried the exasperated publican.

"That's a strong defence among the hills," answered the provost; "but it has little authority in these parts. I ordain you to pay forty shillings, as the penalty under the act, to be applied to the king's use as accords. I allow you five minutes to discharge the debt."

Though Peter had been willing to pay the fine, he was not in possession of funds. He had come from Edinburgh without any supply of cash, trusting, no doubt, to a successful sorning on his poor host and his poorer daughter. The time allowed by the provost having expired, and no symptoms being made by Peter of any intention to pay, an order was immediately issued to the attending officers to carry the king's debtor to jail, there to be fed on bread and water, the only allowance made to the contraveners of the king's statutes, aye and until the said penalty shall be duly paid. When the officers laid hold of him to drag him away, the bitter spirit he had already partly displayed, broke forth with increased virulence. The powers of his judgment, with his ordinary prudence, left him; a fierce anger, producing execrations and threats, hurried him into extravagances; and losing, in his desire of vengeance, a proper regard to his safety and interests, he cried out—"An unjust judge will destroy the best act o' Parliament that ever passed the three estates; but he canna free himsel frae the pains o' fause imprisonment. Haud aff, ye whelps o' the Lord Lion! and preserve yer teeth for seizing, (on my warrant for damages,) your auld unjust provost, wha has sent a man to jail for visiting his ain wife—a clear exception in the act."

"Stop the prisoner!" cried the provost. "Are you married, sir, to Catherine Simpson, in whose house you resided during the night? If so, you are free in terms of the statute, as construed by the king's officers."

"I am," answered Peter, still fuming with anger, and still losing sight of every consideration but the defeat of his enemies.

"I haud him to his word," cried the voice of Catherine Simpson, who, about the same time, entered the court room.

"And I and the clerk are witnesses," cried Fleming, laughing immoderately.

"I must note the transaction," said the judge. "Are you the wife of this man?"

"I am," replied Catherine, "if he has said he is my husband."

"He has already said it," replied the judge.

"I deny it!" cried Peter, who saw the scrape he had got into. "I spoke in jest, and no man is bound for a foolery."

"Many a husband would willingly say the same if the law allowed him," said the judge. "You have in anger, sir, not in jest, admitted yourself to be the husband of Catherine Simpson. It matters nothing that you have told a lie to escape the punishment of the law. Courts are

not intended as places of merriment, where the play of 'hide and seek' can be performed for the purpose of producing amusement to the actors and the bystanders. 'Ay' and 'No,' have no copulative existence in places where justice is dispensed and not dispensed *with*. Your deliberate statement has been noted. As a married man, I dismiss you from the bar, reserving to you any claim of damages you may have against Thomas Fleming, your private, *not public* informer."

"I will pay a guid damage in name o' tocher," cried Fleming, laughing.

The discomfited Peter Ramsay sneaked away from the bar in shame and despondency. He proceeded instantly to Edinburgh, to consult a lawyer as to whether he had admitted himself into marriage. He was not ignorant that a Scotch marriage could be perfected by consent without the interference of a clergyman; but he had been betrayed into the unguarded statement he had made, partly by a desire of victory, and partly from an idea that, unless the woman was present, (and he thought she was absent,) no statement by a man could bind him, as he had the power of denying it when the woman claimed him. His calculations had proved false; the woman claimed him, and there could be no retraction in a court. The lawyer told him he was very firmly noosed. Peter made a virtue of necessity, and took home Catherine. He died soon after, and left her the proprietor of all his property, amounting to a very considerable sum.

This story was soon bruited far and wide; for Peter's celebrity had been as general as the hatred of the ungracious statute was diffused among all sensible people, and many individuals had even imitated him on a small scale in the provincial towns. Everybody was delighted with the discomfiture of a man who had been at so much trouble to prepare an engine for the destruction of others, and had deservedly become the victim of his own ill-directed ingenuity.

But the people of Scotland were not contented with exultation over the fate of the man who had tried to lock up their hearts, and to make money at once of their philanthropy and their hard-heartedness. They conceived that a proper opportunity had arrived for getting quit entirely of the obnoxious and disgraceful statute. A number of respectable householders in Edinburgh and other places accordingly prepared a petition to the king in council, setting forth the history of the passing of the act, the practices of Ramsay, his own case and defeat, the hardship they suffered from the measure, and the disfavour with which it was contemplated by the people of England, who took advantage of it to corroborate the sentiments they were in the habit of uttering against the generosity of the Scots. On these grounds and others they prayed for its repeal.

The king read the petition with favour.

"It is Heaven's time," cried the monarch, "to take back the boon when ingratitude repudiates it. We passed this act for the advantage of hostelers—and these hostelers are among the first contraveners of its provisions. We repent not of having passed it, were it for no other reason than that it hath shewn us how cautious legislators ought to be in changing the preambles of petitions into acts of parliament. Let it be repealed—and may the laws of hospitality remain as they ought to be, sacred in our land!"



TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PENNY-WEDDING.

HAVE any of our readers ever seen a Scottish penny-wedding? If they have, they will agree with us, we dare say, in saying that it is a very merry affair, and that its mirth and hilarity is not a whit the worse for its being, as it generally is, of a homely and unsophisticated character. The penny-wedding is not quite so splendid an affair as a ball at Almacks; but, from all we have heard and read of these aristocratic exhibitions, we for our own parts would give the preference decidedly to the former, however questionable such a taste may be considered. Of *that* we are perfectly willing to take our chance.

It is very well known to those who know anything at all of penny weddings, that, when a farmer's servant is about to be married—such an occurrence being the usual, or, at least, the most frequent occasion of these festivities—all the neighbouring farmers, with their servants, and sometimes their sons and daughters, are invited to the ceremony; and to those who know this, it is also known that the farmers so invited are in the habit of contributing each something to the general stock of good things provided for the entertainment of the wedding guests—some sending one thing and some another, till materials are accumulated for a feast, which, both for quantity and quality, would extort praise from Dr Kitchener himself than whom no man ever knew better what good living was. To all this a little money is added by the parties present, to enable the young couple to *plinish* their little domicile.

Having given this brief sketch of what is called a penny-wedding, we proceed to say that such a merry doing as this took place, as it had done a thousand times before, in a certain parish (we dare not be more particular) in the south of Scotland, about five-and-twenty years ago. The parties—we name them, although it is of no consequence to our story—were Andrew Jardine and Margaret Laird, both servants to a respectable farmer in that part of the country, of the name of Harrison, and both very deserving and well-doing persons.

On the wedding day being fixed, Andrew went himself to engage the services of Blind Willie Hodge, the parish fiddler, as he might with all propriety be called, for the happy occasion; and Willie very readily agreed to attend gratuitously, adding that he would bring his best fiddle along with him, together with an ample supply of fiddle strings and rosin.

“An’ a wee bit box o’ elbow grease, Willie,” said Andrew, slyly; “for ye’ll hae gude aught hours o’t, at the very least.”

“I’ll be sure to bring that too, Andrew,” replied Willie, laughing; “but it’s no aught hours that’ll ding me, I warrant. I hae played saxteen without stoppin except to rosit.”

“And to weet your whistle,” slipped in Andrew.

“Pho, that wasna worth coontin. It was just a mouthfu’ and at it again,” said Willie. “I just tak, Andrew,” he went on, “precisely the time o’ a demisemiquaver to a tumbler o’ cauld liquor, such as porter or ale; and twa minims or four crotchets to a tumbler o’ het drink, such as toddy; for the first, ye see, I can tak aff at jig time but the other I

can only get through wi’ at the rate o’ Roslin Castle, or the Dead March in Saul, especially when it’s brought to me scadding het, whilk sude never be dune to a fiddler.”

Now, as to this very nice chromatic measurement, by Willie, of the time consumed in his potations, while in the exercise of his calling, we have nothing to say. It may be perfectly correct for aught we know; but when Willie said that he played at one sitting, and with only the stoppages he mentioned, for sixteen hours, we rather think he was drawing fully a longer bow than that he usually played with. At all events, this we know, that Willie was a very indifferent if not positively a very bad fiddler; but he was a good humoured creature, harmless and inoffensive, and moreover the only one of his calling in the parish, so that he was fully as much indebted to the necessities of his customers, for the employment he obtained, as to their love or charity.

The happy day which was to see the humble destinies of Andrew Jardine and Margaret Laird united having arrived, Willie attired himself in his best, popped his best fiddle—which was, after all, but a very sober article, having no more tone than a salt box—into a green bag, slipped the instrument thus secured beneath the back of his coat, and proceeded towards the scene of his impending labours. This was a large barn which had been carefully swept and levelled for the “light fantastic toes” of some score of ploughmen and dairy-maids, not formed exactly after the Chinese fashion. At the further end of the barn stood a sort of platform, erected on a couple of empty herring barrels; and on this again a chair was placed. This distinguished situation, we need hardly say, was designed for Willie, who from that elevated position was to pour down his heel-inspiring strains amongst the revellers below. When Willie, however, came first upon the ground the marriage party had not yet arrived. They were still at the manse, which was hard by, but were every minute expected. In these circumstances, and it being a fine summer afternoon, Willie seated himself on a stone at the door, drew forth his fiddle, and struck up with great vigour and animation, to the infinite delight of some half-dozen of the wedding guests, who, not having gone with the others to the manse, were now, like himself, waiting their arrival. These immediately commenced footing it to Willie’s music, on the green before the door, and thus presented a very appropriate prelude to the coming festivities of the evening.

While Willie was thus engaged, an itinerant brother in trade, on the look-out for employment, and who had heard of the wedding, suddenly appeared, and stealing up quietly beside him, modestly undid the mouth of his fiddle bag, laid the neck of the instrument bare, and drew his thumb carelessly across the strings, to intimate to him that a rival was near his throne. On hearing the sound of the instrument, Willie stopped short.

“I doubt, frien, ye hae come to the wrang market,” he said, guessing at once the object of the stranger. “And ye hae been travellin too, I daresay?” he continued, good-naturedly, and not at all offended with the intruder, for whom and all of his kind he entertained a fellow feeling.

“Ay,” replied the new Orpheus, who was a tall good looking man of about eight and twenty years of age, but very poorly attired, “I hae been travellin, as ye say, neebor,

and hae come twa or three miles out o' my way to see if I could pick up a shilling or twa at this weddin."

"I am sorry now, man, for that," said Willie, sympathisingly. "I doot ye'll be disappointed, for I hae been engaged for't this fortnight past. But I'll tell ye what—if ye're onything guid o' the fiddle, ye may remain, just to relieve me now and then, and I'll mind ye when a's owre; and at ony rate ye'll aye pick up a mouthfu' o' guid meat and drink—and that ye ken's no to be fand at every dyke side."

"A bargain be't," said the stranger, "and much obliged to you, friend. I maun just tak pat-luck and be thankfu'. But isna your waddin folks lang o' comin?" he added.

"They'll be here belyve," replied Willie and added, "Ye'll no be blin, frien'?"

"Ou, no," said the stranger, "thank goodness I hae my sight; but I am otherwise in such a bad state o' health, that I canna work, and am obliged to tak to the fiddle for a subsistence."

While this conversation was going on, the wedding folks were seen dropping out of the manse in twos and threes, and making straight for the scene of the evening's festivities, where they all very soon after assembled. Ample justice having been done to all the good things that were now set before the merry party, and Willie and his colleague having had their share, and being thus put in excellent trim for entering on their labours, the place was cleared of all incumbrances, and a fair and open field left for the dancers. At this stage of the proceedings, Willie was led by his colleague to his station, and helped up to the elevated chair which had been provided for him, when the latter handed him his instrument, while he himself took up his position, fiddle in hand, on his principal's left, but standing on the ground, as there was no room for him on the platform.

Everything being now ready, and the expectant couples ranged in their respective places on the floor, Willie was called upon to begin—an order which he instantly obeyed, by opening in great style.

On the conclusion of the first reel, in the musical department of which the strange fiddler had not interfered, the latter whispered to his coadjutor, that if he liked he would relieve him for the next.

"Weel," replied the latter, "if ye think ye can gae through wi't onything decently, ye may try your hand."

"I'll no promise much," said the stranger, now for the first time drawing his fiddle out of its bag; "but, for the credit o' the craft, I'll do the best I can."

Having said this, Willie's colleague drew his bow across the strings of his fiddle, with a preparatory flourish, when instantly every face in the apartment was turned towards him with an expression of delight and surprise. The tones of the fiddle were so immeasurably superior to those of poor Willie's salt box, that the dullest and most indiscriminating ear amongst the revellers readily distinguished the amazing difference. But infinitely greater still was their surprise and delight when the stranger began to play. Nothing could exceed the energy, accuracy, and beauty of his performances. He was, in short, evidently a perfect master of the instrument, and this was instantly perceived and acknowledged by all, including Willie himself, who declared, with great candour and good will, that he had never heard a better fiddler in his life.

The result of this discovery was, that the former was not allowed to lift a bow during the remainder of the night, the whole burden of its labours being deposited on the shoulders, or perhaps we should rather say the finger ends of the stranger, who fiddled away with an apparently invincible elbow.

For several hours the dance went on without interruption, and without any apparent abatement whatever of vigour on the part of the performers; but, at the end of this period some symptoms of exhaustion began to manifest

themselves, which were at length fully declared by a temporary cessation of both the mirth and music.

It was at this interval in the revelries that the unknown fiddler—who had been, by the unanimous voice of the party installed in Willie's elevated chair, while the latter was reduced to his place on the floor—stretching himself over the platform, and tapping Willie on the hat with his bow, to draw his attention, inquired of him, in a whisper, if he knew who the lively little girl was that had been one of the partners in the last reel that had been danced.

"Is she a bit red-cheeked, dark-ee'd, and dark-haired lassie, about nineteen or twenty?" inquired Willie, in his turn.

"The same," replied the fiddler.

"Ou, that's Jeanie Harrison," said Willie—"a kind hearted, nice bit lassie. No a better nor a bonnier in a the parish. She's a dochter o' Mr Harrison's o' Todshaws, the young couple's maister, an' a very respectable man. He's here himsel, too, amang the lave."

"Just so," replied his colleague. And he began to rosin his bow, and to screw his pegs anew, to prepare for the second storm of merriment, which he saw gathering, and threatening to burst on him with increased fury. Amongst the first on the floor was Jeanie Harrison.

"Is there naeboddy'll take me out for a reel?" exclaimed the lively girl; and, without waiting for an answer—" 'od, then, I'll hae the fiddler." And she ran towards the platform on which the unknown performer was seated. But he did not wait her coming. He had heard her name her choice, laid down his fiddle, and sprung to the floor with the agility of a harlequin, exclaiming, "Thank ye, my bonny lassie—thank ye for the honour. I'm your man at a moment's notice, either for feet or fiddle."

It is not quite certain that Jeanie was in perfect earnest when she made choice of the musician for a partner; but it was now too late to retract, for the joke had taken with the company, and, with one voice, or rather shout, they insisted on her keeping faithful to her engagement and dancing a reel with the fiddler; and on this no one insisted more stoutly than the fiddler himself. Finding that she could do no better, the good-natured girl put the best face on the frolic she could, and prepared to do her partner every justice in the dance. Willie having now taken bow in hand, his colleague gave him the word of command, and away the dancers went like meteors; and here again the surprise of the party was greatly excited by the performances of our friend the fiddler, who danced as well as he played. To say merely that he far surpassed all in the room, would not, perhaps, be saying much; for there were none of them very great adepts in the art. But, in truth, he danced with singular grace and lightness, and much did those who witnessed it marvel at the display. Neither was his bow to his partner, nor his manner of conducting her to her seat on the conclusion of the reel, less remarkable. It was distinguished by an air of refined gallantry, certainly not often to be met with in those in his humble station in life. He might have been a master of ceremonies; and where the beggarly looking fiddler had picked up these accomplishments every one found it difficult to conjecture.

On the termination of the dance, the fiddler—as we shall call him, *par excellence*, and to distinguish him from Willie—resumed his seat and his fiddle, and began to drive away with even more than his former spirit; but it was observed by more than one that his eye was now almost constantly fixed, for the remainder of the evening, as, indeed, it had been very frequently before, on his late partner, Jeanie Harrison. This circumstance, however, did not prevent him giving every satisfaction to those who danced to his music, nor did it in the least impair the spirit of his performances; for he was evidently too much practised in the use of the instrument which he managed with such consum-

mate skill to be put out, either by the contemplation of any chance object which might present itself, or by the vagaries of his imagination.

Leaving our musician in the discharge of his duty, we shall step over to where Jeanie Harrison is seated, to earn what she thinks of her partner, and what the Miss Murrays, the daughters of a neighbouring farmer, between whom she sat, think of him, and of Jeanie having danced with a fiddler.

Premising that the Miss Murrays, not being by any means beauties themselves, entertained a very reasonable and justifiable dislike and jealousy of all of their own sex to whom nature had been more bountiful in this particular; and finding, moreover, that, from their excessively bad tempers, (this, however, of course, not admitted by the ladies themselves,) they could neither practise nor share in the amenities which usually mark the intercourse of the sexes, they had set up for connoisseurs in the articles of propriety and decorum, of which they professed to be profound judges.

Premising this, then, we proceed to quote the conversation that passed between the three ladies—that is, the Miss Murrays and Miss Harrison—on the latter taking her seat between them after dancing with the fiddler.

“My certy,” exclaimed the elder, with a very dignified toss of the head, “ye wana nice, Jeanie, to dance wi’ a fiddler. I wad hae been very ill aff, indeed, for a partner before I wad hae taen up wi’ such a raggamuffin.”

“And to go and ask him, too!” said the younger, with an imitative toss. “I wadna ask the best man in the land to dance wi’ me, let alane a fiddler! If they dinna choose to come o’ their ain accord, they may stay.”

“Tuts, lassies, it was a’ a piece o’ fun,” said the good-humoured girl. “I’m sure everybody saw that but yersels. Besides, the man’s weel aneuch—na, a gude deal mair than that, if he was only a wee better clad. There’s no a better lookin man in the room; and I wish, lassies,” she added, “ye may get as guid dancers in your partners—that’s a’.”

“Umph! a bonny like taste ye hae, Jeanie, and a very strange notion o’ propriety!” exclaimed the elder, with another toss of the head.

“To dance wi’ a fiddler!” simpered out the younger, who, by the way, was no chicken either, being but a trifle on the right side of thirty.

“Ay, to be sure—dance wi’ a fiddler or a piper either. I’ll dance wi’ baith o’ them—and what for no?” replied Jeanie. “There’s neither sin nor shame in’t; and I’ll dance wi’ him again if he’ll only but ask me.”

“And faith he’ll do that wi’ a’ the pleasure in the world, my bonny lassie,” quoth the intrepid fiddler, leaping down once more from his high place—for there having been a cessation of both music and dancing, while the conversation above recorded was going on, he had heard every word of it—“wi’ a’ the pleasure in the world,” he said, advancing towards Jeanie Harrison, and making one of his best bows of invitation; and again a shout of approbation from the company urged Jeanie to accept it, which she readily did, at once to gratify her friends, and to provoke the Misses Murray. Having, accordingly, taken her place on the floor, and other couples having been mustered for the set, Jeanie’s partner again called on Willie to strike up, again the dancers started, and again the fiddler astonished and delighted the company with the grace and elegance of his performances. On this occasion, however, the unknown musician’s predilection for his fair partner, exhibited a more unequivocal character; and he even ventured to inquire, if he might call at her father’s to amuse the family for an hour or so with his fiddle.

“Nae objection in the world,” replied Jeanie. “Come as often as ye like; and the oftener the better, if ye only bring yer fiddle wi’ ye, for we’re a’ fond o’ music.”

“A bargain be’t,” said the gallant fiddler; and, at the

conclusion of the reel, he again resumed his place on the platform and his fiddle.

“Time and the hour,” says Shakspeare, “will wear through the roughest day;” and so they will, also, through the merriest night, as the joyous party of whom we are speaking now soon found.

Exhaustion and lassitude, though long defied, finally triumphed; and even the very candles seemed wearied of giving light; and, under the influence of these mirth-destroying feelings, the party at length broke up, and all departed, excepting the two fiddlers.

These worthies now adjourned to a public-house, which was close by, and set very gravely about settling what was to them the serious business of the evening. Willie had received thirty-one shillings, as payment in full for their united labours; and, in consideration of the large and unexpected portion of them which had fallen to the stranger’s share he generously determined, notwithstanding that he was the principal party, as having been the first engaged, to give him precisely the one-half of the money, or fifteen shillings and sixpence.

“Very fair,” said the stranger, on this being announced to him by his brother in trade—“very fair; but what would ye think of our drinking the odd sixpences?”

“Wi’ a’ my heart,” replied Willie—“wi’ a’ my heart. A very guid notion.” And a jug of toddy, to the value of one shilling, was accordingly ordered and produced, over which the two got as thick as ben-leather.

“Ye’re a guid fiddler—I’ll say that o’ ye,” quoth Willie, after tossing down the first glass of the warm exultating beverage. “I wad never wish to hear a better.”

“I have had some practice,” said the other modestly, and at the same time following his companion’s example with his glass.

“Nae doot, nae doot, sae’s seen on your playin,” replied the latter. “How do you fend wi’ your fiddle? Do ye mak any thing o’ a guid leevin o’t?”

“No that ill ava,” said the stranger. “I play for the auld leddy at the Castle—Castle Gowan, ye ken; indeed I’m sometimes ca’d the leddy’s fiddler, and she’s uncommon guid to me. I neither want bite nor sopp when I gang there.”

“That’s sae far weel,” replied Willie. “She’s a guid judge o’ music that Liddy Gowan, as I hear them say; and I’m tauld her son, Sir John, plays a capital bow.”

“No amiss, I believe,” said the stranger; “but the leddy, as ye say, is an excellent judge o’ music, although whiles I think rather owre fond o’t, for she maks me play for hours thegither, when I wad far rather be wi’ Tam Yule, her butler, a sonsy, guid-natured chiel, that’s no sweer o’ the cap. But, speaking o’ that, I’ll tell ye what, frien,” he continued, “if ye’ll come up to Castle Gowan any day, I’ll be blythe to see you, for I’m there at least ance every day, and I’ll warrant ye—for ye see I can use every liberty there—in a guid het dinner, and a jug o’ better toddy to wash it owre wi’.”

“A bargain be’t,” quoth Willie. “Will the morn do?”

“Perfectly,” said the stranger—“the sooner the better.”

This settled, Willie proceeded to a subject which had been for some time near his heart, but which he felt some delicacy in broaching. This feeling, however, having gradually given way before the influence of the toddy, and of his friend’s frank and jovial manner, he at length ventured, though cautiously, to step on the ice.

“That’s an uncommon guid instrument o’ yours, frien,” he said.

“Very good,” replied his companion briefly.

“But ye’ll hae mair than that ane, nae doot?” rejoined the other.

“I hae ither twa.”

“In that case,” said Willie, “maybe ye wad hae nae objection to part wi’ that ane, an’ the price offered ye wur

a' the mair temptin. I'll gie ye the sixteen shillings I hae won the nicht, and my fiddle, for't."

"Thank ye, frien, thank ye for your offer," replied the stranger; "but I daurna accept o't, though I war willin. The fiddle was gien to me by Leddy Gowan, and I daurna part wi't. She wad miss't, and then there wad be the deevil to pay."

"Oh, an' that's the case," said Willie, "I'll say nae mair about it; but it's a first-rate fiddle—sae guid a ane that it might amaist play the lane o't."

It being now very late, or rather early, and the toddy jug emptied, the blind fiddler and his frien parted, on the understanding, however, that the former would visit the latter at the Castle (whither he was now going, he said, to seek a night's quarters) on the following day.

True to his appointment, Willie appeared next day at Gowan House, or Castle Gowan, as it was more generally called, and inquired for "the fiddler." His inquiry was met with great civility and politeness by the footman who opened the door. He was told "the fiddler" was there, and desired to walk in. Obeying the invitation, Willie, conducted by the footman, entered a spacious apartment, where he was soon afterwards entertained with a sumptuous dinner, in which his friend, the fiddler, joined him.

"My word, neighbour," said Willie, after having made a hearty meal of the good things that were set before him, and having drunk in proportion, "but ye're in noble quarters here. This is truly fiddling to some purpose, and treatin the art as it ought to be treated in the persons o' its professors. But what," he added, "if Sir John should come in upon us?—he wadna like maybe a'thegither to see a stranger wi' ye."

"Deil a boddle I care for Sir John, Willie! He's but a wild harum-scarum throughither chap, at the best, and no muckle to be heeded."

"Ay, he's fond o' a frolic, they tell me," quoth Willie; "an' there's a heap o' gay queer anes laid to his charge, whether they be true or no; but his heart's in the richt place, I'm thinkin, for a' that. I've heard o' mony guid turns he has dunc."

"Ou, he's no a bad chiel, on the whole, I dare say," replied Willie's companion. "His bark's waur than his bite—an' that's mair than can be said o' a rat-trap at ony rate."

It was about this period, and then for the first time, that certain strange and vague suspicions suddenly entered Willie's mind regarding his entertainer. He had remarked that the latter gave his orders with an air of authority which he thought scarcely becoming in one who occupied the humble situation of "the lady's fiddler;" but, singular as this appeared to him, the alacrity and silence with which these orders were obeyed, was to poor Willie still more unaccountable. He said nothing, however; but much did he marvel at the singular good fortune of his brother in trade. He had never known a fiddler so quartered before; and, lost in admiration of his friend's felicity, he was about again to express his ideas on this subject, when a servant in splendid livery entered the room, and, bowing respectfully, said, "The carriage waits you, Sir John."

"I will be with you presently, Thomas"—replied who? inquires the reader. Why, Willie's companion!

What! is he then Sir John Gowan—he, the fiddler at the penny-wedding, Sir John Gowan of Castle Gowan, the most extensive proprietor and the wealthiest man in the county?

The same, and no other, good reader, we assure thee.

A great lover of frolic, as he himself said, was Sir John; and this was one of the pranks in which he delighted. He was an enthusiastic fiddler; and, as has been already shewn, performed with singular skill on that most difficult, but most delightful of all musical instruments.

We will not attempt to describe poor Willie's amazement

and confusion, when this singular fact became known to him; for they are indescribable, and therefore better left to the reader's imagination. On recovering a little from his surprise, however, he endeavoured to express his astonishment in such broken sentences as these—"Wha in earth wad hae ever dreamed o't? Rosit an' fiddle-strings.—this beats a'. Faith, an' I've been fairly taen in—clean dunc for. A knight o' the shire to play at a penny waddin wi' Blin' Willie Hodge, the fiddler! The like was ne'er heard tell o'."

As it is unnecessary, and would certainly be tedious, to protract the scene at this particular point in our story, we cut it short, by saying that Sir John presented Willie with the fiddle he had so much coveted, and which he had vainly endeavoured to purchase; that he then told down to him the half of the proceeds of the previous night's labours which he had pocketed, added a handsome *douceur* from his own purse, and finally dismissed him with a pressing and cordial invitation to visit the castle as often as it suited his inclination and convenience.

Having arrived at this landingplace in our tale, we pause to explain one or two things, which is necessary for the full elucidation of the sequel. With regard to Sir John Gowan himself, there is little to add to what has been already said of him; for, brief though these notices of him are, they contain nearly all that the reader need care to know about him. He was addicted to such pranks as that just recorded; but this, if it was a defect in his character, was the only one. For the rest, he was an excellent young man—kind, generous, and affable, of the strictest honour, and the most upright principles. He was, moreover, an exceedingly handsome man, and highly accomplished. At this period, he was unmarried, and lived with his mother, Lady Gowan, to whom he was most affectionately attached. Sir John had, at one time, mingled a good deal with the fashionable society of the metropolis; but soon became disgusted with the heartlessness of those who composed it, and with the frivolity of their pursuits; and in this frame of mind, he came to the resolution of retiring to his estate, and of giving himself up entirely to the quiet enjoyments of a country life, and to the pleasing duties which his position as a large landed proprietor entailed upon him.

Simple in all his tastes and habits, Sir John had been unable to discover, in any of the manufactured beauties to whom he had been, from time to time, introduced, while he resided in London, one to whom he could think of intrusting his happiness. The wife he desired was one fresh from the hand of nature, not one remodelled by the square and rule of art; and such a one he thought he had found during his adventure of the previous night.

Bringing this digression, which we may liken to an interlude, to a close, we again draw up the curtain, and open the second act of our little drama with an exhibition of the residence of Mr Harrison at Todshaw.

The house or farm steading of this worthy person was of the very best description of such establishments. The building itself was substantial, nay, even handsome, while the excellent garden which was attached to it, and all the other accessories and appurtenances with which it was surrounded, indicated wealth and comfort. Its situation was on the summit of a gentle eminence that sloped down in front to a noisy little rivulet, that careered along through a narrow rugged glen o'erhung with hazel, till it came nearly opposite the house, where it wound through an open plat of greensward, and shortly after again plunged into another little romantic ravine similar to the one it had left.

The approach to Mr Harrison's house lay along this little rivulet, and was commanded, for a considerable distance, by the view from the former—a circumstance which enabled Jeanie Harrison to descry, one fine summer afternoon, two or three days after the occurrence of the events just related,

the approach of the fiddler with whom she had danced at the wedding. On making this discovery, Jeanie ran to announce the joyful intelligence to all the other members of the family, and the prospect of a merry dancing afternoon opened on the delighted eyes of its younger branches.

When the fiddler—with whose identity the reader is now as well acquainted as we are—had reached the bottom of the ascent that led to the house, Jeanie, with excessive joy beaming in her bright and expressive eye, and her cheek glowing with the roseate hues of health, rushed down to meet him, and to welcome him to Todshaw.

"Thank ye, my bonny lassie—thank ye," replied the disguised baronet, expressing himself in character, and speaking the language of his assumed station. "Are ye ready for another dance?"

"Oh, a score o' them—a thousand o' them," said the lively girl.

"But will your father, think ye, hae nae objections to my comin'?" inquired the fiddler.

"Nane in the world. My faither is nane o' your sour carles that wad deny ither folk the pleasures they canna enjoy themsels. He likes to see a'body happy around him—every ane his ain way."

"And your mother?"

"Just the same. Ye'll find her waur to fiddle doun than ony o' us. She'll dance as lang's a string hauds o't."

"Then, I may be quite at my ease," rejoined Sir John.

"Quite so," replied Jeanie—and she slipped half a crown into his hand—"and there's your arles; but ye'll be minded better ere ye leave us."

"My word, no an ill beginnin'," quoth the musician, looking with well affected delight at the coin, and afterwards putting it carefully into his pocket. "But ye could hae gien me a far mair acceptable arles than half-a-crown," he added, "and no been a penny the poorer either."

"What's that?" said Jeanie, laughing and blushing at the same time, and more than half guessing, from the looks of the *panky* fiddler, what was meant.

"Why, my bonny leddie," he replied, "just a kiss o' that pretty little mouth o' yours."

"Oh, ye gowk!" exclaimed Jeanie, with a roguish glance at her humble gallant; for, disguised as he was, he was not able to conceal a very handsome person, nor the very agreeable expression of a set of remarkably fine features—qualities which did not escape the vigilance of the female eye that was now scanning their possessor. Nor would we say that these qualities were viewed with total indifference, or without producing their effect, even although they did belong to a fiddler.

"Oh, ye gowk!" said Jeanie—"wha ever heard o' a fiddler preferring a kiss to half a crown?"

"But I do, though," replied the disguised knight; "and I'll gie ye yours back again for't."

"The mair fule you," exclaimed Jeanie, rushing away towards the house, and leaving the fiddler to make out the remainder of the way by himself.

On reaching the house, the musician was ushered into the kitchen, where a plentiful repast was instantly set before him, by the kind and considerate hospitality of Jeanie, who, not contented with her guest's making a hearty meal at table, insisted on his pocketing certain pieces of cheese, cold meat, &c. which were left. These the fiddler steadily refused; but Jeanie would take no denial, and with her own hands crammed them into his capacious pockets, which, after the operation, stuck out like a well filled pair of saddle bags. But there was no need for any one who might be curious to know what they contained, to look into them for that purpose. Certain projecting bones of mutton and beef, which it was found impossible to get altogether out of sight, sufficiently indicated their contents. Of this particular circumstance, however—we mean the projection of the bones from the pockets

—we must observe, the owner of the said pockets was not aware, otherwise, we dare say, he would have been a little more positive in rejecting the provender which Jeanie's warm-heartedness and benevolence had forced upon him.

Be this as it may, however, so soon as the musician had finished his repast, he took fiddle in hand, and opened the evening with a slow pathetic Scottish air, which he played so exquisitely that Jeanie's eye filled with a tear, as she listened in raptures to the sweet but melancholy turns of the affecting tune.

Twice the musician played over the touching strain, delighted to perceive the effects of the music on the lovely girl who stood before him, and rightly conceiving it to be an unequivocal proof of a susceptible heart and of a generous nature.

A third time he began the beautiful air; but he now accompanied it with a song, and in this accomplishment he was no less perfect than in the others which have been already attributed to him. His voice was at once manly and melodious, and he conducted it with a skill that did it every justice. Having played two or three bars of the tune, his rich and well regulated voice chimed in with the following words—

"Oh, I hae lived wi' high bred dames,
Each state of life to prove,
But never till this hour hae met
The girl that I could love.

"It's no in fashion's gilded ha's
That she is to be seen;
Beneath her father's humble roof
Abides my bonny Jean.

"Oh, wad she deign ae thought to wair,
Ae kindly thought, on me,
Wi' pearls I wad deek her hair,
Though low be my degree.

"Wi' pearls I wad deek her hair,
Wi' gowd her wrists sae sma';
And had I lands and houses, she'd
Be leddy owre them a'.

"The sun abune's no what he seems,
Nor is the night's fair queen;
Then, wha kens wha the minstrel is
That's wooing bonny Jean?"

Jeanie could not help feeling a little strange as the minstrel proceeded with a song which seemed to have so close a reference to herself.

She, of course, did not consider this circumstance otherwise than as merely accidental; but she could not help, nevertheless, being somewhat embarrassed by it; and this was made sufficiently evident by the blush that mantled on her cheek, and by the confusion of her manner under the fixed gaze of the singer, while repeating the verses just quoted.

When he had concluded—"Well, good folks all," he said, "what think you of my song?" And without waiting for an answer, about which he seemed very indifferent, he added, "And how do you like it, Jeanie?" directing the question exclusively to the party he named.

"Very well," replied Jeanie, again blushing, but still more deeply than before; "the song is pretty, and the air delightful; but some of the verses are riddles to me. I dinna thoroughly understand them."

"Don't you?" replied Sir John, laughing; "then I'll explain them to you by and by; but, in the meantime, I must screw my pegs anew, and work for my dinner, for I see the good folk about me here are all impatience to begin." A fact this which was instantly acknowledged by a dozen voices; and straightway the whole party proceeded, in compliance with a suggestion of Mr Harrison, to the green in front of the house, where Sir John took up his position on the top of an inverted wheelbarrow, and immediately commenced his labours.

For several hours, the dance went on with uninterrupted glee; old Mr Harrison and his wife appearing to enjoy the

sport as much as the youngest of the party, and both being delighted with the masterly playing of the musician. But, although, as on a former occasion, Sir John did not suffer anything to interfere with or interrupt the discharge of the duties expected of him, there was but a very small portion of his mind or thoughts engrossed by the employment in which he was engaged. All, or nearly all, was directed to the contemplation of the object on which his affections had now become irrevocably fixed.

Neither was his visit to Todshaws, on this occasion, by any means dictated solely by the frivolous object of affording its inmates entertainment by his musical talents. His purpose was a much more serious one. It was to ascertain, as far as such an opportunity would afford him the means, the dispositions and temper of his fair enslaver. Of these his natural shrewdness had enabled him to make a pretty correct estimate on the night of the wedding; but he was desirous of seeing her in other circumstances, and he thought none more suitable for his purpose than those of a domestic nature.

It was, then, to see her in this position that he had now come; and the result of his observations was highly gratifying to him.

He found in Miss Harrison all that he, at any rate, desired in woman. He found her guileless, cheerful, gentle, kind-hearted, and good-tempered, beloved by all around her, and returning the affection bestowed on her with a sincere and ardent love.

Such were the discoveries which the disguised baronet made on this occasion; and never did hidden treasure half so much gladden the heart of the fortunate finder as these did that of him who made them. It is true that Sir John could not be sure, nor was he, that his addresses would be received by Miss Harrison, even after he should have made himself known; but he could not help entertaining a pretty strong confidence in his own powers of persuasion, nor being, consequently, tolerably sanguine of success. All this, however, was to be the work of another day. In the meantime, the dancers having had their hearts' content of capering on the greensward, the fiddle was put up, and the fiddler once more invited into the house, where he was entertained with the same hospitality as before, and another half-crown slipped into his hand. This he also put carefully into his pocket; and having partaken lightly of what was set before him, rose up to depart, alleging that he had a good way to go, and was desirous of availing himself of the little daylight that still remained. He was pressed to remain all night, but this he declined; promising, however, in reply to the urgent entreaties with which he was assailed on all sides to stay, that he would very soon repeat his visit. Miss Harrison he took by the hand, and said—"I promised to explain to you the poetical riddle which I read, or rather attempted to sing, this evening. It is now too late to do this, for the explanation is a long one; but I will be here again, without fail, in a day or two, when I shall solve all, and, I trust, to your satisfaction. Till then, do not forget your poor fiddler."

"No, I winna forget ye," said Jeanie. "It wadna be easy to forget ane that has contributed so much to our happiness. Neither would it be more than gratefu' to do so, I think."

"And you are too kind a creature to be ungrateful to any one, however humble may be their attempts to win your favour—of that I feel assured." Having said this, and perceiving that he was unobserved, he quickly raised the fair hand he held to his lips, kissed it, and hurried out of the door.

What Jane Harrison thought of this piece of gallantry from a fiddler, we really do not know, and therefore will say nothing about it. Whatever her thoughts were, she kept them to herself. Neither did she mention to any one

the circumstance which gave rise to them. Nor did she say, but for what reason we are ignorant, how much she had been pleased with the general manners of the humble musician—with the melodious tones of his voice, and the fine expression of his dark hazel eye. Oh, love, love! thou art a leveller, indeed, else how should it happen that the pretty daughter of a wealthy and respectable yeoman should think for a moment, with certain indescribable feelings, of a poor itinerant fiddler? Mark, good reader, however, we do not say that Miss Harrison was absolutely in love with the musician. By no means. That would certainly be saying too much. But it is as certainly true that she had perceived something about him that left no disagreeable impression—nay, something which she wished she might meet with in her future husband, whoever he might be.

Leaving Jeanie Harrison to such reflections as these, we will follow the footsteps of the disguised baronet. On leaving the house, he walked at a rapid pace for an hour or so, till he came to a turn in the road, at the distance of about four miles from Todshaws, where his gig and man-servant, with a change of clothes, were waiting him by appointment. Having hastily divested himself of his disguise, and resumed his own dress, he stepped into the vehicle, and about midnight arrived at Castle Gowan.

In this romantic attachment of Sir John Gowan's—or rather in the romantic project which it suggested to him of offering his heart and hand to the daughter of an humble farmer—there was but one doubtful point on his side of the question, at any rate. This was, whether he could obtain the consent of his mother to such a proceeding. She loved him with the utmost tenderness; and, naturally of a mild, gentle, and affectionate disposition, her sole delight lay in promoting the happiness of her beloved son. To secure this great object of her life, there was scarcely any sacrifice which she would not make, nor any proposal with which she would not willingly comply. This Sir John well knew, and fully appreciated; but he felt that the call which he was now about to make on her maternal love, was more than he ought to expect she would answer. He, in short, felt that she might, with good reason, and without the slightest infringement of her regard for him, object to his marrying so far beneath his station. It was not, therefore, without some misgivings that he entered his mother's private apartment on the day following his adventure at Todshaws, for the purpose of divulging the secret of his attachment and hinting at the resolution he had formed regarding it.

"Mother," he said, after a pause which had been preceded by the usual affectionate inquiries of the morning, "you have often expressed a wish that I would marry."

"I have, John," replied the good old lady. "Nothing in this world would afford me greater gratification than to see you united to a woman who should be every way deserving of you—one with whom you could live happily."

"Ay, that last is the great, the important consideration, at least with me. But where, mother, am I to find that woman? I have mingled a good deal with the higher ranks of society, and there, certainly, I have not been able to find her. I am not so uncharitable as to say—nay, God forbid I should—that there are not as good, as virtuous, as amiable women, in the upper classes of society as in the lower. I have no doubt there are. All that I mean to say is, that I have not been fortunate enough to find one in that sphere to suit my fancy, and have no hopes of ever doing so. Besides, the feelings, sentiments, and dispositions of these persons, both male and female, are so completely disguised by a factitious manner and by conventional rules, that you never can discover what is their real nature and character. They are still strangers to you, however long you may be acquainted with them. You cannot tell who or what they are. The roller of fashion reduces them all to one level; and, being all clapt into the same mould, they become mere repetitions of each other, as

like as peas, without exhibiting the slightest point of variety. Now, mother," continued Sir John, "the wife I should like is one whose heart, whose inmost nature, should be at once open to my view, unwarped and undisguised by the customs and fashions of the world."

"Upon my word, John, you are more than usually eloquent this morning," said Lady Gowan, laughing. "But pray now, do tell me, John, shortly and unequivocally what is the drift of this long, flowery, and very sensible speech of yours?—for that there is a drift in it I can clearly perceive. You are aiming at something which you do not like to plump upon me at once."

Sir John looked a good deal confused on finding that his mother's shrewdness had detected a latent purpose in his remarks, and endeavoured to evade the acknowledgment of that purpose, until he should have her opinion of the observations he had made; and in this he succeeded. Having pressed her on this point.

"Well, my son," replied Lady Gowan, "if you think that you cannot find a woman in a station of life corresponding to your own that will suit your taste, look for her in any other you please; and, when found, take her. Consult your own happiness, John, and in doing so you will consult mine. I will not object to you marrying whomsoever you please. All that I bargain for is, that she be a perfectly virtuous woman, and of irreproachable character; and I don't think this is being unreasonable. But do now, John, tell me at once," she added, in a graver tone, and taking her son solemnly by the hand, "have you fixed your affections on a woman of humble birth and station? I rather suspect this is the case."

"I have, then, mother," replied Sir John, returning his mother's expressive and affectionate pressure of the hand—"the daughter of an humble yeoman, a woman who"—But we will spare the reader the infliction of the high-flown encomiums of all sorts, which Sir John lavished on the object of his affections. Suffice it to say, that they included every quality of both mind and person which go to the adornment of the female sex.

When he had concluded, Lady Gowan, who made the necessary abatements from the panegyric her son had passed on the lady of his choice, said that, with regard to his attachment, she could indeed have wished it had fallen on one somewhat nearer his own station in life, but that, nevertheless, she had no objection whatever to accept of Miss Harrison as a daughter-in-law, since she was his choice. "Nay," she added, smiling, "if she only possesses one tenth—ay, one tenth, John—the good qualities with which you have endowed her, I must say you are a singularly fortunate man to have fallen in with such a treasure. But, John, allow me to say that, old woman as I am, I think that I could very easily shew you that your prejudices, vulgar prejudices I must call them, against the higher classes of society, are unreasonable, unjust, and, I would add, illiberal, and therefore wholly unworthy of you. Does the elegance, the refinement, the accomplishments, the propriety of manner and delicacy of sentiment, to be met with in these circles, go for nothing with you? Does"—

"My dear mother," here burst in Sir John, "if you please we will not argue the point; for, in truth, I do not feel disposed just now to argue about anything. I presume I am to understand, my ever kind and indulgent parent, that I have your full consent to marry Miss Harrison—that is, of course, if Miss Harrison will marry me."

"Fully and freely, my child," said the old lady, now flinging her arms around her son's neck, while a tear glistened in her eye—"and may God bless your union, and make it happy! I would rather ten thousand times see you marry such a girl as you have described, than that you should do by her as many young men of your years and station would be but too ready to do."

Sir John with no less emotion returned the embrace of his affectionate parent, and, in the most grateful language he could command, thanked her for her ready compliance with his wishes.

On the day following that on which the preceding conversation between Sir John Gowan and his mother took place, the inmates of Todshaws were surprised at the appearance of a splendid equipage driving up towards the house.

"Wha in a' the world's this?" said Jeanie to her father, as they both stood at the door, looking at the glittering vehicle, as it flashed in the sun and rolled on towards them. "Some travellers that hae mistaen their road."

"Very likely," replied her father; "yet I canna understand what kind o' a mistake it could be that should bring them to such an out-of-the-way place as this. It's no a regular carriage road—that they might hae seen; and if they have gane wrang, they'll find some difficulty in getting right again. But here they are, sae we'll sune ken a' about it."

As Mr Harrison said this, the carriage, now at the distance of only some twenty or thirty yards from the house, stopped, a gentleman stepped out, and advanced smiling towards Mr Harrison and his daughter. They looked surprised, nay confounded; for they could not at all comprehend who their visiter was.

"How do you do, Mr Harrison?" exclaimed the latter, stretching out his hand to the person he addressed; "and how do you do, Miss Harrison?" he said, taking Jeanie next by the hand.

In the stranger's tones and manner the acute perceptions of Miss Harrison recognised something she had heard and seen before, and the recognition greatly perplexed her; nor was this perplexity lessened by the discovery which she also made that the countenance of the stranger recalled one which she had seen on some former occasion. In short, the person now before her she thought presented a most extraordinary likeness to the fiddler—only that he had no fiddle, that he was infinitely better dressed, and that his pockets were not sticking out with lumps of cheese and cold beef. That they were the same persons, however, she never dreamt for a moment.

In his daughter's perplexity on account of the resemblances alluded to, Mr Harrison did not participate, as, having paid little or no attention to the personal appearance of the fiddler, he detected none of them; and it was thus that he replied to the stranger's courtesies with a gravity and coolness which contrasted strangely with the evident embarrassment and confusion of his daughter, although she herself did not well know how this accidental resemblance, as she deemed it, should have had such an effect upon her.

Immediately after the interchange of the commonplace civilities above-mentioned had passed between the stranger and Mr Harrison and his daughter—

"Mr Harrison," he said, "may I have a private word with you?"

"Certainly, sir," replied the former. And he led the way into a little back parlour.

"Excuse us for a few minutes, Miss Harrison," said the stranger with a smile, ere he followed, and bowing gallantly to her as he spoke.

On entering the parlour, Mr Harrison requested the stranger to take a seat, and placing himself in another he awaited the communication of his visiter.

"Mr Harrison," now began the latter, "in the first place, it may be proper to inform you that I am Sir John Gowan of Castle Gowan."

"Oh!" said Mr Harrison, rising from his seat, approaching Sir John, and extending his hand towards him—"I am very happy, indeed, to see Sir John Gowan. I never had the pleasure of seeing you before, sir; but I have heard much of you and not to your discredit, I assure you, Sir John."

"Well, that is some satisfaction, at any rate, Mr Harrison," replied the baronet, laughing. "I am glad that my character, since it happens to be a good one, has been before me. It may be of service to me. But to proceed to business. You will hardly recognise in me, my friend, I dare say," continued Sir John, "a certain fiddler who played to you at a certain wedding lately, and to whose music you and your family danced on the green in front of your own house the other night."

Mr Harrison's first reply to this extraordinary observation was a broad stare of amazement and utter non-comprehension. But, after a few minutes' pause thus employed, "No, certainly not, sir," he said, still greatly perplexed and amazed. "But I do not understand you. What is it you mean, Sir John?"

"Why," replied the latter, laughing, "I mean very distinctly that *I* was the musician on both of the occasions alluded to. The personification of such a character has been one of my favourite frolics; and, however foolish it may be considered, I trust it will at least be allowed to have been a harmless one."

"Well, this is most extraordinary," replied Mr Harrison, in great astonishment. "Can it be possible? Is it really true, Sir John, or are ye jesting?"

"Not a bit of that, I assure you, sir. I am in sober earnest. But all this," continued Sir John, "is but a prelude to the business I came upon. To be short, then, Mr Harrison, I saw and particularly marked your daughter on the two occasions alluded to, and the result, in few words, is, that I have conceived a very strong attachment to her. Her beauty, her cheerfulness, her good temper, and simplicity, have won my heart, and I have now come to offer ner my hand."

"Why, Sir John, this—this," stammered out the astonished farmer, "is more extraordinary still. You do my daughter and myself great honour, Sir John—great honour, indeed."

"Not a word of that," replied the knight—"not a word of that, Mr Harrison. My motives are selfish. I am studying my own happiness, and therefore am not entitled to any acknowledgments of that kind. You, I hope, sir, have no objection to accept of me as a son-in-law; and I trust your daughter will have no very serious ones either. Her affections, I hope, are not pre-engaged."

"Not that I know of, Sir John," replied Mr Harrison; "indeed, I may venture to say positively, that they are not. The girl has never yet, that I am aware of, ever thought of a husband—at least, not more than young women usually do; and as to my having any objections, Sir John, so far from that, I feel, I assure you, extremely grateful for such a singular mark of your favour and condescension as that you have just mentioned."

"And you anticipate no very formidable ones on the part of your daughter?"

"Certainly not, Sir John; it is impossible there should."

"Will you, then, my dear sir," added Sir John, "be kind enough to go to Miss Harrison and break this matter to her, and I will wait your return."

With this request, the farmer instantly complied; and having found his daughter, opened to her at once the extraordinary commission with which he was charged. We would fain describe—but find ourselves wholly incompetent to the task—the effect which Mr Harrison's communication had upon his daughter, and on the other female members of the family, to all of whom it was also soon known. There was screaming, shouting, laughing, crying, fear, joy, terror, and amazement, all blended together in one tremendous medley, and so loud, that it reached the ears of Sir John himself, who, guessing the cause of it, laughed very heartily at the strange uproar.

"But, oh! the cauld beef and the cheese that I crammed

into his pockets, father," exclaimed Jeanie, running about the room in great agitation. "He'll never forgie me that—never, never," she said, in great listress of mind. "To fill a knight's pockets wi' dauds o' beef and cheese! Oh! goodness, goodness! I canna marry him. I canna see him after that. It's impossible, father—impossible!"

"If that be a' your objections, Jeanie," replied her father, smiling, "we'll soon get the better o't. I'll undertake to procure ye Sir John's forgiveness for the cauld beef and cheese—that's if ye think it necessary to ask a man's pardon for filling his pockets wi' most unexceptionable provender. I wish every honest man's pouches war as weel lined, lassie, as Sir John's was that night." Saying this, Mr Harrison returned to Sir John and informed him of the result of his mission, which was—but this he had rather made out than been told, for Jeanie could not be brought to give any rational answer at all—that his addresses would not, he believed, be disagreeable to his daughter, "which," he added, "is, I suppose, all that you desire in the meantime, Sir John."

"Nothing more, nothing more, Mr Harrison; she that's not worth wooing's not worth winning. I only desired your consent to my addresses, and a regular and honourable introduction to your daughter. The rest belongs to me. I will now fight my own battle, since you have cleared the way, and only desire that you may wish me success."

"That I do with all my heart," replied the farmer; "and, if I can lend you a hand, I will do it with right good will."

"Thank you, Mr Harrison, thank you," replied Sir John; "and now, my dear sir," he continued, "since you have so kindly assisted me thus far, will you be good enough to help me just one step further. Will you now introduce me in my new character to your daughter? Hitherto, she has known me only," he said, smiling as he spoke, "as an itinerant fiddler, and I long to meet her on a more serious footing—and on one," he added, again laughing, "I hope, a trifle more respectable."

"That I'll very willingly do, Sir John," replied Mr Harrison, smiling in his turn; "but I must tell you plainly that I have some doubts of being able to prevail on Jane to meet you at this particular moment. She has one most serious objection to seeing you."

"Indeed," replied Sir John, with an earnestness that betokened some alarm. "Pray, what is that objection?"

"Why, sir," rejoined the latter, "allow me to reply to that question by asking you another? Have you any recollection of carrying away out of my house, on the last night you were here, a pocketful of cheese and cold beef?"

"Oh! perfectly, perfectly," said Sir John, laughing, yet somewhat perplexed. "Miss Harrison was kind enough to furnish me with the very liberal supply of the articles you allude to; cramming them into my pocket with her own fair hands."

"Just so," replied Mr Harrison, now laughing in his turn. "Well, then, to tell you a truth, Sir John, Jane is so dreadfully ashamed of that circumstance that she positively will not face you."

"Oh ho! is that the affair?" exclaimed the delighted baronet. "Why, then, if she won't come to us, we'll go to her; so lead the way Mr Harrison, if you please." Mr Harrison did lead the way, and Jane was caught.

Beyond this point our story need not be prolonged, as here all its interest ceases. We have only now to add, then, that the winning manners, gentle dispositions, and very elegant person of Sir John Gowan, very soon completed the conquest he aimed at; and Jeanie Harrison, in due time, became **LADY GOWAN**.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PROPHECY ;

OR,

THE MAID OF ELLE.

Not long ago, there stood, on the Borders of Scotland, an old castle, which went under the name of Duncrief Castle. It was, at one time, a place of some strength, and must have been used as a military station in times of intestine commotion or Border warfare. At the time of which we speak, it was inhabited by a family who came originally from Cumberland, of the name of Becket, consisting of the father, Sir William Becket ; his wife, Lady Anne Becket ; and a son and heir, George—a young man of high spirit, and of a gay chivalrous turn of mind, yet good and kind, and well-beloved by his acquaintances, who followed him as a model of imitation in all the pleasures and exercises of youth.

Not far distant from Duncrief stood a house long known by the name of the House of Elle, and supposed by some, well versed in Border antiquities, to be the scene of the fine old ballad called the "Childe of Elle"—the date of which is acknowledged to be uncertain ; but that it is of great antiquity may be presumed from the circumstance that no one has been able to say when it first appeared. The House of Elle was occupied by Sir James Lauder, a knight much beloved by King James VI. ; but who, from a love of retirement, would not undertake office, preferring the woods round the house of Elle, with their feathered songsters and wild plants, to all the gay and fanciful attractions of the Palace of Holyrood. Sir James had one daughter, Emmeline, on whom he doted with more than parental affection, transferring to the heiress of her mother's charms that love which he bore to the best of wives, softened and sanctified by the tears of bereavement. Lady Lauder had been taken from the arms of her husband after she gave birth to Emmeline, who was nursed by a person of the name of Elspeth Laidlaw, a poor woman who lived in a cottage belonging to Sir James. This old woman had all the qualities of her age and sex—claiming an interest in the youthful Emmeline, and vindicating the right of guardianship, which old nurses conceive they have acquired by having exercised the first authority over the youthful mind of their charge. In this instance, the guardianship was the true effect of a love which centred in itself all the affections which were once extended over a whole family of five children, who, one by one, fell a prey to the ruthless destroyer of Scotland's sons and daughters—consumption.

The love of Elspeth towards Emmeline was well requited. As the young heiress grew up, she added to the instinctive affection of the nursing, which hung round her heart like a sweet dream of other years, the love and respect of the young woman who could appreciate goodness, and feel for the sorrows of a bereaved mother, with a devotion which received its force from her own orphan condition.

Few days passed without Emmeline Lauder being in the cottage of Elspeth Laidlaw, from whom she received both instruction and amusement. The legends of the Borders were well known to the old woman ; and Emmeline's ears

were delighted with the recital of stories and ballads, which the antiquarian would have prized for their antiquity alone, but which Emmeline loved for their simple pathos and natural beauty. The ballad having reference to the house of her father, when sung with that peculiar mournful melody which the old women of Scotland use in the kind of singing-narrative manner in which they chaunt old songs—clearly a remnant of the music of the old bards—was, above all, delightful to her, who, though she had herself committed it to heart, never felt its beauties, unless when she heard it come with the air of a prophecy from old Elspeth of the wood. When she began,

"On yonder hill a castle stands"—

holding out, as she suited the action to the word, her long bony finger in the direction of Emmeline's home, and pronouncing every word with deep emphasis and a hollow melodious voice, she seemed a personification of old Time, carrying back the children of yesterday a thousand years to scenes and incidents of that period of oblivion. At this high and impassioned beginning, Emmeline's heart leapt. As the old woman went on describing the heroine's love for the Childe of Elle, and her hatred towards the "carlin knight" whom her father brought to her—"and within three days she must him wedde"—then going through all the crooked ways of love, and ending with the reconciliation in suitable spirit—the poetic tear filled the eye of the young listener, who would have given worlds to have been in the situation of the heroine of the ballad.

"O Elspeth," the young lady would ejaculate, "is there no such fate awaiting your poor Emmeline? How is it that, so young and gentle as I am, trembling when I hear of the blood of a young lamb being shed, I rejoice so much in the death of the 'carlin knight' in this beautiful ballad?—and, still more wonderful, how is it that I would rather step over his bleeding body to embrace my lover who slew him, than get to his arms through a bed of roses?"

"I canna answer thae deep questions," responded Elspeth. "The ways o' the young heart are strange ; and the thochts o' my ain, when I was like you, were like the sounds o' the mountain harp when it is bound to the willow tree in an autumn nicht. But they are nae stronger than the day dreams o' eild, when the auld heart, wi' the bluid o' its passions dried up, becomes like the harp o' Zion in the wilderness, when it is struck wi' the finger o' a prophet. In our young days, we put our warm hands to our panting bosoms, as if we said, 'Here we live and hae our being ;' but when age has bleached our locks, and sanctified our minds, we point our finger outwards like the wand o' the wizard, as if we saw the images o' futurity in the drifting clouds. Sae, my bonny Emmeline, has my finger been pointed to yer destiny ; but the token is doubtful, and the sign may hae nae power. Would to heaven that I may be right !"

"Your humour is strange to-day, mother," said Emmeline—using a term which she loved to apply to her who stood in place of her parent. "Has anything occurred to make you fear my fate or fortunes? No change has yet come over my heart, which is still my own, and has every chance

of being too long in my keeping. No young knight, like the Child of Elle, has yet dared to send to me his 'little page,' the messenger of love, the bearer of sighs—like the little god, Iris, the fabled messenger of heaven, tinging with the colours of his countenance the hearts of the maidens to whom he is sent."

"Emmeline, there are hearts in the world that cannot love, and forms that cannot but be loved; and yours, I trow, are of these. Would I had the shoe o' swiftness and the cap o' darkness I used to read o' in my young days! I would put them on Emmeline, to keep her, and conceal her frae the charms o' a lover. But I hae nae powers to act the handmaidens to my wishes, and the weird o' my auld heart may laugh at the hope of my idle brain."

Such was the conversation that passed between old Elspeth and her young friend. The same sentiments had been uttered by the old woman before, in the hearing of Emmeline, and struck her with that feeling of awe which the prophetic inspiration of old women often produces in those who have no faith in their divination. Emmeline had just as little faith in those fancies as any light-hearted daughter of the morning has in the threatening indications of a solitary cloud which for a moment throws its shadow across the path of her pleasure. Yet she sometimes gave way to the common feeling, and often detected, as if stealing on her unprepared heart, the dim shade of the old woman's fears—stifling, for a moment, the pulses of joy, and disappearing again before the salient energies of youth. Sometimes she laughed at her folly for allowing herself to be affected by an old woman's superstition; but her laugh, at other times, changed from the cachination of simple risibility, to those hysterical convulsions which are the consequences of nervous fears. In the House of Elle she forgot old Elspeth's spaeing; but, in the groves of old oaks, she encountered the full strength of the memory (aided by the inspiration of the place) of predictions which pointed to her fate, like the dark presentiments which the most sceptical of mankind have often found strangely and mysteriously realized by the common and ordinary, yet not the less fated circumstances of the living world.

These alternatives of moods of bold regardlessness and fears, soon gave way to a power which permitted of no partnership in the subject of its operations. An intimacy had grown up between Emmeline and George Becket, arising from the neighbourhood of their residences and the acquaintanceship of their parents. This intimacy underwent that change which it invariably does where the parties are young and fair, and where there are opportunities afforded of their meeting among the solitary and rural beauties of nature. Well has it been remarked that the old dryads, when they departed with the faith which gave them a local habitation and a name, left behind them, as a memorial of their existence and their recreations, that mysterious charm of the thick wood which acts so powerfully on the hearts of lovers—producing, indeed, as it is often found to do, a susceptibility of affection and a mutual love in hearts which in the flinty streets of the city could have resisted every arrow of the little god. Walking in the woods round the House of Elle and the Castle of Duncrief, George Becket and Emmeline Lauder only obeyed the secret influences of the place and the natural emotions of the human heart: they loved, and with a passion sublimed and strengthened by the poetical influences of the forest, and the green lawn, the lazy rill, and the dashing cataract.

There was one spot in these woods which Emmeline loved beyond any other—the spot to which tradition had assigned the scene of the fight between the two rivals in the ballad which related to her father's house—where the carlish knight "came galloping over the downe." The place was now, however, no longer a "downe." Large trees had grown up and covered the scene of strife and blood; and an

enchantment reigned in the place which did not limit its influence to those who were in love. A small fountain, gurgling through the mouth of a lion, sent a tiny stream through the moss which clad the roots of the elms, and sought its way through a hollow, the sides of which were lined with wild roses, and brambles, and straggling bushes of thorn. In the middle of this "howe," the little stream paused and spread its silver surface around, as if to gratify the wild plants on its edge with its refreshing coolness and humidity. A plant of no unusual kind grew there, to court the embrace of the little stream. A white rose-bush had been planted by Emmeline's mother, when she carried under her bosom the expected child—as an offering to hope that she might be safely delivered, and bring forth a female which might rival her emblem in its sweetness and purity. Fruitless yet fruitful offering! Emmeline was all her mother could have desired to see; but that mother saw her not, and the white rose stood there, a melancholy emblem of a hope realized in wo. Its drooping flowers indicated sorrow for the death of the hand that gave it its existence and locality, and the pale tinge of its flowers aided the feelings which its lonely, melancholy appearance could not fail to produce in those who knew its history. Its flowers and leaves were moistened daily by a father's tears of bereavement, and the softening influence it exercised over the feelings of the daughter pointed it out as a fit trysting place for the communion of love.

At this spot, Emmeline and George Becket held their meetings. The moonlight nights were their favoured periods, as they have ever been, for the interchange of affection. Their walks were never complete, nor their loves gratified, unless they visited the "howe of the mother's rose." The witchery of the place, with its historical associations and its family reminiscences, extended its influence even to the hearts that were engrossed with the selfishness of exclusive affection; exalting the feelings of the one, softening the tenderness of the other, and throwing over the emotions of both a sombre devotional cast, not adverse to the true and legitimate interests of honourable love.

"This rose," said Emmeline, one evening, to George Becket, "has stood now in this spot for eighteen years, and every year of that period, with the exception of those when I was too young to understand its silent but eloquent language, have I watched the putting forth of its buds, the bursting of them into bloom, and the spread of the full flowers. But I also watched the decay of the roses, and sat silently, with the tear moistening my cheek, to see fall, one by one, the dry and shrivelled leaves, to form a bed for the reptiles which, in the wet autumn, crawl round its stem. How emblematic of my poor mother, whose hopes budded, and blossomed, and faded, and fell to the cold earth, covered with the long dank grass of the tomb! Shall this dear bush be also emblematic of the fate of her daughter? When first we met here, the buds were not formed; but, ere the confidence of requited affection allowed you to rife from these lips the first pledge of love, the buds had attained a perceptible form, and gave hope of flowers. They waxed fuller and fuller, as our hearts acknowledged the increase of endearment, and at last they burst forth into opening flowers when we had attained the full strength of a love that was pledged over my mother's rose. Now are the flowers in their bloom, and I can call my dear George the choice of my heart, where no other thought reigns than that affection which looks to him for support, and to that flower for its sanctification."

"And before these roses shall wither," ejaculated George, "I hope to be allowed to call my beloved Emmeline by the name of wife. Would that that high privilege were mine even at this moment, that we might defy the workings of that fate whose power over your favourite plant may be emblematic of what is in reserve for us! Oh, what would be the condition of my love-sick heart, if my Emmeline should

imitate these flowers, and shed her fair leaves ere yet the autumn of her promise is come! It cannot be. The powers which regulate the fortunes of man only sever such hearts as ours, on high and mysterious occasions, for purposes concealed from our purblind vision, and as a sacrifice to some mightier power, who requires, but at distant times, an offering so sacred and so awful."

Such was the conversation held by these lovers, different in its kind from the ordinary effusions of love only in so far as it shewed dim shadows of coming events, the fear of which was not justified by anything known to them. The prophetic warnings of Elspeth Laidlaw may have, in some degree, obumbrated the otherwise salient fancy of Emmeline, which, awakened by the mournful interest of her mother's flower of hope, interwove the sombre thoughts in one sorrowful and fearful train of reflections, which, finding utterance in the overflowing of a love-sick heart, insensibly tinged the thoughts of Becket, and produced, on his part, ejaculations which were apparently but ill suited to remove from the heart of his love the burden which pressed upon it.

The next evening, George and Emmeline again met at their appointed place. The moon was throwing through the leaves of the elms her silver beams, and the chequered light and shade produced by the partial obstruction offered by some of the tall broad trees to her light, produced that beautiful variety of subdued colours which the lover of evening and evening's queen delights to behold, after the sun has run his broad course, flaring his rays in dazzling brightness over the parched earth. The musing pair sauntered forward to the place where they delighted to recline, and approached the rose-bush that claimed so much of Emmeline's affection. Casting her eyes forward, to catch the beloved flower, what were her emotions to find the roses plucked, and their leaves scattered in careless profusion around the bush! No flower remained; the devastation was as complete as if the storms of winter had been at work, and nipped the sweet nurslings of spring. Emmeline looked calmly yet ominously in the face of George, who, struck with the curious connection between this devastation and the conversation of the previous evening, felt as if the powers he had endeavoured then to propitiate, had shewn that his attempt had been unsuccessful. He was disinclined to say anything to increase the fear and the awe of the gentle Emmeline; and, endeavouring to make light of the circumstance, said that some children must have been in the howe and rifled the favourite bush of its treasures. He made an excuse for leaving the place, and the two lovers walked through the woods, at a loss for conversation to beguile each other of the thoughts which the depression of the one produced in the other—so powerful is the influence of a single feeling in tinging the whole microcosm of the mind of man, as an autumn cloud throwing its insignificant shadow before the moon involves the earth in one wide spreading gloom. The fine, and intricate, and mysterious machinery of the mind, deranged by the impingement of a passing breath of melancholy, refuses to give forth its accustomed sounds; the tuneful choir of thoughts and feelings is mute, and man acknowledges, in his humiliation, on how little depend his pleasures and his woes.

The lovers parted, after many endeavours to shake off the melancholy which had invaded them, apparently from an inadequate cause. Emmeline was unwilling again to meet him at her mother's flower, and another place was appointed for their subsequent rendezvous.

Having left her father's house, to go to meet her lover on the following evening, Emmeline required to pass through an avenue of trees, so thick in their foliage as to prevent the moonbeams from piercing through them in any degree sufficient to give light to the passenger beneath them. She sauntered along, still occupied by the omen of the scattered

flowers of her mother's rose-bush. The night was still, and scarcely a sound was heard to waken even the voice of the dry autumn leaf that lay on the ground. On a sudden, Emmeline started. A large oak tree, at the foot of which she paused for a moment, shook as if a sharp gust of wind had whistled through its branches. The shaking and rustling continued for a few seconds, and produced an extraordinary effect in the midst of the silence which everywhere reigned. Emmeline looked up; but the foliage was too thick for anything being observed. Her heart beat quick, and she questioned herself, to assuage or escape from her fear—What can this be?—no animal inhabiting trees could produce this shaking and noise, and no wind exists to produce such an effect. Overcome by fright, she made an effort to run; but the tree again shook, and as she stood and listened to the fearful sound, a voice apparently from the higher branches struck her ear. "Stay, Emmeline Lauder; the warning of last night was intended to prevent thee meeting again the young Master of Duncrief, and yet thou art on thy way to resume these fatal interviews. The shaken oak which was heretofore—why not yet?—tenanted by hamadryads, now labours with prophetic throes, to save thee from an unhappy fate, since the shaken rose-bush had no effect in opening thine eyes to a sense of the evil which impends o'er thee and thy house. Return, and see no more the young heir of Duncrief. I can say no more—my inspiration is complete, my oracle delivered, and my purpose fulfilled. Return!"

The petrified maiden stood rivetted to the spot, by the influence of fear and the awe of a supernatural announcement. Her limbs trembled, and a faintness came over her which compelled her to lean upon the tree from which the sound issued. As she recovered herself, she saw a shadow cross a lighted part of the ground which the moonbeams had reached. Whether it was that of a human being or a shadow at all—her mind running rather on supernaturals, and inclining to consider the appearance as the *ipsum corpus tenue* of an incorporeal spirit—she could only conjecture and imagine. As soon as her powers returned, she sought her father's house, and shut herself up in her apartment, resigning herself to the play of an excited fancy, occupied about the extraordinary appearances she had witnessed. She now thought that all the three indications she had observed—old Elspeth's prophetic fears; the despoiling of the rose bush, and the scattering of its leaves; the sound from the tree, and the mystic and inspired announcement of an unhappy fate apparently impending over her—were connected in some secret way, and pointed to the fulfilment of a weird of which she was the victim. But was it possible for any power short of divine agency—and her guardian spirit was only one of the ministers of fate in her excited fancy—to prevent her from continuing to love George Becket, the choice of her affections, with an unspotted reputation, a high lineage, and of a noble bearing? This question she put to herself in the exultation of a deep-felt unconquerable passion, for which she was ready to die. But, in a moment after, the impious burst was quelled in her bosom, and she felt humbled by the thought that her love, great as it was and sacred in her estimation, was but as a breath on the great moving irresistible energies of fate. She now recollected that she had often heard of some prophecy which haunted with undeviating and relentless fulfilment Duncrief Castle; but all the attempts she had made—and she had applied to her father and to others, and, above all, to Elizabeth Laidlaw on the subject—had not enabled her to form even a guess as to its import. George Becket himself was ignorant of it, had never heard of it, and laughed at her when she mentioned the circumstance to him, making light of it, and treating it with contempt. But now the matter put on a more serious aspect. She was clearly in the hands of fate—attempted to be preserved and pre-

vented from falling under the ban of that prophetic denunciation, and the thought of endeavouring perversely to counteract the designs of heaven shook her frame like an ague.

She went soon to rest; but sleep only brought her hideous dreams. A nightmare sat on her bosom all the night, and superstition put on her black robes and passed sentence against her for disobeying the commands of the Almighty. She was in a state bordering on delirium; vague forms, created by a fever fancy, hovered round her pillow, assuming the most grotesque shapes, and playing off the most fantastic tricks—changing every instant from grave to gay, and in an instant again putting on the appearances of demons, jabbering, rolling their fiery eyes, screaming in voices of despair, and hovering over her in the attitudes of avenging spirits. Through all these forms, George Becket was observable, undergoing transformation—every instant a demon, a lover, a guardian angel, an avenger, and then a weeping anchorite. In this turmoil of wild fancies, Emmeline conceived herself to be the object to which all the energies of the phantoms were directed; and at last, as she conceived herself chased by the whole legion of mixed forms, bellowing, and screaming, and crying for revenge, she came to the “howe” of her mother’s flower, and throwing herself on the rifed branches, conceived herself pricked by the thorns, and awoke in the greatest agony. It was still dark, and the effect of these wild dreams on an imagination already sufficiently excited by the events of the preceding day, was such as to induce her to think seriously of a resolution of resigning her lover. She prayed fervently that she might be enabled to do that, and obey the superintending behests of the unseen power under whose protection she now conceived herself to be. Having finished her prayer, she started from her couch, and placing her hand on a Bible that lay open on the table at which she had performed her devotions on the preceding night, she vowed a vow that on that day she would by letter renounce her lover, and qualify herself for the merited protection of her presiding genius.

After this burst of devotional determination, produced by the excited state of her mind, acted upon by dreams of so fearful a nature, Emmeline lay down, exhausted by her sleepless night, the conflicting emotions of an irresolved spirit, and, last of all, by the determination to which she had in the end come. A soft balmy sleep now stole over her, and in a few hours she rose calm and refreshed, true to her purpose, and with all the sternness of a resolved immolator of her dearest interests at the shrine of a supposed duty.

Sitting down to her desk, she wrote the following letter to George Becket—

“The love I felt for you was that of one who never loved before; and, if it had been permitted by the ruling destinies of mortals that that affection should have been sanctified by marriage I would have been the happiest of women. But there are powers superior to the workings of the hearts of mortals; and they have vouchsafed to me their will that we shall not be wed. Oh, what suffering is it to me to lend thus my hand to aid the designs of an unseen power, to receive, as it were, a dagger from the clouds, to smite my palpitating heart, and lay me prostrate at the feet of my lover! I can see you no more—to see you, is to love you—to love you, is to disobey heaven—to disobey heaven, is to die ten thousand deaths. What a night must it have been to me to produce this announcement! How many demons must have encircled my pillow ere this resolution could have been taken! I cannot think of these things—the remembrance of my past night is like a searing iron applied to my brain. Adieu!—forget Emmeline—she never can forget you.”

This letter dispatched, Emmeline’s mind was for a short time relieved. She endeavoured to banish her lover from her fancy, and tasked herself with the perusal of large portions

of Scripture, with the view of occupying her mind and soothing her lacerated feelings.

George Becket, in perusing the extraordinary letter he had received, was at a loss to know what construction to put upon it. In an evil hour, he shewed it to his mother, who never having been partial to the union of her son and the heiress of Elle, advised him to give up so brainwode a lover as Emmeline seemed to be—stating that he could have no pleasure in the society of an enthusiast whose fancy would be liable to be inflamed by every unusual event, which she would attribute to the workings of fate, and whose eternal ravings in the style of her mad epistle would drive domestic peace from his hearth.

These advices produced considerable effect on Becket. He shortly afterwards proceeded to London, where he completely realized the truth of the adage, “Out of sight out of mind,” by falling in love with a Scottish lady, called Helen Walker, whom he shortly afterwards married and brought down to Scotland to reside at Duncrief Castle.

Poor Emmeline—who had kept herself in a retired condition since the departure of Becket, having never entirely revived from the effects of the apparently supernatural indications already detailed—heard nothing of the change of sentiment and condition on the part of her lover, until it was announced to her one day when coming from church. On that day she met George Becket and his lady, at that very spot where the voice from the tree had startled her, and produced such a change on her life. On seeing them she felt her heart die away within her. They passed—George Becket making a slight bow, and his wife looking and inquiring what lady that was that had attracted his attention. All this poor Emmeline saw and understood. The effect produced by this apparition was as great as that formerly produced at the same place, by the voice she had heard from the tree. The supernatural indications were forgotten, her former love returned, with a consciousness that it could not now be gratified in this world. A deep melancholy took possession of her, and she wandered sadly and silently home.

This state of mind continued, her feelings becoming gradually more and more acute. She now blamed herself for coming too hastily to a resolution affecting the dearest interests of her life, on grounds which might be false and illusory. The appearances she had witnessed might have been the effects of natural causes. Perhaps the Scotch friends of Helen Walker, Becket’s wife, might have produced them, with a view to displacing her from his affections, to make room for her rival, and various other causes might be resorted to for explaining what she in an evil hour had attributed to the interposition of a higher power. These reflections increased her melancholy, which continued to prey upon her mind, disturbing the functions of her personal economy and bringing on corporeal disease. A radical change was in consequence soon produced upon her, the cause of which her father conceived he found in the marriage of George Becket to Helen Walker; yet the reason of the breach between Becket and his daughter he never knew; for Emmeline kept her letter a secret, not having confided it even to her old nurse, Elspeth Laidlaw. Her grief was therefore of a deeper nature than her father supposed; for she had not only lost her lover, but she had lost him by her own will, having acted upon feelings which, in all likelihood, were false, and produced by the schemes of some designing, artful, and interested person. There was thus no consolation for her. Deserted by Becket, her heart might have broken; but it might also have been upheld by indignation at being improperly treated. But herself the cause of the loss of her lover, for whom she lived, and in whom was centred every thought and feeling of interest that ever occupied her heart or mind—what could be to her a comfort or a solace? Her answer was comprised in one word, and that was, Death.

When Elspeth Laidlaw heard of the illness of Emmeline,

she suspected the true cause of it, and hastened to afford her that consolation which she thought she had in her power to bestow.

"What ails my Emmeline?" said Elspeth, as she entered, and saw the pale and dejected creature lying extended on a couch. "But what occasion is there for my putting that question, wha knew sae weel your love for George Becket, the heir o' Duncrief, and his marriage wi' Helen Walker, the Scotch Londoner, wha may yet dree the fate ye hae avoided?"

"I don't know, mother, what you mean by what you have now said," replied Emmeline. "I have experienced the effects of too ready a belief in omens."

"Dinna say't, my winsome Emmeline," rejoined Elspeth. "Ye ken naething about thae mysterious things. Ye may consider yoursel ill as ye are; but there ne'er was an ill but there might be a waur; and mony an ill may be reckoned guid if we could bring oursel to understand something mair o' the ways o' the Almighty. This pair lassie, wha may ae day become the mistress o' Duncrief Castle, little kens what awaits her in the fulfilment o' the auld prophecy about the place o' her residence."

"What is that old prophecy, Elspeth?" inquired Emmeline. "You never would tell me that, though I have asked you often, as well as my father, to communicate it to me."

"The prophecy is weel kenned owre the country by the auld discreet women o' my standing," replied Elspeth. "But they dinna like to repeat it, because it's a sair reflection on the castle, and might gie great pain to the braw leddie wha now inhabits it. She is no auld enough yet to dree the prophecy. It's no time yet for its fulfilment; for though there may be ane or twa grey hairs in her head, ye ken that ae swallow does na mak a summer."

"I am still far from your meaning," replied Emmeline. "I would understand you better if you would tell me what this prophecy is that haunts the Castle of Duncrief. I am interested in it, and have already suffered enough from hidden mysteries. But it is now of little importance to me in one view, for no communications I may now hear can save me from a lingering death."

"Hoot awa, my bonny Emmeline!" cried Elspeth; "thae words are like the gravings on kirkyard stanes. Ye hae been saved frae a great misfortune—and ye now thank the Almighty for his goodness, by resigning to him yer spirit. Na, na; that's no the way to shew gratitude to Him wha made ye. Gie him prayers, Emmeline, and keep yer spirit till it's his high will to demand it frae ye, along wi' an account o' yer precious charge. The prophecy anent the castle o' Duncrief may be tauld ye now for yer consolation, that ye may ken hoo narrow an escape ye hae made frae an early grave. It's as auld a story as the times o' Marvellous Merlin, that there never should a lady kame her grey hairs i' the Castle o' Duncrief. The prophecy has been fulfilled to the very letter, as truly as ever were the predictions o' Thomas himsel, or Beid, Berlington, or Bannester, o' prophesying fame. I hae kenned, i' my day, twa deaths i' the castle before the time. My mother tauld me o' twa in her recollection, and her mother tauld her o' some in her knowledge; and sae the thing is proved by the testimony o' three generations. The present lady has still her black locks, they tell me, and keeps them langer than maybe is the common course o' nature—nae doot owing to the interposition o' high authority, wha keeps aff the enemy o' guid as lang as is consistent wi' His mysterious ways."

"This is but small consolation to me, good Elspeth," answered Emmeline; "for, to tell you the truth, I never had any faith in prophecies. I do not conceive, therefore, that I have made any escape; and the weight of my wo in pressing me to an untimely death, is not diminished by your communication."

"And is this the opinion o' my ain nursling," said Elspeth, "wha I fondly thought got frae me the lear o' the

wise on earth as weel as my milk? Waes me! but the conceit o' this new world warns the like o' me to tak my departure to a better. Wha could hae thought that the bonny bairn wha used to sit on my knee and ask me to begin the auld prophecy, 'Still on my ways as I went,' o' the immortal Thomas, or that ane o' the wonderful Waldhave, 'Upon Loudon Law alone as I lay,' and hear, wi' suitable belief and becoming modesty, my account o' the fulfilment o' the sayings o' thae famous worthies—wad hae sae sune left her ancient faith, and taken hersel up wi the new fangled disbeliefs o' this backsliding generation' Waes me!"

"I do not wish to hurt the feelings of my good old friend," said Emmeline, mournfully; "but I am bound to say, for my heart will not retain it, that that prophecy never would have prevented me from marrying the man of my affections." And the poor disconsolate maiden hid her face in her hands, and sobbed bitterly.

"Keep up yer heart, my winsome lass," said Elspeth, in a soothing tone—"Hector Bruce is as fair a youth and as fond a lover as ever was George Becket; and he has mony qualities o' head and heart that the heir of Duncrief could never aspire to."

"What is Hector Bruce to me?" sobbed the disconsolate Emmeline. "Him I never loved, though often have you, in your mistaken kindness, recommended him to me as a lover. Who can influence the human heart? Oh, my lost, my sacrificed object of my warmest affections! Never, never, can I love another! The spell is broken that bound me to that object, but my heart has broken with it; and who is there now to bind up?"

"Time, my bonny Emmeline," said Elspeth, "has great power in curing affection; and they say that a second love is mair kindly, though less strong than a first. Think nae mair o' George Becket, and yer heart maun follow the course appointed for it by nature, and love again. Hector Bruce was wi' me yesterday, inquiring for ye; and sair has he prayed to get me to intercede for him. I didna hesitate Emmeline, to gie him my favour and advice; for, sair, sair I hae fought, unkenne'd by ye, to keep ye frae Duncrief."

At this moment Emmeline started up in a wild and insane manner, and ejaculated, as she wrung her hands—

"It is—it is! The spoliation of my mother's roses—the voice from the tree—were human schemes! O God! save me from the proof. Elspeth Laidlaw—Elspeth Laidlaw! tell me, if you love me, if you wish me to sojourn yet a little longer on this earth, know ye if Hector Bruce employed means to prevent my marriage with George Becket!"

"Troth, and that he did, my Emmeline," replied Elspeth, "and wi' my consent; for how could I stand aside, and see my darling rush into the open jaws o' a prophecy whase fulfilment was as certain as death itsel? It was Hector Bruce wha scattered the roses o' yer mother's bush and spoke to ye frae the tree as if in a spirit o' inspiration—innocent tricks to serve a guid end, and save my bonny bairn frae an untimely grave."

On hearing this statement, Emmeline rose to the full pitch of her nervous excitement, ejaculating—"O God. O God! sacrificed to an old woman's tale." She fell on the ground and lay in a state of insensibility for many minutes. Assistance was procured; and the unfortunate victim of good intentions was carried to her couch to waken to a sense of unqualified despair.

This announcement produced a change upon Emmeline of a very marked character. She afterwards became quiet and moodish—seldom speaking to any one, and paying little attention to what was passing around her. The servants did everything in their power to make their favourite as easy as possible; and no exertion was spared to bring back her wonted spirits, but the sight or the mention of any circumstance connected with Duncrief Castle or its inmates,

operated as a spell upon her conduct. Sudden bursts of tears came on her when no person was prepared for any special indication of grief beyond the uniform melancholy which she exhibited. Her form gradually wasted—her cheek lost its vermilion tint—and the sprightly beam of her eye declined to a sombre ray, that came through tears. In this condition, the broken-hearted Emmeline continued to wander over the grounds of Elle, an object of pity to the neighbours, of deep and heartfelt sorrow to her father, and to Elspeth Laidlaw a silent reproof. She never again visited the cottage of her old friend. Even this affection was riven asunder; and all the tears, the prayers, the entreaties of the old woman, were unavailing in obtaining for her a single smile. Her appearance was even distasteful to her; and, as she turned to avoid the feeble energies of the poor and devoted being who would have died for her, it was mournful to see the tears of a rejected affection stealing down her rugged cheeks, and to hear the groans of her troubled spirit as it panted for communion with the only being she loved on earth.

Emmeline continued to exhibit the same state of feelings—her body gradually decaying, and her mind becoming daily more absent. One day, as she walked on the lawn opposite to her father's house, she saw pass a road leading from Duncrief Castle to the parish church, a hearse, with a long funeral procession behind it. The circumstance was not sufficient to excite her attention; but some people who were standing near, stated that that was the funeral of George Becket's wife, who had died in giving birth to her first child. The statement recalled the absent mind of the unhappy maiden. She looked up, and observed, with apparent attention, the procession pass along. For some days afterwards, she appeared excited by some unusual trains or thought, but continued still her silence, and in a short time relapsed into her usual state of apparent inanity.

Time rolled on without bringing any change, except gradual decay, to Emmeline. One day, about a year after she had seen the funeral procession, she visited the hollow of her mother's flower. She sat there for hours, with her unmeaning eye fixed on the plant, which had again sent forth buds, and was now in full bloom. As she sat, some person came behind her. It was George Becket. He stood and gazed. The tear was in his eye, and his heart was too full for utterance. She looked up in his face, and remained silent. At last he muttered, "Emmeline." The sound of his words operated like a charm on the victim of melancholy. A flood of tears gushed down her cheeks; and sobs burst from her heart as if they had been restrained by the pressure of the sadness of years. Unable to command himself, Becket rushed forward and caught her in his arms, but he received a senseless load. Emmeline had fainted, and fell into the willing arms of her lover, who held her while the tears dropped from his eyes on her clayey countenance. In a little time she recovered, and looked again into his face, muttering some incoherent words which Becket could not understand. He led her homewards; and, as he parted from her, asked her to meet him next day at the same place.

The effect of this most extraordinary and unexpected change of circumstances on the mind of Emmeline was electric. During the night she wept and sobbed intensely, as if nature had adopted those modes of relieving her of the burden which had pressed upon her so long. On the following morning, a great change had been effected. Her mind evinced greater attention and sensibility, and her speech was less restrained. These indications were hailed by the inmates of the house with joy, and Emmeline herself smiled to see her father happy on the occasion of her recovery.

She repaired to the place appointed. Becket was there before her. The loves of both appeared to have returned with their wonted force, and embraces sealed a new pledge of mutual affection. A conversation, interesting to both,

now commenced. Emmeline explained to him how she had been treated and deceived, giving him an account of the state of mind which had produced the fatal letter. On the other hand, Becket explained what his sentiments were on the receipt of it; but, if it had not been for the advice of his mother, he would not have been dissuaded from endeavouring to redeem her, and release her from a vow which, having been made in error, could not be binding on her. His journey to London, however, did irreparable injury to his affections, for he was dragged into society against his inclination, and the image of his Emmeline, he confessed it with shame, was often absent from his mind. His mother's letters, too, operated in the same direction; and, in a fit of thoughtlessness and what he conceived filial duty, he married Helen Walker, and brought her to Scotland.

At the mention of another woman, Emmeline's feelings were severely shocked. Becket observed the effect his narrative had produced upon her, and endeavoured to soothe her. The question hung upon her lips, "And did you love?" and died away in faltering accents. The subject was painful to both, and Becket changed it, embracing again the consoled maiden, and vowing eternal affection and a determination to make her and himself happy, as soon as preparations could be made for the marriage.

In a short time, George Becket and Emmeline Lauder were married. She became reconciled to old Elspeth, who, however, shuddered at the anticipated fulfilment of the fatal prophecy. The happy pair lived at the Castle of Duncrief—Lady Becket having agreed to receive her daughter-in-law with love and kindness. The story of her sufferings had sunk deep on her mind, and she expressed joy when she was informed by her son that he intended to wed his Emmeline, and that she had consented.

Years rolled on; old Sir William died; and George succeeded his father in his title and property. But Lady Becket lived to an advanced age; and her daughter-in-law, with heartfelt satisfaction, combed, for the good old lady, her locks, which were as white as the driven snow. Elspeth Laidlaw, herself, lived to see the falsehood of her prophecy. Sir George Becket had, by Emmeline, a large family of children. They both attained to an advanced old age, and both combed their grey hairs in the Castle of Duncrief—beloved by their children, respected by their neighbours, and well satisfied with the fortunes they had experienced in life.

THE BLACK HOUR.

ABOUT the time of the great pestilence which committed such dreadful ravages in Scotland in the reign of James I., there lived in the town of Dunse an old woman of the name of Janet Fortune, who, in consequence of her spare appearance and peculiarly sharp style of countenance, joined to a strong religious enthusiasm, which burned with the fires scattered abroad at that early period by the Wickliffites, was generally considered to have that connection with the great Author of Evil which subjected her to the danger of the stake. There was, of course, no more witchcraft about Janet Fortune than might have been in those by whom it was imputed to her; and certainly (if the innocent nature of her avocations formed any test of judgment) there was greatly less connection between her and the Evil One than might have been proved to have existed in the case of the sorners, brennars, stoutrieviers, and masterful beggars, with whom that party of the country abounded, and who conceived they had a right to shake their heads at the old woman in token of their disapprobation of her imputed compact.

Unfortunately, however, Janet Fortune was one of those wiseacres who concern themselves about the signs of the

times; and though other people saw nothing more in the plague, which was then filling the kirkyards and raising there the only crops which the parched country yielded, than was observed in that of the prior century, (1348,) which carried off a third of the inhabitants, she could very easily perceive that it was a warning of the approaching end of all things. This opinion she was in the habit of expressing daily, as she sat at her window, and observed the melancholy progress of the almost hourly funerals which passed her house to the kirkyard. It was in vain that her daughter, a fine young woman, of about twenty-five years of age, called Magdaline, disputed with her on the absurdity of her belief, and proved, by reference to history, that many scourges of the same kind had passed over the earth, which notwithstanding still endured, and would, she hoped, endure as long at least as they were destined to remain on it. Janet was immovable. She could not conceive that one half of God's creatures, among whom she enumerated many godly people, could be sent to their graves for no other ostensible purpose than to make the grass grow. They had committed no greater evil than those who lived before them; they had been removed while in the bud, in the blossom, in the fruit, and in the sere-leaf; and for what could all this be done, but to prepare them in some mysterious way for "the hour which cometh when no man listeth?"

Magdaline was interested in this controversy otherwise than as a speculative casuist, or even as a warm-hearted daughter, who wished to save her mother from public reproach. She had been upon the eve of being married to a young man called Murdoch Stewart, who, though poor and a tradesman, boasted of being a natural son of the unfortunate regent of that name. The match between him and Magdaline had been fixed, and the ceremony was only postponed in consequence of the negative which the old mother set against it; from the conviction which hourly increased with the increase of the general mortality, that her daughter was already destined to be death's bride, and that the day was fast approaching when they would all meet in a place where there were no matches but those of eternal love and friendship. Magdaline was a most affectionate daughter, and sacrificed her own happiness to the peace of mind of her parent. She trusted to the cessation of the scourge, and waited patiently for the change which that happy circumstance would produce on the mind of her mother, and, by consequence, on her own maiden condition.

The great anxiety of the public mind, at that time, rendered it credulous of any nostrum in the shape of a prophecy, which religious enthusiasm, fear, or vanity, might promulgate. As soon as it was known that Janet Fortune, the wise woman of Dunse, had foretold the end of the world, from the premonitory signs of the times, and especially the existence of the frightful disease, which seemed by its own energies alone able, as it was apparently inclined, to put an end to all mankind, numbers of people visited her from all parts of the country, to consult her as to the time when the anticipated change would take place. The daughter saw, with fear and trembling, the danger to which her old parent was exposing herself, by countenancing this unenviable fame. The old woman herself was not insensible to the terrors of imputed witchcraft; but the duty she owed to the Author of all things overcame her fears, and she continued to call her friends to a timely repentance, as a preparation for what would inevitably come upon them.

About this time, the famous Paul Crawler, the Prague doctor, was busy taking advantage of the state of men's minds, produced by the incomprehensible and incurable nature of the pestilence, called, in consequence of the versatility of its vengeance, the *pestilentia volatilis*; and, in various places in Scotland, thundered with his peculiar eloquence against the imputed errors of the Catholic Church,

which, he said, were the true cause of the divine visitation. He dwelt with great force upon the crime of withholding the Bible from the people, for whom its precepts and consolations were intended; argued against the immunities claimed by the ecclesiastics and prelates, from the temporal jurisdiction of the king's law-officers, and laid open the sores which religious error had produced in the hearts of men. In promulgating these doctrines, Crawler visited various of the Scottish towns; and, among the rest, Dunse, which was already sufficiently inflamed by the prophetic warnings of Janet Fortune, aided by the awful state of the kingdom from the still increasing mortality which everywhere prevailed.

The appearance, in so small a town, of the Bohemian enthusiast, with his foreign aspect, dress, and accent—the promulgator of new doctrines, and, in the people's apprehensions, a person connected, in some mysterious way, with the public curse then prevailing—produced an excitement proportioned to the unusual cause and the susceptibility of the people's feelings. He preached publicly in the open street, defying the great inquisitor of heresy and his agents. All that were still free from the grasp of the fell destroyer, collected round the enthusiast. Every face was marked with the sorrow produced by the loss of friends, and the anxiety still felt for their own fate. A predisposition to fear and apprehension reigned everywhere; slight circumstances were magnified into mysterious indications; and anything in the shape of a prophecy operated like the effect of magic on their excited minds. Among the crowd was Janet Fortune, on whom those eyes which were not spell-bound by the preacher, were eagerly, yet fearfully turned. Crawler did not fail to take advantage of the excitement he saw everywhere prevailing, and stated that, while he was bound to inform them that the awful visitation under which their friends had perished and they themselves stood in imminent danger, was sent as a punishment for the vices of the age; he felt himself under the obligation of intimating that heaven and earth were also busily and fearfully doing—that the time was fast approaching when the end of all mortal things would be revealed to man, and he would be called to account for the crimes he had committed and was still committing. When this announcement was made, every eye turned upon Janet Fortune; the unlooked for corroboration of her prediction sealed it with the stamp of truth; an involuntary shudder followed the conviction, and apprehension, producing its sympathetic effects, rose to a pitch of morbid terror seldom experienced in an entire community.

Fears of the kind thus entertained by the inhabitants of Dunse are generally short-lived; but, in the present instance, they were kept up, if not gradually increased, by the continuance of the pestilence, whose ravages were not in any degree abated; the number of the funerals was as great as ever, and all public functions were so completely obstructed, that the interference of the legislature was required to preserve that order and regularity in the public offices which fear had disturbed or put entirely to flight. The apprehensions of the people of Dunse were destined to assume a form of greater certainty. Though neither Janet Fortune nor Paul Crawler had condescended on the particular period of the prophesied change, others did not observe a similar caution or honesty. An obscure hint, whose origin it would, perhaps, have been vain to attempt to discover, served to fix the gnomon of the prevailing fears; and it was circulated with great rapidity, that the 17th day of June following (1432) was the ordained day on which an eternal finality was to be put to sublunary things. A general credence was willingly imparted to the flying intelligence, notwithstanding that neither the old woman nor the Bohemian would admit that there appeared to them any truth in the statement of the particular period of time at which the event would hap-

pen. The difficulty of accounting for the origin of the report only added to it greater certainty, on the principle always acted on by the vulgar, and often too much disregarded by the learned, that what has apparently no cause comes direct from heaven.

The week which intervened between the periods of the starting of the report, and the appointed day, was passed in great and ill concealed apprehension. Some persons, who prided themselves in refusing credence to things which admitted of less doubt, attempted to disregard the subject of general concern; but the connection between it and a present and experienced evil, the still destroying pestilence, prevented them from indulging in a stoicism which had been renounced by all as a scepticism which was so much unsuited to the mysterious character of the times. The everyday concerns of ordinary life were disregarded by those inhabitants whose minds were considered to be entirely devoted to business; and even the peculiar affairs of the heart, and, in particular, the matrimonial thoughts and aspirations of Matilda Fortune and Murdoch Stewart, were merged in the general absorbing subject of anxiety and fear. Meanwhile, the duties were still unremittingly paid to the dying—the dead continued in great numbers to be carried to the burying ground, which being now completely filled, recourse was had by the disconsolate and terror-smitten inhabitants to a part of the ground of a neighbouring monastery as a receptacle for the surplus of the victims of the relentless destroyer.

During this reign of terror, the most unremitting devotion was practised by the inhabitants. It is due to the character of the people of that part of the kingdom to state this historical testimony to their not having abandoned themselves absolutely to the force of their fears. It would not be fair to frail human nature to say that the religious feelings then displayed, and no doubt sincerely, were like the gods mentioned in the ancient aphorism—*metus fecit deos*—the children of apprehension. No doubt many then knelt in prayer to the Almighty who never before bended a knee at his footstool; their reward may be the less, but we have no authority for saying that it will be nothing. We at least to those—and there were even some such to be found among the people—who admitted the truth of the prediction, and yet amidst acknowledgments that sorrow for their dead and dying friends had become familiar to them, kept the knee unbended and the voice of supplication mute. We say not this in reference to the falsely predicted catastrophe; but to the character of hearts which could remain unshaken and unavowed amidst the dissolving elements of a condemned world.

The eventful day at last dawned upon Dunse. No shops were opened by the inhabitants, the most part of whom were either engaged in prayer or in performing the last offices to their dying friends. A very general wish seemed to prevail to enter places of public worship, which were accordingly soon filled. These demonstrations of preparation on the part of people gifted with strong powers of reason, overcame many who maintained hitherto a determined scepticism. The slight beam of hope that the prediction would prove false, which to some extent pervaded the minds of all, was not sufficient to qualify an apprehension justified by the surrounding evidences of the Almighty's displeasure. As the day advanced, that beam became stronger; but it was destined immediately to suffer an almost entire annihilation. At the hour of two, a sudden darkness came over the face of the earth, and Dunse was unfortunately not excepted from the general gloom. The fate of the world and of Dunse was now on the eve of being decided; the prophetess stood on the market-cross, and cried peace and forgiveness to the sinner. Paul Crawar rejoiced in his power of divination, and in the downfall of Popery in a gulf which was

to entomb himself. The fatal tidings, confirmed by a mid-day night, reached the ears of those dying of the pestilence. But disease was now no addition to the misery of the sinner. The remorseless destroyer, that had carried off thousands, was destined himself to be destroyed; and the grave lost its insignificant dimensions, as well as its terrors, amidst the universal tomb of Dunse and the world.

Having lasted a full hour, the darkness began to disappear about three o'clock; and, in a few minutes, the sun shone forth in all his glory. It now occurred to the wiser portion of the inhabitants, that they had been eclipsed; and, sure it was that they had at least mentally been exposed to an obumbration. The rest of the day proved clear and beautiful; and, at night, the moon brought her borrowed light, to make amends to the sorrowing inhabitants for the absence of her principal. On the morning of the 18th of June, Dunse was found to be still on the face of the earth; and what was of not much less importance, the earth herself still held her place among the planets.

The fears of the people, thus wrought out by a great paroxysm, never returned; but many acknowledged the benefits, in a religious point of view, which they experienced from the extraordinary phenomenon of "The Black Hour." The unfortunate Crawar did not, however, share in these. As a heretic and a disturber of the public peace, he was seized by the order of the grand inquisitor, the infamous Lawrence, and, after standing his trial, was condemned to die, and did accordingly resign his life at the stake, in the city of St Andrew's, on the 23d day of July following.

It was with difficulty that Janet Fortune escaped the rage of the populace, who now treated her as a witch of the worst grade—viz. those that torment people with fears of evil which they are not yet far enough in with the Devil to be able to realize; but she was saved by the interference of her daughter Magdaline, who, from her beauty and character, was respected and beloved by all who knew her. No obstruction now existed to the celebration of her marriage with Murdoch Stewart, except the recent deaths of many relatives who had fallen victims to the general destroyer. Though all fears of a decay of universal nature were now banished, many still adhered to the idea that there was some connection between "The Black Hour" and the pestilence; but, happily, even that connection, if any such existed, was destined soon to cease. The mortality of the disease soon began to shew indications of decrease; and, as the summer advanced its ravages diminished. In the autumn following, Scotland and Dunse in particular, had recovered, in a great degree, from the effects of the mighty calamities under which she had for some time laboured; and, during the slow return of health, composure, and happiness, to the so long distressed inhabitants, Magdaline Fortune and Murdoch Stewart, whose fates were particularly connected with the misfortunes of Dunse, were no longer prevented by their mother, who now abjured all spæing, from joining themselves in holy wedlock.

The eclipse of 1432 was long remembered in Scotland by the name we have already mentioned—"The Black Hour." The period of obscurity is understood to have lasted an hour, and to have been distinguished by unprecedented darkness. The pestilence which then also prevailed was, in an age prone to superstition, supposed to be the effect of the celestial phenomenon not then well understood; an opinion which, though it has been spurned by modern philosophers, receives some authority from the records of later history as well as our own ancient chronicles.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

No. 87.

THE ANGLER'S TALE.

NEVER did boy long more anxiously for the arrival of the happy day which was to free him from the trammels of school discipline, than I, a grey-haired man, always do for the return of bright and beautiful summer—that happy season when all nature seems to sympathize with the fortunate citizen who can escape from the confinement, bustle, and excitement of the crowded haunts of men, to soothe his spirit and forget his cares amid the beautiful scenery and calm retirement of the country. I always allow myself, if possible, a holiday in the summer months, and with rod in hand, and knapsack on back, I wander wherever whim or chance may lead me. Oh! the delight I experience, when the city is left far behind me!—the buoyancy, the springiness of feeling, with which I whistle along my path, rejoicing in my freedom! The very birds seem to welcome me with their song; the fields, the streams, all seem breathing of delight; I forget my grey hairs; and the spirit of youth and the freshness of youthful feeling are again upon me.

In one of my fishing excursions, a few years since, I became accidentally acquainted with a worthy farmer of the name of Thompson, who lived on the banks of the Esk, in the neighbourhood of the beautifully situated town of Langholm. He was a good, though by no means a rare, specimen of the class of men to which he belonged:—a shrewd, sensible, well-informed man, frank and friendly in his address, and with an air of quiet unobtrusive independence.

He made up to me with such kindness and hospitality, and was so cordial and pressing in urging me to repeat my visit, that I have ever since made his comfortable house my headquarters during the fishing season. His cottage was beautifully situated on a gentle rise, surrounded by lofty trees; immediately below, ran the winding Esk, dashing and foaming over a bed of limestone, and spanned, at a short distance, by a lofty bridge of one arch, commanding a view of the ruins of the famed tower of Gilnockie. The neat and cheerful exterior of the cottage bespoke comfort and plenty within; and kinder and more hospitable people never existed than its inmates. Elsie Thompson, the guidewife, in her plain but neat "mournings," and her close white mutch, mild and gentle in her manner, looked the very personification of benevolence and hospitality. She had been a very handsome woman; but the hand of affliction had been heavy upon her, and had left its marks upon her careworn features: four of her children had been carried off by a contagious disorder, and her sole remaining comfort, besides her husband, was her daughter.

Ellen was one of the loveliest creatures my eye ever rested upon. Hers was a face of sunny beauty. The braids of her rich brown hair rested upon a brow of more than common whiteness, from beneath which her large blue eyes sparkled with the light of pure and innocent joyousness. The whole of her features bore the impress of light-hearted mirth; and yet at times a passing shade of sadness flitted across them, which, while it softened their beauty, gave an additional charm to their expression. But it was not Ellen's beauty alone that rendered her interesting: a kinder-hearted,

more attentive and affectionate daughter never existed; her whole soul seemed to be wrapt up in her parents; her every action had reference to some wish or habit of theirs. She was equally exemplary in the performance of all her household duties, and was the pride and blessing of her parents.

Ellen and I soon became intimate; for, in the country, untrammelled by the forms of etiquette, acquaintance soon ripens into friendship. Fortunate was it for me that my days of romance were over, or she would have been a dangerous companion; as it was, I could gaze upon her as I would upon a beautiful picture, admiringly, not lovingly. Many a happy evening have I spent, sitting in the mild summer sunset, under the shade of the large beech tree at Edward Thompson's door, listening to the brawling of the foaming waters, with Ellen by my side. It was at such times that I more particularly remarked the melancholy I have before mentioned. Her thoughts were evidently far from the scene she looked upon, and a tear would sometimes steal down her cheek. Whenever I asked her the occasion of her grief, she would answer, with a languid attempt at a smile—"Oh, naething ava!" and immediately began to talk in a strain of forced liveliness and indifference. I saw that she had some secret cause of unhappiness; but, as she did not volunteer her confidence, I did not consider myself justified in attempting to force it, and set her happiness down in my own mind to that general and all-powerful disturber of youthful feelings—love for some absent one.

Last summer, I had been engaged in my favourite amusement of fishing, and had wandered some distance down the Esk, when certain inner warnings admonished me that it was time to recruit my energies. As I am rather an epicure, however, and enjoy my crust with more *gout* the more beautiful the scenery by which I am surrounded, I resisted the cravings of appetite until I had reached a situation the beauty of which tempted my stay; and then, laying my rod on the bank, I proceeded to examine the contents of my knapsack. It was high noon; but the sun was partially shrouded by light fleecy clouds, and threw a softened light on the green bank on which I seated myself. Immediately at my feet ran the clear stream, fringed a little higher up with willows and trees of a larger growth; opposite to me, were the rich woods and lawns of Netherby; to the left, on the other side of the river, was a picturesque ivy-covered turreted building, called the fishing tower; to the right, far down the river, were seen the bridge and buildings of Longtown; and in the distance, the beautiful hills of Cumberland. The high road was only a few yards distant, immediately behind me; but I was shut out from its view by a substantial stone wall, with a neat gate opening to the water-side. Scarcely had I seated myself, when I heard the sound of coming footsteps on the high road. The sound ceased; and, turning round, I saw a traveller looking over the green gate behind me. I am a great disciple of Lavater, and flatter myself, notwithstanding the many mistakes I have been led into, that I can sometimes read a man's countenance, almost as well as a "written book." To me, a good countenance is always a letter of recommendation, and one to which, in spite of the whisperings of prudence, I always pay instant atten-

tion. There was something particularly prepossessing in the countenance and appearance of the stranger. He was a young man of about six and twenty, with a laughing dark eye, hair black as the raven's wing, and a complexion bronzed by exposure to sun and clime. He was dressed like a sailor, in a neat blue jacket, a narrow-rimmed glazed hat, and with a small bundle on the stick over his shoulder. Seeing me look round, and encouraged, I suppose, by the friendly interest with which I regarded him, he remarked upon the fineness of the day, and asked if I had had good sport.

"Yes," replied I—"tolerable; and now I have a tolerable appetite. Will you come and join my mess?"

"Thank ye kindly, sir—wi' a' my heart. I've travell'd far to-day, and I'll be a' the better of an *eleven*.*"

After a hearty and simple meal, wash'd down with a dram of Connal's best,† and a draught of pure river water, I lighted my segar, and, giving my new messmate one, to keep me in countenance, I lounged in luxurious ease upon my grassy couch, while he seated himself with modest frankness beside me.

"Your face tells of other climates, my friend," said I; "it was not an English sun that bronzed it thus."

"It's five years noo, sir, sin' I left the banks o' the bonny Esk; and weel ye ken that a wanderer by land and sea sees mair in a year than a man that aye sits at the ingle cheek will in his lifetime. Gude be thankit, I haena felt muckle care or sorrow mysel! but I hae had my ain share o' hardships."

"You seem not to have forgot your mother-tongue, however. You are a native of this part of the country, I suppose?"

"I am, sir; and, though I've been lang enuch amang the Englishers to hae been half English mysel, I couldna mak up my mouth to speak their daft-like lingo; and noo the sicht o' my ain dear river, the thocht that I'm but a few miles frae my ain hame, has dung what little I did ken o't clean oot o' my head."

"I wonder you are not in a greater hurry to get onwards," said I. "I think, if I were in your situation, I should be eager to reach my home as soon as possible."

"Oh, sir, I maun gang and see puir Geordie Gordon's fouk before I gang hame. It's ill news I hae to tell them, and I maun wait till the gloamin'."

"And who is Geordie Gordon?"

"He was the kindest hearted o' messmates, and the best o' freens. A better seaman, or a kinder, never stepp'd atween stem and stern o' a ship. Puir Geordie!" And he hastily passed the sleeve of his jacket over his eyes.

"Suppose you let me hear some of your adventures," said I; "it will pass away the time, and I should like much to know something of the ways of you sailors, and the customs on board a ship."

"Oh, sir, I hae nae adventures to tell. Could you but hae heard puir Geordie—he was the lad for spinning yarns, as we ca' it."

"Well, but you can tell me what took you first to sea, and what you thought of the life of a sailor after you had joined a ship."

"Weel, sir! I'll just begin at the beginning, and tell ye a' about it; and if ye're wearied wi' my clavers, ye maun just tell me."

There was a large family o' us, an' a happy family we were, for my father was an industrious farmer, weel to do in the world, and weel respeckit by a' wha kenn'd him; and my mither was a kind-hearted worthy woman, wha dearly lo'ed us a', but neverlether luve blind her to our faults. She aye taught us that idleness was the root o' a' mischief, and that we needna fear man as lang's we did our duty to our Maker.

I was about seventeen when Geordie Gordon cam hame frae the sea, to see his fouk, wha liv'd in our parishen. A fraetsome and a weel-faur'd lad was Geordie, wi' a merry ee,

and a laugh—I maist think I hear't noo—that cam ringin frae the heart. He was a favourite wi' auld and young; and mony was the bright ee that blink'd o'er on him as he sat in the kirk wi' his roun blue jacket, and his checkit sark, and his smilin happy face. Jenny Birrel was his sweetheart; a blithe lass and a bonny was Jenny, and guid as she was bonny. Wae 'll be her heart when she hears what has happen'd her joe!

Weel, sir, I was like the lave—I likit Geordie, and Geordie likit me, an' we were aye thegither. It gar'd my vera heart loup to hear him spin yarns, as he ca'd it, about the dangers he had escapit, and the unco sights he had seen; till, frae less to mair, I felt an eager wish to gang wi' him on his neist voyage, and to witness the wonders o' the deep, and to yeesit forran lands. Besides, I saw that a' the lassies thocht mair o' ane wha had been leading a life o' danger and hardship, than o' the douce lads wha keepit following the pleuch, or thumping wi' the flail a' the days o' their lives. And I thocht that my ain wee joe wad loe me better, and that I might earn something to mak us comfortable; and that, after I had seen a' the ferlies o' forran lan's, I wad come hame laden wi' braws to mak her my wife. Bonny wee thing! I wonder if she minds me yet! In storm, in darkness, in danger, I never forgot her.

Sair did my mither greet when I tell't her I was far awa wi' Geordie; an' aft, aft did she beg me to change my min'.

"Stay at hame, Tam, my bairn," said she, "and tak care o' yer auld mither. A' the lave are gane but yersel, an' if ye gang too, what 'll become o' us!" But I wadna be persuaded; the speerit o' change was upon me, and gang I wad.

"I winna hinder ye, my bairn," said my father; "if yer min' is made up to gang for a sailor, gang, and His blessing gang wi' ye. Ye'll be as safe in the midst o' the raging sea as ye wad be by yer ain fireside, as lang's ye trust in Him."

But the warst was to come. I maist repented o' my determination when I gaed for the last time to the trystin tree whar I had sae aft met my dear lassie. She was there wi' her face buried in her han's, sabbin as if her young heart would break. Oh, sir, it was a sad sicht to me!

It was a bonny night: the moon was at the full, and the stars were a' glintin roun' her; there wasna a cloud, but on our ain hearts; the hail holm was ae bleeze o' licht, amaist as licht as day; the leaves were just souging o'er our heads; and the soun' o' the burn wimplin near us, cam clear upon our ears. Our hearts were owre sair for mickle speakin; she sabbit, and I tried to comfort her—but a' in vain. I wanted comfort mysel; an' at last I could stan' it nae langer—I just grat in company.

But this couldna last for lang. We vowed to be leal to ilk ither; an', wi' ae last kiss, I forced mysel awa.

Neist morn, Geordie Gordon an' I took foot in han' an awa to Leith, an' frae that worked our passage to Lunnon. Hech, sirs, it's an awsome bit that Lunnon! The streets just like hedgeraws, an' the kirk steeples like poplar trees; an' then the fouk as thrang on the planestanes on a week-day as if a' the kirks were scalin at ance! Ye'll hae been in Lunnon, I se warran, sir? Min', I'm just tellin ye hoo I thocht an' felt then, for I ken better sin' sync. Then the ships a' croodin on ane anither, like sheep in a fauld, their masts as thick as the trees in yon wud; an' the muckle barges wi' but ae man to guide them; an' the wee bit cockle shells o' wherries skimming along, loaded wi' passengers sitting amaist upon the water; an' the noise o' men, an' the thunner o' carriages, an' the smoke o' ten thousan chimlas! 'Od, sir, I used to think Car'il a gran' toun, but it's naething ava to Lunnon.

Weel, sir, ae day, Geordie an' me were walkin on a place they ca' Tower Hill—whar there's a gran' auld castle they ca' the

* A nautical term for a forenoon whet. † Langholm Distillery.

Tower o' Lunnon, where they say a sodger chiel, o' the name o' Julius Cæsar, was behcadit, lang syne, in the time o' ane o' our auld Scottish kings—when a weel-faured, sonsy-looking chiel, dressed like a provost, wi' a hat on his head might serve a duke, cam up till us, an' seeing us glowerin about, and just doing naething ava, began colloguy in wi' us.

"It's a fine day, my lads," said he, looking as blithe as the sun in a May morning; "you seem to be strangers in London. I like your honest looks; and, as I am an idler myself, I will go with you, if you like, and shew you the lions."

"The lions!—'od, sir, are there ony lions hereawa?" said I.

"Many that you know nothing of," said he, stuffing his pocketnapkin into his mouth, to keep the dust oot, I thoct. "Come with me, and we'll drink to our better acquaintance."

Wi' that he taks us into a bit public near by, an' tells us to ca' for what we likit; an' then he crackit awa, an' was unco jocose and blithe.

"Have you got plenty of money, lads?" said he at last. An' we lookit like twa fules, for Geordie had but twa shillins left, an' I had nae mair mysel. He saw—for he had a gleg ee in his head—that we werena weel provided; so cried he—"Never mind, my boys—I'll stand treat; the landlord o' this house is my friend—you can have whatever you call for, and stay with him as long as you like."

Wi' that he ca'ed for mair drink; an', frae ae thing to anither, what wi' laughin an' drinkin, we got gayan fou, an' were weel pleased to win till oor beds.

"Troth, Geordie, lad," says I, "I think we've lichted on oor feet this time; it's no every day in the week we'll meet sic a freend."

"I dinna ken what to mak o' him," said Geordie—wha kenn'd mair aboot the warld than mysel, as he had been three years sailing atween Dumfries and Ameriky—"he's owre ceevil by half. I've aye heard tell that there's a set o' born deevils in Lunnon. It's a vera weel as far as its gane; but I'm fear'd for the aftercome."

Weel, the neist mornin, oor kind freend order'd breakfast for us, an' then asked us if we'd like to tak a walk an' look aboot us. "But," said he, "you must have better *toggery* than that you have on." And wi' that he took us into a shop, where he ordered a jacket an' troosers for each o' us; an', when we had putten them on, we cam oot, looking as braw as the best. In the coorse o' oor cracks, we had tell't him we wanted to go to forran parts.

"Well," said he, "there's a fine East Indiaman at Gravesend, just going to sail for China. I can get you a berth on board of her."

Noy, though Geordie and I were baith keen to gang to sea, yet we wanted to choose oor ain ship; and, besides, we had resolved no to gang in ane o' the East India Company's ships; for the lads on board the smack, comin frae Leith, had tell't us to keep clear o' the Indiamen; for that they were mann'd wi' the sweepings o' Newgate, and that there was mair floggin on board o' them than in the navy.

"We're no for sailing in a Company's ship, sir," said I; "we'll choose for oursels."

"Very well, lads," said he; "but, before we part, we must 'square yards,' if you please. Pay me what you owe me." And, wi' that, he pulls oot a bill as lang's my arm, for sae muckle meat, sae lang lodging, and sae muckle for claithes!

"'Od, sir," said I, "did ye no treat us? Ye ken vera weel we haena a bodle to pay ye wi'!"

"Then you must either tramp to prison, or go on board the Indiaman. What say you?"

"Weel, if we maun gang, we maun, and there's an end

o't; but ye haena behaved to us like a gentleman and a Christian."

"A gentleman and a Christian!" said he, girning—"why, you Scotch noodle, I'm a crimp!"

("And what, in the name of wonder, is a crimp?" said I, interrupting Tom in his long-winded story.

"A crimp, sir!" said Tom; "d'ye no ken what's a crimp? Why, sir, a crimp is—ye ken, a crimp is—hoot he's just a crimp."*)

"Very satisfactory, certainly," replied I. "However, go on with your story.")

Neist morning, Geordie and I, wi' mony ithers, were put into a Gravesend boat, and sent doun to a bit ca'ed Northfleet, whar the Indiaman was lying at the buoys. She was the first large ship I'd ever seen—and, eh! but I was astonished. I hae seen mony a ane since, and far bigger anes; but she aye seems to my min' the biggest o' them a. She was ca'd the "True Briton;" and grand she did look wi' her tall masts, and her colours a' fleecing abroad; and the muckle guns peeping oot o' the holes in her sides they ca' ports. When we speel'd up her sides, it was maist like muntin a hill; an' when we got on board, I was fairly mazed, an' stood glowrin frae the gangway as if I were bewitch'd, till a chiel, wi' a face like a founart, and a siller pipe hanging round his neck wi' a black ribbon, (he was a boatswain's mate,) ca'd oot to me—"What are you staring at, you great fool? Come doun from the gangway!" An' wi' that, he gied me a pu' by the jacket that maist gar'd me fa' on the deck. My bluid was up in a moment; an' I was just gaun to gie him as guid's he brocht, when Geordie, wha was at my elbow, said—"Haud yer hand, Tam! Never heed him. Do as ye see me do."

Wi' that, he touched his hat to an officer who was walking the deck, and tell't him that we wished to ship as seamen.

"Can you hand, reef, steer, and heave the lead, my man?" said he.

"Yes, sir," said George; "but this callan has never been to sea afore."

"Oh, then, he won't do for us; besides, he is too light a hand. How long have you been at sea?"

"Six years, sir—three in a collier, and three in a Dumfries trader to Ameriky. But, if Tom here is not shipp'd, I'll no go either."

"Well! you are a smart, stout-looking fellow yourself; and, as we want a boy or two, we'll take Tom too, as you call him. Midshipman, take these men to the doctor."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said a smart wee boy, wi' a gilt loop an cockade in his hat—"follow me, my lads!"

"What in a' the yirth is the doctor gaun to do till us? He's no gaun to put a mark upon us, is he, Geordie?" whispered I.

"Whisht, ye great gowk!" was a' the answer I got; and I followed, as I thoct, like a lamb to the slaughter, doun a ladder till anither flat deck, where a' the officers' cabins were:

'Od, sir, I never was sae astonish'd in a' my days! It was just like a street in a town; the cabins, on each side, like raws o' houses; an', farder on, as far as ane could see, a raw o' muckle guns a' stan'ing abreast. It was unco low o'erhead, an' I maist brak my head twice or thrice or I won to the doctor's cabin. 'Od! I've aften laugh'd sin' syne, to think hoo queer everything lookit to me then.

Weel, sir, the doctor felt our pulses, an' lookit in our mouths, and punchit us in the ribs, and examined us just as a horse-dealer wad a beast, to see gin we war soun', win' an' limb. An' when he was satisfied—"Mr Noodle," said he to the midshipman, "tell Mr Douglas these men will do." An' awa we gaed up the ladder again.

* A crimp is a person who receives a certain sum of money from ship-owners, for procuring sailors to man their vessels.

The ship was only waitin for men to mak up her complement; an', as we were the last, we signed the contract for the voyage, an' received twa months pay as arles. Oor kind freend, the crimp, was waiting at the pay-table wi' his bill, an' sune eased us o' maist o' oor money. The morning after, two steam-boats cam alongside, and were lash'd to the ship; we cut from the buoy, and, in a few minutes, the ship was whirring doun the water wi' twa lang cluds o' smoke fleeing awa ahint, an' the red ensign just glinting noo an' then through them in the sunshine. We cam to anchor at a place they ca' the Lower Hope; an', in the afternoon, the boatswain, and his three mates, went aboot chirping wi' their siller pipes, an' ca'ing, "All hands to muster, ahoy!"—an' the men a' cam skelpin up frae below, an' went on the quarterdeck, where the officers were a' stan'ing on the ane side, an' the men ranged themsels on the ither.

"All up, sir," said the third mate, touching his hat to the chief.

"Very well—go on, steward." And the ship's steward ca'd oot the names o' a' the men, an' they went round the capstan, touching their hats as they answered. The chief mate afterwards tell't them a' their stations, for reefing, furling, an' tacking; an' divided them into starboard an' larboard watches. Geordie Gordon being an able seaman, an' a smart, active chiel, was made a fore-castle-man, an' I was stationed in the mizentop.

At daylight neist morning we were roused oot o' oor hammocks by the boatswain and his mates calling out on the upper deck, "All hands up anchor, ahoy! Up all hammocks, ahoy!" An' then they cam doun below, an' made noise enouch to wauken the dead or my auld deaf grannie, crying—"Tumble up! tumble up!—shew a leg!—lash and carry!" (meaning the hammocks.) Then the men jumpit oot, and began hurrying on their claes, an' lashing up their hammocks. I had never been in a hammock afore that nicht, an' I had just been dreaming o' hame, when I was wauken'd by the noise as if a' the deevils had broken loose, an' I started up an' jumpit oot o' my ain bed at hame as I thoct, but I cam doun wi' sic a thud on the deck as maist brak my head.

As soon as the hammocks were a' up, and put away in the nettings on deck, the capstan bars were shipped and manned, an' the chief mate shouted doun the hatchway—

"Are you all ready there below?"

"All ready, sir!" replied the third mate—"heave taught for unbittin'!"

As soon as the cable was unbitted, "Heave round!" was the cry from the lower deck. "Heave round!" said the chief mate; "step out, my hearts!" The fifes struck up "The girl I left behind me," the men stamp'd round the capstan with a cheerfu' steady step, an' in a very short time the cable was nearly up and doun.

"Up and doun, sir!" shouted the boatswain from the fore-castle.

"Heave and paul!" cried the chief mate. "Out bars, out bars! bear a hand, my lads!—Up there, topmen!—loose sails! Send everybody up from below to make sail!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Eh! but I was dumfounder'd to see the lads rinnin up the riggin like sae young monkeys. An' while I was stanin' glowrin at them, a young midshipman ca'd to me, "Hollo! you, Wilson!—don't you know you're a mizzen-topman?—Spin up and loose the topsail!"

"Me gang up, sir!—I canna, sir, I'd tumble."

"Can't, sir! there's no such word on board-ship. Up you go; and if you're afraid of falling, hold on with your teeth!"

So I was obleeged to gang up; but I was a' in a tremble an' just was up to the top in time to creep doun again; for the sails were a' loose, an' a' the lads comin doun. Eh! hoo the sailors did laugh at me! But, in a fortnight's time, there

wasna ane among them could hev saut on my tail. (But what's the use o' my fashin ye! honour wi' a' thae idle clavers? Nae doot ye're tired o' them already.)

"Oh, no, Tom!" said I, "go on; I am much amused, I assure you; but you'd better moisten your lips out of my flask before you go on."

"Thank ye, sir!"

"Eh, but I thoct it a bonny sicht, when I lookit frae the riggin, where I was hauding on wi' a' my fingers, like a fleyed kittlin, to see the men a' lying oot on the different yards, loosenin the rapes that keep the sails rowed up—(they ca' them gaskets.) Then the chief mate cried oot, "Are you all ready there, forward!"

"All ready, sir."

"Are you ready in the maintop?"

"All ready, sir."

"Ready abaft?"

"All ready, sir."

"Let fall!"—An' then the boatswain an' his mates gied a loud skirl wi' their pipes, an' doun cam a' the sails fluffin at ane an' the same time; an' in five minutes the masts that lookit afore as bare as trees in winter, were a' cled in canvass frae tap to bottom. Weel, sir, the sail was a' set, and just swelled out bonnily wi' the light breeze, and the yards were trimmed, as they ca' it, for castin.

"Man the capstan bars!" shouted the chief mate. "Hold on there below!"

"All ready, sir!—heave round!" And away went the men again to the soun' o' the fife, till the boatswain gied a loud chirrup wi' his pipe, as much as to say the anchor was up; an' the paul o' the capstan clinkit, an' the bars were taen oot, an' the men ran aboot a' gaets as they war order't, an' the anchor was made fast, an' in a short time the ship was snoothing through the water, bobbin an' friskin like a fine leddie dress'd a' in her brows in a kintra dance.

'Od, sir, a muckle ship's a queer thing when ye come to think on't; it's just, for a' the warl, like a toun afloat. If ye gang to the ane end, ye hear the quacking o' ducks, an' the cheep-cheepin o' turkeys, an' the crawin o' cocks;—gang to the ither, an' there's the baain o' sheep, an' the grumphin o' pigs, an' the kyé rowtin as natural like as if they war in a farm-steadin at hame. Then there's Jemmy Ducks, a kin' o' henwife, only he's a man; an' a butcher, an' a baker, an' cooks, and carpenters, and joiners, an' sail-makers, and blacksmiths, (armourers they ca' them,) an' a smiddy, an' a' things like a place on shore. Then, if ye want yer shoon clouted, or yer jacket mendit, or yer hair clippit, ye're safe to fin' tailors, and cobblers, and shavers among the crew.

We had a vera crooded ship: there war near five hundred sodgers, wi' some o' their wives, on board; and an awfu' time we had on't at first.

We had just got fairly oot into the Channel, whan it beguid to blaw great guns, as they say, an' the sail was a taen in but the maintopsail, an' the ship tossed an' tumbl't in the water like a strong man warstlin wi' his enemy. Whiles an awfu' sea, as big's a hill-side, wad come rampaging an' raining doun upon her, as if it was gaun to swallow her up a' thegither; an', wi' an awsome thud agen her bow, wad send a shower o' thick spray owre her hail length; then she tumbl't owre, granin an' manin like a leevin thing, till her side went deep into the water, as if she war never gaun to rise mair; then up she wad come again, whirrin, an' roll owre the tither way, daurin the sea, as 'twere, to anither tussle, while the lang masts were whisking aboot as if they wad sweep the heavens abune oor heads.

The sodgers, puir bodies, were doun on the lowest deck—they ca't the hollup, (orlop)—wi' nae licht nor air but what cam doun the hatchways, so that we were obliged to keep the hatch off, an' every time a sea struck the ship, a great body o' water ran doun below, till the hollup was rinnin

maist foot deep; an there were the puir mithers sitting haudin on by the stancheons in the midst o' the deck, an' tryin to catch the helpless bit weans as they were carried frae side to side by the rolling o' the ship an' the rushing o' the water. Eh, it was a sad sicht to see the bits o' things! Mony a puir wean died afterwards.

I could tell ye a feck o' queer things about the voyage; but I hae nae time 'enow. But I'll just tell ye twa bit stories, ane about a sodger, and the ither about puir Geordie Gordon: they baith affected me much at the time.

Amang the sodgers there was a sergeant—a colour-sergeant they ca'd him—wha was weel likit by a' the crew. His name was George Hastie; he was a weelfaur'd, douce, canny body, wi' twa mitherless weans.

Oh, but it was a pleasant sicht to see how carefu' he was o' the bairns!—an' bonny bairns they were. He kamed their hair, an' wash'd the bit faces an' han's, an' keepit them aye as trig an' clean as their ain mither could hae dune. There was a wee bit shufflin luftenan on boord, wha likit his glass weel, an' aye lookit twa inches taller after denner, an' as proud as a wee bantam cock. Weel, ae day, the puir sergeant, what wi' the heat o' the day and the strength o' the grog, was a thocht the vaur o' drink, an' was maybe no exactly sac respectfu' to the bit offisher as he sud hae been, an'—I kenna hoo it was, but he was had afore a court-martial, an' the stripes were taen aff the airm o' his coat, an' he was reduced to the ranks, to do duty as a common sentry. Puir fallow! we were a' terrible ill-pleas'd about it, an' nane mair than the vera offishers that condemn'd him.

Eight days after, cam' the 23d of April, when the King's birth-day, that's dead, was keepit. At daylight in the morning, in place o' the drums an' fifes striking up what the sodgers ca' the revilly, the hail band o' music—twenty-twa instruments, forbye drums—beguid playing, “God save the King,” the colours o' the regiment were fleecing on the poop, an' the offishers a' dress'd oot in their gran' coats. After breakfast, the leddies—bless their blithe looks an' bonny faces!—war a' walkin up an' down the poop, when the bugles sounded to parade, an' a' the sodgers fell in on the quarter-deck. A gran' set o' fallows they war; as neat an' clean as if they'd just turned oot o' a barrack-yard, wi' their belts as white as snaw, an' their brass muntings glintin in the sun, quite dazolin to look at. They war formed into three sides o' a square, as near as might be; an' the colonel an' a' the offishers were stan'in at the open end, a' in full dress. The colonel's breast was just covered a' owre wi' orders.

When the men war a' settled, there was a dead silence; an' the onlookers won'er'd what was comin neist.

“Call Private George Hastie of Captain Thomas' company to the front,” said the colonel. An' oot afore them a' steppit puir Hastie, pale as a sheet, but firm, erect, an' sodger-like.

“George Hastie,” said the colonel, “I have been induced, by the solicitations of the ladies, and of the captain and officers of the ship, as well as by the wishes of your own officers, to pardon the transgression of military discipline of which you have been guilty, and to restore you to the rank of flag-sergeant. I hope your temporary degradation will act as a warning to you for the future, and that you will not again run the risk of forfeiting the good opinion which, I am happy to say, your officers have hitherto had of you.”

Wi' that, oot whiskit the regimental tailor, an', in a jiffey, the bit stripes war on Geordie's airm an' he was a made man again.

He just touch'd his cap to the colonel, puir chiel, an' said nought; but a tear cam intil his ee, an' gaed stealing owre his cheek, that spak mair an' better than words could hae dune. Everybody was delighted at his restoration; it was an act o' mercy wordy o' the occasion;—the king's birth-day couldna hae been better celebrate. The sodgers war then dismissed, an' gaed below; an' in the evening the

band was up, and an extra pint o' grog, to drink the king's health, was served oot; an' there was naething but joy an' diversion from ae end o' the ship to the ither. Sae much for George Hastie! An' noo I maun tell ye about puir Geordie.

One evening we war comin near ane o' the shoals that's put down in the chart—but it wasna weel kent whether there really was ane there or no—an' the captain cam oot about sax in the evenin, an' tell't the offisher o' the watch to shorten sail, an' hae a' ready for lowering the larboard cutter. I was stan'in on the poop at the time, and heard him gie the order.

Weel, sir—we beguid to shorten sail, while the cutter's crew were clearin awa the boat. We took in a' the stunsails, an' hauled up the courses, an' furled the royals; then the mainyard was laid aback, an' the boat was lowered an' hauled up to the gangway. Geordie Gordon was ane o' the crew o' the boat—an' sax o' the finest young lads in the ship they war. Ane o' the mates and a midshipman were sent in the boat wi' orders to mak sail, an' keep a-head o' the ship, sounding for the shoal. They had a compass, twa or three muskets, an' some blue lights for signals, wi' them.

It was a fine evening; a light, steady breeze, was blawin, an' the ship, under her topgallantsails, was gaun about four knots an hour through the water; an' the wee boat danced merrily owre the waves a gey bit a-head, wi' her white sails glintin in the sun, like the wings o' a bonny sea bird.

When the darkenin cam on, the captain, afore he turned in, said to the offisher o' the watch—“Keep your eye on the boat, Mr Bowline, and on no account let the ship go faster through the water than she does at present. Let me know if the boat makes any signal, or if the breeze should freshen.”

“Ay, ay, sir!—Keep a good look-out for the boat there, forward!”

Weel, sir, the breeze keepit steady, an' the ship gaed cannily through the water, an' the boat was easy to be seen—till about seven bells, that's half-past eleven, the sky beguid to owrecast, an' the breeze to freshen; but still through the darkness the bit white sail was seen.

At eight bells, that's twal o'clock, the watch was relieved, an' another offisher cam up to tak charge o' the ship.

“A cloudy night, Bowline. What are the orders?”

“You're to keep the ship the same course,” (I dinna just min' what it was,) “and not to lose sight of the boat on any account.”

“Very well. But where is the boat?”

“There she is, just under that dark cloud. Good-night!”

“Don't be in such a hurry. I can't see the boat!”

“Why, there she is!”

“I can't see her,” said the other; “and, what's more, I won't take charge of the deck till I do.”

“I am sure I saw her two minutes ago,” said Bowline.

Weel, sir, they lookit an' lookit, an' we a' lookit, an' they gat up their nicht glasses; but a' in vain, for the boat wasna to be seen.

The offisher o' the deck was maist demented, an' ran into the captain—“We've lost sight of the boat, sir!”

“The devil!” said he, starting oot o' his cot, an' rinnin on deck—“burn a blue light directly!”

The gunner's mate ran down for a blue light; an', in a minute, it was fizzin awa on the quarter, throwin a bright glare o' licht a' owre the ship. The nicht was dark by this time; but you could see every rape in her, an' the faces o' the men at the far end lookin a' blue an' ghaist-like.

Lang an' sair we lookit for an answer to the signal; ye might hae heard a whisper, we war sae quiet wi' fear an' hope; but there was nowther sicht nor s-un' in reply. Another was brunt—but still nae answer.

A gloom fell upon us a', a fear o' we didna ken what. We durstna speak our thochts to ane anither; an', as for our captain, I thocht he wad hae gane clean oot o' his mind, for a kinder-hearted man never steppit a quarter-deck. We

nove the ship to, as they ca't, an' fired guns every two or three minutes, in hopes the lads in the boat wad hear; an' sair an' sadly we langed for the mornin licht.

It cam at last; but there was naethin to be seen but the lift an' the water. The ship was hauled to the win'; an' the hail o' that day we made short tacks back'ard and for'ard, across oor auld coorse, wi' signals fleecin at oor mast-heads, an' firin guns every hauf hour, an' a' the men straining their een to get a gliff o' the boat—but a' for nocht;—we never saw them mair! Whether the boat was capsized in a sudden squall, or the ship had struck her, or whatever it was, will never be kent till the sea gies up her dead!

Hech, sir, was it no an awfu' thing to think that sae mony fine lads, wha had left us a few hours afore, fu' o' life and speerit, should be hurried awa at a moment's warnin, an' buried in the waves o' the sea! There was an unco gloom owre the ship a' that day an' the neist—the men gaed about whisp'rin to ilk ither, as if they were fear'd to hear the soun' o' their ain voices—an' the bauldest among them were sober'd for a time. But, O sir! to see hoo sune the dearest an' best are forgotten! In a few days, the maist o' the men war as heartsome an' blithe as if naething had happened. Puir Geordie! aft hae I thoct o' you when it was my look-oot on deck, an' o' the merry ee an' the heartsome laugh that I'll ne'er see or hear mair. But it's gettin weel on in the day, sir; so I maun cut short my yarn, as we sailors say, an' leave ye. I left the ship in China, an' volunteered on board a man-o'-war, an' after being three years on a forran station, I was paid aff a fortnicht past, an' am noo on my way hame to share my sayins wi' my wee lass, if she hasna forgotten me. Guid afternoon, sir! I'll maybe meet ye again, or lang, an' then, if ye like to listen to them, I'll gie ye mair o' my cracks. I maun awa to puir Geordie's feyther." And, before I had time to question him as to the whereabouts of his home, and how or when I was to meet him again, he bounded over the gate, and disappeared.

That same evening, I was sitting in Edward Thompson's comfortable parlour, reading my favourite Burns; Elsie was knitting near me, and Ellen was preparing some of the trout that I had brought home, for supper. The sun had long set, and the twilight was only just beginning to fade into night; the window was open to admit the mild evening air; and the song of the thrush and blackbird had usurped the place of all other sounds, with sweet melody.

Just as we were about to seat ourselves at the plain but comfortable board, we heard some one, at a short distance, whistling the air of

"Dinna think, bonny lass
I'm gaun to leave you."

And immediately afterwards, a fine clear manly voice sang—

"I'll tak my stiek into my han,
And come again and see you."

Ellen started and turned pale.

"What ails the lass?" said her father, when the door burst open, and, glowing with health and exercise, my friend of the morning stood before us. The old people stared with surprise; their memory was at fault. Not so Ellen: she blushed, turned pale, and burst into tears.

"Faither, d'ye no min' Tam?—Tam Wilson?" And the next moment, Tom—her Tom—was at her side, and fondling her to his heart. That was a happy night at Fairyknowe. Tom was in all his glory; the old man indulged in an extra glass of toddy, while listening to his *yarns*; and Ellen looked the joy she felt—there was no shade on her features now. Next Sunday, which was only two days afterwards, the gossips of the parish were quite astonished when they heard the names of Tom Wilson and Ellen Thompson cried three times in the kirk.

"Whatna Tam Wilson can that be, I won'er?" Nobody knew. But next Sabbath day all their "won'erings" were satisfactorily silenced, by witnessing the gay kirking

party, with Tom and Ellen at their head—the handsomest couple, so they all said, they had seen this "mony a lang day." I was present at the wedding, which took place on the Friday preceding—and a happy scene it was. Tom has left ploughing the sea, to follow the plough on shore, and he and Ellen are comfortably settled in a small and comfortable farm; with every prospect of happiness before them.

THE GIRDLE-MAKER OF CULROSS.

ABOUT the middle of the fifteenth century, the crafts or trades constituted the chief burgal powers of Scotland. They had been, about the beginning of the century, regularly organized by the grants of charters, or what were called "seals of cause," by which they were allowed to elect their deacons or deans; their box-masters, clerks, and officers; to make by-laws for the regulation of their internal concerns, and to mend these, from time to time, according to expediency, and what might seem to be for "the guid of the craft." These small bodies were thus, in truth, miniature corporations, reflecting in their pigmy members all the corresponding parts of a burgh-corporate's machinery, besides enjoying the advantage of having a voice in the larger council of the town where they figured.

When these grants and privileges were made by our early kings, in favour of the poor squalid creatures who, in the still small towns of a thinly peopled country, contrived to earn a livelihood by collecting the products of their handicraft, and getting them disposed of at the fairs or markets originally instituted for that purpose, the object in view was to favour arts and manufactures, by protecting the really skilful artisan against the competition of quacks, and insuring to the public a good article. No idea was ever entertained of *elevating* what was in feudal times considered incapable of enjoying the benefits of the "art of rising"—the piece of brute matter called a craftsman. It might be protected and moulded for the use of the nobility and gentry, or quickened into powers of producing what would contribute to their ease or convenience. Beyond that, it could not go, and ought not to be allowed to aspire. The kings and nobles who thought in this style, knew little of human nature; any knowledge they had acquired of the humbler orders of society was drawn from bondsmen and hinds who had no liberty, and free tenants who were afraid to exercise it. If the free farmers had not been smitten with ambition, how could the noble passion be expected to be found in the breast of a craftsman, bound to his stall or his loom, denied the free air of heaven, and ground by laws in the formation of which he had no voice?

It is a curious fact that those who were thus most interested in chaining down the human mind, and most desirous of effecting it, should have unconsciously taken the most powerful, nay, ingenious means of breaking the bonds they had themselves imposed. It is impossible to conceive any more effectual mode of making a man feel his strength, or measure the inheritance he has from heaven, than by infusing into his mind the feeling of pride; and this was the very mode adopted by the early Scottish kings when they granted the powers of corporations to the burgh-crafts. No sooner did the humble artisans read their patents, than they conceived themselves important members of society. They were invested directly with a status—the King recognised them as subjects worthy of the royal protection. No one dared enter their craft without submitting to their laws. They were possessed of a vote in the election of a dean, an honour to which they could all aspire—they were above all legislators, and could make by-laws for the internal government of their corporation. Such an accumulation of honours coming all at once upon the oppressed and despised craftsmen, filled them with a degree of importance far beyond what they had any title to arrogate to themselves,

and much disproportioned to the cause, when that was calmly contemplated. But the new-born artisans had no time and less inclination to inquire into the grounds of their pride. It was enough that they all thought themselves entitled to be proud of their new honours. No time was lost in inventing the arms of the various trades, fabricating insignia, building meeting-halls, passing by-laws, appointing deans and officers, dining and banqueting, and ogling each other into a confirmation of the truth of their elevation from slaves to the dignity of independent citizens, if not something more.

Such being the feelings of the elective body, the pride of the deacons may be imagined; though no man who has inherited honours, and no one who, by exertions, has earned them, can form a perfect idea of the pride of these ancient worthies—if indeed pride can be said to be the proper term for describing the perking conceit and simpering self-sufficiency by which the miniature aldermen soon came to be better known than by their chain of office, though no pains was taken to conceal that important bauble from the eyes of an admiring, if not, as they conceived, a wonder-struck public. But, though the remnant of the true deacon which has come down to our days, may furnish some idea of the greatness of their predecessors, qualified with a due mixture of ridicule, it must not be supposed that a deacon, in the days we are now adverting to, was not, in reality, a person of some consequence. It must always be recollected that, as society was then constituted, there was scarcely any intermediate status between a rich craftsman and a lord. The modern merchant was scarcely known—the moneyed walking gentleman had not yet risen—the rich farmers were in the country, and did not compete; and there were only thus some law-officers and the burgh officials, to press down the buoyant pride of the deacon from simulating the inflation of nobility itself.

Unfortunately, however, these great ones did not limit their conceit to corporate domination or domestic displays of greatness. Soon after the societies were completely organized, (1427,) the deans began to think that, as they were themselves legislators, they might, with some advantage to the state, criticise the acts of the King and Council, and even of Parliament itself—a result brought about entirely by the exaggerated ideas they had been gradually forming of their importance. A communication was opened between the various towns, and it was at last arranged that deputations from the combined trades of each should meet in some central part of Scotland, for the purpose (it was given out) of perfecting a general system of by-laws; but truly of speculating and speechifying, according to their assumed dignity, on the conduct of the King, James I., whose firm, resolute, and rapid measures were then filling Scotland with the mixed feelings of wonder, admiration, and fear. The ancient burgh of Culross or Cures, on the banks of the Firth of Forth, was fixed on as the place of rendezvous; and the deacon of the girdle-makers, so famed for their general monopoly—a person called John Finlayson—was appointed stationary president.

Deacon Finlayson was the proudest of all proud deacons. He was a little fat man, originally intended by nature to be a good-humoured, laughing, easy, silly body; but so far metamorphosed by his unexpected honour of being at the head of the corporation of the girdle-makers of Cures, whose monopoly extended over all Scotland, that an affected gravity, which attempted in vain to press down his jaws, sat, like a cardinal's cap on the head of a Merry-Andrew, on his round globules of cheeks, which humour had previously claimed as her own peculiar property. There was thus a continual strife going on in his manner and speech; the gravity and wisdom of the deacon, combining with the conceit inseparable from the office, carried on an endless war with his natural undignified *bonhomie*. The laugh which

an old companion, cast now in the shade by the deacons' prying, contrived to draw from him, was often stopped, *fragrante delicto*, in the very fact; the swelling face was hurriedly puckered up, and a most ridiculous expression of philosophic solemnity cast over features through which the sun of repressed mirth was struggling to burst forth. His speech, naturally short and humorous, had, from the necessity and habit of making long harangues in the Trades' Hall, assumed a continuity effected by the continued use of small joining words—the pronoun "which" being the favourite stop-gap—and by hems and ha's and sometimes, in cases of despair, by a most convenient cough, always concluded by the pronoun in such a manner as if the cough had impertinently, and against his wish, been excluding it—teasing the speaker, and interrupting his volubility. These displays were, of course, highly amusing; but no one durst laugh in those days in presence of a dean.

Deacon Finlayson had a portly wife, (Mrs Deacon Finlayson,) and three grown-up daughters, Elizabeth, Margaret, and Jane, all dying for husbands. Being good-looking gaucy damsels, with a father rich and a deacon of the only trade enjoying a national monopoly, they stood in no want of sweethearts—each having a secret one unknown to their father or mother. Next to the ambition of being a dean, Deacon Finlayson was desirous of elevating his daughters to the highest pitch of civic dignity—the burgh dignitaries excepted—that it was possible then to attain. Nothing less would satisfy his inordinate desire of grandeur, if not glory, than to have *three* deacons for sons-in-law. The idea smacked of a boldness and splendour utterly intoxicating. Mrs Deacon Finlayson was equally fired with the delightful project; the glowing imagination floated in their minds like a day-dream of unearthly lustre, and formed the subject of their continual conversation.

"The main point now is, how to get it accomplished, deacon," said the deaconess. "I dinna respect Cures deacons—yoursel, as the head o' the only trade that has a national monopoly, aye excepted—sae muckle as Edinburgh deans, wha hae an awfu' state about them. I fear they're ayont the mark o' Cures damsels, even though they be the dochters o' the dean o' the girdle-makers wi' braw tochers. I'll never forget, while life's in my body, the day when Deacon Currie o' the Edinburgh waukers dined in this house, wi' his chain, his powdered wig, his lang siller-headed cane, his knee-buckles, his shoe-buckles, his shirt-buttons, an', abune a', his diamond breast-pin, glittering like a knight's star. The dignity o' that cratur sae far outstripped the pride o' our Cures deans, that I couldna help thinking I was i' the presence o' an unearthly being. The honour o' a match between Deacon Currie and twa ither o' the equally stately deans o' Edinburgh an' our three daughters, might remain as a monument o' the glory o' Deacon Finlayson i' the kirk-yard o' Cures, for a hundred years after baith you an' I are laid aneath the stane whar it would be engraved."

"That's a proper view o' the subject, Mrs Deacon Finlayson," replied John—giving, as was customary with people of her rank in those days, her full title—"an' maybe your dream may come sooner to pass than you imagine. There's to be a meeting o' the delegates frae a' the towns held here, on St James' e'en, at the whilk I, as head o' the national craft, am to preside. I'll try to pick out three o' the best o' them for our lassies, and ye may be weel assured that Deacon Currie winna be unnoticed. He's a grand cratur that—no muckle ahint the dean o' the girdle-makers o' Cures; but there's Deacon Smart o' the Edinburgh bonnet-makers, an' Deacon Saunders o' the glovers, maist princely dignitaries, an' mony mair, amang whom we can pick and choose for our sons-in-law. I carena a plack for their money—it's their honour I look to: were they as pair as the purest beadsman o' St Andrews, their offices o' deacons wad cover an' mak amends for a'. I'll furnish the siller, if they bring the glory o' the deanship."

"But will there be a delegate frae Edinburgh, for ilk ane o' our dochters," asked the lady.

"The design is to send ane for the combined trades o' a hail toun," replied the deacon; "but Edinburgh, being the metropolis, is to send five—surely three o' them will be bachelors."

"I hope our dochters winna refuse them," said Mrs Finlayson, who had some suspicions of the secret lovers.

"Refuse a deacon!" ejaculated the wondering official. "Mrs Deacon Finlayson, maun I chide ye, or pity ye, or laugh at ye?"

"Nane o' them a', Deacon Finlayson," answered the mistress. "I see the absurdity o' the thing as plain as ye do. I could as soon suppose that my dochters wad renounce the staff o' life—our girdle cakes, our sheep's heads, or our haggises—as refuse for husbands the kings o' our crafts."

"Kings ye may weel ca' them, Mrs Deacon Finlayson," replied John; "for we are sunne to be engaged in royal business. Jamie, the loun, is no behavin' himsel; and wha is sae capable o' chastising him and keeping him richt as the deacons o' Scotland? But that's a secret o' awfu' import—no a cheep o't to the ladies o' my brither deans. Discretion is the soul o' the wife o' an official."

Whilst Deacon Finlayson and his wife were thus making matches in their glowing fancies, the three daughters were as busy maturing them in their love-stricken hearts. They cared no more for the glory of a dean than they did for the beggar's badge on the breast of the beadsman. They loved their respective apprentices, who, while they had now the hearts to love, might afterwards have the fortune to be elevated to that high station. They all knew each other's secrets, and formed a combination to defeat the united purposes of their parents. Their plan was to avoid, if possible, meeting the deacons; and, if this could not be avoided, to put on a decided manner of repulsive coldness, and even aversion, strong enough to cool the pride and ardour of even a dean. If this failed, and any one should be attempted to be forced into their parents' choice, this was to be the signal for a general rebellion, and all the three were to elope and be secretly wedded to their sweethearts, who were ready to receive them with open arms.

In the meantime, the important meeting of the delegates took place at Cures. A bright constellation of the dignitaries, from all parts of Scotland, graced the Trades' Hall of Cures; and, among the rest, were seen the famous Deacon Currie, Deacon Saunders, and Deacon Smart, who, as fate would have it, were all bachelors. Deacon Finlayson took the chair; and the affairs of the government of James I. of Scotland were to be subjected to their inquisitorial power. The principal ground of complaint against the King was, that he had granted to the aldermen and council of the different towns, "the charge or privilege of fixing the prices of various kinds of work, which they are to regulate according to the estimate of the raw material and the wages of the workmen, as also the power of appointing the wages to be given to wrights, masons, and such other handicraftsmen, who contribute their skill and labour, but do not furnish the materials." On these important subjects, speeches were uttered extending in length to whole hours; and many days were employed in shewing up the injustice of the King's conduct, and devising the means of opposing the new law. The King had no authority, they alleged, to give power to the councils to fix the price of their work, or the wages of their workmen. How could the King or the magistrates judge of *their* profits? Had they not as good a right to cheat the public with their work as James with his laws?—and who had the power of preventing them from keeping a clipped sixpence from a journeyman, if any of their lady deaconesses wanted a bandeau, to appear at the next trades' dinner? James' conduct in regard to them was only a part

of his general tyranny. The bloody Heading-Hill of Stirling—the jail of the Lord of the Isles in Tantallan Castle—the prison of the Countess of Ross, his mother, in Inchcolm—the block at Inverness, still wet with the blood of the Highland chiefs—all cried out against the tyrant; and to this ought to be added, the remonstrances of the deacons of the crafts of Scotland against an encroachment on their rights and privileges. Such were the sentiments of the meeting; and it was carried with acclamation, that they should persist in charging their own prices for their work, and making their own terms with their journeymen. The meeting then broke up, the three favoured deacons being invited to remain for some days at Cures, to be caught by the charms of the girdle-maker's daughters.

Three days after this meeting, Scotland was astounded by one of those bold measures which King James was in the habit of taking when his authority was attempted to be resisted. He had got secret notice of the actings of the deacons; and the Parliament, which happened then to be sitting, declared that the provisions regarding the appointment of deacons of the crafts, within the royal burghs, had been found productive of grievous injury to the realm—for which reason, they are henceforth annulled; and it is ordained that "*no deacon be permitted, after this, to be elected, whilst those already chosen to fill this office are prohibited from exercising their functions or holding their usual meetings, which are found to lead to conspiracies.*" This extraordinary enactment was published throughout Scotland, and a written copy was handed in to Deacon Finlayson, as he sat at the foot of his table, banqueting with Deacons Currie, Smart, and Saunders, his intended sons-in-law, who were very peaceably allowing themselves to be caught in the toils of marriage.

"What proclamation's this?" said Deacon Finlayson, as he opened the paper.

"Read it aloud," cried the three deacons, by this time getting elated with liquor and matrimonial hope.

"The King has maybe repented o' his ill usage to us," said Deacon Finlayson, as he arranged his spectacles.

"It may be as weel for him," said Deacon Currie. "A quick repentance saves wrath an' aften wae. I hae nae spite against Jamie; but, if the deacons o' Scotland dinna stand to their richts, wha will or wha can?"

Deacon Finlayson began to read the proclamation with a loud voice, which, as he proceeded, degenerated into something little short of a "greet." Having finished the document, he laid it on the table, and looked at his brother deacons. Their office was abolished, their honours faded, their glory ended. The three deacons saw their hopes of matrimony scattered to the wind, groaned deeply, and deplored their fate. The three daughters, who heard the proclamation read, smiled with delight and tittered in their sleeves. Their deacon-nightmares were put to flight. The charm of their three knights was dispelled, and they would be at liberty to marry their apprentices when they became journeymen.

Deacon Finlayson, thus shorn of his honours, was greatly humbled. His three intended sons-in-law he ascertained had no money; and, being deprived of their title, what were they more than other men? He allowed his daughters to marry the young men they loved, and settled good tochers on them, as became an indulgent father. King James afterwards repealed the harsh statute, and Deacon Finlayson lived to see his three sons-in-law made deacons under the new law.



W I L S O N ' S
 Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
 AND OF SCOTLAND.

FIRST LOVE.

"Time makes all but True Love cold:
 The burning thoughts that then were told
 Run molten still in memory's mould,
 And will not cool."

CAMPBELL.

"Oh, the hallowed form is ne'er forgot
 Which First Love traced;
 Still it lingering haunts the greenest spot
 On memory's waste."

MOORE.

LOVE, however modified by time or circumstance, however disguised by cautious prudence or the blending of other passions, is ever the natural, the abiding inhabitant of the human heart. It seems its distinguishing characteristic. It displays itself, in its most innocent simplicity, in the happy eyes and glad voice and gesture of the infant, when it hears its mother's well-known words of endearment. The schoolboy, amid all his frolic, wanderings, and light-hearted carelessness, feels, in every hour in which the buoyancy of his playful spirits permits him to feel, that his home, and the inmates of that home, are dearer to his young heart than words could utter—ay, and not unfrequently, there are some of his playmates the subjects of his fond recollections, even though they have not been among those whose residence was at his father's fireside. Youth!—that is the very reign of love! It would be superfluous to say, that then its trembling and restless glow is the one subduing and engrossing feeling. Ambition may lead the haughty heart of manhood astray; but the hero or the conqueror feels his heart bound, when he lays the trophies he has won at the feet of her before whom he is himself subdued, with a rapture far deeper, purer, even prouder, than it did when his resistless prowess forced Victory to declare the triumph his. Nay, his ambition was love misdirected, as was proved by the sweet, calm, satisfied thrill that passed through all his frame, and fixed its abode in his delighted heart, when he performed the homage due to his spirit's rightful sovereign. All powers, all passions, become enfeebled by age, with the single exception of love. The heart loves on, though judgment and reason may have departed. Let the dotage of the infirm old man be pardoned, pitied, if you will, but not despised; for it is but a proof that, while the human being exists in life, he cannot cease to love. Infant imbecility may be there; but it is most touching to see that one tenderest, most delicate, and purest passion outliving all of grosser nature, clinging to him, with all its soft human longings and attachments, even in the midst of his decay, and refusing to quit its dwelling in his heart till that heart's feeble flutterings are stilled.

Nor is it less useful to man than permanently abiding. No one can tell what he may be, do, or endure, till the strong spirit of love call him into action or suffering. Man, in his youth, before his powers and capabilities have been excited, is a mighty magazine of unknown, unawakened power. Love touches the hidden spring; and, stirring up all those dormant faculties, sends the gifted being forth

into the world, with all his energies aroused, the character of his heart and life indelibly stamped upon his every purpose, and prepared to brave, with unshrinking fortitude, every peril which may threaten to obstruct his path, though arrayed in the wildest and most appalling form. And, oh! who could forego the consolation that it pours upon the fainting heart in its hours of sickening despondency! If such its influence upon man, what must it be in woman—that beautiful assemblage of all that is amiable, delicate, refined, and exalted in human nature! In the tender care, the unwearied solicitude of a mother, behold its perfection! There it displays a depth and a purity which man may emulate, but can never hope to attain.

But first love has been distinguished by a peculiar disdainfulness of sneer, as if less likely to be true and enduring than that of a more advanced and matured period of life. "Oh, lame and impotent conclusion!" When the heart is young, is it less qualified to receive a deep and an abiding impression than after its trembling sensibilities have been seared, its fresh and dewy purity sullied or departed, and the bright fervour of its morning radiance overcast and darkened? It has been called childish; but are not the feelings and passions of the child the germs of which the outbudding is to give a shade to the character of the man? Reason says that first love must be the purest; and experience declares that it is the most lasting. To confirm this, it would be enough to appeal to the personal experience of every one—to his own individual feeling—if his heart have not, in his very youth, been deadened by the degrading pursuit of some sordid purpose. Even then, the coldest heart will own that what enchanted its affections when young, left an impression which no subsequent event could ever wholly obliterate.

We have been led into an unwonted degree of prefacing, by a desire to eradicate certain prejudices, ere we proceed to relate an event which one influenced by those prejudices, and a stranger to the reality of the circumstances, might be inclined to think improbable; but which some will know to be true. To the latter this prefacing was unnecessary, and might be passed over; the former—if they have not felt, do not feel, nor can be brought to feel and understand the deep, and engrossing, and abiding power of love, especially of first love—are more to be pitied than envied.

Edward Bruce had been recently united to a most amiable young lady, whose charms both of mind and person had long engaged his tenderest affection. Deep, calm, unutterable was the happiness which filled his soul in his hours of undisturbed retirement, accompanied by her who was to him a ministering angel of quiet bliss. But, like all earth's happiness, those hours sped fast away. He was one of those gallant men "whose home is on the deep;" and soon, too soon, he received orders to resume his command on board the—frigate. The call of his king and his country could not be heard in vain. He joined the vessel, mastering his feelings as he best might, and shewing before his gallant crew no symptoms of backwardness to leave his native land. Indeed it was not possible for a man of such daring courage to look around him upon so many brave fellows, all ready to execute whatever enterprise of peril he should command, and, while he beheld their hardy resolution, still feel sick despondency

weighing down his heart. His feelings were partly hid partly thrown aside; and he bore himself as became a British seaman. During his cruise, he received one letter from home, telling him that his presence would have been very acceptable, to hail a young stranger whose lineaments bespoke him a Bruce. His young wife had gone to reside with a distant relation till his return. That relation had been some time married, but had as yet no family; and, as there had been, even from their earliest years, a very friendly intimacy between her and Mrs Bruce, she had prevailed upon the latter to reside with her, chiefly with the kind intention of preventing that melancholy into which she appeared so inclined to sink. The affectionate and maternal care of Mrs Maxwell, the relation alluded to, was of the greatest advantage to the lonely and tender mother. But her chief pleasure was to sit and gaze on her infant son, tracing what she conceived to be his close resemblance to his distant father. That sweet infant was no doubt dear, very dear, to its mother's heart, as her own infant; but what was the extent of her love to the father, when every faint resemblance which the lovely innocent bore to him made it doubly dear! Oh, that man could but duly appreciate the deep love of woman!—that he could feel but the hundredth part of that fervent disinterested passion which fills all her soul, and makes her esteem all her sufferings as nothing, if she can but minister to his happiness! Were he but as blessed as he ought to be, in feeling himself the object of such pure attachment, he never could act to woman the mean, the selfish, the ungenerous part that he too often degrades himself by acting. While woman thinks but of him she loves, and makes all her actions, all her wishes, all her thoughts subservient to his happiness, man—proud, selfish, unfeeling man—regards but the gratification of his own desires—his love scarce passes beyond himself; and he seeks but his own happiness in his intercourse with woman. Yet this is too severe and general a censure. Men are not all so; and the wisest, best, and greatest of men, are those who can best estimate the value of woman's gentle, loving heart.

A considerable time had elapsed, and Edward Bruce was shortly expected home from his cruise. His young wife would often pass hours caressing her infant, and telling the unconscious, smiling creature that his father would soon be home to share those sweet infantine looks and embraces. Her life seemed to be wrapt up in her child and the thoughts of her husband and his speedy arrival. Alas! who can foresee the storm that may be gathering and approaching even when the day shines the fairest! Who can tell what sorrow may be impending even when hope smiles and beckons the most alluringly! Even at the time when not a day dawned in which she did not encourage the thought that she might embrace her Edward ere nightfall, she little knew what mournful tidings were at hand. But those tidings came. She received a letter announcing that the frigate had captured a French vessel of superior size, after a very sharp action, in which considerable loss had been suffered on both sides—that the brave Captain Bruce had been mortally wounded in leading the boarding party, and had survived the engagement but a few hours. The dismal intelligence smote the tender affectionate wife, as the chill and untimely winter gale smites the delicate unsheltered floweret, and withers up its source of life. She did not long survive: she could not. Her grief was too deep to be violent in its expression; but, while she sat alone, or at least in unbroken silence, her low, soft sigh, growing gradually weaker, seemed to be the passing away of her spirit; and, in spite of her fond love for her dear babe, she sank to the tomb. Before her death, she saw her infant cradled in the bosom of Mrs Maxwell, and heard her fervent assurance that he should be to her as a son. She looked a grateful mother's blessing upon them, for she could not speak; and, after a faint struggle her earthly troubles ended.

Rather more than two years had elapsed since the melancholy events which have been briefly related, and Henry Bruce had become a gay happy prattler, the favourite of every one, and the peculiar delight of Mrs Maxwell, his mother by adoption, when her secret wishes were at length gratified, and she pressed to her bosom a lovely daughter. Though she now felt that deep full throb of the heart which none but a mother can ever feel when enfolding her own offspring in her arms, she forgot not Henry Bruce. She had loved him too long and too fondly to be able to lay aside her confirmed affection for a child so engaging, and, what to a female heart is a still stronger recommendation, so lone and unfriended. He, therefore, though no longer the sole object of her attention, experienced no neglect; and, as he had been accustomed to call Mrs Maxwell "Mother," he soon learned to love the little baby with all the tenderness of brotherly affection.

It would be tedious and uninteresting to trace the progress of the children through the years of their unconscious infancy. Suffice it to say that, as they advanced in years and in growth, Henry became the constant companion, and in some measure the protector, of his little friend, Fanny Maxwell. In all their times of recreation, they were almost constantly together; and if by any chance they were separated, when they again met they had so much to tell each other of what they had seen and done, that such little intervals served only to make their friendship for each other the stronger, and their pleasure in each other's company the more intense. They lived together like brother and sister; and it was indeed many years ere they knew that they were not really so.

From the time when Henry Bruce first learned whose son he was, and what had been the fate of his gallant father and tender mother, a very striking alteration seemed to have taken place in all his manner. Much of his childish and careless playfulness at once forsook him; and he seemed to have made an advance in mind beyond what could have been expected from his years. Yet was he not the less tender and attentive to his little sister Fanny, as he persisted fondly in calling her. He was still young; and the thought had never once entered the mind either of Mr or Mrs Maxwell, that the pensive boy could have begun to reflect upon the peculiarities of his situation. They remarked, indeed, that he seemed to delight in being alone more than he had used to do; and, had they been awake to suspicious observation, they might have perceived more tenderness, mixed with reserve, in his behaviour towards Fanny. Not that he loved her less, nor even that he loved her more; but, when he thought of her as not his sister, he feared to lose her love, and, at the same time, doubted that his wonted familiarity wanted now the sanction of so near and dear a relationship. Such thoughts rolled at times over his mind, like the clouds of evening over the still skies; and, like those clouds which serve as materials to receive and display the glorious, the inimitable tints shed over them by the sun, they received, modified, and reflected, the bright or wild colouring of his imagination. A romantic and imaginative cast of thought gradually took possession of his mind, and called forth a train of sensibilities which might otherwise have lain dormant in the unexplored recesses of his heart. The time of boyhood had scarcely passed away; but his playfulness was gone—at least such exuberant playfulness as boys of his age generally display. To wander alone in the deepening twilight, beneath the shade of the branching oaks, listening to the sad music of the increasing gale, as its moans announced the coming tempest—to recline in some shady nook where not a sunbeam could penetrate the arching boughs, while the ceaseless murmurs of the rivulet gliding past induced a listless dreaminess of mind—or to stand upon the bursting brink of some cataract, watching the little floweret, as its bending head, surcharged with the

spray of the foamy wave, nung trembling over it:—these were dear to him. But, dearer far than all of these solitary enjoyments, was it to roam abroad, be where it might, if accompanied with Fanny Maxwell. The song of the evening birds was then most sweet—the tints of the curtained twilight most purely ethereal—the sound of the evening gale, though plaintive, spoke not of wo—the murmurings of the brook were the faint notes of half-heard music—and even the roar of the waterfall, though still solemn and capable of exciting a deep emotion, was, to his awakened and delighted soul, the majestic voice of a power whose utterings had commenced with creation, and would continue unweakened so long as the world should endure. Fanny Maxwell could perceive and appreciate the romantic and poetical feelings which at such times took possession of Henry's soul. But, with the gay toying of a lively, happy girl, she used to take pleasure in interrupting his pensive moods by some frivolous remark or unimportant request. She would command him to gather her wild flowers, and wreath them into a garland befitting her dignity as the nymph of so beautiful a glen and stream. Often would she lay her sovereign mandate upon him to celebrate her in his lays; for the deep feelings which had been aroused in his heart, had impelled him to give them their appropriate measure and expression, and had taught him to clothe his thoughts in verse.

So glided on their days, till Henry Bruce had reached his seventeenth year, and Fanny Maxwell was approaching her fifteenth. Their intercourse had, by insensible degrees, become less frequent and less unrestrained. The sense of maidenly delicacy had told the innocent girl that, though there was no actual harm, there might be impropriety in such free intimacy with a youth who, though bred up with her from infancy, she knew was not her brother. Yet the reserve which began to be observed by both had in it nothing of coldness. Henry felt in his own breast a sensation to which he could not, dared not give name or utterance, when roaming with Fanny Maxwell beneath the trees of the old grove in the quiet moonshine. Such roamings, it is true, were most delightful; but they were accompanied by a strange feeling of embarrassment, which told him that they ought not to be frequent. His heart, however, would have inclined him to indulge in them much oftener than he did, had not the superior delicacy of the lovely girl furnished a powerful check. She could have depended upon the honour of Henry Bruce for the protection of her life and all that was dearest to her, without the slightest hesitation; yet she felt that the days of childish freedom were gone, and that she could no longer roam at all times, accompanied solely by one whose presence awoke a strange fluttering in her guileless heart. In short, though no words of love, nothing that could bear the least reference to that passion, had ever been breathed by Henry, he had for some time been conscious that the beautiful, the graceful form of Fanny Maxwell; her soft, sweet-toned voice; the gentle, yet eloquent expression of her lovely face; the dewy light of her mild brown eye, bright as the star of evening when the ruddy tinge of the setting sun has not yet forsaken the heavens—all had a subduing, a fascinating influence over his soul, which it were vain to attempt describing, and as vain to endeavour to resist. Perhaps he might have perceived the similar embarrassment of her manner; but he never could have had the confidence to interpret it in his favour. Shyness, delicacy, dislike, would have been more probably the construction he would have put upon the cause of such reserve; but his own backward and unassuming manner prevented him from making any such observations. The truth is, that a young, tender, and deeply seated passion had taken possession of his heart, perhaps of hers also; but the natural delicacy of woman, which makes her shrink from investigating much of her own feelings, had drawn a veil over those

secret workings of that silently insinuating passion. An untold, unexamined affection had united the hidden pulsations of their hearts, in their unsullied innocence; and, though not a word or look, scarce even a sigh, in unison, had divulged that attachment, it dwelt in the bosoms of both, with a warmth which neither had dared to think or to acknowledge.

Henry Bruce was now arrived at that period of life when it becomes necessary for a young man to mingle in the affairs of the world, and pursue some occupation or profession. Several times had he hinted something to that effect in the hearing of Mr Maxwell, and had declared that his choice would be to enter the navy, and lead the life his father had led. Against this choice, all lent their persuasions; and at length their joint entreaties prevailed. He could not, however, be persuaded to embrace some peaceful, but less dignified profession, and remain at home, or at least in Britain. He would relinquish his desire to enter the navy, only if a post in the army should be procured; and, though this also was against their wishes, yet, thinking that there was less imminent peril on land than on sea, exposed alike to the foe and the storm, they assented to his latter choice, and immediately took the necessary steps to procure him a commission. The time of his departure was not yet fixed, though it was certain that it could not be distant, when Fanny Maxwell was seized with an illness which threatened to be of some continuance, if not of immediate danger. Without suffering violent distress, she became gradually weaker, till, at length, she was scarcely able to leave her room. This was most afflicting to the heart of poor Henry, especially in the prospect of an early departure. He could not and he would not think that death could lay his cold hand on so lovely, so amiable a being; yet, when he thought on his departure, and the probable duration of his absence, and looked upon the pale cheek of the still lovely though fading girl, or heard the low and somewhat enfeebled tone of her sweet mild voice, a dark thought—too dark for words to express—came over his mind, and his very soul was blackened with dismal bodings, which he would not credit, but could not chase away. Aware, however, that the health of the body is much influenced by the state of the mind, he often endeavoured to give a lively turn to the conversation in her presence, and his words were often cheerful, while his heart was sick with doubt and wo. He was not one of those who think every reference to mind, to spirit, to religion is necessarily gloomy, and should be sedulously avoided in the company of a person in delicate health; but neither did he think a feeble state of body the most favourable time for agitating the mind with sterner views and doctrines, which some, at such seasons, so incessantly urge. He endeavoured to steer a middle course. He clothed what inspiring religious hopes he wished to bring before her mind in the attire of imagination; and he gave to the language or imagination the spirit of a cheerful religion, such as might at once excite the feelings and encourage the soul, and thus call forth fresh energy in the whole frame. For this purpose, he invoked his muse, as poets say, and, among others, one day produced the following verses, in which he endeavoured to lead the steps of fancy into the path of religious hope.

TO A TENDER HUMAN BLOSSOM.

Fair floweret! why so pale?
 Why has thy spring bloom fled?
 Whence breathed the chilly gale
 That smote thy drooping head?
 Did the dank dew-frosts o'er thee fall,
 Blighting thy unblown beauties all?
 Where slept the young spring gales?
 Amid what leafy bowers?
 Down what retiring vales,
 Toying with early flowers?
 Where roamed, where loitered they, when
 Bent, vainly bent, thy suppliant brow?

And have they left thee all?
 And must thy bloom decay—
 Thy fair weeds droop and fall,
 Before thy morn of May?
 Thy parent stem hang darkly o'er
 Its bosom gem—a gem no more?

No! Lift thy drooping brow;—
 The blight shall pass away—
 The chill that binds thee now
 Dissolve in brighter day!
 To thee, young lovely flower, be given
 Strength, life, light, from the founts of Heaven!

Once or twice, his voice faltered as he read; and, when ne concluded, a slight tinge of confusion reddened his cheek; but he remained silent. At length, with a gentle smile, Fanny observed that she supposed he assumed the right of a poet to understand the language of flowers, and also of a second-sighted person, to foretell future events; and really she could have no objections to his elegant and complimentary gallantry in the one character, nor to the propitious spirit of his agreeable predictions in the other, unlike many of his brethren of the second-sight. To this, he stammered out some commonplace reply; and the conversation soon took a direction less interesting and less dangerous. This interview was decisive as to the state of his heart. The thought of departure from the home and the friends of his youth, had already predisposed his mind to the reception and the development of every tender affection. Love had, indeed, long held his heart bound in a soft, silken captivity, so gentle and so sweet that he scarcely felt its mild thralldom; but her illness occurring at that time when the feelings of his mind were excited into more than their usual sensibility, called forth the deep secret of his soul, and compelled the awakened affections to display themselves in that character which they had been long silently acquiring.

The time was fast approaching when his departure must take place; but, meanwhile, he had the happiness to observe that a perceptible improvement had commenced in Fanny's state of health. This was a greater source of consolation to his heart than he ventured to express. It was to him the first forming radiance of hope's bright arch of promise, gilding the gloom of a dark cloud with an enlivening and cheering splendour. In the midst of his secret happiness, the day came—that day of first departure from the home of his infancy and boyhood, which awakens a pang that can never come but once to any in its power and untried depth. Why should I attempt to describe it? A few there may be who have never felt it—to them any description would be unintelligible; but many have felt it deeply, and perhaps the hearts of some are yet throbbing freshly with its pang—they I would spare a renewal of a pang so severe. To this sore agony of bereavement—this uprooting of the being from his natal soil, which all who have the blessing or the misery of possessing sensitive hearts must once suffer—was added another of a peculiar nature. The panting, fluttering, and glowing agitation of his heart, was now no longer an ambiguous feeling. He was compelled to know that he, in reality, loved Fanny Maxwell; yet he left her without venturing to make mention of his love, without having the confidence to make one effort to obtain one ground of hope to soothe him in his absence.

The departure of Henry Bruce occasioned a deep and saddening blank in Mr Maxwell's family, which continued to be felt for many a weary day. Fanny Maxwell, forgetting at times the cause of his absence, expressed her surprise where he might be, till the recollection of his distant and perilous pursuits came darkly upon her mind; and she could not avoid paying the tribute of a tender sigh to the memory of her earliest friend, the playmate of her infancy. A month passed over slowly, laden, as it appeared, with an uncommon weight of loneliness, and the disappointed

expectation of hearing from Henry. Another and another rolled their course; a year completed its round, and yet they had never heard whether he were still alive. They had begun to think that he must either have fallen on some early field—as many youthful heroes close their brief career—or that he had forgot the home and the friends of his youth. No intelligence came to account for his protracted silence, or to mention that he still existed, even during another year; and, though he sometimes was present to the recollections of those who had known and loved him so long, such times began to come rarely; and, when they did, to be accompanied either with somewhat of a careless wondering what might have been his fate, or the expression of a firm persuasion that he had long ago filled the measure of his days. In the mind of Fanny Maxwell there still remained a kind of lingering regret that he had so soon and so entirely disappeared; mixed with an unowned feeling of dissatisfaction at his conduct, if he should still survive. At times she would blame herself that she could permit a single unkind thought to enter her mind, concerning one for whom her heart, in its season of guileless youth, had felt all a sister's attachment, if not one of a more tender and passionate nature. She thought that it was ungenerous in her to forget him; yet she could not avoid the consciousness that he was in so far forgot that it required an effort to recall him to memory. Often, however, she excused herself with the reflection that she had no certain grounds for believing that he ever had thought of her otherwise than as his sister; and that all the tenderness he had shown, all the emotion he had appeared to feel, might have only been the natural expression of a mind full of romantic ardour and poetic sensibility, such as she well knew his to be. Then came a feeling of female pride, and she chid her heart that she could yet think so much of a person who, perhaps, had never once bestowed a thought upon her, since the day on which he bade her farewell. A third year passed over, and Henry Bruce was but occasionally remembered, like one who has been long time dead. The mention of his name might, indeed, chance to call forth the tribute of a sigh, like that which is paid to the memory of the departed; but it dwelt not on the mind, nor awoke other than vague and evanescent feelings, indistinct as clouds of light floating mist, and passing away as soon. In short, he was all but forgotten, even by those who had been to him a mother and a sister.

The fourth year since Henry Bruce had ceased to be an inmate in the retired dwelling of Mr Maxwell had commenced; and now, even the neighbouring cottagers had nearly lost all recollection of the lonely but amiable boy, whose story they all knew, and whom they all loved so well; and yet it is well known that of any class of people that ever existed, Scottish cottagers are the most steadily tenacious in preserving their affection for those whom they have known and loved. The simplicity and purity of their character gives depth and tenderness to their attachments; and they are little exposed to such circumstances as might tend to banish their recollections of old friends by the introduction of new. They love much, rather than many.

About this time it chanced that George Campbell, a young gentleman, a native of a different part of the country, came to reside in the neighbourhood. He was a younger son of a family respectable more from their rank and connections than their wealth. It was of course necessary that he should choose some occupation whereby to maintain himself. His choice had been made; and he had commenced his pursuits high in hope, and with an ardent desire to secure a competency as soon as possible; and then retire to enjoy it. His efforts had been almost uniformly unsuccessful, and he was beginning to sink into gloom and sour moroseness, when a small estate in the neighbourhood of Hillside was left to him by a maternal relation. He immediately quitted his unproductive pursuits, wandered over the greater part

of Scotland, to satisfy a curiosity which he had long felt; and visiting the little retired estate to which he had so opportunely succeeded, resolved to make it his residence during the remainder of his days.

He was yet young—perhaps not more than twenty-five or twenty-six years old; but the crosses and vexations of his outset in life had given him a distaste for the world and a dislike to society. He accordingly made it a rule to shun intercourse, or at least all approach to familiarity with either his equals or inferiors. The peasantry had of course formed many strange notions concerning him; especially as he had never been seen at the church—a circumstance which, though perhaps not very uncommon in towns, and among those who make worldly gain their chief object, struck these simple and religious people as something of an unaccountable, a dark, a horrible nature. It happened, however, that, one fine Sunday morning, attracted by the bright and the fervent smiles of promise so peculiar to spring, he had wandered out beyond the limits of his usual walks, and continued to stroll along in a state of dreamy, almost unconscious delight, listening the sweet song of a thousand happy warblers. His steps were invited by one of those *kirk-roads* which, in country places, are always kept in the neatest order, and are so planned as to lead through the most beautiful and romantic parts in the neighbourhood; and which, by partaking of that sacred character which, in Scotland, is attached to everything connected with religion, are held to be beyond the power of any proprietor to stop. He had not proceeded far along this footpath, till, by the frequent little parties which he perceived, proceeding along, from various directions, and all seemingly bearing to one point, he became aware that he was near the church. Perhaps he might have turned; but a certain feeling, near akin to curiosity, impelled him to continue on his way and enter the place of worship. There he felt himself, however, a stranger; and, though his property gave him a right to a seat, he knew not where to find it. He had advanced into the body of the church, and was near Mr Maxwell's seat, when he hesitated as uncertain where to go. Fanny Maxwell perceived his embarrassment; and, opening the seat door, beckoned him to enter. Though he had long ceased to practise polished civility, he nevertheless knew its laws and requirements; he bowed and entered, took his seat beside the young lady, and seemed to listen to the preacher with reverent attention. To say the truth, however, he was far otherwise engaged, his whole powers of observation were secretly occupied in scrutinizing the person and manner of Fanny Maxwell.

She had now nearly completed her eighteenth year; and her person displayed all the graceful development of woman's softly-moulded harmonizing form. Her stature was perhaps scarcely what is termed middle sized; but the delicately rounded and exquisite proportion of her figure made it difficult to estimate her height, and impossible to suppose that any increase or diminution of it could have increased the captivating elegance of her appearance. George Campbell gazed on her with astonishment and admiration. Just at that instant, a sunbeam, streaming through the window of the old Gothic structure, fell upon the clustering ringlets of dark auburn locks which shaded her lovely forehead, tinged them with a bright and golden lustre, and giving a radiant expression to her fair cheek, where the lily rather predominated over the rose. The congregation began to hymn their Creator's praise; and Campbell heard her voice joining in the hymn, with its soft, low, but richly melodious tones, while the sacred spirit of the inspired words awoke a more fervent and kindling intelligence in the dewy glance of her mild but expressive eye. The fascination was complete. Before the service was ended, George Campbell had confessed, in his secret soul, that he had never seen a being so beautiful, and, as his heart durst not but think, so full of purity and goodness.

When the congregation were in the act of separating, he took the opportunity of thanking Mr and Mrs Maxwell for their kindness in giving him a seat, mentioned his name and residence, received an invitation to visit them, expressed his willingness to avail himself of that opportunity to do himself an honour and a pleasure, and bent his steps slowly homeward.

A new set of sensations and ideas had suddenly taken possession of his mind, and he felt himself unable to rest till he had visited his new acquaintances. A few repetitions of his visits were enough to tell him that nothing on earth could give him such pleasure as to secure an interest in the heart of Fanny Maxwell. This he feared he should not be able to effect; but yet he could not help repeating his visits as often as possible, and doing all that lay in his power to make himself agreeable. His manners were at first blunt—almost rough and sullen; but that was greatly atoned for by the open manliness of his deportment. His personal appearance corresponded well with such a character. His tall and strongly-built frame, expanded forehead, dark and somewhat stern eye, and the bold cast of his decided and almost harsh features, gave him a noble and commanding air. The powers of his mind were very considerable; and he was possessed of many dignified feelings—rough and uncultivated, indeed, and long uncalled into action—but, though dormant, not departed, and, though unseen, only awaiting the excitement of some worthy purpose to call them into operation. Love had given that excitement—had furnished him with a purpose capable of calling forth all the best and most valuable qualities of his mind and heart. Love is indeed the great improver of human nature. The desire to please draws forth and exercises all that is good and honourable in the human bosom; and while, in order to gain the affections of the object beloved, we strive to act nobly and to appear amiable, we insensibly acquire those qualities and that character which passion and policy had led us to assume. How beneficial might this refining and ennobling tendency of love be made! how productive of matrimonial felicity!—for thus has woman in her power to make her lover gradually become all that she could wish her husband to be. Pay heed to this, ye fair; and yield not up your undisputed ascendancy, till ye have drawn forth and made permanent in your lover those qualities which ye could wish in your lord!

The friendship which had commenced between George Campbell and the family at Hillside, had continued uninterrupted for some time, and was gradually assuming a more intimate and tender character. The object of his repeated visits could not be misunderstood, and had not been attempted to be concealed. He had at length talked of love to Fanny Maxwell, and had not been forbidden. Indeed, his character had become so much improved since the commencement of the intercourse between them, that it was now by no means repulsive. Still manly and frank in his bearing, he had learned to temper the rougher parts of his disposition and manner with much of that yielding, yet dignified kindness, which is at once so flattering and so pleasing. The growing gloom of misanthropy, which had formerly clouded his brow, and shut up the avenues of generous feeling in his heart, was chased away by the mild, soothing, and subduing influence of love; and he was now warmly actuated by a spirit of free and kind benevolence. Such, and so ennobling being the change in his disposition and manner, and knowing that it had been produced chiefly by the influence of his strong love to her, was it strange that Fanny Maxwell had begun to permit his addresses, nay, to receive them with a secret pleasure? Censure her not as inconstant to the memory of Henry Bruce! She had no means of ascertaining whether he were actually in existence, and, if alive, whether his passion for her, if indeed he had ever felt a passion for her, remained still unchanged.

But why should an apparent inconstancy be deemed a matter of such unpardonable delinquency? If we inquire into it dispassionately, we shall find that, in a great many instances, it is extremely excusable—particularly in woman. How can she know whether the protestations of her admirer be the genuine aspirations of a faithful heart, or merely the common expression of unmeaning gallantry? It is often impossible: and even when she has no room to doubt his sincerity, she may be thrown into such circumstances as may render the permanent constancy of her affection extremely difficult, almost impossible. She may be beset by a lover at once persevering and respectful; ardent in pressing his suit, yet displaying a winning deference to her, mingled with a manly and a becoming confidence in himself. His frequent and flattering attentions, the consciousness that those attentions are meant as indications of his preference of her to all her sex, and all the thousand indescribable witcheries of love, may insensibly steal away her affections, while her will remains, or endeavours to remain, constant to her former lover. That citadel, the heart, once gained and possessed by a secret friend, feeble is the resistance that can be made by the betrayed will. A change of affection—what the world brands by the name of inconstancy—must take place. If woman would maintain a constant affection to her absent lover, let her avoid, as much as possible, the company of all, particularly of an ardent and unremitting admirer. It is true she may at first take a determined dislike to the person who annoys her with his disagreeable attentions, and that may increase into a perfect antipathy; but it is no less true that the presence of a fervent lover; and his warm demonstrations of pure and glowing affection, often spread a sympathetic influence around, like the melting and blending power of a mighty flame, and, ere she is herself aware, awaken feelings of love in woman's sensitive bosom. Let her, therefore, if she would avoid the stealthily-overpowering influence of that insinuating passion, beware of coming within the range of its attraction.

Nor let woman's censure fall with extreme severity upon man, if he do occasionally relapse from the faith which he plighted. Let her consider the peculiarities which attend his progress through life as man; let her conceive how often he is exposed to the bewitching influence of some most lovely being, when all his heart has been warmed and predisposed to the reception of the sweet enchantment; let her think of the many engagements of mental occupation which must often completely absorb his attention, and prevent all possibility of indulging in the tenderer passions; let her reflect upon the influence, the powerful influence, in weakening the affections, which, in spite of the protestations of the lover and the songs and romances of the poet, experience tells us that protracted absence and extensive distance, have upon the heart even of the most faithful; and let her learn from all, to prize, highly prize, as an inestimable jewel, constancy when she meets it; and, while she blames inconstancy, to blame it gently, and to pardon it as an unavoidable frailty, incident to human nature.

These reflections have been drawn forth by a desire to shew that Fanny Maxwell, in giving way to a second love, was not acting a part of rare and inexcusable inconstancy. Nor am I relating a fiction; where, for the purpose of producing effect, some gentle fair one shall remain plighted in heart to her absent lover, while the sickening of hope deferred sinks and deepens over her like winter, till that bosom which never harboured one unkind or faithless thought, is laid to rest beneath its kindred clay—cold to love only when cold to life. I must relate the truth. Fanny Maxwell was not an immaculate heroine of romance. She was only a young, lovely, and amiable woman; and consequently susceptible of being gained by the persevering and kind attentions of one who now appeared truly deserving to be beloved. She had given her consent to bestow her hand

upon George Campbell; and it only remained to appoint the day when the ceremony should take place.

It was yet early in autumn. The afternoon was mild, calm, and soberly majestic, as autumn, with all its profusion of mellow richness, its luxuriant and happy associations, and its more pensive anticipations, most frequently is. The wind scarcely stirred the many-tinted leaves; yet even its whisper, though low and calm, was sadly plaintive. The abrupt and pillared fragments of the clouds, or their massy and voluminous ranges, slowly floating or sleeping in stately repose, and beginning to reflect the colouring rays of the descending sun, gave an air of solemn magnificence to the expanded arch of heaven. A warm admirer of nature's ever-varied, ever-delighting beauties, Fanny Maxwell had wandered forth to yield her rapt soul to the thoughts and feelings awakened by the sublimity and grandeur of such a scene. Unconsciously she bent her steps towards that secluded glen which had been the frequent resort of her earlier years. A solitary footpath, untrdden save by a few, passed through it, and opened up a more direct communication with the highway. As she proceeded along the path pausing oft, and gazing around her, then resuming her walk, she perceived, at a little distance, some person approaching. A slight tremor passed over her frame; or she supposed it might be George Campbell come to urge her to fix the day of their union; and, though she meant one day to do so, yet with that sweet and maidenly delicacy so charming in woman, she trembled but to think of it, and always endeavoured to get it postponed. As he came nearer, however, she perceived that he was not the person she feared yet hoped to meet. The stranger seemed to be in the elastic entrance of manhood—youth was still about him. He was dressed in a rich military uniform; a medal depended from his breast, bearing the impress of a sphinx, and the word *Egypt*. His step and air spoke a man who had been used to command, to meet and despise danger, and to undergo peril, toil, and privation with indifference. The sun and the wind of the desert had bronzed his cheek to a hue darker than his natural complexion, as appeared by his light blue, yet keen and intelligent eye, and the shade of his thickly clustering locks. Fanny Maxwell, absorbed in her own thoughts, had but slightly noticed him, when he accosted her, and inquired the way to Hillside. She pointed it out, and seemed about to continue on her aimless ramble, when the stranger hesitated, stood still, gazed on her a moment, then exclaimed, "Fanny Maxwell! my own Fanny Maxwell! do you not remember Henry Bruce?" and then clasping her in his arms, held her to his throbbing bosom. Overpowered with a sudden rush of tumultuous feelings, she remained for some time breathless, and nearly fainting in his arms. As she recovered, she gently disengaged herself, and, looking upon him with a tender and mournful expression of countenance, burst into tears.

Thinking that this was but the natural expression of pleasure at such an unexpected meeting, he would have renewed his endearments, in order to soothe her agitation; but she gently repelled him, and in a low, faltering voice, said, "Henry, we never thought to have seen you more."

"But I have returned, my dearest Fanny—returned from many a scene of peril—once more to see my dear sister, as I fondly called her in my boyhood, and to try if I might win her permission to address her by a still dearer title."

"That title, Henry," said she, in a faint tone, "is the dearest by which you may ever address me. Induced by your absence, and the want of any information concerning you, I thought—I thought that you were—that you could return no more; and I have listened to the addresses of another. I am, though not his wedded, his betrothed bride. I have plighted my faith—my honour is at stake—I will and must redeem my pledge."

He shrunk and staggered as if he had received a deadly wound, leaned against a tree, pressed his hands forcibly

upon his heart and head, and fixed his eyes upon her with a gaze of wild and frenzied astonishment; while a quivering thrill of mortal agony shook his whole frame, and writhed the convulsed features of his manly countenance. At length he spoke, and his words were low, broken, and full of a melancholy tenderness.

"And is it thus we meet, after an absence so long, so full of griefs and dangers? I left thee, Fanny, and my tongue had not uttered, could not utter, what my heart so deeply felt; yet I fondly supposed that you could not but have perceived and understood my emotion: I joined the British army," continued he, feeling a melancholy satisfaction in tracing his progress, and mentioning his feelings and his hopes, though those feelings seemed now all unrequited, and those hopes all withered for ever—"I joined the British army; and our march was soon in foreign lands. I saw their beauties; but I saw them only to despise them. My heart was in the land of my fathers. Often our steps were on the fields of slaughter; and at times, too, disaster pressed us hard. But dangers or sufferings moved not me—there was a mounting spirit, a warm hope within me; and I shrunk not from the combat, nor drooped beneath privation. Uncertainty was around us, and our communication with Britain was unfrequent and interrupted; yet, though far distant, thou wert to my soul like its hopes of Heaven, and it would not resign thee. Our course was bent to Egypt, and a new world of strange, mysterious, and awful objects was around us; but there, amidst the ruins of temples, of obelisks, of sphinxes, framed in the infancy of the world—beneath the shade of those majestic pyramids whose enduring strength seems to mock at time—upon the brink of the broad magnificent Nile, with all its associations of the wondrous times and actions of countless antiquity:—even there I could not refrain, in the midst of my excited wonderment, from thinking upon my native Caledonia, her heathy hills, the quietude and happiness of her woody glens; the wild music of her brawling mountain-streams, and, oh! dearer than all! the beautiful, the gentle being whose smile had shed bliss upon all my previous existence. When the simoom of the desert smote upon us, hot as the fiery breath of a furnace, I thought of the cool invigorating breeze of my native mountains. And in that glorious day," continued he—his warrior spirit kindling within him as the scene rose bright upon his memory; and making him, for a brief moment, forget his sorrows in its high excitement—"in that glorious day, when we ploughed through the foamy surge in the bay of Aboukir, till the keels raised the yellow sands, while shot and shells rained around us, fierce and frequent as hail in a winter storm—when we mounted the rugged heights, in stern unanswering silence, till our bayonets, resistless as the red gleaming lightnings of heaven, burst and destroyed the astonished bands of France; or in that more glorious and bloody day, on the heights of Alexandria, the gallant Abercomby's latest field, when the Highland claymore drank deep of France's bravest blood, and the tartan was richly stained in the gore of those presumptuously styled Invincibles:—in the midst of the indescribable horrors and wild headlong frenzy of fight, of victory, and of pursuit—thy image shed a softening ray into my heart, and withheld my hand from the feeble or the unresisting foe.

"But why enumerate my feelings and hopes? In the midst of all my scenes of danger and of horror, my only source of support and consolation was to think of thee and of my hoped return to the land of my fathers. And now to have returned, and to have found thee thus—the betrothed of another! O Fanny, Fanny! amidst all my wanderings there never ceased to dwell within my heart a longing desire for that pure domestic bliss, the fruit of reciprocal affection; and I ventured to hope that it might have been found in thee, the innocent playmate of my childhood. That hope has left me too. Now, I—But why should I disturb the

happiness of one who is dearer to me than my own existence. I shall leave you, Fanny, at once and for ever; and may he whom you love be to you all that I could have joyed to have been!"

Again he bent on her one long impassioned look; but its character was indeed different. It spoke of the interminable attachment, the soft regard, the tender affection, and the deep devotedness of one who regarded not self, so that he might minister to the happiness of her whom his whole heart loved so fondly. That one look passed through her whole frame like a warm glow of young life; it awakened at once, in full power, all the pure fervour of that affection which had formerly quickened the trembling pulsations of her youthful heart. Though years had passed, and a considerable change had taken place in her situation and in her mental capacities, yet had her first love remained in the innermost recesses of her bosom, pure as the elemental fire in the rays of the sun. It was indeed hidden for a time by one of a less celestial nature; but it mingled not with it, nor could it be extinguished—it was the love of the soul. That look of pure ethereal love, beaming from the expressive eyes of Henry Bruce, had rekindled its sleeping embers; and she felt that George Campbell held but a very secondary place in her affection. A throb of unutterable anguish swelled her heart as she reflected upon her present circumstances. But her high sense of honour pointed out her line of conduct. "Leave me, Henry!" said she, with a sad, but resolute voice; "leave me, for I cannot now be yours; and to listen to you in that strain is improper in the destined wife of another. We must meet no more; but, wherever you go, or whatever may be your fate, if it will console you in any manner, know that Fanny Maxwell would have died a thousand deaths rather than done what she has done, had she known that her first lover still survived!"

Just as she finished speaking these words, and before the fervour of her meaning and utterance had left her quivering lip, George Campbell advanced, and stood beside the lovers. His face was deadly pale, and his fixed features and compressed lips betrayed the emotion which he was evidently struggling to suppress. He had seen the first meeting and embrace of the lovers; and, thinking that he had a right to know who dared assume such familiarity with his affianced bride, he approached unseen, so near as to overhear all their conversation. This he was easily able to do, from the nature of the place, and the engrossing power of their feelings, which rendered them insensible to all around them. He soon learned that, though he should claim and obtain the hand of Fanny Maxwell, it was no longer in her power to bestow her heart. It would be superfluous to say that this discovery agonized his bosom more keenly than all that had ever befallen him. But his heart had learned that there was more real gratification in the exercise of noble and generous virtue and self-denial, than in all the pleasures that could flow from the enjoyment even of life's dearest blessing. His love for Fanny Maxwell had taught him generosity; and her words, when she knew not that he heard the sacrifice they vowed to make, for whom that sacrifice was to be made, confirmed him in his purpose. He took her trembling hand in his, pressed it fervently to his lips, and spoke:—"Heaven knows, my dearest Fanny! with what sincerity I have loved you, and how fondly I would have made you mine. My heart, before I loved you, was a deadened, selfish thing. If it now has any virtue, any sense of generosity, it is to you that it owes them. Let me prove my gratitude. I have heard all that has passed since your meeting with your first lover. To him I resign any claims which I might have conceived that I had upon you. Receive, sir, this highly-valued hand from me. May you both be as happy as your brightest hopes can picture, in the auspicious return and the steady continuance of that purest, sweetest of human passions, 'FIRST LOVE!'"

BARNHILL, THE FREEBOOTER ;

OR,

A RAT TRAP ON A LARGE SCALE.

AT the foot of an assemblage of beautiful, picturesque rocks, called Minto Crags, that overlook the vale of Teviot, there are the remains of an old square tower of prodigious strength, but of the simplest and rudest form.

This tower was the residence, in remote times, of a fierce outlaw, or Border riever, of the name of Barnhill, of whom the following story is told. Having been much annoyed and interrupted in his forays into Cumberland by the captain, or military governor of Bewcastle, in that country, he determined to rid himself, by a contrivance no less bold than ingenious, at once and for ever of this troublesome enemy. Barnhill's tower, though it might be described as we have already described it—namely, as a simple square building—yet was there a slight departure from this simplicity of form, occasioned by a small area or courtyard in front of the structure, formed by four very high walls, and through which only was the tower accessible.

The first movement in Barnhill's contrivance to effect the purpose alluded to, was to have similar fastenings attached to the outside of the door which led into the courtyard spoken of with those by which it was secured on the inside, so that a person from without could fasten the door as effectually as a person within, and thus prevent all egress from the building. This done, Barnhill, attended by some followers, rode into Cumberland, and committed such depredations on the governor of Bewcastle as he knew would lead to immediate reprisals. Having effected this part of his object, he returned homewards, sending his retainers on before him, with the booty which had been taken from the governor.

Barnhill, as has been said, calculated on being attacked in turn by the party whom he had spoiled; and he concluded rightly; but it happened that this retribution came upon him a little sooner than he had expected; although, as the sequel will shew, this circumstance did not in the least mar the success of his plot. Happening to look back as he was leisurely about to turn the brow of a hill, within two or three miles of his own residence, and where he considered himself in perfect safety, he saw a party of eight or ten horsemen coming as hard as they could drive in the direction in which he was, and immediately after heard the deep baying of a bloodhound.

"If ye be the captain of Bewcastle," said Barnhill to himself, as he looked at the horsemen, "this is mair than I bargained for."

The captain of Bewcastle it certainly was, and Barnhill was indeed the object of his pursuit—a fact which the latter soon discovered, and immediately took to his heels; for he was at this moment on foot, having, not half an hour before, sent forward his horse by the only retainer he had kept about him, with the booty with which it was loaded. But, though Barnhill might have defied the horsemen, by taking to inaccessible places, such a proceeding would have been of no service whatever in securing him from the pursuit of the dog, who was fast gaining on him, and whose ferocious growl was becoming every moment more and more audible.

There was but one way of arresting the career of these savage animals, when in pursuit of their prey; and this way, Barnhill, from long experience, knew well. It was to spill some blood in the way of the hound, which has the effect of destroying his scent. Aware of this, as we have said, the courageous outlaw quickly bared his left arm, drew a knife from his belt, inflicted several deep wounds on his arm, and steadily passed the streaming limb over several yards of ground, until he thought he had made

such a track of blood as would certainly arrest the progress of the dog.

This done, he proceeded in his flight. In a few minutes afterwards, the hound, keeping the precise track of the object of his pursuit, came upon the blood, and was, as a matter of course, instantly thrown out. The baffled dog was shortly joined by the horsemen; and, for some time, the whole party were at fault. Soon discovering, however, the cause of the interruption, they resumed the pursuit; but the time lost enabled Barnhill to gain his castle before they could make up to him. It was a close run, however; for the former had little more time than to enter his own gate, before his pursuers were upon him. These, on arriving before the tower, hastily dismounted from their horses; and, knowing they were close on Barnhill's heels, for they saw him enter the gate, rushed sword in hand, and with loud shouts of exultation, into the little courtyard, already described, in front of the castle, thinking that, as the gate had been left open, which they attributed to the hurry of the fugitive's flight, they would find easy access to the interior of the building. Full of this idea, they rushed on the door which, opening from the court, led immediately into the tower; but were rather disconcerted on finding it well secured. For some time, however, they endeavoured to force it open; but, finding this vain, they were about to retire, to consult on some other plan of getting into the building, when, lo! to their utter consternation and dismay, they found the outer gate shut, and no means of egress left them! They discovered, in short, that they were fairly entrapped. While they had been employed in attempting to force the inner door, Barnhill had slung a man down with a rope from one of the windows at the back of the tower; and this person having stolen round to the front gate, had secured it, unperceived, in the way mentioned, and then quietly awaited the result; but not, however, before he had taken possession of the invaders' horses, an additional booty, and removed them out of the way.

At the moment that the captain of Bewcastle and his men made the discovery of their real situation, a loud shout of laughter arose from the battlements of the tower, when the hapless invaders, looking up, discovered Barnhill and his men looking down upon them, quietly enjoying their dilemma, and in raptures with the success of the contrivance which had brought them into it; for they were, in truth, now like as many rats in a trap.

We wish, for the credit of Barnhill, that the story had finished in the same spirit of humour in which it begins and with which it is marked throughout; but we are sorry to say this is not the case. Reversing the usual conduct of dramatic exhibitions, Barnhill gives us, on this occasion, at any rate, tragedy after farce. When that fierce Borderer and his men had exhausted their mirth, and the joke of the captured invaders had become stale, these ferocious outlaws might be seen coolly preparing, even with the smile yet on their faces, to finish in blood what had begun in laughter and glee. Bows might now be seen stringing in all directions, on the top of the tower, and deadly shafts fitting to the cord. We need hardly say what followed. The unhappy captives were deliberately shot at from the battlements, in the midst of as much fun, and frolic, and witty jest, as if they had been a herd of deer, until the last man had fallen, when the outlaws, rushing down with swords in their hands, completed the work of death which the arrow had left unfinished—and thus perished the captain of Bewcastle and his men.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

RATTLING, ROARING WILLIE.

RATTLING, ROARING WILLIE, an ancient Border minstrel, was a well-known character, in the south of Scotland, in the time of James V. His hilarious title, Sir Walter Scott supposes, was derived from his bullying disposition; but this, we humbly think, is not precisely the term which the great novelist ought to have employed on the occasion. It rather does Willie an injustice; for, although, according to Johnson, bully means no more than a noisy, quarrelsome person, yet usage has associated with it a certain degree of cowardice; and we are apt to look on a bully as a vain-glorious fellow, who is much more ready with his tongue than his hands. Now, this was by no means the case with Willie. He certainly was a rattling, roaring boy, as described by his soubriquet; but he was no craven—very far from it. He could drink and fight with any man that ever handled cup or cudgel; and was at all times as ready to bite as to bark. Indeed, it was his pugnacious disposition that ultimately caused his destruction. He killed, in a duel, which was fought with swords, one of his own profession, with whom he had quarreled; and for this was, most iniquitously we think, if we are rightly informed of the case, hanged at Jedburgh.

Our intention at present, however, is, not to enter into a defence of Willie's character, which we suspect must now be left to shift for itself, but to relate an adventure of his which is not very generally known.

Our "jovial harper" once took it into his head to treat himself to a tramp through Fife, to see what kind of ale they brewed on the other side of the Frith, and, generally, to see what sort of living he might pick up there. Having come to this resolution, Willie slung his harp on his back, took a stout cudgel in his fist, and, after partaking of a Hawick gill with a crony in the ancient little town from which the celebrated measure just spoken of takes its name, he started, and drank, and fought, and roared, and played his way through the country, till he arrived at the shore of Leith, where he intended ferrying over to Kinghorn. The ferry boat had just put off, when Willie reached the quay, all breathless and exhausted—for he had run every step of the way from Edinburgh, where he had stopped to refresh his inward man; and where he would have tarried much longer in the discharge of this important duty, had he not been told that, if he did not make haste, he would certainly lose the boat. On perceiving the latter pulling away from the shore—"Haud there! haud!" roared out Willie. "Back, ye villains! and tak me owre; and I'll gie ye a stoup o' the best in Kinghorn."

Obedient to Willie's summons—the more so, perhaps, on account of the promise that was associated with it—the boatmen put about, and the minstrel was taken on board, and in due time safely deposited on the opposite shore; where, having redeemed his pledge to the seamen, he started for the interior of the country; and, after a walk of some fifteen or twenty miles, which he had traversed with various success, he made up to a respectable looking

house at a little distance from the road, where he proposed to seek quarters for the night.

The house alluded to was the residence of the laird of Whinnyhill, or Winnel, as he was more shortly called.

Being a total stranger in the place, Willie assumed a modesty of manner and quietness of demeanour which, it must be confessed, were not amongst the number of his natural failings; but he felt that he could not, with propriety, use the same freedom here that he did in his own part of the country, where he was well known to everybody. It was, therefore, with this sort of mock-modesty, that Willie appeared at the laird of Whinnyhill's gate, and sought a night's quarters from a person who happened to be standing at the said gate when he approached. This person was the laird himself.

"A night's quarters!" said the latter, in reply to Willie's request, and, at the same time, eyeing him archly, and exhibiting a degree of respect in his manner which Willie was grievously at a loss to understand—"that ye shall hae, sir—a score o' them an' ye choose, and the best that my puir hoose can afford, to the bargain." And, after bestowing on his visiter another look of intelligence, which intimated a vast deal more than the latter could comprehend, the laird conducted him into the house. On entering, Willie made directly, and of his own accord, for his usual quarters in such cases—the kitchen; but this he did in direct opposition to the laird, who was conducting him towards his best apartment. On observing, however, that Willie insisted on taking the former course—

"Weel, weel, sir," he said, laughing, "ye will hae yer joke oot, I see; but ye'll do me the honour" (this he said in a whisper) "to join me ben the hoose when ye tire o' yer amusement?"

To this proposal, Willie, though perfectly at a loss to comprehend the meaning of all this extraordinary kindness, readily assented; but, in the meantime, proceeded to the destination which he had originally proposed to himself. Here he found assembled the domestic servants of the family—lads and lassies, to the number of eight or nine. This was just what Willie wanted—an auditory; and he lost no time in giving them a taste of his calling. In ten minutes, he had the kitchen in an uproar with noise and laughter. He sang, danced, played, and pulled the girls about, till one and all declared they had never seen such a harumscarum chiel in all their lives. To all these various sources of entertainment, he added some of his best stories, which, as much from the sly and *pawky* manner in which they were told, as from their inherent humour, were found to be irresistible; and the consequence was, that there was not one within hearing of them capable of doing anything else than laughing or listening to the sly narrator.

Willie, in short, as he always was, was triumphant. Amongst the merry minstrel's auditory on this occasion, was the laird himself; and none seemed more to enjoy the fun than he did, although there was all along in his manner that most unaccountable degree of respect for his guest, which had already marked his conduct towards him, and which the object of it had such difficulty in comprehending. If

this circumstance, however, puzzled Willie, how much more was he confounded, when the laird whispered to him, that, "as they had now had plenty o' daffin, he would be glad of his company ben the hoose, where the guidwife had prepared a bit comfortable supper for them!" It was in vain that Willie said, he "wad just remain where he was, and tak a mouthfu' along wi' the servants—that he was not in the habit of sitting at gentlefolks' tables," &c. No excuses of this or any other kind would avail with the laird, who again bestowed on Willie one of those mysterious looks of intelligence which have been already alluded to, and insisted upon his accompanying him "ben the hoose." Finding that his host would take no denial, and perceiving, moreover, that it was at least all well meant, Willie at length followed the laird, and soon found himself seated at a plentiful board with the "guidwife" dressed in her best at the head.

Much, however, as all this surprised the jovial harper, it did not in the least disconcert him, or deprive him, in any degree, of the presence of mind and ready wit—shall we add impudence—that was natural to him. Diffidence, as has been already hinted, was no part of his character; and he, therefore, very soon found himself perfectly at ease in his unwonted situation, and joked away with the laird and his wife till the roof rang again with the laughter of the joyous party; but it was not till the bottle had been introduced, and had made several rounds, that Willie began to shine forth in meridian splendour. The stimulating liquor had no sooner begun to operate than he broke out into the wild and obstreperous glee which so signally characterised him in his cups; and renewing (but now with double effect, in consequence of the drink he had swallowed, and the generally comfortable state in which he found himself after an excellent supper) the part he had acted in the kitchen, he roared, and shouted, and sang, till the very rafters shook—slapped the goodwife on the shoulders, and gripped the hand of the husband till he nearly squeezed the blood out of his finger ends.

Both the laird and his lady were delighted with their guest; and it is certain that he was no less pleased with them. As it got late, however, the former retired from the apartment, and left her husband and Willie to finish the night and the bottle by themselves—a task which they instantly set about with great zeal and good will. Cup followed cup with marvellous celerity, and with each the bonds of friendship between the revellers were drawn closer and closer. They grasped each other's hands in the fulness of their hearts, and joined together in the choruses of the bacchanalian ditties with which Willie, from time to time, at once varied and enlivened the festivity of the evening. It must be remarked, however, that, during the night, the laird had more than once hinted to his guest that he knew more of him than he was perhaps aware of.

"However, let that flee stick to the wa'," he would add. "I'm no ane to spoil onybody's sport, much less yours. Only tak my advice, sir, and tak care o' yoursel, if ye be gaun through the Middlemass wood; for there's been twa or three lowse-looking chieles seen dodgin about there since yesterday mornin."

"Ye ken mair o' me than I'm aware o', my honest friend," said Willie, on the occasion alluded to, in reply to his host's hints and insinuations, and at the same time slapping him on the shoulder. "I weel believe that, for I'm weel kent in the south country; but, bating the drap drink, and a sough about my bein rather fond o' the lassies, ye could hear nae ill o' me, I think."

"Oh, no, sir—the ne'er a bit," replied his host; "nae ill ava. Thae twa things just comprehend the very warst I ever heard o' ye."

"And as to the chields in the Middlemass wood, laird," continued Willie, "I'll tak my chance o' them. An' I should

forgather wi' them, I hae a bit aim here" (and he clapped his hand on his sword) "that has stood me in guid stead mony a time before, and I'm willin to trust a guid deal till't yet. I can either tak or gie a clour, when such things are gaun."

"Od, sir, out ye play yer character to the life!" shouted out the delighted laird. "I've seen twa or three maskins and mummies in my day, but confound me if ever I saw ane come up to ye! Ye haena said or dune a thing the nicht oot o' joint—a' clean and richt as if ye had been at the trade a' yer life."

"The deil's in the man!" replied Willie, in amazement at the singularity of the laird's remarks, "and havena I been at it a' my life—ay, sir, I was nae bigger than a pint stoup."

"Ah! ha! ha! very guid, very guid," roared out Whinnyhill. "There's nae drivin ye into a corner, I see, sir. Here's to ye again, sir, and lang may ye be spared to amuse yersel and ither folk too!" Saying this, the laird, who was already within a trifle of being floored, turned over such another quantity of liquor as threatened to consummate the catastrophe.

His example was immediately followed by Willie, who, though far from being in a perfectly sound condition, was yet, from long practice, better able to stand his drink than his host. Still both were in such a state that it was impossible their carouse could go on much longer; and accordingly, by common consent, it soon after came to a close, but not, it must be observed, before they had finished every drop of drinkable liquor that stood before them. This accomplished, the laird, though his way was but a devious one, conducted the minstrel to his sleeping apartment, where he left him for the night; and here again the latter's surprise was excited, by finding that he had been shewn into what was evidently the best bedroom in the house. The sheets were as white as a wreath of snow, while the bed itself was of the softest down, presenting to Willie a very striking contrast to the bundles of straw and coarse ragged matts which formed his usual couch during his peregrinations.

On observing this climax to the singularly kind treatment which he had met with in his present quarters, Willie flung himself down into a chair, and endeavoured to think as well as he could over the events of the night, and to see if he could hit upon any plausible conjecture regarding the cause of the extraordinary hospitality that had been shewn him; and, with a look of drunken gravity, he began thus to cogitate within himself.

"The deil hae me, but this beats a'! I've often heard the folk o' Fife were queer folk, and, by my faith, I find it true. But it's a' on the richt side. I wish I could find such queer folk everywhar I gaed to. Nae queer folk o' this kind in our part o' the country. Faith, Willie, lad, ye fell on yer feet whan ye cam here. The best in the hoose! Naething less, as I'm a sinner; and as much drink as"—here Willie hiccupped violently—"as ony decent man wad wish to hae under his belt—that's, no to be the waur o't; and, to crown a', a bed that micht ser' the King himsel. This is what I ca' treatin a man weel. And such a canty hearty cock o' a landlord too! I haena seen his match this mony a day, and I'm fear'd they're owre thin sawn for me to see't for mony a day to come." And here Willie paused for a considerable time, to indulge in fancies which were either too profound or came too thick for utterance. At length, however, starting up from his reverie, having been unable, evidently, to make anything of his conjecture, "I'm much obliged to him, at ony rate," he muttered, "and that's a' I can say about it." And, immediately after, he tumbled into bed. Willie, however, had not lain here more than a minute, when his attention was attracted by a low murmuring, as if of two persons in conversation in the adjoining apartment.

The partition, which was close by his ear, was of wood; and he found that, by listening attentively, he could gather pretty fully all that passed; and to this employment, therefore, he

immediately betook himself, when he discovered that the laird and his wife were the speakers. The result of Willie's application on this occasion was his overhearing the following conversation. His own share of it, as it was of course interjectional and inaudible to the parties, we put within parentheses.

"But are ye sure it's him, John, after a'?" said the laird's better half.

("Him!—wha?" muttered Willie.)

"Sure that it's him, guidwife!" replied the laird, hiccupping at intervals as he spoke. "Deil a doot's o' that! Did ye ever ken me mistaen in my life, when I said I was sure o' a thing? I kent him the moment I clapped my ee upon him, although I never saw him in my life before."

("Did ye, faith?" here again interjected Willie, who had no doubt that he himself was the subject of the conversation to which he was listening. "My word, then, but ye're a gleg chiel.")

"There's that about him that canna be mistaen by any thing o' a quick ee, however he may disguise himsel."

("Disguise himsel! What does the body mean by that? Whan did I disguise mysel, unless it war wi' liquor? Maybe he means that, though.")

"And, besides," continued the unconscious speaker, "hadna I certain information, frae a quarter that I couldna doot, that he had set oot on ane o' his vagaries, and that there was every reason to believe that he had come oor way. And it's the very dress, too, that was described to me."

("By my troth, then, but that's queer aneuch!" here quoth Willie. "Wha the deil could hae tellt you that I was on the tramp, and that I was coming this way? My very dress described, too—'od, that's unaccountable.")

"It's a queer notion that o' the man's wanderin about the country this way," here interposed the laird's wife. "I'm sure he maun meet wi' mony odd adventures whan he's on thae tramps."

("Deil a doot's o't—mony a ane; and that I hae met wi' the nicht's ane o' them. But what's strange in the notion o' me gaun about the country? How else could I mak a leevin o't?")

"His faither had the same trick before him," replied the laird to his wife's remarks.

("That's a curst lie—my faither, honest man, was a douce, decent, sober-livin weaver.")

"I reckon't, guidwife, a lucky thing that he has come oor way."

("Do ye, indeed!—then, feth, sae do I.")

"He'll no forget oor kindness, I dare say."

("The ne'er a bit o' that I'll do.")

"And maybe he'll help us to oor ain again, frae the laird o' Haudthegrip."

("Wi' great pleasure. But hoo do ye expect such a service as that frae the like o' me?")

"I've heard o' his doin the like afore. But I say, guidwife, mind we maunna just let on barefacedly that we ken wha he is; for I can see, frae the way he took my hints the nicht, that he doesna like it. A' that I could do I could na drive him into a corner on that subject. He aye shyed the question. Sae we maun tak nae mair notice o't; for ye ken kings are kittle cattle to deal wi'."

("Kings! Whar the deevil are ye noo, laird? What's a' this about?")

"So they're said to be, John," replied the laird's better half; "and I think the less we hae to do wi' them the better."

("My feth, ye're richt there, guidwife, as I ken to my cost. I was ance very near hanged by the King by mistake, aniang a whcen Border rievvers that he strung up. The rope was about my neck before he wad listen to my story or be convinced that I wasna ane o' the gang.")

"This is the first night," continued the laird's wife,

"ever a king was under my roof, and I hope it'll be the last."

Here we must interrupt the dialogue for a moment to say that it would have done any man's heart good to have seen the expression of Willie's countenance when this last sentence reached his ear. The painter's art alone could convey a correct idea of the look of perplexity and amazement which it exhibited. A glimmering of the facts of that singular case which will shortly be made to appear plain enough, began to break in upon him. But, as he could not yet entirely trust to its feeble light—in other words, could not believe what he heard, or rather could not believe that it applied to him—he lay as still as death, scarcely daring to breathe till he should gather something more regarding the strange insinuation that had just reached him; and for this he had not long to wait.

"Speak laigh, Jenny—speak laigh, woman," said the laird, in reply to his wife's disloyal remark. "He's maybe no sleepin; and I wadna for the best cow in my byre that he heard ye say what ye hae said. I assure you, for my part, guidwife, I'm very proud o' the honour. He's just as guid a fellow as ever I spent a nicht wi'. My faith, he tooms his bicker like a man, as your greybeard 'ill witness in the mornin, guidwife."

Here a loud and long-drawn whee-e-ou from Willie announced that he was now fully enlightened on the mysterious subject of the extraordinary attention, kindness, and hospitality of the Laird of Whinnyhill, and his wife.

There was, in short, he felt, no longer any doubt of the fact, that he had been mistaken by them for no less a personage than the King, James V., whom all our readers know was in the habit of going about the country frequently in disguise; and it was true, as the laird had said, he had heard that he was at this moment abroad on one of those whimsical perambulations; and it was farther true, that he was in the neighbourhood of Whinnyhill.

Here, then, was rather an odd predicament for the southland harper. And he felt it to be so.

"Ta'en for the King, as I'm a sinner!" said Willie—thus following up the whistle of amazement with which he had hailed the disclosure of the astounding fact. "'Od, this coves the gowan! I've met wi' mony a queer thing in my life, but this beats a' oot and oot, as the weaver's wife said when she couldna find an end to the puddin.'" And Willie forthwith proceeded to ruminate internally on the singular situation in which he now found himself; and it was while thus ruminating that he was struck with the bright idea which forms the leading feature in the sequel of our tale. This idea was, to maintain the character which had been thrust upon him, and to continue to enjoy the good living which, judging from what he had already met with, was likely to accrue from the deception. He determined, therefore, to try and throw a little more dignity into his manner and to be a little more guarded in his language—a good deal of which he felt would scarcely be becoming in a king, whatever character he might choose to personify; and, in conclusion, he resolved, in all cases where he should perceive that he was not mistaken for a prince in disguise—which he was conscious would, after all, be but seldom—to give such hints as should induce the desired belief; and, where it should appear to exist, to confirm it by the same means.

Having chalked out this line of conduct for himself, and having indulged in a few more speculations on the subject, Willie resigned himself to sleep, and, in the morning, awoke—a king in disguise.

True to the resolutions he had formed overnight, and not without ability to act up to them, Willie, on the laird's entrance into the apartment in the morning, to inquire how he had slept, looked as majestic as he could; and, in a familiar, but somewhat condescending manner, saluted him with—

"Ha, laird! how dost? None the worse for thy potations last night? On my royal—ah! on my word, I mean—thou hast been nearer regicide than thou wotest of. Another such night and I would be a dead man!"

"The deil a fear o' ye, sir!" said the laird, now fully confirmed in his belief that it was James that stood before him. "It's no a drap guid soun' liquor that'll kill ye, I warrant; and it was nane o' the warst ye had last nicht, I assure ye. It wad hae been ill my pairt if it had. And noo, sir," he continued, producing at the same time a huge bottle of brandy which he had hitherto concealed behind his back—"Ye'll just tak a hair o' the dog that bit ye. A toothfu' o' this," filling up a large cup, "'ll keep the cauld mornin air aff yer stomach; for, nae doot, sir, yours, after a', is just like ither folk's."

"Richt soond advice, laird, as I'm a—a sinner. I'll pledge thee most cheerfully," said Willie, stretching out his hand to take the proffered cup, and, thereafter, draining it to the bottom with an eagerness and relish that amazed even the laird, who certainly thought it rather odd in a king.

"Anither, sir?" said the latter, encouraged by the rapidity of his guest's execution, and looking at him sily as he spoke.

"Why, laird, I don't mind if I do," replied Willie. "It warms me like a yard o' Welsh flannel. If my mother's milk had been like that, laird, I would have been sucking still!" Saying this, he turned over another cup with undiminished gusto. Here, in truth, was a weak point in Willie's character. He could not resist liquor; and had the laird persevered in giving him more drink, he would very soon have unhinged him; for there is little doubt that he would have forgotten his assumed dignity, and have swallowed much more than became a king at that unseasonable hour.

Luckily for his guest, however, the laird desisted from pressing the bottle farther, and this danger was avoided.

Willie, again conducted by his host, now proceeded to an apartment, where he found a sumptuous breakfast prepared for him, of which he partook with an appetite that impressed his host with a very high and satisfactory opinion of the state of his sovereign's health; and, being a loyal subject, the circumstance filled him with unfeigned joy.

On the conclusion of the repast—"Weel, sir," said Willie's host, "what direction do ye propose takin noo? I hear there's to be a gran' hanlin at Braehead the nicht. Ye might get some rare fun there, sir, an' ye gaed—just o' the kind ye like."

"Why, thank ye, Whinnyhill—thank ye for the hint! I'll just e'en go there, then. But what's the occasion, laird?"

"A very guid ane, sir—a hoose heatin. The laird o' Tumlinwa's takin possession o' his new hoose; and he's no ane to stint his freens o' either meat or drink when he brings them thegither. Ye'll want for naething, I'se warrant ye."

"Why, faith, mine honest friend, and these are just the quarters I like," replied Willie, very well pleased to have got such a useful hint as to the direction he ought next to take.

"But," continued the laird, "mind the Middlemass wood, sir, and keep a gleg ee aboot ye when ye're passin through't; for, as I was sayin before, there's some gay unchancy chieils thereabouts 'enow."

"Never fear me, laird," replied Willie; "I'D gie as guid's I get ony day—let who likes try't."

Willie being now ready to resume his journey, and having expressed a wish to do so without farther delay—for, in truth, he was not sure how long he might escape detection—the laird accompanied him a little way, to see him, as he said, fairly on his way.

At parting, Willie took his host by the hand, and said, with all the dignity he could muster, and with a look which

was intended to convey a great deal more than it would have been perfectly proper to express—

"Fare-ye-well, laird, and many thanks for your hospitality. Depend upon it, I will not soon forget it. It may stand thee in good stead some day." And with this he walked off with as much majesty as he could conveniently assume, leaving the laird of Whinnyhill highly delighted with his good fortune in having had an opportunity of making the personal acquaintance and friendship of his sovereign.

Willie, in the meantime, pursued his way; and, after two or three hours' smart walking, found himself entering the wood about which he had been cautioned by his late host; and, although as indifferent to danger of the kind here threatened as most men, he thought there would be no harm in keeping the sharp look-out recommended to him.

He now accordingly proceeded with a more wary step, and kept peering around him as he advanced, to prevent his being taken by surprise. And it was not long ere he found that neither his own caution nor the hints which his late host had given him were unnecessary. When he had got about half way through the wood, he perceived three or four suspicious looking fellows skulking amongst the trees a little in advance of him, and directly in the route he was pursuing.

"By St Andrew, there they are!" said Willie, on observing the persons alluded to—"the very chieils the laird spoke aboot, or I'm greatly mistaen." And he began to free his sword hilt from those parts of his garment which were likely to interfere with its ready use. Although somewhat alarmed at the appalling odds against him, Willie resolutely held on his course till he arrived within a few paces of the foremost, who stood directly in his way with a drawn sword in his hand, and who he now perceived was masked and muffled to the eyes in a cloak, as were also all his companions.

On perceiving the hostile attitude of the fellow, Willie also drew, stopped short, and demanded the reason of his being thus interrupted in his peaceful progress. To this inquiry no immediate reply was made. The ruffians seemed doubtful of their object—indeed, Willie overheard them say as much; and they appeared, besides, rather disconcerted by his resolute bearing and by the circumstance of his being armed. This he also overheard. Observing their hesitation, and thinking his assumed dignity, if announced, might terrify the fellows, and save him from the perils of an unequal encounter, Willie called out to them—"What, ye knaves! would ye kill your King? Never were expressions more unluckily chosen—never imposition worse timed.

"It is him! it is him!" shouted out the ruffians in reply. "Down with the tyrant!—down with the spoiler! Strike, Geordie, strike, for a thousand merks." And the whole rushed upon Willie at once, repeating their cries of "Down with the tyrant! the spoiler!" &c. But this was much easier said than done. Willie instantly retreated before his enemies. But it was by no means from fear. He was practising a very ingenious ruse; and it was one that he brought to a very successful issue. He retired from his assailants in order to separate them; and, having succeeded in this, he suddenly turned round, and, before the man who was nearest him was aware of his intention, ran him through the body. Having accomplished this dexterous feat, which he did quick as thought, he continued his flight until another had got considerably in advance of his companions, when he repeated the experiment, but this time by striking a desperate back blow with his sword, which, taking full effect on the face of his pursuer, inflicted a hideous wound that instantly disabled him from all further exertion. The other two, seeing the fate of their associates, and horror-struck with the ghastly appearance of him that was just wounded, lost heart, and fled. But, for one of them at least, this attempt was vain. Willie's blood was now up; and, not content with

what he had already done, he gave chase, shouting out, as he pursued, "Down wi' the tyrant, ye villains! By St Andrew, we'll see wha'll be doun first! If I dinna gie ye yer kail through the reek, may I never chew cheese again!" And with this—for Willie was as supple of limb as dexterous and ready of hand—having overtaken the hindmost of the fugitives, he ran the flying ruffian through the back, who instantly fell forward on his face, a dead man. Thinking he had now done enough, and not a little exhausted with the exertions he had made, Willie, allowing the last of his assailants to escape, flung himself on the ground, to recover breath, exclaiming, as he did so, after a long drawn respiration. "Hech, but this has been a deevil o' a teuch job! This kingcraft 'ill never do. Here have I been as near murdered on account o't as ony decent man wad wish to be. I've nae notion o' the tred ava, whar ye're cuttled up ae nicht like a sick wife, wi' the best to eat and drink, and the next to hae yer throat cut. It's no the thing, by ony means."

Such were the reflections in which Willie indulged on this occasion—an occasion which had shewn him that the life of a king, as kings and subjects were in Scotland in his time, whatever respect it might procure him, in some instances was one of no small peril. Although, however, he had determined, from the experience which he had just had of the dangers of royalty, to resign the character, and disavow all claims to its dignities very shortly, he yet resolved on going through with it for one day longer—that is, until he had tried what sort of treatment it would procure him at Brachhead, whither, the reader will recollect, he was now proceeding on the recommendation of the laird of Whinnyhill.

In this resolution, therefore, he in a few minutes started once more to his feet, and resumed his journey, leaving the dead bodies of the slain where they had fallen; but not, it must be observed, before he had carefully searched them, to see whether or not there was anything about them to reward him for the trouble of killing them. But in this he was disappointed. On none of them was there anything of the smallest value.

"'Od, ye've been as pair's mysel," he said, on completing his fruitless scrutiny into the pockets of the deceased. "Deil a bodle! No as muckle as wad supper a midge."

Having said this, he rose from the kneeling posture to which his employment had reduced him, and, as we have already said, resumed his march through the Middlemass wood.

Leaving Willie to prosecute his journey, we request the reader to return with us to Whinnyhill, where we shall find a circumstance occurring which is intimately connected with the denouement of our tale.

Shortly after the former's departure from the place just named, another stout carle of a mendicant appeared at the laird's gate. It was the dinner hour, and, as was then customary in the country, and is so still, we believe, in some places, the doors were all carefully secured, and no egress or ingress permitted, till the conclusion of the meal. To this exclusion, however, the person now seeking admission to the laird's, did not seem willing to submit; for he began to thunder at the gate with an impetuosity and vehemence that scarcely beseeemed his very humble calling; and, as if this was not enough, he shouted out at the top of his voice on the inmates to open the gate to him.

Yet, however unbecoming his conduct, or however insolent it may be thought, it had the desired effect of procuring him the service he wanted.

The laird himself answered the call though certainly more for the purpose of letting out his wrath on the noisy intruder, than to let him in.

"My feth, friend," he said, his anger greatly increased when, on opening the gate, he found that it was a common

vagrant who sought admittance, "but ye're no blate to rap at folk's doors this gaet. An' ye had been the best man in the land, ye couldna hae been baulder. My certy, it's come to a pretty pass, when beggars bang at yer door like lords!"

"The devil's in the old churl!" replied the undaunted beggar. "Dost not see that I'm knocked up with fatigue, man, and didst think I was to stand here starving of hunger if a few knocks at your gate was to bring me a little nearea to some refreshment? Come, Whinnyhill," continued the free and easy beggar, at the same time slapping the former familiarly on the shoulder, "I know ye, man, I know ye to be a good honest fellow, and one who grudges nobody either bite or sup. So, let's have something to eat directly." And he bestowed another hearty smack on the laird's shoulder.

"By my feth, sirrah!" replied the latter, amazed and irritated at the singular ease and impudence of the mendicant, and above all at his presumptuous familiarity, "but that's a new way to seek awmous. 'Od, freen, an' ye lack anything, it 'ill no be for want o' askin't."

"Why, Whinnyhill, how should I get, if I didn't ask?" said the mendicant. "Take my word for't, Whinny, when you want a thing there's nothing like asking. Your modest fool always comes off with an empty hand, and maybe an empty stomach too. Why, man, dost think people will run after one offering one what one wants without solicitation? No, no; and, besides, a thing that's worth having is always worth asking."

"Ye're maybe no far wrang there, freend," said the laird: "but ye'll allow me to say that ye're ane o' the bauldest, no to say ane o' the impudentest beggars, I hae seen for a while. Nevertheless, ye may step into the kitchen there, and get a mouthfu' o' what's gaun; but mind ye, dinna kick up such a stramash at my yett again, when ye come seekin an awmous, or I'll maybe let ye cool your heels awwhile or ye win in, and thankfu' if I dinna set the dog on ye."

"The beggar man he thumped at the yett
Till bolt and bar did flee, O,
And aye he swore, as he thumped again,
That denied he wadna be, O.
Fal de ral, al al al, de reedle al de ral
Fal de ral, al al al, de reedle ee di.

"The beggar man he thumped at the yett
Till bolt and bar did flee, O,
When wha should come out but the laird himsel
And an angry man was he, O.
Fal de ral," &c.

Such was the reply, chaunted with great vociferation and glee, which the sturdy beggar vouchsafed to the laird's more candid than courteous remarks; and it would have been much longer, to the extent probably of a score of verses, had not Whinnyhill impatiently broken in with

"Wow, man, but ye're an ill-mannered graceless loon as ever I saw atween the twa een. The greatest man in the land, man, is mair humble and respectfu' than you, when he's gaun about the country as ye're doin, and nicht weel be an example to you and the like o' you."

"What mean ye, laird?—of whom do ye speak?" said the sturdy beggar, evidently somewhat disconcerted by the former's remark.

"Mean!" replied the laird, sharply—"I mean, sirrah, that the King himsel, when he ca's at ony decent man's house for a nicht's quarters, in his ramble through the country, is far mair civil and discreet than ye are."

"Indeed," said the mendicant. "Dost know the King personally, Whinny? Didst ever see him in the guise thou allud'st to?"

"Wad ye be the better if ye kent?" replied the laird, angrily; then adding, in better humour, as if recollecting it was something to boast of—"To be sure I do, sirrah! and

weel I may, seein that he sleepit here a' last nicht, and's no three hours awa yet."

"What, Whinny!—the King! The King here last night!" exclaimed the mendicant, now exhibiting, in his turn, symptoms of surprise and amazement. "Surely you are jesting, laird?"

"Jestin, sir! I'm jestin nane," said Whinnyhill, angrily. "The King *was* here last nicht, sirrah!"

"Impossible, Whinny!"

"Confound ye, sir!—wad ye make me a leear to my face?"

"Oh, no, no, laird," replied the former, laughing; "but you may be mistaken in your man. At any rate, if it is not impossible, it is certainly odd, Whinny."

"Odd, sir. What's odd about it? Do ye think the King wad think himsel demeaned by takin a nicht's quarters frae me?"

"Nay, nay; not at all—by no means, laird," replied the mendicant eagerly, as if anxious to do away the offensive impression—"by no means. The man would be unworthy of being a king who should think there was any degradation in sitting beneath the roof-tree, and partaking of the hospitality, of an honest and respectable man like you, Whinny. My surprise, laird, was at finding that the King had been here; for I was informed that he was in an entirely different part of the country. Pray, Whinny, what like a fellow was this King you speak of?"

"What like a *fellow*, sir!" replied the laird, in extreme wrath. "My feth, ye're no blate to speak o' yer sovereign in thae disrespectfu' terms. Fellow, in troth! Repeat that word again, sir, in the same breath wi' the King's name, and if I dinna teach ye better manners, blame me! Ye've muckle need o' a lesson, at ony rate."

"Very good, Whinny—very good," said the sturdy beggar, laughing heartily at the angry earnestness of the laird. "I meant no offence, man—none whatever. I've as great a respect for the King as you can possibly have."

"It doesna look like it," interrupted the laird.

"But it is so, nevertheless, I assure you," replied the former; "and I like you all the better, believe me, for your loyalty."

"Ye like me a' the better!" said the laird. "And wha the deil cares whether ye like me or no? By my troth, but ye're very condescendin'!"

"Well, well, Whinny," replied the mendicant, again laughing. "But tell me, how did you know the King in his disguise? Are ye sure it was him, after all?"

"Sure enough," said the laird, gruffly; "he mair than half confessed it himsel."

"Oh, he did!—then, there can be no doubt of it—none. I should like to see his Majesty, laird. Pray, can you tell me which way he has gone?"

"Ye're very inquisitive, freen," replied the latter; "and, to be plain wi' ye, I like neither that nor your familiarity. The King's awa to Braehead—and that's the last ye'll hae frae me; sae step into the kitchen and get a mouthfu', and then tak yersel aff as sun's ye like." And with this the laird was about to walk off, when the mendicant, who continued to stand still where he was, called him back and said—

"Laird, harkee—canst keep a secret?"

"If it's worth keepin, maybe I can."

"Well, then," rejoined the former, "altho'gn not very nice in these matters, I'm not altogether reconciled to taking my refection in your kitchen, though, I confess it, most particularly hungry; and therefore ask you what would you think now, if I was the King, and that person, whoever he is, whom you took to be the King, was an impostor?"

"Wow, man, but that's a clumsy trick," replied the laird, chuckling at his own ready sagacity and penetration. "I'm owre far north, lad, to be come owre that way."

"Well, laird," said the mendicant, (who—we need conceal the fact no longer from the reader—was indeed no other than James himself,) "well, laird," he said, smiling, "I assure you your penetration is at fault this time; for I tell you I am the King, Whinny!"

"And I tell you," replied the laird, "that I dinna believe a word o't; and mair, for your impudence in attempting to impose upon me, ye shanna get bite or sup here this day. Tak my word for that."

Dropping here the dialogue, we relate the sequel in simple narrative. It was in vain that James endeavoured to pacify the irritated laird, and to prevail upon him to believe that he really was the King, or to induce him to let him have the refreshment of which he stood so much in need. Obstinate at all times, Whinnyhill was particularly so on this occasion; and not all that the good-humoured monarch could say could move him from his purpose of denying him admittance to his house, or affording him the slightest hospitality.

Finding his efforts in vain, James at length gave up the task as hopeless; but, though not a little disappointed—for he felt both fatigued and hungry—he saw that he could not be displeased, since his churlish treatment by the laird, singularly enough, proceeded from his love and respect for himself. It greatly puzzled James, however, to conceive who it could possibly be that had taken up his incognito, (for that some one had done so he felt assured,) and seemed so successful in the use of it. The trick was a new one to him, and he could not help being tickled with the ingenuity of the impostor in hitting on so novel an idea. His curiosity, too, to see his rival, was great; so great that, on finding he could make nothing of the laird of Whinnyhill, he determined on setting out immediately for Braehead, a distance or about six or seven miles, whither he had been told his counterpart had gone; and, acting on this resolution, he started directly for that destination.

On passing through the Middlemass wood, which was the direct and shortest route to the place he was going to, the King's attention was arrested by the dead bodies which Willie had left behind him, and which were still lying as they had fallen.

"Ha!" exclaimed James, suddenly stopping on perceiving them, "what's this? Here has been some lawless work, which I must inquire into when I return to Falkland." A hollow groan at this moment fell on the King's ear, and directed him to the spot, at a little distance, where lay the man who had been so severely wounded on the face by the back stroke of Willie's rapier. King James stooped over the dying man, and inquired who he was, and what was the meaning of the horrid scene around him. The mutilated wretch fixed his glassy and almost sightless eyes on the face of the King, and said, speaking at long intervals, and as distinctly as his little remaining strength would permit.

"I am a dying man, stranger; but I deserve my fate."

"Indeed!" said James—"then thy iniquities must have been great, for thou'rt in very bad case. What hand dealt thee that cruel blow, man?"

"The King's," replied the wounded man.

"The King's!" said James, in astonishment—"what mean ye?"

"I mean," said the dying man, "that it was the King's sword that left me as you now see me. We waylaid him in this wood, expecting he would come this way—and he did, in disguise; but he was too many for us, being armed, which we did not look for."

"And what motive, miserable man," said James, "had you for attacking the King? I'm sure to you, and such as you, he has ever been a gracious prince. To none but his insolent and tyrannical nobles, who would make slaves of you and a puppet of him, has he ever been accused of severity."

"I acknowledge it," said the dying man. "But we were hired to do the bloody work."

"Ha! hired!" exclaimed James, in alarm; "who hired you? Speak, speak, man—who hired you?"

"That I will not tell," replied the man; "for I've been under obligations to him. But, stranger," he continued, "as you would have the blessings of a dying man upon your head, you will—you will"—

Here the speaker seemed on the point of expiring; and the King, perceiving this, and dreading that that event would take place before the dying man could make any further disclosures—

"I will what? I will what?" he said eagerly, and impatiently.

"You will," resumed the wounded man, after a short interval, "repair to Falkland, and tell the King—the King—to beware of—of"—

"Whom, whom, man?" again interrupted James, breathless with the feeling of intense interest that now possessed him—"whom, man, for a thousand pounds!" he exclaimed, forgetting, in his impatience and eager curiosity, his assumed character.

Apparently heedless, however, or unobservant of the questioner's emotion, the dying man at length slowly added, "Of the Earl of Bothwell"—and expired.

"Ha! Bothwell! Bothwell!" repeated James, now falling into a profound reverie; "ay, is he at these pranks? He shall be cared for, however. I warrant he plays no more of them. But it would seem," continued the King, musing, "that this impudent varlet, my counterpart, has stood me in good stead here, and, by mine honour done me good service too. Had it not been for him, however unwittingly he may have thus come between me and danger, I must have been slain by these ruffians. I'll forgive the dog his impudence, after all. Nay, he deserves a reward, and he shall have it too." Having said this, or rather thought it, James resumed his journey; and we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity which this circumstance affords, to throw in a word or two, explanatory of the discontented spirit which had led to the attempt on the King's life above spoken of.

James V., it is well known, though an amiable and generous prince, and possessed of many excellent qualities besides, was particularly obnoxious to his nobles, on account of his persevering and successful efforts to restrain and limit the exorbitant power which they had acquired during his minority, and which they shewed no disposition to relinquish on his assuming the reins of government.

With this political hostility, as it may be called, to his nobles, James, recollecting what he had suffered from them in his youth, mingled a feeling of bitter personal dislike; and the consequence was, an unrelenting and unremitting course of persecution on the one hand, and of impatient endurance on the other; and the attempt on the King's life, whose consequences our hero, Willie, had so opportunely averted, was one of the ebullitions of that treasonable spirit which this state of matters had engendered.

To return to our tale. Little more than an hour's walking having brought James to Braehead, he entered the house, which was one scene of mirth and festivity from one end to the other; and, uninvited, and, we may add, unopposed too, walked into the kitchen, where a number of country girls and their sweethearts were assembled, to share in the good cheer and jollity of the evening.

On entering the apartment, the King's attention was instantly attracted by a conspicuous figure seated at the farther end, and very enviably placed between two uncommonly pretty girls, whom he was entertaining with a volubility of tongue and noisy glee that seemed to afford them great delight, and to have carried him far into their good graces. But the influence of the exuberant spirits of this joyous, but somewhat obstreperous person, was by no means

confined to his two fair supporters. He had, by the time James entered, evidently secured that pre-eminence which belongs to the character usually known by the title of the cock of the company. He was, in short, obviously in undisputed possession of the popular voice; and there was no doubt was considered by every one there as first fiddle of the evening.

This jovial person, we need hardly say, was no other than our friend Willie; and James, as he eyed him, at once guessed that he was the person who had done him the honour of representing him at Whinnnyhill.

Satisfied of this, the disguised monarch stole quietly round to where Willie was seated, and whispered in his ear this courteous inquiry—

"I say, friend, who the devil are you?"

"And, I say," exclaimed Willie, looking hard at the querist, and by no means making any secret of his inquiry—"wha the deevil are ye?"

"Just what you see me," replied James—"going about the country seeking a living wherever I think it likely I may pick it up."

"Nae harm in that ava, freen," said Willie. "Puir bodies maun leeve some way or anither. They're no gaun to die at a dike side if they can get a mouthfu' for the askin."

"Surely not, surely not, friend," replied James. "But, I say," he added—and now drawing Willie close to him, in order that the communication he was about to make might be inaudible to those beside him—"do you think I don't know you, sir, notwithstanding your disguise? If you do, you are mistaken. I know you well, sir. You are the King!"

"And what though I be, sir?" said Willie, boldly, but secretly surprised to find royalty thus again thrust upon him. "What's that to you? But, I say," he added, and now whispering in his turn, "as ye value yer head, mum's the word about that 'enow; for I'm in very guid quarters whar I am, and hae nae wish to gang among the gentry. Sae keep a calm sough about it, or ye may fare the waur."

"Nay, nay, now," replied James; "I really cannot endure to see my sovereign in such an humble situation as this—a situation so unworthy of his dignity. It is unseemly and painful to behold. I will not endure it!"

"But it is my pleasure, sirrah," said Willie, angrily and impatiently—"and that's aneuch. Sae, mak nor meddle nae mair wi't, or ye'll maybe rue't. Do ye think I want to mak a spectacle o' mysel?"

"Excuse me; but positively, sir, I must insist on your being treated with more respect. I must inform the laird of your being here." And, without waiting for any farther remonstrances on the subject from Willie, or paying any attention to his anxious calls to him to return, the disguised monarch hurried out of the apartment, and desired one of the servants of the house to inform his master that a person wished to speak to him on important business, and that he would find him in front of the house.

Having dispatched this message, James walked out, and, at a little distance, awaited the laird's appearance. On his approach—"Well, laird," said the King, "dost know me? I think thou shouldst. We have seen each other before."

The person thus addressed looked silently and earnestly for some time at the disguised monarch, as if perplexed by the question; but at length eagerly and joyously exclaimed, at the same time doffing his cap or bonnet with the most profound respect—

"I do, sir—I do. You are the King!"

"Hush, hush," said James. "Not a word of that just now. My crown's in danger, laird. There's a rival near my throne. Dost know, laird, that there's another king in your kitchen at this moment?"

"You are pleased to be merry, sire. Pray, what does your Majesty mean?" replied the laird, smiling, yet evidently at a loss to comprehend the joke.

"Why, I mean precisely what I have said, laird. There is, I repeat it, another king in your kitchen just now; and a rattling, stalwart looking fellow he is, with a couple of very pretty girls, one on each side of him. But here is the truth of the matter, laird," continued the King, compassionating the former's perplexity—"here's a fellow, at this moment, in your kitchen, who has taken it upon him to assume my incognito, and has, in this character, already imposed upon Whinnyhill."

"The knave!" exclaimed the laird. "We must have him instantly hanged."

"Nay, nay—not so fast, laird. The fellow deserves a fright, and he shall have it; but he has done me good service, though unwittingly, and I must forgive him." And James here proceeded to relate the adventure in the Middlemass wood, which is already before the reader.

When he had done. "Now, laird," he said, "we shall have some amusement with the rogue. You shall wait on him; and, professing to take him for what he represents himself to be, respectfully invite him, nay, insist on him joining you and your friends at your own table; for I rather think he'll flinch it if he can; and I shall, by-and-by, send in a messenger to announce my arrival, and to seek admittance; and we shall then see how the rogue looks."

The laird, who was himself a bit of a humourist, readily entered into the spirit of the jest, and immediately set about its execution. Proceeding to the kitchen, he walked up, hat in hand, to where Willie was seated between his two doxies; and standing respectfully before him, informed him that, from some intelligence he had just received from Whinnyhill, he had come to solicit his illustrious guest to accompany him to a place more befitting his dignity, though still far from being worthy of it.

"Why, laird," replied Willie, after his best manner, "I thank ye; but, to tell you a truth, I'd rather remain where I am. I'm amazingly well here, and cannot think of leaving these twa bonny lasses. And here the gallant harper chucked the girls under the chin."

"Nay, excuse me," said the laird, bowing low; "but I must insist on your accompanying me. I will explain myself farther when we get to a more fitting place."

"Why, if you do insist, laird," said Willie, "I really do not see that I can refuse you." And with this he arose, though with evident reluctance, from his seat; and, after comforting his fair companions with an assurance that he would rejoin them as soon as he could, followed the guidance of his host. This conducted him into an apartment where were a number of people assembled round a well-stored table, in the full career of social enjoyment. Willie by no means relished this display of company, as it greatly increased the chances of detection; but he resolved to brave it out the best way he could.

On his entrance, the party, to all of whom the hint had been given of what was going forward, rose to their feet, and stood respectfully till Willie was fairly planted in a large arm-chair at the head of the table, when they resumed their seats. Every degree of respect and attention was now shewn to the mock king, which could have been bestowed upon the real one—with this exception, that he was plied with fully more liquor than it would have been altogether becoming to have pressed upon an anointed sovereign. In this, however, Willie himself saw nothing derogatory, and therefore continued to swallow all that was offered him, till he got, as was usual to him in such cases, into most exuberant spirits, when he began to entertain the company with some of his choicest songs and stories, and with the usual effect of "setting the table in a roar." Willie was, in short.

in a fair way of becoming, if not King of Scotland, at least king of the company; and had attained about mid career in his bright track of jollification, when a messenger entered, and informed the master of the house that a person desired to see him on business of importance. The laird, instantly obeying the summons, withdrew. In a few minutes, however, he returned; and, with an air of surprise and perplexity, said, addressing the company, but more particularly Willie—"Gentlemen, here is a very strange matter. Here has a person arrived at my house, who insists on it that he is the King, and demands admittance."

"Admittance!" roared out Willie, evidently a good deal discomposed by the communication—"on no account admit him, laird. Tie the impostor neck and heel, and throw him into the nearest burn! Pack him off instantly!"

"Nay, nay, sir," replied the laird; "I think we had better admit him, and leave it to you and him to decide which of you has the best claim to the dignity." And before Willie could make any farther objection, James himself was ushered into the apartment.

On his entrance—

"Where," he exclaimed, with a fierce frown—"where is the impudent varlet that has been imposing on the credulity of my subjects, by assuming my incognito? Art thou the knave?" he immediately added; and now addressing Willie, who, completely crestfallen, was looking at him with the most rueful expression of countenance imaginable.

"And if I am, man," said Willie, in a piteous tone, in reply to this home charge, "ye needna mak sic a stramash about it, nor look sae dooms angry either. I'm sure yer royalty's no a whit the waur o' me haen't on for a wee bit; and, guid kens, ye're welcome till't back again, for it doesna fit me. Sae tak it, sir, and muckle guid may't do ye!"

Here, James could contain his gravity no longer, but burst into a loud laugh. "And what, you knave," he said, "put it into your head to practise this imposition? You have fairly deceived Whinnyhill."

"The ne'er a bit o' me did that, sir," said Willie, now somewhat relieved of his fears, by the King's good humour. "He deceived himsel." And here Willie related, to the great amusement of James, the conversation which he had overheard between the laird of Whinnyhills and his wife; and concluded with, "So ye see, sir, he made me a king whether I wad or no; and, as he put on the coat, I just wore't, although it was like to cost me dear aneuch in the Middlemass wood."

"I've heard of that too, sirrah," replied the King, again laughing; "and it is for the good service thou d'dst me there, that I now feel disposed not to hang you."

"That's an ugly word, sir."

"Go to, go to, you knave!" said the good-humoured monarch, smiling; and, at the same time, drawing forth a well-filled purse from beneath his outer garment, and thereafter throwing it towards Willie—"There, sirrah, take that, and get thee gone; but mark me, my royal brother, see thou dost not try this prank again, else your quarrel and mine may be a more serious one than it has been on this occasion."

Glad to get off on such favourable terms, Willie sneaked out of the apartment without making any further remarks; and next day set out on his return to his native district forswearing kingcraft and the kingdom of Fife for ever



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

DUNCAN M'ARTHUR

In the year 1778, Mr M'Donald, an extensive West India planter, from the island of Jamaica, came to Scotland, on a visit to his friends and relations in the West Highlands; amongst whom he spent several months, going from place to place, living a week or two here, and a week or two there, as chance or other circumstances directed.

During one of these migrations, this gentleman came one day, accidentally, in a solitary place on the banks of Loch Awe, on a little kilted, barelegged, and bareheaded Highland boy, busily employed in launching a little fleet of paper-sailed boats on the lake. The situation in which Mr M'Donald was at the moment placed, was one of those which strongly predispose one to enter into conversation with whomsoever chance may throw in the way, without much regard to age, sex, or appearance. The day was delightful—it was in the middle of June; the place lonely, and the scenery around of the most sublime and beautiful kind—the most beautiful, perhaps, in the Highlands of Scotland; and this, as our readers know, is no mean character of its qualifications. These were the circumstances, then, in which Mr M'Donald was placed on the occasion to which we have alluded, and on him they had the effect which they would have had on anybody else—namely, that of opening up the sympathies of his nature, of extinguishing the littleness of pride, and of inducing one general feeling of benevolence; and it was in this happy frame of mind that he now reined in his horse, and accosted the young stranger.

"Well, my little fellow," he said, "what's this you're about?"

The boy looked up in his face, and blushed and smiled at the same time, but made no reply, conceiving one unnecessary, as his employment was sufficiently evident. There was in that single look of the boy's, however, an expression of openness and intelligence that at once caught Mr M'Donald's fancy; and he immediately added, good-naturedly, "Where are all these ships going to?"

The boy again looked up in his face and laughed, but now vouchsafed a reply:—

"To the West Indies, sir, for cargoes of rum and sugar."

This was spoken in pretty fair English, though strongly tinged with the Celtic accent.

"Indeed!" rejoined Mr M'Donald; "my word, but you are an extensive trader, if it be the case, as I have no doubt it is, that all these fine ships are your own. What's your name, my little fellow?"

"Duncan M'Arthur, sir."

"Are you at school?"

"Yes, sir; I'm just now on my way home from it."

"What are you learning there?"

"English, writing, and arithmetic."

"Can you write pretty well?"

"Ou ay, sir—middlin."

"Count?"

"Ay—middlin, too, sir."

"That's a clever fellow. How should you like, now, to go abroad and see the world? How should you like to go where you have just now sent these ships?"

"It's mysel, sir, wad like it weel," said the boy, his sharp, intelligent little eye brightening with the idea; "but my father couldna want me for herdin the cows and helpin him wi' his peats."

"Where does your father live, my boy?" inquired Mr M'Donald.

"At the Ferry o' Bunaw, sir." It was within half a mile of the house to which the latter was just going, and where he intended stopping for a few days, previous to his leaving the country for good and all.

"Well, my little fellow," he said; "I am going to Blackhouse. You know it, I fancy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, call upon me, there, to-morrow forenoon. Ask for Mr M'Donald. I wish to speak further with you."

The boy promised, and Mr M'Donald rode off.

Now, it would not be easy for us to say what were the latter's intentions regarding the little barelegged boy; and for this simple reason—that he did not well know himself. He had, however, taken a fancy to the boy—that is certain—and felt a disposition to do him a service, although he had not yet thought of what nature this should be, or how it was to be done. He had, in truth, no definite views on the subject; but he had not ridden far when these began to assume something of a tangible shape, and this was to take the boy into his service as a personal attendant, provided his parents should agree to it.

True to his appointment, little Duncan waited next day on Mr M'Donald, his face well washed and his hair carefully combed over his forehead.

"Ah, Duncan, are you there!" said the latter, on his entering the apartment where he was. "I'm glad to see you. You said yesterday, Duncan, that you would like to go abroad."

"Weel wad I like that, sir," replied the little bare-breeched Highlander, "if my father could spare me."

"Did you speak to your father on the subject, Duncan?"

"I tell't him that I met you, sir, and what you said."

"Ay; and what did he say, my little fellow?"

"He said, sir, 'The shentleman's been shoking you, Duncan; but ye may go down to Blackhouse, as he bade you, and see what he has to say.'" And Duncan looked at Mr M'Donald as if he would be glad himself to know whether there was anything of a joke in the matter. Indeed it was for this purpose that he repeated his father's words, cunningly availing himself of them to elicit the information he wanted.

"Joking you, Duncan!" repeated Mr M'Donald, smiling. "By no means. And of this I'll soon convince both you and your father." Having said this, he took up his hat and stick, and desired the boy to conduct him to his father's.

The house was one of the poorest class; and it was evident, from everything within and around it, that it was a hard struggle with its occupants, to make, as the saying has it, "the two ends to meet."

Having found Duncan's father, Mr M'Donald explained to him his views regarding his son. These were readily acceded to by both the boy's parents, who, though they sorely grudged to part with their little Duncan, yet saw that it might be for his advantage, and therefore felt themselves called on to sacrifice their own feelings in a case which seemed to involve his future welfare. At this interview it was settled, in short, that he should enter the service of Mr M'Donald, and of course leave the country with him when he went.

Three days after this, Duncan bade farewell to his parents and the home of his childhood. His patron was about to set out for Greenock, and there to embark for Jamaica. The parting was a bitter one. His father clasped him in his arms; and, while those tears which no danger to himself and no sufferings merely his own could ever have drawn from him, streamed down his rugged cheeks, he fervently and solemnly prayed, in Gaelic, in his own impressive language, for a blessing on his child.

"When I have had such a parting as this, Duncan," he said, afterwards—"and many of them I've had with my brethren, and with more remote but still dear friends—it was, the honour of our country and our name that caused the separation. They had girded on the sword, and went to seek distinction in the ranks of war and on the field of battle. They went to be soldiers, Duncan; and I could wish that you had been now following their footsteps. But it may be better as it is. Your days may be more, though your reputation should be less. A different destiny seems meted out for you."

But it was in the case of his mother that the parting of little Duncan was most affecting. She held the boy to her bosom, as if she meant that he should never again leave it, and loaded him with all the tender epithets which her memory could supply, and with which the Gaelic language so much abounds. On exhausting these, she proceeded to deplore the approaching separation from her child, in that affecting strain, at once metaphorical and poetical, peculiar to her country on such and similar occasions.

"This day, my Duncan," she said, "the light of the sun is obscured to your mother's eyes, and he shines not as he did before. The green woods have lost their verdure, and the once sparkling waters of the fountain their brightness. A dark cloud is on the face of the sun, that will long remain, though none but your mother's eye will see it; a blight that she alone can perceive, is on the lovely woods of Ardmoran; and, pure though the waters of the fountain may appear to others, to her, Duncan, they will henceforth seem soiled and discoloured." Such was the figurative language in which Duncan's mother went on to describe her feelings as they were, and as she anticipated they would be; and such was the strain in which she deplored the impending separation from her child.

But this could be but of short duration. The moment of final separation arrived, and Duncan hastened to rejoin his master, who was about to embark in a small sailing vessel, (there being then no steamboats on the Clyde,) for Greenock.

On going up the river, the boy was observed by the captain of the vessel, leaning over the side, and gazing with the most earnest attention at something on the shore. The man's curiosity was excited by the circumstance, and he asked him what he was looking at so intently.

"O sir!" replied Duncan, with great simplicity of manner, "I'm lookin at yon beautiful hoose yonder," pointing to a handsome house that stood amidst an embowering wood on the face of a gentle acclivity. "It's the bonniest I ever saw"

"Yes, my man, it's a very fine house," replied the skipper. "Should you like to live in such a house as that?"

The boy looked up in his face and smiled—"Tat I would, sir; and, if I had plenty of money, I would buy't, for I never seen such a pretty place."

"Why, man," replied the good-natured seaman, "perhaps you may be able to buy it yet, or at least as good."

Duncan smiled and shook his head; but, from this moment, the vision of that house took possession of the boy's fancy, by one of those unaccountable and uncontrollable emotions of the mind, which all must have felt in particular instances; and, as long as he lived, he never forgot it. It haunted him in his sleep, and was the frequent resting-point of his memory, when far away in a foreign land. It was, indeed, a boyish fancy; but it was one of those enduring ones, that no vicissitudes of after-life have power to efface, but that, on the contrary, grow the brighter, the further they are removed by distance or by time.

Shortly after arriving at Greenock, Duncan's nether man was arrayed, for the first time, in a pair of inexpressibles, and the kilt thrown aside. To these were added a trim, short coat, ornamented with the M'Donald's livery; and a smart hat, adorned with a gold band—and thus was the first step of Duncan's metamorphosis completed.

For some time, the trousers bothered him a good deal, as they felt extremely tight and uncomfortable—not allowing his limbs that freedom of motion which they enjoyed in such perfection beneath the airy envelopes of the kilt; but he in time got used to them, and even allowed latterly that they were a very good contrivance.

Previous to this, however—that is, previous to striking the kilt—Duncan had made several excursions around the town, his master having left him in the hands of the tailor, and gone to see some friends in Glasgow, where he meant to spend a day or two before embarking. One of these excursions included a visit to that paradise of a place that had caught his eye in coming up the Clyde. It was only three or four miles distant; and he found it, on a nearer inspection, all that his fancy had conceived it from a more distant view. But Duncan's curiosity prompting him to venture farther into the enclosed grounds than was permitted to strangers, he was seen by one of the guardians of the place; and his kilt not increasing the man's notions of his respectability, or of the innocency of his intentions, he gave him chase with a loud whoop and hollo. Duncan saw the enemy approaching and took to his heels, and finally succeeded in clearing the outermost fence, just in time to save himself from a good drubbing.

This incident, on which he had by no means calculated, disturbed his ideas of his Elysium a little, and convinced him that the beauties he so much admired, were not at all intended for the enjoyment of such poor little ragged rascals as himself—that they were reserved for the great and the wealthy alone.

Some days after this, Duncan embarked, with his master, for Jamaica, where they arrived safely, at the end of about the usual period consumed in that voyage. And with this event the first act of our little drama closes. The curtain is dropped, and a distinct division in the story is marked. A brief interval, and the curtain is again raised; but by no means so brief is the time that elapses in the progress of our tale—for this is no less than thirty years.

It was, then, on a fine summer day, precisely thirty years after Duncan M'Arthur had embarked with his master for Jamaica, that a splendid carriage and four, with outriders, was seen rolling along the Gourcock road. On coming opposite a certain gate, which led to a handsome house on the face of a low hill, (it was the same house which had so much taken the fancy of the little bare-legged Highland boy thirty years before,) the carriage stopped, and the gentleman who occupied it, seemingly attracted by a large

board suspended from a tree, stepped out and read on the latter—"This house and adjoining property on sale."

Having obtained this piece of information, he opened the gate and walked leisurely up towards the house; carefully examining the grounds as he went along. On arriving in front of the mansion, he was accosted by a feeble, old man, who approached him with the most profound respect; and, bowing low, inquired if he wished to inspect the premises. The stranger looked hard, for some seconds, at the querist, without making any reply; but at length answered—"Yes, my honest man, I do wish to look at the premises. The house and grounds are on sale, I see."

"They are, sir," replied the old man—"and a bonny spot it is."

"The place certainly looks very well," replied the gentleman. "Is the house in good repair?"

"Excellent, sir. The factor, Mr M'Ausline, keeps a' in guid order, baith without and within; kennin it's the only way to bring a customer."

"Ah! he's right there."

The stranger, conducted by the old man, now went through every room in the house, and examined them with a care and minuteness that shewed he entertained serious intentions regarding the property. The house inspected, he proceeded to the garden—looked into all the out-houses, and made a general survey of the grounds in the immediate neighbourhood of the house. This done, he slipped a crown-piece into the old man's hand, and returned to his carriage, which was waiting him where he had left it.

On the next day, the very same carriage of which we have spoken drew up before Mr M'Ausline's door; and the lackey having rung the bell, and ascertained that that person was within, the same gentleman who had occupied it on the preceding day, jumped out and entered the house.

On being ushered into the apartment in which Mr M'Ausline was—

"You have, sir, I believe," he said, "the management of the sale of Bellevue house and grounds?"

"I have, sir."

"Well, Mr M'Ausline, I have been looking at them; and if you and I can come to terms, it is not unlikely that I may become the purchaser."

Mr M'Ausline bowed.

"What is the upset price, sir?"

"Twenty-five thousand pounds, sir."

"A long price."

"Why, sir, it's well worth the money," said the factor.

"Perhaps it may, sir; but let me look at the plans, &c. if you please."

They were immediately produced, and, in a few minutes, the stranger and Mr M'Ausline were up to the elbows in papers; the former examining every document connected with the property, and the latter explaining and enlarging on each as it came under investigation.

At the conclusion of this scrutiny, the stranger rose to depart, saying, at the same time, to Mr M'Ausline, that he would hear from him in a day or two.

Just as he was going away, the latter asked, with some hesitation of manner, as if he feared the question might be thought rude, if he would have the goodness to favour him with his name.

"Dear me," replied the stranger, "how stupid that I did not think of mentioning that of my own accord! It is one of the first things I should have communicated to you. My name, sir, is M'Arthur—Duncan M'Arthur, late of the island of Jamaica."

Mr M'Ausline bowed low at the name; for, although he did not know Mr M'Arthur personally, it was one with which he was familiar, and which he knew was that of one of the wealthiest men in the West Indies. Need we add, that

this Mr M'Arthur was no other than the little kilted, bare-legged Highland boy, whom we introduced to the reader at the outset of our story.

How he arrived at the high degree of prosperity which he now enjoyed we shall make known before we have done; but, in the meantime, we shall conduct his transaction with M'Ausline to a close.

Agreeably to his promise, Mr M'Arthur again called on that gentleman, at the expiry of about a week, and having previously satisfied himself of the value of the property in dependence, concluded the purchase, and paid down the money.

On the very same day, he went down again to Bellevue, which was now his, the identical house which had so much struck his fancy when a boy.

On this occasion, he was again attended by the old man of whom we have already spoken.

"Well," said Mr M'Arthur, on the latter approaching him, "I have concluded the purchase for this place. The money is paid, and it is now mine."

"I'm glad to hear it, sir, and long may you live to enjoy it!" replied the old man.

"Thank you, my friend—thank you. What's your name?"

"James Moffat, sir."

"Ay, well, James," continued Mr M'Arthur, "do you recollect of chasing a little bare-legged Highland boy out of these grounds one day, about—let me see—ay, I daresay, it will be about thirty years since? See, there," he added, pointing to a particular piece of ground—"there is the very spot on which he stood when you discovered him; and there" (pointing to a particular part of the fence which enclosed the grounds) "is precisely the place where he escaped you. Do you recollect of this, James?"

The old man thought for a moment; then looking in Mr M'Arthur's face and smiling—"Yes, sir—now that you remind me of it, I do recollect the circumstance, and very distinctly. The little fellow had come, I thought, to carry off some of our hens and chickens, as we were then, and are yet, very much annoyed by young depredators of that description. But may I ask your Honour, how your Honour happens to know so well about that affair?"

"Troth, James," replied Mr M'Arthur, laughing, "I have good cause to know well about it; for that boy was no other than myself, James."

James looked unutterable things on this announcement being made to him, and could only come out with the words—"Impossible, sir! It canna be."

"Nothing at all impossible in it, my honest friend," replied Mr M'Arthur, again laughing. "It was indeed I, James; but I deny having had any felonious intentions on your hens or chickens, or anything whatever belonging to you. It was curiosity alone that prompted me. I was struck, boy as I was, with the beauties of the place, and had just taken the liberty of coming in to enjoy them a little."

"Aweel, sir, the like o' this I never heard o', or met wi' or onybody else, I dare say. Wha wad ever hae thocht oi dreamt o' such a thing?"

"It is certainly rather odd, my friend," said Mr M'Arthur; "but you know it has been often said, and truly, that more strange things have happened in real life than ever were invented by story-tellers."

"I've often heard that, sir," replied the old man; "and I consider this a very remarkable proof o't."

"Yes, James," continued Mr M'Arthur—"at the moment when you discovered me a barefooted and bare-legged boy trespassing on your premises, I had just formed the resolution which I have this day, at the distance of thirty years, carried into effect. I had then determined that I should purchase this property if ever I became rich

enough to do so. But," added Mr M'Arthur, smiling, "every dog has his day, James. You turned me off the grounds when you had the power, and you will not think it unreasonable, now that I have it, if I turn you off—eh?"

The poor old man looked a little disconcerted at this speech; not being quite sure whether it was spoken in jest or earnest.

"I canna say, sir," he said, looking at the querist doubtfully, and with a forced smile, "but what it wad be but fair."

Mr M'Arthur saw the uneasiness which his joke had created, and hastened to relieve the old man's fears, by assuring him that he was welcome to remain on the property, rent free, as long as he chose; and not only that, but that he should have every indulgence and accommodation which he might require.

Having brought our story to this point, we now return to trace the course of those events which raised Mr M'Arthur from the humble station in which he began life, to be one of the wealthiest of our colonial merchants.

Some time after his arrival in the West Indies, the junior clerk in Mr M'Donald's counting-house died; and the latter, having found Duncan an active, smart, and scrupulously honest lad, and, moreover, possessing the qualification of writing a fair hand, together with that of a pretty competent knowledge of figures, he at once proposed to him to take the place of the deceased clerk.

Duncan readily closed with the proposal, threw off his livery, laid down his towel, and mounted the stool, quill in hand. In this situation, he remained for three years, discharging his duties greatly to the satisfaction of his employer. At the end of the period above named, the clerk immediately above him also died, and Duncan, as a matter of course, stepped into his place, in which he continued to distinguish himself by his steadiness and abilities, and by the general excellence of his moral character—virtues which eventually raised him, step by step, to the responsible situation of head clerk of the firm.

Two or three years after he had attained this promotion, however, an event occurred that gave him a much more rapid lift than was likely to proceed from the ordinary course of events.

Having, about the end of the period alluded to, gone into the interior of the island on some business of his employer's, an insurrection of the negroes had in the meantime occurred, and involved the whole country in terror and alarm. When Mr M'Arthur left home, all was quiet, and nothing of the kind suspected; nor indeed did he know anything of it, until some ruinous sugar-mills and deserted plantations, which he passed on his way homewards, informed him of the fearful event. As yet, he had seen none of the insurgents themselves—a fortunate circumstance for him; for, if they had fallen in with him, they would, to a certainty, have murdered him. Aware of this, and also guessing at the general state of the country, Mr M'Arthur hastened homewards with all speed; but his journey was considerably lengthened by the necessity he was under of taking by-paths and circuitous routes, to avoid any straggling parties of the insurgents, who might be wandering about. Notwithstanding all the haste he could make, therefore, and though well mounted, night overtook him long before he could reach Kingston, the place of his destination; and, to make matters worse, he was benighted in a wild and remote woody strath, at the base of the Blue Mountains, which had long been famous as the haunt of runaway negroes, and where, from the inaccessible nature of the surrounding heights, they were enabled to defy all the force that could be brought against them.

It was now pitch dark, and Mr M'Arthur, not well knowing his way, was guiding his horse slowly and cautiously through the intricacies of the place, when a wild whooping and yelling, which he knew to proceed from an assemblage of negroes,

suddenly struck on his ear, and filled him with apprehensions for his safety, as he was totally unarmed—although this was perhaps, a matter of no great importance, for, though he had, resistance would have been vain against such odds as he had no doubt the number of the negroes presented.

On hearing the cries alluded to, and which seemed to proceed from persons at no great distance, Mr M'Arthur reined in his horse, and advanced still more warily than before. His progress, however, slow as it was, brought him round the base of the high projecting rock that covered the entrance to an extensive green hollow, from the upper end of which again rose a precipitous wall of rock, on whose summit, a kind of natural platform, were assembled the negroes whose cries he had heard. They had kindled a large fire, and around this they were capering and dancing with a wildness of glee to which—as Mr M'Arthur judged from the outrageous and unsteady manner of most of them—rum had largely contributed.

The sight was an alarming one to a person in Mr M'Arthur's situation; but he was a man of strong nerve and singular resolution, and he therefore determined to ascertain precisely what the negroes were about, and, if possible, whose they were. That they were a party of the insurrectionists he had no doubt; and he therefore thought it not unlikely that, if he could approach them without being perceived, he might gather some information regarding their intended future proceedings, or regarding what they had already done, that might be turned to good account.

Having come to this resolution, he dismounted, secured his horse to a tree, and advanced cautiously on foot to the bottom of the rocks on the summit of which the negroes were assembled. On reaching the position, he looked upward, and saw that the ascent was both a difficult and a dangerous one; but not having yet forgot the practice he had had in such feats in the Highlands, he determined on attempting it; and this he did with such success that he, in a very short time, found himself—his head, at any rate—on a level with the ground occupied by the negroes, and within a very few yards of them. On obtaining a view over the edge of the cliff, the first thing that attracted Mr M'Arthur's attention was a naked cutlass lying on the grass, and fully within his reach. Of this weapon he determined to possess himself; and, by watching a fitting opportunity, he succeeded in getting hold of it unobserved, when he drew it gently towards him, and found his confidence greatly increased by the timeous acquisition. The most remarkable object that presented itself to the daring adventurer's notice, was a slender female figure, wrapped up in a large, light-coloured cashmere shawl, and who was wildly but vainly struggling to free herself from the grasp of a stout, ferocious looking negro, who had thrown his arms around her, and was evidently forcing himself on her as a lover, grinning hideously in her face, as he sputtered away at the gibberish which he intended for the language of love.

Mr M'Arthur saw at once that the lady—for such she had every appearance of being—was a captive in the hands of the ruffians; probably, he thought, the daughter of some of their masters, whose property they had laid waste; and his blood boiled within him at witnessing the indignities to which the unfortunate girl was exposed; and he determined on making a desperate effort to save her.

Grasping his cutlass firmly in his hand, he leapt, with one spring, on the level ground occupied by the negroes; and waving on high his weapon, which flashed in the ruddy light of the fire, shouted out, as if he were supported by others—"Here they are!—down with the villains! Shoot them! shoot them!" And he dashed into the middle of the band and with one blow of his cutlass struck the ruffian whose arm was round the female, to the earth, a dead man.

The ruse of M'Arthur, in the meantime, took completely the negroes, believing that a large force was coming on them



DUNCAN M'ARTHUR.

fled with the utmost precipitation in all directions, leaving the gallant adventurer, with the captive lady, sole possessors of the field. But the former, judging that they would soon return on finding that he was alone, ran up to the terrified girl, and taking her hurriedly by the hand, without waiting to put any questions to her, or even to look at her, urged her to fly with him instantly.

Aware of the propriety of this measure, the latter instantly obeyed; and taking her deliverer by the arm, both hastened away from the spot. But M'Arthur, being wholly unacquainted with the locality of the place, knew no other way of escaping but that by which he had come; and by this way it was impossible the fragile, timorous creature he supported could go. But M'Arthur was a stout, as well as courageous man; and in this dilemma he did not hesitate an instant in adopting the only course which presented itself.

He suddenly flung his left arm around the slender waist of his fair companion, and, raising her from the ground, proceeded to descend the rocks with her; holding on, from time to time, with his right hand, as he passed from one stepping place to another.

Steady of step, stout of heart, and quick of eye, M'Arthur descended in safety with his precious burthen; when, having placed her on her feet, he, with one single word, urged her further flight, till they arrived at the spot where his horse was secured.

Nor had the flight of the fugitives been a whit more expeditious than was necessary; for, ere they had gained the bottom of the descent, the negroes, as M'Arthur conjectured they would do, had returned; and seemingly now assured that they had been deceived, began to search around, whooping and yelling in the most frightful manner for their deceiver and his companion.

Indeed, they appeared at one time to have discovered them, or at least to have conjectured which route they had taken; for several shots were fired in the direction in which they were—a fact which the fugitives ascertained, by two or three bullets striking within a few yards of them.

On reaching his horse, M'Arthur unloosed him, sprung on his back, and, quick as thought, lifted the lady behind him; and having secured her to himself, by passing a silk neckcloth around both, continued his flight—at first cautiously, till he cleared the loose stones and brushwood with which the place was encumbered; and then at full speed, for the distance of eight or ten miles, when, being aware of his near approach to Kingston, and, consequently, to a situation of comparative safety, he reined in the exhausted animal; and it was now that an extraordinary denouement, connected with the fate and fortunes of the fugitives, took place. It was now, and not till now—for circumstances had hitherto permitted no conversation between them—that M'Arthur learnt who the lady was, whom he had so gallantly rescued from the brutality of the rebel negroes.

Having checked the speed of his horse, M'Arthur turned round to his fair companion, and said—"May I now ask, madam, whom I have had the honour of doing this little piece of service to to-night?"

"Don't you know me, Mr M'Arthur?" was the reply, in a soft and gentle tone, not unmingled with surprise that, as the speaker had recognised her deliverer, she had not been recognised by him.

"No, indeed, madam," said M'Arthur, turning again round, but now with a look of intense curiosity; for, although his answer had been in the negative, the tones of the voice were familiar to him.

"Don't you know Miss M'Donald—Flora M'Donald—Mr M'Arthur?" rejoined the lady, smiling.

"Gracious heaven! is it possible?" exclaimed Mr M'Arthur, now aware that she who spoke to him was no other than the daughter of his employer, between whom and him-

self there had long been a secret and unavowed attachment—an attachment which they had never breathed to each other, but which did not the less certainly exist.

The exclamation of surprise and delight—for this feeling was also strongly expressed in it—which we have just recorded, Mr M'Arthur followed up, by inquiring how she had come into the dreadful situation in which he had found her.

This, Miss M'Donald briefly explained, by stating that a party of insurgent negroes had attacked her father's premises, burnt his mills to the ground, plundered his house, and, on their retreat, had carried her along with them.

Much more than this passed between the lovers, thus strangely brought together; but we do not think it necessary to record it; and, therefore, not to interrupt the progress of our story, we proceed to land them safely at Mr M'Donald's residence, a short distance from Kingston, where Mr M'Arthur left his fair charge, and proceeded himself to the town just named—Mr M'Donald being there, at the moment, on some matters connected with the insurrection. On his finding the latter—

"Oh, Mr M'Arthur!" he exclaimed, in great agitation and distress of mind—"isn't this a dreadful business! I'm ruined, ruined for ever. I can no longer hold up my head. I can no longer be good for anything in this world."

"Dear me, sir," said M'Arthur, "has the destruction of your property been so great?"

"Destruction of my property!" reiterated Mr M'Donald—"no, no; that is nothing, nothing at all. A few thousands will repair that. It's the loss of my daughter I bewail—my poor, dear Flora!" And he burst into tears. "You have doubtless heard, Mr M'Arthur," he continued, after a short while, "that the ruffians have carried her off, God knows whither; and her death—worse than her death—is, I fear, certain."

"Mr M'Donald," said Mr M'Arthur, "be no longer under any uneasiness regarding your daughter. She is safe, and, at this moment, under her father's roof, unscathed, unharmed."

"How, Mr M'Arthur!" exclaimed the distracted father, in wild excitement—"my daughter safe—my daughter at home!—Surely you do not dare to deceive me. Swear to the truth of it—swear to the truth of it, M'Arthur! and half my fortune is yours."

"I will, without hesitation, swear to the truth of it, sir, if you desire it, certainly, and on much easier terms than you propose. But let me first tell you what has happened." And he proceeded to detail the whole circumstances of his adventure with the insurgent negroes, as has been already related.

When he had done, Mr M'Donald, whose feelings had been wrought to the highest pitch by the narrative, flew towards him, folded him in his arms, and said—"God bless and prosper you, M'Arthur, for what you have this day done to me and mine!" It was all he could say. His emotion prevented further utterance.

Impatient to see his daughter, the happy father, accompanied by M'Arthur, now hastened home; and the interview between parent and child which instantly followed, was most affecting. Flora rushed into her father's arms, exclaiming—"My dear father!" She could say no more—and buried her head in his bosom.

"Thank God—thank God, my child, that I see you again safe!" fervently ejaculated her father, at the same time straining the beloved being of whom he spoke to his bosom.

After the lapse of a few minutes, and when the emotion of both had a little subsided, taking his daughter by the hand, Mr M'Donald led her towards her deliverer—who stood looking out of a window at the farther end of the apartment, that he might not seem to witness the expression

of their feelings—and, on coming up to him, said, smiling as he spoke—

“Mr M’Arthur, I promised you the half of my fortune if the intelligence you brought me of Flora’s safety were true, and I did this without being aware that I was indebted to you for that inexpressible happiness; but now, knowing this, I must throw something into the bargain. What would you think, then, Mr M’Arthur, of my daughter—here as a make-weight on this occasion?”

M’Arthur looked confused and incredulous.

“Nay, I’m in earnest, Mr M’Arthur,” continued Mr M’Donald. “You have won her, and have the best right to wear her; and, to tell you both a truth, I’ve long thought, and not with much displeasure, that you were not indifferent to each other; and therefore I anticipate no very serious objections on this occasion on either side. What say you, Flora? Have you any objection to take Mr M’Arthur for your husband? Come, now, be honest, be candid.”

Flora looked to the ground, blushed, but made no reply.

“Answer me, Flora,” said her father—“have you any objection to receive your deliverer as your husband?”

“I have always considered it one of my first duties to obey my father,” replied Flora, in gentle accents.

“Enough, my dearest girl—enough,” said her father, embracing her tenderly. “Now, Mr M’Arthur,” he continued, smiling as he spoke, “will you have the goodness to state your objections to accepting the hand of my daughter?”

“I would, sir, very readily, if I had any,” replied Mr M’Arthur, smiling in his turn, but almost entirely deprived of his presence of mind by the great and unexpected happiness and good fortune with which he found himself thus so suddenly blessed. “But—but”—and he stammered out something about felicity, eternal gratitude, choice of his heart; which Mr M’Donald, as he could not make out, though he perceived and appreciated the feeling from which his confusion proceeded, suddenly arrested by saying—

“That’ll do, Mac—that’ll do. You would make a speech if you could, but it’s not necessary. I know all you would say. But, Flora,” he continued, now in a bantering humour—“Mac tells me that he had rescued you before he knew who you was; thus plainly intimating that it was no partiality towards you in particular, that induced him to do what he did. What do you think of that?”

“Why, papa, I think the more of him for it,” said Flora, blushing as she spoke. “His gallantry was the more generous, the more disinterested. It was a deed of true knight-errantry—the rescuing of a distressed damsel, without regard to who or what she was. She was in jeopardy, and that was enough for him.”

“Excellent, Flora—very ingenious defence!” exclaimed her father, laughing, and rubbing his hands with glee. “Commend me to a woman for ready apology, for prompt excuse, for defending what is indefensible.”

We need not prolong the scene. In a fortnight afterwards, Miss Flora M’Donald was married to Duncan M’Arthur, Esq. of Rose Vale; and the latter became an equal partner in the concerns of his father-in-law, by which, in the course of a few years, he realized a handsome fortune, which was further increased on the death of his patron, who left him, for behoof of his wife and children, the whole of his immense wealth. Such is the story—and a true tale it is—of the little bare-legged and bare-headed Highland boy whom we saw running wild on the banks of Loch Awe.

It is almost unnecessary to add—yet our story would be incomplete perhaps without it—that the parents of Mr M’Arthur participated in his prosperity, and that in precise proportion with its advancement. Indeed, to minister to the comforts of the authors of his being, was one of his first cares, and one of the very first purposes to which he applied

the means which his good fortune put in his power—a circumstance indicative of so amiable and beautiful a trait of character, as would alone lessen our wonder at the singular degree of prosperity that attended its possessor—leaving us, as it does, impressed with a conviction that no one who owned such an excellent disposition, could be otherwise than successful in the world.

AUNT MARGARET’S STORY.

MANY of the most pleasing associations of my younger years are connected with my worthy old grand-aunt, Margaret, whom I had been accustomed, from my earliest infancy, to see in a comfortable easy-chair, placed on the warmest side of our parlour hearth, busied with her knitting or her Bible. There is something *reverend*, and, at the same time, peculiarly agreeable, about the image of her, that remains on my memory. She was rather above the common stature of her sex; her figure slender, and, even in age, erect and *stately*; her forehead was round and lofty, and, though not furrowed with deep wrinkles, it yet bore the traces of thought. Her black eye, which had then lost much of its lustre, was still intelligent; the loss of brilliancy having rather communicated a sad or melancholy expression than diminished its intelligence. Her cheek was pale and marble-like; and about her thin, well-formed lips, there was something approaching to a smile, that still was not a smile—which by itself, expressed great benevolence and affection, and, in the *tout ensemble*, presented an air of soothed and chastened sorrow. Her black hair, through which ran many a silvery thread, was smoothly braided over her forehead; and a cap, as scrupulously plain as it was neat, completed her head-dress. Such was her person. Her conversation was generally cheerful—never gay; a tone of elevated, refined poetical sentiment, often mingled in it, and astonished older and more experienced persons than I was. I do not remember that she ever exceeded a gentle smile in her mirth; yet, in our merriest moods, we never thought of avoiding her. She frequently talked in an abstracted manner that was quite unintelligible to us, as if she were thinking aloud, or rather as if she conversed with some unseen visitor. It was then she seemed happiest. Her face would be animated by an unwonted liveliness; then, all at once she would check herself, heave a deep sigh, and, with great bustle and apparent confusion, resume her neglected knitting. As I advanced in life, I experienced an increasing pleasure in her conversation. When I came home during our vacations, her society formed one of my highest enjoyments. And I have often been astonished when my after experience discovered to me the extent and accuracy of her knowledge of mankind.

It was about the merry season of Christmas—every member of the family had gone to an annual merry-making at a neighbouring farm, except my good old grand-aunt and myself; she having outlived the time when such things are *endurable*, and I being detained by some slight indisposition. I was always a favourite with Aunt Margaret—chiefly, I believe, on account of some likeness she imagined she could trace in me, to her favourite brother who died in early youth; and also on account of my name—a ground of attachment we could never explain. In persons of unusually warm feelings, who have outlived the objects of their first attachments, we generally find that the attachments of their riper years are nothing else than resuscitations, if we may so speak, of their former passions. A resemblance, real or imaginary, in look or disposition, to a departed parent, brother, child, or lover—

a tone of voice, or the accidental circumstance of a name, will often arouse the interest of their hearts, too much engrossed by the former to admit of any new or different attachment. Indeed it is only old feelings revived by the presence of the qualities that formerly excited them, and not any new affection that is formed. Besides being a favourite in general with Aunt Margaret, she was, for the time being, my sick-nurse; and, for the evening, was elevated to the sole and undisputed government of our little household. Moreover, in such a situation as ours, parties such as that to which the rest of the family had gone are not of everyday occurrence, and are looked forward to as occasions of great enjoyment. When either boy or girl is left behind in such circumstances, with a companion, young or old, they determine, almost as it were in spite, to be extremely friendly and happy; and then is the time when we are especially disposed to be confidential. All these things were in favour of my design to get at Aunt Margaret's story—for that she had a story to tell I could not doubt. Her chastened look shewed its traces—her attachment to a name—her frequent sighs and involuntary expressions—her ill-concealed observance of two days annually, on which occasions she wore a particular dress, and sundry little ornaments, that, at other times, were kept most sacredly from the light; which two days, moreover, were recorded on the blank leaf of a Bible that was never far from her side:—all these were *symptoms of a story*. It was impossible that a person of her marked character, ardent temperament, and delicate sensibility, could have passed threescore years, even in the seclusion of a pastoral district, without having something to relate. I contrived, in the course of the evening's conversation, to lead her gradually back towards that period of her life to which the date upon her Bible, before-mentioned, directed my suspicions. As we approached it, the spirit of its history lived again in the tender and mournful emotions that evidently agitated her. The chord was at length touched, and I almost regretted that I had ventured so far; but its vibrations were not to be interrupted. There was a degree of pleasure amid the painful emotions it excited—something like the mysterious "joy of grief." And, though female delicacy had preserved even till then the little incident as a holy, sacred thing, there was an evident relief to a burdened heart in the communication of its sorrows.

"You cannot understand it now," she said, "but you may hereafter, and sometimes when your Aunt Margaret's heart is still and cold, you may think, with not the less kindness, of her when you remember this story. Oh, what vanity is the biggest and best of all earthly concerns!—A poor handful of dust shall then be all that remains of a beating, throbbing heart, which *had* concerns more important, in its own esteem, than the affairs of kingdoms or a world. Where shall be all these great concerns then? All forgotten, or only kept alive in your affection—a record like that on the sand of the sea-shore; for, if your own joys or sorrows do not blot it out, death will come at last, like a black raging wave, and sweep it away for ever. Look, Jamie, at that manly writing," she said, holding out the blank leaf of her Bible, on which was inscribed, in a bold, open hand—"Margaret Henderson, her Bible, Lonelee, 1753. Remember the 1st of June, and never forget it." And, under this, the last words were repeated in her own writing—"Yes, remember the 1st of June, and never, never forget it." "And manly was the heart that guided that hand," she continued—"the heart that never wished, and the hand that never wrought the hurt of living creature. He was a neighbour's son: we were year's bairns, as they say. He conducted me to school; protected me when I was there; and we learned the same lessons from A B C upwards. We had left school; and, as he was employed on his father's farm, our friendship continued, and we saw each other almost every day. We read, the

same books, and almost thought the same thoughts. We never dreamed of parting, and we never dreamed of promises or pledges. And though, sometimes, visions of united happiness and prosperity had been given way to, maybe with sinful confidence and anxiety, we never so much as mentioned *love*.

It was the Monday of the Sacrament at P—. We had both joined for the first time. It was a time to be remembered; though, I doubt, sinful *terro* and tremblings did mix, and, in some way, confuse my better feelings. After sermon on the Monday, I had been sent over to the village on some little errand; and, though I think my feelings did, in some measure, glow with that kindness to all mankind which was proper to such an occasion, yet I did not desire society. And, that I might be left to myself, I came round by the footpath that leads through the kirkyard and up through that bonny glen—every inch of both, and every tree and flower that grows in them, are dear and holy to me. The kirk and kirkyard stood there—so quiet—more solitary like than a desert. They seemed as if they belonged naturally to the place; and yet, with all their solemnity and loneliness, there was a sweetness and calm about them, which, on that day at least, spoke to my heart of the holy peace and joy of heaven. And then the kirkyard, with the big dark trees that threw their shadows over the graves of my "*forebears*," were all like so many parts of one heaven-spoken sermon. Nothing seemed out of place—every part answered its end; and, though they were partly melancholy feelings it awakened, I was not in haste to withdraw from the solemn converse. Long I stood under the plane tree opposite the west door; a thousand bees hummed amongst its blossoms, and a solitary cushat mourned unseen among its branches. I was at length forced to draw myself away; and, as I came slowly down by the little footpath, I felt as if I descended from some awfully consecrated spot. Never did I think less of this weary world than at that moment.

At all times, P— kirk looks like a place that God and man had united in preparing as a place for divine worship—an altar erected for the poor and humble to present the offering of a broken and contrite heart on. I came down with a solemnised and a softened heart, and walked slowly through the glen, sprinkled over with daisies and pale primroses, full to overflowing with bright sunbeams, and the music of unnumbered sweet birds, viewless among the rich clustering loads of foliage that were piled up on both sides. I turned to look once more on the old kirk. The knave on which it stood seemed, from that spot, to stand apart, for sacred purposes, from all the rest; a darker and deeper foliage was raised up around it—or, I might rather say, flourishing old sycamores threw a drapery of becoming solemnity around its sacred retreats; the heavenward spire and its cross rose above all, and added all that could be wished for to complete the picture. I scarcely ventured to wish that *he*—my ain Jamie, as I had called him from my infancy—were there. But I thought that, if I could wish for any one, it were he; and who should I see hurrying down the opposite bank but himself! I know not how it was—I had always met him with the same frankness as if he were my brother; but that instant my first thought was to shun him. Something, however, kept me fixed to the spot; and there I stood till his own manly voice greeted me with some good-natured remark about my business wandering there—"Some trvste. I warrant," said he.

"I have been thinking many solemn and happy thoughts" said I. He saw that I was in no mood to jest, and his mind at once sympathised with mine. We had a hundred things to say—many new and strange feelings to impart; for we could unbosom all our thoughts to each other. We became insensibly more and more grave, more and more quiet, till at last not one word passed between us. I ventured to look

in his face; he seemed grieved, and I caught myself sigh as I looked. At last he said, "I must leave you, Margaret."

"We'll go home together," I replied.

"Ah, but I mean that I must go far away—to the homes of the stranger—where I shall have no Maggie to listen to all my nonsense and take an interest in all my feelings." And he went on to tell me how his father regretted his remaining at home; and that the laird had procured him a situation in an office at Alnwick, whither he was to go very soon. I could not tell you all that passed there.

A bed of "forget-me-not," had attracted us under a stately plane tree, and well I remember still the tone in which he said, as he gave me a choice sprig of that plant, "We'll meet again in heaven, at least;" as if he were prepossessed that some untoward fate awaited us. He had just then pushed aside the curtain of leaves which the bending branches allowed to drop down to the very ground, when a flash of lightning startled us both. He drew back to my side—a peal of thunder rolled and echoed along the glen, and brought an awe over our minds; a rattling and rushing of heavy rain about the green roof of our retreat succeeded; flash followed flash, and peal on peal, still nearer and nearer. He exerted himself at first to sustain my courage; but at length uneasiness for my safety evidently overcame his desire to calm my fears. He stood there in breathless anxiety. The rain ceased; a vivid flash and an instantaneous roll of thunder seemed to burst over our heads. I clung to him, and he threw his arms around me—we both fell upon our knees—a gust of wind rushed down the glen, and the trees all at once bowed their heads in low obeisance to the Thunderer. There was then an awful pause. Suddenly, a ball of fire darted from the dark cloud to which our eyes were turned in dismay imperfectly seen through the close leaves. Its stroke shivered a great old elm that stood bare and leafless before us, and the roar that followed without any interval was like the crash of a world. "Heaven spare my Margaret!" he exclaimed, as he pressed me closer to his heart. The fury of the storm was exhausted—it passed away; the dark clouds dispersed, the sun again looked out and smiled, the birds by degrees resumed their song, and the whole earth, refreshed, sent back the smiles of the sun. The shivered and prostrate elm was all that remained to tell of what had been. Our minds were relieved, and in some measure under the influence of the universal feeling of solemn joy; but I could not help feeling a kind of wicked superstitious fear, that this boded something ill. We were still upon our knees; it was the first time his arm had been thrown around me, except in jest; and the solemnity, the strangeness of the situation was too much to be disturbed by words from either of us. As we knelt, our eyes were turned towards Heaven in silent unutterable prayer; it needed not an expressed vow of love, thus so awfully witnessed to. "The God of mercy and love protect and keep ye, Margaret!" he said at last, in an earnest whisper; and we wept there together. I need not tell you of our happy and sorrowful meetings during the week that passed before he left us—of our mutual feelings at parting—or the desolation I felt when he had gone.

A year passed away, during which we had several happy meetings. Another sacrament came round, and we sat down together at the holy table. We met again in the glen on the Monday, and recalled all the strange events of our former meeting. It was under the self-same plane tree he gave me my Bible, on which he had written, as you saw, beside my name, "Remember the 1st of June, and never forget it." A needless memento. The day was engraven on my heart—it was the date of our first interview in the glen.

He had been highly recommended by his employers to the "laird," who proposed sending him, as under-factor, to live upon one of his estates. We were, you may be sure, both happy; for it gave us the prospect of being soon united,

and I was proud of my laddie. The sweet month of May had come; and with that month his engagement with Messrs H—— expired. He was then to come home to spend a few days among his friends; and, after spending two or three months in Edinburgh, he was to enter upon his new situation at Mounthall, when we should consider him settled in life. On a Saturday afternoon, near the end of May, he peeped in upon us unexpectedly. He had been sent on some business to the "laird," and was not to return till Monday. What a happy evening we spent together! The "laird" had formed the most favourable opinion of him, and had that afternoon said many kind things, on which we raised a thousand castles in the air, and formed many dreams of happiness—alas! never, never to be realized. He staid with us till a late hour. A heavy shower overtook him on his way home, from the effects of which he never was to recover. He called ere he went away on Monday morning; and little did I suspect that the few hasty words that passed between us were to be the last we should ever exchange. Information of his illness was sent home in a few days; and his mother went to wait by his bed that was to be his death-bed. His illness was concealed from me at first; but his sister came one morning to tell me that he was ill and had wished to see me. We set out together with much anxiety. I trembled to enter his little room. All was still, save his loud breathing. I attempted and drew back, and tried and tried again; and when at last I did get in, there was my ain Jamie, with the stamp of death on his manly face—his mother moistening his parched lips. How I got to his bedside I know not; but I remember well the effort he made to grasp and press my hand, the expression of satisfaction that stole over his death-like features, the look which he turned upwards as he seemed to mutter a prayer. With his last dying energy he pointed with one hand to heaven, and with difficulty uttered, "There, Margaret!" His face blackened with the effort. My eyes grew dim; my head reeled; and, scarcely capable of understanding that all was over, I fell down insensible, and in this state was taken home. For some days, I was almost without interval delirious—sometimes I could feel an awful, wild, utter desolateness about my heart that soon scared away my returning senses.

On the fourth morning after his death, while the sun shone brightly through the chinks of the window shutters, I rose, in a kind of half dream, and opened them. The glen was there, in all its wonted loveliness, the kirk just visible in the distance. A tumult of conflicting feelings possessed my breast; while a fearful shadowing of some indefinite evil hung over my heart; for, though the sudden and unexpected death of my ain Jamie had completely bewildered my perceptions, yet still, in my state of mournful isolation, faint glimmerings of the truth began to steal over my recollection. The window of the room in which I slept having a command of the kirkyard and glen, I continued to gaze on the dark tree, that skirted the graves of my kindred; and, while my eye rested upon the broad plane tree where Jamie and I first exchanged our hearts, I saw a mournful funeral procession passing towards the burial ground. It was all before me, like a strange dream. I followed the procession till it disappeared amongst the trees, and endeavoured to recollect myself. The whole truth flashed at once upon my mind:—it was the last of my ain dear Jamie. It was the 1st of June; and well might I repeat his words upon the Bible, "Remember the 1st of June, and never forget it!"



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE COVENANTER'S BRIDAL.

ON the blank leaf of an old Greek Testament, now in the hands of an eminent member of the Scottish fraternity of literature, there is the following entry :—

"3d June 1679.

"This day is ended, in a hule and happie manner, the marryage of my bairn, Alison Darlyng, with William Stark, by the godly Maister John Cockburn settin the seale of his blessing theruntoe. It has been a sair and langsome ceremonie; but we haif got therfrom notable recompense of grace.

"GEORGE DARLYNG."

The period of this ceremony was, when "The right divine of kings to govern wrong" was in full test amongst the people of Scotland, and when, under the enthusiasm of religious feeling, that people were practically contending for the benefits of civil freedom. It is to the developements of this time that a silent reference is made in our conceptions of the general character of the Scottish nation; and it is to that singular and triumphant struggle, that their peasantry are indebted for those institutions which preserve them, in the matter of highest moment, at the head of their class.

On a Saturday afternoon, in the spring of the year noted above, a young man, whose appearance indicated inflexibility of character, entered the hamlet of Auchincraw, and passed to the house of George Darling, at its eastern extremity. A coat and waistcoat of black, on which constant labour seemed to have inflicted a premature old age, "hame-made blue" breeches, blue worsted stockings, a flat blue bonnet, and a clean and carefully spread white neckerchief—presented that mixture of homeliness and gentility which marked the nonconformist preacher of the day. Such was William Stark. He had a pale but determined looking countenance, and a quick and clear eye, to which a constant necessity for watchfulness from sudden and hidden dangers had given intensity and restlessness.

George Darling farmed a "sma' haddin" to the east of Auchincraw. He had, in his youth, been destined for the church, and had attended two sessions at St Andrew's with that view; but the troubles growing heavier, and his father dying, he settled on the lease, and, instead of the spiritual director, became the fireside oracle of the place. Under the successors of the Melvilles, the *principles* of the Reformation had been taught him; and, whilst merely supporting Presbytery as consonant to Scripture, he sometimes caught a glimpse of the great social principle of religious toleration, which the Reformers undoubtedly did not understand. Thus he lived amicably with his neighbours of all grades of opinion. He had but one child, Alison; his fondness for whom, as he often said, was the only remains of an "overly world's care;" and he was afraid that the entire spiritualization of his feelings would be brought about by an infliction there. Alison was "beautiful exceedingly." That beauty was more of the heart than of corporeal proportion or delicacy of complexion; but neither was its effect marred by any palpable blemish in its material depository. She was of the

middle height, rather slender, oblong features, blue eyes, and dark brown hair. She did not dazzle or even surprise you at first sight; and it was not till the perfect feminineness of her heart had unfolded itself to you, that you felt the beauty of "sonsie Ailsa Darling."

"She was not violently lovely, but
Stole on your spirits like a May-day breaking."

William Stark, as we have said, passed on to George Darling's house, amid the half dubious, but, withal, respectful notice of the people of the hamlet. He opened the door, and at once confronted George, who was seated on the opposite side of the fire with his Greek Testament folded over his finger, and gazing steadfastly into the fire, as if he expected to discover in it a key to some knotty point of language or of doctrine. In extending his hand to William, George gave a knowing look over his shoulder to where Alison was standing, with her back towards them, skimming a "cogie" of milk. At the first sound of William's voice the vessel in her hand gave a sort of convulsive jerk, that dislodged a part of its contents, while the spoon was suddenly arrested over it; and her face was turned round with a look of inquisitiveness, surprise, and joy. She looked a tolerable representation of her first lineal ancestress, startled in the bowers of Eden by the first appearance of her future mate. William greeted George heartily; but, when he turned to Alison, his look was his only expression, and he took her by the hand in silence, whilst he received from her a welcome as deep, as wordless, and as expressive.

"We didna just expect to see ye at this time," said the old man, "when the oppressed are turning in bitterness on the oppressor; and when it seems on the point of being decided by carnal weapons, whether the church is to be at the mercy of a chance succession for an authoritative head, and be made, in her administration, the tool of worldly policy; or whether, with her one great Head, and His word for her law, she is to stand as in the world, but not of it. But ye're welcome till us a', I fancy," said he, with another sly look at Alison.

"I did not think you felt so warmly on the side of active resistance," said Stark, with a somewhat surprised and disconcerted look.

Darling looked the young man keenly and steadily in the face for a time. But the first expression of suspicion subsided into one of mere inquisitiveness, as he said—

"You have mistaken me. The resistance which I deprecate is to the will of the people. And I hae, nae doot, said, that I never could feel sensible of the right of any party in the church to force their own construction of the minor things of religion on another. But it is just on this principle that I would resist the attempt noo makin to thrust Episcopacy upon us; especially on the ground of uncontrolled right in the ruler to be in himself the conscience and the reason of the governed. But hae ye nae particulars to tell us?"

Stark looked as if he would rather decline the matter but said—"There is a formation in the west; and the King is to give his bastard, Montague, a commission to put it down—and fire and sword and law are in array against the hasty and, I fear, ill-provided junction. But," said he,

and in a freer tone, "we are to have a meeting to-morrow on the other side of Cockburn Law, and my uncle is to officiate."

He finished with a peculiar look to Alison, who seemed again in a state of bewildered pleasure—a smile seeming as if seeking an entry at the corners of her pretty mouth, and her blue eye resting in a sort of vacant expressiveness on her lover. The doubt which the manner of Stark had thrown over her father's countenance, vanished; and he, too, smiled at the embarrassed joy of the two young beings before him.

"Well, my bairns, earthly affections are acute sophists; and, when pure, their gratification is surely the best worldly object. I hae even particular reasons for wishing a fulfilment of my promise to unite you, whenever Maister Cockburn was convenient to give you his blessing. But the time demands duties from us under the highest motives; and we maun hae a care that we dinna alloo lower anes to interfere. Are ye sure, William, that ye haena fand a stumblingblock to lukewarmness in the present opportunity?"

"I hope not; it has, no doubt, thrown up an occasion for gratifying my oldest and dearest wishes; but if you will consent to the time for giving me Alison, you will not find in that, or anything, a reason for me deserting action in the cause."

"Weel," said George, "yer hearts canna be closer united than they are; and the fearful care o' Alison for yer safety can hardly be increased, were she yer wife in form. I will consent, also, for another cause. Ye ken the young laird o' Manderston hasna just kept his distance frae Alison. Her mother was, ye ken, a Hume, and claimed kindred, and was the foster-sister o' the auld laird; and Maister George has tauld Alison o' their mixed bluids—but only in the way of ingratiating, and no for honourable purpose. His passion is strong, for he is a Hume; and, like his race, he is quick-thoughted, prompt, and reckless. But there is at bottom an open feeling, and a generosity which I hope will operate against his worse passions when she is another's wife."

William's face flushed as he said—"If not, I can defend her. But has he made proposals to you or Alison?"

"Proposals frae a branch o' the proud chieftains o' Berwickshire to a farmer's bairn! It is but rare that such loves end in that. But, if he had, there are things mair powerful owre the heart o' a tender lassie than riches or dignities, and muckle maun hae been forgotten or overcome before Alison could hae broken her plighted vow to you; and I wadna, for the braid lands o' his house, that bairn o' mine wad hae dune sae. We will get the people warned for the occasion to-morrow; and, afterwards, you and Alison shall hae my blessing on yer union."

George himself went through the village and spread the news of the conventicle; and messengers having been dispatched to the neighbouring steadings, full preparations were made for attending at the appointed place next day. There was in the village a young man called David Ross, a Scotch cousin of Darling's, who had tried the love of Alison and been unsuccessful. Cool, revengeful, and cunning, he soon ascertained the cause of his defeat; but dissembled, and brooded over the means of thwarting the result of his rival's hopes. Though Alison, with the quick feeling of a woman, suspected and avoided him, he wormed himself into her father's confidence, and got from him the whole state of matters regarding Alison's position, and the promise of the old man to have the marriage celebrated whenever William Stark's uncle could perform the ceremony. He then made himself a confidant of young Manderston, and promised to forward his designs, which, with a fiendish malignity, he took care should not be otherwise than violent and dishonourable—that both the woman who had slighted him, and the man who had been the cause, should equally feel his

vengeance—the one in the prostration of his fondest desires, and the other in the agony of desolated honour.

No sooner had the wretch been told of the meeting and the minister than he suspected the issue as to Alison, and drew the fact from George. He therefore posted off to Manderston with the intelligence.

"Well, Ross," said the young laird, "this must be prevented; for I would rather see that lassie Lady of Manderston than see her the wife of any other man."

Ross winced a little, and said, "There is nae reason, Mr George, for ane nor ither; and I maun tell ye, ye canna do the first, though ye may hinder the last; for this birkie o' a preacher has thoroughly got possession o' her heart. Their feelings sprouted thegither, and became ae plant, warmed by ae sun, on ae hill-side, and ye canna noo transplant the tane, without drawing the heart's moisture frae baith."

In saying this, Ross discovered too much of the fiend for the more generous youth. Hume threw on him a look of painful disgust:—"Ross, you are a cool villain; and do you think my nature so like yours, that I can do such despite to my heart as deliberately to perpetrate the thing you have mentioned? I'll not. You have cured me. Let them be married."

"Weel, Maister George, let them be married, and bonny Ailsa Darling be prized by her husband more highly as she brags that she might hae been Lady Manderston. But do ye no think that a fair trial might be got for yersel, if the marriage was put off?"

"But how could that be done?" said Manderston.

"A little violence wad be necessary for it. The lassie might be taen oot o' the way, whar ye could use yer best means wi' her; an' if she disna come to, it is only giein her up. Suppose yer father, wha hates the conventicle folk, was sending a party to break them up: the lassie could be taen up i' the uproar; I wad gie ye a help wi' her father's party, and auld Elspet i' the Muirhouse could gie her uppittin, till ye saw whar ye could mak o' her."

Hume knit his brows and thought, "I will take the thing into my own hands. My father might be inclined to give trouble and a fee to the bloody Sir George, and to draw in the superannuated hireling Lauderdale. If I get Alison, they may keep their conventicles in danger of the state for me. Be there, Ross."

"I was a fule to tell him that," said Ross, as he went homewards. "What could possess me! But I am right yet. Her obstinacy and his passion will do it."

The next morning shone on the hills, a Sabbath day. The feelings of man, from the cessation of his worldly business, accord with the Sabbath, and give it a character of its own, which exists under every appearance of nature. But most of all do we feel it to be a Sabbath, when nature generates a hallowed calm, and when the sublimest and most precious discoveries of divine inspiration are renovating the heart and life, which is the true happiness of man.

At an early hour, groups of the country people were seen converging to a point, at a ford of the Whitadder, from which the ground gradually but boldly rises into the massive, tumulus-shaped height of Cockburn Law. On the side opposite to that on which the small party we mean to trace were approaching, and also on the banks of the Whitadder, which sweeps round nearly two-thirds of the hill, there is a flat spot, overtopped by a small, sudden swell, which was this day to form the pulpit of the reverend and godly Master Cockburn.

An hour before noon the gathering was completed; and in it you might have traced all the materials of all that has been written in satire, in caricature, or in eulogy, of the Reformers of that time: the ascetic; the fanatic; the hypocrite; the men, not the least numerous, whose opposition was directed solely against an encroachment on their civil liberty; and those, by no means the greatest portion, who combined with this a perception of and a determination

not to relinquish the proper principles of divine worship: mere indifference, the circumstances of the times precluded. We will not too narrowly scrutinize the feelings of the youthful pair, whose vows were that evening to be consummated. But, if earthly affections did now and then thrill and distract them, they gave a general intensity to their mental exercise, which was peculiarly felt in their petitions and their praise. Ross had joined the meeting; and two men, whom Alison knew to be retainers of Manderston, joined after him, and took their places studiously distant from him. The helplessness of woman makes her keen in the perception of danger; and this circumstance, with the intelligent mysteriousness of Ross's look, gave her the alarm; but she contented herself with resolving to be on the watch. Poetry, prose, and painting, have made the mind and the eye familiar to such scenes; and in the one we are speaking of, nothing occurred beyond the ordinary service.

The service, as was usual, had been prolonged, and the western clouds were relieved into fantastic forms by the setting sun, as the groups again diverged on their separate paths. Our friends, with the minister, took the direction of a cottage, where lived an aunt of Stark, and where it was proposed to have the ceremony celebrated. It was on the western side of the ford of the river, opposite to which, on a haugh, was a copse of nut and hazle.

The good woman had been apprised of the visit and its intention, and, of course, was all importance and bustle. Ross had followed, and entered, (as he said, for their company home,) with a cool determined look, to see the proceedings. George at last invited him to join them, and the evident preconcertedness of his manner confirmed Alison in her suspicions.

After tea, all the party looked as if they had something to do, which they did not know how to begin. The minister and George seemed to sink into reflection; the guidwife was fidgety; William Stark looked flushed, and Alison Darling sheepish. Ross sat apparently indifferent; but the quick and furtive glances of Alison discovered an anxiety and intentness which did not lessen her uneasiness at his presence. At last the good man, after a look round, which all understood as the signal for preparation, commenced an address on the nature and duties of marriage. This was considered a substantial of the ceremony. He had scarcely commenced, when a knock was heard at the door; and on it being opened, a stranger entered, and claimed assistance for a companion, who had fallen from his horse, and lay senseless at a short distance. The men all rose to follow him, and departed into the darkness, in the direction of an audible groaning. Alison and her kinswoman stood at the door in expectation, when a sudden rush and a momentary scuffle left the bewildered landlady alone on the threshold. A shrill whistle succeeded; the groaning ceased; the stranger, who was leading his horse, jumped into the saddle and galloped off; and the party, with the exception of one, not less bewildered than their hostess, returned to the cottage.

"Alison, where's my bairn, cousin?" said George, while the eyes of Stark gave as intelligible and anxious an inquiry.

"Gane doun the wund, George, I think," said the poor woman, with a look as if she half believed her own account.

"The lassie hasna gane oot." And he made for the door, the strange nature of the occurrences preventing as yet any definite suspicion. Ross met him at the entrance; and at the moment a plunge of horses' feet was heard across the ford below, and the clatter died away up the haugh. A feeling of the vaguest kind arose, in which Ross was implicated; but he appeared as much at fault as the others, and joined, apparently as interestedly, in the search and cry after Alison, as any of them. Every direction, it may be guessed, was tried in vain; and the party returned to the house in that state of feeling which is engendered by a misfortune sud-

den, unaccountable, traceless, and therefore helpless. Notes were compared; the woman gave as distinct an account of the disappearance as she could; and George and Stark at last saw the only solution in a connection of the Master of Manderston with the event. Resignation did not come, for the calamity was as yet unknown; and George and Stark set off to Manderston, where they learned that the young Laird had, on the previous morning, set out for the west, to join Claverhouse with a few retainers.

The reader is already prepared for the stratagem just narrated, and his previous information will have enabled him to understand the details from what has been told. Two retainers of Hume were in ambush when the party were drawn from the house, and the appearance of Alison at the door enabled them to snatch her off without being seen, and almost without a struggle. She was placed before a confidential servant, and borne away insensible. On their road up the moor they were joined by the two who had practised the successful deception; and the whole party were in half an hour ensconced in the house of Renton. The master of the mansion was absent, and the few servants had been won by Hume, the kinsman of their lord. Alison was here allowed to recover her consciousness; and the transaction was a complete mystery to her, though the look of Ross, and his appearance amongst them, had led her to feel as if something sinister was to happen. By the time she was in a state to require or understand an explanation, young Hume entered the room, and his appearance flashed the truth upon her mind.

"William!—my father! Mr George, ye *canna*!" cried the poor girl, springing towards the door.

"Be quiet, Alison; would you not prefer the house of Manderston to a dominie's kail-yard? Surely you were not going to throw yourself away on yon epitome of the Covenants, who, if the scent of a bishop came upon the wind, would hug the Confession, and off to the moors; and leave his young wife, maybe, to the Bishop's deacons—Clavers' gentle dragoons."

"Did he ken where I was, he wadna leave me to you; and I wad rather share the manse o' the congregation on the hills wi' him, than pride mysel lady o' a' ye hae to gie. An epitome o' the Covenants," reiterated Alison, colouring with zeal, while the young laird flushed with pride and impatience. "Let me tell you that the honoured person ye revile for embracing that good and holy, but perilous cause, which our best interests and dearest rights are bound up in, wadna shrink from the high and holy contest in which he is engaged, nor bow before the bloated power o' Prelacy, were ye to offer him the broad lands o' Manderston. And to my love for William Stark," continued the maiden, with increased warmth, "religion has been the director and minister, and weel may ye conceive that an affection which has grown up and strengthened in the face o' threatening death, as weel as under the immediate eye o' Heaven, is no to be uprooted by the cruel machinations o' the hater and reviler o' *him* in whom alone a my earthly affections and hopes centre."

"Cease your canting foolery, mad fanatic," cried Manderston, nettledly; "I must certainly protest against your exercising, in the house of my kinsman at least, the gift and calling of your proscribed oracle of the conventicle. Let the knowledge of your being entirely in my power teach you prudence; for I tell you what, Alison—I could not, nor *will* I, see you marry another—and, by my hopes of heaven, you shall be mine, mine for ever! so soon as we have put down these bloody Whigamores who have gathered to a head in the west."

"By your hopes o' heaven, said ye?" responded the virtuous and heroic maiden; "nay, I would implore you, by the same sublime hopes, not to trample on the awful authority by which ye swear. Reprove, I beseech you,

if ye would not have those hopes dashed wi' endless despair, the evil thoughts which now pollute your mind, and suffer them not to follow an innocent female whose heart and will are another's; but abandon your cruel purpose, that your affections may be won back to God and to honour."

"It is in vain," cried Manderston, fiercely—his unworthy passion stifling all the latent generosity of his nature—"It is in vain for you to set up the suit of a canting rebel and traitor to the King, in opposition to the desire of one of the house of Hume; for, unless you will give up your affection for Stark, and vow to be mine, you have seen—such being the price which I place upon his head—the last of your preaching Whigamore."

"Hear me, Manderston," ejaculated Alison, determinedly, "my heart is knit to the despised preacher, whom your emissaries seek to waylay, in the indissoluble bands of faithful love; and having thus cast in my lot wi' the persecuted saints, I shrink not at the threats o' wicked men; for I have been taught to feel that I have taken my life into my hand, and that that God who has been invoked to sanction the covenant into which his people have entered, and whose presence, in the wild glen and on the mountain brake, has encompassed and pervaded them during a' their perils, is able to strengthen me at this moment to resist the cruel revenge and violence that ye plot against me."

The Master of Manderston knit his brows gloomily, and seemed, from the disconcertedness of his manner, to be stung with some severe compunctious visitings. Alison saw the struggle that was going on in his breast, and eagerly embraced the opportune moment to make an appeal to the better feelings of his nature.

"O Maister George," cried she—her voice faltering with emotion—"will ye for a moment think on my puir father, and the misery and ruin ye will force upon him, if ye bring dishonour on the only prop o' his house! Were a foul blot attempted to be cast upon the proud name o' Hume, or were a sister o' yer ain in the hands o' a cool villain, imploring at his feet the protection o' her priceless honour—wad ye no move heaven and earth for vengeance on the head o' the ruthless spoiler, if the virtuous prayer o' that sister were to be cruelly disregarded?"

A private story gave point to this appeal, and Manderston, without deigning a reply, turned upon his heel, and abruptly left the room, which he locked behind him. Alison Darling no sooner found herself alone, than she threw herself upon her knees, and thanked God, with her whole heart, for this notable proof of his protection, and fervently implored that the same Almighty arm would shield her lover's life from the hands of those who sought it with such bitterness and cruelty.

The murder of Sharp had been done in Fife, and the whole Covenanters were loaded with the ban of the Privy Council, though that act of justice and of self-preservation arose from local and individual oppression; as if even the crime of a private person would involve a whole body, though founded on no principle which they inculcated. Graham of Claverhouse now began his bloody career; and this dashing and reckless partisan had well nigh escaped his future infamy in the rout of Drumclog. The exasperation of the loyalists, and the victory of the intercommuned, drew forces to both sides; an!—the one relying on their numbers and resources, the other on their cause and their despair—both prepared for a final blow. Hume held a commission, and was obliged to proceed to Glasgow to the King's forces.

Lost in the mystery of Alison's disappearance, after every inquiry had been fruitlessly made, George Darling, William Stark, and the minister, proceeded west, and joined the Covenanters at Bothwell, with a slight hope of seeing Hume and questioning him about her. After the departure of Hume and his servants, Alison contrived—by means of a

young man who had been secretly at the conventicle, and favoured the cause, though a servant of Renton—to escape; and fled to Auchincraw, under his protection. There she learned the departure of her friends, and also betrayed to Ross her flight. The immediate disappearance of the latter again led her to connect him with the design upon her, and she resolved to go to the neighbourhood, at least, of her father and lover. The young man, leaving the badges of his service, accompanied her, and she was placed secretly in a house contiguous to the fatal bridge of Bothwell.

The course of this unfortunate rising is well known. The great body of the Reformers held Presbytery as of *Divine right*, and, of course, insisted on the suppression and exclusion of every other form of church polity. There was, however, a party of more moderate views, who were content to receive the indulgence offered by Leighton, archbishop of Glasgow, to take ordination at the hands of the Bishops, and to join their presbyteries and synods, in which the Bishop should preside, but have no negative voice. This was certainly admitting the establishment of Episcopacy, and was going too far. There was another party, who, refusing the indulgence, and contending for the independence at least of Presbytery, were not for its penal enforcement. Betwixt the ultras the dispute raged, and that sure conqueror, disension, had dispersed their minds before the weapon of the enemy reached their bodies. The result was inevitable. The King's troops encamped on the north bank of the Clyde; and the narrow bridge of Bothwell, which might have been easily defended, was half neglected. A body of brave men disputed the pass; but, having neither commanders nor ammunition, they were soon overpowered, and the flight of the whole followed.

George Darling and Stark were among those who disputed the bridge; and the youth who had aided the escape of Alison kept close by them without making known her situation. No sooner, however, did the rout take place, than he drew Stark towards the house where she was, and entering, placed him at once in the presence of his lover.

"Alison!" staggered out the preacher; and "William!" she half screamed.

The pursuers had pushed on after the fugitives; and, as none had sought refuge almost on the spot of action, so none thought of searching for them there. The master of the house had been with the Covenanters, and a little girl was all that was left in the house. In the evening, they began to think it was as well to seek a place of concealment; and the girl offered to lead them to a cave where her father had often lain from search. They reached in safety one of those concealments which formed the refuge, in those days, of the fathers of reform.

They had conversed for some time on the state of their friends, when voices were heard immediately below, half friendly, half entreating, and half threatening. Stark crept to the margin of the opening in the rock, and heard distinctly his own name and that of Alison mentioned by the voice of George Darling.

"Well, George," said the equally well known voice of Ross, "I was obliged to come to this work by young Manderston, and perhaps I do know something of your daughter; and, if you will now consent to give her to me, I shall risk letting you off."

"You know all—that's evident; but you shall hae nae risk frae me. I came here wi' my life in my hand, and I will not sacrifice my faith or my bairn to a villain, come what may."

"Then I'll call the troopers—and ye ken what that means."

He turned as if to perform his threat, and was fronted by William Stark, on whose name he heard the voice of Alison calling from above. He stood a moment dumb, and the next was stretched senseless on the ground. A motion

from Stark directed George, with whom was the minister, to the concealment; and, watching till Ross stirred, he pointed a pistol at his head, the meaning of which, we presume, he understood, from his silence. Taking his prisoner by the arm, Stark led him, under the enforcement of the pistol, to the cave. The bushes were studiously pulled aside for their approach, and suffered to relapse into their places, so that the path could not be discovered; and the opening was concealed by a thick bramble growing out of a fissure.

At this moment the trampling of horses' feet was heard in the ravine below; and while George Darling cautiously crept to the front of the opening in the rock, and looked through a separation in the bushes which concealed their hiding-place, the sound of a musket shot reverberated through the cave, while thin volumes of smoke came floating up the chasm. This was followed by a loud laugh from the troop; and while Alison's father continued to scrutinize the soldiers, their leader was heard to give directions to them to leave the ravine, and cross the ridge of hills which hung immediately on their left. The dragoons slowly obeyed; and while turning their horses' heads down the ravine, one of them was seen by Darling to rise in his stirrups, and fire his holster pistol, at random, into the very cave where the party lay concealed. The ball entered the right side of the traitor Ross, while leaning against a shattered fragment of rock, at the farther end of the cave, who immediately expired without a struggle. "God's will be done," exclaimed Darling solemnly, returning from the mouth of the cave—"he is gone to his account, who might have been honoured with the martyr's crown."

A half suggestion was now made by Stark, that the ceremony which had been interrupted, should at once be completed. The place and the circumstances gave a romantic interest to the idea; and, as Alison said nothing, and did not look invincible, the good man resumed the broken thread of his discourse; and, in a cave of the earth, surrounded by the martyrs of his faith, and beset by those who were seeking for his blood, was consummated "THE COVENANTER'S BRIDAL."

THE MAID OF COQUET SIDE.

OF all the mountain streams which indent the towering heath-clad hills of Northumberland, and drain the morasses which are frequently found in the high lands in the western and central parts of the county, perhaps not one of them is so justly admired, and so deservedly celebrated, for the varied scenery which its banks present, as the serpentine, crystal Coquet. From her source among the hills to the once important castle of Harbottle; from thence to the verdant plains overlooked by the darkly-frowning, towering Simonside; from thence to the ancient town of Rothbury, embosomed in hills of the bleakest and most romantic description—where shall we find a mountain stream presenting such attractions to the tourist, and whose banks display such comfortable farms, such a respectable and intelligent class of farmers and graziers, and the general population possessing so liberal a share of that comfort, intelligence, industry, and happiness, which so much distinguishes our own "merry England" from other nations, and which is the best criterion by which we may judge of the internal happiness and prosperity of any country? As she pursues her serpentine course down the vale, it is impossible not to admire the frowning and almost terrific grandeur of the scene presented to the eye of the traveller as he approaches the crag end. Here the only road leading down the valley is bounded on the north side by a succession of hills, the tops and sides of which are almost completely covered with crags of immense size, which project considerably in many places, and, in imagination, threaten the timid traveller or

invalid with almost immediate destruction. Often have we stood in the depth of winter, when our fingers were tingling with cold and our toes pinched with the intensity of the frost, admiring the wild grandeur of the scene spread around—which, to us, had always a peculiar charm, arising from associations which it is almost impossible to trace or analyze. The similarity of the scene to some of the romantic glens in a different dale, "where we spent life's early day," always commands our attention and admiration; and, we wind our solitary way along the valley,

"Pleas'd with the present, full of glorious hope,"

we are always, in a manner, so riveted to the scene by an invisible chain, and so happy and pleased with ourself, our fellow-creatures, and all around, animate and inanimate, that we generally spend more time in travelling a few miles in this, to us, delightful region, than a plodding man of business would do in passing from its source to the metropolis. Our imagination wanders to the days of bygone years, when the joyful gladness of youthful days shed its enlivening radiance on the heart, filling it with the pleasing anticipation of a succession of years of unvarying happiness and success, when we should leave the vale of our nativity, mingle with the "busy hum of men," acquire a name and importance in the scale of society, and, perhaps, in the autumn of our age, after a course of industrious perseverance in the path of life which our too sanguine imagination had chalked out for us, retire to the dell where we and our playmates had gambled round the glassy pool,

"Deluded the trout from the wild rushing spray,
explored the craggy dell to enjoy our evening ramble, or
"held high converse with the mighty dead," by poring over their volumes—treasures bequeathed to posterity—in the silence of solitude, where not a sound was heard to break the holy calm save the rushing of the waters over the adjoining linn into the deep reservoir below.

These and similar scenes invariably recur to our recollection, and imagination delights in taking an excursive and retrospective view of the past, when we travel through this romantic neighbourhood. We think of our school days—when the capacious and ardent mind of a never-to-be-forgotten teacher inspired us with a love for literature and the sciences—when we shared the same desk with those whose genius and perseverance would, in all probability, have enabled them to reach the highest pinnacle of the hill of science, and all the honours and emoluments which accompany such distinction, had not the relentless hand of the "king of terrors" so soon seized the most valued victims, severed them from tender friends and connections, and this world of vanity and ambition, and left us in our wanderings to wonder at the inscrutable decrees of Providence, and ponder on their bright but brief career.

To a native of the southern counties the feelings produced would, probably, be very different; but, on descending the valley, the prospect expands; and, when the view-hunter reaches the mouldering ruins of Brinkburn Priory, the scene is truly picturesque. The extreme solitariness of the situation, its beautiful seclusion on the very margin of the Coquet—which here winds round the west, south, and south-east sides of it—the various hanging woods which adorn the precipice on the southern side of the river, and the surrounding woods on the north side, make it one of the most delightful retreats which we have ever beheld. On emerging from the woods below, the prospect becomes extensive, embracing a large extent of richly cultivated country, through which the Coquet winds her way like a silver serpent, glittering in all the brilliancy of summer's sunshine, and adds her plaintive melody to the general concert of creation as she murmurs on through the beautiful little town of Felton, with its pleasing avenues, shady arbours, and sloping gardens, and then meanders through verdant meadows, rocky dells, and closely-embowering woods till she passes the once

majestic and still towering ruins of Warkworth Castle—commanding even in their desolation—and then mingles her pure and limpid waters with the dashing surf of the immeasurable ocean, with the Cocquet Isle nearly opposite to her estuary. Were we one of the most powerful potentates of Europe, we would spend our days on the banks of this delightful stream, where, in autumn and winter, we might enjoy the pleasures of the field and the chase; and, when the returning warmth of spring again re-peopled the woods with numerous tiny songsters, bedecked the verdant plains with cowslips and primroses, made the bursting buds start from their state of embryo, and all God's creation seem joyful and grateful at the departure of the withering blasts and frigid storms of winter—where we might again inhale the pure salubrious western breeze, brushing down the declivity from the bleak sides of Rimside Moor, sally forth with our fishing apparatus duly prepared, and feel once more how delightful it is

“In the sweet-flowing streams of the Cocquet to stand,
With the reel on the back and the rod in the hand!”

Were we, we say, the most powerful monarch in Europe, we would wager our crown to a capon that he who cannot find happiness—that plant of celestial seed—on the banks of this river, will never find it on any spot in the wide creation. For where shall we find more delightful retreats from the summer's sun, more romantic walks, more beautiful streams, more spacious parks, more gorgeous woodlands, more hospitable inhabitants, more fair, intelligent, and bewitching maidens? When the mind is relieved from the tedium of business by the rural sports which the resident here may enjoy, and prepared by the smiles and conversation of a faithful friend to appreciate the value and explore the pages of antiquity, what is there which the wide world can present or the most restless mind crave, that would induce us to prefer any other “location” to a secluded residence on the banks of the crystal Cocquet?

But we forget that, in expatiating on the beauties of our favourite stream, we are digressing; and we now hasten to lay before our readers the following tale, the principal events of which are intimately connected with Cocquet Side.

Four hundred and fifty years ago, the aspect of the eastern part of Northumberland presented a very different appearance to the eye of the traveller from what it does at the present day. The high rising grounds and towering mountains on the north side of the Cocquet, and from ten to twenty miles westward from the seacoast, in all probability presented a covering of waving heath, as they do at the present day; but the gentle declivities from thence to the banks of the river, have undergone a complete alteration. The natural covering of wildwood, which almost totally covered both sides of the river to a considerable distance, has gradually and almost totally disappeared, by the united efforts of the woodman's stroke, and the fertilizing hands of the agriculturist; and the fields which now annually display the riches of Pomona and resound with the jocund laugh of the reaper, have been the scenes of many a gallant chase and the witnesses of many a sanguinary conflict.

At the time of which we write, there stood, on the southern bank of the Cocquet, about a mile and a half above the present town of Felton, a small but substantial residence, which was not sufficiently strong to merit the appellation of a fortress, nor yet so humble as to lead the wayfaring traveller to imagine that it was tenanted by an ordinary retainer of the Earl of Northumberland, whose domains, with the exception of about a hundred acres attached to the residence in question, extended to a considerable distance around

A person possessing this residence and property would, now-a-days, be denominated by the appellation of *respectable*, whatever might be the calibre of his mind or the extent of his literary attainments; but this word, in the times of which we write, was neither so much used nor so

significant in its meaning, as it is in the present perverted state of society. The most powerful only were then the lords of the creation; and, under their protection and guidance, the more humble inhabitants of the soil were, from infancy, reared for warlike enterprises, and led on as the ambition of their superior directed; while the reflecting and comprehensive minds of a few were but just beginning to burst the bonds of the Church of Rome.

This residence—all traces of which, it is almost needless to add, the all-corroding hand of time has now completely obliterated—was situated on a rising ground overlooking the windings of the Cocquet, which here murmur round the north side of the eminence, in the form of a circular arch, and was inhabited by Nicholas Merburry, a faithful esquire of the celebrated Earl of Northumberland, who had had occasion for his services in many a sanguinary conflict, and had long known the fidelity and attachment with which he had served him in many negotiations in which he had been employed. Merburry had, in early life, married a young lady named Agnes Clifford—daughter of a younger branch of that noble family—by whom he had an only daughter named Matilda, now just verging on womanhood.

The personal appearance of Matilda was all that the eye of a *connoisseur* of female beauty could desire to attract the eye, and captivate and hold in thrall the affections. Of the middle size, her person was formed with such exact symmetry that it might have served as a model for a statuary; while, in her complexion, the colours of the flaunting rose were so triflingly blended with the hues of the modest lily, that we are tempted to exclaim with “the Wizard of the North,” in describing one of his heroines—

“Oh, call her fair, not pale!”

There is a pleasing eloquence that lurks in every look and lineament, and which is always ready to spring forth and give silent though powerful expression to affection, sympathy, and all the hidden emotions of the innermost recesses of the female bosom. Of this eloquence, nature had bestowed upon Matilda a liberal portion; so that a physiognomist might have discovered, in the intelligent benignancy of her looks, the purity of her intentions spring from a heart filled with love to every fellow-creature.

But the beauties of her mind were not less fascinating than the graces of her person; for, under the maternal direction of her intelligent and liberal-minded mother, she had acquired an education far beyond the generality of maidens of that day; while her modesty, sweetness of temper, and benevolence of disposition, threw a pleasing softness over her fine features, which almost approached to languor, and which was seldom changed to a more lively expression, except for the purpose of enlivening those companions with whom she most frequently associated—for dispelling their sadness, or for promoting their happiness.

Could such a lovely and retired being be seen and not admired? Could she be admired even by the most avaricious and unprincipled, without his thoughts being refined and purified, and his heart acknowledging the sincerest affection? We imagine our readers will answer in the negative; and so responded the hearts of many of Matilda's youthful friends, who had seen her grow up like one of the lovely flowers that flourished on the banks of the stream that murmured round her dwelling.

Of all Matilda's youthful companions, Henry Mowbray alone seemed to possess any hold of the maid's affections. When rallied by her intimate connections on her future prospects and choice in life, the mention of her other acquaintances was listened to with indifference; but when the name of Henry Mowbray was introduced, the observing eye might have discovered, by the gentle blush which suffused her cheek, and the tremulousness of her voice, occasioned by the violent palpitations within her bosom, that her interest in his welfare and happiness was of no ordinary character,

but was weaving that gentle net around her heart which leads to the consummation of all our earthly felicity, or plunges us into the dark abyss of despondency and despair.

Henry Mowbray had been reared on the banks of the same stream, and had known Matilda familiarly from childhood. They had, in infancy, culled the primroses on Coquet's verdant banks, and formed them into bouquets for each other. In youth, they had rambled together, enjoying the beauties of the woodland scenery spread out on the sloping banks below them, like a large amphitheatre, as they stood in the shade, secure from the ardent rays of the summer's sun, or, in evening, watched the golden orb of day as he sank in slowly-retiring majesty behind the waving heath on the tops of the darkly-frowning Simonside Hills. Thus they spent the calm, flowery, and blissful period of youth. What wonder, then, that Matilda should feel for the companion of her childhood, and fervently pray for his happiness! or that he, when absent from her, should "sigh for the days that were gone," think of the happy evenings he had spent in her society, and anxiously count the days that would intervene before he could see her again!

The period in which their destinies were cast was peculiarly ill fitted for securing domestic happiness. The frequent inroads of the Scots, and the depredations they committed on the southern side of the Borders during the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV., made property comparatively valueless; and many a happy youth was suddenly summoned from the side of his betrothed bride to array himself round the standard of his chief, and accompany him to the battle-field, from which he never returned.

The spring of 1388 was one of the greatest importance to the family of the Earl of Northumberland. Being by far the most powerful nobleman in this part of the kingdom, and the most formidable and incessant enemy the Scots had, they were always willing to embrace any opportunity of harassing his adherents, and plundering his domains.

It was about the middle of June of the above-mentioned year, that the Scots, under the command of the Earls of Fife and Strathearn, two sons of the Scottish king, assisted by Archibald Earl of Douglas, and the Earls of Mar and Sutherland, assembled their adherents, to the number of forty thousand, in order to revenge some injuries which they considered they had received from the English. Their levies were made secretly, and assembled in Teviotdale: but the Earl of Northumberland having discovered their place of assembling, endeavoured to entrap them by stratagem. He and the neighbouring nobles agreed to hold themselves in readiness with their vassals, so as to be prepared for any sudden irruption of the enemy; and, having assembled a considerable number of his own adherents along the eastern coast, who took up their temporary residence at Warkworth, then one of the principal baronial residences of the Earl, he dispatched our hero, Henry, (who was nearly of the same age as his own warlike sons, and their frequent companion,) and a few other trusty friends, to endeavour to ascertain the situation, strength, and intentions of the Scots.

After scouring the Borders to the westward of the Cheviots, without discovering the object of their search, they separated; and our hero pursued his route to the north-west, towards the Teviot, thinking they might yet be in their former position. Not differing materially from the Scots in dress, arms, or language, he adopted the hazardous expedient of entering their camp to ascertain their intentions. Having accordingly tied his horse to a tree, he approached the Scots, and was readily taken for a Scotchman; and, having remained some time, observed their strength, and discovered that they intended to devastate Northumberland, he embraced the earliest opportunity of retreating, and retraced his steps to the place where he had left his horse, the fleetness of which he expected would soon bear him to the vale which contained all he held dear.

How great was his disappointment, on reaching the place, to find that some one had taken him away, and to see that he was pursued by some horsemen from the Scottish camp, his sudden disappearance having excited their suspicions. Being interrogated as to his business, and not giving a satisfactory answer, he was hurried back to the Scottish army and there obliged to disclose, in some degree, the intentions of the Northumbrian barons, and then obtained his liberty. He then returned to the vale of his nativity to disclose the events of his journey.

The Scots, having thus discovered the caution of the Northumbrian nobles, altered their own plans, and divided their army into two parts. One part was dispatched into the neighbourhood of Carlisle; and the other, under the command of James Douglas and the Earls of Moray and March, was directed to march into Northumberland, and lay waste the country round. They so planned their movements that, by hasty and secret marches, he descended the vale of Reed, crossed over the country to the Tyne, and pursued his journey southward to the neighbourhood of Durham, with such celerity that the first notice the inhabitants had of an approaching enemy, was in the smoke of their conflagrations, the ruin of their property, and the destruction of their hopes.

It is not necessary for our purpose to pursue the invaders in their career of devastation; but such was the success of their irruption, that they laid waste the country round Durham without meeting with an opposing enemy; and, having recrossed the Tyne a little above Newcastle, laden with booty, they pursued their course homeward, and encamped at Otterburn on the evening of the 15th of August. Here they erected a temporary fortification round the east and south sides of their camp, the north being sufficiently protected by a tract of marshy ground, and the west side occupied by their spoil.

The Earl of Northumberland having discovered their retreat, sent his two sons, Henry and Ralph Percy, accompanied by the Northumbrian barons, and the flower of their bravest men, to endeavour to intercept the retreat of the invaders; and, after pursuing their route up the vale of Coquet, to a place known now by the name of Hepple, they crossed the river, and continued their march up a solitary dell which leads south-westward through the mountainous tract between the vales of Coquet and Reed, till they gained the rising-ground which gives the traveller an extensive view into the mountainous region through which the Reed winds her course. Pursuing their route up this dreary dell, in the darkening shades of evening, which makes its bleakness doubly cheerless to the solitary wanderer, they reached the eminence above-mentioned, and then pursued their way along the high ground to the westward, till they crossed the little rivulet known by the name of Otterburn-burn, a little above the village.

After proceeding about half a mile farther, suddenly they found themselves in the vicinity of the Scottish army, part of which had laid themselves down to rest, exhausted by the fatigues of their march. Immediately the ardour of the Northumbrian commander, so well known by the appellation of Hotspur, stimulated his followers to an immediate attack. The resolute valour and well-known intrepidity of this warrior, produced an instantaneous movement among his adherents; they attacked the fortifications of the enemy by moonlight—a season when battles would have redoubled horrors—and the desperate clang of arms resounded through the peaceful vale.

The Scots, aided by their temporary fortifications, sustained the attack of the Northumbrians. Their horse had the advantage of anticipating the attempt; for, having always expected to be pursued, they had perceived the advantage to be derived from the possession of a hill on their left, which is now known by the name of the Hottwoodhead. Conse-

quently, wheeling round this hill, while the Northumbrians attacked the entrance of their camp, they assaulted them in flank, made great slaughter, and occasioned considerable confusion. The Northumbrians, however, soon restored their ranks; but the temporary confusion enabled the Scots to march out of their camp, and arrange their forces in order of battle. The combat now raged with unabated fury, till the face of the moon became shrouded in dense clouds, and the darkness of midnight separated the combatants—now unable to distinguish friends from foes. Again the moon shed forth her silvery rays on the gory plains with brilliancy, and again the renowned leaders led on their men to the attack with redoubled ardour. The Northumbrians charged with greater impetuosity, the Scots gave way a little, and the standard of Douglas was nearly taken, by a valiant band led on by Henry Mowbray, who fought near the side of his heroic master. It was then that the two Hepburns from the one wing, and Douglas from the other, rushed to the front, where the danger was greatest, and, after a display of the most desperate valour, succeeded in gaining for their men the position they had lost.

Yet Douglas pressed forward, and having discovered his adversary, Hotspur, in the thickest of the fight, insolently braved the young hero to engage; and, after a desperate conflict, the gallant Douglas fell beneath his valiant sword.

His followers having discovered their leader weltering in his blood, raised the well-known cry of "*A Douglas*"—at which a considerable number of the Scots rushed to that part of the field, thinking the greatest danger to be there, and charged with such impetuosity that the Northumbrians, now overpowered by numbers, were obliged to give way; yet so powerfully, and with such gallant resolution, did they maintain the conflict, that the loss on each side was said to be nearly equal. It was then that the gallant Hotspur and a number of the leaders, among whom was Henry Mowbray, were taken prisoners, and conducted back to the Scottish camp, where they found Ralph Percy, who had been severely wounded and taken prisoner in a different part of the field.

Such was the result of the celebrated battle of Otterburn, remarkable not only for the resolute valour of the contending chieftains and their adherents, but also for its varied issue, and the proof it gives of the mutability of all our earthly prospects. The victor, in the highest expectation of military glory, was prevented by death from enjoying the fruits of his victory; while his vanquished enemy, though now a prisoner along with his gallant companions, and his army routed, enjoyed, after the conflict, many years of military fame. The bodies of Douglas and his noble companions who fell with him on the field, were carried over the hills by the retreating army; and, on the third day after the battle, were interred, with great military pomp, within the walls and opposite the great eastern window of Melrose Abbey.

It is unnecessary for us to dwell on the succeeding events, which are well known to the lovers of history. Such of the prisoners as were of noble descent, and likely to bring considerable ransoms, were carried by the victorious invaders into Scotland; but, after remaining some time in captivity, they once more obtained their liberty by paying their stipulated ransoms.

It would be impossible for us to describe the feelings with which the Northumbrian warriors crossed the mountains, when they once more found themselves at liberty, and breathing the pure air of their native hills; or to describe the anxious hopes with which they pursued their routes to their various habitations, where fond parents, devoted wives, or attached maidens, were anxiously waiting for their return, with all the torturing fears which invariably accompany such a state of agonizing suspense.

Henry Mowbray having reached the dwelling of his parents, was not long in visiting the habitation of Matilda,

whose happiness at his return was more visible in the anxious tenderness of her looks than in the multitude of her words. She had not, till this dangerous separation, known how nearly he was linked to her happiness; nor had he before thought that the feeling with which he regarded her was anything but the purity of friendship, based on their intimacy from childhood. But now they found that they were all to each other that was necessary to constitute happiness; and the flowery banks which they had gambled over in the happy innocence of childhood, they again wandered over in the full consciousness of mutual affection, and the thrilling and indescribable hope of succeeding years of unalloyed felicity.

The current of their lives now ran smoothly, and weeks glided rapidly and almost imperceptibly away. The seasons made another revolution, and Henry and Matilda were married, and, in their peaceful retirement, drank of the pure fountain of connubial bliss. The dissipated citizen may despise their happiness, and smile at their retired and monotonous pleasures; but it was a monotony of the most delightful description; and the ever-varying seasons, as they glided speedily by, still found them cheerful, contented, unclayed, and happy. The rising verdure of spring, the waving luxuriance of summer, the sweet but declining graces of autumn, and the wild grandeur and majestic frowns of winter, awakened in their bosoms springs of gratitude to the omnipotent Governor of the universe, which, in the giddiness and frivolity of an inhabitant of a large city, are sealed up for ever. Had they even been allowed to carve out for themselves their own destiny, it would perhaps have been impossible for them to have pitched upon a state in which they could have enjoyed a greater measure of worldly felicity.

Twelve years of comparative composure followed the union of Henry and Matilda; and, in that time, four smiling children enlivened their evening fireside, with their innocent prattle and heartfelt glee. During that period they chiefly lived at the residence we have described, where Matilda's childhood and youth had glided innocently away, and where she, and the only man she ever loved, were now enjoying that calm and holy feeling of tranquil happiness, which can only spring from a similarity of dispositions and that affection which is based on the purest esteem. Old Nicholas, her father, was wrapt up in the happiness of his only child, and delighted with the innocent society of his grandchildren; and was frequently seen walking, with the deliberate step of age, beside his tiny companions, along the flowery margin of the crystal Coquet; and fervently wishing that he might, uninterruptedly, watch their progress to maturity. His fatherly care of them was, however, destined to suffer *one* interruption, and that was occasioned by his joining the valiant band which defeated the invading Scots at Homeldon in 1402. He, as is well known, was chosen, by the Earl of Northumberland, to carry the tidings of the victory to King Henry; and was rewarded by that monarch, for first bringing him intelligence of the victory, with a pension of £40 a-year—no inconsiderable sum in those days. This increased his wealth, but made no augmentation to his happiness; for, wrapt up in his children and his children's children, he was, before, possessed of all that constitutes terrestrial happiness. His amiable daughter and her devoted husband, in the beautiful language of Thomson,

"Flourish'd long in tender bliss, and rear'd
A happy offspring, lovely like themselves
And good, the grace of all the country round."



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE COUNTESS OF CASSILIS.

At a short distance from the ancient castle of Tynningham—the seat, at the period of our story, (the beginning of the seventeenth century,) of Thomas, first Earl of Haddington, a man remarkable at once for his talents and successful ambition—there is a sequestered little spot, enclosed with steep banks, now cleared and cultivated, but then covered with natural wood, which, together with the abruptness of the rising ground, excluded all view of the smooth stripe of greensward that lay between, until approached within a few yards' distance.

Here, in this lovely and retired spot, met, every evening, or at least as often as circumstances would permit, two fond and happy lovers; and here had they vowed a thousand times to remain true to each other while life endured, under all changes of circumstance and time. One of these personages was a remarkably stout and tall young man, of about three-and-twenty, of a frank, bold, and sanguine expression of countenance; the other was a young lady in the nineteenth year of her age, possessing more than ordinary beauty, together with a singularly graceful form and carriage. The first was no other—a personage of no meaner note—than Sir John Faa of Dunbar—a gentleman who had already established a high reputation for bravery and for superior prowess and dexterity in all manly exercises. The other, more than his equal in rank, was the Lady Jane Hamilton, daughter of the Earl of Haddington already spoken of.

It may be thought that such clandestine meetings between persons of such condition as this, was not altogether becoming in either. But there was a reason for it.

The addresses of Sir John to the Earl's daughter were not approved of by her father, who, desirous of connecting himself with the older peers—his own title being but a recent one—intended that Lady Jane should marry the Earl of Cassilis—a stern Covenanter, and a man, besides, of haughty and imperious temper, who had already made some overtures for the hand of the Lady Jane.

The interviews between the lovers, therefore, were—no uncommon thing—stolen ones; as the Earl, aware of their attachment, had peremptorily forbidden Sir John his house, and had as peremptorily forbidden his daughter ever to see or hold any correspondence with him. But love was stronger than the sense of duty; and the fair lady continued to evade her father's injunctions, to elude his vigilance, and to meet with her lover, in the little dell between the woods, as often as occasion permitted or opportunity offered.

This intercourse, however, was carried on, on the part of the young Knight, at the imminent risk of his life; since, had his stern rival, the Earl of Cassilis (who already considered himself as the affianced husband of the Lady Jane, although he had never deigned to consult the lady herself on the subject) been aware of his perseverance in his suit, his death would have been inevitable. The proud Earl would not have brooked the insult, and it is not unlikely, had he known what was going forward, that others besides Sir John would have felt his vengeance. The

lovers, therefore, were perfectly aware of the dangerous game they were playing; but this circumstance, instead of damping the ardour of their passion, had the effect only of increasing it, and of endearing them still more and more to each other.

It will readily be conceived, from what has been related, that the two rivals for the hand of the Lady Jane Hamilton entertained the most deadly dislike of each other—for the Earl of Cassilis was not ignorant of Sir John's pretensions; and this feeling never failed to evince itself when by any chance they happened to meet—a circumstance which more than once occurred.

On one of these occasions, they had even gone so far as to draw upon each other, and were prevented from closing in deadly strife only by the determined interference of some mutual friends who chanced to be present.

"Beware, Sir John," said the stern Earl, on the occasion we allude to, at the same time returning his sword with violence into its scabbard—"Beware, Sir John, of crossing my path—you know the quarter I mean—otherwise, you may rue it. Remember, young man," he added, "I have cautioned you."

"And remember I have defied you," replied the undaunted youth whom he addressed, "Earl though ye be!" And he turned haughtily on his heel and left the apartment which was the scene of this occurrence. To this defiance the Earl made no reply; but those who were near him saw an expression of deadly wrath on his dark stern countenance that made them at once congratulate themselves on not being the objects of it, and fear the worst for him who was, should he ever be unfortunate enough to fall into his power.

"And when, Sir John, will you return?" was a question put in a gentle and faint voice—faint with emotion—by the Lady Jane Hamilton to her lover, as they walked arm in arm in the little sequestered dell of which we have already spoken, one beautiful summer evening shortly after the occurrence of the circumstance just related. "When do you think you will return?" she said sadly, on being informed by her lover that the following day was fixed upon for his departure for the Continent, whither he had, for some time previously, intended going—an intention of which the Lady Jane had been perfectly aware—to improve himself by a few months' travel.

"This is June," said the young Knight, in a voice scarcely less tremulous than that of his fair companion. And he paused a moment, and then added—"I will be home, my love, God willing, about the latter end of October; and, believe me, Lady Jane, short as this time is, it looks an eternity to me."

A lengthened silence succeeded; for both were too much engrossed by the melancholy thoughts which their approaching separation gave rise to, to prosecute the conversation. Another short, but sad and yet happy hour, quickly flew over the lovers, when the gathering shades of night intimated to them that their interview must terminate. Feeling this, the fond pair, for the thousandth time, solemnly pledged themselves, in the face of heaven, to continue faithful to their vows, tenderly embraced each other, and parted.

On the day following, Sir John set out for London, from whence he proceeded to Paris, thence to Madrid, where suddenly all traces of him were lost; and no after inquiries could ever elicit the slightest explanation of his mysterious disappearance.

Weeks, months, and years passed away, but they brought no intelligence of the fate of the unfortunate young Knight. It was the universal belief that he had perished by the hands of assassins; and in this conviction all further inquiry regarding him finally ceased; while time, as it passed on, produced its usual effects in lessening the general interest in his fate, and in gradually obliterating the recollection of him from the minds of his acquaintance. But there was one over whose memory time had no such power—one who did not only fondly remember him, but who, night and day, sorrowed for his loss through long tedious years. Lady Jane Hamilton, although circumstances subsequently changed her destiny, never forgot the first love of her young and affectionate heart.

Soon after the departure of Sir John Faa, the Earl of Haddington, taking advantage of that circumstance, resolved, if possible, to accomplish the marriage of his daughter to the Earl of Cassilis before the return of the former; and, fortunately, as he conceived, the latter himself, as if actuated by the same motive, renewed at this moment certain overtures connected with this matter which had lain for some time in abeyance, and pressed his suit with the lady's father with an urgency that would admit of no evasion or delay.

A full two years, however, after the departure of her lover, and fully a year and a half after the period when he was first believed to have perished, neither the threats of her father nor the importunities of her noble suitor could prevail on the Lady Jane to become the Countess of Cassilis. At the end of this period, however, the broken-hearted maiden—believing in the death of her lover, and unable longer to withstand the incessant and remorseless persecution with which she was assailed, daily and hourly, by her ambitious father—permitted herself to be dragged to the altar, but not before she had been shewn a letter, whether forged or not is not known, from the English ambassador at the Spanish court, giving assurance of the death of Sir John Faa, whom he represented as having perished in the way generally believed—namely, by the daggers of some bravos.

The marriage of the Lady Jane Hamilton to the Earl of Cassilis was celebrated at Tynningham Castle, with all the magnificence and pomp which the magic wand of wealth could call into existence. Its tall and numerous windows blazed with light. Its liveried lackeys flew through its illuminated halls, preciously burdened with silver trenchers, on which smoked the rarest and the richest viands; or bore massive flaggons of the same precious metal, filled with the choicest wines; while its gorgeous apartments rung with the joyous sounds of mirth and music. But it was a striking thing to note, in the midst of all this splendid pageantry, and in the midst of this crowd of merry faces, that the only one who wore sad looks, the only one who appeared unmoved by this stirring scene, and who took no share in the rejoicing that was going forward, was her on whose account and whom to honour, all this bustle and magnificence had been created.

In a corner of the principal hall, where all the *elite* of the night were assembled, the Countess of Cassilis sat all alone, pale as death, gazing with vacant eye on the moving and glittering spectacle before her, and looking only the more wretched and unhappy for the splendour with which she was attired. All the efforts of her father and her husband were unable to compel her even to assume the appearance of a becoming happiness; and, finding this, they at length refrained (from a fear that perseverance on their part would lead to some more awkward exposures) from insisting upon

her taking any share in doing the honours of the evening and allowed her to occupy undisturbed the retired seat which she had chosen, and to which, though frequently brought forward to receive the congratulations of new comers, she seized every opportunity of instantly returning. Nor was the conduct of the unhappy bride during the ceremony of these congratulations, brief though they were less marked by indications of the wretched feelings which overwhelmed her, than on other more important occasions. Her pale and emaciated countenance, the faint forced smile, and the slight, cold, formal courtesy with which she acknowledged the wishes of the guests for long life and happiness to the Countess of Cassilis, but too plainly shewed how little of the latter she anticipated, and how little of the former she desired.

All the stirring and joyous revelry usual on such occasions, nevertheless, went on; but it was soon interrupted by an occurrence that threw a damp on the revellers and finally hastened their departure. In the very midst of the mirth and rejoicing, and at the moment when those seemed to have attained their height, the whole assembly was suddenly thrown into the utmost consternation by a loud and piercing shriek proceeding from that end of the hall where the Countess of Cassilis was seated. All hurried towards the spot—some leaving the dance unfinished, others hastily throwing down the untasted goblet—and crowded around the sufferer from whom the alarming cry had proceeded. It was the bride. Senseless and extended on the floor, there lay the miserable Countess of Cassilis. But what had happened to cause this extraordinary accident no one could tell. It was ascertained that she had been sitting quite alone when the illness, of whatever nature it was, under which she was now suffering, had seized her; so that no sudden injury of any kind could have befallen her. Her illness, in short, was quite inexplicable. But, as she was about being removed, which was instantly done, there were one or two around her who, hearing her muttering, as she was being raised from the floor, "I've seen him, I've seen him!" more than guessed the cause of the poor lady's sudden illness.

On the removal of the Countess, there were some attempts made to revive the revelries of the evening and to reinfuse the spirit of mirth into the revellers, which the occurrence just related seemed to have dissipated; but in vain. After some ineffectual efforts of this kind, the company broke up; and, long before the anticipated hour, the guests were gone, the lights extinguished, and silence reigned in the halls of Tynningham Castle.

On the day following this event, the Countess of Cassilis was removed by her husband to Cassilis Castle, an old, heavy, gloomy-looking fortalice on the banks of the Doon, in the shire of Ayr, where the unhappy lady remained for four years, heart-broken, crushed in spirit, and looking forward to the grave as the only termination of her sorrows. Her stern husband took no pains to reconcile her to her destiny, nor did he even shew her any of those little kindnesses and attentions which are so well calculated to win on the female heart, and which, had they been employed in this case, might have induced the Countess of Cassilis, since she could not love, at least to esteem her lord. But the Earl had obtained, in a large accession of wealth, all that he desired or cared for in uniting himself to the unfortunate Lady Jane; and the consequence was, that, soon after his marriage, he neglected her, to pursue his schemes of ambition and personal aggrandizement. Thus left alone, as she often was, for weeks, nay, for months, in the lonely castle in which she had been immured, the Countess of Cassilis might often be seen walking on the battlements—almost the only species of recreation within her power—in solitary sadness; at one time, stopping to gaze, but with listless eye, on the wide and romantic scene that lay around her; at another, to look on the leaping and foaming waters

of the Doon immortalized by the poet's song, and to think of the days that were past, of her blighted hopes and untoward destiny.

Most appropriate to her, to her feelings and circumstances, would have been the melancholy song of Burns, of which her present locality was long afterwards to be the scene. Well might the poor Countess of Cassilis have exclaimed—

"Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair!
How can ye chaunt, ye little birds,
And I see weary'fu' o' care!"

But this beautiful lyric was not then in existence, nor for nearly two centuries after.

It was about the end of the fourth year after her marriage, and while leading this solitary and melancholy life, that the Countess of Cassilis, as she walked one evening, as was her wont, on the battlements of the castle, was suddenly alarmed by seeing a numerous band of gipsies approaching the building; and she was the more alarmed, that the Earl, with nearly all his immediate retainers, was at that moment from home, the former being then in attendance on the assembly of divines at Westminster. The Countess, however, would have felt but little uneasiness at the threatened visit of these wanderers, although they had been even much more numerous than they were—for such visitations were then of ordinary occurrence—had they presented the usual appearance, and had the band been composed of the usual materials—that is, of men, women, and children. But in this case there were none of the latter. The whole were men—and all young, stout, active-looking men they were: and hence the alarm of the Countess.

Her fears, however, did not prevent her watching their motions for some time ere she descended from the battlements; and this surveillance discovered to her that they were under the conduct of a leader, and that they were approaching the castle with a very suspicious degree of caution, and yet with a still more startling haste.

Strongly suspecting that the designs of the gipsies were evil, the Countess of Cassilis hastened down from the battlements, and secured herself within the walls of the castle. In the meantime, the band of gipsies approached; but, instead of attempting any violence, they began to sing some of the wild strains with which they usually sought to attract the notice and excite the charity of those to whom they appealed. Her apprehensions somewhat allayed by this pacific indication, the Countess ventured towards a window that overlooked the rude minstrels, and was about to fling them a suitable guerdon, when, on obtaining the nearer view of their leader which this step afforded, she uttered a piercing shriek and fell senseless on the floor. His disguise had not been able to conceal from her—for sharp, sharp are the eyes of love—that, in the leader of the gipsies, she had met with the lost Knight of Dunbar. In the next instant, the Countess was in the arms of the lover of her youth. He it was who acted as leader of the gipsies; and the purpose for which he now came was to carry off, in the absence of her husband—of whose absence he was aware—the betrothed of his early years.

In place of having been assassinated, as was generally believed, Sir John had been consigned to the dungeons of the Inquisition in consequence of some unguarded expressions, regarding the holy office, which he had allowed to escape him when in Madrid; and in these dungeons had he lain, from the time he was first lost sight of, till within about six weeks of his appearance at Cassilis Castle. On his return home, he had learnt, for the first time, of the marriage of the Lady Jane to the Earl of Cassilis; and this information having been accompanied by the intelligence that the latter was then in London, had determined him on the desperate enterprise in which he was now engaged. All this Sir John now communicated to the Countess, and ended with proposing that she should fly with him.

"No, no, Sir John," said the now weeping and dreadfully agitated lady—"I cannot, I will not, do anything so unbecoming the daughter of the Earl of Haddington and the wife of Cassilis. However unwillingly I may have become the latter, I feel myself equally bound to consult his honour as my own, and to do nothing that might sully either. Go then, Sir John," she continued—"oh, do depart from me—do leave me, and take with you an assurance of my continued and unabated"—she paused for a moment, and added—"esteem."

But vain, vain were the good resolutions of the unfortunate Countess—vain her determination not to take so hazardous, and perhaps it ought to be added, so infamous a step as that proposed by her desperate and unthinking lover. Love, almighty love, finally prevailed—all the Countess's resolutions melted away before the energetic importunities of her lover, like snow beneath the midsummer sun; and the succeeding hour saw her mounted on the mettled steed which he had brought for the express purpose of carrying her away—

"So light to the crump the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung."

This done, exactly as the poet has described it, the ill-starred pair commenced their flight, still attended, however, by the gipsy band which Sir John had employed to aid him in the abduction, and which he thought it necessary to keep around him till he should have got to a sufficient distance to be relieved from all apprehensions of pursuit.

Leaving the guilty lovers to pursue their way, we shall return to Cassilis Castle, destined to be almost instantly afterwards the scene of another interesting and most ominous event. This was the unexpected return of the Earl, who, with a large body of retainers, suddenly rode into the castle yard, within less than half an hour after the departure of the Countess and her lover.

Before he had yet got his foot to the ground, the Earl was informed of what had occurred.

"Gone, said you!—the Countess gone, and with Sir John Faa!" exclaimed the amazed and now infuriated nobleman, to the person who gave the intelligence. "Impossible! Thou liest, knave!—thou wouldst deceive me, and thou shalt hang for it." But, exhibiting a strange contradiction between his conduct and his language, the Earl, even while he spoke, sprang again into his saddle, and fiercely calling on his retainers to follow him, set off at full speed in the direction which the fugitives had taken. Nor was his ride, though a rapid, a long one. At a ford across the Doon, not many miles from Cassilis Castle, and still called from the circumstance we are about to relate, the "Gipsies' steps," the Earl and his party overtook his unfortunate Countess and her still more unfortunate seducer.

On seeing the former approach, which the fugitives did with a degree of amazement which could only have been equalled had they seen them drop from the clouds, Sir John, his natural intrepidity not permitting him to reckon on the fearful odds that were coming against him, prepared to offer resistance; and in this hopeless resolution he persisted, although aware that he could place but little reliance on the co-operation of those around him—the gipsies shewing but little inclination to fight, from a well-grounded fear that such a proceeding would increase the severity of their treatment in the event of their being taken; and of this, from the overwhelming superiority in point of numbers of the party coming down upon them, they had no doubt.

Dismounting now from his horse, Sir John assisted the Countess to alight; and, placing her at a sufficient distance to insure her safety from any instant danger, the brave young man leaped again into his saddle, and, drawing his sword, awaited the onset of his enemies, determined to defend the fair companion of his flight so long as he could continue to wield the good weapon which he now so resolutely and proudly grasped.

In a few minutes after, the pursuing party were down upon the fugitives, when the Earl, singling out Sir John, exclaimed, as he rushed upon him—"Have at thee, villain!" and with these words discharged a blow at him which would have immediately unhorsed him, had it not been adroitly warded off. But of what avail was the averting the stroke of one sword when there were many to contend with, and one single arm only to oppose them; for the gipsies had not offered the slightest resistance. In an instant, a score of weapons were flashing around the head of the solitary combatant; yet long and obstinately did he continue the unequal fight, and well did he prove his manhood, although it could have been wished that it had been exhibited in a better cause. More than one of Sir John's assailants fell beneath his sword, and numbers felt the keenness of its edge and the dexterity with which it was handled, in their gaping wounds.

Such a contest as this, however, when it was one to fifty, could be but of short duration. In a few minutes, Sir John was severely wounded, unhorsed, and borne, or rather dragged down, bleeding and exhausted, to the earth. The moment he fell, the points of some eight or ten swords were levelled at his heart, and would have instantly transfixed it, had not the Earl called out to those who wielded them to desist.

"Don't kill him—don't kill him!" he shouted out, at the same time forcing his way through the crowd that surrounded him. "I will clear scores with him in another way," he added. "A dog's death is more befitting him than a gentleman's." These were ominous words and well understood by all who heard them.

The Earl now rode up, for the first time, to where his unhappy Countess stood, and assuming a mock gallantry as he approached her, but with a bitter smile on his countenance, took off his hat, and pointing to Sir John, who was now bound and placed on horseback, informed her that her lover intended honouring his castle with another visit, and had commissioned him to say that he would be glad of the Countess of Cassilis' company. Having said this, he desired some of his attendants to assist his wretched wife to get on horseback, when, leaving her under their care, with instructions to see her safely conveyed to the castle, he left her without further remark or observation, to join the party who surrounded the prisoners.

The whole cavalcade—the captives, consisting of Sir John and the whole of the gipsy gang, being placed in the middle—now set forward for Cassilis Castle. On their arrival there, the prisoners were halted beneath a large plane tree, which grew, and, we believe, still flourishes, on a little knoll in front of the castle gate. All, both the prisoners and their captors, knew full well what the Earl meant by his selection of their halting place. The tree alluded to was one of dismal notoriety; it was known far and wide by the name of the "Dule Tree"—a name which it had acquired from its having been used by the Earl of Cassilis as a gallows on which all offenders, within his jurisdiction, who were condemned to death, were executed.

The prisoners were now drawn up in a line, and there kept until they had witnessed, what was immediately exhibited, the fatal preparations for execution; which consisted simply in fastening a rope, with a running noose, to one of the lower branches, and placing a cart underneath it, with a person standing in readiness by the horse's head to drive off at a given signal.

When these very primitive preliminaries were gone through, all the prisoners, including Sir John Faa, with the exception of one who was left for instant execution, were marched into the castle, and shut up with a strong guard in one of its apartments.

Everything being now ready for the performance of the dreadful tragedy which was about to be enacted, the Earl

of Cassilis proceeded to the Countess' chamber, and again assuming the mock air of politeness of which we have already spoken, he bowed low as he entered the apartment and begged to inform the Countess of Cassilis that he had got up a play for her divertisement, in which her lover, Sir John, had obligingly undertaken to perform a principal part, and desired that she would condescend to witness the pastime. Saying this, he rudely seized the Countess by the arm and dragged her to an apartment where there was a window that overlooked the place of execution.

Having placed the Countess at this window, the Earl made a signal to those assembled beneath the "Dule Tree," and in an instant afterwards the first of the unhappy captives was seen suspended by the neck, struggling in the agonies of death. Another and another of these miserable men followed in due time, until of the whole party their unfortunate leader, Sir John, only remained.

On this ill-fated gentleman being brought out for execution, the Earl roused the attention of his unhappy wife, by calling out to her, with savage glee, to look attentively, as her lover Sir John was now about to play his part; and he had no doubt, he said, that he would do it handsomely. The wretched lady glanced towards the fatal tree and saw him who had been her first, and was yet her only love, about to suffer an ignominious death. The fatal rope was already about the neck of the gallant, but erring young man, whose bearing, in this dreadful situation, evinced all that unflinching fortitude for which he had always been remarkable.

Just before being thrown off, he caught a glimpse of the Countess' figure at the window. He bowed gracefully towards her, kissed his hand to her, and waved an eternal adieu. In the next instant, he was insensible to all earthly objects. These last proofs of the undaunted young man's unalterable affection, however, of which we have just spoken, were not seen by her for whom they were intended; for, although at the window, she was forcibly held there by her savage husband, her eyes were closed on the dreadful scene, and she herself wholly unconscious of what at that fatal instant was passing before her.

The apartment from which the miserable Countess of Cassilis was compelled to witness this dreadful tragedy, is still pointed out by the name of the "Countess' Room." In this chamber the unhappy lady was kept a prisoner for several days after the execution of Sir John and his followers, when she was removed to another of the family residences in the town of Maybole, in Ayrshire, where she was confined during the remainder of her life—the Earl her husband, in the meantime, marrying another wife.

Such is the story of the Countess of Cassilis, and a veritable tale it is.

THE HAPPY CONCLUSION.

"It's a' owre wi' us noo, guidwife," said William Waterstone, throwing himself down in an arm-chair that stood by his own kitchen fireside, and at the same time laying aside his staff and bonnet; for William had just returned from a journey of ten or twelve miles, on which he had set out that morning—"It's a' owre wi' us noo, guidwife," he said, in a voice and with a look and manner of the deepest despair. "He'll no listen to ony terms," he went on, "or to ony delay, but insists on haein' the money down on the nail, and to the last farthin, or he says he'll roup us to the door, and that within fourteen days."

But what misfortune was this that threatened William Waterstone? And who was he? Why, we will tell you, good reader, beginning with your last query first. William Waterstone was a small farmer in Teviotdale, and one of the most honest, laborious, and worthy men in that part of the country. But all his industry, prudence, economy, and

integrity had not enabled him, as, indeed, they could not, to cope with the disadvantages of falling markets and a poor and over-rented farm; and he fell into arrears with his landlord. It was in vain that poor William, who was now getting up in years, being close upon sixty, toiled late and early, assisted by his wife and daughter, (his whole household,) to reduce or keep down the debt that was growing up against him. It was in vain that he and they denied themselves every comfort to attain this desirable end. The arrears, in place of diminishing, went on increasing; for the farm, with all this toil and privation, could scarcely pay the current expenses, let alone enabling its occupant to liquidate an extra debt.

But this state of matters with William, though sad enough, and such as must, in any circumstances, have made him unhappy, would not have ended in his utter ruin, as it now threatened to do, had the property which he rented remained in the hands of his old landlord; for that person knew his excellent character, respected his worth, and, perfectly aware that he was doing all that man could do to discharge the claims he had on him, shewed him every lenity and indulgence; and would, in all probability, (indeed he had actually said as much,) have forgiven him his arrears altogether. Unfortunately for William, however, his generous landlord, just about this time, died; and the property fell into other and very different hands.

The first step of the new proprietor, or rather of his factor, though of course done with the former's consent, was to ferret out all outstanding debts; the next, to enforce their payment, without distinction of persons or consideration of circumstances, by the most summary measures which the law allowed. On this black list, and amongst the foremost, stood the name of William Waterstone.

It was on the day preceding that on which our story opens, that William first received intimation by a threatening letter, of the determination of the new proprietor regarding the arrears which he was owing; and on the next he went himself to the factor, who lived at the distance of about ten miles, to endeavour to avert the proceedings with which he was threatened, by entering into some arrangements regarding the debt. The result of this interview is announced in the expressions with which William seated himself in his arm-chair, as quoted at the outset of our tale; for he had just at that moment returned from his unsuccessful mission.

He had addressed himself to his wife; but what he said was equally meant for the ear of his daughter—a young, beautiful, and interesting girl of about nineteen, who was also present at the time.

On William's announcing the determination of the factor regarding them, his wife, without saying a word, but looking the very picture of grief and despair, flung herself into a chair opposite her husband, where she sat for some time in silence, wiping away at intervals, with the corner of her apron, the tears that forced themselves into her eyes.

After a short time, during which neither father, mother, nor daughter had spoken a syllable, each being wrapt up in the contemplation of the miserable prospects which lay before them, Mrs Waterstone at length said—

“And is there, then, nae houp for us now, William, after a' oor toil and oor fecht?”

“Nane—nane that I can see,” replied the husband, after a lengthened pause, in a voice rendered stern by despair, and at the same time glancing towards his daughter, who, with her face buried in her apron, was sobbing and weeping in a distant corner of the apartment. “Nane that I can see,” he again repeated. “There's nae help for us under heaven. Naething for us noo, Betsy, but the meal pock.”

“Weel, God's will be done, William,” replied the broken-hearted woman; “since it is sae, we maun submit; although it is hard, at oor time o' life, and after the lang and sair struggle

we hae had to do justice to everybody, to be thrown destitute on the world. But ye ken it is said, William, by the Psalmist, ‘I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread;’ and I've nae doot that, wi' God's assistance, we'll find these soothing and comforting words verified in oor ain case.”

To this William Waterstone made no reply, but remained gloomily absorbed in his own dismal reflections. These were, indeed, bitter enough—and bitter also were those of the partner of his bosom, on this melancholy occasion; but they were light compared with those of their unhappy daughter. It was on her that the threatened calamity was to fall with its fullest force, and it was to her that it was to bring the largest share of misery. But this requires explanation; and we proceed to give it.

Marion, for such was her name, had long been wooed in vain by a wealthy suitor who resided at a short distance from her father's house. This person, whose name was Maitland, was a miller to business, and a sufficiently respectable man; but he was precisely three times the age of the young creature whose hand he sought. He was, besides, a widower with several children, and was otherwise by no means such an object as was likely to attract the eye or engage the affections of a woman younger than the youngest of his own daughters.

But John Maitland was wealthy—a circumstance which, though it was of no weight whatever in the eyes of Marion herself, was of great consequence in those of her parents. They, however, although they secretly wished that their daughter would give a favourable ear to the miller's suit, did not urge her, at least any otherwise than by indirect allusions and hints, to admit his addresses; and from even this, seeing that her repugnance to him was unconquerable, they had latterly abstained altogether. Notwithstanding Marion's coldness to him, however, and her dislike of him, which she could not conceal, Maitland continued his visits and persevered in his suit, although to all but himself it seemed an utterly hopeless one. But Marion's conduct in this matter did not proceed solely from a dislike to Maitland. It was influenced by a double motive—a repugnance to him, and love for another.

The favoured suitor, whose name was Richard Spalding, was a young man, the son of a neighbouring farmer, who had everything to recommend him but wealth, of which he had none. His father was in straitened circumstances; and their united labours—for they tilled and sowed the same fields together—were unable to improve them. Indeed, the situation of the former was almost precisely that of Waterstone. They were tenants of the same proprietor, and old Spalding was also in arrears—arrears which he could not pay—to his landlord.

Having given this sketch of the situation in which Marion stood with regard to affairs of the heart, at the period of our story, we recur to the scene which that digression interrupted.

After another long and silent pause, broken only by the suppressed sobs of the poor girl, and at times by heavy and deep-drawn sighs from her mother, the latter again spoke.

“O my John—my John,” she said, “if ye but kent o' this, I'm sure, for a' that's come and gane yet, ye wad stretch out a helpin hand to us in this hour o' distress.”

“Betsy!” exclaimed her husband, angrily interrupting her, and starting to his feet with an unwonted energy of manner, “havana I often tell't ye never to name that ingrate, that undutiful son in my presence?—and how comes it that ye have dared to disregard my injunctions, and that at a time, too, when I'm overwhelmed, rendered desperate, wi' other cares? How could ye, woman, add to my distress by naming the base fallow before me?”

These were harsh words from a father of his own child;

but, so far as circumstances could enable that father to judge, they were not unmerited. William Waterstone's son—his only son—who had been bred a millwright, had gone out to the West Indies some five or six years previous to the period of which we write; and during the last three years of that time, his parents had never heard from him, although they had learnt that he was not only living, but rapidly accumulating a fortune. A score of letters, at least, his father had written him through the medium of the mercantile house by which he had been first sent out, (and which kindly undertook not only to have all his letters forwarded to his son, but offered the same obliging services in the case of communications from the latter to the former,) without ever receiving any answer; and this was the more unpardonable that more than one of these letters contained requests from John Waterstone's father for a little pecuniary assistance to help him out of his difficulties.

These, however, were equally unattended to with the others; and it is not, therefore, to be wondered at that old Waterstone should have charged his son with ingratitude, and considered his conduct undutiful and unnatural. This was, in truth, as we have shown, his father's opinion of the young man. But, oh! what can weaken a mother's love! What can wither the strong and deep-rooted affections of her bosom for the child of her love! The conduct must be infamous indeed that could do this.

Mrs Waterstone, although she did allow that her son ought to have at least written them, yet thought, and, when she dared, spoke of him with the most tender regard. For his apparent neglect of them, she said, she was sure there was some good reason, that would one day be explained to the satisfaction of them all. What this reason could be she owned she could not conjecture; but that was a circumstance which did not in the least shake her faith in its existence. When her husband, therefore, on the present occasion, upbraided her for naming her son, and accused him of ingratitude and undutiful conduct, she, as she always did in similar circumstances, stepped forward with the ready but unsatisfactory defence alluded to.

"Be patient, guidman, I beseech you," she said—"be patient; and, oh, man, dinna think sae unkindly o' the puir laddie. He'll be able, I warrant, to gie a guid reason for a' this when"—

"Let me hear nae mair o't, Betsy," again interrupted William Waterstone. "We've ither things to think o' enow. Here's ruin starin' us in the face, woman. Ruin, ruin! utter ruin!" he repeated, in a tone of the deepest and most bitter despair. "Naething can avert it. Without a hoose to shelter us, as we will sune be, oor auld heads maun be exposed to the winds o' heaven and to the pelting o' the storm."

"Never, never, never!" at this moment suddenly exclaimed Marion; who had hitherto been sitting, as already described, absorbed in grief, at the further end of the apartment, with her face buried in her apron. "Never, never, never!" she exclaimed, rushing towards her father, and throwing her arms about his neck; "ye shall never be driven to that strait sae lang as the means are in my pow'r o' preventin' it. Mother, mother, dear mother," she added—and now turning to the parent she named, and throwing herself on her knees before her—"I can stand this nae langer. I'll marry John Maitland, mother, and he'll lend as muckle siller as 'ill tak ye oot o' this difficulty. He has often said that he wad help my faither, if I wad promise to become his wife."

"My bairn, my bairn!" replied her mother, overcome with this instance of her child's devoted affection; for well she knew the fearful extent of the sacrifice she had offered to make. "My bairn, my bairn!" she said, bursting into tears, and clasping her daughter closely in her arms—"God's blessin' be wi' ye for this dutifu' conduct to your puir parents,

although it grieves me to the heart, my puir lassie, to see ye driven by oor necessities to become an unwillin' bride. But ye see, my bairn, there is nae ither way o' savin' us frae beggary in oor auld days."

"I ken it, mother—I see it," replied Marion, weeping, and as pale as death; "and my mind's made up. Onything, onything will I endure rather than see ye turned oot o' yer ain house, and thrown destitute on the world."

"A faither's blessin' and the blessin' o' God be wi' ye, my dochter, for this!" said her father, now interfering for the first time, and laying his hand upon her head as she knelt before her mother. "Ye canna but prosper, my bairn, for such conduct as this; and your marriage, though, in the meantime it mayna seem to you to promise much felicity, maun in the end be a happy ane. It canna be otherwise. But, Marion," he added, "I winna let ye mak this sacrifice till a' ither means hae failed me, and till I find that the factor is really determined to carry his threats into execution."

At this moment the latch of the outer door was raised, and Richard Spalding, wholly unaware of the state of matters in William Waterstone's, suddenly walked into the midst of the sorrowing family; and great was his surprise on witnessing the scene of disconsolation which presented itself. He guessed, indeed, in part the cause—for his father, as has been already said, was also under the ban of the new factor; but he little dreamt of the resolution to which it had driven his beloved Marion.

This was now, however, soon to be made known to him. On Richard's entrance, her father, who, as well as his wife, knew well of the attachment between the young couple, after hastily saluting him, left the apartment, and was speedily followed by Marion's mother; their object being to give their daughter an opportunity of informing her lover, with her own mouth, of the resolution she had come to regarding his rival.

On being left to themselves, Richard went up to Marion, who, seated in a chair, with her pale cheek resting on the back, looked the very image of hopeless despair. On Richard's first entrance, she had not looked towards him at all, nor exhibited any other symptom of a consciousness of his presence. Neither did she yet offer any signs of welcome. Astonished and alarmed at such unusual conduct, Richard took her affectionately by the hand, and anxiously inquired what was the matter. The poor girl burst into tears.

"Marion," said her lover, now greatly agitated and perplexed, "what in all the earth is wrong? Will you not tell me, Marion?"

"O Richard, Richard, do not ask me. I cannot, I will not tell you," said the distracted girl.

"Then you desire to make me miserable too, Marion," was the reply.

"No, no, Richard; but I cannot tell you what I know will break your heart, as it has already broken mine. My peace is gone for ever, Richard, but it has gone in a good cause."

"For Heaven's sake, Marion," said her agonized lover, "tell me, tell me at once, what you mean, and do not torture me longer with this strange and unintelligible conduct. It's not using him well, Marion, who hopes to be more to you, one day, than any other person on the face of the earth."

"Never, Richard!—never. You can never now be more to me than you are at this moment. That's a' owre, Richard: We maun meet nae mair. I'm gaun to be the wife o' anither."

"Marion!" said Richard—his face now overspread with a deadly paleness, and his lips quivering with emotion—"in God's name, what does this mean? Have I done anything to offend you—anything to—change your opinion of me?"

"No, no, Richard, you have not," said the weeping girl,

"but I maun marry John Maitland, to save my puir faither and mother frae ruin—to save them frae bein thrown on the cauld charity o' the warld in quest o' their bread." And she now went on to detail the particulars of the situation in which they stood, and concluded by mentioning the promise she had made to her parents to accept of Maitland's addresses.

Poor Spalding stood the very personification of misery and wretchedness during the recital of these circumstances, that laid prostrate all his dearest hopes, and wrested from him that happiness which he had fondly believed was within his grasp. For some time he made no reply to, or remark on what had just been communicated to him; but at length taking Marion again by the hand—"Well, Marion," he said, with a strong effort to suppress the emotion with which he was struggling, "this is dreadful news to me; but I do not blame you, or rather I cannot but commend you for the step you are going to take, although it be to the destruction of my peace and happiness in this world. But is there no way of averting this evil? Is there no way of saving your father but by your"—Here he suddenly stopped short. His feelings overcame him, and he could not come out with the two words necessary to finish the sentence. He could not brin^g himself to add, "marrying Maitland."

"Nane, nane, Richard," said Marion, who well knew what he would have said; "there's nae ither way left us—nane, nane, Richard."

"But," replied the latter, "your father said, Marion, you told me, that he will not ask you to make this sacrifice until he sees that the factor is determined to proceed against him, and that there is no other means of satisfying his demands. Now, as it will be some days before he can ascertain the former, will ye promise me, Marion, that ye will take all the time that circumstances will afford you before you commit yourself further with Maitland? Will you promise me this, Marion?—and, in the meantime, I'll stir heaven and earth to save you from the fate that's threatenin' you."

This promise poor Marion readily gave; and, somewhat comforted by it, Richard left the house to try every method he could think of, to avert the misfortune that threatened him. But, alas! what could he do? Where was he to raise £150 some odds, which was the amount of William Waterstone's debt to his landlord? Under the excitation of the moment during his interview with Marion, and under the blind and bewildering impulses excited by it, he thought he might, by some means or other, accomplish it. But, on coming to act on the vague and indefinite notions on this subject which first presented themselves to him, he found them burst like soap-bells in his grasp, until even he himself, sanguine as he was, became convinced that the pursuit was hopeless, and that his Marion was indeed lost to him for ever.

In the meantime, the dreaded crisis approached. Step after step had been taken by the factor in the process against William Waterstone, until at length it arrived at a consummation. His effects were sequestered, and a day of sale announced. Still the poor man entertained hopes that the last and final proceeding would not be had recourse to—that, in short, no sale would actually take place; and in this desperate belief he had still delayed committing himself with Maitland regarding his daughter, although he had dropped some hints to that person of a tendency to encourage his hopes. From this delusion, however, he was now about to be roughly awakened. The day of sale arrived; and with it came the auctioneer; and, as the morning advanced, several persons were seen hovering about at a little distance. These were intending purchasers, whose respect for poor Waterstone, and whose sympathy for his unhappy situation, induced them thus to keep aloof, with the view of saving his feelings as much as possible, until their purpose there should render it necessary for them to approach nearer to the melancholy scene.

These appearances were far too serious to leave the slightest ground for the indulgence of any further hopes from the lenity of the prosecutor; and William Waterstone felt this. He saw now that the sacrifice which he had thus delayed till the twelfth hour, must be made—that his daughter must pledge herself to become the wife of John Maitland; and with a heavy heart he now put on his bonnet to go down to that person, to enter into a full and final explanation with regard to this matter and his own distressed situation. Poor Marion's doom was now, then, about to be irrevocably sealed. Her father was already at the door, on his way to fix her destiny, when he was suddenly arrested by a person wrapped up in a travelling mantle, and who was about entering the house at the same moment, seizing him by the hand.

"Father!" exclaimed the apparent stranger. William Waterstone looked unconsciously for an instant at the person who addressed him. It was his son. "John," said the father, at length, coldly, and returning the former's eager salutation with marked indifference.

"Yes, John," replied his son, in a tone of surprise at his father's reception of him; "and I thought you would have been more happy than you seem to be to have seen him, father?"

"Why should I be happy to see you, John?" said the latter, gravely. "What have you done for me that I should rejoice in the sight of you?"

"Not much, father, I confess, rejoined his son; "but I did for you what I could; and it is my intention to do more."

William Waterstone smiled satirically. It was the only reply he vouchsafed. At this moment, John's mother, who had heard and recognised his voice, rushed out and unfolded her son in her arms.

"My son—my son!" she exclaimed. "Thank God, I see you once more before I die! Ye'll explain a' noo, I'm sure, my John, and mak guid yer mother's words."

To her son part of this address was wholly unintelligible. What explanation was wanted he could not comprehend, and he therefore merely said, smiling as he spoke, that if anything in his conduct wanted explanation he would very readily give it.

"That ye will, my son," said his mother, "to the shame and confusion o' them that entertained ill thochts o' ye."

"Well, well, mother," replied John, more puzzled than ever—"we'll put all that to rights, whatever it is, by and by; but, in the meantime, pray tell me what is the meaning of all this?" And he pointed to the collection of farming implements and other articles, which had been placed in front of the house, preparatory to the sale, and which, with some other no less unequivocal circumstances, but too plainly intimated what was about to take place.

"The meanin' o' that, sir," said his father, sternly, "is very sune tell't. We are gaun to be roupit out the day for arrear o' rent—that's a'—a thing very easy understood; and ye're just come in time to see't. Just in time," he added, bitterly, "to see your father and mother turned out beggars on the world."

"What! rouped out! beggared!" replied his son, with a look of the utmost consternation. "Then, surely, father, some great and sudden pecuniary misfortune must have befallen you; or there has been grievous mismanagement of some kind or other, to reduce you to this unhappy state."

"Oh, no," said his father, in a dry sarcastic tone, "nae sudden misfortune has befa'en me, nor has there been any mismanagement either. Naething has happened but what ye a' along kent very weel about. The arrears o' rent, at least the greater part o' that debt, was stan'in against me before ye went abroad; and I suppose ye ken very weel that the prices o' farm produce hae been fa'in even since; so that I dinna see, sir, that ye need be sae very much surprised at my situation as you seem, or pretend to be."

"I do not pretend, father, I assure you, to be more sur-

prised than I really am," said his son, "and I think I have some reason. Surely what I sent you might have kept you out of debt at any rate."

"What you sent me, sir," rejoined his father, sternly; "I should like to ken what that was." And he again smiled sarcastically. "My troth, my debts wadna hae been ill to pay if that could hae dune't."

"And I must say," replied his son, "that they must have been very considerable, and, I will add, more than they ought, if it could not."

"What do you mean, sirrah?" exclaimed William Waterstone, fiercely.

"I mean, father," replied John, now getting displeased in his turn, "that the three hundred pounds which I have been sending you regularly every year, for the last three years, ought to have placed you in a better situation than I now find you."

"You been sendin me three hundred pounds every year, for the last three years!" said his father, with a look of amazement; and then, suddenly dropping this warmth of expression—"It may be sae, John," he added, coolly and doubtfully, "and I hope, for yer ain sake, ye speak truth; but I have never seen a farthin o't."

"What! not of the money I have been remitting you?"

"Not a penny; but, if ye sent me that money, as ye say, John," he added, "how comes it that ye never answered ane o' my letters?"

"Your letters, father!" replied the latter. "Why, you have not written me for the last three years, although I have dispatched at least a score of letters to you in that time, and have never had an answer to one of them."

"Never saw ane o' yer letters," said William Waterstone, drily.

"This is a most extraordinary and unaccountable business," exclaimed John.

"Queer aneuch," said his father, coolly, and plainly evincing, by his manner, that he did not believe a word of what his son had said to him.

"The money I sent you, father," rejoined the young man, "was transmitted you through the house of M., P., L., & Co., Glasgow. My letters were also always sent to their care, and how it has happened that neither have reached you I cannot at all conjecture; but I will see into that matter immediately. How were your letters to me sent, father?" he added.

"Ou, of course, to thae folks, too," replied the latter. "It was yer ain desire in the last letter I had frae ye."

"So it was, I recollect. Well, we shall have all this explained presently; but, in the meantime, father, let me know what is the amount of the debt that is just now pressing on you, that I may discharge it and put a stop to these proceedings."

"I'm no sure if we'll need yer assistance noo," said his father, coldly. "Your sister's gaun to be married to John Maitland, and, I believe, he'll lend me as muckle siller as 'ill clear my feet o' this mischief, at any rate."

"What! my sister going to marry old John Maitland!" said her brother in amazement. "Impossible! He cannot have been her own free choice."

"I did not say he was," replied his father; "but Marion's a dutiful child, and would do that and mair to save her faither frae ruin. But there she is comin," he added, (pointing to Marion, who was now approaching the house, from which she had been absent since her brother's arrival, of which, therefore, she knew nothing,) "and ye may speak to her yersel on the subject."

John ran towards his sister and clasped her in his arms. She did not recognise him for a second or two; but, when she did, she burst into tears, and—

"O John, John," she said, "this is a sorrowfu' hoose ye hae come to; but yer faither 'ill hae tell't ye a'?"

"He has, Marion; and, amongst the rest, he has told me, what has surprised me more than all, that you intend marrying old John Maitland."

Marion burst afresh into tears. "It maun be sae, brother," she said—"it maun be sae. There's nae ither way o' savin my pair faither and mother frae ruin."

"But there is, though, Marion," replied her brother. "Ye need not now give your hand where your heart is not, for any such purpose. I have the means of saving you from the necessity of making this sacrifice, and gladly shall I employ them. I will pay your father's debts, Marion, and make you once more a free woman."

We would fain describe the joy—the rapturous, the inexpressible joy—with which these delightful words filled the bosom of the poor girl on whose ravished ear they fell; but we are sure that such an attempt would only interfere with the reader's more lively and vivid conceptions—and we therefore refrain from it.

On the same day on which these events occurred, John Waterstone, having previously settled his father's debt to his landlord with those sent to look after the latter's interest at the intended sale, wrote to the house through which the money he had transmitted to his father had been sent, mentioning its non-delivery, and requesting an explanation of the circumstance.

To this letter, Mr Waterstone received, two days afterwards, the following reply.

"SIR,—We have received, with very painful feelings, though not with surprise, yours of the 10th instant. The misconduct of our junior partner, which has placed us in a similarly distressing predicament with several others as with you, has been the cause of the gross irregularity of which you demand an explanation. Your remittances, together with other monies to a large amount, were appropriated by this person (who has lately absconded) to his own use—a practice which we have since discovered he has been long addicted to. As we, however, consider ourselves bound in honour to make good all such claims as yours—the sums you transmitted having been advised to the firm and the responsibility accepted—we beg to inform you that the money alluded to will be paid to your order at our counting house, on demand. We need scarcely remark that the circumstance above mentioned will sufficiently account for the suppression of letters of which you also complain.—We are, sir," &c.

This letter John Waterstone lost no time in laying before his father, whom it at once convinced of his son's veracity, and consequently of the injustice he had done him. But it was to his mother that this proof of her son's integrity and dutiful conduct brought the most triumphant joy.

"I was sure my John," she said, "wad never either forget or deceive us; and weel did I ken, as aften I have said, that it wad a' be satisfactorily accounted for, and that my laddie wad yet triumph owre a' his backbiters, and shame them that misdooted him."

We have only now to add, that John's generosity, on the occasion of this visit to his parents, which was only temporary, was not confined to the latter, but extended to his sister, on whom he bestowed a portion that enabled her and Richard Spalding to unite their destinies.

John returned shortly after to the West Indies, where he pursued a prosperous career for ten years longer, when he came home an independent man, and spent the remainder of his life in the place of his nativity.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SENTIMENTAL DOMINIE'S COURTSHIP

"WEEL, I dinna ken how it is, Richard," said a Selkirk dominie to his friend Richard Blackwell, a souter of the same royal burgh—"I dinna ken how it is, but there's naething pleases me mair than some o' them Border Tales—they're so uncommonly natural. I've often thought, indeed, in my ain mind, that the writers must get silly, stupid folk to sit down and repeat their little histories to them in their ain language; for I can hardly believe that such true delineations o' character, and such remarkable instances o' the ups and downs o' human affairs, are mere inventions. Frequently, when I finish a tale, I exclaim, "I ken the man that's meant for;" and for a' that, though the picture may be as like him as your ain face to its reflection in a looking-glass, it's ten to ane if the author is aware o' such a character being in existence. This is what puzzles me, Richard. The 'Hen-pecked Man,' for instance, was a *dead hit*; but unfortunately every village on the Borders claimed the bicker-maker as weel as Birgham; while ilk guidwife might hae been heard bawling to her next door neighbour, as she shook the tale in her clenched hand, "Filthy fallow! that's our John or your Ned he's been takin aff"

"It wadna be worth their while puttin ony o' us twa into prent," rejoined the incipient souter.

"I differ with you there, neighbour," replied the dominie; "for there is no calculating the value that clever and skilful hands can give to rude materials. Would ye believe, now, to use a funny illustration, that a farthing's worth o' pig-iron, made into steel chains, rises to nearly twa hundred thousand times its value? Ye stare incredulously, Richard; but it's the truth I'm telling you;—so it follows that out o' the raw material o' our lives, value o' another kind may be gotten, by a proper adaption o' incidents and the like: and it often occurs to me, there is that about my courtship, that would make no that ill a story, were it a wee thought embellished. Ye shall hear it, however, as it is, and judge for yourself:—

Love, ye must be informed, Richard, did not communicate itself to my heart, till I was weel up in years—probably when I was seven-and-twenty, or thereabouts—nor did it blaze up a' at once, like a sudden flame, for it seemed at first but a sma' sma' spark, which often threatened to go out o' its ain accord, like coals kindled with green sticks; till Margery Johnson—that's my wife's maiden name—would have come across my path again like a bonny blink o' sunshine, and presently the dying embers would grow het once more at the heart, and burn away for a' the world like a blown-up fire. Now, though Margery, when I went a-courtin her, didna possess ony great personal attractions to make a sang about—like the feck o' your grand romance leddies—yet she had that life and buoyancy about her, and blowzy healthiness o' countenance, which can make a deeper impression on the heart, at least according to my liking, than a' the fine complexions, blue een, and artificial forms in the world. Margery was a little above the middle height—a plump, robust, guid-looking lass—the apple o' her

father's eye, and the pride o' her mother—whom everybody spoke weel o'. And it was not without either choice or reflection that my passion for Margery Johnson was imbibed. Her faither, who is as guid a man as ever broke the world's bread, attended the Rev. Mr Heslop as weel as mysel; and as the seat which I occupied gave me a full command o' him and his family—for they only sat about an arm's length from me—I had the pleasure o' seeing Margery, with the lave, every returning Sabbath. I no ken rightly how it was, but when she slipped along the aisle, I felt like a shortness o' breath, and a queer tingling sensation steal owre my whole body. In the time o' the singing, too, I could not help from keeking off the psalm book, had it been to save me, to see if she were looking at me; and when our glances happened to encounter, I would have instantly reddened to the bottom o' the haffets, and impudently pretended, by casting my eyes carelessly up to the big front window, that it was merely a casual contact I cannot take upon me to say how far this was sinful; but I ken that at such times I sat in a sort o' religious fervour, on terms o' kindness with my bitterest enemy—for weel can love teach a moral to the mind—while my heart seemed rinnin owre with gratitude to the Deity for this new proof o' his benevolence and goodness, in the provision made for pur errin mankind.

I'm no sure whether I have mentioned that Margery was in the service o' the minister—if no, ye must understand that she was his housemaid; and the manse, ye may weel conceive, Richard, was not the best place in the world for carrying on a courtship. I happened to be muckle thought on, however, by the minister and his wife—for my learning, ye see, brought me within a very little o' the minister himsel—indeed, we were nearly a buckle; and I, accordingly, had frequent invitations from him, on a week-day night, to drink tea and spend the evening. On those occasions, unfortunately, I only saw Margery when she brought in and carried out the tea things; but one night, when the minister and I were indulging ourselves after the four-hours was owre, (I may mention, for your edification, Richard, that *four-hours* signifies the time o' drinking tea—*four*, according to Watson, being the ancient *hour* for the afternoon beverage)—it was after our tea was done, as I was saying, that the minister and I sat down to a glass o' whisky toddy; and, as we both got very cracky, the minister says to me, jocularly, for he was a pleasant agreeable man, Mr Heslop—

"I wonder, James, ye never think o' changing your life!"

Now, it did not just strike me, at first, what he meant; so I bluntly replied—"Yes, sir; I am weel aware, as the heathen philosopher has beautifully observed, *Proba vita est via in caelum*—which signifies, A good life is the way to Heaven."

With that the minister and his wife kinked and laughed a guid ane; and the latter, at last, cried out to me—

"Mr Heslop means, James, that you should get married."

"Oh, is that what he's driving at?" says I, colouring at my ain want o' gumption—"truly it's no a slight matter to

get married, though I'll no be after denying that, could I fall in with a likely, serious young woman, I should have no great objections to make her my wife."

"What think you o' Margery, my housemaid?" says Mrs Heslop, archly—"I think she would make you a guid wife."

Had I been convicted o' the theft o' a silver spoon, I could not have felt more confused than I did at this moment—I found the very perspiration, Richard, oozing out, in large drops, from every pore o' my frame; while Mr Heslop, in the midst o' my embarrassment, chimed in—

"You forget, dear, that James must have a learned lady—one who has attained the *tongues*.—What say you, Mr Brown, to a *blue stocking*?"

"White lambs-wool, sir, or blue jacey, are both alike to me, says I, laughing at his drollery. "I'm no particular to a shade."

Another loud laugh, from the minister and his wife, followed up this sally, and, at the same minute, the parlour door opened, and in capered Margery, with an ashbucket full o' coals, to mend the fire. Mrs Heslop, at the same time, went out and left the minister and I owre our second tumbler. I thought I never saw Margery look half so interesting as she did that night; and I was so passionately struck with her appearance, that without minding the presence o' the minister, I leaned back on my chair, and, taking the glass o' spirits into my hand, and looking owre my left shoulder—

"My service to you, Margery," says I, and drank it off.

"I dare say the man's gyte!" says Margery, staring me in the face like an idiot, as she gaed tittering out o' the room.

I was not to be beaten in any such way, however; and on the afternoon o' the following Sabbath, I contrived, when the kirk sealed, to get into the loaning before Margery, and sauntering till her and her neighbour overtook me, I turned round just as they were passing my side, and, says I, keeping up with them at the same time—

"Here's a braw afternoon, lassies."

"It's a' that," says her neighbour.

Now, had it been to crown me King o' England, I did not ken what next to say, for I felt as if I had been suddenly tongue-tacked; and, without the word o' a lee, Richard, I'm certain we walked as guid as two hundred yards without uttering another syllable.

"How terrible warm it is!" says I, at last, removing my hat, and wiping the perspiration from my brow with my India silk napkin.

"So I think," says Margery, jeeringly. And the next minute she and her neighbour doubled the corner o' the loaning, and struck into the path which led down to the minister's, without so muckle as saying, "Guid e'en to ye, sir!"

I made the best o' my way back through droves o' the kirk folk, who kept speering at one another as I passed, quite loud enough for me to hear them—

"Losh me, what a world this is!—isna that the light-headed dominie? What can he hae been stravagin on the Lord's day afternoon? He can hae been after nae guid."

This, as ye may weel suppose, was but a pair beginning, Richard; but still I was determined to hold out and persevere. My next step was to mool in with Margery's faither; and, as I knew him to be a great snuffer, I bought a box and got it filled, though I did not care a button-tap for the snuff mysel, which I used to rax owre to him during the sermon. Nor did I forget her mother—for it's an important thing in courting, Richard, to gain owre the auld folk—but day after day, I used to strip my coat breast o' the bit "mint" and "southernwood" that I was in the habit o' sticking in my button-hole on a Sabbath day, and present them to her, to keep her up in the afternoon service, when the heat was like to overcome her. I invited Margery's brother, too, twice or thrice, on a Sunday afternoon, to his tea; and contrived, in seeing him home, to walk ave within a stone's

cast o' his faither's house, when he could not, for mense's sake, but ask me in. On such occasions, the auld man and I used to yoke about religion, and my clever knack in conversation and argument did not fail to impress him with a high sense o' my abilities. Margery's mother was equally taken with my particular mode o' expression—for schulemaisters, Richard, have to watch owre the smallest *particle*, and frequently when I have delivered mysel o' a few long-nebbed words, she would have slapped me on the shoulder, and cried out—

"It's worth a body's while listening to the likes o' you, Maister Brown; for to hear ye speak is like hearing a Latin scholar reading aloud frae a prented book—such braw words, truly, are no found in every head; and the mair's the pity that your ain is no waggin in a pulpit. Hech! what would I no gie, could ony o' mine acquit themselves in such a manner."

This pleasant intercourse went on for some time, till, one everyday night, being down at tea with Margery's brother, her mother says—meaning, no doubt, for me to take the hint—

"Ye mustna sit there, Robert"—that was to her son—"for ye ken your sister is down at Greystone Mill, and has to come hame hersel the night, which is far frae being chancy, seeing that there are sac mony o' thae Irish fallows upon the road."

"I will take a step down," says I—"it will be a pleasant walk."

"That wad be such a thing!" says the auld woman, "and *him* sitting there! Losh, I'm vexed at mysel for having mooted it before ye."

"I feel a pleasure," says I, "in going; and it's o' no use Robert tiring himsel, as he has trashing enough through the day."

"But ye're sae kind and considerate, Maister Brown," says she—"it's just imposin on your guid nature a'thegither Hurry her hame, sir, if ye please, afore the darkening; but, to be sure, we needna fret, kenning she's in such excellent company."

I accordingly set off for Greystone Mill; and when I came in front o' the premises, I began to see that it was rather an awkward business I was out on; for I did not ken but Margery might hae somebody o' her ain to set her hame; and to go straight up to an unco house, and speer for a female that I had only spoke twice till, and that in a dry "how-do-ye-do" kind o' manner, was rather a trying affair, Richard, for one that was naturally bashful, as ye may weel conceive. Into the house I went, however, and meeting auld *mooter-the-malder*, in the entry—

"How's a' wi' ye, friend?" says I, in guid braid Scotch, shooting out my hand, at the same time, to give him a hearty shake.

"Ye hae the advantage o' me," says he, drawing back and puckering up his meally mouth. "I dinna ken ye."

"I'm the schulemaister o' Selkirk," says I.

"And what may the schulemaister o' Selkirk be wanting wi' me?" says he, gruffly, still keeping me standing like a borrowed body in the passage.

"I'm seeking a young woman," says I.

"Oh," says he, "ye'll be Margery Johnson's sweetheart, I see warrant—come awa ben."

"He's no my sweetheart," says Margery, as I was stalking into the bit parlour. "I wonder what's brought the randering *fool* here."

This, I confess, was rather a damper; and had I not been weel versed in a woman's paughty ways, and kent that she was aye readiest to misca' them for whom she had the greatest regard, before folk, I'm not so sure, Richard, what might have been the upshot. I sat down, however, as if I had not overheard her, and chatted away to the miller's two gaucy daughters, keeping a watchful eye on Margery a' the time, who did not seem to relish owre weel the attention I was

bestowing on them. I saw plainly, indeed, that she was a little mortified, for she gaunted twice or thrice in the midst o' our pleasantries—no forgetting to put her hand before her mouth, and cast her eyes up to the watch that stood on the mantlepiece, as muckle as to say—"It's time we were steppin', lad." I kept teasing her, nevertheless, for a guid bit; and when at last we left the mill and got on to the road that leads down to the Linthaughs, I says to her, "Will ye take my arm, Margery dear?"

"Keep your arms," says she, "for them ye make love till."

"That's to you, then," says I.

"Ye never made love to me in your life," says she.

"Then I must not ken how to make it," says I; "but, aiblins, ye'll teach me."

"Schulemaisters dinna need to be taught," says she; "ye ken nicelies how till make love to Betty Aitchison—at least to her siller."

This was the miller's youngest daughter.—"What feck o' siller has Betty?" says I.

"Ye can gang and ask her," says she, tartly.

"Hoot, what serves a' this cangling?" says I, taking hold o' her arm and slipping it into mine—"you are as het in the temper as a jenny-nettle, woman."

"Ye're the first that said it," says she.

"And I hope I'll be the last," says I. And on we joggit, as loving-like as if we had been returning from the kirk on our bridal.

It might be four weeks after this meeting, that Margery and I were out, on an autumn evening, in the lang green loaning that leads down to the Linthaughs. It was as bonny a night as man could be abroad in: the moon, nearly full, was just rising owre the Black Cairn, and the deep stillness that prevailed was only broken by the low monotonous murmur o' the trees, or interrupted by our own footsteps. I dinna ken how long we might have sauntered in the loaning—ablinks, two hours—and though inclined a' the time to confess to Margery that I loved her, I could not bring mysel to out with it, for aye as I was about to attempt it, I felt as if something were threatening to choke me. At last I thought on an expedient. And what was it, think ye? No—you'll not guess, Richard; but you'll laugh when you hear. I had recently got by heart the affecting ballad that had been written, by a friend o' my ain, on Willie Grahame and Jeanie Sanderson o' Cavers, a little before Jeanie's death; and, thinks I—as I was a capital hand at the Scotch—I'es try what effect the reciting o' it will have upon Margery; for wha kens but it may move her heart to love and pity? This scheme being formed, I says to her—

"Margery, did you ever hear the waesome ballad about Jeanie Sanderson and her sweetheart?"

"Where was I to hear it?" says she.

"Would ye like to hear it?" says I.

"I'm no caring," says she.

And wi' that I began the ditty; but, as it has never been in print, I had better rin owre it, that you may be able to judge o' its fitness for accomplishing my end. It begins as if Jeanie—who was dying o' consumption—were addressing hersel to Willie Grahame, and he to her—*vice versa*.

SCOTTISH BALLAD.

"Six years have come and gane, Willie,
Since first I met with you;
And through each chequered scene I've been
Affectionate and true:
But now my yearning heart must a'
Its cherished hopes resign;
For never on this side the grave
Can my true love be mine."

"Oh, do not speak o' death, Jeanie,
Unless that ye would break
The heart that cheerfully would shed
Its life's blood for your sake;—

For what a dreary blank this world
Would prove to me, I trow,
If ye were sleeping your long sleep
Upon yon cauld green knowe!"

"When I have passed from earth, Willie,
E'en sorrow as you will,
Your stricken heart will pleasure seek
In other objects still.

For though, when my worn frame is cauld,
Your grief may be profound,
My very name will soon become
Like a forgotten sound!"

"I'm wae to see the cheek, Jeanie,
That sham'd the elder wine,
Now stripped o' a' the bloom that told
Your heart's fond love langsyne.
But do not, Jeanie Sanderson,
Come owre your death to me:
It's pain enow to see you look
So sad on a' you see."

"I'm dying on my feet, Willie,
Whate'er you'd have me say;
And my last hour on earth, I feel,
Draws nearer every day.
Nor can ye with false hopes deceive;
For ne'er can summer's heat
Restore the early blighted flower
That's crushed aneath your feet."

"Oh, bring onec more to mind, Jeanie,
The happiness we've seen,
When at the gloamin's tranquil fa'
We sought the loanin green.
Ye ken how oft I came when ye
Sat eric, love, at hame,
And tapped at that bit lattice, whiles—
Your ain, true Willie Grahame!"

"It's like a vanished dream, Willie,
The memory o' the past,
And oft I've thought our happiness
Owre great at times to last.
Alas! your coming now I watch
In sickness and in pain;
But will ye seek my mother's door
When once that I am gane?"

You're harbouring thoughts o' me, Jeanie,
It's wrong for you to breathe;
For oh, is wretchedness the gift
To me ye would bequeath?
I've ne'er, through life, loved ane but you;
And must the hopes o' years
Be rooted from my heart at once,
And quenched in bitter tears?"

"Ye stand 'tween me and Heaven, Willie,
Yet, oh, I do not blame—
Nor seek to wound the feeling heart,
Whose love was aye the same.
But love is selfish to the last,
And I should like to wear
The locket round my neck, when gane,
That holds my Willie's hair!"

"It cuts me to the heart, Jeanie,
To see you thus give way—
To trouble ye are forcing on,
For a' your friends can say.
And do ye think that I could e'er
To others passion vow,
Were death to break the link that binds
Our hearts so closely now?"

"It may be that long time, Willie,
Will teach you to forget;
Nor leave within your breast—for me—
One feeling o' regret.
But, should you fold another's heart
To yours with fond regard;
Oh, think on her who then shall lie
Happ'd up in yon kirkyard!"

Weel, a' the time I was repeating the ballad, I saw, in the changing expression o' Margery's countenance, that there was a tender struggle going on in her heart; but when I came to the last verse, she could restrain her feelings no longer, but grat outright, as if Jeanie had been her ain sister. I was rather on, Richard, for the greeting mysel; but, affecting an indifference I did not feel, I says to her, as she was in the act o' wiping her eyes wi' her pocket napkin—

"Would ye greet for me Margery, were I dying?"

"You're very like a dying person, or you're naething," says she.

"There are few lovers to be met wi'," says I, "like Willie Graham and Jeanie Sanderson—their devotedness is rare."

"Ye'll be judging frae yersel, I'se warrant," says Margery.

"Oh," says I, "I do not doubt but I could mak as guid a sweetheart as Willie Graham, would onybody try me. But I've a secret to tell ye, woman," continued I, summoning up courage to make a confession.

"Women canna keep secrets," says she; "so ye had better no trust me wi' it."

A long silence was the upshot o' this, and we sauntered on, as if we had been two walking statues, till we came within sight o' the manse. Margery could not but notice my perplexity, for I looked round and round about me, a thousand times, for fear o' listeners, and hemmed again and again, as the words mounted to my lips, and swooned away in a burning blush on my face.

"What was it ye were gaun to tell me?" at last, says she. "It maun be some great secret, surely, that ye're in such terror to disclose it."

"Weel, Margery," says I, in the greatest fervour, locking her hand passionately in baith o' mine—"if ye will have it—I LOVE YOU!"

"Is that a'?" says she, coolly slipping awa her hand. "I really thought, from seeing sae muckle dumb-show, that ye had something o' importance to tell me."

"Might I ask, if ye like me?" says I to her, earnestly.

"Were it even possible that I did," says she, "do ye think that I wad be sic a born-fool as to tell ye?—*atweel do I no!*"

I had often heard, Richard, o' folk being dumbfoundered; but, till that moment, I never knew what it was to be so, mysel; and such was the keen sense o' my silliness, that I even wished I might sink down through the earth, clean out o' sight and hearin. As matters stood, however, I saw there was naething for it but urging Margery to discretion; so I says till her, seriously—

"I hope, in Heaven, Margery, that neither your partner, nor anybody else, will be the better o' what has passed between you and me this night!"

"What do ye mean?" says she.

"Why," says I, "I mean that you'll no acquaint them wi' my liking for you."

"Guid truly!" says she, wi' a toss o' her head, "I wad hae muckle to speak aboot. To tell ye the truth, lad, I never was thinking ony mair about it, nor wad it hae entered into my head again had ye no mentioned it."

"I do not care," says I, rather wittily, "how seldom it enter your head, Margery, so long as it engage your heart."

"Ye're a queer man," says she, "to be a schulemaister;" and skipped aff to the manse, without expressing the least desire to see me again.

When I went home and lay down in bed that night, I could do nothing but toss and tumble; and aye as my silliness recurred to me, I would have uttered a loud *hem*, as a person will do when he is clearing his throat, to keep the racking thought down; but, in spite o' a' I could do, it continued uppermost, and kept torturing me till better than half-past four in the morning. Weel, thinks I, this is really a fine pass I've brought mysel to!—I'll not only become the laughingstock o' the minister and his wife; but the whole town will join in with ready chorus. Time slipped on, however, and things remained much the same, save that Margery took upon hersel a great many airs, and behaved on a' occasions as if I were her humble servant. At last, Richard, I took heart o' grace, plucked up a spirit, and seemed careless about her. That Margery was secretly piqued at this, I had ample proof; for, meeting William Aitchison, one night, at her father's—for she had then left

the minister's service—to mortify me, the pair creature paid the most marked attention to the young man, scarcely goaming me; but, for a' that, I could see plainly enough that she preferred me in her heart, though her pride would not let her shew it. Nor did she stop here; for, when Aitchison rose to go away, she hurried to the press, and taking out a bottle o' spirits, she poured him out a dram, which he no sooner had swallowed than she put away the bottle and the glass, without so muckle as saying "Colly, will ye taste?" But I saw through a' this, Richard; and, though she went to the door and laughed and chatted with him, I knew brawlies, from her very manner, that she was acting, and would have given the best thing in a' the house, to have been friends with me again. At last, into the room she comes, and seats hersel down by the fire, with her hands owre ilk other. Now, thinks I, I'll pay ye back in your ain coin, lass; so I rattled away with her brother, for as guid as half-an-hour, about the qualities o' bone-dust and marl, never letting on that I saw her a' the time, until happening to pat the auld colly that lay sound asleep on the heartstane, the pair creature, vexed at the thought o' the dumb beast getting that attention paid him which was denied to hersel, kicked him ill-naturedly with her foot, and ordered him out o' the room.

"I thought lassies were aye best-natured when they had seen their joandearie," says I, giving her brother a sly dunch with my arm, and looking slyly up in Margery's face.

"She's in the sulks, the jade," says her mother; "and if she doesna keep a better temper, the worst will be her ain—that's a' that I'll say."

Margery made no reply to this; but taking the candlestick into her hand that stood on the table, left the parlour without uttering a word.

"What's the matter wi' ye and her now, James?" says the auld wife—for she did not mind styling me *Maister*, as we were so very familiar, though I must say that Margery's father continued to the last to *Maister* me—he had such a regard for mysel, and veneration for the profession.

"There is naething the matter with us," says I—"that I ken o', at least."

"Come, come, lad; ye maunna tell me that," says she; "it's no little that will ding my lass; and if ye hae slighted her for ony o' the Aitchisons, it says unco little for you, wi' a' your learning. "Oh, shame fa' that weary, weary siller!" added she, shaking her head and leaving the room; "it's been the bane o' true love syne the world had a beginnin, and will be, I think, till it have an end."

On my road home that night I resolved in my mind to trifle no longer with Margery; for I became convinced it was but heartless conduct, to say the very least o' it. To get her to confess, however, that she loved me, I was resolutely determined on; and, after devising a thousand schemes, I at last thought o' trying what effect my way-going would have upon her. Accordingly, as ye may weel remember, Richard, I got a report circulated that I had an intention o' going out to America to try my luck in the other world; so, meeting with Margery one night between the Rankleburn and her ain house, I asked her if she had any objections to take a walk with me as far as the Linthaugh.

"What are ye gaun to do at the Linthaugh?" says she.

"Do ye not know," says I, "that I'm about to leave this quarter, for guid and a', for America?" Her heart lap into her mouth at hearing this, and she quickly cast her eyes round on me, which were brimful o' tears, as if to see whether or no I spoke in earnest, and hurriedly withdrew them the same moment without uttering a word. "It's a trying thing," says I, "to leave the place o' aye's nativity. It may appear childish, but there is a charm attaches even to the schulehouse, with its clay floor and dirty hacked tables, that my heart cannot resist; and, as sure as death, Margery, the very wooden chair whose hind legs I rock backwards

and forwards on when the class is ranged before me, dimmed my eyes with tears this morning, when I reflected that, in a few weeks, some stranger lad should sit upon it. It was but the other night, too, that I chanced to light upon a few simple verses in Mrs Heslop's album that quite unmanned me."

"What were they about?" says Margery.

"Just about a person's way-going and fareweel-taking," says I; "and the writer, in speaking o' the sorrow it occasioned him, to take a last look o' any familiar object, says, truly and feelingly—

"I never look'd a last adieu
To things familiar, but my heart
Strunk with a feeling, almost pain,
Even from their lifelessness to part.

"I never spoke the word Farewell!
But with an utterance faint and broken;
A heart-sick yearning for the time
When it should never more be spoken."

"God only knows," continues I, in the same deep earnestness, "whether the time will ever come round to me when the bitter word shall never be spoken again. Our evening walks, Margery, will soon be at an end; but go where I will, never can I forget the green banks o' the Yarrow, and the beetling brow o' those hills, with their red heather and bleached bent, where I used to rin when a callant;—and no scene, however grand or lovely, can ever have nearer and warmer claims upon my affection, than this loaning, Margery, where you and I have watched the lang streaks o' the yellow sunlight, fading in the grey clouds o' evening, as the twilight thickened round us, rendering us as happy as if we were under the delusion o' glamoury. In the sad clearness o' regret, the whole o' the simple images o' the past are crowding owre my fancy; and now that I am thinking o' leaving Selkirk, I cannot describe to you the melancholy sensation o' loneliness that possesses me. I depart from it a green bough, and can only return—if ever I be permitted to come back—a withered, sapless stem; and, though the sun may shine, the birds sing, and that bonny green haugh present the same garniture o' sweets and beauties as ever, what will it a' avail, Margery, if you, and a' them that I care for, have gone down into the grave, and left me without a tie to bind me to the world!"

Here the tears actually trickled down my cheeks, Richard, having wrought my feelings into such a fermentation; and Margery, the same moment, threw her arms around me, and breathed on my neck, in a tremulous and broken voice, the love o' her warm and feeling heart.

"Will ye cross the Atlantic with me, Margery?" says I, while the dear creature still trembled palpably by my side.

"Yes, yes," says she tenderly; "but ye're no gaun to leave Selkirk, James; and ye ken ye're only saying sae to try me."

"You and my happiness are so utterly entwined, Margery," says I, "that I could not for a moment harbour the thought were it to make you uneasy. *I'll no stir a foot.*"

About two months after this took place, Margery and I were married by Mr Heslop, our ain minister; and a braw wedding we had, there being no less than eight couple, besides my guidfather, at it. And, certies, she could not complain o' her down-sitting; for, though I say it who should not, I do not believe there's a braver house than ours—among those o' our ain graith, I mean—in a' Selkirk, or one where you'll find half o' the comfort; for Margery and I are as happy as the day is long, and our two bonny bairns, John and Mary—the laddie's christened after my faither, and the lassie after the wife's mother—mingle with us nightly around our cheerful fireside in the snug little parlour, delighting us with their endearing prattle, and beguiling our cares with the innocent joyousness o' their happy hearts. You may think me a weak man, Richard; but I doubt not the most feck o' parents are like myself—

fond o' speaking about their offspring—no minding that it may be tiresome enough to those that never had ony themselves; yet could ye but feel how the sunshine o' their young and glad hearts reflects itself back upon a dotting faither's, I am certain ye would think that I was more to be envied in my domestic happiness than the monarch o' England; and weel can I exclaim in the words o' the Scotch sang—

"I view with mair than kingly pride
My hearth, a heaven o' rapture;
While Mary's hand in mine will slide,
As Jockie reads his chapter!"

THE INCIPIENT SOUTER'S WEDDING.

"Nor to flatter you, Maister Brown," said the souter, when the dominie had finished the account of his courtship, "your wooing is a capital tale in itself; and could it only be put into prent, in the simple and honest manner—for ye hide nothing—that you've gone owre it, I'll venture to say that a more laughable story is no in the book. Deil o' the like o' it I ever heard; so muckle duplicity on the one hand, and sheepishness on the other; and, after a', to think that ye should have won your wife's heart by such a wily stratagem. Ye talked, if I remember rightly, o' being weel up in years ere ye fell in love; but atweel I cannot say the same, for I was owre head and ears in it before I was rightly into my teens. Having my faither's business in Selkirk to fall back upon, and being rather handsome, and no that ill-farand, and naturally gifted, like the rest o' our family—for our cleverness a' came by the Maxwells—that's our mother's side o' the house—it is not to be wondered at that the young lassies o' the place should have held a great racket about me. I was even styled the leddies' man; and, night after night, I might have been seen strolling away down by the Pleasance, in company with the Jacksons—high as they hold their heads above you and me now, Maister Brown—and, at other times, with the braw niece o' the dean o' guild. At our annual fairs, too, I have seen the genteeler lasses—farmers' daughters and the like—flocking about me for their *fairing* in perfect droves; and I'm certain there was not one o' them, either from Selkirkshire or Roxburghshire, but who would have waded the Tweed for me, had I but held up my thumb. I was very ill to please, however; for, unless I could get one possessed o' youth, beauty, and siller, I had resolved never to marry. These three requisites I considered indispensable in a wife; and though, at times, I felt my prudent resolution nearly sapped by the winning gentleness o' Susan Baillie, I still prevented the sacred citadel o' my heart from being openly taken, and kept cautiously speculating upon the untoward consequences o' a rash and imprudent marriage. My faither dropping off just as I was entering upon my three-and-twentieth year, his business was consigned owre to me, with the whole o' his effects; and, although the heavy bereavement did not fail to make a suitable impression upon my heart, I felt my personal consequence greatly increased, from the circumstance o' standing in his *shoon*. The Johnsons went actually mad about me, besides scores o' others, as weel to do in the world as any Johnson among them; and many a trap was set for me, by auld crones who had daughters at a marriageable age hanging on their hands. I continued, however, to gallant away among them, as a kind o' general lover; and at a' their select parties there was I to be found figuring. Thus weeks, and months, and years passed on, and I still remained in single blessedness, while the young leddies o' my acquaintance kept stepping off one by one—some marrying tradesmen's sons, and others the young gentlemen belonging to the neighbouring counties, till not one o' a' the number that I used to caper about with was left for my taking. The very bairns o' some o' them, breeched and unbreeched, were big enough

to come to my shop and get measure o' their shoon; and, on one occasion, when Susan Baillie's auld Irish nurse—Susan was then Mrs Captain Frazer—brought down the auldest lassie in her hand to get a pair o' red boots fitted on, I declare the very tears came into my eyes when I saw the little creature—she looked so like her mother!

"Losh, me," says I to Peggy Byrne, "that bairn makes me an auld man."

"Och, and it's your own fault, Master Blackwell," says the nurse, "that your ould at all at all; for you who are a gintleman börn, should be glad to have the mistress and purty childer at home, even to spake to."

"A wife is an expensive piece o' furniture to keep about a house," says I.

"I'm sorry to the heart for you, sir," says she; "and if you care for yoursilf, you'll not let a thrifle of money prevent you from trating yoursilf to some genteel cratur of a wife. Will you just give a look to this swate girleen, God bless it!" added she, kissing the wee lassie, "and say if ye could grudge her bit of brade, poor sowl, or the brade of the moder that bore her?"

"But I cannot get anybody to please me, woman," says I, jocularly.

"Take my word and honour, as an Irishwoman," says Peggy, in Hibernian warmth, "you'll bring the shame of the world on yoursilf, and ye will, ye will. I thought once you could not live after my mistress Susan; but she's lost to you, any how, the jewel, and I only know you will never have it in your power to get a glance of love from such too swate eyes agin."

"There are better fish in the sea," says I, "than ever came out o' it."

"Don't attempt to say so," says she; "for, though many a nate dacent girl, is to the fore, 'tis a silfish cratur they wish bad luck to; and maybe your Honour will let me tell you the iligant ould story of the 'Crooked Stick' for your idification:—Well then," she went on, "you must know there was a whimsical young woman sent into a green lane, having on either side tall and beautiful trees; and she was tould to pick out and bring away the straightest and purtiest branch she could find. She was left at liberty to go to the end, if she pleased; but she was not, by any means, to be allowed to retrace her steps, to make choice of a stick she had already slighted. Beautiful and tall were the boughs of the trees, and swate to look upon, and each in its turn was desaired in not being preferred; for the silly maiden went on and on, without any rason, vainly expecting to get a more perfect stick than those that courted her two eyes. At long and last the trees became smaller, while blurs and warts disfigured their crooked boughs. She could not, she thought within hersilf, choose such rubbish. But what was she to do?—for lo! she had arrived at the ind of her journey, and, instead of a nate young branch from a stately tree, an ould deformed bough was all that remained within her reach. So the silly maiden had to take the *crooked stick* at last, and return with it in her hand amidst the jeering of the beautiful trees which she had formerly despised. And now," said Peggy Byrne in conclusion, "remember the *crooked stick*, your Honour, and give over your dilly-dallying, or sure enough you'll get it—you will."

I laughed heartily at the Irish nurse's foolery; and that very night I mind I had as queer a dream as mortal ever dreamt. I thought I was out on a fine summer's day, in the month o' June, fishing in the stream a little below Selkirk, where the Tweed is augmented by the Ettrick. I was angling, I thought, with the artificial fly in the manner o' worm; and, though the water was very turbid, trouts, like silly women, are so apt to be taken with *appearances*, that that day multitudes o' them eagerly seized the deadly barb, and only found out the deceit at the precious cost o' their lives. I imagined I was particularly

nice, however, in choosing the fish I raised; for, as I drew them ashore upon the nearest channel, instead o' rinnin forward with alacrity and seizing them, I thought I stood like an innocent, turning owre in my mind whether the trouts were o' such a quality as to repay me for the trouble o' stooping to take them up. Presently, the fish not being properly banked, would have broken the gut and torn themselves from the hook, leaving me in bewilderment and shame, to execrate my ain stupid indecision. But this was not the worst o' it; for, in some cases, I actually fancied I saw the same bonny detached trouts taken further down the stream by other anglers, while a number, after a fierce struggle to get free, would have been seen pining, with wounded hearts, at the bottom o' the water, unable apparently either to feed or spawn. To add to my vexation, Maister Brown, the stream began suddenly to clear, while the fish, from the quantity o' food that covered the water, grew lazy, and would not so muckle as move. At last, I thought I threw in, for the last time, in a fit o' desperation, and what should I do but hook a huge salmon by the side fin! He immediately started in beautiful style, for his far hame, the sea; and as a fish so fastened, was no better secured than a young bluid-horse bridled by the middle instead o' the mouth, I saw there was nothing for it but following him, and using my legs as weel as my line. Away we accordingly went, at a dead heat, down the Tweed—starting from about Etterick foot, while the fish every now and then would have sprung furiously out o' the water in his attempts to shiver the line with his tail. It would not a' do, however; and, after a great many hours play, I thought we landed at 'Coldstream Brig-end,' where, finding him greatly exhausted, I drew him closer and closer to the edge, while giving him a brattle out into the deep water, till seeing him unable to give any further resistance, I gaffed and secured him. But, judge o' my mortification, when, instead o' a bonny plump salmon, a lean, deformed skate lay in the dead-thraps upon the white gravel, to mock me for my pains! The bairns, at this moment, whom I thought I saw distinctly on the bridge, setting up a wicked shout o' derision, I awoke with the noise. Nor will I ever forget the agony that I was in the sweat ran from my body like a planet shower; and do what I liked I could not get the disagreeable image o' the ill-coloured toom skate from my mind; for aye as I dovered owre again, I was as suddenly started by the presence o' the hateful fish laying itsel' cheek by jowl, along side o' me.

"You may laugh as ye like, Maister Brown at this strange dream; but, when you hear how significantly the crowning event in the after history o' my life was prefigured by it, you'll see less cause for laughter, I'm thinking. It might be half a year subsequent to the dream, or thereabouts, that I happened to be in Wooler on a jaunt; and, as the place and the folk about it were muckle to my mind, I was induced to protract my stay for several weeks. I soon made the acquaintance o' several o' the young leddies o' the same *caste* as mysel; and, among others, I got uncommonly intimate with a Miss Cochrane, and her sister, Arabella. The former, I was told, had a hantle o' siller, besides rich expectations from some auld aunt in Newcastle; while stories were whispered o' the prodigious number o' offers she had refused, and that he would be considered a lucky man who should make off with such a capital prize. Here, thinks I, I've fallen on my feet at last; and, if I do not improve the golden opportunity to my advantage, blame me. Miss Cochrane continued shy, however; and I was beginning to despair o' making any impression, when, one night, being at a party with her and her sister, at the house o' a Mrs Cavendish, we a' three grew so delighted with each other, that it was agreed, before parting, that, as neither Arabella nor hersel had ever seen Coldstream, and, as they had a genteel cousin there, we should take a trip to it the next day in a post

chaise. Off we accordingly went on the ensuing morning; and, as soon as we reached the town, a messenger was dispatched for the genteel cousin, when presently a little dissipated-looking creature made his appearance, who, at the sight o' his dear Sophia and Arabella, was like to go into extatics. He did not need to be asked twice to join us at dinner; for he moved about as if the inn had been his ain, and fell to the dainties we had ordered, as greedily as a half-famished cur. The wine and brandy, too, were sent down his throat as if his stomach had been a sand-bed, and he kept drinking glasses with us every whip-touch, first asking me to join him and then his "dear cousins," till, long before the dinner was owre, I had got so completely *rosined*, that I could not weel make out where I was, or satisfactorily account for the appearance o' the two strange women that sat on each side o' me. The haze, however, that hung owre me, began to go off in the course o' the evening; and, when I cleared up sufficiently, the Coldstream birkie proposed that we should sally out and get a sight o' the famed 'Brig-end,' where the well known Peter Moodie celebrated clandestine marriages.

"I'm ye're man for a sprce," says I—for the brandy, by this time, had flown to my head. And, starting to my feet, and seizing Miss Cochrane by the arm—"Come, my dawty," cries I, "let us away down to the brig and see Hymen's altar!"

"Oh, Master Blackwell!" says Madam, in girlish bashfulness, allowing hersel at the same time to be led off; "only think what our friends will say should they hear of *as* being there! I would not for ten thousand worlds they should know."

"Fiddledee, fiddledum!" shouted I; and off we strutted, uttering a' the balderdash and foolery in the world on our way down; and, when we came to the Brig-end, I began to sing, at the very top o' my lungs,

"There's naeboddy coming to marry me."

But I had scarcely finished the first line o' the sang, when forward stepped an auld man, with a snuffy white napkin round his neck, and with a head as white as the driven snow; and, says he, touching his hat with his hand—

"Would ye be wanting my services, sir?"

"What services in a' the world can ye render, auld carle?" says I.

"I'm the man that marries the folk," says he; "my name's Peter Moodie."

"And what do you seek for your marriage service?" says I.

"Three half-crowns frae working folk, and a guinea frae the like o' you, sir," says he.

"There's a crown-piece, my guid fellow," says I, "and let me see you go owre the foolery—for the very fun o' the thing."

"Do, do, Peter!" cried the youngest Cochrane and her cousin, eagerly.

"Wha shall I buckle, then?" says the mimicking priest.

"Our two selves," says I, pressing Miss Cochrane's hand, in maudlin fondness.

"What's your name, sir?" says the white-headed impostor, looking me gravely in the face.

"Richard Blackwell," says I, proudly.

"Speak after me, then," says he—"I, Richard Blackwell, do take thee, Sophia Cochrane, to be my married wife, and do promise to be a loving husband untø thee until death shall separate us."

I did as I was ordered by the body, and he next caused Miss Cochrane to take me by the right hand, and repeat a few words after him, muckle to the same effect. This being done—"Richard Blackwell and Sophia Cochrane," added the carle, with an air o' möck solemnity, "I proclaim you husband and wife."

"Get on with the ceremony" ye drunken neer-do-weel,"

bawled I; "the five shillings will surely go a deal farther than that. We're not half married, swallow you!"

"Try to get off, if you can, and see how ye'll thrive," says Peter, and staggered off, leaving us to enjoy what I considered at the time a mere farce or bit o' harmless diversion.

Having returned to the inn, we had another bottle o' brandy, to drink to the health and happiness o' Mr and Mrs Blackwell; and, as I was willing to carry on the joke, I good-naturedly humoured the fools—for what will a man not do in drink—and thanked them with sham politeness for their kind wishes. The bill at length was sent up to *our lordships*; but, as the cousin had no small change on him, and as the leddies had left their purses behind them in the bustle o' setting off, I had to pay dearly for my "whistle," or I had nothing. Having got a' settled, we packed into the chaise, and drove off for Wooler; but I was so far gone that I lay as sound as a tap on the auldest Cochrane's shouter, until we came within a mile o' the village; and, when I awoke, the *mercury* had fallen so low that I felt as stupid and dead as a door nail. No sooner, however, did we reach their door in the main street, than I banged up in the chaise, and attempted to jump out; but, alack-a-day! my legs fell from beneath me as if they did not belong to my body, while my pair head swam round and round, like a light bung in a gutter.—"Will ony o' you chiefs," hiecuped I, to the crowd that stood in front o' the chaise window, "carry me to Lucky Hunter's?"

"Ye maun pack in wi' your wife, Billy," cried they.

"I've no *wife*," stammered I; "I'm Ma-ma-ister Blackwell, the braw sou-sou-ter o' Selkirk."

At hearing this, some witty rascal roared out—

"Down wi' the souters o' Selkirk,
And up wi' the Yearl o' Hume."

And, suiting the *action* to the words, *down* from the chaise they accordingly dragged me; but, as I would not on any account enter Miss Cochrane's house, the youngsters lifted me into a butcher's slaughtering barrow, and whirled me along the pavement like daft devils; and, in the lapse o' a few minutes, I was thudded against my landlady's door, and tumbled out on the dirty street, as unceremoniously as if I had been the "lord o' misrule" at a village feast. Being carried up stairs and laid upon a sofa, I was owre asleep before ye could say "Jock Robison," and as unconscious o' the late hullybilloo as the bairn unborn. The burning fever, however, that the drink had flung me into, would not let me sleep for any length of time; and, about two in the morning, I awoke with my tongue sticking to my mouth, as if it had been tacked; nor could I open my lips wide enough to let in a teaspoon shank, though my very throat was cracking with the heat, like a piece o' parched muirland. In raising mysel on the sofa, I fortunately got hold o' the bell rope, and, resting myself on my elbow, I rang it as furiously as if the house had been in flames about my ears.

"What, what, what is the matter with you?" sputtered the terrified landlady, scrambling up the stairs. "People will think it is the fire bell."

"It is a great enough fire bell," says I; "and, if ye do not keep back your abominable candle, you'll set my breath a-low."

"The good folk will then take you for one of the new lights," says she.

"For mercy's sake," cries I, "bring up your water pipe, and let ^{me} run down my throat, to slocken me!"

"There's not such a thing as a water pipe in Wooler," says the aggravating creature. "The good people in this quarter haven't the *spirit* in them that you've got."

"Oh, do not torture me, wife," said I, "with your off-taking way, for I could drink the Till dry, could I get at it."

"You shall have a proper sluicing in it in the morning then," says the unfeeling wretch; "so just lay your head high till daylight comes in."

Seeing I could not better myself, I flung my head down with a terrible clash on the side o' the sofa; while my thirst grew so intolerable that the very breath which issued from my cramped lips was like to stifle me. In this indescribably miserable state I lay till about seven o'clock, when, by a sickly effort o' strength, I got up, and tried to walk across the floor; but my brain reeled at every step, and my limbs shook beneath me like willow wands! With my eyes swimming in dizziness, I next sought the wash-hand basin, and plunging my head into the cauld water, I kept it there for nearly three minutes, drinking copiously at the same time; and though the terrible stimulus brought on a severe shivering qualm, that lasted for nearly a quarter of an hour, it cleared my faculties sufficiently to lay me open to a' the violence o' self-reproach. Having swallowed a beef-steak, with plenty o' mustard and pepper, I felt comparatively recruited, at least in body; and when the day had worn on to about four in the afternoon, I thought, as the reading room was only at the next door, I might contrive to slip in unobserved, and get a sight o' the papers. I, accordingly, stole out, and got into the room without meeting any one, where I found an auldish man in a brown tufted wig, who used glasses, sitting brooding owre the *bad Times* forment the window. He did not take any notice o' me, nor I o' him; but I had not got weel seated, when in steps a spruce-looking body, in a Petersham frock, who immediately marched up to the spectacled dumby, and inquired if there was any news going.

"None," replied the latter, in a sepulchral tone o' voice; "neither foreign nor domestic."

"You haven't heard, then," says the other, "of Miss Cochrane's affair?"

"Has she been *seized*?" says the elderly gentleman, taking off his spectacles, and turning up the whites of his eyes.

"Aye, aye, heart and body," says the younger, in a fit of laughter; "the has been seized by her husband, a half-witted idiot of a fellow, a native of the town of Selkirk."

"Ye dinna mean to say sae!" rejoins his friend.

"The simpleton was hooked at Coldstream Brig-end," cries the young man in the surtout, as I stole out in an agony o' remorse, and directed my steps to my lodgings, on the most friendly terms with desperation. My worst fears were instantly confirmed; for I no sooner had entered the house than Mrs Hunter placed a letter in my hand from the youngest Cochrane. I have carried the thing about with me for these ten years now; and, as I regard it as a kind o' curiosity, ye would aiblins like to hear it. It's just word for word to this day as I received it.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Mrs Blackwell, your much attached wife, has passed a miserable night—going out of one hysteric into another; and bitterly lamenting that she should have given her hand to one who seems determined to repay the affection she has heaped upon him with a neglect which, if persisted in, will not fail to break her loving heart. She has tasted nothing since she left Coldstream, save a mouthful of cold water and a little thin gruel; and our fear is, that the poor soul will starve herself to death! Do come down immediately, and try to comfort her, and you may rely upon my kind offices in doing away with the unpleasant feelings to which your unaccountable conduct last night has given rise.—Your affectionate sister,

"ARABELLA COCHRANE."

I turned in actual loathing from the perusal o' this artful scrawl; while my heart was like to burst with the wild tumult o' feeling that distracted me. "Is it possible," asked I, again and again, o' mysel, "that I'm married. No, no; it cannot

be; and rather than live with a woman I do not like, I'll leave the country, and transport myself for life to the farthest isle o' Sydney Cove." How I was kept in my right judgment throughout that sleepless and miserable night, is a wonder to me till this day. Twenty times did I fondly convince mysel that it was a' but a crazed dream; and as often did the truth flash upon my mind, curdling my very bluid with shame and remorse. The morning at length breaking, I hastily arose, threw on my clothes, and hurried down to the "Cottage" for a post-chaise; and in less than an hour I was off, bag and baggage, on my way to Selkirk. But bad news travel unco fast; and, long before I reached the town, the story o' my clandestine marriage was in the mouths o' auld and young; and, on driving up to my ain house, the first sight I saw was the big Radical flag wapped to the chimney, and flapping out owre the premises, in token o' rejoicing.

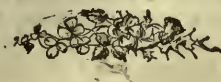
"Oh, Tam Wilson," cried I to the foreman, stamping my foot in madness, "what, in the name o' a' that's guid, has tempted ye to hoist that infernal rag above my house? Tear it down this moment, sirrah, if ye value either your maister's character or your ain employ."

"It was put up, sir, in honour o' your marriage," says he.

"Breathe that word again in my hearing," says I, "and I'll cleave you to the teeth, ye scoundrel!"

In the midst o' our cangling, a chaise rolled up to the door, when out jumped my two she-tormentors, and their little blackaviced cousin, and marched direct into the shop. A *scene* immediately ensued that baffles a' description. The auldest Cochrane first tried on the fainting and greeting; but, finding, after a great deal o' attitudinizing, that she was as far from her purpose as ever, she next began to storm like a fury, and even had the audacity and ill-breeding to smack me in the face—not with her lips truly, but with her open hand—using towards me, at the same time, language that would disgrace an outcast in a Bridewell. After expending the whole o' her wrath on my head, the party left the shop, threatening that they would make my purse smart for it in the way o' a settlement. And they were as guid as their word; for I had forty pounds a-year to settle on a person the law acknowledged as my lawfully wedded wife, besides incurring legal expenses to the amount o' three hundred pounds.

Years have come and passed since a' this happened; but never has my unlucky marriage gone down in Selkirk; and I not only have lost my "status" in society, but my presence, at a public meeting or the like—even at this day—is the ready signal for the evil-disposed to kick up a riot. This I might even get owre; but when I think o' the cheerlessness o' my ain house, and the sad desolateness o' my heart—that my only sister, whose advice I have often treated with owre little deference, has sunk into the grave with a broken heart—that I have none to take an interest or enter into the cause o' the inquietude and suffering that has silently worn down the strength o' my constitution—and that, were I dying the morn, the fremmit must close my eyes, and my effects go to enrich an ingrate:—I say, Maister Brown, when I think on the misery that my foolishness has brought upon me, and reflect how happy I might have been, had I not become the dupe o' my ain erroneous opinions and self-conceit—my very heart sickens within me; and, in the bitterness o' my feelings, I earnestly wish that I were laid by the side o' my puir sister, and my head at rest for ever below the sod.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SEA FIGHT.

"Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
Her home is on the deep."

CAMPBELL.

It was on the close of a sultry day in August, about the end of the French war, that a carriage was slowly wending its way down one of the principal streets of the town of Berwick. The dust with which it was covered, and the jaded appearance of the horses, seemed to betoken that it came from a distance. The postilion, a porsy little man, whose rosy face bore the indubitable marks of a worshipper at the shrine of Bacchus, drew up at the first inn which presented itself to view. Out of the carriage stepped a young man who was plainly dressed in the garb of a sailor. He had nothing particular about his dress to distinguish him from the common run of seamen; but his upright figure, and that indescribable something which is peculiar to a "certain class," and which serves to distinguish them from those in humbler situations in life, at first sight shewed that he belonged to the former. He appeared to be about twenty-six years of age, while his weatherbeaten face, and a slight scar on his left cheek, shewed that he had borne both "the battle and the breeze." He was accompanied by a squat muscular-looking fellow, who seemed to act in the capacity of servant; although his sea jargon and hard horny hands shewed him to be more accustomed to the duty of a sailor than that of a lackey. After seeing that their baggage was properly taken care of, they retired together to a private room.

"Well, Bill," said he who seemed the superior to his companion, "how do you feel after your ride? For my part, I would sooner sail round the world in a gale of wind, and the ship pitching bows under all the time, than be again jammed up and jostled in that infernal cage."

"Why, sir," rejoined his companion, "I am as sore as if I had been soundly thrashed with a handspike; but, howd-soever, that doesn't matter—we must look out for squalls on land as well as on sea, till we are fairly housed either under ground or in Davy Jones."

"Take my spyglass," said the young officer, "walk down to the shore, and see if our little hooker is appearing in sight yet."

"As I take it," replied Bill, "she can't be far astarn of us, for she has had a spanking breeze all day."

So saying, snatching up his hat, he was preparing to quit the room, when the officer bawled out—

"Vast there, my lad—I'll accompany you." And they both descended together.

Turning down the arch which leads to the pier, they strolled along till they overtook four or five men who were lounging at that part where the pier turns outward at an obtuse angle. Below them lay a longboat, apparently intended for piloting the ships into the harbour. One of them was a man about sixty years of age, whose small head and piercing eye, slouched under a broad-brimmed hat, were strangely contrasted with the bluff and muscular

appearance of his body. His face was covered with a thick snaggy beard, which seemed not to have been in the hands of the barber for a month at least. The rest of the men had nothing remarkable in their appearance; but all of them seemed to be at least twenty years younger than the old fellow just mentioned.

"Well, my lads," said the officer, "any ships in sight?"

"Never a one," replied the old fellow, in a gruff voice; "we may stand here all the day blowing our fingers, and whistling to Molly Jackson, long enough, before she send us that windfall."

"Perhaps that windfall may happen sooner than you expect," replied the officer. "I expect a vessel soon; she cannot be far distant."

"Which direction does she come?" eagerly asked the old man. But no sooner were the words out of his mouth than a square-rigged vessel was observed doubling St Abb's which had before concealed her from their view. In a minute the blue jack flew up to her foretopmast head.

"There comes the little Hawk," cried Bill, rubbing his hands for joy; "there comes the Hawk as tight a little craft as ever fought her guns on one deck."

The sudden appearance of the brig seemed to act like an electric shock upon the men. In an instant, hands were seen disappearing from the flaps of their dirty canvass trousers; and each scrambling down the pier as best he could, seized hold of their respective oars, and, in a moment, the longboat was under way, the men pulling as if it had been for life or death.

"Stop!" cried the officer—"take me on board with you."

"Give way, my hearties," roared out the old man, without attending to him. "Give way—there is Hoby Elliot will be at our heels directly."

"I am commander of that vessel," cried the officer, running along the pier to keep up with the boat; but the men were too eager to get at the vessel to attend to him.

"Well, Bill," said he, turning to his companion, "I see it is no go with these fellows; so you will just step up to the inn, get our luggage down, and here is some money to discharge our reckoning."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Bill, and moved off.

The brig, by this time, had neared the harbour considerably, with the wind, from the north-north-west, blowing right upon her quarter. The young officer could not help a feeling of pride and satisfaction as he fondly gazed upon his little vessel scudding before the breeze, while her taunt masts and long slight yards, literally covered with canvass, seemed to bend beneath their load. There is a sympathy which the sailor feels for his ship which it is difficult to describe. It is not that love which a parent feels for his child—nor yet the love of a child to its parent; it is not that which a brother feels for his sister. No; it is something stronger than this: it is the affection which an ardent lover feels for his mistress—it is a love riveted by the strongest links of attachment; in it has he weathered many a tough gale; in it are contained his jovial shipmates, bound together by mutual hardships and perils.

The prospect which at this moment presented itself to the officer's view was beautiful in the extreme. To the

south, beyond the long flat sands of Holy Island, were seen the old castle and abbey of Lindisfern, hallowed by so many sacred associations; beyond them, were seen rising, in the distance, the castles of Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh; to the west, were the fields yellow with corn ready for the sickle; to the north, was the bold promontory of St Abb's, the finest headland in Europe, jutting into the sea; to the east, was the German Ocean, stretching away till the view was bounded by the clouds in the distant horizon, which seemed level with the sea; and, what to the officer was dearer than all these, there was his little vessel, the pride of his heart, skimming, like a thing of life, over the blue waters.

Before proceeding farther with our present story, it may not be amiss, first, to give the reader some insight into the history of the hero of our tale.

Harry Fenwick was the son of a small landed proprietor in the south-west of England, who, having unfortunately embarked his whole fortune in a mercantile speculation, was, by a sudden loss, reduced to poverty. The distress occasioned by this misfortune was increased by the sudden death of his wife, which so preyed upon his spirits that he soon after died of a broken heart, leaving poor Harry and his little sister Susan unprotected in the world. But Providence, who watches over the orphan and the destitute, soon raised them up a protector in the person of a maternal uncle, who, having been abroad for a number of years, had amassed a handsome fortune, but arrived in England too late to close the eyes of his sister. Having no children, he determined to adopt his nephew and niece, who from that day became as his own. Harry was fourteen years old on the death of his parents; and his uncle, Benjamin Davis, determined to bring him up to his own profession—that of a sailor. He was accordingly entered as a midshipman on board the *Ranger*, a fifty-gun ship, where his conduct was such that he rose from one degree to another, till, at length, in an engagement with a ship of superior metal, he so distinguished himself that, in reward for his bravery, he was promoted to the command of the brig *Hawk*, mounting eight twelves and two short carronades, with a crew of eighty hands, as smart fellows as ever sailed on salt water. At the time when our story begins, Harry had left his ship at Leith, to visit an old friend of his uncle's, at whose house he was a frequent visiter. Certain it is that, however much Harry loved the yarns and company of the old tar, yet there was another no less powerful attraction, in the person of his gentle and lovely daughter Maria. Maria Everet was not what most people would call a beauty; but the grace and symmetry of her slight figure, her sweet pensive manners, and the melodiousness of her voice, threw around her a charm which captivated much more effectually than those whose beauty dazzles at first sight.

Often would Maria listen, in silent wonder and admiration, to the conversations between her father and Harry, of hair-breadth escapes, of storms and battles; and, stealing a timid glance at the young and hardy sailor, she would sigh, and, like Desdemona, would desire him to repeat again what he had been relating. Harry, on the other hand, felt interested in the lovely girl: at first he esteemed her for her father's sake, but a better acquaintance made him love her for her own; and it was with secret joy and inward gratification that the old father observed the growing attachment between Harry and his daughter. Often would Harry, when cruising on the coast, think of the peaceful home of the old sailor, where dwelt she whom he loved above all the world; and, however far absent, his thoughts, like the needle in his compass, always reverted to the north. Great, then, was his disappointment when, on arriving at Everet's house, he found that Maria had gone to England to visit his uncle Ben and sister Susan. Without stopping longer than to take a night's rest, he set out for Berwick,

where his ship was to wait till his arrival; and, as he was bound for Plymouth, after an eighteen months' cruise, he determined to call on his uncle, who dwelt on the seacoast. But to return to our story.

By the time the vessel had reached the mouth of the harbour, our old friend, Bill Curtis, was hurrying along the pier, blowing like a porpoise, and bawling out to the porter who accompanied him—

"Come, bear a hand, my lad—I see they are just manning the six-oared-gig!"

On the approach of the gig, Harry leaped down to the landing-place, and stepped on board. In a moment, the caps of the sailors were doffed in salutation to their commander; and a smile of pleasure lighted up their weatherbeaten countenances as he addressed them in a kindly manner.

Harry was received on the quarter by his first and second lieutenants; when the sailors, no longer restrained by the presence of their commander, and bursting with impatience, asked all at once—

"Well, Bill, what's brought the captain and you so soon back?—has the bird flown?"

"Avast a bit," cried Bill—"I must first fill up a hole in my stomach, big enough to hold a hogshead." So, bursting past, he descended the companion-ladder, and straightway betook himself to the galley, where the cook, an old tar who had got his larboard fin carried away by a cannon ball, was serving, out of a monstrous ladle, a mass of beef and greens to the old pilot and his boat's crew, who were already devouring with their eyes the promised feast—"Shiver my tafferel, if I don't think I could swallow a shark, bones and all, for sheer hunger!" roared Bill. So saying, he slapped his knife into the beef, and ate as heartily as if he had not tasted meat for a week.

At this instant, the boatswain's whistle was heard piping up all hands.

"What's the matter now?" said the cook,

"Oh," said Bill, "they are going to get the ship under way, I suppose."

"The ship under way!" said the old pilot, rising from a dark corner where he was sitting. "Is the captain not going to enter the harbour?"

"No, no," replied Bill; "he is in too great a hurry to see his sweetheart for that."

"Where is she?" asked the old cook.

"On the coast of Norfolk," said Bill, "where we are to stop on our passage. But I must not stand speechifying here while the rest are busy."

So saying, he sprung on deck, followed by the old pilot.

When Bill and his companion came upon deck, they found Harry there, giving orders. The old pilot went up to him, and doffing his hat, said—

"Sir, I hope you are not going to get the ship under way to-night."

"Why not?" asked Harry.

"Look, sir," exclaimed the pilot, turning to the north-east, "do you not see how the sky is lowering over yonder?—and do you not feel what a roll of the sea there is?—a sure sign of a coming storm, if there has not been a gale before. Take an old man's advice for once, and one who has weathered many a tough gale—keep not to sea to-night, but enter the harbour, where you will be safe from every wind that blows."

"Thank you, my old boy," said Harry; "but a seaman must not be frightened with every capful of wind that may blow." So saying, he moved off to give directions.

By this time the ship was again under way; but, although Harry had disregarded the advice of the old pilot about entering the harbour, yet he determined to make the ship snug for what might happen. So, seizing a speaking trumpet, he bawled out to some men aloft—

"Send down the royals and topgallantmasts there."

"Ay, ay, sir," shouted half a dozen voices from the clouds; and in a minute down they came.

Harry, coming up to Archer, the second lieutenant, asked him what he thought of the weather.

"I believe we are going to get a stiff north-easter," replied Archer; "and, by the *Lord Harry*, there it comes!" said he, pointing to the east.

"Well, then," said Harry, "get the topsails double reefed, new lash the guns, and send the carpenter and his mate to secure the boats and batten down the hatchways. What course do you steer?" asked Harry at the man at the wheel.

"South-east and by south," said the man.

"Then keep her head two more points to the east; we must stand without the Fern Islands, as the wind seems inclined to eastern upon us."

At this instant, a heavy squall struck the ship, and almost laid her on her beam-ends. "Luff, my lad—luff!" roared out Harry to the man at the wheel.

Seeing the ship much pressed, a midshipman with six men, were sent to take in the staysails, by which the ship was eased considerably. The wind, by this time, had risen to a perfect hurricane; the rain fell in torrents, and the sea-birds were screaming and fluttering about the rigging, as if seeking for shelter from the wind; the sea, likewise, had risen prodigiously, and the ship, groaning and weltering at every plunge, seemed to be creaking at every timber, whilst the creaking of the guns and the rattling of the blocks greatly increased the uproar and confusion.

"Surely some hag is dead to-night, it blows so desperately," said Clark, coming aft to where Harry was standing; "but, as the ship makes good weather on this reach, as she is nearly bow on to the sea, it may be as well to keep her on this tack during the night."

"O sirs," said the carpenter, coming up with a face as long as his arm, "the ship is sinking, and we shall all go to the bottom."

"What's the matter?" said Harry.

"The ship has sprung a leak in the powder magazine, and the water is pouring in like a sluice."

"Hang your long phiz!" said an old grim fellow of a quartermaster, standing by the main-chains; "why don't you go and stop it, then?"

"Do you, Clark," said Harry, "go down and see what is the matter; and do you, carpenter, get your crew and man the weather pump."

"There is a leak, indeed," said Clark, returning; "but nothing to make a work about."

"An ugly sea that!" said the old quartermaster; "that greenhorn at the helm has wet me into the skin. You rascal, why don't you ease the ship into the sea? If you carry on in that manner, you will soon send us all to another place of worship."

"Do you intend, sir," said he, addressing himself to Harry, "to stand long on this tack?"

"Yes," replied Harry; "the ship will labour less on this tack than on the other; and besides it is best to get as much sea-room as possible."

"Had we not better run into the Fairway?" said the quartermaster; "we are sure of getting shelter under the Big Fern; and I know the coast well, for I was brought up in these parts."

"That's a good idea," observed Harry.

"But a lee-shore is a dangerous place in a stormy night," added Clark.

"Oh, never fear the lee-shore—I'll pilot you in safety; besides, the lights will direct us."

"Very well," said Harry; "as the wind does not at all seem inclined to take off, we had better do as you say; and do you, Clark, take some men and clew up the foresail. Keep her away, my lad," shouted he to the man at the

wheel. "So, so—steady. Ready there with the boom-foresail halyards?"

"All ready, sir."

"Then boom away, my lads; get the trysail down too, and we'll run under double-reefed topsails alone."

The ship was much eased by this diminution of canvass, and run much steadier than might have been expected, only occasionally shipping a little sea over the weather bow.

"A bit of a gale," muttered the quartermaster to himself as he descended to the midshipman's mess. "Humph," said he, observing the middies seated over a bowl of punch, "you seem to be enjoying yourselves upon the strength of it."

"Ay, and would have you to do the same," exclaimed a little mid, pushing him a glass of grog; "come douse your sou'-wester and join us."

Little invitation was needed on the part of the quartermaster, who was one of those characters so emphatically termed, by seamen, "*wet lads*," and who, perhaps very philosophically reason, that, as they are exposed to so much fluid of a cold nature from without, so a proportionable degree of fluid of a hot nature within, is necessary to preserve their equilibrium.

Notwithstanding this frailty, there was not a braver nor a kinder heart in the British navy than that of the old quartermaster. The middies he called his children; and they, in turn, were accustomed to call him Daddy, although some of the tricks which they played him savoured of anything but the respect which children owe to their parents. Having fallen asleep in the midst of a song, with his pipe in the one hand and his glass in the other, this was too good an opportunity for a lark to be slipped. As his head had fallen back upon his seat, the middies slyly tied a cracker to his pigtail, and were preparing to ignite it, when the quartermaster suddenly awoke, and perceiving the trick they were about to play him, he seized hold of a rope's-end and soon made the middies seek shelter from his fury under the table; where, being unable to get at them, he sung out—

"Blow me, but you small craft have got into too shoal water for me to follow you now; but if I get my big guns to bear upon you, I will blow you out of the water."

A sailor at this moment entering to tell the quartermaster that he was required on deck, put an end to the joke and relieved the midshipmen from their confinement.

When the quartermaster came on deck, the Fern lights were right a-head; and, by his directions, the vessel was soon moored under the lee of the island, in safety from the tempest. Here, after stopping two days, they again set sail, and had already got off the coast of Norfolk, when, in the grey of the morning, a man at the mast head called out—

"On deck there, ahoy!"

"Well, my lad?" cried Archer, whose watch it was on deck.

"A large ship with French colours, on the weather bow."

"Call up the captain and first lieutenant," said Archer to a midshipman.

"Mast-head again, ahoy!—what more do you make of her?"

"She looms large, and seems coming down upon us right before the wind."

Harry and Clark now came upon deck, followed by the old quartermaster, who, rubbing his eyes, exclaimed—

"Why, what's the matter now?"

Archer pointed out the vessel, which was still at a great distance, but evidently nearing them.

"All hands upon deck there!" shouted Harry; "boat-swain, pipe up all hands; and do you, Clark, go up aloft and see what you can make of her."

"She is a large vessel," exclaimed Clark, looking through his spy-glass, "with French colours and ship rig. There, I

see her side—all black, and white ports; there is one, two, three—I cannot count them, they are so thick.”

“Ay, let her come,” cried Harry—“I warrant her she gets as good as she brings. Up with the British ensign, my lads, and let the Frenchmen see what we are.”

“And I’ll take good care that it shall not come down in a hurry, with your Honour’s leave,” exclaimed the old quartermaster. So saying, he mounted the rigging, and nailed the ensign to the mast. “Now, Mr Frenchman, when that comes down, we’ll strike, but not till then.”

All hands were now on deck and straining their eyes with looking at the strange sail.

“Get the ship clear for action,” roared out Harry; “run out the guns there; pull down the studdingsails. Port!” to the man at the helm. “So.”

The deck of the brig at this moment presented a most interesting sight—all hands as busy as possible making arrangements for the engagement. Powder-boxes, sponges, and buckets were strewed along the deck—while some were loading the guns, others securing the boats along the booms, and all in high glee at the thoughts of having a peppering match at the Frenchman. The brig was soon cleared, with the guns loaded and double-shotted on both sides, and every man at his post stripped to his shirt.

There is perhaps no scene more awfully solemn than that which is presented by a ship going into action. The utmost stillness everywhere prevails, only occasionally broken by the commands of the officers, delivered in a suppressed tone, or the whispers of the sailors delivering to each other little commissions to their wives or relations, if any of them should fall in battle. ’Tis then that the sailor’s heart beats high with hope and expectation, mingled with that undefined emotion of anxiety and dread which the approach of danger always excites. But let the action once begin, and let him hear the guns thundering over his head—’tis then that the sailor forgets his hopes and his fears in his ardour for the conflict. But to return. The breeze had now freshened; and the Frenchman, scudding before it under a press of sail, was now almost within gunshot.

“Hang your impudence, you French lubber!” mumbled the old quartermaster to himself, as he paced up and down the deck with a quick unsteady pace—“do you think to run our little vessel under water? But, big as you are, Mr Monsieur, if the little Hawk does not make you sheer off as if you had run foul of a lee-shore, my name is not Jack Scroggins.”

The Frenchman seemed inclined to confirm the opinion of the old tar; for on he came, without altering his course, till, on coming within hail of the brig, he bawled out—

“Pull down your colours and bring too, or else I’ll sink you.”

“Keep your ship away, then,” shouted Harry, “that I may bring her alongside.”

The Frenchman accordingly did so; but passed so near as almost to carry away the brig’s toppinglift.

“Now, luff my lad, and fire away, my hearties!” shouted Harry, whilst the brig shot up to the wind, and a broadside, accompanied with three hearty cheers, told the success of the skilful manœuvre.

The Frenchman was now left far behind, when she and the brig stayed almost at the same instant—the Frenchman to get at the brig, and the brig to get her other broadside to bear upon the Frenchman. The brig was worked to perfection, and came round in fine style. Not so, however, with the Frenchman; for the sudden broadside of the brig had put him in such confusion that, when staying his ship, he had forgot to loose the lee yard-arm of the foresail, by which the vessel hung in the wind, and finally missed stays. Up once more came the little Hawk, and saluted him with another broadside, which increased the confusion of the Frenchman; but, being now on the same tack with the brig, he soon came up with her, when bringing his

whole broadside to bear upon the Hawk, he poured in such a tremendous volley as to threaten entire dissolution to the frame of the little vessel.

The guns of the contending vessels had now roused the inhabitants of the seacoast, and, by this time, the shore was lined with spectators, who were watching the engagement with intense anxiety. Amongst these, was no less a personage than Harry’s uncle, Benjamin Davis, with whom Maria was at that time staying. The old tar, as was his constant practice, was taking his morning walk along the beach, with his spyglass in his hand, and he had witnessed the engagement from the beginning; and there he was, giving orders, as if he had been on board the vessel.

The brig was, at this moment, passing close under the stern of the Frenchman.

“Now, give it home, my lads,” shouted old Ben on the shore; and, as if in obedience to his command, the brig opened her guns, one after the other, upon the Frenchman, as she passed, which raked him fore and aft, and did much execution.

The Frenchman, however, was not long behind; for, keeping his ship away, he soon came up to the brig; when, opening upon her another broadside, he would inevitably have sent the little vessel to the bottom, had not the steersman, by a dexterous movement of the helm, avoided part of the shock. The shot took effect principally upon the stern of the brig, tore away the quarter-boards, killed the man at the helm and three other men standing near.

As soon as the smoke cleared away, the people on the shore were dismayed to find the little brig sheering off right before the wind, but still keeping up a running fire with his stern chasers, at the Frenchman, who was pursuing her under a press of canvass.

“Curse upon you, for a cowardly rascal, who ever you are, to run away from a Frenchman!” shouted out old Ben on the shore, whilst the sweat trickled down in large drops from his forehead. But both he and the Frenchman were mistaken, in thinking that the brig was endeavouring to get off; for this was only a feint on the part of Harry, who, finding that the enemy was so much superior in his weight of metal, saw that his only chance was in close quarters, when he trusted the bravery of his tars would prove victorious over the number of the French. Calling, therefore, all his men on the quarterdeck, he told them that their only chance of victory lay in close quarters.

“Are you ready, my brave fellows,” he added, “to follow your commander to the Frenchman’s deck? They are three to one of us; but you know what the intrepidity of a handful of British seamen can achieve.”

Three cheers followed these words, which were heard by the people on the shore; and, ignorant of the cause, they anxiously awaited the result.

“Get the boarding pikes ready there!” shouted Harry; “and every man arm himself with a cutlass and brace of pistols; and when the Frenchman comes up, lash her to us, and then to it, yard-arm and yard-arm.”

“All ready, sir,” shouted the men—“all ready.”

The Frenchman was now again up to the brig, which she already considered as her prize, when suddenly the Hawk tacked right athwart her bows, and in a moment was lashed alongside.

“Ay, that is something like,” cried Ben, rubbing his hands for joy—“oh, that I was on board of you, to lend you a helping hand!”

“Hurrah, my hearties! and Old England for ever!” shouted Harry, springing on the Frenchman’s deck, followed by thirty of his crew.

“Old England for ever!” shouted his men, rushing after him, like so many hungry tigers.

The scene which followed was terrific, each party fighting like furies, and disputing inch for inch—the deck

swimming with blood. Two fellows set upon Harry at once. One of these, the lieutenant of the Frenchman, he quickly dispatched with a shot from his pistol; but the other, a strong thickset seaman, with a black bushy beard, was just firing his musket at his head, when a tremendous thwack from a cutlass behind, severed the stock in pieces, and the next moment the weapon was sheathed in the Frenchman's breast. Harry on turning round to observe his deliverer, recognised in him our old friend, Bill Curtis, who, covered with blood and powder, and wounded as he was, was again in the thickest of the fray, dealing death at every blow. There was no time for congratulation, however, for the enemy was pressing them on every side; for, although Harry had been nobly supported by Clark and Archer, with thirty more men, yet the enemy had, by their numbers, hemmed them in on every side, and would soon have cut them all to pieces, had not an unexpected attack from behind suddenly changed the fortunes of the day. This was no other than the old quartermaster, who had been left in charge of the brig, with the remainder of the crew, with strict injunctions not to leave her, happen what might. He had, accordingly, for some time, impatiently looked on the struggle, when, no longer bearing to remain inactive, he sung out that the ship might go to the devil, but he would be hanged if he would stand still any longer and see his shipmates cut to pieces by lubberly Frenchmen. So saying, he jumped upon the Frenchman's deck, followed by the rest of the crew, who were all as eager as himself; and so sudden and furious was the attack, that the Frenchmen, quite dispirited by this unexpected assault, were glad to seek shelter from their fury, some in the rigging, others down the hold, while those who remained were fain to cry for quarter, which was readily given them. The men in the rigging had fled to the tops for shelter, but, seeing their comrades obtain quarter, they also surrendered themselves at discretion. The next minute, the British ensign was waving proudly in the breeze at the topmast of the Frenchman, and three long and hearty cheers, which were responded to by the people on the shore, told the success of the engagement.

The loss on both sides was great, though that of the French greatly exceeded that of the British. Harry, fearing that the French might take it in their heads to set upon him again, as they were still so much superior in number, ordered them below, and batted down the hatches upon them all, except the surgeon and his mate, whom he kept to assist his own in dressing the wounds of the men. On looking amongst the slain of his crew, Harry observed amongst them the stiffened corpse of poor Bill Curtis. Harry could not help shedding a tear to the memory of this brave fellow, who had so nobly seconded him in the time of need. Bill was covered with gore; but an air of defiance was still seated upon his countenance, and his hand still firmly grasped his cutlass, which had that day been wielded with so much success against the enemies of his country. The old quartermaster came up at this moment, and Harry, shaking him by the hand, said to him, "I believe we must have you tried by court-martial, for disobedience of orders. However," he added, more seriously, "I believe, had it not been for your disobedience of orders, we should have all been in the state of that poor fellow," pointing to Bill.

"Ay," said the old quartermaster with a sigh, "a braver fellow never stepped in a black leather shoe. However, it's a road we must travel once; and where die better than fighting for one's country? For my part, I would sooner die on a ship's deck, with the thunder of the cannon sounding in my ears, than on a bed of the finest down."

The people on the shore, seeing that the danger was over, and that the British had gained the victory, had now manned several boats, and were approaching the ships. In the foremost of these was old Ben, who, being the proprietor of the village in which he lived, took upon himself,

on all expeditions by sea, the office of commodore of the fleet.

"A noble fellow the captain of that there little craft," exclaimed Ben, as he approached the Hawk; "he deserves to be made an admiral, whoever he is. Gracious Heaven there is my own nephew, Harry!" cried he, springing up the fore chains.

"My own uncle, Ben!" exclaimed Harry, springing forward to embrace him. Cordial, indeed, was the meeting of the uncle and nephew; and perhaps it were difficult to tell which was the greater—the joy of the nephew, or the pride of the uncle.

"But you are all blood, Harry," said the uncle—"you must be wounded."

"A mere scratch," said Harry; "but some of my poor fellows have suffered; but, as the wind favours, we had better get the vessels into the harbour."

The news of the engagement had spread like wildfire through the country; and, as the vessels approached the harbour, crowds of people were waiting to cheer the gallant fellows who had fought so nobly. The wounded were immediately conveyed on shore and distributed among the inhabitants, who were eagerly striving which should receive them; whilst those who had fallen, both French and English, were decently interred side by side in that narrow house where all feuds and animosities are buried in oblivion.

The rest of our story is soon told. Harry, soon after the engagement, was united to Maria, with the consent of all parties. For some time after his marriage, he still went to sea; but, on the decease of Maria's father, his property devolving upon him, he retired to enjoy the society of his amiable wife, and that domestic repose to which his toils and labours so well entitled him. Clark, the first lieutenant, having fallen in battle, on Harry's giving up the service, Archer was promoted to the command of the Hawk; and he soon after married Susan, Harry's sister. As for the old quartermaster, who had borne so distinguished a part in the engagement, he was at last prevailed upon by Harry to take up his abode in a beautiful cottage upon his estate. A clear stream runs by the cottage door, and the situation commands a fine view of the sea; and the old man may still frequently be seen sitting at his cottage door on a summer evening, enjoying the beauties of the scene; or, if you rise soon enough, you may perhaps see him taking his morning walk along the beach, with his spy-glass in his hand. His chief delight, however, is in Harry's house, where he is quite at home. He is particularly attached to Harry's children, who are his inseparable companions; and the old man may frequently be seen with one on each knee, recounting to them the exploits of his former days, some of which we may at some future period communicate to the reader.

As for the French prisoners, a peace with England soon put a period to their captivity; but, when their release came, so much had the people of the place endeared themselves to them by their kindness, that many of them resolved to marry and settle in the neighbourhood. And to this day may still be seen, in the village of C—, some remnants of the victory of the Hawk.

THE VISION.

WITHIN a short distance of Falkirk, there stands a fine old mansion, formerly the residence of the Earl of Kilmarnock. The building alluded to, though not what can be called an elegant one—being, in truth, very plain—is yet, when viewed as it stands, with its beautiful lawn in front, and magnificent wood behind, a singularly striking and impressive one. It possesses, moreover, an air of grandeur which rarely characterises modern mansions, even when ten times more costly.

This house, as we have said, belonged to the Earl of Kilmarnock; and it was while that unfortunate nobleman was in possession of it, and while he resided there, that our story opens.

Amongst the domestics of the Earl, there was an elderly woman of the name of Jean Edmonstone—or Mrs Edmonstone, as she was called in the family, although she had never been married. The title was bestowed on her, as we believe it always is on such persons in England, as being more respectful, or at least more becoming, in the case of unwedded females who have attained a certain age. Mrs Edmonstone had been long in the family—ever since the then Earl, who was in his forty-first year, had been a boy—and had, at the time of our tale, risen to the responsible situation of housekeeper; a situation for which she was indebted to long and faithful services, but still more particularly to a certain lady-like appearance and manner which she seemed to have intuitively—for her birth and education were both of the humblest kind—and to a degree of intelligence much surpassing what is usually found in persons of her class.

In the household establishment, then, of the Earl of Kilmarnock, this worthy lady was next in power and consequence to the Countess herself; and, although the latter was one of the most elegant and accomplished women of her time, it would have been no extraordinary blunder in a stranger to have mistaken the former for the latter—not that there was any resemblance in their personal appearance, or any comparison on the score of personal charms; but the dignified carriage of the housekeeper was imposing, and might very readily lead to such a mistake as that alluded to; especially if she appeared in the striking dress which she usually wore, and which consisted of a rich black silk gown; a high coif, white as snow; and a short, fancifully ornamented apron of the same purity; her fingers glittering with rings—presents at various times from female visitors and female members of the family; and a bunch of well polished keys depending from her girdle.

Well, such was Mrs Edmonstone, the housekeeper of the Earl of Kilmarnock, in the year 1744, in the winter of which year it happened that his Lordship gave a great dinner at Callendar House, the name of his residence, to a number of the surrounding country gentlemen. After dinner, the conversation turned, it was not known by whom led, on certain vague rumours, which, as it has been said “coming events cast their shadows before,” were floating on the public mind, of an intended attempt to restore the Stuarts to the throne of Britain. In this conversation both the Earl and the Countess of Kilmarnock, especially the latter, who was an enthusiastic Jacobite, took a particular interest; and expressions escaped both that shewed, pretty plainly, which side *they* would take in the event of such an attempt as that alluded to being made. In this, however, all agreed—that it was not at all likely any such attempt would be made, as the present possessor of the throne was, as all believed, too firmly seated to have much to apprehend from any efforts the expatriated family could make to regain the crown of their ancestors; and with this, and some other desultory remarks of a similar kind on the subject, the conversation dropped, and other matters took its place.

In the meantime, the night wore on, and carriages began to be called, and to drive off with their owners, until none remained behind, until the apartment literally became “a banquet hall deserted”—a circumstance which, on this as on all similar occasions, led to the appearance of the faithful housekeeper, Mrs Edmonstone, on the scene of the night’s revelries; it being her business, at least she made it so, to see everything in order before she retired to bed—the silver plate and crystal removed and carefully put past, the lights extinguished, &c. &c. Having completed these duties on this occasion, Mrs Edmonstone, who was always the last person stirring in the house, retired to her own apartment, which

was a very solitary one, situated in a remote wing of the building. At this moment, the whole house was as still as the tomb: the voice of mirth had ceased; the flaunting lights, which had so lately illuminated the lordly mansion, setting staircase and window in a blaze, were extinguished; the inmates had all retired to rest, and the vast pile, with its long and tortuous passages and winding staircases, and its interminable apartments, were left to darkness, silence, and solitude; and the sense of loneliness which this scene would scarcely fail to impress on any solitary person who might be wandering through these dark and deserted rooms, at this, the midnight hour, had there been such, would, particularly if they had been of a superstitious turn of mind, be not a little increased by the circumstance of hearing a high wind roaring amongst the chimneys, slamming doors violently, and mingled with a heavy rain beating against the windows. And such exactly was the case on the occasion we speak of. It was a wild and gusty night in November; and the rushing and dismal sound of trees labouring in the blast was heard like the roar of a mighty cataract from the woods behind.

It was, then, in precisely such circumstances as these that Mrs Edmonstone, carrying a taper in her hand, sought her own apartment, after making a cursory survey of the house, as was her wont, to see that all was right. On entering her remote and solitary chamber, Mrs Edmonstone, as was her custom, sat her down by her little fire, which was burning brightly, to indulge for a few minutes in the luxury of thinking, and of listening to the roaring blast without, having first carefully secured her door. While she was thus employed—that is, wrapt in a profound reverie of which some scenes in her past life were the principal subjects—the door of her apartment, to her indescribable terror and amazement, suddenly but noiselessly opened; and—oh, horror inconceivable!—a human head, grinning in the agonies of death, and dripping with gore, rolled slowly across the floor, and disappeared beneath a chest of drawers on the opposite side of the apartment.

Mrs Edmonstone was a woman of naturally strong mind; and, though her blood curdled in her veins at sight of this most appalling and most extraordinary vision, she uttered no cry, save a pious ejaculation, calling on her God to protect her. She thereafter knelt down and prayed fervently for several minutes, when she arose, with perfect composure, and retired to bed. Next day, however, Mrs Edmonstone, without mentioning the strange occurrence of the preceding night to any one, waited on the clergyman of the parish, a singularly excellent and worthy man, and who, she had previously resolved, should, in the meantime, be her only confidant regarding the vision of the bloody head. To him, therefore, she now told the appalling tale. He listened to her attentively; and, when she had done, smiled, and said, it was certainly a very odd thing; but he had himself no doubt, and he would have her also to believe, that it was merely an illusion; that such deceptive appearances were not uncommon, &c. &c.; and he went on at some length in an attempt to convince her that her senses had deceived her; but concluded by asking her if her terror had permitted her to mark the countenance, and if it had any resemblance to any person she knew? This question involved a circumstance which she had not intended to mention to any human being; but, now that it was put to her, and considering by whom it was put—one in whose keeping the secret she knew would be safe—she resolved at once to answer it, and in reply said, though with great agitation, and becoming as pale as death as she spoke—

“It had, sir—it had.” I marked the features well, and—God be with us, sir!—they were, as sure as He is in heaven, those of my noble and beloved master, the Earl of Kilmarnock! Ay, sir, as distinct and undeniable as if it had actually been his own head that had rolled before me.”

Though by far too enlightened a man to believe in the reality of this horrible vision, the clergyman could not help being struck by the singularity of its character, and still more so by the circumstance which Mrs Edmonstone had just mentioned, of its resemblance to the Earl; who was his own patron. In despite of all his philosophy, it made a strong and disagreeable impression on him, although he did not choose that this should be perceived by Mrs Edmonstone; whom, on the contrary, he conceived it to be his duty to disabuse of all faith in the vision. He, however, added that, as the mention of it might lead to a good deal of idle and mischievous speculation amongst ignorant people, and perhaps give uneasiness to the family, he thought it as well that she should not mention the circumstance to any one. In the propriety of this suggestion, Mrs Edmonstone at once concurred; and, having promised the required secrecy, departed.

For some time after this, the vision of the bloody head continued to haunt the housekeeper's imagination with all the force of a fresh impression; but, in the course of a few months, this gradually weakened, until at length it rarely recurred at all. On those occasions, however, when Mrs Edmonstone did think over the dreadful occurrence of that night, there was no circumstance which so much puzzled her as the connection which seemed to exist between the vision and her master the Earl.

He was in good health, in the prime of life, in unembarrassed circumstances, and, so far as human penetration could discover, a most unlikely person to become the victim of any sudden calamity, or at least of such a tragical one as the horrid and sanguinary character of the vision would appear to prognosticate. Whence the blow was to come, therefore, she could not conjecture; and the difficulty she met with on this point so much shook her faith in the horrible apparition as a veritable harbinger of misfortune, that she began to reflect on it with indifference, and to believe, indeed, that her senses had deceived her.

It was about a twelvemonth after this, and on just such another wild and gusty night as that on which the bloody head had appeared to Mrs Edmonstone, that a horseman, closely wrapped up in a cloak, rode up to Callendar House, and thundered at the gate for admittance. The gate was opened, the stranger dismounted, and demanded to be instantly conducted to the presence of the Earl. The latter was informed of the demand, and gave orders that it should be complied with. On entering the apartment where the Earl was, the stranger took out a letter from a concealed part of his dress, and saying, "My orders, my Lord, were to deliver this into your own hands, and into none other's whatever, under any circumstances," handed it to the Earl, who immediately opened it, and began to read. But he had not proceeded far, when he betrayed evident signs of emotion, and suddenly stopping in the perusal, as if conscious that these signs were palpable, and as if unwilling, also, that they should be seen by the messenger, who still remained in the room, he desired him to withdraw, giving orders, at the same time, to Mrs Edmonstone, who was at the moment in attendance, to see to his being properly provided for for the night.

On the withdrawal of the bearer of the letter, the Earl completed its perusal; and having done so, he flung it down before the Countess, who had been anxiously and intently watching his countenance during the whole time he was reading it, and said—

"There, my Lady, what think you of that? This affair has come to a head at last; but I don't like it altogether."

The Countess took up the letter and read—

"MY LORD,—The ship on board of which was the wine your Lordship expected from France has arrived; but, in consequence of some damage she has received, she has been obliged to run into Lochmanuagh, between Mordant and Arisaig, where the wine has been put on shore, and will be

forwarded immediately by land-carriage. Begging your Lordship, in the meantime, to take such steps regarding said wine as your Lordship may think necessary for your interest, I remain, my Lord, &c. &c. "JAMES M'WHIRTER."

"You understand it, my Lady?" said the Earl, on the Countess throwing down the letter on the table after she had read it.

"I guess it, my Lord, replied the Countess, her face flushed, and her eye sparkling with joy. "The Prince has landed. The rightful heir to the British throne has at length come to claim the crown of his fathers."

"It is even so," said the Earl, who did not by any means seem to partake of his wife's joy and enthusiasm on the occasion. "That is, indeed, the meaning of the writer."

"But who is M'Whirter?" interrupted the Countess, eagerly.

"Don't you know, my Lady?" said the Earl, smiling faintly. "Why, that is young Lochiel—one of the steadiest and most active adherents of the exiled family."

"And what is your intention in this matter, my Lord?" now inquired the Countess.

"Why, on that I have not decided, my Lady. My own sentiments, as you already well know, incline me to favour the house of Stuart; but there would be great danger in the avowal of them at this moment. At all events, I will come to no decision regarding my future conduct in this affair, and certainly take no steps by which I might commit myself, until I have some assurance of there being a reasonable chance of success; of which, in the meantime, I know nothing."

"But, surely—surely, my Lord," replied the Countess, hurriedly, "if this reasonable chance be shewn you, you will not be backward in supporting the rightful pretensions of your lawful Prince. You will place yourself, Kilmarnock, at the head of your vassals, and take the field as becomes the head of your house."

"My vassals!" said the Earl, smiling at his wife's enthusiasm; "do you think they would be such fools as follow me on so desperate a game as this, even were I disposed to lead. No, no, my lady; the stupidest hind amongst them knows better."

"Leave that to me," replied the Countess. "If you will but lead, I will find men to follow you."

"Nay, now, my lady," said the Earl, gravely, "I beseech of you, for your own sake as well as mine, and, above all, for the sake of our children, that you do nothing rashly. Take no steps, I entreat of you, that may compromise us, till we learn something more of the nature of this daring enterprise, and of the condition of its leader. If he is well provided with money, arms, and men, there may be some likelihood of success; if not, there can be none."

Of the caution of the Earl of Kilmarnock, at this juncture, his lady, as may be conjectured from what has been already recorded, but very slenderly partook. Instead of keeping aloof, as he had recommended, she, on the very next day, went clandestinely amongst the tenants, and exerted all her influence (which was not light, as she was generally beloved) to prevail upon them to agree to take up arms and follow the Earl to the field in behalf of the Chevalier, if the former should call upon them to do so; and in this she was so successful that she received the assurances of about seventy or eighty, masters and servants, that they would readily obey such a summons when it reached them. Those who had thus enrolled themselves she afterwards supplied secretly with the arms and accoutrements of troopers; and thus had a body of horse in abeyance, as it were, and ready to start into existence, armed for strife, the moment they were called upon. Of all this the Earl himself knew nothing; and therefore little dreamt how soon he might be put into a condition to take the field, should he finally be brought to that resolution.

Favourable accounts in the meantime continued to arrive, from time to time, of the prospects of the Chevalier. The Highlands were represented as arming at all points in his cause; and, finally, it was reported that he was on the march towards the south, at the head of a large army devoted to his interests and confident of success—reports which, aided as they were by the persuasions of the Countess, all but fixed the wavering resolution of the Earl. Still, however, he had not decided. But a circumstance was now about to occur which finally and fatally determined him.

On the evening of the 15th September 1745, Charles, with his army, arrived at Falkirk, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Callendar House, in which he was invited to take up his residence—an invitation which he at once accepted, and was treated with much respect and kindness by the Earl and his lady. The noble presence and affable manners of the Chevalier, together with the promising appearance of everything around him, particularly the numbers and enthusiasm of his army, instantly decided the resolution of the Earl, and he declared to Charles himself, that from that moment he might count upon him as one of his most faithful adherents, but regretted that he had not yet taken any measures for affording him effectual support, and could, in the meantime, offer him only his personal services.

“You can do more than that, my Lord,” here intruded the Countess, who had been listening to this conversation, and who heard with delight her husband’s declaration that he would espouse the cause of the Chevalier—“you can do more than that, my Lord,” she said, smiling. “Allow me to shew his Highness how expeditiously we ladies can recruit when we beat up for soldiers.” Saying this, she whispered some instructions to a message boy whom she had desired to be sent to her; and, in less than twenty minutes after, a troop of sixty horse, well mounted and armed, composed of the tenants of the Earl of Kilmarnock and their servants, drew up in front of Callendar House, to the great amazement of their lord.

“What is the meaning of this?” said the astonished nobleman; “I gave no orders. I—I—”

“No, my Lord,” interrupted the Countess, smiling, “but I did; and I dare say your Lordship will not now blame me for having exercised a little of your authority, seeing that I have but anticipated your own intentions.”

“Blame you, my dear lady!—very far from it,” said the Earl, taking the Countess affectionately by the hand. “I am obliged to you—I am proud of you. ’Twas well done—’twas nobly done.” And in those encomiums he was most cordially joined by the Prince.

Having brought our tale to this point, we now return to Mrs Edmonstone. That lady had, for some time previous to the arrival of the Pretender at Callendar House, heard a good deal about his proceedings, and she knew that her lady favoured his cause; but, being aware of the caution of the Earl, and having, moreover, frequently heard him express himself very coldly on the subject, she had never for a moment dreamt that he would ever actually engage in the perilous enterprise. Much less, it may be supposed, did she see, under these circumstances, any connection between the horrid vision she had seen, and the destiny, as associated with this enterprise, of her unfortunate master. But when she now heard—for she also was present—the Earl declare himself ready to join the Adventurer, this connection instantly and suddenly flashed upon her mind, and she became satisfied that she at length saw approaching the evil indicated by the dreadful and mysterious sign of the bloody head; and under this impression, her agitation became so extreme that she found herself wholly unfit to go through with the services which she was in the act of rendering to her master and his guests when she heard him express the determination alluded to. She therefore hurried out of the apartment to an adjoin-

ing one, and, after a moment’s reflection, resolved to send for the Earl, and to inform him of the vision of the bloody head, with the hope that it might deter him from taking the fatal step which he proposed.

Acting on this resolution, she dispatched a messenger to the Earl, to say that a person wished to see him immediately on important business. The Earl instantly attended the call; but, when he came into the room where she was, and saw her only—

“What! Mrs Edmonstone!” he said, in considerable surprise, “is it *you* that wants to see me?”

“Yes, my Lord,” replied the former gravely; “and I pray you to excuse the liberty; but I have something to communicate to your Lordship of which I most fervently entreat you will not think lightly. You must not, my Lord, join the Prince—otherwise, a dreadful fate will befall you. I know it.”

“How, Mrs Edmonstone—what do you mean?” said the Earl, smiling, but still more surprised than before. “Do you think it a bad case?”

“I do, my Lord—for you, at any rate, a very bad, a horrid one. It makes my blood run cold but to think of it. Listen, my Lord, and I’ll tell your Lordship how I know that it will be fatal to you.” And here she circumstantially detailed the whole story of the vision of the bloody head, not forgetting to mention the strong resemblance the latter bore to the person to whom she was speaking. When she had concluded—

“Pho, pho! my good dame,” said the Earl, laughing—“what a piece of nonsense is this! Surely, Mrs Edmonstone, you have too much good sense yourself not to see the absurdity of putting any faith in such illusions of the brain as these. You have, and you have done this only to persuade me to relinquish what you consider a dangerous enterprise. Come, now, tell me,” added the Earl, smiling, “is it not so, Mrs Edmonstone?”

Mrs Edmonstone, with all the earnestness of the most perfect sincerity, and with all the eloquence she could command, assured the Earl that what she had related was a thing of real occurrence; that she, indeed, wished to dissuade him from joining the Prince; but that she certainly was not attempting to effect that object by imposing on his credulity; and concluded by again beseeching him to renounce the undertaking. As might be expected, however, Mrs Edmonstone spoke in vain; for it was not to be supposed that the Earl of Kilmarnock was to be deterred from executing any purpose he had determined on by the superstitious gossiping of an old woman.

In less than an hour afterwards, he was mounted, at the head of his troop, and on the march with the rebel army towards Edinburgh. Before he started, however, but after he had got on horseback, Mrs Edmonstone made another attempt to gain her object. She rushed up to where he stood, and, in the presence of hundreds of spectators, who wondered much at her conduct, seized one of his stirrup leathers, and implored him still to return. The ill-fated nobleman clapped her kindly on the shoulder, addressed a few soothing words to her, gently disengaged her hold, and rode off.

Need we tell the sequel? We scarcely think we need. All our readers know that the unfortunate Earl of Kilmarnock was taken prisoner at the battle of Culloden; that he was carried to London; and that, on the 18th of August 1746, his head, severed by the axe of the executioner, fell upon the scaffold.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

CROSSED LOVE.

HENRY SCOT—as his name alone almost would imply—though born in Ireland, was a gentleman of Scottish descent; for both his father and mother were natives of the latter country, which, indeed, they had left but a short while previous to his birth. Although thus much of a Scotsman, however, Henry, unfortunately for himself, took such an interest in the affairs of Ireland, during the unhappy disturbances in that kingdom in 1798, as induced him to join those who rebelled against the authority of the government, and eventually to act so conspicuous a part in the commotions of the period, as rendered it necessary for him to fly the country, on the suppression of the rebellion by the king's troops.

On this occasion, he sought and found shelter in the house of a distant relation of his mother's, who resided in the south of Scotland, the place of his parents' nativity. This relation was a Mr Lorimer, a gentleman of large fortune, and extensive landed possessions in the county in which he resided. He was a widower, with one child only; and this child was Lucy Lorimer, one of the gentlest and loveliest creatures that ever breathed the breath of life. She was, at this period, in the eighteenth year of her age; and when we say that Henry Scot, now in his twenty-second year, possessed every qualification, both of mind and person, calculated to make an impression on a heart so susceptible as hers—and when we add, that every opportunity was afforded him of making this impression, by the circumstance of their residing under the same roof—it will excite little surprise to find that the first courtesies of friendship soon ripened into a warmer sentiment. This was, in truth, the case. An attachment of the most ardent, the purest, and most devoted kind, grew up between them. Each staked on the other's love all their hopes of future happiness, and in that love found all the joy that the world had to bestow. But these affections of the heart were destined to be soon and sadly crossed. Lucy's father discovered the attachment of the young pair. He had other views for Lucy; and, although he had not had such views, the poverty of Henry, who had nothing to depend upon, rendered him, in the eyes of Mr Lorimer, a totally ineligible match for his daughter.

On making the discovery alluded to, Mr Lorimer charged his young relative with abusing his confidence in seeking to engage the affections of his daughter, and ordered him instantly to quit his house. With a bursting heart, Henry complied with the harsh and stern command. He immediately left the house, and that without being permitted to obtain even a last sight of his beloved Lucy.

For some days he lingered about the neighbourhood, at the imminent risk of being recognised and apprehended as a rebel, in the hope of being able to obtain one last interview with Lucy, or, at least, of being able to procure a letter to be conveyed to her. But in vain. Her father had taken measures to prevent this, and had further desired it to be intimated to Henry—of whose vicinity he was aware—that, if he did not immediately leave the country, he would give him up to the authorities. Finding it worse than vain, in these circumstances, to persevere, Henry at length bade

adieu to the scene of his short-lived bliss, and soon after embarked for France, where he succeeded in getting a commission in the French army. With this commission, however, he obtained, at his own most earnest request, the condition that he should not be called upon to oppose his countrymen in the field, but should be employed against foreign powers alone.

To return to Lucy Lorimer. Her father had been able to crush her hopes, and to thwart the dearest wishes of her heart; but all his power and authority over her could not eradicate the affections that dwelt there, or change the current of her thoughts; and dearly did that father pay for, and bitterly did he rue, the attempts which he had made to cross these affections and master these thoughts.

An illness, which threatened to hurry poor Lucy to a premature grave, was the consequence. The rose fled from her cheek, and the lustre from her eye. From day to day she sunk under the wasting, the corroding disease of a broken heart, till her physicians at length intimated to her father, that the only chance of saving his daughter's life was to be found in the removing her to a warmer climate; and they recommended Italy.

This was about two years after the departure of Henry; and, during all this time, Lucy had been slowly but gradually fading, like a flower whose roots have been severed. Her father, who was, after all, doatingly fond of her, grasped eagerly but despairingly at the hope held out by his daughter's medical advisers, and made instant preparations for their departure to the sunny regions of the south.

In the mean time, Henry Scot had distinguished himself in the French service, and had already obtained, in consequence of his bravery, the rank of Colonel of chasseurs, in which capacity he was at this moment serving against the Austrians.

A dreadful struggle had taken place between the latter and the French, in disputing the passage of the Adige, near Verona. In this contest, the French were successful. They gained the bridge—the great object for which both sides fought—and thus opened the communication with Verona.

While the Austrians, though retreating, were yet struggling to check the tide of victory which was approaching to overwhelm them, the corps which Henry Scot commanded was ordered to enter Verona, to clear the streets of any stragglers or parties of the enemy who might be lurking there. On this sanguinary day, Henry had again eminently distinguished himself. Twice had he ridden out of the line in the face of a tremendous fire from an Austrian battery, which was fast throwing his regiment into confusion, and from which they were, in both instances, on the point of retreating—and waving his sword aloft, called upon his men to maintain the martial fame of France, by following him. In both instances, the appeal had been effectual. The chasseurs came on like a thunder-storm, overwhelming guns and gunners in one sudden and irresistible tide of death and destruction. In both cases, Henry Scot was the first man to dash in between the guns of the enemy, and this at a moment, too, when he could feel the heat of the red volume of fire in which the shot was just about emerging from the cannon's mouth. Twice, in the course of this

day, too, had Henry been engaged in single combat, and twice had he slain his enemy.

On receiving the order to enter Verona, Henry recalled his men from the desultory conflict in which they were engaged, and, having formed them in regular order, the word to advance was given, and, in the next instant, the whole squadron was in full gallop towards the city. In less than ten minutes thereafter, Henry's chasseurs were seen charging *sabre-a-la-main* down the Corsa, the principal street in Verona, where two or three companies of French infantry, who had already found their way into the city, were engaged in a sanguinary conflict with a party of the enemy.

The scene of this contest was immediately in front of a large hotel, every one of the windows of which was filled with Austrian soldiers, who, from that situation, kept up a destructive fire of musketry on their enemies in the street. At the moment of Henry's approach with his chasseurs, the hotel was in the act of being stormed by the French soldiery; a party of the most reckless of whom having already battered in the front door with the butts of their firelocks, were now proceeding from room to room, and mercilessly bayoneting all whom they found there. In the meantime, the contest in the street had been decided. The French infantry, on perceiving the chasseurs approaching, having opened their ranks to permit the latter to come in contact with the enemy, every man of the latter was instantly cut to pieces. At this moment, Henry's attention was suddenly and painfully attracted by a piercing shriek from the upper story of the hotel, into which the French soldiers had forced themselves, and which they were now in the act of plundering. Actuated by the generous impulses of his nature, Henry, on hearing the cry, which was that of a female voice, struck the spurs into his horse's sides, and dashed furiously into the midst of the crowd of soldiers, whom the hope of sharing in the plunder of the devoted mansion had assembled in its front, and who were now amusing themselves by firing in at the windows.

Having forced his way to the door of the hotel, Henry flung himself from his horse, gave the animal in charge of a soldier who stood near him, drew his sword, and rushed in amongst the crowd of men by whom the outer passage of the house was filled.

The scene which now presented itself to Henry, although he took but little time to contemplate it, was one of the most appalling he had ever witnessed, much as he had seen of the sanguinary horrors of war. The house was filled, almost to suffocation, with the smoke of gunpowder. Its rooms, and passages, and staircases, were thronged by armed men passing to and fro, under the wild and reckless excitement of recent conquest, and the pursuit of plunder; every man being in quest of something to reward, as he deemed it, the risk and toil which he had encountered; loud shouts of laughter, and an endless succession of merry jests, keeping up the wild revelry of the scene; which was rendered yet more hideous by the ruins of splendid mirrors, the gilded frames of which only now remained on the walls, the glass of each having been smashed into a thousand pieces by the wanton blows of the butts of muskets. In short, not an apartment, not an article in the house, had escaped either the fury or the cupidity of the conquerors; everything that was valuable and portable had been carried off; everything that possessed not the latter quality was destroyed. Disorder, confusion, and destruction prevailed everywhere throughout the ill-fated mansion; and, to complete the horrid scene, every room was swimming with the blood of the unfortunate Austrians who had attempted to defend it, and whose corpses, many of them still grasping their firelocks in the attitudes in which they had received their death-wounds from the bayonets of their destroyers, lay heaped on each other at the windows where they had been massacred.

Occupied by a still more engrossing feeling than even these scenes were calculated to excite, Henry flew from apartment to apartment in quest of the sufferer whose expression of agony had brought him thither; but both his search and his inquiries were for some time fruitless. After having, however, with much difficulty, fought his way up the crowded staircase which had led to the upper range of apartments, Henry struggled forward to one which, from the noise and loud imprecations that issued from it, seemed still to be the scene of violence. On gaining the door, he thrust aside those who would have obstructed his farther progress, and was in an instant afterwards in the midst of the apartment—when a scene presented itself for which Henry, as will readily be believed when the sequel has been read, was but little prepared, and which excited in him feelings that language would in vain attempt to describe.

The astounding sight on which Henry now looked, was Mr Lorimer on his knees, imploring mercy from a soldier who was about to run him through with his bayonet; and his daughter clinging to the knees of the savage, uttering the most agonizing screams, and begging, in the most abject but eloquent terms, for the life of her unfortunate parent; herself being the while the subject of the rude jests and heartless ribaldry of the surrounding soldiers.

Amazed and confounded as he was at this most unexpected and most extraordinary occurrence, Henry was not for a moment deprived of the presence of mind necessary to enable him to act with the promptness and energy which the safety of the unfortunate pair, at this critical moment, required. He burst into the circle which had been formed around Mr Lorimer and his daughter, and struck down with his sword the weapon which was levelled at the breast of the latter. In the next instant, Lucy—who at once recognised her lover with that sharpness of vision which is attributed to love, notwithstanding of his sunburnt countenance and military uniform, bewildered with the horrors of her situation, which left no room for considerations of strict propriety or fastidious decorum—hung around Henry's neck, calling upon him, for the love of God, "to save her father, her poor father."

"He is safe, Lucy," replied Henry, looking sternly around him on the circle of soldiers who were about them. "He is safe; not a hair of his head shall be touched." Then addressing the soldiers:—"Shame, soldiers!—shame!" he said, "to use violence towards an unarmed and unresisting old man! and a tenfold shame it is that you would treat a helpless female with rudeness and incivility, disgracing your country and the profession to which you belong."

Abashed by this reproof, and not a little awed by the stern and determined bearing of him by whom it was spoken, the soldiers gradually stole out of the apartment, one after another, till no one remained but Henry, Lucy Lorimer, and her father.

A mutual explanation of the circumstances which had led to their extraordinary meeting now took place; and, singular as that was, it was very easily accounted for. Mr Lorimer, in compliance with the recommendation of his daughter's medical advisers, had come with her to Italy, and had taken up his abode in Verona, having no idea that the tide of war was so soon to roll in the direction of that city. He had, therefore, been taken by surprise. And by this simple circumstance was the mystery of their meeting solved.

On the party being left to themselves, as already mentioned, Mr Lorimer, on whose feelings towards Henry the incident which had just occurred seemed to have made a sudden and favourable change—a change, however, it was for which he was predisposed by a sympathy for his daughter, the cause of whose illness he well knew, and which he was now, but, alas, too late, willing, nay, anxious to

remove at any cost to which it might subject him :—when the party were left to themselves, as we have said, Mr Lorimer took Henry by the hand, and, with a lively expression of gratitude said—“ Mr Scot, you have relieved us from a situation of great peril. How are we to acknowledge the important obligation? What proof can we give you of our gratitude?”

Henry coloured, and glanced involuntarily towards Lucy, who was now extended on a couch at the opposite end of the apartment—her emaciated frame and broken spirit being unable to withstand the violent agitation which the dreadful occurrences of the day had excited.

“ Ay; well, very well,” said Mr Lorimer, who marked the look which Henry threw towards his daughter, and comprehended its meaning. “ With all my heart. If poor Lucy gets round again, as I trust in God she will, she shall be yours, Henry. You have already my poor girl’s heart, and you have now my willing consent to take possession of her hand also, when circumstances will permit.”

Henry, in turn, now grasped the hand of Mr Lorimer, a tear started into his eye, and, “ You have promised me, sir,” he said, in an under tone, so as not to be heard by her who was the subject of their conversation, “ the greatest earthly blessing which can fall to the lot of man.”

Having thus expressed himself, both he and Mr Lorimer moved towards the couch on which the fair sufferer reclined. But, alas! for her all this happiness came too late. A blow had been stricken whose effects no mortal hand, no change of circumstances, could cure.

On approaching the couch on which she lay—“ Lucy,” said Henry, now seating himself on a chair beside her, and taking her affectionately by the hand, “ these are strange and unhappy circumstances in which you and I have met. But I trust,” he continued, after a moment’s pause, during which she neither spoke nor moved, but remained with her eyes closed, as if completely exhausted, or, it might be, lost in thought—“ I trust,” he said, now anxiously peering into the still lovely but pallid countenance of the suffering girl, “ that the occurrences of this day, alarming though they were, will have no serious effect upon your health. All danger is now past, Lucy—the enemy is driven from the town, and you are safe.”

“ Safe, Henry!” now reiterated Miss Lorimer, whose excessive weakness kept her still extended on her couch in a state of the utmost languor and debility. “ Safe, Henry!” she said, drawing a deep sigh, and gazing affectionately on the countenance of her lover—“ yes, I am safe, I believe, from the enmity and cruelty of man. From these I should think myself secure, under any circumstances, if you were near me, Henry. But there is an enemy, a tremendous enemy, from whose power not even your arm, Henry, can protect me; an enemy who laughs at victory, and tramples on the neck of the conqueror. That enemy, Henry,” she added, after a long pause, during which she seemed convulsed with some strong emotion, “ is Death. Every returning day,” she went on, “ adds to the conviction which I have long felt, that I am dying. There is a something here,” she said, placing her hand on her breast, “ which warns me of approaching dissolution—a feeling well-known to the dying, and which never deceives. No, never, never,” she repeated, with a melancholy emphasis.

“ For God’s sake, Lucy, do not speak thus!” said Henry, in a voice rendered nearly inaudible by the violent emotion which the despairing language of Miss Lorimer had excited. “ Do not, dearest girl,” he continued, and now imprinting a kiss on her pale cold forehead—“ do not indulge in these melancholy, these distracting forebodings. Out of charity to me, Lucy, do endeavour to dismiss them from your thoughts; do not drive me to despair. I could look on death, Lucy, as I have often done, on the battle-field, without quailing; but this I cannot stand. It unmans me—it un-

nerves me.” And here several tears rapidly chased each other down the swarthy, sunburnt cheeks of the soldier. Henry did not attempt to conceal them; for he was not ashamed of them. Lucy also wept; but it was in secret, and in silence, and with her face averted from her lover. There was for a moment a profound stillness in the apartment. At length, Henry rose to his feet, and again taking the dying girl by the hand—

“ Lucy,” he said, “ I must leave you for a short time. I must return to my post; but my absence will not be long; and, in the meantime, I shall place a guard on the hotel to protect you from all farther violence; and shall thereafter endeavour to get matters so arranged that I shall always be near you, at least for so long as we remain in the city.”

“ I trust there will be no more fighting, Henry,” said Miss Lorimer, raising herself up on her couch with a sudden effort, and looking with a countenance expressive of the utmost anxiety and alarm on her lover; but it was for his safety she feared, not her own. “ There will be no more fighting, I trust,” she said—“ Gracious Heaven! it is an awful sight to see armed men engaged in mortal strife with each other. Fierce and ruthless, they seem to delight in carnage, and to rejoice in the din of battle.”

“ No, no,” replied Henry, soothingly; “ there will be no more fighting, Lucy—you need entertain no fears on that account. But, before I leave you, Lucy, let me entreat of you, for your own sake, and for the sake of all those who are dear to you, to cast from you all such gloomy thoughts as those you were a short while since indulging in. Will you promise me this, Lucy?” he added, in an earnest and supplicatory tone.

“ I do promise you, Henry,” replied Miss Lorimer, smiling faintly, “ to comply with your request as far as I possibly can; that is, as far as I have any control over my own feelings and secret convictions. I can do no more; but for your sake and for that of my poor father, I certainly shall do this.”

“ God bless you, Lucy!” said Henry, again stooping down and imprinting another fervent kiss on her fair forehead. “ I need not remind you,” he added, “ that your safety, and that of your father, shall be cared for; so that neither of you need entertain the slightest apprehension of violence. I shall be your guardian during the night, Lucy, and your companion during the day, whilst there is anything to fear.” Having said this, Henry raised the fair hand he held within his to his lips, shook hands with Mr Lorimer, who, from a delicacy of feeling, had, till now, remained standing at a window at the farther end of the apartment, bade them both adieu, with a promise to return as soon as he possibly could, and left the apartment.

Notwithstanding Henry’s having made every exertion and every possible attempt, consistent with his honour as a soldier and the interests of the service in which he was employed, to procure such an arrangement as should place him, without any sacrifice of his reputation, near the abode of Lucy Lorimer, it was not until the third day after the occurrence of the events above related, that he had it in his power to repeat his visit. The interval had been one of the most painful anxiety to Henry, although he had taken every precaution to secure, during his absence, the comfort and safety of her who was the cause of this anxiety. With this view he had held out promises of reward and protection to the landlord of the hotel at which she lodged, and had planted sentinels, with the consent of his commanding officer, in front and around the house. Besides all this, he had obtained the promise of a brother officer, whose duty kept him behind, to shew them all the attention and civility in his power until his return. Henry had himself been employed, in the meantime, in a very fatiguing duty, at a distance from the city; and had also,

in this interval, been several times engaged in skirmishes with the enemy; but from all he had had the good fortune to escape without injury. At length, however, he received, to his inexpressible delight, an order to proceed, with a part of his regiment, to Verona, with instructions to remain there for the protection of the city until further orders.

Having put up his horse, Henry, without waiting either to refresh himself, although much exhausted with fatigue of both body and mind, or to remove the marks of travel, which his soiled and deranged dress everywhere exhibited, hastened to the hotel which held the object of all his anxiety and solicitude. In a few minutes, his heart beating high with alternate hopes and fears, which rendered him almost unconscious of everything around him, he reached the bottom of the flight of steps which led to the front door of the hotel, when, clearing them nearly at one bound, he was in the next instant again by the side of Lucy Lorimer. But, alas! short as the time had been since he had last seen her, a fearful change for the worse had taken place in her appearance. She was now rapidly sinking under the illness which had so long afflicted her. The destroyer was now impatiently, as it were, hurrying his work to a conclusion.

At the instant of Henry's entering the apartment, Miss Lorimer, propped up by pillows to enable her to breathe with less difficulty, was reclining on an ottoman, apparently in the last stage of weakness and debility. Her father sat by her side on a low-cushioned stool, holding one of her hands within his, and gazing, with a look of the deepest misery, on the pallid features of his dying daughter.

The room was still as death, and deeply shaded by the large massive window curtains which had been drawn closely together to exclude the light. Henry, instantly conjecturing, from these appearances, that the worst was to be apprehended, made no inquiries as to the state of Lucy's health. He saw at a glance how that stood. There was no mistaking the cold, rigid, and deadly hue with which the countenance of the fair sufferer was now overspread. Her once beautiful lips were now pale, shrunk, and withered, and her eye shone with a glaring, unnatural lustre. All this Henry marked; and he now felt convinced that there was no hope. Without saying a word, he knelt down by the couch of the dying girl, who was unconscious of his presence; a feeling of distraction shot through his brain, and he felt for a moment as if his reason would forsake him. Nearly a quarter of an hour was thus spent without a word being said either by Mr Lorimer or Henry. At length, the former rose from the stool on which he had been sitting, and leaning over his daughter—

"Lucy, my love," he said, "here is Henry come to inquire for you." That beloved name acted like a spell on the dying girl; she opened her eyes, and even made an effort, though a vain one, to raise herself up on her couch; but there was an abruptness and a flurriedness in the attempt, which made both Henry and her father dread that her mind was affected. She made, too, some hurried efforts to compose and arrange her dress; and, although she actually did little else than make some unmeaning motions with her hands, she seemed satisfied that she had improved its appearance. Henry and Mr Lorimer exchanged hasty but significant looks, as if both had been at the same moment impressed with the belief that the poor patient's reason had departed. There was nothing, however, in what afterwards passed to confirm them in this belief; or rather, her conduct throughout the remaining part of the interview decidedly contradicted the melancholy supposition.

Miss Lorimer's eye having now caught a glimpse of Henry as he knelt beside her, she extended her hand towards him, averting her head, at the same time, to conceal the emotion

which she felt overwhelming her. Henry seized the proffered hand in silence, imprinted on it a thousand kisses, and bedewed it with his tears. Lucy felt all that was implied by these tokens of ardent affection. She felt Henry's tears dropping on her hand; and the agitation which it excited had nearly extinguished the last feeble glimmerings of the lamp of life. She shook violently, and struggled hard, though unsuccessfully, to suppress several violent sobs, which seemed as if they would have rent her bosom asunder.

Both Henry and Mr Lorimer now saw that, however much the effort might cost them, it was necessary, for the patient's sake, to interrupt that agonizing train of feeling under which they were all suffering, and to assume, at least in appearance, a lighter demeanour. It was evident to both, that, if Lucy was permitted to indulge much longer in the distracting feelings with which she seemed oppressed, she must speedily sink under them. Impressed, therefore, with the necessity of instantly changing, if possible, the current of her thoughts, Henry now rose from his knees, took a rapid turn through the room, to recover his self-possession, and to free his eyes, which were red with weeping, from the moisture with which they were yet suffused, returned to the couch on which Miss Lorimer reposed, and, hanging over the back of it, contemplated for a second, unobserved by the fair sufferer, who was still busied in the engrossing reflections which the scene that had just taken place had excited, with a look of tender affection and melancholy solicitude.

"Lucy, Lucy," he at length said, in a low tone, and with as much composure of manner as he could assume—and they were the first words he had uttered since he entered the apartment—"I fear you are worse than when I saw you last."

"Yes, Henry," she replied; "I am."

"My race is run, my warfare's o'er—
The solemn hour is nigh
When, offered up to God, my soul
Shall wing its flight on high."

And she looked, as she slowly and emphatically repeated these beautiful and impressive lines, as if her spirit was really about to wing its way to another and a better world—the solemn, yet mild and gentle expression of her pale countenance, imparted by a pure and innocent mind, unconscious of guilt, giving to her whole appearance, at this affecting moment, as much of the semblance of an angel upon earth, as the human mind can conceive of these happy and elevated beings.

Apparently worn out with the effort she had made, Lucy sank back exhausted on her couch. Her eyes were closed, her breathing was scarcely perceptible; and, for a second or two, both Henry and her father, thought that her pure and spotless soul had passed away with the last words she had uttered. In a few minutes, however, their fears were, for the time, dispelled. The poor girl again rallied—again she opened her eyes, and again breathed audibly. In a short time after, she spoke.

"I feel very faint," she said—"very, very faint. I fear I am about to leave you." And, indeed, the expression of her countenance confirmed the probability of her anticipations.

"Lucy, Lucy, my love—my poor suffering angel, do not say so!" exclaimed Henry, rushing round, in an agony of horror and despair, to the front of the couch, where her father already was—hanging over her with a look of the most intense misery. At this moment, Mr Lorimer—after exchanging a significant glance with Henry, who was now again kneeling by the couch of the sufferer, with one of her passive hands tenderly clasped in his, as if he would keep her on earth in despite of the grim tyrant—hurried to the door, and, without the knowledge of the patient, dispatched a servant for her medical attendants. These were au

Englishman, resident in Verona, and an Italian practitioner, a native of the city, both of them eminent in their profession. In a few minutes, as the message had been urgent and peremptory, the two medical gentlemen entered the apartment. On their appearance, Henry started to his feet. The physicians approached the patient; both of them looked earnestly on her countenance for several seconds, and one of them counted the vibrations of her pulse. At this moment, both Henry and Mr Lorimer were about to leave the apartment for a little, when they were prevented by the English physician, who, perceiving their intention, said, in a tone so low as not to be heard by the patient—

“You need not, gentlemen—there’s no occasion whatever;” and accompanying the expressions with a look that was meant to intimate that nothing could be done for the sufferer, who seemed totally unconscious of all that was passing around her.

The medical gentlemen, without recommending any thing, but merely that the patient should be kept as easy as possible, both in mind and body, and that whatever she fancied should be given to her, took up their hats to depart.

During this brief visit, both Henry and Mr Lorimer continued to watch the countenances of the physicians with the most pitiable earnestness; and, although enough had passed to confirm their worst fears, both yet clung to the feeble stay alluded to in the expressions, that where there is life there is hope; and besides—to such slender things do we cling in our misery—they had not yet been distinctly told that Lucy was actually dying. This dreadful intimation, however, was now about to be conveyed to them.

On the physicians reaching the door of the apartment, the English gentleman turned round, and made a signal to Mr Lorimer to follow him. He obeyed; but at once conjecturing the purpose for which he was summoned, his limbs trembled beneath him as he went. On reaching the outside of the apartment where the two physicians were waiting him, the Englishman gently closed the door; and, addressing Mr Lorimer in a low tone, and with a great deal of sympathy in his manner, said—

“My friend here and I think it our duty to inform you that your poor daughter is past all hope of recovery. Till this day we could not bring ourselves to believe this; but our visit just now has convinced us of it. She will not live many hours—probably not one.”

“The will of God be done!” exclaimed Mr Lorimer, clasping his hands together, and looking upwards with an air of pious resignation. “His will be done!” he repeated, and returned into the sick chamber, where Henry awaited, in an agony of suspense and anxiety, the result of the conference which was passing outside.

During the interval, he had not attempted to address a word to Miss Lorimer, (who seemed to have fallen into a profound slumber,) but sat absorbed in the silent misery of wo. At length the door of the apartment slowly opened, and Mr Lorimer, more like a spirit just risen from the grave than a living man, entered. There was on his pale and haggard countenance an expression of utter wretchedness, which, without making any inquiry, Henry instantly knew to proceed from his having been informed that the case of Lucy Lorimer was hopeless. Henry rose from his seat, and advanced to meet him. The latter uttered not a word, but rushed towards him, and flung himself on his neck in a paroxysm of grief.

At this interesting moment, the two mourners were roused from their reverie of sorrow by the dying girl suddenly inquiring, in a feeble tone if her father was in the apartment.

“Yes, Lucy, my love, I am here,” said Mr Lorimer, hastening up to his daughter’s couch—Henry, at the same moment, quitting the apartment, lest what she had to say might be meant for the parent’s ear alone to hear.

“You will remain with me, dear father,” she said, “till all is over. It will not detain you long; for I feel that it is now close at hand.”

“My beloved child,” said her father, as he hung over her, bathing her pale face with his tears, “since it is the will of Almighty God that you should leave us”—this he said for he felt that to speak now of hope would not only be idle but annoying to the poor sufferer, whose resignation was perfect, and whose conviction of the immediate approach of dissolution was not to be overturned—“since it is the will of Almighty God that you should leave us, we must bow to the high behest. Your exchange will be a happy one; and the period of our separation will now be but short. I will soon follow you, Lucy; for I cannot stay behind.”

“You must not speak in that manner, father,” said the dying girl. “I trust you have many years of happiness before you still”——

“And bereft of you, Lucy!” said her father. “No, no, that cannot be.”—After a pause of a few minutes, “Lucy,” he said, “would you wish to see Henry?”

“Yes, father,” she replied, “I would. I should like to see him once more before I die.” And an involuntary tear at this moment started into her eye.

Mr Lorimer now left the apartment in quest of Henry. In a few seconds both were by the side of the dying fair one.

“Henry,” said Lucy, on his approaching her, “kiss me; if you can think of embracing so disagreeable an object as I must now be.”

Henry, unable, from emotion, to make any reply, stooped eagerly down to comply with the poor girl’s dying request. She made an effort to fling her arms around his neck; she failed in the attempt, sank back in her couch, and expired—the agitation which this last interview with the object of her heart’s fondest affections had created having at once extinguished the little of life that remained.

We will not attempt to describe the misery into which the fatal event—though for some time anticipated—threw both Henry and the father of his beloved Lucy. On the former, it had the effect of disgusting him with life; and, in this desperate mood, he came to the resolution of seeking death on the first field of battle which he should tread; and such was the hopeless and cheerless state of his mind, that he found a degree of consolation in this reckless determination, which one other solace only could possibly have afforded him.

Having, after the funeral of Lucy, consigned Mr Lorimer to the charge of the English physician who had attended his daughter, and who had insisted that he should accept the hospitality of his house for a fortnight or so, promising that he would, at the end of that period, if Mr Lorimer’s strength would admit of it, accompany him to the seacoast, and see him safely shipped for his native land:—having, as we have said, made this arrangement, Henry waited on Mr Lorimer, for the last time, before he should march off with his regiment, which was now under orders to leave Verona within three hours. Mr Lorimer was in bed when Henry called on him; but, as the latter was no ordinary visiter, he was immediately shewn into his bedroom. On his entrance into the apartment, Mr Lorimer extended his hand towards him, greeted him affectionately, and desired him to be seated beside him. Henry obeyed.

“Henry,” at length said Mr Lorimer, after a lengthened pause, “since it has pleased Heaven to bereave me of my child, there is no one existing but you who shall inherit my property. I have made up my mind to this, Henry. Had my darling angel been spared, it would one day have been yours, at any rate; and, for her sake, it shall be yours still. I shall merely reserve a slender pittance for my own support during the very short period I have yet to live. You

will not, therefore, leave this house until the necessary deeds are drawn out. They can be afterwards legalized in England. Wealth, Henry, is no longer of any use to me. This, I trust," he added, after another pause, "will be some atonement for the cruel and heartless part I acted towards both you and her."

Henry listened with patience to this munificent proposal; but it brought no expression of rapture into his eye, no pleasure to his senses. He heard it all gravely, nay, even contemptuously. His haggard and care-worn features remained cold and rigid, and he looked as if he scarcely comprehended the language which had been addressed to him.

After expressing his gratitude, however, to Mr Lorimer for his intended generosity, he peremptorily declined its acceptance. "You have said, Mr Lorimer," he said, "that wealth is no longer of any use to you—neither is it to me, since she has been torn from me for whose sake alone I could ever think it desirable. Of what use would wealth be to one who has neither wants nor wishes left—who has none to care for, and none to care for him?"

Mr Lorimer persevered for some time in endeavouring to induce Henry to become his heir; but, so far from succeeding, he only excited a feeling of impatience and irritation, which Henry more than once allowed to escape him. Perceiving this, Mr Lorimer at length gave up the point, and Henry rose to depart. They bade each other farewell, and parted never to meet again.

On a morning, in the winter of 1805—it was the 2d day of December—the sun rose above the hills and valleys of Moravia with unusual brilliancy and splendour. It was the celebrated sun of Austerlitz, so often and so triumphantly referred to by Napoleon on the eve of subsequent battles. It is not by any means our intention, however, notwithstanding this introductory sentence, to attempt here any description of the sanguinary contest to which it alludes—we only having to do with one single individual out of all the mighty host which was there assembled to decide their quarrels by force of arms.

Amongst the many brave and gallant hearts that distinguished themselves on this bloody field, there was one whose feats of daring courage left all others far behind; but several of these were of so desperate a character, that it was remarked by more than one witness of them, that no one but a man totally regardless of his life would ever have thought of attempting them.

The courage of this daring man at length became so conspicuous as to attract the attention of Napoleon himself, who repeatedly inquired of those around him who and what he was; adding, once or twice, that he would certainly promote him. It was some time, however, before Bonaparte could learn the name and country of the man whose bravery had won so much of his favour; but he at length learned that it was Henry Scot, that he was a native of Ireland, and colonel of chasseurs.

"Ah!" exclaimed the little warrior, on being informed of this, and taking a huge pinch of snuff as he spoke, "I know him; I recollect him. He has distinguished himself before. I shall look to him."

Such were the bright prospects which Henry's bravery was opening up to him. But, alas! little did the mighty chieftain, whose power was about to open up those prospects, know how small a value Henry put on all that he could bestow—how little he cared for human applause, or the temporal rewards of man.

By one of those singular chances which frequently occur, but for which there is no accounting, Henry, though oftener and more exposed than any individual in the French army on this sanguinary day, could not find the death he so anxiously sought, although hundreds were every moment stricken down around him. He had yet escaped without

the smallest injury, although the conflict had now continued with tremendous slaughter for many hours.

At length, however, the grim messenger came. A corps of Russians were in possession of a position which the French general, under whom Henry immediately served, was extremely desirous to wrest from them. It was a bare knoll, of very little height, and of gentle ascent. As there had been no defensive works thrown up on it, and nothing to obstruct the operations of cavalry, the general conceived that a smart charge of chasseurs would be sufficient to drive them from the position; and Henry was ordered on the duty. He gladly obeyed; and, in an instant after, he was seen leading on his men with the same desperate recklessness which had so often distinguished him during the previous part of the day. Again, as usual also, he was considerably in advance of his men. A minute more, and his tall plume was seen nodding in the midst of the Russian battalion. Another, and it had disappeared. Both the plume and its wearer were down, never again to rise. Henry Scot was no more. He had at length found the death he had so long and anxiously sought. Dragged from his horse, and pierced with a score of bayonets, he fell a martyr to crossed affections and disappointed hopes.

THE BROTHERS.

THE following story is a well-known tradition in the wild and remote district of Assynt, in the North Highlands of Scotland. The main incident on which it turns will startle a reader of the present day, and will, as a matter of course, be immediately set down as a thing wholly unworthy of credit; and in such an opinion, we ourselves cordially agree. But we give the story exactly as we found it, and leave it to make its own impressions. That the leading circumstances are true, however, there is no doubt, whatever may be thought of the particular incident in question.

In a remote and sequestered glen in the North Highlands of Scotland, there lived, about ninety years ago, a widow woman, of the name of Macrae. Her husband was killed at the battle of Culloden, and she was left with two sons, then mere children, to struggle for a subsistence from a miserable patch of land of which her husband had held a lease from, we believe, Lord Seaforth. During the first years of her widowhood, Isabel Macrae had endured much; but, as her sons grew up, her toils and privations gradually became lighter; and, when they attained the years of manhood, these toils and privations may be said to have ceased altogether; for they were dutiful sons to her, and besides turning the little tract of land they rented to better account than she had been able to do, they added several other sources of income to that yielded by their farm, and thus amply provided for their own wants and their mother's comfort. The names of the young men were John and Roderick. They were both as handsome fellows as the Highlands could boast of, and proud, proud was their poor mother of her stately boys; but she had yet a better reason to be proud of them than what their personal appearance afforded. They loved her with the most tender and sincere affection—they toiled that she might be at ease, and vied with each other in contributing to her comfort and happiness. They never spoke to her but in words of kindness and respect; and no frown, no harsh word, no expressions of discontent, ever marred the harmony of their communion. Yet another reason the mother had to be happy in her boys: this was the fond regard they entertained for each other; and much did Isabel Macrae delight in the brotherly love that existed between them. She had never known the slightest approach to a quarrel between her sons; on the contrary, they seemed to live but for each other and for her while they were constantly together and appeared to

desire no other society. Their tempers, too, were very nearly alike, both being mild, gentle, and patient.

Such, then, was the widow Macrae and her sons, and such were the circumstances in which they stood at the period of our story. Availing themselves of every honest means that came within their reach of adding to their income, John and Roderick were in the habit, like many others of their country people, of repairing to the low country every autumn to work for hire in cutting down the harvest, which being much earlier in the latter districts than in the Highlands, they could very easily accomplish, and be yet home in sufficient time to gather in their own little crops. These journeys the brothers performed together, and on foot; rather avoiding than seeking the society of others bound on a similar mission, as they preferred being alone. The season having come round for their setting out on their annual expedition, Isabel saw her sons a short distance on their way. This was not usual with her; but she felt in the present instance a reluctance to part with them, for which she could not account. Before leaving them, she insisted on their joining her in a prayer, although she did not say what induced her to make the proposal; and they accordingly retired to a lone spot, and there offered up an address to the Deity. On rising from her knees—

“Now, go, my sons,” she said, “and God be with you! Be as kind to each other as you have always been. Be as upright and inoffensive in your conduct, and your paths will be pleasant, and your days long upon the earth.” She then embraced them alternately; expressed a hope that they would return to their home and to her, in peace and safety; prayed again to God to bless them; and bade them go their ways. The young men were not a little surprised at their mother’s unusual conduct on this occasion; but, as she did not explain herself, they forebore making any remarks on the subject. She had always, indeed, parted with them with reluctance, and with many expressions of tenderness and regret; but, in this instance, her conduct was marked with a solemnity and anxiety which was not usual to her. At the close of the third day from their leaving home, the brothers found themselves, after a fatiguing journey of upwards of thirty miles, on the banks of a beautiful stream. The former was covered with wood; and directly opposite, on the other side of the river, stood the ruins of an ancient castle. Exhausted with fatigue, and tempted by the singular beauty of the spot—by the coolness of the shade, and the refreshing sound of the breaking waters—the brothers laid themselves down on the grass, when one of them immediately fell into a profound sleep. It was Roderick. The other, observing his brother’s face exposed, as he slept, to a ray of the sun, that found its way through an opening in the foliage above, took a handkerchief from his pocket and laid it gently on his face. Having performed this slight but expressive act of kindness and affection, he also fell asleep; and, for fully an hour afterwards, neither of them stirred. At the end of this period, however, Roderick awoke, and rousing his brother—

“John,” he said, “I have had a curious dream.”

“What was it, Roderick?” inquired his brother, with a smile.

“I dreamt, John,” said the former, “that I was in yon old castle,” pointing to the ruined structure on the other side of the stream, “and that I found there one entire apartment, untouched by time, and just as it had been left by those who inhabited it. In the centre of the floor of this chamber I discovered a large flag stone, and while wondering what purpose it could be for, an old man entered, and told me that it covered a great treasure, and that if I would raise it, I should become possessed of it all.”

John looked grave at this recital; for he partook largely of the superstition of the times, and of the country of his

birth. “It is a curious dream, Roderick,” he said; “I have been told of such dreams before, and have heard of their being realized. When our grandfather was drowned in the water of Inver, his body could nowhere be found, although the spot where he fell into the river was known, and every exertion made to recover it. Several nights after the accident, when they had given up the search in despair, our grandmother dreamt that her husband came to her, and told her that, if they looked for him at a certain part of the stream, which he minutely described, they would find him with one of his feet locked fast between two stones; which was the reason, he said, of his not having been carried any length by the current—as those who searched for him had calculated. The spot, thus mysteriously pointed out, was examined next day, and the body found exactly in the circumstances described.”

“I have heard something of that story, said Roderick; “but what has it to do with my dream, John?”

“Don’t you perceive, brother?” replied the latter. “We’ll go and see if we can find any apartment resembling that you dreamt of. Who knows but your vision may be realized. Was its situation pointed out to you Roderick?”

“It was,” said the latter, half jocularly and half seriously. “The chamber was on the west side of the building.”

“Let us seek it,” rejoined his brother, starting to his feet.

“With all my heart,” replied Roderick; and he also arose.

They proceeded to the old castle; but whether they found what they sought or not, belongs to another part of our tale. In the meantime, we return to the cottage of Isabel Macrae, in Glen Spean.

It was at the close of a sultry day, in the beginning of September, and about a week after her sons had left her for the low country, that Isabel, as she sat knitting a stocking at the door, saw a man approaching the house. It was now dusk; and, at the distance he was yet from her, she could not make out who he was; but, as he approached nearer, her heart began to beat, for the figure resembled that of her son, Roderick—but it could not be. He came yet nearer. It was—it was Roderick—and no other.

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed Isabel to herself, in great alarm—“what does this mean? Roderick back already, and without his brother. O God! O God!” ejaculated the terrified woman, “some fatal accident has happened to my boy. My fears were but too well founded!”

She flew to meet her son, who was now close at hand, to question him regarding his brother; but that son was a changed man—ay, a changed man within the space of one short week. His face, before glowing with the ruddy hue of health, was now pale and haggard. His eye, before beaming with gentleness and kindness, was now wild and unsettled. His manner was sullen—nay, even fierce; and he returned not his mother’s greeting, for, notwithstanding her alarm and anxiety, she had hailed his return with her usual marks and expressions of affection—but doggedly walked on towards the house. His mother inquired where was his brother? He answered nearly in the words of Cain; and, without vouchsafing any further explanation, passed into the cottage, out of which no inducement could again make him stir. When he entered, he took a seat by the fire; and there, wrapt in gloomy abstraction, he sat for several days and nights, taking no food, and never retiring to rest. During all this time, too, he never opened his lips, excepting to return brief and surly answers to the importunities of his distracted parent regarding his brother. From these, however, the former at length ceased; finding she could not elicit from him any of the information she desired. It was a strange and unaccountable change.

Roderick, who used to be so cheerful, so active, so kind, so gentle, was all at once become morose, indolent, and repulsive in his manner. He seemed to care for nothing, and to have lost all interest in the affairs of his mother's household. For hours together, he sat gazing on the fire in dark and moody silence; till at length, however, the appalling monotony of this scene was broken in upon.

One day, about a week after Roderick's return, his mother hastened, in great alarm, to her son, to inform him that she saw three men, strangers, approaching the house, adding—"Who on earth can they be, Roderick, and what can they be wanting?"

"They want *me*," said Roderick, fiercely. "They are come for *me*, and I am glad of it."

"For *you*, my son, my life!" exclaimed his mother in great agitation, and bursting into tears. "Oh, what can they want with you, Roderick? I am sure you are indebted to no one; and still more sure am I that you have harmed no one—you are incapable of it. Tell me, then, in God's name, my son, since you seem to know, what it is they want with you."

"You will know all too soon, mother," replied Roderick, suddenly, and now, for the first time since his return, resuming the mild manner and tone which was natural to him—"You will know all too soon," he said, throwing his arms around his mother's neck in a paroxysm of grief and despair. "O unhappy woman," he exclaimed, "why did you bring such a wretch, such a monster as I am, to the world?"

"What do these dreadful words mean, my child?" said his mother. "O Roderick, have pity on the mother that bore you, that nursed you, that watched over your infant years, and tell me at once the worst I have to learn. Where, again I ask you, in the name of God, is your brother, John?" And without waiting for his reply, "O God, O God," she exclaimed, in wild distraction, "I fear what I dare not name, what I dare not think of; but it cannot, cannot be. Tell me, my son, where is John?"

At this instant the men who had been seen approaching the house entered, when, without giving them time to announce their errand, Roderick stepped up to them, and said, with the utmost coolness and collectedness of manner, "I am the man you want."

"You are," replied the foremost of the strangers; "and since you have said so, I need not tell you our business, I suppose. You will go along with us."

"I'm ready," replied Roderick, firmly. And all that afterwards passed was conducted in silence, excepting on the part of the unhappy mother of the prisoner, (for such now was Roderick Macrae,) whose shrieks and cries—as she at one time vainly implored both her son and the strangers to tell her the meaning of what she saw, (a piece of information which both withheld from motives of compassion,) at another besought the latter not to take her son from her—might have been heard at a long distance. At length, however, the dreadful scene was brought to a close. The miserable woman fainted; when the officers of justice—for such were the visitors—taking advantage of her insensibility, hurried away the prisoner, who had indeed himself pointed out the opportunity which her condition presented; leaving her in charge of two female relatives who had chanced to come in at the moment. Ere leaving the house, Roderick stooped down and imprinted a fervent kiss on the pallid lips of his unfortunate parent, burst into tears, then rushed out of the house, followed by the officers. Two months after this, Roderick Macrae stood at the bar of the High Court of Justiciary, charged with the horrible crime of fratricide—with having murdered his brother, John Macrae, in the old Castle of Droonan.

The first evidence called on his trial was a labouring man, who deponed, That, having been at work in an adjoining

field, he had seen the prisoner at the bar and another man enter the building on the day labelled: That, in about an hour afterwards, he saw the prisoner suddenly rush out of the castle, and run away at his utmost speed: That the other did not again appear at all: That, on the same day, he and another person found a dead body in one of the apartments of the building, apparently that of a murdered man, as there was a deep wound on his left side, as if inflicted by a sharp instrument; and that they also found such a knife, as is called in the Highlands a *skien dhu*, lying at a little distance from the corpse: That the apartment where the body was discovered was one he had never been in before, as, although he had lived for twenty years in the immediate vicinity of the castle, and had been in it a thousand times, he had never known that such a chamber existed. This witness also deponed, that there was a large flag-stone in the centre of the apartment where the body was found, and that it seemed to have been recently raised from its bed on the floor. They also found, he said, on the occasion spoken of, a coarse earthen pot filled with gold and silver coin, standing beside the deceased. This pot was produced in court, and identified by the witness.

The next evidence called was a boy about fourteen years of age. The deposition of this witness was conclusive; and in establishing, as it did, the guilt of the prisoner, presented one of the most startling views of both the weakness and wickedness of human nature, of the fatal power of its evil passions under the influence of momentary impulses, that is, perhaps, upon record. The testimony of the boy was to the following effect:—

On the day on which the murder was perpetrated, he was climbing about the ruins of the Castle of Droonan, in search of birds' nests, and was, at the moment the prisoner and his brother entered it, in such a situation as gave him, from the dilapidated state of the building, a full view of the apartment in which the crime was committed, without exposing himself to discovery. Curiosity to know what the men were going to do, induced him to remain quietly where he was, to watch their proceedings; when, on the former entering the apartment, they immediately began to raise the flagstone, alluded to by the preceding witness. The operation seemed to be a difficult one, and took them a considerable time; but was at length successful. On the stone's being raised, the companion of the prisoner made a sudden plunge with his hand into a hole which it had covered, and took out an earthenware pot, filled with coin; when, all at once, the two men appeared to quarrel, seemingly about the contents of the pot, and the prisoner struck the other on the side; but the witness could not say that it was with a knife. He, however, had no doubt that it was the blow he struck that killed the deceased; for he instantly fell, uttering a loud shriek or cry, and never again moved. On his falling, the prisoner rushed out of the apartment seemingly in great terror, and he saw nothing more of him. Such, in substance, was the evidence of the boy in this dreadful case, and it carried conviction of the prisoner's guilt to the minds of all who heard it.

Roderick Macrae was condemned to death; and, in due course of time, suffered the last penalty of the law—confessing, with his dying breath, the justness of his sentence, and attributing the crime which had exposed him to it, to a sudden gust of passion, occasioned by a quarrel with his brother—whom he yet declared he loved with the most sincere affection—about the division of the money they had found.



TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

WIDOW LINDSAY'S DAUGHTERS.

IN a little vale in the county of Forfar, there lived, a long time back, a person of the name of Jean Lindsay, a widow. She resided at the small farm called Kelton, which had been rented by her husband, John Lindsay, from the Laird of Eaglesmount—a property then yielding a title and an income of considerable extent to the family of Affleck, but now merged in the large estates of a neighbouring proprietor. Widow Lindsay had two daughters, Jean and Katharine, both young and beautiful, though possessing features so entirely different that it could not be supposed they could affect, equally, or indeed at all, the same individual. The characters of the two were also very different; so that they were more like children of parents of different countries than of one father, and he a Scotchman.

Jean Lindsay, the elder, was a simple, good-natured maiden, whose simplicity, possessing, as it did, all the artlessness of childhood, was dangerous to herself, in proportion as it was pleasing to others; for, while it produced lovers who professed an honourable suit, it allured those who trusted to that simplicity for the success of artful schemes. It was in vain that her mother and sister endeavoured to open her eyes to her real interests. Her heart regulated all the moral as well as physical economy of the maiden; and where that pointed, it was impossible, in her estimation, that there could be either guile or want of affection. It may well be conceived that a young girl, possessing these qualities, great beauty, strong sympathies, and the most child-like simplicity, could scarcely fail to produce to herself and her parent some cause of distress; and her mother often said that she wished that Jean had had less beauty, more ill nature, or a harder heart. Jean herself, however, saw no fault in a fair face, and nothing wrong in an affectionate heart—so thinks ever the young and inexperienced maiden; and it is only those whose smiles have changed into the furrows of care, and whose hearts have felt the benumbing influences of the experience of a bad world, who can say, to such as Jean Lindsay, "It had been better for thee that nature had been less kind in bestowing upon thee gifts universally prized, and yet continually working ruin."

Katharine Lindsay was a different kind of person. Not so beautiful as Jean, though still fair and finely formed, she had just enough of beauty to win and please a fastidious lover, but not to dazzle and allure dangerous suitors. Capable of strong affections, her sympathies were quick-sighted to virtue and worth; and her antipathies followed close upon her observation of what was wrong. With strong moral feelings, she had the fortitude which is always allied to an altitude of moral sentiment, and in great emergencies would have exhibited the high qualities for which the noblest of her sex have been so remarkable, shewing a high enthusiasm in the exercise of the generous virtues, and a withering contempt for what is grovelling or mean. Cast in an humble sphere, these qualities in Katharine Lindsay could shew themselves only in humble matters; but it is the beauty of virtue, that, like the diamond which shines as

bright in the bandeau of wool as in the cincture of satin it is independent of situation and circumstances for the display of its splendour.

Near to the habitation of Widow Lindsay stood the farm of Burnbank, occupied by William Haldane, whose son, John, a young man of the age of Katharine Lindsay, went very often to Kelton to enjoy the conversation of the young women. John Haldane was the only son of his father, and expected to succeed to the farm, as well as a pretty large sum of money realized by him. His visits to Kelton were, therefore, of some interest to the mother as well as the daughters; though, as will appear, his attentions to the young women were very differently received.

"How is it," said Widow Lindsay to Jean, "that ye winna receive—as a young woman wha has her market to make ought to do—the attentions o' that guid young man, Burnbank, wha doesna hesitate, like a certain lover wha only lets us hear the sound o' his horn at evening among the corn, to shew his face and gie out bauldly the form and fashion o' his thoughts as befits the son o' his honest father. Tak ye the advice o' age, and the admonition o' a mither—no forgetting that, though ye may hae mony a lover, ye can hae but ae minnie; and mind nae mair the blast o' that bugle we hear at een, whilk seems to mak yer heart jump to its notes as a wind harp answers to the storm that is to brak its strings. Turn, turn in time to the voice o' affection, using our ain natural language to gie it force, and honesty to gie it strength, and faith and troth to gie it lasting—and Jean Lindsay, whase beauty has gane forth like a leaf whilk the wind has taen frae a rose, to make it its sport and pastime, may rise a goodly plant on the bonnie grounds o' Burnbank, and live to see her offspring flourish around her, as I this day now see mine—but wi' less fear o' their destiny."

"I canna like Burnbank, mither," replied Jean, with that tone of voice which indicated the absolute nature of the reason; "and, besides, he has nae richt to like me—for Kate likes him; and, if he winna like her, he weel deserves to hae nane ava to like, for a better and a bonnier lass doesna live between Dichty and the braid Esk."

"Dinna say, Jean," answered Katharine, "that I like the man wha leaves me for my sister; but ye may say that I admire him for a' the hich qualities he has shewn to belong to his manly heart. That nicht when he fought single handed wi' young Stewart o' Ilay and his six reivers, wha burned the stacks o' oor kinsman in the woods o' Kelly, and drove them afore him, as they did the cattle he took frae them and restored to their disconsolate owner, lives in my memory as if it had glistered wi' a' the stars o' heaven. Oh, when I saw him rise covered wi' the bluid o' his liver-hearted foes, to shed mair o' the worthless liquor and shaw its thinness on their ain skins, how I wad hae gloried, if I had been a man, in assisting him in the strife and victory o' that awfu nicht! If Katharine Lindsay had had the choice o' her ain estate, she wad hae wished either to be John Haldane or John Haldane's wife. And since ane o' thae is decided, and the other hangs in the doubtful scales o' a cruel fate, she may be allowed to speak, as she now does, the praises

that are due to ane sae guid, sae bauld, sae generous, and sae kind, as he has often proved himself to be."

So it was, as this conversation shewed—John Haldane loved Jean, who loved some one else; and Katharine's high spirit saw in the lover of another those qualities she required in her own, and without which she never could love any one. Katharine had not declared any affection towards John Haldane; but her heart, filled with a feeling approaching to adoration of the character he held in the country, got relief from the oppression of a love not returned, as she discoursed of the bold acts by which his name had become famous in Angus. She had herself done much to cultivate his affections; but his eye inclined to the more beautiful and fragile sister, and she was daily mortified by evidences of this partiality, which appeared to her the more extraordinary, that she had, on one occasion, saved his life. After the desperate affray, noticed in the conversation already detailed, in which John Haldane had performed so conspicuous a part, many attempts were made by young Stewart and his gang of reivers—who had been committing great depredations in Strathmore, and to whom he had made himself obnoxious by his boldness in defeating them in one or two forays—to take away his life. One of these would have been successful had it not been for the spirited conduct of Katharine Lindsay, who followed the desperadoes, heard their conversation, traced their design, and warned the intended victim a quarter of an hour before the attack. She did this at the expense of her own life; for she was seen leaving Burnbank by the robbers, and two shots were fired after her as she retreated to Kelton; and John Haldane repeatedly declared that, if he had not got the warning, he must inevitably have perished; for the men were bent upon his destruction.

Yet how little has gratitude, for an act so bold and praiseworthy as that of Katharine Lindsay, to do with love! A fortnight had scarcely passed after the adventure now noticed, when the two sisters and John Haldane, returning from the hills of Sedley, were overtaken by the party who had been so intent in taking away his life. They flew on seeing themselves followed, and expected to find shelter in a neighbouring house; but before they could arrive there, the strength of the females was exhausted; and Haldane, seizing them in his arms, thought that, by his matchless strength, he would be able to bear them over the small space which they had yet to traverse before they got shelter. While thus struggling with his double burden, Jean fainted; and such was the effect produced by her state of insensibility on one who could have faced death itself in any shape, that he dropped Katharine, flew with the favourite to the house, and left the rejected in the hands of the foes. Katharine escaped; but it was only by the aid of a high vindication of the rights of women, delivered in such a strain of enthusiasm, that these very children of the mist fell under the rebuke and allowed her to depart. Katharine felt this cruel mark of a lover's partiality, and remembered the personal risk she had encountered in saving, from the revenge of the same men, the life of him who had now left hers in such jeopardy; but she said nothing, and the subject was generally avoided as unpleasant to all parties.

If Katharine Lindsay was unhappy in not having her affection returned, John Haldane was not more fortunate in regard to Jean, whose love was not to be purchased by any virtues, however high or generous. That Jean had a lover of her own, no one doubted; and the allusion made by her mother to the sound of a bugle, which Jean understood well how to interpret, had reference to a secret amour, which had, for a considerable time, existed between her and some gay gallant, who frequented the neighbourhood in the gloaming, and avoided the place in daylight. The

evidence afforded by the sounds of the bugle, and the effect produced upon Jean when she heard them and responded to them by a sudden disappearance, was corroborated by various reports in the neighbourhood to the effect that Jean Lindsay had been seen, on many occasions, and in secret places, walking with a stranger, sitting with him in green schaws, leaning on his arm, and even hanging on his neck, and displaying other marks of a strong and confiding attachment. Several attempts had been made by John Haldane to discover the mysterious stranger, but without effect. Katharine, one night, when the trysting sound seemed to come from a sort of arbour, which stood near the house, went out; and, though darkness prevented her from seeing any one, addressed him in the following terms:—

"Whae'er ye be, whether gentle or simple—the young Laird o' Eaglesmount, or the son o' Walter Burn, the humble cottager o' the Fernbrae, with honour in your heart, or a fause guile in the sounds o' your hunting horn—gude or evil—ye hae little richt, as I ween, to come to the house o' the widow, to steal awa, like a thief in the night, the heart and happiness o' a fatherless bairn. But ken ye, sir, that though ye may think ye hae sma' danger in trifling wi' the affections o' that simple creature, wha has gien her heart for the asking, and never required sae meikle in return as a pledge o' faith, whar she suspects nae guile; ye may be sair mistaen, if ye think that revenge for the ruin o' a sister, winna fire the bosom o' Katharine Lindsay, and nerve her arm in sae gude a wark. And she vows even to mak your dastardly life yield, in its painful parting from your treacherous heart, the love it has betrayed, and the faith it has abused, as weel as the guile, wharby it has wrought mair wae than we yet ken, though nae mair than I suspect. The Laird o' Eaglesmount—thanks to the wit o' man—is nae mair prufe against the rifle o' auld John Lindsay, when touched by the soft yet daring fingers o' his daughter, than is the pair hare that fa's to the ground before the iron-hand o' John Haldane o' Burnbank."

"What ails bonny Katharine Lindsay o' Kelton," responded a voice which Katharine knew to be that of Adam Hall, the forester of Eaglesmount, who happened to be passing. "What ails Katharine Lindsay at my master, wha never did her wrang, and wha is even noo at Kelly House, four miles beyond the reach o' her sweet voice—sweet though speaking o' rifles and implements o' war—fit only for the hands o' foresters, like Adam Hall and the reivers o' Sedley."

Katharine made no reply to the forester. Her anger, she felt, had carried her too far in publishing her sister's suspected dishonour, (for she had every apprehension regarding her secret meetings,) to a person merely imagined to be present; and the circumstance of being overheard addressing the stranger by Adam Hall, added to her regret; but she gave no credence to the wily forester's attempt, as she thought, to take her suspicions off his master, by making out that he was elsewhere; and she quietly returned to the house.

The stranger lover discontinued his accustomed sound; and it was now observed by her mother and sister, that Jean seldom went out in the gloaming, unless when she had been out in the fore part of the day, from which they imagined that there was some system of signals instituted between the lovers, which they made known to each other in the forenoon, with a view to an evening meeting. Having resolved to discover this, Katharine followed Jean the next time she went out; and, having narrowly observed her motions, she found that she went to a large ash tree, that stood not very far from the house; and, having observed a mark upon it, turned and went home by another road. Katharine ran forward to see the sign on the tree, but on

looking a little to a side, she observed John Haldane running as fast as herself, and clearly with the same object in view. As soon as John saw Katharine, he stopped, and looking much abashed, pretended to ask her whether she was hastening. Katharine excused the slight deceit which John's shame had forced him to have recourse to, and did not shew him that she observed it. Overcome by this new evidence of his affection for Jean, she looked sorrowfully; and gently replied to his question, that she was endeavouring to make up with her sister, who had gone before her. He looked suspiciously at her; and, having stated that he was on his way to Kelly, left her and departed—both of them exhibiting much sorrow for the fate which seemed to draw them asunder, while conscious that they were formed for each other. Katharine observed, after his departure, that the figure 9 was cut in the bark of the tree; from which she had no doubt that that was the hour of Jean's appointment with her lover. As Katharine turned round the edge of the planting, from which the solitary ash tree stood apart, she saw John Haldane turn back, examine the mark, and depart dejectedly.

"What melancholy fate," ejaculated the sorrowful girl, "has formed that man as an object of my heart's idolatry, and hauls him up to my dementit fancy as an object wharwith to feed its disordered dreams, and cheat the hope o' a better and a calmer hour; and yet as I am to him he is himself to another, wha flees frae him even as he flees frae me, making all miserable, all hopeless? Wha is sae blind as no to see in Katharine Lindsay and John Haldane twa creatures fitted for making ilk ither happy, even as John Haldane and Jean Lindsay have nae mair in common than the unhappy mates wha are doomed to eternal strife? I canna think o' thae strange doings o' Him wha out o' the clouds has brought living light, to shaw the sailor the rock whereon death sits smiling at the storm, without getting bewildered wi' wild thoughts, and feeling my dizzy brain run round as if to escape frae my ain questioning."

At nine o'clock, Jean Lindsay went out. A little after she departed, Katharine followed her, but soon lost her in the woods. After wandering about for some time, listening to every sound she could hear, and often vainly endeavouring to construe the notes of the cushat or the cuckoo into the sounds of love-making, she at last heard the real sound of the human voice. In an instant, the noise of some one running arrested her attention, and, looking round, she saw Eaglesmount flying through the trees, and heard her sister's voice crying after him—"It is your time, Eaglesmount—it is your time." On proceeding a little farther, she saw, to her greater astonishment, Stewart of Ilay, the noted reiver, standing with his back to her, and speaking fiercely to his mortal foe, John Haldane. She paused—for she knew that where these two met, lives must separate, and watched their motions. A tree stood conveniently between her and them. Their words grew higher—a wild fury was fast taking possession of both their souls, threatening nothing but death. As Stewart stood writhing nder some statement of Haldane's, she saw his right hand convulsively grasping a small dagger, which he was concealing behind his back, and, slipping gently forward, she seized the weapon, wrung it out of his hand, and, starting back, gave it to Haldane, who was entirely defenceless, and in the power of his enemy. Stewart no sooner saw his concealed and treacherous advantage transferred to his enemy, than, darting through the wood, he disappeared. John Haldane acknowledged that he had a second time received his life from Katharine Lindsay; and, as he made this acknowledgment, he turned, with the tear in his eye, to see if he could yet discover any trace of Jean—thus, as it were, tacitly admitting, though with a solemn expression of deep sorrow, that he was not master of himself but exposed to

some secret impulse, whereby he was propelled to evil, prevented from seeing its baneful character, and blinded to the evidences of his own good. Ashamed to admit that he had a second time been found watching Jean, he evaded the questions of Katharine regarding the unusual scene she had discovered in the wood; and, when Katharine returned home, she made as little progress in her investigations there, for Jean had latterly become more determined to tell nothing about her lover, and she would advance nothing that could, in any degree, satisfy her sister as to the true cause of all these strange proceedings.

Next day, Adam Hall, the forester, called and wished to see Jean—but she refused him admittance; from which Katharine inferred, that the two lovers had quarreled on the preceding night. John Haldane called also in the course of the day, and stated that Stewart, enraged at the disappointment he had met with, had vowed revenge, and had taken it to a certain extent, by getting some of his reivers to enter his home, and carry off a great part of his effects, including his favourite rifle. Katharine offered to lend him her father's, an offer which he at once accepted; but the object of his visit—an interview with Jean—was denied him; for she made the same excuse for not seeing him, that she had made to Adam Hall.

Some days after the proceedings now detailed, Katharine was induced, from the conduct of Jean, to keep a strict eye upon the signal tree; and, one day when examining it, she was surprised to see Adam Hall, the forester, run away as if caught in the act of doing something which he wished to keep secret. Katharine was satisfied he had been cutting out the usual mark; and, looking at the tree, she was surprised to find the hour changed, from the usual one of eight or nine, to three. She could not understand what this meant; for three of the afternoon had passed, and three of the following morning appeared so extraordinary an hour for an appointment, that she could scarcely credit the plain indication of the notice. She resolved to say nothing of the circumstance to her mother, but to remain out of bed and watch the motions of her sister.

Accordingly, when night came, Katharine retired to her room, stating that she was somewhat indisposed and did not wish to be disturbed. Her sister slept in a small closet adjoining, while their mother slept in a room in the other end of the house. Katharine, having taken the precaution of not taking off her clothes, was ready to act upon the slightest movement of her sister. She found, before pretending to go to bed, that her sister's clothes were not lying in their usual place, and, not seeing them elsewhere in the room, she concluded Jean had gone to bed without undressing. This was sufficient to justify her apprehensions, and her first resolution was to secure the key of the door and prevent her from going out; but she was strongly influenced by a wish to discover the source and meaning of all this mystery, for she sometimes thought, from what had latterly happened, that John Haldane himself was the person whom Jean had been privately meeting, and that he and she had, in consequence of knowing Katharine's love for him, entered into these schemes for the purpose of blinding her, and gratifying their affection clandestinely. She remembered, in corroboration of this suspicion, his appearance at the signal tree, and his attendance that evening when she saved him from the fatal hands of Stewart. Again she thought, as she had originally done, that Eaglesmount was the lover—a suspicion strengthened by many circumstances, and particularly by the manner of Adam Hall that afternoon, when he appeared to have been skulking away after having made the signal. Her suspicions did not rest on Stewart, because she could not conceive that Jean, simple as she was, would have any intercourse with a reiver and an outlaw; and his appearance on the night in question was accounted for by his hatred towards John Haldane.

whom he had followed for the purpose of revenge. In this state of doubt Katharine was determined to see the end of this mystery, and resolved upon following Jean wherever she went.

A little before three o'clock, Jean rose quietly from her bed, packed up a small bundle of clothes, and, going down stairs, gently opened the door and went out. Katharine followed her closely and silently. She went direct to the Kelton wood, at the skirt of which the signal tree stood; from that to the signal tree, which she examined; and, turning round, she increased her speed to a rapid flight, and fairly outran Katharine, who stood, unknowing what path to pursue. She went first one way and then another, and became alarmed, that, by her negligence, she had for ever lost her sister; a calamity which would end the days of her aged and beloved mother. Inspired by feelings of the strongest character, she chose a path, and, increasing her speed, flew with the greatest rapidity through the wood, till she was stopped by the sound of a shot. Directing her steps in the direction from which the sounds came, she soon witnessed a scene of a most appalling character. On the ground lay the bleeding and apparently lifeless body of Louis Affleck of Eaglesmount, and beside him a rifle, which Katharine having taken up, recognised as that of John Haldane, his name being engraved on the end of it. She examined the body to see if there remained any symptoms of life, but the spirit had fled, and the eyes of the unfortunate gentleman bore that seal which no mortal can break. On turning round, she saw John Haldane in the grasp of two hinds, who, having heard the shot, and the yell of the dying man, and seen John with a gun in his hand, seized him and brought him to the spot where the murdered man lay. It was in vain that John pointed to another gun, in the hands of Katherine, as an evidence that the shot had been fired by some other person, who had taken flight; for that gun being examined, and found to be his, and the one in his possession being that of John Lindsay, rather tended to confirm the suspicions of the men that Eaglesmount had been murdered either by John Haldane or by Katharine Lindsay, who were both at that place at an hour of the morning when they ought to have been asleep in their beds.

The two men removed John Haldane to a neighbouring house, allowing Katharine to go home, as they could not bring themselves to think that a young woman so well spoken of as she was, could be guilty of the crime of murder. The news of this mysterious death spread like wildfire throughout many counties, and an investigation was immediately set about to discover the murderer. John Haldane was removed to Forfar jail, where he was examined by the procurator-fiscal.

In the meantime nothing was heard of Jean Lindsay, notwithstanding that every inquiry was made after her. It was surmised that she had run off with Stewart—but as this originated in the deposition of John Haldane, a suspected person, no great stress was laid upon it. The coincidence, however, of Stewart's disappearance about the same time, gave credibility to the report; but no direct connection could be traced, independently of the evidence of John Haldane, between the elopement or abduction of Jean, and the death of Eaglesmount. A search was, however, made for Stewart, by the orders of the fiscal, but no trace could be got of him.

The grief of Widow Lindsay, for the loss of her beautiful favourite, was so great, that Katharine despaired of her being able to withstand it. The sufferings of Katherine herself; her sister ruined and lost—the man of her affections in jail for murder—her mother reduced to the verge of death by her many griefs—were sufficient to have bowed an ordinary person to the earth; but Katharine Lindsay was no ordinary person; and she stood up in the midst of her misfortunes

like a rock in the midst of a stormy sea—not that she was destitute of feeling, but that her solitary situation suggested the necessity, and her native strength of character afforded the means, of exerting herself in the cause of justice, self-preservation, and humanity. While she continued to watch by the bed of her mother, she was daily and hourly, by means of friends, investigating in every direction suggested by her quick apprehension, every source of evidence which could lead to throw light on the extraordinary affair that had produced so much grief to her family.

The evidence produced by the procurator-fiscal was reported to be adverse to John Haldane. The circumstance of the gun having been found lying by the body of the murdered man, was founded upon strongly; while the fact of the prisoner having been found with another gun in his hand, operated nothing in his favour, but rather against him, seeing that while he had thereby two chances against the life of his victim, he could make use of the device of carrying one to form an impression that some person behoved to have carried and fired the other. A person of the name of William Bell had given evidence to the effect that he had heard John Haldane threaten Eaglesmount with chastisement if he ever presumed to follow any longer Jean Lindsay, and his affection for that girl was capable of easy proof. Adam Hall's testimony was also of great importance; for he could say that his master sent him, on two or three occasions, to watch the motions of Jean Lindsay, and, in particular, to bring him daily intelligence of certain marks, which were formed in the ash-tree, at the side of Kelton wood; and it was in consequence of a signal exhibited by a mark on that tree, that Eaglesmount was out so early that morning when he met his death. Adam stated also the circumstance of the threat of Katharine Lindsay, when, in her address to the supposed lover of her sister, she mentioned her father's rifle as being a probable and suitable engine of a sister's revenge against the supposed seducer—a revenge which was naturally executed by the lover of her who was seduced, and the friend of the family who mourned her misfortune.

On the other hand, Katharine directed a writer in Forfar to various sources of evidence in favour of the prisoner. The carrying off of his gun by Stewart could be made out by two witnesses—a circumstance of the greatest importance—as well as the lending of John Lindsay's rifle to the prisoner when he had lost his own. Every attempt was made to prove that Stewart was a lover of Jean's; but the greatest difficulty was experienced on this point. Several people had seen Jean walking with a man in the gloaming about the neighbouring plantings at Kelton, but no one could speak to that man being Stewart. Katharine saw the importance of this fact, and was greatly disappointed at the want of success in getting it established.

Struggling with these difficulties, she continued the most unremitting attentions to her mother; but the loss of her favourite daughter had given the last shake to the numbered sands in the glass of her mortal existence. The last energies of life were exercised in low mutterings of "Jean, Jean, my bonny bairn;" and sometimes she whispered low and sorrowful regrets, that that beauty which had endeared her to her mother, should have been the cause of her ruin and her mother's death. Any attempts made by Katharine to console her, were uniformly answered by "Bring me my bairn—my bonny bairn. Without my Jean, what is this world and a' its wealth to me. Ae look o' that sweet face, though it were covered by the blush o' her repentant shame, would yet repay me for a' I hae suffered, an' am doomed to suffer, before my spirit bids adieu to that earth where she yet dwells." And the sighs of a broken heart—and who has heard these and can forget them?—came from the heaving breast of the dying and disconsolate mother. In a short time Widow Lindsay breathed her

last—the victim of an affection the gentlest, softest, and most tender of all the sympathies of the human heart—her parting words being still, “My bairn, my puir lost bairn.”

Katharine performed, with the assistance of a neighbour, the melancholy task of laying out her deceased parent. When she brought down over the fixed glassy orbs, the eyelids which were for ever to close up those mysterious organs, where the soul loves to display its tenderest and most evanescent attributes, and which she had so often watched, to catch the ever changing and ever expressive lights of a mother’s feelings, she cried, and the extraordinary circumstances of her situation were forgotten in the all-absorbing griefs of the orphan. The neighbour who had assisted her in her sorrowful duty, went out, and Katharine was left alone sitting by the bedside of her deceased parent.

“And this is the end of all the high hopes of Katharine Lindsay,” she exclaimed, through her tears. “My father, our natural protector, taken frae us even at the time when he was maist required; my bonny sister disgraced and ruined; and John Haldane—he whom my heart has followed, in secret hopes and pure wishes, frae the days o’ our childhood, when his path was my path, and his flower on the hills was my choice among a thousand, to the days o’ our mature growth, when, alas! the flower on the hill was changed to the envious trefoil, and my forsaken leaf has withered, and his hasna flourished, and a third, my Jeanie’s, has become yellow and disappeared—he too has gone; and, last, my puir mither, whase een I hae but this moment covered wi’ their last shade, ye hae also left me. But noo it would ill become ane wha has nane to console her, nane to counsel her, and nane to aid and protect her, to resign hersel to griefs which are gathering around her like evening shadows in Corryarbet, and break her heart wi’ the reflection o’ her ain selfish sorrow, when there are mony in this vale o’ tears wha are crying for a helping hand to free them frae that fate she would bring upon her ain head: Katherine Lindsay has ither things to do than tak awa her ain life, when maybe by that she can save the life o’ anither wha is o’ mair importance to the world than she can ever pretend to be.”

After Widow Lindsay’s funeral, Katharine was sitting one day in her apartment, meditating on sources of exculpatory evidence in favour of John Haldane. A rap was heard at the door; and, upon opening it, a gentleman made his appearance, who said he was the brother of the deceased Eaglesmount, and now her landlord.

“I have heard of thy condition,” began Roderick Affleck—for that was his name—“thy nobleness of spirit, and thy beauty, and have been so bold as to call to see my fair tenant, and read in her own features those qualities which the world has given thee credit for. I now find I have that villain Haldane entirely within my power; for, last night, I found, amongst my brother’s papers, a letter signed by him, and addressed to my brother, threatening to do him bodily injury, if he did not desist from paying court to thy fair sister, Jean: that letter I intend, unless thou shalt prove kind to me, to put into the hands of the procurator-fiscal; then the fate of Haldane will be finally settled, and justice done to my family. I have heard that it is thy wish that Haldane should be saved; that object is now within thy power. If I choose to withhold that letter, all the judges and juries of Scotland cannot touch a hair of his head; as little can it be in the power of those officials to screen him from the punishment of the law, if that letter is produced.”

“I dinna ken, sir,” answered Katharine, “in what way I hae John Haldane in my power; or how an orphan maiden—whase only estate, if she hae ony ava, lies in the puir thoughts o’ her fancy, which, by sorrows, has been sair mis-

used; and the wark o’ her fingers, whar, frae grief, hae ta’en their former power—can hae ony influence owre your resolves, in respect to the use ye may intend to mak o’ that letter.”

“Thy estate lies elsewhere than thou wottest of, my fair Katharine,” answered Roderick; “ay, even in those eyes, whose light seems ill resolved whether to blight or to right, and, if thou knowest the fair castle of Eaglesmount, and couldst say that thou wouldst stay there and console Roderick Affleck for the loss thy sister has caused him, by the death of a brother, then thou mightst know that power thou hast endeavoured so vainly to divine.”

“And were that power,” answered Katharine, while the fire flashed from her eye, “sae great as to enable Katharine Lindsay to decide the fate o’ kingdoms wi’ as meikle ease as she now does that o’ your unlawfu’ project, she would reject it, wi’ a’ the scorn that a proud spirit can cast frae it the pollution o’ dishonour.”

“Then John Haldane dies,” said Roderick, with emphasis.

“His death, and Katharine Lindsay’s dishonour,” she answered, “would be nae mair a choice to John Haldane than a feather and ten thousand gold guineas in the eye o’ a miser.”

Roderick Affleck bowed and withdrew.

Roderick Affleck was as good as his word. He dispatched the letter to the procurator-fiscal, and all parties conceived it to be a decided step in the progress of the prosecution for the crown. The exculpatory evidence proceeded more slowly, and had even some time a retrograde movement. One of the witnesses, who could have spoken to the important circumstances of Stewart having stolen the prisoner’s gun—a person of the name of John Hay—died, and the hearsay evidence he left behind him was rendered useless, by having been taken by a writer acting for the prisoner. Two or three of Stewart’s reivers—men who had been engaged in personal conflicts with John Haldane—bestirred themselves with an active and fiendlike animosity against him, leaving some ground for the suspicion that they were in the pay, and acting under the instructions of Stewart. They volunteered their evidence to the procurator-fiscal, declaring they would swear that, in the morning in question, Stewart was on the banks of the Islay spearing salmon—an occupation in which they were then also engaged along with him. They were also ready to swear that Stewart and Eaglesmount were good friends, and that the former was in France, unaccompanied by any person—having gone there in a coasting vessel, with a view to some commercial speculation in which he was then engaged, and would not return for a year.

All these circumstances were communicated to Katharine, and preyed heavily upon her mind. Her efforts to procure evidence sufficient to save Haldane seemed to be thwarted by some unfriendly spirit. The witness who had died was a young man, a servant of Haldane’s; and her own evidence, it was conceived, would be rejected, on the ground of having exercised herself in procuring evidence for the prisoner. The trial was now fixed to take place in a fortnight, and great fears were entertained that John Haldane would expiate a crime, which no person who knew him could for a moment suppose him capable of committing.

At an early hour one morning, the procurator-fiscal was visited by Katharine Lindsay.

“What wouldst thou with me, Katharine Lindsay?” asked the old gentleman, as she entered. “Art thou come to give me some more evidence regarding the murder of Eaglesmount?”

“I have come here, sir,” answered Katharine, “to say, what I hae aften said to you and ither, that John Haldane is nae mair guilty o’ the death o’ that unfortunate man, than is the maiden wha now stands afore ye.”

"Indeed, my pretty maiden there is some evidence that tells as much against thee as against him."

"An sae it should, sir!" replied she. "Adam Hall has said that he heard me threaten to use my father's rifle against the life o' Eaglesmount, if he persisted in endeavouring to ruin my sister. I was found on the spot, while yet the body o' Eaglesmount quivered wi' his departing life. I had John Haldane's rifle in my hands, when the men who had seized him discovered me standing by the body of the murdered man. John Haldane carried my father's rifle, and the twa men hae sworn, or will swear, that they heard twa shots—and ane o' thae must hae come frae each gun. I hae heard it stated that Dr Greeves o' Arbroath discovered only ae bullet in the body o' Eaglesmount, and whar could that hae come frae but the gun I had in my hand, or that which John Haldane had in his? If John Haldane should hae been in his bed, and may hae been presumed to be about unlawfu' wark at that early hour, whar should Katharine Lindsay hae been? If John Haldane hated the seducer o' Jean Lindsay, how meikle affection was due to him by her sister? And if his threat to take vengeance on him was committed to writing, was mine less safe in the ear o' Eaglesmount's forester, wha stood commissioned wi' his master's secrets, and executed his commands? Noo, sir, I call upon ye to say why John Haldane lies in that place o' confinement over the way, charged wi' the murder o' Eaglesmount, and about to be tried for life or death, and, maybe, to drie the vengeance o' the law, by being hanged in the High Street o' Edinburgh—or, what is waur, in the bonny holts o' Kelton—and Katharine Lindsay sits this day free and at liberty, inviting the conservators o' peace to apprehend her for the murder o' Eaglesmount?"

"That last question, my pretty dame," said the fiscal, "shall be quickly answered; for thou hast given me some lights which, thirty years ago, I would have seen better than to day. Stay there till I return." And the procurator-fiscal locked Katharine into the room.

In the course of half an hour, two officers, holding a warrant in their hands, signed by the sheriff-substitute of Angus, came in, and apprehended Katharine Lindsay, as charged with suspicion of being the murderer of Eaglesmount. She was that evening lodged in the same jail which contained the man for whom she was willing to die.

By this strange procedure, on the part of an illiterate female, an effect was produced which, in all likelihood, she did not see, but which, when brought under her notice, her quick apprehension could not fail to be ready to take advantage of, if for the safety of her lover. John Haldane had, immediately after his apprehension, taken the benefit of the act of Parliament 1701, c. 6, whereby prisoners unable to find bail are allowed to force on their trials. He had given notice to Roderick Affleck, that he wished his trial to be brought on without unnecessary delay. The forty days, during which the prisoner might be tried, were now upon the eve of expiring; and though the Lord Advocate might have wished that the trial of Katharine Lindsay might take place at the same time as John Haldane's, that was now out of his power.

The trial of John Haldane, for the murder of Hector Affleck of Eaglesmount, came on before the Lords of Justiciary on the 10th day of November. After the ordinary forms had been gone through, the council for the Crown went over the various facts that have been already detailed, as tending to prove the guilt of the prisoner. He stated his love for Jean Lindsay—his jealousy of Eaglesmount—his threats to do him injury—his being found at the scene of the murder immediately after it was committed, with a gun in his hand, and other circumstances to make out his case. The witnesses called were those who had been preconscious. The two men who seized Haldane

admitted, on a cross-interrogation, the fact of seeing Katharine Lindsay by the side of the body, with John Haldane's rifle in her hand. And Adam Hall also admitted, on a cross-interrogation, that he heard Katharine Lindsay threaten to use her father's rifle against the life of Eaglesmount, if he persisted in attempting to seduce her sister; and a great many other circumstances were elicited from these witnesses in favour of the prisoner.

John Haldane having procured letters of exculpation, cited, among others, Katharine Lindsay, as a witness for him. She appeared, and addressed the court and jury as follows:—

"It dosena become a maiden o' my estate to impugn the wisdom o' the law, or the grave and reverend dispensators thereof, wha noo sit before me on the trial o' an innocent man for a great crime; but does it no occur to ye as strange, as unaccountable, as suspicious, that though a' the circumstances attending this awfu' transaction were weel kenned frae the beginning, as weel thae affecting John Haldane, as thae wharein I mysel were concerned and though it has this day been proven, as I hear, that I threatened the life o' Eaglesmount, and that I stood by his bleeding body when the deed was discovered, wi' the instrument o' death in thae hands, nae officer o' the law ever said to Katharine Lindsay, come wi' me, in the king's name, and stand your account for this bloody crime? Na, it wasna till I mysel surrendered my body to the king's keeping, that ony breath o' suspicion darkened my reputation; and wharfor is this, my Lords? I dinna say that even ye, in your great wisdom, can answer that question, and I dinna blame ye for no saying what ye dinna ken; but, maybe, Roderick Affleck, wha sits here in the court this day, may tell ye how he and Ebenezer Whyte, the procurator-fiscal o' Forfar, sae contrived things that John Haldane's threatening letter to Eaglesmount shouldna see the light till it was past a' doubt that Katharine Lindsay wouldna consent to be dishonoured by his worthy brither; and even then, if Roderick Affleck could hae saved me frae the gallows by hanging John Haldane, he had some chance, though sma' I ween, o' some day succeeding in his shamefa project, and seeing Katharine Lindsay the victim o' his deceit, and the scorn o' a' honest people. Now, my Lords, whether am I or John Haldane the mair culpable, to a' appearances, o' this crime? Twa shots were, it is proved, fired when the murder was committed; but only ae bullet was found in the body o' Eaglesmount—and whar cam that frae? Is there ony man in this court that can say that the rifle in the hand o' John Haldane produced that bullet, and the rifle in my hands produced naething but a sound to disturb the clouds o' that still morning, and awaken the echoes in the haughs o' Kelton? Or is there ony here sae bauld as to say that Katharine Lindsay couldna hit her mark as weel as John Haldane? Verily, my Lords, though ye may think it strange, Katharine Lindsay—thanks to an honest though eccentric father, and a spirit in her ain bosom abune the fears o' her sex—can stop the ring-dove in the quickest whirl o' its gayest gambol, and mak it reel in the dance o' death. I, my Lords, Katharine Lindsay o' Kelton, am alane guilty o' the crime laid to the charge o' John Haldane."

This admission, which came upon the court by the greatest surprise, produced a strong sensation in the minds of the audience, as well as those of the jury. The case, even without the statement of Katharine, was extremely doubtful; but this confession turned every doubt in favour of the prisoner, in whose favour a verdict of "not guilty" was very speedily returned. John Haldane was relieved from his confinement, but not from sorrow, for the thought that Katharine Lindsay, who had three times saved his life, stood now in danger of her own, for the sake of one who had so long and so ungratefully denied her his affection,

JOHN TURNBULL.

stung him almost to madness. He despised the boon of his life upon a condition so cruel and revolting to his generous nature; and a thousand times wished himself again in the hands of justice, that he might deny the statement of the noble-hearted girl, and suffer for a crime of which he was entirely innocent. He endeavoured to account for his silence, when he heard the confession of Katharine; but he could not. The surprise and astonishment produced by it, took from him the powers of utterance; and it was not until the verdict was returned, that he saw all the terrible consequences of her imprudent but generous act.

Katharine Lindsay was conveyed back to prison, to wait her trial in turn. The day came, and the procedure followed on the occasion of the trial of John Haldane was again gone through. Katharine was told she might answer the question of "guilty" or "not guilty," without reference to her former admission; and her answer was conformable to the advice of her counsel, that she was not guilty of the crime libelled. The same witnesses were examined as on the former occasion. The court were strongly impressed with the idea that the crime lay between the two parties, and that justice was about to be sacrificed to the success of a woman's scheme to save her lover, and afterwards trust to the feeling of the court in favour of a young and beautiful female. The judges were getting ashamed of the whole business, and feelings of displeasure were strongly marked on their countenances. Appearances were against the unhappy Katharine, and the asseverations of John Haldane, who, in his turn, declared himself guilty of the crime, rather tended to make matters worse, in so far as it shewed an evidence of trick, and afforded a foundation for the suspicions of the court. The charge of the presiding judge was, therefore, unfavourable, and a deep silence reigned in the court as he was closing his speech. He had no sooner finished, than Jean Lindsay entered the witnesses' box, and demanded a hearing for the life of her sister. She deposed that, on that fatal morning she went out, as she had been often in the practice of doing, to meet Stewart of Ilay, to whom she was clandestinely married; that they were on this occasion, as they had been before, interrupted in their interview by the Laird of Eaglesmount, who had often endeavoured to get her to meet him, but in vain; that a quarrel ensued between Stewart and Eaglesmount, when the former shot the latter with a rifle he had taken from the house of John Haldane; that she and her outlawed husband, in pursuance of their intention when they met, went off together to a small house on the Island of Mull, where they had resided ever since; and that having been ill-treated by Stewart, who had gone to France, she hastened to be present at the trial of her sister, and save her life, by the statement she now made. She explained farther, that John Haldane often endeavoured to follow her when she went to meet Stewart; but his suspicions were always pointed to Eaglesmount, whom he often saw in the act of following her; and she took no pains to remove these, as she was ashamed of her affection for Stewart, though she had no power to resist it. She explained also, that Stewart's marks upon the tree were noticed by Eaglesmount, and his forester, Adam Hall; and John Haldane also knew them, from having once observed her in the attitude of examining them.

This evidence turned the scales; and Katharine Lindsay was acquitted. She afterwards married John Haldane, and bore to him a family. They lived to hear of Stewart's death beyond seas, and to see Jean's repentance exemplified in the pursuits of a religious devotion, wherein might have been observed those fruits so often produced from a good heart by the influence of an early grief, which, forcing the mind to serious contemplation, declares the tender mercies of Him whose instruments of repentance are often apparent misfortunes.

It has generally been supposed that the hero of Scottish history, Wallace, killed a greater number of men with his single arm than any other of the fierce warriors whom tortured Scotland produced in her labouring struggles for freedom. Bruce has also been cited as a great executioner; and many other leaders have been mentioned as carrying off the palm of individual death-dealing prowess. The truth, however, would seem to be, that the greatest destroyers of mankind, speaking of mere personal exertions, are more likely to be found in veterans who have never risen above the ranks, than in leaders, however daring; or, perhaps, with a still greater approximation to the truth, in small skirmishing chiefs, whose character of chieftainship requires to be sustained as well by individual example as by wisdom in direction.

Of this last class, the famous John Turnbull, commonly called, "Out-wyth-Swerd," who figured on the Borders in the reign of Robert III., may perhaps be cited as the most illustrious killer that ever figured in the shambles of war. He acquired his ominous name from the consequences which generally followed the act it expresses. His sword was of enormous length and weight, rivalling the famous weapon of King Robert. It would seem that the proprietor of it looked upon the instrument himself with a deep impression of its awful character; for it was not until he was strongly roused that he would consent to draw it; but once out, it was scarcely possible to get him to consign it again to the scabbard. His fury calmed with a slowness and difficulty proportioned to the tardiness of its excitement; and wo to the Englishman on the Borders who came within the reach of his sword while it lasted. These circumstances might have aided in the formation of his strange title, by which he was well known in England, as well as Scotland, where his memory was long cherished, and many stories told of his prowess.

On one occasion, Turnbull, with a number of his followers, revenged some insult offered him by Sir Thomas Gray, the governor of Wark Castle, by resorting thither when the governor was absent, razing the fortress to the ground, and putting the inhabitants to the sword. This exploit was one of those in which Turnbull delighted—that is, where there was a clean sweep, no stone left standing on another, and no life saved to enable one survivor to carry the melancholy tidings of the catastrophe to the friends of those who perished. When Sir Thomas Gray heard of this daring and cruel act, he resolved on following the dreaded chief, and executing, if possible, an adequate revenge. To a certain extent he succeeded. A large body of English soldiers surprised Turnbull's men in a haugh a little above Yetholm—and, in the absence of their chief, who had gone secretly to visit a neighbouring laird, put the greater number of them to the sword.

"It was God's providence to the knight," said those who heard of the defeat, "that Out-wyth-Swerd was that day dining with Thomas Kerr of Yetholm; for a single hour of his sword would have done the work of thirty years of destroying time, and left neither Gray nor his men a living tongue to tell their defeat!"

Gray's vengeance was not glutted. Emboldened by his success, he offered to any man on the English side of the Borders a purse of gold containing a hundred pieces for the head of Turnbull. The bribe was not, however, sufficient to overcome the fear with which Out-wyth-Swerd had filled the hearts of the people. No one living in those parts would undertake the task; and it was left for a powerful man, called Thomas Bardolph, a soldier in Sir Thomas Umfraville's regiment, lately arrived from the southern counties, to attempt an achievement, the danger of which ignorance and avarice concealed from his

view, and great pride of unrivalled strength made him depreciate. He had adopted an idea, that the Scottish people, of whom he was supremely ignorant, would, from their supposed fondness of money, be induced to do anything for lucre; and, making it a condition that one half of the reward should be advanced to him on the security of his commander, (who wished to befriend him,) to repay it in case of failure, a bargain was struck with Sir Thomas Gray, who paid down the moiety of the cash; and Bardolph, with the gold in his possession, crossed the Tweed to execute his design.

He had not proceeded far, when he came upon a seawart gaberlunzie, lying extended at full length upon the banks of the Tweed. He wore a long grey beard, which, with whiskers of the same colour, covered the greatest part of his face, leaving apparently only as much space as afforded room for a bold nose to put forth its striking promontory, and two keen eyes to glance from under his arched brow. His blue cloak was wrapped around him—his wallet lay beside him—and his long staff was stuck, by means of a pike in the end of it, into the green sod, and stood like a soldier's halbert beside the weary warrior. The idea at once struck Bardolph that a gaberlunzie was the most eligible person he could meet for giving him information as to the locality of Turnbull's resort, and the best means of getting within arms' length of him; all, as he thought, he required to insure him of his reward.

"Good old man," began the Englishman, "I presume, from your years and your habits, you are well acquainted with these parts, as well as the inhabitants of the Scottish Borders."

"I ken them baith maybe owre weel," replied the beggar.

"Whereby, I suppose, you mean," continued Bardolph, "that you have not got your reward from the inhabitants of these districts. Sometimes strangers are our best friends, and age borrows with most grace from youth. What is your name?"

"Carey Haggerstone," replied the beggar; "wha doesna ken Carey the piper o' Greta, wha, in his day, now nearly gane, has blawn mair spirit into the hearts o' the dancing damsels o' the Borders, than a' the stells o' peat-reek i' the country ever infused into the breasts o' Lowland toppers?"

"I doubt not you have been a merry fellow in your day," replied the Englishman, "and that day I hope is not yet done. I have heard it stated, as a Scottish saying, that empty bagpipes make an empty wallet. Why have you relinquished your calling?"

"A piper nae mair than a sailor, has ony chance o' earning a livelihood without wind," replied Carey. "I blew till I blew awa my lungs; an' it was time, I think, to blow awa my bagpipes when I was nae langer able to blaw them up. An ill-filled bag, like an ill-filled wame, maks a waefu' sound. But it's an ill wind that blaws naebody guid; the folk pity my short breath, and drap something in my wallet to keep it in."

"I've got a wallet, too, good man," said the Englishman, taking out his purse, "and would have no objection to transfer some of its contents into yours, provided I received at your hands some adequate service."

"An' what may that be?" said the gaberlunzie.

"Know you John Turnbull, commonly called Out-wyth-Swerd?" said Bardolph.

"Brawly do I ken that stouthrieving vagabond," answered the beggar. "See ye that mark owre my richt ee?"

"I do see a mark as of a wound there," answered the Englishman.

"Ask that if it kens the lang sword o' the hame-sucking chief o' the Turnbulls?" continued the beggar. "I piped 'the frog cam to the mill door,' to him an' his gang, as they cam frae the sacking o' Wark Castle; an' because I asked

him for piper's fees, he laid open my brow for baith pains an' pay."

"Then you are no friend of his?" said the Englishman.

"Freend o' your enemy!" cried the beggar, laughing. "We ken little o' these things on the Borders. Freend to friend an' fae to fae, is our watchword; but, alas! for age, I hae nae pith to prove, far less to gratify my hatred."

"But if you had the power," said the Englishman, "have you knowledge enough of the place of his retreat to enable you to come at him?"

"Does the auld wolf forget the lair o' the lamb he hasna power to kill?" cried the beggar. "He is even now skulking frae Sir Thomas Gray; an' weel ken I whar he lies. But what signifies knowledge whar age has taen awa the power o' using it."

"And if you knew that Sir Thomas Gray would reward you," said the Englishman, "would you give information to enable one to discover him?"

"Money an' revenge are powerfu when they work the gither," replied the beggar.

"How much would you take to lead me to the lair of Turnbull?" asked Bardolph.

"Naething, sir," answered the beggar, with spirit, "beyond a beggar's fees. I hate bribery, but winna reject an awmous. Follow me, an' see if revenge in an auld man has lost the scent o' his enemy."

The gaberlunzie seized, as he spoke, his long staff, and having thrown his wallet over his back, strode on with long steps before the Englishman, who followed close behind. They proceeded in this manner for about a furlong, when the beggar turned quickly into a thicket, and beckoned Bardolph to follow him, making, at same time, signs to walk softly and with as little noise as possible. The conductor now walked very slowly, and with great circumspection, standing at times to look around him, and to listen if he heard any sounds. They came at last to an open space in the thicket, in the form of an amphitheatre, covered with a fine sward, and surrounded with trees and bushes in such a manner as to present the appearance of great seclusion.

"Now, sir," said the beggar, throwing off his cloak, and rugging off, in an instant, with his left hand, his beard, while he clutched with his right an immense sword, which he had drawn from his cloak—"Behold John Turnbull, commonly called Out-wyth Swerd. He resigns himself entirely to your most unqualified service, and begs to know what are your commands."

"You shall soon know my errand," replied Bardolph, unsheathing his sword, as his courage revived. "I have two objects in view; first, to pay you the alms I promised you; and, secondly, to take home with me that head, whose lying tongue has deceived me to my advantage. There is a gold piece for you!"

"You will better keep the siller thegither, sir," replied Turnbull, smiling. "It's needless to mak twa bites o' a cherry, as they say in our country. I'll get it a' in guid time. As for my head, I can carry it mair easily on my shoulders than you can do in your hands; but an auld piper has little breath to spend on useless speech; for fechtin, as weel as piping, needs wind. Come on."

The battle did not last more than a few minutes. The fatal sword did its work in its accustomed time one stroke severed the Englishman's head from his body Turnbull quietly resumed his disguise, and put into his wallet the purse containing the half of the price of his head.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DIVINITY STUDENT.

"So fades, so perishes, grows dim, and dies,
All that the world is proud of."

WORDSWORTH.

ALTHOUGH the revelations of a divine philosophy have taught us no more to entertain the blind notions of the Epicureans of old, that everything is the result of chance—or to agree with the Stoics, that the revolutions of the planetary system decree the fates and regulate the actions of mankind—yet the vicissitudes of human life, and the uncertainties of earthly hope, continue, no less frequently, to be the theme of the poet, and the regret of the philosopher. The truth is deep; nor is it ever suffered to be so long uncalled forth from our memories, as to allow of its force being blunted. Striking and melancholy examples continually crowd upon us. Daily are we summoned to behold some noble aspiration blasted—to behold youth cut off in the bud—learning disappointed of its reward—worth suffering under the gripe of misfortune—and industry sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind. These are dread and warning lessons to us, yet affording the surest marks of proof, that this sublunary and distempered world cannot be the final abode of man; that the seeds sown here will grow to maturity in a more genial clime; and that the events which now baffle the scrutiny of our moral reason, will yet appear to us revealed in clear and unperplexed beauty.

The story I am now about to narrate, is simple in the extreme, yet affording scope for melancholy, and, it is to be hoped, not unprofitable meditation.

Robert Brown, a Scottish carrier, living in a remote district in Roxburghshire, contrived to bring up his family, consisting of five sons, by a course of unwearied industry and rigid economy, to an age at which the youngest had attained his sixteenth year—a time when it was thought by his friends that he might be able to take himself as a burthen from off his father's hands, and set about something towards his ultimate provision for life.

Consistently with their humble condition in the world, his brothers had all received the usual education of the Scottish peasantry—that is to say, they had been taught reading, writing, and the elements of arithmetic; and, at suitable ages, had been alternately called from school to assist in farm-work. They were fortunate in obtaining employment from the neighbouring landlords; and, though the servants of different masters, none of them were above two miles distant from their father's cottage. William, the youngest, had been destined from the cradle for something superior to the rest. They looked far forward through the vista of years to him as the pride of their old age, and the representative who was to carry down the respectability, credit, and good name of the family, to the succeeding generation. So far from the rest being chagrined at the partiality thus openly avowed, they contributed, "each in his degree," to the furtherance of the plan chalked out by their parents; judging, with honest pride, if William was destined to move in a sphere somewhat superior to their own, that a portion of the common approbation must necessarily be reflected on themselves, his relations. Thus all were united and amiable—no selfish and grovelling feelings

introduced themselves, to mar the cordiality of affection, or interfere with motives so upright and so honourable.

The object of this concentrated flood of generous love was certainly not an unworthy one. Having been born some years posterior to the other members of the family, he had never been a sharer in the youthful sports of his brothers, but was remembered by them as a favourite object on their Saturday evening meetings at their father's cottage. The frame of William was, by no means, so robust as that of the rest; and his dark glossy hair only set off more plainly the pale, and sometimes sallow hue of complexion. From both of these circumstances, his comparative youth, and his comparative delicacy of constitution, he ran a considerable chance of being, what is commonly termed, a spoiled child. He had, of course, contracted, from indulgence, a waywardness of disposition, which, however, by his innate modesty and good sense, was kept within very excusable limits, and soon wore entirely away, as the forwardness of boyhood began to subside into the more pensive thoughtfulness of maturer years.

After having exhausted all the means of instruction which an adjacent town supplied, he was obliged to have recourse to the grammar school of a neighbouring parish, about four miles distant from his home. For two years, neither summer's heat nor winter's snow were for a day allowed to frustrate his walking thither. He never returned till late in the afternoon; sometimes the evening star was the herald of his approach; and, during the brief days, towards the end or about the commencement of the year darkness had set in before his face glimmered by the bickering fire of his parental hearth. Habits of temperance had been familiar to him all his days. Some cheese and oaten cake, regularly deposited in his satchel, served him for dinner, during the interval of school hours, after mid-day—and these he ate, walking about or reclining on the turf; but the warm tea and toast always awaited his evening arrival, and were set before him with all a mother's mindfulness and punctuality.

He was diligent at his books; and, being endowed by nature with good parts, he made a very fair and promising progress. He had none of that intellectual cleverness, which makes advances by sudden fits and starts, and then relapses into apathy and idleness; but his steady industry, his attention, and his assiduity, gave omens favourable to his success, while his gentle and conciliatory manners gained him not only the love of his schoolfellows, but the esteem of his instructor.

It was now evident, that, from the pains and expense taken in regard to his education, he was destined for the pulpit—that climax of the honours and distinctions ever aimed at by a poor but respectable Scottish family. Years of rigid economy had been passed, almost without affording any hope as to the ultimate success and attainment of their laudable end.

His destination, almost unknown to himself, having been thus early fixed, it was resolved that he should be sent to Edinburgh, to attend the college there, professedly as a student of divinity. The expense, resulting from this resolution, bore hard upon their slender circumstances; but they were determined still farther to exert themselves, in-

dulging the fond hope, that, one day or other, they would reap the reward of their honourable endeavours in the prosperity of their son.

To the University he set off, amid the ill-concealed tears of some, and the open and hearty blessings of all—so much were they attached to one, who, till that day, had never been even more temporarily separated from them, without many a caution, perhaps little required, to guard against the evil contaminations of the capital—little thinking, in their simple minds, that the slender means allowed him were barely sufficient for necessary purposes, without indulging in any uncalled for luxury, and that gold is the only key that fits pleasure's casket.

He found himself seated in the Scottish metropolis, in a cheap but snug and comfortable lodging, and encompassed by other sights and sounds than those which he had been accustomed to. The change struck on his heart with a low deep feeling of despondency, which a little time, conjoined with the urbanity and kindness of all around him, was sufficient to dissipate. The immense mass of lofty and majestic buildings, exhibiting their roofs in widening circles around him, and stretching far away, like the broken billows of an ocean, created thoughts of tumult, discord, and perplexity, when contrasted with the serene beauty of the calm pastoral district which he had left; and, amid the nightly crowd of population which engirded him, a sense of his own individual insignificance fell, with a crushing weight, on his spirit. The deeply engrafted strength of virtue and religion, however, at length prevailed, restoring to his mind its usual buoyancy; and he began to see objects in the same degree of relative value, but with a widely enlarged scope of sensation. He set about his studies with vigour and alacrity; and, keeping in recollection the circumstances of his relatives, he determined not only to avoid all unnecessary expense, but to exercise the most rigid economy. Few hours were allowed to sleep, and almost no time allotted to exercise and recreation. The hopes his father entertained, he determined, should not be frustrated, nor the confidence they reposed in him be shewn erroneous, by any negligence on his part; while, by persevering with assiduity and ardour, he trusted, sooner than they expected, to relieve them of the burthen of his support—a burthen which, he knew, could not fail to press heavy on them all, however cheerfully supported.

In a course of the utmost economy, sobriety, and temperance, anxiously endeavouring to allow no opportunity of improvement to pass by unimproved, the winter session wore through, and left behind on his heart very few causes for self-disapprobation.

Towards the end of April, the pale student returned to the cottage of his father. Worn out by unwearied and unremitting studies, the vernal gales of the country came like a balsam to reanimate his flagging spirits; and the hopes that the object of so much exertion and care would be ultimately crowned with success, gained a strong hold on the mind it had threatened almost to forsake. In the crowd of the city he felt too deeply his own insignificance—an isolated stranger, poor and unknown of all, striving, with a feverish hope, at rewards most likely to be carried away by more powerful interests. But here he felt a grain of self-importance return to elevate his fallen thoughts. The budding hawthorn, the singing birds, and the blue sky, were all delightful; and he began to lose his own bosom fears in the general exultation of nature.

The first ebullience of parental joy at his return, together with the congratulations of his affectionate brethren, having gradually subsided, few days were indeed allowed for idle recreation; and the same industrious course was persevered in.

Of the cottage, which consisted of three apartments, one of which served for kitchen, another was entirely set

apart for William, that no interruptions might at any time disturb him. In the summer mornings he was up with the lark; but he closed not his book with her evening song. His studies were carried far into the silence of the night, and the belated traveller never failed to mark the taper gleaming from the window of his apartment.

Summer mellowed into autumn, which, with its fruitage flowers, and yellow corn-fields, also passed away; and again the hoar-frost lay whitely at morning on the wall of the little garden. Towards the end of October, our student, a second time, set out on his journey to Edinburgh.

The life of a college student is not one of incident or variety. Day after day calls him to the same routine of employment; and week is only known from week by the intervention of Sabbath repose. Suffice it, therefore, to say, that the second season passed away like the first, in frugal living and indefatigable exertion, and left our hero, at its close, the same uncorrupted, simple-hearted, and generous-minded youth, as when he first left the shadow of his father's door. His dress and his manners were very little altered. Amid the hum and the bustle of thousands, wealthy and toiling after wealth, he was an individual apart—a hermit standing on the rock, and listening to the roar of life's billowing ocean, but launching not his bark on its dim and dangerous waters.

His delicacy made him feel acutely, that the expenses which he had necessarily incurred, must weigh heavily on those upon whose open, but necessarily circumscribed bounty, he depended. It was, therefore, agreed on, at his own suggestion, to open a school for a season, in some one of the neighbouring villages. He hoped, by this means, to be enabled to raise a small fund for future exigencies, and to be indebted to his own industry for what necessity had hitherto obliged him to be dependent for on the bounty of others. Alas! this commendable design was but the protracting of a course of study already too severe for his tender and delicate constitution.

The scheme was, however, immediately acted on. A school in the village of Sauchieburn was opened, and, in a brief space, everything succeeded to the utmost of his expectations—for the school-room speedily began to fill; and, by a conscientious discharge of his duty to his pupils, the affection of their parents began to flow towards him. Although the quarterly payments were small, he contrived to lay aside by much the larger half. From the natural timidity of his disposition, conjoined with the fear of making acquaintances which might lead him into expenses, he lived almost alone, spending the leisure of his afternoons in walking with his book in his hand through the fields; his evenings passed over in solitary study.

Not long after his settlement, Mr Allan, a farmer of some consideration in the neighbourhood, requested him to devote an hour or two daily to the tuition of his boys. In every point of view, this was a favourable circumstance for him. His labours were handsomely remunerated; and an introduction secured for him into a well-informed and rather elegant circle.

The family in whose house he lodged were little removed above the order of peasantry, but remarkable not only for their cleanliness and for the comfort of their dwelling, but for that integrity in their small concerns, and devout feeling of religious truth, still so frequently found united to narrow circumstances in the nooks and byways of Scotland, and constituting, certainly, not the least valuable gem in the coronal of her honour. Here he was regarded with looks of love; and his minutest wants attended to, with that scrupulous zeal which can only be expected from parental tenderness. He was regarded not only as a member of the family, but looked up to as something that was above them—doing honour to their dwelling. Every possible care was taken to render his situation as agreeable as possible to him

and his health was inquired after, by the kind inmates, with the most anxious and affectionate solicitude.

But the dark work was begun within, and the canker, which was to destroy the rose of health, was already committing dreadful ravages. He uttered no complaint; and, if pain was felt, its pangs were unacknowledged. A languor of the eye, an unusual paleness of the face, and the bursting forth of large drops of perspiration on the least exertion, were the only indications of declining health. The school was attended to as usual—not an hour was sacrificed to his weakness; and day succeeded day, and week followed week, without relaxation and without amendment. This could not last. The interregnum between receding health and approaching disease is generally of short duration, and the vacant throne is either greedily seized on by the angel or the demon.

He was getting gradually worse—gradually weaker. He had tried all those little remedies commonly prescribed for coughs, without advantage, and in secret. What was next to be done, he hardly knew. The school could no longer be continued, as he was unable to leave his room. After so much reluctant delay, a medical practitioner was consulted.

On inquiry, it was found that, for some weeks, he had been expectorating blood—he had nocturnal perspirations, hectic flushes, and almost incessant cough. His appetite was gone, and his whole frame in disorder. Poor William said, that he hoped he should soon be better, and able to persevere with his school. A week passed over, and matters were rapidly getting worse; yet it was not without reiterated persuasions, that the pale scholar could be persuaded to return for a season to the home of his fathers.

We must not omit, that, during his confinement, every attention was paid to William by the family of the Allans, and such small luxuries as his state seemed to require were sent by them unsolicited. Mr Allan himself repeatedly called for him; and, one afternoon, as Miss Mary had walked as far as the village, she summoned up resolution to inquire at the door. William heard her voice, and requested her to come in. As he sat in a large stuffed chair, propped with pillows, his appearance evidently shocked her; and, when she wished to speak to him, her voice swelled in her throat. He extended his hand to her, and told her he would soon be better; but his long thin fingers thrilled her to the heart by their touch. She stood for a minute beside him; and, after again shaking hands with him, departed. Her sensations, during her solitary walk home, may be more easily imagined than described.

It was noted by the servants, that Miss Mary happened to be always the first to receive the communications of the messenger sent to the village of Sauchieburn. It was also remarked, that the tidings, whether favourable or otherwise, could be read in a countenance not yet hardened by artifice, so as to belie the feelings of the heart.

Home he returned at length. To paint the distress of the family, on that occasion, at such a reappearance of one whom they had loved so tenderly, for whom they had done, and were yet willing to do, so much, were a heartrending and melancholy task. As he entered the door, the mother rushed out to embrace her weak and emaciated son; and, throwing her arms around his neck, kissed his pale cheek with an agony of distress, while the tears, in spite of opposition, gushed in burning drops over her furrowed cheeks to the ground. The father grasped him by the hand, and supported him, with cheering words, into the apartment which of old he had inhabited. It had been but little used since he had last been its occupant; and the neat, clean, but plain furniture, remained almost as he had left it.

He was put to bed after the fatigue of travel, and every

heart in that house was sorrowful. The poor scholar could not fail to see the distress so visible on his return; and his heart sank as the clouds of fate lowered over him. His brothers, as they dropped in, one after another, from the fields, approached affectionately to the bedside, and, taking his long, thin fingers in their toil-hardened hands, lamented his case, but cheered him with many a word of comfort, which almost belied themselves, from the uncertain tone in which they were uttered. And no wonder, for the alteration in his appearance was dreadful; and it was evident, to the least observant glance, that the poor young man was far gone in a consumption.

For some weeks the change of air, and the sight of so many countenances, so anxiously interested in his welfare, seemed to work a favourable change; and the gloom on his spirits began gradually to subside. In the sunny forenoons, a chair was placed for him in the little garden behind the house. The spot commanded an extensive view of the country; and it amused him to look on the jolly reapers in the neighbouring field, and listen to their simple music, while gathering in the yellow harvest treasures. Around him were many tall ash-trees, well remembered in the thoughts of other years. The gooseberry bushes, each of which was familiar to his memory, had shed their fruits, and were beginning to shed their leaves; but, on the later currants, some depending red and white strings were yet visible. The summer flowers were disappearing; but the more hardy roots, the spearmint, the gillyflower, the thyme, and the southernwood, sent forth to the autumnal air "a faint decaying smell." The bee-hive in the corner of the hedgerow was still unremoved, and the buzz of its never idle inhabitants filled the whole air with a continual pleasant murmur. The birds were all singing amid the beauty of nature, and, ever and anon, the lark, springing up on twinkling wings, sent a fainter and yet fainter note from its receding elevation.

So many agreeable images, so much affectionate attention, soothed the wounds that no earthly medicine could heal. In a short time, debility rendered him completely bed-ridden; and the tyrant of the human race betokened his approach "by many a drear foreboding sign."

It was one evening, when all the brothers had dropped in, one after another, that symptoms of rapid dissolution shewed themselves. They sat down in silence around the hearth, and looked frequently, first at William and then at each other; while, at intervals, the fortitude of manhood could not forbear a half stifled sob. They saw that the curtain of death would soon be let down over eyes so beloved; and many a hurried glance of affection—and the agitated countenance—and the quivering hand—seemed to say, in silent eloquence, "Would to God I could die in my brother's stead!"

William was not insensible to the afflicting scene around him. He told them to bear up, and assured them that he suffered neither pain of body nor mind. "Heaven is wise in all its decrees," said the dying youth; "mourn not much for me; we shall, I trust, meet all again in Heaven. I only set out on my journey a little while before you. I feel that I have been much, too much of a burthen to you all"—

Here he was eagerly interrupted by all of them, who conjured him not to speak in that manner, and that it was almost unkind of him to do so.

"Well," continued William, "I feel your affection as I ought. The reward hath not perished, and shall not be taken away, though now God calls upon me to leave you."

He then requested his father to read to him the latter part of the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, which he did with a composed and steady voice, amid the silent tears of his children, and the frequent sobs of the almost heart-broken mother, who leant with her face on the bedclothes,

holding in hers the emaciated hand of her son. The soul of a mother can only comprehend the depth and the agony of her sufferings at that hour, when called on to part with her last born—the Benjamin of her small household.

In a short time, his exhaustion was so great, that his efforts to speak were unavailing, and he fell into a gentle slumber, from which he never awoke—breathing his soul out upon the silent midnight without a groan!

However much the stroke of death may be expected, it never arrives without a violent shock to the feelings of all around. Here the grief was deep, but it was not upbraiding; and every pang was tempered by the gentle consolations of Christianity.

The mournful news was communicated to the inhabitants of Sauchieburn; and, amid the regrets of many a grateful parent, bright tears fell from the eyes of childhood, at the thoughts of their kind instructor's death. For a time, with the buoyancy of feeling incident to their years, they had considered the few first days of play as something favourable and fortunate. Feeling the pleasurable effects, they forgot the melancholy cause. But now the "hope deferred" was taken away, and nothing but uncertainty and doubt were left in its place. They looked on the shut-up windows and closed door of the school-house with a mingled feeling of curiosity and regret. The more affectionate said to each other, "our master shall never hear us lessons any more; they are going to lay him in the church-yard; we shall never see him again:" while the more selfish minded busied themselves with conjectures about him who should come to them in his stead. The sorrows of childhood are of short duration; the heart is then like the softened wax, which takes all impressions—the one obliterates the other, and the last, whatever be its import, is still the deepest.

Not so evanescent was the melancholy at the house of the Allans. The two boys, who had been under his charge, spoke often of him as their kind master to Miss Mary, who seldom answered them but with a stifled accent, and an involuntary tear in her eye. That, almost unconsciously to herself, some impression had been made on her heart was evident. The feelings, perhaps, were reciprocal, for William had never mentioned her but in terms of deep respect, mingled with something of tenderness and admiration; but the wide gulf that separated them prevented him from having, even for a moment, indulged one dearer hope.

Certain it is, from whatever cause it might arise, that the health of Mary Allan declined rapidly, even to a state of the utmost delicacy; and the cheerful, lively girl, could hardly be recognised in the pale, emaciated, but still beautiful features, over which the ray of pleasure now seldom shot even a transient gleam. But time, the grand physician of all human troubles, by slow, but sure degrees, began the healing of the wound so afflictively felt by her, and by the whole cottage family. Though, after the first burst of sorrow was over, each turned to his wonted avocation, yet the mainspring of activity was felt to be broken; and the heart often refuses, for a long period, to mould itself for the reception of new feelings and altered objects. Life assumes a different aspect; and the thoughts are often tardy to accommodate themselves to change, and its inevitable concomitants.

The remaining brothers met in the cottage of their parents, as heretofore, on the Saturday evenings; and, for a long time, the blank was felt—a chair was unoccupied—a beloved face was absent; but resignation to the decrees of Providence at length triumphed over the yearnings of natural affection. The father, on whose temples the few remaining hairs were changed to white, read the portion of Scripture with accustomed gravity, from the "big ha' Bible;" and exhibited a lesson, to all around, of noble, steadfast, and unshrinking piety.

The books, the papers, and everything that had belonged to William, were preserved by his relations with an affectionate regard, amounting almost to veneration; and, in a short time, a plain tombstone was erected at the head of the turf under which his ashes lay, inscribed simply with his name and age.

As the church was at more than two miles' distance from the cottage, the family usually spent the intervals between the forenoon and afternoon services, in loitering about the burial-ground. Around the grave of William, often were the whole remaining family observed, seated in the sunshine, upon the daisied turf, with their open Bibles in their hands.

The health of Miss Allan gradually recovered its former tone; but the shock she had sustained threw a shadow of change over her whole character. A degree of thoughtfulness and pensive grace hung around her looks and motions, softening down sorrow to resignation, and gaiety to cheerfulness. She grew more passionately fond of the beauties of external nature, and enjoyed a serene pleasure in solitary walks. Sometimes, in the light of the setting sun, when an azure shadow hung over the hills, when the clouds were tipped with refulgent glory, and the note of the blackbird, "most musical, most melancholy," burst on the ear from the neighbouring coppice, the eye of the passenger has, unawares, intruded on the privacy of her grief, as she stood silently gazing on the grave of him who had gone up before her into heaven.

THE UNGRATEFUL FAMILY.

IN the autumn of the year 18—, as Mr Forbes, a Scotch gentleman of highly respectable family and connections, was returning to his inn in the Highlands, whither he had gone to enjoy two or three days trout fishing, he met a carriage in which were an English gentleman, and two young ladies, his daughters. The latter had just left the inn at which Mr Forbes put up, in consequence of their being unable to procure beds—all accommodation of this kind having been forestalled by earlier comers. Under these circumstances, the gentleman alluded to had resolved, although it was then getting dark, on proceeding to the next stage, which was ten miles distant; and thither they were proceeding when met by Mr Forbes. The latter, again, when this rencontre took place, was returning from the fishing which he had on that day been compelled to give up sooner than usual, on account of a sudden swelling of the river in which he had been exercising his piscatorial skill, and which, in less than an hour, rose from eight to ten feet above its usual level. This was no uncommon occurrence in the case of the river alluded to—and it was one that created no surprise whatever in those who lived in the neighbourhood, as it was amply accounted for by the abrupt descent of mountain torrents; but it was frequently the cause of most disastrous accidents to those unacquainted with the phenomenon; and, but for the activity and courage of Mr Forbes, one of these fatal catastrophes would have taken place on the very occasion of which we are now speaking.

The road which the carriage was taking was intersected by the river alluded to, about four miles farther on than where it was met by Mr Forbes, and, at that particular point, was crossed by a low bridge of one single arch; but when swollen, as it was at this moment, no part of the bridge remained visible, except a portion of its highest parapets—the river, as it swept down, filling the valley, and obliterating all trace of the road at either end of the bridge, to the distance of several hundred yards. Yet, guided by the hedgerows which skirted the way, and whose tops generally projected above the stream, and by the visible portions of the parapets, those who were acquainted with the road

frequently passed on horseback with perfect safety, even while the river was flooded to its utmost height. On the occasion, however, of which we are speaking, the bridge itself had given way, almost at the very first outset of the flood, and Mr Forbes had been a witness of the occurrence; but, as the river was still rising rapidly, none but those who had seen its destruction could tell that it was no longer in existence; and what greatly increased the deception to which this led in the case of those who did not know what had happened, portions of the parapet of the bridge were still visible as before, for only about the one half of it had been swept away. Thus, any one trusting to these guides, and expecting to find a safe passage between them, would be inevitably plunged into the chasm left by the ruined bridge, and swept away by the rushing stream.

At the time Mr Forbes met the carriage with the English gentleman and his daughters, the possibility of such an accident as this befalling them did not occur to him, although it certainly was, to all appearance, inevitable. Mr Forbes, therefore, passed on, without making any remark, and the carriage drove on its way. The latter would be, at this time, about four miles from the fatal ford; and, to increase the evil chances that were against the travellers, it was now getting dark. Mr Forbes, however, had not proceeded above half a mile, when he was struck, all at once, with an apprehension of what might happen. He guessed that the driver of the chaise, who he recognised to belong to the house at which he himself stopped, would attempt the passage, and this with the more readiness and confidence that he was, as Mr Forbes presumed, perfectly familiar with its localities, and had, in all probability, often performed such a feat before. Upbraiding himself, therefore, with his stupidity, in not thinking of all this in time, to have warned the travellers of their danger, and filled with horror at the idea of the catastrophe, which, he thought, was now all but inevitable, Mr Forbes instantly turned, and made after the chaise, as fast as he could run, in the hope that he might yet overtake it, and prevent the dreadful accident which threatened its unfortunate inmates. The speed of the chaise, however, and the distance which it had gained upon him, before he commenced the pursuit, seemed likely to render all his efforts unavailing. For two miles, he continued the chase with unabated vigour; but a little farther, and he found his strength failing him, and yet he could neither see nor hear anything of the carriage, although he frequently stopped and listened, with the most intense anxiety, for the sound of its wheels or the crack of the driver's whip. Exhausted and breathless as he now was, however, Mr Forbes determined on making another desperate effort to avert the impending calamity; and, in this spirit, he resumed the pursuit with rather increased than abated speed. Still no sound of the seemingly-devoted vehicle would fall on his ear to cheer him as he struggled and panted onward. Another mile was passed, and still no trace of the carriage presented itself. Mr Forbes now began to think that all his exertions were in vain; and his heart sunk within him, as his imagination pictured the appalling calamity which, he feared, had already taken place. On, however, he still despairingly pressed; and, at length, the huge broad sheet of water, the swollen and turgid river, lay gleaming before him in the starlight, moving quietly but fearfully along—the majestic, yet awful silence of its march being only interrupted by a faint gushing noise, at different points, proceeding from the resistance presented to the stream by the trunks of trees or other such impediments. Still Mr Forbes could discover nothing of the object of his pursuit; and he, therefore, now no longer hoped that his services could be of any avail. Under these horrifying impressions, rendered still more intolerable by a consciousness that he might have prevented the accident, had he given the travellers timely notice of their danger, Mr Forbes now ceased from further

exertion, and walked slowly over the short space that intervened between him and the water's edge. On reaching the latter, he strained his sight over the gleaming surface of the river in the line of the road and ruined bridge; but he did this more from a desperate and indefinable curiosity, than from any hope of discovering the object of his solicitude.

While earnestly engaged in this scrutiny, however, Mr Forbes thought he perceived a large dark object, between the lines formed by the hedges on each side of the inundated road. Heavens! could it be the chaise? He looked again, till his eyeballs were like to start from their sockets, in his attempt to penetrate the thick darkness that hung between. Again he looked, and again and again, and still that object was discernible; but he could not perceive that it moved. To ascertain this point, Mr Forbes knelt down, and brought it between him and one of the stars, that shone brightly above. The expedient was successful. It shewed him a motion which he could not before discern. The chaise! the chaise it must be, no doubt of it; or if there was any doubt, that was quickly dispelled by the crack of the driver's whip, and his loud tchick, tchick, at once of encouragement and caution to his horses, as they slowly and fearfully picked their way through the heavy stream.

On becoming assured that it was the carriage he saw, Mr Forbes instantly raised his voice to its utmost pitch, shouting out to the driver to stop for God's sake, as the bridge was down, and that they would be all lost if they went on. The chaise, however, still held on its perilous way, the driver either not hearing or not heeding the warning thus given him; and in less than five minutes more, all warning would be vain, as the vehicle was now within twenty yards of the chasm left by the ruined bridge. Perceiving that his cries were unattended to, and aware that there was not a moment to lose in arresting the further progress of the carriage, Mr Forbes dashed into the water, and, by the most desperate efforts, and at the imminent hazard of his own life, succeeded in reaching the vehicle, just as the horses' heads approached the site of the broken bridge. Previously, however, to his coming up to the carriage, Mr Forbes' shouts—for he had continued calling out, from time to time, as he struggled through the water after the chaise—had attracted the notice of its inmates, whose heads were now thrust through the windows on either side, to ascertain what was the cause of the alarm; and on seeing him approach, the father of the ladies, who were by this time dreadfully agitated, inquired of him what was the nature of the danger he would warn them of. Of this Mr Forbes, after ordering the driver to stop the carriage instantly, informed him, as distinctly as the breathless state he was in would admit of.

By Mr Forbes' directions, the horses were now unyoked—as it was impossible to turn the carriage, in the circumstances in which it was placed—when, mounting on one of them, he took one of the young ladies behind him, and conveyed her safely to dry land. Leaving her there, he returned to the chaise, and, in a similar manner, brought the other on shore—the driver and the ladies' father following on the remaining horse; and thus were the whole party saved from what had appeared to be inevitable destruction.

On reaching the inn at which Mr Forbes put up, and to which the party now, as a matter of course, returned, the same reason which had induced them to leave it at first still remained in force. There were no spare beds for them; but this difficulty, at least so far as regarded the ladies, was soon got over. Mr Forbes offered, nay, insisted, on resigning his bed to the fair travellers; and, after many polite expressions, on their part, of regret and sorrow, and thankfulness, and so forth, the offer was accepted. The ladies soon after retired to bed, while their father and Mr Forbes

made the best arrangements they could for passing the night on armed chairs by the fire. On the following morning, Mr Forbes breakfasted with the ladies and their father; and, at the conclusion of the repast, the latter formally, nay, in something like a set speech, thanked Mr Forbes for the important service he had rendered him and his family, and wound up his oration by presenting the latter with his card, and requesting him to call upon him in London, where he resided, the first time he should visit that city. The ladies again expressed their gratitude by saying—

“La, how vastly we are obliged to you, sir. It would have been shocking to have been drowned in such a dark night.”

In about half an hour after this, the travellers and Mr Forbes parted. The former resumed their journey, though now by a different route from what they originally intended; and the latter went up to his bedroom to trim some flies for another day's sport on some of the numerous fishing waters in the neighbourhood of the place of his sojournment.

Neither at this time, nor for a long while after, had Mr Forbes any prospect or intention of visiting London; but, at the expiry of about a year and a half from this period, some particular business did call him to the English metropolis; and, when there, he bethought him of calling, according to invitation, on the family to which he had rendered the important service just narrated. One forenoon, he accordingly sallied forth to put this resolve in execution, having previously provided himself with their address card, which he had brought from home with him, with the intention of availing himself of the invitation it implied, and entertaining no doubt of meeting with a kind and friendly reception. In less than a quarter of an hour, Mr Forbes found himself at the door he wanted. He knocked. A servant in livery answered the summons. Mr Forbes inquired if his master was at home. “Yes, sir,” was the reply. “And the young ladies?” Another affirmative: all were at home. Very fortunate this, thought Mr Forbes; and he enjoyed, in anticipation, the hearty welcome he should receive, and the many kind and flattering things which would be said to him by the grateful family. Softened into an excessive urbanity of manner by these reflections, Mr Forbes now informed the servant, in some of his blindest cones, that he desired to see his master and the young ladies. The servant immediately bowed him into a withdrawing-room, and requested his card. This Mr Forbes gave him, and he withdrew with it. In a few minutes, however, he returned, and said that neither his master nor the young ladies recognised in the name sent them that of any friend or acquaintance; but in case there might be any mistake as to this, the gentleman *might* walk up stairs if he thought fit. Mr Forbes thought this rather odd to begin with. He did not think it required any great stretch of memory, on the parts of either the gentleman or his daughters, to recollect him, considering all the circumstances attending their first acquaintance. Still, as they themselves said, there *might* be some mistake, and that, on his part, it might possibly be a totally different family—or, supposing it to be the same, they *might* have forgotten—and, under this impression, Mr Forbes resolved to avail himself of the privilege offered him, and to “walk up stairs.” Having signified this resolution to the servant, the latter immediately led the way, and ushered him into the apartment where were the ladies and their father. They were all engaged in reading when he entered, each having a volume in their hands; and, when he made his appearance, they all simultaneously withdrew their eyes from their books, but without moving from their seats, and fixed them, with a broad stare, upon their visitor, and without yet betraying the slightest symptom of recognition. Mr Forbes, who was a good deal puzzled and embarrassed by this

reception, after making his best bow, and endeavouring to throw a gracious smile into his countenance, which, however, was a decided failure, remarked, that he had taken the liberty of calling upon them, agreeably to their own invitation, and that, though they did not recognise his name, he hoped they would have no difficulty in recognising himself, now that he stood before them. Yes, indeed, they had thought. They could not really recollect that ever they had the honour of seeing him. Whatever difficulty, however, they had in recognising him, Mr Forbes had none whatever in recognising them. They were the identical persons whose lives he had saved a year and a half before.

“Then, although you do not recollect me,” replied Mr Forbes, “you will probably recollect of a certain accident that befell you in the Highlands, in the autumn of the year 18—.”

“Oh, la, yes,” drawled out the elder of the two ladies “I do recollect something of that shocking affair. Don't you, Sophia?” she said, now addressing her sister, who murmured an affirmative. “It was in a water, wasn't it?” continued the first speaker.

“Yes, madam,” replied Mr Forbes, rather sneeringly, “*it was in a water.*”

“And you are the person, I dare say,” she went on, “who came into the water after us and took us out. How droll you looked, now I remember; but it certainly was vastly kind of you, nevertheless. Papa,” continued this paragon of gratitude, and now addressing her parent, who, regardless of the presence of the stranger, and of his claim upon his civility, was again busily engaged in reading, “this is the gentleman who saved us from being drowned in the Highlands.”

“Oh, indeed,” said papa, raising his eyes for a moment from the book he was perusing, and nodding to Mr Forbes, “glad to see you, sir;” and instantly resumed his reading, seemingly resolved to take no further notice of or interest in what was going on.

This was too much for Forbes. He could stand these rebuffs no longer, and he now determined on bringing his visit instantly to a close. Without making any further remark, therefore, he abruptly wished the ladies and their father a “good morning”—a salutation which was returned with equal briefness and coldness by them to whom it was addressed—and left the house with feelings which, as we suppose every one can conceive them, we think it unnecessary to describe.

Mr Forbes did not determine, on this occasion, never to assist any persons again who should be similarly situated with this ungrateful family—that would be exceedingly unchristianlike—but he did determine never to entertain, in future, such exaggerated notions of the measure of gratitude which such services inspire.

The circumstance we have just related, made a deep and disagreeable impression on Mr Forbes at the time it occurred, but, like most other merely sublunary events, this impression wore off in the course of time; and, although he never entirely forgot it, he, in the course of two or three years, recollected it only when recalled to his memory by association; and even then he recollected it, divested of all the feelings with which the retrospect was attended, when its occurrence was recent. Four years after his visit to London, on the occasion spoken of, Mr Forbes succeeded, by the death of a near relation, to a very valuable property; and amongst the first uses he determined on making of this addition to his fortune, was to indulge himself in the execution of a scheme which he had long meditated, but which he had not, till then, thought it prudent to realize. This scheme—not by any means either an uncommon or extraordinary one—was to visit the Continent, particularly Italy. Having the means of gratifying himself in this fancy now at command and abundance of leisure on his hands to permit of its

full enjoyment, Mr Forbes set out on his travels, and soon found himself at Geneva, from which he intended crossing the Alps by the great pass of the Simplon, where, as is well known, everything that is terrible and sublime in Alpine scenery is assembled:—the roaring resistless avalanche that comes tumbling down from the mountains, overwhelming everything, even whole villages, in its destructive course, and filling the wide, deep, and desolate valley, with the thunder of its voice; huge abrupt precipices, foaming cataracts, rushing on their way, far down in the depths of yawning chasms, spanned only by narrow inadequate bridges, without ledges or parapets; dangerous passes high up amongst the rocks, and narrow paths or carriage ways, winding along the edge of dizzy heights, from which one false step would pitch the incautious traveller headlong down into the horrible abyss beneath. Through these tremendous, but grand and impressive scenes, Mr Forbes, accompanied by a guide, journeyed on foot, for he preferred this mode of travelling through the Simplon, to that by the diligence, that he might at more leisure, and more fully enjoy the magnificent scenery of that celebrated pass.

After wandering through many scenes of awful beauty, of fearful grandeur, one still more terrible, and more wildly sublime than the rest, burst all at once on Mr Forbes' astonished view. The road, which had for some miles before wound along the face of the mountains, but near the bottom of the valley which they overlooked, suddenly brought the traveller to a point, from which he saw another and a lower valley, or rather enormous chasm of several thousand feet in depth, yawning far beneath him, and, at the bottom, a foaming torrent, which, although it was fully ten yards in breadth, appeared, from the great depth at which it lay, no thicker than a thread. At the point alluded to, the road diverged in two different directions. One branch, the broadest, wound half way down the chasm, where it crossed, by a substantial bridge of stone, though of only one arch, the remaining depth of the abyss; the other, which was the narrower, struck off at a much greater height, and instead of a bridge, the chasm was here passed by two or three rude logs stretched across from two insulated and elevated points of rock on either side. The first of these roads was the carriage way, the second was for pedestrians, to whom it presented the shortest route to the next stage, by fully a mile and a half; a temptation which, together with that which the nobler views it commanded offered, seldom failed to induce the latter to prefer it with all its dangers—and these were neither few nor trifling—to the former. On reaching the point at which these roads commence, Mr Forbes' guide explained to him the advantages and disadvantages of both the ways, and left it to himself to determine which of them he should adopt. Deciding, as the majority of his predecessors had done in similar circumstances, Mr Forbes at once chose the higher way, and proceeded accordingly on his journey. On reaching the bridge—if the three or four logs that crossed the roaring torrent beneath can be so called—Mr Forbes, before attempting the passage, seated himself on the point of rock on which the logs rested, on the side he was on, and began to survey, at leisure, the wild and fearful but magnificent scene which lay around and beneath him, and of which the position he occupied formed almost the precise centre. While thus employed, Mr Forbes was horrorstruck by suddenly perceiving a carriage coming at full speed in the direction in which he himself was, and which, he perceived, by pursuing this course, must, to all appearance, be hurled headlong into the chasm at his feet; there being, as already mentioned, no other bridge across it than that formed by the logs. Some dreadful mistake here, thought Mr Forbes to himself, as he sprung to his feet in the first impulse of terror and alarm.

‘They have taken the wrong road, they’ll be all lost,’

shouted out the guide. And he rushed along the logs, to gain the opposite side of the chasm, in order to avoid being involved in the approaching catastrophe—the road being too narrow, and its sides too precipitous, to admit of any other way of escaping but that which he had taken.

In the meantime, on came the carriage with increasing velocity, and, as it neared, Mr Forbes perceived that it had no driver. He had been thrown, and this at once accounted for the mistake which had taken place in its route. Mr Forbes now saw, too, and saw with increased horror, some ladies in the ill-fated vehicle, in the most dreadful state of agitation and terror, thrusting their heads out of the windows, and screaming wildly and madly for assistance. For two or three seconds, no mode of arresting the progress of the furious animals presented itself to Mr Forbes. To attempt to have done so by standing in their way, or by seizing them when they approached, would, he felt convinced, only insure his own destruction, without in the least serving those whom he would assist in their dreadful jeopardy. There was, however, no time for deliberation. Another minute, and the impending catastrophe would have been accomplished; but ere this minute had expired, Mr Forbes' presence of mind and activity had suggested, and effectually employed, a means for their preservation. By the side of the way, and only a few yards distant from where he stood, there lay a large and branchy pine or fir tree, which had recently been torn by the winds from its hold, on the face of the lofty steep which rose immediately above the road, and had tumbled down to the spot where it now lay. Seizing the fallen tree by one of its strongest branches, and exerting a degree of strength which he, perhaps, could not have commanded on a less exciting occasion Mr Forbes succeeded in wheeling it round, until it lay directly athwart the road so as to obstruct the further progress of the carriage. Having done this, he also crossed the chasm, and, ascending to the pinnacle of the rock on the opposite side, there awaited, with the most intense interest, the result of his expedient. For this he had not long to tarry; for not only did that result, but all that we have related in connection with it, occur in less than a third of the time which we have taken to relate it; and great was his joy, when he saw that it was successful. On coming in contact with the prostrate tree, the horses stumbled and fell, and so entangled both themselves and the pole of the carriage in its branches, that, after some desperate, but unavailing efforts to extricate themselves, they lay quietly, exhausted and panting where they fell.

In the next instant, the carriage door opened, and its inmates, two ladies and a gentleman, stood in safety on the road. They looked towards their deliverer; and, notwithstanding the state of alarm and distraction they were in, the blush of shame and embarrassment glowed on their cheeks. Mr Forbes gazed on them in his turn. Could it possibly be? Most extraordinary. He looked again. Yes, they were the identical persons whom he had saved from being drowned six years before—the same whom he had called upon in London, and by whom he had been so ungraciously and ungratefully received. On making this discovery, Mr Forbes being now assured of their safety, and further relieved from all anxiety on their account, by seeing their dismounted driver, and a crowd of peasants hastening to their assistance, waved his hand towards them from the pinnacle of the rock on which he stood on the opposite side of the chasm, as a token of recognition, followed this up by a haughty bow and instantly disappeared down the steep descent which the pathway took, after leaving the bridge, and pursued his journey; and of the ungrateful family he had thus twice saved from a violent and premature death, he saw and heard no more. What *their* feelings were on this occasion, cannot, perhaps, be very accurately guessed; but it is not to be supposed, we should think, that they were of the most pleasant description.

THE SUSPICIOUS DRAFT.

ONE day, in the summer of the year 1752, a stranger of very remarkable appearance entered a certain banking office in the city of Glasgow. He was a man of immense stature, of fierce aspect, and wore the full dress of a Highlander, of which country his accent discovered him to be a native.

In the manner in which the stranger made his *entré* into the banking-office, there was a curious mixture of boldness and timidity. In the first place, he opened the door slowly and cautiously, almost as it were by stealth. This done, he thrust in his head to reconnoitre before advancing a step further; when, seeing only one person in the office, he assumed the haughty air which seemed natural to him, stalked into the apartment, banged the door after him with some violence, and then advanced with a firm step towards a small desk—for banking office establishments were then altogether on a small scale—at which the banker himself, an elderly gentleman, was seated.

The latter, from the moment the stranger had first thrust his head in at the door, had kept his eye fixed on him with a look of inquiry, which said, as plainly as if it had been spoken, "Who, in the name of all that's suspicious, art thou, friend?" The stranger instantly perceived that he was looked upon with more than ordinary interest, and he did not seem to relish the distinction.

On approaching the banker, who was still gazing upon him with a look of intense inquisitiveness and curiosity, the stranger stood still; and to the inquiry of the former regarding his business, made no other reply than by beginning to grope under his plaid, as if in search of something concealed in its voluminous folds, from which he at length drew a dirty scrap of paper. At this he glanced for an instant himself, then threw it haughtily on the desk before the banker. The latter lifted the singular looking document, adjusted his spectacles, and proceeded to give it a deliberate perusal. This done, he again laid it down, raised his glasses high on his forehead, with the air of one who is about to commence a serious and important investigation into singularly suspicious circumstances; and, addressing the stranger, said—

"Pray, friend, where got you this order?"

"Why, what does it signify how or where I got it?" replied the former, gruffly. "It is all right, I suppose, and I want the money for it."

"Right, oh! ay, right," said the banker, again lifting the paper, and looking at the signature for at least the sixth time—"perhaps it is, but the whole matter is odd. This gentleman," he added, pointing to the subscriber's name, "left Glasgow yesterday, to my certain knowledge, for the Highlands; and, previously to his departure, we adjusted all matters between us, and of this order he said nothing. In short, sir," he went on, "under all the circumstances of the case, I decline paying you this money." And the old gentleman pressed his lips together with an air of fixed resolution. When he had done—

"So, so," replied the bearer of the rejected draft, "you don't like the order. It's suspicious, you think." Here he turned suddenly round about, and threw a rapid glance around the apartment, as if to be assured that there was no one present but themselves. Then, again confronting the banker, "You don't like the order," he repeated, and, in the same instant, he plunged his hand beneath his plaid. "Why, then, here's another, a genuine one. What say you to *that* draft, Mr Banker?" And he planted the muzzle of a pistol on the edge of the little desk at which the person whom he addressed was seated. "What; don't you like this either?" he said jocosely, as if he enjoyed the terror and alarm which was now strongly depicted on the countenance of the banker. "But, come," he added more

sternly, "like it or not, down with the money; I've no time to loose. Down with the money, or—" and he completed the sentence by a significant motion of the imposing weapon which he held in his hand.

"What, sir! what, sir!" exclaimed the banker, leaping from his seat in the most dreadful consternation and alarm, his lips pale and quivering with fright, "do you mean to rob me?"

"Rob you," replied the terrible stranger, coolly; "rob you—no, no; by no means. I only want you to give me my own."

"I will call out for assistance, sir; I will get you apprehended—I will get you hanged!" exclaimed the banker, still dreadfully discomposed.

"You had better not," replied the stranger, "else you may rue it." And he made another significant motion with his pistol.

Perceiving now that it was both idle and dangerous to tamper longer with his extraordinary visiter, the banker opened a huge iron door in the wall of the apartment, close by where he had been sitting, and proceeded to count out the amount of the draft which he was thus forcibly compelled to honour.

"Now," said the stranger, on putting the last handful of the coin which had been told down to him into a large leathern purse with which he was provided, "that this little matter is settled between us, I will tell you something that may be worth your knowing. If you attempt to follow me one single step, or if you make the slightest effort to have me pursued, you may rest assured of having your house, one of these nights, burnt about your ears. If I escape any such attempt as that I speak of, this I would do with my own hand. If I am taken, there are certain friends of mine who will do it for me, and, perhaps, blow your brains out to the bargain."

Having said this, the stranger, after bidding the banker good morning, stalked deliberately out of the office, leaving the latter to his own reflections on what had just taken place.

Fully confiding, as he had good reason to do, in the threat which had been held out to him, he did not attempt to follow his tremendous visiter; but stood gazing in rueful silence, on his retiring figure as he left the office. There was another reason, however, for the banker's forbearance on this occasion. The draft which he had paid, he felt assured, was genuine; he only doubted the circumstances in which it had appeared, and was, therefore, secure from pecuniary loss—a circumstance which had due weight with him, and which effectually reconciled him to the escape of his customer.

And now, good reader, you will be somewhat curious to know, we presume, who this strange person was. This curiosity we can easily gratify. He was a celebrated Highland freebooter of the name of John Dhu Cameron, or Sergeant Mor, as he was called in his native country, from his large stature. The order, whose odd process of being cashed we have above described, was extorted from a gentleman whom the sergeant met with in the Highlands; and who was detained a prisoner by his gang, but treated with much hospitality, until John Dhu's return with the money, when he was liberated and escorted to a place of safety. The proceeding of the sergeant, in the case just related, was a bold one; for he was well known and ran great risk of being taken and hanged. But fortune favours the brave; and John, as we have seen, succeeded in bringing the dangerous transaction to a happy conclusion.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND

STRUGGLES OF WALTER ARNOTT.

WALTER ARNOTT rented a small patch of sterile ground on the borders of the Lammermoors—a portion of the few acres which unwearied industry, aided by the strictest economy, struggled to win from the wilderness of moor and marsh that still extends, little encroached upon even by modern improvements. The woods that served to divide, and, in some degree, to adorn the square formal parks around the unostentatious mansion of the lairds of Wedderlie, were of importance in that cold and inclement situation; and it was under their shelter that the cottage farmhouse and scanty acres of Walter Arnott were situated. His had been a life of the most constant toil, and of inadequate remuneration. The return from his fields was at all times small, and the risks of a crop, in such a situation, are greatly above the average—so that his utmost exertions could do little more, even in the days of his youthful prime, than keep a dry roof over their heads, and a moderate share of comfort under it. At the period when we would introduce him to our readers, Walter had passed the period of vigorous exertion. His tall, strongly-built frame bore the marks of his incessant toil. The leading features of his history were traced in his looks: his steadiness, integrity, and industry—his struggles, disappointments, and his fears for the future—were all recorded in characters so distinct as to be read at a glance. The faithful partner of his cares and toils was almost exactly such a one as we would fancy in such a situation—neat, bustling, naturally cheerful, and, in her look, expressing much of that kindness and frank hospitality which characterise and amiably distinguish the tribes of our bleak hill country. Of their family there remained only one daughter—the pride of their age, and the solace of their misfortunes. Reared far from the glee and sympathy of young companions—acquainted, from her earliest years, with the anxieties and affection of her parents—and having mourned over the early loss of a beloved brother and three sisters—Janet Arnott grew up a thoughtful, sensitive girl, of the liveliest sympathies and the most affectionate dispositions—not without many personal attractions of a kind that required neither art nor effort to display them. It were saying little to tell that she was a dutiful child. In her parents centred all her affections: their slightest wish was her law, and their happiness the object of her highest ambition. Her mother was proud to tell that “Janet was the bairn that ne'er cost her parents a sigh.” Were we to attempt to describe them in a situation the most characteristic of the time and the class to which they belonged, and affording the best outline of themselves individually, perhaps we might describe them as they duly set out on Sunday morning, by the footpath that led through their fields, to the church of Westruther; the patriarch-looking peasant leading the way, attired in an ample suit of hodden grey, and the *madd*, or shepherd's plaid, across his shoulder—walking a little in advance, and now and then addressing a grave remark over his shoulder to his wife and his bonny Janet, who followed him with looks of respectful admiration; for, in the eyes of both, he was the foremost man in all the world. Tibbie, on such occasions, was a pattern of rustic neatness. In her hands, clasped over her breast, she

carried a large Testament, the gift of her lost son, purchased with his first fee. By her side walked her daughter. Many would have considered Janet beautiful; but her beauty was not of a kind to attract rustic admirers. There was a simplicity and artlessness—a contemplative and almost melancholy air—about the oval regular countenance that stood out from the modest hood which she wore, according to the fashion of the young women of her time, and which her father had strained a point, in opposition to her wishes, to purchase of the handsomest kind. Her figure was slight, and more elegant than we might have expected in her circumstances.

Janet Arnott had now reached her eighteenth year. Her cares had increased with her years. Her father's declining strength was becoming unequal to the labour of his little farm; and their prospects were anything but cheering. It was Janet's part to soothe the anxious heart of her parent—to join her efforts with those of her mother to lighten the trouble and silence the discontent that sometimes threatened to overcome the principles of meekness and patient endurance that Walter had sought to acquire from trust in Him who feeds the sparrows and arrays the lilies of the field; and a skilful comforter she was; for her heart was no stranger to the anxieties which she sought to relieve in others. She was not gay; but there was a settled calm and a sweet smile, which, for a father's sake, she could always assume, and the influence of which her father could never withstand. Though she seldom succeeded in elevating the spirits of their little party to the point of mirth—for that was not in her own nature—she could generally maintain a feeling of sober happiness, by her kind attentions, her solicitude about her parents' comfort, and the piety or cheerfulness of her conversation. She was not without her own moments—we might rather say hours—of melancholy reflection, which, though she had not the vivacity to repel, she had the power to conceal. At such times, when her warm-hearted cousin, Alice Wilson, was not near to listen to her sorrows, she was accustomed to steal away alone through the plantations about *the Place*, to their favourite walk by the banks of a little stream, one of the sources of the Blackadder, which skirts these woods on the east side. Then, when the few things that lend some air of bustle to the day among the hills were beginning to be stilled—when the sun was sinking behind the Lammermoors, and the grey twilight, that suited so well with the sombre scene around, was falling over mountain and moor—when the sheep on the hill-side had lain down, and the cattle browsed or ruminated indifferently in the haugh—then and there, under covert of the aged beeches, that gently dipped their drooping branches in the stream at every impulse of the light air, did she linger and listen. The continuous rippling of the stream, the untired melody of the blackbird, the lonesome cooing of the cushat—and, at intervals, the far off silvery voice of youthful laughter—blended together harmoniously in Nature's vesper hymn: their voice was one of peace and calm—and Janet's heart did not resist their influence. She soon came to admit another than Alice Wilson to her friendship and confidence. Henry Nichol had been early left an orphan, friendless and unprotected in the wide

world; and, from his thirteenth year, had made it his pride to maintain himself by his own industry. He had, for a year or two, been intrusted with the humble charge of the cattle at Wedderlie; and, for the last two years, he had been employed about the garden and grounds at *the Place*, as the laird's mansion was called. He was naturally of a lively and ardent temperament; and the effects of his peculiar circumstances upon such a mind may easily be imagined. Subjected often to the most painful reflections, his sympathies were cultivated and enlarged; whilst his spirit was too buoyant to permit his afflictions to produce any permanent depression or gloom, his mind was neither callous to suffering nor wrapt up in its own. His employment at *the Place* formed, in his own estimation, the first step towards his future *greatness*; and his honest neighbours regarded it as a piece of great good luck, which he was likely to improve.

"Sic a carefu', weel-doin, guid-natured lad," they said; "he's weel worthy o't; and, certes, he'll mak the maist o't." During the last two years, he had often seen and admired Janet Graham. He had found many opportunities of shewing little marks of attention and good nature to her parents—the most direct road to Janet's heart. He had sought occasion to pay frequent visits to the cottage; and he was altogether such a youth as was likely to gain the esteem and affection of such a family. He could talk sensibly with Walter, feelingly with Janet, and mingle his good feeling with merry jokes and a kind of unintentional simple flattery to her mother, who was not slow to perceive his growing regard for her beloved Janet—

"Weel pleased to see her bairn respected like the lave."

Janet was not slow to return the youth's regard, with a warmth she durst not acknowledge, even to herself, without many maiden fears and self reproofs. We need not detail the particulars of their growing intimacy—all our readers can imagine how they came to feel their hopes, their interests, and their fates united. Her evening rambles were not less interesting, it will be believed, when they were accompanied by one she loved so much; and in whom she reposed so many hopes. She was certainly more happy now, that her anxieties were all relieved by her confidence in Henry Nichol; her melancholy cheered by the communion of his spirit, which, whilst it lent a ready sympathy, communicated also the influence of hope and buoyancy. Her solicitude about her parents became insensibly less painful, whilst her affection for them was not diminished; for Henry did not call away her affection from *them* when he increased her esteem for himself, by the tender interest he exhibited in all that concerned them. To him, the situation in which their attachment placed them, was peculiarly novel. He had, from his earliest years, had no parents to demand his regard, farther than in respect for their memory and regret for their loss. He had had no one to supply their place, none on whom he might bestow the overflowing sympathies of his heart, farther than the ordinary neighbours and companions who shared his general kindness and civility. Now he had found one to absorb every wish and aspiration of his soul, and give a direction to all his feelings. In Walter Arniott and his wife he found a father and mother; for he respected them on their own account, and loved them as a son for Janet's sake. He listened to all she said regarding them, as if it concerned himself, and participated all her solicitude about their welfare. Their welfare had all along been the favourite object of her contemplation—a desire for that amounted almost to a passion in her; and it naturally became a frequent subject of her conversation with one who possessed her unreserved confidence, and who delighted to enter into all her views and feelings. It became the subject of Henry's day-dreams; and her heart beat high when he talked, with warmth and confidence, of the ease and comfort that should yet crown their old

age. He persuaded himself, too, that nature had formed his Janet for something better than the rank of a peasant. Thus, his disposition to speculate on future prosperity and advancement was not checked—it had only received a new direction and impulse; and the desire to secure Janet's happiness, by relieving her parents from their embarrassments, and securing their independence, outstripped his power and his opportunities—outstripped his prudence, too; for it prepared him to hazard all in *any* project that promised a speedy reward. In his ardour, he saw no obstacle in the way; and even Janet's sober chastened spirit became animated by a portion of his enthusiasm, as he described, in glowing colours, the happiness they should enjoy, when he had reached what seemed to her the objects of a lofty ambition. At times, indeed, they both (though unknown to each other) shrank from the prospect. She would sometimes venture to wish that they could have enjoyed, in calm and repose, the lot to which she deemed herself born. In his mind, too, the greater distance to which his schemes removed the prospect of their union, sometimes produced a gentle inclination towards the content and retirement of a lowlier fortune. But the contemplation of a higher destiny had become a habit with him; and the idea he had formed of Janet's character, as well as the situation of her parents, whose difficulties were not likely to be speedily relieved by the exertions of a *peasant*, gave a strength to this habit which he could not resist. For her, wealth had no attractions in itself; but, as she never doubted her lover's ability to accomplish all he proposed, she gave way to the pleasing delusion, and dwelt with delight on the prospect of seeing her parents enjoying ease and comparative affluence, and her Henry occupying the station to which, in her eyes, his virtues and talents entitled him. She was content in the contemplation of future happiness, which diverted her mind from the privations, but not from the duties of her present situation. She was happy in the enthusiastic affection of her own youthful and chosen lover, which sustained all her hopes and soothed all her cares.

While they were thus satisfied with the contemplation of a future good, the time present, and the course of events, though unwatched, was not delayed. The affairs of Walter Arniott had reached a crisis; a failure of his crop decided, at once, his wavering fortune. He waited upon the laird with a heavy heart, and sorely did it wound the old man's honest pride to acknowledge that he must retire from the struggle indebted to any man.

"Nay, be of good heart, Walter," said the laird; "indebted to me ye arena: lang and faithfully hae ye tenanted the bit ground, an' sair hae ye fouchten to avoid this day; an' I may rather say, that I regard mysel as your debtor, for thirty years' tried worth an' honest attachment to our *ancient* family. It grieves me that I canna better reward it. Ye are free, hooever, from a' obligation to me. If ye think ye can do nae better, I shall only be payin part o' my debt, when I offer ye a coc's grass in the bog-park, a bit house, and ony little employment ye can pit yer hand to about the place. I wish I could do mair," he said, with a sigh for the dec ning fortunes of his "*ancient family*," as he delighted to call it. Though offered with the best of feeling, it was accepted not without some feeling of abasement, but with the warmest gratitude; and Walter returned to his anxious wife and daughter, comforted, and, in some measure, at ease.

Walter's errand to *the Place* had been observed by one individual with deep emotion. This was Henry Nichol. The young man reproached himself now with inactivity, and felt the necessity of instant exertion. Reports of the rapid success of many adventurers at a time when the awakening energies of society were daily rendering foreign trade a more and more important and lucrative engagement.

had reached our youth, even in the retirement of that moorland home. These reports were, perhaps, not a little exaggerated, either by the ignorance and admiration of his informants, or by the ardour of his own disposition. The perils of such undertakings were little understood by him, and were, it may be, still less regarded; and he at once determined to embark all his darling hopes (he had nothing more to risk) in the chance. Poor Janet, amid her visions of coming happiness, had never once inquired into the means by which it was to be achieved. Of a separation she had never once dreamed; and when he came, at length, after many an effort, to unfold his purpose to her, it came upon her like an electric shock: his absence—the thousand dangers to which he would be exposed—all was distraction to her. She yielded, at last, to the influence he possessed over her mind. She endeavoured to regard it as a thing that *must be*; and summoned all her woman's fortitude and endurance to submit to what she considered the arrangement of Providence.

The day of his departure would have been the term of their residence at the cottage, which had been the scene of so many joys and sorrows to them all; but the ground was rented by the tenant of an adjoining farm, who did not require the house, so that it was arranged that they should still call it their home. Walter was content when he found that the sale of his little stock would enable him to discharge all his debts; and they prepared to submit to the change of circumstances with cheerful resignation.

It was the morning of Lauder fair, and Walter Arnott, accompanied by his wife and daughter, prepared to set out to dispose of one of their favourite cows. Many a painful thought it cost them all to set about this first step towards their change of condition. Janet shed tears, as she loosed her, for the last time, from the stall; and many a kind wish and fond regret mingled with the praises they bestowed, as they gathered round to stroke and pat her, before she was driven for ever from the well known door.

The road was crowded with eager and merry groups. Here a "guidwife," in her Sunday's gown, urged on, to keep up with the strides of an inconsiderate husband, the little ones whom she surveyed with all a mother's pride, looking over them with scrupulous watchfulness, as if she felt that they were to be the objects of universal attraction that day—"the cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

The little elves themselves, amid all their exhilaration, seemed infected with *her* idea of their importance; strutting along in their stiff, awkward dresses, aping the airs and consequence of men—each urchin labouring forward, having a hand stuck resolutely in his pocket, grasping the little treasure it contained—the long promised penny—and a cudgel in the other hand, that might not have disgraced Donnybrook; keeping up an incessant clattering of annoying questions about what was to be seen, and discussing the expenditure of their little treasures with all the gravity of a committee of supply. Then groups of aged men, moving leisurely along, talked gravely of crops and prices, and *auld world* stories. Parties of young persons, of both sexes, bounded onwards, shortening the way with "cracks, and jests, and wreathed smiles." These mingled with the drivers of the farmers' cattle—the hinds dragging on the lingering and reluctant cow, and the shouting *herds* who urged forward the startled flocks.

Our little party, with their much-valued crummie, at length found themselves amid the din and confusion of the fair—strangers, it will be believed, to the glee and exhilaration that pervaded the crowd. Many an old friend shook Walter and his wife heartily by the hand; and Janet was greeted with respectful kindness, even by those who had rough enough gibes in store for maidens of less delicate sensibility. Her character and circumstances had an influence over the roughest and most obtuse

"Oh, there comes the Laird!" cried many voices.

"As hale and hearty as ever," cried one.

"His hearty laugh as ready as ever," said another.

"Ay, but that's only on ae side o' his mouth," exclaimed a third, who passed for a *wag*; "for, if ye saw the other side, ye wad say he was as ready to greet as ever."

This last remark was, indeed, pretty descriptive of the person regarding whom it was made; for he was ready, to a fault, to laugh with the merry and weep with the sad. He was a rather venerable looking farmer, whom the youngsters of *his* day described as being of the old school. His dress was in the fashion of the simplest peasant, only of the most ample dimensions and most substantial material. He sat awkwardly erect upon his stiff white pony—his ample skirts half covering the animal's shaggy sides, and his smoothly combed grey hair flowing down about his shoulders. His smooth face, in which there appeared much benevolence and some humour, was indicative of easy circumstances, not of luxurious living. It was rather from the look of hospitality and general kindness with which he surveyed the crowd, than on account of any assumed superiority, that we say he looked as if the fair was all his own. He seemed to have something humorous or good-natured to say to all; and his big rough hand was in continual request by some old friend or crony. He was making his way through the crowd with as great expedition as the number of salutations and the self-willed leisure of his steed would permit. In reference to the latter hinderance, we may say that Bawtie's looks told that she was an old and indulged servant: her head hung carelessly down at her own pleasure—her *dais'd* eye was only half awake—her hairy feet were raised from, and again deposited in slow succession upon the hard pavement with "cannie care;" and she replied to the repeated thumps of her rider, rather by a something between a sigh and a groan, which he called a *peck*, than by any acceleration of speed.

"My auld freend, Wattie Arnott!" he exclaimed, as he approached our party. "The very man I wanted to see—and Tibbie, too! Gie's a shake o' yer hand, woman, for auld langsyne. Hech, woman, it's a braw time since—But we mauna cast up sic far back stories as that. And, Janet, hoo are ye, my bonny woman?"

There was scarcely time left for any other reply than kind looks to all his inquiries. Walter's eye brightened at his friend's cordiality, undiminished by the misfortune to which he had been exposed.

"And ye *are* gaun to sell that bonny beast?" he continued, pointing to crummie.

"Ay, though wi' nae meikle guid wll; ye may be sure," replied Walter, with a sigh.

"Man, she is a bonny beast, Wattie—the bonniest cow i' the market."

"That is, she has been," interrupted her honest owner. "I'm thinkin, at least, them that buys her winna be for making her the dearest i' the market."

"Weel, after a', age does *not* improve a cow, I daresay," said his friend. "But sic a milker! Losh, man! ye're a fule if ye pairt wi' her for a trifle."

"I doot her milk and her beauty hae gane thegither," said Tibbie; "though she *has* been, in her day, a subject o' nae little braggin to me; but, laird, ye ken the best o' her days are past, like the blithest and best o' yours and mine."

"Na, speak for yersel, Tibbie," said the laird. "You and me, ye ken, are no just year's bairns; and I *have* some hopes of happiness yet, if ye kenn'd it," glancing to Jenny. "But, about that cow, depend on it, age destroys youthfu' looks sooner than real worth; and, losh, woman, what wad a calf off her no be worth!"

The speaker seemed determined to keep up the price of the cow; and, to make sure of verifying his prediction

of the high price she would bring, declared his intention to become the purchaser himself. He invited Walter to drink a mug of ale with him in Rab Watson's tent, whilst they made the bargain.

"Tak care, noo, Wattie," cried Tibbie, as they went away together; "tak care, Wattie. And, Laird, gin ye play ony o' yer Dunse market tricks, and bring Wattie back singing, dinna put yoursel in reach o' my staff—that's a'."

"Fearna," he replied, likewise assuming a serious air. "To do hurt to you or yours will aye be the ae thought farest frae the heart o' auld Sandy Thomson."

Thus saying, they left the comforted mother and daughter, with a promise to rejoin them ere long. The bargain about the cow was easily concluded, when the purchaser was more ready to appreciate the advantages of it than the seller was to extol them.

"Weel, Wattie, I am glad to get a canny crack wi' ye," said the laird, with the air of a man who has something to communicate. "Put round the stoup, man, and let us forget, for a wee, the changes you and I hae seen o' late years. D'ye ken, I'm thinkin o' changin either my quarters or my condition?"

"Changin, Laird," said the other. "Tak my advice, and keep yer present quarters guid. Flittin's nae better than it's ca'ed. But whar wad ye be changin to?"

"I kenna," said the Laird; "but ye see, sin' ye took awa Tibbie Dodds frae me, I ne'er had heart to seek another for my wife—sae I hae nane to care for me in a way; an' haein a pickle siller, I hae just been thinkin to enjoy it, while I can, to mak some sport wi'd, as I say to myself."

"Mak sport, say ye, Laird, wi' the labour o' a lifetime!"

"Ay, e'en sae—I'm no yet sae far gane i' years as that I mayna work for enjoyment. Sae I'm a'maist resolved either to hae a wife, Wattie, or gang aff to America."

Walter Arnott made no reply to this, and the bargain about the cow being finally arranged, to the great satisfaction of the guidwife, it was agreed that she should be sent to pasture in a park which the Laird rented from the proprietor of Wedderlie, adjoining to Walter's fields. As it was but a short distance from the cottage, Janet was to milk her as usual. This transaction, on the part of the kind-hearted Sandy Thomson, was, in fact, only a delicate method of presenting his old friend with a sum of money which he knew must be needful to him in his extremity, and, at the same time, securing to Tibbie the use of her favourite cow. It may be thought there was more than the mere motive of kindness in this act; and it must be confessed that other feelings than those of friendship *did* mingle in it—though nothing was farther from his mind than any conscious intention of forcing himself, by this means, upon his "Joe Janet," as he had long called Walter's daughter. As for the honest family he had obliged, they returned home with hearts not a little relieved; and it was with more than usual fervour that they knelt together that night to offer up their regularly paid thanksgiving at the footstool of Him who had dealt so mercifully amid their afflictions. On the following morning, Walter Arnott rose early to enter on his new employment. It was, in many respects, a sad day to them all. Walter could scarcely persuade himself to pass the scene of so many hard days' labour. The scene of his future exertions, the nature of his employment, every step and every movement, reminded him painfully of the change; and even the mild superintendance of the Place steward whispered to him that he was no longer his own master. His wife and his Janet looked often and sadly out to see the fields around tilled by another. Janet could scarcely persuade herself that the homely dinner ought not to be delayed for her father's return; and they sat down at last, sadly and silently,

to a comfortless board. Tibbie shed the first tears their misfortunes had ever commanded, when she looked upon his empty place. Their extraordinary attentions made Walter feel somehow that he was an object of compassion—a thought he could not brook; all his honest pride was aroused to forbid the contentment that they all strove to assume. A few days of such painful experience told upon the health of the aged pair; and, ere a second week had passed away, Janet, in addition to her other duties, was called upon to wait by the sick-bed of her mother. Her dutiful affection nerved her for every exertion; and, it may be, the necessity of such exertion saved her from the influence of sad and withering thoughts. Anxiety about her wandering lover often, indeed, pressed itself upon her mind, and refused to be quieted. Among the first to offer their condolence, and express an interest in their afflictions, was their friend, Sandy Thomson. He had, long ere now, secured Janet's esteem, by his honest worth; and her warmest friendship, by his uniform kindness to her parents. These sentiments were not diminished by late occurrences; and the frank and hearty expression of her gratitude afforded him, it may be, some ground to cherish his foolish fondness—fondness which, alas! was to prove the destruction of all her earthly peace and happiness. It was a beautiful morning in July, and Janet, having engaged her father to wait by the bedside of her afflicted mother until her return, hastened to the park to milk her cow. When she reached the park, she, to her alarm, found it deserted. The whole herd of cattle had strayed, she could neither imagine how nor where. Her search was soon joined by others equally interested in it; but she was obliged to return without success. Her father joined those who set out to endeavour to trace the stragglers; and, from the route they had taken, the state of the fences, and other circumstances, the poor people were soon convinced that their cows, the support and comfort of so many families, had fallen a prey to a band of ruffians, who had committed several depredations among the flocks in the neighbourhood. Those who know anything of the circumstances of the poor, will easily conceive how heavy a blow this was felt to be by all, and not least by our unfortunate friends.

This, however, was a bereavement which the kindness of Sandy Thomson could readily mitigate. It was his first care, when he heard of it, to offer, in the meantime, the use of one of his own best milkers; and a new expression of Janet's gratitude lent new force and countenance to the foolish passions of the simple old man.

Things went on for some time in this way; but misfortunes always follow in a train; and the composure that Janet was struggling to regain, the hopes she was beginning to cherish, were destined to be speedily blighted. Her father had been employed for some time in *tiring*, as it is called, a steep bank for an intended quarry; and one morning he was carried home from thence, with a broken limb and other serious injuries. Janet's feelings may be more easily conceived than described; the sufferings of her parents, her own exertions over-taxed, and the destitution of the family, now that they were deprived even of the scanty fruits of her father's labours, urged her almost to the brink of despair. Their old and faithful friend did not stand aloof in this their hour of need. His aid in pecuniary matters was ever ready, presented in the frankest and most delicate manner; his visits became daily; and the frequent opportunities he thus enjoyed of seeing Janet—of witnessing the devotedness of her filial piety, and of listening to her repeated expressions of gratitude and respect for himself—all assisted in augmenting his passion, and in reviving, in some measure, the feelings and emotions of a youthful lover.

"Hoo shall we ever pay back a' yer kindness?" she said, as a tear of gratitude trembled in her eye.

"By ae word," he replied, endeavouring to summon up resolution to make the cherished proposal; "by ae word, Janet: say only that ye'll be my wife, and the debt, as ye ca't, though I consider it nane, is mair than cancelled. Yes, Janet, ye'll make my days days o' happiness and peace, which they'll ne'er be without ye." And he seized her hand, and gazed upon the bewildered girl with mingled looks of fondness and suspense.

After a minute's silence, she exclaimed—"Can ye be serious! Oh, if ye could but have spared me the feelings with which I say that can never be—for ae reason were there nae ither—that my heart and hand are promised to anither. I shall ever think of you with respect and thankfu'ness. Yer kindness we can never repay. As for the siller, when Henry comes back"—And she took refuge from the feeling of helpless obligation in the fond hope of her wanderer's return.

Many a fainting step did that hope support; but it failed, too, on the morning when Adam Wcir, the Edinburgh carrier, brought the news that the vessel in which he was embarked had perished. His ship was a wreck, and all that Jenny cherished and delighted in perished there too. She sat down in black, desolate despondency. Afflictions pressed around her, and her stay had failed; but hope, faint hope, that he might have survived, came at last, and she awoke again to the imperative calls of duty—of the wants of those who depended upon her care. It was a gloomy winter to her. Happiness had fled from her experience—her existence was one continued course of listless, almost stupid exertion on behalf of those she still loved with a melancholy tenderness, lighted only by the flickering glance of that affectionate and stubborn hope that looked for Henry back. It may be conceived with what feelings she was still forced to hear the incessantly urged suit of her aged benefactor.

"Ye sat, Janet, when a bairn, on my knee; ye found a place in this lanely heart; every bairn's word and bairn's action o' yours found a place there; and noo ye are necessary to its happiness. Ye speak o' respect and friendship; but then ye blast a' the hope and affections that yet remain in my breast when ye say ye cannae loe me. Be it sae; but still, O Janet, for *their* sakes, marry me."

This was all grief and distraction to her. The man she could not but esteem; their obligations now pressed heavily on her mind, when she could no longer turn with confidence to Henry's successful return as the period of their existence. She felt, in all its bitterness, her own unprovided situation, and, more than all, the helplessness and destitution of her parents. An impassioned love for one who might be hid for ever from her sight, consumed her energy. She could only listen, in silence and sorrow, to the painful entreaties that were addressed to her. Her father felt her dependance and his own, and saw the uncomplaining partner of all his cares and toils borne down by affliction, and totally unprovided for, in the days when he had hoped to see her in ease and comfort. He gave way to discontent and murmuring, that grieved his pious and affectionate daughter: he saw her union with the old laird to be the only deliverance from all their troubles; and he joined his entreaties to those of his friend; sometimes he was even tempted to give way to reproaches, of what he called the "self-will and obstinacy" of his devoted child. Her mother felt all the bitterness of their trials—but she had a woman's heart within her breast, and she knew what was passing in her daughter's mind; at the same time she viewed their destitution in its worst aspect. She spoke not a word on the painful sacrifice, but "she looked in Jenny's face till her heart was like to break."

Sandy Thomson was their fast and only stay. And, now the old man's happiness was gone, his purpose was unsettled,

and he reverted again to his old notion of seeking a new home and enjoyment beyond the Atlantic. The fear of unrelieved poverty presented itself to the aged pair; and the trials of their daughter were all increased—*carried* out beyond her own feelings and regards—her hopes of seeing Henry unencouraged by the vaguest report. Urged, entreated, reproached, she gave a reluctant and almost unconscious assent—and was at length to give her hand to one who could never hope to possess her heart.

There was no merry wedding party to celebrate their union; privately and quietly they were declared man and wife, and Janet went sadly to her new home. She looked the picture of resignation; but she could not seem happy and cheerful—her mind was weaned from the earth, and she sought not its joys. One of her great objects was now gained—her parents were placed beyond the fear of want; but then it was not, as she had fondly dreamed, by the fruits of her Henry's exertion. No other object of earthly desire remained to her. She endeavoured to discharge the duties of an affectionate wife—she could do no more. She had given her hand, but her heart was in the sea. She struggled against thoughts of him whom she could never now call her own; but the remembrance of him still hung over her mind like a brooding unfulfilled destiny. No cheerful calm spread around, and the most affectionate and watchful kindness of her guidman could command no more than a mournful and unnatural smile.

Henry had escaped from the wreck, and he was made rich, in his own estimation, by a reward from the owners of the vessel for his disinterested exertions to save their property. With his little treasure, he hastened to present himself before her who had supported him in every danger and difficulty; and cheerfully and eagerly he hurried along, big with the near prospect of their united happiness. The farm house of Sandy Thomson was on his way; and he only meant to stop there for a moment to ask the refreshment that his parched throat and exhausted frame demanded. He approached the door, and a young woman, with a look of deep and touching melancholy, beckoned him in. As he ascended the steps, she looked upon him fixedly, and, as her cold eye met his, her face grew white as death. Henry suddenly staggered back against the wall:—it was Janet! the being who had haunted his memory night and day, dreaming or waking. He flew to clasp her in his arms; but words are altogether inadequate to describe the dismay, the agony of that meeting. The young wife uttered a loud shriek, and sank senseless on the threshold of her husband's door. "He lives—he lives!" were the only words she articulated. The next moment her mother, with streaming eyes, threw her arms around her seemingly lifeless daughter, and, in the most heart-rending accents, implored Henry's pity on one that had become the wife of another to save her aged parents from starvation. Henry stared in her face wildly, and exclaiming, "Merciful God, uphold me in this terrible hour of trial!" rushed from the house. The Laird kissed his wife's cheek with a mixture of tenderness and pity, and attempted to infuse balm into her corroding heart; but Janet, through her fast-coming tears and sobs, told the sorrowing group that her peace was gone for ever. Her death, perhaps, was nearer than she apprehended; for, amidst all her worldly prosperity, she pined silently away; and, a few weeks after her interview with Henry Nichol, she was borne to her grave, in the bloom of youth, like a green leaf beaten to the earth, deplored by her husband for her watchful kindness, and wept by her childless parents for an affection that had led her to sacrifice her life for their happiness and well-being. As for Henry, he bade a last adieu to the Lammermoors; and, after a solitary and cheerless life of honour and usefulness, he died an officer in the Royal Navy.

THE MAGIC GLASS.

At the period when fairies, brownies, witches, and other respectable personages of this description were more in vogue in Scotland than they now are, there lived at the foot of the Lammermoor hills a man of the name of Tweedie.

David—for this was his Christian name—was a sheep farmer, and a pretty extensive one. His character throughout the country was excellent, and his circumstances easy. His wife was good-natured and affectionate; his children obedient and well-doing; his house comfortable, cheerful, and happy;—in short, David's condition altogether, was a most enviable one; and he, himself, fully appreciated the blessings that had been vouchsafed him. He adored his wife, loved his children, and entertained the warmest sentiments of esteem towards his numerous friends, who, in turn, liked David exceedingly, and any one of them would have parted with half their substance to serve him. To complete this picture of felicity, this happy combination of happy circumstances, David was himself a jolly-looking fellow—good-humoured, kind-hearted, and hospitable; but, it must be acknowledged, a little rough and blunt in his manners—qualities, however, which rather improved than deteriorated the general character of the man, inasmuch as they made it more unique.

On one occasion, being called away to attend the death-bed of a wealthy uncle, from whom he had great expectations, and who lived in a remote county in the west of Scotland, previous to his leaving home, David, thinking it not improbable that he might be a good while absent, or seeing that it was, at least, uncertain when he might return, as he would be obliged to await his relative's dissolution, whenever that might happen—assembled a number of his most intimate friends around him on the evening before his departure, and, warmed by his liquor, their expressions of love and affection knew no bounds.

"O man!" exclaimed Jamie Torrence, a near neighbour, and particular friend—"O man!" he said, rising up from his chair in a fit of irrepressible enthusiasm, and seizing David by the hand, "an' ye wad just let me keep Rover till ye come back, I wad be happy, just that I might hae something o' yours about me to shew kindness to whan ye're awa."

The request was an odd one; but it evidently proceeded from the overflows of a kind and friendly disposition, and was immediately complied with. But it is time to say who Rover was. Why, Rover was an old dog, and a very great favourite of his master's, as he had been, in his day, a singularly sagacious and serviceable animal, though now perfectly useless; and this his master had not forgotten. Indeed, there were not many things that David Tweedie would have been more loath to entrust to the care of another than Rover. But, in this case, as already said, he did consent to part with him—at least, *pro tempore*; and that very night, kind, warm-hearted Jamie Torrence carried poor blind old Rover home with him.

But there was another guest present on this evening, who was still more ardent in his expressions of esteem for David than even Jamie Torrence. This person was Andrew Tamson—a near neighbour also, and a most particularly intimate friend, too, of David's. Andrew was a stout, active, rattling fellow, of about five-and-thirty; good looking, and well made, but with a reputation for being a trifle wild or so. He was, however, in the main, an excellent fellow, and was greatly esteemed by David, at whose house he was the most frequent visitor of all his acquaintances.

On this occasion, Andrew proffered his services in superintending and otherwise looking after David's out-of-door concerns during his absence—an offer that was very thankfully accepted. In the meantime, however, the night, regardless of the happiness of the party, and insensible to the

cruelty of interrupting it, wore on, till at length the hour of separation arrived, when each retired to his own home, and David to bed.

In the morning, David Tweedie, after taking an affectionate leave of his wife and family, mounted his horse, and proceeded on his journey. On arriving at his uncle's, David found the old man still in life, and with an appearance of strength that promised to hold him lingering on for some time. Perceiving this, David made up his mind to a considerable stay; for now that he was come, and his relative's death, though it might be protracted for a while, inevitable, it would have been both cruel and indecent to have left him until the anticipated event had taken place.

During this interval, David found the time hang heavy on his hands, and began to become uneasy about matters at home; although he certainly had no good reason—for his wife was an active, thrifty, managing woman; and she and his friends, he might have been assured, would look well after his interests. Still he could not help constantly thinking of his wife, his family, his sheep, and his farm, nor of entertaining a most ardent longing to see them again; and, from morning to night, he wondered what they would be doing.

It was David's practice, while staying with his dying relative, on those occasions when the old man had fallen into a slumber, to go out and take a short stroll in the neighbourhood. His favourite resort, at these times, was a beautiful retired little dell, at a short distance from the house—a spot which he had selected not more for its natural beauty, than for a resemblance, fancied or real, which it bore to a certain locality in the vicinity of his own dear home. One evening, about eight days after his arrival at his uncle's, David—the old man having expressed a wish to be left alone for an hour or so—repaired to his usual place of resort. It was dark—a time at which David would not have visited the place alone for a score of the best sheep that ever grazed on the Lammermoors, had he known what everybody else thereabouts knew—namely, that it was haunted by fairies. But, not knowing this, he entered it even while the shades of night were falling around him, without fear or dread.

The subject of David's thoughts, while he strolled up and down the little solitude, were the usual ones—his home, his friends, and his farm. But his longings regarding these were now, as was perfectly natural, becoming every day more and more intense and irksome; for there were no posts in those days to relieve the anxiety of his mind, through the medium of that ingenious device—writing. A letter was then as rare as a comet. David, wearied with walking and ruminating, flung himself down on a little green knoll, exclaiming—"Hech, sirs, what I wad gie this moment for a sicht o' them—just to see what they're a' about!" Here let us explain that David meant his family. No sooner said than done. The words were hardly out of his mouth, when he perceived a little female figure, clothed in a green gown, standing beside him. How she had come there, or whence she had come, it was impossible to tell. There she was, however—that's certain; and a beautiful little creature.

"David Tweedie," said the little queer lady—"you and yours have always treated us with kindness and respect, and have never, in any instance, given us the smallest offence. Moreover, many a merry dance have I had on the knowes behind your house; and now, for all these reasons, David, here have I come to gratify the wish which you have just now expressed. But, David," she added, "as your friend, I would advise you not to insist on the gratification of your wish, for it will give you no pleasure; but mark me, it shall be done if you still desire it."

David, though exceedingly terrified—for he perceived at once, as indeed any one would have done, that it was a fairy who spoke to him—had yet presence of mind enough

to thank the little lady for her obliging offer, and courage enough, notwithstanding what she had said, to intimate his acceptance of it. Indeed, her dissuasion had had rather the effect of sharpening his curiosity than allaying it; for he feared that it referred to some mischief that had happened at home, and he was naturally desirous of knowing what it was. Under this impression, then, he pressed for the promised gratification.

"Well, well, then," said the fairy, when she found him resolved to accept her offer, "your wish shall be gratified; but, remember I have warned you. There," she said, putting a little instrument, not unlike a modern pocket telescope, into his hands—"there, take that; and, when you desire to see what's going on at home, look through it; and you will see everything as distinctly as if you were on the spot yourself—but you must give it back to me here before you return home; and, in the meantime, at your peril, shew it to any one, or mention to any human being anything of the circumstances of this night." Having said this, the lady vanished as suddenly and mysteriously as she had appeared. Relieved of her presence, David, after thrusting the fairy's gift into his pocket, which he did without looking at it, bounced to his feet, and took to his heels as fast as his feet could carry him; nor did he halt—for his terror was even greater than his curiosity—till he had reached his uncle's house.

Here, however, he dared not make any use of the magic instrument that had been so strangely given him; for he was constantly in the presence of other people, and the fairy's injunctions were peremptory that nobody but himself should see it. Neither durst he venture out of doors to make any experiments on it, for it was now dark; and he would not, after the fright he had got, cross the door, especially with fairy property in his pocket, for all the Lothians. David, however, determined that he would start with the sun on the following morning, and betake himself to some quiet place where he could freely indulge his curiosity. But, in the meantime, his state of mind was far from being easy or comfortable; in truth, he spent a most miserable night. His anxiety to try the powers of the magic instrument was most distressing; and his curiosity to know what was going on at home insupportable;—in short, he was in a perfect fever, from agitated and excited feelings of all sorts. Although David, however, did not dare to take the glass out of his pocket, he kept constantly feeling it the whole night previous to going to bed, and even frequently ventured to take a sly peep of it, but not without expecting, every time he looked, to find it turned into a piece of a *kail runt*, or, it might be, a roll of brimstone—such gifts, as he was well aware, being often suddenly converted into the most valueless things. No such deception, however, was practised on David; what the article was at first, whatever that might be, it was at last—no change took place in either its shape or substance.

Although the night on which David obtained the fairy gift was to him a long and a sleepless one, yet it did wear away. Morning came, and with the first peep of dawn he was stirring. Having put on his clothes, and found that all, to appearance at any rate, continued right with the fairy instrument, he stole softly out of the house, and sought a quiet spot in which to try its powers. Having soon found such a place as he desired, David pulled out the fairy gift, examined it minutely for the first time, and found that, seemingly at least, it was neither more nor less than a small telescope with glass at both ends. His curiosity satisfied on this head, with a beating heart and trembling hand, he clapped the glass to his eye, when, most wonderful to relate, and to David's unutterable surprise, he beheld his own house, with its white front shining in the morning sun, as plain and distinct, with all about it, as if he had been stand-

ing within fifty yards of it. He could count, with the greatest ease, every pane of glass in the windows. Nay, more amazing still, he could see everything and every person inside, as well as if he were actually beside them—indeed, there was no difference whatever, only that he could not hear them speak, nor, of course, they him.

"Extraordinary!—most astonishing!" exclaimed David, taking the glass from his eye for a moment, to breathe (for surprise had suspended his respiration) and to reflect on the wonderful powers of the instrument. "Most extraordinary!—most astonishing!" he said, looking intently at the magical telescope, and turning it over and over in his hands as he spoke. "My word, ye're worthy o' yer wecht in diamonds, and a great comfort ye'll be to me while I'm here. I can get a sicht, now, o' my ain dear Lizzy whan I like; an' that'll be a wonnerfu consolation to me sae lang as we're separate."

It was very early in the morning, he it observed, when David took his first peep through the magic glass; so that he found no one stirring about his own house; but he took a look of all the inmates as they lay in bed, and was rejoiced to find them all apparently in perfect good health, which relieved his mind greatly; for, from what the fairy had said—namely, that a knowledge of what was going on at home would afford him no pleasure—he was apprehensive that something evil had happened to some of the members of his family; and he was glad that it was not in any circumstance of this kind, at any rate, that the reason of the little lady's unpleasant caution was to be found. David had also, on his first peep, taken a look of his sheep on the hill; and there, too, everything appeared to be right, only, that, on counting his flock, which he did very carefully, he found several amissing; but he thought nothing of this, as he had no doubt their keeper would be able to give a good account of them.

After a short time, David again put the glass to his eye, saying, while he did so—"Od, I'll hae a peep at Jamie Torrence, and see how him and Rover's coming on." And he directed the glass accordingly. But he had not looked an instant, when he began exclaiming, loud enough to have been heard by anybody within fifty yards of him, had there been any one so situated—"Weel, that coves the gowan! O Jamie Torrence, wha wad hae thocht ye wad hae been sae treacherous, sae cruel-hearted? Let alane the dog, ye savage, ye deceiver! What has the puir brute done to you, that ye should use him that gate? Ay, ye've dune't at last," he added, after a pause; "ye've finished him now, ye fause-hearted villain! But little do ye ken, my lad, wha's seein ye: ye'll be tellin me, nae doot, when I come hame, that the puir brute died a nat'ral death. But hand ye there, lad; I'll nick ye. I'll dumfounder ye wi' the facts."

David was at this moment witnessing a harrowing and most unexpected sight—viz., the execution of Rover by the hands of his own trusty and well beloved friend, James Torrence, who had promised, even with tears in his eyes, to be kind to his dog during his absence. At the very moment when David had directed his magical glass to that person's domicile, the "fause-hearted villain," as he called him, and not unjustly, was employed in a small back yard, attached to his dwelling, in stringing up Rover; and David had detected him in the very act. The reason of this atrocious cruelty it was of course impossible for David to guess; but he felt assured that there could be no good one, as the dog was a harmless inoffensive creature. His heart bled within him as he gazed upon the dying struggles of his unfortunate favourite, whom it was out of his power to save.

From this miserable sight, David turned for consolation to his own dear happy home, where all were now a-foot. Earnestly and delightedly did David gaze on his two fine

romping little boys ; but, indeed, very angry did he soon become, when he saw one of them go into the garden, and deliberately pull up an entire bed of flowers in which he had taken great delight. Forgetting the distance that was between them, the angry father shouted out to the little mischievous vagabond to desist, threatening him, at the same time, with the direst vengeance if he did not. But his wrath was expended in vain.

"Oh, you little scounrel ye!" exclaimed David; "if I was within arm's length o' you, but I wad creesh your haffits for ye! But that's waitin ye, ye young villain! I'll mind this among the lave."

David now directed the glass once more to the hill where his sheep were grazing—just to see, as he said, what his trusty shepherd, Watty, was about. It was some time, however, before he could find Watty; and he was rather surprised at this, as he knew where he ought to be about that time in the morning: but there he was not, neither was he about the house. At length, however, David discovered Watty, and in a very strange predicament he was. There was a sheep on his back, his feet being tied together, and he was hurrying towards his own house with his burden.

"Something quere in this," said David to himself. "Whar can Watty be gaun wi' the sheep, and what in a' the world can he be gaun to do wi't?"—David resolved to make himself master of this; and it was not long before he was so. In a few minutes he saw his trusty and favourite servant enter his own cottage with the sheep, bolt the door after him, cut the animal's throat, skin and cut up the carcase and deposit it snugly in his own beef barrel, and, lastly, hide the skin below the kitchen bed.

"Aweel, after that, onything," exclaimed the amazed and confounded farmer. "A fallow that I wad hae trusted wi' uncounted goud—a fallow that I hae trusted this thirteen year. Oh, the villain! and ane o' my very best sheep too—the very pick o' my flock! But, to be sure, he wad hae been a great fule had he dune otherwise. The rascal was richt, when he was at it, to wale a gude ane. But my name's no David Tweedie, if I dinna get something put roun your craig, Maister Watty, that'll be a hantle mair troublesome than a sheep."

In such unconnected exclamations as these, did David express at once his amazement, his sorrow, and his anger, at the delinquency he had witnessed of his most trusty and esteemed servant; but, as he was a good-hearted man, although a little passionate—one, in short, whose bark is worse than his bite—he almost regretted that he had seen it, as much on his own account as the offender's, for it made him miserable. David now took a look into his stable, to see how his favourite black mare was coming on—the animal having been thought dying when he left home. There was a little country cart standing at the door when David looked, and Jamie Armstrong, another trusty servant in the stable at the time. But what was he about? Why, he and the man to whom the cart belonged were busily employed in filling a sack with corn from the corn chest.

"Oh, is there no trust to be put in man?" shouted out David, when he witnessed this other instance of treachery and spoliation; for we suppose we need not say, in more plain terms, that a robbery was being perpetrated between Jamie Armstrong and the fellow to whom the cart belonged. "I'm a ruined man—head and tail, stoup-and-roup, horse and foot, plundered and deceived at a' hands. This is fearfu'; but it's a mercy I've fund it oot. Dee or leeve, uncle," continued David, "I maun be hame directly, or they'll harry me clean. They'll no leave me a stool to sit upon."

David was now sorely distressed in mind—and no wonder; for he had seen enough to put any man distracted. The depredations committed on him were of a very serious cha-

acter. Those engaged in them were men in whom he had placed the most unlimited confidence; and there was, therefore, no saying for how long a time, or to what extent, he had suffered by them. All this David felt very keenly; and a most miserable and unhappy man it made him. But he had not yet seen all. In looking into his barn-yard, to which he had been attracted by perceiving a quantity of thick dense smoke issuing from it, he saw six or eight of his finest corn stacks in a blaze—which almost put the poor man beside himself.

"Assistance here—assistance here!" shouted out David forgetting, in his agony, the hopelessness of the appeal. "The stack-yard's on fire—the stack-yard's on fire! Oh, will naebody try to stop the flames. There'll no be a stack left in fifteen minutes!" And poor David danced where he stood, with the glass at his eye, in a paroxysm of despair. "Lizzy, Lizzy! whar are ye?" he bawled out. "Whar are ye in this awfu' strait?" he said, at the same time looking for his wife in every direction. But she was nowhere to be found. He searched the whole house, but no Lizzy was there.

Here was a new cause of alarm, or, at least, of astonishment. Lizzy was not within; nor, so far as he had been yet able to discover, was she anywhere about the house. Where, on earth, could she be! Still David searched for Lizzy—and still he searched in vain. He sought her up stairs and down stairs—he sought her in stable and byre, in dairy and in field; but no Lizzy was to be seen. He became seriously alarmed—so much so as even to forget, for a time, the burning stacks. In wandering with his eye over the premises of his establishment, however, he thought he perceived somebody in the little bushy secluded arbour, at the far end of his garden. David peeped in, and—oh! surpassing, inconceivable, unutterable surprise, and unendurable sight—there beheld his dearly beloved wife, and his most esteemed friend, Andrew Thomson, in close and loving confab together. Yes! his wife thus situated, and his stack-yard burning at the same moment! Surely this was enough to put any man distracted.

Pale as death, his limbs trembling beneath him, and with his eyes starting from their sockets, David uttered a fearful oath; and, in the desperation and distraction of his mind and thoughts, made a fierce grasp at the guilty pair, as if he would tear them into a thousand pieces.

"Hilloa, hilloa! ye villain!" he madly shouted out, and flung his arms wildly around him; "and you, ye treacherous woman, let me trample ye beneath my feet, and"—

"What do ye mean, David? What's the matter wi' ye, man? What a nicht ye've had o' kickin and spurrin, and grumphin and groanin!" was uttered, at this moment, in the soft and gentle tones of a female voice, quite close by the distracted man, who was now—mark, reader!—*sitting bol upright in his bed*, his hair standing on end, his eyes rolling wildly in his head, and himself perspiring at every pore while the queries above recorded were put to him by his faithful and affectionate, but alarmed wife, who was lying by his side.

"Od, I dinna ken very weel, guidwife," said David, in answer to her queries, on recollecting himself, which he soon did. "I've been dreamin, Lizzy, I'm thinkin!" There was no doubt of it. David had been dreaming; and what we have just told you, good reader, was David's dream as it was afterwards related by himself—a circumstance which we rather think you did not suspect when you began to read THE MAGIC GLASS.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

GRACE CAMERON.

IN the centre of a remote glen or strath, in the West Highlands of Scotland, stands the old mansion-house of the family of Duntruskin. At the time of the rebellion of 1745-6, this house was the residence of Ewan Cameron, Esq., a gentleman of considerable landed property, and extensive influence in the country. Mr Cameron was, at the period of our story, a widower with an only child. This child was Grace Cameron—a fine, blooming girl of nineteen, with a bosom filled with all the romance and high-souled sentiment of her mountain birth and education. In the commotions of the unhappy period above alluded to, Mr Cameron, although warmly attached to the cause of the Pretender, took personally no active part; but he assisted in its promotion by secret supplies of money, proportioned in amount to his means. In the result of the struggle—which, although he was not yet aware of it, had already arrived at a consummation on Culloden Moor—neither he nor his daughter had anything to fear for themselves; but this did not by any means relieve them from all anxiety on the momentous occasion. The father had to fear for many dear and intimate friends, and the daughter for the fate of a lover who was in the ranks of the rebel army. This lover was Malcolm M'Gregor of Strontian—a warm-hearted, high-spirited young man, the son of a neighbouring tacksman, to whom Grace had been long attached, and by whom she was most sincerely and tenderly loved in return. M'Gregor at this period held a captain's commission in the service of the Prince, and had distinguished himself by his bravery in the various contests with the royal troops that had occurred during the rebellion.

Having given this brief preliminary sketch, and advising the reader that the precise period at which our tale opens is on the second day after the battle of Culloden, and the locality a certain little parlour in Duntruskin House, we proceed with our story. Seated in this little parlour, on the day in question, Grace Cameron—occasionally employing her needle, but more frequently pausing to muse on the absent, to reflect on the past, or to anticipate the future—awaited, with intense anxiety, some intelligence regarding the movements and fortunes of the rebel army, with whose fate she deemed her own connected, since it was shared by one who was dearer to her than all the earth besides.

Grace did not expect any special communication on this important subject; but she knew that common fame would soon bring a rumour of every occurrence of consequence which should take place at this interesting crisis. With this expectation, she anxiously watched, from her window, the approach of every stranger to the house; and, when one appeared, was the first to meet and to question him regarding the events of the day. At length a report reached her in which all agreed—for her informers had differed widely in others—that a great event had taken place, that a sanguinary battle had been fought; but, this admitted, the usual discrepancies and contradictions followed. Some declared that the Prince's army was defeated, and that a number of his leading men had been killed and taken prisoners; others, with equal confidence asserted that the rebels were

victorious, and that the King's troops were flying in all directions. Elated and depressed by turns, by these conflicting rumours, Grace awaited, in dreadful anxiety, some certain intelligence regarding what had taken place. It was while in this state of mind, and while gazing listlessly and almost unconsciously from her little parlour window on the wide prospect which it commanded, that her eye was suddenly riveted on one particular spot. This was an abrupt turn in the great road leading to Inverness, which passed Duntruskin House at the distance of about half a mile, and from which, at this moment, the sun's rays were suddenly reflected, in bright, brief, and frequent flashes, as if from many surfaces of polished steel. Grace's heart beat violently; for she instantly and rightly conjectured that the dark body which now gradually but rapidly came in sight, and from which the corruscations which had first attracted her attention emanated, was composed of armed men; but whether they were rebels or King's troops, the distance prevented her from ascertaining. In this state of doubt, however, she did not long remain. Their rapid approach soon shewed her that they were a party of royalist dragoons—a circumstance which threw her into the utmost terror. Nor was this feeling lessened by her perceiving them leave the highway and make directly for the house. On seeing this, Grace, in the greatest alarm, hastened to seek out her father, whom she found busily engaged in writing, and utterly unconscious of the threatened visit. When informed of it, his countenance became pale, and his whole frame agitated; for he dreaded that his secret connection with the rebels had been discovered, and that he was now about to be apprehended; and these were also the fears of his daughter. Without saying a word, however, in reply to what had just been communicated to him, Mr Cameron threw down his pen, started hastily to his feet, and hurried to the window, beneath which, so rapid had been their motions, the troopers were already drawn up. The commander of the party—for there was only one officer—was a little thickset man, about forty-two years of age, with a red, florid, vulgar countenance, expressive at once of gross sensuality, much indulgence in the bottle, and a total absence of all feeling. In the manner of his dress he evidently affected the military dandy: his shirt neck reached nearly to the point of his nose; his gloves were of the purest white; a showy silk handkerchief was carelessly thrust into his breast, with just enough left projecting to indicate its presence. Notwithstanding this display of finery, however, and in despite of a splendid uniform made after the smartest military fashion of the time, Captain Stubbs was still exceedingly unlike a gentleman, and still more unlike a soldier. The first he was not, either by birth or education; the latter he had neither talents nor energy of character sufficient ever to become. The absence, however, of these qualities in Captain Stubbs, was amply supplied by others. He was vain, irascible, conceited, and cruel; brutal and overbearing in his manners; and coarse and utterly regardless of the feelings of others in his language. He was, moreover, both an epicure and a glutton; and, to complete his very amiable character, a most egregious coward.

Having drawn up his party in front of the house as

already mentioned, Captain Stubbs, before dismounting threw a scrutinizing glance at several of the windows of the building, as if to ascertain what sort of quarters he might expect—a point with him of the last importance. In the course of this brief survey, his eye alighted on that occupied by Mr Cameron and his daughter, whom he saluted with an insolent and familiar nod. In the next instant, he was at the door, where he was met by Mr Cameron himself, with a countenance strongly expressive of the alarm and uncertainty which he felt, and could not conceal, regarding the issue of the interview now about to take place.

On their meeting—"Ha," said Stubbs, addressing the latter, "you are, I presume, Mr—Mr—hang me, I forget your name, sir! Mine, sir, is Captain Stubbs, of the — regiment of dragoons. I find your name is in my list of—of—here the Captain, (who had, by this time, been conducted to the diningroom,) perfectly indifferent as to the particular of finishing his sentence, began to pull off his gloves, and to detach his spurs from his boots with the air of one who is determined to be quite at home—"of—of," he continued to repeat, with the utmost disregard of ordinary politeness, and with the most profound contempt for the feelings of his host, who, taking alarm at the ominous hiatus, which he fully expected would be filled up by his being ranked amongst the proscribed, waited patiently and meekly the conveniency of Captain Stubbs—"of—of," repeated the Captain slowly, after having divested himself of his accoutrements, and otherwise prepared himself for an hour or two's enjoyment—"of the friends of the government," he at length said—and the words instantly relieved both his host and his daughter from the most dreadful apprehensions. "So I have just beat you up," continued Captain Stubbs, "*en passant*, as 'twere, to tell you of the total defeat of the rebels, at a place called Culloden, and to have a morsel of dinner—eh, old boy?—and an hour or two's quarters for the men and horses."

"Much obliged for the honour," replied Mr Cameron, ironically, and accompanying the expression with a polite and formal bow; but, at the same time, cautiously guarding against any expression of his real feelings on this occasion, amongst which was a strong inclination to kick the redoubted Captain Stubbs to the door. His prudence, however, prevented him embroiling himself in this or any other way with a visiter who had the means of retaliation so much in his power.

Immediately after making the announcement above recorded, Captain Stubbs added—"And now, Mr—A—a—Pray, what the devil's your name, sir?"

"My name, sir," replied the party interrogated, "is Cameron—Ewan Cameron."

"Ah! Cameron—ay, Cameron," repeated Captain Stubbs, knitting his brows, and endeavouring to look very dignified. "Why, then, sir, I want some brandy and water; and pray, see that some of your fellows look after my horses." Having been provided with, and having swallowed a very handsome modicum of the beverage he had called for, Captain Stubbs went on—"I say, Cameron, can any of your brutes, your Hottentots, prepare me a fowl, *à la Condé*?"

"Why, Captain Stubbs," replied Mr Cameron, whose anxiety to keep well with the government and all connected with it induced him to suppress the resentment which the amazing insolence of his guest was so well calculated to excite—"our cookery is in general of a very plain sort."

"Ay, oh! boiled beef and cabbage, I suppose," interrupted Captain Stubbs, with a sneer.

"But my daughter," continued Mr Cameron, without noticing the impertinent interruption, "has, I believe, some little skill in these matters, and will be happy, I doubt not, to make some attempt to produce the

dish you speak of; I will not, however, answer for her success."

"Your daughter, Mr A—a—a; ay, your daughter," said Captain Stubbs; "why, let me see—yes, let her try it; but zounds, if she spoil it, it shall be at her peril. No, no, he added, after a moment's thought—"I'll tell you what Mr Cameron—as it would be a devil of a business to have the thing botched, I suppose I must give instructions about it myself: so, pray, order every one out of your kitchen but your cook, and I shall go down stairs presently and see the thing properly done. In the meantime, Mr Thingumbob, call in your daughter, that I may have some conversation with her on the subject, that I may learn how far she may be trusted in this affair."

Mr Cameron immediately rung the bell, and desired the servant who obeyed the summons to inform his daughter that he wished to see her immediately. "And, that she may not be altogether unprepared," he added, "say to her that I wish to introduce her to Captain Stubbs."

"Ah!" ejaculated the latter, with a supercilious nod, in acknowledgment of his acquiescence in the terms of the message. In a few minutes, Miss Cameron entered the apartment. "Ah! Miss Cameron, I presume," said the Captain, with a haughty inclination of his head, but without moving from his seat. "Your father, madam," he continued, "tells me that you know something of *le grand cuisine*. Now, pray, madam, how do you compound your sauce for a fowl, *à la Condé*? Eh, ma'am? Answer me that, if you please. Do you use chopped veal or not? If you don't, you spoil the dish—that's all. I've seen mutton used, but it's downright abomination."

"Why, sir," replied Miss Cameron, haughtily, shocked and disgusted with the insolence and gross epicureanism of the brute, "I am not accustomed to be catechised on these subjects, or on any other, in the very peculiar manner which you seem to have adopted."

"No!" exclaimed the gallant Captain, starting up to a sitting posture; and, at the same time, seizing his shirt collars with finger and thumb, and tugging them up, at least, another inch higher on his face. "I say, you are uncivil, and confoundedly unpolite, madam. I am a King's officer, madam—and a soldier, madam; and, by Heavens, neither man nor woman shall insult Captain Stubbs with impunity."

"Nobly said, Captain," replied Miss Cameron, with an air of the mock heroic; "draw your sword, sir, and lay your insulter dead at your feet; or, if you are not altogether so sanguinary, you may send me a challenge by my waiting-maid, who, I dare say, will have no objection to act as my second in any little affair of honour—such as this is likely to be."

"Miss Cameron, madam—Mr Cameron," stuttered and spluttered out Captain Stubbs, starting to his feet, his face reddening with rage, and every feature exhibiting symptoms of the high indignation which he felt. "Mr Cameron, sir, I command you, sir, in the King's name, to turn your daughter out of this apartment, otherwise I shall order up half-a-dozen of my fellows, with pistol and sabre, to drive her from my presence; and it is not improbable, sir, that I may have her apprehended and tried, and shot as a rebel, sir."

Whilst delivering himself of this appalling speech, Captain Stubbs strutted up and down the apartment, chafing with rage; at one time impatiently tugging on his gloves, at another buttoning up his coat with an air of determination which he thought, no doubt, would strike terror into the breasts of his auditors.

Mr Cameron, unwilling that matters should be carried any farther, and still desirous to keep up appearances with his guest, now approached his daughter; and, taking her gently by the hand, and at the same time leading her towards the door—

Grace, he said, "I think you had better retire. You do not appear disposed," he added—smiling in his daughter's face as he spoke, but taking care to conceal this expression of his real feelings from the enraged Captain—"to make yourself agreeable to-day; and, therefore, it may be as well that you carry your temper to some other quarter."

"Oh, certainly, sir, since it is your pleasure," replied Miss Cameron, tripping towards the door, where she stood for an instant—looked full at the Captain—said she would expect to hear from him at his convenience, as to time, place, and weapons—made him a stately courtesy, and left the apartment.

When she had gone—"Don't think I am afraid of her, Mr Cameron," said Captain Stubbs. "I am a man, sir, and a soldier, sir" he continued, still pacing the room, in great indignation at the treatment he had received from his fair antagonist, "and not to be frightened with trifles; but I say, Mr A—a—," he added, in a more subdued tone, "as I am not a man to permit such small occurrences as this to direct my attention from any important object I may have in view, I beg to know, distinctly, what you have for dinner, and I insist upon you, at the same time, recollecting, sir, that I am a King's officer, sir, and have a right to civil treatment."

"What sort of a dinner you are to have, Captain Stubbs," replied Mr Cameron, "I really do not exactly know; but you may rest assured that, in so far as it lies with me, you shall have civil treatment; and I request of you to point out to me in what way I may contribute to your comfort."

"Ah! well—very well," replied Captain Stubbs. "Am I, then, or am I not, to have a fowl, *à la Condé*, sir—eh?"

"Surely, sir," said his host, "if any of my people can prepare such a dish as you speak of, you shall have it."

"What the devil, then!" exclaimed Stubbs, passionately; "and am I to lose my dinner if your Hottentots should not happen to know how to cook it? No! hang me, sir, I'll superintend the thing myself. I'll do it with my own hands, if you will shew me the way to your kitchen."

With this request Mr Cameron immediately complied, by marshalling the Captain to the scene of his proposed labours. On arriving in the kitchen, he forthwith prepared himself for the work he was about to undertake, by throwing off his regimental coat, rolling up his shirt sleeves to his shoulders, and seizing on a large carving knife which happened to be lying within his reach. Thus prepared, Captain Stubbs, after having been provided, by his own special orders, with a pair of choice fowls, lemon juice, bacon, parsley, thyme, bay leaf, cloves, &c. &c., commenced operations; and, forgetting his dignity in his devotion to good living, he might now be seen smeared, from finger ends to elbows, with grease and offal, earnestly engaged in disembowling, with his own hands, the fowls on which he meant to exercise his gastronomic skill.

Leaving Captain Stubbs, of his Majesty's — regiment of horse, thus becomingly employed, we shall return to a personage who, we should suppose, will be fully more interesting to the reader. This is Grace Cameron. That lady, on leaving the presence of her father, and him of the fowl *à la Condé*, returned to her own apartment, when, recollecting that the dragoons were still in front of the house, she walked up to the window, to gratify her curiosity by taking another peep at the warlike display; and it was while thus employed, that Miss Cameron, for the first time, perceived that there was a prisoner amongst the soldiers. The prisoner was a boy of about thirteen or fourteen years of age. He was mounted behind one of the dragoons, to whom he was secured by a cord, which was passed round the bodies of both. Grace thought she perceived that the boy looked up at the windows of the house with more earnestness and anxiety than curiosity; and, when his eye at length rested on that she occupied, he threw a peculiar intelligence into

his look, accompanied by certain expressive but almost imperceptible signs, that convinced her that he was desirous of holding some communication with her. Satisfied of this, Grace raised the window at which she stood, and beckoned to the sergeant of the troop to approach nearer. He rode up to within a few yards of the house.

"Is that poor boy a prisoner, sir?" inquired Miss Cameron.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the sergeant, touching his hat.

"For what has he been taken up? What has he done?"

"Done, ma'am! Lord love you, ma'am—excuse me—he has done nothing as I know of; but our Captain suspects him of being a rebel."

"Where did you fall in with him?"

"Why, ma'am, we picked him up on the road as we came along this morning. Captain saw him skulking behind a hedge. 'There's a blackguard looking rascal, sergeant,' says he. 'He has the rebel cut about him as perfect as a picture. Pick him up, and strap him to one of the fellows, and we'll see what the cat-o'-nine-tails will bring out of him.'"

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Grace, shocked at this instance of military despotism, "is it possible that such a state of things exists—that you can apprehend and punish whomsoever you please, without a shadow of crime being established against them? You cannot have such a power, sergeant. It is impossible."

"Oh, bless you, ma'am, but we have, though," replied the sergeant. "Captain may hang or shoot a dozen every day if he has a mind, without ever axing them a question. We could never get through our work otherwise; and, as to this young rogue's being a rebel, there's no doubt of it. He's all in rags; and, as Captain says, every poor-looking, ragged rascal is sure to be a rebel."

"Pretty grounds, truly, on which to subject a man to the treatment of a felon!" said Miss Cameron. "However," she continued, "will it be any dereliction of your duty, sergeant to permit me to speak for a moment with the unfortunate lad?"

"By no means, ma'am," replied the sergeant. "Provided he's kept fast till Captain's pleasure is known regarding him, I don't see it signifies a pinch of gunpowder who speaks to him."

Availing herself of the permission granted her, Grace was in an instant afterwards beside the prisoner, whose looks brightened up with an expression of extreme delight as she approached him. After asking the lad a few trivial questions, she observed him cautiously stealing something forth from a concealment in his dress. It was a letter. Watching an opportunity, he slipped this document unperceived into her hand.

Trembling with agitation, although she knew not well for what, Grace crammed the letter into her bosom, and saying to its bearer that she would speak with him again, she hurried into the house, and sought a retired apartment, when, pulling it from her bosom, she discovered, from the handwriting of the address, that it was from Malcolm McGregor. With a beating heart and trembling hand, she opened it, and read—

"DEAREST GRACE,—All is lost. The Prince's army is defeated and dispersed, and I am now a wandering fugitive in my native land, with the axe of the executioner suspended over my neck. This is a dreadful reverse, and carries with it destruction to all our hopes—to mine, individually, utter annihilation. I have only time to add, dearest Grace, that, if I can escape the bloodhounds that are in pursuit of us, I must seek safety in a foreign land. I will, however, endeavour to see you before I go. I *must* see you, Grace, and shall do so at all hazards. I have hitherto escaped unhurt. God bless you," &c. &c.

With mingled feelings of joy and grief—joy to find that her lover still lived, and had escaped the dangers of the battle-field, and grief for the unfortunate position in which

he was now placed—Grace returned the letter to her bosom, and hastily left the apartment, when she was met by her father, who insisted upon her joining Captain Stubbs and himself at dinner; requesting her, at the same time, to conduct herself in a conciliatory way to the Captain, and thus to endeavour to make her peace with him, as he was such a man, he said, as might occasion them trouble if allowed to leave the house with any feelings of irritation towards them.

Obedient to her father's commands, Grace joined the party, and not only avoided giving Stubbs any farther offence, but got so far into his good graces that she actually prevailed on him to order the release of the boy who had been the bearer of Malcolm's letter—an order which Grace took care to see immediately fulfilled; nay, Captain Stubbs not only did this, but began, after dinner, when his temper had been mollified by the good things of which he had partaken, to play the gallant—and in this character he was standing at a window with Miss Cameron, when, suddenly dropping the awkward badinage which he had been attempting—

“But who the devil have we got here?” he exclaimed, his eye having caught a man in a mean dress, who, on discovering the dragoons as he approached the house, suddenly stopped short, and, in evident surprise and alarm, sprung to one side of the road and endeavoured to conceal himself behind a low and rather thin hedge that ran parallel to the house, and directly in front of it. Stubbs pointed him out to Miss Cameron; she started and turned pale; for, meanly dressed as he was, she at once recognised in the stranger her lover, Malcolm M'Gregor. He had come, she doubted not, in this disguise to pay the visit which his letter had promised. In the meantime, Stubbs, flushed with the wine he had drunk, and desirous of shewing Miss Cameron his promptitude and energy on sudden emergencies, threw up the window violently, and called out to the soldiers to pursue the fugitive, and to fire upon him if he did not surrender himself. It was in vain that Miss Cameron—at this trying moment forgetting the additional danger to which the warm and earnest expressions of her interest in the fate of her lover would subject him—implored Captain Stubbs to allow him to escape.

“For Heaven's sake,” she exclaimed, in the agony of her feelings, and seizing him almost convulsively by the hand as she spoke, “do not commit murder! Do not send the soldiers after him, Captain. I will do anything for you—I will go on my bended knees to you,” said the distracted girl, “if you will call your men back, and allow him to escape.” To this appeal Stubbs made no other reply than by repeating, with additional vehemence, his orders to the soldiers; half a dozen of whom, with the sergeant at their head, now galloped furiously off in the direction which he pointed out. Then, turning round to Miss Cameron, with a look of mingled triumph and self-complacency—

“Why, madam,” he said, “we must do our duty. We soldiers musn't stand on trifles. The fellow must be shot; and, if he isn't shot, he must be hanged—that's all; so there's but two ways of it—eh? Tight work that, madam, isn't it—eh?”

At this instant, the report of a carabine was heard, and immediately after, another and another.

“O Heavens! they have killed him, they have killed him!” exclaimed Miss Cameron, covering her face with her hands, and throwing herself into a seat in an agony of horror and despair. “They have murdered him, the ruthless savages. O Malcolm, my beloved Malcolm! that you had never loved me, that you had never looked on this fatal face!—for it is I, and I alone, that have been the cause of your cruel and untimely death.” And here the violence of her feelings choked her utterance, and she burst into a flood of tears.

Fortunately, Captain Stubbs was too intently occupied in watching the proceedings of the party who were in pursuit of the fugitive, to hear all that Miss Cameron had permitted to escape her in her agony; or, indeed, to notice her distress at all. Quizzing-glass in hand, he was employed in looking at the chase, and, ever and anon, giving utterance to the various feelings which its various turns excited.

“Ha, you've pinned him at last, sergeant,” muttered the Captain, in his own peculiar and elegant phraseology, on perceiving the fugitive stumble and fall, immediately after a carabine had been discharged at him by the officer just named.

“No, you blind rascal,” again muttered Stubbs, on seeing the fallen man taking once more to his feet, and clearing hedges and ditches with an activity that sufficiently shewed he had sustained, at any rate, no serious injury. “You haven't touched him. I'll have you back to the ranks again for that, you scoundrel, or my name's not Stubbs.” And, after a moment's pause—“Ay, ay, you villain,” he added, “he's off, he's off; you'll never get within shot of him again. Hang me, if I don't get every man of you flogged to death for this!”

When Captain Stubbs said the fugitive had escaped, he was right. The nature of the ground had been all along greatly in his favour, being so interspersed and encumbered with hedges, ditches, walls, and trees, that the dragoons had little or no chance of ever being able to overtake him, should he escape their carabines; and these had hitherto been discharged at him without effect.

The last effort of the fugitive—that which secured his final escape, and which had called forth the expressions of Captain Stubbs' displeasure—was, his plunging into a thick plantation that grew on the face of a steep and rocky hill, where it was impossible for the troopers to pursue him. The latter finding this, two or three shots were discharged at random into the wood; a volley of oaths followed; and the pursuit was abandoned.

The dragoons turned their horses' heads towards Duntrusk House, where they soon after rejoined their comrades.

During the pursuit, Miss Cameron awaited its result in deep but silent wretchedness, till, aroused by the delightful intelligence communicated involuntarily by Stubbs, that the fugitive yet lived—

“He is not killed, then!” she exclaimed, in a paroxysm of rapture, starting from her seat, her face flushed with joy, and her soft dark eye beaming with inexpressible happiness. “He is not killed, then!” she said, rushing wildly to the window. “Oh, thank God, thank God for his mercies!” she exclaimed, on perceiving that the fugitive appeared to be still unhurt, and that he was continuing his exertions to escape with unabated energy.

Unable, however, to look longer upon the doubtful and critical struggle between the pursuers and the pursued, she had again retired from the window, and again her fears for the eventual safety of her lover had returned. These, however, Captain Stubbs' latter exclamations had once more removed.

“Off! is he off?” she wildly repeated, taking up the words in which the joyful event had been communicated; and she again flew to the window. “Dear Captain Stubbs,” she exclaimed, forgetting, in the excitement of the moment, all former feelings and antipathies regarding him she addressed—“is he indeed off? Has—has”—and she was about to pronounce the name of M'Gregor, when a sudden recollection of the imprudence of doing so struck her, and she merely added—“has the man really escaped?” Having quickly satisfied herself that it was so, Miss Cameron, unable longer to control the warm and overflowing sense of gratitude which she felt towards the Omnipotent Being

who had protected the beloved object of her affections in the moment of peril, clasped her hands together, looked upwards with a countenance strongly expressive of thankfulness and joy, and breathed a short but fervent prayer of thanksgiving.

The scene was one which Stubbs could not comprehend. He thought it very odd, but he said nothing. In a few seconds after, Grace left the apartment—a step to which she was urged by two motives. Captain Stubbs had threatened that he would instantly go himself, with his whole troop, on foot, to search the wood in which the fugitive had concealed himself—a measure which, if executed, would almost certainly secure the capture of M'Gregor, or, at least, render it a very probable event. The other motive, proceeding from this circumstance, was, to see whether she could not fall on any means of preventing the threatened expedition.

On leaving the apartment, Grace met the sergeant on his way to Captain Stubbs, to make his report of the proceeding in which he had just been engaged. Without well knowing for what precise purpose, but with some general idea that she might prevail on him, by some means or other, to second her views in defeating the object of Stubbs' proposed search, she stopped him, and hurriedly conducted him into an unoccupied apartment.

"O sergeant!" she exclaimed, in great agitation, and scarcely knowing what she said, "will you, will you do me a favour—a great favour, sergeant? For God's sake, do not refuse me!"

The man looked at her in utter amazement.

"Your Captain," continued Grace, "proposes renewing the pursuit of the person that has just escaped you. I am interested in that person. Now, sergeant, will you do what you can to prevent this search taking place, or to render it unavailing if it does?" And with these last words she put a purse, containing ten guineas, into the sergeant's hand.

The man looked from the gift to the giver, and again from the latter to the former, in silent astonishment, for several seconds. At length—

"Why, miss," he said, "since you *are* in such a taking about this matter, and as I don't mind a poor fellow's escaping now and then, I *will* do what I can to serve you in the case." And he put the purse into his pocket.

"Oh, thank you, sergeant, thank you!—God bless you for these words!" said Grace, in a rapture of joy. "But how, how, sergeant, will you manage it?"

"Oh, leave me alone for that, miss," replied the latter; "I know how to manage it, and I'll do it effectually, I warrant you. I can send Captain in any direction I please on the shortest notice. He don't like the smell of gunpowder, tho' he be a soldier; and, when he can, always follows the wind that brings it."

In a few minutes after, Serjeant Higginbotham was in the presence of the pink of chivalry, Captain Stubbs. Having informed the latter briefly of the result of the pursuit, he added, that, when he was out, he had seen "something suspicious."

"What was it?" inquired Stubbs, in a tone and with a look of alarm.

"Why, sir," responded the sergeant, "a crowd of people assembled on the face of the hill where the fellow escaped us."

"The devil! Are they rebels, think you, sergeant?" said the Captain, with increased perturbation.

"An' please your Honour, I think as how there is no doubt of it," replied Higginbotham.

"In great force, you say, sergeant!" added Stubbs; "in overwhelming force—madness to attack them; you can depone on oath before a court-martial?"

"To be sure, I can, sir," rejoined the former.

"That's a good fellow; order my horse to the door in

stantly, and let the men fall in" These orders were immediately obeyed; and, in the next instant, Captain Stubbs appeared at the door.

"In what direction are these rascals?" he said, addressing the sergeant, as he was about to mount his charger.

"In that direction, your Honour," replied the latter, pointing towards the place of M'Gregor's concealment.

"Ah!" ejaculated Captain Stubbs; and, in a moment after, he was in full gallop, followed by his whole troop, in the opposite direction.

We should certainly fail were we to attempt to describe the joy of Grace Cameron when she beheld the departure of the dragoons. That joy, as will readily be believed, was extreme.

For some time after the troopers had left the house, Grace continued to keep her eye on the spot where M'Gregor had disappeared, in the hope that he would again shew himself. Nor was she mistaken. Malcolm appeared also to have been able to see from his hiding-place the departure of the soldiers; for they had not been more than a quarter of an hour gone when he again appeared at the skirts of the wood where he had been concealed, and made towards the house. On recognising him, Grace hastened out to meet him.

This meeting we need not describe, as it very much resembled all other meetings of a similar kind—only that it was, perhaps, a little more interesting, from the peculiar situation of the parties. The lovers had much to say to each other, and much was said in a very small space of time. Amongst other things, Malcolm informed Grace that it was his intention to request her father for an asylum for three or four days, when, he said, it was his intention to proceed to the coast, and to endeavour to effect his escape from thence to France.

The asylum that Malcolm requested was readily granted by Mr Cameron, and a place of concealment was found for him, which promised every security—and there was need that it should; for, on the following day, the surrounding country was filled with soldiers, who were everywhere making the strictest search for the fugitive insurgents; and of these several parties had already paid domiciliary visits to Duntruskin House.

The constant state of terror and alarm for the safety of her lover, in which these visits kept Grace Cameron, and the imminent risk he ran of being discovered, at length suggested to the romantic girl an undertaking which well accorded with her strong affection and noble spirit; but which certainly, had it been known, must have appeared to all but herself as utterly hopeless.

On the second day after the occurrence just related, Grace, seizing such an opportunity as she thought favourable for her purpose, suddenly flung her arms around her father's neck, and said, smiling affectionately in his face as she spoke—

"Father, I am going to ask you a favour.

"Well, Grace, my dear," replied he, "I tell you, before you ask it, that, if it be reasonable in itself, and within my power, I shall grant it."

"Thank you, my dear father," said Grace; "but I am afraid you will *not* think it reasonable. Nevertheless, you must grant it."

"Nay, Grace, that's more than I bargain for," rejoined Mr Cameron, laughing. "But let me know what it is you want, and I shall then be better able to judge of its propriety."

"Well, then, father," replied Grace, "will you allow me to go from home for two days, to take my pony with me—for I mean to travel—and allow Macpherson to accompany me?"

"Where do you propose going to, Grace?" inquired her father, rather gravely.

"That's a question, father," said his daughter, "that relates to a part of the bargain I mean to drive with you which I have not yet arrived at, and which will seem to you the most unreasonable of the whole, I dare say. You must not ask me where I am going to, nor what I'm going to do. On my return, you shall know all."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr Cameron; "why, this is certainly strange, Grace—I don't understand it; and, what is more, I must say I do not like it; but, as I have every reliance on your good sense and discretion, my child, I will grant your request. But I really wish you would tell me what it means; for you cannot suppose that I can be otherwise than uneasy till you return."

"I have your unconditional consent, father, to my terms," said Grace, playfully; "so you must not put any questions; and, as to your being uneasy about me, I assure you there is not the slightest occasion; for my project involves no chance whatever of personal injury to myself."

"Well, well, Grace," replied her father, "since you assure me of that, and since I have certainly given my consent to your request, I will keep my word. You may go when you please."

Delighted with her success, Grace flew to give the necessary orders regarding her intended journey; and amongst these were instructions to Macpherson—a favourite servant of long standing in the family—to have her pony, and a horse for himself, in readiness at an early hour on the following morning. When this hour arrived, it found Grace and her attendant jogging forward, at a pretty round pace, on the road leading to the town of Inverness.

Leaving her to prosecute her mysterious journey, we shall return to Duntrusk House, where a scene was about to occur of no ordinary interest.

On the second day after Grace's departure, a young Irish officer, who had been in the service of the Pretender, and who was well acquainted with both Mr Cameron and M'Gregor—with the latter intimately, as they had served together—arrived at Duntrusk House. He, too, was a fugitive, and was now endeavouring to find his way back to Ireland, and to avoid the numerous military parties that were scouring the country.

This gentleman, whose name was Terence Sullivan, was a genuine Milesian. He was frank, open, generous, warm-hearted, and brave to a fault; for he was rash and impetuous, and never stopped an instant to reckon on the odds that might be against him in any case, either of love or war. On he went, reckless of consequences and fearless of results. Terence was thus, in truth, rather a dangerous ally in cases where either caution, deliberation, or forbearance were necessary, and where their opposites were attended with peril. Such as he was, however, he now appeared at Duntrusk, on his way to the coast for the purpose already mentioned. But Mr Sullivan brought a piece of intelligence with him which it was rather singular he should have fallen in with; and it was intelligence that greatly surprised and alarmed both Cameron and M'Gregor. This was, that the place of concealment of the latter was known, and that he might every moment expect to be apprehended; and, to shew that his information was well founded, he described the place of M'Gregor's retreat with such accuracy that it was instantly recognised, and left no doubt that a special information on the subject had been laid by some person or other. Sullivan said, that the way in which he came by the intelligence, was this:—He had slept on the preceding night in a small public house, and having been much fatigued, had retired early to bed. This bed was in a recess in the wall, with a sliding door on its front, which he drew close. Soon after he had lain down, a party of military came to the house in quest of refreshments; and, being shewn into the apartment where he lay, he overheard all that passed amongst them; and part of

this conversation, he said, was what he had just communicated.

On receiving this startling intelligence, Mr Cameron hastened to inform M'Gregor of his danger, when an earnest conversation ensued between them as to what steps the latter ought now to take to secure his safety.

Leaving them, for an instant, thus employed, we will return to Terence, who, having been left alone by Mr Cameron while he went to speak with his protegee, had taken his station at a window which overlooked the approach to the house, and was there humming away, with great spirit, one of his lively national airs, when his eye was suddenly caught by the red coats of a party of dragoons advancing towards the house. Terence's eye instantly brightened up with an almost joyous expression, when he saw them; for he anticipated some amusement, in the way of fighting, as he took it for granted that the house was to be defended to the last extremity. Having at once settled this point he hurriedly looked about the apartment, to see whether he could not find any eligible weapon wherewith to resist the approaching foe; and, in this particular, his luck was singularly great indeed. Over the fireplace there hung a rifle gun and a flask of powder, and on the mantelpiece were several bullets that fitted to a hair—the very things wanted. Never was man so fortunate. Delighted beyond measure with his good luck, Terence seized the rifle, loaded it in a twinkling, and again took his place at the window, which he now banged up to its utmost height, and stood ready for mischief; never dreaming that it was at all necessary to consult the master of the house as to the manner in which he meant to receive his visitors, or conceiving that anything else could be thought of in the case but fighting.

"Blessings on them, the darlings! there they are," said Terence to himself, as he stood at the window in the way already described, "as large as life, and as lively as two-year-olds." Muttering this, he raised his rifle, and putting it on full cock—"You'll see now, my jewels," he added, "how beautifully I'll turn over that fellow on the white charger." He fired, and almost in the same instant the unfortunate man whom he had selected, fell lifeless from his horse.

Terence gave a shout of joy and triumph at the success of his shot, and was proceeding with the utmost expedition to re-load, when his arm was suddenly seized from behind by Mr Cameron, who, in amazement at his proceedings, and in great distress for their very serious result, which he had seen from another part of the house, had hastened to the apartment where he was.

"Good heavens, Mr Sullivan! what is the meaning of this?—what are you doing?—what have you done?" he exclaimed, in great agitation. "We shall be all put to the sword—by the laws of war, our lives are forfeited. It was foolish—it was madness, Mr Sullivan."

"Faith, my dear fellow," replied Terence, not a little astonished that his proceedings should have been found fault with, "you may call it what you please; but no man shall ever convince Terence Sullivan that it's either folly or madness to kill an enemy when you can." At this moment, they were joined by M'Gregor; and, in the next instant, the commanding officer of the troop—a very different man from Stubbs—entered the apartment, with his drawn sword in one hand, and a pistol in the other, and followed by about a dozen of his men; the remainder being drawn up in front of the house.

"Gentlemen," said the officer on his entrance, "you perceive, I trust, that further resistance will be vain, and can only bring down destruction on your own heads."

"Not so fast, my good fellow—we perceive nothing of the kind," exclaimed Terence, forcibly releasing himself from the gripe which Mr Cameron still held of him, and,

in the next instant, preparing his rifle for another charge. "Just keep off a bit, and let us have fair play for our money. Shot about, my beautiful fellows. It's all I ask, and no gentleman can refuse so reasonable a request."

"Terence, Terence!" exclaimed Mr Cameron, again laying his hand on the right arm of his hot-headed friend, "listen to me, I beseech you as a special favour. I request of you, I beg of you, to desist."

"Well, well, my dear fellow," replied Terence, somewhat doggedly, and, at the same time, resting the butt of his rifle on the floor, "do as you please, only it's a cursed pity you wouldn't allow a few shots to be exchanged between these gentlemen and me, if it were only for the respectability of your own house."

"Don't you know, sir," here interposed the commanding officer of the party, addressing Terence, "that by the laws of war, I could"—

"Och, no more of that blarney, if you please, my dear fellow," interrupted Terence, impatiently. "Mr Cameron has told me all about that already."

"If he has, then, sir," said the officer haughtily, "you know the extent of the obligation you lie under to my clemency."

Terence was about to reply to this insinuation, and probably in no very measured terms, when he was stopped short by Mr Cameron, who dreaded that some immediate act of violence would result from the continuance of this irritating conversation.

"Mr Cameron," said the officer, now proceeding to the real purpose of his visit, "my business here is to make this gentleman"—and he bowed slightly to M'Gregor—"my prisoner, although this is not precisely the spot in which I expected to find him. I feel it to be a painful duty, sir," he said, now directly addressing Malcolm; "but it is unavoidable."

"I am aware of it, sir," replied the latter, "and am obliged by the consideration which induces you to say it is unpleasant to you. I have no doubt it is. I am ready to attend you, sir."

The officer bowed; and now turning to Terence, "You will please, also, sir, consider yourself as my prisoner. Your rashness and folly have placed you in a very precarious predicament. Sergeant," he added, addressing a non-commissioned officer, "remain here, keeping six men with you, with these gentlemen, till I return; and see that you guard against escape."

Saying this, he again bowed, and left the apartment. In a minute after, he was mounted, and off with his troop, in pursuit of some object of a similar kind with that which had brought him to Duntrusk.

"This is a devil of a business, Mac," said Terence, when the officer had left the apartment; then sinking his voice, so as to be heard only by Malcolm—"but I think we three might clear the room of these fellows, if we set to it with right good will. What say you to try? I'll begin."

"Hush," said M'Gregor, under breath—"madness, Terence, madness. We are fairly in for it, and must just abide the consequences. Our doom is sealed. In plain English, we must hang for it, Terence."

"Faith and that we won't, if we can help it, Mac; and we'll try whether it can be helped or not," said Terence. "We'll get the fellows drunk, if we can, and that will be always one step gained.—I say, Sergeant," he added, now speaking out, and confronting the person he addressed, "I think you're a countryman of my own."

"I don't know, sir," replied the sergeant, in a brogue that at once shewed Terence's conjecture was right—"I am from Ireland."

"I thought so," rejoined the latter. "I saw potatoes and butter-milk written on your sweet countenance as plain as a pikestaff. Perhaps, now, you wouldn't have any objection

to take a small matter of refreshment yourself, nor to allow your men to partake of it, if our friend, Mr Cameron here, would be kind enough to offer it."

"No, certainly not, sir," replied the sergeant.

"Mr Cameron," continued Terence, and now turning to the person he named, "would ye be good enough to order a little whisky for the lads here; for we'll have a long march of it by and by, and they'll be the better of something to help them over the stones."

A large black bottle of the stimulative spoken of by Terence was instantly brought; when the latter, installing himself master of the ceremonies, seized it, and began to deal about its contents with unsparing liberality.

"Come, now, my lads," he said, after having completed three rounds of the black-jack, "make yourselves as comfortable as a rat in a corn chest. Here's the stuff," he continued, slapping the bottle, and commencing a fourth progress with it, "that'll make ye forget the sins and sorrows of your wicked lives. Won't it now, Sergeant?"

"Troth and it will, sir, I'll be sworn," replied the latter whose eyes were already twinkling in his head, and his articulation fast thickening into utter unintelligibility; "it's as good for one as a sight of the quartermaster at pay-day."

"Right, Sergeant, right," exclaimed Terence—"I see your education hasn't been neglected. You have had some experience of the world, Sergeant, and know some of its hardships."

"Faith an' it's yourself, sir, may say that of a man who has been hundreds of times in the saddle thirteen days out of the fortnight; living in the air, as one may say, night and day, and never allowed to put his foot on the ground, no more than if it had been covered with china tea-cups."

"No joke, Sergeant—by my faith, no joke," replied Terence; and again he made a round with the bottle, a proceeding which brought matters fairly to a crisis. The faces of the soldiers suddenly became as red as their coats; their eyes began to dance in their heads; and they were now all talking together at the tops of their voices, shouting out at intervals, "Long life and glory" to their entertainer. Nor was the sergeant himself in any better condition than his men; but his genius, under the influence of liquor, took a musical direction, and he began trolling scraps of songs; for, as his memory failed him in almost every instance in these attempts, he was compelled to make up by variety what he wanted in continuous matter. Thus favourably, then, were affairs going on for Terence's design; and there was every appearance that the men would soon be in such a state as should render escape from them a matter of no very difficult accomplishment. But, lo! just as the flow of mirth and good fellowship had attained its height, another sergeant, detached, with an additional half dozen of men, from the troop that had visited the house in the morning, suddenly entered the apartment, with orders from the commanding officer, to the effect that the party which had been left with the prisoners should proceed immediately to Fort George with Sullivan, and that they themselves were to remain with M'Gregor till their officer came.

This, as will readily be believed, was by no means welcome intelligence, as it threatened to render the attempt to unfit the soldiers for their duty abortive, in so far as the object of doing so was concerned. This, indeed, it fully effected as regarded Malcolm's escape, since he was to be left behind; while it rendered Terence's much more precarious than if the debauch had been allowed to proceed.

Terence, however, did not feel that all chance of escape was yet lost. He hoped that what he had not had time to effect at Duntrusk, he should be able to accomplish while they were on the march; and he resolved to watch with the utmost vigilance for such an opportunity as was necessary to success in his intended attempt.

In the meantime, preparations were made, in obedience to the order just received, for the march of Terence's escort with their prisoner. An affecting parting now took place between M'Gregor and Sullivan, especially on the part of the former, who deemed it a last farewell—an opinion, however, in which he was by no means joined by his friend, who, with the natural buoyancy of his disposition, and cheerful and sanguine temper, entertained strong hopes of being able to give his guards the slip; and he bade Malcolm good-by with all the hilarity of manner and brightness of countenance which these hopes inspired.

The drunken troopers now staggered out of the apartment one after the other—their swords tripping them at every step, and several of them with their caps turned the wrong way—next came Terence, and lastly the sergeant, trollying, as he left the room—

"I'm bothered with whisky, I'm bothered with love;
I'm bothered with this, and I'm bothered with that;
I'm bothered at home, and I'm bothered abroad;
And it's all botheration together, says Pat."

M'Gregor went to the window, to see what he had no doubt was the last of his poor friend, Sullivan—and he soon had this melancholy satisfaction. In a few minutes, the party appeared proceeding down the avenue, with Terence in the centre, mounted on one of the dragoon's horses—a favour which his uproarious goodfellowship at Duntrusk House had procured for him. He caught a sight of Malcolm just as he and his escort were about to take a turn in the road that would conceal them from each other, and waved an adieu, accompanied by one of his characteristic shouts, which, though plainly enough indicated by his gestures, was, from the distance, unheard by him for whose edification it was intended.

In about an hour after the departure of Terence Sullivan, the commanding officer of the party, who had been at Duntrusk House in the morning, appeared riding up the avenue at the head of his troop. In a few minutes afterwards, he was again in the apartment with M'Gregor.

"We will now proceed, sir, if you please," he said, on entering. "Are you ready?"

"I believe I must say I am, sir," replied Malcolm, with as much composure as he could command.

"Nay," said the officer, who marked his agitation; "you need not say you are, if you are not. Is there anything you wish yet done before you go? Any one you wish to see?"

"There is—there is one I wish to see, sir—one to whom I should have wished to have bidden farewell," said Malcolm, with an emotion which he could not conceal; "but I know not when she may be here, and"—

"She is here, Malcolm—she is here," said Grace, at this instant rushing into the apartment.

Malcolm flew towards her. "God be thanked, Grace, you are come! I would have been miserable if I had not seen you before I went. A few minutes later, Grace, and we should never have beheld each other more. We have now met," he added, "for the last time."

"No, no, Malcolm; we have not, we have not," said Grace, hurriedly and in great agitation, taking a letter from her bosom, which, with a blush and a courtesy, she presented to Major Ormsby—the name of the officer already so often alluded to. He bowed as he received it; and, unfolding it, began to read. The perusal did not occupy him an instant. The matter was short but effective. Having read it, he advanced towards Malcolm with extended hand, and said—

"Allow me, sir, to congratulate you on your restoration to freedom, and to an immunity from all danger on account of certain late transactions which you wot of." And, as he said this, he smiled significantly. "You are at liberty, Mr M'Gregor. I have no more control over you, and have

therefore to regret that I shall not have the pleasure of your company to Fort-George, as I expected."

"What does all this mean, sir?" inquired Malcolm, in the utmost amazement.

"Why, sir, it means simply, that you are a free man," replied Major Ormsby. "And here is at once my authority for saying so, and my warrant for releasing you." And he read:—

"This is to discharge all officers of his Majesty's government, civil and military, and all other persons whatsoever, from apprehending, or in any other ways molesting Malcolm M'Gregor, Esq. of Strontian, for his concern in the late rebellion; and, if he be already taken, this shall be sufficient warrant for those detaining him to set him at liberty, which they are hereby required to do forthwith.

"CUMBERLAND."

"At Inverness, the 19th day of }
April 1746."

"Grace," exclaimed Malcolm, in a transport of joy, when Major Ormsby had concluded, "this is your doing, noble and generous girl. It is to you, and to you alone, that I am indebted for life and liberty. But how, how on earth, Grace, did you accomplish it?" he added, taking her affectionately by the hand.

The explanation was a brief one. She had gone to Inverness—had sought and obtained an interview with the Duke of Cumberland—had implored him for a pardon to her lover, and, to the amazement of those who were present on the occasion, had succeeded. Her youth, her beauty, the natural eloquence of her appeal, and the romance of the circumstance altogether, had touched the merciless conqueror, and had betrayed him for once into an act of humanity and generosity.

After partaking of some refreshment, Major Ormsby with his troop, left Duntrusk, and the happiness of Malcolm would have been complete, but for one circumstance. This was the miserable situation of his poor friend, Sullivan; presenting, as it did, such a contrast to his own. This, however, was a ground of unhappiness which was soon and most unexpectedly to be removed. In less than two hours after the departure of Major Ormsby, as Malcolm, Miss Cameron, and her father were sitting together, talking over the events of the preceding two or three days, to their inexpressible amazement, Sullivan suddenly burst into the apartment, with a loud shout.

"Haven't I done them, after all, Malcolm?" he exclaimed—"done them beautifully! Didn't I tell you, now, I would give the drunken rogues the slip somewhere? Och! an' just give me a bottle of whisky in my fist, and I'll take in hand to bother a saint, let alone a sergeant of dragoons."

We need not describe the joy of the party whom Terence on this occasion addressed, when he appeared amongst them. It was very great, and very sincere. Terence, however, was immediately hurried off by M'Gregor, who dreaded an instant return of the dragoons in quest of him, to a place of concealment at a little distance from the house, where he remained for two days, when he was secretly conveyed by his friend to the coast, and embarked on board a small wherry, hired for the purpose, for his native land, where he arrived in safety on the evening of the following day.

Within a year after these occurrences, Grace Cameron was fully better known in the country by the name of Mrs M'Gregor, than by that which we have just written



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WHITE WOMAN OF TARRAS

UP among the wild moors of Liddesdale and Ewesdale, rises the Tarras, a small, black-looking stream, which, after dashing and brawling through scenes as wild as itself, joins the Esk near Irvine, about twelve or fifteen miles from its source. In the olden time, the banks of the Tarras formed one of the favourite resorts of the freebooters of the Scottish Borders, who, in the midst of their inaccessible morasses, either set pursuit at defiance, or made an easy conquest of those who were foolhardy enough to follow them into their strongholds. They have long ceased their roving and adventurous life—pursuer and pursued have long been lying in the quiet churchyards, or slumbering in their forgotten graves among the wild hills where they fought and fell; but Tarras has since been haunted by other spirits than the turbulent ones of whom we have spoken; for, when the days of rapine and murder were past, it was but natural that superstition should people the wild and desolate morasses with the spirits of the departed.

The "march of intellect" is gradually trampling under foot the legends, omens, and superstitions which formerly flourished in their strength amid the wild fastnesses of the land; and they are seldom talked of now but as things that have been, but never will be again. The incidents upon which the present tale is founded, were matters of common conversation some sixty or seventy years since, and the belief in their truth was general and implicit; now, they only live in the recollection of the aged, like a half-forgotten dream of their early days. It was from an infirm old man, the son of our *ghost-seer*, that the tradition was obtained.

Late one evening in the autumn of 17—, Willie Bell, the blacksmith, was standing at the door, wondering what had become of his apprentice, John Graham, who had left Clay-yett that morning, to go to the neighbouring town of Langholm, where his father was lying dangerously ill. It was bright moonlight—calm and beautiful; the few clouds seen in the sky lay still and motionless on the horizon, like barks becalm'd at sea, only waiting for a breeze to waft them.

"I hope naething has happen'd the callant," said Nelly, the guidwife; "it's a bonny night—he canna hae tint the gaet."

"Hout na," said Willie, "he kens the gaet as weel's I do mysel—there's nae fear o' him; but I'm thinkin, maybe, his father's waur than he expectit, an' he'll be bidin at the Langholm a' night."

"Puir chiel! I did hear tell that his faither was waitin on; but I hope he's no that far gane yet."

It was now near nine o'clock, and the good folks were beginning to be rather uneasy about John Graham, who had faithfully promised to return before eight, when they heard the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps, and presently the object of their solicitude appeared, running at the top of his speed, and looking anxiously behind him, as if dreading pursuit, or flying from danger. He soon reached the cottage, and staggered to the door, where he leaned, apparently quite exhausted. His face was ghastly pale, large drops of perspiration stood on his brow, and his limbs trembled as if he were under the influence of an ague.

"Mercy on us!" said Nelly, looking wonderingly and anxiously in his face, "what ails the callant? Speak, my bonny man! What ails ye?"

"Gie's a sowp water," said John Graham—"I'm amaist deed."

The water seem'd to revive him a little, and he stared wildly around him. "D'ye see ought?" said he; "eh!—what's yon?"

"Hoot, the laddie's daft; there's nought yonder but just the holly buss, lookin, for a' the warld, like a man body in the moonlicht."

"Eh, whow!—eh, whow!" groaned the poor boy to himself, burying his face in his hands. "Nelly!" said he, at last, slowly and solemnly, "tell me the truth! When a body sees a ghost, is't no a warning that his ain time's no far aff?"

"Hoot na! I hae seen half a score ghosts mysel, and I'm no a bit the waur. Some folk threep that it's no canny to speak to a ghost; for, if ane dis, there's sure some mischief to follow."

"Deil's i' the woman, clattering about ghosts!" said the blacksmith; "it's silly havers aboot them a'thegither. What is a ghost? It canna be a body—for we ken that the bodies o' the dead are mouldering in the grave; it canna be a soul—for what could gar a happy speerit come back frae heaven to revisit this wearisome warld?—an' frae the ither bit, Auld Clootie wad tak far owre guid care o' them to let e'er a speerit among them won back again. Na, na! there's nae sic thing as ghosts."

"Whether there's ghosts or no," said John Graham, solemnly, "I'm thinkin I've seen ane the night. Gude be thankit, I didna speak till't!"

"Seen a ghost!" cried Nelly. "Eh, John!—whar was't?—what was't like?"

"Oh, like a holly buss, I'sc warran," said the blacksmith, sneeringly; "or like a muckle calf, or the shadow o' himsel."

"Never heed him, John, lad," said Nelly; "say yer say an' tell us a' aboot it."

"Weel, Nelly, ye see, I'd been at the Langholm, an' I fand my puir faither just waitin on, an' my mother maist dementit, sabbin an' greetin fit to kill hersel; an' the Doctor was fleechin on her to haud her tongue, an' no disturb her husband in his last moments; an' sair wark had we baith to keep her quiet. The Doctor tellt us that my faither had just come to the warst, an' that 'twas just the toss up o' a bawbee whether he lived or died. Weel, aboot the four hours, my faither fell into a sound sleep, and when he wauken'd up again, he'd gotten the turn; an' the Doctor said, if he was keepit quiet, there was nae fear but he'd won owre it. Eh, but my mother was a pleased woman; and when she gied the guidman the cordial, she kissed him and cried out affectionately, 'Geordie! gude be thankit, ye're spared till us! Gae to sleep, my man.'

"She then steekit the door, an' cam ben, an' took a muckle bottle oot o' the cupboard an' mixed a glass o' real guid toddy, an' said to me—

"Tak this afore ye gang hame my bairn; 'twill do ye nae harm; drink it an' be thankfu' that yer faither's life's spared. Ye maunna bide ony langer, but get back to yer

maister's as fast's ye can ; it's bonny moonlicht, an' young limbs mak quick wark. Guid nicht ! His blessing be wi ye !

"Weel, I made the best o' my way owre the mill, an' was aye thinkin o' my faither, an' what a sad thing 'twad hae been if he'd been taen frae us ; when, just as I'd gotten to yon side o' Tarras, an' was passing a holly buss near the Gallsyke, I felt a' at ance, I canna tell hoo—the air seem'd quite cauld and damp, a tremblin cam owre me, my flesh seem'd as if 'twar creepin thegither, an' a fear o' I didna ken what garr'd me look rouin, an' there, as I'm a leevin man, no sax yards frae me, walkin the same gait wi' mysel, was a leddy a' dress'd oot in white. It was bricht moonlicht—I couldna be mistaen, I saw her as plain as I see yersel at this moment. I rubbit my een, thinkin I might be dreamin—for I'd heard tell o' folk walkin in their sleep—but, na ! there she was still. I didna ken hoo it was—whether it was the glass o' toddy my mother had gien me, or that I didna dread there was anything forbye common about her—but I didna feel at a' afeared o' her, though I still had the same unco oot o' the way scudderin, an' dread o' something I couldna conceit what. To tell the truth, I was mair pleased nor feared, to see a leevin body sae near me, an' me sae fearfu in mysel. Weel, there she walkit, never turnin her head to the richt nor the left, an' me glowrin at her, but no daurin to speak ; for she was grandly dress'd, just like a leddy, wi' pinnars on her head, an' buckles glintin in her shoon. There was a little wind at the time, but it never stir'd her claes, an' her feet gaed fast o'er the gründ, but nae sound cam frae them ; I didna notice a' that at the time, but I minded it after.

"We had gotten as far as the auld aik-tree yonder, when, while I had my eye upon her—while I could tak my Bible aith she was there beside me—she was gane as clean's a whistle. I lookit ahint the tree—I lookit a' round me, but I seed nought ; an' then, a' at ance, the thoct cam into my head that I'd seen a ghost. I couldna doot it, for the cauld air had pass'd awa wi' her, an' I felt as if the chill had gaen clean out o' my bluid ; but when I cam to think o' the awfu company I'd been in, I maist swarfed wi' fear ; an' as soon's I cam roun, I set aff for hame as fast's my legs wad carry me."

"Weel, that beats a'," said the blacksmith—"ye've seen the White Leddy o' Tarras !"

"An' wha's that?" said John Graham.

"Come yer ways in, lad, an' sit down, an' I'll tell a' I ken about her, for I'm thinkin nané o' us 'll be for gaun to bed enow ; an' it's better for ye to be sittin by the cheerfu' ingle, than cowerin aneath the bedclaes. Nelly, woman ! gie's oot the whisky—the puir lad 'll no be the wair for a sopp, and I dinna care to tak a drap, to keep him company."

After they were all comfortably seated, and had dispelled the thoughts of spirits with the toddy-cup, Willy began his story :—

"It's noo mony years sin' there lived a man o' the name o' Archy Brown, at the Windy Hill, up by yonder. He was a puir weaver body, wi' a wife an' a hantel o' weans, an' sair wark he had to keep the house owre his head. The wife was a clean, canty body, an' keepit a' thing trig an' comfortable, an' made the maist o' what she could get, an' that was but little ; but content, they say, is better than riches, an' she aye keepit her heart abuné, an' tried to mak her guidman as contented as hersel. But it wadna do—Archy was a disappointed, unhappy man ; he was aye grumblin at his hard fate, an' wonderin what he'd dune, that he should be forced to work hard for his bread, when ithers, nae better than himsel, he thoct, were sitting wi' their hands afore them, doin naething ava. But this wadna do ; it taks a stout heart to face a stey brae—an' Archy seemed to hae tint his a' thegither. Wark cam slowly in, an' whan it did come, it was sair negleckit, till at last, if

it hadna been the respeek they had for his wife, his employers wad hae left him ane an' a'. Archy had just suppit his parritch, after a grumblin day's wark in August, an' was sittin by the ingle cheek, looking as black as the back o' the lum, an' the wife was busy washin the dishes an' puttin a' thing richt.

"Hech !" says Archy, with a pech, "but this is a weary warl."

"Hoot," said the wife, "the warl's weel eneuch, if 'twarna the folk that's in't ; it's a guid an' a bonny warl, Archy, an' thankfu' we should be that we hae health to enjoy it."

"Thankfu' !" said Archy—"my certie ! guid richt hae we to be thankfu', an' can hardly get the bite an' sopp to pit in our mooths, when there are sae mony that dinna ken what to mak o' a' their havins !"

"Ou, Archy, man ! ye're aye thinkin o' them that's better aff than yersel ; but think hoo mony wad be happy to change wi' ye. There's mony a ane this nicht, Archy, that has nae shelter for his head but the lift abuné him, an' that's fain to cower ahint the dike frae the cauld blast."

"Gae 'wa wi' yer preachins !" said Archy—"is't no eneuch to hear the minister on the Sabbath, but I maun be plagued wi' a wife playing hum in my lug a' the day lang !"

The wife held her tongue, but the tears were rinnin doun her cheeks as she wiped doun the dresser. Archy was a guid-hearted though a fretfu' man ; an' the sicht o' his wife's distress softened him.

"Come, come, Nancy, woman, dinna tak on sae ; ye ken I loe ye weel—for a kind an' guid wife hae ye aye been to me ; an' ye sudna heed what I say when the vera heart's bluid within me is soured by disappointment. I could bear't a' weel eneuch for mysel ; but to think o' my havin wiled ye frae yer faither's beil hame, to share the fortunes o' a broken man, gars my heart grue ; an' whiles I feel as if I could risk my saul to the Evil Ane, to procure ye ease an' comfort."

"O Archy ! shut sic wicked thochts oot o' yer heart, or maybe, whan temptation comes, ye'll tak't by the han' instead o' resistin it. Mindna for me—I want naething to mak me happy but to see ye pleased ; an' I'd far fairer see ye smile, as ye used to do langsyne, than be the bravest o' the brow without it."

The darkness o' nicht was noo beginnin to spread owre the earth, an' Archy an' the wife were just ettling to gang to bed, whan a saft rap cam to the door, an' a han' tirl'd at the sneck.

"Wha can that be, in Gude's name?" whispered Nance "rise, Archy, man, an' speer at them what they're seekin at this untimeous hour."

"Wha's that?" said Archy, in a loud tone o' voice, though it trembled a wee whan he thoct o' bogles an' rievvers, an' a' sic like deevilry.

A saft an' gentle voice answered—"Can you give me a guide over the hills as far as Langholm? I'm a lone unprotected woman, and have lost my way."

"Is there onybody wi' ye, forbye yersel?" said the cautious Archy.

"No one. Pray let me in to rest for a short time. I am no beggar ; you shall be well rewarded for your kindness."

"Reward !" replied Archy, drawin the sneck—"there's nane needed ; it should never be said that Archy Brown, puir though he be, wad keep his door steekit again' them that haena beil."

The door was by this time open, and Nance had lighted the candle. The stranger walked in. Great was the surprise o' baith at the unexpected sicht ; they were maist as frightened as if they'd seen a bogle. The stranger was a tall handsome woman, a' dressed oot like a leddy, wi' pinnars on her head, an' a' sort of whirlygeerums—I dinna ken their names ; but, howsomever, they a' gaed to prove that she was a leddy

an' no ane like themselfs; an' when she spak, her voice was saft an' gentle, an' her words as grand as if they were oot o' a printed book. Then she had grand buckles in her shoon, an' rings on her wee white hand, an' a thing grander about her than they'd ever seen afore. Weel, she sat down by the ingle cheek, and askit again could they furnish her wi' a guide to the Langholm; an' they persuadit her to bide where she was a' nicht, an' Archy wad gang wi' her himsel, the niest morning. It was lang or they could gar her stop; but there were nae roads hereawa in thae days; an' she was feared to gang farer by hersel, an' Archy dounricht refused to leave the hoose. She tell't them she had come frae the south country, an' that she was travellin to Embro' to see a frien'; an' aye as she spak she sighed an' sobbit; an' whan she laid aff her rich manteel, they saw that a' wasna richt; an' they lookit at her han', but there was nae weddin ring upon't; an' then Nance lookit in her face, an' saw dule an' sorrow there, but naething waur—for her beauty was like that of a sorrowing angel; an' she had sic a look o' innocence, that Nance dreaded she had been beguiled by the warmth an' innocence o' her heart—that she was aiblins a puir thing mair sinned again' than sinning; an' Nance's ain heart warmed till her, an' she fleeced on, an' made muckle o' her. Sair did the puir thing greet; but she never loot on wha she was, or where she cam frae, or wha 'twas she was seeking; but said that she was a wand'rer an' an ootcast, an' nae leevin soul cared for her; an' the sooner she was dead the better for hersel! Puir Nance was sair put aboot to comfort her; but at last she persuadit her to sup some milk an' bread, an' gang to her bed. Archy an' Nance sleepit on the flure—at least Nance sleepit, for Archy couldna; the Deil was busy wi' him—the siller buckles an' the braw rings were aye glintin in his een whenever he steekit them, an' himner't him frae sleepin. He closed his een and tried to snore, an' to fancy that he was sleepin; but aye the langer he tried, the waur an' the wickeder were the thochts that cam intill his head, till at last he got up on his elbow, an' sat glowrin at the bed where the stranger ledly lay soun sleepin—an' aye the langer he lookit, the mair he thoct what a happy man he wad be if he had a' her braw rings, an' the gowd that was in her purse, an' her siller buckles an' a'; an' he loupit up to his feet, an' got his knife in his han', an' went to the bedside, an' just then the cat gied a mew, an' the ledly turned an' groaned, an' down he slippit to the flure again—a mercy it was that the ledly happened to groan, or nae-body kens what might hae been the upshot. Weel, niest mornin, soon after daylight, the ledly waukens up an' cries to Nance that 'twas time for her to tak the road; but Nance wadna hear tell o't, till she had gien her her breakfast.

"It's no muckle we hae," said Nance; "but, sic as it is, ye're welcome to a share o't; just sup yer milk an' bread, while Archy snods himsel up to gang wi' ye."

As soon as they'd finished their breakfast, and Archy had putten on his Sabbath claes, the ledly took oot a bonny silken purse, that looked as if it wad burst wi' gowd and siller, and gied Nance a piece o' gowd.

"I'm no for't," said Nance; "there's nae needcessity; ye're very welcome to a' ye got."—But the ledly wad insist upon her takin it, while Archy's een glistened at the sicht o' the purse, and he bit his lip, and his breast gaed up and down like the bellows i' the smiddy, and his fingers opened and shut upon his thigh, like the claws o' a cat just gaun to loup at a mouse.

"Good-by, good Nance," said the lady; "may you never want a friend in time of need, and as hearty a welcome as you have given to me!"

The morning, though calm, was cauld; but, aboot twa hours after they had left, Nance heard the sough o' a comin wind. It was an awesome and an unco sound—

she had never heard the like afore—it was like the groans o' the deen; and, as she hearkened till't moaning past the door, she fancied she heard a body crying for help. Nance was terribly frightened; for it seemed to her that the wind was no just a common wind, but the voice o' a spirit—a kind o' whisper frae anither world. A' at ance, there cam sic a blast as was never seen nor heard afore nor since, at the Windy Hill. A' the winds o' heaven seemed to hae been let loose at ance, and the noise o' their roaring was loud as the loudest thunder. Nance ran out o' the hoose, thinkin that clay wa's couldna even bide the brunt o' sic a storm, and there she waited for the upshot. She covered down on the grund, and covered her head wi' her apron, while the noise o' a thousand storms was round her. Nance thoct it strange that she didna feel the wind as weel as heart, and she keek't oot frae under her apron—and there was nae visible appearance o' the presence o' the storm: the sound was a ragin tempest round her; but the lang grass was standin unshaken, an' the leaves o' the trees were without motion. A dread o' the powers o' the air cam owre Nance—she thought she heard their bodily voices about her—and, wi' a loud skirl, she swarfed awa on the grund! Some o' the neighbours had seen Nance fa', and cam rinnin to help her; but it was lang or she was a' richt again. When she cam round, she steekit her een, and stappit her lugs—moaning, "Oh, that wind!—that awesome wind!" The neighbours a' wondered; for nane but Nance had heard aught extraordinary. Nance waited lang for Archy to come in to his dinner; but it was weel on to the gloamin when he cam back. Nance heard his fitfa', an' ran to the door to meet him—

"Eh, but ye've been lang o' comin, Archy! How did ye leave the ledly, puir thing?"

"Oh, she's safe at the end o' her journey," replied Archy, wi' a kind o' laugh that sounded unco like a groan.

"Puir body," said Nance, "she maun hae been sair wearied; but, Archy, ye maun hae been maist blawn awa wi' that awesome wind."

"What wind?" said Archy; "there wasna ony wind, it was as lown as a simmer day."

"Oh, man, ye dinna say sae! Aboot twa hours after ye left this, there cam on sic a storm that I thoct the house wad come doun on my head, and!"

"Twa hours!" said Archy; and he turned as white's a clout, and the cauld sweat stood on his face.

"Mercy on us, Archy," said the wife, "what ails ye? Ane wad think ye'd heard that awfu' wind yersel; it maist frightened me to death. It was, for a' the world, when it first beguid, like the groans and moans o' a deen body."

"Haud yer whisht, woman," said Archy, very short-like, "it's no canny to talk o' sic things. Hae, tak my coat, an pit it awa i' the kist."

"Odsake! Archy," cried Nance, haudin the coat to the light; "what, in Gude's name, is this that's on't?—it's bluid! Where got ye that?"

"Ou," said Archy, "there was a man killing a muckle sou in Tarras, and he cried to me to help him, and I didna mind that I'd gotten a guid coat to my back."

"Weel! that beats a'! Here's ane o' the bonny rings the ledly had on her fingers, in yer pocket. How cam ye by that?"

"What's your business, woman?" said Archy, wi' an oath. "Did I no tell ye afore, that the ledly was safe and sound at her journey's end? She wad insist on giein me the ring to keep for my kindness to her."

"Did she no send ony word back by ye?"

"Ay, she thankit ye for yer kindness, and said she'd send ye word when she got to the far end—"but it'll be lang or that," muttered Archy to himsel.

Weeks and months gaed by, but still nae word cam o' the ledly; and puir Nance was wae for her; for she dreaded

something uncommon had happened her. Archy gaed to Embro, an' cam back wi' gowpens o' siller, and a lang story how an auld friend o' his father's had died, and left him a hantle money. Frae that time, he became a rich and prosperous man; but he was never seen to smile, and after aften did the cold sweat draps stand on his face, while his een were closed in sleep; for the spirit was busy within him.

The ledly was never heard tell o' again—she had nae kith nor kin to speer after her—she cam like a dream, and vanished like ane; but there's a stane on the banks o' Tarras, wi' a mark upon it that a' the storms and floods o' years haena been able to wash oot—it's the mark o' blood; and, aft since syne, the figure o' a ledly, a' dressed in white, has been seen wanderin in the mirk or the bright moonlight, and aye vanishin like a flaff o' lichtnin. The ghost, if ghost it be, never fashes ony decent body; but it has an unco dislike to a body in drink. If a sober, quiet man, is gaun the road, he may pass the Tarras a hundred times and see nought; but, after a Langholm hiring-day, or a July fair, if a man has taen twa three cheerers forbye common, he's maist sure to see the WHITE LEDDY O' TARRAS!

THE FREEMEN'S WELL.

It was the eve of Saint Mark's Day, when the town of Alnwick was reached. The White Swan was, of course, the inn to which a traveller would naturally direct his steps, being the "head;" and yet, strange as it may seem for the county town of Northumberland, it did not carry its head higher than a single story above the ground floor. But what it wanted in height, it added in breadth; it was sufficiently large for the business of the place; and was a complete *multum in parvo* compared with many of the large inns in the metropolis and elsewhere. Thomas Liddel—for that was the name of the ostler, who resembled the building as to height—was attentive to the horse. Robert Thompson, more like the master of the house than the waiter, took care to adorn and enrich the table; and Mrs Wilson, good lady, like a portly folio, had bound up, in the pages of her heart, the whole of the kindly feeling and attention comprised in the endearing appellation of MOTHER. Of the names of these personages there can be no more doubt than of their existence. A reference to the Pocket Companion, always carried about with me, and headed with the comprehensive sentence, "Persons, places, and things," is a security against error. Here all first impressions are entered, as they come burning from the brain, and afterwards elaborated as occasion requires.

After reposing the limbs, and taking a comfortable cup of tea, some of the principal streets were perambulated. On coming to the market-place, which formed a spacious square in the centre of the town, a concourse of people were perceived, of both sexes, and of all ages, from nearly the first spoke in the ladder of life to the last. Having the organ of Inquisitiveness largely developed—and this, be it observed, was long before the faculty was either thought of or manufactured by phrenologists—an inquiry was naturally instituted into the occasion which brought them together, and which was as satisfactorily answered.

To proceed. Mr Thomas Twaddle, a worthy knight of the thimble, as was afterwards learned, was the person to whom the question was proposed. This gentleman belonged to the corporate body, and was a fair specimen of the British constitution, which he took every legal means to support by good eating and drinking. His hat was the very "tip of fashion," as old fashions went in those days with a few of the ancients of the town. It was turned up on three sides, as if each corner had been sent a star-gazing, or had been intended to answer the purpose of a water-

spout in order to conduct the skirts of a shower of rain to the bottom of the brim, and there form a kind of moat round the head, to protect the brain from all feverish attacks from without, as well as to enable it to vegetate within, by preserving it in a state of moisture. The hat, thus looking in three directions at one and the same moment, was mounted on a large bush-wig—an emblem of the solidity, profusion, and magnificence of the times—and would be sufficient to convert a man, with a proboscis like that of the Duke of Wellington, into an owl of the night. With Mr Twaddle it was far otherwise: he had a round full face, with a set of regular features. A single breasted coat, with a front covering about two-thirds of the abdominal regions, swept down either side in a half circle—the waistcoat, meanwhile, flapped at the pockets, and exhibiting the same graceful curvature towards the bottom, with a slight display of white linen, looking out from between the nethermost button of the self-same waistcoat and the waistband of the inexpressibles. Braces were unnecessary. A pair of large buckles, doctored by poor old "Davy the buckle-mender," adorned his feet. Every other part of his costume was in character. He had a tolerable stock of low anecdote—a little humour—but was bankrupt in wit. To this remnant of the preceding century I addressed myself.

"Allow me to ask you, sir, the occasion of this apparent tumult."

"Why, sir," returned the man of the goose—abridging almost every word that came in his way, plaintively singing out some of the vowels like the more affecting notes of a funeral dirge, and whose pronunciation it would be as difficult to pen as it would be in every instance for a stranger to understand—"Why, sir," said he, "this is the eve of St Mark's Day."

"I am not to infer from that, sir, that these are his followers," I returned, "and that they are rendering homage to his saintly virtues."

"You are a stranger, I perceive," was the reply, "and have to be informed that the chamberlains and common council are now meeting in the town-hall, where persons qualified to become free burgesses are in attendance. After the candidates discharge the usual demands, and take the oaths, they quit the hall and parade the streets with the best music the town can afford, closing the scene with a friendly bowl of punch at the separate public houses they select for the occasion. But," added he, "to-morrow will be the day!"

"And pray, sir," I inquired, "what of to-morrow?"

"Why, sir," he rejoined, "the young freemen will have to go through the well."

"Past it, sir, I suppose you mean?"

"No, sir, *through it*," said Mr Twaddle, sharply; "otherwise, no freelidge." He then proceeded to give me a brief view of the proceedings of the day; to which I appended—"If the ceremony had taken place on the first, instead of the twenty-fifth of April, the candidates would have been in danger of being dubbed what you call, in this neighbourhood, *April gowks*."

Resolved to see the ceremony, I inquired whether horses were let out for hire by any person in the town, and was directed to Mr Hurtim—an ominous name—a Crispin by trade. Jackey—that being the name by which he was called—was soon found, and pledged himself to let me have one of the best of his stud. This son of Crispin was a little active man, full of points, and resided in a house that made some fair promises, not only to shelter him in life, but to be a grave for him in death. His horses had a thorough knowledge of the barest spots of the moor. They were of all colours and dimensions: of all forms, except the beautiful—of all ages, except the young—of all joints, except the straight and supple; and the set-out invariably corresponded with the animal. Having placed the trump of

praise to his lips, and given a full blast in their favour, as the best of the kind in the town, I departed to my inn, supped, slept soundly, and was up betimes in the morning.

Walking out at an early hour, I was surprised to see persons engaged in planting large holly trees in the front of different houses; but found, on inquiry, that they were so many signals placed at the doors of the several candidates of the dipping order, to tell their friends to come and make merry. A few ribbons, knotted to some of the higher boughs, floated like pennons in the breeze. At eight o'clock, I hastened, as advised, to the market-place, where I found each chevalier on horseback, and provided with a sword. They were soon joined by the chamberlains and officers of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, armed with old halberds and other instruments of destruction, in rather Hudibrastic style, as though great opposition had been anticipated, and they had to fight their way to freedom, like some of their forefathers, who had probably wielded the same weapons on the field in the battle of "Chevy Chase." This part of the ceremony having been omitted in the description given by the knight of the thimble the evening before, the faculty of Inquisitiveness was naturally brought into play, and on asking a gentleman near me, whether they expected to meet an enemy, I received for reply—"Oh, no, sir"—the Northumbrian smiling at my simplicity—"from the frequent inroads of the Borderers in ancient times, it became expedient for the party to be armed; and hence the custom is still observed, though the weapons are now no longer necessary." The gentleman had scarcely concluded his explanatory remarks, when the intended freemen (some of them looking through the haze of a night's hard drinking) being arranged in due order, like a troop of horse, drew, though not without some difficulty, their rusty swords, whose blades had not flashed in battle for a century or two, nor witnessed the light of heaven since that day twelve months; and, accompanied by no small portion of the inhabitants, in carriages, gigs, carts, on horseback, and on foot, with music playing, proceeded round part of their extensive domains. The musicians, each mounted on his palfrey, the one scraping a piece of catgut, and the other blowing the snout of a hautboy, were persons who received a salary from the town, and were the principal performers on all public occasions; they were dressed in their uniform, blue turned up with yellow, adorned with a silver plate, with an appropriate device on one of their arms, between the shoulder and the elbow; the head being roofed with a hat similar to that of the remnantist, with this exalted distinction—the brims of each were bound with silver lace. These helps to hilarity were denominated, in the language of the town—"The Waits." In the front of these, a poor idiot, known by the name of *Bobby Daghish*, and in perfect keeping with the ceremony, performed a number of antics, to the great amusement of the children both old and young.

Agreeably to previous arrangement, I had my horse brought to the market-place. Mr Hurtim, who was a man of business, and took a pride in seeing his horses dash off from the starting-post, was himself in attendance. He was there, too, it may be remarked, to meet any objection that might arise from appearances on the part of the horse, and from timidity on the part of the jockey. The animal came to the post like a bear to the stake, one of the apprentices pulling him along, and the master, touching not his buttocks, for they had disappeared, but his bones with the palm of his hand. Bit and stirrup were both rendered venerable by the rust of years; the leather having died a natural death, the reins were gaping with large cracks, as though they would have devoured both horse and rider; a tuft of wool peeped out from the padding of the saddle in different directions; and the animal himself, like a jockey, was fairly sweat down to "catch weight."

"What in the world is this you have brought me?" I exclaimed—"I expected a horse, not a ghost of one."

"One of the finest animals in the world, sir," replied Mr Hurtim. "Jick—jick—come up, sir; he is a little stiff at first, but he mends as he warms; and he is quite safe."

"Why, sir, the animal is unfit to take a journey from the stable to the trough," said I, not a little chagrined as well as humbled.

"Never fear, sir; get on—get on, sir," rejoined little Crispin, who spoke like a watchman's rick—bustling about the horse, the boy, the rider, saddle, bridle, stirrup, and crupband, all at once—"he went to Morpeth and back again yesterday, a distance of forty miles, without ever turning a hair."

"Have you no other?" I inquired.

"Other, sir!—no, not if you would give a hundred pounds for one," he exclaimed, a little surprised that an objection should be raised to a horse which had travelled the road so long, and to which he could give such an undeniable character.

There was no alternative; the remainder of the stud were engaged for the Well. Grasping hold of the mane and of the bridle in a state of desperation, I thrust my foot into the stirrup, and had it not been for the judicious conduct of the wary little man and the boy, who had prudently posted themselves on the opposite side, where they maintained a fair balance by tugging at the stirrup-leather, the animal would certainly have been floored before his time. Whip and spur were immediately held in requisition, and Mr Hurtim, who had always too much respect for his customers instantly to turn his back upon them, as I afterwards learned, and anxious withal to see the horse safely over the stones, invariably proceeded to the end of the town with the rider. During this stage of the business, he, as was usual with him, accommodated his pace to the animal, walking or trotting agreeably to his ability and humour. Now, he would make his advance towards the neck, alternately hitting the horse with the palm of his hand, laying it upon my knee, as if to support his steps, or touching the bridle; then, casting a glance at the feet of the one and the face of the other, would endeavour, from the purest motives of trade, no doubt, to ascertain how far safety and temper promised to comport with the length of the journey. In the twinkling of an eye, he would be found in the rear, a few paces from the horse's heels, and, taking hold of each side of his leathern apron, would crack and flap it in the air like a girl shaking carpets; thus endeavouring to inspire him with a little extra spirit, no matter of what kind, and to produce, by the crack of the leather, what I, as horseman, failed to effect by the crack of the whip. Then in an instant again he would twist the apron as if in the act of wringing clothes, and, taking hold of its upper end, would dexterously contrive, while passing on to his former station, to wind it round the front of the animal's thigh, and touching the inner part, would realize a few inches of real speed. Nothing but encouragement appeared now to be requisite; and, like an ostler employed with the wisp, the currycomb, or the brush, he ambled on with a half whistle, ever and anon exchanging the note for "Jick, jick—that's my lad—there he goes—he's off now"—occasionally instructing me how to guide the rein, how to sit in the saddle, and where, in case of emergency, on the spirits beginning to flag, I might find a tender part, and touch it with advantage. Such kindly attentions could scarcely fail, whatever they might augur, to mollify the feelings that had been excited. If there was any failure, it was not in him, but in the horse; and it would have been hard to visit the one with non-payment for the defect of the other. The way was now clear—the animal, having passed the usual drill, knew that he was bound to proceed; the stones became less immovable; instead of remaining motionless, till

as much fire was struck out of them as would have illuminated every grate and warmed every hearth in the town, they began to scamper off on every movement of the foot, flying right and left, and giving the appearance of an animal playing at marbles. Jacky—pardon, gentle reader!—that is, Mr Hurtim—seeing the stones, together with every joint of both man and horse, fairly in motion, tipped the brim of his hat, with—

“Good morning, sir—a pleasant journey to you!” and returned to his last and to his apprentices.

I ascended the hill, and, on reaching the toll-bar, made an abrupt turn to the left. I had scarcely proceeded a mile, when I united myself to some of the hindmost of the pedestrians, who had just entered the main road from the footpath, and contrived to keep pace with them across the moors.

Arriving at length at the pond called, “THE FREEMEN’S WELL,” about four miles from the town, I was grateful to find that, out of scores of stumblings, there had not been above two fair falls and three quarters. On dismounting, I stretched and shook myself, in order to replace any joints that might have slipped out of their sockets; and anxiously awaited the appearance of the candidates in company with their friends and others—the candidates themselves being obliged to go to the full extent of their boundaries, while we had the privilege of taking a nearer cut across the moors. While several were emptying their pockets and their baskets of liquors and other refreshments, I endeavoured to satisfy my curiosity with all that could be seen. I found the Well situated at the bottom of a hill, called “Freeman’s Hill;” it appeared to be about ten yards long and four broad. Oral inquiry was unnecessary on several subjects. One exclaimed to a person near him, “I’ll bet you a guinea, Dick Thompson will be through first.” A second, “How will the poor old blind man get through?” A third, “Little Jack Stevenson will get a ducking.” And so on. Striking in with an exclamation, amidst a dozen more,

“How dirty the water is!” said I.

“And well it may,” replied a person at my elbow; “the water,” continued he, perceiving me to be a stranger from the remark—“the water is permitted to run off till about a week previous to St Mark’s Day, when the chamberlains pay a small sum to the servants of an adjoining farmer to dam it up; but the sly rustics, before they proceed to their duty, take care to dig large holes, build dikes, and fasten straw ropes at the bottom, in order to give the unsuspecting candidates a good drenching; and, to beguile the eye from these, they have been engaged this morning, by means of long poles, in raising the mud from the bed of the pond.”

Just at that moment, a general shout was set up; and directing my attention to the place on which every eye was fixed, I saw several persons on horseback leaping over the hedge at the top of the hill. The summit of the rise running on a line with the horizon, rendered the horsemen invisible till they reached the side of the hedge facing the crowd, and produced an effect similar to that of persons shooting from the skies. As these were the candidates, and as it was an honour to be first at the Well, the neck, of course, appeared of minor importance, and down they drove towards us, full speed.

Dismounted, they instantly began to strip, and each candidate was soon arrayed in white, with a white cap, ornamented with a bunch of ribbons at the side of it, and but for which coloured appendage, the cap might have been indicative that the neck was about to be stretched, rather than that immersion was at hand. Prior to their proceeding to the edge of the Well, their spirits were again exhilarated with a glass of brandy, which, perhaps, would be the less fiery, as it was about to be dipped in water. Being again arranged, not as horse soldiers, but as light infantry,

the signal was given, and twenty-five in number, as from a sheep-loup, to employ the language of the country, plunged into the pool, and were instantly over head and ears amongst mud and filth. The son of the oldest freeman, according to the general rule, had the honour of taking the first leap, which was improved by the juniors, some of whom broke their fall by leaping upon his back; and, employing him at the bottom of the pool as a kind of stepping-stone, hastened their passage through. The principal part of the pleasure attendant on this part of the ceremony was that of their seizing each other by the limbs, mounting on each other’s shoulders—anything, in short, to hasten their own progress and retard that of their fellows.

Never did a company of frogs, assailed by a set of idle schoolboys, occasion greater merriment to the spectators, or work a pond into a greater tempest, than did these ducklings, appearing and disappearing as they made the best of their way through, and plentifully besprinkling the bystanders, who were pressed towards the verge by the crowds behind, equally anxious to witness the scene with themselves. One circumstance ought to be noticed, as it helped to quicken their diligence on their passage to freedom. On the preceding day, as is not uncommon at that season of the year, in the north, there had fallen a copious shower of hail and sleet; in the night, there had been a sharp frost; and, although the morning sun had risen upon the scene, and was cresting the eddies of the pool with its light, the weather was, nevertheless, intensely cold. The old man (who was bald and blind, and had to substitute the cap for the wig, and after the neglect of many years had been compelled, by the importunity of his friends, to take up his freedom for the sake of his children and grandchildren, then witnesses of the ceremony) was led along by the edge of the pool by one of his descendants; while the other candidates, on reaching the opposite shore, were assisted out of the puddle by their friends. The first out was honoured with applause, and the last in had to content himself with the jokes of the spectators. Recourse was once more had to the bottle to chase away ague and fever; and, having put on dry clothes, their spirits were elevated to an uncommon degree. Again on horseback, they were ready to perambulate the remainder of their large common. Not feeling much disposed to accompany them round their boundaries, I took a nearer route across the moors, to give them the meeting with the rest of the crowd, on their entrance into the town. This indisposition arose out of sheer *tenderness*, not so much for Mr Hurtim’s nag, as for myself, having got a good deal of fine feeling excited by the electrical shocks of his spavined step.

Proceeding at the full speed of the animal, I at length overtook an honest tradesman, whose son had just passed through the Well, and was ready with his fellows for another washing. The tradesman was mounted on one of the less sprightly of Mr Hurtim’s stud; and this accounts for my own success in having gained ground on an animal similar in shape to my own. The moment my steed saw the other—for he still had one eye left—he began to neigh and spring forward at the rate of five miles an hour. I could scarcely conceive what had befallen the beast; but, on his arrival at the point of attraction, he turned his head towards his old mate with an apparently deep sympathetic feeling, as if about to salute him, and moved on straight abreast with him, as in the shafts of a currie, bidding fair for a dead heat at the close of the journey. The tradesman looked like Widow Placid: he had been accustomed to engage horses at Mr Hurtim’s livery stables, and had all the enjoyment he expected; besides, the circumstance of his son being made free, swallowed up all minor considerations; chafing and shaking were mere trifles, his mind was made up for them, and he met them with the fortitude of a man going to be tied to the halberds.

The conversation of my companion in travail was a great relief. On inquiring the precise route of the newly fledged burgesses, he replied—"They have to pass over a considerable extent of country, and, during their progress, each young freeman is obliged to alight every quarter of a mile, and, taking up a stone, has to place it on a cairn, as a mark of his boundary. This is done till they reach the Townley Cairn, where the Duke of Northumberland's bailiff reads over the names of the freeholders of Alnwick. Having arrived at a place called the Freeman's Gap, the young freemen, exulting in their past success, and too often warm with the fumes of cogniac, set off at full speed over rocks and steep declivities, at the imminent risk of their lives, each striving to acquire the honour of being first at the Rotten-Row Tower, at the entrance of the town." Then, with a burst of tender parental feeling, he added, "I hope my lad will escape harm. I cautioned him this morning against Johnny Wardle's folly, who, while shouting out 'neck or nothing,' and heedless of his road, precipitated his horse over a deep gravel pit, and, sure enough, broke the neck of the beast, and narrowly saved his own."

"There ought to be good horsemanship amongst them," I observed.

"Poor indeed, sir," replied the tradesman; "and what can you expect from a tailor, for instance, who has been pinned to the lapboard from his childhood? Some of the candidates have been known to exercise a month or six weeks beforehand, in order to prepare themselves for the day."

The conversation next took a commercial turn, and lasted till we reached about half a mile from the town, where, on several natural, with a few artificial mounds, and these again on considerably elevated ground, an immense concourse of people were waiting the appearance of the freemen. The situation was favourable, and could command a view of them at a distance of two miles or upwards. There I amused myself by surveying the scenery.

The horse beneath me, without a "turned hair," to employ the language of its owner, appeared like a fixture, and might have remained in that immovable attitude, fit for a draughtsman to sketch from, had it not been for a general shout, similar to that at the Well, which startled him from a gentle slumber, and recalled my own eye from the tour it was taking across the country. The infant burgesses were in sight, and if an insurance office for broken necks, legs, and arms, could have been found, perhaps it was never more necessary than at that moment. The ground itself was rough, as has been already hinted, and the tracks formed by the sheep and horned cattle while grazing, wound round immense clusters of whins; while some of the riders had rarely been mounted higher than when set on end on the tailor's board or cobbler's stool, on either of which their masters, even Mr Hurtim, found it difficult to keep them—much more on horseback, with their heads rolling on their shoulders, and the ground apparently turning round beneath them. The consequence was, that two or three were fairly scattered on the ground, and one was pitched into the midst of a large whin bush, where he sat and sang like a night-ingale till relieved from his situation, each struggle sending the unruly thorns further into his hide. Their horses, proving the lighter for the mishap, and being accustomed to the road, of course won the day. On the gentlemen of the whin and the turf, left behind, coming up to their comrades, the young freemen again drew their swords, and entered the town in triumph, preceded by the fiddler and hautboyist, and accompanied by an immense concourse of people on horseback and on foot. Having solemnly paraded the street, the whole of the equestrians entered the castle, where they were entertained with ale at the expense of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland. Returning from thence, the company dispersed; but the young freemen repaired to the

doors of their respective houses, and, around the holly-tree, drank a friendly glass with each other. They then assembled in the market-place, when the scene was closed with a copious bowl of punch, each retiring to his house to dine with his friends. There is a tradition that King John made this foolish institution as a perpetual mark of his displeasure, on account of his being thrown from his horse in the bogs of Haydon Forest, on his dreadful journey to the north.

THE CROOKED COMYN.

WALTER COMYN, Earl of Menteith, one of the "three Comyns," all Earls, who, in the minority of Alexander III., possessed so much power in Scotland as to be able to oppose all the other nobility together, was a very remarkable man. Of low stature, deformed in his person, dark in his complexion, of gigantic strength—he possessed the spirit of a lion with the subtlety of a fox. Neither in the planning nor the executing of a political scheme could any man in Scotland or England cope with him: He made his two brothers, and the thirty-three knights who joined him against the measures of the English regency, his puppets, allowing them no will of their own, but subjugating them entirely to his direction. He could read the human countenance even of a courtier of Henry III. of England as easily as he could do the court hand of the clerks of his time; and, to complete his character, he so falsified the muscles of his face, by mixing up smiles and frowns in such a confusion of muscular activity and change, that no one could tell his thoughts or his feelings.

His wife, the Countess, was directly the reverse of her husband. Tall in her person, handsomely formed, with graceful movements and accomplished manners, she was accounted open-hearted, good-humoured, approaching to simplicity, destitute of all guile and deceit. Her countenance wore a continual smile, and was so open and ingenuous that it might be read like the page of a book. The best proof of her goodness was the kindness she exhibited to the deformed partner of her life. She boasted—and he admitted—that she was the only person who could read him, not from her powers of penetration, but from his yielding relaxation of the deceptive discipline of his face and manners. He often remarked that it was fortunate for him that his Countess Margaret was so much of a child; for he felt and acknowledged that it was only in the presence of children that he considered himself safe in throwing off his disguise, and appearing for a time in his natural character:—such are the effects of ambition.

It is reported that, on one occasion, the following conversation took place between these dissimilar yet well-mated companions.

"Wert thou not so simple, fair Margaret," said the Earl, "I would suspect thou hadst no great affection for him whom King Henry calleth the 'Crooked Comyn.' Men may love me for my subtlety and power, from interest; my brothers, because I am their brother, from instinct; and my wolf-dog, Grim, because I join him in the chase. Now, to gratify my humour for frolic, on this night, when I think I have overturned the power of the English regent, tell me what thou lovest me for, good simpleton; for I cannot doubt that simpletons have their fancies like other folks; and, if thou dost not love me, why hast thou prepared for me, even now on this night of my triumph, that cup of warm milk curdled with sack which thou callest a posset? I asked it not of thee, and love must have suggested it."

"What should I love my Walter for," replied Countess Margaret, "but his noble qualities, placed in a person the defects of which, as he states them; I cannot see? Custom hath made thee straight, and love hath embellished both

thy mind and body; but, above all, I love thee because thou lovest me; for it is an old saying in our cottages, that love begets love, and"—patting him playfully on the cheek—"my heart must have been barren indeed, if, after ten years, of thy wooing, it produced no more affection than was able to prepare for thee a posset of milk and sack on the evening of the day of thy triumph."

"Thou hast made a good turn of the subject, simpleton," said Comyn. "If I beat my political opponents during the day, thou worstest me at night by thy ingenious pleasantry. Thou conquerest even nature's twists and torsels, for my crooked mind and deformed body become straight under the soft ministrations of thy simple manners. I cannot help sometimes thinking that, if it had been thy fate to be wedded to such a fair piece of nature's handiwork as the English Baron, John Russel, who banqueted with us yesterday—a thing of red and white pigment—an automaton mannerist, without a mind—every woman's slave, and never his own master—thy simplicity would have lost its power, for, having no foil, it would have merged into the idiocy of thy husband, and you would have become a pair of quarrelsome simpletons."

"And if thou hadst got a wife," answered Countess Margaret, smiling, "as deep and subtle as thyself, the charm thou hast for me—thy mental superiority—would have been lost, for want of a foil; but thou wert too clever to fall into that snare, and didst avoid artful and knowing women, though beautiful, as anxiously as I, if I were still unmarried, would avoid that fair painted Jackalent thou hast mentioned, the English Baron, John Russel. Sheep, thou knowest, often fight, and get entangled in each other's horns. They are then an easy prey to the wolves. I would not give my Crooked Comyn' for all the Russels of England."

"Thy rattle pleaseth me, sweet Margaret," said Comyn. "But how is this? I feel ill. What can ail Comyn on the night of his day of triumph? These pains rack me. So sudden an attack! These are not usual feelings that now assail me."

"Ill in the midst of health!" cried Countess Margaret. "What meaneth this?—where is the complaint? Speak, dear husband! tell thy devoted wife what may enable her to yield thee relief."

"A burning pain wringeth my viscera," replied Comyn, with an expression of agony, "and unmanneth a soul that never knew subjugation; that is to me the only symptom of danger. When Comyn trembleth, death cannot be far distant."

"Thou alarmest me, dear husband," cried Countess Margaret; "speak not in such ominous terms of what I could not survive one solitary moon. What can I minister to thee?"

"Water, water, from the icy springs of Lapland!" cried the frantic Earl; "yet the frozen sea will not quench this burning fire! What availeth now the wiles, the subtlety, the courage of Scotland's proudest Earl? I never was master or director of such pains as these. Death! how successfully dost thou earn thy reputation of being the grim king! Water, beloved Margaret, for this miniature hell!"

"It is here, good heart," cried Countess Margaret. "God bless its efficacy!—drink."

"It is as nothing," cried Comyn, after swallowing the contents of the cup. "It is as nothing—these tormina laugh at the puny quencher of fires fiercer than those of Gehenna. I must submit. Thou wilt have no terce from my earldom, wherein I am not yet feudally seised. Alas! shall my innocent be left terceless—a beggar—the dependant of my brothers? 'Sdeath, this is worse than these scorching fires! Call the clerk of St John's—quick."

The Countess flew out of the room, and in a short time returned with the clerical lawyer.

"Attend, sir," cried Comyn. "Thou seest one in the hands of death; prepare, with the greatest speed of thy quill, a liferent disposition of my whole earldom in favour of

Countess Margaret, my wife. I shall then confess to thee and thou shalt pray for me."

"The liferent disposition I shall make out," replied the clerk of St John's; "for Comyn's commands must be obeyed. But I, in behalf of the holy brethren of our order, must tell thee, noble Earl, that our prayers can be of little avail if they are limited, in point of time, to the period of thy sojourn on earth. Thy mausoleum must be lighted for ten years with wax tapers, a thousand masses must be said for thy soul, and a pilgrimage to the Holy Land must be performed, ere we can hope to bring thee out of purgatory. If thou leavest the liferent of thy Earldom to Countess Margaret—the fee going to thy eldest brother as heir—what is to pay the monks of St John for all their labours in thus endeavouring to free thee from the pains of that temporary place of punishment?"

"No purgatory can equal these pains, man," cried the Earl. "Thou shalt have my earldom this instant for one hour's relief from this hell fire."

"Why, good priest," said the lady, "canst thou thus talk of wordly possessions to one in such agony? While I am thus ministering to the body, it would better become thee to minister to the soul, while it is still in its earthly tabernacle. I, his dear wife, asked for no liferent; and yet thou requirest a mortification."

"It is for his own sake," said the priest, "that I have recommended the provision of the means for saving his soul. We are not bees, to produce wax for tapers; nor birds of Paradise, to fly from hence to Jerusalem, and sit on the holy shrine, without being fed as other birds; nor are we canonized saints, requiring no meat nor drink. We must live, or we cannot pray. Wilt thou, madam, give up a half of thy liferent to aid in the redemption of the soul thou lovest so ardently?"

"Thou hast heard my lord's commands," rejoined the lady. "I cannot allow my mind to be occupied at present with thoughts of that contemptible trash thou callest gold. What is all the earldom of the Comyns to the preservation of the life of my dear husband?—Walter, dear Walter! what can be done for thee?"

"The priest hath already my commands," answered the Earl. "The parchment!—the parchment!—and—and—water!—water!"

"Hie thee away to thy work, good monk," cried the lady. "There's no time for parley. Away! Thou seest that I deny him not his request."

"Water costeth little," said the priest, with a smile of suspicion, "and availeth little either to assuage these pains or those of purgatory."

The priest retired, and, in the course of an hour, returned with the deed extended, and two witnesses at his back. The paper was read. Comyn was still able to sign it. He attached his name, and, in a few minutes, expired.

Thus died that remarkable man. A dark story now arose in Scotland: Countess Margaret had encouraged a criminal passion for the English Baron, John Russel, and was openly accused of having poisoned her husband, by means of a posset of milk and sack, to make way for her paramour, whom she married with indecent haste. Insulted and disgraced, she and her husband were thrown into prison, despoiled of their estate, and compelled to leave the kingdom. It was afterwards rumoured in Scotland that she quarreled with Russel—who ill-used her, and stood in continual fear of being treated in the same way as Comyn—and, finally, drowned herself in the river Thames.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

DISASTERS OF JOHNNY ARMSTRONG.

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

Fortunately for Johnny, this propensity to stick fast—which he did like a limpet—was natural to him. It was a part of his constitution. He had no desire whatever to travel, or, rather, he had a positive dislike to it—a dislike, indeed, which was so great that, for an entire quarter of a century, he had never been three miles out of Carlisle. But when Johnny had waxed pretty rich, somewhat corpulent, and rather oldish, he was suddenly struck, one fine summer afternoon, as he stood at the door of his shop with his hands in his breeches pockets, (a favourite attitude,) with an amiable and ardent desire to see certain of his relations who lived in Brechin, in the north of Scotland; and—there is no accounting for these things—on that afternoon, Johnny came to the extraordinary resolution of paying them a visit—of performing a journey of upwards of a hundred miles, even as the crow flies. It was a strange and a desperate resolution for a man of Johnny's peculiar temperament and habits; but so it was. Travel he would, and travel he did. On the third day after the doughty determination just alluded to had been formed, Johnny, swathed in an ample brown greatcoat, with a red comforter about his neck, appeared in the stable yard of the inn where most of the stage coaches that passed through Carlisle put up. Of these there were three: one for Dumfries, one for Glasgow, and one for Edinburgh—the latter being Johnny's coach; for his route was by the metropolis. We had almost forgotten to say that Johnny, who was a widower, was accompanied on this occasion by his son, Johnny junior, an only child, whom it was his intention to take along with him. The boy was about fourteen years of age, and though, upon the whole, a shrewd enough lad, for his time of life, did not promise to be a much brighter genius than his father. In fact, he was rather lumpish.

On arriving at the inn yard—it was about eight o'clock at night and pretty dark, being the latter end of September—Johnny Armstrong found the coach apparently about to start, the horses being all yoked; but the vehicle happened, at the moment he entered the yard, to be in charge of an ostler—not of either the guard or driver, who

had both gone out of the way for an instant. Desirous of securing a good seat for his son, Johnny Armstrong opened the coach door, thrust the lad in, and was about to follow himself, when he discovered that he had forgotten his watch. On making this discovery, he banged to the coach door without saying a word, and hurried home as fast as his little, thick, short legs would allow him, to recover his time-piece. On his return, which was in less than five minutes, Johnny himself stepped into the vehicle, which was now crowded with passengers, and, in a few seconds, was rattling away at a rapid rate towards Edinburgh. The night was pitch dark, not a star twinkled; and it was not until Johnny arrived at his journey's end—that is, at Edinburgh—that he discovered that his son was not in the coach, and had never been there at all. We will not attempt to describe Johnny's amazement and distress of mind on making this most extraordinary and most alarming discovery. They were dreadful. In great agitation, he inquired at every one of the passengers if they had not seen his son, and one and all denied they ever had. The thing was mysterious and perfectly inexplicable.

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

"Very odd," said the guard.

"Very odd, indeed," said Johnny.

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

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

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

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

The mention of this possibility, nay, certainty—for Johnny had actually dispatched the boy to Glasgow—instantly struck him dumb. It relieved him, indeed, from the misery arising from a dread of some terrible accident having happened the lad, but threw him into great tribulation as to his fate in Glasgow without money or friends. But this being, after all, comparatively but a small affair, Johnny was now, what he had not been before, able to pay attention to minor things.

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

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

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

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

And truly such was the fact. The girl, a fresh-caught country lass, had thrown it on the first coach she found.

saying her master would immediately follow—and that happened to be the Dumfries one. Here, then, was Johnny safely arrived himself, indeed, at Edinburgh; but his son was gone to Glasgow, and his trunk to Dumfries—all with the greatest precision imaginable. Next day, Johnny Armstrong, being extremely uneasy about his boy, started for Glasgow on board of one of the canal passage boats; while the lad, being equally uneasy about his father, and, moreover, ill at ease on sundry other accounts, did precisely the same thing with the difference of direction—that is, he started for Edinburgh by a similar conveyance; and so well timed had each of their respective departures been, that, without knowing it, they passed each other exactly half way between the two cities. On arriving at Glasgow, Johnny Armstrong could not, for a long while, discover any trace of his son; but, at length, succeeded in tracking him to the canal boat—which led him rightly to conclude that he had proceeded to Edinburgh. On coming to this conclusion, Johnny again started for the metropolis, where he safely arrived about two hours after his son had left it for home, whither, finding no trace of his father in Edinburgh, he had wisely directed his steps. Johnny Armstrong, now greatly distressed about the object of his paternal solicitude, whom he vainly sought up and down the city, at last also bent his way homewards, thinking, what was true, that the boy might have gone home; and there, indeed, he found him. Thus nearly a week had been spent, and that in almost constant travel, and Johnny found himself precisely at the point from which he had set out. However, in three days, after having, in the meantime, recovered his trunk, he again set out on his travels to Brechin; for his courage was not in the least abated by what had happened; but on this occasion unaccompanied by his son, as he would not again run the risk of losing him, or of exposing himself to that distress of mind on his account of which he had been before a victim. In the case of Johnny's second progress, there was "no mistake" whatever of any kind—at least at starting. Both himself and his trunk arrived in perfect safety, and in due time, at Edinburgh.

Johnny's next route was to steam it to Kirkaldy from Newhaven. The boat started at six a.m.; and, having informed himself of this particular, he determined to be at the point of embarkation in good time. But he was rather late, and, on finding this, he ran every foot of the way from Edinburgh to the steam-boat, and was in a dreadful state of exhaustion when he reached it; but, by his exertions, he saved his distance, thereby exhibiting another proof that all is not lost that's in danger. An instant longer, however, and he would have been too late, for the vessel was just on the eve of starting. Johnny leapt on board, or rather was bundled on board; for Johnny, as already hinted, was in what is called good bodily condition—rather extra, indeed—and was, moreover, waxing a little stiff about the joints; so that he could not get over the side of the boat so cleverly as he would have done some twenty years before. Over and above all this, he was quite exhausted with the race against time which he had just run. Seeing his distressed condition, and that the boat was on the point of sailing, two of the hands leapt on the pier, when the one seizing him by the waistband of the breeches, and the other seizing him by the breast, they fairly pitched him into the vessel; throwing his trunk after him. As it was pouring rain, Johnny, on recovering his perpendicular, immediately descended into the cabin, and, in the next instant, the boat was ploughing her way through the deep. For two hours after he had embarked, it continued to rain without intermission; and for these two hours he remained snug below without stirring. At the end of this period, however, it cleared up a little, and, in a short while thereafter, became perfectly fair. Having discovered this,

he ascended to the deck, to see what was going on. The captain of the vessel was himself at the helm; he, therefore, sidled towards him, and, after making some remarks on the weather and the scenery, asked the captain, in the blandest and civillest tones imaginable, when he expected they would be at Kirkaldy. The man stared at Johnny with a look of astonishment, not unmingled with displeasure; but at length said—

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

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

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

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

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

This was an inquiry which Johnny might put to himself, but it was one which he could by no means answer. Being, however, an easy, good-natured man, and seeing how much offence in one instance, and subject for mirth in another, he had unwittingly given, by putting it, he resolved to make no further inquiries into the matter, but to await in patience the arrival of the boat at her destination—an event which he had the sense to perceive would be neither forwarded nor retarded by his obtaining or being refused the information he had desired to be possessed of. The boat arrived in due time at the wished-for haven, and Johnny landed with the other passengers; the captain giving him a wipe, as he stepped on the plank that was to convey him ashore, about his Kirkaldy inquiries, by asking him, though now in perfect good humour, if he knew the precise length of that celebrated town; but Johnny merely smiled and passed on.

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

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

"There's no coach at all from this to Dundee, sir," replied the waiter.

"No!" said Johnny, a little nonplused by this information. "That's odd."

The waiter saw nothing odd in it.

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

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

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

"Kirkaldy, laddy!" exclaimed Johnny Armstrong, with an expression of consternation in his face which it would require Cruikshanks' art and skill to do justice to—"Gude hae a care o' me, is *this* no Kirkaldy?"

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

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

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

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

Johnny Armstrong was all gratitude for this very opportune piece of kindness, and gladly closed with the offer—the captain and he taking a couple of additional tumblers each, on the head of it, to begin with. We say to begin with; for it by no means ended with the quantity named. The captain was a jolly dog, and loved his liquor, and was, withal, so facetious a companion, that he prevailed on his new friend to swallow a great deal more than did him any good. To tell a truth, which, however, we would not have known at Carlisle, Johnny Armstrong, who had the character of a sober man, got, on this occasion, into a rather discreditable condition, and, in this state, he was escorted by the captain—who stood liquor like a water cask—to the vessel, and was once more embarked; but it was now on board the Fifteen Sisters of Skatehaven. On getting him on board, the captain, seeing the state he was in, prudently bundled him down into the cabin, and thrust him into his own bed, where he immediately fell into a profound sleep, that extended over twelve mortal hours. At the end of this period, however, Johnny awoke—but it

was not by any means of his own accord, for he was awakened by a variety of stimulants, or *rousters*, if we may be allowed to coin a word for the occasion, all operating at once. These were, a tremendous uproar on the deck, a fearful rolling of the vessel, the roaring of wind, and the splashing, dashing, and gurgling of waves; and, to crown all, a feeling of deadly sickness. When he first opened his eyes, he could not conceive where he was, or what was the meaning of the furious motion that he felt, and of the tremendous sounds that he heard. A few minutes' cogitation with himself, however, solved the mystery, and exposed to him his true position. In great alarm—for he thought the vessel was on the eve of going down—Johnny Armstrong rolled himself out of his bed, and crawled in his shirt up the cabin ladder. On gaining the summit, he found himself confronted by the captain, who, with a very serious face, was standing by the helm.

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

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

"Very extraordinary this," said Johnny Armstrong to himself, as he lay musing in bed on the perilous situation into which he had so simply and innocently got—"very extraordinary, that I couldna get the length o' Brechin without a' this uproar, and confusion, and difficulty, and danger; this knocking about frae place to place, half drowned and half murdered. Here have I been now for mair than a week at it, and it's my opinion I'm no twenty mile nearer't yet than I was, for a' this kick up. Dear me," he went on, soliloquizing, "I'm sure Brechin's no sic an out o' the way place. The road's straight, and the distance no great. Then, how, in the name o' wonder, is it that I canna mak it out like ither folk, let me do as I like?"

Thus cogitated Johnny Armstrong as he lay on his bed of sickness, sorrow, and danger. But his cogitations could in no way mend the matter, nor, though they could, was he long permitted to indulge in them; for that mortal sickness under which he had been before suffering, but which the little incident of the visit from the wave, with its consequences, had temporarily banished, again returned with tenfold vigour, making him regardless of all sublunary things—even of life itself. In this state of supineness and suffering did Johnny lie for three entire days and nights—for so long did the storm continue with unabated fury—the vessel having, for some four-and-twenty hours previously, been quite unmanageable, and driving at the mercy of the winds and

waves. A dreadful crash, however, at length announced that some horrible crisis was at hand. The vessel had struck, and, in a few seconds more, she was in a thousand pieces, and her unfortunate crew, including Johnny Armstrong, were struggling in the waves. From this instant, he lost all consciousness; and, when he again awoke to life, he found himself lying on the sea-beach; but how he had come there he never could tell, nor could he at all conjecture by what accident his life had been saved, when all the rest in the ill-fated vessel had perished; for Johnny was, indeed, the only person that had escaped. On coming to himself, he started to his feet, and gazed around him with a bewildered look, to see if any object would present itself that might help him to guess where he was. But his survey affording him no such aid to recognition, he began to move inland, in the hope of meeting with somebody who could give him the information desired; and in this he was not disappointed—that is, he did meet somebody; but the appearance of that somebody surprised Johnny “pretty considerably.” He had a high-crowned hat on, such as Johnny had never seen in his life before; an enormous pair of breeches; and a pipe a yard long in his mouth. His *tout ensemble*, in short, was exceeding strange in Johnny Armstrong’s eyes. Nevertheless, he accosted him.

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

The stranger shook his head, but made no reply.

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

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

“Futra butara rap a ruara datera muttera purra murra footra den, Preekin, humph.”

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

“I dinna understand a word o’ what ye say, freen,” at length said Johnny, staring hard at the stranger, with open mouth.

“Umph!” said the latter; and he again withdrew his pipe from his mouth, and again sent a volley of his “datera mutteras” about Johnny’s ears, to precisely the same purpose as before.

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

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

He now began to think that he had probably got into the Highlands; but, although this supposition might account for the strangeness of the language he had heard, it

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

“’Od,” said Johnny, “I’ll surely get a mouthfu’ o’ sense frae somebody here, and fin’ out whar I am.”

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

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

“I cam last frae Alloa,” said Johnny, “and I want to ken, sir, if I’m anything near to Brechin.”

“Preekin! vere dat?”

“’Od, I thoct everybody in Scotland kent that,” said Johnny, smiling.

“Ah! maybe Scotlan, mine friend, but no Hollands,” replied he of the broken English.

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

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

“Never in my life,” said Johnny, earnestly.

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

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

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

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

“To be sure I vas,” said the Dutchman, smiling at Johnny’s ludicrous perturbation. “Mine Got, did you not know you vas in Hollands? Vere you coome from, in all de worlds, you not know dat?”

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

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

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

“Weel, weel,” said the Brechin voyager, with an air expressive of more calmness and resignation than might have

been expected, "this does cove the gowan! How, in Heaven's name, am I ever to fin' my way hame again? Little did I think I was ever to be landed this way amang savages."

Johnny Armstrong, it will be here observed, could have been no great reader—otherwise, he never would have applied the term savages to so decent, industrious, and civilized a people as the Dutch. The Dutchman, who was a kind, good-natured fellow—taking no offence whatever at Johnny's unbecoming expression, because probably he did not understand it, and compassionating his situation—now invited him into the house, where, having succeeded in conveying to the whole household, through the medium of the speaker of broken English, the story of his misfortunes, he was treated with much hospitality. With these kind people, Johnny Armstrong remained for about a week—for they would not allow him to go sooner—when, having entirely recovered from the effects of his sea voyage and shipwreck, he proceeded to Rotterdam; being accompanied and assisted in all his movements by his benevolent host, Dunder Vander Dunder, of Slootzloykin. On arriving at Rotterdam, a passage was engaged for Johnny on board one of the Leith packets, or regular traders, in which he was next day snugly deposited; and, in an hour after, he was again braving the dangers of the ocean. For some time all went on well on this occasion with him, and he was beginning to feel comfortable and even happy, from the prospect of being soon again in his native land, and from the superior accommodations of the vessel in which he was embarked—far surpassing, as they did, those of the unfortunate Sisters of Skatehaven. His present ship was, in truth, a remarkably fine one, and altogether seemed well adapted for encountering the elements. The weather, too, was moderate, and the wind fair; so that a quick and pleasant passage was confidently anticipated by all on board, including Johnny Armstrong. All these agreeable circumstances combined, made him feel extremely comfortable and happy; and, in the exuberance of his feelings, and from the exciting sense of having at length triumphed over his misfortunes—it might almost be said his fate—Johnny even began to joke and laugh with those whom he found willing to joke and laugh with him. It was while in this happy frame of mind, and as he stood luxuriously leaning over the bulwark of the vessel, that the captain suddenly espied a little, smart, cutter-looking craft, sailing exactly in the same course with themselves, and evidently endeavouring to make up with them.

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

"Your name vas John Jones, mynheer"

"No, sir," said Johnny; "my name's John Armstrong."
"Ah, a small shange—dat is all. You vas John, and he vas John, and you be both John togidder; so, you must come to de shore wid us."

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

"Donner and blitzen!" shouted out one of the men, passionately, "but you must go!"—at the same time seizing Johnny by the collar, and drawing a pistol from his bosom.

In utter amazement at this extraordinary treatment, Johnny Armstrong imploringly called on the captain and the other passengers for protection; but, as none of them were in the least acquainted with him, and therefore did not know whether he was John Jones or not, they all declined interfering—the captain saying that it would be more than his ship and situation were worth to aid any one in resisting the laws of the country; that he could not, dare not do it. His appeals, therefore, to those around him being vain, he was eventually bundled into the cutter, and conveyed on shore, placed in a temporary place of confinement for the night, and next day carried before a magistrate to be identified. To effect this, several witnesses were called, when one and all of them, after examining Johnny pretty narrowly, pronounced, to the great disappointment of the officers who had apprehended him, that he was *not* the man! They, however, asserted that the resemblance between the real and supposed John Jones was very remarkable. On the discovery being made that the prisoner was not Jones, the magistrate apologized to Johnny in the most polite terms for the trouble he had been put to, and expressed great regret for the mistake of the officers; but said that, as the witnesses had stated that there was a strong resemblance—an unfortunate one, he must call it—between him and the real defaulter, and seeing, moreover, that they were both natives of Britain, the officers were perfectly justified in doing what they had done, however much the hardship of the case might be matter of regret. The magistrate having thus delivered himself, Johnny Armstrong was dismissed with great civility, and wished, by all present, safe home to his own country—a wish in which he most heartily concurred, but which seemed to him more easily entertained than gratified. On regaining his liberty, the first thing he did was to endeavour to find out when the next ship sailed for Scotland; he having, of course, lost that in which he had first embarked, and, to his great consternation and dismay, learnt, that there would be no vessel for a fortnight. This was sad intelligence to Johnny; for, to add to his other distresses, his funds were now waxing low, and he felt that it would require the utmost economy to enable him to spin out the time, and leave sufficient to pay his passage to his native land. This economy he could very easily have practised at home, for he had a natural tendency that way; but he did not know how to set about it in a foreign country. His unhappiness and anxiety, therefore, on this point were very great. In this dilemma, he bethought him of again seeking out and quartering on his friend, Vander Dunder, of Slootzloykin, till the vessel should sail; but not having, of course, a word of Dutch, he could make no inquiries on the subject of his route, or indeed of anything regarding his friend at all. This idea, therefore, he ultimately abandoned, principally through a fear that he should, by some mistake, be dispatched upon a wrong scent—a species of disaster to which he was now so sensitively alive, that he would neither turn to the right nor to the left, without having made himself perfectly sure that he was about to take the right course; and, as to conveyances of all kinds, of which he now entertained an especial suspicion, he had prudently determined that he would know every particular about them and their destinations, before he would put a foot in one of them; for he had found

from dear-bought experience, that, if he did not take this precaution, the chance was, that he would never reach the place he desired to get at, and might be whisked away to some unknown country, where he would never more be heard of.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“No, no; no obleeget at all,” replied the kind-hearted Dutchman, impatiently. “You do the same to me in your country, if I was shipwrack and in misfortune, and put to trouble for an innocent thief.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Yes, yes,” replied the captain, “you may have seen such a ticket as you speak of, and there was certainly such a ticket on our shrouds, as you say, but it did not refer to this ship, but to the vessel outside of us. We allowed the board to be exhibited on our shrouds merely to accommodate our neighbour, as it could not be read from his—he being on the outside, and we next the quay. That, my friend, is a piece of civility very commonly practised at sea-ports by one vessel to another, when similarly situated as we and they were. You will see it at all quays and wharfs?”

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

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

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

“Mony thanks to ye,” said Johnny, perceiving and appreciating the friendly purpose of the captain; “and I'll e'en tak advantage o' yer kind offer; but, as to sein the world, by my faith, I've seen now about just as muckle o't as I want to see, and maybe a trifle mair—a hantle mair, at ony rate, than ever I expected to see.” Then, in a soliloquizing tone and manner—“God keep me, whar's Brechin

noo! A' that I wanted, and a' that I intended, was to get to that bit paltry place; and, instead o' that, here am I within a stans cast o' the north pole, for aught I ken to the contrar, and, to a' appearances, no half dune wi't yet. Heaven kens whar I'll be sent niest!—maybe be landed on Owhyhee, or on some desert island, like another Robison Crusoe. Na, it's certain, if things gang on muckle langer this way."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He replied—"Rotterdam."

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

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

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

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

We felt interested in Johnny, by this brief sketch of his mysterious story; and, not a little curious to know where on earth he could possibly have been all the time, we readily closed with our friend's proposal to run round to the berth for which we saw the vessel was making, and to await his coming on shore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The friends now walked away, arm in arm together; and, in about two hours afterwards—Mr Stevenson having, in the meantime, dispatched what business he had to do in the city—they were both seated in the gig, and birring it on merrily towards Carlisle.

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

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

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

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

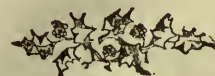
On discovering the predicament they were in, both the travellers—the one dropping his whip, and the other his stick—seized on the reins, and began pulling, with all their might, in the desperate hope of checking the animal's speed by main force; Johnny, in his terror, exclaiming the while, distractedly—

"Mair o't yet, mair o't yet! Lord have a care o' me, but this is awfu'! This is waur than onything I hae met wi' yet. Waur than the Fifteen Sisters, Dutchmen, and a'. God be wi' us! are my misfortunes never to hae an end, till they hae finished me outright? Am I never to get safe to either ae place or anither?—either to hame or to Brechin? Surely ane o' them might be permitted to me. O Jamie, see hoo he's gaun! He doesna seem to fin' us at his hurdies nae mair than if we war a pair o' preencushions."

This was true enough. The horse in his fury did not indeed seem to feel either them or the vehicle they were seated in, but pushed madly onwards, till he came to where the road divided itself into two distinct roads—the one being the right one, and the other of course the wrong—when, as if inspired by Johnny's evil genius, he at once took the latter, and in little more than twenty minutes, had him and his friend fully half as many miles out of their way. Now, however, the catastrophe was to be wound up. A milestone caught one of the wheels of the gig, canted it over, and threw Johnny sprawling on the road with a broken leg; his friend, although also thrown, escaping wholly unhurt.

"Aweel, here it's at last," said Johnny, sitting up in the mud amongst which he had been planted, and fully believing that his injuries were fatal. "Here it's at last. I'm clean dune for noo, after a' my escapes. It may be noo plainly seen, I think," he went on, "that some evil spirit has had me in its power, for these six weeks past, at ony rate, and has been govin' me about the world like a fitba', to kill me wi' a gig at last."

Luckily, Johnny's injuries did not prove so serious as he had feared they would do; and no less fortunate was it that the accident to which they were owing happened not far from a small country town in which there was a resident surgeon. To the latter place Johnny was immediately removed on a temporary bier, hastily constructed for the purpose by some labouring men who chanced to be near the spot where the accident happened, and there he lay for six entire weeks, when the surgeon above alluded to, and who had attended him all that time, intimated to him that he might now venture to return home. Delighted with the intelligence, Johnny instantly acted on it, and next day entered Carlisle triumphantly in a post chaise—not looking nor really being, after all, much the worse for his unprecedented adventures, save and except a lameness in the injured limb, which ever after imparted to his movements the graceful up-and-down motion produced by that peculiar longitudinal proportion of the nether limbs, designated by the descriptive definition of "a short leg and a shorter." Having, with this last occurrence, concluded the story of Johnny's disasters, we have only to add that Johnny has never, to this good hour, got the length of Brechin—nor will he says, ever again make the attempt.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MAID OF ANCRUM MUIR.

At a little distance from Ancrum and its famous muir, where the bloody battle bearing that name was fought, in the year 1545, stood (and its ruins are still observable, exhibiting, in their broken fragments, the giant strength of its youth) the castle of Maltan, once famous, in those parts, for having often resounded but never yielded to the battering-rams of England, and for having been serenaded (we shrewdly guess not for its own sake) by minstrels whose untutored trembling hands and quivering voices exposed the secret of their disguise. It was a regular Anglo-Norman building, with moat, drawbridge, and dungeon, and all the other appurtenances of a military guard or feudal castle; and its strength was only equalled by the beauty of its situation, in the midst of old elms, whose rough skins bespoke the endurance of centuries of winters' blasts, and the scorching effects of as many revolving suns. The throne of feudal supremacy, with all its trappings of services, reddens, tenendas, vassalage, and villeinage, seemed placed there by peculiar right and privilege. This strength was, at the time of which we speak, possessed by Sir William Lyle, whose ancestor, an Englishman, had, about a century before, located himself there as a loyal subject of our Scottish King—having previously taken umbrage at his own monarch, and rendered himself and his services acceptable to the old proprietor of the castle, whose daughter he married, and thence possessed the property, and propelled it down, by entail, through a series of heirs. The ordinary heir-loom of large possessions—family pride—had descended with the property, and swelled the bosoms of the consecutive possessors, while it rendered their manners pompous, dry, and repulsive, and dried up even the small portion of philanthropy found in the breasts of feudal lords. In this respect, Sir William did not shame his predecessors; for he united to the relished domination of feudalism and contempt of inferiors, all the grasping and sordid passions of the trafficking citizen; so that generosity, the usual redeeming virtue of proud aristocracy, was totally wanting in the proprietor of Maltan—its place being supplied by the corresponding vice. His lady did not participate in the faults of her husband's family. Truly Scotch in her birth and manners, she inherited, from a good father, his virtues—being humble, generous, pious, and affectionate—looking on mankind, though bearing the bonds of her lord's servitude, as brethren, and extending to them all the sympathies of a heart whose pulses, obeying the law of instinctive feeling, were yet regulated by a discriminating judgment, which distinguished innocence and misfortune from vice and its attendant, deserved misery.

This couple, so unlike each other, had contrived to pass a considerable period of their lives in comparative peace. The elements of happiness could not be expected to be found in materials so discordant; but the good sense and feeling of Lady Lyle—suggesting the remedy of concession, where victory, purchased by the price of a husband's independence and good temper, would not have yielded her satisfaction—produced, in appearance at least, the usual concordance of married persons. They had one son, Augustus, and one daughter, Lilyard, who were just the counterparts of their

respective parents; the son being the exact representative of his father, in person, disposition, and temper—and the daughter being as like her mother as one fair and good creature could resemble another. The father and son followed the same pursuits. War, the foray, hunting, hawking, and oppressing their feudal dependants, occupied, successively and continually, their attention, while they gratified connate feelings and acquired habits. But the right hand of the house, while thus exercised in acts of oppression, was followed by the soft curative effects of the left. The pointed and distrained tenant had often his little cot refurnished from the source of his misfortunes and sorrows; and the very proceeds of his small stocking went in at the hall door of the castle only to come out at the wicket. Lady Lyle and her daughter Lilyard, cured, in secret, the wounds produced by the husband and the son, and dried up, while their own flowed, the tears of the wives and children of their oppressed retainers.

The two divisions of the House of Maltan produced in this way severally many friends and foes. The proprietor of the neighbouring Castle of Catthorpe—once a famous strength, but now classed with the things that were—named Hector Oliphant, also a proud chief, who rivalled the lord of Maltan and his son in their pride, power, and severity, had long nourished feelings of hostility against his neighbour, which had several times broken forth in attacks on the Castle of Maltan, and in personal conflicts whenever the parties or their retainers met in the open field. Nor were the inimical feelings of Sir William Lyle and his son less strong against the proprietor of Catthorpe; though there was this marked difference in their hostility—that, while the latter was open in the expression of his sentiments, and wished to accomplish his enemy's ruin by means justified by the warlike usages of the times, the former were continually concocting schemes of secret mischief, whereby they might encompass the destruction of one they wanted the courage to meet fairly in open fight.

Amongst other devices resorted to by Sir William and his son against the life and fortunes of their enemy, was one suggested by the genius of Augustus. The invention of the monk of Cologne—gunpowder—had, previously to this time, been exhibiting its revolutionizing effects, and a quantity of it had been procured by Augustus Lyle for the purpose of blowing up the Castle of Catthorpe, which he expected to be able to accomplish by having previously bribed a retainer of his enemy to give him the key of a subterraneous entrance to the castle. The father was delighted with this project—his revenge and admiration of the inventive genius of his son blinding him to the cowardice that suggested it, and the cruelty that yearned for its execution. But the plan was incomplete without the daring hand that was to accomplish it. There were but few men about Maltan fitted, by the union of intrepidity and caution, for the arduous enterprise; and neither the scanty bribes nor the liberal threats of the proud and base superior could prevail upon any of them to expose themselves to the triple risk of losing themselves in the dark passages, being seized and put to death by

Catthorpe, or blown up in the air along with him and his castle.

They next turned their eyes towards the out-door dependants; and there was among them one man who, if he could be prevailed upon, by working upon the necessities of his father, to undertake the task, would perform it better than any man on the marches. This young man's name was George Turnbull, the only son of William Turnbull, an old man, who, with his mate, a true representative of "the guidwife"—a character which is fast losing its close-mutch, gaucy, cozie peculiarities—had lived for many years in a small cottage not far distant from the castle, from whose lord he held his house, and a small mailing of ground, called Greenbank, in feu. George Turnbull presented one of those extraordinary examples of unconscious worth which conceited humanity so seldom exhibits, but which are less seldom found in the humble classes of society than in the superior orders. To a strong athletic body, formed on the handsomest model, he united a strong mind, a stern judgment, ready decision, unflinching courage; and, among all these attributes, the slightest incident of social life could bring out, like the charmed wand applied to the rock, the wellsprings of a soft and feeling heart. His courage had been often tried, and his affection and duty to his parents were the daily offices of his life; so that his eye was as ready to yield the tear under the blessing of a dotting mother, as it was to glance the fire which was to quail the heart of the Englishmen of the Borders whose vaunts called it forth.

Though honest and industrious, William Turnbull had not been able to pay up his yearly feu-duty to his superior, and had, in consequence, been subjected more than once to his harsh measures for compelling payment. He had again got into arrear, and, two full rents being due, he was at the mercy of his creditor, who, by the feudal law, could have deprived him entirely of his property, *ob non solutum canonem*. Sir William had been threatening to take advantage of this privilege, while Lady Lyle and her amiable Lilyard were busy devising means for the purpose of enabling the old cotter to pay at least one year's rent, whereby the threatened irritancy of his right might be avoided. In their visits to the humble dwelling of old Dame Turnbull, they had frequently occasion to meet George, whose modesty and filial duty attracted their attention and commanded their admiration, while his noble person, handsome countenance, and famed courage, sometimes forced a sigh from the gentle Lilyard, as she thought of the unequal decrees of fate, which placed Sir Lionel Manners, an English suitor recommended to her by her father, in a castle, and George Turnbull in a thatched cottage.

While Lady Lyle and her daughter were thus entertaining these generous intentions towards the cottagers of Greenbank, Augustus Lyle was concocting schemes of a very different kind. He suggested to Sir William the plan of endeavouring to prevail upon the fearless George Turnbull, whose father and himself were completely in their power, to undertake the execution of the project they had devised for reducing to ruins the Castle of Catthorpe. The suggestion was adopted, and the two schemers went together to the house of their dependant.

"This is the last time, William Turnbull," said Sir William, gruffly, as he entered, "that I can come to Greenbank to ask that which I have the power of taking by deputy. It is only in consideration of your having been so long in this place that I have hitherto delayed pursuing against you the necessary declarator, as the lawyers call it, for resuming again, as my absolute property, this mailing, which was fued out by my ancestors, and will come again appropriately into my power."

"An' your Honour will wait but a little time, replied William sorrowfully, while the tear was bursting from his

eye, "I will be able to pay my feu-duty, an' save her wha has been sae lang my comforter, my puir wife, frae the blasts that blaw through the thin grey hairs o' the unfortunate. Twa or three weeks can mak sma' difference to the braw Laird o' Maltan; but they may carry on their heavy wings the salvation and the comfort o' poverty an' auld age. Look to Elspeth there, your Honour, and think—excuse my freedom—on Lady Lyle; an', oh! guid young Maister o' Maltan, look on her, an' think, as ye look, what ye would feel, an' say, an' do, if ye saw her wha gae ye birth and nourished baith body an' mind—even as my Elspeth did my George, wha sits there wi' a fu' heart—on the eve o' being beardless an' dinnerless at the close o' a lang life. Grant but a little time, an' Greenbank will be redeemed."

"So plead all debtors," replied Sir William. "You have made no exertions to pay your feu, and laziness has, since the beginning of the world, been clothed with rags. Your son George, there, might have made good use of his thews and sinews, if it had been in no other way than in the King's wars, when Evers and Latoun are deluging these parts with blood. But he has been living in inglorious ease, husbanding strength which, if it had been inspired with the spirit of Wallace, might have a second time redeemed his country. I cannot wait longer, and to-morrow will write to Gilbert Poindall, my agent, to proceed with the action. I think it proper to give you this notice."

"Can they hae mixed breaths, an' touched ilk ither's lips, the Lord an' Lady o' Mattan?" cried old Elspeth, regardless of her husband's efforts, by looks and touches of the foot, to prevent reference to Lady Lyle. "I will, I maun, William, let out the voice o' a heart that winna be still. It may be, Sir William Lyle, ye want payment o' your rent. Every body i' this warld likes his ain; an' a puir cotter, an' his auld wife an' his dutifu' son, mayna be worth five Scotch merks, when weighed i' the gold scales o' the great; but surely a wife's friendship canna be a husband's feid, an' the kind words o' Lady Lyle, even now, as she promised us relief, canna be made the first sounds o' the wreck o' her angry lord."

Sir William scowled as he heard the allusion to the visit of his lady. Augustus, having made a sign to George to follow him to the door, went out, and the unhappy son immediately followed. They were joined instantly by Sir William, who was anxious to assist the efforts of his son.

"You see, George Turnbull," said Sir William, as he came out, "how dangerous is the position of your aged parents. Report says you are dutiful, and your strength and courage have become a proverb on the Borders. Would you be willing to employ these qualities for my benefit, as well as for that of those you are bound to deliver from their perilous position?"

"There's naething, your Honour," replied George, "that a man daur do that I wadna undertake for the sake o' the twa auld stocks, whase green strength has passed into that arm."

"That is spoken like a good son and a brave man," said Sir William. "It is worthy of him to whom the report of these parts has attributed the unprecedented act of having, with his unassisted arm, felled to the earth three Englishmen at Adam's Edge, with no better weapon in his hand than an oaken twig."

"An' if there had been twice three, your Honour," said George, "they might a' hae been sent the same road, without my tellin' wha did the deed. I am only sorry that a simple man canna, in his ain defence, kill three Englishmen wi' an oaken cudgel against three swords, without a' the Borders hearin' o' the deed. Whaever tauld the story, I am guiltless o' the sin o' blawin' my ain fame—an' I think I can answer for the Englishmen."

"You shall not, George," said Sir William, "have the same complaint to make in regard to the adventure I wish

you to engage in. Do you know the old Castle of Catthorpe?"

"I do," replied George. "It's as guid a strength as is on a' the Borders; an' if yer Honour wishes me to be the first man to climb its auld wa's, to avenge a just feid, I am at your service. I will stick to the moss-grown stanes as firmly as the bats o' Maltan; an' the mountain eagles winna be mair anxious for their prey. That would be a sma' price for the seil an' safety o' my auld parents."

"You are the very man I want," said Sir William; "the spirit that leads a man to climb the walls of Catthorpe may surely be sufficient to carry him under them. The bat can burrow as well as climb, and the eagle can seize its prey on the ground as well as on the mountain. Do you know the mouth of the passage to the castle that goes by the name of the Molesway?"

"I hae seen it," answered George. "If that is the way ye intend to tak to the inside o' the strength, ye hae only to add to our graith o' weir, a guid blazing torch, made o' the juice o' yon auld pines. I'll shew the men o' Maltan the way. But they tell me the Molesway has been lang closed up an' carefully guarded."

"That difficulty may be overcome," replied Sir William.

"If that can be managed," said George, "everything may be managed. The sooner the attack the better, for I canna live to see my auld mither wringin frae her dry een the tears o' a grief that it is in my power, by God's blessing, to heal. I will be ready for your Honour the morn."

"Your love for your parents carries you too fast," said Sir William. "You do not know the peril of the enterprise you offer to undertake?"

"An' what peril to me, your Honour, can equal what I now witnessed in that cottage whar I was born, an' whar I expected the only warning my faither an' mither would get to flit would be frae Him whase kauk an' keil nae man nor woman born can escape? Yet your Honour warned them only a little afore God's ain time; an' I heard it—ay, a son heard that sentence pronounced against his parents. Speak na to me o' peril. For their sakes, to heal their wae an' dry up their saut tears, I wad attempt the strength o' Catthorpe wi' that single arm, carryin as its friend the trusty blade my mither's father brought frae the field o' Bosworth. This is no my usual speech, yer Honour—for nae man ever heard me say what I would do or was able to do; but a father's sorrows may weel plead the excuse o' what some might ca' my weak vanity."

"Your words are yet less than your known deeds, George," said Sir William. "Your fault does not lie in telling us what you are able or willing to do, but in a misapplication of your proffered services to a different mode of attack from that which we contemplate."

"Let the mode o' attack be what it may," replied George, still excited by the hope of saving his parents, "I will undertake it."

"A right good soldado, by my faith!" said young Lyle, wishing to bring the conversation to a close. "Suppose, then, George, that we put into your possession the key of the secret passage called the Molesway, would you undertake to lodge beneath that part of the castle, in the eastern tower, where old Oliphant slumbers and dreams of his revenge against the Lyles of Maltan, a sufficient number of casks of gunpowder, and, laying a train thereof to the door, fire it, and seal in an instant, and without sturt or strife, as they say, the end of our foe and his old castle for ever?"

"Never!" replied the disappointed and incensed youth, bending back his tall, handsome person, and looking disdainfully on the knight and his son. "I will never be guilty o' laying aside that strength which God has, in his guidness, awarded to me, to use in its place the wiles o' cunnin an' treachery, an' basely apply them for the destruc-

tion o' my fellow-creatures. I opined ye had a fair feid, and intended to mak a fair an' honourable trial o' strength against your auld enemy Catthorpe. I hae been cheated an' ye hae been also deceived. If that is the price o' my faither an' mither's safety frae the hands o' the cruel Poindall, I can only say, may God hae mercy on their auld heads, for George Turnbull canna save them at the expense o' his honesty an' the safety o' his eternal saul!"

"You are a proud hind," said Sir William, sarcastically. "Our nobles must repair to Greenbank, to learn what is honour and honesty; and we will send Poindall to shew them the way."

With these words, Sir William Lyle and his son turned and proceeded homewards, meditating schemes of revenge against the hind who had, by the simple dictates of an honest heart, called up into the faces of his high-born feudal superiors the blush of shame, which might have resisted the summons of a less unequal stickler for the rights of honesty. Unfortunately, though they had not the fate of their enemy, Catthorpe, so completely in their hands as their desire of revenge led them to wish, they had only to point to the sleuth hound, Poindall—an appendage of feudalism as necessary as the canine prototype was to the blood-thirsty raiders of these ancient times—to get their vengeance glutted against the poor family of the Turnbells, who had committed two crimes—first, in receiving the protection and sympathy of Lady Lyle, and, secondly, by their son shewing his superiors an example of a spirit which had dared to animate the bosom of a hind.

In a short time afterwards, what is called a decree of declarator of irritancy, was got by Poindall, against William Turnbull; in other words, a writ or sentence of a judge, declaring that, as the feuar had gone in arrear two years' rent, he had forfeited all right to his little piece of ground, which reverted, from that moment, back into the hands of the person from whom it originally came. This proceeding was known to Lady Lyle; who, however, in consequence of having been reprimanded by her husband for her interference with his administration of what he proudly called his paternal property, had not ventured to call at Greenbank, to administer consolation to the old feuars. She had meditated sending to old William as much money as would enable him to pay up the whole of his arrears; but she soon found that Poindall's expenses had, with the rapidity of increase of a lawyer's account, swelled beyond her present powers of liquidation; and she saw, moreover, that no effort of hers, or indeed of any other individual, could save the ill-fated family, so long as they remained subject to the power of her husband, from the effects of the hatred which he and Augustus now avowed they nourished against them. On consulting with her daughter, who felt a greater interest in the fortunes of the poor family than she was perhaps herself aware of, they came to the conclusion of recommending, by the medium of the kind offices of Lilyard, to old William and Dame Turnbull, to submit to the fate that pressed so hard upon them; while a sum of money given to the son, George, would enable him to get a feu from some neighbouring proprietor, in his own name, whereby the care of providing for old age would be properly transferred to youth and filial affection.

As soon as this measure was resolved upon, the generous lady dispatched secretly the gentle and spirited Lilyard to the cottage at Greenbank, one evening after the moon had begun to chequer the greenwood. As she tripped lightly along, with her generous donation carefully lodged in a green silk bag that hung from her arm, she paused at times to contemplate and enjoy a scene that harmonized so perfectly with a frame of mind produced by the heartfelt gratification of generous feelings directed towards the misfortunes of honesty and old age, and softened and saddened by the sympathy and sorrow she felt for sufferings produced

by her parent, and attempted to be ameliorated by a daughter in secret. Her mind reverted occasionally, and against her own will, to the noble person, famed courage, and, above all, to the duty and affection of George Turnbull; and the regret she had felt before stole softly upon her, producing a sigh, with the almost unconsciously breathed monologue of pity, that one whom she esteemed above all men was so lowly born, and so far below the grade of society from which she would be forced, by a hard father, to choose a husband. But her reviving prudence and sense of delicacy checked the unavailing regret; and, drawing another sigh, she quickened her pace, to escape from the cold reasonings, obligations, and realities of life.

"If ye are hastenin, fair lady, to Greenbank," said George, meeting her, "ye will see the displeishin o' a cotter's hoose, an' the turnin oot, to the beildless forest, twa auld residents wha hae passed their best days there, an' expected to pass their last. Poindall, wi' three concurrents, is noo i' the hoose packin up the sticks o' plenishin; an' this nicht my father and mither maun beg a nicht's lodgin frae a neighbour, or sleep till mornin i' the wood."

"Why has the cruel man chosen so late an hour to turn your parents to the door?" said Lilyard.

"I dinna ken," answered George, whose delicacy prevented him from stating what he knew, that her father had given orders to Poindall to eject the old people at night. "He says he has authority; but so say a' his tribe; an' my client maun aye bear the shame an' mails o' a writer's oppression."

"I wished to have seen your father, George," said she, having a commission to him and old Elspeth from my mother; but, if the house is in confusion, and they on the eve of being turned out to the open forest, I fear I cannot stand the sorrowful sight."

"An' it's no easy to stand, fair lady," replied George. "They say I am ane that ne'er felt fear, though that is, maybe, only a fashion o' expressin courage greater than their ain, an' yet no' great; but nae man can say that langer—for the puir bairn that grat on its dead mither's bosom on the streets o' Selkirk, had mair courage than I hae shewn this nicht. I wouldna recommend ye to face my auld greetin parents i' the sorrowfu' plight they are now in. I maun warsele wi' that mysel; an' God only kens whar I am to carry them, or what I am to do wi' them."

"Who is your nearest neighbour?" asked Lilyard, with tears in her eyes.

"The fear o' the mailin ca'ed the Heather Knowe, Steenie Thorburn, down i' the green haugh yonder, is our nearest neebor an' oor bitterest foe," answered George.

"But there is surely some one near who will give you a night's quarters," said the maid. "Widow Dempster of the Burnfoot has experienced my mother's kindness. I would willingly go there mysel and procure for you a lodging."

"Na, na, fair Lilyard Lyle," said George. "The bonny dochter o' the lord o' the high towers o' Maltan maunna beg quarters for her father's ejected cotters. I will try Widow Dempster mysel, an' wi' yer leave, will say that it would please Lady Lyle if she would gie hap an' hauld for a nicht to my father an' mither, and I can sleep i' the wood."

"May God speed your dutiful endeavour!" said Lilyard, looking on his handsome face through her tears, which still continued to flow; "but what will you do on the morrow?"

"I will repeat that bonny prayer ye hae now uttered," replied George; "an' if my sins should clog its wing an' stop its progress, we will rely on the purer ane o' yer Leddship, whose innocence will waft it to the gates o' heaven, the only true source o' mercy to mortals."

"I will repeat it," said she, "this night as I retire to my couch. My prayers of this day have been partially

answered; for I am commissioned by my mother, no doubt an humble instrument in God's hand, to give you this purse, containing as much money as will enable you to get from some other proprietor a small feu, which she requests you will take in your own name, that your father and mother may be no longer subjected to the dangers of an obligation. I am now only keeping you from them. Return, and take with you my wishes and those of my mother for the welfare of your family."

"Fair maid o' Maltan," said George, "this siller, which I freely accept for my parents' sake, I hope one day to pay back wi' interest. To try, in the meantime, wi' my heart fu' o' sorrow an' gratitude, to tell ye what I think o' this gift, an' what I think o' Lady Lyle, the giver, is far beyond my poor power o' speech. But how muckle mair difficult is it for me to speak as I feel, an' as I ought, o' that angel wha has flown through the thick mists and dark clouds that surround humble poverty, to pour on the heads o' auld age an' misfortune the consolation she has gathered in the high places whar she dwells!"

"You are forgetting your father and mother, George," said Lilyard: "know ye the man in whose power they are?"

"True—true," answered he; "but I'll see them again an' comfort them for a' they are sufferin. You wha hae relieved them, I may never see mair."

"I trust you may never require to see one whose errand to your house is to relieve distress," said Lilyard. "Adieu! God bless your family!"

"Just ae minute mair," cried George. "Will ye pardon a poor hind for breathing a silly thought that oppresses him?"

"I think I could forgive almost anything that such a man as George Turnbull could either think or do," answered Lilyard.

"Thank, thank ye, fair leddy!" cried George; "without that promised forgiveness, I never could hae told ye that the Castle Maltan, an' the towers o' Catthorpe, an' a' the brave strengths o' Teviotdale, wi' their ha's, their gilded plenishin, their burnished chandeliers, their servants, their equipages, their dames in silken sey o' cramasie, wi' goold and pearls, an' a' the braw things o' the great, never could wring from me a sigh, till I saw Lilyard Lyle."

"Away, away, George Turnbull, to your distressed father!" cried Lilyard, quickly and anxiously. "You talk incoherently. The distresses of your house have turned your brain. Away, I tell you! Farewell, farewell!"

As Lilyard uttered these words, she retreated precipitately towards Maltan, leaving Turnbull to meditate on the effects of a statement he intended to modify so as to convey to her the meaning he properly attached to his declaration. It was his intention to have added, that he was aware of the presumption of even thinking of one in her condition, and that, while his fancy—he could not say his heart—thus rebelled against his humble fate, his judgment could distinguish, and did distinguish properly, not only the line of demarcation between the high-born and the cotter, but the reason of the distinction having originally been made and the propriety, nay, necessity, of its being continued. He regretted that his benefactress had been scared by his half expressed sentiment, and blushed to think that she would hereafter entertain of him an opinion as unworthy of him as it was untrue. When he looked at the purse she had given him, so generously accompanied with the expression of feelings that did honour to her station, and saw in the gift the relief of his parents, and the harbinger of comfort and independence, when he expected nothing but want and misery, he exclaimed—"An' for a' this, what has she received—what does she think she has received—frae George Turnbull? A bauld an' impertinent declaration o' love frae her father's cotter's son! A beggar has offered to

a high-born damsel, for his benison, a heart lodged in a bosom beaten through rags! A malison on my stupid tongue!—An' a' this time, too, my puir faither an' mither are fechtin wi' Poindall, an' feelin every nail that's taen frae their auld plenishin, as if dragged frae their ain bodies."

Reproving thus himself and his conduct, George Turnbull hastened back to the cottage, where he found the stockin and furniture piled on a cart; the two cows, a horse, and other live stock bound with ropes; all ready to be transported to the market cross of the county town, to be sold for payment of the arrears of feu.

"Stop, sirrah," cried George to Poindall, as he approached the house. "I haena seen your warrant yet for this proceedin. That my faither is decreet to remove, I ken—an' we will remove; but what is the poindin for? Is it for the twa years' feu, and for yer expenses?—or is it for the ane or for the ither?"

"Are you William Turnbull o' Greenbank?" asked Poindall, impertinently.

"No," cried William, who sat at the door of the cottage, on a stump of an old oak; "but he has my authority to see the warrant, though, wae's me! what signifies seein a bit paper whilk maybe contains ony a wheen words o' auld Latin, or at best some lang-nebbed words o' the law, that nane but lawyers themsels understand? Besides, Geordie, ye canna read writé."

"I cannot trust my warrant out of my own hands," said Poindall. "There it is; if any one of you can read it, you are welcome to the perusal of it."

"I am no scholar enough, sir," replied George, "to snatch up the written words o' lawyers, as birds do barley grains frae the field o' the sawer. Mither, haud me here the light, if we may use a poinded cruise, that I may read our condemnation. Gie me the paper, sir."

Poindall drew back his hand—but he was too late. The grasp of Turnbull, applied to his arm, opened his palsied fingers as easily and readily as would have done the doctor's knife applied to the motive nerves of the arm, and the writ dropped at his feet. Turnbull took it up, and, unable to read it himself, held it and the light before the eyes of one of the concurrents, and requested him, on the pain of corporal punishment, to read it truly as it was written, without missing or supplying a letter. The man looked to Poindall; but the fire of Turnbull's eye attracted like a meteor the lesser lights of his timid looks, and, trembling with fear, produced by George's fame for strength and courage, as well as by the menacing attitude in which he was now placed, he read the writ, the purport of which was, an authority to messengers-at-arms, "to remove William Turnbull, his wife and bairns, cotters and dependants, from the cottage and mailing of Greenbank, and to poind the out-door and in-door plenishin, for payment of five merks, reserving decree for expenses, as accords." It was thus apparent that the authority to poind extended only to the five merks of bygone feu, the truth being that Poindall, in his hurry to get old Turnbull ejected, had got what is called an interim decret, for the sake of dispatch, reserving a right to get another decret for his expenses afterwards—a form not uncommon in law.

"Now, Geordie," cried old William, when the paper was read, "hoo muckle wiser and hoo muckle better are ye o' hearin a' this garray o' nonsense graithit in lang words? Will it stop the poindin, or keep us i' the cottage o' Greenbank, whar I expected to dee?"

"Now, sir," said George to Poindall, heedless of the words of his father, "write me out a receipt for thae five merks mentioned in yer warrant."

"There's no use for my taking that trouble," replied the writer, "where there is clearly no means of payment."

"I offer ye the siller, sir," said George, "in presence o' your ain beagles as witnesses."

The man of the law looked surprised, and reluctantly wrote the receipt, which George made all the three concurrents read to him, separately and removed from Poindall; and, finding all of their readings to agree, he handed over to the writer the five merks.

"I hae only now to request," said George, "that ye put every stick o' that plenishin whar ye fund it, an' come back here i' the mornin, when ye'll find the premises redd an' ready for your new tenant."

At this request, Poindall fired, and requested his men to lay the furniture on the ground, as that part of the warrant which related to the removing was not affected by the payment of the money for which the plenishing had been poinded; but the stern attitude of Turnbull, who stood prepared to enforce his request with a stick in his hand, which an ordinary man could not have wielded, and one stroke of which would have felled an ox to the earth, carried too much terror with it to admit of any compliance, on the part of the men, with the command of their master. They proceeded to place the furniture in the house, while the disappointed attorney went, as he said, to procure a stronger posse of constables, to enable him to enforce the behests of the law. He did not, however, return that night; and the furniture having been replaced, the old residents tarried one night longer in their habitation.

Next morning, before daybreak, the inmates of Greenbank were wakened by Catthorpe's forester, Giles Roebuck, who came from his master to offer them a retreat on his grounds.

George—who knew that Poindall would be at the cottage as soon as he could prevail upon a sufficient number of lazy, dissipated concurrents to rise from their beds in the morning—rose early, and proceeded, with all expedition, to Catthorpe. The old chief was already up, and walking in the plantations around the castle. He knew Turnbull by sight, as well as by name, as, indeed, did almost every man in those parts; for he had often wrestled at weaponshaws, and borne off the gree, to the discomfiture of competitors and the admiration of the fair maidens.

"Well, George," said the old chief, "did Giles Roebuck tell you that I had heard of Sir William Lyle's treatment of your poor father, and am willing to give you a feu off Catthorpe?"

"He did," answered George; "but, while I acknowledge mysel obliged to yer Honour for yer offer, I would like to hear the conditions o' the right."

"Fealty and service, surely," replied Catthorpe.

"I hae nae objection to the ordinary conditions," replied George, "if ye gie me the power o' judgin o' the plea o' battle, before I am asked to fecht for yer Honour. I like an honest cause. As for the English, I'll ask nae reservation; against them, the plea's aye guid. But I hate the raid o' the aggressor; an' a' I ask is, to be allowed to judge o' the fairness o' an attack against a Scotchmar, before I tak up my grandfather's sword against my countrymen."

"Your condition is uncommon and extraordinary, George," replied Catthorpe; "and I fear my son, Æneas, would laugh at the thought of my entertaining it for an instant; but you are a brave fellow, and I am pleased with the humour of your independence. If the place called the Bush-o'-broom pleases you, I will ask Jedediah Vellum to write out a charter in the usual terms, with the reservation you have mentioned. You may, in the meantime, take possession."

"Thanks to yer Honour!" replied George. "I will communicate the guid tidings to my faither. The place is a bonnier ane than Greenbank; and the roses that bloom there may sune come to be as sweet to my mither as the thistles at the end o' our auld gavel, whilk, she said, were the bonniest flowers o' Scotland."

"That's a good national feeling," replied Catthorpe.

"But a man awa, or Poindal will be before me. Guid morning, your Honour!"

"I am safe enough with that proud boor," said Catthorpe, as he looked after Turnbull, who was hastening home to anticipate Poindal; "he will not be scrupulous in taking advantage of his impertinent reservation, when my attack is against his enemy of Maltan—against the man who has poynded him, every plea will be good, and his strong arm, with his knowledge of the castle, will be of such service to me in that quarter that I may now effect my purpose in overpowering and humbling my natural foe."

By the time Turnbull got home, Poindal, with no fewer than five concurrents, was in the house.

"I am glad ye hae brought sae mony assistants, Poindal," said George. "Ye'll be to empty the house, I suppose—the very thing I want—and my auld faither is no very able to assist us. Just wait till I get auld Wheezle into the cart, and ae liftin will serve a'."

George immediately got the horse into the wain, smiling, all the while, at the impatience of Poindal, whose object was to get his concurrents to throw the furniture to the door.

"Now, my lads," said Turnbull, when he was prepared for them, "I am ready for ye; but I hae ae word to say to ye before ye begin. If ye break, or twist, or crush, or spoil a single bit o' that plenishin, I will demand frae the culprit wound for wound—a broken bane for a broken stool, and a crackit croun for a crackit pat. Heave awa!"

The furniture was very soon carried out by the concurrents, and placed in the wain; and two neighbours having come to the assistance of the cotters, the whole outdoor and indoor plenishing was, in a short time thereafter, on the way to the Bush-o'-broom—George having, previous to his starting, thanked the messengers for the timely assistance they had yielded in enabling him to flit from a good possession to a better.

The new tenants of Catthorpe soon became partial to their little possession; and even Elspeth Turnbull acknowledged that there was a something about the roses that reconciled her to the want of the prickly flowers of Greenbank. The ladies of the Castle of Catthorpe sometimes paid them a visit. The famed strength and handsome person of George Turnbull invested him with sufficient interest to produce a respect which would have been denied to an ordinary person in his humble situation; but the thoughtless and partially misinterpreted declaration he had made to Lilyard Lyle still rankled in his heart, while all his efforts to banish her from his recollection were as unavailing as would have been his endeavours to forget the services she and her mother had rendered to his family.

But the remorse he felt at the ingratitude and folly of his ill-timed statement, had not the effect of enabling him to subdue his presumptuous affections. He returned to his old error; and the benefits he had so ungratefully repaid riveted the image of the inaccessible benefactress in his imagination with a firmness that all the powers of his strong judgment could not affect. He found himself often again in the vicinity of her favourite spots, without being conscious of his errand; and one evening, having laid himself down in the shade of a tree in the Bountree Haugh, he resigned himself to the sweet seduction of a teeming fancy, exercised on what he knew to be unattainable objects of a cotter's ambition. In the midst of his waking dream, he heard his name mentioned by a female voice, and his excited ear caught the broken words of a maiden's monologue.

"He may force it; but Sir Lionel will get a dead bride. I would sooner be the wife of my enemy, Æneas Oliphant, who says he regrets our fathers' feud for my sake. If George Turnbull, with whose name these parts are filled, and not more than this poor bosom is with his virtues, had been born a gentleman, or I a forest maiden, my griefs this

day would have been few. It I had been a pagan of the old world, I would have said that the hearts and fates of mortals were made and cast by different plastic hands; but our truer God can reconcile inconsistencies, and the fate that forbids my union with George Turnbull has prepared an anodyne in the ameliorating comforts of a religious resignation, and a love of our precious Redeemer, built on the ruins of a worldly affection."

"Blessed cure o' a remorse that has wrung my puir heart since that eventfu' nicht!" said George Turnbull, as he fell at the feet of Lilyard. "Dinna think that I hae watched for that balm as the hive thief waits for the honey o' the sleepin bees. I had nae thought o' your being here, an' only lay aneath that tree to dream o' a bliss that canna be mine. Dinna flee frae me, Lilyard Lyle; stay and hear what ye ought to hae heard, when ye heard me declare I loved ane I had nae richt to love."

"George Turnbull," said Lilyard, with the blush of shame on her sorrowful countenance, "when you say you did not watch for the unguarded statement I have now made, you have said nothing more than I believe; and it would be as vain to blame you for my error, as it would be impossible now, were I willing, to retract what I have said. But, happily, while you heard the sentiment of my heart, you heard also the dictates of my judgment."

"Owre weel—owre weel hae I heard ye say ye canna be his whom yer heart loves," said George; "an' if ye had waited the end o' my declaration to you on that nicht when ye saved us a' frae ruin, ye wad hae heard that I wasna ignorant o' my ain presumption in thinkin o' ane sae far abune my degree: sae the unspoken thoughts o' baith our hearts had been tempered wi' the same cruel prudence. But they say time is a great physician, an' if he doesna cure our love, is there nae chance—oh, dinna turn awa yer head, Lilyard!—is there nae hope o' his ever being able to mak some reconciliation atween what we ought to do and what we wad like to do?"

"Look to that ancient an' proud castle, George Turnbull," said Lilyard, "and think what chance there is of the heart of Sir William Lyle, its great lord, being changed in its flesh, and in its blood, and in its pride of family and power. Let us not deceive ourselves. My safety lies in not seeing you. Away, George Turnbull, to your new cottage of the Bush-o'-broom, and learn to bring down your thoughts to the level of its humble economy. Some one comes. Away! and forget Lilyard Lyle."

As she said these words, she receded quickly along a sheep path among the furze that grew thick in the haugh. George heard steps approaching on the other side, and, as he retreated, thought he saw Augustus Lyle looking and searching as in quest of his sister. Some broken ejaculations of the young man met his ear; but his progress onward was too quick to enable him to catch the sounds in such a way as to make any sense out of them. He went directly home to his cottage, where he passed a night forming a most important era of his humble life; for the consciousness of being loved by Lilyard Lyle, the most beautiful damsel of these parts, and one of the highest of the land, whom he had long adored without hope, and thought he had offended without remede, wrought a revolution in his mind and feelings which all the obstructions which a hard world and a factitious state of society, as well as the suggestions of his own self-denial and prudence, had thrown and might throw in the way of the gratification of his affection, could not mitigate or affect. The vigil of his love kept him in his bed to a late hour next morning, when his father came and told him that Æneas Oliphant, the son of his superior, waited at the cottage door, to speak to him on business of importance.

"I am come," said Æneas, as George went out to meet him, "to inform you that my father intends to attack Maltan

to-morrow at midnight, and has sent me to tell you to get your arms in order, as you are to be intrusted with the principal charge of the affair."

"How does the balance o' their account stand?" said George. "The affair o' St James' E'en was, I think, the last; but wasna that attack made by your faither? The great raid o' Malton was afore that; an' ye ken your faither was at the head an' direction o' that. I think, too, that Catthorpe began the bluidy tulzie o' the rude-yards, when ten o' Malton's men were killed on the spot."

"All right," replied Æneas, laughing with delight at the account of his father's enterprises. "But we intend making this attack a finisher; and I have a small sub-plot of my own to work out, wherein you will be of great service to me. I have been long enamoured of my father's enemy's daughter, the fair Lilyard Lyle; and, as there is no hope of my getting her for my wife in a fair way, by the consent of ner father, I intend taking advantage of this night's attack to carry her off by force. She will herself make no great struggle, for I know that she wishes to get quit of that pale-faced Englishman, Sir Lionel Manners. I have no time to say more to you. Our preparations require my presence. Get your sword scoured, and I will give you the necessary intimation when to attend."

George was in the act of opening his mouth to reply; but Æneas was off in a moment on the wings of his youthful fervour.

"This is an unfair plea," said George to himself. "I'm no bound to it, an' winna gang. I maun play another pairt i' this affair, whar baith love an' honour are at stake. I'm glad this lion's whelp made off sae cleverly, for I wad hae been obliged to refuse my assistance, if it had been put to me by a fair question."

On the following day, towards evening, George directed his steps towards Malton, having taken the precaution of rolling himself up in a cloak to prevent his being recognised. He procured immediate entrance to the castle, by the good offices of his acquaintance, the warder, who led him into the presence of Sir William Lyle.

"Yer Honour will doubtless wonder," said he, "at my takin the liberty, after a' that's passed, o' addressin ye in yer ain ha'. I refused, at yer Honour's biddin, to blaw up Catthorpe, wherby my faither was ejected frae Greenbank; an' we accepted an offer o' refuge frae yer auld enemy, on certain conditions that authorize me to come here this day. Catthorpe has asked my assistance in an attack he intends to make on yer Honour's castle this night, at the eerie hour o' twelve; an' I am come to gie ye timeous notice, sae that ye may be prepared against what I think an unlawfu' aggression."

"If I understand you right, sirrah," said Sir William, sarcastically, "you have come from one who has served you and given you protection, to befriend his enemy and your own, by disclosing his secrets and defeating his purposes. This is not human nature; and, to be plain with you, sir, I do not believe one word you have told me. There is a snake in the grass. Ho, there, seneschal! send here my son, Augustus, and three of my men. Seize this fellow," he continued, as Augustus and the retainers entered, "and see if he has any weapon under his cloak."

The order was instantly obeyed—Turnbull making no resistance; and, from under his cloak, his grandfather's trusty weapon was dragged in triumph by Augustus Lyle.

"Traucherous dog!" cried Sir William, "is this the mode by which you have acquired your fame, by attempting the lives of your foes under the mask of friendship? This is the honesty that prevented you from undertaking the undermining of Catthorpe. Away with him to the dungeon!"

George Turnbull was dragged to the lowest part of the castle, and put into a close prison, where he was allowed to lie for many hours, without any one coming near him.

He waited patiently for the hour of midnight, and observed, from the silence that reigned throughout the castle, that no belief had been attached to his statement, for no preparations were making for defence. A loud shout struck his ear in an instant, and in a short time all the noise and confusion of an attack was heard within and without the castle. The sounds of contending strife continued for some hours; and it appeared, from the thunders of the mangonels and the falling of stones, that the wall of the ballium was in the act of being battered down. Every stroke of the huge instruments seemed to be followed by the falling of large masses of stones, and the accompanying shouts of triumph of the assailers, whose loud voices indicated hopes of success. The uproar increased every instant, as the danger grew more imminent, and the besiegers, the besieged, the wounded, the dying, and the females who witnessed, from the loopholes, the dreadful struggle, all joined their various shouts, yells, cries, and screams, in one wild chorus.

"George Turnbull! George Turnbull!" cried the voice of a female, through the grating of his prison—"you alone can save Malton and its inmates—and one of these is Lilyard Lyle."

"Liberate me then, sweet Lilyard," replied George, "for I came here only for the purpose o' protectin ye, wham Æneas Oliphant, this nicht, intends to carry off by force o' arms."

"You are free, you are free!" replied she—"fly to our rescue."

In a moment, Turnbull, with his head in one of Malton's soldier's helmets, to conceal his face from Oliphant, and a good sword, though not his grandfather's, in his hand, was on the breach of the wall. With his four first consecutive blows, he brought to the earth as many of the assailants. His unwarlike cloak, which he had not taken time to take off and which was flung back behind him—his furious onset and fatal debut—the wild energy of his manner—his size, strength, and sudden appearance—surprised the inhabitants of the castle, who did not know him, and struck a panic into the enemy. He continued to strike down every man as he rose to the breach; and the cry of the besieged—"Who is he?—who is he?" reaching the ears of those who were suffering from his furious career, was repeated by the besiegers, and spread fear, confusion, and alarm, in every direction.

"Attack them from the drawbridge," cried Turnbull to Augustus Lyle, who was near him.

The order was obeyed; and, while the enemy were thus, in front, mowed down by the fatal arm of the resistless champion, they found themselves attacked in the rear. The face of matters was now changed. Fear had come in place of confidence; and the loss of many men had diminished the strength of the besiegers to such an extent that they were obliged to fall back, and take refuge in the wood. A scout brought the intelligence that they had taken their course to Catthorpe; and Turnbull, suddenly leaping from the breach, dashed into a thicket, and throwing away his helmet and sword, returned home, and went to bed; where he had not been many minutes, when Æneas Oliphant and several of his men called at the house, to make inquiry as to his motions; and, finding him taking his accustomed rest, they concluded he had been, as his father said, absent all day on business, and consequently could not have been the unknown warrior who had created to them so much mishap at the siege of Malton.

Next evening, George Turnbull sought the Bountree Haugh, in the expectation of seeing Lilyard Lyle, though it were for the last time. She was there. An increase of affection had followed the accession of a new feeling of gratitude towards him who had been her deliverer; and, on meeting him, she fell upon his bosom, overcome with the struggle between duty and affection.

"How painful it is to me," said Lilyard, as she sobbed and wept, "to have my heart bound in love and gratitude to one between whom and myself fate has reared such insurmountable barriers! Your conduct last night, George, exceeded all praise; but, such is the perversity of the human heart, my father hates you even more bitterly than ever. You committed the unpardonable sin of bringing out the shame of him and Augustus, by your superiority of prowess, and the proof you gave of the falsehood of the opinion he entertained of your intentions. But it seems to be a part of my adverse fate, to witness in you those qualities which mock the acquirements of my high-born relations, and call forth their envy. Oh, how my heart swelled as I saw you standing on the dreadful breach—the saviour of my father, his castle, and our lives—the terror of our foes, and the admiration of all—dealing around you death and dismay, more like one commissioned by heaven, than a creature of earth—and yet only a poor hind, despised by those you saved and by those you conquered!"

"Kind, kind maiden," replied George, overcome by the condescension of his lady-love in resting on his bosom; "I wadna gie the enjoyment o' this moment for a' the honour, fame, and glory o' my best battles. Can it be that I hae Lilyard Lyle in thae unworthy arms, made only for the offices of the cotter, or the defence o' the ungratefu' great? For ae minute, I defy ye a', my stern foes, ye hard warld, an' my harder fate! Come, as ye list, ye winds of misfortune—blaw yer sternest blast, till ye dee i' the silence o' weariness—ye canna tak frae me the remembrance o' this scene! Ye hae rewarded me, Lilyard, for a' my past services, and paid aforehand the consideration for a' I maun yet suffer on your account."

"And that will not be small," cried the harsh voice of Augustus Lyle, as he stepped forward, with his sword in his hand, intent, apparently, on an attack on the defenceless youth. "It was for this, was it—for the love of a lady whose shoe-latchets you are not fit to bind—that you made so much profession of fidelity to the house of Maltan? Presumptuous boor! take from the point of this sword the reward of last night's services in behalf of your lady-love."

"Gie me't then, sir," replied George, wrestling from his hands the sword, as he would have done a sapling from the fingers of a boy. "But I winna hurt ye. I canna tak this wi' me, for ye wad ca' that theft—I canna return it, for ye wad use it against an unarmed man. I can only tak the sting frae the wasp; sae, sir"—and he cracked the blade into shivers, and threw the handle from him.

"A better punishment than a clean stab with a gentleman's sword—a death you are unworthy of—waits you!" cried the incensed youth. "Home, madam! Sir Lionel waits you in the hall; and the milkmaids of Catthorpe cry for your lover."

And, saying these words, he dragged her away, leaving Turnbull to reflections we dare not venture to describe. We shall have a more easy task in narrating that ambition, which had been slowly working its way in the mind of Turnbull, urged him, some time afterwards, to obey the command of young Lesly of Rothies, and join the Earl of Angus, who was on his way to fight the English generals, Evers and Latoun, who were then ravaging Scotland. He thought that, if he acquired renown in a great battle, he might get some promotion, and acquire a better right to the affections of his high-born love. The acquisition of such a man as Turnbull was boasted of by Lesly to his friends, and, among the rest, to Sir William Lyle; and the intelligence was not unwelcome to the latter, who saw, in the dangers to which the youth might be exposed in the expected conflict, a probable means of getting quit of one who stood between his daughter and the husband he had chosen for her—Sir Lionel Manners. Sir William communicated

the circumstance to his son, and a dark scheme was formed between those worthies, (who were both coadjutors of Lesly, and intended to be present at the fight,) to take away the life of their preserver. Augustus Lyle undertook to stab Turnbull in the first encounter with the English, and make it appear that he died by the hand of the enemy. Lady Lyle heard, from her own apartment, this dreadful purpose canvassed by her husband and her son; and, flying to her daughter, she commissioned her to resort to Turnbull, and advise him not to join the ranks, where death awaited him from before and from behind.

At a late hour of the night, Lilyard, dressed in such a way as to escape detection, sought the cottage of Turnbull.

"Join not the ranks of Angus, against Evers and Latoun," she cried, as she met George, who came out to the door. "My brother, Augustus, has resolved to take away your life in the fight. I have hurried here to warn you, and must return instantly. Promise, George Turnbull, that you will grant my request. The misery of my life is already great enough without this new evil. Living, I cannot have you—but, dead, I could not survive you."

"Dear Lilyard," replied George, taking her by the hand, "I hae pledged my word to Lesly, an' canna draw back. But dinna fear. I will keep out o' the way o' Augustus; and, besides, his sword has nae pith on its point, when directed against me. I maun win fame an' honour for Lilyard. If I dinna mak mysel worthy o' ye, an' buy ye wi' my bluid, I canna live. My intention is to seek ane o' the English generals, an' the head o' Evers or that of Latoun maun buy me that honour that will mak me worthy o' Lilyard Lyle."

"Are you determined?" said the girl.

"I am, dearest Lilyard," replied George.

"Well, then, my course is also taken," replied she, boldly—"adieu, adieu!" And she left her lover in a state of perplexity from which all his efforts at construing her strange words could not deliver him.

The battle of Ancrum Muir, so well known in Scottish history, soon followed. George Turnbull was in the front ranks of the Scots, and fought as no man ever fought. Honour and love hailed him forward; and the irresistible strength of his arm was nerved, beyond mortal power, by the moral impulses to which he was subjected. At a little distance behind, was Augustus Lyle, who was more intent on the progress of his intended victim than the success of the fight. The enthusiasm of Turnbull made him forget the counsel of Lilyard; and her treacherous brother, taking advantage of Turnbull's engagement with the enemy, came close behind him, and, lifting his sword, made a plunge directed towards the back of the devoted youth. The blow was intercepted by a young soldier, who had watched the motion, and received in his bosom the death that was intended for another. The fate of the battle is well known. Turnbull earned what he wanted—fame; Sir William Lyle and his son were both slain; and, among the dead, was discovered the body of a young and beautiful female, dressed as a soldier, and bearing a wound on her bosom. That female was Lilyard Lyle. The spot on which the battle was fought is called Lilyard's Edge, from the name of the heroic maiden; and, though the inscription on her broken and defaced monument is no longer legible, many of the old people of the country still remember the rude lines which it bore.

Such is the legend of the female warrior of Ancrum Muir.





THE MAID OF ANCRUM MOOR.

W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

TOM BERTRAM.

Poor Tom Bertram!—his story is a sad one; and yet I love to talk of it. It affords me a melancholy pleasure, in my old age, to conjure up the memories of the past, and to recall those happy days when Tom and I enjoyed together the freshness of youth and friendship. We were born in the same village of Roxburghshire, educated at the same Border school, entered as reefers together in the Honourable East India Company's service, and for fourteen years we were shipmates and firm friends. *His* voyage of life has long been over; and my crazy old hulk must founder ere long. But a truce to reflection. I must proceed with my story; and, if I do make myself tedious by my digressions, forgive the fond garrulity of an old sailor, who loves to linger upon every trifling recollection of a lost and valued friend.

Tom Bertram was an orphan, the son of a respectable farmer in Roxburghshire, who, on his death-bed, left his boy to the care and protection of my maternal uncle. It was impossible to live long in Tom's company without loving him. He was frank, daring, and active—a stranger to fear, and yet gentle and affectionate in the extreme; and, when I add to this that he was one of the handsomest youths ever beheld, can it be wondered at that he was an object of favour and admiration to all our village belles? Tom, however, laughed, and joked, and talked sentiment with them all—but his heart remained untouched, his *time* had not yet come; and it was with a merry heart, and pleasant anticipations of the future, that he took his seat beside me on the coach that was to convey us to London. I will pass over our first impressions of all the novelties we saw and heard there; suffice it to say, that the consciousness of being among strangers and aliens, made us cling with the fonder warmth to each other; and every voyage we made together only served to strengthen the ties of our mutual regard. Years had past by, and we had both risen gradually, though slowly, in our profession, and had always contrived to get appointed to the same ship. The last voyage we sailed together, I was fourth, and Tom fifth mate of the Cornwallis, Indiaman; and we were both in the same watch. Every one acquainted with board-ship affairs knows how perfectly compatible the greatest intimacy and familiarity are with the strictest discipline; and how habitually and instantaneously the frankness of friendly intercourse gives place to the formality of nautical etiquette, whenever the duty of the ship requires their alternation. Tom and I were like brothers; but he never forgot that he was my junior officer, and never, by any chance, took advantage of my friendship for him by ill-timed familiarity. One fine moonlight night, we were lying becalmed within the tropics, whistling and invoking St Antonio in vain, for no breeze came. Beautiful are those calm tropical nights to the lovers of the picturesque, though sadly trying to the patience of the mariner. The *watch* were all lying in various attitudes about the decks, in deep slumber; the helmsman was standing at his post—but whether asleep or awake was of little consequence; for the rudder was powerless; there was not a cloud in the dark blue sky, and the moon and stars were shining with almost dazzling brightness, and looking provokingly placid and

happy; the surface of the sea was smooth as the smoothest glass, and in its undulating mirror gave back a vivid reflection of the brilliant canopy above; there was a long silvery path of light from the horizon to the ship; and the scene was altogether uncommonly beautiful, and uncommonly provoking to the officer of the watch. And there, in the midst of all the splendour and beauty of nature, lay our noble ship, one of the finest specimens of man's proud art, helpless and powerless as a new-born babe—rolling, and tossing, and tumbling about—her lofty prow rising and falling as if doing homage to the majesty of ocean, while the moon and stars seemed to smile in quiet scorn at her unwieldy movements. Oh, the tedium and weariness of a calm night-watch at sea!—the anxious look around and aloft to see if any *cat's paw* is ruffling the water, or if any stray air has found its way into the *flying-kites*; the low impatient whistle; and the common but unintelligible and unaccountable ejaculation of "Blow, good breeze, and I'll give you a soldier!" Bertram was standing at the gang-way, with his arm and head resting on the rail, and muttering to himself. I approached him just in time to hear—

"For then sweet dreams of other days arise,
And mem'ry breathes her vesper sigh to thee."

"Ah, Tom! sentimentalizing? I have some hopes of you now. Who is the object of your vesper sigh, if it is a fair question?—which of the thousand and one flowers in your garden of love, has left the memory of its fragraney in your heart?"

"Nonsense, Harry," said he, colouring; "I have something else to do than to pine and sigh for a lady's love. What a lovely night it is!"

"Yes!" said I—"lovely enough for a high-flying sentimental lover, but anything but pleasing to a plain, straightforward fellow like myself. But, joking apart, Tom, you have not been yourself this voyage; you go through your duties actively enough, it is true, but evidently quite mechanically. Your heart is elsewhere. Do not be afraid of making me your confidant—I will not betray you; trust your secret sorrow, whatever it may be, to *me*; if I cannot assist, I can at all events sympathize with you."

"Thank you kindly, Harry," said he—"I believe you from my heart. You have made a right guess for once in your life. I *am* in love."

"Well, make a clean breast of it at once, and tell me who your *Dulcinea* is; that, if I have the felicity of her acquaintance, we may hold eloquent discourse of her charms together."

"Well, Harry, you remember Miss"—

"Hollo! there's a breeze coming at last—beg your pardon Tom," said I, springing up on the poop for a better view; and there it was, sure enough, coming up on the larboard quarter, with a cool, fresh, rippling sound, roughening the surface of the swell before it.

"Forecastle there!"

"Sir!" replied Tom.

"Rig out the foretopmast and topgallant-studdingsail booms, Mr Bertram, and bear a hand with the sails."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Maintop there!—rig out the topgallant-studdingsail boom!"

‘Ay, ay, sir.’

‘All ready with the stunsails forward, sir,’ cried Bertram.

‘Very well. Forward there the watch!—run the stunsails up. Forecastle there!—swing the lower boom’

‘Ay, ay, sir.’

In twenty minutes, the ship was under a cloud of canvass and moving rapidly through the water, the ropes were all coiled down, and the watch again on their beam-ends.

‘Stea—dy!’ called the quartermaster.

‘Steady it is!’ answered the man at the helm.

‘I told you so, Bill,’ muttered one of the afterguard to his neighbour—‘I know’d as how we’d have a breeze when I throw’d my old shoe overboard.’

‘Now, Tom,’ said I, ‘make an end of your confession. You asked me if I remembered Miss—what’s her name?’

‘Kate Fotheringham.’

If a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet, it could hardly have startled me more than did the unexpected mention of that name. I *felt* myself turn pale—the blood seemed to creep and curdle in my veins, and a sensation of mortal sickness and faintness came over me.

Tom observed my emotion, and exclaimed, in great alarm, ‘Harry, how ill you look! What is the matter with you?’

‘Nothing,’ said I—‘a sudden spasm—but it is gone.’

And, with desperate resolution, I gulped down the emotion which almost choked my utterance, and listened with patience while Tom proceeded, with all a lover’s enthusiasm, to expatiate upon the charms of his mistress. He had so long confined his feelings to his own bosom, that, when he gave them free vent, their sudden and torrent-like outpouring was almost overwhelming. Rapidly and fervidly did he depict his first sensations; glowingly and fondly did he dwell upon the personal charms and mental amiabilities of his adored one; and, in *burning* words, he expressed his happiness in the certainty that he was beloved again. Alas, poor fellow! he little knew that every kind expression of his mistress went like a dagger to the heart of his friend! And yet so it was; for, in the innermost recesses of my heart, hidden from all mortal knowledge save my own, I had enshrined an idol—and that idol was Kate Fotheringham. ‘Tis true I had bowed before it in vain. I had offered up to her the incense of my first love; it had filled the temple, but made no impression upon the divinity. My love was hopeless but constant. But it is necessary that I should explain myself; and, to do so, I must go back.

The Rev. Thomas Fotheringham was minister of the parish of L——, and the father of two beauteous daughters, of whom Kate was the youngest. She was, indeed, a lovely creature—full of life and animation, sparkling and joyous; her complexion was delicately brilliant, and her bright blue eyes shot forth their playful glances from the covert of the most beautiful flaxen ringlets in the world. When she shook back her hair from her forehead, and her laugh,

“Without any control

and displayed teeth of pearly whiteness, she was, indeed, a thing to be wondered at and admired.

Mr Fotheringham had been an intimate friend of my father, and I had gone to spend a few weeks at L——Manse, on my last return home. When I had seen Kate some years before, she was a pretty, interesting child, and used, in her playfulness, to call me her sailor husband: how great was my surprise when I met her again, to find the playful child transformed into the tall, graceful, elegant woman! It was impossible to see Kate Fotheringham without admiring her beauty: I soon found that it was impossible to know her without loving her. She was as good

as she was lovely, and was almost adored by the poor of the parish, to whom she was like a ministering angel. Her great delight was in distributing food and clothing to the poor and needy, and her sweet smile and soothing tone of sympathy were balm to the melancholy mourner, and to the bruised and broken spirit. Was it wonderful that, living as I did in the most friendly intimacy with such a being, listening to her praises from all quarters, hearing the sweet music of her voice as she warbled the simple melodies of her native land—was it wonderful that I loved her? Yes! I more than loved her. Love is too tame, too commonplace a term for my feelings. I adored her—I bowed my heart before her very footsteps; but I felt that I was not loved again. The very frankness and innocent familiarity of her manner towards me, while it fascinated, maddened me; for I knew that I was wilfully deceiving myself, that she looked upon me as a friend—a brother—nothing more. Fool that I was!—knowing all this—knowing, in my own secret heart, that every day, every hour, I was only storing up bitterness for myself—I still fluttered round the flame that was consuming me. At last, one evening, my long suppressed feelings burst forth. Some expression of Kate acted as a spark to the train of passion that was lying smouldering within my breast, and—I know not what I said, but my heart was in the words—I only know that I was miserable. Kate was agitated, surprised, and affected; she esteemed and admired me, she said, but—her heart was not her own. We parted with mutual sorrow; and with a promise, on her part, never to mention the occurrences of that evening, and with a determination on mine to smother my feelings, and with firm resolve to tear her image from my heart for ever. Weak and vain resolution!—that image will go with me to my grave!

Tom went on to tell me that he had gone, with my uncle, his guardian, on a visit to L——, three years before, and that he had not been long domesticated there, before he felt the influence of those charms which had proved so fatal to my peace. He was the constant companion of the young ladies in all their rambles, had witnessed their various deeds of unostentatious charity and benevolence, and was in the habit of listening with pleasure to the warm and unsophisticated praises lavished upon them by every dependant and cottager around them. His heart had hitherto resisted the fascinations of beauty, and he had learned to look upon it as a “pretty plaything,” accompanied, as he had hitherto seen it, with superficial accomplishments and frivolous employment: but here was all his fancy had ever pictured of female loveliness and amiability combined; and he felt that, with such a companion, he might reasonably expect to realize his brightest dreams of mundane happiness. He consulted my uncle, who had always loved him as a son, and who intended him to be his heir; and, laying before him the state of his affections, told him that he waited but for his consent to prosecute his suit. My uncle was delighted with his confession, and with the object of his choice, and gave him his consent and blessing; at the same time, giving him to understand that Kate should not marry a beggar. Kate’s heart, almost unconsciously to herself, had long been his; and she was too frank and artless to attempt to veil it from him when he made his proposals. It was agreed that their marriage was to take place when he returned from his next voyage; and that, in the meantime, their engagement was to be kept secret.

Oh, how I had envied my happy rival! How often had I longed, with eager curiosity, to see the man who had gained the heart of such a glorious creature! And now he stood before me: the dearest friend of my heart, from whom I had never had but one concealment—he whom I had loved as a brother, and watched over with more than a brother’s love—was the being who, unconsciously, stood

between me and happiness—who had blighted and withered the fondest aspirations of my heart. Oh, the conflict of feelings within me! Had he but confided in me sooner, what misery might he not have spared me! Thank Heaven! friendship and justice conquered at last. I resolved to keep my secret, though my heart should break; his knowledge of it could not benefit me, but would only distress and grieve him, and, perhaps, cast a cloud over that friendship which was now the chief remaining solace of my life. It was with a smiling face, therefore, but with an aching bosom, that I shook hands with Tom that night; and well did I keep my secret, for he died in ignorance of it.

As we were going into the mess-berth next morning, to breakfast, we met Ben, the servant, looking as grave as an owl, with a face as long as the maintop-bowline.

“What’s the matter, Ben?” said Tom.

“O sir! we’ll soon know what’s the matter: the cow died this morning!”

Tom burst into a roar of laughter, and asked what that had to do with his long face.

“It’s no laughing matter, sir,” said the man; “I never knew any good come to a ship when the cow died: but we’ll see before long.”

We were both much amused at the man’s new-fangled superstition, as we thought it, as we had never before heard of this.

“I have been told a story,” said I, “of a cat influencing the destinies of a ship, but I never heard a cow so highly honoured before.”

“A cat!” said Tom—“what do you mean?”

“It’s an old story,” said I; “but, as you seem not to have heard it, I will enlighten you on the subject:—

“Some years since, one of His Majesty’s crack frigates had greatly distinguished herself, on the Mediterranean station, by the smartness and activity of her crew, her state of excellent discipline, and her great success in capturing prizes. For some time, her good fortune seemed to have deserted her: day after day passed away, and not a *tangible* sail was to be seen; the time began to hang heavy on the hands of the crew, and discontent and disappointment were legible in their countenances. This state of things could not last long. The captain, a good and gallant seaman, perceived that the spirit of disaffection was busy among his crew, and determined to check it in the bud.

“‘Call the hands out, if you please, Mr Steady,’ said he to the first lieutenant.

“The hands were called out; and, when assembled on the quarterdeck, the captain addressed them to the following effect:—

“‘My lads, you used to be as active and cheerful a set of fellows as I would wish to command; I used to be proud of you, for you seemed to take pleasure in your duty; but now you go about the decks sullen and discontented, and only work because you dare not disobey. If you have any grievances to complain of, come forward like men and say so, and I will redress them, if I can; but I tell you, once for all, I will have no sulkiness; and, by Heaven! if I can’t drive it out of you in any other way, I’ll flog it out of you.’

“After a short pause, one of the captains of the fore-castle stepped out from the crew, and, twirling his hat in one hand, and scratching the back of his ear with the other, said—

“‘Please your Honour, we haven’t no grievances.’

“‘Then what the devil’s the matter with you all?’

“‘Why, sir,’ said the man, hesitatingly.

“‘Go on,’ said the captain—‘I won’t bite you.’

“‘Why, then, sir,’ replied the captain of the fore-castle, ‘we’ve never had no luck since you took that ’ere black cat on board.’

“The captain could not help laughing. ‘Well,’ said he,

‘that evil can soon be remedied. Midshipman, tell my steward to throw the cat overboard.’

“‘O sir!’ said the man, in great alarm, ‘do not throw him overboard—that would be worsor still.’

“‘Then, what the deuce do you want me to do with him?’

“‘Why, if your Honour would send him ashore as he came aboard, in a boat.’

“‘What a set of cur-sed ninnies!’ muttered the captain.

‘Well,’ said he, ‘you have often exerted yourselves to please me, and it is but fair that I should do something to please you for once in a way.’

“The frigate stood in shore, and hove to, a boat was lowered, and the unlucky cat, safely deposited in a bread-bag, was sent under charge of a midshipman to be landed at the nearest point. The boat returned in due time, and was hoisted up, the sails were filled and trimmed, when the man at the mast-head hailed the deck—

“‘A strange sail in sight, a-head, sir!’

“‘All hands make sail in chase!’ was the cry; and, before night, the cat-haters had taken a valuable prize.”

“A strange coincidence, certainly,” said Tom, “and most unfortunately calculated to strengthen the men in their superstition. I hope we shall have no such confirmation of Ben’s panic about the cow.”

We had a glorious breeze that morning on the quarter; the long swell, which had been so smooth and glassy the day before, was broken into short waves, which came rushing, and curling, and bursting under the ship’s counter; the sky was covered with light mackerel clouds; every stitch of canvass we could carry was spread; the sails were all asleep, and the ship snoring through the water:—there was every appearance of a steady breeze, and of continued fine weather. A little after midday, the captain came on deck, and said to the officer of the watch, “Mr Freeman, what do you think of the weather?”

Mr Freeman, with a look of surprise, replied, “I never saw a finer day, sir; and there is every appearance of a steady breeze.”

“Well,” said he, “that’s my opinion, too; yet the glass is falling rapidly. I do not understand it. Send for Mr Sneerwell.” And the chief mate made his appearance. He agreed in thinking that there was no sign of change in the weather.

“Well,” said the captain, “my glass has never deceived me yet, and I will believe it now against my own opinion, and in spite of favourable appearances. You will pipe to dinner, if you please; and, when the people have had their time, call the hands out to shorten sail.”

“Ay, ay, sir! Pipe to dinner!”

The breeze began gradually to freshen; and, by the time we had swallowed our dinner, we were glad to get our stunsails and lofty sails in as fast as possible. A small dark cloud had appeared on the weather beam, which gradually spread and spread, till the whole heaven was covered with an ominous darkness, and the wind increased so rapidly that there was barely time to execute the orders which followed each other in quick succession from the quarter-deck. Before one reef was taken in in the topsails, it was time to take in another; the courses were reefed, the mainsail furled, the topgallant yards sent on deck. Before midnight, we were under reefed foresail and close-reefed driver; and, before the morning watch, were hove to under stormstaysails. Tom had exerted himself greatly during the gale; and, when aloft in the maintop, had been struck on the temple by one of the points of the topsail which was shaking in the wind while reefing. The blow, though from so small a rope, had stunned him; and, when he recovered, he was obliged to be assisted down to his cot, where the doctor took a good quantity of blood from him. About this time, an epidemic disorder had shewn itself among the crew, which spread rapidly, and in a short time our sick list amounted to six or seven-and-twenty. At first, the disease was not

fatal ; but, after a time, death followed in its footsteps, and the mortality became quite alarming and dispiriting to the survivors of the crew. The only officer who was seized with the disorder was my friend Tom, who had hardly recovered from the weakening effect of loss of blood, and whose constitution had been much shaken by severe illness abroad. Long and doubtful was the struggle between life and death ; but at length the crisis of the disease was over, and he began slowly to recover. Oh ! how often did I vow, while watching by his sick-bed, and bathing his burning hands and brow, never again to go to sea with one for whom I felt more than a common regard ! I thought it would be almost better to renounce the communion of intimate friendship altogether, than again to expose myself to the risk of such grief as I now felt in the prospect of losing my friend. Tom did no more duty for the remainder of the passage of five weeks, and was still very feeble when we arrived in the Downs. During that time, however, he used often to come on deck in my watch ; and, if there was no particular ship's duty going on, we indulged in long conversations about the past, and in pleasant anticipations of the future. But, on whatever topic our conversations might commence, they always ended in the same subject—L———Manse and its inmates. Kate Fotheringham, Kate Fotheringham, was the everlasting theme of Tom's tongue ; even if I had never seen her, I might almost have painted her picture from his vivid descriptions of her.

"You forget, Tom," I have often said, "that I have seen this paragon of yours ; you need not give me such a minute description of her."

"You have seen her, Harry ! I *always* see her ; her image is in my heart. It is out of the fulness of my heart, that my mouth speaks. Oh ! let me talk of her—the very sound of her name is like music to my ear. Kate, Kate Fotheringham—is it not a sweet name, Harry ?"

"The name is pretty enough ; but, my dear fellow, you are allowing your passion to run away with your senses altogether. For her sake, as well as your own, you must endeavour to restrain the violence of your feelings, which, in the present enfeebled state of your health, might produce fatal effects."

"Fatal !" said he—"nothing can be fatal to me as long as Kate Fotheringham's love remains to me. But, O ! Lord, if I were to lose that, what would become of me ?"

I was alarmed and distressed by the depth and violence of Tom's emotions ; but I thought it better to allow him to express them unreservedly, than to run the risk of adding to their intensity by endeavouring to check and repress them. Among other plans for the future, he dwelt with much pleasure upon the prospect of giving our friends at L——— an agreeable surprise, by coming upon them unexpectedly, before they had heard of our arrival in England. Circumstances favoured us in this project. Our passage had been a quick one ; and, the wind favouring us after we had passed the Downs, we ran right up the river at once. In consequence of our unexpectedly early arrival, there were no letters awaiting us ; but we were not anxious on that score, as our last accounts were favourable. The day after our arrival at Blackwall, we obtained leave of absence, and set off (under the rose) for the north. When we arrived at the nearest town to L———, we left the coach, intending to hire a chaise or gig to take us on to the manse ; but there had been a run on the road that day, and there was no conveyance to be obtained. Tom's mortification was extreme. I wished to remain till next day ; but his impatience prevented his listening to reason.

"It's only a few miles, Harry ! We can walk."

"In your present state," said I, "such an exertion may be prejudicial to you."

"I see you don't like to stretch your legs, Harry. I will go by myself ; you can follow to-morrow !"

I had nothing further to say ; so we ordered our baggage to be sent after us, and set off together. When we arrived near L———, instead of following the sweep of the road, and crossing the river by the bridge, by way of a short cut we struck across the fields, and waded the stream. The moon was shining brightly, and the whole scene was flooded with light. On the summit of a green bank, sloping down to the river, lay the churchyard, near which stood the church, a venerable Gothic building, shaded by old and solemn-looking trees, standing like sentinels over the slumbers of the tomb. Our path to the manse lay through the churchyard ; and a feeling of sadness and of awe crept over us as we saw the cold beautiful moonlight resting on the well-known graves of many of our early friends.

"Ah !" said I—"the churchyard has, at least, *one* tenant more since our departure. Whose can this handsome monument be ?"

My eye glanced at the inscription, and a cold shudder came over me.

"Come on, Tom !" said I ; "we have no time to dawdle here."

"Let me read this epitaph first."

"No, no," said I, trying to force him away. But it was too late—he had seen enough ; and, with a cry of unutterable anguish, he fell fainting in my arms. Poor Tom Bertram ! Long years have passed, but that scene is fresh in my memory—my heart bleeds for him still ! I laid him gently on the grass beside the tomb—the dying, as I thought, beside the dead. The tears blinded my eyes as I endeavoured to read the sad inscription on the stone—"Sacred to the memory of Catherine, youngest daughter of the Rev. Thomas Fotheringham, minister of this parish." The long panegyric that followed—what had I to do with it then ? I ran down to the river, and, bringing some water in my hat, I dashed it in Tom's face, and, after some time, had the happiness to see him revive. He stared wildly at me, and exclaimed—

"Where am I ?—Harry !"

"Here I am, dear Tom !"

"Oh ! I have had such a dream !" His eye-glance fell upon the tomb—"Merciful Heaven ! is it true ?" And leaning his head upon my breast, while his face turned deadly pale, he gasped for breath. At length, a burst of sorrow, such as I had seldom witnessed, relieved his overwrought feelings ; he sobbed and wept as if his heart were flowing out of him. I did not attempt to check or to console him ; sorrow like his was, in its first bitterness, too deep and withering for consolation. Alas ! I needed comfort for myself !

At length, the first violence of his feelings was exhausted, and he suffered me to lead him, unresistingly, to the manse where we were received with the greatest kindness and sympathy by the sorrowing family. There we heard the sad particulars of our loss. Kate had fallen a victim to consumption some months before ; the letter containing the melancholy news had not reached us. Poor Tom, exhausted by previous illness, and overcome by the dreadful shock he had experienced, was obliged to take to his bed. I hastened back to my ship, where I was detained some weeks. When I returned, Tom was dying. He knew me ; and, with a faint smile, and a hardly perceptible pressure of my hand, he murmured—

"I die happy, Harry. She prayed for me on her death-bed !"

THE COTTER'S DAUGHTER.

THE parties to whom the following tale refers, being still, we believe, alive, we must warn the reader that, though the story be true, the names employed are fictitious ; but

we beg also to add that in this circumstance alone is the tale indebted to invention.

Young Edington of Wellwood was the son of a gentleman of large fortune, residing in Roxburghshire; but we shall not say in what particular part of that district. The noble residence of Wellwood—a huge castellated pile, rising in the midst of embowering woods and wide-spread lawns of the smoothest and brightest verdure—sufficiently bespoke the wealth of its owner; or, if this was not enough to give such assurance, the crowd of liveried menials that might be seen lounging about its magnificent portals, together with the splendid equipages that were ever and anon rolling to and from the lordly mansion, would have carried this conviction to the mind of the most casual observer.

The presumptive heir to all this grandeur was young Wellwood, who was an only child. At the period of our story, Harry (for such was his Christian name) was about four and twenty years of age. His education had been completed at Oxford some three years previous to this; and the interval had been spent in a tour on the Continent, from which he had now just returned, to reside some time with his father, before going abroad, to fill a high official situation, which the latter's great influence in the political world had procured for him.

Young Wellwood was a man of elegant figure, accomplished, and of singularly fascinating manners—qualifications of which he too often availed himself, to accomplish very discreditable purposes, as the sequel of our story will shew. He was not naturally of bad dispositions—we could almost say quite the contrary; nor did he love evil for its own sake; but his passions were too powerful for his moral principles—unsupported as these were by any auxiliary resolutions of his own.

Such, then, was young Edington of Wellwood; and, having thus briefly sketched his circumstances, situation, and character, we proceed to advert to the humble heroine of our tale.

At a short distance from Wellwood House, there is a pretty little village, which we shall take the liberty of calling Springfield. It is situated in a romantic dell or hollow, and occupies either side of a broad, clear, but shallow stream, that runs brawling through its very centre. Steep rocks, and in other places abrupt acclivities covered with verdure, and the whole overhung with “wild woods thick'ning green,” form the boundaries of the narrow glen in which the village is situated. From this village, bands of young maidens—daughters of the labouring people by whom it is inhabited, and of others in poor circumstances—were in the habit of repairing to Wellwood House every morning, during the summer season, for supplies of milk; the excess of the dairy being sold at little more than a nominal value to every one in the neighbourhood who chose to apply for it. Amongst the young girls who used to frequent Wellwood House on this errand, was Helen Gardenstone, the daughter of a poor widow woman who resided in Springfield. She was a girl of surpassing beauty, and that of a kind rarely to be met with amongst those in her humble station in life. Her beauty did not lie in the mere glow of health, or in regularity of feature alone. Both of these, indeed, she possessed in an eminent degree; but the chief captivations of her truly lovely countenance were to be found in the peculiar sweetness, grace, and native dignity of its expression, which the meanness of her circumstances had been unable to abase. In short, even the style of Helen Gardenstone's beauty, unaided by fashion, art, or education, as it was, was such as the daughter of the haughtiest peer of the realm might have been proud to own. But Nature had not expended all her skill and pains on the countenance alone. She added a figure every way worthy of its loveliness; a figure whose elegance and fine proportions the simple but coarse garments she wore might

impair, but could not conceal; and she finished the work by bestowing on this beautiful being, a mild, gentle, and generous disposition; a heart formed for cherishing all the better qualities of female nature; and a degree of intelligence much surpassing that usually found amongst those of her years and class. Such was Helen Gardenstone, the daughter of the widow.

To resume our narrative. It was on a fine summer's morning, at the period to which our story refers, that Helen's mother came to her bedside, and, shaking her gently by the shoulder—for she was sound asleep—said, in a kindly tone—

“Helen, dear, it's time ye were awa to Wellwood for the milk.”

Helen opened her bright eyes, smiled in her mother's face, started from her couch, and was soon ready to perform the morning duty to which she had been called.

“But I'm thinkin I'm late this mornin, mother,” she said, on observing the advanced appearance of the day.

“Ou, ye're time aneuch, dear,” replied her mother; “I didna like to wauken ye sooner, as ye were up sae late last night, an' sae sair fatigued wi' the washin.”

“Tuts, mother,” rejoined Helen, “that was naething. Ye should hae made me jump at the usual time.—I declare there they're comin back!” she abruptly added, having caught a glimpse of some of the village maidens returning with their pitchers of milk; and, with this, she hurried out of the house, with her little tin can, and, tripping lightly over the road, she soon reached the avenue leading to Wellwood House.

Helen was, indeed, later than usual on this morning; and one consequence of this was, that she had to go alone—for all those who used to accompany her had already been to Wellwood, and had returned; another consequence, and one fraught with much that was deeply interwoven with the future destiny of the unsuspecting girl—that all the inmates of Wellwood House were astir, and amongst these young Wellwood himself, who was sauntering in the avenue that led to the house at the very moment Helen entered it. They met. Wellwood, who had never happened to see her before, was struck with her extraordinary beauty. He threw himself in her way. He addressed her in flattering language. He watched her return from the house, learned everything from the artless girl regarding her situation and circumstances; and, from that hour, she engrossed all his thoughts, and became the sole object to which he devoted the dangerous powers of fascination which nature had given him and art had improved. Nor did he exercise these powers in vain. Helen ultimately fell a victim to his wiles, and became the prey of the spoiler.

The story of the poor girl's misfortune soon spread abroad. It became the talk of the village; and many a burning face, and many an agonizing pang it cost her as she passed along, and heard the sneers, and taunts, and heartless jests to which that misfortune subjected her.

“The graceless cutty!” said one—and we must here remark that the merciless persecutions of this kind to which she was exposed proceeded almost entirely from those of her own sex—“nae better could happen her wi' her dressin and her airs. No a madam in a' the land could be at mair pains snoodin her hair than she was.”

“Atweel, that's true,” said a second; “and see what she has made o't, the vain, silly thing!”

“Made o't!” exclaimed another of these vulgar and heartless traducers; “my certie, she'll mak weel o't, I warrant ye. Young Wellwood 'll gie her silks and satins by the wab, a id siller in gowpens. She'll no want—tak my word for that. We maun toil late and early, cummers, for our scanty mouthfu, and our bits o' duds; while the like o' her eats and drinks o' the best, without ever fylin her fingers.”

"This 'll bring down her pride, I'm thinkin," said a fourth. "I aye thocht she wad hae a fa', and was ne'er owre fond o' oor Mary gaun wi' her. Folk speak o' her beauty; but, for my part, I never could see ony beauty about her."

"Nor me either," chimed in a fifth; "I aye thocht her a puir, glaikit, silly-looking thing."

Much of such conversation as this, the poor unfortunate girl frequently overheard; and much more of a similar kind was said which she did not hear. In short, there was not one, at least of her own sex, who expressed the smallest sympathy for her unhappy condition, or felt for her misfortune—not one who attempted to soothe her sorrows or to lighten the burden of the poor girl's miseries—not one to treat her error with the lenity which their own liability to deviate from the straight path of moral rectitude, ought to have inspired:—no, the poor girl's persecutors seemed to think that the abuse and defamation of her character shed an additional lustre on their own, and that, by her fall, they themselves were exalted. Strangers were they to the god-like sentiments expressed by him who says—

"Teach me to feel another's wo,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others shew,
Such mercy shew to me."

When we said, however, that there was not one who felt for poor Helen's unhappy situation, we ought to have made a single exception. There was *one* who felt for her, and that most acutely. This one was her mother. The widow sorrowed, indeed, over the fall of her child, and many a bitter tear unseen did it cost her—but she pitied and forgave.

"Dinna mourn that way, my puir lassie," she would say, when she found Helen, as she often did, weeping in secret. "God 'll gie ye strength to bear up wi' your sorrows. He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, Helen, and e'en will He saften the grief in which your young heart is steeped. Though a' the warld should abuse ye, Helen, and desert ye, and scorn ye, your mother's arms and your mother's bosom will aye be open to receive ye; for weel do I ken, though everybody else should be blin' to't, that, for a' that has happened, ye're guileless, Helen, and far mair sinned against than sinning."

The uniform kindness of her mother, and the charitable and Christian-like spirit in which she treated her erring daughter, greatly consoled the unfortunate girl under her affliction, and was the means of saving her, for a time at any rate, from utter despair—we have said for a time only, because it was ultimately unequal to support poor Helen's spirit against the sneers of an unfeeling world. Returning home, one evening, from a place at a little distance, where she had been on an errand of her mother's, Helen overheard, from amongst a group of women, some such conversation regarding her as we have already quoted; but more severe things still were said on this occasion, than we have recorded, and, amongst these, the last and worst name which can be given to the crring of her sex, was applied to her. Helen heard the horrifying word; and no sooner had it reached her ear than a sense of self debasement, of shame, and despair, which she had never felt so acutely before, seized upon her, and nearly deprived her of her reason. The ground seemed to reel under her feet, and it was with the utmost difficulty she was able to make out her mother's house. Her walk was unsteady, and she was pale as death when she entered.

"Mercy on me, Helen! what's the matter?" exclaimed her mother, running, in the utmost alarm, to the bed on which the latter had flung herself in an agony of shame and horror, the moment she had entered the house. "What's the matter, Helen?" repeated the latter, in a soothing tone. "Has onybody been using you ill?" she inquired for she

knew that her unfortunate daughter was often exposed to such insult and abuse as we have already noticed.

"O mother! mother! I can stand this nae langer," was the indirect, but sufficiently intelligible, reply of the weeping girl, who, with her face buried in the bedclothes, was now sobbing her heart out. "I can stand it nae langer. I canna live, mother—I canna live under this load o' shame and reproach. I ken I am a guilty and a sinfu' creature, but, oh! will they no hae mercy on me, and leave me to the punishment o' my ain thochts and feelings? Is there nae compassion in them, nae pity, nae charity, that they will thus continue to persecute me wi' their merciless tongues? I hae offended my God; but, I'm sure, I have never offended them in thocht, word, or deed; and why, then, will they drive me to distraction this way? I canna live under it, mother—I canna live under it!" again exclaimed the unfortunate girl.

"They can hae but little o' the milk o' human kindness in their bosoms, Helen, that wad add a pang to them ye are already endurin, my puir lassie," said her mother, leaning over her with the utmost tenderness and affection. "They surely canna be mothers themsels that wad do a thing sae cruel and unfeelin. I'm sure it wad melt the heart o' a whinstane to look on that puir wae-begone face o' yours. But never mind them, Helen, dear—keep up your heart. Guid has come before noo oot o' evil; and there's nae sayin what may be in store for you yet."

To this attempt at consolation Helen made no reply; but that night—and it was a wild and a wet one—she left her mother's house, stealing out while she slept; and, when morning came, she had not returned, and no one knew whither she had gone. Days, weeks, and months passed away, and still Helen Gardenstone came not, nor was any trace of her discovered; but it came at length to be generally believed that the poor deluded and distracted girl had terminated her miseries by committing suicide—that she had buried her sorrows in the waters of the Molendinar; the name of the stream or river that ran through the village, and which had many deep pools both below and above it.

These were, indeed, actually searched for her body, but to no purpose; though this was accounted for by the circumstance of the river's having been much swollen at the time of Helen's disappearance, by several previous days' rain. The body, then, was conjectured to have been carried down to the sea.

The report of Helen's sudden disappearance, together with rumours of the supposed catastrophe which it involved, soon reached young Wellwood; and, libertine as he was the appalling intelligence plunged him into the deepest distress. When first informed of it, he grew deadly pale, and would fain have disbelieved the horrid tale, which made him virtually and morally, though not legally, poor Helen's murderer. But, when he found he could no longer doubt the truth of the rumour, remorse and contrition seized him and, for some days thereafter, he confined himself to his room on pretence of sudden indisposition, to conceal the distraction of his mind, which wholly unfitted him to mingle in society.

The vision of Helen, invested with all the personal beauty and mental innocence in which she had first met his sight, appeared before him during the feverish reveries of the day, and in the disturbed slumbers of the night. Anon, the scene would change, and the dead form of the victim of his lawless passion would stand before him, bearing all the horrid marks of the peculiar death she had died:—her face, rigid and ghastly pale—her wet dishevelled hair hanging wildly around it; and her clothes drenched with the waters in which her miseries had been terminated. Such were the harrowing pictures which the disturbed imagination and guilty soul of young Wellwood summoned before his mental eye, to madden and distract him. In

time, however, these dreadful visions began to abate, both in frequency and force, and he was gradually enabled to take his place again in society; but a settled melancholy was now visible on his countenance—for the fatal catastrophe of poor Helen's death, though latterly less vividly present to him than at first, still pressed upon his spirits with a weight and constancy that produced a very marked change on his general demeanour.

Soon after the period to which we have now brought our story, Wellwood proceeded to the place of his destination abroad, to occupy the official situation which his father's influence had procured for him. Here he remained for two years, when some business connected with the duties of his appointment called him to London. One of the first persons on whom he called, on his arrival in the metropolis, was a gentleman of the name of Middleton—a young man of fortune, and of excessively dissipated habits, whom he had known at Oxford, and who had been the companion of all his debaucheries (and they were frequent and deep) during his residence at that seat of learning. In this last respect, young Wellwood was now somewhat improved; but it was otherwise with his old friend, who still pursued, with unabated vigour and unsated appetite, the wild career of dissipation in which Wellwood had so far accompanied him. The renewal of their acquaintance on this occasion terminated in the renewal of the scenes at Oxford; and, led on by his companion, Harry largely indulged in all the fashionable excesses of the capital. These excesses, however, even with all the outrageous mirth and jollity with which they were associated, could not restore to him the peace of mind he had lost, nor even banish from his countenance that expression of melancholy to which it had now become habituated, and which did not escape his friend Middleton, who frequently urged him to tell him the cause of it; but, for some time, Wellwood evaded the inquiry. At length, however, the secret was wrung from him.

"I say, now, Harry," said Middleton to him, one evening as they sat together over a bottle of wine, "won't you tell us how you came by that puritanical face of yours. It's not the one you used to wear at Oxford, I'll be sworn, and where you have picked it up I can't imagine; but it certainly does become you amazingly. That melancholy gives you quite a sentimental air. Could'n't you help me to a touch of it? I think it would improve me vastly."

"Middleton," replied Wellwood, gravely, "I wish you may never have such cause as I have, both to look and to think seriously; and, in order that you may judge for yourself whether I have not good reason, I will now inform you of the cause of that melancholy which has so frequently attracted your notice, and has so much excited your curiosity." Having said this, Wellwood proceeded to tell his friend of the dismal story of Helen Gardenstone; and, when he had concluded—"Worlds on worlds," he exclaimed energetically, "would I give, Middleton, were I possessed of them, to restore that sweet unfortunate girl again to life; and these, ten times told, would I part with to be relieved of the guilt of having wronged her."

To the melancholy tale of Helen's death, and to the repentant exclamations with which it was wound up, Middleton replied with a loud laugh.

"And is this all?" he cried out. "Is this the cause of that most lachrymose countenance of yours, Harry? Shame, shame, man! I thought you were a fellow of more spirit, a man of more metal, than to be affected by such a very trifling affair as that. Why, how the deuce could you help the silly wench drowning herself? You did not push her into the water. Tuts, man! fill up your glass, and think no more of it; and now, 'pon my soul, Harry," he continued, "that I know the cause of your dismal phiz, and find it to be a matter of moonshine, I'll cut you for ever, if you don't, after this night, hold up your head and look like a man. There,

fill up," he said, pushing the bottle, from which he had just helped himself largely, towards his companion, who, without making any remark on what had just been addressed to him, seized it with avidity, and, as if in desperation, poured out and swallowed an entire tumbler of the liquor it contained.

We need not follow out the scene. The night terminated, as it usually did with those boon companions, in a deep debauch; but it was ultimately marked by an event for which the reader will be as little prepared as Wellwood was. On returning to his lodgings, accompanied by Middleton, who slept at the same hotel, at an early hour of the morning—and a bitterly cold and snowy one it was, for it was the depth of winter—the two friends, as they came shouting and bawling along, under the influence of the wine they had drunk, were attracted by seeing four or five persons gathered together on the street, and evidently surrounding some object of interest.

"I say, Harry, let's see what this is?" said Middleton; "p'rhaps we may knock some sport out of it."

"Why, I don't mind," replied the former; "but doubtless it's some drunken or starving wretch, enjoying the cool night air."

"Why, what's the matter here?" said Middleton, bustling into the middle of the assemblage, followed by Wellwood.

"Vy, it's a young woman and a child as is a-starving, and has never a home to go to," said one of the bystanders. And such, indeed, was the truth.

A miserable being—not, however, in her attire, which, though bespeaking poverty, was yet clean, whole, and even decent—was seen sitting on the steps of a stair, seemingly in the last stage of exhaustion, with a child, a boy of about two years of age, closely wrapped up in her cloak, and strained to her bosom, to protect it from the piercing cold of the night.

"My good woman," said Middleton, stooping down close to her—for even he was affected by the piteous sight—"where are you from?"

"I'm frae Scotland, sir," was the reply, in a voice of singular sweetness, but evidently enfeebled by suffering.

Wellwood caught, in an instant, the dialect of his native land; and he did not hear it without emotion—neither were the soft musical tones of the voice lost upon him. They resembled, strongly resembled, those of one whom he dared not even think of; and these circumstances combined, instantly excited in him a deep interest in the unhappy being before him. He now also approached her, and taking her kindly by the hand, was about to address her in soothing language, looking at the same time closely into her face when, without saying what he intended, or indeed saying anything, he slowly raised himself again from the stooping posture to which he had had recourse, his face as pale as death, and trembling violently in every limb. In the next instant, he staggered as if he would have fallen. Middleton ran to support him, and, thinking he had been seized with some sudden illness, slowly led him to the distance of a few paces from the persons assembled round the destitute female.

"What's the matter, what's the matter, Harry?" said the former, on their getting out of hearing of any one. "My troth, but you do look ill, Wellwood!"

"That," replied the latter, in a sepulchral voice, and with a look that increased the alarm of his companion—"That," he said, pointing to the spot where the unhappy woman sat, and without noticing Middleton's inquiry, "is ne being of flesh and blood. It is a vexed spirit, Middleton, come to haunt me for the injuries I did it when in the body—come to destroy my peace and to realize the horrid dreams of my guilt. It is, it is, Middleton"—and he gasped for breath as he spoke—"the spirit of Helen Gardenstone."

"Nay, that I'll be sworn it isn't," replied his friend, who now thought he had gone deranged. "It's a bona

sic human being, I warrant you, Harry, and I'll bring you proof of that directly." Saying this, he ran to the object of his friend's terror, and inquired her name. She gave it—Middleton was confounded—he hastened back to Wellwood, and, as he approached him—"By Heaven, Harry!" he said, "you are so far right—the woman's name is really Helen Gardenstone."

Regardless of the situation in which he was, and equally so of those who might witness the strong expression of feeling which he meditated, Wellwood instantly dropped on his knees, and, in one brief sentence of mingled piety and joy, thanked God that he was not altogether the guilty wretch that he had conceived himself to be; for he now felt assured that, whatever might have been the train of circumstances that had led to this singular occurrence, the person whom he had thus found a houseless and destitute wanderer on the streets of the metropolis, was, indeed, no other than Helen Gardenstone.

On recovering a little from the tumultuous feelings which had at first overwhelmed him, Wellwood's next thought was how to succour the unfortunate girl and *his* child, as he had no doubt it was. The first idea which occurred to him on this point was to have Helen instantly conveyed to his hotel—and on this idea he subsequently acted; but, thinking the present neither a fit time nor place to discover himself to her, or to give her an opportunity of recognising him, he deputed the task to his friend Middleton, who readily undertook it, whilst he himself kept aloof. On reaching the inn, Wellwood retired to his own apartment, while Middleton saw to the comforts of his unfortunate charge. These provided for, he rejoined his friend, whom he found wrapt in profound meditation, with his elbow resting on a table.

"Well, Harry," he said, on entering the apartment, "this is a devilish queer affair, an't it? But, in the name of all that's perplexing, what do you propose doing now?"

"I'll tell you all about that in the morning, Middleton," replied Wellwood, gravely, "after I shall have slept on it. In the meantime, I thank you for your attention to the poor girl."

"Faith, to tell you a truth, Harry," rejoined Middleton, "I would have done as much, and a great deal more, too, on her own account, let alone yours; for she's certainly as pretty a girl as ever I clapped eye upon. A gentle, beautiful creature 'tis, Harry. But what the deuce are you to do with her, again say I?"

"Why, I have not quite made up my mind on that subject," said Wellwood; "but I'll think of it, and we'll see what the morning brings forth." Saying this, he retired to his own sleeping apartment, where he spent half the night in thinking what should be his next proceeding with regard to Helen; and the result of his cogitations on this subject was a resolution of a very extraordinary kind.

On the following morning, when he and Middleton met—"Well, Harry," said the latter, "what's to be done now? What has been the result of your night's reflections regarding Helen? What do you now propose doing with her?"

"I propose to marry her, Middleton," replied Wellwood, gravely. "It is the least thing I can do in reparation of the injury I have done her—the misery and scorn I have entailed on her; and, besides, Middleton," he went on, "I should be perjured in the face of heaven if I did not, for I swore a sacred and binding oath that I should make her mine, and it was by trusting to that oath that poor Helen fell."

"Ha. na!—a particular good joke, Harry," exclaimed Middleton, "and"——

"No joke whatever, Middleton," said Wellwood, interrupting him, "I am in serious earnest. I will do the girl

the only justice now in my power: I will do what my heart and my conscience tells me is right in this matter, and defy the sneers of a selfish and censorious world. On this I am firmly determined, let the consequences be what they may. My mind is made up, Middleton."

"You're mad, Harry," said the latter, now becoming serious in his turn, on seeing that his friend was really in earnest—"absolutely and absurdly mad."

"It may be so, Middleton," replied Wellwood, calmly. "That is a point I will not dispute with you; but I am, nevertheless, firmly resolved to do what I have said. I will take my poor little boy to my bosom, and his mother shall become lady of Wellwood. It is all the reparation I can make her, and it shall be made. Will you assist me in going through with this romantic business, Middleton?" he added, smiling.

"Why, Harry," replied the latter, "I certainly should not like to desert you in a time of need; but"——

"No buts, Middleton," interrupted his friend. "Will you, or will you not?"

"Why, then, if you *are* resolved, Harry, on this desperate, and, I must call it, singularly absurd step, I will," rejoined Middleton. "But what will your father say to it?"

"Why, from him certainly my marriage must, for a time, at any rate, be concealed; but of this more afterwards. In the meantime, will you go to Helen and tell her that an old acquaintance desires to see her, and conduct her hither?"

Middleton readily undertook the mission, and departed to execute it. In a minute afterwards, he returned, leading in Helen by the hand. On seeing Wellwood, she uttered a piercing shriek, and fainted in the arms of Middleton, her little boy clinging to her in all the terror of childish affright. Wellwood rushed to her assistance, and, in the tenderest and most soothing language he could command, endeavoured to restore her to consciousness. This of itself gradually returned, and a scene followed which we will not attempt to describe. Wellwood, pressing Helen to his bosom, told the bewildered but delighted girl that it was his intention to repair the injury he had done her by offering her his hand. He next flew to his boy, took him up in his arms, bathed him with his tears, and bestowed upon him, while he caressed him, every tender epithet he could think of.

Our story is now coming naturally to a close; and we will not prolong it by any unnecessary or extraneous details. In three days after this, Helen—having been previously provided with everything suitable to the rank in life to which she was thus suddenly and most unexpectedly promoted from the lowest depth of wretchedness and destitution—became the wife of Henry Edington, Esq., of Wellwood. In three days more, Mr Edington received intelligence of his father's sudden demise, which rendered it necessary that he should proceed instantly to Wellwood. In this journey, his wife and child accompanied him; and the next appearance of Helen Gardenstone in her native village was in a splendid carriage, as the lady of Wellwood, in which character she subsequently acquired an extensive reputation for benevolence and for the practice of every social virtue. Helen, in short, became an exemplary wife, and conferred on her husband, who continued to regard her with unabated affection till the day of his death, all the happiness of which the marriage state is capable.



W I L S O N ' S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
 AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WIDOW OF DUNSKAITH.

“Oh, mony a shriek, that waeft’ night,
 Rose frae the stormy main;
 An’ mony a bootless yow was made,
 An’ mony a prayer vain;
 An’ mithers wept, an’ widows mourned,
 For mony a weary day;
 An’ maidens, ance o’ blithest mood,
 Grew sad, an’ pined away.”

THE northern Sutor of Cromarty is of a bolder character than even the southern one—abrupt, and stern, and precipitous as that is. It presents a loftier and more unbroken wall of rock; and, where it bounds on the Moray Frith, there is a savage magnificence in its cliffs and caves, and in the wild solitude of its beach, which we find nowhere equalled on the shores of the other. It is more exposed, too, in the time of tempest: the waves often rise, during the storms of winter, more than a hundred feet against its precipices, festooning them, even at that height, with wreaths of kelp and tangle; and, for miles within the bay, we may hear, at such seasons, the savage uproar that maddens amid its cliffs and caverns, coming booming over the lashings of the nearer waves, like the roar of artillery. There is a sublimity of desolation on its shores, the effects of a conflict maintained for ages, and on a scale so gigantic. The isolated, spire-like crags that rise along its base, are so drilled and bored by the incessant lashings of the surf, and are ground down into shapes so fantastic, that they seem but the wasted skeletons of their former selves; and we find almost every natural fissure in the solid rock hollowed into an immense cavern, whose very ceiling, though the head turns as we look up to it, owes evidently its comparative smoothness to the action of the waves. One of the most remarkable of these recesses occupies what we may term the apex of a lofty promontory. The entrance, unlike that of most of the others, is narrow and rugged, though of great height; but it widens within into a shadowy chamber, perplexed, like the nave of a cathedral, by uncertain cross lights, that come glimmering into it through two lesser openings, which perforate the opposite sides of the promontory. It is a strange, ghostly-looking place: there is a sort of moonlight greenness in the twilight which forms its noon, and the denser shadows which rest along its sides; a blackness, so profound that it mocks the eye, hangs over a lofty passage which leads from it, like a corridor, still deeper into the bowels of the hill; the light falls on a sprinkling of half-buried bones, the remains of animals that, in the depth of winter, have crept into it for shelter, and to die; and, when the winds are up, and the hoarse roar of the waves comes reverberated from its inner recesses, or creeps howling along its roof, it needs no over-active fancy to people its avenues with the shapes of beings long since departed from every gayer and softer scene, but which still rise uncalled to the imagination in those by- corners of nature which seem dedicated, like this cavern, to the wild, the desolate, and the solitary.

There is a little rocky bay a few hundred yards to the west, which has been known for ages, to all the seafaring men of the place, as the Cova Green. It is such a place as

we are sometimes made acquainted with in the narratives of disastrous shipwrecks. First, there is a broad semicircular strip of beach, with a wilderness of insulated piles of rock in front; and so steep and continuous is the wall of precipices which rises behind, that, though we may see directly over head the grassy slopes of the hill, with here and there a few straggling firs, no human foot ever gained the nearer edge. The bay of the Cova Green is a prison to which the sea presents the only outlet; and the numerous caves which open along its sides, like the arches of an amphitheatre, seem but its darker cells. It is, in truth, a wild impressive place, full of beauty and terror, and with none of the squalidness of the mere dungeon about it. There is a puny littleness in our brick and lime receptacles of misery and languor which speaks as audibly of the feebleness of man, as of his crimes or his inhumanity; but here all is great and magnificent—and there is much, too, that is pleasing. Many of the higher cliffs, which rise beyond the influence of the spray, are tapestried with ivy; we may see the heron watching on the ledges beside her bundle of withered twigs, or the blue hawk darting from her cell; there is life on every side of us—life in even the wild tumbling of the waves, and in the stream of pure water which, rushing from the higher edge of the precipice in a long white cord, gradually untwists itself by the way, and spatters ceaselessly among the stones over the entrance of one of the caves. Nor does the scene want its old story to strengthen its hold on the imagination.

I am wretchedly uncertain in my dates, but it must have been some time late in the reign of Queen Anne, that a fishing yawl, after vainly labouring for hours to enter the bay of Cromarty, during a strong gale from the west, was forced, at nightfall, to relinquish the attempt, and take shelter in the Cova Green. The crew consisted of but two persons—an old fisherman and his son. Both had been thoroughly drenched by the spray, and chilled by the piercing wind, which, accompanied by thick snow showers, had blown all day through the opening, from off the snowy top of Ben Wyvis; and it was with no ordinary satisfaction that, as they opened the little bay on their last tack, they saw the red gleam of a fire flickering from one of the caves, and a boat drawn upon the beach.

“It must be some of the Tarbet fishermen,” said the old man, “wind-bound like ourselves; but wiser than us, in having made provision for it. I shall feel willing enough to share their fire with them for the night.”

“But see,” remarked the younger, “that there be no unwillingness on the other side. I am much mistaken if that be not the boat of my cousins the Macinlas, who would so fain have broken my head last Rhorichie Tryst. But, hap what may, father, the night is getting worse, and we have no choice of quarters. Hard up your helm, or we shall barely clear the Skerries; there now, every nail an anchor.” He leaped ashore, carrying with him the small hawser attached to the stern, which he wound securely round a jutting crag, and then stood for a few seconds until the old man, who moved but heavily along the thwarts, had come up to him. All was comparatively calm under the lee of the precipices; but the wind was roaring fearfully in the woods above, and whistling amid the furze and ivy of

the higher cliff; and the two boatmen, as they entered the cave, could see the flakes of a thick snow shower, that had just begun to descend, circling round and round in the eddy.

The place was occupied by three men, who were sitting beside the fire, on blocks of stone which had been rolled from the beach. Two of them were young, and comparatively commonplace looking persons; the third was a grey-headed old man, apparently of great muscular strength, though long past his prime, and of a peculiarly sinister cast of countenance. A keg of spirits, which was placed end up in front of them, served as a table; there were little drinking measures of tin on it, and the mask-like, stolid expressions of the two younger men shewed that they had been indulging freely. The elder was apparently sober. They all started to their feet on the entrance of the fishermen, and one of the younger, laying hold of the little cask, pitched it hurriedly into a dark corner of the cave.

"His peace be here!" was the simple greeting of the elder fisherman, as he came forward. "Eachen Macinla," he continued, addressing the old man, "we have not met for years before—not, I believe, since the death o' my pair sister, when we parted such ill friends; but we are short-lived creatures oursels, Eachen—surely our anger should be short-lived too; and I have come to crave from you a seat by your fire."

"William Beth," replied Eachen, "it was no wish of mine we should ever meet; but to a seat by the fire you are welcome."

Old Macinla and his sons resumed their seats, the two fishermen took their places fronting them, and for some time neither party exchanged a word.

A fire, composed mostly of fragments of wreck and drift wood, threw up its broad cheerful flame towards the roof; but so spacious was the cavern that, except where here and there a whiter mass of stalactites, or bolder projection of cliff stood out from the darkness, the light seemed lost in it. A dense body of smoke, which stretched its blue level surface from side to side, and concealed the roof, went rolling outwards like an inverted river.

"This is but a gousty lodging-place," remarked the old fisherman, as he looked round him; "but I have seen a worse. I wish the folk at home kent we were half sac snug; and then the fire, too—I have always felt something companionable in a fire, something consolable, as it were; it appears, somehow, as if it were a creature like ourselves, and had life in it." The remark seemed directed to no one in particular, and there was no reply. In a second attempt at conversation, the fisherman addressed himself to the old man.

"It has vexed me," he said, "that our young folk shouldna, for my sister's sake, be on more friendly terms, Eachen. They hae been quarreling, an' I wish to see the quarrel made up." The old man, without deigning a reply, knit his grey shaggy brows, and looked doggedly at the fire.

"Nay, now," continued the fisherman, "we are getting auld men, Eachen, an' wauld better bury our hard thoughts o' ane anither afore we come to be buried ourselves. What if we were sent to the Còra Green the night, just that we might part friends!"

Eachen fixed his keen scrutinizing glance on the speaker—it was but for a moment; there was a tremulous motion of the under lip as he withdrew it, and a setting of the teeth—the expression of mingled hatred and anger; but the tone of his reply savoured more of sullen indifference than of passion.

"William Beth," he said, "ye hae tricked my boys out o' the bit property that suld hae come to them by their mother; it's no lang since they barely escaped being murdered by your son. What more want you? But ye perhaps think it better that the time should be passed in making hollow lip professions of good will, than that it suld be employed in clearing off an old score."

"Ay," hiccuped out the elder of the two sons, "the

houses might come my way, then; an', besides, gin Helen Henry were to lose her ae jo, the ither might hae a better chance. Rise, brither—rise, man, an' fight for me an' your sweetheart." The younger lad, who seemed verging towards the last stage of intoxication, struck his clenched fist against his palm, and attempted to rise.

"Look ye, uncle," exclaimed the younger fisherman, a powerful looking and very handsome stripling, as he sprang to his feet, "your threat might be spared. Our little property was my grandfather's, and naturally descended to his only son; and, as for the affair at Rhorichie, I dare either of my cousins to say the quarrel was of my seeking. I have no wish to raise my hand against the sons or the husband of my aunt; but, if forced to it, you will find that neither my father nor myself are wholly at your mercy."

"Whisht, Earnest," said the old fisherman, laying his hand on the hand of the young man; "sit down—your uncle maun hae ither thoughts. It is now fifteen years, Eachen," he continued, "since I was called to my sister's deathbed. You yoursel canna forget what passed there. There had been grief, an' cauld, an' hunger, beside that bed. I'll no say you were willingly unkind—few folk are that but when they hae some purpose to serve by it, an you could have none; but you laid no restraint on a harsh temper, and none on a craving habit that forgets everything but itsel; and so my pair sister perished in the middle o' her days—a wasted, heart-broken thing. It's no that I wish to hurt you. I mind how we passed our youth thegither, among the wild Buccaneers; it was a bad school, Eachen; an' I owre often feel I havena unlearned a' my ain lessons, to wonder that you shouldna hae unlearned a' yours. But we're getting old men, Eachen, an' we have now what we hadna in our young days, the advantage o' the light. Dinna let us die fools in the sight o' Him who is so willing to give us wisdom—dinna let us die enemies. We have been early friends, though maybe no for good; we have fought afore now at the same gun; we have been united by the love o' her that's now in the dust; an' there are our boys—the nearest o' kin to ane anither that death has spared. But, what I feel as strongly as a' the rest, Eachen—we hae done meikle ill thegither. I can hardly think o' a past sin without thinking o' you, an' thinking, too, that, if a creature like me may hope he has found pardon, you shouldna despair. Eachen, we maun be friends."

The features of the stern old man relaxed. "You are perhaps right, William," he at length replied; "but ye were aye a luckier man than me—luckier for this world, I'm sure, an maybe for the next. I had aye to seek, an' aften without finding, the good that came in your gate o' itsel. Now that age is coming upon us, ye get a snug rental frae the little houses, an' I hae naething; an' ye hae character an' credit, but wha would trust me, or cares for me? Ye hae been made an elder o' the kirk, too, I hear, an' I am still a reprobate; but we were a' born to be just what we are, an sae maun submit. An' your son, too, shares in your luck; he has heart an' hand, an' my whelps hae neither; an' the girl, Henry, that scouts that sot there, likes him—but what wonder o' that? But you are right, William—we maun be friends. Pledge me." The little cask was produced; and, filling the measures, he nodded to Earnest and his father. They pledged him; when, as if seized by a sudden frenzy, he filled his measure thrice in hasty succession, draining it each time to the bottom, and then flung it down with a short hoarse laugh. His sons, who would fain have joined with him, he repulsed with a firmness of manner which he had not before exhibited. "No, whelps," he said—"get sober as fast as ye can."

"We had better," whispered Earnest to his father, "not sleep in the cave to-night."

"Let me hear now o' your quarrel, Earnest," said Eachen—

"your father was a more prudent man than you; and, however much he wronged me, did it without quarreling."

"The quarrel was none of my seeking," replied Earnest. "I was insulted by your sons, and would have borne it for the sake of what they seemed to forget; but there was another whom they also insulted, and that I could not bear."

"The girl Henry—and what then?"

"Why, my cousins may tell the rest. They were mean enough to take odds against me; and I just beat the two spiritless fellows that did so."

But why record the quarrels of this unfortunate evening? An hour or two passed away in disagreeable bickerings, during which the patience of even the old fisherman was worn out, and that of Earnest had failed him altogether. They both quitted the cave, boisterous as the night was, and it was now stormier than ever; and, heaving off their boat, till she rode at the full length of her swing from the shore, sheltered themselves under the sail. The Macinlas returned next evening to Tarbet; but, though the wind moderated during the day, the yawl of William Beth did not enter the bay of Cromarty. Weeks passed away, during which the clergyman of the place corresponded, regarding the missing fishermen, with all the lower parts of the Frith; but they had disappeared, as it seemed, for ever.

Where the northern Sutor sinks into the low sandy tract that nearly fronts the town of Cromarty, there is a narrow grassy terrace raised but a few yards over the level of the beach. It is sheltered behind by a steep undulating bank; for, though the rock here and there juts out, it is too rich in vegetation to be termed a precipice. To the east, the coast retires into a simicircular rocky recess, terminating seawards in a lofty, dark-browed precipice, and bristling, throughout all its extent, with a countless multitude of crags, that, at every heave of the wave, break the surface into a thousand eddies. Towards the west, there is a broken and somewhat dreary waste of sand. The terrace itself, however, is a sweet little spot, with its grassy slopes, that recline towards the sun, partially covered with thickets of wild-rose and honeysuckle, and studded, in their season, with violets, and daisies, and the delicate rock geranium. Towards its eastern extremity, with the bank rising immediately behind, and an open space in front, which seemed to have been cultivated at one time as a garden, there stood a picturesque little cottage. It was that of the widow of William Beth. Five years had now elapsed since the disappearance of her son and husband, and the cottage bore the marks of neglect and decay. The door and window, bleached white by the sea winds, shook loosely to every breeze; clusters of chickweed luxuriated in the hollows of the thatch, or mantled over the eaves; and a honeysuckle that had twisted itself round the chimney, lay withering in a tangled mass at the foot of the wall. But the progress of decay was more marked in the widow herself than in her dwelling. She had had to contend with grief and penury: a grief not the less undermining in its effects, from the circumstance of its being sometimes suspended by hope—a penury so extreme that every succeeding day seemed as if won by some providential interference from absolute want. And she was now, to all appearance, fast sinking in the struggle. The autumn was well nigh over: she had been weak and ailing for months before, and had now become so feeble as to be confined for days together to her bed. But, happily, the poor solitary woman had, at least, one attached friend in the daughter of a farmer of the parish, a young and beautiful girl, who, though naturally of no melancholy temperament, seemed to derive almost all she enjoyed of pleasure from the society of the widow. Helen Henry was in her twenty-third year; but she seemed older in spirit than in years. She was thin and pale, though exquisitely formed; there was a drooping heaviness in her fine eyes, and a cast of pensive thought on

her forehead, that spoke of a longer experience of grief than so brief a portion of life might be supposed to have furnished. She had once lovers; but they had gradually dropped away in the despair of moving her, and awed by a deep and settled pensiveness which, in the gayest season of youth, her character had suddenly but permanently assumed. Besides, they all knew her affections were already engaged, and had come to learn, though late and unwillingly, that there are cases in which no rival can be more formidable than a dead one.

Autumn, I have said, was near its close. The weather had given indications of an early and severe winter; and the widow, whose worn-out and delicate frame was affected by every change of atmosphere, had for a few days been more than usually indisposed. It was now long past noon, and she had but just risen. The apartment, however, bore witness that her young friend had paid her the accustomed morning visit; the fire was blazing on a clean comfortable looking hearth, and every little piece of furniture it contained was arranged with the most scrupulous care. Her devotions were hardly over, when the well-known tap was again heard at the door.

"Come in, my lassie," said the widow, and then lowering her voice, as the light foot of her friend was heard on the threshold—"God," she said, "has been ever kind to me—far, very far aboon my best deservings; and, oh, may He bless and reward her who has done so meikle, meikle for me!" The young girl entered and took her seat beside her.

"You told me, mother," she said, "that to-morrow is Earnest's birthday. I have been thinking of it all last night, and feel as if my heart were turning into stone. But when I am alone, it is always so. There is a cold death-like weight at my breast that makes me unhappy; though, when I come to you, and we speak together, the feeling passes away, and I become cheerful."

"Ah, my bairn," replied the old woman; "I fear I'm no your friend, meikle as I love you. We speak owre often o' the lost; for our foolish hearts find mair pleasure in that than in anything else; but ill does it fit us for being alone. Weel do I ken your feeling—a stone deadness o' the heart, a feeling there are no words to express, but that seems as it were insensibility itself turning into pain; an' I ken, too, my lassie, that it is nursed by the very means ye tak to flee from it. Ye maun learn to think mair o' the living and less o' the dead. Little, little does it matter, how a puir worn-out creature like me passes the few broken days o' life that remains to her; but ye are young, my Helen, an' the world is a' before you; an' ye maun just try an' live for it."

"To-morrow," rejoined Helen, "is Earnest's birth-day. Is it no strange that, when our minds make pictures o' the dead, it is always as they looked best, an' kindest, an' maist life-like. I have been seeing Earnest all night long, as when I saw him on his *last* birth day; an' oh, the sharpness o' the pang, when, every now an' then, the back o' the picture is turned to me, an' I see him as he is—dust!"

The widow grasped her young friend by the hand. "Helen," she said, "you will get better when I am taken from you; but, so long as we continue to meet, our thoughts will aye be running the one way. I had a strange dream last night, an' must tell it you. You see yon rock to the east, in the middle o' the little bay, that now rises through the back draught o' the sea, like the hull o' a ship, an' is now buried in a mountain o' foam. I dreamed I was sitting on that rock, in what seemed a bonny summer's morning; the sun was glancin on the water; an' I could see the white sand far down at the bottom, wi' the reflection o' the little waves running o'er it in long curls o' gowd. But there was no way o' leaving the rock, for the deep waters were round an' round me; an' I saw the tide cover-

ing one wee bittie after another, till at last the whole was covered. An' yet I had but little fear; for I remembered that baith Earnest an' William were in the sea afore me; an' I had the feeling that I could hae rest nowhere but wi' them. The water at last closed o'er me, an' I sank frae aff the rock to the sand at the bottom. But death seemed to hae no power given him to hurt me; an' I walked as light as ever I hae done on a gowany brae, through the green depths o' the sea. I saw the silvery glitter o' the trout an' the salmon, shining to the sun, far far aboon me, like white pigeons in the lift; an' around me there were crimson starfish, an' sea-flowers, an' long trailing plants that waved in the tide like streamers; an' at length I came to a steep rock wi' a little cave like a tomb in it. 'Here,' I said, 'is the end o' my journey—William is here, an' Earnest.' An', as I looked into the cave, I saw there were bones in it, an' I prepared to take my place beside them. But, as I stooped to enter, some one called me, an', on looking up, there was William. 'Lillias,' he said, 'it is not night yet, nor is that your bed; you are to sleep, not with me, but with Earnest—haste you home, for he is waiting you.' 'Oh, take me to him!' I said; an' then all at once I found myself on the shore, dizzied an' blinded wi' the bright sunshine; for, at the cave, there was a darkness like that o' a simmer's gloamin; an', when I looked up for William, it was Earnest that stood before me, life-like an' handsome as ever; an' you were beside him.'

The day had been gloomy and lowering, and, though there was little wind, a tremendous sea, that, as the evening advanced, rose higher and higher against the neighbouring precipice, had been rolling ashore since morning. The wind now began to blow in long hollow gusts among the cliffs, and the rain to patter against the widow's casement.

"It will be a storm from the sea," she said; "the scarts an' gulls hae been flying landward sin' daybreak, an' I hae never seen the ground swell come home heavier against the rocks. Wae's me for the puir sailors!"

"In the lang stormy nights," said Helen, "I canna sleep for thinking o' them, though I have no one to bind me to them now. Only look how the sea rages among the rocks, as if it were a thing o' life an' passion!—that last wave rose to the crane's nest. An', look, yonder is a boat rounding the rock wi' only one man in it. It dances on the surf as if it were a cork, an' the wee bittie o' sail, sae black an' weet, seems scarcely bigger than a napkin. Is it no bearing in for the boat haven below?"

"My poor old eyes," replied the widow, "are growing dim, an' surely no wonder; but yet I think I should ken that boatman. Is it no Eachen Macinla o' Tarbet?"

"Hard-hearted, cruel old man," exclaimed the maiden, "what can be taking him here? Look how his skiff shoots in like an arrow on the long roll o' the surf!—an' now she is high on the beach. How unfeeling it was o' him to rob you o' your little property in the very first o' your grief! But, see, he is so worn out that he can hardly walk over the rough stones. Ah, me, he is down! wretched old man, I must run to his assistance—but no, he has risen again. See he is coming straight to the house; an' now he is at the door." In a moment after, Eachen entered the cottage.

"I am perishing, Lillias," he said, "with cold an' hunger, an' can gang na farther; surely ye'll no shut your door on me in a night like this."

The poor widow had been taught in a far different school. She relinquished to the worn-out fisherman her seat by the fire, now hurriedly heaped with fresh fuel, and hastened to set before him the simple viands which her cottage afforded.

As the night darkened, the storm increased. The wind roared among the rocks like the rattling of a thousand carriages over a paved street; and there were times when,

after a sudden pause, the blast struck the cottage, as if it were a huge missile flung against it, and pressed on its roof and walls till the very floor rocked, and the rafters strained and shivered like the beams of a stranded vessel. There was a ceaseless patter of mingled rain and snow—now lower, now louder; and the fearful thunderings of the waves, as they raged among the pointed crags, was mingled with the hoarse roll of the storm along the beach. The old man sat beside the fire, fronting the widow and her companion, with his head reclined nearly as low as his knee, and his hands covering his face. There was no attempt at conversation. He seemed to shudder every time the blast yelled along the roof; and, as a fiercer gust burst open the door, there was a half-muttered ejaculation.

"Heaven itsel hae mercy on them! for what can man do in a night like this?"

"It is black as pitch," exclaimed Helen, who had risen to draw the bolt; "an' the drift flies sae thick that it feels to the hand like a solid snaw wreath. An', oh, how it lightens!"

"Heaven itsel hae mercy on them!" again ejaculated the old man. "My two boys," said he, addressing the widow, "are at the far Frith; an' how can an' open boat live in a night like this?"

There seemed something magical in the communication—something that awakened ail the sympathies of the poor bereaved woman; and she felt she could forgive him every unkindness.

"Wae's me!" she exclaimed, "it was in such a night as this, an' scarcely sae wild, that my Earnest perished."

The old man groaned and wrung his hands.

In one of the pauses of the hurricane, there was a gun heard from the sea, and shortly after a second. "Some puir vessel in distress," said the widow; "but, alas! where can succour come frae in sae terrible a night? There is help only in Ane. Wae's me! would we no better light up a blaze on the floor, an', dearest Helen, draw off the cover frae the window. My puir Earnest has told me that my light has often shewed him his bearing frae the deadly bed o' Dunskaith. That last gun"—for a third was now heard booming over the mingled roar of the sea and the wind—"that last gun came frae the very rock edge. Wae's me, wae's me! maun they perish, an' sae near!" Helen hastily lighted a bundle of more fir, that threw up its red, sputtering blaze half-way to the roof, and, dropping the covering, continued to wave it opposite the window. Guns were still heard at measured intervals, but apparently from a safer offing; and the last, as it sounded faintly against the wind, came evidently from the interior of the bay.

"She has escaped," said the old man; "it's a feeble hand that canna do good when the heart is willing—but what has mine been doing a' life long?" He looked at the widow and shuddered.

Towards morning, the wind fell and the moon, in her last quarter, rose red and glaring out of the Frith, lighting the melancholy roll of the waves, that still rose like mountains and the broad white belt of surf that skirted the shores. The old fisherman left the cottage, and sauntered along the beach. It was heaped with huge wreaths of kelp and tangle uprooted by the storm, and in the hollow of the rocky bay lay the scattered fragments of a boat. Eachen stooped to pick up a piece of the wreck, in the fearful expectation of finding some known mark by which to recognise it, when the light fell full on the swollen face of a corpse that seemed staring at him from out a wreath of weed. It was that of his eldest son. The body of the younger, fearfully gashed and mangled by the rocks, lay a few yards farther to the east.

The morning was as pleasant as the night had been boisterous; and, except that the distant hills were covered with snow and that a heavy swell still continued to roll in

from the sea, there remained scarce any trace of the recent tempest. Every hollow of the neighbouring hill had its little runnel, formed by the rains of the previous night, that now splashed and glistened to the sun. The bushes round the cottage were well nigh divested of their leaves; but their red berries—hips and haws, and the juicy fruit of the honeysuckle—gleamed cheerfully to the light; and a warm steam of vapour, like that of a May morning, rose from the roof and the little mossy platform in front. But the scene seemed to have something more than merely its beauty to recommend it to a young man, drawn apparently to the spot, with many others, by the fate of the two unfortunate fishermen; and who now stood gazing on the rocks, and the hills, and the cottage, as a lover on the features of his mistress. The bodies had been carried to an old store-house which may still be seen a short mile to the west; and the crowds that, during the early part of the morning, had been perambulating the beach, gazing at the wreck, and discussing the various probabilities of the accident, had gradually dispersed. But this solitary individual, whom no one knew, remained behind. He was a tall and swarthy, though very handsome man, of about five-and-twenty, with a slight scar on his left cheek; his dress, which was plain and neat, was distinguished from that of the common seaman, by three narrow stripes of gold lace on the upper part of one of the sleeves. He had twice stepped towards the cottage door, and twice drawn back, as if influenced by some unaccountable feeling—timidity, perhaps, or bashfulness; and yet the bearing of the man gave little indication of either. But, at length, as if he had gathered heart, he raised the latch and went in.

The widow, who had had many visitors that morning, seemed to be scarcely aware of his entrance; she was sitting on a low seat beside the fire, her face covered with her hands, while the tremulous rocking motion of her body shewed that she was still brooding over the distresses of the previous night. Her companion, who had thrown herself across the bed, was fast asleep. The stranger seated himself beside the fire, which seemed dying amid its ashes, and, turning sedulously from the light of the window, laid his hand gently on the widow's shoulder. She started and looked up.

"I have strange news for you," he said. "You have long mourned for your husband and your son; but, though the old man has been dead for years, your son Earnest is still alive, and is now in the harbour of Cromarty. He is lieutenant of the vessel whose guns you must have heard during the night."

The poor woman seemed to have lost all power of reply.

"I am a friend of Earnest's," continued the stranger, "and have come to prepare you for meeting with him. It is now five years since his father and he were blown off to sea by a strong gale from the land. They drove before it for four days, when they were picked up by an armed vessel then cruising in the North Sea, and which soon after sailed for the coast of Spanish America. The poor old man sank under the fatigues he had undergone; though Earnest, better able from his youth to endure hardship, was little affected by them. He accompanied us on our Spanish expedition—indeed, he had no choice, for we touched at no British port after meeting with him; and, through good fortune, and what his companions call merit, he has risen to be the second man aboard; and has now brought home with him gold enough, from the Spaniards, to make his old mother comfortable. He saw your light yestern evening, and steered by it to the roadstead, blessing you all the way. Tell me, for he anxiously wished me to inquire of you, whether Helen Henry is yet unmarried."

"It is Earnest—it is Earnest himself!" exclaimed the maiden, as she started from the widow's bed. In a moment after, she was locked in his arms. But why dwell on a scene which I feel myself unfitted to describe?

It was ill before evening with old Eachen Macinla. The fatigues of the previous day, the grief and horror of the following night, had prostrated his energies, bodily and mental; and he now lay tossing, in a waste apartment of the storehouse, in the delirium of a fever. The bodies of his two sons occupied the floor below. He muttered, unceasingly, in his ravings, of William and Earnest Beth. They were standing beside him, he said, and every time he attempted to pray for his poor boys and himself, the stern old man laid his cold swollen hand on his lips.

"Why trouble me?" he exclaimed. "Why stare with your white dead eyes on me? Away, old man! the little black shells are sticking in your gray hairs; away to your place! Was it I who raised the wind on the sea?—was it I?—was it I? Uh, u!—no—no, you were asleep—you were fast asleep—and could not see me cut the *swing*; and, besides, it was only a piece of rope. Keep away—touch me not; I am a free man, and will plead for my life. Please your Honour, I did not murder these two men; I only cut the rope that fastened their boat to the land. Ha! ha! ha! he has ordered them away, and they have both left me unskathed." At this moment, Earnest Beth entered the apartment, and approached the bed. The miserable old man raised himself on his elbow, and, regarding him with a horrid stare, shrieked out—"Here is Earnest Beth come for me a second time!" and, sinking back on the pillow, instantly expired.

THE HAY WAIN.

IN the time of Robert Bruce, there lived, in the neighbourhood of Linlithgow, a farmer of the name of Binnoch. We have said in the time of Robert Bruce; but the precise period was when that great man and renowned warrior with other Scottish patriots, was struggling, for the independence of his country, with the grasping ambition of Edward I., and ere he had succeeded in freeing Scotland from the thralldom of England.

At the period alluded to, most of the strongholds in Scotland were in possession of the English King, and were occupied by his soldiery; and amongst those thus situated was the castle of Linlithgow—a most important fortress, from its strength and central situation. This garrison William Binnoch supplied with hay, to the great disturbance—though a voluntary act on his part—of his equanimity; for William sorely grudged being the means of furnishing the common enemy with anything which could contribute to the comfort of their situation. But they gave a good price, paid ready money, and bought largely; and William, to a certain extent, reconciled his conscience to the part he was acting by a piece of irrefragable reasoning.

"If I dinna gie them't," he would say, "somebody else will; for the provender, it's clear, they maun hae; sae I may as weel tak their siller as anither." Nay, William went a step farther than this, and almost persuaded himself that it was an act of patriotism thus to make a living off the enemy. Still it is certain that the honest farmer, although provided with these choice arguments for his acting the part of purveyor to the English garrison, was not himself, by any means, reconciled to the office. This, at any rate, is certain—that he mortally abhorred his customers; and equally true it is, that, if his wishes had been of any avail, every horse they had would have choked on the first mouthful of his own hay. Indeed, so inveterate was Binnoch's hatred of those whom he was supplying, that he never returned from the castle, after delivering a load, without wishing that every evil to which their situation rendered them liable—and, perhaps, occasionally some others—might, sooner or later, befall them. Binnoch's abhorrence of his customers, we need hardly say, was a national feeling. He saw in them the invaders and oppressors of his country: and he longed

to revenge the insults and injuries she had sustained at their hands. But he had yet other grounds of quarrel with them—at least with that special portion of them with which he came into personal contact in the way of traffic. The soldiers of the garrison were in the habit of amusing themselves at his expense, every time he entered the fortress, by gibing and sneering at him; and, although he generally gave fully as good as he got on these occasions, their sarcasms and taunts did not tend to allay the feelings of detestation which he entertained for them, and which may be said to have been a kind of ingraftment on the stock of his national resentment. But Binnoch, however eager he might be to revenge at once his own and his country's wrongs, had it not in his power. He was but one, while his enemies were many. He was, therefore, obliged to keep a *calm sough*, and to put up with many things to which he would scarcely have submitted in circumstances where his individual prowess would have been of any avail—for he was a man of great courage and personal strength. The hopelessness of his position, however, so far as regarded the idea of obtaining revenge, did not prevent him thinking much of how it was to be obtained. In truth, for a long while, he thought of little else; but, for a long while, also, he thought in vain. Nothing eligible would present itself, although he had turned the matter over in his mind a thousand times. At length, however, on one happy morning, his toils of thought on this engrossing subject were rewarded with a bright and promising idea. But, before divulging it to the reader, we must detail all the circumstances connected with it; and, if we give a few that are not, perhaps, strictly so, we shall only be following the example of many of our most popular story-tellers.

On the eventful morning in question, William Binnoch went, as usual, to the garrison with a load of hay, and, as usual, William was received by the soldiers who were idling about in the court-yard inside, with shouts of laughter, and a running fire of merry jests.

"Here comes old Blue-bonnet," roared out one.

"Ay, old Cheat-the-governor," exclaimed another.

"I may cheat the governor," replied William, deliberately, to this last assailant; "but I'm sair mistaen, freen, if ye cheat the wuddy."

"What dost mean by that, Scotchy?" said the fellow, advancing fiercely towards Binnoch. "What's a wuddy?"

"A bit rape wi' a bit loopy at the end o't," said Binnoch, coolly. "Do ye ken the article? If ye dinna, ye'll be sure better acquainted, I'm thinkin'."

"Ha! art there, old Short-weight!" shouted out a new comer, interrupting this colloquy, and thrusting himself between the parties.

"Short-wecht!" repeated William, eyeing his new assailant contemptuously. "By St Bride! if I let this fist down upon ye, ye'll ken whether I gie short wecht or no. Deil o' you 'ill complain o' short wecht, I'm thinkin, if I do. Short wecht, indeed!" he reiterated: "'od, lad, whan ye're hingin on a tree, ye'll be wishin ye were short wecht, too, I'm jalousin." And William laughed heartily at his own wit, which, indeed—though, after all, none of the brightest—was certainly superior to any that had yet been levelled at him by his assailants.

"I say, Scotchy," shouted out a third, "do you know where one has the least chance of getting anything to eat?"

"Whar an Englishman's been before ye, to be sure," replied William—a hit so palpable that even the soldiers themselves, who were standing around, joined in the laugh which it occasioned at the expense of the unlucky querist, who meant to have answered his own question by naming Scotland.

The triumphant success of Binnoch in this war of words repressed any further attempts at annoyance of a similar kind from the soldiery, and he was allowed to pass on with his cart, and to unload it without further interruption.

Having done this, he left the castle; and it was while jogging leisurely homewards on this morning, in advance of his horse, which he was leading by the halter carelessly held in his hand behind his back, himself the while looking intently on the ground, and musing deeply on his favourite topic—the circumvention of the garrison—as he went along:—we say, it was in these circumstances, that the bright idea struck him to which we have elsewhere alluded.

When this happy event occurred, Binnoch suddenly stopped short, thought again for a moment, as if to make sure there was no flaw in his project, then slapped his hand forcibly on his thigh, in the full conviction that his idea was a complete and practicable one.

"It'll do—it'll do!" he exclaimed, exultingly. "By St Bride, it'll do, if it's only weel managed!" And again he slapped his thigh, and smiled, in the joy of his heart, at the prospect of the glorious achievement he had no doubt he would perform. "I hae't now—I hae't now—I hae't at last," he went on in the fulness of his happiness. "'Od, I'll gie them a cart o' provender they'll no chew in a hurry—an' that'll stick in their teeth, I'm thinkin, and kittle the roofs o' their mouths." And, highly pleased with himself, William now pushed vigorously forward, till he reached his own house, when he unyoked his cart, went in with a light heart and cheerful countenance to his wife, and told her that he must set out instantly on a short journey.

"A journey! Whar to, William?" exclaimed his wife, in surprise at this sudden intimation. "What journey are ye gaun upon, William?"

"I'll tell ye that whan I come back, guidwife," replied William; "but the deil a word before; for you women folk hae lang tongues, and yours might spoil some sport 'enow. It might not either; but I winna trust it, sae let me hae a mouthfu' o' meat as fast's ye like, and let me be aff. I'll be hame again ere nichtfa'."

Obedient to her lord's commands, William's wife hastily placed some food before him, and, obedient also in a point where obedience was infinitely more difficult, she put no more questions regarding his proposed journey.

On finishing his meal, William started to his feet, threw his plaid around his shoulders, put on his bonnet, grasped his staff, and took the road; and, had he been dogged, it would have been soon discovered that he was proceeding in the direction of a certain castle situated in the very heart of the Torwood, an extensive forest (at least it was so at that time) between Falkirk and Stirling.

In this castle, Robert Bruce was at this moment residing. He had chosen it as a place of temporary abode, or rather concealment—for his fortunes were at this period at a very low ebb—on account of its strength, its sequestered situation, and its inaccessibility to a beleaguering force, being unapproachable, from the thickness of the wood, by large bodies of men moving in mass.

Binnoch knew the easiest approaches to the castle, for he had been familiar with the place in his youth; and one of those he chose on this occasion. He had entered the wood, and was threading his way towards the building—from which, however, he was yet fully a quarter of a mile distant—when an armed man suddenly sprang out of a thicket where he had been concealed, and, presenting the point of a sword to his breast, to prevent his farther advance, demanded who he was, whither he was going, and what was his errand. The first and second questions Binnoch answered. To the third, he replied that he had a private matter of importance to communicate to the King, and desired to see him personally. The sentinel (for such was the person who had interrupted Binnoch's progress; and the wood was filled with them in all directions, for the distance of a full mile from the castle, to give notice of the slightest appearance of anything of a hostile character approaching) having thought for a moment, at the same time

searching Binnoch's person, to see that he was unarmed, said—

"We fear treachery in these times, friend; but, as you are without arms, and have no marks of the traitor about you, you may have an interview with the King, as you say you have something of importance to communicate; but you must submit to be blindfolded. You cannot be permitted to advance another step otherwise."

"Nae objection to that, in the world, fren," said William; "but it's useless; for I ken every fit o' the way as weel as ye do yersel, and could fin' oot the castle blinlins as weel as wi' my een open. But ye may tie up my een for a' that, an' ye like."

This operation being performed, Binnoch was conducted, with many a turning and winding, purposely made to deceive him, to the castle of Torwood; and, when the bandage was taken from his eyes, he found himself in the presence of Robert Bruce.

Binnoch had never seen the patriot King before, and he was now, therefore, greatly struck with his singularly noble and majestic appearance. Nor was he less struck by his immense size and the amazing strength which his stately person indicated.

The first feeling of the honest farmer, on finding himself in this appalling presence, was that of awe; but this was soon dispelled by the mild tones, and gentle and affable manner, of the monarch, who, perceiving Binnoch's uneasiness, hastened to relieve it.

"Well, honest friend," he said, with a smile meant, and not in vain, to inspire confidence, as he threw himself back in the huge oaken chair in which he sat, his visiter standing before him, "I understand you have something of consequence to communicate to me. Pray, thee, my good fellow, what is it?"

Binnoch looked towards the person who had conducted him to the castle, and who still remained in the apartment, as if expressive of doubt whether he would be safe in speaking in his presence. Bruce understood him, and said, again smiling graciously—

"Oh, that is a trusty friend, my good sir, and may hear anything that concerns me, or the welfare of our country; but, if you wish it, he shall retire." And, without waiting for an answer, he beckoned him to leave the chamber, which he instantly did. When he was gone—"Now, my good friend," said the King, "there is none here but you and I; so proceed, if you please."

"Aweel, sir," said Binnoch, whom Bruce's kindly and condescending manner had relieved of all feeling of restraint, "the business I cam upon is just this, sir. I supply the garrison, ye see, sir, o' Lithgow, wi' hay; now, I've observed that they're a wheen idle, careless fellows, mair taen up wi' their play than their duty."

Bruce's eye here kindled with sudden fire, and his whole countenance became animated with an expression of fierce eagerness that strongly contrasted with its former placidity. He was now all attention to the communication of his humble visiter.

Binnoch went on. "Now, sir, I think I could tak the castle."

"What! the Castle of Linlithgow, friend!" exclaimed Bruce, with a slight smile of mingled surprise and incredulity. "You take the Castle of Linlithgow! Pray, my good fellow, how would you propose to do that?"

"Why, sir, by a very simple process," replied Binnoch, undauntedly. "I wad put a dizen or fifteen stout, weel armed, resolute fellows, in my cart, cover them owre wi' hay, and introduce them into the garrison as a load o' provender. If they were ance in, an' the chiefs themsels were o' the richt stuff, I'll wad my head to a pease-bannock, that the castle's ours in fifteen minutes."

"And would you undertake to do this. my good friend?"

said Bruce, gravely, struck with the idea, and impressed with its practicability.

"Readily, an' wi' richt guid will, sir," replied Binnoch, "provided ye fin' me the men; but they maun be the very wale o' yer flock; it's no a job for faint hearts or nerveless arms."

"The men ye shall have, my brave fellow; and the very best I have," replied Bruce, now so much excited by the projected enterprise that he rose from his seat and began to pace the apartment with great energy. "The men ye shall have," he repeated, as he walked up and down the chamber, gazing on the floor, and evidently full of the idea that had just been communicated to him. "And," he went on, "a good, nay, a most important service ye will do to your country and to me, my good fellow, if you succeed; and, though you do not, both your country and I will still be your debtors. But 'tis a perilous undertaking, Binnoch," he said, suddenly stopping, and confronting the person he addressed, "and there must necessarily be some hard fighting; besides, if you fail, and are taken, they will certainly hang you. Have you thought of all this, my friend? and have you made up your mind for the worst?"

"I have, sir," replied Binnoch, firmly. "I ken it a', and am prepared to meet the consequences in ony form they like to tak. As to the fechtin, I think we can gie them there at least as guid as we'll get; an', as to the hangin, if it should sae fa' out, I could na die in a better cause. The Scotsman's no deservin o' the name," went on Binnoch, and now rising above himself in his manner, "that's no ready to brave death, in ony shape; for the guid o' his country an' o' Robert Bruce."

Bruce caught the enthusiasm of the speaker; a tear started into his eye, and seizing the hand of the humble patriot—

"My noble fellow," he said, "would to God all Scotsmen were like thee! Beneath that homely plaid of thine, there beats a heart that the bravest knight in Christendom might be proud to own. This shall not be forgotten, Binnoch, lose or win; your future welfare, and that of your family, in so far as your and their worldly interests are concerned, is from this hour in my keeping."

Bruce now proceeded to arrange with Binnoch the details of the projected enterprise, which included the stipulation, that fifteen picked men should be dispatched to him from Torwood Castle on the morning of the day succeeding the next—for Binnoch expressed a wish to have the following one to make further observations; and that these men should leave the castle so as to arrive at his house an hour before daylight.

These particulars settled—"Now, my friend," said Bruce, "have you any small thing about you, that I may give to the leader of the party I shall send you, as a token that you may be assured they are the same? Any trifle will do."

Binnoch searched his pockets, but they contained nothing suitable for such a purpose. Bruce saw his perplexity, and said, laughing—

"Tuts, man, give me a button off your coat. Nothing better." And he handed Binnoch his dagger, to sever the proposed token from the garment to which it was attached.

"Will ye know it again?" said Bruce, looking at the homely article which he now held in his hand.

"That I will, sir," replied Binnoch. "There's no the neebor o't in a' our parish, except on my ain coat here."

"Enough," said Bruce. "Then, the leader of the party will produce this token to you, and you will then admit him to your confidence. But," he added "you may as well have a word, too; you may meet in the dark. What shall it be?" And he thought a moment. "Why, let it be my own

name—let it be Bruce. Let your watchword be Bruce, Binnoch."

This matter also adjusted, Binnoch shortly afterwards set out on his return home, where he arrived safely and in due time.

Next morning, he went, as usual, with a load of hay to the garrison; but, on this occasion, no provocation could induce him to take any part in, or make any reply to the customary badinage of the soldiers. He was better employed. He was taking careful note of every circumstance that promised to be favourable, or otherwise, to the desperate enterprise he contemplated. One answer only he vouchsafed to all the banter that was addressed to him, and that was to the person whose business it was to see the hay which he brought weighed and payed for. On settling for the present load, that person, as he handed him the money, said—

"That's a devil of a price, old Skinflint, to pay for such a cart of hay as that."

"It may be sae," replied Binnoch, coolly, as he turned round his horse's head to leave the castle; "but I wadna wunner if the next wad cost ye a hantle dearer"—a reply under which the reader will see a meaning that was entirely hid from the person to whom it was addressed.

On the following morning, at the hour appointed, William Binnoch was roused by some one knocking at his door. Although pretty sure who the visiter was, yet, as the times were exceedingly loose and troublesome, William, before he undid the bars of the door, took the precaution of inquiring who the person was.

"A friend," was the reply.

"A' very weel; but how am I to ken that?" inquired Binnoch.

"Bruce," said the person without, in a low voice.

"Enough," rejoined Binnoch; and he hastened to undo the door. On his opening it, the person who sought admittance walked in, and, on the former's procuring a light, put into his hands the token which had been agreed upon. Binnoch looked at it an instant, and at once recognising his own button—

"It's a' richt," he said, laughing, and thrusting the button into his pocket. "But whar's your men?" he added, seeing that the person to whom he spoke was followed by no one.

"They're not far off," replied the man. "I can produce them in five minutes. But I thought it best to come forward myself in the first instance, to avoid exciting suspicion, and to see that the way was clear for us."

"It was weel thocht o'," said Binnoch, now scrutinizing the person who stood before him, as if to see whether he was a likely man for the perilous work in hand; and with the result of this scrutiny he was satisfied—as, indeed, well he might, for he had seldom seen a more powerful or more determined looking man. "But," he went on, "ye may bring them as sune as ye like, and the sooner the better. But mind, freen, ye maun conduct them to the barn, out by there, where I'll be waitin mysel to receive ye; no to the house here, for there's no a soul, except oursels, not even my ain wife, kens onything o' the job we're gaun to be about this mornin'."

The man, whose name was Erskine, went off for his comrades; and in a few minutes the whole party were assembled in Binnoch's barn, where the latter, to his great satisfaction, found the stock as good as the sample—that is, he saw not a man amongst the whole inferior in appearance of strength and resolution to him who had first come forward. They were all well armed, too, being provided with steel caps, short swords, for the close work they anticipated, and daggers; but, excepting the piece of defensive armour named, they wore no other panoply, in order that they might be more light and more free to act with the

agility which the peculiar nature of their enterprise was likely to demand.

A conversation now took place, in whispers, amongst the resolute and bold-hearted band; chiefly regarding some details connected with their intended proceedings. These arranged, Binnoch brought his waggon to the door, and the men laid themselves down in it, at full length, disposing themselves in such a way as at once to avoid, as much as possible, incommoding each other, and to be ready to start in an instant. Each man, too, laid him down with his naked sword in his hand, that, when the moment of action came, there might not be the loss of even the time necessary to draw the weapons from their scabbards. The men being thus disposed, Binnoch proceeded to cover them with hay, and this he did so dexterously that, when the structure was completed, it was utterly impossible to tell, merely from looking at it, that it was anything else than what it appeared to be. Everything being now in readiness, Binnoch hid a sword amongst the hay for his own use, and in such a situation that he could instantly seize it when wanted. He also provided himself with a poniard, which he concealed beneath his waistcoat. Thus prepared at all points, the intrepid peasant set forward with his load of daring hearts; and, having arrived at the castle, he and his cart were immediately admitted. They proceeded onwards till they came to the centre of the court-yard, when Binnoch gave the preconcerted signal to his associates, which was conveyed in the words, spoken in a loud voice—"Forward, Greysteil, forward!" as if addressing his horse, which he, at the same time, struck with his whip, to complete the deception.


These words were no sooner uttered than the layer of hay, with which the daring adventurers was covered, was seen to move, and, in the next instant, it was canted bodily over on the flagstones, to the inexpressible amazement of the idlers who were looking on; and, to their still greater surprise, fifteen armed men leapt, with fearful shouts, on the pavement of the court-yard, where, being instantly headed by Binnoch, who had by this time also seized his sword, the work of death began. Every man within their reach at the moment was instantly cut down where they stood. The guard-room was next assailed, and all found there—not one of them, in the suddenness of the surprise, having had presence of mind enough to arm—put to the sword without mercy. Having made this successful beginning, Binnoch and his party rushed from apartment to apartment, putting to death all whom they encountered, until they had so reduced the numbers of the garrison, that they had no longer anything to fear from resistance. They were, in short, now masters of the castle; for the attack had been so sudden, so wholly unexpected, and so cunningly devised, that its unfortunate occupants, though at least six times the number of their assailants, had no time to take any measures for their defence, not even to arm, and thus fell an easy prey to the bold adventurers, who had thus not only bearded but vanquished the lion in his den.

We have only now to add, that Binnoch was rewarded by Bruce, for this important service, with some valuable lands in the parish of Linlithgow; and that his descendants had for their arms a *Hay Wain*, with the motto, *Virtute Doloque*.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



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