

THE
DOMINIE'S LEGACY.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "THE SECTARIAN."

The old man travelled far, both north and south,
And mickle did he see, and mickle hear;
And left the fruits to them wha like to read.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JULIA, COUNTESS OF GLASGOW,

&c. &c.

MADAM,

IN deliberating upon offering the following papers to the public, it has been no small encouragement to me to proceed thus far, that your Ladyship has been pleased to give them your countenance.

For various reasons, as well as that the scenes of the Tales are principally laid in the neighborhood of that part of Scotland where your Ladyship and family chiefly reside, their Dedication to you is natural and fitting, and is hereby most respectfully offered.

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That your Ladyship may long continue to adorn, by your virtues, the high station to which Providence has called you, is the sincere wish of,

Madam,

With every respect,

Your Ladyship's most obedient

and humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London,
Feb. 17, 1830.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is now several years since my late worthy and somewhat eccentric acquaintance, Mr. Gavin Balgownie umqwhile portioner of Balgownie Brae, in the west of Scotland, disposed to me, by his last will, certain papers in his own autograph, with no other injunction but that I should give them a careful perusal; and leaving the ultimate disposal of them entirely, as he expressed it, to my own considerate discretion.

Now having, in the course of my brief experience, found that there are many worthy persons in the world who, when you become intimate, will divulge to you that they have been solacing themselves with a little private authorship; and, knowing how sacred any trust which has to do with these secret begettings of the fancy, or labours of the judgment, is justly held, I received this legacy of my defunct friend with something like alarm, at the heavy responsibility it implied, especially after I had read the papers themselves, agree-

ably to positive injunction. Being, also, as little accustomed to executorial duties, as I have ever been to the experience of a fortunate legatee; and having, in various ways, come to some knowledge of the afflictions of publishing, I confess that this legacy of my late worthy friend, however well meant to my honour, has been no small burthen upon my conscience for several years; and now, having advisedly decided on the hazardous step of submitting a portion of his papers to the world, it becomes me to introduce them by stating, briefly, a few things regarding them and their author, necessary to be known by the reader.

As the world will have little sympathy with details, which the feelings of private friendship might tempt me to give, all I need say is, that the following papers were written at different and distant periods, by a tall, benevolent-looking, elderly man, who, in early life, had been educated for a clergyman, but the best of whose years had been spent in the humble and laborious occupation of a country schoolmaster; and who was hence known till his death by the familiar cognomen

of Dominie Balgownie. Having, however, been left a small income by one of his own pupils, he lived independent for many years before his death, on a pleasant spot which he purchased with his own money, and adorned with much care; and which was situated on the outskirts of one of those secluded and truly rural villages that straggle at the foot of the low hills which rise gradually over each other from the vale of Clyde, in Renfrewshire, until they terminate in the circular amphitheatre which forms the majestic border, or rim, which encircles the celebrated and romantic Lochlomond.

In this well selected spot lived the simple Dominie for many years, lonely enough as to society, his only usual companion being a maiden sister, who kept his house, and hoarded his money, of which the good man himself took little heed. But the homely manse, or mansion, of Balgownie Brae was actually to be considered only as his head quarters; for, although it was probably here that he indited the matter of the following sheets, great part of his time, in his latter years, was spent in travelling about the country; a peculiarity

of habit which sometimes procured him the name of the wandering Dominie ; and which having greatly increased in inveteracy as he advanced in years, it is a little remarkable, he first acquired while he exercised his calling as a schoolmaster.

Whether it was, if I may endeavour to account for this habit, that the confinement of his teaching employment was naturally more irksome to his spirit than it is to most men, or that it was the mere effect of that sympathy with others, which was so much a characteristic of his kindly nature, that made him partake so evidently of the happiness of the boys under his charge, when the appointed hour came which gave deliverance alike to master and pupil ; certain it is, that, as he used himself to confess, the very shout of emancipation of the buzzing crowd, as they raced forth into the open green before his door, to freedom and to sport, always bounded home to his own heart, so that he was ready himself to have shouted with the most eager of them ; and was always as glad to rush out under the open heavens, as the wildest urchin of them all.

From this involuntary feeling of sympathetic delight with his own pupils, in enjoying the gladsome hours of outdoor liberty, and a natural disposition to musing and wandering among the quiet dells near his school, until the last minute of prescribed time; the transition was easy, to his partaking of those longings which every birch-dreading youngster feels for the precious holidays of Christmas and Midsummer, and which are participated in by master as well as pupil and usher in every part of the grammarian and a-b-c-d-rarian world. The moment, therefore, when the wished-for day came, that the clock struck the welcome hour which terminated the long season of teaching and confinement, off went the Dominie as fast as his legs could carry him, his heart as light as a bird, and kicking up his heels like a young colt, in the very wantonness of fresh liberty, and the prospect of unknown adventure; and thus onward he would wander, if it were to Johnny Groat's house itself, if the time allowed, for home never saw him again until the very morning when the reluctant little rabble came again together, to occupy the dingy desks and forms

of the old school-room, and to plague and worry the patient teacher for another half year.

When, therefore, the fortunate Dominie became, at length, a laird and an independent man, and occupied the pleasant upland dwelling, to which, with conscious vanity, he gave the name of Balgownie Brae, the delight he had ever taken in his periodical wanderings was recurred to with all the force of early recollections, of persons and circumstances which had interested his heart in the course of his ramblings; and between the winter and summer solstices he set forth still, with as much regularity as he had done when encumbered with his noisy charge; but now without care or dread concerning time's lapse or cash's diminution. In these journeyings, however, the principle of liberty, which had at first made them so precious, began more and more to predominate of late years; and his manner of setting forth was usually this:

He had no set time for his jaunts, nor did he ever take a thought about where, or in what direction they were to be, until probably the very morning when the fancy struck him

to take a peregrination somewhere about the world. It was a matter of perfect wilfulness of the time where it was that he took it into his head to go to ; whether it might be to the residence of some favourite acquaintance within fifty or a hundred miles, where he knew he was always welcome to sojourn so long as he chose, or to some far off place, where he should literally be a stranger and a pilgrim. Whether it were to the north Highlands or the border, to London city, or to the land's end, if he had happened to have taken a thought about any particular person or place during the musings of the previous night, if the look of the morning pleased him, and his old weather glass seemed to point any where near to " set fair," he would thrust a couple of shirts and two or three pair of stockings into a little leathern wallet that was convenient for his arm, and taking his faithful travelling staff in his hand, and slipping a certain true friend into his pocket, away he would wander forth on foot ; and perhaps, after several weeks or months, would wend back to Balgownie Brae upon no more certain motives ; and entering his house, would

sit down in his own chair, and mildly beg his sister to bring him something to eat, as if he had only returned from a walk to get an appetite for his dinner.

It was in the course of these eccentric and meditative excursions, or during his sojourn in certain great houses, in the quality of tutor or confidential friend, that the simple Dominie picked up the family histories, or fell in with the adventures which it was his amusement and solace to commit to writing, during the long nights and weary hours of bachelor vacuity in his declining years. Much as he interested his heart in every thing which was the subject of his records, and precious as these writings were to his own recollections, he never had the courage to say to me in so many words, that he had a desire or a distant hope that they should ever be thrown upon the shoreless waters, or committed to the stormy sea of publicity in actual print: but I knew the good man's secret thoughts and incipient wishes, while recalling these old stories to memory, and setting them in pen and ink order, too well, from experience, not to second them, as far as discretion would at

all warrant ; yet it has not been until after a lapse of years, and after one or two of them had got locally into the public in an unedited state, and been greatly commended where they were known (as no doubt they deserved), that I have ventured to offer a portion of them to the world.

Although all this commendation of my friend's stories gratified me, I confess, almost as much as if they had been my own, yet having been long perplexed what I should do with them, I did not determine, by means of my troublesome legacy, to encounter the fastidiousness of the gluttoned world, without some sort of sanction to my own judgment, and therefore called in certain respectable men, who were much conversant with literary matters, to aid me in this important intromission with the papers of the defunct. To these gentlemen, I am, therefore, bound to make my public acknowledgments on my own part and that of Mr. Balgownie deceased ; and in particular to my valued friend, Mr. Galt, who with the ready liberality of the higher kind of talent, and the good nature of those sort of minds which take a pleasure in making use of the

advantages they have honourably acquired, for the benefit of those who are, as yet, striving against preliminary difficulties, entered fully with me into the subject of the papers in my hands; seemed almost to have taken a regard for the simple Dominie, from what he had left behind him: and to the suggestions of a man of his taste and experience, it became me to pay no small degree of attention and respect.

One thing more I must mention in quality of legatee, and for my own exoneration in offering these papers to the public; for much as I, without doubt, esteemed the Dominie and am disposed to commend his quaint sincerity, it is not to be expected that I should stand up in defence of any man's wilful and obstinate faults—one grievous one at least, as I am sensible, adheres to the following histories, which all my arguments could not drive out of the head of my friend, now dead, and it is this—that these narratives, instead of being about princes, and dukes, and lords, and other great people, and high affairs, as they should, no doubt, be, for the pleasing of the world—are nothing else but the stories of

obscure persons whom nobody ever heard of, and a simple picture of joys and griefs in ordinary and lower life, such as come naturally within the knowledge of a man like the wandering Dominie; and worse than that, that they instead of being beautiful or gorgeous paintings of the trained imagination, they are every one, more or less, indebted to mere truth and actual occurrences, for all that their author intended them to embody.

It was in vain for me to preach to the stubborn Dominie, about the admitted inferiority of the man's productions who pretends to labour with little else but truth and nature, to his who works romantic figures and incidents on the coloured tapestry of his own imagination; or to argue how tasteless, to the appetite of a pampered public, must be the relation of incidents and concerns which really took place, or the description of thoughts and feelings, the merit of which can consist of little else but faithful observation. The obstinacy of the Dominie, in adhering to his own heresy, was most egregious! But such confirmed absurdity must surely have arisen more from attention to, or the peculiarity of

his own feelings, than from extensive acquaintance with the external world ; and that having found himself interested in what most people in artificial life, like the Levite in the gospel, are disposed to pass by on the other side ; and being one of those who, in their progress through the world, are inclined to find tongues in stones, and good in every thing, he judged very much of mankind by what he felt himself ; and the realities of life, sad though they often be, had more interest for him than any mere creation of the fancy, which, exaggerated and coloured to suit the common taste, could have little foundation in actual truth.

But without persisting in accounting for any man's peculiarities, the meaning of what we are offering, at all events, is, that at least these papers do not go forth to the world with much pretence. The Dominie was an humble man, and he had little reason to be otherwise ; but this very quality enabled him to see and collect things throughout the world, which at least interested himself, and which were to him, what thousands are going from Dan to Beersheba, seeking for in vain.

THE RASH MARRIAGE.

THE RASH MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

Wrap close your cloak, outface the blustering storm,
Mount up the prisoner's stair, and ope his cell.—
What do you see within? *Scrap Stanzas.*

IT was on a dark dirty night in the month of October, that I found myself impelled by motives of humanity, as well as a regard for my word, to gather myself up from my comfortable arm chair, and to buckle on my leather leggings, in order to proceed through the dubs and the wet into the old town, and to climb the Castle-hill of Stirling.

I could not help grumbling a little at my own readiness in making promises to bestow myself abroad, that were sure always to come due on the most disagreeable rheumatic days or nights in the whole year, as I thrust my arms into my

ample Bavaria, and wrapping some half-dozen handkerchiefs round my neck, or rather my shoulders and face, prepared to go out into the rain and damp, and to take the high road to the town. 'There is a great pleasure in doing good, no doubt,' said I to myself, as I warmed my gloves at the fire; 'but a man at least should have fine weather to do it in: and it would certainly make any sensible bachelor begrudge his good works, to be obliged to leave his fireside on such a night, in order to get himself into other people's troubles.' But I had promised, and that was sufficient; and, although the night and the occasion were enough to raise all the blue and green devils that ever visit a forlorn single man in his melancholics, I armed myself with my confidential crummy, and set forth from the Laird of Muirdyke's house, where I and my sister Margery were then staying, to splash my way a good mile of road into Stirling.

It was, as I said, as unpraiseworthy a night as ever a man set out in; none of your sublime stormy nights, blasting and blowing, thundering

and lightning, the which I could have well endured, and even wished for, compared with this. It was not even poetically stormy; for the trees in the long parallelogram avenue of my host's mansion did not sigh and whiz in the wind in the way I should have gloried in, even when lying in my bed in the night time. There was nothing but a vile, harsh, gusty blast, that came every now and then with raging thuds, frightening the very crows in the old rookery, and carrying with it a thick drizzling rain—a heavy Scotch mist, soaking any mortal to the skin, and the night as dark! ay, “black as Erebus!”

As I trudged on along the lonesome avenue, and forthwith splashed my way through the unseen dubs of the common toll road, I mused eerily and painfully upon the occasion which had called me forth to the town on such a dismal night. I was going in fact to a jail, a place of which I always had a sickish horror; and I was about to pay a visit to a poor confined debtor, of whose incarceration I had heard only the day before; but he having been an acquaintance of my early

days, and even a pupil of my own, my conscience would not suffer me to defer seeing him another hour.

But the occasion brought upon me all sorts of reflections upon human vicissitude, as I plodded on towards the dull town, and the still more dismal prison ; and thought of the unexpected developments of manhood, after the promises of youth ; and the strange difference often between the beginnings and the endings of human things. To be sure, the man I was about to visit might be now a person of no great character ; and in fact, I had known nothing of him for more than twenty years. Nevertheless, said I, whatever he is, with all his other wants, in his misfortunes, he wants liberty, and cannot have the pleasure, even “on such a night as this,” of turning up his face to “the sweet heavens,” to receive the fresh rain upon it from above,* by way of choosing his evil from the

* Imprisonment for debt, is much closer in Scotland than it is in England. By the Scotch law, the debtor who is incarcerated is not permitted to enjoy any exercise in the open air. There are, consequently, no court-yards for prisoners ; for the spirit of the law is, that they must not, at any moment, get *from under cover*.

hand of God, instead of the hand of man, by which he is now suffering, while I can have the satisfaction of going forth in the storm, and getting wet and uncomfortable, of my own free choice and election.

Musing, in this melancholy way, I soon found myself mounting by the main street up the Castle-hill of Stirling. The sight of towers and turrets, battlements and bastions, *may* bring pleasing associations of war and of romance, of grandeur and antiquity, when the day is fine, and the sun is shining on threatening gun-port and waving standard: but truly, in a dark rainy night, the mass of buildings and rocks that form the ancient Castle of Stirling have a peculiarly gloomy and confused effect; and as for the actual confinement part of it, the dim lights appearing from the small barred windows, which studded the old buildings, gave most expressive indications of what a prison promises to “those that are without,” and the bolts and locks and riveted doors, with the poor disconsolate unshaven debtor, wearying his solitary hours within the narrow apartments—these

are associations that are the very reverse of agreeable ; and, in fact, give one sensations that are truly grievous and melancholic.

I knocked at the strong outer gate of the debtors' prison, and the very sound of the heavy falling iron conveyed to my heart a sad and solemn moral reflection : but this was no time for moralizing ; and I saw that the ugly-looking Arguses, who watched over their unwilling lodgers, were a step beyond that. I had often heard of the riot and jollity of prisoners, but assuredly there appeared no indications of such things as yet. As I entered, scarce a sound was heard ; a light from the little grated windows glimmered through the darkness, and shone upon the wet pavement of the interior yard (where the prisoners dare not enjoy the luxury of walking) ; the patient sentinel seemed to cower, solitary and cold, in his box as I passed, as if he felt uncomfortable on the very threshold of confinement ; and the turnkeys stared suspiciously at me, as they leisurely admitted me, and directed me up the long stone stairs of the castle.

When I had clambered to the top of the stairs,

and while I stood waiting in the passage for the person I had come to visit, not wishing to be intrusive, I endeavoured to comfort myself on his part, by dwelling on the usual relieved mind and thoughtlessness of prisoners, in that "poor but merry place," that turning-post, from which the victim of imprudence or of vicissitude may commence a new career—that asylum from every sort of hunting and vindictive persecution, where, in placing a man within its monotonous walls, the hardened creditor, and the more hardened lawyer, have both done their worst—and where at least, as the vulgar song has it,

——“ No bailiff, dun, nor setter,
Dares to show his frightful face,”

when my friend made his appearance from one of the low rooms in the passage.

He received me in the dimly lighted corridor with the look of gratitude with which a visit in adversity is generally acknowledged; and with the prisoner's forced smile and somewhat bravoing manner, which endeavours to drive off the con-

sciousness of degradation and the apprehension of disrespect, at being recognized by an old friend and equal, as an imprisoned debtor and an insolvent; and which covers for a moment the usual depression and humiliation of mind: but he detained me at the door of his room, with a perplexed expression in his look, and a seeming hesitation, that appeared to me odd and unaccountable.

When he opened the door, however, and I entered his small apartment, I was absolutely startled with the appearance of the figure that I found within, whose presence had been the cause of my friend's indecision. It was a female, a lady dressed in black silk, and for a place of this kind a perfect apparition of elegance, so completely unlike to the man who introduced me, and to the bare walls of the prison room, the mean bedstead on which they had been sitting, and the miserable tea equipage that stood on the deal table before them, that I was transfixed in sudden astonishment.

The effect that my entrance had upon the female seemed no less embarrassing and uneasy. When her eye met my gaze, as I came forward, and she

saw the expression on my face, she rose and made towards the opposite corner, as if she wished that the stone walls of the jail would give way, that she might hide herself from me. I apologized, and offered to retire, but Farquhar, whom I had come to visit, would not suffer me, but made me be seated on a form, while the poor female rose from her scanty meal, blushed, averted her face, and looked towards the fire—and I, perhaps, with as absent an expression, began to condole with him upon the unfortunate occurrences which had placed him where he was. Whether from the effect of ill manners, or design, I know not, but he did not introduce me to the lady, nor take any notice of her to me, but began a long account of his private affairs, and the circumstances which had led to his imprisonment.

While my old pupil was discoursing to me of bonds and securities, and captions and hornings, and arrests, and so forth, I occasionally stammered out something in the way of assent or inquiry, while really occupied with nothing but musing conjectures regarding his fair companion;

and I looked at her more than I felt to be strictly decorous, for I found myself treating my own eyes as if doubtful of credit, so much was I confounded at the sight of such beauty and elegance of mien, in a place where they were so little to be expected. Farquhar continued to prose away about the fine prospects he had once thought he had in London, where he had lately been; and of his cunning Partner, who chose to turn scoundrel to him (according to his own account), and so forth. But, in truth, I did not make out any sense or connection in his weary story, so much was I absorbed with the apparition of the lady, and the mean, broken-edged teacups before them, and the tea from which she had risen on my entrance, and to which they did not appear to possess even the luxury of prison *cream*; and the morsel of brown sugar, giving an idea of such meagre poverty—and the female, with the look of a heroine! dressed I might say with elegance, and absolutely a beautiful creature! I was more than confounded, and somewhat ashamed, I knew not why, except it was, that I saw she was evidently

embarrassed by my presence, and yet I could not properly leave the room on her account, and then I incessantly caught myself watching for a proper sight of her face, while the man was talking to me.

In short, after the first mutual inquiries between my friend and myself, I found my curiosity so much excited concerning the lady, that I could with difficulty demean myself as I ought to the man I had come hither to visit. The little that I had heard her speak was in the best English accent; she must have come down from thence with him. It could not be possible that she was his *wife*! I felt an inward grudging to come to this conclusion; but yet no female *but* a wife or sister could be thus circumstanced with a man in prison; and his sister could no more be like the female before me, than I could be like "the King of the Sandwich Islands."

While conversing at intervals, I was all the while reasoning in my own mind on the probability of the most natural supposition, but I could not at all admit it. I looked at them alternately, and saw such a contrast! *He* had been a tolerably

handsome stripling, as I once knew him ; now he was a mean and an unhealthy looking creature, —appearing above forty years of age, without the dignity and wisdom that ought to belong to that time of life, although his real age could not, as I could recollect, be much above thirty—his countenance bespeaking abjectness rather than melancholy, and all the humbled depression of the prisoner without a trace of sentiment. The brown wig that he wore gave him the appearance of a constitution on the decline, or of early emaciation ; and his yellow-grey, feline eyes conveyed an expression which to me was actually unpleasant, at least they were of a character very different from those that usually succeed in interesting a woman.

The lady might be called tall ; and was dressed by no means expensively, but yet in perfect taste ; her age appeared to be eighteen, or nineteen at farthest ; her complexion like the very ivory, and while I looked at her shining black hair, dressed over her head in a style which seemed, I confess, more suitable for a drawing room than a prison—as she thrust back occasionally the curls from her

clear forehead—while I noted one by one her features—her charming mouth, her pure, healthy cheek, her eyebrows! and then her eyes! I thought of poems, old and new, sonnets on beauty, and laboured descriptions of all sorts, and antique ballads, most delightful to think of.

And I did think of them at that very moment, I positively could not help it; and in the same breath was conning over to myself the verse which says—

The blink o' her bonny black ei wha can thol,
On the strings of my heart she bewitchingly plays,
And each languishing note is a sigh frae my soul!

And I did sigh too as I looked at the lady, it is Heaven's truth, although I burned with shame at the time, and am still ashamed to own it.

“Can she be his wife?” I still inquired of myself; and I looked at his old-looking, sallow countenance, and read his sordid, trading, groveling spirit in every change of it—and then I turned to the elegant figure sitting opposite to me, just from London, with features bespeaking delicacy, modesty, and female spirit; to be united to such a

fellow, to spend the honeymoon of marriage in a prison ! Could she be other than virtuous ? This could not be, for had she degraded herself, as many females do, she would even in this way have been placed far above giving her person to a mean trader, without either money or talents to support her in the manner she had evidently been accustomed to. She wrung her white hands into each other, as if striving not to think, and upon her long, plump fingers I observed a mourning, and also, as I presumed, a marriage ring. What could have been her fate ? The profile of her bust was admirable ; and a little of her arm, which was revealed, set my imagination to work regarding the perfection of her figure as well as her face.

After some further conversation with him, in which I framed several inquiries bordering on the information I aimed at, he told me he *was* married. My interest on his account now increased inexpressibly on hers, who by some one of those incidents which often do strangely affect a woman's lot, was actually his wife ; and, on further speaking of his circumstances and remaining friends, he

gave me a most deplorable account of his situation and prospects. So much did he dilate upon this subject, and so abject and indelicate an *exposé* did he make of his whole situation, of his being now, as he described himself, a burthen on his relations, who were unable to bear it—upon the hopelessness of his obtaining his liberty from the vindictiveness of a particular creditor, and his utterly helpless situation even when that might be brought about, that I blushed to listen to it, and could ill conceal the contempt and disgust I felt for the dastardly wretch, who, under any circumstance, could so degrade himself to his fellow, particularly in the presence of a newly married and beauteous wife.

The feeling of shame which had evidently oppressed her on my entrance, from being found in such a state, seemed now to be succeeded by a returning pride; by those sentiments of dignity and self-respect so natural to a well-educated woman; which, with an occasional look towards her husband of contemptuous bitterness, she was evidently calling in, to overcome the previous feel-

ing of embarrassment and humiliation; and which, by a natural reaction, seemed, as I watched her countenance, to rise above their usual level, as she reflected, no doubt, on the present strange appearance she made before one who saw her for the first time, and as her husband continued to degrade her by his ignoble complaint.

He went on to speak of their at present living, poor as that living was, upon the sale of his young wife's trinkets, assisted by the scanty donations of his relatives. To my suggestions of plans for him when he obtained his liberty, they all seemed to him hopeless, or above his expectations—and when he came to express his satisfaction that he could still become a menial servant, and added, that that appeared to be his only alternative, the lady seemed to arouse as from a trance, and turning half aside, her eyes flashing with some strange emotion, she appeared ready to burst out into a fit of contemptuous laughter. I was really afraid, as I looked in her face, tried to draw the conversation by degrees into another channel, and began to talk, without knowing well what I said, to give myself time to make my mental observations.

The lady, as I said, appeared to be in the bloom of eighteen, or little more; and her look, whatever it expressed, did not indicate melancholy; on the contrary, the natural light spirits of her age seemed as if they refused to be repressed, by even the description forced upon her of her circumstances and prospects. She looked almost as if unconscious where she was, excepting at sudden intervals; even a jail and poverty had not yet affected her spirit, and the care she evinced of her person, and the joyousness of youth, mixed with an occasional expression of disdain, that still beamed in her eye, being the powerful attributes of nature—that *circumstance*, whatever it was, which had placed her in this inimical state, had not yet been able to overcome or to dissipate.

I pitied her much; for, without as yet knowing the particulars of her past life, I thought if she could judge as I did of what was likely to be in reserve for her, as the wife of such a man, she would have been affected in a very different manner. I offered my services to *him*, while half addressing *her*; but could not then understand the look she gave me, nor why she seemed to have been

watching my countenance, as she sat with her arm leaning upon the edge of the table, and her long fingers stretched over her eyes ; nor why she kept playing with my snuffbox, and busy with something she had taken from her pocket, with her back half turned to me. I repeated my offer as I rose to depart. She respectfully declined it, with acknowledgments gracefully delivered ; he, with a hesitating reference to her, as if a momentary jealousy or dread had come across his mind : and I then left them.

I found myself deeply impressed with the scene I had just witnessed ; and, as I stepped down the street towards home, began to lament and meditate, in my moralizing way, upon the fearful perils of youth, particularly of the fair sex, who, in the non-age of inexperience, are so liable to plunge into circumstances, of the issues of which they are utterly ignorant, and for the evils inseparable from which they are very unprepared, and may be quite unable to mitigate or control. When the thoughtlessness occasioned by ignorance of evil, and the impatience caused by the fancied prospect of good, may in a few weeks or days induce steps to be taken, or

engagements to be formed, which risks, if not destroys, the happiness, perhaps the virtue, of the whole succeeding and most valuable portion of life: when young persons (I went on), charming as the woman I have just left, may lose the proper pleasures of youth,—of that season when joy dances in the spirits and levity laughs in the eye, before care has fastened her talons in the vitals, and anxiety has begun to suck up the marrow of life; and instead of enjoying the sweet period which is never to return—begin early to treasure up evil against the day of suffering, and then grow old in unavailing complaints of the miseries of existence; in envying in others the rewards of prudence, and the comforts flowing from sensible conduct, which by early folly may never be *their* lot.

Youth and beauty, I continued, pursuing my train of trite reflections, are passing away like a shadow. (I am five and forty good!) Life itself is but a series of shadows, or clouds, which glow brightly in the sunbeams of youth, and are deepened and mixed in the seriousness of age. It is rational to catch the good, and enjoy it as it passes; though it be but a shadow, if hallowed by virtue,

and gilded by the imagination ; for the dark shadows will not fail at some time to pass over each of us, and involve us in their gloom ; and, whether we feel it much or not, a share we must expect out of the abundant storehouses of evil.

“ Very fine *Johnsonizing*, all this,” I said, taking out my snuffbox, as I proceeded down the street, “ but I must quicken my notions with a little olfactory refreshment.” I gave my oblong receptacle of black rappee three distinct taps, as was my wont, and was proceeding to open the lid, and to bury my finger and thumb among the soft mass of fragrant stimulant, when my digits were prevented by some rustling thing which overlaid the snuff. I felt a sort of alarm at this, and could not help at the instant adverting in thought to the beauteous lady in the prison, who had handled my humble snuffbox so caressingly in her white fingers ; and strange ideas crossed my brain about night intrigues, and the dangerous seductions of the sex, so that I almost regretted having seen her at all, and seriously hoped that I might never meet her more, it being as much as my peace of mind was worth : when bringing the box to the light,

I found inside a small piece of paper neatly folded up, the very look of which put me into a trepidation.

After some musing and fancying before I could make out the meaning of this discovery, I was at length enabled, by the peeping light from a shop window, to read a pencil writing on the paper, as follows :

“ Excuse, Sir, the freedom of a stranger, an unfortunate female, in taking this mode of addressing you ; but if your offers to serve my husband and myself be sincere, meet me in fifteen minutes after you receive this, or at least, exactly at nine o’clock, at the end of the street next to this wretched jail.

Yours,

JEMIMA FARQUHAR.”

I stood aghast at the bare idea of this assignation, although I would have given any thing to know something of the strange lady’s history ; but, in truth, she had impressed my thoughts too strongly already, for any other man’s wife to impress them ; I was not at all anxious to fall in love in such a quarter, and had no higher opinion

of my own virtue than that of other people. But, thought I, "I must be so ready forsooth in offering my services to ladies in prison; and here I am challenged to meet a pretty woman alone, at the ninth hour of the night!"

I had not stood five minutes at the darkling corner of the street before a lady wrapped in a cloak came suspiciously up to where I stood, and looked curiously in my face.

"God bless you, Sir!" she said, after a moment's hesitation, "for meeting me so readily, and excuse my boldness; but I have the power of getting my husband liberated from that miserable prison, and must not neglect it, if at all consistent with"—

"What can I do for you, Madam?" I said, with a haste that indicated considerable suspicion of myself.

"It is only your protection I want, Sir, in a matter that"—and the lady again hesitated.

"I hope you will find that you may confide in me," I replied, mustering courage; "but this is no place to talk, Madam, and it is so wet and uncomfortable. Had not we better"—

“Ha! do you think a shower of rain, or a blast of wind scares me!” said the lady, with an energetic, or rather indignant nobleness of manner. “Does not suspicion dog the steps, and detraction watch every movement of a poor female, in the company of one of that sex from whom she naturally expects counsel and protection? Where should you and I go, Sir, where the very walls would not be on the watch to witness against us?”

“You say true, Madam,” I replied, quietly; but I was not accustomed to such energy of language and manner as she showed; and marvelled what she had to say.

“I had better explain, Sir,” she said, after a moment, “the nature of the business on which I would beg your assistance.”

“If you please, Madam,” I added; “but may I be permitted first to make an inquiry regarding the circumstance which led to your marriage with my old acquaintance? I confess I have some curiosity, and”—

“I see I must explain my inmost feelings, must

expose my bitter error, even to strangers, before I am trusted," she said, half to herself. "Know you, Sir, what a woman's reason may be, for marrying the creature she despises?"

"Alas, Madam!" I said, "a woman usually marries from the power of some present feeling; but reason she seldom has, even for her noblest actions. I have known a woman marry the man she cared not for, merely to vex and torture the man whom yet she loved to distraction."

"But not without a cause, good Sir," exclaimed the young lady; "not without a strong reason; not unless he had vexed her heart, and used her ill, as Ellis did me. Oh my God!" and the female was hardly able to stand, from sudden emotion at my having touched the string of her feelings.

"Then, Madam," I said compassionately, "with all your claims on admiration, you married the man you never can love, under the influence of pique,—a pet—to avenge a supposed injury, and"—

"Exactly so, Sir," she said, drawing a heavy sigh; "but why should I reflect unavailingly upon what cannot be recalled. Farquhar is my husband

now; and in short, Sir, the man who threw him into jail is he who was my own early lover, who has had my destiny in his hands ever since I knew him; whom I loved, and yet whom I sometimes almost hated. But I cannot tell you all, Sir; and it was in consequence of his usage, and in obedience to my father's temporary wish, that I married the low-spirited, sickly—but he is my husband now; and I have submitted to the degradation of asking that very man, of whom I took revenge, by this ill advised marriage, for poor Farquhar's liberation."

"Unfortunate girl!" I could not help exclaiming, "and you so young, and to be thus situated."

"This gentleman," she continued, "who has my husband thus in his power, is named Ellis.—We had long been designed for each other, and he knew but too well that he had my entire heart: and he became, as I thought, capricious with me, and wilfully tried to vex me, by attentions to others whom I scorned. In short, his conduct was most harassing to my warm feelings, and to my high spirit, for he played the male coquette to me, dis-

pleased my father; and then, when I resented this, he was furious, and seemed as if he would have destroyed himself on my account; yet he was too proud to sue to me and woo me as a woman expects; and I was too proud to show that I cared for him, and he carried the quarrel with a high hand, Sir, and I could not bear it."

"But your father, Madam?" I said, deeply affected with the pretty young woman's passionate manner.

"My father," she went on, "is a man who loves money above all things, and he took a fancy to Farquhar, because he thought him like himself, and because he was supple and cringing in his manners. He applied to my father, and made him believe he was wealthy; and in the height of my quarrel with Mr. Ellis, I took a hasty resolution, and married him, and plunged myself into wretchedness for life only three days afterwards!"

"A sad account of yourself, poor girl," I answered, shaking my head and sighing, as I contemplated the beauteous face of the young woman, by the dull light of the corner lamp; "but pray go on."

“I am explaining all this very candidly to you, Sir,” she continued, “believing you to be a man who knows the world, and who has sense to understand my tale. The horror I felt at my own act was almost compensated by the fury and grief of Ellis, whose regret at his own conduct was now undisguised, and drove him almost to madness. But he has a strange temper, as I said, and when he heard of my husband’s partner absconding, and found he had him in his power, he could not resist the temptation of throwing him into jail, merely to degrade, and be revenged on me, while he contrived to sow discord between my husband and father, that we might both be humbled,—humbled indeed, by poverty and sorrow!”

“Alas!” said I, “a strange and unfortunate tale.”

“Not so very strange, Sir, I believe, though unfortunate enough,” she went on, as if striving against her feelings; “but I endeavoured to do my duty to my poor dejected husband, and left London to keep him company in that dismal jail; but confinement and depression began to wear down

my high spirit, and I solicited Ellis to let him out ; but he wrote to me that he must see me : and what do you think were his tyrannical conditions ?”

“ Pray tell me,” I said, “ I am interested in your tale.”

“ You must know, Sir, that the place where I first met him, and where we first became acquainted, was in this very neighbourhood, in a spot,—I dare hardly trust myself to name it, but which now lies shrouded in darkness beneath us ! It was when I was here in Scotland on a visit several years ago, and there we used to walk in the summer nights, and there is a particular tree which stands on the very edge of the winding Forth, where we used to meet ; but I scarce dare venture now even to think of those days !”

“ Let us walk forward, Madam,” I said, “ for the night is cold ;” and we went on together.

“ Well, Sir, he insists upon seeing me, and at that very tree, and alone, at ten at night, before he will liberate my husband.”

“ An extraordinary instance of tyranny and caprice. And will you give him the meeting ?”

“ I must either do it, or he will remain as unmoved as the dead walls of the prison. He first appointed a night last week ; and as I took no notice of his capricious wish, he wrote me a note full of bitterness, stating that I had caused him to wait at the spot a full hour alone, and that he was to set off for London in a few days ; and that if I did not consent to meet him to-morrow night, at the same hour, or even later, he would continue mine and my husband’s determined enemy, from the way he said I had wronged him.”

“ And how, Madam, do you mean to act ?” I inquired.

“ I would have met him, perhaps, at first, Sir, for I know his peremptory temper, had I had any respectable person that would have gone with me, and stood aside while I talked to Ellis, as well for my protection, as that I could not, with due respect for my character, meet another, or watch alone for any man at that hour in the night in so strange a place. Now, Sir, as I know it will be useless to refuse him, if you are disposed to bear me company to-morrow night, and be an

unobserved witness of this most trying interview, you will prove yourself a friend to me in my trouble, and be the means of relieving my husband and myself from this miserable jail."

"And do you wish me to interfere for you with this vengeful man?" I added, doubtingly, for I had little confidence in my own nerves in engaging in scenes of passion; and began to feel much disturbed by the prospect of being inveigled in a night affair with a pretty woman.

"Certainly not, Sir," she said with animation; "I only want a protector, and your staid appearance and character will—but if you have any hesitation," she added proudly, "I will meet this man by myself, and even at midnight, if he should take me and drown me in the black waters of the Forth!"

"You shall not want a protector, young lady!" I said at once; my gallantry, as well as my humanity, overcoming every momentary scruple.—"Only say where we shall meet, and I will attend you."

"Heaven bless you, Sir," she answered; "I

will expect you then to-morrow night, at the proper hour, to be with me at the near end of the walk on the brow of the castle, called the Castle Walk.—Now, Sir, just leave me here,” she said, going; “I will find my own way to my solitary apartment. God bless you again!”—and before I had recovered my surprise, the lady, wrapping her mantle round her, had tripped off down the wet street, and was out of view, while I stood stockstill under a dim lamp, gazing vacantly along the route by which she had disappeared.

I went home, and up to my chamber in the old-fashioned house of the Laird of Muirdyke, where I was then domiciled; but I could not sleep a wink the whole of that night—not a single wink, for thinking of that lady. God help me! I was always a silly man about female charms, and love, and so forth, and the thoughts of the poor young woman’s fate, and of her uncommon beauty, and her high spirit, and of my own fate, in being thus frequently made a go-between in other people’s love matters!—I, that had never been successful

in any love concern of my own,—were positively exceedingly trying.

Indeed, as I lay in my bed betwixt sleeping and waking, thinking of the dark eyes and appealing looks of the lady, and of the sad circumstances of life that so often cause such beauty as hers to be lost, and worse than lost, in this ill-divided world, I began to suspect myself of indulging evil thoughts; and the very wind that whistled among the elm trees round the old house, and rattled on my creaking casement all night, and the rooks, that cawed hoarsely in the rookery near, seemed to accuse me of weakness, and of a secret disposition to break the tenth commandment.

CHAPTER II.

The night was dark, the time was lang,
And lonesome was the spat;
And the bonnie lass that sat by me
She sobbed aye and grat. *Serap Stanzas.*

WELL, the next night did arrive at length, and away I trudged to my dangerous assignation. The evening, happily, was a perfect contrast to the former; it was quite dry, and solemnly calm: but there was neither moon nor star to be seen; and the red light of the distant forges of Carron was the only thing that diversified the heavy blackness of the sky above. I got into Stirling, and mounted with a sort of guilty step, to the Castle Walk, where there was not a soul to be seen or heard near. I stood for a time behind the parapet, that surrounded the rock on which I was, and looked down upon the dark waste extending far beneath me, and in which I could not distinguish an

object but the deep black lines of the winding Forth, which moved on so deadly silent that I could not hear a single murmur of its waters at the height whereon I was; and the occasional tread of the pacing sentinel above me was the only sound to break the stillness of the night.

I had not tarried long until a light step came pattering on in the distance, and a female figure, wrapped in a cloak, was quite near to me before I had discerned her in the darkness. "Heaven bless you, Sir, for this," she said, as she came close; and she took my hand in both hers, and pressed it. I declare the feeling went through me down to my very toes, for the poor young woman seemed ready to throw herself into my very arms from gratitude. I could not say much. I never was free of speech when I found myself affected. I only gave the lady my arm, which she took, I thought, as if she had found a new lover in my grave person; and away she led me I knew not well whither.

We descended from the castle without speaking, and she took me by several paths, which she

seemed to know in the dark as perfectly as if it had been broad day, to the spot mentioned, by the side of the Forth: and she looked round her with a sort of suspicious dread as we drew near the large knarled tree that she had spoken of, which overhung the bank of the river. "What a strange sensation comes over me, Sir," she said, "on approaching this well known spot. There is a dread I feel here, which is like the dread of guilt; and yet I have been sorely sinned against. Alas, Sir, I am unworthy of your protection," she added, clinging to me. "My high and wilful spirit has been my own ruin!"

"Be calm," I said, "and collected, for I hear some one approaching, and I will be at hand as your protector."

"Oh, Sir," she exclaimed trembling, "I owe you every thing;—let me conjure you, whatever you hear, to say nothing, nor even to show yourself, unless Mr. Ellis actually intend some guilty design, and offer me some violence. Pray conceal yourself behind the tree on the side next the river, and do not move if possible, for Ellis is a fury, and blood will be the consequence."

The sound of footsteps soon indicated that some one was quite near. I crept behind the tree, and immediately saw the tall figure of a man approach the trembling Jemima.

“ So—you are there at last,” said a low voice, in hollow accents, but, as I thought, in a tone of triumph. “ Times are changed with you now, Jemima,” he added ; “ you were not always willing to be thus complaisant to me. But I knew—I was certain, it would come to this.”

“ If you are only come to reproach me, Richard,” she said composedly, “ I shall return as I came. I have complied with your unreasonable request ; and met you in this solitary spot under the cloud of night, not from the slightest sentiment of humility to you, but for the sake of my unfortunate husband.”

“ Well, Jemima !”

“ What mean you by questions ? Will you still continue to oppress my husband ? or will you show yourself a man, by discharging him from his confinement ?”

“ That is not the way that it becomes the wives of imprisoned debtors to address a losing creditor,”

was his haughty answer. "I will not be spoke to in this manner, Mrs. Farquhar, even by you!"

"Have you not already mortified me enough, Mr. Ellis?" she said, almost in tears, at hearing herself called by this name. "Will you *for my sake* discharge my husband from that horrid prison, and let me go home?"

"It was for your sake I sent him to jail, Jemima."

"And will you for my sake release him, Richard?" she said, clasping her hands together.

"Perhaps I may—but not now."

"Not to-night, after all!"

"If I do it not to-night I shall never do it, for I depart by daybreak for London; and your fine husband may then rot for years within the stone walls of the Castle of Stirling."

"Heavens! what do you mean? But you will do it to-night still. You have not surely brought me here in vain? A few lines from your pen will release my wretched husband."

"There is no light from Heaven at present to write by, Jemima; nor are there tables at hand on

the cold bank of the Forth for penning letters to the jailor of Stirling," he replied, with a scornful and almost ruffianly disregard of the young lady's anxiety.

"Then why did you not bring it with you?" she replied, patiently. "Have I not yet been sufficiently tortured by you?"

"No!" he exclaimed, with an expression that was almost ferocious. "No! you will never suffer, wild, untamable girl, half the torture that you have made me feel! Is not my rising up and lying down, my very morning and evening outgoing and incoming a torture to me on your account? to think that you—ah, but you are yourself suffering for it now, Jemima; now you are made to feel!"

"But did you bring me here at this dark hour," she replied, "only to mock me, without bringing my husband's discharge? Is your vengeance of so low a species, Richard Ellis?"

"How did I know," said he, "that you would not have mocked me yourself, as you did at the former appointment, by failing to meet me? And

why should I then be so forward with a ready made discharge for the wretch you call your husband, when you might not have even condescended to accept it?"

"Oh, Richard!" she said weeping, "you have made sad use of the power you have had over me: but write me my husband's release, and I will follow you where you can."—

"You shall not!" he interrupted, "here only I will meet you, and here alone will I enter into any compromise. Wait here until I bring it to you, or let the caitiff remain a year longer in Stirling Castle."

"You would not have me linger here till midnight, Richard! Surely you may be satisfied without that."

"I shall *never* be satisfied on earth! Jemima, while you are satisfied to remain as you are—to sleep in the arms of that yellow, sickly—Oh God!" and he stamped with the bitterness of the thought. "Will you wait until I return again, and I promise to bring you a written paper in my pocket in reference to Farquhar?"

“ I will wait, Richard !” she exclaimed, “ I will wait on this cold bank until morning, if that will satisfy you.”

“ You shall not have to wait long. Ah ! had you always been thus yielding, Jemima,” he said, with a stifled tenderness—“ but let me not think of the past. Farewell now, I will return anon ;” and having said this, he turned off along the bank towards the town, and was soon lost in the utter darkness of the night.

I crept out from my hiding place, and received many thanks for my protecting kindness from the still agitated girl. “ And now, Sir,” she said, “ I may have a whole hour to linger here, you had better not tarry, as I think, after all, Mr. Ellis’s intentions are at least not to injure me.”

I protested at once against any such desertion, and making a place for her on the dry sod of the bank, I persuaded her to be seated, and sat myself down close by her side.

A whole hour wore away while she sat by me with good heart ; but she spoke little, nor did I encourage her to talk, for in truth I was jealous

over myself with a prudent jealousy, and felt the exceeding precariousness of the command I had over my heart and feeling in my present most interesting situation. Eleven o'clock was told by the castle and church bells of Stirling, their chimes had rung out, and as it drew near to the midnight hour, my anxious companion strained her eyes looking down the river and towards the town, and up to the dim lights on the Castle wall, and then she turned to look up in my face, with a prognosticating yet silent apprehension.

Twelve o'clock was told and echoed from the rocks of the old Castle of Stirling. The guard was changed on the battlements as we watched, and still no step was heard nor sound, but the occasional challenge of the sentinel on the outer battlements, to the last stragglers who passed or sought entrance; or at times we could hear the distant roar of the forge blasts of the great foundery of Carron, the light from whose furnaces glared, even at this distance, upon the black sky over us.

The anxiety of the poor female by my side became now of a more nervous character, and partaking

more of the excitement of apprehensive impatience than I could have anticipated. Her wonted spirit seemed to desert her, as she looked round where we sat, in the solemnity of midnight, and began to reflect that she could not now with decency seek her lodgings in Stirling after this late hour, and was likely to be left in the fields all night. She entreated me to go home, and leave her to her fate—she thanked me with tears in her eyes, because I would on no account desert her—in her gratitude she pressed my hand between her soft fingers until the effect thrilled through me; and, after an exclamation or two of agony, as she looked round her again and then towards me, and contrasted, with a sort of astonishment, her past hopes and her present situation, she was unable longer to command her feminine feelings, and laid down her head upon her knees and burst into bitter sorrow.

She begged me to excuse her weakness, as she sat wringing her hands and weeping, while she looked abstractedly down into the dark waters rolling at our feet, and thought, no doubt, of her early days, and father's house in England, and the

sad and ruined condition in which she was left on this trying occasion, sitting with a stranger at the dead hour of the night in the open fields, the wife of a poor debtor in Stirling jail, and waiting on the will of a man, whose capricious abuse of her undisguised love had driven her into this state of wedded despair.

But nature and youthful need at length prevailed over rankling sorrow ; for as she sat musing over her griefs, and listening to the chime of the distant bells of the town, and sometimes watching the gleam of the Carron furnaces on the sky, she rocked herself into a state of drowsy inanition : the chill air and the exhaustion of her sorrow completely overcame her ; her apologetic lamentation for me, who thus voluntarily protected her, and the voice of her murmuring griefs died gradually away ; until, with the passiveness of a female leaning upon woman's natural protector, and the docility of a child, she suffered me to assist her sinking head, as she willingly allowed it to drop on the soft bank, and giving a sigh of nature's weariness, and the regardlessness of grief, she

stretched herself along on the sod, and sunk into a profound and murmuring sleep.

There was something in my situation at this cold hour of midnight, as I sat beside the sleeping young female on the bank of the Forth, that startled myself to think of, and that was perfectly new to my experience; for in all the incidents that my wanderings had afforded me, I had always been a man of staid gravity, and of habits of such perfect regularity, that no one thought of imputing to me the smallest deviation from the straight path, or taxing me with any thing that had the most distant appearance of evil; and yet here was I, not only staying out of my home all night, but passing it in the fields along with a young woman, that was a perfect temptation to think of. What would my kind host at Muirdyke, and all my sober friends, far and near, think of a man of my character being so found? and my sister Margery, my friend's prim visitor, who was probably at this moment sitting up for me, mustering all my former faults and eccentricities to exasperate herself in her impatience, and carefully staving off sleep, and

nursing her wrath to keep it up to scolding heat? and how should I face her again in broad daylight after such an affair as this?

‘A goodly woman is my sister Margery,’ I said to myself, as I sat ruminating with a guilty feeling upon my present suspicious predicament, ‘and hates all manner of carnal iniquity; and a maiden she is, God knows! and my very look will betray me to her:’ and as I thus mused, my eyes also began to close, and my senses to conglomerate in midnight drowsiness: the shadows of darkness compassed me about, and the grey eyes of my sister Margery seemed to glare reproachingly upon me; and I thought, or dreamed of midnight ruffians treading stealthily around; and they seemed about to seize me by the throat, and I started from my stupor in chill and guilty uneasiness.

But when I thought of my poor unprotected sleeper by my side, and of the serious griefs which made this moment’s repose perhaps a precious respite for her, I felt ashamed that I should entertain any selfish misgivings about the opinion of others, while I watched her in this hour of trial

and desertion. I laid my ear near to her mouth, and listened to her deep and heavy breathing, and recollected that she had a father who owned her, and a mother who had reared her on her knees; and who little thought that their regarded daughter was now sleeping on the cold earth, by the banks of the Forth. I adjusted, carefully, her cloak over her limbs as she drew them up in her sleep from the cold; and if an evil thought came into my head, the distant flame of the great foundery of Carron seemed to shoot fearfully upwards and along the sky; and then I looked up above and saw the heavens red and threatening over me! but anon, the red glare passed away, and so did my foolish thoughts: and then the music bells of Stirling Church would strike their hourly peal, and came chiming over my ear from the town, breaking the stillness of midnight with their solemn tinkle; and the notes of the evening hymn which they rang seemed to speak forgiveness and good-will to poor me, as I sat watching in the field in the night; and was like the symphony from on high, which was heard of old by the shepherds of Bethlehem!

Then I forgave myself, and my grief-sunk companion; and considered that Providence, which watches over the evil and the unthankful, was surely watching over us both on this night of disappointment: and thus the dull hours passed away, and still no foot was heard, nor was there any appearance of the strange man who had caused all this weary watching. I was able to resist sleep henceforward, until I observed the doubtful shade of a new day beginning to change a little the dark sky, and to streak the black horizon eastward; and slowly the light spread upwards and around, until nature came out by degrees over the extensive plain in my front. The turrets of Stirling Castle began to appear by the grey light; and now the surface of the Forth at my feet reeked fantastic clouds of hovering mist, taken up by the cold air of the morning.

An uneasy shuddering seemed now to disturb the rest of my fair sleeper; she gave a start on looking up, but was evidently bewildered for an instant, and knew not where she was. As her recollection returned, and the circumstances of the

previous night were gradually recalled, she seemed astonished at herself and me ; and, staring on me for a moment, exclaimed, “ Good heaven ! are you still here, my friend ? and have I really been asleep ? and is this the daylight breaking upon us ? —is there still no appearance of Richard Ellis ? ”

I begged of her to be calm, and to thank Heaven for her refreshing slumber ; but I could scarcely either get her pacified, when she thought of her strange situation, thus out all night, or to cease her acknowledgments to me, and her entreaties that I would leave her and go to my own home. While we were thus talking I thought I heard the noise of a vehicle moving on the distant road, and turning round, perceived, through the dim day-break, a carriage proceeding towards the country, and in a direction to where we stood. Jemima had risen up, and now stood watching the destination of the carriage with breathless anxiety. It soon stopped, and presently a man stepped out, and entered the path which led to the side of the Forth where we were. I again went behind the tree to watch what would be the result of this

second interview, and shortly saw the man draw near.

“Heavens, Jemima! are you still here?” he exclaimed. “Forgive me for this! forgive me, I entreat you! for, indeed, I did not mean you this dreadful humiliation. My God! you shiver with the cold, and your teeth chatter. Oh! were you not another’s!” and he offered to throw his arm around her.

“Stand from me, Sir!” she said, starting from his grasp; “you are no longer my lover, nor were you surely ever my friend; although I am now in your power, as the lamb may be in the power of the vulture, I can suffer your barbarity to the utmost, but shall never suffer again your insidious kindness. Bring you my husband’s release at last?”

“Yes, Jemima, I do, and I deserve perhaps your cruel language; here it is;” and he took from his pocket a paper.

“Then give it me, Richard!” she exclaimed; “give it me quickly, and let me go! How could you inflict upon me this last cruelty?”

“That is what I meant to explain to you,” he said. “I could not in the whole neighbourhood get a carriage out until this hour. I go off this morning to London:—I cannot go without speaking to you once more. Jemima, answer me one question; are you not sorry for what you have done?”

“What mean you, Mr. Ellis? How can you look at me, after having brought me to this, without feeling sorrow for what *you* have done? and yet”—

“I did not mean to have driven you to any thing,” he replied, his tone changing into one of penitent entreaty. “I never meant more than mere thoughtless folly: but as it is, how can I but be sorry for being the innocent cause of your having thrown yourself away as you have done? I would not now speak of your unreasonable anger against me, and your infatuated rashness;—but in so far as *I* was the cause of your unhappy marriage, I am sorry—sorry for the offence I gave you; and now, Jemima, implore—yes, I *implore* that you will yet think of me with something like forgiveness.”

She said nothing, but stood firmly looking in his face.

“Jemima,” he went on, “*you* may be one of those perfect beings who have no folly to confess, nor frailty to deplore, but I am none such. *My* feelings, I know, are often the enemies of my own happiness, but I never intended they should inflict sorrow on you. Are you insensible to what I say, as well as to my forgiving and discharging your husband after all I have lost by him?”

“No, I am not insensible, Richard,” she said; “it is not in my nature to be insensible, particularly to kindness.”

“And much as you blame me,” he went on, “are you not sensible, Jemima, of having sometimes yourself tried my temper, and the strength of my early regard for you?”

“Yes! I am quite sensible,” she replied, with the energy of unsuppressable emotion; “and I too am sorry, sorry for what has happened; and I will confess *my* faults too;—and I forgive you, Richard, since you speak thus at last. Alas! am I not a lost unhappy girl?”

“ Had I known that you would have taken what I said, and my thoughtless trial of your feelings, in the serious manner you did, Jemima,—there is my hand, I would have cut it off rather than have vexed you.”

“ Go away, Richard!” she exclaimed; “ give me the paper and go away.”

“ There is the paper, take it: now, I wish you happy, Jemima.”

“ Why do you speak thus?” she said, in great agitation. “ Why do you not reproach me?”

“ I cannot reproach you, Jemima!” he said, with choking voice, “ I must reproach myself. I have trifled with your high spirit; I know it, and am sorry for it. I ask your forgiveness before I go, for this may be the last time I may ever meet you.”

“ Oh! Richard Ellis!” she screamed in an agony of thought, and burst into weeping.

She leaned upon his arm for a while, and all a woman’s feelings seemed to overcome her, as, without the slightest freedom, they both seemed to be supporting each other, as they wept for a brief space together.

“ Bid me farewell then kindly, Jemima,” he said, pressing her as she hung passively upon him.

“ Farewell, Richard,” she said, offering her hand ; “ I am a ruined girl ; I have wedded myself to imbecility and poverty ; but you were my first love, and your kind expressions at the last will be my consolation as I wander, a poor woman, about the world.”

“ Poverty ! ha ! I had forgotten that—that least pitied of all miseries ; and what I meant to leave you now, as a last favour—use that for my sake, Jemima ;” and he thrust a roll of bank notes into her hand.

She took the roll of cash, and seemed to examine it energetically for a moment, and then she looked at him with a countenance whose very glare of calmness shocked me, from the expression which swelled in her beautiful face, as she merely said, “ Nay then, Richard, money in need is a real test of friendship :” and looking wildly up to Heaven, as if in thankfulness, she dropped and fell like one dead on the dewy sod.

I was standing all this time behind the tree, but I was not two yards from them; and I never had seen any thing so fearful as this—for the distracted female sank down, and lay like a stone statue on the grass, while the young man, now also completely overcome, stood confusedly weeping over her like an infant. I saw him run for water to the river below, and lave it upon her face. I saw him raise her up and kiss her lips, as sensibility began to return; and I felt, as I looked at this sacrilege, as if I had witnessed a rebel angel plucking the flowers of Paradise.

From this time forward, however, I cannot describe the words they used, and the many sad farewells they said, and their bitter allusions to her unhappy marriage, and their reiterated interchange of forgiveness, and his hesitation about saying something which seemed to be on his lips, until at last they parted.

I saw him also run from her, at length, as one does from his weakness and his temptation. I watched him as he made his way across the field, with his handkerchief to his eyes. I heard her

sobbing, as she sat beside the tree, on the bank, at my feet; and I wondered at the power of deep grounded affection, and almost rejoiced over the strength of human virtue;—for I feared they were about to have agreed to run off together; and actually surmised that he had brought the carriage for that purpose, but had not the resolution to destroy the revived favourable impression he had made on her he loved so deeply, by making at the moment such a proposal.

CHAP. III.

Come pack up your wallets and gae, gudeman,
Come pack up your wallets and gae ;
For ye've lost your fair name, an' ye've anger'd your joe,
And ilka ane's turn'd to your fae, gudeman,
Oh! ilka ane's turn'd to your fae.

Scrap Stanzas.

THE morning was now brightening up, and the early sun, peeping above the horizon at the edge of the far off plain, gleamed pleasantly across the rich carse of Stirling, and gilded with beauty the irregular battlements of the Castle, as I braced up my own awakened feelings, and at length came out from behind the tree, to assist my weeping friend, who still sat sorrowing on the grass near.

She did not speak a single word as I came forth, and, with a sort of parental freedom, assisted her to her feet: but having dried her tears, and looking at me as if she could have embraced me,

in her gratitude, she put her arm within mine, and we proceeded slowly up the path together.

“ I did not think, Madam,” said I, first breaking silence, “ that after the ill you were pleased to say of this young man, who has played you so impudent a trick as to keep you out in the cold all night, you would have cried so much about him. But, truly, the women are strange little people, as I have experienced,” I added; solving my own difficulty, and looking in the bewiped face of my companion.

“ Ah, Sir, it was all my own fault !” she replied; “ I was too tyrannical over Ellis, in my confidence, and too proud and resentful of a supposed injury. But had he said one word of kindness to me, as he has done this morning, I would have suffered any thing for him. But now I have sold myself for life, and I shall die brokenhearted. That will be the issue of this misery.”

“ Do not speak of such a thing, young lady,” I said, looking down in her sad countenance; for I felt a thousand painful thoughts shooting through me about her; but hearing a foot near at the

moment, I looked round, and saw a face that I knew, staring straight at me and my companion.

“Here’s a fine morning, Mr. Balgownie;” said a man, whom I perceived at my very side, pacing across the wet grass of the field.

“Fine morning, John,” I answered aloud; “I wish the devil had sent you any other way, however,” I thought within myself, as I perceived the cunning look on the man’s countenance, and saw in an instant the use that he might make of this fine discovery.

The lady and myself soon got out upon the turnpike road to Stirling, however; and as I hastened forward with her on my arm, I found that this little incident of the man had somewhat discomposed me. We had got forward on the road, almost under the walls of the castle, when a cart came forward, and I next heard a voice, almost at my side, say, with Scotch freedom of manner,

“A pleasant morning this, Mr. Balgownie; ye’re early astir, Sir.”

“The morning is a sweet morning enough,” I said, looking as sour as vinegar at the man, who was walking briskly beside his cart.

“It ’ill be rather cauld for ladies though, I think,” answered the impudent fellow, leering knowingly at my modest companion.

I made no answer to this impertinence, but by a look of as much wickedness as I could muster.

“Maybe she would like a bit ride on my cart,” said the persevering man, with anxious curiosity to get a look of the young lady’s face: “I’m just driving up by Muirdyke, an’ there’s a bit place at the front, where she can sit perfectly comfortable.”

“I thank you, Robin,” said I, trying the effect of fair talk, “we are not going to Muirdyke just at present.”

“Ye’re no gaun to Muirdyke? then ye’ll be for staying in the town wi’ the lady, Mr. Balgownie. A gude morning to you, Sir;” and touching his broad bonnet, the man set off after his cart with particular gaiety, as conscious of having got possession of a most interesting piece of scandal, wherewithal to entertain his neighbours at my expense.

“These Scotch people make very free with one,” said my companion, seeming to feel relieved as the man left us.

“ Rather deficient in breeding as yet, I confess,” I answered ; beginning to feel actually alarmed for my character, which I foresaw would be utterly blown in the whole neighbourhood, from this morning forward.

I may not be particular upon the subsidiary difficulties of this strange business of mine with the prisoner’s wife, nor in regard to the trouble I had in disposing of her at this early hour, consistent with her delicacy and my character, which was now in the most imminent jeopardy. She could not get into the house wherein she had taken lodgings for three hours to come ; and as for the respectable inns and places of public accommodation, their people were all still buried in sleep, so that there was no house to be found where we could, with decency, put in our heads.

Add to this, my poor companion was, by the time we got into Stirling, more faint and exhausted than ever ; sorrow and watching, and the cold air, and the reflections that oppressed her, made some refreshment and proper rest absolutely necessary to preserve her from fainting in the street : and as

for my own situation, to say the truth, I felt myself in a poor state of body. The morning air had got completely into my stomach: I never in all my life felt more in need of a small modicum of Scotland's peculiar stimulant; and besides, I was, as I said, considerably troubled in mind, in regard to considerations of my character, which had never before got such a blow as this.

But necessity, I thought, has no law; and being acquainted with a decent woman in Stirling, whose late husband (for she was a widow) had been a dominie, like myself, though in a less topping way, and who kept a small public house for the soberer sort of elderly men of the town, I was fain to knock her up, in order to obtain from her some refreshment for myself and my interesting charge. Although Mrs. Bogue was a known early riser, I found some difficulty in rousing her up from her bed so early; but, knowing my voice, we heard her at length shout to a sleepy-headed servant girl, and next the wooden bolts of several doors began to be drawn, and we were forthwith admitted into an inner apartment.

The morning fire was soon stirred up; and I sat, with my drooping female at my side, resisting manfully the side-looks and sly inquiries of Widow Bogue and her drowsy servant, while she brought us sundry little matters that I ordered: and I soon had the satisfaction to perceive the colour return to the youthful cheek of my beauteous companion; and, as our hearts began to feel returning comfort, I cannot say but that the expressive gratitude to me, that beamed in her dark eye, and her heartfelt and childlike acknowledgments gave me sincere pleasure. Having, after a time, given the best explanation I was able to the widow, of my morning's adventure, I left Mrs. Farquhar in her present charge, and in the course of a little space proceeded home to my own quarters, at the old mansion of Muirdyke. But a sore business this affair turned out to me, as I have yet to relate.

When I arrived at Muirdyke House I slipped myself in by a side door, which was used by all on occasions of no ceremony, and was pleased to find no one stirring but one maid servant, who was just opening the window-shutters, and yawning her-

self into a properly wakerife state. I accosted the lass with a compromising civility, and desiring her to assist me to disburthen myself of my Bavaurie, and my leggings and shoes, I got quietly off, and slipping up stairs, had two good hours' rest before the time for breakfast.

It is in vain to talk of the steady look, and undaunted face of innocence, after what I experienced this morning; for when I came down to breakfast (being determined not to look guilty, by hanging back), and found already assembled my stiff sister Margery, and the sleek Laird of Muirdyke, and the prim, pious Lady Muirdyke, and gaunt Muirdyke the younger, and the two long, lean, everlasting misses, Muirdyke's immovable daughters; and perceived the meaning looks of the whole at me and at each other as I entered the room; I declare I not only looked, but felt, as consciously guilty as ever did the bad woman in the Scripture picture, which instructively graced the walls of Muirdyke's parlour.

I had made my civilest salute, and taken a chair, and helped myself to an egg, and an empty

plate, before a single word was spoken. At length the Laird himself addressing me with a sarcastic gravity, said—

“ Ahem ! Good morning, Mr. Balgownie ; we were na’ expecting the pleasure o’ your company to breakfast.”

“ Why not, Laird ? ” I said demurely, “ although I am a little late, you’ll find I’ll eat as hearty a breakfast as any present.”

“ No doubt, Sir,” he replied primly ; “ if—but what sort o’ weather had ye beyont the town before daylight this morning, Dominie ? ”

“ Beyond the town, Laird ? ” I repeated, looking confusedly across.

“ Yes,” said he, “ just tell the ladies, Mr. Balgownie, what sort o’ a morning ye had beyond the castle about three or four, for we hear that ye were seen wandering about towards the links when ither folk were in their beds. Dinna be offended wi’ me, Dominie, for a ceevil question, for ye see folk that can stay out o’ house and hame all night are liable to a little back-speering in the morning.”

“ Oh Gavin, Gavin ! I’m burning wi’ shame

about you," screamed my sister Margery, in a wailing tone, and sorrowfully shaking her head.

"But the lady, Dominie?" said the eldest of the maiden daughters, "we're informed that ye were seen wi' a lady. Now at that hour in the morning; really, Mr. Balgownie, it looks so.—"

"Gavin, hae ye no a word to say for yoursel?" exclaimed my sister Margery, almost bursting with vexation. "If ye're so lost to all decency, as to stay out the whole night blackguarding about a town, can ye no confess, an gie some account o' yourself to the Laird, for my character's sake, at least?"

"Whisht, whisht, Miss Balgownie!" said Lady Muirdyke, "dinna put yoursel into a state, until ye hear. I canna think that a douce man, like the Dominie, would be guilty of sic wickedness: an' after all, we read in the word that the best o' men hae had their slips an' their swervings."

"Slips, Lady!" interrupted Margery, "will ye really take the part o' a man that can be seen openly wi' a woman on the Links o' Forth, at gray daylight in the morning, an' staying out all

night in a blackguard hole like Stirling? Didna Johnny M'Phun see him wi' his een, and the woman hanging on the left wing o' him? An' didna Jean Jaap, the lass that helped him off wi' his Bavaurie an' his leggings, tell me that his very apparel, when he came in frae his night warks, was in a state no to be spoken about? Oh Gavin Balgownie! Gavin Balgownie!" she went on, howling herself into dry tears, as she shook her head in my face, "I'll never be able to look over my own door after such a trial as this."

"Have you nothing to say at all, Dominie, at least for the character of my house?" said the Laird himself, while all the women were occupied in administering to the vapours of my distressed sister. "I assure you, Sir, the fact of your being out all night, and the reports that have been brought up to my very door about you, are of a nature to make me imagine you were a most rampajeous man," but he gave a chuckling leer, which showed he only kept up the scene for his own diversion.

"My own conscience, Laird," said I solemnly,

emboldened by his jocular manner, "acquits me of any actual transgression in this matter."

This last asseveration of mine seemed to have made some additional impression on the placable and considerate Laird; and I was beginning to hope that this storm would blow over. At least I was comforted to find that the distressing congregation of accusations of the morning had not been made before Miss Barbara, (Muirdyke's second daughter), who was luckily absent from this unfortunate breakfast, for there had long been a matter of marriage pending between Miss Barbara and me; not that I was at all anxious to marry her, but she made no secret of being particularly anxious to be married to me. Now having a spirit in me that was rather cowardly to women's tongues, and Miss Babby being a woman of great readiness of speech, to say the truth, I dreaded her worst of all.

This flattering congratulation had scarcely passed through my head, and scarcely had my sister been set up again, and a show of calm restored, when the door opened and in walked Miss Babby, to my

great consternation, for I saw by a glance at her face, that she was to be the worst of all upon me.

“What is the matter now, Babby,” inquired the Laird, observing her swollen face, and her look of determined passion, that would have made a very hyena tremble.

“The matter, father ! the matter ?” she shouted, “are ye asking the matter at me : and that brazen man sitting at your own table ? Oh ! Miss Balgownie ! Miss Balgownie !” she exclaimed, going up to my sister, “I am sorry for you ! sorry for you, more than for myself ! And what do ye think I have heard in addition to all that has been told us by Johnny M’Phun. I went down to the town on my ain twa legs to get at the bottom o’ this disgraceful business : and what do ye think I heard ?”

“I’ll believe ony thing,—ony thing whatever against him,” whimpered my sister ; “he’s brought me to scandal and disgrace, that I canna look up. Oh ! Miss Babby, Miss Babby !” she added, with tears of commiseration, “ye ha’e had a narrow escape.”

“ But I’ll not tell, you ladies,” added Barbara, clenching her fist, “ I’ll bring it out of the vile man’s own mouth !” and she stood over me like a fury.

“ Now, Gavin Balgownie !” she croaked, after an awful pause, “ just look in my face and tell me if ye werna drinking this morning before five o’clock, in Luckie Bogue’s Change House, wi’ a woman ; ay ! wi’ a *woman*, Mr. Balgownie ! answer me I say, before my father and mother !”

“ I was !” said I quietly, and nodding my head, “ I was, just as you say.”

“ Oh ! ooh ! hoo !” they all screamed round.

“ With a *young* woman,” continued my enraged examiner, “ that has been seen sneaking out and in about the prisoners and sodgers in the castle !”

“ Yes !” said I, “ just so.”

“ Hoo ! hoo !” they all screamed : “ wha would think that a man o’ your character would ever hae been guilty of such gross debauchery !”

“ The whole town is ringing wi’t !” exclaimed Miss Barbara, in continuation ; “ and he knocked

up Luckie Bogue out o' her bed, wi' the limmer cleeked in his arm. Oh! what an escape I hae had.—Whoo! hee! whee!" and she screamed herself into a faint or a fit, and kicked and sprawled in a manner that would have moved any feeling but pity; while all the other women crowded round, and deepened the pathos of the scene.

"Is this really true, Dominie?" said the Laird pretending seriousness, when the confusion had a little subsided, "I see plainly that this stramash and sculduddery business will end in nothing less than your standing on the cutty stool with a white sheet round you. I only want to know, Dominie, if you confess to these facts?"

"I do confess them!" said I boldly.

"He's lost to all shame!" said my sister Margery; "I'm sorry for you, Babby; sorry for you all!"

"That's just enough! he has said quite plenty;" said the prim lady Muirdyke, taking up her voluminous gown and preparing to go.

"I would not have believed it, if I had not heard it from your own mouth," said the Laird,

ready to burst out into laughter, in spite of his assumed seriousness; but thinking it best for the present to give way to the storm, he, with a wink of his eye to me, slipped out of the room.

During this latter period I was arranging in my own mind a minute explanation and defence, and waiting with my right hand uplifted to begin at the first instant of pause, expecting the Laird to take my part, when just as I was about to commence, the clamour having ceased, I lifted up my eyes, and perceived that every one of the family, my sister Margery and all, had disappeared, having successively walked out, and left me standing alone in the middle of the apartment.

A few moments' consideration served to show me that it is vain for innocence itself to contend against the clamour of popular opinion and women's tongues; and finding that my character was broken and blasted in this whole neighbourhood, I stepped upstairs to my chamber, packed up the little *et ceteras* of my travelling wallet, and with certain heavy thoughts about the pretty woman, with whom I had literally passed the previous

night, and about the injustice of the contemporaneous world, I turned my back on Stirling, and took my departure for my own home in the West country.

CHAPTER IV.

Ah ! just let me die, on the bed where I lie,
For the green buds of Spring I'll ne'er see :
And bury me deep on some bonnie grassy spot,
Where the sun lingers long on the lee.

Scrap Stanzas.

It has been my fortune on several occasions to be falsely accused by the world, and to receive for a time an unjust judgment upon my conduct ; in particular regarding my transactions with that sex, with which, notwithstanding it has never been my lot to form any binding connexion.— These scandalous rumours and detrimental judgments have often given me sore vexation ; especially when they were adopted by men whose good opinion I somewhat coveted ; but knowing from experience that the world's opinion is often as hastily taken up as it is liable to mutation and

contrariety, I learned to act upon the principle, so beautifully expressed in the exhortations of holy writ, that is, "by patient continuance in well doing," to put slowly to silence those ignorant misunderstandings which it was neither convenient nor dignified for me verbally to contradict.

Thus it was with the first unfortunate consequences of my affair with the pretty debtor's wife; and indeed my sister Margery herself seemed almost disappointed, that I followed on in my usual quiet and regular habits, and did not fall away at once into a course of debauchery and abomination. Long before a year had passed away, therefore, the whole affair seemed to have fallen into total discredit, and I was regarded as the same moral, discreet man as ever: and still I had heard no tidings upon which I could depend, concerning the fate of the interesting, but ruined wife of my unrespected quondam pupil.

Yet many a thought, I confess, she had given me, but not in the least such as I needed be ashamed of: for some said, that Farquhar and she were now living quite happy; others said,

that she had run off with some man from England, and had left her husband. And again it was reported that she was in ill health, and thought to be dying of some inward distress. In short, some said one thing and some another, which only increased my indwelling interest and concern about her. At length at the usual season of the year, when I was wont to take my wanderings, I set forth towards Edinburgh, hoping that Providence would lead me into the way of hearing something concerning her.

I took up my lodgings with my old acquaintance Mrs. Gleig, in the old town, near Holyrood House, but no trace could I learn of Farquhar or his wife, although I found for certain, that they were somewhere in the city or its outskirts. I inquired everywhere. I mounted stairs almost like the tower of Babel, that was intended to reach to heaven, and I knocked at doors until my perseverance was almost exhausted; but I found that obscurity in a neighbourhood is a great sign of the shame of misfortune, and that the sun itself hardly dares to shine upon the shrinking sons of the world's misery.

I made no speed in my inquiries, excepting on one day that a young woman with a child in her arms, who answered my knock at a door to which I had been directed, seemed to know more than she chose to tell me, and examined me closely as to my name, and my reasons for inquiring after such a person. I gave a faithful account of myself and my motives, giving also my address; and the woman promised to send me word if the person whom I inquired for was to be found?

One evening about this time, as I was walking solitarily at the foot of the Salisbury Craigs, I perceived a man walking musingly on, like myself, but seeming to me to be inwardly troubled in his mind. The moonlight was but very obscure, yet, on passing by him, I was sure I knew the face,—but it was pale and haggard, so that I might have been mistaken in my recollection. The young man, for he was young, and of quite a gentlemanly appearance, suddenly turned off, and mounted the craigs, by a path with which I was unacquainted. I could not help following him as fast as my wind would hold out, but he was strong and athletic, and beat me by much. By the time I got to the

top of the hill I saw him standing alone, with his arms folded as if in deep deliberation. He then walked forward to the edge of the craig next to Edinburgh, and seemed to look for a place where the precipice was deepest and most abrupt. He then stepped a few paces back, and after gazing for about a minute over the city, lying spread out below us in the obscure moonlight, he drew a heavy sigh, and taking off his hat, seemed to mutter a prayer to Heaven.

By this time I was almost at his back, but I turned a little down the brow of the hill to watch his movements. He stretched out both his arms, as if bracing up his resolution for some desperate deed, and then walked steadily forward again towards the precipice. I saw that not a moment was to be lost, and by three or four strides got between him and the precipice, just as we had both got almost to the edge. He gave a start on seeing me at this critical instant, and tried to pass me, but I was enabled to give a sudden spring in time, and caught him in my arms.

“Who are you?” he exclaimed, his haggard eye flashing wild upon me.

“ I am thy guardian angel, on this occasion, rash young man,” I said, holding him in my grasp. “ Think if you are in a fit state to jump out of earthly existence, by that frightful precipice, and into the presence of your Maker.”

“ Reason with the stormy sea, if you will ;” said the stranger, in hoarse accents, “ but do not think to speak calm truth to a distracted man. Unhand me, friend !”

“ The Lord be near you in the hour of temptation, young man !” I said solemnly.

The stranger gave a groan on hearing my words as he gazed at me ; and I knew the voice and face to be that of Richard Ellis.

“ Surely Providence is in this !” he said sadly ; at length, as he gazed and seemed to deliberate within himself, “ Accept of my thanks, friend, for being its agent,” he added, wringing me by the hand ; “ but forget you ever saw me. I am an unhappy man ; but I am not so lost as to disregard the evident will of heaven ; and remember, I am not to be made the subject of the world’s unfeeling gossip. Now farewell !” and on saying this, he turned round and made off down the

craigs, at a pace which was too quick for me to follow, and I soon lost sight of him.

I went home to my lodgings, full of imaginings and anxiety, for I had no doubt but that the dreadful attempt of Ellis was in some way connected with the fate of Mrs. Farquhar. Next morning while I was at breakfast by myself, and meditating on my recollections concerning her, a knock was given at my door, and a boy delivered a note to my landlady, which was addressed to me, and which ran as follows :

“ Dear Friend,

“ I have learned that you have been inquiring for me, and confess that I should wish to see you once more, for my health and spirits are gone, and my time will not now be long on the earth.

“ But the particular reason of my writing to you now is this: I must inform you that Mr. Ellis hearing of my ill health, and of my husband’s being again reduced to distress, insists on seeing me. This liberty I have not dared to grant him, both for my own sake, in the present state of my

nerves, as well as his, as he seems in much distress of mind on my account.

“But yet his feelings are evidently in such a state, that if it would tend to calm them, I am far from unwilling to meet him; particularly as it may be for the last time; and as, in truth, much as I fear it, I should myself wish to see him once more; for he avers, that he has something of the last importance to say to me. I will not, however, consent to speak to him but in the presence of a third party; and as that party cannot be my husband, I know none so fit to be present as yourself, after what you have already witnessed.

“If, therefore, you approve of my seeing him after this explanation, I am ready to meet him in your presence to-morrow evening, at eight o’clock, if you can see him, and make the appointment with him in the interim. You will find him, I believe, at N°. 11, Parliament Close.

“I leave this matter to your own prudence; and remain under many obligations to you,

Your unfortunate

JEMIMA F.”

I may not describe the extravagant joy with which Mr. Ellis, whom I found at his lodgings as directed, received my communication ; but he was too much absorbed in the thoughts of again seeing Jemima, and confused in his mind to observe that I was the person who had prevented him from self-destruction on the Salisbury Craigs the night previous. I confess I waited the intervening time with considerable impatience ; and having met with Mr. Ellis at the appointed hour, we went together to the obscure spot where Jemima lived.

Having mounted the common stair of a house leading off the Cannongate, and knocked at the door as directed, we were admitted by a tall thin woman, who acted as servant. After waiting for a little in the dark lobby, we were next shown into a small back room, in which sat the faded and melancholy form of Jemima Farquhar.

The apartment was but partially lighted, but there was some good furniture in it ; and withal a neatness that is usually seen as the last grasping after gentility by the superior minded and the reduced. But what a change was now on the

countenance of Jemima ! Not that there was any appearance of physical disease ; but there was the wan look and resigned melancholy of one whose feelings are consuming her within, of the female who is deliberately aiding in the breaking of her own heart.

She offered a thin white hand to each, as we came forward, without rising from the old-fashioned sofa on which she reclined ; but yet the look which she gave us both was still charming beyond expression, and her former lover was unable to speak for a few moments, from extreme agitation.

After a few words of inquiry on both sides, wherein the state of her health was ascertained with painful anxiety by Ellis, he begged, first looking at me, that he might be allowed to say a few words to her in private.

“That is impossible, Mr. Ellis,” she said. “Do not be offended with me if I say, I should never have suffered this meeting with you but in the presence of another. Whatever you have to say, if it is not fit for my friend to hear, neither will I hear it.”

“It is something that concerns you and I most deeply, Jemima! Will you allow your friend to withdraw?”

“Certainly not!” she said, firmly, “unless he chooses to leave me against my wish.”

“Then,” said he, “let me appeal to you and him in the proposal I am about to make.—Jemima!” he went on, after a pause to collect himself, “let me inform you, that I have seen your medical attendant upon the subject of your health and life; and he avers decidedly, that you are dying voluntarily without bodily disease! and that a voluntary abandonment of your present unhappy circumstances,—a flying from the horrors of an unblest marriage engagement, to society, in which you can be happy; to free air, to enjoyment, and the love of your heart, would soon restore you to health and long life. Do not be startled at the proposal I have to make.—Can you refuse to leave a husband to which only a human ceremony binds you, for your first love and your everlasting friend, who will devote his life to your happiness? I cannot think that you will choose an early

grave and a broken heart, instead of love, happiness, and long life, with one who adores you!—Speak, speak, Jemima! not only your own doom, but mine!”

After a dead silence of a few moments, which followed this imperatively uttered speech, Mrs. Farquhar faintly said, “I will only refer it to this respectable person,” looking towards myself, “whether I ought to listen or condescend to reply to such a proposal, Richard, even from you.”

“I appeal even to you, Sir,” said Mr. Ellis, distractedly, turning to me, “as to this proposal, which, if agreed to, will save both this lady’s life and mine. See you not that she is dying before us? It is a case of extremity!”

“I know not what extremity may sometimes excuse;” I said, “but I cannot sanction, for a moment, a breach of the most sacred of our earthly obligations.”

“My friend’s answer is mine,” said the sick lady, with animation; “and now, Richard, what have you seen in me that could even give you assurance to make such an audacious proposal?”

“ There is no connection, Mrs. Farquhar,” he replied, “ between any conduct of yours and my proposal ; for, in truth, I meant to have made it on the sad night when we met on the banks of the Forth, but had not then the courage ; and I only make it now for the saving of your life and my peace of mind. Oh, give it a moment’s consideration !”

“ Not an instant, Richard ! not an instant !”

“ Jemima,” he replied, despairing, “ I am a distracted man. I cannot attend to my concerns of life, on your account. I have been on the point of committing suicide. Save me, as well as yourself, by leaving these narrow confined apartments, this wretched place, that contemptible man, who has so long had the possession of—. My God, it will drive me insane !”

“ For Heaven’s sake and mine, Richard,” she cried, “ do not persevere in this criminal proposal. No, no ; now let me die in peace, for a few months will close my unhappy life. Now do not speak, Richard ! Forget me from this moment. And forgive me ! forgive me, too, for all the sorrow that I

have caused you ;—there, now,” she added, letting fall a few tears, as she gave him her pale fingers to kiss. “ Farewell, friends ! Farewell, Richard !”

“ Then it is farewell after all !” he said, in a tone of despair, as he looked in her swimming eyes.

“ Yes, yes,” she gasped ; “ and for ever : it is the just punishment of my rash folly ; let me die peacefully. Farewell !”

I looked at her for the last time. I tore Mr. Ellis away. I saw him to his lodgings. I went home sadly to my own. I in a little time returned to my dull home in the West Country, and shortly after learned that Mr. Ellis, who had gone about Edinburgh like a distracted man for some time, had, by the persuasion of his friends, at length gone to Italy.

It was far in the autumn part of that same year, and near the borders of winter, that I sat one day thoughtfully alone in my solitary home, at Balgownie Brae, in the West of Scotland. It was also near the evening of a dull, yet blowing day, and it pleased my melancholy mood to watch the

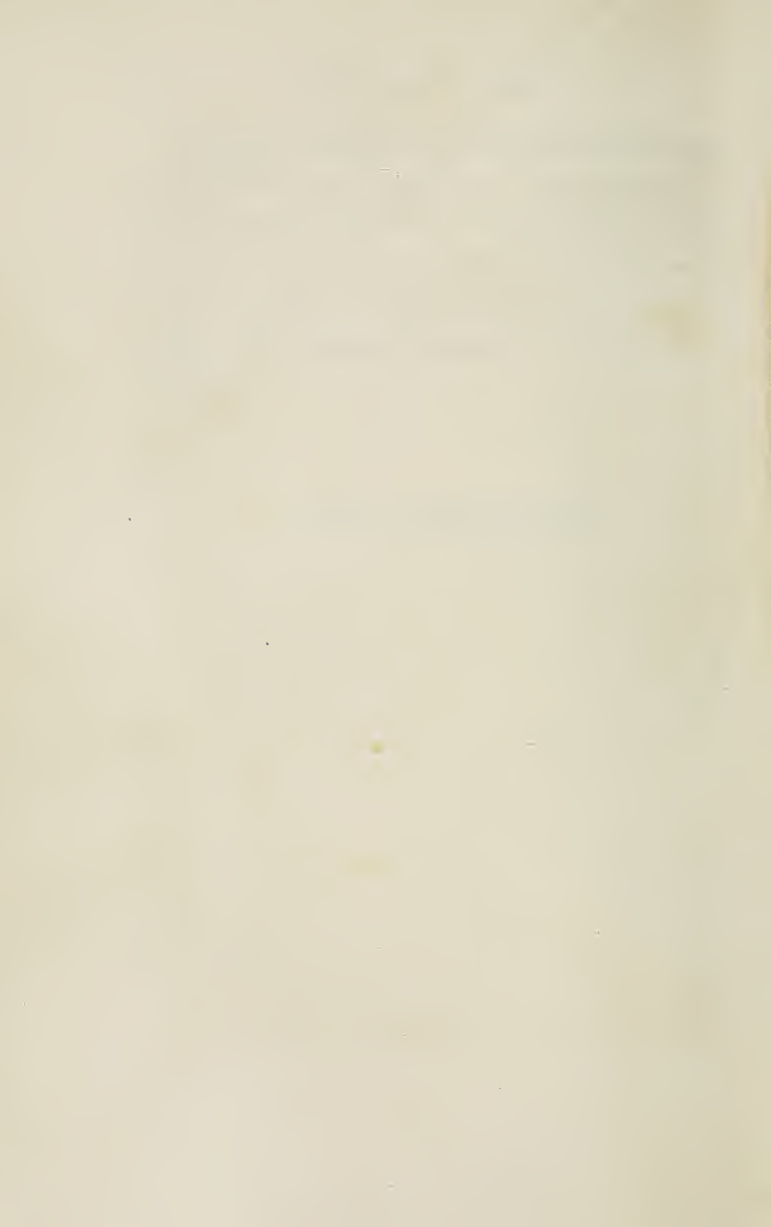
last leaves of the preceding summer, separated at every fresh gust from the naked trees before my door, and to hear them rustling on the ground under my window.

While occupied with the sad reflections which the impressive language of nature at the fall of the leaf is apt to call forth, I saw the postman coming with his usual short, quick step towards my door. I had been long looking for news of Mrs. Farquhar; and the thought smote upon me, that the man of letters was the bearer of some tidings regarding her, and that these tidings were of a nature to deepen my present gloom. My forboding anxiety caused me to rise and go out to meet the man. The seal of the letter which he brought told me enough—Mrs. Farquhar was now a corpse in her lodging in Edinburgh, and I was invited to her funeral.

Why need I tell more? It was a sad and thoughtful journey to me at this dull season; and the solemn countenances of the strangers assembled to follow her corpse to the grave were, to my fancy, unusually impressive.

I saw her carried out of her house, and followed her hearse to the churchyard. I saw her laid in her last resting place. But never shall I forget the sensation which struck upon my heart, as I heard the shoveled clay rattling down upon the coffin of the young and beauteous victim of a *Rash Marriage*.

MINISTER TAM.



MINISTER TAM.

Our wishes make us fools ; our bastard aims
Turn ignorance into guilt : even blessed hope,
Coupled with false desire, is often ruin.

Scrap Stanzas.

IF you pass along the main street of any of our villages, or through the outskirts of a large town or city, and if you should happen to be one of those unfortunate persons, who are continually musing and thinking wherever you go, your thoughts will be sure to be disturbed, and yourself plagued, and literally “ put out of the way,” by the rabble of bawling children, who will not fail to keep racing about “ amongst your feet,” throwing you down, perhaps, by driving their hoops between your legs, or making you jump, by whipping you instead of their tops ; so that, your

cogitations being thwarted out of their track, you may be very apt to ask yourself for what good, or for what sort of life all these noisy urchins may be rearing, and what may possibly be the history of many of them twenty or thirty years hence?

The question is, probably, not worth an answer, any more than would be the inquiry as to the history of the parents who begot them, who dwell, or vegetate, in the long mean street through which you are passing, and who continue to breed in a manner that is quite annoying to any well regulated bachelor to think of; a little rabblement of the servitors of society, who are to spread themselves abroad, seeking their subsistence among the men of the next generation. No doubt the poor little bare headed top-spinners are, in general, as little worth talking about as their busy and simple parents: nevertheless, amongst them there are individuals who, when fed up into manhood, and sent forth into life, fall into circumstances, and pass through scenes such as make their history very different from what might be anticipated of them when they are merely bluff curly haired

children, as common and unremarkable as the low dwellings, in the little dormitories from which they first emerged into this troublesome world.

In the populous manufacturing town of Paisley, in Scotland, you could hardly look down any of the long straggling suburban streets, but you might have pointed out to you one or more, at least, of the good folks in each, who were more or less observable persons; and out of the multitude of children which each year produced, and with which the place swarmed, you could not fail, if your talent lay that way, in tracing out several whose history or character came afterwards to exhibit those strange or painful realities which make up the thinly sprinkled romance of common life. The industrious poor people of the long Crosslets of Paisley were engaged from morning to night in their ingenious employments; yet amongst them was observable considerable variety of character, from "the philosophical weaver," who had studied Hume and Mirabeau, with his striped Kilmarnock nightcap on one side of his head, and his look of supercilious wisdom, down to "haveral

Davie," with his stocking sleeves and his green apron, who luxuriously smoked brown paper by the door cheeks, because smoking was a necessary of life, and he could not afford to buy tobacco; and who, though *man muckle*, still played "Keep the Corbie off the Crow" with the boys, or danced Mary Mantanzy with the girls, before the doors in the summer evenings.

In this long street, which had only one side facing the pleasant road between Paisley and Glasgow, lived a man called Thomas Trail; and if you were to ask why Thomas was a remarked sort of man, and known to every one about, even to the very dogs and cats of the place; and why, if he passed in the presence of a stranger, he was likely to be pointed out, with "that is Thomas Trail;" and Thomas Trail and his wife do so and so—nobody could tell you! for though Thomas owned the thatched house in which he lived, and the little garden in its rear, that was nothing more than was the case with most of the respectable weavers and small manufacturers, his neighbours, some thirty years ago; and Thomas himself was

nothing but an honest sort of short pudgy body, with sore eyes, and a brown wig, and his wife only a long, randy, Aberdeen-spoken woman, who, as the neighbouring wives said, “ had little of either manners or sense, although she *was* a sma’ land-lady.” But there might be a little envy in this ; for Mrs. Trail, although she had an outlandish twang in her talk, and could not aspire to the beautiful language spoken about Paisley, had her full share of Scotch sentimentality, as we shall soon have occasion to show.

Now this worthy couple had an only son, who had every right and title to be spoiled and undone ; for, besides making his appearance after a long interval of wishful barrenness, he was the only one of the after family who lived over two months, and was, of course, to be laird of the one story house and the garden, and all the plenishing of the weaver’s shop, and whatever else the old man might gather before he died ; and was, in fact, the very centre and hope of his parents. Young Tam Trail, was soon well known over the neighbourhood, not that he was particularly clever and mischievous,

but simply because that, being an only son, he was not required to work, and hardly to go to school; so that he had nothing to do, and, therefore, although his mother's darling, he loved to hang about any other place than his father's house, and the honest woman was usually obliged to hunt him out of the neighbouring weavers' shops in a morning to get him home to his oaten meal porridge; saying, in her Aberdeen *twang*, as she thrust her head in at the doors, "Tammy, my maun, come hame to your parritch—theyve been standing this hour on the kist head, an' the hens hae been through them and through them, to the very knees and bauck again!"

There never had appeared before, in the Crosslets of Paisley, such a world's wonder as young Tam Trail. Every thing he did and said was a perfect astonishment to his delighted parents. His reading was, from the beginning, perfectly wonderful; his writing was a greater wonder than that, because, being an idle boy, no one could tell how he acquired it; but his cleverness in making up sums, or as his parents said, *arithmetic*, was

more wonderful still ; and as for his talk, and his “ style of language,” it was perfectly beyond wondering at ; besides, he grew up so fast for his years, that nothing in the place had ever yet appeared so wonderful ; even the “ calves of the stall,” which we read of in the book of Habakkuk, were nothing to him. What was then to be done with such an extraordinary youth ? That was the question ; for that he was “ beyond the common,” was, to his parents, quite evident, and all the neighbours confirmed the fact, for there are few so low as not to find flatterers. “ What do you mean to do wi’ Tam ? ” was the constant inquiry—and, “ Ye maun make him a man of lair, o’ some sort,” was as constantly the fulsome advice ; and it was soon resolved that, like every other pet boy in Scotland, Tam Trail was to be sent to the great College of Glasgow, and there to be made a *minister*.

It was a proud day for Mrs. Trail, that, when “ her Tam,” dressed in a shining new scarlet gown, “ like ony gentleman,” with a bulky bundle of second hand books, and his pockets crammed with

bread and cheese, set forth to become a student in the College of Glasgow. The neighbours were all out to witness his departure, as he set forward by the Glasgow coach—his father was quite stupefied with congratulations and the business of the morning, as well as with his son's great prospects; and his mother wept with joy at parting with him—she thought he already looked so like a minister.

What could the honest couple now be expected to talk about but Tam, and of what their Tam was to be, whom they had now at the Glasgow College, “bringing him up to be a minister?” And when at length his first season was over, and all his fees paid, and his lodging money every farthing, and his books, and his pocket money, and so forth, “a wearifu sum,” and he returned once more to the Crosslets of Paisley for the summer, with all his books and bundles, his stature lengthened out, and several new words on his tongue's end, and his very pronunciation and phraseology partaking of the classical tone of the University—his own mother was almost afraid to speak to him, from her

instinctive awe of every thing which made the most distant approach to the shape of a *minister*.

After Mrs. Trail had shown her uncommon son over all the neighbourhood, and exhausted her whole store of jams and jellies, in tea drinkings for this purpose, the house was next turned topsy turvy to accommodate Tam and his books. A little room under the roof, with a small window cut out of the thatch, and overlooking the garden and the behind of the cottage, was cleared out of all its heddles and treddles, and other loom gear, that it might be converted into a study for him; and here he sat himself down to labour at his Greek and humanity for the summer. But Tam had no sooner begun to turn over his Lexicon, than he found himself horribly annoyed and disturbed by the shuttling of the weavers beneath him; and, besides the abominable noise of their looms, the insensible rascals sang songs, and whistled, and talked, and argued politics, amidst the din of their shuttling, without the smallest regard to the fact, that over their heads sat a minister, studying his Greek and humanity. This

misery was not to be borne, and the studies of the young minister was not to be discomposed by a shopful of hardhearted weavers; and, rather than submit to this, Thomas and his wife agreed to sleep in the little hole under the thatch, that their own bed-room, at the other end of the house, might be converted into a comfortable study for Tam. Here then, by a new overturning of the house, was Tam at length established; and it was beautiful to observe how conveniently his books were arranged in the pleasant little attic, which, when he was fairly placed in it, with his face to the window, and his red gown hung up behind him, looked as if it had actually been built for the study of a minister.

But Tam's window looked now towards the pleasant Glasgow road; and it was found by experience, that, whether it was that there were too many children, who kept shouting and squabbling before the door, or whether there were too many coaches constantly passing, with every sort of odd-looking body on the tops of them, all which, with the *et cæteras* of the blowing of horns, and the hurras of the boys, as each vehicle passed the house, would

really have diverted the attention of a saint, or of Aristotle himself; or whether there was something in the very nature of Greek and Latin that was irksome and perplexing to a genius like Tam, certain it is, that here he was worse than with the singing and arguing of the weavers' shop; his mind wandered most lamentably, until the very sight of his books and his study became a weariness; he became shamefully idle, and his whole day came at length to be passed in lounging about the neighbours' houses, or in *daikering* about the fields with some one who could, like himself, afford to be idle, and who suffered his company because he was understood to be studying for a minister.

At length the second winter came on, and he departed again "for the classes" of the venerable College of Glasgow; and in this sort of way he got over five or six years, to the great expense and delight of his mother, whose astonishment every year increased at the rapid growth of her son's person and learning. A proud woman was she, when thinking of Tam, notwithstanding all his faults, as she sat on the Saturday afternoons

at her upper window, with her spectacles on her nose, looking out for the weekly visit which her son at this time was pleased to make her, from the grand College of Glasgow. A beautiful youth was "Minister Tam" (as he then began to be called), in his mother's eyes, no doubt; but really, to speak indulgently, he was, at that time, as raw looking, overgrown, gawky a youth, as any mother's pet of a student, who lodged in a back attic and fed on oatmeal porridge, while "studying for a minister," in the old High Street of Glasgow. Indeed, some said of the "young ministers" of the time, as they then appeared, that the very porridge shone out of their faces, and stuck like batter about their mouths; at least, it was certainly seen very palpably clotting their long teeth, as they would laugh in your face as they told you they were "maist through the Hall," meaning the Divinity Hall, which was, of course, to make them all ministers.

But Tam Trail was a youth of spirit; and, although there were numbers of his fellows, the sons of weavers, and hucksters, and small shoe-

makers, and the like, at college, to be made great men like himself, he did not at all affect their company, but rather courted the acquaintance of minister lads, whose fathers were somewhat genteel in the world; so that Tam would actually deny the place of his birth and domicile, being quite ashamed of his own father; and once sharply reproved his uplifted mother, for recognizing "her Tam" one Saturday, as he swaggered slyly past his home, in company with a knot of his brother collegians. This, however, we must own, was the highest zenith of Tam's greatness; and while his sanguine parents only saw in all this prospects too great and grand for them almost to think of, wise people, above their own state in life, shook their heads compassionately, and observed, that the silly good people were, in all likelihood, only laying up for themselves sorrows for the day of unveiled delusion and bitter disappointment.

At last Tam Trail passed the Hall, and was fairly, as far as the college could make him, "a minister;" and even passed his examinations, preached his trial sermons before the Presbytery

with eclat, in the presence of his admiring parents, began to wear black, and was admitted by authority, and went forth to the world, a preacher of the Gospel. How tedious is often the interval between first hope and ultimate fruition! Home came the Rev. Thomas Trail, dismissed from the College of Glasgow, and quite ready to be a minister: but, even admitting that the Church of Scotland might be waiting for his ministrations, and although he might have the talents of an Apostle, he was still too young, and some time must be spent in tarrying probation. But how was he to employ himself in the meantime? for, being a scholar, he could condescend to do nothing but to make others scholars like himself; and when he got leisure to think, he found that the Church of Scotland was by no means waiting until he was old enough to step into a kirk, and that his talents did not obviously fit him for distinguishing himself over the heads of the crowd of probationers like himself, who were never destined to obtain the honours of the ministry. After wandering about his own neighbourhood until his

presence became a plague, and his idleness a proverb, he essayed to "take up a school," the refuge and the condemnation of the learned poor. But here various disappointments occurred, which quite astonished him and his parents; for, knowing nothing of the world, every thing differing from their own sanguine notions, awakened them to perfect amazement. At first he would offer to teach nothing but Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Logic, and other high matters; and actually might have taught them, if he could only have got pupils: but, after various disasters and disheartenments from within and without, he descended to the humble occupation of teaching common reading and writing, or any thing else you please, to the mischievous children of the industrious poor of his own neighbourhood.

But, in the awful character of the pedagogue, we cannot in strictness say, that he gained much of either credit or emolument: for, besides, that a prophet has little honour among his neighbours' children, he felt himself degraded by such a, b, c, d-erian labour, and such profitless confinement;

particularly, as many of his mischievous pupils seemed to think him little better than a big boy of the neighbourhood, upon whom they might work all manner of disrespectful tricks, and laugh in his face when he offered to punish them. In short, as his observation extended, and his experience was increased, “a kirk,” the great object of the student’s ambition, seemed to recede farther from his hopes, and the poverty and patience of the confirmed teacher to stare him closer in the face. But even his humble occupation was unlikely to do any good longer; at least, in the place where he had been at the pains to establish it; for a grand schoolmaster from some distant place, who “khnoped English like a Londoner,” and whose very frown was awful, set up a grand *Academy* near at hand, and away went all Tam’s scholars, except two or three, to the new man; for nobody attempted to dispute, that a regular schoolmaster, who wore a wig, and walked with a cane, could teach, much better than Minister Tam, “the lang, learned, ladie, of the Crosslets of Paisley.”

Still Tam’s mother bid him keep up his heart,

for the time would yet come when he should “wag in a poopet (pulpit) like the best:” and the school being now given up, a great effort was forthwith to be made to effect that important object. But the old man found, to his astonishment, that although his son was perfectly finished and ready for the ministry, there were hundreds as ready, and many better fitted for it than he; and that if considerable popular talents were not as yet developed, it required interest and other advantages, such as he could not at all command, to get the youth even a hearing for any advantageous purpose, or get him, in the remotest manner, in the way of being a minister. Now came the period of reaping the fruits of his education, and all the honours of the Divinity Hall of Glasgow. The young man was anxious enough to make use of his expensive and tediously acquired knowledge, but found that, while he knew what he found little use for, he was perfectly ignorant of things known to the youngest in his own sphere of life. Mercantile men, to whom he offered himself, after asking him contemptuously

what he was fit for, would have nothing to do with him, and disliked the very thoughts of Greek and logic; and artificers of all sorts rejected him in toto, because, as they said, he seemed to have learned nothing.

Employment, any sort of employment, but teaching children, became now to poor Trail the object of his most anxious desire; for his father had so cramped his little trade, in supporting him at college, &c. that the good old man was becoming pinched and reduced; and illness and repeated disappointment had begun to make sore havoc with our youth's hopes and his health; and he hung about the neighbourhood dispirited and wretched. Instead of being a pride and a support to his parents, now that he was a man, he was their greatest source of vexation and anxiety. At length his father, after many efforts, and after much personal humiliation to both, in dancing after their superiors, succeeded in getting him the place of tutor in the family of the Laird of Caudland's, who lived in a dull house over the Paisley Braes, about six miles off; and here, the Laird

being a man who was determined to give his children *a good education*, gave Tam an appointment to teach, not only English to his little son, but also Latin and Greek to his two grown up daughters; at least, as much of these *dead* languages as they could be got to "take in."

This was a great place for Tam, and great expectations were raised from it; in fact his fortune, it was thought, was now made, for the Laird was a man who loved learning for learning's sake, and Tam was, through his patronage, to be a minister after all. But it turned out that the Laird and his daughters differed widely in opinion upon the subject of a lady's education, and while they affected to obey their father, they thought "Mr. Trail" and his Latin and Greek equally a bore. They plagued him with questions, because he was a learned man, upon subjects of light literature, for the amusement which his ignorance afforded them; they had novels hid under the cushions of their chairs, and read them in place of their lessons; and when Trail tried to look serious and play the tutor, they threw off all obedience and

laughed in his face. The very anxiety of poor Trail to acquit himself, and his consequent seriousness were against him; for the Laird's son said he was a dull booby; the lady herself took a disgust at him, because his father was a weaver, and constantly warned her children to take care of learning from him vulgarity; and the young ladies at length treated him with such sauciness and scorn, that he almost feared to open his mouth in the family.

The unfortunate tutor soon perceived that he could not long hold out in the face of all this; for although he was admitted to be harmless and assiduous, he was perfectly despised by all but the Laird himself; and the very awe with which he looked upon his pupils and their parents; the conscious humility of his deportment, and the anxious dread which was constantly apparent, even in his face, of being dismissed and returned upon his parents, only increased and aggravated their ill-suppressed contempt. At length, an open conspiracy was formed against him by the ladies, because he had ventured to exert some of what he called con-

scientious authority, and to remonstrate against the idleness of the daughters; and this conspiracy was headed by mamma herself, who could never be persuaded into a love for Greek and Latin, and had no favour whatever for "learned weavers:" so that, in short, the Laird was obliged to give poor Trail an unconditional dismissal, without promise or patronage, for fear of that domestic disturbance, which has ever been the terror of wilful husbands.

Behold Tam Trail again returned to the Cross-lets of Paisley, hopeless and helpless, stamped with the confirmed and valueless character of "a sticked minister." Employment was again his aim, if it were only to obtain a scanty supply of pocket-money, now more than ever necessary, and to relieve the humbled anxiety of his mind. For two or three years he was driven about from post to pillar, in all the misery of uncertainty, and incurring all the vexations of tantalizing hope and repeated disappointment. Sometimes he taught a small school of his own; sometimes was assistant in some other; and he even had the honour of

preaching three different times within the creditable kirks of Campsie, Camlachie, and Cross-my-loof respectively ; but all these honourable ministrations led to no permanent results ; for the circumstances of the case, or some other competitor, who had more patronage or more knowledge of the world, continually upset his plans, or pushed him *out* ; sending him back to spiritless idleness, and the poor fireside of his reduced and disheartened parents. Sorrow now took fast hold upon him, as the hopes of youth gave place to serious gloom ; and even want began to come upon him, as the prophet expresses it, “ like an armed man.” His very features became changed by the progressive elevation of sorrow. No traces were left of the gaunt and gawky expression which his face bore while a growing youth ; for manhood had now filled up his whole person ; painful reflection had given almost a dignity to his look ; and misfortune had palled his cheek, and softened the tones of his voice into a sad and manly humility.

His usefulness was now reduced into becoming the occasional arbiter of the petty disputes of the

neighbourhood, especially when they happened to be upon subjects that required learning; and though, by a few, he was still jeeringly called "Minister Tam," his tall figure and rusty black coat, together with his plaintive look and sad manner, with the majority commanded every where a compassionate respect. But the little services he was able to render his neighbours being, in general, rewarded only by a treat at the public house, to which his fits of despondency began now too frequently to lead him, he saw with terror the prospect of tippling excitement, perhaps, becoming his wretched refuge, and the horrible appellation of Drunken Minister being attached to his name. When this view of his situation struck him, he wandered abroad like a ghost, seeking relief from his own thoughts, until his despair increased, and his despondency deepened; and, with all these distresses on his mind, he fled at length to impart his sufferings to woman, the best consoler, and the bitterest aggravator, of the sorrows of life.

"What ails you the night, Mr. Trail," said Jean Emerie, a serious black eyed maiden, the

daughter of a small manufacturer, in whose house he often lingered out his evenings. "What can ail you the night? you seem so melancholy of late, Mr. Trail, I'm amaist afraid to look at you."

"Naething, Miss Jean, naething."

"Naething, do you say—hech, Sirs! that's a strange speech."

"It's naething, Miss Jean, an' ye need na mind me. When do you expect your father home?"

"I canna really say. But, Mr. Trail, ye need not tell me that it's naething that makes ye look sae wae; for I've watched you many a time, when you did not observe. Na, Thomas, ye need na be ashamed to tell me what oppresses your heart. I'm not come to this time of life without my ain trials. Man, I could greet to look at you."

"Could you, Jean?" said Trail, looking up at her, the big tears rolling down his wan cheeks. "I did na think ony body could greet for me, I'm such a ——"

"Just let it out, Mr. Trail. I ken it's a sair thing for a man to greet;" said Jean, hardly able herself to sob out so many words: "but I ken

there's something oppressing you at the heart. Man, you're like to burst !”

“ I did not think to have done this before you, Jeanie,” said Trail, giving way to a burst of tears.

“ There's mickle sorrow in this world when ane comes to know it,” said Jean, in the half whisper of weeping ; “ but just tell me what distresses you, Mr. Trail ? indeed, I've often thought about you, and pitied you, when none was by ; and I'll at least gie you a kind word.”

“ God bless you, Jean Emerie ! for *that* kind word !” he said, wringing her hand : “ and for thinking about the like of me ; for, truly, I'm a broken hearted man, any body may see that.”

“ But ye'll get a kirk yet, Mr. Trail ; and, at ony rate, dinna repine at providence,—the Lord's all sufficient.”

It is not every day that a man in distress will meet with one of the species of God's comforters equal to Jean Emerie ; for she was a woman whose nature was such, that she had almost a veneration for affliction, when it seemed to her to come by

the dispensations of Providence. No wonder, then, that she should listen with interest to the tale of Thomas Trail, or that he should feel a grateful regard for her who loved him, almost for his very misfortunes. If, by his frequent visits to Jean Emerie, Thomas was saved from the degrading resource of the bottle in his troubles, he fell into an intoxication seldom less dangerous to a poor man. And yet it is strange that none are so ready to fall in love as the poor, or those whose feelings have been sharpened by misfortune; and who are least able to afford such a luxury, as the song has it,

“ O love will venture in
Where it dare na well be seen.”

And thus it was with Thomas Trail, who had the presumption to fall in love in the height of his distress. Like many men similarly circumstanced, he, foolishly, imagined that a man could never so well bear his afflictions as when he had a woman to share them with him; instead of concluding, with Lord Bacon, that “ a wife and

children make misfortunes more bitter:" besides that, there was at least two made miserable in place of one. But Thomas only dared to love, and to wish for happiness, and determined to make one effort more with the further hope and inducement of making Jean Emerie his wife. "This is the last trial," he said to himself, as he finished an arrangement of business; "if it is successful, I shall be made happy; if it fails, again I shall do something that I dare not now think of."

For a time every thing promised fair, and many many a happy night he spent with Jean in talking of days to come; but, ultimately, whether from his want of training, and business knowledge, or from over anxiety, or from mere misfortune, within a twelvemonth the hopes that Trail had clung to with desperate eagerness entirely gave way, and he lost every thing except his honesty, which was doggedly upright to the last. The sternness of despair now sat upon his brow, for the short time after in which he was visible to his friends; for, without saying a word, or taking leave of father or mother, or Jean, or any one, he took to the

last resource of disappointed youth, and inlisted for a soldier.

It was in vain after Thomas Trail took the king's bounty, which he sent home to his mother, that he tried to be jolly, and dissipated, and noisy, and not to think like his thoughtless companions. It was no easy matter for him, who had preached in a pulpit, to go about the country recruiting with the scum of the earth, and a cockade in his hat, the companion of low Irishmen and young blackguards, and to submit to be drilled for a soldier, in "the bonnie green of Glasgow," in sight of that venerable college in whose silent cloisters he had studied to be a minister of the church and preacher of God's gospel, and while the drill sergeant shook his cane over him as he absently thought of former days, the well known knell of the college bell struck to his heart a sound of deeper sadness and sorrow.

"Minister Tam is gone to be a sodger after a'," was the cry for a time throughout the Crosslets of Paisley; and that was the breaking of his parents' hearts, and the crowning of all they had suffered.

He had been, as expressed in the fine ballad of the poet of Paisley, "Listed, tested, sworn an' a'," before ever any thing of his resolution was known at home; and the next thing heard of him was, that he was gone "far beyond the sea," having embarked with his regiment to join Lord Wellington in Spain; and now all went wrong at home, and old Thomas Trail's house became desolate, and the poor man went about stupid, and began to take to a drop of drink; and his wife would lie in bed for days together, though in perfect health, while every thing out and in went to wreck.

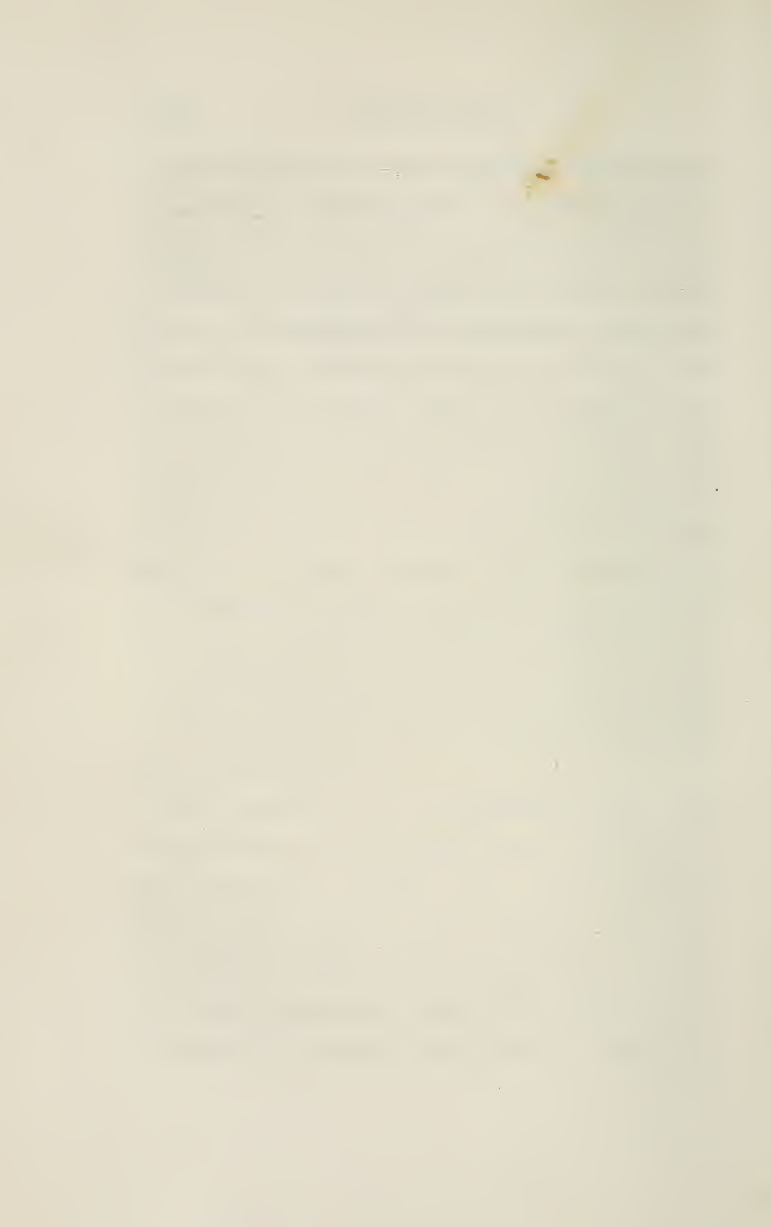
Some said that Trail made a good soldier, and was made a corporal in Spain; but of this no authentic accounts ever arrived. What his thoughts were, while on the march, "in a foreign land," or as he stood his watch as sentinel in the long cold nights, and pondered of Scotland and the Paisley Braes, and of his old mother and father at home, and of former happy sabbath nights, and of Jean Emerie who was never to see or weep with him again, we can only guess; for the last that was

heard of Minister Tam in the Crosslets of Paisley, was, that he had fallen gloriously at the battle of Salamanca !

But there was little glorying in the news with some who heard it. I speak not of the grief of Jean Emerie, who might be seen in widow's weeds sometime after, sitting lonely on a Sunday morning, in the cold Abbey Church of Paisley ; for there is enough of that sort of grief in the world, and of women who weep in secret disappointment, after blasted hopes with the only man who was ever the choice of their hearts for a companion for life. It was old Thomas Trail and his wife, at least, who were truly to be pitied ; and they used to sit together by the fire at night for hours without being able to speak.

But Sabbath night was the hardest to get over in the house of the old people, with all its recollections and all its sanctity. You might see Mrs. Trail sitting opposite her husband by the fire and without candle, looking into the embers with her hands wrung into each other, and weeping for hours over a mother's thoughts, for " she should

never see her son more ! who after all her hopes had been killed in a foreign land, and because that his very bones were huddled into the clay without coffin, or a mother's tears, in some far away place—which they call Salamanca.”



MISS PEGGY BRODIE.

MISS PEGGY BRODIE.

A CLISHMACLAVER.

O, my teeth's growing black and my hairs growing gray,
And the friends of my youth are all wed and away ;
I'll never see again the dear days that I've seen,
But I'll die for the love of a soldier in green.

Scrap Stanzas.

“ IF I were a man, instead of being a woman, as unfortunately I happen to be,” said Miss Peggy Brodie to me, “ I would call a meeting in public, on the part of the ladies, to petition the king for another war ; for really, since the peace, there is no such thing as any decent woman getting a husband, nor is there so much as the least stir or stramash nowadays, even to put one in mind of such a thing. And the king, God bless him, is a man of sense, and understands what's what perfectly,” continued Miss Peggy ; “ and I have not the least doubt, that if he were only put in posses-

sion of the real state of the sex since the peace, he would give us a war at once, for it is cruel to keep so many women in this hopeless state."

"Indeed, Mem," said I, looking as wise as I was able, "you may depend upon it, you are under a mistake."

"Don't tell me, Sir," replied Miss Brodie, "you men think you know every thing. As if I did not understand politics sufficient to know that the king grants all reasonable petitions. I tell you, Mr. What's-your-name, that the whole sex in Glasgow, from Cross-my-loof to the Rotten Row, and from Anderston to Camlachie, are in a state of the utmost distress since ever the peace—and marriages may be made in heaven, or somewhere else that I do not know of, but there is none made hereaway, to my certain knowledge, since ever the sharp-shooters laid down their arms, the strap-ping fallows."

"I'm sure, Mem," said I, "for a peaceable man, I have been sadly deav'd about these sharp-shooters."

"It's no for you to speak against the sharp-

shooters, Mr. Thingumy !” said Miss Brodie, getting into a pet ; “ you that never bit a cartridge in your life, I know by your look ! an’ kens nae mair about platoon exercise, and poother wallets, an’ ramrods, than my mother does ! But fair fa’ the time when we had a thriving war, an’ drums rattling at every corner—and fifer lads whistling up and down the streets on a market day ; and spruce serjeants parading the Salt Market, pipe-clayed most beautiful ! then there was our ain sharpshooters, braw fallows, looking so noble in their green dresses, and lang feathers bobbing in their heads. Besides, there was the cavalry, and the merchants’ kore, and the trades’ kore, and the grocers’ kore. Why, every young man of the least pluck was a soldier in these heart-some days, and had such speerit and such pith, and thought no more of taking a wife then, than he would of killing a Frenchman before his breakfast, if he could ha’ seen one.”

“ But, Miss Brodie,” said I, “ they were all so busy taking wives that they seem to have quite forgot to take you, in these happy times.”

“Ye need not be so very particular in your remarks, Mr. Thingum; for it was entirely my own fault, an’ I might hae gotten a husband any morning, just for going to the Green of Glasgow, where the lads were taking their morning’s drill; for it was there all my acquaintances got men, to my certain knowledge:—an’ now its naething but *Mistress* this an’ *Mistress* that, wi’ a’ the clippy lassocks that were just bairns the other day;—an’ there they go, oxtering wi’ their men, to be sure, an’ laughing at me. Weel, it’s vera provoking, Mr. Clishmaclash, isn’t it?”

“Deed, Mem,” said I, “it’s rather a lamentable case. But why did you not catch a green sharpshooter yourself, in those blessed days?”

“Hoot, Mr. Balgownie, it was quite my ain faut, as I said. I was perfectly ignorant of the most common principles of the art, and knew no more of the way an’ manner o’ catching a husband, no more than if I had never been born in Glasgow. In fack, I was a perfect simpleton, an’ thought it the easiest matter in the worl; an’ ye see, Sir, I had a wee trifle o’ siller, besides my looks (which

ye ken, Mr. Thingumbob, were far frae being disparageable); and so I was perfect simple, an' just thought I was like the lass in the sang;

' Set her up on Tintock tap,
The wind'll blaw a man till her.'

But ne'er a man was blawn to me;—an' there's all my giggling acquaintances married, ane after the ither. There's Bell Mushat, and Jeanie Doo, an' Mary Drab, an' Beanie Sma, an' Sally Daicle, naething but *marriet*, *marriet*;—an' here's puir me an' the cat, leading a single life until this blessed day. Hoghay! isn't it very angersome, Mr. What's-your-name."

"It is really a case o' great distress, when one thinks o' your worth, Miss Brodie," said I, pathetically;—"and if I did not happen to be engaged myself, it's impossible to say but"—

"Ay, there it is!" exclaimed Miss Peggy, "there it is! Every decent sensible man like you, Mr. Clishmaclayers (I really forget your name), that sees what I am, are just *marriet*, *marriet* themselves, and tied up. And so I may just sit here

an' blaw my fingers ower the fire wi' the cat.
Hoghay !"

" But surely, Miss Brodie," said I, " you did not use due diligence in time and season, or you would not now be left at this sorrowful pass."

" I let the sharpshooter times slip out o' my fingers, like a stupid simpleton, as I say ; but no woman could have been more diligent than I have been of late years, and all to no purpose. Haven't I walked the Trongate ? haven't I walked the Green ? Haven't I gone to a' the tea drinkings within five miles, where I could get a corner for myself ? Haven't I gone to the kirk three times every Sunday, forbye fast days, thanksgiving days, an' evening preachings ? Haven't I attended a' the Bible meetings, and missionary meetings, forbye auxiliary societies, an' branch associations ? Wasn't I a member of a' the ladies' committees and penny-a-week societies, frae Cranston Hill to the East Toll ? Didn't I gang about collecting pennies, in cauld March weather, climbing stairs, and knocking at doors like a beggar, until the folk were like to put me out, an' the vera weans on the stairs used

to pin clouts to our tails, an' ca' us penny-a-week auld maids? Ea, that was a sair business, Mr. Clashmaclish, an' little thanks we got; an' I got the chilblains in my feet, wi' the cauld, that keeped me frae sleep for three weeks."

"It's really lamentable," said I; "but I should have thought that the saintly plan was a good one."

"So it would have been, Sir, if I had had more money; but ye see fifty pounds a year is thought nothing of nowadays; and these kind o' people are terrible greedy o' siller. Na, na, Sir, gie me the sharpshooters yet."

"Well now, Miss Brodie," said I, "as we're on the subject, let me hear how it was you lost your precious opportunities in the volunteering time."

"Oh, Sir, that was the time, volunteering! There never was such days as the volunteering days. Drums here, and bands o' music there, sodgering up, and sodgering down, an' then the young men looked so tall in their regimentals, and it was such a pleasure just to get ane o' them

by the arm, an' to parade wi' them before the Tontine, an' then a' your acquaintances to meet you walking wi' a braw sharpshooter, and talking about you after, in every house; an' such shaking o' hands in the Trongate, an' such treating us wi' cakes in Baxter's; for the volunteering lads were sae free o' their siller in thae days, puir chields! Oh, thae were the times!"

"There are no such times now, I fear, Miss Peggy."

"Oh, no, Sir! an' then the lads thought nothing to take you to the play at night, in thae days; an' what a beautiful thing it was to sit in the front o' the boxes o' the big theatre in Queen Street, wi' a red coated, or a green coated volunteer, it was so showy, and such an attraction, and a talk. To be sure, Mr. M'Clishclash, it's no a'thegether right to go openly to common play-houses: but a man must be got some place, an' ye ken the sharpshooters couldna gang to the kirk in their green dress, puir fallows."

"But you never told me, Miss Brodie, what art or mystery there is in man-catching, and yet you

“speak as if some of your female friends had practised something past the common to that intent.”

“Its not for me to speak to you about women’s affairs, Mr. M’Clavers, but I can tell you one thing. Do ye mind lang Miss M’Whinnie, daughter o’ auld Willie M’Whinnie, that was an elder in Mr. Dumdrone’s kirk?”

“I think I recollect her face,” said I.

“Weel, Sir, this was the way she used to do. Ye see she was a great walker, for she was a lang legged lass, although her father is a wee gutty body—an’ if ye took a walk in the green or the Trongate, ye were sure at ony hour to meet lang Nelly M’Whinnie, lamping wi’ a parasol like a fishing-rod, simmer an’ winter, looking o’er her shoother now an’ then to see when she should *fa’* aff her feet.”

“Fall! Miss Brodie!—What do you mean by falling?”

“Hoot, Sir, ye ken naething. Wasn’t it by fa’en that Nelly M’Whinnie got a man. I’ll tell you hōw. She used to walk by hersel, an’ whenever she came near a handsome sharpshooter,

or gentlemanlike chield that she wished to pick acquaintance wi'—she just pretended to gie a stumble, or to fall on one knee or so; an' then ye ken the gentleman couldna do less than rin up to lift her, an' ask if she was hurt, and so forth; an' then she would answer so sweet, and thank him so kindly, that the man must say something civil; an' then she would say, 'Oh, Sir, you are so obliging and so polite,' an' just in this way she made the pleasantest acquaintances, an' got a man by it, or a' was done."

"Ha, ha, ha—That is perfectly ridiculous and hardly credible," said I.

"Na, ye need not laugh in the least," continued Miss Brodie, "for I'm telling you the truth, an' didna the same lass break her arm wi' her faing?"

"Break her arm, Miss Brodie! are you serious?"

"It's perfectly true, Mr. Balgrudery. Ye see, Sir, she was walking on speculation, in her usual manner, in the green of Glasgow it was, as I believe, and somewhere near the Humanity House, by the side of Clyde, when she observed three strappen fallows coming blattering up behind her;

this was an opportunity not to be let pass, an' the day being frosty, an' the road slightly slippery, afforded an excellent pretence for a stumble at least. Well, Sir, just when the gentlemen had got within three yards of her, Nelly geid a bit awckward sprauchle, an' shot out a leg, but whether Nelly had mistaken her distance, or whether the men were up to her fa'en system an' wadna bite, never clearly appeared; but they werna forward in time to catch the lassie in their arms as she expected, an' after a sprauchle an' a stumble, down she came in good earnest, an' broke her arm."

"Ha, ha, ha! I would rather hear that story than any one of Mr. Dumdrone's best discourses," said I. "But are you sure it's true?"

"Did not I see Miss M'Whinnie the time she was laid up wi' the broken arm in a sling. But ye see, Sir, the gentlemen did gather round her when they saw she was fairly whomlet, an' gather'd her up nae doubt; an' as soon as she got better o' the broken arm, she just took to the fa'en again. But I believe she never geid farther than a stoitre or a stumble after that, till ance she got a man."

“ And so, Miss Brodie, she did fall into a marriage ?”

“ Ou deed did she, Sir ; a fallow claught her at last, as she fell ; an’ there was nae mair wálking the Trongate wi’ the lang parasol like a bellman’s staff. But in the time o’ the sharpshooters an’ the cavalry, an’ the merchants’ kore, an’ a’ the kores, I mind as weel as yesterday, how a great illness took place among the young women, an’ neither pills nor boluses were found to be of the least service, an’ the doctorè were perfectly puzzled and perplexed, and knew not what to recommend in this general distress ; but the young women, ane an’ all prescribed for themselves, from an inward understanding of their complaints, and nothing, they said, would cure the prevailing sickness, but a walk in the morning in the Green of Glasgow. Now, Sir, it happened so providential, the whole time that this influenza lasted, that the sharpshooter kore, an’ the cavalry kore, an’ the trades’ kore, an’ the merchants’ kore, an’ the grocers’ kore, an’ a’ the kores were exercising in the Green o’ Glasgow, where a’ the young ladies

were walking for their health: it was so beautiful an' good for the ladies, when they were sick, to see thae sharpshooters how they marched an' wheel'd, an' hooph'd, an' whooph'd, an' ran this way, an' that way,—an' whiles they fired on their knees, an' then they would clap down on their backs, an' fire at us, puir chields; an' then ye see, just when we had gotten an appetite for our breakfast by our walk, the kores would be dismissed, an' then the volunteer lads couldna but spread themselves among the ladies that were outside, just to speer after their complaints; an' then naething but link arm wi' the sharpshooters an' the other kores, dizzens in a row, an' be escorted hame to breakfast. Many a lass that was quite poorly an' badly, was relieved by these morning walks, an' are now married women. Ah, thae were the pleasant days, Mr. Balcrowdie."

"But dear me, Miss Brodie," I said, "how did it happen that you were allowed to remain single all this time: had you no wooers at all?"

"Mr. M'Clavers, what do you mean by asking me such a question? No wooers! I tell you I

had dozens o' lads running after me night an' day, in thae pleasant times."

"Well, but I don't mean in the common way. I mean, had you any real sweetheart, any absolute offer."

"Offer, Sir! Indeed I had more than ane. Wasna' there Peter Shanks, the hosier, that perfectly plagued me, the dirty body! but you see, Sir, I couldna bear the creature, though he had twa houses in Camlachie: for to tell you my weakness, Sir, my heart was set upon ——."

"Upon whom, Miss Brodie?—Ah! tell me."

"Upon a sharpshooter!"

"Bless my heart! But if you would just let me hear the tale."

"Ah! Sir, it's a pitiful story," said Miss Brodie, becoming lachrymose.

"I delight in pitiful stories," said I, taking out my handkerchief.

"Well, Sir,—'love an' grief are sair to bide,' as the sang says; an' my heart wasna made o' the adamant rock, Mr. Clavermaclash: so ye see, Sir, there was a lad they ca'd Pate Peters, an' he

was in the sharpshooters; an' he sat just quite near me in Mr. Dumdrone's kirk; for ye see, Sir, it was there we fell in. Oh! Sir, Pate was a beautiful youth: teeth like the ivory, an' eyes as black as the sloe, and cheeks as red as the rose!"

"Ah! Miss Brodie—Miss Brodie!"

"An' when he was dress'd in his sharpshooter's dress!—Ah! Sir, but my heart was always too, too susceptible! I will not trouble you, Sir, with the history of our love, which would have come to the most happy termination, but for a forward cutty of a companion of mine, of the name of Jess Barbour. But there can be nae doubt but Pate Peters was a true lover o' me: for he used to come hame wi' me frae Mr. Dumdrone's preaching whenever Jess was not there; an' I'm sure his heart burn'd with a reciprocal flame!—But one night, Sir,—I'll ne'er forget that night!—I was coming hame frae a tea drinking at Mr. Warp's, the manufacturer, on the other side o' Clyde, when just as I got to the end o' the wooden brig next the green, wha does I meet but Pate Peters!"

"Ah!—Oh!—"

“ Well, Sir, it was a moonlight night ; just such as lovers walk about in, an’ Pate an’ me linked arm in arm, walked, an’ walked, round the Green o’ Glasgow. We stopped by the side o’ Clyde, an’ looked up at the moon !—‘ Miss Peggy,’ says he, ‘ do ye see that moon ?’—‘ Yes,’ says I. ‘ That changeable moon,’ says he, ‘ is the emblem of falseness in love !’—‘ Yes !’ said I, ‘ Mr. Peters,’—an’ my heart was ready to melt.—‘ But I will never be false in love !’ says he.—‘ I hope you will be true until death,’ says I.—‘ To be sure I will, Miss Brodie,’ says he.—These were his very words.”

“ Ah ! Miss Peggy,” I said, as I saw she was unable to get on, “ that is quite affecting.”

“ But he talked so sensibly, Sir,” continued Miss Brodie ; “ he spoke even of marriage as plain as a man could speak. ‘ Miss Peggy,’ said he, ‘ do you remember what Mr. Dumdrone, the minister, said last sabbath ? He said, ‘ Marriage was made in heaven :’ an’ he said, that ‘ Solomon, the wisest of men, expressly said, in the Proverbs,

he that getteth a wife getteth a good thing.' Was not that plain speaking, Mr. Clishmaclash,—Mr. Balgownie, I mean?"

"Nothing could be plainer, Miss Peggy; but I'm interested in your story."

"Well, Sir,—he came home to the door with me, and—it's not for me to explain the endearments that passed between us!—So, Sir, I went to sleep with a light heart, an' was for several days considering and contriving about our marriage, when—what do you think?—In three weeks time word was brought to me, that the false and cruel man was married to Jess Barbour!"

"Bless me! Miss Brodie, what a woful story! It's just like a romance."

"So it is, Mr. M'Clishmaclavers," said Miss Brodie, all blubbered with weeping. "It's perfect romantic.—Ye see, Sir, what trials I had in love! But you're not going away in that manner, Sir."

"Oh, yes, Miss Brodie," said I, taking my hat, "I'm not able to stand it any longer."

“ You are a feeling man,” said she, shaking me by the hand, “ you’re a man o’ sweet feeling, Mr. Malgownie.”

“ You are an ill-used woman, Miss Brodie !—
Adieu, Miss Brodie.”

GEORGE WISHART.

VOL. I.

L

GEORGE WISHART.

CHAPTER I.

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal ;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear. *Macbeth.*

IN a certain quiet town in the western side of Scotland, situated in the midst of a country, over the face of which are scattered the woody policies and shapely pleasure grounds of a resident gentry, of various degrees of family antiquity, there lived, many years ago, a young artist of much local celebrity, whose name was George Wishart.

The reputation for talents, which it takes with many almost a lifetime to acquire, was awarded to young Wishart in a few short years, by the unanimous verdict of every person of taste, for

many miles round; and these talents, not being limited to excellence in his own profession, but shining out in the shape of numerous brilliancies and accomplishments, were so decided and remarkable as to outstrip all local comparison, and to silence, wherever he was known, the risings of all incipient detraction, by the involuntary homage of irrepressible admiration. As if superior and startling talent were not enough for the advancement of one individual, nature had, in addition, conferred upon George Wishart a person and countenance so interesting to the eye, and manners so perfectly elegant and seducing, that fortune seemed, in all her channels, to have provided for him universal success; and, no longer blind and capricious, to have formed one individual, at least, even from an inferior class in society, whom she had safely and surely marked for her own.

In these universal encomiums bestowed upon Wishart, it was little to be wondered at, that his pleased and gratified parents should have heartily and gratefully joined, and that a bright career should have been generally predicted for the

accomplished young artist of Barhill. But into all matters, lying among the contingencies of futurity, poor mortals see dimly and darkly, as through a glass; and on no subjects are the sagacity of the wisest more completely baffled, than in their calculations upon the beginnings and endings of human fate.

There were many objects in the country round Barhill, which, to the eye of an enthusiastic artist, at least, conveyed deep impressions of the glory of nature; and among the hills and haughs within many miles round the young artist wandered unrestrained, and sketched without ceasing, until not only all the glens and braes, and picturesque spots were transferred to his collection of local scenery, but every mouldering ruin and modern mansion, in which he saw any beauty, were, by his patient studies in the open air, made familiar to his eye and his pencil.

The spectacle of an artist, and a handsome young man, wandering through the woods, and exploring the glens, with his portfolio under his arm, or sitting perched on a crag or a ruin,

drinking in the delicious peeps of nature, and labouring, with his pencil, until he caught the last glimpse of the sun, as it set behind Kilburnie Braes, was a new thing to the great proprietors of the west of Scotland. Yet they were not so insensible to the seduction of the arts, or so prejudiced in favour of what was ornate and foreign, as altogether to neglect the young genius of Barhill ; and often the country gentleman, as he rode abroad with his lady or daughter, or as he wandered the heights and moors, with his pointer and his gun, would stop to admire and commend the solitary, but delighted labourer, in the shapes and shadows of ever-varying nature.

It happened one day, after that in process of time he had painted many pictures, and formed many studies from the beauties round the town of Barhill, our artist had taken a fancy to a peep of foreground among the rich glades in the neighbourhood of Darnwood, the seat of one of the heads of the most wealthy and widely branched families in all the district. He had seated himself on the jutting point of an old ragged wall, which

thrust itself forward into a sort of dell, where a view was spread out from a narrow opening among the trees, which led off in such interesting groups and mazes, in the fantastic dance of wild nature, from the rich foreground to the far off projections of rock and ruin, interrupting the green levels to the blue hills and sunny clouds beyond, that the poetic eye of the limner was long before he had satisfied himself, in working on his flat surface so multifarious a detail of the furnishings of nature.

He had not yet finished the whole range of his objects, when one of those chilling blasts rushed suddenly up the glade before him, which, in this climate, often precede a change of weather ; and, shortly, the usual symptoms of a storm began to change his shadows, to dim his lights, to blow up and disturb the paper before him, and, by the falling at first of a slight *spitting* rain, to convince him of the necessity of seeking a shelter. So eager was he, however, to finish his work, that he stirred not until the heavy rain began fairly to obliterate the marks of his pencil, and then he was fain to retreat from the insufficient shelter of

the trees in the glade, to seek to get under cover, among the outhouses of the mansion of Darnwood, in the grounds of which he had been labouring.

Having, however, been observed while at his studies from the windows of the mansion, when the rain came on, a servant was despatched to endeavour to trace him, and to invite him into the house, until the state of the weather should enable him to get comfortably back into Barhill. Wishart accepted the invitation with pleasure; but could not help, as he followed the servant to the house, pondering in his surprise, upon the cause of an invitation so little to have been expected from the haughty owner of Darnwood, or any of the widely spread family of the Mores, who kept at a jealous distance from every one in the country, whom they could deem inferior to the aristocratic rank which they had from time immemorial supported.

The mystery was explained, however, upon Mr. Wishart's entering the house; for he was received, not by Robert More, the owner, but by a strange gentleman, who turned out to be the Squire's brother, and who, having travelled far, and lived

much on the Continent, was possessed with an admiration for the arts, and a respect for talents, which overcame, in many cases, the natural prejudices of rank, and which, together with the sympathetic representations of his niece, Fanny More, who had been watching young Wishart from the windows, made him think it nothing remarkable or derogatory, that he should invite the artist into the mansion, and even to introduce himself and his niece to one who was generally known and admitted all round to be a man of genius.

The pleasure that Wishart received from this chance introduction, was greatly enhanced, not only by the intelligent remarks and genuine admiration of all that the poetical painter loved, which burst from the amiable stranger, but by the opportunity it afforded him of seeing and conversing with Miss Fanny More, a lady of whom he had long heard much, and who was in fact, at that time, the theme and the pride of all in this part of the West of Scotland. Fanny, on her part, was no less delighted in the chance which brought into the dull mansion of Darnwood, the handsome

young painter of Barhill ; her admiration of him and his talents broke forth from her unsuspicious and frank nature, in expressions which filled the heart of Wishart with rapture ; her travelled uncle did not particularly discourage the delighted intimacy of the young people ; and foreseeing probably, or predicting within himself, that Wishart would yet be an honour to any connection of his own, gave him a warm invitation to his brother's house, and in his brother's name, on the following evening.

The honour of an invitation to the society of the Mores of Darnwood and Bargowan was most flattering to the young artist, not only from its promising effects to his prospects, but from its affording him the pleasure of occasionally conversing with the orphan Fanny, who had already deeply interested him, not by her beauty only, which was every where admired, but by a union of those graceful and elevated qualities, which are so apt to impress and win the hearts of such men as Wishart. He went accordingly ; and though he enjoyed less in the society of the gentlemen than

he had anticipated,—the presence of the proud and stern resident of Darnwood tending to damp the admiration of his more liberal brother, who had given Wishart the invitation, and to throw a restraint over all present; yet in regard to Fanny, his delight and admiration was increased to perfect intoxication, which completely swallowed up every other disheartening or discouraging feeling.

The poor youth, however, received no more invitations to this pleasant society; and soon after he learned with regret, that the younger of the Mores, who had first introduced him to the family, was gone towards London, on his way to some part of the Continent; and inferred sadly, that he was now to be for ever debarred from further opportunity of meeting the interesting orphan of Darnwood. As Fanny More was the frequent subject of conversation in every company, the next news he heard, was the startling intelligence that she was about to become the bride of John Ross, of Rosshaugh, a gentleman who lived quite near to the further suburbs of Barhill.

Wishart had at this period no more than those vague wishes and yearning aspirations towards the love of Fanny More, which cannot be called hope, and which are so often felt painfully in youth, as we successively see those consigned to the arms of more fortunate men, whose very smile seems a paradise to reflect on, and whom we grudge to give finally up to another, from the eyes of partiality with which we imagine they have at sometime by-gone looked towards ourselves. But when he came to hear fully the character of John Ross, to whose arms she was, if common report might be credited, to be consigned for life, and found that he was a person of gross appetites and selfish feelings; a deep votary of the bottle, and withal (presuming upon his large possessions), self-willed and tyrannical beyond endurance; the youthful artist was almost distracted at the thought of this modest and blooming flower being cropped by such a brute in the form of man, and taking up his portfolio, he rushed forth towards the policy of Darnwood, to try to obtain one other interview with his Fanny.

Entering the principal gate of this beautiful demesne, he walked up the carriage road, then turning off by an avenue that led into the wood, he sat himself down on the stump of a tree, within view of the windows of the house, and near the spot, where he first had been ; and opening his book, began to sketch as formerly, in the hopes that something would occur favourable to his wishes. He had not sat very long, until he perceived the head of Fanny's own maid peeping stealthily out from a small door at the bottom of the garden. Taking no apparent notice, but labouring on, the girl soon came forward, and first making a rustling to attract his attention, she came near confusedly, and courtesying said, with a familiar smile—

“ Ea ! Mr. Wishart, but that's a weary seat for a gentleman ; and if auld John Crabtree, the gardener, was na' a cross body, he would ask you in, if ye pleased ; for there's nae peaches grows in the wood to sloken your thirst ; nor flowers sae sweet blooms here in the shaw, as in bonny garden bowers, where ladies like to walk i' the sun !—

There's no a prettier picture ever was painted wi' paint, than ye may see in Darnwood Garden, an' the door is wide open, Mr. Wishart,—” and saying this, away ran the maid, and instantly made her exit through the door she had alluded to.

The delighted artist was at no loss to comprehend the meaning of this arch compound of simplicity and coquetry; and rising from his seat, he walked straight into the garden, taking readily a covered walk to his left, after he had closed the door behind him. He had not gone far until he observed the white dress of a female in one of the walks, and shortly after Fanny More, timidly, yet with an air of modest frankness, came forward and addressed him.

The time was too valuable to be passed in empty compliments: explanations and avowals came burning from the lips of Wishart, and were answered in broken sentences by the agitated girl; until a scene of impassioned admiration of each other, and horror at the intended marriage with the coarse squire of Rosshaugh, ended in mutual

vows and half expressed resolutions, and an appointment to meet again on the following evening, in the house of a mutual confidant in Barhill. They met accordingly, again and again, at the place of rendezvous; the detested marriage was pressed and insisted upon both by Mr. Ross and her guardian uncle, which caused the meetings between her and her beloved Wishart to be both more frequent, and the measures concerted to defeat it, or to put it off, if possible, until the return of her other uncle from the Continent, to be more hasty and decisive; until the ardent lovers decided upon an instant private marriage, as the only means of saving her from being sacrificed to the man she loathed; and the exposure of which was reserved until the friendly interference of her only friend, now shortly expected at Darnwood, might reconcile it and her to her haughty family.

In the meantime it came to be known, even in the family of the Mores themselves, that private meetings had taken place between Fanny and the clever young artist; and her uncle was wroth and full of reproaches to her; and John Ross, pressing

his suit from mere pique, at the idea of being supplanted by one who had little but his talents and his manners to recommend him, was stung with the bitterest jealousy and rage against Wishart, on finding himself and his addresses, on his account, treated with coldness and disdain, little short of contempt. By this time, Fanny More's beauty and accomplishments came to be so much remarked, that she, in connection with the talented painter, was the theme of conversation, and the admiration of every one, far and near, round the town of Barhill; and, as was then the fashion, was the constant toast, wherever the ladies of the neighbourhood were named or spoken of. Ambition to be the possessor of her who commanded general admiration, now added fuel to the gross desires of Mr. Ross; and Fanny's steadiness in resisting both his importunities and her uncle's indecisive authority, in favour of an obscure artist, who also had contrived to obtain universal praise, provoked almost to madness, the haughty and wilful spirit of the wealthy squire of Rosshaugh.

CHAPTER II.

AT the period of time when this our story took place, the custom, so happily got rid of in our days, of deep and shameless drinking in the evening, was at its very height, even among the higher orders of society. At these sottish carousings none sat longer, and few held out as well as the man whom her avaricious uncle had destined for the husband of the delicate and sensitive Fanny More.

At one of those parties, which were nightly with the dissipated squire of Rosshaugh, and when was also present Mr. William More of Bargowan, a constant companion of the former, the name of Fanny More was, as usual introduced, and certain sneering insinuations, over their cups, at the ill success of Mr. Ross, was, with bachelor freedom, played off at the expense of their haughty companion. The name of Wishart was next spoken of

with no less freedom, and as much sneering, at the expense of William More, who was banteringly congratulated upon the probable addition of the pallet and easel, for lack of any thing else that the Herald's College could furnish in connection with the name of Wishart, to grace the scutcheon of the arms of More of Bargowan.

But this senseless and provoking talk did not end here. The discussion was carried on to a considerable extent, in the course of which it was stated and maintained, in reply to William More's scornful repulsion of the idea of Wishart's ever becoming connected with his family, that the artist had actually boasted, among a circle of his own companions, that Miss Fanny More was already legally and indissolubly his wedded wife !

Nothing could exceed the feelings of rage and indignation with which the very idea that such a thing was publicly talked of about Barhill, was received by both gentlemen. They were too much men of the world, however, to show it before their friends ; but first, bringing round a change in the

conversation, they swallowed glass after glass, to qualify the gall which rose to their throats, then sat moody and silent until about midnight, when, leaving their party, they sallied forth into the street, to vent to each other their mutual feelings of indignation and scorn at him they, in the narrow spirit of vulgar pride, called the beggarly and presumptuous painter.

It was on one of those delightful moonlight nights, which takes the dizzy bacchanalian by surprise on merging forth from the candlelight and steaming heat of a close room, when the two gentlemen mentioned, warmed with wine, and boiling with indignation and purposes of vengeance, went forth into the streets of Barhill. They were in no humour to separate or seek their homes, for the grievous subject of the upsetting artist, as they called him, completely occupied their minds, and served them for conversation for a considerable time, during which they continued to stroll up and down, near the house where Wishart lived, vaguely hoping that some chance of

the time, or some malignant demon, who helps the work of that mischief which is brewed at midnight, would throw him in their way. Perhaps he might this night be out like themselves, and might not yet have gone home, in which case they might still meet him ; and, should this fortunately occur, with what stern scorn, thought they, we shall put him to the question !

This idea having taken full possession of them, they continued, for nearly an hour, to walk up and down the street, near to Wishart's door, sometimes muttering to themselves coarse curses upon the head of the talented and fortunate lover, and oftener swearing outright, in the bitterness of wounded pride, and in language of ruffian profanity, being, in fact, eager for any vengeance which, in the spirit which wine and the chaffing of their companions had raised, might be offered to glut their unbridled passion. In those days there was no regular watch in Barhill, and a couple of tipsy-looking gentlemen, parading about on a moonlight night, excited no remark from the

casual passenger, who, at this hour, might be but little more sober than themselves; and as for the few quiet men who occasionally patrolled the street through the night, under the appellation of the town guard, they had too great a respect for the provincial aristocracy who dwelt among them, to take any notice of such men as Mr. Ross and his friend, who, they knew, were no strangers on the streets of their sober town at midnight.

It happened, on the same night, that Mr. Wishart, being at all times much in request in the evening parties round, had also been out: but his Fanny, not having been, of course, present where he was, his mind had dwelt upon her image the whole of the night; and, though detained by the hilarity of his party, he had been restless and absent, until the hour when he was suffered to depart. He was stepping homewards alone, through the empty streets, his mind impressed peculiarly this night with the difficulties of his situation, with regard to Fanny More, and musing deeply upon the future, as he paced towards the Cross of

Barhill in the moonlight, when his thoughts were disturbed by the heavy step of booted feet on the dark side of the street quite near him, and presently there started out, from the shadow of the old jail of the town, two persons, who came swaggering up to accost him.

“Ho! Wishart!” shouted a voice familiarly, “is it you that breaks the blank in our quiet street at midnight?”

“It is:—men will, at times, defraud their pillows for the society of those they love; and even this moon would almost tempt one to linger abroad. But I am nearer to my home than either of you, gentlemen;” said Wishart, somewhat pleased, in the mood he was, by the apparently friendly address of these honourable relatives of his Fanny.

“You are, and yet *we* are not in haste to lose this hallowed moonshine;” said More, craftily addressing to the artist the language which he knew would most readily interest him: “see you how its soft, yet brilliant beams, linger upon the black walls and about the grotesque architecture

of these antique buildings, and throw out the forked shadows of those tall gables opposite, along the level and empty market-place. Come, Wishart, this is a night for a painter. Will you steal five minutes more from sleep, to stroll a pace with us?"

"Most willingly," replied Wishart, charmed with the goodnatured familiarity of the haughty pair, who had, by this time, taken an arm on each side of him, and away, up the street, they all set off together.

They soon turned off up by a broad open path, which led up the hill, on which several churches, with their steeples, stand almost together, their walled churchyards sweeping down on the face of each side of the hill, and the headstones and monuments throwing picturesque shadows, or standing out white and spectral in the moonlight.

"Look you to the dark side of this church and churchyard," said Mr. More, still in the same strain, as they looked through the gate among the monuments; "How strange the effect of these mingling shadows of death and of religion. But

come away, there is something dreadful to me in a rotting Golgotha at midnight."

"Is there, Sir?" said Wishart. "To me there is too much beauty as well as solemnity, in that quiet burying place, for any feeling of terror; even now, if I had no where else to go, I could lie down and sleep beneath the moonlight, among the dead men, without any other thoughts but those serious broodings over time and eternity which occur at times to the most thoughtless."

"You could!" said Ross, glaring, with a pale look and a strange expression of countenance, on the poetic youth, as if a foul thought had that instant crossed his mind; "then you may have to lie in dead man's lair sooner than you think of: your face turned towards the moon without your seeing her, and your toes towards the heavens without their feeling the summer's heat.—Life is a brittle thing as I've heard say."

"What mean you, Sir?" inquired Wishart, somewhat struck. "We have all at once got into a strange manner of talking, gentlemen."

"Only what is natural for the place and hour,"

said Mr. More; "and wine sometimes aids the bringing out of the poetics of superstition or solemnity; besides, there is a pleasure in men on occasion becoming children to enjoy over again their freshest fancies or most impressive superstitions. Remember you the boyish saying, that if you run round a church three times at midnight, and knock loud at the chancel door each time, calling upon the spirit of the tombs to come out—Hark!"

"Nonsense."

"Now if we should go in and knock hard at the great door of that empty church, we should make its gloomy ailes echo, until the eyeless ghosts should perhaps rise from behind the monuments, and grin at us between the gothic arches, for disturbing them thus at midnight,—see you, as Otway says,

'The tombs and monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness through my aching heart.'

"Curse your poetry!" said John Ross, doggedly, and with his usual coarseness. "What do we stand here mouthing for? Come!"

“Where next?” said Wishart; “’tis now time for bed, and my door stands not open all night; so, gentlemen, I shall leave you.”

“Nay, not yet,” said More. “See you the beautiful clump that surrounds the bowling green on the farther ridge of the hill? It was a Roman prætorium, you know, in days of yore; let us merely walk round it while I speak something serious to you. The place is classical, and the view in the moonlight, over the hazy plain below, is more than beautiful.”

“Come along then—the way is but short now, and the hour is fitting for serious conversation.”

“I am attentive, Sir.”

“You are reported to be a lucky fellow with the ladies, Mr. Wishart,” said Ross.

“That is the second time you have made the observation since we met, Sir,” said Wishart, looking round sternly at the last speaker.

“Is it!” was all the answer; for in fact, at the first sight of Wishart, at the Cross of Barhill, and after his first open and manly reply, all the vengeful rhodomontade in which they had pre-

viciously indulged, was dissipated by the very presence and look of the youth; and both had felt all along so much of the influence of his known talent, that they had not courage to meet him upon the very subject which yet smouldered with deep feelings of hate and jealousy in their breasts.

They went forward, therefore, in silence. At length they all stood still simultaneously, Wishart appearing struck with the sight before them.

“How like you the effect of that?” said Mr. More, as the artist halted in the open space in front of a small cottage, which stood, as we said, on the western ridge of the hill, on the spot which might once have been the entrance to the Roman fort before mentioned. The cottage, which served for the keeper of the place, stood lowly under the broken shadows of a double circle of tall trees that surrounded the area, which was once the inside of the fort, in its rear, but which, being a beautiful level, was now used as a bowling green; and the whole circular clump standing on the angle of the hill and in front of them, with the moonlight streaming through among the lofty

boughs of the trees, had an effect that was singularly beautiful.

Wishart stood for a moment admiring this romantic effect, when as he turned suddenly, he observed his two companions whispering together, in a peculiar and earnest manner. He took no notice to them of this, for in fact they were only reproaching each other for cowardice, in not being able to speak to Mr. Wishart upon the subject which lay so deeply in both their minds. They proceeded along, however, into the walk outside, and, as it once had been, under the walls of the fort which sweeps round the angle of the hill, shaded by the lofty trees of the bowling green above. The walk was protected, or backed on this side and behind, by a rough, sandstone, loosely built wall, and certainly the view, from where the gentlemen now stood, was, from its extent, almost magnificent, for the very indistinctness of the objects in the plain beneath, by the reflected light of the broad moon, gave boundless scope to the fancy in its involuntary contemplations.

Wishart seemed to gaze with all the enthusiasm

of an imaginative artist upon the scene; but his companions observed that he seemed entirely to fix his eyes upon one spot, and that was the white shining walls, and the dark belted woods of the demesne of Bargowan in the distance.

“See you ought there to entrance you thus, Sir?” said Ross, his jealousy again rising into his throat on observing this.

“I do, Sir,” said Wishart, readily; “I do see a spot there, where lives one for whom I am deeply interested, and I will not affect to misunderstand the questions which you have just been putting to me, by denying the interest I take in that lady.”

“I tell you what, Mr. Wishart, I have something to say to you,” said Mr. Ross, fired at this, and now stepping up in front of the artist, with more than his usual haughty and swaggering air, “about a matter which must instantly be explained to my satisfaction.”

“And to mine, Sir!” said William More, now taking courage, and stepping also up threateningly.

“Are these airs meant for intimidation, gentle-

men?" demanded Wishart, boldly, yet evidently surprised at their sudden change of manner; "if so, you have mistaken your man."

"Fellow!" said Ross, his spirit laying aside all restraint, "do you presume to brave us?"

"I will brave any man who thinks to intimidate me," said Wishart; "I am ready at any moment to give satisfaction or explanation, if sought from me as a gentleman would seek it; but I will not be bearded even by two persons, who can, for whatever purpose, thus treacherously decoy me to a solitary spot at midnight."

A look was here exchanged between More and Ross; and the momentary silence was first broken, by the former saying, with mock humility—

"Your pardon, Mr. Artist, we did not at the moment take note whom we were addressing. The world, in faith, is turned upside undermost in these days; when the gentlemen of the land must speak smooth and respectful to every obscure boy who can write rhymes, or plaster paint upon canvass. But prescribe to us, good Mr. Limner, how we must word our inquiries of your worship."

“Gentlemen,” said Wishart, slightly galled at this scornful speech, and struck on the instant with the sense of his own inferiority of birth, “I am not insensible of the different ranks in life that we respectively occupy, nor would I willingly be thought to presume upon any of your families; but surely I am intitled to be spoken to by you in terms such as at least imply a respect for yourselves. If you have any thing to say to me, let us talk as we go on.”

“The inquiry we have to make is of such importance, Sir,” said Mr. Ross, “both to our own feelings, and in respect to the interests of our families, that we have determined that you shall not leave this spot without satisfying us.”

“You are both heated with wine,” said Wishart, after a moment; “and this spot is somewhat inauspicious at the dead hour of night—should my replies not be to your liking. Nevertheless, I scorn to flinch any reasonable inquiry, if proposed to me in language which it becomes me to answer. So proceed.”

“It is reported, Sir,” said More, who was the

coolest of the two, "that you have boasted among your friends of an intimacy with one of our family, whom I need not name."

"I understand what you mean," said Wishart; "but that is false. Whatever intimacy the lady in question may have honoured me with, I have never in any way made it the subject of *boast*."

"Have you not admitted having met Fanny More in private? Have you not even attempted to justify your own conduct and hers?"

"I *have* met her in private, and will not deny it: and I *shall* justify myself, and especially her, for this, before all the world!"

"Have you not even said, that she was your lawful wife?" again demanded Ross, boiling with rage.

"Perhaps I may, when that avowal seemed necessary to preserve her character's respectability."

"Scoundrel! dare you say this in my presence!" and Ross attempted, after this exclamation, to lay hold of the artist.

"Dare to lay a hand on me!" said Wishart

calmly, but springing back towards the rugged wall under the bowling green.—“There are two of you to one, but you shall not offer an insult with impunity.”

“Wishart!” said More, pressing close to him, “have you dared to say that my cousin is your wife?”

“I have not only dared to say it, but I will prove it! Stand from me, gentlemen!”

“By Heaven!” exclaimed Ross, looking at his neighbour, and then springing forward, he attempted to catch the youth in his arms, that he might disable him from resistance; but Wishart, by a push in the breast, sent him staggering several paces backward.

A blow under the ear from More, now insidiously given on the instant, almost stunned him; but he returned it quickly, and with interest: and the two exchanged several hasty and severe blows with their fists. For Wishart, perceiving that some serious injury was premeditated, struggled fiercely, and would soon have disposed of his pre-

sent adversary, had not Mr. Ross, at the instant, sprung in between them.

“More,” said Ross, as the two whom he had separated stood breathing hard, and gazing on each other, “how can you disgrace yourself, boxing like a ruffian, with a common painter?”

“No! I will not,” said Wishart to himself, gnashing his teeth together, as he dropped the arm that was rising to aim a blow also at Ross, for this fresh insult; for he observed that the arms of the latter, although his first adversary, were dropped pacifically as he thought, by his side, and his right hand was even somewhat behind his back.

“George Wishart!” demanded Ross, in a voice choking with rage, but with a ruffianly calmness of manner, “will you ever again say that Fanny More is your wife?”

“I *will* say it, and maintain it,” said Wishart, solemnly, “till the last moment of my life!”

“Then, by G—! this shall be the last time,” exclaimed the squire; and he raised his right hand, and with it a rough sandstone, which he had

plucked out of the loose wall beside them while Wishart was engaged with More, and struck the unsuspecting youth, on the back of the head, a blow ! which, together with a hustle, which was at the same instant given by his watchful accomplice, succeeded in laying the young man flat on the gravel road.

Wishart came to his senses from the effects of the blow, just as he felt the knee of More being placed on his breast ; and his eyes encountered the glare of those of Ross by the moonlight, as the latter stooped down, and as his hand was again raised to strike a fatal stroke on his head with the heavy sandstone.

“ Is this indeed murder ? ” said Wishart, calmly looking up at both.

“ It is the punishment of presumption, reptile ! ” said Ross, hoarse with rage.

“ Give me a moment’s chance, gentlemen ! ” said Wishart, struggling to get up, “ life is sweet : and consider the murderer’s portion ! ”

“ Do you parley, John ? ” said he that kneeled on the young man’s breast, looking up at his companion.

“Not for my sake, but for the sake of Fanny More; of my darling Fanny, forbear!” gasped the artist, in the immediate fear of death.

“Villain! will you still name that name?” exclaimed Ross, with a horrible expression of countenance, then striking a blow on the forehead of the prostrate Wishart, he deprived him of all sense; and, as his unresisting victim in his convulsive agony turned away his face, Ross, standing up, in his fury raised the coarse sandstone aloft, and dashed it down on the head of the unhappy youth, who gave one groan, as it fell upon the naked scalp: then stooping mechanically, and again lifting the stone, Ross and More stood for a moment and gazed upon each other, and then at the body, which lay bleeding and disfigured along the road in the moonlight.

“Can’t you throw it away?” said More to the other, as he next looked wildly on the stone in his hand, which was almost made smooth on one side with the clotted blood and hair of the brained young man.

The murderer threw the stone from him, with

a guilty shudder ! and, without speaking a word, each fled sullenly off his different way from the scene of slaughter ; for the silent horror of blood seemed already to have raised the cry of vengeance behind them.

CHAPTER III.

THE moon had gone down, and all was now dark at the cross of the town of Barhill, the place where the two gentlemen and Wishart had met in the earlier part of the night, when the dull silence was disturbed by a sudden knocking at a door, so loud and long continued, that it aroused from their slumbers, in alarm and consternation, very many of the sober people who dwelt in the neighbourhood. Windows began to rise up here and there above, and heads of people in their night dresses to be shot out, while the drowsy civilians, who at that time patrolled the streets, under the name of the town guard, also came forth from their den under the steeple, to see what this fearful knocking might mean.

The Wishart family lived then at the Cross of Barhill, and the old man and his wife slept in a room on the third story, and that faced the street.

“What dreadful knocking is that?” said Mrs. Wishart to her husband, as she was roused from her sleep, “Do you hear it, gudeman?”

“Yes, I do;” replied Wishart’s father. “But what need we mind it? It is no fire, or we would see the light.”

“I wish you would get up, and look out,” rejoined the woman, “maybe you can see where it is, at least: it is so loud and earnest, as if something dreadful had taken place. Every knock like that, in the nighttime, goes to my very heart.”

The old man tardily stepped out of bed, and, raising the sash of the window, put out his head, to see if he could ascertain what was the matter.

“The knocking is at the doctor’s door, round the corner opposite;” said he. “Gracious! the town guard are out, and they have a light among them, and they seem to be taking in a dead man. I see his bloody face. God preserve us! now they’ve gotten him in, poor creature!”

“That is, indeed, fearful; but come to your bed, gudeman, ye’ll get cold,” said his wife; and

Mr. Wishart, shutting down the window, for the street was now quiet, stepped again into bed.

“ I wonder who the man can be that has been ill used, or murdered,” continued Mrs. Wishart. “ Some poor stranger, or ill doing wretch, no doubt. What a happy thing it is, that our sons are so well behaved ; for never any thing happens to them ! Our son George is in his bed long ago, I dinna doubt.”

“ There’s little doubt of that,” said Mr. Wishart complacently. “ George is a clever lad, and can take care of himself perfectly, out of such dreadful affairs as this unfortunate man seems to have been in this disturbed night.”

“ God bless him—he is the pride of the family !” said Mrs. Wishart : and, both comforting themselves in this manner, the unconscious parents of Wishart resigned themselves to sleep.

Meantime the surgeon, in the street below, who was dull of hearing, having been at length aroused, and the body borne into his premises, he gave a look over it, and then said coolly, to the three or four anxious bystanders,

“What needd ye have made all this knocking and noise at my door, about a dead man? The man seems to be gone.”

“How can you tell, doctor,” said one, “without ever trying if he’ll bleed, or feeling if there’s a beat at his heart? I know he was living when I found him, if he has not departed while we’ve been standing here, knocking at your door.”

“Faith, this is a bloody job, I see,” said the doctor, quietly; “Lord’s sake!” he exclaimed, holding the candle to the disfigured face of the insensible youth, “that’s like George Wishart, the painter.”

“It is, indeed! it is the very man!” exclaimed the person who had brought him, with much consternation at the discovery; “and I found him crawling on his hands and knees, on the kirk brace, when the town guard gave me help to bring him here. God pity us, Sirs,” continued the man, addressing the few bystanders, “it would hae melted your heart to have heard his groans. Make haste, and do something, doctor; for the poor

young man is in a dead faint, if e'er he comes to life again."

It appears that the energy of youth had prevailed so far over the effects of the murderous treatment he had received, that consciousness again returned to the breast of Wishart; and reviving, in some measure, by the cool morning air, he had been able to crawl some length towards home, when he was found by the man, who was attracted by his groans, and who carried him to the shop of the surgeon. There his wounds received a slight dressing, and he was laid on a couch for the remainder of the night. In the morning he was in a state of total insensibility; and the surgeon, who had dressed his wounds, fixedly contemplated the unfortunate youth, as he was carried, amid many lamentations and despairing words, into the house of his heart-stricken parents.

Sore was the agony in which the young painter lay, if, indeed, he retained sense of his sufferings, for several days; and strange were the apprehen-

sions that began to haunt the mind of Fanny More, as she sat lonely in her uncle's house in the country, a whole week having passed, without her hearing from her beloved Wishart. Her light young heart, however, was unwilling to admit the fear of any evil, happy as she was in the possession of Wishart's love, and eagerly as she looked forward to the day, when, by the return of her other uncle and guardian, who was the friend of him whom all the rest of the family were set against, she should be enabled to avow that which present circumstances made it prudent to conceal. Her maid, also, whom she had entrusted with her secret, entered, one morning, with a message, purporting to be from Wishart, stating, that he was obliged to go from home for a short time, but that she should hear from him in a few days: and this message, though delivered verbally, was so acceptable, that it was instantly credited by the unsuspecting girl; and it entirely calmed her present apprehensions. Meantime all sorts of reports, and strange surmises went round among high and low in the whole place, concerning this

dreadful and mysterious affair; the issue of which was still so doubtful, and John Ross and William More were seldom seen; but, when they did appear, they seemed to go about with the very print of guilt and inward dread impressed on their countenances.

There was one Sabbath night, shall I ever forget it! that I passed down through the centre of the town, meaning to take a meditative walk a little way into the country, after the day's religious duties. When I got as far as the Cross, I was astonished to observe a crowd assembled in the street, and opposite Mr. Wishart's door. I could not think what this could mean, for in those days the sabbath was well kept, and scarce a person was ever to be seen on the street, excepting in passing to and from his place of worship. But the crowd was not a tumultuous or a mean crowd, but made up of sober well dressed persons, who stood in groups, and talked to each other in whispers, and looked up with melancholy interest to the windows, where I understood George Wishart was lying.

I had not the heart to address any one, for I was then but a very young man, and I feared Wishart was dead, or that he might be dying; but casual whispers among the crowd where I stood, wherein I heard the words “doctors, and an operation, and trepanning the skull, and boring a hole in the head of the living man, with an instrument, to get into the brain, and to raise the broken bones which pressed upon the source of sensation;—and dreadful agony,” shocked me, and gave me some clue to the cause of this gathering on the street this quiet Sabbath night.

In a little time the silence was broken by a scream from out of the chamber of the unhappy youth, which was truly terrible, and was answered by a groan which ran through the people below, for it was such as to pierce every heart. Another, and another shriek from the agonized youth, each more terrible than the former, succeeded quickly; and the crowd hustled together in the desperation of intolerable feeling, while some fled from the spot unable to listen to these appalling expressions of suffering. “Now they turn the steel in the

living bone, as if it were insensible ivory !” * said one. “ Now they operate upon the inflamed source of the nerves !” said another ; while scream succeeded scream, mixed with the low sympathetic howl of the females of his house, who were unable to bear the horror of the operation, until the shouts of the unhappy young man, under the hands of his torturers, subsided into an insane roar, as suffering merged into the relief of delirium.

No words can convey the effect of these dreadful sounds. I also grew sick from their effects upon myself, and was forced to fly from the spot, by the appalling horrors of human agony.

* The operation of the trephine.

CHAPTER IV.

SUNDAY was at all times a dull day at Morehill, where lived Fanny More with her uncle and aunt; but this seemed to her particularly and somewhat ominously silent and sad. She could not account for the fact, that for a number of days past her uncle had prevented her, by different excuses, from going out, or into Barhill, except in the company of her infirm and nervous relative; who, instead of paying any visit as usual, drove a short way further into the country; and all company seemed to have deserted the house, excepting one or two of the members of the family, who were more silent and haughtily dull than usual, and often spoke in whispers before her, and even appeared anxious to get rid of her presence.

All this began to trouble Fanny More deeply in her present painful situation ; but she never thought of associating it with any thing regarding George Wishart, until this present Sunday, when something struck her as being peculiar in the manner and behaviour to her of every one in the family ; and even, as she thought, of the servants around her. At church, whither she had gone with her aunt, she was unusually affected with the tenor and tone of the solemn discourse of the minister ; but could not conceive why the eyes of the people seemed every where turned towards her ; as she was stepping into the carriage at the gate, she observed a group striving anxiously for a sight of her face ; and as she wondered at their exchanging of looks and signs, she thought she heard Mr. Wishart's name pronounced, in a tone and manner that caused her involuntary alarm.

But this was nothing to what she observed at home at the dinner-table ; where, though no one would speak to her any thing but common place, she seemed to be an object of interest and observation, such as had never before been the case.

Her aunt seemed to her to look haggard and anxious; her cousin, William More, who dined with them this day, treated her with a painful politeness; but his manner was uneasy and altogether inexplicable; he exchanged looks with, and replied to certain observations of her uncle, in a manner that filled her with alarm; and she saw him turn pale on two different occasions, when she fixed her eyes steadily on his face. When her aunt and herself retired to the drawing room, she was so much excited by her own apprehensions from all she had witnessed, that she at once asked the meaning of what she observed? but the answer she received, if the stammering and alarmed reply of the old lady could be called such, only tended to confirm her undefined fears, when her aunt, evidently wishing to avoid her, retired hastily to her own room.

She sat for nearly an hour alone in the drawing-room, and pondered apprehensively, as the evening closed in, upon all the circumstances which had struck her during the last few days.

Every thing around wore a Sabbath evening stillness, which was neither broken by a sough of wind among the trees without, nor an audible sound from that part of the house where the gentlemen sat over their wine, within ; for they seemed to speak in distant whispers this evening, and the very servants stole up and down with a cat-like dread of letting a sound escape them. A book of Sermons lay open before her, but she could not read ; and a thousand times she thought of throwing her mantle round her, and walking forth into Barhill, to endeavour to learn news of Wishart, for every moment added to the fears which began to harass her thoughts.

She rung the bell hastily for her maid, from a thought that struck her on the instant. When the girl entered the room, she came forward reluctantly to the light, and even appeared to tremble, and to turn away from the eager and anxious gaze of the young lady.

“ What means this strange manner to me, Peggy ? ” said the young lady.

The girl only stared with a guilty look, and was silent.

“ I want to know from your own mouth, this blessed sabbath night,” said Miss More, with a solemnity which seemed to harrow the feelings of the young woman, “ whether what you told me, a week ago, of Mr. Wishart, was the truth, or if the whole was a lie to deceive and distress me ?”

“ Madam, I—I—” stammered the girl, still trembling.

“ Well ! speak up, Peggy, if you have a clear conscience !”

“ Conscience, Madam !”

“ Yes, Peggy, this is the Lord’s night, lay your hand on that open Bible, and say you have not told me a falsehood concerning Mr. Wishart.”

The girl burst into tears.

A feeling of horror and apprehension came more than ever over the mind of Fanny, as she witnessed the emotion of the girl ; and rising up in the agony of the moment, she exclaimed ; “ Tell me now the truth,—know you ought of Mr. Wishart ? is he

come home? did he ever leave Barhill? is he well? is he alive? Speak, you cruel deceitful woman!"

"Oh, Madam! forgive me, and I will tell you all I know," exclaimed the girl, falling on her knees, "although I lose my place this instant. Something," she went on, "has, indeed, happened to Mr. Wishart; he is ill, very ill, and there was a great crowd, this evening, at Barhill Cross, where he lies; but I cannot tell you particularly, there are so many reports. I wished to tell you before, but Mr. More gave me money to say I had a message from Mr. Wishart to you, and threatened me—alas! that I ever should have deceived so good a mistress!—If he dies, I shall never forgive myself!" and the girl's voice was choked with her weeping.

The further account that the maid was able to give, was so garbled and disturbed by her repentant grief, that it only served to increase the horrible imaginings of her distracted mistress; and a few minutes after, found Fanny without, wrapped in her cloak and followed by the maid,

where, hurrying on foot through her uncle's grounds, she was proceeding, at a pace which increased in speed with every succeeding reflection that shot through her heart, towards the distant town of Barhill.

The night was very dark, and though familiar with the road, Fanny stumbled to each side, and was scarcely able to keep her way. As they drew near the dull country town, the tall steeples of which, from the hill on which it was partly built, shot up between her and the dim starlight sky, the whole place seemed to repose in such silence, this Sunday night, that in spite of her disturbed anxiety, a feeling of dread, if not of guilt, caused her to hesitate, as her maid and herself looked timorously in each other's faces, as they came within the dim light of the street lamps in the outskirts, as if suddenly arrested in their hasty flight.

At this moment they observed two gentlemen quite near them, but on the dark side of the road, who seemed to stop suddenly on observing them, and to eye Fanny with an attention that naturally

alarmed both. They hastened forward, however, without speaking; but on coming to a crossing, at the mouth of a narrow street at the entrance of the town, the same two gentlemen, who had, doubtless, gone round by another way to intercept them, crossed near, and gazing curiously at them, passed on.

Fanny could not set this down to common rudeness, for the like proceeding, on a Sabbath evening, was unknown in this orderly town; and as, from the glance she had of the gentlemen, the person of one of them was, as she thought, familiar to her eyes, although, from the confusion of her thoughts, she could not name him; the circumstance, in her present state of mind, increased the uneasy excitement of her feelings. They still proceeded on through several ill-lighted suburban streets. Not a sound was heard this sober Sabbath night, but their own light steps, as they went hastily forward, and the occasional shrill croon of the psalm of family worship, which the simple people were offering up at their firesides, before retiring to rest; but when these soothing sounds died away,

as they passed the lowly dwellings, a distant noise, which they found to be the measured tread of booted feet behind, showed that they were dogged by some persons who seemed interested in watching them.

“Margaret, where are we? this is not our way!” exclaimed Fanny, looking round her, after having proceeded so quick for a time, in her confusion, to avoid those who dogged them, that she knew not where she was going. “Which way shall we turn? We are on the borders of the country again, and the town is all behind us.”

“See you that? Look there, Madam!” exclaimed the girl, with a suppressed scream, and grasping her mistress’s arm.

“What! What men are these?” she cried hastily; for she saw, with a feeling that she could not express, two large eyes from a pale face, which she, at the moment, thought was that of her uncle, gazing at her from under the last corner lamp near which they stood.

“Oh, Miss Fanny!” said the maid, quite thrown off her guard with terror, “that is Mr.

Ross himself, that murdered Mr. Wishart at the back of the bowling-green."

"Murdered ! Peggy !—do you say murdered !" exclaimed Fanny, scarcely able to articulate.

"Ah, Madam, maybe it's not true," said the maid ; "although this is the report far and near, and here is the very man watching us in the dark, this Sabbath night. Dear lady, what is the matter ? where will I take you ?"

"Take me where you will, Peggy," said the unhappy young lady, faintly, "for I am unable to go farther."

A few moments of agitated silence, wherein she stood and sobbed within herself, as she leaned upon the maid, served to give vent to the overpowering feelings which the impressions of these circumstances made upon her, and recovering a little, she requested to be led back into the town which they had left behind.

As they stood considering for a moment of their route, a female figure came slowly forward, discovering, in spite of a large and erect form, the characteristics of age, and taking a curious peep

at the face of Fanny More, as she passed, gave a startled mutter to herself, and crossing the road, was instantly out of sight under the dark firs in the country side of the way.

It was in vain that Fanny tried to rally her spirits, or to encourage her timorous companion; and, as both females stood transfixed to the spot, one of the gentlemen who had been dogging them, and whom they knew to be Mr. Ross, again passed close to them, and crossing also the road, after visiting them with a look that paralysed both, he took the same path as the old woman.

“I wish we were safe back at Morehill, Madam,” said the maid, scarcely able to speak, and trembling from fear as well as with cold.

“Is not that dark planting before us part of the grounds of Rosshaugh?” said Fanny.

“Yes, lady, for we are now on the east side of the town, and Morehill must be above three miles off.”

“I think I know that old woman,” said the young lady, a sudden thought having crossed her. “Peggy,” she went on, “if you have either af-

fection for me or courage for yourself, fellow me ;” and so saying, she hurried the terrified girl forward into the dark road under the planting.

They travelled on a considerable way, until entering by a narrow stile, and proceeding up a path in the dark, which led through a field by the side of a tall hedge, they stopped at the door of a low cottage.

Fanny More could not help standing still for a moment, before venturing to seek entrance into this lonely cabin ; and she looked for an instant through the wicker window, to detect, if possible, whether she had been mistaken in her momentary supposition. The old woman within was the same she had seen at the end of the town, and had just entered the cottage, for she was occupied blowing with her mouth the red embers of the fire, which yet refused to light up in her small naked dwelling.

“ You don’t mean to speak to that fearful woman,” said the maid in terror, and laying hold of her mistress ; “ that’s Lucky Hodgert, that was taxed wi’ murdering a bairn. She’s a witch at

least, if she's no' nae waur!" said the maid in terror.—"Oh! madam, come back to Barhill itself, or any place but here."

"If you're afraid to follow me, you can stay where you are," said Fanny, with the calmness of despairing feeling.—"I have known poor Janet Hodgert since I was a child, and have no fear of her;" and so saying, she tapped with her knuckles at the cottage door.

"Just draw the string and lift the sneck, Fanny More," cried the old woman from within, without turning her head from still blowing at her fire. "There's neither porter nor bethral to open my door, and naebody uses ceremony wi' the poor widow woman;—so just come ben."

"How can you name one who knocks at your cottage door without seeing them, good woman?" said Fanny, with a feeling that was almost superstitious, as she came forward behind the woman."

"I ken a sleepless ei by a glint o' lamplight; an' I ken a beating heart at my ain door back, Miss Fanny," said the old woman, in a half murmur: "but sit you down on the stool 'till I light

my cruisy, an' I'll tell you what you want to ken."

"Oh! Mrs. Hodgert," said Fanny, after a little, and clasping her hands in anxious impatience, "you know well the dreadful doings that have taken place at Barhill; and I can get no satisfaction: will you just tell me at once if you think George Wishart is to live or die?"

"Fanny More," said the old woman, regarding the young lady with a look that made her almost tremble, "if ye want me to speak to you about solemn concerns o' life an' death, speak to me as becomes you, and dinna trifle wi' the lone widow woman: for age and poverty have nae honour frae the worl'; an' I ken o'er muckle o't to be flattered wi' fine words."

"I did not mean to offend you: I understand you not."

"My name is *Janet* Hodgert, Miss Fanny," said the woman, with a look of honest reproof, that was almost noble; "and my gudeman's name, that has long been beneath the mools, was William Hodgert; and a puir auld woman like me, that's

living from day to day by the hand of Providence, out o' the grave that will soon cover my bones, may, at least, be content wi' the same name that is soon to be put on my coffin lid. But I'm no angry at you, my bonnie young thing. Wae's me, but ye look pale and sorrowfu, an' I can gie you little consolation this sweet sabbath night !”

“ Ah, then, Janet, tell me, if you can,” exclaimed Fanny, in an agony of anxiety, “ if George Wishart is alive, and if I may see him on his sick bed ? Neither stone walls nor iron bolts shall keep me from him, if my hand may be suffered to smooth his pillow, or wipe his brow. You know his father's house, Janet. Oh, get me to see and speak to my dear George Wishart, and perhaps, perhaps I may be able to restore him yet, Janet, for he is, he is my wedded husband !”

The old woman sat opposite to her, gazing for a little on the anxious fair countenance of the young wife, while the muddy glare of the oil cruisy threw her wrinkled, but strongly marked features, into striking relief, as with unusual emotion, she replied :

“Ye may get to see him, and sit in the lang hours o’ the night by his sad bedside, Miss Fanny; ye may wipe the cauld sweat frae his brow; ye may bathe his bloody wounds wi’ your ain hands, when he turns up his een wi’ the agony; ye may watch the weary struggle of cauld insensibility, wi’ the warm blood of twa-and-twenty, for fell death tuggs lang and sore at the youthful heart; ye may see the last breath issue frae his convulsed lips, and even streak his bonnie limbs when he’s dead; but he’ll ne’er lie in your arms again, Fanny More, as a young husband should lie; he’ll ne’er again fasten the warm kiss of love on your willing lips. Alake, alake, my bonnie young thing! I’m an auld woman, and canna greet; but I ken in my heart, I ken weel what ye maun suffer, for sore, sore is the pang of youthful widowhood!”

“And am I, then, to lose him? And is there really no, no hope?”

“Alas!” rejoined the old woman “doctors may promise, and a fond woman may wish, and hard-hearted men may cut and mangle the bruised and shrinking scalp, and pick, wi’ sharp steel,

amang the broken bones next the brain ; but men dinna live and go about wi' holes bored in their heads ; and the grave will get its ain ; and the winding sheet and the coffin is, aye, the last lair o' a murdered man !”

Fanny More sat for a little in absorbed stupor, continuing to gaze in the woman's face ; then, starting and seizing hold of her withered arm, she exclaimed, with insane wildness of look, “ Janet ! Janet Hodgert ! surely things are known to you, that are hid fròm many. You have always been a remarkable woman. Deeds of wickedness, done in darkness, seem never to escape your secret ken. Can you say, was it Mr. Ross that did this horrid deed ? ”

“ Dinna ask me such a question, Fanny More,” said the woman solemnly. “ Look at this poor shingle, whare I have leave to wear out my auld day till a narrower house receive me. This cabin is given me by John Ross, and the crumbs o' his table, and the dropping of his luxurious feastings, often serve to nourish the withering weakness of poverty and eild ; but the bar of criminal accusa-

tion, and the sentence from the high seat of the judges of the land, will give judgment upon John Ross and William More, for the time is at hand ; so go home to your bed, Fanny More, and rest as you can. Ye maun dree your weird as I have done mine, till every good and every evil deed be brought to light, either in this world or the world that is to come."

"Come away, mistress ! Do come away," said the terrified maid, who stood aside during this scene ; and Fanny was passively about to depart.

"Dinna come to me for comfort in your sorrow," said the old woman, with an awful expression of bitterness and melancholy, as she followed Fanny to the door with the cruisy in her hand ; "for comfort I hae nane to spare, and my ain heart's withered wi' penury and sorrow. But when your indignation rises at the guilt of the crafty and the cruel, and your nerves fail under the sufferings caused by them who have less sympathy for woman's feelings than the fiends of the pit of perdition, come to me, though it were silent midnight ; when the howlet skreighs frae the dreeriest

wa's an' wastes, an' I'll reason wi' you about the world's guilt, and the impunity of the wicked ; an' I'll add my curse, my bitterest curse to yours, on the heads of those who have worked you this dreadful dool."

" I'll come to you again ; I see what is reserved for me !" was all that Fanny could say, and the unhappy girl suffered herself to be assisted out into the dark path that led from the cottage. They had not proceeded above a street's length into the town of Barhill, and towards Mr. Wishart's house, when they again heard feet walking hastily behind them ; and, soon after, two men, one of whom turned out to be her uncle, and the other Mr. Ross, who had been watching her, seized her, and hurrying her towards where a carriage stood waiting, she was placed in it more dead than alive, and it set off at full speed, she knew not whither.

CHAPTER V.

“THE unfortunate Wishart still lingers in his pain; death is long in coming to his relief. Some say that there are even slight hopes;” were the exclamations and reports which went through the town of Barhill, some days after this; and many prayers and wishes were added, by all who knew him, that at least he might be speedily relieved from his sufferings.

“But what has become of Miss Fanny More?” was the constant question for a time in the town and neighbourhood.

“She has been carried beyond the border,” was affirmed by some. “No; it is said that she has sailed in a ship bound for Holland.” “That cannot be the fact, for *I* have heard she has been sent

to a lone house in the Isle of Jura, and that she is placed in a turret of Belvoigh Castle that o'erhangs the sea; and it is said she gets her food through a hole in the wall, and she's watched by wild Highlandmen that can speak no English." Such were the various reports respecting the unfortunate girl, about whom, and in connection with Wishart, there was all round a strong and sympathetic interest, which was deepened by the present uncertainty regarding both.

Meantime that death which nothing but the freshness of his youth, and the energy of his natural spirit had warded off so long, was, notwithstanding all that had been done by the surgeons, gradually, but surely, drawing closer every hour, to the relief of the unfortunate Wishart; and dull and lonesome were to him the long hours of racking pain, or tedious weakness, for something seemed still to be wanting to comfort his inmost thoughts in his sickness, and many a longing gaze he had turned towards the door, before his tongue was able to express the yearning wish of his heart.

“Will no one get me one other look of Fanny More?” he at length audibly exclaimed, in his trouble; but this might not be granted, for the physicians had strictly forbidden all communication that might disturb his nerves, and particularly had interdicted him from any interview with the lady in question. But the weary hours of sickness and suffering passed slowly and sad as he still murmured her name; and any faint hopes of recovery he received with a suspicious look and an incredulous closing of the eyes; but the first use he made of it was again to beg to be allowed to say one word to his dear Fanny.

But his parents now found, with apprehensive consternation, that Miss More was removed, or in some way disposed of, no one knew with certainty whither; and while they heard the many reports concerning her, with appalled feelings, they dared not communicate them to their weak and suffering son, who still, in his returning paroxysms of weakness and of raving, implored for the opportunity to speak a single word to her.

“George Wishart is not expected to live another

day—the young artist is given up by the physicians and dying fast,” was soon after reported again, with disappointed looks; and “Mr. Ross has not been seen for several days: some say he has fled, and others say that William More is under hidings, and was heard to express, that if Wishart dies, he will drink the contents of a phial of laudanum, that is placed for the purpose at his bed’s head.” Various other reports were mixed with these. The most intense anxiety every where prevailed, and Wishart’s family were again drowned in grief and despair.

“It cannot last much longer,” said the sick youth himself, faintly, one night, to his sister, who watched over him; then turning his eyes with that impressive effect, and in that tone of harrowing pathos, which so peculiarly marks the words of the dying; he said, “Oh, Jess, must I die without getting one other look of Fanny More?”

“If there is a person in the world that can hear of her,” said his sister, scarcely able to speak, “it is old Janet Hodgert of the Burnfoot, by

Rosshaugh, and to her I have twice sent, and if Miss More is in the country side—but, still I hope, George—”

“Hope nothing, Jessy;” said the young man, energetically, “I tell you, I am dying.”

The time lingered on in the deep silence of the sick chamber; and, on the same night, the breathing of the youth began to become troublesome and ominous. The clock ticked audibly by the wall, as he watched the lapse of the moments, and, with an intense look at the dial, was heard to whisper to himself, frequently repeating the words,

“Time is at an end, the sand in the glass is almost out, eternity is long, long.”

“What is it you say, George?” said his sister.

“Do not interrupt me; I am thinking of the dead, among whom I must soon be laid. The moon shall shine quietly on my grave, as I sleep among those that have run a longer race before me. The contemplation of the lonesome place of silence is almost the last thing I remember on that fearful night; but it is all one now. I shall lie

with the others, unmoved by earthly sorrow or passion:" and then he muttered the solemn paraphrase concerning the dead :

“ ‘ Their hatred and their love is lost,
Their envy buried in the dust ;
They have no share in all that's done
Beneath the circuit of the sun.”

“ And soon this will be my state. Hark ! some one opens the door ; I know it is joyful tidings ; help me up, Jess ;” said the youth, wildly. “ Hear you not that voice ? Oh God ! give me strength !”

In an instant the door was opened, and in rushed, or rather staggered, the pale and excited Fanny More.

It may not be described with what feelings she threw herself over the pillow of the sick youth, and kissed his dying lips.

“ Once more, once more on earth,” he was able to say, returning her sobbing embrace. And after a little she drew back, and sat, for a moment, gazing upon the wan features of her dying husband.

His sister, however, ran out on seeing the change that seemed fast coming over him ; and the whole family were soon in the chamber, gathered round, to witness the last moments of the unfortunate young man, and the awful and bitter parting of the newly wedded and strongly attached pair. And yet the heart of the dying youth seemed to be bursting rather with joy, in this embrace of his Fanny, than with sorrow, that they were soon to be parted for ever : and the big tears that rolled down his pale cheeks were accompanied with a smile, almost of rapture, as he gazed on her once more, and blessed her as long as articulation was granted to him.

But the excitement of this interview evidently hastened the crisis that was sure to come. “ Help me up, Fanny,” he said, with the anxious haste of one who seemed afraid to lose a moment, “ for death gallops, and is at hand ! Bear witness, all, that Fanny More is my lawful wife ; and, I again declare, declare before God, that John Ross, assisted and aided by William More, is my murderer ! look to my beloved, beloved Fanny ! ”

He sunk back, as they all gazed around in silence, which was only disturbed by stifled sobs and the distracted exclamations of the unhappy Fanny. His look was fixed upon his wife, but it soon became stony and glazed. He was no more.

Next day John Ross, Esq., of Rosshaugh, and William More, Esq., of Bargowan, were arrested, and carried to Edinburgh, on a charge of murder.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT a difference it makes to most people, their dealing death or distress to others, or the same things being brought home to themselves! The day of the trial of John Ross and William More, before the Lords of Justiciary in Edinburgh, was, notwithstanding that no pains or expense had been spared to bring them off, a dreadful day at the homes of the several parties, and to all their numerous relatives throughout the country.

At Morehill almost the whole relatives of the family, who did not choose to go to witness the trial, were assembled, and passed the day in solemn deliberation; mutually supporting each other's hopes, as they waited together, in horrid anxiety, for the expresses, hourly expected from Edinburgh, with the result: and at Rosshaugh, Mr. Ross's maiden aunt was too much agitated to go out, but

went from room to room, wringing her hands, and exposing, even to the whispering servants, the feverishness and intensity of her dread of what this dreadful day might bring forth.

Doubtful visions, of the fearfulest sort, family disgrace, and the gallows itself, filled the alarmed fancies of all concerned, the whole of the day. All the gentry round seemed to wait, in intense anxiety, concerning an event, the bare idea of which was so dreadful; and, among the reports with which the town of Barhill was agitated, it was said that the head of the unfortunate Wishart had been dug up after it was buried, and that the prepared scull was to be laid on the table before the accused, on their trial, as a witness against them.

The day passed over, at length; and crowds of people were assembled at the town-end, on the road by which the messenger was to come from Edinburgh with the news of the verdict. It was twelve at night, and still there were crowds out, and the town was going "from bank to brace," in eager anxiety. At length the rattle of a carriage

was heard. It was a postchaise and four, which came forward like the wind. The crowd ran to meet it. "Not proven!" shouted a gentleman from within. "Not proven!" ran through the crowd; and all went home shaking their heads at this intelligence, excepting those whose hearts it relieved from a load of horrid apprehension. Next day John Ross and William More came stealthily back to their own houses in the neighbourhood of Barhill.

But the sound of this sad affair by no means died away in the district where it happened; although the subject was sedulously avoided by all concerned, excepting the sad and broken hearted family of the Wisharts: and as for Fanny More, as she was still called, no one could tell what had become of her. That verdict, admitted in the Scotch law, which seems a sort of medium between guilty and not guilty,—or rather, appears to some to imply guilt which yet is defective in legal proof, gave great discontent to most people acquainted with the affair, and caused much discussion all round the country. The evidence of

the surgeon witnesses, who laying stress upon the notion which they themselves had helped to give out, that Wishart had partly recovered from the original injury, had given it as their opinion, that he died of a secondary disease in the head, was commented upon in no measured or guarded terms every where; and few scrupled to assert, that money, "the great disposer of events," had the real merit of procuring this startling acquittal of the murderers of Wishart.

Although a paragraph appeared in the newspapers of the date, noticing the reports in question, and declaring, that "the worthy gentlemen to whom these scandalous rumours applied, having been honourably freed from the charge, were to be received every where with every previous honour and respect!" yet this, so far from having the intended effect, deepened the detestation and horror in which they were held by all, save their own immediate connections; and a prophecy that something would be seen to happen to them before they left the world, as a judgment upon their guilt, was universally admitted and echoed from mouth to

mouth, with the confidence of a conviction that such would be seen to be a heaven-directed and unavertable earthly retribution.

But little was known concerning either of the gentlemen for several months, and far less of Fanny More. The reports, however, became after a time, mixed with horrible suggestions and surmises of the deepening of Ross's guilt, and concerning the destination of Fanny, and secret confinement of the unhappy girl, and even murder, deliberate and planned murder, became openly to be spoken of. But nothing certain was known regarding any of the parties ; and as to Mr. Ross, or his friend, whether they were still in the neighbourhood or not, they were seldom seen in the streets of Barhill. At length it came to be known, through the medium of servants, and by the late hours and evidences of midnight revelry about Rosshaugh and the houses of the Mores, that the two gentlemen kept much at home, and had plunged into habits of deep and sottish dissipation. They were never seen but in the early part of the evening, after having spent the day in bed ;

and then stealing guiltily about, with red eyes and inflamed countenances, and in a state of feverish nervousness, as if afraid to look any one in the face; they seemed anxious for the concealment of night, again to lose their senses, and drown their remorse in the excitement of gambling, and the gross dizziness of staring intoxication.

The life that they now led was notorious to all. Even the great influence of their numerous and haughty relatives could neither palliate nor conceal their reckless and abandoned conduct. Drunkenness,—gross and shameless drunkenness, seemed now to be the state in which they gloried; and scenes of riot were acted in the old mansion, among the woods of Rosshaugh, which startled the quiet ear of midnight—seemed to frighten the very birds that slept in the planting around, and gave rise to reports of what was seen and heard at these hours, that filled the sober people near with horror. Lights were seen after midnight among the trees, and forms were observed to issue from the mansion, in the indistinctness of darkness, which were not to be spoken of; for it was known

that the most abandoned men and women were invited to Rosshaugh: and whether it was the visible interposition of the spirit of evil himself, that sanctioned their orgies, was not distinctly understood; but certainly sights were seen along with the sounds of profanity, which were never properly described, but which almost seemed to indicate that supernatural power was present,—that embodied spiritual wickednesses that dwell in high places, and that walk in darkness, seemed to be called in by the incantations of the evil one, to aid the black spirit of earthly vice! It became so vile, that even the vicious themselves seemed at last to flee from Rosshaugh, and William More only was left to spend the night with the bloated and abandoned Ross, until the very house became a terror to the neighbourhood, and the wretched gentlemen became the reproach and the pity of their own servants.

CHAPTER VII.

It was on a Saturday night late, it was even midnight and over; for it was into the holy calm of the dead hour, and of Sabbath morning, when a light still burned in the lonely cottage of Janet Hodgert, which stood on the edge of the grounds of Rosshaugh, in a neglected and desolate spot, near a few outstraggling firs which skirted the remote part of the pleasure grounds.

The dim light of the peeping oil cruisy within, indicated that the old woman was not yet in bed, a circumstance not very uncommon of late; and this inexplicable fact having been more than once observed by casual passers by, together with the circumstance of her lonely situation and peremptory mode of talking, had caused reports concerning her, associated with the wicked doings at Rosshaugh, where she lived, which partook much

more of superstitious dread, than of sense and truth. This night she sat by herself, as usual, with her Bible spread out before her, which, however, she was not looking upon ; but, sitting gazing into the embers of her decaying fire, and rocking herself backwards and forwards, she seemed to be absorbed in an abstraction which had, in its dreamy subject, more of an eternal than of a present world. It was her constant habit to spread the old Bible before her, while in these moods, although her sight was now so gone that she could not distinguish a single letter of the book she loved so well to ponder over in her solitude.

“ It is past midnight, and still I cannot bear to go to bed. What is to happen, hereabout, before the morning ? What *is* to happen me ? ” muttered the old woman, looking steadily into the embers of the fire ; for that mixture of superstition and presentiment, with the musings of age and solitude, which seemed to partake of the spirit of prophecy, now occasionally came over her, about the dead of night, almost persuading her into a belief in her personal communion with a spiritual world.

“ Something will happen this night, I know by the crooning sound in my ears ; and something will be here in the darkling, I see by the shadows that pass between me and the red fire ; and I manna gae to bed, for the sleep has gone clean frae my een. Gude save us ! but I’m eeny ! sitting my lee-fu lane in this cottage ; for the wickedness that’s working between the four walls of Rosshaugh House, is like a Sodom and Gomorrha, that brings a curse on the very trees that whiz in the night-wind at the gable o’ my lonely dwelling. Hoogh ! What’s that ? I hear a soft foot on the yird without. Auld as I am, I’m wanted this night, I trow.”

A slight tap at the cottage door startled the old woman, and the words, “ Janet ! Janet Hodgert ! ” were repeatedly called, by a voice from without, which the old woman could not, in her sudden trepidation, recognise.

“ Am I a bairn to be frightened because it’s the witching hour o’ the night ? ” muttered the old woman, rising to open the door, and taking the cruisy in her hand.

“ The blessed saints be about us ! ” she ex-

claimed aghast, and almost letting fall the lamp in her terror, as she cast her eyes on the pale figure that stood without; for a bare-headed female in white, with her hair flowing down over her neck and shoulders, stood gazing wildly upon her. "In the name of the Lord, speak! and say your errand to me, fair speerit," said the old woman, with difficulty.

"I'm no spirit, Janet Hodgert," said the figure; although I'm sore altered with grief and pining; but stand out of the doorway and let me in. Ye'll not deny a seat by your fire, and a word of your mouth to the broken-hearted Fanny More!"

"Surely the world is going back, riding on the axle-tree of sin, and Satan himself has been let loose to reign on the earth in these latter days," exclaimed the old woman, "if this be at last the condition of the bonnie youthful Fanny More!" and she held the cruisy close to her face, as she set the wretched young lady down on a stool.

"I'm cauld—I'm cauld—body and soul! Janet Hodgert,—steer the red low 'till I warm my knees," said Fanny, with a childish gaze into the fire.

“ God be merciful to me ! surely it hasna come to that,” said the old woman, looking at the poor female, in deep pity. “ Where hae ye come from, at this hour, Fanny More ? ”

“ I came frae the Ashet Isle, in the middle o’ Clyde stream, Janet Hodgert, and I waded up to my waist in the bubbling water, although it was dark, dark—an’ spunkie followed me all the way through the moors—gleam gleaming to decoy me ; but the smell o’ the dead led me to Inchinnan kirk-yard—an’ the smell o’ brimstone led me to wicked Ross’s house, in the dark, and here I am first.”

“ Waes me !—Waes me ! ” said the old woman, pathetically, as she contemplated the wild look of the crazed girl ; “ have I lived to see this, and ye’re blae beneath the een, Fanny, and your look is wild and willyart ! Mercy be o’er us ! ”

“ But I’m whyles happy, when I think I hear his voice,” said Fanny, smiling childishly ; “ but he’s lang, lang of coming hame.”

“ Who is lang of coming hame, Fanny ? ” said the old woman.

“Bonnie George Wishart, to be sure. Blessings on him!” And the poor insane creature wiped a tear from her face when she thought of him whose death she seemed insensible of, and whose image was still imprinted on her memory.

“But what want you with me, at this dead hour, Fanny More?” enquired Janet Hodgert; for experience had taught her, that a special purpose often lurked in the vagaries of insanity such as hers.

The young lady, gazing in Janet’s face for a moment, her recollection seemed to clear up, and she replied with remarkable distinctness: “Remember you not, my old friend, the last words you said to me in this cottage, that sorrow had withered your own heart, and you had no comfort to spare for me; but if I could not thol the bitterness of a weary life, and if my heart rose against those who had worked me dool and grief, you would, at least, help me, even at the dark hour of midnight, to denounce a curse upon those who have murdered the husband of my youth, and broken my heart. Come, Janet Hodgert,” she

added, with a caressing look, that was truly piteous, "the hour of riot is not over in Rosshaugh House; I saw the light through the trees on my way. Come, and let me speak the anathema of heaven, upon the guilty head of him who can never know what he has made me feel."

"God forbid that I should refuse you, whatever come of it, my poor broken-heart!" said the woman. I knew I had something to do before I slept, and the hour and time is fitting!" and huddling her cloak round her, she accompanied the insane girl forth from the cottage.

A small streak of a late moon just appearing, was all the light they had, as they wound through the silent plantings of Rosshaugh; and a feeling little short of terror came over the woman herself as she drew near the large dark mansion, hearing no sound but the tread of herself and companion, whose light form, and wildly pale look, were truly ghostlike in the dim glimmering of the moon.

As they walked silently on, down a narrow avenue that terminated in the great carriage way, they saw distinctly the figure of a man issue from

the mansion, and take two or three hasty turns on the gravel walk ;—then seeming absorbed, and muttering to himself, as if under the influence of some agitating feeling, he darted into the planting next the house, and seemed to be coming directly to where the females were walking down the path.

The old woman was struck with the unshrinking steadiness with which the crazed girl pursued her path,—her eye fixed upon the man as if she expected him to meet her. A feeling of pure terror made old Janet fall a short way behind, until she should see what was to happen : when at the instant the man had leaped on to the footway, at a spot where there being a clear crossing, the rising moon had relieved it from the surrounding darkness, Fanny More stood in the light immediately before him : and, in the agitated scream which this apparition called forth, was recognised the voice of William More.

If ever ghost and its witness at midnight, by the glimmer of the moon, were fitly represented by any group, they were at this moment by these

two figures ; and truly, the horror-struck look of the wearer of a guilty conscience, under the eye of those whom it has wronged, is a dreadful sight at all times, but particularly in the solitude of a wood, at the witching time of night. Fanny More stood stockstill: the hollow eyes, caused by the night's fatigue, and her long misery, glaring upon the unhappy man ! She spoke not,—but lifting up her arms, and parting the long dishevelled hair, which hung about her temples, and partly obstructed her gaze, she continued to fix her look, in which the excitement of execration and partial insanity were fearfully blended, upon the wretch that stood gasping with terror before her.

“ Merciful God ! where shall I go ? earth and hell seem alike to haunt me ! ” croaked the unhappy man ; and retreating slowly, as he gazed on the form before him, he dived farther into the recesses of the wood.

Janet Hodgert was astonished to witness with what a strange steady step and ghostlike manner, the vengeful Fanny continued to follow, as the

horror-struck man retreated from walk to walk, across and through the tangling of the planting; and at every moment, when hidden in the shade of the trees he thought her gone, she merged forth on the next open spot of moonlight, just at his side, until in a dark spot, studded with large scattering elms and beeches, she came close up, as if it had been her intention to grapple with him. A black circular pond was so hid among the luxuriant trees, in a nook of the wood in this quarter, that the oblique light of the moon reached not the dreary hole, which one would have almost shuddered to look upon in the clearness of noon; and into this gloomy and secluded den had Fanny by this time pursued him; when turning round, terror and intoxication having completely carried away his senses, he croaked out these words: "Whence came you, horrid shape? are you not amply revenged by my feverish heart and burning brain—still on? will nothing satisfy you? mean you to follow me to hell?"

"Give me back George Wishart!" was Fanny's shrill and sharp exclamation; and she insanely

held out her arms as both drew near to the very edge of the pool.

“Keep off! Come not near! Name not that name.—Fiend! leave me!—Oh!” And, as he uttered the last exclamation, while retreating in terror, he staggered down the slope towards the water, and with a shriek and a plunge, sank to the bottom of the deep pool! while the crazed Fanny screamed out an insane laugh, that echoed from every corner of the silent woods of Ross-haugh.

“For God’s sake, Fanny, save him!” cried the old woman, coming up hastily in horror, as the wretched man struggled on rising to the surface of the pond.

“Hush, ush, Janet,” said Fanny, leaning on her with an idiotic caress; “Listen! hear you the splashing struggle of the remorseful wretch? Hush! there! what think you of the last gurgle of the murderer, drowning at midnight in the reedy pool? Now, all is quiet. His hands clench in death. Oh, I’m a sorrowful woman;” she added, changing her tone with the rapidity of

mental aberration, "for that will not bring back my bonnie George Wishart."

They both wandered on, in shuddering dread, out of the darkness, and from the pool. The nearest retreat they could get from this dreadful spot brought them again near to the mansion; and by this time the moonlight was pretty clear; and the old woman determined to follow Fanny wherever she meant to go. They heard a low door hastily close in the side of the mansion as they drew near; and, going up to it, it gave way to their hand; for the person who had been looking out from it seemed to have been too much in terror to close it after him, so Fanny and the old woman easily entered the house.

They proceeded along the passages, which were all familiar to them; until, perceiving a light in the large dining room, they both opened the door, and walked forward to the table, near which they perceived some one still sitting alone on a chair. The man moved not, nor seemed to notice them as they came forward. It was Mr. Ross himself! his

head was laid back uneasily over his chair, and he was fast asleep.

Fanny More stood still, gazing on him for a moment; and, whether it was from the influence of her feelings, or the sudden transition from the cold air without, into the warm apartment, she shuddered all over as she contemplated the bloated young man, in his uneasy and intoxicated sleep. A pair of candles, burning into their sockets, stood before him, and the table was spread over with glasses and decanters, half filled with wine and brandy, among which packs of cards, counters, money, and torn papers, lay in midnight and drunken confusion.

The old woman had been so struck with the half insane energy of the bewildered girl, that she stood passively behind, to see what she would do; when, after a brief pause, stepping close to Mr. Ross, she gave a knock on the table, so hard, that it sounded through the whole silent house, making the bottles and glasses dance where they stood, and, at the same moment, putting her mouth to

the ear of the sleeping man, she shouted, with a scream that seemed almost unearthly, the single word, "Murderer!"

The awakening look, the confused stare of horror, of the conscience-struck man, as he gazed upon the steady and pale face of Fanny More, is not to be communicated by any possible description; but the relief of speech was totally denied him for a considerable interval. At last he was able to gasp out, "In the name of God, what is this?"

"It is the murderer's curse! John Ross;" said Fanny, in a voice that made the old woman herself tremble. "Waken, sinner! and hear it every word, before you go to your everlasting place!"

"Who are you?"

"I am Fanny More, of the Ashot Isle;" said Fanny, her bewilderment returning, "and I came from Saint Mirren's kirk yard to waken you. Hark ye—a dead man wants you, John Ross. Did ye see George Wishart, seeking you with his bloody head?"

"My God!"

“ Whisht ! this is the sabbath morning ; ye daurna speak that name again wi’ the devil’s books before you, John Ross. John Ross, ye murdered my sweet George Wishart, and brake his head wi’ a rough stone ; and ye brake my heart, till my wits are gone wi’ grief. Oh, wicked John Ross ! I canna curse you wi’ my ain tongue. But fearfu’ is the doom o’ the murderer !”

But *I* can curse him with a widow’s curse !” exclaimed the old woman, now coming forward, and excited by horrible recollections. “ Did you not murder Jean Gray’s bairn, John Ross, an’ tried to get the guilt put on me, to increase the sorrows o’ the puir widow woman ? Have you not broken the heart, and deprived of her wits this sweet young creature, after having murdered the prettiest youth that ever stepped the streets of bonnie Barhill ? May the curse of the wicked and the destroyer follow you night and day, John Ross ! But your days will be few on the earth ; and William More has already gone to his account. Ay, already ! for he lies now at the bottom of the dark pool in the wood !”

“Take me to hell after him, you hag!” cried the wretched man, “or any where, from this horror.”

“The fever is already bleezing in your bloated face, John Ross,” said Fanny, mournfully, “and the murderer’s wretchedness is eating at your heart, till the doom of the wicked is ready to swallow you. Oh, miserable man, give me back my sweet husband. You took his life! you took George Wishart’s sweet life!”—And, saying these words, she threw herself forward in her agony, and staring wildly in his face, she again screamed “murderer!” until her shrill tones echoed through every passage of the silent mansion.

The effect of this seemed too much for the guilty man. His eyes rolled fearfully in his horror, as he shrunk back from this midnight proclaimer of his misery and his doom; and, in the unconscious desperation of dread, he overturned the table, with a howl of terror; and, in an instant, was prostrate on the floor, and they were all left in total darkness.

After a few moment’s silence, in which he still

lay seemingly in a fit on the floor. Janet Hodgert, taking hold of the passive young lady, they walked out by the open doors, and made the best of their way in the moonlight towards her lonely cottage.

Little more remains to be added to this painful tale. Next day and the following, the avenues of Rosshaugh were overrun with the carriages of physicians from far and near, for John Ross was known to be in a raging fever.

A short period served to indicate that all human assistance was vain; and that the doom that had been expected for the guilty squire of Rosshaugh was already near at hand. The horrible language that he made use of in his ravings filled his domestics with increased dread; and even his proud aunt, who had adhered to him through all his errors, was almost driven by pure fear from the bedside of her guilty nephew. Meantime, the town and neighbourhood of Barhill rang with reports of what had been heard and seen at Rosshaugh; and the sudden disappearance of William More, whose body was not yet found, increased the consternation of both families.

The large lone mansion, where John Ross lay dying, was now completely deserted, even by the physicians: and the terrors of an invisible world seemed to haunt the minds of the few nurses and servants who did the last attendance to the raving gentleman. As his madness subsided from mere weakness into silence, a distinct and continuous sound was heard, as if over his head; which resembled the booming of a wheel, accompanied by strange indistinct clamours, as if of a multitude of low tongues; and these sounds—of which there is as much evidence as there is of many other things received without question among us—were understood by the numbers who heard them, to be the hasty spinning and drawing out of the last thread of the life of the dying, and the clamours of invisible beings, who waited impatiently for his departing spirit. On the night that he died, sights were said to have been seen in the sick chamber, and throughout the grounds; and sounds were heard, even more terrible and distinct.

On the same day that John Ross was laid out

a corpse, the body of William More was found swimming on the surface of the black pool in the wood ! and the day on which they were both interred in St. Mirran's Churchyard was one of storm and rain, such as had scarcely ever been remembered by the oldest inhabitant of the town of Barhill.

END OF VOL. I.

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