

CHAPTER III.

Change the song, and change the measure,
 Churlish Care gives way to Pleasure ;
 Chequering sunbeams kiss the glade,
 Light flies hand in hand with shade ;
 Rosy morning chases night,
 Farewell darkness, welcome light.

Madrigal.

THE old Fiddler, who, like most self-educated men of talent, had an exaggerated opinion of his own importance, and to whom the idea of annihilation was peculiarly obnoxious, treated all such notions with supreme contempt. He firmly believed that his melodies would live for ever, and that his name would endure along with them. It would have been cruel to annoy him, by expressing a doubt of what he so firmly believed ; and we must confess that he had almost made us a convert to his opinions, when, with much enthusiasm, and in the most emphatic manner, he thus addressed the Gaberlunzie —“How can ye talk sae lightly o' fame, an' sae sneeringly about the forgetfulness o' man, when you yoursel' bear evidence to the contrary? Will your countrymen ever forget you and your warld o' worth? Will they e'er forget your sangs an' your sayings? Na, na, forgetfulness may seek a hame whaur it can find ane; it has nae resting-place in braid Scotland!”

“I wad just observe,” said wee Willie, “that the present time's ours; and as you wise folks are no very sure about the future, ye should just enjoy yoursel's as weel as ye can e'now.”

“A vera gude remark, Willie,” said Peter, “and a pawky ane; wha wad hae thought that ye could hae gi'en the gude-man sic a slee hint about his bottle? I'm sure I couldna hae done it.”

“Od, Peter, ye're right,” roared our landlord. “Gudewife, see if ye can mak us a wee drap tovy warm stuff.”

“In the meantime, Fiddler, ye’ll maybe gie us a sang while the water’s warming; our gudewife an’ the lassies, I’m sure, wad like to hear ye.”

“Atweel ye shanna want that, my dawties; and just to let ye hae a specimen o’ my sangs, and to clear awa the cluds frae my auld freend’s brow, I’ll e’en try what I can do to burnish up the mirror o’ my auld memory, so as to let him see himsel’!” So saying, he sung the following song to an original melody, accompanied on the fiddle:—



THE GABERLUNZIE.

BLYTHE be the auld Gaberlunzie man,
 Wi' his wallet o' wit, he fills a' the lan';
 Wi' his blinks o' fun, and his blauds o' lear,
 O' a' thing that's gude he has walth to spare;
 Has a warm Scotch heart, and a braid Scotch tongue,
 He has a' the auld sangs that ever were sung;
 His daffin and quaffin, his glory and glee,
 Lichts up the auld spunk o' the North Countrie.

His face bright wi' joy as the full harvest moon,
 Has braid lines o' grandeur he canna keep down;
 When his ae ee is muckle, his ither is wee,
 Baith set in his face like a balance ajee;
 Keekin up, keekin down, keekin back, keekin fore,
 Wi' darts that through quarries o' whinstane might bore;
 While his wide massy brow is sae towering an' high,
 O bauld is the Cock o' the North Countrie.

He ne'er wants a friend, for he ne'er maks a foe,
 He's first to help poortith, and first to soothe woe;
 While his bearing's so manly, his looks are so gay,
 Ye wad think that thro' life he had laugh'd a' the way;



INTERIOR OF KELPIE CLEUGH

*O Blithe be the suld Gaberlanzie man,
Wi' his wallet o' wit, he fills a' the lan',
Wi' his blinks o' fier, and his blaunds o' leir,
O a' thing that's guid he hath walth to spare.*

He seeks nae for crime, an' few fauts can he find,
 For he fain wad think weel o' the hail o' mankind ;
 An' he's a'boddy's body, baith muckle and wee,
 The couthie Auld Cock o' the North Countrie.

For the blythe he's a smile, for the sad he's a tear,
 Nae ferlie we a' haud his blessin' sae dear ;
 For his hale haly heart's beated up wi' a lowe,
 That rays like a glory around his white pow,
 And glimmers like sunlight upon the white snaw ;
 He's the boast o' his kin, he's the pride o' us a' ;
 Gae search a' the world, an' ye's get a proud fee,
 Gin ye match the Auld Cock o' the North Countrie.

This welcome effusion, which was sung and played in the fiddler's best style, was applauded in a manner to satisfy the Gaberlunzie that the estimate which his old friend and acquaintance had formed of his character was not overrated ; and that his merits were duly appreciated by the happy group which at present encircled him. His face, which during the progress of the song had been gradually resuming its wonted benignity of expression, was now lighted up with a brilliancy that contrasted finely with the cold indifference with which he had professed to look on all marks of distinction. He was proud of the song, and proud of the manner in which it was received. He was happy with himself, and consequently happy with all around him. He shook the Fiddler warmly by the hand, saying—

“Od man, ye play the fiddle as weel as e'er ye did ; ye're a second David, I declare ; ye hae chased awa the dark spirit that was hovering ower me ; and I'm now sae light-hearted, I could dance like a five-year-auld.”

“Hoot, man, I hae wyled a laverock frae the lift afore now,” said the Fiddler ; “I was sure I could soon heeze you out o' the slough o' despond, and gaur ye shake aff the gloomy burden that was weighing you doun ; whene'er I gat ye hookit fairly by the lug, I kenned ye wad change your tune.”

“Gie your fiddle the credit o't,” said the Gaberlunzie.

“Ay, but the bow was weel rosin'd,” said the Fiddler.

“Wi' butter,” said the Pedlar.

“Sweeter than yours, or I couldna hae swallowed it,” said the Gaberlunzie.

“Needfu’ folk are seldom nice,” retorted the Pedlar. “Ye’ll aiblins be glad o’ mine, tho’ it be a wee thing sautish, when ye canna get better.”

“Stap your ain gabby mou wi’t e’now,” said the Gaberlunzie; “here is something mair to my liking; see ye that, man,” said he, turning round to the two fair girls who seemed listening with great delight, and sharing largely in the general admiration; “ye see the auld Gaberlunzie is yet able to win the good graces o’ the fair an’ young. Come awa, my bonny dawties, an’ gie us ane o’ your muirland sangs; nane e’er sound sae sweetly in my ears as the sangs o’ our ain bonnie Scotch lassies, that they sing at their wark outby in the lang days o’ simmer, or at the ingle-cheek in the lang nights o’ winter; so let’s hear your twa voices mingling thegither as gin they were ane.”

The two sisters, who sat blushing intensely as all eyes were turned on them, after a little trepidation, and not a little pressing, sung in delightful harmony the following song:—



THE GRAY HILL PLAID.

HO’ cauld and drear our muirland hame
 Among the wreathes o’ snaw,
 Yet love here lowes wi’ purer flame
 Than lights the lordly ha’;
 For ilka shepherd’s chequered plaid
 Has room enough for twa,
 And coshly shields his mountain maid
 Frae a’ the blasts that blaw.
 Then hey the plaid! the gray hill plaid,
 That haps the hearts sae true;
 Dear, dear, to every mountain maid
 Are plaid and bonnet blue.

What tho’ we’re few upon the muir,
 We lo’e each other mair,
 And to the weary wanderin puir
 We’ve comfort aye to spare.

The heart that feels for ithers' woes
 Can ne'er keep love awa ;
 And twa young hearts when beating close
 Can never lang be twa.
 Then hey the plaid ! the gray hill plaid,
 That haps the heart sae true ;
 Dear, dear, to every mountain maid
 Are plaid and bonnet blue.

Why should I have felt uneasy at the singing of this song, which was delightfully warbled by two as sweet voices as ever mingled together? What had I to do with "The Gray Hill Plaid" but jot it down? Why should I have been annoyed at the idea that

Twa fond hearts when beating close
 Can never lang be twa ?

How should such a sentiment, coming from the pure lips of the fair sisters, have roused the wrath, or stirred the jealousy, of the scribbler? Ah, gentle reader! it is high time thou shouldst know that, in visiting Kelpie Cleugh, he had some other object in view than merely to jot down what took place there for thy amusement. Had this not been the case, this narrative, tedious though it may be, would have been much more so. Yes, truth must out, and thou must imagine a mantling blush spread over the face of the humble lad, when he acknowledges that love had led, had dragged, him thither. The gentle nature, the Hebe form, the soft blue eyes, the glossy ringlets of Mary, which no man with life-blood in his veins could resist, had long, long ago, even at the dawning of those charms, now approaching maturity, made an impression, which every moment, during this eventful evening, was becoming stronger and deeper. Every kind look which she sent past him, even to his friend the Gaberlunzie, was watched by him with envious and scrupulous jealousy; while he continued inwardly to curse his own awkward bashfulness, which prevented him from being able to do anything to attract her attention, or win a single approving smile.

Oh! love, love, what an incomprehensible, incorrigible, little vagabond art thou! Thy birth, thy death, thy beginning, and

thy end, are alike shrouded in mystery ! Thy quips, thy cranks, thy fidgettings, thy crosses, and thy heart-burnings, make years of happiness seem moments, and little half-hour fits of jealousy seem ages ! Poets call thee blind, philosophers call thee foolish, lovers call thee cruel, yet all court thy smiles ; all breasts are laid bare to thy weapons ! Thou poor little wandering vagrant boy, who hast such nicknames applied to thee, yet still art able to make thyself a home in every heart, receiving a warm welcome from the dark eye of beauty, and a kindly reception from the open and manly face of thought ! Go to ! the boy is neither blind, foolish, nor cruel ; he is the most gentle monarch that ever swayed a sceptre, although nothing will serve him but sole and undivided dominion over the whole human family.

Poets acknowledge that his aim is sure, and that his darts kill, where their paper-feathered shafts fall blunted and harmless. Wise men confess that his foolishness is more than a match for their wisdom. Maidens, while they call him cruel, pat him on the cheek, or clasp him fondly to their bosoms. Buxom widows are an easy prey to the sly knave ; with his sun-bright wings he brushes the tear-drops of sorrow from their cheeks, or converts them into gems, to brighten the glowing eye of the twice-wedded bride. The old miser, who has spent three-quarters of a century in clutching the red gold, opens up, with his rusty keys, his strong box, to array the young and blushing bride, whose eyes have penetrated through the cran- nies of his narrow and contracted bosom, and illuminated his dark soul with a few glimpses of light and happiness previous to his taking leave of life for ever. The plodding man of business, who has reached middle life, without being annoyed by the tiny urchin, is arrested midway in his career by some tochered beauty, who shortly presents him with an image of himself, in due time qualified to take his father's place behind the counter, and marry, as his father did before him. Even young boys or girls who are only fit to be his own playmates, will Cupid attack, and wound their little hearts deeply, all in sport.

As little Love was wandering,
On a sultry summer day,
He alighted to rest his weary wing
Beside two children at play.

The one was a fair-hair'd, blue-eyed girl,
The other a dark-eyed boy ;
And they romp'd and wheel'd in a merry whirl,
Till they fell asleep with joy.

And Cupid the laughing urchin crept,
As in slumber they smiling lay ;
And he pierced their little breasts as they slept,
Then flew unseen away.

Long years, like rivers, swift will rush,
And by the altar's side,
To the Priest's "Wilt thou?" with a sigh and a blush,
Answers the gentle Bride.

And the Bridegroom's "Yea," and the Priest's "Amen,"
Ring through the vaulted aisle ;
While a Spirit repeats the tones again,
As if whispering, "Hail, all hail !"

On the altar's top sits Little Love,
And he gives loud laughters three ;
"My chains are wove in the regions above,
What Priest can bind like me."

Now Heaven preserve the King of Hearts,
His burden is light to bear ;
Were it not for his kissing and blessing arts,
What mortal would tarry here !

Like the children in the foregoing ballad, at a very early period of my life I had become a prey to the snares of love. While girl and boy, Mary and I had been playmates, neighbours had called us sweethearts, and we believed them. My feelings remained unchanged, and it never had occurred to me that Mary's sentiments could, by any possibility, have become altered, and that she might now entertain for some manly lover a more womanly affection than she could be expected to feel for a boyish companion, of whom, during a number of years, she had heard little and seen nothing. A long period had elapsed since our parting, but her image still dwelt in my

memory as distinctly portrayed as at that moment when, with tears running down our cheeks, we kissed and murmured farewell; and I had set it down as a necessary consequence that she retained a similar recollection of me. We are too apt to believe what we hope. We are prone to conclude that others feel as we do ourselves; and as some of our old friends had told us that "we were so like," that marriages were made in heaven, and that we seemed destined for each other, it had become a fixed point in my belief that, some day or other, this end would be accomplished. True, I had no reason for entertaining this idea; but love never reasons—such a proceeding would be inconsistent with its character. The youthful heart, when steadily fixed on the object of its first adoration, continually finds some new charm to arrest its attention, and to enchain its affections; distance also helps to make assurance doubly sure in idea, and personal vanity is never wanting to assist hope in concluding that the passion is mutual, that the interchange of feeling is reciprocal. When lovers are about to meet again, after having been long separated, a world of doubts and fears begin to afflict, nay, to agonize them; every little circumstance or occurrence from their first meeting to their last parting is recalled to memory, and then, strange to say, the sky which hope had lit up so brilliantly becomes clouded and obscure. Reader, I appeal to yourself—for you may at some period or other of life have been similarly circumstanced—whether you have not, after having spent a long period, it may be many years, in a dreamy state of happiness, begun suddenly to recollect, upon approaching the spot which contained the treasure of your soul, that she had grown, since you last saw her, from a romping girl of twelve to a modest maiden of nineteen? It is probable, also, if like me your lot has been cast in a large town, and your fair enslaver has resided in the country, that you may begin to feel, as you approach her habitation, surrounded with fresh nature and natural beauty, that it is impossible the beautiful and blooming cottage maid could ever feel happy in the pent-up domiciles of a crowded city. Perhaps, also, you may have occasion to recollect, that you can only offer her for a residence some lofty attic, from the windows of which, no doubt, you can command a charming prospect of hill and dale and valley; yet so very highly exalted is this sky cradle of yours, that it requires considerable exertion

to reach it, and when once up, there is little inducement to bring you down again ; or perchance the view which, from such an altitude, you might naturally be expected to have, is shut out by some tall, broad, and uncouth chimney-stalk, which prevents you getting even a bird's-eye peep of the charming landscape lying beyond it ; while you can only indulge in a forlorn hope that the spire-rocking storm will some time or other hurl to the earth the black and dingy object of your detestation.

Such thoughts as these are sure to rise in your mind when, after a long absence, instead of being greeted with the warm shake of the hand, the glowing kiss, the clear and soft eyes peering into your face, all of which have dwelt in your memory since your last parting, you are received with a downcast look, a modest blush, and a respectful though distant courtesy. Jealousy instantly replaces love, and you are plunged at once into the midst of grief, trouble, and confusion. The very bashfulness which is the never-failing accompaniment of love, and to which that elevating passion, when matured, always gives birth, partially extinguishes, by its apparent coldness, a flame which may be visible to all but those in whose breast it blazes most purely and brightly.

In this position was I placed on the present occasion. I had been delighted with the first glance I had obtained of my old companion, though somewhat astonished to find the sylph-like form of my little playmate rounded and filled up into a perfect specimen of a Scotch beauty. Her figure was rather short, but finely proportioned ; her complexion clear and fair ; her blue eyes were beaming with rich, soft, and warm light. The crimson which suffused her cheeks was a combination of delicacy and freshness, which you seldom see blended together, but in the face of a country girl. The under part of her countenance was round ; her forehead, although not high, was broad and ample, and its extreme whiteness was finely relieved by the little black velvet band which confined her golden hair, while a few stray ringlets fell upon her transparent neck. She wore a light blue kerchief, and a short gown of pale tint, and her arms, as seen through the slight draping, were tapered away with the most exquisite symmetry as they approached her little white hands.

She was, in short, the very being I had pictured in imagination, when, in the first burst of warm feeling, fired by youthful

affection, I had made my first attempt at rhyme, and produced the following effusion, which had been as carefully treasured up in my memory, as the form of Mary had been indelibly engraven on my heart :—



MY BONNY MARY.

O SAFT is the blink o' thine ee, lassie,
 Saft is the blink o' thine ee ;
 An' a bonny wee sun glimmers on its blue orb
 As kindly it glints upon me.

The ringlets that twine round thy brow, lassie,
 Are gowden as gowden may be ;
 Like the wee curly cluds that play round the sun
 When he's just gaun to drap in the sea.

Thou hast a bonny wee mou, lassie,
 As sweet as a body may pree ;
 An' fondly I'll pree that wee hinny mou
 E'en tho' thou shouldst frown upon me.

Thou hast a lily white hand, lassie,
 As fair as a body may see ;
 An' saft is the touch o' that wee genty hand,
 At eve when thou partest wi' me.

Thy thoughts are sae haly and pure, lassie,
Thy heart is sae kind an' sae free ;
That the bright sun o' heaven is nae pleased wi' himsel',
Till he glasses himsel' in thine ee.

O thou art a'thing to me, lassie,
O thou art a'thing to me ;
What care I altho' fortune should frown,
Gin I gain the blythe blink o' thine ee !

I did not gain the blythe blink of Mary's eye at this particular time, however, and the cool and modest reception which she gave me produced a corresponding degree of bashfulness on my part. Every kind look which she sent past me, even to the Gaberlunzie, I regarded with envy and jealousy ; and although a looker on might have seen that Mary's confusion very much resembled mine, and that it might have proceeded from a similar cause, to me it assumed a very different aspect ; and when the Gaberlunzie praised her for the part she had taken in the singing of the Gray Hill Plaid, and applauded the sentiments embodied in the song, I could have looked Mary into annihilation, and cordially wished him anywhere but at Kelpie Cleugh.

"Ay, ay," said he, "hillside wooing's best, pure and holy feelings can be best gi'en vent to whaur they are generated, and love can be best exchanged between twa young hearts, in the gloaming o' a simmer night, far awa frae aught but themsel's. How can love," he continued, "be made in a drawing-room, where Turkey carpet, rosewood furniture, silk hangings, sentimental albums, and braw painted French artificial flowers, strive in vain to rival the wild and sweet buds o' beauty blooming outby? When Papa and Mamma leave the room, and after a few preliminary hems, the starched candidate for matrimonial honours turns up the white of his eyes, looks his intended in the face, utters a few unintelligible sentences, gets on his knees, and beseeches the mistress of his soul to have compassion on him, while she, good kind dear, with half-averted looks, utters a few encouraging words, and refers her lover to Pa for farther explanation. Pa enters at the moment, sees what has been going on, leads his *young friend* into the dining-room, fills a bumper, and, with a sly leer, proposes married life. This may do, maun do," continued he, "for toun birkies, wha ken nae

better; but commend me to the gray plaid and the hillside, whaur wi' your arms round your lassie's waist, without uttering a word, your ee tells the sweet tale o' love, and your breast is like to burst wi' smothered an' stifled sobs o' joy. Here love, always most eloquent when silent, holds purest and holiest communion."

This was a direct lunge at me, and I felt it deeply, although I managed effectually to conceal my feelings, and to join in the laugh against myself with apparent good humour. My pride, however, was much mortified at being made the butt of such a company, and it was not until the young farmer, who had been requested to sing, had proceeded some length with the following song, that I began to find myself sufficiently at ease to perceive that his was a breast from which I might expect sympathy: he was evidently in love, and deeply. "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," and I loved him.

OH, WHAT IS THIS THAT RACKS MY BREAST?

The musical score is written on four staves in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and folk-like. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across lines. The second and third staves continue the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line.

Oh, what is this that racks my breast, And fleys my peace o' mind a - wa, An'
 maks me tyne my night - ly rest, And wea - ry for the mor - ning daw!
 I daun - der doun the dow - ie glen, I lin - ger on the lane - ly lea, An'
 in some dark an' ee - rie den, I fain wad lay me doun an' dee.

OH, what is this that racks my breast,
 And fleys my peace o' mind awa,
 An' maks me tyne my nightly rest,
 An' weary for the morning daw?
 I daunder doun the dowie glen,
 I linger on the lanely leè,
 An' in some dark an' eerie den
 I fain wad lay me doun an' dee.

I heave nae sigh, I mak nae mane,
 I let nae tear bedim my ee,
 But mix wi' follies light an' vain,
 To wyle awa my misery.
 Few ken the hearts they meet wi' here,
 Few trow there's grief they canna see ;
 And e'en the maid I lo'e sae dear
 Shall never guess the dool I dree.

'Tis hopeless love an' sad despair,
 Cast by the glamour o' thine ee,
 That cluds my waukrife dreams wi' care,
 And maks the daylight dark to me.
 I canna hope nor ask for mair
 Than ae wee pearly tear frae thee ;
 An' gin thy een hae ane to spare,
 In pity let it fa' for me.

What an endless variety of tastes and dispositions is to be met with among mankind ! One class love comedy, another tragedy, and another nothing. The last are the worst : nothing pleases, nothing displeases them ; they carry about the same unmeaning stare with them at all times, and look so provokingly quiet and unruffled, that a man who in a towering passion would fain grasp them by the coat-collar, and shake them to pieces, has no resource but to turn on himself and tear his own clothes to tatters instead of theirs. Although we had none of this latter stamp at Kelpie Cleugh, we neither lacked variety of taste nor diversity of character ; the one always accompanies the other, and the singing of the foregoing verses gave rise to the expression of various opinions. For my own part, I was perfectly enraptured with the song, and thought I could discern a corresponding sentiment in the face of Mary, as she raised her eyes from her brother, on whom they had been reposing, and cast a momentary glance on me. Instantaneous though it was, it shot through me like lightning ; and I felt my whole frame vibrating with emotion, and my heart beating quick and loud within me. What would I have given for a word of explanation, for one half-hour in the Gray Hill Plaid ?

The song, however, seemed to have a very different effect on our host : to him it was evidently a sickener ; and he thus pro-

ceeded—"Hech, man, ye are a sapless branch of the auld stock; ye senseless sumph, is that the way to win a lassie, blubberin' that gait? Od, at your age I wadna hae sang a sang o' that kind for a Highland Society premium. I aye wooed an' won my lassie wi' a merry face an' a light heart; and gin she did get a wee thing gyte whiles at my daffin, a chuck under the chin, a leer o' the ee, an' a smirk o' the mou, soon made our quarrel up again. My fegs, the auld times and the auld chiefls had the best o't; but then we didna stand at trifles. In those days, instead o' mumping ower the fire at night, I hae seen me think nae mair o' crossing seven miles o' muir after nightfa' to see my lassie, than ye wad do o' takin' your supper, ye lazy loun! Od, girnin' folk are aye lazy."

"Hoot, ye maunna be ower hard on your son," said the Gaberlunzie; "the young heart has aye mair sentiment than the head has wit, an' I like the heart that feels better than the tongue that's aye gaun."

"Ay, but when baith gang thegither, it's mair profitable and edifying," interponed the Pedlar.

"Ye auld farrant, worldly-minded creature," said the Gaberlunzie, "wad ye hae folks to buy an' sell hearts as ye do ribbons, aye wi' an ee to profit? Na, na; true love an' selfishness canna bide in ae breast thegither. When ye begin to count cost, yere a trafficker in gear; love canna be bartered awa like an auld horse: the heart maun be gi'en freely, or it's no worth haeing; and I'm no very sure but our ain gudeman had gi'en his in this way, or ever he kenned whether or no he had gotten that ane in return, which has now throbbid beside his warmly and fondly for sae mony years."

"I'm no disputing what ye say," said Tam, "but out wi't; tell the lassie ye like her, and there's an end o't. Gin she gies ye a naysay, be done wi' her, an' tell her to tak her ain way o't; leave her to the freedom o' her ain will, an' she'll maybe throw hersel' in your way after a'."

"That she will," said Peter; "she may pass ye ance or twice, wi' her head ajee, and her neck bent like a swan; but watch her weel, and gin ye catch a slee corner o' her ee keekin at ye, cross ye the road half-way to meet her; it's better aye to halve the difference at a niffer than to part as ye met, ilka ane bearin hame wi' him what he brought to the market for sale. He's a silly chapman wha winna rather come and gang a wee than

keep his goods and let a' his trouble and travel gang for naething."

"I wadna grudge ony trouble to please a lassie," said Tam; "but gin she canna be wooed wi' coaxing, she winna be won wi' greetin; and gin ye canna raise a smile on her face, ye shouldna try to draw a tear frae her ee."

"Ay; but every ane canna conquer wi' a look like you," said the Gaberlunzie. "I hae seen glibber mou'd louns than you tongue-tackit on sic occasions; even our toun-bred birkie, Jot there, looks as beglomered like enow, as gin he had seen a warlock, and as mim as gin he had haen his tongue whiskit out of his mou by some wee witch or ither."

I must have looked daggers at the speaker, but I said nothing.

"My young friend," said the farmer, "will find his tongue some time, an' to purpose. I hae heard him when he was but a bairn beat his auld maiden aunty in Edinburgh yonder to sticks; and it's no easy gettin the last word o' her, puir body, wi' her lang tongue and her lang stories. My sang, Peter, ye wad hae nae chance wi' her; I wad gie something to see you an' her yokit."

"They wha can beat yoursel', gudeman, hae jist anither to beat," said Peter.

"Saftly, sweetly, Peter," whispered the Gaberlunzie.

"But now," said the Pedlar, turning to me, "there's ae advice I hae to gie ye: my young friend, ye maunna keep your breast locked up without tellin her wha keeps the keys o't, else how is she to ken it's in her keepin? Meantime, as ye hae a' been sae hard on the young folk, and hae set the very lasses a blushing (so they were, especially Mary), and as ye hae a' been singing sae bonnily, I'll e'en volunteer ye a sang mysel'; and as the young folk hae had sae muckle o't, I'll try and gie ye something that will be relished by the auld anes. What think ye o'



“OLD AGE’S GARLAND?”

“O CAULD maun the heart be that’s no set a-lowe,
When honour’s green wreath circles eild’s snawy pow ;

And dim maun the ee be that glists nae to see
 The young green buds sproutin' frae out the auld tree :
 O ripe is the fruit on the steive tree o' age,
 Tho' age wad be young, an' tho' youth wad be sage ;
 There's nought half sae haly in a' Nature's plan,
 As a white-headed, warm-hearted, couthie auld man.

“ When friends in auld age hae been cronies in youth,
 On baith sides there's honour, on baith sides there's truth ;
 When white pow and white pow forgather wi' ither,
 Wha life's stormy billows hae breasted thegither :
 The lown lowe o' virtue, Time's chilly sky warms,
 And Truth is borne upwards in Hope's loving arms ;
 For Time's but a footstep, and Life's but a span,
 But Heaven's the hame o' ilk couthie auld man.

“ And friendship's pure flame never sparkled more bright
 Than around this kind circle of friendship to-night ;
 And the healths that we pledge, and the bumpers we drain,
 Shall oft be repeated by warm hearts again :
 When a couthie auld friend, at the quiet chimney-neuk,
 Spends an hour wi' a friend, and an hour wi' a beuk,
 An' whiles steps abroad to keep right a' the lan',
 O wha wadna be sic a couthie auld man ! ”

This song enlivened the hearts of all the company ; the old folks were particularly joyous, and another bumper was drained to auld friends, auld langsyne, and better acquaintance. The Gaberlunzie and Fiddler seemed to feel the green leaves rustling round their brows ; Willie and Maggy were in high spirits ; the Fiddler tuned his fiddle, the floor was cleared, and we commenced to foot it away right merrily ; the Gaberlunzie and the goodwife, the landlord and Maggy, being the most important personages, led off as a matter of course the first reel. Willie and Peter elicited much applause by their nimble performance ; both being small in stature, a sort of rivalry seemed to spring up between them. Armless Willie made up for the want of thumbs to crack, by making his feet clatter like a pair of castanets. Peter's hunchback was almost straightened by the way he elevated his head, and threw back his shoulders, and there he bobbed away, like one of those little jumping-

jacks to be seen in toy-shops, kicking and throwing about their legs and arms with the most astonishing agility. The girls and their brother also skipped away with great spirit and elegance through the long stretches of reels and strathspeys which seemed to grow under the fiddler's bow-hand; I of course became as mad as the others; and after a few electric touches of Mary's hand as we crossed and set in the dance, I was almost as happy as if I had been the owner of the Gray Hill Plaid. I felt a returning confidence that her heart was still my own; and—such a strange compound of joy and woe are we—here were the young farmer and myself, who half an hour before seemed sinking in despair, now footing it away as merrily and lightly as if care had never crossed our paths! All was madness and merriment.

“We reel'd, we set, we cross'd, we cleekit,”

until tables and chairs seemed to be leaping as merrily as ever trees danced to Orpheus. The very cows in the outhouses seemed to be startled with the noise, and bellowed most lustily, as well as they might. This was none of your prim and demure dress ball parties, but a family circle of Scotch men and women, lads and lassies, dancing with all their vigour genuine Scotch reels and strathspeys on the earthen floor of a Carnwath farmer's kitchen.

In the brief disquisition on music formerly given, I omitted to notice its effects on the Scotch (a nation proverbially fond of melody), but shall afterwards have opportunities of doing so, when describing Scotch weddings, kirns, and other merry-making occasions where broad-browed and broad-shouldered ploughmen exhibit as much mettle in their heels as would wear the wind out of a dozen Highland pipers. A few of these scenes may be expected to be met with in our travels, when I shall have occasion to notice the national peculiarities in this particular above alluded to. In the meantime, alas! I am called away from this description to record one of those touching and melancholy incidents with which Providence, in its inscrutable wisdom, sees fit to cloud the brightest scenes of our existence.

Poor Feckless Phemie, who at the commencement of the dance had shrunk aside from observation, was now amissing, and the honest farmer and fiddler, both of whom blamed

themselves for having frightened her away with their boisterous mirth, immediately had the house searched in every corner for her, but in vain : the outhouses were explored with a similar result, but footsteps were traced to the old castle, on one of the old fragments of which she was discovered seated, singing in a low voice—

Tho' the morning of life be flooded with light,
Sparkling with glory, and breathing with balm,
Yet the evening of life should be still as the night,
All imbued with a holy calm.
Then come sweet death,
With thy gentle breath,
Hush me asleep on the midnight heath !

She spoke no more, she moved not at our call, and when we approached her death had indeed come to her on the midnight heath, and Feckless Phemie was no more.

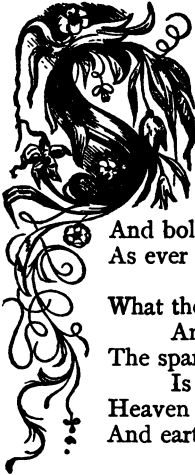
An event like this happening at such a time changed the scene of merriment to one of wailing and woe ; the faces which had but the instant before been lighted up with smiles were now bedewed with tears ; those whose mirth had been most boisterous were loudest in their lamentations. Death, at whatever time he comes, is always an unwelcome guest ; but when he unexpectedly and suddenly obtrudes himself into the midst of gaiety, his appearance is peculiarly appalling. The whole festivity of the scene was at an end ; all held their breaths as they gazed on the dead body, then looked at each other with awe-stricken countenances. The poor idiot boy, who had been asleep, awoke, and not comprehending the change which had taken place on his deliverer, began to shake her hand and to pat her cheek, evidently expecting her to open her eyes and smile on him. It was with great difficulty we could tear him away ; and when he did get some glimmering of the truth, he laid his head on his grandfather's knee, and sobbed as if his heart were breaking.

The strong emotion betrayed by the old Fiddler deeply affected us all ; he gazed in the face of the deceased, and pressed her hand between his with much tenderness ; his whole frame heaved with strong internal commotion ; and the deep-seated melancholy, which has been elsewhere adverted to as

indicated in his face, now assumed a gloomier and sterner character. So great was the change of expression, that we were scarcely able to recognise him as the same being who, but a few minutes before, had been the leader in our merry and light-hearted sport. After having gazed long and eagerly on the features of the poor lifeless creature, a stream of tears at length came coursing down his furrowed cheeks, and, amid broken sighs, he exclaimed, "Poor wounded bird, thy broken heart hath now ceased to beat; the throbbings of thy swelling breast are now at rest for ever; thy woes have been pitied; thy wrongs have been avenged! Wherefore should I live longer? Would that I had died with thee, my poor dead Phemie!" He sunk back in a swoon, and only recovered to fall into a disturbed slumber, out of which he frequently started, as if aroused by some horrible recollection.

"Rest, weary wanderer, rest!" said the Gaberlunzie, contemplating the unconscious musician with a look of deep sympathy, "many have been thy trials; thy long journey through life hath been one of sorrow and trouble, and although now in all probability near a conclusion, the future shows but a dark prospect, without one ray of hope to enliven the scene; and poor Phemie hath what few can boast of—a faithful and sincere mourner."

With this unexpected and heavy dispensation in the house, it was impossible that any of us could think of going to bed, and the morning dawn saw us all seated where we had passed the night. At a very late hour, when we were nigh worn out, the Gaberlunzie roused us from our lethargy by reciting the following ballad of Mary Hay, a poor maiden in an adjoining county, whose fate, he said, bore some resemblance to that of Feckless Phemie:—



MARY HAY.

WEET flowers will blow, sweet flowers
 will fade,
 The fleeter that they're fair,
 And Mary Hay was the fairest maid
 In all the shire of Ayr ;
 And bold Sir Hugh was as true a Knight
 As ever worshipp'd Beauty bright.

What tho' his home was the castle high,
 And hers the cottage low ?
 The sparkling dart from Beauty's eye
 Is match for valour's bow ;
 Heaven bends to earth full fraught with love,
 And earth seeks love in heaven above.

And Matthew Hay was a fearless man,
 Chief of a daring crew,
 Who pledged him their troth o'er a flowing can,
 And dubb'd him the Old True Blue ;
 And over the ocean and over the land
 His will was the law, and his wish the command.

What tho' he traffick'd in contraband goods,
 Braving the law's strong ban ;
 How many of our nobles may trace their bloods
 To some bold and fearless man !
 And bold and fearless he e'en must be
 Who achieves his own nobility.

Sir Hugh traced his kin to a distant time ;
 Matthew swore he would found a race,
 And build a strong castle of stone and lime,
 Where future ages might trace
 In sculptured story what deeds he could dare,
 To leave such a dower to his daughter fair.

Tho' fortune often favours the brave,
 The battle's not aye to the strong ;
 And Matthew danced o'er the dancing wave
 On the end of a hempen thong ;
 For why? the law was stronger than he,
 And swung him aloft on his own cross-tree.

There is a passion that God hath bless'd,
 'Tis born in Heaven above ;
 No feeling that lurks in the human breast
 Can match a parent's love ;
 When love and light from the Earth hath flown,
 A child shall ask bread and find a stone.

And Matthew had been to Mary Hay
 A father fond and true ;
 And ah ! should the flower be cast away,
 Though in the wild it grew :
 Oh ! nourish it in thy warmest bower,
 And none shall bloom like the mountain-flower.

So the Baron felt, and the Baron said,
 And he kept by his plighted troth ;
 For he prized above price for his peerless maid,
 And he valued his heart-sworn oath :
 And well he knew that scandal's tongue
 Dared ne'er be breathed while his falchion rung.

The day was set, and her kindred met,
 And Mary was dress'd in white ;
 And her eyes, half-hid in their fringes of jet,
 Were sparkling in joyous light,
 Illumining all hearts with each glance and gleam,
 Like the straggling light of a stray sunbeam.

And the Priest was there ; and the Bridesmaid fair
 Was slyly jibing the Bride,
 As the hour past by and no Bridegroom came nigh,
 " Must maids such freaks abide ?
 Another minute, and then, and then,
 I'd shut my heart against love and men ! "

The old Mother, too, had doff'd her black
 On her daughter's bridal day ;
And though her heart was sad, alack !
 She smiled through her locks of gray :
And " Mary, Mary dear," she cried,
" It was not thus when I was a bride."

Another hour, and the day grows dark,
 It is a December day ;
No Bridegroom yet—no horse-hoofs. Hark !
 'Tis his ; ah ! well-away,
'Tis Hope's ear drinking the rushing air,
For neither rider nor steed is there.

And Mary hath fled from her kindred's gaze
 Into her little room ;
And as hope fled with his glittering rays,
 Still darker grew the gloom ;
And scowled each brow, and swelled each form,
Like the gathering wrath of a mountain storm.

" Now speed thee onward, my gallant gray,
 From the ice strike sparkling fire ;
And this night I shall wed my Mary Hay
 Despite my kindred's ire ;
For my mother, grammercy, the croaking crone,
Hath scarced me with bodings till day hath gone."

The steed he flew like the wild-fire flight
 Scorching the mountain brow :
Sir Hugh, Sir Hugh, approach not to-night
 That house of wrath and woe ;
Thine own sweet Mary is not there,
Nor aught but the wailing of dark despair.

She is gone ; they seek her east and west,
 They call her up and down ;
But away, heart-struck from her parent's nest,
 The mateless bird hath flown :
Alack ! and the cold December night
Is an ominous time for a maiden's flight.

They have sought, and searched, and track'd in vain
 The land and the half-frozen river ;
 They can trace no footsteps over the plain—
 She is lost, she is lost for ever ;
 But hope still nerves the lover's heart,—
 "We perish together, but never part."

He is all alone on the frozen lea,
 He hath cross'd the crackling ford,
 And her fairy footprints he can see,
 Now Glory to the Lord ;
 For the moon, and the snow, make a silvery day,
 And he traces her steps in the flickering ray.

And lo ! a shuddering chills his frame,
 As, ascending the snow-clad hill,
 He hears in whispers his well-known name
 Waking the silence still ;
 Softly floating, like seraph's song,
 While hush'd ; he listeth, and stealeth along.

And on the hill top, like a spirit all white,
 In her bridal robes array'd,
 Gazing upon the moon's pale light,
 Sitteth the love-lorn maid ;
 Pressing her hand on her throbbing heart,
 That leaps, as it fain from her bosom would start.

"Mary ! Mary !" but still she sate
 Gazing at the moon ;
 "In my bridal chamber here I wait
 And my lover cometh soon ;
 My brain is a-fire, the snow is a-cold,
 And love dances light on the pearly wold."

"Mary !" he cried, and the maid awoke
 (Ah, Love hath potent charms) ;
 But alas ! her wounded heart had broke,
 And she fell all dead in his arms ;
 And a cold dead bride to his bosom he strains,
 Chilling the blood that flow'd thro' his veins.



MARY HAY

*With a golden crown
And a purple robe,
She sat at the banquet
And the king was
And the queen was
And the prince was
And the princess was*

Some bosoms will sigh, and their sighs will burst
 In gushing fountains of tears ;
But is not the burning heart accurst
 Which can live through long, long years,
Without a sigh, without a tear ?
Alas ! grief's living grave is here.

Sir Hugh sits in his Baron's Hall
 Draining the goblet deep,
Till the guests at the gorgeous festival
 Are all dead fast asleep ;
And he gazeth upon the vacant chair,
Till Mary's sainted form is there.

God wot but the lights shed a ghastly glare,
 Blending the quick and the dead ;
When the Baron fell back in his high oaken chair,
 And, as his spirit fled,
A whisper was heard, faintly dying away,—
I come—I come—my Mary Hay !