

CHAPTER II.

Oh, ope the door and let me in,
 Oh dinna let your minstrel fa' ;
 An' dinna let his winding-sheet,
 Be naething but a wreath o' snaw.
 PICKERING.

ALL the inmates rushed at once to the door, and were jostled aside by a tall amazon, almost shapeless with snow, who staggered in, with something rolled up in the folds of her mantle, which, from her manner of carrying it, seemed to be a child, but which, when she had unslung her cloak from her shoulders, proved to be a little old man, apparently dead. His appearance, as he lay in her arms, was well calculated to awaken sympathy. His eyes, which glared wide open, were piercing, black, and lustrous ; his wrinkled cheeks were livid and colourless ; his mouth was open, and the relaxed muscles of his under jaw were formed into hard wiry and deeply indented lines ; his grizzly beard seemed to be covered with hoar-frost, and his whole body so much reduced, that he looked more like a skeleton than a living being. The female, on the contrary, was a strong, bold, healthy looking personage, with an energetic decision in all her movements, and a tender affection evinced by her for the poor creature who lay before us interested us all warmly in her favour. It seemed somewhat strange and unnatural, that so large a woman should be linked with such a fraction of a man ; but the slender lichen clings to the strong rock, and our self-pride is gratified in assisting those who cannot assist themselves. Indeed, without this wise provision of nature, it is apparent that the weak would become weaker, and the strong stronger ; until that fellow-feeling of imperfection which unites us together being altogether dissolved, the world would be worse than it is, and man would cease to acknowledge the relationship which subsists between him and his brethren.

After the usual means of restoration had been applied for some time, the Gaberlunzie, who appeared well skilled in

matters of this kind, gave notice of returning animation. The breath of the prostrate object dimmed the little mirror brought from the room; he was rolled up in warm blankets, and, in the arms of his affectionate helpmate, returned to life and consciousness. The diminutive hero was soon able to recognise all that was going on around him; his eyes glistened and twinkled, as if emitting sparks; his face got animated and flushed; he held forward his lips to his benefactress, who smacked them till the whole house rung again; all eyes were filled with joy; even "Braxy" caught a tear trickling down his cheek, and exclaimed, "Od hang it, this is ower muckle!" The little man, however, lay in the same position, gazing in the face of his protectress, who, nothing loath nor daunted, almost stifled him with her caresses, until, as if suddenly awakened from her dream of happiness to some painful reality, she exclaimed, "Oh, dearly as I lo'e to see my Willie weel again, yet I canna forget our puir companions in the storm, the auld Fiddler an' his silly laddie, that I was obliged to leave, and seek a shelter for my puir deeing Willie! Puir creatures, had I haen the power as I had the will, I wud hae carried them baith on my back; they wad hae helpit to fill that toom corner at the ingle-side; but, by this time, I fear they'll likely be strakit on a snawy wreath." Upon this being mentioned, the Gaberlunzie started up, and looking out on the night, said, "That if she could guide him near to the spot where she had left them, they might yet be saved. The old Fiddler," he added, "who had seen three generations away, had fought his way through many a rough storm; and, if he was alive, and conceived himself within the reach of human hearing, now that the storm had passed, he would be endeavouring to attract attention by his voice and fiddle, which, for sweetness and power, were unmatched in this part of the world."

Upon this hint accordingly we prepared to accompany our leader, and, with the exception of the Pedlar, who was not willing, and "Willie," who was left in charge of our kind landlady and her daughters, we sallied forth, to endeavour, if possible, to discover and succour the storm-staid travellers.

The light at first, with the reflection from the white snow, was sufficiently strong to let us see each other, and the moon shortly began to glimmer through the clouds. After an hour spent in clambering through masses of snow, and over hills of

drift, we came to a large stream, which, although frozen, was dangerous to attempt crossing. We skirted along its banks for some time under the directions of the female, who at length told us that she thought we were near the point where she had parted from her fellow-travellers. Here we made a stand to consult about our farther proceeding, when the colley, who had come along with us, started off in the direction of the hill. Encouraged by this omen, the Gaberlunzie laid his ear on the end of his staff, and declared that he heard music in the same direction as that which the dog had taken. There was a deep hollow or glen between us and the commencement of the hill, which was somewhat dangerous, the snow in many parts of it being very deep; but, using every precaution, we succeeded in finding our way across a rocky ridge which crossed this muirland strath, and soon the sound of a fiddle at no great distance was heard distinctly. "Braxy," who knew the locality, was not long in informing us that the Fiddler had found shelter in a peat-sheiling which stood on the hill-top, where the herds at times resided in summer, and where he had himself in early life spent many a merry night. Although now deserted, he said that it was still fit to afford shelter from the angry elements in such a night; but how the Fiddler had found his way thither, was at present to him a mystery.

The moon, which now rose clear and dazzling, afforded us, on reaching the eminence, a full view of the hut, which certainly formed a picture of a singular and romantic character. It was partly unroofed, one of the gables was nearly down, and the whole walls were in a state of dilapidation. One turf seat remained; and the moonbeams struggling through the broken roof, fell full on the old man seated thereon, with his idiot boy, apparently unconscious of his situation, leaning on his grandfather's knee, listening to the blended melody of his voice and fiddle.

There was something in all this which inspired us with awe, and created a mingled feeling of admiration and astonishment. The Fiddler was apparently very aged; his white hair, which rivalled the silvery snow, fell in long straight lines down his back; his forehead was high, and deeply furrowed; his cheeks, which were very thin, sunk in the middle to a hollow, and again stretched out round his mouth in irregular circles of deeply

indented lines; his eyes, which were fixed on his helpless charge, with a look of the most solicitous affection, were sunk far in their sockets, and shone with that lustrous brilliancy which is the sure index to a melancholy mind. Light grief finds its way in tears down the cheek; heavy grief lies buried in the heart, and glasses itself in the eye, in which can always be detected the fitful flashes of the hidden and consuming flame.

When we approached, he had just commenced to sing and play the following song and melody, his face varying its expression at every point, and his head bent forward as if in communion with the sounds which came from the bosom of his richly-toned fiddle.

MY FIDDLE AN' ME.

NATURE is bonny an' blythsome to see,
Wi' the gowd on her brow, an' the light in her ee;
An' sweet is her summer sang rollin' in glee,
As it thrills the heart-strings o' my fiddle an' me.

When the young morning blinks through among the black
cluds,
An' the southland breeze rustles out through the green wuds;
The lark in the lift, and the merl on the tree,
Baith strike the key-note to my fiddle an' me.

When among the crisp heather upon the hillside,
Mine ee fou o' rapture, my soul fou o' pride;
The wee heather lintie an' wild hinny-bee
A' join in the strain wi' my fiddle an' me.

When daunderin at e'en down the dark dowie dells,
To cheer the wee gowans, an' charm the wee bells—
The sweet purling rill wimples down to the sea,
Dancing light to the notes o' my fiddle an' me.

At kirk or at weddin', at tryst or at fair,
There's nae saul-felt music unless we be there;
Wi' a spark in my heart, an' a drap in my ee,
The verra floor lous to my fiddle an' me.



E'en now, when the cauld drift sweeps ower the bleak hill,
 An' mony stout hearts sink beneath the fell chill,
 What keeps my puir callant alive on my knee,
 But twa three blythe staves frae my fiddle an' me.

My fiddle's my life-spring, my fiddle's my a',
 She clings to me close when a' else are awa ;
 Time may force friends to part, he may wyle faes to gree,
 Death only can part my auld fiddle an' me.



MY FIDDLE AN' ME.

*Moderately
 Slow, with
 Feeling.*

O Na- ture is bon-ny an' blithesome to see, WI' the
 gowd on her brow, an' the light in her ee; An' sweet is her sum-mer sang
 roll - in' in glee, As it thrills the heart-strings o' my fid-dle an' me. When the
 young morning blinks thro' among the black cluds, An' the southland breeze rustles out
 through the green wuds; The lark in the lift, an' the merl on the tree, Baith
 strike the key - note to my fid - dle an' me.

While this song was being sung, we all stood still, as if afraid to breathe, or lose a single word or tone. Although the voice of the singer was tremulous, and at some points nearly inaudible, still the notes were so beautifully blended with the tones of the fiddle, that every word was heard, as if distinctly pronounced both by the enthusiastic musician and his harmonious instrument. So much were we charmed by this effusion, that we had almost wholly forgotten our situation and the purport of our visit; nor had we recovered presence of mind to move forward, when we were still farther astonished and charmed by a voice, which issued from the dark corner of the shieling, and as if echoing the melody which still rang in our ears, chanted the following wild and plaintive burden, evidently the outpouring of a diseased and woe-stricken mind:—

SING ON, SING ON.



SING on, sing on, the wanderer's near,
Cold scowls the night, and the blast howls drear :
Sing on, or my woe-worn heart will break ;
Sing on ! sing on ! till my love awake.

Sing on, while the Kelpie's ford is dry,
Will-o'-wisp's obscured by the stars on high :
The boughs their silvery feathers shake ;
Sing on ! sing on ! till my love awake.

Sing on, sing on, tho' the snow-wreathed moss
Like fading old age be hoar and cross :
Spring gives new bloom to the ferny brake ;
Sing on ! sing on ! till my love awake.

Sing on, sing on, tho' the creaking tree
On the lonely moor swings drearily :
He shakes from his brow each snowy flake ;
Sing on ! sing on ! till my love awake.

Climb ye the mountain, seek ye the dell,
Bid mirth good-night, and pleasure farewell :
Yet life shall float over death's dark lake ;
Sing on ! sing on ! till my love awake.

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.

The Robin sits on the graveyard skull,
 Chirping away with his small heart full :
 The sweet bird sings at the dead man's wake ;
 Sing on ! sing on ! or my heart will break.

Sing on, sing on, the wanderer's near,
 Cold scowls the night, and the blast howls drear :
 Sing on, or my woe-worn heart will break ;
 Sing on ! sing on ! till my love awake.

All Nature acknowledges the influence of music ; man bends before its power, and even the inferior animals own its dominion. The deep-toned organ, as it peals through the groined and richly-fretted arches of the lofty cathedral, wafts the soul to heaven on the wings of melody, and elevates the devotional feeling of the sincere worshipper. The clear tinkle of the solitary church-bell in the Sabbath morn, as it echoes among the hills, is felt and responded to by the well-attuned hearts of those who, impressed with its old and sacred associations, repair, at its summons, from their distant homes, to hold sweet converse with their God, in the same church where their forefathers often had met together in the olden time. The sad sound of the pibroch deepens the gloom of the Highland glen. The muffled drum hushes to stillness the noisy voice of the crowded street through which passes the funeral procession of the poor soldier. The blind vocalist, whose voice awakens the dull and silent lane at nightfall, like a spirit wailing among the habitations of the dead, leads after him, in the cold winter time, groups of merry little creatures, who, chained by the ear, follow him through half the town, regardless of the punishment that awaits them on their return home from their nocturnal perambulations. Bands of musicians find encouragement sufficient to induce them to serenade and enliven the darkest and closest alleys of the city. In the poorest districts of large towns, where nothing but squalid misery abounds, the itinerant ballad singer finds purchasers for his woeful ditties. The most popular street songs are chanted loudest by the friendless wretches, seated on outshot shelving stairs, poor homeless beings who have their dwellings in the streets, and who can look forward to the grave only for a home, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." The child,

as he lisps and prattles on his nurse's knee, leaps bounding to a lively air, or is hushed asleep by a gentle lullaby. Old frail wrecks of humanity, whose dancing days have long since passed away, will beat time with their staff to the sound of the fiddle. Nations have been conquered, battles have been won, by the influence of music; and many a wounded soldier has shed his last sigh, and fallen asleep in the arms of death, amid dreams of home and friends, conjured up by a melody associated with

“Life's morning march, when his bosom was young.”

Strong as is the influence of music over the mind at all times, its power is much increased by the stillness of the night. The *Æolian* harp, breathed upon by the invisible spirits of the air, makes every heart echo to its irregular and fitful cadences; and many a hard pillow is softened, and many an aching head is soothed to slumber, by the gentle and pleasing strains of the nightwaits. Was it, then, to be wondered at, that while the foregoing songs were being sung in so singular a manner, the party from Kelpie Cleugh should stand, silent and still, riveted to the spot with admiration?

Ere we had awakened from our trance-like stupor, or were able to shake off the spell in which we were bound, the singer of the last song came forth from the shadowy corner of the hut in which she had been concealed from our view, and the feeling of awe which had crept over us was increased by the appearance of the figure who now stood revealed. Her person was thin and tall; a gray hill-plaid hung over her left arm; her hair escaped in irregular ringlets from beneath a small bonnet, which, although it partially shaded, did not conceal any one feature of her very remarkable face. Her colour was pale; the expression of her eyes subdued and tender. There was no trace of derangement about her, but she seemed rather the victim of mental suffering and broken-hearted grief. Yet her step was firm and elastic; and He who stills the stormy wave to the weary mariner, and tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, had given her a frame capable of enduring the fatigue to which the restless and unsettled state of her mind frequently subjected her.

While we still stood gazing on this very singular personage, the old Fiddler, apparently much delighted with the wild and flowing melody she had just sung, began to play it on his

fiddle, which so affected the singer that we observed large glistening tears running down her cheeks; at the pause, however, she seemed to awake to a sense of the danger to which they were all exposed, and again addressed herself to the listeners.

There is beauty below, there is beauty above,
 The earth beams with light, and the sky glows with love,
 The snow sparkles white, and the stars twinkle gay,
 All mingling and blending like Morning with Day;
 Then follow me, follow me, through the long muir,
 There's a home for the friendless, a friend for the poor!

Tho' the sky is all clear, yet the birds are all fled;
 Tho' the earth's deck'd in white, yet the flowers are all dead;
 Tho' the brave heart of manhood beats dauntless and bold,
 Yet old age and childhood will shiver a-cold.
 Then follow me, follow me, through the long muir,
 There's a home for the friendless, a friend for the poor!

"Ay, and ye shall find them baith at Kelpie Cleugh, my kind-hearted dawtie!" exclaimed the farmer, unable longer to restrain himself. "My puir faithfu' feckless creature, God help us! it wad be telling us a', if folks wha are reputed great, gude, an' wise, had a tithie o' your kindness. Come awa, come awa, ye shall hae the biennest corner o' the ingle-cheek, the best bite in the pantry, the blythest blink o' my wifie's ee, and the warmest welcome I can gie ye."

This exclamation startled the whole three listeners, particularly Phemie, who shrunk into the corner whence she had issued; and it was not until our worthy host had convinced her of his identity that she could be induced again to come forth.

The fiddler and his boy received us with loud cheers, and every possible demonstration of merriment. The face of the former had quite a changed expression; he leaped up, skipped about, twanged his fiddle-string with his finger, shouted out again and again, clasped the farmer round the neck, and embraced us all, not even our conductress escaping his caresses. The chief expression of joy, however, was reserved for the last. When the Gaberlunzie, who had kept in the background, made

his appearance, the Fiddler started back, clasped his hands together, knelt down, and throwing his arms round the knees of our old friend, looked up in his face as if he had been preserving life for half a century just to see him, and now felt contented to die. The boy also seemed deeply affected, and when the Gaberlunzie patted him on the head, and applied to him the familiar epithet of "puir fallow," he felt him all over, looked him close in the face, and, amid unintelligible sounds and wild gestures, endeavoured to express how very happy he was. The two old men seemed acquaintances of long standing; they retired together for some moments, and conversed with each other in a very animated manner, though all their conversation was carried on in an undertone. They also kept close together on our way to Kelpie Cleugh, and maintained a similar conversation the whole road, apparently questioning and answering each other with a feeling of deep interest. This convinced us all that there was some connecting link between them, some mutual attraction that did not extend to the circle around them.

With all this demonstration of joy on the part of the old Fiddler, he did not manifest nor express that surprise which might have been expected from one in his situation. He told us that, after having been left by his two companions, he had struggled hard to follow them, but that his boy, weakly at all times, had sunk down completely exhausted; that having at last got to the leaside of a crag, which afforded a partial shelter from the storm, he had resolved there to abide his fate; that knowing the power of his bow-hand, he had begun to play a tune, thinking to attract the attention of some of the shepherds or farmers, if, perchance, any of their cottages should be within hearing distance; that shortly after he began to play, Feckless Phemie had come to his assistance; that the storm had abated in severity; and that she had conducted him to the shieling where we had found him, carrying the poor boy herself all the way. Thus, during the half hour they had remained there, they had been singing and cheering each other in the way we had found them, although much against Phemie's will, who had been anxious to convey them to Kelpie Cleugh; but the boy still being weak and weary, and the shieling affording sufficient shelter, he had resolved to stay a short time, and try the effect of his fiddle, to see whether or not it might bring

some one to assist them, ere they again ventured to cross the snow wreaths alone. "And by my troth," said he, "I screwed up the auld jaud's heart-strings, and gaured her speak; and sweet is the music o' a tongue that could bring sae mony kind friends round me at sic a seasonable time, wi' sic help an' relief:" so saying, he tossed off the "quaich of mountain dew" now handed him by the farmer, and thus again apostrophized his fiddle:—

Winter's frost and snaw
 Ne'er wi' me can meddle,
 While sic notes I draw
 Frae my dear auld fiddle.
 Far I rise aboon
 A' this world's widdle,
 Wi' a hamely tune
 Frae my tunefu' fiddle.
 Then link an' laugh awa
 While my elbows diddle;
 Weel I lo'e ye a',
 But better far my fiddle!

Lassies lo'e a kiss,
 Callants lo'e a cuddle,
 But they ken nae bliss
 Like dancing to my fiddle.
 Sweet's the maiden's tear
 At her sister's bridal,
 But ah! the dew-blob's dear
 That's drappit on my fiddle.
 Then link an' laugh awa
 While my elbows diddle;
 Weel I lo'e ye a',
 But better far my fiddle!

His fiddle was evidently the goddess of the old man's idolatry, and it was needless at present to endeavour to infringe, in the slightest degree, on a friendship of such long standing, or to direct his attention to his kind-hearted companion and our willing conductress, to whose exertions, in the first instance, he owed our present visit.

We now set out on our return towards Kelpie Cleugh, and

on our way thither felt the full force of the old proverb, "That a good deed lightens a heavy heart, and agreeable company shortens a long road." The night was now one of singular beauty. The sky, lighted up with the moon and stars, was like one sheet of silver, studded with sparkling diamonds; while the Milky Way stretched across, like a deeply imbedded seam of jewels, glimmering and losing themselves in each other's light. The snow, which had been wound into waving and circular wreaths, was crystallized by the frost, and reflected from innumerable little mirrors, with increased effect, the lustrous brilliancy of the sky. Some of the gray crags and knolls, which had been swept bare, peeped out here and there from among the mass of glittering white, relieving and giving variety to a landscape of great beauty, and more like enchantment than reality.

As we approached within sight of the house, the beauty of the scene was still further heightened. The skeleton branches of the trees were all loaded with glistening snow. The ruins of the old castle now seemed older than ever; and one or two tall fragments of wall which still remained standing, looked like some fantastically shaped giants of antiquity, their heads hoary with extreme age, and their bodies bending beneath the load of years. The dense volume of smoke which rose from the farm-house slowly and gradually wound itself into large circles of thin clouds, and threw a fine gray shadow over the white roof. As the cloud ascended to an immense height in an undulating and semi-transparent column, the rays of light, playing on its edges, and piercing its thin body, gave it a delicacy of tint, and a richness of colour, which might have been imagined to attend the ascent or descent of some supernatural being.

We found our kind hostess and her family awaiting our arrival with great anxiety. Our little hero, Willie, now quite recovered, was seated, chatting with the Pedlar, and seemed to be amusing the company with his lively conversation. He came running out to meet his helpmate, and ere we had all got seated, or had time to receive the warm congratulations which were poured thick upon us from all quarters, he welcomed his better half with the following affectionate effusion:—



WILLIE AND MAGGY.

TUNE—"Whistle an' I'll come to you, my lad."

CHORUS.

Oh! what wad I do gin my Maggy were dead?
 Oh! what wad I do gin my Maggy were dead?
 This wud e'en be a wearifu' warld indeed
 To me, gin my ain canny Maggy were dead.

Bairns brought up thegither, baith nursed on ae knee,
 Baith slung ower ae cuddy, fu' weel did we gree;
 Tho' I was born armless, an' aye unco wee,
 My Maggy was muckle, an' bunted for me.
 Oh! what wad I do, &c.

When she grew a woman, an' I grew a man,
 She graspit my stump, for I hadna a han';
 An' we plighted our troth ower a big bag o' skran,
 Thegither true-hearted to beg thro' the lan'.
 Oh! what wad I do, &c.

Tho' whiles when the skran and the siller are rife,
We baith may get fou, yet we never hae strife;
To me she ne'er lifted her han' in her life,
An' whaur is the loon that can brag sic a wife?
Oh! what wad I do, &c.

Oh! Maggy is pure as a young Papist nun,
An' she's fond o' her Will, as the wean o' its fun,
As the wight o' his drink, or the wit o' his pun—
There's no sic anither Meg under the sun.
Oh! what wad I do, &c.

Mony big loons hae hecited to wyle her awa,
Baith thimblers, and tumblers, and tinklers an' a';
But she jeers them, an' tells them her Willie, though sma',
Has mair in his bulk than the best o' them a'.
Oh! what wad I do, &c.

I'm feckless an' frien'less, distorted and wee,
Canna cast my ain claes, nor yet claw my ain knee;
But she kens a' my wants, an' does a' thing for me,
Gin I wantit my Maggy I'm sure I wad dee.

Then what wad I do gin my Maggy were dead?
Oh! what wad I do gin my Maggy were dead?
This wad e'en be a wearifu' world indeed
To me, gin my ain canny Maggy were dead.

“Weel done, my wee game-cock,” exclaimed Braxy; “Od, I like to see a man that loves his wife, and can tell her o’ her qualities afore her ain face, an’ afore a’ the warld; and ye hae a right ane, wha weel deserves a’ your attention, and weel worth having half-a-dozen o’ sangs chanted in her praise. But for the gude steeve stuff she’s made o’, baith in body and mind, my fire-neuk wad hae been toomer the night, and they might hae been takin’ their last sleep on the muir wha are singing like summer birds round the blythsome blink o’ our ingle lowe. Troth, gudewife,” continued he, addressing his “bonny wee dame,” “I couldna help comparing mysel’ to Noah filling his ark the night, as I cam over the muir wi’ my freends ahint me, and a dainty cleckin o’

chickens I hae gathered thegither, I trow. I question gif ye'll get sic a collection o' sangsters under ae roof-tree in a' braid Scotland at the present moment. The bits o' birdies outby e'enow, puir things, are e'en blythe to pick up twa three crumbs frae the window-sole, or aff the barn-floor, an' I whiles think the wee bit chirm their leader Robin gies is bonnier than the blythest lays o' the lark in the simmer mornin. I wadna want their kindly chirp for a barnfu' o' corn; an' gin the burdies canna nor maunna be forgotten, neither shall the door o' Kelpie Cleugh be steekit against the traveller, however poor. We hae muckle need to help ane anither in this warld; it's but a warstle at the best, and we hae aneugh ado to get through without warstling wi' our ain brithers, or steeking our heart against ony son o' Adam, however far awa he may be removed frae us in kin, or however laigh may be his station in life."

"I like ye for that, man, Tam; I like ye for that," said the Gaberlunzie, grasping him by the hand; "I like ye for that far mair than for a' your ither qualities: it was that kindly feeling o' yours for the wants o' ithers, that desire to render them assistance, that first made me tak a liking to you; and amid a' the daffin, deevilry, and quaffing glee that you used to gang on wi' in your young days, your kindly disposition was aye letting itself out in some shape or ither; and I hae nae doubt that this did mair to gain ye the heart o' her wha's now been sae lang your helpmate, than a' the wabs o' ruffles and brow dresses that the Pedlar yelps about."

"Baith's best," said Peter, "baith's best; a kind heart beats as warm aneath a ruffled sark as a coarse piece o' sackclath; and even marble's nane the waur o' haeing a wee bit glister on't."

"Ah, Peter," said the Gaberlunzie, "he kens little o' nature wha kens nae that the tree wi' the rough bark may hae a sound core; and the Carnwath Muir folks ken weel that the blackest peat sends forth the brightest lowe, and gies the maist heat. But the gieing hand is unca seldom toom, our worthy host has been aye unca weel provided for a' his days; and it shall gang hard wi' me an' mine, if some day or other he disna get a mensefu' return for this and other kindnesses."

"Hoot, awa' wi' your havers! think ye that I either expect or seek a return for gieing a night's quarters to sic a set o' jolly fellows in Kelpie Cleugh? Od, man, the hale bundle o' ye,

although staying a' the winter wi' us, wadna consume the pickle aits that grow on the bit auld moss that young Tam there has drained this year wi' his ain slaughter-spade. We're aye gettin the langer the richer. Carnwath Muir will soon be changed into Carnwath Garden. I, wha ance had enough ado to mak a living for the gudewife and mysel' aff the farm, that then could barely keep half-a-dozen o' kye, hae brought up my bonny sonsy family in a mensefu' way, and can let ye see now as decent a dairy as ye'll find in mony places. True," added he, lifting up his little boy, and holding him at armslength above his head, "it will tak a while or this wee fellow be able to do for himsel'; but He wha has minded the faither winna forget the wee sprout o' his auld age. Ye are a' welcome; sae come awa, gudewife, see what ye hae to gie the puir bodies, they maun e'en be hungry an' cauld enough; see ye gie them something to warm them." The best that was to be had was accordingly placed before the hungry and weary travellers. We were now in an excellent condition to stand a winter's blockade; we had comfortable quarters; a company, although smacking a little of what our host had humorously alluded to when he mentioned Noah's ark, nevertheless containing great diversity of character, and possessing a sufficient fund of amusement to beguile the long nights. There was Peter, a perfect ubiquity; there was Willie with, according to report, a host of stories; there was our host and his family, as fine a picture of Scottish peasantry as could be found anywhere; there was Feckless Phemie, with her wild and irregular snatches of songs; there was the old and enthusiastic Fiddler; and, last not least, the Gaberlunzie, who, although not, strictly speaking, a "wight of Homer's craft," was a rhymer in his own way, sung his own songs, recited his own ballads, and made his own observations on men and manners with a considerable degree of terse vigour and broad humour. Intensely national in his feelings, and with a voice naturally rich and mellifluous, he sung or recited his own productions with a breadth and strength which rendered them most effective, and without which our dear vernacular is shorn of all its characteristic beauty. When thus privileged to hear him, we were at no loss to account for the powerful effect which the songs of the wandering minstrels of Scotland had on the burly barons and gentle dames of the past ages. He, however, disclaimed all

praise on account of his qualifications in this line, and stated, as reasons for his having become a rhymers, that he was sorry to see the vigorous songs of his early days, and the witty jest books of a more recent period, banishing from the shelves of the farmhouses; and, although he professed all due respect for the useful knowledge contained in the penny publications which had been substituted, he hinted that it was a pity they possessed so little of the power of their predecessors; so that, endeavouring to keep clear of the coarseness of the one, and the tameness of the other, he had strung together a few staves which had been well received, and had procured him many a kind look and good meal, together with comfortable quarters—"Ay," said he, "an' some o' them hae cruppen into hearts, and nestled themsel's in bosoms whaur they are safely enshrined during the author's natural life, and nae gangrel bodie like me can expect or desire langer fame; if ilka ane serves his time and his turn as weel as I hae dune, he'll hae little cause to complain, for the 'best o' folks are never miss'd,' far less we humble rhymers."

THE BEST O' FOLK ARE NEVER MISS'D.

WHEREFORE should man, though e'er so great
 In art or science, rank or state,
 Think muckle o' himsel',
 When he such humbling truths may read
 From the mute mansions of the dead?
 Hark how the echoes swell!
 When man is laid in death's cauld kist:
 E'en let him gang, he's never miss'd.

Yet still he strives, and strives in vain,
 The top of Fame's high mount to gain,
 An' mak himsel' immortal;
 Vain thought, whene'er life's taper's out,
 The strongest, sternest, loon maun lout
 An' pass thro' death's dark portal,
 And there maun lie an' tak his rest:
 The lave live on, he's never miss'd.

Thus man moves on year after year,
Still in the same jog-trot career,
Nor yet ae jot the better ;
Although in each succeeding age,
There may have been some worthy sage,
Wha's left the world his debtor ;
The debt's unpaid, he little wist,
When he was gane, he'd ne'er be miss'd.



For proof vain mortals clamour loud.
What? doth not every funeral shroud
The solemn truth proclaim,
That soaring, sinking, wavering man
Aspiring, only grasps a span,
And dies with all his fame ;

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.

Glory and fame, and honour's crest :
 Baubles begone !—ye're never miss'd.

See yonder self-conceited fop,
 His mother's joy, his father's hope,
 Tho' doited, dull, and shilpit ;
 Had learn'd (great deed) to write and count,
 Got routh o' Greek to gaur him mount
 Into some patron's pulpit ;
 His schulin dune, he Tibby kiss'd,
 Took the red coat—an' ne'er was miss'd.

Ah ! see the orphan bairn, the herd,
 Lie wi' a book upon the sward,
 Teaching himsel' to read ;
 And in the course o' after years
 The same philosopher appears
 Science and art to lead ;
 By Nature's students loved and bless'd :
 Death claims him, and he's never miss'd.

See, see, the strong and stalwart swain
 In muscle, sinew, nerve, and bane,
 Like Hercules himsel' ;
 Just let the loon within the ring,
 An' sic a swanking blow he'll bring
 As might Goliath fell ;
 Yet, tho' even giants fear his fist,
 He's fell'd at last, and never miss'd.

Or see the thundering son of Mars,
 The hero of a hundred wars,
 Wha ance had a' mankind
 Led captive at his chariot wheels ;
 But now he glegly tak's his heels,
 And scours aff like the wind ;
 His laurell'd pow lies soil'd in dust,
 And the great hero's never miss'd.

Behold the saint, whose eagle eye
Pierces the clouds that shroud the sky,
 And who on faith's bright wing
Can travel from earth's dark abode
To the bright presence of his God,
 And, taught by heaven's Great King,
Proclaimeth peace to all that list,
Yet when he's gone he's never miss'd.

Mark the Astronomer, whose skill
O'er heaven's vast concave roams at will
 After each wandering star,
Foretelling for a thousand years
Each blazing comet that appears,
 Though in its light afar ;
His wondrous science shines confess'd,
Yet the great Prophet's never miss'd.

Or list the Bard, whose searching ken
Surveys the hearts and homes of men,
 In every land and clime ;
His heaven-concentred rays of light
Illume the earth with radiance bright,
 And kindle thought sublime ;
His magic power none can resist,
Yet Nature's lover's never miss'd.

Behold the Painter's vivid art
Makes Nature from her canvas start
 In every varied hue ;
Each placid vale and mountain storm,
Each manly face and angel form,
 To life he pencils true,
And lights each eye, and warms each breast,
Yet, when he dies, he's never miss'd.

List the Musician's seraph strain !
That thrills the heart in every vein
 With wild mysterious might,
Recalls old scenes long, long gone by,
Rouses the soul to raptures high,
 Or lulls it in delight ;

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.

Alas! the heaven-born melodist,
When dead and gane, is never miss'd.

But, lo! our metaphysic frien's,
Wha range men's minds like spats o' prins
On paper sparkling white;
Conceited gowks! they canna see
The thoughts that rush through you and me,
As swift as air and light;
Our mind's our ain, sae haud your wisht,
E'en let them guess, they'll ne'er be miss'd.

Behold the Patriot Saint, whose blood
Water'd, as with a spring-tide flood,
Sweet Freedom's sacred flower,
His hallowed name is soon forgot,
(O man, thou art a heartless sot,
For all thy boasted power);
Well may Heaven honour such a guest,
For by the earth he's never miss'd.

Behold yon ancient Abbey wall,
Nodding and tottering to its fall,
Bending to meet the earth;
Each time-worn, mossy, green grave-stone,
With all its mock immortals gone,
Each name, each death, each birth;
From all attempts at fame desist,
Frail mortals, here you'll ne'er be miss'd!

What could have induced our worthy old friend to give utterance to an epistle so long, prosy, and apparently out of place, at such a time, is more than we can account for. Perhaps he thought that too much importance is generally attached to small matters, and wanted to caution all present against the vainglory with which we are apt to cover ourselves, when conscious of having done something even of minor importance. Whatever might have been his motive, or however just his observations, certain it is, that his long catalogue of facts, which could not be easily confuted, was received very coldly by the party at Kelpie Cleugh. Even Feckless Phemie, who

had as usual retired behind backs, where she sat listless and quiet, commenced to chant in an under tone—

Tho' summer hath past, and the winter blast
The death-knell of Nature hath rung ;
Tho' chilling and cold be the blood of the old,
Yet warm is the breath of the young.
And the woods shall ring with the voice of spring,
And summer shall wake again ;
And thought new-born shall light Life's morn,
Till Time shall cry, Amen,
Amen ;
And Echo shall sigh, Amen.

Human nature is exceedingly averse to contemplating its own dissolution. We all cling to the idea that we shall, in some shape or other, live hereafter ; and every one has a desire for celebrity in some particular department ; a love to attract the attention of his fellows. Whether it be self-esteem, or the love of approbation, that prompts us onward in our career, is of little moment, seeing that the result, even when attained, is but a temporary triumph ; and often a fame highly prized by its possessor, is very limited both in time and space. According to the Gaberlunzie, "the best o' folk are never miss'd ;" but the most of us feel ourselves of some importance to the welfare of the community, and this perhaps furnishes the strongest incentive to human exertion. Hence, although we are all builders of airy castles, without foundation or body, we do not love to be told that the structure which we have taken such delight in rearing has not a shadow of reality about it ; that the temple which had appeared to us a building strong enough to laugh at time, and defy the elements, is but "the baseless fabric of a vision ;" that the cloud-borne column, which had risen before us like a pillar of fire, shall fade away into thin air ; that with all our lofty aspirations and fond imaginings, we are little better than the bonny bairn building

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

The bonnie, bonnie bairn, wha sits pokin' in the ase,
 Glowerin' in the fire wi' his wee round face ;
 Laughin' at the fuffin' lowe—what sees he there ?
 Ha ! the young dreamer's biggin' castles in the air !

His wee chubby face, an' his touzie curly pow,
 Are laughin' an' noddin' to the dancin' lowe ;
 He'll brown his rosy cheeks, an' singe his sunny hair,
 Glow'rin' at the imps wi' their castles in the air.

He sees muckle castles towerin' to the moon,
 He sees little sodgers pu'in' them a' doun ;
 Warlds whomling up an' down, bleezin' wi' a flare ;
 Losh, how he louns as they glimmer in the air !

For a' sae sage he looks, what can the laddie ken ?
 He's thinkin' upon naething, like mony mighty men ;
 A wee thing maks us think, a sma' thing maks us stare,—
 There are mair folk than him biggin' castles in the air.

Sic a night in winter may weel mak him cauld,
 His chin upon his buffy hand will soon mak him auld ;
 His brow is brent sae braid—O pray that Daddy Care
 Wad let the wean alane, wi' his castles in the air.

He'll glower at the fire, an' he'll keek at the light,
 But mony sparkling stars are swallow'd up by night ;
 Aulder een than his are glamour'd by a glare ;
 Hearts are broken—heads are turn'd—wi' castles in the air !