

LOCHANDHE.

CHAPTER I.

Oh mother, yet no mother!—'tis to you
My thanks for such distinguished claims are due.
You,—unenslaved to Nature's narrow laws,
Warm championess for Freedom's sacred cause,
From all the dry devoirs of blood and line,
From ties maternal, moral, and divine,
Discharged my grasping soul;—pushed me from shore,
And launched me into life without an oar.

Savage.

Estos rasgos de mi tan conocidos,
Esta carta, estos tristes caracteres,
Por tan preciosa mano dirigidos,
Cien veces los he visto.

JOJOE.

ON his arrival at Sanderson Mains, Amherst was disappointed to find that Cleaver had gone with his friend Macauley, to visit the town where that officer was stationed; and he felt his friend's absence still more, when he, the next morning, received the following letter:—

“TO AMHERST OAKENWOLD, ESQ.

“How shall my pen tell that which my lips could not utter! How shall I address you, whose name recalls those happy visions, once deemed substantial, but now faded for ever!—Yet they are sweet for memory to dwell upon!—To deny that I have loved—that I still love, would now be impossible. How, then, can I bring myself to divulge the agonizing secret, that must for ever crush all hope, and convert even the inward throbbings of my heart into a species of criminality?—For, Amherst, I never can be yours!—the proud and ancient house of Oakenwold never can admit into its bosom the tainted child of infamy.—How shall I proceed?—I am not the niece of Lord Eaglesholme,—I am his daughter,—the daughter of Lady Deborah Delassaux,—born during her husband’s life.

“The dreadful truth is told, and my heart is broken!—May Heaven dispose you to forget the existence of a wretch who cannot long burden this earth!—On you may its choicest blessings be showered!—And—yes—I may at least look for

that; for, surely, though visited by the cruel condemnation of mankind, I am yet faultless in the eye of an all-just and merciful Being.—That we may meet without offence in Heaven, is the only prayer, the only hope that clings to the decaying heart of her, who (though now without a name) once called herself

“ ELIZA MALCOLM.”

This communication was the grave of Amherst's lingering hopes. He threw himself down on his bed in an agony of despair, where he lay almost without consciousness for nearly an hour. Ten thousand contradictory thoughts then darted across his mind, like the flashes of lightning athwart the troubled sky, leaving, like them, no trace behind them. Recollecting how very proud his father was of the high antiquity, and the unsullied purity of his ancestral descent, he felt convinced, that no marriage, not having high family connection to recommend it, would be palatable to him. But to think of nuptials calculated to produce a positive blot in the family escutcheon,—of a description, too, so very objectionable!—it would drive the old man mad!—Yet to aban-

don all idea of Eliza Malcolm!—never again to see her, whose candour, magnanimity, disinterestedness, and love, had been so powerfully shown, even in the very sacrifice she was making!—

A faint flash of hope again succeeded. Like the spark, at first almost imperceptible, but gradually rising into a flame, spreading and widening until it sets the mighty forest in a blaze, it quickly grew into strength, and again illuminated the darkness of his soul. “She has all along passed as the niece of Lord Eaglesholme,—why may she not still do so? The truth has never yet been suspected, and why may not so justifiable a deceit be kept up for ever? Yes, yes, my adorable Eliza!—mine you shall be! Merciful Heaven never could have placed such a treasure of beauty, virtue, and pure attachment, almost within my embrace, and then forbid me to enjoy the bliss!—Dolt—fool that I was, to overlook so simple a remedy. I will write to her directly—not a moment shall be lost. We may live together in Scotland;—or we can go abroad, until the cruel Lady Deborah, and all those who are old enough to throw a suspicion over her birth, have ceased in the course of nature to exist. Better

that we should bury ourselves in the wild woods of America,—that I should become a hunter of the forest for her sake,—and that her sustenance should depend on the exertions of these limbs,—than that we should be rent for ever asunder to the certain destruction of both. 'Twas noble in her to write as she has done. But I must now do my part."

Filled with these romantic thoughts, he snatched up a pen, and sat down to embody them on paper; and dispatched O'Gollochar with a letter, as remarkable for the delicacy of its expression, as for the tenderness and strength of the passion it displayed. He ended an eloquent appeal, by saying, that he trusted all obstacles would vanish before the plain and happy expedient so naturally suggesting itself, and by imploring Miss Malcolm to permit him to wait on her immediately.

Having taken this step, his mind became calmer, and he was enabled to present himself at breakfast, where, to his no small surprise, he found Sir Alisander seated, who, in defiance of his habits of indolence, had risen several hours earlier than usual in compliment to his guest's return.

They had hardly sat down when the voice of

Cleaver was heard upon the stairs. Even Sir Alisander started up to meet him with a welcome. He entered the room with a shout of good natured salutation, followed by the hearty squeeze and shake of the hand, that spoke the honesty as well as the warmth of his expressions.

“Well, my Lady!—well, Sir Alisander!—glad to see you again, from the bottom of my heart!—Amherst, my boy, what cheer?—Overjoyed, upon my soul, to see you safe in harbour before me—We sailed last night with a fair breeze—wind chopped round in our teeth, and so have been beating about all night.—What! at breakfast, eh?—I an’t sorry for that—though I did have a slice or two of excellent grilled salmon this morning by way of a damper.”

With these words he sat down,—and what with eating, and talking of his expedition, and asking news from those around him, he managed to wile away a couple of hours very agreeably, to others as well as to himself. Amherst was the only one who felt any impatience, and he was much relieved when he and his friend were permitted to retire together.

When they were alone, Cleaver expressed his

eager desire to learn all that had occurred to Amherst during his trip to the Highlands, and he endeavoured to satisfy him, by giving him an abridged account of his adventures since they had parted. Many a strange exclamation was drawn from Cleaver by the recital. Having brought his narrative down to the moment of his parting with Miss Malcolm at the gate of Eaglesholme Castle. “Well,” said Cleaver anxiously, “and have you yet received the promised communication from the young Lady?”

“I have, indeed,” said Amherst, with a deep sigh; “and to you, who have been so much my friend, I shall communicate its contents without reserve, trusting that with you they will be like the secrets of the grave. I must be candid, however, and tell you, that, were it not that your friendly advice may be of the utmost importance to me in the perplexity of my affairs, as you are much better acquainted with the probable issues of my father’s temper than I am, I should not have considered myself entitled to divulge the secret even to you.”

Saying so, he put the letter he had that morn-

ing received into Cleaver's hand without farther comment.

Cleaver was petrified by the contents.

“ Eh !—what !—strange !—this is a cruel disappointment indeed. But there is nothing but disappointments in this world—I have had 'em myself, my dear boy. Poor Mary of the Isle of Wight !—I never told you that story,” continued he, wiping from his eyes a small tribute partly due to his friend's distress, and partly to the memory of an early tenderness.—“ She was the only child of a widowed clergyman—I was but a lieutenant at the time—We loved !—I need not say how truly—she was the fairest lily in her father's garden, and I was sincere. I was sent on a long voyage, and the first place I went to on my return was her father's house. The front of the parsonage was gay with roses and jasmines ; their sweet odour came fresh upon me as I lifted the latch of the little garden, and the flowers, methought, laughed with joy to see me. Mary's lovely innocent eyes seemed, to my fancy, to greet me with gladness from among them wherever I turned.

“ Some strange faces were at the parlour win-

dow. I entered, and was saluted by a gentleman I had never seen before. He was in deep mourning—he had buried his brother the clergyman that very morning. A villain had robbed the father of his fair flower, and had trodden it under foot. He died of a broken heart—I rushed out of the house—and how my stubborn heart stood it I cannot tell!”

But it was not difficult to guess; for even now Cleaver’s voice trembled as he spoke,—he became almost inaudible, and his veteran cheeks were plentifully bathed ere he had done. But Amherst was so much absorbed in his own misery that he heard him not.

“Cleaver, I cannot give her up!” said he at last; “to resign Eliza Malcolm would be to give up existence itself, for mine is alone nourished with the hope of being united to her.” He then told Cleaver of the letter he had written to Miss Malcolm.

“My dear boy,” said Cleaver, with a sad and serious face, “I fear much you are a little romantic in the scheme you have formed, and in the hopes you have founded on it; for if your plan goes adrift, the hopes attached to it must be

wrecked along with it. I can perceive that your love for Miss Malcolm is of no light nature, and from all I have heard regarding her, I am led to believe, that, independent of her beauty, which, like the outside-ornaments of a merchant ship, I take it, is but the least part of the value of a woman, she carries a cargo of virtue and discretion rarely to be met with in so young a person; and which will prevent all risk of her capsizing from want of ballast during the voyage of life. Were you a plain sailor, sprung from a piece of junk, like Ned Cleaver, you might, nay, you ought to marry her at once. What should I care for the taunts of the world? Or why should the innocent child be punished for the crimes of her parents? But with you, who are the shoot of an old and venerable tree, that has drawn nutriment from the soil of Kent ever since the Heptarchy, and in which not one blasted or bastard branch appears, the case has a very different complexion. 'Tis prejudice all, I grant you, and her virtuous conduct does in reality bring her as much up to your level, or that of any body else, as it would do to mine. But how far you could persuade your father, who is as proud as Lucifer of his

family-tree,—how far, I say, you would succeed in persuading him to overlook such prejudices, and peacefully to submit to the insertion of this spurious graft, in the vain hope that nobody will examine into the history of its production, I leave it for yourself to judge. To expect that Amherst Oakenwold could marry without the busy world finding out who his wife is, would be to expect that the tongues of silly fools and gossiping women would be for ever dumb; and how far your descendants will thank you for giving them so questionable a stock, I think you may easily decide. But what is the use, after all, of my preaching, or of my giving opinions or advices, which Miss Malcolm's answer will render superfluous? I think you were rash in writing without more mature deliberation. But since you have so written, deliberation is now of no avail; for should the young Lady accept of the proposals you sent her this morning, your honour cannot now permit you to recede, and you must marry her in defiance of your father, and all man and woman kind; and if, on the other hand, she should persist in what I must call her highly laudable, her magnanimous refusal, your hopes of

prevailing with her to yield to persuasion must be at an end."

Whilst the friends were thus engaged, O'Gollochar tapped at the door. He was the bearer of a letter to Amherst, that was indeed calculated to put a period to all his air-built visions. It ran in these words:—

“ She who can call herself by no other name than that of Eliza Malcolm, is deeply affected by the noble generosity displayed in Amherst's communication. She freely confesses that it has raised him, if possible, higher than ever in her estimation; but, for that very reason, she is but the deeper impressed by the sense of duty, now more than ever imperative on her, never to sully, by the impurity of her blood, that which has flowed uncontaminated for so many generations in his family. No! never can Eliza Malcolm be his wife! —yet dear, while she lives, shall his remembrance be to her, and the only earthly comfort of her broken heart will be to think of the virtue, and to pray for the happiness, of him whom she loved too much to permit him to sacrifice himself for her. She now bids him solemnly and fondly farewell for ever!!!”

These words seemed to have been written under great agitation, for many of them were almost illegible. Amherst's doubts as to the possibility of their union had dissolved before the ardour of his passion, and he could hardly even yet be persuaded that Miss Malcolm's answer was so very decisive of his fate as it really was. For some time he argued wildly with Cleaver, until at length being compelled to admit the truth, even from the very weakness of his own unsubstantial arguments, he threw himself in an agony on the bed, and wept unceasingly. Cleaver did all in his power to comfort him. But his affliction was beyond all comfort, and his sympathizing friend saw the necessity of allowing his grief to take its own course. Unfit for society, he was obliged to make slight indisposition an apology for keeping his own apartment for the rest of the day. All night long he tossed unceasingly, the blood in his veins boiling, and his temples throbbing, from the effect of his mental sufferings.

In the morning he was still in so disturbed and unhappy a state, that Cleaver proposed to him to return to England, hoping that change of scene, and above all, absence from objects calculated to

excite associations, keeping up the fever of his passion, might soon restore him to himself. Amherst rather obeyed than consented,—exhibiting every symptom of the most listless carelessness as to what might now become of him. Cleaver undertook to apologize to the hospitable Baronet, and Lady Sanderson, for their sudden departure, which he proposed should take place next day; and thus all their arrangements were speedily made.

When O'Gollochar heard of their purpose, he was frantic. He went straight to his master, and with his eyes swollen with tears, begged of him, in the most pitiful manner, to remember how his honour had promised to allow him time to settle his little love matters before he should return to Kent. Amherst was too deeply occupied by his own miseries to attend to those of his servant. With a frigid apathy, O'Gollochar had never seen him exhibit before, he carelessly told him that he might go and do what he pleased. The Irishman, who had been sobbing very audibly, whilst he expected that his master was to refuse him time to go to Eaglesholme, having now interpreted his words and manner into some-

thing tantamount to a dismissal, stared at him for some time in silent astonishment,—and then striking his hands violently over his eyes, he burst out in a fit of vociferous complaint, more powerful than any he had ever before exhibited.

“Och, then, is it this way that your honour’s honour would be after using me?—Sure, sure, and I hav’n’t a bit o’ me desarved to be traited in this manner!—Och, what is it I have done that you should be so cruel?—Och, sure I’ll never win over it!”—and his sobs actually put a stop to his further utterance.

Amherst was amazed.—“What, in the name of Heaven, is the matter with you, my good fellow?” said he to him.—The expression, “good fellow,” pronounced in a tone of voice in itself extremely soothing, did more to reassure O’Gollochiar than a volume of eloquence. He took his fingers from his eyes, and surveying Amherst’s countenance with attention, and reading there mingled astonishment and compassion, he burst into a fresh ecstasy of tears,—but they were tears of joy.

“Och, sure after all, your honour has maybe

been joking me?—Sure you wouldn't go for to turn me off so carelessly,—I that would follow your honour all over the world, in spite of all the Pingles or Spindles, aye, or Pegtops, that may be whirling on its surface? And sure I love her too, (as I'll make bould to say,) as much as man can love woman.—But your honour has been so kind to me, taking me when I had no charackter, out o' the very dirt, as a body may say—that I would not go for to leave you for all the wives in Britain, aye, or in Ireland itself,—or France into the bargain. But if I could but have half an hour to go and see Ma'amselle now,—who knows but she might maybe consint to be Mrs O'Gollochar on the spot? or if not, maybe she might come after me by and bye to Kent,—for sure and sartain she has tould me, over and over again, that she will marry no one else. And if your honour would only give me your consint now to my giving myself away, sure I wouldn't be a bit worse a sarvant, becaise herself would be sitting at home, making, maybe, your honour's shirts, or tacking lace to your ruffles,—for she is a mighty handy body at all them soort o' things."

So saying, he set off, full of hope, to make his

last assault, *par coup de main*, on the tender heart of Mademoiselle Epingle.

“How happy is that poor fellow!” thought Amherst,—“and why am not I so too? Bitter, bitter fate!”—and he relapsed into his former state of despondency.