

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. III.



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LEEING DAVIE.

VOL. III.

B

LEEING DAVIE.

Truth ! homely truth !—hard and unshapen fact !
Such may be mouth'd from mere penure of wit,
By brainless unimagivative knaves ;
But sooth to say, it is too starv'd and bald
For genius such as mine,!

Scrap Stanzas.

EVERY one knows that there are various degrees of excellence in lying, as there are in all the other polite arts, from the small white lie of the simple chambermaid, who hesitatingly says that her mistress is not at home, when she is within hearing, to the noble performances of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto himself.

But there are some, who by their precocity of talent in this department of genius, discover at once that nature has designed them for achieving the most brilliant honours of invention ; and this was the case with the subject of our memoir, who,

in the days of his obscurity, was only known in a select circle of young blackguards in his neighbourhood, by the simple, but unanimously awarded title of Leeing Davie.

Well, Davie's parents lived in a long descending street, called Storey Street, in the well-aired town of Paisley, in the west of Scotland; and they were really very creditable people in their station, and had a numerous family; none of whom, however, showed any distinction of parts beyond the common, save only Davie. But Davie was decidedly a remarkable chap; and having a stepmother, a well disposed busy woman, of great simplicity of character, and who had no talents whatever in Davie's way, his first essays in the art of lying were made very much at her expense, by which her great inferiority and his own uncommon gifts were made particularly manifest.

It answered Davie's purpose never to do the things that he was desired to do; at least, until his own time came, and to do various other things that he was strictly enjoined *not* to do; and in this way he was always getting into scrapes with

his parents within doors and his companions without; but let the case be ever so bad, Davie was sure to get himself out of it by one or more good, well told lies! and it was a bad case, indeed, out of which Davie could not work himself, when his father took him to task, from the pure resources of his invention.

But it was his stepmother who, as we said, suffered most in these cases; for Davie being her only errand-goer and factotum for small matters, and she being unfortunately responsible to his father for the correctness of his conduct, Davie was always bringing himself and the other parties together in the way of investigation and trial, about some vexatious affair, in which he was his own advocate and witness; and his stepmother sustained the invidious character, not only of exculpator of herself, but of Davie's accuser. It was here that Davie's talents first shone out. In these cases, his invention was so ready, and the produce of it so plausible, and often so astounding, that his father stood convinced, while his stepmother held up her hands in astonishment,

being deprived of the power of "answering again," and quite overcome by the excess of her amazement.

Sometimes, indeed, in her zeal for truth (which every one knows is a quality often most dangerous to the possessor), she let out expressions of perfect horror at Davie, calling him a most notorious and inveterate liar: but this only served to make matters worse for her; for Davie did not like to hear his inventions called by this broad appellation; and beginning next to whimper, and to add a lie or two on the offensive, his stepmother, from being the accuser, soon stood at the bar herself; the tables were completely turned against her by the lad's inventive skill, and the father's partiality; until suspicion being raised against her, the cry of "my motherless children!" became the watchword of the raising of mischief in the family; which always ended in restoring Davie into favour, and throwing all the wrath of the angry father against the hapless and simple-hearted stepmother.

Doctor Young, in his dismal poem, says, "I

give thee joy that's awkward at a lie;" but he gives nobody joy that is awkward at the truth; yet this was, actually Davie's way, for when it happened that he was necessitated to tell a few words of truth, in order to make a lie tell the better, he hesitated, and mumbled, and stammered, and blushed for himself, so that you could not help suspecting him and the truth itself; but when Davie got on to the main *lie*, for which he had gone through this painful preparation, he told it with such pleasure, and such face, and, as his stepmother said, with such a *birr*, that the whole showed that he was evidently born to despise the inconvenient trammels of verity, and to revel among the pliable fancies and in the upper regions of pure invention.

Whether these talents in Davie were nourished and brought out by the circumstance of his father being somewhat of a newsmonger, and exceedingly fond of spreading abroad what rumours he was lucky enough to pick up, if he could only himself be persuaded of their truth, we shall not take time to determine. Probably the truth is, that the

faculty of lying in a respectable manner is, like the faculty for making an epic poem, an innate gift of nature, which will one day develope itself in spite of all opposition ; and for which she has, without doubt, provided a special bump on many a good hard skull, which, with the indications of many other valuable gifts and graces, yet remains for ingenious phrenologists to find out.

However, one day Davie, who was at this time a lad of fifteen, had been sent by his stepmother, with a verbal message to a friend at the farther end of the town. Now it was not to be expected that he should remember his message for more than five minutes after he had left the house, especially as the attractions abroad lay out of the way of the person's house to which he was sent. It was then war time, and volunteering and recruiting presented too many temptations to be resisted by such as Davie, so he never thought of his message, or of returning home all day, until hunger and the dismissal of the volunteers sent him wandering back towards Storey Street, far on in the afternoon.

Meantime his stepmother had been waiting for many hours with anxiety, for the return of the lad, and the answer to her message; but it drew towards evening, and still no appearance of Davie, until his father began himself to participate in his wife's feelings, and to join her in bitter invectives against "the provoking ne'er-do-well." Mr. Peterkin, his father, being in a particularly favourable humour to-night, all Davie's tricks, and lies, and grievous misconduct, were laid before him by his wife, as the two sat at tea, and after a sad exposé of many wicked acts, they at length joined in heartily abusing the luckless Davie.

It happened, at this time, that there was quartered in the town a regiment of foot, the officers of which were said to be particularly handsome, at least they were sufficiently showy and idle, and fond of flirting among high and low, to create a great sensation and envy among the women. There was also in the town a particularly dashing lady, and to say the truth of her, she was an uncommonly pretty woman, round whom the officers of this regiment constantly hung, to the great

envy and mortification of all the neglected women about the place.

Now among these officers was a Captain Palmer, one of the handsomest men of the whole, who seemed peculiarly favoured by Mrs. Templeton, the lady we are speaking of; and, in fact, the two were seen so often together in public, and walking by themselves in the suburbs, near her husband's house, that it was not possible but that the strongest surmises should have spread every where concerning them. Whenever, therefore, neighbours met to cement friendship, or husband and wife were on such terms as to gossip comfortably together, a pleasanter subject could not be started for discussion and mutual edification, than the scandalous conduct of Mrs. Templeton and Captain Palmer; and now to this very topic our hero's father, Mr. Peterkin, and his wife had agreeably diverged, after their unanimous abuse of Davie.

Davie was on his way home by this time, never troubling himself, as usual, about the message on which he had been sent, until he had got within a few paces of his father's door, when he applied to

his wits, as formerly, to get him out of this scrape, by plausibly accounting for his day's absence. But the greatest geniuses will sometimes break down, at the very moment when their resources are particularly wanted, and for once Davie found himself fairly at fault. In truth, he had already invented so liberally, that he had tried his fancy on all the subjects that he knew, that were at all worthy of his genius ; and to resort to a contemptible, disrespectable common-place lie, was what Davie was quite above being guilty of. He marched on, however, entered the house, and mounted the stairs, and had got into the open door of the room, where his father and mother were sitting, without a single thought, as yet, occurring to him, that at all satisfied his fastidious taste in invention, to account for his day's employment.

His parents were so deeply engaged upon the subject of Captain Palmer and Mrs. Templeton, that they did not observe Davie slip into the room, and thus the names of these persons struck the ear of the youth, or at least he heard enough to know

what formed the subject of his parent's conversation. A single idea is sufficient, as we all know, for a man of genius to found upon, and, before his father had time to turn round in his chair, Davie had the whole thing ready; and not only so, but being also struck with the wants of the community, in respect of news from abroad, his fancy being now awake, a train of ideas darted into his head, all the way from the seat of war, that would almost have filled a whole newspaper.

"Bless me!" exclaimed his stepmother; "look behind you, gudeman, if there's not Davie come in at last."

"You unmanageable rascal," said his father, looking round, "where have you been all day? give an account of yourself this instant."

"So I will, father," said Davie, modestly; "an' I would have been hame langsyne, but, really, I could scarcely get out of the crowd."

"What crowd, you lying villain?"

"The crowd at the Cross, about the news."

"What news have you brought now? come, come, Davie, none of your Wonderful Magazine stories this time, it wont do."

“ I am sure I thought I saw you yourself, father, among the crowd, talking to wee Bailie Mac-thrum.”

“ Not I ; I have not been at the Cross of Paisley since Saturday last ; but, if there really was a crowd, what was it about, Davie ? tell me that first.”

“ Then you have not heard the news, Sir. The mail’s not come in yet ; but there’s an English rider come into the town, on a reeking horse, wi’ the news that there has been a great battle somewhere abroad, about Austria or Grand Cairo, and ninety thousand o’ the French killed on the spot, besides General Bonyparty himsel’ !”

“ God sake, Davie !” cried his father, cocking his ears, “ is that really for a fack ?”

“ It’s as true’s death, Sir. I saw the English rider at the Town’s-house, an’ there’s a great crowd waiting for the mail. But I would hae gotten hame weel enough, only for the business about Mrs. Templeton.”

“ Mrs. Templeton ?” cried father and mother together, “ What of her ? What is the story about, Davie ? what is it ?”

“Ye havena’ heard, then, father, that she run aff wi’ Captain Palmer this morning, in a chaise and four, and ——”

“There, now, gudeman, I told you that!” cried Mrs. Peterkin, greedily swallowing Davie’s news. “Run off wi’ Captain Palmer, in a chaise and four! O, the wanton strumpet! But what more, Davie?”

“I thought you had heard of it,” said Davie, quietly; “but there was Mr. Templeton himsel’, set aff frae the Town’s-house in another chaise an’ four after them, along wi’ Mr. Inglis, the messenger; forbye, Will Craig, the town’s officer, mounted behind, wi’ his red coat, and twa dragoons riding before, an’ they all set off, flying like Jehue.”

“Well, that beats every thing!” exclaimed his father.

“But are you sure it’s true, Davie?” said his stepmother, looking suspiciously across, for the news was almost too delightful to be authentic.

“True!” answered Davie, indignantly. “Did not I see the coach and every thing with my eyes?”

and couldna' get past it, for there was lame Willie Buchan keeping off the crowd. And didna' I run after the chaise all the way to the east toll?"

"But who told you these particulars, Davie? I should like," said his father, "to know your authority."

"It was Deacon Dote, the reed maker;" answered Davie, readily. "I saw him at the Cross, and he told me every word, and asked for you and my mother so kindly."

"Deacon Dote is a sponisible sensible man, and it must be an undoubted fack;" said Mr. Peterkin, solemnly addressing his wife. "Well, this is a most extraordinary worl'!"

The present happened to be club night, and the hour was, happily, now at hand; so Mr. Peterkin, knowing that a man's importance for the evening in his club was, generally, in proportion to the news he brought, rose instantly from the table, unable to finish his tea, from impatience to be the first with the intelligence; while Davie's day's misconduct, and even his message, was not only forgotten, or passed over, in the importance

of his tidings, but even his stepmother gave him an extra spoonful of jam to his tea on the occasion, for which Davie condescended to invent for her several most interesting additional particulars about Captain Palmer.

Never did a man change his coat, and comb out his whiskers, and brush his hair over the bald places, with greater pleasure than did Mr. Peterkin this night, in preparation for meeting his club. His wife and he were in perfect fondness and cordiality, from delight in their social morsel of scandal. She even complimented him on his appearance this evening, and said he looked like a perfect Bailie in his black coat, which she kept brushing half way down the stairs, on him, as he set off impatiently for his club.

We leave to the imaginations of those who have such a thing about them, to conceive, if it be possible, the pleasure of Mr. Peterkin, on finding that he was the sole and only bearer of, and referee upon this news, so refreshing to the weary spirits of a country club. To be sure, he was somewhat damped at first, on finding that the English rider's

(commercial traveller's) intelligence about the great battle, and the slaying of Buonaparte, was not confirmed by the newspapers, which soon after arrived. But this was the period for contradictory and false rumours; and the story about Mrs. Templeton was so rich and prolific, that it eclipsed all the foreign news that had been brought to the club for months, and furnished the most interesting scandal and sculduddery for the whole night.

Not but that the zeal of the club for virtue, and morals, and continence, and all that, was greatly kindled; but this zeal, and the honest wrath of the members against the guilty pair and their shameful conduct, was chiefly manifested by the turn the conversation took to similar instances of female frailty; and the most interesting and instructive discourse was kept up upon the subject the whole of the evening, wherein all the cases of provincial sculduddery and crim-con-ism, that had occurred within the memory of the parties, were revived and discussed, intermixed with numerous nods and winks, and sly inuendos, exceedingly

illustrative of the several subjects, but on which I do not choose to be very particular.

But there was one person present, who, being secretly connected with, or at least employed by, one of the nearest provincial newspapers, delighted to meet this club; not only on account of the social pleasures to be there enjoyed, but because he had been able, on sundry occasions, to pick up some useful and profitable intelligence, even out of its evening gossip. This public man, who, among his services for the community, was always glad to make a penny where he could, thought himself particularly fortunate in being present this night, took special note of the whole statement regarding this scandalous offence against public morals and decency; and Deacon Dote having been freely quoted as authority for the story, our intelligencer departed early with his valuable tale, and the whole affair, with only the thin disguise of T— and P— for the names of the offending parties, appeared next morning, chapter and verse, in the neighbouring newspapers.

Mr. Peterkin and his wife rejoiced in the plea-

tures of their story for two whole days, and they had the satisfaction of hearing it confirmed every where; for in fact it was the talk of all the talkers in the town, and this may be calculated at, at least, nineteen twentieths of the whole population. On the evening of the second day, however, while the two sat at tea, discussing the additional particulars which public rumour had by this time engrafted upon it, a friend entered with the disconcerting intelligence, that Mrs. Templeton had either not run very far with the captain, or she had been brought very quickly back, for she had just been seen taking her usual walk down through the Cross, and going into Mr. Murdoch's shop, as if nothing had happened.

The family and their visitor were just discussing this painful intelligence, when a knocking was heard below, and the servant girl soon entered and informed Mr. Peterkin that two strange men waited at the door with an instant request to speak to him.

"Wanting to speak to me, lassie!" said the decent man, not a little startled, and put in bodily

fear. "It cannot be *me* they want; I am a peaceable man in this time of wars and rumours, and I'm not in debt—it cannot be me!"

"Its just you, Maister," said the girl; "and the man in the black coat says he has a paper for your ain hand; an' the man in the red coat has a long staff. I've seen him at the Cross wi' a halbert."

"A man wi' a red coat, an' a paper, an' a halbert—the Lord be near us!"

"And there's people gathered about the doors, Sir," added the servant; "an' they say it's a king's messenger and a town's officer, Sir, that wants you."

"A king's messenger and a town's officer, lassie? wanting me! Lord, what's this o't—what's this!"

"An' the folk says they're to take you and clap you up in the jail below the steeple, Maister," added the girl, now blubbering out.

"Clap me in jail!" repeated the horrified man; "Janet!" addressing his wife, in great agitation, "Oh, Janet, rax your hand to the cupboard, and gie me a drap o' that brandy, or I'll faint!"

“ James ! James, my dear, keep up your heart, and trust in the Lord,” said his wife, running twenty ways at once, and then pouring out the brandy. “ Bless my heart, what can messengers and officers want wi’ you ? a quieter man at bed an’ board is not in the neighbourhood, an’ that I’ll testify in open court. Now, James, whip aff that drap speerits, and just gird up your loins, and slip down to the men.”

When our distressed friend was enabled, by the liquor and the encouragement of his wife, to descend the stairs, he started with surprise on seeing Mr. Inglis, the king’s messenger, and William Craig, the town’s officer, waiting for him.

“ Is your name James Peterkin ?” said the former, with legal formality.

“ It is,” replied Peterkin, his heart at his throat.

“ I serve you with this instrument, with witness present, said the messenger, putting a paper into the affrighted man’s hand, and pointing at the same time to the officer.

“ Ye need not be so particular, speering my

name, friends. Ye ken me perfectly weel," said the poor man, taking the paper: "but what does aw this mean? I thought ye were both aff to Edinburgh on that melancholy business about Mrs. Templeton."

"I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Peterkin," said the messenger; "ye had better broken your leg, or scaulded your tongue in hot kail, than to have raised this clishmaclaver about Mrs. Templeton!"

"Me raise the story about Mrs. Templeton!— I assure you, Sirs, I'm as innocent as the baby at the breast: but what are you going to do with me? Lord's sake! am I to go to jail this very minute?"

"No: you are to appear and be examined before the magistrates, and the sheriff, and the fiscal, and other public functionaries, within the Clerk's Chamber, to-morrow at eleven o'clock, anti-meridian, there to answer at your peril!"

"Hech, Sirs!—hech—hech!"

"An' there'll be Mr. Templeton himself to confront you, Sir: an' if it be proven upon you, you shall be punished (I'm telling you as a friend);

punished with the utmost rigour of law ; and I'm not sure but it may come to—to felony and transportation."

"And I would advise you as a friend, Mr. Peterkin," added Craig, the officer, now striking in, "to keep out of the way of Captain Palmer in the meantime ; for he's going about with a sword, new out o' the cutler's, an' a pair o' great horse-pistols, swearing like a dragoon, that if he get's you, he'll stick you like a calf, an' blaw your brains out forbye ! for offering to play pew at the honour of Mrs. Templeton."

"You're in a melancholy predicament, I tell you as a friend," rejoined the messenger ; "and so good night."

"This'll be a heavy trial to your wife, honest lady," said the town's officer, with a grin of ludicrous commiseration, as he parted from the unfortunate man.

"Rigour of law, felony, and transportation," muttered Peterkin, in soliloquy, when the others were gone : "stick me like a calf, and blaw my brains out wi' a horse-pistol !" he added,

mounting the stairs: "Hae Janet!" he said to his wife, "read that paper yourself, for I am not able to see:—I'm a ruin'd man!—There, gi'e me the brandy again!" he added; "for there's neither law, nor justice in the worl'. What signifies the plain truth, against swearing captains an' horse-pistols!"

His wife began to read the paper: "Summons before the magistrates,—malicious libel, defamation, and scandal, directed against Mrs. Templeton and Captain James Palmer: damages, a thousand pounds, fine, and imprisonment!"—

"Oh! we're ruined out of house and home!" cried Mrs. Peterkin, going up and down wringing her hands.

"This is a sore trial that the Lord has sent us, Janet!" said Mr. Peterkin, looking up solemnly to heaven and his wife.—"Send Davie for Deacon Dote, this instant, an' rax me the smelling-bottle."

Generals and great warriors *may* sleep the night before a battle. Thieves and other great scoundrels *may* sleep the night before they are hanged,

but so did not Mr. Peterkin on this anxious night ; and as for his wife, poor woman, whenever she began to doze, the devil or the night-mare appeared to her in the frightful form of a Paisley Bailie, while Mrs. Templeton herself seemed to look over the shoulder of the angry magistrate, grinning at her, and reaching out her talons like the very witch of Endor.

At length the dreadful morn arrived, and Mr. Peterkin having adorned himself with a clean frilled shirt, and fortified his failing heart with a glass of *eau de vie*, girded up his strength and marched forth to take his trial. Great was the bustle on his arrival in the court, then held under the Tolbooth, in an apartment called the Clerk's Chamber ; and the countenances of the three assembled Bailies seemed, to the terror-struck man, as he stood in their dread presence, to frown and freeze him into absolute nothingness, by the awfulness of judicial dignity and magisterial pomposity.

" Silence in the court !" shouted William Craig the officer, who stood, officially, with his long halbert at his back ; and this first sound was so

terrible to Peterkin, that every drop of blood, as well as of brandy, in his body, seemed to quit him with it, like an electric shock.

“ James Peterkin,” said the Provost with sonorous solemnity, “ you are accused of having maliciously spread abroad certain false and scandalous reports, injurious to the character of a worthy lady, the pride and boast of this ancient town; and of being the cause of the wicked libel being published to the whole world in the public newspapers; the reporter, who is here present to confront you, having given you up as the author. What have you to say in your defence?”

Mr. Peterkin’s mouth was as dry as a burnt stick, and he looked round for help in vain, but could not utter a word.

“ I am sorry to see you standing at that disgraceful bar, Mr. Peterkin,” said little Bailie Shuttleston, with a particularly bitter expression, for he was the unfortunate culprit’s own acquaintance; and having himself lately married a handsome young wife, of whom he was desperately jealous, he felt a laudable zeal and a sensitive

sympathy in a matter so nearly coming home to himself.

Peterkin, however, only gave an inward groan for answer, and looked round for Davie.

“How could you, Sir, be guilty of spreading such a scandal?” said Bailie Farrier next, who was by no means uninterested in this affair; for the good people of Paisley, being particularly attentive to the character and concerns of their neighbours, had uttered sundry dark sayings regarding him and Bailie Shuttleston’s young wife. “How could you say such things?” repeated the worthy magistrate.

“I told nothing, Sirs, but what was told to me,” at length said Peterkin.

“Have you any witnesses, James?” inquired the Provost.

“Yes, Bailie, various,” he added, courageously; for at this moment Deacon Dote entered the court, and was ordered to stand forth.

“William Dote,” continued the chief magistrate, “did you tell to the defendant these scandalous particulars in the libel against the character of that desirable lady, Mrs. Templeton?”

“ Me tell such a report !” exclaimed the Deacon, indignantly : “ indeed, Sirs, I did no such thing.”

“ You did not ?” said the magistrate, astonished.

“ Not I, Provost,” said the deacon, briskly. “ I couldna’ have had the heart to speak a word to disparage that sweet woman, Mrs. Templeton, supposing there had been a bit *faw paw* wi’ her and the captain. It’s a perfect pleasure to see her tripping along the plain stanes at the Cross o’ Paisley, wi’ her breast out, an’ her head up, like a blue-eyed pigeon. Besides, Sir Provost, I hae na’ spoken to Mr. Peterkin there this whole fortnight.”

“ But you told the story to my son Davie,” said Peterkin, with great courage, and even triumph. “ Come forward, Davie, lad !”

Davie came forward modestly, and gracefully, and with an air of honest confidence.

“ Young man,” said the Provost, “ hold up your head, and never be ashamed to tell the truth. Did William Dote, who is here present, tell you last week the particulars reported of Mrs. Templeton, which you have heard read ?”

“ No, your worship’s honour, he did not.”

“ No! Did you not say to your father that he did?”

“ Never said such a thing, Sir.”

“ Did you not,” interrupted his father, “ tell me the story about Mrs. Templeton on Thursday evening last, you villain?”

“ Not a word o’t, father; you’re intirely in a mistack.”

“ Is that really the case, my lad?” said the Provost.

“ It’s the perfect fack, your worship,” said Davie; “ I never said a word o’ the sort; but I heard my father and mother talking about Mrs. Templeton and Captain Palmer, when I came hame frae the volunteer park.”

“ God’s mercy, what’s the meaning o’ this!” exclaimed the distressed man at the bar. “ Am I in my right senses!”

“ This is a black business, Mr. Peterkin,” said the Provost; “ and if you’re not able to raise some five or six hundred pounds, at least, for damages, I am afraid the auld jail above our heads will

have a tedious tenant o' you. Is there prison-room above, William Craig?" he added, addressing the officer.

"Plenty, Sir," said Craig, "in the condemned holes in the steeple, and up in the garrets among the rattons; but no' an inch o' room below among the debtors and gentlemen. Will I bring um up to the jail, Bailie?"

"Not just at present, William. Now, James," added the magistrate, addressing Peterkin, "I always thought you a man of truth and character till now; yet there's your own son, whose very face has honesty in it, has convicted you of falsehood before this whole court."

"And of raising a most foul report to the defamation of a pretty woman," said Bailie Farrier.

"And of disturbing domestic peace," exclaimed Bailie Shuttleston, with moving emotion. "It is a scandalous thing that worthy gentlemen cannot enjoy their wives in family comfort, but they must be subjected to the sneers and idle reports of tippling clubs. Any man who is guilty of such conduct ought to be made an example of."

“ Oh, gentlemen, I am an ill used man !” was all that Peterkin could get out : “ Where are ye, gudewife ?” he added, looking round : “ Will ye not come forward and speak up for me in this extremity ?”

“ What have *you* got to say to this business, Mistress ?” demanded the Provost, as Mrs. Peterkin became prominent.

“ I hae to say, Sirs,” she answered, in evident wrath, “ that wi’ all your wigs an’ your wisdom, ye seem to be confounded and conglaumour’d wi’ this business, which is as clear to me as a green leek.”

“ What is clear to you, Madam ? Do you speak disrespectful of the court ?”

“ Deel a bit, Sir Provost ; but it’s just as visible to me as the pimple on your nose, that this whole mishanter is raised by naebody else but that brazen-faced villain, Davie.”

“ What is it you say, Mistress ?”

“ I say that it is leeing Davie, the callan there, that is at the bottom o’ the whole affair. Indeed, Bailie, my poor simple gudeman is no half a match

for his own son. There he stands, the young ne'er-do-weel, an' I can tell you, Sirs, from black experience, that he is ane o' the most notorious, inveterate, incorrigible, misleert lee-ers, that ever opened a mouth ! The auld father of lees, himself, is but a bungler to him."

"And did *he* bring home this story, for the first time, to you and your husband, Mistress?" said the Provost.

"He did, Bailie ; I heard it frae him on Tuesday night last wi' my ain ears, an' he father'd the whole on the authority of Deacon Dote there, speeritless body ! wi' his blue-ee'd pigeons !"

"I see how it is," said Bailie Shuttleston, shrewdly, and addressing his brother magistrates. "The delinquent and his wife want to get their own infamous conduct shifted now over upon that well fard boy. But I am confident that the lad's evidence will only fix the guilt upon them more firmly. Just suffer me to examine him."

The little Bailie now drew himself up with all the pomp his figure would admit of, and proceeded to catechize Davie.

“ Now, my lad,” he began, “ speak freely ; did you tell nothing whatever to your father and mother, last Tuesday, of a lady and gentleman having eloped together, and of other persons, in a coach and four, going in pursuit of them ? ”

“ I did, Sir.”

“ You did ? ”

“ Yes, Sir. But I said nothing about either Captain Palmer or Mrs. Templeton.”

“ And who, then, did you tell about, my lad ? ”

“ I dinna like to tell you, Sir,” said Davie, with a sly look.

“ Dont like to tell me ? ” said the little Bailie, alarmed. “ I *insist*, I *must* know what was the name of the gentleman, at least.”

“ I’m afeard to tell, Sir ; ” added Davie, modestly, and looking towards the other magistrates.

The heart of Bailie Shuttleston gave a suspicious bump, while an awful silence reigned in the court.

Davie’s stepmother shot out her head from where she stood, to get a proper sight of his face, while she muttered to herself, “ Noo he’s going to bring

out some most notorious lee, I ken, by his pleased look."

"Nay, but what was the name of the lady that you told your father had run off?" said the Provost, now striking in.

"Weel, Sir," said Davie, "it wasna Mrs. Templeton, but just *Mrs. Shuttleston*, the Bailie's young wife, there."

"God's mercy! my wife!" exclaimed little Bailie Shuttleston, thumping the council table with his fist, until the inkstands jumped a foot upwards.

"And the name of the gentleman?" rejoined the Provost.

"It was just Captain Farrier, beside you, there," said Davie.

"*Bailie Farrier* you mean, I suppose;" said the Provost, enjoying highly the amazement of the people, and the looks that his brother magistrates were throwing at each other.

"Ou, ay, Sir, but the folk ca' him *Captain Farrier* yet; for ye ken he was captain o' the *volunteers* afore he was Bailie," said Davie, delighted

at his own invention; “an’ my father, nae doubt, just made a mistack o’ the names.”

“Farrier and Shuttleston *might* have been taken for Palmer and Templeton, certainly;” said the Provost, with judicial gravity.

“But who told you that Bailie Farrier had run off with my wife, young man? who dared to repeat such things?” said the jealous little magistrate, hardly able to sit on his seat with vexation.

“Dinna put yourself into a passion, my dear Bailie,” whispered the Provost across the table, and chuckling at the new turn the business had taken. “Young wives *will* be talked of, ye know; and, really, Mrs. Shuttleston is such a pleasant sweet body!—but then, ye ken, Bailie, her affection for you is so evident; and ——”

“You take this business very colly, Bailie Farrier,” said the little magistrate, addressing his guilty-looking brother, without noticing what the Provost had said, and choking with all the pangs of the green-eyed monster.

“I do *not* take it coolly, Sir,” retorted Farrier. “In fact, my concern for myself, in this abominable

scandal, is nothing to my feelings for Mrs. Shuttleston."

"Your feelings for Mrs. Shuttleston!" gasped the injured Bailie: and Othello, the prince of jealous husbands, looked far less frightful, though more black in the face, when he exclaimed, "Goats and monkeys!" than did the little magistrate at this moment, to the great amusement of the people round.

"Hoot, Mr. Shuttleston, dinna differ wi' Bailie Farrier, ye ken he's a pleasant man to the ladies," whispered the Provost, with a dry smile; "and indeed his attention to Mrs. Shuttleston has been quite observable and particular, for his politeness is perfectly proverbial."

"Death and deevils!" exclaimed the angry Bailie, unable to contain. "Am I to be made a—a horn'd cuckold, before open court, in the Clerk's Chambers o' Paisley!"

By this time the whole crowd without the bar was in a titter of whispering surmise about Bailie Shuttleston's lady. William Craig, the officer, was making the most significant grimaces to Deacon

Dote and other bystanders; and Captain Palmer, who stood behind, along with another whiskered officer, looking through his eyeglass at the scene, burst out into audible laughter.

“Hoot—oot! whisht! behave yourself, Bailie!” whispered the Provost, beginning to be alarmed for the dignity of the court.—“Noo, gentlemen,” he continued aloud, “let us proceed with the examination.”

“Young man,” said Bailie Farrier to Davie, “didn’t you tell that you yourself saw some circumstances connected with these reports about myself and Mrs. Shuttleston?—Did you see any one going off to Edinburgh in pursuit, in a chaise and four with attendants?”

“I did that, Sir,” said Davie: “it’s real fack!—an’ I saw the gentleman inside.”

“And who was he?” inquired the magistrate.

“He was just like Bailie Shuttleston, there?” said the boy.

“And who were the attendants?”

“Four or six dragoons, wi’ drawn swords!” said Davie.

“God Almighty!” exclaimed Bailie Shuttleston; “and all this about my wife!”

“The boy is mad! or there must be some mistake,” observed the Provost.

“I saw it wi’ my ain een, Sirs!” said Davie.

“I wager you, Bailie, if ye’ll excuse me,” said Craig, the officer, who was wont to use great freedom with the magistrates in these old times, “that I can tell you what the callan means.”

“Well, William,—speak up!”

“He has mistaken, for the Bailie there, that wee black body, Roger M’Cowlan, the Eeerishman, that was sent aff the other day in a chaise to Edinburgh, wi’ a guard o’ sodgers, to be tried afore the lords, for robbing a bleachfield!”

“Mistook the Irishman, that robbed the bleachfield, for me—going aff with a guard of dragoons!” shouted Bailie Shuttleston: “what am I to think? This is horrid!”

“Hush—sh, Bailie,” frowned the Provost.

“But who *did* tell you the particulars you told your parents, boy,” continued Bailie Farrier, determined to sift the matter, “if it was not William Dote?”

“ It was just Deacon Dobbie, the mealmonger, in Dirty Street !” said Davie, readily.

“ Oh ! *Dobbie*,—not *Dote*,” said the Provost, smiling.

“ Had ’nt he better be sent for at once ?” said Bailie Farrier, “ that we may trace this affair thoroughly.”

“ Faith, the callan’s done for now, I’m thinking,” said Craig, the officer, whose shrewdness was well known : “ Deacon Dobbie’s no far to fetch, Bailie,” he said aloud ; “ I saw him pass the window this minute.”

“ Bring him in, William !” said they all ; and, by this time, Mr. Peterkin and his wife were rather enjoying the scene than otherwise.

When the other Deacon was brought in (for the good town of Paisley abounds with Bailies and Deacons), and was confronted with the lad, the whole story was soon seen to be a tissue of fabrications ! and the tables were completely turned upon Davie ! who, after being lectured by the magistrates, and hooted by the bystanders, was forthwith committed for twenty-four hours

to the jail above, to the great satisfaction of his stepmother, and the delight of Craig, the officer, who treated him with sundry kicks and cuffs on their way up the crooked stairs of the jail.

The whole of this important scandal having been, at length, traced to the lies of a boy, now restored the good-humour of the court, rejoiced the heart of Mrs. Peterkin, and relieved the remaining apprehensions of her husband; who was congratulated on his acquittal, even by Captain Palmer and the Provost, who joined heartily in laughing at the whole affair.

But Davie himself, even in the prison, was not particularly discomposed by this passing "mishanter:" and, before two days more were over, had brought home to his father another pleasant story, how that it was currently said throughout the town, that Deacon Dobbie had been seen in most suspicious circumstances with Deacon Dote's wife! and also, that the Provost of Paisley had given Captain Palmer a black eye, in a duel, fought at the back of Mrs. Ralston's public-house, about Mrs. Templeton!

THE WIDOW.

THE WIDOW.

I, an old turtle,
Will wing me to some wither'd bough ; and there
My mate, that's never to be found again,
Lament till I am lost.

Winter's Tale.

I STOOD, one pleasant morning, before the doors of the Sun Inn, in the stirring town of Kilmarnock, in the west of Scotland, looking upwards to the sky to judge of the future day, and down the street towards the country, and debating within myself in what manner I should travel home to my own domicile of Balgownie Brae. To walk, although I was no sluggard, I was somewhat loath ; for the road through the Moor, and past the Mearns Kirk, was long and dreary ; and, as to any convenient vehicle, there was none that I considered suitable to my pretensions, excepting the

common diurnal coach, then newly set up, against which I had a most decided antipathy ; and whether, notwithstanding the length of the way, to betake myself to my own serviceable shanks, or to encourage, by my patronage, the filthy upsetting vehicle, was now the question.

On the former evening I had, with blamable softness, suffered myself to be persuaded and flattered into accepting the half of a post-chaise from the pleasant town of Maybole, near the coast, to this present Sun Inn, in Kilmarnock, by a gentleman, as they called him—gentleman ! quotha !—but the whole way, after the first mile, I repented of my bargain, merely from the beastishness of my frowzy companion ; and how did I know but I might again be saddled with society as bad, or worse, among the common clanjamphrey of a stage-coach ? I stood, therefore, as the ready coach waited for its passengers, and watched to see what sort of people might be setting out ; as, I thought, if I could observe any plain sensible-looking body among them, whose face pleased me—such an accident *might* induce me to take

my chance of the other rabblement, who might be, for the time, fellow-lodgers with me in this unpleasant, new fangled go-cart.

While I stood, watching and musing discontentedly about my journey of the former evening; and how I had, in the silliest manner, lost my own company, and the beauty of the whole way, through the pleasant shire of Ayre, and the sweet glints of the evening sun on the green fields, or as it hovered over the distant sea, by being shut up in a rattling coach, jammed in by a coarse carcass, which had no more intellectual perception than a pig; I happened to lift up my eyes, and perceived to my confusion that the horses had been put to the waiting machine; all seemed on the move, and already a rout of people were clambering into places, inside and out, upon the vehicle.

“Coach quite ready, Sir!—Going off immediately, Sir!—Time is up, Sir! No other coach to-day, Sir!” was shouted right and left into my ears, by divers guards and bystanders, all at once; and before I had time to make my observations, or give the matter a serious thought, one fellow

whipped up the leather wallet which stood at my foot, another banged open the coach door in my face, and a third ill-looking blackguard, in a red coat, taking hold of me by the arm, actually thrust me into his dirty coach, clapped the door upon my toes, like a cannon-shot ; and before I was able, in my consternation, to get out a natural exclamation upon such rudeness, crack went the whip, and away we rattled forward on the stones, and out in an instant from the precincts of Kilmarnock.

I now had no other of it but to make the best of such an act of ravishment, by casting about me to see what sort of people they had pushed me amongst ; but not one of the five faces to which I was thrust so close, bore any thing in them of the smallest consolation. In fact, I would not demean myself by saying any thing about them. One might as well plague his neighbour by describing the stones of the street, which are all alike, and equally coarse, hard, and bemuddled. They were all just of that species of people, among which one never, by any chance, can meet with an interesting person ; and which class I inconti-

nently, in my inner spirit, detest; because the very qualities of mind which, in general, gives them their trading success, and the means of their vulgar conceit, are of a sort which supposes a radical baseness of spirit, and are opposed to whatever is, for its own sake, amiable and estimable.

But I have no business, I said within myself, to find fault with God's creatures; and so I sat silent, while they *Ma'am*-ed and *Sir*-ed one another, and called one another gentleman, and gave each other honour for things which made me despise them the more; but not one word did any one say that was of the least interest to any but one of their own sort to hear, any more than did the lumpkin log, who had slept with me the former evening in the chaise. "I wish," said I to myself, and looking out from the coach window, "that I could see any wandering pedler on the road, or even a blithe bare-footed country lass, travelling to the fair of Glasgow, I would not sit another instant among these fat traders, but, leaving coach and comfort, 'away wi' them I would gang,' like an auld Gaberlunzie."

But the road seemed particularly dull, and I tried to edge in a word with my company, but they received my civility with an ignorant stare; and on seeing them look at each other when I spoke, and hearing one whisper to his neighbour, that I was mighty like a threadbare dominie, I could hold no longer; but calling the coachman to stop, I paid my fare, and determined to take my chance of making out my journey on foot.

I was delighted when I got once more into the open air, and again got opportunity of enjoying nature's solitude, and my own undisturbed society. The smell of the heathy moor, into which I was entering, refreshed and delighted me. "Loudon's bonnie woods and braes," so pleasantly sung by the Paisley poet, I contemplated with pleasure, as they receded far to my right in the distance; the Gothic castle rising gray up out of the wood; and on my left the stately Hall of Crawfordland, confused my thoughts with a multitude of interesting meditations. The only thing I now wanted was some pleasant body of a companion, be he or she ever so poor, as I said to myself, if they only had some

sort of perception of nature's beauty, and could commune with me a little regarding the objects around me.

I walked on, or rather sauntered, my way with considerable pleasure to myself, until I had proceeded some eight or ten miles. But by this time the day was far advanced; my spirits were much dissipated by heat and fatigue; I began to be tired of the solitude of my journey, and longed exceedingly to see a human face. I continued, however, to labour on my way, which was now somewhat toilsome, and I had no prospect in the moor but a desolate lengthening out of wild moss, with a little diversification of furzy hills and hollows; here and there a dribbling stream crossed my road, and my reveries were sometimes disturbed by the flapping of a flight of crows, which came croaking over my head, and helped to deepen my inclination to sadness, and to blacken the scene around me.

At length I observed the figure of a woman, at a short distance, as I turned an elbow of the road, sitting, resting by herself, on a low wall that

skirted our path. Assuredly there was nothing in the appearance of this figure that was calculated to revive a spirit of social cheerfulness in the thoughts of a lonely single man. She was clad in rusty black; and sat on the wall alone in this solitary moor, the very image of one who is not only left in the desolation of poverty and widowhood, but whom the world around has totally deserted. I was right, for as I came up I observed that a widow's bonnet nearly concealed her face, which indeed raised instant compassion in me as I came more close, for she looked the widow most true to nature. No affectation appeared in her, far less any boldness or wantonness of look; but grief of mind, and weakness and weariness from journeying on foot, were most expressively marked on her countenance.

She was a little dark-complexioned woman, rather past the years of youth, and yet evidently more injured by sorrow than years, and rather plain than otherwise, which, I confess, was a disappointment to me; for, said I to myself, "I positively can take no interest in the conversation of an

ordinary woman." Nevertheless I was glad to meet with her upon this lonely road. I stopped and addressed her: I persuaded her to arise and accompany me forward; and when we came to commune together, she began absolutely to interest me, from the feeling and seriousness of her conversation, and the depth of meaning which she seemed to attach to every word she uttered. She had large expressive dark eyes, which added extraordinary power to that feeling, and gave a melancholy and affecting air to all that she said; and, as we got into acquaintance, I thought I could perceive a comeliness in her face, and an elevation in her sentiments that interested me exceedingly.

But the way we began our acquaintance was this: after a polite salutation from me, and certain customary interjections about the fineness of the day, and the wearisomeness of the road, and other needless talk, she seemed to have a desire for my society; and indeed expressed a wish that, as we were travelling the same road, I would pleasure her with my company, provided, she added with humility, "I thought it worth my while to favour such as her with my civilities."

“ Indeed, Mistress,” I replied, “ it will be a pleasure and a satisfaction to me to be your companion, for the brief period in which this road may lead us on, in oneness together ; and not the less so that you seem somewhat clouded in spirit, as I am rather grieved to perceive. But, perhaps, I may be enabled, as we proceed in company, to rationalize, in some degree, the view you take of your own trials ; or, at least, to divert your mind, by detailing the issues of my own experience ; for you may suppose, Madam,” I added, “ that I have not lived until this day without tasting myself, somewhat of the bitterness of tribulation ; nor would I now be travelling this road on foot, if I was, altogether, one of the fortunate and the happy.”

The little woman gazed up at me when I had said this, and seemed impressed with some sentiment that affected her, and that had come to the tip of her tongue ; but she restrained herself, and only *looked* something which may not be described ; then, giving a smile to herself, as if in gratulation that she had fallen in with one who understood, and was willing to put himself on a

level with her and her feelings, we proceeded leisurely on together. Our acquaintance, at this period, did not warrant any further freedom on my part; but, after walking a short time in a sort of reconnoitering silence, she reached her hand to my side, and said,

“ Sir, you will please excuse my boldness; but, as you are so regardful of me, notwithstanding that our acquaintance is but short, perhaps you will allow me to take hold of your arm. A woman, Sir, as you know,” she continued, “ requires a staff to lean upon through this world, particularly a weak, broken-spirited creature, like myself; but *my* staff you see, Sir, is gone, and I am now to wander through the world alone!”

Here the poor widow stopped. I knew her heart was full, and I did not interrupt her; but she swallowed down her sobs, and stifled her feelings, as she wiped away the tears that burst out, and, with much lowliness of manner, and humility of language, begged my pardon, for having obtruded her griefs upon a stranger.

I again begged that that consideration might

not be a restraint upon her in my society ; and, furthermore, expressed a curiosity to know something of those circumstances which seemed so deeply to affect a woman of her evident goodness of understanding.

She replied that there was no single circumstance in her history that would, perhaps, either be of interest to me, or that, perhaps, ought to have caused her present state of feeling. And that, although she could not object to detail, to a man of my sympathies, any occurrence of her life, yet, if I cared to inquire concerning her, I must be at the trouble of hearing an account of the chief events that had happened to her, taken together, before I could understand their full effect.

I thought this a very probable matter, and very judicious reasoning ; and, after urging the widow a little further, in that way and manner which I had found, by experience, to be peculiarly successful with the fair sex, I perceived the spirits of the little woman to improve considerably ; and she, at length, agreed to beguile our time on the road, by telling me her whole story, which she did, as follows :

“ It is no idle romance that I am about to tell you, Sir,” began my humble widow, “ and, therefore, I need not trouble a man of your staid appearance with any flowery garnishing to my poor tale ; nor will I even take up your time with any account of my early years. I enjoyed much in the society of an excellent mother, read much, for that was my taste, and anticipated much of the expected happiness of life. But my father often called me a novel-reading fool, and my mother shook her head at my youthful fancies ; warned me against expecting too much from the world ; exhorted me, with solemnity, to endeavour to conquer my increasing sensibility, to curb my fancy, and to ‘ think soberly.’ As I grew to womanhood I perceived, with sorrow, that I was very destitute of personal attractions, the grand object of a woman’s wishes ; and quality, for which, above all others, she values herself ; and my mother told me, that, as to marriage, the great pivot upon which turns the whole destiny of a woman, I might think myself fortunate if I obtained, for a husband, a man in years, and in tolerable circum-

stances ; some plain man, who would take me for other qualities than personal beauty."

Here my gallantry constrained me to interrupt my little widow, by observing that she must have undervalued herself in that respect, else my eyes deceived me. The poor woman, however, only gave a faint smile at my compliment, and then proceeded with her story.

" I enjoyed but few of the pleasures of youth !" she went on,—“ and scarcely knew any thing of the interesting and gratifying enjoyments of young females who are sought after, admired, and loved ! My good sense was praised ; my erudition was talked of, sometimes sneered at. But beauty ! the dear subject of female interest, was never mentioned in my presence, excepting with reference to others ; and in such a way only as to impress me with its value in the eyes of men, and to give me a humbling opinion of myself. The young men talked of books with me and my father ; but they made up their party of pleasure without ever thinking of me ; and preferred the silliest coquets, the merest mental nonentities, because of

some girlish beauty of face or person : often was I obliged to sit solitary at home, while my female acquaintances were abroad upon those engagements, and enjoying those youthful pleasures which are so delightful, and so flattering to a female ; and I was forced, continually, to listen to narrations concerning, and descriptions of the common joys of my young friends, but of which I seemed never to have been destined to taste.

“ All this was, of course, most chagrining to me, for I had strong sensibility of disposition, and much relish for the endearments of affection, and the sympathetic pleasures of the heart. I saw that the emulations and preferences of the youthful party, or the ball-room, I was not destined to partake of ; to the look of admiration or of interest from the other sex, in public or in private, I was quite a stranger ; and the delicious evening walk with a lover, the stolen whisper or interview, I was never fated to enjoy. Old men talked religion with me ; young men talked of the weather or the wars ; but their little love topics and scandals, among their rivals and sweethearts, they

feared to speak of in my presence, and love was never mentioned, except in ridicule.

“ Meantime, my father died, and was soon followed to the grave by my excellent mother, whose death gave me much grief; and whose counsel I was soon greatly to miss. To my consternation, I found that my father had left no property; and that, by his death, my support was completely cut off. I had no relations now alive, excepting one brother, and he was abroad, and could not be useful to me: so that, unless I could maintain myself by my own exertions, I was totally destitute. Fortunately, I had had some education in the making of female apparel, and to this resource I now betook myself, and turned energetically for a livelihood. By degrees, I got business from my friends; my mind was now kept employed; and I soon maintained myself as a tradeswoman, comparatively in respectability and independence.

“ There now came several persons to my house, in the quality of suitors; but there was none among them such as my fancy had painted, or as I was willing even to think of as a husband. One there

was, in particular, who had long been intimate with my father,—a coarse man, beyond the age of forty ; stingy, worldly, and easy in circumstances. His addresses at first absolutely frightened me ! The bare idea of such a man being my husband,—my companion for life, and the sharer of my bed, was a sinker to my spirits, and a shock to my tranquillity. But as he became serious and persevering in his advances, I began to recollect the solemn reasoning, and the quaint warning voice of my mother, now in her grave ! that it became me to consider prudently, and to “think soberly.” I was ready to admit, that wiser persons than myself might call it folly in me were I to reject such a man ; particularly as I was now in my twenty-fifth year, and had little chance, as I thought, of obtaining for a companion a young man, whom I could love, or who would feel the affection for me which I considered should naturally belong to the conjugal state. In short, good sense,—if you please so to denominate the usual reasoning in such circumstances as mine, overcame my natural aversion to this person as a man ; for, I referred

to the whole of my prospective days, and the world's substantial comforts, and tried to reconcile my heart to complete disappointment for life, of any exercise of those feelings, as far as regarded my husband, which nature had so deeply interwoven with my happiness.

“ But this conquest over myself, and all that had been dear to my imagination, that had still been the subject of my doubtful wishes and undefined hopes for many years, was not achieved until after a considerable time, nor without tears and regrets in private, more than I need tell. But, in short, I did reconcile my mind to my marrying the man who was, I may say, the very antipode of such as I could have loved. I gave him my consent, and he fixed a day when he was to accompany me to the nearest large town, while we made the purchases necessary upon our marriage.

“ Well, Sir, the morning came, and I dressed myself with a sort of painful trepidation, and was ready by the hour appointed. But it rained slightly, and the day looked lowering; and first the hour passed away, and then the next after, and

still he came not. The whole morning went over, I grew sick with strange reflections; he never came the whole of the day, nor ever thought fit to send explanation or apology. The next day also passed over, and the next to that, without my hearing from him; but on the third he called, in his usual dull way, and, sitting himself down, began to discourse of the unsettled state of the weather, as if nothing of the least consequence had occurred. At length he alluded to the morning, three days back, having been rather uncomfortable; and, without noticing my natural feeling of disappointment, or his own regardlessness of what I thought, he, in short, spoke of the purchases intended, and other matters connected with our marriage, in such a manner as to shock me exceedingly; and still more painfully to me did he express himself, when I noticed his conduct with some expression of surprise.

I now saw, in short, that he considered himself as paying me, or any woman without a fortune, a great compliment, by condescending to offer himself for a husband: that no treatment of his, however vexatious or degrading, was expected to be

noticed by any one to whom he was pleased to do so great a favour; and that he considered me as an article of furniture for his house, which he might have at offering the slightest token of his will, or that he might pass by at his pleasure. My heart involuntarily rose against him, but I suppressed my feelings until his absence enabled me to find relief in tears. In short, he saw I was offended, and never troubled himself to come near me more; and, I verily believe, expected me to have gone *to him*, in which case he might have condescended to be reconciled, upon receiving an apology from me, and still have made me his wife.

“ You may conceive, Sir, what a shock all this gave to my feelings, after I had, with so much difficulty, made up my mind to the step, and thought my future life shaped out for me; and I felt it the more, as I was now without mother or friend to whom I could unbosom myself, or with whom I could advise.

“ But the distance between desponding grief and unexpected joy is sometimes so short as to be surprising even to ourselves. My mind was still

in the depression occasioned by this event, when I was addressed, with seriousness, by a *young* man, of whom I had no previous idea as a lover, of pleasing exterior, and still more pleasing address; whom I had only heard spoken of, with a sort of unexpressed admiration, as gay, good-natured, and imprudent.

“You know, Sir,” continued my widow, appealing to my inferential experience, “that there is no time when a woman is so easily courted as immediately after a disappointment in marriage, or a slight. My serious mind at first regarded the reported follies of this young man as insurmountable barriers to my enjoying any happiness with him; but his person and manners were so agreeable, so unlike his who had just deserted me, that they won upon me at once, and made me, with a woman’s partiality, ready to excuse all his errors. I tried his temper, by freely lecturing him for his imprudences; and this he took so well, that I flattered myself, if we were once united, I should soon acquire an influence over him, and reform him to steady and unexceptionable conduct. I

could not long withhold my consent, and confess that I was intoxicated with joy, at the idea of at last obtaining for a husband a man whom I really loved ; and in the fulness of my heart wrote a long letter to my brother abroad, detailing my good fortune, and describing my husband's handsome face and person. We were married, Sir, and I was the happiest of women ; and the more so, as my happiness was so unexpected, and contrasted strongly with the fate I had just escaped.

“ But alas ! my happiness was short. It was but a moon of felicity—but it *was* felicity—and the sorrows that I have since suffered, great as they have been, will not prevent it from living in my remembrance. I soon found that my husband cared but little for me, that the love was nearly all on my side ; and it appeared very obvious that he had intended his marriage with me as a resource for himself, in case the business in which he was engaged should fail with him, for it was by no means prospering.

“ Shortly after my marriage I met, at a party to which, among others, we were invited, my for-

mer suitor, looking as cool and self-complacent as I had ever observed him. He had the cruelty to take me aside in order to reproach me for the choice I had made, to throw the blame of the difference that had separated us wholly on me, and to predict misery and ruin as the consequences of my new connexion. My heart was sorely wounded, both then and afterwards, at the bitter words of this brutal man; particularly as, from many things I now began to observe, a trembling apprehension forced itself upon me, that his angry predictions might come to be too true. Alas, for myself, that I, who had always too much feeling, have surely been destined to be the sport, and the victim of those who have none!

“ My husband’s conduct soon became strangely capricious and unequal. He was sometimes seemingly affectionate, gay, and engaging; often he was neglectful, peevish, and unfeeling. In the house he had me surrounded with a junta of his female relations, who constantly watched me, put evil in his mind against me, misrepresented every thing I did, and made me wretched. Meantime

he suffered me to provide every necessary for the house, under the plea that he could not be allowed to draw from his business funds for some time: but he kept a strange silence regarding his private affairs, even to me, and always declined giving me any of his confidence. He at length neglected me most obviously, and my bursting complainings and tearful entreaties only served to estrange him from me the more."

Here my sad narrator paused in her tale, and then exclaimed, with the painful energy of deep-felt grief, "What is there, Sir, that can make up to a woman, who marries for love, for the loss of her husband's affection! This it is that is her glory in prosperity, her consolation in sorrow, her support in trial, her every thing. Poverty she may suffer, persecution or ill treatment from others she may endure, toil she may undertake with cheerfulness and bear with patience; but take from her her husband's affections, and you take away the corner-stone upon which rests all her happiness on earth. Oh, that men, who marry the woman that can love them, who are united to a partner

that can feel, would but think what they have in their power to inflict, would consider the deep misery they may occasion !

“ By degrees, and most unwillingly, I was forced to the conclusion that my husband, much as I loved him, had not heart himself to love any woman steadily, and little worth or principle that could be depended upon ; and that he was, in fact, a man of pleasure, without knowing in what genuine pleasure consisted. I was in time delivered of a daughter, of which he was extremely fond at first ; but, like a child with its plaything, he shortly grew tired of her ; her, who was his own picture, and now my only consolation on earth. His business, it appeared, was now fast verging to a crisis ; and his partner, it was supposed, would contrive to injure him and to save himself.

“ My infatuated husband now spent his evenings entirely from home, mostly in the society of gay friends, or in places of public amusement ; and though he was sensible that he was neglecting his concerns and using me ill, he had not strength of mind sufficient to meet the approaching crisis,

and do the best in his power, nor principle enough to do me justice; nor was what feeling he possessed of that kind, which would induce him to treat me with any thing like kindness. Of the attentions and society of a husband I was now completely deprived. Sunday he spent I know not where.—I walked alone to the church (a thing remarkable in the town where we lived), to seek consolation from above; and the dear evening walks we used to take, particularly on Sabbath night after worship, I now could only recollect with regret.

“ Perhaps I expected too much from my thoughtless husband at first, and might have been too severe in my reflections on his conduct; for he evidently dreaded my opinion, and almost my presence, yet had he not strength to do what he was conscious he ought. At length he one day told me, with some seeming compunction, that the cause of his unaccountable conduct, was the state of his mind from the situation of his business, which was now in much embarrassment, although he had commenced it with considerable

advantages. His renewed confidence soothed me. I excused his conduct, and regarded him with pity, because I loved him; and I entreated him, with tears, to adopt a decisive and consistent line of proceeding. But things had gone on too far; his partner and he had become enemies, and mutually thwarted each other. A public failure was the consequence; and now commenced to me a series of sufferings which I need not attempt to describe. My poor distracted and weak-minded husband, although but little deficient in property to pay his debts, and although nothing of consequence could be alleged against him, had not courage enough to face his creditors, or to try to arrange his affairs; but, without intimating a word to me of his intentions, fled, as I afterwards found, to Hamburgh, upon some vague promise or prospect in some new line of life.

“ His angry creditors, and his vindictive partner, now that he was out of the way, made out every sort of charge against him, and blamed him for all the misfortunes that had befallen the concern, which they visited, as far as they could,

upon me, as his wife and remaining representative. Men seem to me, Sir," went on the reflective little woman, "to take a pleasure in harassing those who are completely in their power, in proportion to their very helplessness, and their disposition despairingly to bend under cruelty and persecution. Mankind are so conscious of weakness and imperfection in themselves, that they are apt to despise those who, from nervous feeling or ignorance of the world, are terrified by them, and find a malignant pleasure in increasing their fears, and hunting them down, as the fox-dog worries to death the timid hare, who is unable to run farther from him, or to resist his ferocity. Thus they did with me; for although my husband had brought no property whatever with him, when united to me; though he did not even support my house, his creditors, after the humiliating proceedings of the law, sold my little property for the payment of his debts; and a man, who had formerly worked as a menial for my father's family, but who had now got to be my own landlord, carried away my furniture, took away the bed from under me and my

child, and sold them in the market place for a small sum of rent.

“ In short, Sir, I was surrounded with wretches in the shape of men, who thought they were acting with prudent firmness in pursuit of their own interest, because they did not suffer themselves to be moved from satisfying themselves to the last penny that my little chattels would produce, by my evident destitution, my unavailing tears and distraction of mind ; and they almost drove me to the last desperation by their unfeeling persecution ; add to all this, my husband’s female relations, who never liked me, now joined in distressing me, by contriving to blame me as a cause of his misfortunes ; and my own remaining relatives, to whom I was now obliged to resort for assistance, to enable me to repurchase a few of my own articles of furniture, grudgingly lent me a meager sum of money, seasoned with reproaches and wise reflections upon my imprudent marriage (although some of themselves had advised me to it), while they now scorned the bitterness of my grief, and almost laughed at my calamity.

“What end would it serve, Sir, further to describe,” continued the little widow, “although I were able, what I suffered at this period. A poor woman, bereft of every thing, my husband gone, I knew not whither, leaving me pregnant, an infant in my arms, little more than a year old; all the world avoiding me, and suffering my grief to prey upon my mind, and to drive me to distraction. But my child and my condition obliged me to rouse myself; and what think you, Sir, was I forced to do? I could do nothing in the shape of exertion, without first obtaining a little money; and, after every other resource was tried in vain, I was obliged—I was obliged, Sir,” continued the poor woman, with the loud energy of choking feelings, “to apply for a small loan, to the very man who was first to have been my husband, and who had, already, so deeply wounded and sported with my feelings.

“This was the bitterest trial of all! I am unable, even now, to bear the recollection of it!”

Here the poor woman’s tears completely stopped her utterance; and I was obliged to lead her to

the road side, and to seat her on a stone, while she wept profusely. She then gave a sad sigh or two as she wiped her face. I led her again forward on the road in silence, and, in a little time, she thus proceeded :

“ I have not yet described this man, whom I had once brought my mind to think of as a husband, and to whom I now went in a state of total ruin, to apply to for a favour. He was a short, stout-made, contented-looking, comfortable-living man, above forty ; and, when I had steeled up my heart to knock timidly at his door, he bowed me in, with that affected respect which I felt to be a mockery ; and seemed rejoiced at the interview, as it afforded him an opportunity of contrasting his circumstances with mine, and of avenging himself, once more, on my feelings, for my former want of submission to his humour.

“ My heart was ready to burst, as, after some hesitation, I tried to state to him the purpose of my visit. He heard what I was able to say with the greatest coolness and complacency, and seemed perfectly to understand that I had come to ask

him for assistance, before I had got words to give utterance to my petition. But, while I talked to him, and watched his seeming hesitation, and the expression of sagacious triumph in his grey eyes, his former prediction of ruin and misery, and the circumstances in which that prophecy was uttered, rushed upon my recollection, so as to render my thoughts almost insupportable. But the thought of my child at home, and the necessities of my present condition, obliged me to swallow my choking thoughts. I had brought with me some small articles of my private property, for his *security*, or, in other words, to pledge with him for a few pounds. These he took and examined, with all the business-like care of a pawnbroker, entered in his book the day and date when I promised to return the money, which he agreed to lend me, handed it into my trembling hand, and dismissed me with an undisguised grin of satisfaction, at the full accomplishment of his prediction, and at seeing me in the deepest sorrow.

“ I now, with a perturbed mind and sore feelings, began to apply myself to my little business,

as far as my health and the care of my child would allow. I had been well known and respected in better days, and I now commended myself to the cupidity of those who would employ me, by working for less, and more carefully than any one else; which was so far successful that I, in time, began to get easier in circumstances, and to refurnish my apartments; and to acquire some degree of pity for my misfortunes, and even respect. The opinion of the world, good or bad, is inseparable from success, or the contrary, however little these may be attributable to the individual. When the ruin of my husband took place, my neighbours found a thousand faults in my conduct, which they never had had the sagacity to discover when I was in prosperity!—Now, when by great exertion, I was beginning to recover myself, they complimented themselves in discovering many virtues in me, which had escaped their penetration when I was in distress; and felt great self-approbation in giving me their employment, out of compassion, as they said, and to encourage me! while, in reality, it was because none

would do what I did for so little, nor allow themselves to be faulted and trampled upon, as they in many cases did upon me, because I was humble and unfortunate.

“ I maintained myself in decency, however, in spite of many discouragements ; and, after a considerable time, received letters from my husband, full of expressions of regret, kindness, and affection. I answered my poor husband with all a woman’s recollections, and a wife’s unabated affection. We continued to correspond, and as the impression of my former sorrows began to weaken, my love for my husband revived more and more ; and anxiety for his welfare, and consideration for his situation in a foreign country, now occupied much of my thoughts. I was delivered of a son, to my great joy ; but my recovery was tedious ; and the care of him and my daughter much interrupted my business. Still, however, it continued tolerably good ; and I had several apprentices, who assisted me in it, and even in the care of the children, who now were a source of much interesting pleasure to me.

“ My daughter, indeed, was particularly so, as she now began to prattle, and call upon her father, whose very image she was; and her little looks and attempted language, pointed my thoughts to him incessantly, and made my present separation from him appear extremely irksome and joyless. I began to form excuses for his follies, and his neglect of me, from the consideration of his youth and natural gaiety, and from the influence of his unsettled circumstances. Every expression of kindness from him became now doubly dear to me: I began to yearn with indescribable impatience to see him once more; and in vaguely contemplating that, entertained a thousand hopes, and formed many plans of yet influencing him to virtuous conduct, as well as greater regard for myself.

“ He now, in his letters, expressed a wish that I would go to him to Hamburgh, and even used many arguments and affectionate expressions to urge me to it. I would not, for a time, allow myself to think of such a thing; but still it dwelt on my mind, and the very prattle of my child, on this subject, was irresistible. The poor child

looked up in my face as I wept over her father's letters, still called his name, and her innocent face seemed to appeal to me, not to rear her as a fatherless orphan, but to take her to him, that she might console him in a foreign land, receive his blessing and his parental instruction.

“ Many a weary thought I had upon my sleepless pillow, debating with myself upon the hardy venture of leaving my country and my little trade, and crossing the sea to my husband. At length, as the subject pressed on my mind night and day, I did begin to entertain seriously the purpose ; and let every man and wife, who have loved each other, and who, though aware of each other's feelings, have known what it was to live from each other in lingering and solitary separation, judge for me in this matter, and say whether I was not to be excused.

“ My husband, in urging me to go to him, promised to send me money to defray the expenses of my journey ; but when the time came, his next letter intimated that it was not at present in his power, from certain circumstances which he did

not explain. By this time, however, I had been making some preparations for setting off; for, though he had sent me nothing, I had heard good accounts of his situation and prospects, and absence from him was becoming more and more painful to me, now that I had made up my mind. A succeeding letter received from him at this time, wherein he complained of the state of his health, the discomfort of his solitary life, and of his exposure to company, from not having a house of his own, and in which he repeated his former endearing expressions, determined me to run all risks on his account, and to set off immediately to see him and restore him to health. I disposed of whatever I had gathered by my industry, and gave up my little business; and, having packed up what necessaries I could command, I departed for Leith, to encounter a sea voyage, in the beginning of winter, with two infant children, and no one to protect or assist me, on an element to which I was a perfect stranger.

“The voyage was boisterous, stormy, and uncomfortable. I suffered much from that horrid

sickness, caused by the motion of the vessel, which is so severe upon weak and nervous constitutions, and from anxiety about my poor infants, to whom, in my sickness, I was unable to attend. Even when I became a little recovered, my spirits were low, and my mind irritable; and a prognosticating dread of some further sorrow, oppressed and sickened me with strange apprehension. There were, however, some gentlemen, passengers on board, who were extremely kind and attentive to me, treated me with considerate feeling, and even assisted me with my infants.

“As our ship drew near to the coast of Germany, my impatience to see my husband became extreme; for I had a thousand dreams and fancies about him, in the state of health in which he had described himself; but hope flattered me with the joy of meeting him well, and rejoiced to meet me again; and with the happiness I might still enjoy with him, in a country wherein a different language from our own was spoken, and where I could not, of course, fail, as I thought, of being yet his principal and most regarded companion. I

fed my fancy with the delight he would feel in again embracing his children, one of whom he had never yet seen; and with the calm enjoyment I was likely yet to have in Germany with himself; where I should have no business of my own to distract me; but should only have to attend to my children, and to make my husband comfortable.

“It was with unspeakable pleasure then, that I at length heard the shout of ‘land!’ after an unusually long passage; and that I found soon after, that we were sailing down the Elbe, and I was drawing quite near to my expecting husband. We dropped down the river rapidly; the walls of Hamburgh appeared in the distance, and my heart bounded in my bosom, at the thoughts of again embracing my husband!

“Who may describe the feelings of a woman, situated as I was, as, after the usual bustle of arrival, I at length stepped ashore on the Quay, at Hamburgh? There was no one there to meet me; but this was not to be expected, and my limbs could scarcely support me to the street and the place to which I was directed. It was not

long until the house I sought was pointed out. I thought it but a mean looking place: the door was opened doubtfully to me, and I was conducted up stairs by a bald-headed foreign-faced man; and when I expected to see my husband, whom I trembled with anxiety to embrace, the man bowed me to a seat, walked off slowly, and shutting the door behind him, left me alone without saying a word.

“ I sat some minutes by myself in the cold empty room, endeavouring to account for the strange conduct of the man, from his ignorance of the English language; but my poor children began to cower closely to me, and to look wistfully in my face, while I sat trembling with impatience for my husband’s entrance.

“ At length I heard a foot on the stairs. I rose up in my agitation: the door opened, as I watched it intensely; a person entered,—but not my husband! he was a strange demure looking man, who addressed me in English, and gravely begged me to be seated.

“ I could not bear this mysterious formality;—

but sudden apprehensions were awakened by it ! I had not power to speak. The person took a seat opposite to me, and looked as if he had something to say, but knew not how to introduce it. At length, as I gazed in breathless yet undefined dread, in the ominous face of the strange man, he said, ‘Madam, I presume you are the wife of Mr. Y——.’

“ ‘I am,’ said I, hastily, ‘where is he?—why is he not here? Bring me to him, good friend;—bring me to him.’

“ ‘I hope, Madam, you will be patient, and—’ stammered the stranger.

“ ‘Speak, friend,—for heaven’s sake ! Where is my husband?’ I cried in agony;—‘is he not here?—is he well?’

“ ‘And be these his infants, Madam?’ inquired the person, with a wistful look at my poor babies!

“ ‘They are!’ I replied, ‘Oh! good friend, where is their parent?’

“ ‘Be calm, I pray you!’ interrupted the man.

“ ‘Is my husband well?—Is he alive? speak I pray you, for God’s sake! Tell me the truth at once.’ I entreated, ‘and that will calm me.’

“ ‘Madam, I am sorry to be the bearer of evil tidings !’ said the grave person, his compassionate look is present with me at this instant ; ‘ but,’ said he, ‘ since I must say it, I yesterday assisted in laying him in the grave.’ ”

“ ‘ God above !’ was the last exclamation that I was able to utter, and fell fainting at his feet.”

Here my poor widow made a halt in her story, and leaned heavily on my arm, as we proceeded slowly for a time in silence, at length drawing a sigh, she again continued—

“ For some time after I recovered from my long swoon I neither knew nor observed any thing ; but when I became collected in my mind, and fully understood that my husband had been suddenly carried off, when thought to be recovering from a fever, my former grief, great as it had been, seemed small and tolerable compared to this. My youthful husband was gone—dead—buried, on whom all my hopes and wishes for life were centred. All my former and present sorrows now met in a point, for *he* was taken from me for whom I had left my country and sacrificed my all. He who was the husband of my youth, the father of my

children ! to whom clung all my recollections and all my anticipations ; and in whose society, after all, I had tasted the only portion of endearing enjoyment which had been my lot on earth !”

Here the poor little woman again stood still, to express with energy her grief. “ Oh, Sir !” she exclaimed, as she stood in the middle of the road, looking up in my face ; her widow’s crape thrown up, her hands wrung into each other, and her cheeks streaming with tears—a very picture of heart-bursting sorrow. “ Oh, Sir, can you but conceive what it is to lose a husband as I lost him ? Can you understand the inexpressible grief of never seeing more on earth—never ! never again on earth ! the man who, who with all his faults, was entwined round the heart of a weak and sensitive woman ?”

I was by this time so completely overcome myself, by the appearance and genuine sorrow of the unfortunate woman, that my own tears began to fall nearly as fast as hers. When she had again calmed herself, and I had set my face in order, she thus proceeded.

“Independent of my feelings for my husband, I found myself now in a foreign country, where a language which I understood not was spoken, without friends or money, and with two infant children, besides myself, to provide for. I had given up my business in Scotland, and was left a destitute and disconsolate widow in a strange land—and what was I to do?

“Sorrow now brought on ill health, my money was all but gone, and my children came to be neglected. Any thing that my husband had left fell into strange hands, and was accounted for in one way or another, by the expenses of his funeral. My youngest child, for want of proper nourishment and attention, began to decline; and after much sickness, and trouble to me, he was taken from a sorrowful mother to a better world. Not to trouble you, Sir, further with the details of sufferings which cannot be described, by the kindness of some English families in Hamburgh, to whom my case became known, and even of foreigners, who were more feeling than those in my native town who had known me from infancy, I was furnished

with the means of returning home to Scotland. I had now no alternative but to return to my native town, and begin the world a third time, without a place to go to, or a chair to sit upon, and with a young child and myself to support.

“On my return I began again my poor trade, and, with some difficulty, got a little employment; for while some had a sincere compassion for me, who were but little able to serve me, the majority of those, to whom I was known, excused themselves, by blaming me for imprudence, which they again began to perceive in my late conduct, and charitably to set me down as one of those who were destined, as they said, to come to no good.

“I now, Sir,” concluded my widow, “try to labour at my business, when I have health to do so, in great discouragement and mean circumstances; for I am a broken-hearted woman, unable now to bear, as formerly, with the insolence of the prosperous, and the chiding of customers, who are never to be pleased with the efforts of one, who is bowed down in spirit by poverty, and the depression and humiliation of misfortune. Sometimes,

now, I get impatient at the harassing bargain-making of those who, living in plenty themselves, would yet have the labour of the poor widow for nothing. I have just been to Kilmarnock for a few days, with a view to improving a little my health; but I am unable to afford the returning coach hire, and my weak frame will not be the better of a journey on foot of twenty miles. But I feel that I shall soon be relieved from a life that has lost all interest for me, except it may be for my fatherless child; for the energy of my constitution and my spirits are completely worn down by affliction; my hope is no more; and I shall, of a surety, soon meet my husband and my infant in a better world!"

By this time, as the evening was deepening down, we discovered, in the distance, the gothic towers of the ancient cathedral of Glasgow; and, having pressed my sorrowful widow to partake, with me, of some refreshment, and prevailed upon her to accept such part of my silver and gold as appertained to my travelling circumstances, I accepted of her grateful and benignant blessing in return, and—I never saw her more.

When I learned that she was dead, and that even her child, also, was no more, I took a journey soon after to the town where the poor widow had lived, and I had the curiosity to go to the place where she was buried, and to seek to get a look of her grave. I tried all I could, about the nook in the churchyard where I was told she was laid, but could not identify the hillock that was hers; so I abandoned the search with silent heaviness of spirit, concluding, within myself, that not only the obscure griefs, but even the place where rested the dust of the poor and unfortunate, were consigned by the world to everlasting oblivion.

THE LOVE MATCH.

THE LOVE MATCH.

CHAPTER I.

So, art a gentleman ! and can'st not hear
A tale of love, and grief, and early wrongs,
Because the face of withering poverty
Grins in the homely picture ? go to !
I love thee not.

Scrap Stanzas.

MUCH of the enjoyment of a great many minds consists in recalling the past, in pondering over “ the deeds of the days of other years.” In early life, however, castle-building, and the day-dreams of anticipation of the joys to come, serve, more generally, to occupy our “ hours of leisure and recess ;” but, as our journey advances, and in proportion as the time already *gone* exceeds that which we suppose to lie before us, the conjurations of memory employ those hours so fondly devoted to absent objects ; the deeds *done*, and the feelings

felt, upon the events that are past, and recorded in the stubborn chronicle of recollection, form the great magazine from which is drawn the satisfaction or regrets of latter life. With what pleasure now do I dwell, as I step along by the way-side, upon every good I have been enabled to do in the course of my span of life, and upon the memory of every good man, whom it has been my fortune to meet among the tares, which are so plentifully sown in the wide field of the world.

I am now pleasing myself with the recollection of an opportunity I once had of saving the life of a worthy and (no uncommon case with such) heart-broken man, who had attempted self-destruction. I need, however, give myself little credit for this act, for there are none so hardened who would, on meeting with a heart overcharged with sorrow, refuse to put forth their hands to prevent the last act of desperation; but there are few, indeed, who are disposed to undertake the higher, because less obvious service of helping to stop the current of misfortune and suffering, before the feelings are too much shattered with its violence, and the

mind has lost for ever its healthy tone of energy and contentment.

The circumstance to which I allude occurred to me in Bedfordshire, when travelling from London, on the road which passes through the well known wood of Woburn. The morning was dull, cloudy, and lowering: the thick wood shaded in and darkened the road, and the rising wind made a low whistling among the boughs of the trees. My mind was somewhat depressed, from occurrences disappointing to my feelings, which I had lately met with; and the appearance of the day, with the gloom and silence of the road, disposed me to be contemplative and sad. In the alterations of this world, there is a time to laugh and a time to weep; a time to be merry, and a time when mirth is not pleasure, and gaiety is unseasonable and unwelcome. This morning my heart was unusually heavy: the dark shades of the picture of life I could not avoid dwelling upon; my feelings were softened, or, in the language of many, were become weak and womanish; and I now almost wished for an object on whom I might exercise compassion.

In this mood I moved along solitary in the wood, and looked with a sort of suspicion through the dark interstices of the trees, whenever I could obtain a glimpse over a broken embankment which skirted the road. I wondered that no one, besides myself, happened to be passing; and was listening eagerly for the sound of a footstep or a carriage, when suddenly, at some distance in the wood, I heard a strange dashing noise, with a sort of moan and rustling, that awakened curiosity, not unmixed with a feeling of terror. After a moment's deliberation, I sprung up the embankment, and ran to the spot whence I heard the noise proceed; when, at a short distance, I, with horror, perceived a man hanging by the neck from a bough of a tree. His body swung backwards and forwards, from the force with which he had thrown himself off; his head and face were uncovered, and, as I drew near, I perceived his countenance working in the agonies of suffocation.

I was for a moment deprived of action, from the hurry and agitation into which I was thrown, and from the uncertainty how to save a man's life, as

he hung high in the air, and I could not get at the handkerchief by which he was suspended. I, after some effort, succeeded in climbing the tree—got out upon the bough—cut the handkerchief, and the man fell to the ground. Upon unloosing the twisted napkin from his neck, and trying to restore him, I was deeply distressed to find that life appeared entirely to have fled—and the man lay motionless, distorted, and ghastly before me. I began to look round, and to feel alarmed at my own situation, alone, with a dead man at my feet, and the handkerchief by which he was strangled in my hand. There was no water near, which might assist in restoring him, should he still have life. I had neither any pungent salts to stimulate his nerves, nor a lancet to open a vein.

At length I raised his head, held him half sitting in my arms, and thought I perceived an effort to make a sort of gasp. He became now slightly convulsed; a little froth shortly after appeared at the corners of his mouth, he sobbed several times, and, by and by, his eyes, all at once, opened and rolled fearfully. By my chafing his temples, and

assisting, as far as I was able, the efforts of returning life, he at length sat up, breathed somewhat freely, and, turning his eyes upon me, began to gaze in my face with a look of doubting composure. I pressed his hand between mine, and addressed him soothingly. He looked frowningly upon me, then shut his eyes, and laid himself back upon the ground.

I watched him, while he lay beside me, often groaning deeply, and seeming to struggle painfully, partly with the effects of his horrible attempt, and partly with the thoughts that had caused it. He again sat up, and, looking in my face, said mournfully, "Friend, for your humanity in saving my life, God will reward you; but I am sorry—sorry that you have succeeded, and that I have failed in my attempt to get free from this wretched world."

I answered that, in his state of mind, we must necessarily differ materially upon that point; but that if he would try to accompany me to the nearest house, we might be furnished with something which would, at least, help to restore him to his usual health.

I assisted him to his feet, and he proceeded, with some difficulty, out of the wood. A coach soon passed, which, at my request, took us up. I alighted with him at the nearest stage, and called for refreshment. I ordered spiced wine and bread, which was soon set before us. He was silent, and seemed to hesitate about partaking of it; and when, by my persuasion, he did, I was shocked to observe, by his manner of swallowing it, that he appeared to be in a state bordering on starvation.

I had now, indeed, sufficient exercise for compassion, while I watched him in silence, and marked the abstraction of mental suffering working on his countenance; and while I endeavoured, by my manner, to show participation in his grief, and to obtain his confidence. I sat observing him. He was a young man about thirty; his dress genteel, but inclining to shabby; with good features, large intelligent eyes, and a look of despairing melancholy.

“Sir,” said I, compassionately, and laying my hand on his, “pardon my intrusion into the sacred temple of distress, such as yours seems to be;

but the sorrows of the heart must have a vent : it will relieve your mind, if you will converse with me on the subject of your griefs ; and, if I can do no more for your relief, I will, at least, give you the best advice of experience, and the consolation of sincere sympathy."

" Have I then," said he, looking doubtingly upon me, " once more found a man who really feels for his neighbour in his distress ? So few have I known, during my life, whose selfishness is to be overcome by the sufferings of another, so as to induce him to make any real sacrifice for his relief, that I look upon such men to be above price in our estimate of human character."

At my request he began, in rather an incoherent manner, to inform me of the cause of that state of mind, which ended in his impious attempt upon his own life ; in the course of which, drawing a deep sigh, he exclaimed most passionately, " My wife—my poor—wife and children !" He then rose from his seat, and walked in a frantic way about the room, and groaned fearfully ; then, stopping short, looked in my face, for a moment, with

a look that was terrific and appalling. He continued standing in this posture, without uttering a word, until, as he stared on me, his countenance changed into an expression of beseeching sorrow. He walked forward to me, and holding out his hand, said with humility,

“ My good—*good* friend, will you forgive me for my wicked thoughts? But I am so distracted about my family, that I was on the very point of cursing you, for recalling me to life and sensibility.”

“ My unhappy friend !” I answered; “ I forgive you at once: but pardon me for asking of you one question. Is your family at home in pecuniary want?”

“ O God !” said he, “ that I could say that they are not; my last accounts of them are, that they are in the deepest distress !” Here he covered his face with his hands, and stamped on the floor in terrible agony.

“ Sir,” I said, “ I have about me a small matter of five pounds: which, I believe, I can spare in the urgency of your distress; and if you will

accept of it, it may give a little present relief to your family."

"What?" exclaimed the man, staring at me with energy: I repeated my words, holding out the money, and begging that he would say nothing, but take it. The poor fellow stood for a moment, with a face like one beside himself; then throwing himself on his knees, near my chair, he burst into an hysterical torrent of tears, and buried his face in my lap.

I could not myself help being affected, as he lay at my feet with his hands on my knees; his distress of mind obtaining the natural relief of tears, from the melting joy of a little present relief, and his body quivering with strong emotion. At length he slowly recovered: he looked up in my face with his swollen eyes; then sat down on his chair, and contemplating the money said, with the most affecting look and emphasis, "I will not thank you, for I *cannot*!" and with difficulty prevented himself from a fresh burst of tears. I shall never forget that moment! I am still moved when I think of it.

We agreed that I should inclose the bank note in a letter, (in which he wrote a few passionate lines to his wife), and remit it to a friend, who would instantly on receipt, send the money to his family. The house in which we all this time were, was the post-office of the place; and it was almost painful to observe, the anxious impatience with which the husband and father waited the passing of the mail, to carry relief to his wife and children. When the money was fairly on its way, and the noise of the coach, into which it was committed, as it rattled away down to Scotland, became lost in the distance, the young man grew calm and cheerful. His conversation was now joyous and even playful. I found that he had observed much of life for his years; that his remarks were often penetrating and satirical; and that from the pathos with which he entered into the feelings of others, or described his own, he could fly off in an instant, to make a humorous or caustic remark on whatever he thought mean or ridiculous.

The day by this time became sunny and cheering; and I proposed that we should proceed on

our journey. I explained to him the peculiar mode in which I chose to travel; and as we proceeded on our road on foot, through the princely estate of the Duke of Bedford, he informed me that his name was William Allanton, and thus told his story.

CHAPTER II.

“MY father was a Scotch dissenting clergyman, truly a reverend character—a man who, with the qualification of a little good-natured weakness, and some sectarian, but conscientious bigotry, was indeed a ‘Nathaniel, in whom was no guile.’

“His life was rendered miserable, however, by the oppression of a large family, having but a small income; and the happiness of his children, in the season which should have given them the purest and most innocent enjoyment, was poisoned by the carking bitterness of narrow-hearted and chilling poverty. This kept us constantly on the rack of watchful privation and apprehension; clouded the dawnings of every joy, and altered the tempers of ourselves and our parents. We his children were denied all those little playthings and pleasures which those like ourselves enjoyed,

and the want of which is such a heartbreaking disappointment to the young; because our parents were unable to afford them. We dared not mix in many of the plays and freedoms of other boys, lest we should wear out our clothes; we dared not go a distance from home, for fear of wearing out our shoes; and besides being indifferently fed, we were constantly kept in terror by strong and threatening injunctions, to which our parents were obliged to resort, from the severe necessity of straitened circumstances and the rigid regulations of economy.

“ My father never had any thing to live by but his education and his preaching gifts, which might have been rewarded in the established church, or some such circumstances: but he had little worldly wisdom; and the appointed vineyard of his labours turned out to be no higher a situation than the Antiburgher congregation of Rockburn, an obscure village in the West Lothian. Here his lot was cast; and among his poor people he laboured in godliness and honesty for nearly fifty years—a determination of his talents, which he

said, must doubtless “be all for the best;” for the arrangements which Providence predestines for us, none may alter or elude.

“My mother, let me inform you, Sir, at their marriage, brought my father a little money; which was soon spent in the bravery of wedding show, and the delights of the first year of matrimony: but, as he used to say, ‘it was dear money to him;’ for though she who brought it contrived to spend it all upon herself in a short season, yet like the widow’s oil, it in another respect suffered no diminution; for, by her tongue, in constant allusion to it, like the memory of the just, it was held in everlasting remembrance. She was soon, however, like all other wives of poor men, forced to abandon that portion of gaiety and social enjoyment, at first within the reach of her circumstances, by the cares and occupations of an increasing family—female vanity itself was, by slow degrees and with painful reluctance, made to give way to its serious concerns and duties; and before she attained to thirty years she began to talk in the language of the aged, and to refer with regret to

the free and lightsome days of her youth. But my mother was, in many respects, well fitted to be the wife of a poor clergyman, and the mother of a large family. She was entirely domestic, laboriously industrious, and, except in the article of her own dress, rigorously economical. To us, her children indeed, she was a severe and vigorous disciplinarian; for in her temper was a good portion of the termagant; and its violence increased as her family increased in number, and with the successive trials to which it was put, by the consequent increase to her of drudgery and harrassment. The cradle was filled anew so often, that, upon each succeeding occasion, my father's heart sickened more and more with distress and apprehension: he applied, in vain, to his congregation for an addition to his income; and began to muse and to philosophize, why an increase of children should not, as of old, be in all circumstances an increase of blessings. My mother, however, never could comprehend how she came to be so miserable; seeing that Providence was multiplying its favours in sending a numerous progeny to surround

her table; advocated the popular doctrine, by the quotation, that children are ‘like arrows in the hands of the mighty man;’ and reproached my father in his want of faith and his carnal reasoning, because he advised the young men, who came to him talking of marriage, not to become parents until they were in a condition to do justice to their children.

“The conclusions of my mother and her gossips, however, were not sufficient to overturn my father’s good sense and his homefelt experience; he took these matters so seriously, that as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, his feelings were transferred into his sermons; he preached several discourses on the duty of celibacy; and strongly recommended the example of St. Paul the apostle to all persons of small incomes, who would live in godly singleness of heart and independence. But neither his virtues, nor my mother’s scheming economy, could enable his stipend, along with a few occasional and much-thought-of presents from his hearers, to support us in any thing like comfort, and pay for our

education; and we were brought up in hard and heart-eating poverty.

“Forty pounds sterling a-year, with the little manse, was a fair income for their minister, in the eyes of my father’s providers, who never reckoned their own expenditure in money; but, to obtain food for so great a number, and maintain some sort of clerical decency with this sum only, was impossible; and we were driven to degrading expedients, as I remember, and obliged to submit to meannesses most painful to me still to think of. The family continued to increase in number; and the wants of the elder children became greater as they drew nigh the time for doing for themselves; so that when we mustered thirteen, besides our parents, our condition became truly pitiable. My father’s sermons now became disjointed and allegorical, and abounded in incongruous bursts of distracted aspirations after heaven, or desponding and false pictures of the trials and miseries of the present state of probation.

“My mother’s share in the toils and perplexities of rearing and contriving for our large family pro-

duced upon her a different effect. The anxieties which drove my father to despondency, and to his Bible, impelled my mother to the fury of a shrew. He became resigned and shrinking : she took fits of termagancy that made him and the whole family tremble. The trials that sent him up stairs to his knees, and to the refuge of the pious, drove her down stairs to abuse my sisters, to scold the occasional servant, or to turn her out of doors, and to beat me for some supposed fault, until my heart, on these occasions, beat with horror at the very sight of her. Add to all this, my brothers and sisters, from these causes, became sour, malevolent, and quarrelsome ; and what with pinching poverty, discontent, fury, and contention, life, in our home, was often almost insupportable.

“ Even religion, I mean a sour and harsh sort of it, very unsuitable to ideas I was at this time acquiring, aided to make us wretched ; for on Sunday evening, when assembled together, after passing the whole day in the kirk, we seldom enjoyed a blink of the quiet happiness and peace of family society.

“ The severe zeal of our parents increased with their domestic anxieties ; and if we presumed to laugh or enjoy ourselves within, or to steal to the garden without to catch a little juvenile amusement, or to look upon the quiet going down of the sun, and the peaceful fall of the shadows of evening, religion (I mean this kind of it) came like an inquisitorial and ghostly tyrant ; and in the piercing and menacing tones of my mother, or the solemn and beseeching authority of my father, called us to punishment and to penance, and crushed our young spirits with restraint and terror.

“ To proceed in my account of the real state of the family of a poor minister. I had three sisters, well looking girls, generally pensive, humble, and affectionate ; often peevish, envious, and contentious ; but who, in easy and happy circumstances, had been lively and amiable.

“ The girls were obliged to keep cowering and desolate at home, for want of dress, to enable them to appear among their equals ; and they even dared not to go out, to accept of the well meant invita-

tions of their neighbours, from a consciousness that we were debarred from exercising a little kindly hospitality, and could not afford to invite them in return. So wretched did my poor sisters feel themselves, between our privations and restraints, and the temper of our parents, that, sure I am, they were ready to have thrown themselves into the arms of the first man that should offer to emancipate them from the miseries of home, though likely, from their youth, to have large families themselves, and, perhaps, to run the same race that our unhappy parents had done. But who need talk of the future to youth, particularly to the weaker sex, when under the impatience of present evil, and offered, in its stead, present enjoyment; and how few, in these circumstances, will give you thanks for your warning and instruction!

“As soon as we, the boys, appeared able to shift for ourselves, in any sort of creditable way, we were gladly sent successively about our business, to earn our own support, and to lighten the burden of our care-worn parents.

“Being myself amongst the youngest of the

family, I had five or six brothers sent off before me, who all went to the several large towns nearest us, to catch the chances of fortune, where population and wealth were most abundant. Whilst I remained at home, we had the additional pain, amongst our other vexations, to hear of the disappointments of some, and the bad conduct of others of those of us who had been sent from their father's house to 'try the world,' and its effects upon their own passions and dispositions.

“ In the troubled waters of life, when the present is suffering, men try to console themselves from the illusions of the future. Those who struggle with a large family and narrow circumstances, find, like all others, consolation in *hope*—anticipating ease and happiness, in latter life, from the good conduct and industry of their children. This I often heard my father advert to with feeling, and with some pride, as he surveyed the goodly company of young men and maidens who surrounded his hearth, and looked up in his face for support and instruction, on many occasions, with a spirit of docile humility, according to the beautiful scripture expression, ‘like little children.’

“ But these hopes are often sadly disappointed; and thus it was with my parents, when my brothers were freed from the severe restraint of home, and sent to the city to seek their fortunes. Three of them whom my father had, after much anxious effort, succeeded in getting into creditable and favourable employments, fell dreadfully into the vices of the town; and accounts came daily to our religious dwelling, of the dissipation, vice, and folly of one or the other of our late companions in piety; and, soon after, of the disrespect and misery which they were in consequence suffering. Other brothers of mine, however, we learned, were acting well: but this appeared to give little consolation to our parents; for, in this world, evil always makes a stronger impression than good; and my ill conducted brothers were the themes of my mother’s wrathful complaints, and my father’s be-moaning prayers. To his feelings, however, this seemed the most grievous trial of all, and, of all his disappointments, the hardest to bear.

“ There was one in particular, of his three prodigal sons, whose dereliction distressed him still more than perhaps that of both the others. He was my

father's second son; and seeming to possess a steady and serious disposition, the old man had designed him for the ministry; and with great difficulty and many sacrifices, had completed his education, when, getting inveigled with dissolute companions, he was led to commit many excesses, until at length, by exposing himself, he was obliged to abandon his prospects in the church, and, with them, all that was to make life respectable and hopeful, besides blighting the hopes of his parents, who had clung round him in prospect, as the future reward for all their care, and solace for all their sorrows.

“When these distressing accounts arrived, my father did not reflect, that if the will is too much restrained in early youth—besides narrowing and enfeebling the growing mind—when by manhood or change of circumstances, it obtains emancipation, it bursts forth like a torrent that had been confined, and then often runs to extremes in vice and profligacy; nor had he much opportunity of observing, that, from this cause, the sons of clergymen, and very religious persons, often become the most regardless and dissipated of men.

“ One night we were all ranged round our parlour fire, having just finished family worship ; my father, on this night, having ‘ poured out his heart to the Lord,’ regarding his disobedient sons, and ‘ wrestled’ in prayer for them, with the fervent and almost distracted earnestness of a parent. My sisters were in tears from the effect produced by the strong feelings of our father ; and even my mother melted into tenderness, as we tried to soothe and give hopes to the disconsolate old man.

“ A knock was heard at the door, it was the postman, who sometimes came at night, and who brought a letter from Glasgow, which my father trembled to open. When he had read the letter, his countenance sank into an expression of grief and despair, which filled us with horror ; for the letter was from a friend, who ended a dreadful account of the conduct of my brothers, by a demand for money with which they had been furnished on my father’s credit.

“ I shall not soon forget the inconsolable look of my good old venerated father, as he sat in his arm chair, with the letter he had just received in

his hand, we all in sorrow round him, and my sisters weeping at the news. ‘To have one prodigal son in a family,’ he exclaimed, with bitterness, ‘is a severe trial; but to have *three* already made manifest, is more than I can bear.’

“ ‘My life,’ he continued, with much feeling, ‘has been devoted to my congregation without, and my children within; I have striven for them with poverty and care through many years; I have borne for them the burden and heat of the day until my head is white, and my limbs have become feeble. It is now far spent—I am declining into the evening of life, and am wearied and broken down with increasing anxiety;—my sons, whom I expected to have held up my hands as my health declined; by their industry to have contributed to my ease, and by their virtue and talents to have solaced my feelings, and given me the comforting pride of a father, have become sons of Belial for wickedness, and blasted my hopes of their even doing well for themselves. And my Jonathan too!—whom I expected to have seen fighting in the good cause, in which my life has

been spent; whom I thought, with pride, to have witnessed instructing my people from my own pulpit, in that spot where, for above forty years, I have declared to them ‘the whole council of God;’ for *him* to have turned aside after the wickedness of Sodom, and followed the abominations of Gomorrah, to me is the excess of affliction!

“ ‘Tell me not of my children that do well—and of the hopes of those who are yet, like Samson, strong in the sheep-cots of their father. To have two sons to become to me like Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, I might have received strength to bear; but Jonathan! the Aaron of my house—the representative of my sacred office—to go over to the forbidden ground of the enemies of the Lord—is too much!

“ ‘I would now give up my life,’ he added, with his clenched hand held up towards heaven; ‘I would now, if it pleased Him, go hence, and be no more seen; and I may exclaim, Ichabod!—seeing that the glory of Israel is departed.

“ ‘Consolation,’ he still went on, laying his other hand on the Bible, ‘I know is laid up for

me in heaven ; but here it is no more. I may now weep for my children, like Rachel, and, like her, refuse to be comforted ; for my hopes are fled, my spirit is bowed down to the dust, and my gray hairs shall go down in sorrow to the grave !

“ And so they did : for though there was some mitigation of the cause of his despair—though he received an addition of *ten pounds* yearly to his poor stipend—and though Jonathan, his favourite, with promises of amendment, came to him, and said, ‘ Forgive me, father ! though, indeed, I am no more worthy to be called thy son ;’ yet sorrow had securely taken her seat—anxiety and disappointment had done their worst ; and, after wrestling for a year or two longer, with evils which his broken spirit made worse, and with which there was little mixture of earthly hope, his time was come—the ‘ silver cord ’ of life was loosened—the worn out pitcher was broken at the fountain—and he was laid quietly down where the weary are at rest. The death of a parent,” said my companion, “ is an impressive event. If I have not already been too tedious, let me describe his funeral, which to me was deeply affecting.”

“ Do not apologize,” said I ; “ I pray you go on.”

“ My father had a neighbour and friend, the minister of our parish church, with whom he had lived for nearly fifty years, in that sort of intimacy, mixed with a little envy, which subsists between superior gifts, which were on my father’s side, and superior circumstances in life, which were on Mr. Rawson’s. There was also a portion of the jealous rivalry, which is generally found between the lean and spiritually-fed sectarian, and the prideful and fat indolence, as my father said, of priests, who have kings for nursing fathers, and queens for nursing mothers ; and whose spiritual pastorage is connected with the Babylonish kingdoms of this world. Nevertheless they were both good men ; although like brothers of a family, who are differently talented and circumstanced, they never could allow the good qualities of each other, while they were alive—and knew not how much they really loved one another, until death had ended their rivalry, and extinguished their jealousy ; and, closing an intercourse which

had lasted half a century, enabled the survivor to see fairly the virtues of his friend.

“ Mr. Rawson was about eighty years of age, and had nearly lost the use of his limbs ; but when he heard of my father’s death, his mind received an extraordinary impulse ; he seemed like one awakened ! and though he had not left his house for above a twelvemonth previous, he would not be withheld from attending his friend’s funeral.

“ When the black crowd of mourners were gathered to bury my father, and sitting round the rooms in silent and meditative solemnity, the door opened, and every one seemed astonished and affected upon perceiving the bent figure of old Mr. Rawson, as he was brought in, leaning upon the shoulders of two men, his head shaking with a palsied motion, and his red eyes starting, as under the influence of strong excitement.

“ He was placed in my late father’s great chair. The bread and wine was brought in, and he was called upon to pray. The company rose up ; but he, being unable to stand, sat in the midst ; lean-

ing forward, like the patriarch Jacob, and resting on the top of his staff.—And when he began to lift up his old hollow voice, and made it sound long and solemnly through the hushed apartments, like a voice from the dead; and when we looked on his white shaking head,—his face towards the earth, and his eyes closed,—and heard him let out in prayer, his feelings of affection and sorrow for his departed friend, over whose remains he now addressed that Being, whose public servants they had both been for half a century, as he said mournfully, in the affecting words of the patriarch, whom he now so much resembled :

“ ‘ Few and evil have been the days of the years of the pilgrimage of thy servants !’ and in the singing tone, and trembling voice of emotion and age, prayed—‘ When the last messenger shall summon us to thy awful presence, in circumstances, where the enmities and friendships of this world shall have ceased, and our eyes shall have closed for ever on all things beneath the circuit of the sun ! may we pass over the awful Jordan, that separates time from eternity, with hopes as bright,

and faith as pure, as thy servant had, whom it has been thy will to remove from among us ! and whom we have this day met to lay in the grave ! in that place where reigns everlasting silence, and where the dead cannot give thee praise !' the effect cannot be described ; he appeared like a messenger from the world of spirits ! the assembly were drowned in tears : and old men, who had not wept for forty years, wiped their aged cheeks, and turned aside their faces, to indulge their roused feelings.

“ When we proceeded to the churchyard, Mr. Rawson was carried to the ground, and set on a ‘ through stane,’ near the open grave ; and seemed to take deep interest in what was going on. The considerations which enabled him to do justice to my father, but which he had suppressed during his life, now crowded upon him : his feelings were suffered to flow for him since his death ; and as the grave-diggers, with professional dexterity, clapped the earth over ‘ the dead man’s bed,’ he sat rocking himself backwards and forwards on the stone, expressing his feelings with a groaning murmur ;

for the fountains of nature had long dried up within him, and his time of weeping was past !

“ While he thus sat, some of my father’s congregation gathered round ; and one of them addressing him with country hale-heartedness, said,—

“ ‘ Weel, Sir ! there’s a gude man gane to his lang hame.’

“ The old minister looked upon the man with angry severity, but answered him not.

“ ‘ I’m observing, Sir,’ repeated the countryman, ‘ there’s a gude man gane to his lang hame.’

“ At length the old gentleman replied, with great emphasis and indignation,—‘ And is that all the inference you draw from the present interesting dispensation !’ and he ended by drawing his chin up and his mouth together, and fixing his eyes on the man, with that peèuliar expression by which an old man can give effect to his sayings.

“ ‘ What inference, Sir,’ said the man, ‘ would ye hae me draw, about the gude man that’s gane ?’

“ ‘ I would have you to draw the inference,’ he

was answered, ‘if you had sufficient understanding to do so, that you and your fathers have been his betrayers and murderers!’

“ ‘How hae we been that, Sir?’ said the man, looking at the minister’s old rival with astonishment.

“ ‘Did not you and your fathers *betray* him while he was in the vigour of youth, to take the oversight of your souls, by promising him all needful support in the Lord?—and did you ever perform this promise?—Did you not rather *murder* him by your parsimonious obstinacy, in withholding his due: making his family wretched, and breaking his heart. Go away!’ he commanded angrily, and waved his uplifted hand,—‘Go from me! I cannot bear the sight of any of you!’

“He sat by himself until the servants came and carried him home. They carried him back to the churchyard in less than a twelvemonth after, and laid him in the earth, a few paces from his friend.

CHAPTER III.

“ I CANNOT follow the fortunes of the other members of my family, now scattered abroad in the world, but will confine myself to a brief narrative of my own history, after various changes that followed the death of my venerated father. I was now ready to go forth to the wide world, and ‘push my fortune.’ What a pleasing prospect for a country youth of eighteen ! By the exertions of one of my brothers in Glasgow, I got employment in a merchant’s office ; and thinking myself a man, entered into manly pursuits, formed acquaintances, and tried to shake off my country rusticity.

“ But though I was sometimes remarkably lively and mirthful, my disposition was generally thoughtful and moralizing. I associated, of course, among the middling classes of a trading city. The prospect before me of passing my life, as I ob-

served thousands pass it, in keen and patient money-seeking ; in repressing every thought inconsistent with the pursuit of the ‘main chance ;’ in bearing all the buffeting of competition, and all the responsibility implied in the uncertainty of success ; in having to meet, perhaps, the scowl of the griping creditor, perhaps all the horrors of a mercantile fall, after years of anxious and laborious effort—I say, to set my face to all this disheartened me, and made me deliberate upon returning again to the country, to seek a quiet livelihood by the plough or the pruninghook.

“ But what was most painful to my spirit, as I sat at my desk, afraid to speak, or look off my writing, by the severe and Shylock countenance of my employer, was the system of rules which were urged upon me, as necessary to obtaining the good opinion of those, by whose cautious countenance or assistance I was haply to make my way in the world. The slavish restraint under which my person and mind must be placed, to please those who had obtained great perfection in this craft, yet from whose prejudices a slight rumour,

or any unguarded disclosure of mercantile heterodoxy, the good opinion of many years might be quite turned against me.

“ ‘Take care of yourself,’ said my employer to me one day, with a dry and striking grin, as he stood with his back to the fire, and lectured me for having been seen in the company of an old acquaintance, who had become an officer in the army, ‘take care of yourself, Sir ! you are a young man, and the eyes of the world are upon you.’

“ For several years I continued to learn the formalities and intricacies of business, and to experience the uncertainty of the favour of men, who knew no feeling but what was dictated by their own interest. My income was slowly increased with my years and experience; but though through steadiness and pliability, I contrived to please my employers, my heart was ill reconciled to the prospects before me. I was not yet ‘hardened to the world.’ The proud temple of wealth to me shone at a distance hopeless, if not immeasurable; and the rugged road by which it was to be approached, the long and toilsome ascent to it, and the thou-

sand chances of being tumbled back to the bottom of the terrific steep, on the summit of which it stands, guarded by the sleepless Arguses of Avarice, made it to me a prize which, even though it were certain, was unworthy of the immense sacrifice by which its attainment should be purchased.

“ On the subject of marriage, when time might be expedient, I received, from certain sagacious advisers, several wise and prudent hints; and in this way might have followed fortune, by a path less tedious and uncertain, than by my own mercantile talents. But these wise proposals, with the conditions annexed to them, I could not stomach: my mind was desperately at variance with the prescriptions of these excellent creditable persons, who never consider any thing, but as it relates to the one thing needful; and they sometimes would shake their heads and prophesy that I would never be rich.

“ You must now allow me, Sir,” continued my companion, “ to trouble you with some particulars of this period of my life, which may, perhaps, be tedious to a man of your sober experience; but which to me, even to think of and recount, as we

journey on our way, will be an interesting and consoling pleasure. In short, my history becomes now connected with one who was destined to have more effect upon my life than I at all could have foreseen, and whom that providence, which orders for us the sweet consolations, as well as the troubles, which are to mingle in our lot, at this period threw in my path.

“ Among other matters of gossip, in a detracting neighbourhood, I had often heard a young female spoken of in terms so uncommon, and so contradictory, that the alternate expressions of sympathy or of blame, at length, aroused in me considerable curiosity. The name of the lady was Villiers: there was allowed to be something painfully peculiar in her present situation; and warm and general admiration of her beauty, mixed with the occasional sneers of deep envy, and cruel insinuations regarding circumstances which ought to have excited moralizing concern, induced me to feel for her an extraordinary interest, long before I had the happiness which was afterwards to have such an effect upon my life.

“ It was on one of the delightful mornings with

which the summer begins, that, with holiday joy, I set forth, as had been long arranged, to the outskirts of the city, to meet a party of young people, like myself, for one of those rambles into the country, which gives so much delight in the free days of youth, and at which I expected to meet with Miss Villiers at last.

“ I was introduced to her as she walked with the other young girls of the party, on a green plot before the door of the house in which we were to meet ; but before I came up to the spot, I had marked her out in my mind from the others, by the superior elegance, simplicity, and grace of her dress and deportment. I need not trouble you, Sir, with a description of beauty, but during this May-day ramble to the braes of Cathkin, this glorious inhaling of summer’s breath, and drinking in of nature’s various loveliness, to me there was no lady of the party worth looking at, but herself ; and I soon found, that neither was there one worth speaking to but she ! She seemed sufficiently conscious of her beauty, or whatever else made her superior to her companions : but her

whole demeanour was so gentle and ladylike ; her communications and replies were so truly polite and proper ; her gaiety was so graceful and unaffected,—though mixed occasionally with a stealing gravity,—the pleasure she seemed to enjoy in our excursion, came out in her expressions, with such sparkling, and homefelt truth ; and her disapprobation of whatever struck her as mean or improper, spoke so rapidly, in the severe scorn of her eye, that I was charmed into increasing admiration, and almost feared to speak to one who seemed so far the superior of all around her.

“ I was not long in obtaining the attention of her who at once had engrossed all my admiration. My distant silence, and the involuntary observation of my eye, might have attracted her notice ; but after a time, we exchanged a little distant conversation. She afterwards placed her arm within mine, as we trod, with light hearts, ‘ the gowany green,’ and our young spirits danced to the summer’s music.

“ I can scarcely tell you, Sir, what followed on this first day of our meeting, supposing you were

inclined to listen to me. The intoxication of love may not be communicated. We had not sought each other's acquaintance, and yet even already we were well acquainted.

“ It was several weeks afterwards before I again saw her ; the opportunity was rather unlooked for by us both ; and she then received me in such a way, as to evince that she remembered me well, and was pleased with another occasion of meeting me. Her mind seemed now full of some painful matter ; but before me she strove to conquer the thoughts of it. I regarded her with deep interest, which increased every moment. She perceived my anxiety on her account,—smiled seductively at the gravity of my manners, but dropped doubting expressions occasionally, as if she was as yet uncertain of my sincerity. I now saw her repeatedly, and saw her alone ; her confidence in me continued to increase.

“ I learned from her and others, that she was the last remaining of a family,—was an orphan, and was wholly dependant upon an uncle, a bachelor, whom downright and unaccommodating honesty

had brought into embarrassed circumstances. Her father had died of a broken heart, caused by mercantile losses; and she soon after suffered the loss of an invaluable mother, a woman who had seen much of the world, and possessed a most superior mind and high endowments.

“ From her broken expressions, and the general pensiveness of her manner, I found that she suffered deeply in her feelings, in particular for the loss of her mother: and as, by degrees, and after much maiden coyness and distance, which at length gave way, she began to open her heart to me, and wept over misfortunes which placed her, at present, in dependant and trying circumstances; as she related the affecting occurrences of her mother’s death, the heaviest loss of all, and the perils and fears into which her uncle’s embarrassments placed her,—my heart melted with admiration and compassion; her form, and her expressions of the suffering of a proud mind, occupied much of my thoughts; the bright beams of the playful gaiety of youth often burst through her tears, like the sun through clouds; while she

moved me, at her will, to sorrow or to laughter, delighting me with the arch power of her countenance and conversation; and, in short, I was flattered exceedingly with possessing the favour and confidence of such a girl.

“ Her society now became the great delight of my existence; every moment that could be spared from business, I spent in her company. The maxims of avarice and worldly wisdom, that would have admonished me to beware of interesting myself in the misfortunes of another, and would have advised me to run from her, like others, when I found this to be the case, I regarded with loathing disgust. Admiration, compassion, and interest for her, soon merged into strong passion; and I came deeply under the influence of that power which reigns in heaven, and works such wonders upon earth.

“ What a transition was now, from the pinching bitterness, the strife, and to me the terrific religion of my father’s house, and the sickening and sinking observation with which my mind had lately been occupied, of trade and trading men! The

contemplation of the perfection of form and mind, —the bringing out of the feelings, and possessing the affections, of one of the best specimens of that seductive thing called woman, intoxicated me with a new joy, and elevated me above all I knew among the sons of men. Love now came over my spirits like a celestial vision, and fell upon me and softened me like dew from heaven ! As I flew to it from business and its sordid labours, I fed upon it like manna in the wilderness, and found it to be a nectar of which the world was not worthy !

CHAPTER IV.

“ LONG did I continue to drink this pleasing draught, and to enjoy those happy evenings spent in my love’s society. Her uncle was seldom at home; we read together as lovers will do, we walked together, for I was her only companion now; and in our excursions, I observed, with pride, that we were often gazed at by strangers, who, in passing, were struck with admiration of her face and person.

“ At length she was commanded to accept of an invitation to the house of a friend of her late mother’s, in the country, and for a short time we found ourselves forced to part. In the delirium of love and confidence, I pointed out to her the uncertainties which might attend our future destinies respectively; and asked her with affectionate seriousness, if all our intimacy was to end in some uncertain farewell, which might be the last occasion

of our meeting, and the last words we should speak to each other on earth ?

“ Her answer was such as might have been expected, from the confidence that was now between us ; and, before we separated, we had betrothed ourselves to each other, in terms which the hot pincers of affliction cannot pluck from the memory, and on which the thoughts will dwell with delight, after youth and passion hath passed away !

“ In her absence I had time to think seriously ; and now considered, with excessive pain, the difficulties that seemed in the way of a union with the object of my affections, and the length of time that I was likely to be obliged to wait upon the world and all its chances, before I should be able to support her with her ideas and my own, of what was necessary to make life tolerably agreeable. On her return, we agreed in the truth of this painful conclusion : but love is hopeful, and centres in itself ; and we persuaded ourselves, that, if circumstances should oblige us to unite with less pecuniary provision than we might wish, we could not but be happy, were we only together. After some time her uncle’s affairs drew to a crisis.

My apprehensions on her account became most distracting: her fortitude of mind was great for her years; but she loved him, and her fears for him and herself preyed upon her continually. He, at length, seemed to have found a provision for himself abroad, and resolved to fly and take his niece with him.

“ To leave her native land (for she was born in Scotland, although her father was an Englishman), and encounter the dangers of the sea, to such a distance as Buenos Ayres, with an uncle, who, though a good man, had no idea of the duties of guide and protector of a delicate and beautiful girl, and but an indifferent chance of being sufficiently successful in business to keep her when there in common respectability, appeared, upon consideration of the chances of being driven with him up and down the world, hazardous in the extreme; and yet where she was, no provision was made for her. But here it seemed best to remain. She scorned to seek after retiring friends, and proposed endeavouring to support herself by her needle.

“ But why should I tire you, Sir, dragging you

along the stream of circumstances, which was silently sweeping us both to the ocean of our destiny. What will you have? A single female, labouring heartlessly by herself, could not long preserve either her health or her character, when obliged to adjourn to the house of a stranger, and to work, as was necessary, for her daily support, if she still continued to see me occasionally, which, indeed, was now her only consolation. But to a lone girl of surpassing beauty, is not her whole existence comprehended in one term, character?—and so the alternative was, that I must from hence abandon Louisa's society. I, a bachelor, lived also cold and weary in my lonely lodging, practising frugality, and thinking day and night on her whom my soul loved.

“ But her health began to give way—and my misery was fast becoming intolerable. We could not stay asunder. We could not endure this state of separation. We met. We wept at the very thoughts of our joy and our resolves. We were united for ever as man and wife! Sanguine hope made the fairest promises, and love sanctioned and gilded our fondest delusions of ourselves.

“ Behold me, then, a married man at twenty-two, undertaking to support a family upon the precarious salary of a merchant’s clerk, with a wife, whom my anxiety to support in respectability and comfort was in proportion to the extreme ardour of my affection. For two or three years, while our income was sufficient for moderate comfort, we enjoyed the sweetest happiness; but, by this time, my dear companion brought me two children; and by the failure of the house (notwithstanding all its sordid prudence) for which I did business, I lost my situation.

“ All the interest I could command, and all that could be said for my character, could not, for a considerable time, obtain for me a similar employment; while, in the meantime, I was reduced at home to considerable difficulties. Necessity, at length, obliged me to accept of a less respectable situation, and a smaller income than the former, although, by this time, my wants were greatly increased. My family now became pinched, and often distressed; the want of pecuniary ease made sore inroads upon our love and domestic enjoyment; for elegancies were out of our reach; sufficient

necessaries we were often forced to want; and 'the sad realities of fate,' which in prospect we had often deplored, now bound us down to the mean and harassing cares of the world.

"It can neither be pleasing nor new to you, Sir," said my melancholy story-teller, interrupting himself, "to describe, a second time, the vexations and distractions of narrow circumstances to a family. The world is, unfortunately, full of them. But I will not have the wretched complainings of the thoughtless votaries of low passion, or even the cases of such as my own parents, to be spoken of, along with the silent suffering of elevated and cultivated minds, like that of my Louisa, whom circumstances have impelled to incur the risk of all these sorrows, rather than suffer what appears to them to be much greater misery, or being, perhaps, driven to dishonour.

Little did I once think, while pondering over the distress I witnessed in my father's house, that I was myself so soon to suffer deeply from the very same cause. The decisive step I had taken, pressed by the misfortunes of my Louisa, had already turned me aside off the straight course to

independence; and, friendless as we both were, I seemed marked out and appointed for a long and distressing struggle.

Already I had got into the power of men; pressing necessity drove me a little into debt; and harassment, without hope, began to humble my spirit, and distract my feelings. ‘The fortunate and the happy,’ said I to myself, on one of my sleepless nights, ‘seldom give themselves the trouble to think. The day glides over in agreeable engagements and unremarked pleasures; and their only observations are on the light follies of those who think as little as themselves. But the ambitious, or the unfortunate, *think*, because they are obliged to feel. Wisdom is forced upon them by the well-remarked impressions of pain; and, like those who are deprived, by blindness, of the light of the day, their nerves are more intensely alive to the form and nature of those objects with which they come in contact.’ My mind became now more than ever sensitive and reflective. I grew in wisdom and knowledge of mankind, as the pains and anxieties of poverty sharpened my faculties, and gave keenness to my feelings. I was now made fully sensible

of the extreme dependance of my situation in life. I could not afford to be a week out of employment; and the support of my family hung not only on the fortunes of another, but on his uncertain good opinion or caprice. My feeling for all I held dear at home, made me feverishly alive to every thing that might injure me in his favour; and, contrary to my nature, I found myself become, from necessity, cowardly, slavish, and servile. My spirit was broken, and my character was much changed, from anxiety for my beloved wife and children. I watched the mean countenance of the man I despised, and observed the movements of his contracted and groveling mind; for upon him depended my accomplished-minded wife, and my thoughtless innocents.

“ ‘ A wife and children,’ says Lord Bacon, ‘ enhance the pleasure of prosperity; and sweeten labour; but make misfortunes more bitter.’ It was now my lot to taste that bitterness. The pain of being kept at bay by my equals, because I had not money to spend among them, I could despise: but, when I saw my Louisa’s countenance becoming

pale, from domestic fatigue and confinement, when I observed her smile of passive endurance, as she heard of the prosperity of her former associates, who, in reality, were not worthy to tie the latches of her shoe ; when I witnessed, on these occasions, instead of repining, her fond look at the children and at me ; when I saw her declining in health, and vainly striving to support her spirits, without a single complaint, but on my account,—that I should have given up all the gay pleasures and hopeful chances of other young men, to cast my lot with her in her adversity ; for her sake to give up all hopes of fortune, and to spend my youth in a dependant struggle for the support of a family ; —when I witnessed these things, and heard her feeling lamentations for me, her soothing entreaties not to allow myself to be disheartened, and her heroic willingness to suffer any thing with me, and for our children, I was, indeed, comforted ; but my distress was inexpressible, that such a woman should, with me, be doomed only to degrading poverty.

Along with sickness, and accidental misfortunes

in my family, business vicissitudes now contributed to heighten the painful excitement of our trials, and hope and disappointment alternately tantalized and tore up our feelings. Driven by the wretchedness of a small and uncertain income, to a thousand plans of industry, I at length forced myself into a business of my own, without capital, or any advantage, but my own anxious efforts to do well.

“ But the sagacious and comfortable men of prosperity saw the foundation of my trade, and would have of none of my dealings; prophesied my destruction, and laughed my anxiety to scorn; for what to them was my concern for my wife and children? my credit was extremely limited; a few were friendly, and valued my character and honourable intentions; but none who were really able would lend a shoulder, to help me up the first steps in the ladder of prosperity, to give my efforts a fair chance; and every one fled from the man who seemed infected with the pestilence of poverty.

CHAPTER V.

“ABOUT this time the ferment against the government, and the sentiments of those called Radical Reformers, had spread through all the manufacturing districts of the country. Public and menacing meetings were held; a rising *en masse* of the lower orders was talked of; preparations seemed to be making for some terrible insurrection; and the peaceably disposed of the whole country were filled with apprehension and alarm.

“The higher classes justly derided the vain threatenings of working men, who were deluded into a purpose of overturning the long established and well defended monarchy of the country, as if such could be effected by the mere angry ebullitions of their own wrath and discontent; and considered their ignorant mouthings against our government as vain as the imbecile anger of the

dog, who bays at the steadfast face of the moon. Nevertheless, that large portion of men, who were in unfortunate and drowning circumstances, eagerly caught at this straw for help—began to meet together, and to marvel what wondrous events were yet in the womb of time; and preached abroad that, like the little cloud that rose out of the sea, at the prayer of Elijah, in time of great drought, which was at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which soon overspread the horizon, and burst at length with the long desired blessing, the present threatenings of insurrection should soon accumulate in confidence and power until it would burst also in an earthquake of political change; and would, doubtless, be succeeded by a jubilee of happiness and prosperity.

“The glorious effects of prospective revolution and anarchy awakened, I say, the hopes of every unfortunate man and every desperado. This radical plot became like the cave of Adullam—‘Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented,’ saith the Scriptures, gathered themselves, in one way or

another, under its dark recesses and obscure intents, and hoped something to themselves, from the schemes hatched in its murky bosom.

“At the period when the attention of the public was entirely engrossed by these matters, I was one night on my way home, after the business of the day, when I met on the street a friend whom I had not seen for a long time, and who, after a turn or two, proposed that I should accompany him to a neighbouring tavern, where we might have opportunity for some conversation. The house into which we adjourned was well occupied, and we were shown into a small box near the bar.

“As we sat, conversing with little either of warmth or noise, our attention was attracted to the conduct of two men in a room adjoining us, whom we could not avoid observing through a pretty large space, left by the falling out of an oblong knot from the thin wooden partition, which separated our box from the room in which the men were, and which left a hole just convenient to my eyes where I sat. One of the men walked quickly and impatiently backwards and forwards,

often looked at his watch, and whispered to the other; and we observed him take from his pocket a small sharp iron instrument, fashioned somewhat like a shuttlecock; which, with several papers, appearing to be plans, he showed to his neighbour. But what caused us to remark the conduct of the men, was the cautious whispering manner in which they conversed, while one of them often exclaimed, audibly, ‘I wish to God the blow up was fairly begun!’

“At length another man entered, whom they ran hastily to salute; and they and the stranger mutually inquired the news with great eagerness. The stranger was a stout, elderly man, well dressed, appearing as newly arrived from a journey, with a swaggering confidential look, as if a little elevated with liquor. He demanded the tidings of the two others, with the air of a man having authority, and one of them answered that every thing seemed in a hopeful way; that all persons in the working districts seemed determined, almost to a man, and impatient to be led to the field, *if* proper arrangements were made for their armament, and *if* they could only obtain the expected leaders.

“The strange man, nodding his head in congratulatory acquiescence in this veritable statement, said they should soon have leaders enough; and proceeded to screw his mouth, and, with an air of mystery, to communicate his news, which, after all, as I could hear, amounted to nothing more than the vague reports possessed by everybody. He said, that he hoped that every reformer would be firm, and stand forward without fear; that all Manchester, and the other manufacturing districts in England, were about to ‘strike the blow;’ and gave several obscure hints, regarding certain influential and wealthy individuals being warm in their cause ‘at heart,’ and ready to lead them to the utmost of their wishes, as soon as things should be ripe, and the common men should show face, with weapons in their hands. The two others were greatly comforted from this speech; drank heartily, success to the good cause; and the strange man at length, as the drink went round, unbending himself from his mystical secrecy, took from his pockets several papers or packets, which, he said, he had been entrusted

with by the committee of their friends in England, to deliver to sundry individuals of rank, some of whom he condescended to name.

“ Shortly after they withdrew together; and I proposed to my friend to follow them, and have them arrested on suspicion of treason; ‘ for,’ said I, ‘ this business of theirs looks very serious.’ My friend, to my surprise, laughed at me, saying that I had better not be too officious; ‘ for,’ said he, ‘ if you consider the subject a little, you may soon become of their mind yourself.’ In short, I found him greatly infected with their sentiments, and wonderfully anxious for the success of their plans.

“ My friend and I continued to converse upon this new subject; and I being raw in any species of knowledge, but particularly ignorant of politics, became almost persuaded that all the distress that I and many others suffered arose from the oppression and bad measures of the government, &c.; that the working class was about to sweep away our old and inveterate evils, with the besom of destruction; and that I should soon see and par-

take of the plenty and happiness that would follow. My incredulity, at length, gave way. I became elevated with this flattering conversation, and the liquor with which it was washed down : and, when I went home, I embraced my wife with joy, congratulating her on the cheering prospects which, at this moment, danced before my imagination. She only smiled and shook her head. The morning of a new day dispelled the previous night's delightful visions ; and, like the man who, parched with thirst, seems to drink greedily in his sleep, I awoke, as John Bunyan says, ‘ and behold it was a dream !’

“ The day after I had occasion to go to the town of Paisley ; and, missing the person I wanted to see, was obliged to arrange for remaining in that town for the night. While sitting in the common apartment of the inn, passing the afternoon, two tradesmen-looking persons were unceremoniously introduced into the room, and sat down to their drink beside me. They talked, of course, upon the topics at that time in every one's mouth ; inveighed bitterly against the ministry and the

king ; but said, with a vulgar spiteful scorn, that they (the king and his ministers) had had their day, and the people would soon have theirs ; and they should now feel what it was to oppress millions of ‘ decent, sensible men,’ to support a host of blackguard sinecurists, and hypocritical drones of priests.

“ Finding that these sensible decent persons were addressing me, I replied that, for any thing I knew, a reform might be wanted ; but how that could be effected by the mere operative class, without any ostensible Franklin to legislate for them, or Washington to organize and lead them to resistance or hostility ; supposing, for argument’s sake, such to be the proper mode of obtaining what they aimed at—I could not see. The man forced a laugh at my answer, with the scornful and self-satisfied air of one who found himself obliged to condescend to instruct a child or a simpleton ; and said,

“ ‘ And so, my friend, like other ignorant folk, ye are pleased to think us perfect asses ! born idiots ! arrant bairns !—that, like Jonah’s Nine-

vites, dinna ken our right han' frae our left!— Upon my word, we're muckle obliged to you, young man, for thinking that grey-headed experienced men, that might be your grandfather, ha'e nae mair sense than lippen their hinder end to a slap that gate! Ah, ha! lad; we wer'na born yesterday, to commit oursels, an' our cause without gude fallows to back us; tak' my word for't!'

"I admitted my ignorance, and professed willingness to be instructed, which greatly pleased the self-love of the man; and he, with the most laughable self-complacent solemnity, drew himself up; and with the air of a lecturer on phrenology, or some such modern discovery, began, as Shakespeare expresses it, 'to unmuzzle his wisdom.'

"Like the man, who thought it necessary to commence a lecture on language, by a treatise on the science of music, my instructor began at the root of the matter; 'developed' the law of nature with due profundity, as also the rights of man: by which he seemed to mean, that every

man had a *right* to rule, or to be ruled, in his own way; until he at length found himself *bogged* between the principles of the French economists, which he did not understand,—and the principles of the British Constitution, of which he was (as his townsmen would say,) most preciously ignorant. Finding that he had now played the philosopher long enough, he descended to his proper level; and began, in the most nauseous Paisley vulgarity, to rail at the tricks, as he said, of kings and priests, by which dust was thrown into the eyes of the people, to prevent them from becoming deists and atheists, and from seeing their own immense value and sovereign power; and ended by trumpeting forth the wisdom and strength of the radical party; and glorying in all the great men who, he said, only waited the rising among the artizans to manifest themselves, and hold out to the weavers, &c. the right hand of fellowship; ‘and *then* they would ride forth,’ as he expressed it, flourishing his arm at his own eloquence,—‘conquering, and to conquer!’

“ I smiled at the vulgar enthusiasm of the man.

We entered further into conversation. I felt an interest in the subject, because it was a new study to me, and because the odd absurdity of the man furnished me with amusement; while he, on his side, thought me a teachable and hopeful disciple. It did not for some time occur to me, to relate to him the circumstance of the men, whose conversation I had overheard two nights ago; and when I did think of mentioning it, and came to tell of the packets one of them seemed to be charged with, to be delivered (if the man was to be believed), to sundry individuals of influence, he thumped his hand vehemently on the table; reproached me for stupidity, in not ‘disclosing’ such important tidings to him sooner; rose up and walked proudly about the room; putting himself into attitudes, as if meditating or rehearsing an oration to his brethren upon this great subject, and frequently exclaimed,—

“ ‘Wha can doubt it? Wha can doubt it? We’ll hae the whole sense an’ talent o’ the nation on our side yet, to help us to clean out that Augian stable o’ Saint Stephens; and after that, I trow, we’ll

kittle their corners,' he said, suiting the action to the word, with a thrust, in some such way as a Spaniard uses his knife.

“ ‘ Ye shall gang doon this vera night, young man,’ he continued, addressing me, ‘ to the meeting o’ the committee, in Saunders M’Haffie’s, that ye may declare, in the body o’ the assembly, what ye hae seen and heard ! but ye’re a man o’ honour, Mr. What’s-your-name, ye’ll no betray us ! ’ he said, holding out his dirty hand for me to shake, by way of swearing me to secrecy: ‘ an’ if ye gang, ye’ll see us a’ sitting there, wi’ our president an’ our secretary, like ony senate; an’ ye’ll hear mair *real* wisdom in that back room o’ Saunders M’Haffie’s in one night than has been heard in the house o’ parliament, for ought I ken, since that fallow Cromwell kicked out the members like dogs—my blessing on him ! ’

“ The man was so overjoyed at my intelligence, and his own dreams of slaughtering the parliamenters, and becoming a Solon himself, that he spent every farthing he could gather from the corners of his pockets, in drinking success ‘ to the

cause;' and eagerly pressed me to go and make a speech to the committee in Saunders M'Haffie's.

" Having nothing better to do, partly from thoughtless curiosity, and partly warmed into favour for the sentiments of the reformers, I agreed to accompany my new friend, Moses Mushat (for that was the name of this radical philosopher) to their honourable senate. My mind was, for a moment, relieved from its usual depression. I gave way to my natural disposition, to observe and laugh at folly when I met with it; and, little decided in my opinion on the general subject, yet fully disposed to ridicule such revolutionary agents, I hoped to find a treat, in witnessing a parliament of weavers, who were, doubtless, in the succeeding political millenium, to sit 'at the helm o' state,' and to 'rule this mighty nation.'

" It was, favourably, dark when I went with the man; and, on our way, Moses Mushat had so many places to call at, to impart the refreshing news of a messenger having passed through Glasgow with his pockets full of correspondence from the friends of the cause in England, 'to most of

the noblemen and gentlemen in the west of Scotland,' as Mushat was pleased to translate most of my unimportant communications, who, he said, must be their friends *at heart*, that we did not seem likely soon to arrive at the place of our destination. Among other places, he brought me to a cutler's shop, where a number of idle men stood or leaned, with aprons before them, and some of them with stockings drawn on their arms, by way of sleeves—most with short tobacco-pipes in their mouths—and all enjoying the glorious luxury of laziness, and discoursing of the deep knowledge of the Paisley weavers, and the great strength of the radicals.

“ Each man seemed to grow two inches taller when he heard the tidings which Moses, with a consequential air, imparted to them; and being by a look made sensible that I was a favourer of their cause, they made no scruple of venting the most treasonable expressions, in the most vulgar and childish language. Several men, of a similar appearance, came into the shop, while I waited, inquiring if their *knives* were ready. Moses, winking

with one eye, explained this to be the name agreed upon, by which their pike heads should be designated—showed me a number of them—and informed me that the making of such had been almost the whole business of the cutler for the previous winter.

“ We next stopped at the door of a small public house, which, I was told, was Saunders M'Haffie's *senate house*; and we entered, passing a man who was posted as sentinel at the door, to give timely warning of any approach of the higher powers to disturb the deliberations of these webster legislators; in which case, as Moses Mushat told me, 'there was a convenient door to allow them to escape through Saunders M'Haffie's kail yard.' I was thrust into a small room, where stood a table covered with newspapers, the writings of Cobbett, the Black Dwarf, paper, &c.; and on a small corner-shelf two or three well-thumbed copies of Paine's *Age of Reason*. While I remained here, I understood that the committee were deliberating upon the safety of admitting me; and at length Moses entered, and, with a solemn

air, introduced me into the place where sat this potent assembly.

“ It was a narrow low-roofed room where they were met, having a long table in the centre, round which, on forms, sat the members, with an elderly man as president at the farther end. On the table stood a small stoup of aquavitæ, with a single drinking glass, and a bit of oaten cake. Two small dirty candles shed a dim light around, and upon the pale faces of the ill clad and famished-looking men, that filled the room, and sat looking in the face of the president, waiting for him to say something; and, but for the great event of my news and introduction, seeming at a loss upon what to deliberate.

“ On my relating what I had heard and observed, I saw they were disposed to believe any thing, however gross, that favoured their cause; but they justly wondered that such a special messenger, as I had informed them of, had not done them the honour to wait upon them, or even send notice of his mission; and, never suspecting the truth, that he was an unprincipled

betrayers, they soon consoled themselves with the supposition, that he could only have been prevented from demanding an audience by the hurry of his important services.

“The assembly having soon come to this conclusion, became loquacious upon the great events that were soon to take place; and I really pitied the poor men—some of whom spoke with fervent excitement, and an enthusiasm which I was forced to admire; and who, with faces like death, from long hours of labour, and poor and scanty food, were neglecting their employments, and deserting the few advantages within their reach, to amuse their fancies with the delusions of children, and to imagine themselves for a moment the planners of revolution, and actors in the affairs of national government.

“I did not, however, receive at Saunders M’Haffie’s the amusement I had anticipated; and what I saw only caused me to think what an imposing thing even the meal-tub plot must have been, as an assembly of conspirators, in comparison with this mock committee, or Guy Fawkes’s plot,

or any other creditable-looking plot; and, on my way home, after serious reflections on the distressed situation of so many of my ingenious countrymen, my imagination became full of plots and conspiracies, and dwelt with romantic recollection upon the celebrated secret tribunals of Germany, whose sittings were held in the heart of a forest, at the dead of night, with the stars twinkling over the heads of its members, and their faces shining in the light of their own torches.

“ I returned to Glasgow on the following day; and after I had finished with my employer the business on which I had been sent, I inquired of him what he thought of the threatening appearance of the times, and the mischief which seemed to be brewing throughout the country. He answered that ‘ it depended upon how it should *end*, whether it might prove to be mischief or good; but that, for his part, he had long observed that the persons in power seemed determined to resist every wish of the people for the rectifying of evils that themselves admitted to exist, and which lay at the root of all our complaints; and that he thought it not

unlikely that they might *rise*, and do by force what was in vain sought by petition, and other channels of public opinion.'

"He had never spoken his sentiments to me before; and I was now encouraged to describe to him what I had overheard and observed in the tavern, and also what I had by chance witnessed in the town of Paisley, without, however, troubling him with any observation of my own upon these matters. He seemed struck with my information; and, after taking a few turns across the counting-house floor, he went out and left me. While he was absent I became exceedingly uneasy, from a fear that I had gone too far in my confidence in him, knowing his low and narrow mind; and that he might make use of my information to betray me, and those whom, little as I could approve of their proceedings, I would rather have died than bring into jeopardy. He however returned in an hour, with a smile on his face; and, after talking of some matters of business, said that the manner I had conducted myself in regard to this business, &c. had greatly enhanced me in his opinion; and,

as he had become much interested respecting the fate of the present attempts to bring about reform, he would recommend me to follow up the advantages I had accidentally obtained, in acquiring the confidence of the heads of the reformers in the west, and to go out and communicate with them occasionally. He then began to write in his Bank book, and said to me, 'As I know your mind is uneasy about your family, take this draft for twenty pounds'—and he handed me the draft—'with which I shall charge your account or not, according to circumstances.'

"You may conceive how happy this little relief made me, and how my opinion of my employer was improved from his apparent generosity. I was soon after sent to Paisley again; and after meeting with Moses, and several others of their principal men, I was told that the reformers were that night to be trained in their military evolutions in the neighbouring fields, and, that if I chose, I might accompany them. This was a new scene to me; and about ten at night, I went to be

exercised in the pike exercise, and the art of upsetting the government.

“ I was conducted out of town with my head full of popular armies ; squadrons of pikemen marching and counter-marching : and extended lines of a warlike people, covering great part of the country. But when I came to the spot, I could see nothing but a straggling crowd, of less than a hundred persons, most of whom stood talking in groups ; and instead of arms or military appointments, they mostly wore aprons before them, and had short tobacco-pipes in their mouths. One group I heard disputing upon what were to be their degrees of military rank, viz. which of them should be ensign, and which should be captain ; and another was occupied in a strong argument (for there were some of them old soldiers) regarding what was the speediest mode of cutting to pieces a regiment of dragoons.

“ A party of about forty were in another part of the field, formed into a line of Indian file ; and were marching, and halting, and facing about, very much like children *playing at soldiers* ; for,

as most of them were to be commissioned officers, some were talking, some laughing, and now and then some stood still, while one or two ran to a hole in the hedge to listen, as they said, 'if the horsemen were coming.' I perceived that, excepting a few determined men, it was generally the youngest, and most regardless-looking, that were most forward to be soldiers; and as their discipline allowed perfect liberty and equality, I joined (the better to make my observations) this sample of 'physical force;' but looking along their irregular mixture of boys and men, I could not help despising myself for my folly in being found among them.

" ' You'll be a pretty sort o' a captain, Jock !' said one to his neighbour, ' gaun there, marching wi' your han's in your pouches !'

" ' Deevil sic anither soger I ever saw !' said an old militia-man, teaching his comrade on the left, whose faults he could see in the dark—' Ye set down your feet man, when ye march, just as ye were treading the *treadles* ; an' your vera head gangs *nid noddin*, as if ye were following the shuttle !'

“ ‘Od, man,’ said the refractory recruit, answering again, ‘ye’re deevelitch strick for a malicious man.—Do you expect me to be as gude at the marching already as a fogleman or a fife-major? an’ to stick in my back and out my breast, just like Jock Walker, wi’ his bass drum on his wame: besides, haven’t I held up my chin i’ the air to please you, till my vera een are standin’ in my head?’

“ ‘Canna ye turn out ye’re toes, men?’ reiterated the zealous militia-man: ‘I declare ye hae no more notion o’ marching than Tibby Drab’s hens!’

“ ‘I’ll tell you what, Jamie Corbie!’ said one, speaking to the man behind him, ‘if ye dinna keep ye’re lang legs to yourself, an’ haud your brogues aff my heels, I’ll kick behind me, like a Cuddy, that’s what I will!’

“ But what most diverted me, was the happy union of the hardships of war, with the luxuries of home, in a patriotic weaver near me: who, having considerably lighted his short pipe at that of some other, before he commenced drilling,

was circumspectly going through his exercise with it in his cheek. The word of command was given to face to the left; but the man next to him happening to forget to which of his sides this military term applied, turned to the *right*; in doing which his nose came in contact with his comrade's pipe, and broke it off at his mouth, and the two valiant soldiers stood facing each other.

“ ‘ Deevil's in you ! ye hae broken my pipe ;’ said the one, spitting out the stump of his pipe.

“ ‘ Hang you, ye hae broken my nose !’ said the other, feeling his face with his hand.

“ ‘ Blast your bletherin' tongues !’ said the militia-man ; ‘ what gars you speak in the ranks ?’

“ The straggling groups behind were now beginning to form into line, beside our corps ; and some of them actually had pike-heads stuck on the ends of sticks ; but a sudden alarm took place, and they all began to cock their ears : something was heard ;—and after a few minutes listening, one heard distinctly the clatter of horses' feet ;

and another the trumpets of the dreaded horsemen.

“ ‘ The cavalry !—the cavalry !’ was exclaimed with terror, from one to the other ; and although some talked of resistance ; and some of marching off in regular order,—in five minutes we were all dispersed, and our great army had scampered away in different directions.

“ I happened to go on a little farther, on the nearest road, and soon found the cause of this panic. I fell in on my way with a man and an ass, coming from a neighbouring fair, and the shoes of the poor animal happening to be loose, made a clattering on the stones, very terrific to the assembled radical army ; and so as greatly to resemble, at a distance, the noise of a troop of horse.

“ As for the alarming and warlike sounds, I saw at once how they were to be accounted for : this donkey-man happened to be accompanied from the fair by an honest fiddler ; who, in order to beguile the tedious journey, was innocently treating his neighbour and the ass to a spring

on his instrument; and which in the distance by the dexterity of the musician, must greatly have resembled the warlike sound of a trumpet!

“ ‘To your tents, O Israel!’ cried the radicals in the field at this appalling sound,—and every man fled.”

CHAPTER VI.

“MR. STEEL, my employer, still seemed to take extraordinary interest in the proceedings of the reformers; and questioned me concerning what I had seen and heard, with the most eager attention. I could not divine his motives for this; for I knew his mind to be beneath the least feeling of patriotism, or the love of freedom, and his judgment to be equally incapable of perceiving the value of our existing laws and institutions, as of the true mode of rectifying old abuses. I afterwards found, however, that he had an ambition for city honours; and made use of the information that I was enabled to obtain for him; thinking, by its means, to ingratiate himself with some of the present rulers, for his own mean purposes.

“Beginning to reflect, however, upon what I was

about, I felt alarmed at the thought of the consequences that might follow my attendance upon radical committees; into which I had, in the first instance, been led by causes rather arising from the peculiarity of my disposition, and my thoughtless fondness for observing men in absurd or amusing situations, than from any political motive; and was not a little uneasy at the thought, how much I had, in my simplicity, trusted myself into the power of Mr. Steel: and, when I further reflected, that his seasonable advance of twenty pounds had no small share of influencing me to my subsequent obedience to his insidious wishes, I almost cursed myself, and deprecated, with a sinking heart, my abject circumstances, which had made me so easy a prey to the man who had induced me to do what made me almost despise myself, by the bribery of a little money.

“ But, when I again thought of my family, and the temporary benefit this small sum had been to them, I perceived fully what a changed being I was capable of becoming, from the pressure of circumstances, and what I was capable of under-

taking, for the sake of obtaining comfort for my Louisa and my children.

“ While my mind was in this state, Mr. Steel began to talk to me of making certain inquiries of the principal reformers individually, next time I should go to Paisley, upon points respecting which he pretended great curiosity. I now began strongly to suspect his motives; and, at first testifying only reluctance, I at length absolutely refused to meet with the reformers any more. Steel looked at me as one would look at a dog, who refuses to do his bidding; and bravoinly said,

“ ‘ And so, Mr. Allanton, you won’t do as I desire you, eh? and do you suppose I have given you twenty pounds for nothing, eh?’

“ I stood stock still, gazing on him with astonishment, but unable to utter a word.

“ ‘ Take my advice,’ he said, assuming a tone so despicably cajoling, that I could scarcely refrain from spurning him; ‘ Take my advice, and do as I wish you; or else,’ he continued, raising his voice, on perceiving my look of contempt; ‘ I’ll discover every word you have told me, and have you made an example of.’

“ My spirit rose to such a pitch of indignation when I heard him utter this, that, fearing my passion might drive me to some rashness that would put me farther into his power, I replied not, but rushed hastily out of the room.

“ But my feelings were wrought up to the highest, as I proceeded, by gradual inferences, to perceive the whole extent of the degradation, and even danger, into which my dependant circumstances and anxious mind had plunged me. ‘ Good God !’ I exclaimed, when I got words to assist my agitating reflections, ‘ what am I become ? I may be apprehended as a traitor and a rebel ; I may even suffer public punishment ; self-approval and whatever depends on it, may even be driven out of my bosom ; and all from the degrading influence of poverty, which has made me a tool to the mean wretch I am also obliged to call my master.’

“ ‘ Poverty, alas for it !’ I went on, ‘ for it is the accursed thing that all men conspire against ! Wisdom, and worth, and genius, and love, and the “ noble rage ” of patriotism itself, are all crushed beneath its galling and chilling pressure :

and thus the human mind, with all its godlike aspirations, becomes, in its grasp, or that of its progenitor, the yellow-eyed fiend, gold—as the very clay in the hands of the potter, which the fiend tramples under his feet, or sets up at his caprice; the molten Moloch being all the while worshipped “above all that is called God,” by the wretched idolators of this mammon of unrighteousness, who yet call themselves the offspring of civilization. My bitterest imprecation on the world,’ I added, ‘on the refined selfishness and injustice of civilization, which has set up this cruel idol, this European Juggernaut, to crush to death its thousands and tens of thousands, or to consume its victims by slow and heart-devouring misery: and when the many-attributed monster hath fixed its talons on the wretch, driven him to despair, and buried him in the cross roads of life; it drives a stake through his soul, fixes his bowels to the earth, and consigns his name to everlasting contempt.

“ ‘To what have we arrived?’ I went on in my despairing frenzy, ‘that men will exert themselves with zeal to convert *black men*, who never knew the

vices of the white *Christians*, yet will at the same time weave a net of circumstances round their prostrate fellows in this Christian country, which will in vain be resisted by the degraded petitioner ! While the rich man blesseth himself complacently, and says, “ It is an everlasting law of our excellent society, that to him that hath, shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken the little that is left.” And thus,’ said I, after I had got home, and sat gazing on my family, ‘ is my high spirited Louisa and myself, for a few guineas, to be forced into the power and everlasting dread of such a wretch as Steel ; and to be tortured daily with the studied disrespect of persons whom our minds constrain us to loathe and despise. Poverty !’ exclaimed I again, ‘ it is the unpardonable sin, that is never forgiven, neither in this world, neither’—but I was on the point of blasphemy, when I indulged my thoughts on the hated subject.

“ But, alas ! when I had exhausted my frenzied thoughts what could I do but submit—bow my neck to Mr. Steel—for the sake of my wife and children ; and to save myself, perhaps, from the grasp of the executioner ! When I returned to

him, he grinned with a cold satisfaction at my passion, and his triumph over me ; but, in the manner of his habitual hypocrisy, began to soothe me—pretended kindness and concern for me—protested I was safe with him—and obliged me to promise again to attend the committee at Paisley.

“ I obeyed, and when I went there and met the reformers, after some discussion, they offered to entrust me with a mission to a gentleman of property and name, who lived at a considerable distance, and to whom I was to carry a letter, and receive an answer, which, for fear of danger, was to be principally or wholly verbal. Mr. Steel strongly urged me to undertake the journey—talked of the service I was doing my country ; and I was furnished by the committee with money to bear my expenses.

“ My mind was now relapsing into its former depression, when, just as I was about to set out, I received a letter from an old friend in the West Indies, with whom I, since his leaving Glasgow, had occasionally corresponded. He informed me that he was on his way to Britain, intending to open an establishment in London, to be connected

with the one he had in Barbadoes, of which he offered to give me the charge, with a handsome remuneration, either in the shape of salary or share, as we might fix; and, appointing to meet me at the house in which he usually lodged in London, on the first day of the following month, that we might arrange the whole business.

“ I was, of course, rejoiced at this prospect of some degree of independence, and of being able to maintain my Louisa and my children in comfort; and thought that fortune was now, in her caprice, turning unexpectedly in my favour. I informed Mr. Steel of the offer I had received, and he did not seem displeased at my improved prospects, ‘if,’ said he, hypocritically ‘the present system is to get over the ensuing struggle;’ but, in the mean time, he urged me, by all means, not to delay my important mission for the reformers.

“ I set off next morning, by the mail, in good spirits; and when I arrived, on the following day, at the Town of T——, I hired a horse to carry me to my destination, round by a small town called Ecclestane, about ten miles off the main road.”

CHAPTER VII.

“IT was a fine afternoon in spring, when I entered the old-fashioned gate of the demesne of Craigha’; and having passed the porter, who peeped after me, with the most anxious scrutiny, from the ivy-clad lodge wherein he lived, I rode cheerily down the long, straight, and broad avenue, under the shade of its tall chesnut trees, towards the Ha’. This stately avenue terminated in a thick clump of larch and witch elms, which concealed the mansion from that point, and the carriage road then winded with a sweep round a delightful park, which modern taste had beautified and improved upon all the preparatory advantages of the rich and venerable vegetation, of perhaps a century before. As I rode leisurely along, and contemplated its various beauties, a troop of deer came rustling past me on my left, and spread themselves with

gambols of delight, like forest shooters, among the bushes; and on my right, at some distance, I perceived the white plumage of a flock of swans shining through the trees, as they sailed majestically along a sheet of water or pond, which now opened out to my view.

“ I stopped my horse to gaze on this pleasing scene. Round the edge of the lake, and on a picturesque island in its bosom, were placed several exquisite statues, in different attitudes:—by the side of a graceful clump stood a lovely figure of Musidora, stepping into the lake to bathe—and over the trees, on the farther side, peeped the top of some monument or temple. The rays of the sun glittered upon the little waves of the lake, which winded round a point at its further end and became lost, by artificial obscurity, in a dark recess among the trees; and as I contemplated these objects, my heart yearned after wealth, when I thought of the various elegant enjoyments within its extensive and commanding power.

“ When I came opposite the mansion, it struck me with a degree of awe, although there was

nothing remarkable about it, except its venerable and somewhat castellated appearance; but the taste of the present proprietor had supplied a beautiful gothic portico at the entrance, and refreshed the old arms of the family, which projected with dignity above the entrance.

“ I soon dismounted and entered the house; and the servant mistaking me, I suppose, for some nobler personage, opened the door of a low drawing-room, into which he showed me until he should fetch his master, who was out somewhere in the grounds. The room into which I was shown was elegant and sumptuous beyond what I had ever seen; music, musical instruments, books, and drawings, lay scattered about the tables and sofas, in luxurious carelessness; and it seemed altogether the Paradise of some tasteful and literary voluptuary, when he chose to vary his enjoyments by residing in the country.

“ As I contemplated the beauties of the apartment, the door was hastily opened, and a beautiful young girl came skipping into the room. When she perceived me, she blushed, and, begging my

pardon, ran out, with the lightness of a fawn; and I was again left to my own meditations.—‘My God!’ I exclaimed to myself, ‘what can induce the owner of all this to endanger and interrupt the quiet happiness that reigns around him, to perplex himself with this miserable radical cabal? and can he find no other way of serving his country, but contaminating himself with treasonable correspondence with such men as Moses Mushat?—a very ‘cur’ of vulgar discontent!—an ignorant pedant of Deism, and bastard of political philosophy.’

“While my thoughts ran on thus, the door was opened, and a tall genteel figure, namely Mr. Craig, of Craigha’ himself, entered; and bowing, inquired my business. I really felt ashamed of my mission; and said, that having the confidence of certain persons who were now engaged as friends of liberty in the West, they had requested me to deliver a letter to him, which I then handed.

“‘I do not know,’ said he, after he had perused it, ‘what to say to this letter. The committee in Paisley very properly wish me to give

my answer verbally, to prevent danger to myself. But personal danger is not what I fear, if I could be useful in rescuing my country from a corrupt and oppressive system; by which its population is kept in misery; and the whole landed and mercantile interests are fast approaching to ruin. Tell my friends in the west, that I am glad to hear of the good prospects they speak of; and when the proper time arrives, they shall not find me backward in showing myself in the cause of liberty, and a more equal distribution of happiness: to procure which is the most anxious wish of my heart; and to promote which I shall, if necessary, be among the first to shed my blood!

“While he was speaking, two ladies, whom I took to be his wife and daughter, entered in a stolen manner into the room, and seemed to mark his words with the most anxious feelings. When he had finished this speech, which did so much credit to his heart, and so little to his understanding, his lady instantly came forward, and said, in a tone of emotion, ‘My God! Charles, what do

you say ? if you value not your own life, will you not think of your family, whom your extraordinary sentiments and intentions may bring into every misery ?’

“ He beckoned her to peace ; but she still continued in a tone of entreaty.—‘ My dear Charles ! what is it you mean to do ? Is not your fortune amply sufficient for us ? and would we not in this retreat, and in a circle of the best society, enjoy every happiness, but for your unreasonable intermeddling in politics, and anxiety about men you never saw ! and who would give you little thanks should you foolishly throw away your own life, and make us beggars, to espouse the part of an ignorantly discontented mob ; who would perhaps, themselves, become the greatest tyrants, should they unfortunately obtain power ?—and, Charles !’ she continued, changing her tone, and putting on a roguish smile : ‘ I know you have too much taste not to prefer,—if tyrants are in the question,—a *gentleman* tyrant, to a tyrant with a greasy mechanical face, and perhaps a leather apron !’

“ The poor gentleman could not suppress a

smile at the ludicrousness of the last idea; yet in his eye there seemed a settled discontent: and he appeared to be altogether the subject of an infatuation most unaccountable.

“I felt much interest in the succeeding conversation of Mr. Craig and his wife, although to give it farther would probably be tedious. The lady asked me several questions regarding the reformers, which I answered with a candour that seemed greatly to oblige her, and to surprise, and somewhat to cool him. They ordered refreshments; treated me with a kind politeness, and I took my leave.

“As I returned through the antique avenue, I observed the gate-porter pretending to be at work; but really watching for my return to hear the news.

“‘A gude e’en, Sir,’ he began, touching his hat, as I came up; ‘ye’ll be frae the west, I doubt not?’

“‘Yes, from Glasgow.’

“‘Lord’s sake! Sir:’ and the man spoke with such eagerness, that he caught the bridle of my

horse familiarly, that he might detain me until he should hear all my news.—‘Lord’s sake! Sir, came ye frae Glasco? an’ what’s doing amang thae fearful radigals? gin ye please?’

“ ‘Doing! why, there are terrible doings there, and there’ll be worse shortly:’ (for partly to get away from the man, and partly from waggery, which, I believe, was the foundation of many of the reports current at that period, I was determined to give him some news worth repeating).

“ ‘Hech, Sirs! and do ye say sae? then our maister’s a gone man! Did ye see the maister, Sir?’ I answered, ‘I did.’—‘I hope, Sir, ye warnae egging him up to rin after thae weary radigals?’

“ ‘No, indeed! I am not in haste to advise gentlemen to throw away their estates, or their lives, by fighting against their sovereign.’

“ ‘Noo, God bless you! Sir; but that was well spoken: for the poor gentleman has been perfectly bewitched this time back, wi’ thae matters, that I dinna understand; an’ a better hearted gentleman needna live: he canna sleep in his

very down bed about them ; and they say, he rises in his sleep, an' fights the very bed-posts ! Gude be about us ! But, Sir, what hae the radigals done ?—I'm told the weavers are bloody-minded fallows, an' hae pikes like ony spits.'

“ ‘ Pikes, my friend !’—I said, ‘ they have pikes four yards long ! and as for what they have done, did you not hear, that they have taken Dumbarton Castle by storm ; blown up the Provost of Glasgow ; and burned the town of Pollockshaws to ashes !’

“ ‘ Lord saff us !—Lord saff us ! Janet ! do ye hear that ?’ he cried, calling to his wife, as we came opposite to the lodge.—‘ Janet, woman ! hech, hech !’—and, in his anxiety to get the news told, he left me without any civility, and ran into the house, bursting with tidings of horror : while I went on laughing at my own lying contribution to the false tales of rumour,—by which, with her thousand tongues, she was at this period spreading a most agreeable alarm, to give the yawning idlers of the countrysomething to talk of ; and the borough Bailies and other great men something to do.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“ I RODE on briskly towards the town of T——, not without melancholy apprehensions regarding my own safety ; and looking anxiously forward to London, where I had the prospect, as I imagined, of living free from the dangers and distractions into which poverty had driven me.

“ The moon rose as I drew near to the town of T——. It was an upland country where I was riding ; and I was contemplating, with pleasure, the level plain below, variegated with white villas, and gentlemen’s seats, and dark spots, and belts of woodlands, and enlivened by a winding stream, which took several beautiful and fantastic turnings, and, in many points, reflected from its clear surface the silver light of the moon ; until, from gazing on the still evening scene, my mind became absorbed with certain poetical ideas, called up by

this charming prospect, and was luxuriating away the time, very much to my own satisfaction, when my attention was suddenly called to the occasional glancing of something on the road at a distance, which I soon found was the reflection of the moonlight from the swords of a body of horsemen, who were moving onwards on the road into which I was about to enter.

“ I was just about to turn into the main road, when two of the equestrians, who appeared to be a picquet from a party of country cavalry, the same that I had observed at a distance, turned out of their way, when they perceived me ; and, as they rode hastily up, I heard one of them say,

“ ‘ It must be him ; there can be nae doubt about it ; it’s his vera description.’

“ ‘ Stand, and surrender, in the king’s name !’ vociferated the one, as he came close to me.

“ ‘ Ay, surrender in a moment !’ cried the other, not willing to give up his share of the exploit, and valiantly flourishing his greasy sword.

“ ‘ Surrender !’ repeated I, with surprise ; ‘ to be sure I’ll surrender—but why ?’

“ ‘ We’ll soon let you ken that,’ said the first; ‘ Whaur came ye frae, an’ whaur hae ye been, an’ whaur are ye gaun?’ interrogated the man, mistaking himself for a magistrate, but showing no great talents for examination.

“ ‘ Faith, friends!’ I answered, ‘ I’m not willing to sit here on a road to be questioned by you. If I’m to give an account of myself, it must be to your betters.’

“ ‘ Ram your sword into him!’ said the valiant companion of the man, in the excess of his zeal; but this my examiner did not think proper to do.

“ ‘ I’ll gar ye bock a confession, ye infernal radical!’ said the first, holding his sword to my throat: but not liking the position of the weapon, I immediately raised the but-end of a short heavy riding whip, which I held in my hand, and giving the sword a slight hit, struck it out of his awkward hand, and it fell into the dirt behind him.

“ ‘ Hoot, Bauldy!’ said his companion, laying back his sword over his own shoulder, and seeming afraid that I was going to disarm him too, ‘ ye needna be sae hastie wi’ the gentleman:’ but,

hearing that the main body of his comrades were now at his heels, he raised his voice, and cried, 'Sir, do ye surrender, or no?'

" 'Surrender! surrender!' shouted the whole company of valiant cavalry, catching the only word that they heard; and, hobbling up, they surrounded me in the greatest disorder, while they flourished their swords in the empty air, like Ossian's heroes, from the mere overflow of their valour; and their very horses neighed and snorted, as participating in this great exploit.

" 'Haud back! haud back!' roared a fat man, as he jingled and bustled his way through this disorderly army; and, after puffing a minute or two, he said, 'Let me see, let me see—yes, yes, that maun be him. What do you report of this stranger?' he added, addressing the man that first spoke to me.

" 'Atwell, captain,' said the man, awkwardly laying the back of his hand to his brow, by way of military respect; 'he would neither answer buff nor sty to my civil questions. I don't know what to make o' him. Your honour had better just put a query or twa to him yoursel'.'

“ ‘ Ay, and —’ said the other, in great wrath, now striking in, after he had dismounted, and wiped his sword on his horse’s mane, ‘ Sir, he gart the swurd flee out o’ my han’, as if it had been a parritch spurtle, the damned radical villain !’

“ ‘ What,’ said the captain, ‘ did he offer resistance ?’

“ ‘ Hoot, no, Sir,’ answered the first man ; ‘ it was Bauldy himsel’ that was rather oure ready stavin’ his swurd across the gentleman’s throat, wha just gied it a bit jirk wi’ his whup-end, and knocked it out o’ Bauldy’s hand,—that was a’.’

“ They all now set up a loud laugh at Bauldy. ‘ Silence, *gentlemen* !’ cried the country captain, after he had got his own face put in order ; ‘ and pray, Sir,’ he said, addressing me, ‘ did you not hire your horse to-day at T——?’ I answered in the affirmative.

“ ‘ And where have you been since ?’

“ ‘ I was at the little town of Ecclestane, upon some business.’

“ ‘ But were you not at Craigha’, Sir ? for the road you came is not the direct one from Ecclestane.’

“ ‘ Yes, I was at Craigha’, with a letter for Mr. Craig.’

“ ‘ Holoa !’ they all shouted, ‘ the vera man, the vera man !’

“ ‘ Sir,’ said the captain, ‘ you must come along under my escort, to answer for yourself to the magistrates of T——.’

“ With some difficulty he got his formidable legion in some sort of order, and away we trotted, as fast as we could get the heavy stiff horses of the yeomen to follow us.

“ ‘ I hope, Sir,’ said the lusty captain, politely addressing me, ‘ that you are innocent of any connexion with this radical business. If so, you’ll be put to little trouble ; but if you *be* one of their agents, my faith ! you’ll find yourself in the hands o’ the Philistines.’

“ ‘ I fear nothing,’ was my laconic reply ; and, as we now drew near to the town of T——, we heard drums beating, were met by a crowd at the entrance of the town ; and the whole place seemed to be in the greatest confusion and alarm. The townsmen were hastily shutting their shops : as my guard of honour came rattling, in a triumphant manner, down their

narrow street, they called in every member of their families from this awful danger; and, as I passed, I could hear the women crying, ‘Oh! that I should live to see this dreadful night!’ We stopped before the door of the court-house; and the crowd pressed round to get a sight of me.

“ ‘Is’n he a terrible ruffian-like fellow?’ said a man, as I dismounted.

“ ‘Indeed, no,’ said a young woman—‘he’s a weel-far’d lad—it’s a pity to see the like o’ him gaun to the gallows.’

“ When we entered the room of judgment, we found it quite crowded, and seeming, from other arrests that had been made, in great confusion. ‘Make way there for the prisoner!—Make way!’ were the big words with which I was ushered in, and placed before several magistrates.

“ The captain reported, that he, with his party, had, in scouring the country, taken me coming down the Boor-tree road; and that I had confessed to being the same day at Craigha’, with a letter for the laird himself. A murmur of satisfaction was heard at my being taken; but still this

news seemed to increase the confusion of the worthy magistrates, who were interrupted every moment by fresh messengers and reporters, who poured in one upon another, each with his tale of rumour or suspicion. But when a fellow entered with horror in his looks, and staring with fear, and the importance of his tidings told that news had just arrived at Craigha', or the neighbourhood, that the Castle of Dumbarton had been taken by the radicals, and the Provost of Glasgow blown up with gunpowder! the whole assembly were filled with horror, and I was obliged to hide my face, lest I should burst with laughter.

'But,' said the man, trying to recollect, 'there's mair than that o't, if I could mind:—the Paisley weavers, wi' their lang pikes, hae taken the town of Renfrew by storm, and ravished a' the wives and children!'

"Here, the horror of most, and the laughter of a few were greatly increased. The magistrates were confounded, and seemed not to know what to do first. I really pitied a fidgety old gentleman in the middle of them, who, while one suggested to

examine me, another to give orders to the yeomen to go and secure Mr. Craig, of Craigha'; and a third whispered him from behind,—scratched his ear, and grinned with impatient confusion, and, according to the Scotch phrase, seemed not to know what hip to sit upon, from the multiplicity and importance of the business that pressed upon him. Observing me smile at all this, he raised his voice, and gave orders to an officer, to remove the prisoner for a little to the witness's room, until the magistrates should consult what was best to be done in this important emergency.

“ A good natured-looking elderly man instantly touching me on the shoulder, begged that I would follow him for a moment, and he led me into a handsome apartment behind the court-room.

“ ‘ Noo, Sir,’ said the man, handing me a chair, ‘ ye’ll sit there and rest ye a wee; ’till the Bailies come to themselves;—poor men ! they are just gone clean stupid. I dinna think,’ added the bodie, looking kindly in my face ; ‘ that ye leuk like a radical ! they’re surely mistaken.’

“ ‘ Quite mistaken,’ said I.

“ ‘Hoot, I dare say’t,’ quoth the man; ‘but did ye hear the Bailie say that I was to stay here and watch you? I think not,’—for the gossiping officer was loath to lose the opportunity of gratifying his curiosity in the court-room.

“ ‘I heard no such order,’ said I, ‘but it makes little matter; you need give yourself no trouble, friend, in watching me.’

“ ‘Hoot, I daur say’t,’ said the bodie again, with a nod of his head; and he slipped back to the court-room, very much to my satisfaction.

“ The thought of my present dangerous predicament impelled me forcibly to take advantage of the present moment. I went to the door, and shot up the inside bolt, to prevent my being disturbed by the man’s sudden return. I went to the window—the moon shone like day—it was scarce two stories from the ground. I threw up the sash, and looked over into the rear of a low house, where I perceived a pretty country girl singing, and carrying straw into a small out-house, as I supposed, for fodder to her cows.

“ ‘Lassie!’ said I, speaking to her in her own language.

“ ‘ Eh ? ’ she answered, looking up, and seeming insensible of the hubbub in the street.

“ ‘ Wilt thou lay down twa bundles of straw below this window ? ’ I said, ‘ an I’ll show thee a trick.’

“ ‘ An what’ll ye gie me, lad ? ’ she said, smiling.

“ ‘ Gie thee ! I’ll gie thee a kiss.’

“ ‘ Ye’se ne’er say’t again,’ said the girl, and she threw under the window a quantity of straw.

“ I instantly thrust myself out through the window, and dropped down. I was, for a moment, stunned by the fall—the girl helped me to my feet. I threw my arm round her, and gave her the promised kiss; then said, ‘ Now, my bonnie lass, ne’er speak o’ seeing me,’ and, without waiting for her reply, I darted down a green, towards the small stream that ran at its foot, went under the arch of a bridge, crossed the stream, and bounded up along its other side, until I got into a thick irregular planting, that skirted it for a long way; then, pushing on through brambles, and thickets, and hedges, was two miles off before I ventured to take breath. The moon became rather

obscure, and favoured my escape; and after crossing some fields, I ventured out upon a road which lay near me.

“ I trudged along without knowing whither the road led; but I perceived that I was receding from the town of T——, and now I began to reflect a little upon my situation. ‘ This is a strange business,’ I said to myself; ‘ and it will be well if this be the end of my radicalism—to be wandering here under pursuit, like a thief, not daring to return to my family; and, perhaps, having brought a goodnatured man to some punishment for suffering me to escape.’ I was pleased, however, with the thought, that I had been of some service in opening the eyes of the owner of Craigha’ to the danger and absurdity of his present resolutions, and that the horse that I had hired at T—— would be safely returned to the owner: and I hoped, what I soon found really to be the case, that if the magistrates there were unsuccessful in recapturing me, they would quash the matter, so that it might do me little injury, that they themselves might not incur blame for their negligence.

“ I travelled all night, and at daybreak gladly took refuge in a small public-house, which I found already open, to obtain a little rest and refreshment. In about two hours afterwards, during which time I rested and talked to the honest woman of the house, the mail-coach passed ; and, finding a spare seat, I, with pleasure, availed myself of it, and proceeded towards London. It being a little too early for meeting my friend in the metropolis, I stopped a few days at Carlisle, on my way, to write to my wife, and also to a friend in the west, whom I desired to call upon one of the reformers, and intimate my escape, &c. ; and, having despatched my letters, I waited anxiously in Carlisle to hear news from my family.

CHAPTER IX.

“I SOON received a letter from Louisa, wherein, with much feeling, she expressed her joy upon hearing that I was yet safe ; described her dreadful apprehensions for me, upon learning, from the best authority, that the hypocritical wretch Steel had given information to the authorities of the mission which himself had urged me to undertake ; and that it was from his exact description of my person and route that I had been arrested by the magistrates of T——. She further informed me, that, since my escape, the officers of justice had been in search of me at my house ; and while she was still anxious for my safety, and earnestly wished me success with Mr. Elder, the friend I was to meet in London, she was not sanguine of it, and rather had a foreboding, that our sorrows were not yet at an end.

“ Away from her and my children, and in a strange place, I also began to be visited with depression of spirits, which, from anxiety and fear, and for want of one to communicate with, rather increased on the road, and as I drew near to London. As I was carried along through the rich scenery of England, the thoughts of my being now thrown on this Mr. Elder for my future hopes, filled me, after what I had experienced, with concern. The treacherous conduct of my old employer, though it did not surprise me, galled me exceedingly ; and, as I looked round on the beautiful country seats and pleasure-grounds through which we drove, I reflected how often it had been my lot, and how much it was the lot of mankind, to be hindered from enjoying the peaceful scenes of nature by disquietude of mind.

“ When I had proceeded as far as Highgate, and first obtained a view of the vast city of London, of which I had heard and read so much, extending, under a cloud of smoke, farther than I could see, with the heavy dome of St. Paul’s rising in its centre, and overlooking all its other towers

and steeples, I was delighted with the sight, and agitated with a variety of feelings. I considered it (a common reflection I suppose) as a world of human beings, in which was comprehended all the curious materials for observation, that lie between the extremes of suffering and enjoyment, of vice and virtue, of ignorance and stupidity, and knowledge and genius. I looked upon it as a vast *hive* built for the habitation of men, in which generations lived, and moved, and passed away, and were succeeded by their posterity.

“Considering that, after what I had suffered, it would be nothing very remarkable should I in this new prospect be also disappointed; and that here, in London, I might again be left to the uncertainties of the man who is *out* of that circle of credit and prosperity, in which mercantile advantages are found to move; I entered this city’s swarming bosom with a presentiment, which perhaps has been felt by many an adventurer as well as myself, that at all events I should either, among the chances of good fortune which occasionally starts up among its motley variety, find some-

thing that would bring ease to my mind, and comfort to my family; or else I would in it, or its neighbourhood, die of a disease, not uncommon in the world, called a broken heart; or even, perhaps, in some fearful moment, by a mode, which is the last act of despair itself, and of which I began now to entertain an ominous and horrible dread.

“ It was now past the day on which my friend had appointed to meet me. I went to his lodgings with a doubtful hope; but my disappointment may be conceived, when I learned from the landlord that such a gentleman as Mr. Elder had, he believed, once lodged at his house; but he had heard no tidings of his coming home, nor any thing of him. After some considerable trouble, I found a mercantile house with which he occasionally did business, and there I made inquiry concerning him. The person whom I saw, in the true stile of a London trader, would hardly take time to answer my question—said loftily, that in one of Mr. Elder’s letters he spoke of coming home shortly, but he could say nothing more; and he ran off like a Scotchman who fears you

are going to ask something from him. Among other persons whom I had occasion to call upon, some were polite and somewhat attentive, but most were respectful, until they found that I was neither a purchaser of their goods, nor had I any thing to bring to them; and after this my very presence seemed a trouble to them, and I, of course, gave them none of it.

“ For a week or two at first, I waited in hope: the bustle and show of the streets of London, and the pleasure of gratifying my curiosity, in seeing those places of which I have so often read, and which have so many classical associations, excited my spirits and occupied my mind. I thought little of personal danger, and indulged hope of Mr. Elder’s daily arrival; but week after week passed, without any intelligence of my friend: my money was nearly exhausted; and a dread that the present was to turn out only another, to be added to my disappointments, dreadfully depressed my spirits, while fears for my family began again to haunt me with horrible visions of want and misery.

“ In this wretched state I continued for two

months, and still there was no account of Mr. Elder. I saw every person around me in spirits, with the bustle of business; while I, who could so ill afford to remain without income, was the prey of restlessness and anxiety, and obliged to spend my time in idleness. I tried to get employment in the meantime, as clerk to some merchant; but my having a family was a general objection: and as I sat in the warehouse of an acquaintance, and observed the numbers of applications for employment by well-dressed persons, who had greatly the advantage of me, being well acquainted with London, and not having an idea beyond the desk, or the yard stick on week-days, and their eighteen-penny drive, and their giggling-party on Sunday,—I sickened at the thought of the degrading competition; and began to look upon myself as ‘cast-out’ from the common hopes and chances of other men.

“As I walked the busy streets alone, and witnessed the profuse expense that was lavished every where around me; as I saw portrayed in every countenance, the perfect selfishness that

reigned in each bosom, and the city habits of perfect disregard of the oldest friend, if attacked with misfortune, which makes it so often but one step from genteel or respectable circumstances to that excellent institution the workhouse!—an institution which, like the gibbet, stands the indubitable proof of our civilization, and of our near approach to human perfectability; and is the never-failing excuse for the cruelest insensibility, by which the *cit*, and the applauded patron of public charity, can refuse the petition of private and modest misfortune; and when I thought again of my lovely Louisa at home, and my little children, whom I might never see again,—pangs of feeling shot through my mind, which almost drove me to insanity. Like Job, I was inclined to curse the hour of my birth, into a world which, though I had every disposition to industry, refused me the opportunity of obtaining support for those interesting beings whose lot was connected with mine. A letter from Louisa, which I received at this time, completed the intensity of my sufferings. She informed me, that her resources were drained to the last! that she had applied for a loan to a friend,

and, with much pain, even to Mr. Steel; and met only with the coldest refusals; that my brothers, &c. were unable to assist us; and that she was reduced to the most painful expedients to obtain food for our children.

“ My mind was so distracted at this intelligence, that in walking the streets, I found myself pushing on with breathless haste, as if I were running from myself. I feared that I should become insane. I endeavoured to reason myself into calmness, until I found myself in St. James’s Park. I sat down on a bench, and tried to think coolly.— ‘Why should I and my children perish,’ thought I, ‘and so much wealth and benevolence in this city?—It is full of benevolent institutions,’ I said, flattering myself, from an eager desire to catch at hope;—‘and Britain’s wealthy sons take a proud delight in healing the sick, and relieving the needy. It is false pride alone that prevents me from stating to some wealthy individual the situation of my wife and children! I am to blame!’ exclaimed I, rising and making my way towards the Strand:—‘misfortune and pecuniary distress may overtake almost any.

“ ‘ But to whom shall I apply ? ’ was a startling question ; ‘ ordinary individuals will suspect my tale, and may treat me as an impostor ; I will state my unhappy circumstances to a member of some benevolent institution, who will doubtless interest himself to investigate the verity of my tale.’ My motions followed my distracted thoughts like lightning. I darted into a bookseller’s shop, and inquired for a Register. While I ran over an immense number of names of Reverends, and Right Reverends, and Esquires, directors of religious and charitable institutions, something came across my thoughts to arrest my purpose, but what it was I was too much confused to know. I came out of the shop, without having determined on exposing my distress, or to whom my tale should be told. Still I pushed quickly forward, as if in haste to obtain relief from some publicly benevolent individual, though the hope was contrary to all my observation and experience of the world.

“ By the time I got to Bridge Street, where a celebrated society had held its sittings, and where

the splendid apartments of the British and Foreign Bible Society are situated, as I looked down the street, the full recollection of what had crossed my mind, in the bookseller's shop, came now clearly upon me; the form of my deceased friend, Barlass, was present to my fancy, and his experience, in a case remarkably similar to my own, threw a chill over my momentary hopes, that disabled me from stirring from where I stood. I thought I should have fainted; for now I saw that I had been pursuing a shadow, which was likely only to lead to an aggravation of my suffering; but my thoughts turned to meditation on my friend's mournful story, which though a common enough case I suppose, I shall take the liberty to tell, as it served to bring me back for a time to reason and recollection.

“Misfortunes in trade had driven Mr. Barlass to London, and there also, like myself, he had met only disappointment. He was in vain endeavouring to obtain, at least, money to enable him to leave the city and return home, when a friend, who had called at his house in Edinburgh, found

his family in the greatest distress, and wrote to him an account of it. For himself, as he said, he could suffer patiently, but the thoughts of his family being in want, were not to be borne. In his extremity he began to think of a wealthy merchant, a countryman of our own, of whom he had heard, who was a director of the first religious and benevolent institution in the world, on whose annual reports his name, I presume, will still be found to flourish.

“To this man poor Barlass went with confidence; for he thought, in his simplicity, that the man who took upon himself the cares of public benevolence, who was zealous in one good work in public, would gladly lay hold of an opportunity of doing another in private, where he could witness the effects of his own generosity; and that he who dispenses the Bible to men in the other hemisphere whom he never saw, would gladly relieve a lover of that Book, who is his countryman, and at his door, an unfortunate sojourner in this great city. Barlass wrote to the merchant a feeling statement of his case, inclosing his friend’s letter

to vouch for its truth ;—he petitioned for employment, or a small *loan* to remit to his distressed family. He hoped for relief from this person in any shape which was thought expedient ; and rejoiced, by anticipation, in the power of ‘ the word,’ preaching love and benevolence to all men, but especially to those of the faith, which this man was dispensing : but, when he waited on the threshold of this elder in Israel—this Levite, or coadjutor of Levites—what was his astonishment, after finding that his situation had been exposed to the titter of a room full of clerks, when one of them brought back his letter to him, with word that Mr. M—— could not attend to his case ; and sent him his advice to return to Edinburgh and look after his affairs.

“ This gave such a shock to the mind of poor Barlass, who knew little of the world and of London, was a good religious simpleton, who endeavoured to practise what he professed ; and ignorantly thought, because himself was actuated by the precepts of Christianity, that other men, who served God and Mammon, meant any thing when

they took these precepts into their mouths—that this opening of his eyes was the real cause of his death, which happened soon after. It was, however, by the exertion of a person but little richer than himself, that he was enabled once more to reach his home and his wife and children.*

“The recollection of the story of Barlass,” my companion went on, “recalled my reason, but it rather aggravated my feelings. Other instances, with which my intercourse with suffering men had furnished me, of the hollow hypocrisy, which is often the foundation of public good works, now fastened upon my despairing and irritable mind; and, while I worshipped the fair creation in which I was placed, I almost hated man, for whose use it seemed to be formed; for I thought, what between native selfishness, groveling minds, and the effects of trade, and what is called civilization, not one man in a hundred seemed to possess worth or feeling, the inborn qualities of virtue, in any material measure above the brutes that perish.

“I thought the crisis had now arrived when I

* No fiction.

should die, according to the presentiment I had had when I entered London. But as the fearful consummation now seemed to stare me in the face, I shuddered at the impiety of the thought; and the idea of the act was distracting, when I reflected on futurity, but especially when I reverted to the image of my wife and children. But the more I thought of suicide, the more insane my mind became, and the less hideous did it appear.

“ I had, by this time, got towards the suburbs of London; and I actually went into a public-house, and wrote a letter to my Louisa, informing her of my despair, and my design, and advising her to do the same; ‘ for,’ said I (well do I remember the words of that letter), ‘ the world, which will do nothing to save us or our children while we are alive, will be forced, by its own public principles, to support them when we are dead; and we shall not be tortured with the pain of seeing their little sufferings, or vainly lamenting their unconscious degradation. Our life is cut short in our prime, my Louisa,’ I said to her, ‘ for want of the means of living, which thousands are wasting; but this

is the way of the world—and had we but had a competent support, we should have been too happy! We have loved—but our hour of love is past. We have enjoyed much in the short season of it—but subsistence is denied to us and to our babes. Shall we seek pity of the world? shall Louisa Villiards and her William live beggars?—Let us *die*, my adored, before the searing hand of wretchedness shall have changed our characters, and made us forget that we have ever loved!’

“After writing thus, I wandered on, in this state of mind, until I found myself in the outskirts of London, and, by an unconscious impulse, on the road towards home. Night came on—I was ready to drop from fatigue and hunger. The previous excitement of distress had subsided into a weak and cowardly state of mind; and I now, in the patient humility of suffering, resolved to beg my way down to Scotland, and said, ‘I will thus see my Louisa once more; and then we shall die, and “die together.”’

“I had still a little silver left in my pocket; and I went into a small neat public-house, on the road,

to lodge for the night. The cleanly look of it, and the still more prepossessing appearance of the matronly landlady, brought a momentary comfort to my heart. She regarded me with interest; for, seeing grief in my look, and seeming to suspect that it must be distress that caused a person of my appearance to seek lodgings in her humble dwelling, she tried, by every means in her power, to cheer and comfort me; and made much preparation to set my frugal supper before me in the best manner her house afforded, and treated me with a benign and kind deference.

“After a night’s rest, of more calmness than I could have expected, as I was leaving the kind and sympathetic Englishwoman, who would scarcely be prevailed upon to take payment for her entertainment, ‘Sir,’ said she, feelingly, as I offered her my hand at parting, ‘I perceive you have seen better days: pardon me for intruding upon your sorrows—but if the simple fare of my house, for a month to come, until providence shall bring you better prospects, is worth your taking, come, do not leave me, I entreat of you!’ I shook my head,

and said it was impossible. ‘Then,’ said she, ‘be guided by a poor woman’s counsel, and do no rash thing, but be patient, until the day of adversity be overpast. God bless you, Sir, and restore you to happiness!’

“I felt greatly refreshed by this little taste of unsought goodness, after the turn my thoughts had lately taken; for it was like oil poured upon my wounded spirit, and it restored me to myself, and served to solace me in my meditations, for many a weary mile. ‘A taste of disinterested benevolence occurring to an unfortunate in this world,’ said I to myself, ‘is, to use the expressive figure of the prophet, like a well of water in a dry and thirsty land, which surprises the fainting pilgrim in the desert, cools his parched tongue, and gives him strength and spirit to proceed on his journey!’

“I can scarce now recollect how I travelled on, until I got as far as Bedfordshire; but as I approached the wood of Woburn, the thoughts of my family, and its probable distress, became scarcely supportable; besides the last farthing of

my money was spent, and the horrors of starvation stared me closely in the face. My resolution of the last act of humility, begging, I had several times tried to practise; but as the persons drew near to whom I intended to address myself, my tongue became powerless, and I was only able to give them a look, in the anguish of my spirit, and they had passed before my courage could carry me further.

“ At length, on a gloomy threatening evening, the road led my weary steps through the wood of Woburn. Night was drawing near. I was reduced to the last extremity, for I had tasted nothing since morning; and where should I lay my wearied limbs to rest? for I had nothing to defray the cost of my night’s lodging. I looked into the dark recesses of the wood with foreboding horror; hunger and weakness soon disabled me from proceeding farther, and exerting my remaining strength, I dashed into its thickets with a gloomy and somewhat savage impatience.

“ Here, within the wood, I laid myself down to die. I thought myself calm as, rising and kneel-

ing at the foot of a tree, I offered up a prayer for my wife and children, and as in fancy I took of them a last, and a bitter farewell. But my extreme anguish was fast mounting to insanity. As dark night came on, my mind was filled with the most horrid phantoms; and as the wind howled through the trees over my head, while I lay on the damp ground, I asked myself wildly, ‘Is it possible that this is to be my end—that I am to die here of the lingering pangs of hunger? and that, hidden in this lonely spot, my bones are even to be denied a grave? or is this horrible wood but the valley of the shadow of future death?’ ”

Here the voice of my companion sunk into a whisper, from emotion at the recital of his painful story; and as we were now entering a village, he proceeded no farther in his narration.

In a little time, as we were passing on, a post-chaise drove to the door of the village inn, and two gentlemen alighted. No sooner had Mr. Alanton observed them than, clapping his hands, and exclaiming, “Good God! is it possible?” he ran forward and held out his hand to one of the

strangers at the door of the inn, who returned his salute most cordially, and they were going both to enter, when he beckoned me to follow.

Mr. Allanton, my hitherto unfortunate companion, then introduced me to one of the gentlemen, as one more worthy man, whom chance had thrown in his way; saying, with a countenance beaming with gladness, "This is my long expected friend, Mr. Elder." That gentleman then explained, that after his letter to Mr. Allanton was despatched from his residence in the West Indies, he had been obliged to alter his destination, for the Clyde, instead of the Thames; and had been greatly disappointed in not meeting him in Glasgow, at the time when he was suffering such distress in London.

The joy of the latter may now be imagined,—at being rescued from self-destruction, and restored to life and comfort, his Louisa and his children. We all sat down to supper the same night; after which they arranged their business in my presence, by which Mr. Allanton was to be placed, immediately, at the head of an establishment in

London, with an advance of money to enable him to remove his family thither. In the morning, Mr. Elder repaid me the five pounds that I had remitted to my friend's wife, which I received with a sort of disappointment; for I almost regretted having lost the gratification of spending this small sum towards making happy the affectionate pair. Mr. Allanton then took his seat for London, in the chaise with his friend, and we parted not without emotion on both sides.

I have once, since that period, visited him and his lovely family in London. What a picture was presented to me of the pleasures of accomplished minds, and of pure domestic happiness! After all my experience, I almost wondered that mere money should, in some situations, have such mighty power, to confer such happiness upon men as my friend and his dear circle now enjoyed; or to inflict such terrible misery upon some, for the sin of making a LOVE MATCH, as they had formerly suffered.

THE
LOWLAND LAIRD AND HIS MEN.

THE
LOWLAND LAIRD AND HIS MEN.

CHAPTER I.

“ Cauld was the night, bleak blew the whistling wind,
And frae the red nose fell the drizzling drap.”

Poem of the Ghaist.

It was about the twilight of a blowy blasty evening, in the windy month of March, that a small party of Highland soldiers trudged patiently along the naked dreary road, that traverses the long swampy flats of heathery moss, lying between Glasgow and Kilmarnock, and well known by the name of the Mearn's Moor. The party was headed by an officer, and consisted of six stout Highlandmen, besides a sergeant and corporal, which, with the ensign who commanded them, made nine; and moved wearily along the hilly exposed road,

the cold blast obliging them frequently to put up their unemployed hands to their lofty Highland bonnets, to keep them in their position, and taking great liberties with the short kilts which *should have* covered their limbs almost as far down as their knees.

The whole party seemed to be infected with a sort of Highland sulkiness on their march ; for the service they were upon was as disagreeable to their feelings and habits, as mountaineers, as its principle was repugnant to their prejudices ; and the more so, as the officer who led them on to it being the son of an upstart Lowland Laird, instead of a Highlandman, like themselves, was the object of their dislike, and even contempt.

On they went, however, up hill and down dale, as the night darkened down, the wind, every now and then, coming whistling over the black heath of the moor, and together with a chill sleety rain, beating in thuds against the faces of the poor soldiers, who had been reluctantly compelled upon this expedition from their comfortable quarters in the Gallowgate of Glasgow.

“Deevil o’ a lang road this, Donald,” said one, spitting crossly to windward, and then looking angrily into the face of his neighbour.

“Tamned blasted cauld night!” grumbled the other, looking wicked and askance, and wiping the drop from his nose; “an’ no a change-hoose whar we can get a single mouthfu’ mair than we were on the hills o’ Lochabber. Got tam!”

“An’ to be sent a stell hunting, amang the coal reek, here in this tam’d low country moss—it’s waur than the bogs o’ Blair Logie; an’ aw wi’ that parritch-mouthed Sassenach!” said the first, looking gloomily under his black brows towards the officer, who was plashing along the dirty road beside them. “Deevil! to send Donald Magraw on sic a ploy.”

“An’ to rin at the tail o’ a guttey gauger, an’ at the bidding o’ a Lowland Laird, without a kilt to his hurdies, like a shentleman;” murmured Laughlan, in further aggravation.

“An’ aw to squeeze the warm blude out o’ the bit bread-winner o’ some honest lads amang the hills, puir fallows. I wish we had John Barley-

corn's kail pat by the lug this vera moment. But, hoigh ! there's a hoose at last ;" exclaimed the grumbling Highlander joyfully, as they came to the brow of a rising ground, and perceived in the distance the comfortable Inn of Kingswell, smoking warmly in the midst of the moor, to the rejoicing of all travellers through this waste solitude.

" Gude whiskey there, an' a comfortable hay-loft for quarters," replied Donald, much revived, " Hoogh ! Laughy, dinna ye see the fire bleezing through the windows already ?"

The little party now moved on with alacrity, and were all into the wide lobby of the Inn of Kingswell, and partly in the large kitchen on the left side, before the landlord or his wife were aware of their arrival. " Bless me, what a regiment o' Highlandmen !" exclaimed Mrs. P——, the decent landlady, when she entered the kitchen from an inner apartment, and observed the passage filled with the party ; " but come ben, lads," she added, with that instinctive hospitality, which belongs more to a natural good disposition than to the interested character of an innkeeper. " Come ben

to the fire, the night is cauld," she urged, as the men hung back with the well-bred modesty, so general in the Highland regiments. "Noo just come near," she continued, as they drew gradually in a circle round the wide spread kitchen fire, "an' warm your knees, puir cheilds ! odd, it's a queer thing to gar decent Highland lads travel the Moors wi' bare houghs on such a night as this ;" and the landlady glanced down at the brawny limbs of the soldiers, with country goodnature and female partiality for a red coat.

While the subaltern, who had the charge of the party, spoke to the landlord apart, the Highlandmen ranged themselves round the fire of the roomy kitchen, clubbed together for a refreshment of their favourite mountain dew, to which Mrs. P——, then a young woman, generously added a liberal compliment of oaten bread, cheese, and milk ; and the very maid servants around, whisked about and served with unusual alacrity, being delighted with the presence and grateful glances of "the braw Highland sodgers."

As the night wore on, and the mountain dew

within, and the blazing fire without, began to have their effect upon the hearts of the Highlandmen, all this natural and artificial warmth was not a little increased by the love glances and partial services of the two female attendants, who had ample scope for their natural dispositions to coquetry, among such a circle of youthful red coats; and many a kind look, and interchange of soldierly love-making, and country delight at being admired by the "manly lads," made this a happy evening to all in the big kitchen of the Moorland Inn of Kingswell.

Meantime "the officer chap," as the Lowland Laird, who commanded this expedition, was profanely called by the merry girls below, passed a weary time above stairs, endeavouring to solace himself, in a large room, with the company and conversation of two long tallow candles, a newspaper, and a pint of frozen port; the society of the goodnatured landlord, for part of the time, compassionately proffered to help out the night, as well as that of a roistering English rider, who was weather-bound on the moor—having been rejected

in toto by our fine gentleman of the spontoon, who preferred passing the evening in the meditative exercise of yawning and combating the blue devils, "all for the gentility of the thing."

Much cheerful mirth, however, diversified even by the singing of Gaelic songs, was enjoyed by the humble party in the kitchen; and by this time the females of the house, and the warm-hearted Highlandmen, were getting insensibly interested with each other.

But a woman has always a favourite even among a score of woers, whether she chooses to let it be known or not; and Betty Leishman, the handsomest of the two girls, as she went about her work, behind the circle who surrounded the fire, and gave an occasional glance into the faces of "the soldier lads," while she replied to their complimentary jokes, soon fixed her fancy on the round healthy countenance, and dark mountain glance of a young Highlander of the clan of M'Lean, whose well built form and curled raven locks, might have attracted the attention of one of higher pretensions than any of the secluded

females at Kingswell. Ronald M'Lean himself had a ready perception of beauty, even in the person of the blithe servant in a Moorland Inn; and he was not long in noticing, with the warm gallantry of a soldier, and the hawk penetration of mountaineer, that Betty Leishman's eye, fixed itself on him whenever she thought none might observe; and as she went about behind backs, he repeatedly caught her shamefaced glance turning rapidly from himself. An interchange of look, a whisper, at the convenient time, and a stolen pressure of the hand, soon told that already there was love between Betty Leishman and the curly black-eyed Highland soldier.

It never had occurred to the mind of the good-natured landlady, far less was it inquired by the thoughtless servant lasses, what was the purport of the visit of this cohort of soldiers to their inn; but as the lads were attended to for the night, and good beds provided for most of them, by the considerate kindness of the landlady, and the zeal of the servants, and as, before retiring, Ronald M'Lean contrived to obtain a whispering inter-

view of a few moments with Betty, she, in the anxiety of her heart to learn if this was to be her last as well as her first meeting with her young Highland soldier, asked him if he was to leave in the morning, and if she might ever hope to see him again, at the neighbouring town of Kilmarnock, or haply once more at their own comfortable inn of Kingswell.

When Ronald had informed her, with brief reluctance, that he and his comrades were sent here on the harassing and unsoldier-like duty of still-hunting; that is, to detect and destroy the distilling apparatus of some smuggling party, who manufactured illicit spirits among the convenient declivities of the Moor, he was surprised at the effect of his intelligence upon the girl, who, unconsciously, uttered an exclamation of apprehensive surprise; but some one crossing their privacy at the moment, they were hastily separated, and all went to enjoy their rest; a couple of excisemen having arrived during the darkness of the night, to be guide of the party in their morning's expedition.

CHAPTER II.

Come aff to the moors an' awa, my lads,
Let's aff to the moors an' awa ;
If ye dinna come fast,
The black cock 'll flee past,
And nae sport 'll be left us awa, my lads,
Hoogh ! aff to the hills an' awa.

Scrap Stanzas.

THE goodnatured reader, who has not deserted me for all my failings and short comings, even until this precious instant, may think himself fortunate that I did not inflict upon him a good yard of rhyme at this present setting forth, for really the very smell of the upland moors came so refreshingly athwart the nose of my imagination, and the echo of the distant shots among the hills began to pop so pleasantly through the inward ears of my fancy, on thinking of my Highlandmen, that I could have sat down and sung him a song on the occasion with the greatest good will.

But, putting the reins on my wordiness, as I have often done before, I shall, in plain terms, though something in the style and manner of my betters, proceed with my story as follows :

“ ‘The zealous voice of bustling chanticleer
Had thrice done salutation to the morn,’ ”

and daylight was spreading slowly o’er the heathy solitudes of the Mearn’s Moor, when the Highlanders had already assembled, and were inspecting the locks of their muskets, in the large kitchen of the inn at Kingswell. Already also the maids were astir, and while the party had to wait until their stiff and conceited officer was dressed to his own approval, and for the rousing of the excisemen, who had on the previous night taken a stiff cup above their usual liberal allowance, on account of the storminess of the night, and were somewhat loath, and not very able to leave their beds, Betty Leishman was serving out to the Highlanders a substantial and hospitable early refreshment. This was succeeded, of course, by the Doch-an-dorous, or stirrup cup, of clear undiluted aqua, the par-

taking of which always puts a Highlander in good humour; and as she was handing round the customary oaten cake, amid the good wishes and compliments on her beauty of the party, when she came to Ronald M'Lean, she looked anxious and grave in his face, while he, with gallant freedom, putting one arm round her waist, whispered something into her ear.

She drew herself hastily away from the grasp of the bold Celt, when, turning round her head at the moment, her eyes fell on the face of the foremost of two men, who at this instant had entered the kitchen, and who, on observing Betty and the Highlander, gave a slight start, and opened his eyes with seeming astonishment, while she coloured and looked alarmed on encountering the eyes of the stranger.

The persons that entered were young men, dressed somewhat better than common farmers; and the foremost, whose name was Quentin Bruce, without taking notice, further than casting his eyes round upon the unexpected military party, and then giving a sarcastic smile to his companion, sat

down in a corner of the kitchen, and called for some liquor.

The Highlandmen looked knowingly in each other's faces on observing the manners of the strangers, and Donald Magraw, the grumbler of the previous night, closing one eye, and pointing to them, whispered to the serjeant, "Do ye see that, Serjeant M'Dougal? Deevil a drap o' whiskey we'll get on the moor *this* day. The Lowland Laird an' the lazy gaugers hae bitch'd the Stell hunting here; so we may just shoulder our firelocks an' gae back to Glasgow, for thae fallows there ken our buzines as weel as I do. Just speer the time o' day at them, serjeant," added Donald, nudging his listening neighbour.

"How does the morning promise on the moor, my lads?" inquired the serjeant, addressing the new comers.

"Neither wat nor dry, Mr. Sodger," answered the foremost fellow, saucily, "but just between the twa, as Davie danced."

"Ye're early out wi' your sour milk, my fine fellows," said Ronald M'Lean, sneeringly, and

quite willing to pick a quarrel with the first, for his look regarding Betty Leishman.

“Not so early but we had time to draw on a breeches, Donald,” replied Quentin Bruce, looking down to the bare knees and ruddy fair skin of the young Highlander. “But, here, will ye taste my barley corn? it will help the courage o’ your kitchen courtship,” he added, holding out his glass full of whiskey in mock invitation to Ronald, and at the same instant casting a wicked glance towards Betty Leishman.

“Swallow your ain drink, if ye can pay for it, young man,” said Ronald, coolly; “ye’ll maybe need all the courage it can give you, if your Ayrshire breeding does not teach you better manners.”

“A pleasant morning for the moors, lads,” interrupted the second stranger, slyly; “an’ Highland shentlemen like the smell o’ the blue heather; but there’s deep bogs atween this an’ the Mearn’s Kirk,” he added, winking to his friend.

“An’ heavy handed fallows, that kens a gauger’s setter frae a shepherd’s colley,” rejoined the first, “whether it has a breek on its hurdies or no.”

The whole party looked at each other, as much amazed at the sagacity of the strangers as at the boldness of their threatening remarks; and quite aware that if they ventured on the moor, there would be more broken heads than bilged casks of liquor to-day.

“An’ if Highland shentlemen will come to try a shot on the moors,” continued Quentin, sarcastically, “they may bag what game they can; but if they come within five miles o’ the Mearn’s Kirk to court our lasses before our faces, they had better be following their trulls about the Goose-dubs o’ Glasgow.”

A general movement of vengeful astonishment ran round the circle, and kindled in the quiet countenances of the Highlandmen at this insulting speech; when, without saying a word, Ronald M’Lean stepped slowly forward, and raising his foot, deliberately kicked over the small table at which the strangers were drinking, while the glasses smashed on the stone floor of the kitchen.

A scream of apprehension from the women gave the alarm of a quarrel, and soon brought in Mr.

P——, the landlord, to take cognisance of what was going forward.

“Ye’re a brave cheild, though I shouldna say’t?” said Quentin Bruce, standing up and surveying Ronald from head to foot; “but as hard heads as yours hae taen the yird on the Mearn’s Moor before now, an’ we’ll maybe see you belyve;” and saying this he threw down the price of the drink and the broken glasses, and was off with his companion before any farther inquiry could be made.

The Highlandmen would have told their officer and the exciseman what had happened, which might have prevented any farther proceeding in the expedition for a time; but they were so determined to have a tilt with the smuggling distillers, wherever they were, and to whom these strangers who had thus exasperated them evidently belonged, that, without an observation, they put themselves in order, and were instantly marched forth, under the guidance of the officers of the revenue, to their adventure on the moor.

As they were about leaving the kitchen, Ronald saw the eye of Betty Leishman, modestly but

anxiously watching him, as if she sought an opportunity of speaking to him unknown to any one. On making this observation he affected to arrange the long ostrich feathers in his Highland bonnet, and plucking one of them out, he purposely left it behind him, in the hurry of their late and hasty muster to the door of the inn.

Betty took the hint, and contriving to have him called back from among his comrades, after the party had set off, she went out and met him at the edge of a little fir planting that skirted the road beside the inn.

“Ronald,” she said, when he came up, “excuse the anxiety of a simple stranger lass; but in sooth I would like ill to see so many braw sodger lads run wilfully into jeopardy, among the bogs and blackguards o’ the Mearn’s Moor, an’ I just wish to tell you—”

“I’ve been in moors before, Betty, my kind-hearted lass; an’ I have little fear of danger in a common still-hunt,” said Ronald, smiling, and looking with admiration into the girl’s anxious countenance.

“ But the smuggler lads o’ the bogs hate the gaugers, and they’re o’er cunning for you,” she said, wistfully looking up into the glowing eyes of the Highland soldier. “ Will ye take my advice, Ronald,” she added, earnestly, and returning the pressure of the youth who held her hands.

“ I’ll jump from the top of Neilston pad, if you bid me, Betty;” he said eagerly, and pointing towards the hill, in the distance, which bears that name; “ but make haste, for there are my comrades, wi’ their feet on the heather already.”

“ Then dinna seem anxious to do the guagers bidding against the moorland lads; an’ be sure ye keep to the left when ye come to the brow o’ the Covenanters’ Cove; an’ oh, Ronald, mind ——” she added, beseechingly.

“ Quick, Betty, my pretty Lowland lass,” he cried, “ I dare not tarry.”

“ Let no one lead you by night or by day, Ronald, down the hollow beyond the gray stanes to the left; for if ye just set your foot on the deceitfu’ green moss o’ the Packman’s Dowk, ye’ll plump beyond help or hope: an’ this’ll be the last sight I’ll ever see of you.”

“ God forbid that we should not meet again, Betty, both at Kilmarnock and Kingswell ;” he said, seriously ; “ but I cannot remember all you have said unless—nay—do not deny me—this moment is too precious ; for ——” she made little resistance while he kissed her warmly under the fir tree ; and, instantly parting from her, he bounded over the heather, to join his comrades.

The sun shot pleasantly out across the heath, as the party turned the hip of the last hill, or rather heathery hillock, that shut out entirely the now distant view of their pleasant quarters at Kingswell, and brought them fairly into the black solitudes of the moor. The Highlanders trotted along, in Indian file, through a firm part of the boggy land in high spirits, and seemed to feel themselves as if on their own glorious mountains and glens in Lochaber or Argyleshire, as they snuffed up the well known smell of the fragrant heath, and heard the poetic wail of the curlew, echoing from the recesses of the moor ; the very bleakness and purple tinge of which, as it stretched away towards the Neilston braes, kindled in their spirits the de-

licious enthusiasm of their own romantic regions in the north.

“Whish’t, Lauchland!” said Donald Magraw to his comrade, as the party came to an elevated spot, and had an extensive view of the level flats and irregular heights and glens around them. “Dinna ye see a reek, amang the brambles on the shaw below? Ea, man! I would like this moment a bit mouthfu’ frae the stell-ee, if we could light on’t, just to mind me o’ langsyne.”

“Quick step, men! forward!” commanded the officer.

“But deevil a drap we’ll get this day,” continued Donald; “naething for us on this moor but a broken crown, as lang as there’s naebody to head us but that useless Lowland Laird, that never smelt a peat bog, nor saw a whiskey stell in his life. See here, he’s brought us up to this height just to show us o’er the hail moor, an’ bring us into some ambuscade. I tell you what, Lauchey?”

“What do ye say? speak low, Donald,” said his neighbour.

“If there comes to be clouting o’ heads wi’ the

smuggler lads amang the heather," whispered the first, "just keep in your breath, an' lurch a bit i' the bog, and dinna be o'er ready drawing dirk or trigger for this feekless laird wi' the breeks. Od, man, I was a smuggler mysel' in Lochaber, an' the smell o' malt an' barley is just a revivement."

Lauchland, his comrade, answered this speech only by a look of shrewd Highland cunning, and the party continued their half trot in silence.

As they descended the rising ground, they came upon the tract of cart wheels, and now the excisemen, who seemed somewhat uncertain as to their route, gave an exclamation of joy, and begged the officer to follow it. The tract of the wheels was, however, soon lost in the irregularities of the heathy ground, which now became more and more boggy and wet; and the commander of the party having sunk several times mid-leg into the mossy mire, to the great discomfort of his gaiters and white stockings, and seeming to be going only "the farther in the deeper," began to lose his temper, and to swear against the guides, that they were wandering at random, and knew not where they were leading him.

The surmise of the officer was confirmed by the sneering looks of his men, and the evident embarrassment of the excisemen, who halted every few yards when they could get footing to stand on, and gazed uncertainly around them, and then at a paper, which one of them had, on which was scratched something like a map of the moor, and a direction to the hidden haunt of the distillers. But nothing appeared all round but the dull solitude of an extensive tract of purple heath, only diversified by low hills, among which were deep ravines of moss water, which were scarcely seen until the wanderer was at their edge, or had stumbled into them; or by deeper shades of dark brown or black, indicating a thinner vegetation of stunted heath on the surface, or a more dangerous and deceitful footing of sinking bog.

The day was advanced, and the men were now beginning to be fatigued and almost as disheartened as their officer at their profitless search, when, picking their steps cautiously to get to a craggy rising ground, where they could reconnoitre a little, a tall old woman made her appearance, surprising them by rising up instantaneously out of the heath almost at their feet.

“What do you here, in this lonely place, Mistress?” said the exciseman, surprised at the apparition.

“When I speer *your* business, gudeman, I’ll tell you mine,” said the woman, with a saucy nod of her head.

A short consultation was here held between the men of the revenue and the officer of the party, as to whether they should talk farther to the woman, and trust her so far as to ask her to be their guide to a certain spot which he spoke of in the moor. The Lowland Laird soon decided the question in the affirmative, and they all drew near to where the woman stood.

“You are well acquainted with this moor, no doubt, good woman,” said the gauger.

“I ken where to find blaeberries on the brae face, and soorocks by the water’s edge, an’ patricks nests amang the whins, gudeman,” she answered.

“Come ye a bird-nesting, eh?”

“Would you wish to earn half a crown with little trouble, Mistress?”

“Troth would I, gudeman,” she replied, gaily,

“half crowns dinna grow on bramble bushes, an’ ye’ll oftener see a black cock on the Mearn’s Muir, than a Highland sodger, I trow—so gie me the siller,” and she held out her lean hand.

“Will you guide us then to the Covenanters’ Cove, and show us the safest and nearest tract from that out of the moor by the north side?” said the exciseman.

“Oo, ay,—but just let me feel the white siller between my finger and thumb,” added the woman, who did not seem at all willing to trust the exciseman without payment in advance.

“I dinna like that wife’s look,” said Donald Magraw to his comrade behind, as they went forward where the woman led. “The Lowland Laird ’ll no get out o’ the moor this day wi’ clean breeks, I’m thinking.”

“Deevil cares for her breeks or her broken head either,” said the other, “if I had something to eat afore we came in clauts wi’ the smugglers. This is a tam’d hungersome place,” he added, looking ruefully round him.

They followed the woman about two miles fur-

ther, for now their footing, under her guidance was tolerably good, until they got into a more craggy tract, interspersed with occasional patches of thick brushwood and rich long heath on the face of the crags. The woman had scarcely pointed out the black ravine, called the Covenanters' Cove, and near which a hard struggle had taken place in former times, in the sinking moss, when stealing behind, as the party were anxiously looking out on their search, she totally disappeared, and when they looked round, to ask her some question, she was no where to be found, and seemed as if she had sunk into the earth as suddenly as she had risen out of it when they first discovered her.

The excisemen looked round them every where, more bamboozled than ever at the strange disappearance and unsatisfactory answers of the old woman, and beat the brushwood near, and closely examined the crags in vain; and the Lowland Laird stood aghast, and swore that if ever there was a witch that collegued with the devil, and deserved to be burned, they had this day met with one on the moor.

The Highlandmen were now extremely impatient, either to have an affair with the whiskey distillers, or to be led back to Kingswell; and as they continued to wander among bogs and brushwood, the Lowland Laird began to think much about the pleasantness of the tat-too, which beat the roast beef of old England at a certain hour, and to look carnivorous at the black moss, which he did not seem to think would at all agree with his stomach.

Donald Magraw bit a fresh quid of tobacco from his spleuchan with a tug of impatience, and almost spit the tongue out of his mouth from mere anger; and Ronald M'Lean thought it a great hardship that he should have wandered the whole day, on this ugly moor, without ever having an opportunity of breaking the head of the fellow who had quarrelled with him at Kingswell.

While they were deliberating in this way, a brace of partridges sprang up almost at their feet, and instantly their ears were delighted by the report of a gun, which brought down one of the birds, and forthwith two persons came running forward

from behind the crag. The excisemen looked suspiciously at the two men, and at first seemed uncertain whether to address them or not, for they were not gentlemen, who might have been sporting on the moor, nor had they the appearance of farmers, besides only having one gun between them. The officer, in his impatience, however, urged the exciseman, and commanding the men to halt, the three went forward and made some inquiries of the strangers.

After some colloquy, the Lowland Laird coming back with a pleased and knowing look, ordered his men to march to the top of a knoll in front, and there to lie and conceal themselves among the heath, until he and the excisemen should return to lead them to where they should be wanted. The men obeyed this order with a sulky suspicion of its prudence, and shortly their officer and the excisemen were out of sight, under the guidance of the strangers.

The party lay on the knoll for a full half hour, and still no appearance of their leaders was yet indicated on the broad surface of the moor. A

gloomy murmur and a Gaelic oath now and then ran through the whole, until some began to remonstrate with the sergeant for obliging them to tarry on this spot, while their officer might be drowned in the bogs by the treachery of the strangers. "I darna disobey orders, lads," was the only answer of the sergeant, when at length Ronald M'Lean starting up with eager impatience, cried, "who'll follow me? and I'll take my chance of disobedience," when instantly the whole followed his example in mutiny against all orders whatever. After some consultation, it was agreed, however, that only three should separate from the body, viz. Ronald M'Lean, Magraw, and his comrade, and forth the latter set, to trace, if possible, their officer and the excisemen.

The three had not gone far, when descending into a black boggy ravine, which wound by the spot called the Covenanters' Cove, they thought they heard a voice issuing out from among the heathy irregularities of the ravine; and after seeking about for some time, they discovered the top of a Highland bonnet rising out of the heath, and

on going up, found the poor Lowland Laird, sunk almost breast high in the moss, into which every effort and flounder that he made for his release only seemed to plunge him deeper.

“Where are the gaugers, Sir?” said the men, as they assisted him out, in a miserable pickle.

“Damn the gaugers! I hope they are drowned in the bogs by this time,” exclaimed the Lowland Laird, looking down at his miry dress, which was totally destroyed; “let us be our own guides, and make haste home, or we’ll never get out of this moor alive.”

In the midst of their colloquy, they heard the report of a couple of guns fired near, and looking back, they perceived the body of their party running along the ridge of the crag, until diving down among the bushes, they all disappeared on the further side. The three with their officer, covered with black moss as he was, were hastening to join the others, when mounting out of the ravine, they perceived, without being themselves observed, two men, lurking in a recess or angle of the ravine, as if on the watch for something. A moment more

served to convince Ronald that these were the same fellows whom he had seen and insulted that morning in the inn at Kingswell; and, whispering an instant with the officer, he, with Donald Magraw, obtained leave to hide in the ravine, and watch, for a time, the motions of the men.

The Lowland Laird, and the remaining man, had scarcely disappeared over the height, when the two young men, stealing out from their hiding place, swept round the edge of a swampy flat which bordered the ravine, as if to join more of their party; and as Ronald and his grumbling friend followed them, still unseen, they perceived the tall figure of the old woman, who had so mysteriously dived out of view, start out from behind a crag near, with her head turned towards another party somewhere in her view, to whom she was evidently making signs of direction. Her eye soon caught our two solitary soldiers as they waded through the long heath, and, pointing with her finger, she immediately drew the attention of Quentin Bruce and his comrade to those who were now fast gaining on them.

The fellows at once stopped short, in some surprise at the near presence of the soldiers; and, clutching short sticks which they held, seemed to be ready for an encounter, and stepped forward with a swagger, as if courting resistance.

“It’s a fine day, lads,” said Donald Magraw, with mock civility, as he and Ronald drew near: “ken ye where we’ll get a mouthfu’ o’ gude whiskey on the moor?”

“Yes, I do,” said Quentin Bruce, his eye glistening with vengeful pleasure, as he recognised the features of the handsome Highlander with whom he had quarreled at Kingswell, “and I know where breeckless soldiers have no business to come, ferreting through the moors like gaugers’ whelps, after our Ayrshire lasses and our whiskey.”

“Your tongue will be like to endanger your toes, young man,” said Ronald M’Lean, at the same time stamping down the butt end of his musket on the sod at the feet of the other, so as to make him jump backwards two paces; when, on the instant, his neighbour, springing between Ronald and his comrade, aimed a blow with his

black stick at the head of the former, which was, however, parried in the most masterly manner by a ready motion of the firelock of Donald Magraw, while, at the same instant, two other men, getting up like plovers from among the heath near, and rushing among them, let fall several hasty blows on the now almost surrounded Highlandmen.

The fight was immediately general, and most unequal, both as to numbers and quality of weapons, as well as somewhat savage in its character; for the Highlanders, disdaining to draw their bayonets or to fire, were obliged to act very much on the defensive with such numbers; and for one heavy blow that they could deal with their muskets, they parried or received a dozen lighter ones from the short sticks of the smugglers, who every now and then gave a shout of triumph, or of vengeance, which reverberated among the wild solitudes of the moor; for our two Highlanders found themselves left alone, and engaged with double numbers.

It was not possible that this ill assorted battle could last long without some odd, or, perhaps, fatal result; and an awkward push in the stomach,

from the but-end of the musket of Ronald, soon laid his principal enemy, Quentin Bruce, flat and gasping on the sod ; at the same instant, when poor Donald Magraw's head, having, in the ardour of the fight, lost the protection of his large Highland bonnet, received a random blow that heeled him completely, and, stretching him senseless at the side of his valiant comrade, left the latter unequally struggling with the three active stell-men. Ronald on this stepped a few paces back, and, poising his musket for a few moments, took breath, while, regardless of the numbers who stood opposed to him, he regarded, with a look of scornful pleasure, the person of his prostrate enemy.

The triumph of the active Highlander was, however, very short, for scarcely had he time to put himself again in a defensive position, when the other three men, setting up a shout, rushed upon him, and he soon fell under their repeated blows, and lay also on the heathy sod, near the others, in a state of complete insensibility.

How long he lay unconscious was unknown to him ; but he was aroused out of his stupor by feel-

ing some one tugging at his musket, which, with instinctive bravery, he still grasped; when, looking up, he beheld the swollen face of Quentin Bruce, bent over him with an expression of gloomy triumph. By a sudden movement of his foot, however, he caused the other to stumble, when, suddenly springing to his feet, the two enemies stood once more singly opposed to each other, for the field was now cleared, even his companion, Donald, having, by this time, been carried off by the others.

“ You think you floor’d me, Mr. Highlander, I suppose,” said Bruce, menacingly surveying his enemy, “ but you’re more indebted, I can tell you, to your soldier steel than to honourable manhood. And, if you have not yet got enough of it, and will meet me, with a civil weapon, like a man, I am ready again to give you the other half of such a drubbing, as will keep you from forgetting the longest day of your life, your hunt on the Mearns Moor.”

A flash of anger shot from the dark eyes of the young Highlandman, while he glanced upon the other as if scorning a reply, in any other manner

but by blows; and, instantly catching up the stick of one of the late combatants, which lay on the sod, he threw down his musket, and, only saying "Now, braggart, we are equal!" sprung once more upon his adversary.

A determined fight was once more commenced, during which the eyes of both shot such deadly enmity, that had their weapons been steel, instead of sloe thorn, a short interval only must have elapsed before their encounter should have terminated in the death of one of them. Soon, however, the heads of both were streaming with blood, when the better play, or greater strength of the Highlandman giving him increasing and evident superiority, the other driven now to act on the defensive, looked anxiously round for some mode of taking advantage of his adversary, and of saving himself against the danger and disgrace of a retreat, which seemed almost inevitable.

By the movement of a few paces of well timed retreat, he managed to shift their ground farther into the hollow, and near the margin of a black level, at the edge of which stood two round gray stones,

towards which Bruce made, as if in the last extremity of resistance. Ronald following unsuspectingly, two or three hard blows were given and received on the edge of the boggy flat, when the Highlander, pressing hard upon the other, by one stroke hit the stick out of Bruce's hand into the air.

While Ronald stood, for an instant, expecting his adversary to beg for mercy, Bruce, smiling grimly, as if it was *he* that was the conqueror, sprung forward upon the Highland youth, and, grasping his stick, seemed to try to wrench it out of his hand; but, drawing him first towards the gray stones, he, with one push of despairing vigour, thrust him backwards into the black flat, which becoming deeper at every retrograde plunge of the unwary mountaineer, in two seconds he sank down nearly to his neck in the deceitful swamp, while a last blow with his own stick, which was wrestled from him, as he went down, by the cunning smuggler, once more took away all feeling, and left the unfortunate Highlander in a state of insensibility, sunk to the chin in the black mud of the bog.

CHAPTER III.

What shape is that between me and the moon ?
Do ghosts stalk forth across the matted moor
To startle murder from his deadly aim ?
Heav'n help me in my need !
The form is gone !

Scrap Stanzas.

NIGHT had crept over the wild solitudes of the Mearns Moor, and all was darkness round, ere the deadly chill of the wet swamp, into which he was bedded, at length brought Ronald to sense, and some degree of recollection. During his incasement for several hours in the moss, his very insensibility and weakness was his salvation ; for any movement of the least energy would only have served to plunge him deeper, and tended eventually to smother him in the dangerous morass. When he first opened his eyes, and perceived only the dull starry sky overhead, and the dark moor-

land waste around him, while the night wind whistled sadly from the distant hills along the bending heath; and when he felt only the cold moss-earth around his body, he fell into an aguish shudder, and thought himself already a buried corpse in this horrid swamp.

Sometimes he tried to make a slight effort to get out; but weakness and a natural perception of the consequences still confined him: while the pain of the wounds on his head, and the excessive uneasiness of the clotted blood in his hair, made him almost resigned to die where he was. Anon he thought he heard noises on the distant moor, as if of persons trampling backwards and forwards on the hollow sod, and he tried to shout, but had not strength to give the least voice to his distress.

The poor Highland youth was beginning to relapse into a deadly stupor, when he thought he heard the sound of a light footstep quite near, and opening his eyes, he perceived a dull light moving at a short distance from him. He continued to watch the soft tread, and the light still seemed

to move about almost on the surface of the heath. At first, he thought it was that *ignis fatuus*, or bog-fire, which has such a fearful appearance to the benighted traveller among swampy moors; but as he mechanically fixed his eyes on it, he again heard more distinctly the slow tramp, and presently a low voice quite near, lamentingly said,

“Ochon! ochon! for the poor Highland lad: for he’s lost and smothered in the Packman’s Dowk: *there* is his bonnet an’ feathers; and there are the marks o’ his foot beyond the gray stanes: Ochon! for that wicked Quentin Bruce.—Hush! what’s that?” added the voice: for the unfortunate Ronald gave a groan, to make himself heard while the stranger was speaking; and he now perceived the dark form of the tall figure of the old woman, who had been the guide of the party during the day, and who was now seeking about for him: the light he had seen being the dim, indistinct glimmer from a horn lantern, which she carried in her hand.

She gave an exclamation of joy; when holding down the light in different directions, on the very

rim of the swamp, she first beheld the bloody face of the Highlander, still over the surface of this dangerous spot, and encouragingly begged him to keep himself steady, while she did her best to relieve him. By means of her long staff, and her knowledge of the nature of the bog, into which she was obliged to venture some way herself, she at length, notwithstanding his weakness, succeeded in extricating Ronald from his perilous situation; and desiring him to lean upon her, she forthwith, half dragging him with her, piloted their way through the solitude, among the heathy swamps and crags of the moor.

At length they came among the brushwood where they had been in the daytime; and stooping behind a bushy clump, at the rear of which rose a knoll, the woman began to pull at the heath which grew out of the face of the crag, which presently giving way in a considerable surface opened as a door, and they entered into a small warm apartment under the crag.

The place was light and comfortable as they entered; a turf fire burned in the centre, beside

which sat a shock-headed boy, and presently a rude seat having been brought forward, Ronald was by a sign ordered to sit down.

“First let me see what ye’re like!” said the old woman, opening the lantern, and holding the light close to the pale face of the youth.

“You may trust me, mistress,” said Ronald faintly, and understanding her meaning.

“I like your look, in troth, my puir Highland lad;” said the woman; “an’ I’ll soon bring you round: but ye’ll no’ be a treacher to ‘auld Margery,” she added, putting her head close to his, with an expression which showed she had once known how to seduce the affections of a handsome Highlander.

“There’s my hand!” said Ronald gratefully; and the woman knew too well the value of such a pledge from a son of the Celt, to distrust him another instant.

“Now, Bauldy,” she said to the boy, “bring out the Grey Beard, ’till I give the puir lad a dram,—that’s the first thing.”

The Grey Beard was soon produced, which was

a good sized stone bottle, and having, as a preliminary, poured into the youth a hearty bumper of the pure mountain dew, which she drew from it, she proceeded to rub his limbs, and to restore the circulation; and then, though she seemed to think his final recovery most precarious, if fever should, as was likely, succeed the ague of the morass, she assisted him to a bed of heath, which was made up at the inner recess of the cavern; whereon being placed, he soon fell into a profound sleep.

Meantime the whole afternoon and evening was one of strange and restless excitement, as well as much anxiety to the female inmates at Kingswell Inn. The excisemen had first arrived by themselves, having been led astray, and afterwards beaten and abused when separated from their party on the moor, out of which they were glad to escape with their lives. Then came the Lowland Laird, (followed by all his men but two,) in a miserable pickle, swearing against all excisemen, stell-hunts, and mossy moors! which he said had cost him in one day, the price of a new dress at

least; and last of all came groping in, when it was late, the mangled remains of Donald Magraw; who after having gathered himself up on the field of battle, or been assisted off, he could not tell which, managed by pure valour, and the help of a good bumper of whiskey, given him by the old woman, to get eventually clear of the dangers of the moor.

In answer to the eager inquiries of all regarding Ronald, Magraw could tell nothing, but that the youth had fought like a lion and a Maclean! and probably died like a soldier; for it was not likely, he thought, from Ronald's own temper, and that of the stell-men, that he would be lucky enough to bring himself and his life away clear and clean out of that confounded-moor. This melancholy conclusion was unfortunately confirmed next day, on a search that was made in the dangerous part of the morass by two of the party, accompanied by the landlord of the inn himself, who was well acquainted with the general localities of the neighbourhood: for the firelock and bonnet of the youth were found where the struggle had begun,

and deep marks near the two gray stones close by, gave every confirmation to the suspicion, that he had perished in the fathomless swamp; which, ever since a poor pedler, who passed that way, had been smothered in its deceitful gulf, had been known by the name of the Packman's Dowk.

Next night and the following, some of the men who were suspected to be engaged in the illicit distilling on the moor; and, in particular, Quentin Bruce, were seen skulking about the Inn of Kingswell, as if afraid to enter it. On the third night, there being a new moon, Bruce again crossed the Moor to the Inn, and watching the opportunity of Betty Leishman's going to some of the outhouses, ventured to appear before her and address her.

"How dare you speak to me, Quentin Bruce?" she said, looking him steadily in the face: "you need not follow me, for I tell you, you are no cousin of mine; and besides, leading away my poor brother to join in this dangerous trade of yours!—your spirit is,—Quentin, I dare not look at you!"

"You never would look at me with kindness,

Betty," he said grimly; "although I once persuaded myself that I had won you; but I have something to say to you to-night; and your brother has something to say to you, if you will meet him for five minutes on the moor."

"My brother Mark at last!" she exclaimed; "but why does he not come here?"

"You know it is dangerous for the present," he said, with an insinuating air. "Come, Betty, and speak pleasantly to him and myself for once."

After some more colloquy, mingled with the reproaches of the girl, he, with some difficulty, persuaded her to trust herself with him on the moor, to which she consented, in the hopes of seeing her brother, and learning something certain about the fate of Ronald.

Leaving her business in the inn to her comrade servant, and throwing her short plaid round her shoulders, she proceeded into the moor by a well known path, and found Quentin, who had gone before, waiting for her. "Where is Mark?" she said, suspiciously, seeing him alone on the heath, with his light gun in his hand.

“ He did not come so near Kingswell. He is just at hand, at the back of the knoll, waiting for us,” said the youth, pointing down into the hollow.

The girl accompanied him onward in silence, and not without suspicion; and, as he attempted to throw his arm round her, in the Scotch sweetheart fashion, she spurned him with an almost shuddering repugnance.

He attempted similar freedoms several times, as they wound round the knoll on the heath, with no better success, until at length he stopped short, and gazed on her, his eyes flashing with a wild and horrid ardour.

“ I don’t see my brother Mark,” she exclaimed, looking round, and beginning to tremble. “ Where are you leading me, Quentin? What do you mean?”

“ I told you a lie, Betty,” he said, with an ominous smile. “ Your brother must not hear what I have to communicate to-night. I have something very particular to say to you myself,” and he caught her round the waist.

“ Let me go home, Quentin,” she said, looking fearfully up, as she observed the alarming expression on his countenance. “ Do let me go !”

“Not a step until you hear me; nay, listen to me, Betty,” he said, sadly. “Indeed I am to be pitied, and you are the cause.”

“Me!”

“Yes, you have driven me mad by your cruelty, and I do not care what I do. Stay, Betty, stay and speak to me! Will you be kind to me? Will you love me? Will you marry me? I will leave the smuggling—I will bring back your brother—I will do any thing!”

“Quentin,” she said, solemnly, “how can you talk to me this way? what did you do to the poor young Highlandman? Ah, Quentin, you look fearfully! People say he was pushed by some one into the Packman’s Dowk, and drowned—smothered. Oh, I cannot look at you!”

“Did you love this Highland stranger, then, better than me?” he said, rapidly, and with a look of desperation.

“Yes! a thousand times. Oh, you unfortunate cruel man! You are a murderer! I see it in your face.”

“Do you, Betty?” he said, with a look of calm

wickedness that was horrible; "then you are right. If you love not me, you shall never love him. I shoved him into the smothering bog with my own hands. *I did for him.*" And, as the desperate young man said this, he stared in the face of the affrighted girl with a look of fiendish satisfaction.

"God forgive you, Quentin!" she only said, clasping her hands, and looking at him with horror.

"Betty Leishman," he exclaimed, "I am distracted, and you only can cure my wild spirit. Will you return my love? Will you leave Kingswell with me, and save me from ruin and shame? By heavens you must, or——"

"Never, you accursed man! God be near us—what is that I see? The spirit of the murdered Highland lad seems moving on the heath between us and the moon!"

"Where?" he croaked, with a shudder; but he saw nothing, for the quarter moon was just being covered by a cloud.

"Betty," he continued, hoarsely, "I ask you again, will you consent to go with me this instant? speak!"

“Never! You wretch, let me go!”

“Then, by Heaven! your tongue shall never bring me to the gallows. I will have you, or your life!” and he took up the gun and prepared to shoot.

All the accounts of young women murdered by their proffered lovers, that she had ever read or heard, rushed into the distracted mind of the girl, as she gazed helplessly around her into the solitary obscurities of the moorland waste, and then into the scowling countenance of the man, who seemed prepared for a desperate deed. Then falling on her knees, she, in the earnest language of despair, begged him not to take her life.

“What do I care for your life!” he said, with ruffian coolness, as he stood over her; “have you not driven me mad?”

“Oh, Quentin!” she exclaimed, in horror, still on her knees, “I am your own cousin—I am in my youthful years—I have never wronged you—let me go home for God’s sake!”

“You shall never see another morning if you do not consent to be mine!”

“ God have mercy on me then, for I never will !”

“ Never ?”

“ Never ! I will follow the poor innocent Highland lad first, whom you smothered in that horrid bog.”

“ The Highlander again !” he gasped out, with jealous fury.

“ Mercy ! Mercy !” screamed the horrified girl, as he stepped two paces back and deliberately cocked the gun. He raised it to his eye, and looked wildly towards his victim, who seemed in a stupor of horror, and presently a rushing noise swept among the heath.

“ Christ Jesus !” exclaimed the villain at what he saw ; for the form of Ronald M‘Lean seemed to have started up out of the earth, and stood between him and the horrified girl, the moon shining out dimly upon his pale and patched features, his head being bound with a bloody handkerchief.

“ The very dead rise up against me !” exclaimed Quentin, in a whisper of horror, and dropping the cocked musket, he fled forth into the obscurity of the moor.

The Highlander lifted up the girl in silence—she gazed in his face in the moonlight—she felt him warm, and saw his eye burning with admiration.

“ Ronald !” she exclaimed, with a scream of joy, “ is it really you Ronald ?” and with that surrendered herself to his delivering embrace.

They went together joyfully to the inn ; she blessing the Providence that had spared his life, and sent him to the spot at a moment so fearful ; for being so far recovered, his impatience had impelled him to escape from the moor by favour of the moonlight ; and hearing the screams, he had crept to the spot and started up at the last instant of danger. I need not say what a happy evening he spent with the grateful girl and the others, at the homely Inn of Kingswell.

Bruce fled for ever from the Mearns, and no one ever heard of him more, within the whole shire of Ayre. But some years after, I was travelling on the borders of the Highlands, and on one of the great northern roads, I happened to stop for refreshment at a country inn, the unexpected decency and comfort of which, in these parts, struck

me with particular pleasure. I was soon welcomed by a pretty young matron as landlady, who, upon my looking at her for a moment, proved to be the very Betty Leishman of my tale; and she was now surrounded by a crowd of black-eyed curly-headed children, who at once fathered themselves upon Ronald, the handsome Highlander, now landlord of the inn.

I spoke to her distantly of former times, and of a certain stell-hunt which once took place in Ayrshire; but when I became more explicit, I saw the eyes of the pretty landlady fill with tears of pleasure, as I reminded her of the far away days "when she was a lass," treading the fragrant blooming heath of the Mearn's Moor, or singing at her work in the heartsome Inn of Kingswell.

THE END.