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TALES & SKETCHES  
BY  
THE RTTICK SHEPHERD  
VOL. VI







# TALES AND SKETCHES,

BY THE

James Hogg

ETTRICK SHEPHERD;

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## MARY MONTGOMERY.

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ON the 3d of July, 1641, when England was in utter confusion, a party of yeomen were sent toward Scotland with a young lady, sole heiress, of the name of Montgomery, whose father was one of the leading Royalist lords; but being imprisoned and in imminent danger, was obliged to send his infant daughter to her relations in Scotland. The party was led by Captain Seymour, a determined Catholic and hardy warrior; and in passing through the wood of Tarras, on the Border, they were encountered by a band of Mosstroopers, led by one Beatson or Beattie, of Watkerrick. Beatson pretended to be leading his clan to join the Whig army, but in fact to obtain some plunder in the harassed state of the country; and on meeting with Seymour and his party, he accosted him in these words: "Whither away, brother, and on what expedition?"

"And pray who gave you a right to ask that?" said the other.

"Do you see this good spear which I hold in the rest, and this cut-and-thrust blade by my thigh, with all these men behind me, and yet ask me that question?"

"I'll see a higher commission than any of these thou bonneted saucy Scot, before I explain my mission. Give way, and let me and my party pass; we have no quarrel with thee. Let it suffice that our mission is a private

one, and has no connexion with the political troubles of the present day."

"Ye are telling a braid downright lee, sir," said Wat o' Blackesk, "for dinna I ken you to be the maist determined an' abominable Papishur in a' the British dominions. I hae met wi' you, hand to hand, afore this, an' came rather off wi' the waur, but I'll speak wi' you now here in my ain coontry. Watkerrick, this is Captain Seymour, guan away on a Papish errand for his cursed master, whose cruelty has laid our country waste."

"Down with your arms, sir, instantly," said Beatson, "and you shall all have assurance of life and limb until farther instructions from the Commission of Estates."

"I despise and defy you and your commission," said Seymour. "Thou rude churl! Thou Border ruffian! Impede my progress if thou darest. I say open, and let me pass. I have no quarrel with thee; or feel the weight of a weapon that never was turned in battle."

"Let me but at the villain!" cried Wat o' Blackesk, and with that he rode furiously at Captain Seymour with his lance, but before one could have counted six, Seymour had cut off both the head of Wat as well as his lance. The rush of the Beatsons was then instantaneous and terrible. Seymour and his party fought stoutly, for there was no more parley, and several of the Beatsons were the first who fell, among whom was John of Watkerrick, their leader. The fray grew fiercer every minute, but the Beatsons being nearly two to one, prevailed, and every one of the English were cut down, saving one who had fled at the beginning of the action, and was seen scouring off at full speed, with intention, as was supposed, of reaching the castle of Mangerton. The Beatsons supposing him to be the bearer of some great secret or treasure, gave chase with all their might, and Robert of Cassock being the best mounted, at length overtook him and speared him without ceremony in at the back; and behold, when he came to the ground, a lovely female child that was clasped in his bosom fell with him. She was richly dressed, but crying pitifully; and Robert, sec-

ing her all covered with blood, thought she was wounded, and that it would be as good to stab her too at once and put her out of pain, and lifting his lance with as much deliberation as if about to leester a salmon, his ears were assailed by such an unearthly cry from the dying man, that it made him start and withhold his stroke for the moment; and turning to him, he said in a fluttered voice, "What the deel's the matter w'ye, man?"

Though this was rather an annoying question to a man who had been fairly run through the body, yet he showed such anxiety about the infant that Robert was struck with a sort of natural awe and turned and listened to him. He pointed to the babe, held up his hands, and spoke in the most fervent tones, but he was a foreign priest, and Robert could not understand a word that he said. Rather astonished, however, that a man should be speaking what he could not comprehend, which had never happened to him in Eskdale before, he drew close to the wounded man, held down his head, and asked very loud, "Eh? What are ye aye bletherin an' sayin, man? Wha is the creature? Wha is she ava?"

The man spoke on in the same fervent tones, but not one word could Robert comprehend, till at length losing patience with him, and seeing a crucifix upon his breast, an object of the utmost detestation then in the south of Scotland, he stabbed him again through the body, bidding him "either speak sense that fo'ks could understand or haud his tongue for ever." The poor forlorn priest, writhed and spurned, uttered his *Ave-Marias*, and ever and anon kissed the rood. Robert was rather affected, and stood for some time gaping and staring over him, saying at last to himself, "Od I wonder what the body can be saying? But O! I'm sure the kissing o' that bit black stick can do little for his soul's salvation. It is surely a maist ridiculous thing to be a Papist. But come, come, there's nae fun in this. It is best to pit sic a gomerel out o' pain;" and so saying he drew his sword, as sharp as a razor, and at one stroke severed the priest's head from his body.

In the meantime Jock of Thickside had come up and lifted the child, and seeing a golden crucifix and chain hanging around her neck, and gold and jewels about her beyond calculation, which had been placed there as their only place of safeguard in those marauding and troublous times, it probably having been weened that no ruffian hand would harm a helpless and lovely infant. Well, Jock Beatson perceiving these before his kinsman had done confessing and murdering the priest, claimed the baby as his own, he having been the first lifter of her from the battle field. At the first, Robert of Cassock seemed very willing to consent to this arrangement, thinking to himself that he had plenty of these brats up and down the country already, and soon expected some more. But his eye had caught something about the babe, it was never known what it was, and all at once he refused to yield his right to her, saying that he had overtaken and slain her guardian with his own hand, which he (Jock Beatson) never could have done on his bauchle of a beast, and that therefore he should have his heart's blood before he had that child. This was a hard alternative, especially as this Robert was now the chief of the Beatsons after the fall of Watkerrick, and Jock of Thickside was rather hard put to it knowing something of the riches of which he was possessed.

Now it must be remarked, that the rest of the Beatsons who were pursuing the flying priest, perceiving that he was overtaken and slain, hasted back to the combat field to divide the horses and the spoil, and look after their wounded friends, so that at this time there were none nigh or in view but the two rough kinsmen and the baby. "I lifted her first, cousin; and you know by all the rules of our clan, that gives me a right to her and all about her; go and strip the priest, he is your own fair prey,"

"I brought the priest and her both to the ground at the same blow, and I claim both, therefore give up what is my right before I am obliged to send you after the priest to bear him company."

"Speak'st thou that way to me, cousin? If thou art



disposed to use such language use it to thy equals, for thou knowest that this arm could master ten such as thine. Why, I'll hold the child in the one hand and fight thee with the other, and if thou win her from me thou shalt have her."

Robert of Cassock could bear no more; but heaving his long bloody sword with which he had just beheaded the priest, he attacked his cousin, who held his drawn sword in one hand and the screaming infant below the other arm. At the very first turn Robert wounded both Jock and the child. "Beshrew thy heart, man, thou hast killed the bairn!" said Thickside, and flung the poor thing behind him as if it had been a bundle of clouts, and the combat went on with the most deadly feud for the nearer the friends the more deadly the animosity when such occurs. Sharp and severe wounds were given, on both sides, and their morions and hawberks were hacked and hewed, for the two kinsmen were very equal in prowess. Robert was the strongest man, but Jock of Thickside was accounted the best of the clan at handling his weapon, and at length, when both were much exhausted, he by a dexterous back stroke turned upward, wounded his cousin below the sword arm, and he fell, cursing his opponent for a wretch and a villain.

When John Beatson saw what he had done in the heat of passion, he was cut to the heart, stood up like a statue, and the tears poured from his manly eyes mixing with his blood. O, Rob Beattie, Rob Beattie! What have I done!" cried he, "and what hast thou done to provoke this deadly enmity between two who have always agreed and loved like brothers! Now Rob to save thy life would I give all the ewes and kye on Thickside and the land that feeds them into the bargain. Can I do nothing for you in binding up your wounds."

"No, no; you can do nothing for me," said the other, "for I am cut through the midriff, and life is ebbing fast. Take thy prize, but take her and her wealth with my curse, and know she will prove a curse unto thee, and thy ruin shall arise from her, for thy claim on me was unjust."

John, nevertheless, did all that he could to bind up and stem his cousin's wounds, and even brought him a drink in his helmet; he drank eagerly of it, then died in his cousin's hands. Poor little Mary Montgomery, horror-struck by her wound, and the sight of two bloody men hacking and hewing at one another, and her kind conductor lying without the head, had rolled herself from her swaddling clothes, and was waddling across the moor, crying incessantly, and falling every minute. John Beatson followed, and seizing her by the frock he brought her back in his hands swinging like a thing of no value. "Haud the yaup o' thee, thou little imp!" said Jock. "Little does thou ken the evil thou hast bred this day! Sorrow that thou had been in thy mother's cradle an' ane o' thy braw velvet clouts about the. Haud the tongue o' thee, I say, for I want but a hair to mak a tether o' that sal lay thee beside the tither twa. Plague on thee! Haud thy yaup!" And with that he shook her until the dear young ladie cried herself weak,

Jock of Thickside (for that was the familiar name he was known by) was so o'erspent by wounds, vexation, and the loss of blood, that he never so much as thought of ransacking the pockets of the priest, where he would have found some documents that would have redounded to his profit. But if Jock had found them he could not have read them, and would probably have burnt them or thrown them away. However, weary and heart-broken as he was for the death of his cousin and next neighbour, he took the babe carelessly on before him on the horse, regardless of her cries and whining, and bore her straight to Christy his wife at their remote habitation, without going any more nigh the field of battle to share the spoil.

"O, Kitty Jardine! Kitty Jardine! I am a ruined man," said he, but you are a made woman, for here's a bit creature I hae brought you wi' as muckle riches hanging about her shoulders as wad buy an earldom. But O, Chirsty, what think you I hae done? Have nae I gaue an' killed Rob o' Cassock, our cousin, for the possession o' that bairn."

“Hush!” said Christy, laying her finger on her lips. “Did ony body see you kill your cousin?”

“No, no ane but that creature itsel, for there was nae another soul in sight but a Papish priest, an’ he couldna see very weel for he wantit the head. But what gars ye speir that? I killed him fairly in a set battle, an’ I’ll never deny it.”

“That was bravely done. But was your quarrel with him just?”

“I’m no just sae sure about that.”

“Then deny it. Swear it was not you, else you are a dead man. You will be hanged in eight days, an’ every ane o’ the clan will cut a collop off you if you have fastened an unjust quarrel on Rob Beattie an’ murdered him.”

“O Kitty, Kitty! ye gar a’ my flesh creep! I wadna care sae muckle for hanging, but to be cuttit i’ collops is terrible. But what do you think? He cursed me wi’ his dying breath, an’ prophesied that that bairn should prove my ruin. I dinna like to think o’ this at a’, Christy; an’ I hae been thinkin that it might no be the warst way to pit the bit brat out o’ the gate.”

“God forbid that ever sic a sin should lie at our door. Poor dear little creature! She is thrown on our care by some strange chance, but she has brought plenty wi’ her to pay for her boord wages, an’ sooner would I part wi’ it a’ an’ a’ that I hae in the warld beside, than see a hair o’ her head wranged; and with that Christy Jardine hugged the child to her bosom and kissed and caressed her; and the babe, horrified as she had been by scenes of blood, and feeling herself once more under the care of one of her own kind sex, clung to Christy’s neck, and again and again held out her little lovely mouth to give her protectress another kiss. Jock Beatson, the rough Mosstrooper, was so much affected by the scene that he blowed his nose three times between his fore finger and thumb, and as often brought his mailed sleeve across his eyes. “God bless you, - Kitty!” said he.

The Beatsons stripped the slain, collected the fues

English horses, a grand prize for them at that period, buried their friends and foes together in one pit, which is still well known, about half-way between Yarrow and Liddell, and bore home their wounded with care to their several families. It had been a dear-bought prize to them, for they had lost their leader and his second in command, and nearly as many brave men as had fallen of the English. They had seen Watkerrick fall, but what had become of Robert of Cassock, they could not comprehend. Several of the pursuers asserted that they had seen him overtake and bring down the flying warrior; but they knew no farther, and in the hurry and confusion none even seemed to remember that John of Thickside had ridden on to the final catastrophe. So the next morning a party were sent out to search for Robert, dead or living; and as they well knew the place where he had been last seen, they went straight to it, and found both him and the headless priest lying stripped naked side by side. This circumstance was to them perfectly unaccountable.

Now it so happened, that Lord Nithsdale, who was a stern Catholic, had raised five hundred men to go to the assistance of King Charles, and he being the lord superior of the Beatsons, who were Protestants and hated him, sent up a strong force by the way of Eskdale, under Peter Maxwell of Wauchope, to command their services. Peter found them all gone on a different service, (as Lord Maxwell rather had suspected,) and followed straight on their route, to force them to take the side of their liege lord. Peter chanced to take the other side of the ridge, and fell in with the headless priest and Robert of Cassock lying dead together. On stripping the former, Peter found a letter to Sir James Montgomery, stating that Lord Montgomery had sent his only child to Sir James, as the only place of refuge he knew of, with all the ready money he had, and all her late mother's jewels; that the child's name was Mary, and she was the sole heiress to three earldoms. The letter also recommended Captain Seymour and Father Phillippe to Sir James's confidence.

Peter Maxwell was astonished, for there without doubt was Father Phillippe lying without his head, side by side with one of the wild moorland clan denominated "the bloody Beatsons." But he perceived that a valuable life and a valuable prize was in jeopardy, and not knowing what to do, he, like an honest man, went straight to his chief, put the letter into his hands, and stating how he came by it, asked his counsel how to proceed.

But by this time word had arrived at Lord Maxwell's camp, that a party of English troopers, supposed to be Catholics on some private mission from King Charles into Scotland, had been met by a subordinate clan of his and totally annihilated. Lord Maxwell was in dreadful wrath, and forthwith took an oath to extinguish that marauding sept, and resolved at all events to have the child. So turning with one hundred of his choicest troopers, he rode without drawing bridle straight to Watkerrick, to ask an explanation from the leader of that wild and desperate clan.

But it so happened, that when he arrived there, the whole of Eskdale, consisting chiefly of Beatsons, Bells, and Sandisons, were assembled together, burying their chief in his own chapel. A few lifted their bonnets to Maxwell, but suspecting his intents to be evil and dangerous, they took very little notice of him till he began to speak in an authoritative manner, demanding a word of their chief, but they only shook their heads and pointed at the bier. He then ordered his troopers to take every Beatson present into custody, in order to be tried for a breach of the king's peace. But as soon as his troopers began to lay hands on them, a thousand rapiers and daggers were drawn from under the vestments of mourning, and a desperate battle ensued for the space of ten minutes, when Lord Maxwell's troop was broken and every one fled at full speed the best way he could. As I said, Lord Maxwell had been the lord superior of Eskdale for ages, but he being a Catholic and the inhabitants of that wild region a sort of nominal Protestants, without much genuine religion among them, as they are to the present day, so

they hated him, and in short wanted to be rid of him and possess their lands without feu-duty or acknowledgement to any lord superior. Such men wanted but a pretext for beginning the strife, and they did it with all their energy. Maxwell's men were scattered like the chaff before the wind, and he himself so hemmed in and belaid that he could not get homeward, but was obliged to fly to the east with only three or four followers. A party of his rebellious vassals pursued with all their energy, and before he gained Craik-Cross his followers were all cut down one by one, but he himself being exceedingly well mounted, still kept far a-head. His horse was greatly superior to any of the Eskdale horses, but had been exhausted by his forenoon's ride from the tower of Sark to Watkerrick, so that before he reached the castle of Branksholm, some of the Bells and Beatsons were close upon him. When he came within view of the castle he waved his chapeau and shouted aloud, and the warder perceiving a nobleman pursued by commoners, raised the portcullis and let him in; but there was one George Bell so close upon him, with his heaved sword, that the portcullis in falling cut off his horse's head, and he himself knocked out his brains against the iron bars.

That was a costly raid for the Beatsons, for Lord Maxwell that very night sold the superiority of Eskdale to the Laird of Buccleuch for a mere trifle, and that relentless chief raising his clan, cut off the Beatsons every one who possessed land to a man, except the young laird of Watkerrick, the son of the chief, whom he saved, and whose heirs inherit the estate to this day in a lineal descent. The original surname of the clan was Beatson, but from the familiar pronunciation it is now changed into Beattie.

In the mean time, as soon as Lord Maxwell reached his troops, he despatched a number of private spies in search of the young heiress, and it was not long until they got a clue to her, for a countryman named David Little informed them that " he had seen Jock o' Thickside cross at the Garwald water foot, on the evening of

the 3d of July;—he was a' covered wi' blood, an' had a bit bloody bairn wavin' on afore him."

One of the men then proceeded straight to Thickside by himself, and soon discovered that the missing child was indeed there, for John had only two sons nearly grown to men's estate. But all that the man could do, was to return and inform his lord, he having no further instructions than merely to discover where the child was. Some dispute that took place between Sir Richard Graham and Lord Maxwell, about the marching of the troops of the latter on such an expedition, crossed Maxwell so much that he was arrested on his journey, and shut up in Carlisle Castle as a rebel to the State, his troops marching back to Nithsdale and Galloway.

While these things were going on, there were some insinuations spread against John of Thickside, and it was rumoured that he had murdered his kinsman and next neighbour, Rob of Cassock. He had got a strange child nobody knew how; he was covered with wounds, and it was perfectly well known that he had not been at the division of the spoil, nor the burying of the slain; and it was said there were "some very braw velvet clouts covered wi' goud" that had been seen by some of the vassals about the house; in short, strong suspicions were entertained against Thickside, and the Beatsons, though a lawless sept as regarded others, had the most upright notions of honour among themselves, and would in no wise suffer the highest of their clan to wrong the lowest, so they themselves took hold of Jock of Thickside, and carried him to Dumfries gaol, to take his trial before that very Lord Maxwell, who, like himself, was at that time shut up in prison.

I have often been amazed at discovering how the truth comes out under circumstances the most concealed and secret, and the first hint that circulates is very often the most accordant with it. Word reached Christy Jardine, that she had an heiress to three lordships in her keeping, and that the child would be forced from her

in a few nights, with all that she possessed; and if that was refused, her house and fortalice would be laid in ashes.

Christy was terribly perplexed. Her husband had been borne off to prison on suspicion of the slaughter of his cousin. She was aware that he was guilty, and knowing the hands that he was in, she had but little hope of his escape. But above all, she felt that the tearing of that sweet babe from her would be the same as tearing her heart from her bosom, and she could think of no way of preservation but by absconding with her to some other place. So as it approached towards evening on the 17th of July, Christy prepared every thing for her departure. She hid all the jewels and a part of the gold in a hole of the little fortalice, and built them up so as that neither wind, water nor fire, could touch them; and putting the rest of the gold in the lining of her bodice, and the golden cross being about the child's neck, which she would not get off, but took for a charm to keep the fairies from her; as soon as night set in she left her home weeping bitterly, carrying the sleeping babe along with her, and sped away toward the country of those who sought to reave her of her child, for there lay her native country, and she knew no other. About the break of day she heard the voices of a troop of men meeting her, on which she crept behind a turf dike, and squatted down in perfect terror, lest the child should awaken and cry. As bad luck would have it, the men sat down to rest themselves on the side of the path, right opposite to where Christy and her precious charge lay concealed, and she heard the following dialogue among them.

*First Man.* "Are we far frae that out-o-the-way place, Thickside, does ony o' you ken? How far off are we, Johnstone?"

*Second Man.* "About seven miles, as I guess; and I shoudna' be ill pleased though we should never find it. I look on the haille o' this expedition as unfair. What has our Lord Maxwell ado wi' the brave old fellow's wean, however he came by her? But I trow it is the



yellow goud he wants. Jock himself is lying in prison an' hard suspicions entertained against him, an' no ane to defend his place but a callant; an' if they refuse to gie up the wean an' her treasure, we are to burn an' herry. The de'il a bit o' this is fair play."

*First Man.* "But think if Jock Beatson be a murderer, Johnstone, 'an' hae killed his cousin for the greed o' this bairn's siller, which they say wad buy a' the lands o' Eskdale. Then think what he deserves. What is your opinion about that?"

*Second Man.* "Od I believe that he killed Robert o' Cassock; for it is plain that the Priest wanting the head coudna' hae killed him. But then I think he killed him in fair combat, for he has nae fewer than ten wounds a' before; an' his armour, which was brought to Dumfries, is hacked an' hewed, ye never saw aught like it. Od we'll bring them a bairn o' ony kind. If it be but a lassie, they canna ken ae bairn by another, an' it will be a grand fortune to ony bit weelfaurd lass bairn to get three lordships."

*Third Man.* "I hae half a dozen wenches, an' my wife has seven, ye shall get the wale o' them a', Johnstone, if ye like to make the experiment."

*Fourth Man.* "I wad rather hae a haul at Jock o' Thickside's ewes an' kye. Let us, if you please, go according to order."

*Second Man.* "Devil-a-bit! The time is come that I hae been looking for a while past, when every man does that which is right in his own eyes. But it shall never be said o' Jock Johnstone that he took advantage o' the times to do aught that's oppressive or unjust; an' I think this mission o' ours is an unfair one. An' if a be true that I hae heard, the best days o' the Beatsons are bye."

When the dialogue had reached thus far, there was a dog or sort of bloodhound belonging to the troop popped his head over the turf dyke, right above where Christy and her sleeping charge lay concealed. He never got such a fright in his life! He uttered such a bay as

made all the hills yell, and fled as if a hundred fiends had been after him, never letting one yelp await another.

“May a’ the powers o’ heaven preserve us,” cried one; “what can be ayant that dyke? sure am I it is something neither good nor canny, for Reaver never fled frae the face o’ clay sin’ the day that he was born.”

The first horrid bay of the dog wakened the child, who stood up in her rokelay of green, and began to prattle, and the men hearing the small voice in a language which they did not well understand, conceived that they were indeed haunted by the fairies, and grew exceedingly frightened, and as Christy thought, some of them fled; but one Charles Carruthers, more bold than the rest, cursed them for cowards, and went away, though manifestly agitated, to peep over the dike. The lovely infant, clad in green, met his face with hers on the top of the old green dyke; but if Reaver got a dreadful fright, Carruthers got a worse, for he actually threw himself back over, and made sundry somersets down hill before he could gain his feet, and the whole troop then fled in the utmost astonishment. As for Reaver he got such a fright, that he ran off and was never more seen.

Poor Christy journeyed on with a heavy heart, for she heard that evil was determined against her. Yet was she glad that she had made her escape with the child; and she had some hope in the honour and forbearance of Johnstone, who seemed to be a leading man among Maxwell’s soldiers. This party reached Thickside about sunrise, and found only James, the youngest son at home; for the eldest had followed his father to Dumfries to minister to him. James told them frankly that his father had brought home a child from the battle, but that when or how he got her he knew not; but he added, “My mother will maybe ken, for she sleeps wi’ her. She says they ca’ her Maly Cummy.”

But when they went to Christy’s apartment, behold “the sheets were cold, and she was away!” There was neither dame nor child there, at which James was greatly confounded, thus to be deprived of both his father and

mother ; and the men easily discerned that he was in no way privy to the concealment. The soldiers searched the cowhouses, hinds' houses, and shepherds' cots, but no coucealed lady, child, or treasure could they find ; so they burnt the house of Thickside, and drove the cattle, according to their lord's order.

During the time of the search, and the contention about seizing the spoil, the youth James contrived to send off an express to Garwal, who sent expresses to every landward laird of the clan, and though the Beatsons knew not until the following year that Lord Nithsdale had sold them and their possessions, yet having once shown a spirit of insubordination, they were determined to submit to nothing. So when the Maxwells came to a place called Sandy-ford, a strait and difficult passage across the Black-Esk, they were encountered by a body of the Beatsons, and cut off to a man.

Christy and her lovely little charge arrived late that same evening of the foray at a cot in Langley-dale, where she was kindly welcomed by a lone widow to a night's lodging, chiefly on account of the beauty and polished dialect of little Mary, who was quite a phenomenon among those rude borderers. And the next day, when Christy was about to continue her journey, the widow, whose name was Clark, besought her to stay with her, and help her with the spinning of some webs for Lady Langley. Christy accepted the offer, for no one could excel her at spinning ; and the two continued on carding and spinning, time about, very busy and very happy to all appearance, although in truth Christy's heart was yearning over the precarious situation of her husband, as well as her household goods and gear ; and Widow Clark yearning no less to know who the strangers were whom she had got in her house. Christy said " the bairn was her's, but the father o' her was a grand nobleman wha had fa'n into some scrape, an' the king had cuttet off his head. Sae as the bairn wasna jeetimate, the friends had just sent her back to her poor mother again."

" Ay, ay !" said widow Clark ; " we leeve in awfu' times !

For sin' ever I can mind, which is near forty years, the lives o' men hae been naething countit on. Whenever a man's indictit as they ca't, the next word that we hear is, that he's hanged." (Christy let the thread drop out of her hand, and her cheek grew pale.) "An' then, how mony hae been shot an' hanged without either indictment or trial? The lives o' men are nae mair countit on now-a-days than they were a wheen auld ousen or auld naigs. But oh, I heard some ill news yestreen! Ye maun ken that there's a wild bloody clan wha leeve up in the moorlands that they ca' Beattie's, wha it is thought will soon be extirpit, for they hae risen in rebellion against their lord, an' as near killed him as he'll ever miss being killed again. An there's ane, it seems, the warst o' the hale bike, wha has killed a gentleman, an' stown an heiress. Aweel, ye see, the Lord Maxwell o' Niddisdale, he sends up a band o' sodgers to rescue the bairn; but when they gaed there, the rascally thieves wadna produce her. Weel, the sodgers brunt an' herried, for ye ken thae Beatties are a' outlaws an' thieves, an' fair game. But what does the villains do, think ye? I declare it was tauld yestreen, that they gathered till a head, and had killed Lord Niddisdale's men ilka ane, an' roastit an' eatin them."

"Hout! they surely wadna do that. It wad only be some o' the recovered cattle that they roastit an' eatit. That ye ken is the rule."

"I ken nae sic thing, but this I ken, that the knaves will soon be a' hanged, that's some comfort. The villain that murdered the gentleman an' stealed the bairn, an' her tocher, is ta'en away to Dumfries already to be hanged. An' if Lord Maxwell of Niddisdale had them a' where he is, there wadna ane o' them escape. This bonnie bairn's your ain, you say?"

"Ay, weel I wot is she, though I maun say it to my shame. An' I maun e'en try to work for her bread an' my ain baith."

"Because a kind of glose cam' o'er me that this might be the stawn heiress, an' that I might get mysel' strappit

neatly up by the neck about her. But what need I say sae? What interest could a poor workin' body like you hae in stealing a bairn to bring a double weight on your shoulders? An' what a bit gildit trinket is this wi' some glass beads in it that she wears on her naked bosom?"

"That's a charm for keepin' away the fairies, the brownies, an' a' evil spirits frae her. Her father, wha, was a great maister o' airts, lockit that about her neck that it might never be ta'en aff."

"Ah! but that is a valuable thing an' a blessing to my house, for muckle muckle I hae been plaguit wi' them! So she's your ain bairn, you say? Weel I canna help having my jealousings. She's verra unlike ye. What is your name, darling?"

"Why, Maly? little Maly Gumly!" said the child carelessly, as she sat on the floor caressing a kitten.

"I am ruined now," thought Christy to herself, "and all will out together!"

"What mair nor Mary did you say? Tell me what mair?"

"I don't know what you say," said the child. "What mare is it? Is it papa's own or the ane I rode on wid auld Fader Flip."

"What does the creature say?" said widow Clark. "Who was Father Flip, Mary?"

"O, it was de man that wanted de head, you know: when Maly yan and kie'd, and de bloody man took Maly up and toss'd her."

"O, she's clean ayont my comprehension," said widow Clark. "But what mair do they ca' ye forby Mary? What mair did you say?"

"I did not say any thing about a mare," said the child. "Come, come, pussy, you must go with me, and if you dare to scratch me, I will beat you."

"That's nae bairn o' this country, however," said the widow; "ye hae surely been far up through England when ye met wi' your misfortune?"

"That's rather a sair subject, Mrs Clark, but ye ken weel how many English officers, baith noblemen an'

gentlemen, hae been hereabouts for ower lang a time for our good. If ye ken'd a' that I hae suffered for that bairn your heart wad bleed for me. An' lack-a-day I fear my sufferings for her winna be a' ower yet." And with that Christy fell a-crying bitterly as she thought of her husband and of her burnt habitation. But who can fathom the latent fountains of tenderness in a woman's heart, especially when helpless infancy is concerned?

Widow Clark felt that she had sounded a chord too delicate, and concluded by saying—"Weel, weel, cheer up your heart, an' think nae mair about it. What's done canna be undone, an' ye hae a pair o' good hands o' your ain, an' are weel worthy o' your room, sae ye are welcome to stay here as lang as you like, an' your wark shall stand for your meat, an' if we ply weel, we'll surely support sweet little Mary atween us."

This speech was rewarded by a gush o' grateful tears from Christy, for her heart yearned over the child, and from that day forward Mrs Clark never put another question to Christy about the child. She called herself Christy Melvile, and said the child was to be called after her own surname, by order of her father the day before he was beheaded. So one was called Christy and the other Mary, and there was no more said about it. But every sabbath day Christy left the charge of little Mary with the widow, went off before day and returned again by night; and though the widow watched her, she saw that she sometimes went one way and sometimes another, and could not comprehend her business. It was afterwards discovered that she went to Dumfries and Thick-side week about.

Christy saw and learned from others that she stood on ticklish ground; a high reward having been offered for the discovery of the child, she took good care to conceal the riches she brought with her, never even venturing to buy her a new frock, unless out of their joint savings. That widow Clark really believed the child to be Christy's is rather doubtful; but certain it is she acquiesced in the belief, for she loved both the child and

mother, and had no mind to part with them. So the child grew in stature and in beauty. But we must return to Christy's family.

Jock of Thickside was tried before Lord Nithsdale immediately on his return from England, but the Beatsons, his accusers, refused to attend, keeping their fastnesses, for they knew that as far as the power of the Maxwells extended they were a proscribed clan; and moreover their late slaughter of the band of English rendered them supremely obnoxious to their old tyrannical liege lords. But Maxwell was at the pains to send officers up among them, who examined them, and the Beatsons told all that they knew, for they lamented the death of their brave clansman Robert of Cassock exceedingly, and all of them suspected John of Thickside. It was proven that he was not on the field at the dividing of the spoil, nor the burying of the slain, nor even at his chief's funeral the next day, and that he was seen crossing the Esk on the evening of the 3d, with a crying child on the horse before him.

This was all, and there was nothing more criminal in it than what attached to the whole clan who were present at the foray, and all this Jock had confessed plainly at first, but schooled by his wife, he denied that he had ever left the field of strife. He said he had picked up a lovely child trying to waddle away from the field of battle, and he being wearied and wounded, rode straight home and took the child with him to try to preserve her innocent life.

"Then tell me, ruffian, what thou hast done with that child?" said Lord Maxwell; "for that baby's life was of more value than the lives of thy whole race."

"It is false," said Jock.

"What say'st thou, caitiff? Speak'st thou so to me?"

"Yes, I do. For there is not a life of my race which is not as valuable in the sight of heaven as either thine or her's, and I hope a great deal more so than those of any papist's on earth."

A buzz of approbation ran through the crowded cou-

cil-room at this bold reply; for the Dumfriesians had suffered much from the Catholics and abhorred them, and Lord Maxwell perceiving this, answered mildly and said, "Tell me what thou hast done with that noble child, and thy life shall be as dear to me as thou rashly supposest it is to heaven?"

I must give John Beatson's explanation in his own words. "Troth ye see, ma' lword, I feught verra hard that day an' levelled a good deal o' the Englishers wi' the swaird. But that wasna my wyte, far we had a commander, a chief o' our ain, an' whan he began the fray, what could we do but follow. Besides we ken'd the days o' the papishes war ower, as ye'll soon find to your cost, an' we thought the sooner we made an end o' a when o' them the better. But to come to the bairn again that ye haud sic a wark about; troth I was laith to pit the secret out. But faith an' troth, my lord, ye murdered her yoursel'. An' it's gayan like a papish's trick after a'. They're sae frank at takin' the lives o' others it's weel done when they snap ane anither's at orra times."

"Explain what you mean, Beatson. This is too serious a business to be jeered with. I never saw the child, and therefore could have had no hand in taking her life. But it is a business which, if I judge aright, will cost you your neck."

"Aweel! I ken ye hae resolved on that already, an' gin a' my kinsmen had but ae neck among them ye wad chop a' off at aince. But I ken wha's head better deserves to be chopped off; and I'll explain the matter to you an' a' that hear me. I fund a bairn there's nae doubt o't, trying, poor thing, to waddle away an' escape frae the field o' battle. Sae I took her by the frock-tail an' pu'd her up afore me, an' findin that she was laden wi' goud an' diamonds an' precious stones, an' that I was sair woundit an' forefoughten, I thought I wad tak her for my prize an' let my friends share the rest amang them. Sae I brought hir hame an' gae her to my wife, wha poor woman kissed her, caressed her, an' fed her wi' the best



in the house. But behold I was sent to prison, an' your lordship, knowing that I wasna at hame to defend my ain, sent up your sogers wha surroundit the house; an' my poor wife was sae fley'd that she took up the baby an' a' her riches into a hiding place in a garret which nae leeving soul could find out. But behold the base knaves set the house on fire an' brunt it every stap, an' my honest woman an' the bonny bairn war baith brunt to ashes. But that's the gate honest an' true men hae been long guidit by the papishes."

Lord Nithsdale looked confounded. He knew such a deed had been done; the plain narrative affected him, and he exclaimed "God forgive me." The populace grew outrageous. They pulled Lord Nithsdale from the seat of justice, and knocked and pommelled him so, that it was with great difficulty his officers and adherents got him pushed into the dungeon of the prison and locked up there. From that day he never more mounted the bench of justice in Dumfries. The times were changed with him. The mob assumed the rule for a season. The crown tottered on the head of the king, while a more powerful hand grasped at it, and all was utter confusion. In the mean time, John of Thickside was set free, amid the shouts of an exulting mob. But though liberated in this singular and tumultuous way, he was not exculpated in the eyes of his kinsmen, who regarded him with a jealous eye and refused to associate with him. They suspected him not only of having foully slain Robert of Cassock, but of having made away with the child for the sake of her treasure, for though the Beatsons heard the story as a fact that the wife and child were both burnt, they did not believe it.

When Mary came to be about nine years of age she was taken notice of by Mrs Maxwell, commonly called Lady Langley. This lady was a widow, her husband having fallen in the civil wars, and she had retired to an old solitary but neat mansion in this wild dell, with her only surviving child, a boy in his teens. Now, as Lady Langley supplied the two women with constant

work, she often called at their cot to see how her woollen and linen yarn were coming on, and pay them by the spindle. So every time she saw and conversed with little Mary Melville, as she was called, she could not help admiring her singular beauty and fine address ; and at length proposed to take her home and educate her along with her son, who had a tutor of his own. This proposal was blithely accepted by the two women, for though both of them by dint of hard spelling and misnaming words could read a little, they found themselves quite inadequate to teach their little darling any thing beyond the alphabet, every letter of which they mispronounced.

Mary proved a most apt learner, as girls about that age generally are, and soon made great advancement in overtaking the young laird. Lady Langley was so pleased with herself at having taken this fatherless and interesting child under her protection, that she condescended often to attend to her education herself, though with a great deal of pomp and circumstance. It was while guiding her hand in writing one day that Lady Langley perceived the cross on the girl's bosom, and was struck dumb with astonishment thinking it was streaked with blood. She took it out and stared at it. Mary made no resistance, but stared on the lady's face in return. It was a cross of gold set with rubies in a most beautiful way,

“ Mary Melville, what is this ?” said the lady ; “ child, this cannot be yours.”

“ I believe it is, madam,” said Mary seriously. “ It has hung there since ever I remember, and I have heard that it was locked round my neck by my father the day before he was beheaded.”

“ He has died for the true religion then,” said the lady, turning up her eyes, and then turning over the cross, she saw upon the adverse side these words, if I remember aright, set in very small diamonds *Mater Dei, memento M. M.* “ Ay, there it is ! There it is,” exclaimed she, “ Mother of God, remember Mary Melville ! Girl,

that cross is worth an estate. Do you remember aught of your papa?"

"I think always I remember of riding in a coach with a gentleman whom I was wont to call so."

"What was his name?"

"I have quite forgot, but men took off their caps when they spoke to him."

"Was your own name always Mary Melville?"

"No it was not. I am almost certain it was not. But O I cannot remember! I think they called me Mary Gurney or Gulney, or some such sound as that. But it is all uncertain and quite like a dream."

"But you never had any mother or mamma save poor Christy."

"No, no, I never had any mother or mamma but Christy, excepting Mrs Clark, who is the very same."

"Ay, ay! So then the story is all too true! Your father has been a gentleman, perhaps more. But your mother has been one of the herd, perhaps a common strumpet, so you must never think to rise in life, Mary. Never presume to thrust yourself into genteel society, for there is a stain on your lineage which all the beauty and accomplishments of the world cannot efface."

"I don't see that at all, Lady Langley, why I should be looked down on by the world for a misdemeanor in which I had no share."

"It is the way of the world, child, and to the ways of the world we must submit, as we cannot frame it anew to our own ideas or the particular circumstances that suit ourselves. But blessed be God who cast you on my protection, for I will breed you up in the true religion, and as you never can rise in life, I will get you placed in a nunnery."

"A nunnery? What's that? I do not like the name."

"It is a religious house where young women are brought up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord, well prepared for a better state, and well provided for all their lives."

“Well, I should like that exceedingly. Are there plenty of young gentlemen in it?”

“No, no! There is no man suffered to enter those sacred gates but the father confessor.”

“I think I shall not go. I’ll rather take my chance with old mother Christy, to such luck as may cast up.”

Lady Langley smiled and made a long speech about mothers, which I do not choose to bring into my tale, and by degrees half and more persuaded the young volatile beauty that she was directing her on the right path. In the meantime the young laird and she learned on and gambolled on together. He was constantly playing tricks on her, and keeping her squalling in their hours of amusement, and sometimes he would pretend to lash her from him with a horse-whip, but in one minute she was between his shoulders again. Lady Langley gave them many profound lectures on the impropriety of their intimacy, and would often impress Mary’s mind so much that she would try to keep aloof from George for days together. But the game always began again. They went a nutting, they went a bird-nesting, keeping out of the severe dame’s sight, and ultimately George would stand or sit and gaze in silence at the growing beauties of Mary, while the return he got for this worship was often no more than a slap on the cheek or a fillip on the nose.

But the time arrived when George was obliged to leave his mother’s house for some Catholic college, whether in France or Ireland I have forgot, but he remained there a number of years, and was only home once all the time, and then when he met with Mary he did not know her. It was a droll scene. Mary accosted him with ease and familiarity, while he could only bow, stare, and hesitate. When told that it was his old playmate, Mary Melville, he actually cried for joy at seeing her so lovely. The lady took good care to keep them asunder, so that they only met once by themselves for a few minutes, but during that short space something had passed between them which never was forgotten by either of them.

But the time at length arrived when it beloved George Maxwell to come home and take the charge of his own affairs, and then Lady Langley resolved to put her scheme into execution with regard to Mary, and get her disposed of in a nunnery. She made no mention of such a thing, but said she wanted to send her as a companion and governess to her cousin, the Countess of Traquair, who she knew generally went abroad every year, and had plenty of interest. Mary was obsequious and rather fond of the change, but it took all Lady Langley's eloquence to persuade the two old dames to part with her, and strange to say, Mrs. Clark was the far most obstinate in yielding and affected at parting with her.

The Earl of Traquair's chaplain and livery servant at length arrived by appointment, and after a great deal of kissing and crying, Mary, mounted on a fine palfrey, rode cheerfully away with her ghostly conductor; the livery-man's horse being quite laden with necessaries which the good old woman forced her to take along with her.

I could never find out what road they took for the castle of Traquair. A printed account of the transaction that I have seen says they were going to lodge that night with a sort of broken or deposed clergyman at a place called Braeger, so that it is probable it was at the steps of Glen-dearg that they encountered a horde of men and women, lodging in two tents in which fires were blazing, and plenty of noise and singing going on, while the bagpipe was lending its loudest strains to the chorus. The priest was frightened, as well he might, for he knew by the inimitable strains of the bagpipe which he had frequently heard, that the carollers were THE FAAS, a reckless tribe of gipsies that generally travelled twenty-four strong, and through all the country took and did whatever they listed, but who never visited any place more than once in a year, and those who were civil to them they would not wrong, but reaved without scruple from their adversaries.

The priest as I said was not at all at his ease, but to get off the road at the steps was impossible, and to return

back over the dreary path they had passed was both cowardly and inconvenient, so the three were obliged to pass on. But to get by unperceived was impracticable. The horses stopped and snorted, and the dogs of the gipsies bayed until out sallied a body of the Faas, and without ceremony seized the three hapless travellers and bore them in to the chief, taking care meantime to secure their horses out of sight.

What a scene was there ! There was plenty of lamb and mutton roasting and stewing, which the gipsies, with the help of their dogs, had reaved from the flocks that fed all around them, and plenty of the best French brandy, for they were smugglers as well as gipsies. Now the man who seized Mary and carried her into the gipsy's tent was no other than the celebrated Gordon Faa, the piper ; which she knew by this token, that every step which he took with her the great drone uttered a groan, she having some way pressed against the bag, to the infinite amusement of the gang, who screamed with laughter at the piper and his splendid load.

The smell of the viands was so delicious that, truth to say, the chaplain eyed them as ascending from the cauldron with great satisfaction, and after blessing the good things in Latin, partook most liberally of them as well as of the brandy. He knew the chief, and named him by his name, LORD JOHN FAA. He also knew the piper, naming him, so that no doubt of the identity of the priest remained. The Lord Traquair of that day was a great and good man, respected over all Scotland, and by this wandering horde as much as any ; nothing therefore could exceed the kindness of the gang to their guests, and it must be acknowledged that both the priest and servant enjoyed themselves exceedingly, for they really felt that they were much more comfortable than they could possibly have been with the broken curate at Braeger.

Not so with poor Mary. It was a scene of rudeness, roughness, and recklessness, of which she had never even dreamed, and the gipsy women were the far worst. And

moreover Gordon Faa, the piper, who kept close by her, plagued her with his assiduities, looking upon her as his lawful prize, although again and again snubbed both by the stern looks and degrading taunts of his chief John Faa, lord of Little Egypt, who at length drove him into the secondary tent, leaving none in that tent save his mother, two brethren, the priest, Mary, and himself. They slept on rushes ; but as Mary refused to lie down, the chief like a gentleman sat and watched with her. As soon as all were quiet, he proposed at once to make her queen of the gipsies, assuring her that no lady in the land should fare better or be better attended. She tried to turn it into a jest, and said she was already engaged to the piper. Lord John let her know that he was jesting none about the matter, and told her that Gordon the piper was a low dastardly poltroon whom he, John Faa, could snuff out like a candle, and not so much as burn his fingers on him.

“I beg your pardon, Sir Sovereign,” said Mary. “Now, in my opinion, the piper is the most proper man of the two, and as I am engaged to him it is most ungenerous in you to propose taking me from your kinsman.”

“I would take you from my brother,” said he, “for of all the women I have ever seen on earth you are the most beautiful. But believe me it would be wise and prudent in you to acquiesce in my proposal. It will be the better for you, because what you refuse me on friendly terms I am resolved to take by force.”

“I must first hear what my conductor and ghostly confessor says to that,” said Mary. “And you yourself must also first procure the consent of the piper before we can proceed farther in this matter.”

Now it so happened that there was only the thickness of the canvass, between the jealous piper and them all this time, and he heard every word that was uttered and took it all for earnest, and there was one other heard it, who, to all appearance, was the soundest sleeper there, and that was the chief's mother, the queen dowager of the gipsies, and as she both adored and dreaded her son,

she resolved to further his views in the attainment of his object, a queen of the gipsies, that would not only do them credit but astonish all the country.

The next morning they packed up their baggage in a time unaccountably short, and set off before sunrise. The priest asked for their horses and liberty to proceed, but the chief told him that he would conduct them in safety to Traquair gate, provided he would marry him to that young lady with whom he was resolved never to part. But if he refused to do that, perhaps—he—would not be permitted—to go much farther.

The chaplain's blood ran chill to his heart, for he knew with whom he had to do,—a gang that accounted no more of the lives of men than of sheep. "If I have the consent of parties," said he with a pale and quivering lip, "why then I can have no objections."

"How can you say so, father Crosbie?" said Mary, "would you marry me to the chief of a lawless gang of outlaws, vagabonds, the terror and disgrace of the country. Be assured then, once for all, that I would rather die a thousand deaths than submit to such a degradation."

"Don't just say so far, young madam," said the old gipsy queen, "we'll see about that by and by."

"Well, well, we'll not say any more about these matters just now," said the chief. "But as we are all going the same road let us journey on together till breakfast-time, and when we have got a hearty meal we shall either remain together or part good friends."

The chaplain, who would gladly have been off, answered mildly, "Why, now begging your honour's pardon, I think we had better proceed by ourselves. You are the very best of fellows, and the best of landlords, but think what will be said through the country if the Earl of Traquair's chaplain, a gentleman in holy orders, and a lady belonging to that great family, should be seen travelling through the country with the gipsies?"

"There is no one to see us here," said Lord John, "for no one dares to come near us as we pass out of the way, therefore let us journey on till we breakfast together,



which will not be before eleven, as we take always only two hearty meals a-day."

Some went a fishing, some went a shooting, and some a reaving, and as appointed they all met at a place called Back-Burn at eleven to breakfast. They had plenty of fine trout, some of the birds now called *game*, and both lamb and mutton beside; and after both men and women had partaken of a full quaigh of brandy, they sat down to a hearty breakfast, and then after another quaigh of brandy the chief said, "Now, Sir Priest, proceed we to business, if you please, and join this young woman's hand with mine, as nothing less than such a ceremony will satisfy the consciences of women."

Here the piper came forward, bonnet in hand, and thus addressed his chief. "My lord, how is it that I should be forced to remind you of the unaltered and inviolable law of this and all well regulated communities regarding spulzie; you know too well that it is that whoever first finds the prize and takes possession is the legal owner without dispute and without reference; you have therefore no right nor claim to that young maiden. She is mine. And before our kinsmen I make my appeal, and dare you to touch her so much as with one of your fingers."

Lord John Faa stood up curling his dark lip, while his mustachios moved up and down like the whiskers of a cat with rage. "Thou butterfly! Thou moth! Thou thing of wind and whistles! Darest thou for thy heart's blood speak thus to me?"

"Yes, I dare!" said the piper, "for I ask only justice."

"Then take that as a part of thy measure of it," said the chief, aiming a tremendous blow at the piper's left temple. But Gordon Faa the piper was a proper man though in a subordinate capacity; he broke the force of his chief's stroke with his left elbow, and returned it with such interest that he laid his chief flat on the green, where he lay motionless with the blood gushing from his mouth and nose, right before the entrance of his tent.

The piper instantly struck with the enormity of his offence, turned his back and fled, and in the hurry of lending assistance to the chief no one noted this till the old gipsy queen called out, "Is the dog to be allowed to escape thus?" On which Ellick Faa, the chief's brother, threw off his coat, drew a rapier, and pursued him.

There was not one of the sept, however, a match for the piper in speed, which had often been proved before, and at this time terror increasing it he shot away from his pursuers like a hare from a colley dog. Another brother perceiving this, pursued also, and the chief recovering from the stunning blow followed behind, calling on his brothers to stop, but they neither heard nor regarded. Some of Gordon the piper's near connexions next followed, both men and women, and the path down the river over knowe and dell, was seen by the shepherds and peat-workers from the hills covered with a long line of gipsies, all running like mad people, and they said one to another, "There's some drunken fray among the Faas, an' it'll no settle without blood."

The piper kept quite a-head, and it is believed would have done so and far outran all his pursuers. What then tempted him to take earth is unaccountable for though far a-head and out of sight of his pursuers he bolted into the very first house he came to, which was the farmhouse of Cosserhill. It so happened that there was not a soul in the house but one young girl, who was standing at the kitchen table baking bannocks. She knew Gordon Faa the piper, for she had danced to his strains only three days before, and she asked in astonishment "What's the matter? What's the matter? Guide us Gordon, what's the matter?"

"Nae ill to you, deary; 'nae ill to you," said he, and flying into a corner of the milkhouse, he hid himself behind a salt barrel and a meal one. I can give the particulars of this catastrophe correctly, for it was the daughter of that girl who related the story to me again and again when I was a boy. Her name was Tibby Scott, and she lived

with an only daughter at Craig-hill on Lord Napier's land, and I am sure is still remembered by many living.

"What's the matter, Gordon?" said she. "Nae ill to you, deary" said he. "But for God's sake dinna tell ony o' them that I'm here."

He had not well done speaking when Ellick Faa entered, with his thirsty rapier ready in his hand. "Did you see a man, lassie?" said he, hurriedly; "did you see a man? Saw you aughts o' our piper here?"

"Na," said she, as if quite surprised by the question, on which Ellick uttered an oath and ran again to the door. But the view from that house being very extensive all around, and he seeing no one flying, returned again into the house, and said, "O d—him, he must be here!" and instantly commenced a search, when the panting of the piper soon led to his discovery. Ellick seized him by the neck, and dragged him out to the middle of the kitchen-floor, while the piper seemed to be deprived of all power either to plead or fight, but arms he had none. Ellick trailed him out on his back, and setting his foot on his throat, he stabbed him through the heart. He was standing on him with both his feet, the girl said, and when he pulled out his rapier from his breast, the blood spouted upwards against the loft. The piper died instantly.

That blood remained on those joists and flooring for a century, and I have often looked at it myself in the old farm-house of Cosserhill, with a sort of awe and terror, although only a memorial of former days. The chief's younger brother next arrived, and likewise ran his weapon through the body of the piper, but it hardly shivered, he having been run through the heart at the first. The chief next arrived with his face, and breast covered with blood; but his rage and grief, when he saw Gordon the piper was murdered, is past describing. He cursed his brethren for their impetuosity, and the girl was wont to say, that she believed if he had had a weapon in his hand he would have slain them both. When his rage had somewhat subsided, he lamented his fallen kinsman in

the most dolorous and pathetic terms, and wept like a child over him, saying, "Thou art foully slain, Gordon, thou art foully slain! and I would rather it had been myself, or either of them than thou. For it was I who was the aggressor! yes, it was I—it was I!"

Sundry others arrived, both men and women, and great was the lamentation for the fall of the piper, and dreadful the execrations on his murderers. They then took the byre door from its hinges, stretched the ghastly corpse upon that, and bore him back to the tent, where they wrapped the body up in linen and woollen, and buried it on the very spot where his chief fell when he knocked him down, and where his grave is to be seen to this day, on Brockhope Ridge—and with one stone at the head, and another at the feet: a dreadful lesson to the insubordinate members of all clans.

In the mean time, while this horrible and fatal affray was going on, and the gipsy men all away, the priest and livery-servant made their escape; mounting their steeds, they rode with all their might, and reached the castle of Traquair before it was quite dark, where they related their grievous story, but not truly, to save themselves from the shame of leaving Mary behind. The truth was that the priest pleaded very hard that Mary should accompany him; but the old gipsy queen, and the other women that remained at the tent, would not suffer her to depart, but held her by force. The priest threatened her with the vengeance of Lord Traquair, and said he would send an armed body of men at once, who would not only take the young lady from them, but cut them all to pieces. But the old hag is said to have answered him in these bitter words:—

"Ay, gang or ride your ways, and warn the Earl o' Traquair. We dinna gie *that* for him (snapping her fingers). An' afore ye win the Kirk-Rigg, we'll mak her she sanna be worth the sending for, nor will she gang wi' ye if ye wad tak her."

Mary cried most bitterly, and entreated the priest, by all that he held sacred, to remain with her and be her

protector ; but he was glad to escape with life and limb, and left Mary in a swoon, held down by three gipsy women. Therefore when he went to Traquair, he said that they had fallen in with the powerful gipsy gang called the Faas, and that the young lady for whom they were sent rather chose to remain with them and be their queen, than come to Traquair to be a servant. Lady Traquair would not believe this report, after the letters she had had from her cousin, but the Earl believed it, and sent no succour.

But there is a power far above that of the nobles of the earth that watches over truth and innocence ; and Mary failed not at every interval of hateful persecution in this dreadful dilemma, to implore protection of heaven ; and her prayers were heard, for she *was* delivered, and that in a most wonderful manner.

When the gang returned with the mangled and bloody corpse of the piper, her feelings received a fearful shock. She expected nothing but death from those lawless ruffians ; but it was not death so much as dishonour that she dreaded ; and after the gipsy queen's speech to the priest, she had good reasons for dreading both. She however seized a clasp knife, and concealed it in her bosom, resolved, if any violence was offered to her, to stab the aggressor, and if unable to accomplish that to stab herself. But the old gipsy queen either missed the knife, which was a sort of closing dagger, and a most insidious and dangerous weapon, or some way or other suspected Mary's design, for the three hags laid all hold of her at once, forced the knife from her, and tied her hands behind her back.

When the piper's burial was over the chief was very down-hearted and out of tune. He was angry that the chaplain was gone ; he was angry that the young lady was detained against her will, and her hands bound behind her back. In short, he was angry with every thing, and ordered his mother to let Mary depart ; for he had no heart to compel her to submit to his will by force.

“ Not by force ! ” said she. “ How then should a

queen of the Egyptians be wooed but by force? I thought I had a noble and daring son of thee, but I have only a chicken-hearted craven! Where could you find such another queen as this thrust upon you by chance. The like of her is not in broad Scotland; and after proposing the thing, to draw back! Faugh! force forsooth! Where lives the maiden who does not like to be forced to some things! I—ay I was laid on the bride-bed with your father, with my hands tied behind my back; and what I was obliged to submit to, my daughter-in-law may well submit to after me. I would not have a queen of our brave and ancient tribe who was not taken by force, because otherwise she would not be worth having. Win her and wear her, say I. There she lies at your command. Lord Traquair may send for her to-morrow, but I sent him word that before that time he should find her not worth the taking; and neither would she go with his men if he would take her. Come, comrades, let us take a walk up by the Back Burn, and leave the young couple by themselves.”

Mary was then left in the tent with Lord John Faa, with her hands tied behind her back. He had, however, used no violence with Mary, for she all her life spoke of him with respect. He had, perhaps, offered some—for it seems that he discovered the cross in her bosom, which at once struck him speechless and motionless. This golden cross, be it remembered, was a very affecting thing. It was an effigy of the Saviour on the cross, with large rubies for the nails, and smaller ones resembling the streaming of the blood. The savage, who certainly had known something about the Christian revelation, was so struck with the sight of this apparently bloody cross, that he shrunk back speechless and horrified, while Mary, seeing his perturbed looks, appeared as much terrified as he. At length, with a quivering lip, he spoke words to the following purpose:—“Lady, you are the favoured of heaven; and rather than offer any violence to that pure and lovely frame would I spill my own heart’s blood. You are free. Here I loose you with my own hands,

and fear not that one of our tribe dare so much as touch you with a foul finger."

Poor Mary was so overjoyed at this miraculous relief, that she kneeled at her deliverer's feet, and embraced his knees; and then, how astonished was the old reckless queen and her associates, at seeing the chief and the beauty meeting them walking arm in arm. The gipsies, of course, formed conclusions wide of the truth.

But that very afternoon the chief mounted Mary on her own palfrey, and he and his two brethren accompanied her as far as a place called Corse Cleuch, where she got the room to sleep in and they the barn; and the next day they set her safely down at Traquair gate, with every thing pertaining to her. Lord and Lady Traquair were highly pleased with the generosity and kindness of this roving barbarian chief, and it was thought (but to the truth of this I cannot speak) that it was through the earl's powerful interest that there was never any cognizance taken of the piper's murder. It was as likely to have been occasioned by the times being so terribly out of joint: but so it was, that the two brothers escaped with impunity.

As for Mary, she seemed to have been born to a life of wild romance; for no sooner had she shewn her face at Traquair than John Stewart, second son to the earl, and denominated The Tutor of Caberston, fell desperately in love with her, and intreated of his parents permission to marry her. They were highly indignant at the proposal, but finding him obstinately intent on his purpose, they were obliged to apply to Mary herself, and rely on her prudence. She was aware how well the young gentleman loved, and also how advantageous the match would have been,—for he was afterwards Earl of Traquair. But she listened to the admonitions of her new guardians, and the next time the Tutor addressed her, she gave him such a lecture on his imprudence in proposing such a thing, and of their great inequality in life, he being the son of a powerful nobleman, and she a poor nameless foundling, unacknowledged by any one,

that the young man was astonished, but nowise diverted from his purpose ; for in place of that, when he found her so disinterested, his love glowed fiercer than ever, and he determined, at all hazards, on making her his wife.

Mary told the countess every thing candidly, and all the gentleman's vehement protestations ; and that acute lady perceived that, knowing her son's temper and disposition, there was nothing for it but separating them. She therefore persuaded her two sons Charles and John, to go on a visit to their relations in Nithsdale ; and in the mean time she smuggled off Mary to France, in company with two of her daughters, the ladies Lucy and Ann, with charges to them to get her introduced into the convent of Maisendue, with which the Scottish Catholic nobility were all connected : so off they set to Edinburgh in the earl's huge lumbering carriage, and did not reach that city until dark of an autumn day, when they alighted at the earl's house in the Canongate.

Mary had not well set foot on the pavement, when one touched her arm and said " Mary, I want to speak with you."

Mary thought she knew the voice, and turned aside with the woman without hesitation. It was her unfailing friend, Christy, who never lost sight of her except one of the nights she was detained by the gipsies. On the very day that Mary left Langley-Dale, poor Christy vanished from Mrs Clark's cottage. Whoever reads this will suppose that then she had gone home to her own dwelling at Thickside, but, alas ! Thickside was no more her dwelling—the Beatsons had been extirpated, and their ancient feudal territory parted among the Scotts, and John of Thickside and his sons had shared in the fate of their brethren. So Christy had made up her mind to stick by her adopted daughter. She was sure she was a lady of quality, but who she was, or what she was, remained a mystery. The good woman, however, had plenty of tokens to prove her protegee's origin, if ever she should be claimed ; in particular, the gold and ruby cross,



which was locked about her neck and hung down on her breast, was one that could never be disputed. She followed her to Traquair, and was there a day before her; and ere she left home she got some intelligence that Mary was destined for a foreign convent. While Mary was at Traquair, Christy was refused admittance to her, and never saw her: but when she set off for Edinburgh, she set off also, and was there before her, and contrived to get the first word of her on her alighting from the carriage, and with the bustle and confusion of taking out the ladies and the luggage, Mary's retreat was never noted.

"My dearest Mary," said Christy, "leave these great people at once and retire again with me. Your doom is fixed if you refuse this, and you are to be sent to France and confined within the walls of a nunnery for life."

"But do you not think, mother, that a life devoted to religion is the best life that a woman can lead?" said Mary.

"No, no, Mary, that was not the end of woman's creation. She was made for the nourishing of the immortal mind and bringing up beings for eternity, and therefore it is mean and selfish in her to care only for herself. For my part, I would rather see you take the evil and good things of life as they come, to be a wife and a mother, than have you immured in a convent, even though that secured you of heaven at last."

With arguments of this tendency, expressed in more homely but more forcible language, she persuaded Mary to elope with her, and abandon her noble friends and her luggage for ever. So the two went to the house of a Mistress Jardine, in a place called Alison Square. She was cousin german to Christy, and had often spent a few weeks with her at Thickside, and with that lady they took up their lodgings and lived in style, for Christy had plenty of the good red gold with her, and they lived at least as well as the ladies of Traquair did in their grand house in the Canongate. Christy also bought her dar-

ling several appropriate dresses, so that at this time Mary was really an angel in loveliness.

Great was the stir among the earl's people when it was discovered that Mary was missing. It was the most unaccountable thing ever known ! that a young lady should vanish stepping out of a coach, who had not an acquaintance, male or female, in Edinburgh, and leave all her baggage to whomsoever pleased to take possession of it. None could give any account of her, save that one page said he saw her step aside on the plain stones, speaking to an elderly woman, but that being called on at the time he saw no more. The very worst construction was thus put on poor Mary's elopement, for sooth to say the Traquair young ladies hated her, finding they never could catch a glance from a gentleman when Mary was present, and they now asserted that their chaplain had told the truth, that she had remained a night with the gipsy chief of her own free choice, and had now gone off with a lady of the town, of whom she could know nothing, on the very first hint ; and they charitably concluded that she was an undone creature, and that her personal beauty had been given her for her ruin.

In the meanwhile, the Tutor of Caberston returned from his visit to Nithsdale, and when he found that his darling Mary was smuggled away from him in rather an equivocal manner, his rage was quite boundless. He accused his mother fiercely to her face, and told her he would follow that inimitable girl to the limits of the earth, and defied the machinations of man or woman to deter him from the attainment of her. So mounting his horse he galloped straight to Edinburgh, determined, if she had gone on shipboard, to follow her straight to France and prevent her taking the veil ; but on reaching his father's house in Edinburgh, and finding that Mary was a-missing, his chagrin surpassed all bounds, and to their evil insinuations regarding her, he not only turned a deaf ear, but cursed them all for a parcel of affected fools and idiots, ever to suppose that guilt or deceit could lurk beneath a face and form like those of Mary Melville. In short,

Lord John, or the Tutor as he was commonly called, was in such a rage and in such chagrin that the family were distressed, and even frightened about him. And when he was just at the worse, behold there arrived his half-cousin, George Maxwell, in search of the same lost beauty, and came straight to the earl's house, his nearest kinsman, in Edinburgh.

The Tutor was happy at meeting him, being so much interested in the same discovery. They were very like each other, exactly of the same age, and though only half-cousins, there was a family resemblance between them that was most singular: and when dressed in the same way, (and it is well known that the dresses of gentlemen, as well as ladies, were very formal in those days,) no one could distinguish the one from the other.

They agreed between themselves to search for Mary Melville till they found her if she was alive and in Scotland, and that no ill blood might be between them, to leave the appeal entirely to herself when found. It was not easy to find any one in Edinburgh then. There was no half-dozen of papers with advertisements going every day. There was nothing to rely on but bodily exertion and ocular proof. There was only one street in Edinburgh then; the High Street and the Canongate, which is a continuation of the former stretching from the castle to the Palace. That street our two young lovers traversed every day, but always traversed it in vain. They attended at the private meetings of the Catholics, but they found her not. They went to every public place—to every popular meeting whether sacred or civil, but Mary they could not discover.

As they were walking up the Lawn-Market towards the Castle one day, a lady, a perfect angel in beauty, dressed in green silk, with a green turban and feathers, beckoned to them across half the street. They returned the salute, and walked on for a long time in perfect silence. "Who in the world is that?" said Maxwell.

"I think she is one of the Ladies Gordon," said Lord John, "I don't know any other ladies of rank, and she

is very like them in her stately manner and superb dress, She is however, a beautiful young creature."

They walked on in silence again until coming up to the Castle-Hill. "My Lord John," said Maxwell, "it strikes me that that lady who smiled and beckoned to us was no other than Mary Melville, the young lady for whom we are so anxiously searching.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lord John. "She is in my opinion, Lady Mary Gordon." But then stopping, and making himself some inches higher, he exclaimed, "Good heavens, is it possible that that exquisite splendid being could be Mary Melville!"

"There is something, my lord, that schoolfellows never forget," said Maxwell, "and there was a smile and some dimples yonder which I am sure could be nobody's but Mary's!"

"Let us follow then," said the Tutor, "and trace her to her domicile. She is worth the looking after at all events. If that really was Mary, what a jewel!"

The two kinsmen then wheeled round and pursued down the High Street, but did not overtake the two ladies, as they had turned off to the right for the Horse Wynde, that led to their lodgings. Shortly after that Maxwell fell sick, either from disappointed love or of vexation at the insinuations constantly poured into his ears against his adored Mary. However, sick he grew and took to bed, and his physician said it was agitation of mind that caused his illness.

The Tutor was now left to prowl about by himself, which he did every day, always keeping a sharp look-out for the lady dressed in green silk; and one day when he was taking a look at the Palace of Holyrood, the splendid home of his royal relatives, whom should he meet face to face in the gallery but the identical lady in green silk, his admired Mary Melville, leaning on the arm of old Christy of Thickside.

"Miss Melville!" exclaimed he, "Blessed be all the powers above that I have at last found you out!"

"And pray, wherefore, sir?" said Mary.

“Because, with your dear permission, we shall never part again,” said he.

“It will be very long before you attain that sir?” said Mary, rather saucily. “I know my distance better, and have got some feeling lectures about that before now.”

And with that she moved off along the gallery making the plumes in her turban nod in a rather disdainful manner. “Mary! my dear Mary!” cried Christy. “Pray whaten a bee has gotten into your head the day? Are ye gane daft, lassie?” But Mary capered on, and down the stair she went. Christy ran back to Lord John, taking him all the while, be it noted, for George Maxwell, and making a real country courtesy, said, “Dear, dear, sir! Ye see Mary has ta’en some o’ her tantrums the day. They’re queer creatures, thae young women! It’s impossible to comprehend them. For I can tell you ae thing, that she likes you better than baith her meat an’ her drink. Ay, than either her right hand or her right ee, or than a’ the men o’ Scotland put thegither. An’ tak ye an auld fool’s word for’t, ye’re as sure o’ her as ye’re sure o’ your denner the day. In an honourable way, that’s to say.”

“Thank you, thank you, for the dear information!” said the Tutor; at the same time holding out a handful of silver and gold pieces to her.

“Na, na! Na, na! I want nane o’ your siller an’ gowd, sir!” cried Christy, holding her closed fist above her head. “Mary has mair gowd than baith her an’ I can count or ever will be able to count a’ our days, I believe. Na, na! Keep your siller to replenish your house when you get Mary, for I assure ye that will be to do, and in some style, too! Only this I can assure ye o’, if you want to hae Mary in an honourable way ye’re sure o’ her.”

Lord John stood like a statue, saying within himself, “The daughter of a nobleman! More gold than she will ever be able to count? Of a Catholic nobleman, who died for the cause; and such a jewel for beauty! In

love with me too! I'll have her in spite of all the kinsmen and kinswomen on earth. I'll have Mary Melville! Yes, I'll have her to myself, let them all say what they will."

Christy hurried after her darling and adopted daughter, and overtaking her in the area, she said, "Dear, dear, Mary! What gart ye take the strunts at the young laird the day? Ye ken how weel he likes ye, an' I ken gayen weel how somebody likes him. I canna understand thae dortie fits. I'm sure when I was young, I never took ony o' thae dortie fits at the man I liket, except aince by the bye."

"Stop, stop, dear mother Christy! What are ye speaking about?" said Mary. "Yon young gentleman was no other than the Lord John Stewart of Traquair, or the Tutor of Caberston, as he is called. He is a youth of a haughty and imperious temper, and of a high though amiable family; but, in short, a young nobleman whom I would no more think of marrying than the Prince of Wales, to be a discredit to his high and proud ancestry. He made love to me before, but I like him very ill."

"Dear Mary! If yon be nae George Maxwell, the laird of Langley, I never saw him."

"I tell you he's no more the laird of Langley than you are, but the Lord John Stewart, the Tutor of Caberston."

"Then what hae I done, Mary? What hae I done! I told him that I was sure he had your heart, an' that if he axed you in an honourable way he should hae you, I e'en gae him my word o' honour on it."

"Then you have done very wrong, mother Christy, and that which may lead to much ill. He is only George Maxwell's half cousin, and I know there is a singular family likeness between them. But could you not distinguish the impetuous and haughty looks of the one from the modest and respectful looks of the other? Ah! there is something in the features of early schoolfellows which never can be forgotten, and which even a half or a whole century could not efface from the mind. Had

he been George Maxwell of Langley, my mischievous and teasing youthful playmate, I do assure you my behaviour would have been far otherwise. But I understand he is living in the same house with his cousins, and a great favourite there, so that I have but a small chance of any further notice from him. But it shall be long before I make any efforts to obtain it."

"Ah, ye hae a prood speerit, Mary! An' its proper an' fitting that ye should too! for I ken mair about ye than ye ken yoursel, if some reports be true. But ye sal never hear them frae me, unless I can reach the foundation o' them."

"Hush, hush!" said Mary. "See there is the Lord John Stewart following us; and as I am firmly resolved to resist his proffers whatever they may be, I beg that we may elude him some way or other that I may not be harassed by his courtship."

"Ye're a queer lassie, Mary; for I wad think the offer of a young nobleman for a husband was no that bad."

They however, went into a nobleman's house on the right hand side of the Potter-Row, and as soon as the Tutor saw them fairly housed, he ran home and hasting up to Maxwell, who was sitting in his room with a napkin about his head, and some cordials or medicines beside him, told him that he had met with Mary Melville, and though he had not got her verbal consent to marry him, he had gotten that of the old dame who had the charge of her. That she was really the most lovely creature that ever trode the face of the earth. And as Lord John seems to have been a forthright honest fellow, he told him at once where she lived.

George Maxwell arose and dressed himself ill as he was, and went straight to the nobleman's house, and desired to speak to Miss Melville. No such person was known there. Maxwell retired modestly as one who had been hoaxed, and just at the door he met the Tutor, who gave him a look of high offence as if he thought he had been taking advantage of him.

"She is not here, my lord," said Maxwell.

"Not here said he. "I know better;" and rapping loudly, a footman came to the door, when Lord John asked for Miss Mary Melville.

"I know of no such lady, sir," said the footman. "But as you asked the same question not five minutes ago, pray may I request your address."

"Lord John Stewart of Traquair," said he.

Now it so happened that the earl of Traquair had been the lord of the mansion's great friend and patron. I think his name was Anstruther, a baronet and one of the Judges of the Court of Session; so when he heard Lord John announce his name, he hastened into the lobby, welcomed him, and compelled him to come in and be introduced to his family, loading him with every sort of attention and kindness, and then inquired jocularly who the Miss Melville was whom he was asking so anxiously after.

The Tutor answered, that she was a young lady who had been recommended to the care of his father and mother, but that she had eloped from them, and they were most anxious to recover her, as she was an heiress and the daughter of a nobleman who had suffered for his adherence to the cause of King Charles.

"Melville, Melville!" said the Judge. "There must be some mistake, for no nobleman of that name in Britain has suffered either in person or forfeiture for such adherence. Are you sure she is not Lady Mary Montgomery? She would indeed, be worth looking after."

"No; we have known her always only by the name of Miss Melville."

"Then it is some deception, Lord John; some cheat depend on it, and the less you trouble yourself about her the better. Come look round you; what think you of my daughters here?"

Lord John did look round the room, for how could he avoid it. He perceived there was one of the young ladies very pretty. She chanced to be a young widow with a fortune, but he thought no more of it at that time.



The Judge then said jocularly, "But my dear Lord John, what tempted you to suppose that this lost sheep, this stray runaway beauty of yours, could be an inmate here?"

"For the best of all reasons," said the Tutor. "For I traced her into your door—saw her admitted and welcomed."

"That is the most singular circumstance I ever heard," said the Judge. But seeing his three daughters begin to titter and blush, and look very sly to one another, he asked an explanation. They would not give it, but laughed louder, blushed deeper, and bowed down their faces to their knees.

"I don't understand this at all," said the Judge. "My Lord John can you explain it to me! There must be something under this. I beg, my dear girls, that you will explain what you mean. Was Miss Melville really here yesterday?"

"Why, sir, it is rather an awkward circumstance, and I pity the noble young gentleman with all my heart," said the handsome widow. "But the truth is that there *was* a lady here yesterday, a young lady clad in green—a very fine girl, but accompanied by an old plain country-looking dame. They were ushered in here, and the young lady begged pardon and said, that she was watched and haunted by a gentleman whom she disliked exceedingly, and whom she wished by all means to elude, and that she was obliged to take shelter in our house to mislead him. She stood at that window and watched until he went out of sight, and then took her leave. She was quite a lady—a very fine girl indeed! But from the appearance of her patroness, I would not say that she is any better than she should be."

Lord John's face grew red then pale, and then red again, yet he could not help giving a sly smile to the lovely and wicked widow. He rose to go away, but the Baronet and judge compelled him to stay to a family dinner, declaring at the same time that he had been more obliged to his father than any man on earth.

When the footman admitted Lord John, he took him for the same gentleman who had called a few minutes before, for everybody mistook the one cousin for the other their dress and looks being precisely the same, so he shut the door, and Maxwell was left by himself to saunter about in the street and do as he liked. In less than five minutes who should appear but the lovely Mary Melville and old Christy of Thickside. Maxwell ran to them, and never was a lover better received. When he took Mary's hand and kissed it, the tears streamed down her cheeks, and the three all returned straight back to Mrs Jardine's again, to Mary's lodgings. Every thing was soon understood between them. Their hearts had both understood it before, and it appeared at once that they were inseparable."

"Now, dear, dear Mary, just tell me this said Christy. "Will ye ever presoom to say or pretend that that's no the gentleman we met in Holyrood-house the tither day, wha I promised you to—in an honourable way, that's to say?"

"No more than I am you or you me Christy. Do you think old schoolfellows can ever forget one another? Never! If you knew how oft I had been between these now broad shoulders, and how oft pinched and tickled by those mischievous hands, you would not suppose I could mistake his face again."

"Aih, wow, sirs! But there's mony wonderfu' things i' this world! An' mony wonderfu' changes!" exclaimed Christy. "But love biziness gangs on the same an' the same for ever! Aye love an' aye love! an' aye generation an' generation! frae the werry day that our auld father Aedie fell to this day; an' some think that was the werry thing that brak him too."

"Whisht, whisht!" said Maxwell, "and inquire at Mrs Jardine if she has any room for me, for my cousin John Stewart is so violently in love with Mary, and such a violent young man altogether, that I would rather live beside you or near you than in the Earl's family. It would be so delightful to see you every day."

Mrs Jardine could not spare him a parlour and bedroom, but she got him both right opposite, from which, though he could not properly speak, he could make signs every hour of the day ; so that the two lovers generally spent the greater part of the day together, walked together, took their meals together ; but on Sunday, going to a private chapel together, who should they meet in front of the altar but Lord John Stewart. Mary was dressed in pure white that day, with a white gauze veil, and no man could conceive an angel, far less a virgin, more lovely. When Lord John saw them enter, arm in arm, his countenance flamed with rage. He was in love with Mary, fervently, deeply in love : and after the agreement he had made with his kinsman, he conceived himself undermined and insulted ; and as Maxwell had left his father's house in the Canongate privately, he weened that Maxwell himself was conscious of the advantage he had taken. So, on leaving mass, he came sternly up and asked his cousin's address, which was given without reserve, and that same evening, Sunday though it was, Lord John sent him a challenge by the hand of Lord Adam Gordon. Maxwell would willingly have entered into an explanation ; but Lord Adam, who was likewise the Tutor's cousin, had no such instructions, so he refused all kind of capitulation, and the challenge was of course accepted, the place appointed, and every thing settled for the next morning at sun-rising.

But now a particular difficulty occurred to Maxwell. Where was he to find a second ? He had not one gentleman acquaintance in Edinburgh, save Lord John Stewart himself. There was, he knew, a sort of writer body who had done a good deal of business faithfully for the late Mr Maxwell, his father, and also for himself in his minority, whose name was Johny Fairbairn ; so, considering him a friend, he ran to him and told him his circumstances, begging of him to be his second, and telling him at the same time that he was the only son of his old friend Mr Maxwell, of Langley.

The writer was sitting in his little snug parlour at the

top of three stairs in St James's Court, reading his Bible, that day being (as may be remembered) the sabbath. But when he heard the young man's name and request, instead of appearing distressed, he appeared to regard him with laughter and contempt.

"Ay, ay, man," said he, "so thou's the son o' my first an' best friend, George Maxwell? An' thou's gawn to thraw away thy life in a sinfu' combat, likely about some wench; without thinking what is to become of thee mwother and of the family name. O, man! thou's a great fule! An' then to think that Johny Fairbairn wad bear thee out in sickan madness! That's the maist ridiculous o' the hale! But there's ae thing I can do for thee, which is mainly requisite. I'll draw out thee testament. It shall only cost thee ten puns."

George Maxwell stood thoughtful for a few minutes, and then said, "By the bye, that should have been done. But there is no time now. I must go and look after a second. The thing is settled."

"Now stop, my dear callant, and think for a wee," said Johny, "an' I'll convince ye that ye're aye o' the greatest fules in the warld. The morn's morning ye maun either murder a kinsman, or he may murder you. If ye murder him, ye will leeve a miserable life o' remorse, an' be passed into hell-fire at last, like a bouking o' foul blankets into a tub. An' gin he murder thee, which is the maist likely o' the twa, how do you think thou'lt set up thee face to thee Maker, or what wilt thee say for theesel? Couldst thou really hae the assurance to say, 'Now thou seest, Sire, that I's comed sooner to thee than I intendit. But it happened that a friend of mine an' I fell out about a wench, an' then ye see it grew an affair o' honour, an' I hae thrown away my life there's nae doubt o't. But thou maun just excuse me, for ye ken a gentleman's naething at a' without his honour.' What think'st thou the Judge's answer wad be to thee? I think I can tell thee. It wad be, 'Tak that chap awa' wi' his honour, an' plunge him wi' his heels upmost into the hottest kittle o' boiling brimstone thou canst find, an' let him

sotter there till he learn to ken the value o' his tint honour.' ”

Maxwell could not stand this satire. He found he had come to the wrong man, so he turned his back and fled ; but the satiric limb of the law followed, calling out, “ Na, na, stop. I's no done wi' thee yet. Thou hast forgot the testment an' the ten puns. Ah, fule, fule, fule ! ” added he, as Maxwell's feet blattered down the lowest stair.

Maxwell was now hard put to it, for there was not one individual in or near Edinburgh of whom he had the least knowledge, but with the bee honour in his head, and half-crazed with that and some inward gnawings, he ran up toward the castle, to try if any one officer there would stand his second. But in going up the castle hill a curious chance befel him. He perceived a fine-looking young gentleman sitting apparently much interested in the view toward the north, so he joined him and asked him the names of such and such places, and at once perceived from his dialect that he was from his own country. “ I perceive, sir, that you are a gentleman. In that no one can be mistaken,” said Maxwell, the duel alone occupying his mind. The stranger stared in his face, and thought him mad. “ I am unknown here, sir, and I think, from your tongue, that you are from my own country. Pray will you be so kind as stand my second in a duel to-morrow morning ? ”

“ With all my heart.” said the other, “ for I know that none but a gentleman would either give or accept of a challenge. Therefore I am your man depend on it. Name the place and hour.”

“ The place,” said Maxwell, “ is Nicholson's small park—the furthest away one. The time is at the sun-rising. I am George Maxwell, of Langley, and my opponent is the Lord John Stewart of Traquair.”

“ And I am likewise George Maxwell,” said the stranger ; “ a countryman and relation of your own. I am a younger son of the family of Springkell, and a student at the college here.”

“ Then God bless you for a noblehearted fellow. We are indeed near relations, and both named after the same noble progenitor.”

“ Why I do not expect that God will bless me much the more for this undertaking. But a Borderer likes always to see a trick of his old trade. Nothing to him like a bout at crown-cracking. Pray will I get a cuff at the second? Who is he?”

“ I believe he is one of the young Gordons of Huntly, likewise a cousin of my own; so it unfortunately happens that we are all relations together who are engaged in this quarrel.”

“ Nay, he is no relation to me that I know of. I'll fight him. It is said that those highlanders are good at the broad-sword, or claymore as they call it. But if Lord Adam Gordon will fight me with the Border long cut-and-thrust, I will bet a hundred pounds to his twelve pennies on the issue. I wish you would give up your quarrel with Lord John Stewart to me. If I don't settle him, never trust a Maxwell again.”

“ This is the devil of a fellow, that I ever met with!” thought the other Maxwell to himself, turning round and indulging in a burst of laughter. “ No, no, my brave namesake, that will never do. I have accepted Lord John's challenge, and I'll fight him whatever may be the consequence. It is for all that is dear to me in life, to which he has no more right nor claim than you have.”

“ Ho! hem! I understand it! Well, I'll fight him for you, and lay no claim to the girl neither. Is it a bargain?”

“ No, no; speak not of that, but meet me very early at my lodgings to-morrow morning.”

“ Never fear! I'll be with you, and I'll see you get justice too, by G—d!”

The opponents met next morning in a small inclosure, somewhere about where Rankeilor Street now is. And it having been agreed on that they were to fight with long two-edged swords, as was then the custom, before the word was given to begin, young Maxwell of Spring-

kell said to the other second, "What suppose we should also take a turn in the meantime, Lord Adam?"

"We have no quarrel, sir," said the other.

"No, true, we have no quarrel; but when friends are fighting, I hate to stand and look on. Please then, my lord, to draw!"

Lord Adam complied. The word was given, and the two pairs began at the same time. The Maxwells soon truly found with whom they had to do. In the course of from ten to fifteen seconds, Lord Adam disarmed his opponent without shedding a drop of his blood. The other was a very hard battle indeed, and it appeared to both the seconds that Maxwell had rather the best of it. At length they were both wounded—Maxwell seriously. Then was the time that the other Maxwell ought to have interposed and made peace, and for the neglect of that he was sore blamed afterwards. But he was stupified by his sudden defeat, and could do nothing but stand staring at Adam Gordon with a sword in either hand. At length Lord John wounded Maxwell for the third time, closed with him and downed him, and had just his hand raised to run him through the heart, when Gordon seized his arm, and wrenched his sword from his hand, addressing him in terms so severe that I do not choose to repeat them. He then led him from the field, but as he was forced away, he turned and said, with great bitterness, "I must go, since it is your will; but I'll have the lady still, in spite of his heart's blood."

As they were going off the field, Gordon turned round and struck his opponent's sword into the earth till it sunk to the hilt, saying, "There is your grand sword, Maxwell; I hope the next time you use it you will use it better, and in a more legitimate cause." Maxwell never got over that sudden defeat. Some said it broke his heart and killed him, as he deemed his arm unequalled. I think he died abroad, but am not certain.

Maxwell conducted his friend home, and Dr. Bennet dressed his wounds, expressing considerable doubts of his recovery. Mary attended him without the least restraint

or affectation, wept over him, and blamed him sore for risking his life for her, adding one day, "Did you ever think that any body could take me from you?"

It is impossible to conceive, far more to describe, how dear she became to Maxwell. He felt that she was the dearest part of his being, both soul and body, and that he never could exist without her. In the mean time, Lord John Stewart having found her out, offered her marriage in perfect sincerity, and was not a little astonished, as well as chagrined, when he found that she absolutely refused him; and he being a young nobleman of that wild impetuous temper that he could not brook opposition to his will in any thing, told her plainly on going away that he *would* have her, either by foul or fair means, that she might depend on.

This frightened her and her lover both, for they knew that Lord John would try to be as good as his word, and the two were married forthwith by a worthy old priest, who had been reduced by the change of times from the highest to the lowest grade of his profession; and even before George Maxwell was very fit for the journey, the two set out for Langley Dale on horseback: old Christy absolutely refusing to ride, took her foot for it, and was home before them.

Lord John took the best and most rational amends for his disappointment that any man could do, for the very next week he was married to the handsome young widow, Lady Weir, the daughter of his father's friend, Sir Philip Anstruther, the judge.

When George Maxwell and his lovely bride reached home, they were coldly received by Lady Langley, and informed, to their utter consternation, that they were not worth a farthing in the world, for that owing to the part that her late husband had acted with the royalist lords, the estate was sequestered, as well as the furniture, even to the dishes and spoons, and every thing to be sold by public auction, the forfeiture having passed the Great Seal. The estate was exposed to sale in the Royal Exchange at Edinburgh. No man offered money for it.



Then came the roup of the household furniture and cattle, at which a great concourse of people attended, when, behold, an old country-looking wife bought up every thing. At first she had to buy up some articles rather dear, nevertheless she would not let one of them go away; but soon a whisper ran that she was an agent for Lady Langley, and then, so high was the respect entertained for the old family, that no one would bid a farthing over old Christy's head. She got every thing at her own price. She actually got richly carved chairs at twopence a-piece, and splended tables for sixpence each. The auctioneer was astonished, but all his eloquence signified nothing. He got many to laugh at him, but not one to bid him money save old Christy. He at length was driven to the alternative of just asking, "See, old lady, what will you give for this?" and then strike it off to her whatever she offered. He at one time said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is very remarkable. Certainly this old lady has bewitched you and tongue-tied you every one, else you have no regard for your own interests. Here is a state-bed mounted in full, containing every thing requisite for a king lying down in. I am sure this bed, as it stands, cost upwards of a hundred pounds. We shall begin it as low as thirty pounds. Who bids thirty pounds for it? Will nobody offer thirty pounds for this splendid piece of furniture, with mattresses, feather-beds, sheets, and coverlets? Only thirty pounds."

"I'll gie you thirty pennies for it, man; an' that's a fair offer frae ae friend till another."

"Old witch, that you are! I wish that you had been a hundred miles hence to-day!"

"Dear, what wad hae com'd o' your roup then?"

"But remember, old madam, that every thing is to be ready money here to-day."

"Hout, na! ye'll surely gie me sax months' credit. It's the gate o' this country. We never pay aught in less than sax months."

"It must be on better security than you are likely to bring then."

“Oo, I’ll gie you the government creditors for my security, as you an’ them hae been sae muckle obliged to me the day, ye canna refuse that ye ken.”

“Well, ladies and gentlemen, my instructions are to sell every thing within and without the house. Every thing on the premises for what it will bring, so I am compelled to proceed. There is only one half-crown bidden for this elegant bed! Does none bid more? Two and sixpence, once! Two and sixpence, twice! Going, going! Gone! Devil take the old witch! This is deplorable! What shall I do?”

The same thing went on the whole day. The crowd got so much amused with the dilemma in which the auctioneer was placed, that there was a roar of laughter constantly going through it, and I believe if it had been for nothing more than the fun of the thing, no one would have bid a penny. No one did, however. Christy got every thing at her own estimate. She got a pair of capital bay mares for nine shillings and sixpence, and one cow for sevenpence-halfpenny. The whole sum came to a mere trifle, which Christy paid down in good yellow gold, placing the family exactly as they were before the forfeiture, and yet she still went and lodged with widow Clark as usual, and would by no means stay in the mansion-house, modestly judging that she was not fit company for them and their guests.

Before the assemblage parted that night, the auctioneer announced that the estate of Langley Dale was to be sold at the cross at Dumfries on the 7th of April, in seven lots, which he specified, and every one of which was to be knocked down to the highest bidder for ready money only. Well, the 7th of April came, but as ready money was as scarce in Scotland then as at present, there were not very many purchasers attended. In the meantime the story had spread over the whole country about old Christy, and it was reported and believed that all the Maxwells had combined to preserve the estate in the family, and had employed this old woman as the most unfeasible agent they could fix on, and every one rejoiced

at the stratagem, and at the part old Christy had acted. There were three of the Maxwells had agreed to buy up the mansion-house and the farm around it for their young relation, but farther they had not resolved to credit him in the ticklish state he stood with the new government.

The auctioneer was placed upon a raised platform with the clerk beside him. The mansion-house of Langley was first exposed, with the garden, offices, and farm adjoining, at the moderate upset price of £10,000 Scots. Springkell was just going to offer the upset price for the behoof of the present proprietor, when, behold old Christy stepped forward and offered 500 merks!

If any body had but seen the astonishment of the clerk and auctioneer when they saw their old friend appear before them again; their jaws actually fell down, and they looked like men bewitched or as if struck with a palsy. They perceived how the sale would go, and how they would be regarded by their employers, and their spirits sunk within them; so after a great deal of palaver the lot was knocked down to Christy for 500 merks, a sum rather short of £27—at this very time it is let at £243.

George Maxwell being there among his noble and most respectable relations, would not let one of them open their mouths to bid for him as soon as old Christy appeared, so the sale went on much as before. There were plenty there who knew old Christy, and the whisper soon went round that this was the agent of the Maxwells again, and not one person would bid a farthing against her. She bought up the whole at her own price, and the last farm, that of Auchenvoo, which a friend of my own now possesses, she obtained at not the twentieth part of what is now paid for it in annual rent.

There was some demur about the payment. Among the treasure which Christy got with Mary when a baby, there were a great number of foreign gold coins of which she did not know the sterling value, but on which she had set a nominal value of her own, something proportioned to the size. These the agents for the sale refused

to take, and tried on that account to reverse the whole bargain. But the Maxwells backed old Christy and appealed to the sheriff, Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, who knew as little about the value of the coins as any of them did. But he loved the old Maxwells, and took a most excellent way of settling the dispute. He made them take so much of the sterling coin of the realm and weigh the foreign coin against it, and pronounced the one as of the same value with the other. As this came very nearly to one-third more than Christy had set upon her foreign specie, the estate turned out to be very cheap at last.

These transactions were all a mystery to the Maxwells. Christy had never mentioned Mary's treasure to any living save to Lord John Stewart by mistake, and he having lost her and married a rich widow instead, thought no more of it; and they really imagined, like the rest of the country, that she was the secret agent of the clan. She would not live with them, but still with Mrs Clark; but there was no endearment that they did not load her with, for there were they established in their ancient property freer of burdens than it had ever been since it came into the possession of the family, and all bestowed on them by a poor old widow, by what means they could not comprehend.

Lady Mary Montgomery had been called over every cross in the south of Scotland and north of England once a-year, for a number of years, and £100 offered for her discovery, that being the only means then in use of advertising; and it so happened that Lord John Faa, the king of the gipsies, was the man who discovered her to her friends and actually gained the reward,—a generous and kind action seldom misses it. "He had been guilty of some fact, but I canna just be telling e'enow what that fact was," as Mrs Macknight used to say; but certain it is he was lying in Ayr prison at the time when he heard the proclamation through his grated loophole, and when the description was read of the golden cross set with rubies, which was locked round her neck, he was certain he could find a clue for her discovery.

He accordingly, the next day, sent for Sir James Montgomery, and disclosed to him all that he knew about the young lady. How that she had once fallen into his hands by mere chance. That she had even been delivered to him with her hands bound behind her back, but that he was so much impressed by her beauty, her tears, and above all, by the bloody cross of gold upon her breast, that he instantly released her and conducted her in safety to the castle of Traquair, where he delivered her to the ladies of that mansion.

Now this must have been a Sir James Montgomery of Ayrshire, and not as I supposed, Sir James of Stanhope; for I know that Faa was lying in the prison of Ayr, and that he sent for Sir James Montgomery, who attended him on the very day that he sent, and listened to the gipsy lord's narrative with wonder and astonishment. He instantly bailed him from prison, armed and mounted him, and took him in his train as a witness who could not be deceived. There was, however, no deception attempted. When they arrived at Traquair House the Earl and the Countess were from home, having gone abroad; but Lord Linton, Lord John, his young wife, and another young lady were there, and welcomed Sir James with all the usual kindness and hospitality for which the family had been long remarkable; and the Tutor, who knew most about the young lady, told Sir James at once that the young lady who had been recommended to their family under the name of Mary Melville, had eloped from them, and was now married to a young kinsman of their own, Mr Maxwell, of a place called Langley. That he had since heard that their lands had been forfeited, and that they had been roused out at the door, and he knew no further about them. He said not a word about his own love or the duel he had fought for her, his wife being present; but he told Sir James further, that she was supposed to be the daughter of a nobleman who had suffered in some way for his adherence to King Charles, but who he was could never be discovered. That he thought he had heard his mother once speak of

a cross set with jewels, but for his part he had never seen it, and knew not positively whether it was of her or some other lady that the countess had then been speaking. Perhaps it was hers, for there was something said about an M.M. being on it.

Sir James clapped his hands for joy. "It is she! it is she indeed!" cried he. "My own dear and long-lost ward! Her husband is fortunate! She is worth fifty thousand a-year to him, exclusive of long and heavy arrears, which are due to her, but all are well secured."

He rode straight to Langley Dale next day, and found his long-lost kinswoman a lovely, beloved, and happy wife, though rather, as they themselves supposed, in poor circumstances, as they were indebted for all that they possessed to a poor old woman, who had acted the part of a mother to Mary from her earliest recollection.

When Sir James alighted at Langley-gate with his train of three armed followers, there was no little stir within the house, visitors of such apparent rank being rarely seen there. He told his name and designation, and said he wanted a private word of the young lady of the mansion. He was shown into a room, and Mary instantly came to him with a pale face, wondering what a great baronet could want with her. After the usual compliments and salutations had passed, Sir James said, while Mary stood actually panting for breath, "My dear young lady, I hope I come with good tidings to you?"

"Thank you, Sir James, thank you, though I cannot conceive what those tidings may be."

"Pray, will you allow me one look of the medal suspended from that gold chain around your neck?"

Mary pulled it out and presented it, on which Sir James kneeled and kissed certainly the most beautiful crucifix that ever was framed by the hands of men. And then saluting the lady, he said, "You do not know, madam, who you are or what your rank is, but I know. Come, then, and let me introduce you to your husband, although rather a novel way of introduction."

Then leading her in by the hand to the parlour where

Maxwell and his mother stood awaiting them, he said to the former, "I give you joy, sir, of this your lovely young wife. Such joy as I never had the power of conferring before, and never shall again; but I give it you with all my heart, and hope by your behaviour you will continue to deserve it. You are the most lucky man, Mr Maxwell, that ever Scotland bred. This young and most lovely wife of yours, sir, I may now introduce to you as the Honourable Lady Mary Montgomery, sole heiress of three lordships, all of which you will inherit through her, though not the titles, excepting perhaps the Irish one. But these are of small avail. With this lady's hand you have secured to yourself £50,000 a-year, besides upwards of £500,000 of cash in hand, all run up in arrears of rent since she was lost, but all firmly secured in bonds at full interest. So I think you must confess you are the most fortunate man that ever was born."

George answered modestly that he held his darling Mary in such estimation, that no earthly advantage could enhance her value to him, but that he certainly would be grateful to providence as long as he lived for such an extraordinary windfall of fortune. But Mrs Maxwell who had been pinched for money all her life, hearing of £500,000 of tocher and £50,000 a-year, seemed to lose all power of calculation. She held up her hands—her frame grew rigid. Her face grew first deadly white, then of a mulberry hue, and down she fell in a swoon. This somewhat marred the joy of the happy group, but after the old lady was laid in bed she gradually recovered. She however, lay raving about "thousands and hunders o' thousand puns" for nearly three weeks.

When matters were a little settled, old Christy was sent for, that every thing might be fairly authenticated. Christy, for the first time, divulged the whole truth concerning the young lady; of the death of the priest, and the capture of the child with all her gold and jewels about her person. But that the documents relating to her birth had by some chance fallen into other hands, she wist not how. She knew that one noble family, of

whom she had great dread and great suspicions, was in search of the babe, but that she, dreading it was in order to make away with her and possess themselves of her treasure, thought it best to abscond with the dear infant, and claim her as her daughter, in order to preserve every thing to her that was her own, which she had done to the value of a plack. She then stated how she had bought up the estate and every thing pertaining to it with the lady's own treasure, and that she had a good deal still of which she neither knew the value nor the use, but which should be produced, to the last mite.

She then went to her little concealed treasure, and brought a great number of gold ducats and doubloons, with many other foreign coins of which I have forgot the names. She likewise produced all the little precious trinkets that had belonged to Mary's mother, Lady Montgomery, even to her wedding ring, which affected Mary exceedingly. It is easy to conceive that old Christy and Mrs Clark were placed in snug and comfortable situations for the rest of their lives.

When all these things were fairly settled, and Mary's capture proved to a day and an hour, Sir James said, "But Lady Mary, I have a henchman of my own to introduce to you, merely to see if you know and acknowledge him, for if you do, it is a fact that you are indebted to him for all your riches and honours, and he deserves his reward."

He then went and brought in John Faa, lord of little Egypt and of all the Egyptian tribe in Britain.

Mary at once courtsied to him, and said, "Ah, my Lord John Faa here too! As noble and generous a person as ever breathed, and well deserving to be chief of a more respectable clan. But you was an awful morning, Faa. However, *you* behaved as a gentleman to me, and I shall never forget it."

"Do you know, you blackguard gipsy," said Sir James, "that this lady, whom you protected and released, is no other than the Honourable Lady Mary Montgomery, the sole heiress to three earldoms?"



“Lord, what a prize I hae looten slip away from me!” exclaimed Faa, holding up his hands, with a countenance of exultation. “But od you see, Sir James, her beauty an’ her tears, an’ aboon a’ the bloody cross on her breast, struck me wi’ the same veneration, as if she had been the Virgin Mary (which she was by the bye). But od you see I coudna hae injured a hair of the lovely creature’s head to hae been made king o’ the island. Na! Nor for nae earthly feeling or advantage.”

Sir James then paid him down his hundred guineas, and said, “Now, had it been a hundred thousand I could hae paid it from that lady’s wealth to-morrow.

“A hunder pounds! a hunder pounds!” exclaimed the gipsy chief, “there was never as muckle money in a gipsey’s pouch sin’ the warld stood up, or else it was nae as honestly come by, Mony thanks t’ye a’, leddies and gentlemen;” and Faa began to bow himself out of the room, when Mary said, “Farewell, Lord John, and as you once freed me, when in dreadful jeopardy, if you are ever in one, which is not unlikely to happen from what I saw of your subjects, be sure to apply to me, and if either my interest or credit can relieve you, they shall not be wanting.” That time did arrive in the course of three years, but thereby hangs a tale, which I hope I shall live to relate.

Before the gipsy chief was dismissed. Sir James had noted that old Christy was standing up in a corner, sobbing and drowned in tears. “What is the matter, my worthy old dame?” said he.

“O, sir,” said she, “I never ken’d really wha my dear, dear bairn was qwhill now. The very first night that she came to my arms, she said that her name was Maly Gumly, a name of which I could make nothing. And when I was obliged to abscond with her for fear of being burnt to ashes, which we wad hae been had we staid at hame another day, an’ when I cam’ here to leeve wi’ her, as my ain bairn, she told widow Clark that her name was Maly Gumly, and that she had ridden in a coach wi’ her father, and that men took off their caps to him. I

think I hae acted the part o' a mother to her, an' if I should never see her face again, which I fear will now be but ower seldom, I shall say that o' her, that a kinder-heartit, mair affectionate an' dutifu' creature was never formed o' flesh an' blood."

Mary ran up, clasped old Christy to her bosom, and kissed the tears from her cheeks.

# THE SIEGE OF ROXBURGH.

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## CHAPTER I.

There was a king, and a courteous king,  
And he had a daughter sae bonnie ;  
And he lo'ed that maiden aboon a' thing  
I' the bonnie, bonnie halls o' Binnorie.

\* \* \* \*

But wae be to thee, thou warlock wight,  
My malison come o'er thee,  
For thou hast undone the bravest knight,  
That ever brak bread o' B.nnorie !

*Old Song.*

THE days of the Stuarts, kings of Scotland, were the days of chivalry and romance. The long and bloody contest that the nation maintained against the whole power of England, for the recovery of its independence, —of those rights which had been most unwarrantably wrested from our fathers by the greatest and most treacherous sovereign of that age, with the successful and glorious issue of the war, laid the foundation for this spirit of heroism, which appears to have been at its zenith about the time that the Stuarts first acquired the sovereignty of the realm. The deeds of the Douglasses, the Randolphs, and other border barons of that day, are not to be equalled by any recorded in our annals ; while the reprisals that they made upon the English, in retaliation for former injuries, enriched both them and their followers, and rendered their appearance splendid and imposing to a degree that would scarcely now gain credit. It was

no uncommon thing for a Scottish earl then to visit the Court at the head of a thousand horsemen, all splendidly mounted in their military accoutrements: and many of these, gentlemen of rank and family. In court and camp, feats of arms were the topic of conversation, and the only die that stamped the character of a man of renown, either with the fair, the monarch, or the chiefs of the land. No gentleman of noble blood would pay his addresses to his mistress, until he had broken a spear with the knights of the rival nation, surprised a strong-hold, or driven a prey from the kinsmen of the Piercies, the Musgraves, or the Howards. As in all other things that run to a fashionable extremity, the fair sex took the lead in encouraging these deeds of chivalry, till it came to have the appearance of a national mania. There were tournaments at the castle of every feudal baron and knight. The ploughmen and drivers were often discovered, on returning from the fields, hotly engaged in a tilting bout with their goads and ploughstaves; and even the little boys and maidens on the village green, each well mounted on a crooked stick, were daily engaged in the combat, and riding rank and file against each other, breaking their tiny weapons in the furious onset, while the mimic fire flashed from their eyes. Then was the play of *Scots and English* begun, a favourite one on the school green to this day. Such was the spirit of the age, not only in Scotland, but over all the countries of southern Europe, when the romantic incidents occurred on which the following tale is founded.—It was taken down from the manuscript of an old Curate, who had spent the latter part of his life in the village of Mireton, and was given to the present Editor by one of those tenants who now till the valley where stood the richest city of this realm.

There were once a noble king and queen of Scotland, as many in that land have been.—In this notable tell-tale manner, does old Isaac, the curate, begin his narrative. It will be seen in the sequel, that this king and queen were Robert the Second and his consort.—They

were beloved by all their subjects, (continues he) and loved and favoured them in return; and the country enjoyed happiness and peace, all save a part adjoining to the borders of England. The strong castle of Roxburgh, which was the key of that country, had been five times taken by the English, and three times by the Scots, in less than seventeen months, and was then held by the gallant Lord Musgrave for Richard king of England.

Our worthy king had one daughter, of exquisite beauty and accomplishments; the flower of all Scotland, and her name was Margaret. This princess was courted by many of the principal nobility of the land, who all eagerly sought an alliance with the royal family, not only for the additional honour and power which it conferred on them and their posterity, but for the personal charms of the lady, which were of that high eminence, that no man could look on her without admiration. This emulation of the lords kept the court of King Robert full of bustle, homage and splendour. All were anxious to frustrate the designs of their opponents, and to forward their own; so that high jealousies were often apparent in the sharp retorts, stern looks, and nodding plumes of the rival wooers; and as the princess had never disclosed her partiality for one above another, it was judged that Robert scarcely dared openly to give the preference to any of them. A circumstance, however, soon occurred, which brought the matter fairly to the test.

It happened on a lovely summer day, at the end of July that three and twenty noble rivals for the hand of the beautiful princess were all assembled at the palace of Linlithgow; but the usual gaiety, mirth, and repartee did not prevail; for the king had received bad tidings that day, and he sat gloomy and sad.

Musgrave had issued from the castle of Roxburgh, had surprised the castle of Jedburgh, and taken prisoner William, brother to the lord of Galloway; slain many loyal Scottish subjects, and wasted Teviotdale with fire and sword. The conversation turned wholly on the state of affairs on the border, and the misery to which

that country was exposed by the castle of Roxburgh remaining in the hands of the English; and at length the king enquired impatiently, how it came that Sir Philip Musgrave had surprised the castle this last time, when his subjects were so well aware of their danger.

The earl of Hume made answer, that it was wholly an affair of chivalry, and one of the bravest and noblest acts that ever was performed. Musgrave's mistress, the lady Jane Howard, of the blood royal, and the greatest heirless of the north of England, had refused to see him, unless he gained back his honour by the retaking of that perilous castle, and keeping it against all force, intercession, or guile, till the end of the Christmas holidays. That he had accomplished the former in the most gallant stile; and, from the measures that he had adopted, and the additional fortifications that he had raised, there was every possibility that he would achieve the latter.

"What," said the king, "must the spirit of chivalry then be confined to the country of our enemies? Have our noble dames of Scotland less heroism in their constitutions than those of the south? Have they fewer of the charms of beauty, or have their lovers less spirit to fulfil their commands? By this sceptre in my right hand, I will give my daughter, the princess Margaret, to the knight who shall take that castle of Roxburgh out of the hands of the English before the expiry of the Christmas holidays."

Every lord and knight was instantly on his feet to accept the proposal, and every one had his hand stretched towards the royal chair for audience, when Margaret arose herself, from the king's left hand, where she was seated, and flinging her left arm backward, on which swung a scarf of gold, and stretching her right, that gleamed with bracelets of rubies and diamonds, along the festive board, "Hold, my noble lords," said she; "I am too deeply interested here not to have a word to say. The grandchild of the great Bruce must not be given away to every adventurer without her own approval. Who among you will venture his honour and his life for

me?" Every knight waved his right hand aloft and dashed it on the hilt of his sword, eyeing the graceful attitude and dignified form of the princess with raptures of delight. "It is well," continued she, "the spirit of chivalry *has not* deserted the Scottish nation—hear me then: My father's vow shall stand; I will give my hand in marriage to the knight who shall take that castle for the king, my father, before the expiry of the Christmas holidays, and rid our border of that nest of reavers; but with this proviso only, that, in case of his attempting and failing in the undertaking, he shall forfeit all his lands, castles, towns, and towers to me, which shall form a part of my marriage-portion to his rival. Is it fit that the daughter of a king should be given up or won as circumstances may suit, or that the risk should all be on one side? Who would be so unreasonable as expect it? This, then, with the concurrence of my lord and father, is my determination, and by it will I stand."

The conditions were grievously hard, and had a damping and dismal effect on the courtly circle. The light of every eye deadened into a dim and sullen scowl. It was a deed that promised glory and renown to adventure their blood for such a dame,—to win such a lady as the Princess of Scotland: but, to give up their broad lands and castles to enrich a hated rival, was an obnoxious consideration, and what in all likelihood was to be the issue. When all the forces of the land had been unable to take the castle by storm, where was the probability that any of them was now to succeed? None accepted the conditions. Some remained silent; some shook their heads, and muttered incoherent mumblings; others strode about the room, as if in private consultation.

"My honoured liege," said Lady Margaret, "none of the lords or knights of your court have the spirit to accept of my conditions. Be pleased then to grant me a sufficient force. I shall choose the officers for them myself, and I engage to take the castle of Roxburgh before Christmas. I will disappoint the bloody Musgrave of his bride; and the world shall see whether the charms

of Lady Jane Howard or those of Margaret Stuart shall rouse their admirers to deeds of the most desperate valour. Before the Christmas bells have tolled, that shall be tried on the rocks, in the rivers, in the air, and the bowels of the earth. In the event of my enterprise proving successful, all the guerdon that I ask is, the full and free liberty of giving my hand to whom I will. It shall be to no one that is here." And so saying she struck it upon the table, and again took her seat at the king's left hand.

Every foot rung on the floor with a furious tramp, in unison with that stroke of the princess's hand. The taunt was not to be brooked. Nor was it. The haughty blood of the Douglasses could bear it no longer. James, the gallant earl of Douglas and Mar, stepped forward from the circle. "My honoured liege, and master," said he, "I have not declined the princess's offer,—beshrew my heart if ever it embraced such a purpose. But the stake is deep, and a moment's consideration excusable. I have considered, and likewise decided. I accept the lady's proposals. With my own vassals alone, and at my own sole charge, will I rescue the castle from the hands of our enemies, or perish in the attempt. The odds are high against me. But it is now a Douglas or a Musgrave : God prosper the bravest!"

"Spoken like yourself, noble Douglas," said the king, "The higher the stake the greater the honour. The task be yours, and may the issue add another laurel to the heroic name."

"James of Douglas," said Lady Margaret, "dost thou indeed accept of these hard conditions for my sake? Then the hand of thy royal mistress shall buckle on the armour in which thou goest to the field, but never shall unloose it, unless from a victor or a corse!" And with that she stretched forth her hand, which Douglas, as he kneeled with one knee on the ground, took and pressed to his lips.

Every one of the nobles shook Douglas by the hand, and wished him success. Does any man believe that



there was one among them that indeed wished it? No, there was not a chief present that would not have rejoiced to have seen him led to the gallows. His power was too high already, and they dreaded that now it might be higher than ever; and, moreover, they saw themselves outdone by him in heroism, and felt degraded by the contract thus concluded.

The standard of the Douglas was reared, and the bloody heart flew far over many a lowland dale. The subordinate gentlemen rose with their vassals, and followed the banner of their chief; but the more powerful kept aloof, or sent ambiguous answers. They deemed the service undertaken little better than the frenzy of a madman.

There was at that time a powerful border baron, nicknamed Sir Ringan Redhough, by which name alone he was distinguished all the rest of his life. He was warden of the middle marches, and head of the most warlike and adventurous sept in all that country. The answer which this hero gave to his own cousin, Thomas Middlemas, who came to expostulate with him from Douglas, is still preserved verbatim; "What, man, are a' my brave lads to lie in bloody claes that the Douglas may lie i' snaw-white sheets wi' a bonny bedfellow? Will that keep the braid border for the king, my master? Tell him to keep their hands fu', an' their haunches toom, an' they'll soon be blythe to leave the lass an' loup at the ladle; an' the fient ae cloot shall cross the border to gar their pots play brown atween Dirdanhead and Cocket-fell. Tell him this, an' tell him that Redhough said it. If he dinna work by wiles he'll never pouch the profit. But if he canna do it, an' owns that he canna do it, let him send word to me, an' I'll tak' it for him."

With these words he turned his back, and abruptly left his cousin, who returned to Douglas, ill satisfied with the success of his message, but, nevertheless, delivered it faithfully. "That curst carle," said the Douglas, "is a thorn in my thigh, as well as a buckler on my arm. He's as cunning as a fox, as stubborn as an oak,

and as fierce as a lion. I must temporize for the present, as I cannot do without his support, but the time may come that he may be humbled, and made to know his betters; since one endeavour has failed, we must try another, and, if that do not succeed, another still."

The day after that, as Sir Ringan was walking out at his own gate, an old man, with a cowl, and a long grey beard, accosted him. "May the great spirit of the elements shield thee, and be thy protector, knight," said he.

"An' wha may he be, carle, an it be your will?" said Ringan; "An' wha may ye be that gie me sic a sachless benediction? As to my shield and protection, look ye here?" and with that he touched his two-handed sword, and a sheaf of arrows that was swung at his shoulder: "an' what are all your saints and lang nebbit spirits to me?"

"It was a random salutation, knight," said the old man seeing his mood and temper; "I am not a priest but a prophet. I come not to load you with blessings, curses, nor homilies, all equally unavailing, but to tell you what shall be in the times that are to come. I have had visions of futurity that have torn up the tendrils of my spirit by the roots. Would you like to know what is to befall you and your house in the times that are to come?"

"I never believe a word that you warlocks say," replied the knight; "but I like aye to hear what you *will* say about matters; though it is merely to laugh at ye, for I dinna gie credit to ane o' your predictions. Sin' the Rhymer's days, the spirit o' true warlockry is gane. He foretauld muckle that has turned out true; an something that I hope *will* turn out true: but ye're a' bairns to him."

"Knight," said the stranger, "I can tell you more than ever the Rhymer conceived, or thought upon; and, moreover I can explain the words of True Thomas, which neither you nor those to whom they relate in the smallest degree comprehend. Knowest thou the prophecy of the Hart and the Deer, as it is called?"

' Quhere the hearte heavit in het blude over hill and howe,  
 There shall the dinke deire droule for the dowe :  
 Two fleite footyde maydenis shall tredde the greine,  
 And the mone and the starre shall flashe betweine,  
 Quhere the proude hiche halde and heveye hande beire  
 Ane frenauch shall feide on ane faderis frene feire,  
 In dinging at the starris the D shall doupe down.  
 But the S shall be S quhane the heide S is gone.' "

" I hae heard the reide often and often," said the knight, " but the man's unborn that can understand that. Though the prophecies and the legends of the Rhymer take the lead i' my lear, I hae always been obliged to make that a passover."

" There is not one of all his sayings that relates as much to you and your house, knight. It foretels that the arms of your family shall supersede those of Douglas, which you know are the bloody heart ; and that in endeavouring to exalt himself to the stars, the D, that is the Douglas, shall fall, but that your house and name shall remain when the Stuarts are no more."

" By the horned beasts of Old England, my father's portion, and my son's undiminished hope," exclaimed the knight,—“ Thou art a cunning man ! I now see the bearing o' the prophecy as plainly as I see the hill o' Mountcomyn before my e'e ; and, as I know Thomas never is wrong, I believe it. Now is the time, auld warlock,—now is the time ; he's ettling at a king's daughter, but his neck lies in wad, and the forfeit will be his undoing.”

" The time is not yet come, valiant knight ; nevertheless the prophecy is true. Has thy horse's hoof ever trode, or thine eye journeyed, over the Nine Glens of Niddisdale ?"

" I hae whiles gotten a glisk o' them."

" They are extensive, rich and beautiful."

" They're nae less, auld carle ; they're nae less. They can send nine thousand leel men an' stout to the field in a pinch."

" It is recorded in the book of fate,—it is written there—"

“The devil it is, auld carle; that’s mair than I thought o’.”

“Hold thy peace: lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and be silent till I explain: I say I have seen it in the visions of the night,—I have seen it in the stars of heaven”—

“What? the Nine Glens o’ Niddisdale among the starns o’ heaven! by hoof and horn, it was rarely seen, warlock.”

“I say that I have seen it,—they are all to belong to thy house.”

“Niddisdale a’ to pertain to my house!”

“All.”

“Carle, I gie nae credit to sic forbodings: but I have heard somethink like this afore. Will ye stay till I bring my son Robin, the young Master of Mountcomyn, and let him hear it? For aince a man takes a mark on his way, I wadna hae him to tine sight o’t. Mony a time has the tail o’ the king’s elwand pointed me the way to Cumberland; an’ as often has the ee o’ the Charlie-wain blinkit me hame again. A man’s nae the waur o’ a bit beacon o’ some kind,—a bit hope set afore him, auld carle; an’ the Nine Glens o’ Niddisdale are nae Willie-an-the-Wisp in a lad’s ee.”

“From Roxburgh castle to the tower of Sark,”—

“What’s the auld-warld birkie saying?”

“From the Deadwater-fell to the Linns of Cannoby, —from the Linns of Cannoby to the heights of Manor and the Deucharswire,—shall thy son, and the representatives of thy house, ride on their own lands.”

“May ane look at your foot, carle? Take off that huge wooden sandal, an it be your will.”

“Wherefore should I, knight?”

“Because I dread ye are either the devil or Master Michael Scott.”

“Whoever I am, I am a friend to you and to yours, and have told you the words of truth. I have but one word more to say:—Act always in concert with the Douglasses, while they act in concert with the king your mas-

ter,—not a day, nor an hour, nor a moment longer. It is thus, and thus alone, that you must rise and the Douglas fall. Remember the words of True Thomas,—

‘ Quhane the wingit hors at his maistere sal wince,  
‘ Let wyse men cheat the chevysance.’ ”

“ There is something mair about you than other folk, auld man. If ye be my kinsman, Michael Scott the warlock, I crave your pardon, Master; but if you are that dreadfu’ carle—I mean that learned and wonderfu’ man, why you are welcome to my castle. But you are not to turn my auld wife into a hare, Master, an’ hunt her up an’ down the hills wi’ my ain grews; nor my callants into naigs to scamper about an’ i’ the night-time when they hae ither occupations to mind. There is naething i’ my tower that isna at your command; for, troth, I wad rather brow a’ the Ha’s and the Howard’s afore I beardit you.”

“ I set no foot in your halls, knight. This night is a night among many to me; and wo would be to me if any thing canopied my head save the cope of heaven. There are horoscopes to be read this night for a thousand years to come. One cake of your bread and one cup of your wine is all that the old wizard requests of you, and that he must have.”

The knight turned back and led the seer into the inner-court, and fed him with bread and wine, and every good thing; but well he noted that he asked no holy benediction on them like the palmers and priors that wandered about the country; and, therefore, he had some lurking dread of the old man. He did not thank the knight for his courtesy, but, wiping his snowy beard, he turned abruptly away, and strode out at the gate of the castle. Sir Ringan kept an eye on him privately till he saw him reach the top of Blake Law, a small dark hill immediately above the castle. There he stopped and looked around him, and taking two green sods, he placed the one above the other, and laid himself down on his back, resting his head upon the two sods,—his body half

raised, and his eyes fixed on heaven. The knight was almost frightened to look at him; but sliding into the cleuch, he ran secretly down to the tower to bring his lady to see this wonderful old warlock. When they came back he was gone, and no trace of him to be seen, nor saw they him any more at that time.

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## CHAPTER II.

This man's the devil's fellow commoner.  
 A verie cloake-bag of iniquitie.  
 His butteries and his craboun he deschargeth  
 Flasche, not by airt or reule. Is it meet  
 A Ploydenist should be a *cedant arma toga*,  
 Mounted on a trapt palfrey; with a dishe  
 Of velvatte on his heide, to keepe the brothe  
 Of his wit warm? The devil, my maisteris,  
 There is no dame in Venice shall indure itt.

*Old Play.*

WHILST the knight and his lady were looking about in amazement for their mysterious guest, the tower-warder sounded the great bugle, a tremendous horn that lay on a shelf in the balcony where he kept watch. "One—two—three," said the knight, counting the three distinct notes,—a signal of which he well knew the language,— "What can that mean? I am wanted it would appear: another messenger from the Douglas, I warrant."

"Sir Ringan, keep by that is your own," said the lady—"I say, mind your own concerns, and let the Douglas mind his."

"Dame," said the chief, "I hae gotten some mair insight into that affair than you; and we maun talk about it by an' bye. In the mean time let us haste home, and see who is arrived."

As they descended from the hill hand in hand, (for

none walked arm in arm in those days,) they saw Richard Dodds, a landward laird, coming to meet them. "Oh," said Sir Ringan, "this is my officious cousin, Dickie o' Dryhope; what business can he be come upon? It will be something that he deems of great importance."

"I hate that old fawning, flattering sycophant," said the lady; "and cannot divine what is the cause of your partiality for him."

"It is his attachment to our house that I admire, and his perfect devotion to my service and interests," said the knight.

"Mere sound," exclaimed the lady bitterly: "Mere waste of superfluous breath! I tell you, Sir Ringan, that, for all your bravery, candour, and kindness, you are a mere novice in the affairs of life, and know less of men and of things than ever knight did."

"It is a great fault in women," said the knight, making his observation general, "that they will aye be meddling wi' things they ken nought about. They think they ken every thing, an' wad gar ane trow that they can see an inch into a fir deal.—Gude help them! It is just as unfeasible to hear a lady discussing the merits of warriors an' yeomen, as it wad be to see me sitting nursing a wench-bairn."

"Foh, what an uncourtly term!" said the lady; "What would King Robert think if he heard you speaking in that uncouth stile?"

"I speak muckle better than him, wi' his short clippit Highland tongue," said the chief; "But hush, here comes the redoubted Dickie o' Dryhope."

No sooner were the knight and his lady's eyes turned so as to meet Dickie's, than he whipped off his bonnet with a graceful swing, and made a low bow, his thin gray locks waving as he bowed. Dickie was a tall, lean, toothless, old bachelor, whose whole soul and body were devoted to the fair sex and the house of his chief. These two mighty concerns divided his attention, and often, mingled with one another; his enthusiasm for the one, by any sudden change of subjects or concatenation of ideas,

being frequently transferred to the other. Dickie approached with his bonnet in his hand, bowing every time the knight and lady lifted their eyes. When they met, Sir Ringan shook him heartily by the hand, and welcomed him to the castle of Mountcomyn.

“ Oh, you are so good and so kind, Sir Ringan, bless you, bless you, bless you, noble sir ; how do you thrive, Sir Ringan ? bless you, bless you. And my excellent and noble lady Mountcomyn, how is my noble dame ? ”

“ Thank you,” said the lady coldly.

Dickie looked as if he would have shaken hands with her, or embraced her, as the custom then was, but she made no proffer of either the one or the other, and he was obliged to keep his distance ; but this had no effect in checking his adulations. “ I am so glad that my excellent lady is well, and the young squires and maidens all brisk and whole I hope ? ”

“ All well, cousin,” said the chief.

“ Eh ! all well ? ” reiterated Dickie, “ Oh the dear, delightful, darling souls, O bless them ! If they be but as well as I wish them, and as good as I wish—If the squires be but half so brave as their father, and the noble young sweet dames half so beautiful as their lady mother—oh bless them, bless them.” “ And half so independent and honest as their cousin,” said the lady, with a rebuking sneer.

“ Very pleasant ! very pleasant, indeed ! ” simpered Dickie, without daring to take his lips far asunder, lest his toothless gums should be seen.

“ Such babyish flummery ? ” rejoined the lady with great emphasis. Dickie was somewhat abashed. His eyes, that were kindled with a glow of filial rapture, appeared as with flattened pupils, nevertheless the benignant smile did not altogether desert his features. The knight gave a short look off at one side to his lady. “ It is a great fault in ladies, cousin,” said he, “ that they will always be breaking their jokes on those that they like best, and always pretending to keep at a distance from them. My lady thinks to blind my een, as many a



dame has done to her husband afore this time; but I ken, and some mae ken too, that if there's ane o' a' my kin that I durstna trust my lady wi' when my back's turned, that ane's Dickie o' Dryhope."

"H'm, h'm, h'm, neighed Dickie, laughing with his lips shut; "My lady's so pleasant, and so kind, but—Oh—no, no—you wrong her, knight; h'm, h'm, h'm! But, all joking and gibing aside—my lady's very pleasant. I came express to inform you, Sir Ringan, that the Douglasses are up."

"I knew it."

"And the Maxwells—and the Gordons—and the hurkle-backed Hendersons."

"Well."

"And Sir Christopher Seton is up—and the Elliots and the laird of Tibbers is up."

"Well, well."

"I came expressly to inform you—"

"Came with piper's news," said the lady, "which the fiddler has told before you."

"That *is* very good," said Dickie; "My lady is so delightfully pleasant—I thought Sir Ringan would be going to rise with the rest, and came for directions as to raising my men."

"How many men can the powerful Laird of Dryhope muster in support of the warden?" said Lady Mountcomyn.

"Mine are all at his command; my worthy lady knows that," said Dickie, bowing: "Every one at his command."

"I think," said she, "that at the battle of Blakehope you furnished only two, who were so famished with hunger that they could not bear arms, far less fight."

"Very pleasant in sooth; h'm h'm! I declare I am delighted with my lady's good humour."

"You may, however, keep your couple of scare-crows at home for the present, and give them something to eat," continued she; "the warden has other matters to mind than wasting his vassals that the Douglass may wive."

“Very true, and excellent good sense,” said Dickie.

“We’ll talk of that anon,” said Sir Ringan. And with that they went into the castle, and sat down to dinner. There were twelve gentlemen and nine maidens present, exclusive of the knight’s own family, and they took their places on each side as the lady named them. When Sir Ringan lifted up his eyes and saw the station that Dickie occupied, he was dissatisfied, but instantly found a remedy. “Davie’s Pate,” said he to the lad that waited behind him, “mak that bowiefu’ o’ cauld plovers change places wi’ yon saut-faut instantly, before meat be put to mouth.” The order was no sooner given than obeyed, and the new arrangement placed Dickie fairly above the salt.

The dining apparatus at the castle of Mountcomyn was homely, but the fare was abundant. A dozen yeomen stood behind with long knives, and slashed down the beef and venison into small pieces, which they placed before the guests in wooden plates, so that there was no knife used at the dining board. All ate heartily, but none with more industry than Dickie, who took not even time all the while to make the complaisant observation, that “my lady was so pleasant.”

Dinner being over, the younger branches of the family retired, and all the kinsmen not of the first rank, pretending some business that called them away, likewise disappeared; so that none were left with the knight and his lady save six. The lady tried the effect of several broad hints on Dickie, but he took them all in good part, and declared that he never saw his lady so pleasant in his life. And now a serious consultation ensued, on the propriety of lending assistance to the Douglas. Sir Ringan first put the question to his friends, without any observation. The lady took up the argument, and reasoned strongly against the measure. Dickie was in raptures with his lady’s good sense, and declared her arguments unanswerable. Most of the gentlemen seemed to acquiesce in the same measure, on the ground that, as matters stood, they could not rise at the Douglas’ call, on that occasion, without being considered as a subordinate family, which

neither the king nor the Douglas had any right to suppose them; and so strongly and warmly ran the argument on that side, that it was likely to be decided on, without the chief having said a word on the subject. Simon of Gemelscleuch alone ventured to dissent; "I have only to remark, my gallant kinsmen," said he, "that our decision in this matter is likely to prove highly eventful. Without our aid the force of the Douglas is incompetent to the task, and the castle will then remain in the hands of the English, than which nothing can be more grievously against our interest. If he be defeated, and forfeit his lands, the power of the Border will then remain with us; but should he succeed without our assistance, and become the king's son-in-law, it will be a hard game with us to keep the footing that we have. I conceive, therefore, that in withdrawing our support we risk every thing,—in lending it, we risk nothing but blows." All the kinsmen were silent. Dickie looked at my Lady Mountcomyn.

"It is well known that there is an old prophecy existing," said she, "that a Scot shall sit in the Douglas' chair, and be lord of all his domains. Well would it be for the country if that were so. But to support the overgrown power of that house is not the way to accomplish so desirable an object."

"That is true," said Dickie; "I'll defy any man to go beyond what my lady says, or indeed whatever she says."

"Have we not had instances of their jealousy already?" continued she.

"We have had instances of their jealousy already," said Dickie, interrupting her.

"And should we raise him to be the king's son-in-law, he would kick us for our pains," rejoined she.

"Ay, he would kick us for our pains," said Dickie; "think of that."

"Either please to drop your responses, Sir," said she, sternly, "or leave the hall. I would rather hear a raven croak on my turret in the day of battle, than the tongue of a flatterer or sycophant."

“That is very good indeed,” said Dickie; “My lady is so pleasant; h’m h’m h’m! Excellent! h’m h’m h’m!”

Sir Ringan saw his lady drawing herself up in high indignation; and dreading that his poor kinsman would bring on himself such a rebuke as would banish him the hall for ever, he interposed. “Cousin,” said he, “it’s a great fault in women that they cauna bide interruption, an’ the mair they stand in need o’t they take it the waur. But I have not told you all yet: a very singular circumstance has happened to me this day. Who do you think I found waylaying me at my gate, but our kinsman, the powerful old warlock. Master Michael Scott.”

“Master Michael Scott!” exclaimed the whole circle, every one holding up his hands, “has he ventured to be seen by man once more? Then there is something uncommon to befall, or, perhaps, the world is coming to an end.”

“God forbid!” said Redhough: “It is true that, for seven years, he has been pent up in his enchanted tower at Aikwood, without speaking to any one save his spirits; but though I do not know him, this must have been he, for he has told me such things as will astonish you; and, moreover, when he left me he laid himself down on the top of the Little Law on his back, and the devils carried him away bodily through the air, or down through the earth, and I saw no more of him.”

All agreed that it had been the great magician Master Michael Scott. Sir Ringan then rehearsed the conversation that had passed between the wizard and himself. All the circle heard this with astonishment; some with suspense, and others with conviction, but Dickie with raptures of delight. “He assured me,” said Redhough, “that my son should ride on his own land from Roxburgh to the Deadwater-fell.”

“From Roxburgh to the Deadwater-fell!” cried Dickie, “think of that! all the links of the bonny Teviot and Slitterick, ha, ha, lads, think of that!” and he clapped his hands aloud without daring to turn his eyes to the head of the table.

“And from the Deadwater-fell to the tower o’ Sark,” rejoined the knight.

“To the tower of Sark!” exclaimed Dickie. “H—have a care of us! think of that! All the dales of Liddel, and Ewes, and the fertile fields of Cannobie! Who will be king of the Border, then, my lads? who will be king of the Border then? ha, ha, ha!”

“And from the fords of Sark to the Deuchar-swire,” added Sir Ringan.

Dickie sprang to his feet, and seizing a huge timber trencher, he waved it round his head. The chief beckoned for silence; but Dickie’s eyes were glistening with raptures, and it was with great difficulty he repressed his vociferations.

“And over the Nine Glens of Niddisdale beside,” said Sir Ringan.

Dickie could be restrained no longer. He brayed out, “Hurrah, hurrah!” and waved his trencher round his head.

“All the Esk, and the braid Forest, and the Nine Glens o’ Niddisdale! Hurrah! Hurrah! Mountcomyn for ever! The warden for ever! hu, hu! hu!”

The knight and his friends were obliged to smile at Dickie’s outrageous joy; but the lady rose and went out in high dudgeon. Dickie then gave full vent to his rapture without any mitigation of voice, adding, “My lady for ever!” to the former two; and so shouting, he danced around, waving his immense wooden plate.

The frolic did not take, and Sir Ringan was obliged to call him to order. “You do not consider, cousin,” said the warden, “that what a woman accounts excellent sport at one time is at another high offence. See, now, you have driven my lady away from our consultation, on whose advice I have a strong reliance; and I am afraid we will scarcely prevail on her to come back.”

“Oh! there’s no fear of my lady and me,” said Dickie; “we understand one another. My lady is a kind, generous, noble soul, and so pleasant!”

“For as pleasant and kind as she is, I am deceived if

she is easily reconciled to you. Ye dinna ken Kate Dunbar, cousin.—Boy, tell your lady that we lack her counsel, and expect that she will lend us it for a short space.”

The boy did as he was ordered, but returned with an answer, that unless Dickie was dismissed she did not choose to be of the party.

“I am sorry for it,” said Sir Ringan; “but you may tell her that she may then remain where she is, for I can’t spare my cousin Dickie now, nor any day these five months.” And with that he began and discussed the merits of the case *pro* and *con* with his kinsmen, as if nothing had happened; and in the end it was resolved, that, with a thousand horsemen, they would scour the east border to intercept all the supplies that should be sent out of England, and thus enrich themselves, while, at the same time, they would appear to countenance the mad undertaking of Douglas.

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### CHAPTER III.

“Come, come, my hearts of flint; modestly; decently; soberly; and handsomely.—No man afore his leader.—Ding down the enemy to-morrow,—ye shall not come into the field like beggars.—Lord have mercy upon me, what a world this is!—Well, I’ll give an hundred pence for as many good feathers, and a hundred more for as many scarts:—wounds, dogs, to set you out withal! Frost and snow, a man cannot fight till he be brave! I say down with the enemy to morrow!”

*Sir John Ollicastle.*

THE castle of Roxburgh was beleaguered by seven thousand men in armour, but never before had it been so well manned, or rendered so formidable in its butresses; and to endeavour to scale it, appeared as vain an attempt as that of scaling the moon.

There was a great deal of parading, and noise went on, as that of beating drums, and sounding of trumpets

and bugles, every day; and scarcely did there one pass on which there were not tilting bouts between the parties, and in these the English generally had the advantage. Never was there, perhaps, a more chivalrous host than that which Musgrave had under his command within the walls of Roxburgh; the enthusiasm, the gallantry, and the fire of the captain, were communicated to all the train.

Their horses were much superior to those of the Scots; and, in place of the latter being able to make any impression on the besieged, they could not, with all the vigilance they were able to use, prevent their posts from being surprised by the English, on which the most desperate encounters sometimes took place. At first the English generally prevailed, but the Scots at length became inured to it, and stood the shocks of the cavalry more firmly. They took care always at the first onset to cut the bridle reins with their broad-swords, and by that means they disordered the ranks of their enemies, and often drove them in confusion back to their stronghold.

Thus months flew on in this dashing sort of warfare, and no impression was made on the fortress, nor did any appear practicable; and every one at court began to calculate on the failure and utter ruin of the Douglas. Piercy of Northumberland proffered to raise the country, and lead an army to the relief of the castle; but this interference Musgrave would in nowise admit, it being an infringement of the task imposed on him by his mistress.

Moreover, he said, he cared not if all the men of Scotland lay around the castle, for he would defy them to win it. He farther bade the messenger charge Piercy and Howard to have an army ready at the expiry of the Christmas holidays, wherewith to relieve him, and clear the Border, but to take no care nor concern about him till then.

About this time an incident, common in that day, brought a number of noble young adventurers to the camp of Douglas. It chanced, in an encounter between

two small rival parties at the back of the convent of Maisondieu, which stood on the south side of the Teviot, that Sir Thomas de Somerville of Carnwath engaged hand to hand with an English knight, named Sir Comes de Moubray, who, after a desperate encounter, unhorsed and wounded him. The affair was seen from the walls of Roxburgh, as well as by a part of the Scottish army which was encamped on a rising ground to the south, that overlooked the plain ; and, of course, like all other chivalrous feats, became the subject of general conversation. Somerville was greatly mortified : and, not finding any other way to recover his honour, he sent a challenge to Moubray to fight him again before the gate of Roxburgh, in sight of both armies. Moubray was too gallant to refuse. There was not a knight in the castle who would have declined such a chance of earning fame, and recommending himself to his mistress and the fair in general. The challenge was joyfully accepted, and the two knights met in the midst of a circle of gentlemen appointed by both armies, on the castle green, that lay betwixt the moat and the river, immediately under the walls of the castle. Never was there a more gallant combat seen. They rode nine times against each other with full force, twice with lances and seven times with swords, yet always managed with such dexterity that neither were unhorsed, nor yet materially wounded. But at the tenth charge, by a most strenuous exertion, Sir Thomas disarmed and threw his opponent out of his saddle, with his sword-arm dislocated. Somerville gained great renown, and his fame was sounded in court and in camp. Other challenges were soon sent from both sides, and as readily accepted ; and some of the best blood both of Scotland and England was shed in these mad chivalrous exploits. The ambition of the young Scottish nobles was roused, and many of them flocked as volunteers to the standard of Douglas. Among these were some of the retainers of Redhough, who could not resist such an opportunity of trying their swords with some rivals with whom they had erst exchanged sharp blows on the mar-



ches. Simon of Gemelscleuch, his cousin John of Howpasley, and the Laird of Yard-bire, all arrived in the camp of Douglas in one night, in order to distinguish themselves in these tilting bouts. Earl Douglas himself challenged Musgrave, hoping thereby to gain his end, and the prize for which he fought; but the knight, true to his engagement sent him for answer, that he would first see the beginning of a new year, and then he should fight either him or any of his name; but that till then he had undertaken a charge to which all others must be subordinate.

The Laird of Yard-bire, the strongest man of the Border, fought three combats with English squires of the same degree, two on horseback and one on foot, and in all proved victorious. For one whole month the siege presented nothing new save these tiltings, which began at certain hours every day, and always became more obstinate, often proving fatal; and the eagerness of the young gentry of both parties to engage in them grew into a kind of mania: But an event happened which put an end to them at once.

There was a combat one day between two knights of the first degree, who were surrounded as usual by twenty lancers from each army, all the rest of both parties being kept at a distance, the English on the tops of their walls, and the Scots on the heights behind, both to the east and west; for there was one division of the army stationed on the hill of Barns and at the head of the Sick-man's Path, and another on the rising ground between the city and castle. The two gentlemen were equally matched, and the issue was doubtful, when the attendant Scottish guards perceived, or thought they perceived, in the bearing of the English knight, some breach of the rules of chivalry; on which with one voice they called out "foul play." The English answered, "No, no, none." The two judges called to order, on which the spearmen stood still and listened, and hearing that the judges too were of different opinions, they took up the matter themselves, the Scots insisting that the knight should be disarmed and turned from the lists in disgrace, and the English

refusing to acquiesce. The judges, dreading some fatal conclusion, gave their joint orders that both parties should retire in peace, and let the matter be judged of afterwards ; on which the English prepared to quit the ground with a kind of exultation, for it appeared that they were not certain with regard to the propriety of their hero's conduct. Unluckily, it so happened that the redoubted Charlie Scott of Yard-bire headed the Scottish pikemen on the lists that day, a very devil for blood and battery, and of strength much beyond that generally allotted to man. When he saw that the insidious knight was going to be conducted off in a sort of triumph, and in a manner so different from what he deemed to suit his demerits, he clenched the handle of his sword with his right hand, and screwed down his eyebrows till they almost touched the top of his nose. "What now, muckle Charlie?" said one that stood by him. "What now?" repeated Charlie, growling like a wolf-dog, and confining the words almost within his own breast, "The deil sal bake me into a ker-cake to gust his gab wi', afore I see that saucy tike ta'en off in sic a way." And with that he dropt his pike, drew his sword, and rushing through the group he seized the knight's horse by the bridle with his left hand, thinking to lead both him and his master away prisoners. The knight struck at him with all his might, but for this Charlie was prepared ; he warded the blow most dexterously, and in wrath, by the help of a huge curb-bridle, he threw the horse backward, first on his hams, and then on his back, with his rider under him. "Tak ye that, master, for whistling o' Sundays," said the intrepid borderer, and began to lay about him at the English, who now attacked him on both sides.

Charlie's first break at the English knight was the watch-word for a general attack. The Scots flew to the combat, in perfect silence, and determined hatred, and they were received by the other party in the same manner. Not so the onlookers of both hosts;—they rent the air with loud and reiterated shouts. The English poured forth in a small narrow column from the

east gate along the draw-bridge, but the Scottish horsemen, who were all ready mounted the better to see the encounter from their stations, scoured down from the heights like lightning, so that they prevailed at first, before the English could issue forth in numbers sufficient to oppose them. The brave Sir Richard Musgrave, the captain's younger brother, led the English, he having rushed out at their head at the first breaking out of the affray; but notwithstanding all his bravery, he with his party were driven with their backs to the moat, and hard pressed; Douglass, with a strong body of horse, having got betwixt them and the castle-gate. The English were so anxious to relieve their young hero that they rushed to the gate in crowds. Douglas suffered a part to issue and then attacking them furiously with the cavalry, he drove them back in such confusion, that he got possession of the draw-bridge for several minutes, and would in all likelihood have entered with the crowd, had it not been for the portcullis, the machinery of which the Scots did not understand, nor had they the means of counteracting it; so that just when they were in the hottest and most sanguine part of their enterprize, down it came with a clattering noise louder than thunder, separating a few of the most forward from their brethren, who were soon every one cut down, as they refused to yield.

In the meantime it fared hard with Richard, who was overpowered by numbers; and though the English archers galled the Scottish cavalry grievously from the walls, he and all that were with him being forced backward they plunged into the moat, and were every one of them either slain or taken prisoners. The younger Musgrave, was among the latter, which grieved his brother Sir Philip exceedingly, as it gave Douglass an undue advantage over him, and he knew that, in the desperate state of his undertaking, he would go any lengths to over-reach him. From that day forth, all challenges or accepting of challenges was prohibited by Musgrave, under pain of death; and a proclamation was issued, stating that all who entered the castle should be stripped naked,

searched and examined, on what pretence soever they came, and if any suspicious circumstances appeared against them, they were to be hanged upon a post erected for the purpose, on the top of the wall, in sight of both armies. He was determined to spare no vigilance, and constantly said he would hold Douglas at defiance.

There was only one thing that the besieged had to dread, and it was haply, too, the only thing in which the Scots placed any degree of hope, and that was the total failure of provisions within the castle. Musgrave's plan, of getting small supplies at a time from England by night, was discovered by Sir Ringan Redhough, and completely cut off; and as Douglas hanged every messenger that fell into his hands, no new plan could be established; and so closely were the English beleaguered, that any attempt at sending additional supplies to those they had proved of no avail. The rival armies always grew more and more inveterate against each other, and the most sharp and deadly measures were exercised by both. Matters went on this manner till near the end of October, when the nights grew cold, long, and dark. There was nothing but the perils of that castle on the Border talked of over all Scotland and England. Every one, man, maid, and child, became interested in it. It may well be conceived that the two sovereign beauties, the Lady Jane Howard and Princess Margaret of Scotland, were not the least so; and both of them prepared, at the same time, in the true spirit of the age, to take some active part in the matter before it came to a final issue. One of them seemed destined to lose her hero, but both had put on the resolution of performing something worthy of the knights that were enduring so much for their sakes.

## CHAPTER IV.

And O that pegis weste is slymme,  
 And his ee wald garr the daye luke dymme ;  
 His broue is brente, his br-estis fayre,  
 And the deemonde lurkis in hys revan bayre.  
 Alake for thilke bonnye boye sae leile  
 That lyes withe oure Kyng in the hie-lande shiele !

*Old Rhyme.*

I winna gang in, I darena gang in,  
 Nor sleep i' your arms ava ;  
 Fu' laithly wad a fair may sleep  
 Atween you an' the wa'.  
 War I to lie wi' a belted knight,  
 In a land that's no my ain,  
 Fu' dear wad be my courtesye,  
 An' dreich wad be my pain.

*Old Ballad.*

ONE cold biting evening at the beginning of November, Patrick Chisholm of Castle-weary, an old yeoman in the upper part of Teviotdale, sat conversing with his family all in a merry and cheerful mood. They were placed in a circle round a blazing hearth fire, on which hung a huge cauldron, boiling and bubbling like the pool, at the foot of a cataract. The lid was suspended by a rope to the iron crook on which this lordly machine was hung to intercept somewhat the showers of soot that now and then descended from the rafters. These appeared as if they had been covered with pitch or black japanning ; and so violently was the kettle boiling, that it made the roof of Pate Chisholm's bigging all to shiver. Notwithstanding these showers of soot, Pate and his four goodly sons eyed the boiling cauldron with looks of great satisfaction,—for ever and anon the hough of an immense leg of beef was to be seen cutting its capers in the boil, or coming with a graceful semicircular sweep from one lip of the pot to the other.

“ Is it true, callants,” said Pate, “ that Howard is gaun

to make a diversion, as they ca't, in the west border, to draw off the warden frae the Cheviots."

"As muckle is said, an' as muckle expectit," said Dan, his first born, a goodly youth, who, with his three brethren sat in armour. They had come home to their father's house that night with their share of a rich prey that the warden had kidnapped while just collecting to send to Roxburgh under a guard of five thousand men. But Sir Ringan, getting intelligence of it, took possession of the drove before it was placed under the charge of those intended to guard it.

"As muckle is said, an' as muckle is expectit," said Dan; "but the west border will never turn out sae weel to us as the east has done. It's o'er near the Johnstones, and the Jardines, and the hurklebackit Hendersons."

Pate looked from under his bonnet at the hough of beef.—"The Cheviot hills hae turned weel out for the warden," continued Dan; "Redhough an' his lads hae been as weel scrieving o'er law and dale as lying getting hard pelts round the stane wa's o' Roxburgh, an' muckle mair gude has he done; for gin they dinna hunger them out o' their hauddin, they'll keep it. Ye'll draw an Englishman by the gab easier than drive him wi' an airn gaud. I wad ride fifty miles to see ony ane o' the bonny dames that a' this pelting an' peching is about."

"Twa wanton glaikit gillies, I'll uphaud," said Pate, looking at the restless hough; "o'er muckle marth i' the back, an' meldar i' the brusket. Gin I had the hefing o' them, I sude tak a staup out o' their bickers.—Whisht, I thought I heard the clanking o' horse heels.—Callant, clap the lid down on the pat; what hae they't hinging geaving up there for?"

The clattering of the horses approached, but apparently with caution; and at length a voice called at the door in an English accent, "Hollo, who holds here?" "Leel men, an' for the Scots," answered Dan, starting to his feet, and laying his hand on his sword. "For the knight of Mountcomyn, the Scottish warden?"—inquired the

horseman without. "For the same," was the answer. "It is toward his castle that we are bound. Can any of you direct us the way?"

"Troth, that I can," said old Pate, groping to satisfy himself that the lid was close down on the pot, and then running to the door; "I can tell you every fit o' the road, masters: You maun gang by the Fanesh, you see; it lies yon way, you see; an' then up the Brown rig, as straight as a line through Philhope-head, an' into Borthwick; then up Aitas-burn,—round the Crib-law,—an' wheel to the right; then the burn that ye come to there, ye maun cross that, and three miles farther on you come to the castle of Mountcomyn.—Braw cheer there lads!"

"I am afraid, friend," said the English trooper, "we will make nothing of this direction. Is it far to this same castle of the Scottish warden?"

"O no, naething but a step, some three Scots miles."

"And how is the road?"

"A prime road, man; no a step in't a' wad tak your horse to the brusket; only there's nae track; ye maun just take an ettle. Keep an ee on the tail o' Charlie's wain, an' ye'll no gang far wrang."

"Our young lord and master is much fatigued," said the trooper; "I am afraid we shall scarcely make it out. Pray, sir, could you spare us a guide?"

Dan, who was listening behind, now stepped forward, and addressed them; "My masters, as the night is o' darkness, I could hardly ride to Mountcomyn mysel, an', far or near, I couldna win there afore day. Gin ye dought accept o' my father's humble cheer the night—"

"The callant's bewiddied, an' waur than bewiddied," said Pate: "We haena cheer for oursels, let abe for a byking o' English lords an' squires!"

"I would gladly accept of any accommodation," said a sweet delicate voice, like that of a boy; "for the path has been so dreadful that I am almost dead, and unable to proceed further. I have a safe-conduct to the Scottish court, signed by all the wardens of the marches, and

every knight, yeoman, and vassal is obliged to give me furtherance."

"I dinna ken muckle about conducks an' signatures," said Pate, "but I trow there winna be mony syllables in some o' the names if a' the wardens hae signed your libelt; for I ken weel there's ane o' them whase edication brak aff at the letter G, an' never gat farrer. But I'in no ca'ing ye a leear, southron lord, ye may be a vera honest man; an' as your errand may be something unco express, ye had better post on."

"It sal never be casten up to me neither in camp nor ha," said Dan, "that a stranger was cawed frae my auld father's door at this time o' the night. Light down, light down, southron lord, ye are a privileged man; an', as I like to see the meaning o' things, I'll ride wi' ye mysel the morn, fit for fit, to the castle of Mountcomyn."

The strangers were soon all on their feet, and ushered into the family circle, for there was no fire-place in the house but that one. They consisted of five stout troopers, well armed, a page, and a young nobleman, having the appearance of a youth about seventeen or eighteen years of age. Every eye was instantly turned on him, there was something so extraordinary in his appearance. Instead of a steel helmet, he wore a velvet cap, shaped like a crown, striped with belts, bars, and crosses of gold wire, and manifestly more for ornament than use. His fair ringlets were peeping in curls out from below his cap, and his face and bright blue eyes were lovely as the dawn of a summer's morning.

They were not well seated till a noise of the tread of horses was again heard.

"The warld be a-wastle us!" cried old Pate, "wha's that now? I think fouk will be eaten up wi' fouk, an' naething for fouk's pains but dry thanks;—thanks winna feed the cat—"

He was stopped in his regretful soliloquy by a rough voice at the door: "Ho, wha hauds the house?" The same answer was given as to the former party, and in a minute the strangers entered without law or leave.



“Ye travel unco late, maisters,” said old Pate: “How far may ye be for the night?”

“We meant to have reached the tower of Gorranberry to-night,” said one of the strangers, “but we have been benighted, and were drawn hither by the light in your bole. I fear we must draw on your hospitality till day.”

“Callant Peter, gang an’ stap a wisp i’ that bole,” said Pate: “it seems to be the beacon light to a’ the clan-jaumphry i’ the hale country. I tauld ye aye to big it up; but no ane o’ ye heeds what I say. I hae seen houses that *some* fouk whiles gaed by. But, my maisters, its nae gate ava to Gorranberry,—a mere haut-stride-and-loup. I’ll send a guide to Bilhope-head wi’ ye; for troth we hae neither meat nor drink, house-room nor stabling, mair about the toun. We’re but poor yeomen, an’ haud our mailin for hard service. We hae tholed a foray the night already, an’ a double ane wad herrie us out o’ house an’ hauld. The warld be a’ wastle us! I think a’ the mosstroopers be abraid the night! Bairns, swee that bouking o’ claes aff the fire; ye’ll burn it i’ the boiling.”

The new comers paid little attention to this address of the old man; they saw that he was superannuated, and had all the narrow selfishness that too generally clings to that last miserable stage of human existence; but drawing nigh they began to eye the southron party with looks of dark suspicion, if not of fierceness.

“I see what maks ye sae frightet at our entrance here,” said the first Scots trooper, “ye hae some southron spies amang ye—Gudeman, ye sal answer to the king for this, an’ to the Douglas too, whilk ye’ll find a waur job.”

“Ken where ye are, an’ wha ye’re speaking to,” said Dan, stepping forward and browing the last speaker face to face: “If either the ae party or the ither be spies, or aught else but leel men, ye shall find, ere ye gang far, whase land ye are on, an’ whase kipples ye are under. That auld man’s my father, an’ doitet as he is, the man

amang ye that says a saucy word to him I'll gar sleep in his shoon a fit shorter than he rase i' the morning. Wha are ye, sir, or where do you travel by night on my master the warden's bounds?"

"Sir," answered another trooper, who seemed to be rather a more polished man, "I applaud your spirit, and will answer your demand. We go with our lord and master, Prince Alexander Stuart of Scotland, on a mission to a noble English family. Here is the king's seal as well as a pass signed by the English warden. We are leel men and true."

"Where is the prince?" said Dan: "A prince of Scotland i' my father's house? Which is he?"

A slender elegant stripling stept forward. "Here he is, brave yeoman," said the youth: "No ceremony—Regard me as your fellow and companion for this night."

Dan whipped off his bonnet and clapped his foot upon it, and bowing low and awkwardly to his prince he expressed his humble respect as well as he could, and then presented the prince to his father. The title sounded high in the old man's ears, he pulled off his bonnet and looked with an unsteady gaze, as if uncertain on whom to fix it—"A prince! Eh?—Is he a prince o' Scotland? Ay, ay!" said he, "Then he'll maybe hae some say wi' our head men—Dan—I say, Dan"—and with that he pulled Dan's sleeve, and said in a whisper loud enough to be heard over all the house,—“I say, Dan, man, gin he wad but speak to the warden to let us hae a' the land west the length o' the Frosty lair. O it wad lie weel into ours.” “It wad, father, and I daresay we may get it; but hush just now.” “Eh? do you think we may get it?” enquired the old man eagerly in the same whispering tremulous voice, “O man, it wad lie weel in; an' sae wad Couter's-cleuch. It's no perfect wanting that too. An' we wad be a great deal the better o' twa or three rigs aff Skelfhill for a bit downfa' to the south—See if ye can speak to the lad.”

Dan shook his father's hand, and nodded to him by

way of acquiescence. The old man brightened up ; “ Whar is your titty Bessy, Dan ? Whar are a’ the idle hizzies ? Gar them get something set down to the princely lad : I’s e warant he’s e’en hungry. Ye’ll no be used til siccan roads as thir, Sir ? Na, na. They’re unco roads for a prince.—Dan, I say, come this way ; I want to speak to you—I say,” (whispering very low aside) “ I wadna let them ken o’ the beef, or they’ll just gang wi’t. Gie them milk an’ bread, an’ cheese, an’ a drap o’ the broo ; it will do weel aneuch. Hunger’s good sauce. But Dan,—I say, could ye no contrive to get quat o’ thae English ? I doubt there will be little made o’ them.—They’re but a when gillie-gaupies at the best, an nae freends to us.—Fouk sude ay bow to the bush they get bield frae.”

“ It’s a’ true that ye say, father ; but we surely needna grudge an Englishman a piece o’ an English cow’s hip.—The beef didna cost you dear, there’s mair where it cam frae.”

The old man would not give up his point, but persisted in saying it was a dangerous experiment, and an unprofitable waste. However, in spite of his remonstrances, the board was loaded with six wooden bickers filled with beef broth, plenty of bear-meal bannocks, and a full quarter of English ox beef, to which the travellers did all manner of justice. The prince, as he called himself, was placed at the head of the table, and the young English nobleman by his side. Their eyes were scarcely ever turned from one another’s faces, unless in a casual hasty glance to see how others were regarding the same face. The prince had dark raven hair that parted on a brow of snow, a black liquid eye, and round lips, purer than the cherry about to fall from the tree with ripeness. He was also a degree taller than the English lord ; but both of them, as well as their two pages, were lovelier than it became men to be. The troopers who attended them seemed disposed to contradict every thing that came from the adverse party, and, if possible, to broach a quarrel, had it not been for the two knights, who were all suavity,

good breeding, and kindness to each other, and seemed to have formed an attachment at first sight. At length Prince Alexander inquired of his new associate his name, and business at the Scottish court, provided, he said, that it did not require strict secrecy. The other said, he would tell him every thing truly, on condition that he would do the same : which being agreed to, the young English nobleman proceeded as follows :

“ My name is Lord Jasper Tudor, second son to the Earl of Pembroke. I am nearly related to the throne of England, and in high favour with the king. The wars on the Borders have greatly harassed the English Dalesmen for these many years, and matters being still getting worse between the nations, the king my cousin, has proposed to me to marry the Princess Margaret of Scotland, and obtain as her dowry a confirmation of these border lands and castles, so that a permanent peace may be established between the nations, and this bloody and desperate work cease. I am on my way to the Scottish court to see the princess your sister ; and if I find her to be as lovely and accomplished as fame speaks her, I intend to comply with the king’s request, and marry her forthwith.”

This speech affected the prince so much that all the guests wondered. He started to his feet, and smiling in astonishment said, “ What, you ? you marry my m—m—my sister Margaret ? She is very much beholden to you, and on my word she will see a becoming youth. But are you sure that she will accept of you for a husband ? ” “ I have little to fear on that head,” said the Lord Jasper Tudor jeeringly ; “ Maids are in general not much averse to marriage ; and, if I am well informed, your lovely sister is as little averse to it as any of her contemporaries.”

The prince blushed deep at this character of his sister, but had not a word to say.

“ Pray,” continued Tudor, “ is she like you ? If she is, I think I shall love her,—I would not have her just like you neither.”

“ I believe,” said the prince, “ there is a strong family likeness ; but tell me in what features you would wish her to differ from me, and I will describe her minutely to you.”

“ In the first place,” said the amorous and blue-ey'd Tudor, “ I should like her to be a little stouter, and more manly of frame than you, and, at least, to have some appearance of a beard.”

All the circle stared. “ The devil you would, my lord,” said Dan ; “ Wad ye like your wife to hae a beard, in earnest ? Gude faith, an your ain war like mine, ye wad think ye had eneuch o't foreby your wife's.” The prince held up his hands in astonishment, and the young English lord blushed deeper than it behoved a knight to do ; but at length he tried to laugh it by, pretending that he had unwittingly said one thing when he meant the very contrary, for he wished her to be more feminine, and have less beard.”—“ I think that will hardly be possible,” said Dan ; “ but perhaps there may be a hair here an' there on my lord the prince's chin, when ane comes near it. I wadna disparage ony man, far less my king's son.”

“ Well my noble lord,” said the prince, “ your tale has not a little surprized me, as well it may. Our meeting here in like circumstances is the most curious rencounter I ever knew ; for, to tell you the plain truth, I am likewise on an errand on the same import, being thus far on my way to see and court the lady Jane Howard, in order that all her wide domains may be attached to my father's kingdom, and peace and amity thereby established on the border.”

“ Gracious heaven !” said young lord Tudor, “ can this that I hear be true ? You ? Are on your way to my cousin, the lady Jane Howard ? Why do you not know that she is already affianced to Lord Musgrave !”

“ Yes it is certain I do ; but that is one of my principal inducements to gain her from him ; that is quite in the true spirit of gallantry ; but save her great riches, I am told she has little else to recommend her,” said the prince.

“ And pray, how does fame report of my cousin Jane ?” said Tudor.

“ As of a shrew and a coquette,” answered the prince ; “ a wicked minx, that is intemperate in all her passions.”

“ It is a manifest falsehood,” said Tudor, his face glowing with resentment, “ I never knew a young lady so moderate and chastened in every passion of the female heart. Her most private thoughts are pure as purity itself, and her—.”

“ But begging your pardon my lord, how can you possibly know all this ?” said the prince.

“ I do know it,” said the other, “ it is no matter how : I cannot hear my fair cousin wronged ; and I know that she will remain true to Musgrave, and have nothing to do with you.”

“ I will bet an earldom on that head, said the prince, “ if I chuse to lay siege to her.”

“ Done !” said the other, and they joined hands on the bargain ; but they had no sooner laid their hands into one another’s than they hastily withdrew them, with a sort of trepidation, that none of the lookers on, save the two pages, who kept close by their masters, appeared to comprehend. They, too, were both mistaken in the real cause ; but of that it does not behove to speak at present.

“ I will let you see,” said the prince, recovering himself, “ that this celebrated cousin of yours shall not be so ill to win as the castle of Roxburgh ; and I’ll let Musgrave see for how much truth and virgin fidelity he has put his life in his hand ; and when I have her I’ll cage her, for I dont like her. I would give that same earldom to have her in my power to-night.”

The young Lord Tudor looked about as if he meditated an escape to another part of the table ; but, after a touch that his page gave him on the sleeve, he sat still, and mustered up courage for a reply.

“ And pray, sir prince, what would you do with her if you had her in your power to-night ?”

“ Something very different from what I would do with you, my lord. But please describe her to me, for my

very heart is yearning to behold her,—describe every point of her form, and lineament of her features.”

“She is esteemed as very beautiful; for my part I think her but so so,” said Tudor: “She has fair hair, light full blue eyes, and ruddy cheeks; and her brow, I believe, is as fine and as white as any brow can be.”

“O frightful! what a description! what an ugly minx it must be! Fair hair! red, I suppose, or dirty dull yellow! Light blue eyes! mostly white I fancy? Ah, what a frightful immodest ape it must be! I could spit upon the huzzy!”

“Mary shield us!” exclaimed young Tudor, moving farther away from the prince, and striking lightly with his hand on his doublet as if something unclean had been squirted on it. “Mary shield us! What does the saucy Scot mean!”

Every one of the troopers put his hand to his sword, and watched the eye of his master. The prince beckoned to the Scots to be quiet; but Lord Tudor did no such thing, for he was flustered and wroth.

“Pardon me, my lord,” said the prince, “I may perhaps suffer enough from the beauty and perfections of your fair cousin after I see her; you may surely allow me to deride them now. I am trying to depreciate the charms I dread. But I do not like the description of her. Tell me seriously do you not think her very intolerable?”

“I tell you, prince, I think quite otherwise. I believe Jane to be fifty times more lovely than any dame in Scotland; and a hundred times more beautiful than your tawny virago of a sister, whom I shall rejoice to tame like a spaniel. The haughty, vain, conceited, swart venom, that she should lay her commands on the Douglas to conquer or die for her! A fine presumption, forsooth! But the world shall see whether the charms of my cousin, Lady Jane Howard, or those of your grim and tawdry princess, have most power.”

“Yes, they shall, my lord,” said the prince: “In the mean time let us drop the subject. I see I have given

you offence, not knowing that you were in love with Lady Jane, which now I clearly see to be the case. Nevertheless, go on with the description, for I am anxious to hear all about her, and I promise to approve if there be a bare possibility of it."

"Her manner is engaging, and her deportment graceful and easy; her waist is slim, and her limbs slender and elegant beyond any thing you ever saw," said Lord Tudor.

"O shocking!" exclaimed the prince, quite forgetting himself: "Worst of all! I declare I have no patience with the creature. After such a description, who can doubt the truth of the reports about the extreme levity of her conduct? Confess now, my lord, that she is very free of her favours, and that the reason why so many young gentlemen visit her is now pretty obvious."

High offence was now manifest in Lord Jasper Tudor's look. He rose from his seat, and said in great indignation, "I did not ween I should be insulted in this guise by the meanest peasant in Scotland, far less by one of its courtiers, and least of all by a prince of the blood royal. Yeomen, I will not, I cannot suffer this degradation. These ruffian Scots are intruders on us,—here I desire that you will expel them the house."

The Prince of Scotland was at the head of the table, Tudor was at his right hand; the rest of the English were all on that side, the Scots on the other,—their numbers were equal. Dan and his three brethren sat at the bottom of the board around the old man, who had been plying at the beef with no ordinary degree of perseverance, nor did he cease when the fray began. Every one of the two adverse parties was instantly on his feet, with his sword gleaming in his hand; but finding that the benches from which they had arisen hampered them, they with one accord sprung on the tops of these, and crossed their swords. The pages screamed like women. The two noble adventurers seemed scarcely to know the use of their weapons, but looked on with astonishment. At length the prince, somewhat collecting himself, drew out



his shabby whanger, and brandished it in a most unwarlike guise, on which the blue-eyed Tudor retreated behind his attendants holding up his hands, but still apparently intent on revenge for the vile obloquy thrown on the character of *his cousin*, Lady Jane Howard. "Tis just pe te slance she vantit," said the Scott next to the prince.

"My certy, man, we'll get a paick at the louns now," said the second.

"Fat te teel's ta'en 'e bits o' veè laddies to flee a' eet abeet 'er buts o' wheers? I wudnae hae my feet i' their sheen for three plucks an a beedle," said the third.

"Thou's a' i' the wrang buox now, chaps," said the fourth. These were all said with one breath; and before the Englishmen had time to reply, clash went the swords across the table, and the third Scot, the true Aberdonian, was wounded, as were also two of the Englishmen, at the very first pass.

These matters are much sooner done than described. All this was the work of a few seconds, and done before advice could either be given or attended to. Dan now interfered with all the spirit and authority that he was master of. He came dashing along the middle of the board in his great war boots, striking up their swords as he came, and interposing his boardly frame between the combatants. "D—n ye a' for a when madcaps!" cried Dan as loud as he could bawl: "What the muckle deil's fa'en a bobbing at your midriff's now? Ye're a' my father's guests an' mine; an', by the shin-banes o' Sant Peter, the first side that lifts a sword, or says a misbadden word, my three brethren and I will tak' the tother side, an' smoor the transgressors like as mony moor-poots."

"Keep ycur feet aff the meat, fool," said old Pate.

"Gude sauff us!" continued Dan, "What has been said to gie ony offence? What though the young gentlewoman dis tak a stown jink o' a chap that's her ain sweetheart whiles? Where's the harm in that? There's little doubt o' the thing. An' for my part, gin she didna"—

Here Dan was interrupted in his elegant harangue by a wrathful hysteric scream from young Tudor, who pulled out his whinyard, and ran at Dan, boring at him in awkward but most angry sort crying all the while, "I will not bear this insult! Will my followers hear me traduced to my face?"

"Deil's i' e' wee but steepid laddie," said Buchan the Aberdonian; "it thinks' at 'er preeving it to be a wheer 'e sel o't!"

Dan lifted up his heavy sword in high choler to cleave the stripling, and he would have cloven him to the belt, but curbing his wrath, he only struck his sword, which he made fly into pieces and jingle against the rafters of the house; then seizing the young adventurer by the shoulder, he snatched him up to him on the board, where he still stood, and, taking his head below his arm, he held him fast with the one hand, making signs with the other to his brethren to join the Scots, and disarm the English, who were the aggressors both times. In the meantime, he was saying to Tudor, "Hout, hout, young master, ye hae never been o'er the Border afore; ye sude hae stayed at hame, an' wantit a wife till ye gathered mair rumelgumption."

The five English squires, now seeing themselves set upon by nine, yielded, and suffered themselves to be disarmed.

When Tudor came to himself, he appeared to be exceedingly grieved at his imprudence, and ready to make any acknowledgment, while the prince treated him with still more and more attention; yet these attentions were ever and anon mixed with a teasing curiosity, and a great many inquiries, that the young nobleman could not bear, and did not choose to answer.

It now became necessary to make some arrangement for the parties passing the night. Patrick Chisholm's house had but one fire-place in an apartment which served for kitchen and hall; but it had a kind of *ben end*, as it was then, and is always to this day, denominated in that part of the country. There was scarcely room to

move a foot in it ; for, besides two oaken beds with rowan-tree bars, it contained five huge chests belonging to the father and his sons, that held their clothes and warlike accoutrements. The daughters of yeomen in these days did not sit at table with the men. They were the household servants. Two of Pate's daughters, who had been bustling about all the evening, conducted the two noble youths into this apartment, together with their two pages. The one bed was neatly made down with clean clothes, and the other in a more common way. "Now," said one of the landward lasses, "You twa masters are to sleep the-gither in here,—in o' this gude bed, ye see, an' the twa lads in o' this ane." The two young nobleman were standing close together, as behoved in such a room. On the girl addressing them thus, their eyes met each other's, but were as instantly withdrawn and fixed on the floor, while a blush of the deepest tint suffused the cheeks of both, spreading over the chin and neck of each. The pages contemplated each other in the same way, but not with the same degree of timidity. The English stripling seemed rather to approve of the arrangement, or at least pretended to do so ; for he frankly took the other by the hand, and said in a sweet voice, but broad dialect, "Weal, yuonng Scuot, daghest thou lig woth mey?" The young Caledonian withdrew his hand, and held down his head : "I always lie at my master's feet," said he.

"And so shall you do to-night, Colin," said the prince, "for I will share this bed with you, and let my lord take the good one." "I cannot go to bed to-night," said Tudor, "I will rest me on this chest ; I am resolved I sha'n't go to bed, nor throw off my clothes to night."

"Ye winna?" said May Chisholm, who visibly wanted a romp with the young blooming chief,—"Ye winna gang til nae bed, will ye nae, and me has been at sic pains making it up til ye? Bess, come here an' help me, we sal soon see whether he's gang til his bed or no, an' that no wi' his braw claes on neither." So saying, the two frolicsome queans seized the rosy stripling, and in a mo-

ment had him stretched on the bed, and, making his doublet fly open all at one rude pull, they were proceeding to undress him, giggling and laughing all the while. Prince Alexander, from a momentary congenial feeling of delicacy, put his hand hastily across to keep the lapels of Tudor's vesture together, without the motion having been perceived by any one in the hurry, and that moment the page flung himself across his master's breast, and reproved the lasses so sharply that they desisted, and left them to settle the matter as they chose.

The Prince had, however made a discovery that astonished him exceedingly ; for a few minutes his head was almost turned,—but the truth soon began to dawn on his mind, and every reflection, every coincidence, every word that had been said, and offence that had been taken, tended to confirm it ; so he determined, not for farther trial, but for the joke's sake, to press matters a little further.

When quietness was again restored, and when the blush and the frown had several times taken alternate sway of the young lord's face, the prince said to him, "After all, my lord, I believe we must take share of the same bed together for this one night. It is more proper and becoming than to sleep with our pages. Besides, I see the bed is good and clean, and I have many things to talk to you about our two countries, and about our two intended brides, or sweethearts let us call them in the meantime."

"Oh no, no, prince," said Tudor, "indeed I cannot, I may not, I would not sleep in the same bed with another gentleman—No—I never did—never."

"Do not say so, my dear lord, for, on my word, I am going to insist on it," said the prince, coming close up to him, his eyes beaming with joy at the discovery he had made. "You shall sleep by my side to-night : nay, I will even take you in my bosom and caress you as if you were my own sweet dear Lady Jane Howard." Tudor was now totally confounded, and knew neither what to say for himself, nor what he did say when he spoke.

He held out both his hands, and cried, "Do not, prince, do not.—I beg—I implore do not; for I cannot, cannot consent. I never slept even in the same apartment with a man in all my life."

"What, have you always slept in a room by yourself?" asked the teasing prince.

"No, never, but always with ladies—yes, always!" was the passionate and sincere reply.

Here the prince held up his hands, and turned up his eyes. "What a young profligate!" exclaimed he, "Mary shield us! Have you no conscience with regard to the fair sex, that you have begun so wicked a course, and that so early? Little did I know why you took a joke on your cousin so heinously amiss! I see it now, truth will out! Ah, you are such a youth! I will not go a foot further to see Lady Jane. What a wicked degraded imp she must be? Do not kindle into a passion again, my dear lord. I can well excuse your feigned wrath, it is highly honourable. I hate the knight that blabs the favours he enjoys from the fair. He is bound to defend the honour that has stooped to him: even though (as in the present instance I suppose) it have stooped to half a dozen more besides."

A great deal of taunting and ill humour prevailed between these capricious and inexperienced striplings, and sorely was Tudor pressed to take share of a bed with the prince, but in vain—his feelings recoiled from it; and the other being in possession of a secret of which the English lord was not aware, took that advantage of teasing and tormenting him almost beyond sufferance. After all, it was decided that each should sleep with his own page; a decision that did not seem to go well down at all with the Yorkshire boy, who once ventured to expostulate with his lord, but was silenced with a look of angry disdain.

## CHAPTER V.

He set her on his milk-white steed,  
 Himself lap on behind her,  
 And they are o'er the Highland hills ;  
 Her friends they cannot find her.

As they rode over hill and dale  
 This lady often fainted,  
 And cried, " Wo to my cursed moneye,  
 That this road to me invented."

*Ballad of Rob Roy*

O cam ye here to fight, young man,  
 Or cam ye here to flee ?  
 Or cam ye out o' the wally west  
 Our bonnie bride to see ?

*Ballad called Foul Play*

It is by this time needless to inform my readers, that these two young adventurers were no other than the rival beauties of the two nations, for whose charms all this bloody coil was carried on at Roxburgh ; and who, without seeing, had hated each other as cordially as any woman is capable of hating her rival in beauty or favour. So much had the siege and the perils of Roxburgh become the subject of conversation, that the ears of the two maidens had long listened to nothing else, and each of them deemed her honour embarked in the success of her lover. Each of them had set out with the intent of visiting the camp in disguise ; and having enough of interest to secure protections for feigned names, each determined to see her rival in the first place, the journey not being far ; and neither of them it is supposed went with any kind intent. Each of them had a maid dressed in boy's clothes with her, and five stout troopers, all of whom were utterly ignorant of the secret. The princess had by chance found out her rival's sex ; but the Scottish lady and her attendant being both taller and of darker complexions than the other two, no suspicions were entertained

against them detrimental to their enterprise. The princess never closed an eye, but lay meditating on the course she should take. She was convinced that she had her rival in her power, and she determined, not over generously to take advantage of her good fortune. The time drew nigh that Roxburgh must be lost or won, and well she knew that, whichever side succeeded, according to the romantic ideas of that age, the charms of the lady would have all the honour, while she whose hero lost would be degraded,—considerations which no woman laying claim to superior and all-powerful charms could withstand.

Next morning Dan was aroused at an early hour by his supposed prince, who said to him, “ Brave yeoman, from a long conversation that I have had last night with these English strangers, I am convinced that they are despatched on some traitorous mission; and as the warden is in Northumberland, I propose conveying them straight to Douglas’ camp, there to be tried for their lives. If you will engage to take charge of them, and deliver them safely to the captain before night, you shall have a high reward; but if you fail, and suffer any of them to escape, your neck shall answer for it. How many men can you raise for this service ?”

“ Our men are maistly up already,” said Dan; “ but muckle Charlie o’ Yardbire gaed hame last night wi’ twa or three kye like oursels. Gin Charlie an’ his lads come, I sal answer for the English chaps, if they war twa to ane. I hae mysel an’ my three billies, deil a shank mae; but an Charlie come he’s as gude as some three, an’ his backman’s nae bean-swaup neither.”

“ Then,” said the counterfeit prince, “ I shall leave all my attendants to assist you save my page,—we two must pursue our journey with all expedition. All that is required of you is to deliver the prisoners safe to the Douglas. I will despatch a message to him by the way, apprizing him of the circumstances.”

The Lady Margaret and her page then mounted their palfreys and rode off without delay; but instead of tak-

ing the road by Gorranberry, as they had proposed over night, they scoured away at a light gallop down the side of the Teviot. At the town of Hawick she caused her page, who was her chief waiting maid and confidant, likewise in boy's clothes, to cut out her beautiful fleece of black hair, that glittered like the wing of the raven, being determined to attend in disguise the issue of the contest. She then procured a red curled wig, and dressing herself in a Highland garb, with a plumed bonnet, tartan jacket and trowsers, and Highland hose and brogues, her appearance was so completely altered, that even no one who had seen her the day before, in the character of the prince her brother, could possibly have known her to be the same person ; and leaving her page near the camp to await her private orders, she rode straight up to head-quarters by herself.

Being examined as she passed the outposts, she said she brought a message to Douglas of the greatest importance, and that it was from the court ; and her address being of such a superior cast, every one furthered her progress till she came to the captain's tent. Scarcely did she know him,—care, anxiety, and watching had so worn him down ; and her heart was melted when she saw his appearance. Never, perhaps, could she have been said to have loved him till that moment ; but seeing what he had suffered for her sake, the great stake he had ventured, and the almost hopeless uncertainty that appeared in every line of his face, raised in her heart a feeling unknown to her before ; and highly did that heart exult at the signal advantage that her good fortune had given him over his rival. Yet she determined on trying the state of his affections and hopes. Before leaving Hawick, she had written a letter to him, inclosing a lock of her hair neatly plaited ; but this letter she kept back in order to sound her lover first without its influence. He asked her name and her business. She had much business, she said, but not a word save for his private ear. Douglas was struck with the youth's courtly manner, and looked at him with a dark searching eye,—“ I have



no secrets," said he, "with these my kinsmen; I desire, before them, to know your name and business."

"My name," said the princess pertly, "is Colin Roy M'Alpin,—I care not who knows my name; but no word further of my message do I disclose save to yourself."

"I must humour this pert stripling," said he turning to his friends; "if his errand turns out to be one of a trivial nature, and that does not require all this ceremony, I shall have him horse-whipped."

With that the rest of the gentlemen went away, and left the two by themselves, Colin, as we must now, for brevity's sake term the princess, was at first somewhat abashed before the dark eye of Douglas, but soon displayed all the effrontery that his assumed character warranted, if not three times more.

"Well now, my saucy little master, Colin Roy M'Alpin, please condescend so far as to tell me whence you are, and what is your business here,—this secret business, of such vast importance."

"I am from court, my lor'; from the Scottish court, au't please you, my lor'; but not directly as a body may say,—my lor'; not directly—here—there—south—west—precipitately, incontrovertibly, ascertaining the scope and bearing of the progressive advance of the discomfiture and gradual wreck of your most flagrant and preposterous undertaking."

"The devil confound the impertinent puppy!"

"Hold, hold, my lor', I mean your presumptuous and foolhardy enterprize, first in presuming to the hand of my mistress, the king's daughter,—my lovely and queenly mistress; and then in foolhardily running your head against the walls of Roxburgh to attain this, and your wit and manhood against the superior generalship of a Musgrave."

"By the pock-net of St Peter, I will cause every bone in your body to be basted to powder, you incorrigible pedant and puppy!" said the Douglas; and seizing him by the collar of the coat, he was about to drag him to the tent-door and throw him into the air.

“ Hold, my lor’; please keep off your rough uncourtly hands till I deliver the credentials of my mistress.”

“ Did you say that you were page to the Princess Margaret? Yes, surely you are, I have erst seen that face, and heard that same flippant tongue. Pray, what word or token does my dear and sovereign lady send me?”

“ She bade me say, that she does not approve of you at all my lor’ :—that, for her sake, you ought to have taken this castle many days ago. And she bade me ask you why you don’t enter the castle by the gate, or over the wall, or under the hill, which is only a sand one, and hang up all the Englishmen by the necks, and send the head of Philip Musgrave to his saucy dame?—She bade me ask you why you don’t my lor’?”

“ Women will always be women,” said Douglas surlily to himself: “ I thought the princess superior to her sex, but—”

“ But! but what, my lor’? Has she not good occasion for displeasure? She bade me tell you that you don’t like her;—that you don’t like her half so well as Musgrave does his mistress,—else why don’t you do as much for her? He took the castle for the sake of his mistress, and for her sake he keeps it in spite of you. Therefore she bade me tell you, that you must *go in* and beat the English, and take the castle from them; for she will not suffer it that Lady Jane Howard shall triumph over her.”

“ Tell her in return,” said Douglas, “that I will do what man can do; and when that is done, she shall find that I neither will be slack in requiring the fulfilment of her engagement, nor in performing my own. If that womanish tattling be all that you have to say,—begone: the rank of your employer protects you.”

“ Hold, my lor’, she bade me look well, and tell her what you were like, and if I thought you changed since I waited on you at court. On my conscience you look very ill. These are hard ungainly features of yours. I’ll tell her you look very shabby, and very surly, and that

you have lost all heart. But oh, my lor', I forgot she bade me tell you, that if you found you were clearly beat, it would be as well to draw off your men and abandon the siege; and that she would, perhaps, in pity, give you a moiety of your lands again."

"I have no patience with the impertinence of a puppy, even though the messenger of her I love and esteem above all the world. Get you hence."

"Oh, my lor', I have not third done yet. But, stay, here is a letter I had almost forgot."

Douglas opened the letter. Well he knew the hand; there were but few in Scotland who could write, and none could write like the princess. It contained a gold ring set with rubies, and a lock of her hair. He kissed them both; and tried the ring first on the one little finger, and then on the other, but it would scarcely go over the nail; so he kissed them again, and put them in his bosom. He then read to himself as follows:

"MY GOOD LORD,—I enclose you two love-tokens of my troth; let them be as beacons to your heart to guide it to deeds of glory and renown. For my sake put down these English. Margaret shall ever pray for your success. Retain my page Colin near your person. He is true-hearted, and his flippancy affected. Whatever you communicate to him will be safely transmitted to

"MARGARET."

It may well be supposed how Colin watched the emotions of Douglas while reading this heroic epistle; and, in the true spirit of the age, they were abundantly extravagant. He kissed the letter, hugged it in his bosom, and vowed to six or seven saints to do such deeds for his adored and divine princess as never were heard or read of.

"Now, my good lor'," said the page, "you must inform me punctually what hopes you have of success, and if there is any thing wanting that the kingdom can afford you."

“ My ranks are too thin,” replied the Douglas ; “ and I have engaged to take it with my own vassals. The warden is too proud to join his forces to mine on that footing, but keeps scouring the borders, on pretence of preventing supplies, and thus assisting me, but in truth for enriching himself and his followers. If I could have induced him and his whole force to have joined the camp, famine would have compelled the enemy to yield a month ago. But I have now the captain’s brother prisoner ; and I have already given him to know, that if he does not deliver up the castle to me in four days, I will hang the young knight up before his eyes,—I have sworn to do it, and I swear again to keep my oath.”

“ I will convey all this to my mistress,” said Colin. “ So then you have his only brother in your hold ? My lor’, the victory is your own, and the princess, my mistress, beside. In a few hours will be placed in your hands the primal cause and fomentor of this cruel and bloody war, the Lady Jane Howard.”

The Douglas started like one aroused from slumber, or a state of lethargy, by a sudden wound. “ What did you say, boy ?” said he. “ Either I heard amiss, or you are dreaming. I have offered estates, nay, I have offered an earldom, to any hardy adventurer who would bring me that imperious dame ; but the project has been abandoned as quite impracticable.”

“ Rest content,” said Colin : “ I have secured her, and she will be delivered into your hands before night. She has safe passports with her to the Scottish court, but they are in favour of Jasper Tudor, son to the Earl of Pembroke ; so that the discovery of her sex proves her an impostor, and subjects her to martial law, which I request, for my mistress’ sake, you will execute on her. My lady the princess, with all her beauty, and high accomplishments, is a very woman ; and I know there is nothing on earth she so much dreads as the triumph of Lady Jane over her. Besides, it is evident she was bound to the Scottish court either to poison the princess, or inveigle her into the hands of her enemies. All her

attendants are ignorant of her sex save a page, who is said to be a blooming English country maiden. The Prince Alexander bade me charge you never to mention by what means she came into your hands, but to give it out that she was brought to you by a miracle, by witchcraft, or by the power of a mighty magician." "It is well thought of, boy," said the Douglas, greatly elevated—"I have been obliged to have recourse to such means already—this will confirm all. The princess your mistress desires that you should remain with me. You shall be my right hand page, I will love and favour you; you shall be fed with the bread and wine, and shall sleep in my tent, and I will trust you with all my secrets for the welcome tidings you have brought, and for the sake of the angelic dame that recommends you to me; for she is my beloved, my adored mistress, and for her will I either conquer or die! My sword is her's—my life is her's—Nay, my very soul is the right of my beloved!" Poor Colin dropped a tear on hearing this passionate nonsense. Women love extravagance in such matters, but in those days it had no bounds.

It was not long till the prisoners arrived, under the care of muckle Charlie Scott of Yarbire and Dan Chisholm, with their troopers, guarded in a very original manner. When Charlie arrived at old Chisholm's house, and learned that a *prince* had been there, and had given such charges about the prisoners, he determined to make sure work; and as he had always most trust to put in himself, he took the charge of the young English nobleman and his squire, as he supposed them to be. The page he took on his huge black horse behind him, lashing him to his body with strong belts cut from a cow's raw hide. His ancles were moreover fastened to the straps at the tops of Charlie's great war boots; so that the English maiden must have had a very uncomfortable ride. But the other he held on before him, keeping her all the way in his arms, exactly as a countryman holds up a child in the church to be christened.

The Lady Jane Howard had plenty of the spirit of ro-

mance about her, but she neither had the frame nor the energy of mind requisite for carrying her wild dreams of female heroism into effect. She was an only child—a spoiled one; having been bred up without perhaps ever being controlled, till she fell into the hands of these border mosstroopers. Her displeasure was excessive.—She complained bitterly of her detainment, and much more of being sent a prisoner to the camp. When she found herself in muckle Charlie Scott's arms, borne away to be given up to the man whom of all the world she had most reason to dread, she even forgot herself so far as to burst into tears. Charlie, with all his inordinate strength and prowess, had a heart so soft, that, as he said himself, “a laverock might hae laired in't;” and he farther added, that when he saw “the bit bonny English callan', that was comed o' sic grand blude, grow sae desperately wae, an' fa' a blirting and greeting, the deil a bit but his heart was like to come out at his mouth.” This was no lie, for his comrades beheld him two or three times come across his eyes with his mailed sleeve—a right uncouth handkerchief; and then he tried to comfort the youth with the following speech: “Troth, man, but I'm unco wae for ye, ye're sae young an' sae bonny, an' no' a fit man at a' to send out i' thir crabbit times. But tak good heart, an' dinna be dauntit, for it will soon be over w' ye. Ye'll neither hae muckle to thole nor lang time to dree't, for our captain will hang ye directly. He hangs a' spies an' messengers aff hand; sae it's no worth naeboddy's while to greet. Short wark's aye best i' sic cases.”

“He cannot, he dares not injure a hair of my head,” said Lady Jane passionately.

“*Canna!*” said Charlie, “Gude faith, ye ken that's nonsense. He can as easily hang ye, or do ought else w' ye, as I can wipe my beard. An' as for the thing that the Douglas *darena* do, gude faith, ye ken, I never saw it yet. But I'm sure I wish ye *may* be safe, for it wad do little good to me to see your bit pease-weep neck rackit.”

“It was most unfair, as well as most ungenerous in

your prince to detain me," said she, "as my business required urgency. I had regular signed warrantice, and went on the kindest intent; besides, I have a great aversion to be put into the hands of Douglas. How many cows and ewes would you take to set me at liberty?"

"Whisht, whisht, Sir!" said Charlie; "Gudesake, haud your tongue! That's kittle ground. Never speak o' sic a thing. But how many could ye afford to gie, an I were to set you at liberty?"

"In the first place, I will give you five hundred head of good English uolt," said Lady Jane.

"Eh? What?" said Charlie, holding his horse still, and turning his ear close round to the lady's face, that he might hear with perfect distinctness the extraordinary proffer. It was repeated. Charlie was almost electrified with astonishment. "Five hunder head o' nout!" exclaimed he: "But d'ye mean their heads by themselves!—cuttit aff, like?"

"No, no; five hundred good live cattle."

"Mercy on us! Gude faith, they wad stock a' Yard-bire—an' Raeburn," added he, after a pause, putting his horse again slowly in motion; "an' Watkerrick into the bargain," added he, with a full drawn sigh, putting the spurs to his beast, that he might go quicker to carry him away from the danger. "For troth, d' ye ken, my lord, we're no that scarce o' grund in Scotland; we can get plenty o' that for little thing, gin we could get ought to lay on't. But it's hard to get beasts, an' kittle to keep them i' our country. Five hunder head o' black cattle! Hech! an Charlie Scott had a' thae, how mony braw lads could he tak at his back o'er Craik-corse to join his master the warden! But come, come, it canna be. War somebody a Scots lord, as he's an English ane, an i' the same danger, I wad risk muckle to set him free. But come, Corby, my fine naig, ye hae carried me into mony a scrape, ye maun carry me out o' this ane, or, gude faith, your master's gane. Ha, lad, ye never had sic a back-fu' i' your life! Ye hae five hunder head o' black cattle on't, ye dog, an' ye're carrying them a' away frae your

master an' Yarbire wi' as little ceremony as he took you frae Squire Weir o' Cockermouth. Ah, Corby, ye're gayan like your master, ye hae a lang free kind o' conscience, ye tike!"

"But, my dear Sir," said Lady Jane, "you have not heard the half of my proffer. You seem to be a generous, sensible, and good natured gentleman."

"Do I?" said Charlie, "Thanks t'ye, my lord."

"Now," continued she, "if you will either set me and my page safely down on English ground, or within the ports of Edinborough, I'll add five thousand sheep to the proffer I have already made you."

"Are ye no joking?" said Charlie, again stopping his horse.

"On my honour I am not," was the answer.

"They'll stock a' Blake-Esk-head an' the Garald-Grains," said Charlie; "Hae ye a free passport to the Scottish court?"

"Yes, I have, and signed with the warden's name."

"Na, na haud your tongue there; my master has nae name," said Charlie: "He has a good speaking name, an' ane he disna think shame o', but nae name for black an' white."

"I'll show you it," said Lady Jane.

"Na, ye needna fash," said Charlie; "I fear it wad be unmannerly in me to doubt a lord's word."

"How soon could you carry us to Edinborough?" inquired Lady Jane, anxious to keep muckle Charlie in the humour of taking her any where save into the hands of Douglas.

"That's rather a question to speer at Corby than me," said Charlie; "but I think if we miss drowning i' Tweed, an' breaking our necks o'er the Red-brae, an' sinking out o' sight i' Soutra-flow, that I could tak in hand to hae ye in Edinborough afore twal o'clock at night.—Bad things for you, Corby."

"Never say another word about it then," said Lady Jane; "the rest are quite gone before us, and out of sight. Turn to the left, and ride for Edinborough. Think of the five hundred cows and five thousand sheep."



“ Oh, that last beats a’ !” said Charlie. “ Five thousand sheep ! how mony is that ? Five score’s a hunder — I’m sure o’ that. Every hunder’s five score then — and how mony hunder makes a thousand ?” —

“ Ten,” said the page, who was forced to laugh at Charlie’s arithmetic.

“ Ten ?” repeated Charlie. “ Then ten times five hunder that maks but ae thousand ; an’ other ten times five hunder — D—n me if I ken how mony is o’ them ava. What does it signify for a man to hae mair gear than he can count ? I fancy we had better jogg on the gate we’re gaun, Corby.”

“ I am sure, friend, ye never had such a chance o’ being rich,” said Lady Jane, “ and may never, in all likelihood, have such a chance again.”

“ That is a’ true ye’re saying, my lord, an’ a sair heart it has gi’en me,” said Charlie ; “ but your offer’s ower muckle, an’ that maks me dread there’s something at the bottom o’t that I dinna comprehend. Gude faith, an the warden war to suffer danger or disgrace for my greed o’ siller, it wad be a bonny story ! Corby, straight on, ye dog : ding the brains out o’ the gutters, clear for the camp, ye hellicat of an English hound. What are ye snoring an’ cocking your lugs at ! Od an ye get company like yoursel, ye carena what mischief ye carry your master into. Get on, I say, an’ dinna gie me time to hear another word or think about this business again.”

The young lady began here to lose heart, seeing that Charlie had plucked up a determination. But her companion attacked him in her turn with all the flattery and fair promises she could think of, till Charlie found his heart again beginning to waver and calculate ; so that he had no other shift but to croon a border war-song, that he might not hear this dangerous conversation. Still the page persevered, till Charlie, losing all patience, cried out as loud and as bitterly as he could, “ Haud your tongue, ye slee-gabbit limb o’ the auld ane. D’ye think, a man’s conscience is to be hadden abreed like the mou’ of a sack, an’ crammed fu’ o’ beef an’ mutton whether he

will or no! Corby, another nicker an' another snore, lad, an' we'll soon see you aff at the gallop."

Thus ended the trying colloquy between muckle Charlie Scott o' Yardbire and his two prisoners; the rest of his conversation was to Corby, whom he forthwith pushed on by spur and flattery to the camp.

When the truth came to be discovered, many puzzled themselves endeavouring to guess what Charlie would actually have done had he known by the way what a treasure he had in his arms,—the greatest beauty, and the greatest heiress in England; for Charlie was as notable for kindness and generosity as he was for bodily strength; and, besides, he was poor, as he frankly acknowledged; but then he only wished for riches to be able to keep more men for the service of his chief. Some thought he would have turned his horse round without further ceremony, and carried her straight to Yardbire, on purpose to keep her there for a wife; others thought he would have risked his neck, honour and every thing, and restored her again to her friends. But it was impossible for any of them to guess what he would have done, as it was proved afterwards that Charlie could not guess himself. When the truth came to be divulged, and was first told to him, his mouth, besides becoming amazingly extended in its dimensions, actually grew four-square with astonishment; and when asked what he would have done had he known, he smacked his lips, and wiped them with the back of his hand as if his teeth had been watering—and, laughing to himself with a chuckling sound, like a moor-cock, he turned about his back to conceal his looks, and only answered wth these emphatic words: "Gude faith, it was as weel I didna ken."

## CHAPTER VI.

Some write of preclair conquerouris,  
 And some of vallyeant emperouris,  
 And some of nobill mychtie kingis,  
 That royally did reull the ringis :  
 And some of squyris douchty deidis,  
 That wonderis wrocht in weirly weidis ;  
 Sa I intand the best I can  
 Descryve the deidis and the man.

SIR DAV. LINDSAYE.

Wald God I war now in Pitcary !  
 Becass I haif bene se ill deidy.  
 Adieu ! I dar na langer tairy,  
 I dreid I waif intill ane widdy.

*Ibid.*

IN the same grotesque guise as formerly described, Charlie at length came with his two prisoners to the outposts of the Scottish army. The rest of the train had passed by before him, and warned their friends who was coming, and in what style; for no one thought it worth his while to tarry with Charlie and his overloaded horse. When he came near the soldiers they hurra'd and waved their bonnets, and gathering about Charlie in crowds, they would not let him onward. Besides, some fell a loosing the prisoner behind him, and others holding up their arms to release him of the one he carried before; and, seeing how impatient he was, and how determined to keep his hold, they grew still more importunate in frolic. But it had nearly cost some of them dear; for Charlie, growing wroth, squeezed the Lady Jane so strait with the left arm, that she was forced to cry out; and putting his right over his shoulder, he drew out his tremendous two-hand sword, "Now stand back, devils," cried Charlie, "or, gude faith, I'll gar Corby ride over the taps o' the best o' ye. I hae had ower sair a trial for heart o' flesh already; but when I stood that, it sanna be the arm o' flesh that takes them frae me now, till I gie them

into Douglas's ain hands. Stand back, ye devils; a Scott never gies up his trust as lang as his arm can dimple at the elbow."

The soldiers flew away from around him like a flight of geese, and with the same kind of noise too,—every one being giggling and laughing,—and up rode Charlie to the door of the Douglas' pavilion, where he shouted aloud for the captain. Douglas, impatient to see his illustrious prisoner, left the others abruptly, and hasted out at Charlie's call.

"Gude faith, my lord," said Charlie, "I beg your pardon for garing you come running out that gate; but here's a bit English lord for ye, an' his henchman,—sic master, sic man, as the saying is. There war terrible charges gi'en about them, sae I thought I wad secure them, an' gie them into your ain hands."

"I am much beholden to you, gallant Yarbire," said Douglas; "The care and pains you have taken shall not be forgotten."

This encouraging Charlie, he spoke to the earl with great freedom, who was mightily diverted with his manner, as well as with his mode of securing the prisoners.

"There's his lordship for ye," said Charlie, holding him out like a small bale of goods; "Mind ye hae gotten him safe off my hand; an' here's another chap I hae fastened to my back. An a' the English nobles war like thir twa, I hae been thinking, my lord, that they might tak' our lasses frae us, but we wadna be ill pinched to tak their kye frae them; an' it wad be nae hard bargain for us neither." So saying he cut his belts and thongs of raw hide, and let the attendant lady, in page's clothes, free of his body. "He's a little, fine soft, cozey callan this," added Charlie, "he has made my hinderlands as warm as they had been in an oon."

Douglas took Lady Jane off from before the gallant yeoman in his arms. He observed with what a look she regarded him; and he was sure from the first view he got of her features, that the page Colin must have been right with regard to the sex of the prisoner. He likewise

noted the holes in her ears from which it was apparent that pendant jewels had lately been taken; and he hoped the other part of the page's information might likewise be correct, though how to account for such an extraordinary piece of good fortune he was wholly at a loss. He led her into the inner pavilion, and there in presence of his secretary and two of his kinsmen, examined her papers and passports. They were found all correct, and signed by the public functionaries of both nations, in favour of Jasper Tudor, son to the Earl of Pembroke.

"These are quite sufficient, my young lord," said Douglas; "I see no cause for detaining you further. You shall have a sufficient guard till you are out of the range of my army, and safe furtherance to the Scottish court."

The prisoner's countenance lighted up, and she thanked Douglas in the most grateful terms, blessing herself that she had fallen into the hands of so courteous a knight, and urged the necessity of their sudden departure, Douglas assured her they should be detained no longer than the necessity of the times required; but that it was absolutely requisite, for his own safety, the safety of the realm, and the success of the enterprize in which he was engaged, and so deeply concerned, that they should submit to a personal search from head to foot, lest some traitorous correspondence might be secretly conveyed by them.

The countenance of the prisoner again altered at this information. It became at first pale as a lily, and immediately after blushed as deeply as the damask rose, while the tears started to her eyes. It was no wonder, considering the predicament in which she now stood; her delicate lady form to be searched by the hands of rude warriors, her sex discovered, and her mission to the Scottish court found out to be a wild intrigue. She fell instantly on her knees before Douglas, and besought him in moving accents to dispense with the useless formality of searching her and her young kinsman and companion, assuring him at the same time that neither of them had a

single scrap of writing that he had not seen, and adjuring him on his honour and generosity as a knight to hearken to this request.

"The thing is impossible, my lord," said Douglas; "and, moreover, the anxiety you manifest about such a trifle argues a consciousness of guilt. You must submit to be searched on the instant. Chuse of us whom you will to the office."

"I will never submit to it," said she passionately, "there is not a knight in England would have refused such a request to you."

"I would never have asked it, my lord," said he; "and it is your utter inexperience in the customs of war, that makes you once think of objecting to it. I am sorry we must use force. Bring in two of the guards."

"Hold, hold, my lord," said Lady Jane, "since I must submit to such a degradation, I will submit to yourself. I will be searched by your own hands, and yours alone."

They were already in the inner tent. Douglas desired his friends to go out, which they complied with, and he himself began to search the person of Lady Jane, with the most careful minuteness, as he pretended, well aware what was to be the issue of the search. He examined all her courtly coat, pockets, lining and sleeves,—he came to her gaudy doublet, stiff with gold embroidery, and began to unloose it, but she laid both her hands upon her breast, and looked in his face with eyes so speaking, and so beseeching, that it was impossible for man to mistake the import. Douglas did not mistake it, but was bent upon having proof positive.

"What?" said he, "do you still resist? What is here you would conceal?"

"Oh my Lord," said she, "do you not see?"

"I see nothing," said he; and while she feebly struggled he loosed the vest, when the fair heaving bosom discovered the sex of his prisoner, and at the same time, with the struggle, the beautiful light locks had escaped from their confinement, and hung over her breast in waving ringlets. The maid stood revealed; and, with the

disclosure, all the tender emotions and restrained feelings of the female heart burst forth like a river that has been dammed up from running in its natural channel, and has just got vent anew. She wept and sobbed till her fair breast was like to rend. She even seized on Douglas' hand, and wet it with her tears. He, on his part, feigned great amazement.

“How is this?” said he, “A maid !”

“Yes indeed, my lord, you see before you, and in your power, a hapless maid of noble blood, who set out on a crazy expedition of love, but, from inexperience, has fallen into your hands.”

“Then the whole pretended mission to our Scottish court is, it appears, a fraud, a deep laid imposition of some most dangerous intent, as the interest that has been used to accomplish it fully demonstrates. You have subjected yourself and all your followers to military execution ; and the only method by which you can procure a respite, either for yourself or them, is to a make full confession of the whole plot.”

“Alas, my lord, I have no plot to confess. Mine was merely a romantic expedition of youthful love, and, as you are a knight, and a lover yourself, I beg your clemency, that you will pardon my followers and me. They are innocent ; and, save my page, who is likewise a lady, and my own kinswoman, all the rest are as ignorant who I am, and what I am, as the child that is unborn.”

“If you would entertain any hopes of a reprieve, I say, madam, either for yourself or them, declare here to me instantly your name, lineage, and the whole of your business in Scotland, and by whose powerful interest you got this safe conduct made out, for one who, it seems, knows nothing of it, or who, perhaps, does not exist.”

“Surely you will not be so ungallant as to insist upon a lady exposing herself and all her relations? No, my lord, whatever become of me, you must never attain to the knowledge of my name, rank, or titles. I entrust myself to your mercy : you can have nothing to fear from the machinations of a love-lorn damsel.”

“ I am placed in peculiarly hard circumstances, madam ; I have enemies abroad and at home ; and have nothing but my own energies to rely on to save my house and name from utter oblivion, and my dearest hopes from extinguishment. This expedition of yours, folded as it is in deceit and forgery, has an ominous and daring appearance. The house of Douglas must not fall for the tears of a deceitful maiden, the daughter of my enemy. Without a full disclosure of all that I request, every one of you shall suffer death in the sight of both armies before the going down of the sun. I will begin with the meanest of your followers, in hopes, for the sake of your youth and your sex, that you will relent and make a full disclosure of your name, and all your motives for such an extraordinary adventure.”

Lady Jane continued positive and peremptory, as did also her attendant, who had been thoroughly schooled before-hand, in case of their sex being discovered, never, on any account, to acknowledge who she was, lest it should put Musgrave wholly in Douglas' power. The latter, therefore, to keep up the same system of terror and retribution first practised by his opponent, caused sound the death knell, and hung out the flag of blood, to apprise those within the fortress that some of their friends were shortly to be led to execution.

The first that was brought out was a thick-set swarthy yeoman, who said his name was Edinund Heaton, and that he had been a servant to Belsay, whom he had followed in the border wars. When told that he was about to be hanged for a spy and a traitor, he got very angry, even into such a rage that they could not know what he said, for he had a deep rough burr in his throat, and spoke a coarse English dialect. “ Hang'd ? I hang'd ? and fogh whot ? Domn your abswoghdity ! Hang ane mon fogh deying whot his meastegh beeds him ? ”—He was told that he had not two minutes to live, unless he could discover something of the plot in which his employers were engaged ; that it was found he had been accompanying two ladies in disguise, on some traitorous



mission which they would not reveal ; and it was the law of war that he should suffer for the vile crime in which he was an accomplice.

“ Nabbit, I tell you that won't dey at all ;—n-n-nor it sha'n't dey neitheg. Do you think you aghe to hang eveghy mon that follows ane woeman? Domn them, I nevigh knew them lead to oughts but ell ! If I had known they had been woemen—Domn them !”—He was hauled up to the scaffold, for he refused to walk a foot.—“ Wh-wh-why, nabbit speak you now,” cried he in utter desperation ; “ why n-n-nobit you aghe not serious, aghe you ?” He was told he should soon find to his experience that they were quite serious.—“ Why, cworse the whole geneghation of you, the thing is nwot to be bwoghn. I wont swoffegh it—that I woll not. It is dwouright mworder. Oh, ho, ho !” and he wept, crying as loud as he could, “ Oh-oh ! ho : mworder ! mworder ! Domn eveghy Scwot of you !”—In this mode, kicking, crying, and swearing, was he turned off, and hanged in sight of both hosts.

The walls of Roxburgh were crowded with spectators. They could not divine who it was that was suffering ; for all kind of communication was forbid by Musgrave, and it was now become exceedingly difficult. Great was their wonder and anxiety when they beheld one trooper after another of their countrymen brought out and hanged like dogs. But it was evident to every beholder, from the unsettled and perturbed motions of those on the wall, that something within the fortress was distressing the besieged. Some hurried to and fro ; others stood or moved about in listless languor ; and there were a few that gazed without moving, or taking their eyes from the spot where they were fixed. Not one flight of arrows came to disturb the execution, as usual ; and it was suspected that their whole stock of arrows was exhausted. This would have been good tidings for the Scots, could they have been sure of it, as they might then have brought their files closer to the walls, and more effectually ensured a strict blockade.

Lady Jane's followers were all executed, and herself and companion sore threatened in vain. Douglas, however, meant to reserve them for another purpose than execution,—to ensure to himself the surrender of the fortress, namely; but of her squires he was glad to be rid, for fear of a discovery being made to the English that the lady was in his hands, which might have brought the whole puissance of the realm upon him; whereas the generality of the nation viewed the siege merely as an affair of Border chivalry, in which they were little interested, and deemed Musgrave free from any danger.

It was on St Leonard's day that these five Englishmen were executed; and as a retaliation in part, a Scots fisherman was hanged by the English from the wall of the castle; one who indeed had been the mean of doing them a great deal of mischief. And thus stood matters at that period of the siege; namely, the Earl of Douglas and Mar, lay before Roxburgh with eight thousand hardy veterans all his own vassals. The Redhough kept a flying army on the borders of Northumberland, chiefly about the mountains of Cheviot and Cocket-dale, interrupting all supplies and communications from that quarter, and doing excellent service to himself and followers, and more to the Douglas than the latter seemed to admit of. Whenever he found the English gathering to any head, he did not go and attack them, but, leaving a flying party of horse to watch their motions, he instantly made a diversion somewhere else, which drew them off with all expedition. A numerous army, hastily raised, entered Scotland on the west border, on purpose to draw off the warden; but they were surprised and defeated by the Laird of Johnston, who raised the Annandale people, and attacked the English by night. He followed them into Cumberland, and fought two sharp battles with them there, in both of which he had the advantage, and he then fell a spoiling the country. This brought the Northumberland and Durham men into these parts, who mustered under Sir William Fetherstone to the amount of fifteen thousand men. Johnston retired, and the

Earl of Galloway, to back him, raised twenty thousand in the west, and came towards the Sarke: So that the siege of Roxburgh was viewed but as an item in the general convulsion, though high was the stake for those that played, and ruthless the game while it lasted. Douglas now looked upon the die as turned in his favour, as he held pledges that would render the keeping of it of no avail to his opponent. The lady was in his power at whose fiat Musgrave had taken and defended the perilous castle so bravely,—but of this no man knew save the Douglas himself. Sir Richard Musgrave was likewise in his hand, the captain's youngest, most beloved, and only surviving brother; and Douglas had threatened, against a certain day, if the keys of the castle were not surrendered to him, to hang the young hero publicly, in the view of both hosts; and in all his threats he had never once broke his word. We must now take a peep within the walls of Roxburgh, and see how matters are going on there.

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## CHAPTER VII.

I cast my net in Largo bay,  
 And fishes I caught nine;  
 There were three to roast, and three to boil,  
 And three to bait the line.

*Old Song.*

Saw never man so faynt a levand wycht,  
 And na ferlye, for our excelland lycht  
 Corruptis the witt, and garris the blude awail,  
 Until the harte, thocht it na danger aill,  
 Quhen it is smorit memberis wirk not rychte,  
 The dreadfuller terrour swa did him assaile.

*Pal. of Hon.*

BERWICK was then in the hands of the English, and commanded by Sir Thomas Musgrave, the captain of Roxburgh's cousin; so also was Norham, and all the

forts between, on that side of the river. Notwithstanding of this, the power of the Scots predominated so much in the open field during that reign, that this chain of forts proved finally of no avail to Lord Musgrave, (or Sir Philip Musgrave, as he is generally denominated,) though he had depended on keeping the communication open, else in victualling Roxburgh he had calculated basely. The garrison were already reduced to the greatest extremes; they were feeding on their horses and on salted hides; and, two or three days previous to this, their only communication with their countrymen had been cut off, they could not tell how. It was at best only precarious, being carried on in the following singular way.—The besieged had two communications with the river, by secret covered ways from the interior of the fortress. In each of these they had a small windlass, that winded on and let off a line nearly a mile in length. The lines were very small, being made of plaited brass wire; and, putting a buoy on a hook at the end of each one of these, they let them down the water. Their friends knowing the very spot where they stopped, watched, and put dispatches on the hooks, with fish, beef, venison, and every kind of convenience, which they pulled up below the water, sometimes for a whole night together; and though this proved but a scanty supply for a whole garrison, it was for a long time quite regular, and they depended a good deal on it.

But one night it so chanced that an old fisherman, who fished for the monastery, had gone out with his coble by night to spear salmon in the river. He had a huge blaze flaming in a grate that stood exalted over the prow of his wherry; and with the light of that he pricked the salmon out of their deep recesses with great acuteness. As he was plying his task he perceived a fish of a very uncommon size and form scouring up the river with no ordinary swiftness. At first he started, thinking he had seen the devil: but a fisher generally strikes at every thing he sees in the water. He struck it with his barbed spear, called on Tweed a *leister*, and in a moment had it into his boat.

It was an excellent sirloin of beef. The man was in utter amazement, for it was dead, and lay without moving, like other butcher meat; yet he was sure he saw it running up the water at full speed. He never observed the tiny line of plaited wire, nor the hook, which indeed was buried in the lire; and we may judge with what surprise he looked on this wonderful fish,—this phenomenon of all aquatic productions. However, as it seemed to lie peaceably enough, and looked very well as a piece of beef, he resolved to let it remain, and betake himself again to his business. Never was there an old man so bewildered as he was, when he again looked into the river,—never either on Tweed or any other river on earth. Instead of being floating *down* the river peaceably in his boat, as one naturally expects to do, he discovered that he was running straight against the stream. He expected to have missed about fifty yards of the river by his adventure with the beef; but—no!—instead of that he was about the same distance advanced in his return up the stream. The windlass at the castle, and the invisible wire line, of which he had no conception, having been still dragging him gradually up. “Saint Mary, the mother of God, protect and defend poor Sandy Yellowlees!” cried he; “What can be the meaning of this? Is the world turned upside down? Aha! our auld friend Michael Scott, has some hand i’ this! He’s no to cree legs wi’; I’s be quits wi’ him.” With that he tumbled his beef again into the water, which held on its course with great rapidity straight up the stream, while he and his boat returned quietly in the contrary and natural direction.

“Aye, there it goes,” cried Sandy, “straight on for Aikwood! I’s warrant that’s for the warlock’s an the deil’s dinner the morn. God be praised I’m free o’t or I should soon have been there too!”

Old Sandy fished down the river, but he could kill no more salmon that night,—for his nerves had got a shock with this new species of fishing that he could not overcome. He missed one; wounded another on the tail;

and struck a third on the rigback, where no leister can pierce a fish, till he made him spring above water. Sandy grew chagrined at himself and the warlock, Michael Scott, too—for this last was what he called “a real prime fish.” Sandy gripped the leister a little firmer, clenched his teeth, and drew his bonnet over his eyes to shield them from the violence of his blaze. He then banned the wizard into himself, and determined to kill the next fish that made his appearance. But, just as he was keeping watch in this guise, he perceived another fish something like the former, but differing in some degree, coming swagging up the river full speed. “My heart laup to my teeth,” said Sandy, “when I saw it coming, and I heaved the leister, but durstna strike : but I lookit weel, an’ saw plainly that it was either a side o’ mutton or venison, I couldna tell whilk. But I loot it gang, an’ shook my head. ‘Aha, Michael, lad,’ quo’ I, ‘ye hae countit afore your host for ance ! Auld Sandy has beguiled ye. But ye weel expeckit to gie him a canter to hell the night.’ I rowed my boat to the side, an’ made a’ the haste hame I could, for I thought auld Michael had taen the water to himsel that night.”

Sandy took home his few fish, and went to sleep, for all was quiet about the abbey and the cloisters of his friends, the monks ; and when he awoke next morning he could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses, regarding what he had seen during the night. He arose and examined his fishes, and could see nothing about them that was not about other salmon. Still he strongly suspected they too might be some connections of Michael’s,—something illusory, if not worse : and took care to eat none of them himself, delivering them all to the cook of the monastery. The monks ate them, and throve very well ; and as Sandy had come by no bodily harm, he determined to try the fishing once again, and if he met with any more such fish of passage to examine them a little better. He went out with his boat, light, and fish-spear as usual ; and scarcely had he taken his station, when he perceived one of a very uncommon na-

ture approaching. He did not strike at it, but only put his leister-grains before it as if to stop its course, when he found the pressure against the leister very strong. On pulling the leister towards him, one of the barbs laid hold of the line by which the phenomenon was led; and not being able to get rid of it, he was obliged to pull it into the boat. It was a small cask of Malmsey wine; and at once, owing to the way it was drawn out, he discovered the hook and line fastened to the end of it. These he disengaged with some difficulty, the pull being so strong and constant; and the mystery was thus found out. In a few minutes afterwards he seized a large sheaf of arrows; and some time after, at considerable intervals, a number of excellent sides of beef and venison.

Sandy Yellowlees saw that he could now fish to some purpose, and formed a resolution of being the last man in the world to tell his countrymen of this resource that the enemy had. The thing of which he was most afraid was a discovery. He knew that the articles would soon be missed, and that his light would betray him; and then a flight of arrows, or even a single one, from a lurking foe at the side of the river, would put an end to his fishing for ever. Such an opportunity was not to be given up, notwithstanding of this danger; so, after much prying, both by day and by night, Sanders found that at an abrupt crook in the water, whatever the line brought up came close to the side, and when the water was low it even trailed them over a point of level sand-bed quite dry. This was a joyous discovery for Sandy. He had nothing ado but to sail down in his boat when it grew dark, and lie lurking at this crook in the water, and make a prey of whatever came within his reach. The very first night he filled his boat half full of valuable stuff. There was a necessity for disposing of a part of this, and Sandy was obliged to aver that he had discovered a hidden store belonging to the English; and, moreover, he hinted that he could supply the towns of Kelso and Roxburgh, the abbey of the one and the priory of the other, for some time to come. Great was the search that was made about the

banks of the river, but no one could find the store; yet Sanders Yellowlees continued to supply the market with luxuries, tho' no one knew how. Intelligence was sent down the stream, with the buoys, of the seizure of the provisions, and of the place where they were taken off, which they knew from the failure of the weight they were pulling to be always at the same place. The news also spread of Sandy's stores, and both reached the secret friends of the English, from whom the provisions were nightly sent to their besieged friends and benefactors, with all the caution and secrecy possible, it being given them to understand that on that supply alone depended the holding out of the fortress.

Many schemes were now tried to entrap Sandy, but all without effect; for the Scots had a strong post surrounding that very point where Sandy caught all his spoil. It was impossible to reach it but by a boat; and no boat was allowed on the river but that one that belonged to the abbey. At length an English trooper undertook to seize this old depredator. Accordingly, in the dead of the night, when the lines came down, he seized them both, twisted them into one, and walked silently up the side of the river until he came nigh to the spot where the Scots lines on each side joined the stream. He then put the two hooks into his buff belt, and committing himself to the water, was dragged in silence and perfect safety up the pool between the outposts.

The first turn above that was the point where Sandy lay watching. He had only seized one prey that night, and that was of no great value,—for they had given over sending up victuals to enrich an old Scots rascal, as they termed honest Sanders. He was glad when he saw the wake of a heavy burden coming slowly towards him. "This is a sack o' sweet-meats," said he to himself: "It must be currans an' raisins, an' sic fine things as are na injured by the fresh water. I shall get a swinging price from the abbey-men for them, to help wi' their Christmas pies."

No sooner did this huge load touch the land, than



Sandy seized it with all expedition ; but, to his inexpressible horror, the sack of sweetmeats seized him in its turn, and that with such potency that he was instantaneously overpowered. He uttered one piercing cry, and no more, before the trooper gagged and pinioned him. The Scottish lines were alarmed, and all in motion, and the troops on both sides were crowding to the bank of the stream. A party was approaching the spot where the twain were engaged in the unequal struggle. To return down the stream with his prisoner, as he intended, was impracticable ; so the trooper had no alternative left but that of throwing himself into Sandy's boat, with its owner in his arms, shoving her from the side into the deep, and trusting himself to the strength of the wirelines. As the windlasses were made always to exert the same force and no more, by resisting that, they could be stopped ; so by pushing the boat from the side in the direction of the castle, the line being slackened, that again set them agoing with great velocity ; and though they soon slackened in swiftness, the trooper escaped with his prisoner undiscovered, and, by degrees, was dragged up to the mouth of the covered way that led through or under the hill on which the castle stood ; and there was poor Sanders Yellowlees delivered into the hands of his incensed and half-famished enemies. It was he that was hanged over the wall of the castle on the day that the five English yeomen were executed.

The English now conceived that their secret was undiscovered, and that their sufferings would forthwith be mitigated by the supply drawn by their lines. They commenced briskly and successfully ; but, alas ! their success was of short duration. Sanders' secret became known to the Scots army. The night-watchers had often seen the old man's boat leaning on the shore at that point at all hours of the night ; for he was always free to go about plodding for fish when he pleased. His cry was heard at that spot, and the boat was now missing : the place was watched, and in two days the Englishmen's secret, on which they so much relied, was discovered,

and quite cut off; and that powerful garrison was now left with absolute famine staring them in the face.

As in all cases of utter privation, the men grew ungovernable. Their passions were chafed, and foamed like the ocean before the commencement of a tempest, foreboding nothing but anarchy and commotion. Parties were formed of the most desperate opposition to one another, and every one grew suspicious of his neighbour. Amid all this tempest of passion a mutiny broke out:—a strong party set themselves to deliver up the fortress to the Scots. But through such a medley of jarring opinions what project could succeed? The plot was soon discovered, the ringleaders secured, and Sir Stephen Vernon, Musgrave's most tried and intimate friend, found to be at the head of it. No pen can do justice to the astonishment manifested by Musgrave when the treachery of his dear friend was fully proven. His whole frame and mind received a shock as by electricity, and he gazed around him in moody madness, as not knowing whom to trust, and as if he deemed those around him were going to be his assassins.

“Wretch that I am!” cried he, “What is there more to afflict and rend this heart? Do I breathe the same air? Do I live among the same men? Do I partake of the same nature and feelings as I was wont? My own friend and brother Vernon, has he indeed lifted up his hand against me, and become one with my enemies? Whom now shall I trust? Must my dearest hopes—my honour, and the honour of my country, be sacrificed to disaffection and treachery? Oh Vernon—my brother Vernon, how art thou fallen!”

“I confess my crime,” said Vernon; “and I submit to my fate, since a crime it must be deemed. But it was out of love and affection to you, that your honour might not stoop to our haughty enemies. To hold out the fortress is impossible, and to persevere in the attempt utter depravity. Suppose you feed on one another, before the termination of the Christmas holidays, the remnant that will be left will not be able to guard the sallying ports,

even though the ramparts are left unmanned. In a few days I shall see my brave young friend and companion in arms, your brother, disgracefully put down, and ere long the triumphant Scots enter, treading over the feeble remains of this yet gallant army. I may bide a traitor's blame, and be branded with a traitor's name, but it was to save my friends that I strove; for I tell you, and some of you will live to see it, to hold out the castle is impossible."

"It is false!" cried Musgrave. "It is false! It is false!" cried every voice present in the judgment-hall, with frantic rage; and all the people, great and small, flew on the culprit to tear him to pieces; for their inveteracy against the Scots still grew with their distress.

"It is false! It is false!" shouted they. "Down with the traitor! sooner shall we eat the flesh from our own bones than deliver up the fortress to the Scots! Down with the false knave! down with the traitor!"—and, in the midst of a tumult that was quite irresistible, Vernon was borne up on their shoulders, and hurried to execution, smiling with derision at their madness, and repeating their frantic cries in mockery. It was in vain that the commander strove to save his friend,—as well might he have attempted to have stemmed the river in its irresistible course single-handed. Vernon and his associates were hanged like dogs, amid shouts of execration, and their bodies flung into a pit. When this was accomplished, the soldiers waved their caps, and cried out, "So fare it with all who take part with our hateful enemies!"

Musgrave shed tears at the fate of his brave companion, and thenceforward was seized with gloomy despondency; for he saw that subordination hung by a thread so brittle that the least concussion would snap it asunder, and involve all in inextricable confusion. His countenance and manner underwent a visible change, and he often started on the approach of any one toward him, and laid his hand on his sword. The day appointed by the Douglas for the execution of Sir Richard, provided the castle

was not delivered up before that period, was fast approaching,—an event that Musgrave could not look forward to without distraction; and it was too evident to his associates that his brave mind was so torn by conflicting passions, that it stood in great danger of being rooted up for ever.

It is probable that at this time he would willingly have complied with the dictates of nature, and saved the life of his brother; but to have talked of yielding up the fortress to the Scots at that period would only have been the prelude to his being torn in pieces. It was no more their captain's affair of love and chivalry that influenced them, but desperate animosity against their besiegers; and every one called aloud for succours. Communication with their friends was impracticable, but they hoped that their condition was known, and that succours would soon appear.—Alas, their friends in Northumberland had enough ado to defend themselves, nor could they do it so effectually but that their lands were sometimes harried to their very doors. The warden, with his hardy mountaineers, was indefatigable; and the English garrison were now so closely beleaguered, that all chance of driving a prey from the country faded from their hopes. Never was the portcullis drawn up, nor the draw-bridge at either end let down, that intelligence was not communicated by blast of bugle to the whole Scottish army, who were instantly on the alert. The latter fared sumptuously, while those within the walls were famishing; and at length the day appointed for the execution of Sir Richard drew so near that three days only were to run.

It had been customary for the English, whenever the Scots sent out a herald, bearing the flag of truce, to make any proposal whatsoever, to salute him with a flight of arrows; all communication or listening to proposals being strictly forbidden by the captain, on pain of death. However, that day, when the Douglas' herald appeared on the rising ground, called the Hill of Barns, Musgrave caused answer him by a corresponding flag, hoping it might be some proposal of a ransom for the life of his

beloved brother, on which the heralds had an interchange of words at the draw-bridge. The Scottish herald made demand of the castle in his captain's name, and added, that the Douglas requested it might be done instantly to save the life of a brave and noble youth, whom he would gladly spare, but could not break his word and his oath that he should suffer. He farther assured the English captain, that it was in vain for him to sacrifice his brother, for that he had the means in his power to bring him under subjection the day following, if he chose.

A council of the gentlemen in the castle was called. Every one spoke in anger, and treated the demand with derision. Musgrave spoke not a word; but, with a look of unstable attention on every one that spoke, collected their verdicts, and in a few minutes this answer was returned to the requisition of the Scots:

“If Sir Philip Musgrave himself, and every English knight and gentleman in the castle were now in the hands of the Douglas, and doomed to the same fate of their brave young friend, still the Douglas should not gain his point,—the castle would not be delivered up! The garrison scorn his proposals, they despise his threats, and they hold his power at defiance. Such tender mercies as he bestows, such shall he experience. He shall only take the castle by treading over the breasts of the last six men that remain alive in it.”

This was the general answer for the garrison—in the meantime Musgrave requested, as a personal favour of the Douglas, that he might see and condole with his brother one hour before his fatal exit. The request was readily complied with, and every assurance of safe conduct and protection added. The Douglas' pavilion stood on the rising ground, between the castle and the then splendid city of Roxburgh, a position from which he had a view of both rivers, and all that passed around the castle, and in the town; but, since the commencement of winter he had lodged over night in a tower that stood in the middle of the High-town, called the King's House, that had prisons underneath, and was strongly

guarded ; but during the day he continued at the pavilion, in order to keep an eye over the siege.

To this pavilion, therefore, Musgrave was suffered to pass, with only one knight attendant ; and all the way from the draw-bridge to the tent they passed between two files of armed soldiers, whose features, forms, and armour exhibited a strange contrast. The one rank was made up of Mar Highlanders ; men short of stature, with red locks, high cheek bones, and looks that indicated a ferocity of nature : the other was composed of Lowlanders from the dales of the south and the west ; men clothed in grey, with sedate looks, strong athletic frames, and faces of blunt and honest bravery. Musgrave weened himself passing between the ranks of two different nations, instead of the vassals of one Scottish nobleman. At the pavilion, the state, splendour, and number of attendant knights and squires amazed him ; but by them all he was received with the most courteous respect.

Sir Richard was brought up from the vaults of the King's House to the tent, as the most convenient place for the meeting with his brother, and for the guards to be stationed around them ; and there, being placed in one of the apartments of the pavilion, his brother was ushered in to him. No one was present at the meeting ; but, from an inner apartment, all that passed between them was overheard. Musgrave clasped his younger brother in his arms ; the other could not return the embrace, for his chains were not taken off ; but their meeting was passionately affecting, as the last meeting between two brothers must always be. When the elder retired a step, that they might gaze on each other, what a difference in appearance !—what a contrast they exhibited to each other ! The man in chains, doomed to instant death, had looks of blooming health, and manly fortitude : The free man, the renowned Lord Musgrave, governor of the impregnable but perilous castle of Roxburgh, and the affianced lord and husband to the richest and most beautiful lady in England, was the picture of haggard despair and misfortune. He appeared but the remnant, the

skeleton of the hero he had lately been ; and a sullen instability of mind flashed loweringly in his dark eye. His brother was almost terrified at his looks, for he regarded him sometimes as with dark suspicion, and as if he dreaded him to be an incendiary.

“ My dear brother,” said Sir Richard, what is it that hangs upon your mind, and discomposes you so much ? You are indeed an altered man since I had the misfortune to be taken from you. Tell me how fares all within the castle ?”

“ Oh, very well ; quite well, brother. All perfectly secure—quite well within the castle.” But as he said this he strode rapidly backward and forward across the small apartment, and eyed the canvas on each side with a grin of rage, as if he suspected that it concealed listeners ; nor was he wrong in his conjectures, though it was only caused by the frenzy of habitual distrust. “ But, how can I be otherwise than discomposed, brother,” continued he, “ when I am in so short a time to see you sacrificed in the prime of youth and vigour, to my own obstinacy and pride, perhaps.”

“ I beg that you will not think of it ; or take it at all to heart,” said the youth ; “ I have made up my mind, and can look death in the face without unbecoming dismay. I should have preferred dying on the field of honour, with my sword in my hand, rather than being hanged up between the hosts, like a spy, or common malefactor. But let the tears that are shed for Richard be other than salt brine from the eyes of the Englishmen. Let them be the drops of purple blood from the hearts of our enemies. I charge you, by the spirits of our fathers, whom I am so shortly to join, and by the blessed Trinity, that you act in this trying dilemma as the son of the house you represent. Shed not a tear for me, but revenge my death on the haughty house of Douglas.”

“ There is my hand ! Here is my sword ! But the vital motion, or the light of reason, who shall ensure to me till these things are fulfilled. Nay, who shall ensure them to this wasted frame for one moment ? I am not

the man I have been, brother. But here I will swear to you, by all the host of heaven, to revenge your death, or die in the fulfilment of my vow. Yes, fully will I revenge it! I will waste! waste! waste! and the fire that is begun within shall be quenched, and no tongue shall utter it! Ha! ha! ha! shall it not be so, brother?"

"This is mere raving, brother; I have nothing from this."

"No, it is not; for there is a fire that you wot not of. But I will quench it, though with my own blood. Brother, there is one thing I wish to know, and for that purpose did I come hither. Do you think it behoves me to suffer you to perish in this affair?"

"That depends entirely upon your internal means of defence," answered Richard. "If there is a certainty, or even a probability, that the castle can hold until relieved by our friends, which will not likely be previous to the time you have appointed for them to attempt it; why, then, I would put no account on the life of one man. Were I in your place, I would retain my integrity in opposition to the views of Douglas; but if it is apparent to you, who know all your own resources, that the castle must yield, it is needless to throw away the life of your brother, sacrificing it to the pride of opposition for a day or a week."

Musgrave seemed to be paying no regard to this heroic and disinterested reasoning,—for he was still pacing to and fro' gnawing his lip; and if he was reasoning, or thinking at all, was following out the train of his own unstable mind.—"Because, if I were sure," said he, "that you felt that I was acting unkindly or unnaturally by you, by the Rood, I would carve the man into fragments that would oppose my submission to save my brother. I would teach them that Musgrave was not to be thwarted in his command of the castle that was taken by his own might and device and to the government of which his sovereign appointed him. If a dog should dare to bay at me in opposition to my will, whatever it were, I would muzzle the hound, and make him repent his audacity."



“ My noble brother,” said Richard, “ what is the meaning of this frenzy ? No one is opposing your will, and I will believe no one within the castle will attempt it—”

“ Because they dare not !” said he, furiously, interrupting his brother : “ They dare not, I tell you ! But if they durst, what do you think I would do ? Ha, ha, ha !”

Douglas overheard all this, and judging it a fit time to interfere, immediately a knight opened the door of the apartment where the two brothers conversed, and announced the Lord Douglas. Musgrave composed himself with wonderful alacrity ; and the greeting between the two great chiefs, though dignified, was courteous and apparently free of rancour or jealousy. Douglas first addressed his rival as follows :

“ I crave pardon, knights, for thus interrupting you. I will again leave you to yourselves ; but I judged it incumbent on me, as a warrior and a knight of honour, to come, before you settled finally on your mode of procedure, and conjure you, Lord Philip Musgrave, to save the life of your brother—”

“ Certainly you will not put down my brave brother, Lord Douglas ?” said Musgrave, interrupting him.

“ As certainly,” returned he, “ as you put down my two kinsmen, Cleland and Douglas of Rowlaw, in mere spite and wanton cruelty, because they were beloved and respected by me. I am blameless, as it was yourself who began this unwarrantable system, and my word is passed. Sir Richard must die, unless the keys of the castle are delivered to me before Friday at noon. But I shall be blameless in any thing further. I conjure you to save him ; and as an inducement, assure you, by the honour of knighthood, that your resistance is not only unnatural, but totally useless ; for I have the means of commanding your submission when I please.”

“ Lord Douglas, I defy thee !” answered Musgrave. “ You hold the life in your hand that I hold dearest on earth, save one. For these two would I live or die ; but, since thy inveterate enmity will not be satisfied with

ought short of the life of my only brother, take it; and may my curse, and the curse of heaven, be your guerdon. It shall only render the other doubly dear to me; and, for her sake, will I withstand your proud pretensions; and, as she enjoined me, hold this castle, with all its perils, till the expiry of the Christmas holidays, in spite of you. I defy your might and your ire. Let your cruel nature have its full sway. Let it be gorged with the blood of my kinsfolk; it shall only serve to make my opposition the stronger and more determined. For the sake of her whom I serve, the mistress of my heart and soul, I will hold my resolution.—Do your worst!”

“So be it!” said Douglas. “Remember that I do not, like you, fight only in the enthusiasm of love and chivalry, but for the very being of my house. I will stick at no means of retaliating the injuries you have done to me and mine, however unjustifiable these may appear to some,—no act of cruelty, to attain the prize for which I contend. Little do you know what you are doomed to suffer, and that in a short space of time. I again conjure you to save the life of your brother, by yielding up to me your ill-got right, and your conditions shall be as liberal as you can desire.”

“I will yield you my estate to save my brother, but not the castle of Roxburgh. Name any other ransom but that, and I will treat with you. Ask what I can grant with honour, and command it.”

“Would you give up the life of a brave only brother to gratify the vanity and whim of a romantic girl, who, if present herself, would plead for the life of Sir Richard, maugre all other considerations, else she has not the feelings of woman? What would you give, Lord Musgrave, to see that lady, and hear her sentiments on the subject.”

“I would give much to see her. But, rather than see her in this place, I would give all the world and my life’s blood into the bargain. But of that I need not have any fear. You have conjurors among you, it is said, and witches that can raise up the dead, but their power ex-

tends not to the living, else who of my race would have been left?"

"I have more power than you divine; and I will here give you a simple specimen of it, to convince you how vain it is to contend with me. You are waging war with your own vain imagination, and suffer all this wretchedness for a thing that has neither being nor name."

Douglas then lifted a small gilded bugle that hung always at his sword belt, the language of which was well known to all the army; and on that he gave two blasts not louder than a common whistle, when instantly the door of the apartment opened, and there entered Lady Jane Howard, leaning on her female attendant, dressed in attire of princely magnificence. "Lady Jane Howard!" exclaimed Sir Richard, starting up, and struggling with his fettered arms to embrace her. But when the vision met the eyes of Lord Musgrave, he uttered a shuddering cry of horror, and sprung with a convulsive leap back into the corner of the tent. There he stood, like the statue of distraction, with his raised hands pressed to each side of his helmet, as if he had been strenuously holding his head from splitting asunder.

"So! Friend and foe have combined against me?" cried he wildly. "Earth and hell have joined their forces in opposition to one impotent human thing! And what his crime? He presumed on no more than what he did, and could have done; but who can stand against the powers of darkness, and the unjust decrees of heaven? Yes; unjust! I say unjust! Down with all decrees to the centre! There's no truth in heaven! I weened there was, but it is as false as the rest! I say as false!—falsar than both!—I'll brave all the three! Ha, ha, ha!"

Douglas had brought Lady Jane the apparel, and commanded her to dress in it; and, perceiving the stern, authoritative nature of the chief, she judged it meet to comply. At first she entered with a languid dejected look, for she had been given to understand something of the rueful nature of the meeting she was called on to attend. But when she heard the above infuriated rhapsody, and

turned her eyes in terror to look on the speaker, whose voice she well knew, she uttered a scream and fainted. Douglas supported her in his arms ; and Sir Richard, whose arms were in fetters, stood and wept over her. But Musgrave himself only strode to and fro over the floor of the pavilion, and uttered now and then a frantic laugh. " That is well !—That is well !" exclaimed he ; " Just as it should be ! I hope she will not recover. Surely she will not ?" and then bending himself back, and clasping his hands together, he cried fervently : " O mother of God, take her to thyself while she is yet pure and uncontaminated, or what heart of flesh can endure the prospect ? What a wreck in nature that lovely form will soon be ! Oh-oh-oh !"

The lady's swoon was temporary. She soon began to revive, and cast unsettled looks around in search of the object that had so overpowered her ; and at the request of Sir Richard, who perceived his brother's intemperate mood, she was removed. She was so struck with the altered features, looks, and deportment of the knight, who in her imagination was every thing that was courteous, comely, and noble, and whom she had long considered as destined to be her own, that her heart was unable to stand the shock, and her removal from his presence was an act of humanity.

She was supported out of the tent by Douglas and her female relation ; but when Musgrave saw them leading her away, he stepped rapidly in before them and interposed ; and, with a twist of his body, put his hand two or three times to the place where the handle of his sword should have been. The lady lifted her eyes to him, but there was no conception in that look, and her lovely face was as pale as if the hand of death had passed over it.

Any one would have thought that such a look from the lady of his love, in such a forlorn situation, and in the hands of his mortal enemy, would have totally uprooted the last fibres of his distempered mind. But who can calculate on the medicine suited to a diseased spirit ? The cares even of some bodily diseases are those that

would poison a healthy frame. So did it prove in this mental one. He lifted his hand from his left side, where he had thrust it convulsively in search of his sword, and clapping it on his forehead, he seemed to resume the command of himself at once, and looked as calm and serene as in the most collected moments of his life.

When they were gone, he said to Sir Richard, in the hearing of the guards: "Brother, what is the meaning of this? What English traitor has betrayed that angelic maid into the hands of our enemy?"

"To me it is incomprehensible," said Sir Richard: "I was told of it by my keeper last night, but paid no regard to the information, judging it a piece of wanton barbarity; but now my soul shudders at the rest of the information that he added."

"What more did the dog say?" said Musgrave.

"He said he had heard that it was resolved by the Douglasses, that, if you did not yield up the fortress and citadel freely, on or before the day of the conception of the Blessed Virgin, on that day at noon the lady of your heart should be exhibited in a state not to be named on a stage erected on the top of the Bush-law, that faces the western tower, and is divided from it only by the moat; and there before your eyes, and in sight of both hosts, compelled to yield to that disgrace which barbarians only could have conceived; and then to have her nose cut off, her eyes put out, and her beauteous frame otherwise disfigured."

"He dares not for his soul's salvation do such a deed!" said Musgrave: "No; there's not a bloodhound that ever mouthed the air of his cursed country durst do a deed like that. And though every Douglas is a hound confest, where is the mongrel among them that durst but howl of such an outrage in nature? Why, the most absolute fiend would shrink from it; Hell would disown it; and do you think the earth would bear it?"

"Brother, suspend your passion, and listen to the voice of reason and of nature. Your cause is lost, but not your honour. You took, and have kept that for-

treachery, to the astonishment of the world. But for what do you now fight? or what can your opposition avail? Let me beseech you not to throw away the lives of those you love most on earth thus wantonly, but capitulate on honourable terms, and rescue your betrothed bride and your only brother from the irritated Scots. Trust not that they will stick at any outrage to accomplish their aim. Loth would I be to know our name were dishonoured by any pusillanimity on the part of my brother; but desperate obstinacy is not bravery. I therefore conjure you to save me, and her in whom all your hopes of future felicity are bound up."

Musgrave was deeply affected; and, at that instant, before he had time to reply, Douglas re-entered.

"Scots lord, you have overcome me," said he with a pathos that could not be exceeded: "Yes you have conquered, but not with your sword. Not on the field, nor on the wall, have ye turned the glaive of Musgrave: but either by some infernal power, or else by chicanery and guile. It boots not me to know how you came possessed of this last and only remaining pledge of my submission. It is sufficient you have it. I yield myself your prisoner; let me live or die with those two already in your power."

"No, knight, that must not be," replied Douglas. "You are here on safe conduct, and protection, my honour is pledged, and must not be forfeited. You shall return in safety to your kinsmen and soldiers, and act by their counsel. It is not prisoners I want, but the castle of Roxburgh, which is the right of my sovereign and my nation,—clandestinely taken, and wrongously held by you. I am neither cruel nor severe beyond the small range that points to that attainment; but that fortress I will have,—else wo be to you, and all who advise withholding it as well as all their connexions to whom the power of Scotland can extend. If the castle is not delivered up before Friday at noon, your brother shall suffer,—that you already know. But at the same hour on the day of the Conception, if it is still madly and wantonly detained, there shall be such a scene transacted before

your eyes as shall blur the annals of the Border for ever."

"If you allude to any injury intended to the lady who is your prisoner," said Musgrave, "the cruellest fiend in hell could not have the heart to hurt such angelic purity and loveliness; and it would degrade the honour of knighthood for ever to suffer it. Cruel as you are, you dare not injure a hair of her head."

"Talk not of cruelty in me," said Douglas; "If the knight who is her lover will not save her, how should I? You have it in your power, and certainly it is you that behove to do it; even granting that the stakes for which we fought were equal, the task of redemption and the blame would rest solely with you. And how wide is the difference between the prizes for which we contend? I for my love, my honour, and the very existence of my house and name; and you for you know not what,—the miserable pride of opposition. Take your measures my lord. I will not be mocked."

Douglas left the apartment. Musgrave also arose and embraced his brother, and, as he parted from him, he spoke these ominous words; "Farewell my dear Richard. May the angels that watch over honour be your gaurdians in the hour of trial. You know not what I have to endure from tormentors without and within. But hence we meet not again in this state of existence. The ties of love must be broken, and the bands of brotherly love burst assunder,—nevertheless I will save you—A long farewell my brother."

Musgrave was then conducted back to the draw-bridge, between two long files of soldiers as before, while all the musicians that belonged either to the army or the city were ranked up in a line behind them, on the top of the great precipice that overhangs the Teviot, playing, on all manner of instruments, "*Turn the Blue Bonnets wha can, wha can,*" with such a tremendous din that one would have thought every stone in the walls of Roxburgh was singing out the bravado.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Quhat weywerde elfin thyng is thaten boie,  
 That hyngethe still upon myne gaire, as doeth  
 My synne of harte? And quhome rychte loth, I lose  
 With not les hauckerynge. His locent eyne,  
 And his tungis maiter comethe on myne sense  
 Lyke a remembrance; or lyke ane dreime  
 That had delytis in it. Quhen I wolde say  
 "Begone;" lo then my tung mistakethe quyte,  
 Or fanceyinge not the terme, it sayethe "Come hidder  
 Come hidder, crabbed boie, unto myne syde."

*Old Play.*

THAT evening, after the departure of the noble and distressed Musgrave, Douglas was sitting all alone musing in a secret apartment of the pavilion, when he heard a gentle tap at the door, "Who is there?" inquired he surlily: "It is I, my lor'," said a petulant treble voice without. "Aha! my excellent nondescript little fellow, Colin Roy, is it you? Why, you may come in." Colin entered dressed in a most elegant and whimsical livery, and forgetting himself made the Douglas two or three graceful courtesies instead of bows.

"Aye, hem," said he, "that is very well for the page of a princess. I suppose you have been studying the graces from your accomplished mistress! But where have you been all this while? I have felt the loss of you from my hand grievously."

"I have been waiting on my royal mistress, my lor', informing her of all that is going on at the siege, and of your good fortune in the late captures you have made, wherein she rejoices exceedingly, and wishes you all good fortune and forward success; and, in token of kind remembrance, she sends you this heart of ruby set in gold and diamonds,—a gem that befits your lordship well to wear. And many more matters she has given me in charge, my lor'."



Douglas kissed the locket, and put it in his bosom, and then uttered abundance of the extravagant bombast peculiar to that age. He called her his guardian angel, his altar of incense, and the saint of his devotion, the buckler of his arm, the sword in his hand, and the jewel of his heart. "Do you think, Colin," added he, "that ever there was a maiden born like this royal lady of my love?"

"Why, mylor', I am not much skilled in these matters, but I believe the wench, my mistress, is well enough:—that is, she is well formed. And yet she is but so so."

"How dare you, you piece of unparalleled impudence, talk of your royal mistress in that strain? Or where did you ever see a form or features so elegant, and so bewitchingly lovely?"

"Do you think so?—Well, I'm glad of it. I think she is coarse and masculine. Where did I ever see such a form, indeed! Yes I have seen a much finer limb, and an arm, and a hand too! What think you of that for a hand, my lor'?"—(and with that the urchin clapped his hand on the green table, first turning up the one side of it and then the other.)—"I say if that hand were as well kept, and that arm as well loaden with bracelets, and the fingers with diamond rings, it would be as handsome as your princess's, of which you boast so much,—aye, and handsomer too."

"You are a privileged boy, Colin, otherwise I would kick you heartily, and, moreover, cause you to be whipped by the hand of the common executioner. However, you are a confidant,—all is well from you; and, to say the truth, yours is a very handsome hand for a boy's hand,—so is your arm. But what are they to those of my lovely and royal Margaret?—mere deformity! the husk to the wheat!"

"Indeed, my lor', you have an excellent taste, and a no less gifted discernment!"

"I cannot conceive of any earthly being equalling my beauteous princess, whether in the qualifications of body or mind."

“I rejoice to hear it. How blind love is! Why, in sober reality, there is the Lady Jane Howard. Is there any comparison between the princess and that lady in beauty?”

“She is, I confess, a most exquisite creature, Colin, even though rival to my adorable lady; in justice it must be acknowledged she is *almost* peerless in beauty. I do not wonder at Musgrave’s valour when I see the object of it. But why do you redden as with anger, boy, to hear my commendations of that hapless lady?”

“I, my lor’? How should I redden with anger? On my honour, craving my Lord Douglas’ pardon, I am highly pleased. I think she is much more beautiful than you have said, and that you should have spoken of her in a more superlative degree, and confessed frankly that you would willingly exchange your betrothed lady for her. I cannot chuse but think her very beautiful; too beautiful, indeed, with her blue eyes, white teeth, and ruddy lips. I dont like such bright blue eyes. I could almost find in my heart to scratch them out, she is so like a wanton. So you don’t wonder at Lord Musgrave’s valour, after having seen his mistress? Well, I advise your lordship, your captainship, and your besiegership, that there are some who wonder very much at your *want* of valour. I tell you this in confidence. My mistress thinks you hold her charms only at a small avail, that you have not *gone into* that castle long ago, and turned out these Englishmen, or hung them up by the necks if they refused. Musgrave went in and took it at once, for the favour of his mistress; because, forsooth, he deemed her worthy of the honour of such a bold emprise. Why, then, do not you do the same? My mistress, to be sure, is a woman,—a very woman; but she says this, that it is superabundantly ungallant of you not to have *gone in* and taken possession of the castle long ago. Do you know that (poor kind creature!) she has retired to a convent, where she continues in a state of sufferance, using daily invocations at the shrines of saints for your success. And she has, moreover, made a vow not to braid her hair,

nor dress herself in princely apparel until the day of your final success. Surely, my lor', you ought *to take that castle*, and relieve my dear mistress from this durance. I almost weep when I think of her, and must say with her that she has been shabbily used. and that she has reason to envy Lady Jane Howard even in her captivity."

"Colin, you are abundantly impertinent: but there is no stopping of your tongue once it is set a-going. As to the taking of castles, these things come not under the cognizance of boys or women. But indeed I knew not that my sovereign lady the princess had absconded from the courtly circle of her father's palace, and betaken herself to a convent on my account. Every thing that I hear of that jewel endears her to me the more."

"What? even her orders for you *to go into the castle*, and put out the English? I assure you, my lor', she insists upon it. Whether it is her impatience to be your bride, I know not, but she positively will not be satisfied unless you very soon *go into that castle*, and put the Englishmen all to the outside of it, where you are now; or hang them, and bury them out of sight before she visits the place to congratulate you."

"Boy, I have no patience with you. Cease your prating, and inform me where my beloved mistress is, that I may instantly visit her."

"No; not for the Douglas' estate, which is now in the fire, and may soon be brought to the anvil, will I inform you of that. But, my lor', you know I must execute my commision. And I tell you again, unless you take this castle very soon, you will not only lose the favour of my mistress, but you will absolutely break her heart. Nothing less will satisfy her. I told her, there was a great moat, more than a hundred feet deep, and as many wide, that surrounded the castle, and flowed up to the base of its walls; that there was a large river on each side of it, and that they were both dammed and appeared like two standing seas—but all availed nought. 'There is a moat,' said I; 'But let him go over that,' said she; 'let him swim it, or put a float on it. What is it to cross

a pool a hundred feet wide? How did Lord Musgrave pass over it? 'There are strong walls on the other side,' said I: 'But let him go over these,' said she; 'or break a hole through them and go in. Men built the walls, why may not men pull them down? How did Musgrave get over them?' 'There are armed men within,' said I: 'But they are only Englishmen,' said she; 'Let Douglas' men put there swords into them, and make them stand back. How did Musgrave get in when it was defended by gallant Scots? Douglas is either no lover, or else no warrior, added she; 'or perhaps he is neither the one nor the other,'"

"Peace, sapling," said Douglas, frowning and stamping with his foot, "Peace, and leave the pavilion instantly." Colin went away visibly repressing a laugh, which irritated Douglas still the more; and as the urchin went, he muttered in a crying whine, "My mistress is very shabbily used!—very shabbily! To have promised herself to a knight if he will but take a castle for her, and to have fasted, and prayed, and vowed vows for him, and yet he dares not go in and take it. And I am shabbily used too; and that I'll tell her! Turned out before I get half her message delivered! But I must inform you, my lor', before I go, that since you are making no better use of the advantage given you, I demand the prisoners back that I lodged in your hand in my lady mistress' name, and by her orders."

"I will do no such thing to the whim of a teasing impertinent stripling, without my lady princess's hand and seal for it," said Douglas.

"You shall not long want that," said Colin; and pulling a letter out from below his sash, he gave it to him. It was the princess's hand and seal,—it being an easy matter for Colin to get what letters he listed. Douglas opened it, and read as follows:

"**LORD DOUGLAS,**—In token of my best wishes for your success, I send you these, with greeting. I hope you will take immediate advantage of the high superiority

afforded you in this contest, by putting some indelible mark, or public stain, on the lusty dame I put into your hands. If Musgrave be a knight of any gallantry he will never permit it, but yield. As I cannot attend personally, I request that the mode and degree of punishment you inflict may be left to my page Colin. That you have not been successful by such means already, hath much surprised

MARGARET."

"This is not a requisition to give you up the prisoners," said Douglas, "but merely a request that the punishment inflicted may be left to you, a request which must not be denied to the lady of my heart. Now, pray, Master Colin Roy MacAlpin, what punishment do you decree for the Lady Jane Howard? For my part, though I intended to threaten the most obnoxious treatment, to induce my opponent to yield, I could not for my dearest interests injure the person of that exquisite lady."

"You could not, in good troth? I suppose my mistress has good reason to be jealous of you two. But since the power is left with me I shall prevent that; I shall see her punished as she deserves: I'll have no shameful exposures of a woman, even were she the meanest plebeian, but I'll mar her beauty that she thinks so much of, and that *you* think so much of. I'll have her nose cut off; and two of her fore teeth drawn; and her cheeks and brow scolloped. I'll spoil the indecent brightness of her gloss! She shall not sparkle with such brilliance again, nor shall the men gloat, feasting their intolerable eyes on her, as they do at present."

"Saint Duthoc buckler me!" exclaimed the Douglas,—"what an unnatural tiger cat it is! I have heard that such feelings were sometimes entertained by one sovereign beauty toward another of the same sex; but that a sprightly youth, of an amorous complexion, with bright blushing features and carrotty locks, should so depreciate female beauty, and thirst to deface it, surpasses any thing I have witnessed in the nature of man. Go to, you are a perverse boy, but shall be humoured as far as my

honour and character as a captain and warrior will admit."

Colin paced lightly away, making a slight and graceful courtesy to the Douglas as he glided out. "What an extraordinary, wayward, and accomplished youth that is!" said the chief to himself. "Is it not strange that I should converse so long with a page, as if he were my equal? There is something in his manner and voice that overcomes me; and though he teazes me beyond endurance, there is a sort of enchantment about him, that I cannot give him the check. Ah me! all who submit themselves to women, to be swayed by them or their delegates, will find themselves crossed in every action of importance. I am resolved that no woman shall sway me. I can love, but have not learned to submit."

Colin retired to his little apartment in the pavilion; it was close to the apartment that Douglas occupied while he remained there, and not much longer or broader than the beautiful and romantic inhabitant. Yet there he constantly abode when not employed about his lord, and never mixed or conversed with the other pages. Douglas retired down to the tower, or King's House, as it was called (from king Edward having occupied it,) at even tide,—but Colin Roy remained in his apartment at the pavilion. Alas! that Douglas did not know the value of the life he left exposed in such a place!

On the return of Musgrave into the castle, a council of all the gentlemen in the fortress was called, and with eager readiness they attended in the hall of the great western tower. The governor related to them the heart-rending intelligence of his mistress being in the hands of their enemies, and of the horrid fate that awaited her, as well as his only brother, provided the garrison stood out. Every one present perceived that Musgrave inclined to capitulate; and, as they all admired him, they pitied his woeful plight. But no one ventured a remark. There they sat, a silent circle, in bitter and obstinate rumination. Their brows were plaited down, so as almost to cover their eyes; their under lips were bent upward, and

every mouth shaped like a curve, and their arms were crossed on their breasts, while every man's right hand instinctively rested on the hilt of his sword.

Musgrave had taken his measures, whichever way the tide should run. In consequence of this he appeared more calm and collected at this meeting than he had done for many a day. "I do not, my friends, and soldiers, propose any alternative," said he,—“I merely state to you the circumstances in which we are placed; and according to your sentiments I mean to conduct myself.”

“It is nobly said, brave captain,” said Collingwood; “Our case is indeed a hard one, but not desperate. The Scots cannot take the castle from us, and shall any one life, or any fifty lives, induce us to yield them the triumph, and all our skill, our bravery, and our sufferings go for nought?”

“We have nothing to eat,” said Musgrave.

“I'll eat the one arm, and defend the draw-bridge with the other, before the Scots shall set a foot in the castle,” said a young man, named Henry Clavering. “So will I;” said another. “So will I, so will we all!” echoed through the hall, while a wild gleam of ferocity fired every haggard countenance. It was evident that the demon of animosity and revenge was now conjured up, which to lay was not in the power of man.

“What then do you propose as our mode of action in this grievous dilemma?” said Musgrave.

“I, for my part, would propose decision and ample retaliation,” said Clavering. “Do you not perceive that there has been a great storm in the uplands last night and this morning, and that the Tweed and Teviot are roaring like two whirlpools of the ocean, so that neither man nor beast can cross them? There is no communication between the two great divisions of the Scottish army to night, save by that narrow passage betwixt the moat and the river. Let us issue forth at the deepest hour of midnight, secure that narrow neck of land by a strong guard, while the rest proceed sword in hand to the eastern

camp, surround the pavilion of Douglas, and take him and all his associates prisoners, and then see who is most forward in using the rope !”

“ It is gallantly proposed, my brave young friend,” said Musgrave; “ I will lead the onset myself. I do not only ween the scheme practicable, but highly promising; and if we can make good that narrow neck of land against our enemies on the first alarm, I see not why we may not cut off every man in the eastern division of their army; and haply, from the camp and city, secure to ourselves a good supply of provisions before the break of the day.”

These were inducements not to be withstood, and there was not one dissenting voice. A gloomy satisfaction rested on every brow, and pervaded every look, taking place of dark and hideous incertitude. Like a winter day that has threatened a tempest from the break of the morning, but becomes at last no longer doubtful, as the storm descends on the mountain tops, so was the scene at the breaking up of that meeting—and all was activity and preparation within the castle during the remainder of the day.

The evening at last came; but it was no ordinary evening. The storm had increased in a tenfold degree. The north-west wind roared like thunder. The sleet descended in torrents, and was driven with an impetuosity that no living creature could withstand. The rivers foamed from bank to brae; and the darkness was such as if the heavens had been sealed up. The sound of the great abbey bell, that rung for vespers, was borne away on the tempest; so that nothing was heard, save once or twice a solemn melancholy sound, apparently at a great distance, as if a spirit had been moaning in the eastern sky.

Animal nature cowered beneath the blast. The hind left not her den in the wood, nor broke her fast, until the dawning. The flocks crowded together for shelter in the small hollows of the mountains, and the cattle lowed and bellowed in the shade. The Scottish soldiers



dozed under their plaids, or rested on their arms within the shelter of their tents and trenches. Even the outer sentinels, on whose vigilance all depended, crept into some retreat or other that was next to hand, to shield them from the violence of the storm. The army was quite secure,—for they had the garrison so entirely cooped up within their walls, that no attempt had been made to sally forth for a whole month. Indeed ever since the English were fairly dislodged from the city, the Bush-law, and all the other outworks, the attempt was no more dreaded; for the heaving up of the portcullis, and the letting down of the draw-bridge, made such a noise as at once alarmed the Scottish watchers, and all were instantly on the alert. Besides, the gates and draw-bridges (for there were two gates and one draw-bridge at each end) were so narrow, that it took a long time for an enemy to pass in any force; and thus it proved an easy matter to prevent them. But, that night, the storm howling in such majesty, and the constant jangling of chains and pulleys swinging to its force, with the roaring of the two rivers over the dams, formed altogether such a hellish concert, that fifty portcullises might have been raised, and as many draw-bridges let down, and the prostrate shivering sentinels of the Scottish army have distinguished no additional chord or octave in the infernal bravura.

At midnight the English issued forth with all possible silence. Two hundred, under the command of Grey and Collingwood, were posted on the castle-green, that is, the narrow valley between the moat and the river Tweed, to prevent the junction of the two armies on the first alarm being given. The rest were parted into two divisions; and, under the command of Musgrave and Henry Clavering, went down the side of each river so as to avoid the strongest part of the Scottish lines, and the ramparts raised on the height. Clavering led his division down by the side of the Teviot, along the bottom of the great precipice, and, owing to the mingled din of the flood and the storm, was never perceived till fairly in the

rear of the Scottish lines. Musgrave was not so fortunate, as the main trench ran close to the Tweed. He was obliged to force it with his first column; which he did with a rapidity which nothing could equal. The Englishmen threw themselves over the mound of the great trench, hurling in above their enemies sword in hand, and overpowering them with great ease; then over one breastwork after another, spreading consternation before them and carnage behind. Clavering heard nothing of this turmoil, so intemperate was the night. He stood with impatience, his men drawn up in order, within half a bow-shot of Douglas's pavilion, waiting for the signal agreed on; for their whole energy was to be bent against the tent of the commander, in hopes, not only to capture the Douglas himself, and all his near kinsmen, but likewise their own prisoners. At length, among other sounds that began to swell around, Clavering heard the welcome cry of "DUDDOE'S AWAY!" which was as readily answered with "DUDDOE'S HERE!" and at that moment the main camp was attacked on both sides. The flyers from the lines had spread the alarm. The captain's tent was surrounded by a triple circle of lesser tents, all full of armed men, who instantly grasped their weapons, and stood on the defensive. Many rough blows were exchanged at the first onset, and many of the first ranks of the assailants met their death. But though those within fought with valour, they fought without system; whereas the English had arranged every thing previously; and each of them had a white linen belt, of which the Scots knew nothing; and in the hurry and terror that ensued, some parties attacked each other, and fell by the hands of their brethren. Finding soon that the battle raged before and behind them, they fled with precipitation toward the city; but there they were waylaid by a strong party, and many of them captured and slain. The English would have slain every man that fell into their power, had it not been for the hopes of taking Douglas, or some of his near kinsmen, and by that means redeeming the precious pledges that the Scots held, so much to their detriment,

and by which all their motions were paralyzed. Clavering, with a part of the troops under his command, pursued the flyers that escaped as far as the head of the Market-street, and put the great Douglas himself into no little dismay; for he found it next to impossible to rally his men amid the storm and darkness, such a panic had seized them by this forthbreaking of their enemies. Clavering would, doubtless have rifled a part of the city, if not totally ruined that division of the Scottish army, had he not been suddenly called back to oppose a more dangerous inroad behind.

When Musgrave first broke through the right wing of the Scottish lines, the noise and uproar spread amain, as may well be conceived. The warders on the heights then sounded the alarm incessantly: and a most incongruous thing it was to hear them sounding the alarm with such vigour at their posts, after the enemy had passed quietly by them, and at that time were working havoc in the middle of their camp. They knew not what was astir, but they made plenty of din with their cow-horns, leaving those that they alarmed to find out the cause the best way they could.

The Scottish army that beleaguered the castle to the westward caught the alarm, and rushed to the support of their brethren and commander. The infantry being first in readiness, were first put in motion, but, on the narrowest part of the castle green, they fell in with the firm set phalanx of the English, who received them on the point of their lances, and, in a few seconds, made them give way. The English could not however pursue, their orders being to keep by the spot where they were, and stand firm; so that the Scots had nothing ado but to rally at the head of the green and return to the charge. Still it was with no better success than before. The English stood their ground, and again made them reel and retreat. But, by this time, the horsemen were got ready, and descended to the charge at a sharp trot. They were clad in armour, and had heavy swords by their sides, and long spears like halberds in their hands. The

English lines could not withstand the shock given by these, for the men were famishing with hunger and benumbed with cold, the wind blowing with all its fury straight in their faces. They gave way ; but they were neither broken nor dispersed. Reduced as they were, they were all veterans, and retreated fighting till they came to the barriers before the draw-bridge ; and there, having the advantage of situation, they stood their ground.

The horsemen passed on to the scene of confusion in the camp, and came upon the rear of the English host, encumbered with prisoners and spoil.

When Clavering was called back, Douglas, who had now rallied about one hundred and forty men around him, wheeled about, and followed Clavering in the rear ; so that the English found themselves in the same predicament that the Scots were in about an hour before,—beset before and behind,—and that principally by horsemen, which placed them under a manifest disadvantage.

It is impossible to give any adequate idea of the uproar and desperate affray that now ensued. The English formed on both sides to defend themselves ; but the prisoners being numerous detained a great part of the men from the combat. A cry arose to kill the prisoners ; from whom it first issued no one knew, but it no sooner past than the men began to put it into execution. The order was easier to give than perform : in half a minute every one of the guards had a prisoner at his throat,—the battle became general,—every one being particularly engaged through all the interior of the host, many of them struggling in pairs on the earth, who to get uppermost, and have the mastery. It was all for life, and no exertion was withheld ; but, whenever these single combats ended in close gripes, the Scots had the mastery, their bodies being in so much better condition. They made a great noise, both individually and in their files, but the English scarcely opened their mouths ; like bred mastiffs, when desperately engaged, they only aimed at the vital parts of their opponents, without letting their voices be heard.

It is vain at this period to attempt giving a better description of the scenes of that night, for the men that were present in the affray could give no account of it next day. But, after a hard encounter and heavy loss, the English fought their way up to their friends before the ramparts, who had all the while been engaged in skirmishing with the foot of the western division, whom they had kept at bay, and thus preserved the entrance clear to themselves and brethren; but ere the rear had got over the half-moon before the bridge, it was heaped full of slain.

There were more of the Scots slain during the conflict of that hideous night than of the English; but by far the greater number of prisoners remained with the former, and several of them were men of note; but such care was taken to conceal rank and titles, after falling into the hands of their enemies, that they could only be guessed at. De Gray was slain, and Collingwood was wounded and taken; so that on taking a muster next day the English found themselves losers by their heroic sally.

They had, however, taken one prize, of which, had they known the value, it would have proved a counter-balance for all their losses, and all the distinguished prisoners that formerly told against them. This was no other than the pretended page, Colin Roy, of whose sex and quality the reader has been formerly apprised, and whom they found concealed among some baggage in the Douglas' tent. Grievous was that page's plight when he found himself thrust into a vault below the castle of Roxburgh, among forty rude soldiers, many of them wounded, and others half-naked, and nothing given them to subsist on. Concealment of his true sex for any length of time was now impossible, and to divulge the secret certain ruin to himself and the cause of Douglas.

Next day he pleaded hard for an audience of Musgrave, on pretence of giving him some information that deeply concerned himself; and he pleaded with such eloquence that the guards listened to him, and informed the commander, who ordered the stripling to be brought be-

fore him. The next day following was that appointed for the execution of Sir Richard Musgrave. Colin informed the governor that, if he would give him his liberty, he would procure a reprieve for his brother, at least until the day of the Conception, during which period something might occur that would save the life of so brave a youth; that he was the only man on earth who had the power to alter the purpose of Douglas in that instance; and that he would answer with his head for the success,—only the charm required immediate application.

Musgrave said it was a coward's trick to preserve his own life,—for how could he answer to him for his success when he was at liberty? But that no chance might be lost for saving his brother's life, he would cause him to be conducted to Douglas under a strong guard, allow him what time he required to proffer his suit, and have him brought back to prison till the day of the Conception was over, and if he succeeded he should then have his liberty. This was not exactly what Colin wanted: However, he was obliged to accept of the terms, and proceeded to the gate under a guard of ten men. The Scots officer of the advanced guard refused to let any Englishman pass, but answered with his honour to conduct the strippling in safety to his commander, and in two hours return him back to the English at the draw-bridge. No more was required; and he was conducted accordingly to the door of Douglas' tent, which, as he desired, he was suffered to enter, the men keeping guard at the door.

In the confusion of that morning, Douglas never had missed the page, nor knew he that he was taken prisoner; and when the boy entered from his own little apartment, he judged him to be in attendance as usual. He had a bundle below his arm tied up in a lady's scarf, and a look that manifested great hurry and alarm. The Douglas, who was busily engaged with two knights, could not help noting his appearance, at which he smiled.

“My lord,” said the boy, “I have an engagement of great importance to-day, and the time is at hand. I

cannot get out at the door by reason of the crowd, who must not see this. Will it please you to let me pass by your own private door into the city?"

Douglas cursed him for a troublesome imp, and forthwith opened the door into the concealed way; and as all who came from that door passed unquestioned, the page quickly vanished in the suburbs of the city,

The officer and his guard waited and waited until the time was on the point of expiring, and at last grew quite impatient, wondering what the boy could be doing so long with the commander. But at length, to their mortal astonishment, they beheld the stripling coming swaggering up from the high street of the city behind them, putting a number of new and ridiculous airs in practice, and quite unlike one going to be delivered up to enemies to be thrown into a dungeon, or perhaps hanged like a dog in a day or two.

The officer knew nothing of the concealed door and passage, and was lost in amazement how the page should have escaped from them all without being visible; but he wondered still more how the elf, being once at liberty should have thought of coming strutting back to deliver himself up again.

"Where the devil have you been, master, an it be your will?" said the officer.

"Eh? What d'ye say, mun!" said the unaccountable puppy. "What do I say mun!" replied the officer, quite unable to account either for the behaviour of the prisoner or his address; "I say I trow ye hae seen sic a man as Michael Scott some time in your days? Ye hae gi'en me the glaiks aince by turning invisible; but be ye deil, be ye fairy, I sal secure ye now. Ye hae nearly gart me brik my pledge o' honour, whilk I wadna hae done for ten sic necks as yours."

"Your pledge o' honour! What's that, mun? Is that your bit sword? Stand back out o' my gate."

"Shakel my knackers," said the officer laughing, "if I do not crack thy foor's pate! What does the green-kail-worm mean? You, sir, I suppose are presuming to

transact a character? You are playing a part in order to get off, but your silly stratagem will fail you. Pray, my young master, what character do you at present appear in?"

"Character me no characters!" said the page,—it is not with you that I transact—nor such as you! Do not you see who I am, and what commission I bear? Bide a great way back out o' my gate an ye please; and show me where I am to deliver this."

"And who is that bald epistle for, master Quipes? Please to open your sweet mouth, and read me the inscription."

"Do you not see saucy axe-man? Cannot you spell it? 'To James, Earl of Douglas and Mar, with greeting, These.' Herald me to your commander, nadkin; but keep your distance—due proportioned distance, if you please."

"No, no, my little crab cherry; you cheated me by escaping from the tent invisible before, but shall not do it again. We'll get your message done for you; your time is expired, and some more to boot, I fear; come along with us."—And forthwith one of their number waited on the chief with the letter, while the rest hauled off the unfortunate page, and delivered him back to the English.

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## CHAPTER IX.

His doublet was sae trim and neat,  
 Wi' reid goud to the chin,  
 Ye wad hae sworn, had ye been there,  
 That a maiden stood within.  
 The tears they trickled to his chin,  
 And fell down on his knee;  
 O had he wist before he kissed,  
 That the boy was a fair ladye.

*Song of May Marley.*



Who's she, this dame that comes in such a guise,  
 Such face of import, and unwonted speech?  
 T'ell me, Cornaro. For methinks I see  
 Some traits of hell about her.

*Trag. of the Prioress.*

IN this perilous situation were placed the two most beautiful ladies of England and Scotland, at the close of that memorable year; and in this situation stood the two chiefs with relation to those they valued dearest in life; the one quite unconscious of the misery that awaited him, but the other prepared to stand the severest of trials. Success had for some time past made a show of favouring the Scots, but she had not yet declared herself, and matters with them soon began to look worse. As a commencement of their misfortunes, on that very night the battle took place, the English received a supply of thirty horse-loads of provisions, with assurances that Sir Thomas Musgrave, the governor of Berwick, was setting out with a strong army to their succour.

The supply was received in this way. There was a bridge over the Teviot, which communicated only with the castle, the north end of it being within the draw-bridge and that bridge the English kept possession of all the time of the siege. It being of no avail to the Scots, they contented themselves by keeping a guard at the convent of Maisondieu, to prevent any communication between the fortress and the Border. But the English barons to the eastward whose castle lay contiguous to the Tweed, taking advantage of the great flood, came with a strong body of men, and attacking this post by surprise, they beat them, and chasing them a considerable way up the river, got the convoy along the bridge into the castle.

This temporary relief raised the spirits of the English, or rather cheered their prospects, for higher in inveterate opposition their spirits could not be raised. On the day following, likewise, a flying party of Sir Thomas Musgrave's horse made their appearance on the height above Hume castle and blew their horns, and tossed their banners abroad on the wind, that the besieged might see

them, and understand that their friends were astir to make a diversion in their favour.

On the same day a new gibbet was erected on the top of the Bush-law, with a shifting wooden battery, to protect the executioners; and all within the castle feared that the stern and unyielding Douglas was going to put his threat respecting the life of Sir Richard Musgrave into execution. Therefore to prevent their captain from seeing the scene, and if possible, his mind from recurring to it, they contrived to get a council of war called, at which they intentionally argued and contended about matters of importance, in order to detain him until the sufferings of his brother were past.

The Bush-law, on which the Scots had a strong fortification, rises abruptly over against the western tower of the castle of Roxburgh: they were separated only by the moat, and though at a great height, were so near each other, that men could with ease converse across, and see distinctly what was done. On the top of this battery was the new gibbet erected, the more to gall the English by witnessing the death of their friends.

At noon the Scots, to the number of two hundred, came in procession up from the city, with their prisoner dressed in his knightly robes; and, as they went by, they flouted the English that looked on from the walls,—but the latter answered them not, either good or bad. By a circular rout to the westward they reached the height, where they exposed the prisoner to the view of the garrison on a semicircular platform, for a few minutes, until a herald made proclamation, that unless the keys of the castle were instantly delivered at the draw-bridge, the life of the noble prisoner was forfeited, and the sentence would momentarily be put in execution; and then he concluded by calling, in a louder voice, “Answer, Yes or no—once—twice.” He paused for the space of twenty seconds, and then repeated slowly, and apparently with reluctance, “Once—twice—*thrice*,”—and the platform folding down, the victim was launched into eternity.

The English returned no answer to the herald, as no

command or order had been given. In moody silence they stood till they witnessed the fatal catastrophe, and then a loud groan, or rather growl of abhorrence and vengeance, burst from the troops on the wall, which was answered by the exulting shouts of the Scots. At that fatal moment Musgrave stepped on the battlement, to witness the last dying throes of his loved brother. By some casualty, the day of the week and month happening to be mentioned in the council hall, in the midst of his confused and abstracted ideas, that brought to his remembrance the fate with which his brother had been threatened. Still he had hopes that it would have been postponed; for, as a drowning man will catch violently at floating stubble, so had he trusted to the page's mediation. He had examined the stripling on his return to the dungeon, but the imp proved forward and incommunicative, attaching to himself an importance of which the captain could not perceive the propriety; yet though he had nothing to depend on the tender mercies of Douglas, as indeed he had no right, he nevertheless trusted to his policy for the saving of his brother alive; knowing that, in his life, he held a bond round his heart which it was not his interest to snap.

As he left the hall of council, which was in the great western tower, and in the immediate vicinity of the scene then transacting, the murmurs of the one host and the shouts of the other drew him to the battlement, whence his eye momentarily embraced the heart-rending cause of the tumult. He started, and contracted every muscle of his whole frame, shrinking downward, and looking madly on each hand of him. He seemed in act to make a spring over the wall: and the soldiers around him perceiving this, and haply misjudging the intent of his motion, seized on him to restrain him by main force. But scarcely did he seem to feel that he was held; he stretched out his hands toward his brother, and uttered a loud cry of furious despair, and then in a softer tone cried, "Oh! my brother! my brother!—So you would not warn me, you dog?—Nor you?—Nor you?—No,

you are all combined against me! That was a sight to gratify you, was it not? My curse on you, and all that have combined against the life of that matchless youth!" and with that he struggled to shake them from him. "My lord! my lord!" was all that the soldiers uttered, as they restrained him.

At that instant Clavering rushed on the battlement. "Unhand the captain!" cried he: "Dare you, for the lives that are not your own, presume to lay violent restraint on him, and that in the full view of your enemies?"

"I will have vengeance, Clavering!" cried Musgrave,—"ample and uncontrolled vengeance? Where is the deceitful and impertinent stripling that promised so solemnly to gain a reprieve for my brother, and proffered the forfeit of his life if he failed?"

"In the dungeon, my lord fast and secure."

"He is a favourite parasite of the Douglas; bring him forth that I may see vengeance executed on him the first of them all. I will hang every Scot in our custody; but go and bring him the first. It is a base deceitful cub, and shall dangle opposite to that noble and now lifeless form. It is a poor revenge indeed,—but I will sacrifice every Scot of them. Why dont you go and bring the gilded moth, you kennel knaves? Know you to whom you thus scruple obedience?"

Clavering was silent, and the soldiers durst not disobey, though they obeyed with reluctance, knowing the advantages that the Scots possessed over them, both in the numbers and rank of their prisoners. They went into the vaults, and without ceremony or intimation of their intent, lifted the gaudy page in their arms, and carried him to the battlement of the western tower, from whence, *sans* farther ceremony, he was suspended from a beam's end.

Douglas could not believe the testimony of his own senses when he saw what had occurred, Till that moment he never knew that his page was a prisoner. Indeed, how could he conceive he was, when he had seen

him in his tent the day after the night engagement? His grief was of a cutting and sharp kind, but went not to the heart, for though the boy had maintained a sort of influence over him, even more than he could account to himself for, yet still he was teasing and impertinent, and it was not the sort of influence he desired.

“I wish it had been our blessed Lady’s will to have averted this,” said he to himself; “But the mischances of war often light upon those least concerned in the event. Poor Colin! thy beauty, playfulness, and flippancy of speech deserved a better guerdon. How shall I account to my royal mistress for the cruel fate of her favourite?”

With all this partial regret, Douglas felt that, by the loss of this officious page of the princess, he would be freed from the controul of petticoat government. He perceived that the princess lived in concealment somewhere in the neighbourhood,—kept an eye over all his actions and movements;—and, by this her agent, checked or upbraided him according to her whimsical inexperience. Douglas was ambitious of having the beautiful princess for his spouse,—of being son-in-law to his sovereign,—and the first man in the realm; but he liked not to have his counsels impeded, or his arms checked, by a froward and romantic girl, however high her lineage or her endowments might soar. So that, upon the whole, though he regretted the death of Colin Roy MacAlpin, he felt like one released from a slight bondage. Alas, noble chief! little didst thou know of the pang that was awaiting thee!

It will be recollected that, when the Lady Margaret first arrived in the camp in the character of Colin her own page, she lodged her maid in the city of Roxburgh, disguised likewise as a boy. With her she communicated every day, and contrived to forward such letters to the Court as satisfied her royal mother with regard to the motives of her absence,—though these letters were like many others of the sex, any thing but the direct truth. The king was at this period living in retirement at his castle of Logie in Athol, on pretence of ill health.

The name of the maiden of honour thus disguised was Mary Kirkmichael the daughter of a knight in the shire of Fife. She was a lady of great beauty, and elegant address,—shrewd, sly, and enterprising.

Two days after the rueful catastrophe above related, word was brought to Douglas, while engaged in his pavilion, that a lady at the door begged earnestly to see him. “Some petitioner for the life of a prisoner,” said he : “What other lady can have business with me ? Tell her I have neither leisure nor inclination at present to listen to the complaints and petitions of women.”

“I have told her so already,” said the knight in waiting ; “but she refuses to go away till she speak with you in private ; and says that she has something to communicate that deeply concerns your welfare. She is veiled ; but seems a beautiful, accomplished, and courtly dame.”

At these words the Douglas started to his feet. He had no doubt that it was the princess, emerged from her concealment in the priory or convent, and come to make inquiries after her favourite, and perhaps establish some other mode of communication with himself. He laid his account with complaints and upbraidings, and, upon the whole boded no great good from this domiciliary visit. However he determined to receive his royal mistress with some appearance of form ; and, in a few seconds at a given word, squires, yeomen, and grooms, to the amount of seventy, were arranged in due order ; every one in his proper place ; and up a lane formed of these was the lady conducted to the captain, who received her standing and uncovered ; but, after exchanging courtesies with her, and perceiving that it was not the princess, jealous of his dignity, he put on his plumed bonnet, and waited with stately mein the development of her rank and errand.

It was Mary Kirkmichael.

“My noble lord,” said she, “I have a word for your private ear, and deeply doth it concern you and all this realm.”

Douglas beckoned to his friends and attendants, who

withdrew and left him alone with the dame, who began thus with great earnestness of manner: "My lord of Douglas, I have but one question to ask, and, if satisfied with the answer, will not detain you a moment. What is become of the page Colin that attended your hand of late?" Douglas hesitated, deeming the lady to be some agent of the princess Margaret's. "Where is he?" continued she, raising her voice, and advancing a step nearer to the captain. "Tell me, as you would wish your soul to thrive. Is he well? Is he safe?"

"He is sped on a long journey, lady, and you may not expect to meet him again for a season."

"Sped on a long journey! Not see him again for a season! What does this answer mean? Captain, on that youth's well-being hang the safety, the nobility, and the honour of your house. Say but to me he is well, and not exposed to any danger in the message on which he is gone."

"Of his well-being I have no doubt; and the message on which he is gone is a safe one. He is under protection from all danger, commotion, or strife."

"It is well you can say so, else we would have fallen to your lot, to mine, and to that of our nation."

"I know he was a page of court, and in the confidence of my sovereign and adored Lady Margaret. But how could any misfortune attending a page prove of such overwhelming import?"

"*Was* a page of court, my lord? What do you infer by that *was*? Pray what is he now? I entreat of you to be more explicit."

"The plain truth of the matter is shortly this: The boy fell into the hands of our enemies that night of the late fierce engagement."

At this the lady uttered a scream; and Douglas dreading she would fall into hysterics, stretched out his arms to support her. "I pity you, gentle maiden," said he, "for I perceive you two have been lovers."

She withdrew herself, shunning his proffered support, and, looking him wildly in the face said in a passionate

voice, "In the hands of the English? O Douglas, haste to redeem him! Give up all the prisoners you have for that page's ransom; and if these will not suffice, give up all the lands of Douglas and Mar; and if all these are still judged inadequate, give up yourself. But, by your fealty, your honour, your nobility, I charge you, and, in the name of the Blessed Virgin, I conjure you to lose no time in redeeming that youth."

Douglas could scarcely contain his gravity at this rhapsody, weening it the frantic remonstrance of a love-sick maid; but she, perceiving the bent and tenor of his disposition, held up her hand as a check to his ill-timed levity. "Unhappy chief!" exclaimed she, "Little art thou aware what a gulf of misery and despair thou art suspended over, and that by a single thread within reach of the flame, and liable every moment to snap, and hurl thee into inevitable ruin. Know, and to thyself alone be it known, that that page was no other than the princess of Scotland herself: who, impelled by romantic affection, came in that disguise to attend thee in all thy perils, undertaken for her sake. It was she herself who seized her rival, and placed her in your hands, thus giving you an advantage which force could not bestow. And from time to time has she laid such injunctions on you, written and delivered by her own hand, as she judged conducive to your honour or advantage. If you suffer that inestimable lady to lye in durance, or one hair of her head to fall to the ground, after so many marks of affection and concern, you are unworthy of lady's esteem, of the titles you bear, or the honour of knight-hood."

When the lady first came out with the fatal secret, and mentioned the princess's name, Douglas strode hastily across the floor of the pavilion, as if he would have run out at the door, or rather fallen against it; but the motion was involuntary; he stopped short, and again turned round to the speaker, gazing on her as if only half comprehending what she said. The truth of the assertion opened to him by degrees; and, it may well be supposed,



the intelligence acted upon his mind and frame like a shock of electricity. He would fain have disbelieved it, had he been able to lay hold of a plausible pretext to doubt it; but every recollected circumstance coincided in the establishment of the unwelcome fact. All that he could say to the lady, as he stood like a statue gazing her in the face, was, "Who art thou?"

"I am Mary Kirkmichael of Balmedie," said she, "and I came with the princess, disguised as her attendant. I am her friend and confidant, and we held communication every day, till of late that my dear mistress discontinued her visits. O captain, tell me if it is in your power to save her!"

Douglas flung himself on a form in the corner of the tent, and hid his face with his hand, and at the same time groaned as if every throb would have burst his heart's casement. He had seen his royal, his affectionate, and adored mistress swung from the enemy's battlements, without one effort to save her, and without a tear wetting his cheek; and his agony of mind became so extreme that he paid no more regard to the lady, who was still standing over him, adding the bitterest censure to lamentation. Yet he told her not of her mistress's melancholy fate,—he could not tell her; but the ejaculatory words that he uttered from time to time too plainly informed Mary Kirkmichael that the life of her royal mistress was either in jeopardy or irretrievably lost.

The Douglas saw the lady no more, nor regarded her. He rushed from the tent, and gave such orders as quite confounded his warriors, one part being quite incompatible with another; and, in the confusion, Mary glided quietly away from the scene without farther notice. All the motions of Douglas, for two days subsequent to this piece of information, were like those of a drunken man; he was enraged without cause, and acted without consistency; but the only point towards which all these jarring and discordant passions constantly turned was revenge on the English—deadly and insatiable revenge. When he looked towards the ramparts of the castle, his

dark eye would change its colour, and sink deeper under his brow, while his brown cheeks would appear as if furrowed across, and his teeth ground and jarred against one another. His counsels, however, were not, at this time, of a nature suited to accomplish any thing material against his rivals. He meditated the most deadly retaliation, but was prevented before he could put it in practice.

On the following evening, when the disturbance of his mind had somewhat subsided, and appeared to be settling into a sullen depression of spirit, or rather a softened melancholy, he was accosted by a monk, who had craved and obtained admittance—for a deference to all that these people said or did was a leading feature of that age. Douglas scarcely regarded him on his first entrance, and to his address only deigned to answer by a slight motion of his head; for the monks's whole appearance augured little beyond contempt. He was of a diminutive stature, had a slight, starved make, and a weak treble voice. His conversation, nevertheless, proved of that sort that soon drew the attention of the chief.

“May the blessed Virgin, the mother of God, bless and shield you, captain!”

“Humph!” returned the Douglas, nodding his head.

“May Saint Withold be your helmet and buckler in the day of battle—”

“Amen!” said the Douglas, interrupting him, and taking a searching look of the tiny being that spoke, as if there were something in the tones of his voice that struck him with emotion.

—“And withhold your weapon from the blood of the good,” added the monk, “from the breast of the professor of our holy religion, and dispose your heart to peace and amity, that the land may have rest, and the humble servants of the Cross protection. Why don't you say ‘Amen’ to this, knight? Is your profession of Christianity a mere form? and are the blessed tenets which it enjoins, strangers to thy turbulent bosom?”

“Humph!” said Douglas: “With reverence be it spoken, monk, but you holy brethren have got a way of chattering about things that you do not understand. Adhere to your books and your beads. I am a soldier, and must stick by my profession, bearing arms for my king and country.”

“I am a soldier too,” rejoined the monk, “and bear arms and suffer in a better cause. But enough of this. I have a strange message for you, captain. You must know that, a few weeks ago, a beautiful youth came to our monastery seeking supply of writing materials, which he could not otherwise procure. He was a kind and ingenious youth. I supplied him, for I loved him; and I have since seen him sundry times in my cell. But last night, as I was sitting alone, a little before midnight—I am afraid you will not believe me, captain, for the matter of my message is so strange—I had gone over my breviary, and was sitting with the cross pressed to my lips, when behold the youth entered. I arose to receive him; but he beckoned me to keep away from his person, and glided backward. I then recollected that he must be a spirit, else he could not have got in; and, though I do not recollect all that he said, the purport of his message was to the following effect:

“‘Benjamin,’ said he, ‘arise and go to the captain of the Scottish army, whom you will find in great perplexity of mind, and meditating schemes of cruelty and retaliation, which would be disgraceful to himself and to his country. But let him beware; for there be some at his hand that he does not see; and if he dare in the slightest instance disobey the injunctions which you shall from time to time lay on him, his sight shall be withered by a visitant from another world, whose face he shall too well recognize ever again to find rest under a consciousness of her presence. Monk Benjamin, I was not what I seemed. A few days ago I was a lady in the prime of youth and hope. I loved that captain, and was betrothed to him. For his sake I ventured my life, and lost it without a single effort on his part to save me. But his fate is in

my hand, and I will use the power. It is given to me to control or further his efforts as I see meet,—to turn his sword in the day of battle,—or to redouble the strength of his and his warriors' arms. My behests shall be made known to him; and if he would avoid distraction of mind, as well as utter ruin, let him tremble to disobey. In the first place, then, you will find him pondering on a scheme for the recovery of my lifeless body,—a scheme of madness which cannot and may not succeed; therefore, charge him from me to desist. You will find him farther preparing an embassy to my father and mother to inform them of the circumstances of my death, and that not in the words of truth. But let him take care to keep that a secret, as he would take care of his life and honour, for on that depends his ultimate success. Tell him farther, from me, to revenge my death, but not on the helpless beings that are already in his power; to pursue with steady aim his primary object,—and his reward shall be greater than he can conceive.'

"Strange as this story may appear, captain, it is strictly according to truth. You yourself may judge whether it was a true or lying spirit that spoke to me."

"Are you not some demon or spirit yourself," said the Douglas, "who know such things as these? Tell me, are you a thing of flesh and blood, that you can thus tell me the thoughts and purposes of my heart?"

"I am a being such as yourself," said the monk,—"a poor brother of the Cistercian order, and of the cloister adjoining to this; and I only speak what I was enjoined to speak, without knowing whether it is true or false. I was threatened with trouble and dismay if I declined the commission; and I advise you, captain, for your own peace of mind, to attend to this warning."

Douglas promised that he would, at least for a time; and the monk, taking his leave, left the earl in the utmost consternation. The monk's tale was so simple and unmasked, there was no doubting the truth of it,—for without such a communication it was impossible he could have known the things he uttered; and the assurance

that a disembodied being should have such a power over him, though it somewhat staggered the Douglas' faith, created an unwonted sensation within his breast—a sensation of wonder and awe, for none of that age were exempt from the sway of an overpowering superstition.

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## CHAPTER X.

Here away, there away, wandering Willie,  
Here away, there away, haud away hame.

*Old Song.*

THE state of mind to which the two commanders were now reduced was truly pitiable. Within the castle of Roxburgh, all was sullen gloom and discontent. In one thing, and that only, were they unanimous, which was in a frantic inveteracy against the Scots: and though Musgrave, with the feelings of a man, would gladly have saved those dearest to him in life, yet he found that to have proposed such a thing as yielding to the garrison, would have been but adding fuel to flame in order to extinguish it. Their small supply soon began again to wear short, and, moreover, the privations to which they were subjected, had brought on an infectious distemper among them, of which some died every day; but every item added to their sufferings, fell into the scale against the Scots, and all the cruelties exercised by the latter in order to break the spirits of their opponents, only militated against themselves. Opposition to the last man was a sentiment nursed in every English bosom within the garrison, with a brooding enthusiasm of delight. There can be no doubt that they felt intensely for their gallant captain, considering the dismal situation in which he stood with respect to their enemies, and the strong hold they had been enabled to keep over his heart. It was probably the burning intensity of these feelings that

was the great source of their unhappiness, and gave rise to the fierce spirit of dissension that daily manifested itself. Although they detested the deed the Scots had committed in executing Sir Richard, yet they felt his death a sort of relief, as by it one-half of the cord which their hated adversaries held round the breast of their commander was broken, and there is little doubt that they wished themselves free of Lady Jane Howard, by fair and gentle means if possible, but at all events to be rid of that remaining tie, which almost maddened them to think of.

There was one circumstance which of late was to all of them wholly unaccountable. As the day of the Conception of the blessed Virgin approached, the mind of Lord Musgrave, instead of becoming altogether deranged as they had foreboded, became more and more steady and collected. He watched over every part of the economy within that huge fortress, and gave his orders with punctuality and decision, although with a degree of sternness that had not previously been observed.

The dreaded day of the Conception at length arrived; and, before noon, crowds of the citizens, and people from the surrounding country, began to assemble around the Scottish camp. These were forcibly kept beyond the line of circumvallation, while the regular troops were drawn up in columns both to the east and west of the fortress, and particularly round the gibbet on the Bush-law. At eleven o'clock the Scottish trumpets sounded; the English soldiers crowded to the battlements around the western tower of the citadel, and Lord Musgrave came up among the rest, arrayed in a splendid suit of light armour, and gallantly attended.

These battlements and the new gibbet were, as before stated, right opposite to one another, and separated only by the breadth of the moat and a very small slope on the western ascent; so that every object could be distinctly seen from the one place to the other, and, by raising the voice somewhat, a conversation could be carried on across. At the very time that Lord Musgrave thus appeared on the wall, the Lady Jane Howard and Sir

*Richard* Musgrave were introduced on the boards of the gibbet. Yes,—read it over again. I say Sir Richard Musgrave, for it was truly he. The Douglas, seeing that he could not prevail, and that the gallant youth was given up by his brother and the English to his fate, could not brook the idea of losing by his death the one-half of the influence he held over Musgrave. But that he might try it by stretching it to the very last, he clothed another culprit in Sir Richard's habiliments, tied a white cloth over his face, let him stand a proclaimed space on the boards with the cord about his neck, and, at the last moment of the given time, there being no parley sounded for the delivering up of the keys of the fortress, the board sunk, and the man died; but Sir Richard was safe in hold.

He was again produced that day, being the eighth of December, along with Lady Jane. He was dressed in the suit of armour in which he fought on the day he was taken prisoner, and Lady Jane in pure snow-white robes, betokening her spotless virginity. Sir Richard's eye beamed with manly courage, but the fresh hues of the rose on the cheeks of Lady Jane had blanched, and given place to the most deadly paleness. Both hosts were deeply affected with the sight, and on this occasion both felt alike. There was not a heart amongst them that did not overflow with pity at the unhappy fate of the two youthful prisoners, whose dismal doom could now no longer be averted, unless by a sacrifice on the part of the English, with which even the most sanguine of the beleaguering army doubted their compliance.

The Douglas then caused a herald to make proclamation in a stentorian voice; first stating the cause why he had put off the execution of Sir Richard Musgrave until that day, namely, his anxious desire to save the life of the noble youth, on the ground that the purposed holding out of the garrison till the twenty-fourth was a chimera; and, secondly, declaring that, unless the keys of the castle were previously delivered up to him, precisely at the hour of noon, the noble and gallant Sir Richard, the

flower of English chivalry, should be put down; and the beautiful and accomplished Lady Jane Howard, the betrothed bride and devoted lover of Lord Musgrave, subjected to a fate the most humiliating, and the most deplorable, that ever noble maiden suffered, and that in full view of both armies. A loud murmur of detestation sounded from the walls of the castle, but the columns of the Scottish army stood and looked on in mute and tender sorrow. Lord Musgrave placed himself right opposite the prisoners, turned his face straight toward them, and gazed with an unmoved and undaunted air. Sir Richard addressed him in the same sentiments he had formerly expressed, the purport of which was, it will be remembered, the madness and folly of holding out the castle, now when the bright and unequalled prize for which he contended was lost. For his own life, he said, he accounted it as nothing in the scale; but the fate that awaited the lady of his love, who had shown such devotion to his person and interests, was not to be endured or permitted by any knight of honour. Lady Jane cried out to him to save her from a doom before which her whole soul shrunk; adding, that she had done much, and suffered much, for him, and would he not make one effort, one sacrifice, to save her.

“Lord Douglas,” cried Musgrave, “will not a formal consignment of all my lands, titles, and privileges in the dominions of England, ransom the lives of these two?”

“Not if they were ten times doubled,” returned the Douglas: “Nor shall any earthly thing ransom them, save the full and free possession of the castle of Roxburgh. I have myself suffered a loss at your hands, of which you are not aware; and, I long and thirst to revenge it on you and your house.”

“Then my resolution is fixed!” cried Musgrave; “Though all England should deprecate the deed, and though I know my brethren in arms disapprove of it, I must and will redeem the lives of these two. Yes, I will save them, and that without abating one iota from the honour of the house of Musgrave. Not make one effort,



Lady Jane? Not one sacrifice to save your honour and life? Effort, indeed, I will make none. But, *without* an effort, I will make a sacrifice of as high estimation for you as ever knight offered up for the lady of his love. Perhaps it may not be in my power to save you; but in the sight of these rival armies,—in yours my only brother and betrothed bride,—and in the sight of heaven,—I offer the last ransom that can be offered by man." As he said these words, he flung himself headlong from the battlement of the western tower, struck on the mural parapet around the lower platform, then on the rampart, from which he flew with a rolling bound, and flashed with prodigious force into the ample moat. There, by the weight of his armour, he sunk forthwith to rise no more. The troops of the rival nations stood aghast, with uplifted hands, gazing on the scene; but no more was to be seen of the gallant Musgrave! A gurgling boil of bloody water arose above him as he sank to the bottom,—and that was the last movement caused in this world by one whose life had been spent in deeds of high chivalry and restless commotion.

Excepting one shriek uttered by Lady Jane, the Douglas was the first to break the awful silence, which he did by these words: "There fell a hero indeed! Noble and resolute Musgrave! I cannot but envy you such a chivalrous fate as this!" Many such expressions of enthusiastic admiration burst from both armies, not in shouts of applause, for these were suppressed by sorrow, but in a low and melting pathos that bespoke the soul's regret as well as approval.

When these first expressions of feeling were over, the dark and manly countenance of Douglas sunk into more than usual gloom and dejection. All the advantages given him, and which he had deemed insurmountable by his opponents, were by this desperate act of Musgrave's extinguished. He had now no more power over the English garrison than what he could make good with his sword and his bow. To have executed his threats on Sir Richard and the lovely and romantic Lady Jane,

would only have been an act of poor and despicable revenge, which would have disgusted his own followers, and could in no degree have farthered his cause ; so he ordered them back to confinement, with directions that they should be attended according to their rank.

What was next to be done ? That was the great question. Douglas never once conceived the idea of giving up the enterprize ; for though the princess for whom he had undertaken it was now no more, his broad domains were all engaged. The very existence of the house of Douglas depended on his success ; and, besides, the king had more daughters, though none like his beloved and accomplished Margaret. Therefore Douglas had no hesitation regarding the necessity of taking the castle. He was determined to have it. But what to do next, in order to accomplish this determination, was the question. Circumstances were grievously changed with him. The garrison had got a supply across the Teviot-bridge during the time of the flood and the tempest, but the Scots could not ascertain to what amount. Sir Thomas Musgrave had been joined by some troops from the shores of Northumberland, and had issued forth with these and the greater part of the garrison of Berwick, to the amount of 5000 men, in order to make a diversion in favour of the garrison of Roxburgh. This movement by the governor of Berwick disconcerted the Douglas most of all. A party of these marauders had shown themselves on the height about Hume castle, with trumpets sounding and colours waving in the air. From thence they marched on, keeping the backs of the hills, until they came into the lower parts of Leaderdale, which they harried, burning in their way the town and castle of Ercildon. They next made a movement towards Melrose, meaning to establish themselves in the rear of Douglas, and either to cut off his supplies, or force him to abandon the siege in order to preserve his own country behind him. But when they came to the river Tweed they were opposed by the brave abbot Lawrence. He had raised all the abbey vassals and retainers, and showed fairly disposed

to dispute the passage of the English over the river. In the meantime he posted message after message to Douglas, to come, or send to his assistance, before the abbey of the holy Virgin, with all its sacred stores, should fall into the hands of their ruthless enemies.

Douglas was hardly put to it. If he drew off from a close blockade, the English were sure to take advantage of his absence, make a sally, and procure plenty of provisions ; and, in that case, his only probable hope of success was cut off. On the other hand, if he suffered himself to be enclosed between two armies, his situation would become every day more precarious, and perhaps in the issue quite untenable. He was, therefore, in a manner forced to the resolution of making an effort to join father Lawrence, and of giving the captain of Berwick battle before he attained possession of the rich monastery of Melrose.

The time was now arrived when the support of Sir Ringan Redhough and his borderers was become absolutely necessary. Without their co-operation in a more close and decisive manner than that in which they had hitherto conducted themselves, he could not now proceed one foot, and his great cause was ruined. He therefore dispatched a pressing message to the chief, conjuring him as his friend and fellow-soldier, either to come and supply his place in the blockade of Roxburgh, or march with all expedition to Melrose, and give battle to the governor of Berwick. The dogged and unyielding Warden returned for answer, that it had always been his chief and undivided aim to act in concert with his noble and gallant friend, and lord superior, the Earl of Douglas and Mar. But that he had a peculiar charge from his Sovereign of the English marches, which it was his bounden duty to attend to, prior to all other considerations. Whatever he could do conformable with this first duty, should not be wanting. Finally, he sent him word, as he had done formerly, "that if he couldna take the castle, and confessed that he couldna take it, he might send word to him, and he wad take it for him."

“What does the crabbed carle always mean by that answer?” said the Douglas, when it was reported to him: “Perhaps he has some means of communication with those within the fortress, some secret friend in disguise among our enemies. Perhaps he knows of some weak or accessible point among these extensive bulwarks, or perhaps he reckons on some plausible means of surmounting them; for the devil’s head is not more fruitful in expedients than his. This is a matter of such importance to me at present, that I must try to probe it to the bottom. Were I sure that he could accomplish his boasted feat, I had better engage him to it with one-third of my dominions; and at all events, I must procure the active assistance of his energetic force at present, whatever may be the equivalent required. Let my white steed Beaver be caparisoned, and my attendants in readiness; I must have an interview with this man of the mountains before I sleep.”

The warden had drawn his force down to Wooller, with the intention of co-operating more effectively with the Douglas. He had heard of the advantages that lord held over his adversaries, but nothing of the late catastrophe by which they were all removed. Deeming therefore that the chances were mainly on the side of the Douglas he judged it his safest course to act in complete concert with him.

This resolution had been taken, and so far acted upon, that trusty agents had been despatched all over the country in disguise, to execute a portion of the great concerted plan, when the Douglas, at a late hour in the evening, arrived in the Warden’s camp. He then had proofs experimentally of the Warden’s caution and vigilance. He came upon his outposts at a great distance from the main body of his army. These withstood his passage, but seeing his retinue so small, for he was attended only by two knights, a squire, and a guide, they conducted him from one post to another, till at length they brought him completely guarded to the Warden’s head-quarters; which was nothing more than a lowly cottage at Wooller haugh-head.

The doughty chief and his kinsmen were still sitting in earnest conversation round a rustic table, with a tremendous torch in the middle of it. This was nothing less than a huge broken jar full of refined ox's tallow, and a flow peat stuck to the head in the middle, which being kindled emitted a blaze like a fish light. The gallant kinsmen were in deep consultation anent their grand plan of warlike operations, and the more they conversed about it the more eligible did it still appear to them, and the more deeply did they get interested in it; so that when the knight in waiting announced a stranger who requested an interview with Sir Ringan, every one seemed disposed to refuse him admission.

"Tell him I am engaged," said the Warden.

"O yes. By all means. Tell him we are engaged," said Dickie o' Dryhope.

"If it is another message from the Douglas, I have had enough of him," said the Warden.

"Ay, faith, we have had enough of him," said Dickie.

"Who is he? or what is he like?" enquired the Warden.

"Ay, that is the principal thing to be attended to," said Dickie; "What is he like?"

"He is delivered as a knight of most noble bearing and courtly deportment," answered the knight in waiting. "I suppose we must admit him, and hear what he has to say," said the Warden, again taking his seat.

"O yes. By all means. Let us hear what he has to say," said Dickie, sitting down likewise.

As the courtly and athletic form of the Lord Douglas came up the hovel, the Border gentlemen stood all up to receive, save Sir Ringan, who throwing himself back on his seat, leaned his chin on his hand, and in that indifferent posture awaited till the quality of his guest was made manifest. But no sooner did the voice of Douglas reach his ear, than he rose up to salute and receive him with as much ease as if he had been his daily visitor.

"You are hard of admission, noble Sir Ringan," said

he, "thus to let your friends wait at the door of your pavilion, after riding so far in the dark to see you."

"I am chafed with visitors from both countries every hour of the day, Lord Douglas; many of them coming with complaints which it is out of my power to rectify. I have therefore a sly inquisition established around me, that might haply give your Lordship some interruption. But it was your own blame. Had you announced the name of Douglas, that would have opened a lane for you from my farthest outpost to this chair, which I request you to occupy, while I take my place here at your right hand. You are welcome, noble Earl of Douglas and Mar, to our rude habitation. There is no man more so, beneath our sovereign lord the King. I give you and your attendants all kind welcome and greeting."

"You are become as much an accomplished courtier among these wild wastes as you were before an accomplished warrior, Sir Ringan," said Douglas.

"I always make points of speaking as I am spoken to, drinking as I am drunk to, and going to a battle when sent for," said the Warden. "H'm h'm h'm," neighed Dickie o' Dryhope, screwing up his mouth on one side like a shrew: "It is all true our Captain tells you, Lord Douglas. That's his rule. Mh? mh? Mh? H'm h'm h'm." The Douglas cast at Dickie a curious searching glance from his dark eye that was half hid by a shaggy eyebrow; and then turning to Sir Ringan, replied, "I am heartily glad of it, noble Baron of Mountcomyn, it having been for that very purpose I sought this interview with you. Sir Ringan Redhough, you must to battle with me to-morrow."

"With all my heart, my lord," was the reply.

"Come, that is as it should be. We'll no more of it. We *can* have no more of it," said Douglas: "Let us have a flaggon of your best wine to drink success to our arms."

The wine was soon produced, with plenty of other good cheer, with which the Warden's camp was then abundantly stored; and the two chiefs conversed together with as much freedom, and as little apparent jeal-

ousy with regard to rank or fame, as if they had been two brothers. The Douglas delineated his affairs as in that posture in which success could not fail him; at the same time he admitted the ticklish situation in which he stood, owing to the diversion made by the captain of Berwick, and that without an instant effort he would be inclosed between two fires. Sir Ringan answered, that he had heard of the incursion, and therefore he had drawn his troops down from the dales of Northumberland to support his friend and firm ally in any case of necessity; and he concluded by boldly proffering either to supply the Douglas's place in the blockade, or march to the west, and hold Sir Thomas Musgrave in check. Douglas was delighted to find the crabbed, cross-grained Warden, as he was wont to call him, in such a complaisant humour; and testified that delight by many well-turned compliments and encomiums on his vigilance and gallant support. He got introduced to all the gentlemen of the party, with whom he exchanged civilities, desiring them all to regard him as their friend, and one ready to do them a kindness whenever it lay in his power. "And now, Sir Ringan, since you hold the taking of the castle of Roxburgh so light," said he, "I think it is meet that my men and I should march and give battle to Musgrave. Probably you may have taken possession of that troublesome garrison before we return."

"If I do, my Lord of Douglas, I take it for myself," replied Sir Ringan: "and claim all the privileges, rights, and immunities that were to devolve on you as the reducer of it. Now, if I should take the castle of Roxburgh before your return, I suspect you would find it as hard work to expel me, and these Border warriors of mine, as the half-starved English that you have there already. I have all these brave fellows to hold in beef and malt, my Lord of Douglas; and for their sakes I have laid down a golden rule to walk by, which is, *To do nothing for nothing*. If I take the castle of Roxburgh, I take it for myself and them."

Douglas became now more convinced than ever, that

the Warden knew of some flaw or some tangible point in the garrison; and if there existed a knowledge of such a thing, he resolved to avail himself of it by any means. He knew Sir Ringan too well to suppose he would confide his secret to him, without a certainty of reaping due advantage; and that, therefore, it behoved to give him a prevailing interest in it. With this view, he answered him, jocularly; "Though you were to receive all that was promised to me, in the event of my success, you would probably find yourself only a loser by the *guerdon*."

"Why, are you not to be made the king's son-in-law," replied Sir Ringan? "and thereby the first subject, or rather the first man of the realm; for, by the indolence and retired habits of our sovereign, you would have the whole kingdom at your beck. Call you this nothing, my Lord? Or would it be fair and reasonable,—supposing the thing possible, which I do not pretend to say it is,—that if my warriors and I should put you in possession of all this power, riches, and honours, would it be fair, I say, that we should be again turned out to these Border wastes, to live by our shifts, without reaping any thing of the benefit?"

"Should you take the castle for me, in my absence, noble Sir Ringan, your reward shall be of your own naming."

"Would it not be better, Lord Douglas, that the reward were settled before-hand; and, then, I lose or gain at my own risk and peril. If I deliver you no produce, I ask no pay."

"And what is the reward Sir Ringan would ask for such a piece of incalculable service?"

"My choice of seven baronies on the West Border, to divide amongst these gentlemen commoners, to whose support I owe every thing."

"You are a master worth serving, brave Sir Ringan. But such a grant would break my power on the Border for ever."

"It is that your power on the Border *may not* be



broken for ever, Lord Douglas, that I make the proffer. I am safer without the venture. But you are a day's march nearer to the English army,—draw off your men silently before the break of day, and march against it. I shall supply your place at the blockade, to the west of the castle, without loss of time, and answer to you at your return for all ingress or egress that takes place in that division. If Sir Thomas proves hard for you, you have only to keep your men together, and fall back toward the entrenchments. You shall find you have some good back-friends there.”

Douglas had determined on no account to let this proffer of the Warden's ingenious head and powerful arm in the taking of the fortress pass without trial; so, without more ado, he called for the friar's tablets, and made out a grant to Sir Ringan, in free present, of the barony and lands of Gilkerscleuch, and his choice of seven of the best baronies belonging to the house of Douglas in the districts adjoining to the West Border, in the event of his putting James, Lord of Douglas and Mar, in full possession of the castle of Roxburgh. This grant signed and sealed, the Douglas departed, after pledging the Warden and his friends in a hearty stirrup cup, both chiefs being alike well pleased with the agreement they had entered into. The Douglas posted back to Roxburgh and reached it just in time to put the western division of his army in motion at break of day; while Sir Ringan made his musters by the light of the moon, and marched off to the siege of Roxburgh.

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## CHAPTER XI.

Aboon his skins he sat and rockit,  
 And fiercely up his bonnet cockit;  
 Then at ha' doors he crouselly knockit  
 Withouten dread,

Till wives and bairns around him flockit,  
 But now he's dead.

Then he wad claw, and he wad hustle,  
 Till all the skins played rap and rustle ;  
 While up his thighs, wi' devilish bustle,  
     Ran mony a ked ;  
 Now they hae lost their gume and gustle,  
     Sin' Robin's dead.

De'il on the yaud, that I should ban !  
 That brak the neck of sic aue man ;  
 Now wha will wucked dames traupan  
     Wi' siccan speed ?  
 O. drive the hides to them wha tan,  
     Sin' Robin's dead ?

*Rob Paterson's Elegy.*

ON the same day that Douglas marched his men up the Tweed towards Melrose, and the Warden his troopers across the Border to the siege of Roxburgh, a band of twelve men and thirty horses came up out of Eskdale towards Craik-Cross, the most motely group that had ever been seen traversing that wild country. The men were dressed as English peasants of the lowest order, with broad unshapely hats, made of a rude felt of wool and hair mixed ; wide coarse jockey-coats that came below their knees ; and, instead of loops or buttons, these were bound round the middle with a broad buff-belt ; the rest of their dress was all conformable, save that each of them had a noble broad-sword girded by his side. Some of their horses were loaden, some of them half-loaden, and a few had scarcely any thing on their backs at all. But no man will guess what that loading consisted of. Not to keep the reader in suspense, it was of *nolt-hides* ; that is, of cow-hides, oxen-hides, bull-hides and all sorts of hides that ever came from the backs of cattle. There were raw hides, and dried hides, black hides and white hides, hides with horns, and hides without horns ; and of these consisted their loading, and nothing else.

The men alighted at Craik-Cross to bait their horses, and the following conversation ensued, which will let the reader into the secret who these skin-dealers were, thus strangely accoutred.

“ Will Laidlaw o' Craik, ye're a gayan auld-farrant

chield. Come near me, and sit down, and tell me gin ye can hae ony guess what our master the Warden can be wanting wi' a' thir confoundit ill-smelled hides?"

"I hae puzzled my brain to nae purpose about it, Dan Chisholm; but am conviuced it is some way connected wi' the siege of that unlucky castle; and the maist part o' us trows that they are for making raip-ladders, or rather whing-ladders, for climbing ower the wa's; an gin that be the case, Dan, there will mony ane o' us throw away our lives to little purpose."

"Now to hear you talk about fock throwing away their lives! You that wad risk your life for naething but a broken crown every day o' the year. Why, Will Laidlaw, I hae foughten often in the same field wi' you afore this time, and I never saw you set your life at a cow's horn, let be the hide o' ane (for whilk we wad gie a good deal the day.) I hae seen ye ride from your ain party, when that wing wasna hotly enough engaged, and blatter into the very thickest and hettest part o' the field, just girning and laying on like some lang-nosed deil come out o' the pit. But let me tell ye, Will o' Craik, it is a sair fault o' your's, and it is a clagg o' the hale clan,—the deil be your landlord, (as he has already been mine, quietly,) gin the hale tott o' ye be nae ill for saying ae thing an' thinking another. If ane hear a Laidlaw complaining o' pinching and poverty, ye may amaist be sure that he has the best stockit mailings, and the best filled beef-barrels in the country. If ye hear him complaining, that the English are herrying the Scots up, stoop and roop, ye may rely on it the Scots hae been getting the upper hand and enriching themsels; and if ye hear a Laidlaw pretending to be averse to a foray or a battle, ye may depend on it that his very knuckles are itching, and his teeth watering, to be at it.—Na, ye needna waul wi' your muckle een, Will, for ye canna deny the thing; and it is a provoking gate ye hae."

"Hout, dear Dan! we just hae it by kind to try what fock thinks on the subject a wee; to sound them like, afore we tell our hale minds. But a' comes aye freely

out ere the hinder-end. But the truth is, about this that we wer cracking, ye ken. I dinna mind a bodle what the Warden be gaun to do wi' the skins, provided he keep his promise, and gie me a living English cow for the hides of every three dead anes that I bring him."

"There it goes now! There you go again! Weel I ken ye carena ae doit about the kye. Ye hae plenty o' baith kye and ewes already, and, on the contrary, ye wad *gie them a'* to ken what our chief is gaun to be about wi' thir hides. But it is needless to fight w'ye! Ye canna help that cross gate o' expressing yoursel. Gin ever ye be drowned we may seek you up the water. There's ae thing, Will,—ye may see the Warden means some general good to us a' by this project, whatever it is, for he has sent ae man o' every name to gather up the skins o' his native district. Ae Oliver, ae Armstrong, ae Laidlaw, ae Chisholm, and twa o' the Redhoughs; for ye ken he is always maist behadden to his ain name. But what can be the meaning o' this ugly disguise, I canna form a single conjecture; and he is sae strick about it too, that if ane o' us let oursels be found out, we lose a' chance of reward or advantage. Sae, Will, ye're unco weel kend about Craik and Howpasley, and a' the links o' Borthwick, and so am I about Castle-Wearie and Chisholm, and thereabouts. Gang ye into my father's house a' night, and I'll gang to Craik; gather ye up the hides o' Teviot, and I shall take Borthwick in my road. My father will maybe be a wee sweer to take ye in, but ye maun make your way on him the best gate ye can; he has the best stockit pantry on Teviot head, but a bit of a Laidlaw's fault, complaining aye maist when he has least reason. He has a capital stock o' hides, but seeing that English disguise he may deny them; therefore try him first, and if he winna produce them, gang up the burn about half a mile, and in a lown crook, weel hidden frae a' the world, ye'll find a bit housie wi' a dozen o' good hides in it. If he winna gie you them at a fair price, ye maun e'en take them for naething, as it is a' for his ain advantage."

“ Na, na, Dan. Weel I wat I’ll do nae sic thing ! I wadna dispute wi’ the auld man nor anger him for a’ the hides in the hale barony.”

“ There again ! Aye the auld man ! Now, the Lord forgi’e ye ; for ye never met wi’ him a’ your life but ye baith angered him and disputed wi’ him. But nae mair about it. Take ye Sandy Pot o’ the Burnfit, the queer hairum skairum devil, Tam Oliver, Bauldy Elliot, and Bauldy Armstrong wi’ you ; and I’ll take Jamie Telfer o’ the Dodhead, Jock o’ the Delorin, Jock Anderson o’ nae place, and Geordie Bryden o’ every place, wi’ me,— and good luck to the skin trade !”

It was one of those sort of winter days that often occur in January, when the weather is what the shepherds call “ in the deadthraw,” that is, in a struggle between frost and thaw. There was a dark cloud of rime resting on the tops of the hills, which shrouded them in a veil impervious to vision beyond the space of a few yards, and within that cloud the whole height appeared to be covered with millions of razors, every pile of bent and heath being loaded with ice on the one side, so that each had the exact resemblance to a razor blade, all of which appeared to be cast in the same mould, and of the same beautiful metal. The feet of the horses as they travelled through this made a jingling noise, as if they had been wading among crystal. As they came lower down on the hills the air became softer, and the ground was free of those ice-candles ; but an uncommon gloom hung over holm and dale.

Old Peter Chisholm was walking on the green to the westward of his house, looking at his ewes coming bleating down from among the dark foldings of the rime, and saying to himself, “ I wonder what can be word o’ thae dirty herd callants the day, that they are letting the sheep come a’ stringing in lang raws, and rairing and bleating, into the how o’ the water that gate. The country’s in a loose state e’now, for the strength is a’ out o’t ; a raid o’ thirty stout English thieves wad herry the hale water. An sic were to come this gate the day, my stock wad be a’ gane.”

Peter was proud of his ewes for all that, and, giving them a whistle, he threw the plaid over his shoulder, set his broad bonnet up before, and turned about to go home to look after the shepherd lads. As he turned his face to the north, he naturally cast his eye up toward the Limy-cleuch hills, where it instantly embraced the appalling sight of Will Laidlaw o' Craik, and his disguised compeers, with their fifteen horses, coming stretching down the ridge, right opposite to Pate Chisholm's hirsel of bonny wheel-horned ewes. The old man's eyes were dazzled in his head, and a paralytic affection seized his whole frame. "Lord pity us! Now see what's coming yonder," said Peter: "I tauld them aye what wad happen! but no ane wad heed me! O dool to the day! A man may soon hae muckle, and soon hae naething in this wearifu' country. O Dan, Simon, and Jock, the strength o' my house! wherefore are ye a' gane and left your gear to gang as it came! Dear bought! far sought! and little for the haudding."

By the time Peter got thus far with his soliloquy he was quite out of breath; for he was not only walking fast, but he was absolutely running towards home, with a sore stoop, and knees bent much forward. Still as he hobbled he continued to apostrophise in short sentences, as he could gather a little breath now and then to utter a small portion of the concatenation of repulsive ideas that presented themselves one after another—"Naething but trash left—Daughter! Bessy Chisholm—Heh! Are ye therein? May Chisholm—where's your titty? Poor tafferal ruined tawpies! What are ye gaun gairdering about that gate for, as ye didna ken whilk end o' ye were uppermost?" "That's easily kend father. What has come ower ye? Hae ye seen a warlock that ye are gaping and glowring at sic a dismal rate?" "War than ony warlock, ye twa glaikit idle hizzies. Off wi' jerkin and wilycoat, and on wi' doublet, breeks, and buskins instantly. Belt on bow, buckler, and brand, and stand for life, limb, gear, and maidhood, or a's gane in ae kink. O dool be to the day! dool be to the day! What are

ye standing glinting, and looking at ane anither there for? Cast your een up to the Carlin-rigg, and see what's coming. A' harried! ravaged! and murdered. Come, come: Don your billies' claes; let us make some show; it will maybe save something. Warn the herd callants; let the stoutest of them arm, and the weakest rin and drive sheep and cattle an' a' out o' sight among the clouds. O dool to the day! Na, na; for a' the houses that are in the country here they come straight! Nae winning by this place."

The lasses seeing their father in such a querulous mood, and the motely troop fast approaching, acquiesced in his mandate, and without delay mounted themselves each in a suit of their younger brother's clothes, while old Peter stood over them to see that they put all to rights, always giving such directions as these: "Come, come, come! strap, clasp, belt and buckle; and gudesake fauld up your cuffs. Your arms hing at your shoulder blades as they were off joint. Hout fie! hout fie! Wha ever saw young chields hae sic luchs o' yellow hair hingin fleeing in the wind? Come, come, strap and string down; swaddle it round wi' sax dizzen o' wheelbands, and fasten a steel-belted fur cap ower aboon a'. Yare, yare! Lord sauff us! Here they come! What's to be our fate? Keep close for a wee while."

"Hilloa! Wha hauds the house?" was vol'ied from the door by the deep-toned voice of Will Laidlaw.

"There's nae body in but me, and I downa come to the door. Ye had better ride on," cried old Peter, in a weak tremulous voice.

"Wilt thou answer to thy name, or hast thou a name to answer to?" said Will, feigning to speak the broad Northumberland dialect, which sorted very ill with his tongue: "An thou be'st leel man and true, coome and bid thee guests wailcome. It is God speed, or spulzie wi' thee in three handclaps."

"Spulzie, quo the man!" exclaimed Peter: "The inuckle fiend spulzie the unmannerly gab that spake it!"—and with that he came stooping over his staff, and

coughing to the door, speaking in a quavering treble key. "A bonny like purpose! What wad ye spulzie fræ a poor auld man that hasna as muckle atween him and the grave as will pay for howking it, and buy a hagabag winding sheet? Spulzie, quo he! That is a good joke! —he—he—he, (cough) hoh—hoh—hoh. I'm sae ill wi' that host! Eh? wha hae we a' here? Strangers, I think!"

"Goodman, we were directed to your house for a night's entertainment or two, if you are the old rich yeoman cycled Patrick Chisholm of Castle-Weary."

"Na, na! I'm nae rich yeoman! I'm naething but a poor herried, forsaken, reduced auld man! I hae nae up-putting for ought better than a flea. Ye had better ride on down to Commonsie. There's plenty there baith for man and horse. Come away, I'll set you down the length o' the ford, and let ye see the right gate."

"Come neighbours, let us go away as he says, We'll never make our quarters good on this auld carle," said Sandy Pot, in a whisper to his companions: "And troth do ye ken I wad rather lie at the back of the dyke, before I imposed myself on ony body. Od my heart's wae for the poor auld niggard."

"Come away, lads, come away," cried Peter. "The days are unco short e'now; ye haena time to put off."

"Stop short there, my good fellow," cried Laidlaw, "We have some other fish to fry with you before we go. I am informed you have a large stock in hand of the goods in which we deal. You have had lucky lifts this year. Plenty of good hides with you?"

"Rank misprision, and base rascally jests on a poor auld man. Not a single hide about the hale town, fore-by the ane on my back," cried old Peter.

"My orders are, worthy old yeoman, to give fair prices to such as produce their hides," said Laidlaw. "But whoever refuses, I am obliged to search for them; and if I find any I take them at my own price."

"O dear, honest gentlemen, I downa joke wi' ye: hoh,



hoh," coughed Peter. "Gin ye be for a place to stay in a' night, come away as lang as it is daylight."

"Why, with your leave my good fellow, we must lodge with you to-night. Hearth-room and ha'-room, steed-room and sta'-room, is the friendly stranger's right here. Small things will serve: a stone of English beef or so, and two or three pecks of oats."

"Beef, quoth the man? Ye may as weel look for a white corby as beef in my pantry, or aits in my barn. Will ye no come away."

"Not till I makes a search for your nolt hides, honest yeoman. To that am I bound."

The four skin-dealers next the door alighted and went in, leaving their horses with the other two, who went and put them up in a good large stable with plenty of stalls. Peter ran back to the house in perfect agony, speaking to himself all the way. "They are very misleared chaps thae. They maun surely either be Low Dutch, or else sutors o' Selkirk, that they are sae mad about skins. I little wat how I am to get rid o' them."

The two lasses appeared armed cap-a-pee like two young men; and though Bess was Will Laidlaw's own sweetheart, he did not recognize her through the disguise, neither did she once suspect him. The two made a little swaggering about the *pelt-dealers* as they called them entering the pantry, but not choosing to measure arms with them, the weak suffered the strong to pass; and Will having his cue, soon discovered the huge barrels of beef below the ground, with empty ones above them. Old Peter shed tears of vexation when he saw this huge and highly-valued store was all discovered, but had not a word to say for himself, save now and then "A' fairly come by, and hardly won; and there is nae right nor law that says honest men should be eaten up wi' sorners. May ane speir where ye come frae, or by wha's right ye do this!"

"Why man dost thou no hear and dost thou no see that we're coome joost from Nworthoumberland!"

"Aha!" thought Peter to himself; "English thieves

after a' ? I had some hopes that I could distinguish Scots tongues in their heads. But a's gane; a's gane !”

“ Now auld yeoman, if thou hast a word of trooth in thee, tell us where the hides are, and we will pay thee for them.”

“ No ae hide about the town. No ane, either little or muckle.”

“ Why soore am I them coos doodnae coome to thee without heydes, did they ? That I can answer for, they had a' heydes and bones baith when they came from hwome.”

“ Waur than ever ! Waur than ever !” exclaimed Pate Chisholm to himself as he sought another apartment : “ The very men that the kye were reaved frae come to take revenge ! Callant, come here and speak wi' ine. Haste to a neighbour's house, and raise the fray. We shall never be a' quietly put down wi' half a dozen.”

“ Dearest father,” said May, “ I dinna think the men mean ony ill, if ye wad be but civil.”

“ Civil or no civil, wench, it is as good to have half a dozen armed men lying concealed near us,” said Peter : “ An we dinna need them, the better. Rin your ways, and gar raise a' the auld men and the young lads in the two neist towns, for there is nae ither left. Pith's good in a' play.”

The maid did as she was ordered, and Peter, seeing that no better would be, tried to compel himself to a sort of civility, which however, sat on him with a very bad grace. But, hides ! hides !—nothing but hides was the burden of their enquiries : while Peter durst not for his life produce the hides, deeming that every man would know the hides of his own kine, and wreak tenfold vengeance on himself and household. He knew not, he said, what his son Dan, who took care of all these matters, had made of them,—sold them he supposed to the carriers and sutors of Selkirk,—and more than this Pate would not acknowledge. There was no other thing for it, nor perhaps did Laidlaw want any thing else, than for him and his companions to walk up the burn and make a

seizure of the whole of Peter's excellent hides, with which they returned loaden to his dwelling. His confusion and distress of mind were most appalling when Laidlaw spread them all out before him, and asked in a very particular manner to be informed where he had got them. O! Peter knew nothing about them. They were not his at all. He did not know to whom they belonged. But he would not stand to speak, turning his back always on the men, and hasting away, coughing and speaking to himself. He could have seen these presumptuous skin-men roasted on a brander, for they had now put him out of all patience, and all hope!

"Pray thee now, mine good friend, inform me this," said Laidlaw; "Did'st thou nwot get this seame fleckered one, and this brwoad one here, on the third of the last mwonth; and here's wother three, did'st thou nwo get them on the twentieth of the seame mwonth? Now tell me this I say? Why where is thou going groombling into theesel? Turn about the feace to the heydes, and answer to the pwoint."

"Aff hands is fair play," said old Pate: "I winna be forced wi' ony unmannerly English lown that ever I saw atween the een;" and with that he heaved his staff and struck Laidlaw across the shoulders, and over the steel bonnet repeatedly, who was like to burst with repressed laughter, but still persisted in his queries.

"What ails the owld catwiddied carle," said he, "that he winno answer a ceevil question? I's jwost wanting to tauk to thee about boosiness, and thou flees out in a reage and breaks me head. Come tourn again, and tell me when and where thou got'st this one, see, this wheyte one here! What's 't moombling at? Wolt thou tell me the price of them, then?"

"I want to hae naething to do wi' you, and as little to say to you; therefore, gang about your business, and dinna plague a poor auld unfeiroch man. The gate is afore ye, and your company's wanted elsewhere."

Will would take none of these hints; he followed his uncourteous host about and about, till at last he fairly

held him beyond the fire; and then he took his seat over against him and conversed on, while his companions dropped in one by one and joined in it. For a while they got it all to themselves, but at length Pate, not being able to make better of it, suffered himself to be drawn in by degrees to join them, still preserving the same strain of disingenuousness. They asked who the two handsome striplings were that attended him, and spread the board with provisions? He answered that they were two sons of his own. "Sons of thine?" said Laidlaw, "Whoy what are their neames?" "Simon and John," answered he; "or rather Sim and Jock, for that's how we ca' them."

"Whoy, mon, that is the queerest thing I ever heard," said Laidlaw; "Then thou hast two swons of the neame of Jock, and other two of the neame of Sim, for I saw two of that neame, strapping youths, in the Warden's camp."

Peter wist not well what answer to make; and, therefore, only added, "Ay, Ay! Were you in the Warden's camp? Then tell me, is there ony word frae my son Dan?"

"Ay man, I can tell thee sic news of Dan as thou never heard'st; he has sitten at his supper hand and neive wi' the deil." At these words one of the young men behind them (May Chisholm to wit,) uttered a suppressed scream, and from that moment Will Laidlaw smelled a rat, and soon discovered his own beloved Bess Chisholm standing gazing at him.

Bess said to the skin-dealer next to her, who chanced to be Sandy Pot, "Pray, Sir, when you were in the camp of Sir Ringan Redhough, did you note a brave trooper, a friend of ours, named Laidlaw?"

"Oh, yes, that I did," said Sandy: "I know him well." This was a glorious joke for Pot, and his comrades were afraid he would persevere in it till he put their secret out altogether.

"How is he reported in the army?" said she: "Is it still alleged that he is the bravest and most successful battler in the baron's array?"

“*Bottler*, I suppose you mean,” said Sandy, “for as to his battling, God mend that. He is not noted for ought that I ever heard of, except for keeping a flunkey, or a wal-i'-the-chamber, as the Frenchmen ca' it; and it is reported thro' all the army, that that *wally* o' his is an English girl. I can tell you that your neighbour, Will Laidlaw, is notorious for nothing else beside this.”

“It is false as thyself, and thy perjured ungenerous nation,” said the disguised maiden. “I know my friend to be honour's self, and of a house whose courage and integrity were never called in question. The man that dares to slander him had better do it somewhere else than in my presence, and under my father's roof. But I degraded him myself, by putting his name into the mouth of such a mean forager as thou art! The man whose actions are base, always accuses the brave and generous of deeds such as his own.”

“Bless me, what ails the chiel?” said Sandy, laughing good humouredly:—“What's the great ill o' keeping a *wally*? I aince keepit ane mysel, there's nae doubt o't, till my uncle, Gideon Scott, set up his birse, and gart me part wi' the creature.”

The rest laughed at Sandy being put out of countenance by the indignant stripling; but Bessy Chisholm turned on her heel, and walked out at the door, muttering expressions about vulgarity, raw hides, and maggots; and Will Laidlaw, not able to contain himself, rose and walked out after her in a visible state of mental agitation. As he approached the stable door quietly, into which she had turned, he heard her saying to herself, “Laidlaw keep an English mistress in disguise! No, the fellow is a poltroon, and a liar, and I will not believe it.” Will entering at that moment, seized her hand between both his, and kissed it, saying in a passionate style, “My own dear and high-spirited Bess Chisholm still.”

Never was there seen such a statue of amazement. The tones of the voice, now uttered in its natural key, were familiar to her. But the figure that uttered them!

To be addressed in that style by a great burly thief of an English skin-buyer, outwent all comprehension. She was in a man's dress, be it remembered,—and there she stood, with her face half raised, her ruddy lips wide apart, and her set eyes of lucent blue showing a mixture of astonishment and disdain. “What? what? Sir,” was all that she could say, until the ragamuffin figure reminded her of some love-tokens and vows, of which none knew save one. But, with a woman's natural caprice, she now was angry at him in turn having discovered her true sentiments, and refused to acknowledge him as her lover in that hateful disguise, unless the meaning of it was explained to her. He told her, that the meaning of it was unknown to himself; that he took it at his captain's command; but that his fortune depended on the secret being kept.

“There you are safe, at all events,” said she; “and it is well you have disclosed yourself in time, for my father has raised the country, and it is not improbable that, before to-morrow, you should have been all dead men.”

“I think we have been in greater jeopardies,” said he: “But in the mean time keep up your disguise, that my comrades may not discover your sex;—and we two must have some private discourse during the night, for I have much to say to you.”

“Not I, master, I winna court ae word wi' a man in the dress of a vulgar English boor; for it is sae hatefu' to me, I can like nought that's within it. Ah me! I wot ill how it is; but I think I hardly detest it sae sair already.”

“My bonny, haughty, pawkie, sweet Elizabeth!” cried Laidlaw.—But Isaac the curate says, that, being himself a married man, he could not go on with all the overcharged outrageous stuff that passed between these two fond lovers; so he passes it over, as well as the conversation at their evening meal, which Bess took care to make a plentiful and savoury one; and in the mean time, she was in such high spirits herself, that the troopers, who

did not know her, took the young man for the most swaggering puppy they had ever seen. She challenged Sandy Pot to fight her with single rapier, knowing well that Laidlaw would find some means of preventing it; but it was evident that old Peter thought her entirely out of her senses, for he tried to get her away from about the house to the residence of one of the neighbouring gentlemen yeomen for the night, but the experiment was vain.

When he saw such a goodly supper, or dinner, (for they were both in one,) set down to these uncouth, and, to him, unwelcome guests, he could not contain his chagrin, and at first refused to turn out to the board, or partake with the rest. But when he saw that the good fare would all go, he grew as restless as if he had been sitting on pins, till Bess, who knew his way, took him by the arm, and pretended to force him jocularly out to the table. But Peter was not ill to force; for in place of receding, he made all the haste into the head of the board that he could, though at the same time always repeating, "I tell ye, callant, it is downright wastery." He, however, plied as good a knife and as good a horn-spoon as any of them all.

While they were yet busily engaged at their meal, the tramp of horses was heard approaching the door in a cautious and uncertain manner, and by a circuitous way.

The two disguised maids, (whom, by-the-by, we should distinguish by the names of Sim and Jock, as they sustained these that night,) were standing eating at the hall-dresser, behind the backs of the troopers; and when the trampling was first heard, Jock grew as pale as death, but Sim, who knew what guests were within, which the other did not know, shewed a courage so undaunted, that it appeared wonderful to all present, save one, but to Jock in particular: "O ho! The nearer night the mae beggafs," cried Sim. "Who have we next?"

"That beats ought I ever heard in my life!" exclaimed Pate: "I think the fock be gane distractedly mad! What brings them a' here? Is there no another ha'

house and pantry in the hale country but mine? It is hard to be eaten out o' house and hald wi' sorners and stravaegers this gate. May Liberton's luck befa' the hale o' them. Callant Jock, set by that meat out o' sight." "Stop for a wee bit, an ye like, goodman," said Bauldy Armstrong: "It is best aye to do ae thing afore another."

By this time the dialogue had commenced in the court; Simmy went briskly to the door by himself, and demanded of the strangers who they were, and what they wanted? They answered, with hesitation, that they supposed they had lost their way, and requested to know who held the house, and how it was called? "The house is held by my father, a leel Scottish yeomen," said the youth; "and already full of strangers to the door, as well as every stall of his stable with their horses. Pass on your way, and peace be with you." "Did not I tell you we had *lost* our way," said the first speaker, riding up to the door. "Pray, who are the strangers within? We have lost a party of our friends."

"The men are from the south, master: free-traders, they may be called. Men of horns, hides, and hair, Sir. You, I suppose, are of the same profession?" "Precisely of the same," said the stranger, alighting from his horse, and entering the house.

He was followed by other two, for there were but four in all, and the fourth was a boy whom they left holding their horses. When they came in upon Peter and his jolly hide-merchants, they were visibly disappointed, and viewed the grotesque-looking group with marked curiosity. These were not the men they expected to have found, that was evident; but perceiving their English habits, they ventured to address them. They were answered in blunt cutting terms: for our troopers knew them although the disguise prevented their being known again. Having learned the name of the house and its owner, they began forthwith to inquire if any thing of a young nobleman had been seen at that place, with such and such attendants; for they had traced them to that



very house, they said, and if the possessors could give no account of them they would be held as responsible. Old Peter said, there were so many people came to that house, that it was impossible he could tell a tale of one of them distinct from another ; but the intrepid Sin, knowing his back friends, told him the whole story in a few words, and then asked them in turn what they had to say concerning it.

“ Whoy, I has joost to say this, young chap, that I am to boond thee and all the faymilie, and carry you all to answer before a meeting of the wardens.”

“ Ay, and it is prwoper reyght and prwoper reason too, that they should, friend,” said Laidlaw, pretending to take his part, to see what he would say. Will knew the three men to be three notorious English thieves, of the set of the Halls and Reids, and that they could not, in fact, be sent in search of the Lady Jane Howard ; but he could not divine their motive for coming there, or making the inquiry ; therefore he took the Northumberland tongue as well as he could, and encouraged them in conversation till a late hour. Yet he could learn nothing ; only he was sure they were come about no good end. As for old Peter, when he saw two parties of Englishmen come upon him, and heard that they laid their heads together, he gave himself and all that he had up for lost ; and hoping to conciliate their favour in some measure, he actually intreated these last comers to sit down and share of the remnants of their supper, which they did in a right liberal manuer, while Peter went out and in to learn the news. He found by this time nine men, well armed, assembled in the barn, that had gathered from the neighbouring houses, whose inhabitants were all bound to rise and assist one another on any emergency. These were mostly old men or very young ones, the flower of the Border districts being all in the Warden’s camp. Will likewise informed his sweetheart privately of his suspicions ; and perceiving that the strangers were extremely well mounted, and heavily armed, he desired her, if possible, to find means of concealing their horses. This the

supposed Sim soon effected. The boy still held them at forage by the side of the old castle-wall; and he being brought in and set down to supper, some of those in the barn were warned to take the horses quietly to the concealed house up in the hollow burn. They were soon secured there; and the thieves perceiving that no one left the house, never had the smallest suspicion of any trick, the boy being fast asleep behind the board. At length all of them grew drowsy, and began to compose themselves to rest as they best could, save two fond lovers, that were whispering their vows and their secrets to each other.

About midnight, when all was quiet, these two heard the cry of *Welhee! Welhee!* from a neighbouring mountain, which in a short time was returned from two different places in the valley.

“Now, I will lay my neck in wad,” whispered Will to his sweetheart, “that there is a thief-raid to-night; and that these three have either come here to watch you, or to cut your throats in case of resistance; or perhaps they may have indeed lost their party in the mist. But this I ken, neither a Reid nor a Hall ever came thus far into Scotland for good. If the fray rise, take you the command, and fear nothing. My friends and I will defend you, and clear your way.”

“But what shall we do, dear Laidlaw, with these three moss-troopers and the boy?”

“We must either slay or bind them the first thing we do, or perhaps leave them to waddle to the hills in their armour on foot the best way they can.”

The maiden's heart trembled at the thoughts of what lay before her; as for old Pate, he kept going out in like a restless spirit; and if he had not lost his daughter, and knew not where she was, he proposed to have fastened doors and windows, and burnt all the nine Englishmen where they lay, for he had no faith in any of them, and weened them all come for the purpose of ruining him. As he was going about preparing matters for this laudable purpose, one of the shepherd lads came with the

fray, and related a dismal tale. He said, that he and his companions had driven out all the sheep and cattle to the heights among the mist, as they had been commanded; that in the course of the evening they heard many calls and whistles around them; and just as the moon rose a band of English thieves came round them, and drove them all off towards Bilhope-head. Peter's assembled friends advised him to take the skin-men's fifteen horses, and what remained at home of his own, and ride off and try to recover the prey, without alarming his dangerous guests; but Peter was bent on fastening the doors, and burning them skin and bone, for he said they would never get so easily quit of them. The two anxious lovers hearing a bustle without, opened the casement, and overheard a part of these perplexed words and reasonings. Then hastening out to join counsel, they raised the fray openly. The heroic Sim flew to horse, and desired all that were friends to the Scots to follow, while Laidlaw addressed his compeers, saying, "Up, lads, and let us ride; our host must not be herried while we are under his roof."

"No, no!" exclaimed the thieves, all in a breath; "he must not be herried and we under his roof;" and no one appeared in half such hurry as they were to mount and be gone.

"Stop short, my good fellows, till I speak with you for a minute," said Laidlaw: "Make me sure which side you will take before you go, else one foot you stir not from that fire-side. I know you for Anthony Reid of Whickhope, and those for two of your cousins of Tersit-head, and shrewdly suspect you to be at the head of the foray."

Anthony drew his sword: so did Laidlaw. But the English troopers were bold and desperate fellows; and before Laidlaw's friends could gather round him to his assistance, the three having covered themselves with their bucklers, forced their way out, back to back, and ran Sandy Pot through the left shoulder, who pressed on them too rashly. When they missed their horses, and

saw that they were clean gone, they foamed like as many furies, and setting their backs to the wall, swore they would fight it out. The combat might have been attended with much bloodshed, had not all the people rushed from the barn, and overpowered them. They were then taken into the house and bound, while Pot and May Chisholm, alias Jock, were left as guards on them, with orders to kill the first that should offer to loose either himself or any of his companions. This whole scene was quite beyond Peter Chisholm's capacity. He could in nowise conceive how the one party of Englishmen assisted with such energy in detecting and binding the others. Still he was any thing but satisfied; the matter having outgone his comprehension, as well as that of all his associates, save one.

They now mounted without delay, and rode with all manner of speed toward the Pass of the Hermitage, by which path they supposed the droves must necessarily proceed; and just as they went down the Redcleuch, leading their horses, they saw the cattle passing at the foot of it. The party amounted scarcely to their own number; but the sheep-drivers were not come in view; so they mounted their horses, and instantly mixed with the men behind the drove, without offering to stop the cattle. At the same time they placed a guard of two farther behind, to prevent all intelligence from passing between the two parties. When this was effected, Simmy challenged the cattle as his father's, and desired the drivers to give them up; but to this the captain of the gang, whose name was Gabriel Reid, the younger brother of Anthony, and captain in his absence, only mocked, imitating the sharp treble notes of the petulant youngster, and telling him that he would not give them up for three score such men as *he* was, else he was better than he looked. As he said this, however, he kept a curious eye on the rough exterior of the tall athletic English peasants by whom the youth was surrounded, which Laidlaw perceiving, accosted him in his feigned tone.

“Who'y, friend, we are countrymen of thee own, and

know thee full weel. Thou's Gabriel Reid of Trochend. But thee billy Anty is taken prisoner this seame mworning, and if thou disna gie up the kie, his head will be chappit off, as weel as these of thee twa coosins the Ha's. Sae thou hast ney choice left but to yield up thee ill gotten gain."

"And what dog art thou, that takest part against thee own countrymen?" said Reid.

"Oo, I's a dealer in the leather line, as weel as all my friends there. We have our free passages and warrantu for the good of both countries; but we are honest men, and by chance were lodged in the house of the owner of these coos, and must see joostice doone to him. I boond thee brwother with mee own hands."

"Then the devil bind thee, thou traitor knave! and for thee reward, this to thy harnpan!" said Gabriel, drawing out his sword, and attacking Laidlaw without more ado. Will, who was never backward at a brulzie, received the encounter without finching, and calling for fair play and elbow-room, both proceeded to decide the day by single combat, while the rest drew aloof and looked on, encouraging them only with cheers and applausive words. Laidlaw was mounted on Anthony Reid's gallant steed, which Gabriel remarked, and that added to his rancour against the skin-man at least ten degrees. The ground was exceedingly bad, so that they could not wheel for weapon-space without a parley; but neither would ask it. They fought close together, first with their swordblades, and afterwards, as their horses came in contact, they dashed each other with their hilts. Both were slightly wounded, but Laidlaw rather had the worst of it. "Beshrew thine heart, if thou hast been a skin-merchant all thy life," said Gabriel, as he turned his horse in the path for another encounter. They had now changed sides, and this encounter was longer and more inveterate than the first. Laidlaw not being quite master of his mighty and furious steed, was twice in imminent danger, losing his broad slouched hat in the struggle, the crown of which was cross-barred with steel,

Poor Sim had changed colours ten times since the combat began ; and, on seeing this last struggle, he lost all command of himself, and rushed with his sword drawn to Laidlaw's rescue. *Himself*, did I say ? alas, no one knew the true sex, save her lover, and no one interfered till she was met by an English trooper half-way, who unhorsed and wounded her with as much ease, of course, as she had been a child. Will's eye caught the first glance of her, as she was falling, and galloping up to the rescue, bare-headed as he was, he clove the trooper's burgonet, and slew him at the first stroke. Reid followed him up ; but Laidlaw's spirit, now fully proportioned to the high mettle of his steed, was a match for any thing. He rode against his antagonist with all his fury, and having the advantage of the brae, overthrew horse and man, and galloped over them. Then throwing himself from his horse, and seizing the forlorn warrior by the throat, called out with a voice of fury,—“Rescue or no rescue ?” “ No rescue ! Redsdale to the fray !” was the resolute and fatal reply. Will could not stand to reason any more at that time, so, without more ado, he ran him through the body, and flew to the rescue of his beloved and heroic Elizabeth, for there the combat began to thicken. She was on her feet ere he arrived, and well guarded, and mounting her palfrey, she bade her lover head the fray, and pay no regard to her, for she was nothing the worse. He, however, saw the blood upon her bassonet, and was roused to perfect fury. The battle now became general ; but it was no regular engagement, being scattered here and there through all the drove—some fought before the cattle, some behind them, and some in the middle. It was reported, that at one time there were fifteen single combats all going on at the same instant. Therefore, to have been an engagement on a small scale, it proved a very bloody one, many being slain and wounded on both sides. But the tremendous skin-merchants bore down all before them wherever they went. These were inured to battle, while the thieving moss-troopers, as well as the hinds on

the Scottish side, were only used to desultory warfare. The bare-headed leather-merchant, in particular, was a dismal sight to the forayers, for having soon rid himself of his first antagonist, he continued galloping about the field wherever he saw two engaged, and cut down all of the adverse party as he went, or rode them down, giving, with every stroke, a hard grin and a grunt. The men thought the devil was come among them, or else that he had fairly taken possession of a skin-merchant; and giving up the contest, a few of them tried to escape by flight, which they did by quitting their horses, and gaining some inaccessible ground. The drivers of the sheep likewise made their escape, for they found the droves deserted in the Hope. The weakest of the men having been left behind with them, they had come in view of the field of combat, and, marking how it terminated, had sped them away out of danger.

Chisholm's party brought home five prisoners with them, twelve English horses well caparisoned, and all the prey, save one ox that Will Laidlaw had ridden over and slain in the plenitude of his wrath. The Scots had no fewer than nine killed and grievously wounded out of their small party, of whom one of the latter was the brave and lovely Bess Chisholm, who was so faint, that Will was obliged to carry her all the way home on his horse before him, clasped to his bosom, he not failing to kiss her pallid cheek many a time by the way, while all the rest wondered at Laidlaw's great concern about the youth. When Peter saw his child borne into the house pale and wounded, he lost all recollection of the secret of her sex, and cried out "O my poor Bess! my dear daughter! What had I ado making a man of thee! Thy blood is on thy old father's head. Alas, for my beloved daughter!"

"Daughter!" exclaimed they all again and again, "Daughter!" re-echoed Will Laidlaw, as if he had not known well before. "Daughter?" cried the skin-men; "Have we then been led to the field by a maid? Shame on our heads that suffered the overthrow! against the

rules of chivalry as her attempt was ! Alas, for the gallant and high spirited young dame !”

They put her to bed, and dressed her wounds, and from all appearances had high hopes that she was more afraid and fatigued than hurt. She soon fell into a quiet slumber, in which they left her, and retired to take some refreshment, and talk over their morning's adventure. It turned out as suggested, that their three prisoners were the three chief men of the gang, who had completely lost themselves and all traces of their companions among the mist ; and having heard a report of the seizure formerly made at that place, they cunningly tried to pass themselves off as messengers sent in search of the lost travellers. If they had been with their own party, they would have proved an overmatch for the Chisholm's. The Reids and Halls had been herried of their whole live stock by the Warden's people, and learning that the greater part of it was driven up into these mountains, they naturally wanted to make some reprisals, and recover their own again. Had it not been for their misfortune in separating, and the exertions of the gallant hide-men, they would have effected their purpose with the utmost ease. It proved a luckless raid for them, for they lost all their horses, the greater part of their men, and the chief, and six of his friends, were sent prisoners to the castle of Mountcomyn.

The country people at Chisholm's board were loud in praise of the skin-men, and of their trusty and gallant behaviour ; in particular, they averred that Laidlaw had killed the half of the thieves with his own hand, for that he rode about the field like a resistless angel, destroying all before him. When Peter heard that he fought so valiantly for the recovery of his stock, and saved his darling daughter's life, his heart warmed toward him, and he bid him ask any thing of him he chose that was in his power to give, and he should not be said nay. Will at once asked the maid whose life he had saved for his wife. Peter hesitated, and said it was hard to bestow the flower of all the Chisholms on an English skir-



merchant, a man who seemed to have neither house nor name, or was ashamed to own them. However, as he had proved himself a warrior and a hero, Peter consented, provided the maid grew better, and was herself satisfied with the match. Will said he asked her on no other terms, and went to see her before he departed. She was still sound asleep, or pretended to be so; therefore, unwilling to disturb her, he breathed a blessing over her, and impressed two or three warm affectionate kisses on her lips. As he came away he felt a slight pressure of her arms around his neck.

When Sandy Pot learned that the lovely youth with whom he had watched the prisoners all the night and morning of the battle was a maid, and the younger sister of his gallant friend Dan, Sandy's wounds grew so ill, that he could not be removed, so he remained where he was, and the other four went off with their uncouth loading. They found Dan Chisholm at Hawick waiting for them in the utmost impatience, having collected no fewer than twenty horse-loads of hides, every one of them in size like a hay-stack, and away the motley train marched and joined the Warden on the night after his arrival before the walls of Roxburgh.

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## CHAPTER XI.

So they shot out and they shot in,  
 Till the morn that it was day,  
 When mony o' the Englishmen  
 About the draw-brigg lay;  
 When they hae yoket carts and wains,  
 To ca' their dead away,  
 And shot auld dikes aboon the lave,  
 In gutters where they lay.

*Ball. of Old Metlin.*

THE expedition of the Douglas against Musgrave is, like the innumerable Border battles of that reign, only

shortly mentioned by historians ; and although it was a notable encounter, and is detailed by Isaac at great length, it lies out of our way here. Let it suffice that they skirmished cautiously for two days with various success, and at last came to an engagement on a field right opposite to the junction of the Tweed and Gala. After a hard fought battle, Douglas' left wing was discomfited ; and just as he was arranging his force so as to cover the retreat, an unaccountable confusion was noted among the English ranks, which seemed to be engaged anew, and with one another, there being no other army nigh. Douglas, recalling his routed squadrons, faced about, but advanced with caution, till he saw Musgrave's army broken and flying in all directions. This gallant feat was accomplished by a Sir John Gordon, who was on his way with seven hundred fresh men to the assistance of Douglas ; and as he came on the English ranks behind at that important crisis, he broke them at the first onset, and took Sir Thomas Musgrave prisoner with his own hand.

Thus far the affairs of Douglas wore the aspect of prosperity—but a settled gloom hung over his mind ; an oppression of spirits was apparent in every sentence that he uttered and every plan he suggested, and these were far from being traits of his wonted disposition. But the monk Benjamin had been with him again and again !—had been harrassing his soul with commissions and messages from the mansions of the dead ; and one night he heard the voice of his lost and dearly regretted princess, speaking to him in his tent, as it were out of the canvas. Still the most solemn injunctions of secrecy were imposed on him, insomuch that he deemed himself not at liberty to open his mind to any one. Besides all this, the disconsolate Mary Kirkmichael had been constantly lingering nigh to him, and always presenting herself in the utmost agony of mind, to make inquiries about her royal mistress. That lady's appearance became so terrible to him that he was unable to bear it, and gave strict charges that she should not be suffered to come within the limits of his camp. But for all that, availing herself of her

rank and her sex's privilege, she forced her way to him several times, and at every visit filled his soul with the most racking torments.

After the intrepid Lord Musgrave had sacrificed his own life in order to save those of his only brother and the lady of his love, Clayering was unanimously chosen captain in his room, and every soldier took a new oath to him to die in defence of the fortress. The commission of which he accepted was a dismal one; but he entered into all the feelings of the famishing inmates in their hatred of the Scots, and implacable enmity against them,—therefore, he was the very man for their purpose.

Every attempt of the besiegers to scale the walls of the castle, or to gain an entrance by fraud or force, had hitherto proved utterly abortive; the determined sons of England laughed at them, regarding them in no other light than as freaks of mere insanity, or the gambols of children. The fortress was impregnable with such heroes within, had they been supplied with sufficient stores of food and of arrows, both of which had long been exhausted; and though a small and welcome supply of the former had been obtained during the tempest and the flood which followed, yet, it proved rather more hurtful than advantageous, for they devoured it with such avidity that the distemper, with which they had formerly been visited, broke out among them with greater violence than ever. Yet disregarding all these privations, which a looker-on would suppose might naturally tend to break the human heart and daunt the resolution of the boldest,—with famine and pestilence both staring them in the face,—they bound themselves by a new and fearful oath never to yield the fortress to the Scots while a man of them remained alive. Every new calamity acted but as a new spur to their resolution; and their food being again on the very eve of exhaustion, their whole concern was how to procure a new supply. Not that they valued their own lives or their own sufferings,—these had for a good while been only a secondary consideration,—but from the ex-

cruciating dread that they should die out, and the Scots attain possession of the fortress before Christmas.

The warders soon noted the alteration that had taken place in the beleaguering army. They perceived the ground that had formerly been occupied by the Angus men, and the Mar Highlanders, now taken up by the tall, athletic, and careless looking borderers, against whom they found their antipathy was not so mortal : and they had some surmisings of what really was the case, that a strong diversion had been made in their favour, that had drawn off their inveterate and hateful enemy Douglas from the siege. Every hour convinced them farther of the truth of this suggestion ; for they perceived a laxness in the manner of conducting the blockade which they had not witnessed for many days, and all their conversation turned on the manner in which they ought to avail themselves of it. The carelessness of the besiegers themselves, or something subordinate thereto, soon furnished an opportunity to them of putting their policy once more to the test, and that by an adventure the most ardently desired. On the second day after the departure of Douglas, the warder on the topmost tower perceived, on a rising ground two miles to the southward, about thirty head of cattle, that came gradually in view as a wing of a large drove might be supposed to do ; and after they had fed for some time there, two men came before them and chased them back out of sight of the castle, as if a great oversight had been committed by letting them come in view of it. Notice of this important discovery was instantly given to the captain, and the news spreading among the garrison, many a long and longing look was cast from the battlements and loopholes of the high western tower that day. They were not cast in vain. Just toward the fall of evening they perceived a part of the drove appear again only a very short space from the castle, and they likewise perceived by their colours that they were a drove of English beasts which had been brought from their native pastures by the strong hand of rapine, for the supply of this new come border

army. They perceived likewise that they approached the army by a concealed way, that the two glances they got of them were merely casual, and that they were very slightly guarded.

A council of war was immediately called, in which it was agreed, without one dissentient voice, that the garrison should make a sham sally at the eastern draw-bridge, as if with intent to gain the city, in order that they might draw the attention of the besiegers to that point; and in the meantime the captain, with the choicest of the men, were to march out by Teviot-bridge, of which the garrison had necessarily the sole possession, and endeavour to seize the prey. Thence they were to proceed westward, and try to elude the enemy's posts, or give them battle, if the former were found to be impracticable; but at all events, either to die or succeed in attaining that valuable supply, or a part of it. The success of the contest now turned on that single point as on a pivot; the balance was against them, but, that being turned in their favours by an exertion of warrior prowess, they could then reckon on a complete triumph over their unappeasable foes.

Besides, every thing seemed to concur in support of their gallant expedition. The nights were dark even beyond their usual darkness at that gloomy season, and the moon did not arise till two in the morning. Both these circumstances were in their favour,—the one in attaining possession of the prey unperceived, and the other in enabling them to fight their way home; for they knew that though they themselves might pass the strong Scottish posts favoured by the deep darkness, still it was impossible to bring the drove through them, and along the bridge, without a hard skirmish. The captain, therefore, gave command to the division left behind, that the more noise they heard of an engagement about the bridge of Teviot, and the gate towards the west, the more they should press their battle eastward, to divert the strength of the army to that quarter. Because on that side the Scots could make no impression, and the English could lose nothing there save a few lives, which they accounted

of small avail; but if the expedition to the west failed, their cause was finally ruined.

That was a busy evening within the walls of Roxburgh, while all was quietness and indifference without. Within there was arming and disarming, for the suits of armour that once fitted these emaciated warriors would not now hang on their frames. There was grinding of swords, pointing of spears and ox-goads, and even the slaughter-houses of the fort were cleared, with a provident concern seldom overlooked by Englishmen; and at eleven o'clock at night, by the convent matin bell, Clavering, with five hundred chosen men, well armed, issued silently from the garrison, creeping along the Teviot-bridge on their hands and knees. From that they proceeded westward in the most profound silence, and so close by the Scottish posts, that they heard them breathing and conversing together. One party crept up all the way within the water-brae, and the other, led by Clavering himself, past through between two Scottish posts, drawing themselves along the ground close on their breast, and once or twice were obliged to squat close down, and lie silent for a considerable space, while the following dialogue passed between the sentinels.

“Od, Sandy Scott, think ye it can be true that the English are eating ane another?”

“There's nae doubt o't. I hear that they're snapping up five o' the fattest o' their number every day. They will eat themselves out bit by bit that gate.”

“Aih wow, man! I wad rather die o' hunger than pick the banes of ane acquaintance. Bursten devils, that they are!”

“Aha, Sandie, billie, ye dinna ken till ye be tried. A man will do ought or he die o' hunger. An do you ken, Sandie Scott, I think our captain has done wrang in bringing sae mony fat bullocks a' sae near the castle at ae time. Thae hungered louns will hae a haud o' some o' them, and maybe cut a when o' our throats into the bargain, some o' thir dark nights.”

“Now, ye see neighbour, I ken sae well that our

master never does the sma'est thing without some design, that I think he wants to wile out the English, and then kill them ; and that he has brought a' thir braw stots o'er the border, just on the same principle that a fisher throws a bait into the water."

" Na, na, Sandie, that canna be the case, for he has gi'en strict orders that no ane o' them be suffered to come within sight o' the castle. He just thinks the beasts canna be sae safe ony where else as beside himsel' and his lads. But hunger has sharp een, and I wadna wonder if this drove should lead to some hard tulzie."

" Whisht! Godsake, haud your tongue! What's that I hear?"

" The English, I'll warrant you. If hunger hae clear een, fear has unco lang lugs. What was it that Sandie heard?"

" I heard a kind o' rubbing and thristing, as a fox or a founart had been drawing himsel' through a hole aneath the ground. Hilloa! What guard?"

" Howpasley and Gemelscleugh."

" Watch weel. There's something stirring."

" Not a mouse."

" So say the sleeping foresters ; but I can tell you, men o' Gemelscleuch and Howpasley, an there be nought stirring aboon the ground, the moudies are very busy aneath it the night. Clap close, and keep an e'e on the withergloom. I had a heavy dream at nightfa', and I'm resolved no to close an e'e. Come neighbour, tell a tale, or say a rhyme to keep us wauking."

" Have ye heard the new ballant made by the rhinning dominie o' Selchrit, the queerest thing ever was heard? It begins this gate —

The Devil he sat in Dornock tower,  
 And out at a slip-hole keekit he,  
 And he saw three craws come yont the lift,  
 And they winged their flight to the Eildon tree.  
 O whow, O whow, quo the muckle deil,  
 But yon's a sight that glads my ee,  
 For I'll lay the steel brander o' hell  
 There's a storm a-brewing in the west countrye."

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Whisht, for heaven’s sake ! I heard the tod again, Hilloa ! Gemelscleuch to the glaive ! Hare lug and hawk e’e, or there’ll be news afore the morn that’s unheard tell o’ yet.”

“ And that there will ! Saint David be with us ! and the blessed Saint Mary, the mother of God, be with us ! Hist havering, say Benedicite.”

At that instant a sharp breeze arose which drowned the noise, and Clavering and his men passed fairly by on their perilous expedition. Beyond the next hollow they found the cattle all lying puffing and dozing on a round hill. An immense drove of them there seemed to be, for the hill appeared to be literally covered, but the night was as dark as pitch, and they could see nothing distinctly. Clavering gave his commands in a whisper to his chief men, to surround the whole drove, and drive them furiously, that by these means they might throw the enemy’s lines into confusion. “ We have the advantage of the ground,” said he ; “ the bridge is clear, and the gates open. Let us play the men for once, and our difficulties are all over. Providence has favoured us beyond what could have been calculated on. Our force is superior to that of our enemies on this side the river. On whatever side our column is attacked, let us keep a running fight, so as to push on and preserve the prey, and the day is our own : And now, Saint Anthony for the right !”

The men then formed themselves into a crescent behind the cattle six-line deep, and with club, goad, and spear pushed them on. There were a few dour lazy driving runts behind that bore all the thumps, but the bulk were high-spirited, and galloped off on the path toward Roxburgh with the utmost fury, insomuch that the delighted drivers never got a sight of them. They broke through the Scottish lines without either stop or stay. The alarm was instantly given, but a night muster is always attended with some delay. So the English thought,—so they said ; and to their great joy they found their suggestions realized ; for not till the last cow was past the strong line of posts on the height were they attacked



by the Scots. But then, indeed, the Gemelscleuch and Howpasley men set upon them with unparalleled fury and being every five minutes joined by more of their companions, they pressed hard upon the English, who, being obliged to keep up a retreating battle, fell thick on the brae beyond the bridge. The brave and judicious Longspear himself led the attack, and behaved like a lion ; for though wounded in three different places of the body, he fought in the front of the main battle all that night.

The Scots, to the utter amazement of their enemies, never once offered to stop the cattle, but merely attacking the English crescent behind, drove them and cattle and all towards the bridge. This Clavering and his chief men attributed wholly to the surprise by which the Scots were taken ; and when the former saw the dark column of cattle take the bridge, he thanked the God of heaven, the blessed Virgin, and all the saints whose names were known to him, for such a wonderful success and merciful deliverance. The English host then raised such a shout of triumph that the echoes called from the castled towers to the forest, and from the forest to the distant rocks. The Scots soon joined in it with equal enthusiasm ; and the two armies then engaged at the eastern gate, also joined their voices to the general chorus. The gray friars of Roxburgh, and the Benedictine monks of Kelso, raised their heads from their flinty pillows, committed themselves to heaven, and deplored the madness and folly of the men of the world. The city dames wept and prayed, and the men ran to head-quarters to learn the cause of the uproar. The sounds were actually heard in the camp of Douglas, at the distance of sixteen miles ; and when this was reported to him next morning, he said, " Then is the Redhough on the ramparts of Roxburgh ! "

But man's thoughts are vanity ! He cannot judge of events so as to calculate on what is to happen from one moment to another : incidents of the slightest moment so often having the effect of overturning the greatest and most momentous enterprizes. Never was there one so

nearly overturned as this, although it was not once thought of till afterwards,—and it was on this wise: There was a strong guard of English placed at the south end of the bridge, to guide the foremost of the drove on to it, or help to cut a way for the cattle through such troops as might interpose. The cattle, as was said, came galloping furiously without intervention, and, as if led by an unseen providence, took the bridge with all their vigour, the battle being then raging behind them, and the shouts beginning to rend the sky. This guard had nothing to do, of course, but to open into two lines, and give them head. But at the end of the bridge there was a deep puddle, and among the men there chanced to be a little boy who was running about and thrashing the cattle as they went through this puddle, which made them spring up the arch with redoubled velocity, which the urchin thought good sport. But in the midst of this frolic he bolted away at once with such velocity that he had almost overthrown one of the men in the file, and as he ran he cried out, “Lord, saw ever ony mortal the like o’ that?” “What was it, rash idiot?” said the man. “Grace and mercy man did you not see how yon great black stott stood straight up on his hin legs and waded the pool?” said the boy. “Take that to clear your eyes, impertinent brat,” said the man, and gave him a blow with his fist that made him run away howling and crying, always repeating as he went, “I’ll tell your captain,—now! ’at will I that—now!”

The combat behind the cattle thickened apace. The English were sore borne down on the hill, but when they came to the little plain at the bridge-end they stood firm, and gave as hard blows as they got. They had fairly gained their aim, and their spirits, so long depressed, mounted to an unusual height. The last lingering hoof of the whole countless drove was now on the arch, and they could calculate on holding out the fortress against their hated foes not only to Christmas, but till that time twelvemonth. Their shouts of joy were redoubled. So also were those of the Scots. “The people are mad!”

said they, "thus to shout for their own loss and their own defeat. It is a small trait of the cursed perversity of the whole nation!"

The English narrowed their front and narrowed their front still as their files found room on the arch of the bridge, which was long and narrow, and very steep at the south end, that rose directly from the plain. But the road up to the castle by the two tremendous iron gates was likewise exceedingly steep, and went by a winding ascent, so that the latter end of the drove, those dull driving ones that bore all the strokes, got very slowly up, and with great difficulty. There was a guard of considerable strength left in this gateway by Clavering, lest any attempt should be made by the enemy to enter in his absence. But these men had strict charges to clear the way for the cattle, and help to drive the foremost ones up the steep. The fore part of the drove however came up to the steep with such main fury, that the men were glad to clear a way for them, by flying out of the path up to the citadel. There was not a man left in the gateway, save two at each of the iron portcullises, and these stood in deep niches of the wall, out of all danger. Each of these men held the end of a chain that was twisted round an immense bolt in the wall,—and these bolts are to be seen sticking to this day. On untwisting this chain the portcullises fell down, and when they were to raise up it was done with levers. Well, as the two outermost men stood in their niches, holding by the ends of their chains, they observed, that two of the oxen that first came in, nay the very first two that came in, turned round their ugly heads, leaned their sides to the wall, and kept in their places, the one on the one side and the other on the other, till the whole drove passed them. The men could not move from their posts to drive them on with the rest, but they wondered at the beasts; and the one cried to the other, "What can ail them two chaps?" "O them are two tired ones," said the other: "Dom them for two ugly monsters! they look as them had been dead and roosen again."

At length, by dint of sore driving and beating, the last hoof of the Warden's choice drove passed inward through the castle gate of Roxburgh, for the maintenance of his irascible enemies. Could any thing be so unfortunate? or how was he to set up his face, and answer to the Douglas now? But the Redhough was determined that he would set up his face and answer to the Douglas and his country too, as well as to his kinsmen and followers, whom he valued highest of all. Just as the last lazy cow crossed the gate, and when the triumphant shouts of the English were at the loudest, the two great lubberly oxen that stood shaking their ugly heads, and leaning against the wall, ripped up their own bellies; and out of two stuffed hides, two most ingenious cases, started up no less men than Sir Ringan Redhough and his doughty friend, Charlie Scott of Yardbire. Off went the heads of the two porters in one moment, and down came the portcullis with a thundering rattle, and a clank that made the foundations of the gate shake. "Now, southern lads, haud ye there!" cried the Redhough. "Time about is fair play. Keep ye the outside o' the door threshold, as lang as ye hae gart us keep it."

They next went up and seized the other two porters, whom they saved alive, to teach them how to bolt, bar, open and shut the gates, but the men had taken the oaths with the rest, and remained obstinate. No threatening could make them move either finger or tongue except in mockery, which provoked the Redhough so that he despatched them likewise. On reaching the great square the Warden found his men in peaceable possession. Six score brave chosen men had entered among the cattle, each in a stuffed ox or cow hide, and had now like their captain cast their sloughs, and stood armed at all points to execute his commands. They found nothing to do, save a prodigious difficulty in working their way from the western to the eastern gate. There were so many turnings and windings; so many doors and wickets; so many ascents and descents,—that an army might have gained possession of the one end and yet have been kept

out of the other for years. But the surprise here was so complete, that the Borderers had in fact nothing to do but to keep the possession, thus obtained in so easy and at the same time so gallant a style. The shouts that arose from the western battle had so much encouraged those at the eastern gate, that they had sallied out, and attacking the besiegers sword in hand, had driven them back within their strong line of defence. This retreat was a part of the plan of the Scots to draw off the remaining force from the gate, and while they were in the hottest of the skirmish, down came Redhough and his lads from the interior of the castle behind them, cut down the few guards about the entrance and the draw-bridge with ease. and having raised that, and shut the double gates on that quarter likewise, he placed the Armstrongs there as a guard, and returned into the interior, still uncertain what enemies he had to combat within.

This mighty fortress was, from the one draw-bridge to the other, a full quarter of a mile in length, walled and moated round, and contained seven distinct squares or castles, every one of which was a fortress of itself. But the strongest of all was the division on the western part, which was denominated the citadel, and had gates and bars of its own, and towers that rose far above the rest. Into this strong place the sole remnant of the English soldiers had retreated, which consisted merely of the guard that kept the western porch and made way for the cattle, a few stragglers beside, and some official people that kept always within. Through every other part of the castle the Scots found free passage; and by the time the moon had been risen for an hour, the shouts of "A Douglas! a Douglas! a Redhough! a Redhough!" were heard from every part of the walls, excepting the western tower. There indeed a faint and subdued shout announced at intervals the name of the King of England, for it was now no more a Musgrave! and as for Clavering they wist not whether he was dead or alive, taken or at liberty.

When the first ranks of the Englishmen that came

up behind the castle saw the gates shut against them, they took it for some accident, or some mistake that the porters had fallen into, on listening to the shouts of the adverse parties; but after calling and remonstrating to no purpose, they began to suspect that there was treason at the bottom of it, and the whisper of treason spread among that part of the forces which was now forced against the gate. They could do nothing; for they neither had room to fight nor fly, and they knew not whom to suspect or what had befallen them. As for those at the farther end of the bridge, they were so hotly engaged with their opponents, that they had little time to consider of any thing; but finding themselves fixed to the spot, and no movement making toward the gate, they conceived that something there was wrong, which retarded the regular entrance of the troops for so long a time. They now fought only three to three abreast on the steep arch of the bridge, down which the English drove the Scots six or seven times, the latter always returning to the charge with that vigour which a certainty of success inspires. Clavering fought them in the rear, and in the hottest of the battle still encouraging his men to deeds of desperate valour, little weening how matters went within. But when the names of the Scottish chiefs were resounded from the walls, every heart among the English was chilled and every arm unnerved in one instant. They had no conception how the thing could have happened; it appeared so far beyond all human power to have effected it, that it was several hours before it gained general credit among them. They had kept the fortress so long, with so little dread of its being wrested from them, and withal suffered so much in it, that they could not believe the evidence of their senses, that by a course of events entirely of their own planning, they should be all without the walls, and the Scots within. It was like a work of enchantment.

The Scots could make no impression on them upon that long narrow bridge; but they could not long stand cooped up there; and when they saw that all hope of

regaining entrance was lost, they threw themselves over a high parapet, and took possession of the steep bank between the bottom of the southern wall and the river Teviot. The river being dammed below, it stood like a frith round the bottom of this bank, which was so steep that they could not stand on it, but were obliged to clamber alongst it on their hands and feet. Escape being impracticable, the Scots suffered them to take possession of that bank undisputed, and to keep it, supposing they must surrender next day ; but a great number were slain before the latter end of the train was disentangled of the bridge.

The Scots had now free access to the gate, into which Gemelscleuch and Howpasley were admitted. The Warden embraced them, and thanked them for their wise counsel, as well as their great bravery, and they again set about traversing and surveying the fortress, concerning which Charlie Scott said, " It wad tak a man a year and a day to find out a' the turnings and windings about it."

The battle at the eastern draw-bridge had continued from midnight without intermission ; and after the break of day our chiefs witnessed a scene from the walls that was without a parallel. That division of the Scots army was composed of Douglas' men, being the same troops that were there before, and they were commanded by Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith. That knight got private intelligence of the Warden's intention to storm the castle, by what means he knew not, but resolved to hold himself in readiness ; and, as he was desired, when the sortie was made, he retreated at first, drawing them off from the gate. When the cry arose that the castle was taken, his men became frantic with joy, and resolute on taking ample vengeance on their enemies, they burst upon them without regularity, making great havoc, and at the same time throwing away many of their own lives. Sir James with great difficulty restrained them, called a parley, and offered the expelled garrison quarter ; but they returned for answer, that they

weened he had called the parley to ask quarter of them, and they had determined to refuse it. They concluded by telling him to see to himself, and insult them no more by such messages, for as yet he knew not with whom he was warring. The battle was then renewed by the light of the moon with greater fury than ever; they fought like baited bears, with recklessness of life and the silence of death. Deadly hate was in every thrust, and the last words of every falling warrior were, "Have at them yet."

When the day light arose, the English fought within a semicircular wall of mangled carcasses; for grievous to relate, they were not corpses; yet were they piled in a heap higher than a man's height, which was moving with agonized life from top to bottom, and from the one end to the other; for the men having all fallen by sword wounds, few of them were quite dead. The English were now reduced to a small number, yet, in the strife, their ardour seemed to prevail over that of their opponents. The Border chiefs, inured as they were to war, stood amazed, and even shocked, at the scene presented to their view. Yarbire was the first to deprecate it in these words; "Gude faith, Sirs, it strikes me, that this is rather carrying war to an extremity."

"Rescue! rescue!" shouted the Warden: "Give quarter to these men, for my sake. I will pay their ransom myself."

When the Douglas' vassals heard this they lowered the points of their swords, and drew back from the slaughter, commanding the English to ground their weapons. The latter consulted together for a few minutes, and void of all dread, save that of being obliged to submit to the Scots, they broke with one consent over the pile of human bodies, and carrying destruction before them, opened a way into the middle of the Scottish columns; nor ceased they fighting until every man of them was cut down. The rest of the English army were in a fold. Escape was impossible. Ten men could have prevented it on all sides, yet for a whole day and night did they hold their tenure of that perpendicu-



lar bank, although before the evening many were losing their holds, and rolling into the river from exhaustion. Then the sudden immersion arousing them somewhat from their torpor, scores of them might be seen at a time crawling to the side of the water, and endeavouring to clamber once more up the bank; but at last they sunk back into the deep, and their last breath arose to the surface in small chains of fetid air bubbles. No one knew what became of the young and intrepid Clavering,—at what time, or in what place he fell; and without a head as these men were, it was not till the second morning, when the breath of revenge had cooled, and after much expostulation on the part of the conquerors, that the wretched remnant yielded themselves prisoners of war, and were all suffered to depart on their parole, with high encomiums on their valour. But these commendations were received with the gall of bitterness; and none of them could tell, when they went home, how or by what means they were expelled.

The Warden and his men now set themselves with all their endeavour to take the citadel; and feebly as it was defended, it cost them no little trouble. It is probable that it might have held out a few days longer, but when Douglas and his army were seen approaching on their return from the battle, the impatience of the Borderers could be no longer restrained; and Yarbire, with a remnant of his Olivers, Pots, and Laidlaws, scaled the wall in the faces of the enemy, who had scarcely power left to cleave a head without a helmet, and throwing themselves into the square, became masters of the gate in a few minutes; so that before Douglas reached the top of the hill of Barns, his colours were placed on the topmast tower of the citadel.

It may easily be conceived with what joy, wonder, and admiration he gazed on this phenomenon. Joy that his broad lands and possessions were thus insured to him, of which for some time past he scarcely retained a hope; and admiration how that indefatigable chief had accomplished, in a few days, that which he had exerted him-

self in vain to accomplish for the space of as many months. The idea of being so far outdone in policy was without doubt somewhat bitter to the palate of a Douglas, for never till this day can they brook a competitor in the field: but, considering how matters stood, it would have been the worst of policy to have let such a feeling appear. Douglas therefore testified the highest satisfaction, extolling the Warden's head to conceive and hand to accomplish, in terms as he never had been heard to utter. "Glorious Redhough! unparalleled Redhough!" exclaimed he again and again: "Thou and thy lads are the men to trust."

The chief received him at the castle gate, welcoming him in jocular terms of high chivalry to the castle of Roxburgh, which he took care always to denominate "my castle." This was soon noted by the Douglas; and as soon as they entered the governor's house in the citadel, Douglas made over to him, by regular deeds and instruments, the seven first baronies he chose to name. This document, together with the royal charters confirming it, is extant, and in the possession of one of the Warden's lineal descendants at this day. On receiving this grant, signed, sealed, and witnessed, Sir Ringan delivered over the keys of the castle to the Earl of Douglas and Mar, and the two exchanged seats at the table. Douglas also conferred the honours of knighthood on Charlie Scott, Simon Longspear, and John of Howpasley; while Sir Ringan bestowed one of his new baronies on each of these brave gentlemen in support of their new dignities, burdened only with a few additional servitudes. On his right hand hero, the hereditary claimant of the post of honour, he conferred the barony of Raeburn and Craik, that he might thenceforward be the natural head of his hard-headed Olivers and skrae-shankit Laidlaws. To Longspear he gave Temadale; and to Howpasley, Phingland and Langshaw. When Charlie first rose from his knee, and was saluted as Sir Charles Scott of Raeburn and Yarbire, he appeared quite cast down, and could not answer a word. It was supposed that his grate-

ful heart was overcome with the thought that the reward bestowed on him by his generous chief had been far above his merits.

The news of the capture were transmitted to court with all expedition; on which King Robert returned word, that he would, with his queen, visit the Douglas in the castle of Roxburgh, and there in the presence of the royal family, and the nobles of the court, confer on him his daughter's hand in marriage, along with such other royal grants and privileges as his high gallantry and chivalrous spirit deserved. He added, that he had just been apprized by his consort, that his daughter the princess Margaret, had been for some time living in close concealment in the vicinity of Roxburgh, watching the progress of her lover with a devotion peculiar to her ardent and affectionate nature. If the Douglas was aware of this, which the king had some reasons for supposing, he requested that he would defer seeing her until in the presence of her royal parents. There was a thrust indeed! An eclairsissement was approaching too much for man to bear.—But that heart-rending catastrophe must be left to the next chapter.

Abundance of all the good things that the kingdom could produce were now poured into the castle with all expedition; and every preparation made for the reception of the King and Queen of Scotland. The carnage had been so great at the two gates that night the fortress was taken, that the citizens of Roxburgh, as well as the three establishments of monks and friars in the vicinity, besought of Douglas that the slain might not be buried nigh to the city, for fear of infection; and if this was granted, they proffered to be at the sole charge of removing and burying them with all holy observances. This was readily granted, and they were removed to a little plain behind the present village, where thousands of their bones have lately been dug up. The burying continued for three days.

## CHAPTER XIII.

O I hae seen the gude auld day,  
 The day o' pride and chieftain glory,  
 When royal Stuarts bore the sway,  
 And ne'er heard tell o' Whig nor Tory.  
 Though lyart be my locks and gray,  
 And eild has crook'd me down,—what matter?  
 I'll dance and sing ae ither day,  
 That day our King comes o'er the water.

*Jacobite Song.*

FROM the time of the taking of the castle until the arrival of King Robert, was an interval of high festivity. The Border chiefs and yeomen went home to their respective places of abode with abundant spoil, having been loaded with rich presents from the Douglas, as well as their share of Sir Ringan's numberless booties, which he always divided among them with great liberality; and it was computed that, in the course of that predatory warfare, he drove thirty thousand domestic animals out of the English territory. The Scottish Border districts were never so well stocked before. For a century previous to that, they had lain waste, having been entirely depopulated, and left no better than a hunting forest. That reign enriched them, and its happy effects have never since been obliterated.

Among other things that happened in this joyful interval, old Peter Chisholm received a message one day, informing him, that the stranger to whom he had betrothed his daughter would appear next day to claim the fulfilment of his promise.

“They'll eat up every thing that's within the house,” said Peter: “If he will have her, it wad suit better for us to meet them at Hawick. The half o' the expences there wad lye to him at ony rate; and if he made weel through wi' his hides, mayhap he wad pay the halewort. He's a brave chield enough, it wad appear; but I wish

he had fawn aff the tap o' his humphed ill-smelled hides, and broken the bane o' his neck ; for it will be a wae sight to me to see the flower of a' the Chisholms gang away wi' an English cadger. Oh, wae be to the day !”

“ What is a man but his word, father ?” said Dan. “ I think the gallant way in which the stranger behaved entitles him well, not only to the flower o' the Chisholms, but to the best in the house beside.”

“ Ay, ay, that's aye the gate ! fling away ! fling away ! till ye'll soon fling away every plack your auld father has gathered for ye. But, hark ye, callant Dan : Gin ye will stand by me, I'll gainsay the fellow yet, and refuse to gie him my Bess.”

“ Hear what Bess says hersel,” said Dan, “ and then I'll gie iny answer.”

Bess was sent for, who declared not only her willingness, but her resolution to abide by her father's agreement ; but added, that if a better came before him, and made her an offer, she would not wait a minute on her leather-merchant.

“ Heard ever ony body the like o' that ?” said Peter ; “ What trow ye is the chance for that ? How lang hae ye hung on the tree wi' a red cheek an' a ripe lip, and never man to streek out the hand to pu' ye ? There was aince a neighbour I had some hopes o' ; an' he has a good heart too, for a' his jibes, an' ane durst but tell him !”

Peter said these last words to himself, as he was turning about to leave the apartment,—for he was at that time forming in his mind one of those superlative schemes which strike dotage as plans of the mightiest and most acute device, but which youth and energy laugh at. This was no other than to be early astir next morning, and, before any of his family was aware, gallop over to Craik, a matter of seven miles, and beg of Will Laidlaw to come and run off with his daughter before she fell into the hands of an English skinman. This grand scheme he actually put in practice, but met Laidlaw and his jovial party by the way, who wondered not a little when they

saw old Pate coming galloping up the Fanesh ridge, having his great pike staff heaved over his shoulder, with which he was every now and then saluting the far loin of his inare, and that with an energy that made all his accoutrements wallop. He never perceived the bridal party till close on them, and till he was asked by half a score voices at once, "What's the great haste, Castle-weary! Where are ye gawn at sic a rate sae early in the morning? Are your ha's burnt? Are your cattle driven? Have the Ha's and the Reids been o'er the fells aince inair?" And many other such questions were put, before Peter got a word spoken or a thought thought. He only bit his lip, and looked very angry, at being caught in such a plight. But seeing Will Laidlaw at the head of his kinsmen, he took him aside, and imparted his grand secret. Will's sides were like to burst with laughter. He, however, contained himself, while Peter went on "But ye had better turn a' that clan again, wha hae nought ado at a' wi' us but put things to waste. The less din about the thing the better."

"But how are we to answer the skin-merchant when he comes then, Castle-weary? That tremendous buyer of hides will hew us all to pieces."

"Ay, ye maun just take a' the blame on yoursels, you and Bess. He'll no mak muckle at the Laidlaw's hands, or he'll do what never ony did afore him."

"I certainly have the greatest respect for your daughter; but times are hard and dangerous, and I have nae great opinion o' marriage."

"Come, now, I like to hear that; for ye ken fock maun ay read a Laidlaw backward; and if the times are hard, I shall be satisfied with a very small dowry. Perhaps the matter o' ten tup hogs aff the Crib-law, sax owsen off Hosecot, and"——

"Hold there, my old friend; and I will run all risks, and take away your daughter Elizabeth: let the skin-man look to himself."

"Weel, God bless ye wi' ner. Ye'll get the flower of a' the Chisholms, and the best bairn o' the bike."

Bess was a winsome and a blithe bride that day, and though the wounds she received in the engagement with the marauders were not quite whole, she danced the best at the wedding, and was the first that lighted on Craik-green. Dan entertained his fellow-soldiers nobly; but old Peter was terribly in the fidgets, not only at the huge waste of meat and drink that he now saw going on, but for fear of the arrival of the outrageous and ill-used hide-merchant, and never till his dying day could he be brought to identify his son-in-law with the stranger to whom he first promised his daughter. But for many a day, when the dogs barked, he hasted out in great agitation, lest the dealer in skins and his associates should come upon him unawares. Sandy Pot having found a very kind, attentive, and, withal, a very indulgent nurse, in the younger daughter, May Chisholm, there chanced two weddings at Castleweary on the same day.

Among all the festivities at Roxburgh, and all the mighty preparations for the reception of royalty, and the spending of the Christmas holidays in such company, the countenance of Douglas was manifestly overcast. He affected mirth and gaiety, but a hideous and terrific gloom frequently settled on his dark manly countenance. The princess's shameful and untimely death hung heavy on his mind, and the secret of it still heavier. His conscience upbraided him, not with any blame in the matter, for he was alike ignorant of the rank and sex of his fantastical page: But her devotion to his cause and person; the manner in which she had exerted herself by putting her rival into his hands; the love-tokens slyly given to him by her own dear self; her admonitory letters; and all her whimsical and teasing inuendos, came over his mind, and combined in rendering her memory ten times dearer to him than ever he conceived that of human being could have been. And then, how was all this requited? By bad humour, disrespect, and a total disregard of her danger and sufferings. The most enthusiastic, affectionate, and accomplished lady of the age in which she lived, was suffered to be put down as a common

criminal, without one effort being made to save her; and that delicate and beautiful form thrust down into a common charnel-house among the vulgar dead. Knowing all these things as he did, how could he again behold her royal parents? and knowing all these things as he did, why had he not related the lamentable facts as they had happened, and conducted himself accordingly? There was fixed the acmè of his dilemma. The detail of that lady's love and fate rose before his mind's eye, like a dark unseemly arch, of which this was the keystone; and there was a power stood above it that held his soul in controul, and beyond that he could not pass. Was it indeed true, that the spirit of his royal and beloved mistress walked the earth, and from day to day laid her stern behests upon him? And could it be that such a spirit attended upon him in his most secret retirements; and, though unseen, watched over all his motions, words, and actions? Or how else could the very thoughts and purposes of his heart, together with his most secret transactions, be repeated to him by this holy monk? Nay, though he had never actually seen this apparition, he had heard his mistress's voice one night speaking to him as from behind the hangings, and charging him, as he respected his own and her soul's welfare, to keep her fate concealed from all flesh.

Whenever the Douglas got leisure to think at all, amid the hurry of his military duties, these cogitations preyed on his mind; and one night when they had thrown him into a deep reverie, the monk Benjamin was announced.

"I cannot see him to-night: Tell him to come and speak with me to-morrow," said Douglas.

"He craves only a few moments audience Lord of Douglas; and he says, that unless he is admitted, a visitor of another nature will wait on you forthwith."

"What is the meaning of this?" said Douglas: "Must my privacy be broken in upon, and my mind placed on the rack, at the pleasure of every fanatical devotee? Tell him that I will not be disturbed to-night. But—I think not what I am saying. Admit him. Well, re-



verend and holy father—madman rather! What is your important business with me?”

“That sauntly vision has again been with me.”

“Out upon thee, maniac and liar! There has been no such thing with thee; and thou hast trumped up a story in order to keep the power of the Douglas under thy ghostly and interested controul.”

“If I am a visionary, Lord, it is for thyself to judge. I speak nothing as of myself, but the words of one that has sent me. If thou darest say they are the visions of a maniac, in future I keep them to myself and do you abide by the consequences.”

“Thinkest thou that I will not, or that I dare not abide by any consequences? Hence! Begone!”

“Rash precipitate man! thou shalt repent this! What interest can I possibly have in whispering these truths in thine ear? Did I ever ask or hint at a favour from thee? Or was aught ever, save thy own welfare, the purport of my messages? Adieu, my lord! There must another commissioner wait on you presently, and one who will elude the most vigilant of your sentinels.”

“Stay, Benjamin: Thou art, indeed, blameless. If thou hast ought to warn me of, say it and have done, for I am not in a mood to be trifled with.”

“I have been bid to caution you to look to yourself, for that there is treason within the walls of this castle. Will you answer me one or two queries truly and seriously, that I may know whether the being that commissioned me be a true spirit or a false one?”

“I will.”

“Have you got a private offer to a prodigious amount for the ransom of Lady Jane Howard?”

“Monk, thou hast had this from hell.—I have.”

“Which thou hast rejected, with the secret intent of asking her in marriage yourself, should circumstances concur to favour the device?”

“It is false!—false as the source whence thou hadst it.”

“Ah! Then have I done! my informant is a false one.”

“ Or, if I had, it was some passing thought, which no man can gainsay, and for which none are accountable.”

“ Neither is it true that you visited her in disguise last night ?”

The Douglas gazed upon the monk in silence, with an eye in which there was an unnatural gleam of madness. He drew his breath three times, as if he would have spoken, but made no answer. The monk continued : “ If these are truths, then list to the following behest,—if they are false, thou needest not regard it : There is a conspiracy among thy people for the rescue of Lady Jane. They have been bribed by unheard-of rewards. Thy guards are of course to be cut down, otherwise the rescue cannot be effected ; and if thy own head is added to the convoy, the guardous are all to be doubled.”

The Douglas started to his feet, and held up both his hands : “ By the blessed Virgin it is true !” exclaimed he—“ True every word of it ! There have been petitions made to me for the use of certain keys already. Ay, and I have granted some of them too. I see through a part of the conspiracy. But I’ll sift the traitors ! I’ll make carrion of them.”

“ If I am rightly informed, it may yet be prevented without being made manifest, which would be greatly preferable. Beware of Kinlossie. And list, for my time is expired : If you value your own name, see not the face of Lady Jane again, till you present her to your sovereign.”

The monk retired with precipitation, and left the Douglas overwhelmed with tumultuary and adverse passions. “ Still the Lady Jane Howard !” said he to himself : “ Nothing but the Lady Jane Howard ! Is it possible this can be an agent of hers ? But the inference contradicts the whole scope and tendency of his missions. I must investigate this matter without delay.” He raised his small bugle to his mouth, for in those days that answered all the purposes of a house bell, and many more. Every officer in castle or camp knew, by the blast blown,

when his personal attendance was required. Douglas lifted his to his mouth,—but before he sounded it, the knight in waiting announced “a lady.” No bolder heart than that of Douglas beat in a Scottish bosom. Nevertheless it quaked; for he thought of the threatening of the monk, that another commissioner should visit him, whom his guards should not be able to repel. His agitation was now wrought up to the highest pitch, for he attempted to pronounce some words, of which the knight knew not the import,—probably it was a command to expel her, or to call in some guards; but before the order could be understood or complied with, the lady herself entered. “There she is, my lord!” said the knight in a whisper; “and none of us know whence or how she came hither.”

The lady came slowly by, and the knight retired with all speed. She bore indeed the figure and form of the late princess, but the roses of youth and beauty were gone, and in their room a clayey paleness pervaded the features, which were even whiter than the cambric by which the face was surrounded. The figure held up its right hand as it advanced, and fixed its eyes on the earl; but no man to this day ever knew any thing farther of that conference. The knight in waiting, shortly after he had retired, heard a noise within as of a man choking and endeavouring to cry out; and, bringing two more attendants with him, they all three rushed into the apartment, and found the Douglas fallen back on the embroidered couch in a state of mental abstraction, or rather of total insensibility, and the lady was gone. They immediately applied themselves to the restoration of their lord, which they effected in a short time. Animation soon returned, but reason wavered in a state of instability for several hours. During that period he had for a number of times inquired who admitted that stranger, or who saw her depart? The men assuring him each time, that no one saw her till she was observed standing in the anti-chamber; and that none was either admitted into the citadel or seen depart, save the starveling monk who

attended him frequently as his confessor. "There has been another lady," they added, begging admission to your presence for a whole day and night, which has always been refused her, in consequence of your peremptory order. She has at the last resorted to the means always at a woman's command, tears and threatenings; and she vows, that if she is not admitted to an audience, you shall dearly repent it."

"What, another still?" said the Douglas: "No, I'll see no more women to-day, nor to-morrow, nor next day. Do you know, Eveldon, what I think of women?"

"No, Lord Douglas, but well what I think of them myself, which is, that they are nature's masterpieces."

"The pests of society, Eveldon. I deem them subordinate creatures, created solely for man's disquietude. The warrior is naturally surrounded by dangers; but, till he engages with women, he rises superior to them all; it is then that his troubles and perils begin. No, I'll see no more women to-night."

"Might I advise, my lord, it would be, that you should give her admission. It appears so strange to see a lovely and most courtly dame standing weeping at your gate. The very commonest of the people sympathise with her, and blame your neglect. Beshrew me if any knight in the realm would refuse such a suit; no, not the King himself."

"Do you think, Sir John of Eveldon, that I can submit to be ruled by women and their agents? I, who never held them as ought save as beings formed for man's pleasures or his interests. My hands are free of their blood, Sir John,—my heart, if ever it was in bonds, is now emancipated; and yet, by their means, has my life of late been held in thralldom."

"Say that I may admit this dame, my lord."

"Well, be it so, and let us be quit of her. In the mean time, let the guards be tripled, and stand to your arms. I have had strange intelligence to-night; if true, there will be a dangerous commotion in less than an hour hence."

“The forces of the two kingdoms cannot disturb you here to-night, Lord Douglas.”

“See to it,—there is treason within our walls. Who are on guard?”

“The Gordons, and Lindsay of Kinlossie’s men.”

“The Gordons I can trust,—let the others be changed without delay, Sir John, and see them consorted to the camp.—Call up the Douglasses of the Dales, and let them look to themselves. Admit that petitioner in whom you are so much interested, and call me on the slightest appearance of insubordination.”

Sir John did as he was commanded, and forthwith introduced Mary Kirkmichael of Balmedie. The impatience and mortification that the Douglas manifested under this trial is not to be described, for he had promised to give her information of her royal mistress as soon as he had it in his power, and yet he neither had the heart nor the resolution, after the charges he had received of secrecy, to tell her of her mistress’ woeful fate. At Mary’s first entrance into his presence, she rushed forward and kneeled at his feet, crying, in the most passionate manner, “O, my dear lord, tell me what has become of my mistress. This suspense is dreadful. The castle is now in your hands, and all the prisoners, if such there were; but there are shocking insinuations whispered abroad. Her father and mother are on their way to visit you here; and what shall I say to them for the loss of my dear mistress? O, Lord Douglas, if you know of her, as know of her you must, tell me where I can see her. Dead or alive, let me but see her. Or tell me when I shall see her.”

“Lady, that is more than I can tell you; but if it will give you any heart’s ease, as certainly as I speak to you I saw her in this apartment to-night.”

“Blessed are the news to me, my lord! But why, then, won’t you admit me to her? Send me instantly to her presence, Lord Douglas, for I know she cannot be in any state of concealment in which my company

cannot be welcome. I implore of you to send me forthwith to her presence."

"Send you to her presence? That would be a cruel act! Dame, you and your sex have moved my spirit from its erect and heavenward position. It is like a tree bowed by the wind, and the branch of memory is stripped of its fruit. Did I say I saw the Princess Margaret in this apartment?—You must not credit it. There's an incoherence in the principle, or nature has hasty productions not accounted for. You must not believe it, lady; for till the porter opens the great gate to you your royal mistress you shall not see again."

"Are not all the gates opened or shut at your controul, my lord? You speak to me in paradoxes. I comprehend it all well enough, however. I will go in or out at any gate; only, in one word, conduct me to my mistress."

"Hell has no plague like this! No, there are no other fiends that can torment a man in this manner." He blew his bugle.—"Evelton, conduct this dame to her mistress. She is in the great stateprison, you know, the receptacle of royalty and thralldom, and let me not hear another word. I'll throw him over the battlements that next mentions the name of a woman to me."

The lady curtsied, and thanked the Douglas; and Sir John, mistaking his lord's frantic sarcasm for a serious command, hurried Mary Kirkmichael up stairs to the topmost apartment of the great tower, and ushered her in, without farther ceremony, to Lady Jane Howard and her attendant. Lady Jane rose and came running toward them; but, seeing who approached, she started, and retreated to her place. As the two ascended the narrow staircase, there was a great commotion in the square below, therefore, Sir John turned the key and hastened down again. The noise increased, and he heard there was a stern engagement, in which the name of Lady Jane was given as a rallying word on the one side. At the bottom of the stair the conspirators met him, having broken through the ranks in that direction; for the Gor-

dons flew to guard the apartments of the Douglas, not knowing what the object of the insurrection was. Sir John had just time to shut a double-barred door in front of them ; and, retreating up one storey, he shouted from the balcony to apprize the Douglas, else the Lady Jane Howard was gone. One from the ranks ran to apprize the captain, but losing himself among the intricacies of the entrance, he shouted out, " Lord Douglas ! Lord Douglas !" with the utmost vociferation. The Douglas was sitting in a deep reverie ; his drawn sword was lying on the table beside him. He heaved it above his shoulder, and running to the door of the apartment, opened it, and asked the fellow, who was still bawling in the dark, what it was ? " Tis the Lady Jane Howard !" answered he, in the same shouting voice. " Damnation on the tongue that says it !" exclaimed the Douglas in ire : " Am I never more to hear aught repeated but the names of women ? Do you know the penalty of that word, recreant ? I have sworn to throw you from the battlements, but that shall not prevent me from cleaving you to the earth in the first place. Women ! women ! Nothing but one woman after another ! I'll cut down every man that dares name one to me in that manner !" As he said these words, he rushed toward the soldier with his heavy sword heaved, but the man, flying with all expedition, escaped into the court. The Douglas followed him, and was soon in the midst of a confused engagement ; and hearing the conspirators shouting the same name, " Lady Jane Howard !" he took it as in derision, and flew on their ranks with such fury, that every man at whom he struck fell to the ground. The Gordons followed him up, crying " A Douglas !" but the conspirators were the stronger party, and would ultimately have prevailed, had not the Douglasses of the Dales arrived to change guard as formerly ordered ; and then, Kinlossie having fallen in an attempt to slay the Douglas, his party surrendered. There was a strong troop of English horsemen waiting on the other side of the Teviot with a raft, to whom she was to have been let down from the wall. But the information

lodged by the monk not only frustrated the whole of this desperate expedition of the Howards, but saved the life of Douglas. For the conspirators receiving the unexpected orders to depart to the camp, were driven to make the attempt prematurely, before their measures formerly concocted were ripe for execution.

Of all the circumstances that had hitherto occurred, the reflection upon this bewildered the mind of Douglas the most. The manner in which these secret combinations had been revealed to him filled his heart both with gratitude and amazement; and as all endeavours at reconciling them with nature or reason only increased the mystery, he resolved to shake the load from his spirits and think no more of them. That he might effect this with greater promptitude, he kept his noble kinsmen constantly about him by night as well as by day. The Redhough also returned from his visit to Mountcomyn, as did all the knights and gentlemen commoners of his party from their respective homes, mounted in their most splendid accoutrements, to greet their Sovereign, render him an account of their services, and proffer him due homage.

The arrival of these heroes added a great deal to the hilarity, tilting, and other military amusements at Roxburgh; until at last the 24th of December arrived, and with it the word that the King and Queen were on their way to Roxburgh, and approaching by the wild path of Soutra-edge. There was no bustle at the castle or city of Roxburgh, save by the city dames and maidens, for whom the approaching festival appeared a glorious epocha; for since the days of Edward Longshanks, who kept his court there for some weeks, there had not been a crowned head within the precincts of that illustrious city. Consequently, with these fair denizens, and with the merchants who attended that mart once a year from many of the towns on the Continent, it was a time of hurry and preparation; but with the warriors it was far otherwise. They were ready before; every one being alike anxious to fulfil the part entrusted to him,—so that they had



nothing ado but to mount and ride in the order assigned to them.

First of all rode Sir Ringan Redhough, supported by all the gentlemen of the middle and west marches—the Scotts, the Elliots, the Armstrongs, and the Olivers, were the most powerful of these : And next in order came the Laidlaws, the Brydens, the Glendonyngs, and the Pots. After them rode the copper-nosed Kers, the towzy Turnbolls, and the red-wudd Ridderfords ; for in those days every sept had some additional appellative or by-name. These were also mixed with a number of smaller septs, such as the Robsons, the Dicksons, the hurkle-backed Hendersons, and the rough-riding Riddels ; and they were all headed by the doughty Sir Andrew Ker of Aultonburn. Next in order rode Old Willie Wiliecoat, named also *Willie wi' the white doublet*, the ancestor of the Earls of Home,—a brave and dauntless character, who for the space of forty years had been a sight of terror to the English, with his white jacket. With him rode the gentlemen of his own name, the hard-rackle Homes, the dorty Dunbars, the strait-laced Somervilles, and the Bailies. Then came the proud Pringles, a powerful sept, mixed with a countless number of dependent families, headed by Pringle of Galashiels ; and after them the Gordons, led by Sir John of that ilk.

All these held lands of the Douglas, on conditions of certain services ; they were nevertheless all independent chiefs, these services performed ; but at this time they attended personally, with their kinsmen, to pay their dutiful respects to their Sovereign. Last of all came the Douglasses, in five separate bodies, every one headed by a lord or knight of the name ; and these made up one-third of the whole cavalcade, the Earl himself being with the last party of all, and most gallantly attended.

The two parties met at Earlston, but the royal party was nothing in point of bearing and splendour to that of the Douglasses. The King and Queen travelled each in a litter borne by two gallant steeds. These carriages were very splendid in their decorations, and constructed

in the same way as a sedan chair, and it was truly wonderful with what velocity they were borne along. They were contrived for the King's use, who had a halt, and could not travel on horseback ; and they suited the state of the roads in Scotland at that period exceedingly. Two heralds rode before his Majesty, who introduced the various chiefs to him as he passed. The whole procession then drew up in files until their Majesties passed, after which they fell all into their places, the order of precedency being then reversed, and the Douglasses next to the Sovereign. There was no time for delay, considering the season, the darkness of the night, and the shortness of the day ; so they posted on with all manner of expedition, and yet it was dark before they reached the abbey of Kelso. But all the way, by the cloisters, the bridge, and up the High-street of the city of Roxburgh, there were tiers of torches raised above one another that made it lighter than the noon-day. Never was there such a scene of splendour witnessed in that ancient and noble city ; to which the darkness of the canopy above, and the glare of torch-light below, added inconceivable grandeur. It seemed as if all the light and beauty of the universe had been confined within that narrow space, for without all was blackness impervious to the eye, but within there was nothing but brilliancy, activity, and joy. Seven score musical instruments, and as many trilling but discordant voices, yelled forth, from the one end of the street to the other, that old song beginning,

“ The King came to our town ;  
Ca' Cuddie, ca' Cuddie !  
The King came to our town,  
Low on the Border.”

The trumpets sounded before, and the bugles behind ; and the Border youths and maidens were filled with enthusiastic delight at the novelty of the spectacle. They followed with shouts to the castle gate, and then returned to talk of what they had seen, and what they should see on the morrow.

The royal party was conducted to the citadel, where every thing was in readiness for a grand entertainment; and there the Douglas delivered into the King's hands the keys of the castle of Roxburgh. His Majesty received them most graciously, and thanked him for all the cost, pains, and trouble that he had taken for the good of the realm; and added, that he came prepared in heart and mind to fulfil his engagements to him in return. There was now a manifest embarrassment on the part of the Douglas; his countenance changed, and he looked as he would have asked for the princess, or, at least, as if some one were wanting that ought to have been there; but after an agitated pause, he could only stammer out, that "he was much beholden to his Majesty, who might at all times command his utmost services without bounty or reward."

"I trust that is not as much as to say that you now decline the stipulated reward for this high service," said the King.

"Sire, I see none either for your Majesty to give, or your servant to receive," said the Douglas; and at the same time he cast a hasty and perturbed glance at the courtiers and warriors ranged around the hall. The King nodded by way of assent to his hint; and at the same time said to him, aside, "I understand you, Lord Douglas. You will explain this gallantry of yours, in keeping your sovereign's daughter in concealment from her natural guardians, in private to-morrow. But, pray, can we not see our darling to-night?"

"Alas, my liege lord and sovereign," said Douglas, passionately, "sure you jest with your servant, thus to tax him with that of which he is innocent."

The King smiled, and waving his hand jocularly, by way of intimating that he thought his affected secrecy prudence at that time, left him, and forthwith went halting up among the Borderers, to converse with them about the affairs of the English marches.

## CHAPTER XIV.

I want none of your gold, Douglas,  
 I want none of your fee,  
 But swear by the faith of thy right hand  
 That you'll love only me :  
 And I'll leave my country and my kin  
 And wend along with thee.

*May Marley.*

WHEN the mass, and a plentiful morning meal, were over next day, every one began to prepare for such exercises as the season admitted. All lingered about for some time, but seeing that no orders were likely to be given out for any procession or general rendezvous during the day, which every one had expected, some betook them to the chace, others to equestrian exercises with sword and spear, while the Homes and the Gordons joined in an excursion into English ground, keeping along the southern bank of the Tweed. The king observing them all about to disperse, reminded the Douglas that it was a high festal day ; on which the latter made a low obeisance, and remarked, that he was only now a guest in the castle of Roxburgh, and that his honoured liege sovereign was host ; that his foresters and sumptuary officers had got timeous notice, and nothing would be lacking that his majesty could desire for the entertainment of his nobles and friends. The king then caused it to be intimated, that he would be happy to meet all his lords and nobles in the banquet-hall at even-tide, where every knight, gentleman, and yeoman, were expected to attend in their several places, and all should be heartily welcome. " And now, Lord Douglas," said he, leading the way into an antichamber, " let us two retire by ourselves, and consult what is to be done next."

Lord Douglas followed, but ill prepared to answer the inquiries about to be put to him. He had received injunctions of secrecy from one who had in no instance

misled him, and to whom he had been of late indebted for the preservation of his life. But how was he now to conduct himself, or how answer his sovereign in any other way than according to the truth as it had been stated unto him? His predicament was a hard one: for he was, in the first place, ashamed of the part he had acted, of never having discovered his royal mistress while attached to his side, notwithstanding of all the evidences in confirmation of the fact, which he had never once seen till too late. And then to have suffered even his mistress' page to fall a victim to such a shameful death, without either making an effort to save him, or so much as missing him from his hand, or mentioning his loss,—were circumstances not quite consistent with the high spirit of gallantry, as well as chivalry, he had displayed at first by the perilous undertaking. Gladly would he have kept his knowledge of the transaction a secret; but then there was the monk Benjamin, who, by some supernatural agency, had been given to understand the whole scope and tenor of it; and there was dame Mary Kirkmichael knew the whole, except the degrading catastrophe, and had unfolded it all to him when it was too late. He run over all these things in his mind, and was as little, as at any previous period, prepared what part to act, when the King turned round, and, in the most anxious and earnest manner, said, “Lord Douglas, where is our daughter?”

“My liege lord and sovereign, ought not I rather to have asked that question of you?” said the Douglas; “And I would have done it at our first meeting, only that I would not trifle with your feelings in such a serious matter, perceiving that you laboured under a grievous misconception regarding my conduct. You have not, it seems, brought the princess Margaret along with you, as was expected by all my friends and followers?”

“Not by yourself, I am certain. I say, Lord Douglas, where is my daughter? I demand a categorical answer.”

“Sire, in what way am I accountable for your daughter?”

“ Lord Douglas, I hate all evasion, I request an answer as express as my question. I know my darling child, in admiration of your chivalrous enterprise, resolved, in the true spirit of this romantic age, to take some active part in the perils undertaken solely on her account ; I know her ingenuity, which was always boundless, was instrumental in performing some signal services to you ; and that finally she attached herself to your side in a disguise which she deemed would ensure her a kind and honourable protection. Thus far I know ; and, though the whole was undertaken and transacted without my knowledge, when I was absent in the Highlands, I am certain as to the truth of every circumstance ; and I am further certified that you know all this.”

“ Hear me, my liege sovereign. Admitting that your daughter, or any other king's, lord's, or commoner's daughter, should put herself into a page's raiment, and” \_\_\_\_\_

“ Silence, lord !” cried the King, furiously, interrupting him ; “ Am I to be mocked thus, and answered only with circumlocution, notwithstanding my express command to the contrary ? Answer me in one word. My lord of Douglas, where is my daughter ?”

“ Where God will, sire,” was the short and emphatic reply. The king eyed Douglas with a keen and stern regard, and the eagle eye of the latter met that of his sovereign without any abashment. But yet this look of the Douglas, unyielding as it was, manifested no daring or offensive pride : it was one rather of stern sorrow and regret ; nevertheless he would not withdraw it, but, standing erect, he looked King Robert in the face, until the eyes of the latter were gradually raised from his toward heaven. “ Almighty Father !” cried he, clasping his hands together, — “ Where, then, is it thy will that my beloved child should be ? O Douglas ! Douglas ! In the impatience and warmth of temper peculiar to my race, I was offended at your pertinacity ; but I dread it was out of respect to a father's feelings. I forgive it, now that I see you are affected ; only, in pity to this yearning bosom, relate

to me all that you know. Douglas! can you inform me what has befallen to my daughter?"

"No, my liege, I cannot. I know nothing, or at least little save from report, but the little that I have heard, and the little that I have seen, shall never be reported by my tongue."

"Then hope is extinct!" cried the King. "The scene that can draw tears from the stern eye of the Douglas, even by an after reflection, is one unmeet for a parent's ear. The will of the Almighty be done! He hath given and he hath taken away; blessed be his name! But why have the men of my household, and the friends in whom I trusted, combined against my peace?" The King said this in a querulous mood. "Why did you not tell me sooner!" cried he, turning to Douglas, his tone altering gradually from one of penitence and deep humiliation to one of high displeasure: "Why bring me on this fool's errand, when I ought to have been sitting in sackcloth and ashes, and humbling myself for the sins of my house? These must have been grievous indeed, that have drawn down such punishments on me. But the indifference of those in whom we trusted is the worst of all! O, my child! My darling child, Margaret! Never was there a parent so blest in a daughter as I was in thee! The playfulness of the lamb or the kid,—the affection of the turtle-dove, were thine. Thy breast was all enthusiasm and benevolence, and every emotion of thy soul as pure as the ray of heaven. I loved thee with more than parental affection, and, if I am bereaved of thee, I will go mourning to my grave. Is there no one in this place that can inform me of my daughter's fate? Her lady confidant, I understand, is still lingering here. Send for her instantly. Send for her confessor also, that I may confront you altogether, and ascertain the hideous and unwelcome truth. If I cannot have it here, I shall have it elsewhere, or wo be to all that have either been instrumental in her fate or lax in warding it off. Do you think, Lord of Douglas, that I can be put off with a hum and a haw, and a shake of the head, and, "it's God's will?" Do you

think I should, when I am inquiring about my own daughter, whom I held dearest of all earthly beings? No, I'll scrutinize it to a pin's point. I'll wring every syllable of the truth out of the most secret heart and the most lying tongue. I'll move heaven and hell, but I'll know every circumstance that has befallen to my daughter. Send, I say, for her foster-sister and faithful attendant, dame Mary Kirkmichael. Send also for her confessor, and for all to whom she has but once spoken since she arrived here. Why are they not sent for before this time?"

"My liege lord, restrain your impatience. They are sent for; but they will tell you nothing that can mitigate your sorrow. If it be all true that has been told to me, and that you yourself have told to me, of the disguise the Princess assumed, then is it also true that you will never again see your daughter in this state of existence."

"Ah! is it even so! Then is the flower of the realm fallen! then is the solace of my old age departed! But she is happy in the realms of blessedness. While love, joy, and truth are the delight of heaven, there will my Margaret find a place! O, that she had staid by her father's hand! Why was my jewel entrusted to the care and honour of those who care but for themselves, and who have suffered the loveliest flower of the world to be cropped in its early blossom? nay, left it to be sullied and trodden down in forgetfulness. Lord Douglas, did you see my daughter perish?"

"Now, my liege lord, can I act the man no longer. Forgive me: and may the holy Virgin, the mother of God, forgive me; for I indeed saw with these eyes that inestimable treasure cut off, without one effort on my part to save her, and without a tear wetting my cheeks."

"Then, may all the powers of darkness blast thy soul, thou unfeeling traitor! Thus! thus will I avenge me on the culprit who could give up his sovereign's daughter, and his own betrothed bride, to a violent death, and that without a tear! O thou incarnate fiend! shalt thou not bewail this adown the longest times of eternity? Darest thou not draw against an injured father and king?"



“Put up thy sword, sire. The Douglas draws not but on his equals, and thou art none of them. Thy person is sacred and thy frame debilitated. He holds thee inviolate ; but he holds thee also as nothing !”

“Thou shalt know, proud lord, that the King of Scotland fears no single arm, and that he can stand on one limb to avenge the blood of his royal house.”

“My gracious lord, this is the mere raving of a wounded spirit, and I grieve that I should have for one moment regarded it otherwise than with veneration. I had deserved to die an hundred deaths, if I had known who the dear sufferer was ; but, alas ! I knew not ought of the sex or rank of my page, who was taken prisoner in the great night engagement. But I can tell you no more, Sire ; nor is it needful ; you now know all. I am guiltless as the babe unborn of my royal mistress’s blood ; but I will never forgive myself for my negligence and want of perception ; nor do I anticipate any more happiness in this world. I have been laid under some mysterious restraints, and have suffered deeply already. And now, my gracious lord, I submit myself to your awards.”

“Alas, Lord Douglas, you are little aware of the treasure you have lost. Your loss is even greater than mine. It behoves us, therefore, to lament and bewail our misfortunes together, rather than indulge in bitter upbraidings.”

Here they were interrupted by the entrance of the Queen, who brought with her the Lady Jane Howard, dressed in a style of eastern magnificence, to introduce her to the King. The King, amid all the grief that overwhelmed his spirit, was struck with her great beauty, and paid that respect and homage to her which high birth and misfortune always command from the truly great ; and the Queen, with the newfangledness of her sex, appeared wholly attached to this captive stranger, and had brought her down at that time to intercede with the King and Lord Douglas for her liberty, loading her with commendations and kind attentions. To check the Queen’s volatility of spirits, the King informed her shortly of the

irreparable loss both of them had suffered, but the effect was manifestly not at all proportionate to the cause. She appeared indeed much moved, and had well nigh fallen into hysterics; but if her grief was not assumed, it bore strong symptoms of being so. She first railed at, and then tried to comfort the Douglas; but finally turned again to Lady Jane, (who wept bitterly, out of true sympathy, for the princess's cruel and untimely fate,) and caressed her, trying to console her in the most extravagant terms. The King, on the other hand, sobbed from his inmost soul, and bewailed his loss in terms so pathetic and moving, that the firm soul of Douglas was overcome, and he entered into all his Sovereign's feelings with the keenest sensations. It was a scene of sorrow and despair, which was rather increased than mitigated by the arrival of two more who had lately been sent for. These were the monk Benjamin and the lady Mary Kirkmichael, whom the King began anew to examine, dwelling on every circumstance that occurred during the course of his darling child's extravagant adventure with a painful anxiety. But every now and then he became heated with anger, blaming some one for the want of discernment or respect. When he came to examine the monk, who shewed great energy and acuteness of speech, he lost his temper altogether at some part of the colloquy; but the monk was not to be daunted; he repelled every invective with serenity of voice and manner, and at sundry times rather put the monarch to shame.

“Hadst thou ever an opportunity of confessing and shriving my child, previous to the time she fell into the hands of her enemies, reverend brother.”

“No, Sire, she never made confession to me, nor asked absolution at my hand.”

“And wherefore didst thou not proffer it, thou shrivelled starveling? Werè there no grants to bestow? no rich benefices to confer, for the well-being of a royal virgin's soul, that caused thee to withhold these poor alms of grace? Who was it that bestowed on thy unconscionable order all that they possess in this realm? And yet thou

wilt suffer one of their posterity to come into thy cell, to ask thy assistance, without bestowing a mass or benediction for the sake of heaven."

"Sire, it is only to the ignorant and the simple that we proffer our ghostly rites. Those who are enlightened in the truths and mysteries of religion it behoves to judge for themselves, and to themselves we leave the state of their consciences, in all ordinary cases." The monk was robed in a very wide flowing grey frock, and cowed over the eyes, while his thin and effeminate-looking beard trembled adown his breast with the fervency of his address. As he said these last words, he stretched his right hand forth toward the King, and raising the left up behind him, his robe was by that means extended and spread forth in a manner that increased the tiny monk to triple the size he was before. "And for you, King of Scotland," added he, raising his keen voice that quavered with energy, "I say such a demeanour is unseemly. Is it becoming the head and guardian of the Christian church in this realm,—him that should be a pattern to all in the lower walks of life,—thus to threat and fume beneath the chastening of his Maker? You ask me who bestowed these ample bounds on my order? I ask you in return who it was that bestowed them on thy progenitors and thee, and for what purpose? Who gave thee a kingdom, a people, and a family of thy own? Was it not he before whose altar thou hast this day kneeled, and vowed to be for him and not for another? And what he has bestowed has he not a right to require of thee again, in his own time, and in his own way?" The King bowed with submission to the truth of this bold expostulation, and the impetuous and undaunted monk went on: "It is rather thy duty, most revered monarch, to bow with deep humiliation to the righteous awards of the Almighty, for just and righteous they are, however unequal they may appear to the purblind eyes of mortal men. If he has taken a beloved child from thee, rest assured that he has only snatched her from evil to come, and translated her to a better and a happier home. Why then wilt thou

not acknowledge the justice of this dispensation, and rather speak comfort to the weaker vessels than give way to ill-timed and unkingly wrath ?

“ As for thee, noble lord, to the eyes of men thine may appear a hard lot indeed. For the love of one thou adventuredst thy life and the very existence of thy house and name. The stake was prodigious, and when thou hadst won it with great labour and perseverance, the prize was snatched from thy grasp. Thy case will to all ages appear a peculiarly hard one ; still there is this consolation in it—”

“ There is no grain of consolation in it,” said Douglas, interrupting him : “ There can be none ! The blow on my head, and my hopes of happiness, is irretrievable.”

“ Yes lord, there is,” said the monk ; “ for has it not been decreed in heaven above, that this union was never to be consummated ? Man may propose and scheme and lay out plans for futurity, but it is good for him that the fulfilment is vested in other hands than his. This then is consolation, to know that it was predestinated in the counsels of one who cannot err, that that royal maid never was to be thine ; and therefore all manner of repining is not only unmanly and unmeet, but sinful. It behoves now thy sovereign, in reward of thy faithful services, to bestow on thee another spouse with the same dowry he meant to bestow on his daughter. And it behoves you to accept of this as the gift of heaven, proffered to thee in place of the one it snatched from thy grasp. As its agent, therefore, and the promoter of peace, love, and happiness among men, I propose that King Robert bestow upon thee this noble and high born dame for thy consort. Both of you have been bereaved of those to whom you were betrothed, and it cannot fail to strike every one that this seems a fortune appointed for you two by Providence ; nor can I form in my mind the slightest objection that can be urged to it on either side. It is desirable on every account, and may be the means of promoting peace between the two sister kingdoms, wasted by warfare and blood, which every true Christian

must deplore. I propose it as a natural consequence, and a thing apparently foreordained by my master ; and give my voice for it. King and Queen of Scotland, what say you?"

" I hold the matter that this holy and enlightened brother has uttered to be consistent with truth, reason, and religion," said the King,—“and the union has my hearty and free approval. I farther promise to behave to this lady as a father to a daughter, and to bestow upon our trusty and leal cousin, the Lord Douglas, such honours, power, and distinction as are most due for the great services rendered to this realm. The match has my hearty concurrence.”

“ And mine,” said the Queen : “ I not only acquiesce in the reverend brother’s proposal, but I lay my commands on my noble kinsman the Lord Douglas to accept of this high boon of heaven.”

“ Pause my sovereign lady,” said the Douglas, “ before you proceed too far. In pity to the feelings that rend this bosom, let me hear no more of the subject at present. In pity to that lovely and angelic lady’s feelings, that must be acute as my own, I implore that you will not insist farther in this proposal. Do not wound a delicate female breast, pressed down by misfortunes.”

“ This is something like affectation, Lord Douglas,” rejoined the Queen : “ If I answer for the lady Jane’s consent, what have you then to say against this holy brother’s proposal ?”

“ Ay, if your Queen stand security for the lady’s consent, and if *I stand security for it likewise*,” said the monk—“ what have you to say against the union then ? Look at her again, lord. Is not she *a lovely and angelic* being ? Confess the truth now. For I know it to be the truth, that never since you could distinguish beauty from deformity, have your eyes beheld *so lovely and so angelic* a lady ? Pressed down by misfortunes, too ! Does that not add a triple charm to all her excellencies ? You know what has been done for her ? what has been suffered for her ? what a noble and gallant life was laid

down for her . Was such a sacrifice ever made for a lady or princess of your own country? No, never, heroic lord! Therefore bless your stars that have paved out a way for your union with such a dame and take her! take her to your longing and aching bosom."

"Moderate your fervour, holy brother," said the Douglas, "which appears to me rather to be running to unwarrantable extremes. Granting that the lady Jane Howard is perhaps unequalled in beauty and elegant accomplishments——"

"Why then do you hesitate, and make all this foolish opposition to an union which we all know you are eager to consummate?" said the monk.

"Holy brother, what unaccountable phrenzy has seized upon you," said the Douglas; "and why this waste of declamation? Let me not hear another sentence, nor another word on the subject: only suffer me to finish what I had begun. I say then, granting that the lady Jane were peerless in beauty and accomplishments, still there is an impression engraven on my heart that can never be removed, or give place to another; and there will I cherish it as sacred, till the day of my death. And, that no reckless importunity may ever be wasted on me again, here I kneel before the holy rood, which I kiss, and swear before God and his holy angels, that since I have been bereaved of the sovereign mistress of my heart and all my affections,—of her in whom all my hopes of happiness in this world were placed, and who to me was all in all of womankind—that never shall another of the sex be folded in the arms of Douglas, or call him husband! So help me thou Blessed One, and all thy holy saints and martyrs, in the performance of this vow!"

During the time of this last speech and solemn oath, the sobs of the monk Benjamin became so audible that all eyes were turned to him, for they thought that his delicate frame would burst with its emotions. And besides, he was all the while fumbling about his throat, so that they dreaded he had purposed some mortal injury to

himself. But in place of that, he had been unloosing some clasps or knots about his tunick; for with a motion quicker than thought, he flung at once his cowl, frock, and beard away,—and there stood arrayed as a royal bride the Princess Margaret of Scotland! “Journeyer of earth, where art thou now?”

Yes; there stood, in one moment, disclosed to the eyes of all present, *the princess Margaret Stuart herself*, embellished in all the ornaments of virgin royalty, and blooming in a glow of new born beauties.

“Thank heaven I have been deceived!” cried she, with great emphasis; and when she had said this, she stood up motionless by the side of lady Jane Howard, and cast her eyes on the ground. No pen can do justice to the scene. It must be left wholly to conception, after the fact is told that no one present had the slightest conception of the disguise save the Queen, who had been initiated into the princess’s project of trying the real state of the Douglas’s affections on the preceding night. It was like a scene of enchantment. But a moment ago all was sorrow and despair; now all was one burst of joyful surprise. And, to make it still more interesting, there stood the two rival beauties of Scotland and England, side by side, as if each were vying with the other for the palm to be bestowed on her native country. But to this day the connoisseurs in female beauty have never decided whether the dark falcon eyes and lofty forehead of the one, or the soft blushing roses and blue liquid eyes of other, were the most irresistible.

The King was the first to burst from the silence of surprise. He flew to his daughter’s arms with more vigour than a cripple could well be supposed to exert, kissed and embraced her, took her on his knee and wept on her neck; then striking his crutch on the floor, he scolded her most heartily for the poignant and unnecessary pain she had occasioned to him. “And the worst of it is,” added he, “that you have caused me show too much interest in an imp that has been the constant plague of my life with her whims and vagaries; an interest, and an

intensity of feeling, that I shall be ashamed of the longest day I have to live."

"Indeed but you shall not my dear lord and father, for I will now teaze another than you, and teaze him only to deeds of valour and renown; to lead your troops to certain conquest, till you are fully avenged of the oppressors of your people."

Mary Kirkmichael hung by her seymar and wept. The Douglas kneeled at her feet, and in an ecstasy took her hand and pressed it to his lips. "I do not know whether or not I shall have reason to bless heaven all my life for this singular restoration," said he; "but for the present I do it with all my heart. Tell me, thou lovely cameleon, what am I to think of this? Wert thou indeed, as was related to me, the page Colin Roy Macalpin? He with the caroty locks and the flippant tongue?"

"You need not doubt it, lord Douglas. I was. And I think during our first intimacy that I teazed you sufficiently."

"Then that delicate neck of yours, for all its taper form and lily hue is a charmed one, and rope proof; for, sure as I look on you now, I saw you swing from a beam's end on the battlement of this same tower."

"Oh! no, no, my lord! It was not I. Never trust this head again if it should suffer its neck to be noosed. *You* suffered it though; that you must confess. And I dare say, though a little sorry, felt a dead weight removed from about your neck. You suffered me to be taken prisoner out of your tent, and mured up among rude and desperate men in a dungeon. It cost me all my wits then to obtain my release. But I effected it. Swung from a beam's end, quoth he! Och! what a vulgar idea! No my lord, the page whom you saw swung was a *taylor's apprentice*, whom I hired to carry a packet up to your lordship, with my green suit of clothes, and a promise of a high place preferment, and I kept my word to the brat! An intolerable ape it was. Many better lives have been lost in this contention; few of less value—I



never deemed he was so soon to be strung, and my heart smote me for the part I had acted. But the scheme of turning monk and confessor suited me best of all : I then got my shackles of mystery riveted on you ; and, heavens ! what secrets I have found out."

The marriage of the princess Margaret of Scotland and the Earl of Douglas was not now long delayed. The border never witnessed such splendour of array, such tournaments, such feasting, and such high wassail as what accompanied the wedding. The streets of the city, and the square of the fortress, that had so lately been dyed with blood, now "ran red with Rhenish wine." And be it farther known, that Sir Charles Scott of Raeburn and Yardbire, and his horse Corbie, bore off every prize in the tilting matches, till at last no knight would enter the lists with him ; but the fair dames were all in raptures with the gallantry of his bearing, and the suavity of his manners. In short, Charlie Scott or the knight of Raeburn, was of all the gallants quite the favourite at that splendid festival in the hall, as well as the hero in the lists, in which he six times received the prize of honour from the hands of the royal bride and those of lady Jane Howard, who, at the Queen's earnest request, was made principal bride's-maid, and presiding lady at the sports.

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## CHAPTER XV.

This general doctrine of the text explained, I proceed, in what remains of this discourse, to point out to you three important and material considerations concerning the nature and character of women. These shall be, *1stly*, What she was ; *2dly*, What she is ; and, *3dly*, What she will be hereafter. And are not these, my brethren, matters of high importance ?

*Dickson's Sermons.*

ALL things of this world wear to an end, so also did this high Christmas festival within the halls and towers

of Roxburgh. The lady Jane had borne a principal share in all the sports, both in and out of doors. In the hall she was led up to every dance, and in the lists she presided as the queen of the games, distributing the prizes with her own fair hands to the Scottish heroes, and, of course, crowning her old friend Charlie with the bays at least once a day. Sir Charles was a most unassuming character, and seldom ventured on addressing his superiors first. But when once they addressed discourse to him, he never failed answering them with perfect ease and unconcern; and often, as is well known ere this time, with more volubility than he himself approved of. Once, and only once during all these days of his triumph and high honours, did the lady Jane remember him of having brought her into captivity, and of the high bribe he had refused for her liberty. "An' if it be your will, honoured lady, I wish ye wadna say ony mair about that matter," said Sir Charles; "for mony queer fidgetty kind o' feelings I hae had about it sinsyne. And if I had kend then what I ken now,—if I had kend wha I had in my arms, and what I had in my arms, I had nae borne the honours that I wear the day. My heart had some sair misgiving aince about you, when there were hard news gaun of your great jeopardy; but now that you are in sic high favour, I am e'en glad that I brought you, for troth ye hae a face and a form that does aue good to look at."

The lady Jane only sighed at this address, and looked down, thinking, without doubt, of the long and dismal *widowhood* which it would behoove her to keep for the dismal end of her betrothed knight, and then a virgin widowhood too, which was the worst of all. There was an obscure glimpse of the same sort of ideas glanced on Charlie's mind as he viewed her downcast blushing countenance; and afraid of giving birth to any painful sensations in such a lovely lady's mind, he desisted from further conversation.

The Queen was still so much interested in that lady as to endeavour by all means to procure her liberty with-

out any ransom, somewhat contrary to her son-in-law's opinion. The Queen reasoned, that she was not a lawful prisoner of war; the Douglas that she was, there being no bond of peace subsisting between the nations, and she entering Scotland with forged credentials, at least signed and sealed in favour of another and non-existing person. She applied to the King, who gave his consent, but, at the same time, professed having nothing to do in the matter. At length she teased Lord Douglas so much that he resolved to indulge her Majesty before the court took leave of him.

Meanwhile lady Douglas (lately the princess Margaret of Scotland) through the instrumentality of her tire-woman, Mary Carmichael, furthers, in the following manner, a match between Sir Charles Scott and her former rival, lady Jane Howard. One day Sir Charles, alias Muckle Charlie of Yardbire, was standing at the head of his hard-headed Olivers, his grimy Potts, and his skrae-shankit Lajdlaws, in all amounting now to 140 brave and well appointed soldiers. He had them all dressed out in their best light uniform, consisting of deer-skin jackets with the hair outside; buckskin breeches, tanned white as snow, with the hair inside; blue bonnets as broad as the rim of a lady's spinning wheel, and clouted single-soled shoes. He was training them to some evolutions for a grand parade before the King, and was himself dressed in his splendid battle array, with his plumes and tassels of gold. His bonnet was of the form of a turban, and his tall nodding plumes consisted of three fox tails, two of them dyed black, and the middle one crimson. A goodlier sight than Sir Charles at the head of his borderers, no eye of man (or woman either) ever beheld. As he stood thus giving the word of command, and brandishing the Eskdale souple by way of example, in the great square in the middle of the fortress, a little maid came suddenly to his side and touched him. Charles was extending his voice at the time, and the interruption made him start inordinately, and cut a loud syllable short in the middle. The maid made a low

courtesy, while Charles stooped forward and looked at her as a man does who has dropt a curious gem or pin on the ground, and cannot find it. "Eh? God bless us, what is't hinny? Ye war amaiist gart me start."

"My mistress requests a few minutes private conversation with you, sir knight."

"Whisht dame! speak laigh," said Sir Charles, half whispering, and looking raised-like at his warriors: "Wha's your mistress, my little bonny dow? Eh? Oh you're nodding and smirking, are you? Harkee, It's no the auld Queen, is it? Eh?"

"You will see who it is presently, gallant knight. It is a matter of the greatest import to you, as well as your captain."

"Ha! Gude faith, then it maunna be neglected. I'll be w'ye even now, lads; saunter about, but dinna quit this great four-nooked fauld till I come back again. Come along, then, my wee bonny hen chicken. Raux up an' gie me a grip o' your finger-ends. Side for side's neighbour like." So away went Sir Charles, leading his tiny conductor by the hand, and was by her introduced into one of the hundred apartments in the citadel.

"Our captain is gaun aff at the nail now," said Will Laidlaw; "Thae new honours o' his are gaun to be his ruin. He's getting far ower muckle in favour wi' the grit fo'k."

"I wonder to hear ye speak that gate," said Gideon Pott of Bilhope: "I think it be true that the country says, that ye maun aye read a Laidlaw backward. What can contribute sae muckle to advance a gentleman and his friends as to be in favour with the great?"

"I am a wee inclined to be of Laidlaw's opinion," said Peter Oliver of the Langburnsheils, (for these three were the headsmen of the three names marshalled under Sir Charles,)—"Sudden rise, sudden fa'; that was a saying o' my grandfather's, and he was very seldom in the wrong. I wadna wonder a bit to see our new knight get his head choppit off; for I think, if he haud on as he is like to do, he'll soon be ower grit wi' the Queen

Fo'k should bow to the bush they get bield frae, but take care o' lying ower near the laiggens o't. That was a saying o' my grandfather's aince when they wantit him to visit at the castle of Mountcomyn."

"There is he to the gate now," said Laidlaw, "and left his men, his bread-winners, in the very mids o' their lessons; and as sure as we saw it, some o' thae imps will hae his simple honest head into Hoy's net wi' some o' thae braw women. Wha wins at their hands will lose at naething. I never bodit ony good for my part o' the gowden cuishes and the gorget, and the three walloping tod tails. Mere eel-baits for catching herons!"

"Ay weel I wat that's little short of a billyblinder, lad!" said Peter Oliver; "I trow I may say to you as my grandfather said to the ghost, 'Ay, ay, Billy Baneless, 'an a' tales be true, yours is nae lie,' quo' he; and he was a right auldfarrant man."

But as this talk was going on among the borderers, Sir Charles, as before said, was introduced into a private chamber, where sat no less a dame than the officious and important lady of all close secrets, Mistress Mary Kirk-michael of Balmedie, who rose and made three low courtesies, and then with an affected faltering tongue and downcast look addressed Sir Charles as follows: "Most noble and gallant knight,—hem—Pardon a modest and diffident maiden, sir knight!—pink of all chivalry and hero of the Border: I say be so generous as to forgive the zeal of a blushing virgin for thus presuming to interrupt your warrior avocations.—(Sir Charles bowed.)—But, O knight—hem—there is a plot laying, or laid against your freedom. Pray may I take the liberty to ask, Are you free of any love engagement?"

"Perfectly so, madam, at—hem!—"

"At my service. Come that is so far well. You could not then possibly have any objections to a young lady of twenty-one or thereby, nobly descended, heir to seven ploughgates of land, and five half davochs, and most violently in love with you."

"I maun see her first, and hear her speak," said the

knight, "and ken what blood and what name; and whether she be Scots or English."

"Suppose that you *have* seen her and heard her speak," said the dame; "and suppose she was of Fife blood; and that her name was *lady* Mary Kirkmichael: What would you then say against her?"

"Nothing at all, madam," said Sir Charles, bowing extremely low.

"Do you then consent to accept of such a one for your lady?"

"How can I possibly tell? Let me see her."

"O Sir Charles! gallant and generous knight! do not force a young blushing virgin to disclose what she would gladly conceal. You *do* see her, Sir Charles! You *do* see her and hear her speak too. Nay, you see her kneeling at your feet, brave and generous knight! You see her *tears* and you hear her *weep*,—and what hero can withstand that? Oh Sir Charles!—

"Hout, hout, hout!" cried Sir Charles, interrupting her, and raising her gently with both hands, "Hout, hout, hout! for heaven's sake behave yoursel, and dinna flee away wi' the joke atehgither, sweet lady. Ye may be very weel, and ye are very weel for ought that I see, but troth ye ken a man maun do ae thing afore another, and a woman too. Ye deserve muckle better than the likes o' me, but I dinna incline marriage; and mair than that, I hae nae time to spare."

"Ah, Sir Charles, you should not be so cruel. You should think better of the fair sex Sir Charles! look at this face. What objections have you to it, Sir Charles?"

"The face is weel enough, but it will maybe change. The last blooming face that took me in turned out a very different article the next day. Ah, lady! Ye little ken what I hae suffered by women and witchcraft, or ye wadna bid me think weel o' them."

"Well, knight, since I cannot melt your heart I must tell you that there is a plot against your liberty, and you will be a married man before to morrow's night. It is a grand plot, and I am convinced it is made solely

to entrap you to marry an English heiress that is a captive here, who is fallen so deeply in love with you that, if she does not attain you for her lover and husband, her heart will break. She has made her case known to the Queen, and I have come by it; therefore, sir knight, as you value my life, keep this a *profound* secret. I thought it a pity not to keep you out of English connections; therefore I sent for you privily to offer you my own hand, and then you could get off on the score of engagement."

"Thank you kindly, madam."

"Well, Sir. On pretence of an appendage to the marriage of the king's favourite daughter with the greatest nobleman of the land, before the festal conclude, it is agreed on that there are to be a number of weddings beside, which are all to be richly endowed. The ladies are to choose among the heroes of the games; and this lady Jane Howard is going to make choice of you, and the law is to be framed in such a manner that there will be no evading it with honour. You have been a mortal enemy to the English; so have they to you. Had not you better then avoid the connection by a previous marriage, or an engagement say?"

"I think I'll rather take chance, with your leave, madam: Always begging your pardon, ye see. But, depend on it, I'll keep your secret, and am indebted to you for your kind intentions. I'll take chance. They winna surely force a wife on ane whether he will or no?"

"Perhaps not. One who does *not incline marriage*, and has not *time to spare* to be married, may be excused. Tell me, seriously; surely you will never think of accepting of her?"

"It is time to decide about that when aince I get the offer. I can hardly trow what ye say is true; but if the King and the Warden will hae it sae, ye ken what can a body do?"

"Ah, there it is! Cruel Sir Charles! But you know you really have not a minute's *time to spare* for marriage, and the want of *inclination* is still worse. I have told you, sir knight, and the plot will be accomplished to-

inorrow. I would you would break her heart, and absolutely refuse her, for I hate the rosy minx. But three earldoms and nine hundred thousand merks go far! Ah me! Goodbye, noble knight. Be secret for my sake."

Sir Charles returned to his men in the great square, laughing in his sleeve all the way. He spoke some to himself likewise, but it was only one short sentence, which was this: "Three earldoms and nine hundred thousand merks! Gudefaith, Corbie will be astonished."

It was reported afterwards, that this grand story of Mary's to Sir Charles was nothing at all in comparison with what she told to Lady Jane, of flames and darts, heroism, royal favour, and distinction; and finally, of endless captivity in the event of utter rejection. However that was, when the troops assembled around the fortress in the evening and the leaders in the hall, proclamations were made in every quarter, setting forth, that all the champions who had gained prizes since the commencement of the Christmas games were to meet together, and contend at the same exercises before the King, for other prizes of higher value; and, farther, that every successful candidate should have an opportunity of acquiring his mistress' hand in marriage, with rich dowries, honours, manors, and privileges, to be conferred by the King and Queen; who, at the same time, gave forth their peremptory commands, that these gallants should meet with no denial, and this on pain of forfeiting the royal favour and protection, not only towards the dame so refusing, but likewise to her parents, guardians and other relations.

Never was there a proclamation issued that made such a deray among the fair sex as this. All the beauty of the Lowlands of Scotland was assembled at this royal festival. The city of Roxburgh and the town of Kelso were full of visitors; choke full of them! There were ladies in every house beside the inmates; and generally speaking, three *at an average* for every male, whether in the city or suburbs. Yet, for all these lovely women of high rank and accomplishments, none else fled from the conse-



quences of the mandate but one alone, who dreaded a rival being preferred,—a proof how little averse the ladies of that age were to the bonds of matrimony. Such a night as that was in the city! There were running to and fro, rapping at doors, and calling of names, during the whole night. It was a terrible night for the dressmakers: for there was such a run upon them, and they had so much ado, that they got nothing done at all, except the receiving of orders which there was no time to execute.

Next morning, at eight of the day, by the abbey bell, the multitude were assembled, when the names of the heroes were all called over, when sixteen appeared. The candidates were then all taken into an apartment by themselves, and treated with viands and wines, with whatever else they required. There also they were instructed in the laws of the game. Every one was obliged to contend at every one of the exercises, and the conqueror in each was to retire into the apartment of the ladies, where they were all to be placed in a circle, lay his prize at his mistress's feet, and retire again to the sports without uttering a word.

The exercises were held on the large plain south of the Teviot, so that they were beheld by the whole multitude without any inconveniency. The flowers of the land also beheld from their apartment in the castle, although no one saw them in return, save the fortunate contenders in the field.

Sir Charles Scott won three prizes; one for tilting on horseback, one for wrestling, and one for pitching the iron bar, and he laid all the three prizes at the feet of lady Jane Howard. Two lords won each of them two prizes, and other two knights won each of them one; and each laid them at the feet of their lady.

When the sports of the day were finished, the conquerors, all crowned with laurel, and gorgeously arrayed, were conducted to the gallery where the ladies still remained; and after walking round the room to the sound of triumphal music, they were desired to kneel one by one in the order in which they had entered before, and

each to invoke his mistress's pity in his own terms. Sir Charles Scott kneeled, and, casting his eyes gravely toward the floor, said only these words; "Will the lady whom I serve take pity on her humble slave, or shall he retire from this presence ashamed and disgraced."

Woman, kind and affectionate woman, is ever more ready, to confer an obligation on our sex than accept of one. Lady Jane arose without any hesitation, put the crown on the knight's head, and, with a most winning grace, raised him up, and said, "Gallant knight, thou wert born to conquer my countrymen and me; I yield my hand and with it my heart." A friar who was present lost no time in joining their hands; he judged it best and safest to take women at their first words; and short time was it till the two were pronounced husband and wife, "and whom God hath joined let no man dare to put asunder. Amen!" said the friar, and bestowed on them an earnest blessing.—Fame expatiates largely on the greatness and goodness of this couple; how they extended their possessions, and were beloved on the Border. Their son, it is said, was the famous Sir Robert of Eskdale, the warden of the marches, from whom the families of Thirlstane, Harden, and many other opulent houses are descended.

## THE ADVENTURES

OF

## COLONEL PETER ASTON.

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THIS heroic young gentleman was bred up in the family of John, the eighth Earl of Mar, and was generally supposed to have been a near connection of that nobleman's, but whether legitimate or illegitimate, is no where affirmed. It was indeed whispered among the domestics, that he sprung from a youthful amour between Lord Aston, of Forfar, and a nearer connection of the Mar family than I choose to insinuate. Certain it is, however, that the boy was christened by the name of Peter, and retained the surname of Aston to his dying day.

Although young Aston was taught every accomplishment of the age, yet he had no settled situation, either of honour or emolument. He looked forward to the life of a soldier, but hitherto his patron had made no provision for him. He was a principal man at weapon-shaws, excelling every competitor, an excellent barge-man, a most acute marksman, and at the sword exercise, he was not surpassed by any young man in the kingdom.

His chief and benefactor, the Earl of Mar, was a man of great power and authority, but about this time he got embroiled in the troubles of the period, and suffered some grievous losses and misfortunes, owing to the malignity of some of the parliamentary leaders, and so hardly

was he pressed, that he was obliged to make his escape into Ireland, and his family was scattered among his relations.

But perceiving the dangers that were approaching him, he established young Aston in the north, as constable of the Castles of Brae-Mar and Kildrummie, and sole keeper of the Earl's immense forests in those parts. This was a grand appointment for our young hero, requiring all the energies of his mind, for the forest was then of such extent that no living sportsman knew the limits of it, and concerning which the different foresters were not at all agreed, no, not to the extent of ten and twelve miles in some directions. Throughout this boundless chase, the great red deer of the Highlands strayed in thousands, beside numberless roes, wild boars, foxes, and other meaner animals. Here also the king of game, the great cock-of-the-wood, or capperkailzie, was to be found in every copse, with grouse of every description, without number, so that it was indeed a scene of prodigious interest to Peter. Here his adventurous life began, and in this early stage of it were displayed many of the rising energies which marked his character. Here he was enabled to maintain the Earl's castles and domains against all opposition; for among the woods and fastnesses of the great Mar forest, no regular troops durst trust themselves; and here our young hero, with his hardy Farquharsons and Finlays, kept all the straggling bands of the parliament forces at a due distance.

But Peter had other enemies whom he found it harder to deal with. These were bands of deer-stalkers or poachers, who established themselves on the skirts of the forest, and subsisted on its plunder. The deer and the game were so abundant, that hordes of sundry neighbouring clans made incursions into its richest glens occasionally, and made spoil of the Earl's deer. Over these men, our hero began at once to keep a jealous eye, and soon forced them to escape from his limits, for he could not endure to see the best of the deer slaughtered by men who did not even acknowledge vassalage to his chief. He took several

of these marauders prisoners, chastised others, and by dint of watching, threatening, and fearless demeanour, he soon cleared the forest ; so that he proved a most unwelcome guest to all the poachers and deer-stalkers of that country ; while his pursuits of and engagements with them contributed greatly to the romantic excitement of his employment, and afforded numerous opportunities for exhibiting that personal prowess for which he was becoming every day more renowned.

Among all those bands of depredators, the worst and most obstinate was one Nicol Grant. This resolute outlaw had established himself and a body of his kinsmen in a little solitary dell, not far from the side of Loch-Bily, where the remains of their hamlet is still visible, though nearly covered with the green sward. It was a perilous situation for Peter and his men ; for it was actually upon the chief of the Grants' property, although indented into that of Glen-Gairn, one of the richest glens of the Mar forest : and there Nicol Grant persisted in remaining, and held all the adherents of the Earl of Mar at defiance.

Against this man there were grievous complaints lodged, from the first commencement of Peter's command, and instead of dying away under the new rigours of our determined keeper, the complaints of his under-foresters became still more loud ; for though they knew that he harried their forest, they could not catch him, his art of concealment greatly surpassing their skill in discovery. They often caught his warders, placed on hills to give him various warnings, but these they could not even punish with any show of justice, as they were all unarmed intentionally, their situations being so much exposed.

Peter at last determined one day, all of a sudden, that he would step into this highland reaver's den, and expostulate with him on the baseness and impolicy of his conduct, and try to convince him of these, and persuade him to keep his own laird's bounds. Expostulate indeed ! never was there a man less likely to succeed in expostulation than Mr Constable Aston, for he was violently

passionate when he conceived himself wronged, and though himself swayed by principles of the most perfect justice and integrity, had no patience with any one whom he deemed in the wrong. Moreover, having been brought up at Alloa Castle, on the Forth, he understood the Gaelic so imperfectly, that he frequently took it up in a sense the very reverse of what it was, which ruined all chance of expostulation. His attendant, Farquhar, however, understood both languages middling well, so that there he was not at so great a loss.

Well, it so chanced that Peter and this one attendant was hunting or watching one day upon the eastern division of the great mountain Ben-Aoon, when Farquhar pointed out to him the smoke issuing from the abode of Nicol Grant and his associates. The smoke appeared so nigh, that all at once the fancy struck Peter of going directly there and hearing what this obstinate freebooter had to say for himself; and notwithstanding of all that Farquhar could say, he persisted in his resolution.

The way was longer than he expected, and on coming nigh the hamlet, almost impervious, so that had it not been for the smoke, the two could not have found it; but the smoke was like the smoke of a great camp, or a city on a small scale, and as they approached, a savoury scent of the well-known venison came temptingly over the senses of our two hungry invaders. But though that gave Farquhar a strong desire to partake of the viands, he continued to expostulate with his master on the madness and danger of this visit, but all to no purpose.

If ever there existed a man who really knew not what fear was, as far as regarded beings of flesh and blood, it was Peter Aston, and without the least hesitation, in he went, followed by his attendant, to the largest house of the encampment, from whence the greatest quantity of smoke issued, and from which likewise, the savoury perfume seemed to proceed. At his very first step within the threshold, (O woful sight to Peter's eyes!) he perceived hundreds, if not thousands of deer hams, all hanging drying in the smoke, tier above tier innumerable. The

house being something like a large highland barn, with its walls made of stake-and-rise, there was in the other end a kilnful of malt drying, for ale and whiskey to these bold marauders. It was this which had produced the great column of smoke, by which the keeper and his man had been directed through the intricacies of rock and forest to this singularly sequestered abode. There was, moreover, a large fire in the middle of this rude edifice, on which hung an enormous kettle simmering full of a venison stew, and two coarse-looking highland women kept constantly stirring and pouching it up.

All this was far too much for the patience of Peter. The moment he cast his eyes to the countless number of deer hams, the calm-expostulation part of his errand vanished. He and his attendant were both well armed with long firelocks, bows, arrows, and broad swords ; and stepping up resolutely into the middle of this singular store-house and refectory, he said fiercely, " By the faith of my body, but you gentlemen deer-stalkers seem to live well here, and rather to know too well where the Earl of Mar's best bucks graze."

There were four or five ragged and sulky looking fellows sitting on the floor in a ring, employed on something, but as they understood no English, they made no answer ; but one of the women at the kettle, called out " Eon," and straight a tall hard-featured fellow came from another apartment, who, with a bow that would not have disgraced a nobleman, welcomed the stranger Sassenach to his friend's humble abode.

" Why I was saying, sir," said Peter, " that you seem to live well here, and rather to know too well where the Earl of Mar's best bucks graze ; what say you to that ?"

" Why sir," said the fellow, " she just pe saying tat her fare pe very mooch tependin on her creat induster. She pe often tear pought and far sought. But such as she pe, te stranger always welcome to his share."

" Answer me this one civil question, sir," said Peter, in a voice of thunder, " where did you get all those deer

hams, and on whose land and in what district did you obtain them all. You can answer me, can't you?"

"Yes," said the highlander, drawing himself up. "To one who can pe knowing a steir's ham from that of a buck, and a highland shentlemans from a mere gilly she could pe answering te questions."

Peter, without once thinking of his perilous situation among a horde that had sworn his death, stepped fiercely up, and seized the man by the collar, "I'll have no shuffling, sir," said he. "I am the Earl of Mar's castellan and forester, and I demand an explicit answer, whether, as has been reported to me, those deer have been stolen from his forest."

The man, not doubting that Peter had a strong and overpowering party without, answered him softly, by assuring him that he was not master there, but that he might depend on being satisfactorily answered by his leader and kinsman.

By this time one had run and apprized Nicol Grant of the arrival of a youthful Sassenach, who was assuming unaccountable airs and authority among his kinsmen. Nicol belted on his sword, and hasted into his rude hall, and there perceived a stately youth, of not more than nineteen years of age, collaring his kinsman, the redoubted John of Larg, his greatest hero and right hand man, a well-tried warrior, whom he had never known to flinch. The scene was so ludicrous that the captain of that Katheran band could not help smiling, and going up, he tapped Peter on the shoulder, addressing him in the most diabolical English; something as follows:—"Fwat pe te mhatte, prave poy? Fwat haif my cousin Larg peen tooing or saying?"

"What?" said Peter:—he said no more but that one short monosyllable, yet he expressed a great deal, for what from his look and that one word, he set all present into a roar of laughter, except Nicol.

"Pray fwat should pe your grotharh, tat is your call upon me after?" said the latter.

"What?" said Peter, louder than before, for he really



did not understand what Grant said, and to four or five violent speeches of the highlander, this word was the only answer, still louder and louder. Both were getting into a rage, when Farquhar interposed, desiring each of them to speak in his own mother tongue, and he would interpret between them. By this means Farquhar hoped to soften both answers, and for a short while effected a delay of the breaking out of the quarrel, but to the old question by Peter, "where he destroyed all those deer?" Grant made a speech, which Farquhar being obliged to interpret, put an end to all peaceable colloquy. He said he lived upon his chief's own land, and took the deer where he could get them, and defied the Earl of Mar and all his adherents to prove him a thief or dishonourable man. That he had as good blood in his veins as that great chief had or any belonging to him, and that he set him and his whole clan at defiance.

"Sir, to be short with you," said Peter, "since I find you such a determined and incorrigible villain, I give you this warning, that if I find you or any one of your gang henceforth in the Earl of Mar's forest, I'll shoot you like wild dogs or wolves. Remember, you are forewarned."

"Kill the Sassenach, kill him," shouted a number of voices at once, and half a dozen of naked swords were presented to Aston's breast at once. "No, no, hold off!" cried Nicol, "since he has dared to beard the old fox in his den, I'll show him how little I regard his prowess, or the power of those who sent him. Young gentleman, are you willing to fight me for the right of shooting in Mar forest?"

"By the faith of my body, and that I am," said Peter, pulling out his sword. "But you dare not, sir. You dare not, for the soul that is in your body, fight me single handed."

"May te teal mon take tat soul ten!" exclaimed Grant. "Hurrah! all hands aloof! It shall never pe said tat Nicol Craunt took odds akainst a Sassenach, far less a stripe of a fhoolish poy. Come on, praif mhaister, you shall never chase a Craunt from the Prae-Mhar forest akhain."

The two went joyfully out to the combat, and were followed by the whole hamlet, men, women, and children, an amazing number, and among the rest, not fewer than twenty-five armed hunters were among the crowd. Farquhar besought a word of his master, and tried to persuade him to come to some accommodation for the present, for as it was, in whatever way the combat terminated, they were both dead men. But his remonstrances were vain. Peter never could be brought to perceive danger. There was a deadly rancour in each heart, and they took the field against each other with the most determined inveteracy.

They fought with swords and bucklers, at which it was supposed each of them believed himself unmatched. But they had not crossed swords for five minutes, till Peter discovered that Grant was no match for him. The latter fought with the violence of a game-cock, and he being more than double the age of Peter, soon began to lose his breath. Peter let him toil and fume on, defending himself with the greatest ease, till at last he chose an opportunity of putting in practice a notable quirk in the sword exercise, that he had learned from M'Dowell, his master, at Alloa castle. He struck Grant's elbow with the knob of his buckler, so as to take the whole power out of his arm, and the next moment twirled his sword from his hand, making it fly to a great distance, and without the loss of an instant, while the Katheran chief was in this dilemma, Aston tripped him up, and set his foot upon his breast, waving his sword above his throat.

It was not to be borne by the Grants, as he might easily have supposed. A loud cry and a general rush forward was the consequence, and in one moment Peter Aston was overpowered and bound with cords, his hands behind his back and his feet with many folds. Why they did not slay him on the instant, as Nicol Grant and his gang had sworn his death many a time, is not easy to be accounted for, but there can be no doubt that some selfish motive predominated.

He was carried to a sort of dark hovel of an outhouse,

thrown upon the floor, and a single armed guard placed at the door. He requested to have his servant Farquhar to attend him, but the savages only laughed at him, spoke in Gaelic, and left him. Thus was our hero vanquished by numbers, but still nothing dismayed. His mind seems to have been incapable of terror from man; but hunger came in its place, which was worse to bear, and now began to tease him most unmercifully, nor had he any means of repelling that most troublesome guest, and he began to dread that the savages were going to starve him to death, and his blood ran chill at the thought.

He fell asleep, but it was a troubled sleep, for he had dreams of eating at the Earl of Mar's table, but was ashamed because his appetite was insatiable. He ate up whole quarters of vension, and began to attack the beef with unimaginable glee; but still the desire increased with repletion, and there was no end either of the feast or the most intolerant rapacity. While in the very height of this singular enjoyment, he imagined that he saw a lovely female figure coming in to partake of his viands. He tried to speak and welcome her, but he could not. He tried to stretch out his arms and embrace her, but he could not. She was, however, no vision, for the lovely being loosed the cords from his hands, and as he came to himself by degrees he heard her whispering—"Be not afraid, gallant stranger; I have come at the risk of my life to set you free. I saw how fearlessly and nobly you acquitted yourself to-day, and though you vanquished my own father, I admired you, for we never knew of his being vanquished before. And besides there is a party on the way which will be here shortly, and these men are to carry you into your own bounds and drown or strangle you; for it is a rule with my father that no man, however great his offence, shall be put down here. Knowing all this, and hearing the orders given, I thought it hard that so gallant a youth and a stranger should be cut off in this manner, for doing that which he conceived to be his duty. I have therefore taken my life in my hand, and come to set you at liberty, provided you give

me your sacred troth, that you will spare this little community, that by the troubles of the times have been driven to the hard circumstances in which you find us. But in particular you are to promise me, if I now give you your life, which your rashness has forfeited, that you are never to shed the blood of my parent, but to ward off his vengeance in the best way you may; for well I know he never will forgive the stain which you have this day cast on his honour by vanquishing him, and setting your foot on his breast at his own threshold, and in the midst of his dependants. Now, before I set you free, do you promise me this?"

Peter was deeply affected by the interest taken in his fortune by this lovely young female, the daughter of his mortal enemy; yea, affected in a way which he had never before experienced. "I would have granted anything at your request, my comely maiden, without any conditions," said Peter; "but as it is *your* request, it is granted. Henceforth Nicol Grant's life shall be held precious in my sight, as if it were the life of my own parent; and as a pledge of my troth, now that my hands are free, I will halve this bonnet-piece of gold between us, and let the sight of your half or mine always remain a memorial between us and a witness of this vow." And then, after a good deal of sawing, cutting, and nibbling, he parted the gold coin between them.

"I am satisfied and happy, brave youth," said the maiden; "and to tell the truth, I had resolved to set you at liberty, and to trust to your generosity and your honour, whether you had promised or not; but your promise and your pledge makes me happy; for well I know my father will never forgive you, but will thirst for your blood. But the times are perilous, and you and my father may soon come into the battle-field together, or against each other; and should you once cover his head on such a day, he then might be all your own; and what a guardian I should then have for my brave old and impetuous parent!"

"Lady, who are you, that I may know you again?"

said Peter ; “ for such sentiment and high and generous feeling in such a place as this, appears to me as an anomaly in human nature.”

“ I am Marsali Grant,” said she ; “ the sole child and darling of the man whom you this day vanquished in fight. But there is no time for more parley ; your executioners will presently be here. There is something both to eat and drink, but for Heaven’s sake escape to the solitudes and fastnesses of the hills before partaking of either. Remember you are unarmed, for I durst not bring your armour for fear of a discovery. Haste and make your escape by the western branch of the glen, and avoid the eastern as you would the door of death. Make your way through this divot roof, for though your guard is asleep, which I effected, yet I dare not trust you in his sight. My father and his men are all absent on some expedition. Not another word. God speed you.”

“ But where is Farquhar ?” said he ; “ What has become of my faithful Farquhar ?” Marsali shook her head, and again charged him to look to his own safety ; so, after giving her an affectionate embrace, and shedding a tear of gratitude or love, we shall not decide which, on her cheek, our hero took his leave, made his way by the western branch of the glen, as the maid had directed him, and on the following morning reached the castle of Braemar in safety.

Peter had the day before summoned the Earl’s men of the western glens together, to watch the motions of some of the marching divisions of the enemy, and found them assembled at the castle on his return. To them he related his adventure precisely as it had happened, save that he did not mention his promise to Marsali. The men insisted on being led against that nest of freebooters, to cut them off root and branch, but Peter refused, on which the men of Mar looked at one another, not being able to divine the cause of Peter’s backwardness, it being so much the reverse of his general disposition.

Peter really was convinced in his own mind that Nicol

Grant only took that mode of releasing him, to give it a little more effect—to make a deeper impression on his mind, and extract a promise from him which Grant could not otherwise have obtained. Our hero was wrong, as will appear in the sequel : but, at all events, he would not have injured a hair of one of that tribe's head, and all for the sake of their lovely young mistress.

The confusion in the south of Scotland became dreadful about this period. New tidings arrived at Brae-Mar every day, of new revolutions and counter-movements of the different armies. Certain word at length arrived, that the Earl of Mar had been compelled to fly the country, and that his son Lord John, who commanded in Stirlingshire, had been so hard pressed by Argyle and his party, that he had been obliged to abscond along with a few principal friends. It was rumoured that they had escaped to Argyleshire, and joined Montrose, who was then laying waste the devoted Campbells. But young Aston could not help wondering why his lord should not have retired to his highland dominions, where the force continued stedfast, strong and unbroken ; but it was to save those dominions from ravage that both noblemen escaped in a different direction.

A messenger at length arrived from Ireland, who brought a confirmation of Peter's investiture in the chief command of all the Earl's people in those parts. His instructions were to keep his men prepared, but to temporise as long as possible, without showing a decided hostility to any party ; but if fairly forced to take a part, then to join his troops to those of the king, and stand or fall with the royal cause. The Earl's people were thus left in a ticklish position, being surrounded on all sides by the whig or parliamentary forces, excepting indeed their powerful neighbours the Gordons of Strath-Bogie and Aboyne. They had marshalled again and again in great force, but had not yet finally declared themselves ; the Marquess of Huntly and his son being both in prison in Edinburgh Castle, so that they were as much at a loss how to proceed, deprived of their leaders, as the Earl of

Mar's people were. Peter, now styled Captain Aston, continued to act in the most fearless and independant manner. He held the strong castle of Kildrummie Cogarth and Brae-Mar, and showed a resolution of repelling force by force on the first opportunity.

It is well known, that in the event of any national commotion in Scotland, it has always been the prevailing sin of the clans, in the first place, to wreak their vengeance on their next neighbours, and this disposition shewed itself at that time over all the north. And in particular as relates to our narrative, the Grants deeming theirs the prevailing party, became as intolerant as any clan of them all; but many and severe were the chastisements they received from Captain Aston, who missed no opportunity of inflicting on them the most rigorous retaliation. They could live no longer with him, and determined on having him cut off, cost what it would. Nicol Grant, of Glen Bilg, and his desperate gang of deer-stalkers were applied to as the most able and likely to effect this laudable work; and they undertook it with avidity, swearing over the sword to shed his blood, or forego the name and habitation of their fathers.

On the morning after Peter's escape from the hands of these ruffians, Grant's party of executioners arrived at the encampment about the break of day, in order to carry off the prisoner, to hang or drown him in his own bounds. They found the armed highlander walking backward and forward before the door, but on entering the bothy there were the bonds lying, and the prisoner gone through a hole in the roof. The highlander swore to them that he had never for a moment quitted, but that he once thought he found the smell of the devil coming from the cottage, and heard him saying to the prisoner, that the Grants might rue the day that he was born. The Grants were astonished, and believing all this, they looked on their very existence as a tribe to depend on the death of this young man, and tried every means of accomplishing their purpose. Nicol Grant burst into the heart of the forest with a stronger party than he had hitherto headed,

and defeating a party of Mar's men on the hill above Invercauld, he pursued them with such eagerness, thinking they were led by the captain, that he lost all thought of his danger. The man whom he took for Captain Aston perceived that he was singled out by Grant, and fled toward a ford in the linn of Glen-quais, where one only can step at a time, and where one good fellow might guard the ford against fifty. Finlay Bawn leaped the gully, and then turned to fight the Katheran chief, but Grant heaved a stone with such deadly aim, that Finlay's feet being entangled among the rocks, it knocked him down, or some way caused him to fall, on which old Grant sprang over the gully, and cut the unfortunate youth down as he was trying to gain his feet, and with many curses and oaths began a-hacking off his head. He was that moment saluted by a shower of huge stones, which laid him prostrate at once, and he was seized and bound by three of the Farquharsons.

As they were binding him, he growled a hideous laugh, and said, "Ay, you cravens, do your worst, now I have kept my oath. I have avenged the wrongs of my clan, and my own disgrace, and removed the spell of a cursed enchanter. I am satisfied."

"Is it the death of our young friend, Finlay Bawn, that is to effect all this?" said the men.

"Finlay Bawn!" exclaimed the savage, in a tone of agony: "and is it only Finlay Bawn, whose death I have effected with the loss of my own life? Bramble! brandling! would that I were at liberty to hew you into a thousand pieces for thus disappointing me of my just and noble revenge."

"What a pity we have not a rope," said one of his captors, "that we might hang him over the first tree."

"What need have we of a rope," said another. "Give me a fair stroke at the monster, and I'll engage to cut off his head as accurately as it had never been on."

"I defy you," said Grant; "now try your hand at it."



“O, that is a stale joke,” said the first; “you want to fall by a quick and honourable death, but you shall hang like a dog. Off to the castle with him, that our captain may have the satisfaction of hanging him with his own hand.”

Nicol Grant was then hauled away, with his hands bound behind his back, to the castle of Brae-Mar, and flung into the dungeon until the arrival of the Captain, who was not expected till the evening. In the mean time, Finlay Bawn’s father arrived at the castle, and insisted on inflicting vengeance on the slayer of his son, with his own hand. He being a man of some note among the Earl’s people, none of the assembled vassals opposed the motion, and Grant being delivered up to the irritated father of a beloved son, a scene of great outrage ensued. Old Finlay put a rope about the culprit’s neck, and began a-dragging him up to the gallows that stood at the cross of the village of Castleton, about a quarter of a mile from the castle. Grant was so dogged and sulky that he would neither lead nor trail, and a few boors, with braying laughter, were beating him on with sticks like an ox. Grant cursed them; tried to kick them; and said again and again, “Were your lord here, as he is in Ireland, the best of you durst not use me thus.”

At this critical juncture, Captain Aston arrived from Kildrummie, and galloping up the green beheld his sworn enemy Nicol Grant led like a bullock by a long rope, and a parcel of clowns threshing him on with stones. He rode into the middle of them, knocking sundry of them down with his sheathed sword. “Who dares to lead a prisoner to execution here without my orders?” cried he. “I claim this prisoner as mine to try or to pardon; for though he slew your son in a forest broil, he slew him for me, and therefore the revenge is mine.”

“What, sir?” cried old Finlay, “refuse me due vengeance on this old outlaw for the death of my brave son? I’ll have it, sir!”

“Hold your peace,” cried Aston. “I am captain

here, until either the Earl or Lord John return, and I'll have no vassal voice to countermand my orders. I am sorry for the loss of the brave young man, but the stroke, as I understand, was meant for my head, not his; therefore, the prisoner is mine."

So saying, he alighted and loosed the rope from the neck of Nicol Grant with his own hands, unscrewing also the chain that held his hands together.

Old Grant gnashed his teeth and bit his lip in astonishment, but said not a word. He was conducted back, and again thrown into the dungeon of the castle, without being offered either meat or drink. "Lie there, and eat the flesh from off your bones, old murderous vagabond," said Aston; "I carry this key to the wars with me, and if I never return your cursed bones shall never be buried."

Nicol Grant laid him down on his dungeon floor, and after exhausting his curses on Pender-tana-mor, fairly made up his mind to suffer death by hunger and thirst without complaint, and without a cry being heard from the dungeon.

As he was lying half asleep, grinning with despair, he thought he heard the outer door of the castle slowly unlocked; then a few steps as approaching down the stone stair, and finally the dungeon door was unlocked, and in stepped Captain Aston. He carried armour, and old Grant perceived at once that he was to be murdered in private and in cold blood, and grinned a disdainful smile in the face of his hated enemy.

"You have always judged too hard of me Grant," said he. "I was never your personal enemy, nor the enemy of your clan, but only the enemy of injustice and robbery; and if you and your adherents will desist from robbing my lord and master's forests, I will unite in friendship with you for ever. It is not now a time for loyal subjects to be quarrelling among themselves and cutting each other's throats."

"Young squire, I want no directions from you where I and my men are to hunt or not to hunt. I will hunt

where I please over all Scotland," said Grant; "and you or the Earl of Mar hinder me at your peril."

"What folly to speak to me in that manner, Grant," said Captain Aston, "considering that you are in my power, and sensible as you must be that I have spared you and your nest of forest robbers merely that I might not make enemies of my powerful neighbours the Grants; hoping that we shall yet combine in the same noble cause. Nor, for all your malice, shall a chieftain of the Grants be put down by me. I desire to be your friend and your companion in arms, for I know you for a brave man. Therefore, though I dare not tell my men, but must pretend I leave you here to die of hunger and thirst, here is both meat and drink for you in abundance; but haste and escape to the fastnesses of the mountains before partaking of either, for I cannot answer one minute for your life while you are in the environs of this castle."

"Boy! stripling! low-life Sassenach!" exclaimed Nicol. "Do you think I would take my life in a present from you? No, caitiff, I would rather die a thousand deaths!"

"Well, if you put hand to your own life, that is no act of mine," said Aston, gaily; "but I hope better things of you, and yet to fight side by side with you." So saying, he thrust him out of the castle, loaden with venison, bread, and wine, and bolted him out.

Grant felt himself degraded below the standard of humanity. Never was there a more wretched and miserable being. He felt himself doubly—trebly conquered; and his savage nature recoiling from the contemplation, he cherished nothing but the most deadly revenge.

He returned home, to the great joy of his clan, but he had not the face to tell them of his degradation; but his darling Marsali wormed it out of him, partly in his sleep and partly when awake. But by day his whole conversation with his associates was how to accomplish the death of Aston. He was represented as a necromancer, a limb of Satan, and a scourge of God on the Grants; and one on whose death the welfare and very existence

of the clan depended. His death was again sworn to over the sword, and shortly after a fit opportunity offered.

A watcher came one night, and informed Nicol Grant that he had discovered a nightly retreat of Pender-Mor's, near the head of the Gairn, on the very confines of their bounds ; and that, what with the different lights and bugle blasts that he used, the Grants could not stir a foot but they were surprised ; and that he had dodged them with a few chosen men for three successive nights, and would likely remain till discovered or expelled.

This was joyful news for old Nicol, and all was bustle among the Grants of Glen-Bilg, to secure the success of their great enterprise. The scouts kept all day coming and going, and meeting one another, and at night it was ascertained that the dreaded party was still there, as the smoke was seen ascending from the bothy, although scarcely discernible through the trees that surrounded the rock, at the foot of which the shieling was placed. They then set their guard, so as it was impossible the foe could escape.

But none of their consultations were concealed from Marsali ; she was one of themselves, and heard every thing. No one ever suspected her of having set their great foe at liberty, the devil having been the only person suspected there. None, however, knew of her lover's engagement to her, and no one but herself knew of the generous relief he had afforded to her indomitable parent. She therefore resolved to save the young and generous hero's life still, if practicable, by sending a private message to him. But how to get that private message to him,—there lay the difficulty ! However, love will accomplish much. She knew the sceue well, though only from hourly description, and she imagined she could direct one to it. But she had as yet no confidant whom she could trust, and such an interest in the clan's greatest tormentor was a dangerous secret to impart.

Captain Aston and six of his bravest followers had again met by appointment at their wild bothy that even-

ing. The place was on the very boundary of the Grant's land, and fixed on as a check to them as well as for its singular safety; for the bothy could only be approached by one man at a time, and that with difficulty. And, moreover, the inmates had a retreat up from behind on a ladder into a concealed cave in a tremendous rock, and when the ladder was pulled up, the men who took shelter there were safe, though assailed by a thousand foes.

Peter (or rather Captain Aston) and his men were sitting in the bothy at the foot of the rock, cooking a hideful of the finest venison, with other game mixed, and always now and then tasting the delicious liquor, to ascertain if it was ready for their grand repast, when all at once a watcher in a loud whisper, gave the word, "A Grant! a Grant!" "By the blessed rood, he dies then, if he were their chief," cried the Captain, and fitting an arrow to his bow, and waiting a little space until the intruder came to the highest part of the path, his form was wholly exposed between the captain's eye and the sky, and was thus rendered a complete butt for an archer's eye. The intruder was a slender youth, and hasting towards them with eager speed. Peter took a hasty aim, the bowstring twanged, the shaft sped, and pierced the stranger's lightsome form, who with a loud cry fell to the ground. The captain was first at him, and found a comely youth lying bleeding on the height, with a deep wound in his shoulder, from which he had just pulled the barbed arrow. The youth wept bitterly, and blamed the captain for shooting a friend who came on a message of life and death. The other retaliated the blame on the wounded youth, for his temerity in coming without the pass-word.

"I want a single word with you in private, sir, before I die," said the youth.

"Die!" exclaimed the captain, "why it is a mere scratch, it would not cause a girl to lose an hour's sleep. Retire, my friends, to your supper, till I hear what this stripling has to communicate." The men did so, when the youth instantly produced the token which our hero

had given to Marsali Grant, and at the same time charged him to follow where he should lead the way, else in half an hour he and his party would all be dead men.

“There you are mistaken, my brave boy,” said Peter; “for here I and my party are safe, and defy all the Grants of Strath-Aven.”

“Are you not bound in honour to answer this token, sir.” Peter bowed, and acknowledged the obligation. “Then,” continued the youth, “you must come and speak with my young mistress without, for she has something of the utmost importance to communicate to you.”

Peter did not hesitate a moment in complying with his beauteous deliverer’s injunctions. He ran to his men, desiring them to take shelter in the cave for the night, and draw up the ladder, and returned to his young ragged and weeping conductor. “O sir,” said he, “if you know of any path out of this entanglement in any direction, for heaven’s sake lead on, for my master’s men surround this place in great force, and will immediately be upon us; and if I guess aright, it was to save your life that I was sent. What shall we do? For I am wounded and cannot fly with you, and if I am taken, my life is the forfeit.”

“Fear not, and follow me,” said the captain; and taking the youth by the hand, he pulled him along on the narrow path by which he had come. They had not proceeded far, ere they heard the rush of the Grants approaching, on which they were obliged to creep into the thicket on one side, and squat themselves to the earth. The poor timorous youth clung to the captain’s bosom, and sobbed and wept; for he heard their whispered vengeance in his native tongue, and their rejoicings that they had their greatest enemy once more in the toil. When they were all gone by, the two arose and pursued another path in deep silence, and it was not long ere they gained the height, and perceived the blue waters of Loch-Bily below them, whose waves glittered bright in the beams of the rising moon.

Here the captain dressed the youth’s shoulder, which

had still continued to bleed a little and rendered him somewhat faint: but Peter, binding it hard up with some herbs, assured him that it was nothing, and the two proceeded on in silence, the youth taking the lead. In an amazing short time, our hero found himself in the middle of the encampment of the Grants; and the sly youth who had led him by such a near route, seemed to enjoy his consternation greatly, when he saw where he was and heard what he heard. This was a wild and terrible anthem, proceeding from the large rude hall in which he had been formerly. The song seemed a battle strain, ending with a coronach for the dead. When it was ended, the youth whispered him to walk deliberately in, and use his own discretion until he went and apprized his young mistress of his arrival. The mention of her name thrilled him to the heart, and without thinking of ought else, he walked boldly and slowly into the hall amid the astonished group. They were all females, some old and some young; but there was one powerful old dragon among them, whom Peter set down in his mind at once as a witch. One wild exclamation in Gaelic followed another, but these our hero did not fully comprehend, neither did they his salutations; but it was manifest that their astonishment was extreme. The superstition of that age was such as cannot now be comprehended. People lived and breathed in a world of spirits, witches, warlocks, and necromancers of all descriptions, so that it was amazing how they escaped a day with life and reason. Peter believed in them all; and as for the Grants of the glen, they had from the beginning set him down as a demi-devil—a sort of changeling from the spiritual to the human nature; and there was a prophecy among them which that same old hag continued oft to repeat. It was in Gaelic, but bore that “when Peter, the great son of Satan, should fall, their house should fall with him,”—thus regarding him the evil angel of their race. His wonderful escape from them formerly, his surprising feats of arms, and most of all, his present appearance in the midst of them, as they were singing his death-song, impressed

them with the firm belief that he was indeed a superhuman being. They sent off one message after another for their young mistress, but she could not be found, and no one knew where she was. But in a short time Marsali herself stepped in, arrayed in the brilliant tartan of the clan, and really, in such a scene, appeared like the guardian divinity of the wilderness. There was such a combination of beauty, simplicity and elegance, both in her appearance and deportment, that Captain Aston, brave and resolute as he was, instantly felt that he was only a secondary and subordinate person there.

The guileful creature instantly kneeled before him, and prayed him—in Gaelic, that all the women might thoroughly understand her—that for her sake he would restrain his soldiers, by whom they were surrounded, from ravaging and destroying a parcel of poor helpless women who had been left without a guard.

“Madam, you know that I do not understand you,” said he. “But you also know that I cannot refuse anything to you, if you will speak in a language with which I am acquainted.”

She then thanked him again in Gaelic for his boundless kindness and generosity in thus always repaying them good for evil. And the women hearing this, conceiving of course that their adored mistress had gained a great victory, and saved all their lives, danced for joy around them, and blessed them both in a verse of sacred song.

Marsali led her lover into her own chamber, and addressed him in the language to which he was accustomed; and that with a frankness and affection which greatly endeared the maiden to his fond heart, unpractised as it was to any of the blandishments of love or flattery. He gazed and gazed at her, his eyes beaming with delight, and then said, “I am afraid of you, Marsali. And well I may, for I find that I am your captive—that you can make me do what you please; and aware as I am of that, where is my security for not doing every day something that is wrong.”



“ O, noble sir, can you not trust my generosity and affection. Let me clasp your knees, and kiss them, for your unmerited kindness in rescuing my infatuated father from an instant and ignominious death.”

“ And where is my recompense, Marsali? When I thought to have secured him as my friend and companion in arms for ever, you see how I am rewarded. Parent as he is yours, Nicol Grant has the nature of a demon.”

“ Say not so, noble sir, but listen to me. It grieves my heart to find that my father, in place of being won by your kindness, is more inveterate against you than ever. He feels that he is not only conquered in warrior prowess but in generosity, and feels every moment of his life as if he were writhing beneath your foot. His yearning for vengeance is altogether insupportable; and I have now no other resource but to endeavour your separation for ever; and it was to effect this that I sent for you from the forest of Glen-Gairn.”

“ Bless me! I never till this moment remembered to ask you wherefore you sent for me so hastily, and forced me to leave my men in some danger.”

“ I sent, in the first place, to warn you of your danger, and save your life, which I need not say I feel now to be too dear to me. But, for shame! how could you shoot my messenger?”

“ The rascal came without our pass-word, and what could I do? He had not even the sense to answer our challenge by calling out a ‘friend.’ But I was little sorry for the accident, for such a poor whining elf I never beheld. I could hardly refrain from kicking him: for what do you think? he actually cried like a girl for a scratch on the shoulder.”

“ Poor fellow! he’s a very kind hearted, faithful, and pretty boy.”

“ He a pretty boy! an ugly keystrel! a chit! The worst-looking howlet, that I ever saw in my life, ah—a—a—.” Here our bold Captain’s volley of obloquy against the poor boy was suddenly cut short, while the hero himself was to be seen standing gaping like one

seized with a paralytic affection. For the lovely, the accomplished and engaging Marsali Grant had thrown back her silken tartan, and there was the identical wound on a shoulder as white as the snows on Ben-Aven, which our hero had recklessly inflicted, and as carelessly dressed on the height of Glen-Gairn.

Peter's mouth turned into the shape of a cross-bow—he looked over his right shoulder, but seeing nothing there worth looking at, his eyes reverted again to the wound on the lovely shoulder, at which the victorious damsel stood pointing. The round tears stood in our hero's large blue eyes, which seemed dilated above measure; and so, to prevent himself from crying outright, even louder than the maiden had done herself, he turned his face over his left shoulder, and began a-laughing, while at the same time his face went awry and the tears ran down in streams.

“So you never saw a shabbier keystrel or a worse-looking boy, did you not?” said she, most provokingly.

“Dear, dear Marsali, you are too hard upon me; Heaven knows I wish the wound had been mine. And yet it is nothing to one you have given me, I—I—fear—I love you, Marsali.”

“A bold confession! But forgive me for laughing at it. It is however given in good time, for I have a most serious request to make of you, and one that nearly concerns both our happiness and our lives. Did I not hear you say lately, noble Aston, that you could not refuse me any thing?”

“Perhaps you did; and if I said so, what then?”

“Alas! the time is hard at hand, when your sword and my father's must both be drawn in this ruinous war, which is a more serious affair than broils about forest land, which God ordained should be free. This country is now destined to be the seat of bloody and destructive war; and no tribe, nor clan, nor family is to be suffered to remain neutral, without being subjected to plunder, fire, and sword. Both parties have issued summonses and threats, and to the one or the other we must cling. I

know the part that the Grants will take, and my father and his followers will be the foremost men. Should you and the men of Mar take the same side, as is reported, think what the issue will be. Either you or my father will never come home again, nor can you even subsist together in life for a single day. He is altogether irreconcilable, and nothing but your blood will satisfy him. He has sworn an hundred times to wash his hands in it, and in the event of either of you falling by the other's hand, *what is to become of me?*"

"But, dearest Marsali, what can I do to prevent this? I will be friends with your father for your sake alone; and I will be a shield to him in the day of battle, provided he will be friends with me; but if I am attacked unfairly, or by ruffian ferocity, what can I do but defend myself?"

"There is only one expedient in nature to save one or both of your lives, and mine beside; and that is, for you either to keep personally out of this war, or lead your troops to some other district. It was principally for this that I brought you here, to plead with you in a maiden's habit; and as a maiden should do, move your heart to the one of these alternatives."

"What you ask, Marsali, is out of my power. My orders are, to join the king's troops if forced to the field; and where else can I go, or find a leader save the gallant Montrose."

"Then it is all over with poor Marsali, and the sybil's prediction must be fulfilled. Our happiness is over, and our days numbered."

"What *would* you have me to do, dearest Marsali?"

"Either to keep from the war personally, or take the opposite side to my father. In the latter case I have only the chances of war to dread; but in the same army you cannot subsist without bloodshed and ruin to all concerned. But, dear Aston, cannot you live in the forest with me?"

"If I stay another moment, I am a lost and ruined man," cried Peter, and bounded away to the hill like a

wild deer. The maid followed by the light of the moon, and contrived to keep sight of him: and when at length he sat down upon a stone, and began to think and repeat to himself, that he had used this matchless girl very ill, he never wist till her own sweet voice said close behind him, "Well stay, and take me with you, Aston, and be counselled by me, else you will repent it at your last gasp, when there is no redress to be found."

"Spare my honour, for mercy's sake!" cried Aston; "not to-night, my dear Marsali, not to-night; for a fitter time will soon come. I am engaged, and must stick to my engagement. I have nearly forfeited my credit with my lord's men already; and if it were not that they believe your father is locked up in the dungeon of the castle to die of hunger, I could not call out Mar's vassals. Therefore not to-night, for heaven's sake not to-night."

Marsali sat down, and wiped her eyes, and cried, "I now know that I shall lose both my kind father and my noble and generous lover. But, what could a maid do more? Heaven prevent them from meeting in deadly feud." Marsali went home with a heart overpowered with the deepest affliction, and a settled presentiment that a terrible judgment hung over her house and her lover.

Never was there a man so much astonished as Nicol Grant was, on learning what had happened in his absence, and comparing that with what he had himself seen. He had surrounded Aston's bothy at the foot of the rock, so that a fox could not have made his escape. He had seen the fire burning, and the guardians of the forest passing and repassing in the light. He had rushed in, to surprise the man he accounted his greatest opponent on earth. The fire was still blazing. The venison steaks were still warm upon the stone table, but human beings there were none to be found. Nicol's hair stood on end, and his looks were so troubled that all his followers partook of the infection, for they imagined they were opposed to men who were in conjunction with the evil one, and who could convey themselves through the air, or the

bowels of the solid rock, as suited their convenience. But when Grant came home, and learned from the females appertaining to the clan, that at the very time when he was surrounding Aston and his Brae-Mar men in their bothy, Aston and his men were surrounding the encampment of the Grants, and that if it had not been for the intercessions of Marsali, they would all have been ravaged, slaughtered, and plundered,—why Nicol Grant knew not what to think. He tried to frame some probable solution of the thing, but he found it impracticable.

But the trump of war was now sounded in the distracted valleys, and by degrees reached the most bewildered of the Grampian Glens, where it was hailed with joy by men who could lose nothing but their lives,—which were every day laid in peril, and the loss of them naturally the less dreaded,—while a foray, upon the lowlands or their rival clans, was their highest delight. And while the trivial events above detailed were going on, the war raged in the western highlands. The intrepid Marquess of Montrose had turned on the braes of Lochaber, like a lion caught in the toils, and beat the Campbells to pieces at the battle of Inverlochy, and forthwith the conqueror arrived in the eastern districts, where two powerful armies of the reformers were sent against him. Every clan was then obliged to join the one side or the other, further temporising being impracticable. The Laird of Grant, a very powerful chief, was the first to declare for the royal cause. He sent a brave array, under the command of Ballindaloch, his brother, consisting of 500 men, while the Strath-Avon men were led by our redoubted forester and free-booter, Nicol Grant. While Captain Peter Aston, having his lord's private orders, raised the forces of the Dee and the Don for his royal master.

It was on the 28th of April, that Nicol Grant joined the royal army with no fewer than 300 men, all robust and wild katherans. He was received by his Colonel, Ballindaloch, with high approbation, and placed next in command to himself. Nicol was a proud man that day,

on seeing so many of his own name and clan together in arms, and forming the wing of the royal army that lay next to their own country. Forthwith, Nicol thought not of advantages over the king's enemies, but, with that fiendish malignity of which he possessed a portion above all men, he immediately began to concert plans how he might revenge old jealousies, now that he saw the Grants in such force as appeared to him supreme.

Accordingly, with speech full of malevolence, he represented to his colonel, how that the Earl of Mar's people were rising in great force to join the opposing army, and that it would be of the greatest consequence were he and his men permitted to crush the insurrection in the bud, before their array gathered fairly to a head. Ballindaloch believing this, hastened to Montrose, and laid the intelligence before him; Montrose was hard of belief, knowing the firm loyalty of the Earl of Mar, and charged Ballindaloch to beware how he proceeded rashly in the matter; but, at all events, to prevent the men of Mar from joining the covenanters.

This piece of treachery in Nicol Grant had the effect of bringing about great events, for the Grants moving southward to watch the movements of the Mar men, weakened the main body of the king's army, and hastened on the great battle of Auldearn. But, in the mean time, Nicol Grant was despatched with his regiment to the south, to waylay the men of Mar, and bring them to an explanation one way or another. This was the very commission Nicol Grant wanted, for he knew every pass and ford of that country, and now was his time for executing that vengeance which gnawed his heart. He had likewise orders to watch the motions of General Baillie, but, to that part of his commission, he determined on paying only a secondary regard.

Now, it so happened, that at the muster of the Earl of Mar's clans at Kildrummie, the men of Cluny and Glen-Shee did not appear, but Aston finding 300 gentlemen cavalry assembled, he left John Steward, of Kildrummie, to gather in and bring up the foot, and he him-

self rode off with the cavalry to join the royal standard, lest the expected battle should be fought ere he got forward with the whole.

Our young hero's heart was never so uplifted before, as when viewing this gallant array led on by himself. He thought of what mighty exploits he would perform for his king and country, but he could never help mingling these thoughts with others of what would become of the lovely and accomplished Marsali Grant during the war. If she would accompany the old deer-stalker to the camp, or retire to some place of safety. He wished he had known, for he found he could *not* get her out of his mind.

Such were some of the brave Captain Aston's cogitations, when lo, at the fall of evening, as he was fording a river at the head of his men, which I think, from the description, must have been at the ford of the Don above Kirkton, he was suddenly attacked by a force of great power, which, from its array, appeared to be of the Clan-Grant. But certain that they had joined the royal party, he deemed them labouring under some mistake, and for a while, he and his troops only stood on the defensive, calling out what they wanted, and likewise that he was for the king and Montrose. It availed nothing, down they came with fury on his first division, while the rest of his troops were entangled in the river, and ere he had given orders for an attack, his front rank, which had gained the firm ground, began to waver. He was as yet but little acquainted with the practical science of war, measuring merely the strength of his army with his own, and, at length, waving his sword over his head, he called out "On them, brethren! follow me."

He was at the head of his column on the left when he gave this order for the charge, and instantly thereon he spurred his horse against the right of the Grants, the place where he knew their leader would be. He was followed by a few resolute fellows, who, at the first, made an opening in the front ranks of the Grants, but several of them were cut down, and the captain himself nearly

inclosed. Terrible were the blows he dealt, but though they made the Grants recoil, it was only to return with redoubled fury; and just while in this dilemma, their leader rushed forward on him, and closed with him, crying at the same time in Gaelic, as if bursting with rage, "Perdition on thy soul! I have thee now."

With these words, he struck at Aston with the fury of a maniac. The latter warded the first blow, but the second, which was a back stroke, wounded his horse on the head, and at the same time, cut the head-band of his bridle. Never was there a warrior who did his opponent a greater service, for the rest plunged onward, and our young hero would have been cut in pieces, for he entertained no thought of a retreat, but his horse disliking the claymores of the Grants exceedingly, and feeling himself under no further control from the bridle, turned and scoured after his associates swifter than the wind, outrunning the most intense flyers, and thus bearing his rider from instant death.

In less than ten minutes, the handful of the Mar cavalry that had reached the firm ground were broken and chased by their enemies to the eastward, while those still entangled in the river were glad to retreat to the other side.

Captain Aston's heart was absolutely like to burst with vexation at being thus baffled and broken by the old infernal deer-stalker, whom he had so lately and so generously rescued from death,—for too well he knew his voice and his bearing,—and in his heart cursing him as the most implacable barbarian, wished that he had let the men hang him as they intended, and then he should have been guiltless of his blood.

The Grants being on foot, there was no danger of a hasty pursuit. Still the captain continued to scour on, followed by his front division alone, consisting of about 120 men. He knew not what had become of all the rest; if Nicol Grant had slain them all in the coils of the Don, or chased them back again to Brae-Mar. How came he thus to be flying from the face of an enemy of



whom he had no fear, and whom he still wished to fight? In the confusion of his reminiscences, he did not perceive clearly the reason of this, which the reader will easily do. His horse wanted the bridle, as the reins only hung by the martingal, and our hero wasted his strength in vain, pulling in his wounded and furious steed by the shoulders.

A spruce cavalier of his troop, who had all the way kept close by his side, now ventured to address him, asking him sharply, whither he intended to lead them in such abundant and unnecessary haste?

"It is my horse who is in such a persevering haste, and not I," said Aston. "He is wounded, and so much affrighted that he is beyond control. I may as well try to turn the hill of Loch-na-gaur. No, no! here we go! push on, boy!"

"Captain, this is sheer madness!" said the youth. "If you cannot command your horse, throw yourself from his back and call a muster."

"I never thought of the expedient before. Thank you, young sir," said the captain, flinging himself from his horse, and then, coming to close grips with him, commanded him by force, when it appeared the animal wanted the bits, was wounded in the head, and had one of his ears cut off. A council of war was then called, and it was resolved that they should try to unite their force in the morning by break of day, return in a body, and cut all the Grants into small pieces!

From this laudable resolution there was no dissentient voice, till the stripling before mentioned stood up at the captain's hand, and said—"Brother cavaliers, I, for one, must dissent from this mad resolve, for several reasons; and the first is, the certainty of losing our captain, the first man on the field. It is quite manifest, that he understands no mode of attack beyond what he can do with the might of his own arm, and no mode of retreat save the old one of who to be foremost."

"What do you say, sir? what is your name? and whose son are you?" said the captain, fiercely.

“It is not every man, Captain, that can tell whose son he is,” retorted the youth, with a sly bow, which raised the titter so much against the captain that he only bit his lip and waited in silence what the stripling had farther to say. “I am quite serious, Captain, for I perceive that in any private broil your bold temerity would be the ruin of your followers. My most serious and candid advice then is, that you lead us straight to the royal army, and then fighting at our head, in the regular ranks, I know not on whom we would turn our backs. I am the more serious in this advice, that I am certain we were attacked through mistake. These men have been despatched to watch the motions of General Eaille, and prevent the junction of his army with that of Sir John Urry. And as the former general’s army consists mostly of cavalry, there cannot be a doubt but that the Grants mistook us for his advanced guard; for how could they expect a regiment of horse from Brae-Mar? Let us then assemble our men, haste on to the main army, and represent the case to the Lord Lieutenant, who we are sure will do us justice, either on friends or enemies. This, in my estimation, will be behaving like true and loyal soldiers, while in the other case, it would be acting like savage banditti, to avenge supposed wrongs on friends who believed they were doing their duty.”

“Young gentleman, your wisdom is so far above your years, that I request to know your name and lineage,” said the Captain.

“My name is Colin,” said the youth; “I am the son of a gentleman of your acquaintance, and newly returned from school; but my surname, I shall for the present keep, lest I behave ill in the wars. Let it suffice then that I am Colin, a young gentleman volunteer to the banner of the Earl of Mar. I came with the intent of following Captain John Stewart, whom you have left behind, but since it has been my fate to fall under the command of another, I shall do my duty, either in council or field. Captain, you shall never find me desert you.”

“I admire your sagacity, young Sir,” said Aston; “but I know more than you do, and I know that you are wrong. However, as my brethren judge your advice the best, I am willing to follow it. And henceforth I attach you to me as my page, for a sword you can scarcely wield yet.”

Colin's proposal was immediately applauded and adopted. A whistle from the other side of the river announced the vicinity of their associates, who joined them at day-break at a place called Black-meadow ford, all but five men, and thus they advanced straight on to the army, then lying close to the Moray firth.

Montrose received them with the greatest kindness and affability, but his staff could scarcely refrain from laughter at the bluntness of our hero, when he made his complaint against the Grants, and told how he had been routed by them, and had lost sundry brave men. The Marquess looked thoughtful and displeased, and sending for Ballindaloch, requested an explanation. That worthy gentleman could give him none, for he saw that he had been duped from a motive of private revenge. Montrose plainly perceived the same, and after some severe general remarks on the way in which the royal army had been distracted by private feuds, he added, “Colonel Grant, your lieutenant must be punished.” And forthwith there was an express sent off to order Nicol Grant's division from the passes of the mountains.

On the 4th of May, 1645, the famous battle of Auldearn was fought. And here I judge it requisite to be a little more particular on the events relating to this battle, than perhaps the thread of my narrative requires, because I am in possession of some information relating to it not possessed by any other person; it was originally taken from the lips of a gentleman who had a subordinate command in the royal army, and may be implicitly relied on. And, moreover, it proves to a certainty the authenticity of this tale.

At this period, then, Sir John Urry, with a well-appointed army of seven powerful regiments of the Reform-

ers, had been approaching nigher and nigher to Montrose for some days. While general Baillie also approaching from the south with an army equal in magnitude and superior in appointment to either of the other two, their intent was to hem in the royal army between them, when they supposed it would fall an easy prey. The noble Marquess had resolved to fight each of these armies singly. Still he was quite unprepared, for his clans were scattered all abroad. But it so happened that Murray of Kennet-Haugh, having had a sharp difference with the laird of Haliburton, and not being able to obtain any redress owing to that hero's great credit with the General, deserted on the following night to the Whigs. He then represented to Sir John Urry that if he wished to gain immortal renown, that this was the time to crush for ever the redoubted Marquess of Montrose. "His strength is reduced to nothing, and certain victory awaiting you," said he. "The Grants are at a distance on a fool's errand. The Stewarts and Murrays of Athol are gone home to protect their own country from pillage. The M'Leans are still as far off as Glen-Orchy, and in eight days the force of Montrose will be doubled by other western clans, that are all on their way to his camp. At present he has nothing to depend on but the regiments of Colkitto and Muidart, for as for the men of Strath-Bogie they cannot fight at all."

This was Murray's speech, as afterwards rehearsed to the council by Sir John, and with such words as these he stirred up that general, a vain and precipitate man, forthwith to push on and complete the overthrow and ruin of the terrible Montrose. And truly the circumstances of his army made the opportunity too favourable a one to be overlooked. Indeed had it not been for the activity and presence of mind of one Mr Neil Gordon, who rode with all his speed and apprised Montrose, Urry would have taken him completely by surprise. He put his battle in array with all expedition, took the command of the right wing himself, and assigned the left to a brave and irresistible hero, M'Donald of Colkitto. The centre was

commanded by John of Muidart, captain of the Clan-ranald, and the cavalry by Lord Gordon; so says my authority, for the truth of which I can vouch.

Ere this hurried array was fairly completed, the army of the Reformers appeared in columns hastening on to the attack. But this Montrose would not risk, for he never suffered his clans to wait an attack, but caused them always to rush on and break or disorder the enemy's ranks at the first onset; and this mode he never had reason to repent. No man that ever led the clans to battle knew their nature and capabilities so well as he did. Captain Aston and his regiment were of course placed under the command of Lord Gordon, and fought on his right hand, and the men of Lewis and Kintail were opposed to them.

It was a hard fought and bloody battle, and many were slain and wounded on both sides; for the brave M'Donald having a mixture of Irish soldiers, with both Lowlanders and Highlanders in his division, they fought at odds, disdaining to support one another, so that his wing was driven back and very nigh broken to pieces. It was then that the Lord Gordon and his cavalry were hard put to it; their left wing being left exposed, and the M'Kenzies hotly engaged with them in front, mixing with them, and holding them in such dreadful play, that at that period the issue of the battle was not only doubtful but very nigh hopeless on the part of the Marquess, for the army of the Reformers was mixed with small bodies of archers which galled the cavalry exceedingly.

The path by which M'Donald was compelled to retreat, was a narrow, rugged one, between a cattle-fold and a steep rocky ascent, part of the inclosure being formed by a rugged, impassable ravine. From the side of this burn there was a little green hollow, which at the top could only be ascended by two or three at a time. On reaching this hollow, the laird of Lawins with great spirit and judgment stopped his regiment in the pursuit, and ordered his men to run up that hollow and attack the rear of the Gordons and the men of Mar.

Montrose galloped to an eminence and called to the Earl of Antrim to assist M'Donald, but still this manœuvre by the laird of Lawins was concealed from his sight, which if it had even but partially succeeded, at that doubtful and dangerous period of the battle, it would have completed the ruin of the royal army. Captain Aston was the very first man who perceived it, and pointed out the danger to the Lord Gordon. The combat with the M'Kenzies being then at the very hottest, Lord Gordon would not stop it, but swearing a great oath that all was ruined if you dogs were suffered to rally on the height, he wheeled his charger about, and without giving any orders to follow, galloped full speed to the verge of the precipice, where Lawin's men were beginning to appear. Aston and his page Colin followed close to him, and a few others by chance noticed and flew to the assistance of their brave young lord. He was indeed a perfect hero, so careering full drive upon the few who had gained a footing on the height, asked what they were seeking there; but without waiting for a reply, he struck the lieutenant that led them in the throat with his spear with such force, that the point of the weapon went out at the back of his shoulder. He was a gentleman of gigantic size, and on receiving the wound he made such a tremendous spring over the precipice, bolting headlong down among his followers, that he overthrew many more, and greatly marred the ascent at that critical moment. Captain Aston seconded his leader's efforts with equal if not superior might, and the page, though he never drew his sword, shot two of the enemy dead with his pistols.

Montrose, who had the eye of the eagle, beheld this gallant action, and asked at Alexander Og, who stood next him, if ever an army could be defeated which contained such men? And Alexander answered, "With fair play, my lord, it never will." M'Donald also perceived the dismay wrought among his enemies, principally by the might of two individuals, and he said to the gentlemen around him who had taken shelter in the fold,

“What, shall we stand here and see Lord Gordon win the battle with his own hand?” He instantly led his motley array back to the combat, on which Lawin’s regiment was forced to retreat in its turn. Montrose at the same time causing his wing to close with the enemy, in half an hour after the rout became general; and every leader acknowledged that the gallant and desperate defence made by Lord Gordon and Captain Peter Aston, had turned the fortune of the day. It was the hinge, or rather pivot on which the fate of the battle turned;—on such small incidents often hang the fates of kingdoms and armies.

My authority says, that Sir John Urry’s plan was a good one, and boldly executed. He brought the whole strength of his array to bear upon Montrose’s left wing, in order to turn the flank of the strong centre division. He had gained his point so far; and if that regiment had fairly gained a footing on the height in the rear of the horse and the Clan-ranalds, it is quite evident that ruin to the Royalists was inevitable,—which two determined heroes alone prevented. While their regiments were still struggling with enemies behind and enemies before, they heard a great shout; and on looking round, they beheld the Kintail men scouring up the rising ground, like so many frightened kyloes galloping before their pursuers. Seaforth tried with all his power to rally them, but in vain, and immediately after he perceived his Lewis regiment coming full speed in the same direction. He then lost all patience, and galloped in amongst them, threatening to cut down every man who would not turn and face the enemy; but his efforts were fruitless, for the Gordons and Mar horsemen were hacking them down behind. The Lord Gordon espied his adversary, and rode up to him, accosting him thus: “Traitor, thou hast betrayed the cause which thou hadst sworn to defend. Dost thou not see the justice of God pursuing thee?”

“Art thou the justice of God, my Lord,” said Seaforth? “If so, it shall pursue me no farther.” On saying which he rode at young Huntly with his spear. The latter met his career with equal promptitude, and the

struggle was very sharp between them for three minutes' space. At that instant three brethren, gentlemen of Lewis's, of the name of M'Lellan, came to their lord's rescue; and time was it, for Lord Gordon had both him and his horse rolling in the mud. The M'Lellans, however, defended their lord gallantly, got him again on horseback, and fled with him. Aston was too late for this scuffle, but he pursued after Lord Seaforth as far as a place called Ardrier, on the road to Inverness, and got so nigh to him at the bridge of the Nairn, that he struck at him and wounded his horse, and it was with the greatest difficulty his lordship escaped. Captain Aston, however, returned with many gallant prisoners.

Such was the issue of this hard-fought battle, and on these particulars the reader may rely as authentic. It was the absence of the Grants that brought it on, and a few heroic individuals that turned the fate of the day when it was on the eve of being lost. There was a happy and joyful meeting among those heroes. Two of the M'Donalds were knighted in the field, and Captain Aston was raised to the rank of Colonel, besides being presented with a gold-mounted sword from the noble Marquis's own hand, and publicly thanked in his majesty's name.

Nicol Grant, to whom an express had been sent by his colonel, arrived in the camp the day after the battle and was instantly called to account before the general. A very bungling account he attempted at first to make of it; but on back questioning with regard to other proofs, his proud and unbridled spirit rose, and he owned his hatred of the leader, and his purpose of yet being revenged on him. Montrose pronounced such a fellow incapable of any more serving his majesty, and caused his sword to be broken over his right arm, and himself cashiered and banished the camp, with orders no more to approach it on pain of being shot.

It now seemed as if every thing in nature combined to agonize the heart of Nicol Grant, but this was the unkindest thrust of all; his abhorred rival thus advanced, and himself publicly disgraced and debased for ever. His



breast again burned with untameable vengeance, and once more he kneeled on the sward, and with clenched teeth and hands swore eternal vengeance on the abhorred wretch that was born for his debasement. He retired into concealment, he and his friend John of Lurg, who attached himself to all his fortunes, and watched for an opportunity of assassinating Colonel Aston. No such opportunity offering, and the army at length moving southward laden with spoil, Montrose crossed the Spey into Banffshire, and set up his head quarters at the house of Birken-bog, while the rest of his army were cantoned in the towns and villages around him. Colonel Aston with his Brae-Mar cavalry were despatched up to Glen-Fiddich for the sake of the best forage; and here he encamped in a haudsome tent taken from the Whigs, with his soldiers around him. His page, Colin, never quitted him. He would sometimes take a nap in his master's tent by day, but he watched every night along with the patrol, and was beloved by every one for his kindness and affability; but whenever he saw any straggling highlander hovering about or entering the camp, he was the first to make up to them, enquire their business, and warn them off.

So one evening late he perceived the tall rugged form of John of Lurg approaching Colonel Aston's tent, and straight the stripling made up to him, and withstood him. "What do you want, sir?" said he, "and whom seek you here?"

"Och-hon and hersei just pe waiting a von singil worts with te captain."

The youth answered in Gaelic, "Know you so little of the regulations of your sovereign's army, sir, and of the orders issued by our general, as to make such a demand?—a demand the complying with which would cost me my life. Return to the outpost instantly, before I cause you to be arrested; tell your name and commission to him; from him I will transnit it to our Colonel; but for your life dare not to come within the outposts till the message be returned."

“ On my troth,” said the rough highlander, in the same language, “ you are, for a stripling, ane strick disciplinarian ! Are you of a gentleman, boy ? ”

“ I am, sir ; and he who calls me less shall not do it with impunity,” presenting a horse-pistol at him. “ Retire instantly. Make good your retreat beyond our outposts, else here goes. But while I remember to ask, and you have life to answer, how did you get within them ? ”

“ Och-hon, just te pest way she coult. Teal mor pe in te poy, fwat a weazel of termagant ting she pe ! She pe tell you fwat young man: since you should pe a shentlemans, she would rather pe telling her message to you tan te post. Will you then, as a mhan of honour, pear Mr Nicol Graunt’s challenge and defiances to your captain, or colonel as you pe pleased to call him, and tell him tat he and mine own self, Jhon Craunt, of Lurg, will fight him to-morrow, and te pest mhau in all yòur army ; and if he ’ll be so coot as name his hour and place. Fwat do you start at agunach ? pe you afraid of plood ? Hoo ! put tere mhost pe plood, and heart’s plood too. Teliver tis mmessage, poy, as may pe a shentlemans.”

“ And dare you try, sir, to make me the bearer of treason, to raise new feuds among the clans, which our lord-lieutenant has been at such pains to put down ? I can tell you your head is in forfeit ; for the general is well aware of this treason, which was avowed to his face. But that I am a highlander myself, and related to the Grants, I would have you beheaded by to-morrow’s sun-rising. But I will not disclose this : only go instantly to your den in Glen-Bilg, else if our scouts find you to-morrow, you and all concerned in this vile plot are dead men. Sentiuels ! attend here ! ” shouted he with a loud voice.

“ Och-hon ! te creat big teil is in tis cursed poy ! Hold your pay-hay for a mhoiment, my tear, till she hexplain. Och ! Cot’s creat pig tams be upon her,—here comes te Mhar tragoons.”

“ John Farquharson, you are the captain of the guard for the night,” cried the page. “ Take this suspicious

fellow and convey him without the limits of our camp, and if ever any of you see him again, shoot him—or any of these malevolent deer-stalkers of the forest.”

“That we shall, Colin,” said the guard, “with better will than ever we shot a stag.” Lurg held his peace, and was obliged to submit. They took him to the outpost on the banks of the Fiddich, gave him the bastinado, and pushed him into the river.

“She haif purnt her tongue sipping oder people’s khail,” said Lurg; “put she shall purn te saul, and te pody, and te heart’s ploit of te captain tat ordered tis.”

Colin never told his colonel a word about this challenge, and therefore the latter lived in perfect security. But on the second day or the third after this, he got a note from Montrose, requesting him, as his was the outermost station, to send out messengers, and keep a good watch for the return of the Athol men and the M’Leans, who he knew were on their way to join the camp, and he was afraid they might be waylaid by some of the Whigs. Colonel Aston, certain that the clans would return by the forest paths, placed wardens with bugles on every height from the sources of the Tilt to Belrinnes, who were to warn him of their approach. The bugles had never yet sounded; and one day Colonel Aston said to two gentlemen with whom he was walking, “What would you think of a walk to the top of Belrinnes this fine day, to get the news from our warder and see the hills of the Dee?” The names of these two gentlemen were John Finlayson and Alexander Duff. They acquiesced at once, and Colin, who never quitted his master, accompanied them. They reached the top of the hill about noon. The warder had *thought* he had heard a bugle from the south-west that morning, but he had heard no more; but he was assured the clans were coming. Nevertheless, the two gentlemen noted that their colonel’s eyes were always fixed in another direction. “Why do you strain your eyes so much in that direction, sir?” said Duff.

“O! I am just looking toward my own beloved hills

of the Dee," said he. "But tell me, for you should know that country, is yon Loch-Bilg that we see?"

"Oh, I cannot think it, sir," said Duff. "It is too far to the south; Loch-Bilg should be westerly."

"Begging your pardon, sir," said Colin Ray, as they called him, "yon is Loch-Bilg. Look you, yonder is a small part of Ben-M'Drei westernmost, the king of the Grampians. Then yon next is Benni-Bourd, and that opposite us is Ben-Aven, so yon must be a glimpse of the waters of Loch-Bilg."

"You are quite right, boy," said Colonel Aston: "I know them all as well now as I do the fingers on my right hand. And yon is Glen-Bilg. How I should like to be yonder to-night."

"And I wish I were with you," said the boy.

Colonel Aston was astounded at the soft and serious tone in which these few words were said. He turned and looked with such intensesness on the boy, that his associates wondered. What he thought, or what he felt, at that moment, is a secret, and ever must remain so. He spoke little more all that day, but seemed wrapped up in some confused and doubtful hallucinations. They lingered on the top of the hill, for the days were long, it being then May, and the weather delightful. Towards evening they descended to their post on the banks of the Fiddich, but many a look Colonel Aston took of his page, with the long matted black hair hanging about his ears, but for what reason was not known. He continued still silent and thoughtful. At length the page accosting him, said, "Sir, had we not better keep the open country down the ridge of Ard-Nethy, and not go by the pass to-night?"

"I care not though we do, Colin," said the Colonel.

"It is more than two miles about," said Duff.

"Nay, it is half a dozen," said Finlayson. "Nonsense! the boy is afraid of spirits in the pass."

"Yes, sir, I am," said Colin; "I have an eye that can discern spirits where yours cannot. I beg of you,

dear Colonel, to humour me in this, and do not go by the pass to-night."

"With all my heart, Colin, I will go a few miles about to humour your superstitious fears. With all my heart, boy."

The other gentlemen laughed aloud at this, and swore they would go by the nearest path, though all the devils of hell were there; so the Colonel too was obliged to laugh and join them, and Colin followed behind, weeping. As they proceeded through the pass that brought them to the valley of Fiddich, Colin touched his master's arm, and pointed out to him three men who were whispering together, and seemed to be waylaying them. "You would not take my way to the camp, sir," said the youth sobbing, "do you see who are yonder?" Aston knew them too well. The party consisted of Nicol Grant, John of Lurg, and one Charles Grant, younger, of Aikenway, as determined a deer-stalker as any of the other two. "I could not have believed," said Aston, "in aught so ungenerous and malevolent in human nature as this! Gentlemen, it would appear that we will be obliged to fight our way here."

"So much the better," said Duff. "They are only three to three; or rather three to four; for this brave boy will bring down one in a pinch. Who can they be, for those fellows are not in the least like covenanters? Katherans, I suppose—let us have at them."

"Draw your swords," said the Colonel; "but if they do not challenge us, take no note of them." The gentlemen did so; but though men of high spirit and courage, they had never been accustomed to war or danger. The three drew their swords, and marched boldly on. The three Grants drew up in the pass before them. "Slave! upstart! poltroon!" roared Nicol Grant. "I sent you my challenge and defiance, from which you skulked. I have you now! Stand to your defences."

"Vile, ungrateful charlatan," exclaimed Colonel Aston; "you know that you are no better than a child under my brand; but you know from experience, that I will not

harm your life: therefore, you take the coward's part, and dare me in safety. Do your worst, I defy you; but as for these gentlemen, who are of so much value in the king's service, let them and your two friends merely stand as judges of the combat."

"I will either fight or kill one or both of them," said John of Lurg.

"Three to three, if you dare, for the blood and the souls that are within you!" said young Aikenway.

The two gentlemen of the Garioch, Duff and Finlayson, advanced boldly, although little used to wield their swords, so that the three veteran Grants had a decided though unacknowledged advantage.

The combat began with the most deadly intent on the one side at least, and at the second turn, Duff received a wound from a back stroke aslant the breast, from the point of Lurg's sword, which brought him down. Finlayson fought most courageously, but finding himself unequal to Charles Grant, of Aikenway, with the claymore, he closed with him at the risk of his life. After a deadly struggle, they both went down wounded, but they still held firm by each other with the most determined grasps. They tried again and again who to rise first, but Finlayson was the most powerful man, and after a long and hard struggle, he gave Charles Grant such a blow with the hilt of his sword that it stunned him, but yet for all that he could do, he could not get out of his grasp. They rolled over and over each other till they tumbled over the bank into the river, when Finlayson fell uppermost, and held his opponent down till he fairly drowned him, which he very quickly effected, for he was wounded and out of breath; but to make sure he run him through the heart, and then let him float his way; for all that, he continued for some time to splash feebly with his arms, and make attempts to rise, although the whole river ran red with his blood, so tenacious is a highlander of life. At length he came upon an abrupt rock, which stopped him, and there he lay moving backwards and forwards with the torrent, a ghastly bleeding corpse.

Although the description of this deadly struggle occupies a considerable space, it was nevertheless very short, and when John Finlayson beheld his colonel fighting with odds, he attempted to rise and haste to the rescue, but to his sorrow he found that he could not, for his limb had been dislocated, either in the struggle or the fall from the bank, and there he was obliged to lie reclining on some dry rocks, and witness the unequal contest. He lived long after to give an account of this, and often declared that such a gallant and desperate defence never was made by man. Nicol Grant and Lurg were both upon him, and both thirsting for his blood, yet such was his strength and agility, that he kept them both at play for the space of ten minutes without receiving a single wound; while Grant, from his furious impetuosity, was wounded twice. The Colonel always fought retreating, bounding first to the one side and then to the other, while they durst not for a moment separate, for they found that, single-handed, they were nothing to him. At length they drove him to the point of the valley, where a ledge of rock met the precipitate bank of the river, and then he had nothing for it but to fight it out against the two swords with his back to the rock; and then, indeed, they reached him several wounds, though none of them deadly.

In the heat of this last mortal combat, their ears were all at once astounded by a loud shriek of horror which came from the top of the rock immediately above them, where the page Colin and two countrymen that instant appeared, and the former darted from the precipice swifter than a shooting star, and rushed between the swords of the combatants, spreading out his arms, screaming and staring in maniac wise, at the same time uttering words which neither of the parties comprehended, taking them for the words of raving and madness. Aston was all over covered with blood, but still fighting like a lion when this interruption took place; Nicol Grant, too, was bleeding and sorely exhausted, but the furious Lurg, perceiving the two countrymen hastening round the rock,

rushed in upon the gallant youth, and closed with him, and the struggle for about half a minute was very hard; but then Aston made his opponent's sword twirl into the river, and clove his left shoulder to the chest. "Take that, cowardly ruffian, for your unfair and unmanly conduct!" cried he; and John of Lurg tumbled headlong into the river, where he lay grovelling with his head down and his feet up.

During this last struggle, Nicol Grant, seeing that the last stake for executing his hideous purpose of revenge was on the eve of being lost for ever, made a fierce effort to reach Colonel Aston's side; but the youth Colin seized his arm, struggled with, and prevented him, crying out, "O, for the love of Christ! for your own soul's sake, and for the sake of your only child, forbear! forbear! desist!"

But in the mania of rage he would not listen. He threw down the youth, uttered a bitter curse upon him, ran him through the body, and flew now to the unequal combat. "Old ruffian," exclaimed Aston, "I have vowed to spare your life, and *have* spared it ere now, but after such a deed as this——" Aston heaved his heavy sword, his teeth were clenched, the blood dropped from his eyebrows, and the furious gleams of rage glanced from between the drops of blood. That lifted stroke had cleft the old barbarian to the heart, had not these chilling words ascended in a shriek, "Spare! O spare my old father."

Both their swords dropped at the same moment, and they turned their eyes on the prostrate and bleeding youth from whom the words proceeded. They gazed and remained mute till they again heard these killing words, uttered in a sweet but feeble voice, "I am Marsali. I have overcome much to save both your lives, and have effected it. Yes! thanks be to God! I have effected it now, but have lost my own! O! my poor wretched old father! What *is* to become of you?"

Colonel Aston could not utter a word. His bloody face was in an instant all suffused with tears, and he then,



for the first time, recollected his thrilling suspicions regarding her identity on the top of the hill of Belrinnes. He lifted her in his arms and carried her softly to the side of the river, and gave her a drink out of the hilt of his sword. Her blue bonnet with its plumes dropped into the river, and down flowed the lovely chesnut locks of Marsali. She drank plentifully, said she was better, and begged to be laid down at her ease upon the sward. Her lover complied, and then, at her request, opened her vest and examined her wound. Never was there seen so piteous a sight! So fair a bosom striped with its own heart's blood, and that blood shed by the reckless hand of a father! Homely phrase cannot describe a sight so moving, and all who beheld it were in agonies. The two countrymen, whom she had brought to separate the combatants, could comprehend nothing, but stood and gazed in mute astonishment.

Old Nicol Grant only saw matters darkly, as through a glass, but he saw them in a distorted and exaggerated view. He sat upon a stone, throbbing deeply and awfully, and sometimes growling out a curse in his rude native tongue, and muttering in his breast something about sorcery. At last, as the scene between the lovers grew more and more affecting his passion grew to a sort of madness, and had the two armed countrymen not marked his intent and restrained him, he would have immolated the brave youth without once warning him.

Poor Marsali continued to assure her lover that she was getting a little better, and would soon be quite well; but alas! the blanched roses on her cheek, the pallid lip, and the languid eye, spoke a different language, while the frequent falling tear proclaimed the heart's consciousness of approaching dissolution. Perceiving the dark looks of her father, she intreated him to come near her and give her his hand, but through grief and rage he shook like an aspen, and only answered her by thrusting his hand in his bosom.

“What! my dear father,” said she feebly, “will you not come nigh me that we may exchange forgiveness?”

And surely you will give me a farewell kiss, and not suffer your poor murdered Marsali to leave this world without your blessing?"

The old barbarian uttered something between a neigh and a groan, hung down his head, and wept bitterly; yea, till the howls of sorrow that he uttered became absolutely heart-rending.

"God of mercy and forgiveness, pity my poor distracted parent, and preserve his reason," cried Marsali, lifting her eyes and her hands to heaven.

Her father then made an attempt to come to her, but felt himself incapable, for he could only bend his looks on the man he hated,—the curse of him and of his race,—and those looks expressed in language the most intense, how impossible it was for those two to accord, even in an act of pity and commiseration; so he retreated again to his stone, and sat groaning.

But this scene of sorrow was fast wearing to a close. Marsali lifted up her eyes painfully to her lover's. "The thing that I dreaded has come at last, hard as I have striven to prevent it," said she; "O, Aston! are you not sorry to part with me so soon?"

"Talk of living or dying as you please, beloved Marsali," said he; "but never talk of parting with you, for where thou goest I will go; for I find the world that wants thee would be to me a world of defeat and darkness, and that which has thee, a world of victory and light. Till this hour, I never dreamed what the affection of woman was capable of enduring, but having found one dear instance, I shall never look for another below the sun. O, I should like to have my arms around thee, Marsali, even in death, and in the grave to sleep with thee in some remote corner of the wilderness."

While he yet spoke, the dying maid embraced his neck, and again sunk back on the green; and he heard these heart-piercing words syllabled in a soft whisper—"Farewell!—Kiss me!" It was a last effort; Marsali closed her eyes like one going to sleep, and breathed her last.

Old Grant's irremediable loss now burst full on him,

and was expressed in the most passionate sublimity. "O! is she gone?—is she gone?" cried he. "Is my darling, my orphan, Marsali, gone, and left me for ever? No, it cannot be, for she was my all!—My hawk and my hound!—my bow and my arrow—my hands and my feet! The sight of my eyes, and the life of my soul! and without whom I am nothing! God of justice! where are thy bolts of vengeance that thou dost not launch them at a guilty father's head?"

But unable to endure the sight of his abhorred enemy kissing the lips of his dead child and weeping over her, the old man fled from the scene with rapid but faltering steps, and roaring and howling, he sought the thickest part of the forest and vanished.

John Finlayson then called to the two countrymen, who lifted him from his rocky bed and laid him on the green, until the arrival of the camp litters. He lived to an old age, but was lame till the day of his death.

The body of Marsali was at Colonel Aston's request carried into his own tent, where he watched it day and night, weeping over it, and refusing all sustenance. On the morning of the third day, he was found bleeding to death on the floor of his tent and the body removed. The only words that he spoke after his attendants entered were—"They have taken *her* away."

An express was sent to the Marquis, who was soon at the spot. A body of the Grants, who were the patrol for the first watch of the night, were missing. Montrose ordered a hasty pursuit, but as well might he have tried to trace the fox without the hounds as to trace a party of a clan when the rest are true. The men escaped, but no one doubted that at the last Nicol Grant had got his vengeance sated, and had murdered the brave Colonel Aston. A horrible, bearded, naked maniac, for some time after that, haunted the forest of Glen-Avon:—it was Nicol Grant, whose bones were at last found on the heath.

Colonel Aston died before noon on the day he was found wounded, deeply lamented by all who knew him, and by none more than his noble General.

## GORDON THE GIPSEY.

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It has been tritely, because truly said, that the boldest efforts of human imagination cannot exceed the romance of real life. The best written tale is not that which most resembles the ordinary chain of events and characters, but that which, by selecting and combining them, conceals those inconsistencies and deficiencies that leave, in real life, our sense of sight unsatisfied. An author delights his reader when he exhibits incidents distinctly and naturally according with moral justice; his portraits delight us when they resemble our fellow-creatures without too accurately tracing their moles and blemishes. This elegant delight is the breathing of a purer spirit within us, that asserts its claim to a nobler and more perfect state; yet another, though an austerer kind of pleasure arises, when we consider how much of the divinity appears even in man's most erring state, and how much of "goodliness in evil."

In one of those drear midnights that were so awful to travellers in the highlands soon after 1745, a man wrapped in a large coarse plaid, strode from a stone ridge on the border of Loch Lomond into a boat which he had drawn from its covert. He rowed resolutely, and alone, looking carefully to the right and left, till he suffered the tide to bear his little bark into a gorge or gulf, so narrow, deep, and dark, that no escape but death seemed to await him. Precipices, rugged with dwarf shrubs and broken granite, rose more than a hundred feet on each side,

sundered only by the stream, which a thirsty season had reduced to a sluggish and shallow pool. Then poising himself erect on his staff, the boatman drew three times the end of a strong chain which hung among the underwood. In a few minutes a basket descended from the pinnacle of the cliff, and having moored his boat, he placed himself in the wicker carriage, and was safely drawn into a crevice high in the wall of rock, where he disappeared.

The boat was moored, but the adventurer had not observed that it contained another passenger. Underneath a plank laid artfully along its bottom, and shrouded in a plaid of the darkest grain, another man had been lurking more than an hour before the owner of the boat entered it, and remained hidden by the darkness of the night. His purpose was answered. He had now discovered what he had sacrificed many perilous nights to obtain, a knowledge of the mode by which the owner of Drummond's Keep gained access to his impregnable fortress unsuspected. He instantly unmoored the boat, and rowed slowly back across the loch to an island near the centre. He rested on his oars, and looked down on its transparent water.—“It is there still,” he said to himself: and drawing close among the rocks, leaped on dry land. A dog of the true shepherd's breed sat waiting under the bushes, and ran before him till they descended together under an archway of stones and withered branches. “Watch the boat!” said the highlander to his faithful guide, who sprang immediately away to obey him. Meanwhile his master lifted up one of the grey stones, took a bundle from underneath it, and equipped himself in such a suit as a trooper of Cameron's regiment usually wore, looked at the edge of his dirk, and returned to his boat.

That island had once belonged to the heritage of the Gordons, whose ancient family, urged by old prejudices and hereditary courage, had been foremost in the ill-managed rebellion of 1715. One of the clan of Argyle then watched a favourable opportunity to betray the laird's

secret movements, and was commissioned to arrest him. Under pretence of friendship he gained entrance to his stronghold in the isle, and concealed a posse of the king's soldiers at Gordon's door. The unfortunate laird leaped from his window into the lake, and his false friend seeing his desperate efforts threw him a rope, as if in kindness, to support him, while a boat came near. "That rope was meant for my neck," said Gordon, "and I leave it for a traitor's." With these bitter words he sank. Cameron saw him, and the pangs of remorse came into his heart. He leaped himself into a boat, put an oar towards his drowning friend with real oaths of fidelity, but Gordon pushed it from him, and abandoned himself to death. The waters of the lake are singularly transparent near that isle, and Cameron beheld his victim gradually sinking, till he seemed to lie among the broad weeds under the waters. Once, only once, he saw, or thought he saw him lift his hand as if to reach his, and that dying hand never left his remembrance. Cameron received the lands of the Gordon as a recompence for his political services, and with them the tower called Drummond's Keep, then standing on the edge of a hideous defile, formed by two walls of rock beside the lake. But from that day he had never been seen to cross the loch, except in darkness, or to go abroad without armed men. He had been informed that Gordon's only son, made desperate by the ruin of his father and the Stuart cause, had become the leader of a gipsy gang,\* the most numerous and savage of the many that haunted Scotland. He was not deceived. Andrew Gordon, with a body of most athletic composition, a spirit sharpened by injuries, and the vigorous

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\* The Lochgellie and Linlithgow gipsies were very distinguished towards the middle of the last century, and had desperate fights at Raploch, near Stirling, and in the shire of Mearns. Lizzy Brown and Ann M'Donald were the leading Amazonians of these tribes, and their authority and skill in training boys to thievery were audaciously systematic. As the poor of Scotland derive their maintenance from usage rather than law, and chiefly from funds collected at the church door, or small assessments on heritors (never exceeding two pence in the pound), a set of vagrants still depend on voluntary aid, and are suffered to obtain it by going from house to house in families or groups, with a little of the costume, and a great deal of the want and thievery of ancient gipsies.

genius created by necessity; had assumed dominion over two hundred ruffians, whose exploits in driving off cattle, cutting drover's purses, and removing the goods brought to fairs or markets, were performed with all the audacious regularity of privileged and disciplined thieves. Cameron was the chosen and constant object of their vengeance. His keep or tower was of the true Scottish fabric, divided into three chambers; the highest of which was the dormitory, the second or middle served as a general refectory, and the lowest contained his cattle, which required this lodgment at night, or very few would have been found next morning. His enemy frequented the fairs on the north side of Forth, well mounted, paying at inns and ferries like a gentleman, and attended by bands of gillies or young pupils, whose green coats, cudgels, and knives, were sufficiently feared by the visitors of Queensferry and Dumfermline. The gipsey chieftain had also a grim cur of the true black-faced breed, famous for collecting and driving off sheep, and therefore distinguished by his own name. In the darkest cleughs or ravines, or in the deepest snow, this faithful animal had never been known to abandon the stolen flock intrusted to his care, or to fail in tracing a fugitive. But as sight and strength failed him, the four-footed chieftain was deposed, imprisoned in a byre loft, and finally sentenced to be drowned. From this trifling incident arose the most material crisis of his patron's fate.

Between the years of 1715 and 1745, many changes occurred in Captain Gordon and his enemy. The Laird of Drummond Keep had lost his only son in the battle of Preston Pans, and was now lingering in a desolate old age, mistrusted by the government, and abhorred by the subdued Jacobites. Gordon's banded marauders had provoked the laws too far, and some sanguinary battles among themselves threatened the downfall of his own power. It was only a few nights after a desperate affray with the Linlithgow gipseys, that the event occurred which begins my narrative. He had been long lying in ambush to find access to his enemy's stronghold, intending to

terminate his vagrant career by an exploit which should satisfy his avarice and his revenge. Equipped, as I have said, in a Cameronian trooper's garb, he returned to the foot of the cliff from whence he had seen the basket descending to convey Gavin Cameron; and climbing up its rough face with the activity required by mountain warfare, he hung among furze and broken rocks like a wild cat, till he found the crevice through which the basket had seemed to issue. It was artfully concealed by tufts of heather; but creeping on his hands and knees, he forced his way into the interior. There the deepest darkness confounded him, till he laid his hand on a chain, which he rightly guessed to be the same he had seen hanging on the side of the lake when Cameron landed. One end was coiled up, but he readily concluded that the end must have some communication with the keep, and he followed its course till he found it inserted in what seemed a subterraneous wall. A crevice behind the pully admitted a gleam of light, and striving to raise himself sufficiently to gain a view through it, he leaned too forcibly on the chain, which sounded a bell. Its unexpected sound would have startled an adventurer less daring, but Gordon had prepared his stratagem, and had seen, through the loophole in the wall, that no powerful enemy was to be dreaded. Gavin Cameron was sitting alone in the chamber within, with his eyes fixed on the wood-ashes in his immense hearth. At the hollow sound of the bell he cast them fearfully round, but made no attempt to rise, though he stretched his hand towards a staff which lay near him. Gordon saw the tremor of palsy and dismay in his limbs, and putting his lips to the crevice, repeated, "father!" in a low and supplicating tone. That word made Gavin shudder; but when Gordon added, "Father! father! save me!" he sprang to the wall, drew back the iron bolts of a narrow door invisible to any eye but his own, and gave admission to the muffled man, who leaped eagerly in. Thirty years had passed since Gavin Cameron had seen his son, and Gordon well knew how many rumours had been spread,



that the younger Cameron had not really perished, though the ruin of the Chevalier's cause rendered his concealment necessary. Gavin's hopes and love had been all revived by these rumours, and the sudden apparition, the voice, the appeal for mercy, had full effect on the bereaved father's imagination. The voice, eyes, and figure of Gordon, resembled his son; all else might and must be changed by thirty years. He wept like an infant on his shoulder, grasped his hand a hundred times, and forgot to blame him for the rash disloyalty he had shown to his father's cause. His pretended son told him a few strange events which had befallen him during his long banishment since 1715, and was spared the toil of inventing many, by the fond delight of the old man, weeping and rejoicing over his prodigal restored. He only asked by what happy chance he had discovered his secret entrance, and whether any present danger threatened him. Gordon answered the first question with the mere truth, and added, almost truly, that he feared nothing but the emissaries of the government, from whom he could not be better concealed than in Drummond Keep. Old Cameron agreed with joyful eagerness, but presently said, "Allan my boy, we must trust Annet; she's too near kin to betray ye, and ye were to have been her spouse." Then he explained that his niece was the only person in his household acquainted with the basket and the bell; that by her help he could provide a mattress and provisions for his son, but without it, would be forced to hazard the most dangerous inconveniences. Gordon had not foreseen this proposal, and it darkened his countenance; but in another instant his imagination seized on a rich surfeit of revenge. He was commanded to return into the cavern passage, while his nominal father prepared his kinswoman for her new guest and he listened greedily to catch the answers Annet gave to her deceived uncle's tale. He heard the hurry of her steps, preparing, as he supposed, a larger supper for the old laird's table, with the simplicity and hospitality of a highland maiden. He was not mistaken. When the bannocks, and grouse, and claret, were arranged, Cam-

eron presented his restored son to the mistress of the feast. Gordon was pale and dumb as he looked upon her. Accustomed to the wild haggard forms that accompanied his banditti in half female attire, ruling their miserable offspring with iron hands, and the voices of giants, his diseased fancy had fed itself on an idea of something beautiful, but only in bloom and youth. He expected and hoped to see a child full of playful folly, fit for him to steal away and hide in his den as a sport for his secret leisure; but a creature so fair, calm, and saintly, he had long since forgotten how to imagine. She came before him like a dream of some lovely picture remembered in his youth, and with her came some remembrance of his former self. The good old laird, forgetting that his niece had been but a child, and his son a stripling, when they parted, indulged the joy of his heart by asking Annet a thousand times, whether she could have remembered her betrothed husband, and urging his son, since he was still unmarried, to pledge his promised bride. Gordon was silent from a feeling so new, that he could not comprehend his own purposes; and Annet from fear, when she observed the darkness and the fire that came by turns into her kinsman's face. . . . But there was yet another peril to encounter. Cameron's large hearth was attended by a dog, which roused itself when supper appeared, and Gordon instantly recognized his banished favourite. Black Chieftain fixed his eyes on his former master, and with a growl that delighted him more than any caresses would have done, remained sulkily by the fire. On the other side of the ingle, under the shelter of the huge chimney-arch, sat a thing hardly human, but entitled, from extreme old age, to the protection of the owner. This was a woman bent entirely double, with no apparent sense of sight or hearing, though her eyes were fixed on the spindle she was twirling; and sometimes when the laird raised his voice, she put her lean hand on the curch or hood that covered her ears. "Do you not remember poor old Marian Moome?"\*

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\* Nurse or foster-mother.

said Annet, and the laird led his supposed son towards the superannuated crone, though without expecting any mark of recognition. Whether she had noticed any thing that had passed, could not be judged from her laugh; and she had almost ceased to speak. Therefore, as if only dumb domestic animals had been sitting by his hearth, Cameron pursued his arrangements for his son's safety, advising him to sleep composedly in the wooden panelled bed that formed a closet of this chamber, without regarding the half living skeleton, who never left the corner of the ingle. He gave him his blessing, and departed, taking with him his niece and the key of this dreary room, promising to return and watch by his side. He came back in a few moments, and while the impostor couched himself on his mattrass, took his station again by the fire, and fell asleep, overcome with joy and fatigue.

The embers went out by degrees, while the highland Jachimo lay meditating how he should prosper by his stratagem's success. Plunder and bloodshed had formed no part of a scheme which included far deeper craft and finer revenge. He knew his life was forfeit, and his person traced by officers of justice; and he hoped, by representing himself as the son of Cameron, to secure all the benefits of his influence, and the sanctuary of his roof; and if both should fail to save him from justice, the disgrace of his infamous life and death would fall on the family of his father's murderer. So from his earliest youth he had considered Cameron: and the hand of that drowned father uplifted in vain for help, was always present to his imagination. Once, during this night, he had thought of robbing Cameron of his money and jewels by force, and carrying off his niece, as a hostage for his safety. But this part of his purpose had been deadened by a new and strange sense of holiness in beauty, which had made his nature human again. Yet he thought of himself with bitterness and ire, when he compared her sweet society, her uncle's kindness, and the comforts of a domestic hearth, with the herd which he now resembled; and this self-hatred stung him to rise and depart without

molesting them. He was prevented by the motion of a shadow on the opposite wall, and in an instant the dog who had so sullenly shunned his notice, leaped from beneath his bed, and seized the throat of the hag as she crept near it. She had taken her sleeping master's dirk, and would have used it like a faithful highland servant, if Black Chieftain's fangs had not interposed to rescue Gordon. The broad copper brooch which fastened her plaid, saved her from suffocation, and clapping her hands, she yelled, "a Gordon! a Gordon!" till the roof rung.

Gavin Cameron awoke, and ran to his supposed son's aid, but the mischief was done. The doors of the huge chamber were broken open, and a troop of men in the king's uniform, and two messengers with official staves, burst in together. These people had been sent by the Lord Provost in quest of the gipsy chieftain, with authority to demand quarters in Drummond's Tower, near which they knew he had hiding-places. Gordon saw he had plunged into the very nest of his enemies, but his daring courage supported him. He refused to answer to the name of Gordon, and persisted in calling himself Cameron's son. He was carried before the High Court of Justiciary, and the importance of the indictment fixed the most eager attention on his trial. Considering the celebrity, the length, and the publicity of the gipsy chief's career, it was thought his person would have been instantly identified; but the craft he had used in tinging his hair, complexion and eyebrows, and altering his whole appearance to resemble Cameron's son, baffled the many who appeared as his accusers. So much had Gordon attached his colleagues, or so strong was the Spartan spirit of fidelity and obedience amongst them, that not one appeared to testify against him. Gavin Cameron and his niece were cited to give their evidence on oath; and the miserable father, whatever doubts might secretly arise in his mind, dared not hazard a denial which might sacrifice his own son's life. He answered in an agony which his grey hairs made venerable, that he believed the accused to be his son, but left it to himself to prove what

he had no means of manifesting. Annet was called next to confirm her uncle's account of her cousin's mysterious arrival ; but when the accused turned his eyes upon her, she fainted, and could not be recalled to speech. This swoon was deemed the most affecting evidence of his identity ; and, finally, the dog was brought into court. Several witnesses recognized him as the prime forger of the Gordon gipseys ; but Cameron's steward, who swore that he saved him by chance from drowning in the loch, also proved ; that the animal never showed the smallest sagacity in herding sheep, and had been kept by his master's fireside as a mere household guard, distinguished by his ludicrous attention to music. When shown at the bar, the crafty and conscious brute seemed wholly unacquainted with the prisoner, and his surly silence was received as evidence by the crowd. The Lord High Commissioner summed up the whole, and the chancellor of the jury declared, that a majority almost amounting to unanimity, acquitted the accused. Gordon, under the name of Cameron, was led from the bar with acclamations ; but at the threshold of the session's court, another pursuivant awaited him with an arrest for high treason, as an adherent to the Pretender in arms. The enraged crowd would have rescued him by force, and made outcries which he silenced with a haughty air of command, desiring to be led back to his judges. He insisted in such cool and firm language, and his countenance had in it such a rare authority, that after some dispute about the breach of official order, he was admitted into a room where two or three of the chief lords of session, and the chancellor of the jury, were assembled. Though still fettered both on hands and feet, he stood before them in an attitude of singular grace, and made this speech as it appears in the language of the record.

“ The people abroad would befriend me, because they love the cause they think I have served ; and my judges, I take leave to think, would pity me, if they saw an old man and a tender woman pleading again for my life. But I will profit in nothing by my judges' pity, nor the peo-

ple's love for a Cameron. I have triumphed enough to-day, since I have baffled both my accusers and my jury. I am Gordon, chief of the wandering tribes; but since you have acquitted me on "soul and conscience," you cannot try me again; and, since I am not Cameron, you cannot try me for Cameron's treasons. I have had my revenge of my father's enemy, and I might have had more. He once felt the *dead grip*\* of a Gordon, and he should have felt it again if he had not called me his son, and blessed me as my father once did. If you had sent me to the Grass-market, I would have been hanged as a Cameron, for it is better for one of that name than mine to die the death of a dog; but, since you have set me free, I will live free as a Gordon."

This extraordinary appeal astonished and confounded his hearers. They were ashamed of their mistaken judgment, and dismayed at the dilemma. They could neither prove him to be a Cameron or a Gordon, except by his own avowal, which might be false either in the first or second cause; and after some consultation with the secretary of state, it was agreed to transport him privately to France. But on his road to a seaport, his escort was attacked by a troop of wild men and women, who fought with the fury of Arabs till they had rescued their leader, whose name remained celebrated till within the last sixty years as the most formidable of the gipsey tribe.

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\* The grasp of a drowning man.

## WAT PRINGLE O' THE YAIR.

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ON Thursday evening, the 11th of September, 1645, Walter Pringle, an old soldier, came to the farm-house of Fauldshape, then possessed by Robert Hogg, and tapping at the window, he called out, "Are ye waukin, Robin?"

"No, I think hardly," said Robin. "But ance I hae rubbit my een an considered a wee bit, I'll tell ye whether I'm waking or no. But wha is it that's so kind as to speer?"

"An auld friend, Robin, an' ane that never comes t'ye wi' a new face. But, O Robin, bestir yoursel, for it's mair than time. Your kye are a' gane an' a good part o' your sheep stock, an your son Will's on in the bed where he used to lie, an' a' is in outer confusion."

"Deil's i' the body. Did ever any mortal hear sic a story as that? Wha are ye ava?"

"It's me, Robin, it's me."

"Oo, I dare say it is, I hae little doubt o' that; but who me is, that's another question. I shall soon see, however."

By this time Robin was hurrying on his clothes, and opening the door, there he found Wat Pringle leaning on the window sill;—he asked him what was the matter.

"O Robin, Robin! ye hae been lying snorkin' an sleepin' there, little thinkin' o' the judgment that's come ower ye! That bloody monster Montrose, for whom we

were a' obliged to gang into mourning for, an' keep a fast day. That man wha has murdered more than a hunder thousand good Protestant Christians, is come wi' his great army o' Irish an' highland papists, an' they hae laid down their leaguer at the head o' Phillip-haugh there, down aneith ye, an' the hale country is to be herried stoop an' roop; an' as your's is ane o' the nearest farms, they hae begun wi' you. Your kyes a' gane, for I met them an' challenged them; and the reavers speered gin the beasts were mine, an' I said they were not but they were honest Robin Hogg's, a man that could unco ill afford to lose them. 'Well, let him come to head-quarters to-morrow,' said one, 'and he shall be paid for both them and the sheep in good hard gold.'

" 'In good hard steel you mean, I suppose,' said I, 'as that is the way Montrose generally pays his debts.'

" 'And the best way too for a set of whining rebel covenanters,' said he.

" 'We are obliged to you for your kind and generous intentions, captain,' says I. 'There is no doubt but that men must have meat, if it is to be got in the country. But I can tell you, that you will not find a single friend in all this country except Lord Traquair. He's the man for you. But surrounded as he is wi' true covenanters, he has very little power; therefore the sooner ye set off to the borders o' the popish an' prelatie countries, it will be the better for ye.'

" 'Perhaps you are not far in the wrong, old carl,' said he; 'I suspect every man in this country for a rebel and a traitor.'

" 'You do not know where you are, or what you are doing,' said I; for I wanted to detain him, always thinking your son Will would come to the rescue. 'You have only fought with the Fife baillies and their raw militia, an' the northern lowlanders, wha never could fight ony. But, Billy, ye never fought the true borderers! ye never crossed arms wi' the Scotts, the Pringles, the Kers, and the Elliots, an' a hunder mae sma' but brave clans. Dear man! ye see that I'm nothing but an auld



broken down soldier; but I'm a Pringle, and afore the morn at noon, I could bring as many men at my back as would cut your great papish army a' to ribbons.'

" ' Well said, old Pringle !' said he; ' and the sooner you bring your army of borderers the better. I shall be most happy to meet with you.'

" ' And now you know my name is auld Wat Pringle,' said I, ' gin we meet again, wha am I to speer for?'

" ' Captain Nisbet,' said he, ' or Sir Philip Nisbet, any of them you please. Good b'ye, old Pringle.' And now Robin, it is in vain to pursue the kye, for they're in the camp, an' a' slaughtered by this time; it was on the top of Carterhaugh-Cants that I met wi' them, an' the sodgers war just deeing for sheer hunger. But, O man, I think the sheep might be rescued by a good dog. Where in the world is your son Will?"

" O, after the hizzies, I dare say. But if he kend there had been ony battling asteer, the lasses might hae lien their lanes for him the night. But I'll gang an' look after my kye, an' gie in my claim, for there will be mae claims than mine to gie in the night. Foul fa' the runnagate papish lowns, for I thought they had gane up Teviotdale."

" Sae we a' thought, Robin; but true it is that there they are landit this afternoon, and the mist has been sae pitch dark, that the Selkirk folks never kend o' them till the troopers came to the cross. But it seems that he is rather a discreet man, that Montrose, for he wadna' let his foot soldiers, his Irish, an' highlanders, come into Selkirk at a', for fear o' plundering the hale town, but sent them down by Hearthope-Burn, an' through at the fit o' the Yarrow; an' there they lie in three divisions, wi' their faces to the plain, an' their backs to the river an' the forest, sae that whaever attacks them, maun attack them face to face. Their general an' his horsemen, who pretend a' to be a kind o' gentlemen, are lying in Selkirk."

" O, plague on them! they are the blackest sight ever came into the forest. Ye never brought a piece of as bad news a' your days as this, Wat Pringle. I wad-

nae wonder that they lay in that strong place until they eat up every cow and sheep in Ettrick Forest, an' then what's to become o' us a.' Wae be to them for a set o' greedily hallions. I wish they were a' o'er the Cairn o' Mount again."

"But Robin Hogg, an' ye can keep a secret, I can tell you ane o' the maist extraordinary that you ever heard a' the days o' your life, but mind it is atween you an' me, and ye're no to let it o'er the tap o' your tongue afore the morn at twal o'clock."

"O, that's naething! I'll keep it a month if it's of any consequence."

"Weel ye see as I was coming doiting up aneath Galashiels this afternoon, among the mist which was sae dark that I could hardly see my finger afore me,—it was sae dark that I was just thinking to mysel it was rather judgment-like awsome, and that Providence had some great end to accomplish, for it was really like the Egyptian darkness, 'darkness which might be felt.' An' as I was gaun hingin down my head, an' thinkin what convulsion was next to break out in this terrible time o' bloodshed an' slaughter,—God be my witness if I didna hear a roar and a sound coming along the ground, that gart a' the hairs on my head creep, for I thought it was a earthquake, an' I fand the very yird dinning aneath my feet, an' what should I meet on the instant but a body o' cavalry coming at full trot, an' a' mountit in glittering armour, an' wi' the darkness o' the mist the horses an' men lookit twice as big an' tall as they were. I never saw a grander like sight a' my life. 'Halt!' cried the captain of the vanguard. 'Hilloa! old man, come hither! Are you a scout or watcher here?'

"'No, I am neither,' said I.

"'Be sure of what you say,' returned he, 'for we have cut down every man whom we have met in this darkness, and, with our general's permission, I must do the same with you.'

"'Hout, man!' says I again, 'ye'll surely not cut down an auld broken soldier gaun seekin' his bread?'

“‘Then if you would save your life, tell me instantly where Montrose and his army are lying?’

“‘But I maun first ken whether I’m speaking to friends or foes,’ said I, ‘for I suspect that you are Montrose’s men, an’ if you be, you will find yoursels nae very welcome guests in this country; an’ I hae been ower lang a soldier to set my life at a bawbee, when I thought my country or religion was in danger.’

“‘So you have been a soldier then?’

“‘That I hae to my loss! I was in the Scottish army all the time it was in England, and for a’ the blood that was shed we might as weel hae staid at hame.’

“‘And are you a native of this district?’

“‘Yes, I am. I am standing within a mile of the place where I was born and bred.’

“‘Oho! then you may be a valuable acquaintance. Allow me to conduct you to our general.’

“The regiments passed us, and I might be deceived by the mist, but I think there might be about ten thousand of them, the finest soldiers and horses I ever saw. The general was riding with some gentlemen in front of the last division, and whenever I saw him I knew well the intrepid and stern face of Sir David Lesly. I made a soldier’s obeisance, and a proud man I was when he recognised me, and named me at the very first. He then took me aside, and asked if I could tell him in what direction Montrose was lying?

“‘He’s lying within three Scot’s miles o’ you, general,’ said I. ‘I can speak out freely now for I ken I’m among friends. But strange to say you have turned your back on him, and have gone clean by him.’

“‘I know that,’ said he; ‘but I have taken this path to avoid and cheat the Earl of Traquair’s outposts, whose charge it is, I understand, to watch every road leading towards the army; but of course would never think of guarding those that led by it.’ He then took out a blotch of a plan which he had made himself from some information he had got about Lothian, and asked me a hundred questions, all of which I answered to the point,

and at last said, 'Well, Pringle, you must meet me at the Lindean church to-morrow before the break of day, for I have not a man in my army acquainted with the passes of the country, and your punctual attendance may be of more benefit to the peace and reformed religion of Scotland than you can comprehend.'

"'I'll come, General Lesly, I'll come,' said I, 'if God spare me life and health; an' I'll put you on a plan too by which yon army o' outlandish papishes will never be a morsel to you. We hae stood some hard stoures thegither afore now, general, an' we'll try another yet. In the meantime, I maun gang ower the night, an' see exactly how they're lying.' An' here I am, sae that ye see, Robin, there will be sic a day on that haugh-head the morn as never was in Ettrick forest sin' the warld stood up. Aih mercy on us, what o' bloody bouks will be lying hereabouts or the morn at e'en!"

"Wat Pringle, ye gar my heart grue, to think about brethren mangling an' butchering ane another in this quiet an' peaceable wilderness! I wonder where that great bloustering blockhead, my son Will, can be. Sorra that he had a woman buckled on his back, for he canna bide frae them either night or day. If he kenn'd General Lesly were here, he wad be at him before twal o'clock at night. He rode a' the way to Carlisle to get a smash at the papishes, and a' that he got was a bloody snout. He's the greatest ram-stam gomerall that I ever saw, for deil haet he's feared for under the sun. Hilloa! here he comes, like the son of Nimshi. Whaten a gate o' riding's that, ye fool?"

"Oh, father, is this you? Are you an' auld Wat gaun down to join Montrose's army? Twa brow sodgers ye'll make."

"Better than ony headlong gowk like you. But I'm gaun on a mair melancholy subject; they have, it seems, driven a' our kye to the camp."

"Ay, an' cuttit them a' into collops lang syne. I followed an' agreed wi' them about the price, an' saw our

bonny beasts knocked down, and a great part o' them eaten afore the life was weel out o' them."

"Deil be i' their greedy gains! We're ruined, son Will! we're ruined! What will Harden say to us? Ye said ye had made a price wi' them: did ye get any o' their siller?"

"D'ye think I was to come away wanting it? I wad hae foughten every mother's son o' them afore I had letten them take my auld father's kye for nothing. But indeed they never offered—only they were perishing o' hunger, an' coudna be put aff."

"Come, now, tell us a' about the army, Will;" said Pringle? "Are they weel clad and weel armed?"

"Oo ay, they're weel clad an' weel armed, but rather ill off for shoon. Ilka man has a sword an' a gun, a knapsack an' a durk."

"And have they ony cannons?"

"Ay, a kind o' lang sma' things; no like the Carlisle cannons though; and ye never saw ony thing sae capitally placed as they are. But nae thanks to them, for they were trenches made to their hand by some of the auld black Douglasses, an' they hae had naething ado but just to clear them out a bit. Sae they hae a half-moon on the hill on each side, an' three lines in the middle, with impervious woods an' the impassable linns of the Yarrow close at their backs, whether they loss the battle or win the battle, they are safe there."

"Dinna be ower sure, Willie, till ye see. But think ye they haenae gotten haud o' none o' your father's sheep?"

"O, man, I hae a capital story to tell you about that. Ye see when I was down at the lines argle-bargaining about my father's kye, I sees six highlanders gaun straight away for our hill, an' suspecting their intent, I was terribly in the fidgets, but the honest man, their commissary, handit me the siller, an' without counting it I raimed it into my pouch, an' off I gallops my whole might; but afore I won Skeilshaugh they had six or eight scores o' my father's wedders afore them, and just near the

Newark swire, I gae my hand ae wave, an' a single whistle wi' my mou' to my dog Ruffler, an' off he sprang like an arrow out of a bow, an' quickly did he reave the highlanders o' their drove; he brought them back out through them like corn through a riddle, springing ower their shoulders. I was like to dee wi' laughin' when I saw the bodies rinnin' bufflin' through the heather in their philabegs. They were sae enraged at the poor animal, that two or three o' them fired at him, but that put him far madder, for he thought they were shooting at hares, an' ran yauffin an' whiskin' an' huntin' till he set a' the sheep ower the hill, rinnin' like wild deers, an' the hungry highlanders had e'en to come back wi' their fingers i' their mouths. But the Scotts an' the Pringles are a' rising with one consent to defend their country, an' there will be an awfu' stramash soon."

"Maybe sooner than ye think, Willie Hogg," said Pringle.

"For goodness' sake, haud your tongue," cried Robin, "an' dinna tell Will ought about you, else he'll never see the morn at e'en; an' I canna do verra weel wantin him, gowk as he is. Come away hame, callant; our house may need your strong arm to defend it afore the morn."

Will did as his father bade him, and Wat Pringle, who was well known to every body thereabouts, went over to the town of Selkirk to pick up what information he could. There he found the townsmen in the utmost consternation, but otherwise all was quiet, and not a soul seemed to know of General Lesly's arrival in the vicinity. After refreshing himself well, he sauntered away down to the Lindean kirk before the break of day, and as soon as he went over Brigland hill, his ears were saluted by an astounding swell of sacred music, which at that still and dark hour of the morning had a most sublime effect. Lesly's whole army had joined in singing a psalm, and then one of their chaplains, of whom they had plenty, said a short prayer.

Lesly was rejoiced when Wat Pringle was announced, and even welcomed him by shaking him by the hand,

and instantly asked how they were to proceed. "I can easily tell you that, General," said Wat, "they are lying wi' their backs close to the wood on the linns o' Yarrow, an' they will fire frae behind their trunks in perfect safety, an' should ye break them up they will be in ae minute's time where nane o' your horse can follow them, sae that ye maun bring them frae their position, an' then hae at them. Gie me the half o' your troops an' your best captain at the head o' them, and I'll lead them by a private an' hidden road into the rear o' the Irish an' Highlanders' army, while ride you straight on up the level haugh. Then, as soon as you hear the sound of a bugle frae the Harehead-wood answer it with a trumpet, and rush on to the battle. But by the time you have given one or two fires sound a retreat, turn your backs and fly, and then we will rush into their strong trenches, and then between our two fires they are gone every mother's son of them."

Now I must tell the result in my own way and my own words, for though that luckless battle has often been described it has never been truly so, and no man living knows half so much about it as I do. My grandfather, who was born in 1691, and whom I well remember, was personally acquainted with several persons about Selkirk who were eye-witnesses of the battle of Philliphaugh. Now, though I cannot say that I ever heard him recount the circumstances, yet his son William, my uncle, who died lately at the age of ninety-six, has gone over them all to me times innumerable, and pointed out the very individual spots where the chief events happened. It was at the Lingly Burn where the armies separated, and from thence old Wat Pringle, well mounted on a gallant steed, led off two thousand troopers up Phillhope, over at the Fowlshiel's swire, and then by a narrow and difficult path through the Harehead-wood. When they came close behind Montrose's left wing, every trooper tied his horse to a bush and sounded the bugle, which was answered by Lesly's trumpets. This was the first and only warning which the troops of Montrose got of the approach of their powerful enemy. The men were astonished.

They had begun to pack up for a march, and had not a general officer with them, while Lesly's dragoons were coming up Philliphaugh upon them at full canter three lines deep. They however hurried into their lines, and the two wings into platoons, and kneeling behind their breast-works, received the first fire of the cavalry in perfect safety, which they returned right in their faces, and brought down a good number of both troopers and horses. Lesly's lines pretended to waver and reel, and at the second fire from the Highlanders, they wheeled and fled. Then the shouts from Montrose's lines made all the hills and woods ring, and flinging away their plaids and guns, they drew their swords and pursued down the haugh like madmen, laughing and shouting "Kilsythe for ever!" They heard indeed some screams from the baggage behind the lines, but in that moment of excitation regarded them not in the least. This was occasioned by Wat Pringle and his two thousand troopers on foot rushing into the enemy's trenches and opening a dreadful fire on their backs, while at the same time General Lesly wheeled about and attacked them in front. The fate of the day was then decided in a few minutes. The men thus inclosed between two deadly fires were confounded and dismayed, for the most of them had left their arms and ammunition behind them, and stood there half naked with their swords in their hands. Had they rushed into the impervious recesses of the Harehead-wood, they would not only have been freed from any possible pursuit, but they would have found two thousand gallant steeds standing tied all in a row, and they might all have escaped. But at that dreadful and fatal moment they espied their general coming galloping up the other side of the Ettrick at the head of three hundred cavalry, mostly gentlemen. This apparition broke up David Lesly's lines somewhat, and enabled a great body of the foot to escape from the sanguine field, but then they rushed to meet Montrose,—the very worst direction they could take; yet this movement saved his life, and the lives of many of his friends. The men in the trenches fled to



the wood for their horses. Lesly, with his left battalion, galloped to the Mill-ford to intercept Montrose, so that the field at that time was in considerable confusion. Montrose, seeing his infantry advancing at a rapid pace in close column, hovered on the other side of the river till they came nigh, and then rushing across, he attacked the enemy first with carabines, and then sword in hand. A desperate scuffle ensued here,—Montrose, by the assistance of his foot behind, forced his way through Lesly's army, with the loss of about a hundred of his brave little band, and soon reached the forest, where every man shifted for himself, the rallying point being Traquair. But here the remainder of the foot suffered severely before they could gain the wood.

One girl and a child were suffered to escape from Montrose's camp, by Lesly's party, owing to her youth and singular beauty, which made the whole corps, officers and men, unanimous in saving her. She retired into the Harehead-wood with the child in her arms, weeping bitterly. Old Wat Pringle kept his eye on the girl, and followed in the same direction shortly after. He found her sitting on a grey stone suckling the baby, always letting the tears drop upon his chubby cheek, and kissing them off again.

“I'm feared, poor woman, that ye'll find but cauld quarters here,” said Wat. “If ye hae nae siller I'll gie ye some, for I'm no that scarce the night, an' as I hae nae muckle need o't I'll blithely share it wi' you.”

“I thank you kindly, honest man,” said she, “but I have some money, only there is such a rage against our people in this quarter, that neither woman nor child is a moment safe from outrage and murder. I'll go any where for safety to myself and my hapless baby. He is the only tie now that I have to life, and I cannot tell you the thousandth part of the anxiety I feel for him.”

“Nae doubt, nae doubt; folks ain are aye dear to them, an' the mair helpless the dearer. I hae a bit cot o' my ain, and a daughter that leeves wi' me: gin I could get ye hame, I could answer for your safety. Think ye

the bairn wad let me carry him? see gin ye could pit him intil my pock."

"O mercy on us!"

"Na, but it's no sic an ill place as ye trow. I hae carried mony a valuable thing in there. But I'm no sayin I hae ever carried aught sae valuable as that cal-lant. Poor little chield, if he be spared he'll maybe be somebody yet."

This bag of old Wat's was one something like a sports-man's bag of the largest dimensions, for he was a sort of general carrier to all the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and a welcome guest in all the principal houses. So the young woman, smiling through tears at the conceit, placed her boy in old Wat's bag with his head out, and as she walked beside him, patted and spoke to him. He was quite delighted, and soon fell sound asleep; and in that way they crossed Phillhope, and reached Wat's cot before sunset, which seems to have been near where the mansion-house of Yair now stands. As they were going over the hill, Wat tried all that he could to find out who she was, but she parried every enquiry, till at length he said, "I'm very muckle interested in you, my bonny woman, an' sae will every ane be that sees you. Now, my name's auld Wat Pringle, what am I to ca' you?"

"O, you may call me either May, June, or July; which you please."

"Then I'll ca' you by the ane o' the three that's nearest us, I'll ca' ye July, an' suppose I pit an a to it, it winna spoil the name sair."

"I fear you know more of me than I wish you did. That is, indeed, my Christian name."

"I suspectit as muckle. I find out a great deal o' things gaun dodgin about the country. An' what do ye ca' yon thing i' your country that the fo'ks are working at up in the meadow?" She made no answer, but held down her head, while he continued, "O, never mind, never mind, ye're in a bad scrape an' a dangerous country for you, but ye're safe enough wi' auld Wat Pringle."

He wadna gie up a dog to be hanged that lippeden till him, let be a young lady an' her bairnie wha are innocent of a' the blood sae lately spilt."

"I shall never forget your disinterested kindness while I have life. Pray, is your wife not living, Walter?"

"Hem—hem!—Na, she's no leevin."

"Is it long since you lost her?"

"Hem—hem!—Why, lady, an' the truth maun be tauld, I never had her yet. But I hae a daughter that was laid to my charge when I was a young chap, an' I'm sure I wished her at Jericho an' the ends o' the earth, but there never was a father mair the better of a daughter. Fo'ks shoudna do ill that gude may come they say, yet I hae been muckle behaden to my Jenny, for she's a good kind-hearted body, an' that ye'll find."

Julia (for we shall now call her by her own name) accordingly found Jenny Pringle a neat coarsish-made girl, about thirty, her hair hanging in what Sir Walter Scott would have called elf-locks, but which old Will Laidlaw denominated pennyworths, all round her cheeks and neck, her face all of one dim greasy colour, but there was a mildness in her eye and smile that spoke the inherent kindness of the heart. She received Julia in perfect silence, merely setting the best seat for her, but with such a look of pity and benevolence as made a deep impression on the heart of the sufferer, more especially the anxiety she shewed about the child; for all sorts of human distress, and helpless infancy in particular, melt the female heart. Julia's great concern was how to get home to the north to her friends, but Wat advised her seriously to keep by her humble shelter until the times were somewhat settled, for without a passport from the conquerors there was no safety at that time of even journeying an hour, so irritated was the country against the royal party, whom they conceived to be all papists, spoilers, and murderers, and rejoiced in rooting them out. "But as the troops pass this place early to-morrow," continued Wat, "I'll try if the general will grant me a passport for you. I did him some good, an' though he paid me wi' a purse

o' goud, ae good turn deserves another. I fancy I maun ask it for dame Julia Hay?"

"Yes, you may; but I know you will not receive it. Indeed it is far from being safe to let him know I am here. But O, above all things, try to learn what is become of my husband and father."

Wat waited the next day at the ford, for there were no regular roads or bridges in this country at that period. The military road up Gala water, or Strath-Gall, as it was then called, crossed the water sixty-three times. When General Lesly saw his old friend, he reined his steed and asked what he wanted with him. Wat told him that he wanted a passport to Edinburgh for a young girl named Julia Hay, and her baby.

"What! lady Julia Hay?" said Lesly.

Wat answered that he supposed it was she. The general shook his head, and held up his hand. "Ah! Pringle, Pringle, she is a bird of a bad feather," cried he; "a blossom of a bad tree! Were it not for the sanctity of her asylum under your roof-tree, I should give her and her little papist brat a passport that would suit her deserts better than any other. Give my compliments to her, and tell her that we have both her father and husband in custody, and that they will both be executed in less than a fortnight. You will see her husband there riding manacled and bound to a dragoon. Do you think I would be guilty of such a déreliection from my duty as grant a safe conduct to such as she? I shall tell you, as a true covenanted Protestant soldier, what you should do. Just toss her and her bantling over that linn into Tweed." And then with a grim Satanic smile, he put spurs to his charger, and left the astonished old soldier standing like a statue in utter consternation; and when that division of the army had all passed, Wat was still standing in the same position looking over the linn.

"Ay, General Lesly! an' these are your tender mercies! Od bless us, an' we get sic orders frae a covenanted Christian soldier, what are we to expect frae a pagan, or a neegur, or a papisher, the warst o' them a'? But thae

ceevil wars seem to take away a' naturality frae among mankind." Thus talking to himself, Wat went home on very bad terms with General Lesly.

But here he committed a great mistake. He did not intend that Julia should learn the worst of his news, but in the bitterness of his heart he told the whole to his daughter Jenny, that she might see in what predicament their hapless lodger stood, and deprecate the awards of the general. Now, owing to the smallness of the cottage and Wat's agitation, Julia heard some part of what he said, and she would not let poor Jenny have any rest until she told her the whole; pretending, that the injuries she had suffered from the world had so seared every feeling of the soul, that nothing could affect either her health or her procedure through life. That she had laid her account to suffer the worst that man could inflict, and she would shew her country what a woman could bear for the sake of those she loved. Alas! she did not estimate aright the power of that energy on which she relied, for when she heard that her father and husband were both in custody, and both to be executed in less than a fortnight, her first motion was to hug her child to her bosom with a convulsive grasp, and then sitting up in the bed and throwing up her hands wildly, she uttered a heart-rending shriek, and fell backward in a state of insensibility.

Now came Jenny Pringle's trial, and a hard one it was. The child was both affrighted and hurt, and was screaming violently; and there was the young and beautiful mother lying in a swoon, apparently lifeless. But Jenny did not desert her post; she carried the child to her father, and attended on the lady herself, who went out of one faint into another during the whole day, and when these ceased, she was not only in a burning fever, but a complete and painful delirium, staring wildly, waving her arms, and uttering words of utter incoherence, but often verging on sublimity. "Without the head!" she exclaimed that very night. "Do the rebel ruffians think to send my beloved husband into heaven without the head?"

Ay, they would send him to the other place if they could!—but I see a sight which they cannot see. I see my beautiful, my brave, my beloved husband, in the walks of angels, and his sunny locks waving in the breeze of heaven. O sister, won't you wash my hands? See, they are all blood!—all blood! But no, no, don't wash my lips, for though I kissed the bloody head, I would not have it washed off, but to remain there for ever and ever. Sister, is it not dreadful to have nothing left of a beloved husband but his blood upon my lips? Yes, but I have, I have! I have this boy, his own boy, his father's likeness and name. Bring me my boy, sister, but first wash my hands, wash them, wash them."

They brought her the child, but she could not even see him, but stretched her arms in the contrary direction, and though he cried to be at her, they durst not trust her with him. So Jenny was obliged to bring him up with the pan and the spoon, as she called it, and the lady lay raving like a maniac. She slept none, and never seemed in the least to know where she was: yet these kind-hearted simple people never abated one item of their attention, but sat by her night and day. When the child slept, Jenny rocked the cradle and waited on the mother, and when he waked, old Wat held him on his knee and attended to the sufferer. This they did alternately, but they never once left either the lady or the baby by themselves. It was indeed a heavy task; but the interest that the father and daughter took in the forlorn and deserted pair cannot be described. Never was there a mother's love for her child more intense than Jenny's was for the little nursling thus cast so singularly on her care. He was, moreover, a fine engaging boy. As for old Wat, he had got more money than he and Jenny both could count, for Montrose's military chest was then very rich, owing not only to the spoil of all the great battles he had won, but the contributions raised in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and all the principal towns in the kingdom. And though Wat declared that "he never rippit ane o' the dead men's pouches, yet the siller poured

in on him that day like a shower o' hailstones." The officers and soldiers were quite aware that Wat's stratagem had secured them an easy victory, and every one gave him presents of less or more, and he conceived that it was all sent by heaven as a provision for the mother and child which had been predestined to come upon him for support; and he generously determined, as the steward of the Almighty, to devote his wealth solely to that purpose.

Meanwhile, lady Julia's distemper took a new and strange turn, for she began to sit up in the bed and speak distinctly and forcibly, and for a time Wat and Jenny listened to her with awe and astonishment, and said to one another that she was prophesying; but at length they heard that she was answering questions as before a judge with great fervour, till at length her malady drew to a crisis, and she prepared for submitting to the last sentence of the law. She made a regular confession as to a Catholic clergyman, and received an ideal absolution. She then made a speech as to a general audience, declaring that she gloried in the sentence pronounced against her, because that from her earliest remembrance she had made up her mind to lay down her life for her king and the holy Catholic church. She next, to their astonishment, asked to see her boy; and when they brought him, she weened she had parted with him only yesterday. She took him in her arms, embraced him, fondly kissed him, and once more shed a flood of tears over him, and those were the last as well as the first tears she had ever shed since the commencement of her woful delirium. Then blessing him in the names of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, and some of the apostles, she returned him decently to Jenny, kneeled, and recommended her soul to the mercy of her Redeemer, and then laying her head decently over an ideal block, was beheaded, and after a few shivers expired.

Wat and his daughter were paralysed with astonishment, but never doubted that it was a temporary fainting fit caused by some extraordinary excitement, but as no

signals of reanimation were visible, Wat ran for the town surgeon, an able and celebrated man; but all attempts at resuscitation proved fruitless, the vital principle was gone, the heart had ceased to beat, and the face was swollen and discoloured, the blood having apparently rushed to the head, on the belief that it was cut off, and would find a vent by the veins of the neck. In this extraordinary manner died the lovely Julia Hay, connected with some of the most noble and ancient families in Scotland, and the youthful wife of a valiant warrior, no one knowing where she was, but all her friends believing that she had perished in the general massacre at Philliphaugh, as they could trace her there, but no further.

Wat having no charge at home now save little Francis Hay, determined on leaving him and his kind foster-mother, Jenny, together for a space, and travel to the north to learn what had become of his darling boy's father; so on reaching Edinburgh he began his enquiries, but could find nobody that either knew or cared any thing about the matter. The general answer that he got was, that nobody heeded or cared about the lives of men in these days, for the two adverse parties were slaughtering, hanging, and cutting off each other's heads every day. He then sought out the common executioner, but he was a greatly, drumbly, drunken stump, and could tell him nothing. He said he did not even know the names of one-half of the people he put down, but that he was very willing to give him a touch of his office for the matter of half a merk, for he had of late thrown off many a prettier man. They were fine going times, he said, but he sometimes got very little pay, and sometimes uncommonly good from gentlemen for hanging them or cutting off their heads. And then the savage sot laughed at the conceit. He said the soldiers were conducting a great number of prisoners through the town one day, and they selected four out of the number, two Irish gentlemen and two from Argyleshire, and brought them to the scaffold without judge or jury, and were going to hang them. "No, masters," says I, "the perqui-



sites and emoluments of this board belong solely to me, and I cannot suffer a bungler to perform a work that requires experience and must be neatly done.' I said neatly done! and so it ought; and now, for a half-mutchkin of brandy, I'll show you how neatly I'll do it, either with the rope or maiden, if you dare trust me. Eh?—eh? What do you say to that?"

"Ye're a queer chap, man," said Wat; "but I hope never to come under your hands."

"You may come under worse hands though, friend. Many a good fellow has entertained the same hopes and been disappointed. Only half a merk. Nothing! Men's lives are cheaper than dung just now. I made only two silver merks out of all the four I was talking of; but when Montrose and his grand royalists come on, and then Argyle and his saints, oh! I shall have such fine going days! Well, I see you won't deal, so let's have the brandy at any rate; if you won't treat me I shall treat you, so that you shall not go back to the Border and say that Hangie's a bad fellow. He has seen better days, but brandy was his ruin. He was once condemned to be hung, and now he is what he is."

Wat ordered the brandy and paid for it, but took care to drink as little of it as possible, of which his associate did not much complain; and after they had finished, the executioner led him away a few doors across the Parliament-close, and bid him ask there for a Mr Carstairs, the clerk of the criminal court, who would give him what information he wanted; and by all means to return to him at the Blue Bell, and he would give him the history of a hangman.

Wat found Mr Carstairs,—a little old grey-headed man, with eyes like a ferret,—who answered to Wat's request that there were certain fees to be paid for every extract taken out of his journal, and until these were laid down he turned not up the alphabet. Wat asked what were the regular dues. "Joost thretty pennies, carle," said he, "an' I'll thank ye for the soom."

"Man, thretty pennies are unco mony peunies for an-

swering a ceevil an' necessary question, but I'll gi'e ye a siller merk."

"Aweel, aweel! Ye may try me wi' that i' the first place," said the clerk. Wat laid down the money, when the honest man returned him two-thirds of it. His thretty pennies came only to twopence-halfpenny, it being denominated in Scots money. He found there had been two Hays executed, a baronet and a young nobleman, but whether they were married or unmarried he could not tell, or any thing farther about them save that they had both lost their heads; of that he was certain. One of them had been on the roll for execution before, but was liberated by a party of his Catholic friends, but had lately suffered the last sentence of the law.

When the day of Sir Francis Hay's execution was stated he was struck dumb with amazement, for it turned out to be the very day and hour, and as near as could be calculated, the very instant when his poor devoted but distracted wife died by the same blow. I have heard and read of some things approximating to this, but never of a sympathetical feeling so decisive. Verily there "be many things in heaven and earth that are not dreamed of in man's philosophy."

Wat returned to the Blue Bell, but found his crony the hangman, too far gone to give him his history that night, which the other was rather curious to hear. The important story was begun many times, but like Corporal Trim's story of the King of Bohemia, it never got further. "Well, you see, my father was a baronet, Do you understand that?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"Because if you do not understand, it is needless for me to go on. A baronet, you see, is the head of the commons. Do you understand that? That is (*hick*) he is in the rank next to nobility."

"Yes, I think he is."

"Well (*hick*), well—I—think so—too. And my mother was an hon. right hon. though (*hick*). Do you un-

derstand that? Mind—take—that along with you (*hick*), else it is needless—for—me to proceed. I was the—third of five—devil of a boy—O, but I forgot to tell you that—my—father was a baronet—eh?—Would not like a tidd of the tow, would you? Ha—ha—ha!—would be grand sport!—Here's to General Lesly."

Wat was obliged to quit the son of the baronet, and the next morning he set out for the north, to see if there remained any chance for his dear little foster-son regaining his lands and honours. I am at fault here, for I do not know where the fine estate of Dalgetty lay. I think, perhaps, on the banks of the Don; for I know that Wat Pringle journeyed by Perth and through Strathmore. However, the first information he got concerning the object of his journey was from a pedlar of Aberdeen, whom he overtook at a place called Banchony-Fernan, or some such daft-like highland name; and this body, in his broad Scandinavian dialect, told Wat all that he desired to know. He confirmed the day and the hour that Sir Francis suffered, for he had been present at it; and on his reciting part of the loyal sufferer's last speech, judge of Wat's wonderment when he heard they were the very same words pronounced by Lady Julia before her marvellous execution. And on Wat inquiring who was the heir to the estate, the pedlar, whose name was Muir, or perhaps Mair, said, "Eh, mun! the kurk and the steete hiv tucken them all untee their ein hunds. The lund's fat they ca' quuster'd and nee buddy can ave it, siving he hiv tucken the kivinents. Now Frank wudna hiv tucken the kivinents if gi'en hum a' Mud-Mar; but whut dis he dee but reeses a rugement, and thucht tee kull the kivinent mun every saul o' thum; and he gurt several thee-sands of them slupp in thur beets and thur sheen tee. He murried a vury swut dar ying liddy, and she hid a seen; but when the kivinent men beguid to come reend hum, he sunt hur awa to a pleece they call the Beerder, to be suff out of the wee, and they nuver saw't eether agin."

"And then if that boy is leevin," said Wat, "will he no heir his father's estates an' titles?"

“Ney, ney min! ney jist noo. But thungs wunni lung continee thus gate. We're no to be all our days rooled and trimpled on bee a whun bleedy-mundit munisters; and then when thungs come all reend agin, the wee laddie will git his father's prupperty.” Having got all from the pedlar which he went to the north to learn, he treated him well at the little change-house beside the kirk; and there he told the astonished vender of small wares, that the sole heir of that ancient and illustrious race was living in his house and under his protection, his mother likewise being dead.

“Eh! guid kinshens min, but that's a sungilar piece o' noos!” said Mair. “Then I can be tulling you fat ye mebee dunna kene, that he has seme o' the bust bleed of a' Scotland in his vens, and as tumes cunna bude thus gate, that wee laddie will be a mun yet worth thousands a-year.”

Wat then by the pedlar's advice went to the sheriff-clerk of Aberdeen, and made him take a register of the boy's birth, name, and lineage, that in case of any change of government the true heir might inherit the property. Wat then returned home, and found his daughter and darling child quite well; but in a very short time after that, to their unspeakable grief, the boy vanished. Wat ran over all the town and the country in the neighbourhood, but could hear nothing of the child, save that one woman who lived on the sandbed said that “she saw him gaun toddlin about the water-side, and a man, a stranger to her, ran an' liftit him an' gae him a cuff on the lug for gangin' sae near a muckle water;” and this was the last news that Wat and Jenny heard of their beloved child, the sole heir to an ancient and valuable estate, and it was conjectured that he had been drowned in the river, although his body was never found.

Wat was the more confirmed in this by an extraordinary incident which befel him. On coming up a sequestered loaning close by Hawick, in the twilight, he met with a lady without her head carrying a child at her breast, and frightened as he was he recognised the child

as Lady Julia's, not as he was when he was lost, but precisely as he was on that day his father and mother died ; and that was the anniversary of the day. The appalling apparition was seen by other three men and a woman that same night ; but it was too much for honest Wat Pringle ; he took to his bed, from which he never arose again, although he lingered on for some months in a very deranged and unsettled state of mind.

This may seem a strange unnatural story, but what is stranger still, that apparition of a lady without her head pressing a baby to her breast, continued to walk annually on the same night and on the same lane for at least 150 years, and I think about forty of these within my own recollection. The thing was so well certified and believed, that no persons in all the quarter of the town in vicinity of the ghost's walk would cross their thresholds that night. At length a resolute fellow took it into his head to watch the ghost with a loaded gun, and he had very shortly taken his station when the ghost made its appearance. According to his own account, he challenged it, but it would neither stop nor answer ; on which, being in a state of terrible trepidation, he fired and shot a baker, an excellent young man, through the heart, who died on the spot. The aggressor was tried at the judiciary circuit court at Jedburgh, and found guilty by the jury of manslaughter only, although the judge's charge expressed a doubt that there was some matter of jealousy between the deceased and his slayer, as the sister of the former in the course of her examination said that her brother had once been taken for the ghost previously, and had been the cause of great alarm. There was no more word of the ghost for a number of years, but a most respectable widow, who was a servant to my parents, and visits us once every two or three years, told me that the lady without the head, and pressing a baby to her bosom, had again been seen of late years.

Jenny Pringle, a girl of fortune for those days, thanks to the battle of Philliphaugh and a certain other windfall, was married in 1656 to her half cousin, Robert Pringle,

who afterwards took some extensive farms about Teviot Side, and their offspring are numerous and respectable to this day. One day when this Robert Pringle was giving a great feast to the neighbouring gentlemen and farmers; the guests had mostly arrived and were sauntering about the green until the dinner was ready, when they saw a gentleman come riding briskly over the Windy-Brow, and many conjectures were bandied about who it could be, but none could guess, and when he came up to the group and bid them good day, still none of them knew him. However, Pringle, with genuine Border hospitality, went forward to the stranger, and after a homely salutation desired him to alight.

"Are you Robert Pringle of Bidrule?" said the stranger.

"I wat weel, lad, that I'm a' ye'll get for him."

"Then I have ridden upwards of a hundred and fifty miles to see you and your wife."

"Faith, lad, an' ye hae muckle to see when ye have come. I hae hardly ken'd any body travel sae far on as frivolous an errand. But you're welcome howsomever. If ye had come but three miles to see Jenny an' me that's introduction enough let be a hunder an' fifty, an' as we're just gaun to sit down to our dinner, ye've come i' clipping-time at ony rate. Only tell me wha I'm to introduce to Jenny?"

"I would rather introduce myself, if you please." So in they all went to their dinner.

Mrs Pringle stood beside her chair at the head of the table, and took every gentleman's hand that came up, but her eyes continued fixed on the handsome young stranger who stood at the lower end. At length she broke away, overturning some plates and spoons, and screaming out in an ecstasy of joy—"Lord forgie me, if it's no my ain wee Francie." He was nearly six feet high, but nevertheless, regardless of all present, she flew to him, clasped him round the neck, and kissed him over and over again, and then cried for joy till her heart was like to burst. It was little dinner that Jenny Pringle

took that day, for her happiness was more than she could brook; she had always believed that the boy had been drowned in the river until she saw him once more in her own house at her own table; and she was never weary of asking him questions.

It was the Aberdeen pedlar who stole him for the sake of a reward, and took him safely home to his maternal uncle, whose small but valuable estate he then possessed; but he found his father's property so much dilapidated by the covenanters, and under wadsets that he could not redeem, so that he could not obtain possession. He remained there several weeks, and the same endearments passed between Jenny Pringle and him as if they had been mother and son; for, as he said, he never knew any other parent, and he regarded her as such, and would do while he lived.

When he was obliged to take his leave, Jenny said to him "Now, Francie, my man, tell me how muckle it will tak' to buy up the wadsets on your father's estate?" He said that a part of it was not redeemable, but that nearly two-thirds of it was so, and since the restoration, as the rightful heir, he could get it for a very small matter—about three thousand pounds Scots money.

"Aweel, my bonny man," quoth Jenny, "ye came to my father an' me by a strange providence, but there was plenty came wi' you, and a blessing wi' it, for Robie an' I hae trebled it, an' I hae a gayin muckle wallet fu' o' gowd that has never seen the light yet. I hae always lookit on a' that money as your ain, an' meant to lay it a' out on your education an' settlement in the world, sae ye sanna want as muckle to redeem your father's estate. But this maun a' be wi' Robie's permission, for though I hae keepit a pose o' my ain in case o' accidents, yet ye ken me an' a that I ha'e are his now."

"My permission!" exclaimed Pringle; "my trulys, my woman, ye's ha'e my permission, an' if the bonny douce lad needs the double o't it shall be forthcoming. Ye ha'e been a blessed wife to me, an' there's no ae thing ye can propose that I winna gang in wi'. But I maun

ride away north wi' him mysel' to the kingdom o' Fife, an' see that he get right possession an' investment, for thae young genteelbred birkies dinna ken very weel about business. I confess I like the callant amaist as weel as he war my ain."

Accordingly, Mr Pringle set him hōme, whether to Dalgetty in Fife or Aberdeenshire I am uncertain, though I think the latter; advanced what money he required, and got him fairly settled in a part of his late father's property, called Dalmagh. He visited the Pringles once every year, and at length married their eldest child, Helen, so that he became Jenny's son—in reality.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.





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