

THE
BLACK WATCH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE DOMINIE'S LEGACY."

My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
SCOTS SONG.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TO

SIR CHARLES FORBES, BART.

&c. &c. &c.

Sir ;

It was the intention of my late father to dedicate to you the following Tale, illustrative of the martial character of the Highlands of Scotland. But death has withheld him from indulging in this wish.

May, I therefore, his son, presume to fulfil the design which my father entertained, and inscribe with your name this, his last, Work ?

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

With great respect,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN COXON PICKEN.

14 Dec 51 Engrt

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THE
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CHAPTER I.

To Nature and to Holy Writ
Alone did God the boy commit :
Where flash'd and roar'd the torrent, oft
His soul found wings, and soar'd aloft !

COLERIDGE.

THE first peep of daylight was just beginning to streak the sky on the seaward side of the old town of Inverness, in the north of Scotland, when a tall Highland youth, dressed in bonnet and trews, stole cautiously forth from the straggling outskirts, and with his face turned southerly, set hastily forward on some boyish

adventure. The season of the year was early summer; the time, that discontented and lawless period in Scotland, which occurred between the fifteen and the forty-five; and the lad that now bared his youthful bosom to the breezes of the south, was not quite sixteen years of age.

No sooner had the youth got fairly clear of Inverness, than he ran for several miles, as if he had been chased; never stopping to take breath until he found himself on the border of the long dreary flat called Culloden Moor, which was afterwards to become so famous in the history of his country. As he proceeded forward, clear day having now spread around, the open level that he could see, to a distance behind, showed him that so far there was none in pursuit. When, however, he had reached the farthest edge of the moor, and the hills began to rise to his right in grand and picturesque irregularity, determining to avoid any possible danger, as well as to gratify his longing to enjoy one glorious week among the

glens, he plunged into the outer commencement of the great wilds of Lochaber.

“Liberty! blessed liberty! is this indeed thyself that I have found at last?” he cried, holding out his arms towards the great blue hills, that now stretched away, mountain beyond mountain, and peak beyond peak, to his astonished admiration. “Have I no master now to slave and harass me? no mercenary mistress to stint me of my food? Have I now no morning’s anxiety, no evening’s terror? Am I really a free being, to run where I please, and seek what I can, in this wide world? Is my feet now fairly on ‘the bonny blooming heather?’ and can I run, like the red deer, without any one to stop me? Liberty! glorious liberty!” he cried, bounding along the ridge to which he had climbed; “I vow I am almost giddy with the joy of finding thee at last!”

He now mounted to the top of the hill, and sitting himself down on a soft knoll, set himself

to consider of his means and prospects. Thrusting his fingers into an opening in the band of his trews, he took out a little leathern purse, and began to reckon his worldly wealth. He had two beautiful silver pennies, the coinage of his former majesty, King George the First—three new farthings, excellently convenient for small change, and not less than six Edinburgh half-pennies, which it became him to husband according to their value. Besides this, he had an Inverness bodle, extremely useful on occasions of economy; and in addition to all, an old-fashioned Scots plack, which being twice the value of the former—namely, the third of a penny—made the whole of this money put together amount to within a fraction above a white sixpence!—a sum which, if properly managed, would go a great way indeed with an abstemious Scotsman.

But considering the splendour of the boy's plans, all this might have been deemed insufficient, but for a piece of good fortune, which,

above and beyond the former, had put into his hand an actual shilling ! with a beautiful king's crown on one side of it ; and when he now reflected on the way it had dropped from the clouds upon him, he saw clearly that Providence favoured his present adventure. The very day previous to that on which he now sat at perfect liberty on the sunny side of a Highland hill, a tall, swaggering Englishman, wearing a great drab coat, and carrying a travelling whip in his hand, had asked him to do him some trifling service ; and after staring him in the face, and saying something about its being a pity that he did not go to the south, had thrust into his hand this noble shilling ; and then stumped off as unconcerned as if he had done nothing extraordinary.

There was only one other piece of wealth the lad had, the value of which could not be so correctly ascertained. That was a small old-fashioned gold clasp, which by much persuasion he had been enabled to obtain from the woman

with whom he had lived from the time he was an infant until he became apprentice to Daniel M'Vicar. This little personal idol he had always held in the most sacred veneration ; for, whenever he took a desponding thought about his orphan condition, it did him good to con over and contemplate its mysterious initials, from some vague notion of hidden philosophy, that it might one day become of service in helping him to a friend.

Having now collected his thoughts, and matured his resolves, he descended the hill with joy ; and stretching forward again down a winding glen, he soon overtook, beside some long patches of green corn, several straggling cottages, that seemed sunning themselves pleasantly in the morning's beams, and there he found a needful, and to him, delicious refreshment. Darting forward again, wherever his fancy led him, he wandered for days among scenes and places, whose very wildness to him was enchanting, and even whose occasional bald

and gruesome sterility seemed to fill his soul with the deep spirit of nature. All the latent romance of his disposition now came out in glowing enthusiasm, as he lingered among the recesses of those glorious wilds, and saw with his own eyes how nature had shaped out a retreat for herself, to which she invites none to enter but her chosen children; and thus, with his young and buoyant spirit, he first drank in her profound impressions.

During all this, Hector Monro was at little loss for his simple maintenance; for, whenever he came to a laird's castle on a hill-side, or a lonely sheiling in a glen, the comely appearance and bold spirit of the boy, procured him a hearty and a delighted Highland welcome. There he partook of the barley-bread and milk, or the bit of braxey mutton, of the kindly cottager, and rested at night on the bed of heath made up for him in the corner; and if, on leaving his kind hosts, he offered to open the strings of his little leathern purse, to give a

silver penny for his entertainment, the proffer was refused as almost an insult.

Had we to tell the same story now, applying to our own days, a different representation would require to be given of a people, among whom, at that time, simplicity of life brought a happiness more than they themselves understood; and poverty itself had the sacredness of virtue, accompanied, as it was, by a doric nobleness that made it almost enviable. Before southern luxury and Lowland greed had found their way among the mountains, to the fatal corrupting of landlord and clansmen—making all men mercenary, and none contented—the more than eastern hospitality of the primitive Highlander was such, as well may excite the astonishment of those, whose social sympathies have been improved away, almost into a matter of memory or of history. So common and so genuine was this virtue in those days, among this secluded people, that at length advantage was taken of it by idle persons from the south, who, under

the name of Sorners, lived from house to house, upon the kind feelings of those who impoverished themselves to give to the travelling wayfarer, until the imposition became so common as to require the check of legal enactment.

Though the people among whom our wanderer lighted seemed often poor "to a degree," yet experiencing nothing on his way but kindness and respect, when he retired at night to his fragrant bed, often after partaking of every thing that the cottagers had hoarded, and haply having his fancy delighted with those tales and songs of love and heroism which make so powerful an impression upon the youthful fancy—when, as he lay, he contrasted all this with what he had suffered in the house of his master, in Inverness, the tears would rush into the eyes of the grateful youth, and he rejoiced in spirit, in a more noble view of human nature.

But here, among these romantic mountains,

Hector found that he had, after all, no call to abide; the feeling of independence still obtruding in his thoughts: so, with great reluctance, he descended towards the towns, to see what fortune would throw in his way. As he approached the haunts of population and trade, he soon found that the people began to look with longing when he took out his little purse; and that his silver pennies were now but faintly refused. The generosity of his own disposition made him press them whenever they appeared acceptable; and thus his last plack was ultimately paid away, and his white shilling he had a strong reluctance to discount. With the common self-denial of a mountaineer, he had passed a whole day without food, and towards evening came to a river, which it was necessary to cross. Observing a boat fastened to a stake, he was just about to help himself to its assistance, when he saw a man, carrying a bundle, come leisurely down from a small cottage near the bank.

The man, depositing the bundle in the boat, proceeded to unloose it, and then stepped in himself, taking no notice of Hector, who stood watching by. He was taking up the oars, meaning to cross the river, when seeing the boy making no motion to go on board, he thought fit to address him.

“ Will she no be for crossing ta ferry ?”

“ Then you keep a ferry here ?”

“ Aye, to pe surely—an it’s a penny price. Will she go ?”

“ Will you not let a poor lad get a crossing in your boat, without changing his white shilling ?”

“ She’ll see her nainsel’s nose made a cheese for ta mice first,” said the man, preparing to pull off.

“ Then I’ll try whether the stream is half as churlish as yourself,” said Hector ; and without another word, he dashed in, clothed as he was, his little bundle held firm in his teeth. Breast-
ing the current like a water-dog, he soon swam

past the boat; while it was as much as the astonished ferryman could do to get to the other side of the river at the same moment as the adventurous boy.

“Here’s a ruination to her trade,” said the man, stepping out of his boat. “Deevil! if she comes her that trick again, by the piper o’ Pennycuick, she’ll just stick the oar in the back o’ her neck afore she’s half across, and drown her like a blind puppy.”*

* The alarm of the ferryman was quite natural, from the known reluctance or inability of his countrymen of that period, to pay any species of toll or turnpike-money. A Highlander could never be made to understand why a man should be obliged to pay for “ganging on the ground,” or for getting dryshod across a river; which was the great objection to the military roads just then cut through the Highlands, under Marshal Wade’s direction. Rather than pay so unreasonable a charge, the poorer Scotchwomen made no scruple of exposing their persons in a manner much less excusable than the washing-tub tramping,

Hector never condescended any other answer to this spurt, than to swing round the long end of his wet plaid, until dashing, as if by accident, a shower of water in the face of the enraged ferryman, he ran off laughing down the haugh, with his shilling safe in the bottom of his pocket.

so well known even in the Lowlands; for a traveller from England, a little before this time, who had penetrated as far north as Inverness, shortly after the bridge over the Murray Frith was built, relates, that he has seen numbers of women, many of them carrying loads on their heads, rush into the river; and, tucking up their petticoats to a very unseemly height, wade over the flat stones at the bottom, “which are made slippery by the sulphur,” to the danger even of their lives—the water above the bridge reaching nearly to their middle; and all to save a single *bodle*, the sixth part of a penny, being the amount of the toll levied for crossing the bridge.

CHAPTER II.

The torrent's rush,
The cataract's din, the ocean's distant roar,
The echo's answer to his foot or voice—
All spoke a language which he understood,
And warn'd him of his way.

GRAHAME.

ALTHOUGH thus gay in spirits, as he again approached towards the coast, free from all danger of pursuit from his master, yet one or two days of stormy weather had sadly cut up Hector's slight vestments, and reduced him eventually to much distress. This arose chiefly from his losing his way among the mountains, during the drifting of a storm of summer hail; so that when he had at length arrived in the town of Perth, his brogues, and even his stock-

ings, were completely worn out ; his feet were bleeding with the effects of his march, and the flat bonnet which he had worn, having been blown away as he passed the angle of a rock during the storm, his appearance now, in this seat of comfort and comparative wealth, bare-headed and shoeless, was but a humiliating termination of his long journey.

Wandering along the antiquated streets, his heart sank to find himself totally unheeded, unless as an object to be avoided by the respectable ; and still more was he disposed to despond at the prospect of being obliged again to seek a trading employment, for the sake of subsistence. But where to go, or to whom to apply, even for that, was now the question. Fainting with exhaustion, his changed shilling nearly all spent, he looked about in vain in the faces of his species, for interest or compassion. Reflecting on what little he knew of civilized man, his sagacity led him to avoid those quarters of the town where there was abundance or grandeur, and to seek for a friend among the

pinched and lowly like himself. Wandering towards the meaner part of the town, he observed several passers-by looking on him with sympathy; for, dilapidated as his apparel was, he was yet a brave and a well-favoured youth. At length he saw a middle-aged Highland woman, sitting spinning at a door, who eyeing him, as he passed, with strong looks of interest, at length asked him into her cottage. The lad obeyed, and when she had set him on a seat, and surveyed for an instant his ruddy countenance, long curling locks, and proud mountaineer eye; and saw by his apparel that, though now weary and dejected, he looked, as she said, “like an honest man’s bairn,” her heart melted with compassion; for she was strongly reminded by him of her own favourite son, whose fair head she had but lately laid in the kirkyard of Perth.

“And whare are ye frae, my bonnie young man,” she said, “and what has happened you? Alack! but it’s surely an ill world this, when the like o’ you is let to wander friendless on the

streets o' Perth, the shoon worn off your feet, and no one to bid you a meal o' meat."

Hector, putting a bridle on his proud feelings, told the poor woman, in a few words, that he had neither father nor mother known to him; that he had been put apprentice to a wheelwright, but his master having used him ill, and tried all he could to break his spirit, he had just taken the road and run for it, seeking for better luck towards the Lowlands; and being now arrived in a strange town, no one would know him, or ask him what he was willing to do.

"Oh, oh, but it's sad and sair," said the woman, "when the fatherless is left to be helped by the widow, wha has no helper to herself but Providence aboon, and nothing to depend on but what she draws out o' the thread o' the tow. But dinna be disheartened or take pride at me, my man; if I canna do aught else for the friendless orphan, I can greet for him as I've done for my ain bairn; and if, in the

day of his necessity, he eats a bite o' the widow's bread, it'll ne'er be a mote on his marriage day. Now, my bonnie lad, just let me see your hand."

The boy, turning away his head, to conceal his feelings at the garrulous kindness of the Highland woman, gave her his hand.

Looking at it on both sides, and pushing up the lad's sleeve, for a species of examination to which travellers in Scotland in those days thought it no disgrace to be subjected, when she saw the clear white skin of the boy, through which shone the blue veins at his wrist, all her good opinion of him was fully verified. "A skin like an egg!" she exclaimed, "and an ee like an eagle—a guest weel worthy o' my clean sheets. Wha kens," she added, surveying him all over, "wha's son the orphan may be after a', and wha the puir widow may be honoured to ha'e in her house!"

Agreeable to this primitive and sympathetic philosophy, the poor woman comforted the de-

jected youth, washed his feet according to the Highland fashion, and put him to rest with a mother's care, and even with much of a mother's pleasure. As she contemplated the lad as he soon got into a sound sleep, the painful pleasure of being thus reminded of her son that was gone renewed her sorrow, and yet she thought that the indulgence of her grief over the sleeping stranger brought her a lonely widow's melancholy comfort.

A few days' stay with this woman completely restored the youth to his former vigour. But with his strength returned anxiety for independence, and the means of repaying his kind entertainer. Possessing some acquaintances above her own condition, Mrs. M'Lean did not fail to add her own efforts to the inquiries of the lad, and but a few days had elapsed, when, finding that a substantial burgess and deacon of Perth, by name Hugh M'Vey, was willing to listen to her recommendations of Hector, (clever youths being not so common

as in our day,) he did her the honour to pay her a visit at her cottage, liked exceedingly the lad's looks, attended to his story with much interest, and in ten minutes' time the preliminaries were settled, and Hector was regularly installed in a new line of life.

Master Hugh M'Vey, dealer and chapman in the good city of Perth, and now the worthy patron of our ambitious youth, deserves a few sentences of brief description, as the representative of a class of traders now long extinct. He was an easy-tempered bachelor of forty, who, agreeably to the manners of the place and period, knowing that few could outshine him in goods and gear, and that which he dealt in *must* be had, if there was money to buy it, always acted towards those who bought from him, with that high demeanour and urbane condescension, which made them feel that it was *they* were the party obliged, and he the dignitary who conferred the obligation. Taking his cue, therefore, from the aristocratic shop-

keepers of the Lowlands of his time, it was his practice to take every thing exceedingly easy, to shut the door of his shop every day at one o'clock, when he went to eat his dinner. If, of an afternoon, when he chose to go a fishing, or at any other time a customer came, whom it was not convenient for him to attend, he would inform the intending purchaser that he was busy now, and bid him call to-morrow when he would be at leisure.

It may easily be seen how great a man our youth was soon constituted, as the juvenile doer for such a person as this, and known, as he grew up tall and manly, to be an exceeding favourite with his new master. As the burgess's days of fishing began to multiply, as fast as Hector got acquainted with the details of his craft, and his long summer evenings of bowling-green playing in the outskirts next became invested with sundry social invitations, the lad was left much to himself, and thus the free exercise of his own thoughts soon again worked

themselves into restlessness, if not discontent, agreeably to the unerring philosophy of the human character. But this intruding discontent, if it deserve the name, was of a very different species and intensity, from the slavish depression endured in his original situation, and arose more out of the wantonness of ease and plenty, and the not less powerful bias of disposition, than from any privation or real cause of complaint. Little of the trading spirit as there comparatively was in the simple transactions of his employer, with his long known customers, or as there appeared in the good-natured and benevolent disposition of the burgess, yet this was by no means the case with many others with whom Hector occasionally came in contact ; and the fast developing constitution of his own mind was so repugnant to every thing having a mean or mercenary appearance, that, promising as were his prospects as the favourite of the bachelor, and easy as was his life in a quiet country town, he

began to look upon his good prospects with a vague and discontented dread. Along with all this, a pervading pride of nature, or of blood, in the temperament of the youth, and some intrusive notion that he was designed for higher things, made him look upon his employments with true Highland contempt, which he at the same time suspected to be tolerably unreasonable.

But now was the time of life when he began to feel of what stuff nature had made him, and, reason or none, all he could tell was, that at times he felt himself peculiarly unhappy. Even the taste he had received during his runaway excursion, of the grand and poetic impression of the mountains, increased the indefinite restlessness of his mind. The roving life, and the hardy fatigues of the free Highlander, appeared to him invested with charms irresistible—the echoing forest and the bounding roe, the craggy peak and wild glen, inces-

santly haunted his romantic imagination. Tale also, and song, and heroic romance, now brought frequently to his maturing mind, or rising upon his memory with the music of nature, invested all this, and the wild castles of the Highlands, with an interest which was enhanced by ignorance itself, and charms which fancy made almost inexpressible.

Still time went on, and still this disposition increased, until it turned into the same dissatisfied *ennui* which torments the great, and thus those "nameless longings," which the best hearts have beat with in all generations, became the constant companion of the tradesman-boy. Too young as yet to understand the political news of his time, which came in brief and garbled snatches from the south, or the relative situation of his own country, then far from happy in general, under the government of the House of Hanover, and agitated from the one end to the other, by the fierce dis-

putes of Whig and Jacobite, he only saw the town of Perth occasionally disturbed by the marching and counter-marching of southern soldiers, and heard exaggerated rumours of tumults and robberies in the neighbouring Highlands, which the unfortunate red-coats were vainly attempting to suppress. But the reports brought from the hills on a market-day, by some of the grave Highland proprietors who dealt with the burgess, the sentiments uttered, and the predictions given out of what was soon to take place, were of a nature which might well puzzle the understanding, as they excited the curiosity and impatience, of our ardent youth.

Under all these circumstances, seldom has kindness been felt more burthensome than became the very goodness of Hector's good-natured master ; nor could gratitude well be put to a severer trial, than that which compelled his honourable mind to make any sacrifice of himself, and his restless inclinations, to the feelings

of him to whom he owed so much. He knew not, however, while reflecting in this manner, that occurrences were going on, surely and secretly, which, without compromising his own feelings, were preparatory to another change in his condition.

CHAPTER III.

The trumpets blew, and the colours flew,
And every man to his armour drew ;
The Whigs were never so much aghast.

SCOTCH BALLAD.

ONE morning, before Hector's usual hour of rising, as he lay in his little dormitory dreaming of his favourite subject the mountains, and was roaming in fancy among those wild glens into which he as yet had only had in reality a hurried peep, the fantasies of his sleep seemed to become so real as to strike vividly even upon his external senses. From following, in his dream, dark legions of the warlike Gael, as they plunged into the forests or threaded the thickets of the mountains, he thought he himself bore broadsword and target among them,

and led his men to the coming war, while the vallies echoed to the tread of their feet, and the warlike music of the bagpipe seemed to be reverberated from the rocks with a sound that stirred his spirit like enchantment. The pipers seemed to blow louder and louder, and the tread of his men to become more distinct as they tramped the sod, in some dreary glen, until the former became almost deafening in its pealing note, and he began to wonder withal wither he was proceeding, or who was this armed clan of whom he made one. A loud shout now rose from a shifting something, of either hills or houses, and amidst the din and confusion he heard the cry of "The black watch! the black watch!" rising upon the wind, as if to solve the mystery which momentarily puzzled him. In another instant the skirl of the bagpipe seemed almost at his ear, and starting from sleep he found it proceeded from the street without.

Jumping from his bed, he soon divined

what had caused his dream, and that a party of the Black Watch, of which he had often heard, and about which he was vehemently interested, were at that moment tramping past under his window. He would scarcely take time to dress himself, so anxious was he to get a sight of that far-famed band ; but so hard had he been to awake, that by the time he got to the foot of his stair, and had the door opened, the last remains of the company, which had just passed through the town on an early march, were turning the angle of the street to issue from the north gate, and the dark bonnets and gleaming arms of a few of them were all that his eye caught, while the loud bagpipe music was still sounding strongly in the still silence of the morning.

About to dart after them, to gratify as well his fancy as his curiosity, a heavy hand at the moment caught him by the shoulder, with—

“ Whar awa ?—whar awa, young man ? Nae time for sodgering at this time o’ the morning.

Dinna ye see there's a' the shops round us beginning to open, baith their een an' their mouths? and deacon M'Vey should aye be the foremost. Na, never mind farlies, Hector, my man, but draw the fastenings, and drap the shutters frae the windows, for it doesna do for young men, nor yet young maidens, to let their heads run after the sodgers."

Hector saw that it would not do to gratify himself against the pleasure of his indulgent master, and proceeded in silence to the duties of his employment. But he found, by experience, that it is not so easy a matter for either young men or young maidens, to keep their heads from running upon that which commends itself to their inclination; and all day the Black Watch, the flower of Athol and Lochaber, and the choice men of the clans, and brave Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell, and Master Campbell of Finab, and the proud Grant of Ballindallock, who watched the merry vallies of Strathspey, or ranged the braes of Badenoch,

and Simon Frazer of Lovat himself, whose black Highlanders ranged the great glen of Scotland, from Fort Augustus to the old castle of Inverness—were the talk, and nothing else that day, of all who had a morsel of enthusiasm in them who inhabited the old city of Perth.

It was no wonder that Hector's enthusiasm was increased by the descriptions he heard on every side of these gallant men, especially by the women, who were quite enthusiastic in their admiration of them, from Lovat himself and his Frazers, and Ballindallock and his Grants, gentlemen every man of them, as well as the Camerons of Argyleshire, and the Stewarts of Appin, from the colonel who rode in front of all, to the piper who played at their head—the latter not only a gentleman too, but a bard and a man of Highland erudition, and who performed his duties with more pride than an English general.

“O but they were braw chields!” exclaimed the maids of Perth, “and clean of leg, and light

of heel, and warm of heart on a cauld day, every one of them, as ever sat on a hill side wi' a fortunate lass on the lee of his plaidie."

But as to particular information regarding this interesting corps, Hector could get little or nothnig out of the sober burgess, his master, who, justly aware of the danger of this species of fascination to a youth with Hector's prospects, discouraged his inquiries, and represented the Watch as a dangerous armament of self-elected Highlanders, who had associated themselves into a corps under colour of military efficiency, merely as an excuse for being allowed openly to wear those arms so dear to their fathers, and which, on the passing of the disarming act, their proud spirits would not suffer them to part with. Not content, however, with this bald information, which was tolerably correct as far as it went, Hector resolved to go down the same evening to visit the widow M'Lean, his early patroness, to whom he usually applied for all internal information regarding the people of the hills.

On his way thither, he observed the streets to be more than usually crowded with Highland strangers, among which, various groups of red soldiers, as the southern infantry were called by way of reproach, lounged about quite apart from the more bold mountaineers. Taking little heed, however, the youth proceeded on, and was soon seated by the peat fire of the poor widow, whose former kindness it was not his nature to forget.

“ Things are mickle altered since I hae mind,” said widow M’Lean, in answer to Hector’s inquiries. “ I kend the time when a Highland gentleman didna need to take an oath to German George, no more than to Glenco Willie, for the sake of liberty to wear a biodag on his thigh, or a clymore on his haunch, as his fathers had done before him, and when there was nae watch across the hills, but the gude auld neighbourly watch o’ the like of Duncan M’Naughton, or the sensible protection of

Evan M'Evan. And though they sometimes milked a body dry enough, wi' their black meal or maut, or whatever they took frae us, odd, we sometimes got a fat sheep, or may be a gude stot, or a yeanling, if the chields had a lucky creagh in the Lowlands. Oh ! but the Earl of Mar has had mickle to answer for, for his ill-brew'd browst o' the fifteen, for it was that, and the weary scrimmage of Glenshields, that has given the new German folk that's come to rule over Scotland, an excuse to bring into the happy glens ayont the Grampians sae many troubles."

"But the Black Watch," said Hector, attempting to bring back the wandering ideas of the talkative widow.

"Ou, I've naething to say against the Black Watch ; they're pretty men, but I wish they could hae kept their swords and dirks, without swearing to serve this Hanover laird, for they're leal lads, and dinna know southron deceit."

“But, what do you think is bringing the Watch on the march just now, piping and drumming through the town of Perth?”

“Ou, what should I ken? It’s a southron fashion, nae doubt. But I hear that there’s to be a great rising o’ the Watch, and a many more made o’ them, and the Earl o’ Crawford, a rank Lowlander, is to be their commander; and ye may be sure the Hanover Elector has his ain views to do wi’ our Highlands lads; for Simon of Lovat, and other auld lairds, are going out, and there’s the Whig lairds are coming in, and the Watch is to be made a thousand strong, wi’ the brawest men that can be gathered off the hills frae Dornoch to Dumbarton; and they’re a’ to meet in the valley of Glenlyon, aboon Aberfeldy; and proud men they’ll be, nae doubt, but we’ll just see what’ll come o’t.”

The heart of Hector swelled at this intelligence, but, obliged to suppress his rising wishes, he quietly proceeded.

“But you don’t seem to approve of the duties of this gallant legion,” said Hector, anxious to hear the opinions, as well as the information, of the sagacious old woman, “who are stationed in bands across the hills, as I hear tell, to be naething but the guardians of Scotland.”

“It’s all very weel for them to guard their ain firesides, and to march and flourish their broadswords; but the Black Watch shouldna demean themselves, for the sake of pleasing this new king, to undertake, like the red soldiers, and other thief-takers o’ the law, to hunt out and herry our poor ruined lairds, and other Cearnachs, who maybe drive twa or three score o’ beasts frae the Lowlands, now and then, and gar us pay a neivefu’ o’ black meal, whilk is never missed. It’s easy to talk about robberies and spulzie, but there’s braw men hae lost their all since the fifteen, and *must* live, and a wee bit creagh, and a cattle lifting, is whyles a great help to pay the laird his rent. Even an honest

quarrel and brulzie among the glens is naething but what Highlandmen have been used to, since ever I hae mind, and just helps to while away the weariness o' the lang nights, and to keep their clymores in order."

This mode of reasoning was just letting in a new light into Hector's mind, when a sudden noise was heard in the street; the door of the house was hurriedly opened, and a young woman entered, with terror in her looks, saying that a great brulzie had taken place at the cross of Perth, between some strangers from the hills and the red soldiers; and the folk, she added, were all running, and some said that Duncan M'Naughton, or Shaw, the great Cearnach from Strathtay, had been seen in the crowd, and had drawn a short clymore that he had hid under his plaid, and swore he would clear the causeway o' the *seider diarg*; and so he was now laying about him, and the people were shutting their shops for fear o' the fray.

"Duncan M'Naughton sayst thou, lassie?"

cried the woman in amaze. “ It’s not possible that Duncan would venture on the streets of Perth after what he’s done. It’s as mickle as his neck’s worth. Hector, my man, if ye *will* run to the fray, take care of your ain crown. Hoigh ! such times !”

Before the woman had the half of the last sentence uttered, Hector was off, and up the street ; but by the time he arrived at the cross, the crowd met him as flying from the danger ; and the red soldiers were running from all quarters, in obedience to the drum, whose loud and hasty beat to arms gave an alarming idea of what was going forward.

The scene of strife, when Hector drew near it, though comparatively limited in extent, presented that silently warlike appearance, which was in earlier times much more common on the streets of the Scottish capital, than, notwithstanding all that is said of the quarrelsomeness of the Highlanders, ever was the case in the orderly town of Perth. The first object that

was conspicuous was a stout middle-sized Highlander, who, clad in a dress better than common, and now bare-headed from the press of the skirmish, lay about him against above a dozen bayonets, with a bravery which, though evidently on the defensive, showed him to be sensible that he was fighting for his life. A few other Highlanders, some with short knives or skenookles, and more with nought but sloe-thorn sticks, aided the riot, and increased the confusion. But, although several of the townsmen, who also hated the red soldiers, occasionally assisted in embarrassing them in their attacks upon the principal combatant, this was all that either they or the Highlanders were able to effect; for the unpopular disarming act having deprived them of all efficient weapons, they were able to make little head against so many bayonets along with a single sword, which now and then ventured to strike in from a thin lath of an officer, who warily, yet zealously, made himself busy in the fray.

Though occasionally cheered by loud shouts from the townsmen of "Well done ! cut again, and give it them, brave Duncan M'Naughton," the bare-headed Highlander's case was evidently fast becoming desperate, notwithstanding a degree of bravery, which might well excite the astonishment of the multitude, who, from outer stairs and numerous windows, gazed breathlessly upon the riot beneath them. For a youth such as Hector to take any part in an affray so dangerous, was evidently madness, yet the spirit that was in him stirred him up almost to frenzy, as he clenched his empty hand, finding no weapon within his reach with which he might strike a blow for the hard-pressed mountaineers, who fought so bravely with such odds against them.

As the drum continued to beat to arms without, and the soldiers to pour in, the shouts of the townspeople, who also flocked to the spot, increased the confusion, while lights now glanced from doors and windows, the excitement be-

came general, and the fray assumed an appearance absolutely terrific. With the fearlessness of youth and a kindred spirit, Hector had got within a few yards of the spot where Duncan M'Naughton still swung round his short broadsword, and kept at bay half a score of bayonets, when, observing the manœuvres of the lathy officer to get behind the veteran, taking advantage of the fall of a soldier, who was cut down by a back-stroke of the Highlander's active clymore, he plucked the bayonet out of the fallen man's hand, and, flew like a young tiger upon the insidious subaltern. The gentleman of the spontoon fell back among the others, and immediately our youth found himself in the very thick of the fray, while the shouts of the multitude near, and the strong Gaelic expression which he heard from the mountaineer himself, indicated the value they set upon his timely service.

The soldiers now began to retreat among the crowd, and the Cearnach to regain some confi-

dence, when a rush of the people on one side, along with the sudden entrance of a fresh party of soldiers, backed by several of the magistrates, changed the fate of the day ; and while Hector opposed his bayonet to the sword of the retreating officer, Duncan M'Naughton was surrounded from behind, and a total rout of his party became inevitable. Fortunately for our youth, his own dexterous activity became his salvation from a fate much worse, to his apprehension, than a deep wound in the fray ; namely, to be carried to gaol as a rioter and abetter of a Cearnach, of whom the officers of the law had long attempted the capture in vain. First driving back among the confused crowd, and then hastily mounting one of the outer stairs, from which its occupants had fled in confusion but a moment before, he was enabled to witness at his leisure the upshot of the affair. Several of the soldiers and townspeople he saw carried off desperately wounded, and afterwards led past in shouting triumph by the soldiery,

town-officers, and magistrates, the athletic figure of M'Naughton himself, the blood streaming from him in several parts of his head and body, while, with sullen dignity, he appeared to submit to his fate. Soon after, as Hector followed the crowd, he saw the heavy doors of the old gaol open to receive, and slowly close upon, the manly form of the reluctant prisoner; and every one engaged being now glad to make a safe retreat to his own home, the military, by this time in better order, found little difficulty in clearing the streets, and Hector, with no hurt but a slight prick of a sword on the shoulder, got safely up into his own little dormitory.

CHAPTER IV.

What fellow's this?

A strange one as ever I looked on: I cannot get him out of the house.

SHAKSPEARE.

ONE evening, after nightfall, not long after the foregoing event, the streets of Perth presented with peculiar truth, that gloomy and deserted appearance which is often the characteristic of a small country town. This night Hector stood meditatively at the low door of his shop, or rather store, looking listlessly up and down at the casual straggler; and as his eye rested occasionally upon the dim lamps along the narrow venal, and the other obscure lights, which peeped from windows of shops like his own, he felt a strong twinge of that depressing *ennui*, to

which no bosom, high or low, is entirely a stranger. His master was out, having left him to prepare for the market-day to be held on the morrow, and which, every thing being now ready, he longed for exceedingly, as expected to bring with it the usual excitement of trading bustle. Shutting the little half-door of the store, he returned within, and trimming the single oil lamp which hung from the low ceiling, he sat down to think of his favourite subject, the Highland hills. Here his thoughts mixed themselves with the various rumours with which the town was filled, and imperfect accounts both from the Lowlands and the mountains, which only excited and perplexed his ill-informed judgment. To relieve his thoughts, he had taken up the ell-wand, or measuring stick, which so ill befitted his hand; and his brooding pride, as well as vague predilections, having induced him of late to take lessons, with which he assiduously engaged himself, in the broad-sword exercise, from a young Highlander

only known to him by the name of Farquhar, he was practising his guards and his cuts against a high roll of plaiding cloth which stood in the inner shop, when he heard the half-door scraping open behind him, and looking round, saw the stalwart figure of a Highland stranger drawn up to its height within, after having stooped as he entered the low door of the shop. Without a word's speaking, the stranger paced straight into the back part of the store.

The stranger and our youth looked for a moment at each other. To the straight back and haughty step of a better-class Highlander, Hector was no stranger, from the high bearing of the gentleman drover or gentleman piper, to that of the lord of the isles himself; but the air with which this personage strode into the store, and the smile of contempt with which he cast his eyes round on the bales and barrels choking up the place, was such as Hector had seldom had occasion to witness; and certainly

conveyed no flattery to him who had the honour to be the keeper of all this goods and gear. A tall *buiirdly* figure was the least thing remarkable in the appearance of this impressive stranger. To see the aristocratic cock's feather stuck gracefully in the front of the high bonnet of a mountain gentleman, was nothing uncommon in the town of Perth; but gold lace, edging the scarlet waistcoat so seldom worn in the hills, a small portion of which revealed itself to Hector's glance beneath the plaid which crossed the gentleman's breast, as well as the round bowl of a long Spanish pistol, the bright silver of which just peeped from beneath the dark tartan of his short coat, gave token that this was no common man. No sword, however, appeared on his haunch, for the obnoxious act, then sometime passed, made such a weapon rather too conspicuous to be worn in approaching a town; but the belted plaid, whose long folds hung by this gentleman's side, did not seem as ever meant to conceal the ample biodag

or dirk, the threatening hilt of which, mounted also with silver and garnished with the usual convenient apparatus, sat close to the brawny thigh of the stranger.

“Be the chapman not at home then?” said the personage, casting another haughty glance round the shop.

The blood mounted into Hector’s face as he found this contempt strike home upon himself, and under the impulse of the moment, making the ell-wand that he held sound upon the floor, while his eyes flashed upon the stranger, he boldly replied, “My master, sir, is Deacon of the drapers, and town councillor of Perth.”

The gentleman opened his eyes with astonishment, and as he gazed upon the youth, his haughty features gradually relaxed into a smile, when putting up his hand with great ceremony to his bonnet, he lifted it gracefully from his black bushy head, and made our hero a profound bow.

The irony of this action, instead of humbling

him for whom it was intended, deepened the affront; and the youth, throwing down the ellwand with high contempt, merely turned his back on the stranger and walked in silence towards the window.

“By the soul of my father,” exclaimed the unknown, coming forward and offering his hand to our youth, “there’s some mistake here; for it’s evident that old mother Nature, who takes no charge of her own, after she strikes them off her anvil, never made thee for selling and swapping goods and gear like a Lowlander. It’s no fault of mine, not to expect such as thee in a chapman’s shop. Nay, refuse not my hand, boy! there would be danger in that. I’ll give thee to boast what few other can, that Evan M’Evan has begged thy pardon. There, upon my word, a handsome fellow, to be flourishing an ellwand like a Kirkaldy tailor.”

“It is your pleasure, sir,” said Hector, almost affected, “to reproach me with my misfortune.”

“God forbid, young man,” said the stranger, resuming his dignity, and appearing still more interested; “although I am sorry to see so likely a fellow cooped up in such a hole as this, over a gathergae of merchandizing trumpery, I know that on the hills from which I come, the trees of the wood have not the choice of their own situation, and that the winds of heaven, which scatter about alike the seeds of the strong oak and the feeble willow, sometimes let the one fall in the place where the other should be. I see you understand me, young man. By heavens, youth, you have the very eye of the eagle. Its a pity you could not build your nest among the mountains.”

The majestic stranger seemed to Hector to rise a foot taller as he finished his speech, but so affected was the youth with this picturesque illustration of his fate and circumstances, that the rising reply stuck in his throat.

“To be sure,” resumed the chieftain, “the eagles’ haunts in the hills are barren and bare,

often dreary and stormy ; and there grows not on the cliffs or the moors, the comforts which you merchants import from the southland. But the free arm, and the free spirit, and the mountain air, and the forest venison—pah ! what a musty smell is here !—I am talking to you, young man, in the spirit of a Highlander, but perhaps you prefer this murky den where you are.”

“ Only tell me, sir stranger, how I can get there, and live by the use of arm or limb,” cried Hector, with animation, “ and the eagle you speak of shall not fly much quicker than I shall bound away to the mountains.”

“ Hum—very well ; I thought you would say so,” said the chief, suddenly ; but I must not, for all that, advise you to be rash in turning your back upon the comfortable quarters and sheep’s-head broth of a burgess of Perth. It is now time, however, that I should have some talk with my worthy acquaintance ; and, harkee, youth ! in the meantime, be dis-

creet, and do not repeat the name that I have just named in thy private ear, and see that thou get me speedy speech of the good deacon, thy master."

Hector seemed a little at a loss how to act at the moment, which the stranger chief observing, made a sign to his servant, who, without being observed, had stood all this while in faithful watch by the dark cheek of the door. Immediately a head was thrust cautiously in; after which came the short body of a sturdy Highlander, who, drawing up to more than his full height, took off the plain bonnet from his head, and asked what was his honour's pleasure.

"Can you keep a chapman's shop, Dougald? and be ready to sell the merchant's gallimaufery, while this junior here goes to seek for his master?"

"Her nainsel doesna understand ta chop," said the shock-headed Gael, looking round upon the goods with a bewildered look, "but if her honour's pleasure be to trust her lang in tis

choked bourock, I wadna wonder but some of the merchant's jigs-and-jugs wad find their way into her nainsel's ain pouches."

"I would not wonder in the least," said the chief, good-naturedly answering the taciturn grin which developed the white teeth of the Highlander, "but the men of Breadalbane do not stoop to *lifting* of so low a kind--so, Dougald, ye'll just take your stance here beside the bing of plaiding; like the snuff-man's decoy sign, in the Cowgate of Edinburgh; for you see, if any customer come in, it may not be convenient for me to be patent just now, and so I'll step beyond the reach of the light of the chruaskin."

"Deevil nor her chop were at ta bottom o' Lochow," mumbled the Highlander, taking his stand beside the bale, with an angry mutter, as his master retreated within; "I wad rather mount ta sentry post on the windy side o' Fort William, than be stanced beside a plaiding, like a Lowland weaver. Hunch! 'Ta chief be o'er

fool-hardy, I'm thought; an' she'll may be find she's put her finger in ta craw's nest, afore she win out o' the north port o' Perth."

It was not without some misgivings about his untradesman-like guests, that Hector consented to go up the street to look for the burgess. He had not been gone five minutes, when, to the great uneasiness of the unwilling warder of the shop, a strange man of respectable appearance entered, and stepped familiarly within. From the manner in which he gazed round him, the intruder seemed in some haste or alarm; but seeing the store deserted—no uncommon occurrence in a country-town—he quietly took a position by seating himself on the counter, determined to watch until the owner should come in.

"She'll just haud her whisht for a wee," thought the Highlandman within himself, as he stood ensconced behind the plaiding; "may be the deevil will put it into the man's head to gae out again without a spoke or a speer."

However useful the devil is upon most occasions, it did not, however, please him to answer Dougald's invocation in the present emergency ; and the intruder seemed determined to divide with him the high and responsible office of shop-keeper. At length, looking unconsciously towards its inner recesses, as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, this new person thought he saw something within, of an exceedingly strange and dubious character. Next, he heard something breathe almost at his ear, which caused such a tremor all over him, that he scarcely had courage to turn his head to look beyond the plaiding. On the first movement, however, of his head in that direction, his terrified eyes became fixed upon the broad brown countenance of a bearded Highlander, in a place where Highlandmen ought not to be. The worthy citizen never having been a man of renowned courage, sudden surprise, at seeing such an apparition hidden among his friend's goods, with the inexplicable terrors that seemed to surround

him, alarmed as he was on entering the shop, completely deprived him of his natural speech. Continuing, however, to gaze in the Highlander's face until his own jaw fell, and his hair began to rise, the countenance of the Gael seeming to keep time to all these movements, by the various grins to which it was subjected, the latter, at length losing all patience, broke the fearful silence by a wild swear of,

“Cot tamm her! what will she be glouring at?”

“Friend! honest man! what brings you there?”

“What brings her here? Toot!—what'll she be doing but just keeping ta shentleman's chop. Is tat ony wonderment?”

“Lord, but there's surely somebody else among the barrels! What can this mean?”

“Teevil a ane but the ta rattons an' ta mice whilkter be plenty in ta toon o' Perth. Hoogh! stand back! I tell her I'm ta chopkeeper.”

“How do you do, deacon? I'm well pleased

to meët with you,”— said a voice out of the dark, and instantly came forward the imposing figure of the stranger chieftain.

“ Heaven be neest us ! ” exclaimed the citizen in increased terror, as he gazed on the armed chief. “ It’s all true what I heard, and the auld town o’ Perth is in the utmost jeopardy. O Evan M’Evan, Laird of Glenmore, have mercy this night on me and mine ! ”

A long chuckling laugh at the poor man’s terror was the only answer given to this earnest appeal, but as the intruding baillie turned his head the other way, the white teeth and gleaming eyes of the grinning Highland gilly seemed, even in their ludicrous or ferocious expression, to promise to him no matter for merriment.

“ Maister M’Evan, what brings you here ? ” he gaspingly exclaimed ; “ and how have you taken up unlawful possession of the goods and premises of a respectable citizen o’ this burgh ? If ye’ve brought a legion o’ your men frae the hills to beleaguer our town, and burn the auld

jail o' Perth, as I hear tell, I hope ye'll at least spare honest men like me and my unfortunate friend, the worthy proprietor of this shop."

"Teevil a fears o' ta chop ! if I may be so bold," said the Highlander, striking in. "Am I not a chopkeeper mysel ? an' what's ta body feard for ? Oigh ! she's no worth his glory's speaking to, wi' her burning an' her belaguring."

At this moment the plot was thickened by the hasty entrance of the burly burgess himself, followed by Hector ; and on looking around him, M'Vey was more startled at the unexpected presence of deacon M'Farlane on the scene, than at the other strangers, for whose sudden visit at his premises Hector had of course fully prepared him.

"This is an unexpected honour, Glenmore," said the burgess, pulling off his hat, "but it's something oddly timed, methinks, considering the fizz the town is in the night. Lord, Mr. M'Evan, but ye're feard for naething. But

shut up the shop-door, Hector, my lad, and make all haste ; for faith, if the townsmen get sight of my honourable visitors this night, the baillie there and I will have a fair chance to get a snug lodging in our ain jail."

"The Lord forbid !" exclaimed the baillie ; "but hadn't I better leave you, gentlemen ?—ye'll be far better without me ;" and the terrified functionary, stepping down off the counter, prepared to go.

"No !" cried the chief, in a voice of thunder. "You *shall not* go—to put your caitiff townsmen in a panic about nothing. Besides, baillie," he added, cajolingly, "I want your services myself. Are you not a puissant man and a magistrate ?"

"Why, *I am* a man in some authority, certainly," said the baillie, the forces of his mind, such as they were, greatly rallied by this seasonable flattery ; "and being constituted by Providence as of the powers that be ordeened by God, we are prayed for constantly in the

haly kirk, that our hands may be strengthened to be a terror—”

“Yes, but your Whiggish prayers are sometimes answered the contrary way,” interrupted the chieftain, with a dry smile, “so that if you are not a terror to evil doers, evil doers are a sore terror to you, and that answers its own end.”

“Ye are pleased to be pleasant, Glenmore, in the midst o’ danger,” said the baillie, “but in times like thae, great power and authority are beset wi’ many cares, that gar the hands shake wi’ anxiety as mine hae done this night; and we that sit in high places, and dispense judgment, hae mickle need o’ the prayers o’ the saunts; for, as the poet-man says, uneasy is the head that wears a crown.”

The idea of a crown, in connexion with a burgh baillie, and the serious air with which this was delivered, was too much for the gravity of the listeners, and a loud burst of laughter was the only response which the poor magis-

trate received to his pathetic speech; which made him suspect that he had said something not quite orthodox to his present purpose; although what that might be, was beyond his penetration to divine.

“Come, gentlemen,” said the burgess, “this is no place for such high personages as you to hold your communications, so with your leave we will adjourn up stairs, where, by the help o’ a seasonable excitement of the bottle, without which no business ever yet was brought to a lucky conclusion, we will maybe come to a proper understanding—for it cannot be a sma’ affair that has brought Glenmore frae the hills, to trust himself this night in the angry town of Perth.”

The adjournment was carried accordingly, Dougald Downie being placed as sentinel without, to see that no one intruded, and Hector being, by the request of the chieftain, permitted to be present during the deliberation. As the subject of their conversation, however,

cannot be well understood without some brief reference to the internal circumstances of the times, by no means as yet understood in the south, we shall venture upon a few particulars in a new chapter.

CHAPTER V.

But wha's the man, amang ye a',
 Will gae to the Tolbooth door wi' me?
 O up then spak him mettled John Hall,
 (Frae the Laigh Tiviotdale was he,)
 If it should cost my life this very night,
 I'll gae to the Tolbooth door wi' thee.

SCOTCH BALLAD.

“METHINKS we could have dispensed, on the present occasion, with all this officious hospitality, deacon,” said the haughty mountaineer, with some sternness, as he looked impatiently on what appeared to him to be the never-to-end setting down of the various flasks filled with white and red liquor, and the horn drinking-cups which it was the burgess's pleasure to place before his guests, before he would allow

a word to be spoken. “ I am neither come here to sell a nolt nor to buy English frippery, nor yet to drink Whig toasts to the praise of the loyal citizens of Perth—so pray have a truce to this unseasonable jingling of stoups.”

“ Godsake, laird, will ye no let a body strengthen one’s heart with a common dram, just to prepare them for what ye’re about to prepound,” said the baillie, filling himself a tass of excellent French *eau de vie*, which the burgess had just set down—with a hand, however, that showed by its shaking how much his nerves had need of the application. “ Fill yoursel’ a toothfu’, laird,” he added to the chieftain, “ since ye *are* come amongst us. We hae nae bread an’ saut here, to eat oursel’s into friendly confidentiality ; but if ye’ll no pledge me in a wholesome dram o’ the gudeman’s lickor afore we begin, I’ll hae little brew o’ your intercommunings.”

“ It’s a wise propose, baillie,” said the good-natured host, filling up his caup, “ just to drink the dry meal aff the tap of the con-

ference, that we may see clearer to the bottom o't, as the drouthy minister said to the Presbytery. But, Lord, baillie! what's the matter wi' you, that ye're ta'en the hiccup already wi' that single mouthfu' o' lickor? Fright makes men sober, but disna gar them yisk at that rate, or make faces, as you did when I entered the shop this night."

"I just want to know one thing, deacon, just one thing, frae his honour Glenmore there, afore we say a single word—hic!" gasped the baillie; "whether it be true what I've this minute learned in the court ha' among the baillies convened in council, that there's a legion of red-footed fallows frae the hills ambuscaded amang the firs ayont the Tay, for to come in by the Skinner's gate when we're a' sound asleep, to mob and maltreat the auld jail of Perth, and maybe to set fire to the toun, and murder us a' and our wives and bairns, in our beds, just for the sake of rescuing out o' the hands o' law and justiciary, that notorious loon and limmer, Duncan M'Naughton, the

robber. Na, ye needna laugh, Deacon M'Vey, I'm a magistrate and a man in power ! and I hae a right to put such questions—and the powers that be hae always the most orthodox information on a' matters that concern the state, and the peace and preservation o' this realm—hic !”

The little baillie set himself back on his long-backed chair, with his mouth pursed up in terrible officiality, after uttering this triumphant speech ; and even the bluff face of the burghess lengthened considerably, as both, now waiting anxiously for a reply, gazed for a moment in the dark flashing eyes of the chieftain.

The momentary sternness of the laird's face, however, fell instantly into a nose-curling contempt. “ By the mass of our fathers,” he at length said, “ but there is more sense, and as much respectability, in the single forefinger of a Stonehaven fishwife, clad as it is wi' brass rings, and barkened with herring scales, than in the brainless skulls of those Lowland baillies. Why should I reply to such babble as that ?

Have we not oppression enough already in the Highlands, since Scotland lost her king, and Mar lost his head, but we must provoke another scouring and scattering, to set good men by the ears? Law and justice, say you? Have we not already red soldiers from the south to hound us out among the hills, and teach us the law by bayonet and lead—and black-coated ravens from the low country, to teach our very chieftains roguery and greed, and to harry the homes of our poor clansmen, until they take to the roads for a bit and a sip? And have not you townsmen white-wigged men, wi' parchment faces, and red gowns, to take your part against the simple mountaineer, whilk are coming into Perth to-morrow, wi' sound o' trumpet, like a triumph, and all to hang a poor fellow or two whom their own injudicious oppression has made thieves and robbers. But that is not what I am come to speak of, nor will it serve any good purpose to dilate to you upon Highland troubles. But the fact

is, gentlemen burgesses of Perth, and men of power, (as it happens,) I have a particular reason for wishing that no scaith may at this time come o'er a certain man that you have just named, who is to be tried to-morrow before the lords, for what you call robbery and hame-sucken."

"I told you sae! I told you what would be the upshot o' a' this lang speciality," cried the baillie, with vehement courage; "that's a' to prepare us for a treasonable threatenment against the powers that be. There'll be a Highland rescue and jail breaking this night, as sure as the deevil's a gentleman!"

"You're quite mistaken, worthy baillie," said Glenmore, quietly; "if there was any such plot, I would not have demeaned myself to have come up into your ill-flavoured truckery shops, in the heart of Perth, to ask favour or speak civility with the best baillie in your town. But come, gentlemen, if we are to be friends, let us talk not like merchants only, but simply

like men. In brief, here is the deacon, an old friend of mine, and you, baillie, I've seen you before, and that in a place where you did not talk so loudly about the powers that be, whether ordained of God or not, as is your manner of speaking—they were then rather of a different sort to yourself. But you must manage, by crink or by crank, to get Duncan M'Naughton slipped from the inside to the outside of the old jail of Perth, and just let him make a lang leg back to the hills for this once, to see his wife and children, poor fellow, and I'll take care that he behaves better in future."

"Did ony mortal flesh ever hear such a propose?" exclaimed the baillie; "to let aff ane o' the greatest limmers between this and Caithness! after a' the pains we've had to catch him? Didna he drive the whole cattle frae the hills o' Cairncourlie, and left the bow-legged laird hardly a stot? Didna he rub Lady Glengrowl's meal-girnal last winter in the snaw? and carried off the vera side o' beef that hung up in

the kitchen, so that if it hadna been for yoursel' and others, Glenmore, she might hae starved, puir lady? And did not he and his men carry aff Saunders M'Dought's siller kist, out o' the spence, body and banes, and left the honest drover hardly a bodle to pay the toll back to Angusshire? And yet *ye'll* come here to try to cheat the woodie o' its ain, after the fallow has been ta'en and caged, an' shall be tried, and condemn'd to be execute in the most orderly and civilized manner. Ne'er speak o't, Glenmore! ne'er speak o't!"

"What say you, burgess?" said the chief, addressing M'Vey with a look of quiet determination.

"It's little that I can say on such a business," said the burgess. "The baillie there is better acquainted with the jailor that keeps the cage of Perth, and the hangman that does the work, forbye the writer and lawyer bodies, that can quirk a man either into the woodie or out the woodie, just as they finger the siller.

But really, Glenmore, why ye should seek to cheat the gallows o' its ain, in respect to auld M'Naughton, now when he is taen, I can hardly jalouse; for though Duncan is a braw sonsy fallow, and whyles buys and pays like a gentleman, it's weel known he is as great a Cearnach as ever drove a stot frae the Lowlands."

"Why, as to that, burgess," said M'Evan, if every gentleman that drives a horned beast o'er the hills were to be licked up by the long tongue of the law, the old tolbooth of Perth would require a new wing to the shoulder o't; and as to the reasons that have induced me to come hither, to your purse-proud town, to try my influence for the saving of the life of an ill-used man, suffice it to say that they are good and substantial, never speaking of the prayers of his wife and the tears of his youngsters; so now, if you are men, you will put your wits together and see if you cannot devise a way to bring the poor culprit off, for I am well assured

that Duncan, if he gets once clear of this scrape, will be henceforward a changed man."

"It's not possible, Glenmore," said the baillie zealously. "The pyet's a thief in its very nature, and when it gets to a hardened age, and its tongue grows black, it's o'er auld to learn new manners. So, saving your pardon, sir, ye'll just be best to let the lawyers take their will o' Duncan, for an ensample to the oongodly; for ye ken, if it's fore-ordeen'd that the man is to swing at the end o' the woodie, it would be a tempting o' Providence to try to gainsay its will."

"By heaven, he shall *not* swing, if you come to that," thundered Glenmore, starting up out of all patience at the long arguments of the baillie, "or if, as you say, it's ordained that he shall, by the saul of M'Evan, I'll show that it's also ordained, that a dear revenge shall be taken on the head and hallan of every man that has a hand in the ploy. So take your choice, baillie and deacon both."

The two citizens sat looking a moment at each other, but the silence was first broken by the burgess.

“ If I may speak for myself, I should not be ill-pleased to see M'Naughton get scaut free this time, particularly as you seem to be set on the thing, Glenmore; and as there's some sma' hopes that the chield may at least keep out o' the hands o' the *seider roy*, as you call the red-back lads, in future; but, really, how it is to be managed, wi' any safety to ourselves, I know not. There's the judges come in frae Edinburgh this very day to try him, and there's as mony big wigs and writers waiting to make a guinea by his indicting, as would hang ony three honest men; and, waur than that, there's auld Duncan Forbes o' Culloden, the Lord President as he's ca'd, that kens every man o' us here in Perth, and you too, Glenmore, and isna the body as zealous o' the law as a Pharisee, and would clap us all up in the Tolbooth ourselves, if he had the least suspicion

o' any joukery paukery, for what he ca's defeating o' the ends o' justice. I really wish ye would giv't up, sir."

"I shall never give it up : if Duncan Forbes were sitting there," said the chief, calmly, but with a glance of determination that was almost wild, "see you that !" he added, drawing the long dirk from his side, and laying its naked blade on the table ; "Forbes of Culloden knows well that when Evan M'Evan breathes upon his biodag, he never takes back his word, or fails of his oath. Whom do you stare at ? What should hinder Duncan M'Naughton to twist off the irons that the smith has rivetted on his legs, that is, if he get a seasonable hint or help, and the turnkey should forget to lock the door, as was done at Aberdeen, or that he should break a hole in the wall, as Dougal Macdougall brake the auld gaol of Inverness, even though your Tolbooth is a strong place. Are you still afraid ? By heavens, if I would not rather trust the whole affair to the management of this youth,"

and he pointed to Hector, "whose eye tells me that he has a spirit in his body, than to any one of you. Burgess, make me no answer, but let the thing be done; you are this junior's master, and if Duncan M'Naughton once gets his feet on the heather, he, through whose means it is chiefly affected, shall soon know that a Highlander can both avenge his own cause, and show his own gratitude."

"Stay a wee, laird, stay a wee," said the baillie anxiously, as the chieftain stood up, "if it maun be sae, I'll get auld Willie Caption, the writer, to take the thing in hand, as loopy a body as ever drew an auffidauvit; and if ye just get me twa bare legged chields frae the hills, to say as Willie tells them, we'll grease his loof weel wi' siller, and if law and leeing ever got a man frae the gallows, Willie will do't this time for Duncan M'Naughton."

"*Me* get two clansmen to hold up their right-hands in a court of justice, and call God to witness to a falsehood!" said Glenmore, with

indignation; “curse your Lowland craft that would moot such a proposal;” and the mountaineer took two or three strides across the room, apparently unable to utter fully his feelings. “No, no, baillie! to shoot a man fairly on the hills is a decency to that; but I’ll get two Highlanders, who, if I but touch this shining blade, and mention *your name*, will think it good sport to make carrion’s meat of them who will be airt and part in the hanging of M’Naughton”

“The Lord safe us!” whispered the alarmed magistrate; “I’m a dead man.”

“Ye shouldna hae said that, baillie,” said the burgess, returning the whisper to his terrified neighbour; “I know the way of the mountain folk. If it was only but blawing on a book, as they do in England, or kissing o’ your thumb instead of the calf’s-skin, the lads o’ the hills would neer say you nay. But this is a very different affair; and now, as ye have fairly set up the birses of the chief, ye maun

try something to get out o' his ire. I'll tell you what, Glenmore," he added, addressing the chief, "I see no other way but letting the trial go on; but if you will leave this matter betwixt me and the baillie, dangerous though it is, it will be hard if we cannot find a way of saving the auld reiver frae the last loup."

The chief put out his hand to the burgess, and shook it cordially in silence. "I am in rather strange circumstances myself you see, deacon," he said, "and things are not with me as they were before the fifteen; but M'Naughton and I fought side by side; he's an old friend and fellow sufferer, and though he sometimes does, by open daring, what hundreds are doing by more crooked means, I must not allow him, if I can, to make a widow of his well far'd wife, and orphans of his braw sons and daughters, for there's poverty and ill-blood enough on the hills since auld king Jamie left his chair. Farewell, M'Vey, and hark ye, if ever you have occasion to send to the mountains, make this

good youth your ambassador. I'm mistaken if he does not yet turn out to do you credit."

Shaking the honest burgess heartily by the hand, the chief next gave his hand kindly to Hector, into whose eyes the tears started at the effects of his own feelings, as Glenmore spoke to him some encouraging words, and, taking a parting cup of the burgess's best claret, the chieftain took his departure, leaving the others to debate together on succeeding measures.

CHAPTER VI.

Treasons capital, confess'd, and prov'd,
Have overthrown him !

SHAKSPEARE.

NEXT morning, by an early hour, that important event, in a Scots country town, the coming in of the Lords, as it is called, or rather the opening of the criminal court by the judges on circuit, walking in procession, began, along with the circumstance of its being also market day, to give unusual bustle to the streets of the ancient city of Perth. Before eight o'clock a waiting crowd had assembled in front of a large old-fashioned mansion, picturesquely ornamented with battlement and arched gateway. This building, used as an hotel, and inhabited

by their lordships, was one of the last of those fabrics then remaining to ornament the streets of Perth, which, when that city was considered the capital of Scotland, had been the town residence of one of the higher Scots nobility.

Here, in imposing state, sat at breakfast two of the venerable senators of the college of justice, from Edinburgh, having for their guests, on this occasion, the provost and magistrates of the town, including, of course, our puissant friend, baillie M'Farlane, a pair of Edinburgh lawyers who accompanied them in circuit, and, lastly, sundry of the burghesses, and other principle men of the city, among whom, on this high day, deacon M'Vey himself had been honoured with an invitation. Before the arched gateway of the hotel paced a double guard of English soldiers, and without stood a whole company of the same, who, with a posse of quaint-looking towns-officers, clad also in scarlet coats, and valiantly holding up long battle-axe hal-

berts, besides various other inferior functionaries, all waited to take part in the forthcoming procession.

The conversation of the puissant personages above, over their substantial Scots breakfast, related, of course, chiefly to the present unsettled state of the Highlands, the prevailing discontented and Jacobite feeling, notwithstanding what was in one sense true, the mild government of the House of Hanover; the occasional lawless practices of the clansmen, notwithstanding the active measures of Marshal Wade on the one hand, and President Forbes on the other, with the many difficulties which stood in the way, both of the introduction of southern civilization, and the efficient administration of justice among these extensive districts.

But lawyers are seldom philosophers, still seldomer are they practical men, out of their own mere profession; and the mass of absurdity that was talked this morning, regarding the

peculiarities of the Highlanders, and that in sounding periods of forensic construction; and the perfect ignorance that was shown of the real state and feelings of the people of the mountains, among whom there was, after all, much of both innocence of heart and happiness of life, and that by men arrayed in all the external paraphernalia of wisdom, justly astonished the shrewd sense of the good burgess, and made him question his own long experience, little accustomed as he was to the observation of ignorance in high places. Not that the worthy Ulpins and statesmen of the period were materially different from the same species of men of our day; but it seldom has suited the higher orders of society, whose business it is to legislate for the lower, or the more distinctly situated to take much pains either to make themselves well acquainted with the circumstances, or to enter into the feelings of the latter; and government and coercion being frequently considered synonymous, the latter has

at all periods been the favourite system of the indolent, as well as being more consonant to the naturally tyrannous disposition of human nature. Hence the irritation that at this period prevailed in many parts of the Highlands, and hence at all periods have many of the noblest characters been lost to the world—some of them even perishing by the hands of the executioner. Hence, also, on this morning did the judges rejoice over the fortunate capture of the Breadalbane Cearnach, and the ample materials there appeared for his conviction, at least for a felonious riot on the streets of Perth—so that all parties present at the judges' table this morning, felt their individual importance greatly enhanced in their own eyes, by being accessory to the hanging of so notorious an offender. From these we may except, however, the burghess, Hector's master, and also the baillie, with whom the reader is already acquainted. But whatever the fear of M'Evan might have induced the latter magistrate to resolve in secret,

that did not hinder him from being the loudest in talking of the vengeance of the law, so far as the well-ordered speech of his betters left him the opportunity.

At length, breakfast being over, which, according to the fashion of the times, was finished by a small dram of whiskey, swallowed neat, as a settler to the various substantialities of spiced ham, braxey mutton, smoked haddocks, Tay trout, kipper and honey, their lordships retired to robe ; and an additional party having arrived at the door to join the procession, the whole was soon marshalled in that picturesque array appertaining to this simple but impressive pageant. The first blast of the trumpets which was sent forth by the high functionaries who carried these warlike instruments, and who accompany to this day the lords on circuit, to blow before them, was the signal for march, and away proceeded the solemn procession towards the courthouse, situated near where the Scots parliament once sat in Perth.

Meantime, our youthful hero, Hector, whose mind had been both stirred and affected by the scene of the previous night, as well as by what he had heard respecting the accused and his family, looked forward to the one event of the day with no slight interest. This interest was deepened by several circumstances, and particularly by his recent knowledge of some small details regarding the subject of it, of which, if they do not materially serve to exculpate a criminal, constitute, by exposing the peculiarities and tendencies of human character, the very essence of useful biography. Besides, in this case, the youth had a vague idea, from what the strange chieftain had expressed, that the result of the trial was to have some sort of effect upon his own after-fate.

At the first roll of the drums, therefore, which announced the movement of the lords, Hector shut the door of his store, and ran to obtain a favourable station to witness the procession. At no time have the Scots been much treated

with showy pageants; but had they even been so, they could not easily have invented one so simple as this, which, at the same time, should be so well calculated to impress the youthful mind. The day was delightful, and the handsome and then venerable streets of Perth, crowded as they were with citizens and strangers, and filled as were the windows, with well-dressed women, had an appearance like the gaiety and festivity of a triumph. First came a sample of the English infantry, so lauded at that day for their exploits at Ramillies and Malplaquit, but so hated in the Highlands for their inefficient and often cruel attempts to second the law. Next came the advocates in wig and gown, and, after the trumpeters and burly mace-bearers, came in their robes of scarlet and silk, with small triangular hats above their ample wigs, the venerable figures of the judges themselves, the dispensers of life and liberty to many a trembling wight. Next came the magistrates of Perth, dressed in their best, headed by

the provost, and guarded by a file of the halberdier towns officers aforesaid, the whole closed by a party of the principal citizens, mustered to grace as well as lengthen this grand procession.

The streets had scarcely been cleared after the pageant, when the burgess returned to the duties of his shop, to which Hector also attended for some time, but with evident uneasiness. At length his master said, “Hector, my lad, it does not answer me to be seen idling in the court-house of a market-day. I see you are anxious, as well as I am myself, about what is going on. Put on your bonnet therefore, and go to the court. If you mention my name to Thomas M'Dowal, the door-keeper, he will get you a convenient seat; and be sure you take good notice, and bring me a true account of Mr. M'Naughton's behaviour on the trial.”

Hector gladly accepted the considerate order of his master, and in a few minutes found himself placed for the first time in a good station, to

witness the solemnities of a northern court of justice.

The interest that by this time was excited for the criminal, as well in the town as throughout the whole neighbouring hills, had filled the court to suffocation, and crowded the market-place with droves of strangers. The jealousy and aversion with which "the sheepskin law" was at that time regarded in the Highlands, particularly that branch of it that took cognizance of matters, which were thought by a simple and warlike people to be the proper province of individuals themselves, to revenge or retaliate as they could, is hardly credible in times like our own, when we suffer sorely under the opposite evils; and hence, in the mountains, almost every man who got into its gripe, or was likely to be its victim, became the object of general interest, and of the pity even of those who had suffered most from his depredations. Nor was this feeling unnatural, from many circumstances, both on the side of the

enforcers of the law and its breakers, which are already known to general readers. The chief of these, on the part of the mountaineers, was the jealousy, if not aversion, with which they regarded all things coming to them from the south; where they, on the other hand, were looked upon as half barbarians, who were to be treated with that rigour and disregard of their prejudices, with which men conceited of their knowledge and refinement, think themselves at liberty to use those who cannot speak their own shibboleth; and who, in this case, trusted more to their swords, or a sort of natural justice, than to paper courts, which they considered as the very hot-beds of Lowland oppression, trick, and effeminacy. We are the more particular in intruding with these observations now, as however well known, they apply strongly to a portion of our story yet to come, of much more importance, both as a matter of history and an illustration of human nature, than this present trial, however that may be

considered as serving to characterize the manners of the times.

The appearance of the prisoner, upon whom all eyes were now set, as he stood at the bar, was well calculated to increase the interest which many had felt for him from mere report. He seemed to be rather beyond fifty, stout and well formed, but of middle stature; he had the bold open look and roving eye of the free Gael; but the confinement which he had suffered, short as it had been, had already taken off a portion of that hardy hue, which his face usually bore from the air of the mountains.

While the indictment was reading, setting forth his several offences. Hector, who sat quite near him, observed him nod assent to the various charges, and say to himself, "It's a right tale;" but when any thing was read which appeared to him to misrepresent the truth, his brow knit into an expression, as if he could hardly restrain himself from pouncing upon the lawyer. But a bitter "Tam her for a leeing

law," was all that this wrath was allowed to end in.

When the time drew near for asking him, according to the usual forms, his own verdict as to his guilt or innocence—the courts in those northern parts not being conducted with the dignity of ours in the south, several lawyers, and particularly that "loopy body," Willie Caption, before-mentioned, got round him with various advices; and in particular urged him at least to let nothing come from his own mouth that might serve as an acknowledgment of the truth of the indictment.

"What for'll she no tell the truth, and ban the lee," he said, "when her ain neck is in jeopardy, and when the auld men wi' the wigs hae come all the way frae Edinburgh to speer their speer? Joost let Duncan M'Naughton alane, an' no trouble her wi' ony bamboozlement, and she'll answer for hersel'."

"Prisoner, you have heard the indictment read," said the judge; "are you guilty or not of the charges therein laid?"

“ Does her lordship mean to speer if she’s done the deeds that the man read from that lang paper ?”

His lordship signified his assent.

“ It’s o’er true, my lord, saving the twa or three lecs that’s here and there.”

“ Prisoner, I have to caution you as to what answer you give to my question.”

“ Is she no to speak the truth ?”

“ The law does not call upon any man to criminate himself.”

“ What will the law have her to do ? if it’s her lordship’s pleasure ?”

“ Be silent, and hear the issue of the trial.”

“ Oigh, her lordship doesna mean to hang her after all ? God bless her auld wig !” and the simple Highlander leant himself carelessly back against the boards which enclosed the bar.

“ Prisoner, it will be necessary for you to say guilty, or not guilty, to these allegations.”

“ Say, not guilty,” whispered Caption the lawyer, speaking from behind.

“ And what for wad she say that ? ”

“ Because we’ll maybe get you off by the law.”

“ Tam her law ! If she’ll no get aff without the law, she’ll ne’er try it, an’ she should swing on the ugly woodie yet. Haud her whisht about the law, an’ she’ll joost say a word to the auld man wi’ the tippet round her neck.”

“ Prisoner ! your answer to the court.”

“ Weel, her nainsel joost did the misdeeds that the man read out o’ that paper, and mony others forbye.”

“ Then you plead guilty ? ”

“ She’ll no plead nothing ; but her nainsel will ne’er gie her tongue to tell an auld man a lee afore the peoples ; for all that this vile body,” and he turned round and thrust his finger almost into the eye of the lawyer, “ tries to blaw in her lug.”

“ Silence in the court,” cried the officer, to suppress the titter.

“ You are aware,” said the condescending

judge, "that you are accused of hamesucken and theft."

"I ken naething about the sooken; but did her lordship say a thief? she better mind her talk, afore she tell that to Duncan M'Naughton."

"Prisoner, I excuse your disrespect for the present; but I wish to make you understand that you are accused of theft and cattle-lifting."

"Will her lordship speak that again? Does the law say that driving a score o' nolt frae the Lowlands, or herrying the hallan o' a fat Whig, wi' fire and sword, like a gentleman, is the wark o' a thief! Na—na—if her nainsel were a thief or a liar, she would deserve twa hangings instead o' anc. But Duncan M'Naughton may lift a hundre cattle frae a hill-side, or carry off a gude kist o' gear at night, for fear the moths might eat it, and maybe gie a handfu' o' the siller to a puir wife to help her wi' her rent, as she passes, but ne'er would steal a tawtey sheep, like a Lowlander."

A buz of approbation ran through the mountaineer spectators, who crowded the court, at this speech, so agreeable to their common prejudices; and the judges looked at each other, and smiled, to find the true philosophy of robbery so well understood by a Highland cateran, and that with a humanity with which it is not always accompanied in higher places.

“You acknowledge, prisoner, to the principal charge—to wit, of entering the house of James Halliburton, with several of your men, and that with force of arms, carried contrary to law, and after putting the said Halliburton into great bodily fear, you”

“Yes—tam her! and well she deserved it!” exclaimed M’Naughton, interrupting the judge from delight at the thought; “and the body *was* in a deevil o’ a fright, to be surely.”

“Silence, prisoner!—and that, besides assaulting the said Halliburton with sundry beatings and bruises, you did carry off one clasped

box, containing Spanish dollars, as set forth in the indictment."

"The 'dytment, say you? but does your dytment no tell what James Halliburton did *to me* and *mine*, lang before ever I crossed the water o' Earn?"

"No, that is not to the purpose."

"Then it's an ill law, and 'twill be the ruin o' the Highlands, whether I'm hang't or no."

"Prisoner, you are detaining the court. Have you any thing to say why judgment should not be passed upon you for these various crimes to which you have acknowledged, as well as your open riot in the streets of this city? I wish you had not spoken so freely; but I have not allowed this conversation to be recorded, and the law will allow you still to withdraw your confession."

"Will her vile law bid her again to speak the lee, after all the ill she's done afore? Na, na! she'll tell the truth and shame the deevil,

and the law baith, although she should hang for it this minute, and her puir wife sitting at hame greeting for her, nae doubt."

The stout Cearnach then made an ample and almost noble confession of all his principal reiving adventures, to most of which he had been either stimulated by the usages of his countrymen, or impelled by some strong provocation; and whenever he came to a place wherein he or his men had acted with aught like oppression or wantonness, he uttered, in the best English he could command, a strong invective against himself for giving way to passions which he averred he could not always control. "But," said he, finding himself at a loss, "if hersel had good English, she would just speak another spoke yet."

"Go on, prisoner. The court will excuse the peculiarities of your language, from the seriousness of the circumstances in which you now stand."

"It's no' for hersel she would speak," said

the criminal, struck, if not affected, by the last allusion; “but she has as braw a family at hame as ever sat round a fire, and a daughter that, suppose her father say it, there’s few to match frae Lorn to Lochaber; and a son that can wield his father’s sword without his father’s wayward passions. Maybe he’s here this very day—och, och! there he is!” and the delinquent clapped his two hands on his eyes, from emotion, at the sight: “come forward, Farquhar, my man, and countenance your father at this time of trouble. Dinna be blate afore their lordships, for ye’re weel worth to look ony man in the face; and if ye’re no ashamed o’ me this day, may be ye’ll help to save me from the gruesome gallows.”

The eyes of all were now turned to the quarter to which he pointed; and room being made by the crowd, what was Hector’s surprise, to see the same youth who had been his teacher of the broad-sword exercise, come forward, and make a modest bow to the judges.

“Now, if you will allow me another word,” said the prisoner. “This young man’s mother, who has been the cause, although she was the opposer, of my lifting practices; and who, when I took her at first afore the priest, was as like this youth as a pretty woman may be like a man: aye she told me, even when I brought hame the beasts or the gear, that I would come to an ill end, and begged me, wi’ tears, to stay at hame, and be content wi’ our poor bit land in Breadalbane, and saying, that she and hers would be weel content wi’ nothing but a short gown and a sheiling, rather than that I should put my neck in the power of the law. But I kend that for all that she was a proud woman, and couldna bear to want a bit and a sip to give to the stranger as they passed our door; and my father being ruined after Mar lost the fifteen, I just thought I would take revenge o’ the worl’, that had ’poverished me and mine. But now, my lords, as it’s come to a stand wi’ me, and I’ve been cooped up between four wa’s

sae long, and the ministers hae talked to me about faith and gude works, I'm determined, if I can get over this mishanter, to lead a new life, and stick to my hungry farm amang the hills. So, wi' your permission, my propose is this, that if you gie me a pardonment, and let me ance mair put my feet on the heather, I'll do mair to keep down the limmers o' Perthshire, than a' the red soldiers that ever set themselves up for a mark to be shot at by the lads ahint the bushes; and for token, here's my son Farquhar, that's ready to take the oath to King George, and to guard the hills frae the like o' what I hae been mysel, as a tested soldier o' the Black Watch now gathering upon the bonnie holms of Breadalbane. Now I've said my say, and God gie your lordships a gude opinion o' the repentant Cearnach."

Notwithstanding the imperfection of the dialect, there was a dignity in the bearing, and a pathos in the tone, of the criminal, standing, as he now did, between life and death, that, along

with the expressive looks of the youth, who stood facing the judges, melted into tears the great bulk of the crowded auditory. Both father and son stood straining their eyes upon those who held their fate in their hands; but no answer was returned to this appeal: and after some forms, a verdict of guilty having been instantly returned by the jury, agreeably to direction, the judge consulted a moment with the magistrates of Perth; but the shakings of the head and serious looks by which this was met, gave pretty certain indication of what was to follow.

“Prisoner,” said the judge, “to the latter part of your speech, I can make no answer. What you have stated can be of no avail here, nor, I fear, any where else, from what I learn from the magistrates present. My duty, then, and your doom, is already laid down *by the law.*”

“Unfortunate auld carle,” said the prisoner, almost forgetting his own distress for a moment,

as he looked at the judge; “so ye canna hae mercy on a puir sinner, for that vile pinch-craig, the law. I wish ye had been bred to a better trade; but if I had you on the hills for a year, I would just put a clymore in your hand, and teach you an inkling o’ common sense.”

The gravity of the court was again somewhat disturbed by this outbreking, when a single look on the ghastly face of his disappointed son, restored the mountaineer, bold as he was, to a full sense of his unhappy situation. He said nothing, however, while the judge calmly, yet with evident feeling, put on his hat, and in a voice that thrilled through the court, pronounced the fatal words of condemnation to the cord—at which the young man fainted, and fell back into the arms of the people below the bars.

“Weel,” said the criminal, after the confusion caused by this affair had somewhat subsided, “since it *maun* be sae, ye needna hae said mickle about it, to gar my poor bairn swarf at my feet. I’ve seen as gude a fallow as

stands here, shot to the death on a hill-side, and ne'er a ane to put on a bonnet about it, or to say, a Lord hae mercy to him's sowl. But I'll die for the law, as mony a good chield has done afore me, when a piobrach lament played for him at the foot of the gallows tree. Huish! Almighty me!—what's that? I thought I was to get back to my black hole in peace, to prepare me for death."

What caused the last hasty exclamation, was a noise which equally startled the solemn feelings of the auditory, and those of him who was the subject of it; for in the loud scream of a woman's tongue, near the door, Duncan easily recognized the voice of his own favourite daughter. Another shriek followed the former, when, pressing through the crowd, with dishevelled hair and a ghastly countenance, the maiden obtained the first sight of her unfortunate father, as with hands stretched over the railing of the bar, he watched the frightful agony of his child.

While the unhappy girl threw herself into

the arms of her brother, and unable to get near her parent, cast herself on her knees at the foot of the judges' bench, and, tearing her hair as she tried to speak, at length screamed forth prayers that her father's life might be spared,—the utmost efforts of the officers of the court were scarce sufficient to keep the compassionate excitement of the by-standers within such bounds as were consistent with the safety of their lordships, and the security of the new victim of the law.

This state of things could not be suffered. The whole court was in a tumult. "Remove the prisoner!" cried the judge in a voice of thunder; "and close the doors of the courthouse!"

In the midst of the confusion the prisoner was hurried away, and the screams of the young woman, praying in vain for mercy for her father, were the last sounds he heard, as, much unmanned, he was carried through the murky passages, towards the condemned cell of the prison.

CHAPTER VII.

My merryemen's lives, my widowe's teirs—
 There lies the pang that pinches me;
 When I am straight in bludie eard,
 Yon castell will be right dreirie.

SANG OF THE OUTLAW, MURRAY.

“It's gaun to be a bad job this, deacon,” said baillie M'Farlane to the burgess, one evening some days after the trial, as they sat discoursing alone on the affair of the escape. “I wish I had my hands weel washed o't, for auld Watty Hewit, the jailor, is as dour as the whinstane, and the turnkeys maunna be spoken to by me on ony sic a business. Ye ken that it's as mickle as my character's worth, forbye the prospect o' the provostship.”

“ It’s weel enough for you to speak that way, baillie,” said M’Vey stiffly, “ so as to throw the heavy end o’ the concern on my shoulders, but Evan M’Evan knows my disposition and your power, and he’ll never speer whether you are likely to get to the provost or no, if Duncan M’Naughton swings in the woodie.”

“ What do you think we’ll do, burgess? This is a deevil o’ a scrape for a ’sponsible man like me to be into.”

“ And Evan of Breadalbane is a man of his word.”

“ Faith, so he is, and the clansmen are sae used to hae their ain way in thae cases, in spite o’ the powers of law and justice, whilk it’s my duty to maintain, that I fear the very worst, if we shouldna be able to get this Cearnach out o’ the rape. There was auld baillie Frazer, of Inverness, wha was set upon by the clansmen frae the hills, just as Glenmore set upon me, and he behov’d to let lang Dawney Frazer slip

the rape, though as great a limmer as ever drew a dirk, just because he was a Frazer too, and maun be saved to be sure, for the honour o' the clan."

"But *you* have more virtue than the Inverness baillie, that's evident," said the burgess slyly.

"Ye need na sneer at me, deacon. Ye ken brawly how I am situate; and if the jail o' Perth were as rotten a ruckle o' stanes, as the auld tolbooth o' Inverness, whilk is eaten up by the rattons, through and through, Duncan M'Naughton would make a hole for himsel, as well as the sensible brutes; and if he wanted a wee bit claw of cauld iron to pick his way, some hand may be found to slip into a loaf of his bread, a rusty nail or a bit whorl augor, or may be the spring o' a watch, to cut the stancheons, and naebody would ever be a hair the wiser."

"And why don't you try it as it is, since the powers that be, as you say, resist every application for mercy to this doubtful criminal."

“First,” answered the baillie, “because it’s a very unlikely affair for M’Naughton to get out of sae kittle and sae strong a place, considering the many doors and locks; and second, because, being a magistrate o’ the town myself, I canna be seen to lend a finger to sic a business, having no one that I could trust to do the job, unless I run to some o’ the breeless lads frae the hills, the whilk we know would be a ruination. But now, deacon, ye are not won the height o’ the magistracy, yet, as I have. What should hinder *you* to try your hand wi’ something o’ the sort, as ye are in the link o’ the fear of Glenmore, as weel as I am, and would be less likely to be suspected than me, a public functionary?”

“I wish you would not throw your eternal functionaryship so much in my teeth, baillie,” said M’Vey, beginning to lose patience. “But as to this business, although I am no friend to countervailing the laws in any ordinary case, I feel so much interested for the fate of this man, especially since I have become aware of

the injudicious resolutions in a high quarter in favour of severe measures ; being, moreover, of opinion that it is not reasonable to take a man's life for merely lifting a penny of worldly gear, or for driving a few stots or steers off the braes, belonging to them that hae something left behind—I tell you, that independent of the wishes of Glenmore, I am determined to try what I can do for this unfortunate gentleman, in the old-fashioned manner of a bodily escape by door or window ; and in this plan I have hit upon an agent who is little likely to bring suspicion upon either you or I.”

“ Have ye sae ? ” said the baillie, rubbing his hands in ecstasy. “ Odd Deacon, I aye thought you a clever man, an ye hae quite removed a weight from my conscience. What is't ? just let me into your plan ; and if we can only keep it snug frae my brethren, the town baillies, I'll lend a secret and a sure hand to further the business. But whisht !—softly—here's a knocking at the door.”

“It’s only Hector, my doucy young friend, and the trusty agent I’ve just spoken of,” said the deacon. “Come away, my man, and tell us how you’ve sped in the auld tolbooth. I dare say ye were more sure to find the poor Cearnach at hame, than if ye had gan to seek him on a highland hill.”

“He was not far to seek, indeed,” said Hector, coming forward, his countenance bearing evident marks of the impression which the scene he had just witnessed had made on his feelings. “The trial of the hardy reiver was affecting enough,” continued the youth; “but to see a brave auld man chained by the leg like a dog, to a great iron bar rooved into the floor of his dungeon, and appointed to die e’er six days come and go; was to me a sight which I shall not easily forget.”

“This was not a job for one so young as you, when I come to think o’t,” said the deacon, half to himself; “but tell me, Hector, how did the poor man look, and what did he say

to you? Be particular, and withhold nothing."

"As for his look, sir, it was as firm and bold as when he struck down the red-coats at the town's cross. But it's well to be seen that the air of a cell in the Perth jail is not so pure as the breeze that blows from the top of Benvorlich; and neither a mountain man nor a mountain hind could be expected to live long chained by the leg in a stone cage. Yet the old man seems to bend more under the weight of his solitary thoughts, than the fetters that so bitterly resist the activity of his manly limbs, although the usual effects of his awful situation are too evident on his countenance to be altogether concealed."

"God keep us! 'tis a sad situation, no doubt," said the benevolent deacon, "but you gave him some comfort. Hasten and inform us."

Hector went on with particulars, but he did not fully tell with what feelings of reluctance, if not humiliation, he drew from his sleeve, and

exhibited to the condemned man, some small articles with which he contrived to elude the vigilance of the jailor in aid of his intended escape.

“What’s tat?” said the Cearnach, as Hector offered the instruments, he surveying them at the same time with a bewildered and suspicious look.

With a half-guilty hesitation, Hector tried an explanation. No sooner, however, had M’Naughton understood his meaning, than he pushed the articles from him with a contempt that made our youth blush with shame for his commission.

“Does the Perth bodies send their weavers’ wimbles and their tailors’ bodkins to me?” said he, drawing back the whole stretch of his chain. “Deevil! they little ken Duncan M’Naughton. Na, na, youngster! gang back and tell your chapman baillies, that if the auld reiver o’ the hills canna win her way out at the door as she came in, wi’ a stroke o’ fair manliness, and the

strength o' her arm, she'll ne'er try to pick her way out o' a Lowland jail wi' a bodkin, or grub anoth the ground like a mowdiwart; but she'll eether knock her way out like a shentleman, or she'll die for the law, as her betters did afore her."

"But life is sweet, Mr. M'Naughton," said Hector, more and more anxious for the magnanimous condemned; and it's a sad thing for a Highland gentleman to die by the tow, like a Lowland fellow. Listen to me, sir," added the youth, seeing his advantage in appealing to the deep-rooted pride of a Highlander—"could you only get your foot once more on the heath of Breadalbane, where your friends and kin would receive you with shouts that would make the glens ring again—one day, but one glorious day! spent as you were wont on your own braes, tracking the deer in the forests of Athol, or shooting the caipercailzie on the cliffs of Cairntoul, would be worth any effort or any fancied degradation in freeing yourself from

a dog's death, and the weary solitude of this dungeon. And then, sir—nay, I *will* speak it—think of sweet life, and the look of the blessed sun on your own braes—and of a wife's embrace, could you return to her once more from death and doom!—and of a daughter's sob of joy on your bosom—and of a son's hope, and the flush of his eye, as he prepares to follow you again to the mountains!—think—think of all this!”

No sooner had our youth given vent to his warm feelings in this enthusiastic manner, than he found his neck grasped, as he described it, with the grip of a tiger, in the strong fingers of the Cearnach, into whose cheeks the pallid blood had gradually mounted with the climax of Hector's speech, until his eyes seemed ready to start out of his head with a terrific excitement.

“What have I done to you or your friends, boy,” he said, in a tone that was harrowingly pathetic, “that you should thus come into the black hole of the law, to trouble the resignation

of a doomed man? Is not my day almost at hand? Are not my thoughts in the grave, and among the spectres and shadows of the gosseller's world, where my fathers dwell from the days of the Fingallians? And you would disturb her weary thoughts wi' talk o' the hills that she'll ne'er see again; and the wife, and the bairns that she daurnee think of! and that shall hae to tell, when she's dead and gane, that their auld father was hangit like a dog, at the town-cross o' Perth. Ochon! ochon! laddie, that thou should see her greet!" and the unhappy condemned turned his angry grasp into an embrace, and sobbed aloud on the youth's shoulder.

An exchange of forgiveness passed between them as soon as the condemned had a little recovered his tranquillity; but to any further urging upon the point that Hector had come about, he replied, after a long and bitter struggle against the weakness of nature, with the same stern contempt which he had formerly

done to the quirky suggestions of Caption the lawyer ; adding, however, that if he only had a loose leg, even where he was, and a clymore in his belt to give him confidence, he “ would not die the death yet, at least without a bit brulzie, wi’ the jailor men, and other o’ the scabbed colliers o’ the law.”

Thus it appeared that every plan suggested by the worthy citizens was defeated by the peculiar prejudices and disposition of the criminal ; and yet did they dread the ultimate event, for more reasons than we have space to enumerate, although now they separated without coming to any conclusion.

Time passed on, and the day of doom drew nigh, when one night Hector, returning from going on a message, begged with much anxiety of manner to be allowed to absent himself for that evening. The readiness with which he obtained the consent of the kind-hearted burgess, and the expressions of confidence in his prudence with which it was accompanied, af-

fectured the youth almost to tears; and taking his master's hand, and thanking him fervently for all his kindness, his manner seemed so peculiar as to induce inquiry as to the cause of his evident emotion.

“There's something on your mind, Hector,” said the burgess, “for I see your eye kindle with some present purpose. Unfold it to me, that it may be well with you; youth is the better for the counsel of an auld head.”

The youth, however, seemed too much affected to be pressed for a reply, further than to beg to be excused from the formality of counsel, which he foresaw would have no effect if contrary to his purpose; and wringing his master's hands, he took his leave. Before he had got three steps from the door, however, returning hastily back, he said that a foreboding was on his mind that something might happen to him in his intended adventure, or at least that he might be prevented from returning to his duty in the morning. Should that be the case, or

should he be obliged in any way to leave his generous friend for a time, he begged to know how far he might count, if not upon his consent, at least on his forgiveness; as he would not willingly run the hazard of being counted an ingrate by so true a benefactor.

The good burgess, suppressing his present feelings of alarm or reluctance, expressed his full trust in the youth's own prudence, gave his consent to any change which might arise from the best exercise of that quality, and, aware of Hector's secret propensity for the free life of the mountains, assured him of his future friendship. He even insisted upon his putting in his pocket the wages that were due to him, as a necessary preparative to whatever event might be the issue of what he was about to attempt. This done, Hector and his master parted a second time, and with feelings of uncertainty, yet of dogged resolution, he set off towards another part of the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

O Jockie Hall stepp'd to the door,
 And he bended low back his knee;
 And he made the bolts, the door hang on,
 Loup frae the wa' right wantonlie.
 Yestreen I was your prisoner,
 But now this morning am I free.

SCOTCH BALLAD.

IF any portion of life may be considered as a series of chances, to use one mode of expression, that portion is youth, with its prepared circumstances, in which the individual can take no part, and its thick-coming impressions to affect his after life, over which he has indeed little controul. As Hector moved down the narrow street, he wondered internally why he should have engaged himself so deeply in the

fate of mere strangers, or have been so impressed in favour of one, who in no respect had commended himself to the estimation of the world. He did not then know how much sympathy is a component part of the noblest natures, or how much juxta-position, in all circumstances, may happen to bring out that sympathy. Unaware also of the precise tendencies of his own character, his mind only sought the exercise and activity of the most urgent of his faculties, with little regard to the world's opinion, of those to whom the great disposer, juxta-position, happened to introduce him. A neglected orphan, and the victim of necessity, where could fortune throw him but among the obscure sons of lower life, perhaps in the poor townships of Scotland, whose simple joys few delight in contemplating, and to whose many sorrows the high born or the luxurious can afford but little sympathy.

Feeling discontent growing upon him even in the comfortable keeping of a burgess of Perth, what did it signify to him—a floating windfall

of the world's chances—through whose means he got into more congenial circumstances, provided his sympathies were in the meantime interested ; and, while he found agreeable employment for his own activity, was able to do what he considered a good for some other human being, which would give an inward satisfaction to his mind ?

Entering a house as he went along, and proceeding up a narrow stair, as he pondered in this manner, upon opening a door a scene presented itself within, which well might interest the most callous feelings. It was the wife and family of the man who, in two days hence, was appointed for execution. The whole were assembled, and waiting for Hector's coming with the most intense impatience. There was the Cearnach's wife, still a handsome woman, and evidently of higher breeding than himself, though now almost wasted to a skeleton with despairing anxiety. Next was his daughter, a pretty Highland girl, the same who appeared with

such distracted passion on the day of the trial, and now in a worse state, if possible, than her mother—with the son, who originally taught Hector the broad-sword exercise, now burning with impatience for a last trial for his father, and busy in exerting himself to the utmost to support the sinking spirits of the rest. Besides these, there were two younger girls, who by their sobs and afflicting language added to the effect of the whole scene, and gave Hector a fearful impression of the sufferings of a family whose parent was doomed to public immolation. They crowded round him on his entrance, and embracing him, some even on their knees, invoked Heaven in his favour as their only hope; and, knowing also that the attempt they were now ready for, if unsuccessful, would be likely to add the son, and present staff of the family, to the destruction already prepared for the father, the parting from him on this important night, formed altogether a scene which may well be spared the reader.

Having torn themselves from the family, when the two young men came to the front of the prison, they perceived with concern that the guard without had been doubled, and that there was every symptom of unusual vigilance on the part of the military, as if some such attempt as their own was already expected. They stood some minutes in the shade of the rugged buttress of an ancient building, which then nearly faced the prison, and consulted together as to what they should do, in consequence of the additional difficulties presented by this circumstance. They had little time for talk, however, for the hour of changing the turnkeys for the night was fast approaching; and upon the advantage to be taken of that moment depended all their hopes of success.

“Are you sure,” said Hector to his young friend, “that Donald has got inside?”

“I am confident he must,” replied Farquhar, “else we should have found him here. God grant that he and others were well outside again!”

But who can that be in the cocked hat and great coat, peering about under the corner ?”

“ Confound it !” exclaimed Hector, after looking out for a moment, “ it is that long lean officer that I had the tussle with at the skirmish when your father was taken. If he has the command for the night, as seems to be the case, our exploit is almost desperate.”

“ Surely,” said Farquhar bitterly, “ I am the very plaything of ill-luck ! for had I suspected this, I could as easily have had half-a-dozen stout fellows at the corner of the street to assist us, as my tongue could have spoken the word.”

“ Hush, in that strain !” said Hector boldly ; “ fear is a coward born, and we must know neither this night. Stand close where you are—keep your weapon ready for the hand, and your eyes fixed on that black door. Now bid me God speed !”

Hector, who, in his civilian dress, and known as the *doer* of the burgess, had, through his

master's interest, obtained the unquestioned *entrée* to the prisoner, was admitted without difficulty ; but this evening, his person was subjected to a search, more strict than he had ever known it. Having passed this ordeal, as he now followed one of the low functionaries of punishment through the crooked passages, groping every where about for an expected object, his hand lighted among the thick hair of a bushy head, which he gladly recognized as that of the trusty Donald, Glenmore's servant, and the same who had originally acted his part so well in the care of the burgess's shop, crouched down in one of the darkest nooks of the irregular corridor. Catching a handful of the man's coarse hair as he passed, Hector gave it a pull, to show his confidence. In return for this freedom, however, he received from the Highlander such a squeeze in the thick of the leg with the mountainous sinewy hand, as almost endangered the whole adventure, by the difficulty he found in preventing himself from screaming out with the pain.

At length they emerged into the small inner court, out of which opened a low door, by which admission was gained to the condemned cell, and in front of which a sentinel was posted. As the key was turning in the lock, Hector thought he observed the watchful red-coat glare upon him with a suspicious look. He, however, took no notice, and in another instant found himself in the presence of the object of his adventure.

“Are we not to be left alone, friend?” said the unfortunate man to the turnkey functionary, who still stood with his hand on the lock of the inner door.

“No,” said the man, “it’s the orders that I wait inside.”

A look was now exchanged between Hector and the Cearnach; when the latter, taking the youth in his arms and putting his mouth to his ear, a few earnest words of whispering conversation passed between them; after which, giving him a gentle push against the turnkey, he shook his leg to show that in that respect he

was already free, and in another instant, by a sudden effort, the keys were wrested from the hands of the paralyzed servant of the law, and the bold mountaineer was already on the outside of the first door.

“ Dinna kill a puir body, and just keep her nain counsel,” whispered the man hastily to Hector, as he found himself in the youth’s grasp. “ Do you think her nainsel has ony pleasure in seeing his honour hangit? Lock her in, ye deevil, and take care o’ the red sodger.”

Scarcely were the words spoken ere the man was enclosed in the cell ; next the second door was opened, and in another instant the sentinel who stood without, was pounced upon by the athletic Cearnach. While Hector opened the other doors in the passage, the active Highlander continued to grapple with the Englishman, who seemed extremely unwilling to part with the musket which M’Naughton endeavoured to wrest out of hand. The shout which

the surprised sentinel set up while thus engaged, aroused the attention of the other functionaries to what was going forward ; but as they ran to their posts, on finding Hector engaged in opening the doors, out sprung from his concealment the bear-like Donald, and catching one of them in his arms, while Hector now made a dart at the other, who held the keys of the outer door, all became engaged in a furious encounter ; though entirely without weapons, save the heavy keys and a single bayonet now in the hands of the Cearnach. In a few minutes they had mastered, as well the functionaries as several hangers on who lounged in the outer lobby, and the last door being opened by Hector, they attempted to get out into the street.

By this time, however, the unusual noise having reached the ears of the sentinels, their pieces were presented at the breast of those who would have issued from the prison, while, as the latter undauntedly sprang upon the muskets,

the astounding cry of "Guard, turn out!" gave a note of startling alarm down the silent street, and struck to their hearts with the chilling dread that all might yet be lost by this hated interference. Fortunately at this instant, the presence of mind of the younger M'Naughton, who had been watching behind the buttress, created an unexpected diversion in favour of the adventurers; for, running across the street towards the guard-house, he feigned to attack the sentinel placed near the door of the old building where the red soldiers rested. By this timely movement, he diverted for some time the attention of those who were called out by the cry for the guard, and they crowded round him, instead of flying to where his father and friends grappled with the others. He thus gave the adventurers time to strike down every one who opposed them; and to get off clear, even amidst the group of townsmen, who, by this time, were fast assembling on the spot. The tall officer in the coat, however, was the

first to perceive the trick, and running forward, was just in time to encounter Hector, who, from circumstances, was the last to make his way after the others. With a triumphant exclamation of recognition, the subaltern made a spring upon our youth ; but, knowing the danger of any further tumult, and the prudence of a clean pair of heels after being so far successful, Hector, by a jerk of wrestling strength, effected his freedom from the partial grasp of the Englishman, and was off in an instant down the main street of Perth.

As the mountaineer and his son, now foremost, turned down a narrow street to avoid the publicity which they were gradually obtaining, a scream of joy was set up by several females who had been watching for them ; among which, the loud blessings and prayers of his wife and daughter, uttered in Gaelic, struck Hector's ear as he passed out of the Water Gate, and, crossing the long bridge of Perth, in a few minutes the whole, starting off the com-

mon road, found their feet on the soft sod of the rich carse of Strathmore.

When the joyful little party had left behind them the hoary turrets of the ancient palace of Scone, which M'Naughton himself almost looked upon with regret, as reminding him of a dynasty of Scottish kings, now banished perhaps for ever from their own realms, he thought of the sad end from which he had just been rescued ; and, stopping to look back on the distant steeples of Perth, now hardly seen by the starlight, he embraced first his son, and then Hector, and that not without tears ; pouring out upon the latter every blessing for his deliverance, which his gratitude could suggest, or the warm heart of a Highlander find expression for.

“ And och,” said he, “ my braw young man, if you would but just come with us to the hills, where the black cock breeds, instead of spending your life in a smoky town, over the carking cares o’ the Lowlander—if there’s a clean firelock in a’ Breadalbane, to bring down the

deer on the mountains, it shall be yours; and if there's a sharp blade to be had ye shall wear it on your thigh. Then come with us, my lad! —come and see me hame; and if there's a gude bit or sip to be had on the hills, it shall be offered you; or a warm corner in Duncan M'Naughton's hallan, there ye shall sleep when ye come wearied frae the mountains; for the repentant Cearnach will ne'er forget them that saved him frae the woodie."

Though Hector could not but feel serious at the thoughts of leaving entirely the good burghess of Perth, yet, considering that he had been fully recognized as "actor, art and part," in the adventures of this night, the danger of return left him no alternative; although also he could have wished to commence any new career in better company, yet, like most youths, he went forth now again, very much on chance, to see what further turns of fortune time would open out.

CHAPTER IX.

Long ere the dawn, by devious ways
 O'er hills, thro' woods, o'er dreary wastes they sought
 The upland muirs, where rivers, there but brooks,
 Dispart to different seas.

In solitudes like these,
 Thy persecuted children, Scotia, foiled
 A tyrant's and a bigot's bloody laws.

GRAHAME.

TRAVELLING in the dark, even over ground where our adventurers had neither road nor path to follow, and where the partial twinkle of the dim stars above was often obscured by the hazy atmosphere of the north, was neither novelty nor hardship to Hector, young as he was, far less was it so to a hardy cateran flying for his life from the dreaded fangs of the law. Proceeding for a space along the banks of the Almond, they had no other way of getting

across it, but by plunging into its black waters, at a ford beneath the towers of Methven castle, and passing in the dark the grounds of Logie-Almond, midnight was not long past until they found themselves in the great valley of Glen-shee. By the time, however, that they got into the celebrated Birnam Forest, to the south of Dunkeld, they fairly lost all knowledge of the way they ought to pursue, among the irregular hills of Strathbran, and Hector's limbs beginning to weary, they agreed to indulge themselves with an hour's rest in a tempting nook that presented itself in the lee of the mountain.

No untoward accident disturbing their slumbers, the cheering light of a new day early found them again pushing on their way through the winding valley of the Braan, and striking down to the left for fear of any danger of pursuit, passing the small lake of Loch Frenchie, and climbing hills, and winding through passes and corries, before the evening had lengthened the shadows of the hills, their sight was gladdened with a near view of the noble Benlawers,

with the long sweep of Loch Tay winding at its foot. In this journey, Highland hospitality procured the travellers ready support; and on the day following, crossing the Dochart at the head of the lake, through the then secluded hamlet of Killin, the Cearnach ultimately sought effectual concealment, as well as his home and his people, by plunging into the impressive wilds of northern Breadalbane.

The sensations of Hector throughout this mountain journey—through some of the noblest scenery of Scotland—were often such as language does not compass the idea of, but which imaginative youth *feels* when first introduced into the presence of nature's sublimest scenes; and which sometimes makes even age itself almost drunk with the contemplation of grandeur and of beauty. Green glens winding deep among the mountains, whose towering peaks made the eye giddy to look upon them—thick woods of the dark Scots firs, or the larch and the sycamore, scattering themselves in pictu-

resque masses over the broken declivities and wild irregularities which constitute a Highland forest, and into whose unknown recesses the young imagination shoots with a pleasing terror—rumbling cascades and boiling caldrons, into which the enthusiast himself almost fears to look; with clear lins of the mountain pools, so limpid that the clouds of heaven seemed to have come down into, and to linger in their still waters. Occasionally, also, our travellers encountered broad lakes in the hollows, so smooth and so silent, that the whisper of poetry which they excited, seemed to retire into the heart, and echo herself appeared to have fled away into caves unseen, and to speak only among the stooping rocks over the waterfall. Such scenes as these, with a plentiful mixture of bald hills, conveying no image but that of storm and sterility, and long flats of blue heath, out of which fancy itself could extract nothing cheering, and whose dreary solitude the wild cry of the brooding curlew could hardly make more

melancholy, formed an impressive variety on this interesting journey.

At length the pace of our travellers became less rapid, and the thoughts of the Cearnach less anxious; and as they drew near to the scenes which the latter knew so well, the whole frequently rested to give Hector time to enjoy the surrounding prospect.

“Clories and praises! what a pleasurement it’ll be, to find the smell o’ her nain hills again,” said shockheaded Donald, snuffing up the east wind like a mountain goat, as they seated themselves on the soft heath of a hill, whose surmounted ridge had just opened to them the lakes and woods around. “I wonder what wad tempt her again to put her brogued feet on the hard stanes o’ the Lowlands, for naething ava but to get her head in a trouble, or her neck in a rape.”

“I would commend you to take care of your own neck, my friend, and never to speak of auld tales in the hills,” said young M’Naughton, not

at all pleased at this allusion to the misfortune of his father.

“ Oigh she needna be sae short, I’m thinking for a’ her cevil joke,” said the Highlander, “ if the auld law were here, wi’ spectacles on her nose, she would maybe see mair faerlies on the braes o’ Breadalbane, than she would on the four cornered plainstanes o’ Perth.”

“ I would just like to see either beagle or baillie, read his parchment law among the black faced wedders on this hill-side,” said the Cearnach, “ he would maybe need as many red soldiers as would man the wa’s o’ Fort William, to fetch him back again to Tayside, wi’ a hale skin.”

“ If there’s not the *seidar dearag* to keep up the law,” said his son, “ ther’ll be the *seidar dhu* to do the whig’s bidding, and that’ll be little better.”

“ What mean you, boy ? ”

“ Ou just the Black Watch. Have ye not heard that they hae been trysted to a great gathering in Glenlyon, or about the ballach o’

Loch Tay, and a' the best lads and duenewasles in Breadalbane hae joined them. So the hail country's to be scoured frae Kilsyth to Kildrummy, and no Cearnach chield need try to row the tail o' a stot, that has ever cropped a mouthfu' grass in the Lowlands."

"So much the better, Farquhar," said the elder man demurely, as Hector listened attentively to this conversation. "Though I dinna like the law that takes from the poor to heap on the rich, and fill the pouches o' the lawyers, yet I ken I hae been doing wrong mysel, in many a deed; and now, as I have by God's forbearance gotten a loose leg, and my feet once more on the hills o' Breadalbane, if the law only lets me alane to dig my ain peats in bonny Glendochart, I'll keep my word to the auld Lord wi' the tippet, that condemned me to the tow in the court-house o' Perth, and stirke nor steer, stot nor gelding, shall I ever drive again frae another man's hill."

"Say you so, Father! say you so! God be

thanked!" exclaimed the son, starting to his feet, and the embrace that followed between father and son, formed in the observing eyes of Hector, an impressive testimony to the happiness derived from virtuous resolutions.

"Whether shall we make first for Evan M'Evan's castle," rejoined the youth, "or shall we proceed on to our own home in Glendochart?"

"I for one," said Hector, "am anxious to see the noble chief that invited me so kindly to his castle in the Highlands."

"Surely the shentlemans duinhewassels," said Dougald, now striking in, "will not gae by the door o' the great Evan M'Evan, for a puir ten mile, after she's come sae far. If she offered to put upon his honour the laird sic an affront, wha kens but he would take the duinhewassels up, and hang them for a treason at his own door-cheek, just to learn her manners, after she helped her sae weel out o' the woodie in the Lowlands?"

Both M'Naughton and his son saw the propriety of attending to this suggestion, and Hector strongly seconding the proposition, our travellers were about to rise and proceed, when their attention was arrested by the loud report of a musket, quite near, and seeming to proceed from a clump of brushwood which skirted the side of the hill on which they sat, and was then pleasantly repeated in many echoes, away among the recesses of the neighbouring mountains.

Starting forward to see what company was so near, Hector soon perceived, proceeding from behind the brushwood, two tall young Highlandmen of no common appearance, each carrying a long Spanish gun, and followed by a gilly attendant, descending the hill towards them.

A shout of joyful recognition was set up by the strangers on observing M'Naughton ; and as both parties embraced, soon after, with all the warmth of mountaineer friendship, the involuntary cry of " The M'Phersons ! the

M'Phersons!" set up by their own gilly, Donald, while running forward, gave Hector intimation of the names of those new acquaintances.

"And how is this?" said M'Naughton, after the preliminary greetings had passed, as he surveyed the persons of the youthful strangers; "gun and pistol, biodag and skenocle, as if General Wade had ne'er come from the south, to take from us the arms that our fathers wore! Here we are in the heart o' the Highlands, and yet you are armed to the teeth, as if Charlie himsel had set up his standard on the hills o' Breadalbane."

The brothers looked at each other as if some secret were between them, which they were ashamed to reveal to the sturdy Cearnach. At last, one of them, as if disdaining the idea of any concealment, boldly said,

"You know, Duncan M'Naughton, that we're neither Whigs to a southland laird nor traitors to our auld king, if he were here, and

able to keep his chair ; but it does not do for young men to linger idle on the hills, nor for men of peace to stand in the face of the laws—if only a few of them were made for our good ; nor can we bear to part with the arms which it is our pride to wield ; so as times have changed and bid us to follow, we have just given our promise to the gallant Lochnell to take king George's money, and do his bidding, (on our ain hills and no farther,) as gentlemen corporals in the Black Watch—for that is our highest commission until promoted to a better."

" Then my resolve is a good one, and times *have* changed indeed," said the old man, " and all I can say is, if the new Black Watch is to be made up of such men as you, it will be a braw sight to see it ranged out on the carse of Strathmore."

Our hero being now introduced, and various explanations taking place among all, the interest these young men took in their new acquaint-

tance, as well as the remarkable escape of their old friend, the Cearnach, would on no account allow the farther proceeding of the travellers, without first turning aside to taste the hospitality of Corrie-vrin, the neighbouring residence of the M'Phersons. Hector also foreseeing some intimacy hereafter between himself and these engaging strangers, the whole now descending the hill in high spirits, were soon in sight of the pleasant hollow beneath the mountains which had been pointed out under the appellation of Corrie-vrin.

As Hector drew near, so as to have a full view of the indicated spot, the appearance of the whole, particularly the house, or rather ruined tower, or castle, inhabited by the young strangers, might well surprise him, as the residence of men who condescended to act as corporals in the Black Watch, ignorant, as he then was, that almost the whole, even of the rank and file of that famous regiment, was originally composed of men who, among their

own people at least, held the rank of gentlemen, and that many were even the scions of the most ancient families, which the wayward chances of internal broil or mistaken patriotism were fast bringing to poverty or extinction. The situation of Corrie-vrin was as peculiar as its character. It was a level hollow of brilliant verdure, contrasted with the bleak mountains which rose wild and sterile beyond it. Bounded regularly on each side, this secluded flat took the form of an elongated angle, or round-bottomed pyramid laid on its side, the wide and circular end rising from the bottom of the hollow in rocky terraces, which wound like belts round the dell, and the narrow outlet sweeping away out till it terminated in a broken streamlet, which, bubbling among rocks and steep-sinking banks without, where the wild cat and the badger were often hunted with success, gathered itself into a delicious pool or lake of clear fishing water, about a mile below the ancient building.

Descending into the hollow, by playfully springing down the terraces, with the wild pride, in their agility, and hilarious enthusiasm, of mountaineers, the company, now all together numbering eight persons, including the gilly, soon got their feet on the verdure beneath, and proceeded on in front of the ancient habitation of Corrie-vrin.

The building itself, as Hector could now see it, presented that mixed semblance of the castellated and the lowly, which so well corresponded with the simple Highland character. A round tower of square shapen stone, evidently of great antiquity, and probably of Danish origin, formed its most prominent object; and though at present but little used by the inmates, excepting as a sort of outer hall or upper retiring place, gave at least a picturesque effect to the meaner buildings beneath, which it both adorned and overlooked. A small platform below, in front of the tower, terminating in a rude gate of massive elm-tree, showed a quaint

attempt at minor magnificence, in the castellated taste ; and a few stunted fruit-trees and pointed larches in the rear, rising out of an ample plot of Scots green kail, supplied the place of the more substantial corn-stacks of the south, and illustrated as well the poverty as the habits of the inmates.

A hale and handsome matron received her sons and their friends at the door of the tower, which formed the entrance, and conducted them kindly to an inner apartment. “How are you, Duncan M’Naughton?” said she, shaking hands with the Cearnach. “I am blythe to see you again at Corrie-vrin, though I fear you have hitherto been sadly your own enemy. But times have changed since our fathers’ days : and surely the law is not so ill as it is thought here in the glens, or it would never hae let you sae soon back to your ain wife and bairns in Glendochart.”

Great was her surprise, however, when the Cearnach narrated the story of his trial and es-

cape, garnishing his tale as well with strong invectives against the law, as with the praises of Hector, who, he said, had enabled him so successfully to elude his punishment ; and whom he strongly commended to Mrs. M'Pherson's favour. " But where is your daughter ?" he said, interrupting the woman's partial speech and warm invitations to our youth ; " it is fit she should add the beauty of her countenance to this happy meeting."

" She is just putting on her kirtle, and will be here in a trice," said the matron. " Young women, ye ken, Duncan," she added, looking at Hector and the Cearnach's son, " must not be seen in their worst suit, or their worst looks, before such visitors as these ; but here she is."

The female that now entered from the inner room, was well worthy of the interest which the Cearnach had expressed for her, as well as of the evident feeling of the junior M'Naughton, whose sentiments were discovered, at least to our hero, by the modest reddening of his face, when,

after saluting his father, the girl with simple modesty, yet mountaineer warmth, took him also kindly by the hand. With a mother and brother such as Pheane M'Pherson had, it was not possible but she must have been interesting ; and the old-fashioned gown of damask stuff, which she had just put on, and only wore on particular occasions, in these inner recesses of the hills, gave more evidence of her simplicity of heart than of her maiden vanity ; and would have positively detracted from her beauty, or at least her shape, but that no art can destroy the actual effect of a pretty face.

As the M'Phersons and their guests continued to converse, the women that hastened backwards and forwards in the apartment, and the gillies that assisted, began to be particularly busy ; and the board being soon after covered with the wholesome game of the mountains, all sat down with excellent appetites to the provided cheer, which, in due time, was sweetened with much warm Scottish feeling, and, at least when the

whiskey appeared, became seasoned with a good spice of racy Highland wit.

An evening ramble down the glen, towards the lake, delightfully diversified the afternoon's employment ; and the guests, having consented to tarry for the night, accepting of such accommodation as could be provided at Corrie-vrin, tales and songs round the cheerful peat fire closed the homely pleasures of an evening, such as Hector had often imagined in the house of the burgess of Perth, but seldom before had opportunity of enjoying.

CHAPTER X.

From Merab's eyes fierce and quick lightnings came,
 From Michol's the sun's mild, yet active, flame ;
 Merab's long hair was glossy chesnut brown,
 Tresses of palest gold did Michol crown.
 Such was their outward form, and one might find
 A difference not unlike it in the mind.

COWLEY.

A PLEASANT morning, the summer sun-beams shining on their romantic hills, and one of those hearty Highland breakfasts, which are so keenly relished by the grateful traveller who ventures himself into parts so remote, gave excellent preparation to our youth and his friends, for a continuation of their delightful journey.

In no haste to separate, the morning was somewhat advanced ere they rose ; and Farquhar, being the last to issue from the old

building, for reasons which need not be explained, the whole soon mounted again the terraced slopes, and set forth over the hills on their way to Glenmore, the M'Phersons, according to the Highland fashion, insisting upon being convoy to their friends a part of the way; and half a dozen miles, more or less, being no object whatever to athletic Highlanders, the party went all on together for several hours in high conversation about the new circumstances of these parts, and the raising of the Black Watch; their talk greatly helping to enlighten Hector upon various matters with which he longed to be acquainted.

Commended as Hector was to the friendship of the M'Phersons, he could not help feeling a high admiration of the spirit and sentiments of those interesting youths; notwithstanding a simplicity of thinking with reference to the world, which, however natural to mere denizens of the hills, was sometimes amusing even to our youth himself. In the course of their journey, Samuel, the younger of the two, edging himself into separate conversation with Hector, began

to make such circuitous inquiries respecting what he had seen of Margaret M'Naughton, as well confirmed the inference that he drew from the conversation at Corrie-vrin. When Hector narrated to him the whole tale of the escape, and in particular the impressive and passionate conduct of the Cearnach's daughter, at her father's trial, and the scream of joy that he heard burst from her on that anxious night of escape, when she saw him pass her in the dark street of Perth, our youth thought himself well repaid for all he had done, by the gleams of pleasure that shot from the young man's eyes, and the convulsive grasp of his hand, with which his gratitude was indicated.

By other speeches and inquiries, in the course of this journey, Hector perceived that Malcolm, the elder of the M'Phersons, had aspired to the love of a daughter of the chief whom he was now about to visit, which accounted for the pleasure he took in approaching the spot where she dwelt; and, in short, that he was now about

to be domiciled in a neighbourhood where, among these secluded Highlanders, a strong attachment to their own mountains was only exceeded by romantic love for the maidens who dwelt in the glens between them. At length, their convoy agreed to return, and our travellers proceeded cheerily on their way.

It was beyond high noon of the fourth day after leaving the town of Perth, ere, mounting to the ridge of a toilsome hill, the heavy turrets of Glenmore castle first rose into view. It was a full hour more, during which they had by no means been idle, ere they began to mount the slope on the top of which that venerable mass of turreted irregularity now appeared amidst *a garde d'honneur* of old oaks and Scotch firs, with a heavy stateliness that was almost majestic. Much, however, of this imposing effect arose from the peculiar character of the surrounding scenery. Round and undulating, yet irregularly disposed on every side, the hills were low at hand and lofty in the distance ; so that

the prospect was extensive and amphitheatrical, even though the glens which receded away into far-off wilds had been less diversified in their several characters ; and though a sweeping lake barely to be seen in the distance, now reflecting brilliantly the afternoon's sun, had been a less conspicuous object in one part of the background. This latter portion of the landscape, however, and its interesting adjuncts, though comparatively but a peep, was read in the far distance, like a charming passage of pure romance, upon which the imagination of our youthful traveller lingered, as he paused with eager pleasure, although he could distinguish nothing but clouds beyond it.

When our party drew near to the entrance of the stately fabric, which well deserved to be called a castle, Hector's attention was attracted by a sudden exclamation of the elder M'Naughton.

“ There's something to do here ! Do you see that, Farquhar ? ” he added, pointing to several groups of persons who straggled near

the entrance. "Faith, I think there may be folks here that I should not see, or that should not see me, and I just come out of the woodie at Perth."

Hector now observed several rude vehicles near the principal door of the building, as also half a dozen of those low shaggy horses, called shelties, which run wild on these hills, standing at the gable of the castle, linked together by their thong-bridles—some of them, indeed, having only ropes, or halters, made of twisted hair, which, however, in the practised hands of their kilted riders, as they trotted over these wild mountains, did wondrous well in place of bit and bridle. With all this, he observed beyond the beeches which straggled behind the castle, several bare-legged gillies, stretched under the trees, like Indians, who seemed watching the sun in the blue heavens above them, and enjoying the pleasing luxury of unusual warmth and delightful Highland laziness.

"I dare not be seen here just yet," said M'Naughton, drawing back behind the bushes.

“It is right, however, Farquhar, that you should go in, and inform the lairds o’ the news. And while you introduce this brave young man, do not forget to tell my friend, Glenmore, how much I am indebted to him for life and liberty, and that I will see you both in two days hence if you come to the pass of Glendearg. Farewell for the present. I go to wait for your mother and sisters, whom God send safe to a happy meeting with me in Glendochart.” Thus saying, the Cearnach dashed down the bushy side of the hill, and was soon out of sight, while the remaining three made for the entrance of the building.

Nothing could be more genuine than the joy and pleasure with which the warm-hearted chief welcomed Farquhar and our hero, as he read in their looks their success in regard to his old acquaintance.

“I knew, young man,” said he, repeatedly shaking Hector by the hand, “that it would not be long until I should see you on the hills ;

and I could have well predicted all the bravery which Farquhar attributes to you. But, let us not linger here; there's routh and plenty shall be in my house this day; for here are all the friends nearly that I ever knew, and some too that I don't know overly well, come to eat a collop with me at Glenmore. And, hark ye, young man," he added to Hector, "if they talk of politics, have you long ears and closed lips. You would not, I am sure, tell at the cross of Perth what you might hear in a Highland hal-lan; especially when the drink gets in to drive out the wit; nor would you, for a thoughtless blab of the tongue, sell the life of any honest man, that just has a liking for auld friends, and a true fealty for auld masters. But come along."

With this the chief led Hector inside, and introduced him to one or two of the younger guests as a youth who, he was pleased to say, was likely to do honour to any acquaintance he might make on the hills.

The castle of Glenmore, however venerable

or imposing at a distance, was as unaccountable a remnant of feudal inconvenience, as any modern tourist, in quest of the barbarous, could easily discover in the wilds of the North. Those parts of it, which, on the approach of a stranger, looked most picturesque, were in the upper interior at least the merest holes, or the most tiresome stair-screws; or they consisted of ruinous battlements, which seemed nothing more than an empty gutter of decayed masonry above, and a great vaulted stone hall below, where the laird and his people were wont to feast "for evermore." Still the whole fabric was in the interior peculiarly ill fitted for that series of formalities which we, who live in the midst of refined vexations, call the entertainment of company; and so the ladies, who had to conduct the confusion, found it on the present occasion. Fortunately, however, with Highland feasting is not usually associated the idea of scientific *gourmanderie*, or perfect elegance; nor is Highland hospitality confined, as

much as with us in the south, to the display of a lavish waste of money which gives no satisfaction. Accordingly, during the morning, with those that tarried at the castle, there was great hilarity amidst a Babel of confusion: in the afternoon, at the dinner, there was great plenty and little elbow-room—with unconscionable appetites and most heterodox cookery; and in the evening, the clatter of Gaelic tongues was tremendous, and the music “a rank ringing storm.” With all this, however, there was honest friendship expressed, and as honest reproach; and withal, great warmth of feeling and extraordinary enjoyment. The politics discussed, however—the Black Watch gathering, secret rumours, and secret epistles, “Charlie, and Jamie, and Geordie, and a’”—we choose to reserve for a more convenient season.

Until a regular “clearing out” took place of this Babel of Highland delight, no time was afforded for our young hero to make his observations on that part of the family which is

most likely to interest young men, namely, the ladies, which as yet he could say little about, notwithstanding all the toasts that had been drank to their health, and all the speeches which had been raved in their praise. When on the morrow, however, the small windows were thrown open, and the *snell* breezes of Breadalbane had dissipated the fumes of Highland jollification from the arched apartments of the castle, the ladies came forth with looks of rural health, and Hector was called to a more particular introduction.

“A young friend from the good city of Perth,” said the chief, handing Hector forward, “Hector Monro by name, and a great enthusiast for the free life of the Highlands. He has come, by my invitation, to learn to hunt the badger, and to play the broadsword with our lads of the glens. I rede you, my dame, to give him good favour. This next is my daughter Kate, whom you may see, by the red on her cheek, and the darkness of her eye, is imbued with the true spirit of the hills. And this too

is my little daughter Marion, whom you may also see by the paleness of her face, and the light blue of her eye, that she has rather too much of the timid spirit of the Lowlands. Look up, and do not blush, Minny, my child ; the youth is but a bird of passage, coming to perch his season among the mountains. By heavens !” he added, half mentally, “ but he makes a bow as graceful as a courtier, and looks as if he already felt himself as good as his company.”

The latter observation of the laird was the effect of one of those sudden flashes of penetration, by which from small circumstances a whole character is sometimes seen ; for, in fact, Hector seemed at once to feel himself in his own proper level, and the ladies did not fail to respect him accordingly. Indeed, the dame, a handsome, good-humoured woman, approaching to forty, and dressed with somewhat of the stiff richness of the time, conceived at once a partiality for the interesting stripling ; and, whatever danger she might have seen in such a youth being admitted to some intimacy with her

daughters, was obviated or lulled by the said womanish partiality, which a fair exterior alone can account for, aided by her own good-natured indolence of character, and warranted by the simplicity of manners prevailing among the hills.

The few words the laird had spoken regarding his daughters, gave Hector a ready key to their several characters, and well seconded the impression their looks could not fail to convey. Full-formed and striking, both in person and countenance, the eldest was a feminine personation of her father, with all a woman's gracefulness of manner, and all a mountaineer's loftiness of spirit. The character of her younger sister, both as it respected her mind and her person, was not so much a contrast as a modification of these qualities, with the addition of some other traits, which, without rendering the difference very obvious in common, caused them, under certain circumstances, remarkably to differ. What that difference consisted of, is not at present material to our story.

CHAPTER XI.

Who spurns an oath of fealty to the power
Of ruler's chosen by a tyrant's nod.

GRAHAME.

EVAN M'EVAN, the laird of Glenmore, more resembled the genuine Highland gentleman of the old school, than that extravagant compound of chivalry and barbarity, ruffianism and generosity, which make an effective poetical character; and with which it is the fashion to invest all Highland chieftains, in common with the romantic fighting knights of the middle ages. As little was he that mixture of ludicrous pride, poverty, and choler, which forms a caricature of another sort. Of chivalrous sentiment he was certainly far from destitute;

for that belongs to a people whose education is *an education of sentiments*, aided by impressions from the bold features of nature around them.

But this generous chivalry, though often bordering on romance, was, as well as the other sentiments which generally accompany it, tempered and directed by that plain good sense and mother-wit philosophy, which is well known to be no rarity on the north side of the Tweed. That he felt strongly on all subjects is true ; for *feeling*, and a sort of sentimentality of constitution, if not of intellect, is very much the distinctive attribute of the Scotch character. Though this attribute, together with his necessary ignorance of artificial life and government, became the cause of some prejudices, by leading him to exaggerate the wrongs of his country, as well as his own individual importance ; and, in intercourse with his equals, making him ready of impression of kindness or offence ; made him as ready to second them by

word or deed, as the free and fiery spirit of a warlike people also made customary; yet was this attribute the foundation, in brief, of all his virtues; as it ever will be when united to natural generosity of disposition, and guided by experience—while virtue shall be considered any thing more than a negative quality.

Though M'Evan had seen more of artificial life than very many of his brother lairds of the hills, his comparative ignorance of the world, still acting upon that simplicity of character which belongs to manly natures, made him, when in contact even with the burghers of the Lowlands, appear occasionally in a light that was almost ludicrous. But had he been trained to imbibe more of this sort of knowledge, it would have doubtless been at the expense of half his virtues, and perhaps more than half of his happiness. For, one great branch of the latter was, that deriving most of his enjoyments from mere nature, and personal activity on the hills, he did not feel his own poverty—and

highly relished a species of fare, which, to men habituated to luxury, would have been quite pitiable. Indeed, the poverty of the Highlander of that day, from chief to cotter, when collated with their personal pride and poetry of character, has been the subject of endless ridicule to their southland neighbours. For this ridicule, no doubt, the bare massy walls, undulating floors, grotesque cupboards, and hard seats and beds, within Glenmore castle, would certainly have afforded excellent materials, even to the Scotchman of modern times, as well as no bad illustration of the character of their owner. But this pleasant sneering would only show that ignorance of what human happiness really consists, as well as of what constitutes the sound materials of a thoroughly manly character, which is the besetting sin of the superficial lauders of discontented luxury and care-worn improvement.

That the laird of Glenmore should have been prejudiced against the law, and its opera-

tion in the Highlands, particularly in criminal cases, was neither remarkable at the time, nor inconsistent with his character and information. Having, in the course of his own experience, seen its effects almost exclusively confined to cases of that sort of cruelty or oppression which grows out of the severe application of general rules, that takes no notice of circumstances, which may yet weigh strongly upon a feeling and considerate mind, he was disposed to view it much more as one of those inventions by which the powerful contrive to oppress the weak and to fetter the free, than any system of general justice. It was this that, stimulated by his natural generosity, made him go so far in the case of M'Naughton. But the interfering of a chief to get off a clansman by force or intimidation, in spite of the law, was then far from uncommon; and that in cases much less justifiable than the one alluded to. The chief's penetration into character, as well as his good feeling, was well justified by the

subsequent conduct of the Cearnach, as we shall hereafter have occasion to see.

The life that Hector now led for many months in the bosom of the impressive solitudes of Breadalbane, may be left to something else than a wordy description. Sometimes he lived in the homely hallan of the reformed Cearnach, in the wild seclusion of Glendochart; again, he spent days together in the romantic valley of Corrie-vrin, with the two handsome brothers, to whom he could not help becoming greatly attached; but generally his domicile was at Glenmore castle, from which the laird would on no account suffer him to depart, until at least he should learn to know thoroughly, the peculiar life of the mountains, and to be accomplished in all the manly sports and exercises which, in their perfection, are so highly admired by a simple but romantic people.

In the following spring the gathering of the Black Watch taking place in Glenlyon, Hector

was deprived of the society of the gallant brothers. Katherine M'Evan also much missed the occasional, though stolen, visits of a lover, whose noble spirit and handsome exterior might well excuse the partiality of a Highland maiden, and, in common with her father, she could not help lamenting the reduced situation and poor prospects of the widow's sons. As for the Cearnach, he now lived quiet and domestic at Glendochart, and to testify his repentance for former offences, as well as in the hopes of a pardon from the government, at length consented to allow *his* son also to join the Black Watch, and to swear fealty even to King George of Hanover. He was further induced to this step by hopes of speedy promotion for the youth in this gallant corps, the number of the cadets of good families who had taken a place in the ranks, reconciling both to the present inferiority of the station.

The particulars regarding that celebrated regiment will come in their due place; mean-

time the cry of the first parting, and putting themselves into bondage, of so many picked men, as now from all quarters gathered towards Glenlyon, ran up through the glens with pathos and with poetry; and stirred up our youth's spirit with a new and almost painful ambition. At length the brothers, as well as M'Naughton, taking an affectionate leave of Hector, as well as of their respective friends and sweethearts, took their departure from the hills of Breadalbane. Had all parties known what was ultimately ordained, it would have been a more pathetic, yea a more solemn parting.

CHAPTER XII.

The spirit which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude : I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it.

SHAKSPEARE.

A CHANGE was now fast coming over the spirit of Hector's life. It might be only that change which seems to belong to certain stages of it, and to mark certain epochs in our transient existence. It might be no more than the natural transition from the dreamy and inquisitive uncertainties of youth, as its years and its fancies fade away, and there comes gradually upon the absorbing mind, the rational perception, the firmness, and the confidence of ripening manhood.

But in Hector's case there was something

more than even this. The mind of man is a kingdom, whose extent its owner is by no means aware of, and which he seldom finds himself well able either to survey or to rule. From the solitudes of the mountains, from the heaven above and the earth beneath, he had drank in much of the deep spirit of nature, and appropriated the whole, as it were, into the extending realms of his own mind. From conversation with himself in his solitary rambles, he had begun to know something of the graspings of his own understanding, and the furniture of his fancy. From the few books which, up to this period, had fallen in his way, he began to see, not without inward repining, how much there was to know, and from the slight taste he had had at Glenmore, of the elegances of a superior style of life, he could not help inferring how much in this fair world there was to enjoy. It was only in his moments of melancholy that the hopeful spirit of youth would allow him to conceive, or to think upon, how much there

might be *to suffer*. With every succeeding day, however, there came upon him, more and more, the idea of how much in the world there might be *to do*.

It is thus that thoughtless youth merges into anxious manhood, and thus is laid in the mind the great foundations of future good and evil. But if Hector thus obtained, within the recesses of his own breast, a more definite ambition and more rational aims, these were of course bottomed, after all, upon the great mover of human purposes, and handmaid of the mind's perceptions, *discontent*, which, like the changing phantom of the hypochondriac, seems to be the haunting companion of man. Yet, if this omnipresent Mephistopheles of the world be the spoiler of many pleasures, and the everlasting *evil eye* that glares with a lurid light on man's possessions, it is also well-known to be the goad to all his exertions, and, in some respects, the germ of all his greatness.

While Hector's mind worked like yeast with

his own secret thoughts, he received with joy an unexpected invitation. It came from the chief himself, who, interrupting him one day in one of his reveries, requested his company as far as Balloch castle, at Taymouth, the ancient princely seat of the Earl of Breadalbane.

“And what may be our errand, sir?” said Hector, with unconscious curiosity.

“It cannot be supposed, young man, that you should understand politics, or rather Highland politics,” said the chief, with a shrewd bend of his brow; “but this new German king, this second George, is not just so secure in his seat, even yet, as the Provost of Perth may be in his, though the power of the good citizen lasts but for a year. His majesty, therefore, wants to make all the friends he can beyond the Grampians, as well as among the black-skulled Whigs of the west, or the snivelling psalm-singers of the Lowlands. So, as the earl behoves to be his friend, as well as my puissant southland neighbour, it will be ex-

pected that I should show face, and look as loyal as is now the fashion, though, God knows, between you and I, it is neither with good will nor a good conscience."

"Then you are not exactly," inquired Hector, "a sincere friend to this king that reigns over us here in Scotland, and yet lives half the year in England and half in Hanover, as I hear tell."

"Upon my word, Hector," said the chief condescendingly, "that is a question that older men than you would not venture to ask me. In truth, my affection for this present man cannot be expected to be very violent, all things considered," he added, laying his hand mechanically on the side where his basket-hilted sword should have hung; "and it will depend very much on his own behaviour whether I shall hereafter pay my vows to him in the way he or my neighbour Breadalbane would wish. His father was, perhaps, not a bad sort of body, for all that was said about his pinging stinging-

ness and his German mistresses, and this man is quiet enough, unless when in a passion, and has long been very much what his wife, that is called Queen Caroline, and Robert Walpole, have made him. But these are things you don't understand as yet, so get yourself ready in the best you have, make your sword shine like an Andrew Ferrara, but do not carry it yourself for fear of question, and I will try to show you off as well as I can to the earl. It's a pity that the like of you should be left altogether to linger here an idler."

A warm expression of gratitude broke from Hector, on hearing this friendly sentiment, at the end of M'Evan's speech, mingled, as it was, with a considerate allusion to his brooding uneasiness when he contemplated the future.

"Pooh, man! explain it not to me," said the chief, "I know what you are thinking of in these fits that I have seen you in of late, as well as if I saw the inside of your musings. But no more of this. Young folks are impatient and angry at

fortune, before they know what the blind lady is, or aught of her real history ; and as for this trip to Balloch, it is hardly likely that it will do you much benefit, excepting what your young eyes may see, or your ears hear, before you return thither again ; but whatever may happen, you shall stay long at Glenmore ere I wish you away."

On the following morning early, Hector, on opening the patched window of his little dormitory, was reminded of the subject of the above conversation, by seeing a crowd of Highlanders already assembled on the green in front of the castle. On descending, he found the chief already on the ground, separating and selecting the men whom he intended to follow him, *en suit*, to Taymouth, or, in other words, to form that limited *tail* of state attendance to which prudence and the circumstances of the times compelled him to submit. Sore were the murmurs, and sulky the looks—not directed against the laird, but against "the foreigner king"—of

those who found themselves excluded from the wonted post of honour on the present occasion. Still more bitter, and loudly expressed, were the murmurs of the elect few, whom the laird permitted to follow him, that they should go forth “after his honour the chief, without pistol or fusee, mair than as many Dunfermlin weavers, and neither a powder nor a lead, as mickle as would fright a capercailzie on their road, and no a blade dauring to ornament their hip, as lang as worn in the belt of an Aberdeen flesher.”

Yet, for all this, not one of them was without a sharp skenocle, or half knife, half dirk, stuck snugly under their left arm, and not a few had gillies or trusty dependants, who ran a train, (after the train,) and made little secret of bearing both hard steel, pistol, and powder, for the use of those who, they truly said, “could do deevilish ill without them.”

“It’s a poor set out this,” said the chief, as he put himself at the head of this small and un-

armed train; “I wonder what auld Evan Dearag would say, if he could look out of his grave at Cairncree, and see me going to visit the Earl of Breadalbane in this plight. But auld times are not new times, and we must e’en submit;” and so, with no other consolation but a “skirling skreid” from the laird’s professional piper, away this proud party set forth on their journey.

They had not gone farther than the “house-end,” however, when changing his mind as to the order of march, the laird determined to send on his few men before, instructing them to wait for him at the Balloch of Glenlyon; he proposed to perform his journey on horseback, accompanied only by Hector, and two personal attendants.

Mounted now upon a pair of Highland shelties, the tallest of the shaggy animals of the horse species, that, like the quagas of the African wilderness, ran wild on the hills of Breadalbane, our hero and the chief at last actually set out

upon their journey. The two athletic Highlanders, who, in the quality of servants, now formed the only retinue of the gallant laird and his friend, were not mounted in the proud style of their masters, but giving the preference themselves to that primitive sort of conveyance, familiarly called shanks mare, and having great freedom of limb, from their nether parts not being “locked” in inconvenient restraints on the houghs, which in those days of simple phraseology went by the name of breeches, they ran after the tails of their masters’ shelties, with as much docility and more spirit, than do the domestic negro of the West Indies, or the swarthy sepoy of the East, at this present day. One of these obsequious Gibeonites was no other than the laird’s favourite henchman, Donald Downie, who has had the reader’s distant acquaintance from the period of his mounting watch over the “jigs and jags” which lay in the shop of the good burgess of Perth; and who, still following Hector with as much prefer-

ence as his instinctive attachment to the chief would allow, was, by the youth's request, appointed his 'squire on the present occasion.

From several circumstances, as well as from the fact of the laird's having doffed, at this setting forth, those finely-mounted long-barrelled pistols, which, when Hector first saw him, he wore under the lap of his plaid with such imposing effect; and his having parted with that personal god, his horn-handled dirk, the youth suspected that the desire to meet the earl was only *part* of the business of this journey; for M'Evan was not of a temper to make all this parade of obedience to the hated disarming act, did no reasons sway him, such as he was not likely to explain to one of Hector's years. Sufficient rumours, of secret communications from the court of St. Germain, and proposed meetings of the chiefs in the hills, and grievous complaints against the House of Brunswick, and sailing of fleets from the French coast, &c., had reached Hector

even in the wilds of Breadalbane, to account for the present caution of the chief, as well as to rouse his curiosity on the present occasion.

As they trotted along, mounting heights and descending the hollows which lay in their way, the journey seemed to Hector to become unusually tedious. This feeling arose in part from the lowering aspect of the day; and the sterile appearance of the blue heavy hills around, the dark wilderness of the woody ravines, on the edge of which they often clambered, with the weary flats of dull heath over which they passed, which, seeming equally objectless and endless, at length disposed our youth to reflections of a character unusually painful if not melancholy. These were chiefly concerning his own condition and prospects, which, orphan as he was, and unsettled to any spot or pursuit, while yet a strong feeling of independence and a stronger of ambition, had of late worked incessantly in his mind, seemed to him peculiarly perplexing and serious.

“What are you brooding on?” inquired the chief, unwilling to allow the youth to fall into one of his abstracted moods. “Tell me your thought, and I will help it out if I can.”

“I am thinking selfishly,” said Hector, “about what I shall do; should nothing happen on this expedition to give me hopes for the future—that is to say, where I shall go, when I leave the earl’s castle.”

“And what is your determination, suppose it should be against returning with me to Glenmore?”

“To return to my old friend the burgess of Perth. The affair that took me from him must now be blown over, and he would at least give me judicious advice—for he knows me well.”

“Advice is no rarity in the world, Hector, though but a small portion is either good or applicable. Nevertheless, your reason is good, for without the knowledge of the character to whom advice is addressed, it might be worse

than useless. The deacon is a worthy man, but he can only advise you with reference to trade, and trade, let me tell you, ought never to be engaged in by one of the disposition which I know you possess."

The truth of this observation struck home to Hector's experience. "What then can I do, sir," said he, "situated as I am? I cannot linger all my life an idler on your hospitality. I have just been thinking—"

"A foolish thought, I have no doubt, about your own position, of which you can be expected to know nothing," interrupted the laird. "But I will give you my thought. Man on the earth, is like a ball on the surface of a billiard-table. His original position is not only determined by a hand higher than his own, but he is afterwards driven about by the collision or concussion of other balls, or beings, with whom he may be forced into contact. The comparison is not very complete; but the evil I apprehend is, that, as far as I have yet observed, we

are forced to be so passive as we are, and that the strong hand of circumstances, so often renders abortive all activity or energy, which may be thought of by the individual, or employed to place himself in the position congenial to his disposition, even when he has found out precisely what that disposition is."

"And what would you have me to do, sir?" said Hector, opening his eyes at the unexpected philosophy of this speech. "What can I do, but return to my old employment with the burgess of Perth?"

"It would be better for you to think of becoming a common volunteer in the Black Watch, as many a good man's son has done," said the chief, "than to prostrate your spirit to the ledger and the ell-wand in the chapman's shop. But no," he added, pausing, "I cannot, on consideration, advise you to join with Whigs and Hanoverians, while our lawful king is a fugitive in a foreign land. I do hope, that if there are those whom I expect to see at Balloch

castle, you will not require to speak of such plans, if I have either influence or interest."

"I have no words to express," said Hector with animation, "the gratitude I feel for all you have done for me."

"Felt, Hector—not done," said the chief, interrupting him with a benevolent nod of his head. "But let me caution you against unnecessarily multiplying the disappointments of life, by flattering yourself beforehand much respecting any event. Should the earl, or any else I may now meet, not think fit to become your friend, (and that is quite probable,) I really do not know what advice to give you, since times forbid me being materially useful to you myself. Your situation seems strange, and your life may yet be stranger. I am no great master of the moralities of wisdom, but I have observed in my time, that man is a tree that never grows strong and flourishing in the world until he has fairly taken root; so that, striking his suckers deep, and taking hold even

of the stony places of the earth, he may be able to brave the blasts to which every twig in the forest is subject. You are evidently a seed of some noble tree, whom the random wind of fortune is likely to toss about for a season. It is just such as you, therefore, that may look for vicissitude, until you fairly find the soil for which the constitution of your mind has fitted you. But whenever you find that, and disposition is satisfied, there rest your purposes and perseverance, in spite of all discouragements; for *there* you will grow, and there only you will flourish, and no doubt prepare a soil for those who may come after you, that they at least may have a less fugitive fortune."

The tone of this discourse took Hector by surprise, he never before having heard the chief so philosophical. "Pray go on, sir," he said, "and give me fully your thoughts. I feel sensibly the want of a few aphorisms of experience, as a nucleus to my own crude meditations upon that world of which I as yet know so little."

“The world is a strange gathering, which I but little understand myself,” continued the laird, “and man an animal more difficult to describe than any other of the more uniform productions of nature. But this you will find, that though none of nature’s productions require the exercise of sympathy, or the energies of mutual support, so much as man, none exercise the feeling *so little*, or so often turn it strangely against those to whom it would be most valuable.”

“I suppose that is true, sir,” said Hector as the chief paused: “but pray go on.”

“To proceed with my allegory, then,” Glenmore continued; “while the oak of the wood suffers itself to be twined about by many saplings, which it seems proud to support, and which add grace to its trunk, the reverse of this holds true in the world; for the strong oak among men, who is himself rooted firm and can defy the blast, surrounds himself with a circle of exclusion, which poisons or crushes the feeble

plant that intrudes under his shadow, giving his support only to oaks like himself, who need it not; while it is the bending willow, or the sensitive plant of society, which are most ready to add their own feeble strength to the tender twigs of misfortune, that require sympathy or need support. But I begin to moralize, because I am myself suffering somewhat from the world. If fortune favours your ambition, Hector, try to differ from the common character of mankind.”

A long interval of silence followed this speech, and in this manner, with occasional starts of talk of a lighter sort, the time passed over until the brightening summer's evening brought them within sight of the great valley of Glenlyon.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ha! boys—I see a party appearing—wha’s yon?
 Methinks it’s the captain of Bewcastle, and Jephtha’s
 John.

FRAY OF SUPORT.

It was yet early on the following morning, after they had risen and again set forth, when their course still continuing among the passes of the hills, their ears were saluted with a pleasant strain, which, as yet thin and distant like the shepherd’s reed, broke softly the perfect silence of the morning. The very shelties on which they rode began to cock their ears, and to move them backwards and forwards “on the pivot of their skulls,” as Wordsworth would say, and, putting up their noses, seemed to snuff the music, as if it had been a morning

refreshment ; and the scarcely less *tawted* gillies, who *clomb* the hill in the rear, first stopped stone still, and then began to run, as if struck with a sudden enthusiasm.

“ I’ll wager a gill o’ the best usquebaugh that’s to be had in the change-house o’ Kinmore,” cried Donald, running forward, “ that that’s the piobrach o’ the Black Watch already coming up wi’ a sough frae the bughts o’ Glenlyon. Oigh ! maister ! maister—shentlemans ! will her honours no just turn up the beasties, and gie a glint o’er the crown o’ the hill to see what the lads ’ll be doing ? ”

Putting their beasts to the trot, the chief and our youth soon surmounted the crown of the hill, and certainly the sight that burst upon them was well calculated to stir up lively emotions in a mind like Hector’s. Besides the imposing effect of the dark hills of Düll, which rose abrupt and lofty opposite to where our travellers were, there was the long sweep of the glen beneath, widening upwards towards the

western mountains, with the rapid river of the same name rushing over rocks, and sometimes roaring like a lion, or rolling dark and deep at the bottom of the glen. In a broad green field near the mouth of the valley, which stretched for a considerable way by the banks of the Lyon, the whole line of the Black Watch, now above eight hundred strong, were already stretched out on their morning's parade, and the martial appearance of so large a body of men in the midst of such scenery—their bright scarlet coats, with which they had just been supplied, in place of their former dark tartan dresses, from which they took their name, their arms glittering in the sun, and their picturesque evolutions on the field, to the sound of drum and bagpipe—all formed a sight that was highly exhilarating, while it filled our hero with sentiments almost amounting to envy.

Descending the hill rapidly, M'Evan and himself were enabled to obtain a nearer view of the dress and accoutrements of a corps which

were regarded in the Highlands with so much interest. Instead of the short-tailed coat now in use, the soldiers of the Watch wore scarlet jackets and waistcoats, with buff facings and white lace ; and instead of the heavy bonnet of black feathers now worn, a smaller bonnet, with the diced border, of different colours, resembling the fess cheque in the arms of the family of Stewart, and this, in some cases, set off by a plume of cocks' or eagles' feathers, and in others by a small bushy piece of black bear's-skin. The belted plaid, of twelve yards length, so called from being kept tight round the body by a belt, was worn in the usual manner, partly placed round the middle, and the upper part fixed on the left shoulder ready to be thrown loose, and wrapped round the shoulders and firelock in rainy weather, or to serve on the march the purposes of a blanket. Besides the belt which fixed the plaid, and in which were stuck, in most cases, pistols and a dirk, in addition to the regular arms, another broad black

belt, fixed in front by a large buckle of brass or silver, served to support the basket-hilted sword, which, along with the musket and bayonet, were furnished by government; and round the middle was a third belt of black leather, which served to support the cartouch-box, then worn in front. With all this weight of arms, in the wearing of which this regiment of gentlemen were permitted a certain *ad libitum* irregularity, which would be surprising in the present day, when officers have a very different sort of men to deal with; many were also permitted to wear targets, after the old fashion of their country, which, appearing thickly in the ranks, had a very peculiar effect. Nor did this custom, soon or easily, give way to time, and the habits of the infantry, among whom the Highland regiments mixed, any more than the other dearly-loved customs of their fathers; for, seven years after, as the celebrated Captain Grose relates, he saw them

still worn by the men of this regiment, then on service in Flanders.

This appeared to be a morning of some important parade, for the forty-third, as this regiment was then named, were in full dress; and Sir Robert Munro himself, then lieutenant-colonel,—a veteran who had bought his experience well in the old German wars,—galloping about the field on a tall grey charger, gave the command in a voice that was heard above the deep roll of the drum, and was obeyed with alacrity by the proud-spirited Highlanders. Round the park waited numbers of gillies, attendants both of officers and rank and file,—for a great portion even of the latter were thus waited on,—no small number of the gillies holding horses by the bridle, which had carried those who lived at a distance to the exercising ground, and with some of whom Donald Downie, through the ready medium of his snuff mull, was now fast making up a temporary friendship.

“And wha may your maister be, friend?” said he, reciprocating *nosology* with a gentleman’s gentleman, and a “master of the horse” to at least the one that carried *his* master, and over which horse the man now exercised a wholesome measure of temporary tyranny.

“What rank is my maister, do you say?” said the man; “ye may see him in the ranks there, if your een be clear enough, wi’ the feather bobbing aboon his lug; and in the best rank, too, for he’s in the best front o’ Loch-nell’s company, and stands beside the officer next in command—that’s Corporal M’Pherson, my troth!”

“An honourable station in the army, my friend,” said the honourable Donald Downie, with paukey seriousness. “And wha owns the horse that ye chaff sae at the mouth, as if ye had ne’er handled a bridle before? Let the beast alone, man, it’s a quiet enough brute.”

“It’s a canker’d creature when it gets the cauld iron for a gumstick,” replied the man,

“and requires to be exerceed and civileezed, as well as the other shentlemans’ o’ the Black Watch,—and wha’s would it be but Farlan M’Farlan’s, my maister? How else would his honour be able to ride twa lang miles and a bit-tock, to the parawding place, an’t ’twarna for the beast?—and wha would carry his honour’s guns and firelocks, gin I didna rin wi’ them, fit for fit, after the mare’s tail? But wha’ll be *your* ain maister, since ye’ll please to be a cha-tekeese?”

Donald, with the proper flourish of superiority, announced the style and titles of the chief of Glenmore.

“Hough!” grunted the gilly; “I see by your maister’s look, that he would be a proud man if he could get to be a private gentleman in the Black Watch, like my maister’s honour; but that’s no the fortune o’ every man that envies it, I jalouse.”

This instructive communion of congenial spirits was interrupted, however, by the mandate

of the laird, who, notwithstanding the secret wish of Hector to get a few words' speech of the brothers, or M'Naughton, thought fit to trot off the ground, from the wish to be at Balloch castle early in the day ; and telling our youth that there would be plenty of opportunities of meeting his friends in the watch, at least on their return from his visit to the earl, away they proceeded towards the rich valley of Taymouth. What Hector's thoughts in regard to himself were, as he looked back over his shoulder at the imposing array of the Watch, and heard the scream of their warlike music echo through the valley, we cannot here stop to describe.

At last our travellers arrived at Taybridge, where, meeting the few followers which the laird called his tail, and crossing the Tay, they soon found themselves at the earl's gate, which flew open to admit them into the princely park of the noble proprietor of the demesne.

CHAPTER XIV.

Come, come, no more of this unprofitable chat.

SHAKSPEARE.

As our small company marched up to Balloch castle, under the lofty trees of the great avenue, Hector found his pride, both in himself and the laird his patron, ooze out of him sensibly, from the effect of what he observed, like the boasted valour of a well-known character. When at length he stood under the lofty turrets of the ancient building, upon the site of which stands the present more convenient castle of Taymouth, he could not help being conscious of an unplea-

sant degree of awe and personal humiliation. In addition to the imposing appearance of the then castle of Balloch,—at that time inconveniently, though magnificently, habitable, and one of the finest relics of feudal grandeur in Scotland,—the mansion was at the moment crowded with company. There were now in it, lords from the Lowlands, and chieftains from the Isles; Whig lairds from Argyleshire, and high visitors all the way from London city;—so that, as our escort marched up in front of the towers, and halted opposite to the ancient arched entrance, numerous heads appeared at sundry gothic windows above; and there were even ladies, to watch them, looking out of the lower battlements, where they stood enjoying the fine prospect around.

“It was true what the laird told me,” said Hector to himself,—“that here I should at least see and hear something which I should afterwards remember. But will Glenmore really bring me in among all these lords and gentles?”

If so, this day opens up the avenue of my fortune."

These high anticipations, however, were woe-fully damped, not only by his own reception when it came, but by that of the laird himself, who was suffered to stand a considerable time in the doubtful region of the old entrance, and that in the view of his own men, to whom he had always hitherto appeared the greatest man in the universe,—ere the governor of the castle sent a powdered man to give him admittance. But Hector's mortification was complete, when, after cooling his own heels along with the common men of the laird's tail, for a quarter of an hour, without any notice being taken of him or his companions,—saving indeed the occasional gibe or saucy sneer of the pampered menials of the great visitors of the earl, as they idled past them,—he and the rest were ordered round to the rear of the buildings, where, guided in by a low door, they were all huddled indiscriminately into a stone apartment, evidently that

appropriated for the common servitors of the place.

Hector could not help being amused, however, at the looks of stiff pride and high-toned Highland gravity, which his Breadalbane companions shot under their dark brows at the powdered idlers, who, in Lowland dresses, loitered about the passages, or encumbered the stone benches of the hall.

“Is this to be my entertainment in this great man’s house?” said Hector internally, as he hastily surveyed the clumsy flagons of malt broust, and the piles of bones and braxey, or whatever else the cold hashes consisted of, which seemed to have been prepared for the ordinary attendants of the lordlings now at the castle; and which, flanked by coarse loaves of wheaten bread, was, with small ceremony, placed before him and his hungry companions.

“You do not eat, Maister Fair-face,” said a thickset fellow in a mongrel Highland and

Lowland dress, who stood making his observations in the corner opposite Hector. “ You do not eat, I say !”

“ I do as I please, with your leave,” said Hector, scornfully ; all his pride now aroused, as he threw on the questioner an angry glance.

“ As long as you can, Sir Impudence,” retorted the man, drawing down a heavy pair of brows, and nodding his head with impudent familiarity. “ You are a pretty Jack-pudding, that answers my civil observe with your een glancing like candles, and a voice as peremptor as you were my lord himself.”

“ You ought not to speak so peremptor, young man, to a shentleman like Maister Maglashan,” struck in a thin-voiced servitor, who stood by, happy to recommend himself, by a little seasonable injustice, to the favour and friendship of a gentleman of Maister Maglashan’s power among the lower powers in Balloch castle. “ It’s not for beardless cal-

lants to set up their gab to the like o' Maister Maglashan, although ye *be* a stranger, and the laird o' Glenmore's best gilly, maybe."

"Maister Hector is no gilly," exclaimed one of the Breadalbane men, now taking their young friend's part; "he is the laird's friend, that sits at his ain table; he is—that is—I'll not see him put upon."

"And what *is* he? what may he be? since ye are sae proud," said Maglashan; "does he belang to Breadalbane, or is he an oe of Glenmore's, that he looks sae fierce, and will neither eat or drink where good men are set? Na, dinna look sae blate, but up wi't, you that kens. Wha's the youngster's father? and wha's his mother? and what's his kith? and wha's his kin? that he sits here in the earl's ha', and sets up his crokets at Dougal Maglashan?"

This examination was becoming too close and too particular for such information about Hector as was patent even at Glenmore; so the

Highlanders, bending down their heads and plying vigorously at their trenchers, sagaciously left the youth to answer for himself.

All present, however, were disappointed when our hero made no reply whatever, but merely continued to regard the querist with a smile of contempt.

“It’s a shame and a sin to put sic a provocation on an honest lad,” said one of the laird’s tail, clearing his mouth. “I’ll warrant him o’ as gentle bluid as the best o’ us, although he *was* but a merchant chopkeeper in the Lowlands, and nae disparagement.”

“A merchant! a shopkeeper in the Lowlands! a pedlar wi’ a pack! maybe a tailor or a staymaker—ha, ha, ha!” screamed Maglashan, in an ecstasy. “Lord, if I dinna deserve to be pricked in the hurdies wi’ one of his ain needles for offering a civility to such a bit of proud buckram! But here,” he added, filling up a cup of the thin liquor that stood before him, “it becomes a shentleman o’ gude bluid like me

to bear no ill-will, so if the shopkeeper callant just toasts my health and drinks a cup of this broust, for a friendship, and for the honour o' the Earl of Breadalbane's cheer, I'll forget and forgive all that's past, and gie him a snuff out o' my ain mull to souther the bargain ;" saying which, he held the cup most peremptorily up to Hector's face. " Will she no tak it ?—will her no tak it yet, and drink to my health and marriage day, just for a flag of truce, young man ?" cried the impetuous Highlander, as Hector drew himself back in refusal of the proffer, but, though burning with indignation at this Highland freedom, still preserved a dogged silence.

" Haud off your hand, friend," said one of the Breadalbane men, again interfering. " It's a shame to provoke the brave young chield, when ye see he'll neither pick nor dab wi' you, as the henwife said to the cadger. Lord, will ye raise a quarrel already in the laird's ha' ?"

By this time Hector had sprung to his feet,

and plucking the cup out of Maglashan's hand, threw it and its contents at his head with a force, that, had it taken effect, would have done no small damage to the hardest skull. Fortunately, however, by stooping suddenly, the wary Highlander avoided the blow, only receiving part of the liquor; and now springing towards our hero, was only withheld from flying at his throat by the hasty interference of the bystanders.

“Here's a brulzie!” cried several voices, rushing into the hall, as a Highland quarrel was now fairly a-foot, and sides began to be taken, and a Babel of Gaelic confusion already prevailed in the motley assembly.

“Deevil confound General Wade, and auld King George, and every southron son of them,” exclaimed the Breadalbane man, feeling in vain for his wonted side-arms, “that doesna leave a puir fallow a decent blade to help him to keep peace and quietness in an honest shentleman's house! It's a rank scandal to you, Maister

Maglashan, to stop the vera meat in our wezons wi' setting up a quarrel about naething ava but a coup o' sour broust, whilk the brave boy had mickle better no fill his wame wi'."

"Will *I* be spoken to by a merchant Lowlander," cried the fierce champion of the servants' hall, now foaming with fury, "that has not as mickle beard on his lip as the cat could lick off wi' her tongue? Na, do not draw your skenocles at me, men—Dougal Maglashan doesna fight like an Italian stabber. But if *I* be a living man, the Earl of Breadalbane shall know of this brulzie; and this saucy boy shall beg a forgiveness at my feet before he leaves Balloch castle."

In the midst of the latter part of the confusion, Hector suffered himself to be persuaded to leave the hall, and passing out of the small postern at the rear of the building, he gladly found an opportunity of brooding alone over the mortified feelings by which he was now overpowered.

“ I see plainly and evidently what my life is to be,” he said, in the bitterness of his spirit, and with all the confidence of youthful ignorance and passion, as he paced hastily on under the trees of the lawn without. “ Born a beggar, and too proud to be a tradesman, I must forsooth aim at being a gentleman, while in reality but an eleemosynary dependant on a puir Highland laird. And thus, whenever I go abroad, I am liable to all the insults which belong to the questionable shape in which I come. What should I do ? and whither shall I betake me, where I may be able to stand up with common confidence, and look every one fearlessly in the face ? Would to heaven, I could even enlist as a gentleman private in the Black Watch ! I should then at least have my sixpence a day independent, and care for no one.”

Thus our proud youth indulged his boyish rage, with more reflections on his condition and prospects than need be repeated ; but when he lifted up his eyes, and looking round, con-

trasted the heavenly scenery now in his view, and the serene expression of all nature around him, with the boiling bitterness of his own spirit, aroused, as it was, by a sense of shame for himself, he came home to his consciousness. Continuing to muse, as he gazed down the sweet valley of the Tay, he felt a soothing tranquillity steal over his heart, his secret mortifications melt away, and giving place to that involuntary elevation which belongs to the ennobling influence of nature.

He had now mounted to the top of one of those picturesque knolls which diversify the scenic undulations of the princely park of Taymouth. The whole scene, stretched out around him, might well sooth a spirit less easily moved, and less aspiring than his own. All the profanation of wandering tourists and cicerone guide-books, in our own days, will not take entirely away either its poetry or its romance from the noble valley of Balloch, in the midst of which Hector now sat. On his left, lay smooth

and glassy to the evening sun, the long Loch Tay, stretching in quiet beauty along the green and woody foot of the “bold Ben-Lawers,”—which, rising four thousand feet above its level, at once assumes the form and attitude of the foreground giant of the hills.

Beneath, on the glassy bosom of the lake, a pretty tuft of rich green seems to sit like the fairy isle of the water’s expanse, and still known by the name of Holy Woman’s Isle; its ruined priory not at that time dilapidated, as nearly a century more has made it, but even then almost hidden under its trees; and the sanctity of the whole, neither yet impaired by time, nor its picturesque beauty profaned by improvement. Nearer to the feet of our contemplative hero, the clear and deep Tay, issuing slowly forth from the Loch, like a staid child from the bosom of its parent, wanders in broad and imposing beauty along the margin of those pleasure-grounds, in the midst of which he was seated. Following the stream from this point,

away she floats past the imaginative spectator, like the soft and graceful daughter of nature, until the rapid Lyon, issuing from the mouth of a dark but noble glen, which she passes, marries himself to her like an impatient lover ; and impetuously running away with his bride, under the dark hills of Weem, and the braes of Ballechin, only seems to become a really sober *mari*, when meandering down the meads of the rich carse of Strathmore.

But with the very intoxication under which the poetic mind reels in the contemplation of nature's beauty, is often mingled a sigh of bitter pungency at the thought of the meditative individual, that for *his* use that beauty does not exist ; but as a syren temptation to which he must not give way, and which, therefore, only serves to make the mind unhappy, by a painful envy, as strong as the desire itself, for this or any other portion of earth's good, and yet as inevitable as the common feelings of man. "Thus," thought he, "in the Hesperides' gardens

of this fair world, fruits do hang in golden clusters that we must not taste ; and in the busy mart of society, or the saloons of which I have read, eyes do shoot their lightning into our souls, and make our hearts beat quick with emotion, which, notwithstanding, we must not look upon with hope ; the pleasure they are designed to give being not for us. Thank heaven, however, that the regrets that trouble me at this moment are not deepened by such vain desires as these."

He was interrupted in the midst of this unwonted sentimentality by the soft whisper of female voices almost behind him ; and as he listened, he thought he heard the light and hearty laugh of girlish youth, which soon became more distinct. A musical feminine tongue next talked near him, with warm enthusiasm of the beauty of the scene, and even, he fancied, with the joyous volubility of a happy and a light heart.

Unwilling to incur the suspicion of sitting silently as an unknown listener, he rose to move

downwards, when, turning round, he perceived, a little above him, a handsome gentlewoman, about thirty, as if talking to some one whom he could not then see. In another instant, after he had turned his head, the slight figure of a young lady rushed laughingly down the hill, quite near him, and playfully catching at the bushes in her descent, never, however, stopped, until she was quite at the bottom of the knoll, and in the giddiness of her spirits had nearly fallen, in her haste, among the thick grass of the park. Turning round, and looking upwards, towards where the elder lady still stood, her eyes fell upon Hector, whose look of sudden admiration was at once rivetted upon her. Blushing slightly as she looked upwards, she seemed to hesitate in some intended speech.

“Come straight down, Madame Teenie,” she at length said, with playful freedom. “’Tis a delightful run, and the grass is as soft as a carpet. If your high-heeled shoes are ready to

topple you over, hold well by the bushes in your way, and I will up and help you."

A sudden thought struck Hector. Taking two or three steps upwards, to where the hesitating lady stood, he presented himself before her, and pulling off his bonnet, begged the favour of being allowed to assist her in her descent.

The gentlewoman smiled condescendingly as she cast her eye over Hector's person, and refused the proffer. But the repeated thanks and smiling looks with which the refusal was qualified, convinced him that his offer was at least no offence; and seeing her attempt timorously to descend alone, high heels and all, he boldly pressed his suit, received her hand tacitly, and the gallant ease, and even graceful freedom, with which he brought her to the bottom of the hill, was received by the lady with that evident pleasure, with which the attention of a well-looking youth of any rank is always received

by a good-hearted woman. When he had led her to level ground, she turned round and thanked him, with a smile and curtsey as respectful—as he said to himself afterwards—as if he had been a lord ; and, to his astonishment, even the young lady who had first fixed his admiration, gave a blushing smile as he came forward, and took madam by the arm, as if, (though he would not allow himself to think it,) she almost could have wished that the transient gallantry had been shown to herself.

Those who still remember with pleasure the delight which, in the first freshness of youth, they have received from similar incidents, can conceive the rapture with which Hector followed with his eyes the forms of the ladies, as they receded away among the picturesque clumps of the noble lawn of Taymouth. The face of the younger was charming, beyond anything he had yet seen in a female ; and her manner, as far as he had just witnessed it, was as playfully simple, as if she had been but a

lowly maiden of his own hills. His fancy being now fully awakened to the beauties of the female form, he thought, as he still stood rivetted to the spot, that he had never seen an air so noble, and yet so graceful, as he now contemplated ; as, hanging on the arm of her companion, and talking and laughing as she went, this pretty stranger tripped on over the smooth lawn towards the mansion. Starting forward, he watched them at a distance, every step they went—and he even felt no slight twinge of a new species of pain as he perceived a gentleman issue from another walk, and, with many bows and some familiarity, take the arm of the object of his admiration, and conduct both ladies round the western tower, towards the front entrance of the castle.

CHAPTER XV.

Ladies, a general welcome from his grace
 Salutes ye all. This night he dedicates
 To fair content, and you : none here, he hopes
 In all this noble bevy, has brought with her
 One care abroad ; he would have all as merry
 As first-good company, good wine, good welcome,
 Can make good people.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN the morning Hector arose fresh and cheerful. As he wandered, alone, through the extensive pleasure grounds that surrounded the castle, many a look he cast around among the clumps of the park, to see if he could catch a glance of her whose face and form had been the means of so exciting his fancy. But no indication appeared of such good fortune ; and, beginning to feel that exhaustion of spirits that always follows a ferment of the mind, he was

returning to the castle, when coming round towards the front, just as his eye fell on the principal entrance, a gay crowd began to issue forth. Gentlemen appeared with hat in hand, according to the formal manners of the time, leading out ladies by the tips of the long-gloved fingers, each bowing to the other as they went, like the antique figures which are represented in the old pictures of a promenade in the Mall of St. James's Park in Garrick's days, that is, shortly after this very time. All were in full dress for a ceremonious walk before dinner, and Hector, never having before seen so much of English manners and high company, gazed upon the full, round-skirted coats, wide sleeves, dollar-sized buttons, and high-heeled shoes, of the men, with amused curiosity, from the strong contrast which their stiff and wigged figures, and the gaudy colour of their dresses, formed with the free manly costume of the few Highland gentlemen who mixed among them.

But the full disguise, and the successful mis-

shaping of nature, seemed still more perfect in the *making up* of the ladies, who now graced this high-day promenade. This being the first time that Hector had ever seen the true effect of a hoop, or witnessed a regular built head-dress of the *haut ton* of the time, he contemplated both, as the dames sailed towards him, with that mixture of astonishment and questioning, with which we vainly try to look with admiration upon some indications of the wisdom of our ancestors. Could these "mortal shapes," he thought, who appeared to be almost cut into two in the middle, and to have no limbs, "be formed in the same mould with the full-formed maidens of the hills?" Pope speaks of the difficulty of compelling the high dames of those days to acknowledge the shapes which nature had given them, and proposes to the painters of the day to make their Helens from the handmaidens who waited upon the others. Probably this is the best rule even in our own times, but to Hector the subject appeared invested

with a mystery, which was like the mystery of that comparative greatness, which had cost him such envy on the previous day, and of that difference between one man and another in the usages of the world, which is the most difficult of all the lessons that youth has to learn.

Placing himself behind a tree that he might not be observed, Hector watched the passing of this elegant company. The avenue into which they had now entered was broad and magnificent, falsifying in its noble character the assertion of the cynical traveller, who was said to have traversed Scotland, and left it without ever having seen a tree. The whole breadth of a gravelled way, about as wide as those in the Dutch-planned gardens at Hampton Court, was taken up by three couples, walking abreast, the hoops of the elaborately dressed dames keeping the men at a good arm's length on each side. Nevertheless, the whole, as they came forward, formed a goodly and imposing show ; for the dresses, if deficient in grace, were well calculated

for grandeur of effect, and spoke well for the hospitality as well as the spirit of the noble owner of this magnificent demesne. Entertained, though humbled, by the sight of so much grandeur, Hector yet strained his eyes to obtain a view of one who had made so deep an impression on his mind. In the third row of the party, and fortunately on the side next himself, he observed her slender and graceful figure, more elaborately furnished forth than on the day previous ; and though not yet deformed by a hoop, still, so metamorphosed by the enormity of full dress, that nothing but the sharp eyes of love, which had seen her in an apparel more consistent to nature, could possibly have recognized her. Holding up a large fan in her hand, which it seems was prescribed by her quality, her arms covered with large elbow gloves, and a blown rose placed above her stomacher, while the want of a hoop was all but made up by the numerous tucks and flounces of a rich thickly-flowered damask gown, such as our grandmothers wore, she carried herself with all the

grace of her age, yet with all the dignity of a lady of sixty; and, had her face not told for her a better tale, looked like those stiff portraits of young females of the Dutch school, wherein the eye seems almost disappointed that the antiquated dress is not borne out by starch and wrinkles.

But one glance at the fair youthful countenance, and the large laughing intelligent eyes, convinced our Cimon behind the tree, that no art can destroy the irresistible fascination of beauty, and her very motion and manner, as she walked and talked occasionally to the happy gentleman who escorted her, and which our youth watched with the intensest interest, was such as, in spite of her costume, to deepen all the impressions which the brief interview of the previous day had given him concerning her. Of this company, however, his own patron, Glenmore, did not seem great enough to make one; for certainly he was not present, and an unbidden pang of the humiliating melancholy of the previous day shot through Hector's

heart, as, unknown and unnoticed, he saw these grandees pass, and watched the gay company as it receded away in the long sweep of the avenue.

What a strange sentiment is pride, in connexion with such a being as man ! How rooted it seems to be in the *blood* of some natures ! How, in that case, it flies in the teeth of *circumstance* itself, with which only, in the estimation of the world, it has aught to do ! Of how many virtues is it not the parent, for all that is said against it ! Yet, of how much suffering is it not the cause, in all situations of life, more or less resembling those in which our youthful hero now found himself ! But when, to the perception of, and the disposition to, the great and the noble in human position and feeling, is added also an intense perception of the elegant and the pleasurable, what havoc does it not make in the sensitive mind ! Of what bitter murmurings against blind fortune, and even human existence, is it not the origin !

What food for reflection is connected with it, and with the nature of society which so madly juggles with it, is afforded in the common occurrences and obvious remarks to be made about a great man's house !

All day Hector wandered about Taymouth valley, delighted as far as nature could sooth his senses, but miserable as far as art excluded him from the pale of her pleasures. In truth, notwithstanding the profusion and waste that he saw scattered around him, he was actually in danger of being starved ; for he was too low to be noticed by those who banqueted above, and too proud to mess in the servants' hall. Thus his own pride may be said to have eaten him up, and yet it was the only precious thing upon which he could feed in secret satisfaction. What the laird's business could be with the earl he knew not, but since his first arrival at Taymouth he scarcely had seen him. He had no one at hand to whom he cared to express the thoughts which oppressed him. Around him

all were gay, and all seemed happy, but his neglected self. Thus he fed in secret on hoped-for happiness, and the triumphant pride of better days to come, while yet he almost perished for a mouthful of bread.

As far as he could see all day, every servant had been in a bustle at the castle, and as evening drew on, every thing seemed prepared for a grand entertainment. Carriages were seen bowling down the avenue with additional company. A band of musicians had arrived all the way from Edinburgh ; the great hall above was hung with festoons of flowers and green boughs. Hector's inquiries for the chief, or any one he could speak to, made of the servants who bustled without or in the passages, were spoken in vain during the exciting confusion ; for, in the cry of " The company ! the company ! the earl, and the earl's friends !" every voice was drowned, and in *their* wants and *their* service every thought was absorbed.

" Surely," said Hector to himself, as he

lingered cold and exhausted without, "man is a wretched animal, who knows nothing of self-respect, and less of justice to others. His nature seems a compound of the spaniel and the tiger; for he seldom can comport himself as the equal of his species, but must have one to tyrannize over, and another to worship. And yet he is an extraordinary being," he continued, as the roar of Highland merriment began to rise on his ear from the banqueting hall above, "to invent such enjoyments out of the simple furnishings of the earth, and so to fence himself round by laws and opinions, that he shall be enabled to gratify the worst propensities of his nature, if he pleases, and to gorge himself beyond what that nature can bear, while thousands around him are looking on at his excesses, with the sunken eyes of over-laboured want, and with the voluntary yearnings of an unsuppressible conviction of personal injustice."

Anon, the long windows of the hall began to be lit up; forms appeared casting their sha-

dows across the light of the windows—the painted 'scutcheons on the ceiling, and the gilded corbells which protruded from the antiquated carving of the roof, began to be seen by the solitary admirer below; and a preluding flourish of horns and clarionets, and the heavy thrum of viols, sounding through the apartment, showed that the company were preparing for the dance. There are sounds and sights, which at certain moments we cannot bear. Hector turned away, and walked a space down the long avenue.

A sweet and solitary half moon was beginning to peep, shadowy and white, over the double-peaked summit of Ben-More, as Hector, now out of hearing of the music that sounded at the banquet, bethought of again returning to the castle. It was few romances he had read on the hills; but romance and poetry *exist in the mind*, and he thought he now saw a romantic sight. What would we have of an ancient Highland castle, and a great shadowy

park by moonlight ! But this is not the way that certain men talk, or that certain minds receive and cherish their impressions.

Built about 1550, by Sir Colin Campbell, called Knight of Lochaw, “ ane great justicier all his time,” old Balloch castle, on the site of which the present Taymouth stands, was of that character of feudal buildings which might well impress a mind like Hector’s, as it now appeared by the moonlight, amidst the scenery we have alluded to. Between two round and lofty towers, standing at some distance from each other on the summit of a pleasant slope, towards the Tay, ran an irregular screen of inner buildings, containing almost every variety of bastion and buttress, but chiefly occupied, near the western angle, by the state rooms of the castle, from whose long gothic windows the light now streamed towards the sward below, mixing pleasantly with the mellow beams of the moonlight. Above, a variety of pinnacles and battlements rose from different parts

THE BLACK WATCH.

of the building, with that sort of effect peculiar to gothic irregularity, that, seen from some points, they looked like a heavy mass of gloom and feudal strength, while from others they had that air of the bold picturesque, which, on an occasion like the present, was singularly effective. On all the protruding horns or pinnacles of the battlements above, or the buttresses below, hoary as they now were with time, and in some parts particularly dilapidated, the beams of the moon now rested with striking effect; and, together with the festive echo of the music from within, as Hector again drew near, seemed to him like what he had fancied of absolute enchantment.

By the time he again stood under the long windows of the banqueting room, every lady and lordling then in the castle seemed to have joined the gay company, and were now in the high zenith of the dance. All within was light, grandeur, beauty, and festivity. The hall rang and echoed with a species of music, imported

from the favourite land of Orpheus, and now executed with the scientific compounds of harmonious effect, such as was altogether new to the enchanted listener, and came upon his unpractised ears as he stood below in the moonlight, like the rushing melody of a fairy dream. And then, forms and figures went and came as he watched, and plumes nodded, waving their dark shadows on the windows of the hall, and time was beat by light feet and lighter hearts, as lords and ladies swam in the dance, and as the Italian music rose and fell—and some one was there whom he would give worlds to look upon at this moment; and the emotions that began to rise in his soul made his head swim with sensations new and incommunicable.

“What pleasures must not life furnish, and the great enjoy!” he said to himself in the fulness of his fresh feelings, “when scenes which I can only see and hear, thus imperfectly, and at a distance, fill one with such conceptions of grandeur and delight! What have

I yet known, or yet enjoyed, wandering an ignorant Celt on the hills, to what I may yet experience in that great world, upon which I have not even entered ; where art uniting with beauty and intelligence, seems to have provided such pleasures. Yet, alas !” he added, a pang of hunger and exhaustion coming over him at the moment, while a snell night blast from off Ben Aw seemed to unite with the cold ray of the moonlight to chill him through—“ how different is the condition and the enjoyments of man ! How sadly does the sumptuous banquetting and gay pleasure of this house of joy, contrast with the wan melancholy of solitary misery, existing at this instant in so many places !”

But this stinging thought, which it is long before the sympathetic mind learns to check and stifle, by the stern tuition of artificial selfishness, in Hector, served, after a few moments of melancholy reflection, but to enhance his conception of the pleasures now enjoyed by this gay assembly. Pauses and changes now occurred

in the music, and half forms appeared dimly at the windows, which the enchained youth would have given what he did not possess to have seen more closely. Then there was one whose image dwelt on his fancy. Could he but see her at this instant, and who it was she danced with, and how she looked among so many other beauties, which adorned and charmed this hilarious company ! Was there no way of getting up nearer the windows, among the old irregular angles and balconies which the moonlight tipped with such romantic effect ? The temptation was too great for him to stand longer shivering where he was, and “ for heaven,” he would try.

Stepping up to the dark shade of the narrowest but highest tower, he found the low door half open, and ascending the screw-stair within, was enabled to get out by one of those narrow doors so common in old buildings, upon a sort of stripe of ornamented balcony, which ran along the building immediately under the lofty

windows of the banqueting room. Here he had a perfect view through the uncurtained windows of the interior of the hall, and the splendid assembly within; and here the indistinct shapings of his fancy, of that which he had never before witnessed, seemed more than realized by the whole scene before him. Let not him who has lived all his life in the glare of splendid dissipation attempt to conceive its first effect upon an imaginative mind, hitherto buried in obscurity. Let not him who has been pampered all his life, think to conceive the zest and the thankfulness with which the uncloyed heart lifts up the eyes in secret gratitude over the first feast. Neither let them try to imagine the rapture with which our simple youth now gazed on all he heard and saw. What ideas do the lowly first conceive of the great, when seen under circumstances such as Hector now saw this company ! To the great themselves, pearls and diamonds, beauty and magnificence, are but subjects for criticism, or objects of envy or con-

tempt: to Hector all these were now objects of unmingled admiration. From the stiff and misshapen figures which had been presented to him in the morning, he could not have conceived that high-born woman, dressed now in fancy dresses of velvet and brocade, and nature left much to herself, could have appeared objects of such perfect fascination. When, as with bared necks and arms, their eyes more brilliant than the pearls they wore, some (and particularly one whom he now could see distinctly) turned their elegant forms in the mazes of the dance; or, as handed ceremoniously by their partners, they went and came towards the window, at which he by stealth contemplated all this, his heart throbbed in his bosom, with that mingled feeling of delight and melancholy, with which we witness pleasures and contemplate grandeur, which have been laboriously invented for the enjoyment only of those with whom we are permitted no fellowship.

But, however noble and lofty appeared the

antique hall in his view, with its picturesque tapestry of many figures, and its massive carvings of many devices; and however splendid the show of beauty and of dress floating through the apartment, where silver and gold were not wanting, Hector felt, that to stand longer where he was, within the shadow of a buttress, the clandestine spectator of all this, was neither dignified nor becoming, however humble he might rate himself, compared with this lordly company. But she whose name he yet knew not, the youngest and the loveliest of all within, was now actively engaged in the dance, and he could not tear his eyes from her. But when, in the exercise of manly self-denial, he attempted to do so, and turned away his face towards where the evening landscape lay quiet and dim beneath him, if he looked between the long shadows of the clumps, her Terpsichore form seemed still, like a fairy, to “trip along the green;” or, if he looked upwards towards the serene vault of night, she

seemed like a vision to float between his eyes and the clear face of the moon.

“What have *I* to do with these fancies?” he at length said impatiently, as he started out of his hiding-place—“What is she to me, or why should I attempt to think of any one of her rank? But, after all, this is no place for me;” and stealing hastily along, a sense of the necessity of concealment from the view of those within, obliged him to make his way towards the further end of the balcony.

Setting his back towards the rugged moulding of some decayed gothic tracery, that ornamented the outer angle of that part of the building, as he turned his face abstractedly towards the surrounding landscape, that painful mingling of ardour and regret, so common in youth, began to steal over his exhausted spirits with an unwelcome and humiliating melancholy. “Would that I could leave this place!” said he internally—if we may be permitted to translate the reflections of a high-minded youth—

“if I stay longer, I shall be wretched. To be the spectator of pleasures which one cannot taste—to be tantalized by the sight of grandeur which mocks the honest pride of nature, and turns our self-love into bitter and unnatural humility—to contemplate a paradise which to me is like the heaven which the man in the parable only saw afar off, but which was never to receive him within its portals—all this is not good. I feel that it is already laying within me the foundation of the basest passions—envy and discontent. There is the music again! how charming it sounds from within these halls! and seems to echo from these noble groves. I shall leave this to-morrow, else every manly purpose will be lost in the entrancements of others’ luxury!”

The light glare of the moon in his eyes had prevented him from noticing a small door unclosed at the end of the terrace that separated the buildings; and, to his surprise, the very form of her whose beauty had so haunted him,

stepped slowly forth in the shadow, and soon stood on the light balcony quite near him. He gazed upon her, breathless with astonishment at the romance of the incident, and his own good fortune. Her countenance seemed to express some powerful emotion. He still looked, spell-bound. He saw her lean herself passively against the wall, then covering her eyes with her taper fingers, a sob rose in her bosom, that seemed almost to choke her, until she got relief by a passionate burst of tears.

“ Good Heavens !” said Hector within himself, as the lady sobbed and wept by his side, “ do tears mingle with pleasures like these, and sorrow grow out of the house of feasting and of grandeur ?”

Feeling all the indelicacy of his situation, as he still stood concealed by the shadow, while the young lady, recovering from her fit of weeping, now began to contemplate with seeming delight, the tranquil scene beneath her—he at once determined to relieve himself from all

embarrassment, which might arise from his being found where he was, by addressing her. Stepping out, therefore, into the moonlight, and pulling off his bonnet, he modestly begged pardon for being unwittingly in a spot where she might suppose herself quite alone, at a moment when any thing like intrusion could not but be peculiarly painful to her feelings.

A slight start of surprise, and a look of some alarm, was the first effect of this speech upon the young lady: she seemed to hesitate, but still was silent.

“ I am most unfortunate in having offended you, madam,” he again said; “ but, believe me, the intrusion was by no means intentional.”

“ I know not whether I am the intruder here, or you, sir,” she at length said; “ but assuredly I cannot presume to be offended with you, and yet there seems something strange in this;” and she threw a glance around her, as if momentarily perplexed by the unexpected incident.

“Suffer me to explain, madam,” said Hector, drawing near her. “It was no mean motive, such as I might be ashamed of, that brought me up to this spot. A follower only of a Highland gentleman, at present a visitor at this castle, and not, of course, entitled to mix with the company at the ball, can you blame a humble denizen of the hills, if the sound of music such as is never heard in these glens, should have caused him to linger under the walls of the banqueting rooms; and the sight of grandeur and festivity, to which he has hitherto been a stranger, should have enticed him to seek a distant glimpse even from these windows, of gaieties which halls and saloons only contain, and of pleasures to which it is not for him to aspire.”

“And was it to see the dancers, through the windows only, that caused you to mount up to this balcony?” said the young lady with evident interest.

“Assuredly from none other motive, madam,”

replied Hector, " unless the moon, who debars no eye, however humble, from looking up in her sweet face, might have helped to solicit my solitary sacrifice to her fame, to divide my admiration with the beauty and grace within these halls."

" Then you had no invitation to the banquet, young sir ?" said the lady, casting a quick glance over Hector's person.

" No, madam, it is not for the earthen pot to come in the way of the brass pot, as I have read in the fable. The one is apt to be in that case the destruction of the other."

" And you have been making yourself melancholy by the contemplation, through a window, of pleasures of which you are pleased to think so highly ?"

" Assuredly, lady, it is so ; and whether distance and difficulty, as some say, make things more desired, I know not, but, cold and somewhat sad as I have been, standing here without, I have this night seen and heard that

which will never be effaced from my memory.”

The young lady smiled slightly, and replied not, but lifting her eyelids slowly, she regarded the youth with a look of interested curiosity.

“ I see you are surprised, lady,” he continued, encouraged to boldness by the soft expression of her face, “ but it is not for you to know the inward thoughts of conscious inferiority of condition, when contemplating beautiful and noble forms, tripping in the dance, within halls like these. You are pleased to listen to my bursting confession. Can you know aught of feelings such as mine—where pride, instead of, perhaps, becoming humility, gnaws at the heart, and where a susceptibility for pleasures unknown on these bald hills, makes even this music, that now rings in our ears, dance in the ill-suppressed emotions, and stir up the still disappointed fancy, which, when it looks upon eyes such as yours, becomes almost mad with the strength of its own

fires ; and when the whole has fled from the cognizance of the senses, turns the solitary thoughts into gall and wormwood."

" I can conceive something, sir," she said, momentarily catching the tone of his enthusiasm, " of the pains of a brave spirit, whose desires for activity are suppressed by his circumstances, and whose purposes of ambition are constantly hindered by his condition. But I must not tarry here. Accept of my good wishes, sir ; and as for what you have said, surely to the ardent and the brave fortune has in store greater things, than, in a moment of melancholy, such as you have now been indulging, may occur to the fancy."

" A thousand blessings on you, lady, for this condescension. But one word more. I have stood on this terrace, watching your movements within the hall, till my heart was ready to burst with the intensity of my own reflections. Little did I then anticipate that this night would give me the joy and relief of utter-

ing some of those reflections in your own gentle ears. We have met by chance. I know I am your inferior, and yet you have listened to me like heaven's angel of pity, come down to receive from my lips, confessions which I dare hardly utter to myself."

"Good night, sir," she said, smiling, yet almost alarmed at his warmth; "and yet," she added, turning suddenly back, "I ought not, perhaps, to go without saying something in reply to reasonings so fully confessed, and which, in truth, interest me because I hear them with surprise. I fear, young sir, in contemplating with such imaginative desire the imposing scenes which that saloon may have furnished, you have looked only on one side of the picture. Can you not conceive, that, within halls such as these, amidst apparent gaiety and festivity, there may be some feelings suppressed and others excited, which the wretched individual is ashamed to own, and which change almost into hideousness the heart, which is the

subject of them, making a real torment in the midst of banqueting and festivity? While you seem to envy that, of which you only know the exterior, can you not suppose it possible that there may be heart-burnings suffered within halls such as these, so consuming and so intolerable, that the subject of them would at times gladly exchange situations with the menial that stands behind his chair, and would give all the artificial enjoyment of this banquet for one bound of the free and light heart, upon these wild yet noble hills that surround us?"

"Lady," said he, catching the strain of her feeling, "did not I see you yourself this night in tears, even on this spot?"

"I confess it, if that may illustrate my meaning. You, sir, have drawn one picture; let me draw another. Take one of the youngest ladies in that hall; let her heart be warm, and her feelings ready to respond to every noble sentiment; but let the maxims of the world,

adopted by a beloved parent, and a sense of duty never to be set aside, place her in circumstances with relation to one in that apartment, whom, the more she knows the more his presence repels every sentiment of her mind, and every preference of her taste. Let him haunt her with an eye of jealousy, and a selfishness of passion, that knows neither delicacy nor sentiment, until its tyranny grows into rudeness, and its grossness into an insult. May there not, then, occurrences grow out of a case like this, which well may cause tears to flow in secret, and even be an enjoyment; where music rings in the ears without bringing pleasure, and grandeur floats before the eyes without affecting the consciousness or removing bitterness from the heart? Now I have drawn you another picture from your own. Think of it, sir, and let it help you to greater contentment with your condition; and so good night."

"Madam," said he, highly interested by her

speech, "I am unable to give expression to what you make me feel at this moment; could I believe that"

"I have already said, perhaps, too much, sir," she continued, interrupting him; "I will say good night, for I must not remain here."

"Good night a thousand times;" and becoming bolder, he took the hand that she waved, and pressed it to his lips.

"Now, sir, pray, not a step farther," she added, holding up her arm authoritatively, and gliding backwards down the shaded terrace, and mounting the steps which led to the door, in a moment after she had vanished from his sight.

He just saw the little door opened stealthily in the distance, and closed behind the fair vision. He looked around, and saw the terrace a dark blank of emptiness as before, and the moon above shining calm and cold on the shadowy landscape beneath him. He could scarce believe that he had been awake, when, with a

tumult of strange emotion, he again threw back his thoughts on the scene that had come so unexpectedly before his senses, and had now vanished like a dream.

CHAPTER XVI.

Nothing remains, but that I kindle the boy thither,
which now I'll go about.

SHAKSPEARE.

FROM the excitement of the foregoing scene, together with his long fast, Hector, on descending from the balcony, found a feeling of exhaustion come over his spirits that obliged him to enter the mansion, with the view of obtaining a morsel of food. The bustle of the early part of the evening was now subsided; the elder part of the guests at the castle were leisurely taking in vinous intoxication above, while the younger were still enjoying the dance,

and the servants having by this time also “taken in their malt,” in no stinted measure, were lounging about the passages looking for adventures, or dancing Scotch reels among themselves in the lower apartments.

Of these, Mr. Andrew Trotter, the chief butler and key-carrier at Balloch castle, an elderly Lowland-spoken man, with a square-cut head, tastefully whitened with powder, was of course the greatest man in the establishment, and far more to be honoured than the earl himself. Besides, the old man being shrewd and confidential, was allowed to be in waiting among the company above, when all the ordinary “clanjamfrey of flunkeys,” as he called them, were driven out of the room; so that he had frequent opportunity of hearing all the conversation, and many of the family matters of the ancient house of Breadalbane; and being a man who kept his ears always ready cocked, and never opened his mouth but when it pleased himself, he was held in great respect and con-

fidentiality both above stairs and below; besides being a walking repository of the family concerns, of which he contrived always to appear to know a great deal more than he really did.

All these advantages over the higher and lower powers of the establishment, might by the cruelty of fortune, have been turned some day against Mr. Trotter, and he be hurled from his high estate, but for one qualification he had, which might be recommended to the imitation of still greater men. This was merely, the seeing and appreciating a proper distinction between what was done or said by "the quality," and by other people. Having been in the habit of waiting on "gentlemen" at all times and seasons, and in particular of putting himself in their way when their tongues were loosened by drink, and they talked things which ladies ought not to hear; and which, as he said himself, there was no necessity for telling to the minister, he had formed a code of

morality of his own, which exactly suited "the gentry," and is to be found more or less pure in all the liveried fraternity even unto this day. Considering it not to be controverted, that "the quality" were a distinct species of the human race, who were made to be served and worshipped by all those whom they condescended to rule over, Mr. Trotter believed, on his soul, that a nobleman's vices were more to be honoured and attended to, than another man's virtues; so that the old man was, as usual, more valued for his doctrine than his practice; for the former being known to be sound, a few slips in the latter were not to be spoken of, and were even all the better for the love that was borne him for his doctrine's sake.

It was not to be expected, that so great and so wise a personage should take any notice of such as Hector, coming as he did without any particular marks of gentry upon him, except perhaps his looks and his bearing, and what might have been indicated by his conversation,

all of which are of course nothing at all, as the world goes. Mere negligence on the part of M'Evan having consigned our hero to the uncertain chances of a great house; to be neglected by his superiors was a sufficient reason why he should be sent to the wall by those whose business it was to imitate, in a small way, all that they did. But circumstances had occurred in Hector's absence this day, which began to change all this.

“Hoo do ye do, sir?” said Mr. Trotter, nodding condescendingly as he met Hector in an aristocratic part of the passage.

“How do you do?” responded Hector, cuckooing a species of address not then very common in the north.

“I've been looking for you, sir, this whole evening,” said the major-domo, with a respect which naturally astonished our youth. “You were not here about the dinner-bell, I trow.”

“No, Mr. Trotter, will you please to order me some refreshment now?”

“ That I will, sir, with the greatest of pleasure. Just step in here, and I will see about the eatables mysel, and serve the drinkables wi’ my ain hand.”

“ What can all this flattery mean ?” said Hector mentally, when the old man was gone. “ If it bodes no good ultimately, it promises at least a good supper in the mean time, and that is something.”

“ A couple of servants, (the same who had on the former day helped to insult him in the common hall,) soon entered, their faces “ in a bleeze” of drunken good-humour, and bowing politely, absolutely surrounded our hero with dishes, most of which had come untouched from the great banquet above. Anon entered Mr. Trotter himself, followed by *his* servant, bearing a tray, which jingled with glasses and bottles of red brandy and white Hollands, besides a silver tankard with a springing deer on the lid, which bore between its horns the agreeable label of *claret*.

“ Am I the same person I was yesterday ?” said Hector internally, as he surveyed all this, “ or is this but a trick such as the proud lord in the English playbook is said to have put upon Christopher Sly, only to make me feel after insult more deeply ?”

“ Noo, if there isn’t enough here to stay your stomach, young maister, say my name is not Andrew Trotter,” said the functionary, arranging the dishes before him in a scientific manner. “ Lordsake, man ! when I see you at the light, ye look as pale anoth the gills, as ye hadna tasted green nor grey since the morning.”

“ Neither have I,” said Hector simply, taking up the implements of assistance to the mouth.

“ Ea ! God keep us frae cleanness o’ teeth, as the minister said to the mealman. What fore do you no fa’ to, then, and here’s a drap o’ kill-deevil when ye’re done. It maun be pleasant wark on the hills, that could keep you out starving all day, and the quality aboon speering after you.”

“ Asking for me ? ” said Hector, hastily swallowing his mouthful.

“ Yes, speering for you up and down, and the laird of Glenmore, your friend, blasting and blawing about you to the earl himsel. But stop your mouth wi’ your meat, young gentleman, for deevil a word mair will I tell you till ye hae eaten twa meals in ane, and your supper on the top o’t, forbye a tass o’ this cogniac to put smeddum in you. But I’ll drink your health in the meantime ; using that freedom with you, in respect that though your fortune may be gude and your sun on the rise, ye’re no just come to your estate yet. Here’s your health, Mr. Monro. Ye see I only take half a glass at a time, for I’m aye getting bits o’ dribbles an’ drabbles, up stairs and down stairs ; but thae blackguards o’ the ha’, that I maun keep in order, they’re a’ bleezing drunk already.”

“ Then it is no trick after all, but plain enough,” thought Hector, yet not taking time to speak. The conversation, however, suffered

no lack from his own forbearance ; for he being just then supposed to be in the condition to be patronized by such as Mr. Andrew Trotter, the gracious functionary was pleased to extend to him his benevolence, besides making him sensible how great a man he himself was with the ancient family of Breadalbane.

“ Noo just use your freedom, and say the grace when ye’re done, Mr. Monro. What need ye be picking like a maiden at thae poor pigeons, whilk are as dry and fushionless as a skin. Plunge your fork into the paste o’ this pie. There’s something anoth it, that’ll gust your gab. Come, I’ll take this lang-legged chuckie out o’ your way. She’s hardly worth the trouble o’ your ’natamizing, just eenow ; for as the border baillie used to say, a hen’s a hungry feast, but a pudding’s a rare degiest, I canna mind the rest o’t ; but just lay your lugs in that pie ; ye’ll maybe find need o’t again the morn.”

“ How,” said Hector, “ what of to-morrow ? ”

“ Just be putting into you, and I’ll tell you when ye’re done,” said the resolute major-domo ; “ and dinna be in the least hurry ; so, wi’ your leave, I’ll take a seat to rest my shanks, and wait wi’ patience till ye take your bit and your drap, as the minister says to the kirk folk, on hally Sunday.”

The curiosity of Hector to know what was coming, and the real cause of this extraordinary kindness, certainly induced him to use all possible dispatch ; and soon laying down his knife and fork, he asked for a draught of ale to wash down the eatables, and to show that he had finished his meal.

“ The deevil ae drap o’ broust ye’ll get out o’ my hand the night, Mr. Monro,” said the man of keys, in rather a peremptory *key*. “ There would be sma’ sagacity in my betting a wager on the head o’ gentle or simple, that would call for yill, when there’s brandy and Geneva before him, forbye red claret in the magnum, as clear as a lawmore bead.”

“ Betting on my head, Mr. Trotter. Is that what you say ?”

“ To be sure. What’s the use of fighting or fencing, if there’s no a bit canny bet on the head o’ the favourite o’ the day, and so ye think I canna birl a guinea at a wager—aye, or *ten* either, as weel’s ony laird in the ha’? But, faith, as I said before, I’ll ne’er risk my siller on ony man that would bag himsel wi’ sour swats, as lang as he could lic his lips after red claret. That’s my creed.”

“ Fill up, then, good Mr. Trotter,” said Hector, thrusting forward one of the long grenadier glasses then in use, “ I will do any thing in reason, so that you will tell me the meaning of all this exordium.”

“ Weel, sir, as I was waiting upon the quality aboon, they had their cracks about the news o’ the time, and about king George up at Lunon; and how that, though his majesty is a passionate body, and when he’s in an anger

flytes like a kailwife, and kicks his hat and wig about the floor o' the auld palace at Saint James's; and then he'll swear, they say, like a German porter; yet in family affairs, at least, he's an exemplary man, and lives costily and cannily wi' his ain wife, and as for ony bye blows—that is, concerning certain court ladies that are said to be his mistresses—why the gray mare, after all, is weel kenn'd to be the better.....”

“Dear me, Mr. Trotter, how does this gossip about his majesty relate to me?” interrupted Hector. “I hope you will remember the point in hand—”

“Noo, young gentleman,” said the chief of the butlers, with all the energy of drink, added to the habit of inferior rule, “I warn you to beware how you break my thread. I'm just like a loch-leach, if you let me stick, I'll stick; but if you take me aff, the deevil a bit ye'll get me on again.”

“ Well, Mr. Trotter, just go on in your own way.”

“ Noo, that I call sense. Weel, about king George and his mistresses, and his father’s mistresses, and a’ their mistresses, and various matters o’ court scandal, which it’s the part o’ the quality to know and understand; they cracked above-stair the most pleasant and condescending jokes, which it’s time enough for you to hear, young gentleman, when your beard grows langer than your teeth, and does not become me to rehearse. But at length the talk came a little hand-awa-hame, and it was allowed that his majesty and the Lunon folk, whatever were the blessings enjoyed under the protestant succession, did not pay that attention to Scotland, that her importance in the realm deserved. Weel, from that the conversation diverged to the contankerous and canstrary state of the Highlands, and how that the laws could not be executed, and malefactorers could not be executed in decency and quietness, and how that a

strange fallow they ca'ed M'Naughton that was ta'en up for cattle-lifting and hamesucken, had been fished out of Perth Tolbooth nobody could tell how, and was now living in some glen in Breadalbane, and setting the puissant law, and the whole lords o' justiciary, and the lords o' session, and the Lord Breadalbane, my master himsel, and every other lord at black defiance; and so, never looking o'er his shouther at one of them, the auld reiver lived there as if he had never heard o' the hangman. Then came talk about the Black Watch, and how they were sure to take care o' the hills, and how there was naething but gentlemen to be the common men, and how that twa gentlemen lads of the name of M'Pherson, whilk were the brag of a' Breadalbane, had joined them. And how that they were such clever fellows at handling the broadsword—and so came a conversation about the cleverness of the Highland lads, and ilka ane behoved to brag about wha was the best swordsman that he knew; and

at length and lang, the laird of Glenmore, being a wee thought dizzy wi' the drink sup, nae doubt, swears in the face of my earl, that he'll produce a youth hardly nineteen, that'll beat at that weapon any grown man within the laird's ha'. Then up gets the earl wi' a thump o' his faulded neeve on the table; and he swears an oath, as a nobleman ought, that he'll pit young Saundy Crombie, that's the Honourable Mr. Crombie, as he's called, the son of Lord Libberton, against ony swordsman that can be produced by ony gentleman at the table. And so the braggadocia went round, and you were praised by the laird of Glenmore to no allowance, and asked for all over the castle, and the Honourable Saundy Crombie, as we call him, coming in at the time—for he had gotten the begunck frae some lady at the dance—he took up the talk, and swore and blasted that he would fight ony man at the broadsword frae Kilsyth to Killdrummy; and then it was made up, that you and he were to fight a sham fight

to the drawing of blood, or the showing of swordsmanship, to-morrow, at two hours after noon; and the laird has been seeking you all over the castle to tell you the matter. What do you look sae dour for noo, Maister Monro?"

"This is a strange tale, Mr. Trotter."

"It's a very good tale, sir, and very much to your credit," said the functionary with a confident consciousness of drunken good sense, "and ye need not fauld your arms across your brisket like an Angusshire piper. I ken what I'm saying."

"I do not doubt your word, Mr. Trotter; but I think they might have consulted me before they appointed me to a show of this kind. I do not choose to be made an exhibition of for the pleasure of any set of men over their cups."

"Then if that is the way you talk of the quality, Mr. Monro," said the major-domo, starting to his feet, "I have no hopes of you. I tell you what, sir, I've lived nearly threescore years in the world, and never knew a man pros-

per who crossed the will o' the quality o' the land, or spoke against the kirk or the minister."

"I am bound to pay respect to your experience, Mr. Trotter, but I cannot help my feelings, on being thus made the subject of undertakings in which my own consent has never been asked."

"Then ye'll no fight, Mr. Monroe, is that it?"

"I did not say that; but I think there might have been that respect paid to me before the paction was made as to——"

"Hoogh! if it's naething but a bit flaught o' Highland pride," said the shrewd servitor, resuming his seat, "it'll blaw bye, and ye'll win honour and renown yet, afore the ladies, and I'll win my ten gold guineas."

"Before the ladies, Mr. Trotter? is that also in the bond?"

"For certain it is. Do ye think there could be a flourishing o' sword, and a showing aff o' bodily cleverness by young men on the

greensward without the ladies being to see it ? And there's ane o' them, a bit young thing o the quality, the sweetest creature—ooh man !—her vera een, when she looks at you anoth the bonny hassock o' hair that twirls round her brow, would turn an auld man's heart young again. But ye've seen her, and she has seen you too, lad. I hae an ee in my neck."

"What can you mean ? who has seen me ? You surprise me more and more, Mr. Trotter."

"Ooh to be sure, ye'll be surprised, as if ye didna ken what I was speaking about. But I'm an auld sneck-drawer, and hae lang lugs ; and so ye see, when I was up stairs yesterday, poutering at a bit stain on the tapestry on the wrang side, wha should come whisking through but Madam Teenie, as she's called, and Miss Helen Ruthven ; and the young thing joked madame about how a Highland youth had helped her down some hill in the park, high-heeled shoon and a',—meaning you, Mr. Monro,—as featly as if ye had been a lord ; and the lady cackled

like a clocking hen at the thoughts of your flattering Highland gallantry, and praised you up, nae doubt; but the young ane was a wee thought jealous, I could see that. And then, after that, Jenny, the bit prinped-up lassie that dresses the ladies in the morning, she behoved to cast herself in my way this forenoon, after the quality had gaen out to the promenade, and she began speering sly questions at me, and came round about, and round about, until she began to inquire about you, and what was your name, and where ye came from, and every thing. I kend it was just to tell her lady, and I said so to her, and the young baggage turned red in the face. O thae women! thae women! I hae been lang used to their tricks."

Hector could not help smiling, but almost turned "red in the face" himself, on hearing of this flattering interest taken concerning him; although, as he considered a little, his brow again darkened down at the idea of all this his present freedom and confidence, even with the

chief butler in the house of Pharaoh. But the occasion was too tempting for the gratification of his curiosity by means of the talkative old man, and he determined to go on.

“Then *I* will not go round about and round about, as you say,” said Hector; “but straight forward ask you to oblige me by telling me all you can of this young lady. I confess I *have* noticed her; and if she has gained your admiration so highly, it is nought remarkable that she should have also gained mine.”

“Odd, it’s little that I can tell you,” said the man, “but that she is an only daughter, and, I believe connected with gentry of high quality; and ye may admire her as ye like, but it maun be at a distance, much as I do mysel; for it is roundly said, that she is trysted by her father to marry the very gentle that has undertaken to fight you wi’ the broadsword the morn. How his honour, young Crombie, has learned to be sic a champion, I know not; for though he has great lands in the Highlands, by right of his

mother, who was a Campbell, his life has been mostly spent in the Lowlands, where he was born, and where, no doubt, the breadth and width of his father's estates, besides the title, he being the eldest son, is the chief foundation to the lady's father to encourage this match; for well I wot, Crombie himself is no great bargain to tempt a bonnie young lassie, either for his outward man or his inner. But that's nae ferlie, for ye ken the quality marry aye for siller and titles, whilk is perfectly right, just to keep the breed up, as the horse coupers say, and the estates thegither. But I forgot to tell you, that the bonnie creature hersel is not the least taen wi' this braggadocia lordling; for he's rough and uncouth for a' his quality, besides having big knoity knees o' his ain, and calves to his legs like an Edinburgh caudy: and the night at the ball, he *would* dance wi' her, right or wrang, and *did* dance wi' her, by her ain good-nature; but the fool overshot the mark, in his roughness, as I hear tell—and

so she gied him the begunck, as I said before, and slipped aff frae the ball no one could tell whither; and that was the time his honour came bleezing into the sober company that were drinking wi' the earl, and me waiting by. And so he came swaggering in, as I said, wi' a brow as black as night; and, being affronted wi' the ladies, he began to brag and blast about his swordsmanship; and the earl behoved to take his part against Glenmore and you, in respect he was of quality; and so ye maun draw blood o' him the morn, or faith, my brave youth, though ye were e'er so gentle, your time's up here in auld Balloch."

"I fear nought, as the motto has it," said Hector; "and I thank you, Mr. Trotter, for the information you have given me. So, as it is time that I should retire, I had better move to my own quarters."

"Would ye really," said the major-domo in alarm,—“would ye really rise, and sae mickle gude drink before you, when ye know what ye

hae to do the morn? If ye dinna drink to put strength in you, after fasting all day, where do you think ye'll be when ye come before the ladies; and what'll I do for my ten guineas? Odd, if ye just drink another caupful like that, I'll wager five red guineas more on your head—for it would gravel me to the bottom o' my stomach, to see that knoity-kneed Crombie win the day, although he *be* of quality. And ye needna be a bit disdainfu' to take your glass beside me, for the auld earl himsel often speaks to me like a perfect brither, and whyles he and I crack our crack thegither, like pen guns. But faith here's something to do without, and I maun rin. Deevil's in thae blackguards o' mine! the bells may ring till the tongues fa' out o' them, afore they answer ane o' them. After this time o' night the scoundrels o' the ha' nae mair mind the quality than I would as mony Kilsyth kailwives."

With this the old man, making a professional congée, and putting his face into the true form

of a good barking jowler, set off, with a true waiter trot, up the long passage.

Thus left to himself, Hector had the desired opportunity, which he soon availed himself of, of slipping off, to meditate on the events of the day, and the probabilities of the morrow, within the solitude of his own apartment.

CHAPTER XVII.

Now in the valley he stands ; thro 's youthful face
 Wrath checks the beauty, and sheds manly grace.
 Both in his looks so join'd, that they might move
 Fear even in friends, and from an enemy love.

COWLEY.

Celia. I would I were invisible, to catch the strong
 fellow by the leg.

Rosalind. O excellent young man !

Celia. If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can
 tell who should down.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN great events—for events are great only
 by our conception of them—when great events
 have just past, or are just at hand—and by
 both of these was Hector now encompassed—
 how can men be expected to sleep? Accord-
 ingly, our youth lay tossing and tumbling in
 the little ill-furnished cell, which in those days

served for a dormitory in such old-fashioned buildings as Balloch castle, for a long time, but sleep he could get none.

The moonbeam that at first shone clear in at the loop-hole window of his little hole in the tower, gradually became fainter, and moved farther round the wall of the apartment; and at last its light seemed suddenly to go out, like the departure of the frail spirit of man,—as if the good queen of night, weary with watching, had at once taken the resolution of retiring hastily to her rest.

He watched, as he still lay sleepless—the sound of music in the hall, and then the distant boom of merriment farther off, die away on the listening ear; and all below subside into that sentimental sort of silence, which we experience when lying awake in a great country mansion:—in such circumstances, the scenery with which we are conscious of being surrounded, seems to mix with the idea of silence itself; and that impressive *voice* of nature never appears broken, or divested of its solemnity, even by the occa-

sional moan of the midnight air, that, like the mysterious spirit of darkness, seems to sigh away among the distant hills, and at the same instant to breathe an undefined whisper at the very window of the imaginative watcher.

What the thoughts were that kept Hector awake, the events themselves will fully explain, at least as such events would be viewed in the fanciful days of youth, when every thing that happens appears of importance, to an ardent and ambitious mind. If the scene, however, on the balcony, to him so romantic and unexpected, was the subject of the most minute and delicious meditation, the events of the morrow were looked forward to, and imagined in all their bearings and with all their chances, with a natural and feverish anxiety. Not that he feared for himself, or wanted courage to face any event; but when he reflected upon the many things, that, after all, may turn the fortune of a trial like this, in spite of the best skill and effort, and contemplated the bare possibility of a failure before so many witnesses, and in the

presence of one for whose admiration he would wage war with the world, the nervous feeling, engendered by a clear perception of consequences, sometimes struck home to his heart, with that same sort of impatient solicitude that so often disturbs the tranquillity of the busy years of manhood.

From that know-nothing state, however, into which he ultimately fell, and which has so often been compared to the condition of the dead, he was, late in the morning, gradually aroused by several hearty shakes by the shoulder, and, looking up, perceived the tall portly figure of M'Evan himself.

“Up, my good youth—up, and to battle, as the song has it,” said the chief. “By my faith, thou sleepest soundly on a morning like this. Yet I like this refreshing tranquillity of nature, when there is so much before thee: it bespeaks confidence, and bodes good for the issue of the day; for Mr. Trotter, I understand, has told you of what passed regarding you last night, and what depends upon your skill and courage

this blessed day. Lord, Hector, if you gain the victory, 'twill be the first and most difficult step gained up the ladder of fortune. If you lose the day, 'twill be a sad affront to me, that at least I may tell you."

"I am ready and confident, sir," said Hector, starting up, and yet speaking solemnly. "And I have not been without thought of what I have to lose, should fortune turn against me on this trial. So, although I have not the advantage of years and tough sinews, yet in the words of Finlarig, the son of Phadric in our Gaelic song, sharp will be his bright blade, and steady his eye, who shall win the victory from me this day."

"Now that, my brave fellow, is both courageous and poetic, and just like yourself," said the admiring chief, extending to Hector his ample hand; "so now dress yourself with care, and leave not your best looks behind you; for if I mistake not, there will be more eyes upon you to-day than those of the rough carls of the Bredalbane hills."

When our youth had made his toilet, with an instinctive persuasion of the importance of personal appearance on a day like this, he descended with more confidence than usual to breakfast, which he expected would be provided for him in circumstances at which his pride should, not as formerly, revolt. He found, however, the mansion and its inmates in a tolerable pickle of Highland confusion, from the effects of the dissipation of the preceding night. Of the men, it was only the hard-headed Highlanders, or the more seasoned drinkers, that were yet out of bed. The ladies were still, "to a man," in the downy arms of Morpheus. All the doors stood wide open as Hector past, and the ill-aroused servants, who were attachés of the place, unaccustomed to late hours and certain kinds of drink, went about yawning and scratching their towsy heads, in a manner that, as the major-domo said, was nae doubt national and natural enough for a wheen lurdans that couldna keep their hands frae their heads the night afore, but was a rank disrespect to the quality.

To add to the confusion that seemed to reign in the lower regions of the old mansion, there had already arrived a whole legion of inferior retainers, or under-tenants of the earl, as well as numerous thirty-third cousins of every servant there employed ; who, hearing of the grand “ feast ” of the previous night, came to make interest with their several relations then in power at the castle, for the various fragments and “ lickings of plates,” which were likely to be given away on so benign an occasion. Besides this locust visitation of servants—servants of all sorts, who on various pretences had come at least to drink drams with their “ gude friends ” in place, and success to the noble house of Breadalbane, there soon was added to them the whole tail of the laird, Hector’s friend, now provided for at the neighbouring village of Kenmore, for want of room at the castle ; who, hearing of the trial of skill that day to take place, had already swarmed down from their quarters on so good an excuse,

to help off with the fragments of the feast, and increase the multitude.

Above all, this “disrespectful” din of dogs and men, which already had taken place about the rearward precincts of the old building, the loud barking of Mr. Trotter’s voice, as adjutant-general of the establishment, was distinctly heard, boasting away the most irreverent and tatterdemalion claimants, in language strictly appropriate to the occasion; for he being a man who hated confusion, out of respect to the quality, contrived to increase it himself in an eminent degree, by the means he took in his puissant officiousness to restore order, and to quell this unnatural rebellion of the kitchen population. “Deevil blast you!” said he to some of the discharged claimants—for he was apt to speak unguardedly; “if I wouldna rather satisfy a leash o’ hungry hounds, than I would stand here to redde the quarrels of a set o’ ill-bred rabiautors. My life is not worth the living, if I’m to be pestered this way within and without.

And here is a perfect crowd come round us this morning, as if the dear-meal times were come again, and this body's friend, and the tither body's oe, laying the auld castle o' Balloch under a perfect siege; while our ain quality are standing within, kicking their heels to keep them warm, and whistling a norland tune for lack o' their breakfast."

It was quite true what the old man said; for on passing through, our hero found Glenmore himself and another Highland laird wearying their morning away in an empty room, and whistling aloud to keep their courage up, while they could get no satisfaction out of a fitful Babel of Highland gabble, which they heard occasionally from the various outposts of the inner citadel of the larder. There being nothing in this, however, particularly new to them at their several homes, the gentlemen took the matter exceedingly patiently, and Hector was welcomed by Glenmore with his usual kindness; and being formally introduced to

the laird of Whinhills, and received by that dignitary with much Highland state, all began now to think of "their morning" with some anxiety. At length they heard in the passage a welcome rattling of dishes, and shortly after the short pattering trot of Mr. Trotter seemed to pass the door of their apartment.

"Whaur are ye jingling to?" they heard him say to the man without, "wandering about there, as confused in the head as a dizzy guse. Didna I tell you to take in the cauld haggis, forebye the pasty and the aqua-vitæ, to the gentlemen in the yellow room, and keep the wheatbread and the moor-hens to the ladies.—But come this way, ye fule! since ye *are* on the road. Your servant, gentlemen," he said, following his inferior Gibeonite into the room. "Here's a mouthfu' o' breakfast at last. I maun make free to apologeese for the way I have kept you fasting here; but, to attend to the quality, as they ought to be attended, is not in the power o' nature, especially after such a night as last."

“ I am sure you have a heavy charge, Mr. Trotter,” said M‘Evan, with a wink to his black-visaged friend, as he began “ their morning” by filling up good bumpers of the aqua-vitæ ; “ I really wonder how you can carry the whole weight of this establishment on your shoulders.”

“ Charge, laird, indeed ! it’s a charge, as ye say, that would put any other man but mysel perfectly demented. There’s now, since last night, some wi’ meat and some wi’ drink, and some wi’ natural-born stupidity, there’s no one frae the scullion to the valet, who is worth kicking out of one’s road ; and so, as ye say, the whole weight of Balloch castle is on my puir shoulders. Nae wonder I’m brusten, keeping the blackguards in order.”

Before our small company had quite finished their breakfast, and their conversation, however, the honest major-domo seemed in better humour, and entered again with a whole budget of news about what the earl above had just commu-

nicated to him concerning the arrangements which he meant should take place for the convenient accommodation of the noble and honourable spectators of this interesting trial of skill, particularly in one so young as Hector was described to be.

These arrangements will appear in the sequel, but in the mean time the gates of Balloch policies being thrown open, crowds began to arrive to witness a scene in which Highlanders, high and low, take such an interest ; and Hector was advised not to make his appearance publicly without, until the hour should arrive when the assembled company should be waiting for him.

During the few hours that elapsed before the minute appointed, or rather indeed from the previous night when Mr. Trotter gave it wind, the news had reached into the great valley of Glenlyon, had run along the northern side of Loch Tay, as far even as Finlarig castle, and up among the houses that studded the strath beneath Drummond hill, as far as Castle Men-

zies' Hermitage, and the old town of Aberfeldy, so every body would go to see so braw a show.

“By the memory of Fingal and the shade of Cathulin, the auld spirit o' the hills has not yet departed from us, although they *have* taken the swords from us that our fathers wore,” said the poetic Highlanders of Strath Tay, as they hid each a dirk under the drapery of their plaids, and set off to see this unexpected display.

“It's a braw day and a hopeful time, after all,” said others, “when the Earl o' Breadalbane himsel patronizes the play o' the broadsword—by which we have won so many battles, and our forbears so much renown—by a fair trial of skill and manhood beneath the venerable walls o' the auld castle o' Bealach, whare the great knight o' Lochaw once held his court. And then, they say, that there's a routh of lords and ladies frae the south, that are feasting and banqueting there. Come awa, lads, and make haste, for nae doubt it 'll be a braw sight.”

With such exclamations of cherished enthusiasm and feudal attachment, not only did a number of the gentlemen and their tenants, scattered up the long valley of the Tay, set off to the gathering, but many Highland ladies, their dames or daughters, hearing talk of nought but fine young men of gentle blood, upon whose skill the Earl of Breadalbane had laid his wager, dressed themselves hastily in kirtle and calash, and away they would go to see the tourney. Besides this, the men of the Black Watch, officers, and rank and file, (for they were but little distinguished on their own hills,) taking an immediate interest in a trial like this, flocked in hundreds down the valley of Glenlyon, and the earl himself was really astonished when he observed the bands of the Gael who crowded the long avenues of the delightful pleasure-grounds of Taymouth.

The appointed hour now drew nigh, and a crowd already waited at the place named, such as never before had been seen under the hoary

walls of Balloch castle. The spot chosen was a green hollow, nearly circular ; for overlooking it was a series of those gradual undulations which makes the grounds of Taymouth valley so picturesque ; and on the opposite side rose a low crescent-shaped knoll, on the top of which the earl had erected a large old-fashioned marque tent, which Mr. Trotter had unrolled from some of the lumber-rooms of the castle, and which, with a flag flying at the top, and many poles and props to keep it in form, now made quite a picturesque and showy object. Within the ample area of this erection, seats were placed, as Mr. Trotter said, for the accommodation and comfort of the quality—the ladies being intended to sit in front ; and the major-domo, in his thoughtfulness, had caused also tables to be placed within, and several other comforts to be in readiness, which, when set before those for whom they were intended, were very much calculated to set mouths a-watering, and to increase that envy as well as admiration, with which

the rich and great are naturally regarded by their inferiors.

Numbers were yet flocking down the avenues to join the crowd already assembled round the spot, when a splendid array was seen to issue from the great entrance of the castle. The same enormity of hoop and head-dress which had excited Hector's wonder on the day before, now excited the same in many a breast, who witnessed for the first time so much personal grandeur. The aristocratic assemblage was now much larger than it had been on the day before. On the present occasion every one, except those we have afterwards to mention, who at the time were entertained at the castle, walked in the train of the Lowland lords, and others who were near the person of the earl himself, and who paid their ceremonious gallantries to the ladies. Among the train appeared, with little good taste, the challenging combatant, the Hon. M'Crombie himself, who, with much of that arrogant roughness of man-

ner, so often the effect of a senseless confidence in mere birth, chose to play the champion and the hero of the day before the ladies, and ultimately to show himself to the spectators, previous to the arrival of his opponent, in a way which, while it certainly procured him some backers among the men, by no means preposessed the better, or the female, part of the audience in his favour.

By way, however, of recommending himself, by the appropriateness of his costume, M'Crombie had arrayed himself in the dress of the hills—short tartan coat, philebeg and all, and strode about on the sward, with his broadsword under his arm, very much at least to his own satisfaction. In spite, however, of the encomiums that have been passed upon the Gaelic costume, it is not to be denied that upon some men it *does* look abominably ill. The Hon. M'Crombie was a short, broad-made figure, whose person, though ill-formed and bony, bore the indication of great strength, and his face had the

appearance of good Highland determination. But his broad black features, and the aged expression of his countenance, although he was not more than five-and-twenty, looked peculiarly ill under the flat Highland bonnet; the green tartan of his short-tailed, long-bodied coat, sat as ungracefully as possible upon his squat square figure, and his large knees, however brawny, and now of course left in *puris naturalibus*, to be more appropriate with the usual furnishing on the skin of a very dark man, appeared beneath his thick-plaited kilt, with an effect which, even in the eyes of the mountain ladies, was far from either pleasant or delicate.

A feeling of coolness, if not of disappointment, ran through the crowd on the appearance in the area of this doughty challenger, and many of the tall handsome Highlanders of the Black Watch, standing around on the knolls, could hardly suppress their sneering remarks, as he strutted about, waiting for his adversary, "as proud and pricked up as a piper's cock,"

as they said, and certainly looking in all the faces round with conscious bravery, and as conscious gentility.

“Is that your champion?” said a lady, enthusiastic for Gaelic bravery, to her husband in the crowd. “He may be of gentry, or he maybe no; but I would just like to see him trysted here wi’ sergeant M‘Leod o’ the Black Watch. If the sergeant wadna tirl the rings off his gentle fingers, or at least gar him look less like a peacock in June, I’m sair mistaen.”

“And so ye are mistaen, Jannet,” replied the husband of the lady, in the proper spirit of matrimonial contradiction; “so are ye mistaen, for, besides his great strength, which any one might see but a silly woman, isna the fame of Lord Libberton’s son weel known, far and near, for a swordsman that’s not to be equalled, maybe frae Banff to Breadalbane? Hold your tongue, woman, and dinna gie your haveral

opinion upon what you know nothing about. But here's the tother ane."

A buz among the crowd announced the approach of those who now began to be impatiently looked for, and an opening being made, a small party, in front of which the portly persons of Glenmore and the laird of Whinhills were most conspicuous, between whom walked a youthful figure, whose dress indicated his important station, at least in the events of the morning. These personages were followed by a considerable body of Breadalbane and Athol men, who formed the tails of the chiefs, in whose train they now, as in duty bound, walked to the trial.

When Hector stepped into the area appointed for the combat, a buz of surprise, in all, mingled with admiration in some, and doubt in others, made him at once an object of the highest interest to the multitude, even independent of the task in which he was about to engage. A

mere stripling compared to the other, though tall and even athletic for his years, his fine youthful face, comparatively slim figure, and graceful, if not gallant bearing, formed a contrast as strong as well could be conceived, between himself and his thick, sturdy, swaggering opponent. This was made still more apparent, as, led forward between Glenmore and the other laird, our youth was introduced for the first time to the Honourable M'Crombie ; for when they stood opposite to each other, and, moving off his bonnet, our youth gracefully saluted him whom he was about to engage, his handsome prominent features, bold sparkling eyes, and the thick-curled locks of shining auburn, which this action displayed, made the other's dark, haughty, elderly look—his black broad features, and square Lowland wig, which the fashion of the time compelled his honour to wear, but upon which the Highland bonnet sat with an effect that was positively vile—to form altogether, an opposite to our hero,

as complete as if it had been a matter of pains-taking invention.

The attention to appearances, of the importance of which Hector was not insensible, and in which he was eagerly seconded in the interval by the servants within the castle, had certainly not been thrown away on the present occasion. Since the time of his original entrance into Perth, he had never worn the kilt, and delicacy, as well as habit, forbade the adoption of it on a day like this. The trews, therefore, or rather barred and diced trowsers, of the red and white tartan, clothed his limbs; which, with white silk hose and small buckles in his shoes, looked exceedingly handsome on a well-formed youth. His waistcoat was of scarlet cloth, edged with yellow, he having positively rejected embroidery; and, modestly considering the uncertainty of his birth, it was with some difficulty that Glenmore could even get him to assume the double cock's feather in his bonnet, by the argument that he could not stand before such an opponent

without wearing the assumed badge of a gentleman.

But it was upon his upper garment—which, in some respects, might be merely styled a jacket—that, the picturesque distinction of Hector's costume chiefly depended. Formed of light blue cloth, and fitted close to his shape, yet trimmed all round with a variegated edging of otter-skin fur, it seemed to bear a medium between the Highland and Lowland styles of costume; but the sleeves being slashed or divided a considerable way up, and inside the arms, the sides of the open parts thickly ornamented with bell buttons, and the open interval filled up with pink satin, and hooked across by antique shaped clasps,—gave it the appearance of a compound of the Polish jerkin and the English slashed doublet of the olden time.

How this garment had been made to assume so picturesque an appearance, it is unimportant to tell, excepting to hint, that for several of its more elaborate ornaments, as well as, probably,

its general style, he was mainly indebted to a certain damsel of the castle having got her hands over it—namely, she whom Mr. Trotter had designated as “the forward primped-up lassie,” who waited in an especial manner upon the Lady Helen Ruthven. In truth, previous to the jerkin being carried by Trotter, to whom it was originally entrusted, to Mary Morrison, the damsel in question, a conversation respecting our youth had taken place between herself and her mistress, in which, although it consisted only of a few delicately expressed inquiries, the young lady let out more sentiments of interest concerning him and the forthcoming combat than she had intended; and while the girl was, of course, no way surprised at a feeling so natural towards one of Hector’s appearance, it afforded her a cue to do whatever she could to make that appearance as interesting as possible in her lady’s eyes.

This handsome garment, however, surmounted by a sash or belt of dark green silk, which

crossed his breast from his shoulder, in place of the more cumbrous plaid, and into which his broadsword was fixed, together with the trews on his limbs, and a wide crowned bonnet set smartly on his curled hair, a few streams of ribbon hanging over his exposed ear, made him altogether a figure at which all present expressed their highest admiration. In this sentiment even those concurred who, from various indications of strength and years, &c., were quite decided in anticipating the victory for his opponent. But of all the assembled multitude who now gazed upon the youthful competitor for fame, there was one heart among the aristocratic company within the tent, which leaped in admiration on the first buz of the crowd at his appearance, and which, partly from an involuntary partiality, (at least for the moment,) and partly from a disgusted feeling towards his adversary, now trembled with anxiety for the event of the day. We had almost forgotten to mention, besides his other accoutrements, our

youth carried on his left arm, as well as his opponent, a small round target made of hard wood and covered with strong bull's hide, which being studded round the edges and in the centre with antique ornaments of polished brass, had a war-like as well as gay appearance.

But the chief admiration and interest which Hector's appearance and bearing had already procured for him, was among the quality company within the marque, and the ladies in particular,—always the best judges of what is tasteful in the exterior, and the most ready in perceiving indications of intelligence, and among whom, moreover, the honourable gentleman had as yet made few friends,—were loud in their praises of our young hero; but, to the involuntary concern of one eager listener, they seemed far more anxious for, than sanguine of, his success against so powerful an antagonist. The lords and gentlemen, taken quite by surprise by the appearance of a stranger, of whose presence in the castle they had hitherto taken no notice,

were yet, to the dismay of Helen, from their knowledge of Crombie's swordsmanship, still more decided in their opinions in the latter's favour. To show, however, his respect for our youth, as well as testify his interest in the trial, the earl himself rose, and descending into the area beneath, addressed a few words to Glenmore, who, along with another Highland gentleman, whom his lordship called from the tent, was appointed umpire of the trial combat. All being now considered ready, no other ceremony was thought necessary, than that, in default of trumpets to sound the charge, the earl's piper, then in attendance, joined with another from the Black Watch, also on the ground, should set their instruments in order, and blow up a short and a pithy blast befitting the occasion.

At the first "skreed" of their popular music, which sounded over the heads of the people from the knoll where the marque stood, and whose loud echo was sent back upon the ear from the ancient walls of old Balloch, the whole

people of the assembly began to cock their ears in Highland enthusiasm, and every man present who had a clymore by his side, seemed ready himself to spring into the arena.

“ He’ll do yet ! he’ll do yet ! ” cried the thin voice of the major-domo, to another half-gentleman like himself, as, standing under the tent, he watched the kindling of Hector’s eye. “ Iv’e wager’d ten gowd guineas on his head ! and I see he’ll do yet. It’s no that I’m fear’d for the penny siller, but it would spite me to the bone, to see that bonnie young lad, that the lady has fa’en in love wi’, o’ercome and affronted wi’ that haughty Lowlander. Deevil a bit but his honour is an ugly creature, although he *be* of quality. If it wasna that he’s of gentles’ bluid, and the born son of a Lowland lord, auld Nanze Mowat, the tinkler’s widow, has a son that is a perfect prince to him.”

With regard to Hector, who now stood ready for the trial, it is not to be denied, that all this preparation, and the solemnity of the presence

of such a multitude, to witness efforts of skill which never before had been shown in public, had their effect both upon his nerves and his native modesty, to increase his own anxiety as to the result of the contest. Had Glenmore considered well what human nature was, he would have paused before he put the feelings and presence of mind of so mere a youth to a test so severe, as risking his reputation and perhaps his whole after fortune, upon a trial, where so many eyes were upon him, that their very number and the importance of the opinions of his witnesses, with the solicitude he must feel in consequence, might unnerve his arm and take the quickness from his eye, and be productive of nought but defeat and misfortune. That Glenmore himself felt this, when it was too late, was evident from the anxiety with which he watched the countenance of Hector, and the eagerness with which he conveyed to him his instructions and exhortations. Had he known what was passing in the youth's bo-

som, in reference in particular to one who watched his bearing with the most intense solicitude, he would have perhaps felt still greater anxiety as to the result of the day's trial.

'The last blast of the stirring piobrachd was now nearly blown. The two youths stood eagerly eyeing each other. The ladies within the tent participated more than any in the general interest for Hector, and while the pipes were playing, a gentleman behind wove a bushy crown of laurel, which it was arranged should be placed on the head of the victor, by the youngest lady present. Who that lady was, we need hardly tell; and when the arrangement was announced by the noble earl to the young beauty of the circle, Helen Ruthven almost fainted from unexpected agitation, at the additional concern this gave her in the coming event.

At length the bagpipes ceased and the earl giving a sign, the two young men stepped into the centre of the arena. There was a firmness in the manner, and a confidence in the look of

both, which was exceedingly gratifying to the opposing parties, who had formed their expectations of victory for the combatants respectively. A profound silence now reigned over the whole assemblage, as the swords of the young men crossed each other, and eye began to watch eye with that intensity of perception, and quickness of inference and effort, that makes the skill, and gives the success, in a trial like the present.

Two minutes or less of this preliminary play, served to show the skilful among those who witnessed it, that the style of combat of the two youths was materially different; and as both styles had their defenders among the Highland swordsmen around, this circumstance added much to the interest of the occasion. To it, however, they went, with an earnestness every instant increasing; and now the swords flashed in the afternoon's sun, their targets rung more loudly with the short skilful strokes, and the youths more frequently changed their positions in the circle.

It now began to be perceived more distinctly in what the respective superiority of the combatants consisted ; and, to the further consternation of her who, with breathless anxiety, watched every motion of both, while she held the laurel crown for the head of the victor, she heard it generally agreed by those within hearing, that Crombie's mode of fighting, aided by his great strength of muscle, would ultimately be successful. Yet how they could conclude this, she could not conceive ; for every motion of Hector's bespoke such self-possession, and such command of his weapon, and withal, such a watchful perception of his adversary's intentions, that she and the ladies around her anticipated nothing for him but certain victory. But the handsome face and figure of Hector, and the necessary partiality that they created, had entirely carried away what judgment they could have on such a matter, while, by the men near, who deceived themselves with no such feelings, his style was considered too highly sci-

entific, too playful, and even too elegant, for the forward braggadocia, but imposing manner and heavy swinging blows of his sturdy opponent.

The parties had now tacitly stopped a few moments to rest, and they stood in the centre, leaning slightly on their swords, and anxiously eyeing each other and the company, as if taking breath for a more serious and a more decisive onset; for so well did they seem to be matched, after all, that the last *heat* had arisen in intensity towards its close, like the rapid risings of bravura music, without either party having gained apparently the slightest advantage. From the loud acclamations, however, in commendation of Hector, from every part of the crowd, not only for his appearance, but for the unexpected science he had displayed, it was evident that our hero had greatly gained ground in the opinion of the audience. Another scream of the bagpipes seconded the impatience of the people, and to it our combatants went for the ultimate trial, as if determined to end the con-

test with little loss of time. Crombie went in upon our youth with looks of vengeance, and obvious evidence of secret mortification at the unexpected skill and agility that he found in his opponent; while Hector held him at bay, with the same coolness as formerly, and with an evident increase of manly confidence.

The general scene of this encounter now presented to the admiring audience in the tent a perfect picture. The opposite declivities, thronged to a considerable distance with Highlanders of various ranks, with a thin sprinkling of women intermixed, and a few vehicles and horses on the exterior flanks, presented an imposing and amphitheatrical appearance; for those in the front having seated themselves on the sward, to allow of the others seeing over their heads, the whole, notwithstanding their eager interest in what was going forward, stood perfectly at rest, and thus the arena was kept clear without the slightest confusion. But it was the active combatants who struggled within the

circle, upon whom every eye was intensely fixed, and who, contrasted as they were in figure and costume, presented of course the most interesting part of the picture. Animated as he was in the eagerness of the encounter, of Hector it was remarked, particularly by the females, that, merely in the artless freedom of nature, his stripling figure uniformly presented attitudes of the most perfect grace, and occasionally some which would have charmed a sculptor, even still more, perhaps, than they did the aristocratic personages within the marque.

But the struggle was now becoming rapidly too serious even for remarks like these ; for, the object being to cut off with the sword some slight portion of the dress, or at most to touch lightly some part of the body, to show by inference a reserved power over life itself, and every attempt of this sort being skilfully met by the sword and shield of Hector, Crombie's dark eyes began to flash with a malignant scowl of disappointment ; provocation upon provocation seemed to have

turned the trial of skill to a serious combat, and strokes began to be given and lunges to be made, which looked extremely like a mutual effort for life or death. The assembled company were so taken by surprise by this change, that no one had the power to utter an exclamation, until a sudden spring of Crombie, and an attempt to grapple, obliged Hector to avoid a mortal thrust by quickly dropping on one knee.

A wild shout now burst from the people, unable to interpret the meaning of this movement in any other way than as victory for "the philebeg," and the cry that was raised throughout the multitude, smote to the heart of the fair spectatress in the tent, with the painful meaning, that he whom she watched so intently had suffered a defeat. When she saw him spring to his feet, however, and, turning his face to the earl and his friends, hold up his sword in the air, as if appealing to his noble audience, while shouts of "False play !" and "The brave youth

in the trews !” drowned the first mistaken murmur ; her blood returned with so sudden a revulsion, of such delight and admiration, that she was hardly able to support herself on her seat.

“ Again, again ! spare him not !” shouted the crowd, and without waiting for a word from the astonished umpires, Hector, now in earnest, sprang upon his adversary. A few passes more showed the mastery that our hero was obtaining, both over the weapon and the spirit of his adversary. Crombie now fought with a wild malignity that became quite reckless, but his despairing energy being still unsuccessful, he found himself after a few vigorous efforts, obliged to assume the defensive, which was by no means his forte, and Hector now pressed him round the arena in a style which elicited loud, almost tumultuous shouts of applause. While doing this, the animated eye of Hector seemed frequently to glance to a large cockade of scarlet ribbon, which, with consistent taste, the

honourable young man had stuck on the side of his bonnet, just over his right ear. While Crombie's arm was now extended in almost powerless defence, Hector, watching his opportunity, with a clean stroke, cut this ornament from its place, upon which a shout was set up that the contest was gained; but Crombie, with glaring eyes and clenched teeth, still continuing his efforts for one cut at his adversary, a cry from several voices of "Let him have it! give him the steel!" emboldened Hector to another aim, and avoiding a blow of the exasperated young man, he returned its intention by a dexterous touch of his point at the inside joint of Crombie's shoulder. This was the last thrust he was required to make. The sword fell powerless from the hand of him of the philebeg, while shouts of victory deafened the ears of the bystanders.

During these latter efforts, the anxiety of Helen was wound up to such a pitch that the sight left her eyes, and her ears were insensible

to whom the shout of victory really applied. When she saw, however, our youth of the doublet and trews come forward, sword in hand, between the portly figures of Glenmore and the other Highland gentlemen, who had now entered the arena, and bowing gracefully to the company in the tent, draw near to herself, the film left her eyes, a tumult of emotion raised the blood into her cheeks, and by the time he had knelt before her, the graceful tact and presence of mind, inseparable from the high-bred female character, when called to play a conspicuous part, came fully to her aid.

The feelings of pride and triumph which shone in Hector's eyes, as he looked up in the blushing face of the noble maiden, and which also swelled in her bosom, as she placed the laurel crown on his head, need not be made a matter of verbal description. The scene was so new to the simple people of the hills, and was in reality so accordant to their constitutional admiration of bravery and beauty, that they

caught its spirit with characteristic enthusiasm, and *the crowning act* of this interesting day, taking place in such dignified and respected presence, was followed by such shouts of exulting applause, as made the whole valley ring from Kinmore to Finlarig.

The piper of Balloch, or of Glenlyon, or of any other spot on these hills, never being *the last man* on any occasion, soon proclaimed his own presence, as well as the recent victory, by the deafening skirl of pipe and drone, in which he was instantly joined by several others from the Black Watch, who, blowing the wind into their bags, blew up such a blast, while “the quality” began to move from the field, as made old Balloch castle almost dance with the din, or at least caused it to sing—if prolonged and picturesque echoes, which turned the bagpipe *skirl* into real music, might be considered poetically vocal. A proud man was Glenmore this day. A merry *Andrew* was Andrew Trotter, the chief butler, provider, general manager,

and ten-guinea winner on this solemn occasion. "Such a day," he said, "had never been seen in Taymouth valley, since the one that the auld earl came of age, when thirteen hunder Highlandmen played the sword and eat the feast beneath the walls, and the red wine ran in the very gutters of Balloch castle."

It was with feelings, such as youth, and love, and the sense of native ambition, and pride hitherto humbled, and hopes hitherto depressed, only can know, that Hector Monro, wearing a crown of classic laurel, and by this one act elevated to the companionship of those by whom he had never before been noticed, joined the gay company; and proceeding on with it, amidst the gaze of hundreds, and the general buz of admiration, entered with the earl and his guests the front portals of the castle. Bowing to the high dames, who now were delighted to return their condescending courtesies to the stripling victor, with what pride our hero ascended the front stair of the

mansion—even then called great—but which has since been replaced in the modern castle, by a staircase which is justly the admiration of all that part of Scotland.

What a gratifying thing is honour, when it comes after humiliation ! What a marvellous thing is position, which at once changes a man into another being, or, like the metempsychosis of the east, transmigrates into the body a new soul, which it never knew before ! When our hero reached the drawing-room—we give the apartment a modern name to make ourselves understood—although modestly removing the bays from his head, he drew himself up to a height which nature never before had given him, and seemed to breathe an air, which at the moment he thought congenial to him, because exclusively reserved for the respiration of aristocracy.

It is the way of the world always to delight to honour, or delight to contemn. Hector was now (he deserved it, it is true, in some degree)

in the position of the man whom the world delighteth to honour. Honour now poured upon him, for it was the fashion of the hour, and condescension exceeded condescension. And he was grateful—like a youthful simpleton, to be grateful to people for pleasing themselves—and poured out his acknowledgments in good set terms ; and the listeners were gratified, because men delight to be praised for virtues to which they have no claim ; and the world seemed a new world to him, as in reality it was at the moment. But time, that pleases some, tries all, and so he found it.

There was one heart, however, that could reciprocate his feelings, erroneous as might be the origin of them, in this hour of elevation, and whose eye, although he did not know it, kindled to his, as they sat at meat, and as the majordomo himself waited behind both, and thought himself a great man “ even for that same.” But “ the forms of society,” that excellent artifice for spoiling human nature, kept them,

still more than ever, distant and distinct ; and after a night of dissipation, to which he was little accustomed, and which in reality he did not enjoy, our hero laid his head at last on his pillow, with a confused feeling of mixed triumph and regret, which referred him rather to to-morrow than to-day, for that happiness which still seems to elude the pursuer.

END OF VOL. I.

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