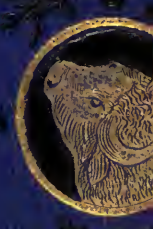


WILSON'S
TALES OF
THE BORDERS
HISTORICAL TRADITIONAL
& IMAGINATIVE





Edwin

Harris

his
BOOR

O for a Dooke and a shoole Abooke
where in a doore or case
with the green leaves whispering
over head
Or the streets cries all about

When I may reade all at my ease
Both of the Newe and Old
In a jolly good booke where
on to looke
Is better to me than a wile

EX
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CHATELARD.





WILSON'S
TALES
OF THE
BBORDERS.
HISTORICAL,
TRADITIONARY,
AND IMAGINATIVE.

WILLIAM & MACKENZIE
LONDON GLASGOW & EDINBURGH



W I L S O N ' S

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF

S C O T L A N D ;

WITH AN

Illustrative Glossary of the Scottish Dialect.

VOL. III.

LONDON.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, 69 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.;
GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH.

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LETTERS BY THE BORNERS

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WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. I.—THE SUICIDE.

IT is a vain question, that which has been often stirred among men of our profession and metaphysicians, whether insanity—including under that word all the modes of derangement of the mental powers—is strictly a *disease*, the definition of which, according to the best authorities, is “an alteration from a perfect state of bodily health.” Both parties may, to a certain extent, be right; for the one, including chiefly the metaphysicians, can successfully exhibit a gradation in the scale of derangement; beginning at the slightest peculiarity; passing on to an eccentricity; from that to idiosyncrasy; from that to a decay or an extraordinary increase of strength in a particular faculty—say memory; from that to a decay or an increase in the intensity of a feeling, an emotion, or a passion; from that to false perception—such as monomania, progressing to derangement as to one point or subject, often called madness, *quoad hoc*; and so on, through many other stages, almost imperceptible in their differences, to perfect madness—all without the slightest indication of a pathological nature being to be discovered or detected by the finest dissecting knife. On the other hand, again, it is indisputable—for we medical men have demonstrated the fact—that a certain *degree* of madness is almost always accompanied with derangement in the cerebral organs—the most ordinary appearance being the existence of a fluid of a certain kind in the chambers of the brain.

The best and the cleverest of us must let these questions alone; for, so long as we remain—and that may be, as it likely will be, for ever—ignorant of the subtle principle of organic life—the nature of the mysterious union of mind and matter—we will never be able to tell (notwithstanding all our mental achievements) whether madness has its primary beginning in the body or in the mind. We must remain contented with a knowledge of exciting causes, and with that melancholy lore which treasures up—alas! for how little good—the dreadful symptoms which distinguish this miserable state of proud man from all other conditions of his earthly sorrow; exhibiting him conscious of being still a human being impressed with the image of God, yet incapable of using the proudest gift of heaven—his reason; susceptible of and suffering the most excruciating of all pains—imaginary evils, torments, agonies—yet placed beyond the pale of human sympathy; bent upon—following with cunning and assiduity, the cruelest modes of self-immolation; and sometimes calmly *reasoning* on the nature of the mysterious power that impels to a horrible and revolting suicide.

I have been led into this train of thought by the circumstances of the case I am now about to relate. It is one of a calm, reasoning, determined self-destroyer, in whom, with the single exception of wishing to die by violent and bloody means, I could discover no mental derangement. The case occurs every day; but there are circumstances in this of a peculiar nature, which set it apart from others I have witnessed and seen described; and, as it bears the invaluable stamp of truth, my description of it may be held to be a

chapter, and a melancholy one, in the wonderful history of human life, wherein perhaps the succeeding capital division may consist of an account of our own tragic fate, not less lamentable or less awful. Such creatures are we lords of the creation!—so completely veiled are the destinies of man!

It was, I think, in the month of December in the winter of 18—, that a man in the garb of a farmer called upon me and requested me to visit George B—, a person, he said, of his own craft, who held a small sheep farm back among the hills about three miles distant. I asked the messenger if the man was in danger, and if he wished me to proceed instantly to his residence, or if a call the first time that I passed that way, which might be next day, would suffice. He replied that his friend was not in immediate danger, and did not wish me to travel three miles for the special purpose of seeing him, but would be contented with and grateful for a visit from me on any early day that suited my convenience.

On the following day, I happened to be in that quarter of the country, and called at the house to which I had been directed. The day was cloudy, raw, and cold, and a stern north wind whistled among the brackens of the hills. I was struck with the situation and appearance of the house. It had formerly been a mansion-house, and was much larger than the ordinary residences of small sheep farmers among the hills. The situation was peculiarly bleak, sequestered, and even dismal: no trees could be discovered in any direction; there were no out-houses attached to the dwelling; and no neighbouring residence was to be seen. The house stood alone, big, gaunt, cold, and comfortless, in the midst of bare hills, exposed to the bitter wind that careered through the valleys and ravines. Nor, as I approached, did I discover any signs of domestic stir or comfort. Several of the windows were closed up—the under part of the house apparently being only inhabited by the inmates, who shewed no anxiety to ascertain by looking out who it was that had accomplished the task of getting to this barren and sequestered place.

On knocking at the door, it was opened by a young woman about eighteen years of age. She appeared to be delicate—being thin in her person, pale in her complexion, and of an irritable temperament, for she started when she saw me. An expression of melancholy pervaded features not unhandsome, and attracted particularly my attention, by almost instantly exciting my sympathy. I asked her if George B— was in the house. She answered that her father, for such he was, had just gone to bed, having been for some time ailing. I told her that it was upon that account I had come to see him. She seemed then to know who I was, and thanked me for my attention. I stepped in; and, as I followed the young woman through a long passage to the room occupied by her father, she told me that her mother had died about a year before, and that there was no other individual living in the house but her and her remaining parent. A gloomy, unhappy pair! thought I, as I looked on her sombre face, and heard the wind moaning through the big, open house.

On entering the room, which was cold and poorly furnished, I observed George B— sitting up in his bed.

reading a book, which I discovered to be a large Bible. He had a napkin bound round his temples. His face exhibited the true melancholic hue, being of a swarthy yellow; his eyes wore the heaviness generally found in people of that temperament; the muscles were firmly bound down by the rigid, severe, and desponding expression of dejection, generally found associated with these other characteristics; and, throughout his face and manner, there was exhibited an indifference to surrounding objects, which was only very partially relaxed by his recognition of me as I entered. There was, however, nothing of the look of a diseased man about him; for his face was full and fleshy, his nerves firm and well strung, his eye steady and unclouded, and his voice, as he welcomed me in, strong and even rough and burly. His face resembled very much the *ideal* of that of the old Covenanters; and the large Bible he held in his hands aided the conception, and increased the picturesque effect of the whole aspect of the man.

He knew, or took it for granted, that I was the surgeon he had sent for, pointed to a chair that I might sit down, and beckoned to his daughter, Margaret, as he called her, to leave the room. The young woman retired slowly, and I observed, as she proceeded towards the door, she threw back two or three nervous looks, which I thought indicated a strong feeling of apprehension, mixed with her filial sympathy. As the door shut, it sounded as if it had lost the catch; the father caught the sound, appeared angry, and requested me to rise and shut it effectually, and, as he added, carefully. I complied, and he seemed to listen for some time, as if to try to ascertain whether his daughter had proceeded along the passage to the kitchen. He was uncertain, and listened again, but was still unresolved; at last, he said he was sorry to give me so much trouble, but he felt he could not enter upon the subject about which he wished to consult me until he was satisfied, beyond the possibility of doubt, that Margaret was not listening. I rose and went to the door. Upon opening it, I saw the young woman standing behind it. On perceiving me, she retreated precipitately and fearfully along the dark passage. I shut the door; and, being unwilling, in my ignorance of the cause of all this mysterious secrecy and suspicion to betray the poor girl, who had perhaps some good legitimate object in her solicitude, I said simply that there was now nobody there. He was satisfied; and I again sat down.

I then asked him what was the particular complaint about which he wished to consult me.

"That is precisely what I wish to know," he replied. "I hae nae complaint about *my body*, which, God be thanked! is just as strong as it used to be. But there is a change in my mind, different frae the healthy griefs, an' sorrows, an' pains o' mortals. My wife, the best o' women, died a year ago. In a short time after, I lost the greater number o' my sheep in a storm, which prevented me frae payin my Candlemas rent. But mony a man loses his wife, an' mony a shepherd his sheep, without tellin a doctor o' their loss. I laid my account w' sufferin grief as heavy as mortal ever suffered; and in this house, in this bed, on these hills, in the kirk, and at our cattle trysts, I hae struggled w' my sorrow. But, sir," leaning his head towards me, and speaking low, "*it winna a' do.*"

He paused, and, as he fixed his eye upon me, drew a deep sigh, as if he had already, as it were, broached a subject that was fearful to himself.

"What mean you?" said I.

"I mean, that *I canna live!*" he replied, energetically, seizing the Bible with a spasmodic grasp—closing it—throwing it to the back of the bed—then falling in an instant into a state of real dejection, with his arms folded over his breast, and his eyes cast down.

"Grief often produces these gloomy thoughts," said I; "but they are the mere fancies of a sick mind—generated

in sorrow, and dying with the time-subdued cause that produces them. There is not a bereaved husband, wife, parent, or child in the land, that does not, in the first struggle with a new grief, entertain and cherish, for passing moments of agony, such sick fancies of rebelling nature. You have not yet given time and your energies a fair trial. You must have patience."

"There is some consolation in that," he replied. "I am glad when I think that that thought that haunts and alarms me is no sae dangerous as it sometimes appears to me. This book (sweet comforter!) tells me that Tobit prayed to be dissolved and become earth, because o' his sorrow. It tells me, also, that Job, in his agonies, cried—'My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life.' My experience o' the ills o' life (and a man o' sixty-five must have some portion o' that) informs me o' the truth o' what you have told me, that an extraordinary burden o' grief often wrings frae the sick soul a wish to dee and be at rest. But, oh! I fear my situation is different. I hae *mair* than a wish to be dissolved; for, sure, none o' my brethren in sorrow—here his voice fell almost to a whisper, and tears rolled down his cheek—"ever lay wi' the like o' that"—holding up a razor "under his sick pillow."

I was alarmed, being utterly unprepared for this exhibition.

"You need be under nae alarm," he continued, wiping the tears from his eyes. "My courage is not yet strong enough. God be praised for it! Moments o' fearfu' fortitude sometimes come owre me, and I have held that instrument in my clenched hand—ay, within an inch o' my bared throat; but the resolution passes as quickly as it comes, and terror, cowardice, and a shiverin cauld—dreadful to suffer—come in their place. Lay it past, sir—lay it past."

I obeyed; and, as I proceeded to place the instrument on the top of a chest of drawers, I heard the noise of some one in the passage, with suppressed ejaculations of—"O God! O God!"

"I wadna hae shewn you that," he continued, as I sat down, "but that it is my wish to tell you the worst; for nae man can expect assistance if he is ashamed or afraid to shew his necessities and his danger. I didna send for you to cure my body, but to examine my mind, and tell me if it is sound and healthy, or weak and diseased, and, therefore, I will conceal naething frae ye that may shew you its state and condition."

I was pleased to find I had so tractable a patient. I paused for a moment, to consider in what way I should draw him out, and on what side I should attack him—whether I should argue calmly with him, and endeavour to stimulate his feelings of duty to his Maker, to himself and his poor daughter; or shake him roughly, as a vain and sinful dreamer who had voluntarily swallowed a pernicious soporific, and try to awaken him and keep him awake, after the manner of our remedial endeavours to save those who have attempted to poison themselves by laudanum. I saw, in an instant, that he was by far too strong-minded a man to be operated upon by the mere power of the charm of the imputed reach and strength of our cabalistic lore—an agent, if well employed, of great good in our profession—and too determined (for such resolutions are always, in some degree, a false result of reasoning powers) to be put from his purpose by a dogmatic pressure of logical authority, or the subtle and more dangerous means of good-humoured or severe satire. My course was clearly to endeavour to affect the form of his own reasoning, and, if possible, to invest it with a character which might be recognised as true by the peculiar and, no doubt, morbid sense of perceptions he possessed of moral truth. I began by securing his eye, which I saw was, at times, inclined to wander, or take on that unmeaning, dull, glazed aspect which people in

the act of brooding over intense sorrows—as if the optic nerves were thereby paralysed—so often exhibit.

“What train of mind are you in generally,” said I, “when the wish to die, accompanied with the fortitude you have mentioned, comes upon you in its strongest form?”

“I first fall into a state of low spirits,” said he, “and then nae effort I can use will tak my mind off my dead wife. I think for whole hours—sometimes on the hills, sometimes in the house, and sometimes in my bed—of our courtship, our marriage, our happy life, and her miserable, painful, untimely death. This feeds my sorrow, which grows stronger, and descends deeper and deeper, till it reaches my brain, and I am sunk in the darkness o’ despair. To escape frae thoughts o’ past sorrows that are owre strong to be borne, I try to look forward to the future; but, alas! I see naething there but the pain o’ livin for a number o’ comfortless years o’ auld age, draggin after me a memory clogged wi’ past ills, and naething afore me but a gaol, and want, and a lingerin death.”

“These are false views of life,” said I—“overstrained and morbid. I must teach you to think better. You have a daughter who will comfort you, and whom you are bound to support and protect.”

“True, true,” he cried—“I hae a dochter, and a better never sacrificed her ain thochts and feelins to the comforts o’ a faither. The idea o’ leavin her, young, faitherless, poor, and full o’ sorrow, in the midst o’ a bad world, has, before this”—lowering his voice—“brought down that rebellious hand from this throat. But, alas for the inconsistency and mutability o’ man’s fancies!—dearly as I love that creature, and she is now my only comfort, my very affection for her sometimes sinks me deeper into that sorrow which produces the dreadful purpose o’ takin awa my ain life; for I think—oh! how weak is man’s proud reason, when the heart is broken wi’ grief!—that an auld parent under the ban o’ poverty is a burden to a child. His death (so in these unhappy moments do I think) relieves the unhappy bairn o’ twa evils—that o’ toilin maybe in vain to support him, and that o’ witnessin age, decrepitude, pain, misery, and want, wringin frae his shrivelled and diseased body groans o’ agony, striking the heart o’ his child wi’ mair pain than would be caused by the knell o’ his death.”

He now sank his face in the bedclothes, which he grasped with a spasmodic action, and groaned so deep and loud that the sounds may have reached the passage. I again heard a noise from that quarter, as if of stifled sighs and hysterical sobs. I was placed between the groans of a father bent against his own judgment on self-destruction, and the terrors and griefs of a daughter listening to the horrible recital of her parent’s designs against his life. The loneliness of the house, and the solitude of the unhappy pair—with no one to aid the young woman, in the event of any appalling extremity to which the unnatural purpose of her father might drive him—struck me forcibly. I had no recollection of ever experiencing a scene of grief so peculiar, with such fearful and uncertain issues, so irremediable and heart-stirring. The groans of the one and the sobs of the other seemed to vie with each other in the effect they produced upon me; but, great as the pain of the father was, the sufferings of the daughter, perhaps as peculiar and touching as any that could be conceived, engaged to the greatest extent my sympathy. It was my duty and wish to try to remove the fundamental cause of all this suffering; and I waited the end of the paroxysm of the father’s sorrow in order to resume the conversation.

“These views,” said I, as he calmed, “which you take of life, and its duties and affections, are all false and distorted. It is our duty to try to regulate our thoughts as well as our actions by some steady regulating principle, which mankind have agreed in considering as true, whether it be derived from the direct word of God or from the

written tablets of the heart. The taking away of our life—originally given to us as a trust, or imposed on us by the Author of all good, for certain ends and purposes which are veiled from our view—is undoubtedly, in many respects, as regards God himself, ourselves, our children, and our neighbours—a great, flagrant, horrible crime. It is against the law of God, the law of our country, the organic law of our physical constitution, and the moral law of our minds. It is indeed the only act that can be mentioned that is against all these. It does not require me to tell you that suicide, with other murders, was denounced by God himself, speaking in words that all mankind have heard, from the “thick cloud” that hung over Mount Sinai. You are, I presume, a Christian, and the Sacred Book containing that denunciation lies at your side; and yet you have made the dreadful confession to me, that you have dared to meditate on the breaking, the despising, the contemning of the command of Him who by less than a command—ay, than even a word, by the lifting up of his finger—may consign you to an eternity of agony, in comparison of which all the sorrow you now suffer is less than a grain of sand to the sand-banks of the sea.

“It is true, it is true!” replied the unhappy man. “I know, I *feel* that every word you have uttered is true, maist true and undeniable as are the sentiments o’ this holy book,” grasping again the Bible; “but can ye, wha, by the command o’ books and education, can dive farther into the nature o’ the mind than ane like me, explain this mystery, that, when my soul is filled wi’ the darkness o’ sorrow, and my rebellious purpose o’ self-murder whispers in my mind treachery and war against God, thae truths ye hae uttered, for they hae occurred to me before, tak flight like guid angels, an’ leave me to warse wi’ a power that subdues me? It is then that I am in danger, an’ the hand that has held up to my throat that fatal instrument I had under my pillow, has the moment before been lifted up vainly in prayer to God, to throw owre my mind the light o’ thae grand truths. What avails it, then, that there are times when I love them, and am guided by them, and thank heaven for the precious gift o’ knowin, feelin, and appreciatin them, if there are other moments when they flee frae me, and I am left powerless in the grasp o’ my enemy?” Pausing and falling again into a fit of dejection. “I fear, I fear the best o’ us are only the slaves o’ some mysterious power. But”—starting up, as if recollecting himself—“I put a question to you—answer me in the name o’ Heaven; for if I gie mysel up to the belief o’ an all-powerful necessity, I am a lost man and a self-murderer.”

He was now clearly approaching a rock whereon many a gallant bark has been shivered to atoms. Even healthy-minded men cannot look at the question of the necessity of the will without staggering and reeling; and hypochondriacs love to get drunk by inhaling the vapours of mysticism that rise from it, destroying, as they do, all moral responsibility, and concealing the vengeance of heaven and the terrors of hell. It was necessary to lead him from this dangerous subject, which it was clear he had been studying and dreaming about, with all that love of subtlety and mysticism which melancholy generates.

“No sensible man,” said I, “believes in the absolute necessity of the will. After the will is fixed, the liberty is already exercised, and there is indeed *no will* in the mind at all, until it takes the form of an active, moving, propelling principle. But these are abstruse fancies, which you must fly, if you wish to possess a healthy mind. Sorrow, or any other feeling of pain, will extinguish while it lasts the burning lights of principle or sentiment. The pain of the amputation of a limb prevents, while it lasts, the natural working of the mind; but *grief may be averted*, and the great healing secret of that is, that the mind *must* be occupied. Renounce all abstruse thinking. all day-dreaming, all

sorrowful remembering, all sentimental musing—look upon application, exercise, work, as a duty and a medicine, and I will answer for your expelling from your mind that dreadful purpose that entails upon you misery, and disgraces the nature of man.”

“Your advice is excellent,” replied he, somewhat roused; “but, unfortunately, I hae got the same frae my ain mind; and, what is mair, I hae tried it—I hae tried it again and again;—the medicine is worth nae mair to me than a bread pill. My efforts to exercise my mind, when a fit o’ sorrow presses upon it, only make the sorrow the heavier, by making the mind less able to bear it. My soul is for ever bent on that question o’ the necessity o’ the will which you despise and avoid. I will, God is my witness, argue it with you, calmly and reasonably.”

“Unless you agree to renounce that question,” said I, “I can do you no good.”

“Then,” replied he, with a groan, “I am left to heaven and my unavoidable fate. May God hae mercy on my soul!”

And he again relapsed into a fit of dejection, his head leaning on his breast, and his eyes fixed on the bed.

I could, I found, make no more of him that day, and my other avocations required my departure. I told him I would call again, and bring or send him some medicine.

“It is an unnecessary waste o’ your valuable time,” he said, lifting up his head, “to call again upon a wretch like me. I am much obliged to you for advice; but the only medicine for me is—*death*.”

He pronounced the fearful word with an emphatic guttural tone, which gave it a terrific effect. I opened the door to depart, and was surprised to find that it would not go back sufficiently to allow me to pass freely. The probable cause of the interruption flashed upon my mind in an instant. Without speaking a word, I edged myself through, and saw, lying at the back of the door, the body of the unfortunate young woman, in a state of insensibility. I had presence of mind enough not to carry her into the room where her father lay; but, seeing the light of the kitchen at the further end of the long gloomy passage, I snatched her up in my arms, and hastened with her thither. Having laid her on a small truckle bed, whereon, I presume, she usually slept, I found she was in a deep swoon; and, notwithstanding that it was getting dark, and my time was expired, I waited her recovery. As she lay before me, pale as a corpse, and as I thought of the cause of her illness, and looked round in vain for any one to give her assistance or consolation, (the groans of her father, which I indistinctly heard, being the only answer that would have been given to a call for aid in a house more like a haunt for ghosts and spectres than a residence for human beings,) I felt the impression of her peculiar misery pass over me, making me shudder as if I had been seized with a fit of the ague. The frail, brittle creature lying there, a victim of hysterics, fit only to be cherished and guarded by a doting mother—placed in a large, empty, gousty mansion—doomed to guard alone a suicide and a father, and, perhaps, to wrestle with him through blood—her parent’s blood!—for the preservation of a remaining spark of a self-taken life! She at length recovered, exhibiting the ordinary precursors of returning consciousness—convulsive shiverings, rolling of the eyes, and beating about with the hands. On perceiving me indistinctly, she articulated—

“Death! death!—that was the word he spoke sae wildly.—Ah! I know it now!—James H— has lang tried to conceal it frae me; but I hae discovered it at last. Can you save him, sir?—can you save the faither o’ her wha has scarcely another friend on earth?”

A flood of tears followed this ejaculation. She tore her hair like a maniac. I tried everything in my power to pacify her; but terror had completely mastered her weak

nerves, and she shook as the successive frightful images suggested by her situation passed through her excited and still confused mind.

“Is there no one in those parts,” said I, “that can attend your father, and assist you? Who is the James H— you just now mentioned?”

“He is my cousin,” replied she. “He lived with us for some time; but my father and he quarrelled about a razor which he said James wanted to steal from him. But I see it now. There was nae theft. James, poor James, was innocent, and wanted to save him; but they concealed it frae me, and my cousin was turned away.”

The mention of the word razor made me start. I had left the instrument on the head of the drawers, and I had even now heard the wretched man’s groans. I hurried to the room, and entered softly. He was in a fit of dejection, groaning, at intervals, deeply, like a man in bodily pain. I took up the instrument without being noticed, and returned to the kitchen. It was now almost dark. I had three miles to ride, through wild hill paths, and I heard some threatening indications of a night storm. The young woman was still lying on the couch, with her terrors undiminished; but I could do nothing more for her, and to have impressed her with the necessity of watching her parent would have created additional alarm, without increasing her zeal in a cause that concerned too nearly her own heart. I told her, therefore, that I required to depart, and was in the act of leaving to go to the door, when, in a paroxysm of terror, she started up, and seized me, clutching me firmly, and crying loudly—

“Will you leave me alone wi’ him in this house, and throughout the dark night? He will do it when you are gone. Heaven preserve me frae the sight o’ a father’s blood!”

I tried to calm her, and to reason with her; but it was in vain. She still clung to me; and I found myself necessitated either to use some gentle force to detach myself from her grasp, or remain all night. I adopted the former expedient, and, rushing out, shut the door after me, mounted my horse, and proceeded home. She had come out after me; for I heard her cries for some time as I rode forward in the dark.

Though soon out of sight of the house, I felt myself unconsciously turning my head once or twice in the direction of the deserted mansion. With all my efforts to think of some other subject—and my own safety among these wild hills might have been sufficient to occupy my attention—I could not, for some time, take my mind off the scene I had witnessed, and the prospective misery that, in such different forms, waited these two individuals. When I had gone about a mile and a half on my journey, I was accosted by a man, who asked me familiarly how George B— was. I recognised in him at once the individual who had asked me to call for him. I told him that he was well enough in his body, but had taken some wild and distorted views of life, which might place him in danger of his own hands, while there was nobody in the house to watch him but his daughter, who did not seem to me to be well fitted for the task, seeing she was weakly, hysterical, and timid. He told me he knew all I had stated; that his name was James H—; that he was a cousin of the young woman’s, George B— having been married on his mother’s sister; that he had resided in the house, and had discovered the tendency of his uncle’s mind; and that, on one occasion, he had snatched out of his hands a razor with which he intended to destroy himself—an act for which he was expelled the house, though he was the acknowledged suitor of the young woman, whom he intended to wed. I told him he should marry her, protect her, and save the father; but he replied that the old man would neither allow him to live in the house nor take his daughter from him; so that she was

compelled to remain in the dreadful condition in which I had found her. I told him to call upon me next day, and proceeded homewards.

Before James H—— called, which he did about two o'clock, I revolved in my mind what should be done for the unfortunate man. I recollected that, in a conversation I had with Dr D—— of Edinburgh, he told me of a case of melancholy, and accompanying determination to commit self-murder, which he had successfully treated by presenting to the mind of the patient such horrific stories and narratives of men who had taken their own lives and suffered in their death inexpressible agonies, and such shocking pictures of murders, where the wretched victims were brought back, by the hand of their offended Maker, from the gates of death, with their consciences seared with the burning iron of His vengeance—that the man got alarmed, was cured of his thirst for his own blood, and never again spoke of self-destruction. I resolved upon trying this expedient, and could not think of a better book for my purpose than that extraordinary record of human vice and suffering, "The Newgate Calendar." I fortunately possessed a copy, with those fearfully graphic pictures, that suit so well, in their coarse, half-caricatured, grotesque delineations, with the dreadful narratives they are intended to illustrate. I picked out the most fearful volume, that contained, at same time, the greatest number of attempted self-murders, where the victims were snatched from their own chosen death, and, after their wounds were healed, devoted to that pointed out by the law as due to their crimes. When James H—— called in the afternoon, I gave him the volume, and requested him to hand it to the patient's daughter, with directions to put it into the hands of her father, as having been sent to him by me. He said he would take the first opportunity of complying with my request.

I had no visits to make that required my presence in that part of the country, for two or three days. On the second day after I had sent the book, I had another call from James H——, who said that he had been requested by the patient's daughter to return the volume, and to request another one, which the patient desired, above all things, to be sent to him that day. I accordingly sent him another volume, although I did not know whether to augur well or ill from this anxiety; but I was inclined to be of opinion that the symptom was an auspicious one. Two days afterwards, the messenger called again, with a repetition of his former request for another volume as soon as it could be sent. I complied with it instantly; sending, however, on this occasion, two—for I thought my medicine was operating beneficially, and it was of that kind that could be of no use unless administered in large doses; so, as it were, to surfeit and sicken the disease, and force it, by paralysing its energies, to relinquish its grasp of the patient's mind and body.

Two days more having elapsed, I felt anxious to ascertain the effect of my moral *emeticalhartics*, and set out on the special errand of visiting my patient. The house, as I approached, exhibited the same still, dead-like aspect it possessed on my first visit. On knocking at the door, it was opened timidly and slowly by the daughter, who appeared to be paler, more sorrow-stricken, more weak and irritable, than on the occasion of my former visit. Her eye exhibited that terror-struck look which nervous people, kept on the rack of a fearful apprehension, so often exhibit. Her voice was low, monotonous, and weak, as if she had been exhausted by mental anxiety, watching, and care. There was still no one in the house but her and her father; the same stillness reigned everywhere—the same air of dejection—the same goustiness in the large empty dwelling. On asking her how her father was, she replied, mournfully, that he had scarcely ever been out of his bed

since my last visit; that he lay, night and day, reading the books I had sent him; that he had eaten very little meat, and had fallen several times into dreadful fits of groaning, and talking to himself. She added that he felt, at times, disinclined to see her; but, at others, his affection for her rose to such a height that he flung his arms about her neck, and wept like a child on her bosom. She had proposed to him, she said, to bring some person into the house; but he got into a violent rage when she mentioned it, and said he would expel the first intruder, whether man or woman. She had therefore been compelled to remain alone. She had lain at the back of his room door every night, watching his motions, whereby, in addition to her grief, she had caught a violent rheumatism which had stricken into her bones. When, for a short time, she had gone to sleep, she was awakened by terrific dreams and nightmares, which made her cry aloud for help, and exposed the situation she had taken, for the purpose of watching her parent and defeating his purpose of self-murder.

I proceeded to the patient's room. When I entered, which I did softly, I found him lying in bed, with his head, as formerly, bound up in a handkerchief; a volume of the Newgate Calendar lying on his breast. So occupied was he with his enjoyment of this *morceau* of horrors, that he did not notice my entry or approach to his bedside. I stood and gazed at him. He had finished the page that was open before him—exhibiting John Torrance, the blacksmith of Hockley. His eye rested at least five minutes on this horrific picture; and, as he continued his rapt gaze, he drew deep sighs—his breast heaving with great force, as if to throw off an unbearable load. He turned the page and noticed me.

"You are very intent upon that book," said I. "I hope it interests you."

"Yes," replied he. "My mind has been dead or entranced for a year. This is the only thing in the world I have met with during my sorrow capable of putting life into my soul. It seems as if all the energies that have been lying useless for that period, had risen at the magic power of this wonderful book, to pour their collected strength upon its pages."

"Then it has served its end," said I, doubting greatly the truth of my own statement. "I sent it for the purpose of entertaining you—that is, interesting you."

"Entertaining me!" he ejaculated; "you mean, binding my soul wi' iron bands:—my heart now loves the misery it formerly loathed. But, sir, I am not *fed* with this food. I devour it with a false and ravenous appetite; and were there a thousand volumes, I think I could read them all before I broke bread or closed an eye."

He rolled out these words with a volubility and an enthusiasm that surprised me. It was clear that I had poisoned the mind of this poor man. I had stimulated and partly fed his appetite for horrors. Familiarity with fearful objects kills the terror and sometimes raises in its place a morbid affection—a fact established in France at the end of the last century by an empirical test of a horrific character; but which no knowledge of metaphysics could have dreamed of *a priori*. Why had I forgotten this matter of history, and allowed myself to be led astray by vain theories and partial experiments? What was I now to do? The man's appetite for the bloody narratives was so strong that, even while I was thus cogitating, his greedy eye had again sought the page. It was necessary that I should conceal from him my apprehensions, and take up his words on a feigned construction.

"This kind of reading," said I, "interests you, I presume, because it fills your mind with a salutary disgust and terror, makes you loathe the act of the suicide, and mans your soul against the hateful purpose you entertained against your own life."

He looked to the door, and beckoned to me to see if it was shut. I went and satisfied him that it was, while I was myself assured that she whom he was so anxious to deceive was again at her post behind it.

"You ask me," he continued, "if this book has disgusted or terrified me against my purpose o' deen. Are we disgusted an' terrified at what we love? I hae seen the day when thae stories had sma' attraction for me. But, alas! alas! I am a changed—a fearfully changed man. My soul now gloats owre tales o' crime an' scenes o' blood. To me there is an interest, an indescribable, mysterious interest in this book, beyond the charm o' the miser's wealth or the bridegroom's bride—ay, sir, or what I ance thoct was in life to the deen sinner. It is a medicine; but"—pausing, and eyeing me sorrowfully—"do you mean it to *kill* or *cure*?"

"To save you from self-destruction," said I—"the most fearful and the most cowardly of all the terminations of human life."

"If you could keep me readin this *for ever*," he said, "yer object would be served."

"I can give you no more of it," said I, conscious that, by indulging his morbid appetite for blood, I had been leading him to his ruin.

"Then I must read thae volumes owre, an' owre, an' owre, again," said he; "an' when I hae dune, I hae naething mair to interest me in this dark, bleak warld."

He fell now into one of his fits of dejection, assuming his accustomed attitude of folding his hands over his breast, and fixing his eyes on the bed, while deep sighs and groans were thrown from his heaving breast. It was necessary, I now saw, to take from him the book which had produced an effect the very opposite of what I had intended and expected. I took it up and placed it beside the other volume that was lying on a side table, with a view to take them away with me—blaming myself sorely and deservedly for the injury I had done by experimenting so rashly on the life and eternal interests of a human being. As I moved away the volume, he observed me, and followed it wistfully and sorrowfully with his eye.

"Ye hae dune weel," he said—"ye hae whetted my appetite for my ain life; an' it matters naething that the whetter an' the whet-stane are taen awa when they're nae mair needed!"

I felt keenly the reproach, for it was just. I might have taken credit for a good intention; but my sympathy for the wretched being restrained any wish I had to defend myself. I endeavoured to change the subject of our conversation, and turn his mind to a subject which I knew engaged his interests and feelings more than anything else on earth.

"Your daughter," said I, "is unwell. She seems to be miserable. I know a change upon her both in mind and body, since I called here only a few days ago. Her body is thin and emaciated, her cheek is blanched, and her eye dimmed. These signs do not visit the young frame for nothing. I fear she has heard of the deadly intention you still persist in entertaining—to take away your own life. It is clear to me that her sickly constitution cannot long stand against a terror and an apprehension which even the aged and the strong cannot endure without grievous injury to all the faculties of the body and mind. Sir, take heed"—pausing and looking at him seriously and impressively—"you may become a *daughter's murderer* before your *cowardly* courage enables you to become *your own*!"

"Hold, sir!—hold!" cried the roused man. "You now speak daggers to me! I could hae borne this when you were here last; but ye hae unmanned me—ye hae made me familiar wi' him, the king o' terrors, wha waits for me. I know him in his worst shapes. He is nae langer hideous to me; and, being his friend, I canna be my dochter's faither an guardian! Why cam you here to revive a struggle that

was owre? My mind was made up. Owre the pages o' that book, my resolution was fixed; now you wad re-resolve me back to my doubt, my pain, my insufferable agony, by bringin up into my mind the tender image o' a sufferin, sorrowin, starvin dochter. My Margaret—my Margaret!—her mother's image—the pledge o' a love dearer than life!"

The door opened, and the young woman, who had been listening at the back of it, rushed in and flung herself on the bosom of the agonized man.

"O father!" she cried, "I ken everything. Yer dreadfu' purpose has been revealed to me. Ye intend to tak awa yer ain life, which my mother, yer beloved Agnes, on her death-bed, bado ye preserve for my sake. But ye canna do that without takin also mine. Yer death will be my death. I hae already seen yer bleedin body in my dreams—the image haunts me like a spirit, an' leaves me nae rest. The doctor says true—ye will kill me before yer dreadfu' purpose is fulfilled; but if, in God's will, I should be left when ye are awa, wha is to guard me, wha is to comfort me—without friends, without means, and without health?"

The scene now presented to me transcended anything I had ever seen during my long intercourse with suffering humanity. The excited girl clung with a firm grasp to the neck of her parent, and sobbed intensely; while he, struggling to be liberated, and holding away his face to the back of the bed, groaned and appealed for relief in broken, guttural, half-choked aspirations to heaven. I saw his eyes turned to the throne of mercy, and big tears rolled down his rugged cheeks. In my anxiety to aid his struggle, and assist him to the return to his natural love of life, and duty to his God, I was afraid to interfere with the sacred service of a bursting heart, turned in its agony to the only source of consolation and healing virtue; while, if I allowed this opportunity to escape, I might not have another for adding a mortal's means and energies (sometimes God's instruments) to the workings of nature, and the silent but powerful voice of religion speaking from the innermost recesses of his moral constitution.

"This is nature and truth," said I, after a pause—"powers a thousand times stronger than the brain-sick fancies of a diseased mind. It is the voice of God himself, sounding through the heart, and, like the electric energy, heaving it with convulsive throes, as if to cast forth from it the impious, daring, and unnatural purpose you have cherished in it so long that no lesser power will expel it. I rejoice in these throes; cherish them and aid them, for they are the expulors of a poison that, having got into your blood, and reached the heart, the seat of life, madly stimulates it to self-destruction. This is the time—here is the vantage ground of a return to all that is right, true, and good, from cowardice, cruelty, irreligion, and even rebellion against God!"

"Listen to him—listen to him!" cried the young woman, still sobbing. "Hear thae words o' truth, for they are sent from heaven. Receive them into your heart, and it will be changed, and I will live to see my father enjoy life and be happy."

"When?" groaned the miserable man satirically, as if roused by the sound of the distasteful word "happy."
"When I am sittin at the window o' a prison, thinkin o' my dead Agnes, and lookin at the red settin o' my sixty-fifth sun?"

These words shewed that the struggle had been ineffectual. Released from the grasp of his daughter, who sat at the side of the bed, he doggedly and sternly folded his arms and relapsed into a silent fit of dejection. No effort would make him open his lips. There seemed to be no principle of reaction in his moral constitution; all was penetrated by a fatal lethargy, which closed up every issue, broke every spring of living thought, feeling, or motion. My professional knowledge was entirely useless, my personal services unavailing. I called to him loudly to answer me, and got

no reply but deep groans. I even shook him roughly, and tried to bend his head to his weeping daughter. My efforts were quickened by a sense that bore in upon me with fearful strength and importunity, that I had, by experimenting on his mind, and filling it with images of horror, increased the disease I intended to cure. Pained beyond measure, I was anxious to redeem my fault and correct my error by getting him again engaged in conversation, whereby I might have a last opportunity of drawing him into a train of thought which might lead to a sense of his awful condition, and a prospect of escaping from its present misery, and its horrible consequences. But my medicine had operated too powerfully. There he sat, unmoved, immovable—a sad and melancholy victim of the worst species of hypochondria—that which exhibits as one of its pathognomonic symptoms, the desire, the determination, persevered in through all difficulties, all oppositions, all wiles and schemes, to commit self-murder.

I waited for a considerable period, standing at the side of his bed, to see if he would exhibit any signs of returning moral vitality; but in vain. My other pressing avocations demanded imperiously my presence in quarters where I could be of more service. The daughter was herself buried in despondency, her face being hid in her hands, and broken ejaculations escaping from her lips. I took up the book which had produced so much harm, and whispered lowly in her ear, to request James H—— to call for me next day. At the sound of this name she started and looked up wildly. I was afraid I might have to encounter another scene like that I had witnessed on the occasion of my last departure. I therefore hurried away, giving her no time to reply, where conversation was apparently useless. My intention was to try and devise some means of introducing a person into the house—though against the determined will of the father—to guard him and assist the daughter; but that could only be done through the medium of the messenger who went between me and the young woman.

When I had got some distance from the house, I could not resist the feeling that on the occasion of my prior visit compelled me to look back upon this miserable dwelling. I had seen diseases of all kinds grinding the feelings of unhappy man; but in the worst of them there is some principle, either of resistance or resignation, that comes to the aid of the sufferer, and enables him to pass the ordeal, whether for life or death. The duty he is called upon to perform is to *bear*; for no man I ever yet saw in a sick bed can get quit of the thought—however much he may try to philosophize about physical causes, or to conceal his sense of a divine influence—that he is placed there by a superior hand *for the very purpose of suffering*, with a view to some end that is veiled from his eye. Every pang, therefore, that is borne carries with it, or leaves after it, some feeling of necessity to *bear*, and a satisfaction of having endured, and, to a certain extent, obeyed the behest of Him that sent it. In many, this feeling is strong and decided, yielding comfort and consolation when no other power could have any effect; and though in others it may be less discernible—being often denied by the patients themselves, and attempted to be laughed at and scorned—it is, I assert, still there, silently working its progress in the heart, and spreading its balm even against the sufferer's own rebellious will. But the case of the suicide is left purposely by Him against whose law and authority the unholy purpose is directed, in a solitary condition of unmitigated horror; for the desire to get quit of pain—the inheritance of mortals—is itself the very exclusion of that resignation which is its legitimate antidote, while the devoted victim, obeying a necessity that forces him to eschew a misery he is not noble-minded enough to bear, not only has *no good* in view, but is conscious that he is flying *from evil*,

through evil, to evil; so that from behind, around him, within him, before him—wherever he casts his eye—there is nothing but darkness, pain, and utter desolation. To complete the scene—there is, perhaps, no living *natural* evil more peculiar and acute, and less capable of generating resistance or resignation, than the rack of apprehension and terror of an only daughter watching, alone and unaided, the issues of a purpose that is, in all likelihood, to force her through the energies of the strongest instinct—filial affection—to stop, with her trembling hands, the flow of a father's life's blood. Yet all this evil, this misery, was to be found in that house, standing alone in the midst of these bleak hills, like a temple dedicated to sorrow.

Next day, James H—— called upon me, having seen the young woman, unknown to the father, on the previous night, and received from her the instructions I left for him. He saw himself the necessity of something being done towards the amelioration of the condition of the two unhappy individuals; but he acknowledged the difficulty of effecting it. He perceived, what was true, that, if any watch were set over his uncle, it might only make certain that which at present was doubtful; that the watchman could only proceed on the principle that he was mad, and bind him, or confine him, or otherwise treat him as insane; and that, besides, he knew no one who, without pay, (and there was no money,) would undertake so unpleasant a duty, which might last for weeks, or months, or even years. No concealed surveillance could be kept over him; for he suspected, in an instant, the object of any one visiting him, and had ordered one or two individuals, who had come from a distance to call for him, out of the house—suspecting (such is the way of all his unhappy tribe) that they came for the purpose of observing his motions. The difficulty was greatly owing to the lonely position of the house: the cloak of friendly intercourse might have covered the frequent visits of near neighbours; but there were none such, for the nearest house was two miles off; and as for relations, they were in another part of the country, distant in locality as well as blood.

The case was hedged with difficulties. Violent diseases require strong remedies. I recollected that James H—— said, on a former occasion, that he was the suitor of the young woman, and wished to wed her. I came to a resolution, on the instant, firm, decided, and sound. I told him that, if he wished to save the father and the daughter, he must accelerate his intended marriage with the latter, even in the midst of the unfortunate circumstances in which she was placed, and under the unfavourable auspices of an event of joy being shadowed with a cloud of sorrow. This would give him a claim on the daughter; and if the old man would not permit his son-in-law to remain in the house and assist him as formerly with the labours of his farm, he could threaten to take her from him altogether—a threat that would not, in all likelihood, fail to make him consent to his becoming an inmate in the house. The young man was pleased with an advice that quadrated with his wishes, and left me, to consult with some other friends on the propriety of instantly following it.

I heard the banns proclaimed next Sunday in the parish church, and was somewhat surprised at the rapidity with which my advice had been adopted and the plan put into execution. The intelligence was promptly communicated to me by the bridegroom himself, who informed me also that the fact of the proclamation of the banns had been communicated to his uncle, who had expressed himself strongly against the match. He had, in fact, taken up a strong prejudice against his nephew, in consequence of the latter's interference with his purpose of self-immolation. He had never allowed the young man to come near him since the day on which he had taken the razor out of his hands by force; and the intelligence that he was to marry his daughter, and deprive him of her society, roused him to fury

He denounced the union, and said that it added another drop of bitterness to the cup of his misery, which was already overflowing. I told the young man that the anger into which his uncle had been thrown would, in all likelihood, do him more good than harm: it might stimulate a mind, dead or dormant, from the effects of brooding over imaginary evils, which produced ten times more self-murders than the real misfortunes of life. He told me the marriage would not, on account of his uncle's anger, be put off; that it was fixed for the 15th of the month, and would be celebrated in private. I informed him that I required to go to a distant part of the country, and could not, for some time, see his uncle, and that he must endeavour, by all means, to support and comfort the unhappy bride in her watchful care over her unfortunate father, who, according to his account, was still under the cloud from which he threatened, every instant, to draw down the lightning that was to strike him to death.

When I returned from my journey, I called again upon the unfortunate man, in the hope of finding some amelioration in his condition as well as that of his daughter. I found him still in bed, though he had been up and out on several occasions since I visited him. I saw no signs of improvement. I endeavoured to get him engaged in a conversation about his own condition; but I saw that, in place of being fond of dwelling on the state of his mind, talking of his sorrows, and contemplating the purpose he entertained against his existence, he shewed an utter repugnance to the subject, having become perfectly taciturn, sullen, and morose, giving me monosyllables for answers, and sometimes not deigning even to shew that he attended to me or understood me. The only thing that seemed to interest him, was his daughter's marriage—looking dark and gloomy when the subject was broached, and muttering indistinct words of reproach and anger. The condition of his daughter was changed; but it was only a new form of anguish. Some days previous, she had observed him with another razor in his hand; but he had secreted it somewhere, and all her efforts had, as yet, been ineffectual to get it. Her watch had, therefore, been more unremitting—her apprehensions were increased, while her strength was greatly diminished. She was reduced to a shadow; the pale skin that covered her face seemed to be in contact with the bones; while her eyes burned with fever and excitement. Yet her marriage was fixed to take place two or three days after! She could not avoid it; she had pledged her word, and her father's safety depended in a great degree upon it. She could bear her condition no longer—all her powers of suffering were worn out; and if her father would not allow her husband to remain in the house, she would, she said, allow the latter to exercise what authority he pleased, in endeavouring, by force, to save his father-in-law and his wife from the ruin that seemed to await them. The gloom that enveloped her mind was deepened by the contrast of the light of a happiness she had long sighed for, now changed into a refinement of peculiar pain. She shuddered when she thought of her marriage with the man she loved, and feared that the power of heaven would fall on her for presuming to bring joy into the chamber of mourning, if not death. As she spoke, tears moistened her burning eye, and ran down her thin, pallid cheeks. She wished the ceremony over, as an evil to be endured, and then fate must take its course, though she feared the termination would be miserable, as well for her father as for her. His life was hanging by a thread; hers was worn out by watching, fainting, and suffering, till it was on the very eve of leaving the body, which was no longer able to support or contain it. These were the misfortunes in the inside of the house; but there were others without doors. The landlord had sequestered the stock belonging to her father—a circumstance that had plunged him deeper in his despondency and misery, and explained the very

altered state in which I had found him. The landlord, a hard man, *laughed* at the *device* of threatened self-murder, resorted to for the purpose of exciting his sympathy and robbing his pocket.

"Yes," she concluded, "he *laughed*"—and she repeated the word "laughed" with an hysterical action of the throat, as if it choked her, and next moment burst into tears.

Two days afterwards, a man on horseback, arrived at my door, and rapped with great violence; his horse was heated and foaming at the mouth, as if it had been hard pressed, and he himself was flushed and excited. He told me, in a hurried manner, that I was wanted instantly at George B——'s; he had been sent to me by another man, and could tell me nothing beyond the fact that something very alarming had taken place, and that if I did not hasten thither, on the instant, and with my very greatest speed, I could be of no use. I took with me what I conceived might be wanted, for my suspicions were more communicative than the messenger, and proceeded, with all the expedition in my power, to the house where I had lately seen so much suffering.

On my entering the house, a most extraordinary spectacle presented itself. On the small trundle bed that stood opposite to the door in the kitchen, lay a female figure, dressed in white, with both her hands rolled up in cloth, from which issues of blood rolled on the bed; and her face, not less pale than her dress, was spotted and besmeared with the same element. It was Margaret B—— in her *marriage dress*. A young woman, her bride's-maid, was beside her, looking in her face as if to see whether life was still in her body. A young man, also dressed as if for the marriage, hurried me to the apartment of George B——, where a scene not less awful was presented to me. The unhappy man was lying in the middle of the floor, on his back, with his throat cut, and James H——, in his bridegroom's clothes, was bending over him, with his hands busily occupied in stanching a wound that would have let out ten lives, if he had had as many to destroy; the floor was literally swimming in blood, and on a chair, in the corner of the room, lay the fatal instrument, still open. My services were useless:—the man was dead; his attendants were engaged in stopping blood already curdled with death. I hurried to the patient that was still living. She had lost almost the whole blood of her body, and it was difficult to detect in her any symptoms of life. I unloosed the cloths from her hands; they were cut in a fearful manner—the blade of the razor, which she had, in her struggles with her parent, endeavoured to wrest from him, having been *whisked* through them when hard clenched. No one had been in the house; her marriage dress was still incomplete—her bosom bare, and her head uncovered; a proof that she had been called from the mirror wherein she saw a half-dressed bride, to see a father kill himself by his own hand against her efforts to save him. Her screams were heard by the bride's-maid and the bridegroom, as they approached the house; but, before they entered, the struggle was nearly over; they found her bending over the body of her father, which lay on the floor, grasping the open wound with her hands. So spoke the attendants as I dressed the wounds. I took up several arteries; but there was one in the left wrist which, for a long period, defied my efforts, unassisted as I was with professional aid, to stem its torrent. I succeeded at last—so, at least, I thought—in my endeavours to stop all the issues. Vain thought! *Death* had stopped them.

This was the first time I had seen a *dead bride*.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND

THE RIVAL SHERIFFS OF TEVIOTDALE.

IN the early history of Scotland, it is curious to contemplate the means which Providence seems to have used in the preservation of the independence of a country whose people were destined to hold a high rank among mankind, for strong mental powers, and a strict adherence to those moral rules and duties which are of such importance to the social state of nations. The appearance of Wallace, at a time when Hope had turned down her eyes on a scorched and devastated land, was almost miraculous; and many unlooked-for and wonderfully opportune occurrences of the same kind might be selected from the history of this country, which never was subdued.

The circumstances to which we are inclined to look at present, however, are those connected with what may be called a curious *copartnership* of fame, which existed among the military leaders who figured in the days of Scotland's triumph over the insidious and cruel designs of the Edwards and Henrys of England. Wallace and Bruce were the first pair of worthies; and who is there who has not, in imagination, aided by the efforts of genius, lived and fought with these favourites of romantic history? Scarcely inferior to either of them, came another pair—Douglas and Randolph—who, though to a certain extent contemporary with The Bruce, may be said to have been consecutive, seeing that they continued their glorious energies after the cares of state had cooled the martial ardour of their great leader. After these, came another pair—Sir William Douglas, the Knight of Liddesdale, and Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie—two of the keenest and most daring spirits that ever threw the lustre of their valour over the dark period of Scotland's oppression. The fates of these two noble warriors are familiar to Scotsmen; but the general outlines of history have left to be filled up by the chronicler of circumstances many incidents regarding them which cannot fail to be interesting to all lovers of their country.

Sir William Douglas, commonly called the Knight of Liddesdale, was the natural son of the famous companion in arms of King Robert the Bruce, Sir James Douglas, commonly called "The Good Sir James." The large estates in Galloway belonging to the family, went, on the death of Sir James, to his brother Archibald, who was afterwards Regent of Scotland, during the minority of King David II. Sir William, in this way, got nothing from his father, who died in carrying into effect the will of another, but made no settlement himself—an act, indeed, not very common in feudal times, when the right of the heir in the fee could not be defeated by the will of the person in possession. The spirited son, however, inherited the military ardour and chivalric feelings of his father, as well as those corporeal qualities without which the other, especially in times when so much depends on individual personal prowess, have often been found of no great avail. All the early Douglases were remarkable for their tall figures, and somewhat gaunt-like appearance—their bones being large, and the flesh very sparingly distributed over them; the muscles strong, well marked, and sinewy, and strung with nerves which did not

shame the high office of supplying the energy which the burning spirit sent forth to the limbs. Their complexions were dark—so much so that some of them, and one in particular, were distinguished by the appellation "black," as a designative; and more than one member of the family had a peculiar lisp, which contrasted strangely with their strong manly bearing, and the high tone of command which their superiority in warlike exercises and their great fame gave them a title to assume.

Several of these qualities were possessed by Sir William, the Knight of Liddesdale. He was taller than his father, "The Good Sir James," and greatly more muscular and gaunt; and, in place of the suave expression which the latter made so much use of among his soldiers, and by which he earned his appellation of "good," he might have been accounted grim, in consequence of the size of the under part of his face, and the protuberance of the lower jaw, forming the peculiarity now known by the word "gashed." Yet he was considered to possess a handsome face, and the ladies of his age were too good judges of what ought to be called beauty in a warrior to have guaranteed to him the appellation of "The Flower of Chivalry," if he had not deserved it as well by his physical qualities as by his genius for war. A clear dark eye, burning and restless, relieved the somewhat heavy aspect of the lower portion of the face; black curly hair, for which his father was remarkable, covered his head and cheeks with great exuberance, and disdained, in its strength, to follow the example of the times in falling down the back after the manner exhibited in the old pictures. A dark swarthy complexion suited well with these attributes; and his extreme height and breadth, with a peculiar rectangularity of form, gave him altogether the appearance of a man chiseled out of some of the hard dusky marbles found in the northern parts of Scotland.

The internal man was in perfect accordance with these physical attributes. Bred in the camp with his father—with the example of his military prowess before his eyes, and the acclamations with which a grateful people received, wherever he was met, the companion of Bruce and one of the saviours of their country, ringing in his ears—the young knight was from his infancy trained to the art of war, and incited to its triumphs by the spirit of an emulation which no youthful heart could have resisted. The military enthusiasm of that period centred in the desire for revenge against the English—a feeling well justified by the conduct of that nation, in making a neighbouring kingdom, for many successive years, a scene of devastation and blood. The spirit of battle in the young Scottish nobles was, therefore, not only a virtue, but a duty; and one of the earliest which was instilled into the young heart. In Douglas, the virtue and the duty were happily the results of natural bias; all the qualities of his heart and mind were calculated for the triumphs of war, which seemed so natural to him that he was never happy when engaged in the tame avocations of peace. The din of battle was to him what the music of the grove is to the lazy hind who, with his tuneful pipe, produces to himself, in imitation of the songsters, a world of sound, beyond which he conceives nothing to exist worthy of interesting the feelings of man. Viewing war as a trade, and a duty he owed to his

country lying prostrate under the feet of an invader, his natural feelings received such an accession of force from these laudable considerations, that every other thought or feeling was looked upon as mean or unbecoming. His country lay bleeding at the feet of one of a race of kings who had sent down to their descendants a hereditary hatred towards it as an independent kingdom; and an early patriotism (obscured, however, for a time) quadrated in his bosom with a love of distinction so strong, that life was, as compared to it, a thing of trifling importance. These sentiments could not fail to produce, in a man naturally daring and unsettled, an enthusiastic love of the military character; and, viewing the high idea which Sir William entertained of the elevation to which it might be carried, it is painful to contemplate the change which at one time came over him, when he sacrificed his patriotism for the gifts of his country's hereditary enemy.

What contributed, however, most to the elevation of Sir William Douglas' character as a warrior, was the strong feeling with which he was imbued of the nature and importance of that strange creation of the fancy of man, the genius of chivalry. Absurd as many of the behests of that great power undoubtedly were, it is not for a Scotsman to find fault with what contributed to the saving of his country. No nation derived so important benefits from the institution of chivalry, as Scotland: for it was when she was lying like a dying giant, panting for breath and freedom, that the enthusiasm of the spirit of knighthood filled the breasts of her sons, and nerved their arms for the work of liberation and revenge. Of all the men that Scotland ever produced, not excepting Bruce himself, no one ever realized in his person and mind the attributes of a "true knight" with so much fidelity to the ideal prototype as the Knight of Liddesdale. His superiority of strength over almost every warrior of his time, made him consider himself as one pointed out by nature to head the various orders of knights; and a creative fancy enabled him to invest his conduct, bearing, dress, speech, and manners, with all the gay and gaudy attributes which were deemed essential to the formation of an accomplished "lady's warrior!" The elegance which he was capable of infusing into his motions, especially when engaged in feats of personal contest, was deemed surprising in one whose formation of body, according to a gigantic scale, might be supposed unfavourable to the reception of the rules of grace. His high bearing within the palisades—amounting to royal demeanour, and derived from his conscious superiority of strength, as well as from the ideal type he had been able to form of the appearance and behaviour of one dedicated at once to Mars and Venus—caught every attention, and produced general respect and submission. Whenever the Knight of Liddesdale appeared, the ladies' tokens of favour were unfurled on every side, and cries of "The Flower of Chivalry," brought a pleasant corroboration to the ears of the warrior of what his own thoughts had so often told him—that he excelled his compeers in that character which he thought the highest that human nature could assume.

That these noble qualities should have been, to a certain extent, dimmed in their lustre by others of a dark and unfavourable kind, is to be lamented by those who cannot justify cruelty and unsteadiness to pledged faith, though found in the breast of the brave and the graceful. Even patriotism, which was the origin of the better qualities of his nature, suffered in the conflict of the feelings of an immoderate and ill-regulated ambition. The gold of the English Edwards had alienated the loyalty of many Scotsmen, and the repeated apostasy of March and others came to be looked upon at least without wonder; but that a Douglas should have listened, for however short a time, to the corruptive whispers of Scotland's destroyer, and the natural enemy of all that bore that charmed name, was indeed a circumstance of an extraordinary character, and

roused his country to impute to his illegitimacy what they could not bear to think should belong to the uncontaminated blood of so noble a family.

It was well for Sir William Douglas that he had earned and acquired his title of "The Flower of Chivalry" before another bright star of knighthood attained its perihelium. Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, when still a young man, shewed a wonderful aptitude for war—combining great intrepidity with almost unexampled address in suggesting and executing schemes for bringing it into action. In person, this distinguished captain was very unlike his contemporary and friend, the Knight of Liddesdale. He was of middle stature, but exceedingly well knit; of firm fibre; tough and hardy; capable of enduring any fatigue; quick in his motions; and always ready for devising a plan or carrying it into execution. He could boast, too, a superb grace of his own, which, disdaining established forms, rejoiced in the expression of high sentiment and conscious ability and rectitude; in a handsome countenance, shadowed with long light auburn hair; the most correct proportion of limbs, and an erect determined bearing—all set off by a gay, hilarious, rapid, and affable manner, which seldom failed in winning the hearts of his countrymen.

But what distinguished Ramsay most from his brother captain, the Knight of Liddesdale, was his strict integrity, which would have shone as bright in the counting-house of the merchant, if fate had destined him for that grade, as it did within the beauty-encircled theatre of the tourney. Douglas was deemed a perfect knight, and knew and kept the precepts of honour which chivalry promulgated; but once beyond the palisades, and his factitious sentiments were stripped of their imposing aspect, and the impulse of private passion, unrestrained by an inherent sense of truth and honour, drove him into courses which even his own friends could not justify. Ramsay, on the other hand, superinduced the sanctions of the code of a knight's honour on those eternal and immutable principles which had been early impressed on his heart by pious instructors, and had received the approbation of his judgment, when he was able to appreciate their excellence. In private life, his honour was as lustrous as in the field of battle or the jousting-place: his domestic morals were taken up as a theme of applause to add to the brilliancy of his public fame; and, even in early life, when strong passions often darken or efface the traces of moral feeling, he acquired the title of a good man—a glorious substratum for the erection of those honours with which mankind repay the services of the patriotic warrior.

Such were the two great captains, who, in the minority of David II., were called forth, by the united voice of the nation, to save Scotland from the sword and the brand of the third Edward; yet, long before their fame had pointed them out to the hopes or confidence of their country, they had been occupied in working out their revenge against its hereditary enemies; and, with the exception of that period when Wallace sprang, phoenix-like, from the ashes of his country's liberties, it would be difficult to point out an era when Scotland's sufferings spoke more eloquently to the hearts of her sons, than when those brave men obeyed her call. Edward Baliol had dismembered the kingdom, surrendered its liberties, and basely sworn fealty and homage to Edward. With the armies of the English King he had twice swept over the whole country, spreading death and desolation wherever he came: the face of the land was a scorched waste; the palace had been left by the princes of the blood; the castle had resigned its lord; and the cottage pointed out its locality by the smoke of its embers. It was a period when, according to an old historian, none but children dared to call David Bruce their king. But, fortunately for Scotland, Edward made, about this time, a public claim to the crown of France, declared war against Philip of Valois, and left Scotland to a deputed persecution, under

the charge of the Earl of Salisbury. From that period, the sword of the liberator was not sheathed till liberty was again achieved for a country destined to suffer more than any other in the world by invasion, and yet to be able to boast that it was never conquered.

Acting in concert, as became the two greatest knights of their time, Douglas and Ramsay fought with the English many battles, and harassed them incessantly with that kind of warfare recommended by King Robert in his testament. The fame of the two leaders being nearly equal, and their talents for war in like manner on a level, it might have been expected that some rivalry would exist between them, especially where the honours of a battle came to be apportioned among the victors. No such feeling ever entered the breast of the generous Ramsay, who was one of those single-hearted individuals whom nature has made great and good, without feeling the pride of the possession of such exquisite gifts; but so much could not be said for the Knight of Liddesdale, who was unwilling to allow that any knight or any noble in the land had any title to compete with him in that field where he had earned and acquired the proud appellation by which he was generally known both at home and abroad. He felt secretly annoyed by the fame of his companion in arms; and the cool disregard with which Ramsay contemplated those honours which he considered of an importance paramount to anything on earth, filled him with envy which degenerated into dislike. He construed the noble generosity of his friend, even when he was the object of it, into a piece of ostentation of qualities which he did not himself possess, and which he knew that his friend did not think he possessed. Acts of liberality were taken as insults, on the principle of those who reject presents because they are often marks of officious patronage, and the links of the chain of gratitude, which poor spirits cannot bear without being galled. This feeling on the part of the Knight of Liddesdale was, unfortunately, increased by a curious train of circumstances, not in any degree attributable to Ramsay, but involving consequences of a character melancholy and disastrous.

The brave conduct of the two knights having contributed, to a great extent, to the expulsion of the English army from Scotland, a strong effort was made by them to reclaim Teviotdale, which had been for a considerable time occupied not only by English soldiers, but English residents, who had quietly set themselves down in the warm lairs of the Scottish lairds, whom they had expelled from their hereditary habitations. In this they succeeded to the utmost extent of their wishes. Their attacks were not in this instance combined; but they were not, on that account, the less efficacious. In Douglas' onset, he overpowered and took prisoners several knights of distinction; and Ramsay was not behind him in the march of victory. The Castle of Hermitage fell into the hands of Douglas; and Lady Winton, the wife of Sir John Winton, an English knight, was taken by Ramsay, after he had, with his own hand, slain her husband. These captures, it was said at the time, ought to have been, as regarded the captors, reversed; for Douglas regretted that he had not secured the English beauty, and Ramsay would rather have had the castle.

"I have made but a poor capture in this expedition," said Ramsay to his friend, "and I would be inclined to try if we could manage an excambion—that is, as our merchants say, a barter or exchange—so as to equalize our mutual satisfaction. If a lady was in ancient times deemed sufficient to equiponderate the old castle of Priam, I do not see why I should be so unknighly as to depreciate this lady, whom I have against my own wishes entailed, to such an extent as to say that no modern dame, though not produced like Helen from an egg, is equal in value to an old castle. Sure I am, at least, that the gallant Knight of Liddesdale,

whom our dames have botanized into 'The Flower of Chivalry,' would not recommend me to attenuate the pretensions of modern beauty by so bold a statement."

"A right good trafficker, by my honour!" cried Douglas, laughing. "It is the custom of the Flemings, and such men who devote themselves to the vulgar occupations of trade, to enhance the value of their commodities and manufactures, by vouching for their qualities in words of much praise; but I must confess that I never did hear of a trafficker, who, in operating an exchange, did endeavour to get his goods bepraised by his brother merchant, while he did his best to depreciate *his* wares. I have not seen this fair captive, and as I am utterly ignorant of the art by which exchangers compare equipollents in the two articles, I cannot tell whether Dame Winton be equal in value to an old castle or not. Observe the difficulty: my capture hath four wings, thine hath only two; and, while I can boast of mine possessing both head and heart, I question if thou canst arrogate to thine the latter possession. But, above all, mine is steadfast, and thine has the property of being locomotive and automatous—a quality which may, perchance, make her mine without the trouble or cost of a base barter."

"Thy comparison is too quaint for the purposes of trade," replied Ramsay, smiling. "Thou mightst have resorted to another mode, if thy subtle love of the equivocal and quillet did not run away with thy wits. The Lord Salisbury, who is not yet out of Scotland, knoweth that a lady can save a castle, by the experience he has had of the love darts (the cloth-yard shafts) of Black Agnes of Dunbar; but if a lady can save a castle, thou must know that she may also betray it; for Tarpeia, the daughter of the governor of the capitol, delivered it over to the Albans, for a pair of bracelets. This, I do opine, is the true way to compare. If a lady can save or betray a castle, she assuredly may well be deemed worth one."

"Thy conclusion is at least worth the meed of praise," rejoined Douglas; "for thou hast arrived at it by some of that ingenuity whereby thou didst so cunningly surprise the English at Hawthornden; but the English were ignorant of the caves in the ravine of the Esk, and I have had some forecast of the depth of thy art. Yet, after all, thy argument only proves that Dame Winton may possibly be worth my Castle of Hermitage—a proposition which no true knight can deny, seeing he is bound to acknowledge obedience to the law of the order, that a knight's life is the full price and value of a lady's smile. I have a hundred times put my life in a venture for a glance, and I may surely risk an old castle for both the beam and the beauty who throws it. Yet, true knight as I consider myself to be, I do not subscribe to the formula that a beauty, unseen and unknown, hath as great a claim upon the prowess or affections of a knight, as one who is mistress of his heart and the arbiter of his destiny. But I am oblivious. Are we not, at present, merchants, sordid slaves, traffickers, hucksters? Why, then, this parlance about knighthood? Let us see the lady, that we may not, as our townsmen say, make a blind bargain, and be only wise behind the hand."

This conversation, though intended by Ramsay as mere sport, had something in it which Douglas considered serious. He, of course, had no intention of giving up the Castle of Hermitage, which he had wrung from the hands of the English; and Ramsay had as little intention of putting his fair captive into the hands of Douglas, on whose honour he could not have relied for proper treatment. His object in detaining the lady was to force out of the hands of Edward a kinsman who had been taken prisoner by the English. But, while his duty to his country and his kinsman rendered it imperative on him to detain, as prisoner, Lady Winton, the duty he owed to his own feelings required that he should treat one whom he had, by the obligations of war, deprived of her protector, and reduced to captivity and

widowhood, with all the attention and kindness which such a condition required at the hands of a man of honour. Everything which a person in her situation required, was got to contribute to her comfort and assuage her grief. Female servants were procured to attend her, and to supply the desires and wants which she might express, or which might, by anticipating sympathy, be supposed to be incident to her sex and condition. She was invited to take exercise on horseback, to attend tournaments and other shows, to read and amuse herself in such way as her fancy suggested or her heart inclined. She was introduced to Ramsay's friends, who, taking pity on her sorrows, spared no pains in assuaging them: sports were got up for her sake alone, and many honours and attentions paid her, which her rank, unaided by the peculiar circumstances of her fate, would not have commanded or procured; communications were delivered to her relations in England, and answers and gifts, received in return, carefully put into her possession; while the most unremitting solicitude was evinced by Ramsay, to make every amends, by personal attentions, for the sad change he had been the cause of bringing on the fortunes of her and her house.

But all these efforts on the part of the generous captor were unable to eradicate from the mind of the lady the one engrossing implacable feeling with which it was occupied—that he had, by his own hand, taken from her the partner of her fortunes, her natural protector, and the object of her love. The slayer of her husband could, in her estimation, do nothing that was sufficient to wash from his hands that blood, each drop of which she cherished more than streams of her own. The kindness with which she was treated by the generous warrior was construed, by the perverse workings of a judgment placed in subjection to morbid feelings, as an intended aggravation of the injury, and an amplification of the cause of her grief and insult. Her desire of self-preservation, and a natural cunning, induced her to conceal this state of her feelings; and she received the genuine and heart-felt attentions of Ramsay with as much apparent gratitude as she could assume; but this effort only tended to aggravate the anger and revenge with which she was actuated; and she sighed for liberation more for the sake of getting them gratified, than of any personal advantages that might result from a return to her country, and the enjoyment of liberty.

The introduction of the Knight of Liddesdale to Lady Winton, took place at the residence of Ramsay, Dalhousie Castle. She received the illustrious guest with greater indications of respect than she had shewn to any others of the nobility who had been introduced to her; arising as well from his fame and imposing appearance, as from a hint she had got in some quarter, that he was not the steadfast and genuine friend of her captor he appeared to be. The sentiments of the three parties who thus met were of the most heterogeneous character. Ramsay thought of making his captive as happy as the circumstances of her situation would permit, occasionally relaxing his mind with the recollection of the playful conversation he had with his companion, of which the lady formed the subject; she, on the other hand, saw in Douglas a person who might serve the purpose of her revenge against Ramsay; while the knight was in deep contemplation of her beauty, and anxious to displace his friend from the office of her protector. A message from one of the governors, the Earl of Moray, having called Ramsay out, the knight and the lady had an opportunity of comparing their thoughts; and, however delicate the subjects lying nearest to their hearts, the desire of revenge on the one side, and love on the other, were too strong to be overcome by ordinary scruples.

"The fortune of war, madam," said Douglas, "hath wofully changed thy condition; and we knights, whose occupation it is to protect the injured and comfort the

sorrowful of thy sex, may not deem it unbecoming or derogatory of our martial character, to offer a tear as a tribute to the pity which thy sorrows demand from every sympathising heart; but, when misfortune is in union with beauty, the feelings of the knight have arrived at their consummation, and I would wish thee, sweet lady, to believe that, while I am thy most abject slave, I am willing to be thy protector and comforter. What pity it was, that thy husband was deprived of life by the hand of my friend!"—looking sorrowful.

"That, good Sir Knight," replied the lady, who saw the intention of the unnecessary and unfriendly allusion to Ramsay, "is, in my humble apprehension, no pity. If my husband was to fall, his fate came as well from the hands of Sir Alexander Ramsay, as from that of a meaner soldier; yet, if thou dost indicate that, if another hand had done the deed, I might have been saved the additional grief of having a fulsome and affected generosity and kindness applied, like a soft, poisonous, lying cataplasm, to my irremediable sores, thou sayest well; I approve thy speech, and admire the delicacy of the allusion."

"Thou givest me more credit for a good intention than my words convey," replied Douglas, well pleased at the hint he had elicited unfavourable to Ramsay; "but I am glad that chance hath, in one instance, acted the part of my better genius, in making me strike the spring which hath exhibited to me the sorrows of a fair dame, that I may bring her succour and relief, save her from the cruel display of unreal feeling, and bind up her wounded spirit with genuine sympathy. By St Duthos, madam, thou hast done what in Scotland is deemed no trivial act—thou hast touched the heart of a Douglas, and enlisted his feelings of chivalry in the cause of injured virtue. I understand the nature of thy complaint; for I, even I, have been forced to bear the display of an affected patronage—a conservative friendship—a bland, unctuous, healing care of my interests, on the part of thy generous keeper. If a lady cannot brook this, what is to be expected from the proudest of Scotland's knights—the flower of chivalry—the Knight of Liddesdale?"

At this moment Ramsay entered with a benignant face, as if he had had some intelligence of a pleasing nature to communicate to Douglas.

"Good news is always welcome," he cried, with a joyful manner, "and I do not see why the presence of this fair lady—whose smiles, softened by tears, may gild the gift of the gods—should prevent me, as Douglas' friend, from at once informing him that the governor, the Earl of Moray, hath been pleased to award to thee the sheriffship of Teviotdale, in consideration of thy services in expelling from that arena of contention our English foes."

"And why," interrupted the proud knight, whom the presence of the lady, as a witness of Ramsay's apparent patronage, inflamed beyond his usual manner—"why did not the Earl of Moray, who is in these parts, as doth appear from thy interview with him, communicate this intelligence to myself, in place of insulting me by this vicarious communication?"

"This answer, my good Sir William, I did not expect," replied Ramsay, with benignity; "but, since thou has allowed thyself to be carried so far by thy feelings as to impugn the conduct of thy benefactor the governor, as well as of me thy friend, I conceive myself called upon to state, what my delicacy had otherwise forced me to withhold, that this office, with its valuable emoluments, was offered to myself, as a reward for my small services in that quarter in behalf of my country; but, aware of thy superior claim to the honour, I waved my privilege of the governor's favours recommended thee, and my nomination received the necessary approbation. The Earl, being obliged to ride off for Perth on the instant, requested me to carry to thee the intelligence. I with the most sincere feelings wish thee joy of thy jurisdiction, with its concomitants—I mean the fees

and do hereby forestall the tenderest part of thy first seisin ox as my guerdon."

"The gift I receive," said Douglas, doggedly; "but I admire neither the mode in which it has been conferred, nor the manner in which it has been communicated. The sanction of thy repetition was not needed to what has been stated by every man and woman between Dunnet Head and the Mull of Galloway—that I expelled the English from Teviotdale, and had the only right to the sheriffship of the county I had thus brought back to the kingdom."

"But art thou not bound in gratitude to thy benefactor," said Lady Winton, with a peculiar expression of face which Douglas at once understood, "who hath not only communicated this intelligence to thee, but added the gift itself, all of his own freewill? Such disinterested friendship—such generosity—such 'an unctuous healing care of thy fortunes'—thou wilt not find in broad Scotland, if thou shouldst wander from the point of Ardnamurchan to Buchanness, which, though an Englishwoman, I know to be the most eastern and western points of thy *rich and beautiful country!*"

"Hold, good madam," said the unsuspecting Ramsay, who took her extravagant eulogium for a serious expression of her sentiments. "If my friend hath underrated my services, thou hast overshot them as much as does the rainbow the apparent earthly extremities of its arch; but I am bound to attribute thy goodwill to some overweening gratitude for services which I was bound, by the laws of war and the precepts of humanity, to render to any one in thy situation. I hope we shall now have done with this matter, which thus forceth me to speak of myself—a subject certainly not fitted either for the epopee or the apologue. We had better refer to Derby's tourney, which is fixed to take place on Wednesday at Berwick, where thou, Sir William, art expected to bring under thy corslet a forgiving heart, and under thy glaive a merciful hand, for both will be required."

"I shall grant Derby his three courses," replied Douglas, with a sneer; "but, if fortune shall place him under my spear, I shall make no parade of my generosity in giving him his legs and his life."

"By my crest, I believe thee!" replied Ramsay, unobservant of the force of the satire, which was appreciated by the lady; "and I hope Lady Winton shall be present to witness thy triumph. Thou must doff thy weeds, my fair prisoner, and array thyself in program and taffeta. A damsel in mourning never inspired the heart of a knight."

The tourney alluded to by Ramsay, was held at Berwick, and is reported by the historian Fordun. Henry de Lancaster, Earl of Derby, who was considered, in England, to be one of the best knights in that kingdom, could not with patience listen to the praises which were daily rung in his ears, of the accomplishments and prowess of the Scottish warriors, Douglas and Ramsay; and, with a view to test his supposed superiority, invited these rivals to joust with him at Berwick. The invitation was specific, and contained the precise terms of the combat. Three courses were to be run between him and Douglas, in the first instance; and then twenty English, with him at their head, were to compete with twenty Scottish knights, with Ramsay at their head. The circumstance of a trial of skill formally appointed, and which was to involve the character not only of the most famous individuals of the day, but also of two rival nations, produced throughout Scotland a great sensation; and people from all quarters flocked to witness the scene. Preparations on a great scale were made, and it was even expected that knights and spectators from the continent would grace with their presence so brilliant an exhibition.

The scene did not shame the anticipations of the people. It was on the grandest scale of these magnificent displays. An immense space of level ground was enclosed with palisades, and around the enclosure were placed, in the form of

an amphitheatre, the seats for the spectators, among whom the ladies formed the most important personages—their prerogatives being those of judges, juries, and spectators, as well as possessing in their approbation the incitement to victory. One of these was Lady Winton, who, notwithstanding the request of Ramsay, had come arrayed in her weeds. By these she was rendered remarkable; and the attraction which her dress commanded, was riveted by the beauty she exhibited in her still pale face and dark eyes. The Knight of Liddesdale kept his eyes upon her, while she regarded him with a smile, and replied to the indications of respect of Ramsay with an involuntary shudder, as she saw displayed those ensigns of war which reminded her of the death of her husband, who had fallen by his hand. Possessed of powers of self-control and dissimulation, she succeeded in restraining further indications of her feelings; while the spectators, who knew the unhappy circumstances of her fate, awarded her a pity, in which the amiable Ramsay shared to an extent suitable to his merits, and the peculiar situation in which he was placed, as the irreproachable destroyer of her happiness, and her kind but ineffectual comforter.

The forms and ceremonies of the tourney were gone through with the most minute precision. Derby appeared first in the arena, and his heralds set forth the peal of defiance, calling upon Sir William Douglas to appear and answer the challenge of Henry de Lancaster, upon the pain of losing his character and honour of a true knight. In an instant, the Knight of Liddesdale was at his post of honour, mounted on a white charger, and arrayed in a costly suit of plate-armour, a new species that had superseded the old mailed coat, and appeared to great advantage when exposed to the rays of the sun. Both knights were dressed in nearly the same style—the only difference of any moment consisting of the want of a chamfeyn or iron frontlet for the black horse rode by the Earl. This supposed want was noticed by Douglas, who put Derby on his guard against exposing the head of his steed; but Derby, bowing gracefully, replied, that, while he was grateful for the intimation he had received, he would adhere to his custom of allowing his horse the pleasure of seeing the discomfiture of his enemy.

This sally roused the blood of Douglas; losing temper and presence of mind, he rushed upon his antagonist, and in a few seconds was wounded severely by a splinter of his own lance, the pain of which adding to his fury, unsettled his steady powers of defence, and left him to the mercy of Derby, who unhorsed him at the first onset. At that critical moment, Ramsay ran forward, and assisting Douglas to rise, examined his wound, and declared to the umpires that it was of such a nature, being in the palm of the hand, that he could not hold the lance, and therefore must resign the fight. Douglas, struggling in pain and anger, opposed this friendly suggestion on the part of Ramsay; but, in the meantime, his hand had swollen to such a size that it would not enter the glaive. On every effort he made to seize the lance, it fell from his feeble grasp, and the united testimony of the spectators declared that he could not continue the contest.

The discomfited knight, having got his hand rolled up in cloth and swung from his neck, took his seat beside Lady Winton, to witness the contest between Derby's knights and the party headed by Ramsay, who were making preparations for the rencounter.

"Thou hast experienced again the tender mercies of thy friend," said Lady Winton. "His eye, quick to the discovery of thy misfortune, saw in thy wound what was not by thee felt. Thou wouldst have recovered thy power, but the pitchpipe of our good friend's sympathy had raised the feeling of the assembly to his required key, and thou hast been groaned and wept out of thy victory. If thy friend now conquers, he will have achieved the contrast he hath no doubt sighed for, from the last feast of St John, when

Derby's challenge reached Scotland, up to this moment of his expected triumph."

"That man is, indeed, my evil genius," groaned Douglas, still under the influence of his pain. "His forte is contrast—he adroitly makes the evil or the misfortune of others the foil of his superiority in arms, or his benevolence of heart. By the heart of King Robert, I would rather bear the gibes and contumely of declared arrogance and bare-faced impudence, than this soft chiasm of whining, affected sympathy—this egotistic benevolence and care—this insulting patronage. But my discomposure is his victory; and the peace I may acquire from the bland influence of thy soft smiles, shall shew that Douglas is above the power of Ramsay to put him out of humour."

The tourney proceeded amidst the deafening shouts of the spectators. The twenty knights met, and coursed against each other with dreadful violence. The conflict became a sanguinary pastime: two English knights fell dead on the first shock; and Sir William Ramsay, the kinsman of Sir Alexander, was struck, through the bars of his aventail, by a spear, which penetrated so deep that no one could suppose that he would survive an instant after it was extracted. He was confessed immediately in his armour, with the spear still sticking in the wound, as if to keep his soul in the body until the unhappy man was shrievd.

"So help me, Heaven!" said Derby, "I would desire to see no fairer sight than this brave man thus shrievd, with his helmet on his head, and a lance in his body. Happy man should I be could I ensure myself such an ending."

The moment the victim was confessed, Sir Alexander Ramsay placed his foot on his kinsman's helmet, and pulled out the broken lance; the shrievd warrior started to his feet, and cried out that he "ailed nothing;" and, in an instant, dropped on the ground, a corpse. His body was immediately removed, and the fight proceeded with greater fury. The English Earl, meeting Ramsay, adroitly fixed his spear between the clasps of his breastplate, with a view to throw him back and unhorse him; but his effort recoiled on himself—the point of his spear slipped, and the forward impulse of the warrior, deprived of its resistance, threw him over the peak of his saddle, and exposed him to Ramsay's side blow, which was laid on with so much force, that the conqueror of Douglas fell senseless to the ground, amidst the shouts of thousands. The stated number of courses terminated with this triumphant advantage on the part of Ramsay; and the umpires awarded the palm to the Scottish knights.

"Now," said Lady Winton, "the contrast for which Ramsay sighed is complete, and he will be present with us instantly, to enjoy his triumph."

"He will not find his foil then, my good lady," said Douglas, hastily. "I am for the Castle of Hermitage, and if my suit hath been successful, as thy smiles have led me to think it hath, I adjure thee, by our common sentiments of the proud victor, who will presently be here to insult us, to trust thyself to my keeping, and journey with me to the old castle, which, in one of our interviews, he wished me to yield to him in exchange for thy fair person."

"Heavens!" cried the lady, "did the destroyer of my husband offer to sell me for an old house?"

"He did, by the faith of a Douglas!" replied the knight.

"And, by the honour of England, the Scotsman cozens well," cried the lady. "His kindness was that of the horse-trader, who proportions his food to his expectations of price. I would have been well sold, and thou wouldst have been jockeyed."

When Ramsay came up to the place where his prisoner and Sir William had sat, he was surprised to find that they had disappeared; and when he was told that they had rode off together for the Castle of Hermitage, his surprise

was increased; the ingratitude of the lady, joined to the breach of faith and friendship on the part of his brother in arms, stung him with an acuteness proportioned to his own sense and feeling of those virtues; and, with his true nobility of nature, he resolved upon leaving them to the reaction of such thoughts as a returning consciousness of his justice and friendship, contrasted with their reprehensible conduct, would ultimately suggest.

On arriving at the castle, Douglas set apart for the lady a splendid suite of apartments, giving her out, with some inconsistency, as his prisoner, whom he was bound to treat with respect and attention. He soon found that he had a very peculiar personage to deal with; the high expectation he had, from her readiness to accompany him, cherished of getting the love he bore to her requited as became its strength, decreased on every effort he made to secure her affections; and latterly he became satisfied that she had consented to accompany him to his residence, principally, if not solely, from a strong desire to get out of the hands of Ramsay. There was, however, a motive in the bosom of Lady Winton stronger than that suspected by Douglas, but which she had too much cunning to declare. She sighed secretly for revenge against Ramsay, and fixed upon the choleric and haughty Knight of Liddesdale to be the executor of her purpose. She had soon discovered that he entertained feelings towards his friend the very reverse of those which the latter entertained towards him; and she had already taken care, as far as she could, to add an asperity to these by the arts already detailed. Her work was only yet begun; but she augured favourably of the result from the moment she discovered that she had caught the affections of the amorous knight, and resolved to use the power she had thus acquired in furthering her wicked purpose. The affair of the sheriffship and the tourney formed a good foundation for her operations; and she trusted to the wit of woman to supply the means of raising the superstructure and attaining her object.

Resistance to Sir William was the first and most effectual part of her scheme. His affection, true to the nature of love, burned with an ardour proportioned to the difficulty that was opposed to its gratification; and the lady, while she pretended to be inclined to extinguish it, with the tact of her sex adroitly trimmed the lamp. Alternating her modes of action, she softened her manner into an apparent incipient affection, or preliminary melting and yielding to the influence of the tender passion; and, when she had discovered the effect produced on her admirer, she confirmed and riveted it by a transition to the severity, hardness, and cruelty of the unwilling dame—thus performing the various arts of the coquette, and gently and slowly winding around her victim the chain by which she intended to lead him to ruin. She felt no affection, and wished to feel none for any Scotsman. If she intended ever to love again, her choice would be made in her own country; but, an adept in the arts of her sex, she resolved on making them available for the purposes of her revenge. Douglas, blind to the practises thus resorted to by an accomplished dissembler, construed her conduct into natural modesty, sometimes tinged with a little asperity, produced by his importunate pressure of his suit; and thus became an easy victim in the meshes of female cunning. His love increased, and the lady's manners vacillated between the stern and the soft, until she thought she had got him safely beyond the chance of a retrogression.

Arrived at this stage, she conceived she might safely begin to make stipulations for the purpose of carrying her object. Hitherto she had never lost an opportunity of keeping floating before the mind of her lover those misconstrued acts of the generous Ramsay which Douglas considered as insults; and, in particular, she handled, with the most consummate skill, the affairs of the sheriffship and

that of the tourney, whenever she found she had a good opportunity. Unhappily, there existed in Douglas' mind a predisposition to inflammation, on the approach of the subject of Ramsay's well-earned fame for the possession of noble qualities; and a ready ear and a flashing eye were guarantees to the artful woman of the effect of her insinuations. He was satisfied, and had been so for a long time, that, although he excelled his rival in daring dashing enterprises of Border warfare, he was inferior to him in military art, in generosity, nobility of thought, conversation, beauty of sentiment; and in the general fame and estimation of the world for the possession of these. But what galled him most was, that Ramsay presented always the appearance of one stooping to notice him, or do him a good service; the quick intelligence of the eye of one invidious of another's better parts had attributed to a supposed assumption of superiority what ought to have been imputed to the consciousness of inferiority, which produced the feeling—a circumstance soon seen by the actress, who adroitly elevated Ramsay, in proportion as she wished to make his eleemosynary insults fall heavier on the mind of Douglas. Carrying forward in this way her two grand objects—an increase of affection towards herself, and of hatred towards Ramsay—she looked forward to the perfection of her scheme, in seeing a junction of these guarantee a stipulation that she would give up her heart, (whether really or apparently, was a different thing,) on condition of her lover taking away the life of the man who had killed her husband and insulted her avenger.

The first approach to a stipulation of such a nature, quadrating, though it did, with Douglas' strongest inclinations, was, as the lady knew, the most difficult and dangerous part of the progress. She relied on her knowledge of mankind, crediting the apophthegm, that what the heart wisheth the judgment will not tarry to confirm, or the hand to execute; and, deriving confidence from small indications, progressed with the noiseless and gradual, yet certain advancement of the serpent, which is formed to pass through the smallest apertures, and to cheat both the eye and the ear of animals of the quickest sensation. Unwilling to risk all on a last throw, which, contrary to her expectations, might turn out unsuccessful, she felt inclined to be contented at first with a lesser chance, and hugged with joy her achievement, when she heard Douglas say, as he hung round her neck, alternately burning with love and revenge, the results of her powers of excitement, that, on the next occasion of an insult on the part of Ramsay, he would punish him with death on the spot.

"When that shall happen," she exclaimed, with fervour, "the heart of Dame Winton is no longer her own."

"And with such a guerdon in view," exclaimed Douglas, clasping her eagerly to his bosom, "it would not be like a true lover to be dainty in his relish of the insult which is to produce so important an effect."

It now remained for this female schemer to bring about such a train of circumstances as would produce an occasion for Douglas redeeming the fatal pledge he had made in the conversation now detailed—and this she felt the easiest part of her task. It happened at that time that an English lady, occupying the high office of one of the maids of honour to the Scottish Queen, was at the Castle on her way to Scone. This lady's name was Clarissa Sofley; and, being an old friend of Lady Winton's, she was entirely devoted to her service. Her power over the English Joanna was known to be great, arising from a community of English ideas and feelings, strengthened by long habits of intimacy and endless conversations about national objects of cherished attachment. Many of the Queen's secrets were confided by the maid of honour to her English friend; and, among the rest, it was communicated that, of all the knights and nobles of Scotland, Sir Alexander Ram-

say was the greatest favourite of the Queen. This fact was in a short time stated by Lady Winton to Douglas, with a view to keep alive the feeling which she was shortly to inflame to an extent suited to her purpose.

Douglas, attached to his new love, remained in a state of inactivity at the castle, while his rival, Ramsay, was "up and doing," with all the usual energy of his character, burning to free his country from the thralldom of the English, and to procure for himself a high degree of favour in the estimation of King David, who, having arrived only shortly before from France, was in a manner new to his country and to its inhabitants. The daring exploits of Ramsay, which were attended with general success, filled the mouths of the people, and found their way, loaded with acclamations, to the throne; but, above all, his triumph in reducing Roxburgh Castle, a fortress of great strength and importance, by a daring night escalade, was universally deemed the most illustrious achievement of those times, and formed the prevailing theme of conversation in Scotland for many a day. As soon as the intelligence reached the Hermitage, it was communicated by Lady Winton to Douglas, with such circumstantial details as would add to the flame of envy it could not fail to produce in the mind of the knight. But Clarissa Sofley was the person whom she wished to interest, to the greatest degree, in this affair. She represented to her that Ramsay's conduct deserved not only praise but reward from his sovereign, and that, in consequence of the kindness he had shewn to her while she remained his prisoner, she herself felt so much interest in his advancement that she could not but press upon the maid of honour the justice and expediency of prevailing upon Queen Joanna, already his friend, to get the King to award to him some mark of favour more substantial than empty words of praise. Douglas, she continued, was sick of the details of the sheriffship of Teviotdale, and she knew for certain that Ramsay sighed for nothing more fervently than that jurisdiction. It seemed, therefore, a favourite opportunity for pleasing all parties. The King would do an act of justice in awarding to so good a soldier this honour. Ramsay would be pleased and filled with gratitude, which would nerve his arm for greater enterprises; and Douglas would be relieved from a duty the discharge of which was not suited to his habits of life. She concluded by extorting from the maid of honour a promise to use every energy in her power, when she arrived at Scone, to gratify her friend by getting this scheme of gratitude accomplished. Next day, Clarissa Sofley departed for the royal residence.

In a very short time afterwards, Lady Winton received a letter from her friend, informing her that David had, with the aid of very little solicitation, conferred on Sir Alexander Ramsay, for his conduct in reducing Roxburgh Castle, the sheriffship of Teviotdale. Repairing with alacrity to Douglas, she told him the extraordinary news, garnishing her communication with such commentaries as would bring out, in the strongest light, the injustice to Douglas of the grant, the dishonour and disgrace it entailed upon him, and the necessity of resorting to some mode of revenge. It was clear, she stated, that the King must have previously known that Ramsay wished for, if he did not solicit the honour, and been informed that Douglas wished to resign it; for it was impossible otherwise to account for so extraordinary an act on the part of a monarch who could not afford to lose any of his knights by so gratuitous an inversion of the rules of justice. But all this was supererogation. The mind of Douglas was too fervent, and his sense of dishonour too acute, to require anything more to inflame it to the highest degree than the simple announcement of this unexpected intelligence.

"Behold," cried he, "the last, the greatest of Ramsay's triumphs! The boon I received kneeling from his genero-

sity is snatched back by the lying devices of another hand. My sovereign hath been imposed upon; his royal signet used for private purposes of aggrandisement; and Douglas attempted to be tricked by the *hiccius doccius* who hath juggled him for years. What more is required to rouse me to the vindication of my honour, the punishment of the criminal devices of low villany cloaked with generosity, the gratification of my revenge, and the consummation of my love?"

"One other thing," answered Lady Winton—"and that, too, is forthcoming. That Ramsay shall wait on thee, and make offer generously to resign the royal grant into hands which he knoweth are convulsively clutching the dagger of revenge, and therefore must be rejected."

"Right, good lady," answered Douglas, energetically; "that is awaiting, and will be supplied. Thou knowest the murderer of thy husband better than I do the destroyer of my honour, and the intruder upon my rights and privileges. By the sword of the Good Sir James, he shall have his response—his reward! Is there need of more words from a Douglas?"

The remark of Lady Winton was verified sooner than could have been expected. Ramsay had himself been surprised at the gift of the King, and had resolved not to accept it unless he ascertained that Douglas truly wished to resign his office. His sense of honour was too fine to allow him to hesitate an instant on the step he should follow; and, telling the King's messenger that he required time to deliberate about receiving the honour intended to be conferred on him, he threw himself upon a horse, and journeyed with all speed to the Castle of Hermitage.

"My King," he said, on meeting Douglas, "hath taken it into his royal head that I am possessed of an especial desire for thy office of sheriffship. God mend the times! Why is it that my thoughts are thus travestied by royal ingenuity, and my honour and friendship put into jeopardy by officious favour? I fear, also, that thy ideas have experienced the *menstruum* of the royal will, and undergone some metamorphosis, for which thou art not answerable; for it doth appear that it hath been represented that thou dost wish to resign thy post of honour and emolument, which, with thy good sword, thou didst fight for, when the sheriffdom over which thy jurisdiction extends was, by thy prowess, cleared of our national enemies. I judge of the truth of thy imputed sentiments by that of my own; and I do, upon the honour of a Ramsay, declare that the authority of David Bruce shall not invest me with those honours which thy arm hath achieved."

"By my faith, Ramsay," replied Douglas, "thou art a right generous knight; and do, moreover, possess a most potent, I should say a most miraculous power of producing opportunities of shewing forth thy noble sentiments; for thou dost not hesitate to imitate some of the old kings, who robbed their subjects, and then generously handed to them their own in the form of a royal donation. I received this sheriffship at thy hands before—God bless the bounty!—and I cannot prevail upon myself to tax thy generosity with a repetition of the same gift. He who bore the heart of good King Robert, and who, as a penance for the sins of his master, resolved to fight and beg his way to the Holy Land, did not bequeath the badge of the 'blue-gown' or any other beggar to his son. I got only his sword, and, God pity me! I once was foolish enough to think I could fight my way, with that good Damascus, through the necessities of illegitimacy, without being obliged to have recourse to mendicancy. I cannot yet resign that thought; for my sword, believe me, is neither blunt nor rusty, though, peradventure, thou dost believe, if I may trust my sense of injury and insult, that it is both. Go, sir, and take possession of thy sheriffdom; and may the prayer of a Douglas be answered, when it expreseth his desire that the first precept directed from

chancery may be to infest thy son and heir in the land of thy family in Teviotdale."

"These taunts, Sir William," said Ramsay, "but ill become our friendship or my errand. I forgive thee, because"——

"Dost thou, most generous youth?" interrupted Sir William. "How much do I owe thee for all the gratuitous awards of thy beneficence? Honour demands an account, and I cannot stoop to acceptance. I shall appear in thy court-room at Hawick, and pay thee over the bar of justice—though that may be the sacred desk of the prelate. The Church loves justice. No more."

As Douglas uttered these words, he rushed abruptly out of the room. Ramsay, unconscious of having done anything to produce anger, felt sorry for the effects of some misunderstanding, which he would have been glad to explain. There was, however, something due to his own dignity. He returned to Dalhousie, fully resolved not to accept the sheriffship, and sent an intimation to that effect to Scone. After some time, he received intimation that Douglas had refused to officiate as sheriff; and the King called upon him, as a faithful subject, to stand forth and prevent the impeding of the course of justice in one of the most troubled of his counties. This appeal it was impossible to resist; and Ramsay allowed himself to be invested with his new honours.

The hints which Douglas had thrown out in his conversation with Ramsay, might have led the latter to suspect that the proud baron whom he had thus, against his own will, superseded in a high office, would resort to some mode of revenge; and it is asserted by historians, that notice was absolutely given to the new sheriff that his enemy resolved to punish him in the very scene of his judicial labours. Ramsay, however, trusted to Douglas having, in a manner, resigned the office, by refusing to fulfil its duties; and it has been also asserted that Douglas subsequently pretended to be reconciled to him. It is certain, at all events, that Ramsay feared nothing, and made no preparations, by having a guard about him, to resist any interference with his person or judicial avocations—a fatal security, destined to be lamented by Scotland, so long as the fate of one of her best men and most accomplished warriors continued to be remembered. In the meantime, Douglas was deeply intent upon the execution of his purpose. He led a band of armed retainers to Hawick, where he knew that the new sheriff held his court in the open church. On entering, Ramsay invited him, with an easy and friendly manner, to take his seat alongside of him; on which Douglas drew his sword, seized his victim, who was wounded in attempting a vain resistance, and, throwing him, while the blood flowed from his wounds, across a horse, hurried him off to the Castle of Hermitage, where he thrust him into a dungeon. There he was left to die of hunger. No one was allowed, by the proud and implacable baron, to approach him; and it is asserted that the dastardly executioner and Lady Winton sat at a low casement, in front of the castle, for the purpose of being regaled by the cries of the dying man. A circumstance occurred which contributed to the extension of his agonies, and the pleasure of his enemies. It happened that there was a granary above his prison, from which some particles of corn fell through the chinks and crevices of the floor. On these the miserable man protracted a wretched existence for the space of seventeen days. The cessation of his groans apprised his implacable foes that hunger had wrung from their victim the last spark of life.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

CHATELARD.

SOME time after the unfortunate Queen Mary had established her court at Holyrood, on her return from France, to ascend the throne of her ancestors, a stranger arrived at a certain tavern or hostelry, kept by one Goodal, at the foot of the Canongate of Edinburgh. The former had just come from Leith, where he had been landed from a French vessel some two or three hours previously. He was a young man, probably about three or four and twenty, tall and handsome in person, of a singularly pleasing countenance, and of mild and exceedingly gentleman-like demeanour. His lofty forehead and expressive eye bespoke the presence of genius, or, at least, of an intellect of a very high order; while his general manners indicated a refined and cultivated mind. There was marked, however, on the brow of the interesting stranger, very palpable traces of saddening thoughts—his whole countenance, indeed, exhibiting the characteristics of a deep and rooted melancholy; but it was of a gentle kind, and bore no likeness to the stern gloominess of disappointed ambition. His sadness was evidently a sadness of the heart—the result of some grievous pressure on its best and tenderest feelings and affections.

After having partaken of some refreshment, the stranger desired a small measure of wine to be brought him. This order was executed by mine host in person; and, indeed, from what afterwards followed, it seemed to have been given with an express view to that result; for, on the landlord's placing the wine before his guest, the latter requested him, with great politeness of manner, to sit down and share it with him; saying, that he wanted a little information on two or three particular points. Mine host, seating himself as desired, expressed his readiness to afford him any information of which he himself was possessed. Having thanked the former for his civility, and pressed him, not in vain, to taste of his own wine, the stranger said—

“Is the Queen, my friend, just now at Holyrood?”

He was answered in the affirmative. The querist paused, sighed, and next inquired if she walked much abroad—what were the hours she devoted to that recreation—whether she was accompanied by many attendants on these occasions—and whether her ordinary promenade was a place easy of access.” Having been informed on all these points, he again relapsed into thought, and again sighed profoundly. After a short time, however, he once more recovered himself, and suddenly exclaimed, but more by way of soliloquy than inquiry—

“Is she not beautiful—transcendantly beautiful?”

Mine host, who was not a little surprised by the abruptness of the question, and the enthusiasm of manner in which it was expressed, replied, that she surely was “Just as bonny a creature as he had ever clapt ee on—a plump, sonsy, nice-lookin lass.”

A slight expression of disgust, or rather of horror, at the homely terms employed by mine host in speaking of the beauty of the Queen, passed over the countenance of his guest. It was, however, but momentary, and was not observed, or at any rate not understood, by him whose language had called it forth.

“Ay, beautiful is she,” went on the enthusiastic stranger, leaning back in his chair, and gazing on the roof, in a fit of ecstasy, and in seeming unconsciousness of the presence of a third party—“beautiful is she to look upon, as is the rising sun emerging from the purpled east; beautiful as his setting amidst the burnished clouds of the west; lovely as the full moon hanging midway in her field of azure-grateful to the sight as the green fields of spring, or the flowers of the garden; and pleasant to the ear are the tones of her voice, as the song of the nightingale in the grove, or the sound of the distant waterfall.”

Here the speaker paused in his rhapsody, continued silent for some moments, then suddenly returning, as it were, to a sense of the circumstances in which he was placed, he brought his hands over his forehead and eyes, as one recovering from an agony of painful and melancholy thoughts. Surprised by this extraordinary conduct of his guest, the landlord of the house began to conceive that he had got into the company of a madman; yet he marvelled much what description of madness it could be, since it was made evident only when the Queen was spoken of—the stranger speaking on all other subjects rationally and composedly.

“She walks not much abroad, you say, my friend?” said the latter, resuming the conversation which he had broken off to give utterance to the rhapsody which has just been quoted.

“Very seldom, sir,” replied mine host; “for, ye see, she doesna fin’ hersel quite at hame yet amang us; but she’ll come to, by and by, I’ve nae doot.”

“And she is not easy of access, you say: no chance of one being able to throw himself in her way?”

“Unco little, I should think,” replied mine host, “unless she could be fa’n in wi’ gaun to the chapel to mass; for she still abides by thae abominations, for a’ John Knox can say till her.” A flush of resentment and indignation crossed the pale countenance of the stranger, at the last expressions of the innkeeper, and he threw a glance at him, strongly expressive of these feelings, but suddenly checked himself, paused for a moment, and then resumed his queries in the calm and gentle tones which seemed natural to him—

“How likes she the country, know ye?”

“Indeed, I canna weel say,” replied mine host; “but I rather doot, frae what I hear, she’s no a’thegither reconciled till’t yet. She thinks, I dare say, we’re rather a rough-spun set o’ folk—a wee thing coorse i’ the grain or sae.”

“Ay, that ye are, that ye are,” said the stranger, with more candour than courtesy, again throwing himself back in his chair, and again beginning to rhapsodise as before. “She is among ye—the beautiful, the gentle, the accomplished, the refined—as a fawn amongst a herd of bears. She is in your wild and savage land, like a lovely and tender flower growing in the cleft of a rock—a sweet and gentle thing, blooming alone in the midst of rudeness and barrenness. O uncongenial soil! O discordant association! Dearest, cruelest, loveliest of thy sex!”

If mine host was amazed at the first outpouring of his guest’s excited mind, it will readily be believed that it was not lessened by this second ebullition of fervour and passion.

He, in truth, now became convinced that he was distracted; and, under this impression, felt a strong desire to be quit of him as soon as possible. With this view, he took an early opportunity of stealing unobserved out of the apartment—a feat which he found no difficulty in performing, as his guest seemed ultimately so wholly wrapt up in his own thoughts as to be quite unconscious of what was either said or done in his presence. Soon after mine host had retired, the stranger ordered paper, pen, and ink, to be brought him. They were placed upon his table, he himself the while walking up and down the apartment with measured stride and downcast look, as if again lost in profound and perplexing thought; and, at intervals, the sound of his footsteps, thus traversing his chamber, was heard throughout the whole of the night. The stranger had slept none; he had not even retired to seek repose; but those periods during the night—and they were of considerable length—in which all was silent in his apartment, were employed in writing; and, when morning came, the result of his labours was exhibited in a letter, curiously or rather fancifully folded, tied with a green silk thread, and highly perfumed. This letter was addressed on the back—“To the Most Illustrious Princess, Mary, Queen of Scotland.”

Having brought the proceedings of the stranger to this point, we will shift the scene to the sitting apartment of the Queen in Holyrood. Here, surrounded with her maids, the young and lovely Princess was, at the moment of which we speak, engaged in working embroidery, and laughing and chatting with her attendants, amongst whom were two or three young French ladies, who had accompanied her from France. The Queen and her maids were thus employed, then, when the gentleman usher, who stood at the door of the apartment, entered, and, with a low obeisance, presented a letter to the Queen. It was the same as that addressed to her by the stranger, and above referred to. The Queen took the letter, with a gracious smile, from the person presenting it, and, contemplating it for a moment, before she opened it, with a look of pleased surprise—

“This, sure,” she said, “is from none of our Scottish subjects: the fold is French.” And she sighed. “It has the cut and fashion of the *billet doux* of St Germain; and,” she added, laughing, “the precise flavour, too, I declare. But I should know this handwriting,” she went on—“I have seen it before. This, however, will solve the mystery.” And she tore the letter open, and was instantly employed in reading it, blushing and smiling by turns, as she proceeded with the perusal. When she had done—“Maria,” she said, raising her eyes from the paper, and addressing one of her French ladies, “who think you is this letter from?”

“I cannot guess, madam,” replied the young lady appealed to.

“Do try,” rejoined Mary.

“Nay, indeed, I cannot,” said the former, now pausing in her work, and looking laughingly at her mistress. “Perhaps from the Count Desmartine, or from Dufour, or Dubois.”

“No, no, no,” replied the Queen, laughing—“neither of these, Maria; but I will have compassion on your curiosity and tell you. Would you believe it?—it is from Chatelard, the poet.”

“Chatelard!” repeated the maiden, in amazement. “What, in all the earth, can have brought him here?”

“Nay, I know not,” said the Queen, blushing; for she guessed, or rather feared the cause. “But read and judge for yourself,” she added, handing her attendant the letter, which contained a very beautiful laudatory poem, full of passion and feeling, addressed to herself, and which the writer concluded by requesting that he might be permitted to form part of her court; declaring that it would be joy inexpressible to him to be near her person—he cared not in how mean a capacity. The having opportunities of seeing

and serving her, he said, would reconcile him to any degradation of rank—to any loss, save that of honour.

“In truth, very pretty verses,” said the waiting maid, returning the poem to the Queen; “but, methinks, some what over-bold.”

“Why, I do think so too, Maria,” replied Mary. “Chatelard rather forgets himself; but poets, you know, have a license, and I cannot be harsh to the poor young man. It would be cruel, ungenerous, and unworthy of me.”

“But what say you, madam, to his request to be attached to your court?”

“Really, as to that, I know not well what to say, indeed,” rejoined the Queen. “Chatelard, you know, Maria, is a gentleman, both by birth and education. He is accomplished in a very high degree, and of a graceful person and pleasing manners, and would thus do no discredit to our court; but, I fear me, he might be guilty of some indiscretions—for he is a child of passion as well as song—that might lead himself into danger, and bring some blame on me. Still, I cannot think of rejecting altogether his humble suit, so prettily preferred; and, if he would promise to conduct himself with becoming gravity and reserve in all matters and at all times, I should have no objection that he was attached to our court. I will, at all events, make trial of him for a short space.”

Having said this, the Queen, now addressing the ladies present, generally, went on—

“Ladies, I will shortly introduce to you a new gallant; but I pray ye take care of your hearts; for he is, I warrant ye, one especially given to purloining these little commodities. He is handsome, accomplished, and a poet; so mind ye ladies, I have warned you—be on your guard. Kerr”—she now called out to a page in waiting—“go to the hostelry, whence this letter came, and say to the gentleman by whom it has been sent, that we desire to see him forthwith. Let him accompany you, Kerr.”

The page instantly departed; and we will avail ourselves of his short absence on this mission, to say briefly who Chatelard was—what was his object in coming to the Scottish court—and of what nature were the fears which the Queen expressed regarding him.

Chatelard, then, was a young French gentleman of rank, of rare accomplishments, and a poet of very considerable excellence. His seeking to attach himself to Mary’s court, was the result of a violent and unhappy attachment to her person; and her fears for him, proceeding from a suspicion of this attachment, were, that he would commit himself by some rash expression of his feelings. She was displeased with his presumptuous love, yet found she could not, as a woman, but look on it with pity and compassion; and hence her disposition to treat with kindness and affability its unhappy victim. Prudence, indeed, would certainly have dictated another course than that Mary pursued with Chatelard, in thus admitting him to her presence; but Mary’s error here was an error of the heart, and more to be regretted than blamed.

In a short while after the messenger had been dispatched with the invitation to Chatelard, the door of the Queen’s apartment was thrown wide open, and that person entered. His bow to the Queen was exceedingly graceful; and not less so, though measured with scrupulous exactness in their expression of deference, were those he directed to her ladies. Chatelard’s countenance was at this instant suffused with a blush, and it was evident he was under the excitement of highly agitated feelings; but he lost not, for a moment, nor in the slightest degree, his presence of mind; neither did these feelings prevent him conducting himself at this interview with the most perfect propriety.

“Chatelard,” said the Queen, after the ceremonies of a first salutation were over, “I perceive you have lost none of your cunning in the gentle craft. These were really

pretty lines you sent me—choice in expression, and melodiously arranged. I assure thee it is a very happy piece.”

“How could it be otherwise, madam,” replied Chatelard, bowing low, “with such a subject?”

“Nay, nay,” said Mary, laughing and blushing at the same time—“I am no subject, Chatelard, but an anointed Queen. Thou canst not make a subject of me.”

Chatelard now in turn blushed, and said, smiling, “Your wit, madam, has thrown me out; but, avoiding this play on words, my position is good, undeniable. All men acknowledge it.”

“Go to—go to, Chatelard—thou wert ever a flatterer. But ’tis a poet’s trade. Thou art a dangerous flatterer, however; for thou dost praise so prettily that one cannot suspect thy sincerity, nor be angry with thee, even when thou deservest that they should. But enough of this in the meantime. Ye may now retire; and I think the sooner the better, for the safety of these fair maidens’ hearts, and your own peace of mind, which a longer stay might endanger. Our chamberlain will provide thee with suitable apartments, and see to thy wants. Mark,” she added, laughingly, “we retain thee in our service in the capacity of our poet—of court poet—a high and honourable appointment; and thy reward shall be the smiles and approbation of these fair ladies—the beauty of all and each of whom I expect thou wilt forthwith embalm in immortal verse.”

Chatelard, bowing, was now about to retire, when the Queen, again addressing him, said—“We will send for thee again in the afternoon, to bear us company for a while, when thou wilt please bring with thee some of thy newest and choicest madrigals.”

Expressing a deep sense of the honour proposed to be conferred on him, of the Queen’s kind condescension, and avowing his devotedness to her service, Chatelard withdrew, and was provided with the promised apartments by the express orders of Mary herself. To these apartments we shall follow the enthusiastic but audacious lover. On being left alone, Chatelard again fell into one of those reveries which we have already described, and again launched into that strain of extravagant adulation which, on another occasion, we represented him as indulging in. Again he compared Mary, in his incoherent ravings, to everything that is beautiful in earth, sea, and sky; but comparing her to these only that he might assert how far she surpassed them. There were mingled, too, with his eulogiums, on this occasion, expressions of that imprudent passion which subsequently at once urged him to commit the most daring offences, and blinded him to their consequences. Poor Chatelard’s ravings, in the instance of which we are just speaking, were unconsciously uttered; but they were unfortunately loud enough to arrest the attention of the domestics, who were passing to and fro in the lobby into which the door of his apartment opened. These, attracted by his rapturous exclamations, listened, from time to time, at his door, and were highly amused with the rhapsodies of the imprudent poet. The latter, becoming more and more vehement, and, in proportion, more entertaining, the domestics finally gathered in a cluster around the door, to the number of six or eight, and, with suppressed laughter, overheard all that the excited and unguarded inmate chose to utter. That, however, was so incoherent, or at least of so high-flown a character, that the listeners could make nothing of it; and, as they could not, they immediately concluded it to be nonsense, and the speaker a madman. But there came one to the spot, at this unfortunate moment, who, with sharper intellect and more apt comprehension, at once discovered the meaning that lurked under the florid language of the poet’s ill-timed soliloquies.

While the servants were crowded around the door of Chatelard’s apartment, too intent on their amusement to notice the approach of any one, another party had advanced

unseen to within a few paces of where they stood. Here, with his arms folded across his breast, he had remained unobserved for several seconds, gazing with a look of surprise and displeasure on the merry group assembled around the poet’s door. He was, however, at length discovered, when the knot of listeners instantly broke up in the greatest hurry and alarm.

“How now,” exclaimed the unexpected intruder—a person of about thirty years of age, of rather slender form, of cold and haughty demeanour, and austere countenance—“How now?” he exclaimed, in a voice whose tones were naturally severe—“what means this idling?—what do ye all here, knaves, in place of attending to your duties?”

Instead of answering this question, the terrified domestics were now endeavouring to make off in all directions; but the querist’s curiosity, or, perhaps, suspicion, having been excited by what he had seen, he instantly arrested their progress, by calling on them, in a voice of increased severity and vehemence, to stop.

“Come hither, Johnstone,” he exclaimed, addressing one of the fugitives—“I must know what ye have been all about.” And, without waiting for an answer, “Who occupies this apartment?” he inquired, pointing to that in which was Chatelard.

“An’ please ye, my Lord,” replied Johnstone, bowing with the most profound respect—“ane that we think’s no very wise. He’s been bletherin awa there to himsel, saving yer Honour’s presence, like a bubbly-jock, for this half hour back, and we can neither mak tap tail, nor mane o’ what he’s sayin.”

“What! a madman, Johnstone?” said the Earl of Murray, the Queen’s half-brother, for it was no less a personage; then hurriedly added—“Who is he?—what is he—where is he from?—when came he hither?”

The man answered categorically—

“I dinna ken, my Lord, wha he is; but, frae the thinness o’ his chafts, I tak him to be ane o’ your French launloupers. He cam to the palace aboot twa hours sync.”

The Earl’s curiosity was now still further excited, and, without saying a word more, he drew near to the door of Chatelard’s apartment, and became also an auditor of the poor poet’s unguarded language; but not such as it was in the case of the listeners who had preceded him; to him that language was perfectly intelligible—at least, to the extent of informing him of Chatelard’s ambitious love. To Murray this was a secret worth knowing; and, in the hope that he might discover this attachment to be reciprocal, and thus acquire an additional influence over the Queen, his sister, at the expense of her reputation, he considered it a singularly fortunate incident. Perhaps he expected that it would do even more for him than this: that it would eventually help him to the accomplishment of certain daring views towards the crown itself, of which he was not unsuspected. Whether, however, he was able to trace, in distinct and definite lines, any consequences favourable to himself from the fact which had just come to his knowledge, it is certain he was pleased with the discovery, and considered it as an important acquisition. That he viewed it in this light, indeed, was evident even by his countenance, cautiously guarded as its expressions ever were.

On being satisfied of the fact of Chatelard’s attachment to the Queen, he withdrew from the door with a look and brief expression of satisfaction, and went directly in quest of the chamberlain. On finding whom—

“So, Mr Chamberlain,” he said, “we have got, I find, another animal added to our herd of fawning, drivelling courtiers. Pray, who or what is he, this person who has taken up his quarters in the northern gallery, and by whose authority has he been installed there?”

“By the Queen’s, my Lord,” replied the Chamberlain.

"I have had express and direct orders from the Queen herself, to provide the gentleman with apartments in the palace, and to see to his suitable entertainment."

"Ah, indeed," said the Earl, biting his lip, and musing for a moment. "By her own express orders!" he repeated. "It is very well." Then, after a pause—"Know ye this favoured person's name, Mr Chamberlain?"

"Chatelard," replied the latter.

"Chatelard! Chatelard!" repeated the Earl, mechanically, and again musing; "why, I think I have heard of that gallant before. He is one of those triflers called poets, methinks—a versifier, a scribbler of jingling rhymes. Is it not so?"

"I have heard the Queen say so, my Lord," replied the Chamberlain. "She has spoken of him in my hearing as a poet."

"Ah! the same, the same," said the Earl; "but how obtained he access to the Queen, know ye?"

"Through his own direct application, my Lord. He addressed a poetical epistle to her Majesty, I understand, from Goodal's hostelry, where he had taken up his quarters in the first place, requesting permission to wait upon her."

"And it was granted?" interrupted the Earl.

"It was, my Lord; and he has already had an audience."

"Ah! so!" said the Earl, without yet betraying or having, during any part of this conversation, betrayed the slightest emotion or symptom of the deep interest he took in the communications which were being made to him. "Know ye," he went on, "if that favour is to be soon again conferred on him? When will he again be admitted to the presence?"

"That, my Lord, rests on the Queen's pleasure; "but I hear say that he is to attend her again this evening in her sitting apartment."

"So, so," said the Earl, nodding his head, as he uttered the words. And, turning on his heel, he walked away without further remark.

From the officer with whom he had just been speaking, the Earl of Murray carefully concealed the motives which had prompted his inquiries, but determined, henceforth, to watch with the utmost vigilance the proceedings of the Queen and Chatelard, until some circumstance should occur that might put them both fairly within his power. Unaware of the dangerous surveillance under which he was already placed, it was with a delight which only he himself perhaps could feel, that Chatelard received, in the evening, the promised invitation from the Queen to attend her and her ladies in their sitting chamber. The invitation was conveyed in some playful verses—an art in which Mary excelled—written on embossed paper. The enthusiastic poet read the delightful lines a thousand times over, dwelt with rapture on each word and phrase, and finally kissed the precious document with all the eagerness and fervour of a highly excited and uncontrollable passion. Having indulged in these tender sensibilities for some time, Chatelard at length folded up the unconscious object of his adoration, thrust it into his bosom, took up a small *portfeuille*, covered with red Morocco leather, gilt and embossed, the depository of his poetical effusions—and hurried to the apartment of the Queen, where he was speedily set to the task of reading his compositions, for the entertainment of the assembled fair ones; and it is certain that on more than one of them, the tender and impassioned manner of the bard, as he recited his really beautiful verses, added to his highly prepossessing appearance and graceful delivery, made an impression by no means favourable to their night's repose. It would, however, perhaps, be more tedious than interesting to the reader, were we to detail all that passed on the night in question in the Queen's apartment; to record all the witty and pleasant things that were said and done by

the Queen, her ladies, and her poet. Be it enough to say that the latter retired at a pretty late hour; his imprudent passion, we cannot say increased—for of that it would not admit—but strengthened in its wild and ambitious hopes.

From that fatal night, poor Chatelard firmly believed that his love was returned—that he had inspired in the bosom of Mary a passion as ardent as his own. Into this unhappy error the poet's own heated and disturbed imagination had betrayed him, by representing in the light of special marks of favour, occurrences that were merely the emanations of a kind and gentle nature—thus fatally misled by a passion which, if notorious for occasioning groundless fears, is no less so for inspiring unfounded hopes. Such, at any rate, was its effect in the case of Chatelard on the night in question. On gaining his own chamber, he flung himself into a chair, and spent nearly the whole of the remainder of the night in the indulgence of the wildest and most extravagant dreams of future bliss; for, in the blindness of his passion and tumult of his hopes, he saw no dangers and feared no difficulties.

From this time forward, Chatelard's conduct to the Queen became so marked and unguarded in various particulars, as to excite her alarm, and even to draw down upon the offender some occasional rebukes, although these were at first sufficiently gentle and remote. Nor did the imprudencies of the infatuated poet escape the cold, keen eye of Murray. He saw them, and noted them; but took care to wear the semblance of unconsciousness. It was not his business to interrupt, by hinting suspicions, the progress of an affair which he hoped would, on some occasion or other, lead to consequences that he might turn to account. Feeling this, it was not for him to help Chatelard and the Queen to elude his vigilance and defeat his views, by discovering what he observed, and thus putting them on their guard. This was not his business; but it was his business to lie concealed, and to spring out on his quarry the instant that its position invited to the effort. Coldly and sternly, therefore, he watched the motions of Chatelard and his sister; but was little satisfied to perceive nothing in the conduct of the latter regarding the former which at all spoke of the feelings he secretly desired to find. As it was impossible, however, for the Earl personally to watch all the movements of Chatelard, he looked around him for some individual of the Queen's household whom he might bribe to perform the duties of a spy; and such a one he found amongst the attendants whom Mary had brought with her from France, of which country he was also a native. The name of this ungrateful and despicable wretch, who undertook to betray a kind and generous mistress, whenever he should discover anything in her conduct to betray, was Choisseul—a man of pleasing manners and address, but of low and vicious habits. Without any certain knowledge of his character, or any previous information regarding him, the Earl of Murray's singular tact and penetration at once singled him out as a likely person for his purposes. On this presumption, he sent for him, and cautiously and gradually opening him up, found that he had judged correctly of his man.

"Choisseul," he said, on that person's being ushered into his presence, "I have good reason to think that you are one in whom I may put trust; and, in this assurance, I have selected you for an especial mark of my confidence. Do you know anything of this Chatelard who has lately come to court?"

"I do, my Lor'. He is countryman of my own."

"So I understand. Well, then, I'll tell you what it is, Choisseul:—I believe the fellow has come here for no good; I believe, in short, that he has designs upon the Queen. Now, my good fellow, will you undertake to ascertain this for me. Will you watch their proceedings, watch them narrowly, and give me instant information of anything sus

picious that may come to your knowledge—and ye shall not miss of your reward?" added the Earl, now opening a little desk which stood before him, and taking from it a well-filled purse.

Choisseul, with many bows and grimaces, readily undertook to play the knave, and, with still more, took the price of his knavery, the purse already alluded to, which the Earl now handed him.

"Now, Choisseul," said Murray, just before dismissing the miscreant, "I may depend on you?"

"Mine honneur," replied the Frenchman, placing his hand on his breast, with a theatrical air, and bowing to the ground as he pronounced the words—"Je suis votre serviteur till die."

"Enough," said the Earl, waving his hand as a signal to him to retire; "be vigilant and prompt in communicating with me when you have anything of consequence to say."

Choisseul again bowed low, and left the apartment. In the meantime, the gallant, accomplished, but imprudent Chatelard, hurried blindly along by the impetuosity of his passion, and altogether unsettled by the intoxicating belief that his love was returned—a belief which had now taken so fast a hold of his understanding that nothing could loosen it—proceeded from one impropriety to another, till he at length committed one which all but brought matters to a crisis; and this was avoided only by its having escaped the vigilance of Choisseul, and having been compassionately concealed by the Queen herself.

On retiring one night, early in February 1563, to her sleeping apartment, Mary and her attendants were suddenly alarmed by an extraordinary movement in a small closet or wardrobe, in which was kept the clothes the Queen was in the habit of daily using. The maids would have screamed out and fled from the apartment, but were checked in both of these feminine resorts by observing the calm and collected manner of their mistress, in which there was not the slightest appearance of perturbation.

"Ladies, ladies," she exclaimed, laughingly, as her attendants were about to rush out of the room, "what a pretty pair of heroines ye are! Shame, shame!—ye surely would not leave your mistress alone, in the midst of such a perilous adventure as this. Come hither," she added, at the same time stepping towards her toilet, and taking up a small silver lamp that burned on it, "and let us see who this intruder is—whether ghost or gallant."

Saying this—her maids having returned, reassured by her intrepidity—she proceeded, with steady step, towards the suspected closet, seized the door by the handle, flung it boldly open, and discovered, to the astonished eyes of her attendants and to her own inexpressible amazement, the poet, Chatelard, armed with sword and dagger. For some seconds, the Queen uttered not a syllable; but a flush of indignation and of insulted pride suffused her exquisitely lovely countenance.

"Chatelard," she at length said, in a tone of calm severity, and with a dignity of manner becoming her high state and lineage, "come forth and answer for this daring and atrocious conduct, this unheard of insolence and presumption." Chatelard obeyed, and was about to throw himself at her feet, when she sternly forbade him.

"I want no apologies, presumptuous man," she said—"no craving of forgiveness. I want explanation of this infamous proceeding, and that I demand of you in the presence of my attendants here. Know ye not, sir," she went on, "that your head is forfeited by this offence, and that I have but to give the word and the forfeit will be exacted?"

"I know it, I know it," exclaimed Chatelard, persisting in throwing himself on his knees; "but the threat has no terrors for me. It is your displeasure alone—fairest, brightest of God's creatures—that I fear. It is"—

"Peace, Chatelard," interrupted Mary, peremptorily.

"What mean ye by this language, sir? Would ye cut yourself off from all hope of pardon, by adding offence upon offence? Rise, sir, and leave this apartment instantly, I command you; I will now hear neither explanation nor apology."

"Then, will you forgive me?" said Chatelard; "will you forgive a presumption of which"—

"I will hear no more, sir," again interrupted the Queen, indignantly. "Begone, sir! Remain another instant, and I give the alarm. Your life depends on your obedience." And Mary placed her hand on a small silver bell, from which, had she drawn the slightest sound, the poet's doom was sealed, and she would have rung his funeral knell.

Chatelard now slowly rose from his knees, folded his arms across his breast, and, with downcast look, but without uttering another word, strode out of the apartment. When he had gone, the Queen, no longer supported by the excitement occasioned by the presence of the intruder, flung herself into a chair, greatly agitated and deadly pale. Here she sat in silence for several minutes, evidently employed in endeavouring to obtain a view of the late singular occurrence in all its bearings, and in determining on the course which she herself ought to pursue regarding it.

Having seemingly satisfied herself on these points—"Ladies," she, at length, said—these ladies were two of her Maies, Mary Livingstone, and Mary Fleeming—"this is a most extraordinary circumstance. Rash, thoughtless, presumptuous man, how could he have been so utterly lost to every sense of propriety and of his own peril, as to think of an act of such daring insolence?"

"Poor man, I pity him," here simply, but naturally enough, perhaps, interrupted Mary Fleeming. "Doubtless, madam, you will report the matter instantly to the Earl."

"Nay, Mary, I know not if I will, after all," replied the Queen. "I, perhaps, ought to do so; but methinks it would be hardly creditable to me, as a woman, to bring this poor thoughtless young man to the scaffold, whither, you know, my stern brother would have him instantly dragged, if he knew of his offence; and besides, ladies," went on the Queen, in whose gentle bosom the kindly feelings of her nature had now completely triumphed over those of insulted dignity and pride, "I know not how far I am myself to blame in this matter. I fear me, I ought to have been more guarded in my conduct towards this infatuated young man. I should have kept him at a greater distance, and been more cautious of admitting him to familiar converse, since he has evidently misconstrued our affability and condescension. There may have been error there, you see, ladies."

"Yet," said Mary Livingstone, "methinks the daring insolence of the man ought not to go altogether unpunished, madam. If he has chosen to misconstrue, it can be no fault of yours."

"Perhaps not," replied Mary. "As a Queen, I certainly ought to give him up to the laws; but, as a woman, I cannot. Yet shall he not go unpunished. He shall be forthwith banished from our court and kingdom. To-morrow I shall cause it to be intimated to him, that he leave our court instantly, and Scotland within four-and-twenty hours thereafter, on pain of our highest displeasure, and peril of disclosure of his crime."

Having thus spoken, and having obtained a promise of secrecy regarding Chatelard's offence, from her two attendants, Mary retired for the night, not, however, quite assured that she was pursuing the right course for her own reputation, in thus screening the guilt of the poet; but, nevertheless, determined, at all risks, to save him, in this instance at least, from the consequences of his indiscretion. On the following morning, the Queen dispatched a note to Chatelard, to the purpose which we have represented her as expressing on the preceding night; and, in obedience to the command it contained, he instantly left the palace, but in

a state of indescribable mental agitation and distraction; for, in the determination expressed by the Queen, he saw at once an end to all his wild hopes, and, more unendurable still, an assurance that he had wholly mistaken the feelings with which Mary regarded him. We have said that Chatelard obeyed one of the injunctions of the Queen—that was, to leave the palace instantly. He did so; but whether he conformed to the other, the sequel will shew.

Two days after the occurrences just related, Mary set out for St Andrew's; taking the route of the Queensferry, and sleeping the first night at Dunfermline, and the second at Burntisland. On the evening of her arrival at the latter place, the Queen, fatigued by her journey, which had been prolonged by hunting and hawking, retired early to her apartment. Here she had not been many minutes, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Chatelard entered.

"What! again, Chatelard!" exclaimed Mary, with the utmost indignation and astonishment. "What means this, sir? How have you dared to intrude yourself again into my apartment?"

Without making any reply to this salutation, Chatelard threw himself on his knees before the Queen, and, seizing the skirt of her robe, implored her pardon for his presumption; adding, that he had been impelled to this second intrusion solely by a desire to explain to her the motives of his former conduct, which, he said, had been wrongly interpreted, and to bid her farewell, before he went into the banishment to which she had doomed him.

"Rise, sir, rise," said Mary: "I will listen to no explanation forced on me in this extraordinary manner. I desire that you instantly quit this apartment. This repetition of your offence, sir, I will neither bear with nor overlook. Rise, I command you, and begone."

Instead of obeying, the infatuated poet not only persisted in remaining in the position he was in, but, still keeping hold of the Queen's robe, began to speak the language of passion and love. The Queen endeavoured to release herself from his hold, and was in the act of attempting to do so, when the door of the apartment, which Chatelard had closed behind him, was violently thrown open, and the Earl of Murray entered. Having advanced two or three steps, he stood still, and, folding his arms across his breast, looked sternly, but in silence, first at the Queen, and then at Chatelard; keeping, at the same time, sufficiently near the door to prevent the escape of the latter, in case he should make such an attempt. Having gazed on them for some time without opening his lips, but with an ominous expression of countenance—

"Well, Sir Poet," he, at length, said, addressing Chatelard, with cold deliberation, "pray do me the favour to enlighten me as to the meaning of your having thus intruded yourself into the Queen's apartment. Why do I find you here, sir, and wherefore have I found you in the position from which you have just now risen. Pray, sir, explain."

"I came here, my Lord," replied Chatelard, with firmness and dignity, "to take leave of her Majesty before returning to France, for which I set out to-morrow."

An ironical and incredulous smile played on the stern countenance of Murray. "A strange place this, methinks, and a strange season for leave-taking; and yet stranger than all, the language in which I just now heard you speak. You are aware, I presume, sir," he added, "that you are just now in the Queen's sleeping apartment, where none dare intrude but on peril of their lives. But probably, madam," he said, now turning to the Queen, without waiting any reply to his last remark, "you can explain the meaning of this extraordinary scene."

"You had better, my Lord," replied Mary, evasively—for

she was still reluctant to commit the unfortunate poet—"obtain what explanations you desire from Chatelard himself. He, surely, is the fittest person to explain his own conduct."

"True, madam," said Murray, sneeringly, "but I thought it not by any means improbable that you might be as well informed on the point in question as the gentleman himself."

"Your insinuation is rude, my Lord," replied the Queen, haughtily; and, without vouchsafing any other remark, walked away to the further end of the apartment, leaving the Earl and Chatelard together.

Murray now saw, from the perfectly composed and independent manner of the Queen, that he could make out nothing to her prejudice from the case before him, nor elicit the slightest evidence of anything like connivance, on the part of Mary, at Chatelard's intrusion. Seeing this, he determined on proceeding against the unfortunate poet with the utmost rigour to which his imprudence had exposed him, in the hope that severity might wring from him such confessions as would implicate the Queen.

Having come to this resolution—"Sir," he said, addressing Chatelard, "prepare to abide the consequences of your presumption." And he proceeded to the door, called an attendant, and desired him to send the captain of the guard and a party to him instantly.

In a few minutes, they appeared, when the Earl, addressing the officer just named, and pointing to Chatelard, desired him to put that gentleman in ward; and the latter was immediately hurried out of the apartment. When the guard, with their prisoner, had left the Queen's chamber, the Earl walked up to Mary, who, with her head leaning pensively on her hand, had been silently contemplating the proceedings that were going forward in her apartment.

"Madam," said Murray, on approaching her, "I think you may consider yourself in safety for this night, at any rate, from any further intrusion from this itinerant versifier; and it shall be my fault if he ever again annoys you or any one else."

"What, brother!" exclaimed Mary, in evident alarm at this ambiguous, but ominous hint—"you will not surely proceed to extremities against the unfortunate young man?"

"By St Bride, but I will though," replied Murray, angrily. "Why, madam, has not your reputation as a woman, and your dignity as a Queen, both been assailed by this insolent foreigner, in the daring act he has done?"

"Nay, my Lord," replied the Queen, haughtily, "methinks it will take much more than this to affect my reputation. I, indeed, marvel much to hear you speak thus, my Lord. My dignity, again, can be debased only by mine own acts, and cannot be affected by the act of another."

"Nevertheless, madam," rejoined her brother, "ye cannot stop slanderous tongues; and I know not how the world may construe this circumstance. Both your honour and station require that this presumptuous knave suffer the penalty of his crime in its utmost rigour. What would the world say else? Why, it would have suspicions that ought not for an instant to be associated with the name of Mary Stuart."

"But you will not have his life taken, brother?" said Mary, in a gentle tone—subdued by the thoughts of the severe doom that threatened the unfortunate gentleman, and placing her hand affectionately on the Earl's arm as she spoke. "Can ye not banish him forth of the realm, or imprison him?—anything short of death, which, methinks, would be, after all, hard measure for the offence."

"You have reasons, doubtless, madam," said the Earl, coldly and bluntly, "for this tenderness."

"I have," said Mary, indignantly; "but not, my Lord, such as you would seem to insinuate. My reasons are

humanity, and a feeling of compassion for the misguided and unhappy youth."

"Chatelard shall have such mercy, madam, as your Majesty's privy council may deem him deserving of," replied the Earl, turning round on his heel, and quitting the apartment.

On leaving the presence of the Queen, the Earl of Murray retired to his own chamber, where he was, shortly after, waited upon by Choisseul, who had been for some time watching his return.

"Ha, Choisseul! art there?" said the Earl, with an unusual expression of satisfaction on his countenance, on the former's entrance. "Thou hast done well, friend; I found matters exactly as you stated, and am obliged by the promptness and accuracy of your information."

"Vere happy, my Lor', I am serve to your satisfaction," replied Choisseul, bowing low. "I vas vatch Monsieur Chatelard as vone cat shall vatch vone leetle mice, and did caught him at las."

"You did well, Choisseul, and shall be suitably recompensed. Dost know how the fellow came here and when?"

"He did come in vone leetle barque, my Lor', from over de riviere, on de toddler side opposite."

"Ah, so!" said the Earl. "Well, you may now retire, Choisseul. To-morrow I shall see to your reward."

Choisseul bowed and withdrew.

When he had retired, the Earl sat down to a small writing table, and, late as the hour was, began writing with great assiduity—an employment at which he continued until he had written eight or ten different letters, each of considerable length. These were addressed to various members of the Queen's Privy Council in Edinburgh, and to some of the law officers of the crown. They were all nearly copies of each other, and contained an account of Chatelard's conduct, with a charge to the several parties addressed to repair to St Andrew's on the second day following, for the purpose of holding a court on the offender, and awarding him such punishment as the case might seem to demand.

On the day succeeding that on which the occurrence just related took place, the Queen and her retinue proceeded to St Andrew's, whither the prisoner, Chatelard, was also carried; and, on the next again, the unfortunate gentleman was brought to trial, the scene of which was an apartment in the Castle of St Andrew's, which had been hastily prepared for the occasion. In the centre of this apartment was placed a large oblong oaken table, covered with crimson velvet, and surrounded by a circle of high-backed chairs, with cushions covered by the same material. These were subsequently occupied by eight or ten persons of the Privy Council; including Mary's Secretary of State, Maitland of Lethington, who sat at one end of the table. At the opposite end, sat the Earl of Murray; the prisoner occupying a place in the centre at one of the sides. During the investigation which followed into the offence of Chatelard, the Earl of Murray made repeated indirect attempts to lead him to make statements prejudicial to the Queen; urging him, with a show of candour and pretended regard for justice, to inform the court of anything and everything which he thought might be available in his defence, without regard to the rank or condition of those whom such statements might implicate. This language was too plain to be misunderstood. Every one present perceived that it conveyed a pointed allusion to the Queen. Chatelard, amongst the rest, felt that it did so, and indignantly repelled the insinuation.

"I have none," he said, "to accuse but myself; nothing to blame but my own folly. Folly, did I say!" went on the fearless enthusiast; "it was no folly—it was love, love, love—all-powerful love—love for her, the noblest, the loveliest of created beings, for whom I could die ten

thousand deaths. It was love for her who has been to me the breath of life, the light of mine eyes, the idol of my heart; around which were entwined all the feelings and susceptibilities of my nature, even as the ivy entwines the tree. The constant theme of my dreams by night; the sole subject of my thoughts by day. It has been hinted to me that I may blame freely where to blame may serve me. But whom shall I blame? Not her, surely, who is the object of my idolatry—my sun, moon, and stars—my heaven, my soul, my existence. Not her, surely; for she is faultless as the unborn babe, pure and spotless as the snow wreath in the hollow of the mountain. Who shall maintain the contrary lies in his throat, and is a foul-mouthed villanous slanderer."

Here the enthusiastic and somewhat incoherent speaker, was abruptly interrupted by Maitland of Lethington, who, rising to his feet, and resting his hands on the low table around which Chatelard's judges were seated, said, looking at the prisoner—

"Friend, ye must speak to your defence, if ye would speak at all. This that ye have said is nothing to the purpose, and ye cannot be permitted to take up the time of this court with such rhapsodies as these, that make not for any point of your accusation.—Think ye not so, my Lords?" he added, glancing around the table. Several nods of assent spoke acquiescence. When Maitland had concluded—

"I have done, then, my Lords," said Chatelard, bowing and seating himself. "I have no more to say."

A short conversation now took place amongst the prisoner's judges, when sentence of death was unanimously agreed to, and he was ordered to be beheaded on the following day, the 22d of February 1563.

On the rising of the court, the Earl of Murray repaired to the Queen, and informed her of the doom awarded against Chatelard. Mary was greatly affected by the intelligence. She burst into tears, exclaiming—

"O unhappy, thrice unhappy countenance!—thou hast been given me for a curse instead of a blessing—the ruin of those who love me best—that, by inspiring a silly passion, at once dangerous and worthless, will not permit one to remain near me in the character of friend! My Lord, my Lord," she continued, in great agitation; "can you not, will you not save the unhappy young man? I beseech thee, I implore thee, by the ties of consanguinity that connect us, by the duty ye owe to me as thy sovereign, to spare his life."

"Ye know not what ye ask, madam," replied Murray, stalking up and down the apartment. "How can his life be spared consistently with your honour? Save him and you will set a thousand slanderous tongues a-wagging. It may not—must not be."

Mary herself could not deny the force of this remark, and, finding she had nothing to oppose to it, she flung herself into a chair and again burst into tears. In this condition the Earl left her to give orders respecting the execution of Chatelard on the following day, and to put another proceeding in train for obtaining that result which he had aimed at on the trial of the unfortunate young man. Sending again for Choisseul—

"Friend," he said, on that person's entering the apartment, "I wish another small piece of service at your hands."

Choisseul bowed, and expressed his readiness to do anything he might be required to do.

"I vas proud to discharge all de drops of my blood in your service, my Lor'," said the knave, with a profound obeisance.

The Earl carelessly nodded approbation.

To-night, then, Choisseul, he went on, "you will repair to the dungeon in which Chatelard is confined. You will see him as a friend. You understand me?"

"Ah! well, my Lor'—vere well."

"Just so; well, then, you will hint to him that you have reason to believe he might yet save his life by confessing a participation in his guilt on the part of the Queen. You may add, though not as from me, of course, that I have no doubt of his having been encouraged to those liberties for which his life is forfeited; and you may say that you know I feel for him, and would readily procure his pardon if he would only give me a reasonable ground or pretext for doing so, by shewing that there were *others* equally in fault with him. Do you entirely understand me, Choisseul?"

"Entirely, my Lor'," replied the latter; "bright, clear, as noonday at the sun."

"So, then, return to me when you have seen Chatelard, and let me know the result," said the Earl.

Choisseul once more withdrew, to perform the treacherous and knavish part assigned him. About midnight he sought the dungeon of the unhappy gentleman, and, having been admitted by the guards, found him busily employed in writing; the indulgence of a lamp, with pen, ink, and paper, having, at his most earnest request, been afforded him. Indeed, these were more readily and willingly given than he was aware of. They were given in the hope that he would commit something to writing which, without his intending it, might compromise the character of the Queen. But in this her enemies were disappointed.

On Choisseul's entering Chatelard's dungeon, the latter, as we have already said, was busily engaged in writing. He was inditing a last farewell to the Queen in verse. On this employment he was so intent that he did not observe, or, at least, pay any attention to the entrance of Choisseul, but continued writing on till he had completed his task, which now, however, occupied only a very few minutes. On finishing—

"'Tis done," he said, and threw down his pen with violence on the table. "These are the last notes of the harp of Chatelard. Ha! Choisseul!" he immediately added, and only now for the first time seeming conscious of that person's presence. "I am glad to see you, my countryman. This is kind. I thought there were none in this strange land to care for me. But they shall see, Choisseul," he added, proudly, "how a Frenchman and a poet can die. That is boldly and bravely. He were no true poet whose soul was not elevated above the fear of death. I said, my friend," he went on, after a momentary pause, and sighing deeply as he spoke, "that I thought there were none in this land to care for me, or to sorrow for me—and perhaps it is so; but there is one, Choisseul, whom I would not willingly believe indifferent to my fate. She, surely, much as I have offended her, will say 'Poor Chatelard!' Nay, methinks I see a tear standing in that peerless eye, when she recalls the memory of her departed poet. That, that, Choisseul," said the unhappy captive, with an enthusiasm which even the near approach of death had not been able to abate—"that would be something worth dying for!"

Choisseul smiled. "You hold your life lightly, indeed, Chatelard," he said, speaking in his native language, "if you think its loss compensated by a woman's tear."

"Ah, Choisseul, but such a woman!" exclaimed Chatelard.

"Well, well," replied the former, again smiling; "but you can have no doubt that *she*, at least, will regret your death. *She* loved you too well not to deplore your fate."

"Did she?" exclaimed Chatelard, eagerly, and with such a look of inquiry and doubt as greatly disappointed the assertor. "You know who I mean, then; but how know ye that which you have just now said? Assure me that ye speak true, Choisseul, and I shall die happy."

"Ah! bah! you know it yourself, my friend, better than I," replied the latter. "No use in concealing it now," he added, with an intelligent look.

"Concealing what, sir?" said Chatelard, in a tone of mingled surprise and displeasure.

"Why, the affection the Queen entertained for you," replied Choisseul. "We all know, my friend, you would not have done what you did, had she not encouraged your addresses. And I'll tell you what, Chatelard," he went on—"I have reason to believe that your life would be yet spared, if you would only shew that this was so."

"Ah, I understand you," said Chatelard, with suppressed passion. "If I will accuse the Queen—if I will put her in the power of her enemies—her enemies will be obliged to me. In other words, I may save my life by sacrificing her reputation; and it would be little matter whether what I said should be true or not. Is it not so, Choisseul?" Then, without waiting for an answer—"Villain, devil that thou art," he exclaimed, now suddenly giving full swing to the passion that had been raised within him, "how hast thou dared to come to me with such an infamous proposal as this? Didst think, most dastardly knave, that my soul was as mean as thine own? Begone, begone, ruffian! Thy presence, thy breath, pollutes my dungeon more than the fetid damps that exhale from its walls—more than the noxious reptiles that crawl on its floor. Begone! begone, I say!" And he seized the now trembling caitiff by the throat, and dashed him against the door of the cell, with a violence that instantly brought in the guards who were stationed on the outside. These, seeing how matters stood, hurried Choisseul out of the dungeon, and again secured the door on its unfortunate inmate.

On leaving Chatelard, Choisseul repaired to the Earl of Murray, but with infinitely less confidence in his looks and manner than on the former occasion when his villany had been successful. To the Earl he detailed the particulars of his interview with Chatelard; not forgetting to mention the rough treatment he had received from the infuriated poet.

"Then he'll confess nothing, Choisseul?" said Murray, when the former had done speaking.

"Not anything at all, my Lor'. Dere is no hope; for he make no more of dying than I do of taking vone leetle pinch of snuff."

"Obstinate fool!" exclaimed the Earl, evidently chagrined and disappointed. "Let him die, then! You may retire, Choisseul," he abruptly added.

Choisseul obeyed.

"His execution, at any rate, shall be public," said the Earl to himself, when the latter had left him. "Perhaps he may make some confession on the scaffold, and it will be well to have it amply testified."

On the following day, Chatelard was led out to execution, when his gentlemanlike appearance and noble bearing excited the utmost sympathy of the crowd. On ascending the scaffold, he pulled a small volume from his pocket, opened it, and read aloud, with great dignity and composure, Ronsard's Hymn on Death. When he had done, he turned towards that part of the Castle of St Andrew's where he supposed the Queen to be, and, kissing his hand, waved a graceful adieu, exclaiming—"Farewell, loveliest and most cruel Princess whom the world contains!"

Having uttered these words, he laid his head, with the utmost composure, on the block. The axe of the executioner fell, and the high-souled, accomplished, but enthusiastic Chatelard was no more.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

MAY DARLING, THE VILLAGE PRIDE.

"Lay her i' the earth;
And, from her pure and unpolluted flesh,
May violets spring!"

Hamlet.

It is a lovely spot, Grassyvale—"beautiful exceedingly." But its beauty is of a quiet, unimposing description; the characteristic feature of the landscape which would strike the eye of a spectator who surveyed it from the highest neighbouring eminence, is simply—repose. There are no mountains, properly so called, within a circuit of many miles—none of those natural pyramids which, in various parts of our beloved land of mountain and of flood, of battle and of song, rise in majestic grandeur, like columns of adamant to support the vault of heaven. The nearest are situated at such a distance that they appear like clouds, and might readily be mistaken for such, but for their death-like stillness, and the everlasting monotony of their outline. No waterfalls hurl their bolts of liquid crystal into dark, frowning, wave-worn chasms, which had echoed to the thunder of their fall since the birth of time. There is no far-spreading forest—no yawning ravine, with "ebon shades and low-browed rocks"—no beetling cliff or precipice, "shagged" with brushwood, as Milton hath it. There is nothing of the grand, the sublime, the terrible, or the magnificent—there is only quiet; or, if the terms do not sound dissonant to "ears polite," modest, unassuming beauty, such as a rainbow, were it perpetually present in the zenith, might form a characteristic and appropriate symbol of. Nature has not here wrought her miracles of beauty on a Titanic scale. What, then, is so attractive about Grassyvale? it will be asked. We are not sure but we may be as much stultified with this question, as was the child in Wordsworth's sweet little poem, "We are seven," (which the reader may turn up at leisure, when the propriety of the comparison will be seen,) and may be forced, after an unsuccessful attempt to justify ourselves for holding such an opinion, to maintain, with the same dogmatic obstinacy—it is beautiful. But the length of our story compels us to exclude a description of the landscape, which we had prepared.

* * * * *

The village of Grassyvale, which is situated on the margin of a small stream, consists of about one hundred scattered cottages, all neatly whitewashed, and most of them adorned in front with some flowering shrub—wild brier, honeysuckle, or the like—whilst a "kail-yard" in the rear constitutes no inappropriate appendage. There is one of those dwellings conspicuous from the rest by its standing apart from them, and by an additional air of comfort and neatness which it wears, and which seems to hallow it like a radiant atmosphere. It is literally covered with a net-work of ivy, honeysuckle, and jasmine, the deep green of whose unvarnished leaf renders more conspicuous "the bright profusion of its scattered stars." The windows are literally darkened by a multitude of roses, which seem clustering and crowding together to gain an entrance, and scatter their "perfumed sweets" around the apartment. Near the cottage, there is also a holly planted—that evergreen tree which seems provisionally designed by nature to cheer the dreariness of

winter, and, when all is withered and desolate around, to remain a perpetual promise of spring. But we have more to do with this beautiful little dwelling than merely to describe its exterior.

Behind Grassyvale, the ground begins to swell, undulating into elevations of mild acclivity, on the highest of which stands the parish church, like the ark resting on Ararat—faith's triumph, and mercy's symbol. Numerous grassy hillocks scattered around indicate the cemetery where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." Amongst those memorials which are designed to perpetuate the recollection of virtue for a few generations—and which, with their appropriate emblems and inscriptions, preach so eloquently to the heart, and realize to the letter Shakspeare's memorable words, "sermons in stones"—there is one which always attracts attention. It is not a "storied urn, an animated bust"—one of those profusely decorated marble hatchments with which worldly grandeur mourns, in pompous but vain magnificence, over departed pride. No; it is only a small, unadorned slab, of rather dingy-coloured freestone; and the inscription is simply—"To the memory of May Darling, who was removed from this world to a better, at the early age of nineteen. She was an affectionate daughter, a loving sister, and a sincere Christian.

"Weep not for her whose mortal race is o'er;
She is not lost, but only gone before."

Ah! there are few, few indeed, for many miles round, who would pass that humble grave without heaving a sigh or shedding a tear for her who sleeps beneath—her who was so beloved, so admired by every one, as well as being the idol and pride of her own family, and whose romantic and untimely fate (cut off "i' the morn and liquid dew of youth") was the village talk for many a day.

John Darling, the father of our heroine, was, what is no great phenomenon amongst the peasantry of Scotland, a sober, industrious, honest man. In early life, he espoused the daughter of an opulent farmer, whose marriage portion enabled him to commence life under very favourable auspices. But, in spite of obedience to the natural laws, the mildew of misfortune will blight our dearest hopes, however wisely our plans for the future may be laid, and however assiduously and judiciously they may be pursued. Untoward circumstances, which it would unnecessarily protract our narrative to relate, had reduced him, at the period to which our tale refers, to the condition of a field labourer. Death had, likewise, been busy singling out victims from amongst those who surrounded his humble, but cheerful fireside; and, of a large family, there only remained three, and he was a widower besides. May was the oldest; and, accordingly, the superintendence of the household devolved upon her. The deceased parent was of a somewhat haughty and reserved turn of mind, for the recollection of former affluence never forsook her; and this circumstance kept her much aloof from the less polished and sophisticated matrons of the village, and also rendered her a strict family disciplinarian. She concentrated her mind almost entirely upon the affairs of her own household; and her children were accordingly watched with a more vigilant eye, and brought up with more scrupulous care than was usual with those around her. It was her pride, and "let it be her

praise," to see them arrayed in more showy habiliments than those worn by their associates; and, to accomplish this darling object, what serious transmutation did her finery of former days undergo, as the mutilated robes descended from child to child, turned upside down, inside out, and otherwise suffering a metamorphosis at every remove! The dress of May, in particular—her first-born bud of bliss, the doted on of her bosom—was always attended to with special care; nor was the cultivation of her mind in any way overlooked. She very early inspired her with a love of reading, which increased with the development of her faculties, and many a day survived her by whom the passion had been awakened.

In person, May was slender; but her light, airy, sylph-like form, was eminently handsome. Hair and eyes of intense depth of black contrasted admirably with a countenance which may be designated as transparent—it was nearly colourless; and only on occasions of unusual bodily exertion, or when some mental emotion suffused the cheek with a damask blush, would a tint of rosy red fluctuate over her pure skin. It can scarcely be called pale, however—it had nothing about it of that death-in-life hue which indicates the presence of disease.

"Oh, call it *fair*, not pale!"

The expression was at once amiable and intellectual—mellowed or blended, however, with a pensiveness which is usually, but most erroneously called melancholy. Melancholy had nothing to do with a "mind at peace with all below—a heart, whose love was innocent." The countenance, in general, affords an index of the mental character—it takes its "form and pressure," as it were, from the predominant workings of that inward principle which is the source of thought and feeling. It is there that thought and feeling, those subtle essences, are made visible to the eye—it is there that mind may be seen. The most casual observer could not fail to perceive that the soul which spoke eloquently in the eye, "and sweetly lightened o'er the face" of May Darling, was a worshipper of nature, of poetry, and of virtue; for they are often combined—they have a natural relation to one another; and, when they exist simultaneously in one individual, a mind so constituted has a capacity for enjoying the most exalted pleasure of which humanity is susceptible. May Darling was indeed imaginative and sanguine in a very high degree; and books of a romantic or dramatic character were mines of "untold wealth" to her.

"Many are poets who have never penned
Their inspirations."

And, although the name of this rural beauty, this humble village-maiden, will be looked for in vain in the rolls of fame, she enjoyed hours of intense poetical inspiration. In short, both in her mental character, and in the style of her personal attractions, she rose far above her companions of the village. Need it be told that often, of a fine evening, she would steal away from her gay, romping, laughing associates, and, with a favourite author in her hand, and wrapt in a vision of "sweet coming fancies," follow the course of the stream which intersected her native vale, flowing along, pure and noiseless, like the current of her own existence?

The favourite haunt in which she loved to spend her leisure hours, was a beautiful dell, distant about half a mile from the village. It was a place so lonely, so lovely, so undisturbed, that there—(but then all these fine old rural deities, those idols shrined for ages in Nature's own hallowed pantheon, have been expelled their temples, or broken by science—why should this be?)—there, if anywhere, the genius of solitude might be supposed to have fixed his abode. It was a broken piece of ground, intersected by several irregular banks, here projecting in hoar and sterile grandeur, (not on an Alpine scale, however,) and there, clothed with tufts of the feathery willow or old gnarled thorn. The

earth was carpeted with its usual covering of emerald turf; and interwoven with it, in beautiful irregularity, were numerous wild flowers—the arum, with its speckled leaves and lilac blossoms; the hyacinth, whose enameled blue looks so charmingly in the light of the setting sun; and oxlips, cowslips, and the like—throwing up their variegated tufts, like nosegays presented by nature for some gentle creature, like May Darling, to gather up and lay upon her bosom. The air, of course, was permanently impregnated with the perfume which they breathed out—the everlasting incense of the flowers rising from the altars of Nature to her God. Such was the sanctuary in which May gleaned from books the golden thoughts of others, or held communion with her own; and well was it adapted for nursing a romantic taste, and giving a tenderer tone to every tender feeling.

The personal attractions of this sweet and lovely creature increased with her years, and she became the reigning belle of Grassyvale and all the country round. It followed, as a matter of course, that her admirers outnumbered her years; and that the possession of her affections was, with many a rustic Adonis, a subject which troubled the little kingdom of the soul, like the Babylonish garment. At every village fete—a wedding, a harvest home, or other rural festival—hers was the step most buoyant in the dance, hers the hand most frequently solicited, hers the form and face that riveted all eyes, and thrilled the heart of the ardent admirer "too much adoring." Amongst the other accomplishments of our heroine, skill in music was not the least prominent. Not that she excelled in those intricate graces which are often had recourse to by vocalists to conceal a bad voice, and atone for want of feeling and expression; but her "wood-note wild" was eminently characterised by the latter qualities of singing; and the effect which she produced, was, accordingly, calculated to be lasting.

It must not be supposed, however, that the flattering unction of adulation, at best like the love of Kaled to Lara, "but half-concealed," had any pernicious influence over her mind. She was neither puffed up with vain conceit, nor display of haughty reserve and distance towards those who numbered fewer worshippers than herself; still humility of heart, which was "native there and to the manner born," characterised her deportment—nor was there any relaxation in the discharge of the household duties which devolved upon her; and the comfort of her father, and the proper care and culture of the younger branches of the family, were as faithfully attended to as if her deformity, instead of her beauty, had been proverbial. She folded the little flutterers under her wing, like a mother bird; and, if there was one thing more than another that she took delight in, it was the training of their young minds to the love and practice of virtue and religion, the only fountains whence happiness, pure and uncontaminated, can be drawn in this life.

"So passed their life—a clear united stream,
By care unruffled; till, in evil hour"—

But we anticipate.

It was on a fine summer morning that May, with one of her little sisters, set out to visit the annual fair of the county town. Such an event naturally excites considerable interest over all the country round; and old and young, blind and cripple, male and female, pour along the public ways—not in "weary," but in light-hearted "droves"—full of eagerness and expectation, like the Jews to the pool of Bethesda, when the angel was expected to make his annual descent, and impart a healing virtue to its waters; for there is to be found variety of amusement for every mind—from the Katerfelto wonderer, "wondering for his bread," down to the more humble establishment of the half-penny showman, with his "glorious victory of Waterloo," his "golden beetle," or "ashes from the burning moun-

tains." But, on the occasion to which we refer, there was an exhibition in the shape of a theatrical booth, which presented extraordinary attractions for May Darling; and, accordingly, after deliberately balancing the gratification which she anticipated, with the expense which it would cost, (her exchequer was, of course, not very rich,) she at length found herself comfortably seated near the front of the stage. The tragedy of "George Barnwell" was going off with prodigious *eclat*; and the performers had arrived at that scene where the hero is about to assassinate his uncle, when the insecure props that supported the gallery began to indicate a disposition to disencumber themselves of their burden, and, at last, finally gave way. The confusion which now ensued, not to mention the shrieks and other vocal notes of terror and dismay, it is needless to describe—these have nothing to do with our tale. Barnwell, instead of imbruing his hands in innocent blood, even "in jest," became the most active agent in rescuing his hapless audience from their perilous situation. He was a tall, handsome young man, of a very prepossessing exterior, and appeared to great advantage in his showy stage habiliments. The general rush was towards the door, the most likely avenue of escape which presented itself to the astonished rustics; but a few, amongst whom was our heroine, with more collected judgment and presence of mind, found a place of security on the stage. May was slightly bruised in her endeavours to shelter her young charge; and, although not much injured, her forlorn yet interesting appearance drew the attention of the histrionic Samaritan, and he kindly conducted her into the back settlements of the theatre. The affair was not of such a serious nature as might have been anticipated. A few dilapidated seats, and a score or two of trifling contusions, made up the sum total of the damage. A hat or two might have changed owners in the confusion; but these are things beneath the dignity of a tragedian to look after; and, as soon as matters were adjusted on the grand theatre of commotion, he returned to the object of his first solicitude. She was seated on a stool, in what was dignified with the sounding appellation of a green-room—looking paler, and lovelier, and more lovable than ever. He quieted her apprehensions with respect to the catastrophe; for he was an adept in the art of imitation, and politely requested the honour of conducting her to her place of residence. It is not difficult to conceive what was the first impression which the request made upon the mind of May Darling; but the scruples of modest, virgin innocence, yielded at last to the importunities of the actor, and they left the scene of mirth and confusion together.

On their journey homewards, the conversation naturally turned upon the drama; and many a fine passage, which May admired, was recited to her with all the eloquence and stage artifice which the actor was master of. And he would speak feelingly of "the gentle lady married to the Moor;" her love—the love of Desdemona—pure, exalted, all-enduring—such as death alone could quench; her wo and her fate, so replete with all that can agonize the human soul, and awaken its profoundest sympathies;—of Ophelia—"the fair Ophelia," the young, the beautiful, and the gentle—her devoted, child-like affection, her mournful distraction, and her untimely doom;—of Miranda, the island bride—the being of enchantment—half earthly, half heavenly—around whom the spirits of the air hovered, and ministered unto as vassals;—of Imogen, the fair and faithful—the patient, long-suffering, and finally fortunate Imogen;—of Cordelia—she of the seraph-spirit, pure and peaceful—whose love for a father surpassed that of the Roman daughter;—of Perdita—"the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran on the greensward"—the shepherdess and the princess;—of Juliet—the martyr of passion—she who drew poison from earth's sweetest flower—love—and died thereby; by love's own flame, "kindled she was and blasted." These,

and many other creations of fancy, which omnipotent genius has rendered almost real historical personages—not shadow but substance—were the topics of discourse which were handled by our hero of the buskin, until the cottage of John Darling was reached. From the description which has been given of May's character, it need be no matter of surprise that the impression made upon her gentle bosom was profound; and, on taking leave of her, a request, on the part of Mr Henry Wilkinson, (such was the tragedian's name,) to be permitted to visit her on some future occasion, made under cover of a pretext to inquire after the state of her health, was acceded to. Again and again Mr Wilkinson visited the cottage, and poured into the ear of the humble, unsuspecting, and happy inmate, many a story of love, and hope, and joy—such as his knowledge of the drama, which was great, supplied him with.

"These things to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline;
But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch
She'd come again, and, with a greedy ear,
Devour up his discourse."

Substitute the name of May Darling for that of Desdemona, and the description becomes perfect of our heroine's situation, whilst the result was similar: in a short time, the happiness of our village maiden was entirely at the disposal of Mr Wilkinson. Hitherto her heart had slept, like some untroubled lake, reflecting only heaven, and nature grand and beautiful around; but now its waters were darkened and disturbed by one single image—and that was her lover's. Her ears were no longer open to the murmurs of her native stream, or the gush of song from the fairy-winged and fairy-plumaged birds, whom she almost knew one from another: she only heard the music of her lover's voice. Her secluded dell was no longer visited alone; her walks were no longer solitary, or, if they were, it was only to meet him whom her heart loved, and to see if his speed "kept pace with her expectancy." Everything was beheld through one all-hallowing atmosphere—and that was love. It lay upon her soul like the shadow on the sundial, and time was measured by it. How, it will be asked, was all this looked upon by her father? With no favourable eye—nay, with many suspicious forebodings and prophetic fears.

It was about three months after the catastrophe which took place in the provincial theatre, that Mr Wilkinson made proposals of a union to May, which, being accepted, the consent of her parent was next applied for. The advances of the actor were for a time checked by an uncompromising refusal; but May's father gradually became less peremptory, until there remained only one objection, but that was insurmountable—namely, the profession of Mr Wilkinson—one, in general, very obnoxious to a Scottish peasant. It was, however, finally obviated, by the actor's promising to abandon it, and become a teacher of elocution in the town of H—. The father's consent was obtained at last, though with reluctance, and the day of their nuptials was fixed.

It was a beautiful evening, that which preceded the day when May Darling was to give her hand to the man for whom her heart cherished a love as deep, intense, and concentrated, as ever was awakened and nursed in woman's gentle bosom. The sun—just sinking through those vast masses of clouds which usually attend his exit, and assume, as he descends, various wild and fantastical shapes, and catch every hue, from the intense purple to the scarcely perceptible yellow—showered on the face of nature a stream of rich but mellowed radiance, which softened without obliterating, the outlines of objects, and produced that "clear obscure, so softly dark, so darkly pure," which is so favourable to indulgence in tender emotions.

"Sweet hour that wakes the wish and melts the heart!"—
sweet hour, when reflection is deepest and feeling most

profound—when the mind, abroad all day, busied with the concerns of this work-a-day world, comes home to itself, and broods, and sleeps, and dreams golden dreams—sunny, hope-illuminated dreams!—sweet hour, when the ties of social being which the day had severed are reunited, and around the household hearth, the “old familiar faces” are assembled!—sweet hour, when the shades of evening, gradually deepening, are sufficient to conceal the blush which might mantle beauty’s cheek, too warmly, fondly pressed, as, in a voice half sighs, half whispers, she confesses the secret of her love; and when, in the arms which gently enfold her yielding form, she seems, in the fine language of Rogers, to become less and less earthly,

“And fades at last into a spirit from heaven!”

’Twas at this enchanting hour that Wilkinson and his betrothed set out on one of those charming walks during which they had so often exchanged vows of mutual and eternal love. The road which they at first took, was sufficiently retired to admit of their conversing aloud with unreserved confidence; but, continuing their journey, unconscious where they were going, they found themselves at last in the vicinity of the high road which leads to the town of H—. Turning to strike down a narrow hedge-row path, a moving spectacle presented itself to their observation. Upon a grassy knoll lay a female fast asleep, with a child at her breast, vainly attempting to force its little fingers within the folds of the handkerchief which concealed the bosom of its mother. May uttered a faint exclamation, somewhat between pity and fear; for she was taken by surprise. But her lover’s astonishment was still greater than hers; for, after he had contemplated the care-worn features of the wayfarer, he started, and, had not the increasing gloom of evening prevented any change of countenance from being perceptible, May might have seen his face turn ashy pale; but she felt the arm in which hers was fondly locked, to tremble distinctly.

“This touches your feelings, Henry,” said May; “but can we not, love, do something to alleviate the sufferings of this, no doubt, unfortunate female? Had I not better awake her, and conduct her to my father’s, where refreshment and rest can be procured?”

“Nay, dearest love,” said Wilkinson—“sleep is to the wretched the greatest boon that can be bestowed: let us leave her alone, nor deprive her of the only comfort which, possibly, she is capable of enjoying.”

So saying, he hastily retired, bearing May, somewhat reluctantly, homewards; for her sympathy was much excited, and she would fain have carried her generous purpose into effect; but gave way to the entreaties of her lover, who had some miles to walk ere he could reach his place of residence. After seeing May safely beneath the domestic roof, Wilkinson bade farewell for the night to his betrothed bride, and took his departure, with the intention, he said, of immediately returning to H—. He did not proceed directly home, however; but, making a retrograde movement, he fell back upon the place where the fatigued traveller had been seen. She was gone when he arrived; and whether the circumstance gave him pleasure or the reverse, we have never been able to ascertain; but, at all events, he now set out in good earnest for H—. What should have interested Wilkinson so much in this apparently wandering mendicant?—*Pacienza*.

On the evening which we have described, let the reader picture to himself two aged crones, comfortably seated upon a rough slab of wood, elevated two feet or so above the ground, by a massive block of granite which supported either end. This, together with the cottage wall against which their backs reclined, might, even with individuals more fastidious than its present occupants, have appeared a luxury little inferior to a sofa, especially in that bland and beautiful hour when daylight dies along the hills, and our

feelings, partaking of the softness of the scene and hour, dispose us to be pleased, we ask not why and care not wherefore. On either hand was situated a door, over which hung suspended a very homely signboard. From one of these, the wayfarer might learn that good entertainment for man and beast could be supplied within, by Janet Baird, who, it appeared, was, by special permission of government, permitted to retail spirits, porter, ale, and other items. Lest any mistake should occur as to the nature of the invitation, (or, perhaps, it was a *ruse* to provoke the alimentary faculties,) there was a painting of the interior, representing a table, which seemed to groan under the weight of bottles, glasses, porter and ale cans, bread, cheese, and what not; whilst two jolly companions, with rubicund faces, where an infinity of good nature predominated, sat round it, each with a cup in hand, and both evidently sublimed by their potations far above this “dirty planet, the earth.” At the entrance to the apartment was seen the landlady, who, with one hand, pushed open the door; whilst the other, projecting forwards, supported a huge tankard, charged with the favourite beverage, which mantled or effloresced at the top, like a cauliflower. The neighbouring sign had fewer attractions for the weary traveller or the droughty villager, throwing out merely hints as to the condition of the reader’s linen, by intimating that clothes might here undergo purification, and be mangled by the hour or *peace* (such was the orthography) by Nelly Gray.

The two neighbours lived on terms of the utmost harmony; for there was no rivalry of interests. Their callings were antipodes to each other—one being devoted to the decoration and comfortable appearance of the human exterior, whilst the other took special cognizance of the internal condition of the animal economy. They, of course, carried on a mutual traffic; but it was on the primitive principle of barter—the weekly account for washing and dressing which Janet owed, being duly balanced by her accommodating Nelly with a certain potent nostrum, which we shall not name, but merely describe as a sovereign remedy for aching bones and pains, and other complaints of the stomach, to which this petticoat Diogenes (for she likewise practised in a tub) was very subject, especially after washing a whole day, or impelling her crazy creaking machine for the same space of time. It was their invariable practice to spend an hour or two every evening in what is termed in the vernacular a “two-handed crack,” either seated out doors, or snugly immersed in Janet’s back parlour—a small dark room, encumbered with sundry articles of retail. The subject of their conversation, on the present occasion, will immediately become apparent.

“They say he’s gaun to learn folk ellykeashun,” said Janet, in reference to May’s lover.

“An’ what’s that, Janet?” asked the other.

“Ne’er a bit o’ me kens very weel,” rejoined Janet, “but, I’m thinkin it’s the way the gentry speak, eghin an’ owin, and sichin and sabbin, an’ makin yer voice gang up an’ down, like daft Jock playin on the fife.”

“Hech, sirs, that’s an idle kind o’ way o’ making ane’s bread,” sighed Janet. “It’s naething else than begging. He’d better pit a napping hammer in his hand an’ tak the road-side for an honest livelihood.”

“Deed, Nelly, it’s my opinion he’s been on the road before, following anither trade,” said Janet. “I’m sair mistaen if he’s no a hempie; an’ we’ll maybe hear mair aboot him yet than some folks wad like to ken o’. I never liked your land-louper an’ spoutin gentry a’ my days. They’re nae better than tinklers, that carry off whatever they lay their han’s on, nae matter whether it’s beast or body. It coves the gowan hoo sae sensible a man as John Darling wad e’er hae looten his dochter tak up wi’ sic like clam-jamfrej. But he was aye owre easy wi’ his family, an’ gied them owre muckle o’ their ain wull frae the first.

But the mother was sair to blame in pittin sic daft-like notions intil a bairn's head as to read playactorin books an' novels. Wae am I to say sae, noo that she's whar the Lord wull."

"Is't true, Janet, that they're to be coupled i' the kirk?" asked Nelly. "They say the minister's taen an unco likin to the lad; an', to mak things look as genteel as possible, he's offered the use o' the kirk for marrying them in; an' to gie them a ploy forbye, after it's a' owre."

"Guid faith, it's a true saying—'The fat sow gets a' the draff,'" rejoined Janet. "It wad be lang or he did a turn like that for ony puir body like oorsels. The birkie doesna stand in need o' cash; for he gies saxpence to this ane, an' a shilling to the tither ane for ganging errans. He micht hae provided something for the waddin folks doun at Michael Crummie's, whase tred's no sae brisk noo, sin' that kick-up wi' him an' the Mason Lodge folk, wha swore he gied them up ill whusky—an' that was, maybe, nae lee. He ne'er, since ever I mind, keepit the real stuff, like that o' mine. But see, Nelly, whatna puir, waebegone looking creature's that coming along the road, scarcely able to trail ae leg after anither?—an' a bairn, too, help us a'!"

The object which drew the attention of the honest ale-wife, was, as the reader may have already sagaciously conjectured, the same forlorn being whom May Darling and her lover had accidentally encountered. With a slow and faltering step, she approached the village dames, and inquired of them how far it was from the town of H—.

"Five miles guid," said Janet Baird, and continued—"but ye'll no think o' gaun there the nicht; it's gettin dark, an' ye've mair need o' a while's rest; an', maybe, ye wadna be the waur o' something to support nature; for, wae's me! ye do look thin an' hungert like! Tak her in by, Nelly, an' I'll fetch her some cordial, as weel as a morsel to eat."

So saying, she proceeded to her shop, for the purpose of making good her word, whilst Nelly followed up that part of the duty of relieving the stranger which devolved upon her, and conducted the "weariet one" into the interior of her humble domicile.

"Ye'll hae travelled a gey bit the day, na, I sudna wonder?" said Nelly.

"Yes," said the stranger, whom we shall now designate as Mrs B. "Since morning, I have prosecuted my journey with all the speed which want and weariness would permit of. But these were nothing, did I only know how it was to terminate."

Meantime, Janet had returned, bearing in her apron an ample stock of provisions; and, having heard the latter part of Mrs B's reply to Nelly, her curiosity was not a little excited to know something of her history. This she set about with the characteristic *pankness* (there is no purely English word sufficiently expressive) of the Scotch—that style of speaking which is half asking, half answering a question; and she was successful in her endeavours.

"It'll be the guidman that ye're gaun to meet at H—?" said Janet. "He'll be in the manufacturing line, nae doot; for there's little else dune there; an', indeed, that itsel has faun sair aff sin' that dirt o' machinery was brought in to tak the bread out o' the puir man's mouth."

"Yes—no; he is not in that line, nor do I know, indeed, if he is to be found there at all; but—but—excuse me, kind friends, for shewing a little reserve touching one who"—

Here, however, her feelings overcame her; and, turning round to gaze on the helpless being that clung to her bosom, tears from her sufficed eyes began to find a ready passage down her pale emaciated cheek—a channel with which they appeared to be familiar.

"He never saw thee, my little Henry, my sweet boy! Methinks, that cherub smile of innocence which lies upon that countenance, would be powerful enough to melt the icy feelings of his soul, and recall—. Pardon me, kind friends," she continued; "but the name of husband is associated in my mind with all that human nature can suffer of unmitigated, hopeless wretchedness. You see before you the victim of—. But you shall hear all."

She then commenced her history, recounting every circumstance of a tale of misery but too common. As it is, in some measure, connected with that of May Darling, we shall give a few of its leading facts.

She was the daughter of a respectable farmer in the north of England, and, being an only child, received an accomplished education; and, from her engaging manners, personal attractions, and skill in music, she was much courted, even by those who moved in the higher circles. At the house of a neighbouring clergyman, Mr G—, she was a very frequent visiter; and her charms captivated the heart of Dr G—, a young medical gentleman, and the nephew of the clergyman. On her part, however, there was no attachment, although the ardour with which Dr G— pressed his suit might have captivated a bosom less stubborn than hers. But another idol was shrined and secretly worshiped there. This was a Mr Henry Bolton, a fellow-student of Dr G—'s—who, in calling at the house of Mr G—, to see his friend the Doctor, was induced to spend a few days with him. His stay was protracted to weeks, months—in short, till the farmer's daughter and he, having come to an understanding with respect to the all-important matter of love, agreed to join hands for better for worse. The marriage took place at a neighbouring town, where the couple remained for several months, living in a state of great privacy, for no one was in the secret of their union, not even the lady's father. The finances of Mr Bolton became exhausted; and a letter from his father having shut out all hope of succour from that quarter, he was thrown into a state of extreme dejection. His temper soured, and harshness towards his wife soon followed; for an application on her part to her father, to whom she was compelled by necessity to reveal her situation, met with a reception similar to the other. One day, he dressed himself with more than usual care, packed up in a small parcel the principal part of his body clothes, and having told his wife that he meant to go as far as —, naming a considerable town, which was situated at some miles distance, parted from her, like Ajut in "The Rambler," never to return. The sun arose and set, and arose again and again, and week after week, but still he came not; nor was she ever able to obtain the faintest trace of him. Her health began to droop, and, in the depth of her humiliation and misery, like the prodigal of old, she was compelled to seek for shelter under the paternal roof. Her father received her even with kindness; for time, the softener of affliction, the soother of wrath, had not passed over his head without exercising its due influence upon his feelings. Here she gave birth to a child, the baby which now lay at her breast. Time passed away, and still no intelligence of her runaway husband reached her, till, "About a week back," she said, "communication was made me by letter, that, if I would repair to the town of H—, I would hear something of my lost husband. Without the knowledge of my father, I have undertaken the journey; and God alone knows whether the information, so mysteriously conveyed to me, be true or false—whether my hopes will be disappointed or realized. A few hours, however, will be sufficient to set my mind at rest. I have wearied you, I fear; but my present wretched appearance required some explanation on my part—for, oh, it is difficult to lie under the suspicion of being a vagrant or vagabond, as heaven knows I am neither." And, clasping her hands and raising her eyes, she remained for a few

minutes in that reverential but death-like attitude which is assumed when a human soul prays in agony.

Her painful narrative had its due influence upon the minds of those to whom it was addressed; and, although both admitted the propriety of proceeding to the town of H—, yet they earnestly exhorted her to remain with them for a night; and to this proposal she acceded. After breakfast next morning, Mrs B— (who must now be looked upon as one of the principal of our *dramatis personæ*) set out for the town of H—. What the nature of her reflections were, as she drew near the termination of her journey, may be readily conceived; but of their intensity, no idea can be formed by any one except by the broken-hearted female who has passed through the same fiery ordeal of desertion and despair. She had arrived within a short distance of the town, when a chaise, driving rapidly down the principal entrance to it, attracted her attention. It approached, and from the favours which profusely adorned the driver, his team, and his vehicle, it was evident that some happy pair were destined soon to become its occupants. The blinds were all drawn up; but, as the chaise passed her, one of them was partially let down, and she heard some one from within instruct the driver to proceed to the manse by a road more retired than that usually taken. There was something in the tone of the voice (though indistinctly heard from the rattling of the wheels) which startled Mrs B. from a reverie in which she had been indulging, and made every fibre of her body to thrill, as if an electric discharge had shot through it. In mute astonishment, not unmingled with thick coming fancies, horrible forebodings, which, without assuming any definite form, were prophetic of wo, she fixed her eyes upon the retiring vehicle, and, rooted to the spot where she stood, motionless as a Niobe of stone, gazed and gazed till her eyeballs ached. "Can it be?" she at last exclaimed, with wild emotion—"can it be?—No—no—'tis but fancy; yet the place!—gracious powers!" Her eyes continued to follow the retiring wheels, fixed upon them she knew not by what mysterious power; and long she might have remained in this position, had not some person from behind softly addressed her. She turned round, and her eyes fell upon her former suitor, Dr G—. Let her astonishment be imagined—we will not attempt to give words to her feelings.

"It is to you, then," she said, after recovering from her surprise—"it is to you, Dr G—, that I am indebted for information regarding my lost husband."

"It is," he replied; "but not a moment is to be lost. Things are in a worse condition than they were when I dispatched my letter to you. But let us proceed instantly to Grassyvale. On the way I will inform you of all that has come to my knowledge regarding that monster—it were a profanation of language to call him husband." So saying, they commenced their journey, which we shall leave them to prosecute whilst we bring up some parts of our narrative which have been necessarily left in the rear.

We need hardly say that the morning of her marriage was an anxious and a busy one to May Darling. It is true that she had plenty of assistance afforded her by the village matrons, and by a few youthful associates, whom she had singled out as especial favourites, from amongst many who were regarded by her with affection. But still a fastidiousness of taste always seizes people on those occasions when they are desirous of appearing to the best advantage. Besides, when there are a number of lady's maids, all busily engaged in decorating a single individual, a difference of opinion relative to the various items of dress always takes place, and occasions much delay. One of them is clear that such and such a colour of ribbon will best suit the complexion of the wearer; another holds out strongly for an opposite hue and a third silences them both by asserting that

neither answer the colour of the bonnet. What sort of flowers would most fittingly ornament the hair, was also a subject of protracted debate; and half an hour was wasted in determining whether the ribbon which was to circle her waist like a zone, should hang down or not. Matters, however, were at last adjusted—the bride was arrayed, the hour of twelve was struck by a small wooden clock which ticked behind the door; and with the hour there arrived at the cottage a sort of rude palanquin, fashioned of birch-tree boughs, which intertwined with each other, and were interwoven with branches of flowering shrubs; and upon this some of the kindest and blithest-hearted of the villagers had agreed to bear May to the kirk. Some modest scruples required to be overcome, before she would be induced to avail herself of this mode of conveyance; and, after being seated, with the bridesmaid walking on one side, and John Darling on the other, the cavalcade began to move. Many hearty good wishes for the happiness of the bride from the elder people, and many joyous shouts from the younger part of the villagers, greeted the ears of the marriage party; whilst a pretty long train which drew itself out in the rear, sent up its rejoicings on the wind from a distance. But one step must bring us to the altar of Hymen. Side by side stood the bridegroom and the bride; and a more interesting, handsome, and apparently well-matched pair, never were seen in the same situation, as we are informed by the clergyman who officiated on the occasion. The ceremony proceeded with due formality—one moment more would have joined their hands, when a person who had just entered the church called to the clergyman to stay the nuptials; and, at the same moment, a shriek from a female who had entered along with him, rose so wild, thrilling, and distracted, that every bosom shook beneath its glittering attire.

"Base, inhuman miscreant!" shouted Dr G—, addressing himself to Wilkinson, (which name must now be supplanted by his real one, Bolton,) at the same time rushing forward to seize the bridegroom.

He, however, had ere this dropped the hand of May Darling—that hand which, till now, like Desdemona's, had "felt no age, nor known no sorrow"—and, unsheathing a dagger which was concealed about his person, (doubtless one of his theatrical weapons,) he threatened to make a ghost of any one who disputed his retreat from the church. His menacing attitude and wild gesticulations terrified every beholder, and even Dr G— gave way, allowing him unmolested to quit the sacred place which he was about to profane, and possibly might have stained with blood. Only one attempted to arrest him, and, for a short time, succeeded. It was his wife—she who the night previously had kindled up in his soul the fires of conscience, as she lay asleep, unsheltered save by heaven's blue canopy, and apparently an abandoned outcast.

"Henry," she said, holding up their child, and stretching forth her arms—"Henry, look on this dear pledge of our affection, the child of love, though born in bitterness and tears, the offspring of your choice—look on him, Henry, and let the voice of conscience in your breast, which must be heard now or hereafter, plead in his behalf. The helpless darling innocent—of what crime has he been guilty, that his natural protector should cast him forth to meet the buffetings of fate, without a shield—that he should be launched upon the sea of life without an oar? If not for my sake, at least for the sake of little Henry—for he bears your name—restore us both to honour and society, by returning to the path of duty. The arms that have so often embraced you, will again encircle the neck to which they have clung so often and so fondly. O Henry, Henry! reflect for an instant on my destitute outcast condition—without you, I am a weed cast from the rock, to be driven whithersoever the storm sets wildest. Think what my sufferings have been

and must be!—God alone can estimate them. Henry, hear me. Stay but one instant—Henry, Henry!" And, taking her child in one arm, she stretched out the other to detain him; but the heartless villain shook her rudely from him, and darted from the church.

What were May Darling's feelings during this heart-rending scene? She was not a spectator of it. The moment that the dreadful truth flashed upon her mind, she sank into the arms of her father, dead to consciousness and time. By the same conveyance which had brought her in triumph to the church, covered with the ensignia of happiness, and palpitating with rapture almost too intense for the human soul to enjoy for any length of time without experiencing pain and a revolution of feeling—by that same conveyance, not an hour after, she was borne to her father's cottage, a wretched but a gentle maniac.

Days, weeks, months, passed away, and she remained the same listless, mild, and inoffensive creature—a baby-woman, a human being ripe in years and an infant in thought, feeling, and everything mental. 'Tis painful to contemplate the situation of an individual overwhelmed by such a calamity under any circumstances; but, under the present, how terrible indeed! To be struck down at the altar, arrayed in bridal robes, and with all her hopes blooming around her—how does it humble human pride, set at naught all calculations of human happiness, and assign narrow limits to human hope! And yet there was mercy in the dispensation. Better unconscious almost of existence itself, than alive to all the horrors of a doom like that of May Darling. Better the vacant stare, and the look of silent indifference on all beneath the sun, than the wild gesticulations of violent grief, the shriek of wo, or the agony of despair, for the alleviation of which "hope never comes that comes to all."

Every means were had recourse to for rousing her from the dismal trance into which she had fallen, to dispel from her thoughts the gloomy, the dead images by which they were haunted; but in vain. Sometimes she would sit amongst her gay companions; and, whilst they laughed, chatted, and sung, as in former happy days, a faint smile would rekindle about her lips, so rosy once, so wan and withered now, and for a moment playing like a mental coruscation, would suddenly expire, and then she would droop again into the gloom of moody madness, and weep amidst all the gaiety that surrounded her—weep even like a child. If spoken to, she made no reply; but, lifting up her dark streaming eyes, sparkling through the humid medium in which they were suffused, like a star in motionless water, she would sing snatches of old songs about disappointed love, blighted hopes, and broken hearts. And the melancholy tones of her voice would sadden all around her, as if some powerful spell had suddenly passed over their minds like a cold wind, and frozen up the fount of joyous feeling; and they would weep, too—weep along with her; for she was so beloved, so good, so beautiful, so happy once, and so wo-begone and wretched now. Then would the gentle maniac start up on a sudden, as if some one had hastily summoned her, and, rushing towards home, would mutter, in a quick tone of voice—"I am coming—I am coming! I knew we would be in time!—I knew we would be in time! He is there!—he—he!—Who?" She was silent now. Many an eye was filled with tears as she passed through the straggling village of Grassyvale.

Winter had passed away—the vernal eruption of spring had been matured into the bloom, and the promise which spring gives of autumn, when May Darling, one evening, wandered forth from her father's cottage, attended only by a little sister. Striking into that beautiful and unfrequented path where she had last walked with him who, on the following day, was to have become her husband, she had arrived at the very spot where lay asleep, on the grassy bank, by the hedge-side, the wife of Bolton. A train of

thought seemed suddenly to rush through her mind; for she sat, or rather dropped gently down. 'Twas the recollection of former events which had begun to be reanimated within her; and, though faint, it was sufficient to cause a temporary suspension of muscular energy: her sight became dim, only vague images being presented to the eye; and she might probably have fallen backwards, had not a person sprung through the hedge, and, putting his arms around her slender form, maintained her in an erect position. The individual who had thus so opportunely come to her assistance was closely wrapped up in a greatcoat, although the warmth of the weather rendered such a covering scarcely necessary. The upper part of his countenance was concealed by a slouched hat drawn pretty far down; but from what of it was visible, it was plain that care, remorse, and dissipation had gone far to modify its natural expression.

May gradually revived from her partial swoon; and the stranger, uncovering his head, and fixing his eyes upon the languid features which began to assume the hue of life and the expression of conscious being, he said, in a low, trembling voice—

"May Darling, hear me—do not curse me—I am miserable enough without the malison of her whom"—But his feelings, for a moment, choked his utterance. "Through a thousand dangers and difficulties have I sought this interview, only that I might obtain your forgiveness, and acceptance of this small gift." Here he flung a purse down by her side. "Say, you forgive me, May—breathe but the word, and, in a few days, an ocean shall roll between us."

But he spoke to ears which heard not. The moment that May recognised Bolton, reason was restored, but animation fled, and she sank dead for a time in his arms. He was about to take measures for her restoration, when the rapid trampling of horses' hoofs drew his attention in another direction; and, looking over the hedge-row, he perceived two horsemen, at a very little distance, advancing towards the village. He seemed to be aware of their errand and the cause of their speed; for, no sooner had he cast his eyes on them, than his head instinctively slunk down behind the hedge. But his precaution was too late. He had been seen; and, that night, he was led, a fettered man, to the gaol of H—, charged with highway robbery. We may as well conclude his history, as well as that of the other individuals who have been interwoven with our tale, before returning to May Darling.

Mr Henry Bolton was found guilty of the crime with which he was charged, and condemned to perish on the scaffold, although it was only his first offence, and, to do him justice, he had committed the crime for the purpose of having it in his power, in some measure, to requite May Darling for the injury which she had received at his hands. How wonderful are the ways of Providence in punishing the guilty! Actuated by a motive unquestionably virtuous, Bolton commits a capital crime, and the woman whom he had wronged becomes, unconsciously to herself, the ultimate cause of his punishment! However, by powerful intercession on the part of his friends, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. But it was destined that he should end his days miserably. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Bolton was virtually a murderer, as we shall see; and the curse could not be eluded by the decision of any earthly tribunal. 'Twas vain to attempt to fly from it. The vengeance of Heaven would have pursued him through all the regions of space; and, screened by the closest envelope of darkness and disguise, would have struck its victim down. In a skirmish with the natives of the place to which he had been transported, he was taken prisoner, and by them put to a cruel and lingering death.

After the painful interview with her husband in the church of Grassyvale, Mrs Bolton returned to her father, secluding herself from the world, and devoting her time to household duties and the education of her son. Rumours of the death of her husband penetrated at last to the remote part of the country where she resided, and, on its being officially authenticated, Dr G—, who had commenced practice in a neighbouring town, became a frequent visitor at the farm-house. His former courtship was renewed; and, when the days of mourning were over, and time had done much to alleviate grief, to restore the faded charms of Mrs Bolton, and to throw the events of the past into dimness and distance, they were united; and are still, according to the last accounts, living happily together, surrounded by a family of thriving children. Nelly Gray and Janet Baird still pursue their respective callings in Grassyvale; the latter never failing, on every possible occasion, to boast of her sagacity in detecting the real character of Mr Henry Wilkinson, *alias* Bolton. But let us return to the suffering May Darling.

She was borne to her cottage home insensible, in which state she remained all that night, and next day revived only to know that she was dying. Yes—the arrow that had pierced her was poisoned; but the venom, though fatal, worked slow. Gold is refined by fire, and the more intense the heat applied, the purer will the metal become. So is it with the human soul. It is made perfect through suffering; and the more it is destined to endure, the fitter will it become for taking a part with the choirs of saints and angels, when it shall have thrown aside the garment of mortality and mounted on high, like the unshadowed moon, through parted clouds. But May was happy notwithstanding. In all her looks and movements were disclosed the peace of mind which passeth understanding. It was diffused, like light from heaven, over her countenance; it was heard, like a rich chord of music, in the tones of her voice; her every word and action betrayed its presence and all-prevailing power. Her Bible, although always a favourite study, became now her sole one; and by its all-hallowing influence, her mind looking down with calm complacency on all terrestrial things, had an early foretaste of immortality, in many a delightful contemplation of that abode and that felicity which shall reward the just.

“It was a delightful evening, about the middle of autumn,” says the worthy clergyman to whom we have been indebted for many of the facts of the foregoing narrative, “that I was hastily summoned, by John Darling, to visit his daughter, who, he believed, was dying. I lost no time in proceeding to his cottage, and found that his conjecture was but too true. In an easy chair, placed at an open window which faced the west, reclined the victim of a broken heart. On her pale cheek death had impressed his seal, though there the deceitful rose tint fluctuated, which was not so in her days of health and hope. Her words, when she spake, and that was seldom, seemed to come forth without her breath; and the lightest down that ever was wafted through summer’s air might have slept unfluttered on her lips. I kneeled down and prayed that the gentle spirit which was about to be released from its mortal bonds, might receive a welcome to the realms of life and light. She understood distinctly that she was dying; and, in token that her mind was at perfect ease, she faintly uttered, when I had finished—‘Yes! oh! yes!—Heaven! he—!’ The words died unfinished on her tongue, and her spirit rose to its native sky.

“Peace to her broken heart and virgin grave!”

“In what a noble, what a truly grand point of view does this instance of triumphant faith place the glorious religion in which we believe! In what bold relief does its value to our fallen race appear! What a luminous light does it shed in life’s last agonies, opening up a radiant vista through

the clouds and darkness which settle on the soul, like the shadows of approaching death! There is nothing better qualified to develop the intellectual faculties, enlarge the understanding, and strengthen and foster the latent virtues of the heart, than the love and the study of literature. I am no advocate for the exclusive study of Scripture—nay, I am not sure if such restricted reading would not lead to narrowness of mind and gloomy unconcern about the affairs of life, and the duties connected with it, if not also to selfish moroseness and illiberal bigotry—a want of community of feeling and sympathy with human nature in general. But what would literature *alone* have done for May Darling? Would the recollection of Shakspeare’s finest bursts of inspiration, where the dramatist seems struggling with nature which shall be the greatest, have buoyed her spirit up under the load which oppressed it, or given but one, only one faint assurance of immortality? Alas! they could only have reminded her of what it would have been far better to forget for ever, to bury in everlasting oblivion beneath the waves of Lethe. How finely does the Bard of Hope write, in reference to the anticipation of eternal felicity in the hour of dissolution!

“What though each spark of earth-born rapture fly?—
The quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye?
Bright to the soul thy seraph hands convey
The morning dream of life’s eternal day!”

“Or what could philosophy have done for her? Science has only reference to this life—its eagle eye has never caught a ray reflected from that which is to come. Matter may be tortured by methods, varied with infinite ingenuity; but every secret thus disclosed only relates to *matter*—there is nothing of spirit brought to light in all the experiments of the chemist, in all the observations of the astronomer, in all the gropings and searching investigations of the geologist; for, though he reveals past time—ay, almost a past eternity—the strata of the earth with their world of organic wonders which record the transpired history of our planet in imperishable hieroglyphics, tell nothing of the future. The ocean, with its buried wrecks and its countless treasures; the mountain over which the mighty deep once rolled its undulating expanse, and there deposited its myriads of living creatures; the desert, which heaps its ocean of sand over entombed cities, once the glory of the earth—but why should we go on?—everything speaks of the past, but not a whisper comes from creation’s breast of what is to come. The Bible alone discloses the mighty secret. May all, therefore, find it what it proved to be to May Darling—light, when all is dark—hope, when all is despair—pleasure in pain—life in death.”

It was upon her that a nameless rustic bard, who had been an admirer, composed the following lines:—

“She faded like a flower
That wastes by slow decay;
Not snatched in an untimely hour,
But withered day by day.
’Twas sad to see those charms,
So heavenly once, decayed;
And, oh! to blight thee in our arms
In bridal robes arrayed!

“But heaven commenced with thee
Whilst yet below the sun;
And, ere the mortal ceased to be,
The seraph had begun.
Calm, then, on Nature’s breast
In dreamless sleep, sleep on,
Till angel voices break thy rest
In music like thine own!”



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. II.—THE CONSCIENCE-STRICKEN

AT a dark period of the world, not yet so far back, in point of time, as modern conceit would place it, many facts in philosophy constituted a mere page of fable in the estimation of those whose belief in witchcraft and other fanciful agencies was unbounded; but, in our enlightened times, things are so curiously reversed, that some of the real events of human life—the every-day workings of that wonderful organ the human heart—are viewed sceptically, as delusion, deception, or invention, by those whose faith is pinned to the floating mantle of philosophy, though it covers the wildest theory that ever set fire to the enthusiasm of science. The facts I have to relate in this chapter, though true, may, from their extraordinary nature, be apt to be classed among creations of the fancy; yet I would rather that their credibility were tested by the mind of the plain and argute man of the world, than by that of the philosopher, whose object it is to investigate truth, and whose ambition it is to receive it, however inconsistent it may appear with the ordinary laws of nature

It is not my object to treat metaphysically any of those powers of the mind which, either in health or disease, exhibit, in certain positions, those extraordinary phases which have struck wonder and terror into the hearts of beholders. The struggling energies of conscience loaded with crime, have been witnessed by philosophers who have denied the existence of the moral sense as an original power; but of what avail is their scepticism, when they are bound to admit that this great sanction of God's law is incident to all mankind—having been found as vivid and strong in the new-found islands of Polynesia, as it ever was in the Old World? It would be for the interest of mankind if those who call themselves its teachers, and dignify themselves with the proud name of investigators of truth, had looked more often at the workings of this extraordinary power—witnessed and described the agonies of the heart convulsed by its throes, heard and narrated the piercing cries and the flaming words that are wrung from the throat of him who is under its scorpion lash, and felt and told the horrors of those sights and sounds—instead of inquiring whether it is connate or constructed by social and political institutions. Yet this, too, has been done, and well done; and it is not because the effects of a burning conscience are unknown, or have been inadequately described, that I contribute the results of my experience on this interesting subject, but simply because I conceive they cannot be too well known or too forcibly delineated, in a country where a struggling competition of interests and a fierce ambition are exerted hourly in attempting to still the voice of the monitor that so indefatigably and thanklessly whispers a better life.

About twelve o'clock on the night of the 15th of December 18—, I was aroused by a loud knocking at my bedroom door—a mode of calling me to my patients different from that generally followed by my domestics; and, upon my requesting the servant to come in, he entered hurriedly, with some one behind him, who called out, in the dark, that Mr T—, a retired undertaker, whom I had been in

the habit of attending, had been shot by an assassin, but that life remained, and might eventually be preserved, by my speedy attendance. I dressed instantly, and accompanied the messenger (a nephew of the wounded man, called William B—, whom I recollected to have seen in his house, and in whom he had much confidence) to where my services were thus so urgently required. We had about a mile to walk—the residence being beyond the town, in the midst of a small plantation of fir trees, and too well situated for the accomplishment of any felonious or murderous intention, which the reputed riches of the proprietor might generate in the minds of ruffians. The night was pitch dark; our path was rendered more doubtful by a heavy fall of snow, which, having continued all day, had ceased about two hours before; and I was obliged to trust almost implicitly to my guide, whose familiarity with the road rendered it an easy task for him to get forward. As we hurried on in the darkness and silence which everywhere reigned, my companion informed me that the shot was directed against the victim through the window of his bedroom, while he was sitting warming his feet at the fire, previous to retiring to rest; and that, the individuals in the house having been roused, one had taken charge of the wounded man, others had gone in search of the perpetrator, and he, the narrator, had flown for me, in the hopes of yet saving the life of his guardian and benefactor.

On arriving at the skirts of the planting, we met some domestics with lights, and perceived that they were busy endeavouring to trace some well-marked footsteps impressed on the snow, and which, they said, they had been able to follow from the window where the shot was fired. I requested them to desist for a short time, as they seemed to be incurring the danger of defacing or so confusing the foot-prints, by the irregular and excited manner in which they were performing this important duty, that they could not be identified. They agreed to remain with the lights until I came to them, or sent some one more capable of conducting the investigation, and, in the meantime, I hurried on to the house, where a most appalling scene presented itself to my eyes. On the floor, which was literally swimming in blood, lay the body of Mr T—, with two people—an old woman, the housekeeper, and a middle aged person, whom I understood afterwards to be another nephew of the wounded man, of the name of Walter T—, (the son of a brother, while my companion, the messenger, was the son of a sister)—bending over him, and endeavouring to stop a wound, made by a pistol bullet, near the region of the heart. The work of the assassin was not entirely finished: there was still a fluttering uncertain life in the body, which shewed itself, however, rather by its struggles against the overpowering energies of death, than by any proper living action; a hemorrhage in the lungs, paralysing their vitality, and filling up the air cells, fought, inch by inch, the province of the breath, which forced, at intervals, its way, by a horrid crepitation, through the aperture in the side, while, as the wound was producing fresh supplies, it was not difficult to see how the contest would terminate. In the pangs of choking, the wretched man heaved himself about, and lifted his hands to his mouth in the vain effort to force an entry to that element so signally the food of life. The peculiar, and, to us doctors,

well-known barking noise of the *cynanche trachialis*, (or, as the name implies, the strangling of a dog,) a few torsels of the body, and shivers extending from head to foot, preceded a sigh as deep as the relentless following blood in the lungs would permit; and, in a few moments, he expired.

Leaving the body to the charge of the housekeeper, I called Walter T—— to accompany me to where the individuals stood with the lights, with the view of tracing the foot-prints in the snow to the hiding-place of the cool murderer, who had committed apparently so gratuitous a crime. When we arrived at the spot, several other people had collected, among whom were some sheriff officers on their way to the scene of murder, but who stopped to join in or rather superintend this investigation. The foot-prints around the spot where the people had collected were too much mixed and confused to be capable of being traced for some distance; but, further on, they were again discernible and traceable, and, at one place, the extraordinary appearance presented itself to one of the officers, of a well defined figure of a pistol imprinted on the snow, with the finger points of a hand applied to lifting it from the ground—suggesting to the mind of every one present the unavoidable conclusion that the murderer had dropped the instrument of his crime in the hurry of his retreat, and had snatched it up again as he continued his flight. We proceeded onwards slowly, aided by several lights brought from the house; and, though the darkness of the night presented many difficulties to a successful search, we were still able to progress with certainty to the termination of the murderer's route. Whenever two distinct marks were traced, we felt no difficulty in identifying them, from the unusual circumstance of one of them bearing the impress of nail heads, and the other not, as if only one of the shoes worn by the culprit had undergone the coarse process of repair, in which, in Scotland, short nails with broad heads are often used. As we proceeded onwards, some one cried out that the prints led to the dwelling of Walter T——; a remark which seemed to be about being verified, by that individual's house now reflecting from its dark walls the glare of the lights, while the footsteps were clearly verging towards the door. I looked round and stared full in the face of the man, as it was darkly revealed to me by the flickering tapers; and, though I could perceive no indications of terror, there were clearly discernible signs of confusion, which, however, might have been the consequence of innocence as well as of guilt.

In a few minutes, we traced the foot-prints to the very threshold of the door of Walter T——'s house; and, upon the instant, one of the sheriff officers laid hold of the suspected man, who looked wildly around him, as if he wished to escape from the grasp of justice, and at last appealed to me if it was fair to blast the character of an individual by an apprehension on such slender evidence as the tracing of a foot-print among the snow from one house to another. I replied, that I thought the evidence very inadequate to authorize a confinement, and that, as to the mere detention, he could, by taking off his shoes, and allowing them to be compared with the foot-print, remove the suspicion, and be set at liberty. The man pointed significantly and triumphantly to the foot-prints he had that instant made, and had been making during the whole course of the investigation, and we saw at once that, although the size of the impression was nearly the same in both, there was no indication of nails in the prints of the shoes he wore; a fact he verified by instantly taking off and exhibiting them to the officers; who, after a minute inspection, admitted that the impressions we had been tracing could not have been formed by the shoes exhibited. This clearance was deemed sufficient by those present; but one of the officers suggested a search of the house, in which he remarked, very properly, the person might be secreted whose foot-prints we had been tracing; and the party immediately entered. There was no person

within, nor could anything be seen to justify those suspicions that had been roused by the evidence afforded by the foot-prints in the snow; and the officers and party were about to retire, when some one pointed to a kind of garret, formed by planks or boards laid on some cross beams that extended between the two walls of the cottage, and quite sufficient to have contained a man. The officer accordingly mounted by means of a ladder; and he had scarcely got up, when he cried out, in a voice that made us all start, that he had succeeded in his search. I had no doubt that he had found there the concealed murderer; and the silence that ensued for a few minutes, as the officer rendered his discovery, whatever it was, available—coming in place, as it did, of an expected uproar, struggle, or fight—imparted to the scene, at this moment, great mystery, which was, however, partly removed by the descent of the officer, holding in his hands a pistol and a pair of shoes.

The appearance of these articles, so strangely and providentially traced by their images in the snow, produced a great sensation, for no one doubted but that they were the very evidences we were in search of; and so indeed they turned out to be, for the foot-prints and the shoes completely agreed, and the impression of the pistol in the snow was, upon examination, found to be clearly that of the one discovered. It was again referred to me whether sufficient evidence had not now been procured to authorize the apprehension of the suspected man, who still remained in the grasp of the officer; and I felt myself, for the first time of my life, dragged, by the force of circumstances, into an investigation neither suited to my feelings and habits, nor connected with my profession, for the discharge of one of the duties of which I had been called out of bed at that late hour of the night. Unwilling, even with the evidence before me, to pass sentence against the man, I inquired of William B——, his cousin, who stood by me, what kind of character he bore; and ascertained from him that he was a person of idle habits, and had been in the practice, for many years, of living upon what money he could extort, by threats or entreaties, from the deceased, who had done much for him, and had never received even thanks for what he had done; that he had known them have many quarrels, and one in particular a short time before that night; and that the deceased had threatened, by making a will, to deprive the ungrateful nephew (his heir) of any part of his effects—a step now prevented by his violent death, which would put the latter, if not guilty of this great crime, in possession of his property, which was very considerable. These corroborating circumstances bore heavy upon me; yet, such is force of habit, I would have felt less pain in amputating one of the suspected man's limbs, than I experienced (and, though it is twenty years since that night, I have the recollection of the painful feeling still) in giving my required sanction to a commitment that might be the first step in a progress to the scaffold. During the few moments of deliberation that passed, before I could bring my mind to pronounce my verdict, the unfortunate man sought, with a fearful eye, my countenance. A shaking terror, that chased every drop of blood from his face, and struck his limbs with the feebleness of a child, was exposed by the lights that flared at intervals on his person; and every one read in these indications of fear, the evidences of his guilt. My opinion was delivered in accordance with that of the other persons assembled. The agitation of the culprit rose to such a degree, that he fell upon the ground, and, grasping my limbs with the convulsive clutch of despair, screamed for mercy, till the echoes rung through the planting, and came back upon the ears of the relentless abettors of justice. The more eager were his energetic appeals to feelings that were steeled against the cries and sobs of a murderer, the more determined were the people to do their duty to the injured laws of their country; and as he, on relinquishing the grasp of my knee,

as extended on the ground, laying about him, and casting up the snow which he clutched with his hands, and even bit in his agony, he was again laid hold of by the officers, assisted by the people, and carried struggling to the nearest place where a cart could be procured to drive him to jail.

Next day, I was examined by the law officers, and stated the facts I had witnessed, as I have now related them from my notes. Many others were examined, and, among the rest, William B—, and the housekeeper I had seen hanging over the body of Mr T—; the latter of whom, I understood, gave testimony to the effect that she had, some days before the murder, heard her master accuse the pannel of having stolen from him his watch; and an officer who had searched the house, and found the watch in a place not far from that where the shoes and pistol had been found, produced it to the men of the law, while the housekeeper and William B— identified it as the deceased's property. Some days afterwards, a great advance was made in the evidence, by another discovery, to the effect that the pannel had been in the practice of stating, to various people to whom he owed money, that he would pay them, with compound interest, when his old uncle (the deceased) was dead, as he, in the character of heir-at-law, would succeed to all his property; and, on one occasion, he had, in some drunken orgies, proceeded so far as to propose as a toast, in presence of his cousin, William B—, who spoke to the fact, a quick and safe passage to the soul of his uncle over the Stigeian stream, which to him, the heir, would become as rich in gold as Pactolus. A great number of other corroborative facts and circumstances were spoken to by many witnesses, which, at this distance of time, I cannot recollect: the evidence was, on the whole, deemed by the men of the law sufficient to justify a trial, which accordingly took place some time afterwards, and at which I was examined as a principal witness.

The scene of that day was, in an eminent degree, heart-rending; the facts proved seemed to strike the unfortunate man like thunderbolts, driving him into a state of stupor from which he was no sooner roused than he was again stricken with the same paralysing proof of his crime. The hand of the Almighty appeared to be occupied in tracing, before the averted eyes of the murderer, the secret purpose he had devised in the recesses of his heart, far removed, as he thought, from mortal eye, yet now revealed as evidence to consign him to the death he was unprepared to meet; and, as he prayed, ejaculated, wept, and swooned by turns, the people assembled in court, while they could not doubt his crime, or conceal from themselves its enormity, pitied the victim of such agony of torture as he was apparently suffering, only, too, on the very threshold of his misery. Having remained in court after my examination, I was called upon by the judge, on more occasions than one, to administer what relief was in my power to the unhappy being, as he lay apparently senseless under the bolt of some truth that came on him from the witness-box, as if to seal his doom in this world. I could do little for him, when he was struck by these moral impulses, except by administering stimulants; but, on one occasion, he lay so long under an attack of syncope, that I felt myself called upon to have him removed, for a short time, to an anteroom, where I took from him some ounces of blood. I have watched the eyes of patients brought back to sensibility, life, and hope, and seen the ray of the brightening prospect of health, success, and happiness, dawn on the drowsy orb; but I had not before witnessed the return of sense and intelligence to be directed, at the first glance, on a gallows, and I shuddered as I perceived the breaking in on his clouded mind of the consciousness of the situation in which he was placed—the terror of again facing that court, and that damning evidence, and the recoiling effort he made to escape—alas, how vain!—from the grasp of the officers, as they again proceeded to carry him

to the court-room. When placed again at the bar, upheld by the officers, pale and trembling, the relentless forms of justice proceeded; the witnesses resumed the chain of evidence, and the unfortunate man was again subjected to the rack, under the torture of which his weakened body recoiled with feeble efforts, as exhausted nature denied the supply of the sensibility of pain. But the charge of the judge, which was hollow against the prisoner, ingenious in its reasonings and stern in its conclusions, again revived the slumbering agonies; and the return of the verdict "Guilty" by the jury, was the signal for the commencement of a scene which the hardest hearted person in the court could not witness without horror. A shrill scream rang through the court-room, and was followed by the extraordinary sight of the prisoner clambering over the bar, clutching the clerks' seat, and struggling, against the grasp of the officers, to get forward to the bench, on which the judge sat adjusting the black cap with a view to pronounce the sentence of death. The roused judge vociferated to the officers, blaming them for their remissness; but his voice was overcome by the ejaculations of the prisoner, who cried for mercy, till, vanquished by the men, who held him firmly down, and even stopped his mouth, he fell senseless within the bar, deaf to the words of the fatal sentence, which now, in the midst of death-like silence, rolled over the court with a solemnity never perhaps witnessed in any place of justice before or since.

On being carried to the jail, whither I accompanied him at the request of the judge, he was with difficulty brought back to a state of consciousness; but it was only to be able to fill the prison with his unavailing cries. I could do him no good; and, though used to exhibitions of pain and misery, I was unable to witness longer this most intensive picture of the most agonized condition of unhappy man. I left him, but I was repeatedly called to him again, in the interval which elapsed between this period and the day of his execution, to bring the strength of our art to bear against the effects of a determination to refuse all sustenance, and to resist all the confirmatory aids of necessity, resignation, and religion. All the efforts of the jailor were not able to get him to take food; the unabated strength of his despair occupied every nerve, and chased from his mind all lesser pains of hunger or bodily privations and wants; his moral apoplexy had extended its deadening effects to his physical system; and, as he lay chained by the leg to his stone couch, it could have been detected only from low murmuring groans, alternated, at long intervals, with sudden yells, that there was any real living action in his mind or body. The ministrations of the clergymen who attended him, were likely to be of greater service to him than anything within the power of our professional art; yet they informed me that such was the force of the agony under which he laboured, that all their efforts had been unavailing to introduce into his mind any one sustaining or comforting principle or sentiment. For many days, his determination to take no food continued as strong as at the beginning, whereby his whole system became emaciated and deranged; and, even when the burning pangs of hunger and thirst, the most acute of all bodily pains, rose upon him to such a height that his moral anguish was forced, for a moment, to cede some portion of the territory of feeling to their irresistible impulse, he gave way to the imperative necessity like a maniac, starting up and seizing the can of water that stood by his couch, and, after draining it to the bottom, dashing it from him, and falling back again into the depth of his misery.

The period of his execution was approaching; but he had become so weak that I gave it as my opinion that he would not be able to walk to the gallows. A fever had been induced by the inflammation which generally results from hunger, acting on what we call the *primæ viæ*; and now, when the moral pyrexia had so far weakened his brain, that

the materiel of suffering almost seemed to be exhausted, he was attacked on the side of the flesh with pains and paroxysms of agony, not much less acute than those he had suffered, and was still, to a great extent, undergoing, from his mental and incurable causes of misery. I had a duty to perform, and I did perform it, by applying to this man, who was already "betrothed to death," those remedies that might enable him to walk into the arms of his grim bridegroom; yet, I do not blush to own and acknowledge, that I secretly sighed that God would overcome my efforts, and, by taking the poor victim to himself, save him from the death which awaited him at the gallows foot. Yet, how vain are the aspirations of mortals, in those emergencies claimed by Heaven as its own vindicated periods and purposes of divine wrath! The food he rejected, when he was *able* to reject it, was supplied in the form of broths, when he was no longer sensible of the reception of that which was to sustain him for the bearing of the agony he dreaded, of all others—a violent death before an assembled multitude. He was saved from one death for the purpose of suffering another, and that in very spite of himself, through the instrumentality of the most pitiable state of man, the want of consciousness. When he came to be informed of the manner in which his life had been protracted and saved for the purpose of being forcibly dragged from him by the relentless arm of public justice, he raved like a madman, expending the remnant of strength that had been saved to him, in imprecations against me, in unavailing screams and clanking of the chain that still clung to his emaciated limbs.

On the day of his execution, he was as feeble as a child; but the gallows does not admit the plea of illness as an excuse for non-attendance. Emaciated and exhausted, he swooned in the hands of the officers, as they knocked from his limbs the chains that might as well have been applied to the infant that has not yet essayed its first attempt to walk; and, if the necessary time had been allowed for recovering him entirely from these repeated fits, the period comprehended in his sentence might have expired, and he would have been beyond the reach of the law. The executors of justice, themselves the very slaves of form, repudiated all ceremony, and the unfortunate being was carried to the cart, to be roused, by its horrid wheels, from a swoon to the awful consciousness of being in the act of being hurled to the scaffold, which he had not strength to mount, and yet could not escape. The scene that now presented itself was such that many individuals, whose morbid appetite for horror was insatiable, flew from the place of execution, unable to stand and witness the spectacle of a human being falling from one swoon into another, incapable of keeping his feet, and lifted *softly*, as by the hands of nurses, to receive around his neck the cord that was to strangle him by his own weight. Yet I was forced to witness this sight; for, by a strange contradiction of duties, I was called upon to attend the *patient*, and, by the use of stimulants, to render him susceptible of the pangs of death. Yet what was my art, what my medicaments, to those of the executioner of the last act of the law, whose quick and sudden jerk ended in a moment life, disease, terror, and all the ills coiled up in the mortal frame of miserable man!

The circumstances attending the execution of Walter T—, (though not the condemnation, which was reckoned just,) were such as to rouse considerably the public attention; and the prints of that day were filled with disquisitions as to the expediency of wounding the feelings of a nation, by executing a man in a situation of mind and body calculated to excite pity and commiseration, and to exclude the feeling of satisfaction which ought to follow the punishment of the most heinous of all crimes. Yet all this was plainly absurd; for, if punishments were to wait the bodily condition of malefactors, the art of man would soon cheat the gallows of its dues, and retribution would be the stalking-horse of

deceit. The unusual sufferings of this individual were commemorated in a manner very different from the ephemeral columns of daily prints; for Dr —, to whom his body, conform to the sentence, was delivered for dissection, anatomized it; and, two years after, I purchased from him, for the price of fifteen guineas, the entire skeleton, to supply a want in my museum, and facilitate the osteological studies of my apprentices. During the twenty years that passed after the period of his execution, I seldom cast my eyes upon that dry crackling memorial of the unhappy man, as it hung in grim majesty and stoical defiance of the changes of time, and of those exacerbations of passion which, in its animated condition, penetrated its very marrow, without a cold shivering remembrance of his sufferings. On the patella or knee-pan of the left limb, there was written, by Dr —, who constructed the skeleton, the words, "Walter T—, a murderer, executed at —, the — day of —." I wrote, on the patella of the other limb—"For the extraordinary circumstances attending his execution, see the — newspaper, published on the same day;" and I retained a copy of the print in my museum, to gratify the curiosity of those who might be interested in the fate of the being whose bones, as they crackled to the touch, sung that peculiar and heart-striking *memento mori*, which few people, not professionally interested in the sight, can hear and forget. The indescribable interest produced by a skeleton is well known, among anatomists, to produce in young students a peculiar facility in acquiring a knowledge of the immense number of bones, many of them bearing long Greek names, which go to make up the aggregate of the human system; but the fate of Walter T—, which I always communicated to my apprentices, adding the part I myself acted in the dark drama, imparted a peculiar interest to the grim spectacle, which no memory, however treacherous, could, even with the assistance of years, disregard or renounce.

For a period of fifteen years after the execution of that unfortunate man, my avocations did not lead me into any correspondence of a professional character with the individuals who resided at the house of Mr T—, the murdered man; but I understood generally, though I could not now tell how I got the intelligence, that William B—, his nephew, having succeeded to the deceased's effects, occupied his house, had got married, and had a large family of children. About the month of December, in the year —, I was, however, called again to the same house in the fir planting, into which I had not been since that night on which I witnessed the death-struggles of its former proprietor. The emergency which now took me there, was the illness of William B—, who had been seized with that disease called *tic doloureux*, perhaps the most excruciating of all the ailments incident to the human frame. We are entirely ignorant of its causes, whether procatartic or proximate—all we can say of it being, that it is an affection of the nerves of the face, and particularly of that branch of the fifth pair, which comes out at an aperture below the orbit; and that it is attended with such pain—coming on in an instant, generally without premonitory warning—that the devoted victim of its cruelty is often thrown on his back on the floor, where he lies, during the existence of the attack, in a state even beyond what can be figured of the wildest exacerbation of fevered frenzy. I have seen a strong man, who could have stood unappalled before a cannon mouth in the field of battle, running about like a madman, as he felt some internal monitor (a peculiarity in his case) telling him that an attack was coming on—holding out his hands, crying wildly for help, or as if he had been flying from the clutches of a hundred demons, and, in a moment after, laid on his back, in the full grasp of the relentless tormentor, uttering the most heart-rending screams, and requiring the power of several people to hold him down. Under an attack of this frightful complaint, I

found William B——, who, being under the greatest pain of the paroxysm, was scarcely conscious of my presence. He was extended on his back on a sofa; his fingers were (according to the practice of these victims) pressed on that part of the face where the pain shoots from; sharp cries, keeping pace with the intermitting pangs, were wrung reluctantly from him, filled the house, and might have been heard beyond it; his limbs were restless, striking the foot and sides of the couch, and sometimes dashing them as if he would have broken and destroyed all resisting objects; and his eye glanced fiercely around, as if he disdained the supplication of mortal aid in so hopeless a cause. I knew the nature of the disease too well to hope to be able to do him, at that time, any service; the patient himself, by the pressure he was applying to the seat of the pain, was doing all that could be done to ameliorate his sufferings; and, having told his wife that I could be of greater use to him at a time when the pain was off him, I left him, with the intention of calling again, to suggest the application of the only remedy yet known for this complaint.

In a few days, accordingly, I called again, and found the patient recovered from a new attack which had come on during the previous night. He was greatly exhausted, looked pale and anxious, and dreaded intensely another paroxysm, which he said he could not be able to bear. He endeavoured to describe to me his feelings, when the disease arrived at its greatest height, and correctly distinguished between those neuralgic pains, and the fiercest of those that attack the viscera and muscles; bringing out, in his unprofessional language, what I have witnessed, that there is often a power felt by the sufferer of resisting, by some indescribable internal process, the latter kind of pain, while, in the former, (and the *tic dolooureux* is the worst species,) the victim is conscious of no power within himself of even bearing—all his energies, thoughts, and stoical resolutions being put to flight and routed by the fierce, lancinating, burning pangs; and even despair, the ordinary refuge of the miserable, seems to deny the tortured spirit the grim relief of its dark haven. As the patient proceeded in his description, he occasionally drew deep sighs, looked despairingly, and shuddered—all symptoms of a terror of the complaint from which he had suffered so much, and might still suffer; and, after a pause, he asked me, with a timid look, if the disease was known to medical men, or if I thought it *peculiar to him*. I replied that the complaint was well known, and very far from being uncommon; but that, unfortunately, we had not very many remedies to which we could resort or trust for a cure. He looked as if he did not believe me, or doubted my statement, and then asked what the best remedy was. I answered that it was an operation, whereby we divided a part of the facial nerve; and recommended to him the trial of that experiment, for as yet we could not pronounce certainty of its efficacy. He did not, however, seem to be inclined to go into my views; and I asked him if he feared the pain of the operation, and yet dared to face that of his disease, which was a thousand times greater. He replied that he cared nothing for the pain of the operation; but yet he felt that he *could not* undergo it. I looked at him with surprise, and requested an explanation; but he answered me by the question—“Are we not sometimes bound to bear pain?” And, as he uttered these words, he seemed to feel great distress. I replied that I thought we were bound rather to get quit of pain by every means in our power, and that all mankind acted on that principle—a circumstance to which my profession owed its existence and success.

“But if this extraordinary, this *miraculous* pain is not sent for some purpose,” he exclaimed, “why is it that, the moment I think of removing it, an attack comes upon me? The last time you were sent for, I was seized, after my wife dispatched to you the message; and now,” holding up his hand to heaven, “behold it comes again, the very instant I begin

to talk of a remedy! Yet I must suffer—it is ordained that I must suffer—it is right and just that I should suffer. Welcome, ye dreadful messenger whom I fear and tremble at, yet love! He comes, he comes!”

The unhappy man spoke truth: an attack of his disease came on him at that moment, and he fell back on the couch, screaming, and pressing, with all his force, his hand against the seat from which the pains lancinated through the bones and muscles of his face. His cries brought his wife to his assistance; but it is one of the characteristics of this disease, that assistants and comforters can only look on and weep, so utterly does it defy and mock all human efforts to assuage the pain it produces. I left him in the charge of his wife, to whom I gave some directions, rather to revive her hope and remove from her countenance a painful anxiety that clouded it, than with any hope of affording relief. As I proceeded through the planting in which the house was situated, I heard his cries for some distance; and, while I pitied the victim, called up into my mind his sentiments, which struck me as being peculiar and mysterious. His conviction of some connection between an attack of his complaint and his attempt to get it removed, was clearly a fancy; yet the existence of such an idea indicated something wrong either in his mind or conscience—even with the admission that a pain so extraordinary might itself suggest, to a sombre-minded man, some thoughts of Divine retribution, where there was no crime to be expiated of a deeper die than the most of mankind are in the habit of committing.

Whatever might be the ground of the delusion under which the patient laboured, it was necessary, at all events, to remove the idea that an effort to cure the disease had any supposed mysterious connection with an attack; the best way of accomplishing which was, to hold forth, by calling and applying remedial processes, the handle of an occasion to the unseen power to make the attack, which, if not taken advantage of, (and who could suppose it would?) might expose the absurdity of his fevered suspicion or conviction. I accordingly called again next day, and observed, as I entered, that the patient's eye scanned me with a look as eloquent as words, that I had brought with me another attack of his dreadful complaint. I ascertained that he had not had an attack since the one I witnessed, and then told him, that, as he would not consent to allow the nerve to be severed, I had brought a lotion which might prove efficacious, if applied to the diseased parts in the manner I explained to him. I held out to him the bottle, but he looked at it with fear, and said, he *could not*, he *dared not* take it—accompanying these words, spoken energetically, with timid looks to Heaven, and deep sighs; then, starting up suddenly, he exclaimed—

“This disease, terrible as it is, must take its course. It never was designed for ordinary mortals, and I cannot believe that you or any medical man ever witnessed in another these excruciating tortures. There is nothing human about this visitation. Like the forked lightning, it leaves no trace of its progress. There is no wound, no inflammation, no fever, not a spot in the skin, to tell that, under it, and, as it were, touching it, there exists agonies, in comparison of which the pain of red-hot irons applied to the skinless flesh (under which nature would claim the relief of sinking) is as nothing; for I cannot faint—I cannot get refuge in insensibility—I cannot die. Speak no more of remedies against Heaven's visitations; but let me suffer, that, by suffering, I may expiate. I shall immediately have another visit from my ferrible messenger. Oh, who shall help him that is accursed of Heaven!”

He turned his body from me, to hide from me his face, and I could perceive that he shook as if from a spasm of the heart. I replied that he talked like one under the dark veil of religious melancholy, or rather like one who had something on his conscience different from the ordinary burden of

human frailty, making him attribute to retribution what was only a disease incident to mankind; that Heaven was not against the cure of any mortal; and that he would, for certainty, have no attack that day, nor, perhaps, for several days, especially if he used the lotion I recommended to him. He heard me in silence, shaking, at intervals, his head, solemnly and incredulously, turning his eyes to heaven, and clasping his hands as if in mental adjuration. Starting up, as if stung by an adder, he exclaimed—

"It will not do—it will not do. I have more faith in the language of this monitor"—striking his bosom—"than in that of frail man. I will have another attack instantly. Leave me, leave me! Why will you force me thus to brave heaven, between whose dread powers and me there is a secret compact recorded here—here?"—again striking his bosom. "This terrible disease I fear and tremble at; but it is *not* hell, and, by bearing the one, I may avoid the other. So do I claim these pangs, sharper than scorpions' tongues, as my right, my due, my redemption. God! what a price do I pay for relief from eternal fire!"

He sat down as he concluded these mysterious words, in an attitude of expectation of the coming paroxysm, and I conceived that my best reply to his wild and incoherent ideas would be, the refuting fact of the absence of any attack at that time. I, therefore, left him; and, as I passed along the passage to the door, I was met by his anxious wife, who inquired of me, with tears in her eyes, if I knew what this dreadful malady was, which, leaving no trace of its presence, yet produced such a pain as she never thought mortal was doomed to suffer; and, above all, she was solicitous to know if I had got any insight into her husband's mind, which was loaded with some awful burden in some degree connected with this calamity; for, since ever the first attack, she had got no rest at night, and no peace during day—his haunted vigils, his sleep-walking, his dreaming, his agonies, and prayers, being unremitting and heart-rending, as well to him as to her. She wept bitterly as she concluded this account of her sufferings; but I could give her little satisfaction beyond assuring her that the disease had nothing supernatural about it, as her husband thought, and giving it as my opinion that the unusual character of the complaint might, in a serious, contemplative-minded man, have given rise to the delusion that it came direct from heaven as a punishment of errors incident to fallen humanity. I informed her, also, of my expectation of removing this delusion, partly by impressing him with the disappointment he would likely feel that day in experiencing no attack consequent upon my remedial endeavours; and, in a short time, I might prevail upon him to allow me to perform the operation I had recommended. The poor woman prayed fervently that I might succeed; for, until some change was effected on her husband's mind, she could expect little peace, far less happiness, on earth. As I proceeded homewards, I had great misgivings as to my having exhausted the secret of this man's misery; yet my efforts at fathoming the true mystery of this unusual imputation of a disease to the avenging retribution of an offended God were unavailing, and I left to time to discover what was beyond my power.

As I expected, I found, on my next call, that no attack had followed my last visit. The patient was somewhat easier; yet his mind was apparently still greatly troubled. I impressed him with the vanity of the delusion under which he laboured, and prevailed upon him to consent to the application of the stimulating lotion to the seat of the disease. In yielding this consent, he underwent a great struggle; I noticed him several times in the attitude of silent prayer, and, as I was about to begin the application of the medicine, he recoiled from my grasp, turning up his eyes to heaven, muttering indistinct words, and trembling like one about to undergo a severe punishment. All this had nothing to do with the character of the simple stimulant I was about

to apply, but was clearly the working of his terror at the application of a remedial process of any kind to a heaven-sent disease; and I was latterly obliged to use a degree of force, assisted by the energies of his wife, before I succeeded in my endeavours to get the medicine applied. His fears and tremors, silent prayers and mutterings, continued during the whole time I was occupied in rubbing in the liniment; and, when I had finished, he fell on his knees and prayed silently for several minutes, and then threw himself down exhausted on the couch.

Two days afterwards, I called again, and found that there had still been no new attack of the disease—a fact communicated to me, on my entrance, by Mrs B——, who was auguring from it the happiest results. On the day following, however, he had a most violent onset immediately before I called; and I ascertained that, for two days previous, the liniment had been discontinued, in consequence of a return of the patient's conscientious scruples; so that I could now reverse upon him his own argument, which I did not fail to do, pointing out to him and impressing upon him that, in place of Heaven being offended at his using remedial measures, he had now experienced its displeasure at not adopting those means which Providence points out to man for arresting the progress of disease. I therefore urged him, with all the force of my reasoning and power of persuasion, to consent to undergoing the operation I had proposed, the dividing of the nerve—backing my arguments with the stated conviction that, if he did not consent, he might be a martyr for many years to the most painful of diseases, and be deprived of all comfort in this world. He heard me in vain; for his conscientious scruples had leagued with his former terror, and he rejected my advice; but he did it as one compelled by a secret power, which overawed him by its stern decrees, and scattered his opposing resolutions with the breath of its whisper.

Justice to myself and my profession required that I should not visit again a man who rejected my advice, and whose case seemed fitted rather for the ministrations of a servant of Christ than a disciple of Æsculapius. Several days passed without my hearing anything of the condition of the unhappy patient; but I had no hopes of his having got quit of his neuralgia, which too often adheres to its victim like a double-tongued adder. One evening I was in my study, reading an old copy of Celsus, over a fire nearly exhausted, and by the light of a candle whose long black wick indicated the attention I was devoting to the old physician. The night was dark and windy, and I was assured that, if no emergency demanded my presence out of doors, (which I fervently wished,) I stood little risk of being disturbed by any *walking* patients, generally deemed by us the most troublesome of all our employers. At my side hung my skeletons; and, among the rest, that of Walter T——; while around were other monuments of the frailty and the agonies of human life, all too familiar to me to take off my attention from the old chronicler of diseases, their causes, symptoms, and cures. My bell rang with great violence, and I started up from the study into which I had fallen. In an instant, my door was flung open, and William B—— stood before me, the picture of a man who had broken out of bedlam: his eyes flashed the fire of an excruciating agony; his right hand was pressed convulsively on his cheek; his left made wild signs, intended to supply the want of words which his tongue could not utter; and every symptom indicated that he was under the full grasp of his implacable enemy. Recovering his breath, he cried out—

"Longer I cannot bear this. The extent of human powers of suffering may be overrated by superior avengers. I must brave Heaven, or die under its dreadful exaction of the last pang of an overstrained retribution; yet death comes not to my prayer, and I am stung to rebellion. Will

you, sir, use your operating knife against the wrath of Heaven? I am resolved. Though conscience cannot be amputated, this hell-scorched nerve may be severed. Come next what will, this must be ended. Now, sir—now, sir, I am at last prepared."

This frenzied burst, wrung by torture from a mind labouring under some terrible burden, startled and alarmed me; and it was some moments before I could perceive the meaning which was veiled under his strange words and manner. He had been seized with an attack of his complaint, and, unable to bear its agony, had run out of the house to seek some relief at my hands. I requested him to be seated; and, though I had to struggle with the disadvantage of candle light, and the want of one of my assistants, I resolved upon performing the operation before the agony had abated. I rung for my oldest apprentice, and made preparations for the work, which, though simple, requires skill and care. The patient was seated on a chair, formed for receiving the back of the head on a soft cushion, and used by me for operations on the upper extremities. Everything was ready; my apprentice came in, and, as he passed quickly forward, struck his head against the skeleton of Walter T—, that hung at the side, and a little to the back of the operating chair on which the patient was seated. The *peritricrepus* of dry bones crackled as the body swung from side to side, and attracted the attention of the man, whose eye, tortured as he was, sought fearfully the cause of the strange noise. His attention was in an instant riveted on the figure, and I perceived that his look was directed to the words (written in large letters) on the knee pan. The knife was in my hand, and my apprentice was about to lay hold of his head. The attitude of the man arrested my eye, and I witnessed, what I have often heard of, but never saw before, that extraordinary erection of the hair of the head, produced by extreme fear, and known by the name of horripilation. I thought he was afraid of the knife—but I was soon undeceived. With a loud yell he started up suddenly and violently—his hair seemed to move with horror—his body was in the attitude of flying from the figure, yet his limbs obeyed not his fear; and he stood riveted to the spot, with his eyes chained on the skeleton, his lips wide open, and his hands extended. He remained in this position for several seconds, while my apprentice and I gazed in wonder and silence on the horror-stricken victim.

"I said I would brave Heaven," he exclaimed, in wild accents, "by curing a heaven-sent disease; but is Heaven to be braved by man? How came that figure there—my cousin Walter T—, who—who died for me? Is he not heaven-sent, also? See, he moves and nods his grim head at me, and says, 'You shall not escape the vengeance of the Almighty. The nerve shall not be cut, and your agonies must continue to the last moment of your existence.' And who has a better right to speak these flaming words, than he whose cause is vindicated by the powers above—he whose agonies, produced by me—me! wretched, miserable man!—were ended by an unjust death on the scaffold, where I should have expiated the crime for which he suffered. Guard me—guard me from that grim spectre! I cannot stand that sight—horror! horror!" And, with a loud crash, he fell on the floor. In the midst of the confusion produced in my mind by what I had seen and heard, the glare of a revealed mystery flashed upon me; and I shuddered even to think of what might turn out to be true. Could it be possible that that wretched man whose bones hung before me—whose sufferings at his trial, in the jail, on the scaffold, were unprecedented, and such as no man ever endured—was innocent of the crime for which he was hanged? Even the suspicion was too painful to me; and I recoiled from the skeleton, as my eye, led by my thoughts, rested on the grim memorial. The agitation into which I was thrown rendered me incapable of thought.

"Get him home! get him home!" I cried to my apprentice, and sought, in the retirement of another room, some refuge from these sights, and an opportunity of calmly contemplating all the bearings of this apparent dreadful discovery.

My apprentice, with difficulty, got the unhappy man into my coach, and took him home. Next day, I was called, early in the forenoon, by an express from his wife. I found him in bed, in the very room where Mr T— was murdered. An attack of his disease was upon him, and his conscience had roused him to a degree bordering on madness. Vain, indeed, would be my effort to describe what I now saw and heard; the powers of the physical and moral demons that externally and internally, at the same moment, wrung his nerves and fired his brain, seemed to vie with each other in the degree of torture to which they were capable of elevating his sufferings. His broken exclamations shewed that he was more and more convinced that the pain he endured was a part of the punishment of the crime that lay on his conscience; and, being only a foretaste of that he was doomed to suffer in another world, his imagination was haunted by the shadows of coming ills, a thousand times more terrible than were those he was struggling with, dreadful as those were. Screams, prayers, and ejaculations, succeeded each other unremittingly; and, as Despair threw over him her dark mantle he raised himself in the bed, and grasping the bedclothes, wrung them between his hands, and twisted them in intricate torsels round his arms, beating his head against the posts, and gnashing his teeth with the fury of a maniac. I waited until the paroxysm should pass over, in order to get from him the dreadful truth. His wife looked on him with eyes where no tear softened the fiery glance of horror and despair, and I conjectured, from her changed appearance, that she had heard some part of his confession. All at once he became calm, and I perceived he fixed his look upon me. I returned steadily his glance. Holding out his arms, he said, with an effort to resist an impulse to fury—

It must out—it must out. Heaven knows it, and what avails it that it is concealed from earth? Wife, wife! once the beloved of my soul, know ye that, for ten years, you have nightly taken to your soft confiding bosom a murderer—ay, the murderer, first of an uncle, and then of a cousin? Turn from me your eyes, and I will confess all—for now my relief is in confession; and that will not be satisfied till I throw myself at the back of the prison door, and cry through the gratings to let me in for mercy's sake. I lived with my uncle, but I was not his heir; and the death that seemed long a-coming, could, at any rate, only benefit my cousin, Walter T—, whose apparition I saw yesterday, and see now—dreadful sight! My bad habits generated a morbid desire for money, which I could not want. I stole my uncle's watch, and heard him blame my cousin. My fancy took the hint, and I formed, with a care worthy of a better cause, a deep scheme, whereby I might, by one spring, jump into the possession and enjoyment of wealth. I waited the first fall of snow, and, with my cousin's stolen shoes, walked from that window to his house, where I deposited the originals of the foot-prints, together with a pistol and the stolen watch, by introducing them through a small skylight on the top of his house. I then returned to my uncle's house by another path, entered his bedroom, where he was sleeping at the fire, pretended that some one was at the window, drew it up so that the servants might hear it, turned round, shot (with another pistol) my uncle through the chest, and cried out at the window to stop the murderer. An alarm was raised; some one ran for my cousin, who was found in his own house; while I hastened for you, who became a tool in my hands. Why need I proceed? What follows is known. What preceded my crime, I have no patience to tell: how I seduced my cousin, in moments of intoxication, to engage in conversations afterwards proved against him; how I got my uncle to blame him for stealing

the watch, in presence of the nousekeeper; and many other ingenious treacherous schemes. By getting my cousin convicted, I removed out of the way the only impediment between me and my uncle's property. He was hanged, and I took his place as my uncle's heir. Thus was I guilty of a double murder. How, O God! have I been brought to tell what I have for fifteen years shuddered to think of? But it has been wrung from me by a heaven-sent calamity, which has, for these few moments, intermitted, by Heaven's decree, to allow me breath and power to make this confession; and now, being done, my pain comes again, and these crackling bones of Walter T— rattle in my ears and dance before my eyes. Whither shall I fly for refuge? Heaven, earth, and hell, are against me—my own flesh wars with my soul, and my soul with my flesh—unutterable horror! And he again twisted the clothes round his arms, and wrestled with the opposing energies of his own muscles. On the other side of me was a scene not less terrible. His wife, struck to the heart by the horrible confession, had fallen on the floor in a swoon. Shall I confess it? The instant I saw in her signs of recovery, I hurried out of the house. What I heard and saw; what I cogitated of the part I took in the death of that poor innocent man, Walter T—; what my fancy conjured up of his agonies, contrasted with his innocence, and the injustice that was done to him, by the misdirected laws of his country—was too much for me, and I flew for relief to the duties of my profession.

I afterwards requested my assistant to attend the unhappy patient in my place. He reported to me that, when he called next day, William B— was in a condition if possible worse than that in which I had witnessed him. He had contracted an irresistible desire to throw himself into the hands of justice; and, in order to get his wish effected, had leaped from the window in his shirt, and had got a considerable way through the planting, on his way to the house of the procurator-fiscal. He was overtaken and seized; but he fought long with the people who had caught him—making the wood ring with his screams, and crying that, as the murderer of his uncle and cousin, it was necessary, ordained by heaven, and conform to justice, that he should be hanged.

My assistant had been able to yield him no relief; and I was called upon by Mrs B—, who entreated me, with tears in her eyes, to try and devise some means of putting an end to the terrible state of suffering in which she was placed. She attempted to make me believe that her husband was deranged in his mind, and had merely *conceived* the circumstances of the confession he had made in my presence. I did not endeavour to undeceive the poor woman; but the conclusion I had come to, was almost exclusive of any doubt of the truth of what had been wrung from the patient; and I contented myself with stating that, if there was any delirium about him, it might be relieved by the cessation of the painful disease which, in all likelihood, produced it. She then inquired if it were not possible, by any means, however violent, to attempt a cure of the disease, in spite of the opposing efforts of her husband; and I replied, that the remedy formerly proposed might be resorted to if the patient were bound down, or held by the energies of strong men, while the operation was in the act of being performed; but that such a step could only be justified by derangement or madness, and the uncertain nature of the remedy was, besides, a strong reason against its being so applied. Glad to grasp at any hope of reducing the amount of her misery, she was not inclined to hesitate, for an instant, about the propriety or possibility of the scheme of relief I had hinted at, and said she would have individuals present in the house to apply the necessary restraining force at any time I chose to fix for carrying the purpose into execution. For the sake of the poor woman and her distressed family,

I felt disposed to make one other attempt at ameliorating a grief which, however, I feared, had its cause much beyond the reach of a surgeon's knife, and fixed an hour next day for attending at the house, with a view to ascertain if any consent could be wrung from the unhappy man to allow something to be done at least for his body.

I accordingly kept my appointment; but found that matters had, in the meantime, assumed a different and more serious aspect. The patient was now bound down by strong ropes, and two stout men sat beside him, ready to resist his efforts to escape, or to commit any act of violence. He had that morning jumped from his bedroom window, and flown, in a state approaching to nakedness, to the prison, situated about two miles distant, at the door of which he knelt down, and beseeched the jailor, in tones of piteous supplication, to receive him into what he called his *sanctuary*. The jailor, seeing a naked man supplicating to get *in* to a place so generally feared and shunned, concluded he was mad, and paid little attention to his asseverations—made, as he said, before God, that he was guilty of murder, and wished to be hanged, with a view to an expiation of his crime. Having got his name, the jailor sent to his wife, and, assistance having been brought, he was carried home, crying bitterly all the way that no one would take vengeance on him, and ease the burning pangs of his mind, by punishing him according to the extent of his crime.

The moment I entered, I saw, by the peculiar light and motion of his eye, that he was on the point of madness, which would likely exhibit itself in the form of a brain fever. He looked wildly at me, and, rugging at the ropes, attempted to release himself.

"Men are leagued against God," he cried, in a frantic manner. "The disease that came from Heaven, as a punishment for the murder of my uncle and cousin, you are come again to try to cure; and these cutting ropes are also tied by the hands of impious men, to prevent me from offering up this racked body as a sacrifice for my dreadful crime. When will this end? When will earth and its worms cease to be arrayed against Heaven and its angels? Why are not these cords bound round my neck? Hold off till I unloose as much as will serve the purpose of a necessary sacrifice. Two deaths are required from him who has only one life; and man comes between Heaven and Heaven's victim. But it must cease. War never lasted or succeeded that was waged against the Author of nature. I must die, even if I should rack and burst the muscles that bind up this conscience-stricken heart. Away, and leave me to my retribution! Cords" (tugging at them) "are too weak for conscience. Ha! ha! when was conscience bound by twisted hemp? See, see how they crack, when Heaven's infliction nerves the rebellious arm that was lifted against his uncle's life! Vain, vain man, to fight with God!"

The supernatural strength of an access of brain fever enabled him to burst the cords; and the attendants were obliged to apply their hands to keep him down, until they could again bind the ropes. Phrenitis, with all its horrors, had commenced. The history of a brain fever is the history of man when he has ceased, from the very extremity of his agony, to interest feelings, which seek in vain for traces of humanity in the raving maniac; and why should I try to describe what never has been, and never will be described with any approach to the terrible truth? Heaven was at last merciful, and closed his sufferings with the seal of death.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MEETING AT ST BOSWELL'S.

It is now some years since I happened to visit the pretty little village of St Boswell's, in Roxburghshire, in company with a friend who had some stock to dispose of at the great annual fair then holding there. Most of my readers are aware that the Duke of Buccleugh is lord of the manor of St Boswell's, and that a dinner is always provided, at his Grace's expense, in a barn on the fair ground, for all gentlemen who have tickets of admission from the baron bailie. While my friend was busied with the disposal of his stock, I, being an idler, wandered up and down the green, and was much pleased with the appearance of the fair, which was more English, if I may be allowed to use the term, than anything of the kind I had ever witnessed in Scotland. The numbers, neat arrangement, and really handsome appearance of the "street" of booths—the gay and well-dressed parties of gentlefolks—the cheerful, joyous faces of the lower orders—the handsome equipages—the green at a distance, swarming with cattle of various kinds—with a bright and genial sun shining over all, formed altogether a pleasing and animated scene. Pleased as I was, however, I caught myself several times involuntarily yawning, and turning my eyes towards the barn; and I was not at all sorry when the welcome sound of the drum announced that "the roast beef" was ready. I was soon seated beside my friend, who, like myself, was most ready and anxious to do justice to the Duke's liberal provision. I have a great talent for eating, but none for description, so I will not attempt to enumerate or describe the variety of good things which disappeared before us; suffice it, we were all much more contented with ourselves and each other when all was over, than before our operations commenced. Commend me to a man who has just made a good dinner—if he be not a philanthropist then, he never will be. Happening to glance my eye towards the other end of the table, I observed that I was the object of close and intense attention to one of the company—a stranger of prepossessing aspect, who was seated at some distance at the opposite side. He gazed at me with an earnestness almost amounting to rudeness; and whenever I glanced in that direction, I perceived that his eye was constantly riveted upon my countenance. At first, I was considerably annoyed by the persevering scrutiny of his gaze; but, after a time, I was conscious of a vague impression on my mind that I had seen his face before; but when or where, I in vain endeavoured to recall. I was in the unpleasant situation of one who hears a long-forgotten melody, which stirs up within his mind overpowering and indefinable emotions, though, at the moment, the associations connected with it are forgotten. A confused train of visions of the past—of pleasure and of pain—crowded through my brain, with a dreamy consciousness that the stranger was, in some way or another, connected with them. I could not, for the life of me, shake off the impression his features had made upon my mind; and I wandered up and down through all the bustle of the fair, as abstracted as if I were in a desert—treading upon the toes of the present, and raking up the ashes of the past, to puzzle out some connection between them and the stranger; but in vain. The indignant looks and half-suppressed curses of those

I jostled or trode upon, alike failed in rousing me from my reverie, till a violent push from the elbow of one of my victims sent me staggering against a gentleman who was standing close to one of the booths. It was the stranger.

How wonderful and unaccountable are the workings of the human mind, and what trifling incidents may present us with a clue to the labyrinth of thought we have been in vain endeavouring to unravel!

In making my apologies to the stranger, my eye chanced to glance upwards to the *sign* above the entrance to the booth; it was "The Old Ship." A flash of sudden recollection lighted up the dark places of my memory—the friend of my early days stood before me.

"Sandford!—in the name of all that's strange, is that you?"

"My name is Sandford Grant," said he, "and I know and feel that you are an old friend. I have been thinking of nothing else since I saw you in the barn; but my memory plays me false—I cannot recollect when or where we have met before."

"Look up at that board—perhaps it will assist your recollection, as it did mine."

"The Old Ship!" exclaimed he, with a look of wonder and inquiry. "The Old Ship!" he repeated, slowly and distinctly, and then he gazed long and earnestly in my face, till at length the look of indecision and doubt gave place to a sudden glow of delighted recognition. "Douglas!" exclaimed he, with a long and cordial shake of the hand.

"The same, my dear fellow. It is ten long years since we met, and Time has left his marks upon us both; no wonder we did not recognise each other at first; particularly as it was in such a very different scene we last met, or rather parted."

We spent the evening together, as two long separated friends should do, in talking over the events of our early years, and relating our mutual adventures since we parted. As I did not know Sandford myself at first, it is hardly to be expected that the reader can know either of us without a formal introduction; which is the more necessary as we are both to figure in the tale I am about to relate.

Those of my readers who have passed through Longtown in Cumberland, may have remarked, on the left hand side of the main street, as they entered the town from the bridge, a neat red brick-house with an iron-railed enclosure in front, and a large gateway to the right, leading into the court-yard. In that house, Sandford Grant and I first became acquainted with each other; it was then an academy. The house still remains, but master and pupils are "scattered to the four winds of heaven." For three years we were classfellows and friends; for we were just of the same age, and a Scottish feeling of clannish regard made us cling to each other more perhaps than we otherwise would have done. He was a handsome, spirited boy, or rather child, and was always ready, at a word, to fight my battles as well as his own. He was a great favourite on account of his frank, liberal disposition; but the most unlucky little dog that ever lived. If ever there was any mischief going on, he was sure to be concerned in it, and as sure of being discovered and punished if there was only one puddle in the

road on a Sunday, he, somehow or other, contrived to go out of his way to tumble into it, dirty his white stockings, and be recommended by the mistress to her husband's tender mercies. In fact, he was constantly getting into scrapes; so much so that "Sandford's luck" became quite a proverb among us.

It was with sad hearts and tears on both sides that we parted, when circumstances obliged me to accompany my family to the South. We were then about eleven years of age; and having lately read the tale of Damon and Pythias, we felt assured that we would willingly follow their example, and were ready, if necessary, to immolate ourselves on the altar of friendship. Fortunately for us, there was no such necessity. The spring of tears in youth lies too near the surface—it is soon exhausted. We solaced our sorrows for the present, by promising that, as we could no longer see each other, we would exchange long letters, at least once a-week. At first our correspondence added considerably to his Majesty's revenue; but our epistolary ardour soon cooled, till, at no very long interval, our correspondence fell into a gradual decline, and at last died away altogether. But the fates had decreed that Sandford and I were not to part so easily. We met, some years afterwards, at the Military College at Addiscombe, where we added to the number of the East India Company's *hard bargains*. There we were inseparable; for, with all the warmth of early recollections around us, our renewed acquaintance soon ripened into sincere and devoted friendship.

After the usual term of probation at Addiscombe, Sandford obtained an appointment in the engineers, and I a cadetship of infantry, and we sailed from England together. On our arrival at Calcutta, we separated; he remaining at the presidency, and I being ordered up the country, to join my regiment at Cawnpore.

I pass over the details of my life in India; suffice it that, after ten years roasting under an eastern sun, I was pretty well done at last, and my liver began to give me sundry gentle hints that it was time for me to be moving, unless I wished to remain altogether where I was; accordingly, I applied for and obtained furlough to visit Europe for the benefit of my health. Though Sandford and I had been so long separated, we had always kept up a regular intercourse by letter, and we had arranged that, if practicable, we would take our furlough together; and, accordingly, we managed matters so that we took our passage in the same ship for England. Fortune had favoured us both in promotion; we had each attained the rank of captain in our respective corps. In congratulating Sandford on his good fortune, I remarked, in allusion to our school-days, that it was better than "Sandford's luck."

"You would not say so, my dear fellow," said he, "if you knew all. I am as unlucky a dog as ever; and you may have reason yet, before we part, to wish we had not met again."

"Nonsense," said I; "let us enjoy the present, at all events, whatever the future may have in store for us. Come, order your palanquin, and let us be off; the boat was to be waiting for us at the Champaul Ghaut at ten o'clock, and it only wants a few minutes of the hour."

Our ship, the *Dolphin*, was a beautiful little chartered free-trader, of about 600 tons, remarkably fast for a merchantman—a regular clipper, as her captain called her—and manned by an active and effective crew. She mounted twelve small carronades on her upper deck, and a neat brass swivel, which traversed on the head of the capstan. On the 28th August 18—, we sailed from Sangor with several other merchantmen, under convoy of H.M.S. *Albatross*. Our voyage was very tedious, unmarked by any variety except that of wind and weather; and our captain, who was a smart, active little man, an excellent disciplinarian, and much beloved by his crew was dreadfully annoyed by the deten-

tion occasioned by the dull sailers of the fleet. At last, he resolved, if possible, to make his escape, and make the best of his way home. After we left *St Helena*, an opportunity, unfortunately for us, soon presented itself. One squally evening, the frigate made a signal for the convoy to carry easy sail, and to watch the Commodore's motions during the night. Soon after dark, the wind freshened up to a strong breeze, with passing squalls and heavy rain at times. With her topgallantsails set over single-reefed topsails, the little *Dolphin* bounded over the waves in such style as to do credit to the name she bore; and, by keeping a little off the course she had before been steering, and carrying a press of sail through the night, made such good use of her *fins* that at daybreak not a ship of the fleet was to be seen. We were all at first delighted with our freedom, and with the prospect of reaching our destination so much sooner than we otherwise would have done; but, upon after reflection, we began to doubt the prudence of trusting to our own legs and arms, when we would have been so much safer under the wing of the *Albatross*. Captain Driver himself, however, was in high glee; he said he knew that few even of the crack privateers were matches for his little *Dolphin*. However, he neglected no means of adding to and improving the efficiency of his vessel; the men were exercised regularly at the guns, the passengers and servants drilled in the use of the muskets, and every precaution was adopted which skill and experience could suggest, to make our means of defence as available as possible.

In this way our time passed away stirringly and pleasantly enough, till we lost the south-east trade, and then we were tormented for nearly three weeks with calms and burning heat during the day, and heavy unceasing rains during the night. To add to our discomforts, a great mortality had taken place among our live stock, and we were for days floating about among a whole fleet of dead ducks and fowls, with the pleasant prospect before us of salt junk and hard *Curtis** for the rest of the voyage.

"My old luck," said Sandford.

We had, at last, contrived to crawl as far as four degrees north, when, one afternoon, to our great joy, we observed signs of change in the weather. Light grey clouds were beginning to appear to the northward; and we watched, with great interest, those "ships of heaven," slowly and gradually moving upwards. Light *cal's-paws* began to ruffle the waters, and every here and there we saw in the distance shoals of fish, sporting amid the roughness which the light and partial airs produced upon the surface. But we were still lying becalmed; the awnings were all spread, but the heat was oppressive; and the little *Dolphin* was rolling heavily in the long sea, dipping her bright sides deep into the water. A long dark line was now visible on the horizon to the eastward, which gradually spread and neared us:—

"Thank Goodness!—there is a breeze at last," said Captain Driver; and, in half an hour's time, the *Dolphin* was once more dancing along, like a living creature, over the waves. During the night, the wind drew gradually round to the northward; and, before morning, we had a fine steady north-east trade, which carried us as far as twenty-nine degrees north. From this time nothing particular occurred, till we arrived nearly in the parallel of the English Channel—the *Lizard* bearing about north-east-by-east of us, fifteen hundred miles distant. Here, after a succession of south-easterly breezes, we had another taste of "Sandford's luck," in the shape of a calm of two days' duration. On the morning of the third day, we were surprised by seeing, at some six or seven miles' distance to the south-west, a long, low, rakish-looking brig, with her royals furled and courses hauled up, and a pennant flying at the mast head. Immediately on noticing us, she hoisted an English ensign, and fired a gun. Our boatswain, an old man-of-war's-man,

* A famous biscuit baker.

immediately exclaimed that he recognised her as H.M. brig Hawk; and, upon her firing a second gun, the quarter-boat was lowered and manned, and the second mate dispatched in her. Sandford, who was fond of novelty, asked and obtained leave to join the party. Soon after the boat shoved off from the Dolphin, a light breeze from the southward filled the stranger's sails, and she drew a little nearer. We were all anxious for news from England, and watched our boat with great anxiety, as she went alongside of the brig; but what was our surprise to observe that the crew were all called up, and two of the stranger's men were sent into the boat! The brig was, all this time, slowly and gradually approaching us, while we were lying helplessly becalmed, watching the breeze as it rippled over the still, smooth water, about half-way between the vessels. The stranger was now within two miles of us, when the light air which had so long been favouring her, began to roughen the sea close under our stern. A bright flash and a thick cloud of smoke now burst from the stranger's bow, and the loud sharp report of a gun broke, with startling import, on our ears, while, at the same moment, the English ensign was hauled down, and the white flag of France floated proudly in its stead, and a red cornet fluttered at the main.

"Here's a pretty business!" said Captain Driver. "We will give them a run for it, however."

In an instant, all was bustle and activity on board the little Dolphin: every stitch of canvass was spread to catch the coming breeze—two of the guns were *trained* aft, and pointed out of the cabin windows—not a voice was heard on board, but that of the Captain—the men moved actively and noiselessly about, watching their commander's eye, and in prompt obedience to his orders. The little Dolphin herself seemed conscious that danger was near; so silently did she slip through the water, as her lofty sails swelled out with the light but steady breeze. There was such a hush among us on board, after all the sails had been set, that the only sound heard was the hissing noise made by the ship as she cut rapidly through the smooth water, and the small bubbles floated away astern. Presently a tiny wave raised its white crest here and there, and broke with a gentle murmur; there was glad music in the sound—for it was a sign that the breeze was freshening. In the course of an hour, though the water was still smooth, the Dolphin was beginning to *speak* audibly, and the white foam bells danced merrily past her.

In the meantime, the stranger had not been idle. She had at first made use of her sweeps; but, as the breeze freshened, she laid them in. Her lofty spars were crowded with canvass, and she seemed to be rather gaining upon us. We could see that her decks were crowded with men; and every now and then she sent a shot after us.

"Talk away, my boys," said the gallant little captain; "I have no time to return the compliment. If I can only keep clear of you till dark, I will weather you yet." The poor little Dolphin glided away beautifully, and proved that she well merited her good character; for, after some hours' chase, the privateer had gained but little upon us; but still there appeared no chance of our escaping in the long run. About noon, the enemy was within range, and no sooner made the discovery than she began blazing away with her bow-guns, in hopes of disabling us; but Fortune, for once in her life, favoured the weaker party. The privateer's shot riddled our sails; but our spars and hull were as yet unharmed, when a well-aimed shot from one of our stern-chasers, went through her foretopgallantsail, and struck the mast just above the cap. Three cheers burst from our gallant crew, as they saw her small masts first bend, then fall forward together before the foretopsail, dragging with them the mainroyal and skysail masts. The sailing of the two vessels was so nearly equal that we now had a decided advantage over the enemy, which Captain Driver

did all in his power to make the most of. Two of the foremost guns were *trained* aft, and the men were all ordered to lie down on the deck close to the taffarel, to bring the ship more by the stern. There were active hands, however, on board the privateer. In a wonderfully short time, the wreck was cleared away, and new spars had replaced the crippled ones. She came crawling quickly up again; and it was evident to all on board the Dolphin, that, unless some unforeseen accident saved us, a few hours would seal our fate.

It was now late in the evening; the sun had set, and dark, lowering clouds were hanging over the horizon to the westward. The water was still tolerably smooth, and the wind was a little on our starboard quarter; the privateer was coming up rather to leeward, gaining rapidly upon us, and peppering away as fast as she could with her bow-chasers. Some of her shot *told* upon our hull, smashing the cabin bulk-heads, but hurting no one; and, fortunately, our spars were as yet untouched. But she was not so lucky—for we could see, by their getting preventer-backstays upon her foretopmast, that the mast was crippled. Captain Driver perceived that there was no chance of escaping much longer by fast sailing, and he determined to try what stratagem could do for us. He called his men round him, and explained to them what his intentions were; telling them that everything depended upon their energy and activity, and promising them, in the name of his owners, a handsome reward if they succeeded in saving the ship. Immediately after the next shot fired by the privateer, the man at the helm, by Captain Driver's orders, began to yaw the ship about—the stunsails were hauled in—the royal sheets let go—the sails *clued* up, but not furled—the topgallantsails lowered, and the colours hauled down. Every movement must have appeared to the enemy indicative of terror and indecision; and we could distinctly hear the cheers with which they hailed the lowering of our ensign. In the midst of our apparent confusion, the yards of the Dolphin were quietly drawn forward to starboard, and the men and passengers stationed at the topgallant and royal halyards, and royal sheets. The privateer, which some of our men now recognised as the notorious Hercule of Brest, came bowling upon our larboard quarter, taking in and furling all her small sails, and hauling up her courses. When she was so close to us that we might almost have thrown a biscuit on board, the French captain jumped upon the bulwark with his trumpet in his hand, as if to hail us.

"Now, my lad," said Driver to the man at the helm, "remember what I told you. When I call out to you to put the helm hard a-starboard, put it hard a-port."

The privateer Captain was just putting the trumpet to his lips, when Captain Driver bawled out "Put the helm hard a-starboard!"

As he expected, this order was instantly echoed on board the privateer, who thought we intended to try and run aboard of him. As I said before, the wind was a little on our starboard quarter; and the Frenchman, by paying quickly *off*, threw his sails aback; while the little Dolphin, her helm having been put to port instead of starboard, flew *up* to the wind, and, her yards being all ready braced up, darted away like an arrow to windward—this being her favourite sailing point; at the same moment, the topgallant sails were sheeted home and set, and the royals hoisted.

It was some little time before the privateer recovered from the surprise and confusion occasioned by this unexpected manœuvre; and, by the time her yards were trimmed and sails set, the Dolphin had again a good start of her. We now had reason to bless the fortunate shot that had crippled her foretopmast; for she was afraid to carry such a press of sail as she otherwise would have done. However, disabled as she was, she was still a match for us, and kept throwing her shot after us, in token of her friendly feeling.

"Hurra, my little beauty!" said Captain Driver, apostrophizing his ship. "Another hour, and we are safe."

The privateer was gaining upon us slowly but surely, when the night, which, fortunately for us, was dark and gloomy, set in. Captain Driver kept a light burning in the stern cabin, and gave strict orders that every other light in the ship should be put out. He then had a large water-butt sawed in half, and fitted into it a light bamboo staff, to the end of which a lantern was affixed. The tub was well ballasted; and, when all was ready, it was lowered down nearly to the water's edge astern, the lantern lighted, and the lamp in the captain's cabin extinguished. Just as the lanyards were let go, and the tub, with its decoy light, fell into the water, we fired both our stern chasers, to deceive the enemy, and immediately bore up, and stood away, under a press of sail, to the westward. The night was pitch dark; the wind drawing round to the southward and westward, and with every appearance of further change.

Our *ruse* succeeded completely. We were only aware of the privateer's position by the bright flashes of her guns, as she fired them in chase, as she thought; and by the twinkling light of the floating lantern, which was, at last, suddenly extinguished, after a brisk fire from the Frenchman. We ran, for a couple of hours, to the westward; and then, the wind gradually heading us, we kept away again for the Channel, and, before morning, we had a fine staggering westerly breeze to help us along.

At daylight, nothing was to be seen from the mast-head; and we cheerfully pursued our voyage, rejoicing in our fortunate escape. We had now time to think of and to lament the hard fate of our shipmates, who had been so cleverly entrapped.

"Sandford's luck, again," said I. "Poor fellow, how strange it is that such a fatality always seems to attend him!"

"You forget," said Captain Driver, "that the men who are with him are in the same unlucky predicament, and of course are equally unfortunate. But it is curious to observe how some men are favoured and others persecuted by fortune. When I was a youngster, I sailed with a captain (a smart, active, intelligent man he was) who told me that ever since he had commanded a ship, each alternate voyage had always been an unlucky one. 'And this,' said he, 'is my unlucky one.' And sure enough it was so; for, from the commencement to the close of it, it was one constant series of misfortunes. However, I have no doubt our poor lads will be well enough off on board the privateer—the French are fine fellows after all; but I do not envy them the quarters that await them on shore."

The breeze continued steady; and, in about ten days' time, we had run down great part of our distance from the Lizard, which we expected to *make* in two days more. One morning, the man at the mast-head reported a large ship to the southward, and Captain Driver *made her out* to be a man-of-war. We immediately crowded all sail, with the horrors of a French prison before us; but she had already noticed us, and came bowling after us, firing a gun to bring us to, and hoisting English colours. After a long and anxious survey of the stranger, Captain Driver was satisfied that she was an English frigate, and accordingly hoisted his colours and hove to. From the lieutenant who boarded us, we learned that the frigate was H.M.S. ———, bound to Spithead. When we related to him our adventure with the privateer, he told us that it was no wonder we were deceived; for that the *Hercule* was often mistaken for the *Hawk*, and that the real *Hawk* was cruising about the *chops* of the Channel, in hopes of falling in with her. We followed in the wake of the frigate, up Channel, and, on the 1st May, to our great joy, we cast anchor once more on the shores of Old England. I remained two years at home, and then returned to the East, without having heard any news of poor Sandford's fate.

"And now, my dear Sandford," said I, "tell me all your adventures since we parted company so unexpectedly."

"You may imagine our surprise," replied he, "when we found how quietly we poor gulls had thrust our heads into the eagle's nest. The second mate of the *Dolphin* and I had hardly set foot on the deck of the stranger, when we saw at a glance our mistake; and, if we had any doubts on the subject, they were soon set at rest by the captain, who said to us, shrugging his shoulders, with a smile—

'Messieurs, you are my prisonnars; dere is no use for de resiste; call your men out of de boat.'

We saw too plainly that resistance was vain, and we submitted to our hard fate as patiently as we could. The boat's crew were sent down into the hold, and sentries placed over them, and we were disarmed, but allowed the range of the deck and cabin, giving our parole that we would hold no intercourse with our own men or the crew. When we saw the privateer's sails swell with the breeze, and when with her long sweeps she began to crawl along 'like a centipede,' while the little *Dolphin* lay stationary and becalmed, we feared that we should soon have more companions in captivity. Great was our delight when the gallant little vessel glided away like a fairy before us, and we began to have some hopes of your escape, knowing as we did what a character the *Dolphin* had for sailing.

'Well done, my beauty!' shouted the mate.

'Ah, mon ami,' said the Frenchman, 'do not rejoice too queek; before night, your lectel beauté, as you call hare, shall be mine.'

I cannot describe his mortification at the skilful manœuvre by which you baffled him just as he thought he was sure of you, and contrived to steal away again to windward of him; but, after a time, when his angry feeling had passed away, he could not help exclaiming—

'Parbleu! he is one clevere man, that capitane! He most be var weak after lose one boat's crew, and yet how he manage his sheep skeelfully! 'Tis almost peety not let him rone away; bote I mos catch heem—he cannot escape long.' When the night set in so dark and gloomy, he said—'Well, begar, I do begin think that capitane of yours is not so vary clevere man after all. How he most be fool to carry that light!—without that lumiere I should lose sight of heem quite entirely, the night is so, what you call, so tar—no—peetch dark.'

'I suppose,' said I, 'in the confusion he has forgot it.'

'Not a bit of it,' said Gordon, the mate, to me, aside; 'Captain Driver is not such a fool as he thinks. He has some reason for what he is doing, depend upon it.'

After a time, the light, which had kept at a pretty equal distance a-head of us, became apparently stationary, and we came up to it with great rapidity.

'Ah,' said the Frenchman, 'he is tire at last. We have catch heem.'

We all thought that some of our chance shots had taken effect, and that the *Dolphin*, unable to escape, had hove to to surrender. As we came near the light, the small sails were taken in and furled, the courses hauled up, and the boat was cleared away for lowering to board the prize.

'Begar, dis is ver extraordinare!' said the Frenchman to me—'dere is de light, but I do not see de sheep. Sheep ahoy!—No answer. 'Sheep ahoy! Answer, or I weel fire.' Still no answer. 'Tirez done!'—A broadside was fired, and the light disappeared.

Not a cry or sound of any kind was heard after the noise of the firing had ceased. The poor little *Dolphin*, we thought, must have sunk at once; but yet it was very strange that so large a vessel (she was large compared to the Frenchman) could have been invisible and inaudible when so near us. The boats were lowered immediately, and furnished with lanterns, that their crews might see to save all they could. After a short time, they returned, bringing back, as

the sole remains of the poor Dolphin, a few broken staves, and a bamboo, with a lantern lashed to the end of it. The French captain's blank stare of astonishment was at first quite amusing; but at last the truth flashed upon him, and, with a loud laugh, he exclaimed—

'Parbleu! that capitane is one dam clevere fellow! He throw out one tub to catch a whale; he deserves to escape. Néanmoins, he is not safe yet.'

He then hauled close to the wind and stood to the eastward, thinking that you would make for the Channel as fast as possible. If it had not been for the name of the thing, we would have enjoyed the cruise very much; for the French captain and his officers were polite and gentlemanly, and treated us as messmates and friends. Their destination was Brest, and ours, eventually, a French prison, till we should be ransomed or exchanged—a pleasant way for me to enjoy my three years' furlough!

One afternoon, just after dinner, as we were dodging to the eastward, with the wind at north, a sail appeared a-head, but too far off to distinguish what she could be. All sail was immediately made in chase, and we rapidly neared the object of our pursuit. She was a lumbering, heavy-looking brig, under topgallantsails, painted with a broad dirty white streak, turning up at each end with a *sheer* like a bow. We hoisted French colours, and fired a gun to leeward; she shewed an English ensign, and immediately began to make more sail, which she did in a regular collier-like fashion, and went floundering and plunging along like a cart horse over a ploughed field; and the more sail she made, the slower she seemed to go. We were all mightily amused with her clumsy attempts to escape, and wondered at her folly in exasperating her enemy by such unavailing efforts. Gun after gun was fired to bring her to; but still she floundered on, kicking up her stern as if in derision, as her heavy bow plunged deep into the water. At last, the captain of the privateer got into a towering passion, and swore he would sink her when he got alongside. While the brig, or at least her crew, were straining every nerve to escape, one of her maintopgallant sheets *went*; and the awkward and slovenly manner in which the sail was handled, excited the laughter of all on board our small craft. The brig, at this time, as if aware that escape was hopeless, took in her royals, and lowered her topgallantsails, but without altering her course or striking her colours. It was dusk when we came within speaking distance; and, running up close under her quarter, our captain seized the speaking-trumpet, and ordered the brig to strike her colours immediately, or he would sink her. What was his surprise, when, in answer to his hail, three deafening cheers resounded from the brig! Her deck was in an instant swarming with men; and, while our crew were gaping with astonishment, the *painted canvass screen* disappeared from her side as if by magic, and a broadside was poured into our hull, which made us reel again, and wounded and killed several of the crew. In justice to the Frenchman, I must say that, as soon as the first surprise was over, he (the captain, I mean,) was as cool and collected as possible. His orders were given rapidly and energetically; and actively and ably were they executed. He instantly stood away to the southward and eastward, and trusted to his heels to escape from an enemy whom he saw at a glance he was unable to cope with. In a few minutes, from the truck to the water's edge, the *Hercule* was one cloud of canvass; and merrily did she dance away over the waves. The English man-of-war crowded all sail after us;—very differently was she *handled* now she was no longer acting merchantman. She seemed to have cast aside her sluggishness with her disguise, and, to our great surprise, seemed rather to gain than lose ground. She kept on our weather (larboard) quarter; and her bow chasers were in constant play, and remarkably well served—hardly a shot but told upon our rigging or hull.

The *Hercule* was considered the fastest privateer out of France; but, before the wind, the brig was evidently gaining upon us. Not one of our shot had, as yet, done her any material injury, though her head sails were riddled through and through. This game could not last long;—the privateer determined upon trying another move. He was obliged to keep his pumps constantly going, for he had received several shots between wind and water. Suddenly whipping in all his stunsails, he ran his yards forward, and hauled to the eastward. This manœuvre was rapidly and skilfully executed; and, as we shot across the bows of the English brig, we poured a raking broadside into her, which, we afterwards learned, did not do so much damage as we expected, as our guns were pointed too high. Three cheers rang from the English brig—as quick as thought, they ran in their stunnails, and, following our movements, hauled to the wind.

As the privateer had anticipated, the moment the brig rounded to, her foretopsail and topgallantsail, already in tatters, blew clean out of the bolt-ropes. This was a glorious sight for the privateer, but a sad one for us poor prisoners; we thought that all chance of escape was at an end, and that it was impossible for the brig to shift her sails quickly enough to save her distance. But "impossible" is a landman's word—there is none such on board a British man-of-war; her fore-rigging was swarming with men in a moment, and in ten minutes more they were *bringing* a new topsail to the yard, and the topgallant yard was on its way to the mast-head again. In the meantime, her bow guns had not been silent; a pretty smart conversation was carried on between them and our stern chasers, and their answers were most unpleasantly *true* and galling. Her guns must have had picked marksmen stationed at them, for hardly a shot was thrown away.

We were, however, leaving the brig rapidly, when a lucky shot from her came through one of our quarter-ports, and knocked down the two men at the helm. The privateer instantly flew up in the wind, and her head sails took aback; and though the helmsmen were instantly replaced, and the vessel boxed off again skilfully and rapidly, yet the few minutes that elapsed before she paid off and gathered way again, were sufficient to make a great alteration in our relative positions.

The English brig was now within half a mile on our weather quarter, gaining steadily and slowly, and throwing her single shot into us with the most unerring precision. At last, an eighteen pound shot struck our weather maintop-sail yard-arm; and the spar snapped in two close outside the slings. All chance of escape was now over; but the Frenchman, a gallant fellow, was determined not to strike till the last; and all the guns that could be brought to bear upon the brig were double-shotted and rattled into her. In answer to this salute, the man-of-war gave a yaw to windward, and poured her starboard broadside into the privateer, with deadly effect; and then, bearing suddenly up amid the clouds of smoke, she ran close under our stern, and discharged her larboard guns, sweeping our decks fore and aft, dismounting two of our guns, killing five of our men, and carrying away our tiller-ropes. The privateer was now perfectly unmanageable—her topmasts were hanging in splinters over her sides—her brave captain was killed—there were three feet water in the hold—and the active and indefatigable brig was playing round and round, pouring in her remorseless fire. The French crew, seeing the madness and inutility of further resistance, struck their colours; and, in a few minutes, a boat came on board from H.M. brig, *Hawk*, and the officers of the privateer surrendered their swords to the lieutenant in command—who, on receiving them, complimented the privateer's men highly on their gallant defence. I was greatly grieved at the death of the French captain, who, during our short sojourn with him,

had endeared himself to us by his handsome and gentlemanly behaviour. He had allowed Gordon the mate, and myself, to dispose of ourselves as we thought proper during the action, on our giving our parole that we would not in any way interfere. As soon as the privateer ceased firing, the smothered sound of three cheers came faintly up the hatchway from our poor fellows in the hold, who rightly judged the result of the action. They were immediately liberated; and a prize crew having been sent on board, the French took up the quarters just vacated by the 'Dolphins.'

After a few hours spent in repairing damages, and in vigorous exercise at the pumps of the privateer, the Hawk, with her prize in tow, stood to the northward and eastward; and, in a few days, the Hercule, with the red ensign proudly floating above the flag of France, followed her captor into Spithead. As soon as I possibly could, I hastened up to town, where I found a letter lying for me at my agent's, to be delivered as soon as the Dolphin arrived, (my friends knew I had taken my passage in that ship,) begging me to hasten over to Ireland immediately, to attend the deathbed of a maternal uncle. I arrived in Dublin in time to attend the old gentleman's funeral, and to find, to my great surprise, that he had left the whole of his Irish property and a large estate in this country to his grateful nephew, on condition that I took his name. Fortune was tired of plaguing me at last. I was obliged to remain nearly three years in Ireland, in order to arrange matters satisfactorily with my agent, and to put everything in train for making my tenants as comfortable as possible. My other estate is in Perthshire, where I shall be delighted to enjoy the pleasure of *your* society, until you are wearied of *ours*.—I say *ours*, because I have a new friend to introduce you to in the person of my wife."

I accompanied Sandford home, and found his establishment such as I should have expected from a man of his liberal and enlightened turn of mind—handsome without ostentation—liberal without profusion. His lady was a most amiable and agreeable person—unaffected and cheerful in her manners. I was delighted with my first introduction to her. Coming forward to meet me with all the graceful ease that distinguishes a well-bred woman, and with all the warmth of manner of an old friend, she shook me most cordially by the hand.

"Mr Douglas," said she, "I am delighted to see you; often and often has Sandford talked over your mutual adventures, and regretted the evil destiny that separated him from his earliest and dearest friend. Your character is so familiar to me, that I feel as if, instead of addressing a stranger, I were talking to an old friend. I hope you will soon learn to look upon all here in the same light."

It was impossible not to feel instantly at home, where such genuine and sincere cordiality was displayed; and, in a few hours, I was as completely domesticated at Grant Hall as if I had been its inmate for years. The very servants seemed to feel that in pleasing me they were pleasing their master and mistress; for whom, it was evident, they all felt the greatest affection and respect. It is a good sign of the heads of a house, when the servants grow grey at their posts; and most of those at Grant Hall seemed in a fair way of doing so. But I am digressing. While the ceremony of introduction between myself and Mrs Grant was in progress, a young lady was seated at one of the open windows. She raised her eyes on my entrance—and such eyes! However, I will say nothing more about them; for, though so much has already been spoken and written about ladies' eyes, one glance from such a pair as then beamed upon me was worth volumes of description. There was nothing at first particularly striking about the lady's appearance; at least, nothing sufficiently so for particular notice or description; but, on further scrutiny, her features were

faultlessly regular, and the expression of her countenance was so placid and gentle that, had it not been for the lambent fire of her dark eyes, I might almost have fancied that some pure, cold, faultless creation of the sculptor's fancy sat before me. Hers was one of those faces which seldom arrest admiration at first sight, but which seem to display new beauties the longer they are gazed upon. Sandford introduced her as his sister Alice.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Miss Sandford," said I. "Your brother wished to give me an agreeable surprise, I suppose; for he never told me that you formed one of his family party."

"Sandford may have neglected to mention his sister to you, Mr Grant," said she, her bright eyes sparkling with animation, and giving life and energy to her features; "but I assure you he has not been backward in making you the theme of his discourse to us. I have often been inclined to feel jealous of his brotherly regard for you."

"Upon my word, Ned Douglas," muttered I to myself, when I was comfortably settled into my soft bed, "you're a lucky dog to have fallen into such good quarters. A few weeks ago, you were afraid to move, lest you should tumble out of your narrow cot, and break your invaluable head upon a hard deck; and now you are afraid to move for fear of losing yourself in this wilderness of a bed, or being smothered in an ocean of feathers."

It was bright and beautiful July; all nature brightened in the smile of the summer sun, and fair Alice smiled upon me. Could I be otherwise than happy?

Sandford was a keen fisherman; and we used to wander together day after day along the banks of the beautiful Tay—he to indulge in an amusement which he enjoyed with enthusiastic relish, and I to gratify my love for the beauties of nature, which are nowhere seen to greater perfection than on the banks of that noble stream. We always returned home to a late dinner, and the evenings were enlivened with music and song, in which both the ladies excelled, and in talking over the adventures of the day, and the stirring scenes of our past lives.

"What strange beings sailors must be!" said Alice to me one evening; "such compounds of contradictions!—so lavish, yet so selfish—so daring, yet so superstitious."

"Do you remember that strange old fellow, Rodney, the quartermaster," said Grant, "who used to be such a favourite of yours? What yarns, as he called them, he used to spin!—enough to stagger the faith of the most credulous; and yet I really think the old fellow had told them so often that he believed them himself."

"Come, Mr Douglas," said Alice, "can you not revive your recollections of the past, sufficiently to favour us with a sample of his yarns, as you call them? We have a long evening before us, and you know we ladies are fond of novelty and excitement."

"Well, Miss Alice, I will endeavour to gratify your love of the novel and marvellous; but, remember, the story I am about to tell, is Rodney's, not mine. You talked of the superstition of sailors—I will repeat you one of his ghost stories, as it is less improbable than most of his yarns; and I know, for a fact, that there were numbers besides Rodney who firmly believed it."

"Well, but, Douglas," said Sandford, "let us have it in true Rodney style—slang and all.—Don't be alarmed, ladies; by slang I only mean the peculiar phraseology of men of the Rodney stamp."

"Oh, do, Mr Douglas! now do! It will add so greatly to the effect of the story; and I am sure you would not say anything to shock our ears."

"Well, Miss Alice, I will do my best to please you; but I must endeavour, in the first place, to give you some notion of Rodney's appearance. Do you remember him distinctly, Sandford? I have his figure before my mind's eye—long,

thin, and muscular; a kind of prototype of that pink of all cockswains and quartermasters, 'Long Tom Coffin;' his round, brightly-blackened hat flapped down upon his head, with an air of careless indifference; his thin, iron-grey hair peeping out behind, as if it was wondering where the queue was going to; and his face looking out in front, as rough and unmoved as the surface of a weather-beaten rock.

'Well, Rodney,' said I to him, one first-watch, when his spell at the cunn was over, and he was taking what he called a fisherman's walk* on the lee side of the poop—'Well, Rodney, you really do believe in flying Dutchmen, ghosts, and all that kind of nonsense?'

'Believe!—Lord love your Honour, to be sure I do! Didn't I sail with a man once as had been in a ship where one of the lads had seen the flying Dutchman the voyage before, and swore to it too? Believe! Why, axing yer Honour's pardon, and meaning no defence, there's none but fools and long-shore chaps what doesn't believe them.'

'Well, well; but ghosts, Rodney—did you ever see a ghost?'

'Why, I can't say as how I ever seen one myself; but I knows them as has.'

'Ah! and what sort of ghost was it?'

'Why, it's a longish yarn, yer Honour; and ye're wanting to turn in. You can't keep your eyes open like an old sailor; it's not naturable you should, seeing you hav'n't had the same opportunity of larning. You oodn't believe, now, I suppose, Mr Douglas, that I keeps watch and watch with my peepers, and always goes to sleep with one eye open? And, for the matter o' that, when I'm walking the deck by myself, I often takes off one of my shoes, to give 'em spell and spell about.'

'Why,' said I, 'I have seen you keeping your shoes at watch and watch; but the eyes, Rodney—I can't swallow the eyes.'

'Love yer Honour, you hain't half a swally, then; when you've heerd as many queer yarns as I've heerd, and seen as many deviltries as I've seen, ye'll larn to swally anything.'

'But come, Rodney, let's have the ghost. I don't mean to turn in till eight bells.'

The old man leaned back upon the hen-coop on which I was sitting, crossed his arms over the breast of his pea-jacket, and began:—

'Well, yer Honour, Jack Rodney never was the man to lay at his anchors when the signal was made to get under weigh. I've been at sea, yer Honour, man and boy, five-and-thirty years come next quarter day; and there's ne'er a blue jacket afloat as can say Jack Rodney ever sailed under false colours, or stretched a yarn beyond its bearings. When once old Jack gets his jawing tacks aboard, his yarn runs off clear and quick, like the line off a log-reel in a breeze. I hates them stuttering beggars, axing yer Honour's pardon, as boxes all the points of the compass, and never steers no strait coorse after all. Their words come creeping out as if they were afeerd the master-at-arms was a-going to put them in limbo; but a steady helm and a straight coorse for old Rodney, says I.'

After the old man had talked himself into a proper opinion of his merits, he began at once to steer a straight coorse, as he called it.

'Ye've never been in Chainey, yer Honour? Ah! you long-togged gentry has a vast to see! Why, you sits at home half your lives, and never knows nothing. Why, now, I'll make bould to say yer Honour doesn't know how to make a sea-pie or a dish of lobskous?'

'Not I, Rodney.'

'My eyes!' muttered the old man to himself, 'to think

of a man coming to his years, and not knowing how to make lobskous! Why, sir, axing yer pardon, yer edication must have been sadly neglected.'

'Oh, I shall improve under your tuition, Rodney; but now for the ghost.'

'Well, sir, you sees when I was aboard the old Bruise-water, East Injeeman, we wor lying at our moorings in Wampoa Reach—that's in Chainey, yer Honour. There was a large fleet of us, all lying waiting for a cargo, with nothing in the 'varsal world to do but to keep the ships clean, and to play at race-horses with the boats. A grand sight it was, yer Honour, to see so many fine large craft lying at anchor, all clean painted, and looking as gay as so many women rigged out for a dance ashore, with their red and striped ensigns all fluttering in the sunshine; and the lads all as neat and clean as shore-going gemmen. Why, Lord love you, this here craft would look like a cockle-shell alongside o' them! 'Twas a sight to do an old sailor's heart good, to see sich a show of merchantmen as no other country but Ould England could produce. And then, for such an outlandish, out-o'-the-way place as Chainey, the country wasn't so ill-looking neither. On each side of the river were the level green paddy fields, with, here and there, a little hill, with a joss-house peeping out from the bamboos; the green hills of Dane's Island further up, and its valleys rich with orange trees and patches of sugar-cane. Further up still, was the village of Wampoa, all sticks and straw, like, with a great thing like a light-house—what them neggers calls a pugodour—standing as stiff as a marine at attention, on the opposite bank of the river. And then to see the outlandish-looking mat sails—for devil a boat could you see belonging to them—cutting across in all directions as if they wor taking a walk in the paddy fields! and the junks cocking up ahead and astern like nothing else in the world, with eyes painted on their bows, because the natural fools think they won't be able to see without them! Then, sir, there's the men with tails like cows, and the women with feet like dolls, and the children in the boats tied to calabashes, to prevent their drowning. Why, bless ye, sir, if ye couldn't swally what I told you before, all this 'll choke ye outright. Well, but to come to my story agen. I hates all this here traverse sailing; I must take a fresh departure. The chief mate of the Prince Royal, Mr Pattison, was a riglar out-an-outer, a man as was well knowed in the fleet, and was a favoryte with high an' low; for he was a sailor every inch of him, and knowed right well how to keep persons and things in their places. He was a taut hand, too; but none the worse for that, for your true sailor, sir, loves an officer as is a real officer, and gives every man his due, good or bad, without favour or defection—one knows what one has to trust to with such a man. He was quite a pet with the crew, though he made them fly whenever he spoke to them; they were proud of old Charley, as they called him, and of their ship—and high kelter* she was in. Well, sir, old Charley was taken ill—then he got worse—then we heard he wasn't expected to live. There wasn't a man or officer in the fleet but wor sorry for him; for them as hadn't been shipmates with him knowed him by karacter. Of coorse, sir, when the chief mate was in the doctor's hands, and hove down to repair, the second did duty for him. One day, when Charley was very ill, the second mate came on deck, and see'd the carpenter a-standing in the sun without his hat on; so says he—

'Mr Chips,' says he, (the carpenters aboard them ships were all warrant officers, and so always had a handle put to their names,) 'Mr Chips, why are you standing in the sun without your hat; you'll be getting a stroke of the sun?'

'O sir,' said the carpenter, with a face as long as the

* "Fisherman's walk"—two steps and overboard.

* Kelter—order.

maintop-bowline, 'it's o' little consequence; my time's almost up; I hav'n't much longer to live.'

'What do you mean?' said the officer; 'what foolish notion have you taken into yer head?'

'Oh, sir, it's no foolish notion; *he* told me so, and I never knowed him deceive any one yet!'

'Who told you so, Chips?' said the mate, kind and soothing like—for he was afeerd that the sun really had got in at some little crack in his upper works; '*who* told you so?'

'Mr Pattison himself told me so, sir, last night.'

'Mr Pattison? Why, Chips, you're dreaming; he's regularly hove down, can't stir hand or foot, poor fellow.'

'No matter, sir, *he* told me so; and if it wasn't him, it was his ghost.'

'But how was this, and when?'

'Why, sir, as I was lying awake last night in my cot, I saw Mr Pattison come into my cabin port. The cot shook under me, I trembled so with fear, for I knew how ill he was; but I thought that, while the fever was at its height, he might have got up and wandered to my cabin without knowing what he was about; so I mustered courage to say to him, 'I am glad to see you on your legs again, sir.' He shook his head mournfully, and said—'I shall never rise from my bed again; in two days' time my eyes will be closed in death, and in three more you will follow me.' He then disappeared, and left me with a weight upon my heart that will sink me to the grave.'

'Oh, nonsense, Chips,' said the officer; 'don't let your mind dwell upon it. You must have been asleep—it was nothing but a dream.'

'Dream or not, sir, I feel that I am a doomed man.'

'Two days after this confab, yer Honour, I saw the colours of the Prince Royal slowly rise from the taffarel, as if they didn't like the duty they were on; and then they hung mournfully half-way between deck and the gaff-end: in three minutes, every ship in the fleet had her colours hoisted half-mast, that well-known signal that some officer has struck his flag to death. Poor Charley was no more! A circule-her was sent from the commodore, to order two boats from every ship in the fleet to attend the funeral—and a grand funeral it was. It was a beautiful sight to see the prosseshin, yer Honour. There was the boat, with the coffin in the stern-sheets, covered with a union-jack; and the mourners sitting on each side of it, towed by one of the 'Prince's' cutters; all her crew in mourning, with black crape round their arms, and pulling minute strokes. Then came the 'Prince's' launch, towed by another boat, full of the ship's company, who had all asked leave to see the last of their officer. Poor fellows! sincere mourners I believe they were. Then, sir, there was a long line of boats from each quarter of the long boat, all following in each other's wake, and stretching from one end of the reach to the other. As soon as the boat with the coffin in it shoved off from the 'Prince,' her bell began to toll slowly, and, as it passed the gangway of the next ship, her bell took up the knell, and so on all up the fleet. It was a beautiful sight, yer Honour, to see the long lines of boats, with their neat jacks fluttering half-mast from the staffs; the men of each boat dressed alike; some crews in blue jackets, others in white, but all with the crape round their arms: then the flags of all the fleet—English, French, American, and Dutch—waving, mournful-like, half-mast high; not a sound to be heard, yer Honour, but the dull sound of the minute strokes, and the fluttering of the colours, and the long clear tones of the bells, as they died away further and further up the fleet:—oh, sir, it was a sad and a beautiful sight! He was buried, where all the other English officers are buried, on French Island. Well, yer Honour, now comes the end of the business. Three days afterwards I was quarter-master of the deck, and was standing on the fokslie, when

I see'd three boats a-passing, with their jacks half-mast and a coffin in the stern sheets o' the foremost on 'em; so says I to Tom Rattlin, the captain of the fokslie—'Tom,' says I, 'what boats is them?' 'The Prince's,' says he; 'I believe her carpenter is dead.' And sure enough it was the carpenter, sir; the ghost didn't tell him no lie; his signal for sailing was made at the very time he named. Now, sir, after that yarn, will you tell me that there are no such things as ghosts? It was my old shipmate, Bill Buntline, that told me; and, if all tales are true, that's no lie.

'There was no answering such a truism; so I thanked the old man for his yarn, and giving him a stiff'ner,* when the watch was over, turned in to my snug cot, little dreaming that I would ever repeat the story on the banks of the Tay.'

'Thank ye, Mr Douglas, for your 'yarn,''' said Alice; 'I really think you would make as good a 'spinner of yarns,' as you call it, as old Rodney himself.'

'What became of old Rodney, did you ever hear?'' said Sandford.

'Yes. He was lost from the Dundas Indiaman, poor fellow! some years ago. I used often to be talking of him on board the Dolphin, and Captain Driver told me that he knew the man, and that he had heard his fate. He went out to put additional lashings on the sheet anchor in a heavy gale of wind, a sea struck the bow, and tore him away while clasping the anchor in his arms. He was swept twenty yards from the ship, poor fellow! at once, and all hopes of saving him were at an end. He was an excellent swimmer, and was seen to take off his pea-jacket with the greatest coolness, and, whenever he rose on the top of a sea, he was seen waving his hat for assistance; at last, he was seen on the crest of a sea, but, when it rose again, Rodney was gone'—

'Where many a true heart has gone before him!' said Sandford, as the ladies were rising to bid us good night. 'How happy ought you and I to be, Douglas, enjoying all the comforts of a cheerful home, while so many brave fellows are exposed to all the storms and dangers of the deep!'

I *was* happy; I had felt like a new man ever since my visit to Perthshire; a gleam of sunshine had brightened the dark and gloomy path of my life. I was no longer an isolated being—I had met with congenial hearts—I contrasted with gratitude the present with the past, and looked forward with hope to a calm and happy future. I have before spoken of my first impressions of Alice Sandford: I soon learned to look upon her with feelings of warmer interest than I had thought I would ever experience again towards mortal being. I will not waste more words in endeavouring to describe the beauty of a face which, lovely as it was, owed its principal charm to its sweet and amiable expression. That her countenance was a true index to her heart, I have had well-tried experience; for Alice Sandford has been the wife of my bosom for many years, and never, in joy or in sorrow, has she given me a moment's cause to repent of my choice. My friend, Sandford, (Grant, I should call him,) persuaded me to fix my quarters in a handsome villa on his property; and I have ever since had reason to be thankful to Providence for the happiness I have enjoyed, and for the blessed chance that led to my meeting with my friend in the barn at ST BOSWELL'S.

* Strong glass of grog.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS.

AND OF SCOTLAND.

RANDAL BARCLAY.

"O Love, thou teacher! O Grief, thou tamer! O Time, thou healer of the human heart! bring hither all your deep and serious revelations!"

Mrs Jameson.

IN the autumn of 1813, as I was passing through a beautiful burial place, connected with a little town on the Scottish side of the Border, I observed an old gentleman standing in front of a tombstone. The object of his attention was a quadrangular slab of stone, with a semicircular cop, fastened into the northern wall of what had once been a spacious Gothic church, though scarcely more than one gable was now entire. I approached the stranger; for my impression was, that I could not be intruding on grief. The inscription was much defaced; tall nettles and weeds had sprung up beneath; the surface of the ground appeared to be quite flat; and several stones which had fallen from the building, were covered with moss. Besides this inference, there was something in the sanctity of the spot and the serenity of the adjacent scenery that operated most powerfully upon me. I had been suffering from severe depression; but I could not resist the mild air and the rich succession of autumnal circumstances; hopes, that have long since passed into dark recollections, had regained a momentary dominion; and I felt most anxious to meet any human being, who could come (even to the slightest extent) within the range of my sympathy.

Situated as I was, I conceived that the easiest mode of getting into conversation with the stranger, would be to direct my attention, in the first place, to the inscription; which, as I have said, was much obliterated. It was as follows:—

RANDAL BARCLAY,
Died, 2d April 1784, aged 23.

"We do fade away as a leaf."

"I have often thought," said I, "that a short passage from Scripture, such as this, is much more suitable to a tombstone than any expression of private feeling. Among other reasons, this is obvious, that, in many cases, survivors must be apt to be regulated in their tributes by the first impulses of grief, and anything but the severest truth is inconsistent with the character of a place which tends to remind us so energetically that all the excesses of human passion must decay."

"Sir," he replied, "that is the very principle on which *he* requested that no other inscription should be placed over him."

"You knew him, then?" said I.

"I did. He and I resided in the same house for several years."

"I should wish much," rejoined I, "to hear something of his history, as I suspect, though I know not *how*, that it involves melancholy circumstances, in addition to a premature death."

"In that," he replied, "you are not deceived; and if you will take a walk with me through the fields, I shall willingly satisfy your curiosity." He then began to beat down the weeds with his cane, begging me to assist him, "in order," as he said, "that people accustomed to visit the churchyard might be struck with the thought that

some friendly survivor still looked with reverence on what had so long seemed a forgotten grave."

We then proceeded along a range of fields, and walked for some hours; but I became so interested in the narrative of my new acquaintance, that I accompanied him to the inn, where the subject was continued; and, after his return to Edinburgh, he was so kind as to send me various documents in the handwriting of his deceased friend, upon which I shall draw liberally in the following sketches.

The moon was shining brightly on the masses of snow that covered the garden of a manse, in which the young widow of a Scottish clergyman was rapidly dying. A boy, about eleven years of age, was sitting beside a table, at a little distance from the bed, with the Bible before him.

"Mother," said he, "what other chapter would you wish to hear?"

"Randal," replied his mother, in a tone so melodiously faint that it made his heart swell—"Randal, my dear, be so kind now, if you are not fatigued, as to read the last chapter of Job. It is full of encouragement to all the distressed who trust in God." Randal began to do as he was desired; but, when he came to the 13th verse—"He had also seven sons and three daughters"—he bent heavily forward, laid his head upon the book, and paused.

"Randal," said his mother, drawing aside the curtain, "do you feel unwell?" The child raised his head, and replied—

"It was a thought that struck me, mother." Here his utterance was again impeded, and he struggled in vain to repress the tears that were trembling in his long eyelashes. But he soon regained his self-command, afraid that this exhibition of feeling might agitate his mother. He could discern nothing, however, except profound serenity in her large, thoughtful eyes, and he was encouraged to speak. "Mother," he said, "I don't like that part of the chapter. Though Job had now double of what he lost, he had only *other* sons and *other* daughters."

"My dear boy," replied Mrs Barclay, "I see how it is—you are thinking that you and I may soon be separated; and it would be wrong to conceal from you, that I cannot recover. But you have many reasons for gratitude; and you have a pledge of protection in the blessing of a mother—though a sinful mother—whom you have never disobeyed." The boy hastily thrust his hand through the thick chesnut curls that fell over his high forehead, stooped for a moment, and fixed his eyes with a stricken expression upon his dying parent, but made no reply.

Here it may be proper to give a brief outline of Mrs Barclay's history. Mary Herbert was the younger daughter of a gentleman who had succeeded a long train of ancestors in the possession of an estate, (latterly entailed,) and who piqued himself excessively upon his patrician distinctions. Before his death, which had taken place about eight years prior to this period, Mary had become acquainted with Mr Barclay, the minister of an adjoining parish, and an attachment had gradually been formed between them. He was a man of the very highest talents and accomplishments, and of the most amiable disposition; and, in fact, there was no objection which Mr Herbert could plead against Mary's union with him, except that he was comparatively of

obscure origin. Yet, when Mr Barclay applied for his consent, Mr Herbert coldly declared that, though he would not make any opposition, no encouragement must be expected from him; and it was after many serious struggles on the part of Miss Herbert, who at first recoiled from the thought of shewing any disrespect to what she might justly have considered the weakness of her parent, that Mr Barclay's proposal was at last accepted. But Mr Herbert kept his word; nor, either when the marriage was solemnized, nor at any succeeding period, did he exhibit the slightest remains of paternal kindness; and, upon his death, his elder daughter, Dorothea, acquired right to the estate, in virtue of the entail, while Mary's portion of the inheritance was confined to four thousand pounds—the sum provided to younger children by her father's marriage contract. Dorothea, who had been infected with all the aristocratic prejudices of Mr Herbert, kept up little intercourse with her sister during his life; and, having subsequently married Sir William Musgrave, a man whose mind was equally contracted, the alienation became complete. That this was most acutely felt by the young wife, may be easily imagined; and, though she used every exertion to conceal her internal strife from Mr Barclay, his perception was not to be deceived. Their union, however, was attended with no other alloy than this undermining pressure of parental disapprobation and haughty neglect on the peace of Mrs Barclay, and the reflex influence which it had on her husband. But their happiness was not destined to be of long duration. A cold which Mr Barclay had caught, on returning late from visiting a sick parishioner, had been followed by an inflammation in the lungs, which carried him off after a week's illness; and his wife's attendance on him having been too assiduous for her delicate constitution, a rapid decline had reduced her, in the course of four months, to the state in which she has been presented to my readers. But, to return to the bedside of the dying mother.

"Randal," said she, "come near me and sit down." The heavy-hearted boy complied. "My dear Randal," she continued, "I know your nature is so affectionate that there is one admonition which I would impress upon you. Beware of too great an intimacy with those who are much superior to yourself in point of fortune. I do not mean that you should altogether shun their society; but that you should consider well before you allow them to acquire any important influence over your stronger affections. Above all, do not depend too hastily upon those who have risen to wealth, and whose coarse habits and contracted feelings have not been refined and expanded by reflection and religion. How often has your father complained to me, that Mr W.'s boys, to whom he had been private tutor, and in whose improvement he had felt all the interest of a brother or a parent, coolly deserted him when his services were no longer necessary! My dear child, remember this warning—your fate may be determined by it."

It would not be easy to describe the agonizing exercise of self-control with which the poor boy listened to this dispassionate appeal. He left the room, desired the nurse to attend his mother, and shut himself up in his bed-chamber, to indulge his feelings in solitude and darkness.

It is the sixth night after the occurrence of what has just been related, that I again revert to the chamber of Mrs Barclay. There was only one light in the room, snow-flakes were drifting fast and thick against the window-panes, and the wind at intervals whistled keenly through the bare boughs of an old maple-tree in front of the house. The nurse, exhausted with long watching, had just fallen asleep on the large arm-chair which had been appropriated to the invalid during her illness; and the little boy had not thought it necessary to disturb her. His grief was far beyond the power of slumber; and, unconscious of time, he continued

sitting by his mother's side, and occasionally administering a little wine and other cordials. Speech had, by this time, deserted Mrs Barclay, and she appeared nearly in the same state for about an hour longer, when Randal, observing *he knew not what*, rose and pressed his fingers on her pulse. He felt *one* throb; after a considerable interval, a *second*; after a still greater, a *third*. A slight convulsion succeeded, and he saw that "all was past."

Sheridan observed, when lamenting his amiable wife, that, in relation to survivors, there is a distinction between "the sting of death" and "the victory of the grave"—viz., the pain of seeing a friend die, and the pain of parting from the remains; and, among those cases in which the latter feeling may generally be supposed to act most powerfully, we may include that of a child who has been deprived of a parent. The boy would sit for hours beside the body of his mother, contemplating, with unutterable reverence, the saintly repose of her features, and reflecting how kind she had uniformly been to him. "A tear," says Bloomfield, "is a witness which all hearts believe."* But *none* are so far removed from suspicion as those which the dying shed in their anxiety about the lot of the living; and it was only *five* hours before Mrs Barclay's death, that, while she was beading over Randal, (who had laid his head on the pillow,) and uttering some words of encouragement, he felt a burning drop fall upon his brow. In after years, he thought that this was, as it were, a second baptism, to proclaim him "a sufferer;" as the first was intended to proclaim him "a Christian."

He was occupied in the manner we have described, when, after a gentle tap at the door, a man entered with implements for fastening the coffin-lid, accompanied by a gentleman whom Mrs Barclay, with Randal's consent, had appointed to be his sole trustee. He approached the boy, and, expecting that he would be quite overcome, attempted to say something in the way of consolation—an effort which his own feelings rendered extremely difficult. In this supposition, however, he was deceived. Randal's grief was too profound to be clamorous. He gazed once more on the countenance of his mother, then took his friend Mr Limont by the hand, and walked to the window, where he stood with apparent composure till the mournful ceremony was concluded; and even when the undertaker had retired, he simply remarked, though in a low and broken tone—

"How long it seems since my mother died!"

There had been a thaw for some days; but it was now a hard frost, and the sun was shining keenly, as the solemn procession moved along the lane that led to the churchyard. Flocks of sparrows that had been feeding on the haws and brier-berries, darted joyously from the hedges, and the notes of the redbreast were occasionally heard from the smoking boughs of the hazels and alders. But the partial restoration of nature had no effect on the heart of the boy, as the coffin was borne along the path that had been cut for it through the crystallized snow wreaths.

We must now pass over various details connected with poor Randal's final adieu to what had once been his happy home, the arrangement of his patrimonial affairs, and his removal to Edinburgh, where he was received with almost maternal kindness by Mrs Limont, whose only son was practising as a surgeon in England. Even in her isolated state, Mrs Barclay had selected Mr Limont, as a person to whose care she could consign Randal with the utmost confidence. He had long been her father's factor, and was distinguished, not only for great practical sagacity, but for the strictest piety—with a degree of native sensibility, which derived additional force from the homeli-

* For, as he spoke, a big round drop
Fell bounding on his ample sleeve—
A witness which he could not stop,
A witness which all hearts believe!"

ness of his language and manners. Mrs Limont, too, from the suavity and benevolence of her disposition, appeared likely to unite with her husband in doing everything to promote the interest and happiness of her charge; and in this, as the sequel will shew, Mrs Barclay's parental instinct did not deceive her.

It may be easily imagined that, to the mind of a boy such as Randal, naturally sensitive, the striking contrast, in conversation and manners, between the inmates of his late and his present home would be rather irksome for some time. But the unceasing assiduities of his kind friends tended gradually to reconcile him; and he soon began to regard them with almost filial respect. Mr and Mrs Limont, on their part, exaggerated every good quality he had; and looked upon him as the best substitute that could have been provided for their absent son. One day, Mrs Limont remarked—

"Hoo much ye put me in mind, laddie, o' oor Willie! Ye look sae like him, an' ye hae a' the ways that he had when he was about the same age."

"Na, na, guidwife!" said Mr Limont—"he's far bonnier, and far quieter, and he has far better abilities. Do ye think that Willie could hae brought hame sae muckle o' Dr Strang's discourse as Randal did last Sabbath?"

"Deed, James," replied the worthy Mrs Limont, "I canna say that ye're that far wrang."

But here it may be as well, in order to illustrate the species of sensibility peculiar to Mr Limont, to detail a scene at family worship, which we transcribe from a memorandum by Randal.

Mr LIMONT—(reading the concluding verse of the 5th chapter of 1st Peter)—"Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity."

Mrs LIMONT.—Dear me, James! they maun hae been unco fond o' kissing lang syne.

Mr LIMONT.—Wheesht, Jean! It was an ordinary form of salutation in the East—Randal will tell you that; just like our practice of shaking hands. But, though it hadna been a mere civility—and, nae doot, the early Christians wadna neglect ony civility that was innocent in itsel—we may weel suppose that their feelings were very different frae ours; for, oh! when we consider what a thin circle o' worshippers first gathered under the shadows o' the Cross, what a pleasure it wad be, to them in particular, to worship God in company—the throbbings o' the regenerate speerit having to strive wi' enemies frae without and frae within, what wi' the persecutions o' the ungodly, and the rebellion o' the corrupt wull in their own breasts:—if we wad only tak a thought o' a' this, need we wonder that they were drawn thegither wi' a *sympathy* that was mair extraordinary than the *stern power* o' Elias or the Baptist, and that may even seem *extravagance* to the like o' us! Hoo different is the world noo-a-days! The strongest professions o' folk that should be our best freends, are owre seldom coloured frae the heart; they often remind me o' the red on the portrait o' ane o' my auld acquaintances, that was taken when he was a corpse. The expression o' life is no there—natur winna be mocked.

Mrs LIMONT.—James! James! ye've been owre lang! ye've fairly set Lizzie asleep; this, as ye ken, has been oor washing-day, and the lassie, puir thing, canna keep her een open.

Mr LIMONT.—O Jean, is it in this way that ye hear the word, and the thoughts that it suggests? Lizzie! Lizzie! (Here the servant girl opens her eyes, and fixes them, as if under some irresistible fascination, on Mr Limont.) Lizzie! let me remind ye o' what ane o' the auld divines has said—"There is no sleep in Hell!" Think mair, my woman, and sleep less.

Passing over the intermediate period between Randal's twelfth and eighteenth years—in the course of which he

attended the High School of Edinburgh, and the literary classes of the University, where he was highly distinguished—we shall now proceed to relate an incident which had the most important consequences upon his future life.

One afternoon, in April 1779, an elderly gentleman, who had just returned to Scotland after acquiring an immense fortune in the West Indies, called upon Mr Limont, for the purpose of consulting him with regard to the purchase of a property in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, which was offered for sale. His name was Ogilvie, and he and Mr Limont had been at the same school. His wife, too, who accompanied him, had been well known in her youth to Mrs Limont. When they were engaged in conversation, Randal entered the room, and both Mr and Mrs Ogilvie—to whom Mrs Limont introduced him, with encomiums so profuse and so inordinate as to bring the blood into his cheeks—were struck with his manners and appearance, and invited him, and Mr and Mrs Limont, to spend the following evening at their lodgings.

Randal, as already mentioned, was remarkable for acuteness of feeling. But this quality was united with a powerful mind, which his seclusion from the world, and his habitual application to abstract pursuits, had rendered perfectly unprejudiced; and "though," in the words of Shenstone, "his ordinary conversation was, perhaps, rather too pregnant with sentiment—the usual fault of rigid students—this awkwardness (so to call it) might be compared to the stiffness of a fine piece of brocade, which, indeed, constitutes and is inseparable from its value." Such, at this period, was the subject of these sketches.

A circumstance which he had not anticipated, detained him the following evening beyond the usual hour of tea: and, as he pursued his way down the Pleasance to St John Street, where Mr and Mrs Ogilvie lodged, the moonbeams were falling gently upon the green slopes of Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. Here I must pause. Randal Barclay, I grieve when I think of thee! Little didst thou then suspect that, like the shepherd in Virgil, thou wouldst find Love to be "an inhabitant of the rocks." But thou hast long been clad with "a wedding garment," stainless and imperishable, among those "who have borne the yoke in their youth."

When Randal entered Mr Ogilvie's apartment, the candles were not yet lit; and, after the customary salutations had passed, he was about to seat himself, when Mrs Ogilvie exclaimed—

"Let me introduce you to my daughter, Mr Barclay. Eliza, my dear, this is the young gentleman we were speaking of."

Randal turned hastily round, and saw a face which he was destined never to forget. Eliza Ogilvie, the only child of her parents, was now fifteen, and strikingly beautiful. She had been educated at a boarding school in Devonshire, to which she was sent at the age of seven, and had rejoined Mr and Mrs Ogilvie only six months previous to this period, upon their arrival in England. In the general cast of her features, Randal thought she strongly resembled the picture of Caravaggio's Mary at the Intombment. Her long, dark-brown hair fell in bright curls down each side of her face; her forehead was broad and high, and of the purest white; and her eyes of a deep violet blue, with that sort of serene expression which is generally considered the symbol of profound feeling; and, had it not been for a sort of airy gracefulness in her movements, and an occasional play of humour about her lips, she might have appeared too grave for her age. Her mind, too, was not only powerful, but highly cultivated; and the elegant simplicity of her manners formed as strong a contrast to those of her parents, as Randal's to those of Mr and Mrs Limont.

But here it is proper to state, that Mrs Ogilvie's pretensions were very different from those of her homely friend.

In a word, her character was thoroughly artificial; and her only redeeming quality, was a sort of instinctive benevolence, applying to cases where she had no prejudice or object to sacrifice. With the view of creating an impression that Eliza's talents were directly inherited from her, she had lately begun to assume credit for superior acquirements, though she had little more to support her than an imperfect recollection of some old novels, which she had read during her voyage to the West Indies; and this ambition even stimulated her to such an excess, that no subject, however remote from her apprehension, could be introduced, with which she would not affect familiarity, by appearing profoundly attentive, and nodding or smiling significantly. Vanity, in fact, was the main principle of her actions. But it had worse effects than the absurdities in which it involved her. It was too powerful for the better part of her nature; and she often evinced no hesitation in violating consistency, and common regard to the feelings of others, for the mere purpose of indulging the most fantastic and abrupt caprices. No one, too, could be more expert in the application of

"The artful injury, whose venom'd dart
Scarce wounds the hearing, while it stabs the heart;
The guarded praise, which kills, and yet, when told,
The listener wonders you could think it cold."

She never had been what could be termed a beautiful woman, as none of her features, taken separately, were good, and their *contour* was small and babyish; but she had a great deal of colour, which rendered their general effect pleasing, particularly in her younger years. When she was acting in one of the humblest capacities, her smart prettiness had engaged the attention of an officer's lady, who had her instructed to act as a nursery-maid, and took her to Jamaica, where circumstances having introduced her to the notice of Mr Ogilvie, she was married to him shortly afterwards. Mr Ogilvie, though endowed with strong common sense, was yet remarkable for great simplicity of character; and, after a union of sixteen years, still remained an utter stranger, not only to the obvious defects, but to the subtle qualities of his wife, and might, in fact, be denominated the passive instrument of her will. He even considered her extremely ingenuous; for, like people who are deficient in real energy of mind, she was apt to rush perpetually into extremes—

"So over violent or over evil,
That every one with her was god or devil;"

and he used to say, "My wife always speaks out."

Let us now return to the company; supposing the conversation to have gone on for some time, and Eliza and Randal to have recognised in each other a decided congeniality of taste. They had been speaking of Milton, and the former had become extremely animated. "How natural it was," said she, "for Eve to ask Adam, why the moon and the stars shone at night—

"When sleep had shut all eyes!"

and what a beautiful description he gives of their influence on the earth! But there is a degree of sadness in the passage; for, at that time, Adam had no idea of a purpose which this light would afterwards serve—that it would be the most soothing and agreeable to the sick and the disconsolate." Randal gazed at her a moment in silence, and was about to reply, when Mrs Limont, who had been for some time listening to the young people, exclaimed—

"The moon's a fine thing for ripening the corn in far'st!"

"And usefu' to the husbandmen in bringing it hame, when the season's late," rejoined the worthy Mr Limont.

"Homer," said Randal to Eliza, "appears to be the only poet who has noticed that the stars in the *immediate vicinity* of the moon are *peculiarly* bright; and it is strange that this fine instance of poetical minuteness has been completely glossed over by Mr Pope in his translation:—

'Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole.

This was pointed out to me a few days ago, and I was quite struck with it."

"I have *often* heard it," said Mrs Ogilvie, to Randal's great surprise. "Oh, how fond I am of reading! When I was on my voyage to India, I never wearied of poring over 'Gil Blas'; my mind was so forward, to be so young a thing, just like our Eliza's there. Ay! ay!" Here she turned up her eyes, fixed them again on the ground, sighed, shook her head very sentimentally, and then looked at Randal, to see the effect of her speech.

"Hech me, James!" said Mrs Limont, giving a most audible yawn—"it's getting late. Do ye no think it's time we were gaun?"

"I'm quite ready, Jean," replied Mr Limont. "Ye ken I'm a freend to early hours."

"But you *must* take a glass of wine," said Mrs Ogilvie, rising and going to a closet. "I cannot allow you to go without that. I am *sure* it will do you all *good*." And she handed wine round, with such a profusion of bows and smiles, that Randal scarcely knew where to look. He had heard nothing of her history; but he felt assured, from the evident importance which she attached to a civility so common in the house of his father, that she could not have been brought up as a lady. On his departure, however, he received so many pressing invitations to visit them often, that he forgot defects, in the prospect of a continued acquaintance with Eliza.

While they were proceeding homewards, Mrs Limont remarked—"Yon Eliza's a bonny, sensible, feelin cratur—is she no, Randal? But, wae's me! what a tiresome body her mother is! She's aye trying to speak sae fine upon things that are no worth the noticin, that I canna be fashed wi' her. She's weel up in the world noo; but she'll ne'er be like a leddy. The little sense she has, is just destroyed wi' conceit—turnin up her een and shakin her head, as if she were gaun to fa' into a dwam. He's a quiet man, Mr Ogilvie, and I wonder he doesna reprove her, when he sees her makin sic a fule o' hersel."

Randal, however, was prevented, by particular reasons, from making any reply; and they proceeded, therefore, in silence, interrupted only by some remarks from Mr Limont on the folly of going to the West Indies to amass a fortune, as so few enjoyed the fruit of their labours on their return.

In the course of a few months after the period at which he has been introduced, Mr Ogilvie purchased a beautiful villa near Collinton, to which Randal was in the habit of going two or three times a-week; and, amid the rows of stately elms or across the romantic hills in the vicinity, Eliza was his constant companion. About this time, one of Mr Limont's old friends requested that he would take charge of his son (Mr Hamilton, the gentleman mentioned at the outset) during his apprenticeship as a writer to the signet. He was nearly of the same age as Randal, and must have been a great acquisition to him, as he possessed talent, information, and sensibility; and as Randal was also studying law, with the view of passing as an advocate.

Four years passed, and we find Randal still a visiter at Elmfield. Here our readers may, perhaps, inquire how this intercourse was not interrupted by so ambitious a woman as Mrs Ogilvie. Had respect for worth or talent overcome her selfish aspirations?—was *she* liberal enough to trust to the probable effect of these qualities in raising Randal to opulence?—or was his income, along with what Mr Ogilvie could contribute, considered sufficient? No; she had a very different reason. Randal was next heir of entail to the estate of Westwood, as Lady Musgrave was now childless, having, during the first year of Randal's acquaintance with the Ogilvies, lost both

a son and a daughter. Besides, Mrs Ogilvie felt a pleasure in Randal's society; more particularly as she had few visitors, and none either intelligent or genteel; and as she conceived that she benefited by his aid in attempting to impress her daughter with respect for her literary claims; for we cannot deny that Randal had one defect, naturally enough arising from the enthusiasm of his feelings towards Eliza. It was this: he never contradicted Mrs Ogilvie, and enriched the tritest remark she made, by such illustrations that it actually assumed an air of originality and importance. As for Mr Ogilvie, he was really attached to Randal, and continued quite inattentive to the inevitable consequences of such a constant association between the young people; and if the thought that they were in love with each other ever did cross his mind—"Eliza," he would probably say to himself, "will have a large fortune, and Westwood will be an excellent addition to it."

We now come to a sad crisis in Randal's life. Two events, of the utmost importance to him, happened on the same day, the 2d of June 1783. In the morning, he received intelligence that his aunt had given birth to a son; and, some hours afterwards, he had to go through his examination as an advocate, in which he acquitted himself most creditably. He had never contemplated, with much interest, the probability of his succession to Westwood; as he had not only his profession to trust to, but the four thousand pounds which he inherited from his mother, with the interest which had accumulated upon it since her death; and he had, therefore, heard of the former occurrence with little or no emotion. But, in the evening, when he went out to Elmfield, and, in the course of conversation, casually mentioned the intelligence he had received in the morning, we may easily imagine his surprise on observing an expression of blank disappointment, followed by a peculiar sneer, pass over Mrs Ogilvie's countenance. He thought, at first, that he must have been deceived; but, shortly afterwards, her manner assumed a petulance and coarse haughtiness which she had never wielded against him on any former occasion. He, as usual, in the course of the evening, proposed to take a walk with Eliza in the adjoining wood; and to this, too, for the first time, Mrs Ogilvie interposed some trivial objections.—Here we may, however, remark, that a Mr Richard Dippie the son of a rich planter, with whom Mr Ogilvie had been acquainted in the West Indies, had recently settled in Edinburgh; and, being frequently at Elmfield, shewed the most unequivocal attentions to Miss Ogilvie. But he excited no jealousy in Randal, as the whole tendencies of this man's nature, and the style of his education, were directly opposed to hers. He was, in fact, a mere boor—weak, shallow, contracted and vulgar.—Eliza, not noticing the alteration in her mother's deportment to Randal, and having sportively combated all obstacles to the proposed walk, went for her bonnet and returned to the room. Randal and she then took the road to a favourite resort of theirs, near the river side. It was a sort of semicircular opening in the wood, bounded by a hedge of hawthorn and sweetbrier; the borders of the soft green turf were inlaid with a profusion of primroses and wild hyacinths; and the murmuring of the river below was distinctly heard, without being seen. When they arrived and had seated themselves on a rustic bench—

"I feel unusually depressed to-night," said Randal. "Will you allow me to ask you a question, Eliza?"

"Certainly," replied she, with rather a startled expression.

"Eliza," he continued, "you must be convinced that I would not, intentionally, do anything to offend any of you. In fact, I am chiefly indebted to your family for any happiness I have had since my mother's death."

"What is the meaning of this exordium?" exclaimed Eliza. "You might have thought that all this would be

taken for granted—there is no one whom we esteem more than you."

"I am happy indeed to hear you say so," replied Randal; "and perhaps I may have allowed some fantastic misapprehension to disturb my mind. But I have always acted openly towards you, and I cannot conceal that there was a coldness in your mother's manner to me this evening, which stung me to the heart. I may be doing her injustice; I hope I am." Here he raised his eyes, and fixed them mildly on his fair companion.

"I am sure," replied she, turning slightly pale—"I am sure that there is no change in my mother's feelings, as there can be no reason for any. Do not allow such an idea to discompose you. If you notice her when we return to the house, you will see she is the same to you as ever."

"Since you have not observed what I alluded to," rejoined Randal, "I must certainly be under some delusion; but this I know, that, were any alienation to take place between us, nothing could console me, much less compensate me."

"I would regret such a result," said Eliza, "very much—perhaps as much as yourself. But it is impious to say that there is any species of calamity for which a remedy cannot be found. Do you recollect that fine anecdote in 'The Tatler,' of a gentleman who, on seeing a young lady, to whom he was engaged, fall over a cliff, exclaimed, '*It is not in the power of Heaven to relieve me;*' and, when he had scarcely uttered the words, *awoke?* I have often thought of this, Randal." Here, raising her eyes, with an attempt at a smile, she met his. Hitherto, she had concealed the emotions that were busy at her heart; but the mournful and subdued enthusiasm of his glance overcame her so much that she was seized with a violent bleeding at the nose, which did not subside for some minutes. Randal was much alarmed, and pressed her instantly to return to the house. They had only proceeded a few paces when she suddenly said—

"A circumstance to-night reminds me of my old maid, Nina, who accompanied me from the West Indies. The blacks, you know, are strangely superstitious; and she always maintained that the number *three* was ominous. Look, Randal," she continued, in a faint tone of voice, raising the end of a white silk scarf; when, to his horror, he perceived three distinct drops of blood on its snowy surface; and, from that moment, notwithstanding all his efforts to revive her spirits, she continued sad and abstracted. This was the last time that ever Randal Barclay walked with Eliza Ogilvie.

We may well suppose that the conversation we have detailed, rendered Eliza an anxious and vigilant observer of her mother that evening; and, even at the first, she *did* detect a sort of coldness in her air to Randal. Still, however, Mrs Ogilvie spoke to him with apparent frankness, and dilated upon her own sensibility and her singular skill in managing a household. But there were two things which attracted the attention both of Eliza and Randal, shortly before the latter took his leave. The one was, that Mrs Ogilvie launched into a prolix and most extravagant encomium on Mr Richard Dippie; the other that, in alluding to Randal's passing, she said, sarcastically, "I'm thinking we shan't see so much of you now, Mr Barclay, as professional matters will be taking up all your time."

Randal took no notice of the last remark; but it confirmed him in the suspicions he had expressed to Eliza; and in her eyes, which frequently met his, he read no reassuring glance. He lingered, however, to the last moment, unwilling to go, as he had a presentiment that *here* he would no longer be a welcome visitor. The next day, he called again at Elmfield, and saw Mrs Ogilvie; but was told that Eliza could not leave her room. During this

interview, Mrs Ogilvie preserved her usual appearance of frankness—still there was a *something* that did not satisfy Randal. But he only felt sorrow, even when she attempted to ridicule a remark that he had made, and, laughing most ungovernably at her own wit, looked for approbation to her husband, who, at that moment, entering the room, inquired where Eliza was? A guilty blush overspread Mrs Ogilvie's face, and she hastily replied—

"She is not well this morning."

"What!—since breakfast!" rejoined Mr Ogilvie. "I never saw her looking better. Girls who have nothing to do are always fancying themselves ill."

"I dare say it is true," said his wife, with a hysterical giggle, glad that she had got something like a subterfuge in her husband's concluding reflection. At the same time, she had penetration enough to observe that Randal was by no means satisfied with her conduct, and she could not refrain from inflicting a mortification upon him. "Will you be so good," said she, in that deprecating tone of voice which she considered particularly beautiful, "as give my compliments to Mr and Mrs Limont, and say that I *will* be so happy if they will take their tea with us to-morrow night? Mr Richard Dippie is to be here, and I wish them to see him—he is such a fine lad that I am getting fonder of him every day. What a beautiful chariot he has got!" Randal looked at her, expecting to be included in the invitation; but she merely said, she was sorry for putting him to so much trouble, while her babyish features expressed a sort of triumph which perfectly confounded him.

Here let us explain the reason why Mrs Ogilvie had prevented her daughter from seeing Randal. It may be told in a few words. When he called, she had taunted Eliza with her partiality for him; and, this being openly avowed, she had declared (for she was a great pretender to energy of character) "that she would go down stairs and forbid him to enter the house again." But her spirit had shrunk when she came into his presence, and she found that her only resource for accomplishing her object, was the artful species of attack which we have described.

Upon Randal's return, Mrs Limont was struck by the dejection, or rather the total prostration of spirits, which his features indicated.

"What's the matter wi' ye, bairn?" said she—"ye appear to be sair cast doon. Has anything happened to vex ye?"

Randal simply replied, that he was fatigued with his walk.

"Nae ither wonder," rejoined she—"ye haena eaten as muckle the day as would hae served a sparrow. That weary passing has dune ye nae guid. Let me bring ye a glass o' wine." This she accordingly did.

Randal then delivered Mrs Ogilvie's message.

"Weel, if it's a fine day, I hae nae objections. What time will suit you?"

"I was not asked," replied Randal.

"No asked!"—cried Mrs Limont—who had long been aware, from her own observation, of his strong attachment to Eliza—"no asked! I mind noo ye looked very disjaskit last nicht when ye cam hame. Ye'd be telling Mrs Ogilvie, nae doot, that yer aunt had got a son?"

Randal, rather startled, replied in the affirmative.

"I see it a' noo. Hech! what a thing wardly pride is! Hoo often it makes a body act meanly! And that ill-faured lad, Dippie, was asked, and ye slighted! He's just a sump. I dinna want to ken ony mair aboot him; but I'll gang, just to tell Bell Rippath a bit o' my mind. Her to tak sic airs on hersel! I mind her a dirty-faced lassie, rinnin bare-headed and bare-fitted aboot Pennycuick. Her, indeed—the wean o' auld Elshie Rippath, the carters' cobbler—to pit sic an affront on you!"

Randal attempted in vain to pacify her; but her honest wrath admitted of no mitigation, until her husband, in his own peculiarly mild and steady manner, expressed a con-

viction that the omission must have been accidental. Still, however, a strong impression that the important change in Randal's expectations had been the cause of Mrs Ogilvie's conduct, lingered on Mrs Limont's mind when she entered Elmfield the succeeding evening. Mrs Ogilvie's reception was particularly cordial; but Mrs Limont's feelings may be conceived when she merely inquired for Randal. There was one circumstance, however, which did please her—that, when Dippie, who was received with the most florid expressions of kindness by Mrs Ogilvie, and accosted by the familiar name of "Richard," entered the room, Eliza, after coldly replying to his inquiries, rose from her chair, near which he had placed his own, and seated herself on the sofa between Mrs Limont and her husband. Mrs Limont's manner, during her short visit this evening, was very different from its usual placidity. She listened with marked indifference to all Mrs Ogilvie's attempts at sentimental conversation and self-eulogies; and her real warmth of heart was only discoverable when Eliza became suddenly unwell, and was obliged to leave the room. This last circumstance was occasioned by some rude allusion of Dippie about Randal having been "*cut out*" of the Westwood property.

"But the bairn may dee," said Mrs Limont, again seating herself after Miss Ogilvie's departure, and having recourse to her snuff-box, as a sort of sedative—"an auld woman's wean seldom lives; and Lady Musgrave, to my certain knowledge, was seven years the senior o' Maister Barclay's mother, who wad hae been little mair than forty had she been livin at this day. Puir, winsome thing!—she dee'd young; and sair, sair maun hae been her heart to leave her bairn to sic a cauld warld."

"I think," said Mr Limont, whose serenity was also secretly disturbed by the rudeness of Dippie's allusion—"I think ye're richt, Jean; and nae guid can ever com owre Leddy Musgrave. If she didna excite auld Herbert against his sister, she, at least, never made ony attempt to lessen his resentment. I sometimes fancied that, if he had had ony honest freend aboot him, matters might hae been made up between him and the Barclays, before his death, as Miss Mary was aye his favourite; and I never can think o' Leddy Musgrave wi' onything like patience, when I remember the desolate state of the puir young creature, as I found him sitting beside the corpse o' his mother, wi' no a relation in the house, though his aunt lived only five miles off. They say, too, that Sir William has had twa or three apoplectic strokes, and that his ledly is aye pingin. But this I'm sure o'—that the loss o' the property has never cost Randal a thought. He has two hundred a-year clear money, and I'm far mistaen if he will not sunc be at the top o' his profession. Mr Hamilton, who has sic a great connection wi' merchants in Glasgow, is to gie him a' his cases, which will be a business o' itsel."

"We think very little of two hundred a-year in Jamaica," said Mrs Ogilvie, with a satirical expression of countenance.

"Hech me!" rejoined Mrs Limont; "but what I would hae thought o' sicca a sum lang syne, at Pennycuick!" And it must be added that, to Mrs Limont's great satisfaction, this allusion did not appear particularly agreeable to Mrs Ogilvie. Here Mr Ogilvie, apprehensive that Mrs Limont should dilate on this obnoxious subject in the presence of Dippie, proposed that the gentlemen should take a walk in the garden. Mrs Ogilvie was not, however, allowed to escape so easily; for, no sooner had the door closed, than Mrs Limont began to detail a conversation which she had had, some nights before, with an old acquaintance of the ci-devant Bell Ridpath.

"What changes happen in folks' lives!" said Mrs Limont, commencing her attack.

"Oh, yes," responded her companion, in a sentimental tone

of voice—"that is what I *often* observe to our Eliza. No one, as I say, can reckon on what is to happen the next mornin'."

"And what enemies folk hae, that they dinna ken o'!" continued Mrs Limont. "An auld leddy, frae Pennycuik, ca'd on me the ither day; and ye wadna believe what an ill-will she has to ye, and hoo she went on about ye."

"She must be a low person; and I wish to hear nothing anent her," cried Mrs Ogilvie, hastily.

"She's no exactly what ye may ca' that," rejoined the other; "for she's come frae decent folk. Her faither was ance a guid stock-farmer, no far frae the Toun; and, gang where ye'd like, ye wadna hae seen a brawer lass than Babbie Brodie. She was just extraordinar. But, oh, she's awfu wicked at onybody that slights her in her auld days. And only think," continued she, lowering her voice to a confidential tone, and drawing her chair nearer Mrs Ogilvie's—"only think what she said—'They tell me,' quo' she, 'that Mrs Ogilvie keeps her heed unco high, and tries to speak fine, noo that she has an auld man wha got a' his siller—Losh preserve us!—wi' makin coffins for the puir craters in Kingston that dee'd o' the yellow fever, when there was an unco scarcity o' wrights.'—'Dear me,' said I, 'Miss Babby, onything for the honest penny.'—'Ay,' said she, 'I wad be the last to cast up onybody's forbears, if folk took nae airs on themsels. But, when they do, merely because they've got siller without ony merit o' their ain, I canna hae ony patience wi' them. To think o' *Bell Rippath* turning up her nose at a s'ponsible man's dochter, like mysel!—a lassie that used to be glad to get an auld gown frae me, at an orra time, to gang decent-like to the kirk! Do ye no mind that auld Elshie was fit for naething but to cobble herds' and cottars' shoon; for naither my faither nor ony o' the farmers wad lippen theirs to him, the donnert, daidlin body?'"

"I wish to hear no more of this," said Mrs Ogilvie, fuming with rage.

"Ay, but I haena come to the warst o't," continued the persevering Mrs Limont. "'She maun hae been unco fond o' siller,' quo' Babby, 'an' sweethearts maun hae been scarce, when she took the like o' Ogilvie, (for ma pairt, I dinna believe she ever had anither offer,) wi' his ggem leg and his glee'd een.'"

"I really cannot submit any longer to listen to the impertinence of this Miss Babby," exclaimed Mrs Ogilvie; and then, for she had observed Mrs Limont's dislike to Dippie, and had guessed the cause which increased it, she remarked—"What a fine lad Mr Dippie is! He is likely to be every day a greater favourite with us all. What a fortune he has! How much do you think?"

"Indeed, I neither ken nor care," responded her companion.

"One hundred and twenty thousand pounds."

"Weel, weel—that's most extraordinar. Babby tellt me that ane o' the ploomen at Pennycuik kenned his grand-faither, wha was just bedral at Currie, and that his faither was a mischievous callant, wha, in ane o' his cantrams, brak the bell when his faither was oot o' the way, and ran off to sea, for fear o' a guid threshing. Hoo he gat to Jamaica, Babby couldna tell. But, she says, it was weel kent that he made his money by marrying nae less than three planters' widows, ill-faured women; and, as for the lad, he hasna a word to thraw at a dog, sae different frae oor Mr Barclay."

Here Mrs Ogilvie displayed that peculiar sneer which was her usual diplomacy when she found herself discomfited; and it would probably have provoked a fresh retort from Mrs Limont, had the gentlemen not re-entered the room.

"And, O sirs," as Mrs Limont said, when afterwards recounting this conversation, "with what a smooth, composed countenance the cratur Bell received them, when her heart was flaming wi' passion! I couldna but think hoo little natur there is about her."

Before the party dispersed, Miss Ogilvie came into the parlour; and, while Mrs Ogilvie was engaged in producing wine and cake, said to Mrs Limont, in a low voice—

"Randal was not well the night before last. I hope he is better now."

"He'll be happy to hear that you are better," whispered Mrs Limont; "but, puir fellow, he is very, very low."

Randal called a few days afterwards, that he might not appear offended, and unwilling to abandon all hope of being permitted to visit the family. To his great delight, Mrs Ogilvie received him with apparently more than usual kindness. But Eliza, who was also in the room, appeared to be much embarrassed. Her voice faltered as she returned his salutation, and he observed that she was much paler than usual. Let us explain the secret at once:—Dippie had, that morning, written to Eliza, making a proposal of marriage; and her mother had been strenuously, but fruitlessly urging her to accept of it. Upon her daughter's decided rejection, Mrs Ogilvie, whose kindness, either as a wife or as a mother, depended emphatically upon the condition of unqualified subservience to all her caprices, tauntingly observed—

"You're refusing a good offer for the sake of a man who has never asked you to be his wife."

"He has not, mamma. But his motives in this, as in every other respect, are pure and just. I have no doubt that the want of a profession has prevented him from making a formal disclosure. But there he is."

And, to her astonishment, her mother received him with the utmost cordiality. But her heart was unchanged; and her assumed manner was partly founded on her wish to create an unfavourable contrast, in the mind of her daughter, between her frankness and Randal's reserve—for which she knew she had given him sufficient reason—and partly on an inclination to conceal from him her share in a letter which she had determined that Mr Ogilvie should write him, forbidding any repetition of his visits. Soon, however, after his entrance, she was called out of the room; and Randal could no longer refrain from acknowledging his feelings to Eliza, and from asking her permission to open the subject to her father. She at once admitted that the regard was mutual, and complied with his request, not without expressing an apprehension that the opposition of her mother might prove successful; but declaring that, if it was, she never would become the wife of another. Mrs Ogilvie's step was soon heard on the stairs, and Randal, (from some feeling of melancholy prescience,) having hastily begged for a lock of her hair, she instantly cut off one of the long beautiful curls which flowed down her temples; and he had only time to secret it when the door opened. He then rose and took his leave. Immediately on his return home, he wrote to Mr Ogilvie, avowing the attachment between himself and Eliza, detailing his circumstances and prospects, expressing a hope that he should soon succeed, in his profession, and entreating that, in the meantime, he might be permitted to enter into an engagement with her. To this note, Mr Ogilvie returned a cold and final refusal; at the same time stating that he and his wife and daughter were to set off next morning for the south of England.

From this time, Randal lost all interest in the usual occupations of life; seldom stirring from the house, except late in the evening, and frequently returning wet with dew or rain, to the great terror of Mrs Limont. It was impossible for him to conceal what had happened from her and her worthy husband; and he had, at least, the comfort of real sympathy.

"Haud up yer head, my bairn," she exclaimed, on one occasion. "There's as guid fish in the sea as ever cam oot o't; and hae but patience—the lassie will be her ain mistress some time or ither; and that upsettin body, her mother, will hae but little power owre her when the auld man's

dead. Ye may be sure, Randal, they maun hae had fecht aneuch wi' her, since they've had to tak her to the south, and haena returned yet, though this is November, and she has been there since the beginnin' o' July. Puir, bonny lassie! I'm thinkin she pines as muckle for the want o' you as ye hae dune for her."

In the course of this month, Randal received intelligence of the death of his infant cousin, at which event Mrs Limont could not conceal her satisfaction; and, without mentioning her intention to Randal, wrote to Mrs Ogilvie, apprising her of what had happened.

"The puir lad," said she, after she had dispatched the letter; "will soon be himsel again, as it's a' the want o' that weary estate that's brought him to this pass."

"I really wish that the heart o' that woman may be turned," observed Mr Limont. "It's an awfu' thing to see a mind sae gentle an' sae powerfu' as Randal's, owtaken wi' untimely decay. Do ye no notice hoo weak his voice is noo, Jean? and hoo his lips tremble and the tears come into his een, whenever we speak a kind word to him? My vera soul's wae for him. I hae often thought o' a saying o' Dr Strang, when he was lecturing on the Flood—'The raven,' quo' he, 'metaphorically speaking, finds itsel at hame in this world; but the dove canna get a spot where to rest its wing.' My fear is, Jean, that it'll no be lang before I'll hae to lay his head in the grave."

Randal became every day weaker; and a severe cold which he had caught having settled on his lungs, medical aid was called in. But, one morning about the latter part of February, he requested that Mrs Limont would sit down by his bedside; and he then, in as gentle a manner as possible, told her that, though he might linger for a month or two, he could not ultimately recover, expressing, at the same time, perfect resignation to his fate. He also stated that he had executed a will, bequeathing to her all he possessed; and advised her to get her own son home, that she might have the comfort of his society in her old age. We shall not attempt to describe Mrs Limont's grief. From the sketches we have given of her character, it may easily be conceived; and her only conversation, when alone with her husband, consisted of profound lamentations for Randal, and execrations against Mrs Ogilvie.

In the course of about three weeks after this disclosure, he was removed, by short stages, to the small Border town which was mentioned at the outset, as it was much recommended for the purity of its air. After the immediate fatigue of his journey was overcome, he felt somewhat stronger, and was even able, on two or three occasions, to go, accompanied by his friend, Mr Hamilton, to the picturesque churchyard, which lies at a little distance from the town. He had never seen it before; and he was so struck with the secluded beauty of the situation, that he frequently enjoined his friend to see him buried in the very spot which we have described, and to cause a simple stone to be erected, bearing nothing but his name, the date of his death, his age, and the short passage from Scripture. It was only about a week, however, after the change, that all his symptoms became alarmingly worse—so much so, that Mr Hamilton considered it indispensable to send for Mr and Mrs Limont. On the 2d of April, they arrived; and the anguish, particularly of the latter, when she saw him rapidly sinking, was quite indescribable.

"My poor bairn," she exclaimed, her old face streaming with tears, "THEY HAVE KILLED YE AT LAST; but they'll repent it."

"O sirs," said Mr Limont, "ye've got but a puir reward for a' yer confidence; you've been *nestling* under the wing of a *vulture*."

"Do not distress yourselves, my dear friends," said Randal, in a faint tone. "How thankful I am that I've lived to see you once more! This will be the last thrill of

worldly enjoyment, except perhaps *one*, that I shall feel before I die. Be sure, Mrs Limont, to get your son home—practice will be of comparatively small consequence to him now." Then, after a pause, he continued, in a still lower voice—"Mrs Limont, I wish to speak a few words with you alone."

Mr Limont and Mr Hamilton then left the room; and Randal, raising his head a little from the pillow, stretched out his cold, moist hand to Mrs Limont, which she grasped convulsively in her own.

"Mrs Limont," he said, "have you heard anything of Eliza since I left Edinburgh?" Here he observed that the hand of Mrs Limont trembled; and, making a sudden movement, exclaimed—"Yes, you have. Tell me all—I am strong enough to bear it."

The truth was, that the intelligence conveyed in Mrs Limont's letter to Mrs Ogilvie hastened the family's return to Edinburgh; and, having discovered, casually, the real situation of Randal, they had all called the very day Mr Hamilton's letter had reached Mr Limont.

"I saw her," replied Mrs Limont, "yesterday. She was very pale and thin; and sair, sair distressed when she heard ye were sae ill. Just when she was gaun oot, she stopped for a moment ahint her father and mother, and spoke something that I couldna weel mak oot, as she was amaist choked, aboot a primrose ye had gien her langsyne, and she bid me tell ye she wad keep her promise."

A sudden radiance lit up the dimmed, though still fine intellectual eye of Randal, on hearing these words. "I knew it would be so," he exclaimed, pressing Mrs Limont's hand more firmly—"I knew it would be so; so I have still had one more earthly enjoyment." After a short interval, he again spoke—"I have one more request to make," drawing from his breast a gold locket, containing the curl of Eliza's hair. "See, my friend, that this is not removed; and tell Eliza what I desired to be buried with me." Mrs Limont promised as articulately as she could, and he soon afterwards fell into a sleep which lasted till about ten at night.

When he awoke, he found Mr and Mrs Limont, and Mr Hamilton, sitting by his bedside; and, though life was fast ebbing, the benignity of his nature still continued so unimpaired, that, on hearing Mrs Limont cough, he begged her to go to bed, adding that *she* had a husband and a son to care for. But it may easily be thought that his request was not complied with.—The difficulty of breathing increased very rapidly; and, about a quarter before eleven, he was heard to murmur—"I neglected my mother's advice; but the penalty will soon be paid." Randal, then, in a tone of voice scarcely audible, requested Mrs Limont to come near.

"Death is at hand," said he—"would you be so kind as to close *this* eye?" She placed her hands upon both; but he gently removed the right, and whispered, "*That one is closed already.*"* The difficulty of respiration soon became greater and greater, and the only other words which he spoke were—

"I bless God that I die in peace with Him and with all." And, before midnight, his spirit had ascended to that place where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in Heaven."

* A similar incident is recorded of the Rev. Mr Wolff.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SNOW STORM OF 1825.

OUR readers will recollect the dreadful snow storm that occurred in the year 1825. Indeed, it is impossible that any one who was above the years of childhood at the time, can have forgot it, or can ever forget it. It was the most tremendous with which this country has been visited for a century. For nearly six weeks, and in some places for a much longer period, every road, excepting those in the immediate vicinity of large towns, was blocked up, and rendered impassable by either horse or foot; and one consequence was, that scores of travellers of all descriptions, were suddenly arrested in their several places of temporary sojournment on the road, and held in durance during the whole period of the storm, without the possibility of communicating with their friends, or, in the case of mercantile travellers, with their employers.

It was a weary time, on the whole, to those who were thus laid under embargo; but not without its pleasures either; for each house thus situated, having perhaps a dozen strangers in it, from and going to all parts of the kingdom, became a distinct and independent little community, from which its local exclusion from the busy world had shut out, also, for the time at any rate, much of its cares and troubles—a philosophic spirit soon prevailing, after the first day or two's confinement, to make the most of what could not be helped.

The writer of this sheet happened to be one of nine who were shut up in the way alluded to, in an inn in the south of Scotland; and although, as already said, it was rather a weary thing on the whole, yet was it not without its enjoyments. Our *ennui* was often delightfully relieved by the diversity of character as developed in our little community; for we had, if we may so speak, the salt, the pepper, and the vinegar of human dispositions, sprinkled throughout the party, which not only took from the cold insipidity of our confinement, but gave to it a rich and pleasant relish. Our host's cellar and larder happened to be well stored, while the house was, in all other respects, an excellent one; so, what with the produce of the former, and the roaring fires kept up by Jamie, the waiter, we had really nothing to complain of on the score of creature comforts—and it is amazing how far the possession of these will go to reconcile men to otherwise very unpleasant situations. In this case, they were enhanced by the dreary prospect from without—the howling storm, the drifting snow, and the wide, dismal, monotonous waste of dazzling white that lay all around us.

The consciousness of the comforts we enjoyed, in short, put us all in good humour with one another; while a fellowship in misfortune, and a community of feeling as well as of persons, introduced a degree of friendliness and intimacy, to which few other circumstances, perhaps, would have given rise. We had our small round of standard jokes peculiar to our situation, which few else could have understood, and fewer still have appreciated, though they did understand them. We had, too, a small round of harmless tricks, which we regularly played off every day on some one or other of the corps. But, notwithstanding all this—the larder, the cellar, the fire, the jokes, and the tricks—time did occasionally hang rather heavily upon our hands, especially in the even-

ings. To lessen this weight, we latterly fell upon the contrivance of telling stories, one or two of us each night, by turns. The idea is a borrowed one, as the reader will at once perceive, but we humbly think not a pin the worse on that account. There was no limitation, of course, as to subject. Each was allowed to tell what story he liked; but it was the general understanding that these stories should be personal if possible—that is, that each should relate the most remarkable circumstances in his own life. Those who had nothing of the kind to communicate were, of course, allowed to get off with anything else they chose to substitute. The first to whose lot it fell to entertain us in this way, was a fat, good-humoured, good-natured, little, hunch-backed gentleman, with a short leg and a bright yellow waistcoat. He was a mercantile traveller, and, if I recollect right, a native of Newcastle.

When the little man was asked to open his budget, "Why, gentlemen," said he, "I do not see that I can do better than comply with the understood wish of the company, by giving you a sketch of my own life, which you will find to present, I think, as curious a race, or struggle, or whatever else you may choose to call it, between luck and misfortune, as perhaps you have heard of:—

You must know, then, my friends, (went on the little gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat,) that the indications of my future good fortune began to exhibit themselves as early as they well could. I was born with a caul upon my head, gentlemen, which all of you know is an indubitable token that the little personage to whom it belongs will be singularly fortunate in life. Well, gentlemen, I was favoured, as I have already said, with one of those desirable head-pieces; and great was the joy the circumstance gave rise to amongst the female friends and gossips who were assembled on the occasion. The midwife said that everything I should put my hand to would prosper, and that I would be, to a certainty, at the very least, a general, a bishop, or a judge; the nurse to whom I was subsequently consigned, on the same ground, dubbed me a duke, and would never call me by any other title; whilst my poor mother saw me in perspective, sitting amongst the great ones of the earth surrounded with power, wealth, and glory. Such were the bright visions of my future prosperity, to which my caul gave rise; and probably they might have been realized, had it not been for an unlucky counteracting or thwarting power that always stepped in, seemingly for no other purpose but to disappoint my own hopes and those of my friends; some times baulking my expectations altogether, when on the point of fruition—sometimes converting that to evil in me which would assuredly have produced good to any other person. But to proceed with my history. I grew up a fine, stout, well-made child. Ay, you may laugh, gentlemen, (said the little man, good-humouredly, seeing a titter go round at this personal allusion, which so ill accorded with his present deformed appearance,) but it was the case, I assure you, until I met with the accidents that altered my shape to what you now see it. Well, I repeat that I grew a fine, promising child, and to the inexpressible amazement and delight of my parents, shewed symptoms of taking unusually early to my legs.

Nor were these symptoms unfaithful. I took to my

pins on my own account, before I was ten months old ; but, unfortunately, my first walk was into a draw-well, where I would infallibly have been drowned, if it had not been for a large Newfoundland dog which my father kept, and which was close by me at the time of the accident. The faithful creature leapt in after me, and kept me afloat, until my father came and extricated me. After this, I was never trusted a moment out of sight ; and thus, instead of this precocious development of my physical powers proving a blessing to me, it proved a curse ; for it deprived me of all liberty. As I grew up, however, this restraint became less rigorous, and I was permitted to ramble in the garden ; and one of my first feats, after obtaining this freedom, was, to climb a high wall, to come at an uncommonly fine apple that had long tempted me with its rosy cheeks, and I had just succeeded in getting near enough to the prize to grasp it, when, in making this effort, down I came ; and this leg, gentlemen, (said the little man, holding out his deformed limb,) was the consequence. I fell and broke my leg, just as I was about to grasp the apple. Fatal type of all my subsequent misfortunes !

I have now, gentlemen, (went on the little man,) to account for the other deformity that disfigures me : viz.—my hump-back. This befell me in the following manner. Playing one day with a number of boys of about my own age, which was then six or seven, a big fellow, of double the size of any of us, came in amongst us, and began to plunder us of our playthings ; and he was in the very act of robbing me of a hoop, when another lad, still stronger and bigger, who saw the attempted robbery, generously ran to my assistance, and aimed a tremendous blow with a stick at my assailant. The blow, however, missed him at whom it was aimed, and took me exactly on the small of the back, which it broke in two as if had been a pipe shank ; and the consequence was, as you see, gentlemen, (said the little man in the bright yellow waistcoat, edging round, at the same time to indicate his hump.)

Well, then, gentlemen, (he went on,) up to my ninth year, this was all the good fortune that my caul brought me—that is, being first half-drowned, then breaking my leg, and lastly my back. To compensate, however, in some measure, for these mischances, I turned out an excellent scholar ; and, especially, became a very expert Latinist—a circumstance which my father, who had a great veneration for the language, thought sufficient alone to make my fortune ; and it certainly procured me—that is, very nearly procured me—in the meantime, some of the chief honours of the school. I say very nearly—for I did not actually obtain them ; but it was only by the merest accident in the world that I did not. The misapprehension of a single word deprived me of a prize which was about to be awarded to me, and gave it to one of my competitors. This was reckoned a very hard case ; but there was no help for it.

Still there was luck in the caul, gentlemen, (continued the little man in the bright yellow waistcoat,) as you shall hear. Going home from school one day, a distance of about a mile and a half, I found a very handsome gold watch, with valuable appendages, lying upon the road. I was at first afraid to lift the glittering treasure, hardly believing it possible that so rich and splendid a thing could be without an owner ; but, gradually picking up courage, I seized on the watch, hurried it into my pocket, and ran onwards like a madman. I had not run far, however, when a man, respectably dressed, but who seemed the worse of liquor, or rather like one just recovering from a debauch, met me, and, seizing me by the breast, fiercely asked me if I had seen anything of a gold watch. I instantly confessed that I had found such a thing ; and, trembling with apprehension, for the fellow continued to look furiously at me, produced the watch.

Very well," said he, taking it from me. " Now, you

little villain you, confess. You did not find the watch, but stole it from me whilst I slept on the road-side."

I protested that it was not so—that I found it as I had said. To this protest the fellow replied by striking me a violent blow on the side of the head, which stretched me on the road ; where, after administering two or three parting kicks, to teach me honesty, as he said, he left me in a state of insensibility. I was shortly afterwards picked up and carried home ; but so severe had been the drubbing I got, that I was obliged to keep my bed for three weeks after. And this was all I gained by finding a gold watch. Had any other person found it, they would have been allowed to keep it, or, at the worst, have got a handsome reward for giving it up ; but such things were not to be in any case in which I should be concerned.

Still I say, gentlemen, (continued the little man in the bright yellow waistcoat,) there *was* luck in the caul ; for, soon after, a distant relation of my mother's, who had been long in the West Indies, and had there realized a large fortune, having come to England on some business, paid us a visit, and was so well pleased with the attention shewn him, and with the society he got introduced to, that he spent the whole subsequent period of his temporary residence in this country with us. During this time, he became remarkably fond of me—so fond that he could never be without me. I was obliged to accompany him in all his walks, and even to sleep with him. In short, he became so attached to me, that it was evident to every one that some good would come out of it ; for he was immensely rich, and had no family of his own, never having been married. Indeed, that I would be the better for the old boy's love was not matter of conjecture, for he frequently hinted it very broadly. He would often take me on his knee, and, while fondling me, would say, in presence of my father and mother—" Well, my little fellow, who knows but you may ride in your carriage yet ? As odd things have happened." Then, " Would you like to be a rich man, Bobby ?" he would inquire, looking archly at me. " If you continue as good a boy as you are just now, I'll undertake to promise that you will." In short, before leaving us, our wealthy friend, whose name was Jeremiah Hairsplitter, held out certain hopes to my parents of my being handsomely provided for in his will. This so affected us all, that we wept bitterly when the good old man left us to return to the West Indies ; where, however, he told us, he now intended remaining only a short time, having made up his mind to come home and spend the remainder of his days with us.

Well, gentlemen, (said the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat,) here was a very agreeable prospect, you'll all allow ; and it was one in which there appeared so much certainty, that it cost my father—who had been led to believe he should get a handsome slice too—many serious thoughts as to how we should dispose of the money—how lay it out to the best advantage. My father, who was a very pious man, determined, for one thing, to build a church ; and, as to me and my fortune, he thought the best thing I could do, seeing, from my deformities, that I was not very well adapted for undergoing the fatigues of a professional life, was, when I should become a little older, to turn country gentleman ; and with this idea he was himself so well pleased, that he began, thinking it best to take time by the forelock, to look around for a suitable seat for me when I should come of age and be ready to act on my own account ; and he fortunately succeeded in finding one that seemed a very eligible investment. It was a very handsome country-house, about the distance of three miles from where we lived, and to which there was attached an estate of 1000 acres of land, all in a high state of cultivation. The upset price of the whole—for the property was at that moment on sale—was £20,000 · a dead bargain, as

the lawyer who had the management of the property assured us. It was worth at least double the money, he said; and in this, Mr Longshanks, the land-measurer, whom my father also consulted on the subject, perfectly agreed; but was good enough to give my father a quiet hint to hold off a bit, and, as the proprietor was in great distress for money, he might probably get the estate for £18,000, or something, at any rate, considerably below the price named. Grateful for this hint, my father invited Mr Longshanks to dine with him, and gave him a bottle of his best wine. Now, gentlemen, please to observe (said the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat) that while we were thus treating about an estate worth £20,000, we had not a sixpence wherewith to buy it; so that Mr Longshanks' hint about holding off was rather a superfluous one. But then our prospects were good—nay, certain; there was, therefore, no harm—nay, it was proper and prudent to anticipate matters a little in the way we did; so that we might at once have the advantage of sufficient time to do things deliberately, and be prepared to make a good use of our fortune the moment we got possession of it.

That our prospects were excellent, I think you will all allow, gentlemen, when you take into account what I have already told regarding our worthy relative; but that they really were so, you will still more readily admit, when I tell you that we received many letters from Mr Hairsplitter after his arrival in Jamaica, (for he now opened a regular correspondence with us,) in all of which he continued not only to keep our hopes alive, as to the destination of his wealth, but to increase them; so that I—for the bulk of his fortune, there was no doubt, was intended for me—was already looked upon as a singularly lucky young dog; and of this opinion, in the most unqualified sense, and in a most especial manner, was my mother, my nurse, and the lady who ushered me into the world—all of whom exultingly referred to my caul, and to their own oft-expressed sentiments regarding the luck that was to befall me.

But, to return to my story. After a lapse of about two or three years, during which, as I have said, we received many letters from our worthy relative, one came, in which he informed us that it was the last we should have from him from Jamaica, as he had wound up all his affairs, and was about to leave the island, to return home and spend the remainder of his days with us, or in our immediate neighbourhood.

Well, gentlemen, you see matters were gradually approaching to a very delightful crisis; and we, as you may believe, saw it with no small satisfaction. We indulged in the most delicious dreams; indeed, our whole life was now one continued reverie of the most soothing and balmy kind. From this dreamy state, however, we were very soon awakened by the following paragraph in a newspaper, which my father accidentally stumbled on one morning as we were at breakfast. It was headed "Dreadful Shipwreck," and went on thus:—"It is with feelings of the most sincere regret we inform our readers, that the *Isabella*, from Jamaica to London, has foundered at sea, and every one on board perished, together with the whole of a most valuable cargo. Amongst the unfortunate passengers in this ill-fated vessel, was a Mr Jeremiah Hairsplitter, a well-known Jamaica planter, who was on his return, for good and all, to his native land. The whole of this gentleman's wealth, which was enormous, will now go, it is said, (he having died intestate,) to a poor man in this neighbourhood, [Liverpool,] who is nearest of kin."

Well, gentlemen (continued the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat,) here was a pretty finish to all our bright anticipations! For some time, indeed, we entertained hopes that the reports, especially the last, might be false; but, alas! they turned out too true. True, true were they, to the letter. My father, unwilling to believe

that all was lost, called upon a lawyer in the town where we resided, who had a good deal to do with our late relative's affairs; and, after mentioning to him the footing we were on with the deceased, and the expectations he had led us to indulge in, inquired if *nothing* would arise to us from Mr Hairsplitter's effects.

"Not a rap!" was the laconic and dignified reply—"not a cross, not a cowrie! You haven't a shadow of claim to anything. All that Mr Hairsplitter may have said goes for nothing, as it is not down in black and white, in good legal phrase."

So, my friends, (said the narrator, with a sigh,) here was an end to this fortune and to my luck at that bout, at any rate. Still, gentlemen, (went on the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat,) I maintain there was luck in the caul.

I was now, you must know, my friends, getting up in years—that is to say, I was now somewhere about one-and-twenty. Well, my father, thinking it full time that I should be put in a way of doing something for myself, applied, in my behalf, to a certain nobleman who resided in our neighbourhood, and who was under obligations to my father for some election services. When my father called on the peer alluded to, and informed him of his object—"Why, sir," said his Lordship, "this is rather a fortunate circumstance for both of us. I am just now in want of precisely such a young man as you describe your son to be, to act as my secretary and amanuensis, and will therefore be very glad to employ him." His Lordship then mentioned his terms. They were liberal, and, of course, instantly accepted. This settled, my father was desired to send me to Cram Hall his Lordship's residence, next day, to enter on my new duties.

Here, then, you see, was luck at last, gentlemen, (said the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat;) for the nobleman was powerful, and there was no saying what he might do for me. Next day, accordingly, I repaired to Cram Hall with a beating, but exulting heart; for I was at once proud of my employment, and terrified for my employer, who was, I knew, a dignified, pompous, vain, conceited personage.

"Shew off your Latin to him, Dick, my boy," said my father, before I set out: "it will give him a good opinion of your talents and erudition." I promised that I would.

Well, on being introduced to his Lordship, he received me with the most affable condescension; but there was something about his affability, I thought, which made it look extremely like as if it had been assumed for the purpose of shewing how a great man could descend.

"Glad to see you, young man," he said. "I hope you and I shall get on well together. But there was just one single question regarding you, which I quite forgot to put to your father. Do you understand Latin thoroughly?—that is, can you translate it readily?"

Feeling my own strength on this point, and delighted that he had afforded me so early an opportunity of declaring it, I replied, with a degree of exultation which I had some difficulty in repressing—"I flatter myself, my Lord, that you will not find me deficient in that particular. I understand Latin very well, and will readily undertake to translate anything in that language which may be presented to me."

"In that case," replied his Lordship, gravely, "I am sorry to say, young man, you will not suit me."

"How, my Lord!" said I, with a look of mingled amazement and disappointment—"because I understand Latin? I should have thought that a recommendation to your Lordship's service."

"Quite otherwise, sir," replied his Lordship, coolly. "It may appear to you, indeed, sir, rather an odd ground of disqualification. But the thing is easily explained. I have

often occasion, sir," he went on, with increasing dignity, "to write on matters of importance to my friends in the Cabinet; and, when I have anything of a very particular nature to say, I always write my sentiments in Latin. It would therefore, sir, be imprudent of me to employ any one in transcribing such letters, who is conversant with the language alluded to; or, indeed, otherwise exposing them to the eye of such a person. You will, therefore, young man," continued the peer—now rising from his seat, as if with a desire that I should take the movement as a hint that he wished the interview to terminate—"present my respects to your father, and say that I am very sorry for this affair—very sorry, indeed."

Saying this, he edged me towards the door; and, long before I reached it, bowed me a good morning, which there was no evading. I acknowledged it the best way I could, left the house, and returned home—I leave you, gentlemen, to conceive with what feelings. My Latin, you see, of which I was so vain, and which, with anybody else, would have been a help to success in the world in many situations, and in none could have been against it, was the very reverse to me.

That there was luck in the caul, gentlemen, nevertheless, I still maintain, (said the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat, laughing;) and you will acknowledge it when I tell you that, soon after the occurrence just related, I bought a ticket in the lottery, which turned out a prize of £20,000."

"Ha, ha! at last!" here shouted out, with one voice, all the little man's auditors. "So you caught it at last!"

"Not so fast, gentlemen, if you please—not so fast," said the little man, gravely. "The facts certainly were as I have stated. I did buy a ticket in the lottery. I recollect the number well, and will as long as I live. I chose it for its oddity. It was 9999, and it did turn out a £20,000 prize. But there is a trifling particular or two regarding it, which I have yet to explain. A gentleman, an acquaintance of mine, to whom I had expressed some regret at having ventured so much money on a lottery ticket, offered not only to relieve me of it, but to give me a premium of five pounds, subject to a deduction of the price of a bowl of punch. "A bird in hand's worth two in the bush," thought I, and at once closed with his offer. Nay, so well pleased was I with my bargain, that I insisted on giving an additional bowl, and actually did so.

Next day, my ticket was drawn a twenty thousand pound prize! and I had the happiness (added the little man, with a rueful expression of countenance) of communicating to my friend his good luck, as the letter of advice on the subject came, in the first instance, to me.

However, gentlemen, luck there was in the caul still, say I, (continued the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat.) Love, gentlemen—sweet, dear, delightful love!—(here the little man looked extremely sentimental)—came to soothe my woes and banish my regrets. Yes, my friends, (he said, observing a slight smile of surprise and incredulity on the countenance of his auditors, proceeding, we need hardly say, from certain impressions regarding his personal appearance,) I say that love—dear, delightful love—came now to my aid, to reconcile me to my misfortunes, and to restore my equanimity. The objects of my affections—for there were two"—

"Oh, unconscionable man!" we here all exclaimed in one breath. "Two! Ah! too bad that."

"Yes, I repeat, two," said the little man, composedly—"the objects of my passion were two. The one was a beautiful girl of three-and-twenty—the other, a beautiful little fortune of £10,000, of which she was in full and uncontrolled possession. Well, gentlemen, to make a long story short, we loved each other most devotedly; for she was a girl of singular judgment and penetration and placed little

store by mere personal appearance in those she loved: the mind, gentlemen—the mind was what this amiable girl looked to. Well, as I was saying, we loved each other with the fondest affection; and at length I succeeded in prevailing upon her to name the happy day when we should become one. Need I describe to you, gentlemen, what were my transports—what the intoxicating feelings of delight with which my whole soul was absorbed by the contemplation of the delicious prospect that lay before me! A beautiful woman and a fortune of £10,000 within my grasp! No. I'm sure I need not describe the sensations I allude to, gentlemen—you will at once conceive and appreciate them.

Well, my friends, all went smoothly on with me this time. The happy day arrived—we proceeded to church. The clergyman began the service. In three minutes more, gentlemen, I would have been indissolubly united to my beloved and her £10,000, when, at this critical moment, a person rushed breathless into the church, forced his way through the crowd of friends by whom we were surrounded, and caught my betrothed in his arms, exclaiming—"Jessie, Jessie! would you forsake me? Have you forgot your vows?" Jessie replied by a loud shriek, and immediately fainted.

Here, then, you see, gentlemen, (continued the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat,) was a pretty kick-up all in a moment.

In a twinkling, the bevy of friends by whom we were accompanied scattered in all directions—some running for water, some for brandy, some for one thing and some for another, till there was scarcely one left in the church. The service was, of course, instantly stopped; and my beloved was, in the meantime, very tenderly supported by the arms of the stranger; for such he was to me at any rate, although, by no means so either to the lady herself or to her friends. I was, as you may well believe, all astonishment and amazement at this extraordinary scene, and could not at all conceive what it meant; but it was not long before I was very fully informed on this head. To return, however, in the meantime, to the lady. On recovering from her fainting fit, the stranger, who had been all along contemplating her with a look of the most tender affection, asked her, in a gentle voice, "If she would still continue true to him." And, gentlemen, she answered, though in a voice scarcely audible, "Yes;" and, immediately after, the two walked out of church arm in arm, in spite of the remonstrances and even threats of myself and my friends—leaving us, and me in particular, to such reflections on the uncertainty of all human events as the circumstance which had just occurred was calculated to excite. In three weeks after, the stranger and Jessie were married. Who he was is soon explained. He had been a favoured lover of Jessie's some seven years before, and had gone abroad, where it was believed he had died, there having been no word from him during the greater part of that period. How this was explained I never knew; but that he was not dead, you will allow was now pretty clearly established.

Now, gentlemen, (added our little friend,) I have brought my mishaps up to the present date. What may be still in store for me, I know not; but I have now brought myself to the peaceful and most comfortable condition of having no hopes of succeeding in anything, and therefore am freed, at least, from all liability to the pains of disappointment." And here ended the story of the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat.

We all felt for his disappointments, and wished him better luck.

The person to whose turn it came next to entertain us, was a quiet, demure looking personage, of grave demeanour, but of mild and pleasant countenance. His gravity, we thought, partook a little of melancholy; and he was in

consequence, recognised generally in the house by the title of the melancholy gentleman. He was, however, very far from being morose; indeed, on the contrary, he was exceedingly kind and gentle in his manner, and would not, I am convinced, have harmed the meanest insect that crawls, let alone his own species.

"Well, gentlemen," said this person, on being informed that it was his turn to divert us with some story or other, "I will do the best I can to entertain you, and will follow the example of my unfortunate predecessor of the evening, by choosing a subject of something of a personal nature.

"To begin, then, my friends," went on the melancholy gentleman—"I do not, I think, arrogate too much when I say that I am as peaceable and peace-loving a man as ever existed. I have always abhorred strife and wrangling; and never knowingly or willingly interfere in any way with the affairs of my neighbours or of others. I would, in short, at any time, rather sacrifice my interests than quarrel with any one; while I reckon it the greatest happiness to be let alone, and to be allowed to get through the world quietly and noiselessly. From my very infancy, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) I loved quiet above all things; and there is a tradition in our family strikingly corroborative of this. The tradition alluded to bears that I never cried while an infant, and that I never could endure my rattle. Well, gentlemen, such were and such still are my dispositions. But, offending no one, and interfering with no one, how have I been treated in my turn? You shall hear.

At school, I was thrashed by the master for not interfering to prevent my companions fighting; and I was thrashed by my companions for not taking part in their quarrels: so that, between them, I had, I assure you, a very miserable life of it. However, these were but small matters compared to what befell me after I had fairly embarked in the world.

My first experience after this of how little my peaceful and inoffensive disposition would avail me, was with an evening club which I joined. For some time I got on very well with the persons who composed this association, and seemed—at least I thought so—to be rather a favourite with them, on account of my quiet and peaceable demeanour; and, under ordinary circumstances, perhaps I might have continued so. But the demon of discord got amongst them, and I became, in consequence of my non-resisting qualities, the scapegoat of their spleen; or, rather, I became the safety-valve by which their passions found a harmless egress. But, to drop metaphor, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) the club got to loggerheads on a certain political question—I forget now what it was—and for some nights there was a great deal of angry discussion and violent altercation on the subject. In these debates, however, in accordance with my natural disposition, I took no part whatever, except by making some fruitless attempts to abate the resentment of the parties, by thrusting in a jocular remark or so, when anything particularly severe was said. Well, gentlemen, how was I rewarded for this charitable conduct, think you? Why, I'll tell you.

On the third or fourth night, I think it was, of the discussion alluded to, a member got up and said, addressing the club—"My friends, a good deal of vituperation and opprobrious language has been used in this here room, regarding the question we have been discussing these three or four nights back; but we have all spoke our minds freely, and stood to it like men who isn't afeared to speak their sentiments anywhere. Now, I says that's what I likes. I likes a man to stand to his tackle. But I hates, as I do the Devil, your snakes in the grass, your smooth-chopped fellows, who hears all and never says nothing, so as how you can't tell whether he is fish or flesh. I say, I hate such dastardly, sneaking fellows, who won't speak out; and I says that such are unfit for this company;" (here the speaker

looked hard at me;) "and I move that he be turned out directly, neck and heel."

Well, this speech, my friends, (went on the melancholy gentleman,) which you will perceive was levelled at me, was received with a shout of applause by both parties. The ruffing and cheering was immense; and most laudably prompt was the execution of the proposal that excited it. Before I had time to evacuate the premises quietly and of my own accord, which I was about to do, I was seized by the breast by a tall ferocious-looking fellow who sat next me, and who was immediately aided by three or four others, and dragged over every obstacle that stood in the way to the door, out of which I was finally kicked with particular emphasis.

Such, then, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) was the first most remarkable instance of the benefits I was likely to derive from my inoffensive non-meddling disposition. However, it was my nature; and neither this unmerited treatment nor any other usage which I afterwards experienced could alter it.

Some time after this, I connected myself with a certain congregation in our town, and it unfortunately happened that, soon after I joined them, they came all to sixes and sevens about a minister. One party was for a Mr Triterite, the other a Mr White. These were distinguished, as usual in such and similar cases, by the adjunct *ite*, which had, as you may perceive, a most unhappy effect in the case of the name of the first gentleman, whose followers were called Triteriteites, and those of the other Whiteites. However, this was but a small matter. To proceed. In the squabbles alluded to, gentlemen, I took no part; it being a matter of perfect indifference to me which of the candidates had the appointment. All that I desired was, that I might be let alone, and not be called upon to interfere in any way in the dispute. But would they allow me this indulgence, think you? No, not they. They resolved, seemingly, that my unobtrusive conduct should be no protection to me. Two or three days after the commencement of the contest, I was waited upon by a deputation from a committee of the Triteriteites, and requested to join them in opposing the Whiteites. This I civilly declined; telling them, at the same time, that it was my intention and my earnest wish to avoid all interference in the pending controversy; that I was perfectly indifferent to which of the candidates the church was given, and would be very glad to become a hearer of either of them; that, in short, I wished to make myself no enemies on account of any such contest.

"Oh, very well, Mr B——," said the spokesman, reddening with anger, "we understand all this perfectly, and think very little, I assure you, of such mean, evasive conduct. Had you said boldly and at once that you favoured the other party, we would at least have given you credit for honesty. But you may depend upon it, sir," he added, "White never will get the church. That you may rely upon."

"Scurvy conduct," muttered another of the committee, as he was retiring after the speaker.

"Shabby, snivelling, drivelling conduct," muttered a third.

"Low, mean, sneaking conduct," said a fourth.

"Dirty subterfuge," exclaimed a fifth. And off the gentlemen went.

But they had not yet done with me. One of the number was a person with whom I had some acquaintance, and the next day I received from him the following note:—"Sir, your unmanly, (I will not mince the matter with you,) your unmanly and disingenuous conduct yesterday, when called upon by Mr Triterite's committee, has so disgusted me that I beg you to understand that we are friends no longer. A candid and open avowal of opposite sentiments from those which I entertain, I trust, I shall be always liberal enough to tolerate in any one, without prejudice to previous intimacy;

but I cannot remain on terms of friendship with a man who has the meanness to seek to conciliate the party he opposes, by concealing his adherence to that which he has espoused.—I am, sir, &c.

Well, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) was not this an extremely hard case? To be thus abused, and reviled, and scouted, for merely desiring to be allowed to live in peace, and to have nothing to do with a squabble in which I did not feel in any way interested. But this was not all. I was lampooned, caricatured, and paragraphed in the newspapers, in a thousand different ways. In the first, I was satirized as the *fair* dealer; in the second, I was represented as a wolf in sheep's clothing; and in the last, I was hinted at as "a certain quiet double-faced gentleman, not a hundred miles from hence."

But still this was not all. Two or three days after I had been waited on by the Triteriteites, the same honour was done me by the Whiteites, and with similar views. To the gentlemen of this party, I said precisely what I had said to those of the opposite faction, and begged of them, in heaven's name, to let me alone, and settle the matter amongst them as they best could.

"Well," replied one of the gentlemen, when I had done, "I must say, I did not expect this of you, Mr B. I thought I could have reckoned on your support; but it doesn't signify. We can secure Mr White's appointment without you. But I must say, if you had been the candid man I took you for, you would have told me, ere this, that you meant to have supported the other party. I really cannot think very highly, Mr B., of your conduct in this matter; but it doesn't signify, sir—it doesn't signify. We now know who are our friends and who are not. Mr Triterite, you may depend upon it, will never get the church, even though he has you to support him." Saying this, he turned on his heel and left me, followed by his train, who, precisely as the others had done, muttered as they went, "shabby fellow," "mean scamp," "shuffling conduct," "snake in the grass," (favourite phrase this,) &c. &c.

Well, my friends, here you see, (said the melancholy gentleman,) without giving any one the smallest offence, and desiring nothing so much as peace and the good will of my neighbours—here was I, I say, become obnoxious to heaven knows how many people; for my reputation naturally extended from the committees to the other members of the congregation, and from them again to their friends and acquaintances; so that I had, in the end, a pretty formidable array of enemies. The consequence of this affair was, that I soon found myself compelled, from the petty persecutions and annoyances of all sorts to which I was subsequently exposed, to leave the congregation altogether. However, to compensate for all these troubles and vexations, I had the good fortune, about this time, to become acquainted with a very amiable young lady, as peaceably inclined and as great a lover of quiet as myself. This lady I married, having previously secured a house in one of the quietest and most retired places in the town, so as to be out of the way of all noise and din. Immediately beneath this house, however, there was an empty unlet shop, which I could not help regarding with a suspicious eye, from an apprehension that it might be taken by a person of some noisy calling or other; and so much at last did this fear alarm me, that I determined on taking the shop into my own hands, and running myself the risk of its letting—thus securing the choice of a tenant. Having come to this resolution, then, I called upon the landlord and inquired the rent.

"O sir," said he, "the shop is let."

"Let, sir!" replied I; "I saw a ticket on it yesterday."

"That might well be, sir, for it was only let this morning."

"And to whom, sir, is it let, may I ask? I mean, sir, what is his business?"

"A tinsmith, sir," said the landlord, coolly.

"A tinsmith!" replied I, turning pale. "Then my worst fears are realized!"

The landlord looked surprised, and inquired what I meant. I told him, and had a laugh from him for my pains.

Yes, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) a tinsmith had taken the shop—a working tinsmith—and a most industrious and hard working one he was, to my cost. But this was not the worst of it. The tinsmith was not a week in his new shop, when he received a large West India order; and when I mention that this piece of good fortune, as I have no doubt he reckoned it, compelled him to engage about a score of additional hands, I may safely leave it to yourselves, gentlemen, to conceive what sort of a neighbourhood I soon found myself in. On this subject, then, I need only say that, in less than a week thereafter, I was fairly hammered out of the house, and compelled to look out for other quarters. But this, after all, was merely a personal matter—one which did not involve the inimical feelings of others towards me; and, therefore, though an inconvenience at the time, it did not disturb my quiet beyond the moment of suffering, as those unhappy occurrences did in which I had, however unwittingly, provoked the enmity of others; and, therefore, after I had been fairly settled in my new house, I thought very little more about the matter, and was beginning to enjoy the calm, quiet life which I so much loved, as nobody had meddled with me for upwards of three weeks. But, alas! this felicity was to be but of short duration. The election of a member of Parliament came on, and I had a vote—but I had determined to make no use of it; for, being but little of a politician, and, above all things, desiring to be on good terms with everybody, whatever might be their religious or political persuasions, I thought the best way for me was to take no share whatever in the impending contest; it being a mere matter of moonshine to me whether Whig or Tory was uppermost. In adopting this neutral course, I expected, and I think not unreasonably, to get quietly through with the matter, and that I should avoid giving offence to any one. I will further confess, that, besides this feeling, I was guided to a certain extent by interest. I had many customers of opposite political tenets—Whig, Tory, and Radical—and I was desirous of retaining the custom and good will of them all, by taking part with none. Grievous error—dreadful mistake!

Soon after, the candidates started, and there happened to be one of each of the three classes just mentioned—that is, Whig, Tory, and Radical. I received a card from one of my best customers, a Whig, containing a larger order than usual for tea, wine, spirits, &c.—such being the articles in which I deal, gentlemen, (said our melancholy friend;) but, at the bottom of the slip, there was the following note:—"Mr S— hopes he may count on Mr B.'s supporting the liberal interest in the ensuing election, by giving his vote to Lord Botherem. Mr S— is perfectly aware of Mr B.'s indifference to political matters; but it is on this very account that Mr S— reckons on his support, as it can be a matter of no moment to him to whom he gives his vote."

Well, gentlemen, here you see was the first attack upon me; and the second soon followed. I saw the storm that was gathering. In the course of the very same day, I was waited on by another customer, an inveterate Tory.

"Well, Mr B.," he said, on entering my shop, "I am come to solicit a very important favour from you; but still one which I am sure you will not refuse an old friend and a tolerably good customer. In short, Mr B.," he went on, "knowing it is a matter of moonshine to you who is member for this burgh—for I've heard you say so—I have come to ask your vote for Mr Blatheringham, the Tory candidate."

"My dear sir," I replied, "you are quite right in saying that it is a matter of moonshine to me what may be the political tenets of our member—but I have resolved—and I

have done so for that very reason—not to interfere in the matter at all. I do not mean to vote on any side.” And I laughed; but my friend looked grave.

“Oh! you don’t, Mr B.!” he said. “Then am I to understand that you won’t oblige me in this matter, although it is on a point which is of no consequence to you, on your own confession, and, therefore, requiring no sacrifice of political principle.”

“My dear sir,” replied I, in the mildest and most conciliating manner possible, anxious to turn away wrath—“I have already said”——

“Oh! I know very well, sir, what you have said, and I’ll recollect it, too, you may depend upon it, and not much to your profit. My account’s closed with you, sir. Good morning!” And out of the shop he went, in a furious passion. On the day following this, I received a note from the Whig canvasser, in reply to one from me on the subject of *his* solicitation, in which I had expressed nearly the same sentiments which I delivered verbally to my Tory friend: and in this note I was served with almost precisely the same terms which the Tory had used in return, only he carried the matter a little farther—telling me plainly that he would not only withdraw his own custom from me, but do his endeavour to deprive me of the custom of those of his friends who dealt with me, who were of the same political opinions with himself. This I thought barefaced enough; and I daresay you will agree with me, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) that it was so.

Here, then, were two of my best customers lost to me for ever. Nay, not only their own custom, but that of all their political partisans who happened to deal with me; for the one was fully as good as his word, and the other a great deal better: that is to say, the one who threatened to deprive me of the custom of his friends, as well as his own, did so most effectually; while the other, who held out no such threat, did precisely the same thing by his friends, and with at least equal success.

In truth, I wanted now but to be asked to support the Radical interest, to be fairly ruined; and this was a piece of good fortune that was not long denied me. “My dear Bob,”—thus commenced a note, which I had, on this unhappy occasion, from an intimate friend, a rattling, rough, outspoken fellow—“As I know your political creed to be couched in the phrase—‘Let who likes be king, I’ll be subject’—that is, you don’t care one of your own figs what faction is uppermost—I request, as a personal favour, your support for Mr Sweep the decks; and this I do the more readily, that I know there is no chance of your being pre-engaged. Now, you mustn’t refuse me, Bob, else you and I will positively quarrel; for I have promised to secure you.”

Here, then, you see, my friends, (said the melancholy gentleman,) was a climax. The unities in the system of persecution adopted against me, were strictly observed. There was beginning, middle, and end complete—nothing wanting. Well—still determined to maintain my neutrality—I wrote a note to my friend, expressing precisely the same sentiments to which I have so often alluded. To this note I received no answer; and can only conjecture the effect it had upon him by the circumstance of his withdrawing his custom from me, and never again entering my shop.

Observe, however, my friends, (here said the melancholy gentleman,) that, in speaking of the persecutions I underwent on this occasion, I have merely selected instances—you are by no means to understand that the cases just mentioned included all the annoyance I met with on the subject of my vote. Not at all. I have, as already said, merely instanced these cases. I was assailed by scores of others in the same way. Indeed, there was not a day, for

upwards of three weeks, that I was not badgered and abused by somebody or other—ay, and that, too, in my own shop. But my shop was now not worth keeping; for Whig, Tory, and Radical had deserted me, and left me to the full enjoyment of my reflections on the course I had pursued. In short, I found that, in endeavouring to offend no one, I had offended everybody; and that, in place of securing my own peace, I had taken the most effectual way I possibly could to make myself unhappy.

Well, in the meantime, you see, my friends, (continued the melancholy gentleman,) the election came on, and was gained by the Whig candidate. The streets were on the occasion paraded by the partisans of each of the parties; and, as is not unusual in such cases, there was a great deal of mischief done, and of which, as a sufferer, I came in for a very liberal share. The Whig mob attacked my shop, and demolished everything in it, to celebrate their triumph, as they said, by plucking a *hen*—in other words, one who would not support them. The Tory mob, again, attacked my house, and smashed every one of my windows, alleging that, as I was not a Tory, I must be a Whig; and, finally, the third estate came in, and finished what the other two had left undone, because I was not a Radical.

Here, then, gentlemen, was I, I repeat, who had offended no one, or, at least, had given no one any reasonable grounds of offence, but who, on the contrary, was most anxious to remain on friendly terms with everybody—here, I say then, was I, surrounded with enemies, persecuted at all hands, my business dwindled away to nothing, and, lastly, my effects destroyed, to the extent of nearly all I possessed in the world. There was still, however, a small residue left; and with this I now determined to retire to the country, and to take a small house in some sequestered place, at a distance from all other human habitations, with the view of ascertaining if I could not there secure the peace and quietness which I found the most harmless and in-offensive conduct could not procure me in society. I determined, in short, to fly the face of man. Well, such a house as I wished, I, after some time, found; and to it I immediately retired. It was situated in a remote part of the country, in a romantic little glen, and several miles distant, on all hands, from any other residence—just the thing I wanted. Here at last, thought I, as I gazed on the solitude around me, I will find that peace and quiet that are so dear to me; here is no one to quarrel with me because I do not choose to think as he does—none to disturb me because I seek to disturb no one. Fatal error again!

There was a small trouting stream at a short distance from the house. I was fond of angling. I went to the river with rod and line, threw in, (it was the very next day after I had taken possession of my new residence,) and in the next instant found myself seized by the cuff of the neck. I had trespassed; and an immediate prosecution, notwithstanding all the concession I could make, was the consequence. The proprietor at whose instance this proceeding took place, was a brute—a tyrant. To all my overtures, his only reply was, that he was determined to make an example of me; and this he did, to the tune of about a score of pounds. This occurrence, of course, put an immediate stop to my fishing recreations; and, at the same time, excited some suspicion in my mind as to the perfect felicity which I was likely to enjoy in my retirement. Having given up all thoughts of angling, I now took to walking, and determined to make a general inspection of the country in my neighbourhood; taking one direction one day, and another the next, and so on, till I should have seen all around me to the extent of some miles—“And surely this,” thought I to myself, “will give offence to nobody.” Well, in pursuance of this resolution, I started on my first voyage of discovery; but had not proceeded far, when a beautiful shady avenue, with its gate flung invitingly open, tempted me to diverge.

I entered it, and was sauntering luxuriously along, with my hat in my hand, enjoying the cool shade of the lofty umbrageous trees by which it was skirted, and admiring the beauties around me—for it was, indeed, a most lovely place. I was, in short, in a kind of delightful reverie, when all of a sudden I found myself again seized by the cuff of the neck, by a ferocious looking fellow with a gun in his hand.

“What do you want here, sir?” said the savage, looking at me as if he would have torn me to pieces.

“Nothing, my good fellow,” replied I, mildly. “I want nothing. I came here merely to enjoy a walk in this beautiful avenue.”

“Then, you’ll pay for your walk, I warrant you. Curse me, if you don’t! You have no right here, sir. Didn’t you see the ticket at the entrance, forbidding all strangers to come here?”

I declared I did not; which was true.

“Then I’ll teach you to look sharper next time. Your name, sir?”

I gave it; and, in three days after, was served with a summons for another trespass, and was again severely fined.

“Strangeland of liberty this!” thought I on this occasion—as, indeed, I had done on some others before—“where one dare not think as they please without making a host of enemies, and where you can neither turn to the right or the left without being taken by the neck.”

I now, in short, found, gentlemen, (said our melancholy friend,) that I had only exchanged one scene of troubles for another; and that even my remote and sequestered situation was no protection to me whatever from annoyance and persecution; and I therefore resolved to quit, and return once more to the town, to make another trial of the justice of mankind; and in this resolution I was confirmed by a letter which I shortly after this received from the proprietor whose lands adjoined the small patch of ground that was attached to the house I resided in.

“Sir,” began this new correspondent, “you must be aware that it is the business of the tenant of the house you occupy to keep the drain which passes your garden in an efficient state, throughout the length of its passage by your ground. Now, sir, it is just now very far from being in such a condition; and the consequence is, that a large portion of my land in your neighbourhood is laid under water, to my serious loss. I therefore request that you will instantly see to this, to prevent further trouble. I am, sir,” &c.

Well, gentlemen, (continued our melancholy friend,) to prevent this further trouble, and to keep, if possible, on good terms with my neighbour, I went, immediately on receipt of his letter, and examined the drain in question; resolving, at the same time, to do what he requested, or rather commanded, if it could be done at a reasonable cost, although I conceived it was a matter with which I had nothing to do. It was an affair of my landlord’s altogether, I thought, especially as nothing had been said to me about the drain when I took the house—at least nothing that I recollected. However, as I have said, I determined, for peace sake, to repair it in the meantime, and to take my landlord in my own hand for restitution. On looking at the drain, I found it indeed in a very bad state, and immediately sent for a person skilled in such matters to give me an idea of what might be the cost of putting it in proper order; and was informed that it might be put in very good condition, in such a state as my neighbour could not object to, for about fifty pounds. Now, gentlemen, this was precisely equal to two years’ rent of my house, and, I thought, rather too large a price to pay for the good will of my neighbour; and I resisted, at the same time referring him to my landlord.

My landlord said he had nothing to do with it, and that I must settle the affair with Mr T—the best way I could. Well, I took advice in the matter for I thought it looked very like a conspiracy against my simplicity and good nature; and was advised by all means to resist. The result was, that my neighbour, Mr T—, immediately commenced a suit against me; and, in my own defence, I was compelled to raise an action of relief against my landlord; so that, when I returned to town, I brought with me from my sweet, calm, peaceable retirement, a couple of full-blown law pleas of the most promising dimensions. Who would have thought it—who would have dreamt it—that, in this seclusion, this desert as I may call it, I should have got involved in such a world of troubles? Well, gentlemen, what do you think was the result? Why, both cases were given against me. In the one, I had to pay costs—and in the other, to pay costs and repair the drain too; and (added the melancholy gentleman, with a sigh) I am at this moment so far on my way to Edinburgh to pay the last instalment of these ruinous and iniquitous claims.” And with this the melancholy gentleman ended the sad story of his sufferings.

We all pitied him from our hearts, and each in his own way offered him the condolence that his case demanded.

He thanked us for the sympathy we expressed, and said that he felt encouraged by it to ask our advice as to how he should conduct himself in future, so as to obtain the peace and quiet he so earnestly desired.

“What would you recommend me to do, gentlemen—where would you advise me to go,” he said, in an imploring and despairing tone—nay, we thought half crying—“to escape this merciless and unprovoked persecution?”

We were all much affected by this piteous appeal, and felt every desire to afford such counsel to our ill-used friend as might be of service to him; but, while we did so, we felt also the extreme difficulty of the case; for we did not see by what possible line of conduct he could escape persecution, if the very harmless and inoffensive one which he had hitherto of his own accord adopted, had been found ineffectual for his protection.

Indeed, it was the very, nay, the only one which, *a priori*, we would have recommended to him; but, as he had clearly shewn us that it was an ineffectual one, we really felt greatly at a loss what to say; and, under this difficulty, we all remained for some time thoughtful and silent. At length, however, it was agreed amongst us, as the case was a poser, that we should sleep on the matter, and in the morning come prepared with such advice as our intervening cogitations should suggest.

The melancholy gentleman again thanked us for the kind interest we took in his unhappy case; adding, that he was now so disheartened, so depressed in spirits, by the usage he had met with, that he almost felt it an obligation to be allowed to live.

As it was now wearing late, and our landlord had just come in to announce that supper was ready, and would be served up when ordered, we agreed to rest satisfied for the night with the extempore autobiographies, as I may call them, of our two worthy companions—the little hunch-backed personage in the bright yellow waistcoat, and the melancholy gentleman; but we, at the same time, resolved that we would resume the same mode of entertainment on the following evening, and continue it till every one had contributed his quota.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE VICTIM OF PUBLIC OPINION.

MEN who disobey the laws, though not possessed of any true courage, are certainly possessed of some degree of hardihood—at least, insensibility to danger—without which they would not bring themselves within the range of the dread arm of public authority. That the possession of such a quality, however, gives peace of mind, is a proposition which no one will advance; for, if there is any real, unqualified misery on earth, it is to be found in the bosom of the wicked. The false hardihood which the bad man possesses is only experienced in the beginning of his career. It is gradually broken in upon as he advances in crime; and is, in general, succeeded by a nervous irritability which renders him the slave of fears which would be despised by the honest coward. That he perseveres in his course, is not the sign of a continuance of his former false courage: it is the mere force of habit; the refuge from that very nervousness which pursues him with terrors; an escape from himself and his own thoughts; and a source of livelihood, without which he would starve. His unhappiness increases with the number of his breaches of God's law and the statutes of the land, and he dies (not always in his bed) the victim of those fears which, at the outset of his life, he despised.

There is, however, another character in the world—the victim of a morbid wish for reputation, or of a co-ordinate fear of public reproach. This character (and the world is full of such) is one of sheer cowardice. He is, in general, not more virtuous than his neighbours; he is, on the contrary, often the cause of crime, always of mischance to himself. His endeavours to cover his faults or misfortunes, dictated by fear alone, and not regulated by a genuine sense of virtue, are often vicious, always ridiculous, and never without such a portion of fear and trembling that he is equally miserable with the breaker of the ten commandments and the laws of the land.

In this way, these two characters often meet in the common experience of morbid terrors. The first has been often described—the heart of the criminal has been well dissected. The latter is well known; but will be nothing the worse for being exemplified in a truly ludicrous character, who, about the middle of the last century, figured in the town of Selkirk.

Peter Penilheugh was a souter, or shoemaker, in the Border town which has become so famous for the possession of "sewers of single-soled shoon," about the time of the Rebellion of 1745. He carried on his trade in a small house, well known to this day, with a timber front, remarkable in consequence of the small round window which gave light to the room where Peter single-handed stood his ground against poverty. He was married to Robina Harden, a daughter of a flesher of that name living in Selkirk, who bore him no children, and seemed to be only useful to him in one peculiar way, to be afterwards noticed.

These two individuals were the very opposite of each other. She was reckoned good-looking; and, though this might be a vulgar prejudice, she was at least showy, tall, fair, and erect. Her power did not lie so much in her face

as in her arm—a fact not unknown to her husband. She might be called a bouncing buxom woman—fond of dress, of going out, of figuring at fairs, of chatting with soldiers, and of running down the characters of her neighbours. She was regardless of her own reputation, which she left entirely to her husband to defend—an occupation which, though requiring no usual powers of specious glossing and representation, was undertaken by him with uncommon though ill-requited zeal.

Her husband, on the other hand, was considerably older. He could not boast of being half so well-favoured as many of the male associates of Robina; and, on that account, did not come in for any share of her approbation. Of a timid and inoffensive nature, he never commenced a brawl with the partner of his affections, whom he loved with a strength equal to her hatred. He was a great advocate for peace; a state of inaction which she considered tame and unworthy of her regard, and which, accordingly, she took every opportunity of enlivening with a dash of domestic war.

There was one characteristic possessed by Penilheugh, which, being a ruling passion, deserves some more particular notice. Though a man in an humble sphere of life, and much below that consequence which would have entitled him to any share of public attention, he possessed a strong ambition of being considered of good repute—"a man o' stautus"—by the inhabitants of his native town. This love of reputation was extended to that general character which is found so much in the mouths of the public, and which generally has so little meaning—of being "well respected;" of having a "fair reputation;" an "unblemished repute;" of being "godly and well-living;" an "example to his fellow men," and so forth. In these floating eulogiums there is never found any specialty or particular. Fame does not like particulars, because these require proof. A general assertion often proves itself; and the people who are greedy of public reputation—great hunters of a good name—love to shelter themselves under such denominations as carry a high-sounding title to superior excellence, leaving particular acts of virtue to the common, every-day people of the world, who, not caring for praise, seem unconscious of the good they perform, and, therefore, are totally unworthy of reward.

This love of being considered a good member of society, and "a man o' stautus," was, in Penilheugh, as is always the case, accompanied with the greatest horror of being considered capable of doing anything to sully that reputation which it was the object of his desire to be thought worthy of. He carried this feature of his character to an extent which made him ridiculous. The whisper of scandal was dreaded by him as if it had been gifted with the powers of the simoom. He never spoke to any one of suspected reputation, avoided all places where it was indecorous to be seen, seldom laughed, never staid from church, concealed the infirmities of his wife, never tasted liquor, and avoided places of amusement. The authorities of scandal in the town were the objects of his fear and adulation. He never passed them without a salutation, and never spoke to them without a compliment. He was, in fact, the victim of a fear of public reproach, the consequence of an extreme

moral timidity, which was constitutional to him, and, no doubt, increased by the consciousness of being placed by his wife in a situation where the shafts of ridicule, a weapon he disliked above all things, might hit him with peculiar force and effect.

This peculiarity of Penilheugh's character was quite well known to Robina, who did not fail to take advantage of it. She was in the practice of constantly maltreating him. His fear of exposure, and of being published as a man who kept an unruly house—a fear he laboured under with the greatest pain—induced him, or rather forced him, to bear with the abuse and even blows that were daily heaped on him by his wife. She knew well this weakness, and did not fail, when in the act of dealing out her chastisement with her usual force and address, to make as much noise as possible, whereby the poor victim forgot his pain in the terror of having it generally known that they did not live agreeably together, and that he was “hen-pecked.”

It was never well understood what particular demerit, on the part of Penilheugh, brought down upon him the indignation of his wife. He was, as already said, a quiet man; and his fear of being talked of in the town disrespectfully, stood in place of a good moral restraint against doing anything to merit the trouble which his spouse took with his skin; and, while he did nothing to anger her before she began, he was as quiet as a lamb, not only during the period occupied by her operations, but after the work was finished to her satisfaction.

The public knew these things, and speculated upon them without coming to any very sound conclusion. A serious investigation of the cause of the broils being, perhaps, unworthy of the subject, the neighbours, as is generally the case, turned it to the account of laughter. Some said that Robina took so much trouble with her husband merely for the sake of exercise to herself—a quaint way of accounting for a thing which is not often done gratuitously, and, besides, as another said, sufficiently disproved by the fact that she took more pleasure in beating Penilheugh than people generally in performing an operation for the sheer and apparently useless purpose of exercising the body. Another said, with a similar attempt at humour, that she did it for the purpose of exercising *him*, from a feeling that his sedentary habits required some circulation of the blood—a plausible explanation, answered another, but also liable to the charge of quaintness, besides being exposed to the objection, that, although *circulation* of the blood may be good for a person of sedentary habits, the *drawing of blood* has never held that reputation.

But the speculations of the public on this subject were suddenly put a stop to by the entire cessation of Robina Penilheugh's labours; for—whether it was that she had got wearied of a thing which she had endeavoured in vain to imbue with any colours of well-marked variety, or that, having wrought so long without getting any thanks, she had considered him ungrateful—she left him one night just as he expected she was going to retire to bed, taking with her a great many portable articles of furniture, all her valuables, (with the exception of a leather thong, which Penilheugh was well acquainted with,) and a considerable portion of her husband's linen. Penilheugh soon ascertained, in a private way, that his wife had eloped with a soldier upwards of six feet high, (Penilheugh was only five and a half,) for whom he had made a pair of very good shoes.

This circumstance was a great grief to Penilheugh—not so much from the loss of his wife, as from the loss of his reputation, which would be an inevitable consequence. His only remedy lay in putting as fair a face upon his wife's flight as his ingenuity could suggest; and the best mode of accomplishing this, was to lay a good foundation in the proper quarter, by throwing himself in the way of

the chiefs of the scandal coteries of the town. The male director of these was Walter Gibson, a leather-merchant, a neighbour of Penilheugh's; and the female, Jean Currie, widow of John Currie, a barber, who had long figured in the same line, and from whom his widow had derived her information and power of communicating it.

Penilheugh first threw himself in the way of Gibson. The onset was instantaneous.

“Is Robina awa frae ye, Peter, for guid an' a?” began Walter.

“Wheesh! ” answered Peter; “speak reverently, man—ane's reputation is at stake in an affair o' that delicate nature. I, wha hae contrived to bear a character sae replete wi' honour as mine, canna be a'thegither perfectly easy under sic a question. Dinna ye ken, Walter, that the man wha has parted wi' his wife wham he is bound to cherish in his bosom, an' defend against wind an' weather, canna be weel spoken o'?—and wha can blaw the breath o' suspicion on my character? Na, Walter, my wife and I are no separated. I hae merely gien her, purr thing, some some sma' respit frae that eternal wark she is aye sae kindly engaged in, to mak me comfortable. She's awa to the saut water.”

“A'boddy kens, Peter,” said Walter, who knew his weak side, “that your character is far beyond my power to injure it. It's no even in the power o' a man o' weire, fierce as thae creatures are, to stab a repute purified by a' the four cardinal virtues—justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude.”

This mention of the soldier went to Peter's heart like his sword; but he tried to rally.

“Very guid, Walter, very guid; I really dinna think a man-at-arms could injure my repute; but, God be praised! I hae little to do wi' thae gentry. George Sinclair, nae doot, didna pay me for the shoon I made to him before he left Selkirk; but that's the way o' his craft. It's mercifu he couldna tak awa my reputation along wi' my leather.”

“If he has ta'en frae ye, Peter,” said Walter, “nae ither leather than what made the shoon that carried him frae Selkirk, there's nae ill dune. Ye'll no care muckle about a pair o' shoon. But, if I'm no cheated, 'he leather he has run aff wi' winna *hide* him frae your just indignation, Peter.”

“There's mair souter's lair in that speech,” replied Peter, “than I can understand; and it's no my way to steal ither folk's education. It's weel kent ye're clever, and, nae doot, weel acquainted wi' the saying o' Matthew, that every idle word spoken by man maun be gien an account o'. When the prophet said that ane's reputation is like a box o' jewels, there's nae doot he meant, in sae far as oor trade is concerned, a box o' tools; and nae man can ken better than you what a crime it wad be to steal frae me my implements o' trade.”

“Your reputation, Peter,” said Walter, “is, I believe, equal to that o' ony man in Selkirk—a gey wide word—an' I'm no the man that wad injure it. When does Robina come back frae the saut water?”

“When she's got aneuch o' it,” replied Peter, glad to think Walter was off the scent. “Ye'll maybe look down and bear me company in her absence?”

Walter replied that he would; and Peter left him, to endeavour to cross the path of Mrs Currie. In this he was successful, as the stately Queen of Scandal was just in the act of returning to her house, after a long round she had made among the neighbours, collecting and collecting all the particulars of the elopement.

“Weel, Mrs Jean,” commenced Peter, *suaviter et molli-*ter, “ye surely maun hae been takin something o' the elixir kind the day, for ye are lookin like a young lassie gaun to be married, wi' a' her smiles about her.”

“Thank ye, Peter!” replied Mrs Currie: “I hae indeed

been gettin a wee drap o' the elixir kind, as ye ca't; if there's onything that can mak me young again, it's a pleasant, dainty, stirrin bit o' news."

"What's stirrin i' the toun the day?" inquired the trembling Peter.

"They say," replied Jean, "that George Sinclair, the man-at-arms, has deserted wi' a pair o' your shoon, Peter."

"It's very true," replied Peter; "Robina, wha's awa to the saut water, tauld me the same story—but I maun just put up wi' the loss. There's ae comfort in't—I can stand the loss, an' my reputation's no concerned in the affair."

"It wadna be easy to hurt that," replied Jean. "Walter Gibson says ye hae a' the carnal virtues, amounting to a great number. You men are weel aff. We puir women hae muckle reason to be proud when we can say we hae ane. Robina maun be a proud woman, Peter, to get your leave to gae to the saut water."

"Puir thing!" replied Peter; "I was obleeged to force her awa. I couldna see her workin and toilin by nicht and by day, a' for my comfort and convenience, and to the prejudice o' her ain health. It's a pairt o' oor trade to beat oor leather, ye maun ken, Mrs Jean. Mony a day she wrought at that, puir thing. I hae seen the very sweat rinnin doun her bonny brow at it. I couldna witness sae muckle hard labour without feelin; an' often has the tear trickled doun my cheeks to see the curious ways o' woman's love. Ye are true creatures, Jean. What could we do without ye?"

"No weel, Peter," answered the flattered dame; "an' I'm just afraid ye may feel eerie when Robina's awa, for want o' that braw, lichtsome, rattlin manner o' hers. She was the woman to mak a man merry. Wha could resist the fun o' her daffin, as she slapped him on the back in the free and easy way she sae often did to ye? There's ne'er anither woman in Selkirk wha took sae muckle pains wi' her husband as Robina Penilheugh did wi' you."

"Ye're a sensible woman, Mrs Currie," said Peter, "as your deceased husband was a maist worthy man. Though a barber, nae man ever fand a hair i' his neck."

"That's true," replied Mrs Currie; "he was as like yersel, Peter, as twa honest men, wi' guid wives, can be to ane anither. A weel-wived husband is aye meek an' sleek. The marks o' the kame are aye fand in his hair, and wasna wantin in mine, though cuttin and kamin hair was his honourable profession. Whan does Robina come back frae the saut water?"

"When she has aneuch o't," replied the satisfied Peter.

The two friends bade each other good day. Peter continued his rounds, to save his honour, by circulating the story of his wife having gone to bathing quarters; and Mrs Currie flew to tell a neighbour she saw waiting for her, that Mrs Penilheugh had eloped with grenadier Sinclair.

The news had very generally got wind. An elopement is that kind of occurrence which, in a small town, is considered of that sprightly, humorous kind which stirs the lazy blood of villagers, and gives them new life. The timid Penilheugh had, therefore, good cause to beat up for recruits to his fame; but even his own self-love could not blind him altogether to the fact, that his honour had suffered—first, by the treatment his wife had been in the habit of giving him; and, secondly, by this unlawful affection she had adopted for a man of war. All his lies, he feared, could not save him from the effects of public shame. He saw the people pointing at him as he passed, and felt the agony of that deplorable condition when a man of honour experiences the first attack upon his virgin fame. He told his griefs to a friend, who informed him that his suspicions were unfounded, and explained away the circumstance of the pointed fingers, by stating that the inhabitants of Selkirk were in the habit of pointing to him as he passed, on which occasions they generally applied to him the appellation of honest Peter Penilheugh.

This explanation, to a certain extent, calmed Peter's apprehensions; but enough of solicitude was left to induce a wish, on the part of this extraordinary votary of public fame, to advance himself in the estimation of good men, by taking part in the public affairs of the time; with a view, first, of saving his character from the effects of the catastrophe he had already experienced; and, secondly, of laying the foundation of a more imperishable character in the history of his country. News had arrived of the rising in the north in favour of the Pretender, and a better opportunity could not have occurred for a person of spirit, who had been in the shade, redeeming himself in the estimation of the world, and probably making his fortune.

A number of the inhabitants of Selkirk were inclined to engage in the cause of the young Prince; and Peter Penilheugh asked himself the question why he should not strive for the crown of glory as well as others. The desire of being considered a person of public spirit fired him with an ardour which outran his courage. In his wish to be considered a warrior, he forgot he was a coward; or rather he endeavoured to satisfy himself that the man who trembled under the hands of a woman was not necessarily destitute of the spirit necessary to fight one of his own sex. Indeed, he satisfied himself that the quiet way in which he had received Robina's bastinadoing—though some liver-hearted captives might call it cowardice—ought truly to be denominated courage. There was exemplified in it the power of suffering—a true element of a courageous character; and that suffering was endured, not, as some might say, from a fear of exposure, but only to gratify a faithful wife.

Peter's new ardour pushed him forward among the young men who were preparing to join the Pretender. They had placed themselves under the charge of a person of undoubted courage, named Adam Turnbull—a young man, who had for some time been in the army—and were in the habit of secretly going through their exercises on a green near the town. Peter was one of them, and was observed to go through the forms with great spirit. On the day previous to their departure, he suddenly stood forth from the ranks, and addressed his fellow-soldiers in the following eloquent strain:—

"Ye gallant lads o' Selkirk, ken ye for what ye are aboot to fecht? If ye are inflamed by the same spirit that warms my bosom and maks my bluid circulate through my veins, ye canna be ignorant o' the great and mighty object for which ye are aboot to draw the sword o' yer strength, and spill the bluid o' the best o' Selkirk's sons. It's no for ae king mair than anither king—it's no for Charlie mair than for Geordie—it's no for Popery mair than for Protestantism—it's no for riches mair than for enaugh;—it's for honour, for fame, for glory, for stautus:—that's what it's for; and can there be a higher object o' a brave man's ambition? If there's ane amang ye wha doesna feel the force o' a guid repute—wha doesna appreciate the pleasures o' fame—whase heart doesna boil wi' the thoct o' being weel spoken o'—that man's no fit to fecht in oor cause. The love o' stautus, my companions, is the source o' a' our energies, frae him wha slips his hand o'er the smooth sole o' a weel-made shoe, and mutters to himself, in his high and legitimate pride, Wha could touch that? to him wha penned the loftiest apic, and grat to hear (for he was blind) its elevated sentiments read to him by his dochter. I am no ashamed to say that Peter Penilheugh is the man wha would risk his life for that inestimable jewel; and, if ye are a' o' the same way o' thinking, Prince Charlie winna hae a set o' braver lads under his banner."

This rhapsody was received with great cheering, and Peter was set down, among the weaker part of the inhabitants, as a man of courage. Those who knew him had a very different opinion of him; but all conspired in flatter-

ing him—some because they thought he had some of the qualities he wished attributed to him, and others because they procured, from his looks of self-complacency, considerable amusement. He got himself arrayed in regimentals; and, as he strutted about talking to the inhabitants of the virtues of a good citizen, he sometimes ventured on the remark, that a man of his size would make a better soldier than a grenadier. He, of course, did not wish it to be understood that he made any allusion to the particular grenadier who had made off with his shoes, but merely to the race of Anak generally, which he held in no estimation for their capabilities of war, however they might be prized by the fair sex, who were no true judges of the character of a proper man.

The Selkirk party accordingly joined the Prince. In the first skirmish, Peter Penilheugh's courage departed from him; and, having fairly turned his back for a dastardly flight, one of his companions pursued him, and, with a cut of a sabre, brought him to the earth. The wound could have no effect in inducing Peter to return. Indeed, it had, as might have been expected, rather a different effect, as he learned from it some experience of his own cowardice—a quality which the blows of Robina had not been sufficient to elicit, so as to be observable by himself. Even, however, if he had been willing, he could not have again joined the ranks; for it was found necessary to amputate the limb—an operation which confined him in a small house, near the borders of England, for many months.

When sufficiently recovered to be able to go out, the dismembered hero found it necessary for him to secret himself from the reach of the long arm of public authority, raised in vindication of the rights of a monarchy which ought to have been deemed entitled to the benefit of a proscription. A hue and cry was raised against the Jacobites; and it is well known to what shifts the poor deluded victims of false hopes were forced to betake themselves in escaping from their sanguinary pursuers. The Prince himself, under the soft disguise of female apparel, was comparatively well provided for when compared with some of his adherents. The poor man who filled with his body the churn, for eight days, in the neighbourhood of Arbroath; he who lay for six days in a coffin, in a house in the Nethergate of Dundee; he who lay coiled up in a brewer's vat, with a lid upon it, in the Canongate of Edinburgh; and he who was stretched for a month between two mattresses, in a house in the suburbs of Perth—were not consoled by being made the subject of a single song, while their Prince's sufferings were chanted in a hundred strains.

The terror of Peter Penilheugh may be very easily conceived, when it is known that the men who had recourse to these extraordinary modes of secrecy were, in fact, brave spirits reduced to the greatest distress. But Peter excelled them all in his plan of escape. He was mutilated by the wound he had received, and he lost one of his eyes when he fell in his flight from the field of battle. He could scarcely, therefore, be recognised by the people who formerly knew him; and having, in a great degree, lost his reputation—which was the most valuable jewel he possessed on earth—he had no wish to be recognised by his old friends. He had heard it reported that he was dead, and an idea struck him—worthy of his superior genius—to allow the opinion to prevail, and even favour it; whereby, and by having recourse to a new name in another town, and a new reputation, he would get quit of the effects of the outlawry that was against him, and the shame that awaited him in his native town, where his wife's bad conduct and his own cowardice were now, no doubt, quite current. His reputation being dead, it was better that he should be dead also. He, therefore, sat down, and, in a feigned hand, and under a false signature, wrote to the Provost of Selkirk, informing him that that honest, worthy citizen, Peter Penilheugh, was dead, and

requesting him to take charge of his effects for the person who would appear and claim them.

This letter was received by the Provost, and the contents of it circulated throughout the town. No doubt was entertained in any quarter that Peter Penilheugh was dead; and the proverb, of Fifean origin, that it is better to be married in Fife than to die in Fife, was found to be applicable to Selkirk; for the true character of Peter was very freely brought out by his friends, and not much to the credit of either him or his reputation.

In the meantime, while *civiliter* dead in Selkirk, Peter repaired to Melrose, where, under the name of Andrew Haggerstone, he practised his trade, and began to lay a new foundation for a character of repute, that would be alike independent of the destructive energies of a wife, as of the witnesses of his cowardice when he ran from the fight. In order to disguise himself more effectually than had been already done by the knife of the surgeon and the stone that knocked out his eye, he shaved his whiskers, and wore a wig of a different colour, clapping a large black patch over the untenanted site of his lost orb, changing the cut of his clothes and the tones of his voice, and leaving his timber support to please itself in constituting a difference of walk. In this disguise, it was quite impossible to recognise old Penilheugh. He himself found every satisfaction in it, with the exception of a difficulty he experienced in founding a reputation against the vulgar prejudices that arose out of his tinkler-like aspect. He found that very few were inclined to respect a modern Vulcan; and, for a long time, his endeavours were unequal to the task of making his acquaintances believe that respectability could attach to a fragment of a man, who had lost an eye and a leg, and had little of a seemly character in the remainder.

Although the fragment of Peter's body was thus in Melrose, his mind remained in Selkirk. He found that, in place of securing anything like a respectable status where he was, the people would scarcely trust him with their shoes to cobble; and, in a very short time, he was in want of the means of subsistence. The parts of his body he had lost, had terrified away the people who might have contributed to his support; while, unfortunately, the fragment that remained required as much sustenance to support it as his whole previous corporation. His eye was, accordingly, turned to the place of his birth, where he still retained some property—a small house and some furniture—which he had not devised any good scheme for securing. He recollected with pain the palmy state he enjoyed in that comfortable town—when he, as “a man o' stautus,” strutted along its streets, a respected and favoured citizen, receiving the salutation of this person and the recognition of that, and enjoying the sunshine of a good estimation—and contrasted these advantages with the miserable and despised hobble of a dead-alive fragment of what he was, worshipping a haughty neighbourhood for a smile of regard and a pair of shoes to mend, and receiving often nothing but a look of contempt, or, what was worse, a grin of affected sympathy.

In order to advance him in the estimation of the citizens of Melrose, he published a handbill, importing that he mended soles on a new principle, and intimating slyly that all the other cobblers in the town were a set of blackguards, who used rotten leather and weak thread, with a view to create trade by undermining the footing of the lieges, and making them repair for an expensive consolation to the headquarters of roguery. This attempt to raise himself at the expense of his neighbours, was attended with disastrous effects. The cobblers, waxing great and wroth at the proud monocolus who had come among them from the moon, with a view to supplant them in the estimation of the public, assembled together for the purpose of taking revenge on the leather of the traducer. Peter, however, got intimation of the intended attack; and, cursing Melrose

as a place where a good reputation could not be founded, in consequence of the envy of a set of low vagabonds, he took up his stick, leaving his *awl* in his tool-box, and took the road to Selkirk, to ascertain what was done with his property, and whether the officers of the Crown had given up all hopes of finding him alive.

As he entered his birth-place—the fountain and the grave of all his pleasures, where he had wed and lost his Robina, earned and thrown away an excellent character, made and resigned a handsome competency—he wept; but he had too much manliness left to allow a weak feminine tear to stick in the only eye he had left to light him through life; so, wiping it away, he directed his steps to what is called the cross, or middle of the town, where he used to resort after finishing his shoes, to hear the news of the town, and enjoy the advantages of a good reputation and unsullied character, in the respect which was always shewn him by those, at least, who knew his weakness, and who, by Peter's self-adulation, were magnified into the public. Nobody knew him. He looked at his old friends; they slunk away from him. He had the appearance of a gaberlunzie; and one of them offered him a penny. The offering was gall and vinegar to the victim of public opinion. He turned away his face; and, directing his steps to old Walter Gibson's, he went in and asked him if he knew where one Peter Penilheugh lived, or if he did live in Selkirk.

Having thrown this question in at the door, he stood to receive his answer, expecting that Walter would come out the moment he heard the sweet name of his old, honoured friend. Walter did come out.

"The auld wretch is dead mony a lang daysyne," answered Walter, captiously. "He didna deserve to leeve. His conceit, his horns, his military prowess, his love o' false soles, his lees, his ugly face, lie a' snug aneuch in the kirkyard o' Alnwick."

"Did he leave a wife?" inquired Peter.

"Deed did he," answered Walker, "and a fine quean she is. She used to tan him nicely, the auld rascal; and wha could blame her? She is a bonny quean, and he was an ill-favoured goat, wha never deserved sic a companion. But she treated him weel; for she leathered him to his heart's contentment every day, and then went and took a walk wi' some o' her wiselike freends, for the sake o' recreation. At last, sick o' the auld brock, and wearied to death wi' strappin him, she eloped wi' a fine-lookin grenadier o' the name o' Sinclair; and the puir horned creature thocht he couldna do better than use his armed head against the reignin King. But horns are nae signs o' courage—the reptile took fright at the first onset, and fled frae the field o' fecht wi' as muckle speed as he had approached it; an', if I'm no cheated, it was just the grenadier Sinclair, wha, seein him rin, followed him, cut his hamstrings, and left him to blaw oot his useless breath in the heart o' a cloud o' mist."

"Where is his wife, now?" inquired the nearly speechless Peter.

"She and her husband Sinclair," replied the other, "are livin in the wretch's hoose doun the way there. She claimed it for her terce, no bein within the bounds; and the Shirra has gien her't for her life. She has a' his bit sticks o' furniture, too."

"Did nae ither body claim his hoose?" asked Peter.

"Ou, ay, a nephew o' the useless cratur's claimed it; but the Shirra gae it to the widow. I dinna ken the law, and I dinna care for't."

"Ye dinna seem to hae liked auld Peter," said his equivalent.

"Indeed I didna," replied Walter. "He had owre muckle conceit. He thocht himsel a man o' repute, puir thing, though the hail town lauched at him. We a' praised him to his face, nae doot, but it was only for fun; for we liked to enjoy the keckle o' his lauch when he was tauld o'

his reputation. I had ither reasons for no likin him. The cratur wasna honest. He cheated me like a blackleg, giein me rotten leather for my soles, and seal's-skin for my uppers—and then his prices were beyond a' calculation."

With a sorrowful heart, Peter hobbled away to another quarter of the town, to try if his character was any better in that direction. Knocking at Widow Currie's door, he inquired if Peter Penilheugh still lived in Selkirk, and where.

"Hoot, man!" ejaculated the widow, as she ran to the door—"that silly carle's dead langsyne; but ye'll get his wife, wha is married to George Sinclair, livin in his hoose."

"Ay, ay—is he dead?" said Peter, mournfully. "I kent him brawly mysel—he wasna sae ill as he's ca'ed noo, after he's dead. There were mony guid points aboot him. His repute was fair an' honourable while he lived, an' it's no fair to speak ill o' the dead."

"I hae nae great reason to speak ill o' the puir body," said the widow, "neither did I intend to do sic an ungratefu office; but I canna stand by an' hear a white-livered cuckold caitiff praised for qualities he didna possess. Whar, think ye, lay the repute he made sae muckle wark aboot when he was on earth? Only in the fleechin an' fun o' the wags o' Selkirk, wha liked to see the auld smaik-smirkin owre the notion o' his honour, o' whilk he had nae mair than ony auld jewel wha ever cheated the wuddy. But, maybe, ye're a freend o' his?—I shouldna be sae free wi' strangers."

"I'm sure naebody can say he didna leeve happy wi' his wife," said Peter, wishing to avoid her question, and to feel her pulse on this delicate point.

"Think ye sae, man?" said the widow—"ye'll better ask Robina hersel. She'll no be sae mealy-moothed as I am. Mony a day she strapped him wi' his ain leather; but the cratur's fear prevented him frae complainin; an' he tauld everybody that she liked him, when he should hae said that she licked him. He was richt cheap o' his paiks; for they say he looked after ither women, an' I can even say that the auld goat cast mony a sheep's ee at mysel. But the warst faut o' the cratur was his dishonesty—for ye never got change frae him but it wanted a plack; an' the liggs he tauld to mak folk believe he was a man o' repute, were oot o' a' character."

"Do a' the folk o' Selkirk think sae ill o' my auld freen as ye do?" asked the despairing Peter.

"Deed do they," answered the widow—"an' waur. They were muckle offended wi' his flicht frae the field o' battle. It was that unfortunate affair that brocht up a' his fauts. Maybe, if he had dee'd gaum, they micht hae forgotten his fauts, and buried them wi' his body; but we wha bear the honour o' bein the bravest o' the Borderers, canna endure cowardice."

Peter bade the widow good night, and went sorrowfully through the town, endeavouring to find if these statements of him were general. He found they were. Everybody had something to say against him. He was a thief, a liar, a swindler, a coward. Many things were said which had no foundation in truth. The people seemed angry at his cowardice, because, as they said, it sullied the fame they acquired at the battle of Flodden. It would even seem that his effigy had been burnt when the news of his flight arrived in the town; and there could be little doubt that the rancour that prevailed against him had its origin in that proceeding.

This extraordinary living example of the old adage applicable to eavesdroppers, sat down on a dike at the end of the town, to commune with himself on his own sorrows. He had intended, if he found the people still retained a grateful sense of his reputation, and knew nothing of the story of the flight, to come back to life again, and receive, in the town where he was beloved, the congenial effects of that sympathy which his supposed death would undoubtedly

excite. He had figured himself walking along the town, some fine morning—*redivivus*—the same clean, honest-looking, respectable citizen he used to be; and saw, in his imagination, the people flying from all quarters to get a shake of the hand of the lamented dead-alive, and pouring in upon his delighted ears their hearty congratulations. "What an increase of reputation!" he had ejaculated. A deaconship would be the consequence; next, the office of convener would be put upon him, and the shining robe of the representative of Brydone was already flowing from his shoulders.

Where were all these hopes now? The top of an old dike was his seat; he had no money to procure a bed; he was hungry; and, above all, he was dishonoured. The reputation he had so long wrought and fought for, was gone. Mutilated in body, with one melancholy lack-lustre orb sticking lonely in his forehead; his immortal part destroyed, both in his prior life and in the present, in Selkirk and in Melrose—what remained for him but a rope? Even that he knew not where to find. Pope's recommendation was to him nugatory; for where was the "penny?" He had not even the means of death, far less those of life.

His situation was deplorable; and his utter destitution suggested the idea of still assuming his former life and character, (his shape he could not,) and vindicating his right to his little house and chattels. But how was this to be done? Who would believe that he was Peter Penilheugh? Would not Robina and her husband murder him if he endeavoured to deprive them of their property? But, above all, how could he appear in Selkirk, to claim his effects—in that place where his only consolation, his only pride, his exultation, his joy, was to be considered respectable and beloved—to stand up an object of scorn and contempt on the spot where he had been burnt in effigy, and assert a right to effects which had been quietly possessed by others for a length of time? The thought was maddening; he could not stand it. This resource was abandoned in despair.

As he sat in this deplorable plight, the provost of Selkirk passed him, and threw him a penny. Peter's pride would not allow him to take it up. "I'm no a beggar, sir," said he.

"You are perhaps a gentleman," said the provost, picking up his gratuity.

"No," said Peter; "but I was ance a person o' reputation; and, though poor, I canna forget my honour."

"Are you going into Selkirk?" inquired the provost, as he was proceeding.

"Yes," answered Peter: "an' I wish to ken if there's ane Peter Penilheugh lives there?"

"I wish there was now such a person," answered the provost—"I could communicate good tidings to him; but he is dead."

As the provost said these words, he had got to some distance. Peter started to his *foot*, and hobbled after him. The provost thought he had changed his mind about the gratuity, and cried out to him that he need not follow him, as he never offered a penny twice to anybody.

"It's no the penny I'm wantin, yer Honour," said Peter. "I want to ken the guid tidings ye hae for Peter Penilheugh, wha was a freen o' mine; an' maybe I may hae reason to say that what a freen gets is no lost."

"The matter is to me no secret," said the provost. "I am merely acting in my capacity of provost of Selkirk, and have no interest in the affair either one way or other. If you are a friend of Peter's, you have a right to the communication, that you may, if you have any title, put forward your claim, and be a competitor along with the rest. I this day got a letter communicating to me the intelligence that old Pendriech of Pirnie, a large property in the neighbourhood, is dead, and, upon examination, it has been found that Peter Penilheugh's mother was the

great-great-grandniece of his forbear, who acquired the property; and her son, Peter, if he had been alive, would have been the heir-at-law. He being dead, some difficulty will be experienced, as he left no heirs, and the line of descent will take a new direction. What relationship do you stand in to Peter?"

"I'm no a'thegither quite sure, your Honour," answered Peter; "but I'll count my kin i' the coorse o' the nicht, and let your Honour ken the morn. I hae naething i' the meantime to get a bed wi'; and if yer Honour would hae the guidness to lend me a shilling, ye can keep it aff the first year's rents o' Pirnie, when Peter—I mean, yer Honour, that I will repay you honestly."

The provost gave Peter the shilling, and they parted. This new situation of affairs opened up another view of the economy of life to the aspirant for reputation. He sauntered gently into the town, musing, as he went, upon the question whether he ought to brave the scorn of the world he had left for the sake of the estate of Pirnie, a property worth two thousand pounds a-year. The question may appear strange to ordinary people—it did *not* appear strange to Peter Penilheugh, because he was an extraordinary individual. He did not prize wealth so much as fair fame; and, having lost the one, should he, for the sake of the other, endure the misery of knowing that he was, while living in the midst of the world, an object of scorn and ridicule to those in whose eyes every energy of his existence had been exerted to appear respectable. The question undoubtedly had subtlety in it; and Peter thought it might be as well to sleep upon it.

As he went about seeking for a bed, he saw various clusters of his old cronies standing about the street. He felt great curiosity to ascertain what they were saying. He suspected their conversation was all about him, as the provost had, before he left the town, no doubt dropt enough to set them all a-cackling for hours together. Taking a sweep, with his timber leg on the starboard, he came as near them as a man in doubt whether to go forward or take a turn, could be supposed to do. He found his suspicions justified. All the coteries had him, his death, character, and loss of Pirnie, through hands. He could not learn exactly the particulars of their discourse; but he heard them all laughing occasionally, and mixing up his name in the most irreverent manner with their merriment. This incensed him to an extent he had never before experienced, and laid the foundation of a radical change in his sentiments, which produced an effect upon every subsequent feature of his life.

The pride of riches had been silently yet surely making inroads upon Peter's mind for several hours. He was entirely unaware of it himself; and it was only in some of its remote effects that it could have been discernible. The first effect of it was to produce a high sense of indignation, when he heard himself laughed at. The recollection of the abuse he had heard heaped upon him by Walter Gibson, and Widow Currie, and many others, tended to the same result. This was the first stone of reformation of his character. It gave rise to a superstructure of cogitation, which went on all night when he was in his bed; for he could procure but little sleep.

"What, after a', is the thing I have a' my life been rinnin after?" was the first fruits of his amendment. "Is it no a mere bubble? Did it ever put a penny in my pouch or a bit o' bread in my mouth? Is it no a mere vapour blawn by people wha use their ain lungs, and hae a richt to blaw as they like, if they should blaw awa no only yer character, but your means o' subsistence? This nicht has opened my een—I hae stood on the street whar I thoct I was honoured, and heard the very folk wha formerly praised me, rin me down the brae o' reputation's quickest descent, and tell o' me stories that never had any ex-

istence but in their black, venomous hearts. When an' what did ever I steal? What woman did ever I look at wi' an unlawfu ee? Wha did I cheat? and hoo mony placks did ever I retain frae the just amount o' a change o' copper? Thae things are a' lees; and dootless a thousand mair hae been said o' me by the coterics wha were lauchin at me this nicht in the streets. Whar, then, can the faith o' man lie, wha builds his hopes o' happiness on the tongues o' men? He may as weel seek his meat frae the poisoned tongue o' the adder, or look for milk to his parritch frae the dairy on the taid's back. Owre, owre late do I see my error; but there may even yet be time for reformation—ay, there may be time for revenge."

The word revenge was quivering on Peter's tongue when he fell asleep in the morning, after a whole night's cogitation. When he woke, he was muttering revenge; and the process of reasoning by which he arrived at a word he had scarcely ever before uttered with any of the feeling it represents, rushed upon his mind. He rose and dressed himself, and went straight to the house of the provost. As he entered, he took off his patch and wig, and was put into a room to wait for his Honour, who was at breakfast. The door opened, and the first burgess entered.

"Peter Penilheugh, yer Honour," said Peter, bowing, with his hat in his hand.

"Who?" ejaculated the provost, staring at him in evident amazement.

"Peter Penilheugh, shoemaker in Selkirk, yer Honour," repeated Peter—"he wha was dead and is come alive again—wha was lost and is found—wha was poor and is or will be Laird o' Pirmie."

The provost surveyed attentively the apparition. It was, indeed, the very Peter Penilheugh. He knew him at once; and nothing more was required than to get from Peter an account of his death, and the means by which he had become resuscitated. All this Peter gave with much good-will and some humour. He told the provost he had been the slave of public opinion; it was the chains of that slavery that had killed him, and he only felt life again when they were thrown from him.

The business was now the next point. There could be no doubt of Peter's propinquity; because old Pendriech had left written evidence of the fact. A lawyer was called in, who went home and wrote out a power of attorney for him to act in getting Peter served heir and put in possession of the property. He was recommended, in the meantime, to retire to Edinburgh for a little, that he might be out of the sight of the people of Selkirk, whom he now heartily hated. The attorney advanced him £50, a larger sum than he had ever fingered in his life; and, going privately out of the town, he mounted a gig, which the provost sent to receive him, and drove off, in great state and high spirits, to the metropolis of the kingdom.

The service having been concluded, Peter was next inducted into the property. The mansion house, which was large and spacious, was fitted up for his reception; as he intended, he said, to live as suited himself, regardless of the opinion of the public. He took possession of it, and, at the same time, got a handsome carriage built for him, which, he said, the loss of his leg rendered indispensable to him. After being comfortably settled, he next thought of the best way of taking his revenge on his old friends of Selkirk. In forming this resolution, he acted on the soundest principle of the law of retaliation—viz., that the best and completest revenge is forgiveness and kindness.

He, accordingly, soon issued cards of invitation to dinner to a great number of his old friends, both male and female. Among these were Walter Gibson, Mrs Currie, and all those he had spoken to on the eventful night when he heard himself so much abused by those in whose eyes he thought he stood highest. There were only two of his old

friends he left out. These were his wife, whom he could not invite, seeing he intended to divorce her, and her husband, George Sinclair, the grenadier, who had injured him more deeply than by running away with his shoes or traducing his character.

All the persons invited attended. Walter Gibson, as an old friend, was at the foot of the table, and Mrs Currie occupied a prominent part, being no other than mistress of the ceremonies in the drawing-room.

After dinner was finished, and the wine had begun to circulate, Peter was called upon, by Walter Gibson, to give them an account of his extraordinary disappearance, death, funeral, and resurrection.

"My life," began Peter, "has been a very curious ane; and this is no the least curious part o't—even this convocation o' my auld freends and weel-wishers. It was late in life before I learned what might be ca'ed the very first lesson; for I never thought that a man may think himsel a respectable member o' society, and yet be nae mair esteemed than an auld grimalkin. Mony a day, as is weel kenned to you, I wrocht to establish a character; and a' my efforts were scarcely able to make up for the injuries my reputation sustained by the misdemeanours o' Robina Harden, my wife. But still I persevered; and, amidst poverty, and ill health, and domestic broils, I still kept in my ee, as the bright north star o' my houp and ambition, the construction, edification, and support o' an unblemished repute among my fellow-citizens. I thoct I had attained my darling object; and wished to add to my honest reputation, a character for valour. There I was wrang; I had nae command owre my ain heart. I ran frae the field o' fecht. I was pursued, wounded, and outlawed. To escape my shame and King George's messengers, I resigned my life, by a letter I sent to our guid provost, and began a new state o' existence in Melrose. I tried there, too, to build up a character; but I failed—and then I visited again my native toun. I thoct it was due to my auld freens to ca' upon them. Some o' you may recollect my visit: I asked ye aboot Peter Penilheugh—if he was dead or alive. I got my answer—I got also my character. My een were at last opened. I found that, while I was striving to be guid, and to deserve a guid reputation, the public were busy hatching lies against me; sae that what I gained at ae end o' the string, I lost at the ither. I am noo satisfied there's little truth i' the warld; and that he who binds himsel to the wheels o' public opinion, maun resign his rest and his happiness, and run a risk o' bein crushed to death in the end. Some o' ye may recollect what ye said o' me. I think I was, at least, a leear, a thief, a cheat, an' a follower o' unlawfu loves. That nane o' thae I ever was, I believe ye a' ken just as weel as I do. That I had weaknesses aboot me I admit; but they a' arose oot o' my silly vanity o' thinkin I could regulate the tongues o' men an' women. I micht as weel hae tried to stop the wheels o' a' the water-mills frae the Mull o' Galloway to John-o'-Groat's. Noo, my freens, alloo me to say, I forgie ye, upon this ae condition, that ye drink to the toast I'm aboot to propose; and, when that is dune, we winna again recur to things past, but resign oorsels to the effect o' this braw wine, and mak oorsels as happy as that and guid company can mak us. My toast is, freens, 'A fig for public opinion, and may we a' rely on the faithfu responses o' a guid conscience!'"

The toast was drunk with great applause, even by those who were conscious of being pointed at by Peter's strange speech. The party sat to a late hour, and made the roof-tree o' Pirmie ring with the praises of Peter Penilheugh.

Peter subsequently divorced Robina, who, having been obliged to give up the property she had taken possession of, lost the affections of her lover, became dissipated, and died, affording an example of the every-day effects of vice. If

she had treated her husband well, she might have lived, and have been called Mrs Penilheugh of Pirnie.

From this period of Peter's life, there arises the elucidation of another moral: that which a man shews he despises, is generally, by the contradictory spirit of mankind, placed within his power; while that which he struggles and fights for, and exhibits a great anxiety to attain, is pertinaciously kept from him. This fact in human nature might be traced to deep sources; but, moralists though we are, we cannot think of interfering with the progress of our hero's career, by officious and sometimes unpalatable moralizing reflections, which every man thinks himself fit for, and which most men carry about with them, like an old surtout, to conceal the holes in the riddled *toga* of their honesty.

Peter was resolved that this dinner should be the last occasion on which he would trouble himself about mankind—not that he was to turn a Timon of Athens—a mere misanthrope—the victim of hurt pride; but simply that he was resolved to produce that respect by sheer contempt, which he had formerly prayed for and solicited as a gift of inestimable value. He had become versant in human nature, in the manner of the horse's cunning knowledge of a bad and cruel horseman—by being ridden upon; and, like the noble object of the simile, he was resolute in doing that which he felt himself able to do—to throw his rider, and leave him to praise the free steed whose spirit disdained the curb of the unworthy and inexperienced master.

The first thing that a man who is to despise the world ought to do, is to defend himself by a good wife. Acting upon this noble resolution, Mr Penilheugh (for, having no right to use familiarities with the great, we must renounce the familiar "Peter") wooed and won the daughter of a neighbouring laird, who (maugre the lost eye and amputated limb) saw in the broad acres of Pirnie the capabilities of affording a jointure without mutilation. She had the merit of being the very opposite of Robina—meek, soft, conciliating, and affectionate; and, what her husband triumphed at, there existed not the slightest difficulty on his part to defend her reputation for fidelity and kindness; for the good reasons—first, that she required no defence; and, secondly, that, if she had, he would not have been at the trouble to have recourse to the very best mode of destroying both his character and her own.

They lived together happily, and became highly respected. Mr Penilheugh, to gratify his peculiar humour, sometimes visited Selkirk, and, leaving his equipage at the door of the inn, walked, with as much majesty as his mutilated body could exhibit, along the streets—his wife hanging on his arm, and his eye occupied in such a way as, without shewing any wish, on his part, to cut old *friends*, yet served to tell very plainly that he could take their moral measure as correctly as he did the dimensions of the foot of the man-at-arms who ran away with his shoes, or of that of many of the citizens, who never paid him, but who yet abused him. Meanwhile, however, he did the town much good; for he subscribed munificently to its charitable institutions, and supported many a poor beggar, who knew the way to Pirnie better than to the church.

The effects of all this were soon apparent. The greatness of mind of Mr Penilheugh of Pirnie was becoming evident to the inhabitants of Selkirk. The reverse of the maxim, that familiarity produces contempt, awarded to him the meed of respect he seemed to disregard. On the next occasion of a vacancy in the Provostship, it was suggested, and approved of by all the citizens, that the Laird of Pirnie should be presented with an humble requisition to take upon himself that honour. The intermediate steps of his progress to the civic chair were to be—by some means unknown to us, but quite in the power of the inhabitants—overleaped, or, at least, simulatively achieved; and every-

thing was cut and dry for the installation. A deputation of the chief citizens was appointed to wait on the "great man," and present the address to him; and Walter Gibson volunteered to make the speech. They arrived at Pirnie House in high spirits, and no doubt was entertained of the success of their schemes. They were received with becoming dignity; and the spokesman began—

"Since ever the memorable days of the renowned Brydone, Provost o' oor guid toun," began the deputy, "it has been the pride o' Selkirk to put into her civic chair individuals worthy o' succeedin that great burgal legislator and undaunted warrior." [Mr Penilheugh's eye became clouded at this unfortunate allusion, suggesting the contrast of his *flight* and Brydone's valour.] "We, o' the present day, are anxious to keep up the honour o' oor native toun, and conceive that the lustre o' the name o' Penilheugh o' Pirnie, transcending, as it unquestionably, indubitably, and clearly does, that o' the greatest o' oor civic rulers, may reflect some light even on the blazoned arms o' oor brave burgh. We have, therefore, come to the determination, the resolution, and the purpose o' askin yer Honour to vouchsafe to us your consent to adorn oor toun, to purify oor burgh legislation, to extend its power, to benefit its citizens, and—and so forth—hem—hem—by becoming oor provost."

This speech, which, it will be seen, was just beginning, towards its termination, to escape the memory of the speaker, was heard by Mr Penilheugh in solemn silence.

"Messrs Deputies o' the Inhabitants o' Selkirk," began the dignified responder, "there was a time when I aspired to the great office you have noo put within my poorer; but, somehoo or ither, there existed nae reciprocity o' sentiment on that subject between me and your worthy citizens, wha wouldna recognise my being made even box-master o' my ain tred—sayin, what I canna weel forget, that a man wha was licked by his wife wasna fitted for being a *box*-master. But that time has passed; and luckily there has gane wi't that desire o' ambition that ance burned in my veins. The tables are, in fact, turned. I asked what was denied me, and now you ask what is in a minute or twa to be denied you. I dinna say, however, that the honour I am about to reject is just o' the *same dimensions* as that whilk your inhabitants rejected frae me; because I conceive that comparisons are odious. But, at same time, I wish the thing to be recorded in your answer; so that the circumstance may appear in the burgh books, that I *was* in fact *rejected* by your inhabitants when I wanted to begin to climb to the civic chair; and my reason for this is, that it may also appear that I *now reject* this honour, no because you formerly rejected me, but simply because I noo care nae mair for honour and stautus, than I do for the wag o' the supple tongues on whilk they baith hae their kittle seat. I beg leave, therefore, to decline this honour you have now offered to me—wishing you, at same time, to understand that I will ever be the friend o' your toon, whose beggars, when they come to Pirnie, will never want a better meal than I ever, in my necessities, got frae your townsmen."

The deputies bowed as gracefully as they could, and retired. This rejection was considered to be couched in very equivocal terms; but, notwithstanding, just in proportion to Mr Penilheugh's contempt o' public opinion, his honour and fame increased. He lived to a long age, and left heirs, who acted upon the moral maxim he bequeathed to them on his deathbed—never to court popular applause.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE CURATE OF GOVAN

Do any of our east or south country readers know anything of the little village of Govan, within about two miles or so of Glasgow? If they do, they will acknowledge, we daresay, that it is one of the most prettily-situated little hamlets that may be seen. We mean, however, solely that portion of it which stands on the banks of the Clyde. On a summer evening, when the tide is at its height, filling up the channel of the river from side to side in a bumper, and is gliding stilly and gently along between its margins of green, there cannot, we think, be anything prettier than the scene of which the little picturesque village of Govan forms the centre or principal object. The antique row of houses stretching down to the water, widened, at this particular spot, into a little lake, by the confluence of the Kelvin; the rude, but picturesque salmon fisher's hut in the foreground; the river winding far to the west, and skirting the base of the beautiful hills of Kilpatrick, that form the boundary of the scene in that direction—all combine to form, as we have already said, a scene of more than ordinary beauty.

Such, as nearly as we can describe it, is the local situation and appearance of Govan at the present day; for often, often have we been there in our younger years, and never shall we forget the happy hours we have spent in it. Pleasant indeed was the walk of a summer's evening on the banks of the Clyde—pleasant was the feast of kippered salmon, for which the village was celebrated; but pleasanter than all were the looks—the kindly, *pawky* looks—the civility, and the homely, but shrewd wit of David Dreghorn, the honest, worthy, and kind-hearted landlord of the —. We are not sure if his house had a name; but it was not necessary; for well and widely was David known, and by none was he known by whom he was not esteemed and respected.

But there were other landlords in Govan before David's day; not more worthy or better men, but of older date—yes, as far back as the time of James V. At that period, the principal, indeed the only hostelry in Govan, was kept by one Ninian, or, as he was more commonly called, Ringan Scouler. The house—a small, plain-looking building, with marvellously few windows, and these few marvellously small in size and wide apart—was situated at the extreme end of the village, which terminates at or near the margin of the river. All trace of it has long since disappeared; but we have pointed out its precise locality. It commanded, as those who know the spot will at once believe, a delightful view, or rather series of views. The front windows looked up the Clyde, the back windows down; and those in the gable exhibited the Kelvin and the woodland scenery (more so then than now) around and beyond. The sign of his calling, which hung above the door of Ringan Scouler's little hostelry, was then, as it still is, that of several of his brethren in trade in the village—the figure of a salmon, painted in its natural colours on a black ground. Ringan's emblematic fish, however, was not a very shapely animal; but there was enough of likeness remaining to place beyond all manner of doubt that it was meant to represent the “monarch of the flood.” Mine host himself was a quiet-mannered, good-humoured,

and good-natured person, with just such an eye to the one thing needful as admitted of his cherishing this temperament, and of keeping a comfortable house over his head. Perhaps his propensity of the kind just alluded to, went even a little further in its objects than this. We will not say that, with all his quiet wit, and good-humour, and kindness, and apparent carelessness about the main chance, he was not a pretty vigilant marker of it. But what then? It was all in a fair and honest way; and he gave his urbanity of manner as an equivalent.

Ringan, at the period of our story, was about fifty years of age, of a fresh, healthy complexion, and shrewd cast of countenance; the latter being lighted up by a couple of little, cunning, grey eyes, deep set beneath a pair of shaggy eyebrows, which, again, were surmounted by a head of hair, prematurely grey—a constitutional characteristic; for neither his years nor his cares warranted this usual indication of the pressure of one or other, or both of these causes. Ringan was, moreover, well to pass in the world; for, being a man of at least ordinary prudence, and having an excellent business, his circumstances throve apace. His business, we have said, was excellent. It could not be otherwise; for it was not in the nature of man to pass Ringan's door without entering it. His good things, in the shape of liquor and provender; his quaint, sly jokes, spoken almost under breath, which, in his case, added to their effect; his cunning, smirking, facetious look and manner—were all and each of them wholly irresistible; and all the king's lieges who passed within a mile of his door, and who had a penny in their pockets, felt them to be so.

Such was Ringan Scouler, the landlord of The Grilse and Gridiron—for we forgot to say, in its proper place, that the culinary implement just named appropriately figured at one end of the board. The list of Ringan's regular customers, which was a very extensive one, included the curate and schoolmaster of Govan, both drouthy cronies and sworn friends, although there was not a night in the world that they did not quarrel; but this was more the effect of Ringan's ale than of any inherent pugnacity of disposition in the belligerents themselves. This quarrel, however, was so usual and so regular, that Ringan could tell to a measure of liquor when it would commence.

In summer, these worthies generally occupied a little room that overlooked the river; but, in winter, or when the weather began to get chill, they took possession of a corner of the kitchen, the most cheerful apartment in the house at that season, as it was always kept in most admirable order. The walls were white as snow, the floor strewed with bright white sand; immense rows of shining pewter plates and jugs of the same metal glittered on the rack; and a rousing fire crackled in the old-fashioned chimney. Nothing, in short, could be more tempting to the wayfarer, on a dark, cold, and drizzly night, than a casual peep through the blazing windows into Ringan's cheerful kitchen; and nothing could, in reality, be more comfortable than that kitchen, when you were once into it. In a corner of this snug apartment, was to be found regularly, every evening, say, from October to May, between the hours of seven and ten, Mr Walter Gibson, curate of Govan, and Mr John Craig, schoolmaster there. Before them, and near to the fire-

place, stood a small fir table, and on this table invariably stood a large pewter measure of ale, and three horn tumblers with silver rims—one for each of the persons just named, and a spare one for the use of the landlord, who joined their potations as often as the demands on his attention to the duties of the house permitted.

Out of all the evenings, however, which the curate and schoolmaster spent in Ringan Scouler's, we can afford to select one only; but this shall be one on which something occurred to diversify the monotony of their meetings, otherwise distinguished only by the usual quarrel, the usual humdrum conversation, (which, though sufficiently interesting to themselves, would, if recorded, afford very little entertainment to the reader,) and the usual consumption of somewhere about a gallon of mine host's double ale. The particular evening to which we have alluded shall be one in the latter end of the month of October, and the year somewhere about *anno* 1529. It was a raw, wet, and cold night—circumstances which greatly enhanced the comforts of Ringan's kitchen, as both the curate and schoolmaster very sensibly felt. Having each turned off a couple of horns of their good host's home-brewed, the conversation between the two worthies began to assume a lively, desultory character.

"I was up in the town the day, curate," said the schoolmaster—a thin, hard-visaged personage, with a good deal of the failing said to be inherent in his craft—conceit. "I was up in the town," he said—meaning Glasgow.

"Were ye?" quoth the curate—in personal appearance and manner the very antipodes of his friend; being a stout homely-looking man, of blunt speech and great good nature; his age, about forty-five. "And what saw ye strange there, Mr Craig?"

"Naething very particular, but the braw new gatehouse o' the archbishop. My certy, yon's a notable piece o' wark! His arms are engraven on the front o't—three cushions within the double tressure. Man, curate, can ye no contrive to warsle up the brae a bit? I'm sure waur than you's been made a bishop."

"I'm no sae ambitious, Johnny," replied the curate. "If I were rector o' Govan, I wad be content. But St Mungo himsel wadna get even that length noo-a-days without a pouchfu o' interest—and I hae nane."

"The mair's the pity," said the schoolmaster, filling up his horn tumbler; "but there's nae sayin what may happen yet."

"Indeed, is there no, Mr Craig," interposed Ringan, who made, at this particular moment, one of the party. "Ye may get promotion, curate, whan ye least expeck it, and may find a freen whar ye didna look for him. There's mony chances, baith o' guid and ill, befa' folk in this world."

While the curate's friends were endeavouring, by these vague and sufficiently commonplace but well-meant remarks, to inspire him with hopes of better days, it was announced to the party that the ferry-boat was bringing over a passenger. By the way, with regard to this particular, ye forgot to say before that there *was* a ferry across the Clyde, just below Ringan's house; and, as the passengers were not then, as they are now, very numerous, there was always a degree of interest and speculation excited by their appearance.

"Wha can he be?" said Ringan. "Some o' oor ain folk, I fancy. It'll be Jamie Dinwoodie frae Glasgow fair, I'll wad a groat. He's come roun by Partick, instead o' comin doun by the water-side."

"The deil o' him it's, at ony rate, Ringan," said the schoolmaster. "Jamie's been hame twa hoors since, and as fou's a fiddler."

All further speculation on the subject of the passenger, was here interrupted by the entrance of that person himself; and it was with some disappointment the speculators

found that, to judge by his appearance, he was not worth speculating about; for he was very meanly dressed—nay, worse than meanly—his attire was beggarly; so much so, indeed, that there was a general belief that he was a mendicant by profession, although, perhaps, of a somewhat better order than common. His apparel consisted of a threadbare and patched short coat or surtout, of coarse grey cloth, secured round his middle by a black belt. On his legs he wore a pair of thick blue rig-and-fur hose or stockings, as a certain description of these *wearables* are called in Scotland. They are now nearly extinct, but may still be seen occasionally. Those on the legs of the stranger were darned in fifty places, and with worsted of various colours. His shoes were in no better condition than his stockings, being patched in nearly as many places. On his head, he wore an old broad blue bonnet, which, with a pair of sadly-dilapidated inexpressibles, and a rough newly-cut staff, completed his equipment—the whole unequivocally bespeaking a very limited exchequer. On his entrance, the stranger, perceiving the respectable quality of the guests assembled in the kitchen of The Grilse and Gridiron, reverently doffed his bonnet, and apologized for intruding on the "honourable company."

"Nae apology necessary, freen," said the curate, rising from his seat to allow the poor traveller, who was dripping with wet, to approach nearer to the fire. "Come awa—nae apology at a' necessary. This is a public hostelry; and, if ye can birl your bawbee, ye've as guid a richt to accommodation as the best in the land."

"Thanks to ye, honourable sir," replied the stranger, meekly. "I wish every ane were o' your way o' thinking: but I find this auld coat and thae clouted shoon nae great recommendations to civility onywhere."

Saying this, the stranger planted himself in a chair before the fire, and ordered the landlord to bring him a measure of ale.

"Tak a moothfu o' this, in the meantime, honest man," said the curate, handing him his own goblet; "for ye seem to be baith wat and weary."

"Ou, no; no very weary, sir," replied the stranger, taking the proffered goblet; "but a wee thing wet, certainly. I hae only come frae Glasgow the day."

"Nae far'er?" said the curate.

"No an inch," replied the other.

"Tak it oot, man, tak it oot," said the former, as the latter was about to return the goblet, after merely tasting it. "It'll warm your heart, man, and I'm sure ye're welcome till't."

The stranger, without any remark, did as he was bid, and drained out the cup. In the business of this scene, the schoolmaster took no part, but maintained a haughty distance; his pride evidently hurt by the intrusion into his society of a person of such questionable condition—a feeling which he indicated by observing a dignified silence. This difference of disposition between the two gentlemen did not escape the stranger, who might have been detected from time to time throwing expressive glances of inquiry, not unmingled with contempt, at the offended dominie. The displeasure of his friend, however, did not deter the kind-hearted curate from prosecuting his conversation with the stranger, who eventually proved to be so intelligent and entertaining a person, that he gradually forced himself into the position of an understood, though not formally acknowledged member of the party. Being full of anecdote and quaint humour, such as even the schoolmaster could not altogether resist, although he made several ineffectual attempts to do so, the laugh and the liquor both soon began to circulate with great cordiality; and, in due time, songs were added to the evening's enjoyment. In this species of entertainment, the good-humoured curate set the example, at the earnest request of Ringan, who asked him, and not

in vain, to "skirl up," as he called it, the following ditty, which he had often heard the worthy churchman sing before:—

"In scarlet hose the bishop he goes,
In the best o' braid claiith goes the vicar;
But the curate, pur soul, has only the bowl,
To comfort him wi' its drap liquor, drap liquor,
To comfort him wi' its drap liquor.

"Right substantial, in troth, is the fat prebend's broth,
And the bishop's a hantle yet thicker;
But muslin kail to the curate they deal—
Sae dinna begrudge his drap liquor, drap liquor,
Sae dinna begrudge his drap liquor.

"Gie the soger renown, the doctor a gown,
And the lover the long looked for letter;
But for me the main chance, is a weel-plenished manse—
And the sooner I get it the better, the better,
And the sooner I get it the better."

"Faith, and I say so too with all my heart, sir," said the stranger, laughing loudly, and ruffing applause of the good curate's humorous song on the table. "I'm sure I've known many a one planted in a comfortable living, whom I would take it upon me to say were less deserving of it than you are."

"That may be, honest man," replied the curate; "but, as I said to my friend here a little ago, when he made the same remark—I hae nae interest; and, without that, ye ken, it's as impossible to get on as for a mile-stane to row its lane up a hill."

"Indeed, sir, that is but too true, I fear," said the stranger; "yet the King, they say, is very well disposed to reward merit when he finds it, and has often done so without the interference of influence."

"Ou, I daur say," replied the curate; "he's gude aneuch that way—na, very guid, I believe; but I hae nae access to the King, and it'll be lang aneuch before my merits, if I hae ony, which I mysel very much doot, 'll find their way to him. He has owre mony greedy gleds to feed, for the like o' me to hae ony chance o' promotion. No, no freen—

"Curate o' Govan I was born to be,
An' curate o' Govan I'm destined to dee."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed the stranger, laughing; "a bit of a poet, curate."

"In an unco sma' way, freen," replied the worthy churchman.

"Excuse my freedom, sir," rejoined the stranger; "but pray how long have you been curate of this parish?"

"Nine years, come Martinmas next."

"And no prospect of advancement yet?"

"Just as muckle as ye may see through a whunstane; and ye ken it taks gey sharp een to see onything through that."

"Nae doot," replied the stranger; "but the King, though he cannot see through a whunstane farther than ither folk, has pretty sharp eyes, and ears, too, sir, and baith hears and sees things that every one is not aware of. You may, therefore—who knows?—be nearer promotion than you think. Isn't the rectorship of Govan vacant just now?"

"Deed is t, freen," said the curate; "and, if I had it, I wadna ca' the King my cousin, though he were my uncle's son. But it'll no be lang vacant, I warrant; some o' thae hungry hingers-on about the court 'll be clinkit down in-till't, in the turnin o' a divet. It's owre canny a seat to be lang without a sitter."

"It will not be long without an incumbent, I dare say," rejoined the stranger; "but I'm not sure that you're right, curate, as to the description of person that will obtain it. But will your friend here not favour us with a verse or two? It is his turn now."

"Ou, I dare say he will," replied the curate. "Come, Johnny, gie's yer auld favourite."

With this request, the schoolmaster, who was now considerably mollified by the liquor he had drank, readily complied, and struck up:—

"Let kings their subjects keep in awe,
By terror o' the laws;
For me, I fin' there's naething like
A guid thick pair o' tawse.

"Let doctors think to store the mind,
By screeds o' rules and saws—
Commend me to the learning that's
Weel whupp'd in wi' the tawse.

"Let lawyers, when they wad prevail,
In fine words plead their cause—
The *argumentum* still wi' me
Is thao bit nine-taed tawse."

Suiting the action to the word, the dominie, on repeating the last line, whipped the formidable and efficacious instrument he spoke of out of his pocket. Whether, however, it had actually nine toes or not, or whether that assertion was merely a poetical flourish, none of those present took the trouble of ascertaining.

"By my troth, sir," said the stranger, when the schoolmaster had concluded, "it's a pity that such a thing as tawse was not in use outside the school as well as inside. There are many children of the larger growth in the world who would be greatly improved by its application."

"Come, landlord," now said the curate, "it's your turn now;—and it'll be yours belive, freen," he added, addressing the stranger. "Up wi't, Ringan—up wi't, man."

"Ye'se no want that lang," said the jolly, good-natured landlord of The Grilse and Gridiron, with one of his quiet, cunning shrugs of the shoulders and pawky leers of the eye; and off he went with—

"A flowing jug, a reaming jug,
'S a glorious sight, my dear boys;
It waukens love, it lichtens care,
And drowns all sorts of fear, boys.

Come, gentlemen, chorus.

Fal de ral, &c.

"Your sober man's an arrant fool,
His spirits all are sunk, boys;
Give me your honest, jovial soul,
That night and day is drunk, boys.

Chorus, gentlemen.

Fal de ral, &c.

"You tell me that his outward man
Is shabby, spare, and thin, boys;
But you forget to reckon on
The comfort that's within, boys.

Chorus.

Fal de ral, &c.

"Then, whether I be here or there,
On this or t'other side, boys,
May streams of ale still round me flow,
As broad and deep's the Clyde, boys!

Chorus, gentlemen.

Fal de ral, &c."

At the moment the landlord of The Grilse and Gridiron had completed his temperance society lyric, and ere the tribute of applause which was ready to be paid down on the nail to him by his auditors for it, could be tendered him—the feelings of the whole party were directed into another channel, by the information that a boat-load of passengers had just landed at the ferry. On receiving this intelligence, Ringan hurriedly rose from the table, and ran to the door, to see what portion of the human cargo was likely to come his way—and right glad was he to find that he was about to be favoured with the company of the whole. They were one party, and were approaching Ringan's house in a string. On entering the kitchen, they were found to be three men and two women. The former were apparently farmers—two of them elderly men, and one of them a young loutish-looking fellow, of about two-and-twenty. The women were mother and daughter—the latter a beautiful girl, of about eighteen or twenty years of age. The whole of these persons were well known to the curate schoolmaster, and landlord; and the consequence

was a general outcry of recognition, and a tumultuous shaking of hands.

"How are ye, curate?" "How are ye, Clayslaps?" "Glad to see you, Mr Craig!" "As glad to see you, Jordanhill!"

"And hoo are ye, guidwife?" said the curate, advancing towards the eldest of the two females, and taking her kindly by the hand—"and you, Meenie, my bonny dear," he said, turning towards the daughter—"hoo are ye? and hoo," he added, with an intelligent smirk, "is Davy Linn o Partick? But hoo's this?" he said, more seriously, and now peering into her face—"there's a tear in yer ee, Meenie. What's wrang, lassie? Hae ye lost yer leman? Has Davy no been sae kind's he should hae been?"

Poor Meenie made no reply to the worthy curate's half jocular, half serious remarks. Her heart was sad; and to her dismal and heart-withering was the errand on which she and her friends (for, of the men of the party, one was her father, the other her uncle, and the third her intended husband) had come to Govan. While the curate spoke to her, she held down her head to hide the tears that were fast falling from her beautiful dark hazel eyes; but she could not conceal the heaving of her bosom, from the sobs which she was endeavouring to suppress.

"She's a camstairy cutty," said her father, Adam Ritchie of Clayslaps, frowningly, "and most undutifu, no to submit to the wishes o' her parents wi' a better grace."

"Surely every bairn is bound to obey with cheerfulness those to whom they owe their being," said the curate; "but there are some cases, Clayslaps, where it wad be cruelty to impose restraint, and unreasonable to expect ungrudging compliance."

"Weel, weel, curate," replied Adam Ritchie, impatiently, "we'll speak o' thae things anither time. In the meantime, landlord," he said, turning to Ringan, "bring us in some brandy; for we're baith cauld and wat, and a thumblefu' o' the Frenchman 'll do us nae harm."

This order was speedily complied with. A small pewter measure of the liquor desired, accompanied by a small silver drinking cup or quaigh, was placed on the table; and the whole party, including the former occupants of the kitchen, soon began to get cheerful and somewhat talkative, with the exception of Meenie Ritchie. In all that had hitherto passed, he of the clouted shoes and darned hose had taken no part, but had kept his eye steadily fixed on Meenie, with a look of deep interest and compassion. At length, as if urged on by the increasing energy of these feelings, he rose, went up to her, and clapping her kindly on the shoulder—

"I wish, my sweet lass," he said, "it were in my power to lighten that bit heartie o' yours; for it seems to me to be sore burdened wi' some grief or other; and I am wae to see't."

"And what business hae ye to interfere, freen?" said her father, angrily. "If the lassie's in grief, whilk she has but a little reason to be. she has them about her here wha hae a deeper interest in her than ye can hae, and a hantle better right to be her comforters."

"Sma' comfort she's like to get amang ye, be ye what ye like to her," replied the stranger, doughtily; "and if it's anything I can richt her in, tak my word for't, honest man, I'll do it with but small regard to your displeasure."

"My troth, ye're no blate, sirrah, to tell me sae—her ain faither," said Clayslaps, reddening with anger; "but I advise ye, freen, neither to mak nor meddle wi' oor affairs, else ye may repent it. That lassie, sir, is my dochter; and there's her mother, and there's her uncle, and there's her husband to be; sae ye may see hoo very little your interference is needed here."

"Well, well," replied the stranger, now retiring to his seat, "if there's only fair play going, I'm content; but I like to see that everywhere and on all occasions."

"So, Clayslaps," said the curate, here interfering, "is't to be a match after a'—is't?"

"Indeed is't, curate," replied the former. "Meenie's come roun at last, and is convinced her parents wadna advise her against her interest. Sae we hae just come here this night for the express purpose o' gettin a cast o' your office; and I consider it the luckiest thing in the world that we hae forgethered wi' ye sae cannily, curate."

"Indeed ay, curate," here chimed in Meenie's mother with that ready volubility and a little of the incoherence of her particular class and character. "We're just gaun to close the business at ance, and be dune wi't. I'm sure muckle trouble and thoct it has cost us, curate. Ye ken Davy o' Partick, that was rinnin after Meenie, and wha the fulish, thochtless thing had sic a wark wi', hasna a plack in his purse—neither maut nor meal, neither hoose nor ha' o' and were we gaun to thraw awa oor lassie—wi' fifty merks o' tocher in her pouch, forbye what she may get when the guidman and me's raked i' the mools—on a landless, pennyless chiel like that? Na, my certy—we kent better than that, curate; and we're just gaun to gie her to the young laird o' Goupinsfou there, wha can lay down plack for plack wi' her, and has a bein house to tak her to, forbye."

"But," here interrupted the curate, at the same time looking towards Meenie, "are ye quite sure, Mrs Ritchie, that ye hae brocht your dochter to see this matter in the same prudent licht that ye do? I maun say, I doot it. And, besides, guidwife, what's a' the hurry in marryin the lassie—she's but young yet."

"That's a faut that's aye mendin, curate," replied Meenie's mother; "and we think the suner she's oot o' harm's way the better. He's but a reckless chiel that Davy, and there's nae sayin what he micht do. Maybe rin awa wi' her afore mornin; for he has heard an inklin o' oor intentions. Sae we just cam slippin awa in the dark, to get the business settled without his kennin."

During all this time, poor Meenie Ritchie sat the picture of misery and suffering. She had never, since she entered, once raised her head, but continued wrapt up in the silent wretchedness of despair; painfully and forcibly shewing how little she partook in the anxiety of her parents to accomplish the impending union. Meenie was evidently, in short, a victim to parental authority; and this all present felt and saw, and none with more compassion than the worthy curate who was to be the unwilling instrument of her doom.

"To be plain wi' ye, guidwife," said the kind-hearted churchman, when the former had gone through her somewhat unconnected, but sufficiently intelligible story, "and you, Clayslaps, and the rest o' ye that's concerned in this business—I dinna like it, and I will not marry these persons but with the full and free consent of both."

"But ye may not refuse, curate," said Meenie's father, somewhat testily. "She has consented already, and wil consent again."

"In that case, certainly, I may not refuse," said the curate, going up to the afflicted girl, and taking her kindly by the hand. "Meenie, my dear," he now said, addressing her, "are ye here, for the purpose o' being united to Goupinsfou, o' yer ain free will and accord?"

The poor girl made no reply.

The curate repeated his question, when her father sternly called on her to answer. Thus urged, she uttered a scarcely audible affirmative.

"Then, since it is so, Meenie," said the curate, dropping her hand, "I may not decline to effect the union. Do you desire, Clayslaps, that the ceremony should be immediately performed?"

"As sune's ye like, curate," replied the latter.

"And the suner the better," added Meenie's mother.

"Our worthy landlord here, then," said the curate,

"will prepare an apartment for us, and we will retire thither and unite this young couple. In the meantime, friends," he added, addressing the schoolmaster and he of the darned hose, "we had better settle oor lawin."

The schoolmaster instantly drew from his pocket his share of the reckoning, while the stranger pulled out the foot of an old stocking, which had been ingeniously converted into a purse, and was about undoing the bit of twine with which it was secured, when the curate placed his hand on his arm, to arrest his proceedings, saying—

"The ne'er a bodle, freen, ye'll pay. This'll be the schulemaister's and mine."

"The ne'er o' that it'll be, curate," replied the schoolmaster. "Every ane for himsel. Plack aboot's fair play. Let every herrin hing by its ain head. The deil a bodle I'll pay for onybody."

"Then I will," said the curate. "I'll pay for this honest man here; for it may be he canna sae weel spare't." And he laid down his own and the stranger's share of the reckoning.

"Many thanks to ye, curate," said the latter; "but there's no occasion for this kindness. I have, indeed, but little to spare; but that gives me no claim whatever on your generosity."

"Say nae mair aboot it, freen," replied the curate—"say nae mair aboot it, man. Ye'll maybe pay for me in a strait, some ither time. It's but a trifle, at ony rate—no worth speakin aboot; sae ye'll obleege me by giein me my ain way."

"Well, well, since you insist on it," said the stranger, again tying up the stocking-foot, "I winna press the matter. Many thanks to ye."

The important affair of the reckoning settled, a general movement was made amongst the party to adjourn to the apartment which had been prepared for the celebration of the marriage ceremony. Taking advantage of the momentary confusion created by this circumstance, the curate's new friend touched him on the elbow, led him aside, and whispered into his ear:—"Delay the ceremony as long as you can. The poor girl, you see, is about to be sacrificed. Perhaps I can prevent it."

The curate nodded assent, although it was but the result of an impulse of his kind nature; for he could not conceive how any one—particularly such a very humble personage as he who had spoken to him—should have the power to stay an event of the kind, and under the circumstances of that which was about to take place. Still, as the request was in accordance with his own feelings, and as he did not know what this very odd person might have it in his power to do in the matter, he resolved to do what he could to comply with it. Having made the communication to the curate just recorded, the stranger suddenly and hurriedly left the apartment. Whither, and the purpose for which he went, we shall ascertain by following him.

On leaving the house, he hastened down to the river side, and, having called the ferryman out of his temporary habitation, a little hut erected on the bank—"Friend," he said, "do you know Davy Linn o' Partick?"

"Brawly that," replied the ferryman. "No a better or decenter chiel in the country side than Davy. A warm-hearted, honest fellow!"

"Glad to hear it," said the inquirer. "Well, then, since that is the case, you will have no objection to do him a service, I daresay?"

"It would be ill my part if I had," replied the man; "for he has done me twa or three services that I wadna willingly forget."

"Then across the water with you, and up to Partick as fast as if the Old One were after you, and tell Davy to come here directly—to come along with you—if he would not lose Meenie Ritchie for ever."

"Feth, that'll mak him rin, if anything will," said the man, who knew of Davy's attachment to Meenie.

"And stay, sir," continued the stranger, without noticing the interruption; "take this"—producing a small gold ring—"and go, at the same time, to the bishop's castle, up the way, there, on the Kelvin, and request some one of the domestics to put it into the hands of Sir John Elphinstone, who is residing there just now with the bishop. He will instantly come out to you; and, when he does, tell him that the person who sent it desires to see him here immediately, and requests that he may come along with you. And now, my friend," he continued, "that you may do all these errands with the greater good-will and dispatch, here's a gold Jacobus for thee."

The man took the coin, though not without a look of surprise at the donor, whom he evidently thought a most unlikely person to deal in gold rings and Jacobuses. He, however, made no remark, but prepared to execute the mission with which he had been entrusted; and was just about to push off his boat, when his employer called out to him—

"I forgot to say, friend, that, when you have brought over your passengers, you will desire them to wait in your hut here until you have acquainted me with their arrival. You will find me in Scouler's hostelry."

With this order, the boatman promised compliance, and pushed off; when his employer returned to the inn, and, planting himself before the kitchen fire, anxiously awaited the return of his messenger.

The curate, in the meantime, was faithfully performing his part, in promoting delay, by the aid of story and anecdote, although he felt as if it were a hopeless case. While thus employed, the landlady, a lively, active, bustling body, happening to come into the room, he suddenly stopped in the middle of a story, and exclaimed, laughingly—"Mrs Scouler, hae ye been makin ony brandy parritch lately?"

"Tuts, Mr Gibson, will I never hear the end o' that?" replied the hostess of The Grilse and Gridiron, good-naturedly, and hurrying out of the apartment, to escape the further banter of the facetious churchman.

"What about the brandy parritch, curate?" exclaimed the guidwife of Clayslaps, on the hostess leaving the room.

"I'll tell you that," replied the curate. 'Ae morning, pretty early, last summer, there cam a serving man, mounted on horseback, to oor freend Ringan Scouler's door here, and said he belonged to Lord Minto; and that he had been sent forward by his master, who was on the road comin frae Arranthrough to Edinburgh, to order some breakfast to be prepared for him. But what, think ye, was the breakfast ordered for his Lordship? Why, it was parritch—plain, simple parritch; for, it seems, he prefers it to a' ither kind of food for his morning meal. Weel, however much astonished Mrs Scouler was at this order, she readily undertook to prepare the dish desired, and the man departed. But he had no sooner gone, than it occurred to her, that parritch for a lord ought to be made somewhat differently from those intended for a plebeian stomach. But wherein was this difference to consist? There was no choice of materials, no variety of ingredients, no process of manufacture, but one, that she had ever seen or heard tell of. At length, after racking her brain for some time, to see if she could not strike out something new on the subject, it occurred to her that, if she would substitute brandy for water, the desired object would be accomplished, and a lordly dish produced. Acting on this bright idea, the guidwife immediately emptied a bottle o' brandy into the parritch-pot, and proceeded with the remainder of the process in the usual way. By the time his Lordship came up, the parritch was ready, and a dish of them placed before him. Little suspecting—although he thoct they looked a wee thing darker than they should do—that there was anything wrong, his Lordship took a thumpin spoonfu

to begin wi'; but he no sooner fan' the extraordinary taste they had, than he jumped from his seat, threw doon the spune, and sputtered the contents o' his mooth a' owre the table, thinkin he was poisoned. He then ran to the door, and called oot violently for oor guid hostess here. In great alarm, she ran hastily up the stair, and inquired what was the matter.

"The matter, woman!" exclaimed his Lordship, in a towering passion. "What's this you hae gien me?"—pointing to the parritch—"what infernal stuff is that?"

"Mrs Scouler, surprised at his Lordship's want of discernment, explained to him what she had dune; when he burst out a-laughing, told her that the taste of a peer and a ploughman was precisely the same, and requested her to make him just such a mess as she made for her ain family. This was accordingly dune; whan his Lordship, payin sax prices for his hamely breakfast, set off in great guid humour, telling Mrs Scouler, however, at parting, never to put brandy in his parritch again."

The curate, having concluded this episodical anecdote, proceeded with the story which he had interrupted to relate it; but was beginning to be secretly uneasy at the long delay which was taking place in the operations of his friend of the darned stockings. From this feeling, however, he was in some measure relieved by the latter's sending for him, after a short while, and begging of him to gain but other fifteen minutes, if he could, when he pledged himself that such an event would occur as would, in all probability, save Meenie Ritchie from the fate that threatened her.

"But what is the event ye allude to, freen, and what is't ye propose to do in this matter that'll produce the effect ye speak o'?" said the curate, looking doubtfully at his new acquaintance.

"Patience a little, my good sir," replied the latter, smiling, "and ye shall know all. In the meantime, trust to my good faith, and you will find that I can do more perhaps than my appearance would promise."

"Be it even so, then," said the curate; "but observe I cannot possibly put the ceremony off beyond the time you have mentioned; for a' but the puir lassie hersel are gettin restlessly impatient."

The curate now returned to his party, and again had recourse to his store of anecdote, which was an inexhaustible one, to protract the performance of the ceremony. In the meantime, the boatman, faithful to his trust, was diligently executing the missions confided to him. On entering the house of Davy Linn's father, he found Davy sitting disconsolately by the fire, his head resting on his hand, and his eyes fixed, in thoughtful gaze, on the burning embers. He was thinking of Meenie Ritchie—there could be no doubt of that; for poor Davy thought of little else. Formerly, these thoughts had been pleasant to Davy; but at this moment they were sad and heart-withering; for he had heard some rumours of her parents intending to marry her to another; and he now, therefore, considered her as for ever lost to him.

"What the mischief, Davy, man, are ye sittin gloomin and glunchin at, there?" said the ferryman, whose name was Archy Dawson, slapping the person he addressed on the shoulder—"up, man, up!—I hae guid news for you—at least, what I think's likely to turn oot sae."

Davy, who had hitherto been so engrossed by his own gloomy reflections, as either not to have heard or not heeded the entrance of Archy Dawson, now rose from his seat, and, confronting the former, asked, with a faint smile, what the news was.

"Is there naeboddy in the hoose but yersel, Davy?" inquired Archy, looking cautiously round the apartment.

"Nane at this moment," replied Davy; "but there'll be some o' them here belive, I daursay."

"Weel, before they come, Davy, I'll tell you what's

brocht me here the nicht." And Archy proceeded to relate the particulars of his mission.

Davy made no reply for some time; but the clenching of his teeth shewed that some fierce spirit had been roused within him by the intelligence. At length he said—"Ay, I see how it is: they have stolen a march on me. Oh, if I had known this but an hour since, they should have had more guests at the wedding than they counted on, although some of them might not have been very welcome."

"Maybe, maybe, Davy," said Archy; "but it's likely no owre late yet; sae come awa as fast's ye can, man, and let's see what this business'll turn oot to, and I'll tell ye the rest o' my story as we gang along."

Davy, although without knowing distinctly why or wherefore, now left the house with his friend Archy, when the latter, as promised, acquainted him with the other mission he had to execute—namely, the delivering the ring to Sir John Elphinstone, at the bishop's castle, whither Davy subsequently accompanied him.

On arriving at the lordly mansion of the prelate, Archy inquired of a servant if Sir John was there, and was told that he was.

"Then," said he, "be sae guid, freen, as tak up this bit trantalum o' a thing till him, and I'll wait whar I am till I hear frae him."

In a few minutes, after Sir John appeared, and, accosting Archy, said—"Well, my friend, what commands have you brought along with this?" producing the ring.

"The person that gied me that, sir," said Archy, "desired me to tell you to come along wi' me."

"And, pray, where are you from, friend?"

"Ou, no far awa, sir," said Archy—"just frae Govan, owre the way there."

"Very well, I'll accompany you. But who's this you have with you?" inquired the knight, looking at Davy Linn, who stood close by.

"That lad's name, sir," said Archy, "is Davy Linn; he belongs to Partick, up there, sir. He's a fine lad, Davy—a fine, decent, canny lad, sir."

"I have no reason to doubt it," replied Sir John; "but what does he here with you?"

"Dear me, sir," said Archy—"he was sent for, too, by the same chield that sent you the ring. I was desired to bring ye baith."

"Oh, indeed," replied Sir John—"that's enough; let us proceed, then." And the three immediately set off for Govan. On their arrival on the opposite bank of the river, Archy leaving them there, hastened up to Ringan Scouler's, and intimated to his employer that he had executed his mission, and that the persons he had sent for waited him in his hut. On receiving this information, the former hastened down to the ferry station; and, after a brief interview and hasty explanation with Sir John and Davy, of which we leave the sequel to shew the import, returned with equal haste to the hostelry, and now pushed boldly into the apartment occupied by the marriage party. The time stipulated with the curate had expired; and the latter, finding he could no longer delay the discharge of the duty he was called upon to perform, had already commenced the service.

"Friend," said the intruder, with a degree of boldness and familiarity in his manner which he had not before assumed, and at the same time laying his hand on the arm of the curate, to arrest his attention, "pray, stop a moment, if you please, till I speak a word with the bride's father." Saying this, and now turning round to the person to whom he alluded—"May I ask, Clayslaps," he said, "if your objection to your daughter's having the man of her choice is his want of fortune?"

Clayslaps looked for a moment at the querist with an expression of extreme surprise, but at length said—

"I dinna see what richt, freen, ve hae to put such ques-

tions; nevertheless, I will answer't. It is; and a guid and sufficient ane it'll be allooed, I think."

"Is it your only one? Have you no other fault to lay to the young man's charge?"

"I hae nae faut to charge him wi'," replied Clayslaps, crustily and reluctantly. "The lad, for ought I ken to the contrary, is weel aneuch in ither respects. But he's nae match for my dochter."

"Your wife has said," continued the querist, "that your daughter's portion is fifty merks, which is to be met by a similar sum on the part of the young man whom you intend for her husband. Now, friend, if Davy could produce two merks for her one—that is, a hundred to her fifty—what would you say to having him still for a son-in-law?"

"Why," said the bride's father, "that wad certainly hae altered the case at ae time; but it's owre late noo."

"Not a bit, not a bit," replied the propounder of the question—"better late than never."

"But young Goupinsfou has lands as weel as siller," rejoined Clayslaps.

"True, I believe," said the other speaker; "but suppose Davy could produce you evidence of his being a laird, too—say—let me see"—and he paused a moment—"say he could shew you that he was laird of a hundred acres of the best land within half a dozen miles of Partick, what would you say, then, guidman, to having Davy for your daughter's husband?"

"What's the use o' talkin this nonsense?" said the laird of Clayslaps, impatiently; "everybody kens that Davy Linn's baithlandless and pennyless, and likely aye to be. Sac, freend, hae the guidness to retire—for your company's no wanted here—and let the ceremony proceed."

"Not so fast, laird, if you please," replied the person addressed. And then turning to the bride's mother, "What would you say, guidwife, to Davy for a son-in-law, if he had all the property I have mentioned?"

"Ou, indeed, man, it wad surely hae altered the case a'thegither—there's nae doot o' that. I wad hae had nae objection till him, had that been the case—neither wad her father, I am sure. But, as the guidman has said, what's the use o' speakin o' thae things, noo, at ony rate? Davy has naething, and Goupinsfou has plenty, and that maks a' the differ—but, my feth, an unco differ it is."

"No doubt; but, if we remove this differ, guidwife," rejoined the stranger, "perhaps we may yet prevent two fond hearts being separated; and, to end this matter at once," continued the speaker, but now in a serious tone, "I will pay down a hundred merks on Davy Linn's account, as a free gift to him, on the day after he has become the husband of your daughter, and I will put him in possession, as a free gift also, of a hundred acres of the best land within six miles of Partick, on the same day and on the same condition."

"Ye'll pay doon a hunner merks to Davy Linn, and ye'll gie him a hunner acres o' land!" exclaimed Clayslaps, in the utmost amazement, and looking at the threadbare coat, clouted shoes, and darned hose of the man of promises, with the most profound contempt and incredulity. "And whar the deil are ye to get them?"

"Never ye fear that, freen," replied the latter, laughing; "I'll find them, I warrant you."

"Let's see the siller," said Clayslaps, triumphantly.

"Why, you certainly have me there, Clayslaps. I have not the money on me indeed; but I will find you instant security for it, and for the entire fulfilment of my promises.—Landlord," continued the speaker—and now turning to Ringan, who was one of his astonished auditors—"please to say to Sir John Elphingstone, whom I presume you know is to be found in the next room, that it will be obliging if he will step this way a moment."

We will not stop to describe the amazement that was felt by all, and expressed on every countenance in the apartment, on the delivery of this extraordinary message. Sir John Elphingstone was well known to every one there as a gentleman of large possessions and highly honourable character; and how he came to be at the call of such a person as he who had sent for him, or how he came to be in the house at all at such a time, was matter of inexpressible surprise to every one present. The whole affair, in short, was one of impenetrable mystery and perplexity to all, including the worthy curate. We will not, however, wait to describe the feelings of the party on this occasion, but go straight on with our story. Neither will we do so in any case, thinking it much better to leave such matters wholly to the reader's own imagination.

The summons that called Sir John into the presence of the marriage folks was immediately obeyed. In an instant, that gentleman entered the apartment, with a smile upon his face, all the party standing up and receiving him with the most marked reverence and respect.

"You'll excuse the liberty I have taken in sending for you, Sir John," said the person who had called him, on the former's entrance; "and I certainly would not have taken that liberty had I not known how much pleasure it gives you when an opportunity is afforded you of doing a generous thing. Here, Sir John, is a young woman about to be sacrificed at the altar of Mammon. Now, I know that you would not permit this if you could help it. Neither will I; and, to prevent it, I have promised, to the intended bride's father here, that I will give one hundred merks and one hundred acres of land to the husband of Meenie's choice, Davy Linn of Partick—a very deserving young man, I believe—on the day after she is married to him. Now, Sir John, will you become my security to Clayslaps for the fulfilment of this promise?"

"Most assuredly," said Sir John, smiling; "let me have pen, ink, and paper, and I will give him my written obligation to that effect."

The materials were brought, and the obligation drawn out; Clayslaps and all the others being too much confounded by what was passing to offer any interruption or make any remark. When the paper was written, it was handed to Meenie's father, who, almost unconsciously—for he did not seem to know very well what he was doing—read it over. On concluding the perusal—

"A' richt aneugh," he said—"a' richt aneugh. 'Od, this is a queer business. But it's a' owre late, guid sirs. We canna be aff wi Goupinsfou at this stage o' the affair, and in this sort o' way. It wadna be fair nor honest, and wad look unco strange like. Besides, ye canna expeck that he would submit to't himsel."

This was certainly a reasonable enough supposition; but it happened to be an unfounded one; for Goupinsfou was not only an ass, but a most abominably mean and selfish one; and Sir John, aware of this, thought he knew a way to reconcile him to the loss of Meenie.

Going up to Goupinsfou, he took him aside and whispered in his ear—"I say, laird, you've long had an eye, I know, to the bit holm on the Kelvin, below the Gorroch Mills."

"It's a bonny spot," interrupted Goupinsfou, cocking his ears.

"It is," replied Sir John. "Well, then, it shall be yours if you give up all claim to the hand of Meenie Ritchie, and give me, in writing, an entire quittance on that score."

"Dune!" exclaimed Goupinsfou, instantly, wisely calculating that he could readily find another wife, but might not so readily get another offer of the piece of land he so much coveted. "Dune, Sir John!" he exclaimed, grasping that gentleman by the hand with the selfish eagerness that belonged to his character; but, desirous of glozing over the

meanness of the transaction, he placed his acquiescence on another footing than that of bribery, by adding, "I wadna like, I'm sure, to force the lassie to marry me against her will. I gie her up wi' a' my heart."

Having obtained the brute's consent to resign the hand of Meenie, Sir John turned to the party, and informed them that their worthy friend, the laird of Goupinsfou, out of consideration for the feelings of Meenie Ritchie, which he feared were not favourable to him, resigned all claim to her hand, and left her at full liberty to marry whom she pleased.

"Weel, that's certainly sae far guid," said Clayslaps; "but still I'm no a'thegither reconciled to this business. It looks——"

"Toots, guidman," here interposed his wife, "the thing's a' richt aneuch. Havena ye Sir John's haun o' writ for the promise made by this—this"—and she looked at the person she meant, and would have said *gentleman*, but another glimpse of the patched shoes directed her to the words—"honest man, to gie Davie the land and siller spoken o'; and what mair wad ye hae? Davie's a discreet, decent, weel-doin lad, everybody kens, that will mak, I'm sure, a guid husband to Meenie; sae, just let them e'en gang thegither." She would scarcely have said so much for Davie an hour before; but she said it now, and it was all well enough.

"Weel, weel, guidwife," said Clayslaps, "since it is sae, we'll see aboot it. There can be nae harm, however, in delayin a day or twa, at ony rate, till we think owre't."

"No, no—no delay," exclaimed the meddling stranger; "delays are dangerous, guidman. Nothing like the present moment. Let us strike while the iron's hot.—Landlord," he said, turning round to Ringan, "send Davy Linn here."

In a second after, Davie Linn rushed into the apartment, flew to Meenie, and caught her in his arms. "Mine yet! mine yet, Meenie!" he exclaimed, rapturously. It was all he could say; and, little as it was, it was more than her he addressed was able to express. During the whole night, indeed, she had not opened her lips, and seemed to have been scarcely conscious of what was passing around her. This was the effect of deep misery; and the result was now nearly the same from an excess of joy.

"No delay now, curate," said the intermeddler. "Set to work as fast as you can, and buckle these two together. No objection, I fancy?"

"Oh, none in the world," said the curate—"I'll fix them in a trice. But I say, friend," he added, laughing, "I'm thinkin what a fule I was to pay your reckonin the night—ane wha maks the merks flee like drift snaw on a windy day, and gies away lumps o' land wi' as little thocht as—as I settled your lawin. Feth, but it was fulish aneuch o' me, and ye're a queer ane, be ye wha ye like."

"Not so very foolish, perhaps, as you think, curate," said the person thus addressed—"and that, it's possible, ye may find. At any rate, it's no lost what a friend gets, you know, curate; but, in the meantime, will you proceed with the ceremony, if you please. And, guidman," he added, turning to Clayslaps, "will ye allow me to give away the bride?"

"I ken nane here that has a better richt," replied the latter, now thoroughly reconciled to the sudden and most unexpected change in his daughter's destiny which had taken place. "Ye may either gie her awa or tak her yersel, just as ye like; for, by my faith, ye seem to be a guid honest chiel, be ye wha ye like, as the curate says."

"Well, then, since you place her at my disposal, I here give her to Davy Linn o' Partick—and may he always continue to deserve her!"

This conveyance of the fair Meenie, the curate lost no time in legalizing and confirming. When the ceremony was completed, "Now," said the stranger, "if there be a

fiddler or piper in all Govan, who will play to us for love or money, let him be brought here instantly, and we'll finish as well as we've begun. By St Bride, we'll have a night of it! What say you, Sir John?" And he turned to that gentleman with a smile. "Will you condescend to honour us with your presence, and with as much good humour as you can conveniently spare?"

"Oh, most certainly," replied the latter, laughing—"with all my heart."

The desired musician was procured, and made his appearance. The room was cleared, creature comforts were ordered in in unsparing abundance, and such a night of mirth and fun ensued as, we believe, has not been seen since in the little village of Govan, and, perhaps, not often anywhere else. The curate danced and frisked about like a three-year-old; Sir John conducted himself with no less animation; but neither of them had the smallest chance with the gentleman in the darned hose. He kept the floor almost the whole night, whooping and hallooing in a most spirited manner, and dancing fully half the time with the bride, and the rest with her mother, the guidwife of Clayslaps, relieved occasionally by a turn out with some young girls of the neighbourhood, whom the landlord of The Grilse and Gridiron had hurriedly brought together, on the principle of "the more the merrier." But time and tide wait on no man. Morning came, and the revellers prepared to depart to their several homes. The marriage party, including the bride and bridegroom, and Sir John Elphingstone, proceeded to the ferry, to which they were accompanied by him who had performed the principal character of the night. Having seen them all embarked, and having wished the young married couple every happiness, he stood on the shore for an instant, waved them a final adieu, retired by the way of the village, and was seen no more.

Within a week after the occurrence of the events just related, the worthy curate of Govan was surprised one day by receiving a letter from the archbishop of Glasgow.

"What's wrang noo?" said the curate to himself, as he opened it. "My dismissal, I suppose, for the irregularity o' my conduct in Ringan Scouler's, the ither nicht."

It was not exactly so, as the reader will perceive. The letter ran thus:—"At the recommendation of a high personage, I intend appointing you to the vacant rectorship of Govan. You will, therefore, repair immediately to me, either at my palace at Glasgow, or my castle at Partick, that I may confer with you farther on the subject.—DUNBAR, A. B. of G."

"Whe-e-e-ou!" ejaculated the curate, with a long-drawn expiration, when he had read this very pleasant document—"I smell a rat. 'Od, but it was stupid o' me no to think o't afore. I'm sure I nicht hae kent him; for I've seen him twa or three times; but then he was in a green frock coat o' the finest claith; a velvet bonnet, wi' ruby and feathers, was on his head; a chain o' gowd, worth five hunner merks, if it was worth a bodle, roun his neck, and a gaucy sword by his side. Still I ought to hae kent him, for a' his clooted shoon and darned hose. But the cat's oot o the pock—and, my word, a bonny beast it is!"

What does the good curate's hints and allegorical allusions mean? inquires the reader. Why, it means that the worthy man suspected—and we have no doubt his suspicion was perfectly correct—that the person in the darned hose was no other than James V., King of Scotland.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FERGUSON
CHAPTER I.

"Of Ferguson, the bauld and slec."—BURNS.

I HAVE, I believe, as little of the egotist in my composition as most men; nor would I deem the story of my life, though by no means unvaried by incident, of interest enough to repay the trouble of either writing or perusing it, were it the story of my own life only; but, though an obscure man myself, I have been singularly fortunate in my friends. The party-coloured tissue of my recollections is strangely interwoven, if I may so speak, with pieces of the domestic history of men whose names have become as familiar to our ears as that of our country itself; and I have been induced to struggle with the delicacy which renders one unwilling to speak much of one's self, and to overcome the dread of exertion natural to a period of life greatly advanced, through a desire of preserving to my countrymen a few notices, which would otherwise be lost to them, of two of their greatest favourites. I could once reckon among my dearest and most familiar friends, Robert Burns and Robert Ferguson.

It is now rather more than sixty years since I studied for a few weeks at the University of St Andrew's. I was the son of very poor parents, who resided in a sea-port town on the western coast of Scotland. My father was a house-carpenter, a quiet, serious man, of industrious habits and great simplicity of character, but miserably depressed in his circumstances, through a sickly habit of body; my mother was a warm-hearted, excellent woman, endowed with no ordinary share of shrewd good sense and sound feeling, and indefatigable in her exertions for my father and the family. I was taught to read, at a very early age, by an old woman in the neighbourhood—such a person as Shenstone describes in his "Schoolmistress;" and, being naturally of a reflective turn, I had begun, long ere I had attained my tenth year, to derive almost my sole amusement from books. I read incessantly; and, after exhausting the shelves of all the neighbours, and reading every variety of work that fell in my way—from "The Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan, and the Gospel Sonnets of Erskine, to a treatise on fortification by Vaban, and the "History of the Heavens" by the Abbé Pluche—I would have pined away for lack of my accustomed exercise, had not a benevolent Baronet in the neighbourhood, for whom my father occasionally wrought, taken a fancy to me, and thrown open to my perusal a large and well-selected library. Nor did his kindness terminate until, after having secured to me all of learning that the parish school afforded, he had settled me, now in my seventeenth year, at the University.

Youth is the season of warm friendships and romantic wishes and hopes. We say of the child, in its first attempts to totter along the wall, or when it has first learned to rise beside its mother's knee, that it is yet too weak to stand alone; and we may employ the same language in describing a young and ardent mind. It is, like the child, too weak to stand alone, and anxiously seeks out some kindred mind on which to lean. I had had my intimates at school, who, though of no very superior cast, had served me, if I

may so speak, as resting-places, when wearied with my studies, or when I had exhausted my lighter reading; and now, at St Andrew's, where I knew no one, I began to experience the unhappiness of an unsatisfied sociality. My schoolfellows were mostly stiff, illiterate lads, who, with a little bad Latin and worse Greek, plumed themselves mightily on their scholarship; and I had little inducement to form any intimacies among them; for, of all men, the ignorant scholar is the least amusing. Among the students of the upper classes, however, there was at least one individual with whom I longed to be acquainted. He was apparently much about my own age, rather below than above the middle size, and rather delicately than robustly formed; but I have rarely seen a more elegant figure or more interesting face. His features were small, and there was what might perhaps be deemed a too feminine delicacy in the whole contour; but there was a broad and very high expansion of forehead, which, even in those days, when we were acquainted with only the phrenology taught by Plato, might be regarded as the index of a capacious and powerful mind; and the brilliant light of his large black eyes, seemed to give earnest of its activity.

"Who, in the name of wonder, is that?" I inquired of a class-fellow, as this interesting-looking young man passed me for the first time.

"A clever, but very unsettled fellow from Edinburgh," replied the lad; "a capital linguist, for he gained our first bursary three years ago; but our Professor says he is certain he will never do any good. He cares nothing for the company of scholars like himself; and employs himself—though he excels, I believe, in English composition—in writing vulgar Scotch rhymes, like Allan Ramsay. His name is Robert Ferguson."

I felt, from this moment, a strong desire to rank among the friends of one who cared nothing for the company of such men as my class-fellow, and who, though acquainted with the literature of England and Rome, could dwell with interest on the simple poetry of his native country.

There is no place in the neighbourhood of St Andrew's where a leisure hour may be spent more agreeably than among the ruins of the Cathedral. I was not slow in discovering the eligibilities of the spot; and it soon became one of my favourite haunts. One evening, a few weeks after I had entered on my course at college, I had seated myself among the ruins in a little ivied nook fronting the setting sun, and was deeply engaged with the melancholy Jaques in the forest of Ardennes, when, on hearing a light footstep, I looked up, and saw the Edinburgh student whose appearance had so interested me, not four yards away. He was busied with his pencil and his tablets, and muttering, as he went, in a half audible voice, what, from the inflection of the tones, seemed to be verse. On seeing me, he started, and apologizing, in a few hurried but courteous words, for what he termed the involuntary intrusion, would have passed; but, on my rising and stepping up to him, he stood.

"I am afraid, Mr Ferguson," I said, "'tis I who owe you an apology; the ruins have long been yours, and I am but an intruder. But you must pardon me; I have often heard of them in the west, where they are hallowed, even more than they are here, from their connection with the history

of some of our noblest Reformers; and, besides, I see no place in the neighbourhood where Shakspeare can be read to more advantage."

"Ah," said he, taking the volume out of my hand, "a reader of Shakspeare and an admirer of Knox! I question whether the heresiarch and the poet had much in common."

"Nay, now, Mr Ferguson," I replied, "you are too true a Scot to question that. They had much, very much in common. Knox was no rude Jack Cade, but a great and powerful-minded man; decidedly as much so as any of the nobler conceptions of the dramatist—his Cæsars, Brutuses, or Othellos. Buchanan could have told you that he had even much of the spirit of the poet in him, and wanted only the art; and just remember how Milton speaks of him in his "Areopagitica." Had the poet of "Paradise Lost" thought regarding him as it has become fashionable to think and speak now, he would hardly have apostrophized him as—*Knox, the Reformer of a nation—a great man animated by the spirit of God.*"

"Pardon me," said the young man, "I am little acquainted with the prose writings of Milton; and have, indeed, picked up most of my opinions of Knox at second-hand. But I have read his *merry* account of the murder of Beaton, and found nothing to alter my preconceived notions of him, from either the matter or manner of the narrative. Now that I think of it, however, my opinion of Bacon would be no very adequate one, were it formed solely from the extract of his history of Henry VII., given by Kaimes in his late publication.—Will you not extend your walk?"

We quitted the ruins together, and went sauntering along the shore. There was a rich sunset glow on the water, and the hills that rise on the opposite side of the Frith stretched their undulating line of azure under a gorgeous canopy of crimson and gold. My companion pointed to the scene:—"These glorious clouds," he said, "are but wreaths of vapour; and these lovely hills, accumulations of earth and stone. And it is thus with all the past—with the past of our own little histories, that borrows so much of its golden beauty from the medium through which we survey it—with the past, too, of all history. There is poetry in the remote—the bleak hill seems a darker firmament, and the chill wreath of vapour, a river of fire. And you, sir, seem to have contemplated the history of our stern Reformers through this poetical medium, till you forget that the poetry was not in them, but in that through which you surveyed them."

"Ah, Mr Ferguson," I replied, "you must permit me to make a distinction. I acquiesce fully in the justice of your remark; the analogy, too, is nice and striking, but I would fain carry it a little further. Every eye can see the beauty of the remote; but there is a beauty in the near—an interest, at least—which every eye cannot see. Each of the thousand little plants that spring up at our feet, has an interest and beauty to the botanist; the mineralogist would find something to engage him in every little stone. And it is thus with the poetry of life—all have a sense of it in the remote and the distant; but it is only the men who stand high in the art—its men of profound science—that can discover it in the near. The *mediocre* poet shares but the commoner gift, and so he seeks his themes in ages or countries far removed from his own; while the man of nobler powers, knowing that all nature is instinct with poetry, seeks and finds it in the men and scenes in his immediate neighbourhood. As to our Reformers"—

"Pardon me," said the young poet—"the remark strikes me, and, ere we lose it in something else, I must furnish you with an illustration. There is an acquaintance of mine, a lad much about my own age, greatly addicted to the study of poetry. He has been making verses all his life-long; he began ere he had learnt to write them even; and his

judgment has been gradually overgrowing his earlier compositions, as you see the advancing tide rising on the beach and obliterating the prints on the sand. Now, I have observed, that, in all his earlier compositions, he went far from home; he could not attempt a pastoral without first transporting himself to the vales of Arcady; or an ode to Pity or Hope, without losing the warm living sentiment in the dead, cold personifications of the Greek. The Hope and Pity he addressed were, not the undying attendants of human nature, but the shadowy spectres of a remote age. Now, however, I feel that a change has come over me. I seek for poetry among the fields and cottages of my own land. I—a—a—the friend of whom I speak—But I interrupted your remark on the Reformers."

"Nay," I replied, "if you go on so, I would much rather listen than speak. I only meant to say, that the Knoxes and Melvilles of our country have been robbed of the admiration and sympathy of many a kindred spirit, by the strangely erroneous notions that have been abroad regarding them for at least the last two ages. Knox, I am convinced, would have been as great as Jeremy Taylor, had he not been greater."

We sauntered along the shore, till the evening had darkened into night, lost in an agreeable interchange of thought. "Ah!" at length exclaimed my companion, "I had almost forgotten my engagement, Mr Lindsay; but it must not part us. You are a stranger here, and I must introduce you to some of my acquaintance. There are a few of us—choice spirits, of course—who meet every Saturday evening at John Hogg's; and I must just bring you to see them. There may be much less wit than mirth among us; but you will find us all sober when at the gayest; and old John will be quite a study for you."

CHAPTER II.

Say, ye red gowns that aften here
Hae toasted cakes to Katie's beer,
Gin e'er thir days hae had their peer,
Sae blythe, sae daft!
Ye'll ne'er again in life's career
Sit half sae saft.

Elegy on John Hogg.

We returned to town; and, after threading a few of the narrower lanes, entered by a low door into a long dark room, dimly lighted by a fire. A tall thin woman was employed in skinning a bundle of dried fish at a table in a corner.

"Where's the guidman, Kate?" said my companion, changing the sweet pure English in which he had hitherto spoken, for his mother tongue.

"John's ben in the spence," replied the woman. "Little Andrew, the wratch, has been makin a totum wi' his faither's ae razor, an' the puir man's trying to shave himsel yonder an' girnan like a sheep's head on the tangs."

"Oh, the wratch! the ill-deedie wratch!" said John, stalking into the room, in a towering passion, his face covered with suds and scratches—"I might as weel shave mysel wi' a mussel shillet.—Rob Ferguson, man, is that you!"

"Wearie warld, John," said the poet, "for a oor philosophy."

"Philosophy!—it's but a snare, Rab—just vanity an' vexation o' speerit, as Solomon says. An' isna it clear heterodox, besides? Ye study an' study till your brains gang about like a whirligig; an' then, like bairns in a boat that see the land sailin, ye think its the solid yearth that's turnin round. An' this ye ca' philosophy; as if David hadna tauld us that the warld sits coshly on the waters, an' canna be moved."

"Hoot, John," rejoined my companion, "it's no me, but Jamie Brown, that differs wi' you in thae matters. I'm a Hoggonian, ye ken. The auld Jews were, doubtless, gran' Christians, an' wherefore no guid philosophers too? But it

was cruel o' you to unkennel me this mornin' afore six, an' I up sae lang at my studies the nicht afore."

"Ah, Rob, Rob!" said John—"studying in *Tam Dun's* kirk. Ye'll be a minister, like a' the lave."

"Mendin' fast, John," rejoined the poet. "I was in your kirk on Sabbath last, hearing worthy Mr Corkindale; whatever else he may hae to fear, he's in nae danger o' '*thinking his ain thoughts*,' honest man."

"In oor kirk!" said John—"ye're dune, then, wi' precenting in yer ain—an' troth nae wonder. What could hae possessed ye to gie up the puir chield's name i' the prayer, an' him sittin' at yer lug?"

I was unacquainted with the circumstance to which he alluded, and requested an explanation. "Oh, ye see," said John, "Rob, amang a' the ither gifts that he misguides, has the gift o' a sweet voice; an' naething less would ser' some o' oor Professors than to hae him for their precentor. They might as weel hae thoct o' an organ—it wad be just as devout; but the soun's everything now, laddie, ye ken, an' the heart naething. Weel, Rob, as ye may think, was less than pleased wi' the job, an' tauld them he could whistle better than sing; but it wasna that they wanted, and sae it behoved him to tak his seat in the box. An', lest the folk should be no pleased wi' ae key to ae tune, he gaed them, for the first twa or three days, a hail bunch to each; an' there was never sic singing in St Andrew's afore. Weel, but for a' that, it behoved him still to precent; though he has got rid o' it at last—for what did he do, twa Sabbaths ago, but put up drunken Tam Moffat's name in the prayer—the very chield that was sittin' at his elbow, though the minister couldna see him. An' when the puir stibbler was prayin for the reprobate as weel's he could, ae half o' the kirk was needecessitated to come oot, that they might keep decent, an' the ither half to swallow their pocket napkins. But what think ye?"

"Hoot, John, now, leave oot the moral," said the poet. "Here's a' the lads."

Half a dozen young students entered as he spoke; and, after a hearty greeting, and when he had introduced me to them one by one, as a choice fellow of immense reading, the door was barred, and we sat down to half a dozen of home-brewed, and a huge platter of dried fish. There was much mirth and no little humour. Ferguson sat at the head of the table, and old John Hogg at the foot. I thought of Eastcheap, and the revels of Prince Henry; but our Falstaff was an old Scotch Seceder, and our Prince a gifted young fellow, who owed all his influence over his fellows to the force of his genius alone.

"Prythee, Hal," I said, "let us drink to Sir John."

"Why, yes," said the poet, "with all my heart. Not quite so fine a fellow, though, 'bating his Scotch honesty. Half Sir John's genius would have served for an epic poet—half his courage for a hero."

"His courage!" exclaimed one of the lads.

"Yes, Willie, his courage, man. Do you think a coward could have run away with half the coolness? With a tithe of the courage necessary for such a retreat, a man would have stood and fought till he died. Sir John must have been a fine fellow in his youth."

"In mony a droll way may a man fa' on the drap drink," remarked John; "an' meikle ill, dootless, does it do in takin aff the edge o' the speerit—the mair if the edge be a fine razor edge, an' no the edge o' a whittle. I mind, about fifty years ago, when I was a slip o' a callant"—

"Losh, John," exclaimed one of the lads, "hae ye been fechtin wi' the cats?—sic a scrapit face!"

"Wheesht," said Ferguson; "we owe the illustration to that, but dinna interrupt the story."

"Fifty years ago, when I was a slip o' a callant," continued John, "unco curious, an' fond o' kennin' everything, as callants will be"—

"Hoot, John," said one of the students, interrupting him, "can ye no cut short, man? Rob promised last Saturday to gie us, '*Fie, let us a' to the Bridal*,' an' ye see the ale an' the nicht's baith wearin' dune."

"The song, Rob, the song!" exclaimed half a dozen voices at once; and John's story was lost in the clamour.

"Nay, now," said the good-natured poet, "that's less than kind; the auld man's stories are aye worth the hearing, an' he can relish the auld-world fisher-song wi' the best o' ye. But we maun hae the story yet."

He struck up the old Scotch ditty "*Fie, let us a' to the Bridal*," which he sung with great power and brilliancy; for his voice was a richly modulated one, and there was a fulness of meaning imparted to the words which wonderfully heightened the effect. "How strange it is," he remarked to me when he had finished, "that our English neighbours deny us humour! The songs of no country equal our Scotch ones in that quality. Are you acquainted with '*The Guid-wife of Auchtermuchty*'?"

"Well," I replied, "but so are not the English. It strikes me that, with the exception of Smollet's novels, all our Scotch humour is locked up in our native tongue. No man can employ in works of humour any language of which he is not a thorough master; and few of our Scotch writers, with all their elegance, have attained the necessary command of that colloquial English which Addison and Swift employed when they were merry."

"A braw redd delivery," said John, addressing me. "Are ye gaun to be a minister, too?"

"Not quite sure yet," I replied.

"Ah," rejoined the old man, "'twas better for the Kirk, when the minister just made himsel ready for it, an' then waited till he kent whether it wanted him.—There's young Rob Ferguson beside you!"

"Setting oot for the Kirk," said the young poet, interrupting him, "an' yet drinkin' ale on Saturday at e'en wi' old John Hogg."

"Weel, weel, laddie, it's easier for the best o' us to find fault wi' ither than to mend oorsels. Ye have the head, onyhow; but Jamie Brown tells me it's a doctor ye're gaun to be, after a'."

"Nonsense, John Hogg—I wonder how a man o' your standing"—

"Nonsense, I grant you," said one of the students; "but true enough, for a' that, Bob. Ye see, John, Bob an' I were at the King's Muirs last Saturday, an' ca'ed at the *pendicle*, in the passing, for a cup o' whey; when the guidwife tellt us there was ane o' the callants, who had broken into the milk-house twa nicht's afore, lyin' ill o' a surfeit. '*Dangerous case*,' said Rob; 'but let me see him; I have studied to small purpose if I know nothing o' medicine, my good woman.' Weel, the woman was just glad enough to bring him to the bedside; an' no wonder—ye never saw a wiser phiz in your lives—Dr Dumpie's was naething till't; an', after he had sucked the head o' his stick for ten minutes, an' fand the loon's pulse, an' asked mair questions than the guidwife liked to answer, he prescribed. But, losh! sic a prescription! A day's fasting an' twa ladles o' nettle kail was the gist o't; but then there went mair Latin to the tail o' that, than oor neebor the Doctor ever had to lose."

But I dwell too long on the conversation of this evening. I feel, however, a deep interest in recalling it to memory. The education of Ferguson was of a twofold character—he studied in the schools and among the people; but it was in the latter tract alone that he acquired the materials of all his better poetry; and I feel as if, for at least one brief evening, I was admitted to the privileges of a class-fellow, and sat with him on the same form. The company broke up a little after ten; and I did not again hear of John Hogg till I read his elegy, about four years after, among the poems of my friend. It is by no means one of the

happiest pieces in the volume, nor, it strikes me, highly characteristic; but I have often perused it with an interest very independent of its merits.

CHAPTER III.

But he is weak—both man and boy
Has been an idler in the land.

WORDSWORTH.

I was attempting to listen, on the evening of the following Sunday, to a dull, listless discourse—one of the discourses so common at this period, in which there was fine writing without genius, and fine religion without Christianity—when a person who had just taken his place beside me, tapped me on the shoulder and thrust a letter into my hand. It was my newly-acquired friend of the previous evening; and we shook hands heartily under the pew.

“That letter has just been handed me by an acquaintance from your part of the country,” he whispered; “I trust it contains nothing unpleasant.”

I raised it to the light, and, on ascertaining that it was sealed and edged with black, rose and quitted the church, followed by my friend. It intimated, in two brief lines, that my patron, the baronet, had been killed by a fall from his horse a few evenings before; and that, dying intestate, the allowance which had hitherto enabled me to prosecute my studies necessarily dropped. I crumpled up the paper in my hand.

“You have learned something very unpleasant,” said Ferguson. “Pardon me—I have no wish to intrude; but, if at all agreeable, I would fain spend the evening with you.”

My heart filled, and, grasping his hand, I briefly intimated the purport of the communication, and we walked out together in the direction of the ruins.

“It is, perhaps, as hard, Mr Ferguson,” I said, “to fall from one’s hopes as from the place to which they pointed. I was ambitious—too ambitious, it may be—to rise from that level on which man acts the part of a machine, and tasks merely his body, to that higher level on which he performs the proper part of a rational creature, and employs only his mind. But that ambition need influence me no longer. My poor mother, too—I had trusted to be of use to her.”

“Ah, my friend,” said Ferguson, “I can tell you of a case quite as hopeless as your own—perhaps more so. But it will make you deem my sympathy the result of mere selfishness. In scarce any respect do our circumstances differ.”

We had reached the ruins: the evening was calm and mild as when I had walked out on the preceding one; but the hour was earlier, and the sun hung higher over the hill. A newly-formed grave occupied the level spot in front of the little ivied corner.

“Let us seat ourselves here,” said my companion, “and I will tell you a story—I am afraid a rather tame one; for there is nothing of adventure in it, and nothing of incident; but it may at least shew you that I am not unfitted to be your friend. It is now nearly two years since I lost my father. He was no common man—common neither in intellect nor in sentiment; but, though he once fondly hoped it should be otherwise—for in early youth he indulged in all the dreams of the poet—he now fills a grave as nameless as the one before us. He was a native of Aberdeenshire; but held, latterly, an inferior situation in the office of the British Linen Company in Edinburgh, where I was born. Ever since I remember him, he had awakened too fully to the realities of life, and they pressed too hard on his spirits, to leave him space for the indulgence of his earlier fancies; but he could dream for his children, though not for himself; or, as I should perhaps rather say, his children fell heir to all his more juvenile hopes of fortune, and influence, and space in the world’s eye;—and, for himself, he indulged in hopes of a later growth and firmer texture, which pointed

from the present scene of things to the future. I have an only brother, my senior by several years, a lad of much energy, both physical and mental; in brief, one of those mixtures of reflection and activity which seem best formed for rising in the world. My father deemed him most fitted for commerce, and had influence enough to get him introduced into the counting-house of a respectable Edinburgh merchant. I was always of a graver turn—in part, perhaps, the effect of less robust health—and me he intended for the Church. I have been a dreamer, Mr Lindsay, from my earliest years—prone to melancholy, and fond of books and of solitude; and the peculiarities of this temperament the sanguine old man, though no mean judge of character, had mistaken for a serious and reflective disposition. You are acquainted with literature, and know something, from books at least, of the lives of literary men. Judge, then, of his prospect of usefulness in any profession, who has lived, ever since he knew himself, among the poets. My hopes, from my earliest years, have been hopes of celebrity as a writer—not of wealth, or of influence, or of accomplishing any of the thousand aims which furnish the great bulk of mankind with motives. You will laugh at me. There is something so emphatically shadowy and unreal in the object of this ambition, that even the full attainment of it provokes a smile. For who does not know

‘How vain that second life in others’ breath,
The estate which wits inherit after death!’

And what can be more fraught with the ludicrous than an union of this shadowy ambition with *mediocre* parts and attainments! But I digress.

“It is now rather more than three years since I entered the classes here. I competed for a bursary, and was fortunate enough to secure one. Believe me, Mr Lindsay, I am little ambitious of the fame of mere scholarship, and yet I cannot express to you the triumph of that day. I had seen my poor father labouring far, far beyond his strength, for my brother and myself—closely engaged during the day with his duties in the Bank, and copying at night in a lawyer’s office. I had seen, with a throbbing heart, his tall wasted frame becoming tremulous and bent, and the grey hair thinning on his temples; and I now felt that I could ease him of at least part of the burden. In the excitement of the moment, I could hope that I was destined to rise in the world—to gain a name in it and something more. You know how a slight success grows in importance when we can deem it the earnest of future good fortune. I met, too, with a kind and influential friend in one of the professors, the late Dr Wilkie. Alas! good, benevolent man! you may see his tomb yonder beside the wall; and, on my return from St Andrew’s, at the close of the session, I found my father on his deathbed. My brother Henry—who had been unfortunate, and, I am afraid, something worse—had quitted the counting-house and entered aboard of a man-of-war, as a common sailor; and the poor old man, whose heart had been bound up in him, never held up his head after.

On the evening of my father’s funeral, I could have lain down and died. I never before felt how thoroughly I am unfitted for the world—how totally I want strength. My father, I have said, had intended me for the Church; and, in my progress onward from class to class, and from school to college, I had thought but little of each particular step, as it engaged me for the time, and nothing of the ultimate objects to which it led. All my more vigorous aspirations were directed to a remote future and an unsubstantial shadow. But I had witnessed, beside my father’s bed what had led me seriously to reflect on the ostensible aim for which I lived and studied; and the more carefully I weighed myself in the balance, the more did I find myself awaiting. You have heard of Mr Brown of the Secession, the author of the “Dictionary of the Bible.” He was an old acquaintance of my father’s; and, on hearing of his

illness, had come all the way from Haddington to see him. I felt, for the first time, as, kneeling beside his bed, I heard my father's breathings becoming every moment shorter and more difficult, and listened to the prayers of the clergyman that I had no business in the Church. And thus I still continue to feel. 'Twere an easy matter to produce such things as pass for sermons among us, and to go respectably enough through the mere routine of the profession; but I cannot help feeling that, though I might do all this and more, my duty, as a clergyman, would be still left undone. I want singleness of aim—I want earnestness of heart. I cannot teach men effectually how to live well; I cannot shew them, with aught of confidence, how they may die safe. I cannot enter the Church without acting the part of a hypocrite; and the miserable part of the hypocrite it shall never be mine to act. Heaven help me! I am too little a practical moralist myself to attempt teaching morals to others.

"But I must conclude my story, if story it may be called:—I saw my poor mother and my little sister deprived, by my father's death, of their sole stay, and strove to exert myself in their behalf. In the daytime I copied in a lawyer's office; my nights were spent among the poets. You will deem it the very madness of vanity, Mr Lindsay; but I could not live without my dreams of literary eminence. I felt that life would be a blank waste without them; and I feel so still. Do not laugh at my weakness, when I say I would rather live in the memory of my country than enjoy her fairest lands—that I dread a nameless grave many times more than the grave itself. But, I am afraid, the life of the literary aspirant is rarely a happy one; and I, alas! am one of the weakest of the class. It is of importance that the means of living be not disjoined from the end for which we live; and I feel that, in my case, the disunion is complete. The wants and evils of life are around me; but the energies through which those should be provided for, and these warded off, are otherwise employed. I am like a man pressing onward through a hot and bloody fight, his breast open to every blow, and tremblingly alive to the sense of injury and the feeling of pain, but totally unprepared either to attack or defend. And then those miserable depressions of spirits to which all men who draw largely on their imagination are so subject; and that wavering irregularity of effort which seems so unavoidably the effect of pursuing a distant and doubtful aim, and which proves so hostile to the formation of every better habit—alas! to a steady morality itself. But I weary you, Mr Lindsay; besides, my story is told. I am groping onward, I know not whither; and, in a few months hence, when my last session shall have closed, I shall be exactly where you are at present."

He ceased speaking, and there was a pause of several minutes. I felt soothed and gratified. There was a sweet melancholy music in the tones of his voice, that sunk to my very heart; and the confidence he reposed in me flattered my pride. "How was it," I at length said, "that you were the gayest in the party of last night?"

"I do not know that I can better answer you," he replied, "than by telling you a singular dream which I had about the time of my father's death. I dreamed that I had suddenly quitted the world, and was journeying, by a long and dreary passage, to the place of final punishment. A blue, dismal light glimmered along the lower wall of the vault; and, from the darkness above, where there flickered a thousand undefined shapes—things without form or outline—I could hear deeply-drawn sighs, and long hollow groans, and convulsive sobbings, and the prolonged moanings of an unceasing anguish. I was, aware, however, though I know not how, that these were but the expressions of a lesser misery, and that the seats of severer torment were still before me. I went on, and on, and the vault

widened, and the light increased, and the sounds changed. There were loud laughings and low mutterings, in the tone of ridicule; and shouts of triumph and exultation; and, in brief, all the thousand mingled tones of a gay and joyous revel. Can these, I exclaimed, be the sounds of misery when at the deepest? 'Bethink thee,' said a shadowy form beside me—'bethink thee if it be not so on earth.' And, as I remembered that it was so, and bethought me of the mad revels of shipwrecked seamen and of plague-stricken cities, I awoke. But on this subject you must spare me."

"Forgive me," I said; "to-morrow, I leave college, and not with the less reluctance that I must part from you. But I shall yet find you occupying a place among the *literati* of our country, and shall remember, with pride, that you were my friend."

He sighed deeply. "My hopes rise and fall with my spirits," he said; "and to-night I am melancholy. Do you ever go to buffets with yourself, Mr Lindsay? Do you ever mock, in your sadder moods, the hopes which render you happiest when you are gay? Ah! 'tis bitter warfare when a man contends with Hope!—when he sees her, with little aid from the personifying influence, as a thing distinct from himself—a lying spirit that comes to flatter and deceive him. It is thus I see her to-night.

"See'st thou that grave?—does mortal know
Aught of the dust that lies below?
'Tis foul, 'tis damp, 'tis void of form—
A bed where winds the loathsome worm;
A little heap, mould'ring and brown,
Like that on flowerless meadow thrown
By mossy stream, when winter reigns
O'er leafless woods and wasted plains:
And yet that brown, damp, formless heap
Once glowed with feelings keen and deep;
Once eyed the light, once heard each sound
Of earth, air, wave, that murmurs round.
But now, ah! now, the name it bore,
Sex, age, or form, is known no more.
This, this alone, O Hope! I know,
That once the dust that lies below,
Was, like myself, of human race,
And made this world its dwelling-place.
Ah! this, when death has swept away
The myriads of life's present day,
Though bright the visions raised by thee,
Will all my fame, my history be!"

We quitted the ruins and returned to town.

"Have you yet formed," inquired my companion, "any plan for the future?"

"I quit St Andrew's," I replied, "to-morrow morning. I have an uncle the master of a West Indiaman, now in the Clyde. Some years ago, I had a fancy for the life of a sailor, which has evaporated, however, with many of my other boyish fancies and predilections; but I am strong and active, and it strikes me there is less competition on sea at present than on land. A man of tolerable steadiness and intelligence has a better chance of rising as a sailor than as a mechanic. I shall set out, therefore, with my uncle on his first voyage."

CHAPTER IV.

At first, I thought the swankie didna ill—
Again I glow'd, to hear him better still;
Bauld, sice, an' sweet, his lines mair glorious grew,
Glow'd round the heart, an' glanc'd the soul out through.

ALEXANDER WILSON.

I had seen both the Indies and traversed the wide Pacific, ere I again set foot on the eastern coast of Scotland. My uncle, the shipmaster, was dead, and I was still a common sailor; but I was light-hearted and skilful in my profession, and as much inclined to hope as ever. Besides, I had begun to doubt, and there cannot be a more consoling doubt when one is unfortunate, whether a man may not enjoy as much happiness in the lower walks of life as in the upper. In one of my later voyages, the vessel in which I sailed had lain for several weeks at Boston in North America—then

a scene of those fierce and angry contentions which eventually separated the colonies from the mother country; and when in this place, I had become acquainted, by the merest accident in the world, with the brother of my friend the poet. I was passing through one of the meaner lanes, when I saw my old college friend, as I thought, looking out at me from the window of a crazy wooden building—a sort of fencing academy, much frequented, I was told, by the Federalists of Boston. I crossed the lane in two huge strides.

“Mr Ferguson,” I said, “Mr Ferguson,” for he was withdrawing his head, “do you not remember me?”

“Not quite sure,” he replied; “I have met with many sailors in my time; but I must just see.”

He had stepped down to the door ere I had discovered my mistake. He was a taller and stronger-looking man than my friend, and his senior apparently by six or eight years; but nothing could be more striking than the resemblance which he bore to him both in face and figure. I apologized.

“But have you not a brother, a native of Edinburgh,” I inquired, “who studied at St Andrew’s about four years ago?—never before, certainly, did I see so remarkable a likeness.”

—“As that which I bear to Robert?” he said. “Happy to hear it. Robert is a brother of whom a man may well be proud, and I am glad to resemble him in any way. But you must go in with me, and tell me all you know regarding him. He was a thin pale slip of a boy when I left Scotland—a mighty reader, and fond of sauntering into by-holes and corners; I scarcely knew what to make of him; but he has made much of himself. His name has been blown far and wide within the last two years.”

He shewed me through a large waste apartment, furnished with a few deal seats, and with here and there, a fencing foil leaning against the wall, into a sort of closet at the upper end, separated from the main room by a partition of undressed slabs. There was a charcoal stove in the one corner, and a trundle bed in the other; a few shelves laden with books ran along the wall; there was a small chest raised on a stool immediately below the window, to serve as a writing desk, and another stool standing beside it. A few cooking utensils scattered round the room, and a corner cupboard, completed the entire furniture of the place.

“There is a certain limited number born to be rich, Jack,” said my new companion, “and I just don’t happen to be among them; but I have one stool for myself, you see, and, now that I have unshipped my desk, another for a visiter and so get on well enough.”

I related briefly the story of my intimacy with his brother; and we were soon on such terms as to be in a fair way of emptying a bottle of rum together.

“You remind me of old times,” said my new acquaintance. “I am weary of these illiterate, boisterous, long-sided Americans, who talk only of politics and dollars. And yet there are first-rate men among them, too. I met, some years since, with a Philadelphia printer, whom I cannot help regarding as one of the ablest, best-informed men I ever conversed with. But there is nothing like general knowledge among the average class; a mighty privilege of conceit, however.”

“They are just in that stage,” I remarked, “in which it needs all the vigour of an able man to bring his mind into anything like cultivation. There must be many more facilities of improvement ere the mediocritist can develop himself. He is in the egg still in America, and must sleep there till the next age.—But when last heard you of your brother?”

“Why,” he replied, “when all the world heard of him—with the last number of *Ruddiman’s Magazine*. Where can you have been bottled up from literature of late? Why, man, Robert stands first among our Scotch poets.”

“Ah! ’tis long since I have anticipated something like that for him,” I said; “but, for the last two years, I have seen only two books, Shakspeare and ‘The Spectator.’ Pray, do shew me some of the magazines.”

The magazines were produced; and I heard, for the first time, in a foreign land and from the recitation of the poet’s brother, some of the most national and most highly-finished of his productions. My eyes filled, and my heart wandered to Scotland and her cottage homes, as, shutting the book, he repeated to me, in a voice faltering with emotion, stanza after stanza of the “Farmer’s Ingle.”

“Do you not see it?—do you not see it all?” exclaimed my companion; “the wide smoky room, with the bright turf fire, the blackened rafters shining above, the straw wrought settle below, the farmer and the farmer’s wife, and auld grannie and the bairns. Never was there truer painting; and, oh, how it works on a Scotch heart! But hear this other piece.”

He read “Sandy and Willie.”

“Far, far ahead of Ramsay,” I exclaimed. “More imagination, more spirit, more intellect, and as much truth and nature. Robert has gained his end already. Hurra for poor old Scotland!—these pieces must live for ever. But do repeat to me the ‘Farmer’s Ingle’ once more.”

We read, one by one, all the poems in the magazine, dwelling on each stanza, and expatiating on every recollection of home which the images awakened. My companion was, like his brother, a kind, open-hearted man, of superior intellect; much less prone to despondency, however, and of a more equal temperament. Ere we parted, which was not until next morning, he had communicated to me all his plans for the future, and all his fondly-cherished hopes of returning to Scotland with wealth enough to be of use to his friends. He seemed to be one of those universal geniuses who do a thousand things well, but want steadiness enough to turn any of them to good account. He shewed me a treatise on the use of the sword which he had just prepared for the press, and a series of letters on the stamp act, which had appeared, from time to time, in one of the Boston newspapers, and in which he had taken part with the Americans.

“I make a good many dollars, in these stirring times,” he said. “All the Yankees seem to be of opinion that they will be best heard across the water when they have got arms in their hands, and have learned how to use them; and I know a little of both the sword and the musket. But the warlike spirit is frightfully thirsty, somehow, and consumes a world of rum; and so I have not yet begun to make rich.”

He shared with me his supper and bed for the night; and, after rising in the morning ere I awoke, and writing a long letter for Robert, which he gave me in the hope I might soon meet with him, he accompanied me to the vessel, then on the eve of sailing, and we parted, as it proved, for ever. I know nothing of his after life, or how or where it terminated; but I have learned that, shortly before the death of his gifted brother, his circumstances enabled him to send his mother a small remittance for the use of the family. He was evidently one of the kind-hearted, improvident few who can share a very little, and whose destiny it is to have only a very little to share.

CHAPTER V.

O Ferguson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law’s dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstone hearts,
Ye Embrugh gentry!
The tithe o’ what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow’d his pantry!

BURNS.

I visited Edinburgh, for the first time, in the latter part of the Autumn of 1773, about two months after I had

sailed from Boston. It was on a fine calm morning—one of those clear sunshiny mornings of October, when the gossamer goes sailing about in long cottony threads, so light and fleecy that they seem the skeleton remains of extinct cloud-lets; and when the distant hills, with their covering of grey frost rime, seem, through the clear cold atmosphere, as if chiseled in marble. The sun was rising over the town through a deep blood-coloured haze—the smoke of a thousand fires; and the huge fantastic piles of masonry that stretched along the ridge, looked dim and spectral through the cloud, like the ghosts of an army of giants. I felt half a foot taller as I strode on towards the town. It was Edinburgh I was approaching—the scene of so many proud associations to a lover of Scotland; and I was going to meet as an early friend one of the first of Scottish poets. I entered the town. There was a book stall in a corner of the street; and I turned aside for half a minute to glance my eye over the books.

“Ferguson’s Poems!” I exclaimed, taking up a little volume. “I was not aware they had appeared in a separate form. How do you sell this?”

“Just like a’ the ither booksellers,” said the man who kept the stall—“that’s nane o’ the buiks that come down in a hurry:—just for the marked selling price.” I threw down the money.

“Could you tell me anything of the writer?” I said. “I have a letter for him from America.”

“Oh, that’ll be frae his brither Henry, I’ll wad; a clever chield too, but owre fond o’ the drap drink, maybe, like Rob himsel. Baith o’ them fine humane chields, though, without a grain o’ pride. Rob takes a stan’ wi’ me sometimes o’ half an hour at a time, an’ we clatter owre the buiks; an’, if I’m no mistaen, yon’s him just yonder—the thin pale slip o’ a lad wi’ the broad brow. Ay, an’ he’s juist comin this way.”

“Anything new to-day, Thomas?” said the young man, coming up to the stall. “I want a cheap second-hand copy of Ramsay’s ‘Evergreen;’ and, like a good man as you are, you must just try and find it for me.”

Though considerably altered—for he was taller and thinner than when at college, and his complexion had assumed a deep sallow hue—I recognised him at once, and presented him with the letter.

“Ah! from brother Henry,” he said, breaking it open and glancing his eye over the contents. “What!—*old college chum, Mr Lindsay!*” he exclaimed, turning to me. “Yes, sure enough; how happy I am we should have met! Come this way—let us get out of the streets.”

We passed hurriedly through the Canongate and along the front of Holyrood-house, and were soon in the King’s Park, which seemed this morning as if left to ourselves.

“Dear me, and this is you yourself!—and we have again met, Mr Lindsay!” said Ferguson—“I thought we were never to meet more. Nothing, for a long time, has made me half so glad. And so you have been a sailor for the last four years. Do let us sit down here in the warm sunshine, beside St Anthony’s Well, and tell me all your story, and how you happened to meet with brother Henry.”

We sat down, and I briefly related at his bidding a. that had befallen me since we had parted at St Andrew’s, and how I was still a common sailor, but, in the main, perhaps, not less happy than many who commanded a fleet.

“Ah, you have been a fortunate fellow,” he said; “you have seen much and enjoyed much; and I have been rusting in unhappiness at home. Would that I had gone to sea along with you!”

“Nay, now, that won’t do,” I replied. “But you are merely taking Bacon’s method of blunting the edge of envy. You have scarcely yet attained the years of mature man-

hood, and yet your name has gone abroad over the whole length and breadth of the land, and over many other lands besides. I have cried over your poems three thousand miles away, and felt all the prouder of my country for the sake of my friend. And yet you would fain persuade me that you wish the charm reversed, and that you were just such an obscure salt-water man as myself!”

“You remember,” said my companion, “the story of the half-man, half-marble Prince of the Arabian tale. One part was a living creature, one part a stone; but the parts were incorporated, and the mixture was misery. I am just such a poor unhappy creature as the enchanted Prince of the story.”

“You surprise and distress me,” I rejoined. “Have you not accomplished all you so fondly purposed—realized even your warmest wishes? And this too in early life. Your most sanguine hopes pointed but to a name, which you yourself, perhaps, was never to hear, but which was to dwell on men’s tongues when the grave had closed over you. And now the name is gained and you live to enjoy it. I see the *living* part of your lot, and it seems instinct with happiness; but in what does the *dead*, the stony part consist?”

He shook his head, and looked up mournfully in my face; there was a pause of a few seconds. “You, Mr Lindsay,” he at length replied, “you who are of an equable steady temperament, can know little, from experience, of the unhappiness of the man who lives only in extremes; who is either madly gay or miserably depressed. Try and realize the feelings of one whose mind is like a broken harp—all the medium tones gone, and only the higher and lower left; of one, too, whose circumstances seem of a piece with his mind; who can enjoy the exercise of his better powers, and yet can only live by the monotonous drudgery of copying page after page, in a clerk’s office; of one who is continually either groping his way amid a chill melancholy fog of nervous depression, or carried headlong, by a wild gaiety, to all which his better judgment would instruct him to avoid; of one who, when he indulges most in the pride of superior intellect, cannot away with the thought that that intellect is on the eve of breaking up, and that he must yet rate infinitely lower in the scale of rationality than any of the nameless thousands who carry on the ordinary concerns of life around him.”

I was grieved and astonished, and knew not what to answer. “You are in a gloomy mood to-day,” I at length said; “you are immersed in one of the fogs you describe; and all the surrounding objects take a tinge of darkness from the medium through which you survey them. Come, now, you must make an exertion, and shake off your melancholy. I have told you all my story, as I best could, and you must tell me all yours in return.”

“Well,” he replied, “I shall, though it mayn’t be the best way in the world of dissipating my melancholy. I think I must have told you, when at College, that I had a maternal uncle of considerable wealth, and, as the world goes, respectability, who resided in Aberdeenshire. He was placed on what one may term the table-land of society; and my poor mother, whose recollections of him were limited to a period when there is warmth in the feelings of the most ordinary minds, had hoped that he would willingly exert his influence in my behalf. Much, doubtless, depends on one’s setting out in life; and it would have been something to have been enabled to step into it from a level like that occupied by my relative. I paid him a visit shortly after leaving college, and met with apparent kindness. But I can see beyond the surface, Mr Lindsay; and I soon saw that my uncle was entirely a different man from the brother whom my mother remembered. He had risen, by a course of slow industry, from comparative poverty, and his feelings had worn out in the process. The character was case-

hardened all over; and the polish it bore—for I have rarely met a smoother man—seemed no improvement. He was, in brief, one of the class content to dwell for ever in mere decencies, with consciences made up of the conventional moralities, who think by precedent, bow to public opinion as their god, and estimate merit by its weight in guineas."

"And so your visit," I said, "was a very brief one?"

"You distress me," he replied. "It should have been so; but it was not. But what could I do? Ever since my father's death, I had been taught to consider this man as my natural guardian; and I was now unwilling to part with my last hope. But this is not all. Under much apparent activity, my friend, there is a substratum of apathetical indolence in my disposition; I move rapidly when in motion; but when at rest there is a dull inertness in the character, which the will, when unassisted by passion, is too feeble to overcome. Poor, weak creature that I am! I had sitten down by my uncle's fire-side, and felt unwilling to rise. Pity me, my friend—I deserve your pity—but, oh, do not despise me!"

"Forgive me, Mr Ferguson," I said; "I have given you pain—but surely most unwittingly."

"I am ever a fool," he continued; "but my story lags; and, surely, there is little in it on which it were pleasure to dwell. I sat at this man's table for six months, and saw, day after day, his manner towards me becoming more constrained, and his politeness more cold; and yet I staid on, till at last my clothes were worn threadbare, and he began to feel that the shabbiness of the nephew affected the respectability of the uncle. His friend the soap-boiler, and his friend the oil-merchant, and his friend the manager of the hemp manufactory, with their wives and daughters—all people of high standing in the world—occasionally honoured his table with their presence; and how could he be other than ashamed of mine? It vexes me that I cannot even yet be cool on the subject; it vexes me that a creature so sordid, should have so much the power to move me; but I cannot—I cannot master my feelings. He—he told me—and with whom should the blame rest, but with the weak, spiritless thing who lingered on in mean bitter dependence, to hear what he had to tell?—he told me that all his friends were respectable, and that my appearance was no longer that of a person whom he could wish to see at his table, or introduce to any one as his nephew. And I had staid to hear all this!

"I can hardly tell you how I got home. I travelled, stage after stage, along the rough dusty roads, with a weak and feverish body, and almost despairing mind. On meeting with my mother, I could have laid my head on her bosom, and cried like a child. I took to my bed in a high fever, and trusted that all my troubles were soon to terminate; but, when the die was cast, it turned up life. I resumed my old miserable employments—for what could I else?—and, that I might be less unhappy in the prosecution of them, my old amusements too. I copied during the day, in a clerk's office, that I might live, and wrote during the night, that I might be known. And I have, in part, perhaps, attained my object. I have pursued and caught hold of the shadow on which my heart had been so long set; and if it prove empty, and untangible, and unsatisfactory, like every other shadow, the blame surely must rest with the pursuer, not with the thing pursued. I weary you, Mr Lindsay; but one word more. There are hours when the mind, weakened by exertion, or by the teasing monotony of an employment which tasks without exercising it, can no longer exert its powers, and when, feeling that sociality is a law of our nature, we seek the society of our fellow-men. With a creature so much the sport of impulse as I am, it is of these hours of weakness that conscience takes most note. God help me! I have been told that life is short; but it

stretches on, and on, and on before me; and I know not how it is to be passed through."

My spirits had so sunk during this singular conversation, that I had no heart to reply.

"You are silent, Mr Lindsay," said the poet; "I have made you as melancholy as myself; but look round you, and say if ever you have seen a lovelier spot. See how richly the yellow sunshine slants along the green sides of Arthur's Seat, and how the thin blue smoke, that has come floating from the town, fills the bottom of yonder grassy dell, as if it were a little lake. Mark, too, how boldly the cliffs stand out along its sides, each with its little patch of shadow. And here, beside us, is St Anthony's Well, so famous in song, coming gushing out to the sunshine, and then gliding away through the grass, like a snake. Had the Deity purposed that man should be miserable, he would surely never have placed him in so fair a world. Perhaps much of our unhappiness originates in our mistaking our proper scope, and thus setting out, from the first, with a false aim."

"Unquestionably," I replied, "there is no man who has not some part to perform; and, if it be a great and uncommon part, and the powers which fit him for it proportionably great and uncommon, nature would be in error could he slight it with impunity. See, there is a wild bee bending the flower beside you. Even that little creature has a capacity of happiness and misery; it derives its sense of pleasure from whatever runs in the line of its instincts—its experience of unhappiness from whatever thwarts and opposes them; and can it be supposed that so wise a law should regulate the instincts of only inferior creatures? No, my friend, it is surely a law of our nature also."

"And have you not something else to infer?" said the poet.

"Yes," I replied, "that you are occupied differently from what the scope and constitution of your mind demand; differently both in your hours of employment and of relaxation. But do take heart—you will yet find your proper place, and all shall be well."

"Alas! no, my friend," said he, rising from the sward. "I could once entertain such a hope; but I cannot now. My mind is no longer what it was to me in my happier days—a sort of *terra-incognita*, without bounds or limits. I can see over and beyond it, and have fallen from all my hopes regarding it. It is not so much the gloom of present circumstances that disheartens me, as a depressing knowledge of myself—an abiding conviction that I am a weak dreamer, unfitted for every occupation of life—and not less so for the greater employments of literature than for any of the others. I feel that I am a little man, and a little poet, with barely vigour enough to make one-half effort at a time; but wholly devoid of the sustaining will—that highest faculty of the highest order of minds—which can direct a thousand vigorous efforts to the accomplishment of one important object. Would that I could exchange my half celebrity—and it can never be other than a half celebrity—for a temper as equable and a fortitude as unshrinking as yours! But I weary you with my complaints: I am a very coward; and you will deem me as selfish as I am weak."

We parted. The poet, sadly and unwillingly, went to copy deeds in the office of the commissary clerk, and I, almost reconciled to obscurity and hard labour, to assist in unloading a Baltic trader in the harbour of Leith.

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FERGUSON.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER VI.

"Speech without aim and without end employ."—CRABBE.

AFTER the lapse of nine months, I again returned to Edinburgh. During that period, I had been so shut out from literature and the world, that I had heard nothing of my friend the poet; and it was with a beating heart I left the vessel, on my first leisure evening, to pay him a visit. It was about the middle of July; the day had been close and sultry, and the heavens overcharged with grey ponderous clouds; and, as I passed hurriedly along the walk which leads from Leith to Edinburgh, I could hear the newly awakened thunder, bellowing far in the south, peal after peal, like the artillery of two hostile armies. I reached the door of the poet's humble domicile, and had raised my hand to the knocker, when I heard some one singing from within, in a voice by far the most touchingly mournful I had ever listened to. The tones struck on my heart; and a frightful suspicion crossed my mind, as I set down the knocker, that the singer was no other than my friend. But in what wretched circumstances! what fearful state of mind! I shuddered as I listened, and heard the strain waxing louder and yet more mournful, and could distinguish that the words were those of a simple old ballad:—

"O Marti'mas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
An' shake the green leaves aff the tree?
O gentle death, when wilt thou come,
An' tak a life that wearies me?"

I could listen no longer, but raised the latch and went in. The evening was gloomy, and the apartment ill lighted; but I could see the singer, a spectral-looking figure, sitting on a bed in the corner, with the bedclothes wrapped round his shoulders, and a napkin deeply stained with blood on his head. An elderly female, who stood beside him, was striving to soothe him, and busied from time to time in adjusting the clothes, which were ever and anon falling off, as he nodded his head in time to the music. A young girl of great beauty sat weeping at the bed-foot.

"O dearest Robert," said the woman, "you will destroy your poor head; and Margaret your sister, whom you used to love so much, will break her heart. Do lie down, dearest, and take a little rest. Your head is fearfully gashed, and if the bandages loose a second time, you will bleed to death. Do, dearest Robert, for your poor old mother, to whom you were always so kind and dutiful a son till now—for your poor old mother's sake, do lie down."

The song ceased for a moment, and the tears came bursting from my eyes as the tune changed, and he again sang:—

"O mither dear, make ye my bed,
For my heart it's flichterin sair;
An', oh, gin I've vex'd ye, mither dear,
I'll never vex ye mair.
I've staid ar'out the lang dark nicht,
I' the sleet an' the plashy rain;
But, mither dear, make ye my bed,
An' I'll ne'er gang out again."

"Dearest, dearest Robert," continued the poor, heart-broken woman, "do lie down—for your poor old mother's sake, do lie down."

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"No, no," he exclaimed, in a hurried voice, "not just now, mother, not just now. Here is my friend, Mr Lindsay, who has sailed all round and round the world; and I have much much to ask him: A chair, Margaret, for Mr Lindsay. I must be a preacher like John Knox, you know—like the great John Knox, the Reformer of a nation—and Mr Lindsay knows all about him. A chair, Margaret, for Mr Lindsay."

I am not ashamed to say it was with tears, and in a voice faltering with emotion, that I apologized to the poor woman for my intrusion at such a time. Were it otherwise, I might well conclude my heart grown hard as a piece of the netlier millstone.

"I had known Robert at College," I said—"had loved and respected him; and had now come to pay him a visit, after an absence of several months, wholly unprepared for finding him in his present condition." And it would seem that my tears pled for me, and proved to the poor afflicted woman and her daughter, by far the most efficient part of my apology.

"All my friends have left me now, Mr Lindsay," said the unfortunate poet—"they have all left me now; they love this present world. We were all going down, down; there was the roll of a river behind us; it came bursting over the high rocks, roaring, rolling, foaming, down upon us; and, though the fog was thick and dark below—far below, in the place to which we were going—I could see the red fire shining through—the red, hot, unquenchable fire; and we were all going down, down, down. Mother, mother, tell Mr Lindsay I am going to be put on my trials to-morrow. Careless creature that I am—life is short, and I have lost much time; but I am going to be put on my trials to-morrow, and shall come forth a preacher of the word."

The thunder which had hitherto been muttering at a distance—each peal, however, nearer and louder than the preceding one—now began to roll over-head, and the lightning, as it passed the window, to illumine every object within. The hapless poet stretched out his thin wasted arm, as if addressing a congregation from the pulpit:—

"There were the flashings of lightning," he said, "and the roll of thunder; and the trumpet waxed louder and louder. And around the summit of the mountain were the foldings of thick clouds, and the shadow fell brown and dark over the wide expanse of the desert. And the wild beasts lay trembling in their dens. But, lo! where the sun breaks through the opening of the cloud, there is the glitter of tents—the glitter of ten thousand tents that rise over the sandy waste, thick as waves of the sea. And there there is the voice of the dance, and of the revel, and the winding of horns, and the clash of cymbals. Oh, sit nearer me, dearest mother, for the room is growing dark, dark; and, oh, my poor head!

"The lady sat on the castle wa',
Looked owre baith dale and down,
And then she spied Gil-Morice head'
Come steering through the town."

Do, dearest mother, put your cool hand on my brow, and do hold it fast ere it part. How fearfully—oh, how fearfully it aches!—and oh, how it thunders!" He sunk backward on the pillow, apparently exhausted. "Gone, gone, gone"

he muttered ; " my mind gone for ever. But God's will be done."

I rose to leave the room ; for I could restrain my feelings no longer.

" Stay, Mr Lindsay," said the poet, in a feeble voice ; " I hear the rain dashing on the pavement ; you must not go till it abates. Would that you could pray beside me !—but, no—you are not like the dissolute companions who have now all left me, but you are not yet fitted for that ; and, alas ! I cannot pray for myself. Mother, mother, see that there be prayers at my lykewake ; for—

' Her lykewake, it was piously spent
In social prayer and praise,
Performed by judicious men,
Who stricken were in days.

' And many a heavy, heavy heart
Was in that mournful place ;
And many a weary, weary thought
On her who slept in peace.'

They will come all to my lykewake, mother, won't they ?—yes, all, though they have left me now. Yes, and they will come far to see my grave. I was poor, very poor, you know, and they looked down upon me ; and I was no son or cousin of theirs, and so they could do nothing for me. Oh, but they might have looked less coldly ! But they will all come to my grave, mother ; they will come all to my grave ; and they will say—' Would he were living now to know how kind we are !' But they will look as coldly as ever on the living poet beside them—yes, till they have broken his heart ; and then they will go to his grave too. O dearest mother, do lay your cool hand on my brow."

He lay silent and exhausted, and, in a few minutes, I could hope, from the hardness of his breathing, that he had fallen asleep.

" How long," I inquired of his sister, in a low whisper, " has Mr Ferguson been so unwell, and what has injured his head ?"

" Alas !" said the girl, " my brother has been unsettled in mind for nearly the last six months. We first knew it one evening on his coming home from the country, where he had been for a few days with a friend. He burnt a large heap of papers that he had been employed on for weeks before—songs and poems that his friends say were the finest things he ever wrote ; but he burnt them 'all, for he was going to be a preacher of the word, he said, and it did not become a preacher of the word to be a writer of light rhymes. And, O sir ! his mind has been carried ever since ; but he has been always gentle and affectionate, and his sole delight has lain in reading the Bible. Good Dr Erskine, of the Greyfriars, often comes to our house, and sits with him for hours together ; for there are times when his mind seems stronger than ever, and he says wonderful things, that seem to hover, the minister says, between the extravagance natural to his present sad condition, and the higher flights of a philosophic genius. And we had hoped that he was getting better ; but, O sir, our hopes have had a sad ending. He went out, a few evenings ago, to call on an old acquaintance ; and, in descending a stair, missed footing, and fell to the bottom ; and his head has been fearfully injured by the stones. He has been just as you have seen him ever since ; and, oh ! I much fear he cannot now recover. Alas ! my poor brother !—never, never was there a more affectionate heart."

CHAP. VII.

A lowly muse !

She sings of reptiles yet in song unknown.

I returned to the vessel with a heavy heart ; and it was nearly three months from this time, ere I again set foot in Edinburgh. Alas ! for my unfortunate friend ! He was now an inmate of the asylum, and on the verge of dissolu-

tion. I was thrown, by accident, shortly after my arrival at this time, into the company of one of his boon companions. I had gone into a tavern with a brother sailor—a shrewd, honest skipper, from the north country ; and, finding the place occupied by half a dozen young fellows, who were growing noisy over their liquor, I would have immediately gone out again, had I not caught, in the passing, a few words regarding my friend. And so, drawing to a side-table, I sat down.

" Believe me," said one of the toppers, a dissolute-looking young man, " it's all over with Bob Ferguson—all over ; and I knew it from the moment he grew religious. Had old Brown tried to convert me, I would have broken his face."

" What Brown ?" inquired one of his companions.

" Is that all you know ?" rejoined the other. " Why, John Brown of Haddington, the Seceder. Bob was at Haddington last year, at the election ; and, one morning, when in the horrors, after holding a rum night of it, who should he meet in the churchyard but old John Brown ?—he writes, you know, a big book on the Bible. Well, he lectured Bob at a pretty rate, about election and the call, I suppose ; and the poor fellow has been mad ever since. Your health, Jamie. For my own part, I'm a free-will man, and detest all cant and humbug."

" And what has come of Ferguson now ?" asked one of the others.

" Oh, mad, sir, mad," rejoined the toper—" reading the Bible all day, and cooped up in the asylum yonder. 'Twas I who brought him to it.—But, lads, the glass has been standing for the last half-hour.—'Twas I and Jack Robinson who brought him to it, as I say. He was getting wild ; and so we got a sedan for him, and trumped up a story of an invitation for tea from a lady, and he came with us as quietly as a lamb. But, if you could have heard the shriek he gave when the chair stopped, and he saw where we had brought him ! I never heard anything half so horrible—it rung in my ears for a week after ; and then, how the mad people in the upper rooms howled and gibbered in reply, till the very roof echoed ! People say he is getting better ; but, when I last saw him, he was as religious as ever, and spoke so much about heaven that it was uncomfortable to hear him. Great loss to his friends, after all the expense they have been at with his education."

" You seem to have been intimate with Mr Ferguson," I said.

" Oh, intimate with Bob !" he rejoined ; " we were hand and glove, man. I have sat with him, in Lucky Middlemass's, almost every evening, for two years ; and I have given him hints for some of the best things in his book. 'Twas I who tumbled down the cage in the meadows, and began breaking the lamps.

' Ye who oft finish care in Lethe's cup,
Who love to swear, and roar, and keep it up,
List to a brother's voice, whose sole delight
Is sleep all day, and riot all the night.'

There's spirit for you ! But Bob was never sound at bottom ; and I have told him so. ' Bob,' I have said, ' Bob, you're but a hypocrite after all, man—without half the spunk you pretend to. Why don't you take a pattern by me, who fear nothing and believe only the agreeable ? But, poor fellow, he had weak nerves, and a church-going propensity, that did him no good ; and you see the effects. 'Twas all nonsense, Tom, of his throwing the squib into the Glassite meeting-house. Between you and I, that was a cut far beyond him in his best days, poet as he was. 'Twas I who did it, man, and never was there a cleaner row in auld Reekie."

" Heartless, contemptible puppy !" said my comrade, the sailor, as we left the room. " Your poor friend must be ill, indeed, if he be but half as insane as his quondam companion. But he cannot : there is no madness like that of

the heart. What could have induced a man of genius to associate with a thing so thoroughly despicable?"

"The same misery, Miller," I said, "that brings a man acquainted with strange bedfellows."

CHAP. VIII.

O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!—BURNS.

The asylum in which my unfortunate friend was confined, at this time the only one in Edinburgh, was situated in an angle of the city wall. It was a dismal-looking mansion, shut in on every side, by the neighbouring houses, from the view of the surrounding country; and so effectually covered up from the nearer street, by a large building in front, that it seemed possible enough to pass a lifetime in Edinburgh without coming to the knowledge of its existence. I shuddered as I looked up to its blackened walls, thinly sprinkled with miserable looking windows, barred with iron, and thought of it as a sort of burial-place of dead minds. But it was a Golgotha, which, with more than the horrors of the grave, had neither its rest nor its silence. I was startled, as I entered the cell of the hapless poet, by a shout of laughter from a neighbouring room, which was answered from a dark recess behind me, by a fearfully-prolonged shriek, and the clanking of chains. The mother and sister of Ferguson were sitting beside his pallet, on a sort of stone settle, which stood out from the wall; and the poet himself, weak, and exhausted, and worn to a shadow, but apparently in his right mind, lay extended on the straw. He made an attempt to rise as I entered; but the effort was above his strength, and, again lying down, he extended his hand.

"This is kind, Mr Lindsay," he said; "it is ill for me to be alone in these days; and yet I have few visitors, save my poor old mother, and Margaret. But who cares for the unhappy?"

I sat down on the settle beside him, still retaining his hand. "I have been at sea, and in foreign countries," I said, "since I last saw you, Mr Ferguson, and it was only this morning I returned; but believe me there are many, many of your countrymen, who sympathize sincerely in your affliction, and take a warm interest in your recovery."

He sighed deeply. "Ah," he replied, "I know too well the nature of that sympathy. You never find it at the bedside of the sufferer—it evaporates in a few barren expressions of idle pity; and yet, after all, it is but a paying the poet in kind. He calls so often on the world to sympathize over fictitious misfortune, that the feeling wears out, and becomes a mere mood of the imagination; and, with this light, attenuated pity of his own weaving, it regards his own real sorrows. Dearest mother, the evening is damp and chill—do gather the bedclothes round me, and sit on my feet; they are so very cold and so dead, that they cannot be colder a week hence."

"O Robert, why do you speak so?" said the poor woman, as she gathered the clothes round him, and sat on his feet. "You know you are coming home to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" he said—"if I see to-morrow, I shall have completed my twenty-fourth year—a small part, surely, of the threescore and ten; but what matters it when 'tis past?"

"You were ever, my friend, of a melancholy temperament," I said, "and too little disposed to hope. Indulge in brighter views of the future, and all shall yet be well."

"I can now hope that it shall," he said. "Yes, all shall be well with me—and that very soon. But, oh, how this nature of ours shrinks from dissolution!—yes, and all the lower natures too. You remember, mother, the poor starling that was killed in the room beside us? Oh, how it struggled with its ruthless enemy, and filled the whole

place with its shrieks of terror and agony. And yet, poor little thing! it had been true, all life long, to the laws of its nature, and had no sins to account for, and no judge to meet. There is a shrinking of heart as I look before me, and yet I can hope that all shall yet be well with me—and that very soon. Would that I had been wise in time! Would that I had thought more and earlier of the things which pertain to my eternal peace! more of a living soul, and less of a dying name! But, oh, 'tis a glorious provision, through which a way of return is opened up even at the eleventh hour!"

We sat round him in silence; an indescribable feeling of awe pervaded my whole mind, and his sister was affected to tears.

"Margaret," he said, in a feeble voice—"Margaret, you will find my Bible in yonder little recess; 'tis all I have to leave you; but keep it, dearest sister, and use it, and, in times of sorrow and suffering, that come to all, you will know how to prize the legacy of your poor brother. Many, many books do well enough for life; but there is only one of any value when we come to die.

"You have been a voyager of late, Mr Lindsay," he continued, "and I have been a voyager too. I have been journeying in darkness and discomfort, amid strange unearthly shapes of dread and horror, with no reason to direct and no will to govern. Oh, the unspeakable unhappiness of these wanderings!—these dreams of suspicion, and fear, and hatred, in which shadow and substance, the true and the false, were so wrought up and mingled together, that they formed but one fantastic and miserable whole. And, oh! the unutterable horror of every momentary return to a recollection of what I had been once, and a sense of what I had become! Oh, when I awoke amid the terrors of the night—when I turned me on the rustling straw, and heard the wild wail and yet wilder laugh—when I heard and shuddered, and then felt the demon in all his might coming over me, till I laughed and wailed with the others—oh, the misery! the utter misery!—But 'tis over, my friend—'tis all over; a few, few tedious days, a few, few weary nights, and all my sufferings shall be over."

I had covered my face with my hands, but the tears came bursting through my fingers; the mother and sister of the poet bled aloud.

"Why sorrow for me, sirs?" he said; "why grieve for me? I am well, quite well, and want for nothing. But 'tis cold, oh, 'tis very cold, and the blood seems freezing at my heart. Ah, but there is neither pain nor cold where I am going, and I trust it shall be well with my soul. Dearest, dearest mother, I always told you it would come to this at last."

The keeper had entered to intimate to us that the hour for locking up the cells was already past, and we now rose to leave the place. I stretched out my hand to my unfortunate friend; he took it in silence, and his thin attenuated fingers felt cold within my grasp, like those of a corpse. His mother stooped down to embrace him.

"Oh, do not go yet, mother," he said—"do not go yet—do not leave me; but it must be so, and I only distress you. Pray for me, dearest mother, and, oh, forgive me; I have been a grief and a burden to you all life long; but I ever loved you, mother; and, oh, you have been kind, kind and forgiving—and now your task is over. May God bless and reward you! Margaret, dearest Margaret, farewell!"

We parted, and, as it proved, for ever. Robert Ferguson expired during the night; and when the keeper entered the cell next morning, to prepare him for quitting the asylum, all that remained of this most hapless of the children of genius, was a pallid and wasted corpse, that lay stiffening on the straw. I am now a very old man, and the feelings wear out; but I find that my heart is even yet susceptible of emotion, and that the source of tears is not yet dried up.

THE ATTORNEY

SIR WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE, of Burnhaugh, in the shire of Perth, was knighted by King Charles I., in consequence of some signal services rendered to the cause of that unhappy monarch. The estate of Burnhaugh came to him through his mother, who was distantly related to the family of Wellwood, residing in the neighbourhood—a place suited to satisfy every feeling capable of being excited by rural beauties, from the hilarity of the glittering lake, covered with the gay and majestic swan, to the sombre romance of the deep thicket, where ruins raise their grey heads, eloquent chroniclers of the things of other years.

Sir William was reported to have been in his early youth a rover, and it was alleged that living evidence still remained of his illicit amours; but these things were so well concealed, through the agency of his man of business—a writer in Perth of the name of Peter Semple, who took upon him the various duties of keeping his cash, conscience, and title-deeds—that very few persons knew much concerning them.

Having laid aside the follies of youth when he became no longer young, Sir William married a daughter of a very rich merchant in London, with whom he got a handsome fortune, which she inherited as well from her father as from a prior husband; for she had married, before, a gentleman of the name of William Apsley. By her first marriage, she had one son called after his father—a fine boy, who shared the affections of his stepfather, to an equal extent with his own children; for Sir William had by his wife two daughters, called Sarah and Jean. The parties lived together in the enjoyment of all the pleasures which affluence can bestow; nor were they destitute of the enjoyments arising from the cultivation of the domestic affections, the true source of real happiness upon earth. Their family was brought up in the fear of God and love to their fellow creatures—having an excellent example shewn them by their mother; and Sir William himself, having early scattered the poisoned leaves of his youthful passions, and set forth in his manhood new buds of better promise, paid proper attention to the morals of his children; so that a better regulated and a happier family than that in the large mansion of Burnhaugh, could seldom be met with in happy Scotland or merry England.

Sir William, indeed, owed to his lady what is more often due to the salutary disgust of satiety, producing, as it so often does, a new and increased affection for the virtues which adorn social life. She got him in the heyday of unrestrained libertinism, when it falls to the lot of a wife either to reclaim her husband, or send him back, with increased appetite, to the haunts of debauchery, made, to many, more inviting by the very circumstance which should render them more disgusting—viz., that, by the marriage obligation, they become a thing prohibited. By exhibiting to him the natural colours of the qualities of human nature generally denominated virtues, deprived entirely of the factitious attributes whereby they are sometimes made to assume the appearance of unsubstantial forms, if not of repulsive and self-denying ordinances, she contrived to convince him that vice is only, in some instances, more pleasant for a time, (without regard to consequences,) because it boasts the character of being an outlaw—a character, whether investing men or moral attributes, at all times pleasing to high-spirited youth—but truly requiring less real fortitude to acquire, than what is necessary to form a good member of society of the smallest grade that could be mentioned. Won by the practice and preaching of such a fair moral enthusiast as Lady Sommerville, Sir William forgot his former extravagances, and became a good and loving husband. The feelings of a father, acting, by the instinctive force of pure nature, aided the scheme of the good

lady; and, beyond all these, Sir William felt the virtuous influences of the secret breathings of the beauties of Burnhaugh more powerful than systems of moral philosophy, in reclaiming his heart to the feeling and practice of what is good and creditable in a husband, a father, and a citizen of the world.

Not contented with exhibiting to his children an example of a good parent, Sir William had taken into his house a clergyman, for the purpose of perfecting the education of his children, as well as instilling into their minds the principles of the religion of Christ. That person was Stephen Semple, the son of his agent and factor—a man whose attainments in literature were undoubtedly great, but who put before either the immortal things of another world or the fame of scientific or literary acquirements, what are by some called the good things of this life. This man had more cunning at command than generally belongs to his cloth. A girl, reputed to be an orphan, called Lucy Gray was brought up with Stephen—a creature of great interest, from her beauty and simplicity of character; and there were not wanting some to allege that Semple would not be disinclined to a match between his son and this orphan, though why the character of the money-making scribe should, in this instance, belie itself, (Lucy having no money,) was not easy to account for. Stephen Semple had been promised by Sir William, a kirk and a good living, as soon as he could afford to let him leave his family, who were now fast growing up to mature age.

Lucy Gray, having once been sent a message to Burnhaugh, was seen by William Apsley, and struck his young fancy with that electric feeling which love's first dart carries on its maiden feather. The first night after they met, the young man's mind was entirely occupied by that curious process whereby the fancy having got possession of the image of the natural object which excited it, invests it with those imaginary attributes without which true love never exists in any eminent degree; and the result was what may have been expected—a strong, enthusiastic affection, which saw nothing in the simple and unaffected maiden, but qualities which she never dreamed of, as belonging to her in a greater proportion than to other young women. On the first occasion which presented itself, he intercepted the unconscious Lucy, when returning from Burnhaugh to Perth, near the romantic spot called the "weeping mother's fountain," in consequence of its containing a very old and fantastic representation of Niobe, with the tears of a mother's tenderness gushing in rather too great abundance from her eyes. Lucy's simplicity saw no harm in sitting down by the side of the fountain to rest herself, though young William Apsley sat near her. On one occasion the youthful pair were interrupted—the intruders were Peter Semple and his son Stephen. They spoke in half whispers; but with so much passion that their voices were, in the deep silence of the place, perhaps better heard than is often the fuller sound of unrestrained and unimpassioned speech.

"Ye ken weel enough, Steenie," said Peter, "that a' my hopes in this world depend upon this scheme. I hae thought of it when I should hae slept—I hae dreamed of it when I should hae waked. My life has been devoted to it, as the hopes o' a sinner are directed to the land o' promise. It has become the light o' my existence, even as the sun-beam which shews us the flower, gives it also the colour by which it becomes sae pleasant in our eyes. To come mair hame, it has been to me as the days o' the lang prescription are to the holder o' a wadset, wha has possessed thirty-nine years, every day making the hope o' the expiry o' the forty years mair certain, till the last stroke o' the bell tells him he is a proprietor in fee simple. Noo, my guid Steenie, how stands Sir William's conscience? Ye ken your wark—ye were to hauld him to the Bible o' which he has become sae fond, the case o' a' early sinners and it was for that purpose and

the object to be thereby effected, that I got ye into the house o' Burnhaugh. Our plan depends entirely upon, and can succeed allanarly by and through Sir William's incapability o' swallowing an oath. If he swears that he never promised to marry Helen, then the game is up, and he has consigned himself to that place whar there is nae expiry o' the legal, as we lawyers say, and whar the cook's remedy for a burn—that is, the fire itself—nae langer cures. But, if he admits on oath that he did mak the promise, then, Steenie, then, my man, the sun o' oor prosperity shall cast nae shadow owre the bonny shaws o' Burnhaugh, an' the name o' Semple may tak precedence o' Sommerville. But it a' depends upon you, Steenie—you are a maist important instrument: ye maun tak advantage o' Sir William's inclination to religious enthusiasm; blow the flame wi' a' the wind o' the leaves o' the meikle Bible that lies in the green chamber, and gie a' the force o' your lungs to mak it burn. They say he is beginning to look on the ground as he walks, to speak to himself, to hunt for lean game, that he may exercise charity, and to be in at the death o' sinners, that he may defend them against the fangs o' an evil conscience—waur, a thousand times, than the tusks o' his stag hounds:—a' guid signs, Steenie. What say ye, my man?"

"It is true, father," answered the son, "that Sir William is fast falling into the slough of fanaticism; and I have the merit of hastening, though not of causing, that event. There are several old sins that seem to follow him, like the hounds you have mentioned; for he groans often in spirit, cries like a man flying from a pursuing and avenging angel, and seeks relief in the heart of that large Bible whose pneumatic powers you have just mentioned. Then is my time for working on him: the terrors of hell lose none of their fearful attributes in the hands of Stephen Semple. He is gradually getting weaker and weaker under the influence of a superstition which I will nourish till he lies down and cries, like David, that his sins gape upon him with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. He is already so much in the power of the fear which the Bible begets upon a sinner of weak nerves, that I am satisfied he is even now ready for our purpose. He will not, I think, parry the oath you have in preparation for him, even were it to produce more evils, in a worldly point of view, than will inevitably proceed from it. How did he swear as to the old debt due to Drybarns?"

"Just as I thought he would swear," answered the attorney. "I got auld Drybarns to prosecute Sir William for that debt, by pretending to him that he would never get his money. I then pleaded, in the name of Sir William, that the debt was owre auld, or, as we say in law, prescribed, whereupon it became necessary for him to swear. He swore at once that the debt was a just ane. A' this I did to test his conscience, and to ascertain whether he will swear true or fause in the great case about which we are scheming. The debt due to Drybarns is nae trifle; and I think the oath in that case is a guid specimen o' what we may expect in oor ain."

William recounted, as nearly as he could recollect, the extraordinary conversation he had heard between Peter Semple and his son, and concluded by asking his mother, if she could understand what was the object of the parties. Lady Sommerville appeared to be sunk in deep thought. She declined saying anything to William, requesting him merely to be cautious in mentioning to any one what he had heard, however unintelligible it might be to him, and promising to explain further to him her thoughts at another time. William was soon again too deeply involved in his feelings of love, to recollect much of what had passed.

Lady Sommerville found, in William's narrative, many things which were capable of forming curious combinations with her previous thoughts and observations. She had not been slow to perceive that the meetings of Semple and his

son were more frequent and more secret than mere affection required; and their frequency and secrecy had latterly greatly increased. She had observed the incomprehensible efforts continually made by Stephen, to involve Sir William in discussions regarding the solemnity of oaths, and their awful sanctions; but, while she considered this strange, she could not connect it with any object. She was satisfied that there was more in these efforts than the mere gratuitous love of explaining divine truths; for the triumph of Stephen, when he thought he had impressed Sir William with a deep sense of the awful nature of a contravention of the ninth commandment, or of false swearing in general, was accompanied by a glow of satisfaction, which the selfish nature of the man never exhibited, unless when something was mixed up with his feelings, which had some connection with his own interest. The incessant workings of this servant of heaven had, she plainly saw, taken from Sir William much of his former contentment and good nature. A physical debility of nerves, to which his early habits had consigned him, made him the victim of superstitious fears; and the chief of these, the dread of punishment for the sins done in the body, had latterly become a waking and sleeping incubus, which deprived him of peace and made him an easy victim in the hands of any person who pretended to a knowledge of religious truth. All her efforts to counteract the effects of Semple's workings, were vain. Sir William would hear nothing against his favourite servant of heaven; and he did not hesitate to say, in answer to the gentle admonitions of his wife, that she was destitute of religious feelings, and required to make up her peace with God, and instruct her heart in the knowledge of his wonderful ways. This change on the part of her husband, filled her mind with grief; but she did not resign him to the power of his superstition, without at least an effort to ascertain the object of the Semples, in thus breaking down the strength of his mind, to make way for some project which their selfishness had planned, and would not fail to execute.

A few lights had been afforded by the information given her by her son, William; and she waited with anxiety for the next meeting between the father and the son, when she determined to endeavour to hear some part of their conversation. Two days afterwards, Peter Semple called at Burnhaugh. Sir William was confined to his room, by an attack of gout, and Peter was, as he wished, shewn into the study, where the accustomed conversation between him and Stephen commenced. Lady Sommerville had stationed herself in a recess, which was covered by a fall of drapery, and could easily hear all that passed between the parties.

"Sir William is confined to his room, I hear," said Peter. "I hope he is not in a dangerous condition; for, while it is our object that his mind may be shaken, we canna want his body, ye ken, and, were he to dee, a' oor hopes would be blasted thegither."

"It is only gout," answered Stephen. "But he is now as fit for our purpose as he ever can be. Were he getting more fanatical, he might be pronounced insane, and no court of law would listen to him."

"Weel, weel," said Peter—"Helen Gray is in our hands, and Gilbert Finlayson, the procurator before the commissary court o' Edinburgh, is ready to proceed in the declarator as sune as he gets instructions. Sae I think I'll get Helen to sign a letter to Finlayson as sune as possible; for there is noo nae time to lose. When Sir William is declared, by the competent authority, to be the husband o' Helen Gray, whom he promised to marry, his present marriage wi' Lady Sommerville is worth nae mair than the paper on which the contract is written—and ye ken"—

At this moment, Peter Semple was cut short in his speech, by a noise as of some person falling. On running out, Stephen discovered Lady Sommerville lying on the

floor in a state of insensibility. The faces of Semple and his son shewed that they suspected they were discovered ; but the efforts they made to recover the lady enabled them to conceal their emotions. The servants were quickly at the side of their mistress ; and, no person daring to assign any cause for the extraordinary circumstance, the efforts to bring back the lady were conducted in silence—though not without suspicions, on the part of the servants, that there was some unexplained connection between the lady's faint and the conduct or conversation of the two Semples.

When Lady Sommerville recovered, she was lying in her own apartment, with her eldest daughter by her side. Her first thoughts reverted to the cause of her present situation, and the extraordinary conversation she had heard. She was now no longer doubtful of the schemes of which she was to become the victim. The various circumstances of which she was now made aware, combined to shew her that it was the intention of Peter Semple to prove a prior marriage between her husband and another woman of the name of Helen Gray. The nature of the man, cunning and cruel, agreed perfectly with this construction ; and, though she was not far enough into the secret to see the advantages that would accrue to this destroyer of domestic peace, from a result apparently so gratuitous and inhumane, she had no doubt, from the known rapacity of the man, that some benefit was expected to flow from the infliction of this cruel wound on the peace of a happy family. She knew too well the subtlety and cleverness of Semple, to conceive that he would embark in an enterprise, even covertly, where, in the event of failure, he would forfeit Sir William's agency, without having good grounds on which to proceed ; and she had heard of the strange peculiarity of the law of Scotland, which justified the apothegm, that, in that country, a person might be married and not know that he was so. These thoughts produced other reflections more gloomy. What would be the effects of a divorce ? Would not her children be illegitimate, and herself an unconscious sinner—a moral solecism in a Christian land—married and not married—a prostitute, an adulteress, and yet neither—a claimant on the pity of a world who could give her no consolation but the miserable advice of submitting to an unjust law ? These things passed through Lady Sommerville's mind, leaving the burning traces of agonized thoughts ; and, when she looked to her beautiful daughter, who sat by her side unconscious of her mother's feelings or of her impending fate, she burst into a flood of tears, and hid her head in her daughter's bosom, which responded to the deep sobs of the unhappy mother.

Lady Sommerville could not tell her husband what she had heard, and what she dreaded. It was a subject so foreign to their usual thoughts and style of conversation, and of a nature so indelicate and repulsive to the feelings of a virtuous wife, that she could not approach it. She felt that she could only wait and tremble. The appearance of any one of the Semples alarmed and shocked her ; and her fragile and susceptible frame acknowledged, in her anxious and pale countenance, the effects of a disturbed mind and excited feelings. Her nights became sleepless, and her days had in them only the semblance of peace ; yet no one knew the cause of her grief ; and she even endeavoured to persuade herself that she had misconstrued the conversation of the Semples—an effort resulting entirely from the natural tendency of the human mind, to produce to itself the image of that peace which has parted from it, perhaps, for ever.

Some days after the incident already noticed, Stephen Semple waited upon Lady Sommerville, and requested to speak with her confidentially, on a subject of a delicate nature. She almost swooned when the request was mentioned ; for she expected nothing less than an announcement of that fatal purpose which was to seal for ever her fortunes on earth. In this she was dis-

appointed. Stephen Semple's object was different. He premised by stating that he had much regard for William Apsley, and, as his tutor, thought it his duty to inform his parent of everything he thought might promote his good and avert his injury. Acting under that sense, he had resolved to inform Lady Sommerville of her son's affection for an orphan girl, of mean parentage and meaner breeding, who lived in the town of Perth, but whom the distance did not prevent from meeting William, at appointed intervals, at the fountain of Niobe, where they often indulged in the sweet but dangerous pastime of the young heart—a mutual communication of the sentiment of love. This could not fail to destroy the fortunes of the boy, and blast the hopes of his mother ; and he, therefore, took it upon him to recommend a step which Sir William had given his sanction to, that the boy should be removed from Scotland, and sent to London, or some part of England, where he would be beyond the power of so destructive an intercourse as that in which he was engaged.

To this statement Lady Sommerville was compelled, from some hints she herself had heard of William's conduct, to give attention ; but, nervous and irritable as she was, and feeling herself in that state which a sense of another's power, though evil and acquired by bad means, seldom fails to produce in the weak when acted upon by the strong, she fell helplessly into the snare which had been laid for her ; and, acknowledging the facts set forth by Stephen to be true, and his remedy efficacious and necessary, consented and promised to get her son dispatched to London on the very next day.

The resolution of Lady Sommerville was put into execution. William Apsley was hurried away, in a post-chaise, to London, and consigned to the care of one of his mother's relations, residing there.

The dark intentions of the Semples had thus far succeeded. William Apsley had been sent out of the way. His love for Lucy Gray—who was the daughter of Helen Gray, the instrument, in the hands of Peter Semple, whereby he intended to produce so much mischief to the family of the Sommers—required to be quenched ; for that girl, who might, eventually, be the eldest heir female to the estate of Burnhaugh, was destined to be the wife of Stephen Semple, who, as her husband, would become the future proprietor of the usufruct of Burnhaugh. The consent of Lucy was not thought necessary to this projected union ; for schemers in dangerous projects take slight obstacles on chance, and all the energies of the Semples were required for getting the declarator of marriage, at Helen Gray's instance against Sir William Sommerville, instituted and brought to a successful termination.

The resolution of the Semples was precipitated rather than retarded by the circumstance of the suspicions they entertained of Lady Sommerville's knowing their schemes. Their intentions were to keep in the back-ground, until the declarator was concluded, getting Helen Gray to employ another agent, but supplying her with the necessary instructions and advice ; but, if it had so happened that Lady Sommerville had heard any part of their conversation, they were determined not to allow this to interfere with their scheme, because all the danger they had to fear was incurred ; and, to forego the advantage for which that danger had been braved, would have appeared, to such a utilitarian as Peter Semple, mere folly. If Lady Sommerville should tell what she heard to her husband, the Semples were then prepared to deny everything, and trust to effrontery for a vindication, adhering still to the cause in which they had engaged, and imputing all its main-springs to Helen Gray herself, the mere instrument in the hands of the wily attorney.

Many times had Lady Sommerville determined to speak, either to Peter Semple or to her husband, as to the cause of a grief which lay so heavy upon her heart ; but the very grief itself took away the power of her resolution, and a few

days' respite had fed her fancy with some rays of hope, that she might still have been wrong in her construction of the conversation she had heard. This hope was destined to vanish, nearly as soon as it had shed its first ray. As she sat one forenoon at the window, contemplating the beauty of the groves lighted up with a midday sun, she observed three men approaching the house, of an appearance not usual in the visitors to Burnhaugh. They came up to the door, and handed to a servant who was standing on the landing place, a paper, and then quickly disappeared, in the manner of incendiaries, who, when their firebrand is thrown, escape from the scene of conflagration. The paper was handed first to Lady Sommerville, that she might give it to Sir William, who was now so completely a martyr to gout as to be generally confined to his bedroom. She read it, and sent it to her husband. The fears of Lady Sommerville were at last realized—the pictures she had drawn of her future condition, were in a moment invested with the dark hues of a sorrowful reality: that paper was a summons of declarator of marriage, between Helen Gray, residing in Perth, and Sir William Sommerville of Burnhaugh. This announcement operated but as a darker grief to the heart already prepared for it by others which, in their first incursion, had wasted even the energies of sorrow. Pale, care-worn, and attenuated, she sat with the fatal document in her hand; and, in the extremity of despair produced by the greatest and the last evil, appeared more like a statue than a creature in whose pulses the blood of life still flowed: such is the effect of mighty calamities, drying up the fountains of sorrow, and throwing over the heart that cataleptic power which produces a grief too deep for tears. After some time, she was able to ring for a servant, to hand the paper to Sir William, and again resigned herself to her sorrow.

From this state of insensibility, she was roused by a violent ringing of Sir William's bell; and, in a little time, she saw a servant run with great speed and saddle a horse, whereon he mounted and took the road to Perth. Some time after, the same servant came back, bringing with him Sir William's legal adviser, Peter Semple, who was immediately closeted with his confiding client. Lady Sommerville retired to her dressing-room, which adjoined to the bedroom where Sir William and Peter Semple were in consultation; and, though she had not gone there for the purpose of hearing what passed—for grief had put all schemes out of her head—she found herself within the scope of the conversation of the two parties.

"Mr Semple, I have always understood, from you," began Sir William, in an agitated state, "that that woman, Helen Gray, was quiet, and not inclined to trouble me about this old promise, which, in the mad recklessness of a youthful passion, I made to her: whence then comes this writ, which you lawyers call a summons?"

Peter Semple took the paper out of the trembling hands of Sir William, with a cool and determined air, mixed with as much of surprise as would impose upon his victim, and make him believe that he had not previously heard of the affair.

"A summons o' declarator before the commissaries!—Oh, the Jezebel!" began the attorney. "Wha could hae imagined that the woman would, at this time o' day—and when I was, as your much-honoured agent, filling her lap wi' gold, to keep her quiet—hae ventured to tak such a step as this? Ah, she maun hae got into the hands o' some low limb o' the law—some grovelling wretch, wha, like the thieves wha used in auld times to steal the offerings frae the altar, infest the precincts o' Justice, and pilfer the contents o' her equal scales, making justice injustice, and law an abomination. But we maun defend it, Sir William—we maun defend it as becomes independent and upright men. I'll write to my agent, to take the summons 'to see,' as we call it; and a braw answer we can make to it, denying every-

thing and admitting naething—the true colour and character o' a guid defences."

"But you forget, sir," interrupted Sir William, "that my character, as a thing visible by One greater than the commissaries of Edinburgh, is here at stake; and I do not choose to be again put in the position in which I was placed by your conduct in the case of Drybarns, where I, on paper, was made to deny everything, and on oath admitted everything. No more of this with one who remembers that wrath will not tarry long to him who numbers himself among sinners. The prophet has said, 'Devise not a lie against thy brother, neither do the like to thy friend.' Yea, 'use not to make any manner of lie, for the custom thereof is not good.' I will therefore allow no lies to be put into any papers bearing my name; and I now request to be informed of the utmost extent of this mighty evil, with which the Lord has, mayhap in His mercy, intended to humble my soul, exceeding even the vengeance of the ungodly, which is fire and worms. Let come what will, I shall not disobey the sacred writer, who says, 'Bind not one sin upon another, for in one thou shalt not be unpunished'—having once sinned, in deceiving Helen Gray, I shall not again sin, in lying against her and Him who made her and who made me, and can avenge the one by punishing the other. These sentiments are well appreciated by all good men; and your son Stephen perceives well their precious worth to him who knows there is another world."

"I dinna gainsay your sentiments, Sir William; but, as I like to stick to business when business is in hand, I maun answer the question whilk is contained in this excellent heap o' godly sentences. You ask me what is the extent o' this evil; but it seems to me that ye mark out the extent yoursel, for, if ye winna let me deny everything, which has aye been my practice in the court, ye maun just admit everything; for, sae far as I know, having never had any wish to qualify a denial, and sae having nae experience o' sic weak things as evasions, I am no free to say that ye would be in any better condition by saying that ye dinna recollect the matter in question. Sae it will be referred to your oath, and ye ken best what to swear. It's nae doot an awfu' thing to swear awa Lady Sommerville and the bonny bairns; but it is a mair awfu' thing, as Steenie would say, to swear awa the prospect o' an eternal life."

At this moment, Lady Sommerville burst into the room.

"Can it be borne," she ejaculated, in a broken voice, and with the wild air of despair—"can it be borne that the law of our land, and, what is far above it, the word of the Almighty, should, by the artifices of sinful men, be used as engines of oppression, by the servant against the master? Sir William Sommerville, this man and his son have laid a snare intended to bind thy feet with fetters, and thy soul with the bands of superstition. It is they who have urged on this unhappy woman, to come, like an unclean spirit, into the sanctuary of domestic happiness, and make that which nearest approaches to Heaven, of all the institutions upon earth, the semblance of the regions of the expiators of sin. These ears can testify the truth of what I say—Peter Semple is the true spring, the aider, the abettor, the perfecter, the reaper of the fruits of this diabolical conspiracy. Deny, sir, if you can, the statement of your intended victim—that you and your son have wrought in two directions, to attain the same object. You have got into your power the infatuated female whom you are now using as the engine of your cruelty, and your son has wrought on the mind of my husband, till you think that, by the aid of a blessed religion, he may be brought to swear away the most holy of rights. Listen to them not, my dear husband—remember your affectionate wife, who trusted to your honour, and do not forget your innocent children, whose affections those laws have sanctified, which are now attempted to be turned to tear them asunder."

With these words, Lady Sommerville clung to the knees of her husband, who looked suspiciously at Semple, as if requiring an explanation. At that moment, Stephen entered the room. He pretended to feel astonishment at the position of the parties, and required an explanation. Peter, without displaying any emotion, complained to Stephen that Lady Sommerville had charged them with being in concert with Helen Gray, in an action of declarator of marriage which she had raised against Sir William. On hearing this charge, Stephen pretended to feel highly indignant, and poured forth a volley of scriptural phrases, with a view to catch the ear of Sir William, which had latterly become so attuned to the language of the Bible, that nonsense itself was consecrated by a sentence from Job. In this, Stephen succeeded so well that Sir William, turning to his lady, remarked that she must surely be in error; that it was impossible that so pious a person as Stephen Semple could, without a motive, for none he saw, be guilty of ingratitude and deceit towards his benefactor. Lady Sommerville was about to reply; but her strength failed her, and servants were called to carry her to her apartment.

Thus the victory was so far declared for the schemers, who proceeded to sympathise with Sir William in his misfortune. Stephen was more than ordinarily eloquent on the important qualities of truth, and represented a false oath as the greatest insult that could be offered to the majesty of God, in so far as it was an effort to produce a fellowship on the part of the most High, in an attempt to change the eternal nature of truth by Him established. Sir William listened with attention. The bird, under the influence of the charm which wiles it into the mouth of its destroyer, is not more loyal to the obligation of its fatal instinct, than was this unhappy man to the wishes of his evil comforters. Convinced that he would swear as they wished and anticipated, the father and son left the room; and Sir William resigned himself to the infliction which he conceived God, for wise purposes, had visited him for his early sins.

It was soon rumoured abroad that Sir William Sommerville was in the unhappy situation of a man doomed to commit a suicidal act against the existence of his dearest interests. His friends interfered, and Lady Sommerville used all the interest of the country to get him brought to a better sense of what was due to himself and his family. But all was in vain. The declarator went on; and the time arrived for Sir William giving his oath, on the reference of Helen Gray, that, at the time and place mentioned in the writings, Sir William Sommerville had promised to make her his wife, and that afterwards she bore him a child. An effort was now made to get him to go abroad; but his answer was, that he could not fly from the presence of Him in whose hands the world is as a ball which is the sport of children; that 'the Lord has created medicines out of the earth,' whereof those of one part of it are as good as those of another, and "he that is wise will not abhor them." The Genius of Superstition had claimed him as her own, and the misery he was bringing upon himself and his children, was considered by him to be that medicine which Ecclesiastes has mentioned—a medicine for the sins of his youth. At the appointed time, Sir William Sommerville sealed the fate of himself and his children, by emitting an oath which, by the peculiar laws of Scotland, fixed on him a marriage prior to that with Lady Sommerville, and consigned her and her family to the pity of mankind.

A sentence was pronounced by the commissaries of Edinburgh, declaring Sir William and Helen Gray to have been and to be married persons. This was acknowledged, even at that early period, to have been an extraordinary practical example of the effects which so strange a law was calculated to produce; and serious intentions were entertained by the authorities of the crown, to introduce a change that would retain some part of the spirit of the old rule,

and save the fortunes of confiding women, who trusted to the honour of men, and were entitled to the benefits of a protecting law, to the same extent as the seduced vindicator of her rights, under this existing system, was entitled to claim that protection. Scotland is still without this salutary change.

Sir William Sommerville saw, with the eye of a stricken sinner, who looks upon the vengeance of heaven as a medicine for the griefs of unrepented sin, all the disasters which he had brought upon his house. A deep melancholy was the consequence, which, extending its influence over a system long depressed by the effects of religious terrors, produced a liver complaint, with complicated stomachic ailments, which soon put a period to his existence.

On the death of Sir William, Lady Sommerville sent for her son, who came on the wings of love; for his Lucy was still the object of his admiration; and all the efforts of his London companions, by introducing him to young rich heiresses, only deepened his sighs for a ramble with the gentle maiden of his first affections, among the bonny groves of Burnhaugh. On his arrival at the house, he was filled with disappointment. Peter Semple had turned Lady Sommerville to the door, and taken possession of the property, as guardian of the heir of Sir William; and she was obliged to take up her residence in a house about two miles from Burnhaugh, on the road to Crieff.

So far had succeeded the diabolical schemes of the Semples. The final step remained to be accomplished—one which had given them no uneasiness. Lucy Gray was, before she was made aware of the change that had taken place upon her fortunes, asked to marry Stephen Semple. No other answer was expected by Peter, who had acted as her guardian through life, than a grateful acquiescence and the disappointment of the schemers may be conceived, when Lucy declared that she would never be the wife of Stephen Semple. This alarming indication, threatening to blast the hopes of so many years, and to render an act of interested roguery, gratuitous villany, only doubled the efforts of the Semples. Lucy was confined in a part of Peter Semple's house, from a fear that she would elope, and get into the hands of some one who could tell her her rights.

These circumstances came to the ear of William Apsley, who, repairing to Perth, discovered where Lucy was confined. He waited till midnight; and, providing himself with scaling apparatus, approached the small window of the room where the disconsolate girl lay bewailing her situation. A tap at the window was responded to by the interesting prisoner. Recognition passed in a moment, and a plan was laid whereby Lucy might be removed on the succeeding night. The scheme succeeded; and, at two o'clock in the following morning, Lucy Gray and William Apsley were on their way to the house of his mother.

In a short time, Lucy was served heir to her father, married William Apsley, and resided in the house of Burnhaugh, whither Lady Sommerville and her family also repaired, and where they all lived as happily as the misfortunes which had befallen them would permit. The discomfited and disappointed Semples, caught in their own snare, became subjects of merriment and scorn to all who knew them. Heirs were produced to the groves of Burnhaugh; and the fountain of the weeping mother was often the scene of a meeting of the family, in commemoration of the circumstances, already detailed, connected with that delightful spot.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. III.—THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

HOWEVER deeply hidden from our limited views (as stated in my first chapter) may be the proximate principles of the connection between the body and the mind of man, we have presented to us every day the most undoubted proofs—and melancholy, in many instances, they are—of that connection being of so intimate a nature, and depending upon such fine and subtle *media*, that the ordinary affections of the two are reciprocated with the greatest regularity and precision, while their derangements, diseases, and extraordinary excitements, produce mutual effects which are not only disastrous and terrible, but so varied and unexpected that they mock all our anticipations of the results of their exciting causes. For all those changes which affect the *entireness* of the mind, we are naturally led to look to diseases and injuries affecting the brain itself; while, for those again which mark a decrease of its energies, we may resort to the ample field of bodily ailments, the most of which—and there are thousands that “flesh is heir to”—extend their “tear and wear” to the seat of thought and feeling; and, though they cannot break, weaken and wear out the noble powers whose arrogated superiority is sometimes doomed to this humiliation.

Yet there are occasional diseases of the body (not to our senses organically affecting the brain) which produce changes on the faculties of the mind different from the general mental weakness incident to most states of protracted bodily suffering. Certain affections of the lungs, for instance, while they reduce the body to the state of a living skeleton, supply such an addition to the oil of “the lamp of hope,” that the deluded victim sees its bright coruscations through the eye that is in the act of being fixed and glazed by death. In some scorbutic affections, again, the mind increases in strength in proportion as the body advances to a state of putrescence; as if the soul, rejoicing in its victory over the flesh that had struggled with it and mastered it, mocked the vain dreams of the infidel materialist, by making its last act its brightest, while that of the body is its weakest. In that great viscus or laboratory of bile, the liver, there, however, often occurs a disease, named by the ancients, from the seat of its primary action, *hypochondriasis*, which exercises an influence over the mind beyond all the powers of the most painful and fatal diseases that do not affect the brain itself. This action, like that of the diseased lungs, is almost always of one particular kind; and it is curious to contemplate the difference between the effects of the two diseased viscera—the one, namely, the diseased lungs, producing hope and confidence; and the other, the diseased liver, filling the mind with fear and apprehension. It is no part of my purpose to speculate on these extraordinary facts; otherwise I might enter on the fine question which has been so strangely overlooked by metaphysicians—namely, What is the principle of the connection between those feelings of hope and fear produced by physical excitement, and the ideas of the particular objects of the feelings which always accompany them? The trembling hypochondriac has for ever in his nervous eye his peculiar object of terror,

either real or imaginary; and just in proportion as his terror is without foundation, does he adhere to the imaginary cause of it with greater asperity and determination, resisting, with the greatest pertinacity, every effort to make him believe the fact that he dreams of imagined ills, and that even the bright star of worldly prosperity is in the ascendant, and shining so bright that no one who is not blind or unwilling to see can escape its light.

The objects of the hypochondriac's fears are as numerous and extraordinary as the whims and caprices of the most pregnant fancy—comprehending the case of the Dutchman, who, thinking himself a pea of grain, was under continual fear of being picked up by birds; that of the residenter at Elgin, who, conceiving himself to be a sack of chaff, was in hourly terror of being sat upon and smothered by his visitors; that of an individual of Edinburgh, who was under the greatest alarm at the sight of a cloud, lest it should fall upon him and kill him; and that of the familiar “man of glass”—all of which are apt to excite in us a smile, in little accordance with the misery of the unhappy victims;—yet the most ordinary form of the hypochondriac's apprehension is a sick, melancholy despondency and despair, resulting from, or producing an imaginary embarrassment of his *pecuniary affairs*—he sees, in the womb of futurity, all the dreadful forms which poverty, clothed with rags and gnawed with hunger, assumes in the lives of unfortunate men; and is impressed with the conviction, which all his own or his friends' efforts cannot subdue, that such a fate—privation, contempt, disgrace, the scorn of the world, and death by starvation under a hedge or in a ditch by the way-side—awaits him inevitably at no distant day.

Of all the cases that have come under my personal observation—and there have been many, more or less marked with striking peculiarities—that of Mr H—, the West India merchant, is the most remarkable. The malady we are now considering seldom takes a turn so obstinate and calamitous as in this case; yet such is the great tendency of people in a mercantile country like ours (where competition and the strife of personal interests assume often the strength of strong passions, and where a failure is looked upon, not undeservedly, as a gigantic evil) to sink into fits of moping melancholy, and assume false and distorted views of their condition, that few will fail to find, in the details of this remarkable case, some features, though on a large scale, of their own situations, at times when they are under the domination of the dark genius of despondency—the attendant of all those who are fated to struggle through a hard world.

When I was first called to Mr H—, I was ushered into a house of great size and splendour, suited to the style of life of a successful West India merchant. In an outer room, I saw Mrs H—, a lady somewhat advanced in life, who happily combined the manners of a gentlewoman with the kindness and frankness which pride too often displaces from the hearts and faces of the rich, to make room for the haughtiness which is deemed the badge of the great. By her side, sat a young woman about twenty years of age, (whom, in the course of conversation, she called Angelina,) her daughter, possessed of what, to the eye of the greater part of mankind, would have appeared extraordinary beauty, but what, to my professional observation, was only the

extreme delicacy, the pure hyacinthine tint, the clear transparent skin, and the fair auburn hair of the victim of a strumous habit, which she had received by hereditary right from her mother, who presented the same brilliant but fallacious appearances of the characteristics of a beautiful blond. The vivacity and sensibility so often found in young women of her peculiar constitution, were also apparent; suggesting to my mind, as they must do to every person who has any claims to feeling, the regret that qualities so exquisite should so often be found associated with, if not resulting from an unnatural state of the system of the body. Mr H—— was, they informed me, ailing in a very slight degree; but my inquiries were incapable of extracting the precise nature of his complaint; the old lady insisting upon its being nothing but an attack of spleen, and the young one, in her peculiar, sprightly way, urging, with a smiling countenance, that her father's disease was pure ill-nature—a complaint which she feared no doctor could cure. I tried to undeceive her, and told her that we possessed some secrets, one of which was the power of making mankind laugh, as well as dance; but I was soon told, by the old lady, that her daughter Angelina was not behind me in that respect; for that she not only possessed that power, but exercised it every hour of the day—a compliment, she thought, to the victim of high-toned nerves, but, in my opinion, the description of a misfortune.

I found Mr H—— sitting in his bedroom, which was purposely darkened, by half-closed shutters, to a dismal gloom. He was in his morning gown, with his head enveloped in large rolls of flannel, and his feet (encased in a pair of yellow Morocco slippers) placed on a footstool before a large fire, into which he seemed to be looking with that intent gaze which the winter comforter often charms from victims of ennui. As he turned his face upon me when I entered, I got read to me at once the enigmatical accounts of his wife and daughter, in the yellow bilious tinge which covered all the white part of his eyes, and imparted to the pupil that heavy, lethargic, and sleepy look which accompanies, as a sure companion, all cases of morbid melancholy, arising from a diseased state of the liver; but, in many instances, alternates with sudden expressions of apprehension and fear, as if the patient dreaded the approach of personal danger. His jaws were elongated by the pressure of despondency, whose influence could be also traced in the flaccid muscles, hanging eyebrows, drooping head, and all the other well-known symptoms of a depressed and clouded mind, into which the radiant bow of hope has been unable to send any of its many-coloured rays. I observed, at first, no indications of the morbid, hare-eyed look of terror and apprehension which, in patients of this class, I always search for with great solicitude, as being a sign of something much more serious than what the vulgar understand by hypochondria; and indicating that advancement of the progress of the real malady, when it lays its dreadful grasp on some of the faculties of the mind. But I was assured, from the other advanced symptoms exhibited to me, that there was greater danger of the disease of the patient reaching, if it had not already reached, that unhappy climax; and my attention behaved to be directed to further indications of a more decided character, generally elicited by a conversation, wherein the patient falls naturally into the train of thought suggested by the state of his feelings, and best calculated for rousing them, forcing out the expression of his sentiments, whether morbid or natural, and shewing the true state of his disease.

I was surprised at hearing him state, somewhat sullenly, that he had not sent for me; but I mentally recurred to the conversation I had with his wife and daughter, and surmounted this difficulty, at the expense of my pride, by stating, jocularly, that the solicitude of an affectionate consort was through the love and gratitude of a good husband. a

sufficient authority for the attendance of a doctor—a remark which was responded to by a splenetic growl, accompanied by the hasty choleric statement (disproved by his gown and flannels) that there was nothing the matter with him. But his natural politeness, overcome for a moment by his disease, vindicated its authority, and produced an expression of regret that he had allowed his changed temper, as he called it, to hurry him into rudeness; a fault which he was never guilty of until latterly, that some cloud having come over his mind, had obscured his perceptions of etiquette, as well as destroyed the contented and happy tone of mind he used to enjoy in the midst of his prosperity. I was easily appeased, and soon got him engaged in conversation, avoiding all direct allusion to his ailment—which, in so far as regarded its true character, was clearly a secret to himself—and following him into those trains of thought which seemed to produce the strongest interest in him, though of little importance to myself.

Breaking off with the greatest abruptness, from a subject started by himself, he pronounced, in a dolorous tone of voice, accompanied with a deep-drawn sigh that heaved all his chest, the name of an old school companion of his; throwing upon me, as he ejaculated, "Poor George! poor George!" one of those timid looks which, during my long practice, I have never mistaken for a true symptom of the real hypochondria. His words betrayed mere sympathy for the fate of George B——; but his eyes spoke a language different from that of sorrow; darting forth, as they now seemed to eschew a supposed incorporated presence, looks of terror, mixed with supplicatory glances of pity, while occasional shivers ran over his body, like the effects of sudden dashes of cold water on the bare skin. This moral ague remained for sometime, his eye still alternating between the expressions of terror and pity—now fixed on me, now on empty space, and now averted from an ideal object; and ejaculations, "God preserve me from such a fate!" bursting from him in deep groans. I saw in all this, the revealed workings of the dreadful disease I have met in so many forms; and waited patiently until the exacerbation of terror had passed, that I might probe the cause of the apprehension of his imaginary evil, with a view to an endeavour to divest it of its supposed danger. He calmed, and I inquired who this man George B—— was, whose fate called from him such intense expressions of pity.

"Who is he!" exclaimed he, in a voice cracked and unnatural, while the same expression of pity and terror occupied his face—"who does not know George B—— the West India merchant, who has fallen, with the quickness of a tumbling balloon voyager, from the heights of grandeur, riches, and fame, to beggary, rags, and hunger? Heavens! what a sight met these eyes on Sunday week, as I took my last airing by Nicholas' Park!—I have not yet recovered from it. George B——, the proud, the aristocratic, haughty George B——, sitting by the roadside supplicating alms!—ay, he condescended to beg from one to whom he once lent two thousand pounds!"

He paused, with his eye fixed on the imaginary object of his vision, while a tear, a tribute to the pity which for a moment had expelled from his mind the terror, bedewed the orb, now strained to the utmost, as if he struggled for a better sight of the victim of misfortune.

"We began the world together," he continued, in a more subdued tone; "but he distanced me in the race of prosperity. By one shipment of tobacco—in that old ship the Emerald, which, after he sold her, sunk near the Malaccas—he cleared seven thousand pounds; and, by two voyages of the Dolphin, he made as much more. Fortune rained gold on him, till he would scarcely stoop to pick it up. Disdaining the vulgar gift of dowries, he married a beauty. On great occasions, he put two more horses to his carriage than were used by the ordinary slow-paced children of

fortune, to drag him in state, or imitate the quickness of his own prosperity. Yet, no one called this dizzy extravagance; for every one thought he could stand higher flights; but, sir," (pausing, exhibiting indications of great distress; and throwing on me timid looks,) "he did not insure the Amphitrite, though she was scarcely sea-worthy and he had thirty thousand pounds between her rotten timbers. Well does the wise man say, 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city.' The confidence of wealth made him despise the winds and the waves; but they, in their turn, despised the Amphitrite, and dashed her to pieces on the rocks of Staten Island. Yet was not his confidence abated: though he had read what has been written, that 'He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it,' he became surety for me who paid my bond, and for others who did not pay their bond. The smiles of fortune were changed to frowns. I tremble when I think how fearfully we merchants are subjected to the mutable tyranny of that subtle and cruel goddess. The gold that rained on him disappeared, his creditors hated him, his debtors despised him, his friends deserted him, and she, his beautiful wife who had come without a dowry, went without a jointure—ay, and without regret. Oh! why was I not spared the sight of that apparition—George B——, with no shoes on his feet; a ragged napkin bound round his temples; a coat through which the cold winter winds blew; hungry, cold, wretched, miserable—begging from me—from me—a penny to assuage the pangs of starvation!"

He shuddered as he pronounced the last of these words; pressing his arms to his sides, clasping firmly his hands, and grinding his teeth, in an apparent effort to resist or bear an exacerbation of terror that shook him to the centre and wrung from him, in spite of himself, the prayer—"O God, avert from me this fate!" But he got no confidence from heaven; for all this suffering was succeeded by the same expression of terror I had already detected. Looking at me askance, he voluntarily, yet timidly construed and explained these extraordinary symptoms, by a single remark.

"Is it not possible," said he—"I mean is it not," (pausing and looking fearfully,) "is it not likely—probable—that I may yet beg?"

It will not be easy for me to forget the look that accompanied these words, though I have seen the terror-stricken orb of the hypochondriac in its most nervous paroxysm. The mystery was now explained; and, having detected the patient's disease, I framed my answer in such a form as might have some chance (though I knew its extent was small) of allaying his fear.

"So far as I can judge," replied I, "scarcely anything can be pronounced more improbable than that you should be brought to that condition. You forget entirely that you have yourself accounted for George B——'s misfortunes. He made money too easily; and, having too much of it, he despised it. You know what the proverb says—'Hast thou found honey: eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.' Your friend vomited his wealth. Why engaged he in suretyship—an imprudence railed against from the days of Solomon, whose saying, applicable to it, you have yourself quoted? 'The Lord is the maker of the rich and the poor; but the rich man unmakes himself. Even when your friend saw danger approaching, he did not 'hide himself;' but, like the simpleton, 'passed on and was punished.' If a man bring himself to ruin by imprudence, another may surely avoid that ruin, by that virtue which comprehends all others—prudence—divine prudence.

As I spoke, he eyed me incredulously. My reference to holy writ seemed to touch a chord that startled him and increased his distress. With that triumphant cunning which his unfortunate class use in the supposed detection

of schemes to allay their fear, he cried out in great agitation—

"Ha! you avoid the *great*, the *important* sentence—and I know *why* you avoid it; but you cannot deceive me by trying to make me believe it is not in the holy book; for I dream of it—it haunts me day and night—and why should I not believe the words of inspiration? Hear them—'Boast not thyself of to-morrow: thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; for riches take wings and fly away as an eagle towards heaven.' These, sir, are the fearful words; and we have, besides, the experience of the world to teach us that rich men become beggars—dreadful fate!—beggars, sir, in spite of all the prudence and wisdom of Solomon!"

"Yes," replied I; "but the confidence of a prudent man in the stability of his fortune is not to be shaken by the experience of the fate of the imprudent man who has thrown his riches to the winds. If you had not insured the Mermaid, which, from hearing of her launch some time ago, I understand is one of your valuable vessels, you might have dreaded the fate that resulted from not insuring the Amphitrite."

"And I have not insured the Mermaid!" screamed he, with a voice that pierced the tympanum of my ears like a sharp instrument—"I have not insured the Mermaid," he repeated, with a kind of yell, as he fell back on his chair, with his face covered by his ague-struck hands.

I was unprepared for this sudden burst; for I had hazarded the remark, trusting to this generally-esteemed prudent and somewhat close-handed man having followed the practice of cautious merchants, in insuring a new and untried vessel. The agitation into which I had involuntarily thrown him prevented me from looking calmly at the true and limited import of my simple remark, which, without a superaddition of some secret cause of apprehension, never could have produced such a terrible effect, even on a hypochondriac. As he still lay struggling with his appulse of apprehension, I hastened to remove the cause of alarm, in the only way which seemed clear and certain.

"You may still insure the Mermaid," said I, "wherever she is. No office will refuse to undertake the risk of a sea-worthy ship that has not exceeded her time."

Taking his trembling hands from off his face, he fixed his eyes on me with that wild look which shews that terror is, for a moment, under the self-excruciating domination of despair.

"When the helm is sunk in the quicksands of Newfoundland," he cried, in a heart-piercing tone, "and the mizzen is whirling in the eddies of the Gulf Stream, what less would the premium be than cent. per cent.?"

He wrung his hands as he ejaculated these words, and fixed his eye intensely on some ideal object, as if he had seen the doomed vessel that held a great part of his treasures torn to pieces by the ravages of the storm—the rudder in the act of being embedded in the quicksands—and the masts drifting along, the sport of the winds and waves. He remained in that position for some time, drawing deep sighs, and apparently unconscious of my presence. I was much perplexed. I had got no intelligence of the loss of the Mermaid—an event which, from her great size, would have produced some noise; and the conduct of his wife and daughter was entirely inconsistent with the knowledge of a loss that might bring them to beggary. At the same time, I was not so well assured of the absolute extent of the patient's disease, as to be able to conclude, upon the instant, that he merely imagined the loss of the vessel. He might have got secret intelligence of the disaster; and, strong as the paroxysm was that had shaken him in the manner I had witnessed, its intensity would have been no overacting of the true, *natural*, *healthy* agony of truth—such truth—operating on a sound mind. In this uncertainty, I was at a loss what to do or what to say. The unhappy man still

sat under the influence of the dreadful charm with which truth or disease had invested the creation of his fancy, on which his mind and gaze were intently fixed. To have questioned him, or argued with him farther, would, on either of my suppositions, have been improper, and to have called in Mrs H—— would have produced alarm, either for the soundness of her husband's mind or the safety of the vessel. My only course seemed to be, to change, in the meantime, the conversation—if indeed it was possible to engage his mind on any other topic—and wait until I got information that would enable me to act with greater decision.

"There is a sudden fall in the exchange between this country and Russia," said I, endeavouring to catch his eye.

"Ha! it will not do, sir," he replied, looking at me suspiciously and fearfully—"you are not able, by this sleight, to conceal from me that dreadful truth. That may be one of your modes of cure; but can you put together the floating pieces of the wreck of the Mermaid? Unless you can do that, you cannot mend my broken mind. This attempted imposition, though well intended, increases my agony, already insufferable: why don't you do as George B——'s friends persisted in doing, after the Amphitrite's loss was blazed at Lloyd's—why don't you boldly say at once, that the ship is *not* lost? That is the common worldly way of exorciation. But you cannot, you cannot—the thing is too clear for that, your courage not sufficient, and my penetration too keen. Would to Heaven I had, at this moment, the luxury of one faint desperate doubt!"

"I have not heard any intelligence of such a loss," said I, forced to continue the subject.

"I know it, I know it, sir," replied he—"that is a gentler way of performing the operation of bandaging the eyes, that one may not see the death that is carried on the point of the amputating knife. But it cannot thus be concealed; for it is felt through every nerve and muscle, and, mounting to the brain which it maddens, is independent of the eyes." (pausing and lowering his voice to a whisper.) "When a truth is beyond cavil and suspicion, believe me it is best to let it alone—there is a certain stage of a disease when the certainty of death itself is no longer concealed from the patient. The man that would attempt to make me believe that the Mermaid is not lost, I would consider my enemy as well as an impostor. Sympathy is best exerted in endeavouring to enable us to support evils that can neither be concealed nor averted. I say endeavouring, for my evil is insupportable. I cannot face beggary: yet whither can I fly for relief? Mercy! Heaven!—mercy! on the beggared bankrupt, who cannot live by the way-side, and yet cannot die there! Horrible destiny!"

His feelings were now, by the workings of his mind, which I had unfortunately stimulated, raised to the highest pitch of mortal suffering. He continued repeating the words "horrible destiny," as the fearful images of want and beggary he conjured up stood revealed before him, like impersonations. His eye still sought the ideal creations, as if they had been realities existing beside him, and operating on him by the power of a charm; yet at intervals he seemed to recoil from them with horror, and fixed on me a look expressive of the supplication of pity. In my ignorance of the real state of his affairs, I was doing the man injury. I could not with safety risk another remark; for everything I had yet said had aggravated the terrors to which he was clearly enslaved. Starting up as if I suddenly recollected an engagement, I hurriedly took my departure, obliged to leave him still in the grasp of the holotonic that convulsed his whole frame.

On reaching the anteroom, into which I had been first introduced, I found Mrs H—— and Angelina, along with a genteel young man named Augustus A——, who seemed to be on terms of great intimacy with the family, and whose

eloquent ocular conversation with the young lady, led me to suspect that the intimacy would one day be changed into a relationship. As I entered, the sprightly, volatile girl came running forward, and, taking me by the hand, asked me if her father, by my means, had yet recovered his usual good nature. She wished, above all things, he should get some of that secret medicine I had mentioned, (and of the nature of which Augustus had informed her,) that would make him dance—a remark she accompanied with a side look of great significance to her lover, who rejoined smartly, that there might soon be occasion for the old gentleman using his limbs in that graceful exercise. The buoyancy of the sprightly young lady was checked by a blush which added a supplement to my information. I accompanied the mother to another apartment, where I learned from her that the object she had particularly in view, in requesting my professional assistance for her husband, was his restoration to a better temper, the change of which she thought depended on a state of the stomach, capable in all likelihood of being removed or ameliorated; but, that restoration, she continued, behoved to be quick, for a marriage had for some time been fixed between her daughter and the young man I had seen, and she had some fears that, in his present gloomy state of mind, he would be unwilling to sign the contract, whereby, as he had already agreed, ten thousand pounds was to be given as a dowry. I heard the old lady out, and then endeavoured to ascertain, by oblique questions and watching of her countenance, whether she was aware of the extraordinary state of mind and feelings into which her husband had fallen, and, above all, whether she had heard any unfavourable accounts of the Mermaid, or of his finances generally. Her answers and manner indicated no knowledge of any misfortune, nor indeed of any fear of misfortune, entertained by her husband. All she knew was, that he had got into a gloomy and ill-natured condition of mind, which she said was entirely unjustified by any change in his worldly condition. By the Mermaid, she added, a powerful vessel, which he had (from his usual narrow spirit) trusted to the sea without insurance, he was almost certain to realize a very large addition to his fortune. I was surprised at these statements; but considered it prudent, in the meantime, to make no disclosure which might tend to alarm the family, who, in consequence of the approach of the daughter's marriage, were clearly all in a state of confidence and happiness, qualified very slightly by a supposed fit of the spleen in the father, which would leave him before the important day of the union.

In the course of the afternoon, I satisfied myself, by inquiries among merchants, and without raising any suspicions, that no unfavourable accounts had been received of the Mermaid, which had touched at Madeira, where she had been heard of on her passage out to Jamaica. Mr H——'s credit was everywhere reckoned unexceptionable, though his close-handedness and firmness in bargain-making were not so generally admired. I was now satisfied that my patient was a true victim of the real malady of hypochondriacism; and that, by brooding over the misfortunes of George B—— and the danger he ran from not insuring his valuable vessel, he had contracted *pseudoblepsia imaginaria*, or an imaginary vision of objects, which often attends the original disease, as one of its very worst characteristics. I called again upon him next day about the same hour, and found him in the same position he occupied the day before, sitting in the dark room, and looking into the heart of the fire, as if the object of his morbid vision were to be found there. He did not hear the opening of the door; but the sound of my voice produced a start, and a sudden, timid, oblique cast of the eye, which satisfied me he was still under the same melancholy delusion.

"Have you seen George B—— to-day?" he said, hurriedly,

and, as if afraid to hear the answer he requested. "Poor man! poor man!—I saw him from that window an hour ago. How little does he know that I am so near his awful condition!"

It was impossible he could have seen the dreaded victim of the fate he himself anticipated, from that window: it was a mere mirage of monomania.

"I have not seen him," answered I; "but I have ascertained that your vessel the *Mermaid* was noted at Madeira, and no one has heard unfavourable accounts of her; so she must be presumed to be safe. You have allowed a fancy to master your perception of truth."

"The old medicine again!" he exclaimed, with a sarcastic grin and tone, evidently exasperating to himself. "So did I act the leech to my poor friend, when, with Lloyd's List in my hand, I told him that the *Amphitrite* was not lost. So do we all endeavour to cheat the unfortunate."

"Well," replied I, "shew me Lloyd's List for the loss of the *Mermaid*, and I will renounce my scepticism."

"We are not generally anxious," replied he, "to convince people of the truth and reality of a misfortune that must bring us to beggary. It is enough that I read that dreadful paragraph myself. I could not stand a reperusal of it. I threw the fatal paper from me; but the words, the words of a letter, are marked as by a burning iron on my brain. I trace them everywhere: on that wall, in that fire, in the air, I see them; and, O God! they need no Daniel to construe the doom of my ruin—my condemnation to that state in which I may, with poor George B——, weep over a divided crust, begged from the reluctant hand of charity!"

"Would you have any objections to let me peruse the paragraph?" said I.

"What array, what need," he cried, emphatically, "of a paltry array of the impressions of types, where the brain is burned by the flaming characters? I know nothing of the dreadful memorial. I threw it from me in despair. Cease this silly scepticism, resorted to to shew an affected hypercritical examination of evidence. See you that book?"—(laying his hand on a Bible that lay on the table, and speaking slow and solemnly)—"*do you doubt holy writ?*"

As he pronounced these words emphatically, he threw on me a look of the triumph of despair over the effort to pierce the darkness of his mind by the last struggling beam of hope. Having appealed to the Bible as an analogous example of the certainty of the probation of the loss of the *Mermaid*, he could go no further, and fell back on his chair, with his face again covered by his palsied hands; but I retained my hopes of still shaking him, by forcing him to descend to the particulars of the disaster.

"When and where was the *Mermaid* lost?" said I.

This question, which begged particulars, and assumed the loss, curdled his blood—he shuddered all over; but, though his courage was at fault, his fancy was prepared:—

"On the banks of Newfoundland," he replied, "on the stormy night of the 15th of November; she was driven so far north by stress of weather. Thus has perished the greater part of my fortune. Other small disasters complete my ruin"—starting up suddenly and looking wildly around. "But, sir, you must mention this to no one, not even to my wife—an execution in my house to-morrow would be the result of the discovery. She cannot stand it; and I must not kill her yet; though death will, I hope, ultimately relieve her from the necessity of begging with me by the way-side. Promise, promise, on this holy book, that you will not divulge my secret!"

I hesitated thus to confirm his disease.

"Do you refuse me this simple request?" he continued, falling on his knees and seizing my legs, while his wild, despair-stricken eye sought with piteous look my face. "Is it thus you repay my confidence? The confessions of a patient are sacred: shall mine be made an exception? Then may the Lord have mercy on me and mine!—for we

are all undone—my tender, doating wife—my Angelina on the eve of marriage—all hurled in one instant from the height of affluence to ruin."

"I will divulge nothing," said I, raising his weak and emaciated body as I would have done that of a child; "but if the disaster is in Lloyd's, my secrecy can be of small importance."

"True, true," he replied, as he again sank on his chair—"I forgot. Nothing can now save me. It must be all over the town. What do the people say of it? Do they pity me as I pity George B——? Ha!—then—then am I indeed to be pitied, *for being pitied!* How often, cruel powers! have I prayed thee to avert from me that wretched boon, as the last, the greatest of all worldly evils!"

My influence over the convulsive throes that followed these words was nothing. The only relief lay in the exhaustion of nature's diseased strength. With an ordinary victim of *real* evil many expedients may be fallen upon to introduce glimpses of consolation through crevices of the mind; but it is a peculiar feature of hypochondria that the imagined object of terror engrosses in its power all the mental forces—judgment, imagination, and feeling—leaving no faculty through which a medicinal virtue can be communicated to the diseased and burning brain. Aware, as my professional knowledge made me, of the invincible nature of the false belief engendered by this disease, I resolved upon not persisting in an attempt, by mere argument, to force it to give place to a truer conviction. Through the physical powers, an impression, in the first instance, could, with the greatest chance of success, be made on the diseased mind; and when the unfortunate man recovered from his fit, I endeavoured to convince him that he was unwell in body and required medicine. He scarcely deigned to reply to me on a subject so far beneath his attention, engrossed as it was with an evil of so gigantic a kind; and sullenly and sarcastically required me to send him a dose of arsenic. I laid on the table what I thought would benefit him, along with the necessary directions, and left him still groaning under the agony of his imagined infiction.

In the passage, I met the gay and hilarious Angelina, who again inquired, laughing, when her father would be in a condition to *dance*—unaware of my private knowledge of what gave a *humour* to this turn of her natural vivacity. A servant, in the meantime, whispered in my ear that Mrs H—— waited for me in an adjoining room. I hastened to her, and, to my surprise, found her extended on a couch, bathed in tears, and apparently under the infliction of some intense sorrow.

"Oh, why have you concealed this disaster from me?" she cried, as I advanced.

"What disaster, madam?" said I.

"The loss of the *Mermaid*," replied she, crying and sobbing bitterly.

"Is it true, then?" said I, starting with astonishment.

"Who should know better than my husband?" said she.

I was instantly relieved by her answer. On inquiry, I found that the servant had overheard a part of the conversation between me and Mr H——, and communicated it to her mistress. I explained everything to her, and she was satisfied on this great subject of alarm; but she had still a difficulty to struggle with. The marriage of her daughter drew near, and how would her husband be got prevailed upon to fulfil his obligation to pay the dowry of ten thousand pounds, if he continued under the dark cloud of mental delusion whose inspissated gloom strangled the very rays of the instinctive perception of primary and elemental truths? I acknowledged that there was great difficulty in the case, and suggested that the marriage might take place in the meantime, and the obligation for the tocher left to be got signed afterwards, when the *Mermaid* came home. This plan did not however, please; and I suspected, though she

had too much delicacy to admit it, that the obligation for the cash was held a kind of *sine qua non* by the bridegroom. I, therefore, promised to consider seriously of some means of relieving her from the extraordinary position in which she and her family were placed; and, in the meantime, recommended to her to use her own exertions in getting her husband to take the medicines I had ordered; leaving to her own discretion, to break to him the subject of his terrors, or keep it, in the meantime, within her own bosom, as she conceived most prudent; but enjoining, in any view, to preserve inviolate my honour with the invalid, over whom my power could be only co-extensive with the faith he reposed in me.

Next day, I had another communing with Mrs H——, who informed me that, on the previous night, she had witnessed the most dreadful scene she had ever experienced during her life. Mr H——, unable longer to restrain himself, had, with tears of lamentation, told her she must prepare herself for becoming a beggar; that the Mermaid was lost, and his brother William, for whom he had become surety to the extent of fifteen thousand pounds, had suddenly failed, whereby he would have that money to pay. Her efforts to undeceive him produced an absolute frenzy; he tore the bandages from his temples, uttered loud screams of agony, sank suddenly into fits of gloomy silence, then passed into paroxysms of weeping, and fell on her neck, sobbing like a child. His condition since had only been a continuation of this misery. She did not know what to do; because, if she were to promulgate his condition, with a view to getting friends and acquaintances to come and endeavour to undeceive him, she might injure his mercantile interests and credit, and produce that very ruin he so much dreaded. In the meantime, the day of the marriage approached apace; and she now candidly confessed that, if there was any demur about advancing the tocher, the bridegroom might refuse to perform his part of the engagement, whereby her fragile daughter might lose her life, and at all events her happiness for ever. I told her I had not yet come to any satisfactory conclusion; but recommended to her to send to all the friends of the seamen on board the Mermaid, to ascertain if any letters had come to them, and, if possible, to get hold of them.

In the evening, a message came to me from Mrs H——, informing me that she had ascertained that no letters had yet arrived from any of the seamen of the Mermaid. I revolved all the peculiarities and difficulties of this extraordinary case in my mind during the night, and bethought myself of the excusable expedient of removing the fatal deception of the patient by a humane and innocent imposition—to destroy falsehood by falsehood, and thereby elicit truth. My plan was to get reprinted a metropolitan newspaper, containing a superinduced entry, as if from Lloyd's, of the arrival of the Mermaid at her place of destination, and to lay this paper within the reach of the deluded invalid. I communicated this plan to Mrs H——, who approved of it; and, on the same day, gave instructions to a printer, in whom I could repose confidence, to put his part of the scheme into execution. He entered cordially into the device, and, next forenoon, sent me a proof of the paper and the fictitious entry, which I immediately revised and returned to him, with directions to send me the perfect copy in the evening. About seven o'clock, accordingly, a young man brought me the paper, stating that his master had been obliged to leave the town in the afternoon; but that I might rely upon the accuracy of the copy, which had been carefully thrown off by his foreman. I immediately carried it to Mrs H——, who undertook to lay it in such a position as would secure the eye of her husband. The matrimonial contract, she said, required to be signed on the 16th, two days after, according to the agreement of the parties; and, owing to the state of her husband, she had resolved upon

the marriage being celebrated afterwards privately. She beseeched me strongly to attend and witness the contract, whereby I might have an opportunity of facilitating the completion of this most delicate and dangerous negotiation.

On the day and hour appointed, I attended accordingly. The scene presented to me, as I entered the sick man's chamber, was extraordinary and striking. The window shutters were still half closed, and the room nearly dark. Augustus A—— and Angelina were sitting opposite to each other at the aperture of the window; their faces, on which the light shone by the side of deep shadows, exhibiting that mixture of love, joy, fear, and solicitude, which the peculiar circumstances of their situation could not fail to produce in hearts whose sympathies were moved by the elastic springs of an affection which had not been crossed, and hopes that never had been blighted. The mother sat silently looking at her husband, who, rolled up in the manner already described, sat immersed in a mood of gloomy despair, his head leaning on his breast, his eyebrows knit, his eyes fixed on the fire, his mouth sealed with a sullen, obstinate silence, and everything indicating either that he was unconscious of what was to be enacted in his presence, or determined not to take a friendly part in it. I seated myself opposite to him, and was saluted by a half scowling, half timid look, which, having scanned me hurriedly, sought again the fire. The meeting of friends collected to witness a coffin-lifting of a dear relative, could not have presented a more funereal, gloomy, and dismal aspect—the shadows being relieved, in the one case, by the lurid smile of expectant heirs, and in the other, by the struggling gleam of the doubtful joy of the bridegroom and bride. At length, the man of the law came with the important document; and, having his bustling, officious importance and familiarity blasted by the sullen growl of the hypochondriac, sat down in disappointment and irresolution. After some words of ceremony, approaching to the sombreness of the preliminaries of a service over the dead, the deed was read, purporting, in the usual terms, that the two parties had agreed to accept of each other for lawful spouses, and that, in consideration of a jointure of five hundred pounds a-year, the father of the bride had agreed to advance the sum of ten thousand pounds as the tocher of his daughter. When the deed was read, all was silent. The bridegroom adhibited his name first, and the bride, suffused with blushes and “smiling inwardly,” followed his example. It was now placed before the father, and the lawyer held out to him the pen, fraught, after a dipping and a redipping, with the nicely adjusted quota of ink, for the purpose of his signing his name.

The company sat for a few minutes silently looking at the attitude of the man of the law, who still held out the pen to the invalid. A loud, horrible, fiendish cackle of a laugh wrung spasmodically from the dry throat of the hypochondriac, rang through the apartment, and filled every face with consternation and terror. I do not recollect of ever having heard a sound so unearthly, so much beyond all powers of description—a noise so compounded of all the elements of discordancy. It seemed the accumulated expression of all his griefs, terrors, and misery. Thrusting his hand, with a fluttering, trembling precipitade, into the pocket of his gown, he dragged forth the newspaper containing the fictitious announcement of the arrival of the Mermaid, and waved it triumphantly over his head.

‘It is not enough,’ he cried, still throwing the paper backwards and forwards like a pendant, ‘that a poor wretch, doomed to beggary and starvation, should have his fate to struggle with, unaided by the co-operation or soothed by the sympathy of relatives and friends! No! there must be added—by the agency of the Devil acting through the cruel refinements of a wife's treachery, a doctor's cunning, and a daughter's selfishness—the injury and insult of a

degrading deception—an imposition, a cheat. Though reduced to beggary, I am not yet, thank God! deserted by my perception of truth, and my love of honesty and fair dealing. The Mermaid *has arrived*" (looking at the paper, and repeating his screech laugh) "*safe—all well!*" And who tells us this glorious news? No other than Mr Gilbert S—, Printer in — Street of our own town of—, whose name is placed here—here" (pointing to the print) "to this London paper, as a guarantee, a pledge of the truth of his information. Excellent cheat! Noble device! Ingenious trickery! How worthy of the jugglers, and the poor, wretched, miserable beggar attempted to be juggled!"

I seized the paper, which, as he fell back screaming out his hysterical laugh, he threw from him. Heavens! what was my surprise to find it indeed true that Mr S—'s foreman, to whom the secret had not been communicated, had, in his master's absence, placed, according to the custom of printers in ordinary matters, his master's name at the foot of the London newspaper! I had ruined the whole proceedings; all the consequences of this broken off marriage were on my head. I had even riveted in this poor man's mind the certainty of the loss of the Mermaid; shame, regret, and self-crimination stung me like adders; and such was the intensity of my suffering, and the darkness, doubt, and confusion of mind into which I was thrown, that I was scarcely conscious of the extraordinary scene still acting around me. I was called to a more attentive observation by the question of the man of the law, addressed to Mr H—, whether he intended to sign the document, as an engagement called him away.

"No!" resounded in my still confused ears—"why should a poor beggar, not worth one penny in the world, sign a bond for ten thousand pounds? By and by, I will be grateful for a penny to buy me a crust of bread."

The thunderstruck writer, to whom an account was due by Mr H—, recoiled at a statement so extraordinary; the bridegroom, unjustifiably afraid that some improper use might be made of his signature, darted forward, seized the marriage contract, and, hurrying out of the door, flew from a *beggared bride*. My ears were now stung by the screams of the two women, the mother and the daughter, who both fainted on the floor, and the occasional bursts of the hypochondriac's sardonic laugh mixing with the wails of distress of the wretched females. Alarmed by the noise, the servants of the house rushed into the room, to administer assistance to those whose cries seemed so urgently to demand it; and I contributed my endeavours to the restoration of the sufferers. The mother recovered in a short time, and soon saw the full extent of the misery that surrounded her; but, being a strong-minded woman, she defied a repetition of the syncope—an effort in which the fragile and volatile daughter was not so successful; for she so soon revived from one swoon than she fell, screaming, into another; sent back, by the dreadful consciousness of her condition, into this state of heaven-sent, humane oblivion of misery. While tending these sufferers, I threw a glance occasionally at him who suffered, from the mere power of a deluded imagination, a thousand times more than those whose tender constitution of body limited the infliction of agony—him who could *not* faint and could *not* weep, but who could yet laugh that dreadful laugh of the miserable which no man can forget who once hears it as I have heard it, but cannot describe it. His head was now swung over the side of the chair, as if he had lost all power of upholding it; his bosom heaved with convulsive throes, his arms sawed the air, his feet shuffled along the floor, and groans, mixed with that horrid spasmodic cackle, burst from him, piercing the ear like the yells of a demon. Having consigned the women to the care of the servants, I left hurriedly this scene, the moral cause of which I could be of no service in endeavour-

ing to relieve. However familiar I had become with scenes of distress, the new and peculiar features of the one I have here attempted to describe, scared away the apathy of custom and habit, and seized my feelings and interest more powerfully and painfully than I can be able to express by the narrative I have here given.

Next forenoon, I called on Mrs H—, and found her under great affliction. She told me that her daughter was confined to bed, and that her swooning fits returned upon her whenever her mind acquired power and sensibility sufficient to estimate the true extent of her suffering for she could not be made to believe that the loss of the Mermaid and the poverty and beggary of her father was a dream of hypochondria; and treated the attempt of her mother to produce this belief as a mere act of maternal sympathy, to conceal from her her deplorable fate in losing a lover and the means of living at the same time. She informed me also that she had seen Augustus A—, who was as obstinate as her daughter in his belief that what her husband had said was true, giving as his reason that he had never heard that Mr H— was mad; and proceeding so far as to accuse her and myself of an attempt, by the falsified newspaper, to get matters so arranged as to inveigle him into a match with the daughter of one on the eve of becoming a bankrupt. I replied, that I now saw no alternative, in our efforts to cure those ingeniously contrived disasters, other than waiting for the captain of the Mermaid's letter of advice, which could not fail to arrive in a very short time. I had scarcely uttered these words, when Mr H—'s clerk handed in a letter from Kingston. We were surprised and pleased at this curious coincidence; and I agreed to remain until Mrs H— took up to her husband this piece of evidence, which could not fail to open his eyes, and cure all the evils that had resulted from his delusion. In a short time after Mrs H— left the room, I heard the well-known sound of the expression of an exacerbation of the hypochondriac's sufferings, mixed, as I thought, with a repetition of the same spasmodic laugh; and I was now surprised by the appearance of Mrs H—, bathed in tears, and holding in her hand the fragments of the letter which had been torn to pieces. She informed me that Mr H— had read the letter, and had cried out, immediately on perusing it, that it was not written in the captain's hand; that it was another attempt to impose upon him; and that we deserved to be handed over to the authorities for forging the postmark. On putting the pieces of the letter together, we perceived that it was signed by the captain; but, in consequence of his having got his hand hurt, written by some other person—yet undoubtedly a genuine document, communicating the safe arrival of the Mermaid at the port of Kingston. It was now, we both agreed, necessary to wait the arrival of the vessel itself.

In the meantime, I continued my visits, communicating through Mrs H— with the patient, who, conceiving me to be in the plot against him, would not consent to see me. His body was undergoing a gradual decay, from the effects of the moral poison continually instilled into the nerves of the brain, the centre of the living powers of the system, as well as the seat of the mind; while his liver, getting enlarged, generated the food of the mental disease, which, in its turn, preyed on his flesh—producing a marasmus assimilating him to a living skeleton. The darkness of the room he occupied was gradually increased, so as to suit his tender vision, which shrunk at the light of day; and it was subsequently necessary to muffle the bell of the door, to prevent its sound from throwing him into a fit of hysterics, in the apprehension of messengers, tipstiffs, and sheriff-officers, who, he said, were haunting the house, ready to pounce upon him the instant they got a glimpse of his person. He was evidently fast falling into a general

cachexia, or depraved habit of body, which would eventually defy all the restorative powers of medicine, as well as the influence of a renewed belief, even if such could be stimulated in his brain by a natural perception of external evidence. His daughter, too, was still confined to bed by a slow fever, resulting from the fearful excitement she had suffered on the day of the signing of the contract.

While matters were in this desperate condition, the Mermaid arrived with a rich cargo from Jamaica. I saw the Captain previous to his first interview with his owner, gave him directions how to conduct himself, and requested him to call and communicate to me the result of the meeting. In a few hours afterwards, he came running to me in great haste, and informed me that Mr H— was assuredly mad; that he had gazed at him as if he had been an apparition—requesting to know how he had saved himself from the wreck of the Mermaid, and whether any of the crew were saved; but prohibiting him, by dreadful oaths, from recapitulating the circumstances of the loss, which, he said, he could not hear from the lips of an eye-witness, and live an hour after. When the Captain replied that the Mermaid was in the harbour, he rose in great fury, cried that the narrator was leagued with his other enemies, who wanted to impose on him, and threatened to strike him if he did not instantly leave the room. After what I had witnessed, I was not surprised even at this. There was only one expedient now remaining—to carry him by force, ill as he was, on board of the ship, and present to his eyes the *corpus reale* of the Mermaid herself.

This was done the very next day. The patient was by far too weak to offer any resistance. He was told that he was ordered by the doctor to take an airing. Two men lifted him down stairs, and placed him in a sedan chair, for the greater facility of transporting him on board. I was waiting him on the deck, along with Mrs H—, the Captain, and two confidential friends, while the crew were directed to be working about, so as to add the weight of the testimony of their living bodies to the evidence of the wood, ropes, and sails of the vessel. The sedan chair was placed in the middle of the deck; and we stood around to witness the effects of the apparition of the lost Mermaid, on the diseased mind of the patient. When the head of the chair was lifted off and the door opened, the spectacle presented to our view was most appalling, transcending even the fancy of a resurrection from the dead. His skin was of the colour of an orange, and seemed to envelope a heap of bones, bound together by gristles—no muscular amplification being in any part visible; his jaws, and the thin tendinous muscles intended to cover and move them, were as rigid as if they had been frozen by a hyperborean winter; a thick shock of black hair, that had not been cut for a long period, hung down over his yellow forehead, and partly concealed his eyes; the nails upon his fingers, which he would not allow mortal to touch, had grown long and sharp, resembling more the talons of an eagle than the appurtenances of men's hands:—everything indicated the diseased, immured troglodite, or cave-man, brought out to see, before he died, the rays of the mid-day sun. As the light to which he had been so long unaccustomed struck his eyes, he winced and groaned, turning the yellow orbs backwards and forwards, shutting his eyelids, opening them again, like one awakening from a long sleep, and rubbing them with his fingers, as if to ease his pain, and, at same time, to remove a supposed mirage which tormented him by its delusion. Beginning to wonder at the strange sights exhibited to him—the change from his own apartment to a ship's-deck, from darkness to light, and from loneliness to society, with the cries of the seamen's "yo-he-vo," the dashing of the waves against the sides of the vessel, and the motion of the pitching bark, which was in an exposed part of the outer harbour—he rose from his seat, and looked wildly over the

top of the sedan, eyeing us, along with the passing seamen—whose faces he scanned curiously—with the greatest amazement, not unmixed with terror and struggling, apparently to force some satisfactory conclusion out of a comparison of riveted beliefs and perplexing appearances. No one spoke to him, all being deeply occupied in watching the strange symptoms of the first returning ray of reason and belief on a mind so long clouded and deranged by gloomy delusions and visionary imaginations. He continued to scan everything with the most minute attention—shuddering at intervals, as if he saw an apparition—casting on us looks of suspicion, and then brightening up with gleams of reviving confidence. At last, his eye was firmly riveted on some object in the direction of the main-mast—his gaze becoming so stedfast and keen that his very soul seemed to be centred in it. We all turned our eyes in the same direction; but I saw nothing calculated to produce so much excitement. In an instant, a loud scream rent the air—the hypochondriac rushed forward with the last collected strength of his attenuated frame, and, clasping his arms round the main-mast, at a place where his name was painted in the semicircle of the indispensable horse-shoe, hugged it till his nerves seemed to crack, and, drawing a deep sigh, fell down on the deck. I thought the experiment was fatal—that the clouded mind had been unable to bear the *coup de soleil* of truth—that he was dead!

I ran forward and lifted him up. In a short time he recovered, and looked around him wildly; but he had received his specific—even the scepticism of his disease had begun to give way to *touch*. When he was lifted up, he took my arm, and walked round and round the vessel, looking at everything, touching everything; and, as the evidence grew stronger and stronger, bursting out into strange hollow laughs. No one yet interfered to give any explanation; for I deemed it better to let the real evidence work its effect in the first instance, before any moral confirmation was offered. The process was slow; the shadows of scepticism seemed to hang about his mind, and contest every inch of the mental province with the beams of the searching light of the evidence of sense. Yet he became gradually stronger and stronger in his belief; and, before we left the vessel, was as much satisfied of the safety and identity of the Mermaid, as he was formerly of her loss and his own ruin. He was taken home, and the effects of the new conviction became soon apparent, producing a reaction of confidence, and brightening up his mind with the cheering rays of hope. A healthy mind is the best medicine for a diseased body—he became gradually better and better, and latterly entirely recovered.

When he became quite well, I used often to talk with him about the state of his mind during that dark period. He felt no disinclination to speak of it. He said that the most remarkable circumstance was, that all his fancies were invested with that *same conviction of truth* which generally accompanies the evidence of the five senses. One good effect, he said, followed from the hallucination; and that was, that his *blindness* enabled him to see through the heart of his intended son-in-law; for he was satisfied that nothing but his declaration of poverty would have elicited the unworthy motives of Augustus A—. He succeeded in satisfying his daughter that her lover was unworthy of her; and, some years afterwards, another and more worthy suitor having sought her hand, succeeded, and a dowry of £10,000 was paid down on the marriage day.



WILSON'S
Historical, Tradictionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE KATHERAN

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he—
He played a spring and danced it roun
Beneath the gallows tree.

IN the latter end of the summer of the year 1700, as a party, consisting of two ladies and two gentlemen, were returning to Banff, the place of their residence, from a distant excursion into the Highlands, they were overtaken by the dusk of evening in the Pass of Benmore, one of the wildest and most desolate spots in the north of Scotland. The ladies of this party were both young, and one of them, in particular, surpassingly beautiful. This lady's name was Ellen Martin, the daughter of a gentleman of great wealth, residing in the neighbourhood of the town above named. At the period we introduce her to the reader, Ellen had just completed her nineteenth year. She was rather under than above the average stature of her sex; but her fragile form was exquisitely moulded, and perfect in all its proportions. Her countenance was oval, glowing with health, and strikingly expressive of a disposition at once confiding, open, and affectionate. In truth, it was impossible to look on the youthful form of Ellen Martin, without feeling that you saw before you the very perfection of female loveliness. But, if there was any particular time or occasion when that beauty was seen to greater advantage than another, it might have been when, shaking aside with a gentle motion of her head the profusion of fair glossy ringlets with which it was adorned, she looked up with her large intelligent, but soft blue eye, and her small rosy lips apart, to catch more distinctly what conversation might be passing around her. At such a moment, and in such an attitude as this, she seemed, indeed, more like one of those aerial beings that fancy delights to create, than a creature of mortal mould.

The female companion of Ellen Martin, on the occasion of which we have spoken and are about more fully to speak, was an intimate friend. One of the gentlemen was a near relation of Ellen's, the other the brother of her friend. The party, all of whom were mounted on little Highland ponies, having been overtaken by the dusk, began to feel rather uneasy at their situation, as they had yet fully fifteen miles of wild and hilly road to travel before they could reach any place of shelter. They had been perfectly aware, when they set out in the morning, of the distance they had to accomplish, and knew, also, that considerable expedition was required to enable them to complete with daylight the necessary journey; but, full of health and spirits, and possessed of tastes capable of enabling them to enjoy the splendid scenery which had met them at every turn in their mountain path, they had loitered on the way till they found that they had expended all their time, and had yet accomplished little more than half their journey. In this dilemma, there was nothing for it but to push on—a simple enough corrective of their error apparently, but one by no means to them of very easy adoption; for they did not well know in what direction to proceed. Under these circumstances, one of the gentlemen called a halt of the party, to consider of what was best to

be done, and to see if their united intelligence could make out where they were precisely, and help to the selection of the best route by which to prosecute their journey. To add to the unpleasantness of their situation, it began to rain heavily, and occasional peals of distant thunder growled amidst the hills.

The party were at this instant crowded together beneath the shelter of a projecting rock, whither they had retired, to avoid the beating rain, and to hold the consultation to which we have above alluded. Unpleasant, however, as their situation was, they felt no great alarm. The ladies indeed, expressed some uneasiness occasionally; but it was quickly banished by the rattling glee of their male companions, who, elated with experiencing something like an adventure, were in high spirits, and endeavoured to communicate the same feeling to their fair friends. Ellen, who with all her gentleness of nature and delicacy of form, was of a highly romantic and enthusiastic disposition, was gazing pensively on the mighty masses of hill that rose around her on all sides, and anon down into the deep hollow of the pass, to whose highest point they had nearly attained, when she thought she perceived, through the obscurity of the twilight, a human figure ascending the pass in the direction of the party. She called the attention of her friends to the approaching object, which, in a few minutes, was sufficiently near to exhibit the outline of a man of tall stature. He was advancing rapidly, with the light springy step peculiar to the Highlanders, and was traversing with apparent ease, ground, which, from its ruggedness and steepness, would have rendered the progress of one unaccustomed to such travelling, slow, laborious and painful. The person now approaching, seemed not to feel any such difficulties. He bounded lightly and rapidly over the ground, and in a few minutes was within a few yards of where they stood. On observing the party, he made towards them, and, doffing his bonnet with great politeness, and with the air of a prince, inquired, after apologizing for his intrusion, whether they stood in need of any such assistance as one who knew the country well could afford them, and was ready to give.

The person who now stood before the party, and who made this friendly inquiry, was a young gentleman—at least one whose appearance and manner bespoke him to be such. He was dressed in the full Highland costume of a person of consideration of the period to which our tale refers; but was fully more amply and carefully armed than was even then usual amongst his countrymen. In his belt he wore, besides the dirk, the common appendage, a couple of pistols, and, by his side, a broadsword of the most formidable dimensions. The figure of this person, who appeared to be about five-and-twenty years of age, was singularly handsome; his countenance mild and pleasing in its expression, yet strongly indicative of a bold and determined spirit—advantages which were finely set off by the picturesque dress in which he was arrayed, and which he wore with much dignity and grace, and by his erect and martial bearing. His whole figure, in short, was remarkably striking and prepossessing.

"I fear," said the stranger, addressing the party, and smiling as he spoke, "that you have miscalculated the

height of our hills and the breadth of our muirs, that you are so late abroad."

"It is even so, sir," said one of the gentlemen; "we have been idling our time, and are now reaping the fruits of our thoughtlessness. We neither know well where we are, nor which way we ought to go. I suppose we must just make the most of the situation we are in for the night, although these rocks are but very indifferent covering."

"Why, I must say I would not feel much for your case, gentlemen," said the stranger, "though you had to sleep on the heather for a night—I have done it a thousand times; but such quarters would ill suit these fair ladies, I fear."

"Yet they must be content to put up with it for this night at any rate," said one of the gentlemen; "for we can make no better of it."

"Perhaps *we* may make better of it," said the stranger. "Something must be done to get these ladies under shelter. Let me see." And he mused for a moment, then added—"If I thought you would not be overly nice as to the elegance of your quarters, and if you would accompany me for a distance of a couple of miles or so, I think I could promise you, at least, the shelter of a roof, and such entertainment as our Highland huts afford."

The friendly offer of the stranger being gladly accepted by the party, who, one and all, declared they would be exceedingly thankful for any sort of quarters, the whole set forward under the conduct of their guide. Whether directed by choice or by chance, the latter, at starting, took Ellen's pony by the bridle, and was subsequently most assiduous in guiding the animal by the easiest and safest tracks. Nor did he once quit his hold for a moment during the whole of their march. This circumstance naturally placed Ellen and the stranger frequently by themselves; since, as eaders, they generally kept several yards in advance of their party—a circumstance which was not lost on the latter, who aimed at, and succeeded in making, perhaps, a somewhat more than favourable impression on his fair companion, by his polished manners and lively and intelligent conversation.

We will not say that the effect of these qualifications was not heightened by the personal elegance and manly beauty of their possessor; neither will we say that the romantic and susceptible girl was not predisposed, by the same cause, to discover, in all he said, fully more, perhaps, than would have been apparent to a more indifferent listener. Be this as it may, it is certain that, on this night and on this particular occasion, Ellen Martin felt, and felt for the first time, the to her new, strange, and delightful emotions of incipient love. What avails it to say that prudence should have forbidden this? The object of Ellen's sudden regard was a stranger, a total stranger. His name even was not known, nor his rank in society otherwise than by conjecture; which, though favourable, was, of course, vague and uncertain. The circumstances, too, in which he had been met with, were such as to preclude all possibility of connecting any one single elucidatory fact with his history. But when, in a young and inexperienced mind, did love submit to be controlled by reason? and when did the young heart exhibit the faculty of resisting impressions at will? Certainly not in the case of Ellen Martin, who was, at this moment, placed precisely in those circumstances most eminently calculated for exciting, in susceptible bosoms, the one great and engrossing passion of the female heart.

After about an hour's travelling, the party, with their guide, arrived at a solitary house situated in a little glen or strath overhung with precipitous rocks, and through which wound a narrow and irregular road that led in one direction over the hills that stretched far to the west, and

in the other to the lower grounds, from which the neighbouring mountains rose. The house itself, although apparently a very old one, was of the better order of houses in the Highlands at that period. It was two stories in height, roofed with grey slate, and exhibited at wide intervals small dingy windows filled with the thick, wavy, and obscure glass of the time. Altogether, it had the appearance of being the residence of a person of the rank of a small proprietor or tacksman. As the party approached the house, all was quiet within and around it. Not a light was seen, or movement heard. The hour was late and the inmates had been long to rest. When within a short distance of the house, the conductor of the party, addressing the latter, said—

"You will be so good as wait here, my friends, for a few minutes, until I prepare Mr Chisholm for your reception. He is an old and intimate friend of mine, and will be glad, on my account, to shew you every kindness in his power."

Having thus expressed himself, he left them, and, in a few moments after, returned to conduct them to the house, where they were received with great kindness by the landlord, a middle-aged man of respectable appearance and mild manners. On entering, the party were ushered into a large room, where a servant girl was busily employed in kindling a fire of peats. These quickly bursting into flame, the travellers, in a very few minutes, found themselves enjoying the agreeable warmth of a blazing fire. But the kindness of their host was not limited to external comforts. With true Highland hospitality, the board was loaded with refreshments of various kinds; huge piles of oaten cake, with proportionable quantities of eggs, cheese, butter, cold salmon, and mutton ham; and, though last not least, a little round, black, dumpy bottle of genuine mountain dew.

Delighted with their reception, pleased with each other, and urged into that exuberance of spirits which good cheer and comfortable quarters are so well qualified to inspire, especially when they present themselves so unexpectedly and opportunely as in the case of which we are speaking—the party soon began to get exceedingly merry; so much so, that they finally determined, as morning was now fast approaching, not to retire to bed at all, but to spend the few hours they intended remaining where they were. In this resolution they were the more readily confirmed, by a certain proceeding of their late guide, in happy accordance with the mirthful feelings of the moment. This was his taking down from the wall a fiddle, which hung invitingly over the fire-place, and striking up some of the liveliest airs of his native land. The effect was irresistible; for he played with singular grace and skill, striking out the notes with a distinctness, precision, and rapidity, that gave the fullest effect possible to the merry strains which he poured on the ears of the captivated listeners. The party were electrified. The gentlemen leapt to their feet, the table was removed bodily, with all its furniture, to one side of the apartment, and, in an instant after, the ladies also were on the floor. In another, the whole were wheeling through the mazes of a Highland reel. Nor did the merriment cease till the rising sun alarmed the revellers, by suddenly pouring his effulgence into the apartment. On this hint, the music and mirth both were instantly hushed; and the party, throwing aside the levity of manner of the preceding hours, began, with business looks, to prepare for their departure. Their host pressed them to stay breakfast; but, being anxious at once to get forward and to enjoy the morning ride, this invitation they declined. Their ponies, which had been in the meantime carefully attended to by their hospitable landlord, were brought to the door, and in a few minutes the whole party were mounted, and were about to start, when the circumstance of their late guide's again taking the reins of Ellen's pony in his hand, and apparently preparing to repeat the service of the previous night, for a moment

arrested their march; all protesting that they would on no account permit him to put himself, by accompanying them, to the slightest further inconvenience on their account. With what sincerity Ellen joined in this protest—for she did join in it—we do not know; but it is certain that her opposition to his accompanying them did not appear at all so cordial as that of her companions.

The objections of the party, however, were politely, but peremptorily overruled by their guide, who reconciled them to his determination of escorting them, by remarking that, without his assistance, they would never find their way amongst the hills, and that, moreover, he was going at any rate several miles in the very direction in which their route lay. These assurances, particularly the latter, left no room for farther debate, and the party proceeded on their way; the guide and Ellen, as before, leading the march. But, as it was now daylight when any little chance distance that might occur between the parties was of less consequence and less attended to, they were always much farther in advance than on the preceding night; indeed, frequently so far as to be for a considerable time out of sight of their companions. In this proceeding, Ellen had, of course, no share whatever. It was solely the result of a certain little course of management on the part of her escort, who availed himself of every opportunity of widening the distance between his fair companion and the other members of the party. It was on one of these occasions, when the lovers—for we may now without hesitation call them such—had turned the shoulder of a hill which Ellen's guide knew, calculating from the distance which the party were behind, would conceal them from the view of the latter for a considerable time—it was on this occasion, we say, that he suddenly seized Ellen by the hand, and, ere she was aware, hurried it to his lips; but, as quickly resigning it—

“Ellen,” he said, looking up to her with an expression of tenderness and contrition that instantly disarmed the gentle girl of the resentment into which the freedom he had just taken had for an instant betrayed her—“forgive me—will you forgive me? That cursed impetuosity of temper—the failing of my race, Ellen—has hurried me into an impropriety. I have offended you. I see it—but do forgive me.”

“On condition that you do not attempt to repeat it,” said Ellen, smiling, though there was evidently much agitation in her manner.

“I promise,” replied the offender. A pause ensued, during which neither spoke. At length, Ellen's guide, who seemed to have been struggling with some powerful and oppressive emotion, suddenly, but gently arrested the progress of the pony on which she rode, and said, in a voice altered in tone by intensity of feeling—

“Ellen, I wish to God we had never met!”

“Why should you entertain such a wish?” inquired Ellen, timidly, and blushing as she spoke.

“Because then I had not been broken-hearted,” said her companion, with a sigh. “I had still retained my peace of mind—my step should still have been light on the heather, and my thoughts free and careless as the wind upon the mountains.”

“You speak in enigmas,” replied Ellen, blushing deeper than before. “I do not understand you,” she added, but with a manner that contradicted the assertion.

“Then I will be more plain with you, Ellen,” replied her companion:—“I love you, I love you, fair girl, to distraction.”

This declaration was too unequivocal to be evaded; yet poor Ellen, though her heart responded to the sentiment, knew not what reply to make in words. Her agitation was extreme—so great as almost to impede her respiration.

“We are strangers, sir,” she at length said—“total strangers; and such language as this should, if spoken at all,

be spoken only when it is warranted by a longer and more intimate acquaintance. Ours is literally but of yesterday; although you have certainly crowded into that short space as much kindness as it would possibly admit of; and I and my friends are grateful for it—sincerely grateful. Still we are but strangers.”

“Strangers, Ellen!” replied her lover, getting more and more energetic and impassioned as he spoke—“no, we are not strangers—at least you are none to me. From the first instant I saw you, you were no longer a stranger. From that instant, you had a home in this heart, and on that instant you stood before me confessed one of the loveliest and gentlest of your sex. What more would an age of acquaintance have discovered? What more is there need to learn.”

At this instant, a shout from one of the gentlemen of the party interrupted the enthusiastic speaker, and put an end, for the time, to the conversation of the lovers. The call however, that had been made on their attention by their friend, being merely intended to intimate that they had them in view, Ellen's guide soon found another opportunity of renewing his suit. We do not, however, think it necessary that we should renew a description of it—tedious as the conversation of all lovers are to third parties. We shall only say, then, that, long ere Ellen and her handsome and accomplished guide parted, the affections of the simple, confiding girl were unalterably fixed. Whether they were happily disposed of, the sequel will shew.

After having crossed “muirs and mountains mony o’,” Ellen and her lover arrived on the ridge of a hill, which commanded a distinct, though distant view of the town of Banff, when the latter suddenly stopped, and—“Ellen,” he said, “here we must part. I can proceed no farther with you; but it will go hard with me if I do not see you very soon again.”

“Nay,” said Ellen, “since you have come so far with us, you must go yet a little farther. You must go on to the town, and afford us an opportunity of acknowledging the obligations under which we lie to you. My father will be most happy to see you.”

The expression of a sudden pang crossed the fine countenance of the stranger. His lip quivered, and his brow contracted into momentary gloom; but, with what was apparently a strong effort, he subdued the feeling, whatever it was, which had caused this indication of mental pain, and replied, after a brief pause—

“No, Ellen, it cannot be. I must not—I—I dare not enter Banff with the light of day.”

“Dare not!” said Ellen, in surprise. “Why dare you not? What or whom have you to fear?”

“Fear?” replied her companion, somewhat distractedly—“I fear the face of no single man, weapon to weapon; but, were I to enter Banff, I might not have such fair play. There are some persons there with whom I am at feud; and my life would be in danger from them. This was what I meant, when I said that I dared not enter Banff. Yet it is not that I would not dare either,” he added, raising himself proudly to his full height, and laying an emphasis expressive of defiance on the word; “but it would be foolhardy—absurdly imprudent. I cannot—I may not go further with you, Ellen.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by the approach of the rest of the party, who at this moment rode up to Ellen and her companion. These, on being told that the latter was now about to leave them, repeated, and in nearly similar words, the invitation which Ellen had already given him; but it was not in similar words to those he had used on that occasion, he answered them. To them he merely said that pressing business called him in another direction, and repeated that, where they now were, they must part. He however, promised, though with the manner of one

who has no fixed intention of fulfilling that promise, that the first time he went to Banff, if circumstances would permit, he would certainly pay them a visit.

"Since you will not go with us, then," said one of the gentlemen, "at least inform us to whom we are indebted for the extraordinary kindness which you have shewn us. Favour us with your name if you please."

"My name, sir!" said their late guide, smiling. "Why, that is a matter of no consequence. You will know me when and wherever you may see me again, I dare say, and that is enough." Saying this, he shook hands with each of the party—with Ellen this ceremony was accompanied by a look and pressure of peculiar intelligence—and bounded away with the same light and elastic step with which he had approached them on the preceding night, and was soon lost to view.

It would not be easy for us to say precisely what were the opinions entertained by Ellen's party, of the warm-hearted but mysterious person who had just left them. These were various, vague, and indefinite. That he was a person far above the ordinary classes of the country, was evident from his dress, his manner, and his accomplishments. The first was that of a gentleman, the latter were those of a man of education and talent. These obvious proofs of his rank there was no gainsaying; nor would they admit of any difference of opinion. But it had not escaped those who were now engaged in discussing the subject of the stranger's probable history, that, during the whole time they had been together, neither his name, profession, nor place of residence, had ever transpired. They had not been at any time alluded to, even in the slightest or most distant manner. It was only now, however, that the oddness of this circumstance seemed to strike the members of the party with the full force of its peculiar character. Each now asked the other in surprise, if they had not ascertained any of the particulars just mentioned from the stranger; and all declared that they had not. More extraordinary still, as it now appeared on reflection, his name had never once been mentioned by the person in whose house they had passed the previous evening. In this investigation, the circumstance of the stranger's having declined to give his name at parting, was not of course forgotten. The affair altogether was a singular one—a conclusion at which all arrived; but it was one also, which their discussion could throw no light on; and this being sensibly felt by all, the subject was gradually dropped.

To what extent the doubts and indefinite suspicions with which the mystery associated with their late guide had inspired the various members of the party, were shared by Ellen, we do not know; but we suspect that, in her bosom, they were mingled with feelings that had the effect of giving them a totally different character from what they assumed in the minds of her companions. In her case, these doubts or suspicions were wholly unassociated with any idea unfavourable to the character of him whose conduct excited them. She saw, indeed, that there was a degree of concealment on the part of that person; but she never, for a moment, dreamt that it proceeded from any reasons involving anything disgraceful. In the fondness of her love, she conceived it impossible that a being of so kind and generous a heart, of so prepossessing appearance and manners, and of so noble a form, could ever have been guilty of anything which should subject him to the debasing feelings of either shame or fear. She felt there was mystery, but she was satisfied it was not the mystery of crime; and, under this conviction, she continued to cherish the love which had thus so suddenly sprung up in her own guiltless and guileless bosom. The party, in the meantime, were rapidly approaching the place of their respective residences, and a very short time after saw that consummation attained.

If we now allow somewhere about the space of a month to elapse, and if we then look, in the dusk of a certain even-

ing, into a certain retired green lane or avenue, at the distance of somewhat less than a quarter of a mile from the residence of Ellen Martin's father, in the vicinity of the town of Banff, and which, being on the property of the latter, was secluded from all intrusion, we shall then and there find two persons walking together, in earnest and secret conversation. If we approach them nearer, we shall discover that they are lovers; for there is the gentle accent and the endearing concourse of fond hearts. They are Ellen Martin and her mysterious lover; and this is the fifth or sixth night on which they have so met since they parted at the time and in the manner before described.

"But why this mystery, James?"—for this much of his name had she obtained—Ellen might have been overheard, by an eavesdropper, saying to her lover on this occasion, as she leant on his arm, and gazed fondly in his face. "Why all this mystery?—why is it that you come and go only under the shade of night?—and why is it that you shun the face of man with such sedulous anxiety?—and why, above all, are you always so carefully armed? Oh, do confide in me, James, and tell me all. Relieve my mind. Tell me the reason of these things. You wrong me by this mystery; for it implies a suspicion of my sincerity—it implies that you think me unworthy of being trusted."

"Doubt your sincerity, Ellen!—think you unworthy of being trusted!" said the person whom she addressed, emphatically but tenderly. "Sooner would I doubt the return of yonder moon—sooner would I doubt that the sea would flow again after it has ebbd—than doubt your sincerity, love; but I cannot, I will not, I dare not give you the information you ask; for, with that information I would lose you for ever; and what, think you, would induce me to inflict such misery as that on myself? Be content, Ellen, in the meantime at least, with an assurance of my love—yes, unworthy as I am," he exclaimed, with increased fervour, "of a love as strong, as sincere, as pure as ever existed in a human bosom."

"I never doubted it, James—I never doubted it," said Ellen, bursting into tears, and leaning her head fondly on the shoulder of her lover; "and I will not press you further for that information which you seem so reluctant to give. I will, in the meantime, as you say, confide in your fidelity, and leave the rest to some future and happier hour."

"Happier hour, Ellen!" said her companion, with a bitter smile. "Alas! there is no happier hour than this in store for me. But it is happiness enough." And he chanted in a low, but mellifluous voice—

"There's glory for the brave, Ellen,
And honour for the true;
There's woman's love for both, Ellen—
Such love's I find in you.
"There's wealth into the Indies, Ellen,
There's riches in the sea—
But I would not give for these, Ellen,
One little hour with thee."

"A poor bargain, James," said Ellen, smiling and blushing at the same time. "You are a fair poet, but a very indifferent chapman, if that be a specimen of your bargain-making."

"It may be so, Ellen," replied her companion, also smiling; "yet I am willing to abide by the terms."

At this instant, a rustling noise was heard amongst the bushes close by where the lovers stood. The mysterious stranger started, hurriedly freed his sword hilt from the folds of his plaid, muttering, as he did so—

"Ha! have they dogged me? They shall rue it. By heaven, they shall rue it!—I shall not be taken cheaply!" And he half unsheathed his weapon, as he stood listening for a repetition of the sounds which had alarmed him; but they were not repeated; and the uneasiness of the lovers gradually subsiding, they resumed their conversation. At

the expiry of another "little hour," the lovers parted, and parted to meet no more—a misfortune which they but little anticipated; for a solemn promise was given by both to meet in the same place and at the same hour on that day se'ennight.

As it may lead to the gratification of some curiosity on the part of the reader regarding the mysterious lover of Ellen Martin, we shall follow his footsteps after leaving her in the manner just described. We may as well, first, however, make the reader aware that these visits of the person alluded to were by no means of very easy accomplishment. They cost him a journey, over mountain and moor, of upwards of a score of miles; but he was light of foot, nimble as one of the deer of his native mountains, and such a feat to him was not one which he deemed much to boast of. If we follow him, then, as proposed, on the night in question, we shall find him performing such a journey as we have alluded to, and finally arriving at a deep but narrow glen, or ravine, far up amongst the hills, and accessible only at one extremity, and even here of such difficult entrance that none but those intimately acquainted with it could effect it. This knowledge, however, the person whom we are now accompanying possessed. He ascended the natural barrier by which the ravine was closed with a sure but rapid step; when, having gained its utmost height, and ere he descended on the opposite side, he extricated a small bone or ivory whistle from the folds of his plaid, and drew from it a short, low, but piercing sound. Had he omitted this precaution, his life would have been the forfeit; for, concealed amongst the copsewood, at a little height inside of the glen lay a sentinel with loaded rifle, whose duty it was instantly to fire on any one entering without such intimation previously given of his being a friend. Having sounded the whistle, the person of whom we were speaking, without waiting for any response—for none was required—plunged down into the ravine below, bounding from crag to crag like a hunted chamois, and trusting for security on each airy footing to a handful of the lichen which grew from the precipitous wall of rock down which he was descending.

Having gained the bottom of the ravine, he pushed on towards its centre, when he again ascended, and now made for a clump of copsewood, which grew at a considerable height on the side of the glen. This gained, he dashed the branches aside, and, in the next instant, plunged into a cavern whose dark mouth they concealed. Accompanying him thus far also, we shall find the companion of our travels reaching a large and lofty chamber, in the centre of which burnt a huge fire of peats, built on a circular piece of rude masonry, and around which are seated eight or ten men. Here and there may be seen resting against the walls of the chamber the large steel basket-hilts of broadswords, and, in different corners, accumulations of plaids and bonnets. Another object also will strike us. This is several immense sides of beef, and several carcasses of mutton, hung up in various parts of the cave, all ready for the operations of the cook. Neither the character of the place, nor of those by whom it is occupied, can be mistaken. It is a den of Highland katherans.

The reception by the latter of the person whom we have just intruded upon them, was very markedly cold and distant; and it was rendered more so by the contrast between his manner to them on his entrance, and theirs to him. The former was cheerful and conciliatory, the latter sullen and repulsive.

"The eagle's eyry is not now in the cleft of the rock," said one. "It is in the barn-yard."

"Ay, the deer has left the mountain, and gone to herd with the swine," said another.

"I understand you, friends," replied the intruder. "You do not approve of these wanderings of mine. You think

I am taming down into some such animal as a Lowland shopkeeper or Wanshaw weaver—and perhaps it is so, in some measure; but I cannot help it. I acknowledge that the whole energies of my nature—all the feelings of my heart—have undergone a total change, both in character and direction. I certainly am not the man I was. I feel it, and therefore feel that I am no longer fit to be your leader.

"Macpherson," said one of the men, "you guess part of our feelings towards you just now, but not all. There is in these feelings at least as much of fear for your safety in these excursions of yours, as displeasure with your neglect of us and our common interest. You know that we love you, Macpherson, for yours is the generous and open hand—yours is the hand that was never raised in anger against the offending or the helpless, and never closed in hard-heartedness against the needy."

"No, thank God," replied the person thus eulogized—"much evil as I have done, the shedding of blood is no part of it. Personal injury I have never yet done to any man, nor to any man shall I ever do it, unless in self-defence. Neither can the poor ever say they asked from me in vain. But, my friends," went on the speaker, "this is but a melancholy strain. Come, let us have something of a livelier spirit, and let me see if I cannot introduce it." Having said this, he went to a corner of the cavern, where lay a large wooden chest. This he opened and drew out a violin. It was a favourite instrument, and well could the person who now held it, employ it. Seating himself on an elevated bench of stone, which had been erected by the inmates of the cavern against the wall, he commenced playing some cheerful airs, and with such effect that he very soon dissipated the angry feelings of his auditors, and brought expressions of benevolence and good will into these rugged countenances, that had been but a little before lowering with gloom and discontent. The skilful minstrel, perceiving the effect of his music—an effect, indeed, which former experience had taught him to anticipate with perfect certainty—now changed his strain, and launched into a series of the most thrilling and pathetic airs, all of which he played with exquisite taste and expression.

Had any one at this moment watched the fierce and weather-beaten faces of those who were listening in breathless silence to the delightful tones of his violin, they might have marked in the eye of more than one, an unbidden tear, and on all an expression of deep sympathy with the spirit of the music. At length the musician ceased; but it was some time before the spell which he had thrown over his auditors was broken. For some seconds, there was not a word or a movement amongst them—all continuing to remain in the fixed and pensive attitude in which the melancholy strains had bound them.

Having brought his performances to a close, the musician, half in earnest and half playfully, hugged his violin, as if exulting in its power, to his bosom, embraced it as if it had been a living thing, and hurried with it to the chest from which he had originally taken it, and there again carefully deposited it. His reception on now returning to the party whom he had just been entertaining with his music, was very different from what it had been on his first entrance. Their better and kindlier feelings had been touched by his strains—a sympathetic chord in each bosom had been struck; and the effects were sufficiently visible in the altered manner of those who were thus affected towards him whose skill had produced the change. The transition of the feelings of admiration was natural and easy from the music to the musician; and looks and words of kindness and forgiveness now greeted the mountain Orpheus, who took his place among the rest, to share in some refreshment which had been, in the meantime, in preparation.

Leaving the katherans employed in discussing this re-

past, which consisted simply of roasted kid, we will proceed to divulge the whole of that secret regarding the chief personage of our tale, which we have hitherto so carefully kept. This personage, then, was no other than the celebrated freebooter, Macpherson. This man, as is well known, was the illegitimate son of a gentlemen of family and property in Inverness-shire, by a woman of the gipsy race. He was brought up at his father's house; but, on the death of the latter, was claimed and carried away by his mother; when, joining the wandering tribe to which she belonged, he acquired their habits, and finally became the character which we have represented him—namely, a leader of a band of katherans. He was a person of singular talents and accomplishments, of uncommonly handsome form and feature, of great strength, yet, though of a lawless profession, of kind and compassionate dispositions. Such was the hero of our tale—such the lover of Ellen Martin, although little did that poor girl yet know how unhappily her affections had been placed.

Having nothing whatever to do with the proceedings of Macpherson and his band during the interval between the parting of the former with Ellen and the period of the proposed meeting—these having but little interest in themselves, and being in no way connected with our story—we will at once pass this space of time, and bring up our narrative to the day on which Macpherson was again to set out for the trysting place. His motive and feelings in this matter he confided only to one friend out of all his comrades. This man, whose name was Eneas Chisholm was the son of the person at whose house the reader will recollect the party, of which Ellen was one, was so hospitably entertained on the night they had lost their way on the mountains. It was he, also, who had eulogized the generosity and clemency of Macpherson, as we a short while since recorded. He was a young man, and, both in manner and disposition, much like Macpherson himself. He possessed all his warmth and sincerity of heart, katheran as he was; but was greatly his inferior in talents and in personal appearance. Taking an opportunity when none else were near, Macpherson informed this person that he intended on that evening repeating his visit to Banff.

"It is madness, Macpherson," said Eneas—"downright madness. You surely do not calculate on the risk you run, in these desperate adventures of yours, of falling into the hands of the sheriff. You are well known, and it is next to a miracle that you escape."

"No danger, Eneas, none at all, man," replied Macpherson, in the confidence of his own prowess, and not a little, perhaps, in that of his agility. "I have done more daring things in my day on far less inducement; and," he added, proudly, "give me fair play, Eneas, my sword in my hand, and not any six men in Banff will take James Macpherson alive."

"But they may take him dead, though, Macpherson," said Eneas, "and you can hardly call that escaping, I think."

"Cheer up, cheer up my bonny, bonny May!

Oh, why that look of sorrow?

He's wise that enjoys the passing hour—

He's a fool that thinks of the morrow!"

exclaimed Macpherson, slapping his friend jocosely on the shoulder. "Why, man, Ellen Martin I must see, and Ellen Martin I will see, let the risk be what it may—ay, although there were a halter dangling on every tree between this and Banff, and every noose was gaping for me."

"Then, at least, allow three or four of us to accompany you, Macpherson, in case of accidents," said Eneas.

"No, no; not one, Eneas," replied Macpherson—"no life shall be periled in this cause but my own. If I am unfortunate, I shall be so alone. I alone must pay the

penalty of my own rashness and imprudence. I would not put a dog's life in jeopardy, let alone yours, in such a matter as this. But I'll tell you what," he added: "I'll exact a promise from you, Eneas."

"What is that?" said the latter.

"It is," replied Macpherson, "that, if I am taken, and taken alive, you will do what you can to have my violin conveyed to me to whatever place of confinement I may be carried."

"It is an odd fancy," said Chisholm, smiling; "but I promise you it shall be done since you desire it."

"I do," replied Macpherson. And here the conversation between him and his friend terminated; and, shortly after, the former, having carefully armed himself, set out alone on his perilous journey. The sun, when he left the glen, had already sank far down into the west, while his slanting rays were yet beating with full fervour and intensity on those sides of the rocks and hills that looked towards the setting luminary, their opposite fronts were involved in a rapidly deepening shade, and the valleys were beginning to be darkened with a premature twilight. But Macpherson had calculated his time and distance accurately. Three hours of such walking as his would bring him to the goal he aimed at, and then the gloaming would have been on the verge of darkness. And it was so, in each and all of these particulars. He arrived at the trysting-place precisely at the time and in the circumstances he desired. On reaching the appointed spot, Ellen was not yet there. Neither did he expect she should; but he felt assured that she would very soon appear. Under this conviction, he seated himself on a small green bank, closely surrounded with thick shrubbery or copse-wood, and, thus situated, awaited her arrival.

Leaving Macpherson thus disposed of for a time, we shall advert to a circumstance of which he was but little aware, although it was one which deeply, fatally concerned him. He had been seen and recognised. The persons—for there were two—who made the discovery, dogged the ill-starred freebooter to the place of his appointment with Ellen, where, seeing him stop, one of them hurried away to communicate the important intelligence to the sheriff, while the other remained to keep watch on the motions of the unsuspecting outlaw. On the former's being introduced to the presence of the dreaded officer just named.

"What would you give, Mr Sheriff," he said, "to know where Macpherson the freebooter is at this moment?"

"Why, not much, man," replied the Sheriff, "unless he were so situated as to render it probable that I could take him. I have known where he was myself a hundred times, but dared not touch him."

"But I mean as you say—I mean in a situation where he may be easily taken," rejoined the man. "I know where he is at this instant, and all alone, too—not one with him."

"You do!" exclaimed the Sheriff, with great animation; for the capture of Macpherson had been long one of the most anxious wishes of his heart. "Where, where is he, man?" he added, impatiently.

"Let me have half-a-dozen well-armed men with me," replied his informant "and for fifty merks I will make him your prisoner."

"Done!" said the Sheriff, exultingly—"fifty merks shall be yours, of well and truly told money, the instant you put Macpherson into my power; and, instead of half-a-dozen men, you shall have a whole dozen, and I myself will accompany you. Is he far distant?"

"Not exceeding a mile."

"So much the better—so much the better," said the Sheriff, rubbing his hands with glee. "If we take him,

a worthier deed has not been done in Scotland this many a day. It were worth a thousand merks a-year to the shire of Banff alone."

In less than fifteen minutes after this conversation had passed, a sudden bustle might have been seen about the old town-house of Banff. This was occasioned by a number of men, amongst whom was the Sheriff, hurriedly ransacking the town armoury for such warlike weapons as it contained, each choosing and arming himself with the best he could find. This choice, however, was neither very extensive nor varied; the stock, chiefly consisting of some rusty Lochaber axes, and a few equally rusty halberds and broadswords, kept for the array of the civic guard on great occasions—sometimes of love and sometimes of war.

The party having all now armed themselves, were drawn up in front of the town-house, when the Sheriff, placing himself at their head, gave the word to march; and the whole moved off under the guidance of the person whose intelligence had been the cause of their turning out. After they had proceeded about a mile, the latter called a halt of the party, and taking the Sheriff two or three paces in advance, pointed out to him the spot in which he had left Macpherson, and where, as they were informed by the man who had remained to watch his motions, and who at this moment came up to them, he still was.

A consultation was now held as to the best mode of proceeding to the capture of the dreaded outlaw—a feat by no means considered either a safe or an easy one by those by whom it was now contemplated; for all were aware of his prowess, and of the desperate courage for which he was distinguished.

Macpherson, in the meantime, wholly unconscious of his danger, was still quietly seated on the small green bank where we left him. Ellen had not yet appeared, and he was listlessly employed in drawing figures on the ground with the point of his scabbard, when he was suddenly startled by a similar noise amongst the bushes with that which had alarmed him on a former occasion. He sprang to his feet, drew a pistol from his belt with his left hand, and his sword from its sheath with his right, and, thus prepared, awaited the result of the motion, which he now saw as well as heard. The rustling increased, the foliage rapidly opened in a line approaching him, and, in an instant afterwards, his friend, Eneas Chisholm, stood before the astonished freebooter.

"Eneas!" he exclaimed, under breath, but in a tone of great surprise.

"Hush, hush!" said Eneas, seizing his friend by the arm—"not a word. In five minutes, you will be surrounded. You have been recognised and dogged. There are a dozen of the Sheriff's men within five hundred yards of you, planning your capture. Let us be off—off instantly, Macpherson," he continued, urging the latter onwards. "If we can gain the town, we may escape. I know a place of concealment there."

"Nay, but Ellen—Ellen, Eneas!" said Macpherson, hanging backwards, and resisting the efforts of his friend to drag him away.

"Fool, fool, man!" said Eneas, passionately, and still urging him forcibly along. "An instant's delay, and both you and I are in the hands of our deadliest enemies."

"We can fight, Eneas."

"Ten times a fool!" exclaimed the latter, with increasing anger. "Fight a dozen men, all as well armed as ourselves!—and observe, besides," he added, "your obstinacy will sacrifice me as well as yourself."

"Ay, there you have me," replied Macpherson. "That shall not be—God forbid!" And he hurried along with his friend.

At this instant, a shrill whistle was heard from the popsewood.

"They are on us," exclaimed Eneas, as, with one bound, he cleared a five feet wall that intervened between them and the highway that led to the town of Banff.

He was instantly followed by Macpherson, who, having thrown his sword over before him, cleared the impediment with yet greater ease. Having gained the road, the two outlaws hurried towards the town. No pursuer had yet appeared; and it seemed as if they had already effected their escape. In this fancied security, the fugitives slackened their pace, that they might not incur the risk which would attach to a suspicious haste. During all this time, not a word more than we have recorded had passed between them. They had pursued their way in silence, and were thus just entering the town, when Macpherson suddenly felt himself seized by both arms from behind. Their route had been marked, and they were intercepted.

Macpherson, exerting his great personal strength, with one powerful effort freed himself from the grasp of his assailants—for there were two—flinging both, at the same instant, to the ground, by a sudden and violent extension of his arms. Having thus set himself at liberty, he hastily drew his sword, and stood upon the defensive. His friend, Eneas, also drew, when they found themselves opposed to at least a dozen—the two who had sprung on Macpherson, being now joined by their comrades. Undaunted by the number of their enemies, and aware of what would be their fate if taken, the intrepid outlaws determined on a desperate resistance. Macpherson, with his other accomplishments, was an admirable swordsman, and he felt that he had not much to fear from the unskilled rabble to whom he was opposed, so long as he could keep them from closing with him—and in this conviction he coolly awaited their onset. It was some minutes before this took place; for their opponents, awed by their fierce and determined bearing, hung back. At length, however, they seemed to be gathering courage by degrees, as they came gradually moving on, till they were within two or three paces of Macpherson and his comrade, when two of the boldest of them made a sudden rush on the former, with the view of rendering his weapon useless, by closing on him; but the attempt was fatal to the assailants. With a fierce shout of defiance and determination, Macpherson struck down the foremost, with a blow that split his head to the chin, while his comrade despatched the other by running him through the body. Both the outlaws, on striking, leapt back a pace or two, so as to maintain the necessary distance between them and their enemies, who were still pressing on. But, panic-stricken by this, the first results of the encounter, they now paused, and entered into a hasty consultation, which ended in the resolution of their attacking simultaneously, and in a body, and thus, by mere force, bearing down their opponents. Acting on this resolution, the whole rushed forward, with loud shouts, when a desperate conflict took place. For a long time, both Macpherson and his friend not only warded off the numerous cuts and thrusts that were made at them, but brought down several of their assailants, one after the other; and the issue of the contest seemed very doubtful, great as the odds were against them.

In the meantime, however, Macpherson, though fighting desperately, was compelled to yield ground, to avoid being closed upon and surrounded; for the pressure of the crowd was now greatly increased by an accession of town's people, who, having heard the din of the conflict, hastened to the scene to witness it, and to assist in the capture of the freebooters. Finding himself in the danger of being assailed from behind, he rushed to one side of the street, and, placing his back to the wall of a house, flourished his sword, and defied the whole host of enemies who pressed upon him; and out of that whole host there was not one who would come within reach of the courageous outlaw thus desperately at bay.

For fully a quarter of an hour, he kept a circle of several yards clear around him, and having in this interval gained breath, it seemed extremely doubtful that he should be captured at all; for it was possible that, by a desperate effort, he might cut his way through his assailants and effect his escape. In truth, seeing the timidity of his enemies from the circumstance of none of them daring to approach him, some such proceeding he now actually contemplated. But a counter measure was at this moment in operation, which prevented its execution, and placed the outlaw in the hands of his enemies.

A person from the crowd entered the house, against the wall of which Macpherson was standing, by a back door, and proceeded to an apartment one of whose windows was immediately above and within a few feet of him. Opening this window cautiously, this person having previously provided himself with a large heavy Scotch blanket, threw it, as broadly extended as possible, over the outlaw, thus blinding him and disabling him from using his weapon. The crowd beneath—marking the proceeding, which Macpherson, from his position, could not—watching the moment when the blanket descended, rushed in upon him, threw him to the ground, disarmed, and secured him; his friend Eneas, who had been early separated from him in the *melée*, and who had not attracted, during any period of the conflict, so much of the attention of their common enemies, having contrived, previous to this, to effect his escape.

On being captured, he was bound, conveyed to prison, and a strong guard placed over him. On the following day, an elderly woman, dressed in the antique garb of her country—the Highlands—was seen walking up and down in front of the jail in which Macpherson was confined, and ever and anon casting a look of anxious inquiry towards the building. A nearer view of this person discovered that her eyes were red with weeping; but all her tears had been already shed, and the first excess of grief had passed away; for both her look and manner, though still expressive of deep sorrow, were grave, staid, and composed—nay, even stern. Occasionally, however, she might be seen, as she stood gazing on the prison-house of the unfortunate outlaw, rocking to and fro with that slow and silent motion so expressive of the intensity of mental suffering. Occasionally, too, a low murmuring of heart-rending anguish might be heard issuing from her thin parched lips. But she held communion with no one, and seemed heedless of the passers by. At length she crossed the street, and having knocked at the massive and well-studded outer-door of the prison, inquired if she might see the principal jailor. He was brought to her. On his appearing—

“The deer of the mountain,” said his strange visiter, “is in the toils of the hunter. Oh! black and dismal day that that proud and gallant spirit that was wont to roam so wild and so free should be cooped up within the four stone walls of a loathsome dungeon—that those swift and manly limbs should be fettered with iron—and that the sword should be denied to that strong arm which was once so ready to defend the defenceless!”

“What mean ye, honest woman?” said the jailor, who was a good deal puzzled to discover a meaning in this address.

“What mean I?” exclaimed his visiter, sternly. “Do not I mean that the brave is the captive of the coward—that the strong has fallen before the weak—that the daring and fearless has been circumvented by the timid and the cunning? Do not I mean this?—and is it not true? Is not James Macpherson a prisoner within these walls, and are not you his keeper?”

“It is so,” replied the astonished functionary.

“I know it,” said his visiter. “Then will you convey this to him?” she said, bringing out a violin from beneath her plaid.

The jailor looked in amazement, first at the woman, and then at the instrument.

“What!” he at length said, “take a fiddle to a man who’s going to be hanged! That is ridiculous.”

“It is his wish,” said the former, briefly. “The wish of a dying man. Will you convey it to him?”

“Oh, if it be his wish, he shall surely have it,” said the jailor; “but it is the oddest wish I ever heard.”

“You will convey it to him, then?” replied the stranger, with the same sententious brevity as before.

“I will,” was the rejoinder.

The woman curtsied and withdrew in the same cold, stern, and formal manner she had maintained throughout the interview. On her departure, the jailor proceeded to Macpherson’s dungeon with the extraordinary commission with which he had been charged. The latter, on seeing the well-known instrument, snatched it eagerly and delightedly from its bearer, exclaiming—“Welcome, welcome! thou dear companion of better days! thou solacer of many a heavy care! thou delight of many a happy hour! Faithful Eneas!” And, with the wild, strange, and romantic recklessness of his nature, he immediately began to play in the sweetest tones imaginable—tones which seemed to have acquired additional pathos from the circumstances of the performer—some of the melancholy airs of his native land; and from that hour till the hour of the minstrel’s doom, these strains were almost constantly heard pouring through the small grated window of his dungeon. But they were soon to cease for ever. Macpherson was, in a few days afterwards, brought to trial and condemned to be hanged at the cross of Banff.

On the day on which he suffered the last penalty of the law, he requested the jailor to send some one with his violin to him to the place of execution. The request was complied with. The instrument was put into his hands as he stood at the foot of the gallows, when he played over the melancholy air known by the name of “Macpherson’s Lament.” It had been composed by himself while in prison. On concluding the pathetic strain, he grasped his violin by the neck, dashed it to pieces against the gallows, and flung the fragments into the grave prepared for himself at the foot of the gibbet. In a few minutes after, that grave was occupied by all that remained of Macpherson the Freebooter.

We have now, we conceive, to gratify the reader’s curiosity on one point only—and this is accomplished by adverting to Ellen Martin. The unhappy girl ultimately ascertained, though not till long after his execution, who her mysterious lover was; but neither the history of her attachment to him, nor her intimacy with him, was ever known to any one besides his friend Eneas; for to none other had he ever named her. Nor, during his confinement, or at any period after his capture, had he ever made the slightest allusion to her. This, indeed, from motives of delicacy towards her, he had studiously and carefully avoided.

On Ellen, the effect of a grief—for the discovery of her lover’s real character had not been able to efface the impressions which his handsome person and gentle manners had made upon her young heart—the effect, we say, of a grief which she durst not avow, was that of inspiring a settled melancholy, and determining her on a life of celibacy. In the grave of Macpherson was buried the object of her first love, and she never knew another.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

DUNCAN SCHULEBRED'S VISION OF JUDGMENT.

WE see so many examples of the extraordinary discovery of evil designs attempted to be concealed by all the craft of cunning man, that it is impossible to doubt, even with the many cases before us of the apparent success of criminal schemes, that it is a part of God's providence to lay open the secret actings—nay, often the secret thoughts—of those who contravene his laws. The modes by which this purpose is fulfilled, are as various as the designs themselves; and though some of them may not appear to be consistent with the seriousness and gravity of an avenging and punishing retribution, we are not, on that account, to doubt their authority or undervalue their effect. In elucidation of this statement, we have a case to record of an extraordinary and ludicrous discovery of roguery, which, as well on account of its truth as the moral which, amidst all its grotesqueness of humour, it inculcates, we cannot withhold from the public. An incorrect and unauthenticated version of the story may probably have found its way to the public ear; but this, in place of forming any reason against our publishing it, renders our exposition of the real truth itself the more necessary and the more acceptable.

In that manufacturing town which has lately risen to considerable eminence, called Dunfermline, there lived, some time ago, a person of the name of Duncan Schulebred, by trade a weaver—or, as he chose rather to be called, a manufacturer, a term which the inhabitants love to apply to every man who can boast the property of a loom and its restless appendage. We believe the people of that town to be as honest and industrious as those of any mercantile place in the kingdom; but they have too much good sense to think of claiming for their entire community, a total exemption from the inroads of dishonesty and deceit—vices which prevail in every corner of this land. Unhappily, the individual we have mentioned, had allowed himself to become a slave to those evil propensities which are concerned in the collecting together of ill-gotten wealth, and never left any feasible plan unattempted, which might present any chance of gratifying the ruling passion by which he was mastered. He was a little man, with a florid complexion, and the small twinkling eye which almost invariably accompanies cunning. His walk was that of a man accustomed to carry under his left arm a web of huck-aback, and in his right a staff ellwand; and his style of speech, conciliating and persuasive, was derived from the habit of wheedling customers into exorbitant terms. He was a great coward, as well physical as moral—the consequence, doubtless, of being a dishonest trader. Too contemptible to be hated, perhaps his greatest enemy was his own conscience, of which he stood in such terrible awe, that his wife was often obliged, during the dark hours of the reign of that mysterious power, to rise and light a lamp for the purpose of exorcising the spirit which, seated on his heart, tormented him with the gnawing inflictions of its pain.

This power of his conscience had hitherto, however, been unable to prevent him from using his short ellwand, and acting dishonestly. The moment he got into daylight and

active life, he, like all other cowards, despised the enemy from which he thought himself at the time safe. In a strong-minded man, conscience produces resolution; in a weak, it gives rise merely to fears and vacillation. It is not often that greedy, cunning men are given to intoxication; yet we are obliged to add this vice to the character of Duncan Schulebred, who (exhibiting, however, the one vice in the other) never failed to get intoxicated, if he could effect his purpose at the cost of his neighbour—a result he often achieved, by leaving the tavern (after he had got enough) on pretence of returning in a few minutes to the company of his unsuspecting victim.

Like many others of the peripatetic manufacturers of Dunfermline, this individual sold through the country the cloth he fabricated at home; so that, for one half (the winter) of the year, he *sat*, and for the other (the summer) he *travelled*. By the same means and ratio, he was one half of the year sober and the other drunk; for he could fleece no pot companion in his native town, where he was known; while, throughout the country, he could walk deliberately out of every ale-house on the road, and leave his travelling companions to pay for his drink, in exchange for that society which they had enjoyed.

In the course of his journey, this individual had occasion, during the latter end of a summer, to be in Edinburgh, where he usually sold a considerable part of his stock. During the day, he had been in treaty with a person of the name of Andrew Gavin, a pettifogging writer, residing near the Luckenbooths, for the sale of a web of linen, which the latter (like a trout with a bait on a clear day) approached and examined, and looked at and felt, and yet still seemed irresolute in his determination to be caught. The weaver's twinkling eye saw and admired the gudgeon; the linen (to a *safe* extent) was unrolled, its texture felt with a "miller's thumb," its qualities extolled, and its price wondered at by him who fixed it and smiled inwardly at his profit and the trick by which he realized it. The unwary purchaser, though a man of the law, was at last caught—the bargain was struck, the money paid; and all that remained was that the seller (in addition to cheating him in the manner to be explained) should, after his usual practice, get drunk at the expense of his customer.

The two parties accordingly repaired to a tavern known by the name of The Barleycorn, where they sat down deliberately, to indulge in a deep potation—the one (the customer) luxuriating in the idea of getting "glorious" at the cost of the seller, who had generously, and in consideration of his custom, agreed to pay all; while the latter secretly chuckled at the idea of leaving the writer (who was known to the tavern keeper) to *liquidate* the debt incurred by his *liquidation*. Both the companions were thus happy, though from very different causes; and their happiness only impelled them to further gratifications, with the view of augmenting it—such is the danger that attends an elevation of the spirits; and such is the insatiable thirst for happiness in man, that, after the physical thirst is slaked, the moral appetite must be ended by a surfeit.

In the midst of the orgies of these two worthies, the customer, who had a humour of his own, took many "rises" out of his companion, who submitted to his fun, in con-

sideration of his determination to leave him to pay "the score," which would put "the laugh on the other side."

"There's a great difference between our townsmen o' Edinburgh, and yours o' Dumfarlan," said the writer.

"Very great," replied Duncan; "but I winna say on what side the advantage lies. We're at least a' honest men on oor side o' the water."

"Ye're mair than honest," replied Andrew, touched by the insinuation—"ye're *prudent*. Your maxim, I understand, is, 'Flee laigh and ye'll no fa' far'—a sayin weel exemplified in the canny, quiet way your weavers mak what they ca' their fortunes, and then look aboot them for what they denominate, in their conceit, an estate. Every-thing's dune in your toun by *batter*. Ye batter yer claith, ye batter yersels, (wi' oor national dish, three times a-day,) and the "*batteries*," *pendente lite*, that come to our court prove how ye batter the lieges."

"Ye canna say I hae either battered or buttered you, at least," said Duncan.

"The washin will try that," replied Andrew; "but dinna put me oot o' the thread o' my discourse. By twenty years shuttlin and shufflin,* ye contrive to scrape thegither what in your phrase maks a fortune—say maybe twa thousand—and, curious aneugh, there are scattered round your toun sae mony cocklairdships, (mair than ye'll find again in a' Scotland,) and yer ambition and the state o' the country in this way sae weel agree, that every independent weaver (manufacturer, I mean) is just as sure to become a laird as he is sure, in the course o' time, to dee."

"The lawin will mak amends for this," muttered Duncan to himself. "And when did you ever hear o' an Edinburgh *merchant* buyin an estate? A' their property consists o' a front door, and a brass plate, which their servants keep scrubbin at every day, till it shines like that they hae sae little o' within—gowd. They may sometimes buy an estate and borrow the price; but, if they do, the 'W.S.' whase plate is on the next door, will sune hae a hornin on the bond."

"It will at least be an *estate*," responded the Edinburgher, "an' no a *mailin*, fit only to yield room aneugh for its master's grave. Then ye're no content wi' the denomination o' sic a man o' sic a place—as, for instance, when ye buy *your* estate, ye winna be content wi' Duncan Schulebred o' Wabha', or Mr Schulebred o' Wabha', or even Duncan Schuiebred, Esquire, o' Wabha', but, like the Lords, wha carry the name o' their estates, you would be 'Wabha' itself, simply and withoot appendage. Ha! ha! 'Wabha'! yet, it is just as guid as Foxha', or Shuttleha', or Shuttlecrief, or Craigdookie, or Cockairnie, or Buchlyvie, or Pitbauchlie, or ony ither o' the cocklairdships that stand on the Fife horizon, waitin for the stoppin o' the Dumfarlan shuttle, the sign o' a made fortune, and o' the determination o' the manufacturer to change his name for the proud designation o' his *estate*. Ha! ha! is it no excellent, Duncan, to think o' twa weavers that used to sit side by side, drivin their shuttles on the Pittencrief road, meetin, ten years after, and usin the salutation—'Hoo do you do, Pitbauchlie?'—'Very well, I thank ye, Craigdookie! We never think o' ca'in a man Nidry, or Dreghorn, or Trinity, or the like. The modesty o' the folk on this side o' the water forbids a' thae absurd fashions."

"An affront, or an insult," muttered Duncan, "is easily washed doun, if ye use the insolent varlet's ain liquor in the operation. Now, sir," said he, out, "since ye hae abused oor guid toun, will ye tell me this—Whether is the drivin o' your lawyers' pens or oor weavers' shuttles, maist for the guid o' this auncient land? The anc maks a ravelled wab

to catch unwary clients, and the ither maks guid linen for the backs o' the honest men and bonny lasses o' Scotland, as weel as for the fat sides o' the beef-fed yeomen and braw queans o' England. Edinburgh *robs* Scotland, Dumfarlan *robes* it—a pun I canna resist, notwithstanding o' my dislike o' that low sort o' humour. We are the *linen*, you (that is, you writers) are the little blood-sucking varlets that live on't, and suck the bluid o' the wearers."

"There's but little bluid comes out o' *batter*," replied the angry writer, who noticed triumph in Duncan's twinkling eye. "We writers would starve, if we had nae ither bluid to suck but that o' the white-faced liver-lipped propellers o' the shuttle. A fat law plea, we say, never comes owre the water. Ye're owre far north, and far beyond the reach o' the lang arm o' justice. If ye ever fill her scales ava, it is wi' the rump or fag-end o' a ten years' multiplepoinidin, whar there are sae mony claimants, *riders*, and competitors, that ye fa' oot and fecht amang yersels, and then come to us to mend yer broken heads; but the bluid is a' oot o' them before they are trusted in oor *chancery*."

This wordy war only made the writer and the weaver more thirsty; every argument was followed by a draught, which slaked at once both thirst and revenge—each thinking that he was drinking at the expense of the other. The more they drank the warmer they grew in defence of their respective towns, till they came to that condition of toppers, when, by the mere operation of their potations, they became unable even to *dispute*. All confirmed drunkards have in their drunkenness some ruling principle, which, however far gone they may be, regulates their wayward movements. The writer's habit was to sit when he thought he could not stand—a principle which many sober men might do well to adopt. The weaver's, again, was to *walk* when he wished not to stand the reckoning—a prudent maxim which never left him, even when all other ideas had been washed from his brain. It was now about one o'clock in the morning, and they had drank so much that neither of them could tell (for neither had any interest in a matter which did not seem to concern his pocket) how much would require to be paid; it was enough for Duncan, that he knew that something (and not little) *must* be paid—and now was the time for escape.

"We were speakin o' the law," said he, winking with cunning and hiccuping with drink—"I fancy they never refuse siller at the *bar* here, (hiccup,) ony mair than they do in Dumfarlan. There is only this difference atween the twa—that the folk wha resort to *your* bar pay when they enter, we (hiccup) pay as we gae oot. Rest yersel there till I cast up the bill, and if I hae ony *plea* wi' the landlord, ye can come and plead it."

"That's kind, Duncan," said the writer—"it will be the only plea I ever had frae a Dumfarlan weaver. If I gain it, we maun hae a—another gill."

"Twa o' them," replied Duncan, trying to rise. "We maun, at ony rate, hae (hiccup) the stirrup-cup, ye ken"—laughing and twinkling his reeling eyes.

"Ou ay," replied the writer; "but I—I fancy I maun pay for *that*, seem ye are the traveller, and—and are besides to pay a' this tremendous bill, that lies, dootless, on the bar like a—lawyer's memorial."

"Ye're an example o' an honest, ay, a generous writer," said Duncan—"wha could hae thocht ye wad hae offered to pay the stirrup-cup? I'll send yer wife a piece o' dornock for that, as weel as a screed o' huckaback and harn, to keep up a gratefu' recollection o' me after I'm awa. I'll no be a minute at the bar; for it's a place (hiccup) I dinna like."

"Hae," cried the writer, ripping his pocket—"tak wi' ye and pay at the same time the price o' the stirrup-gill—ae settlin will ser' a'."

"Ye're richt, Mr Gavin," replied Duncan, receiving the money; "but that's a sma sum (hiccup) in comparison o'

* We are not answerable for the statements of the interlocutors in our tales; but we may here state that the tradesmen of Dunfermline are as honest and industrious a set of individuals as are to be found in the kingdom. But, after all, we think Edinburgh comes off second best.—Ed.

what I hae to pay ; but it's pleasant to discharge the obligations o' honour."

The wily huckaback manufacturer was, as he spoke, approaching the corner where his staff ellwand lay—an article he stood more in need of at that time (short measure as it was) than ever, on any other occasion of *taking off*, he had encountered. The recourse to it for the purpose of merely going to the bar, could not fail to raise suspicions in the mind of the writer ; but then, again, was he to lose a *short* measure, which, getting into the hands of a writer, might be sent—in revenge of the trick he had already played him, in selling a web of linen damaged in the heart, and that he was about to play—to the public authorities, who would hunt him to Dunfermline, and ruin him by the exposure? He besides required it for his support ; for he could scarcely stand. In this dilemma, he had again recourse to his wits.

"I'm no sure aboot thae folk ben the hoose," he said, holding up the ellwand. "They may try to cheat me, seein I'm a simple cratur, besides being twa *sheets* i' the wind—(hiccup)—dinna ye think that I should tak my stick i' my hand, as a kind o' lawburrows and protection? No to say I would think o' usin't, but simply to keep the publican in awe, and within just and lawfu measure.

"Tak it wi' ye, tak it wi' ye, man," said the writer. "Say it's a—a Dumfarlan baton, the sign o' yer constableness, and ye'll find the bill twa inch shorter."

"Ingenious cratur!" ejaculated Duncan, with a hiccup, and a drunken leer of his grey eyes. "A law plea never can fail, surely, in the hands o' a man wi' sic a power o' suggestion as ye hae. But ye forget that Dumfarlan batons are no sae lang as Dumfarlan ellwands—(hiccup)—the power o' authority there's short, but the reach o' oor honesty's prodigious. That's a guid sign: oor batons are short because we're quiet and civil, and our ellwands are lang because we're honest. Wad ye believe it, noo, that that ellwand o' mine, in spite o' the wear and tear o' walkin wi't, is a hail inch different frae yer Edinburgh yards?"

This fresh attack against the honesty of Edinburgh roused the blood of the writer, and another wordy battle was like to commence ; but Duncan saw at once, that, if he put off more time, the people of the house might, from the lateness of the hour, come and insist upon the reckoning on the spot—a measure which all his wits would not enable him to counteract. The open mouth of the writer was therefore shut, by a few conciliatory words from the aggressor:—

"I didna say, Mr Gavin," added Duncan, "whether the inch belonged to Dumfarlan or Edinburgh. Ye may tak the benefit o' a *presumption* in yer ain favour, till I come back. Mony ane o' yer tribe stick langer by a presumption than that, and, till it grows into a fact, it canna injure an honest man like me. Guid"—(he was going to add "night," and leered grotesquely at his own imprudence)—"guid—(hiccup)—guid luck to my speedy settlement o' the lawin!"

He now staggered to the door, which he opened so gently that the writer might, if he had not been drunk, have suspected him of foul play. His foot was scarcely heard on the passage ; but a sound, as if from the foot of the stairs, indicated that some one had missed a step. No notice of it was taken by the writer, who sat with his eye fixed on the candle, concocting, like a good poet, one of those works of imagination called a preliminary or dilatory defence. Formerly, these works of fancy were very rife among lawyers, and, before the judicature act, they used to reach a second or even a third edition, under the form of "amended defences," "re-amended defences," and so forth. They are not now so much in favour, though the fancy which produces them is still as vivid as ever. How long Andrew Gavin sat dreaming over his intended work we cannot say;

but never was poet more rudely, importunately, and unpleasantly roused from his dream, by the hand of a messenger at arms, than was the unsuspecting victim of Duncan's treachery as he was called upon by the landlord to pay the bill. He had no money upon him—the small sum he had given to the weaver to pay the last or stirrup gill, and which the varlet had carried away with him, having been all his remaining cash, after paying the price of the linen. He requested the importunate landlord to wait a little, to ascertain if Duncan would return ; but the man wished to get to bed, and Andrew's credit being somewhat worn, like that of many others of his overdone profession, the publican insisted upon him leaving his watch, as a pledge for the payment of the money. The writer's pride (a quality never wanting in the race, especially when they're in liquor) was roused ; he refused to *impignorate*, as he called it, his watch, and swore that he would rather remain in durance all night, than succumb to the unreasonable demand of the publican. The man was as resolute as he, and, without saying a word, turned the key in the lock, and left the writer to dream over his legal works of fancy in the dark.

Meanwhile, the wily Duncan Schulebred, having recovered from a fall on the last step of the stair—produced by that impatience of slight obstacles which seizes an ambidexter at the successful termination of a well concerted and better executed scheme—proceeded down the Canon-gate. He was out and out intoxicated ; but the wish to cheat, so long as it was in operation, kept his mind from that confusion which, his purpose being effected, immediately seized him. He was not certain of the direction in which he was moving, but he was satisfied with the idea that he was going *from* the sign of The Barleycorn, and any destination was better than that. A confused intention of sleeping all night in the town of Leith, with the view of catching the Fife boat in the morning, at last wrought its way through the cloud which overhung his mind ; and having found himself as far as the Water-gate, he continued his progress until he came to what is called the Easter Road leading directly down to the Links. The air produced its usual effect upon a man who was filled to the throat with liquor ; and every step he took he found himself getting more and more unsteady, and more and more unfit for prosecuting his journey. He was, however, still conscious of his condition, and felt great alarm lest some one should assail him, and take from him his money. By and by, even his consciousness left him, and he rolled from side to side, engrossing, for his own particular ambulation, the whole breadth of the road. Several times he came down, and, being unable to rise without many repeated attempts, lay on the ground for considerable periods. The necessity of motion of some kind is the last idea parted with by an intoxicated traveller ; and Duncan still retained it, even after he had lost his ellwand, his chief means of support. On he struggled, falling, and lying, and rising, and to it again, till he got at length as far as the green called the Links of Leith—an open space always as disadvantageous to the drunk man as it is pleasant to the seaman. A road with two sides may be got over—the dikes keep him on ; but an extended area of grass with radiating openings all round, is a kind of place which a man in Duncan Schulebred's position, without the rudder or compass of consciousness, must always view with great uneasiness. Accordingly, he beat about in this large circle for several hours, and at last entered a street which leads down to that called Salamander Street, from the circumstance of its being inhabited by those fire-eaters, the glass-blowers of the Leith glassworks, into which latter street he also got, reduced to the last extremity of feeble inebriation.

Having reached the south side of Salamander Street, he lept close by the walls and houses, stepping along, unwilling to trust himself again to open space. He knew nothing

of whither he was progressing, he had lost all recollection of what he had been engaged in, was unconscious of what he was doing, and utterly ignorant of all localities. As he moved past the houses, he came to an opening, and, staggering to a side, he entered the small avenue into which it led, and proceeded along it, still holding by the wall, until he got into one of the large houses or cones of the glass works. There he lay down along-side of the furnace, and behind a large trough used by the artificers in their work—a situation which, yielding him considerable heat, was so secluded that he might, for a time, escape even the observation of the artificers in the morning, when they resumed their work. He fell in an instant into a sleep, disturbed by those frightful dreams that haunt the pillow of the dissolute and the wicked.

In the morning, the workmen came to commence the labours of the day. They began their work with a spirit called forth by high wages, produced by an increased demand at that time for glass. Throughout the large cone they lighted their lamps, and proceeded to the various preliminary processes, towards the manufacture of their brittle commodity. The large furnace was lighted, and blown up to a red heat, for the purpose of preparing what is called the *fritt*, being the substance out of which the glass is subsequently formed. Large flames soon shot forth from the fire, which was, from time to time, supplied with great quantities of fuel, and, at every blow of the bellows, the vivid light flashed through the space around, which was comparatively dark, from the disproportion between the large area, and the few lights yet lighted. While some of the men were occupied about the furnace, the light striking on their sallow faces, and leaving all again in an instant nearly dark, a number of the others were busy in the distance, performing the operation of blowing the glass, dipping their long tubes in the prepared substance, and inflating the ball, till, red and glowing like a fire globe, it is expanded to the size requisite for the purpose for which it is intended. In this operation, the workmen are obliged to be active in their movements, running backwards and forwards between the furnace and the reservoirs, with the hot, red, glaring glass globes at the end of the tubes, and crossing and recrossing each other, in the dark obscure, so as to present the appearance of demons engaged in some mysterious operations of their avenging spirits. In all this, the shining globes are the only appearances clearly discernible in continuation; the figures and faces of the men being only at intervals shewn by the glare thrown upon them by the glowing furnace, as it responds to the loud murmuring bellow of the inflating and fire producing blast.

It may well be doubted whether any of the descriptions of the infernal regions, as given by the three great epic describers of that place of torment, would give a better idea of Hades, than a view, during the dark hours of a gloomy morning, of a great glass-work in active operation. Many of the appearances are strikingly coincident with our ideas of the place appointed for the wicked. The glowing furnace; the roaring bellows; the crossing and recrossing of the men with the fiery globes in their hands, which they continue plunging into reservoirs, as if striking victims; the darkness, relieved only by the rising flame, which, falling again, leaves the former gloom; the wide expanse around the rising walls of red brick, tapering up beyond the reach of the eye, as if they sought the clouds; and all the endless apparatus lying around—cannot fail to suggest the most striking resemblance to the peculiarities of the hell of the poets. The impression produced on the mind of a person visiting the works, is extraordinary and lasting; and it is not too much to say that a nervous individual, introduced secretly, at a proper time, and without any knowledge of the place, would be apt to be thrown into a state of gloom and even fear, which he would not soon forget.

During all this time, and while this extraordinary work was going on around him, Duncan Schulebred had been as much unnoticed by the workmen as they had been by him. He began at last to shew some signs of returning consciousness, rolling his body backwards and forwards, as if under the effect of a night-mare of the body, or of that more terrible night-mare of the conscience by which he was often at home so relentlessly ridden. And so he was. Some frightful dreams had filled his mind with terrors; and, having produced a kind of half waking state, were followed, as they usually were, by the gnawing of that power which during night produced to him such torments. A dim recollection came on him of all the wickedness he had committed—the number of innocent individuals he had cheated by his short measure and his damaged linen; the shirking of publicans, the duping of travellers, his drunkenness, his lies, and false pretences—all his thoughts being accompanied by the terrors of an evil conscience, which whispered punishment by fire and brimstone, and filled his half-sleeping fancy with vivid images of the place of punishment. It is not unlikely that this half-sleeping, half-waking, dreamy cogitation, was aided insensibly by the partial operation of external sense, conveying some dim intelligence of what was going on around him. But this condition did not last long: he awoke to the full conviction of being in the very place of the damned. He heard first the roaring of the bellows; then he saw the red brick walls rising to heaven; then his eyes turned on the terrific furnace, vomiting forth its living fire, while the bearers of the burning globes, hurrying to and fro past him and around him, and plunging their fiery weapons into the receptacles, (doubtless of the condemned wicked,) claimed, on every side, his rapt and terrified gaze. Fear prevented him from moving; his cogitations took the form of a soliloquy, and he communed with himself on his awful condition.

"Mercy on my puir soul!" he exclaimed, but so as not to let the devils hear him—"am I *here* at last? When I was in the body, hoo often did I think and dream o' the bottomless pit?—can it be that I'm now in't? Alas! it's ower true! What hae I, a wicked cratur, noo to expect frae thae fiends for a' the sins dune i' the body? But when did I dee? I dinna recollect the circumstance o' my death—dootless apoplexy—ay, ay, I was aye fear't for't. Yet did I no fa' doon the stair o' The Barleycorn? I did—that's it—I had been killed by the fa'. Death's a sma' affair to this. What a fiery furnace for a puir sinner! See hoo the devils rin wi' their burning brands, forkin them into thae pits, whar lie craturs in the same condition wi' mysel! But hoo do they no come to me? Ah! the furnace is for me. I see Satan himsel at the bellows, and it's no for ilka sinner *he* wad condescend to work. It's for me wha cheated the folk by my short ellwand at the rate o' thirty-six inches o' claith a-week for fifteen years—wha drank, and lee'd, and deceived, and committed sins reder than scarlet and mair numerous than the mots i' the sun—ay, and wha dee'd i' the very act o' cheatin Andrew Gavin, by sellin him a wab o' damaged linen, and leavin him to pay my bill at The Barleycorn. Alas! am I at last in this awful place!"

This soliloquy was accompanied by deep groans, wrung from him by the conviction that he was truly in the place appointed for the wicked. The sounds caught the ear of one of the workmen called David Leechman, who, looking over, saw, lying behind a reservoir, the unhappy Duncan. Listening, he heard the speech, and understood in an instant the import of it: that some one had lain down there in a state of inebriety, and having fallen asleep, had wakened to a conviction that he was in Pandemonium. He instantly communicated the intelligence to some of his neighbours; and the son of a proprietor of the works, who was present, having heard it, gave his countenance to the proposition of some

of the men—viz., that they should humour the notion of the condemned weaver, and draw out of him some amusement. The proprietor's son—a spirited and clever young man—was accordingly deputed to act the part of Prince Beelzebub, on whom the others were to attend as ministerial and subordinate devils; each holding in his hand a glass-blowing tube, with a glowing ball (kept alive from time to time) at the end of it. The Prince held up his hand and cried—

“Where is the weaver that cheated the public at the rate of thirty-six inches of cloth per week, and died, *flagrante delicto*, in the very act of cheating our *special friend* Andrew Gavin the writer, (for every writer is our special friend, and must be protected by us, so long as he writes lying defences and long memorials,) by selling him damaged linen, and leaving him to pay his tavern bill? Where is the scarlet rogue, that we may burn out the red of his sins by the red fire of this glowing furnace?”

A loud yell, uttered by the simulated devils, was the reply to this speech, and went to the very heart of the trembling victim. The Prince, followed by his demons, approached him; he was lying shaking, trembling, and groaning, upon his back, and looked at the approaching legion, with their flaming brands, as they approached him, with an expression of countenance transcending anything that could be produced by mere earthly agony, or described by a mere goose quill of the upper world.

“What is thy name, sinner?” asked the Prince.

“Mercy on me!” ejaculated Duncan, “I’m in for’t noo! An’ please your excellent Majesty,” replied he, in a voice scarcely audible, from the effects of terror, “Duncan Schulebred, wha, when in the upper world, was by trade a puir weaver in the town o’ Dumfarlan. I did yer Honour some service i’ my sma’ way, and hope ye winna be sae ill to me as ye threaten. Oh, keep thae fierce fiends, wi’ their burnin torches, frae me, and I’ll confess to ye a’ my crimes. Be mercifu to a puir sinner!”

“What service didst thou ever do to me?” said Satan.

“I made ye some freens,” replied Duncan, still groaning. “I did a’ that was i’ my pooer to get the cratur’s i’ the upper world to drink wi’ me till they were sae drunk that ye might hae run awa wi’ them as easily as ye did wi’ Doctor Faustus or the exciseman. Oh, think o’ that, and save me frae that awfu furnace!”

“Confess, sinner,” said the Devil, “that thou didst that for the purpose of getting more easily quit of the tavern bills. Thou didst also cheat the lieges by a false measure.”

“Lord, he kens everything,” muttered Duncan—“I confess I did cheat the lieges; but I assure yer Majesty, upon my honour, that I never cheated ony o’ yer Majesty’s freens; for I aye dealt wi’ honest folk. That’s surely a reason for some mercy.”

“Recollect thyself, varlet,” said Satan—“didst thou never cheat a writer?”

“Hoo correct he is!” muttered Duncan, with a groan. “Ou ay—true, true—a’ writers are yer Majesty’s freens. I forgot. I did cheat Andrew Gavin, by sellin him a wab o’ rotten linen, and leavin him to pay the lawin at The Barleycorn—a name your Majesty, dootless, weel kens.”

“I think I should,” replied Satan, “seeing *that is my grain*, wherewith I work greater wonders than ever came out of the mustard seed. This place is fed with barleycorns—we bait our hooks with barleycorns—we spread barleycorns under our men-nets—the very man who sang the praises of the grain, under the personification of ‘John Barleycorn,’ and of its juice, under the soubriquet of ‘barley-bree,’ took our bait; but a redeeming angel touched him on the fore part of the stomach, and made him throw it, and Heaven now boasts that glorious prize.”

“Miserable as I am, I’m very glad o’t,” said Duncan,

whose fears began to decline. “I wadna like to see oor darling poet in sic a place as this.”

“Impudent varlet!” said the Devil. “In with him into the furnace! Yet, stay. How much money did you cheat our friend Andrew Gavin of?”

“I needna try to conceal it,” said Duncan to himself. “He kens it as weel as I do. Here it is” (speaking out) “and some mair—ye may hae it a’, if ye’ll no consign me to that red-hot fiery furnace. Fearfu, fearfu place!”

“Count it out,” said Satan.

Duncan complied with trembling hands, and Beelzebub took up the money.

“That is a most precious commodity,” said he. “They say, above, that our dominions are paved with good intentions—they should rather say, that it is paved with gold, a metal with which the ancient infidels said, heaven was constructed. Never was there a greater error. ‘The root of all evil’ cannot surely be found in the very birth-place of good.”

“I ken, at least,” said Duncan, “that it was gowd that brought me here. Cursed trash! It is the gowd and no the puir sinners deceived by’t that should be put into the furnace. Weel, weel, has it been ca’ed the root o’ a’ evil. Oh, cursed dross! what am I to suffer for ye?”

“Doth the creature malign our staple commodity,” said Satan, “and say it should be melted? Away with him to the furnace!—melt *him!*”

Duncan screamed for mercy, while the workmen laid hold of him, and proceeded to carry him to the mouth of the furnace, which was blown up into a fearful red heat. He continued to roar with tremendous vociferation, making all the cone ring, and casting about his legs and arms, like one distracted. Those of the workmen who were not engaged in carrying him, brought within an inch of his face, their burning globes of glass, and made indications as if they would apply them to his body; while the bearers, turning his head to the fiery volcano, brought it within a foot of the burning coal, and the whole ceremony was accompanied by a chorus of loud yells, set up by the operators, and made to echo and reverberate throughout the area of the cone. Independently, altogether, of the conviction of being in the hands of the Devil and his legions, the situation of Duncan, with his head within a foot of a furnace, and surrounded by wild-looking howling beings, intent apparently on his destruction, would have terrified the stoutest heart; but he *truly* believed himself on the very eve of being punished for his crimes, by being thrust head-foremost into the burning furnace, from which no power could save him. And who could contemplate that position without horror? His agony was inexpressible, except by screams; and it was cruelly prolonged by affected manœuvres, such as blowing the bellows, and stirring and restirring the coals, to make them burn more fiercely, for the more adequate reception of the greatest of human sinners that had ever been consigned to the pit.

Having held him for some time in this position, Satan, pretending to recollect himself, cried out—

“Achitophel, get the red-hot pincers. We were oblivious. He hath not confessed all his crimes. We will pinch him for a few hours before we consign him to the fire, which is not, at any rate, red enough for so great a sinner. Lay him down close to the furnace, and bring a pair of pincers for each leg and arm.”

The victim was laid before the furnace, screaming at the top of his voice, and his eyes rolling about like fiery balls. The pincers were brought and put into the furnace, and the bellows again sent forth their dreadful sound; the howling was increased; and all the men, as they uttered their yells, danced round him, waving their red globes, and every now and then bringing them within a few inches of his face. The pincher were getting hot apace, by the fierce blowing

of the bellows; and one of the legion held the head of the victim so as to force him to contemplate the instruments of his torture. The confusion grew worse confounded—the noise of the blowing forge, the howling of the legion, the groaning and screaming of Duncan, the loud word of command of the Prince, all blending together to rend and distract the ear; while the rapid motions of the dancers, and the rising and falling of the bellows, made the eyes of the distracted being reel like those of a maniac.

This punishment was continued, until it appeared that the terrified Duncan was about to faint. His cries ceased, and fear seemed to lose its effect over him. It was time to stop, as even amusement may be carried to the verge of death—and the unfortunate Duncan was more like death than life. The young man who acted the Prince accordingly gave the sign for his legion to stop, and in an instant the bellows ceased to blow, and the men to dance, and all was as still as death. Apprehensive of having killed the victim by pure fright, the Prince, assisted by some of the legion, lifted him to a distance from the furnace, and having held up his head so as to get him to sit, some whisky (bought with a part of his own money) was brought from a neighbouring ale-house. As he sat pale and trembling, and looking wistfully about him, the chief actor filled up a glass of the spirits, and offered it to him. He seemed irresolute and timid—looking first at the whisky, then at the men, and much at a loss what to think of his position. His grotesque appearance forced the chief actor to smile: the effect was instantaneous—Duncan caught the favourable indication, and took the glass into his hands.

“I didna think,” said he, “that there was only *this* kind o’ liquor here. I expected naething but melted brimstone, said to be the staple drink o’ your dominions. But is it really whisky? It’s surely impossible—if the circumstance got wind aboon, that there was whisky in *these parts*, there wad be nae keepin folk oot. Hoo dinna ye spread the intelligence? surely ye’re no sae keen for recruits as ye were when ye danced awa wi’ the exciseman.”

“It is already known on earth that whisky was first brewed in Pandemonium,” said the actor. “The nectar belongs to heaven, the wine to earth, and the whisky to the infernal regions. A thousand poets have sung about the drink of the gods, and a little old fellow (a Greek) who lies in one of these troughs, getting his wine-heated pate cooled with brimstone every five minutes, danced and sang the praises of wine till I got hold of him at the age of eighty. The only poet who has let out the secret of whisky being first brewed in our regions was a person of the name of M’Neil, who sang—

Of a’ the ills puir Caledonia
E’er yet pree’d, or e’er will taste,
Brewed in Hell’s black Pandemonia,
Whisky’s ill has scath’d her maist.

I tried to get hold of the fellow, for his impudence in maligning our favourite liquor; but he wrote some sweet poems, and the gods took him under their wing.”

“Ye were muckle indebted, I think,” replied Duncan, “to Hector, for tellin the folk that whisky was brewed here. It will save your Majesty a warld o’ trouble; for customers, o’ their ain accord, will come in millions, ‘linkin to the black pit,’ if they’re sure o’ the *spark*.”

“They *are* sure of the *spark*,” replied the Prince. “But we give it here only as a medicine whereby we recover our patients that they may be the more able to feel our torments. The moment thou drinkest, the pinchers will be applied.”

“Then I beg leave to decline the liquor,” said Duncan. “I see nae use for fire baith outside and in; besides, I hae renounced the practice o’ drinkin at another person’s expense—a tred I followed owre lang in the upper regions, to my sad cost this day.”

“Thou hast paid for this with the money thou gavest me,” said the actor.

“That’s mair than I ever did upon earth,” said Duncan, with a leer which he could not restrain.

It will have been seen that the truth had for some time been dawning upon the mind of the condemned culprit. He looked round and round him, and every look added fresh proof of the delusion under which he laboured. Looking into the face of Satan, he even was bold enough to smile, accompanying the act with one of his inimitable leers. It was impossible to resist his look of sly humour; and the whole company broke out into a fit of laughter, which made all the cone ring again. Seizing the whisky he looked round upon all the parties, and, bowing, said—

“Gentlemen, I’m obleeged to ye for the trouble ye hae taen on my account. I see noo hoo the land lies; but though I ken the hail extent o’ this awfu delusion, dinna think that the part ye hae played is a piece o’ mere fun and humour, to form afterwards the foundation o’ a guid story. Ye hae dune mair this mornin for the regeneration o’ a puir sinner, than was effected by a’ the sermons I ever heard frae the pu’pits o’ Scotland. I hae confessed my crimes to ye, and I canna expect that this cone is to confine for evermy evilreputation. Itmaun gae abroad, and condemn me, and ruin me; but” (lowering his voice seriously) “I will defy it to prevent me frae followin the course I hae this day determined to pursuc. Frae this hour henceforth, to that moment when it may please Heaven to tak me frae this warld, I shall be an upright, a sober, and a religious man. The folk I hae injured, cheated, and robbed, I will try to benefit to the utmost extent o’ my puir ability. And every day o’ my life will be dedicated to the service o’ the Almighty, and the guid o’ his cratur. My first step will be to gang to Edinburgh, and pay back to Andrew Gavin the price o’ the damaged linen he purchased frae me, and to settle the tavern bill at The Barleycorn, to assist me whereunto ye will dootless gie me back my siller. This resolution I confirm thus.” And he flung the whisky into the furnace, which blazed up, a kind of holocaust, as a thanksgiving for the regeneration of a sinner.

Duncan’s money was paid back to him honestly, and the actors were well pleased that they had, out of their amusement, wrought so extraordinary a miracle. The regenerate man departed from the glassworks, and proceeded, according to his intention, direct to Edinburgh. He called first at Andrew Gavin’s house.

“Is Mr Gavin within?” said he, to Mrs Gavin.

“My husband,” said the disconsolate wife, “hasna been at hame a’ nicht. The last time I saw him was when he departed wi’ you. What hae ye dune wi’ him? I fear some sad mischief has befa’en him; for unless he’s at a prufe or after a *fugy*, he never stays oot o’ his ain hoose at nicht. But what kind o’ linen was that ye sauld him?”

“It was a piece o’ *rotten* linen I sauld him,” replied Duncan, sternly.

Mrs Gavin looked at him in amazement.

“Ay, and,” he continued, “your husband is dootless locked up in The Barleycorn, because he couldna—puir man!—pay the lawin that I should hae paid and ran awa and left him to pay.”

Mrs Gavin’s amazement was increased.

“Ay, and,” continued he, “I hae cheated thousands besides you and yer husband—a greater sinner than I hae been, ye wadna find between the Mull o’ Galloway and John o’ Groats. If I had got my due, I wad hae been hanged, or at least sent to Botany Bay.”

“Are you mad, or do you glory in your wickedness?” said Mrs Gavin.

“Nane o’ the twa,” said Duncan. “I am as wise as ye are; and, in place o’ gloryin in my wickedness, I am as repentant as a deein martyr.”

"Repentance is naething without warks," replied she.

"Warks!" ejaculated Duncan. "Bring, bring me the rotten linen."

The astonished woman went and brought the article.

"There's the siller," said Duncan, "I got frae yer husband for that wab. I'll sell it noo for what it is—a piece o' vile deception. Need ye a commodity o' that description?"

"I think I could find use for't," said Mrs Gavin. "It has ae guid end, but ye'll come to an ill ane when ye"—"row it down," she would have said, but Duncan caught her:—

"When ye cheat yer neighbour," added he. "Ye're quite right, madam; a rotten-hearted wab is just like a rotten-hearted man—they baith come to an ill end. Oh, hoo gratefu I am to thae glass-blowers, wha hae blawn awa my crimes, and converted and reformed me!"

"He is surely mad after a'," muttered Mrs Gavin, to herself—"wha ever heard o' glass-blowers convertin sinners? I hae aye understood that glass-blowers are free livers, and need repentance themselves as muckle as ither folk. Hoo could they convert ye?"

"There are strange mysteries i' the world," said Duncan; "but we will better let that subject alane. We only, after a', see 'as through a glass darkly.' Stick to the linen—what is it worth?"

Mrs Gavin stated a price, Duncan accepted her offer, and the damaged linen was sold.

"Noo," said Duncan, "I'll send ye yer husband."

"I will be obleeged to ye," said Mrs Gavin; "and if ye can get the glass-blowers to gie him a blast, yer kindness wad be increased far beyond my puir pooers o' recompense."

"Ah, madam," said Duncan, "writers are owre weel accustomed to *blasts o' the horn*, to care for ordinary wind-fa's. I ken nae better thing for an ill husband (no sayin that Andrew is liable to that charge) than a blast o' a wife's tongue. God be praised, Janet Schulebred will hae nae mair cause to lecture me! We will now live happily durin the remainin portion o' the time o' oor pilgrimage. I hae aye taen something hame to her. Last year I took some whisky bottles—probably made at the glasswarks o' Leith; this time, I intend to tak a family Bible. Guid day, madam—I'm awa to The Barleycorn; and frae that I gang to a Bible repository, and then hame."

He repaired to The Barleycorn. He saw the landlord standing at the door, with a sombre face. He had the key of the room in his hand, and looked the very picture of a jailer. He knew Duncan instantly, and was proceeding to seize him, when the latter surrendered himself with so much good humour that the publican gave up his purpose and smiled at the prospect of getting his money.

"You forgot to come back last night," said the man. "Mr Gavin says that you were the principal debtor to me for my drink, and that he was merely surety or cautioner. Is that true?"

"Perfectly true," replied Duncan. "I promised to pay the bill, and should hae paid the bill; but I was determined I wadna pay the bill. Accordingly, I ran awa for nae ither purpose than to avoid payin it."

"A trick ye'll no play a second time," said the publican, seizing him.

"No," said Duncan, taking out money, "seein I am come to pay ye plack and farthlin. Let us adjourn to Mr Gavin's pryon."

"The vera place I intended to tak ye to," said the man.

They proceeded to the room where Andrew was confined, and found him sitting in a sombre fit of melancholy. As they entered, he looked at Duncan with an appearance of mixed anger and satisfaction. The latter feeling predominated, as his mind suggested that the poor weaver had been prevented by drunkenness from returning immediately to pay the bill, and had now come to make amends.

"I hae been angry at ye, Duncan," said he; "but I nicht hae had mair faith in yer honour, than to doot ye without better proof o' dishonesty than no returnin (when ye werena able) to pay yer debts."

"Ye couldna hae a better proof o' my dishonesty," replied Duncan, sternly; "for, last nicht, when I ran awa without payin the lawin, I had nae mair intention o' comin back than I had o' gainin doun to the bottomless pit."

Andrew looked at the speaker with the same amazement as was exhibited by his wife.

"How comes it, then," said the writer. "that ye hae returned here this morning?"

"I hae got some new *licht*," replied Andrew. "Ye ken—

So long's the lamp holds on to burn,
The greatest sinner may return.

I hae returned, no only to this tavern to pay my debt, but to a proper sense o' what is due to Heaven and to my fellow-creatures. I am a changed man, sir. Nae 'vision o' judgment,' penned by Southey or Byron, ever transcended that o' the bottle-blowers o' Leith."

The writer considered him mad, and trembled for the payment of the bill, which could not be extorted from a maniac. The tavern-keeper took a calmer view, and thought he was still drunk.

"What are ye starin at?" said Duncan. "Did ye never before see a repentant sinner? Bring yer bill, sir. And, Mr Gavin, I refer ye to Mrs Gavin for some information respectin a wab o' rotten linen I sauld ye yesterday, bought back again, and sauld again to her this mornin'."

The tavern-keeper brought the bill, which Duncan discharged.

"I cheated ye, Mr Gavin, also o' the price o' the stirrup-cup."

"Let us drink it noo," said Mr Gavin—"Bring us a gill"—to the tavern-keeper.

The whisky was brought, and the writer took cleverly his morning dram, a practice which the craft has latterly renounced, but which they should have recourse to again, as a glass of whisky is a good beginning to a day's roguery, and has, besides, sometimes the same effect upon the conscience that it produces on the toothache—stills the pain. A glass was next filled out for Duncan. He took it up and held it in his hand.

"Your fire's no sae guid as the ane I saw last nicht, he said to the tavern-keeper.

"It is only newly lighted," was the apology of the host. "It may be the better o' that," said the other, throwing the whisky into the grate, and making the fire blaze up. "Sae should a' burnin, fiery liquors be used. They might then warm the outsides, in place o' burnin the insides o' sinners. Ye hae seen some o' the first acts o' my repentance. This is ane o' them. Ye may hear and see mair, if ye consider Duncan Schulebred worthy o' yer consideration, and trace his conduct through this weary, wicked, waefu world, during the remainin period o' an ill-begun but (I hope) weel-ended life."

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

HAVING laid before our readers a story the truth of which may be testified by the evidence of living witnesses, we will now add an account of another supposed descent into the infernal regions, performed by another individual belonging to the same town, equally true as the adventure of Duncan Schulebred, but unfortunately having a very different termination.

W—— B—— was a respectable merchant in Dunferm-

line, where he had carried on business for a great many years, under the reputation of being, at least, in very easy circumstances, if not wealthy. A good business, a comfortable wife, and a fair reputation, were supposed to have conspired to produce in him as much happiness and contentment as generally falls to the lot of the people of this lower world; nor did the appearance of the man belie in the slightest degree the supposition so naturally and legitimately formed: he was always in good humour, active, bustling, cheerful, and loquacious; and if he did not succeed in his attempts to produce mirth in the people who frequented his place of business, he made up the deficiency by an ever ready chorus of his own, the sound of which seemed to please him nearly as well as the tributary laughter of others. In the very midst of all this apparent contentedness, W—— B—— disappeared all at once. No one could tell whither he had gone; and his wife was just as ignorant of his destination or fate as any one else. That he had left the country, could not be supposed, because he had taken nothing with him; that he had made away with himself, was almost as unlikely, seeing that it is not generally in the midst of gaiety and good humour that people commit suicide. Every search, however, was made for him, but all in vain—no trace could be found of him, except that a person who had been near the old ruin called the Magazine, part of the old castle in the neighbourhood of the town, reported that, on the night when he disappeared, he, the narrator, heard in that quarter a very extraordinary soliloquy from the lips of some one in great agony; but that all his efforts (for it was dark) could not enable him to ascertain who or where he was. So far as he could recollect, the words of the person were as follows:—

“The self-destroyer has nae richt to expect a better place. (Groans.) A’ is dark and dismal—a thousand times mair sae than what my fancy ever pictured upon earth. But there will be licht sune, ay, and scorchin fires, and a’ the ither terrors o’ the place whar the wicked receive the reward o’ their sins. If I had again the days to begin, which, when in the body, I spent sae fruitlessly and sinfully, hoo wad I be benefited by this sicht o’ the very entrance to the regions o’ the miserable? and yet does not the great author o’ guid strive, wi’ a never-wearyin energy, by dreams and visions, and revelations and thoughts, which vain man tries to measure and value by the gauge o’ his insignificant reason, to shew him what I now see, and turn him to the practice o’ a better life. This is a narrow pit—there is neither room for the voice o’ lamentation, nor for the struggle o’ the restless limbs o’ the miserable; the light, and the air, and the space, and the view o’ the blue heavens, and the fair earth, which mak men proud, as if they were proprietors o’ the upper world, and sinfu as if its joys were made for them, are vanished, and a narrow cell, nae bigger than my body, wi’ nae air, nae licht, nae warmth—cauld, dark, lonely, and dismal—is the last and eternal place appointed for the wicked. (Groans.) On earth, men, though sinners, hae the companionship o’ men; here my only companion is a gnawin conscience, the true fire o’ the lower pit, and a thousand times vaur than a’ the imagined flames which haunt the minds o’ the doers o’ evil.”

These dreadful words were spoken at intervals, and loud groans bespoke the agony of the sufferer. The individual who heard them, at a loss what to conceive, became alarmed, ran away to get assistance, and, in a short time, returned, with a companion and a light, to search among the old ruins for the individual who was thus apparently suffering under the imagined terrors of the last place of punishment. They looked carefully up and down, throughout the place called the Magazine, among the ruins of the castle, and in every hole and cranny of the neighbourhood, but neither could they see any human being, nor hear again any of the extraordinary sounds which had chained the ear of the

listener, and roused his terrors. The idea of a supernatural presence, was the first that presented itself; and a ghost giving its hollow utterance to the lamentations of its suffering spirit, confined, doubtless, in some of the vaults of the castle, and struggling for that liberty which depends upon the performance of some penance upon earth, was the ready solution of a difficulty which defied all recourse to ordinary means of explanation. Having ascertained that nothing was to be seen or heard, the two friends returned to the town, where they told what had happened. The disappearance about that time of W—— B—— suggested to many a more rational explanation of the mysterious affair; and a number of people adjourned to the Magazine, for the purpose of exploring its dark recesses more thoroughly, under the conviction that the missing individual might be concealed in some part that had not been searched. Every effort was employed in vain. They penetrated all the holes, and explored all the dark corners—nothing was to be seen, nothing heard, and the conclusion was arrived at, either that the narrator was deceiving or deceived, or that the spirit had ceased to issue its lamentations.

For many days and many years afterwards, no trace could be had of W—— B——, nor was there ever even so much as whispered, a single statement of any one who had seen him either alive or dead. The food for speculation which the mysterious affair afforded to the minds of the inhabitants, was for a time increased by the total want of success which attended all the efforts of inquiry; and, after the fancies of all had been exhausted by the vain work of endeavouring to discover that which seemed to be hid by a higher power from human knowledge, the circumstance degenerated into one of the wonders of nature, supplying the old women with the material of a fire-side tale, for the amusement or terror of children. But it would seem that the energies of vulgar every-day life, are arrayed with inveterate hostility against the luxury of a mystery so greedily grasped at by all people, however thoroughly liberated from the prejudices of early education or of late sanctification; and accordingly, one day, many years after the occurrences now mentioned, as some boys were amusing themselves among the ruins of the old castle, they discovered lying in a hole—called the Piper’s Hole, from the circumstance of a piper having once entered it with a pair of bagpipes, which he intended to play on till he reached the end of it. but never returned—the body of a man reduced to a skeleton, but retaining on his bare bones the clothes which he had worn when in life. It was the body of W—— B——. On searching his pockets, there was found in one of them a few pence, and in another a bottle, with a paper label marked “Laudanum.”

This discovery cleared up all mystery. The unfortunate man had intended to kill himself in such a way as would put his suicidal act beyond the knowledge of his friends, and had resorted to the extraordinary plan of creeping up into the dark and narrow passage, where the action of the fatal soporific had produced the delusion that he was in the place appointed for the wicked, with the soliloquy already detailed—and then death. The physical mystery was cleared up; but a mystery of a moral nature remains, which will bid defiance to the revealing efforts of philosophers—the strength and peculiarity of feeling which, working on a sane mind, produced a purpose so extraordinary, and the resolution to carry it into effect.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FORTUNES OF WILLIAM WIGHTON.

My departure from Edinburgh was sudden and mysterious; and it was high time that I was away, for I was but a reckless boy at the best. I was well named by my school-mates, "Willie the Wight." My uncle was both sore vexed and weary of me, for I was never out of one mishap until I was into another; but one illumination night in the city put them all into the rear—I had, by it, got far ahead of all my former exploits. Very early next morning, I got notice from a friend that the bailies were very desirous of an interview with me; and, to do me more honour, I was to be escorted into their presence. I had no inclination for such honour, particularly at this time. I saw that our discourse could not be equally agreeable to both parties; besides they, I knew, would put questions to me I could not well answer to their satisfaction—though, after all, there was more of devilry than roguery in anything I had been engaged in.

I was not long in making up my mind; for I saw Archibald Campbell and two of the town-guard at the head of the close as I stepped out at the stair-foot. I had no doubt that I was the person they wished to honour with their accompaniment to the civic authorities. I was out at the bottom of the close like thought. I believe they never got sight of me. I kept in hiding all day—neither my uncle nor any of my friends knew where I was to be found. After it was dark, I ventured into town; but no farther than the Low Calton, where dwelt an old servant of my father's, who had been my nurse after the death of my mother. She was a widow, and lived in one of the ground flats, where she kept a small retail shop. Poor creature! she loved me as if I had been her own child, and wept when I told her the dilemma I was in. She promised to conceal me until the storm blew over, and to make my peace once more with my uncle, if I would promise to be a good boy in future. She made ready for me a comfortable supper, and a bed in her small back room. Weary sitting alone, I went to rest, and soon fell into a sound sleep. I had lain thus, I know not how long, when I was roused by a loud noise, as if some person or persons had fallen on the floor above; and voices in angry altercation struck my ear.

The weather being cold, my nurse had put on a fire in the grate, which still burned bright, and gave the room a cheerful appearance. I looked up—the angry voices continued, and there was a continued beating upon the floor at intervals, and, apparently, a great struggling, as if two people were engaged in wrestling. I attempted to fall asleep again, but in vain. For half an hour there had been little intermission of the noise. The ceiling of the room was composed only of the flooring of the story above; so that the thumping and scuffling were most annoying, reminding one of the sound of a drum overhead. I rose in anger from my bed, and, seizing the poker, beat up upon the ceiling pretty smartly. The sound ceased for a short space, and I crept into bed again. I was just on the point of falling asleep when the beating and struggling was renewed, and with them my anger. I rose from bed in great fury, resolved at least to make those who annoyed me rise from the floor. I looked around for something

sharp, to prick them through the joinings of the flooring-deals. By bad luck, I found upon the mantel-piece an old worn knife, with a thin and sharp point. I mounted upon the table, and thus reached the ceiling with my hand. The irritating noise seemed to increase. I placed the point in one of the joints, and gave a push up—it would not enter. I exerted my strength, when—I shall never forget that moment—it ran up to the hilt!—a heavy groan followed; I drew it back covered with blood! I stood upon the table stupified with horror, gazing upon the ensanguined blade; two or three heavy drops of blood fell upon my face and went into my eyes. I leaped from the table, and placed the knife where I had found it. The noise ceased; but heavy drops of blood continued to fall and coagulate upon the floor at my feet. I felt stupified with fear and anguish—my eyes were riveted upon the blood which—drop, drop, drop—fell upon the floor. I had stood thus for some time before the danger I was in occurred to me. I started, hastily put on my clothes, and, opening the window, leapt out, fled by the back of the houses, past the Methodist Chapel, up the back stairs into Shakspeare Square, and along Princes' Street; nor did I slacken my pace until I was a considerable way out of town.

I was now miserable. The night was dark as a dungeon; but not half so dark as my own thoughts. I had deprived a fellow-creature of life! In vain did I say to myself that it was done with no evil intention on my part. I had been too rash in using the knife; and my conscience was against me. I was, at this very time, also, in hiding for my rashness and folly in other respects. I trembled at the first appearance of day, lest I should be apprehended as a murderer. Dawn found me in the neighbourhood of Bathgate. Cold and weary as I was, I dared not approach a house or the public road, but lay concealed in a wood all day, under sensations of the utmost horror. Towards evening, I cautiously emerged from my hiding-place. Compelled by hunger, I entered a lonely house at a distance from the public road, and, for payment, obtained some refreshment, and got my benumbed limbs warmed. During my stay, I avoided all unnecessary conversation. I trembled lest they would speak of the murder in Edinburgh; for, had they done so, my agitation must have betrayed me. After being refreshed, I left the hospitable people, and pursued, under cover of the night, my route to Glasgow, which I reached a short time after daybreak. Avoiding the public streets, I entered the first public-house I found open at this early hour, where I obtained a warm breakfast and a bed, of both which I stood greatly in need. I soon fell asleep, in spite of the agitation of my mind; but my dreams were far more horrifying than my waking thoughts, dreadful as they were. I awoke early in the afternoon, feverish and unrefreshed.

After some time spent in summoning up resolution, I requested my landlady to procure for me a sight of any of the Edinburgh newspapers of the day before. She brought one to me. My agitation was so great that I dared not trust myself to take it out of her hand, lest she had perceived the tremor I was in; but requested her to lay it down, while I appeared to be busy adjusting my dress—carefully, all the time, keeping my back to her. I had two

objects in view: I wished to see the shipping-list, as it was my aim to leave the country for America by the first opportunity; and, secondly, to see what account the public had got of my untoward adventure. I felt conscious that all the city was in commotion about it, and the authorities dispatched for my apprehension; for I had no doubt that my nurse would at once declare her innocence, and tell who had done the deed. With an anxiety I want words to express, I grasped the paper as soon as the landlady retired, and hurried over its columns until I reached the last. During the interval, I believe I scarcely breathed; I looked it over once more with care; I felt as if a load had been lifted from my breast—there was not in the whole paper a single word of a death by violence or accident. I thought it strange, but rejoiced. I felt that I was not in such imminent danger of being apprehended; but my mind was still racked almost to distraction.

I remained in my lodging, for several days, very ill, both from a severe cold I had caught and distress of mind. I had seen every paper during the time. Still there was nothing in them applicable to my case. I was bewildered, and knew not what to think. Had the occurrences of that fearful night, I thought, been only a delusion—some horrid dream or night-mare? Alas! the large drops of blood that still stained my shirt, which, in my confusion, I had not changed, drove from my mind the consoling hope; they were damning evidence of a terrible reality. My mind reverted back to its former agony, which became so aggravated by the silence of the public prints that I was rendered desperate. The silence gave a mystery to the whole occurrence, more unendurable than if I had found it narrated in the most aggravated language, and my person described, with a reward for my apprehension.

As soon as my sickness had a little abated, and I was able to go out, I went in the evening, a little before ten o'clock, to the neighbourhood of where the coach from Edinburgh stopped. I walked about until its arrival, shunning observation as much as possible. At length it came. No one descended from it whom I recollected ever to have seen. Rendered desperate, I followed two travellers into a public house which they entered, along with the guard. For some time, I sat an attentive listener to their conversation. It was on indifferent subjects; and I watched an opportunity to join in their talk. Speaking with an air of indifference, I turned the conversation to the subject I had so much at heart—the local news of the city. They gave me what little they had; but not one word of it concerned my situation. I inquired at the guard if he would, next morning, be so kind as take a letter to Edinburgh, for Widow Neil, in the Low Calton.

“With pleasure,” he said—“I know her well, as I live close by her shop; but, poor woman, she has been very unwell for these two or three days past. There has been some strange talk of a young lad who vanished from her house, no one can tell how; she is likely to get into trouble from the circumstance, for it is surmised he has been murdered in her house, and his body carried off, as there was a quantity of blood upon the floor. No one suspects her of it; but still it is considered strange that she should have heard no noise, and can give no account of the affair.”

This statement of the guard surprised me exceedingly. Why was the affair mentioned in so partial and unsatisfactory a manner? Why was I, a murderer, suspected of being myself murdered? Why did not this lead to an investigation, which must have exposed the whole horrid mystery of the death of the individual up stairs? I could not understand it. My mind became the more perplexed, the more I thought of it. Yet, so far, I had no reason to complain. Nothing had been said in any respect implicating me. Perhaps I had killed nobody; perhaps I had only wounded some one who did not know whence the stab

came; or perhaps the person killed or wounded was an outlaw, and no discovery could be made of his situation. All these thoughts rushed through my mind as I sat beside the men. I at last left them, being afraid to put further questions.

I went to my lodgings and considered what I should do. I conceived it safest to write no letters to my friends, or say anything further on the subject. I meditated upon the propriety of going to America, and had nearly made up my mind to that step. Every day, the mysterious affair became more and more disagreeable and painful to me. I gave up making further inquiries, and even carefully avoided, for a time, associating with any person or reading any newspaper. I gradually became easier, as time, which brought no explanation to me, passed over; but the thought still lay at the bottom of my heart, that I was a murderer.

I went one day to a merchant's counting-house, to take my passage for America. The man looked at me attentively. I shook with fear, but he soon relieved me by asking—“Why I intended to leave so good a country for so bad a one?” I replied, that I could get no employment here. My appearance had pleased him. He offered me a situation in his office. I accepted it. I continued in Glasgow, happy and respected, for several years, and, to all likelihood, was to have settled there for life. I was on the point of marriage with a young woman, as I thought, every way worthy of the love I had for her. Her parents were satisfied; the day of our nuptials was fixed—the house was taken and furnished wherein we were to reside, and everything prepared. In the delirium of love, I thought myself the happiest of men, and even forgot the affair of the murder.

It was on the Monday preceding our union—which was to take place in her father's house, on the Friday evening—that business of the utmost importance called me to the town of Ayr. I took a hasty farewell of my bride, and set off, resolved to be back upon the Thursday at farthest. Early in the forenoon of Tuesday, I got everything arranged to my satisfaction; but was too late for the first coach. To amuse myself in the best manner I could, until the coach should set off again, I wandered down to the harbour; and, while there, it was my misfortune to meet an old acquaintance, Alexander Cameron, the son of a barber in the Luckenbooths. Glad to see each other, we shook hands most cordially; and, after chatting about “auld langsyne” until we were weary wandering upon the pier, I proposed to adjourn to my inn. To this proposal he at once acceded, on condition that I should go on board of his vessel afterwards, when he would return the visit in the evening. To this I had no objection to make. The time passed on until the dusk. We left the inn; but, instead of proceeding to the harbour, we struck off into the country for some time, and then made the coast at a small bay, where I could just discern, through the twilight, a small lugger-rigged vessel at anchor. I felt rather uneasy, and began to hesitate; when my friend, turning round, said—

“That is my vessel, and as fine a crew mans her as ever walked a deck;—we will be on board in a minute.”

I wished, yet knew not how, to refuse. He made a loud call; a boat with two men pushed from under a point, and we were rowing towards the vessel ere I could summons resolution to refuse. I remained on board not above an hour. I was treated in the most kindly manner. When I was coming away, Cameron said—

“I have requested this visit from the confidence I feel in your honour. I ask you not to promise not to deceive me—I am sure you will not. My time is very uncertain upon this coast, and I have papers of the utmost importance, which I wish to leave in safe hands. We are too late to arrange them to-night; but be so kind as promise to be at the same spot where we embarked, to-morrow morning, at what hour you please, and I will deliver them

to you. Should it ever be in my power to serve you, I will not flinch from the duty of gratitude, cost what it may."

There was a something so sincere and earnest in his manner, that I could not refuse. I said, that, as I left Ayr on the morrow, I would make it an early hour—say six o'clock; which pleased him. We shook hands and parted, when I was put on shore, and returned to my inn, where I ruminated upon what the charge could be I was going to receive from my old friend in so unexpected a manner.

I was up betimes, and at the spot by the appointed hour. The boat was in waiting; but Cameron was not with her. I was disappointed, and told one of the men so; he replied that the captain expected me on board to breakfast. With a reluctance much stronger than I had felt the preceding night, I consented to go on board. I found him in the cabin, and the breakfast ready for me. We sat down, and began to converse about the papers. Scarce was the second cup filled out, when a voice called down the companion, "Captain, the cutter!" Cameron leaped from the table, and ran on deck. I heard a loud noise of cordage and bustle; but could not conceive what it was, until the motion of the vessel too plainly told that she was under way. I rose in haste to get upon deck; but the cover was secured. I knocked and called; but no one paid any attention to my efforts. I stood thus knocking, and calling at the stretch of my voice, for half an hour, in vain. I returned to my seat, and sat down, overcome with anger and chagrin. Here was I again placed in a disagreeable dilemma—evidently going far out to sea, when I ought to be on my way to Glasgow to my wedding. In the middle of my ravings, I heard first one shot, then another; but still the ripple of the water and the noise overhead continued. I was now convinced that I was on board of a smuggling lugger, and that Cameron was either sole proprietor or captain. I wished with all my heart that the cutter might overtake and capture us, that I might be set ashore; but all my wishes were vain—we still held on our way at a furious rate. As I heard no more shots, I knew that we had left the cutter at a greater distance. Again, therefore, I strove to gain a hearing, but in vain: I then strove to force the hatch, but it resisted all my efforts. I yielded myself at length to my fate; for the way of the vessel was not in the least abated.

Towards night, I could find, by the pitching of the vessel and the increased noise above, that the wind had increased fearfully, and that it blew a storm. It was with difficulty that I could keep my seat, so much did she pitch. During the whole night and following day, I was so sick that I thought I would have died. I had no light; there was no human creature to give me a mouthful of water; and I could not help myself even to rise from the floor of the cabin, on which I had sunk. The agony of my mind was extreme: the day following was to have been that of my marriage; I was at sea, and knew not where I was. I blamed myself for my easy, complying temper; my misery increased; and, could I have stood on my feet, I know not what I might have done in my desperate situation. Thus I spent a second night; and the day which I had thought was to shine on my happiness, dawned on my misery.

Towards the afternoon, the motion of the vessel ceased, and I heard the anchor drop. Immediately the hatch was opened, and Cameron came to me. I rose in anger, so great that I could not give it utterance. Had I not been so weak from sickness, I would have flown and strangled him. He made a thousand apologies for what had happened. I saw that his concern was real; my anger subsided into melancholy, and my first utterance was employed to inquire where we were.

"I am sorry to say," replied he, "that I cannot but feel really grieved to inform you that we are at present a few leagues off Flushing."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, as I buried my face in my hands, while I actually wept for shame—"I am utterly undone! What will my beloved Eliza say? How shall I ever appear again before her and her friends? Even now, perhaps, she is dressing to be my wife, or weeping in the arms of her bridesmaid. The thought will drive me mad. For God's sake, Cameron, get under way, and land me again either at Greenock or where you first took me up, or I am utterly undone. Do this, and I will forget all I have suffered and am suffering."

"I would, upon my soul," he said, "were it in my power, though I should die in a jail; but, while this gale lasts, it were folly to attempt it. Besides, I am not sole proprietor of the lugger—I am only captain. My crew are sharers in the cargo. I would not get their consent. The thought of the evil I was unintentionally doing you, gave me more concern than the fear of capture. Had the storm not come on, I would have risked all to have landed you somewhere in Scotland; but it was so severe, and blowing from the land, that there was no use to attempt it. I hope, however, the weather will now moderate, and the wind shift, when I will run you back, or procure you a passage in the first craft that leaves for Scotland."

I made no answer to him, I was so absorbed in my own reflections. I walked the deck like one distracted, praying for a change in the weather. For other three days, it blew, with less or more violence, from the same point—during which time I scarcely ever ate or drank, and never went to bed. On the forenoon of Monday, the wind shifted. I went immediately ashore in the boat, and found a brig getting under way for Leith. I stepped on board, and took farewell of Captain Cameron, whom I never saw again, and wish I had never seen him in my life.

After a tedious passage of nine days, during which we had baffling winds and calms, we reached Leith Roads about seven in the evening. It was low water, and the brig could not enter the harbour for several hours. I was put ashore in the boat, and hastened up to the Black Bull Inn, in order to secure a seat in the mail for Glasgow, which was to start in a few minutes. As I came up Leith Walk, my feelings became of a mixed nature. I thought of Widow Niel and the murder, as I looked over at the Calton; then my mind reverted to my bride. I got into the coach, and was soon on the way to Glasgow. I laid myself back in a corner, and kept a stubborn silence. I could not endure to enter into conversation with my fellow-travellers: I scarce heard them speak—my mind was so distracted by what had befallen me, and what might be the result.

Pale, weary, and exhausted, I reached my lodgings between three and four o'clock of the morning of the seventeenth day from that in which I had left it in joy and hope. After I had knocked, and was answered, my landlady almost fainted at the sight of me. She had believed me dead; and my appearance was not calculated to do away the impression, I looked so ghastly from anxiety and the want of sleep. Her joy was extreme when she found her mistake. I undressed and threw myself on my bed, where I soon fell into a sound sleep, the first I had enjoyed since my involuntary voyage.

I did not awake until about eight o'clock, when I arose and dressed. I did not haste to Eliza, as my heart urged me, lest my sudden appearance should have been fatal to her. I wrote her a note, informing her I was in health and would call and explain all after breakfast. I sent off my card, and immediately waited upon my employers. They were more surprised than pleased at my return. Another had been placed in my situation, and they did not choose to pay him off when I might think proper to return after my unaccountable absence. My soul fired at the base insinuation; my voice rose as I demanded to know if they doubted my veracity. With an expression of coun-

tenance that spoke daggers, one of them said—"We doubt at least, your prudence in going on board an unknown vessel; but let us proceed to business—we have found all your books correct to a farthing, and here is an order for your salary, up to your leaving. Good morning!"

I received it indignantly; and, bowing stiffly, left them. I was not much cast down at this turn my affairs had taken so unexpectedly. I had no doubt of finding a warm reception from Eliza, hurried to her parent's house, and rung the bell for admittance. Judge my astonishment when her brother opened the door, with a look as if we had never met, and inquired what I wanted. The blood mounted to my face—I essayed to speak; but my tongue refused its office, I felt bewildered, and stood more like a statue than a man. In the most insulting manner, he said—"There is no one here who wishes any intercourse with you." And he shut the door upon me.

Of everything that befell me for a length of time, from this moment, I am utterly unconscious; when I again awoke to consciousness, I was in bed at my lodgings, with my kind landlady seated at my bedside. I was so weak and reduced I could scarce turn myself; the agitation I had undergone, and the cruel receptions I had met on my return, had been too much for my mind to bear; a brain fever had been the consequence, and my life had been despaired of for several days. I would have questioned my landlady; but she urged silence upon me, and refused to answer my inquiries. I soon after learned all. I had been utterly neglected by those to whom I might have looked for aid or consolation; but the bitterest thought of all was, that Eliza should cast me off without inquiry or explanation. I could not bring my mind to believe she did so of her own accord. She must, I thought, be either cruelly deceived or under restraint; for she and her friends could not but know the situation I was in. I vainly strove to call my wounded pride to my aid, and drive her from my thoughts; but the more I strove, the firmer hold she took of me. As soon as I could hold my pen, I wrote to her in the most moving terms; and, after stating the whole truth and what I had suffered, begged an interview, were it to be our last—for my life or death; I said, appeared to depend upon her answer. In the afternoon I received one: it was my own letter, which had been opened, and enclosed in an envelope. The writing was in her own hand. Cruel woman! all it contained was, that she had read, and now returned my letter as of her own accord, and by the approbation of her friends; for she was firmly resolved to have no communication with one who had used her so cruelly, and exposed her to the ridicule of her friends and acquaintances. This unjust answer had quite an opposite effect from what I could have conceived a few hours before: pity and contempt for the fickle creature took the place of love; my mind became once more tranquil; I recovered rapidly, and soon began to walk about and enjoy the sweets of summer. I met my fickle fair by accident more than once in my walks, and found I could pass her as if we had never met. Her brother I had often a mind to have horsewhipped; but the thought that I would only give greater publicity to my unfortunate adventure, and be looked upon as the guilty aggressor, prevented me from gratifying my wish.

Glasgow had now become hateful to me, otherwise I would have commenced manufacturer upon my own account, as was my intention had I married Eliza. In as short a period as convenient, I sold off the furniture of the house I had taken, at little or no loss, and found that I still was master of a considerable sum. Having made a present to my landlady for her care of me, I bade a long adieu to Glasgow, and proceeded by the coach to Leeds, where I procured a situation in a house with which our Glasgow house had had many transactions.

As I fear I am getting prolix, I shall hurry over the next

few years I remained in Leeds. I became a partner of the house; our transactions were very extensive, more particularly in the United States of America, where we were deeply engaged in the cotton trade. It was judged necessary that one of the firm should be on the spot, to extend the business as much as possible. The others being married men, I at once volunteered to take this department upon myself, and made arrangements accordingly. I proceeded towards Liverpool by easy stages, on horseback, as the coaches at that period were not so regular as they are at present.

On the second day after my leaving Leeds, the afternoon became extremely wet towards evening; so that I resolved to remain all night in the first respectable inn I came to. I dismounted, and found it completely filled with travellers, who had arrived a short time before. It was with considerable difficulty I prevailed upon the hostess to allow me to remain. She had not a spare bed; all had been already engaged; the weather continued still wet and boisterous, and I resolved to proceed no farther that night, whether I could obtain a bed or not. I, at length, arranged with her that I should pass the night by the fireside, seated in an arm-chair. Matters were thus all set to rights, and supper over, when a loud knocking was heard at the door. An additional stranger entered the kitchen where I sat, drenched with rain and benumbed with cold; and, after many difficulties upon the side of the hostess, the same arrangements were made for him.

As our situations were so similar, we soon became very intimate. I felt much interest in him. He was of a frank and lively turn in conversation, and exceedingly well informed on every subject we started. A shrewd eccentricity in the style and matter of his remarks, forced the conviction upon his hearers, that he was a man of no mean capacity; there was also a restless inquietude in his manner, which gave him the appearance of having a slight shade of insanity. At one time, his bright black eye was lighted up with joy and hilarity as he chanted a few lines of some convivial song. In a few minutes, a change came over him, and furtive, timid glances stole from under his long dark eyelashes. Then would follow a glance so fierce that it required a firm mind to endure it unmoved. These looks became more frequent as his libations continued; for he had consumed a great quantity of liquor, and seemed to me to be in that frame of mind when one strives in vain to forget his identity.

The other inmates of the house had long retired, and all was hushed save the voice of my companion. I felt no inclination to sleep; the various scenes of my life were floating over my mind, as I gazed into the bright fire that glowed before me, while the storm raged without. My companion had at length sunk into a troubled slumber; his head resting upon his hand, which was supported by the table, and his intelligent face half turned from me. While I sat thus, my attention was roused by a low, indistinct murmuring from the sleeper: he was evidently dreaming—for, although there were a few disjointed words here and there pronounced, he still slept soundly.

Gradually his articulation became more distinct and his countenance animated; but his eyes were closed. I became much interested; for this was the first instance of a dreamer talking in his sleep, I had ever witnessed. I watched him. A gleam of joy and pleasure played around his well-formed mouth, while the few inarticulate sounds he uttered resembled distant shouts of youthful glee. Gradually the tones became connected sentences; care and anxiety, at times, came over his countenance; in heart-touching language, he bade farewell to his parent and the beloved scenes of his youth; large drops of moisture stole from under his closed eyelids. The transitions of his mind were so quick that it required my utmost attention to follow them; but I never heard such true eloquence as came from this dreamer. I

had seen most of the performers of our modern stage, and appreciated their talents; but what I at this time witnessed, in the actings of genuine nature, surpassed all their efforts.

Gradually the shades of innocence departed from his countenance; his language became adulterated by slang phrases, and his features assumed a fiendish cast that made me shudder. He shewed that he was familiar with the worst of company; care and anxiety gradually crept over his countenance; he had (it seemed) commenced a system of fraud upon his employers, and been detected; grief and despair threw over him their frightful shadows; pale and dejected, he pleaded for mercy, for the sake of his father, in the most abject terms. He now spoke with energy and connection—it was to his companions in jail; but hope had fled, and a shameful death seemed to him inevitable.

His trial came on. He proceeded to court—his lips appeared pale and parched—a convulsive quiver agitated the lower muscles of his face and neck—he seemed to breathe with difficulty—his head sank lower upon the hand that supported it—he had been condemned—he was now in his solitary cell—his murmurs breathed repentance and devotion—his sufferings appeared to be so intense that large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead—he was engaged with the clergyman, preparing for death. Remembering what I had suffered in my own dreams, I resolved to awake him; and, to do so, gave the arm that lay upon the table, a gentle shake. A shudder passed over his frame, and he sank upon the floor.

All that I have narrated had occurred in a space of time remarkably short. I rose to lift him to his seat, and make an apology for the surprise I had given him; but he was quite unconscious. The noise of his fall had alarmed the landlady, who, with several of the guests, entered as I was stooping with him in my arms, attempting to raise him. I was so much shocked when I found the state he was in, that I let him drop, and recoiled back in horror, exclaiming, “Good God! have I killed him! Send for a surgeon.” The idea that I had endeavoured to awake him in an improper time, came, with strong conviction, upon me, and forced the words out of my mouth.

They raised him up and placed him on his seat. I could not offer the smallest assistance. Every effort was used to restore him, in vain, and a surgeon sent for; but life had fled. During all this time, I had remained in a stupor of mind; suspicion fell upon me that I had murdered him; I had been alone with him, and seen stooping over the body when they entered; and my exclamation at the time, and my confusion, were all construed as sure tokens of my guilt. I was strictly guarded until a coroner’s inquest could be held upon the body.

I told the whole circumstances as they had occurred; but my narrative made not the smallest impression. I was not believed—an incredulous smile, or a dubious shake of the head, was all that I obtained from my auditors. I then kept silence, and refused to enter into any further explanation, conscious that my innocence would be made manifest at the inquest, which must meet as soon as the necessary steps could be taken. I was already tried and condemned by those around me—every circumstance was turned against me, and the most prominent was, that I was Scotch. Many remarks were made, all to the prejudice of my country, but aimed at me; my heart burned to retort their unjust abuse; but I was too indignant to trust myself to utter the thoughts that swelled my heart almost to bursting.

The surgeon had come, and was busy examining the body of the unfortunate individual, when a new traveller arrived. He appeared to be about sixty years of age, of a pleasing countenance, which was, however, shaded by anxiety and grief. Sick and weary of those around me, I had ceased to regard them; but I raised my eyes as the new comer entered; and was at once struck by a strong resem-

blance, as I thought, between him and the deceased. The stranger appeared to take no interest in what was going on; but urged the landlady to make haste and procure him some refreshment, while his horse was being fed. He was in the utmost hurry to depart, as important business required his immediate attendance in London. The loquacious landlady forced him to listen to a most exaggerated account of the horrid murder which the Scotchman had committed in her house. The story was so much distorted by her inventions, that I could not have recognised the event, if the time and place, and her often pointing to me and the bed on which the body was laid, had not identified it. I could perceive a faint shudder come over his frame, as she finished her romance. The surgeon came from his examination of the body. He was a man well advanced in years, of an intelligent and benevolent cast of countenance. She inquired with what instrument the murder had been perpetrated.

“My good lady,” said the surgeon, “I can find no marks of violence upon the body, and I cannot say whether the individual met his death by violence or the visitation of God.”

“Oh, sir,” cried the hostess, “I am certain he was murdered; for I saw them struggling on the floor as I entered the room, and he said, himself, that he had murdered him.”

“Peace, good woman,” said the surgeon, who turned to me, and requested to know the particulars from myself; “for I am persuaded” (he continued) “that no outward violence has been sustained by the deceased.”

I once more began to narrate to him the whole circumstance. As I proceeded with the dream, the stranger suddenly became riveted in his attention; his eyes were fixed upon me; the muscles of his face were strangely agitated, as if he was restraining some strong emotion; wonder and anxiety were strongly expressed by turns, until I mentioned one of the names I had heard in the dream. Uttering a heart-rending groan or rather scream, he rose from his seat and staggered to the bed, where he fell upon the inanimate body, and sobbed audibly as he kissed the cold forehead, and parted the long brown hair that covered it.

“Oh, Charles,” he cried, “my son, my dear lost son! have I found thee thus, who wast once the hope and stay of my heart!”

There was not a dry eye in the room after this burst of agonised nature. He rose from the bed and approached me. Looking mildly in my face, he said—

“Stranger, be so kind as continue your account of this sad accident; for both our sakes, I hope you are innocent of any violence upon my son.”

Overcome by his manner, in kindness to him, I suggested that it would be better were only the surgeon and himself present at the recital. Several of those present protested loudly against my proposal, saying I would make my escape if I was not guarded. My anger now rose—I could restrain myself no longer—I cast an indignant glance around, and, in a voice at its utmost pitch, dared any one present to say I had used violence against the unfortunate young man. All remained silent. In a calmer manner, I declared I had no wish to depart, urgent as my business was, until the inquest was over; and, if they doubted my word, they were welcome to keep strict watch at the door and windows.

The old man perceived the kindness of my motive for withdrawing with him, and his looks spoke his gratitude as we retired.

I once more stated every circumstance as it had occurred from the time of his son’s arrival, until he fell from the chair. As I repeated the words I could make out in the early part of the dream, his father wept like a child, and said—“Would to God he had never left me!” When I came to the London part, he groaned aloud and wrung his hands. I was inclined more than once to stop; but he

motioned me to proceed, while tears choked his utterance. When I had made an end, he clasped his hands, and, raising his face to heaven, said—"I thank Thee, Father of mercies! Thy will be done. He was the last of five of Thy gifts. I am now childless, and have nothing more worth living for, but to obey Thy will. I thank Thee, that, in his last moments, it can be said of him as it was of thy apostle—"Behold, he prayeth!"

For some time we remained silent, reverencing the old man's grief. The surgeon first broke silence:—"Stranger," he said, "I have not a doubt of your innocence of any intention to injure the person of the deceased; but your humane intention to awaken him was certainly the immediate cause of his death; for, had you tried to rouse him from sleep, either sooner or later in his dream, all might have been well. The gentle shake you gave his arm, in all likelihood, was felt as the fatal fall of the platform or push of the executioner, which caused, from fright, a sudden collapse of the heart, that put a final stop to the circulation, and caused immediate death. We regret it; but cannot say there was any bad intention on your part."

I thanked the surgeon for the justice he had done me in his remarks; and then, addressing the bereaved father, I begged his forgiveness for my unfortunate interference with his son; I only did so to put a period to his dream, as his sufferings appeared to me to be of the most acute description.

He stretched out his hand, and, grasping mine, which he held for some time, while he strove to overcome his emotions, he at length said—

"Young man, from my heart I acquit you of every evil intention, and believe you from evidence that cannot be called in question. What you have told coincides with facts I already possess. For some time back the conduct of Charles gave me serious cause of uneasiness; but I knew not half the extent of his excesses, although his requests for money were incessant. I supplied them, as far as was in my power; for he accompanied them with dutiful acknowledgments and plausible reasons. Until of late, I had fulfilled his every wish; but I found I could no longer comply with prudence. Alas! you have let me at length understand that the gaming table was the gulf that swallowed up all. I had for some time resolved to go personally, and reason with him upon the folly of his extravagances; but, unfortunately, delayed it from day to day and week to week. I felt it to be my duty as a parent; but my heart shrunk from it. Fatal delay! Oh! that I had done as my duty urged me!" (Here his feelings overpowered him for a few minutes.) "Had I only gone, even a few days before I received that fatal letter that at once roused me from my guilty supineness," (here he drew a letter from his pocket and gave it me,) "he might have been saved! Read it."

I complied. It was as follows:—

WORTHY FRIEND,—“I scarce know how to communicate the information; but, I fear, no one here will do so in so gentle a manner. Your son, Charles, I am grieved to say, has not been acting as I could have wished, for this some time back. One of the partners called here this morning to inquire after him, as he had absconded from their service on account of some irregularity that had been discovered in his cash entries, and made me afraid, by his manner, that there might be something worse. Do, for your own and his sake, come to town as quickly as possible. In the meantime, I shall do all in my power to avert any evil that may threaten.—Adieu!

JOHN WALKER.”

“I was on my way,” he proceeded, “to save my poor Charles from shame, had even the workhouse been my only refuge at the close of my days. Alas! as he told in his dream, I fear he had forfeited his life by that fatal act, forgery, for which there is no pardon with man. If so, the present dispensation is one of mercy, for which I bless His name, who in all things doeth right.

My heart ached for the pious old man. We left the room, he leaning upon my arm. The surgeon and parent both pronounced me innocent of the young man's death. Those who still remained in the house, more particularly the hostess, appeared disappointed, and did not scruple to hint their doubts. Until the coroner's inquest sat, which was in the afternoon, the father of the stranger never left my side, but seemed to take a melancholy pleasure in conversing about his son. The jury, after a patient investigation, returned their verdict, “Died by the visitation of God.”

I immediately bade farewell to the surgeon and the parent of the young man, and proceeded for Liverpool, musing upon my strange destiny. It appeared to me that I was haunted by some fatality, which plunged me constantly into misfortune. I rejoiced that I was on the point of leaving Britain and hoped that, in America, I should be freed from my bad fortune.

When I arrived in Liverpool, I found the packet on the eve of sailing; and, with all expedition, I made everything ready, and went on board. We were to sail with the morning tide. There were a good many passengers; but all of them appeared to be every-day personages—all less or more studious about their own comforts. After an agreeable voyage of five weeks, we arrived safe, and all in good health, in Charleston. In a few months, I completed our arrangement satisfactorily, and began to make preparations for my return to England again. A circumstance, however, occurred, which overturned all my plans for a time, and gave a new turn to my thoughts. Was it possible that, after the way in which I had been cast off before by one of the bewitching sex, I could ever do more than look upon them again with indifference? I did not hate or shun their company; but a feeling, pretty much akin to contempt, often stole over me as I recollected my old injury. I could feel the sensation at times give way for a few hours in the company of some females, and again return with redoubled force upon the slightest occasion, such as a single word or look. I was prejudiced and resolved not again to submit to the power of the sex. But vain are the resolves of man. This continued struggle, I really believe, was the reason of my again falling more violently in love than ever, and that too against my own will. When I strove to discover faults, I only found perfections.

I had boarded in the house of a widow lady who had three daughters, none of them exceeding twelve years of age. A governess, one of the sweetest creatures that I had ever seen, or shall ever see again, had the charge of them. On the second evening after my arrival, I retired to my apartment, overcome by heat and fatigue. I lay listlessly thinking of Auld Reekie, the mysterious murder, and all the strange occurrences of my past life. My attention was awakened by a voice the sweetest I had ever heard. I listened in rapture. It was only a few notes, as the singer was trying the pitch of her voice, and soon ceased. I was wondering which of the family it could be who sang so well, when I heard one of the daughters say, “Do governess, sing me one song, and I will be a good girl all to-morrow. Pray do!” I became all attention—again the voice fell upon my ear. It was low and plaintive; the air was familiar to me; my whole soul became entranced—the tear-drop swam in my eyes—it was one of Scotland's sweetest ditties—“The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes.” No one who has not heard, unexpected, in a foreign land, the songs he loved in his youth, can appreciate the thrill of pleasing ecstasy that carries the mind, as it were, out of the body, when the ears catch the well-known sounds.

Next day, I was all anxiety to see the individual who had so fascinated me the evening before. I found her all that my imagination had pictured her. A new feeling pos-

essed me. In vain I called pride to my aid; I could not drive her from my thoughts. Sleeping or waking, her voice and form were ever present. I left the town for a time, to free myself from these unwelcome feelings, pleasing as they were. I felt angry at myself for harbouring them; but all my endeavours were vain—go where I would, I was with my Mary on the Cowdenknowes.

I know not how it was. I had loved with more ardour in my first passion, and been more the victim of impulse; a dreamy sensation occupied my mind, and my whole existence seemed concentrated in her alone: now, my mind felt cool and collected—I weighed every fault and excellence; still I was hurried on, and felt like one placed in a boat in the current of a river, pulling hard to get out of the stream, in vain. I at length laid down my oars, and yielded to the impulse. In short, I made up my mind to win the esteem and love of Mary; nor did I strive in vain. My humble attentions were kindly received, and dear to my heart is the remembrance of the timid glances I first detected in her full black eyes. For some weeks I sought an opportunity to declare my love. She evidently shunned being alone with me; and I often could discern, when I came upon her by surprise, that she had been weeping. Some secret sorrow evidently oppressed her mind, and, at times, I have seen her beautiful face suffused with scarlet, and her eyes become wet with tears, when my pompous landlady spoke of the ladies of Europe and “the true white-blooded females of America.” I dreamed not at this time of the cause; but the truth dawned upon me afterwards.

It was on a delightful evening, after one of the most sultry days in this climate, I had wandered into the garden to enjoy the evening breeze, with which nothing in these northern climes will bear comparison; the fire flies sported in myriads around, and gave animation to the scene; the fragrance of plants and the melody of birds filled the senses to repletion. I wanted only the presence of Mary to be completely happy. I heard a low warbling at a short distance, from a bower covered with clustering vines. It was Mary's voice! I stood overpowered with pleasure—she sung again one of our Scottish tunes.

As the last faint cadence died away, I entered the arbour; the noise of my approach made her start from her seat; she was hurrying away in confusion, when I gently seized her hand, and requested her to remain, if it were only for a few moments, as I had something to impart of the utmost importance to us both. She stood; her face was averted from my gaze; I felt her hand tremble in mine. Now that the opportunity I so much desired had been obtained, my resolution began to fail me. We had stood thus for some time.

“Sir, I must not stay here longer,” she said. “Good evening!”

“Mary,” said I, “I love you. May I hope to gain your regard by any length of service? Allow me to hope, and I shall be content.”

“I must not listen to this language,” she replied. “Do not hope. There is a barrier between us that cannot be removed. I cannot be yours. I am unworthy of your regard, Alas! I am a child of misfortune.”

“Then,” said I, “my hopes of happiness are fled for ever. So young, so beautiful, with a soul so elevated as I know yours to be, you can have done nothing to render you unworthy of me. For heaven's sake, tell me what that fatal barrier is. Is it love?”

“I thank you,” she replied. “You do me but justice. A thought has never dwelt upon my mind for which I have cause to blush; but nature has placed a gulf between you and me, you will not pass.” She paused, and the tears wam in in her eyes.

“For mercy's sake, proceed!” I said.

“There is black blood in these veins,” she cried, in agony.

A load was at once removed from my mind. I raised her hand to my lips:—“Mary, my love, this is no bar. I come from a country where the aristocracy of blood is unknown, where nothing degrades man in the eyes of his fellow-man but vice.”

Why more? Mary consented to be mine, and we were shortly after wed. I was blessed in the possession of one of the most gentle of beings.

We had been married about six or seven weeks, when business called me from Charleston to one of the northern States. I resolved to take Mary with me, as I was to go by sea; and our arrangements were completed. The vessel was to sail on the following day. I was seated with her, enjoying the cool of the evening, when a stranger called and requested to see me on business of importance. I immediately went to him, and was struck with the coarseness of his manners, and his vulgar importance. I bowed, and asked his business.

“You have a woman in this house,” said he, “called Mary De Lyle, I guess.”

“I do not understand the purport of your question,” said I. “What do you mean?”

“My meaning is pretty clear,” said he. “Mary De Lyle is in this house, and she is my property. If you offer to carry her out of the State, I will have her sent to jail, and you fined. That is right a-head, I guess.”

“Wretch,” said I, in a voice hoarse with rage, “get out of my house, or I will crush you to death. Begone!”

I believe I would have done him some fearful injury, had he not precipitately made his escape. In a frame of mind I want words to express, I hurried to Mary, and sank upon a seat, with my face buried in my hands. She, poor thing, came trembling to my side, and implored me to tell her what was the matter. I could only answer by my groans. At length, I looked imploringly in her face:—

“Mary, is it possible that you are a slave?” said I.

She uttered a piercing shriek, and sank inanimate at my feet. I lifted her upon the sofa; but it was long before she gave symptoms of returning life.

As soon as I could leave her, I went to a friend to ask his advice and assistance. Through him, I learned that what I feared was but too true. By the usages and laws of the State, she was still a slave, and liable to be hurried from me and sold to the highest bidder, or doomed to any drudgery her master might put her to, and even flogged at will. There was only one remedy that could be applied; and the specific was dollars. My friend was so kind as negotiate with the ruffian. One thousand was demanded, and cheerfully paid. I carried the manumission home to my sorrowing Mary. From her I learned, as she lay in bed—her beautiful face buried in the clothes, and her voice choked by sobs—that the wretch who had called on me was her own father, whose avarice could not let slip this opportunity of extorting money. With an inconsistency often found in man, he had given Mary one of the best of educations, and for long treated her as a favoured child, during the life of her mother, who was one of his slaves, a woman of colour, and with some accomplishments, which she had acquired in a genteel family. At her death, Mary had gone as governess to the daughters of my landlady; but, until the day of her father's claim, she had never dreamed of being a slave. I allowed the vessel to sail without me, wound up my affairs, and bade adieu for ever to the slave States. 'Tis now twenty years since I purchased a wife, after I had won her love, and I bless the day she was made mine; for I have had uninterrupted happiness in her and her offspring. The slave is now the happy wife and mother of five lovely children, who rejoice in their mother. After remaining some years in Leeds, I returned to Edinburgh. Widow Neil was dead; but one day I discovered, by mere chance, that the murder I committed in her house was on a *sheep*.

A SCRAP OF THE REBELLION.

A PERSON of the name of Andrew Forbes, who lived in the town of Perth, was very zealous in the cause of the Pretender, and had been so successful in obtaining recruits for Lord Perth, that he was elevated to the rank of sergeant in the regiment raised by that nobleman. Forbes was by trade a common shoemaker; but, as he himself used often to say, he was either blessed or cursed with a spirit above his calling; for his restlessness and ambition prevented him from taking the advice of the old Latin poet, and adhering to his last—while his poverty, and want of education and friends, allowed of no possibility of escaping from the humble condition in which he was placed. The affair of the Rebellion was to him a species of godsend, as it was one of those disruptive movements of the spirit of strife and ambition, which often reverse the fortunes of men, and turn society upside down—reducing rich men to beggary, and raising the poor, from their humble seats, to the high places of the great. To a man that could not be lower than he was, and who wished to be higher, it presented an opportunity of bettering his fortune, and affording food for his ambition, which was not to be overlooked by such a person as Andrew Forbes, who entered into the project with alacrity and high hope, and soon made himself conspicuous. When, to join Lord Perth's regiment, he left his house—a small tenement he had got from his father, and said to have been used at one time as a kind of subsidiary prison—he locked it up, and carried the key with him. It was said he fought with great spirit and courage at all the engagements in which his regiment took a part; and, at Culloden, so signalized himself, that a price was set on his head, and diligent search made for him throughout the country. It was pretty certain that he had evaded, at least for a considerable time, all the efforts of his pursuers; but a report was circulated, and believed, that he had been overtaken and slain in the Pass of Glencoe; and it was at least certain that a sum of money was paid by the authorities at Perth for the head of a man that passed for that of Andrew Forbes. The little house he used to occupy was not thought worth the trouble of confiscation, or, at least, it was never looked after by the officers of the Crown; and a sister of the name of Agnes, the widow of a person called John Crichton, who lived in the Bridge-end, took up her residence in it, along with four children. She never made up any title to the little house, as her advisers told her that, if she made any movement on the ground of right or title, the law authorities might interfere and deprive her of it altogether. She occupied the domicile in this way for ten years, by which time her children had grown up. The neighbours were in the habit of visiting her; and often, at night, over the fire, they used to talk of the rebellion, and of the unfortunate fate of Andrew Forbes, the original proprietor, whose head had been purchased by the Provost of Perth for a sum of money, and whose body had been left to be eaten by the carrion crows of Glencoe—all very stirring incidents, and capable of forming the material of interesting conversations during the dark nights of winter, when old women were the narrators and young persons the auditors. On one occasion, two or three of the neighbours were occupied in this manner, smoking their pipes by the fire, and contributing, alternately, their little graphic details of the by-gone times of commotion and disaster, while the young listeners sat with open mouths, greedily devouring the wondrous legends, made a thousand times more wonderful by the inventive fancies of the narrators, and the solemn effects of a dark night, an apartment filled with smoke, and the fallow faces of the old women, with their long, sharp chins, chiming their eldritch responses to the teller of the legend. The death of the unfortunate Andrew Forbes, and the fortunes of his head, which, it was said, was denied

Christian burial, formed the most prominent and awful subject of the conversation. The minuteness of the graphic details descended to every circumstance connected with the affair. One of the old women said that she herself saw Andrew's head taken out of the bag in which it had been brought from Glencoe. One eye, she said, (munching her toothless chops,) was open, and the other shut, and the long black hair, which he used, in that very room, to comb carefully every morning, was bound round the stump of the neck, to stop the blood, or rather to keep the hands of the authorities, who were to examine it, from being soiled! Another old woman said that she had been called as a witness to speak to its being actually the head of Andrew Forbes, and that she knew it principally from a large mole which he had under his left eye, and which he used to reckon a spot of beauty. The sister of Andrew said that she was from home when the authorities asked her to examine the head, and that the moment she returned, she hastened to George Begbie, the principal town-officer at that time, to ask him to let her see the remnant of her brother. The officer told her she was too late, as, though he could very easily shew her the head, she could not recognise a single feature of the face; but she insisted upon seeing it, and was led to one of the back houses adjoining the court-room, where she saw, lying in a heap, no fewer than fifty men's heads, all labelled with the names of the owners. The man, directed by the written name, took up the head she wanted to see; and, before she was aware of what she was doing, she had received into her hands the grim relic. One of the eyes (as the other speaker said) was staring open; its look was directed towards her, she became frightened, threw it down among the heap of heads, and flew out of the house. As these recitals were going forward, the old women kept smoking their pipes, and the young listeners, bound, to their seats with terror, were afraid to turn themselves round, for fear of encountering Andrew Forbes. Meanwhile the oldest son of the widow, less attentive to the recitals than the others, was amusing himself with a species of mock latch which was attached to the wall, and the use of which had often formed a subject of speculation to him, when, having given it a turn in a certain direction, the iron door of a press burst open, with a clang which roused the party at the fire and suspended their tragic tales. What were the pictures of romantic story-telling to what they now beheld! In a small recess, stood, upright, *Andrew Forbes himself*, dressed in the very same garb in which he had fought at Culloden; his claymore along-side of him, all his accoutrements complete and entire as they were on the day when he escaped from the field, and on his shoulders that identical head about which the old women had been conversing! We cannot attempt to describe the feelings of the party when this dreadful apparition met their eyes. The mystery was soon cleared up. The recess had, in former times, been used as a hole for criminals of a deep die, and was closed by a powerful spring which no one from the inside could act upon so as to open the door. Andrew Forbes had returned secretly to his house, and had taken refuge in the fatal hole; the spring had done its duty fatally, and the efforts of the prisoner having failed to liberate him, and no one having entered a house which was supposed to have been deserted, he had died of hunger. His body stood upright in consequence of the narrowness of the recess, which would not admit of its being doubled or extended. We believe this house, with the hole, was lately to be seen in the town of Perth.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

A CHRONICLE OF THE DEATH OF JAMES I.

THE scrupulous, we might almost say affected regard for what they conceive to be historical truth, on the part of many historians, leading them to admit nothing into their veritable histories but what has been "proven," and proven in such a manner as to please themselves, has been productive of at least this effect—that many a fact in history has been consigned to the regions of fable and romance, because supported only by that evidence which has hanged millions of God's creatures—viz., the testimony of witnesses. The weight of tradition, often the very best and truest evidence, in so far as it combines experience and faith, is, in the estimation of historiographers, overbalanced by a fragment of paper, provided it be written upon, and the writing be formed after some old court-hand, or black-letter style; though, after all, the valued antiquarian scrap, formed by the operation of one goose quill, moved by one hand, and that hand impelled by the mind of one frail mortal, may be merely a distorted relic of that very tradition which is so much despised. We do not profess to be fastidious in the selection of authorities. Tradition, in our opinion, ought to be tested by the experience of mankind: where it stands that test, it ought to be received as a part of veritable history; and sure we are, that, if by this mode anything may be thought to be lost in point of strict truth, it will be well balanced by what is gained in point of amusement. It is upon these principles we have selected, and now lay before our readers, an account of a well known catastrophe of Scottish history, much more full in its details than any that has yet been offered to the public.

In the beginning of the winter 1436, Sir Robert Graham (whose nephew, Patrick Graham, had been married to the daughter of David, Earl of Strathearn, and who himself bore that dignity) appeared at the royal residence of Walter Stuart, Duke of Athol, his kinsman, (the latter being uncle to Patrick, Earl of Strathearn's wife,) in a state of disguise. The night was far advanced when he arrived, and the Duke was called from his bed to see the visiter, who had been for some time under the ban of the stern authority of his Sovereign James I. The Duke knew well what was the main object of the Knight, though he was entirely ignorant of the special intelligence that the latter had to communicate to him. They met in the large wainscoted hall, which, in brighter days, had resounded to the merry sounds of the wassail of King Robert's sons, but which, ever since the accession of the reigning King, had echoed nothing but the sighs and groans of the persecuted victims of James' vengeance against all the relatives and supporters of the unfortunate house of Albany. The Duke and the Knight were now both old men, though the former was much in advance of the latter; they were both grandfathers—the grandson of the Duke being Sir Robert Stuart, Chamberlain to the King, and the grandson of the former being Malise Graham, who had been disinherited of his Earldom of Strathearn, by the unwise policy of the monarch; but, old and grey-headed as they were, they, true to the character of the age in which they lived, retained that fierce spirit of vengeance which was

held one of the cardinal virtues of the creed of nobility and knighthood of that extraordinary period.

As the Duke entered the hall, which was lighted only by a small lamp that stood on the oaken table at which the inhabitants of the castle dined, he required to use well both his eyes and his ears, obtuse as his external senses had become by age, before he was apprised of the situation occupied by the Knight, who, musing over his schemes of revenge, did not observe the Duke enter. He was roused from his reverie by the hand of his old friend, applied by way of slap to his shoulder, as if for the purpose of waking him from sleep—a power that seldom overcomes the restless spirit of vengeance.

"The arm of King James," said the Duke, "reaches farther than mine, and a smaller light than that glimmering taper that twinkles so mournfully in this ancient hall of the Stuarts, enables him to see farther than is now permitted to these old eyes; and yet you are here on the very borders of the Lowlands, and within a score miles of the court, where the enemy of our families holds undisputed sway. Are you not afraid of the Heading-hill of Stirling, which still shews the marks of the blood of the murdered Stuarts?"

"I have come from the fastnesses of the north," said Graham, as he took off his plaid, which was covered with snow, to shake it, and exhibited a belt well stored with daggers and hunting knives—"I have come from my residence among the eagles, like one of the old grey-headed birds with which I am become familiar, to warm the cold blood of a mountain life with some of the warm stream that nerves the arms of my enemies of the valley."

"Or rather," replied the Duke, smiling, "you have come to ask an old fox, with a head greyer than that of an eagle, to hunt with you, and guide you to the caves of your foes; but you have destroyed your scheme of vengeance, by advising your principal enemy of your intention. Why, speaking seriously, did you write such an epistle to the King? You have lived among your grey-headed friends to little purpose, when you have used one of their feathers as an instrument for telling your victim that another is to fledge the arrow that is to seek his heart's blood. Such an act may be said to be noble, when the avenger is to give his enemy a fair chance for his life; but that you do not intend to do, for your vengeance (which must be glutted in secret, if it is to be glutted at all) is not to be staid by the forms of the laws of chivalry. James is now on his guard. You have told him you intend to slay him—and slay him now if you can!"

"And, by the arms of the Grahams of Kincardine, I *will*, Athol—I *will*, I *shall*! Is it your Grace who would dissuade me from my purpose of revenge, merely because the fire is so furious that it sent forth a gleam on the victim that is destined to feel its scorching heat?—you, who have within these few minutes brought up to our burning imaginations, the bloody scene of the Heading-hill of Stirling, whereon perished so many of your kinsmen—you, whose Dukedom has been first wrested from you, and then bestowed on you in *liferent*, because you are *old*—you who should" (here he spoke into the ear of the Duke) "*be king!*"—pausing. "Who does not know that Robert III., your brother, was born out of lawful wedlock? His father never married Elizabeth

More; but who could doubt that Euphemia Ross, your mother, the widow of the famous Randolph, was joined to him in lawful wedlock? The people of Scotland know this, and they are sick of the bastard on the throne"—pausing again, and looking earnestly at the Duke through the gloom of the large hall. "Is it to be tolerated that legitimacy is to be longer trampled under foot by bastardy? Too long have you overlooked your right of blood; but it is not yet too late for ample amends. The usurper has done all in his power, by oppressing you and slaying your friends, to force you to assert and vindicate your indefeasible right, and gratify a legitimate revenge. In these veins," seizing the old man's shrivelled wrist, "runs the blood of *the Bruce!* What a thought is that!—what heart could resist its impulse? what brain its fire?"

After whispering, with great earnestness, this speech into the ear of the old Duke, Graham paused again, and looked at him. The words had produced the effect which they might have been expected to produce on the mind of one who had long dreamed over the same thoughts and purposes, and been fired by the same feelings, but who had been prevented, by unmanly fears, from obeying the dictates of his judgment, the call of his ambition, and the spur of revenge. The energetic manner in which the old fancies had been roused by the wily Graham throw him into a reverie, the result of which the Knight did not think fit to wait. He had already, to a certain extent, succeeded in stimulating the lethargy of age, and sending through the shrivelled veins of the scion of royalty, the blood that owned the influence of the passion-struck heart; it was now his purpose to keep the ground he had gained, and push for more; and as the Duke still stood muffled up in his morning-gown, and his chin upon his folded arms, the tempter proceeded—

"Your Grace has often declared to me," he continued, "that you have faith in our Highland seers, and believe the sounds of the *taish*, as given forth by the inspired visionary."

"Who can doubt these things?" replied the old Duke, looking seriously, and continuing his musing position. "I certainly never had the hardihood. I have seen too many instances of their verification to be sceptical on that head. The fate of the family of Albany, as Chambers will tell you, was foretold by a seer, many months before the execution of Duke Murdoch and his sons. But what has this to do with my persecution, or with my being King of Scotland? God knows, I have at this moment visions enough!—your remarks have roused my sleeping mind; yet I could almost say I dream."

"This dark hall, that little flickering lamp, and my presence at this late hour, may well produce an illusion; but I deal in no fancies. I have only truths to tell, and deeds to do—ay, and such deeds as may well cross the rapt eyes of the seer; Scotland has not seen such for many a day, sad and sorrowful as have been the fates of her kings. Will your Grace hear *your* fate, from the lips of a seer?"

"I would rather hear that of my enemy, who rules this kingdom with a rod of iron," replied the Duke.

"You will hear the fates and fortunes of both," said Graham—"ay, even as is seen the scales of justice, which, as the beam moves, lifts one, only to depress the other. If you will accompany me to a shepherd's hut, back among your own hills of Athol, you will hear what time has in store for you and King James."

"I will," replied the Duke, anxiously; "but age requires rest. I was hunting all day, and feel weary. Let us postpone our visit till to-morrow evening."

"Ah!" cried Graham, "the *hunter* may say he is wearied, but the *hunted* has no title to speak the language of nature. If we go at all, we must go *now*. The visions of the seer come on him during night. At the solemn hour of mid-

night, futurity is revealed to him—to the hunted outlaw whose bed is among the heather, there is not vouchsafed the ordinary certainty of seeing even another sun. Come, dress—I will lead your Grace's horse through the hills. We have no time to lose—the old enemy is before-hand with us, and our grizzled locks mock the tardiness of our revenge. Come!"

"My weakness leaves me under the charm of your words, Graham," said the old Duke. "Tell Malcolm to get my horse in readiness; meanwhile, I will dress, and be presently with you."

The Duke went up to his bedroom, and Graham sought the servant, who proceeded to obey his directions. He came again back to the hall, and, folding his arms, walked to and fro, muttering to himself, stopping at times, and raising his hand in a menacing attitude, as if he were wholly engrossed by one feeling of revenge, and then resuming his musing attitude. The Duke, dressed, belted, and muffled up in a large riding cloak, again roused him from his reverie. They proceeded to the court-yard, where the Duke mounted, and Graham, taking the bridle into his hand, took the horse away into a by-path that led to the hills. After proceeding forward for about an hour in the dark, they observed a small light, glimmering in the distance, and coming apparently from the window of some cottage. For this, Graham made as directly as the unevenness of the ground would permit; and, in a short time, they arrived at the door of the small dwelling, from the window of which the beam of light shot out amongst the darkness, suggesting the idea of life, and probably some of its comforts, (at the least, a fire,) amidst the dead stillness of a winter night in so dreary a situation.

At the door of this cottage, Graham rapped in a peculiar manner; and, without a word being spoken, it was opened by a young man clad in the Highland garb. The two friends entered. The scene presented to them was the ordinary appearance of a mountain hut in those days: a small fire of peats burned in the middle of the apartment, and sent out the light which, beaming through the small aperture in place of a window, had attracted the eyes of the guests. In a corner, a small truckle-bed, stuffed with heather, part of which protruded at the side and end, and covered with a coarse blanket or two, contained an old woman, with a clear, active eye, which twinkled in the light of the fire, and moved with great rapidity as she scanned narrowly the persons of the guests. In another corner was the bed of the young Highlander, composed simply of a collection of heather, and without blanket or covering of any kind. The guests seated themselves on two coarse stools that stood by the fire; holding their hands over the flame, to receive as much as possible of the heat, to thaw their limbs, which the freezing night air, co-operating with their advanced years, had stiffened and benumbed. While they were engaged in this preliminary, but indispensable operation, the young man who appeared restless and confused, placed another stool before the bed of the old woman, so that, when seated upon it, his back would be supported by the side of the bed, and his face in some degree concealed from the gaze of the guests, who, being on the other side of the peat fire, could, through the ascending smoke, see him only indistinctly and at intervals.

With the exception of a few words that had passed between the young Highlander and Graham—and which, being in Gaelic, were not understood by the royal Duke, who, though formerly Lord of Brechin and resident in the north, had been too long in leaving the royal residence of his father Robert II. to acquire the language—there was nothing for some time said. The guests continued their manual applications to the peat fire, and the young Gael, who had for some time been seated on his stool, threw himself occasionally back on the fore part of the bed, then





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brought himself forward again, and at intervals muttered quickly some words in Gaelic, accompanied with sounds of wonder and surprise, from all which he suddenly relapsed into quietness and silence. While these strange operations were going on, Graham directed the attention of the Duke to the uncouth actor, and whispered something in his ear which had the effect of rousing him, and making him look anxiously through the smoke, to get a better view of the strange gestures of the youth. The old woman in the bed, made, in the meantime, efforts as if she intended to speak; but these were repressed by a sudden motion of the youth, whose hand, slipped back, was applied as secretly as possible to her mouth, and then, in a menacing attitude, clenched and shaken in her face.

"Is your hour come yet, Allan?" said Graham, in a deep and serious voice.

"He says no," answered the old woman, with a sharp clear voice, from the bed, translating the Gaelic response of the youth; "but he sees signs o' an oncome."

"Is it to be a mute vision, Allan?" again said Graham; "or see you any signs of a *taisch*?"

"He thinks," said the woman again, as translator, "he will see again the face and feir o' a dead king, wha will speak wi' sobs and grains o' him wha will come after him, an' sit in the browden and burniest ha' o' Scone's auld palace, whar he will be crowned."

Silence again succeeded the clear notes of the woman's voice; the young man's movements and gestures recommenced; and the old Duke's attention was riveted by the strange proceedings which, to an absolute believer in the powers of the seer, were fraught with intense interest. The prophetic paroxysm seemed to approach more near: the body of the seer was bent stiffly back, and leant on the bed; his eyes were wide open and fixed upon a mental object; his hands were extended forth; his lips were apart; and every gesture indicated that state of the mind when, under the influence of a rapt vision, it takes from the body its nervous energy, and leaves the limbs as if under the power of a trance. He remained in this condition for fully five minutes; and then, throwing his arms about, he cried out some quickly-uttered words in Gaelic, which the old woman translated into—"It comes! it comes!" After a pause of a few minutes, during which the most death-like silence prevailed throughout the cottage, he began to move his hands slowly through the air, from right to left, as if he were following the progress of a passing creation of the mind; and, as he continued this movement, he spoke, in a deep, tremulous voice, with a kind of mournful, singing cadence, the Gaelic words which were continuously translated by the old woman.

"There comes slowly, as if frae the womb o' a cloud o' mountain mist, the seim o' a turreted abbey, wi' the tomb o' the Bruce and the monuments o' other kings, amang which a new grave, wi' the moul o' centuries o' rotten banes lying on its edge, and mixed wi' the skulls o' dead kings, an' arm-banes that ance bore the sceptre o' Scotland!—It is gane!—the seim has vanished, and my eye is again darkened!"

A deep silence succeeded, and lasted for several minutes. The speaker's hands again began to move from right to left, and slowly uttered words again came from his lips!

"The cloud throws back its misty faulds, and shews the wraith o' a gowd-graithit bier, movin to the wast; the Scotch lion is on the lid, and a shinin halbrik, owre whilk waves the royal pennon o' Scotland begirt wi' gowd, is carried afore, by the king-at-arms. A warlock, auld and shrivelled, wi' a white beard, touches, wi' his wand, the coffin, the lid lifts, and the head o' a king, wi' a leaden crown, rises frae the bier! A *taisch*! a *taisch*!—hark! the lips o' the dead open and move, and he speaks the weird that never deceives! 'Hail, Walter, King o' the Scots!'"

This extraordinary statement was accompanied by a kind of yell or scream, that rung through the cottage and pierced the ears of the listeners. Silence again followed, and lasted several minutes, during which the seer was quiet. The Duke was apparently entranced, and Graham looked wonder and surprise. The seer began again to move his hands, and speak as before:—

"The cloud throws back its misty faulds, and my eye follows the seim o' the royal chair o' Scone, wherein sits"—(a loud scream of surprise broke from the seer)—"Walter, Lord o' Brechin that was, Duke o' Athol that is—King o' Scotland that will be!"

These words were no sooner uttered than the Duke started from the stool on which he sat, and shewed strong indications of surprise and confusion. His belief in the predictions of a seer was, as was common in that age, unbounded; and, when he heard himself pronounced King of Scotland, his mind, freed from all manner of scepticism or doubt, reverted to the circumstance of the doubtful legitimacy of his half-brothers; the aspirations and day-dreams he had so long indulged seemed in an instant to have received the stamp of truth; the prospect of having his ambition at last gratified, by wearing the crown which his enemy now bore, inflamed his mind, and the coldness and lethargy of old age seemed to have been supplanted by the fire and energy of youth.

"Is the vision complete?" said he to the old woman, as he saw the seer gradually regaining his upright position, and resuming his natural manner, like one who had come out of a fit.

"Ay," replied she. "Allan is himsel again; but, if ye are the Duke o' Athol, as I tak ye to be, I could rede ye, before our reddin, never mair, aiblins, to meet on this side o' time, something that wad make your auld een glimmer through the smeik o' that ingle mair swith and deftly than could a' the visions o' the seers o' Scotland."

Graham looked alarmed at this unexpected speech of the old woman; and Allan, the seer, slipping gently his hand behind his back, stopped her mouth, and produced silence. The Duke and Graham left the cottage—the latter exhibiting a wish that the former should not remain longer, after the object was attained for which they had made their visit. They returned in the same way they had come; and for some time the Duke was so much occupied with the thoughts of the extraordinary vision he had got declared to him, that he rode forward, still led by Graham, without uttering a word. The night was, if possible, darker than it was when they left the castle; and the stillness of a lazy fall of snow reigned among the hills, unbroken by a single sound, even of the night-birds.

"It is then ordained above," said the Duke at last, in a low tone—"my lot is already cast among the destinies, and all the dreams of a long life are at last to be realized. I can scarcely believe that I have been awake for this last hour; yet what can be more certain, than that I am now suffering the cold of these hills, a bodily feeling which dreams cannot simulate? 'Walter, King of Scotland!' Ha! it sounds as well as James—we are both the first of our name. It is tardy justice, but it is justice accompanied by retribution; and when is the blood too thin and cold to feed the fire of revenge? When do the pulses of the old heart cease to quicken at the thought of a just retribution? When is the head too bald to bear a crown lined with purple velvet? My spirits, frozen by age and this cold night, are thawed by the fire of these visions of vengeance, and dance in the wild array of youthful delight. Ha! he took from me the fee of my dukedom, and gave me, because I was *old*, the usufruct, the liferent: I shall now have the usufruct of a *kingdom*—his kingdom by courtesy, *mine* by right. Hark, Graham! How is this vision to be realized? The seer pointed to James' death—who is to kill the tyrant?"

"I with this hand shall strike the blow," replied Graham—"my plans are already laid, and I wanted only your co-operation and assistance; for why, you know, should I be so provident as to kill one king, until another is ready to take his place?"

"I cannot speak lightly of this affair," said the Duke, in check of Graham's levity. "What are your plans? The fewer co-operators in a conspiracy the better."

"I know it," replied Graham. "Your grandson, Sir Robert Stuart, whom James has foolishly retained as Chamberlain, while he has taken from him his chance of succeeding you in your Dukedom, waits for your command to give us access to the royal chamber. The King is to celebrate the Christmas holidays at the monastery of the Dominicans in Perth; he comes to the point of our dagger, held by a hand nerved by a thousand wrongs, to plunge it into his bosom. I can command the services of Sir John Hall, and Christopher and Thomas Chambers, who cry for revenge for the murder of their master Albany; three hunder katherans are at my service, ready to do the work of death at my bidding; and all that was required to complete my schemes, was the consent of your Grace, now happily obtained, to the act which is to right you, to revenge you, to crown you."

"If the King is to be at Perth," replied the Duke, after a pause, "I shall be at the revels of Christmas. My grandson Sir Robert, who, as Chamberlain, may be said to be the keeper of the King, can let your three hundred katherans into the monastery, and the work may be finished with a facility which seldom attends the execution of the purposes of revenge."

"Your Grace has anticipated my very thoughts and words," replied the wily Graham. "Heaven aids the work of a just retribution on the head of the tyrant. Mark the supernatural coincidences. When was the vision of the seer presented to the living senses of the avenger of his own and his country's wrongs—the executioner of a tyrant, and the successor who is to occupy his throne—as if to urge them to their duty? When did the groaning victims of royal cruelty get a chamberlain to turn for them the key of the tyrant's sleeping room? And when were the suspicions of remorse and guilt of the wrongdoer so opportunely lulled as to give room to a confidence which brings him to the dagger's point?"

"Walter, King of Scotland!" ejaculated the Duke, who, during Graham's speech, had been musing over the sudden change in his fortunes. "Ha! how many acts shall I have to repeal! how many nobles to right! how many wounds to bind up of my bleeding country! Graham, you shall be Earl of Menteith, and your grandnephew, Malise, shall have, instead of that Earldom, his own Strathearn. How my mind burns with the thoughts of turning wrong into right, and taking the weight of the royal sceptre out of the scales of justice!"

By this time, the pair had arrived again at the palace of Athol. Their plans were completed: the Duke retired to dream of his crown and sceptre, and Graham returned to seek a heather bed, in his retreat, beyond the reach of his enemies.

Some time after, he met Allan the seer, whose surname was Mackay, among the hills. The Gael had apparently gone in quest of his employer, and seemed to have some important object to attain, by travelling so far as he had done to meet him.

"I peg your Honour's pardon," said the seer, as he came up to Graham; "te katherans are to pe at the red stane in te howe o' te hills, on te saxth. I hae seen a' te praw fallows, wha are as keen for te onset as te eagles o' Shehallion. Ye will meet them, dootless, and keep up the fire o' their pluid, pe te three grand powers—te speeches, te peat-reek, and te pay. Hoo did I manage te Duke? Te play was weel played, your Honour, though Allan Mackay

pe te man wha says it; and te mairs my credit, that I never pefore acted te seer in presence o' te son o' a king. Ugh—ugh! put it was a praw performance, and ane that deserves to pe weel paid for. Hoo muckle did your Honour promise to gie me for my remuneration? Te sum has clean escaped my memory."

"It was five merks, Allan," said Graham.

"I peg your pardon, your Honour," said Allan. "It was shust exactly seven; and little aneugh, seein I had my mither's mouth to keep close, for fear she wad peach te secret to te Duke, pesides te grand story o' Dumferlin Appey, and te funeral, and te taisch, and te Palace o' Scone, to invent and perform. King Shames's actors are petter paid for performin his 'Peebles to te Play.' Maybe your Honour can pay me te seven merks shust now?"

"I cannot quarrel with you, Allan," said Graham; "but our bargain was five. Here's your own sum, however. Since that night, I have had apprehensions about your mother's steadfastness. You must watch her, and prevent her from going from home. Women have been the ruin of all plots, since the beginning of the world."

"That was shust what I was to speak about, next after the payment your Honour," said Allan. "She's awa owre the hills already, Cot knows whar."

"What!" cried Graham, in great agitation—"has she gone away without your knowledge, and without telling you whither she was going?"

"That's shust the very thing I hae to inform ye o'," replied the phlegmatic Gael. "Te last time I saw her was on Wednesday morning, when she was warstlin wi' the winds that plaw ower te tap o' te hill o' Gary. A glint o' the risin sun shewed me her red cloak as it fluttered in te plast, and, in a moment after, a' my powers o' the second sight couldna discover her. But we've ae satisfaction—she's no awa to the Duke. Put maybe" (turning up his eye, sliely) "she's awa to King Shames. I would follow her, and pring her pack, put I require te seven merks I hae got frae your Honour, for other necessary occasions, and purposes, and necessities; and a pody canna travel in the Lowlands, whar there's nae heather to sleep on, without pawbees."

"Death and fury!" cried the agitated Graham, "are all my long-meditated schemes of revenge, are the concerted purposes for cutting off a tyrant and righting a nation, to be counteracted by the wag of an old woman's tongue? Allan," (lowering his voice,) "you must after your mother—dog her through hill and dale, highway and city vennel; seize her, by force or guile; prevent her from seeking the presence of the King, or those who may have the power of communicating with him; and get her back to her cottage, on the peril of all our lives. Here's money for you," (giving him a purse,) "and here is a passport to the confidence of Sir Robert Stuart, the King's Chamberlain, one of our friends, who will co-operate with you, in preventing her from approaching the royal presence."

"She's a Lowlander, your Honour," said Allan, putting the money in his pocket; "and maybe she's awa to see her praw freends o' the south, whar she gaes ance a-year, shust about this time; put, to oplige, and favour, and satisfy your Honour, I'll awa doon te Strath o' te Tay; and, if I dinna find her wi' her relations in Dundee, there may be some reason, and occasion, and authority for your Honour's apprehension, and for my crossin te Tay and te Forth, to prevent her frae payin her respects to Shames, whilk she wad think nae mair o' doin than o' speakin in the way she did to the Duke o' Athol."

"Away—away, then!" cried Graham; "and remember that your head's at stake as well as that of the best of us. So look to yourself."

Graham went away to an appointed place, where he was to meet Sir John Hall, who was to accompany him to the meeting of the katherans, and Allan went back to the

cottage, and, taking out some necessaries, proceeded to Strath Tay. He arrived at the town of Dundee next evening; and, having ascertained that his mother had crossed over to Fife, had no doubt that she was away to Edinburgh, for the purpose of communicating to King James what she knew of the conspiracy of the north. He, therefore, also crossed the Tay, proceeded through Fife, and, after considerable delay, produced by ineffectual inquiries after an old woman in a red cloak, he arrived in Edinburgh on the third day after he had set out from his cottage. He had procured no trace of his mother, and all his wanderings and searchings through the Scottish metropolis were unavailing—he could neither see her nor hear of her; and he therefore resolved to wait upon Sir Robert Stewart, to put him on his guard, lest she might, by her cunning, escape also his notice, and get access to the King by means of some subtle story told to the usher. He had no difficulty in getting access to Sir Robert, who was, about that time, too much occupied with secret messengers from the seat of the conspiracy in which he had engaged, to hesitate an instant about consenting to see the Gael, who, he doubted not, came from Sir Robert Graham, or his grandfather, the Duke—both, he knew, deeply engaged in the secret affair. Having been admitted, Allan, as he walked up to the end of the apartment where Sir Robert was seated, looked cautiously around; and, seeing no one near, assumed an attitude and demeanour somewhat bolder, but still suited to the secrecy of his message.

“Has your Honour seen an old woman in a red cloak, apoot the precincts o’ the King’s residence?” said he, in a whispering tone, as he slipped Graham’s token—a piece of paper with ciphers on it—into Sir Robert’s hand.

“Sir Robert has himself written me about that beldam,” said the Chamberlain. “She is in our secret, I understand—an extraordinary instance of imprudence, which I must have explained to me. Meantime, the danger must be averted. I have not seen her. Have you, sir?”

“No,” answered Allan. “I wish I could get a climpse o’ her. It’s te very thing I want. She would never see te face o’ te King, if she ance crossed my path—tamm her!”

“What would you do with her?” inquired the Chamberlain, eagerly. “I wish we could get her out of the way. You know what I mean: a sum of money is of no importance in comparison of security—real, absolute, undoubted security—from this plague. You understand me?” And he touched his sword, to make himself better understood.

“Understand ye!—ugh, ugh, your Honour,” cried the Gael, “there was nae occasion for touchin te sword; your words are sharp aneugh for gettin to my intellects. You mean” (whispering in the Chamberlain’s ear) “that, for a praw consideration and remuneration, I might kill te auld hag. Eh! isn’t that it, your Honour?”

“Supposing, but not admitting, that that was my meaning,” said the Chamberlain, cautiously, “what would you say to the proposition?”

“Say to’t, your Honour!” said Allan. “Ugh! ugh! Let your Honour say te word and pay te remuneration, and te auld harridan is dead twa hoors after I get a climpse o’ her. Of course,” (looking knowingly into the Chamberlain’s face,) “your Honour would protect me till I got to te hills. Te work itsel is naething—an auld wife’s easy kill—it’s no pe tat te remuneration should be measured—it’s pe te risk o’ hangin. Was it ten merks your Honour said?”

“I did not mention any sum,” said the Chamberlain; “but you may have twenty, if you relieve us of this fear in the manner you have yourself mentioned.”

“Ten in hand, I fancy,” said the Gael—“word for word, your Honour. If I trust you ten merks, you may trust me te trifle o’ killin an auld wife—a mere pagatelle—I hae killt twenty shust to please te Wolf o’ Padenoch’s son, Duncan.”

“But do you know the woman?” said the Chamberlain. “I think I do,” answered Allan. “There’s nae fear o’ a mistake; put, if I should kill ae auld wife for anither, whar’s te harm? The right ane can easily be killt afterwards.”

The importance of being entirely relieved from the danger that thus impended over the heads of the conspirators, was very apparent to Sir Robert Stuart. He knew well the character of James: a hint was often sufficient for him; and the statement of a woman, if it quadrated with known facts and suspicions, would be believed; inquiry would follow; one fact would lead to another, and the whole scheme be laid open. He, therefore, eagerly closed with Allan’s offer; the ten merks were paid, and it was agreed upon that the murderer should receive his other ten merks, as well as harbourage and protection, upon satisfying the Chamberlain that the deed was executed. Well pleased at having made so easily a sum of considerable magnitude in those days, Allan went to look for his mother—not, it may readily be conceived, for the purpose of killing her, but simply with the view of getting her out of the way, until the King had set off for Perth, which he understood he would do in a few days.

He wandered round the skirts of the town, musing on his good fortune, looking at the novelties that presented themselves to his view, and keeping a sharp eye for a red cloak. In this way, he past the time, until the grey of the twilight; when, as he sauntered along the foot of the Calton Hill, he saw, lying in a sequestered spot, his aged parent, wrapped up in her red cloak, and apparently in a sound sleep, into which she had, in all likelihood, fallen, from the excessive fatigue to which she had been exposed in her long journey to the metropolis. The affection of the son produced only an involuntary sigh, and a musing attitude of a few moments. He hastened to the residence of the Chamberlain; and, as he passed the door of a flesher who was killing sheep, ran in, and, without saying a word, dipped his sword in the blood, and then proceeded on his way. He got instant admittance to his employer, who was sitting alone, occupied by the thoughts of the mighty and dangerous enterprise on which he had entered. Slipping up to him, with an air of great secrecy, he stood before him:—

“She’s dead,” said Allan, looking into the face of Graham, with an expression of countenance in which triumph and cunning were strangely blended.

“You are a most expeditious workman,” replied the Chamberlain; “but where is the evidence of our being freed from this plague?”

“Will her heart’s pluid satisfy ye?” replied Allan, holding up the sword covered with the sheep’s blood. “Waur evidence has hanged a shentleman before noo. Ye ken there’s twa kinds o’ pluid in the human body—a red and a plack: the ane comes frae flesh wounds o’ the skean dhu when its bashfu and winna gang far ben, and the other follows the plow o’ the determined dirk when it seeks the habitation o’ life in te heart itsel. Does yer Honour ken the difference? What say ye to that?”—shewing him the sword. “I’m sure ye never saw ponnier plack pluid i’ the heart o’ a courtier o’ King Shames.”

“You are getting ironical in your probation,” said the Chamberlain. “I’m no judge of the difference of veinous and arterial blood; but, if I were, how am I to be satisfied that this is the life-stream of the old woman?”

“Nae other auld plack tevel could hae kept it sae lang in her gizzard,” replied the Gael; “put I’m no limited, to this evidence. An honest man’s like gowd—he rejoices in the fiery furnace. I’ll shew ye the pody o’ the treacherous hag hersel, wha would hae sent us a’ to the head o’ her clan, Satan, if I hadna peen before-hand wi’ her. She lies on the Calton yonder as quietly as if she were in the Greyfriars;

and if your Honour will accompany me, ye may satisfy yer-
sel o' the absolute truth and verity o' my statement."

"The dead body cannot be long there," answered Sir Robert, "without being discovered; and by approaching the spot we may subject ourselves to suspicion, especially if you were previously seen hounding about the place."

"Ugh! ugh! Is that a' your Honour kens o' a Gael's prudence?" replied Allan. "Think ye I wanted to let your Edinburghers see how neatly we Gaels can strike pelow the fifth rib? Na! I was working for ten ten merks, and the salvation o' mysel, your Honour, and Sir Robert Graham; and if the auld witch hersel wasna inclined to spake o' the affair, it didna pecome me to say a single word. She took it as quietly and decently as I'll receive the ten merks (and whatever mair my expedition merits) frae the hands o' yer Honour. Put the night's fain, and there's nae danger in looking at the pody o' a dead wife. Come, your Honour, and trust to me for your guide."

The Chamberlain, pleased with the issue of his negociation, was, notwithstanding, fully aware of the danger to which he was exposed by his connection with the murderer. He hesitated about examining the evidence of the murder; but how otherwise could he have any faith in the statement of the Highlander? and his peace of mind as well as the safety of his colleagues would repay the slight risk he ran in taking a cursory view of the body of the murdered woman. He resolved, therefore, on accompanying Allan to the spot; and having requested the Gael to go before, he secretly followed him, until he saw his guide stop, and point with his finger to the spot where his mother lay. Still under an alarm, which the increasing gloom might have in some measure allayed, he walked irresolutely forward, and having seen the body of the woman, wrapped up in the red cloak, lying extended on the ground, he had not the slightest doubt that she was dead, having been killed by the stern Gael. He instantly retreated; and, having waited for the approach of Allan, paid him twenty merks, (being ten in addition,) and requested him to fly with all expedition to the Highlands. Allan received the money, counting it with a nonchalance which surprised the Chamberlain; and, bidding him good night, walked away to waken his mother and take her to a warm bed, while the other went home, delighted that this great danger had been so easily averted.

Some days afterwards, the King and Queen set out for Perth—Sir Robert Stuart, now freed from all alarm, having preceded them, for the purpose of making the necessary preparations at Dundee for the reception of his royal master and mistress, and for their journey along the north bank of the Tay to Perth. The royal party arrived at Leith about twelve o'clock of the day, for the purpose of embarking in a yacht, which was to carry them across the Forth. A large assemblage of people was present, collected from Edinburgh and Leith, to see the embarkation; among whom the courtiers, dressed in their gay robes, were conspicuous—as well from their dresses as the air of authority they assumed, on an occasion which some of them might suspect was to be the last in which their monarch would ever require their attendance. The sounds of the carriages and horses, of a tumultuous crowd, and of those actually engaged in the embarkation—with the crushing of anxious spectators, and the efforts of the military to produce order, and make room for the progress of the party towards the yacht—produced the confusion generally attending such a scene. The Queen had been escorted forward to the side of the vessel, and been assisted on board; and the King was on the eye of taking the step which was to remove him from the pier into the yacht, when an old woman, wrapped in a red cloak, rushed forward, and, holding up two spare, wrinkled arms in the face of the monarch, cried, in a wild and prophetic manner—

:" James Stuart, receive this warning! It is not made

in vain, however it may be received. If you cross the Scottish sea, betwixt and the feast o' Christmas, you will never come back again in life."

Having said these words, she waved her hands and disappeared. Struck with her solemn and impressive manner, and her extraordinary appearance, James started, and stood for a moment mute. Recollecting himself, he called out to a knight to follow, and question her. He obeyed; but, ere he could make his way among the crowd, Allan Mackay had seized his mother, (for such she was,) and hurried her beyond the reach of the courtiers. The event struck James forcibly. He concealed it from his Queen; but, during the passage to Kirkcaldy, he was remarked to be silent and abstracted—a mood which remained on him during a great part of his journey. At Dundee, he repaired to the palace, in St Margaret's Close, where he still meditated secretly on the strange warning, and compared it with the denunciation and threat contained in the letter he had some time before received from Sir Robert Graham. After retiring to his chamber, he sent for Sir Robert Stewart, to commune with him on matters of importance. The message alarmed the guilty Chamberlain, who conceived that the conspiracy of the north had been discovered, in spite of his murderous effort to conceal it, by the death of the Highland woman. He repaired to the presence chamber, trembling, and full of fearful anticipations.

"Sir Robert," said the King, as the Chamberlain approached him, "I am filled with gloomy apprehensions of a violent death, that will prevent me from recrossing the Forth. Have you heard anything of late of my bitter foe Graham, who has denounced me? Are you certain he is not hatching against me some bloody conspiracy in these fastnesses of the north?"

The question went to the heart of the conspirator. He gave up all for lost, and guilt supplied all that was wanting in the King's speech to fix upon him the reproach of plotting against the life of his Sovereign. Happily, James did not observe his agitation, having relapsed, after his question, into the gloomy despondency in which he had, for several days, been immersed. All the resolution of the guilty man was required to enable him to utter a solitary question.

"What reason has your Majesty," he said, "for entertaining these fears, apparently so unfounded?"

"I have been warned," replied the King, in a deep voice—"surely by a messenger from Heaven. As I stood on the pier of Leith, ready to step into the yacht, a strange woman, muffled up in a red cloak, approached me, and, holding out her hands, warned me against crossing the Forth, and said that, if I did, I would never come back alive. Her manner was supernatural, her voice hollow and grave-like. She disappeared, and, notwithstanding the efforts of my messengers to seize her, could nowhere be found. I cannot shake this vision from my mind. Every one knows that I despise superstitious fears; but that very circumstance makes my gloom and despondency the more remarkable."

This speech struck another chord in the mind of the guilty courtier. No doubt had remained in his mind, that the old woman in the red cloak, mentioned by Sir Robert Graham, had been by his orders killed; he had seen her blood on the fatal sword, and he had seen her body lying lifeless on the ground. Who, then, was this second old woman in the red cloak, that had made such a fearful impression upon the King? Had Heaven not taken up arms against him, and reincorporated the departed spirit of the murdered woman, for the purpose of her humane object being still attained? Had not the King himself, the most dauntless of men, said the figure was supernatural? And, above all, was it not certain that there was a just occasion for the interposition of Providence when one of the rulers

of the earth, who have often been protected by Heaven, was about to fall a victim to a cruel purpose, in which he himself was engaged? These thoughts passed through his mind with the rapidity of light, and struck his heart with a remorse and fear which made him quake. James looked at him with surprise; but attributed his agitation to the strange tidings he had communicated regarding the supposed supernatural visitation. Relieved, however, from the fear of personal danger produced by the King's first announcement, the guilty Chamberlain endeavoured to shake off his superstitious feelings, and, summoning all his powers, contrived to put together a few sentences of vulgar scepticism, recommending to the King not to allow the ravings of a maniac (as the old woman undoubtedly was) to disturb his tranquillity, or interfere with his sound and philosophical notions of the government of the universe.

The King proceeded to Perth, and subsequently overcame the feeling of apprehension and despondency produced by the supposed apparition; and the Chamberlain got again so completely entangled in the details of his conspiracy, that the affair passed from his mind also. By the time the festivities of Christmas came to be celebrated, the apprehensions of evil had died away, just in proportion as the real danger became every day more to be dreaded. The power of the Chamberlain was now exercised vigorously, and with ill-merited success. He contrived to gain over to his side many of the royal guards; while Sir Robert Graham was not less successful in his organization of the external forces, composed of wild and daring katherans, ready, on being let into the palace, to spread death and desolation wherever they came. Meanwhile, the Duke of Athol dreamed his day-dream of royalty, and indulged in all the intoxicating visions of state and power which he thought were on the point of being realized. Yet the conspiracy was confined to a very few influential individuals—the Duke himself, Graham, Stewart, Hall, and Chambers, being almost the only persons, of any distinction or authority, who had been asked to join the bold enterprise; and these, it is supposed, would not have ventured on the scheme, had they not been blindfolded by personal cravings of insatiable revenge, which prevented all prudential calculations of consequences.

As the revels approached, the Chamberlain took care to prevail upon the King to send an invitation to those of the conspirators who were considered to be so much in favour at court as to be entitled to that mark of the royal favour, while especial care was also taken to get the invitations to the *real* friends of the King so distributed that there should, on the night intended for the murder, be collected in the monastery as few as possible of the latter, and as many of the former as the King could be prevailed upon to invite. There would thus be insidious enemies within, at the head of whom would be the Duke of Athol; and fierce foes without, led by the furious and blood-thirsty Graham, to the latter of whom, by the bribing of the guards, a free passage would be opened to the sleeping apartment of the King, where the bloody scene was intended to be acted in presence of the Queen.

It was on the night of the 20th of February that the conspirators had resolved to execute their work of death. All things were carefully prepared: wooden boards were placed across the moat which surrounded the monastery, to enable the conspirators to pass unknown to the warders, who were placed only at the entrances; and the extraordinary precaution was taken by the Chamberlain, to destroy the locks of the royal bedchamber, and of those of the outer room with which it communicated, whereby it would be impossible for those within to secure the doors, and to prevent the entrance of the party. Meanwhile, in the inside of the monastery, a gay party was collected, consisting of young and gallant nobles and knights, and crowds of fair damsels, dressed in the glowing colours so much beloved by the

belles of that age. In the midst of this happy group, were the traitors, Sir Robert Stuart and his aged grandfather Athol, who looked and smiled upon the scene, while they knew that, in a few minutes, that presence chamber would, in all likelihood, be flowing with the blood of the King who sat beside them, and become, through their means, a scene of massacre and carnage.

Of all the individuals in the royal presence chamber on that night, no one was more joyous than the merry monarch himself. A poet of exquisite humour, as well exemplified in his performance of "Peebles to the Play," he was the life and spirit of the amusements of the evening which consisted chiefly of the recitation of poetical stories; the reading of romances; the playing on the harp to the plaintive tunes of the old Scottish ballads—(the touching words being the suitable accompaniment;) the game of tables; and all the other diversions of the age. In all this, the King joined with (it is said) greater pleasure and alacrity than he had exhibited for many years. In the midst of his jests and merry sayings, he even laughed and made light of a prophecy which had foretold his death in that year—an allusion perfectly understood by those who knew of the apparition of the old woman in the red cloak, whose warning, though not forgotten, was now treated with his accustomed levity. In playing at chess with a young knight, over whose shoulder the grey-bearded Athol looked smilingly into the face of the King, his jesting and merriment was kept up and exercised in a manner that suggested the most extraordinary coincidences. He had been accustomed to call the young knight "the king of love;" and, in allusion to the warning, advised him to look well to his safety, as they were the only two kings in the land. The old Duke started as he heard this statement come from the mouth of one on the very eve of being consigned to the dagger; and for a moment thought that the conspiracy had been discovered; but a second look at the joyous merry-maker left no doubt on his mind that his jesting was the mere overflow of an exuberance of spirits.

At this moment, a hundred wild and kilted katherans, armed with swords and knives, and thirsting for blood, were lurking in the dark angles of the court of the monastery, directing their eyes to the blazing windows of the presence chamber, and listening to the sounds of the revels. The conspirators within knew, by a concerted signal, that Graham and his party were in this situation, and looked anxiously for the breaking up of the entertainment; but the King was inclined to prolong the amusements, and the hour was getting near midnight. While the King was engaged in play with the young knight, Christopher Chambers, one of the conspirators, was seized with a fit of remorse, and repeatedly approached the royal presence, with a view to inform James of his danger; but the crowd of knights and ladies who filled the presence chamber, prevented him from executing his purpose. The amusements continued; it was now long past midnight, and Stuart and Athol heard, at length, the long wished for declaration of the King, that the revels should be concluded.

Just as James had uttered this wish, the usher of the presence chamber approached Stuart, and whispered in his ear that an old woman, wrapped up in a red cloak, was at the door, and requested permission to see and speak with the King. The guilty Chamberlain, who was on the point of giving the fatal signal, heard the statement with horror, and recoiled back from the usher; but the die was cast, and even the powers of heaven were disregarded amidst the turmoil of wild thoughts that were then careering through his excited mind. "Bid her begone—thrust her from the door!" he whispered, in the ear of the usher, and applied himself again to the dreadful work in which he was engaged.

Soon after this, the King called for the parting cup, and the company dispersed—Athol and Stuart being the last

to leave the apartment. With the view of going to bed, James and his Queen now retired to the sleeping chamber, where the merry monarch, still under the influence of high spirits, stood before the fire in his night-gown, talking gaily with those around him. At that moment, a clang of arms was heard, and a blaze of torches was seen in the court of the monastery. The quick mind of the King saw his danger in an instant: a suspicion of treason, and a dread of his blood-thirsty enemy, Graham, were his first thoughts. Alarm was now the prevailing power; and the ladies of the bedchamber, rushing into the sleeping room, cried that treason was abroad. The Queen and her attendants flew to secure the doors; the locks were useless; and the certainty of having been betrayed by his Chamberlain now occupied the mind of the King. Yet, though he saw his destruction resolved on, he did not lose presence of mind. He called to his Queen and ladies to obstruct all entrance as long as they could, and rushed to the windows. They were firmly secured by iron bars, and all escape, in that way, was impossible. The clang of arms increased; and the sounds of the approach of armed men along the passages, came every instant nearer and nearer. The ladies screamed, and held the doors; the King was in despair; and, seizing a pair of tongs from the fireplace, with unexampled force wrenched up the boards of the floor, and descended into a vault below, while the ladies replaced the covering.

A slight hope was now entertained that he might escape. The vault communicated with the outer court; but, unfortunately, the passage had been shortly before, by the King's own orders, built up, to prevent the tennis balls of the players in the tennis court, to which the passage led, from rolling into the vault, (as they had often done,) and being lost. There was, therefore, no escape. Meanwhile, Graham and his katherans rushed towards the bedchamber, and having slain Walter Straiton, a page they met in the passage, began to force open the door, amidst the shrieks of the women, who still, though weakly, attempted to barricade it. An extraordinary circumstance here occurred: Catherine Douglas, with the heroic resolution of her family, thrust her arm into the staple from which the bolt had been taken by the traitors—and in an instant it was snapt asunder. The conspirators, yelling like fiends, and, with bloody daggers and knives in their hands, now rushed into the room, and cowardly stabbed some of the defenceless ladies, as they fled screaming round the apartment or trying vainly to hide themselves in its corners and beneath the bed. The Queen herself never moved: horror had thrown its cataleptic power over her frame; she stood rooted to the floor, a striking spectacle—her hair hanging over her shoulders, and nothing on her but her kirtle and mantle. In this situation, she was stabbed by one of the conspirators, and was only saved from the knives of others and death itself, by a son of Graham's, who, impatient for the life of the King, commanded the men to leave such work for that which was more important. The King was not to be found; and a suspicion gained ground, that he had escaped from the sleeping room by the door. A search was therefore made throughout the whole monastery, in all the outer rooms along the corridor, and in the court; and had it not been that Stewart assured them that it was impossible the King could have escaped beyond the walls, the search would have been relinquished in despair.

Meanwhile, the citizens and the nobles, who were quartered in the town, heard the tumult, and were hastening to the spot. The King might yet be saved; for his place of escape had not been discovered, and rescue was at hand. Alas! his own impatience brought on his head the ruin that seemed to be averted. Hearing all quiet, he fancied that the traitors had relinquished the search, and called up from the vault to the ladies to bring the sheets from the bed and draw him up again into the apartment. In attempt-

ing this, one of the ladies, Elizabeth Douglas, fell down into the vault. The noise recalled the murderers. Thomas Chambers, who knew all the holes and recesses of the monastery, suddenly remembered the small vault, and concluded that James must be concealed there. He therefore returned; the torn floor caught his eye; the planks were again lifted, and a blazing torch was soon held down into the dark hole. The King and the unfortunate lady, who lay apparently breathless beside him, were seen; and, glorying in his discovery, the relentless ruffian shouted aloud with savage merriment, and called his companions back; "for," as he said, "the bride was found for whom they had sought and carolled all night." A dreadful scene was now enacted in the vault, in the hearing of the Queen, who, with her attendants, was still in the apartment. Sir John Hall first leapt down; but James, strong in his agony, throttled him, and flung him beneath his feet. Hall's brother next descended, and met the same fate; and now came the arch enemy, Sir Robert Graham. Like a roaring tiger, he threw himself into the hole, and James, bleeding sore from the wounds of Hall's knives, was overcome and fell with the stern murderer over him. The wretched monarch implored mercy and begged his life, should it be at the price of half his kingdom.

"Thou cruel tyrant," said Graham, "never hadst thou compassion on thine own noble kindred; therefore, expect none from me."

"At least," cried James, "let me have a confessor for the good of my soul."

"None," replied Graham, "but this sword!" Upon which, he stabbed him in a vital part; but the King continued to implore so piteously for mercy that even Graham's nerves were shaken, and he felt inclined to fly from the dreadful scene.

His companions above noticed this change; and, as he was scrambling up, leaving the King still breathing, they threatened him with death if he did not complete the work. He at last obeyed, and struck the King many times till he died.

The story of the Highland woman who appeared to King James, which, to historians, has so long been a subject of mystery, is thus, by our chronicle, cleared up. We may afterwards do the same good office to other curious and doubtful parts of Scottish history; but, in the meantime, as it may be satisfactory to know the fate of those bold conspirators who executed so desperate a purpose as that we have narrated, we may mention that the Queen never rested till she had brought them all to justice. Never was retribution so certain, so ample, so merited, and so satisfactory to a whole people; for James' alleged harshness was confined to the nobles, and never extended to the people, who loved the royal poet and revered their King. Sir Robert Stuart and Thomas Chambers were first taken; and, upon a confession of their guilt, were beheaded on a high scaffold, raised in the market-place, and their heads fixed on the gates of Perth. Athol next suffered; and, as he had sighed for a crown, his head, when it was severed from his body, was encompassed by an iron one. Graham was next seized; and, after the manner of the times, was tortured, before his execution, in a manner which we cannot describe. Hall, and all the others, suffered a similar fate; and it was alleged that not a single individual who had a hand in the terrible tragedy was allowed to escape—thus justifying the ways of God, where vengeance, though sometimes concealed, sooner or later overtakes those who contravene his laws.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS.

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SKEAN DHU

"BLESS me, Angus! do you wear a weapon of that kind about you?—I never knew it before," said John Sommerville to his friend Angus M'Intyre, as he sat looking at him one morning performing his toilet; an operation which discovered the latter thrusting a *skean dhu*—which all our readers know is a short knife, with a black horn handle, once a favourite weapon of the Highlanders—beneath the breast of his coat, into a sheath which seemed to have been placed there for the especial purpose.

"Did you not know that before, John?" said Angus, with a faint smile, but at the same time evidently desiring that there should be no more remarks made on the subject; for he hastily buttoned up his coat, after having placed the weapon in its sheath, as if to cut the conversation short by putting its subject out of sight.

"No, indeed, I did not," replied Sommerville. "I never saw it before, and never heard you carried such a thing about you. It's a dangerous weapon, Angus; and you are a more dangerous man than I thought you," he added, smiling.

"Tuts—nonsense, man," said M'Intyre, impatiently. "It'll never harm you, at any rate, John."

"No, no; I dare say not," replied his friend, good humouredly; "but it may hurt others, though. Let me see it, Mac." Angus reluctantly complied with his request, and put the tiny, but formidable weapon into his hands.

"It has my initials, I declare, on the handle!" exclaimed Sommerville, as he looked at the letters J. S. which were engraved on the but-end of the knife.

"Yes," replied his friend—"it belonged to my maternal grandfather, John Stewart of Ardnahulish."

Sommerville returned the weapon without further remark; and here the conversation dropped. We will avail ourselves of the opportunity to say who the parties were whom we have thus somewhat abruptly introduced to the reader.

Angus M'Intyre was a native of the island of Sky, in the West Highlands of Scotland, and was, at the period of our story, (now a pretty old one, as it happened in the year 17—,) an officer of excise in Glasgow. At this period, the Highland character had not lost all its original ferocity, and consequently the circumstance of an officer of excise, who was a Highlander, wearing a dirk, even in the discharge of the peaceable duties, though they were not always so either, that fell to his lot in a large town, was not by any means considered so very extraordinary a thing as it would be now. M'Intyre, as we have said, was a native of the West Highlands of Scotland, and an admirable specimen of the hardy and intrepid race from which he sprung. He was a very handsome man, and of the most daring courage, as had been often proven in the perilous adventures in which his profession occasionally engaged him. He was however, of a remarkably quiet disposition, though fiery and irascible when provoked; but so much did the former prevail in his nature, that no one who did not know him intimately would have guessed how fiery a spirit lay couched underneath this thin covering of placidity, nor deemed, unless they saw that spirit roused, how formidable a man in his anger

its possessor was. Yet, withal, was he a man of a kind and generous heart. The habit of carrying the deadly weapon to which we have alluded, Angus had acquired, when a youth, in the Highlands, where it was then common to be so armed; and this habit had adhered to him, notwithstanding the entire change of life to which his new occupation, as an excise officer, had introduced him. Angus, in short, although they had made him a clergyman, would, it was believed by those who knew him, have carried his *skean dhu* with him to the pulpit. He made no boast, however, of being possessed of this weapon. On the contrary, as we have already in part shewn, he very much disliked any allusion to it; for it was known, by a few of his most intimate friends, that he did carry such a thing about with him, and by these such allusions were sometimes made; but the former, although they had often seen his naturally fiery temper put to very severe test, never knew an instance of his having taken advantage of his concealed arms, even to the extent of a threat, excepting in the single instance of which we are about to speak; but that alone is sufficient to shew, in a very striking light, we think, the miserable effects of introducing or maintaining barbarous habits, more especially that of wearing secret weapons, into civilized and social life.

Of Sommerville, we have not much to say in the way of description. He was in the same service with M'Intyre—that is, the excise; and was about the same age—thirty-two or thirty-three. They were intimate friends, and as frequently together as the nature of their duties would permit; and were both unmarried. On the same day on which the conversation with which we opened our story took place, it happened that Angus and Sommerville were invited together to a tavern dinner, in the Saltmarket, with some mutual friends. About an hour previous to that appointed for the festive meeting, Sommerville called on M'Intyre, at his lodgings, with the view of waiting for him, that they might go together to the house where they were to dine. A few minutes before they left M'Intyre's lodgings for this purpose, Sommerville said, playfully—

"By the by, Mac, I hope you do not intend taking that infernal weapon with you to-night?"

"Tuts, man," replied M'Intyre, somewhat testily, "never mind it. What need ye always harp on that string? Did you never know of a gentleman wearing a dirk before? It's no such extraordinary or terrible thing, surely."

"Terrible enough in reckless hands," said Sommerville.

M'Intyre looked more and more displeased, as his friend continued to cling to the subject; but his only reply was—
"Nonsense, John. Come, let us be going—it's near the hour."

"Well, I tell you what it is, Angus," remarked his friend, banteringly, and still pertinaciously dwelling on the *skean dhu*—"I won't sit beside you to-night—I'll take care of that. No, nor within arm's length of you either."

"Sit where you please," replied M'Intyre, angrily; and he flung out of the apartment, followed by Sommerville.

On their reaching the tavern, the company were already assembled, and were waiting their presence before sitting

down to table. As soon as they entered, however, places were taken; and it happened, by chance, that the only vacant chair left for Sommerville, was one next his friend M'Intyre. On observing this, the former jokingly declined it, saying—

"No, no, Mac—I won't sit near you, as I said before. Ye're no canny—I have discovered that." And he winked significantly; and, following up the jesting resolution which he had just expressed, he eventually took his place at a different part of the table. M'Intyre said nothing in reply to his friend's remarks; but there was a frown upon his brow that shewed pretty plainly, though none present observed it, that he was very far from being pleased with them. In truth, he was highly irritated at what appeared to him the silly, provoking pertinacity of his friend, in dwelling on a subject which, he thought, the latter might have discovered before, by his manner, was disagreeable to him. Nay, to make matters worse, he had no doubt that he had discovered it; and that this, instead of being considered by him as a reason for refraining, was deemed directly the reverse—an excellent source of small annoyance. What followed on this fatal night will, we think, be most graphically related in the words of a person, another intimate friend of M'Intyre's, who was present:—

"At the close of the entertainment," said the person alluded to, "which was protracted to a pretty late hour, some high words suddenly arose between M'Intyre and Sommerville; the former being evidently predisposed, from some cause or other, to quarrel with the latter; but so few were they, that I paid but little attention to them, and had no difficulty in reconciling the parties, as I imagined; but in this, at least in so far as regarded M'Intyre, I was mistaken. No more words, however, of an angry nature passed between them. At length the party broke up—M'Intyre, Sommerville, and myself remaining a short time behind, when we also left. Sommerville went first, M'Intyre followed, and I went last. In this order we were passing through the entrance, which was quite dark, to gain the street, when I was suddenly horror-struck by hearing Sommerville utter a loud shriek, and, in a moment after, saying, in a hoarse, unearthly tone, as he staggered against the wall, 'I am a murdered man!—M'Intyre has stabbed me!'

Guessing precisely what had taken place, I rushed to the mouth of the entrance, and saw M'Intyre crossing the street with as calm and deliberate a step as if nothing had happened; and, immediately after, he turned a corner and disappeared. I now returned to Sommerville, whom I found still leaning against the wall, with his hand upon his wound. In an instant after, he fell, groaned heavily, and, when I stooped down to assist him, I found he was gone. Several persons had, by this time, assembled round us; and, by the assistance of two or three of these, we had the body of the unfortunate man conveyed to his lodgings. Next morning, having occasion to be abroad very early, and to pass the residence of the Procurator-Fiscal, I saw three men, whom I knew to be criminal officers, just entering the house. In an instant it crossed my mind that this untimely visit of these gentlemen to the functionary above named, was, in some way or other, connected with the melancholy event of the preceding night, and that my unfortunate friend, M'Intyre, was about to be apprehended. Fully impressed with this idea, I instantly hastened to his lodgings, taking such short cuts and by-ways as I knew would give me several minutes' start of his pursuers, if the men I saw really were to become such—and the sequel will shew they did. On entering M'Intyre's room, which I did in considerable agitation, I found him, to my great amazement, sound asleep!

'M'Intyre,' said I, shaking him violently by the shoulder, 'I fear there is a warrant out against you, or at least that there will be one out immediately; so, for God's sake, rise, and let us see whether we cannot find a hiding-place for you.' I then hastily mentioned to him the grounds of

my suspicions of such being the case. While I was speaking the unhappy man looked at me with an expression of extreme surprise, and as if he did not at all comprehend what I meant. In truth, neither he did; for he had at the moment no recollection whatever of the dreadful deed he had perpetrated—a circumstance which left no doubt of his having been greatly under the influence of liquor when it was done, although I did not at the time think so. By degrees, however, the horrible truth flashed upon him; and the painful realities of the preceding night stood before him. His, however, was a stout heart. His firm nerves shook not under the pressure of the dreadful circumstances in which he was placed. He made no remarks on my communication, but immediately rose and put on his clothes; and this he did with a coolness and deliberation that both amazed and irritated me; for I was afraid that the officers of justice would be in upon us every moment. Having at length dressed, we both sallied out, although I did not at all know which direction I should recommend my unfortunate friend to take; neither had he himself any idea whither he should go. We, however, proceeded down the street in which he lived; and, just as we were about turning the corner, at the foot, happening to look round, we saw the officers in the act of entering the street at the opposite end. At this alarming sight, we of course quickened our pace, although we calculated that some time would be gained by the search to which we did not doubt the officers would subject the house in which M'Intyre lived. I could not but admire the coolness and presence of mind which my unfortunate friend exhibited under these trying circumstances, although I certainly could have wished the exhibition made in a better cause, and on a more honourable occasion. In his manner there was not the least flurry nor agitation. He remained perfectly calm and collected, although an ignominious death was now staring him in the face. After we had proceeded a little way, M'Intyre suddenly stopped, and, addressing me, remarked that my accompanying him could serve no good end, but rather increase the difficulty of his escape, and that, therefore, I had better leave him. To the propriety of this remark, I could not but subscribe; and I therefore, though reluctantly—for, notwithstanding the rash and indefensible act he had committed, I could not forget the character which my unfortunate friend had formerly borne, which was that of an honest, honourable, and warm-hearted man—agreed to leave him. Before we parted, he told me that he now recollected, that, previously to his returning to his lodgings after he had stabbed Sommerville, he had gone down to the Clyde, and tossed the fatal weapon with which he had done the deed, as far as he could throw it into the river; but whether this was merely a precautionary measure, to break at least one link in the chain of evidence, or the result of a feeling of horror at what he had done, he did not explain; but my impression was that it was the latter. Having agreed in the propriety of my friend's remark as to the additional danger to which my accompanying him further would expose him, we parted—I to return to my lodgings, and he to seek shelter where he might, for he had not, at the moment, the smallest idea whither he should direct his steps.

For about ten days after this, I heard nothing of my unhappy friend; but, at the end of that period, I learned that he had been apprehended, and was then in Glasgow jail. This intelligence was subsequently confirmed by a note from himself, which I received, intimating his apprehension, and requesting me to call upon him. With this request I complied, and found my unfortunate friend in the dreadful circumstances of an imprisoned criminal. He was, however, still calm and collected; and appeared perfectly resigned to the fate which, he had not the smallest doubt, awaited him—viz., that he should die upon the scaffold

and, indeed, no reasonable man could have expected any other issue, nor could it be denied that he deserved it. Our interview was short, as it was necessarily carried on in the presence of a turnkey, and, therefore, confined to merely general topics. The unhappy man himself, besides, shewed no disposition to prolong it; and, observing this, I withdrew, after obtaining his promise to apply to me for anything he might want, and for any service it might be in my power to render him.

About three weeks after this, while I was at breakfast, one morning, my landlady came into my room, to inform me that there was a young woman at the door, who wished to speak with me. I desired her to be shewn in. She entered; and a more interesting looking girl I have rarely seen. She appeared to be about one-and-twenty years of age, and was extremely graceful, both in person and manner. The latter, indeed, bespoke a much more elevated condition than her dress—which was that of a domestic servant—seemed to indicate. Her style of language, too, discovered the same contradiction to appearances.

Courtseying as she entered, and blushing as she spoke—

‘You are, sir, I believe,’ said she, ‘a friend of poor M’Intyre’s, just now in Glasgow jail, for, for’—And here her emotion prevented her further utterance.

‘I was,’ replied I, interposing to save her feelings, which I saw were painfully excited, ‘and I still am his friend. Would to God, I had some way of shewing him, in his misfortune, how sincerely I am so!’

This I said with a degree of earnestness and fervour that seemed to make a strong impression on my fair, but mysterious visiter. She became pale and agitated, and I thought I could even discover a tear glittering in her eye. When this momentary emotion had passed away—

‘Then,’ she said, ‘I need not hesitate to trust you with a secret.’ And she glanced towards the door, to see that it was shut. ‘This night,’ she resumed, ‘M’Intyre will escape from prison.’

‘Escape!—how?—by what means?’ I exclaimed, in amazement.

‘By mine,’ she replied, calmly.

‘By yours!’ I said, with increased astonishment.

‘Yes, sir, by mine. This night at twelve o’clock he will be without the prison walls, and at liberty, and you must then do him the last service he is ever likely to require at your hands. You will have a chaise waiting at the hour I have mentioned, at the first mile-stone on the Greenock road. Will you do this, and save the life of your unfortunate friend?’

Although a good deal confused by the suddenness and singularity of the whole affair, I, without a moment’s hesitation or reflection, replied that I would; and, having made this promise, I asked my visiter if she would further confide in me, by telling me all the particulars connected with the proposed escape of my friend.

‘Not now—not now,’ she said, gathering a tartan plaid, which she wore round her, as if to depart; ‘but you will probably learn all afterwards. In the meantime, farewell! and, as you would have a friend do to you in similar circumstances, so do you to your friend. Be faithful to your promise.’ And, ere I could make any farther remark, or put any other question, she hurried out of the apartment, hastily opened the street door, rushed out, and disappeared.”

Interrupting this personal narrative for a time, we will shift the scene, on the eventful night in question—eventful, at least, to the unfortunate subject of our story—to the house of the jailor, in whose custody he was; and here we shall find, in the capacity of a domestic servant, a young woman, bearing a very striking resemblance to her who visited M’Intyre’s friend, as above described. Indeed, there can be no doubt that they are the same. It was the jailor’s custom, at this time, to make the rounds of

the prison precisely at nine o’clock every night, to see that all was secure; and when this survey was completed, to carry all the keys with him to his own house, which was included in the general building, and had interior communication with that portion of it where prisoners were confined. On bringing up the keys, as usual, on the night of which we are speaking, the jailor gave them in charge to his wife, as he was invited out to join a party of friends on some occasion of merry-making—a circumstance which had been previously known to his family, and, amongst the rest, to the servant girl a short while since alluded to. Having received the keys from her husband, the jailor’s wife carried them to her own bedroom, for greater safety, and there deposited them in a drawer. In less than two hours after, this drawer was secretly visited by the young woman just spoken of, and a particular key carefully selected, detached from the rest, and transferred, from the drawer in which it had lain, into her pocket, when she withdrew with her prize. Shortly after this, the jailor returned, and retired to bed. When the whole was still, the purloiner of the key might have been seen stealing, with cautious steps, down the staircase that led into the principal passage of the prison, where were stationed two turnkeys—one at the outer door, and one at the inner. Advancing to the former—

“James,” said the girl, “Mr Simpson” (the name of the jailor) “desires to see you up stairs immediately. Go to the little parlour, and wait for him there, and he’ll come to you directly.”

“Lassie,” said the man, “I canna leave the door richtly; but if he wants me, I suppose I maun gang.”

“I’ll keep the key till you return,” said the former, “and tell Andrew” (meaning the inner turnkey) “to look after the door till you return, James.”

“Ay, do, like a dear,” replied the unsuspecting turnkey, handing her the key, and hastening away to attend the call of his superior.

On his departure, the girl went, as she had promised, to the other turnkey; but it was to deliver a very different message from that she had undertaken. To him, in truth, she made precisely the same communication as she had done to his neighbour, with a difference of destination—him she directed to wait his master in the kitchen. This guardian, trusting in the vigilance of him of the outer door, of whose absence he was unaware, made no difficulty whatever of obeying, but instantly ascended to the jailor’s kitchen, where he patiently awaited the appearance of his superior. Having thus disposed of the two turnkeys, the girl now, with a beating heart, flew to the door of the apartment in which M’Intyre was confined, applied the key to the lock, turned its huge bolt, and the way was clear.

“Angus M’Intyre,” she said, on flinging up the door, “come forth, come forth, and fly instantly for your life! There is none to oppose you.”

“In the name of God, who are you?” said M’Intyre, instinctively obeying the call to liberty and freedom. “I should know that voice,” he added, endeavouring to obtain a glimpse of the face of his deliverer, but in vain, as she was carefully hooded, and the place profoundly dark.

“Hush, hush!—not a word!” said the latter. “What does it signify to you who I am? Off, off instantly!—you have not a moment to lose. This way, this way.” And she hurried the astonished prisoner, though now no longer so, through the deserted passage of the jail, till they reached the outer door, to which she applied the key with which its simple guardian had entrusted her, and, in the next instant, M’Intyre and his deliverer were in the street. On gaining it—

“Now, fly, Angus,” said the latter, thrusting, at the same time, a purse of money into his hand. “At the first mile-stone on the Greenock road, you will find a chaise waiting for you. In that, you will proceed to Greenock, where you will

find a ship to sail to-morrow for New York. Embark on board of her; and you will then, I trust, escape the vengeance of man—it must be your own business, Angus, to deprecate that of your God.” And, without waiting for any reply, or permitting herself to be known to her companion, she hastened away in the opposite direction to that she had pointed out to M’Intyre, and disappeared. The latter, bewildered with the suddenness and strangeness of the proceeding which had thus so mysteriously led to his liberation, stood for a second confused, irresolute, and undetermined. His first idea was to pursue his deliverer and to insist on ascertaining who she was; but even the moment he took to deliberate, had put this out of his power, for the night was dark, and she was already out of sight; and where there were so many ready places of concealment, the pursuit was a hopeless one. M’Intyre perceived this; and aware, at the same time, how necessary it was that he should instantly quit the vicinity of the jail, he hastened to the place where he had been told a chaise would be waiting him. The chaise was there; M’Intyre flung himself into it, reached Greenock in about four hours afterwards, and, before another sun had sunk in the west, he was sailing down the Firth of Clyde on his way to the opposite shores of the Atlantic.

“Three years after the occurrence of the events just related,” continued the narrator whom we have already quoted, “during which time I had heard nothing more of M’Intyre than that he had effected his escape, nor anything whatever of his deliverer, I was removed, by order of the Board of Excise, to the island of Sky, where I was settled, perhaps about a year, when, one day as I was crossing the country from Portree to Meystead—a place celebrated in the wanderings of Prince Charles—I met a party of ladies and gentlemen coming in the opposite direction. They were a merry squad, with the exception of one of the ladies, who seemed to take but little share in the obstreperous mirth of her companions; and it was owing to this circumstance, perhaps, that I found her engrossing a greater share of my attention than the others; for, in that hospitable country, we were friends the moment we met, although we had never seen each other before; and the party, having some provisions with them, I was requested to favour them with my company to a dejeuner, which, they informed me, they had been on the eve of making before I joined them. Readily accepting their kind invitation, I accompanied my new friends in search of a suitable spot for the proposed entertainment. This was soon found, and we all sat down on the grass to partake of the good things provided for the occasion. During the repast, I could not keep my eyes off the lady whose melancholy had first attracted my attention; for I felt an impression that I had seen the face somewhere before; but when, where, or under what circumstances, I could not at all recollect. She seemed also to recognise me; for there was a marked confusion and agitation, both in her countenance and manner, from the moment I joined the party to which she belonged. Guessing, from these expressions, that it would not be agreeable to her that I should make any attempt at renewing our acquaintance, of whatever nature that might have been, in the presence of her friends, I forbore; but determined, if an opportunity was afforded me, of doing so before we parted, as I felt all that curiosity and uneasiness which such vague and imperfect recognition of a person’s identity is so apt to create. The opportunity I desired, the lady, of her own accord, subsequently afforded me.

When our repast was concluded, she said, addressing me—“We are going, sir, to see the falls of Lubdearg, about a mile from this. It is a very magnificent one; and, if you have never seen it before, and are in no great hurry to prosecute your journey, you will, perhaps, accompany us. My friends here, I am sure, will be glad of such an addition to their party”

The falls she alluded to, I had never seen; and for this reason, but still more for that before hinted at, I gladly accepted the proposal of becoming one of the party to Lubdearg. While we were proceeding thither, my inviter contrived to drop a little way behind her friends; which perceiving, and conjecturing that she did so for the especial purpose of affording me an opportunity of speaking with her, I availed myself of it, with a degree of caution that prevented all appearance of connivance, and joined her. Being considerably apart from the others, she said, smiling—

“You have recognised me, I rather think, sir; but do you recollect where and under what circumstances it was that you saw me?”

“I do not indeed; I have not the most distant idea,” I said; “but I certainly do recollect having seen you before.”

“And I, too, recollect well of having seen you. It is impossible I should ever forget either you or the occasion that introduced me to you. Do you,” she added, “recollect of a young woman calling on you one morning at your lodgings, to request of you to have a chaise in readiness on the Greenock road, to aid”—and here she paused a moment, and betrayed great emotion—the escape,” she resumed, “of Angus M’Intyre.”

I need hardly say that, short as this sentence was, I knew, ere it was half concluded, that it was the deliverer of my unhappy friend who stood before me.

“I do, I do, perfectly,” I replied—“you are the very person. This is, indeed, strange—most singular—our meeting here again, and in this way. But who, in heaven’s name, are you?” I added: “that I have never yet known.”

The lady smiled sadly. “Did you ever hear your unfortunate friend speak of one Miss Eliza Stewart?” she said.

“Often, often,” I replied; “to that lady I always understood he was to have been married, had not that deplorable occurrence taken place, which so miserably changed his destiny, and marred all his prospects in life.”

“It was so,” said my fair companion, with increased emotion. “I am that person.”

“Impossible!”

“It is true; I am Eliza Stewart.”

“Then, here is more perplexity and mystery,” said I. “How, in all the world, came you to appear to me in the dress and character of a servant girl—you, who are a lady both by birth and education?” (this I knew from M’Intyre;) “and how, above all, did you effect the escape of our unfortunate friend?”

The lady again smiled with a melancholy air. “I will inform you of all,” she said, “in a very few words. At the time of Angus’ misfortune, I lived, as you may probably know, with my father at —, in Sky here. On hearing of what had taken place, and of Angus’ apprehension, I hastened to Glasgow, on pretence of visiting a friend, and got into the house of the jailor in the character of a domestic servant. I will not say by whose means I effected this, as it might still bring ruin on their heads.” And here my fair informant gave me the details which are already before the reader. “On effecting his escape,” she went on, “I immediately resumed my own dress, and returned to my father’s house, where it was next to impossible to detect, in his daughter, the servant girl of the Glasgow jailor. Our remote situation, besides, further secured me from the chance of discovery; and I have not yet been discovered, nor do I suppose I ever will now.”

“And why,” said I, laughingly, “did you not share the fortunes of the man in whom you thus took so deep an interest?”

“No, no,” said the heroic girl, with an expression of deep feeling; “I loved M’Intyre, I confess it, with the

most sincere and devoted affection—what I did for him proves it; but I could not think of uniting myself to a man whose hand was red with the blood of a fellow-creature; for it cannot be denied that our unfortunate friend, notwithstanding all his good qualities, was—there is no disguising it—a—Here her emotion prevented her finishing the sentence—nor did she afterwards finish it; but I had no doubt the word she would have supplied was ‘murderer.’

‘Now, sir, you know all,’ she continued, on recovering from her perturbation; ‘but you will make no allusion, I beg of you, to anything I have told you, to my friends here, amongst whom are my father, mother, and a sister, who know nothing whatever of the part I acted in effecting M’Intyre’s escape.’

With this request I promised compliance. We reached the falls of Lubdearg. I parted with Eliza Stewart; and we never met again, as, in a few days afterwards, I left the island; and, with this event, terminated all connecting circumstances on my part with ‘The Skeep Dhu.’”

THE BREAKING UP OF THE FOREST OF PLATER.

The breaking up of the old forests of Scotland was, perhaps, the first important step that was made towards its civilization. Prior to the reign of David II.—and, indeed, long after that period—the whole face of the country presented an appearance not much different from that, at this day, exhibited by many of the wooded parts of America. The number of extensive forests then existing has been given by historians; and, though many of them extended over whole counties, their names are not now to be traced in the local designations which point out the prædial divisions of the space they once occupied.

Amongst the most extensive of these forests, and, perhaps, the first that was broken up, was the Forest of Plater, in the county of Angus. Its extent was so great that a very large proportion of that county was covered by it; and, bordering as it did upon the lower end of the Grampians, it was much infested by the wolves of those heights, which came down to commit ravages on its inhabitants, whether wild or domestic. As the first of the forests that resounded to the sound of the axe, and, by its destruction leading the way to others, opened up Scotland to the ameliorating and civilizing effects of the plough, its limits have been attempted to be traced by antiquaries; but with no great success. The circumstances, however, which led to the first grant of its cleared soil are known, and, being curious, deserve notice, as well from their own nature as the fact of their signaling the dawn of Scottish civilization.

David II. was, for a considerable period, a captive in England—a circumstance adequately impressed on the memories of the already oppressed inhabitants, by the immense sum of ransom they had to pay for the liberation of a king who rewarded his faithful country by afterwards endeavouring to betray it—by attempting to alter the order of succession of its kings in favour of an English prince. He also resided for a time in France, where he, in all likelihood, acquired that effeminacy of character and love of unlawful pleasures which unfitted him, both in a physical and moral point of view, for being the king of a barbarous, though true-hearted people.

After the death of his Queen Joanna, David began his intercourse with the famous beauty, Margaret Logy, supposed to be the daughter of Sir John de Logy, who resided, at that period, in Angus, and close by the Forest of Plater. In addition to the other circumstances which render this forest memorable, its umbrageous retreat was selected by the royal lover as the place of his interviews with his fair mistress. Coming from Scone or Falkland, by short jour-

neys, he continued to feed his passion by frequent interviews with the fair Margaret, at a part of the forest called, as many other wild places were then denominated, the Wolf’s Glen. Having met her first when he wore, as he often did, the dress of a French knight, he, for a long time, kept up that character in the estimation of his mistress, whose vanity was fed by the fulsome style of gallantry which her lover had imported from that country, and applied to her in its most inflated form. The King’s imitation of French customs and dress was, indeed, carried much farther than suited the national prejudices of his people, however much it may have been relished by Margaret Logy. The broad silk sash which occupied the place of the leather belt, and white kid gloves superseding, with strange contrast, the buckram gaives of the hardy warriors of Scotland, had peculiar charms for the eye of a female, which a kilted katheran might not have been able to discover.

Not far distant from the glen where David was in the habit of meeting and wooing his mistress, there was a small forest out, occupied by a hind, of the name of Murdoch Rhind, who had a wife and a large family of children. Rhind, in consequence of having previously seen King David on some public occasion, knew who the French knight was, that so often met Sir John Logy’s daughter in the forest, and was not without an expectation that he might in some way benefit himself and his family, by the knowledge he had thus, by mere chance, come to be possessed of. After revolving in his mind various schemes, comprehending a projected discovery to the damsel’s father, a secret intimation to the King, accompanied by a hint to be paid for his secrecy, and others equally feasible and equally fruitless, he resolved upon trusting to chance, to present to him an occasion for making his knowledge available, which he would not fail to take advantage of, and turn to the best account. This occasion was afforded him sooner than he expected.

One night, when Rhind was passing the Wolf’s Glen, with the view of bringing home some wood, which he had, for the use of his cottage, cut in the fore part of the day, he heard the sound of voices in the lovers’ favourite retreat, and did not doubt that they were those of the King and his mistress. Curiosity to hear a royal courtship was stronger than the wish to obey the command of his wife, who wanted the faggots for the purpose of preparing their supper; and, stealing behind a bracken bush, which concealed him from the lovers, he sat down very much at his ease, though in the presence of royalty, to hear a courtship which he shrewdly suspected must differ considerably from the mode of wooing he had adopted, in winning the heart and hand of Peggy Hamilton, who was now waiting for the faggots, unconscious that her husband, Murdoch, was in the presence of King David of Scotland.

“And is France so very different,” said the fair damsel, in continuation, no doubt, of the prior discourse, “from our own country? Such is the effect of habit, that I could not form an idea of a country, the greater part of which is without trees. Neither hunting nor wooing can thrive in a bare land; and what is any country without these? I love the French gallantry and their exquisite fabrics—their taffeta, and brocades, and soft gloves, which last, of all the parts of a knight’s apparel, indicate, with greatest certainty, the gentleman. But where does gallantry shew so well, and where do these articles of dress so nobly embellish beauty and grace, as in the still umbrageous wood, with the green leaves as your canopy, and the tuneful inhabitants your companions? Believe me, Sir Knight, I would have the men, and the manners, and the fabrics of France imported into Scotland.”

“Thou hast said nothing of the ladies of France,” said David, with his accustomed gallantry. “Wouldst thou leave

them in the mateless condition of the ancient Amazons, without a single lover to console them for the loss of their silks?"

"The exception, good Sir Knight," replied Margaret, blushing, "is a woman's who could not bear competition for the heart of her lover. Thou knowest that, among French beauties, poor Margaret Logy would have small chance of retaining thy affections."

"Humble wood-nymph," said David, clasping her hand, "I would not exchange thee, in thy dress of linsey-woolsey, for all the fair damsels of Paris, dressed in silk and sey. But, in thy sweet prattle, thou hast approached a subject which our King, who loves the French and their subtle inventions, would do well to consider. We can enjoy none of the envied productions of the useful arts which thou hast been so much applauding, at the same time that we retain these mighty drawing-rooms of nemoral gallantry thou wert now describing with the fervour which our presence in one of them at this moment has produced. The one might be made the cause of the production of the other. Were I King David, as I am only Sir Philip Nemours of Lorraine, I would portion out a great part of the forests of Scotland, beginning with Plater, to feuars, taking them bound to deliver to me yearly, as the condition of their grant, a piece of silk, or a pair of gloves, or some other article of manufacture, which might be introduced into Scotland; and thus at once bribe and oblige the inhabitants to become manufacturers, at the same time that they were learning the art of husbandry."

"Thy gloves would be better covering thy mouth, Sir Knight, than thy hand," said Margaret "if thou art to fill a maiden's ears with a discourse on manufactures, in place of the soft accents of love. What careth a damsel for the loom or the loom-weaver that produces her silks, or the skin of the goat that furnishes her with her soft hand-shoes, as they call gloves in the Pictish counties of Scotland? What hath become of my knight's gallantry, now that he is, in imagination, a manufacturing king?"

"The mercy of a beautiful woman comes quick upon the repentance of her lover," said David, smiling—"especially when his error is a mere continuation of one committed by the lady herself. Thou forgettest, fair Margaret, that thou didst originate this discussion, by expressing a wish to get the French gentlemen, manners, and fabrics, imported into Scotland, while I only suggested a mode of doing without them; and, upon my honour, were I King David, I would put it into execution."

The lovers were surprised by the sudden appearance of Murdoch Rhind, who stood before them.

"*Your Majesty*," said he, stepping up and whispering these two words, which contained the whole secret, into the King's ear, and then continuing the rest of his speech in an audible tone—"the King" (pausing and eyeing David with a sly Scotch eye) "couldna do better than begin with the Forest o' Plater; and wha has a better right to the first grant than Murdoch Rhind, wha has wrought his bairns' mittens an' his wife's Sabbath glaives sin' the Eve o' St John, fifteen years back. I cam to warn ye that there's a wolf at the back o' yon bracken bush."

"Thanks to thee, sir," replied David, eyeing Murdoch carefully, and seeing at once where the game lay. "Thou art a very discreet fellow; and the discretion of the tongue, which is of more service than that of the hand, deserves its reward. Where is thy cottage?"

"In the wud there," replied Murdoch—"twa casts east frae the Glen. I will be at hame the morn frae matins to vespers, waitin for a visit frae"—(a pause)—"Sir Philip Nemours."

"I will call for thee, Murdoch," said David, "and reward thee for thy timeous intimation.—Let us go, dear Margaret! I hope that next time we meet, there may be no wolves in the Glen."

"Murdoch Rhind will tak guid care o' that, your Honour," cried Murdoch after the lovers, as they departed.

Murdoch went leisurely and tied up his faggots. When he got home, the poor husband received for his pains the customary tribute due to disobedient consorts, who choose, foolishly and rebelliously, to act upon the verdicts of their own wittol judgments, when they should quietly follow the course pointed out by their wives. The time necessary for going, and tying up the faggots, and returning, was calculated to a minute; and all that was beyond that, was to be accounted for with the fidelity of a treasurer. It did not, however, at that time, suit the husband's notions of marital obedience, to render this strict accounting. Unwilling to tell a lie—for, though poor, he was honest and true—he contented himself with evasive answers—adroitly turning the tables on his wife, and alleging that the last time she went to the fair of Forfar she staid three hours beyond her time, a period which had not been accounted for to that day. The effect of carrying the war into the enemy's country was soon apparent. Peggy became silent; but managed, according to the tact of her sex, to cover her retreat, by keeping her mouth in such continual occupation with the affair of the supper, that she had, apparently, neither time nor room for farther words of objuraction.

Next morning, Murdoch told Peggy that a gentleman was to call upon him during the day, requesting her not to be alarmed at his silken sash, or his other insignia of knighthood. The good woman inquired the object of the visit, and was surprised that her husband observed the same silence on that subject as he had so unaccountably exhibited on the previous night. Fear took possession of her, and she pictured to herself an officer of the law, coming to apprehend her husband for some misdemeanour committed in the forest. This feeling was not much assuaged by the appearance of the stranger himself, who called faithfully about the hour of twelve, and had an interview with Murdoch.

"How many ox-gangs wouldst thou require of the Forest of Plater?" inquired David.

"Four, an' please your Majesty," replied Murdoch.

"And wilt thou undertake," added the King, "to render to me yearly, in name of feu-duty, a pair of white kid gloves of thy own manufacture?"

"I will work my way to France," replied Murdoch, "for the very purpose o' learning the secret o' this trade, and will undertake to perform the service yearly, on pain o' losing my grant, wi' a' meliorations."

"Thou shalt have thy grant," said David; "but upon this other condition—which, however," (he added, smiling,) "doth not enter the writ—that thou keepest the secret of my personality. Thou understandest me?"

"Brawly, your Majesty," answered Murdoch. "There will be nae mair wolves i' the Wolf's Glen; whilk, indeed, craving your Majesty's pardon, is mair fitted, frae its great beauty, for makin a pair o' my four ox-gangs—that is, after your Majesty nae mair requires it for wooing—than for a lair to wild beasts."

"The place shall be added to thy ox-gangs," said the Monarch, laughing; "but always with my right of servitude of making love among its birken bushes."

The grant was afterwards made out, of four ox-gangs of Plater Forest, in favour of Murdoch Rhind, for the strange reddendo of a pair of white kid gloves yearly. This was the first breaking up of the ancient forests of Scotland, and the fact, which is historical, of the yearly rendering of the gloves, forms a curious contrast with the act of which it was made a condition. David, as is well known, afterwards married Margaret Logy. Her subsequent divorce and application to the Pope, are matters of history.

THE WEIRD OF THE THREE ARROWS.

AMONG the many strange stories that were circulated in Scotland, in the days of her adversity, and received a credence from the people, in consequence of the heartfelt pressure of the misery which, perhaps, produced them, there was one which asserted the usual claims on the faith of the Borderers—and probably on as good grounds as any of the others—but which has been somewhat unfairly passed over by our historians. We delight in doing justice to an old neglected legend, and therefore present it to our readers.

Sir James Douglas—the companion of Bruce, and well known by his appellation of the “Black Douglas”—was once, during the hottest period of the exterminating war carried on by him and his colleague Randolph against the English, stationed at Linthaughlee, near Jedburgh. He was resting himself and his men, after the toils of many days’ fighting—marches through Teviotdale; and, according to his custom, had walked round the tents, previous to retiring to the quiet rest of a soldier’s bed. He stood for a few minutes at the entrance to his tent, contemplating the scene before him, rendered more interesting by a clear moon, whose silver beams fell, in the silence of a night with out a breath of wind, calmly on the slumbers of mortals destined to mix in the mêlée of dreadful war, perhaps on the morrow. As he stood gazing, irresolute whether to retire to rest, or indulge longer in a train of thought not very suitable to a warrior who delighted in the spirit-stirring scenes of his profession, his eye was attracted by the figure of an old woman, who approached him with a trembling step, leaning on a staff, and holding in her left hand three English cloth-shaft arrows.

“You are he wha is ca’ed the guid Sir James?” said the old woman.

“I am, good woman,” replied Sir James. “Why hast thou wandered from the sutler’s camp?”

“I dinna belang to the camp o’ the hoblers,” answered the woman. “I hae been a residenter in Linthaughlee since the day when King Alexander passed the door o’ my cottage wi’ his bonny French bride, wha was terrified awa frae Jedburgh by the death’s-head whilk appeared to her on the day o’ her marriage. What I hae suffered sin’ that day,” (looking at the arrows in her hand,) “lies atween me an’ heaven.”

“Some of your sons killed in the wars, I presume,” said Sir James.

“Ye hae guessed a pairt o’ my waes,” replied the woman. “That arrow” (holding out one of the three) “carries on its point the bluid o’ my first born—that is stained wi’ the stream that poured frae the heart o’ my second—and that is red wi’ the gore in which my youngest weltered, as he gae up the life that made me childless. They were a’ shot by English hands, in different armies, in different battles. I am an honest woman, and wish to return to the English what belongs to the English; but that in the same fashion in which they were sent. The Black Douglas has the strongest arm an’ the surest e’e in auld Scotland; an’ wha can execute my commission better than he?”

“I do not use the bow, good woman,” replied Sir James. “I love the grasp of the dagger or the battle-axe. You must apply to some other individual to return your arrows.”

“I canna tak them hame again,” said the woman, laying them down at the feet of Sir James. “Ye’ll see me again on St James’ E’en.”

The old woman departed as she said these words. Sir James took up the arrows, and placed them in an empty quiver that lay amongst his baggage. He retired to rest, but not to sleep. The figure of the old woman, and her strange request, occupied his thoughts, and produced trains of meditation which ended in nothing but restlessness and disquietude. Getting up by daybreak, he met a messenger at the entry to his tent, who informed him that Sir Thomas

de Richmond, with a force of ten thousand men, had crossed the Borders, and would pass through a narrow defile which he mentioned, where he could be attacked with great advantage. Sir James gave instant orders to march to the spot; and, with that genius for scheming for which he was so remarkable, commanded his men to twist together the young birch trees on either side of the passage, to prevent the escape of the enemy. This finished, he concealed his archers in a hollow way, near the gorge of the pass. The enemy came up; and, when their ranks were embarrassed by the narrowness of the road, and it was impossible for the cavalry to act with effect, Sir James rushed upon them at the head of his horsemen; and the archers, suddenly discovering themselves, poured in a flight of arrows on the confused soldiers, and put the whole army to flight. In the heat of the onset, Douglas killed Sir Thomas de Richmond with his dagger.

Not long after this, Edmund de Cailon, a Knight of Gascony, and governor of Berwick, and who had been heard to vaunt that he had sought the famous Black Knight, but could not find him, was returning to England, loaded with plunder, from an inroad on Teviotdale. Sir James thought it a pity that a Gascon’s vaunt should be heard unpunished in Scotland, and made long forced marches to satisfy the desire of the foreign Knight, by giving him a sight of the dark countenance he had made a subject of reproach. He soon succeeded in gratifying both himself and the Gascon. Coming up in his terrible manner, he called to Cailon to stop, and, before he proceeded into England, receive the respects of the Black Knight he had come to find, but hitherto had found not. The Gascon’s vaunt was now changed; but shame supplied the place of courage, and he ordered his men to receive Douglas’ attack. Sir James sought assiduously his enemy, and experienced the difficulty of finding him, that had been imputed to himself. He at last succeeded; and a single combat ensued, of a most desperate character; but who ever escaped the arm of Douglas, when fairly opposed to him in personal conflict? Cailon was killed—he had met the Black Knight at last. “So much,” cried Sir James, “for the vaunt of a Gascon!”

Similar in every respect to the fate of Cailon, was that of Sir Ralph Neville. He, too, on hearing the great fame of Douglas’ prowess, from some of de Cailon’s fugitive soldiers, openly boasted that he would fight with the Scottish Knight, if he would come and shew his banner before Berwick. Sir James heard the boast, and rejoiced in it. He marched to that town, and caused his men to ravage the country in front of the battlements, and burn the villages. Neville left Berwick with a strong body of men; and, stationing himself on a high ground, waited till the rest of the Scots should disperse to plunder; but Douglas called in his detachment, and attacked the Knight. After a desperate conflict, in which many were slain, Douglas, as was his custom, succeeded in bringing the leader to a personal encounter and the skill of the Scottish knight was again successful. Neville was slain, and his men utterly discomfited.

Having retired one night to his tent to take some rest after so much pain and toil, Sir James Douglas was surprised by the reappearance of the old woman whom he had seen at Linthaughlee.

“This is the feast o’ St James,” said she, as she approached him. “I said I wad see ye again this nicht, an’ I’m as guid’s my word. Hae ye returned the arrows I left wi’ ye to the English wha sent them to the hearts o’ my sons?”

“No,” replied Sir James. “I told ye I did not fight with the bow. Wherefore do ye importune me thus?”

“Give me back the arrows, then,” said the woman. Sir James went to bring the quiver in which he had placed them. On taking them out, he was surprised to find that they were all broken through the middle.

"How has this happened?" said he. "I put these arrows in this quiver entire, and now they are broken."

"The weird is fulfilled!" cried the old woman, laughing eldritchly, and clapping her hands. "That broken shaft cam frae a soldier o' Richmond's; that frae ane o' Cailon's; and that frae ane o' Neville's. They are a' dead, an' I am revenged!"

The old woman then departed, scattering, as she went, the broken fragments of the arrows on the floor of the tent.

FALSEHOOD REPROVED.

THE following anecdote of the Rebellion was at one time current in Maxwellton, and generally believed.—A widow of the name of Janet Brown, residing there, some connection of the Orchardtowns in the Stewartry, thought that she could not do justice to the love she bore the "bonny Prince" otherwise than by sending her son—a young man, a slater by trade, and called John after his father, who followed the same occupation—to fight for the descendant of our old kings, and help to place him on the throne. The young man, who neither felt the enthusiasm, nor could perceive the rationale of the feeling with which his mother was inspired, felt no great love for the task; but, having been bribed by a small sum of money given him by Sir Thomas Maxwell, and blown up with large hopes of rising to eminence in the event of the Prince's success, he agreed to put on the bonnet and badge, and to "follow Prince Charlie." The new-born valour of the slater, like that of all the artisans who espoused the same cause, was destined to a severe trial and a rapid decrease. At the battle of Culloden he fought at first with some spirit, and then fled, leaving all his accoutrements, with the exception of a small dagger, which he retained for the purpose of self-defence, in a field not far from the scene of his disgrace. The impetus of terror had been so strong, that he had gone over a score of miles before he began to reflect on the best means of escaping from his foes; and now he was satisfied that the advantage he possessed from the nature of his occupation—the capability of walking or sleeping on the house-tops, like the Pharisees of old—might be turned into the means of his salvation. Without stopping he hurried on to Maxwellton, where he arrived about nightfall, and his familiarity with the roof of the house where his mother lived—occupying only a small garret, from the necessity of her limited means—suggested that situation as the best calculated for concealment, until the rage of pursuit was over, and he could again follow his ordinary avocations. Getting unobserved to the back of the house, he, by means of a skylight, which opened from the top of the circular staircase, got to the roof, where he felt himself perfectly at home, and in the enjoyment of as much security as if he had been in the back settlements of America. By taking off his shoes, and walking lightly along the slates, he could look down on his aged mother, who was, doubtless, occupied with thoughts of her son, who was fighting at Culloden, or perhaps lying dead on the bloody field; but Brown knew the nature of his parent too well to entrust her with the secret of his place of concealment—a fact which she would have told instantly to her neighbours, with that addition which would have made it go like wildfire, that it was a great secret, and was not to be divulged. His self-denial in this respect was, however, wonderful, considering that he had scarcely tasted meat since he came from Culloden, and was therefore labouring under hunger, cold, and fatigue, all of which might have been removed or ameliorated, by the assistance of his mother, and the refuge of her dwelling, into which he might have descended through the skylight. If she was ignorant of his proceedings, he was as ignorant of hers; for

she had been, during the day and evening, busily engaged in making the people believe that her son had not engaged actively for the Prince, but had repented and returned to his allegiance to King George. Several officers from Dumfries had called at her house with a view to catch the rebel, and at the very moment when Brown was looking deliberately down through the skylight window, calculating how he could reach with his dagger a tempting loaf of bread that lay on a shelf, he saw enter a sheriff's beagle, who soon engaged with his parent in earnest conversation. The officer insisted that her son was not in the house, and she, though a godlywoman, not only denied that he was there, but alleged (laying her hand on her big Bible) that he had never engaged in the Rebellion at all. This act, on the part of his parent, astonished the son: his mother had told a lie, though all the energies of her life had been directed towards inculcating good principles on her son, and, above all, a love of strict truth in everything he said or did. So much had he been impressed with the importance of veracity, that he himself, if taken, would not have denied (even if that would have saved him) that he had been in the rebel ranks; and yet the very parent who had done him this good service, had swerved from her own principles, and sealed a lie by an appeal to holy writ. The circumstance could only be accounted for by the love she bore to him; but it is not too much to say, that it produced to him as much uneasiness as his own danger. Continuing his examination, he saw the officer depart; and, in a short time afterwards, the good widow, on retiring to bed, required to perform her evening devotion. She got upon her knees for this purpose; but the pangs of remorse, for the falsehood she had told, prevented her for a time from uttering her prayer. At last she succeeded in getting utterance, and began to ask forgiveness of heaven for the great sin she had committed that night, in denying that her son had engaged in the Rebellion; she then proceeded to return thanks for the *daily bread* with which, notwithstanding of her sins, she had been blessed; and strongly, and with tears, declared her utter unworthiness of the gift. She had proceeded so far, when, as she turned round her eyes, filled with repentant tears, she saw that very loaf for which she had returned and was still returning thanks, in the act of gradually moving from the shelf towards the skylight, and in a moment disappear, without the assistance of mortal hand, or any other lifting or suspending power! In what manner could heaven better declare that her repentance was not registered above? The gift was taken back to the place from whence it came, because she had lied, and attempted inconsistently to return thanks for that of which she was so unworthy. The celestial light broke in upon her in a moment. Starting to her feet, she flew out of the house; and Brown sat quietly down on the roof to enjoy the loaf, which, with his dagger, he had removed from the shelf for the purpose of allaying his hunger. He remarked that his mother did not return to her house that night; and, suspecting that he was in dangerous quarters, descended in the morning, and removed himself to a greater distance. After the heat of pursuit was over, he returned; and heard, "many a time and oft," his mother relate how heaven had interfered to punish the crime she had committed, in denying, on the faith of holy writ, that her son had been engaged in the ranks of Prince Charles. Brown was too prudent to say a word of the true cause; for, a great lover of truth himself, he was pained by the falsehood of his mother, which had been so strangely cured.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS.
AND OF SCOTLAND.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BURNS.

CHAPTER I.

Wear we not graven on our hearts
The name of Robert Burns!—*American Poet.*

THE degrees shorten as we proceed from the higher to the lower latitudes—the years seem to shorten in a much greater ratio as we pass onward through life. We are almost disposed to question whether the brief period of storms and foul weather that floats over us with such dream-like rapidity, and the transient season of flowers and sunshine that seems almost too short for enjoyment, be at all identical with the long summers and still longer winters of our boyhood, when day after day and week after week stretched away in dim perspective, till lost in the obscurity of an almost inconceivable distance. Young as I was, I had already passed the period of life when we wonder how it is that the years should be described as short and fleeting; and it seemed as if I had stood but yesterday beside the deathbed of the unfortunate Ferguson, though the flowers of four summers and the snows of four winters had now been shed over his grave.

My prospects in life had begun to brighten. I served in the capacity of mate in a large West India trader, the master of which, an elderly man of considerable wealth, was on the eve of quitting the sea; and the owners had already determined that I should succeed him in the charge. But fate had ordered it otherwise. Our seas were infested at this period by American privateers—prime sailors and strongly armed; and when homeward bound from Jamaica with a valuable cargo, we were attacked and captured when within a day's sailing of Ireland, by one of the most formidable of the class. Vain as resistance might have been deemed—for the force of the American was altogether overpowering—and though our master, poor old man! and three of the crew, had fallen by the first broadside, we had yet stood stiffly by our guns, and were only overmastered, when, after falling foul of the enemy, we were boarded by a party of thrice our strength and number. The Americans, irritated by our resistance, proved, on this occasion, no generous enemies; we were stripped and heavily ironed, and, two days after, were set ashore on the wild coast of Connaught, without a single change of dress, or a single sixpence to bear us by the way.

I was sitting, on the following night, beside the turf fire of a hospitable Irish peasant, when a seafaring man, whom I had sailed with about two years before, entered the cabin. The meeting was equally unexpected on either side. My acquaintance was the master of a smuggling lugger then on the coast; and on acquainting him with the details of my disaster, and the state of destitution to which it had reduced me, he kindly proposed that I should accompany him on his voyage to the west coast of Scotland, for which he was then on the eve of sailing. "You will run some little risk," he said, "as the companion of a man who has now been thrice outlawed for firing on his Majesty's flag; but I know your proud heart will prefer the danger of bad company at its worst to the alternative of begging your way home." He judged rightly. Before daybreak we had lost sight of land,

and in four days more, we could discern the precipitous shores of Carrick stretching in a dark line along the horizon, and the hills of the interior rising thin and blue behind, like a volume of clouds. A considerable part of our cargo, which consisted mostly of tea and spirits, was consigned to an Ayr trader, who had several agents in the remote parish of Kirkoswald, which at this period afforded more facilities for carrying on the contraband trade than any other on the western coast of Scotland; and, in a rocky bay of the parish, we proposed unlading on the following night. It was necessary, however, that the several agents, who were yet ignorant of our arrival, should be prepared to meet with us; and, on volunteering my service for the purpose, I was landed near the ruins of the ancient castle of Turnberry, once the seat of Robert the Bruce.

I had accomplished my object; it was evening, and a party of countrymen were sauntering among the cliffs, waiting for nightfall and the appearance of the lugger. There are splendid caverns on the coast of Kirkoswald; and, to while away the time, I had descended to the shore by a broken and precipitous path, with a view of exploring what are termed the *Caves of Colzean*, by far the finest in this part of Scotland. The evening was of great beauty: the sea spread out from the cliffs to the far horizon, like the sea of gold and crystal described by the Prophet; and its warm orange hues so harmonized with those of the sky, that, passing over the dimly-defined line of demarcation, the whole upper and nether expanse seemed but one glorious firmament, with the dark *Ailsa*, like a thunder-cloud, sleeping in the midst. The sun was hastening to his setting, and threw his strong red light on the wall of rock which, loftier and more imposing than the walls of even the mighty Babylon, stretched onward along the beach, headland after headland, till the last sank abruptly in the far distance, and only the wide ocean stretched beyond. I passed along the insulated piles of cliff that rise thick along the basis of the precipices—now in sunshine, now in shadow—till I reached the opening of one of the largest caves. The roof rose more than fifty feet over my head—a broad stream of light, that seemed redder and more fiery from the surrounding gloom, slanted inwards, and, as I paused in the opening, my shadow, lengthened and dark, fell athwart the floor—a slim and narrow bar of black—till lost in the gloom of the inner recess. There was a wild and uncommon beauty in the scene that powerfully affected the imagination; and I stood admiring it in that delicious dreamy mood in which one can forget all but the present enjoyment, when I was roused to a recollection of the business of the evening by the sound of a footfall echoing from within. It seemed approaching by a sort of cross passage in the rock, and, in a moment after, a young man, one of the country people whom I had left among the cliffs above, stood before me. He wore a broad Lowland bonnet, and his plain homely suit of coarse russet seemed to bespeak him a peasant of perhaps the poorest class; but, as he emerged from the gloom, and the red light fell full on his countenance, I saw an indescribable something in the expression that in an instant awakened my curiosity. He was rather above the middle size, of a frame the most muscular and compact I have almost ever seen, and there was a blended

mixture of elasticity and firmness in his tread that to one accustomed, as I had been, to estimate the physical capabilities of men, gave evidence of a union of immense personal strength with great activity. My first idea regarding the stranger—and I know not how it should have struck me—was that of a very powerful frame animated by a double portion of vitality. The red light shone full on his face, and gave a ruddy tinge to the complexion, which I afterwards found it wanted—for he was naturally of a darker hue than common; but there was no mistaking the expression of the large flashing eyes, the features that seemed so thoroughly cast in the mould of thought, and of the broad, full, perpendicular forehead. Such, at least, was the impression on my mind, that I addressed him with more of the courtesy which my earlier pursuits had rendered familiar to me than of the bluntness of my adopted profession. "This sweet evening," I said, "is by far too fine for our lugger; I question whether, in these calms, we need expect her before midnight; but 'tis well, since wait we must, that 'tis in a place where the hours may pass so agreeably." The stranger good-humouredly acquiesced in the remark, and we sat down together on the dry, waterworn pebbles, mixed with fragments of broken shells and minute pieces of wreck, that strewed the opening of the cave.

"Was there ever a lovelier evening!" he exclaimed; "the waters above the firmament seem all of a piece with the waters below. And never surely was there a scene of wilder beauty. Only look inwards, and see how the stream of red light seems bounded by the extreme darkness, like a river by its banks, and how the reflection of the ripple goes waving in golden curls along the roof!"

"I have been admiring the scene for the last half hour," I said; "Shakspeare speaks of a music that cannot be heard, and I have not yet seen a place where one might better learn to comment on the passage."

Both the thought and the phrase seemed new to him.

"A music that cannot be heard!" he repeated; and then, after a momentary pause, "you allude to the fact," he continued, "that sweet music, and forms such as these, of silent beauty and grandeur, awaken in the mind emotions of nearly the same class. There is something truly exquisite in the concert of to-night."

I muttered a simple assent.

"See," he continued, "how finely these insulated piles of rock that rise in so many combinations of form along the beach, break and diversify the red light, and how the glossy leaves of the ivy glisten in the hollows of the precipices above! And then, how the sea spreads away to the far horizon, a glorious pavement of crimson and gold!—and how the dark Ailsa rises in the midst, like the little cloud seen by the Prophet! The mind seems to enlarge, the heart to expand, in the contemplation of so much of beauty and grandeur. The soul asserts its due supremacy. And, oh! 'tis surely well that we can escape from those little cares of life which fetter down our thoughts, our hopes, our wishes, to the wants and the enjoyments of our animal existence; and that, amid the grand and the sublime of nature, we may learn from the spirit within us that we are better than the beasts that perish!"

I looked up to the animated countenance and flashing eyes of my companion, and wondered what sort of a peasant it was I had met with. "Wild and beautiful as the scene is," I said, "you will find, even among those who arrogate to themselves the praise of wisdom and learning, men who regard such scenes as mere errors of nature. Burnet would have told you that a Dutch landscape, without hill, rock, or valley, must be the perfection of beauty, seeing that Paradise itself could have furnished nothing better."

"I hold Milton as higher authority on the subject," said my companion, "than all the philosophers who ever wrote. Beauty, in a tame unvaried flat, where a man would know

his country only by the milestones! A very Dutch Paradise, truly!"

"But would not some of your companions above," I asked, "deem the scene as much an error of nature as Burnet himself? They could pass over these stubborn rocks neither plough nor harrow."

"True," he replied—"there is a species of small wisdom in the world that often constitutes the extremest of its folly; a wisdom that would change the entire nature of good, had it but the power, by vainly endeavouring to render that good universal. It would convert the entire earth into one vast corn field, and then find that it had ruined the species by its improvement."

"We of Scotland can hardly be ruined in that way for an age to come," I said. "But I am not sure that I understand you. Alter the very nature of good in the attempt to render it universal! How?"

"I daresay you have seen a graduated scale," said my companion, "exhibiting the various powers of the different musical instruments, and observed how some of limited scope cross only a few of the divisions, and how others stretch nearly from side to side. 'Tis but a poor truism, perhaps, to say that similar differences in scope and power obtain among men—that there are minds who could not join in the concert of to-night—who could see neither beauty nor grandeur amid these wild cliffs and caverns, or in that glorious expanse of sea and sky; and that, on the other hand, there are minds so finely modulated—minds that sweep so broadly across the scale of nature, that there is no object, however minute, no breath of feeling, however faint, but what it awakens their sweet vibrations—the snow-flake falling in the stream, the daisy of the field, the conies of the rock, the hysop of the wall. Now, the vast and various frame of nature is adapted not to the lesser but to the larger mind. It spreads on and around us in all its rich and magnificent variety, and finds the full portraiture of its Proteus-like beauty in the mirror of genius alone. Evident, however, as this may seem, we find a sort of levelling principle in the inferior order of minds, and which, in fact, constitutes one of their grand characteristics—a principle that would fain abridge the scale to their own narrow capabilities—that would cut down the vastness of nature to suit the littleness of their own conceptions and desires, and convert it into one tame, uniform, *mediocre good*, which would be good but to themselves alone, and ultimately not even that."

"I think I can now understand you," I said: "you describe a sort of swinish wisdom that would convert the world into one vast sty. For my own part, I have travelled far enough to know the value of a blue hill, and would not willingly lose so much as one of these landmarks of our mother land, by which kindly hearts in distant countries love to remember it."

"I daresay we are getting fanciful," rejoined my companion; "but certainly, in man's schemes of improvement, both physical and moral, there is commonly a littleness and want of adaptation to the general good that almost always defeats his aims. He sees and understands but a minute portion—it is always some partial good he would introduce; and thus he but destroys the just proportions of a nicely regulated system of things by exaggerating one of the parts. I passed, of late, through a richly cultivated district of country, in which the agricultural improver had done his utmost. Never were there finer fields, more convenient steadings, crops of richer promise, a better regulated system of production. Corn and cattle had mightily improved; but what had man, the lord of the soil, become? Is not the body better than food, and life than raiment? If that decline for which all other things exist, it surely matters little that all these other things prosper. And here though the corn, the cattle, the fields, the steadings

had improved, man had sunk. There were but two classes in the district: a few cold-hearted speculators, who united what is worst in the character of the landed proprietor and the merchant—these were your gentlemen farmers; and a class of degraded helots, little superior to the cattle they tended—these were your farm servants. And for two such extreme classes—necessary result of such a state of things—had this unfortunate, though highly eulogized district, parted with a moral, intelligent, high-minded peasantry—the true boast and true riches of their country.”

“I have, I think, observed something like what you describe,” I said.

“I give,” he replied, “but one instance of a thousand. But mark how the sun’s lower disk has just reached the line of the horizon, and how the long level rule of light stretches to the very innermost recess of the cave! It darkens as the orb sinks. And see how the gauze-like shadows creep on from the sea, film after film!—and now they have reached the ivy that mantles round the castle of The Bruce. Are you acquainted with Barbour?”

“Well,” I said; “a spirited, fine old fellow, who loved his country and did much for it. I could once repeat all his chosen passages. Do you remember how he describes King Robert’s rencounter with the English knight?”

My companion sat up erect, and, clenching his fist, began repeating the passage, with a power and animation that seemed to double its inherent energy and force.

“Glorious old Barbour!” ejaculated he, when he had finished the description; “many a heart has beat all the higher when the bale-fires were blazing, through the tutorage of thy noble verses! Blind Harry, too—what has not his country owed to him!”

“Ah, they have long since been banished from our popular literature,” I said; “and yet Blind Harry’s ‘Wallace,’ as Hailes tells us, was at one time the very Bible of the Scotch. But love of country seems to be getting old-fashioned among us, and we have become philosophic enough to set up for citizens of the world.”

“All cold pretence,” rejoined my companion; “an effect of that small wisdom we have just been decrying. Cosmopolitanism, as we are accustomed to define it, can be no virtue of the present age, nor yet of the next, nor perhaps for centuries to come. Even when it shall have attained to its best, and when it may be most safely indulged in, it is according to the nature of man, that, instead of running counter to the love of country, it should exist as but a wider diffusion of the feeling, and form, as it were, a wider circle round it. It is absurdity itself to oppose the love of our country to that of our race.”

“Do I rightly understand you?” I said. “You look forward to a time when the patriot may safely expand into the citizen of the world; but, in the present age, he would do well, you think, to confine his energies within the inner circle of country.”

“Decidedly,” he rejoined; “man should love his species at all times, but it is ill with him if, in times like the present, he loves not his country more. The spirit of war and aggression is yet abroad—there are laws to be established, rights to be defended, invaders to be repulsed, tyrants to be deposed. And who but the patriot is equal to these things? We are not yet done with the Bruces, the Wallaces, the Tells, the Washingtons—yes, the Washingtons, whether they fight for or against us—we are not yet done with them. The cosmopolite is but a puny abortion—a birth ere the natural time, that at once endangers the life and betrays the weakness of the country that bears him. Would that he were sleeping in his elements till his proper time! But we are getting ashamed of our country, of our language, our manners, our music, our literature; nor shall we have enough of the old spirit left us to assert our liberties or fight our battles. Oh, for some Barbour or Blind Harry of

the present day, to make us, once more, proud of our country!”

I quoted the famous saying of Fletcher of Salton—“Allow me to make the songs of a country, and I will allow you to make its laws.”

“But here,” I said, “is our lugger stealing round Turnberry Head. We shall soon part, perhaps for ever, and I would fain know with whom I have spent an hour so agreeably, and have some name to remember him by. My own name is Matthew Lindsay; I am a native of Irvine.”

“And I,” said the young man, rising and cordially grasping the proffered hand, “am a native of Ayr; my name is Robert Burns.”

CHAPTER II.

If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother!
Dedication to G. Hamilton.

A light breeze had risen as the sun sunk, and our lugger, with all her sails set, came sweeping along the shore. She had nearly gained the little bay in front of the cave, and the countrymen from above, to the number of perhaps twenty, had descended to the beach, when, all of a sudden, after a shrill whistle, and a brief half minute of commotion among the crew, she wore round and stood out to sea. I turned to the south, and saw a square-rigged vessel shooting out from behind one of the rocky headlands, and then bearing down in a long tack on the smuggler. “The sharks are upon us,” said one of the countrymen, whose eyes had turned in the same direction—“we shall have no sport to-night.” We stood lining the beach in anxious curiosity; the breeze freshened as the evening fell; and the lugger, as she lessened to our sight, went leaning against the foam in a long bright furrow, that, catching the last light of evening, shone like the milky way amid the blue. Occasionally we could see the flash, and hear the booming of a gun from the other vessel; but the night fell thick and dark; the waves too began to lash against the rocks, drowning every feeble sound in a continuous roaring; and every trace of both the chase and the chaser disappeared. The party broke up, and I was left standing alone on the beach, a little nearer home, but in every other respect in quite the same circumstances as when landed by my American friends on the wild coast of Connaught. “Another of Fortune’s freaks!” I ejaculated; “but ’tis well she can no longer surprise me.”

A man stepped out in the darkness as I spoke, from beside one of the rocks; it was the peasant Burns, my acquaintance of the earlier part of the evening.

“I have waited, Mr Lindsay,” he said, “to see whether some of the country folks here, who have homes of their own to invite you to, might not have brought you along with them. But I am afraid you must just be content to pass the night with me. I can give you a share of my bed and my supper, though both, I am aware, need many apologies.” I made a suitable acknowledgment, and we ascended the cliff together. “I live, when at home with my parents,” said my companion, “in the inland parish of Tarbolton; but, for the last two months, I have attended school here, and lodge with an old widow woman in the village. To-morrow, as harvest is fast approaching, I return to my father.”

“And I,” I replied, “shall have the pleasure of accompanying you in at least the early part of your journey, on my way to Irvine, where my mother still lives.”

We reached the village, and entered a little cottage, that presented its gable to the street, and its side to one of the narrower lanes.

“I must introduce you to my landlady,” said my companion, “an excellent, kind-hearted old woman, with a fund of honest Scotch pride and shrewd good sense in her composition, and with the mother as strong in her heart a

ever, though she lost the last of her children more than twenty years ago."

We found the good woman sitting beside a small but very cheerful fire. The hearth was newly swept, and the floor newly sanded; and, directly fronting her, there was an empty chair, which seemed to have been drawn to its place in the expectation of some one to fill it.

"You are going to leave me, Robert, my bairn," said the woman, "an' I kenna how I sall ever get on without you; I have almost forgotten, sin, you came to live with me, that I have neither children nor husband." On seeing me, she stopped short.

"An acquaintance," said my companion, "whom I have made bold to bring with me for the night; but you must not put yourself to any trouble, mother; he is, I daresay, as much accustomed to plain fare as myself. Only, however, we must get an additional pint of *yill* from the *clachan*; you know this is my last evening with you, and was to be a merry one at any rate." The woman looked me full in the face.

"Matthew Lindsay!" she exclaimed—"can you have forgotten your poor old aunt Margaret!" I grasped her hand.

"Dearest aunt, this is surely most unexpected! How could I have so much as dreamed you were within a hundred miles of me?" Mutual congratulation ensued.

"This," she said, turning to my companion, "is the nephew I have so often told you about, and so often wished to bring you acquainted with. He is, like yourself, a great reader and a great thinker, and there is no need that your proud, kindly heart should be jealous of him; for he has been ever quite as poor, and maybe the poorer of the two." After still more of greeting and congratulation, the young man rose.

"The night is dark, mother," he said, "and the road to the *clachan* a rough one; besides you and your kinsman will have much to say to one another. I shall just slip out to the *clachan* for you; and you shall both tell me on my return whether I am not a prime judge of ale."

"The kindest heart, Matthew, that ever lived," said my relative, as he left the house; "ever since he came to Kirkoswald, he has been both son and daughter to me, and I shall feel twice a widow when he goes away."

"I am mistaken, aunt," I said, "if he be not the strongest minded man I ever saw. Be assured he stands high among the aristocracy of nature, whatever may be thought of him in Kirkoswald. There is a robustness of intellect, joined to an overmastering force of character, about him, which I have never yet seen equalled, though I have been intimate with at least one very superior mind, and with hundreds of the class who pass for men of talent. I have been thinking, ever since I met with him, of the William Tells and William Wallaces of history—men who, in those times of trouble which unfix the foundations of society, step out from their obscurity to rule the destiny of nations."

"I was ill about a month ago," said my relative—"so very ill that I thought I was to have done with the world altogether; and Robert was both nurse and physician to me—he kindled my fire, too, every morning, and sat up beside me sometimes for the greater part of the night. What wonder I should love him as my own child? Had your cousin Henry been spared to me, he would now have been much about Robert's age."

The conversation passed to other matters, and in about half an hour, my new friend entered the room; when we sat down to a homely, but cheerful repast.

"I have been engaged in argument, for the last twenty minutes, with our parish schoolmaster," he said—"a shrewd, sensible man, and a prime scholar, but one of the most determined Calvinists I ever knew. Now, there is something, Mr Lindsay, in abstract Calvinism, that dissatisfies and distresses me; and yet, I must confess, there is so much

of good in the working of the system, that I would ill like to see it supplanted by any other. I am convinced, for instance, there is nothing so efficient in teaching the bulk of a people to think as a Calvinistic church."

"Ah, Robert," said my aunt, "it does meikle mair nor that. Look round you, my bairn, an' see if there be a kirk in which puir sinful creatures have mair comfort in their sufferings or mair hope in their deaths."

"Dear mother," said my companion, "I like well enough to dispute with the schoolmaster, but I must have no dispute with you. I know the heart is everything in these matters, and yours is much wiser than mine."

"There is something in abstract Calvinism," he continued, "that distresses me. In almost all our researches we arrive at an ultimate barrier, which interposes its wall of darkness between us and the last grand truth, in the series which we had trusted was to prove a master-key to the whole. We dwell in a sort of Goshen—there is light in our immediate neighbourhood, and a more than Egyptian darkness all around; and as every Hebrew must have known that the hedge of cloud which he saw resting on the landscape, was a boundary not to things themselves, but merely to his view of things—for beyond there were cities, and plains, and oceans, and continents—so we in like manner must know that the barriers of which I speak exist only in relation to the faculties which we employ, not to the objects on which we employ them. And yet, notwithstanding this consciousness that we are necessarily and irremediably the bound prisoners of ignorance, and that all the great truths lie outside our prison, we can almost be content that, in most cases, it should be so—not, however, with regard to those great unattainable truths which lie in the track of Calvinism. They seem too important to be wanted, and yet want them we must—and we beat our very heads against the cruel barrier which separates us from them."

"I am afraid I hardly understand you," I said;—"do assist me by some instance or illustration."

"You are acquainted," he replied, "with the Scripture doctrine of Predestination, and, in thinking over it, in connection with the destinies of man, it must have struck you that, however much it may interfere with our fixed notions of the goodness of Deity, it is thoroughly in accordance with the actual condition of our race. As far as we can know of ourselves and the things around us, there seems, through the will of Deity—for to what else can we refer it?—a fixed, invariable connection between what we term cause and effect. Nor do we demand of any class of mere effects, in the inanimate or irrational world, that they should regulate themselves otherwise than the causes which produce them have determined. The roe and the tiger pursue, unquestioned, the instincts of their several natures; the cork rises, and the stone sinks; and no one thinks of calling either to account for movements so opposite. But it is not so with the family of man; and yet our minds, our bodies, our circumstances, are but combinations of effects, over the causes of which we have no control. We did not choose a country for ourselves, nor yet a condition in life—nor did we determine our modicum of intellect, or our amount of passion—we did not impart its gravity to the weightier part of our nature, or give expansion to the lighter—nor are our instincts of our own planting. How, then, being thus as much the creatures of necessity as the denizens of the wild and forest—as thoroughly under the agency of fixed, unalterable causes, as the dead matter around us—why are we yet the subjects of a retributive system, and accountable for all our actions?"

"You quarrel with Calvinism," I said; "and seem one of the most thorough-going necessitarians I ever knew."

"Not so," he replied; "though my judgment cannot disprove these conclusions, my heart cannot acquiesce in them—though I see that I am as certainly the subject of

laws that exist and operate independent of my will, as the dead matter around me, I feel, with a certainty quite as great, that I am a free, accountable creature. It is according to the scope of my entire reason that I should deem myself bound—it is according to the constitution of my whole nature that I should feel myself free. And in this consists the great, the fearful problem—a problem which both reason and revelation propound; but the truths which can alone solve it, seem to lie beyond the horizon of darkness—and we vex ourselves in vain. 'Tis a sort of moral asymptotes; but its lines, instead of approaching through all space without meeting, seem receding through all space, and yet meet."

"Robert, my bairn," said my aunt, "I fear you are wasting your strength on these mysteries to your ain hurt. Did ye no see, in the last storm, when ye staid out among the caves till cock-crow, that the bigger and stronger the wave, the mair was it broken against the rocks?—it's just thus wi' the pride o' man's understanding, when he measures it against the dark things o' God. An', yet, it's sae ordered that the same wonderful truths which perplex an' cast down the proud reason, should delight an' comfort the humble heart. I am a lone, puir woman, Robert. Bairns and husband have gone down to the grave, one by one; an', now, for twenty weary years, I have been childless an' a widow. But trow ye that the puir lone woman wanted a guard an' a comforter, an' a provider, through a' the lang mirk nichts, an' a' the cauld scarce winters o' these twenty years? No, my bairn—I kent that Himsel was wi' me. I kent it by the provision He made, an' the care He took, an' the joy He gave. An', how, think you, did He comfort me maist? Just by the blessed assurance that a' my trials an' a' my sorrows were nae hasty chance matters, but dispensations for my guid, an' the guid o' those he took to himsel, that, in the perfect love and wisdom o' his nature, he had ordained frae the beginning."

"Ah, mother," said my friend, after a pause, "you understand the doctrine far better than I do! There are, I find, no contradictions in the Calvinism of the heart."

CHAPTER III.

Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twined, amorous, round the raptured scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till, too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of winged day.

To Mary in Heaven.

We were early on the road together; the day, though somewhat gloomy, was mild and pleasant, and we walked slowly onward, neither of us in the least disposed to hasten our parting, by hastening our journey. We had discussed fifty different topics, and were prepared to enter on fifty more, when we reached the ancient burgh of Ayr, where our roads separated.

"I have taken an immense liking to you, Mr Lindsay," said my companion, as he seated himself on the parapet of the old bridge, "and have just bethought me of a scheme through which I may enjoy your company for, at least, one night more. The Ayr is a lovely river, and you tell me you have never explored it. We shall explore it together this evening, for about ten miles, when we shall find ourselves at the farm-house of Lochlea. You may depend on a hearty welcome from my father, whom, by the way, I wish much to introduce to you, as a man worth your knowing; and, as I have set my heart on the scheme, you are surely too good-natured to disappoint me." Little risk of that, I thought; I had, in fact, become thoroughly enamoured of the warm-hearted benevo-

lence, and fascinating conversation of my companion, and acquiesced with the best good-will in the world.

We had threaded the course of the river for several miles. It runs through a wild pastoral valley, roughened by thickets of copsewood, and bounded, on either hand, by a line of swelling, moory hills, with here and there a few irregular patches of corn, and here and there some little, nest-like cottage peeping out from among the wood. The clouds, which, during the morning, had obscured the entire face of the heavens, were breaking up their array, and the sun was looking down, in twenty different places, through the openings, checkerboard the landscape with a fantastic, though lovely carpeting of light and shadow. Before us, there rose a thick wood, on a jutting promontory, that looked blue and dark in the shade, as if it wore mourning; while the sunlit stream beyond shone through the trunks and branches, like a river of fire. At length the clouds seemed to have melted in the blue—for there was not a breath of wind to speed them away—and the sun, now hastening to the west, shone, in unbroken effulgence, over the wide extent of the dell, lighting up stream and wood, and field and cottage, in one continuous blaze of glory. We had walked on in silence for the last half hour; but I could sometimes hear my companion muttering as he went; and when, in passing through a thicket of hawthorn and honeysuckle, we started from its perch a linnet that had been filling the air with its melody, I could hear him exclaim, in a subdued tone of voice, "Bonny, bonny birdie! why hasten frae me?—I wadna skaith a feather o' yer wing." He turned round to me, and I could see that his eyes were swimming in moisture.

"Can he be other," he said, "than a good and benevolent God, who gives us moments like these to enjoy? Oh, my friend, without these Sabbaths of the soul, that come to refresh and invigorate it, it would dry up within us! How exquisite," he continued, "how entire the sympathy which exists between all that is good and fair in external nature, and all of good and fair that dwells in our own! And, oh, how the heart expands and lightens! The world is as a grave to it—a closely-covered grave—and it shrinks and deadens, and contracts all its holier and more joyous feelings under the cold, earth-like pressure. But, amid the grand and lovely of nature—amid these forms and colours of richest beauty—there is a disinterment, a resurrection of sentiment; the pressure of our earthly part seems removed, and those *senses of the mind*, if I may so speak, which serve to connect our spirits with the invisible world around us, recover their proper tone, and perform their proper office."

"*Senses of the mind*," I said, repeating the phrase; "the idea is new to me; but I think I catch your meaning."

"Yes; there are—there must be such," he continued, with growing enthusiasm; "man is essentially a religious creature—a looker beyond the grave, from the very constitution of his mind; and the sceptic who denies it, is untrue not merely to the Being who has made and who preserves him, but to the entire scope and bent of his own nature besides. Wherever man is—whether he be a wanderer of the wild forest or still wilder desert, a dweller in some lone isle of the sea, or the tutored and full-minded denizen of some blessed land like our own—wherever man is, there is religion—hopes that look forward and upward—the belief in an unending existence, and a land of separate souls."

I was carried away by the enthusiasm of my companion, and felt, for the time, as if my mind had become the mirror of his. There seems to obtain among men a species of moral gravitation, analogous, in its principles, to that which regulates and controls the movements of the planetary system. The larger and more ponderous any body, the greater its attractive force, and the more overpowering its influence over the lesser bodies which surround it. The earth we inhabit carries the moon along with it in its course,

and is itself subject to the immensely more powerful influence of the sun. And it is thus with character. It is a law of our nature, as certainly as of the system we inhabit, that the inferior should yield to the superior, and the lesser owe its guidance to the greater. I had hitherto wandered on through life almost unconscious of the existence of this law, or if occasionally rendered half aware of it, it was only through a feeling that some secret influence was operating favourably in my behalf on the common minds around me. I now felt, however, for the first time, that I had come in contact with a mind immeasurably more powerful than my own; my thoughts seemed to cast themselves into the very mould—my sentiments to modulate themselves by the very tone of his. And yet he was but a russet-clad peasant—my junior by at least eight years—who was returning from school to assist his father, an humble tacksman, in the labours of the approaching harvest. But the law of circumstance, so arbitrary in ruling the destinies of common men, exerts but a feeble control over the children of genius. The prophet went forth commissioned by Heaven to anoint a king over Israel, and the choice fell on a shepherd boy who was tending his father's flocks in the field.

We had reached a lovely bend of the stream. There was a semicircular inflection in the steep bank, which waved over us, from base to summit, with hawthorn and hazle; and while one half looked blue and dark in the shade, the other was lighted up with gorgeous and fiery splendour by the sun, now fast sinking in the west. The effect seemed magical. A little grassy platform that stretched between the hanging wood and the stream, was whitened over with clothes, that looked like snow-wreaths in the hollow; and a young and beautiful girl watched beside them.

"Mary Campbell!" exclaimed my companion, and, in a moment, he was at her side, and had grasped both her hands in his. "How fortunate, how very fortunate I am!" he said; "I could not have so much as hoped to have seen you to-night, and yet here you are. This, Mr Lindsay, is a loved friend of mine, whom I have known and valued for years; ever, indeed, since we herded our sheep together under the cover of one plaid. Dearest Mary, I have had sad forebodings regarding you for the whole last month I was in Kirkoswald, and yet, after all my foolish fears, here you are, ruddier and bonnier than ever."

She was, in truth, a beautiful, sylph-like young woman—one whom I would have looked at with complacency in any circumstances; for who that admires the fair and the lovely in nature—whether it be the wide-spread beauty of sky and earth, or beauty in its minuter modifications, as we see it in the flowers that spring up at our feet, or the butterfly that flutters over them—who, I say, that admires the fair and lovely in nature can be indifferent to the fairest and loveliest of all her productions? As the mistress, however, of by far the strongest-minded man I ever knew, there was more of scrutiny in my glance than usual, and I felt a deeper interest in her than mere beauty could have awakened. She was, perhaps, rather below than above the middle size; but formed in such admirable proportion that it seemed out of place to think of size in reference to her at all. Who, in looking at the *Venus de Medicis*, asks whether she be tall or short? The bust and neck were so exquisitely moulded, that they reminded me of Burke's fanciful remark, viz., that our ideas of beauty originate in our love of the sex, and that we deem every object beautiful which is described by soft waving lines, resembling those of the female neck and bosom. Her feet and arms, which were both bare, had a statue-like symmetry, and marble-like whiteness; but it was on her expressive and lovely countenance, now lighted up by the glow of joyous feeling, that nature seemed to have exhausted her utmost skill. There was a fascinating mixture in the expression of superior intelligence and child-like simplicity; a soft, modest light dwelt in the blue eye; and in the entire contour and general form of the features, there was a

nearer approach to that union of the straight and the rounded, which is found in its perfection in only the Grecian face, than is at all common in our northern latitudes, among the descendants of either the Celt or the Saxon. I felt, however, as I gazed, that, when lovers meet, the presence of a third person, however much the friend of either, must always be less than agreeable.

"Mr Burns," I said, "there is a beautiful eminence a few hundred yards to the right, from which I am desirous to overlook the windings of the stream. Do permit me to leave you for a short half hour, when I shall return; or, lest I weary you by my stay, 'twere better, perhaps, you should join me there. My companion greeted the proposal with a good-humoured smile of intelligence; and, plunging into the wood, I left him with his Mary. The sun had just set as he joined me.

"Have you ever been in love, Mr Lindsay?" he said.

"No, never seriously," I replied. "I am, perhaps, not naturally of the coolest temperament imaginable; but the same fortune that has improved my mind in some little degree, and given me high notions of the sex, has hitherto thrown me among only its less superior specimens. I am now in my eight-and-twentieth year, and I have not yet met with a woman whom I could love."

"Then you are yet a stranger," he rejoined, "to the greatest happiness of which our nature is capable. I have enjoyed more heartfelt pleasure in the company of the young woman I have just left, than from every other source that has been opened to me from my childhood till now. Love, my friend, is the fulfilling of the whole law."

"Mary Campbell did you not call her?" I said. "She is, I think, the loveliest creature I have ever seen; and I am much mistaken in the expression of her beauty, if her mind be not as lovely as her person."

"It is, it is," he exclaimed—"the intelligence of an angel with the simplicity of a child. Oh, the delight of being thoroughly trusted, thoroughly beloved by one of the loveliest, best, purest-minded of all God's good creatures! To feel that heart beating against my own, and to know that it beats for me only! Never have I passed an evening with my Mary without returning to the world a better, gentler, wiser man. Love, my friend, is the fulfilling of the whole law. What are we without it?—poor, vile, selfish animals; our very virtues themselves, so exclusively virtues on our own behalf as to be well nigh as hateful as our vices. Nothing so opens and improves the heart, nothing so widens the grasp of the affections, nothing half so effectually brings us out of our crust of self, as a happy, well-regulated love for a pure-minded, affectionate-hearted woman!"

"There is another kind of love of which we sailors see somewhat," I said, "which is not so easily associated with good."

"Love!" he replied—"no, Mr Lindsay, that is not the name. Kind associates with kind in all nature; and love—humanizing, heart-softening love—cannot be the companion of whatever is low, mean, worthless, degrading—the associate of ruthless dishonour, cunning, treachery, and violent death. Even, independent of its amount of evil as a crime, or the evils still greater than itself which necessarily accompany it, there is nothing that so petrifies the feeling as illicit connection."

"Do you seriously think so?" I asked.

"Yes, and I see clearly how it should be so. Neither sex is complete of itself—each was made for the other, that, like the two halves of a hinge, they may become an entire whole when united. Only think of the Scriptural phrase *one flesh*—it is of itself a system of philosophy. Refinement and tenderness are of the woman, strength and dignity of the man. Only observe the effects of a thorough separation, whether originating in accident or caprice. You will find the stronger sex lost in the rudenesses of partial

barbarism ; the gentler wrapt up in some pitiful round of trivial and unmeaning occupation—dry-nursing puppies, or making pincushions for posterity. But how much more pitiful are the effects when they meet amiss—when the humanizing friend and companion of the man is converted into the light, degraded toy of an idle hour ; the object of a sordid appetite that lives but for a moment, and then expires in loathing and disgust ! The better feelings are iced over at their source, chilled by the freezing and deadening contact—where there is nothing to inspire confidence or solicit esteem ; and, if these pass not through the first, the inner circle—that circle within which the social affections are formed, and from whence they emanate—how can they possibly flow through the circles which lie beyond ? But here, Mr Lindsay, is the farm of Lochlea, and yonder brown cottage, beside the three elms, is the dwelling of my parents.”

CHAPTER IV.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, revered abroad.

Cotter's Saturday Night.

There was a wide and cheerful circle this evening round the hospitable hearth of Lochlea. The father of my friend, a patriarchal-looking old man, with a countenance the most expressive I have almost ever seen, sat beside the wall, on a large oaken settle, which also served to accommodate a young man, an occasional visitor of the family, dressed in rather shabby black, whom I at once set down as a probationer of divinity. I had my own seat beside him. The brother of my friend (a lad cast in nearly the same mould of form and feature, except perhaps that his frame, though muscular and strongly set, seemed in the main less formidably robust, and his countenance, though expressive, less decidedly intellectual) sat at my side. My friend had drawn in his seat beside his mother, a well-formed, comely brunette, of about thirty-eight, whom I might almost have mistaken for his elder sister ; and two or three younger members of the family were grouped behind her. The fire blazed cheerily within the wide and open chimney ; and, throwing its strong light on the faces and limbs of the circle, sent our shadows flickering across the rafters and the wall behind. The conversation was animated and rational, and every one contributed his share. But I was chiefly interested in the remarks of the old man, for whom I already felt a growing veneration, and in those of his wonderfully gifted son.

“ Unquestionably, Mr Burns,” said the man in black, addressing the farmer, “ politeness is but a very shadow, as the poet hath it, if the heart be wanting. I saw, to-night, in a strictly polite family, so marked a presumption of the lack of that natural affection of which politeness is but the portraiture and semblance, that truly I have been grieved in my heart ever since.”

“ Ah, Mr Murdoch,” said the farmer, “ there is ever more hypocrisy in the world than in the church, and that, too, among the class of fine gentlemen and fine ladies, who deny it most. But the instance”——

“ You know the family, my worthy friend,” continued Mr Murdoch—“ it is a very pretty one, as we say vernacularly, being numerous, and the sons highly genteel young men ; the daughters not less so. A neighbour of the same very polite character, coming on a visit when I was among them, asked the father, in the course of a conversation to which I was privy, how he meant to dispose of his sons ; when the father replied that he had not yet determined. The visitor said, that, were he in his place, seeing they were all well educated young men, he would send them abroad ; to which the father objected the indubitable fact, that many young men lost their health in foreign countries, and very many their lives. ‘ True,’ did the visitor rejoin ; ‘ but, as you have a number of sons, it will be strange if some one of them does not live and make a fortune.’ Now, Mr

Burns, what will you, who know the feelings of paternity, and the incalculable, and assuredly, I may say, invaluable value of human souls, think when I add, that the father commended the hint as shewing the wisdom of a shrewd man of the world !”

“ Even the chief priests,” said the old man, “ pronounced it unlawful to cast into the treasury the thirty pieces of silver, seeing it was the price of blood ; but the gentility of the present day is less scrupulous. There is a laxity of principle among us, Mr Murdoch, that, if God restore us not, must end in the ruin of our country. I say laxity of principle ; for there have ever been evil manners among us, and waifs in no inconsiderable number, broken loose from the decencies of society—more, perhaps, in my early days than there are now. But our principles, at least, were sound ; and not only was there thus a restorative and conservative spirit among us, but, what was of not less importance, there was a broad gulf, like that in the parable, between the two grand classes, the good and the evil—a gulf which, when it secured the better class from contamination, interposed no barrier to the reformation and return of even the most vile and profligate, if repentant. But this gulf has disappeared, and we are standing unconcernedly over it, on a hollow and dangerous marsh of neutral ground, which, in the end, if God open not our eyes, must assuredly give way under our feet.”

“ To what, father,” inquired my friend, who sat listening with the deepest and most respectful attention, “ do you attribute the change ?”

“ Undoubtedly,” replied the old man, “ there have been many causes at work ; and, though not impossible, it would certainly be no easy task to trace them all to their several effects, and give to each its due place and importance. But there is a deadly evil among us, though you will hear of it from neither press nor pulpit, which I am disposed to rank first in the number—the affectation of gentility. It has a threefold influence among us : it confounds the grand, eternal distinctions of right and wrong, by erecting into a standard of conduct and opinion, that heterogeneous and artificial whole which constitutes the manners and morals of the upper classes ; it severs those ties of affection and good-will which should bind the middle to the lower orders, by disposing the one to regard whatever is below them with a too contemptuous indifference, and by provoking a bitter and indignant, though natural jealousy in the other for being so regarded ; and, finally, by leading those who most entertain it, into habits of expense, torturing their means, if I may so speak, on the rack of false opinion—disposing them to think, in their blindness, that to be genteel is a first consideration, and to be honest merely a secondary one—it has the effect of so hardening their hearts, that, like those Carthaginians of whom we have been lately reading in the volume Mr Murdoch lent us, they offer up their very children, souls and bodies, to the unreal, phantom-like necessities of their circumstances.”

“ Have I not heard you remark, father,” said Gilbert, “ that the change you describe has been very marked among the ministers of our Church ?”

“ Too marked and too striking,” replied the old man ; “ and in affecting the respectability and usefulness of so important a class, it has educed a cause of deterioration, distinct from itself, and hardly less formidable. There is an old proverb of our country—‘ Better the head of the commonality than the tail of the gentry.’ I have heard you quote it, Robert, oftener than once, and admire its homely wisdom. Now, it bears directly on what I have to remark—the ministers of our Church have moved but one step during the last sixty years ; but that step has been an all-important one—it has been from the best place in relation to the people to the worst in relation to the aristocracy.”

“ Undoubtedly, worthy Mr Burns,” said Mr Murdoch, “ there is great truth, according to mine own experience, in

that which you affirm. I may state, I trust, without overboasting or conceit, my respected friend, that my learning is not inferior to that of our neighbour the clergyman—it is not inferior in Latin, nor in Greek, nor yet in French literature, Mr Burns, and probable it is he would not much court a competition; and yet, when I last waited at the Manse regarding a necessary and essential certificate, Mr Burns, he did not so much as ask me to sit down."

"Ah!" said Gilbert, who seemed the wit of the family, "he is a highly respectable man, Mr Murdoch—he has a fine house, fine furniture, fine carpets—all that constitutes respectability, you know; and his family is on visiting terms with that of the Laird. But his credit is not so respectable, I hear."

"Gilbert," said the old man, with much seriousness, "it is ill with a people when they can speak lightly of their clergymen. There is still much of sterling worth and serious piety in the Church of Scotland; and if the influence of its ministers be unfortunately less than it was once, we must not cast the blame too exclusively on themselves. Other causes have been in operation. The Church, eighty years ago, was the sole guide of opinion, and the only source of thought among us. There was, indeed, but one way in which a man could learn to think. His mind became the subject of some serious impression:—he applied to his Bible, and, in the contemplation of the most important of all concerns, his newly awakened faculties received their first exercise. All of intelligence, all of moral good in him, all that rendered him worthy of the name of man, he owed to the ennobling influence of his Church; and is it wonder that that influence should be all-powerful from this circumstance alone? But a thorough change has taken place;—new sources of intelligence have been opened up; we have our newspapers, and our magazines, and our volumes of miscellaneous reading; and it is now possible enough for the most cultivated mind in a parish to be the least moral and the least religious; and hence necessarily a diminished influence in the Church, independent of the character of its ministers."

I have dwelt too long, perhaps, on the conversation of the elder Burns; but I feel much pleasure in thus developing, as it were, my recollections of one whom his powerful minded son has described—and this after an acquaintance with our Henry McKenzies, Adam Smiths, and Dugald Stewarts—as the man most thoroughly acquainted with the world he ever knew. Never, at least, have I met with any one who exerted a more wholesome influence, through the force of moral character, on those around him. We sat down to a plain and homely supper. The slave question had, about this time, begun to draw the attention of a few of the more excellent and intelligent among the people, and the elder Burns seemed deeply interested in it.

"This is but homely fare, Mr Lindsay," he said, pointing to the simple viands before us, "and the apologists of slavery among us would tell you how inferior we are to the poor negroes, who fare so much better. But surely 'Man liveth not by bread alone!' Our fathers who died for Christ on the hillside and the scaffold were noble men, and never, never shall slavery produce such, and yet they toiled as hard, and fared as meanly as we their children."

I could feel, in the cottage of such a peasant, and seated beside such men as his two sons, the full force of the remark. And yet I have heard the miserable sophism of unprincipled power against which it was directed—a sophism so insulting to the dignity of honest poverty—a thousand times repeated.

Supper over, the family circle widened round the hearth; and the old man, taking down a large clasped Bible, seated himself beside the iron lamp which now lighted the apartment. There was deep silence among us as he turned over the leaves. Never shall I forget his appearance. He was

tall and thin, and, though his frame was still vigorous, considerably bent. His features were high and massy—the complexion still retained much of the freshness of youth, and the eye all its intelligence; but the locks were waxing thin and grey round his high, thoughtful forehead, and the upper part of the head, which was elevated to an unusual height, was bald. There was an expression of the deepest seriousness on the countenance, which the strong umbery shadows of the apartment served to heighten; and when, laying his hand on the page, he half turned his face to the circle, and said, "*Let us worship God*," I was impressed by a feeling of awe and reverence to which I had, alas! been a stranger for years. I was affected, too, almost to tears, as I joined in the psalm; for a thousand half-forgotten associations came rushing upon me; and my heart seemed to swell and expand as, kneeling beside him when he prayed, I listened to his solemn and fervent petition, that God might make manifest his great power and goodness in the salvation of man. Nor was the poor solitary wanderer of the deep forgotten.

On rising from our devotions, the old man grasped me by the hand. "I am happy," he said, "that we should have met, Mr Lindsay. I feel an interest in you, and must take the friend and the old man's privilege of giving you an advice. The sailor, of all men, stands most in need of religion. His life is one of continued vicissitude—of unexpected success, or unlooked-for misfortune; he is ever passing from danger to safety, and from safety to danger; his dependence is on the every-varying winds, his abode on the unstable waters. And the mind takes a peculiar tone from what is peculiar in the circumstances. With nothing stable in the real world around it on which it may rest, it forms a resting-place for itself in some wild code of belief. It peoples the elements with strange occult powers of good and evil, and does them homage—addressing its prayers to the genius of the winds, and the spirits of the waters. And thus it begets a religion for itself;—for what else is the professional superstition of the sailor? Substitute, my friend, for this—(shall I call it unavoidable superstition?)—this natural religion of the sea—the religion of the Bible. Since you must be a believer in the supernatural, let your belief be true; let your trust be on Him who faileth not—your anchor within the veil; and all shall be well, be your destiny for this world what it may."

We parted for the night, and I saw him no more.

Next morning, Robert accompanied me for several miles on my way. I saw, for the last half hour, that he had something to communicate, and yet knew not how to set about it; and so I made a full stop:—

"You have something to tell me, Mr Burns," I said: "need I assure you I am one you are in no danger from trusting." He blushed deeply, and I saw him, for the first time, hesitate and falter in his address.

"Forgive me," he at length said—"believe me, Mr Lindsay, I would be the last in the world to hurt the feelings of a friend—a—a—but you have been left among us penniless, and I have a very little money which I have no use for;—none in the least;—will you not favour me by accepting it as a loan?"

I felt the full and generous delicacy of the proposal, and, with moistened eyes and a swelling heart, availed myself of his kindness. The sum he tendered did not much exceed a guinea; but the yearly earnings of the peasant Burns fell, at this period, of his life rather below eight pounds.

(To be continued.)



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BURNS.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER V.

Corbies an' Clergy are a shot right kittle.—*Brigs of Ayr.*

THE years passed, and I was again a dweller on the sea; out the ill fortune which had hitherto tracked me like a bloodhound, seemed at length as if tired in the pursuit, and I was now the master of a West India trader, and had begun to lay the foundation of that competency which has secured to my declining years the quiet and comfort which, for the latter part of my life, it has been my happiness to enjoy. My vessel had arrived at Liverpool in the latter part of the year 1784, and I had taken coach for Irvine, to visit my mother, whom I had not seen for several years. There was a change of passengers at every stage; but I saw little in any of them to interest me, till within about a score of miles of my destination, when I met with an old respectable townsman, a friend of my father's. There was but another passenger in the coach, a north country gentleman from the West Indies. I had many questions to ask my townsman, and many to answer—and the time passed lightly away.

"Can you tell me ought of the Burnses of Lechlea?" I inquired, after learning that my mother and my other relatives were well. "I met with the young man Robert about five years ago, and have often since asked myself what special end Providence could have in view in making such a man."

"I was acquainted with old William Burns," said my companion, "when he was gardener at Denholm, an' got intimate wi' his son Robert, when he lived wi' us at Irvine, a twalmonth syne. The faither died shortly ago, sairly straitened in his means, I'm fear'd, an' no very square wi' the laird—an' ill wad he hae liked that, for an honest man never breathed. Robert, puir chield, is no very easy either."

"In his circumstances?" I said.

"Ay, an' waur:—he gat entangled wi' the Kirk, on an unlucky sculduddey business, an' has been writing bitter, wicked ballads on a' the guid ministers in the country ever syne. I'm vexed it's on them he suld hae fallen; an' yet they hae been to blame too."

"Robert Burns so entangled, so occupied!" I exclaimed; you grieve and astonish me."

"We are puir creatures, Matthew," said the old man; "strength an' weakness are often next door neighbours in the best o' us; nay, what is our vera strength taen on the ae side, may be our vera weakness taen on the ither. Never was there a stancher, firmer fallow than Robert Burns; an' now that he has taen a wrang step, puir chield, that vera stanchness seems just a weak want o' ability to yield. He has planted his foot where it lighted by mishanter, an' a' the guid an' ill in Scotland wadna budge him frae the spot."

"Dear me! that so powerful a mind should be so frivolously engaged! Making ballads, you say?—with what success?"

"Ah, Matthew, lad when the strong man puts out his strength," said my companion, "there's naething frivolous in the matter, be his object what it may. Robert's ballads are far, far aboon the best things ever seen in Scotland afore; we auld folk dinna ken whether maist to blame or praise them, but they keep the young people laughing frae the ae nuik o' the shire till the ither."

"But how," I inquired, "have the better clergy rendered themselves obnoxious to Burns? The laws he has violated, if I rightly understand you, are indeed severe, and somewhat questionable in their tendencies; and even good men often press them too far."

"And in the case of Robert," said the old man, "our clergy have been strict to the very letter. They're guid men an' faithfu ministers; but ane o' them, at least, an' he a leader, has a harsh, ill temper, an' mistakes sometimes the corruption o' the auld man in him for the proper zeal o' the new ane. Nor is there ony o' the itheres wha kent what they had to deal wi' when Robert cam afore them. They saw but a proud, thrawart ploughman, that stood uncow'ring under the glunsh o' a hail session; an' so they opened on him the artillery o' the kirk, to bear down his pride. Wha could hae tauld them that they were but frushing their straw an' rotten wood against the iron scales o' Leviathan? An' now that they hae dune their maist, the record o' Robert's mishanter is lying in whity-brown ink yonder in a page o' the session-buik, while the ballads hae sunk deep deep intil the very mind o' the country, and may live there for hunders and hunders o' years."

"You seem to contrast, in this business," I said, "our better with what you must deem our inferior clergy. You mean, do you not, the Higher and Lower parties in our Church? How are they getting on now?"

"Never worse," replied the old man; "an', oh, it's surely ill when the ministers o' peace become the very leaders o' contention! But let the blame rest in the right place. Peace is surely a blessing frae Heaven—no a guid wark demanded frae man; an' when it grows our duty to be in war, it's an ill thing to be in peace. Our Evangelicals are stan'in, puir folk, whar their faithers stood; an' if they maun either fight or be beaten frae their post, why, it's just their duty to fight. But the Moderates are rinnin mad a'thegither amang us: signing our auld Confession, just that they may get intil the Kirk to preach against it; paring the New Testament doun to the vera standard o' heathen Plawto; and sinking ae doctrine after anither, till they leave ahint naething but Deism that might scunner an infidel. Deed, Matthew, if there comena a change among them, an' that sune, they'll swamp the puir Kirk a' thegither. The cauld morality that never made ony ane mair moral, taks nae haud o' the people; an' patronage, as meikle's they roose it, winna keep up either kirk or manse o' itsel. Sorry I am, sin' Robert has entered on the quarrel at a', it suld hae been on the wrang side."

"One of my chief objections," I said, "to the religion of the Moderate party is, that it is of no use."

"A gey serious ane," rejoined the old man; "but maybe there's a waur still. I'm unco vexed for Robert, baith on his worthy father's account and his ain. He's a fearsome fellow

when ance angered, but an honest, warm-hearted chieftain for a' that; an' there's mair sense in yon big head o' his than in ony ither twa in the country."

"Can you tell me aught," said the north country gentleman, addressing my companion, "of Mr R——, the chapel minister in K——? I was once one of his pupils in the far north; but I have heard nothing of him since he left Cromarty."

"Why," rejoined the old man, "he's just the man that, mair nor a' the rest, has borne the brunt o' Robert's fearsome waggery. Did ye ken him in Cromarty, say ye?"

"He was parish schoolmaster there," said the gentleman, "for twelve years; and for six of these I attended his school. I cannot help respecting him; but no one ever loved him. Never surely was there a man at once so unequivocally honest and so thoroughly unamiable."

"You must have found him a rigid disciplinarian," I said.

"He was the most so," he replied, "from the days of Dionysius, at least, that ever taught a school. I remember there was a poor fisher boy among us named Skinner, who, as is customary in Scottish schools, as you must know, blew the horn for gathering the scholars, and kept the catalogue and the key; and who, in return, was educated by the master, and received some little gratuity from the scholars besides. On one occasion, the key dropped out of his pocket; and, when school-time came, the irascible dominie had to burst open the door with his foot. He raged at the boy with a fury so insane, and beat him so unmercifully, that the other boys, gathering heart in the extremity of the case, had to rise *en masse* and tear him out of his hands. But the curious part of the story is yet to come: Skinner has been a fisherman for the last twelve years; but never has he been seen disengaged, for a moment; from that time to this, without mechanically thrusting his hand into the key pocket."

Our companion furnished us with two or three other anecdotes of Mr R——. He told us of a lady who was so overcome by sudden terror on unexpectedly seeing him, many years after she had quitted his school, in one of the pulpits of the south, that she fainted away; and of another of his scholars, named M'Glashan, a robust, daring fellow of six feet, who, when returning to Cromarty from some of the colonies, solaced himself by the way with thoughts of the hearty drubbing with which he was to clear off all his old scores with the dominie.

"Ere his return, however," continued the gentleman, "Mr R—— had quitted the parish; and, had it chanced otherwise, it is questionable whether M'Glashan, with all his strength and courage, would have gained anything in an encounter with one of the boldest and most powerful men in the country."

Such were some of the chance glimpses which I gained, at this time, of by far the most powerful of the opponents of Burns. He was a good, conscientious man; but unfortunately in a harsh, violent temper, and in sometimes mistaking, as my old townsman remarked, the dictates of that temper for those of duty.

CHAPTER VI.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep at times frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd—
How best o' chieftains are whiles in want,
While coofs in countless thousands rant,
And kenma how to wair't.—*Epistle to Davie.*

I visited my friend, a few days after my arrival in Irvine, at the farm-house of Mossiel, to which, on the death of his father, he had removed, with his brother Gilbert and his mother. I could not avoid observing that his manners were considerably changed: my welcome seemed less kind and hearty than I could have anticipated from the warm-hearted

peasant of five years ago, and there was a stern and almost supercilious elevation in his bearing, which at first pained and offended me. I had met with him as he was returning from the fields after the labours of the day: the dusk of twilight had fallen; and, though I had calculated on passing the evening with him at the farm-house of Mossiel, so displeased was I, that, after our first greeting, I had more than half changed my mind. The recollection of his former kindness to me, however, suspended the feeling, and I resolved on throwing myself on his hospitality for the night, however cold the welcome.

"I have come all the way from Irvine to see you, Mr Burns," I said. "For the last five years, I have thought more of my mother and you than of any other two persons in the country. May I not calculate, as of old, on my supper and a bed?"

There was an instantaneous change in his expression.

"Pardon me, my friend," he said, grasping my hand "I have, unwittingly, been doing you wrong; one may surely be the master of an Indian, and in possession of a heart too honest to be spoiled by prosperity!"

The remark served to explain the haughty coldness of his manner which had so displeased me, and which was but the unwillingly assumed armour of a defensive pride.

"There, brother," he said, throwing down some plough irons which he carried, "send *vec Davoc* with these to the smithy, and bid him tell Rankin I won't be there to-night. The moon is rising, Mr Lindsay—shall we not have a stroll together through the coppice?"

"That of all things," I replied; and, parting from Gilbert, we struck into the wood.

The evening, considering the lateness of the season, for winter had set in, was mild and pleasant. The moon at full was rising over the Cumnock Hills, and casting its faint light on the trees that rose around us, in their winding-sheets of brown and yellow, like so many spectres, or that, in the more exposed glaes and openings of the wood, stretched their long naked arms to the sky. A light breeze went rustling through the withered grass; and I could see the faint twinkling of the falling leaves, as they came showering down on every side of us.

"We meet in the midst of death and desolation," said my companion—"we parted when all around us was fresh and beautiful. My father was with me then, and—and Mary Campbell—and now"—

"Mary! your Mary!" I exclaimed—"the young—the beautiful—alas! is she also gone?"

"She has left me," he said—"left me. Mary is in her grave!"

I felt my heart swell, as the image of that loveliest of creatures came rising to my view in all her beauty, as I had seen her by the river side; and I knew not what to reply.

"Yes," continued my friend, "she is in her grave;—we parted for a few days, to re-unite, as we hoped, for ever; and, ere those few days had passed, she was in her grave. But I was unworthy of her—unworthy even then; and now—But she is in her grave!"

I grasped his hand. "It is difficult, I said, "to bid the heart submit to these dispensations, and, oh, how utterly impossible to bring it to listen! But life—your life, my friend—must not be passed in useless sorrow. I am convinced, and often have I thought of it since our last meeting, that yours is no vulgar destiny—though I know not to what it tends."

"Downwards!" he exclaimed—"it tends downwards;—I see, I feel it;—the anchor of my affection is gone, and I drift shoreward on the rocks."

"'Twere ruin," I exclaimed, "to think so!"

"Not half an hour ere my father died," he continued, "he expressed a wish to rise and sit once more in his chair; and we indulged him. But, alas! the same feeling

of uneasiness which had prompted the wish, remained with him still, and he sought to return again to his bed. 'It is not by quitting the bed or the chair,' he said, 'that I need seek for ease: it is by quitting the body.' I am oppressed, Mr Lindsay, by a somewhat similar feeling of uneasiness, and, at times, would fain cast the blame on the circumstances in which I am placed. But I may be as far mistaken as my poor father. I would fain live at peace with all mankind—nay, more, I would fain love and do good to them all; but the villain and the oppressor come to set their feet on my very neck, and crush me into the mire—and must I not resist? And when, in some luckless hour, I yield to my passions—to those fearful passions that must one day overwhelm me—when I yield, and my whole mind is darkened by remorse, and I groan under the discipline of conscience, then comes the odious, abominable hypocrite—the devourer of widows' houses and the substance of the orphan—and demands that my repentance be as public as his own hollow, detestable prayers. And can I do other than resist and expose him? My heart tells me it was formed to bestow—why else does every misery that I cannot relieve, render me wretched? It tells me, too, it was formed not to receive—why else does the proffered assistance of even a friend fill my whole soul with indignation? But ill do my circumstances agree with my feelings. I feel as if I were totally misplaced, in some frolic of Nature, and wander onwards in gloom and unhappiness, for my proper sphere. But, alas! these efforts of uneasy misery are but the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave."

I again began to experience, as on a former occasion, the overmastering power of a mind larger beyond comparison than my own; but I felt it my duty to resist the influence. "Yes, you are misplaced, my friend," I said—"perhaps more decidedly so than any other man I ever knew; but is not this characteristic, in some measure, of the whole species? We are all misplaced; and it seems a part of the scheme of Deity, that we should work ourselves up to our proper sphere. In what other respect does man so differ from the inferior animals as in these aspirations which lead him through all the progressions of improvement, from the lowest to the highest level of his nature?"

"That may be philosophy, my friend," he replied, "but a heart ill at ease finds little of comfort in it. You knew my father: need I say he was one of the excellent of the earth—a man who held directly from God Almighty the patent of his honours? I saw that father sink broken-hearted into the grave, the victim of legalized oppression—yes, saw him overcome in the long contest which his high spirit and his indomitable love of the right had incited him to maintain—overcome by a mean, despicable scoundrel—one of the creeping things of the earth. Heaven knows I did my utmost to assist in the struggle. In my fifteenth year, Mr Lindsay, when a thin, loose-jointed boy, I did the work of a man, and strained my unknit and overtoiled sinews as if life and death depended on the issue, till oft, in the middle of the night, I have had to fling myself from my bed to avoid instant suffocation—an effect of exertion so prolonged and so premature. Nor has the man exerted himself less heartily than the boy—in the roughest, severest labours of the field, I have never yet met a competitor. But my labours have been all in vain—I have seen the evil bewailed by Solomon—the righteous man falling down before the wicked." I could answer only with a sigh. "You are in the right," he continued, after a pause, and in a more subdued tone: "man is certainly misplaced—the present scene of things is below the dignity of both his moral and intellectual nature. Look round you"—(we had reached the summit of a grassy eminence which rose over the wood, and commanded a pretty extensive view of the surrounding country)—"see yonder scattered cottages, that, in the faint

light, rise dim and black amid the stubble fields—my heart warms as I look on them, for I know how much of honest worth, and sound, generous feeling shelters under these roof-trees. But why so much of moral excellence united to a mere machinery for ministering to the ease and luxury of a few of perhaps the least worthy of our species—creatures so spoiled by prosperity that the claim of a common nature has no force to move them, and who seem as miserably misplaced as the myriads whom they oppress?"

"If I'm designed yon lordling's slave—
By nature's law designed—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty and scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?"

"I would hardly know what to say in return, my friend," I rejoined, "did not you, yourself, furnish me with the reply. You are groping on in darkness, and it may be unhappiness, for your proper sphere; but it is in obedience to a great though occult law of our nature—a law general, as it affects the species, in its course of onward progression—particular, and infinitely more irresistible, as it operates on every truly superior intellect. There are men born to wield the destinies of nations—nay, more, to stamp the impression of their thoughts and feelings on the mind of the whole civilized world. And by what means do we often find them roused to accomplish their appointed work? At times hounded on by sorrow and suffering, and thus in the design of Providence, that there may be less of sorrow and suffering in the world ever after—at times roused by cruel and maddening oppression, that the oppressor may perish in his guilt, and a whole country enjoy the blessings of freedom. If Wallace had not suffered from tyranny, Scotland would not have been free."

"But how apply the remark?" said my companion.

"Robert Burns," I replied, again grasping his hand, "yours, I am convinced, is no vulgar destiny. Your griefs, your sufferings, your errors even, the oppressions you have seen and felt, the thoughts which have arisen in your mind, the feelings and sentiments of which it has been the subject—are, I am convinced, of infinitely more importance in their relation to your country than to yourself. You are, wisely and benevolently, placed far below your level, that thousands and ten thousands of your countrymen may be the better enabled to attain to theirs. Assert the dignity of manhood and of genius, and there will be less of wrong and oppression in the world ever after."

I spent the remainder of the evening in the farm-house of Mossiel, and took the coach next morning for Liverpool.

CHAPTER VII.

His is that language of the heart
In which the answering heart would speak—
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light up the cheek;
And his that music to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.—*American Poet.*

The love of literature, when once thoroughly awakened in a reflective mind, can never after cease to influence it. It first assimilates our intellectual part to those fine intellects which live in the world of books, and then renders our connection with them indispensable, by laying hold of that social principle of our nature which ever leads us to the society of our fellows as our proper sphere of enjoyment. My early habits, by heightening my tone of thought and feeling, had tended considerably to narrow my circle of companionship. My profession, too, had led me to be much alone; and now that I had been several years the master of

an Indiaman, I was quite as fond of reading, and felt as deep an interest in whatever took place in the literary world, as when a student at St Andrew's. There was much in the literature of the period to gratify my pride as a Scotchman. The despotism, both political and religious, which had overlaid the energies of our country for more than a century, had long been removed, and the national mind had swelled and expanded under a better system of things, till its influence had become co-extensive with civilized man. Hume had produced his inimitable history, and Adam Smith his wonderful work, which was to revolutionize and new-model the economy of all the governments of the earth. And there, in my little library, were the histories of Henry and Robertson, the philosophy of Kaimes and Reid, the novels of Smollett and M'Kenzie, and the poetry of Beattie and Home. But, if there was no lack of Scottish intellect in the literature of the time, there was a decided lack of Scottish manners; and I knew too much of my humble countrymen not to regret it. True, I had before me the writings of Ramsay and my unfortunate friend Ferguson; but there was a radical meanness in the first that lowered the tone of his colouring far beneath the freshness of truth, and the second, whom I had seen perish—too soon, alas! for literature and his country—had given us but a few specimens of his power, when his hand was arrested for ever.

My vessel, after a profitable, though somewhat tedious voyage, had again arrived in Liverpool. It was late in December 1786, and I was passing the long evening in my cabin, engaged with a whole sheaf of pamphlets and magazines which had been sent me from the shore. *The Lounger* was, at this time, in course of publication. I had ever been an admirer of the quiet elegance and exquisite tenderness of M'Kenzie; and, though I might not be quite disposed to think, with Johnson, that "the chief glory of every people arises from its authors," I certainly felt all the prouder of my country, from the circumstance that so accomplished a writer was one of my countrymen. I had read this evening some of the more recent numbers, half disposed to regret, however, amid all the pleasure they afforded me, that the Addison of Scotland had not done for the manners of his country what his illustrious prototype had done for those of England, when my eye fell on the ninety-seventh number. I read the introductory sentences, and admired their truth and elegance. I had felt, in the contemplation of supereminent genius, the pleasure which the writer describes, and my thoughts reverted to my two friends—the dead and the living. "In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous objects," says the Essayist, "there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight—which expands it, as it were, beyond its usual bounds, and which, investing our nature with extraordinary powers and extraordinary honours, interests our curiosity and flatters our pride."

I read on with increasing interest. It was evident, from the tone of the introduction, that some new luminary had arisen in the literary horizon, and I felt somewhat like a schoolboy when, at his first play, he waits for the drawing up of the curtain. And the curtain at length rose. "The person," continues the essayist, "to whom I allude"—and he alludes to him as a genius of no ordinary class—"is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman." The effect on my nerves seemed electrical—I clapped my hands, and sprung from my seat: "Was I not certain of it! Did I not foresee it!" I exclaimed. "My noble-minded friend, Robert Burns!" I ran hastily over the warm-hearted and generous critique, so unlike the cold, timid, equivocal notices with which the professional critic has greeted, on their first appearance, so many works destined to immortality. It was M'Kenzie, the discriminating, the classical, the elegant, who assured me that the productions of this "heaven-taught

ploughman were fraught with the high-toned feeling and the power and energy of expression, characteristic of the mind and voice of a poet"—with the solemn, the tender, the sublime;—that they contained images of pastoral beauty which no other writer had ever surpassed, and strains of wild humour which only the higher masters of the lyre had ever equalled; and that the genius displayed in them seemed not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature. I flung down the essay, ascended to the deck in three huge strides, leaped ashore, and reached my bookseller's as he was shutting up for the night.

"Can you furnish me with a copy of Burns' Poems," I said, "either for love or money?"

"I have but one copy left," replied the man, "and here it is."

I flung down a guinea. "The change," I said, "I shall get when I am less in a hurry."

'Twas late that evening ere I remembered that 'tis customary to spend at least part of the night in bed. I read on and on with a still increasing astonishment and delight, laughing and crying by turns. I was quite in a new world; all was fresh and unsoiled—the thoughts, the descriptions, the images—as if the volume I read was the first that had ever been written; and yet all was easy and natural, and appealed, with a truth and force irresistible, to the recollections I cherished most fondly. Nature and Scotland met me at every turn. I had admired the polished compositions of Pope, and Gray, and Collins, though I could not sometimes help feeling that, with all the exquisite art they displayed, there was a little additional art wanting still. In most cases the scaffolding seemed incorporated with the structure which it had served to rear; and, though certainly no scaffolding could be raised on surer principles, I could have wished that the ingenuity which had been tasked to erect it, had been exerted a little further in taking it down. But the work before me was evidently the production of a greater artist; not a fragment of the scaffolding remained—not so much as a mark to shew how it had been constructed. The whole seemed to have risen like an exhalation, and, in this respect, reminded me of the structures of Shakspeare alone. I read the inimitable "Twa Dogs." Here, I said, is the full and perfect realization of what Swift and Dryden were hardy enough to attempt, but lacked genius to accomplish. Here are dogs—*bona fide* dogs—endowed indeed with more than human sense and observation, but true to character, as the most honest and attached of quadrupeds, in every line. And then those exquisite touches which the poor man, inured to a life of toil and poverty, can alone rightly understand! and those deeply-based remarks on character, which only the philosopher can justly appreciate! This is the true Catholic poetry, which addresses itself not to any little circle, walled in from the rest of the species by some peculiarity of thought, prejudice, or condition, but to the whole human family. I read on:—"The Holy Fair," "Hal low E'en," "The Vision," the "Address to the Deil," engaged me by turns; and then the strange, uproarious, unequalled "Death and Doctor Hornbook." This, I said, is something new in the literature of the world. Shakspeare possessed above all men the power of instant and yet natural transition, from the lightly gay to the deeply pathetic—from the wild to the humorous; but the opposite states of feeling which he induces, however close the neighbourhood, are ever distinct and separate; the oil and the water, though contained in the same vessel, remain apart. Here, however, for the first time, they mix and incorporate, and yet each retains its whole nature and full effect. I need hardly remind the reader that the feat has been repeated, and with even more completeness, in the wonderful "Tam o' Shanter." I read on. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" filled my whole soul—my heart throbbled and my eyes moistened; and never before

did I feel half so proud of my country, or know half so well on what score it was I did best in feeling proud. I had perused the entire volume, from beginning to end, ere I remembered I had not taken supper, and that it was more than time to go to bed.

But it is no part of my plan to furnish a critique on the poems of my friend. I merely strive to recall the thoughts and feelings which my first perusal of them awakened, and thus only as a piece of mental history. Several months elapsed from this evening ere I could hold them out from me sufficiently at arms' length, as it were, to judge of their more striking characteristics. At times the amazing amount of thought, feeling, and imagery which they contained—their wonderful continuity of idea, without gap or interstice—seemed to me most to distinguish them. At times they reminded me, compared with the writings of smoother poets, of a collection of medals which, unlike the thin polished coin of the kingdom, retained all the significant and pictorial roughnesses of the original dye. But when, after the lapse of weeks, months, years, I found them rising up in my heart on every occasion, as naturally as if they had been the original language of all my feelings and emotions—when I felt that, instead of remaining outside my mind, as it were, like the writings of other poets, they had so amalgamated themselves with my passions, my sentiments, my ideas, that they seemed to have become portions of my very self—I was led to a final conclusion regarding them. Their grand distinguishing characteristic is their unswerving and perfect truth. The poetry of Shakspeare is the mirror of life—that of Burns the expressive and richly modulated voice of human nature.

CHAPTER VIII.

Burns was a poor man from his birth, and an exciseman from necessity; but—I will say it!—the sterling of his honest worth, poverty could not debase; and his independent British spirit oppression might bend, but could not subdue.—*Letter to Mr Graham.*

I have been listening for the last half hour to the wild music of an Eolian harp. How exquisitely the tones rise and fall!—now sad, now solemn—now near, now distant. The nerves thrill, the heart softens, the imagination awakes as we listen. What if that delightful instrument be animated by a living soul, and these finely-modulated tones be but the expression of its feelings! What if these dying, melancholy cadences, which so melt and sink into the heart be—what we may so naturally interpret them—the melodious sinkings of a deep-seated and hopeless unhappiness! Nay, the fancy is too wild for even a dream. But are there none of those fine analogies, which run through the whole of nature and the whole of art, to sublime it into truth? Yes, *there have* been such living harps among us; beings, the tones of whose sentiments, the melody of whose emotions, the cadences of whose sorrows, remain to thrill, and delight, and humanize our souls. They seem born for others, not for themselves.—Alas, for the hapless companion of my early youth! Alas, for him, the pride of his country, the friend of my maturer manhood!—But my narrative lags in its progress.

My vessel lay in the Clyde for several weeks during the summer of 1794, and I found time to indulge myself in a brief tour along the western coasts of the kingdom, from Glasgow to the Borders. I entered Dumfries in a calm, lovely evening, and passed along one of the principal streets. The shadows of the houses on the western side were stretched half-way across the pavement, while, on the side opposite, the bright sunshine seemed sleeping on the jutting irregular fronts and high antique gables. There seemed a world of well-dressed company this evening in town and I learned, on inquiry, that all the aristocracy of the adjacent country, for twenty miles round, had come in to attend a county ball. They went fluttering along the sunny side of

the street, gay as butterflies—group succeeding group. On the opposite side, in the shade, a solitary individual was passing slowly along the pavement. I knew him at a glance. It was the first poet, perhaps the greatest man, of his age and country. But why so solitary? It had been told me that he ranked among his friends and associates many of the highest names in the kingdom, and yet to-night not one of the hundreds who fluttered past appeared inclined to recognise him. He seemed too—but perhaps fancy misled me—as if care-worn and dejected; pained, perhaps, that not one among so many of the *great* should have humility enough to notice a poor exciseman. I stole up to him unobserved, and tapped him on the shoulder; there was a decided fierceness in his manner as he turned abruptly round; but, as he recognised me, his expressive countenance lighted up in a moment, and I shall never forget the heartiness with which he grasped my hand.

We quitted the streets together for the neighbouring fields, and, after the natural interchange of mutual congratulations—"How is it," I inquired, "that you do not seem to have a single acquaintance among all the gay and great of the country?"

"I lie under quarantine," he replied; "tainted by the plague of liberalism. There is not one of the hundreds we passed to-night whom I could not once reckon among my intimates."

The intelligence stunned and irritated me. "How infinitely absurd!" I said. "Do they dream of sinking you into a common man?"

"Even so," he rejoined. "Do they not all know I have been a gauger for the last five years!"

The fact had both grieved and incensed me long before. I knew too that Pye enjoyed his salary as poet laureate of the time, and Dibdin, the song writer, his pension of two hundred a-year, and I blushed for my country.

"Yes," he continued—the ill-assumed coolness of his manner giving way before his highly excited feelings—"they have assigned me my place among the mean and the degraded, as their best patronage; and only yesterday, after an official threat of instant dismissal, I was told it was my business to act, not to think. God help me! what have I done to provoke such bitter insult? I have ever discharged my miserable duty—discharged it, Mr Lindsay, however repugnant to my feelings, as an honest man; and though there awaited me no promotion, I was silent. The wives or sisters of those whom they advanced over me had bastards to some of the — family, and so their influence was necessarily greater than mine. But now they crush me into the very dust. I take an interest in the struggles of the slave for his freedom; I express my opinions as if I myself were a free man; and they threaten to starve me and my children if I dare so much as speak or think."

I expressed my indignant sympathy in a few broken sentences; and he went on with kindling animation:—

"Yes, they would fain crush me into the very dust! They cannot forgive me, that, being born a man, I should walk erect according to my nature. Mean-spirited and despicable themselves, they can tolerate only the mean-spirited and the despicable; and were I not so entirely in their power, Mr Lindsay, I could regard them with the proper contempt. But the wretches can starve me and my children—and they *know* it; nor does it mend the matter that I *know* in turn, what pitiful, miserable, little creatures they are. What care I for the butterflies of to-night?—they passed me without the honour of their notice; and I, in turn, suffered them to pass without the honour of mine; and I am more than quits. Do I not know that they and I are going on to the fulfilment of our several destinies?—they to sleep, in the obscurity of their native insignificance, with the pismires and grasshoppers of all the past, and I to be whatever the millions of my unborn countrymen shall yet

decide. Pitiful little insects of an hour! what is their notice to me! But I bear a heart, Mr Lindsay, that can feel the pain of treatment so unworthy; and I must confess it moves me. One cannot always live upon the future, divorced from the sympathies of the present. One cannot always solace one's self under the grinding despotism that would fetter one's very thoughts, with the conviction, however assured, that posterity will do justice both to the oppressor and the oppressed. I am sick at heart; and were it not for the poor little things that depend so entirely on my exertions, I could as cheerfully lay me down in the grave as I ever did in bed after the fatigues of a long day's labour. Heaven help me! I am miserably unfitted to struggle with even the natural evils of existence—how much more so when these are multiplied and exaggerated by the proud, capricious inhumanity of man!"

"There is a miserable lack of right principle and right feeling," I said, "among our upper classes in the present day; but, alas for poor human nature! it has ever been so, and, I am afraid, ever will. And there is quite as much of it in savage as in civilized life. I have seen the exclusive aristocratic spirit, with its one-sided injustice, as rampant in a wild isle of the Pacific as I ever saw it among ourselves."

"'Tis slight comfort," said my friend, "th a melancholy smile, "to be assured, when one's heart bleeds from the cruelty or injustice of our fellows, that man is naturally cruel and unjust, and not less so as a savage than when better taught. I knew you, Mr Lindsay, when you were younger and less fortunate; but you have now reached that middle term of life when man naturally takes up the Tory and lays down the Whig; nor has there been aught in your improving circumstances to retard the change; and so you rest in the conclusion that, if the weak among us suffer from the tyranny of the strong, 'tis because human nature is so constituted, and the case therefore cannot be helped?"

"Pardon me, Mr Burns," I said—"I am not quite so finished a Tory as that amounts to."

"I am not one of those fanciful declaimers," he continued, "who set out on the assumption that man is free born. I am too well assured of the contrary. Man is not free born. The earlier period of his existence, whether as a puny child or the miserable denizen of an uninformed and barbarous state, is one of vassalage and subserviency. He is not born free, he is not born rational, he is not born virtuous; he is born to *become* all these. And wo to the sophist who, with arguments drawn from the unconfirmed constitution of his childhood, would strive to render his imperfect, because immature state of pupilage, a permanent one! We are yet far below the level of which our nature is capable, and possess in consequence but a small portion of the liberty which it is the destiny of our species to enjoy. And 'tis time our masters should be taught so. You will deem me a wild Jacobin, Mr Lindsay; but persecution has the effect of making a man extreme in these matters. Do help me to curse the scoundrels!—my business to act, not to think!"

We were silent for several minutes.

"I have not yet thanked you, Mr Burns," I at length said, "for the most exquisite pleasure I ever enjoyed. You have been my companion for the last eight years."

His countenance brightened.

"Ah, here I am boring you with my miseries and my ill-nature," he replied; "but you must come along with me and see the bairns and Jean; and some of the best songs I ever wrote. It will go hard if we hold not care at the staff's end for at least one evening. You have not yet seen my stone punch-bowl, nor my Tam o' Shanter, nor a hundred other fine things beside. And yet, vile wretch that I am, I am sometimes so unconscionable as to be unhappy with them all. But come along."

We spent this evening together with as much of happiness as it has ever been my lot to enjoy. Never was there a fonder father than Burns, a more attached husband, or a warmer friend. There was an exuberance of love in his large heart, that encircled in its flow, relatives, friends, associates, his country, the world; and, in his kinder moods, the sympathetic influence which he exerted over the hearts of others seemed magical. I laughed and cried this evening by turns; I was conscious of a wider and warmer expansion of feeling than I had ever experienced before; my very imagination seemed invigorated by breathing, as it were, in the same atmosphere with his. We parted early next morning—and when I again visited Dumfries, I went and wept over his grave. Forty years have now passed since his death, and in that time, many poets have arisen to achieve a rapid and brilliant celebrity; but they seem the meteors of a lower sky; the flush passes hastily from the expanse, and we see but one great light looking steadily upon us from above. It is Burns who is exclusively the poet of his country. Other writers inscribe their names on the plaster which covers for the time the outside structure of society—his is engraved, like that of the Egyptian architect, on the ever-during granite within. The fame of the others rises and falls with the uncertain undulations of the mode on which they have reared it—his remains fixed and permanent, as the human nature on which it is based. Or, to borrow the figures Johnson employs in illustrating the unfluctuating celebrity of a scarcely greater poet—"The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes, without injury, by the adamant of Shakspeare."

CHRISTIE OF THE CLEEK.

THOUGH the records of history and every-day experience teach us that human nature, when pressed beyond certain limits by the force of stern necessity, loses all trace of the lineaments of the lord of the creation, and degenerates as far below the grade of brute existence as it is, when not subjected to any such power, above it; yet it is remarkable how determinedly mankind cling to a sceptical incredulity in regard to those facts which derogate, in a very great degree, from the dignity of the character of their species. The story of Christiecleek has been considered by many as only fit for being, what it has been for five hundred years, a nursery bugbear; and yet it is narrated by Winton, one of the least credulous of historians, was attended by circumstances rendering it highly probable at the time, and has been corroborated by instances of *civilized* cannibalism, produced by necessity, in cases of shipwreck, of almost yearly occurrence.

The united powers of war and famine, which have so often poured forth their fury on the devoted head of poor Scotland, at no time exhibited greater malignity than in the beginning of the reign of David II. For about fifty years, the country had scarcely ever enjoyed a year of quiet—with, perhaps, the exception of a short period of the reign of Bruce. Repeatedly swept from one end to the other by the invading armies of the Edwards, carrying the sword and the faggot in every direction, she was, on the very instant of the departure of the foreign foes, (in all cases starved out of a burnt and devastated land,) laid hold of by the harpies of intestine wars. The strong resilient energies of the country could have thrown off the effects of one attack, however severe and however protracted; but a series of incursions of the same disease, at intervals allowing of no time for recruiting her powers, produced a political marasmus—a confirmed famine—one of the most dreadful evils (including in itself all others) that ever was visited on mankind.

It would be difficult to draw a picture, because imagination falls short of the powers of a proper portraiture, of the misery and desolation of Scotland at the time we have mentioned. The land had got gradually out of cultivation, and the herds of black cattle and sheep, on which the people relied, in default of the productive powers of agriculture, had been either driven into England, or consumed by the myriads of soldiers of the English invading armies. Great numbers of the people having nothing wherewith to allay the pangs of hunger, though they had plenty of money, quitted their country in despair, and took refuge in Flanders. Those who had no money to pay their passage, left their homes, and betook themselves to the woods, where, to appease their agonies, they lay on the ground and devoured, like the inhabitants of their styes, the acorns and the nuts that had fallen from the trees. In the want of these, the very branches were laid hold of and gnawed; and many poor creatures were found lying dead, with the half-masticated boughs in their clenched hands. The only remedial influence that was experienced, was the growth of dysenteries and other intestine diseases, which, produced by hunger and becoming epidemic, kindly swept off thousands who would otherwise have died of protracted famine.

At a wild spot near the Grampian Hills, a number of destitute beings had collected, for the purpose of catching deer, (a few of which still remained,) to keep in the spark of life. They agreed to associate together, and divide their prey, which was dressed in a mountain cave, where they had assembled. Every morning, they sallied forth, women and all, on the dreadful errand of taking advantage of chance, in supplying them with any species of wild animals that came in their way, to satisfy the imperative demands of hunger. They got a few creatures at first, consisting chiefly of hares and foxes, and occasionally wolves, as ferocious and hungry as their captors; and such was the extremity to which they were often reduced, that they sat down on the spot where the animals were caught, divided the smoking limbs among their number, and devoured them without any culinary preparation.

This supply very soon ceased—the animals in the neighbourhood having either been consumed or frightened away to more inaccessible places. The wretched beings, like others in their situation, had recourse to the woods for acorns; but the time of the year had passed, and no nuts were to be found. Weakness preyed on their limbs; and several of their number, unable longer to go in search of food, which was nowhere to be found, lay on the floor of the cavern in the agonies of a hunger which their stronger companions, concerned for their own fate, would not alleviate. All ties between the members of the association began to give way before the despair of absolute famine. They ceased all personal communication; silence, feeding on the morbid forms of misery called up by diseased imaginations, reigned throughout the society of skeletons, and hollow eyes, which spoke unutterable things, glanced through the gloom of the cavern, where a glimmering fire, on which they had, for a time, prepared the little meat they had procured, was still kept up, by adding a few pieces of wood from the neighbouring forest. No notice was taken of each other's agonies, nor could the groans which mixed and sounded with a hollow noise through the dark recess, have been distinguished by the ear of sympathy; an occasional scream from a female sufferer who experienced a paroxysm of more than her ordinary agony, was only capable of fixing the attention for an instant, till individual pain laid hold again of the tortured feelings.

A person of the name of Andrew Christie, a butcher, originally from Perth, had endeavoured, at first, to organize the society, with a view to save himself and his fellow-sufferers. He was a strong, hardy man; and, if any of the number could be said to retain a small portion of self-command, in the midst of the horrible scene of suffering

which surrounded them, it was this man. He was still able to walk, though with difficulty, and continued to feed the fire, going out occasionally and seizing on grubs that were to be found about the mouth of the cavern. The others were unable to follow his example, and even he latterly was unfitted for his loathsome search. All were now nearly in the same predicament: agony and despair reigned throughout, to the exclusion of a single beam of hope of any one ever again visiting the haunts of man. At Christie's side, a woman ceased to groan; an intermission of agony was a circumstance, and the only circumstance to be remarked. The thought struck him she was dead; he laid his hand upon her mouth to be assured of the fact; she was no more! The dead body was a talisman in the temple of misery—in a short time, that body was gone!

The Rubicon of the strongest of natural prejudices was past, with the goading furies of hunger and despair behind. A prejudice overcome is an acquisition of liberty, though it may be for evil. The death of the woman had saved them all from death; but the efficacy of the salvation would postpone a similar course of relief. Christie saw the predicament of his friends, and proposed, in the hollow, husky voice of starvation, that one of their number should die by lot, and that then, having recovered strength, they should proceed to the mountain pass and procure victims. This oration was received with *groans*, meant to be of applause. The lot of death fell on another woman, who was sacrificed to the prevailing demon. A consequent recovery of strength now fitted the survivors for their dreadful task. They proceeded to the mountain pass, headed by Christie, and killed a traveller, by knocking him on the head with a hammer, and then removed him to the cavern, where his body was treated in the same manner as that of the woman on whom the lot of death had fallen. They repeated this operation whenever their hunger returned; making no selection of their victims, unless when there was a choice between a foot passenger and a horseman—the latter of whom (always preferred for the sake of his horse) was dragged from his seat with a large iron hook, fixed to the end of a pole—an invention of Christie's, serving afterwards to give him the dreadful name by which he became so well known. That which hunger at first suggested, became afterwards a matter of choice, if not of fiendish delight. The silent process of assuaging the pain, arising from want, subsequently changed into a banquet of cannibals; the song of revelry was sounded in dithyrambic measure over the dead body of the victim, and the corrobantic dance of the wretches who required to still conscience by noise, or die, was footed to the wild music which, escaping from the cavern, rung among the hills. Such were the obsequies which Scotchmen, resigning the nature of man, amidst unheard of agonies, celebrated over the corpses of their countrymen.

These things reached the ears of government; and an armed force was despatched to the hills to seize the cannibals. Several of them were caught; but Christie and some others escaped, and were never captured. The bones of their victims were collected, and conveyed to Perth; where, upon being counted, it appeared that they had killed no fewer than thirty travellers. From these transactions, sprung that name, *Christiecleek*, which is so familiar to the ears of Scotchmen. "*Christiecleek! Christiecleek!*" became instantly the national nursery bugbear. No child would cry after the charmed name escaped from the lips of the nurse; and even old people shuddered at the mention of a term which produced ideas so revolting to human nature, and so derogatory of Scottish character. It is said that, some time after the performance of the dreadful tragedy we have narrated, an old man in the town of Dumfries, who had three children by his wife, quarrelled her often for the use of a term intended simply to pacify her children when they cried but which he declared was too much even for his ears. He

was a respectable merchant, had earned a considerable sum of money by his trade, and was reputed a most godly man, attending divine service regularly, and performing all the domestic duties with order and great suavity of manner. His neighbours looked up to him with love and respect, and solicited his counsel in their difficulties. His name—David Maxwell—was applauded in the neighbourhood, and he received great sympathy from all who knew him, in consequence of having, as was reported, lost an only brother among Christiecleek's victims—a fact he had concealed from his wife, till her use of the name compelled him to mention it to her, but which afterwards came to be well known.

The silence of the mother had, however, no effect upon the urchins, who, the more they were requested to cease terrifying each other by the national *terriculamentum*, "Christiecleek," the more terrible it appeared to them, and the more they used it. If they abstained from the use of the words in the presence of their parents, they were the more ready to have recourse to it in the passages of the house, and in the dark rooms, and wherever the dreaded being might be supposed to be. The pastime was general throughout Scotland; and David Maxwell's children only followed an example which has been repeated for five hundred years. "Christiecleek!—Christiecleek!" What Scotchman has not heard the dreaded words? Time rolled on, and the Misses Maxwell resigned their childish pastime for the duties of women. Their father had become a very old man; and the attentions which their mother could not bestow, were willingly yielded by the young women, who were remarked as being very beautiful, as well as very good. They loved their father dearly; and looked upon their filial duties as willing tributes of affection. After they became entrusted with the secret, they substituted for the cry of their youth, which had given their father so much pain, pity for the brother of the victim of the execrated fiend.

At last, David Maxwell came to die; and, as he lay on his bed, surrounded by his wife and daughters, he seemed to be wrestling with some dreadful thought which allowed him no rest, but wrung from him, incessantly, heavy groans and muttered prayers. His wife pressed him to open his heart to her, or, if he was disinclined to repose that confidence in her when dying, which he had awarded to her so liberally during a long union, he should, she recommended, send for Father John of the Monastery of St Agnes, and be shrived. The daughters wept as they heard these melancholy statements, and the old man sympathised in their sorrow, which seemed to give him additional pain. At last he seemed inclined to be communicative, and, after a struggle, said to his wife—

"Wha is to tak care o' my dochters when I am assigned to that cauld habitation whar a faither's love and an enemy's anger are alike unfelt and unknown? My effects will be sufficient for the support o' my household; but money, without a guardian, is only a temptation to destroyers and deceivers. If I could get this point settled to my satisfaction, I might die in peace."

"You never tauld me o' yer freens, David," said his wife—"a circumstance that has often grieved me. The hundreds o' Maxwells in the Stewartry and in Dumfriesshire, surely contain among them some relation, however distant; but my uncle will act as guardian to our dochters, and ye hae tried his honesty."

"Yet I dinna want relations," groaned the dying man. "I hae a brither."

"A brither!" ejaculated the mother and daughters, in astonishment; "was he no killed by the monster, Christiecleek, in the Highland cavern?"

"No," answered David, with great pain.

"Whar lives he, and what's his Christian name?" cried the wife, in amazement.

"Is it his *Christian* name ye ask?" said the old man.

"Surely, David," replied the wife—"his surname maun be Maxwell."

"But it is not Maxwell," said he, still groaning.

"Not Maxwell!" said the wife. "What is it, then?"

"*Christie!*" ejaculated David, with a groan.

The mention of this name acted as a talisman on the minds of the wife and daughters, who, in the brother, saw (as they thought) at once the hated Christiecleek, and found an explanation of the horror which David Maxwell had uniformly exhibited when the name was mentioned in his presence. They had at last discovered the true solution of what had appeared so wonderful; and, having retired for a few minutes, to allow their excitement to subside, they, by comparing notes, came to the conclusion that their father having been ashamed of his connection with the unnatural being, had changed his name and dropped all intercourse with him; but that now, when he was about to die, his feelings had overpowered him and forced him to make the awful confession he had uttered. Pained and shamed by this newly-discovered connection, they were not regardless of what was due to him whose shame and grief had been even greater than theirs, and, accordingly, resolved to yield all the consolation in their power to the good man who could not help having a bad brother. On their return to the bedside, they found him in great agony both of mind and body.

"This brither, David," said the wife, "I fear, is little worthy o' your friendship, and the change o' your name is doubtless the consequence o' a virtuous shame o' the connection. But can it be possible that he is that man o' the mountain cavern, whose name terrifies the bairns o' Scotland, and makes even the witches o' the glens raise their bony hands in wonder and execration? Tell us, David, freely, if this be the burden which presses sae heavily on yer mind. Yer wife and dochters will think nae less o' you for having been unfortunate; and consolation is never sae usefu as when it is applied to a grief that is nae langer secret. The surgeon's skill is o' little avail when the disease is unknown."

This speech, containing apparently the fatal secret, produced a great effect upon the bed-ridden patient, who rolled from side to side, and sawed the air with his sinewy hands, like one in a state of madness.

"We were speakin' o' guardians for my dochters," said he at last, "and I said I had a brither whase surname is Christie. You promised me consolation. Is this your comfort to a deein man? For twenty years, I have hated the mention o' that dreadfu name; and now, when I am on my deathbed, speakin' o' curators for my bairns, ye rack my ears by tellin me I am the brither o' *Christiecleek!* Would Christiecleek be a suitable guardian for my dochters? Speak, Agnes—say if ye think Christiecleek would tak care o' their bodies and their gowd as weel as he tended the victims o' the Highland cave?"

The wife saw she had gone too far, and begged his pardon for having made the suggestion.

"Ye will forgive me, David," said she, "for the remark. I hae dune ye great injustice; for how is it possible to conceive that sae guid a man could be sae nearly related to a monster? But ye hae to explain to me the change o' name. How hae you and your brither different surnames?"

"*Because,*" said the dying man, turning round and staring with lack-lustre eyes broadly in the face of his wife—"Because I am Christiecleek!"



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SEA-STORM.

It was a beautiful, calm afternoon in summer; the surface of the Solway was as smooth as glass, for it was just high-water, and there was scarcely wind enough to dimple its surface, or to raise the dense train of smoke which the Liverpool steamer left behind her, as she came rapidly and steadily bearing down from Port Carlisle towards Annan water foot, where a crowd of passengers were anxiously expecting her arrival. The air was so still that the sound of her paddles, and the rush of water from her bows, were distinctly heard at a great distance, and the toll of the bell of Bowness Church fell full and clear upon the ears of the dweller on the Scottish coast. Here and there a solitary sea-gull soared lazily over his shadow in the water, and then bending downwards, dipped his wing in the smooth stream, rising up again with a sharp, quick turn, and a shrill scream, which sounded rather ominously, particularly as there was a kind of bright, hazy indistinctness hanging over the whole scene, and a close, suffocating oppression in the atmosphere, foretelling change and storm. The wooden jetty at the water foot was crowded with people—some about to embark for Liverpool, others attracted by curiosity, and by the beauty of the afternoon. On the road near the jetty lay a large flock of sheep, and several cattle, ready for embarkation; and Ambrose Clarke's Dumfries coach, and other conveyances, stood at hand, ready to transfer their freights into the steam-boat. It was altogether a beautiful and exciting scene; bright and joyous summer seemed to have shed its cheering influence over the spirit of man, as well as over the face of nature; and, amid the throng around me, I did not remark a single unhappy countenance. At length the steam-boat bore up for the mouth of the Annan, and, after a great deal of manœuvring with the paddles, was laid safely along-side the jetty. Then came the tug of war, and the peaceful quiet of the calm afternoon was disturbed by the loud and various sounds of embarkation. The bleating of sheep, the bellowing of cattle, the loud shouts of their drivers; the elbowing and jostling of passengers of various classes making a rush on board, dragging after them their trunks or portmanteaus, regardless of legs or elbows in their progress; and, over and above all, the loud, deafening, rushing, roaring noise of the steam, like the voice of some giant bellowing to them all to be as quick as possible—converted the late quiet scene into one of Babel-like confusion. At length the sheep were comfortably wedged up together, and the cattle secured; and then the bell rang as a warning to those who were going, to stay on board, and to those who were staying on board too long, to take their departure.

While standing on the jetty, I had exchanged a few commonplace remarks with a frank, middle-aged, gentlemanly-looking man standing near me, who, like myself, was *en route* for Liverpool; and when the steamboat was fairly off, I made up to my new acquaintance again, and we had a long and amusing conversation together. To those who are fond of studying human character, and who derive amusement from observing its numerous varieties, a public conveyance of any kind is an interesting *study*—a cabinet in which they

may chance to meet with strange and rare specimens to add to their collection of human originals. I do not envy the man who seems to think the warning bell of the steam-boat, or the shutting of the door of the stage-coach, a signal to him to close the door of his mouth and ears; and who can doze away in a corner, uninterested and uninteresting, and leaves the conveyance, as he entered it, dull and heavy, uncomfortable and discontented himself, and a species of incubus upon the spirits of his companions.

We had only left our port about two hours when the sky began to overcast, and heavy clouds rose slowly from the horizon. The wind seemed to be awaiting in silence, and reserving its strength for the approaching conflict of the elements; for there was not a breath stirring; the sea birds shrieked around us, as if to warn us of approaching danger; and the smoke from the engine fire hung heavily over the deck, and covered the water around us, as if to hide us from the coming storm. At length the forerunner of the *squall* appeared in the shape of a broad, bright, sudden blaze of lightning, followed by a rattling peal of thunder, which seemed to have burst open the flood-gates of heaven, for the rain descended in torrents from the over-charged clouds, while flash followed flash, and peal followed peal in rapid succession. A light breeze soon springing up from the south, the flashes of lightning became less and less vivid; and we heard, afar off, the low growling of the thunder, as the clouds slowly and unwillingly retreated before the wind, which now freshened up rapidly. In a short time it blew a gale, and occasioned such a heavy sea that most of the passengers were driven below by the violent motion of the vessel. I, being an old stager, preferred the cool breeze on deck to the close, confined air of the cabin; and, to my great surprise, saw my new and agreeable acquaintance walking up and down the deck as unconcernedly as if the boat were lying at the jetty.

"You seem to have excellent *sea legs*, sir," said I; "you walk the deck with the confidence of one to whom such unsteady footing is familiar; you do not look like a sailor, but still I am greatly mistaken if this is the first time you have been in a gale of wind."

"You are right," replied he, "in both your conjectures; I am not a sailor by profession, and I have been in many a gale. I owe the greatest happiness of my life to a storm and its consequences."

"Indeed!" said I; "if it is not asking too much, will you favour me with an account of the adventure to which you allude?—it will serve to beguile the time till we turn in."

"With all my heart," said he; "and with the greater pleasure, because I perceive you are a sailor, and will understand me. If you find me tedious, remember you have yourself to blame for the infliction."

"When I was a youngster, I was sent out by my friends to join a mercantile house in Bombay, of which my father had formerly been a partner. After labouring for some years as clerk, I was admitted as junior member of the firm, and being considered a stirring man of business, I was sent by the heads of the house as supercargo of one of their ships trading to the Straits, and China. It was in this way I

acquired the sea-legs on which you have been pleased to compliment me; and, what was still more to the purpose, I managed well for my employers, and added considerably to my own resources.

Fortune smiled upon all my private mercantile speculations; and, in the course of a few years, I amassed what I considered a comfortable competency. As my constitution, although it had been severely tried, was still tolerably unimpaired, I thought it wiser to return home at once, to enjoy the moderate fruits of my labour, than to risk my health in the endeavour to add to my means. I accordingly retired from the firm, wound up my affairs, transferred my money to the English funds, and took my passage in a country ship to China. From thence I embarked in a fine Indiaman of 1000 tons burthen, called the *Columbine*, bound to England, and to touch at the Cape of Good Hope. Our passage was quick and pleasant; and I greatly enjoyed our fortnight's stay at the Cape, where our party was greatly increased, by the addition of a lady and gentleman to our cabin circle. The gentleman was a retired surgeon of the Indian army, and one of the funniest little *Sancho Panza* figures I ever beheld. When he first stepped over the gangway, there was a general titter among the crew at his strange appearance. He was dressed in a little scarlet shell-jacket; a pair of wide Indian-made *continuations* of nankeen, with stockings as nearly as possible of the same colour; a little black velvet hunting-cap, stuck on one side over his round, fat, rosy face; a walking-cane in one hand—(a walking-cane on board a ship!)—and a leather bottle, suspended by a belt from his shoulders. On further acquaintance, I found he was as odd in character as in appearance. He was a regular old bachelor, fidgety and particular. His countenance bespoke him a lover of the good things of this life—and it did not belie him, for dearly did he enjoy them all; nothing came amiss to him, that came in a *perishable* shape, provided it had all the “appliances and means to boot” of the culinary art. It was really quite a treat to hear the smack of genuine pleasure (a kind of *parting-salute*, a token of good-will and kindly feeling) which followed the engulfment of every mouthful of the captain's excellent claret—and his mouth, like the Irishman's, held exactly a glass; and then his little dark eye twinkled with anticipated delight, as it wandered discursively over the cuddy table, when the covers were raised at dinner. And yet with all this spice of epicurism and apparent selfishness, he was liberal, kind-hearted, and obliging. He had been so long absent from home that he had become completely *Indianized*; and his strange opinions and expectations respecting England, were in the highest degree ludicrous.

The lady was a young widow, who had accompanied her husband, a Madras civilian, many years her senior, to the Cape, in the hopes of re-establishing his health; but it was too late—the hand of death was upon him; and he had been taken from her about six months before our arrival. She remained at the Cape, waiting for expected letters from Madras, and then determined upon proceeding to Europe. She came on board in mourning and in tears: the sight of the ship seemed to have re-awakened the memory of him she regretted; and she did not for some time take her place at the cuddy table, nor appear among the other passengers. Now and then, in the calm moonlight evenings, she came stealing up like a shadow, and wandered listlessly up and down the deck, leaning on the captain's arm, or bending over the bulwark of the poop, gazing mournfully on the waves below. Time, with the absence of all objects that could revive her painful recollections, soon had the effect of soothing her grief; and after we had crossed the *Line*, she was persuaded to join the cuddy party. She was young; and, without being decidedly beautiful, was one of the most interesting looking females I had ever met with. There was an air of mild, uncomplaining resignation in her

look and manner, which irresistibly attracted sympathy and admiration. During the bustling scenes of my life in various parts of the East, I had met with all varieties and shades of beauty, and, strange to say, had passed unharmed and “fancy-free” through the ordeal of whole constellations of bright and beaming eyes. Love had hitherto been a stranger to me; I had read of it, talked of it, heard of it, but had never felt its overpowering influence; and I had begun to doubt whether I had a heart at all, at least for the tender passion. But I now soon found that I had been mistaken, and that I had feelings and tender ones too, as well as those whom I had been in the habit of ridiculing for them. I could hardly analyze them at first, they were so various and contradictory. I began with admiration of the widow's expressive countenance and gentle manner. I was loud in her praise to every one who would listen to me: “If ever there was an angel on earth,” (afloat, I should have said,) “she is one.” I eagerly sought every opportunity of throwing myself in her way, till I happened to overhear one of the officers calling me “the widow's shadow.” Then, all at once, I felt confused whenever her eyes met mine; the warm blood rushed to my cheeks, and a flutter of nerve came over me, whenever she spoke to me. I gradually withdrew from her society; lost my appetite; became fond of solitary walks; and was seized with a most extraordinary oppression of the lungs, which obliged me to sigh continually.

“Hollo, Wentworth!” said the officer of the deck to me one night, “what is the matter with you? There was a sigh like the blowing of a grampus!” He was an old friend of mine, and as kind-hearted a rough diamond as ever breathed.

“I don't know, Wildman,” replied I; “I'm afraid my liver is terribly out of order.”

“Liver!” said he, with a loud laugh—“tell that to the marines; I suspect it's the heart that's out of trim more than the liver.” And so saying, he walked forward to hail the foretop, and left me to my meditations. He left me an enlightened man; his words had flashed conviction on my mind.

“And so,” muttered I, “I am actually in love! How strange that the *novelty* of my emotions should so long have blinded me to their *nature*! Heigho! But why the plague should I sigh about it? Love! No, no; I'm sure I'm going to have an attack of liver. I wonder if she likes *me*?”

“Why don't you ask her?” said my sailor friend, who had returned unobserved to his place at my elbow, and had overheard the last part of my soliloquy. “Come, come, Wentworth,” said he, seeing that I look'd rather annoyed, “don't be angry with me; you have been like the bird that hides its head in the sand, and fancies no one can see it; but I have long observed your growing partiality for the fair widow, and I admire your taste—she is a prize worth trying for. Take a friend's advice, and, if you are in a marrying mood, put your modesty under hatches, and make a bold stroke for a wife at once.”

“Oh, nonsense, Wildman!—how can you talk so foolishly? She is in such affliction! I could not dream of following your advice; it would be indelicate in the extreme at present.”

“Ay, it is too soon to come to close quarters yet; but there is nothing like laying an anchor to windward in time. Play at long balls with her, my boy. Stand in a corner, and gaze in admiring silence; send a few well-aimed die-away glances through her, and play off a sigh or two now and then, backed by a little sentiment. Why, man, a broadside of such red-hot sighs as yours would riddle her heart, and make her strike her colours at once, if you had but courage to lay her alongside.”

Whether it was that I tacitly followed my friend's advice, or that my unconscious silent attentions had made the impression he anticipated, it so came to pass that, in a short time, the fair widow seemed to feel a pleasure in my society

beyond that of any other on board. A slight degree of mutual good understanding soon ripens into intimacy on board a ship, where circumstances throw people into such close and constant communion; the flimsy veil of mere artificial politeness is soon seen through, and the character of each individual shews itself in its true colours. The more I saw of hers, the more I admired it; she was so free from the petty vanities of the sex, and so sweet and equable in her temper. She was the daughter of a highly respectable physician in the west of England, whose professional income had enabled him to bestow on all his family a liberal education, and to bring them up suitably to their apparent prospects, and to the station he expected them to fill in society. Her elder brother had gone out to India in a mercantile capacity, and had returned home to recruit his health in his native vale. During the interval of his visit, his father, who had long been in declining health, died, and, contrary to expectation, left his children but poorly provided for; and the brother, after having arranged the family affairs, and placed the juniors under the guardianship of an old and tried friend, persuaded his sister to accompany him to the East. When they arrived at Madras, my fair friend, whom I shall call Emily, was not long without admirers. Among others was an elderly civilian, high in the service, of great wealth and irreproachable character. He urged his suit with the greatest assiduity; and, notwithstanding Emily's evident coldness, he laid his heart and fortune at her feet.

All Emily's friends were urgent with her not to reject so advantageous a settlement. Her brother said nothing on the subject, but she had learned to read his wishes in his countenance. She thought of the almost destitute state of her family at home, and of the opportunities which the wealth and liberality of so excellent a man might afford her of benefiting them; and, after a long struggle of contending feeling, she consented to become the wife of Mr Stacey. He was for two years all he had promised—affectionate, considerate, and attentive to her slightest wishes. She respected and esteemed him, and, when she closed his eyes in a foreign land, she mourned for him as a sincere and valued friend. He had left her by his will the sole and uncontrolled command of his large fortune; and she was now returning home to comfort the declining years of her mother, and rejoicing in the thought that her wealth would enable her effectually to promote the interests of the junior members of her family.

But I must proceed to other matters. Our passage from the Cape had been a long, but to me a most delightful one, and we were expecting to make the Lizard next day. The captain was very anxious to have a good *land-fall*, as his best chronometer had met with an accident a few days before, and he was rather doubtful as to its correctness. The breeze was light and fair, and the waves were breaking short and crisp, curling their little white crests as they rose and fell in rapid succession; but there was a long, heavy under-swell from the southward, which gave rise to many an ominous shake of the head among the experienced hands on board. For my part, I dreaded no danger, and I enjoyed to the utmost the really beautiful scene around me. There was nothing, to be sure, to be seen but sea and sky; but it was beautiful and boundless nature—nature in her solitude and strength. There were no crowds of human beings jostling and hurrying past each other, as in the haunts of man and of art; but there was the glorious sun, shining in almost unclouded splendour—the sea with its playful waves dancing and smiling in the sunbeam, and teeming with life and energy. Whole shoals of flying fish quivered their little wings, glittering like silver in the sun, and then dropped fluttering into the waters; while those “hunters of the sea,” dolphins, and bonitos, and albacores, darted, leaped, and plunged in pursuit of them—sometimes rising six or seven abreast, and making immense flying

leaps together, as if emulating each other, and putting to shame the steeple-chasing “lords of creation.” My attention was diverted from the water by the gradual *heeling over* of the vessel, and the creaking noise of the blocks as the freshening breeze gave additional tension to the tacks and sheets; at the same time, I heard one of the men muttering to another, as they stood by the royal cluelines—

“This here breeze is a-freshening fast, Bill. I does'nt like to see them beggars a-galloping round the ship like so many mad horses; and look how the cat's a-whisking about! There's a gale of wind in her tail, I'll take my 'davy.”

“Man the royal cluelines!” shouted the officer of the watch. “Haul taut! In royals!”

As soon as the royals were furled, the boatswain piped to dinner; the men went below, and I hastened to my cabin. As I sat at the open port, I could not help recalling the conversation I had overheard, and, looking out, I observed that the clouds were rapidly rising from the southward, and forming into dense dark masses; and I was aware, from the increasing motion of the ship, and the long, crashing rush of the sea under the counter, that the breeze was freshening. “The fellow is a true prophet, after all,” muttered I to myself; and, just as I spoke, the ship gave a heavy lurch, and my book-case, which was badly secured, *fetched way*, and, with a heavy crash, fell on the deck. Fortunately, there was but little mischief done to my books, and I sent for one of the carpenter's mates to secure the case again. Scarcely had the poor fellow left my cabin, after having finished his work, when I heard the sharp warning *tweet, tweet* of the boatswain's call instantly echoed from three different parts of the lower deck; then came the sound of hurrying feet, and then a long, loud, shrill whistle, followed by a hoarse cry of “All hands reef topsails, ahoy!” then were heard the loud, clear orders, “In topgallantsails! Lower away the topsails!” followed by the whirring, rattling sound of blocks, and the dull flapping of the sails, as the yards were pointed to the wind. Poor Evans, the carpenter's mate of whom I spoke above, was stationed on the foretop-sail-yard, and in his hurry to *lay out*, his foot slipped, he lost his hold of the yard, and fell head-foremost downwards. The ship was rolling to windward at the time, so that he fell outside the bulwark, struck the anchor in his descent, and must have been senseless when he reached the surface of the water; for, although he went down head-foremost, he *struck out* mechanically, as if endeavouring to dive, and never rose again. For an instant this sudden and dreadful accident paralysed both officers and men; but it was only for an instant.

“Poor fellow!” said the commanding officer—“he's gone! Come, bear a hand, there aloft! Lay out!—lay out! Tie away!—lay down!”

Again the *tweet, tweet* was heard; “Hoist away!” was the order; and, with a quick and steady tramp, a hundred feet kept time with the merry notes of the fife. The sails were set, the yards trimmed, and, under her reduced canvass, the ship bounded along with greater lightness and ease. But the face of nature was no longer smiling: the heavy masses of clouds had risen from the southern horizon, one dense body seeming to push another upwards, as it rose from the gulf of darkness, till the whole surface of the heavens was covered with a veil of gloomy and wildly-driving clouds. The waves were no longer, as Wilson says, “like playful lambs on a mountain's side,” but were rushing after each other like wild beasts in search of prey. It was evident that the breeze was freshening fast; but, as it was still *free*, the ship was making rapid way through the water. I will pass over the next twenty-four hours, during which the breeze continued strong, but steady. At about five P.M. of the next day, a darkness like that of night hung over the horizon to windward, which gradually rose in the centre,

forming a hard, clear, well-defined arch, which rapidly enlarged and enlarged, the centre part becoming dim with driving rain.

"Call the hands out—reef topsails!" shouted the captain; and again all was bustle and animation. The sound of the boatswain's cry was hardly out of our ears, before the men were on deck, full of eagerness and emulation, their energies seeming to rise in proportion to the demand upon them. Our topsails were double-reefed and on the caps when the squall struck us; we could hear it howling over the water long before it reached us, the rain driving fiercely before it, mixed with the spray of the waves, which was dashed abroad like mist.

"Lower the driver!—man the gear of the mainsail!"

"All ready, sir!"

"Up mainsail!"

The men who were stationed at the mainsheet unfortunately let it run through their hands; the sail bellied up over the leewardarm, gave one loud, heavy flap, and, with a report like that of a cannon, split right across, and was blown in pieces, and the tattered remnants fluttered from the yard, as if struggling to escape, and cracking like ten thousand whips. As soon as the blast had expended its fury, the fragments of the mainsail were unbent, and a new sail got up in their place.

"Away, aloft there, topmen!—get the topgallant yards ready for coming down!" was now the cry.

"All ready forward, sir!"

"Ready abaft?"

"All ready, sir!"

"Haul taut!—sway away!—high enough!—lower away!"

And, in a few minutes, the topgallant yards were safely landed on deck, and secured on the booms.

Hitherto the weather had been dry and fine, except during the squalls; but, as the night closed in, a thick, drizzling rain came on, which drove all the passengers below.

The ship was now plunging and rolling heavily, and the white foam of the long tumbling seas looked doubly ghastly through the gloom, while their roaring formed dismal harmony with the howling of the wind.

Our party was small at the cuddy-table that evening, when we met at eight bells (eight o'clock) to discuss our hot grog and negus. Some of the gentlemen were sick, others tired, and some alarmed at the appearance of things around them.

The mercury in the barometer had fallen considerably; and the captain, as he sat at the table rallying some of his passengers on the extraordinary length of their phizzes, was evidently assuming a cheerfulness he did not feel; and at times looked absent and uneasy.

"Has not the glass fallen very fast, captain?" said one of the military officers.

"Yes," replied he, "a little. That question recalls to my recollection a most ridiculous circumstance that occurred on board a free trader, of which I was mate. I was keeping the middle watch on a beautiful night, when a fine light breeze filled all the *small kites*, and the weather was looking remarkably steady and clear. All at once the captain came running out in his nightcap and slippers, looked at the compass, and then aloft, and said—'What kind of night is it Mr Darby?'"

"'Very fine, sir; steady breeze, smooth water; every stitch of sail set that will draw.'"

"'Take in all your small sails, sir, as fast as you can; the glass has fallen considerably since I turned in; we are going to have a breeze.'"

"I looked at him with surprise, and then to windward; but to hear was to obey—the stunsails, smallstaysails, and royals were taken in. This was scarcely done, when the captain again made his appearance. 'Darby, the glass is falling fast—call the hands out, double reef the topsails, and down topgallant and royal yards.'"

"'Sir!' answered I, staring at him with astonishment.

"'Bear a hand, sir, and get the sail off the ship,' said he, sharply.

"His orders were obeyed, greatly to the surprise of all on board. But even this did not appear to satisfy him. He came on deck again, and this time I kept at a most respectful distance, for I really began to think his head was cracked, and that he might perhaps wish to try how I would look in the same predicament.

"'It's very odd, Darby,' said he; 'I don't understand it; the glass is still falling; come and look at it.'"

"I went with him into his cabin, where the barometer was hanging near his cot with a swinging lamp beside it. The mercury was very low, uncommonly so; but, while I was looking at it, I heard a heavy drop upon the deck, and, looking downwards, I saw something glittering below the lamp. I stooped to look what it was, and the mystery was solved at once: there was a hole in the bottom of the tube, and the mercury had been oozing out. The captain looked very foolish at first, and then, staring me full in the face, burst into an uproarious fit of laughter, in which I heartily joined him. At daybreak the hands were called out again; but for a very different purpose. "Crack on everything!" was now the cry; and we were soon spanking along again under a crowd of canvass. But you are not to suppose," continued Captain Darby, "from this anecdote, that I mean to depreciate the value of the marine barometer; it is the seaman's invaluable friend—a prophet whose warnings are not to be disregarded. Many and many a time has it enabled me to prepare in time for a coming gale, which would otherwise have assailed me unawares."

"The gale is freshening fast, sir," said an officer, putting his head into the cuddy door. The captain hurried out, and gave orders for reefing the courses; and, during the whole of that long, and, to us, miserable night, all hands were kept constantly at work; and we heard the loud orders of the officers, and the cries of the answering seamen, confusedly and at intervals, through the roaring of the wind and the rushing of the seas. I slept, or rather lay—for I could not sleep—in one of the round-house cabins; the edge of my cot, at every roll of the ship, knocking against the beams from which it was suspended; and I was every now and then nearly jerked out by the violent pitching, when the ship seemed as if she were endeavouring to dive head-foremost into the depths, to escape the violence of the winds. The ladies' cabins were abaft the round-house; the fair widow's divided from mine only by a thin bulkhead. I would have given all I was worth to be allowed to sit near her, to revive her spirits and to soothe her fears. I was aware that she was dreadfully alarmed; for, whenever the vessel staggered under the overwhelming attacks of the sea, I heard from her cabin a shuddering of nervous terror. The gentlemen passengers actually envied the poor seamen who were exposed to the pelting of the pitiless storm: *they* were actively employed, the excitement of the moment left no time for reflection—besides, storm, tempest, and danger, were their elements; but we lay idle and helpless, knowing just enough of our danger to imagine it to be much greater—brooding over the chimeras of our own fancies, and anticipating we knew not what of approaching calamity. The continual creak, creak, creaking of the bulkheads—the pattering of the thick shower of spray upon our decks, following the dull heavy "thud" of some giant sea which made the ship reel and tremble through every timber—the cries of the seamen, heard indistinctly and at intervals, and then borne far away to leeward in the gale, as if the spirits of the air were shrieking above and around us—formed altogether a fearful medley of wild sounds. At length, towards morning, nothing was heard on deck but the deep moaning voice of the gale, and the roar of the sea; but new and more ominous sounds arose from the lower deck: there was the

monotonous clanking of the pumps, and the rush of water from side to side of the ship, as she rolled heavily and deeply. I could lie in my cot no longer—my nerves were worked up to such a state of excitement; and I rushed on deck to breathe the fresh air, and to see the state of affairs there. It was to me a beautiful, though awful sight. The sun was just beginning to rise; and the lurid, threatening, angry glare he shed over the horizon, gave additional horror to the gloomy scene. The ship looked almost a wreck to my eyes. The topgallantmasts had been got on deck; the booms were crowded with wet sails and rigging; the small ropes aloft were bellying out with the wind, and then striking violently against the masts with the roll of the ship; the hatches were battened down; lifelines were stretched along from the poop to the forecabin; heavy seas were striking the bow, every now and then pouring volumes of clear blue water over the decks, while the spray flew like a thick shower over head, nearly half-mast high; the horizon all round was pitchy black, except where a dull, hazy, fiery gleam marked its eastern verge; the surface of the water was one wide sheet of white foam, glistening through the gloom; and the strength of the gale seemed absolutely to blow the tops off the giant seas, and scattered them abroad in showers of spoon drift. The deck was deserted, except by the captain and the officer of the watch—one watch of the men having been sent below to the pumps, and the other to their hammocks. The captain was standing under the lee of the weather bulwark, holding on by the main-brace, looking pale and exhausted; near him, with his arm round the poop ladder, stood the officer of the watch, muffled up in his pea-jacket, his eyes red and inflamed, and speaking in a low, husky whisper, his voice being completely broken with the exertion of the night.

"Ah, Mr Wentworth," said the captain, when I made my appearance, "you are soon tired of your cot. I did not expect to see any of you idlers on deck in such weather as this."

"It is more pleasant here than down below, I should think, Captain Darby. Sleep is out of the question. I hope the gale is not going to last much longer?"

"There is no chance of its moderating at present," said he; "the glass is still falling, and the appearance of the weather is as bad as it well can be!"

"Whereabouts are we now, captain? Are we not very near the English coast?"

"Yes—we're not very far from it; I hope we shall make the land soon."

I asked one or two more questions, which the captain evidently evaded answering. I accordingly desisted from my inquiries; but a dark and undefined presentiment of evil came over me, which I strove in vain to shake off. Finding the captain so uncommunicative, and the spray, that was constantly dashing over the decks, anything but comfortable, I thought my wisest plan would be to crawl to my cot again. On my way to my cabin, I lingered for a few minutes under the poop awning, and happened to overhear the captain say, in a low voice, to the chief mate—

"Charters, I wish the sun would shew his face again—I don't like this groping work. I'd give a hundred pounds to be as many miles to the westward—we are much too near a lee shore, for my taste."

"Oh, sir, we shall, perhaps, see some of the pilot boats soon, and then we shall be right enough."

"Ten chances to one against it," replied the other, "in such weather as this. However, we will fire a gun every five minutes, in case any of them should be cruising in our neighbourhood. I wish we had bent our cables before this gale set in. As soon as the hands are called out, we will bend them, and get the anchors clear, that we may be prepared for the worst."

"Ay, ay, sir."

This was pretty comfort for me; but, as I knew that talking would not mend matters, I did not mention what I had heard to any of the other passengers. A very short time had elapsed when the hands were called out, and the orders of the captain were carried into effect as actively as possible. It was a work of considerable difficulty and no little danger, to bend the cables, as the ship was plunging and rolling awfully, and every now and then taking green seas over all, and volumes of water rushed through the open hawse-hole into the lower deck. At last it was accomplished, and the men had a temporary respite from their labour. The gale, so far from moderating, rather increased in fury; but the leak had not gained upon us, and the maintopmast still seemed to stand stiffly up to the gale, with the close-reefed sail upon it. About four o'clock in the afternoon, a heavy sea struck the quarter, filled one quarter boat, and broke it away from the tackles, and stove the other; and at the same time the ship lurched so deeply, that the muzzles of her quarterdeck guns were buried in the water, one of the maintopmast backstays gave way, and the mast, with a loud crash, went toppling over the side. I was standing under the poop awning at the time, and was nearly washed off my feet by a body of water rushing out of the cuddy; and, at the same time, I heard the screaming of the ladies in the after cabin. I ran aft, and, knocking at the fair widow's door, was immediately admitted, and found everything in the greatest confusion, and herself in extreme alarm. The sea had burst in the quarterport, and deluged the cabin with water; the deck was strewed with furniture, dashing and tumbling about with the motion of the ship; and Emily herself was clinging to one of the stanchions, pale with terror, and drenched to the skin. "Oh, Mr Wentworth!" was all she could utter, before she fell fainting into my arms. I will not enter into a description of my feelings at that moment, when the only woman I had ever truly loved was lying helpless in my embrace; suffice it that I felt I could die for her. In a short time she revived; and, blushing deeply, apologized for the trouble and alarm she had occasioned me. My heart was on my lips. I had hitherto, from a feeling of delicacy, abstained from expressing all I felt towards her; but now she looked so lovely, so gentle, so confiding, that I was just on the point of giving utterance to the emotions of my heart, when the entrance of the servants, coming to secure the furniture, interrupted the unseasonable disclosure. I then hastened on deck, where a sight awaited me which almost paralysed my excited nerves. The ship was *lying to*, but anything but *lying still*, under the storm mainstaysail; the wreck of the maintopmast was hanging down the lee-mainrigging, banging backwards and forwards with the motion of the ship; the men were clinging like cats to the mainrigging, actively employed in endeavouring to secure and clear away the wreck; the wind had drawn more round to the eastward, and was blowing a perfect hurricane—when all at once a loud cry was heard from the forecabin of "Breakers on the leebeam!" and their white tumbling crests were soon distinctly seen by all on deck, and it was evident we were fast approaching them. For an instant there was a pause of dead silence among the crew; officers and men looked at each other and at the breakers, with blank dismay. The sharp, quick, distinct tones of the captain's voice startled them into habitual attention and activity.

"Stations, wear ship! hard up with the helm! run up the forestaysail! square away the afteryards!"

The staysail just *belled out* with the gale, and blew to rags; the ship fell off for a moment, and then flew up to the wind again. "Cut away the mizenmast!" was the next order; and, in five minutes, the tall mast fell crashing over the side. The helm was again put up; but in vain—the ship would not pay off, and we were bodily and rapidly drifting down upon the breakers.

"Have both bower cables clear below, and all ready with the sheet!" shouted the captain.

I ran, or rather staggered, as fast as I could to the after cabin, and requested admittance. Emily was there, looking dreadfully pale. I suppose my countenance betrayed the agitation of my mind; for she instantly exclaimed—and her demeanour was unnaturally calm and collected, though her voice trembled, and her cheek was blanched with terror—

"Is there any hope, Mr Wentworth? Tell me the worst; I am prepared for it, and can bear it calmly?" I hesitated. "You need not speak," said she—"your silence tells me there is no hope."

"There is, indeed, none," replied I, "but in the mercy of an overruling Providence! In another hour, our doom, whether for life or for death, will be sealed."

I saw the pang of agony that flitted across her countenance at this intelligence: she gasped for breath, and seemed as if about to faint; but she immediately recovered herself, and, looking upwards, with mild resignation, she murmured—"It is a painful trial; but *His* will be done." By my advice she put on some warmer but lighter clothing, and I then supported her to the quarterdeck. I felt the shuddering of her frame when the awful sight of approaching destruction was before her. The scene, altogether, was one to appal the bravest—to make the boldest "hold his breath," never will the remembrance of it be erased from my mind; and, to this hour, it sometimes haunts my dreams. Scarcely half a mile to leeward lay the coast—dark, frowning, precipitous, and apparently inaccessible; its lower line completely hidden from our view; but, at intervals, the dark and rugged summits of the rocks were seen, through the sheets of white foam dashed over them by the breakers. To windward the prospect was as cheerless: darkness was beginning to settle on the waters, and, in the distance, nothing was to be seen but the foam of the crested seas, flashing indistinct and ghastly through the gloom. Viewed by that uncertain light, and rising in such various waving forms, they seemed to my over-wrought fancy as if the sea had given up her dead, and the spirits of the departed were assembling on the waters, to witness our approaching fate. The ship was already almost a wreck: the mizenmast was still hanging alongside, having smashed the poop hammock nettings, and bulwark, in its fall; the stumps of the fore and maintopmast were all that remained aloft; the giant seas were dashing over the sides, deluging the decks, fore and aft, and blinding us with their thick showers of spray; the lower yardarms dipped into the water, as the half water-logged ship rolled heavily and deeply, groaning and trembling in every timber, like a living creature in its mortal agony. And then the accompaniments!—oh! how often since have I in fancy heard again the hollow, *ominous* moaning of the gale, mourning, as it were, over the wreck of its own violence; the roaring of the waters as they rose, and rushed, and dashed against our side; the dull, mournful, dirge-like sound of our minute guns; the shuddering cries of the timid; the curses and imprecations of the hardened and desperate! Oh, if the recollection of it be so appalling, what must have been the reality?

Some of the men were actively employed in endeavouring to clear away the wreck of the mizenmast; others cutting adrift the small booms and spars, and all such light articles as might be instrumental in bearing them to the shore; and the passengers, and those who were unemployed, were gazing, in the gloomy silence of despair, upon their approaching destruction. I saw that there was no hope, and that the last struggle was fast approaching. I lashed the trembling and weeping Emily to a spar, and whispered in her ear—"Pray to the Ruler of the winds and waves, dearest Emily! *He* can save when there is none other to help!" She pressed my hand in silence, smiled through her tears, and looked upwards.

We had only one resource left now, and that was one of feeble promise—both bower anchors were cut away—the cables ran out to the clinches, and snapt like threads; the sheet cable shared the same fate.

"I knew it," exclaimed the captain—"I knew it was in vain. No hemp that ever was twisted could stand the strain of such a sea and breeze. It is all over with us now! Every man look out for his own safety! You had better lash yourselves to the spars, my lads!"

The momentary check given to the ship brought her broadside round to the breakers. Never shall I forget the cold shudder which came over me when the vessel rose upon the crest of an enormous sea, and seemed to be balancing herself for a moment, as if loath to meet her doom; another instant, and she struck with a shock that made us all start from the deck, and a crash as if the whole fabric were falling to pieces beneath us. Again she was lifted by the sea, and dashed on the rocks nearer the shore, when she fell over on her side with her masts towards the beach, along which parties of men were hurrying, dimly visible in the dusk of evening, eager but unable to afford us assistance; while the heights above were thronged with country people, who had been attracted to the spot by the report of our guns. The sea which had dashed us on our broadside, swept away with it the boats, booms, spars—everything, in fact, from the upper deck; and bore its promiscuous prey onwards towards the beach. What was my agony to see the spar to which Emily was lashed, sharing the fate of the rest! She tossed her arms wildly over her head, gave one shrill and piercing scream, and was borne away and hidden from my view by the following sea. "I will save her," I exclaimed, "or perish." The hull of the stranded ship formed a kind of breakwater, and the sea was comparatively smooth under her lee.

I had stripped myself, in preparation for the coming struggle, of all superfluous clothing; and, crawling out as far as possible on the mainmast, I committed myself fearlessly to the sea, which was to me quite a familiar element. A few vigorous strokes, and the friendly elevation of a rising wave, gave me a sight of Emily; and I immediately swam towards her, and by partly supporting myself on the spar, and directing it towards the shore, I was fortunate enough to succeed in bearing my precious charge in safety to the beach, against which we were dashed with great violence, but fortunately without any injury. She was quite insensible, and lay on the sand so still and pale that at first my heart died within me; I thought she was gone for ever.

"Emily! dearest Emily!" I frantically exclaimed.

A faint sigh was the answer. The sudden revulsion from grief to transport, at this assurance that life was not extinct, was almost too much for me. Faintly, but fervently, did I breathe forth my thanksgivings to a merciful Providence, and then, with the assistance of some of the inhabitants, I bore the still unconscious form of my beloved companion to a fisherman's hut, which was perched in a fissure of the neighbouring rocks.

"Don't be afear'd, sir," said the old fisherman who assisted me in supporting Emily; "don't be afear'd. Her cheek is a little pale or so; but my ould ooman 'll soon bring the colour into it again. Bless her ould heart, she's a famous doctor! But here we are," said he, giving a thundering rattle against the door. "Betsy, Betsy, heave a-head, ould woman!—this is no night to keep flesh and blood on the wrong side of the house."

The door was cautiously opened, and, shading her candle with her hand from the rude blast, a tidily-dressed, respectable looking woman made her appearance, who gave a cry of surprise and alarm when she saw the apparently lifeless body of Emily. She began pouring out a whole string of questions, which her husband quickly cut short with—



THE SEA STORM.



"Come, come, Bet, there' no time for *backing* and *filling* now. Get the poor thing stripped, ould ooman, and put her into a warm bed as soon as ee can. There's a ship ashore below there, and this ere lady comed ashore with this ere gentleman."

"For Heaven's sake be quick, my good woman," said I; 'you shall be handsomely rewarded for your trouble."

"Reward, sir!" replied the woman; "neither Bill nor me looks for reward for doing our duty. More's the luck, there's a good fire in both ends of the house to-night; bring her in here, poor thing."

In half an hour, thanks to blankets, hot water, and Schiedam, Emily was in a quiet and placid slumber; and the fisherman and I, after having fortified ourselves with a glass of good Hollands, hastened again to the beach. The storm was still raging in all its fury; lights were flashing along the shore, and parties of men were running up and down—some in search of plunder, others with the more benevolent wish to afford assistance to the shipwrecked crew of the Indiaman. The beach was strewn with broken spars, hen-coops, chests of tea, and ship timber; and every now and then, the fisherman's light flashed upon a dead body, lying extended, partly on the sand and partly in the water. As we were hurrying along, I stumbled, and nearly fell, over somethings oft, which I could not distinguish in the darkness, the fisherman being some paces a-head of me with his lantern. I stooped down, and found it was a human body.

"Poor fellow!" muttered I—"he sleeps sound; 'tis the sleep of death." As I spoke, my hand touched the face, which, to my great surprise, was still warm. "Ah, there is life here still!" And of this I soon had startling conviction; for my finger was suddenly and sharply bitten, and, at the same moment I saw a little, round, dim-looking bundle rolling over and over with great rapidity along the beach. I was startled at first; but quickly recovered myself, and gave chase to the mysterious-looking object, calling out to the fisherman to join me. We soon overtook the object of our pursuit; and, cold and wearied as we both were, and surrounded by sights and sounds of horror, I could not forbear laughing at the sight that met my eyes. There, rolled up like a hedgehog, with his leather bottle by his side, and a red night-cap fastened on with a pocket handkerchief, his littleround chubby face buried in his hands, and his knees drawn up to his chin, lay the little doctor, his whole body trembling with fright. I flashed the light across his face, but he kept his eyes obstinately shut, and buried his face deeper in his hands.

"Doctor!" said I, shaking him.

"Oh, oh," shuddered he, "don't kill me—that's a good fellow! I'll give you my brandy-bottle if you won't." I touched him in the ribs. "Oh! I'm a dead man," groaned he, recoiling from the touch; "drowned like an ass at sea, and now going to be stuck like a pig on shore! Oh!"

"Doctor!"

"Never was one in my life!—my name's Posset. Drenched to the skin!—cold—cold! Don't kill me—that's a good fellow. I'm so cold."

"Don't you know me, Doctor?" said I, almost crying with laughter; "don't you know Wentworth?"

"Eh! What?" returned he, gradually uncoiling himself, till his little thick legs were stretched to their full length, (shortness, I should say,) and his sharp twinkling eyes stared full up in my face. "So it is! Give me your hand, my boy—who'd have thought it? How did you escape? Devil takes care of his own, eh?"

"So it seems, Doctor," said I, laughing; "that accounts satisfactorily for *your* appearance here."

"Ha, ha, ha! have me there, eh, Wentworth? Help me to take the stopper out of the bottle—that's a good fellow."

"He raised himself on his elbow turned his face to the

sky, and held deep communion with *his* pocket companion; but, happening to cast his eyes upon *mine*, he started nimbly to his feet, and, edging close to my side, muttered with great trepidation:—

"Who's your friend, eh? Not a wrecker, I hope? Sad fellows those—cut-throats, and all that."

Having set the little gentleman's fears at rest on that score, we returned to the cottage, which was now crowded with survivors from the wreck, some dreadfully bruised, others only exhausted with cold and fatigue. We heard that several others had taken shelter in another cottage, about half a mile distant, and that a messenger had been dispatched to a neighbouring town for medical assistance. It was found, on comparing notes, that only about fifty people were saved out of the crew of one hundred and twenty. Sad and silent were the greetings of the survivors; for the loud roaring of the wind, the rattling of the door and casements, and the low, rumbling sound of the distant breakers, recalled but too forcibly the horrors of the scenes they had just witnessed, and the sad fate of their unfortunate shipmates. As soon as the little doctor was revived by the heat, and by a dose of the fisherman's restorative, he hastened to make himself useful in a professional way; and his little rosy cheeks and merry chuckling laugh had the effect of soon dispelling the gloom which hung over the party. In a short time, we heard, in the intervals of the gale, the faint, distant sound of a horse's hoofs, galloping along the beach.

"There comes the young doctor, I'll take my 'davy,'" said the fisherman. "Never know'd him let the grass grow under his horse's feet in time of need—blessings on his kind heart!" The door opened, and in walked the expected visiter. He was quite a youth in appearance, but tall, and of a most prepossessing exterior.

"I hope there has no serious accident happened, William."

"Serious enough, your Honour," said the fisherman. "There's a fine ship stranded just below; many of the poor fellows on the beach are beyond the reach of your assistance; there is not so much as a broken bone here, however—nothing but wet clothes and bruises. But there's a lady in the other end of the house, Doctor—you had better go to her first."

We were just going to knock at the door of Emily's room, when the fisherman's wife opened it, and, on seeing me, exclaimed—

"Your wife has just wakened from a sound sleep, sir, and looks quite fresh and life-like." I smiled at the good woman's mistake, which I did not see any occasion to rectify; but I followed the young doctor into the room. I saw in an instant that Emily had heard the woman's address to me; for as soon as her eye caught mine, she blushed deeply and averted her face. I almost flattered myself I heard a gentle sigh. The young doctor, in the meantime, approached the bed, and was about respectfully to feel her pulse, when, all at once, to my great surprise, he exclaimed—

"Merciful heaven! Emily, dear Emily!" And, without the slightest ceremony, he printed kiss after kiss upon her fair cheek. My first impulse was to spring forward to chastise him for his insolence; but I felt my limbs tremble under me; I staggered against the wall, hid my face in my hands, and absolutely groaned with anguish of spirit. There was an end to all my bright visions; I had flattered myself that the cup of happiness was just at my lips, and now it seemed to be dashed from them for ever. I had saved Emily only for the arms of a happy rival!

Such were the thoughts that flashed through my mind with the rapidity of lightning; and with them visions of ropes, and razors, and pistols. Two words of Emily dispelled them, and raised me again from the depths of despair into the seventh heaven of hope and happiness. These cabalistic words were—"Dear brother!" The young doctor now turned round to me, and said, hesitatingly—

"And this gentleman, Emily? Pray introduce me to him."

"Mr Wentworth, allow me to introduce to your notice and friendship, my brother, Edward Walford."

"Wentworth!" said young Walford; "there is surely some mistake here, Emily—I thought the woman called this gentleman your husband!"

"So she did, Edward," replied she, blushing; "but it was a mistake on her part, and not a surprising one. I am more astonished at *your* ignorance of my affairs than at hers. You cannot have received my two last letters from the Cape."

She then informed him of the events which had taken place since she left Madras; spoke kindly and affectionately of her late husband, who, she said, had always behaved like a tender and considerate father to her; and expressed the warmest gratitude to him for his liberal provision for her future welfare. She hinted delicately, that, though she grieved for his loss as that of a dear and valued friend, her feelings towards him had been chiefly those of gratitude and esteem. She gave a rapid and graphic sketch of the voyage, and ended with an account of the immediately preceding scenes of its fatal termination. Her cheek grew pale, and her voice trembled, as she detailed the horrors of the wreck.

"Although I had thought myself perfectly resigned," she said, "to what appeared to be my inevitable fate, yet, when that awful sea tore me away from the deck, I felt as if my last earthly hope was wrested from me; that moment, snatched as it were from the confines of a violent and awful death, was crowded with the recollections of a lifetime, which flashed, with lightning-like rapidity, across my memory. I thought of all I had done and suffered, and then of the extinction of my fond hopes of meeting and benefiting those dearest to my heart. There was agony in the thought—I screamed, and became unconscious. The cold dashing of the sea, while it half drowned, revived me from my fit. I was too faint and frightened to speak, but I was aware that Mr Wentworth was beside me; I felt that I was saved, and I relapsed into unconsciousness. To this gentleman," she said, turning her tearful eyes towards me, "am I indebted, under Heaven, for my escape from a watery grave. Oh, Mr Wentworth! how can I ever adequately prove my gratitude to you?"

"You owe me none," replied I. "The mere selfish impulses of our nature prompt us to endeavour to save what we value most. I *thought* I loved you; but it was not till I saw you struggling in the waves that I knew how *very* dear you were to my heart. Pardon my abruptness; if you think it presumption in a comparative stranger so *soon* to talk of love, I will wait months, years—only speak one word Emily—say, may I hope?"

She was silent, but her eyes filled with tears, and she looked beseechingly at her brother.

"I see how it is, Mr Wentworth," said the doctor, laughing: "my sister deposes me to act as her interpreter. Her eyes say to you, as plain as they can speak, (though you do not seem to understand their language,) 'You saved my *life*—who has a better claim upon my hand and heart?' Am I right, Emily?" said he, putting her small fair hand into mine.

She made no reply, but gently returned the pressure of my hand, and looked up in my face with such a sweet smile that I could not resist the temptation to imprint the first fond seal of love upon her glowing cheek.

"Come, Emily," said young Walford, "your *brother* has given you to Mr Wentworth, and now your *doctor* must take care of you for him. You are too weak yet to bear more excitement; we will leave you to your repose." He then took my arm, and bidding Emily adieu, we went into the other room, where we found the most exhausted of the

party stretched on the floor in various attitudes, giving audible notice that their lungs had not been materially injured by their late submersion; while the shuddering moans and convulsive starts of some of the number shewed that fancy was busy within them, acting over again, the dreadful scenes of the night.

When day had begun to break, the whole party hastened out to the beach. Not a vestige remained of our unfortunate ship; the hull was completely broken up, and the shore was strewn for miles with portions of the wreck. We found Captain Darby, Wildman, and the survivors who had taken refuge in the other cottage, busily employed in the sad duty of collecting the dead bodies of their less fortunate shipmates. Young Walford and I had a long and interesting conversation together, in the course of which he told me that his mother and the rest of the family were living in the neighbouring town, in which he was practising as surgeon. He was obliged to return home immediately, he said, to attend to his professional avocations; and, leaving me to apologise to his sister when she awoke, he promised either to come or send for her as soon as possible. I returned to the cottage. Emily was sleeping, and remained for three or four hours in a sound slumber, from which she had only just awakened, when a post-chaise drove up to the door, a handsome middle-aged lady stepped out, and in a moment Emily was in the arms of her mother. For some time, they embraced each other in silence; but their lips were moving, and the tears were streaming down their cheeks.

"Dear, dear mother!" at last sobbed Emily.

"Blessings on my darling!" replied she, holding Emily from her, and then hugging her to her heart; "let me look again on thy sweet face, my child!" she continued, gazing earnestly and affectionately at her, and then murmuring, "Oh, if I had lost you, Emily!" she again burst into an agony of tears. At last recollecting herself, she exclaimed, "Edward has told me all—where is *he*—where is the gallant man who saved your life?"

"This is Mr Wentworth," said Emily.

Mrs Walford took my hand in both hers, and pressed it to her heart, and, with a broken and trembling voice, she exclaimed—

"The blessing of a widowed mother be upon you, sir. You have saved my grey hairs from going down in sorrow to the grave."

I was greatly affected by her warm expressions of gratitude, and by the almost maternal cordiality with which she urged me to accompany them home. This invitation, it may be readily supposed, I was not at all unwilling to avail myself of; and, as none of the party were encumbered with baggage, nothing having been saved from the wreck, we soon left the cottage, carrying with us the good wishes and blessings of its inmates, whom Mrs Walford had most liberally rewarded for their hospitality. Three months afterwards, Emily Stacey became my wife; and, as I said before, sir, I owe the greatest blessing of my life to a storm and its consequences."

The steam-boat, soon afterwards, entered the Mersey; and, when we parted on the quay at Liverpool, it was with mutual regret, and with a promise to renew our acquaintance as soon as possible. I have since had reason, like Mr Wentworth, to bless a "storm and its consequences;" for the next greatest blessing to a good wife, is a good friend, and such he has ever proved himself to be, since our "stormy" meeting in the steam-boat.



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AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MATCHMAKER OF SALFORD.

It was Dean Swift, we think, that endeavoured to regulate the actions of his old age by the experience and wisdom of his youth—an attempt which may sound strangely in the ears of grave philosophers, who think that there is no wisdom in the world but what comes from the experience of grave seniors; but one, notwithstanding, which many grey-headed sages might do well to imitate. The Dean committed to paper what he called maxims or truths to be observed when he came to be old, and one of these was, never to fancy that he could be the object of the affection of a young woman. The remark had been dictated, doubtless, by the pitiful exhibitions he had witnessed in his aged friends, who had resigned themselves to the fond imagination of a requited love; and, under that delusion, played off all those tricks which turn the grey hairs of wisdom into folly and ridicule. We know not if the Dean had ever heard our Scotch expression of “the auld daft;” but that he had seen the grey-headed passion in full operation, cannot be doubted, and hence it was that he counselled his old age by the wisdom and experience of youth, and set an example which, as we will now shew, has not been at all times followed.

Manchester remains, but where is the rich Miles Cranstoun, who was once the envy of both the rich and the poor, so much did his wealth exceed that of the richest? It is many a long day since his bones were deposited in the churchyard of St Fillan; and, as his son died far from Manchester, and the second generation located themselves in Scotland, there remains not even a tombstone in that great manufacturing town where the old man made his wealth, to tell that there once lived a person of that name, the richest individual in it: neither is the name inscribed in any tablet of the memory of the existing generation; and even the town records mention him not, for he was too much bent on making money, to allow any part of his time to be devoted to the good of the public. Yet, though he wrought thus assiduously to be forgotten, he did not altogether succeed; for, if his generosity was not strong enough to be remembered in the second or third generation, his weaknesses were *strong* enough to endure for ages.

This extraordinary person left St Fillan's when a mere boy, went to Manchester, where he went through all the grades of runner, warehouseman, clerk, manager, partner, and sole proprietor, and by dint of Scotch prudence, or rather excessive cunning, amassed a large fortune. As what we have to say of him respects entirely the latter part of his life, when he became the victim of a strange passion or whim which sometimes seizes old men, we do not require to give more of his history than that he married a person from St Fillan's, who bore him an only son, and afterwards died; so that the household of the rich old merchant was composed solely of himself and his heir-apparent, whose name, Mark, was bestowed on him after a forebear of that appellation in St Fillan's.

By the time that Mark became thirty-two years of age, the father was at least seventy-two. He then presented the

appearance of a rich frequenter of Exchange. His money-making spirit had not, as it often does, diminished an early corpulency, which, accompanied with a fine, fresh, ruddy complexion, made him one of those comfortable sights so delectable to the wishers of long life, as affording them a kind of guarantee, or at least expectation, of a prolonged enjoyment of this transitory world. Such men are a species of unconscious philanthropists. Every time they are seen by the aged, the middle-aged, and the young, they stir their blood by the excitement of busy, calculating hope—a feeling which has more health in it than is to be found in a whole pharmacopolium. But the old gentleman did not communicate more than he felt, for he was just as full of health, spirits, and hope, as the young striplings who counted from his example a long series of coming years, not one of which, perhaps, they might ever see.

On the other hand, young Mark was a thin, spare, tall, genteel figure, wanting both the flesh and the blood of his father, but withal very handsome and good looking; while the inner man, though somewhat starved by the narrow, money-making views and sentiments of the father, exhibited great generosity, and a fine sense of honour—qualities which procured for him the affection of all his acquaintances. He was, in fact, both, externally and internally, the reverse of his father, and on that account shared but a small portion of the love or admiration of his parent, who, the older he grew, became the more penurious, and complained that the mental and bodily qualities of the son unfitted him for the race of fortune in which he himself had already been so successful. He forgot that two generations could not spend the money he had already made, and that the son of a rich father wants the motive to exertion which was the soul of the former's success.

There was nothing that seemed to have the slightest chance of coming in between the expectations of the heir apparent and his possession of all his father's fortune. It was now twenty years since Mrs Cranstoun died, during the whole of which time the old gentleman devoted himself with so much assiduity to the increase of his fortune, that he never thought of taking another wife. During the first ten years, Mark might have had something to fear, if he had had sense and selfishness to calculate; but now, when a threescore years and ten, and two to boot, had put the seal upon the bald head of the celibate, there remained no ground for even the fears of nervousness. Mark's splendid *apparency*, which procured him many flatterers, and many *tacit* offers of delicate, yet grasping hands, was, however, doomed to a long continuance; for, as the time came when, in the course of nature, it might have been expected to terminate, it was as vivacious as ever—a circumstance not in the slightest degree regretted by the old merchant, who thought that his increasing age, or the increasing expectations of a son, were no reasons for a decreasing hope or vitality, any more than for a decay of flesh and colour—a consequence which, he plainly saw and felt, did not, at least in his case, result from it.

Nearly opposite to where Mr Cranstoun lived, (in the suburb called Salford,) a widow lady, Mrs Baynes, with her only daughter, Julia, an interesting and (so reckoned) a very beautiful girl, resided in a self-contained house, left

to her by her husband, who had died some years before. The two families had been for a considerable time acquainted, and the two young members, by frequent intercourse, and by the subtle manœuvring of the mother, who saw all the advantages of a match so full of hope and expectation of wealth, became enamoured of each other. The cunning mother had seen, at a very early period, the spark, and had never allowed a moment to pass without using all the pneumatic powers of praise and cajolery to make it burn into a flame. Her success was as complete as could be: young Cranstoun very soon declared a passion for Julia—a declaration, next to that of her own husband when he made the proposal to her, the most delightful she had ever heard come from mortal lips. She saw in an instant realized all the hopes she had entertained of her daughter's becoming the wife of the richest heir-expectant in Manchester, and, consequently, in a very few years at least, the lady of an immense fortune, which many generations of Cranstouns and Baynes would not be able to dissipate or spend.

This love affair and proposed match was kept, in the meantime, a profound secret from the old man, whose strange peculiarities required to be studied and calculated before a declaration to him could be ventured upon. When his son had endeavoured to draw from him his sentiments upon the subject of marriage, he had uniformly maintained such a studied reserve and even silence, that he utterly defied all the young man's efforts; and the latter was thus left in the greatest doubt whether he was against marriage altogether, or only entertained certain views respecting the kind of wife, her family, education, or tocher. No references were made in these attempts to Julia Baynes, or any other lady; but even the device of keeping them general, did not succeed in drawing out the close old merchant, who saw in an instant that his son had a wife in his eye, though who she was he had not been able to discover, and, of course, disdained to ask. He had not the most distant suspicion that his son's choice was Julia Baynes, because the efforts of the mother, while her art was in progress, were rather directed to concealment, or indeed to leading the old gentleman to a different belief, than to procuring his favour to what was not yet ripe enough for even being mentioned to the ear of her own trembling expectations.

Foiled in his attempt to get some insight into his father's mind on this, to him, important subject, Mark hastened to his intended mother-in-law, and told her that he feared he would be taking a step in the dark, the consequences of which might be ruinous to them all, if he were to propose to her at once his intended marriage with Julia, without knowing before hand whether he was for or against it.

"His peculiarities, Mrs Baynes," said he, "are known to you and to all the people of Manchester. He thinks for himself; and it is quite a sufficient reason for not according with a view, or acting according to the wishes of another, that these views and wishes do not originate in his own mind. His determinations are so strong, that obstinacy is too gentle a word for them; for that implies some attention to the subject of the determination, while he seems to be unconscious—so completely does he eradicate, by contempt, other men's sentiments from his mind—that his own actions are adverse to the expressed hopes and wishes of those who have often a right to entertain them."

"I am aware of the delicacy of the point," said Mrs Baynes. "Were you to presume to obey the dictates of your heart, and act upon a spring which has not its coil in his mind, you might forfeit his good opinion, and be cut off with a shilling. That won't do, good Mark. I must take the thing in hand: women are, after all, the only match-makers—so much so, that I verily believe (though you lay so much stress on *putting the question*, as you call it) that

every man is *asked* tacitly, before he says a word on the subject. My Julia" (laughing) "is, indeed, one exception; and your love was so strong that I did not require to interfere, in so far as you were concerned. But now, by your authority, I will act in my natural vocation, and try if I have not wit enough to get your father's consent to your marriage."

"If you did not know him," said Mark, "I would say you would fail, clever as you are."

"One look of a woman," said Mrs Baynes, "at the other sex, accomplishes more in the way of acquiring a knowledge of them, than a day's study of a man."

"By 'the other sex,' you mean Englishmen," replied Mark: "a Scotchman's eye is a blind, and his words back-reading Hebrew. Twenty years' study have not yet enabled me to know my father. I leave the matter in your hands."

Mrs Baynes set about her task with all the assiduity of a woman engaged in her most natural duty, and all the anxiety of a mother, who saw that her daughter's fortune and her own depended upon the issue of her endeavours. She began by prevailing upon the old gentleman to come more about her house—sending him a kind invitation to tea—sitting with him *tête-à-tête*—putting Julia up to all manner of kindness and blandishments—praising her in his presence with the tact of a mother who knows the female characteristics that please a man—and, in general, by making both herself and daughter the greatest favourites possible with the old Scotchman. At first, Mr Cranstoun exhibited some shyness and reluctance, and complained that her invitations and kindness occupied too much of his time, and stated that the duties of business prevented him from enjoying so much as he wished the society of her and her daughter; but, in a short time, this reluctance began to wear off; he came always when invited, and he even shewed the extraordinary change of coming when he was not invited. At all times, whether invited or not, he was made so welcome, was so completely *honeyed*, by the soft words and kind looks of the mother, and so charmed (that is, as became a man of seventy-two) with the beauty and intelligence of the daughter, that he never went away without reluctance, and was never long absent without a wish to be back again.

All these indications were, undoubtedly, favourable; and Mark saw with delight how effectually his intended wife and mother-in-law were getting into his graces. Mrs Baynes was getting proud of her expected victory; and Julia could not doubt that so excellent an old man as Mr Cranstoun (when under the effect of the luxurious palpations of Mrs Baynes) would agree to the union the instant it was proposed to him. The young couple thought matters already ripe for the *direct* attack of the mother, and pressed her to begin her active operations. Mrs Baynes was, however, of a different opinion. Her conversations, hitherto, had been too general, and too remote from marriage, to admit of a change without a great deal more preparation; but she saw she was in a fair way for ultimate success. On the occasion of the next visit, she intended to be left for some time alone with him, and to begin some of the mere out-works of her operations.

The opportunity was not long awaiting, for Mr Cranstoun had now become a frequent visitor; but the quick eye of the mother was now startled by a strange apparition. A new wig graced the head of the old gentleman; and a clear shining pea-green new coat, fresh from the tailor's hands, sat majestically on his portly person; a light buff vest reflected from its bright surface a stream of light on his ruddy and now greatly illuminated face; and over the whole man the spirit of reform had thrown an entire change. Nor was the change confined to the outer man; the inner had shared the effects of the innovating or renovating principle; a strange and somewhat uncouth vivacity imparted to his actions, looks, and words, a lightness and frivolity which,

holding no terms but that of absolute contrast with the usual manners of an old, stiff-limbed, tottering man, produced the most grotesque appearance possible. It seemed as if, by some metamorphosis, the spirit of a fop had taken up, by force, its quarters in his mind, and assumed the reins of government of both soul and body. The caustic, purse-proud, and sometimes rude old merchant, was transformed into a smiling, simpering manufacturer of compliments. His supreme wish seemed to be to produce an impression—to make himself agreeable and pleasant—to raise a laugh by the powers of a bastard and forced wit—to attract attention to himself, his dress, appearance, and speech; and all his efforts were accompanied by certain side-looks or glances, as if he were secretly, but confidently watching the effect of his better qualities and powers on the minds and feelings of the two ladies.

At this extraordinary change, Mrs Baynes sat and stared in amazement; for the idea that the old man was in love, was the very last to rise in her mind, quick in the general case as she was to observe indications of a feeling in which women are generally so much interested. At last, however, on comparing this extraordinary exhibition with what she had before seen, heard, and read of, she became satisfied that he was in love—hat what, in Scotland, is called the *auld daft*, and what the English have no very proper name for, had overtaken him at the period of life when he might have been considered past danger, and that the object of his passion was, in fact, *herself*. Being a stout, comely woman, somewhat *en bon point*, fair and healthy, of about forty years of age, she was perfectly capable of producing a warm flame in a much younger heart than that of the old merchant; but, as the discovery broke in upon her, she could not resist a smile at a conquest which, in so short time, threatened to overcome all the schemes she had planned for the happiness of the young couple. A few minutes thought, however, satisfied her that the easiest and best mode of gaining the old lover's consent to the union of their children, was to bring about a union with him. To insure the honour of the young people's draft, the shortest way was to take possession of the bank itself; and this, according to all appearances, could be no difficult matter, seeing that the keys were apparently held out to her hand. By *hooking* the old merchant, she hooked his money-bags—the great obstacle that stood in the way between her daughter and his son.

A new impulse was thus given to her actions; and her tactics required to be changed, to suit the change that had taken place upon the enemy. She began to imitate him, by dressing outrageously fine and showy; and all the smiles and ogles which she had for a long time kept lying in the lumber room of her old affections, were brought out, furnished, and set in motion with a force suited to the high object to be attained. She made inquiries as to the best mode of treating the *auld daft*, and found that no blandishments, however strong, evidently seen through, or over-acted, could come up to the wishes and expectations of the victim of the extraordinary passion. Yet she determined upon acting modestly, at least in the first instance—proposing to herself to increase the dose of flattery and cajolery as she saw the appetite getting a stronger and stronger relish for the exquisite stimulants. She said nothing in the meantime to Julia or Mark as to her own individual aims; and the former having no skill in the detection of the symptoms of the passion of love in one of seventy-two, while the latter being seldom present when his father *performed*, there could be no risk of their discovering how the affair actually stood. It was her intention to tell them of their happiness along with her own; and, in the meantime, she was determined to leave no effort unassayed to effect her object. She had been often left alone by Julia, with a view to the commencement of active proceedings; but she never had plucked up sufficient courage to make

the attack, and it was left for the old lover himself to declare his passion.

"It's a lang time, noo, since my Agnes died," said he, in the Scotch accent—which he always retained—"and I'm rather astonished at mysel that I hae allowed my affections" (a side glance) "to lie, as it were, barren, or, maybe, rather like a rich ley field, for sic a length of time; but my case is just your ain case, Mrs Baynes; wi' this difference, that it's langer since my Agnes died than it is since your Walter left you a widow."

"You are quite right, Mr Cranstoun," said Mrs Baynes, who saw that he was coming to the very point itself, almost without the ordinary circumlocutionary preparations. "I believe I feel as you feel; but it requires a time before a person can fix their affections on an object. Your simile of the ley field is, perhaps, more expressive than I can, consistently with the delicacy" (blushing) "of our sex, explain; but I can assure you, sir, that I am quite of opinion that the longer one is beginning to love, he or she loves the stronger."

"I meant nae mair than that," said he, "by my simile o' the ley field, which, when ance broken up, affords twa crops. My heart has lang lain ley, Mrs Baynes;" (a side glance;) "love's account in my ledger has been lang bearin interest;" (another glance;) "but the sum total's the greater when Hymen casts it up. Ye ken what I mean—for, indeed, ye expressed it yersel, maybe as weel according to your fashion as I do according to mine. I'm glad we agree on this important point. It's like a kind o' settlement o' preliminaries, or rather a testin o' the qualities o' the articles, before we come to state prices."

"The most straightforward lover I ever met," muttered Mrs Baynes. "Indeed, sir," continued she aloud, "I am very straightforward in my sentiments; and I believe you will not this night utter a single opinion, however startling to a lady's ear, in which I will not concur with you."

"I like your frankness, Mrs Baynes," said he; "it gies a man courage, which, on a certain subject," (winking,) "we a' require. The best and gayest o' us" (looking down at himself) "are apt to falter when we approach even the preliminaries o' the delicate affair. I hae lang thocht o't; but to this hour I never could pull up resolution enough to break the ice."

"But with an open, frank woman like me, Mr Cranstoun, and one, moreover, whom you know admires you as the most sensible and proper man in Salford, and a thousand times better fitted for making a woman happy than the young men, (and you are far from being old,) whose love consists of empty professions, you need have no fears about breaking the ice. I'll catch you in my arms if you give indications of sinking." (Looking at him tenderly, and clapping him on the shoulder.) "Speak out, my dear Mr Cranstoun!"

"Is it your opinion, then, Mrs Baynes," said the old lover, with a trembling voice, "that I could make a sensible, discreet woman happy—I mean puttin mere wealth oot o' the question, for I hae nae notion o' buyin a wife. Think o't a little before ye answer me—tak time," (rising meanwhile, and tottering along the floor, by way of shewing his figure,) "just tak time."

"No one who has heard you and *seen* you, Mr Cranstoun, requires much time to answer that question."

"Ay, but I never like a hasty answer," said he, as he endeavoured to catch her eye, and, by walking with as firm a step as possible, to impress her with a conviction that he was hale and firm, as well as properly made. "I would rather wish you to tak time, for I'll value the opinion just in proportion as it is weel conned. I'm in nae hurry"—(drawing himself up before her, to overcome the bent of age)—"think weel on't."

"I can have no doubt on the point, my dear Mr Cran-

stoun," said she, "provided the woman is a sensible one, and able to appreciate all your merits. I think the woman who is fortunate enough to get you will be the happiest creature alive."

"I am happy to hear ye say sae," replied he; "and yet, even wi' your opinion, sae candidly expressed, I hae a kind o' a flutterin fear to put my next question to ye."

"Why should you have any fear to put *any* question to me, my dear sir?" said she, rising and taking his arm, on which she leant lightly, for fear of hurting him. "You know me now too well to feel any alarm as to what my answer will be."

"You are an indulgent cratur," said he, as he lifted his arm with the vain intention of supporting her; "yet wi' a' your indulgence"——

"Come now, my dear Mr Cranstoun," pressing his arm fondly, and almost upsetting him; "why, you are like a blushing boy—what need of this?"

"True, there's nae occasion for't," said he, "seem ye hae half answered me already—would ye hae any objection, then," (holding away his head,) "to—to"——

"What now, my dear Mr Cranstoun," turning her face to catch his words, "what now?"

"To my askin Julia to be my wife," answered he, with a great struggle.

A nervous shock convulsed her whole frame, and extending its effect to his arm, made him reel and almost fall on the floor. She was silent, and found it impossible to say a word; yet she dared not withdraw her arm.

"What's the matter wi' ye, Mrs Baynes?" inquired the lover.

"You do not like a hasty answer," replied she, with difficulty, taking refuge behind his own sentiment.

"Only sometimes," said he, impatiently. "At present I'm in a different humour. A quick answer wad relieve me noo. Activity is the soul o' business. What say ye, my dear Mrs Baynes?"

At this moment Julia entered the room, thinking that her mother had had sufficient time to get out of him some consent to her marriage with Mark. The interruption was the most opportune in the world, and the still confused and disappointed mother took advantage of it by withdrawing her arm gently from that of the old lover, and sitting down. Her disappointed expression of countenance was read sorrowfully by Julia, who augured from it the worst issue to her fond hopes; while Mr Cranstoun, occupied now in gazing upon the beautiful object of his affections, did not perceive the unfavourable impression his question had produced on the mother. He was relieved. The question had been put; the worst part of his suit was over; and, becoming garrulous in his joy, he talked as fond old lovers generally do, and thus covered the effects he had himself produced. He soon afterwards departed; stating, as he winked and shook hands with Mrs Baynes, that another opportunity would occur for resuming their *interesting* conversation.

This turn, so totally unexpected, changed the entire aspect of the matchmaker's views, and filled her with pain and disappointment. Nothing except a veto upon the marriage of the young couple could have been more inauspicious and unfortunate. Julia, even if disengaged, had too much spirit to sacrifice herself for money; and the match with the father, to the exclusion of the son, was entirely out of the question. But how was it possible to give the old lover a denial without sacrificing, in an instant, all the hopes of the son? The former was possessed of too much conceit—for the auld daft is, in this respect, truly a species of madness—to allow himself to be cut out by his bareboned, white-faced son, as he sometimes called him, without retaliating, by cutting him, in return, out of his will. All parties, therefore were placed, by this unexpected and unfortunate pro-

posal, in a state of extreme danger; and all the wits or the cunning matchmaker would clearly require to be put in requisition to avert it. But she felt a consciousness of power (for what woman ever despaired in such a cause) that would enable her to bring matters yet to a successful termination; and resolved, in the meantime, still to keep her secret and plans from the young couple, whose forwardness might, in some measure, disconcert them.

Her first step was to endeavour to take advantage of this freak of nature, before his mind was further fixed on her daughter. She knew that an old man in his situation loves rather in consequence of a radical change in his mind than because he sees any particular woman whom he can love to the exclusion of all others—a man under the power of the auld daft bearing a considerable resemblance to a clocking hen; for as chalk, in the form of eggs, will entice her to incubation, almost any woman, if she is very young, will fire his old heart. She immediately wrote away for a dependent niece called Fanny Maxton, who lived at some distance from town, and who, to get a carriage, would not hesitate to marry any one. She was a tall, swan-necked, showy looking girl—a picture to look *at*, but, unfortunately, also a picture to look *into*, for a near view discovered many imperfections most imperfectly attempted to be covered and concealed by rouge; but which, of course, could not be observed by Mr Cranstoun, without the aid of his glasses; and these he never carried with him when he went a-courting, in case he might, by chance, expose his short-sightedness. In using Miss Maxton as a tool for her private ends, Mrs Baynes had no intention, unless she could not otherwise effect her object, of urging the old gentleman to absolute matrimony—a step inimical to the hopes of her daughter: her object was to give his mind another bent; and, if that should fail, she had another resource, in which the good-natured Fanny would also have to act a prominent part; but the puppet was to know no more of her schemes than what was just necessary to enable her to play her part.

When Mr Cranstoun called on the next occasion, Miss Fanny Maxton was present, and Julia was indisposed. The shewy figure of the niece was set in the best light, right opposite to him, and so as to receive on her radiant countenance the lack-lustre eyes, which, searching in vain for Julia, and not finding her, might, for the mere sake of rest, fix themselves where there was apparently so much beauty. She was told, before he came, that he was an old man worth more than a hundred thousand pounds; and nothing more was required to stimulate her energies to engage his attention, and to stare him into love. The ogling at first went on with considerable spirit; and Mrs Baynes took care occasionally to turn away her head, in order to give the darts plenty of room for collateral as well as direct play. If she could have had an opportunity of prompting Fanny, she would have recommended to her to have opened her battery upon him more gradually, and to have closed up at intervals the port-holes, to give him time to reload, and to increase his fervour and pluck; but the truth was, that the girl had not, for a long time, met with so enviable a prize; and the extreme anxiety she felt to hook him, produced, perhaps, an imprudent precipitation, in betaking herself to her most spirited system of attack. The effect produced upon the old lover was, however, wonderful and highly auspicious. He stood his ground with great spirit, and sometimes even went so far as to vindicate a right to the *last glance*—a right which Fanny very imprudently contested with him, except in a very few instances, where Mrs Baynes, by claiming her attention, thus gave the old stickler for the rights of his sex an occasional victory, of which he was as proud as if he had taken the heart of a beauty by storm.

The result of this interview seemed highly creditable to

the spirit of the principal actors, as well as to the art of the female schemer herself. Several other interviews followed, at which the same system was kept up, and many very endearing things said by both parties. At the next meeting, Mrs Baynes chose to see Mr Cranstoun by herself.

"Julia is still a little indisposed," said she, after he had seated himself at the tea-table, "and a young beau has taken Miss Fanny to the theatre."

"Umph! what has a young beau," said he, in a disappointed tone, "either of sense, solidity, or money, to make any woman happy?—but its Julia I want to speak aboot. Hae ye pondered owre the question I put to ye that nicht before the fair cratur took ill? I hope ye didna surprise her wi' the communication. A sudden declaration of that kind sometimes completely overpowers the young heart, and maks it beat quicker than the passage o' the bluid requires. I fear I am the cause o' her illness—puir, sweet, delightfu cratur!"

"I have not told her anything of the matter," said Mrs Baynes, disappointed at the apparent issue of her trial of Fanny; "you have *my* interest, however; but" (whispering in his ear) "I fear you have been *rather*—I do not say so absolutely—but I fear you have been somewhat late in your application. Julia, in spite of my wish and will, entertains a kind of incipient passion for a young man who very seldom visits the house; and, what is still more wonderful, I do not think her affection is returned."

"What like is he?" said Mr Cranstoun, proudly; "what is he like?" (Looking down at himself.) "Do I ken him?"

"It would not be quite proper," replied the dame, "for me to give you his name *at present*; but there's a good time coming."

"But ye may tell me what like he is," replied the other, snappishly. "Is he stout, portly, and dignified?" (stretching his shrunk muscles;) "has he solidity and sense? has he money?"

"I doubt if he has any of them," replied the other. "I am angry at Julia, who, between ourselves," (whispering,) "is, notwithstanding of a little beauty, a little senseless and indiscreet. I often wish she were like Fanny, who, though she can go to the theatre with a young beau, keeps her heart disengaged for a good offer, when it presents itself. Isn't she a splendid creature? If she had been my daughter in place of Julia, what a pleasure it would have afforded me to see her receiving with delight the addresses of such a man as you! Did you notice how proud she was of your attention? Ah! you rogues of men! what a power you exercise over the hearts of women!"

"And wha should hae that power if the lords o' the creation didna possess it?" said he, with a chuckle of self-satisfaction; "but" (returning to his vomit) "I am concerned about Julia, wha I wished to mak happy. Can she no be brought to see her ain interest and happiness as other folk see them? Has she nae power o' comparison aboot her?" (Eying himself.) "Can she no distinguish atween ae man and anither, eh?"

"Indeed, my good sir," said she, "I fear she does *not* know a proper man, and she's very obstinate. What if I cannot turn her affections? You cannot want a wife—the women will not want you. Would that I had had two daughters, and that Fanny had been one of them! What do you think, my good sir, we shall do?"

"Do! I'm astonished at you, Mrs Baynes," replied he, somewhat hurt; "what should you do but compare the lovers, as becomes a sensible mither, anxious for the guid o' her dochter; set the qualities o' the twa men afore your dochter's een, and force her to appreciate them according to their value. Or, there's anither and a better plan: *let us meet*, and shew ousels face to face afore her. Wha could doubt her choice, unless she's a natural?"

"That you may well say," replied the crafty dame; "but I might experience a great difficulty in getting you together."

"But there's anither plan," said he, speaking low into her ear. "Could we no touch her jealousy a bit? Suppose you were to say that I was after Fanny, and that Fanny was after me. That would rouse her; that would shew her the better man, and open her een to her real happiness. What say ye, Mrs Baynes?"

"It might do very well," replied she, taken by surprise by this new turn; but, instantly seizing her advantage—"it might do very well if you were *really* after Fanny, but I do not like to tell a falsehood. If you were to begin to make love to Fanny, I might inform Julia of it afterwards. What say you to that?"

"I would hae nae great objections," said he, "if I knew hoo far I could safely venture in interesting the feelings and gaining the affections o' Miss Maxton—that is, I mean without, maybe, breakin her heart, in the event o' my no following up my suit wi' marriage. I hae some conscience about me, Mrs Baynes, and hae nae wish to hae a woman's death on my head. I hate a gay deceiver as I do a dishonest merchant."

"Indeed, Mr Cranstoun," said she, restraining a smile, "I fear you could not proceed far with so highly susceptible a girl as Miss Maxton, without producing that very effect you so properly dread. How few men are like you! A broken heart is a victory to many of your sex; and I am delighted to hear you say that you purposely refrain from the cruel achievement."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Fanny, who had come home from the theatre sick. She sat down beside them, very pale. The lover lost no time in applying the necessary stimulants. She recovered; and Mrs Baynes whispered in his ear, that men have a strange power in producing sickness as well as in allaying it. A chuckle was the reply to this sweet *morceau*; and Mrs Baynes was not yet without hopes that she might get him entangled with the willing Fanny.

Some more interviews satisfied the matchmaker that she would not be able to succeed in detaching Mr Cranstoun's affections from her daughter, so long as he cherished the wish to have a trial of qualities with his rival. Pride seemed to have entered the lists as Love's colleague. He repeatedly again urged upon her the necessity of putting an end to the rivalry by the speedy measure he had suggested, and harped upon the expediency of going at least a *safe* length with Miss Fanny, to stimulate the feeling of rivalry in Julia. Foiled in this, her second scheme of getting his affections fixed on Miss Maxton, and also her third project of getting him to court her, (as a mode of getting at Julia,) and to commit himself so far that he could not honourably recede, she behoved to have recourse to another, and her quick fancy was not slow in suggesting what it should be. The fond lover was becoming every day more urgent, and his visits were now more frequent. At their next meeting he found another opportunity for resuming the old topic.

"I almost think, Mrs Baynes," he said, "that ye dinna wish Julia happy. Ye hae lost a fine opportunity o' workin on her feelings, sae lang as she was in a sickly condition; for sickness, and tenderness, and love, are a' connected by ae heart-string. But naething can be dune till this lover is oot o' the way. Can ye no tell me yet wha he is? Can ye no let me meet him in presence o' the fair judge?"

A woman's wit," she replied, "is worth the judgment of a dozen of men in these matters. I have made a curious discovery since you were here last. Who do you think Fanny's beau at the theatre was?"

"I dinna ken; but I hope it may hae been Julia's lover," said the arch Scotchman.

"You are right, Mr Cranstoun," said she; "a right good guess. Julia discovered the whole affair herself, by exhibiting her jealousy when she came to know that Fanny had been so signally preferred; but a greater wonder still is the beau himself. Who think ye? Not the young man I mentioned to you. I am satisfied she never loved him, but merely used him as a kind of decoy-duck to cheat me, who she suspected was favourable to *your* claims, because her real lover, that is the man she loves, (for he loves Fanny,) and you could not possibly be rivals."

"What's this, what's this, Mrs Baynes?" said he. "I would like to see the man I wadna compete wi' for a woman's favour. Wha can this wonderfu man be?"

"What would you think of Mr Mark Cranstoun?" said she, whispering in his ear.

"Whew!" whistled the old lover. "White-gilled, pithless cratur, would he think o' competin wi' his father in any affair either o' love or merchandise?"

"Have I not told you, Mr Cranstoun," said she, "that the young man does not seem to fancy Julia, but rather prefers the more showy Fanny Maxton?"

"Ha! I kenned he wadna dare to cross my path," said the father. "If he did, he wad hae little to count at the credit o' his name in my will. A shillin, madam—just ae shillin—wad be his fortune."

"Mercy on us," muttered the dame to herself, "we are on dangerous ground. But is it not a mercy," she said aloud, "that he has no intention to compete with his father in such a delicate affair?"

"He has dune mischief aneugh, madam," said he, "in interestin the dear cratur Julia's feelings in his favour. Her choice, between ourselves," (speaking low and winking,) is naething in his favour. Mark's but a feckless composition o' lang banes and lank muscles—the elements, in thae degenerate days, o' gentility; and, besides, what has he to keep a wife on? Absolutely naething, but what he gets frae that very father she wad reject on his account. Extraordinary infatuation! But something maun be dune to purify her heart frae this foolish attachment."

"That will not be a difficult matter, I should think," replied the dame. "My puir wits, I think, are equal to that task."

"How would you manage it, my dear Mrs Baynes?" said the lover, anxiously.

"Get Mark to marry Miss Fanny Maxton," said she, "and the battle's won."

"I question if that's sae easy an affair as ye think it, ma'am," said Mr Cranstoun, pulling himself up conceitedly, and looking into the mirror.

Mrs Baynes was at fault. What was the meaning of this manœuvre? She could not guess, but she could inquire.

"Why so, sir?" said she.

"If I can judge frae her ce," said he, smirking with self-complacency, "she is already struck in anither quarter." (Winking.) "Sae lang as she thinks she has a grip o' the father, she'll never look at the son. The wench has comparison in her."

"True, very true—I forgot that," said Mrs Baynes. "But that difficulty may be got over; I can say that you are engaged for Julia."

"Hey! hey! and set them a-fechtin about me," cried he, chuckling over his supposed power.

"Leave that to me," said the dame; "I wil undertake to manage the affair between Fanny and Mark, provided you give me authority to act for you in the negotiation."

"I gie you full power, authority, and commission," said Mr Cranstoun, "to negociate, adjust, and settle the affair as you think proper. He's very welcome to Fanny, if I can secure Julia. I canna marry baith the dear craturs, and it's no lost what a friend gets, as they say in our country. Do your best. I am deen to get a clutch o' the sweet Julia—that is,

when I can count absolutely upon there bein nae obstacle to that perfect union o' hearts that befit true love."

These last words were uttered as he was struggling with old age to rise and depart. He succeeded; and, getting to the door in the slipshod way of aged individuals, he, still under the influence of the tender sentiment, put his hand to his mouth, and, throwing a kiss to the mother, bade her give it to Julia for his sake, and departed.

So far this last scheme had succeeded, and the performer expected to bring it to a successful termination; though sometimes, when she thought of the strange individual she had to work upon—the most cunning and hardest man in Manchester—she could scarcely make herself believe that a woman could match and circumvent one who was more than a match for all others. But she forgot, when she gave way to these fears, that she held in her hands a power—that of administering to the "auld daft"—before which all the perversities of man's nature become as smooth as oil—the giant becomes a child, the miser a spendthrift, and the confirmed celibate as uxorious as Solomon. Meanwhile, the young people had become all impatience. They could neither understand her mother nor his father, and the match-maker was not inclined yet to divulge to them her schemes; while, in regard to poor Fanny, who had a part to play, and yet could not tell from what springs she was moved, nor for what object she was made to perform so many manœuvres, she was left to speculate on all these mysteries as her imagination might supply the necessary materials.

Her next step was to call all parties to work at the same time, and to make them go through their evolutions, so as to contribute to the success of her plan, without being in any respect privy to her design. Her abilities were even able for this great stretch of her power. A tea party was regularly made up, and the performers were to act thus:—Miss Fanny, whose game was the old one, got a hint from her aunt that her object would be best served by rousing his jealousy—a matter of easy accomplishment, as she had only to devote her attentions and direct her fires against the son; Julia, again, was primed with the softest looks and the blandest words for her intended father-in-law, whose good wishes she was to cultivate with all the perseverance and assiduity of woman; while Mark was recommended to keep his father still in the dark, by paying attention to Fanny, and leaving Julia to insinuate herself into the favour of the crusty old gentleman, who was yet very far from being in a position fit for the subject being even broached. The old lover himself, again, was recommended to watch Fanny and Mark, and notice the state of their hearts, while the conduct of Julia would satisfy him that the mother's exertions in his favour were not made in vain. Acting under these hints and instructions, the various individuals of the drama went through their parts as correctly and successfully as if they had been let into the secret, and had seen vividly the object their actings were intended to attain. The old lover went home satisfied of three things: first, that his son and Fanny would make a match of it; secondly, that he and Julia would attain that happiness to which they were so signally suited; and, thirdly, that he was indebted to Mrs Baynes for all his success.

Next day Mrs Baynes, in her character of commissioner, waited upon Mr Cranstoun, at his own house, to share the exultation of the success of her actings, and to get the remaining portions of her plan pushed forward with all speed. She was received with great grace and favour; a chair was placed for her by the trembling hands of the old gentleman; wine of various kinds, as old as herself, was placed before her; and every attention paid to her who held in her hands the key to his supremest happiness.

"I see now," said he, drawing his chair near her, "the great merit o' your proceedings in my behalf. Julia was absolutely charming last night; sae kind, sae condescendin,

sae lovin. Did I no tell ye to bring the twa men thegither face to face? I declare she scarcely ever looked at Mark. I engaged a' her attention, was blessed wi' a' her smiles, and waffed to heaven on the wings o' her undivided luv."

"I confess I myself was somewhat surprised at the sudden change," said she. "I thought at one time she was playin you off against Mark, with a view to rouse his jealousy, and detach him from Fanny; but, after all the attention I could bestow on her looks and actions, I became pretty well satisfied that you were, at least last night, her choice."

"Ha! ha! playin me off against Mark—very guid, Mrs Baynes," cried the old lover; "use a lion to hunt a dormouse; very guid; but I see ye like a joke, especially ane that lies on the surface and maks ane laugh without the trouble o' thinkin; yet I maun confess I didna think Julia wad hae let Mark aff sae easily. But Fanny's the queen. I'faith she kept at him; but think ye she wasna playin Mark aff against me? Ye're a clever woman, Mrs Baynes, but ye dinna see sae far into a millstane's I do."

"I would not doubt but that she was trying that scheme," said the dame, "but she soon saw that you were too firmly caught by Julia, to be affected by that swivel gun. She will be quite contented with Mark. I had a conversation with both him and her this morning. They seem quite devoted to each other, so that my part is easily performed; but there remains something to be done by you, over which I have no control. To get-quit of Mark as an obstacle, is, I assure you, of the greatest importance; and deserves some sacrifice on your part. He says he cannot keep a wife."

"That's true aneugh," replied Mr Cranstoun. "The callant has nae business talents, sufficient to enable him to do business successfully on his ain account."

"But, under your protecting wing, Mr Cranstoun, he might do much. He is your only son."

"Ay, at present, Mrs Baynes," said he, with a broken, hysterical kind of laugh. Tak along wi' ye that qualification, if you please, madam."

"Well, well," replied she—"I certainly wish the old stock of the Baynes to be kept up; but a person of your great fortune may easily provide well for Mark, without interfering with the interests of the children of your second marriage."

"I might gie him a share o' the business in the meantime," said he. "A ten years' contract wad expire before ony o' the bairns o' this second marriage cam to need muckle mair than education; and I might renew it for some years langer, until my second son was fit to receive a share also. But I wadna like to grant Mark this favour as in *consideration* of his marriage. I want to gie nae absolute unqualified countenance to his choice o' a wife, because he may come to repent o' his act, when he sees that I hae been blessed wi a better, and maybe say that I bought him aff as a rival, wi' the price o' the share o' the business I intend to bestow on him."

"It is not in any degree necessary," said the dame, delighted with her success, "that you should say anything at present to Mark about his marriage. He has told me privately, that all he wants to make him happy, is just this very partnership that you intend to bestow upon him. Give it to him instantly, as a mere act of paternal love; the marriage will follow, I know, as a matter of course, and you need not be accessory to it in any way, beyond giving your consent, as every father is asked to do."

"It shall be dune, it maun be dune, Mrs Baynes," said he. "Mark will get a share immediately—even this very day I will ask Mr Coventry to draw out a scroll o' the contract o' copartnership. They say in our country i' the north, that ae marriage begets anither, and there's some curious secret about the bride's cake. If Fanny gaes aff in style, Julia winna remain lang ahint her; for, beggin your pardon, Mrs Baynes, women are just like race-horses or game cocks, set

the ane aff or the ither a-fechtin and the rest are sure to follow the example. The virtue o' Fanny's bride's cake will sune work its effects on me and the gentle Julia."

"All will go well," said the dame, "after the partnership is fixed. There will be no keeping Julia out of your arms when she is stimulated by the example of Fanny."

"And wha wad dare try to keep her oot o' my arms, madam?" said he. "By my faith, the intruder wad sune feel the force o' them. Tak a glass o' wine, Mrs Baynes"—(helping her with a shaking nervous hand)—"ay, he wad sune feel the force o' them. Ye'll be wantin a guid jointure for Julia, I warrant? Let alane the mither for looking to what comes after, while the happy bride and bridegroom are occupied about the present."

"That can be spoken of again, Mr Cranstoun," said she, wishing to escape from details.

"It will be ample, ma'am," said he—"it will be ample; an' the mair sae that the dear cratur doesna marry me for my siller. A wife's real love should, besides being suitably returned, be well repaid by a guid settlement. It's a' we can gie the puir craturs after we are dead, and they gie us a' they hae when they are livin."

"Do not speak of death," said Mrs Baynes, putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Merely eventually, ma'am—merely eventually," said he.

"Dinna greet for me, my dear Mrs Baynes. I hae plenty o' time yet to mak your dochter happy. I could greet, too, but it is for the happiness o' our honey-moon. Ha! Mrs Baynes," (rubbing his palsied hands,) "ye canna deny me the sympathy o' your strongest feelings, when ye look back to that awfu period o' your ain life. Hoo lang a time do ye think we should let pass between Mark's marriage and my ain—between the wanin o' his mune and the risin o' mine?"

"Julia must be consulted on that point, I fancy," replied she.

"It will be short aneugh, then—short aneugh, ha—ha—ha," cried he, in the highest excitement—then singing, in a voice cracked with age—

"I saw the new moon late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And there's nae fear, my mistress dear,
That we will come to harm."

Mark's moon winna hae waned far when mine will be shinin as bright as molten silver."

"A happy bridegroom makes a happy marriage," said the dame, as she stared in amazement at this highest flight of the *auld daft*.

Mr Cranstoun again pressed her to take wine, and, as she was rising to depart, assured her that Mark's contract of copartnership would be signed on the next day. The dame, well pleased with the result of her negociation, hastened home, where she met Mr Mark Cranstoun, to whom she communicated the intelligence, that, on the morrow, he was to become a partner in his father's lucrative business.

"Then he has consented to our union!" cried the young man and Julia at the same moment.

"You are both of you too quick," replied the mother. "I give you this piece of pleasant intelligence, and you immediately cry for more. I see I must exact a promise from you, Mr Mark."

"What is that?" inquired he.

"That you will say nothing to your father," said she, "of your love for Julia, or your intention of marriage, until I give you liberty and instructions."

"What!" cried the youth, "may I not, at the time of signing the contract of copartnership, venture a single hint at the object we have in view, in entering into the transaction?"

"Not one word, or the whole affair is spoiled," said the mother. "Do you not observe the delicacy of your kind father? He wishes to keep the two contracts, that of copartnership and marriage, separate, as well as the subjects

of them, that his generosity in making you a partner may be the greater in proportion to there being no demand for it. All you have to do, is to sign your name, and thank your father for his kindness."

"I will comply," said the youth.

"What are the profits of the business?" inquired the mother.

"Six thousand a-year, one with another," replied the youth.

"And you are to have a half of that?" cried Julia, exultingly.

"For ten years certain, at least," said the mother.

"The period of the duration of the contract, I presume?" said Mark.

"Yes," replied the mother; "and by that time your father will be well on for eighty-three, and then you will put in for the stock, I fancy.

"Ah, mother!" said Julia, "the old gentleman knows of our marriage just as well as you do. Don't he now?"

"I cannot answer that question, Julia," replied she, trying to suppress a smile, as she contrasted Julia's manner with the singing of the old lover.

Mark went away delighted with the intelligence he had received. The old gentleman kept his word. The contract of copartnery was entered into, and it was soon known, over all Manchester, that young Cranstoun had been assumed as a partner in his father's lucrative business.

This affair being settled, Mrs Baynes had effected the great object of her clever scheming, because the contract being irrevocable, she had insured, for ten years, three thousand a-year for her daughter and Mr Mark Cranstoun, which the spite of the old lover, when he came to know the real truth, could not take from the happy pair. But there was one thing she had yet to achieve, and that was, to save herself and Mr Mark Cranstoun from the vengeance of the father, by laying the whole blame of the rapid change that was about to be communicated to him on the back of her daughter. Her object for this was clear, because she would, in this way, prevent the rich father from disinheriting his son, and save herself from an imputation of duplicity and artifice. She made preparations, therefore, for an awful meeting with the old lover, at which she would require the aid of a lugubrious face and a sea of crocodile's tears; but as she dressed herself for the occasion, she often burst out into a laugh at the triumph of the artifice and management of a woman over the most subtle fox of his day. Having rung the bell, she was admitted and received with great kindness.

"Ye see I hae been as guid as my word," said he, as she entered. "Mark may marry now when he pleases, and I fancy the road is clear for my takin immediate possession o' Julia. I was thinkin o' fixin the day (wi' her consent, of course) this evenin. I see naething to prevent the marriages being on the same day. But what maks ye look so sorrowfu, Mrs Baynes, on sae joyfu an occasion?"

The dame increased the lugubrious expression, and wiped her eyes, pretending to be unable to utter a syllable.

"Ha! I see it, I see it!" cried he. "When the point has come to the point, ye're sorrow to see Julia gettin a husband, and you (still so young) cut oot by your daughter, as I thought I was to be by my son."

"That's not the cause of my sorrow, Mr Cranstoun," blubbered out the knowing dame.

"Then it's because ye're afraid to trust your daughter in my keepin, is it?" rejoined he. "But there's nae occasion for that, madam. I'll use her kindly, tenderly, and lovingly. I never was a rough lover—gentleness is the very soul o' the tender passion—and wherever there is roisterin, rantin, and roarin, there's some ground for suspicion that the heart's no ategither sure o' its ain affection. I need say uae mair, Mrs Baynes, than that your daughter Julia will

lie as saft in my bosom as on a bed o' bloomin roses, and, dootless, far mair pleasantly."

"It is not a fear of your being rough with Julia," said Mrs Baynes, still wiping her eyes, "that is the cause of my weeping."

"What is it, then?" inquired he; "speak out, my dear mither-in-law; for I love to anticipate my happiness by addressin you in that friendly way—speak, guid-mither, speak."

"Oh, sir," cried she, "I can scarcely speak with shame and vexation. Alas, that I should have lived to see this day! Would you believe it, sir? All the attentions bestowed by Mr Mark Cranstoun upon poor Fanny Maxton, turn out now to have been mere by-play, to excite the love and jealousy of Julia, who now declares she will marry no one else but him; and all that little minx's conduct towards you, my good sir, was intended merely as similar by-play, to excite the love of Mark, who says he will marry no one else but her. All my schemes are frustrated, my hopes disappointed, and my pride of management laid in the dust." (Weeping.)

"How can I look you in the face, my good sir, after I have thus unconsciously led you astray? Unhappy hour, when I first engaged in this affair!—but I was naturally anxious for the welfare of my daughter, whom I wished married to a man of substance, solidity, and intelligence. Thus it is, we bring up children to deceive us. Where is faith and confidence to be found, if the very children of our bodies prove false to us?"

"Does Julia Baynes prefer Mark Cranstoun to his father, and does Mark Cranstoun prefer Julia Baynes to Fanny Maxton?" cried the old lover, in an incredulous tone and falling back on the couch. The thing's impossible, ma'am! I will never believe it till I have her own word for it."

"You may have that too soon," said the mother, still weeping; "but there is one thing I wish to impress upon your mind, and that is, that the young man is not to blame. I have purposely concealed from him your affection for Julia, so that he does not to this hour know that he has been competing with you."

The old gentleman took his hat and staff and accompanied Mrs Baynes to her house. He put the question to Julia, whether she did not love him preferably to his son; and received for answer, that she would ever respect him as her father-in-law, but that her love had been long since bestowed on Mr Mark Cranstoun, who had declared that he intended to marry her. The disappointed man left the house in great sorrow, vowing wrath against the whole sex, whom he intended to renounce for ever. Some time afterwards, his son appeared before him, and told him that he intended to wed Julia Baynes, whom he had loved for a long period of time.

"If I had known that you were to marry sic a jilt," replied the father, in great fury, "you wad never hae been my partner; but I fancy things hae gane owre far for a return."

The young couple were married, and lived splendidly upon the half share of the profits of the business. The old gentleman was never altogether reconciled to Mrs Cranstoun, but he relented considerably, and latterly left them all his fortune. The moral of our story lies in *aprico*—When old age follows the practices, adopts the manners, and competes for the honours and pleasures of youth, it must lay its account with meeting defeat, discomfiture, and ridicule, as the reward of its folly.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE EARLY DAYS OF A FRIEND OF THE COVENANT.

I WAS born in the upper district and amidst the mountains of Dumfriesshire. My father, who died ere I had attained my second birthday, had seen better times ; but, having engaged in mercantile speculations, had been overreached or unfortunate, or both, and, during the latter years of his life, had carried a gun, kept an amazing pointer bitch, (of which my mother used to discourse largely,) and had ultimately married, in a fit of despondency. My mother, to whom he had long been affianced, was nearly connected with the Lairds of Clauchry, of which relationship she was vain ; and in all her trials, of which she had no ordinary share, she still retained somewhat of the feelings, as well as the appearance, of a gentlewoman. I remember, for example, a pair of high-heeled red Morocco shoes, overhung by the ample drapery of a quilted silk gown, in which habiliments she appeared on great occasions. Soon after my father's decease, my mother found it convenient and advisable to remove from the neighbourhood of the Clauchry to a cottage, or cottier as it was called, on her brother's farm, in the upper division of the parish of Closeburn.

Few situations could be better fitted for the purpose of a quiet and sequestered retreat. The scene is now as vividly before me as it was on that day when I last saw it, and felt that, in all probability, I viewed it for the last time. A snug kail-yard, surrounded by a full-grown bushy hedge of bourtree, saugh, and thorn, lay along the border of a small mountain stream, and hard by a thatched cottage, with a peat-stack at the one end and a small byre at the other. All this was nestled as it were in the bosom of mountains, which, to the north and the east in particular, presented a defence against all winds, and an outline of bold grandeur exceedingly impressive. The south and the west were more open—consequently the mid-day and afternoon sun reposed, with delightful and unobstructed radiance, on the green border of the stream, and the flowery foliage of the brae. And when the evening was calm, and the season suitable, the blue smoke winded upwards, and the birds sang delightfully amidst hazel, and oak, and birch, with a profusion of which the eastern bank was covered. It was here that I spent my early days ; and it was in this scene of mountain solitude, with no immediate associate but my mother, and for a few years of my existence my grandmother, that my "feelings and fortunes were formed and shaped out."

To be brought up amidst mountain scenery, apart and afar from the busy or polluted haunts of man ; to place one's little, bare foot, with its first movement, on the greensward, the brown heath, or in the pure stream ; to live in the retired glen, a perceptible part of all that lives and enjoys ; to feel the bracing air of freedom in every breeze ; to be possessed of elbow room from ridge to summit, from bank to brae—this is, indeed, the most delightful of all infant schools, and, above all, prepares the young and infant mind for enlarged conception and resolute daring.

"To sit on rocks ; to muse o'er flood and fell ;
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or seldom been ;

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold ;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean ;
This is not solitude—'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's God, and see his works unrolled."

Here, indeed, are the things that own not the dominion of man ! The everlasting hills, in their outlines of rock and heath ; the floods that leap in freedom, or rush in defiance from steep to steep, from gullet to pool, and from pool to plain ; the very tempest that overpowers ; and heaven, through which the fowls of air sail with supreme and unchallenged dominion : all these inspire the young heart with independence and self-reliance. True it is that the child, and even the boy, reflects not at all on the advantages of his situation—and this is the very reason that his whole imagination and heart are under their influence. He that is ever arresting and analyzing the current of his thoughts, will seldom think correctly ; and he who examines with a microscopic eye the sources of beauty and sublimity, will seldom feel the full force and sway of such impressions. Early and lasting friendships are the fruit of accident, rather than of calculation—of feeling, rather than of reflection ; and the circumstances of scenery and habit, which modify the child, and give a bent, a bias, and a character to the after-life, pass all unestimated in regard to such tendency at the time. The bulrush is not less unconscious of the marsh which modifies its growth, or the wall-flower of the decay to which it clings, and by which alone its nature and growth would be most advantageously marked and perfected, than is the mountain child of that moral as well as physical development, which such peculiar circumstances are calculated to effect. If, through all the vicissitudes and trials of my past life, I have ever retained a spirit of independence, a spirit which has not, as the sequel (which I may yet give) will evince, proved at all times advantageous to my worldly advancement—if such has been the case, I owe it, in a great measure, to the impression which the home of my youth was calculated to make.

My mother had originally received a better education than in those days was customary with individuals of her class ; and, in addition to this advantage, she had long acted as housekeeper to an unmarried brother, the minister of a parish in Galloway. In this situation, she had access to a large and well-chosen library ; and at leisure intervals had improved the opportunity thus presented. She was quite familiar with Young, and Pope, and Dryden, as well as with Tate's translation of Ovid's epistles. These latter, in particular, she used to repeat to me during the winter evenings, with a tone of plaintiveness, which I felt at the time, and the impression of which can never be obliterated. From these early associations and impressions, I am enabled to deduce a taste for poetry, which, while it has served to beguile many an otherwise unsupportable sorrow, has largely contributed to the actual enjoyments of life. There are, indeed, moments of sadness and of joy, to which poetry can bring neither alleviation nor zest ; but these, when compared with the more softened shadings, are but rare ; and when the intensity of grief or of delight have yielded, or are in the act of yielding, to time or reflection—it is then, in the

gloaming or the twilight, as darkness passes into light, or light into darkness, that the soothing and softening notes of poesy come over the soul like the blessed south.

In religion, or rather in politics—in as far, at least, as they are interwoven with and inseparable from the Presbyterian faith—my mother was a staunch Covenanter. Nor was it at all surprising that one whose forefathers had suffered so severely in defence of the Covenant, and in opposition to oppression, should imbibe their sentiments. Her maternal grandfather had suffered at the Gallowlee; and her grandmother, who refused to give information to Clavers respecting the retreat of her husband, had her new-born babe plucked from her breast, dashed upon the floor, and the very bed, from which, to rescue her babe, she had sprung, pierced and perforated in a thousand places by the swords of the ruffians. Whilst this tragedy was enacting within doors, and in what, in these simple times, was denominated the *chaumer*, her eldest son, a boy of about twelve years of age, was arrested, and because he would not, or in all probability could not, disclose his father's retreat, he was blindfolded, tied to a tree, and taught to expect that every ball which he heard whizzing past his ear was aimed at his head. The boy was left bound; and, upon his being released by a menial, it was discovered that his reason had fled—and for ever! He died a few years afterwards, being known in the neighbourhood by the name of the Martyred Innocent! I have often looked at the bloody-stone, (for such stains are well known to be like those upon Lady Macbeth's hand, indelible,) where fell, after being perforated by a brace of bullets, Daniel M'Michael, a faithful witness to the truth, whose tomb, with its primitive and expressive inscription, is still to be seen in the churchyard of Durisdeer. Grierson of Lag made a conspicuous figure in the parish of Closeburn in particular; nor did my mother neglect to point out to me the rined tower and the waste domain around it, which bespoke, according to her creed, the curse of God upon the seed of the persecutor. His elegy—some-what lengthy and dull—I could once repeat. I can now only recall the striking lines where the Devil is introduced as lamenting over the death of his faithful and unflinching ally:—

“What fatal news is this I hear?—
On earth who shall my standard bear?—
For Lag, who was my champion brave,
Is dead, and now laid in his grave.”

“The want of him is a great grief—
He was my manager-in-chief,
Who sought my kingdom to improve;
And to my laws he had great love,” &c.

And so on, through at least two hundred lines, composing a pamphlet, hawked about, in my younger days, in every huckster's basket, and sold in thousands to the peasantry of Dumfriesshire and Galloway, at the price of one penny. Whilst, however, the storm of evil passions raged with such fury in what was termed the western districts in particular, the poor, shelterless, and persecuted Covenanter was not altogether destitute of help or comfort. According to his own apprehension, at least, his Maker was on his side; his prayers offered up on the mountain and in the cave, were heard and answered; and a watchful Providence often interfered, miraculously, both to punish his oppressors, and warn him against the approach of danger. In evidence of this, my mother was wont, amongst many others, to quote the following instances, respecting which she herself entertained no doubt whatever—instances which, having never before been committed to paper, have at least the recommendation of novelty in their favour.

One of the chief rendezvous of the Covenant, was Auchincairn, in the eastern district of Closeburn. To this friendly, but, on that account, suspected roof, did the poor wanderer of the mist, the glen, and the mountain,

repair, at dead of night, to obtain what was barely necessary for the support of nature. Grierson of Lag was not ignorant of the fact, and, accordingly, by a sudden movement, was often found surrounding the steading with men and horses before daybreak; yet, prompt and well arranged as his measures were, they were never successful. The objects of his search uniformly escaped before the search was made. And this singular good fortune was owing, according to my authority, to the following circumstance. On the night previous to such an unwelcome visit, a little bird, of a peculiar feather and note, such as are not to be found in this country, came, and perching upon the topmost branch of the old ash tree in the corner of the garden, poured forth its notes of friendly intimation. To these, the poor skulking friend of the Covenant listened, by these he was warned, lifted his eyes and his feet to the mountain, and was safe.

The curate of Closeburn was eminently active in distressing his flock. He was one of those Aberdeen divines whom the wisdom of the Glasgow council had placed in the three hundred pulpits vacated in consequence of a drunken and absurd decree. As his church was deserted, he had had recourse to compulsory measures to enforce attendance, and had actually dragged servants and children, in carts and hurdles, to hear his spiritual and edifying addresses; whilst, on the other hand, his spies and emissaries were busied in giving information against such masters and parents as fled from his grasp, or resisted it. He had even gone so far, under the countenance and sanction of the infamous Lauderdale, as to forbid Christian burial in every case where there was no attendance on his ministry. Such was the character, and such the conduct, of the man against whom the prayers of a private meeting of the friends of Presbytery were earnestly directed, on the following occasion. The eldest son of the guidman of Auchincairn had paid the debt of nature, and behoved to be buried with his fathers in the churchyard of the parish. To this, from the well-known character both of curate and father, it was anticipated that resistance would be made. Against this resistance, however, measures were taken of a somewhat decided character. The body was to be borne to the churchyard by men in arms, whilst a part of the attendants were to remain at home, for the purpose of addressing their Maker in united prayer and supplication. Thus, doubly armed and prepared, the funeral advanced towards the church and manse. Meanwhile, the prayer and supplication were warm, and almost expository, that *His* arm might be stretched forth in behalf of his own covenanted servants. A poor idiot, who had not been judged a proper person to join in this service, was heard to approach, and, after listening with great seeming attention to the strain of the petitions which were made, he, at length, unable to contain himself any longer, was heard to exclaim—“Haud at him, sirs, haud at him—he's just at the pit brow!” Surprising as it may appear, and incredulous as some may be, there is sufficient evidence to prove, that, just about the time when this prediction was uttered, the curate of Closeburn, whilst endeavouring to head and hurry on a party of the military, suddenly dropped down and expired.

Is it then matter of surprise, that, with my mother's milk, I imbibed a strong aversion to all manner of oppression, and that, in the broadest and best sense of the word, I became “a Whig?” To the mountain, then, and the flood, I owe my spirit of independence—that shelly-coat covering against which many arrows have been directed; to my mother, and her Cameronian and political bias, I owe my detestation of oppression—in other words, my political creed—together with my poetical leanings. But to my venerated grandmother, in particular, I am indebted for my early acquaintance with the whole history and economy of the spiritual

kingdoms, divided, as they are, into bogle, ghost, and fairy-land.

I shall probably be regarded as an enthusiast whose feelings no future evidence can reclaim from early impressions, when I express my regret that the dreams of my infancy and boyhood have fled—those dreams of dark and bright agency, which shall probably never again return to agitate and interest—those dreams which charmed me in the midst of a spiritual world, and taught me to consider mere matter as only the visible and tangible instrument through which spirit was constantly acting—those dreams which appear as the shadow and reflection of sacred intimation, and which serve to guard the young heart, in particular, from the cold and revolting tenets of materialism. From the malevolence of him who walks and who works in darkness—who goes about like a roaring lion, (but, in our climate and country, more frequently like a bull dog, or a nondescript bogle,) seeking whom he may terrify—I was taught to fly into the protecting arms of the omnipotent Jehovah; that no class of beings could break loose upon another, without his high permission; that the Evil One, under whatever disguise or shape he might appear, was still restrained and overmastered by the source of all good and of all safety; whilst, with the green-coated fairy, the laborious brownie, and the nocturnal hearth-bairn, I almost desired to live upon more intimate and friendly terms!

How poor, comparatively speaking, are the incidents, how uninteresting is the machinery, of a modern fictitious narrative!—sudden and unlooked for reappearances of those who were thought to be dead, discoveries of substituted births, with various chances and misnomers—“antres vast, and deserts wild!” One good, tall, stalking ghost, with its compressed lips and pointed fingers, with its glazed eye and measured step, is worth them all! Oh, for a real “*white lady*” under the twilight of the year seventeen hundred and forty! When the elegant Greek or warlike Roman walked abroad or dined at home, he was surrounded by all the influences of an interesting and captivating mythology—by nymphs of the oak, of the mountain, and of the spring—by the Lares and Penates of his fireside and gateway—by the genius, the Ceres and the Bacchus, of his banquet. When our forefathers contended for religious and civil liberty on the mountain—when they prayed for it in the glen, and in the silent darkness of the damp and cheerless cave—they were surrounded, not by material images, but by popular conceptions. The tempter was still in the wilderness, with his suggestions and his promises; and there, too, was the good angel, to warn and to comfort, to strengthen and to cheer. The very fowls of heaven bore on their wing and in their note a message of warning or a voice of comforting; and when the sound of psalms commingled with the swelling rush of the cascade, there were often heard, as it were, the harping of angels, the commingling of heavenly with earthly melody. All this was elevating and comforting precisely in proportion to the belief by which it was supported; and it may fairly be questioned, whether such men as Peden and Cameron would have maintained the struggle with so much nerve and resolution, if the sun of their faith had not been surrounded by a halo; if the noonday of the Gospel had not shaded away imperceptibly into the twilight of superstition. In fact, superstition, in its softer and milder modifications, seems to form a kind of barrier or fence around the “sacred territory;” and it seldom if ever fails to happen that, when the outworks are driven in, the citadel is in danger: when the good old woman has been completely disabused of her harmless fancies, she may then aspire to the faith and the religious comforts of the philosophy of Volney.

In confirmation of these observations, I may adduce the belief and life of my nearest relatives. To them—amidst all their superstitious impressions—religion, pure and unde-

filed, was still the main hold—the sheet anchor, staid and steadied by which they were enabled to bear up amidst the turmoils and tempests of life. To an intimate acquaintance with, and a frequent reading of the sacred volume, was added, under our humble roof, family prayer, both morning and evening—an exercise which was performed by mother and daughter alternately, and in a manner which, had I not actually thought them inspired, would have surprised me. Those who are unacquainted with the ancient doric of our devotional and intelligent peasantry, and with that musical accentuation or chant of which it is not only susceptible, but upon which it is, in a manner, constructed, can have but a very imperfect notion of family prayer, performed in the manner I refer to. Many there are who smile at that familiarity of address and homeliness of expression, which are generally made use of; but under that homely address there lies a sincerity and earnestness, a soothing, arousing, and penetrating eloquence, which neither in public nor in private prayer has ever been excelled. Again and again I have felt my breast swell and my eyes fill, whilst the prayer of a parent was presented at a throne of grace in words to the following purpose:—“Help him, good Lord!” (speaking in reference to myself)—“oh, help my puir, fatherless bairn, in the day of frowardness and in the hour of folly—in the season of forgetfulness and of unforeseen danger—in trial and in difficulty—in life and in death. Good Lord, for his sainted father’s sake, (who is now, we trust, with Thee,) for my puir sake, who am unworthy to ask the favour, and, far aboon and above a’, for thine own well beloved Son’s sake—do *Thou* be pleased to keep, counsel, and support my puir helpless wean, when mine eyes shall be closed, and my lips shall be shut, and my hands shall have ceased to labour. Thou that didst visit Hagar and her child in the thirsty wilderness—Thou that didst bring thy servant Joseph from the pit and the miry clay—Thou that didst carry thy beloved people Israel through a barren desert to a promised and a fruitful land—do Thou be a husband and a father to me and mine; and, oh, forbid that in adversity or in prosperity, by day or by night, in the solitude or in the city, we should ever forget thee!”

In an age when, amongst our peasantry in particular, family prayer is so extensively and mournfully neglected—when the farmer, the manufacturer, the mechanic, not to mention the more elevated orders, have ceased to obey the injunction laid upon all Presbyterian parents in baptism—it is refreshing to look back to the time when the taking of the book, as it was termed, returned as regularly as the rising and the setting of the sun—when the whole household convened together, morning and evening, to worship the God of their fathers. In public worship, as well as in private prayer, there is much of comforting and spiritual support. It is pleasing, as well as useful, to unite voice with voice, and heart with heart; it is consolatory, as well as comforting, to retire from the world to commune with one’s heart and be still; but it is not the less delightful and refreshing to unite in family prayer the charities and sympathies of life—to come to the throne of mercy and of pardon, in the attitude and capacity of parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife, master and servant, and to express, in the common confession, petition, and thanksgiving, our united feelings of sinfulness, resignation, and gratitude.

Milton paints beautifully the first impressions which death made upon Eve; and, sure I am, that, though conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, I remember the time when I was entirely ignorant of death. I had indeed been informed that I had a father, but as to any change which had been effected upon him by death, I was as ignorant as if I had been embowered, from my birth, amidst the ever-greens of Paradise. Everything around me appeared to be permanent and undying, almost unchanging. The sun set only to rise again; the moon waned, and then reappeared, reassured in strength and repaired in form; the stars, in

their courses, walked steadily and uniformly over my head ; the flowers faded and flourished ; the birds exchanged silence for song ; the domestic animals were all my acquaintances from the dawn of memory. To me, and to those associated with me, similar events happened : we ate, drank, went to sleep, and arose again, with the utmost regularity. I had, indeed, heard of death as of some inconceivable evil ; but, in my imagination, its operation had no figure. I had not even seen a dog die ; for my father's favourite Gipsy lived for nine years after his death—a cherished and respected pensioner. At last, however, the period arrived when the spell was to be broken for ever—when I was to be let into the secret of the house of corruption, and made acquainted with the change which death induces upon the human countenance.

My grandmother had attained a very advanced old age ; yet was she straight in person, and perfect in all her mental faculties. Her countenance, which I still see distinctly, was expressive of good will ; and the wrinkles on her brow served to add a kind of intellectual activity to a face naturally soft, and even comely. She had told me so many stories, given me so many good advices, initiated me so carefully in the elements of all learning, “the small and capital letters,” and, lastly, had so frequently interposed betwixt me and parental chastisement, that I bore her as much good will and kindly feeling as a boy of seven years could reasonably be expected to exhibit. True it is and of verity, that this kindly feeling was not incompatible with many acts of annoyance, for which I now take shame and express regret ; but these acts were anything but malevolent, being committed under the view of self-indulgence merely. It was, therefore, with infinite concern that I received the intelligence from my mother, that Grannie was, in all probability, on the point of leaving us, and for ever.

“Leaving us, and for ever,” sounded in my ears like a dream of the night, in which I had seen the stream which passed our door swell suddenly into a torrent, and the torrent into a flood, carrying me and everything around me, away in its waters. I felt unassured in regard to my condition, and was half disposed to believe that I was still asleep, and imagining horrors ! But when my mother told me that the disease which had for days confined my grandmother to bed would end in death—in other words, would place her alongside of my father's grave in the churchyard of Closeburn—I felt that I was not asleep, but awake to some dreadful reality, which was about to overtake us. From this period till within a few hours of her dissolution, I kept cautiously and carefully aloof from all intercourse with my grandmother—I felt as it were unwilling to renew an intercourse which was so certainly, and so soon, and so permanently to be interrupted ; so I betook myself to the hills, and to the pursuit of all manner of bees and butterflies. I would not, in fact, rest ; and, as I lay extended on my back amidst the heath, and marked the soft and filmy cloud swimming slowly along, “making the blue one white,” I thought of her who was dying, and of some holy and happy residence far beyond the utmost elevation of cloud, or sun, or sky. Again and again I have risen from such reveries to plunge myself headlong into the pool, or pursue with increased activity the winged insects which buzzed and flitted around me. Strange, indeed, are the impressions made upon our yet unstamped, unbiassed nature ; and could we in every instance recall them, their history would be so unlike our more recent experience, as to make us suspect our personal identity. I do not remember any more recent feeling which corresponded in character and degree with this, whose wayward and strange workings I am endeavouring to describe ; and yet in this case, and in all its accompaniments, I have as perfect a recollection of facts, and reverence of feeling, as if I were yet the child of seven, visited for the first time with tidings of death.

My grandmother's end drew nigh, and I was commanded,

or rather dragged, to her bedside. There I still see her lying, calm, but emaciated, in remarkably white sheets, and a head dress which seemed to speak of some approaching change. It was drawn closely over her brow, and covered the chin up to her lips. Nature had manifestly given up the contest ; and although her voice was scarcely audible, her reason evidently continued unclouded and entire. She spoke to me slowly and solemnly of religion, obedience to my mother, and being obliging to every one ; laid, by my mother's assistance, her hand upon my head, as I knelt at her bedside, and, in a few instants, had ceased to breathe. I lifted up my head, at my mother's bidding, and beheld a corpse. What I saw or what I felt, I can never express in words. I can only recollect that I sprung immediately, horror-struck, to my feet, rushed out at the door, made for the closest and thickest part of the brushwood of the adjoining brae, and, casting myself headlong into the midst of it, burst into tears. I wept, nay, roared aloud ; my grief and astonishment were intense, whilst they lasted, but they did not last long ; for, when I returned home about dusk, I found a small table spread over with a clean cloth, upon which was placed a bottle with spirits, a loaf of bread, and cheese cut into pretty large pieces ; around this table sat my mother, with two old women, from the nearest hamlet. They were talking, in a low but in a wonderfully cheerful tone, as I thought, and had evidently been partaking of refreshment. Being asked to join them, I did so ; but, ever and anon, the white sheet in the bed, which shaped itself out most fearfully into the human form, drew my attention, and excited something of the feeling which a ghost might have occasioned. I had ceased, in a great measure, to feel for my grandmother's death. I now felt the alarms and agitations of superstition. It was not because she had fled from us that I was agitated ; but because that, though dead, she still seemed present, in all the inconceivable mystery of a dead life !

The funeral called forth, from the adjoining glens and cottages, a respectable attendance ; and, at the same time, gave me an opportunity of partaking, unnoticed, of more refreshment than suited the occasion or my years ; in fact, I became little less than intoxicated, and was exceedingly surprised at finding myself, towards evening, in the midst of the same bush where I had experienced my paroxysm of grief, singing aloud, in all the exultation of exhilarated spirits. Such is infancy and boyhood—

“The tear forgot, as soon as shed.”

I returned, however, home thoughtful and sad, and never, but once, thought the house so deserted and solitary as during that evening.

My mother was not a Cameronian by communion, but she was in fact one in spirit. This spirit she had by inheritance, and it was kept alive by an occasional visit from “Fairly.” This redoubted champion of the Covenant drew me one day towards him, and, placing me betwixt his knees, proceeded to question me how I would like to be a minister ; and, as I preserved silence, he proceeded to explain that he did not mean a parish minister, with a manse, and glebe, and stipend, but a poor Cameronian hill-preacher like himself. As he uttered these last words, I looked up, and saw before me an austere countenance, and a thread-bare black coat hung loosely over what is termed a hunch-back. I had often heard Fairly mentioned, not only with respect, but enthusiasm, and had already identified him and his followers with the “guid auld persecuted folks” of whom I had heard so much. Yet, there was something so strange, not to say forbidding, in Fairly's appearance, that I hesitated to give my consent, and continued silent ; whereupon Fairly rose to depart, observing to my mother, that “my time was not come yet.” I did not then fully comprehend the meaning of this expression, nor do I perhaps now, but it passed over my heart like an awakening breeze over the strings of an Æolian harp. I immedi-

ately sprung forward, and catching Fairly by the skirt of his coat, exclaimed—

“Oh, stay, sir!—dinna gang and leave us, and I will do anything ye like.”

“But then mind, my wee man,” continued Fairly, in return, “mind that, if ye join us, ye will have neither house nor hame, and will often be cauld and hungry, without a bed to lie on.”

“I dinna care,” was my uncouth, but resolute response.

“There’s mair metal in that callant than ye’re aware o’,” rejoined Fairly, addressing himself to my mother, and looking all the while most affectionately into my countenance. “Here, my little fellow, here’s a penny for ye, to buy a *char-itcher*; and, gin ye leeve to be a man, ye’ll aiblins be honoured wi’ upholdin’ the doctrines which it contains, on the mountain and in the glen, when my auld banes are mixed wi’ the clods.”

I looked again at Fairly as he pronounced these words, and, had an angel descended from heaven, in all the radiance and benignity of undimmed glory, such a presence would not have impressed me more deeply with feelings of love, veneration, and esteem.

This colloquy, short as it was, exercised considerable influence over my future life.

I cannot suppose anything more imposing, and better calculated to excite the imagination, than the meetings of these Cameronians or hill men. They are still vividly under my view: the precipitous and green hills of Durisdeer on each side—the tent adjoining to the pure mountain stream beneath—the communion table, stretching away in double rows from the tent towards the acclivity—the vast multitude in one wide amphitheatre around and above—the spring gushing solemnly and copiously from the rock, as from that of Meribah, for the refreshment of the people—the still or whispering silence, when Fairly appeared, with the Bible under his arm, without gown, or band, or any other clerical badge of distinction—the tent-ladder, ascended by the bald-headed and venerable old man, and his almost divine regard of benevolence, cast abroad upon a countless multitude—his earnestness in prayer, his plain and colloquial style of address, the deep and pious attention paid to him, from the plaided old women at the front of the tent, to the gaily dressed lad and lass on the extremity of the ground—his descent, and the communion service—his solemn and powerful consecration prayer, over which the passing cloud seemed to hover, and the sheep on the hill-side to forego, for a time, their pasture—his bald head, (like a bare rock encompassed with furze,) slightly fringed with grey hairs, remaining uncovered under the plashing of a descending torrent, and his right hand thrust upward, in holy indignation, against the proffered umbrella:—all this I see under the alternating splendours and darkenings, lights and shadows, of a sultry summer’s day. The thunder is heard in its awful sublimity; and, whilst the hearts of man and of beast are quaking around and above, Fairly’s voice is louder and more confirmed, his countenance is brighter, and his eye more assured, and steadfastly fixed on the muttering heaven. “Thou, O Lord, art ever near us, but we perceive Thee not; Thou speakest from Zion, and in a still small voice, but it is drowned in the world’s murmurings. Then thou comest forth as now, in Thy throne of darkness, and encompasseth Thy Sinai with thunderings and lightnings, and then it is, that, like silly and timid sheep, who have strayed from their pasture, we stand afar off and tremble. *This* flash of Thy indignant majesty, which has now crossed these aged eyes, might, hadst Thou but so willed it, have dimmed them for ever; and this vast assemblage of sinful life might have been, in the twinkling of an eye, as the hosts of Assyria, or the inhabitants of Admah and Zeboim; but thou knowest, O Lord, that thou hast more work for me, and more mercy for them, and that the prayers of penitence which are now

knocking hard for entrance and answer, must have time and trial to prove their sincerity. So be it, good Lord!—for thine ire, that hath suddenly kindled, hath passed; and the sun of righteousness himself hath bid his own best image come forth from the cloud, to enliven our assembly.” In fact, the thunder-cloud had passed, and, under the strong relief of a renewed effulgence, was wrapping in its trailing ascent the summits of the more distant mountains.

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid:
My safety cometh from the Lord!”—

These were the notes which pealed in the after service of that memorable occasion, from, at least, ten thousand hearts. Nor is there any object in nature better calculated to call forth the most elevated sentiments of devotion, than such a simultaneous concordant union of voice and purpose, in praise of Him “who heaven and earth hath made.

“All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord!”—

So says the Divine Monitor; but what says modern Fashion and Refinement? Let them answer, in succession, for themselves. And first, then, in reference to Fashion. When examined and duly purged, she deposes that the time was, when men were not ashamed to praise their God “before His people all;” when they even rejoiced, with what tones they might, to unite their tributary stream of praise to that vast flood which rolled, in accumulated efficacy, towards the throne on high; when lord and lady, husbandman and mechanic, learned and unlearned, prince and people, sent forth their hearts, in their united voices, towards Him who is the God over all and the Saviour of all. She further deposes, that the venerated founders of our Presbyterian Church were wont to scare the curlew and the bittern of the mountain and the marsh, by their nightly songs of solemn and combined thanksgiving and praise; and that, with the view of securing a continuance of this delightful exercise, our Confession of Faith strictly enjoins us, providing, by the reading of “the line,” against cases of extreme ignorance or bodily infirmity; and yet, she avereth that, in defiance of law and practice, of reason and revelation, of good feeling and commonsense, hath it become unfashionable to be seen or to be heard praising God. It is vulgar and unseemly, it would appear, in the extreme, to modulate the voice or to compose the countenance into any form or expression which might imply an interest in the exercise of praise. The young Miss in her teens, whose tender and susceptible heart is as wax to impressions, is half betrayed into a spontaneous exhibition of devotional feeling; but she looks at the marble countenance and changeless aspect of Mamma, and is silent. The home-bred, unadulterated peasant would willingly persevere in a practice to which he has been accustomed from his first entrance at the church stile; but his superiors, from pew and gallery, discountenance his feelings, and indicate, by the carelessness, I had almost added the levity of their demeanour, that they are thinking of anything, of everything, but God’s praise; whilst the voices of the hired precentor, and of a few old women and rustics, are heard uniting in suppressed and feeble symphony. Nay, there is a case still more revolting than any which has been hitherto denounced—that, namely, of our young probationers and ministers, who, in many instances, refuse, even in the pulpit, that example which, with their last breath, they were, perhaps, employed in recommending. There they sit or stoop whilst the psalm is singing, busily employed in revising their M.S.; or in reviewing the congregation; in selecting and marking for emphasis the splendid passages; or in noting for observation whatever of interesting the dress or the countenances of the people may suggest. So much for *Fashion*; and now for the deposition of *Refinement* on the same subject.

Refinement has, indeed, much to answer for: she has brushed the coat threadbare; she has wiredrawn the thread

till it can scarcely support its own weight; and, in no one instance, has her besetting sin been more conspicuous than in her intercommunications with our church psalmody. The old women, who, from the original establishment of Presbytery, have continued to occupy and grace our pulpit stairs, are oftentimes defective in point of sweetness and delicacy of voice—in fact, they do not sing, but croon; and, in some instances, they have even been known to outrun the precentor by several measures, and to return upon him a second time ere the conclusion of the line. What then?—they always croon in a low key; and, if they are gratified, their Maker pleased, and the congregation in general undisturbed, the principal parties are disposed of. There is, no doubt, something displeasing, to a refined ear, in the jarring concord of a rustic euphony, when, in full voice, of a sacramental Sabbath evening, they are inclined to hold on with irresistible swing. But what they want in harmony, they have in good will; what they lose in melody, they gain in the ringing echo of their voices from roof and ceiling. And, were it possible, without silencing the uninstructed, to gratify and encourage the refined and the disciplined, then were there at once a union and a unison of agreeables; but, as this object has never been effected, or even attempted, and as Refinement has at once laid aside all regard for the humble and untrained worshipper, and has set her stamp and seal upon a trained band of vocal performers, it becomes the duty of all rightly constituted minds to oppose, if they cannot stem the tide—to mark and stigmatize that as unbecoming and absurd, which the folly of the age would have us consider as improvement. It is of little moment, whether the office of psalm-singing be committed to a silent band, who surround, with their merry faces and tenor pipes, the precentor's seat, or be entrusted to separate parties, scattered through the congregation—still, so long as the *taught* alone are expected to sing, the original end of psalm-singing is lost sight of, the habits of a Presbyterian congregation are violated, and *manner* being preferred to *matter*—an attuned voice to a fervent spirit—a manifest violence is done to the feelings of the truly devout.

No two things are probably more distinct and separate in the reader's mind, than preaching and fishing; yet in mine they are closely associated.

And is not fishing or angling with the rod a most fascinating amusement? There is just enough of address required to admit and imply a gratifying admixture of self-approbation, and enough, at the same time, of chance or circumstance over which the fisher has no control, to keep expectation alive even during the most deplorable luck. Hence a real fisher is seldom found, from want of success merely, to relinquish his rod in disgust; but, with the spirit of a true hill man of the old school, he is patient in tribulation, rejoicing in hope. "*Meliora opera*" is written upon his countenance; and whilst mischance and misfortune haunt him, it may be, from stream to stream, or from pool to pool, he still looks down the glen, and along the river's course; he still regards in anxious expectation the alluring and more promising curl, the circulating and creamy froth, the suddenly broken and hesitating gullet, and the dark clayey bank, under which the water runs thick and the foam-bells figure bright and starry. He knows that one single hour of successful adventure, when the cloud has ascended and the shadow is deep, and the breeze comes upwards on the stream, and the whole finny race are in eager expectation of the approaching shower—that one single hour of this description will amply repay him for every discouragement and misfortune.

And who that has enjoyed this one little hour of success, would consider the purchase as dearly made? Is it with bait that you are angling?—and in the solitude of a mountain glen can you discover the stream of your hope, stretching away, like a blue pennant waving into the distance, and escaping

from view, behind some projecting angle of the hill? Your fishing-rod is tight and right, your line is in order, your hook penetrates your finger to the barb; other companions than the plover, the lark, and the water-wagtail, you have none. This is no hour for chirping grasshopper, or flaunting butterfly, or booming bee; the overshadowed and ruffled water receives your bait with a plump; and, ere it has travelled to the distance of six feet, it is nailed down to the leeward of a stone; you pull recklessly and fearlessly, and, flash after flash, and flap after flap, comes there in upon your hull the spotted and ponderous inmate of the flood! Or is it the fly with which you are plying the river's fuller and more seaward flow? The wide extent of streamy pool is before you and beyond your reach. Fathom after fathom goes reeling from your pirn; but still you are barely able to drop the far fly into the distant curl. "Habet!" he has it; and proudly does he bear himself in the plenitudes of strength, space, and freedom. Your line cuts and carves the water into all manner of squares, triangles, and parallelograms. Now he makes a few capers in the air, and shews you, as an opera dancer would do, his proportions and agility; now again, he is sulky and restive, and gives you to understand that the *vis inertiae* is strong within him. But fate is in all his operations, and his last convulsive effort makes the sand and the water commingle at the landing-place.

The resort of the fisher is amidst the retirements of what, and what alone, can be justly denominated undegraded nature. The furnace, and the manufactory, and the bleaching-green, and the tall, red, smoke-vomiting chimney, are his utter aversion. The village, the clachan, the city, he avoids; he flies from them as from something intolerably hostile to his hopes. He holds no voluntary intercourse with man, or with his petty and insignificant achievements. "He lifts his eyes to the hills," and his steps lie through retired glen, and winding vale, and smiling strath, up to the misty eminence and cairn-topped peak. He catches the first beams of the sun, not through the dim and disfiguring smoke of a city, but over the sparkling and diamonded mountain, above the unbroken and undulating line of the distant horizon. His conversation is with heaven—with the mist, and the cloud, and the sky; the great, the unmeasured, the incomprehensible are around him; and all the agitation and excitement to which his hopes and fears as a mere fisher subject him, cannot completely withdraw his soul from that character of sublimity by which the mountain solitude is so perceptibly impressed.

I shall never forget one day's sport. The morning was warm, and in fact somewhat sultry; and swarms of insects arose on my path. As every gullet was gushing with water, it behoved me to ascend, even beyond my former travel, to the purest streams or feeders, which run unseen, in general, among the hills. The clouds, as I hurried on my way, began to gather up into a dense and darkening awning. There was a slight and somewhat hesitating breeze on the hill-side—for I could see the heath and bracken bending under it; but it was scarcely perceptible beneath. This, however, I regretted the less, as the mountain torrent to which I had attached myself was too precipitous and streamy in its course to require the aids of wind and curl to forward the sport. Let the true fisher—for he only can appreciate the circumstances—say, what must have been my delight, my rapture, as I proceeded to prepare my rod, open out my line over the brink of a gullet, along which the water rushed like porter through the neck of a bottle, and at the lower extremity of which the froth tilted round and round in most inviting eddies. Here there were no springing of trouts to the surface, nor coursing of alarmed shoals beneath. The darkened heaven was reflected back by the darker water; and the torrent kept dashing, tumbling, and brawling along

under the impulse and agitation of a swiftly ebbing flood. I had hit upon that very critical shade, betwixt the high brown and soft blue colour, which every mountain angler knows well how to appreciate; and I felt as if every turn and entanglement of my line, formed a barrier betwixt me and paradise. The very first throw was successful, ere the bait had travelled twice round the eddy at the bottom of the gullet. When trouts, in such circumstances, take at all, they do so in good earnest. They are all on the outlook for food, and dash at the swiftly-descending bait with a freedom and good will which almost uniformly insures their capture. And here, for the benefit of bait fishers, it may be proper to mention that success depends not so much on the choosing and preparing of the worms—though these undoubtedly are important points—as in the throwing and drawing, or rather dragging of the line. In such mountain rapids, the trout always turn their heads to the current, and never gorge the bait till they have placed themselves lower down in the water; consequently, by pulling *downwards*, two manifest advantages are gained: the trout is often hooked without gorging, or even biting at all, and the current assists the fisher in landing his prize, which, in such circumstances, may be done in an instant, and at a single pull. But to return. My success on this occasion was altogether beyond precedent; at every turn and wheel of the winding torrent, I was sure to grace the green turf or sandy channel with another and another yellow-sided and brightly-spotted half-pounder. The very sheep, as they travelled along their mountain pathway, stopped and gazed down on the sport. The season was harvest, and the Lammas floods had brought up the bull or sea trouts. I had all along hoped that one or two stragglers might have reached my position; and this hope had animated every pull. It was not, however, till the day was well advanced, that I had the good fortune to succeed in hooking a large, powerful, active, and new-run "milter." In fisher weight, he might seem *five*, but in imperial, he would possibly not exceed two or three pounds. Immediately upon his feeling the steel, he plunged madly, flung himself into the air, dived again into the depths, and flounced about in the most active and courageous style imaginable. At last, taking the stream head somewhat suddenly, he shewed tail and fin above the surface of the water, brought his two extremities almost into contact, shot himself upwards like an arrow, and was off with the hook and a yard of line ere I had time to prepare against the danger; but, as unforeseen circumstances led to this catastrophe, occurrences equally unlooked for repaired the loss; for, in an instant, I secured the disengaged captive whilst floundering upon the sand, having, by his headlong precipitancy, fairly pitched himself out of his native element. There he lay, like a ship in the shallows, exhibiting scale and fin, and shoulder and spot, of the most fascinating hue; and, ever and anon, as the recollection of the fatal precipitancy seemed to return upon him, he cut a few capers and exhibited a few somersets, which contributed materially to insure his capture and increase my delight.

By this time I had ascended nearly to the source of the stream; and at every opening up of the glen, I could perceive a sensible diminution of the current. I was quite alone in the solitude; and my unwonted success had rendered me insensible to the escape of time. The glen terminated at last in a linn and scaur, beyond which it did not appear probable that trouts would ascend. Whilst I was engaged in the consideration of the objects around me, with a reference to my return home, I became all at once enveloped in mist and darkness. The mist was dense, and close, and suffocating, whilst the darkness increased every instant. I felt a difficulty in breathing, as if I had been shut up in an empty oven; my situation stared me at once in the face, and I took to my heels over the heath, in what I considered a homeward direction. Now that my ears were relieved from

the gurgling sound of the water, I could perceive, through the stillness of the air, that the thunder was behind me. I had been taught to consider thunder as the voice of the "Most High," when he speaks in his wrath, and felt my whole soul prostrated under the divine rebuke. Some passages of the 18th Psalm rushed on my remembrance; and, as the lightnings began to kindle, and the thunder to advance, I could hear myself, involuntarily, repeating—

"Up from his nostrils came a smoke,
And from his mouth there came
Devouring fire; and coals by it
Were turned into flame.

"The Lord God also in the heavens
Did thunder in his ire,
And there the Highest gave his voice—
Hail-stones and coals of fire."

Such was the subject of my meditation, as the muttering, and seemingly subterraneous thunder boomed and quavered behind me. At last, one broad and whizzing flash passed over, around, beneath, and I could almost imagine, *through me*. The clap followed instantly, and, by its deafening knell, drove me head foremost into the heathy moss. Had the earth now opened (as to Curtius of old) before me, I should certainly have dashed into the crater, in order to escape from that explosive omnipotence which seemed to overtake me. Peal after peal pitched, with a rending and tearing sound, upon the drum of my ear and the parapet of my brain; whilst the mist and the darkness were kindled up around me, into an oven glow. I could hear a strange rush upon the mountain, and along the glen, as if the Solway had overleaped all bounds, and was careering some thousand feet abreast over Criffel and Queensberry. Down it came at last, in a swirl and a roar, as if rocks, and cairns, and heath were commingled in its sweep. This terrible blast was only the immediate precursor of a hail storm—which, descending at first in separate and distinct pieces, as if the powers of darkness and uproar had been pitching marbles—came on at last with a rush, as if Satan himself had been dumriddling the elements. The water in the moss-hag rose up, and boiled and spluttered in the face of heaven, and a rock, underneath the hollow corner of which I had now crept on hands and knees, rattled all over, as if assailed by musketry. I lay now altogether invisible to mortal eye, amidst the mighty movements of the elements—a thing of nought, endeavouring to crawl into nonentity—a tiny percipient amidst the blind urgency of nature. I lay in all the prostration of a bruised and subdued spirit, praying fervently and loudly unto God that he might be pleased to cover me with his hand till his wrath was overpast. And, to my persuasion at the time, my prayers were not altogether inefficient: the storm softened—rain succeeded to hail, a pause followed the hurricane, and the thunder's voice had already travelled away over the brow of the onward mountain.

Whilst I was debating with myself whether it were safer, now that the night had fairly closed in upon the pathless moor, to remain all night in my present position, or to attempt once more my return home, I heard, all of a sudden, the sound of human voices, which the violence of the storm had prevented me from sooner perceiving. I scarcely knew whether I was more alarmed or comforted by this discovery. From my previous state of agitation, combined with my early and rooted belief in all manner of supernaturals, I was strongly disposed to terror; but the accents were so manifestly human, that, in spite of my apprehensions, they tended to cheer me. As I continued, therefore, to listen with mouth and ears, the voices became louder and louder, and more numerous, mixed and commingled as they appeared at last to be, with the tread and the plash of horses' feet. These demonstrations of an approaching cavalcade, naturally called upon me to narrow, as much and as speedily as possible, my circumference: in other

words, to creep, as it were, into my shell, by occupying the furthest extremity of the recess, to which I betook myself at first for shelter, and now for concealment. There I lay, like a limpet stuck to the rock, against which I could feel my heart beat with accelerated rapidity. In this situation, I could distinguish voices and expressions, and ultimately unravel the import of a conversation interlarded with oaths and similar ornamental flourishes. There was a proposal to halt, alight, and refresh in this sequestered situation. Such a proposal, as may readily be supposed, was to me anything but agreeable. Here was I, according to my reckoning, surrounded by a band of robbers, and liable every instant to detection. Fire arms were talked of, and preparations, offensive or defensive, were proposed. I could distinctly smell gunpowder. In the meantime, a fire was struck up at no great distance, under the glare of which I could distinguish horses heavily panniered, and strange looking countenances, congregating within fifty paces of my retreat. The shadow of the intervening corner of the rock covered me—otherwise immediate detection would have been inevitable. The thunder and lightnings, with all their terrors, were nothing to this. In the one case, I was placed at the immediate disposal of a merciful, as well as a mighty Being; but at present I ran every risk of falling into the hands of those whose counsels I had overheard and whose tender mercies were only cruelty. As I lay, rod, basket, and fish, crumpled up into a corner of contracted dimensions—all ear, however, and eye towards the light—I could mark the shadows of several individuals, who were manifestly engaged in the peaceful and ordinary process of eating and drinking; hands, arms, and flaggons projected in lengthened obscurity over the mass, and intimated, by the rapidity and character of their movements, that jaws were likewise in motion. The long pull, with the accompanying *smack*, were likewise audible; and it was manifest that the repast was not more substantial than the beverage was exhilarating—"Word follows word, from question answer flows." Dangers and contingencies—which, while the flame was kindling and the flaggon was filling, seemed to agitate and interest all—were now talked of as bugbears; and oaths of heavy and horrifying defiance were hurled into the ear of night, with many concomitant expressions of security and self-reliance. The night, though dark, had now become still and warm; and the ground which they occupied, like my own retreat, had been partially protected from the hail and the rain by the projecting rock. The stunted roots of burnt heath, or "birns," served them plentifully for fuel; and altogether their situation was not so uncomfortable as might have been expected. Still, however, their character, employment, and conversation, appeared to me a fearful mystery. One thing, however, was evident, that they conceived themselves as engaged in some illegal transactions. Their whole revel was tainted with treason and insubordination; kings and rulers were disposed of with little ceremony; and excise officers, in particular, were visited with anathemas not to be mentioned. At this critical moment, when the whole party seemed verging towards downright intoxication, a pistol bullet burst itself to atoms on the projecting corner of the rock; and the report which accompanied this demonstration was followed up by oaths of challenge and imprecation. The fire went out as if by magic, and an immediate rush to arms, accompanied by shots and clashing of lethal weapons, indicated a struggle for life.

"Stand and surrender, you smuggling scoundrels! or by all that is sacred, not one of you shall quit this spot in life!"

This salutation was answered by a renewed discharge of musketry; and the darkness, which was relieved by the momentary flash, became instantly more impenetrable than ever. Men evidently pursued men, and horses were held

by the bridle, or driven into speed as circumstances permitted. How it happened that I neither screamed, fainted, nor died outright, I am yet at a loss to determine. The darkness, however, was my covering; and even amidst the unknown horrors of the onset, I felt in some degree assured by the extinction of the fire. But this assurance was not of long continuance: the assailing party had evidently taken possession of the field; and, after a few questions of mutual recognition and congratulation, proceeded to secure their booty, which consisted of one horse, with a considerable assortment of barrels and panniers. This was done under the light of the rekindled fire, around which a repetition of the former festivities was immediately commenced. The fire, however, now flared full in my face, and led to my immediate detection. I was summoned to come forth, with the muzzle of a pistol placed within a few inches of my ear—an injunction which I was by no means prepared to resist. I rolled immediately outwards from under the rock, displaying my basket and rod, and screaming all the while heartily for mercy. At this critical moment, a horse was heard to approach, and a challenge was immediately sent through the darkness; every musket was levelled in the direction of the apprehended danger; when a voice, to which I was by no means a stranger, immediately restored matters to their former bearing.

"Now, what is the meaning o' a' this, my lads? And how come the King's servants to be sae ill lodged at this time o' night? He must be a shabby landlord that has naething better than the bare heath and the hard rock to accommodate his guests wi'."

"Oh, Fairly, my old man of the covenant," vociferated the leader of the party, "how come you to be keeping company with the whaup and the curlew at this time o' night? But a drink is shorter than a tale; fling the bridle ower the grey yad's shoulders, an' ca' her to the bent, till we mak ourselves better acquainted with this little natty gentleman, whom we have so opportunely encountered on the moor"—displaying, at the same time, a keg or small cask of the liquor referred to, and shaking it joyously, till it clunked again.

In an instant, Fairly was stationed by the side of the fire, with a can of Martin's brandy in his hands, and an expression of exceeding surprise on his countenance, as he perceived my mother's son, in full length, exhibited before him. I did not, however, use the ceremony of a formal recognition; but, rushing on his person, I clung to it with all the convulsive desperation of a person drowning. Matters were now adjusted by mutual recognitions and explanations; and I learned that I had been the unconscious spectator of a scuffle betwixt the "king's officers" and a "band of smugglers;" and that Fairly, who had been preaching and baptizing that day at Burnfoot, and was on his return towards Durisdeer, (where he was next day to officiate,) had heard and been attracted to the spot by the firing. In these times to which I refer, the Isle of Man formed a depot for illegal traffic. Tea, brandy, and tobacco, in particular, found their way from the Calf of Man to the Rinnis of Galloway, Richmaden, and the mouth of the Solway. From the latter depot, the said articles were smuggled, during night marches, into the interior, through such byways and mountain passes as were unfrequented or inaccessible. After suitable libations had been made, I was mounted betwixt a couple of panniers, and soon found myself in my own bed, some time before

"That hour o' night's black arch the keystone!"



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SCOTCH LAW.

"WELL, James, I'll tell ye what we'll do. We'll refer our claims to Emily herself, and let her decide between us, and that will end the matter at once and for ever; if she should prefer you, depend upon it, I will not cross your path in any way; if she should prefer me, I shall expect that you will not cross mine."

This, introduced by some preliminary conversation which we do not think it necessary to record, was said by a young man of the name of Whitford—to be afterwards more fully spoken of—to his friend, or at least acquaintance, James Bryson, also a young man, and of whom we shall likewise subsequently speak at more length.

"Oh, ho, friend!" replied the latter to this proposal, with a contemptuous sneer, "catch me there if you can. You must think me a confounded fool, indeed, Whitford, if you imagine I would trust my happiness, and I may say my fortune too, to one throw of the dice. No, no, Charlie—I mean to continue the game. You may do as you like. I know perfectly how far your sly, wheedling, hypocritical manner, and smooth tongue, have imposed upon Emily's good nature already, and that, on the footing on which you have contrived to place yourself with her, I should have but little chance if matters were brought at this moment to the crisis you propose. But I shall persevere, Whitford; and if I do not succeed in disabusing her of the good opinion she entertains of you, I shall know what and whom to blame for my want of success; and, mark me, Whitford," he added, with a fiendish ferocity of manner, "if Emily, after all, decide in your favour, hang me if I don't spoil some sport—that's all." And the speaker rode off—for both he and his acquaintance were mounted on the occasion of this meeting—without allowing Whitford time to make any reply.

We now proceed to say who the interlocutors were—a piece of information that may be conveyed in very short space. Charles Whitford was, at the period of our story, a young country practitioner in medicine and surgery, and a lad of great promise. He possessed talents of a very high order, was of excellent character and dispositions, and of manners that did even more for him than his skill, great as that was, by gaining him the good will and good opinion of all with whom he came in contact, either in the way of his profession or otherwise. The young surgeon was, in short, a general favourite, and was, in consequence, in a fair way of making a handsome living by his practice; but, at the moment of which we speak of him, he had just begun the world, and had little of its property beyond his case of lancets, and nothing whatever to depend upon but his character and abilities, his steady application to the discharge of his professional duties, industry, and perseverance. With these, however, he fearlessly commenced his career; and resolving that there should be nothing wanting on his own part, he felt confident in the result. To a young medical practitioner thus situated, nothing could be more advantageous than a matrimonial connection with some family of influence in the district in which he resided, where there should be a reasonable share of wealth, of respectability, and local influence; and such a piece of good fortune as this, the young surgeon was not unlikely to be blessed with.

In the neighbourhood of the village of —, in which he resided, there lived a gentleman of the name of Maxwell. He was a retired captain of the navy, and a man of considerable property and influence. Captain Maxwell was a widower, with an only child, Emily Maxwell, a lively, pretty, and interesting girl of nineteen; and at the house of her father, Whitford was a frequent visitor, both professionally and as a friend; for, in the former capacity, his presence was frequently required by the captain, whose health had suffered in foreign climes; but in both he was equally welcome. The course of events here was a perfectly natural one: the young surgeon was captivated with the elegant form, pleasing manners, cultivated mind, and gentle dispositions of Emily Maxwell; and she was no less taken with the qualities, both mental and personal, of the young practitioner; and an attachment, mutual, ardent, and sincere, was the consequence. But Whitford had not the field to himself; he was not to be permitted to carry off the prize undisputed. He had a rival, and this rival was James Bryson, the son of a neighbouring proprietor, who, at his death—for the latter was now dead several years—had left him considerable property; but it had suffered grievously in the hands of the son, who kept open house, night and day, after his father's decease, for all the idle and dissipated of his acquaintance who chose to avail themselves of his reckless hospitality, until he had almost literally nothing left to give them—a condition from which he would willingly have relieved himself, by obtaining the hand of Emily Maxwell, whose fortune, he calculated, would enable him to resume the course of dissipation which the exhaustion of means had interrupted.

Young Bryson, at this period, occupied a large mansion at the west end of the village in which Whitford resided. In his father's time, this house presented a highly respectable appearance. It was regularly overcast on the outside every year; and the ornamental grounds around it—its walks, plots of flowers, and shrubbery—were always kept in the most perfect order; and thus gave an air, not only of comfort but elegance, to the villa of Oakfield, as the house was called. But how different was its appearance in the possession of its new master! Everything within it and around it was allowed to go to decay. The shrubbery and flower-plots were neglected; the walks, once so trim and neat, were overrun with grass and weeds; and the house itself was disfigured by huge stains, imprinted by the dirty water from the roof, which, escaping in fifty places from the dilapidated gutters on the eaves, streamed down the walls, and left its traces in broad black lines—thus imparting to the mansion a peculiar air of discomfort and squalor. Yet, while money lasted, was there little correspondence between the exterior and interior of Oakfield House. The former was, as we have described it, all discomfort and dilapidation—the latter all riotous mirth and debauchery; groaning tables and oft-replenished wine baskets telling of the ruin that was going forward. Hundreds were spent in the inside of the house, but not one sixpence could be spared for the out.

At the precise period of our story, however, this revelry had ceased; and for the very good reason assigned—namely, the want of means to continue it; and in the midst of the

desolation which he himself had created, sat, stern and gloomy, the master of the by-gone revels, ruminating on the misery he had brought on himself, and how he might retrieve his fallen fortunes; and when he thought of the latter, he thought of Emily Maxwell.

Such was the rival of the young surgeon; and, had it not been for the worthlessness of his character, and the well known depravity of his habits, he might, perhaps, have been a formidable one; for he was accomplished, of a handsome person, and, when he chose, of very agreeable manners, though they were naturally rough and boisterous; but, as it was, he had little chance of superseding the former in the affections of a creature so mild and gentle as her—we cannot say whose hand—but whose fortune he sought.

The particular occasion and circumstances on and in which Bryson and Whitford met, when the conversation with which we opened our tale passed, was their coming accidentally in contact one day in a narrow by-road, by which Whitford was passing to visit a patient at some miles' distance, and Bryson was returning home from a fox-chase in which he had been a participator. Their meeting on this occasion was involuntary, as, indeed, were all their meetings, particularly on the part of Bryson, who avoided his rival, because he hated him. The former also avoided the latter when he could; but he did not do so from any dislike he entertained of him personally, but from a desire to escape the unpleasant feelings which the ferocity and brutality of Bryson, on such occasions, was so well calculated to excite.

Whitford was always a welcome visiter at Captain Maxwell's, though that gentleman did not feel altogether disposed to look on the young surgeon in the light of a probable son-in-law. He expected better things for his daughter; and certainly, in so far as regarded fortune, he had a right to do so; for Emily would bring her husband, whoever he might be, a considerable sum; and he expected, not unreasonably, that that husband should be at least as well provided as she was. In point of character, conduct, and dispositions, he would have had no objection to Whitford becoming the husband of his daughter. His want of fortune was the only desideratum, therefore; but it was to him one of so serious a nature, that he never admitted to himself for a moment the possibility of their ever being united. If these, however, were his sentiments regarding Whitford, those he entertained on the same question, in relation to Bryson, were of a still more hopeless character for the interests of that person. No advantages of fortune, on the part of the latter, would have induced him to bestow his daughter's hand on him; and, knowing him to be not only a bad but a ruined man, he would have shut his door altogether against the visits of the impoverished spendthrift, who was an almost daily caller at Spring Vale, the captain's residence, but from regard to the memory of his father, who was one of his oldest and most intimate friends.

Thus stood matters with the different *dramatis personæ* whom we have introduced to the reader, at the period when we would have him to take an interest in their proceedings.

Some time after the meeting between Whitford and Bryson, as recorded at the outset of our story, the former called one evening, as was his frequent custom, at Spring Vale—on this occasion, however, ostensibly to ascertain what relief Captain Maxwell had experienced from a certain medicine he had prescribed, but in reality to spend half an hour with Emily. It would be unfair to insinuate that the gallant officer's health was a matter of no interest to the young practitioner; but it will be a safe presumption that he acted under the influence of a double motive, although it must be confessed that his inquiries as to the effects of his prescription might have been very well delayed without

any injury to the patient, and might even have been deemed, by a captious marker of trifles, as altogether unnecessary. However this may have been, Whitford, on reaching Spring Vale, found, with some surprise, and no little satisfaction, for more reasons than one, that the Captain had got so much better that he had gone out to take an airing on horseback. Emily, therefore, he found alone—a circumstance, however, of rare occurrence, as she usually accompanied him when he went abroad, which was seldom, and was almost constantly by his side when at home. This was an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* which Whitford had rarely enjoyed; and it was one which he now suddenly resolved to avail himself of for bringing matters to a crisis with Emily, by having a certain question—one which he had never hinted at before—settled by her own lips. This was, whether Bryson or himself was the more acceptable suitor. Nay, he resolved to go a step further. He determined, if he found the preference in his own favour, at once to offer his hand to Emily, and to solicit her permission to ask her father's consent to their union. These were high resolves to be so suddenly formed; but they were executed to the letter; and to both the points at issue Whitford gradually obtained, from the blushing and ingenious girl, such replies as made him one of the happiest of men. She, however, warned him that he need entertain but little hope of succeeding with her father, whom she guessed, if she did not positively know, would object to the poverty of her lover.

"Nevertheless," replied Whitford to this discourager, in the matter of consulting her father, "I will try him. There is no saying what he may be brought to do," he added smiling, "when love pleads the cause."

Whitford now waited, with what sort of feelings we need not describe, the return of Captain Maxwell, that he might at once know the best and the worst he had to hope and to fear, by making the momentous proposal. The sound of horses' footsteps was soon after heard approaching. To the young lover they had, somehow or other, a most unusual sound. He had never been so affected by the tread of horses' feet before; their noise seemed to him on this occasion invested with a strange and mysterious interest. The captain appeared—for it was his pony's tramp that had been heard; and he also became the object of this odd and unusual feeling with which the young man was inspired. To the eyes of Whitford he had never before seemed so awful a personage as he did at this moment.

"Ha, Whitford, my lad, art there?" exclaimed the captain, dismounting, and immediately after taking the former, who had hastened to the door to meet him, by the hand. "Didn't miss the old boy much, I fancy, eh? Plenty of society at Spring Vale without him, you rogue!—Isn't that true?" And the captain chuckled, laughed, and looked very sly. "But where's the little jade—where's Emily?" he added—"she used always to meet me at the door."

Whitford could have explained the reason why she had departed from her usual custom on this occasion, and why she was absent; but he did not. He merely looked a little confused, stammered, and said, but in such a way as to be nearly unintelligible—"She's not far off, sir—I really can't say—she'll be here directly—she may be up stairs, perhaps."

"Why, man, what makes you look so glum to-day—eh, doctor?" said Captain Maxwell, who had not at first observed the confusion of his medical attendant, but who now (they had by this time entered the little sitting parlour in which the family spent the most of their time) perceived something unusual in the expression of his countenance, which was, indeed, sufficiently indicative of the excessive mental anxiety and perturbation of its owner. "Anything wrong, man?—anything wrong? Have you despatched

some poor soul before his time in the way of your profession? or have you swallowed one of your own pills? I am told there is nothing you doctors dread so much as that. But where is Emily all this time?" continued the impetuous and garrulous old man; and now approaching the bell-pull, to summon either herself or some one who could give him some intelligence of her.

Whitford felt this movement, simple as it was, to be a decisive one, as it would, if executed, inevitably lead to some such intrusion as would, in all probability, deprive him of the present opportunity; and such a one, he knew, he might not readily find again, of making the important communication on which all his hopes of happiness rested. Feeling this, he rushed towards the captain, seized his arm, and besought him to listen to him for a moment before he rang, as he had something of importance to communicate to him. The captain looked surprised; but, without saying anything, confronted his young friend, and, with an expression of intense curiosity, awaited the promised communication. This, however, was not so readily forthcoming. Although he had thus secured the attention of his auditor, the young man, in the confusion of the moment, did not know precisely how or where to begin; and he stood for some time looking in the captain's face, blushing and simpering, and seemingly unable to find the use of his tongue.

"Why don't you speak, man?" exclaimed Mr Maxwell, becoming impatient at the hesitation of Whitford. "What have you got to say?"

The captain's irritation, thus expressed, had the effect of instantly inspiring the young surgeon with the necessary words and ideas; and he now distinctly laid down his matrimonial project before Emily's father, and sought his consent. It was some moments before the latter made any reply; but it was evident enough, from the expression of his countenance, that the proposal was by no means agreeable to him. At length, however, he said, and with more of good nature than might have been expected—

"Charles, my man, as to character, conduct, and personal qualities, I would have no objection to you as a son-in-law—none in the world. But what have you wherewith to support a wife? You are but young, and have the world all to begin yet. What, man, again I say, have you wherewith to support a wife?"

"Nothing, sir, I confess it," replied Whitford, "but this," he said, producing his lancet-case, "some skill in my profession, and a determination to use my best endeavours to deserve success."

"Honestly said, my lad!" exclaimed Captain Maxwell, and at the same time seizing the young man's hand with eager cordiality—"honestly and manfully said. Emily is yours, Whitford—she is yours; take her and welcome. With that spirit and these dispositions, you cannot but succeed, and I already know how well you are calculated in other respects to secure my girl's happiness."

Tears of joy and rapture started into the eyes of the happy Whitford, who now, in turn, seized the hand of Mr Maxwell, with the view of expressing the deep gratitude he felt for his generous conduct; but his emotion checked his utterance, and he could do no more than raise the hand he held to his lips; which, having done, he rushed out of the apartment in a delirium of joy, flew up stairs to Emily's apartment, where he knew she at the moment was, exclaiming madly, as he ascended the steps by half dozens at a time—

"He has consented, Emily—he has consented!—you are mine, you are mine—mine for ever!" And he burst into the room, and clasped its fair inmate in his arms, in an ecstasy of happiness.

Unaware of what had taken place, Bryson, on the following day, paid one of his usual visits at Spring Vale, an opportunity of which Captain Maxwell availed himself to

put an end to the hopes which he suspected Bryson entertained of obtaining the hand of his daughter, although the latter had never openly avowed his views on the subject, by informing him, merely as a piece of intelligence, of Emily's intended marriage; and this he did in the blunt manner peculiar to him.

"Well, James," he said, "we're going to have a wedding some of these days."

"A wedding!" exclaimed Bryson, turning pale at the announcement. "Indeed! Who are the happy parties, captain?"

"Why, Emily and the young doctor. They're going to buckle to; and I think, after all, Emily might have done worse."

"Oh, doubtless, doubtless," replied Bryson, sneeringly, but with an agitation of manner which he could not conceal. But his agitation did not so much resemble that of a disappointed lover as of a balked gamester, who sees his last stake swept from the board.

On receiving this intelligence, so fatal to his hopes, and feeling that the distraction of his mind would not permit of his conducting himself with the composure he wished to assume, Bryson, affecting an engagement elsewhere, hurried out of the house; when, just as he was turning the corner of the avenue which conducted to it from the highway, he encountered Whitford.

"So," he said, pale with suppressed passion, and addressing the latter, "you have gained your point, I find. Your cant and hypocrisy have carried the day; but, curse me, Whitford," he added, with clenched teeth, "if I don't be revenged of you for this!" And he again hurried off, without giving his successful rival time to make any reply.

Whatever revenge, however, Bryson might have contemplated against Whitford in this moment of irritation, or whatever might be the bitterness of his feelings on the occasion, a little subsequent reflection seemed to have totally altered his dispositions towards the former, substituting charity for unkindness, and reconciling him to what could not be helped. Reflection, in short, appeared to have shewn Bryson the unreasonableness and unjustness of his conduct towards his more fortunate rival, and to have inspired him with a generous desire to atone for that conduct by concession and contrition.

About a week after the occurrence of the circumstance just related, Whitford was surprised one forenoon by a call from Bryson. There was a smile on his face, and a frankness and cordiality in his manner—expressions of feelings very unusual to him, and altogether extraordinary in the present case. Seizing Whitford by the hand with a cordial grasp—

"Charles," he said, "shall you and I be friends? I have been thinking better of the matter between us, and have called on you for the especial purpose of accomplishing this, if it can be done. My feelings towards you, and my consequent treatment of you, though ungracious, you will allow were natural. You were my rival for the affections of a delightful girl; but we are rivals no longer. You have secured the prize; and, this being the case, I consider the matter entirely over as concerns me, and earnestly desire that we may exchange the character of rivals for that of friends. I wish you joy, Charles, and many years of happiness."

Confounded by the singularity of such an address as this from Bryson, and, indeed, at the circumstance altogether, it was some seconds before Whitford could make any reply. At length, his kind and unsuspecting nature prevailing, he returned the friendly grasp of his visiter, and expressed the sincere pleasure he felt at this extinction of all unpleasant feelings between them.

"Then, to convince me of your sincerity, Whitford, in this reconciliation," said Bryson, "will you come and dine with me to-morrow and let us solder this small affair of ours by

an evening of good fellowship? There will be nobody there but a friend or two."

Of this kindly invitation, made with so generous a purpose, Whitford readily accepted; and, after many expressions of good will, the new-made friends parted.

The position of the young surgeon altogether was now a very enviable one. He enjoyed the good opinion and esteem of all who knew him; his business was rapidly increasing; he had secured the woman of his choice, and with her at once an independency and the extensive local influence of her father. His prospects, in short, were of the brightest kind. Happiness in some of its most agreeable forms presented itself on all sides, leaving him nothing to wish for or desire.

In the meantime, matters were fast drawing towards the "consummation devoutly to be wished" in all such cases as that of Emily Maxwell and Charles Whitford.

The day was fixed for their marriage, the bridal garments were already in progress, and the lapse of a couple of weeks was all that was wanting to realize the prospective happiness of the betrothed pair. Long before this time could pass away, however, the day of Bryson's proposed entertainment arrived; and, punctual to his engagement, Whitford presented himself at the appointed hour at Oakfield House, and was cordially welcomed by its owner.

There were only three persons there, besides Bryson and Whitford, to partake of the former's hospitality on this occasion. These were two ladies and a gentleman—total strangers to Whitford. The former were introduced to the Doctor, by their host, as Miss Harriet Williamson and Miss Rachael Carfrae; the gentleman as a Mr Irvine. The ladies were both splendidly attired—Whitford thought, however, rather gaudily than elegantly—but there was a something in the manner and language of both that seemed greatly at variance with the richness of their apparel. In the former, there was a bold and indecorous levity, and in the latter a coarseness and vulgarity that both surprised and disgusted Whitford. Nor did he seem more to approve of in the manners of the gentleman; for he also presented a similar contradiction with appearances. Nevertheless, the little party gradually became a very merry one. The bottle circulated freely; and, in the general feeling of happiness that apparently prevailed, the repulsive manners of the two fair guests—we speak by courtesy—was either forgotten or overlooked by Whitford, and he got into exuberant spirits. These being seemingly shared in by the other guests, the mirth of the little party gradually became somewhat noisy and boisterous. Songs were sung, stories were told, and practical jokes of various kinds were occasionally added to give a zest to the entertainment; and, in all this, Whitford—who was naturally of a lively and humorous disposition, and who was, moreover, at this particular moment, as the reader may conceive, under the influence of feelings eminently calculated to elevate his spirits—played a conspicuous part.

At length, when the hilarity of the party seemed to have attained its height, an amusing idea occurred to their landlord, who immediately submitted it to the general opinion.

"I say, my friends," he bawled out from the head of the table, "I have already told you, I believe, that our worthy and excellent friend, the doctor here, is about to be married. Now, my friends, I propose that we should, in the first place, drink his health, and happiness to him; and thereafter, as he has never had, I presume, any practice in acting the part of bridegroom, that he should rehearse the character, in order to enable him to go through with it creditably when he comes to perform it in earnest; and Miss Williamson will have no objection, I daresay, for the joke's sake—nay, the practice may be useful to herself"—(this was said with a sly look)—"to act the part of bride; and I will put the necessary questions to the betrothed couple."

The idea was received with general approbation; it was

an amusing one, and promised some entertainment, and as Miss Williamson expressed perfect readiness to perform her part, no time was lost in acting on it. In an instant, the party leapt from their chairs, and the blushing bride was conducted by their host to the middle of the floor. With a good deal of pulling and hauling by Bryson and the other gentleman, Whitford was also dragged, though, after all, not very reluctantly, into the middle of the floor, and placed beside his betrothed.

"Do you," said Bryson, now addressing Whitford, with a mock gravity of manner and tone, as if performing the part of a clergyman or person of authority—for the form differed from the regular and established one—"accept and acknowledge this lady, in the presence of these witnesses, to be your wife?"

"I do, sir," replied Whitford, bowing also gravely, to humour the joke.

"And do you, madam," again said Bryson, but now turning to the lady, "accept of and acknowledge this gentleman to be your husband?" The lady replied in the affirmative, with a low courtesy.

The ceremony concluded, Bryson took the mock bridegroom by the hand, wished him joy, and complimented him on the extreme propriety with which he had acted his part. Having done the same by the bride, the health of the young couple was proposed and drank with acclamation.

The party having now resumed their seats, the song and the bottle again went their rounds, until the arrival of the "wee short hour ayont the twal" gave warning that it was time to depart. The hint was taken; the merry little party broke up, and retired from the scene of festivity.

Willing to cultivate the good understanding which now subsisted between himself and Bryson, and to shew his sense of the latter's magnanimity, Whitford called upon him on the following day, but was informed that he had gone to Edinburgh with the two ladies—to which place he now learnt they belonged—having carried them away in his own gig. Whitford on this occasion asked the serving man—for Bryson still had such a remnant of his former greatness about him—when his master would return. The man could not tell.

Two days afterwards, Whitford again called, but still with the same success. He repeated his calls at intervals of two or three days for nearly a fortnight after, but still Bryson was absent. On the last occasion of his being at Oakfield, Whitford said, laughingly, to the domestic already alluded to—

"I begin to suspect Mr Bryson has made off with one of these fair ladies, John. Sly rogue! he has stolen a march on us. Don't you begin to think so?" The man shook his head and smiled significantly, or it might, perhaps, be more properly called mysteriously, but made no reply. "Why," said Whitford, observing the peculiar intelligence of his looks—"wherefore not? By the way," he abruptly added, without waiting for any reply to his remark, "who were they, these ladies, John?"

It was the first time he had ever thought of making the inquiry.

"They're gay queer anes, I'm thinkin," replied John; "but I ken naething about them, sir, and yet that's as muckle as I wish to ken."

Whitford was struck with the singularity of the answer; implying, as it did, that there was something in the character of the ladies in question, that savoured of the discreditable; but, feeling that there would be an indelicacy and impropriety in questioning a servant further about the friends or acquaintances of his master, Whitford, without saying more, turned on his heel and left the house.

Although his sense of propriety, however, had prevented the latter from pursuing his inquiries regarding his friend's late guests, it did not hinder him from thinking of the

matter, nor from being a good deal surprised and perplexed by the nature of even the little information he had obtained. But this, and all other thoughts of a similarly irrelevant character, were quickly banished from the mind of the happy bridegroom by the near approach of the day of his marriage; for time had worn away, and this was now at hand.

Although Whitford had no idea whatever of the present place of location of his quondam rival, we are not in the same state of ignorance on this subject. We know that he was residing in hired lodgings in Edinburgh; and if at this instant we look in upon him, to see what he is about, we shall find him in the act of reading the following letter which has just been put into his hands. It was dated from Spring Vale.

"HONOURED SIR,—Matters are going on here bravely. Every room in the house is filled with mantua-makers and wedding things, and the doctor is here every day, sometimes three times a-day, and he and Miss Emily are constantly walking alone together, both of them, in the garden; but I have not yet been able to learn the precise day on which the marriage takes place, but shall not fail to find it out in time to give you sufficient warning, and will write off to you directly.—Yours to command,

"THOMAS HORNER."

Such was the letter which Bryson was in the act of perusing at the moment we again introduce him to the reader; and we may as well say at once who was the writer. That person was Captain Maxwell's valet, whom Bryson had bribed to give him the information which he now in part communicated, and in part promised. On completing the perusal of the document we have just quoted—

"Exactly so," muttered Bryson to himself—"matters are going on merrily, it seems; but I'll bring them all up with a short pull, or my name's not what it is—ay, curse me, although it should be at the expense of my last guinea. The niddy's hooked. Let him escape if he can." Saying this, he folded up the letter, placed it in his pocketbook, and walked about the room in deep meditation. Having thus employed himself for some time, he suddenly stopped, placed himself at a table, drew some writing materials which lay on it towards him, and wrote the following note:—

"HARRIET,—I have this moment received notice of the progress of affairs at Spring Vale. They are fast coming to a crisis. Hold yourself in readiness to start at a moment's notice, and desire Rachel to be also prepared. I don't think there's any occasion for Irvine making his appearance in the matter in the first instance."

The writer having signed (with his initials only) and sealed this note, despatched it by a porter to its destination, which was somewhere in the Canongate. In less than a week after this, Bryson received another letter from his correspondent at Spring Vale. Of this second epistle we deem it enough to communicate the purport, without giving a verbatim quotation, as in the former instance. This purport, then, was to inform Bryson that the marriage of Emily Maxwell and Charles Whitford was to take place on the second day thereafter, at five o'clock in the evening; and that the ceremony was to be performed at Spring Vale. On reading this letter, Bryson hurriedly exchanged his dressing gown for his coat, put on his hat, and hastened out of his lodgings; and at this point we will leave him for a time, and return to Spring Vale. Here all was bustle and confusion; but it was of a joyous kind. It was the bustle and confusion attendant on the preparations for Emily's marriage, and for the entertainment of the very large party that had been invited to witness the ceremony which was to take place on the afternoon of the day of which we speak. Of all those who rejoiced on this happy occasion, there was none more happy than the bride's father. He had arrayed himself, on this auspicious day, in the full uniform of his

professional rank—a dress which he had not worn for many years previously, but which he had always kept carefully past him for great occasions. The house, too, was filled with near relatives, and, amongst these, youngsters of both sexes, who kept up a hilarious din during the whole of the wedding day. Every face was lighted up with joy, and every bosom filled with gladness. In short, a more thoroughly happy set, or a merrier house, was not within the bounds of the British dominions, than was Spring Vale and its inmates on this joyous occasion.

"Well, my lad," said the captain, speaking, in the exuberance of his spirits, to the bridegroom, who had made a forenoon visit, on some subject connected with the impending event—"don't you repent yet, eh? Time enough still, Charlie, though nothing more. Sharp's the word now, my lad, if you think of cutting your cable and running for it. Emily," went on the Captain, but now addressing his daughter, who had at this moment entered the room. "Charlie has grown a wise man all at once. The proof of which is, he says he won't have you. He has thought better of it, and is determined to keep his head out of the noose. What say you to that, Emily, eh?" But, ere the worthy Captain could obtain any reply to his sufficiently flat, but well-enough-meant jokes, a rush of visitors filled the room, when both bride and bridegroom, as if simultaneously influenced by the same feelings, took advantage of the momentary confusion, and stole out of the apartment.

In the meantime, the day wore on. One, two, three o'clock came, and passed away; and when five had arrived, it found the marriage guests all assembled in one, the largest apartment in the house. In a few minutes after, the slender and elegant form of the blushing bride, arrayed in spotless white, stood in the centre of the room, and by her side the youthful form of the man of her choice. In front of the young pair stood the venerable clergyman of the parish, in the act of delivering the prefatory prayer—the whole being surrounded by a deeply-interested auditory of relatives and friends. At this moment, just as the prayer was concluded, and the clergyman about to unite the hands of the betrothed couple, the door of the apartment was suddenly thrown open and James Bryson entered. The singular and untimeous visit instantly arrested the proceedings of the clergyman, who, knowing of the intruder's former pretensions to the hand of the bride, looked with amazement on his appearance at such an unseasonable moment—an amazement which was shared by many others of the party, from a similar knowledge. Heedless, however, of the looks which told of this feeling, Bryson advanced with undaunted front towards the clergyman, and said, emphatically, but briefly, at the same time laying his hand upon the arm of the latter—

"Sir, I forbid this marriage."

Confounded by this extraordinary conduct, it was some time before any one could reply to the strangely timed interdiction, or inquire into its meaning. At length, when his surprise had a little subsided—

"You forbid this marriage, sir!" said the clergyman. "What do you mean? On what grounds, sir, do you forbid it?"

"On sufficiently good grounds, sir, as you will yourself allow, I dare say, when you have been informed of them. That man, there, sir," pointing to the bridegroom, "is already married!"

Every countenance in the apartment became pale with consternation at this dreadful assertion. The bride fainted in the arms of her maid, and confusion and dismay pervaded the whole party.

"Married, sir!" exclaimed the clergyman, as soon as his amazement would allow him to speak—"married?—when, and to whom?"

"I married, Bryson!" repeated the bridegroom, here

interposing, and confounded, as he well might be, at the extraordinary declaration. "What do you mean? You are mad, sir, or something worse. How have you dared, sir, to come here at such a moment as this with such a ridiculous and infamous falsehood in your mouth? If a jest, it is a very ill-timed and a very impertinent one."

"Oh, no jest at all, sir, I assure you; and you yourself know it," replied Bryson, coolly, and with a malignant smile of triumph on his countenance. "It is but too true, sir; and I can prove it."

"Sir," said the clergyman, here interfering, and laying his hand on Bryson's arm, "in the name of Him who is all truth, tell us at once what you mean. Explain this mysterious business."

"I have no further explanation to give, sir, than simply again to assert, that that gentleman is already married, and that I am ready this instant to prove it."

"Will you not tell us, then," said the clergyman, "if he be married, when, where, and by whom the ceremony was performed?"

"Oh, surely, sir," replied Bryson, with undiminished confidence. "The ceremony, sir, was a very simple one; but sufficiently binding by the Scotch law. It was performed in my house three weeks since, and was the voluntary act of Mr Whitford himself. On the occasion to which I allude, he declared the lady who now claims him for her husband, his wife, in the presence of witnesses; and that, I need not repeat, as you are, of course, perfectly aware of it, is quite valid by the laws of this country. Mr Whitford," he added, bowing to the unhappy bridegroom, "will himself, I am very sure, acknowledge the truth of all that I have said."

"Heed him not, heed him not," exclaimed poor Whitford, frantically. "It was all in jest, all in jest, and the villain knows it. What have I to do with the woman, or what has she to do with me? I know nothing about her. I never saw her in my life before that night, and have never seen her since."

Bryson smiled significantly during the delivery of this vehement but vain disclaimer.

"But, Mr Whitford," said the clergyman, seriously, "did such an occurrence as this really take place? Were you so unguarded as to make such an acknowledgment as that mentioned by Mr Bryson?"

"I certainly did, sir," replied Whitford; "but I repeat again, it was all in jest. We were all making merry, and that was one of the jokes of the evening."

The clergyman shook his head, and looked greatly distressed.

"Jest, truly!" here interposed Bryson; "a pretty law that would be that any man could evade by declaring that he was only in jest! That would be a very nice state of matters, indeed! No, no, Mr Whitford, the law recognises neither jokes nor jesters. It has no relish whatever for them, and that you'll find, I rather think."

"Indeed, this matter is serious," said the clergyman, gravely. "But where, sir," he added, addressing Bryson, "is this proof you speak about? We cannot take your simple assertion in such a case as this."

"The proof is at hand, sir," replied the latter. And he went to one of the windows of the apartment, threw it up, and called aloud—"Mrs Whitford, come this way, if you please; you are wanted—and you too, Rachael. Come both of you up stairs." In an instant after, these parties were in the room, the former covering her face with her handkerchief, so as to conceal nearly all her features, and to give the appearance of one in confusion and distress.

On their entrance—"Harriet," said Bryson, "do not you claim this gentleman," here inclining his head towards Whitford, "as your husband? Did he not avow himself such in the presence of Rachael here, of myself, and of a third party?"

Harriet modestly replied, from behind her handkerchief, "Yes."

"In my house?"

Another affirmative.

"You were witness to it, Miss Rachael?" continued Bryson, now addressing the other female.

"I was," said the former; "and poor Harriet's been in a sad condition ever since that Mr Whitford never looked near her; but she was letting him alone, to see if he would come to her of his own accord, which would have been better for a parties than takin' steps against him. Indeed, I was witness till't," she concluded with emphasis.

"And so was I," added Bryson. "Now, sir, are you satisfied?" he said, addressing the clergyman.

"It's a conspiracy—a black, a villainous conspiracy to ruin me, to blast my happiness!" exclaimed Whitford, distractedly. "What law on earth so ridiculously absurd, so horribly cruel, as to hold me bound in such a case as this? Monstrous! incredible! There can be no such law. Mr Thomson," he added, addressing the clergyman, "proceed with the ceremony, sir, if you please. Where is Emily? Bring in Emily. And you, sir," he went on, turning to Bryson, "quit this house instantly, and take these women with you. I think I know—nay, I'm sure I know—but will not in the presence of this company say what they are."

"Oh, surely, Mr Whitford—surely, we shall retire. We are very unwelcome intruders, I dare say. But Mr Thomson, I have no doubt, knows better than to proceed now with the ceremony of your marriage to Emily Maxwell. If he does, it will be at his and your peril. He knows what would be the consequences."

"What consequences, sir?" exclaimed Whitford, fiercely.

"Why," replied Bryson, calmly, "the consequences would be simply these:—that I would have you prosecuted for bigamy, and transported as a felon beyond seas, and Mr Thomson there dismissed from the ministry, and probably sent along with you—that's all." And, without waiting for any reply, he flung out of the apartment, followed by his two female friends, and instantly left the house.

We have hitherto refrained from interrupting our narrative, by any attempt to describe the feelings of those present during this extraordinary scene. Nor is it our intention, now, to take up the reader's time with any such digression. We prefer leaving him to conceive what these were, in his own mind. Neither have we anything to describe as to their conduct on this singular occasion—both being sufficiently delineated by the simple truth, that they all remained in mute astonishment, during the progress of the circumstances we have just recorded. Not one spoke, or in any way interfered in the extraordinary proceedings; but looked on and listened in bewildered amazement. They, in truth, knew not what to say or to think of the matter before them; and in the same predicament, in this respect, with the others, stood the bride's father; next to the bridegroom, of course, the most interested person in the room. Yet he said nothing, but looked on in the same speechless amazement with the others. On the departure of Bryson and his ladies, the miserable bridegroom—his countenance pale as death, and his lips white and quivering with mental agony—again addressed the clergyman—

"You will, doubtless, go on with the ceremony, sir—you will not, of course, allow this abominable attempt, this wretched farce, to interrupt the discharge of your duty?"

"My young friend," said Mr Thomson, taking Whitford affectionately by the hand, "I am sorry, sincerely sorry, to say that I cannot go on with your marriage under these most extraordinary and most distressing circumstances. I have no doubt whatever, that you have been the victim of a conspiracy; yet we have no proof of this, and these people will, I fear, swear to anything to gain their purposes. The fellow, therefore, has said truly, that to proceed with the

marriage, would be the inevitable ruin of us both—ay, and of poor Emily too.”

“Gracious heaven!” exclaimed Whitford, in dreadful agitation, “is it then, indeed, thus? Am I ruined and undone? Is Emily, after all, never to be mine? Is the cup of happiness to be thus dashed from my lips, at the moment I was about to taste of it? It cannot be—it cannot be! I will surely get justice somewhere. It is impossible that such a preposterous and barbarous law as this can be in existence, or if it is, that it will be enforced in such a case as this.” Thus did the unhappy young man deplore the extraordinary event which had thus so suddenly plunged him from the utmost height of human felicity to the lowest depths of its misery. Those who were around him, and particularly the clergyman, did all they could to console him—for all, as well as the latter, believed that he was the victim of a deep and most nefarious design—by suggesting that matters might not be so bad as they appeared, and that some way might be found of evading the effects of the unguarded proceeding in which he had involved himself.

But where was Emily all this while? and what were her feelings on this dreadful occasion?

Immediately after the extraordinary announcement made by Bryson, and the consequent interruption of the marriage ceremony, Emily was hurried away to her own apartment, that she might not be further agitated by the impending disclosures of Bryson, nor be subjected to the pain of witnessing the progress of the distressing scene whose opening had so much affected her.

“It is all true, then!” said the unhappy girl, as she lay, in great mental anguish, reclining on a couch in her own chamber. “It is all true, then!” she said, gasping for breath as she spoke, when she saw two or three of her female friends, with sad countenances, enter her room at the end of about half an hour after she herself had been removed from the apartment where the marriage ceremony was to have been performed. “But no, no!—it cannot be; Charles could not have so cruelly deceived me.” (She did not yet know the true state of the case.) “He could not—he is incapable of it. It must be some dreadful mistake. Tell me, for mercy’s sake, tell me all!” she exclaimed wildly. “Let me know the worst at once.”

Her request was immediately complied with. When she fully comprehended the nature of Whitford’s situation—“Thank God, thank God!” she said—“Charles’ honour and truth are unstained. I knew it must have been so; and, oh, how I rejoice in it, although he may now never be mine!” And she burst into a flood of tears, which was soon after succeeded by an attack of illness that compelled her to retire to bed.

As it was not thought advisable by the friends of the young couple, that they should see each other again that night, Charles was escorted home to his lodgings by a party of his friends, who, after soothing him as much as they could, left him for the night with the promise of waiting on him early next day, for the purpose of consulting with him as to whether anything could be done to relieve him from the consequences of his imprudence. On the following day, every possible inquiry was made on the extraordinary subject. An agent in Edinburgh was applied to; and a detail of the circumstances having been furnished to him, he laid a memorial before counsel, for the purpose of being instructed on the best plan for his client to follow, in endeavouring to get out of the difficulty in which he had, by the wiles of an insidious enemy, been placed. The answer returned by counsel was just what might have been expected—viz., that, while consent alone is sufficient to constitute a marriage, that consent must be seriously and deliberately given, and not in jest and frolic; but that, as it was a question of fact, in this case, whether the consent was serious or jocular, and that question could only be decided by an

extended probation before the commissioners of Edinburgh, it was impossible for him to say whether it was a legal marriage or not, until the fact was ascertained under the authority of a court. He, at same time, however, added, that he, as a counsel, believed the whole affair to be a trick, and had little doubt, that, under an action of *putting to silence*, as it is called, Mr Whitford would get redress and liberty. Meanwhile, until he was armed with the decision of a court in his favour, it would not be safe for him, (even if the parent would consent to it,) to enter into his projected marriage.

This opinion was communicated to the unhappy young man, whose finances being entirely unequal to the expense of a heavy law-suit in the Edinburgh courts, consulted his intended father-in-law what he ought to do. The captain offered to assist him with money, to try the point; but the pride of the youth rebelled against this measure, while his heart sickened at the thought of having his name made public as the involuntary husband of an individual of bad fame, struggling to free himself from a disgraceful connection. He saw, too, the difficulties that lay in his way. False witnesses might, and would, he had no doubt, be procured by his inveterate enemy; every device would be fallen upon by cunning agents, to hang up the case for years, and a counter-action for aliment, (on which arrestments of his accounts might be used,) would be resorted to against him, for the purpose of destroying a business so very easily affected by a bad reputation. All things, therefore, considered, he conceived it best to trust to the effects of time. He sold off his little stock, left the country, and went on board of a man of war, where he had obtained an appointment, in his professional capacity, through the influence of Captain Maxwell.

For two entire years after this, little or no communication took place between Charles Whitford and either Captain Maxwell or his daughter. During the greater part of the time, he was on a foreign station, from whence opportunities of corresponding with England were but rare. Nor, indeed, though they had been more frequent, had he much to say. He, however, let none slip that did present themselves, to inform Harriet of his well-being, and to repeat his vows of unalterable, unchangeable, and unabated love. With these expressions of an ardent, but apparently hopeless passion, every letter he wrote was filled.

There are those, however, who, putting little store by the affections of the heart, when placed in competition with worldly acquisitions, would have said, that the occurrence which induced, or rather, perhaps, compelled Whitford to abandon a country practice for that of the cock-pit was a fortunate one for him, inasmuch as it had put more money into his purse in one year than the former would have done in a dozen. This it certainly had done, in the shape of prize money. The cruise had been a singularly lucky one; and in that luck Charles was, of course, a participator. But, with very different notions from those of such ways of thinking as we have alluded to, Whitford did not feel the acquisition of wealth to be any compensation to him for the loss of Harriet Maxwell. To him it appeared valueless; or, if he did hold it in any estimation, it was as a thing which had its quality of worth yet to acquire; and this, in his opinion, it could do only by being shared with his beloved Harriet.

At the end of the two years already alluded to, however, viz. those immediately subsequent to Charles’ departure from the village of —, matters had taken a turn in his favour, of which he was not yet at all aware. The progress of this change we will mark by shifting the scene to Edinburgh.

At the period of our story, now some forty or fifty years old, there lived in the Lawnmarket of the city just named a respectable lawyer of the name of Merrylees.

On this gentleman a dissipated-looking man, of shabby-genteel appearance, called one morning about the end of the period spoken of.

Being introduced to Mr Merrylees—

“Hadn’t you, sir,” said the visiter, “a client of the name of Harriet Williamson, *alias* Mrs Whitford?”

“Yes, sir, I *have*,” replied Mr Merrylees. “I was employed in her behalf by a Mr Bryson, to prosecute her husband, Whitford, for a separate maintenance; but he’s cut and run, and there’s nothing to be had.”

“Exactly,” replied the stranger, who, we may as well inform the reader at once, was no other than Irvine, whom the former will recollect to have been one of the witnesses to the scene at Oakfield. “Exactly, sir,” he said. “Well, sir, Harriet is dead.”

“Dead! is she?” replied Mr Merrylees, with some surprise. “Indeed!—when did she die?”

“This forenoon, sir.” There was a pause; when Irvine added—“Perhaps you don’t know all about that business, sir?”

“What business?” inquired Mr Merrylees.

“Harriet’s marriage,” replied Irvine.

“Why, I don’t know. I certainly know nothing more about it than what Mr Bryson told me, and which he supported by your own evidence, and Mrs Whitford’s, and another woman’s, whose name I forget just now.”

“Rachael Carfrae,” interposed Irvine.

“Yes, that is the name.”

“Well, sir,” continued the former, “I didn’t wish to harm Harriet while she was alive, and so kept my thumb upon things; but now that she’s dead and can’t be brought to any mischief by the matter, I will have my revenge on that scamp, Bryson, who has used me very badly, by telling all about the affair.”

“What affair?” again inquired Mr Merrylees.

“Why, about Harriet’s marriage with Whitford.”

“Well, what of it, sir?”

“It was all a hoax,” replied Irvine, laughing—“a air piece of moonshine on water.”

“What do you mean, sir?” said the astonished lawyer.

“Do you mean to say that there was no marriage?—that the woman, Harriet Williamson, was *not* the wife of Mr Whitford?”

“Why, you shall judge of that when I tell you the particulars of the case.” And, without further preface, Irvine proceeded to give all the details of the conspiracy, of which Whitford had been the victim. When he had concluded—

“This, if true, is a serious affair—a very serious affair indeed,” said Mr Merrylees. “It is one of the most abominable transactions I ever heard of, and I am sincerely sorry, indeed, that I ever had anything to do with persons who could be guilty of such an atrocity. And you, sir, let me tell you,” continued the indignant lawyer, “have made yourself infamous by being a party to it, and it is only the consideration of your having done an act of justice, though tardy, in divulging this detestable conspiracy, that will restrain me from having you visited with the punishment to which your participation in the crime has rendered you liable.”

Irvine quailed under the exposition of his own danger, of which he did not seem to have been fully aware; and, losing all the confidence which had hitherto marked his conduct, imploringly besought Mr Merrylees not to institute any proceedings against him.

Mr Merrylees said, in reply, that he had already told him, in effect, that, in consideration of the information he had just given, *he* certainly would not take any steps against him; but added, that he expected he would give him all the assistance he could in establishing the truth of what he had just told him; for the honest lawyer—no rarity, after all, we hope—was now most desirous of being instrumental

in bringing the affair to light, and procuring redress to the injured. He, therefore, proposed that Irvine should conduct him immediately to the residence of Rachael Carfrae, the other witness, whom he wished to examine.

With this proposal Irvine readily complied; and the two proceeded together to the house in which the woman just named lived. Being threatened, by Mr Merrylees, with a criminal prosecution, she confessed all; and so perfectly coincided with Irvine in her details, as to leave no shadow of doubt on Mr Merrylees’ mind of the entire truth of the former’s information.

Satisfied of this, Mr Merrylees withdrew, after concluding his examination of the woman Carfrae; but, before he did so, he advised both her and Irvine to get out of the way.

“For,” he said, “although I will not certainly take any steps against either of you, yet you must recollect there are others who may. These are the injured parties, Mr Whitford and Miss Maxwell. You can hardly expect that they will forgive you the grievous wrong you have done them.” Having said this, Mr Merrylees left the house.

On the following day, Captain Maxwell received the subjoined letter, dated from Edinburgh:—“SIR,—Being aware of a certain painful occurrence that took place in your family two years ago, and having since learned all the particulars of the infamous transaction whence it arose—of which I beg to remark, by the way, I was ignorant at the time I undertook the action against Whitford, and, indeed, until within this hour—I lose no time in informing you of the death of my late client, Harriet Williamson, who died yesterday forenoon. This communication I make merely from an impulse of feeling, and from a belief that you might not otherwise have very readily heard of the occurrence of which I now inform you. I need not add, that, if other circumstances permit, the event which my late client’s pretensions prevented, may now take place, whenever the parties interested may think fit. Hoping this information will afford all the satisfaction which I have flattered myself it is calculated to do, I remain, &c. &c.

“ROBERT MERRYLEES.”

“All right, all right yet, by jingo!” shouted out the captain, in an ecstasy of joy and surprise, when he had read this most gratifying letter; and he called out for Emily, and threw the letter before her. “There, my girl,” he said, “all’s right yet—Charlie and you may buckle to when you like now. The coast is clear.”

Emily took up the letter, read it, threw it down, and rushed out of the room.

“But where is Charlie? How am I to find the scamp?” muttered the captain to himself. “But I’ll catch him—I’ll catch him,” he immediately after added, “if he’s anywhere between the two poles.” And he sat down and addressed a letter instantly to a particular friend, one of the clerks in the Admiralty Office, making the necessary inquiries. In course of post he had a reply, informing him that the ship to which Charles Whitford belonged was at that moment in Portsmouth. He was instantly written to. In less than a week after, Charles was at Spring Vale; and, ere the lapse of another, Emily Maxwell was transformed into Mrs Whitford. Charles resumed his practice in the village of —; and ultimately obtained all the happiness and prosperity which he had so nearly lost.

It may be proper to add, that Bryson absconded immediately on the discovery of his guilt, in order to avoid the punishment to which he had subjected himself, and never again appeared in the country.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

MIKE MAXWELL OF GRETNA.

THERE are many individuals who think they are safe if they act within the strict letter of the law of the land, although they transgress the precepts of holy writ, as well as the dictates of their conscience. There is a wide field of right and wrong, good and evil, within the lines of demarcation drawn by legislators or moralists; and as the acts therein performed are equally removed from punishment and reward, the merit of the actors is the greater, the less they are influenced by the hope of praise or the fear of censure. It would, indeed, be as absurd for an individual to say that he cannot be blamed if he acts within the law, as for another to allege that he can do no good unless his actions are blazoned in the columns of a newspaper, after the fashion of the five-pound donations of dukes and duchesses; but, clear as the proposition is, there are many who pretend to say that it is far from being self-evident. To such mole-eyed moralists, the best lesson is one derived from a practical example drawn from life; and we shall, as public moral teachers, in our humble sphere, proceed to lay one, not, we hope, altogether divested of amusement, before our readers.

The remembrance of the strange individual, Michael Maxwell, who lived, in the end of the last century, in the village of Gretna, so famed for irregular marriages, is not, it is supposed, yet extinct. He was the son of a small farmer, called David Maxwell, who claimed relationship to the Maxwells of Tinwald; and having died when Michael was still young, left him to the care of his mother, without, however, any means of support. His friends gave him a little education, and endeavoured to prevail upon him to learn some trade; but early habits of roving, and living on the chance occurrences of the day—perhaps strengthened by the continued assistance of his mother's friends, who got her a small house, with an acre or two of ground, for a trifling rent, and thus furnished some occasion for his services (when these could be procured) at home—rendered all kinds of regular business disagreeable to him.

He became remarkable, as he grew up, for great strength, strong love of enterprise, and amazing bodily agility, so that no man in that part of Dumfriesshire could cope with him at the games of the neighbourhood, or in personal contest. Of these gifts he was prouder than those who are possessed of undisputed superiority, in any respect, generally are; but he claimed also the possession of other qualities, which are not often found associated with those we have mentioned: an adroit cunning or Scottish sagacity, and certain powers of humour, on which he plumed himself more than on his bodily strength and agility. In his trials of strength with the English, whom he loved to vanquish, he sometimes contrived to bring all those qualities into operation at once—a feat in which he delighted. Giving his English vaunting opponent in a wrestling match every advantage, he allowed him gradually to get more confident and proud of his anticipated victory, wiled him on to greater exertions and more impertinent boastings, and, when he saw him rising on his tiptoe for the last triumphant throw, laid him on his back like a child, amidst the mirth and applause of the assembled crowds.

It was a problem which few of the people about Gretna even attempted to solve, how Mike Maxwell, as he was called, lived; and how he contrived to keep a swift black mare, always well fed and redd, besides supporting his old mother, apparently from the proceeds of a small mailing of ground, formed an addition to the difficulty, and set the wits of the wiseacres at defiance. Some supposed that he had a secret intercourse with the smugglers of the Solway, and that he kept the horse for the purpose of aiding him in directing the contraband dealers on what part of the coast to land their commodities; others again surmised that he was secretly employed by the village secular marriage priest, to act as *avant courier* to runaway couples, whom, by leading through circuitous roads, he might enable to escape from their pursuers.

Of all those who speculated on the subject, none felt a greater interest in the mystery than a young Englishwoman of the name of Alice Parker, the daughter of a widow who lived on the English side of the Borders, and with whom Maxwell had been long on habits of great intimacy notwithstanding of an indomitable prejudice he entertained against her country and countrymen. The great leveller of all distinctions of rank shews little respect for national prejudices; the two were devoted to each other, and would have been united, if he would have complied with her repeated request, to satisfy her as to the means whereby he maintained himself and would maintain her. The condition of the young woman was reasonable; and one night, as she was accompanying him a short way on his road homewards, she pressed the point with so much force that Maxwell could scarcely resist an explanation.

"It is not I alone," said she, "who feel a curiosity on this subject, which, perhaps, you may think only concerns yourself. The inhabitants of the surrounding country all know you, in consequence of the fame of your strength; and my countrymen of Cumberland, by token of their broken limbs and dislocated joints, know you in particular, to their cost. It is to this fame, which you yourself have produced, that you owe the curiosity that is entertained about your means of living; for your maimed enemies would fain make out that you betake yourself to the highway—a very convenient and satisfactory way of accounting for the mystery, as it includes an explanation of your object in keeping Black Bess there, who, as I mention her name, looks about to chide me for the imputation."

"Weel may she," answered Maxwell, "for it is a foul charge; and if I knew wha originated it, I wad mak the place o' him it sprang frae (his head) sae dizzy that he wad be at some loss again to find it. But is it no yersel, Alice, wha maks the charge, and faithers it on the hail o' Cumberland, to force me to gie ye an explanation, which, after a', ye dinna need? The mailin I rent frae Laird Dempster keeps Bess, the kail-yard my mither, and" (smiling, and taking his companion round the neck) "a man in love, Alice, needs little meat."

"No one has any chance with you, Mike," replied she. "Your arm lays your foes on the ground, and your Scotch tongue, made supple by cunning, baffles all attempts to reach your judgment; yet you have not succeeded in this instance, for you tell me in plain terms, that, if I marry you,

I must live on love. That sounds not well in the land of roast beef, of which I am as fond as my neighbours; so you shall be no husband of mine."

"You forget, Alice," said Maxwell, still smiling, "the three weeks ye lay in bed sick wi' love, when I left ye for Bridget o' the Glen. Hoo muckle o' yer national dish did ye eat durin that time?"

"Again at your Scotch humour!" replied Alice; "but I am in earnest. You treat me ill, Mike. What is your love to me, if I am denied your confidence? Yet may I not be asking poison? I could not hear that you were a lawless man, and live a week after I was entrusted with the secret. Unhappy fate, to love, and be forced, by the mysterious conduct of my lover, to suspect his honesty!"

"You are on dangerous ground, Alice," said Maxwell. "We o' the north side o' the Borders, say that love has nae suspicions, and that whar there are suspicions, there is nae love. Do ye mean that I should suspect yer love, as ye do my honesty?"

"Would to heaven," cried Alice, "there were as little ground in the one case as in the other! Here comes a carriage at full speed; take Bess to the side of the road."

"Na," cried Mike, with a sudden start, and looking in the direction of the carriage; "Bess and I will tak the middle o' the road. She'll no stay behind a carriage; she has owre muckle gentle bluid in her veins."

The carriage came up with great speed; the blinds were up, and the route was to Greta.

"Guid nicht, Alice," cried Mike, as he flung himself suddenly on the back of Bess, and bounded off immediately behind the flying carriage.

The young woman stood and looked after her friend with feelings of surprise; and it was some moments before she became sufficiently self-possessed to try to account for so abrupt a departure. Was he angry with her? His conversation shewed the reverse, and his good nature was a prominent feature of his character. A painful question followed these thoughts: Was he away after the carriage, to realize the suspicion she had been communicating to him by the privilege of love? It seemed too likely; for he had never left her before without many endearing expressions of attachment; and she had observed the sudden change of manner and look which seemed to be produced by the approaching vehicle. All the vague reports she had heard concerning him, came in aid of these suspicious appearances; and as she wandered slowly home to Netherwood, where her mother resided, she sunk into a gloomy train of thoughts, which shadowed forth, on the dim horizon of futurity, disgrace and shame to her lover, and misfortune and death to herself.

The carriage which Maxwell followed under such unfavourable appearances, was, as already said, on the route for Greta. The speed of the horses, and the loud cracking of the whip which propelled them, indicated haste; and the close blindstold of adventure, secrecy, and love. Maxwell followed hard; and just as the vehicle turned to take the direction of the village, Black Bess and her rider flew past with the speed of light, and by another path reached the back door of a small house, where she stopped. Maxwell descended and tapped lightly at the door.

"David Hoggins," said he, "are you in?"

"Yes," answered the individual addressed; "what's wanted?" And the door was opened by an old man in a Kilmarnock nightcap.

"There's a couple on the road, David," said Maxwell, "dootless in search o' you. The night is gettin dark, and the carriage lights winna tell them north frae south. I'll wait at the back door till you try and get me engaged to lead the fugitives out o' danger and the reach o' their pursuers."

"The auld condition, I fancy," said David—"half and half."

"Lively," answered Mike—"quick; the row o' the wheels mak the village ring. There, they're landed. Awa wi' your noose, and dinna let me slip through the loop."

"I'm as sure's a hangman," said David, nodding significantly, and shutting the door, to proceed to the front of the house, where his presence was in great request.

Maxwell stood for a considerable time waiting the issue of his proposal, stroking down occasionally the sleek back of Bess, and at times muttering somewhat irreverent expressions of impatience against David and his customers. At last the door opened.

"They dinna need ye," said David; "Jehu will do their business, though its clear they're pursued. They're for Berwick, and intend travellin a' nicht. She's a bonny cratur, man; sae young and guileless, and yet sae fond o' the wark, that she wad hae been doin wi' ae witness, to save the time o' gettin anither. As for him, I can see naethin o' him for whiskers, the cause, I fear, o' a' the mischief. It's a Chancery touch, dootless. They're for aff this minute. Five guineas, Mike—ha! ha!" (shutting the door.)

"Five guineas," muttered Maxwell, imitating David's laugh, "and naething for me. Come, Bess, and let us try what our Scotch cunning may do against English treachery. It has filled our purse afore, and I dinna see how it shouldna do't again. If they winna hae us as guides, they canna refuse us (that is, Bess, if your heels keep, as they say, the spur o' your head,) as followers; and I hae made as muckle i' the ae capacity as the ither. Come, lass," (throwing himself in the saddle, and clapping her sleek neck as she tossed her head in the air,) "come—hark! the wheels row—awa—but whip or spur—awa—we'll try baith their mettle and metal."

As he finished these words, he dashed down the lane, the foot of which he reached just as the carriage containing the buckled lovers passed at the top of the speed of their spurred horses. It was clear they were afraid of pursuit, and were hastening on to Berwick to take shipping for the Continent, the usual retreat of all runaway lovers passing through Greta. Confiding in the abilities of Bess, Mike allowed the carriage to proceed onwards for half a mile before he took seriously the road, as he did not wish to be observed following it so near to the village. He kept moving in the middle of the road, reining in Bess, who, having been gratified by the noise of the carriage wheels, pricked up her ears, pawed the ground, and capered from side to side. Roused by the sound of a strange voice, he started and turned round.

"You've time yet, man," cried Giles Baldwin, a Cumberland man, whose arm Mike had broken at a wrestling match the year before, and whose suit to Alice Parker he had strangled by her consent. "But her going's like a Scotsman running from an Englishman over the Borders. Were my arm whole, I'd lead Bess's head to the follow. Away, man, or the booty's lost, like the field o' Flodden, before it is won."

"Ye've anither arm to brak, Giles," said Mike, in a low voice. "A craven has nae richt to be impudent till a' his banes are cracked, and then, like the serpent, he may bend and spit his venom. I'll see ye at the next match at Carlisle, and let ye feel the strength o' the grip o' friendship and kind remembrance. Tell Alice, as ye pass Netherwood, that I'm awa after a carriage, to shew a couple the way to Berwick. Marriages beget marriages, they say; and she'll maybe tak ye, to be neebor like, and to get quit o' me, against whom ye hae tried to poison her ear."

Saying these words, Mike bounded away; and gave the Cumberland man no opportunity of replying, otherwise than by bawling out some further impertinence about his successful rival's expectation of booty from the expedition in which he was engaged.

"If I had been to put mysel within the reach o' the

arm o' the law," muttered Mike to himself, as he moved rapidly along, "this man's impudence micht hae cared me and saved me; but, thanks to Lewie Threshum, the writer o' Dumfries, I ken what I'm about. I can wring a man, in wrestling, to within an inch o' his life; and cut so close by an act o' parliament, that the leaves o't move by the wind o' my flight. Nae fiscal dare speak to me, sae lang as my Scotch cunning does justice to Threshum's counsel, and my arm defends me against a'ithers. Stretch on, guid Bess, and let me hae twa words wi' the happy couple."

The spirited animal increased her speed, and, in a short time, approached the carriage, which continued to whirl along with great rapidity. A series of quick bounds brought Mike alongside of it. He now saw that the blinds were still up, and the driver so intent upon propelling his horses forward, that he did not know that any one was in pursuit; while the noise of the vehicle prevented the possibility of hearing the soft clattering of Bess's heels. Taking the point of his whip, Mike gave a slight and knowing tap on the carriage blind, like the announcement of an expected lover. A noise, as of sudden fright and agitation, followed from within.

"A's richt," muttered Mike to himself.

But the blinds were still kept up. He paced on a little further, and seeing that no answer was returned to his application, repeated the rap a little louder than before.

"Who's there?" cried a rough voice.

"A friend," answered Mike.

"What is your name?" said the other, evidently in agitation.

"I never gie my name through closed doors," answered Mike; "and, sae lang as ane acts within the law, there's nae use for imitatin the ways o' jail birds. My name, however, is no unlike your lady's maiden ane—an admission I mak through sheer courtesy and guid manners, and respect for her worthy faither."

The blind was taken down hurriedly, and a face covered with a great profusion of curly black hair presented itself. Mike drew down his hat, so as to cover his face, and, clapping Bess on the neck, paced along at great ease. After trying to scan his countenance, the gentleman seemed at a great loss.

"What is it, sir, that you wish with me?" said he; "or what is your object in thus disturbing peaceable travellers by legal turnpikes?"

"I beg your pardon," replied Mike. "The night is dark, and the road lonely; I thought ye might hae wished a companion—sma' thanks for my courtesy. The gentlemen in the carriage that's comin up behind, at a speed greater than yours, ken better what is due to Scotch civility. I accompanied them a space, and enjoyed their conversation. They're in search o' twa Gretna fugitives, and wished me to assist them in the pursuit. I'm sorry I left them, seein I hae foregathered wi' ithers, wha dinna appreciate fully my motives. I think I canna do better than ask Bess to slacken her pace, and bring me again to the enjoyment o' their society and conversation."

A suppressed scream, from a female within, followed this speech. The gentleman withdrew his head, to assist the lady; the coachman looked round, and was inclined to halt; but the words "Drive on!" rang in his ears, and he obeyed. Mike kept calmly his course, clapping Bess's neck occasionally, and pretending not to notice the agitation and confusion within the carriage, where it seemed as if the lady had gone off in a faint. After some time, the same whiskered face appeared at the carriage window.

"Hark ye, friend," said he, in an agitated tone; "you're a Scotchman, I presume, and must be up, as we say in London. What would you take to put the gentlemen in the other carriage *off the scent*?"

"What scent?" asked Mike, gravely.

"The scent of the couple they're after," said the other. "Could you not stimulate their noses with a red herring drag? Don't understand me? Hey, man, quick! What say ye?"

"I understand ye," answered Mike, "mair easily than I can assist ye, I fear. The hounds ken their track owre weel. They're for Berwick direct; but a Scotchman might maybe send them scamperin to Newcastle—I mean that is possible, barely possible."

"Well, well!—what say ye?" replied the other. "Name your sum. Come, quick!"

"Let me see," said Mike; "by returnin, I may lose the market—a dead loss o' twenty pound, at least. Gie me that, an' I'll answer for their being twenty miles on their way to Newcastle, by the time ye're twenty miles on to Berwick."

"Here, here, then," said the gentleman, holding out his hand.

Mike met him half way, and received a handful of guineas, amounting, at any rate, to twenty.

"Keep yersel and the braw leddy easy," said he, as he put the money into his pocket. "Drive on, my lad," (to the driver,) "and, if ye keep off the Newcastle road, ye'll no fa' into the hands o' the chancellor."

With these words, Mike drew up Bess's head, turned, and sauntered slowly back to Gretna, gratifying his humour by a few words of soliloquy.

"But whar is the coach, wi' its contents, I was to send on to Newcastle? A principle o' honesty I hae aboot me maks me almost wish for an opportunity o' fulfillin my promise; but a' I undertook to insure was safety, an' if they hae safety ony way, they get value for their siller: so, after a', I'm nae cheat. But here is another coach drivin at deil's speed."

"Hallo! sirrah!" cries a person from the window; "met you a carriage on your way, driving quickly, and with closed blinds, towards Berwick?"

"You'll no likely find what ye want atween this and Berwick," replied Mike. "But I dinna wonder at your speed; I could almost wish to flee after her mysel. Sweet creatur!—she maun be fond o' whiskers."

"Then you have met the carriage!" cried the man, with great vehemence, quickened by the concluding remark of Mike. "Quick, quick—tell us where they are, and whither going. We lose time."

"I lose nane," replied Mike; "I'm sauntering at ony rate, thinkin o' my poverty; ane o' the very warst o' a' subjects o' mortal meditation."

"Will money drag a direct answer from you, sir?" cried the man.

"No; but it will draw it out o' me as smoothly as oil," replied Mike.

"Here, then," said the other, handing him some—"will that satisfy you?"

"Double it," said Mike, "and I'll halve your labour."

The eagerness of the pursuers forced a ready compliance. "The lady and gentleman you are in quest o'," said Mike, "hae changed their minds, and are on to Newcastle. They gave out Berwick as a decoy—an hour's ridin will bring ye up to them. But, hark ye! I have acted honourably by you—you maun do the same by me; and, therefore, when ye come up to the fugitives, ye will act discreetly, and say naething o' your informer. A nod's as guid's a wink—ye ken the rest."

The pursuers took no time to reply, but flew off at full speed to Newcastle, while Mike sought, at his ease, his mother's house, at a little distance from Gretna. About two hours after he arrived, a loud knock came to the door. Mike himself opened it.

"Is your name Mike Maxwell?" said a man habited like a sheriff officer

"It is," said Mike; "and wha in thae parts doesna ken me, either by grip or sight?"

"It's by the first I get my acquaintance o' folk," said the officer, as he seized his prisoner. "I apprehend ye in the name o' the king, for highway robbery, committed on a lady and gentleman bound for Berwick."

Maxwell threw himself back, and, freeing himself from the grasp of the man, laid him, by one blow, at his feet. His humour was gratified; and, laughing boisterously, he lifted the messenger from the ground.

"That was merely for your impudence," said Mike. "I'm owre confident o' innocence, either to fecht or flee. A present is nae robbery—they gie'd me what I got, o' their ain free-will and accord; and, if this is the way they tak to get their gift back again, I can only say that the presents o' the English to the Scotch are like their blows—weel returned."

"Then you admit having the property of the lady and gentleman," said a second officer, who, attended by a concurrent, now came up. "We must search you."

"There's nae occasion for that," said Mike; "there's the guineas and the ring."

"But where is the portmanteau and the papers?" said the officer, as he took the gold. "Search the house, Jem, while we hold him; the hen's no far off when the chicken whistles."

The man searched the house. Mike looked surprised and confused, and suspected they had mistaken their man. He told them he had taken no portmanteau, and expressed total ignorance of what they meant. The men only laughed at him; they had got a damning evidence against him already—the ring, which had carved on it the initials "C. B.," (Charles Beachum,) the individual who had been robbed; and they did not require to hesitate an instant about his apprehension. They, therefore, carried him direct to Dumfries jail.

Next morning, the news had spread far and wide that Mike Maxwell had been apprehended for highway robbery; he and another individual, unknown, having, on the previous night, attacked a travelling carriage, knocked down the driver, wounded the gentleman, frightened the lady, and carried off a portmanteau filled with valuable articles, and particularly many important documents, together with the gentleman's diamond ring, (which had been found on Maxwell's person,) and other things of great value. On being examined, Maxwell thought it best to tell (with a slight exception) the truth; that he had followed the carriage to inform the runaway couple that they were pursued, and had received the money and the ring for undertaking to disappoint their pursuers. He kept the secret to himself, that when he got the money he did not know, certainly, that there were any persons in pursuit, and had therefore obtained it on false pretences; but, even with this prudent qualification, his examination was held to be just as complete an admission of the highway robbery as any criminal ever uttered, under the excitement of fear or the promise of pardon. The great desideratum was the portmanteau, which the robbers had carried off; and this, by the request of Captain Beachum, who had left instructions to that effect at the next inn, as he proceeded onwards, was searched for by many individuals, under a promise of a very high reward.

About two hours after his examination, Maxwell was told that a young woman wished to get in to see him. He knew at once who it was; and the jailor, who was an old acquaintance, permitted her to enter.

"The secret that is denied to true love," said Alice, as she stood before Mike, looking at him sorrowfully and dignifiedly, "is sometimes told to the king. You hate my country, yet an Englishwoman would have saved you, if your confidence had been equal to the love you have expressed for me. When I asked you how you lived, you told me that a lover

requires little food. How much, Mike Maxwell, does a prisoner within these walls either require or get? What avails your Scottish cunning now, and how much does it transcend English honesty? But, thank heaven, I have made a narrow escape! What would your strength, your fair face, and manly bearing, which have made such conquests at our country games, have yielded me of pride or pleasure, if I had been wedded to a *robber*? Is it possible that that word and Mike Maxwell claim kindred?—that Alice Parker, who treasured up your image in her bosom as a sacred thing or a charm against the evil eye, should this day be doomed to the pain of saying that that hateful word and the name of her heart's choice are one and the same? Miserable hour!"

"Alice," replied Maxwell, "I did you injustice. I should have confided everything to your bosom; but I didna require to pollute that pure casket wi' the confidence o' a robber. I am nae robber—the first man wha said the word was laid in an instant at my feet, and sae should a' slanderers be served. I defy Scotland and England to prove Mike Maxwell a robber."

"The ring you have given up to the sheriff," said Alice, "is proof against you."

"Ha, Alice," replied Mike, laughing, "rings are dangerous things. Was the ane I got frae you, wi' a plait o' that raven hair in't, a sign o' robbery?"

"Would to heaven that it had been such a sign!" said the maiden; "I would not then have had to lament this miserable hour, and this dreadful night." (Pausing.) "But can it be, Mike, that you are so hardened in vice that you can laugh in a jail?"

"And why no, my love, if ane is innocent?" replied Maxwell. "I am indebted for this apprehension to some enemy—probably my rival, Giles Baldwin—who has got up a story about a portmanteau that never was stolen; and my honesty in confessin that I got the ring frae the gentleman for puttin the English beagles wha pursued him aff the scent, has gie'd the lee some colour o' truth. Conscious as I am o' my innocence, I am determined to keep up my spirits, laugh at my enemies till I get out, and then mak game o' their banes, by giein them joints whar nature never intended them to be."

"You have often, in playfulness, mocked me, Mike," answered she, "and turned the inquiries of my love into questions to myself, by the force of your Scotch humour; but I bear faith that you never told me a lie. Yet when I think of the mystery of your life, your secrecy, the strange way in which you left me last night, to make after the carriage, your admission concerning the ring, and many other circumstances, I must also admit that my heart is not satisfied. I cannot help it. Even my love, unbounded as it is, does not enable me to vanquish a cold feeling, that, like the shivering of an ague, creeps over my skin. I cannot say I *disbelieve* you; but, oh, what would I not give for *proof* to still this restless aching heart!" (Pausing.) "That proof, Mike, I *shall* have. The unpretending Englishwoman whose counsel the wily Scotchman despised, shall now try to redeem the character of her countrywomen, and shew that love and honesty are stronger than wiles and secrecy."

"Weel said, heroine Alice," cried Mike, still laughing. "Ye intend to mak me guilty, to increase the glory o' your efforts to save me; but, thanks to the laws o' our country, there's nae great merit in savin an innocent man. I defy a' my faes, and wad prefer a kiss o' my bonny Alice" (clasping her to his bosom) "to a' her noble endeavours to do that which innocence itsel will do for her lover."

"We stand at present on a *new* footing, Mike," said she, as she struggled to get free, and retired back. "I must have my *proof*. Till then, farewell!"

"Noble wench!" said Mike, as she departed. "However I may dislike her suspicions, I canna but admire her guidance and spirit. But Lewie Threshum will soon blaw awa

this cloud, wi' the wind o' the leaves o' Stair or Mackenzie, and a' will shine bright again on Alice Parker and Mike Maxwell."

The views and feelings of Alice were very different: she suspected her lover, and the thought was death to her; yet her native nobility of soul urged her to the task of draining every source of evidence to prove his innocence. She called on Lewis Threshum, who had undertaken Mike's defence, and learned from him, what pained her to the uttermost, that the evidence, so far as it went, was loaded with heavy presumptions against the prisoner. A letter had been lodged in the hands of the fiscal, from Captain Beachum, stating that the robbery was committed at a distance of about ten miles from Gretna; that the perpetrators were two ruffians, mounted on good horses; that they had taken the portmanteau filled with valuable papers, and also his purse, containing a balance of twenty-two guineas, and a diamond ring, marked "C. B.;" all of which they carried off in the direction of Gretna. The letter contained authority to the Lord Advocate to prosecute the perpetrators, and recover the articles. The ring and guineas, *minus two*, had been found on Mike Maxwell, within some hours of the robbery. Then Giles Baldwin had sworn that he saw Mike Maxwell in full pursuit after the carriage some short time before the robbery was committed; and some other individuals swore that they saw him return to Gretna some time after, mounted on his black mare. In addition to all this, was Mike's improbable examination, which seemed of itself to be conclusive of the case. This appeared to Alice overpowering, especially when she added to it what she herself had witnessed—the arrival of the carriage, and the precipitate retreat of Mike, at a time when it was *impossible* he could know that there was (according to his theory) any carriage coming up in pursuit of the other.

She went home, sad and disconsolate, and passed the remaining part of the day and the night in the greatest misery. She revolved in her head various schemes for eliciting something favourable to her lover; but the absence of Captain Beachum, who could alone give any account of the circumstances attending the alleged robbery, formed a bar to her inquiries which she could not overleap. As she sat next evening, musing on the unfortunate current of events that cast her from the elevation of the pride of one who possessed the favour of the most proper and comely man of the Borders, to the shame of the confidential friend and lover of a robber, who might shortly be hanged, after associating, on the scaffold, her name with his sorrows—she was roused from her grief by a tap at the window. She started. It was Mike's rap, and the very hour at which he generally visited her. She flew to the window, thinking he had escaped, and had thus come to communicate the joyful tidings.

"Is it possible? It is not you Mike?" she said, lowly.

"No, but it is his friend," said a voice she thought she knew.

"What friend?" said she; "and with what object does he call here?"

"Names have a dangerous odour," said the other, "when the beagles are out and snuffing every breeze for the scent of red game. You wish Mike Maxwell well—you visited him yesterday: would you aid in his escape?"

"Doubtless," said Alice. "Tell me what I could do to attain that object honourably."

"Here is the portmanteau," said the other, "which was taken from Captain Beachum. If it is sent back to him, he will give up the prosecution against Mike, as all he wants is the papers contained in it. Open the window a little till I rest the end of it on the sill."

Rendered stupid by this statement, Alice obeyed like an automaton. She lifted up the window. The portmanteau was placed within it in an instant.

"Get it sent to Beachum," said the voice. "I joined Mike in the robbery, and wish him to get o'f."

The window fell from the powerless hands of the thunder-struck girl, and struck the speaker's hand, which was on the end of the portmanteau. The blow was a severe one; he ran off, and the portmanteau fell down within the house, where it lay as if it had been placed there by the hands of a housewife. It was some time before the miserable girl came back to the consciousness of her true position. The last words of the voice—"I joined Mike in the robbery, and wish him to get off"—rung in her ears like a death knell; and the next moment her eyes fell on the fatal portmanteau—the very article stolen by her lover—that which was to convict him, to hang him. She grew frantic, ran to the door, looked east and west through the shadows of the trees, flew first one way, then another, called aloud, screamed, and called again. No one answered. The man was gone. She returned into the house, where her eyes again met and recoiled from the damning memorial. Terror now took possession of her mind. The circumstance of the portmanteau being found there, would form the only link wanting of the evidence that would hang her lover. Were she to state how it came there—concealing the last dreadful words which still haunted her ear—she would not be believed; and if she told the whole truth, including the fatal words, the same result—the condemnation of her lover—would follow. What therefore was she to do? She could not discover it; but could she conceal it without danger to herself as well as to him? It was clear she could not; and, besides, her soul abhorred secrecy and deceit of all kinds.

As she sat in this state of doubt and despair, a noise of footsteps was heard at the door, with whisperings and broken ejaculations. A tremor passed over her. They might be officers of justice come to search the house. A rap sounded softly on the door, and the whisperings continued. The portmanteau must, in any view, be concealed in *the meantime*; and, until her mind was made up, she flew and seized the covering of the bed, and hurriedly threw it over the glaring evidence of her lover's guilt. She had scarcely accomplished this hasty, but fatal concealment, when the door opened, and three sheriff officers entered the house and asked her if Mike Maxwell had left anything to her charge? The necessity for acting prudently called up her energies. She stood erect before the men.

"No," she replied—"Mike Maxwell committed nothing to my charge."

"We have here a warrant for a search, young woman; and you will not be annoyed by our putting it to execution."

She was silent, and shook from head to heel. One of the men drew off the bed-cover, and discovered the object of their search. Captain Beachum's name was on the top of it.

"So, Mike committed nothing to your charge?" said the man, addressing Alice again.

"No," she answered, firmly.

"You can tell that to the sheriff," said the man. "Meanwhile, we take this article along with us."

He threw the portmanteau on his shoulders, and departed along with the concurrents, leaving the girl fixed to the floor like a statue.

In a short time after, her mother, who was against Maxwell's suit, and blamed her daughter for having anything to do with him, entered the house. Alice dared not to make her mother her confidant; she was reduced to the necessity of not only wrestling single-handed with her difficulty, but of concealing it from her parent. Bedtime came, and she retired to rest, but slept none. At daybreak she started, dressed herself, and, without saying one word to her mother, proceeded to Dumfries to visit Lewis Threshum. On arriving at his house, she found he was in the prison along with Maxwell, and waited till he came home. She informed him truly of everything that had taken place, and saw, from the effects of her communication, that she was condemning her lover. Starting up in great agitation, he cried—

"Mike's life is in your hands, Alice: will you hang or save him?"

"Save him if I can," replied the girl.

"Then you must tell the shirra," said Lewie, "everything ye've tauld me but the last words uttered by the secret visiter. These you maun keep in your bosom, and hauld like grim death, otherwise Mike's a dead man."

"I will speak the truth," said Alice, calmly.

"Didna you love Mike?" said the writer, staring at her.

"Yes, but I loved also, and still love, truth and honesty."

"Idiot cratur!" ejaculated Lewie, stamping with his feet.

"Mike Maxwell is a dead man—Mike Maxwell is a dead man!" (Pausing and looking at her.) "Will you hide yourself, then?"

"No," replied she; "I do not love secrecy."

"Hang him, then!" cried the infuriated man; "hang him, and then drown yourself, like the rest o' your inconsistent sex."

Offended by the violence of Threshum, which resulted, however, from his wish to save his friend and her lover, Alice left the room suddenly, and had scarcely got to the door, when she heard the writer calling after her. At this moment she was seized by a sheriff officer, and conducted before the sheriff to be examined. She told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The fatal words of the secret visiter—"I joined Mike in the robbery, and wish him to get off"—were formally recorded, and the deposition closed. Threshum, finding the necessity of exerting his best energies to overcome the weight of this overpowering evidence, called at the office of the fiscal, and demanded, on behalf of his client, to see the contents of the portmanteau. This was conceded to him; and the man of the law, having examined carefully the papers in presence of the fiscal, and taken notes of them, departed to turn his information to the best account he could for his client. He discovered that the papers belonged to Mr William Anson, merchant in Bristol, the guardian of the runaway bride, Miss Julia Anson.

This done, Lewie got hold of Alice before she left Dumfries, and took her with him to the prisoner, to see if the efforts of Mike would have any effect upon making her depart from her intention of adhering to the truth on the day of trial—the examination she had already undergone being merely a step in the preparation of the evidence. When they entered, they found Mike enjoying himself over some brandy, which the friendship of the jailor had procured for him. Lewie told him, with a grave face, of the extraordinary circumstances attending the recovery of the portmanteau, and, in particular, the words uttered by the individual who handed it in at the window. Mike remained unmoved.

"And do ye believe the words o' the ruffian wha thus hounds me?" said he to Alice.

"I cannot disbelieve what accords so well with everything else I have seen," replied she. "Alas! would that I could disbelieve them!"

"But ye'll keep them, at least, to yersel, Alice?" said Mike.

"If I could keep my heart to mysel, Mike, I would," replied she. "But God does not allow that, and I must speak the truth. What would you have me to do?"

"To say naething," replied he.

"Fule, man!" rejoined Lewie; "say naething! That wad hang ye mair certainly than what she has already said to the fiscal," (to whom she has tauld everything,) "and intends to repeat at the trial, unless we can, in some way, prevent it. Say naething, man! You and she are tryin, like the competin millspinnin o' Dryden's mill, which o' ye is best at twistin hemp. If she said naething, wha wad be presumed to be the depositer o' the portmanteau in the hands o' Alice Parker, the weel-kenned lover o'

Mike Maxwell? Wha but Mike Maxwell himsel? Could it come frae a mair likely hand than that on whase finger the owner's diamond ring was or micht hae been? Ye're baith fules. The lassie should swear, and she maun swear," (unless, indeed, she wants to hang ye, which seems to be the case,) "that the portmanteau was handed in at the window by a man wha said ye were innocent, and had sent back the papers to try to save ye."

"Will ye say that, Alice?" said Mike.

"I cannot tell a lie, Mike," replied Alice. "I will speak the truth; and I would do that if Alice Parker's neck, in place of Mike Maxwell's, were in danger of the rope."

"Incomprehensible wench!" cried Mike. "Is this the last and strongest proof o' your affection? Does this agree wi' the sabbin heart and watery ee o' the greetin Alice, as she used to hang round my neck among the green shaws o' Netherwood, and get me to promise that I never again wad see May Balfour? or does it agree wi' my promise, made on the condition that you wad renounce Giles Baldwin, wha, I fear, is at the bottom o' a' this affair? Is it common for women to agree to marry simple men, and then hang them?—to promise them a gowden ring for the marriage finger, and gie them a hempen ane for the craig?"

"It is common for women to love," replied Alice, "and it is too common for women to lie for love; but the love that is leagued with the falsehood of the tongue, cannot be supported by the truth of the heart. No woman ever loved man as I loved you Mike; but you are only a man, and there is a God" (looking upwards) "to be loved—ay, and to be feared. But you say you are innocent; and when did white-robed innocence require the piebald, ragged covering of falsehood, to shew the purity which it covers? It were a mockery of the laws of God and man, to swear falsely to save an innocent man. And, alas! if you are guilty," (and appearances are sadly against you,) "no falsehood ought to save you from the injured laws of your country."

"The plain Scotch o' a' this English, Mike," said Lewie, "is, that the lassie is determined to hang ye, as a repayment for a' the kisses ye were at the trouble to gie her in the holms o' Netherwood; and, after ye're dead, she'll sing "Gilderoy" owre your grave. But, in sober seriousness, she's an idiot, like a' the rest o' her English friends. A Scotchwoman wad hae leed through fire and brimstone for her lover; and, after she swore the rope aff his neck, placed her saft arms round his craig, in place o' the hemp. Mercy on me, whar wad be a' my glory at *proofs* if folk were to speak the truth? My pawkieness, slyness, cunnin, art, and triumph o' the cross-question, wad be o' nae mair avail than sae muckle ordinary fair rubbish o' straightforward judgments and honesty. Keep up your spirits, Mike; I'll no let her hang ye. The English man or woman's no born that will hang Mike Maxwell."

"Are ye resolved, Alice?" said Mike, approaching her, and holding out his arms to enfold her.

"I am," replied she, receding. "Clear yourself by the aid of truth, and there's no haven in this world that could be dearer to me than these arms. Till then, I am the bride of sorrow. Farewell!"

And she departed, leaving Lewis Threshum with Maxwell.

"Saw ye ever such a stubborn fule?" said Lewie.

"I never saw sae noble a wench," replied Mike.

"Ha! ha!" cried the writer. "A pair o' fules! Ye're the first man, Mike, I ever heard praise the person that swears awa his life; but this nonsense will neither prove nor pay. We maun set aboot discoverin the mystery o' this adventure at Alice's window. Ae thing seems to me perfectly clear; and that is, that it wasna the robber that handed in that portmanteau."

"Hoo do ye mak oot that?" said Mike.

"You're as simple's the pair English fule," replied

Lewie. "Wad the man wha took the portmanteau frae Captain Beachum hae admitted to Alice Parker that he was the robber; and, what's mair, wad he hae said that ye joined him in the robbery—a lee—at the very moment when he wanted to save ye by returnin the stolen article?"

"You astonish me, Lewie," said Mike; "thae things never occurred to me."

"A lawyer's ee has twa lenses," said Lewie. "The man, whaever he is, who handed in that portmanteau at Alice Parker's window, is your enemy, and no the robber. How he got the portmanteau is a different thing; but maybe we may be able to discover that also."

"If my enemy," said Mike, "he maun be Giles Baldwin, the lover o' Alice."

"Ha!" cried Lewie—"there's light there, man. Why was the portmanteau no taen to yer mother's? The question's a curious ane. Baldwin was the likeliest man to tak it to Alice's, and the *only* man wha wad hae tauld the lover o' his successfu rival, that that rival was the robber. There's conies i' this hole; I see the marks o' their feet, and whar will ye find a better terrier than Lewie Threshum? Mair, man. Wha sent the officers to Alice's house? That I'll sune discover. Keep up yer spirits, Mike; and, while ye try to shake that fause English woman frae yer heart, I'll try and keep Hangie frae yer craig."

And away Lewie hastened to continue his inquiries. He went first to the officers who searched for the portmanteau, and ascertained from them, through the influence of that heart-aperient whisky, that it was in fact Giles Baldwin who had told them to go and search the house of Widow Parker. Lewie next proceeded to Gretna, where he interrogated Alice more distinctly.

"If ye're determined to speak the truth," said he to the grieved girl, "ye should tell us the hail truth, as ye did to the shirra. Did the voice o' the man no strike ye as a kent ane?"

"It did," replied Alice; "but, though I have been trying to discover whose it resembled, I have not been able to make anything of it."

"What say ye to Giles Baldwin's?" said Lewie.

"When you mention it," said Alice, "it does strike me that the resemblance between the two voices was very great. But a thought now strikes me: when the man said that Mike had joined him in the robbery, I let fall the window, which struck him over the knuckles a severe blow. The mark must be on his hand yet. For God's sake, fly to Giles' house, and see if his hand is hurt. If that is the case, I will believe that Mike Maxwell is an innocent man."

"Why," said Lewie, looking cunningly into her face.

"Because," said she, "Mike Maxwell never would have joined Giles Baldwin, his enemy, in a robbery; and, therefore, the statement made to me at the window was a lie; and one lie, like a fly in a box of ointment, corrupts the whole mass of evidence."

"My writing-chamber maun be like a charnel-house, then," said Lewie; "but, lassie, you're surely Scotch, wi' merely an English tongue."

"Sir," said Alice, "I would wish you would hasten to Giles Baldwin, rather than joke about this serious affair."

"A' my triumph in the law consists in joking when I am serious," replied Lewie, with a grave face. "Ye wadna tak my advice when I wanted ye to save yer lover; and now I'll no tak yours when ye want me to save him"—(leering)—"I mean, Alice, just that I'll gang to Giles Baldwin at my ain time. Will ye swear to his voice and his hand?"

"If Giles Baldwin's hand," said she, "is cut in such a way as might have been done by the fall of that window, I will swear to my perfect belief of his being the man who handed in the portmanteau."

"Aneugh, aneugh," cried Lewie; "I kent ye were cotch; and now I'll awa to Giles and *shak hands* wi' him."

Lewie departed, and went away direct to Baldwin's house. He found Giles at the door, and, holding out his hand, asked him, in a friendly manner, how he did. Giles intuitively extended his hand, which, as Lewie seized it, he observed, was clear'ly peeled along the back, a little above the knuckles.

"Ye hae a hard grip, Giles," said the writer. "Is this the arm that Mike Maxwell broke at the wrestlin match last year?" (Looking down at his hand.) "I declare there's the marks o' Mike's fingers on yer hand yet! But I'm sorra ye've gotten into this new scrape, Giles. The craig's a mair kittle pairt than the arm or the hand, and aften does penance for the acts o' its restless friend. I'm sorry for you, Giles."

"What's the matter?" said Giles. "I need no man's sorrow, nor money either."

"A man that has been successful in the highway, doesna need the last," said Lewie; "but he is in great need o' the first. It was strange that twa enemies should join thegither to commit robbery. It's now quite ascertained that you and Mike Maxwell were the robbers o' Captain Beachum."

"Wha dares say that?" replied Giles, looking alarmed.

"Alice Parker," said Lewie. "That nicht ye handed into her Captain Beachum's portmanteau at the window, and got your hand" (taking hold of it) "hurt by the fa' o' the sash, (the mark is on't yet—Providence winna let thae marks heal,) you told her very honestly—but I canna say, Giles, it was prudent o' ye—at least, I wadna hae dune sae unguarded a trick—that Mike Maxwell joined you in the robbery. You then told Jem Anderson, the shirra officer, to gae and search for the portmanteau in Widow Parker's hoose. What made ye do that, man? Couldna ye hae come to me and gien me three and fourpence for an advice?—The neck o' a sheep, wi' the head at ae end, and the harrigals at the ither, is worth eightpence. Surely the craig o' a man is worth three and fourpence."

Giles was bewildered by this speech, and appeared like a man who gets the folds and meshes of a net thrown over him. He stood and stared at the writer. The great terror was the charge of robbery, of which he was quite innocent; and he was conscious that he had so far convicted himself, by an unwary statement to that effect made for a certain purpose to Alice Parker. His mind, occupied by this fear, let go the apprehension of a discovery of the mere act of handing in the portmanteau.

"I see no harm in handing in the portmanteau," he said, irresolutely, his mind still occupied by the major terror; "a person finding it on the road might take that way of returning it to the owner, and saving poor Mike. I committed no robbery."

"Giles Baldwin," said Lewie, "this winna do; I can prove that ye hae *admitted being a robber*. Now, tak yer choice—admit the truth aboot the portmanteau, (for I dinna believe ye stole it,) or rin the risk o' a trial for yer life. If ye refuse me, I'll hae ye apprehended within an hoor."

The scrape into which Giles had got, was evident to himself. He saw no way of escaping; but he was still dogged and silent.

"Guid day, Mr Baldwin!" said Lewie; "ye needna try to flee the country; I'll hae twa beagles after ye afore ye can even cut a stick frae that ash to help ye on. Twa hangins on ae wuddy maks twa pair o' shoon to the hangman, but only ae ploy to the people."

"Mr Threshum," cried Baldwin, as the writer was going out, "what do you want?"

"Explain to me a' ye ken aboot the portmanteau," said Lewie, "and I'll guarantee ye against the wuddy: that's fair."

"I found the portmanteau," said Giles, at last overcome with fear, "and gave it to Alice Parker to send to the owner; and save Mike."

"That's no a' true," said Lewie. "If ye wanted to save Mike, why did ye tell a lee, and say that he was ane o' the robbers, yoursel bein the other?"

Giles was caught; he saw now that he had only one course, and agreed to sign a paper, setting forth all he knew and everything he did in relation to the transaction. Lewie sat down accordingly, and took down his declaration, which, after it was finished, he signed and authenticated. It bore that he had a grudge against Mike Maxwell, for having broken his arm, and taken from him his lover, Alice Parker. He had heard the suspicions which were afloat in regard to Mike's mode of living; and having seen him that night sitting on Black Bess, and looking after the carriage, he suspected he was after prey. He insulted him in the way mentioned; and Mike having retaliated in the way also already set forth, Giles was wroth against him, and seeing, some time after, a carriage hastening after the other, he got up behind it, and rode on with the view of watching the motions of Mike, and of being enabled to inform upon him, and thus revenge himself. After riding for some time, he heard the conversation between Mike and the gentleman in the carriage, which has been already detailed; and having proceeded on some distance farther, to get some whisky at a house where he was acquainted, he noticed, as the carriage swerved to a side, a portmanteau lying on the ground. He jumped down, and, taking hold of the article, swung it behind a hedge, and covered it with leaves and twigs. Some time after, two men came up and asked him if he had seen a portmanteau. He denied that he had, and they passed on. Then came two sheriff officers, who told him that a robbery had been committed on a lady and gentleman going to Berwick, whereby a valuable portmanteau had been taken from the carriage. This made Giles prick up his ears: he suspected that Mike had been the robber, and his suspicion was confirmed by the fact, that he had heard him send the gentlemen in the second coach to Newcastle, though he knew they were after the couple that were bound for Berwick—a device resorted to by Mike, no doubt, for preventing them from coming upon the robbed couple, and giving information against him when they had met. Filled with this suspicion, and his desire of revenge, Giles sent the officers to Mike's house, and afterwards gave as much evidence against him as he could, consistently with his wish to keep the contents of the portmanteau to himself. Having gone and examined it next day, he found nothing in it but papers; and therefore resolved upon committing it to the charge of Alice, and then informing the officers that it was in her custody. To prevent Alice from telling how it came into her possession, and of course to leave the presumption open that she had got it from Mike, he said that Mike had been one of the robbers; and the reason why he had said that he himself was the other, was, that he was personating one of the robbers at the time when he was speaking to Alice; and, as he knew that the report spoke of two robbers, he glided naturally into the statement he had made to Alice, whom he wished also to prejudice against his rival. This declaration Giles signed; and Lewie came away with it in his pocket very well pleased. She read it to Alice Parker as he passed along. She was delighted beyond adequate powers of expression, and only wanted an explanation of the ring to satisfy her entirely.

"That ye'll get too," said Lewie. "I hae a' that, cut and dry; but the time's no just come yet. Ye maun hae patience, and I wad recommend to ye to pay some attention in the meantime to puir Mike, and mak amends for yer cruelty, in refusin to tell a lee to save the life o' a fellow-cratur."

"If people were not cruel to themselves," said Alice, "they would not require any one to commit for them so heinous a sin."

Lewie left her, and returned to Dumfries, where he communicated his success to Mike. Some time afterwards,

the former understood that Captain Beachum had written from Paris, wishing to avoid a personal appearance in Scotland; but the Lord Advocate wrote him back to say, that, if he did not appear, he would neither get the criminal prosecuted, nor receive up his portmanteau and papers. The captain (leaving his young wife on the continent) accordingly came over to Dumfries, extremely anxious to have the trial over, and get possession of his papers. As soon as Threshum knew he was arrived at the Cross Keys, he waited upon him.

"Captain Beachum," said Lewie, "ye hae committed an honest man to prison, on a charge o' being the individual wha robbed ye o' your portmanteau, guineas, and ring. Wad ye ken him if ye saw him?"

"No," said the captain; "but there's proof enough against him; he had my ring in his possession, and the portmanteau was discovered in the house of his sweet-heart."

"The last part o' the charge gaes for naething," said Lewie, "as I can prove to your satisfaction; and the first proves nae robbery, but only your munificence in gien a man a diamond ring, as a luck-penny to a bargain, whereby ye saved yersel and yer wife frae the vengeance o' Mr Anson, wha was that nicht followin you wi' a' the speed o' a guardian's flight after his ward."

"What mean you?" said the captain.

"Do ye no recollect," said Lewie, "o' gien a man on a black mare twenty guineas to mak a red herrin drag across the nose o' Mr Anson?"

"I do," said the captain; "but I did not give him the ring."

"I can assure ye that ye did, though," said Lewie. "Recollect yoursel."

"I'm not inclined to try to recollect my own stupidity," said the captain. "It is impossible I could be so foolish as to give away my diamond ring, either as a present or by mistake."

"If you're no inclined to do that muckle justice to an injured man, maybe you'll gie me the papers that belong to Mr Anson, by virtue o' this letter o' authority." (Taking out the letter.) "Tak your choice."

"The papers, sir," said the captain, getting frightened, "are all I want. I care nothing for the prosecution of the man. It's certainly possible I may have given him the ring by mistake; but how do you account for the portmanteau being in his lover's house?"

Lewie read to him Giles Baldwin's deposition.

"Then," said the captain, "all the evidence against Maxwell is the ring?"

"Naething mair," said Lewie.

"He shall not be hanged for that," said the captain. "I shall off to the authorities, and inform them that it is very probable I gave the man the ring in the way you mention. You say nothing of Mr Anson and the papers, you know."

"I canna interfere, luckily," said Lewie.

On the statement of Captain Beachum, Mike was liberated. He afterwards took a farm, married Alice Parker, whom he admired the more for her love of truth, and lived with happily for many years; but he ever lamented the course of life he had led. He run a great risk of being hanged, from the curious combination of circumstances that conspired against him—lost reputation by it, and caused unspeakable grief to one of the best of women. Hence our moral: that one is not always safe from the effects of vice, though he act within the laws.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE INTENDED BRIDEGROOMS.

WHEN we inform the public that they may rely upon the truth of the following story, which tells a pregnant moral, and points to the consequences of a vice for which our country (unfortunately) stands pre-eminent among the nations of the earth, we have, perhaps, done as much for the cause of sobriety as could be effected by the proudest triumph of the moral teacher. The vice of drunkenness is too often reprobated only for its effects on the moral and physical health, and the worldly interests of the unhappy votaries themselves; but there are evils beyond these, which extend their influence far and wide throughout society—dissolving endearing links, entailing misery and death on those who are nearest and dearest to the deluded victims; and only repented of when all is beyond the hope of cure or amendment.

Walter Brown and James Maitland had been intimate friends from their boyhood. They had gone through the progressive classes of the grammar school together, and together had completed their education at the university. They entered it on the same day, and on the same day left it. Unlike many of the friendships of youth, however, that of Brown and Maitland did not terminate with their educational course; it continued with unabated warmth and sincerity after they had entered into the world and begun to share in its perplexities and troubles. But of these perplexities and troubles, it must be confessed, neither of the young men had by any means an undue proportion. Their fathers were both wealthy, and thus was their way smoothed to prosperity.

It was about this period—that is, after Brown and Maitland had entered into the world—that I became acquainted with them. It was in the year 18—. This acquaintance soon ripened into a sincere and cordial friendship. It was impossible it could be otherwise, at least on my part, for they were both excellent young men; highly educated and accomplished; possessed of first rate abilities, amiable in their disposition, and of noble and generous natures; in short, they were altogether two as fine young fellows as the city of G— could produce. They were both, at this time, about five-and-twenty years of age. As there were many points of similarity between them, and many striking coincidences in various circumstances, so did this sort of parallel progression continue after they had entered into life. They fell in love nearly at the same time; and, after a courtship of some month or two's continuance—during all which time they had made confidants of each other, and faithfully reported progress, from time to time, as they advanced in their suits—they determined on “popping the question” on the same day, and, if favourably answered, that the same day should see them united.

The objects of their choice were both beautiful and accomplished girls, and possessed of considerable fortunes. I knew them intimately, and was perfectly aware of the relationship in which they stood to my two friends; for I, too, was made a confidant in this matter, and was occasionally informed by the young men themselves of the progress of their

courtships. This attachment at length came to the usual crisis where the course of true love *does* run smooth. The lovers declared themselves, and were accepted with the full and free consent of all interested. The matches were thought highly eligible on all sides. I have already said that my friends had agreed to “propose” on the same day; nay, they reduced this understanding, as nearly as they possibly could, to the same hour. To this arrangement I was made privy; and it was agreed amongst us that they should meet in my room immediately after the important interview had taken place, and then and there announce to each other the results of their respective overtures. The hour of meeting at my apartments was fixed for eight o'clock in the evening; and at six the lovers repaired to their mistresses. Feeling deeply interested in the proceedings of my friends on this eventful night, it was with no little impatience and anxiety I waited for their appearance as the hour of eight approached. I tried to beguile the time by reading, but it would not do; the intense curiosity I felt as to the results of the affair on the tapis with my friends, prevented me applying my mind to anything but wandering speculations on the deeply interesting matter in which they were engaged. While I was thus employed, the appointed hour struck; and, in a few minutes after, I heard a rapid foot on the stair. I knew it to be either Maitland or Brown; and I augured well for the happiness of the party, whichever of them it was, from the lightness and vivacity of his footsteps. I was right in my conjecture as to the coming visiter: in a second after, Maitland, with a face radiant with joy, and with a loud expression of exultation, burst into my room.

“Ah! ha! Bob,” said I, stretching out my hand to him, “I see I may wish you joy. You need not say a word on the subject; your looks tell the happy tale.”

“Right, right, Tom,” replied Maitland, seizing my hand with wild glee; “I am a happy man. It's all settled with father and all. But what's become of Brown? I hope, poor fellow, he's been as successful as I have been; it would lessen my happiness greatly if he wasn't.”

The words were scarcely out of Maitland's mouth, when Brown also burst into the apartment; and *his* countenance also told a tale of success. He was in exuberant spirits; and a furious shaking of hands and noisy interchange of congratulation marked the felicity of the trio; for I, too, rejoiced by sympathy in the happiness of my friends; and, though not personally interested in the events of the evening, was scarcely less obstreperous in my glee.

It was now proposed, I think by Brown, that we should instanter adjourn to a certain well-known tavern in the city, and conclude the joyous evening by a supper. I, for some time, stoutly resisted this proposal, insisting that they should remain where they were, and sup with me. Would to God they had complied!—for, had they done so, the fearful scene which afterwards occurred would not have taken place. But it was otherwise ordered. My friends would not listen to my proposal of their remaining with me; and threatened, jocularly, that, if I did not accompany them of my own accord, they would carry me by force.

"You must come and sup with us, Tom," said Maitland; 'you must; so don't compel us to use violence. Why, man, we're such happy dogs to-night, that no man can with safety deny us anything."

Seeing it useless to make any further objections or resistance, I at length consented to accompany them; and away, accordingly, we went in high spirits to the tavern alluded to. Supper was ordered and dispatched. A bottle of wine followed, then another, and another, till it became evident, in the course of a few hours, that we had attained a crisis, and could not possibly hold out much longer. We were all, in short, very tipsy; and our mirth, partaking, of course, of the character of our condition, was noisy and outrageous. Feeling, at length, that we had reached a consummation, and aware that the hour was late, (it might be about two o'clock in the morning,) we arose, paid our reckoning, and left the house. On gaining the street, we gave full swing to the excitation which a sense of propriety had kept somewhat under while we remained in the tavern, and shouted and sang as other fools do in similar circumstances; that is, when labouring under the insanity of intemperance. In this way, we came noisily and joyously along, until we arrived in front of the house in which Maitland lived. It was his father's, and lay directly in our way.

"Now, my friends," said Maitland, as we were about to bid him good night, "we will not part yet. My father is not at home, and there's nobody in the house but an old woman; so you'll just go up with me, and we'll have one single tumbler before we part. I'll promise you a glass of as fine old rum as ever came from Jamaica."

This proposal I met with a decided negative. Not so Brown: he at once closed with it.

"Faith, we shall, we shall, Bob," he said; "we'll have one tumbler of your old stingo. Our bachelor days are nearly at a close now, and we'll see them merrily out."

Saying this, he seized me by the collar on one side, while Maitland did the same by the other; and thus was I forcibly dragged into the house. I determined, however, to drink no more, but to wait patiently till my friends should think fit to close the scene of their own accord. The old housekeeper having been roused from her bed, tumblers, glasses, and hot water were soon produced; and to these Maitland himself added a bottle of rum, which he took from an adjoining closet. In a few minutes my two friends had each mixed up a large tumbler; and, at their obstreperous importunities, I also mixed up one; but I resolved not to taste it; and neither did I—a dereliction which escaped the notice of my companions, who, satisfied by seeing me with a dose before me, forgot to compel me to swallow it. This, however, was a proceeding which *they* did not forget. In a very short time, both of their tumblers were drained to the bottom, and another couple prepared. It was at this moment that I first observed a curious change in the manner of Brown: he all at once became strangely incoherent—an incoherence that appeared to me more like that of insanity than intoxication. It is true that this is a common, nay, a necessary consequence of the latter; and it is true also that Brown had drunk quite enough to account for it; but there was a peculiarity, a wildness in his incoherence, that both surprised and alarmed me. He did not seem to know where he was, who he was with, or what he was doing. Nor was this state accompanied by the physical imbecility or sottish lethargy which usually characterises excessive inebriety; on the contrary, his animal energies seemed unnaturally increased. He was furious, although not ill-natured; and his unsettled eye roved about with a wild expression, and with restless activity. It might be, that all this was merely the effects of intoxication—and there can be no doubt that there lay its origin; but I had never seen such effects before from the same cause.

I have already casually adverted to one feature of Brown's

case—his not seeming to know whom he was with. This obliviousness came suddenly upon him; for, but an instant before, he had been addressing both Maitland and I by our names. In a moment after, he stared at us alternately, with a wild and inquiring look. It was evident he did not recognise us. I now, by signs, called Maitland's attention to the condition of our friend; and he acknowledged the communication, by proposing, in an affected off-hand manner, as it was now so late, and the morning so wet, (it was at this moment raining heavily,) that we should not leave the house at all, but take our beds with him. To this proposal, thinking it advisable on Brown's account, I at once agreed, and suggested that we should retire to bed immediately. Brown made no remark on his friend's suggestion that he should remain all night; he neither dissented from nor approved of it, but seemed quite passive, and willing to submit to any arrangement that we chose to make. Taking advantage of this apparent pliancy and indifference, we conducted him to a sofa, which was in the apartment, as the most convenient resting-place for him; and having desired the housekeeper to bring in some bed-clothes, we covered him up, and left him, as we thought, snug for the remainder of the night. Having thus disposed of our friend, Maitland and I retired to bed, as did also the old housekeeper; and, in a few minutes, all was quiet in the house. I almost immediately fell into a profound sleep, and might have been thus for about an hour, when I was suddenly awakened by a violent noise in the apartment in which Brown was. He had got up, and was overturning everything he came across in the room, and shouting violently. I listened for a moment, and heard him demanding to be let out, and threatening the demolition of everything within his reach, if he was not; and he was already acting on this threat, by smashing pictures and mirrors, and everything else that came into his hands that he could destroy. But his great object seemed to be to get out; and he appeared the more bent on this, that he did not yet know where he was. Of this he had no idea, as I perceived from his outrageous and incoherent expressions. He seemed, however, to be under an impression that he was forcibly detained by some persons; and, conceiving himself ill-used, was in a furious rage.

Alarmed at the destruction he was making, I hastily arose, and, finding my way to where Maitland slept, I awoke him; for he was sound asleep, and had heard nothing of the noise and ruin which his friend was occasioning.

"He must be let out instantly," said I, "or he'll destroy everything in the room. I wonder he did not find the way out himself, for I heard him working at the handle of the door."

"Oh, I locked it," said Maitland, "for fear he should get up through the night and leave the house." Here, then, was in part explained the cause of Brown's outrageous passion. He had found himself locked in, and this had irritated him, and inspired him with the notion of his being forcibly detained.

"But we must let him out instantly," said I.

"Oh, surely, surely," replied Maitland, leaping on the floor; "but go you to bed, Tom—no occasion for you disturbing yourself; I'll pacify him in a minute—and perhaps the more readily that none are present but ourselves." Saying this, he hurried away in his night-gown to the apartment in which Brown was confined, while I retired, as he recommended, to bed, and listened for the result of Maitland's proceedings. The house was a large one, with a very long passage running down the centre; and, as Brown's apartment was at the further end, I could not hear distinctly what passed; but I was surprised at a sudden cessation of all noise in Brown's room, the moment Maitland's footsteps approached it by the passage became audible. It seemed as if Brown had become silent on discovering that some one

was moving towards him ; and this perfect silence he maintained while his friend was for some time unsuccessfully endeavouring to introduce the key into the key-hole ; neither did he make any reply to, or take any notice whatever of the expressions which Maitland was, from time to time, addressing to him from the outside, while employed in searching for the key-hole. I considered the circumstance odd, and, without being able to account for it, felt uneasy at it. At length, while listening with intense anxiety for the issue, I heard the key enter the lock, I heard the door opening, and, in the next instant, heard—I leave the reader to imagine with what sensations—the cry, uttered in a wild, unearthly voice, “I am murdered ! I am murdered !” The voice was Maitland’s. I leaped frantically from my bed, and rushed along the passage. I met my unfortunate friend coming towards me. He was staggering. “A light ! a light !” he exclaimed—“I am murdered ! I am murdered, Tom !” I flew to the kitchen, found a lamp burning on the hearth, snatched it up, and ran again to the passage, when and where a sight presented itself to me, which, to this hour, fills me with horror when I think of it. Seated in the middle of this passage—he had been able to get no farther—I found Maitland, with both hands endeavouring to cover a large wound in the lower part of his body. Here was a winding up of the merriment and joyous recklessness of the preceding night ! On seeing the horrible and deplorable condition in which my unfortunate friend was, I instantly ran away for a surgeon, without waiting to exchange words with him, or to make any inquiries into the dreadful occurrence. I conceived that the first thing to be done, was to procure him surgical assistance.

On knocking up the medical gentleman whose aid I desired, and hurriedly stating the case to him, he recommended to me to run instantly and call up other two of the profession, whom he named. This I did ; and, in less than fifteen minutes, the whole three were in consultation around the unhappy sufferer. I am not myself a medical man, and therefore cannot describe the proceedings which those who attended on this occasion adopted. Indeed I was but little present, being unable to endure the horrible sight which my ill-fated friend presented. He was, however, perfectly calm and collected ; and, short as the time for preparation had been, resigned to his fate ; which, from the first, he believed to be certain, and all but immediate death.

The surgeons having done what they could for the sufferer, although with no hope whatever of saving his life—this, from the hideous nature of the wound, being altogether out of the question—a search was instituted for the murderer ; a proceeding which was neither difficult nor tedious, as he was found lying quietly on the sofa where the kindness of his murdered friend had first laid him. Beside him, on the floor, lay a large carving knife. It was with this he had done the fatal deed ; and it was now discovered, or rather perhaps conjectured, that he had come by the possession of it by accidentally overturning, or coming in contact with a knife case, which stood on a side-board in the apartment.

When we first approached Brown, as he lay on the sofa, he seemed to be in a kind of stupor ; his eyes were open, but he appeared to be wholly unconscious of what was passing around him. One of the medical gentlemen present now laid his hand on his shoulder, and, shaking him with some violence, to arouse him, asked him if he knew what he had done. To this he made no reply, but stared at us with a bewildered look. The question was again repeated, when a confused recollection of the horrid occurrence seemed to pass through his mind ; for he became agitated and deadly pale. To the question put to him, however, he replied in the negative :—“No,” he said—“what have I done ?”

“You have murdered your friend, Maitland,” replied one of the medical gentlemen ; “you have stabbed him, mortally

wounded him, and, we have every reason to believe, with this knife ; and he held up the fatal instrument.

Brown made no reply for some time, but looked earnestly at the knife, and then at us, alternately. At length—

“This is dreadful,” he said, in a low, hollow voice—“dreadful, dreadful, dreadful !” And he struck his hand on his forehead with convulsive violence, and his whole frame shook with the intensity of his mental agony.

He seemed now fully alive to the horrors of his situation, and to have a perfect recollection of the shocking occurrence that had taken place. After a silence of some seconds, disturbed only by the loud sobbings of a difficult and struggling respiration, he again burst out with—

“O my God ! my God !—what is this ? But it cannot be a reality ; it is impossible ; it must be some horrid dream. There must be some fearful delusion somewhere. I murder Robert Maitland ! I stab him with a knife !—my dearest, my best friend ! Ha ! ha ! ha !—nonsense—impossible, impossible ! I would stab myself sooner—much sooner, God knows ! I would not hurt a hair of his head for worlds. I loved him, loved him most sincerely—and yet you tell me I murdered him ! Base slanderers ! who would believe you ? Who would believe so utterly improbable a story ? None, none. Ha ! ha ! ha ! None, none. I am safe—who would believe you ?” He again burst into a hysterical laugh.

It was now evident that the unfortunate young man’s senses had deserted him. But, whether this proceeded from an overwhelming sense of the atrocity of his crime, and of the dreadful situation in which he stood, or was but a continuation of the consequences of the preceding night’s debauch, could not be determined. It appeared to me to proceed in part from both. But, from whatever cause it proceeded, it was most painful to witness ; and it was impossible to look on, or listen to the wailings of the unhappy man, great as his guilt was, without a feeling of compassion.

One of the medical gentlemen present now made a signal to the other—the third having remained by the patient—to step aside with him. He did so ; and, though they spoke in whispers, I overheard as much as informed me that they were consulting as to the propriety of giving immediate information of the occurrence to the Fiscal, with a view to having Brown apprehended ; and one of them eventually undertook this duty, and was about to depart on its execution, when his attention, and that of us all, was suddenly called to the patient, by the medical gentleman who had remained with him coming hastily to the door of the apartment we were in, and, in a hurried voice, summoning his brethren to the bedside of the sufferer. He was expiring. We all hastened to the chamber of death, and were just in time to hear the last words of poor Maitland. These conveyed an earnest entreaty that no harm should come to Brown for the occurrence of that night.

“For I feel perfectly assured,” said the dying man, “that it was either done altogether unintentionally, or that he neither knew me nor what he was doing. I am certain of that. Brown would not knowingly do me an injury. See, then, gentlemen,” he continued, “I entreat of you, with my dying breath, that he be not in any way troubled for what has happened. On the solemn declaration of a dying man, I acquit him of all intention of doing me a wilful injury.”

These were the last words he uttered ; but he continued to breathe for some time afterwards, and the medical gentlemen still remained by his bedside.

Taking advantage of this interval, I stole out of the apartment, and hastened to that in which Brown had been left to warn him of his danger, and to prevail upon him to fly. But he was not there. I went to the street door and found it open. Impelled by a natural instinct, Brown had already fled ; and I was glad to find that he had.

On my return to the room in which Maitland was, I was informed that he was dead. His murderer, as just mentioned, had left the house; but he had not gone far: he was apprehended in his father's house on the following morning, and carried to jail. He was subsequently brought to trial before the High Court of Justiciary; but escaped with his life, on the plea of insanity, supported by other extenuating circumstances. What became of him afterwards I could never learn, nor do I know to this hour. The general belief was, however, that he was conveyed out of the country; and this seems confirmed by the fact that he was never again seen or heard of by any one who knew him. I need not enter into any description of the misery and desolation with which the dreadful occurrence just related overwhelmed the families of the unfortunate young men, equally that of the injurer as the injured, and almost equally likewise those of their respective brides elect. The young ladies never, again appeared at any place of public resort: one of them, the chosen of the unfortunate Maitland, followed him to a premature grave; and the other, in about two years after the fatal occurrence, went abroad to reside with a relative, where she also shortly afterwards died.

Such, then, was the appalling termination to which one night of unguarded indulgence brought the careers of two most promising young men—hurling both, in a few short hours, from the summit of human felicity, the one into a premature and blood-stained grave, the other into the lowest depths of human misery—into a situation of as utter wretchedness as the human mind can perhaps conceive.

I have but one remark to add to this dismal tale; and I leave the reader to employ his own reasoning on it, and to draw from it his own conclusions. The excess which led to the melancholy results just related, was not habitual to the unfortunate young men whose history exhibits them; on the contrary, they were remarkable for the general temperance of their habits, and the uniform correctness of their lives. It was an indulgence excited by a particular occasion, and given way to for a time under peculiar circumstances and feelings. If there is a lesson here, let it be learned.

THE REFORMED.

In the year 1744, a young man, of good personal appearance, but indifferently dressed, stepped on board a vessel at Leith bound for Cadiz, and inquired if the captain would take him out as a passenger. The latter, eyeing him for a moment with a scrutinizing look, said he had no objection, provided he paid his passage-money in advance. To this proposal the young man at once agreed; and having ascertained that the vessel would sail in an hour, added, that he would return at the expiry of that time and then settle for his passage. Punctual to time, he, in an hour afterwards, again appeared on the deck of the *Flora*, which was the name of the vessel now about to sail for Spain, and, requesting the captain, in a hurried manner, to conduct him below, he there paid the former, in guineas, the amount of his passage money. Having received his money, the captain again hastened on deck, to superintend the various preparatory proceedings to getting the vessel unmoored and under weigh. His passenger, however, did not follow him; he remained below; and, although there were many inducements to have urged him on deck, and, amongst them a curiosity to see what was going on, there he continued. He either had none of this curiosity, or he had some secret reason for remaining in his present situation; and from his manner altogether, this rather seemed to be the case. He had no luggage—none whatever; not even a change of linen, or, indeed, of anything else. His looks, too, were troubled, and full of an indefinite apprehension. His tone of voice was

subdued and flurried, as if by some strong internal agitation. If any one had marked him, as he now sat alone in a corner of the cabin of the *Flora*, they would have seen, besides these symptoms of a mind ill at ease, a pale and haggard countenance, frequent and sudden looks of alarm on any unusual noise being made on deck, and a feeling of impatience and uneasiness which evidently bore reference to the motions of the vessel, and told of an anxiety for her departure. This was a source of pain, however, which was soon to terminate. The vessel was flung loose from the quay, her canvass was spread to the breeze, and, in a few minutes, she had glided out of the harbour, when, having gained sufficient sea-room, her bow was turned down the Frith, and she bore away on her voyage. It was now, for the first time, that the solitary occupant of the cabin came on deck. But he did not do this even yet all at once. He stole slowly up the companion ladder, and peered cautiously around, before venturing to emerge entirely. Seeing, however, that the vessel was fairly at sea, he stepped on the deck, and exhibited a very marked change of countenance. A load of uneasiness seemed to have been removed from his mind; and his looks, before strongly expressive of terror and alarm, were now cheerful and confident. The unfortunate passenger, however—for unfortunate he was, that was evident, of whatever nature were his sorrows—was not long permitted to enjoy his new and pleasurable feelings.

"There's a boat making after us," exclaimed the captain; and, immediately after, he issued orders to the men forward to prepare for bringing the vessel to.

"Where is she?" inquired the passenger. (He was the only one in the ship.) "Where is she?" he said, with a look expressive of renewed apprehension, and turning deadly pale as he spoke.

"There she is," said the captain, pointing to a small boat that was evidently directing her route towards them.

The young man looked at her for an instant, then, without saying a word in reply, or making any remark, slunk away down again into the cabin, where, if any one should have now followed him, and seen the dreadful agitation with which his whole frame was shaking, his haggard countenance, and white and quivering lip, they would have little doubt that a load of unatoned guilt lay heavily upon him; that he had rendered himself amenable to the laws of man as well as God, by the perpetration of some dark and heinous crime. Their former suspicions of this would have been confirmed, and they would have seen that the wretched man was in terror of the arm of justice overtaking him, and that he dreaded that the boat which was now approaching contained those who would carry him within its reach. In the meantime, the yawl advanced—it came alongside—the young man heard voices—his heart sunk within him—he threw himself back and gasped for breath, and shook in every limb, as if seized with a universal palsy. Oh, that moment of horror and despair! Worlds could not compensate it—ages of felicity would be dearly bought with it. It was dreadful. Yet, after all, these were but the fears of a guilty conscience, the terrors of an excited imagination, associated with a consciousness of crime; for no one came near the solitary and terror-stricken passenger—none disturbed him. The boat that had come alongside shoved off in a few minutes, with its crew, without any communication of any kind reaching him. He heard the "Good by!" of the captain to the boat's company. He heard their oars strike the water and gradually grow faint in the distance. Joyful, transporting sounds to him!

"Thank God! thank God!" he exclaimed, fervently, leaping to his feet in an ecstasy of happiness, and, in the joyous distraction of the moment, beating his flushed forehead with the palm of his hand. "I have escaped, I have escaped! Oh, horrors! to be taken, to be brought to trial, to be hanged on a gibbet! Yes, walk pinioned up the

ladder, led on the scaffold, and exposed to the gaze of a pitying multitude—that dreadful sea of human faces! Oh! horror, horror, horror! But I've escaped—I've escaped!" And the wretched youth burst into a flood of tears. "I've escaped through Thy boundless mercy, my Almighty Father! and it shall be the earnest endeavour, the sole object, of my future life, to atone to Thee and to society for the grievous offence of which I have been guilty."

Such were the communings of dark and fearful import of the solitary passenger in the cabin of the *Flora* on the occasion of the visit already described; but no one saw or heard aught of these communings, save Him to whom they were in part addressed.

After the lapse of about half-an-hour—during which time the young man of whom we are speaking, having regained, as he believed, sufficient confidence and composure to appear before the captain of the vessel without exciting any suspicion of the feelings by which he had been lately so agitated—he ascended the cabin stair, and came, though still not without some hesitation, on deck. The young man, however, had not so much to fear from the captain's penetration as he dreaded, this being a quality with which the latter was but very moderately gifted. In truth, he neither sought to know, nor cared to know, anything at all about his passenger. The lad had paid his money, was quiet and civil in his demeanour, and put up cheerfully with whatever fare was put before him; and this was quite enough for him. He cared nothing about the rest. It was, therefore, with the same indifference and apathy—not, however, by any means amounting to unkindness—that the captain of the *Flora*, at the end of about six weeks, landed his passenger on the Mole at Cadiz, knowing as little about him when he parted with him there, as he did when he came on board of him in the harbour of Leith. Neither had he ever inquired whither he intended going after he got ashore, or what he intended being about. All that he did and said at parting was to take the young man by the hand, shake it cordially, and wish him "luck."

Having nothing farther to do with the captain of the *Flora*, we shall now follow the footsteps of his passenger, and see whither they were bent, and what were the intentions that directed them.

On gaining the town, he might have been seen gazing, as he went along, on the various signs that were exhibited over the doors of stores, hotels, &c.; and to these alone his attention seemed chiefly directed. He was in quest of quarters; and these he at length found in the house of a Scotchman of the name of Andrew Scott, whose national patronymic he saw blazoned above his door, and which at once determined his choice.

On entering the house and making himself known as a countryman, he was kindly received by the landlord, who immediately placed before him the best that both his larder and cellar could produce, for which he would take no other payment than such news from Scotland as his guest could give. Pleased with the lad's manner and appearance, and judging from his dress that his circumstances were not in a very flourishing condition, the landlord, after they had sat and talked themselves into something approaching to familiarity, asked his guest what were his views in coming to Cadiz, whether he had any friends there, &c.

The lad replied, that of the latter he had none, and that, as to views, they were indefinite. He had just come out on chance, he said, to see whether he could not get a situation as a clerk, or storekeeper, or something of that kind.

"Dear me, man," replied his kind-hearted host, "but that was rash o' ye—to leave yer ain country and come here, trusting to so slender a stay as chance. Hae ye ony letters o' introduction, o' ony kind, to onybody?" inquired

Andrew, in a despairing tone, excited by the interest he felt in the young man.

The latter replied that he had no letter of any kind to any one.

"'Od, man, it's a bad business, I doot," said his host; "but let me see"—and he put his hand to his forehead, and thought for a moment. "Ay, I'll tell ye what ye may do: ye may ca' on Telford & Bogle, the great wine-merchants; they are baith Scotsmen, though Mr Bogle's no here the noo. He's gane hame, and I dinna think he'll ever come back again; for he's sair broken doun in his health. I say ye may ca' on them—that's on Mr Telford—and just plainly state yer case to him, and there's nae sayin what he may do for ye, seein ye're a countryman, although I maun say I hae nae great houps o' yer succeedin, seein that ye want recommendations; but there can be nae harm whatever in tryin. What's your name, lad?" added Andrew, abruptly.

A slight flush suffused the countenance of his guest, and he answered, though not without some delay and confusion—

"James Blackburn."

"Weel, James," continued his host, "I think you had better wait on Mr Telford, as I was sayin. I'll conduct ye to his store, and I think the sooner we go the better."

To this proposal James—the name, adding, as occasion may require, his surname, by which we must henceforth designate the passenger per the *Flora*—readily assented; and, in a few minutes, the two set out for the wine-vaults of Messrs Telford & Bogle. On arriving there, however, they were disappointed to find only a clerk; Mr Telford having just gone away to his country house about a mile out of town. Under these circumstances James' case was stated to the person they found, by the former's landlord, who acted as spokesman for him, and his desire to get into employment mentioned. The clerk said, in reply, that he did not think there was any chance of the applicant's getting an engagement with them; but recommended to him to go out directly to Mr Telford and see that gentleman himself on the subject. To this the young man readily agreed; and, as it was inconvenient for his landlord to accompany him, he was furnished with a sort of introductory line to Mr Telford by the clerk. This line merely stated that the bearer was a native of Scotland, who had come out in quest of employment as a clerk. With this document the young man set out; having been previously directed in the route he should take by his host, who further desired him to let him know the result of his application so soon as he returned. With this friendly request he readily promised compliance, and proceeded on his way.

On arriving at the superb villa of Mr Telford, Blackburn, on asking for that gentleman, was ushered into his presence.

Having delivered his note of introduction—

"You are from Scotland, young man?" said Mr Telford, after he had perused it, "and you want employment?"

Blackburn replied in the affirmative.

"Where are your letters of recommendation?"

"I have none, sir."

"What! Did you come here without any letters of recommendation?" exclaimed Mr Telford, in surprise. "Have you any testimonials as to character, then—any document whatever, to warrant confidence in you?"

Blackburn said he had none—none whatever.

"That is most extraordinary," replied Mr Telford. "How, in all the world, young man, could you think of coming to a foreign country, in quest of employment, without a scrap of testimonial or recommendation with you? You have really drawn largely on chance. What is the meaning of it?"

The young man modestly replied, that he had never been

in any employment before, and that, therefore, he could obtain no recommendation from any persons standing in that relation to him; and that his friends were too obscure, and in too humble a walk in life, to render their testimonials of any avail.

“But your clergyman,” said Mr Telford—“could you not have got a testimonial as to character from him?”

On the mention of this person, his “clergyman,” the young man became as pale as death, a general tremor came over him, and he felt so confused and giddy that it was some time before he could make any reply. At length, he stammered out the simple declaration, that he had never thought of applying to him.

Mr Telford remarked the young man’s sudden agitation; but he attributed it to a degree of nervousness, caused by the peculiarity of his situation, which he felt must be one of intense anxiety; and, putting this construction on it, it rather forwarded than retarded Blackburn’s views, by exciting the sympathy of Mr Telford.

“Well, young man,” said that gentleman, after he had silently thought for a few moments, “I certainly do think it very strange, very odd, that you should have come out here, in quest of employment, without any letters of recommendation or testimonials as to character; yet, as you are a countryman, and, I dare say”—and here he glanced at Blackburn’s exterior, which, as we have already informed the reader, was in but a very indifferent condition—“not overly well provided against disappointment, especially in a foreign land, I will see what I can do for you. Meet me at my counting-house to-morrow at ten o’clock. Now, James,” (he had previously learnt his name,) “let me add,” continued Mr Telford, “and I do so with the view of inciting you to diligence and attention, that, in finding some employment for you, without any recommendation or character, I do so partly out of sympathy for your situation, and partly because I have had so many scamps *with* recommendations, and those of the very strongest, that I am willing to make an experiment on the services of one who has none. I tell you this candidly, James, and hope it will have that influence on your conduct which has been my motive for mentioning it to you.”

Mr Telford next asked Blackburn to shew him a specimen of his handwriting. He did so. His employer was highly pleased with it—as, in truth, he well might, for it was a remarkably fine one.

On the next day, Blackburn met Mr Telford at his counting-house, agreeably to appointment, and was immediately placed at a desk, and set to work. The first specimens of his qualifications for the counting-house were found perfectly satisfactory, and promised permanency to his situation. This followed, and was subsequently secured by a regular agreement, which put Blackburn in possession of a competent salary.

At the end of about twelve months, during which time the young man had distinguished himself by unremitting attention to his duties, by uncommon business talents, and by the most exemplary conduct, the head clerk of the establishment died of a virulent fever that was then devastating Cadiz; a similar visitation having carried off other two clerks about the time Blackburn entered Mr Telford’s employment. At the death of the head clerk, as mentioned, the former, who had already secured the highest opinion of his employer, was appointed to his situation. On this occasion Mr Telford called him into his private room, and, having shut the door, told him of his intention to promote him to the vacant situation. Having made this communication, he desired him to sit down.

“Now, James,” said Mr Telford, “you see the confidence I put in you, by placing the entire superintendence of my establishment in your hands, and you will not think it unreasonable if I expect similar confidence on your part.

You have never yet told me anything of your history, neither have I asked you. I have hitherto forborne, from motives of delicacy towards you; but now that you are about to be placed in so responsible a situation as that of head clerk of our firm, I do think I have some right to know a little more of your history than I am yet acquainted with. I trust you will see, James, that this is not an idle or impertinent, but perfectly reasonable curiosity.”

It would not be easy to describe the feelings of Blackburn on this address being made to him. That they were harrowing in the last degree, was evident from the sudden ashy paleness which overspread his countenance, and the violent tremor with which his frame was agitated. Mr Telford marked these signs of internal suffering, together with the hesitation that accompanied them, and said, though rather peevishly, and in a tone that indicated something like chagrin—it might be displeasure—

“I would not pain you, James—I do not ask you to give me your history under any threat—you need not tell it unless you like; but I think you might have more confidence in me.”

The young man burst into tears, and said—

“I will, sir—I will tell you *all*, at whatever risk.” And on regaining a little composure, he began, and stated that he was the son of a vintner in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh; that his mother had died while he was yet an infant; that his father had always had a hard struggle with the world, being in straitened circumstances, and having but little business; that, notwithstanding this, he had given him, who was his only child, a liberal education, at the expense of great suffering and privation to himself; that, as he grew up, he became acquainted with a gang of idle, dissolute lads, in whose company he spent that time which should have been devoted to his educational improvement, or in assisting his father; that his evil propensities grew upon him with his years, until he at length deserted his father’s house altogether, and gave himself up to a life of idleness and wickedness, coming only home occasionally, to seek the means of carrying on his infamous career; that, in the meantime, his father died, and that the state of total destitution in which this event left him, gradually opened his eyes to the folly and wickedness of his conduct; that, on attaining a full sense of this, he determined to reform, and to lead for the future such a life as would in some measure atone for his past misdemeanours; that he found the first step towards this was to betake himself to some honest calling—but having none to recommend him, and being but too well known in his native city, as a lad of wild and loose habits, he could find no employment; that, in this desperate situation, having neither friend nor relation in Edinburgh, he determined on quitting the city, and seeking to better himself somewhere else; that happening, while he was in this mood, to stroll down to Leith, he saw a ticket on the vessel by which he had come out, announcing that she was bound for Cadiz; and that he on the instant determined to go with her, and trust to chance for the rest, seeing that he could not possibly be worse abroad than he was at home.

Such, in substance, was the story which Blackburn told his employer; and, so far as it went, it was perfectly true in every particular. It was the truth—nothing but the truth; but it was not the *whole* truth. When Blackburn said he would tell *all*, he either said so with a mental reservation, or his courage forsook him in the course of his narration; for he did *not* tell all. There was one passage in his life, one damning incident, which he did not relate. What that was, will appear in the sequel.

It was some time after the young man had concluded, before Mr Telford made any reply to, or any remark on what had just been related to him. At length, however, he said, with a smile—

"You have been, James, it would appear, from your own account, a sad boy in your younger years. I hope, however—indeed I have no doubt of it, from the experience I have had of you—that you will make it all up yet, and exhibit, in your future conduct, more than enough to compensate for the past. In the meantime, let me assure you that what you have told me, has not in the least lessened you in my opinion, or shaken my confidence in you. On the contrary, your candour in stating the worst of yourself, has increased it. Go and assume your new duties, and believe that your story is perfectly safe in my keeping. None shall know anything of it."

Here this interview, so interesting to the parties concerned, terminated. Blackburn repaired to his station in the counting-house, and Mr Telford shortly afterwards went off to his country house.

The position of Blackburn seemed now to be a very enviable one—and, so far as circumstances went, it truly was so: but, associated with these, there was a misery, a torture of mind, which forbade all happiness, which poisoned all the sources of enjoyment—nay, even the springs of life themselves. In his new capacity, it was Blackburn's peculiar duty to superintend the shipment for Britain of all wines exported thither by the house to which he belonged—a duty to which he always evinced the utmost repugnance, although he took great care that no expression of this feeling should betray it. But whence did this repugnance proceed? What was the cause of it? It proceeded from an unwillingness to be brought into contact with any persons from his native country; and any one who could have marked the agitation and misery which he appeared to endure on these occasions, would, let his guilt be what it might, have sincerely pitied him. But it was when a vessel arrived, especially one from Scotland, that his mental sufferings were greatest. This he dreaded most. For long after his settlement in Cadiz, he grew pale on the announcement of any ship's arrival, and never seemed to breathe freely until it had again put to sea.

But all this, as in a former instance, was the result merely of a disturbed mind; for no vessel brought any evil tidings to him, nor did the slightest circumstance occur, externally, to disturb his tranquillity. In the meantime, years rolled on, and each, as it passed, added to Blackburn's reputation as a steady, honourable, and expert man of business. Each year, too, added to his consequence and importance in the firm with which he was connected. His control over its affairs was unlimited—almost undivided; for Mr Telford, the only partner on the spot, seldom interfered—so great was his confidence in the ability and integrity of his chief clerk, and so highly satisfied was he with everything he did. His salary, too, was proportioned to his merits. It was handsome—much beyond that of any other person in a similar situation in Cadiz. These years, too, that had passed on, had restored, in great part, that peace of mind which had been so much wanting to his happiness in former times. He now no longer lived under the terror of recognition, which had haunted him in previous years; or, if he did, it was but rarely, of short continuance, and of a less formidable character than was its wont. Time, in short, the great anodyne for all diseases of the mind, had smoothed down, nearly obliterated, those feelings which had once so grievously tortured him; and a long immunity had dulled his apprehensions of the consequences of that deed which had excited them.

It was about this period—that is, some eight or ten years after Blackburn's settlement in Cadiz—that the remaining partner of the firm, Mr Telford, began to entertain thoughts of returning to his native country. He had fallen into a state of bad health, and longed to breathe the air of his father land. These thoughts and wishes gained strength as his health decayed, until they at length urged him to the fixed determination of returning to Scotland. Having come to

this resolution, he held a conference with his clerk, told him of his intentions, and added that he meant to leave him the entire charge of the business and interests of the firm in Cadiz, until he should see his partner, Mr Bogle, then in Scotland, when, he said, he had no doubt he would obtain that gentleman's consent to his being confirmed their agent in Spain, or rather sole manager of their immense establishment there.

"I must return to Scotland, Mr Blackburn," said Mr Telford, "and that immediately, else I may never see my native land. Yet I do not go with any very sanguine hopes of recovery—I feel too far gone for that; but I am desirous to lay my bones beside those of my fathers, in the little, lonely churchyard of my native village. I think, too, I could die without reluctance or regret, if I was blessed with one other sight of the dear heath-clad hills of Scotland. It is almost all I now wish for."

Thus spoke the dying merchant; for he *was* dying—that was made sufficiently evident by his pallid countenance and emaciated frame; and thus was Blackburn raised another step on the ladder of fortune.

In less than three weeks after this conversation took place, Mr Telford broke up his domestic establishment, and embarked for Scotland; leaving his superb villa with its furniture, to be occupied by his representative, Mr Blackburn.

In due time after the departure of the former, the latter received a joint letter from him and his partner, Mr Bogle, appointing and confirming him their sole agent at Cadiz, with power to act in every case as he judged best for their interest. To this was subjoined the agreeable intimation of a large addition to his salary, and the still more agreeable tidings, that he was admitted a partner in the concern of Messrs Telford & Bogle, to the extent of one-fifth.

Blackburn now stood in a very elevated position. He was a person of note, an important man "on Change," and otherwise of the highest respectability. But his good fortune did not end here. In little more than a year afterwards, Mr Telford, the principal of the firm, died. On this event taking place, Mr Bogle, who was now an old man and in infirm health, expressed, in a letter which he addressed to Mr Blackburn, a desire to withdraw from the firm altogether, as he felt himself wholly unable to take any further active part in its concerns, or indeed to attend to business of any kind; and concluded by making an offer of the whole stock and interests of the firm to his correspondent, on such terms as the latter could not but consider highly advantageous. With this offer Blackburn at once closed; and the necessary interchange of documents on the subject having taken place, Mr Blackburn commenced business on his own account, and with a success that promised soon to conduct him to independence.

Having brought the history of our hero to this point, we there leave him, and resume our narrative after an interval of ten years, with a change also of the scene of the subsequent occurrences.

At the end of the period named, or towards the close of the summer of 1764, a vessel from Cadiz, loaded with wine, arrived at the port of Leith. On board of this vessel was a gentleman, the proprietor of the cargo. This gentleman was Mr Blackburn. He had realized, during the interval which we have passed over, a considerable fortune; but, while increasing his means, he had been losing his health, and this, latterly, so rapidly that he had determined on quitting the country before he should be so far enfeebled as to render recovery hopeless. Having come to this resolution, he made the necessary arrangements for carrying it into execution, and finally embarked for his native land. In doing this, it was not his intention to give up business, but merely to change the scene of his exertions. He resolved on commencing business in Edinburgh, his

native city, as a wine-merchant; and hence the reason of his bringing with him the cargo of wine of which we have spoken.

On the wine being landed on the quay, Mr Blackburn might have been seen going amongst the casks or butts, and, after tasting many, carefully selecting one. This he ordered to be rolled out from amongst the others, and, with his own hands, nailed a card on it, bearing the address of "The Rev. Dr Marshall, Edinburgh." This done, he dispatched it, by a cart, to its destination. Conformably to his orders, the carter drove the pipe of wine up to the worthy doctor's door, and, summoning out his housekeeper—for the doctor was a widower—told her that it was for her master, and requested to know where he should put it.

"A pipe o' wine!—a hail pipe o' wine, for the doctor!" exclaimed Mrs Brackinridge—for such was the housekeeper's name—in great surprise. "Preserve us, that's an awfu quantity! The doctor never used to get in aboon three dizen at a time. What in a' the yearth could hae puttin' in his head to order a pipe! That'll last him twenty years, if he grows nae drouthier than he used to be. But are ye sure, honest man," continued Mrs Brackinridge, "that there's nae mistak in the business?"

"Sure aneuch," replied the man. "The gentleman that aucht it, directed it wi' his ain hands."

"But I'm no sure o't," rejoined the cautious housekeeper. "Wait there till I go and tell the doctor about it." And she hastened up to his study.

On entering the apartment—

"Save us, doctor!" she said, "here's a man wi' a pipe o' wine on a cart at the door—a hail pipe—and he says it's for you."

"A pipe o' wine for me, Mrs Brackinridge!" replied the doctor, no less surprised at the circumstance than his housekeeper. "It's impossible! There must be some mistake in it!"

"I thocht that, doctor, and I said it too; but the man insists it's a' richt aneuch; an' if that be the case, ye ken, we may just as weel tak it in at aince. My certy! we're no gaun to turn awa a pipe o' wine frae the door without kennin what for. It's no every day a win' fa' like this comes oor way, an' I warrant it's guid gear."

"I dare say it may, Mrs Brackinridge," replied the good doctor, smiling; "but I must know something more of it before I can take possession of it. There *must* be a mistake in it. Be so good as send the man up to me."

The man was introduced.

"Who sent you," said the doctor to him, "with this pipe of wine to me?"

"A gentleman, sir, on the shore o' Leith, that's landin a cargo o' wine frae Cadiz."

"Do you know his name?"

"No."

"Are you perfectly sure he desired you to bring it to me—to Dr Marshall?"

"Perfectly sure o' that, sir. He pat on the direction wi' his ain hands, and asked me three times owre if I kent ye, and kent whar ye lived."

"It is very strange—most extraordinary," replied the doctor; "still I cannot help thinking there is some mistake in it; but, since you are so positive as to your instructions regarding the wine, you may put it off, and I'll take charge of it. Have I anything to pay you?"

"Naething, sir—the gentleman paid me, and paid me handsomely."

The pipe of wine was rolled off the cart, and deposited in a cellar of the doctor's; but, under a strong conviction that there must be some mistake in the matter, here he meant that it should lie untouched, until some further light should be thrown on it; and he had no doubt that a short time would do this, and that the real owner would soon appear."

On the day following that on which the occurrence just related took place, a gentleman called at Dr Marshall's, and inquired if he was within. He was answered in the affirmative. "Could I see him?" He was ushered into the doctor's study. The doctor, seeing in his visiter a remarkably well-dressed and gentlemanlike person, rose from his chair, and, with the kind affability of his nature, requested him to be seated. The stranger sat down. A prefatory conversation took place on common and indifferent topics; the doctor being of too amiable and polite a nature to ask his visiter in direct terms the purpose of his call. For this he waited his own good time, and this the more readily that he found the conversation of the stranger singularly agreeable and intelligent. At length—

"I should think, sir," said the doctor with a smile, and looking closely in the face of his visiter, "that you have been in foreign parts lately. You wear the hue of a warmer climate than ours."

"I believe I do, sir," replied the stranger, smiling, in turn; "and there is little wonder I should, seeing that I have been for twenty years abroad, and have returned but the other day."

"I conjectured as much," said the worthy divine. "In what part abroad were you, sir, if I may ask?"

"Spain, sir—Cadiz," replied the stranger, who, the reader will very likely have conjectured, was Mr Blackburn. It was he.

"Ah! indeed!" said the doctor—and here a pause took place in the conversation. During this pause the doctor's visiter seemed struggling with some internal emotion, as if gathering resolution to say or do something of an unpleasant nature. And this was the case. Suddenly rising from his seat, and approaching Mr Marshall—

"Doctor," he said, "do you remember of being attacked on Leith Walk, about twenty years ago, by a young man, and robbed of twenty guineas?"

"Remember it!" exclaimed the doctor—"I do, indeed, very well. It is impossible I should forget it. But how, sir, come you to know anything of that affair? I never mentioned it to a living being. I prayed for the unhappy youth; but I would not be instrumental in procuring the shedding of a fellow-creature's blood; and therefore it was that I mentioned the occurrence to no one, and I thought that it was known to none but to God and ourselves—the injurer and the injured. How, sir, may I ask you, did the circumstance come to your knowledge? Do you know who the robber was?"

"Doctor Marshall," said Mr Blackburn, with great emotion, "you see that robber before you—I was the man!"

"You, sir!—*you* the man!" exclaimed the worthy doctor, with a look that would be but feebly characterised as one of surprise. "Impossible! impossible!"

"Nay, sir, it is but too true. It was I that robbed you, and a miserable man have I been since, although the gifts of fortune have not been denied me; but they have hitherto been bestowed in vain, and in vain still will they have been bestowed, if I do not obtain your forgiveness. Here is the money I robbed you of, and the pipe of wine I sent you must be accepted of for interest."

The repentant offender was on his knees. The good minister lifted him up and granted his forgiveness. Mr Blackburn became a worthy member of his congregation, and an intimacy existed between the two till they were separated by death.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE ROTHESAY FISHERMAN.

WHEN I was a boy, I used to pass the summer vacation in the Isle of Bute, where my father had a small cottage, for the convenience of sea-bathing. I enjoyed my sea-side visits greatly, for I was passionately fond of boating and fishing, and, before I was sixteen, had become a fearless and excellent swimmer. From morning till night, I was rambling about the beach, or either sailing upon or swimming in the beautiful Frith. I was a prime favourite among the fishermen, with most of whom I was on familiar terms, and knew them all by name. Among their number was one man who particularly attracted my attention, and excited my curiosity. He was civil and obliging, though distant and reserved in his manners, with a shade of habitual melancholy on his countenance, which awakened my sympathy, at the same time that his "bearing," which was much above his station, commanded my respect. He appeared to be about sixty years of age; particularly prepossessing in his appearance; and his language and demeanour would have done honour to any rank of society. I felt involuntarily attracted towards him, and took every opportunity of shewing my wish to please and become better acquainted with him; but in vain. He seemed gratified by my attentions; but I made no nearer approach to his confidence. He went, among his companions, by the name of "Gentleman Douglas;" but they appeared to be as ignorant of the particulars of his history as myself. All they knew of him was, that he had come among them, a perfect stranger, some years before, no one knew from whence; that he seemed to have some means of support independent of his boat; and that he was melancholy, silent, and reserved—as much as possible avoiding all communication with his neighbours. These particulars only served to whet my boyish curiosity, and I determined to leave no means untried to penetrate to the bottom of Douglas' mystery. Let me do myself justice, however: my eagerness to know his history proceeded from an earnest desire to soothe his sorrow, whatever it might be, and to benefit him in any way in my power. Day after day I used to stroll down to the beach, when he was preparing to get his boat under way, and volunteer to pull an oar on board. At first he seemed annoyed by my officiousness; and, though he always behaved with civility, shewed, by his impatient manner, that he would rather dispense with my company; but the constant dripping of water will wear away a stone, and hard indeed must be the heart that will not be softened by unremitting kindness. My persevering wish to please him gradually produced the desired effect—he was pleased, and evinced it by his increasing cordiality of manner, and by the greater interest he seemed to take in all my movements. In a short time we became inseparables, and his boat hardly ever left the shore without me. My father was not at all adverse to my intimacy with Douglas; he knew him to be a sober, industrious man, and one who bore an irreproachable moral character; and, as he was anxious that I should strengthen my constitution as much as possible in the sea-breeze, he thought I could not roam about under safer or less objectionable protection. On a further acquaint-

ance with Douglas, I found him a most agreeable companion; for, when his reserve wore off, his conversation was amusing and instructive; and he had tales to tell of foreign lands and of distant seas, which he described with that minuteness and closeness which only a personal acquaintance with them could have produced. Often, in the course of his narration, his eye would brighten and his cheek glow with an emotion foreign to his usual calm and melancholy manner; and then he would suddenly stop, as if some sound he had uttered had awakened dark memories of the past, and the gloom clouded his brow again, his voice trembled, and his cheek grew pale. These sudden transitions alarmed and surprised me; my suspicions were excited, and I began to imagine that the man must have been guilty of some unknown and dreadful crime, and that conscience was at such times busy within him. Douglas must have observed my changing manner; but it made little alteration in his demeanour towards myself.

"What is the matter, Douglas?" said I, one day, when I observed him start and turn pale at some casual observation of mine.

"Do not indulge a vain and idle curiosity, Master Charles, at the expense of another's feelings," replied he, gravely and mournfully, "nor endeavour to rake up the ashes of the past. The heart knows its own bitterness: long may yours be a stranger to sorrow! I have observed, with pain, that you, as others have done, begin to look upon me with suspicion. Be satisfied with the assurance, that I have no crimes, needing concealment, to reproach myself with; and the sorrows of age should be sacred in the eyes of youth."

I was humbled by the old man's reproof, and hastened to express my concern for having hurt his feelings.

"Enough said, enough said, Mr Charles," said he; "Curiosity is natural at your age; and I am not surprised at your wishing, like some of your elders, to learn the cause of the melancholy which hangs over me like a cloud, darkening the path of life, and embittering all its pleasures. At some future time I will tell you the reason why you see me what I am; but I cannot now—the very thought of it unmans me."

Time wore on; every year I returned to the sea-side during the summer, and was always welcomed with unaffected cordiality by my old ally, Douglas. I was now a strapping youth of nineteen, tall and powerful of my age—thanks to the bracing sea-air and constant exercise. One day Douglas told me he was going over to Largs, and asked if I would accompany him.

"With all my heart," said I; and, in ten minutes, we were standing across the Frith with a fine steady breeze. We were close over to the Ayrshire coast, when a sudden puff of wind capsized the boat, and we were both thrown into the water. When I rose to the surface again, after my plunge, I looked around in vain for Douglas, who had disappeared. He had on a heavy pea-jacket, and I was at first afraid the weight and encumbrance of it must have sunk him; but, on second thoughts, I dived under the boat, and found him floundering about beneath the sail, from whence I succeeded with great difficulty in extricating him. He was quite exhausted, and it required all my strength to support him to the gunnel of the boat. After

hanging on there some time, to recover breath, we swam together to the beach, which was not far distant. When we landed, he seated himself on a large stone, and remained silent for some time, with his face buried in his hands.

"Douglas," said I, wondering at his long silence, "are you hurt?"

To my great surprise I heard low sobs, and saw the tears trickling between his fingers. Thinking that he was grieved at the loss of his boat, I said—

"Cheer up, man! If the boat be lost, we will manage among us to get another for you."

"'Tisn't the boat, sir, 'tisn't the boat—we can soon raise *her* again: it is your kindness that has made a fool of me."

He then looked up in my face, and, drying his glistening cheek with *one* hand, he shook mine long and heartily with the other.

"Mr Charles, before I met you, I thought I was alone in the world; shunned, by most around me, as a man of mystery. Because I could not join in their rude sports and boisterous merriment, they attributed my reserve and visible dejection to sinister causes—possibly to some horrible and undiscovered crime." A blush here flitted across my countenance; but Douglas did not remark it. "Young, and warm, and enthusiastic, *you* sought me out with different feelings—you were attracted towards me by pity, and by a generous desire to relieve my distress. It was not the mere impulse of a moment; your kindness has been constant and unwavering—and now you have crowned all by saving my life. I hardly know whether or not to thank you for what was so worthless to myself; but I *do* thank you from the bottom of my heart for the friendly and generous feeling which actuated you. You shall know the cause of the sorrow that weighs upon my heart; I would not that one to whom I owe so much, should look upon me with the slightest shade of suspicion. I think, when you know my story, you will pity and sympathize with me; but you will judge less harshly, I doubt not, than I do of myself."

"Do not call up unnecessary remembrances, which harrow your feelings, Douglas. That I have often thought there is mystery about you, I will not deny; but only once did the possibility of a cause of guilt flash across my mind; that unworthy suspicion has long past, and I am now heartily ashamed of myself for having harboured it for a moment. But we are forgetting the boat; we must try to get assistance to right her."

We soon fell in with one of the fishermen on the coast, with whose assistance she was speedily righted and baled out; and, after having done what we came for at Largs, we returned homewards.

"Meet me to-morrow at ten o'clock, Mr Charles," said Douglas, as he grasped my hand at parting, "and you shall then hear my story, and judge whether or not I have cause to grieve."

At the appointed hour next morning I hastened to the rendezvous;—the fisherman was already there, waiting for me.

"I daresay you are surprised to see me here so soon," said he; "but now that I have determined to make you my confidant, I feel eager to disburthen my mind, and to seek relief from my sorrows in the sympathy of one whom I am so proud to call my friend.

I was not always in the humble station in which you now see me, Mr Stewart; but, thank heaven! it was no misconduct of my own that occasioned the change. My father was an English clergyman, whose moderate stipend denied to his family the luxuries of life; but we had reason to acknowledge the truth of the wise man's saying, that "a dinner of herbs, where love is," is better than more sumptuous fare where that love is not: we were a united and a happy family, contented with the competence with which Providence had blessed us, and pitying, not envying, those who, endowed

with greater wealth, were exposed to greater temptations. Oh! those happy, happy days! It sometimes almost maddens me, Mr Stewart, to compare myself, as I am now, with what I was then. Every morning I rose with a light and happy heart, exulting in the sunbeam that awakened me with its smile, and blessing, in the gladfulness of youthful gratitude, the gracious Giver of light and life. My heart overflowed with love to all created beings. I could look back without regret, and the future was bright with hope. And now, what am I? A broken-hearted man; but still, after all my sufferings, grateful to the hand which has chastened me. I can picture the whole family grouped on a summer evening, now, Mr Stewart, as vividly as a sight of yesterday, though fifty years have cast their dark shadows between. My mother, seated beside her work-table under the neat verandah in front of our cottage, encouraging my sisters, with her sweet smile and gentle voice, in the working of their first sampler; my father, seated with his book, under the shade of his favourite laburnum tree; while my brother and I were trundling our hoops round the garden, shouting with boyish glee; and my little fair-haired cousin, Julia, tottering along with her little hands extended, to catch the butterfly that tempted her on from flower to flower. My brother Henry was two years younger than myself, and was, at the time I speak of, a remarkably handsome, active boy, of ten years of age; full of fun and mischief; unsteady and volatile. My father found considerable difficulty in confining Henry's attention to his studies; for, though uncommonly quick and intelligent, he wanted patience and application. He could not bear the drudgery of poring over musty books. He used to say to me—"How I should like to be an officer, a gallant naval officer, to lead on my men through fire and smoke to victory!" And then the little fellow would wave his hand, while the colour flushed his cheeks, and shout—"Come on! come on!" He had, somehow or other, got possession of an old naval chronicle; and from that moment his whole thoughts were of ships and battles, and his principal amusement was to launch little fleets of ships upon the pond at the bottom of the garden. My father, though mild and indulgent in other matters, was a strict disciplinarian in education; and often did I save Henry from punishment by helping him with his exercises and other lessons. Dearly did I love my gallant, high-spirited little brother; and he looked up to me with equal fondness.

I will not weary you with details; but at once jump over the next twelve years of my life. The scene was now greatly changed at the parsonage: death had been busy among its inmates; a contagious disorder had carried off my mother and sisters, and my poor father was left alone in his old age—not alone, for Julia was still with him. I forgot to say, before, that she was the orphan daughter of his elder brother. Julia, at sixteen, was beautiful. I will not attempt to describe her, although every feature, every expression of her lovely countenance, is vividly pictured in my heart. She was its light, its pride, its hope. Alas! alas! she had grown up like a sweet flower beside me, and, from her infancy, had clung to me with a sister's confidence, and more than a sister's affection. Was it wonderful that I loved her? Yes, I loved her fondly and devotedly; and I soon had the bliss of knowing that my affection was returned. I had been for some time at college, studying for the church, when a distant relation died, and left me a comfortable competency. My father now consented with pleasure to my union with Julia; and a distant day was fixed for the marriage, to enable my brother Henry to be present. He had been abroad for some time in the merchant service, and his constant employment had prevented his visiting home for many years; but he had written to say that he expected now to have a long holiday with us. At length he returned; and great was my joy at meeting my beloved brother once more. He was a fine, handsome, manly

looking fellow—frank and boisterous in his manner, kind and generous in his disposition, but the slave of passion and impulse. In a week after his return, he became dull and reserved, and every one remarked the extraordinary change that had come over him. My father and I both thought that our quiet and monotonous life wearied and disgusted him, and that he longed for the more bustling scenes to which he had been accustomed. "Come, Harry!" said I to him one day, "cheer up, my boy! we shall be merry enough soon: you must lay in a fresh stock of spirits; Julia will quarrel with you if you shew such a melancholy phiz at our wedding." He turned from me with impatience, and, rushing out into the garden, I saw no more of him that day. I was hurt and surprised by his manner, and hastened to express my annoyance to Julia. She received me with less than her usual warmth, blushed when I talked of my brother, and soon left me on some trifling pretext. My father had gone to visit a neighbouring clergyman, at whose house he was taken suddenly and alarmingly ill. I hastened to his bedside, and found him in such a precarious state that I determined upon remaining near him. I therefore dispatched a messenger to Julia, informing her of my intention, and intimating that it would be necessary to postpone our marriage, which was to have taken place in the course of a week, until my father's recovery. In answer to my letter, I received a short and hurried reply, merely acquiescing in the propriety of my movements, and without any expression of regret at my lengthened absence. Surprised at the infrequency and too apparent indifference of Julia's answers to the long and impassioned letters which I almost daily wrote to her, alarmed at the long interval which had elapsed since I last heard from her, and fearing that illness might have occasioned her silence, I left my father, who was rapidly recovering, and hastened home. When I arrived at the parsonage, I walked into the drawing-room; but, as neither Julia nor my brother was there, I concluded they were out walking, and, taking a book, I sat down, impatiently waiting their return. Some time having elapsed, however, without their making their appearance, I rang the bell; and our aged servant, on entering, started at seeing me there.

"La, sir!" said she, "I did'n't expect to see *you*!"

"Where are Miss Julia and my brother?"

"Why, la, sir! I was just agoing to ask *you*. Miss Julia had a letter from you about a week ago, and she and Mr Henry went off in a poshay together next day. They said they would be back to-day."

I said not a word in reply, but buried my face in my folded arms on the table, while the cold perspiration flowed over my brow, and my heart sickened within me, as the fatal truth by degrees broke upon me.

"Fool, fond fool, that I was, to have been so long blind!" muttered I; "but it cannot be!—Julia!—*my* Julia!—no, no!" And I almost cursed myself for the unworthy suspicion. But why dwell longer upon these moments of agony? My first surmise was a correct one: in a week's time all was known—my brother, my brother Harry, for whom I would have sacrificed fortune, life itself, had betrayed my dearest trust, and had become the husband of her I had fondly thought my own. The blow was too sudden and overpowering; I sunk beneath it; my reason became unsettled, and, for several months, I was unconscious of my own misery. I awoke to sense, an altered man. My heart was crushed, my very blood seemed to be turned into gall, I hated my kind, and resolved to seclude myself for ever from a world of falsehood and ingratitude. The only tie which could have reconciled me to life had been wrenched away from me during my unconsciousness: my brother's misconduct had broken my father's heart, and I was left alone in the world. I paid one sad visit to my father's grave, shed over it bitter tears of sorrow and disappointment, and from that

hour to this I have never seen the home in which I passed so many happy days. Some months afterwards, I received a letter from a friend residing in Wales, of a very extraordinary nature, requiring me instantly to visit him, and stating that he had something of importance to communicate to me. I knew the writer, and confided in him; he had known my misfortune, and wept with me over the loss of my Julia and of my father. I hastened to him on the wings of expectation; and, when I arrived, was taken by him into an inner apartment of his house, with an air of secrecy and mystery.

"Have you yet recovered from the effects of your misfortunes?" said he. "I have often reflected on your extraordinary fate, and pitied you from the innermost recesses of my soul. Would you believe it?—I have in store for you an antidote against the grief of your ruined affections; but I will not say a medicine for your pain, or a balm for your sorrow."

"For a broken heart," said I, "there is no cure in this world."

He looked at me, and wept.

"Dress yourself in this suit of my mournings," he said, "and accompany me whither I will lead you."

I gazed at him in amazement; but he left me to put on the weeds, and to torture myself with vain thoughts.

He returned and called me out. I followed him: We went some little distance, and joined a funeral that was slowly proceeding to the burying-ground. My confusion prevented me from looking at the time to see who was chief mourner. I proceeded with the mourners, and soon stood on the brink of the grave. When the pall was taken off, and the coffin lowered down into the earth, my eye caught the inscription on the plate; it was "J. M., aged 20." "So young!" muttered I; and at the same moment I glanced at the chief mourner. He had withdrawn his handkerchief from his face—our eyes met—he turned deadly pale, and made a motion as if to leave the ground; but I sprang forward, almost *shrieking*, "Henry!" and detained him. I looked in his face. Oh, what a change was there! His eye quailed beneath the cold, steady, withering glance of mine. I felt that he read the meaning of that glance; for he absolutely writhed beneath it.

"Do not revile me, brother," murmured he; "the hand of heaven has been heavy upon me; my crime has already met with its punishment. Oh, my poor, poor Julia!"

"Where, where is she?" wildly exclaimed I. He pointed to the new-made grave!

Oh, the bitterness of that hour! We wept—the betrayer and the betrayed wept together over the grave of their buried hopes. I arose calm and collected. "Brother," said I, giving him my hand, "my animosity shall be buried with her; may your own heart forgive you as freely as I do the injury you have done me! But we must never meet more." And, with slow steps and aching heart, I turned and left the spot.

I received a letter from Henry some time afterwards from one of the outports, telling me that he was just on the point of leaving England for ever, and imploring my forgiveness in the most touching terms, "for the sake of our early days, the happy years of our boyhood." Those early days—those happy days!—my heart softened towards him as I thought of them. Sorely as he had wronged me, he was my brother still, and I felt that I could, if permitted, clasp him to my heart once more.

Weary of life, and tired of the world, I dragged on a miserable existence for some time, in a secluded situation on the shores of Cornwall; but, by degrees, the monotony of my sedentary and recluse life wearied me. I began to associate with the poor fishermen around me, and, in a short time, became enthusiastically fond of their perilous and exciting mode of life. The sea became to me quite a

"passion"—my mind had found a new channel for its energies; and when, a short time afterwards, I lost my little fortune through the mismanagement or villany of my agent, I took staff in hand, and, hastening to Liverpool, boldly launched into life again as a common seaman, on board a merchant vessel bound to the West Indies.

I had toiled on for several years as a common seaman, during which time I attracted the notice of my captain, by my indefatigable attention to the duties of my station, and by the reckless indifference with which I lavished my strength, and often risked my life, in the performance of them.

"Douglas," (for that was the name which I had assumed,) "Douglas," said the captain to me one day, after I had been particularly active during a heavy gale we encountered, "I must try if I cannot do something for you; your activity and energy entitle you to promotion. I will speak to the owners when we return, and endeavour to procure you a mate's berth." I thanked him, and went forward again to my duty. A few days afterwards, we were going along with a strong beaming wind; there was a high sea running, every now and then throwing a thick spray over the weather bulwarks; the hands were at dinner, and I was just coming up to relieve the man at the wheel; there was no one on deck but the mate of the watch, and the captain, who was standing on the weather bulwark, shaking the backstays, to feel if they bore an equal strain: all at once the ship gave a heavy weather lurch, the captain lost his footing, and was overboard in a moment. I instantly sprang aft, cut away the life-buoy, and knowing that he was but an indifferent swimmer, jumped overboard after him. As I said before, the sea was running high, and a few minutes elapsed before I caught sight of him rising on the crest of a wave, at some distance from me. I saw he could not hold out long; for he was over-exerting himself, shouting and raising his hand for assistance, and his face was pale as death. I struck out desperately towards him, and shouted, when I got near him, "Keep up your heart, sir; be cool; don't attempt to lay hold of me, and, please God, I will save you yet." My advice had the desired effect, and restored his self-possession; he became more cool and collected, and with occasional support from me, contrived to reach the life-buoy. In the meantime, all was confusion on board the ship; the second mate of the watch, a young hand, in the hurry of the moment, threw the ship too suddenly up in the wind, a squall struck her at the moment, and the foretopmast and topgallantmast went over the side, dragging the maintopgallantmast with them. The cry of "A man overboard!" had hurried the crew on deck, and the crash of the falling spars, and the contradictory orders from the quarter-deck, at first puzzled and confused them; but the chief mate was a cool, active seaman, and the moment he made his appearance order and silence were restored; the quarter-boat was instantly lowered, numbers of the men springing forward to volunteer to man her, for the captain was deservedly beloved by his crew; and the rest of the hands were immediately set to work to clear away the wreck. In a few minutes the boat reached us, and we were safely seated in the stern sheets.

"Douglas, my gallant fellow," said the captain, shaking me cordially by the hand, "I may thank you that I am not food for the fishes by this time. I had just resigned myself to my fate, when your voice came over the water to me, like a messenger of hope and safety. How can I ever repay you?"

"I am sufficiently repaid, Captain Rose, by seeing you beside me; the only way in which you can serve me, is by giving me a lift in the way of promotion, when we return home."

"I will, you may depend upon it," replied he; "and as long as I live, you may apply to me as a firm and faithful friend."

I was highly gratified by this promise; for the great object of my ambition for some time past had been to raise myself again from obscurity into something like my former station in life. Next voyage, through the captain's interest with the owners, I was appointed chief mate of the Albion, Captain Rose's ship, for which I was found duly qualified, having employed all my spare hours at sea in acquiring a knowledge of the theory of navigation. Captain Rose was like a brother to me, introducing me to his family and friends as the saver of his life, and making quite a *lion* of me in Liverpool. We sailed in company with a large fleet, under convoy of three frigates and two sloops of war, and had been some time at sea, when a heavy gale of wind came on one afternoon, which completely dispersed the convoy. When it commenced there were nearly two hundred sail in sight; at the end of two days, we were alone. The Albion was a beautiful vessel of her class, about four hundred tons burden; an excellent sea-boat. We had a smart, active crew, besides a number of passengers, and were well furnished for defence, if required; but we were now so near our port that we dreaded little danger. However, it was necessary to be constantly on the alert, for there were many piratical vessels in those seas, which, in spite of the vigilance and activity of H.M. cruisers, were constantly on the watch to pounce upon any stray merchantmen. Captain Rose was, on the whole, rather pleased at his separation from the convoy, as there were only one or two other vessels, besides himself, bound to the Havannah, and he would have been obliged to accompany the body of the fleet to Barbadoes. After we had parted from the convoy, we made the best of our way towards Cuba. One night it was almost calm, but with every appearance of a coming breeze; the moon was nearly at her full, but dark, heavy clouds were drifting quickly over her, which almost entirely hid her from our view, except when, at intervals, she threw from between them a broad flash over the waters, as bright and almost as momentary as lightning gleams. We were crawling slowly along, with all our small canvass set; the breeze was blowing off the shore, the dark shadow of which lay like a shroud upon the water; it was nearly eight bells in the first watch; the captain and several of the passengers were still on deck, enjoying the cool, delightful breeze; but their suspicious and anxious glances into the dark shadow to windward, seemed to intimate that their conversation over their grog that evening, which had been of the pirates that infested those islands, and Cuba in particular, had awakened their fears and aroused their watchfulness.

"Hark! Captain Rose," said I, "what noise is that?"

Every face was instantly turned over the weather gunwale, and in breathless silence they all listened in the direction to which I pointed. A low, murmuring, rippling sound was heard, and a kind of dull, smothered, creaking noise repeated at short intervals; nothing was to be seen, however, for all was in deep shadow in that quarter.

"Talk of the devil, and he'll shew his horns, Douglas!" said the captain. "I have not been so long at sea without being able to distinguish the whispering of the smooth water when a sharp keel is slipping through it, or the sound of muffled sweeps. There may be mischief there, or there may not; but we'll be prepared for the worst. Get the men quietly to their quarters, put an extra dose of grape into the guns, and have all our tools ready."

Just at this moment the moonlight broke brightly through the clouds, and shewed us a small, black-looking schooner, slowly crawling out from the shadow of the land. Her decks were apparently crowded with people, and she had a boat towing astern. The men were soon at their quarters—and a fine, active, spirited set of fellows they were—each armed with a cutlass and a brace of pistols, while tomakawks and boarding pikes lay at hand for use if required. The passengers were all likewise provided with muskets, pistols,

and cutlasses, and the servants were ready to load spare fire-arms. We mustered about fifty in all; but there was not a flincher among us.

"Now, my lads," said Captain Rose to his crew, "we must have a brush for it. I have no doubt those fellows are pirates; and if once they get footing on this deck, I would not give a farthing for any man's life on board. Be cool and quiet. Don't throw away a shot; remember that you are fighting for your lives; I do not doubt your courage, but be cool and steady!"

In the meantime, the dark hull of the schooner was gradually nearing us.

"Schooner ahoy!" shouted Captain Rose. No answer but the sweeps dipped faster into the water, which rippled up beneath her bow. "Schooner, ahoy!—answer, or I'll fire!" Still no reply; but, almost immediately, a bright sudden flash burst from her bow, and a shot came whizzing through the mizzen-rigging.

"I thought so," calmly said the captain; "be cool, my lads; we must not throw away a shot; he's hardly within our range yet." The moon broke out for a moment. "Now, my lads, take time, and a steady aim. Give it him!" And flash, flash—bang, bang, went all our six carronades. The captain's advice had not been thrown away; the aim had been cool and deliberate; we heard the loud crashing of the sweeps as the grape-shot rattled among them, and fell pattering into the water; and at the same time a yell arose from the schooner, as if all the devils in hell were broke loose. The next glimpse of moonlight shewed us her foretopmast hanging over the side.

"Well done, my fine fellows!" shouted Captain Rose; "bear a hand, and give them another dose. We must keep them at arm's length as long as we can." The schooner had, by this time, braced up on the larboard tack, and was standing the same way as ourselves, so as to bring her broadside to bear upon us; and seemed to be trying to edge out of the range of our guns.

"Oh, oh," said our gallant captain, "is that your play, old boy? You want to pepper us at a distance: that'll never do. Starboard, my boy!—So! steady! Now, my lads, fire away!"—And again our little bark shook with the explosion. The schooner was not slow in returning the compliment. One of her shot lodged in our hull, and another sent the splinters flying out of the boat on the booms. Immediately after she fired, she stood away before the wind, and, rounding our stern at a respectful distance, she crawled up on the other side of us, as fast almost as if we had been at anchor, with a wish apparently to cut off our escape in that direction. But he was playing a deeper game. A long, dark, unbroken cloud was passing over the moon, which threw its black shadow over the water, and partially concealed the movements of the pirate. When it cleared away again, he was braced sharp up on the larboard tack, standing across our bows, with the intention of raking us.

"Starboard the helm!—Brace sharp up!—Bear a hand, my fine fellows!"—And, before she had time to take advantage of her position, the Albion again presented her broadside. The flash from the pirate's guns was quickly followed by the report of ours, and we heard immediately the loud clattering of blocks on board of her, as if some sail had come down by the run. At this moment I thought I heard some strange noise astern, and, running aft, I plainly distinguished the sound of muffled oars, and, immediately after, saw a small dark line upon the water.

"Aft, here, small-arm men!" shouted I.

"Boat, ahoy!—Boat, ahoy!"—A loud and wild cheer rose from the boat; and the men in her, finding that caution would no longer avail them, evidently redoubled their efforts at their oars.

"Fire!" shouted the captain, while a blue light he had just ignited threw a pale, unearthly glare over the ship's

taffarel, and shewed us our new and unexpected enemy. It was the pirate's boat, which she had dropped during the partial obscurity I spoke of, intending to board us a-head herself, while the boat's crew attacked us astern. It was fortunate that we happened to hear them—three minutes more, and nothing could have saved us. There was a set of the most ferocious looking desperadoes I had ever seen, armed to the teeth; and the boat (a large one) was crowded with them. Deadly was the effect of our fire. Four or five of the men at the oars were tumbled over on their faces; but their places were instantly supplied by others, who, with loud yells for revenge, bent desperately to their oars. In a few minutes, the boat shot up under the mizen-chains, while the bullets that were raining down upon them from above, only made them more desperate. The living trampled upon the dying and the dead, in their eagerness to board; and, in a thick swarm, the blood-thirsty scoundrels came yelling over the bulwarks. A sharp and well-directed fire staggered them for a moment, and sent several of them to their last account. We now threw aside the muskets, for cutlasses and tomahawks. Hand to hand, foot to foot, desperate and deadly was the struggle.

"Down with them, my lads!" shouted Rose. "Hew the blood-thirsty villains to pieces. No quarter! no quarter!—shew them such mercy as they would shew you!"

Short and bloody was the conflict; several of the pirates had been killed, the deck was slippery with blood, and the rest were keeping their ground with difficulty. I had a long and severe hand-to-hand fight with one of them. We had each received desperate wounds, when his foot slipped on the bloody deck. I gave him a severe stroke on the head with a tomahawk, and, after a deadly struggle on the gangway, tumbled him backwards overboard. The moon shone bright out at the moment, and fell full upon his face. Merciful heaven!—my brain reeled, I staggered against a gun, and became insensible—that face, Mr Stewart, haunts my dreams to this hour with its ghastly, despairing expression. It was the long-lost Henry's—I was my brother's murderer! (Here the poor fellow hid his face in his hands, and groaned with agony. I pitied him from my heart; but I knew that sorrow such as his "will not be comforted" in the moment of its strength; so I sat in silence beside him, till his first burst of grief was over, and then I endeavoured calmly and coolly to reason with him on the subject, and to persuade him, by all the arguments I could think of, that he had no cause to reproach himself with what had happened.)

It is kindly meant of you, Mr Stewart, (said he, mournfully shaking his head) kindly meant, but in vain! I know that I was only acting in self-defence—that it was life against life—that I was perfectly justified, in the eyes of men, in taking the life of him who would have taken mine—but I cannot drive that last despairing look from my memory. I feel as if my brother's blood were crying out against my soul. O my poor Harry! would that the blow had fallen on my head instead of thine!—would that I had had time to tell thee how fondly I loved thee, how freely I forgave thee!

But I beg pardon, Mr Stewart;—I must go on with my tale. Ten of the pirates were lying dead on the deck, and five of our poor fellows; the bodies of the former were immediately thrown overboard, and the others were laid side by side a-midships, till we could find time to give them Christian burial. Our last lucky shot had prevented the pirate from carrying the other part of his scheme into effect: the moon was now shining out full and clear, and by her light we saw that her throat halyards had been shot away, and her mainsail was flapping over the quarter; there were hands aloft, reaving new halyards, and busily employed about the mast-head, as if it were crippled. "We have had fighting enough for one bout," said Captain Rose; "we must run for it now." Our main topgallantmast was hanging over the side, and our sails were riddled with the schooner's shot; she had evidently

been firing high, to disable us, that she might carry us by boarding. We cracked on all the sail we could, served out grog to the men, and lay down at our quarters. We were not suffered to remain at peace long: the moment the schooner perceived our intention, she edged away after us, and having repaired her damage, set her mainsail again; and, as the wind was still light, with the assistance of her remaining sweeps, came crawling up again in-shore of us. "Scoundrels!" muttered the captain, "they will stick to us like leeches as long as there is a drop of blood left on board."

Again we saw the flash of her gun, and the smoke curling white in the moonbeam. The shot told with fatal effect: our maintopsailyard creaked, bent, and snapped in the slings, falling forward in two pieces.

The loud cheers of the pirate crew came faintly over the water; but our brave fellows, nothing daunted, responded to them heartily.

"They have winged us, my lads!" said our gallant captain; "but we will die game at all events." The men answered him with another cheer, and swore they would go to the bottom rather than yield. We blazed away at the schooner, but in vain; she had been severely taught to respect us; our shot fell far short, while she, with her long metal, kept dropping shot after shot into us with deadly precision. We tried to close with her; but she saw her advantage, and kept it; all that we could do was to stand steadily on, the men lying down under the shelter of the bulwarks. A faint dull sound now fell upon our ears, like the report of a distant gun. "Thank heaven!" said I, "our guns have spoken to some purpose; some of the cruisers have taken the alarm." We immediately burnt a blue light, and threw up a couple of rockets. In a few minutes a shout of joy burst from the crew; a small glimmering star appeared in the distance, which flickered for a moment, and then increased to a strong, steady, glaring light; at the same time, we heard a second report, much nearer and clearer than before. Alarmed at the near approach of the stranger, which was now distinctly visible, standing towards us under a press of sail, the pirate, determined to have another brush with us, bore up, and closed with us. But we were prepared for him; he was evidently staggered by our warm reception; and, giving us a parting broadside, hove round, stood in under the dark shadow of the land, and we soon lost sight of him.

The stranger proved to be H.M. sloop Porcupine. She hove to when she neared us, and sent a boat on board. She had heard the report of our guns, and hastened to the scene of action, just in the very nick of time to save us. The lieutenant complimented the captain and crew on their gallant defence, and hastened on board the sloop again, to make his report. The boat soon returned, with a gang of hands to assist in repairing our damages; and, on the evening of the next day, we were safely at anchor. When the excitement of the action was over, the pain of my wounds and the agitation of my mind brought on a violent attack of fever. During my delirium, the vision of my dying brother was ever before me; and in my madness I twice made an attempt upon my own life. At length the goodness of my constitution triumphed over the violence of my disorder; but my peace of mind was gone for ever. My worthy friend, the captain, to whom I confided my story, did everything in his power to rouse me from my sorrow, and to reconcile me to myself; but in vain. The sight of my brother had recalled the vivid recollection of by-gone scenes, which I had been for years steeling my heart to forget; my spirit was broken, I became listless and indifferent, and no longer felt any interest in my profession. I did my duty, to be sure; but it was mechanically—from the force of habit. Captain Rose was ceaseless in his kindness. When, on our return home, I expressed my determination not to go to sea again, he represented my conduct during the action, and on other occasions, in such glowing terms, to the owners, that they

settled a small annuity upon me, in consideration of the wounds I had received in their service. It was with the deepest regret I took leave of my worthy friend and captain.

"I can never forget," said he, "that, but for you, my children would have been fatherless, my wife a widow: whenever you need the assistance of a friend, Douglas, apply to me with as much confidence as to a brother."

He then offered to evince his regard in a more substantial manner, which I firmly but gratefully declined. I wrote to him afterwards, telling him that I had settled in this neighbourhood, and requesting him to make arrangements that my annuity might be made payable to a certain firm in Glasgow. In reply, he wrote me a long and affectionate letter. It was the first and last I ever had from him; he died soon afterwards. It is now five years since I took up my abode here, and I feel the weakness and infirmities of age creeping fast upon me. Oh! how happily will I lay down the weary load of life!

"Douglas," said I, when he had finished his story, "you certainly have had grievous sorrows and trials; but you have borne them nobly, except in wilfully attaching the odium of crime to the unfortunate circumstances of your brother's death."

"Would that I could think as you do!" said he.

We parted; and four years elapsed before we met again. I had, in the meantime, commenced practice as surgeon in Glasgow, and my professional avocations kept me too constantly employed to allow of my leaving the town. At last, after a severe attack of illness, I was recommended to go to the sea-side for a few months; and my thoughts immediately recurred to my old friend. I took a lodging in Rothesay, and next morning went down to the beach, where I saw the old man just preparing to put off.

"Here I am again, Douglas," said I.

"Sir!" replied he, looking at me at first doubtingly, for illness had greatly reduced me. "Ah! Mr Stewart, is that you? I thought you had forgotten me."

"Then you did me injustice, Douglas; I have often and often regretted that the pressure of business prevented my visiting you again. By the by, I was reminded of you in rather an extraordinary way lately."

"How was that, sir?"

"On my way down here, a few days since, the steamer touched at Greenock. I was standing on the quay when a poor fellow, a passenger in a vessel just arrived, fell from the gangway, and was taken up insensible. I immediately bled him; and, seeing that he appeared to be seriously injured, I determined, as I had no other particular call upon my time, to remain beside him till he recovered. I had him carried to a small lodging in the neighbourhood, where he soon partially recovered; and, having prescribed for him, I left him, desiring that I might be sent for if any change took place. During the night he had a violent attack of fever. I was sent for: when I arrived, I found him delirious; he was raving about Cuba, and ships, and pirates, and fifty other things that immediately recalled you to my remembrance. When he came to his senses again—

"'Doctor! tell me the truth,' said he: 'am I not dying?'"

"'No,' replied I; 'your present symptoms are favourable; everything depends upon your keeping your mind and body quiet.'

"'Quiet mind!' muttered he, with a bitter smile on his countenance. 'It is not that I fear death, doctor; I think I could willingly depart in peace, if I had but been allowed time to find the person whom I came to Scotland in search of.'

"'And who is that?'"

"'A fisherman at Rothesay.'

"He mentioned the name; but at this moment I forget it."

Let me see—it was—ay, it was Ponsonby—Charles Ponsonby.”

Douglas started, and turned pale.

“Ponsonby!” exclaimed he; “that was *my* name, my father’s name! Who can he be? Perhaps some old shipmate of poor Harry’s. I will go directly and see him.” And he turned as if to depart.

“Gently, gently, my friend,” said I, detaining him; “I must go with you. When I left the poor fellow under the charge of a medical man at Greenock, he was greatly better; but he had received some severe internal injury, and he cannot live long. A sudden surprise might hasten his death. I must go with you, to prevent accidents.”

We went on board the next steamer that started, and in two hours were landed at Greenock. I led the way to the small lodging in which I had left my patient; and leaving Douglas at the door, went in to inquire into the state of the sufferer’s health, and to prepare him for his visitor. I found him asleep; but his was not the slumber that refreshes—the restless and unquiet spirit within was disturbing the rest of the fevered and fatigued body. His flushed cheek lay upon one arm, while his other was every now and then convulsively raised above his head, and his lips moved with indistinct mutterings.

“He is asleep,” said I to Douglas; “we must wait till he awakens.”

“Oh, let me look at him,” said he; “it can do no harm. He must be an old shipmate of poor Harry’s; perhaps he has some memento of him for me.”

“Very well,” said I; “you may come in; but make as little noise as possible.”

We walked gently up to the bed; Douglas looked earnestly at the sleeper, and, suddenly raising his clasped hands, he exclaimed—

“Merciful heaven! it is Henry himself!”

The poor patient started, with a wild and fevered look.

“Who called me? I thought I heard Charles’ voice! Where am I? Give way in the boat!—oh, spare me, spare me, Charles!—Fire!—Down with them! Hurra!”—And, waving his hands above his head, he sunk down again on his bed, exhausted.

He soon fell into a deep slumber, which lasted for some hours. I was sitting by his bedside when he awoke.

“How do you feel now?” said I.

“O doctor! I am dying. I have been dreaming: I thought I heard the voice of one I have deeply injured—nay, I dreamt I *saw* him; but changed, how changed!—and I—I have been the cause of it.”

Here he was interrupted by the smothered sobs of poor Douglas, or Charles, as I now must call him.

“Who is that? there is somebody else in the room,” said he; and, drawing the curtain aside, he saw his brother. “Then it was no dream! O Charles!” and, turning round, he buried his face in the pillow. Douglas sprang forward, and, throwing himself on the bed, gave way to a violent burst of emotion.

“Henry! dear Henry! look at me—it *is* your brother, Henry!”

The dying man groaned. “I cannot look you in the face, Charles,” said he, “till you say you have forgiven me.”

“Forgiven you!” replied the other; “bless you! bless you, Henry! if you did but know the load of remorse that the sight of you has relieved me from! Thank heaven, I was *not* your murderer!”

“And can you forget the past, Charles?” said Henry. “Do not my ears deceive me? Do you really forgive me?”

“Freely, fully, from my heart!” was the reply; “the joy of meeting you again, even thus, repays me for all I have suffered.”

“O Charles!” again ejaculated Henry, “you were

always generous and forgiving; but this is more than I expected from you.”

I was now going to leave the room; but my patient, noticing my intention, begged me to remain.

“Stay, doctor, and listen to my confession; concealment is no longer necessary, for I feel that the hand of death is upon me, and that, in a few short hours, my career of sin, and shame, and sorrow, will be at an end.”

“My poor fellow,” said I, “I have heard the first part of your story from your brother; you had better defer the remainder till you have recovered from your present agitation; I will come again to-morrow.”

“To-morrow, sir!” said he; “where may I be before to-morrow? Oh, let me speak now, while time and strength are allowed. It will do me good, sir; it will relieve my mind, and be a comfort to my troubled spirit.”

Feeling that he was right, I seated myself, while he thus commenced his tale:—

“You remember, Charles, our last sad parting—when we stood”——

“Mention it not, Harry!” groaned his brother—“there is agony in the recollection. Poor Julia!”

“When I left you, I was maddened with sorrow and remorse; all night long I wandered about in a state of distraction, and, when morning dawned, I fell down by the roadside, overcome with fatigue and misery. How long I lay I know not; when I awoke, the sun was high in the heaven; and, during one brief moment of forgetfulness, I rejoiced in his brightness. Alas! it was but for a moment; my guilty love, my treachery, my loss, all flashed upon my mind at once, and I started to my feet, and hurried madly onwards, as if I hoped, by the rapidity of my movements, to escape from my own thoughts. Hunger at last compelled me to enter a small public-house, where I fell in with a poor sailor who was on his way to Liverpool in search of a ship. The sight of this man turned my thoughts into another channel. ‘Double-dyed traitor that I am,’ muttered I, ‘England is no longer a home for me. She for whose love I broke a father’s heart and betrayed a brother’s confidence, has been torn from me; and what more have I to live for here?’ My mind was made up.

“‘My lad,’ said I to the sailor, ‘if you have no objection, we will travel together; I am bound to Liverpool myself.’

“‘With all my heart,’ said he; ‘I like to sail in company.’

“I engaged to work my passage out before the mast, in a ship bound to Jamaica, intending to turn my education to some account there if possible, or, at all events, to remain there as long as my money lasted. When I saw the shores of my native land sink in the distance, I felt that I was a forlorn and miserable outcast; that the last link was severed that bound me to existence. A dark change came over me; a spirit of desperation and reckless indifference; a longing wish to end my miseries at once. I strove against the evil spirit; and for a while succeeded. On our arrival at Kingston, I endeavoured in vain to obtain employment; my stock of money was fast decreasing; and when that was gone, where was I to turn for more? Poverty and wretchedness threatened me from without; remorse was busy within. ‘Why should I bear this weary load of life?’ said I, as I madly paced the shore, ‘when one bold plunge would bury it for ever?’

“I threw myself headlong into the water; and, though an excellent swimmer, I resolutely kept my face beneath the surface; yes! with desperate determination, I strove to *force* myself into the presence of that dread Being whom I had so grievously offended. When I came to my senses again, I was lying on a part of the beach I was unacquainted with; a tall, handsome, dark-featured young man, was bending over me, and, within a few yards of where I lay, a small light boat was drawn up on the shore.

“So you have opened your eyes at last, my friend,” said the man; “you have had a narrow squeak for it. When I dragged you out of the water like a drowned rat, I thought all was over with you. Have you as many lives as a cat, that you can afford to throw away *one* in such a foolish manner?”

“Life! I am sick of it,” answered I.

“Well,” said he, “if that is the case, why not throw it away like a man, among men? Come with me, and I will furnish you with active employment to drive the devil out of your mind. But here, before we start, take some of the cordial to cheer you.”

“I was chilled and exhausted, and took a hearty draught. I felt its warmth steal through my frame—it mounted to my brain—I laughed aloud; I felt that I was equal to any act of desperation. Alas! I little knew the snare I was falling into. We launched the boat and sprang into it; and my companion, seizing the oars, pulled rapidly along the beach. After rowing some distance, we saw a light glimmering amid the bushes; it was now nearly dusk; my companion lay on his oars, and gave a long, low, peculiar whistle, which was immediately answered. He then ran the boat ashore; two men sprang in, who relieved him at the oars; and we again held on our way. There was a great deal of conversation carried on in a low tone; and from what I heard of it, half tipsy as I was, I inferred that my companion, whom the other men addressed with great respect, was a naval officer on some secret duty. Just as we were crossing the mouth of a narrow creek, a light four-oared gig dashed out after us, a voice hailed us in English to lie on our oars, and, when we still held on our course, a musket ball whizzed over us, to enforce obedience.

“The piratical rascals!” exclaimed the young man; “if they lay hold of us, we are all dead men. Here!” continued he, seizing a musket, which lay in the stern sheets, and giving me another, “fire for your life!”

“I was half mad with fever, and the effects of my late draught; and, under the persuasion that our lives were in danger, I fired. The bowman of the gig fell, and we rapidly left her. We came at last to a narrow lagune, close to the low shore of which lay a small schooner at anchor, with sails bent, and every preparation for a start.

“Welcome on board the little Spitfire, my man!” said the young stranger; “we want hands—will you ship?”

“What colours do you sail under?” replied I.

“Oh, not particular to a shade,” said he; “any that happens to suit us for the time being: black is rather a favourite.”

“Black!” exclaimed I; “I thought you were king’s men. I won’t go with you.”

“It is too late, my lad—go you must! Besides, there is no safety for you on shore now; you shot one of the crew of the cruiser’s gig, and they will have life for life, depend upon it.”

“The whole horror of my situation now burst upon me. I was in a fearful strait; but I made up my mind at once, to deceive the pirates, by appearing to be contented with my situation, and to take advantage of the first opportunity that presented itself to escape.

“Well,” said I, “if that’s the case, I had better die fighting bravely like a man, than hang like a dog from the yard-arm of a man-of-war.”

“Bravely said, my hearty!” replied the young leader; “but we must be moving—the blue jackets will be after us; that shot of yours will bring the whole hornet’s nest about our ears.”

“We got under way; and, after rounding the east end of Jamaica, we stood away for the Cuba shore. The very first time we came to an anchor, I made an attempt to escape; I had saved part of my provisions for some days before, and concealed it in readiness to take with me. We were lying close to the shore, and the darkness of the night

would, I thought, conceal my movements; I was just slipping over the schooner’s side, to swim ashore, when I felt a touch upon my shoulder, and, turning round, a dark lantern flashed in my face, and I saw the young pirate standing beside me. He held a cocked pistol to my head. “One touch of this trigger,” said he, “and you would require no more looking after. My eye has been upon you all along; you cannot escape me; do not attempt it again—the consequences may be fatal.”

“From that hour I was aware that I was constantly and narrowly watched. Except in the one instance of the gig’s man, whom I had fired at under a delusion, it was my good fortune as yet to have escaped imbruing my hands in blood. During the action with the Albion, I was sent in the boat under the particular charge of the mate. “Keep your eye on this fellow,” said the captain; “if he flinches for a moment, blow his brains out instantly; we must *glue him* to us with blood. I will keep her in play till you creep alongside; and, once on board, cut every one down before you—give no quarter.”

“My blood ran cold at this horrible order, and I determined upon doing all in my power to counteract its execution. I was delighted when you discovered our approach and the blue light flashed from your stern; for I dreaded the scene of massacre that must have ensued, if we had boarded you unawares. I sprang on deck with the rest, in hopes that I might be able to prevent some bloodshed; but, when I was violently attacked, my passions were aroused, and I fought desperately for my life. Just as you tumbled me over the gangway, the gleam of moonshine shewed me your face. I recognised you immediately; and, when I rose to the surface of the water again after my plunge, I blessed heaven that I had been spared the guilt of murder. I reached the boat, which was still hanging under your quarter, cut the painter, and, in the confusion, escaped unnoticed. I immediately made for the shore; and, after many hair-breadth escapes from my old associates, I volunteered on board one of the cruisers on the Jamaica station. At length she returned home, the crew were paid off, and I determined to seek you out. On inquiring at the office of the owners of the Albion, in Liverpool, they told me that the late chief mate had settled, some years before, in the neighbourhood of Rothesay, in the Isle of Bute, and was still alive. Thank heaven! I have found you at last! I should like to live, Charles, to prove to you my sorrow and repentance for the past; but, as heaven has willed it otherwise, the blessed assurance of your forgiveness will lighten death of half its terrors.”

The poor fellow breathed his last a few days afterwards. Douglas mourned long and deeply for his brother’s death; but, after time had soothed his grief, he became quite an altered man. His mind and spirits recovered their elasticity, after the load which had so long weighed them down, was removed. He did not resume his own name; but lived many years afterwards, contented and happy, in the humble station of a fisherman; and it was not till after his death that his old companions discovered how justly the name of “Gentleman Douglas” had been applied to him. His tombstone bore the simple inscription, “Charles Douglas Ponsonby, eldest son of the late Reverend T. Ponsonby.”

I often wander, in the calm summer evenings, to the quiet churchyard, and return a sadder, but, I hope, a better man, after meditating upon the troublous and adventurous life, and peaceful and Christian death of the **ROTHESAY FISHERMAN**.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Emaginatibe
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WRITER'S DAUGHTER.

Come, I will bless thee, gentle Death,
For all I can resign is breath.—*Anon.*

NOTWITHSTANDING of all that has been said or sung about the miseries of life, and of the acknowledged *dictum* of criticism, that poetry is *exaggerated* nature, it may well be questioned whether all the efforts of the greatest genius ever achieved by mere description the adequate expression of so much suffering as may be pressed into the life of one single child of misfortune. The real miseries of life are generally secret, "sad hoarded treasure," while the sympathies of mankind are claimed by public calamities, (whose publicity is often their cure,) and exhausted to the exclusion of a portion of relief to the victim who trembles lest her sorrow should be known. Yet, even here there is "a mercy in the chastisement;" for had misery the tongue of utterance possessed by other states of mind, the world would be a Babel of mournful cries, and the inhabitants like so many Dantes listening with racked ears to the wails of the condemned in the region of lamentation. A small portion of this "secret sorrow" is exposed in the following tale of real life.

Henrietta Graham inherited a considerable property in the county of Berwick. Her father died while she was an infant, and the heiress was reared by her remaining parent with a blind indulgence, which, though not developing any of the darker shades of character, encouraged that obstinate self-determination which, in the most important step of her life, could not be counteracted, either by threats or by the most powerful appeals to her softer affections. When she was about eighteen years of age, a young man from Edinburgh commenced practice as a writer or attorney in C—, a country town near which she resided; and being handsome and frank, with an air of easy consequence, peculiar to his grade in the Scottish metropolis, it may be easily surmised that many of the country belles were assiduous in their endeavours to attract his notice. Mina Dawson, the blooming daughter of the village surgeon, at first appeared likely to carry off the prize; and public gossip was better justified than usual, by his being seen walking with her on the banks of the Tweed, or across the fields to the old churchyard in the neighbourhood. It was even reported (and what greater evidence of love could be required?) that she was selected to be his partner at the farmers' ball on the approaching Friday. Friday came, and, maugre gossip, Henrietta Graham was led to her place in the contre-dance by the much admired stranger. Poor Mina Dawson!—while her heart throbbed with anguish, and bitter tears sprang from her sparkling eyes at this marked neglect, how little conscious was she that, in after years, she might have reason to bless what appeared a calamity! The truth was, that Mr Erskine had been for some weeks a resident in C—, before he became acquainted with the *pecuniary* merits of the surrounding candidates for his favour; and, though Mina's beauty had first attracted him, his heart was formed of that plastic material which can receive any impression *par convenienc*e. Henrietta was plain in her appearance, (though, as far as expression constitutes beauty, she was its possessor,) and she had, there-

fore, interested him little; but, as soon as he discovered the weightier charms of her patrimony, he was converted into a fervent and unwearied suitor. His attentions were successful; and, in a few months from the period of their first acquaintance, she became his wife, in opposition to the reiterated expostulations of her mother. Henrietta's disobedience had displeased her; yet she could not finally resolve to live apart from her daughter—and so, with a heavy heart, she let out her pleasant property as a farm, and rejoined her at the house of her husband.

For some years, business seemed to go on tolerably well; and, if not an attentive, Mr Erskine was, at least, not an unkind husband. Yet, their intercourse was always marked by an unsocial reserve on his part; and, while the young wife, with every act of tenderness, strove to render his fire-side agreeable to the man for whom she had violated her first duty, she had always a secret misgiving that he felt happier elsewhere. But still heavier distress impended over her. A blunder which Mr Erskine had committed in preparing a bond for one of his clients, involved him in a serious pecuniary loss; all Mrs Graham's accumulations had to be drawn from their repositories for his relief; while the circumstance having, unfortunately, been made public, his business gradually diminished. Still the rent of the property was sufficient for the comfortable support of the family, and enabled Mrs Erskine to give her eldest daughter (many years senior to the two younger children) all the advantages of an Edinburgh boarding-school education.

Mr Erskine having made one descent, realized the aphorism of the accumulation of evils: his judgment, which had never been strong, became at length so injured, by tendencies to inebriety, that he was often led into imprudent speculations, and finally involved himself to such an extent that the sale of the property became indispensable; and the circumstances under which this was effected happened to be so disadvantageous, that, when the creditors were satisfied, a few pounds only remained at his disposal.

Compuaction, for the first time, now seemed to visit his breast, as he contemplated the scene of desolation which his imprudence had created: his wife wept in the arms of her mother, but did not upbraid him; his daughter, Isabella, who had been summoned from all the elegancies of one of the first boarding schools in Edinburgh, to her desolate home, looked with terror and amazement, alternately, at both her parents; and the younger children hung at their mother's knee, sobbing in sympathy, while he, pacing the room, execrated his conduct, and declared that he would henceforth be a changed man. During the ensuing fortnight, a complete reform seemed to have taken place in his dissolute habits; and Mrs Erskine used to revert to this brief period of her married life, as one of which she had the most touching recollections.

This apparent amendment was as fallacious as the rest of his conduct. One fine April day, as he sat gazing listlessly from the window, at what was passing in the street, he suddenly exclaimed—

"I must leave you, Henrietta; I cannot remain any longer a burden upon you. Can I see every one busy on this spring day—every one but myself—and not wish to be where my errors are unknown? Yes!" he continued, striking his

clenched hand upon his forehead, "the very sound of the hammering at the new meeting goes to my heart! There is work for every one but me—I must seek my fortune in another place. O Henrietta! how can I look upon your changed face, and not feel myself a villain! You have never upbraided me by words; but that pale cheek is torture to a diseased conscience."

It was in vain that his weeping wife assured him that all his former errors would be amply compensated by his future conduct. He said no more on the subject; but, some time afterwards, he quitted the house at dawn of day. A pair of scissors were found on the pillow of his infant daughter; and a few stray hairs adorning to them, proved that his last act had been to take a ringlet, as the only treasure he had to carry into exile.

From this time, the support of her family devolved principally on the young and energetic Isabella, who put into requisition for this meritorious service all those elegant accomplishments which she had acquired for the mere embellishment of life; and I have often thought that the entire selflessness evinced in the conduct of this amiable creature arose from a perception of duty peculiar to Scotland. I have heard my mother mention, among many similar facts, that a servant girl, who lived with her, did not, for the space of eight or nine years, purchase a new gown for herself, in order that her wages might support a bed-ridden mother.

At a leisure hour, Isabella would occasionally mingle in the evening parties of the village, where her society was thought an important acquisition, as her superior education, her extensive reading, and practical knowledge of human nature, derived from early subjection to misfortune, rendered her altogether different from the general class of young ladies; and I never received so strong an impression during a first interview with any one, as with her. She was then a tall, handsome girl, with features beautifully regular, and strongly expressive of sensibility; and a grace and quiet elegance, which I have seldom seen equalled, pervaded her whole manner. Her language, too, was different from that of her occasional associates; and the mellow tones of her voice seemed peculiarly adapted for the music of her native land. She had just sung "The Flowers of the Forest," with a pathos which filled many eyes with tears, when I seated myself beside her, remarking—

"You are fond of music?"

"Of songs I am," she replied, blushing slightly at the sudden address.

"There is no class of songs," I rejoined, "so much to my taste as that of which you have just favoured us with the finest specimen—it blends the mind with ancient times and ancient feelings so completely as to suspend all attention either to the present or the future. 'Gilderoy' is also a great favourite of mine."

"The air is fine," she said; "but do you not think that the depravity of the object mourned interrupts the train of purifying reflections which music of the highest order naturally inspires? I admire only those," she continued—her fine features irradiated with a sudden glow of enthusiasm—"which abstract the mind from the contemplation of whatever is debasing."

I was about to advert to the different classes of Scottish music, when my fair companion was requested by Dr Dawson to sing *his* favourite ballad, "Auld Robin Gray," which she did with the strongest expression of feeling; and I certainly never saw this fine emanation of genius produce a more thrilling effect.

Years passed on, and Isabella Erskine, at the age of twenty-four, was on the point of marriage. Charles Allan, son of the late minister of C—, had loved her from childhood; and, having obtained a situation in London, yielding a handsome income, he had offered her his hand, and was accepted. Such, however, was the benignity of

her nature, that it is very doubtful if she would have consented to leave her mother, had she not, by her virtuous industry, realized a sum sufficient to establish her two younger sisters in a respectable situation, for which a lady, who was on the point of retiring from it, had agreed to accept a small equivalent.

It was now within a week of the time appointed for Isabella's marriage, and she had gone to spend a day or two with a friend in the country, when, one evening, as her mother and grandmother were sitting alone in the parlour, a slight tap came to the outer door. Mrs Erskine opened it, and a man in tattered regimentals stood before her.

"Henrietta, do you not know me?" said the stranger; and, to her utter astonishment, she recognised her husband.

Kindly was he welcomed. The best in the house was placed on the table; clothes that he had left were brought to him; and, before the two younger girls returned, he had assumed something like a respectable appearance. Mr Erskine, however, made no allusion either to his past or his present situation; and, notwithstanding the evident restraint he was putting on himself, his conversation was interlarded with so many oaths of the most appalling description, that Mrs Erskine felt a shuddering reluctance to make any inquiry. There was another circumstance, too, that almost froze her blood. When Agnes, the youngest girl, from whose head he had taken the hair, came into the room, he merely cast an abrupt and fugitive glance on her, and shook her coldly by the hand. In the course of the evening, he inquired for Isabella; and Mrs Erskine, thinking this a good opportunity for appealing to the better part of his nature, dilated upon the exertions she had made for the support of the family, and the undeviating tenderness with which she had always regarded him.

"Even the trinket box which you gave her," continued she, "is still used for the same purpose as it was when she was ten years old."

No trace of feeling, however, was visible on his rigid features, as she spoke on this or any other subject relating to their mutual interest; and when, at midnight, the family were about to retire to rest, he called for more liquor, declaring that he would not go to bed that night. His reason for this was soon obvious. He left the house early the next morning; and it may be imagined how stunned Mrs Erskine was by his sudden disappearance, more particularly as she felt an ominous conviction, from the dreadful change which had evidently passed upon his character, that he would never return.

It was late in the evening when Isabella returned home, glowing with all the buoyancy of realized hope; and, immediately afterwards, went to the drawer where the box which contained her hoard had been deposited, wishing to take out a trinket: but what was her dismay, when, on raising the lid, she found, instead of the parcel of bank notes and trinkets, nothing but empty space!

"Mother," she exclaimed, "have you removed the money?"

The fearful truth burst upon the mind of Mrs Erskine—who now informed Isabella of her father's visit, of his determination to sit up all night, and of his disappearance in the morning. Isabella made no remark, but merely said she would take a short walk, to allay her agitation. The night was cold; but the boisterous wind was unheeded by Isabella, who could only think of her degraded father, and the disgrace that would accrue to Charles Allan from such an ignominious connection. She sat down upon a mound of earth near the river side, where, regardless of the rain, which fell heavily, she remained for a considerable time. When she returned home, her clothes were completely drenched, and all means were used to avert the bad effects to be apprehended from such imprudence; but in vain. She was

dreadfully ill all night; and at an early hour next morning, a medical gentleman was summoned, who pronounced her to be in a brain fever. The fever, in a few days, subsided; but a decided aberration of reason ensued. Such was her situation when Charles Allan arrived; and his anguish may be conceived, though not described. He lingered in the neighbourhood for several weeks, and was at length informed that poor Isabella's reason appeared to have returned, as her lucid intervals had gradually been lengthening for the last few days; and, as she had now been quite collected for twelve hours, he gained admittance to her apartment, and cautiously approached the large arm-chair on which she reclined. Her face did not retain a vestige of colour, except a small hectic spot on the centre of each cheek, while her whole appearance indicated utter helplessness. She smiled as Charles approached, and extended her hand, murmuring his name. He seated himself by her side, took her wasted hand in his, and she suffered him to draw her head on his shoulder.

"O Charles," she said, "I thought I should never see you again; I feared that you too had forgotten me. I have prayed for you—longed for you—sent for you—and you would never come. O, Charles, why is this? Do you know," whispered she, "no one loves me now? Every one is unkind to me. They confine me to bed—they put cords on my wrists. Look!"—and she raised the sleeve of her wrapping gown—"oh, look!" And he saw with horror her delicate wrist stained with blood, which had been occasioned by necessary restraint. Repeatedly did he press the wounded hand to his heart, his brow, and his lips; and while he did so, he saw a tear drop upon her breast. "O Charles," she faintly said, after a considerable pause, "I have been ill of late. Sometimes I think my senses have wandered, and that I have spoken harshly to my mother. But I shall be well now, since you are with me." She lay a considerable time perfectly still, then, starting up abruptly, exclaimed—"Did I not tell you that Charles Allan would never come again—that he is dead—and that I shall never see him more?"

With these words, she threw herself upon the floor in a violent paroxysm of tears—and vainly did he endeavour to recall her to recollection. She knew him not, she pushed him aside, looking around as if expecting some one else, at the same time imploring that Charles Allan of her disordered fancy to come and preserve her from death. Charles called for assistance, and with a feeling of anguish almost amounting to frenzy rushed from the house. The next day he left C—; and, though he continued to correspond with Mrs Erskine for the ensuing nine months of Isabella's insanity, he never hinted at the mere probability of making her his wife—the scene he had witnessed having left an impression of terror on his mind which could not be effaced.

Mrs Erskine's unwearied cares were, at length, rewarded by the recovery of her daughter, who, though she never again was cheerful—though she never again sang any of her favourite Scottish airs, and rejected every invitation to enter into society—resumed her former employment with renewed industry; an unvaried placidity of countenance taking place of her former animated expression. Like most people in a similar situation, it was long before she reverted to her late disorder; and no one could know if she were conscious of it. Upon an unreasonable display of temper in an employer, she would, in place of expostulating, as she used to do, mildly reply—"I am very sorry indeed that such and such does not please—but I shall endeavour to rectify the fault." And any petulant remark of her sisters, to whom her recent loss of reason (for such is the coarseness inherent in some natures) rendered her an object of lurking contempt, she never failed to receive in the same unrepining manner. Her mother and grandmother were, however, still more intensely solicitous to promote her comfort than formerly; and the tears she

would secretly shed at these unwearied demonstrations of tenderness, were, if possible, more painful than all the humiliations she endured. A friend who visited the family, after having repeatedly witnessed the meekness with which she conducted herself under the most grievous provocations, said to her—

"I am astonished that you can bear all those things so patiently."

"Ah!" she replied, after a moment's pause, as if to suppress a rising emotion, "you do not consider my peculiar situation. What are all these petty annoyances in comparison to what might again befall me, should I give way to them! I could humbly submit to any sorrow, if reason were spared to me; for then I can feel that there is a merciful purpose in every chastisement."

She had never mentioned Charles Allan since her recovery; but sometimes, as she sat working by the sick-bed of her mother, she would gaze at her wistfully upon any recurrence to past years. And once, when Mrs Erskine had inadvertently half pronounced his name, she calmly said—

"Mother, do not be alarmed—I am equal to hear all. What of Charles Allan?"

Her mother vainly evaded a reply; but, resolute in this as yielding in every other respect, Isabella urged her inquiry; and Mrs Erskine was under the necessity of stating to her, though in as softened a manner as possible, that the affection of Charles Allan for her had appeared gradually to decay, and that he had sailed for India; concealing, however, the announcement which he had made of his previous marriage. From this moment it could not be perceived, either by word or action, that the unfortunate Isabella retained a single recollection of her cold-hearted lover; and she continued her regular, quiet habits of industry, until a sad and mournful event roused to agony all the more intense feelings of her heart.

Mrs Erskine had been for many months almost confined to bed, and it was at last decided that her disorder was of so dreadful a nature as to render an immediate operation necessary. The complaint originated in a circumstance which, fortunately, never reached the ears of her daughter—namely, a violent stroke she had inflicted in the course of her insanity.

The day of trial arrived; and such was the power of maternal affection over the physical weakness of Mrs Erskine, that the fearful operation was completed without the utterance of even a suppressed groan, lest any expression of agony from her might have a prejudicial effect on the mind of her daughter. Alas, for the mild, enduring Christian! She died in the course of ten days—and Isabella *still* retained her reason.

After her mother's death, Isabella had occasion to examine some papers in her escritoire, and found, among others, the letters which Charles Allan had written concerning herself. The first evinced the most intense anxiety for the issue of her illness, and described, in an affecting manner, his utter loneliness of heart. But each succeeding communication grew colder and colder; and even when her complete restoration had been announced to him, he merely congratulated Mrs Erskine on the event—expressed a hope that Isabella's reason might never again be suspended—and concluded with stating that having procured an appointment in India, he was about to embark. A newspaper lay beside this last letter, and contained, in the list of marriages, the following:—"Last Friday, at St Stephen's Church, by the Rev. Josiah Lambert, Charles Allan, Esq., Royal Engineers, to Anna Matilda, eldest daughter of James Boyd, Esq., merchant, New Bond Street, London." From the time of reading the above, a melancholy change took place on the calm deportment of Isabella. She would sit for hours, resting her head upon her hand. Sometimes she would mutter to herself—smile

and weep alternately—then talk on topics, uninteresting in themselves, with an alarming vehemence.

About a fortnight after Mrs Erskine's death, her mother, exhausted with the walk, called at the house of a friend on her return from the churchyard where her remains were deposited. How piteous it was to see the good old woman, after having survived the utter extinction of every hope! Her trembling limbs could scarcely support her to a chair, where she remained for some time with her hands spread upon her face, bending herself to and fro, in all the impotent anguish of isolation. At length she exclaimed—while the large tears coursed down her withered cheeks—

“O, Mrs —, I have been seeing my poor Henrietta's grave; and, since my rejoicing at her birth, I never felt so satisfied as to see her place of rest—where I trust soon to lie beside her. But, oh! what is to become of poor Isabella when I am gone? That is the hardest thought of all. When I look at her pale face, my very soul is pierced, and I could pray, if it were the Almighty's will, that her heart may soon be as cold as her mother's.”

A few weeks after this circumstance, the old woman was found dead in her bed, and her unfortunate grand-daughter (how inscrutable are the ways of Providence!) a wild maniac beside the corpse.

The remainder of my sad narrative is soon told. Isabella, by a benevolent few, was placed in a lunatic asylum in the vicinity of Musselburgh, where for many years she continued an inoffensive lunatic. A week before her death, sanity returned, and she was removed to the house of a sister, now respectably married in the neighbourhood. Her mind continued perfectly unclouded to the end. She talked of past events—dwelt on the virtues of her mother—affectionately exhorting her sisters to embalm in their own the memory of such a parent—expressed her happiness at their prosperity—and, reverting to the probable situation of her father, earnestly and solemnly entreated that, should he ever return, they would receive him kindly, and exert every influence to lead him to repentance. She never mentioned Charles Allan—which omission may perhaps impress this conviction upon the minds of our readers, that, in the hour of death, the natural and relative affections are more powerful than those originating in *passion*. To conclude, in the words of an elegant living poet—

“If virtue thus can form no lasting guard
'Gainst ills below—say, whence her bright reward?
Whence, but from fairer worlds beyond the skies,
In which her fadeless beauty never dies?”—DAVID MALLOCK.

THE BONNET ROCK.

If we had lived at the close of the seventeenth century, and if we had been to profession either a sculptor or painter, and had received an order to produce the likeness of an exquisitely beautiful young woman, we should have chosen for our model Mary Rintoul; and, if we had not succeeded in embodying the idea of one of the prettiest creatures that ever came from the hand of nature, the fault would certainly have been with ourselves, not with our subject. We have chosen this mode of endeavouring to convey to the reader an idea of Mary's personal charms, in order to save ourselves the trouble, and him the infliction, of that most hacknied and most threadbare of all subjects, the description of female beauty; and we trust it will be sufficiently effectual. Mary was in truth a pretty girl—so pretty that we feel, after all, under a strong temptation to describe her at full length; but we will not. She was, at the period when we introduce her to the reader, in her nineteenth year. So far as regarded her condition in life, however, her singular beauty was another proof that nature does not

lavish her gifts of person on the children of wealth alone. Her father was but a journeyman wright; yet was his house both a cheerful and a comfortable one; for he was a steady and industrious man, and as such both esteemed and respected in the humble sphere in which he moved. Kirkaldy, the well-known “lang toun,” was the place of his nativity and residence, and is, consequently—a circumstance which perhaps we should have mentioned before—the scene of our story.

Mary Rintoul, as will readily be believed, had many suitors. There were, at least, a score of young men in Kirkaldy who, had they been asked what was the greatest happiness that could be conferred on them, would, each and all of them, at once have answered—“The hand of Mary Rintoul.” But Mary's affections could not be divided. They dwelt on one alone—and this happy man was William Hay, a young carpenter. The selection did credit to her taste and discernment; for William was in every way an excellent and deserving young man. He was, besides, a remarkably handsome lad, with a pleasant smiling countenance, and of a quiet but cheerful disposition. In short, never were two more suitably matched than Mary and William; nor, perhaps, has any one often seen a more comely pair. Young as they were, they had long loved with the most sincere and devoted affection, and had long looked on themselves as destined for each other. But circumstances had hitherto forbidden this consummation: Mary had nothing, and William was yet but an apprentice. This, however, was a matter which a little time was sure to amend—and it did amend it. William's indenture expired, and he became a journeyman, at a high rate of wages for the times; and, to crown his happiness, on the very day of his re-engagement in his new character, which was that succeeding the expiry of his apprenticeship, Mary Rintoul, with the full consent of her parents, named to her enraptured lover the day on which she would become his wife. This day—it was now the middle of December—was the Tuesday following what is called in Scotland Handsel Monday—the first Monday of the year.

At the period of our story, which is the year 1691, and for long after, Handsel Monday was a day of general festivity in Scotland. On that joyous day, young men and women congregated at innumerable points, all over the country, for the purposes of merry-making. Mirth and music filled the land from one end to the other; and deep on that day was the debauch of the thirsty, and lively and long continued the dance of the light-heeled and light-hearted.

Handsel Monday was, in short, in days of yore, in this our ancient kingdom, a day of wild and reckless glee over the whole breadth and length of the land. It has now lost much, nearly all, of its original character as a general feature; and perhaps it is as well that it is so; but it may even yet be found flourishing, in primitive vigour, in some remote corners of the country; and, probably, even in some not very distant.

But of all the districts in Scotland that joined in this festive fray—and there was not one that did not—there was none that conducted it with so joyous a spirit or with such hearty good will as Fife. There, the day was celebrated with a glee that was equalled nowhere else, and with a devotion to the joys of the season that completed its claims to pre-eminence. Of the prevailing spirit, then, of the day and the place, the “lang toun,” of course, came in for its share. On that day, Kirkaldy was all agog, all stir and bustle even by the break of day; for the revellers took Time by the forelock, and were early on the field. The particular Handsel Monday to which we refer, was a delightful day, and remarkably mild for the season; a circumstance which rendered it peculiarly favourable for the out-of-door sports—such as throwing the hammer, putting the stone,

&c. &c.—that formed the principal amusements of the occasion.

The great scene of these pastimes was the sands of Kirkaldy; and on the occasion of which we speak, these were, early in the day, crowded with young people of both sexes—the young men to exhibit their strength and skill, by feats of personal prowess, and the young women to witness the triumphs of their lovers. Although, as we have said, the merry groups assembled on the sands on this day were composed mostly of young folks, yet they were not all young. There were amongst them a good many of their elders, who came there to see how their successors conducted themselves, and to revive their recollections of the days that were past. Amongst these was old Gabriel Watson, who, in his day, had had no competitor in throwing the stone. He had beat, by a full yard, Peter Thomson of Pathhead, who was esteemed, until he suffered this defeat, the man of the most powerful arm in Fife; a reputation which was, of course, transferred, as it had fallen by right of conquest, to Gabriel Watson. But many summers, and winters too, had past since then. Peter was long gathered to his fathers, and Gabriel was now an old man. He was then four-and-twenty—he was now seventy-four; still had not all his strength, by any means, yet departed from him. Gabriel was still a stalwarth carle, and still could throw a stone with the best of them. It is not, however, his gymnastic fame, great as that certainly was, that induces us to notice him thus particularly, but a much more interesting circumstance. This is his having been the grandfather of Mary Rintoul—and dear to the old man, as the apple of his eye, was the beauteous, lively, warm-hearted child of his daughter. Peerless—as she really was—Mary seemed in the eyes of her dotting grandfather. Often, often, did he lay his withered hand on her young head, smoothing down its golden tresses, and imploring on it all the blessings of heaven; and no wonder that the old man's heart was wrapt up in Mary Rintoul, for to him she was ever dutiful, and kind, and tender, and affectionate. To anticipate his wishes was, to her, one of the greatest triumphs, and to obey them, one of the pleasantest occupations of her innocent life.

We have said that, amongst the young people assembled on this day on the Seafield sands, there were a good many old folks. These, however, were not found intermingling much with the noisy, boisterous crowd of their juniors, nor taking anything like an active part in their pastimes. They were, for the most part, otherwise and more characteristically disposed of. At one part of the sands there was a very singular and remarkable rock, called the Bonnet Rock; a name it had acquired from its peculiar shape, which bore a rude resemblance to that article of dress—the old Scotch flat bonnet—pointed at in its designation. Its form altogether, however, taking into account its particular position and its adjuncts, gave it perhaps a fully stronger likeness to the roof of a pulpit. It was a thin, flat, projecting table of rock, formed by the action of the sea, which had wrought its way underneath it, leaving the upper part as a covering to the cave which it had thus hollowed out. The edges of this roof on either side, had been originally supported by natural mounds of sand; but these had latterly been, in great part, swept away by a succession of extraordinary high tides. Still the roof remained secure in its airy situation; for it had, to all appearance, a sufficient resting-place behind, or on the side next the land. The cave formed beneath the Bonnet Rock in the way we have described, was light and spacious, with a natural floor of smooth, white, firm sand. It was thus both a curious, and in its way, a pleasant place—and the good folks of Kirkaldy thought so; for it was on the sands around this singular rock that they were assembled on the day of which we are speaking; and this had been the custom there, on Handsel Mondays, from time immemorial. But on these occasions the inside of the cave presented fully

as joyous a scene as the out. It was the sort of headquarters of the revellers, where they went occasionally to refresh themselves, and to spend the intervals of the sports; for it was the general store-house, for the day, of the creature-comforts of the merry-makers—the grand depository of brandy bottles, and of cakes and kebbucks; chairs and tables, too, were then there, and long forms ran along its walls, for the accommodation of its frequenters: nay, so complete was its equipment as a banqueting-hall, a large fire blazed at its further end, to drive away the chill air of the place, and to make it look more cheerful, and feel more comfortable. It was here, then, in these hilarious quarters, that the older people were to be found on this day. Seated around the different tables with the brandy bottle before them, they talked over the feats of their youth; and, without being at the trouble of going out to witness the sports of the young men, were content to learn of their progress from the occasional visitors to the cave. But these came so thick and frequent—there was such a constant outgoing and incoming—that the old folks were kept well informed of all that was passing without.

We need hardly say, that William Hay was amongst the youngsters on the Seafield sands on this occasion. Neither need we say, that, he being there, Mary Rintoul would not likely be far off. In truth, William was at this moment in the thick and the throng of a crowd of young fellows, who were eagerly engaged in a trial of strength and dexterity, at throwing the stone; and, within a few yards of him, along with some other girls of her acquaintance, whose lovers were also amongst the athletic, stood Mary Rintoul—her eyes glistening with delight; for William had just thrown the stone a full foot beyond the most powerful of the competitors, at least he who had been hitherto reckoned so.

“He has thrown beyond them a’,” said Mary, in a low, modest voice, but with a feeling of triumph, which, though she endeavoured to suppress, her sparkling eye and glowing cheek betrayed. “He has thrown beyond them a’,” she said, addressing the girl who stood beside her.

The reply was a disdainful toss of the head—for the defeated party was her lover—and a remark that Jamie's foot had slipped when he threw the stone, “or it wadna be Willie Hay that wad gang beyond him.”

Mary might well have anticipated this want of sympathy in her triumph, on the part of her companion; for she was aware of the attachment between Jessie Bell and James Elphinston; but, in her joy, she had, for a moment, forgotten the circumstance. Jessie's remark, however, instantly brought this to her recollection, and with it a deeper blush on her cheek. But at this moment, another object suddenly at once engrossed her attention and relieved her from the embarrassing situation in which she stood with her companion.

“There's grandfather,” she exclaimed, running towards the old man, who was now indeed seen approaching the group, of which she herself had just formed a part. Gabriel's eyes brightened up, and a smile came over his face when he saw her.

“Hey! my little gilpie, are you there?” he said, yielding his hand to the fond grasp of both of hers. “Whar's William? But I needna ask,” he added, with a sly look—“whan ye're here, he canna be far aff.”

Mary blushed, and, hanging down her head, replied that he was “owre there,” pointing to the group she had just left.

“Ay, ye little cutty, I thocht sae,” said Gabriel, stepping on towards the throng, with his grandaughter in his hand. “The gowk and the tittlin! Faith, Mary,” he added, as if suddenly re-inspired with the spirit and the energy of his youth, by the mirthful shouts which arose from the crowd that surrounded the stone-heavers, “I'se

hae a throw yet, for auld lang syne. It'll maybe be the last. I used to be gay guid at it; and I dinna ken but I may bother some o' them yet."

Saying this, he dropped the hand of his granddaughter, and, pushing his way into the centre of the crowd, exclaimed, "Stand about, ye feckless loons, and let me at the stane. It's thirty years this very day since I lifted ane; but I hae pith aneuch in me yet, I think, to gie some o' ye the short throw."

Both the old man himself and his speech were received with shouts of applause; for he was well known, and much and universally esteemed by all who did know him.

"Well done, Gabriel! well done, Gabriel! Faith oor auld friend has spunk in him yet," was shouted from all quarters.

"The deil a ane here 'll match him yet," said another.

"Faith, ye say true there, Andrew," replied Peter Blackie, a man not much Gabriel's junior, to the assessor of this bold annunciation. "If ye had seen him on this very spot throwin the stane, as I have, some thirty-five years since, ye wad be still mair sure ye warn a far wrang in saying what ye hae said." Then, raising his voice, so as to be heard by those around him, "I'll wad a pint o' the best brandy in Kirkaldy, wi' ony man here, that Gabriel gang sax inches at the very least beyond the best o' ye. Will onybody tak me up?"

Nobody would, because nobody chose to take up a bet against Gabriel, not from a fear of losing, but from kindly feeling. In the meantime, the old man had stripped his coat and taken his place at the point from which the stones were heaved; and was in the act of poisoning the latter, previous to discharging it, when he felt himself pulled gently from behind. A little irritated by the unseasonable interruption, he turned sharply round; but the slight and transient expression of displeasure exhibited on his countenance, was quickly replaced by a smile, when he beheld his granddaughter. It was she who had called his attention from behind.

"Grandfather," she said, "I hae brocht ye a wee drap brandy, thinkin it micht help ye to throw a wee bit better; for I have often heard ye say, ye aye did that langsyne." And she produced a tumbler from beneath her shawl, in which might be about a wine glassful and a half of the liquor she named.

The old man took the tumbler with a smile of satisfaction; but it was evidently more with the giver than at the gift.

"Thank ye, Mary, my dear," he said—"it was very considerate o' ye, and I'll tak it with great pleasure. Anything, Mary, would do me good, oot o' your hands. Here's to ye a', lads," he added at the same time drinking off the contents of the tumbler. "Now," he said, again poisoning the stone, "by my troth I think I could throw't owre Inchkeith."

And, in the next instant, the stone was sailing through the air. It alighted. The spot was marked by a deep indentation. A foot rule was applied; and it was found to be nine inches and a half beyond the furthest previous throw. A shout from the bystanders at once proclaimed Gabriel's triumph and their satisfaction with his success. Again the stone was put into his hands, again he threw, and six full inches more were added to the distance—a result which put all chance of successful competition, with the nervous old man, entirely out of the question. No persuasions, however, could induce him to throw a third time.

"Na, na," he said, laughing, "I'll keep what I hae gotten. I'm no gaun to risk the honour I hae gained. I'll throw nae mair, neither noo nor hereafter. Ye hae seen the last o't wi' me, lads."

Saying this, the old man resumed his coat; and, taking his granddaughter by the hand—for she had remained beside him throughout the whole of the scene just described—left

the ground. On gaining the outside of the throng, they were joined by William, who, although he had not hitherto interfered, had all along been keeping a watchful eye on their motions. Having congratulated the old man on his success, the latter proposed to William that they should adjourn to the Bonnet Rock.

"You and William may gang, grandfather," said Mary, "but I canna. I maun gang hame. I promised my mother to be hame at twa o'clock, and it's noo ten minutes past it. I canna gang, grandfather, on ony account."

"Then, if that's the case, I'll go home with you, Mary," said William, "and join your grandfather at the Bonnet Rock afterwards."

"Ye'll do nae sic thing, either o' ye," replied the old man, who felt himself particularly happy. "I'll tak a' the wyte frae your mother, Mary, for keepin you; and, since we're at it, we'll just mak a day o't. It's maybe the last Handsel Monday I'll ever see. Indeed, it's mair than likely—though you twa, I trust, 'll see mony a ane."

"But really, grandfather, I canna break my promise to my mother; it wad alarm her; she wad think some mischief had befa'en me," said Mary, shewing great reluctance to proceed towards the Bonnet Rock, whither the whole party were half unconsciously directing their steps, during this conversation.

"Hoot, your mother's a fule, lassie, and ye're anither," replied Gabriel, with a sort of good-natured impatience, and, at the same time, taking his granddaughter by the arm and urging her onwards. Thus pressed, she offered no further resistance; and the whole three were soon afterwards seated at one of the tables in the cave of the Bonnet Rock, amidst a numerous assemblage of friends and acquaintances; and a merry set they were, as any festive occasion ever brought together. Never had the Bonnet Rock, in truth, seen a more joyous squad—and many a one it had seen. The roof of the cave rung with the shouts of laughter and glee that rose from the revellers below; and the laugh and the jest went merrily round.

It was known to the most of those assembled here on this occasion, that the marriage of William Hay and Mary Rintoul was to take place on the following day; and this knowledge was now turned to good account in many a good humoured joke at the expense of the young couple. But the approaching nuptials of the betrothed pair were not thus lightly treated by all. Serious and sincere wishes for their happiness in the married state, were expressed by numbers of those present, and "long life to them" drank in many a brimming bumper.

During this scene, Mary and William sat together; and the latter, taking advantage of the obscurity of the place, as it was now getting dusky, had slipped his arm around the waist of his fair companion, and was occasionally whispering into her ear the overflowings of his happiness, of his present and prospective felicity.

At this moment, a new cause of pleasurable excitement struck on the ears of the joyous party in the cave. This was the sound of pipes. Donald Grant, the town piper of Kirkaldy, and as good a performer as ever blew a chanter, was both heard and seen coming amongst the sands towards the Bonnet Rock, playing, with might and main, the well-known tune of "Maggy Lauder." On arriving at the cave, Donald was received with shouts of welcome by its inmates; but their joy at so timeous and valuable an accession as the piper, was by no means confined to mere expressions of satisfaction with his presence. It soon took a more substantial form; bumpers of brandy and lumps of bread and cheese, short-bread, and currant bun, were thrust in upon him at all hands. The former, Donald—who was reputed as good a hand at the pint stoup as at the pipes, and that was excellent—nipped off, one after the other, as fast as they were presented to him; the latter he thrust into the capa-

cious pockets of his greatcoat, till they could hold no more. Thus charged and primed, Donald was ready for anything, and therefore at once agreed to a proposal which was made to him, that he should ascend from the land side, where it was of easy access, to the top of the Bonnet Rock, and play some tunes from that conspicuous and elevated situation.

The idea met with universal approbation; and about a dozen young men, one of whom carried a large flag, eagerly offered to accompany him. One of them—an intimate friend of William Hay—just as he was leaving the cave with the rest of Donald's escort, called out to the former to come along with them. William smiled and shook his head, without attempting to move. He felt too happily situated where he was, with his arm around his intended bride; and this some of those about him perceived.

"Na, na, faith, ye'll no get Willie to gang along wi' ye, I warrant," said one—"he's owre weel whar he is." Mary held down her head and blushed, and jogged William to go, in order to relieve her from the badinage of his light-hearted acquaintance.

"Not a foot, Mary, will I budge," replied her lover; "let them gibe awa there. They say right: I'm better pleased whar I am, and therefore here I'll stay." And he pressed Mary closer to him.

The last of Donald's merry escort had now quitted the cave, and their joyous shouts were immediately after heard as they scrambled up the rock behind. The summit was gained—that is, the roof of the cave; the flag was placed in the centre; the piper advanced to the front, and again struck up the favourite tune of Maggy Lauder. Inspired by the merry strains, the young men who accompanied Donald began to caper, and dance, and leap about, in all the madness of the moment's excitement; whooping and yelling with boisterous glee. The first part of the play played, the now half-breathless performers assembled in the centre of the flat on which they stood, surrounding the flag-staff, took off their hats, caps, and bonnets, and set up one loud and hearty shout; another immediately followed, and they had already raised the third, when a strange movement was felt beneath their feet. In the next instant—and before any idea or conjecture whatever could be formed of the alarming phenomenon—down, with a dead, heavy crash, went the entire roof of the cave on its ill-starred inmates below, crushing every one of them to death; and it would have done so though each had had fifty lives—for the superincumbent mass was of many hundred tons weight. Huge fragments of rock, and hundreds of cart-loads of sand, and soil, and rubbish, now filled the cave; and all below was silent as the grave, and motionless, where but an instant before all had been thoughtlessness and joy. Here, then, was a dreadful catastrophe—a fearful conclusion to the joyous revelries of the day—an accident unparalleled, perhaps, in the dismal record of mischances. We need scarcely add, that this day of feasting in Kirkaldy was now turned into a day of sad and gloomy mourning. The reveller, horror-struck, laid down the untasted goblet, when the dismal intelligence reached him; the musician stopped in the midst of his merry strains; and the dancers flew from the scene of levity and mirth, to that of death and desolation.

A hundred hands were immediately employed in clearing away, with shovel and pick-axe, the accumulation of rocks and rubbish by which the cave was filled, in the desperate hope that some of those who were buried under it might still be alive. Vain hope! Out of the whole number—upwards of thirty—not one survived. All, all had perished. Nay, not only was life totally extinct, but the bodies were fearfully mangled and dismembered; so much so, that many of them could not be recognised by their nearest and dearest friends. To this, however, there was an exception in the

cases of two of the sufferers. These were William Hay and Mary Rintoul, whose bodies were found entire and untouched. Their death had been caused by suffocation, as they were found deep embedded in a bank of sand; sitting as they sat when death overtook them, close by each other, with William's arm still around the loved object of his affections.

A SCRAP OF THE COVENANT.

It is a fact well known to Dr Lee, and to many besides, that, notwithstanding the extensive researches of Woodrow and others, there have died away in the silent lapse of time, or are still hovering over our cleuchs and glens, in the aspect of a dim and misty tradition, many instances of extreme cruelty and wanton oppression, exercised (during the reign of Charles II.) over the poor Covenanters, or rather non-conformists, of the south and west counties of Scotland. In particular, although the whole district suffered, it was in the vale of the Nith, and in the hilly portion of the parish of Closeburn, that the fury of Grierson, Dalzell, and Johnstone—not to mention an occasional simoom felt on the withering approach of Clavers *with his lambs*—was felt to the full amount of merciless persecution and relentless cruelty. The following anecdote I had from a sister of my grandmother, who lived till a great age, and who was lineally descended from one of the parties. I have never seen any notice whatever taken of the circumstances; but am as much convinced of its truth, in all its leading features, as I am of that of any other similar statements which are made in Woodrow, "Naphtali," or the "Cloud of Witnesses."

The family of Harkness has been upwards of four hundred years tenants on the farm of Queensberry, occupying the farm-house and steading situated upon the banks of the Caple, and known by the name of Mitchelslacks. The district is wild and mountainous, and, at the period to which I refer, in particular, almost inaccessible through any regularly constructed road. The hearts, however, of these mountain residents were deeply attuned to religious and civil liberty, and revolted with loathing from the cold doctrines and compulsory ministrations of the curate of Closeburn. They were, therefore, marked birds for the myrmidons of oppression, led on by Claverhouse, and "Red Rob," the scarlet-cloaked leader of his band.

It was about five o'clock of the afternoon in the month of August, that a troop of horse was seen crossing the Glassrig—a flat and heathy muir—and bearing down with great speed upon Mitchelslacks. Mrs Harkness had been very recently delivered of a child, and still occupied her bed, in what was denominated the chamber, or chamer—an apartment separated from the rest of the house, and set apart for more particular occasions; her husband, the object of pursuit, having had previous intimation, by the singing or whistling of a bird, (as was generally reported on such occasions,) had betaken himself, some hours before, to the mountain and the cave—his wonted retreat on similar visits. From this position, on the brow of a precipice, inaccessible by any save a practised foot, he could see his own dwelling, and mark the movements which were going on outside. The troop, having immediately surrounded the houses, and set a guard upon every door and window, as well as an outpost, or spy, upon an adjoining eminence, immediately proceeded with the search—a search conducted with the most brutal incivility, and even delicacy; subjecting every child and servant to apprehensions of the most horrid and revolting character. It would be every way improper to mention even a tittle of the oaths and blasphemy which were not only permitted, but sanctioned and encouraged, by their impious and regardless leader.

Suffice it to say, that, after every other corner and crevice was searched in vain, the chamber was invaded; and the privacy of a female, in very interesting and delicate circumstances, rudely and suddenly entered.

"The old fox is here," said Clavers, passing his sword up to the hilt betwixt the mother and her infant, sleeping unconsciously on her arm, and thrusting it home with such violence that the point perforated the bed, and even penetrated the floor beneath.

"Toss out the whelp," vociferated Red Rob—always forward on such occasions—"and the b—ch will follow." And, suiting the action to the word, he rolled the sleeping, and happily well-wrapped, infant on the floor.

"The Lord preserve my puir bairn," was the instantaneous and instinctive exclamation of the agonized and now demented mother—springing at the same time from her couch, and catching up her child with a look of the most despairing alarm. A cloud of darkened feeling seemed to pass over the face and features of the infant,* and a cry of helpless suffering succeeded, at once to comfort and to madden the mother. "A murderous and monstrous herd are ye all," said she, again resuming her position, and pressing the affrighted, rather than injured child to her breast. "Limbs of Satan and enemies of God, begone! He whom ye seek is not here; nor will the God *he* serves and *you* defy, ever suffer him, I fervently hope and trust, to fall into your merciless and unhallowed hands."

At this instant a boy about twelve years of age was dragged into the room, and questioned respecting the place of his father's retreat, sometimes in a coaxing, and at others in a threatening manner. The boy presented to every inquiry the aspect of dogged resistance and determined silence.

"Have the bear's cub to the croft," said Clavers, "and shoot him on the spot."

The boy was immediately removed; and the distracted mother left, happily for herself, in a state of complete insensibility. There grew, and there still grows, a rowan tree in the corner of the garden or kailyard of Mitchelslacks; to this tree or bush the poor boy was fastened with cords, having his eyes bandaged, and being made to understand, that, if he did not reveal his father's retreat, a ball would immediately pass through his brain. The boy shivered, attempted to speak, then seemed to recover strength and resolution, and continued silent.

"Do you wish to smell gunpowder," ejaculated Rob, firing a pistol immediately under his nose, whilst the ball perforated the earth a few paces off.

The boy uttered a loud and unearthly scream, and his head sunk upon his breast. At this instant, the aroused and horrified mother was seen on her bended knees, with clasped hands, and eyes in which distraction rioted, at the feet of the destroyers. But nature, which had given her strength for the effort, now deserted her, and she fell lifeless at the feet of her apparently murdered son. Even the heart of Clavers was somewhat moved at this scene; and he was in the act of giving orders for an immediate retreat, when there rushed into the circle, in all the frantic wildness of a maniac, at once the father and the husband. He had observed from his retreat the doings of that fearful hour; and, having every reason to conclude that he was purchasing his own safety at the expense of the lives of his whole family, he had issued from the cave, and hurled himself from the steep, and was now in the presence of those whom he deemed the murderers of his family.

"Fiends—bloody, brutal, heartless fiends—are ye all!—and is this your work, ye sons of the wicked and the accursed One? What! could not *one* content ye? Was not the boy enough to sacrifice on your accursed temple to Moloch, but ye must imbrue your hands in the blood of a weak, an

infirm, a helpless woman. Oh, may the God of the covenant," added he, bending reverently down upon his knees, and looking towards heaven, "may the God of Jacob forgive me for cursing ye! And, thou man of blood," (addressing Clavers personally,) "think ye not that the blood of Brown, and of my darling child, and my beloved wife—think ye not, wot ye not, that their blood, and the blood of the thousand saints which ye have shed, will yet be required, ay, fearfully required, even to the last drop, by an avenging God, at your hands?"

Having uttered these words with great and awful energy, he was on the point of drawing his sword, concealed under the flap of his coat, and of selling his life as dearly as possible, when Mrs Harkness, who had now recovered her senses, rushed into his arms, exclaiming—

"O Thomas, Thomas, what is this ye hae done? Oh, beware, beware!—I am yet alive and unskaited. God has shut the mouths of the lions; they have not been permitted to hurt *me*. And our puir boy, too, moves his head, and gives token of life. But you, you, my dear, dear, infatuated husband—oh, into what hands have ye fallen, and to what a death are ye now reserved!"

"Unloose the band," vociferated Clavers—"make fast your prisoner's hands, and, in the devil's name, let us have done with this driveling!"

There was a small public house, at this time, at Closeburn mill, and into this Clavers and his party went for refreshment, whilst an adjoining barn, upon which a guard was set, served to secure the prisoner. No sooner was Mr Harkness left alone, and in the dark—for it was now night-fall—than he began to think of some means or other of effecting his escape. The barn was happily known to him; and he recollected that, though the greater proportion of the gavel was built of stone and lime, yet that a small part towards the top, as was sometimes the case in these days, was constructed of turf; and that, should he effect an opening through this soft material, he might drop with safety upon the top of a peat-stack, and thus effect his escape to Creechope Linn, with every pass and cave of which he was intimately acquainted. In a word, his escape was effected in this manner; and, though the alarm was immediately given, and large stones rolled over the precipices of the adjoining linn, he was safely ensconced in darkness, and under the covert of a projecting rock; and ultimately (for, in the course of a few days, King William and liberty were the order of the day) he returned to his wife and his family, there to enjoy for many years that happiness which the possession of a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man is sure to impart. The brother, however, of this more favoured individual, was not so fortunate, as may be gathered from Woodrow, and the "Cloud of Witnesses;" for he was executed ere the day of deliverance, at the Gallowlee, and his most pathetic and eloquent address is still extant.

Let us rejoice with trembling, that we live in an age and under a government so widely different from those now referred to; and whilst on our knees we pour forth the tribute of thankfulness to God, let us teach our children to prize the precious inheritance so dearly purchased by our forefathers.



* "In the light of heaven its face
Grew dark as they were speaking."

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SEVEN YEARS' DEARTH.

It was a good many years before the accession of King William III. to the throne of Britain, that a farmer of the name of William Kerr rented a farm in the parish of Minniegaff, in the county of Wigton, on the great road to Port-Patrick. The farm lay at some distance from the road, at the foot of the hills—a wild and secluded spot, possessing few beauties, save to a person who had been reared in the neighbourhood, whose earliest associations were blended with the scenes of his youth.

The farm of Kerr was of far greater extent than importance, only a few acres of it being in cultivation; but his flock of sheep was pretty extensive, and his black cattle numerous. He was looked upon as a wealthy man at the period of which we speak, had been married for many years, but had no children to enjoy that wealth which increased from year to year. This was the only drawback to his earthly happiness; but he never repined, or let a word escape his lips to betray the wish of his heart. Even the rude taunts of his more fortunate neighbours he bore with unruffled countenance, though he felt them keenly; and he still loved Grizzel, his wife, with all the fervour of his first affection—an affection that was returned with usury.

Such was the situation of the worthy farmer, when, one morning in harvest, he went out with the earliest dawn to look after some sheep he had upon a hill in a distant part of the farm. He had counted them, and was returning to join his reapers, accompanied by Colin, his faithful dog, who, in devious excursions, circled round the large grey stones that lay scattered about. He had proceeded for some way without missing the animal, when he stopped and whistled for him. Colin, contrary to his usual custom, did not come bounding to his side, but answered by a loud barking—a circumstance which a little surprised him; but he proceeded homeward, thinking that he was amusing himself with some animal he had discovered; and, being in haste to join his reapers, paid no further attention to this act of disobedience in his favourite. Breakfast passed, and mid-day came, and still Colin did not make his appearance. His master was both angry and uneasy at his absence; but, in the bustle and laughter of the harvest field, again forgot the occasional thoughts of his useful dog, that obtruded themselves on his mind. It drew towards evening, and still no Colin came. The circumstance was becoming unaccountable; none had seen the dog; and uneasiness succeeded to anger. He now left his reapers, and went to the house to inquire of Grizzel if the animal had been in the house; but she answered that she had only seen him once in the early part of the day, for a minute or two, when, after receiving a piece of cake, he had ran off with it in his mouth, nor stopped to eat it, contrary to his usual custom. This, with the circumstance of his leaving him in the morning, and his unaccountable absence, confirmed William Kerr in his opinion, that something uncommon must have happened to him. As he could ill do without his assistance to gather his sheep for the night, without returning to his reapers, he set out for the spot where the dog had left him, ever and anon calling him by his well-

known whistle and name. The large grey stones and barren muir echoed the call; but no Colin appeared. At length he came to the place, and was surprised and overtaken with fear, as he observed the animal stretched upon the ground, with something close beside him, which he seemed to watch.

“Colin, Colin!” he called; “poor Colin!”

The dog did not rise: he gave every mute token of joy and pleasure at the sight of his master, looking over his bushy shoulder, and wagging his tail; but he made no effort to stir—fearful, apparently, of disturbing the object that lay beside him.

“Surely,” said his master, “my poor dog is bewitched. Colin, you rascal, what have you there? Come with me to the sheep.” But Colin moved not.

The farmer stood rooted to the spot; he had neither the power to advance nor retreat; a superstitious fear took possession of him; his hair moved upon his head; a tingling feeling seemed to excite every muscle of his body, and deprive it of voluntary motion. The fear, in fact, of the fairies was upon him; he conceived himself the victim of fascination—a conception well justified by his own conduct, for he could not, for a time, withdraw his eyes from the object of his alarm. When the subject was considered, there was ground for his fear. Before him, under the shadow of a large grey boulder stone, within a few yards, lay his faithful dog—a creature that had never before required a second call from him—now deaf to that voice it was his former pleasure to obey at every hazard. He was supporting something that had the appearance of a lovely child sound asleep, nestled close into his bosom, the head resting upon his shaggy side, and its curly, golden hair appearing like rays of light on the pillow upon which it rested. The face appeared more beautiful than anything of this earth he had ever seen—so delicate, so clear, so beautifully blended was rose and lily; but the eyes were swollen and red with weeping, pearly drops stole in slow succession from its dark eyelashes, while a heavy sob swelled its little bosom as if it would awaken it. The farmer, with his eyes almost starting from their sockets, incapable of motion or cool reflection, stood gazing upon the pair as they lay before him—the one unconscious, the other, while shewing every symptom of joy he could silently express at sight of his master, yet seemingly fearful as an anxious mother of disturbing his sleeping charge. As William Kerr's surprise began to abate, his fears, if possible, increased.

“Surely,” he said to himself, “this is one of the children of the fairies. God protect me! I am bewitched as well as my poor dog. I never felt thus before, in the presence of mere earthly being. I cannot move—my knees can scarce support me—I cannot withdraw my eyes from that fearful object. God deliver me from the power of the enemy!” And he shut his eyelids by a convulsive effort.

He then attempted to pray, but memory had fled; nor psalm nor prayer could he call up to his aid, the palsy of fear had so completely unhinged him. The very beauty of the object increased his alarm; for he had heard that Satan is never more to be feared than when he appears as an angel of light. With his eyes shut by a nervous effort, he turned himself round, and ran to his reapers.

As he approached them, and the distance increased between him and the object of his fears, his natural firmness returned; but his countenance still betrayed the agitation of his mind. The reapers were just quitting the field, having accomplished the labours of the day; and, seeing him running towards them, crowded round him, eagerly inquiring the cause of his alarm. It was some time before he could recover his breath, (so swiftly had he ran,) to give them an account of what he had seen, and express his regret for the loss of Colin, whom he never more expected to see. The whole group were struck with fear and amazement, gazing alternately at the farmer and each other—not knowing what to think of the strange case; but all agreed that some effort ought to be made for the recovery of the dog. John Bell, an elder of the church, and a neighbour farmer, spoke and said—

“My brethren, the power of the Evil One is great; but it is overruled by One greater and more glorious. Let us employ His aid; then shall we go forth in the strength of our faith, and Satan shall flee from before us.”

He then prayed, and the reapers kneeled. When his address was finished, he arose with a firm assurance in the Divine protection.

“I will go forth,” said he, “in the strength of His name, and see what new delusion of Satan this is. William Kerr, send to the house for the ha’ Bible, that I may carry it as a shield between us and the wiles of him who will vanish before the holy book, like mist before the wind.”

One of the young men ran to the house, and soon returned with his mistress, she herself carrying the important volume, which she delivered into the hands of John Bell; and the latter, opening it, read aloud to them that beautiful chapter, the fourteenth of St John’s Gospel. They then proceeded to the spot pointed out by the farmer, chanting a psalm, which the elder gave out, as they walked behind him. All, excepting the elder, were unnerved by fear—casting many a timid glance around, and ready, at the least alarm, to run back. Curiosity to see the conclusion, and shame, more than firmness, compelled them to advance. Before they reached the stone where the farmer had seen his dog and his charge, Colin came bounding to them, barking for joy, and fawning upon his master and mistress; while the former, in a burst of joy at the recovery of his favourite, exclaimed—

“Great is the power of the Word! The charm is broken! Colin, Colin, I am rejoiced to have rescued you from the evil powers. Come, lad, let us to the hill and weer in the ewes.” And, with his usual whistle, he pointed to the hill.

Colin would not yet obey the wonted order, but ran back towards the large grey stone, barking in an unusual manner, returning, again running towards it, and looking back as if he wished his master to follow. The whole group were in amazement, and knew not what to think of these strange actions of the dog; but they had yet more to be surprised at; for, taking the end of his master’s plaid in his mouth, the creature endeavoured gently to drag him towards the stone. As the party thus stood irresolute, the faint wailing of a child was distinctly heard, and a babe, supporting its feeble arms upon the stone, was seen to emerge from the other side of it. It was the same the farmer had previously seen—his fears returned—several of the most timid fled; but Colin ran to the little stranger, and licked the tears that streamed down its cheeks, while the child put its arms around his neck, and leaned its head upon its new friend. That they witnessed something out of the usual order of nature, no one present had the smallest doubt; for how, by earthly means, could a child of man have reached a spot so lonely and secluded? The farmer and his wife both endeavoured, by the most endearing terms, to induce Colin to leave it; but in vain.

“What can this mean?” exclaimed Grizzel “Colin,

Colin, you never before refused to obey my voice; surely nothing good could induce you to disregard it. Come, come, and leave that unearthly creature.”

John Bell, who had been occupied in mental devotion, at length broke silence—

“Let us not judge harshly,” said he; “perhaps it is a Christian child, dropped here by the fairies as they were bearing it away from its parents, who now mourn for its loss, and nurse a changeling in its place. It may have been rescued by the prayer of faith, or some other means, from their power. In the strength of His name, I will be convinced of its real nature, either by putting it to flight if it is unearthly, or rescuing it from death if it is human; for we must not leave it here to perish through cold and want, and prove ourselves more cruel than the dumb animal.”

As he spoke, the eye of the child turned towards them; it gave a feeble cry, and stretched out its arms, still supported by the dog. The elder advanced to it, and placing the Bible upon its head, it smiled in his face, and grasped his leg. The tears came into the good man’s eyes, while Colin bounded for joy, and licked his hand as it rested upon the head of the child.

“Come forward, my friends,” he said; “it is a lovely child, a Christian babe, for it smiles at the touch of the blessed Word. It is weak and sore spent, and calls for attention and kindness.”

All the woman was kindled in the heart of the farmer’s wife: she ran to the babe and pressed it to her bosom, kissing it as it smiled in her face, and lisped a few words in a language none present could understand. The fears of all were now nearly dissipated; those who had fled returned; all the females in turn embraced the babe; but the fondness of William Kerr for the foundling was now equal to his former fears. He at once resolved to adopt it as his own until its sorrowing parents should reclaim it. Grizzel concurred in the sentiment and resolution; and he and Colin, who now had resumed all his wonted obedience, set off for the hill, while the other returned to the house. As Grizzel carried the child home, she felt her love for it increase; and the void that had existed in her bosom ever since her marriage, was fast filling up. The child’s eyes were of a deep hazel, and gave indications of beauty; and its clothes were of a far finer texture than those worn by children of humble rank, and bespoke a good origin. Of all the females present, she alone felt assured that it was a proper child, because she wished it to be so; the others looked upon it still with some misgivings; revolving, doubtless, in their minds, the strangeness of all the circumstances attending the affair—and not the least of these was the locality of the child’s position. It was a lonely spot, bearing no good name, close by a beautiful green knoll, standing by a spring of pure water, and covered with daisies; while all around was heather or stunted grass, resembling an oasis in the desert. Strange sights were reported to have been seen near it; and the shepherd lads, in the still evenings of summer, were wont to hear these strange humming noises, mixed with faint tinklings—sure signs, of course, of the presence of the fairies. It was called the Fairy Knowe, while the stone was called the Eldrich Stone—names of bad omen, and sufficient to scare all visitors after nightfall. The newly awakened feelings of Grizzel deprived all these ideas and recollections of that weight which operated with the other females, and warped their opinions; and, while they concluded that nothing good could be found in such a spot, they cautioned Grizzel, in their kindness, to be wary that the creature did her no harm. Grizzel herself was not without some misgivings; but she clung to the babe that lay in her bosom, and resolved to put to the test, as soon as she reached home, whether it was really a fairy, or a child stolen by these kidnappers. She believed her

test to be sufficient to make it, if a fairy, leave her presence; if a human babe, to place it beyond their power to recover it, cleanse it from any spell they might have put upon it, secure it from the evil eye, and prevent its being forespoken. For these most important purposes she borrowed a piece of money (without assigning a reason for wanting it) from one of her neighbours, and, as soon as she reached home, secured herself in the spence with the babe, (for no one must see her in the act,) put the piece of money into some clean water with salt, stripped the child to the skin, washed it carefully, then took its shift and passed it thrice through the smoke of the fire, and put it on again with the wrong side out. All this was done not without fear and trembling on the part of Grizzel; but her new found treasure was unchanged, and smiled sweetly in her face as she proceeded in her superstitious operation. Having supplied its little wants, now fully assured, she put it to bed with joy and satisfaction, and looked on it till it fell into a sweet sleep. Scarce had she accomplished this, when William Kerr entered with John Bell, upon whom he had called as he returned from the hill, to aid him with his counsel and advice.

"Well, Grizzel," said he, "is it a lad or a lass bairn we hae found; for I am convinced, (for a' the fear it gae me,) by what our elder has said, that it is nae fairy, but an unchristened wean the elves had been carryin awa frae its parents, wha, I hae nae doot, are noo mournin its loss."

"Indeed, guidman," replied Grizzel, "it is as sonsie a lass bairn as ever I saw in my life, and a's richt. It is nae fairy, I'm satisfied, and I'm right glad on't; for she'll be a great comfort to us, now that we are getting up in years, if her ain mother doesna come to take her to her ain bosom; but o' that I think there is little chance; for, by the few words it spoke, it is nae child o' oor land."

"William Kerr," said the elder, "if, as your wife proposes, you mean to keep this child, there is one duty to perform, both for its sake and your own—and that is, it must be baptized; for there is no doubt this sacred right has either been withheld or neglected, or the Enemy would not have had the power to do as he has done. To-morrow I will go myself to the minister and talk with him; and next Lord's Day you or I must present it to be admitted into the visible church, of which I pray it may be a worthy member. Are you content?"

"Far mair than content," replied the farmer: "I will rejoice and bless God for the occasion as fervently as if she were my ain. While I hae a bit or a beild she shall neither feel hunger nor cold."

The parties separated for the night, and the new-found stranger slept in the bosom of the farmer and his wife. On the following Sabbath it was taken to the church of Minniegaff, to be baptized. The church was crowded to excess. Every one that could, by any effort, get there, attended to witness the christening of a fairy, all expecting something uncommon to occur. The farmer and his wife, they thought, were too rash to harbour it in their house, for it was not chancy to be at feud with "the good people," who, out of revenge, might shoot his cattle; and, verily, during that summer, a good many had already died of elve shots. As the christening party approached the church, every one was anxious to get a peep at the young creature. It was so beautiful that it could not, they said, be a common child; neither was it a changeling, for changelings are weakened, yammering, ill-looking things, that greet night and day, and never grow bigger. Contrary to the expectations of almost all the congregation, when the farmer and his party entered the church, the child neither screamed nor flew off in a flash of fire, but smiled as beautiful as a cherub. The service went on as usual. The farmer stood up and took the holy vows upon himself, and gave the lovely babe the name of Helen. The girl throve, and became the pride

of her foster parents, who loved her as intensely as if she had been their own child; and Colin became, if possible, more beloved by them, as Helen's playfellow.

A few months after the finding of Helen, as Grizzel was one day examining the silken dress which she wore when discovered on the muir, and which had never been put on since—being soiled and damp when taken off—she discovered a piece of paper in one of the folds, much cressed, as if it had been placed there by some one in a state of great agitation. It was written in French; neither the farmer nor herself could read it; but William, on the first opportunity, took and shewed it to the minister, who translated it as follows:—"Merciful God! protect me and my child from the fury of my husband, who has returned, after his long absence, more gloomy than ever. Alas! in what have I offended him? If I have, without any intention, done so, my dear baby, you cannot have given offence. Good God! there are preparations for a journey making in the court-yard—horse, saddle, and pillion. Where am I to be carried to? My babe! I will not be parted from you but by death! His feet are on the stairs. I hear his voice. Alas! I tremble at that sound which was once music to my soul. Holy Virgin! he approaches!" Here the writing ceased. It threw no light upon the event, further than it shewed that the mother of the child was unhappy, and above the lower ranks of life. The paper William left with the minister, at his request.

The little Helen grew, and became even more lovely and engaging—the delight and joy of the farmer and his wife. Yet their happiness had in it a mixture of pain; for they never thought of her but with a fear lest, as not being their own child, she should be claimed and taken from them. Years rolled on, and Helen grew apace. She was of quick parts, and learned, with facility, everything she was taught—a circumstance which induced many to believe that the fairies were her private tutors. The opinion was justified by other circumstances. She was thoughtful and solitary for a child. The Eldrich Stone was her favourite haunt. She seldom joined in the sports of the other children of her age—having, indeed, little inducement; for they were always fearful of her, and felt constraint in her presence. Some of the most forward taunted her with the cognomen of Fairy Helen; and if she was successful, (as she often was,) in their childish sports, they left her, saying, "Who could win with a fairy!" This chilled the joyous heart of the fair Helen, and was the cause of many tears, which the kind Grizzel would kiss off with more than maternal love. As she grew up, she withdrew herself from the society of those who thus grieved her; but there was one individual who ever took her part, and boldly stood forth in her defence. This was Willie, "the widow's son," as he was familiarly called, for no one knew his surname. He lived with an aged woman, who passed as his mother; but the more knowing females of the village said she could not, from her apparent age, bear that character. She had come there no one knew from whence, and inhabited a lone cottage with the boy. She appeared to be extremely poor, yet sought no aid from any one. William was better clad than any child in the parish, and much care had been taken in his education. She had (by the proper legitimate right) the name of being a witch. She sought not the acquaintance of her neighbours; and, when addressed by any of them, was very reserved, but civil; while the only thing that saved her from persecution, was her regular and devout attendance at church, along with the child, William, and the good opinion of the worthy minister. Yet this scarcely saved her; for, when anything untoward occurred in the neighbourhood, it was always laid to her charge. William was six or seven years older than Helen, and, still smarting under the taunts he had himself endured, was her champion, and none dared offer her insult in his presence. Her timid heart clung to him and loved him as a brother, and they were ever together—as he accompanied her to and from school, as if she

had been his sister. He was now about eighteen, tall and athletic for his age, and of a firm and resolute mind.

It was in the autumn of the year 1688, that a strange horseman, with a servant behind him, was seen to approach the lone cottage of the widow, to dismount and enter it. He remained for several hours, during which his servant was busy purchasing a horse and the necessary furniture for an immediate departure. Willie was afterwards seen bounding across the fields, towards the house of William Kerr, which he entered with a face beaming with joy.

"Helen," said he, "I am come to bid you farewell; for I am going to leave Minniegaff for a long time, and I could not think of going without seeing you, and letting you know my good fortune."

Helen burst into tears and sobbed. "O Willie!" she cried, "who will take my part when you are gone? I will have no friend left but my dear father and mother, and I will miss you so much; but it is wrong for me to be grieved for your departure, if your fortune is good." And she tried to subdue her tears.

"Yes, Helen," said he, "my fortune is good: I have found, what I hope you will soon find, a long-lost father—a parent I knew not existed. I now know that Elizabeth is not my mother, but has only had the charge of me during my father's exile in a foreign land. He is now returned with William, Prince of Orange, and is restored to his estate. I am going to London to join him, where I will often think of you, Helen. Farewell!" And, clasping the weeping Helen to his bosom, he ran back to his cottage, took farewell of Elizabeth, and, full of hope and joyous expectation, soon was out of sight.

After the departure of Willie, Helen felt for long a loneliness she had never felt before. The Eldrich Stone used to be her favourite resort; but she was now much dedicated to Elizabeth, who, being left alone, became fond of her company, passing the greater part of the day in the farmer's house, but continuing as reserved and taciturn as she had always been. In vain Grizzel endeavoured to know from her who Willie's father was, or his name: all she ever would communicate was, that his was a gallant name; and the time, she hoped, was now come, when he might pronounce it with the best of the land. Thus time passed on, and Willie was almost forgot by every one save Elizabeth and Helen—the one dwelling on the loved theme with all the fondness of a parent, the other with that of a beloved brother; but no news of him had as yet reached the cottage of Elizabeth, who was now become very frail, while Helen paid her every attention in her power.

The seasons had, for the last three years, been most unpropitious; the poor were suffering from famine, and the more wealthy were much straitened in their circumstances, and impoverished by the death of their cattle from want of fodder. In summer—if it could be called summer—when the sun was not seen for weeks together, when the whole atmosphere was surcharged by fogs, when the ground was deluged by rain, and the wind blew piercing cold, the grain that was sown did not ripen sufficiently either for food to man or seed to sow; while the cattle, seized by unknown diseases, languished and died. Money, in those distant parts, was of small avail; for none had grain to dispose of, or help to bestow, upon the numerous applicants who thronged the doors of the larger farmers. Nettles, marsh mallows, and every weed that was not immediately hurtful, were eagerly sought after and devoured by the famished people.

Among all this suffering, William Kerr did not escape. The lengthened and unprecedentedly deep snow-storms were fatal to his flocks, and, before the fourth winter, he had not one left to take care of. His black cattle died, until he was equally bereft of all; and that house where plenty had always been, and from whence the beggar was never sent away hungry, was now the abode of want

bordering on famine. Yet despondency never clouded his brow, and his heart was strong in Christian faith, and resigned to the will of God. Evening and morning his simple sacrifice was offered up to the throne of grace with as fervent love and adoration as in the days of his greatest prosperity; while the assiduous and gentle Helen mingled her tears with those of Grizzel, as much for the misery that was around them as their own. The winter of the fifth year had set in with unusual severity, long before its usual time, and all that William had secured of his crop was a few bushels of oats, so black and bitter that nothing but the extreme of hunger would have compelled a human being to have tasted the flour they produced. Their only cow—the last of six which had in former years abundantly supplied their dairy—now lean and shrunk, had long since withheld her nourishing stream. It was a beautiful animal, the pride of Helen and Grizzel, was reared upon the farm, and obeyed Helen's voice like a dog. With great exertion and assiduity she had procured for it support; but the grass did not give its wonted nourishment, being stinted and sour, and in vain was now all her care. The snow lay deep on the ground, and the animal was pining with hunger, and must inevitably die from want.

Great was the struggle, and bitter the tears they shed, before they gave consent to have their favourite put to death. Yet it was reasonable; for the carcase was requisite to sustain their own existence and that of Elizabeth, whom the good farmer had removed to his own home, lest she had died for want, or been plundered in those times of suffering and distress—when even the bands of natural affection were rent asunder by famine, and children were devouring in secret any little eatable they found, without giving a share to their more famished parents, while parents grudged a morsel to their expiring children. Thus passed another miserable winter, and death was now busy around them; numbers died from want and unwholesome food, and, among the rest, old Elizabeth sickened and paid the debt of nature; but, to her last moment, she never divulged to Helen, much as she loved her, any circumstance regarding Willie. Helen, indeed, in the present distress, thought not of him; and when Elizabeth used to regret his neglect of her, she only remembered him as a former playfellow and generous school companion.

A few days before she died, as Helen sat by her bedside, administering to her wants, she put forth her emaciated and withered hands, and, taking Helen's, kissed them, and blessed her for the care and attention she had paid her. Pointing to a small chest in which her clothes were kept, she gave Helen the key, and requested her to open it and bring a small ebony box to her. Helen did as desired; and, when she received the box, she opened it by touching a concealed spring. Helen looked on in amazement; for in the box were many jewels, and several valuable rings. The old woman took them out, one by one, and laid them upon the bed, in a careless manner, as if they had been of no value; then took out a small bundle of letters, which she kissed and wept over for a few moments; then, looking up, she said—

"O Great Author of my being! pardon this, my last thought of earth, when my whole soul ought to be employed in thanking Thee for Thy mercies, and imploring pardon for my many sins. Oh, how I now lament my infirmities!—but there is still hope for even the chief of sinners, which I am, in the blood of Jesus." She then sunk overpowered upon her pillow for a time, and at length recovering, continued—"Dear Helen, when I am gone, keep these baubles to yourself. Alas! they were purchased by me by years of misery. These papers you will keep for William, should he ever return to inquire after me; if not, destroy them; you are at liberty to look over them if you choose, when I am no more. In this box you will also find a small sum in gold. When it pleases God to give his sinful creatures

more favourable seasons, it will restock this present desolate farm, and in part only restore the debt of gratitude we owe a worthy man."

Helen, with tears, accepted the bequest, and restored it to the oaken chest; then kneeled by the bedside of the sufferer, and prayed with all her heart for her recovery; but the hand of death was upon Elizabeth—she fell into stupor, and never spoke again. Helen and her foster parents felt real sorrow at the death of their inmate, for she was a pleasant companion to a pious auditory. Though taciturn on every subject but what was of a spiritual nature, her soul became as if on fire when she conversed on her favourite theme, and a sublimity was in her language that carried away her hearers, and forced conviction upon the cold and indifferent.

As soon as the funeral was over, Helen shewed to William and his wife the magnificent bequest of the old lady. Although they knew not the exact value of the gems, they knew it must be considerable; and the guineas were above two hundred. Their astonishment was great at the good fortune of Helen; for they had always thought, from her dress and humility, that Elizabeth was poor, although she never sought relief, but lived principally upon the produce of her little kailyard, and the meal she purchased each year, in the beginning of winter, along with her meat. This unexpected wealth added not to their happiness, nor in the least abated their grief for the loss of the giver. Scanty as the necessaries of life were, William Kerr was far from poor; but, at this time, money could not procure food in many of the distant parts of Scotland.

By strict economy, they contrived to put over the next long and dismal winter, and even to have something to spare for the more necessitous of their neighbours, in hopes that the ensuing spring would put an end to their privations; but it proved cold and barren as the others had been, and the more necessitous of the surviving population had retired to the sea-shore, to eke out a scanty subsistence by picking the shell-fish from the rocks, and eating the softer sea-weeds. Often in vain the most dexterous fisher essayed his skill, and returned without a single fish; for even those had forsaken the shores of the famishing land, driven off by the storms, and the swell and surge, that for weeks together beat upon the coast.

In this the extreme of their distress, William Kerr heard that a vessel had arrived at Stranraer with grain. Without delay he mounted his sole remaining horse, now so much reduced that it could scarce bear his weight, and set off for the port—a distance of twenty miles. Short as it was, it was late in the evening ere he arrived; and he found, to his regret, that all had been disposed of in a few hours—being dispersed about the town and immediate neighbourhood. Through much importunity, and by paying a great price, he procured a scanty supply; and next morning, laying it on his horse, went back to his home, rejoicing that he had procured it; for what he had reaped the harvest before was now nearly all consumed. As there was no appearance of the present summer being better than the preceding one, he resolved to shut up his house and retire to Stranraer, until it should please God to remove his wrath from the land. He took this step, because there he could procure subsistence for money, although the price was exorbitant.

With regret they bade adieu to the scenes of their former happiness; and, taking all their valuables and cash, locked up their home; and, with their one horse, which carried the load, accompanied by Colin, now old and blind, led by Helen, the sad procession moved on their dull and weary way. The land was desolate; it was the beginning of June, yet not a bud was to be seen; the whins shewed only their gaudy yellow flowers, as if in mockery of the surrounding dreary scenes. Arrived at Stranraer, they found their situation much more comfortable; as provisions could be had

there, although the prices were exorbitant. Several of the inhabitants imported grain from England and Ireland, in small quantities, for themselves and such as could purchase at the price they demanded for it—which comparatively few could; and what was thus brought was in a manner concealed, for the magistrate, by act of the Estates of Scotland, had the power to seize any store of grain, either in passing through the burgh or concealed in it, and sell it to the people at their own price. This prevented those who could from importing it from a distance, save in small quantities.

Helen's heart bled to see the famishing multitudes wandering along the beach at high water, like shadows—so thin, so wasted—looking with longing eyes for the retreat of the tide, that they might commence their search for any shell-fish they could find upon the rocks, or any other substance which the ingenuity of man could convert to food, however loathsome, to satisfy the hunger that was consuming them. There were to be seen mothers, bearing their infants—unmindful of the rain that for days poured down, more or less; and fathers, more resembling spectres than men, either upon their knees in the middle of their family, imploring heaven for aid, or following the wave in its slow retreat to the utmost bound with anxious looks, exulting if their search procured them a few limpets or wilks.

During this tedious summer, William Kerr returned occasionally to his deserted farm; but it lay waste and uninviting, more resembling a swamp than arable land. His heart fell within him at the sight. No one had called; everything remained as it was; even the direction he had written upon his door, telling where he was to be found, remained undefaced, save by the pelting rain. Towards autumn the weather became more warm and dry, and promised a change for the better. The family, with joy, returned once more to the farm, to prepare for better seasons. As soon as they entered the cold damp house, where fire had not been kindled for many months, Colin, the faithful and sagacious dog, blind as he was, gave a feeble bark for joy, ran tottering round each well-remembered spot; then, stretching himself on his wonted lair beside the fire, which Helen was busy kindling, licked her hand as she patted his head, stretched his limbs, gave a faint howl, and expired. All felt as if they had lost a friend.

This winter was more mild than any that had been remembered for many years, and gave token of an early and genial spring. The famine was still very severe; but hope began to appear in the faces of the most reduced and desponding. William Kerr procured seed corn from Stranraer, and distributed some among his less wealthy neighbours to sow their lands.

For eleven long years no word had been received of Willie, the widow's son, as he had been called, although he had been often the subject of discourse at William Kerr's fireside. The little ebony box had never been opened since the day of the funeral. There was now little chance of his ever returning to receive its contents, and far less of Helen's ever leaving Minniegaff in quest of him; and, as Elizabeth had allowed Helen, if she chose, to read the papers, William and Grizzel proposed that she should do so. She immediately opened it, and took out the packet, which was neatly sealed, and tied by a ribbon. There was no direction upon it. Having broken it open, the first paper was found to be directed "To William B—— of B——;" and ran thus:—

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—You will not have seen this until I am in the world of spirits, and I hope the communion of saints in heaven, through Jesus our Lord. You have ever believed that I am your parent; but I am not. I am only your aunt—your father being a much younger brother, who was the delight of his mother and myself; for, from his earliest dawning of reason, his mind was of a pious turn, and we loved him as much as he was the aversion of his father. His elder brother had engrossed all his parent's love;

for he was more like himself, and cared not for anything that savoured of the fear of God. My father had been a Cavalier, and suffered a share of his sovereign's misfortunes, and hated the Covenanters with a perfect hatred; but he interfered not with his pious wife in her mode of worship, until your father shewed an aversion, when yet a boy, to join in the profanity and revelry which he and his elder son delighted in. It was after this that he began to storm and threaten his wife, for instilling her puritanical notions, as he called them, into his children. We were immediately taken from her. I was sent to an aunt of his own opinion; and Andrew, your father, to the University in Paris. Your father I never heard of for some years. My mother I never saw again until she was upon her deathbed, when she gave me the jewels you will find in the box with this. Make a good use of them, and may they prove a blessing, in placing you above want, if I am taken away before you are claimed by your father, which he will do if he lives, and is allowed to return to Scotland; if not, you will be enabled to trace him out by their means. But I must proceed:—I was still residing with my father's aunt, when your father returned to Scotland, bringing with him from France a Scottish lady of family, whom he had married there. Being very uncomfortably situated, I went to reside with him. The troubles about religion, which distracted the country, had been laying it waste for some time. Your father took a leading part for the Covenant, and joined the insurgents. The fatal battle of Bothwell Bridge was fought. Your father was dangerously wounded; but escaped. He was concealed by a faithful servant, and brought home, where we concealed him from the search that was made, until his recovery. Your mother, who was of a delicate constitution, never recovered the shock. She sickened, and died before her husband was convalescent. Your father was obliged to fly his country in disguise; his property was confiscated, and a price set upon his head; for, though he had been seen to fall, his body had not been found. I was driven from his house, and retired to this wild as a place of security, of which I informed your father. He was, when I wrote this, at the Hague, a merchant, and wealthy. You were too young to remember any of these events, and I was as familiar in your sight as your sainted mother. If you apply to the Prince of Orange, should your father be dead, he will be your friend for his sake.

ELIZABETH B——."

The next paper was a letter in a neat female hand, which had evidently been blotted by the tears either of the writer or the reader; for it was blistered in many places, and the ink effaced.

"MY LOVING ELIZABETH,—Pity me; for my heart is broken—I am weighed down by many sorrows, and have no one to whom I can relieve this bursting heart but you. Alas! the illusions of love are gone. I am now the aversion of my lord. I fear his love for me is fled for ever, in spite of all my endeavours to please him. At the birth of my beauteous babe, he left the castle in displeasure. Unfeeling Charles! when I expected rapture in his eye at the sight of his child, he turned from it as if he loathed it, because it was not a boy. For eighteen months he has been in London, at the court, and returned only a few weeks since. Alas! how his manner is changed! I am treated with harshness and scorn. The only consolation I have now left, he threatens to deprive me of, and send her, young as she is, to a nunnery in France, and make her profess. I have been on my knees again and again to my cruel lord to allow me to be her companion. This he sternly refuses. Oh, teach me, my dear Eliza, how I may soften his obdurate heart; for, cruel as he is, I love him still, and would die a thousand deaths rather than offend him. Had I never loved him so sincerely, I never had been so miserable. Holy Virgin, be my aid! and all the saints befriend me! I know it is not because I am an unworthy daughter of the uni-

versal church that he now has ceased to love me; for he knew I was so before we wed. He, alas! cares for nothing holy; and, in his conversation, even favours the church of my faith. Again, I implore, advise and pity me, your poor and heart-broken

LOUISA B——."

The only other paper was also a letter in the same hand, as follows:—

"MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—Fate has done its worst, and my heart is not broken, neither am I distracted. I am bereft of my treasure; it was torn from me by its unnatural father with threats and imprecations. I know no more; for nature sank under his cruelty. When I recovered, my lord—now my lord no longer—had left the castle. I would have followed, though I knew not whither; but I was detained a prisoner in my room, and denied the presence of every one, except strange menials he had appointed as my keepers. I have succeeded in my attempt, and am now with my uncle. I leave this land, in which I have suffered so much, for France, in search of my heart's treasure; nor will I cease my wanderings until I find my child. Farewell! perhaps for ever!

LOUISA B——."

Helen and the now aged Grizzel shed tears over the sufferings of Louisa, replaced the papers, and wished that William might once more return, if it were for no more than to inquire if he could say whether his relation had found her child or not. The packet could reveal nothing to him but what he already knew.

The following summer was genial and warm, and the crops luxuriant to profusion. Nature appeared anxious to make amends for the barrenness of the preceding years. Famine had disappeared, but poverty had laid its cold hand upon many a family who before had never known want. The more fortunate William Kerr and Helen distributed their aid with a liberal hand to all around them; his farm had resumed its wonted cheerful appearance; and Helen occasionally visited the Eldrich Stone, as she went out of a summer evening to meet the worthy farmer on his return from the hill. The harvest had been gathered in, and a public thanksgiving made in all the churches for its abundance, when, towards the end of the year, the worthy old minister died, beloved and regretted by all. His executor sent to William Kerr the small piece of paper his wife had found in the clothes of Helen, with a certificate of the date and circumstances carefully written out at the time. So little had they thought of it, as of any importance, that its existence was almost forgotten. Helen put it into the same box with the papers left in her charge by Elizabeth, and thought no more of it. Happy, loving and beloved by her foster parents, she had no other wish on earth but to see them happy by contributing to their comfort. The new incumbent of the parish, a pious young man, was most assiduous in the performance of his public duties—visiting all his parishioners with a parent's care, speaking consolation to the afflicted, and soothing down any little animosities that arose among them; but it was observed that he called oftener at William Kerr's, and remained longer there, than at any other of the houses in the parish; and it was whispered by the young maidens that Helen was, more than the old man and his wife, the inducement for these numerous and protracted visits.

The truth was, that he loved Helen, and was not looked upon by her with indifference; his many virtues had won her esteem, which is near akin to love, and she received his attentions with a secret pleasure, though no declaration of love had yet been made by him. In one of their walks, which had been protracted more than usual, they were returning homewards by the Eldrich Stone. The evening was mild and serene for the season; Helen's arm was in his. She felt no fatigue; but stopped, from habit, at the much loved-spot A

thought of Willie passed through her mind ; a faint wish to know if he were dead or alive rose in her bosom ; and her head dropped with a sigh as she thought of his being numbered with the dead. The anxious lover remarked the change ; and, taking Helen by the hand, inquired, with a tremulous voice, the cause of her melancholy. The ingenuous girl laid open to him the cause, and a pang of jealousy wrung his heart as he dropped her hand. "Helen," he would have said, "you love another ;" but such was the agitation of his mind, that his tongue refused utterance to his thoughts.

In silence they walked side by side to the farmer's, as if the faculty of speech had been taken from them. Contrary to his wont, the minister did not enter the gate to the enclosure, but, stopping short, wrung Helen's hand as he bade her good night, and hurried away before she could inquire the cause of his agitation. She burst into tears, and stood looking after him. He stopped, and with a quick step she saw him returning. She still stood in the same spot, her eyes following his every motion. Again he approached, and, leaning upon the gate where she still stood, said, in a voice almost choked—

"Helen, do you love that person ?"

"As a brother I love him, and cherish his memory," the agitated Helen replied.

A groan burst from the minister as he ran from the spot. Helen entered the house, for the first time in her life, a prey to anguish. What could be the cause of the sudden change in the manners of the minister, she was at a loss to conceive. She retired to bed, but not to rest.

For several days she saw nothing of her lover. He had never left the manse. On the Sabbath following, Helen and her parents were in their usual place in the church ; but she had a shade of care upon her lovely countenance which no one had ever seen there before. Contrary to her wont, her eyes were never once directed to the pulpit, while the preacher sought her face with more than usual anxiety. Although there was a tremulousness in his voice at the commencement of the service, he preached with more than his usual eloquence and fervour.

At the conclusion of the service, the pious hearers crowded round their pastor ; but it was remarked that, although William Kerr and his wife shook hands with him, Helen passed on out of the churchyard unaccompanied by him, and without being recognised. The worthy pair were not less astonished than the rest of the spectators, and wondered much what could have caused the change. On their way home, they inquired at Helen, who, without reserve, gave them an account of all that had occurred at their last interview. The good dame smiled.

"He will soon come back again," said she ; "it's a good sign—only a little jealousy of Willie."

"I am sure," replied Helen, "he need not be jealous of my loving my brother ; for I shall always love him as such."

Grizzel was right : in the course of the following week, the minister was as much abroad as ever, and spent more than his usual time with the Kerrs. All was explained to the satisfaction of both parties, and a mutual declaration of love followed. Helen Kerr was soon after led a bride to the manse, and became its ornament and boast. With the plenshing of the bride, the old carved oak chest of Elizabeth was also taken, the ebony box was opened, and, for the first time, her husband knew of the treasure possessed by his wife. With a playful violence he pushed it from him, and clasped her in his arms.

"Helen," said he, "you are the jewel I prize ; put away from my sight these baubles. But what papers are these ?"

"I am afraid to let you look upon them," said she, "for they are Willie's ; and it is dangerous for me, you know, to speak of *him*."

She undid the ribbon and handed them to him. He read them over with care, along with the slip of paper written in

French, and compared the hand in which it was written with the two letters. Resting his head upon his hand, he mused for some time, then again compared them, and seemed lost in thought.

"Helen," said he at length, "a strange fancy has taken possession of me—that you are in some way or other connected with these papers. It is so improbable that I am greatly at a loss to conceive how it can be ; yet the conviction is not the less strong upon my mind. There is a similarity in the handwriting of the letters that struck me at once. Their date, and the date of my predecessor's certificate, are very near each other ; there is not a month between the first letter and the certificate, and the second letter is a short time after the date of that document. It is very strange ; and God, in his good time, if agreeable to his will, may bring all to light."

About eighteen months after this conversation, Helen, one day, as was her wont, had walked over to William Kerr's, with her young son in her arms, to spend an hour or two with them, and wait until her husband called, on his return to the manse, from his visits. William had the babe on his knee, and was talking to it, with all the fondness of age, about its mother, when he first had her on his knees in the same chair and at the same hearth. Their attention was excited by the tramp of horses' feet approaching the house. Helen started up, and ran to the window, to see who it might be. She could not recognise them : it was a gentleman in a military undress, attended by a servant. The first dismounted, and, giving his horse to the attendant, stepped hastily to the door, which he opened with the freedom of an old acquaintance ; and, before she could leave the window, he was in the room. Helen recognised him at a glance.

"It is Willie, father," she cried, in a voice of joy. "I am so happy to see you again, and well!—for we all thought you had been dead."

It was indeed Willie ; but he appeared not to partake of the joy of those who greeted him with such fervour. He gazed at Helen, and then at the babe she now held in her arms, in silence ; and a deep shade of disappointment clouded his brow. He had stood thus for a minute or two in silence, with a hand of each of the old people grasped in his. Helen felt awkward and abashed at his melancholy and imploring glance ; and, turning from it, appeared busy with her son. Willie seated himself, and seemed as if in a fit of abstraction, his eyes still fixed on the object of his early love, and strong emotion depicted on his countenance. The sight of the child had awakened suspicions which he was not for a time able to confirm or dissipate by a simple question ; and his agitation was so extreme that no one present could call up resolution enough to explain to him how or when Helen had changed her situation. The silence was painful to all, but to none more than to Willie himself ; for he could read in the looks of William and Grizzel the reason why they were unwilling to speak. They felt for him ; and Helen's eye was filled with a tear, as she looked up blushing into the face of one who had claimed the first love offering of her virgin heart. This state of painful and too eloquent silence was put an end to by him who had most to dread from a disclosure. Starting, as if by an effort forcing himself out of a train of thoughts, he held out his finger, and pointed to the babe that was looking up smiling into the face of Helen, in whose eye the tear still stood—

"Is it possible, Helen ?" said he, in a voice choking with strong emotion, and unable to get out the rest of the sentence, the meaning of which his pointed finger sufficiently indicated.

Helen was silent ; the blush rose higher on her face, and the tear dropped on the face of the child. William and Grizzel looked at each other as if each wished the other to speak.

"Speak, Helen," said Willie, partly recovering himself. "Can it be?" and he again faltered.

His emotion stopped still more effectually the voice of Helen, who hid her face on the breast of her child.

"Indeed, and it is just sae," at last said Grizzel. "That is Helen's bairn, and as bonny a ane it is as she was hersel when we found her by the Eldrich Stane, wi' her head restin on the side o' puir auld Colin, wha is since dead. Ah, Willie, ye hae yersel to blame; for ye never let us ken whether ye were dead or alive."

Willie drew his hand over his eyes, and was silent. There was another subject that pressed upon his heart, and one which he equally feared to broach by a question.

"And Elizabeth, my more than mother," he ejaculated in a broken voice—"what of her?"

"She's in the kirkyard o' Minniegaff," answered Grizzel. "The sods are again grown thegither, and the grass is hail and green owre her grave."

"Oh, did I expect to meet all this!" muttered the unhappy man, as he held his hands upon his face. There was again silence in the cottage. "Had my dear friend plenty, and was she well cared for in her last moments?" he continued, with the same broken voice.

"Nane o' us had plenty at that dreadful time," answered Grizzel; "death was the only creature that seemed to hae aneugh. We killed auld Hawky, to save the life o' puir Elizabeth; but her time was come. She died i' the fear o' God; and you, Willie, that was her only love on earth, was her last thought, as she left this warld for that better ane whar friends dinna forget their auld benefactors."

"You are unkind, Grizzel," said he, "to add to my present sorrow, by the reproof contained in that hint. I have to you the appearance of being undutiful; but I was so situated that it was not in my power to communicate with her by letter; and to visit her in person was impossible. I would have been here years since, if I could have accomplished it; for I can solemnly declare, my heart has been ever here."

"I believe ye, Willie," replied Grizzel—"I was owre hasty. Ye could hae dune her nae guid, even if ye had been here; for at that time the hand o' God was upon our sinfu' land, and the assistance o' man was o' nae avail. But your Helen mightna hae been the minister's wife this day, if ye had been mair mindfu' o' Minniegaff an' yer auld friends."

The secret which was paining Willie was now fully revealed. The sad truth that he had lost her of whom he had dreamed for years in foreign lands, and to see whom he had journeyed night and day, with the hope of being blessed at the termination of his journey, was fully disclosed. With not again seeing Elizabeth, he had laid his account; but that he should lose Helen had never once entered his mind; and the intelligence, accompanied as it was with the painful vision of seeing her a mother, with the pledge of her love for another sitting smiling on her knee, was too painful to be endured. For some time he again sat silent and moody; but the evil was of that irremediable nature that often contributes to it cures; and, as the first emotion wore off, he gratified his auditors with a statement of what had befallen himself since he left Minniegaff.

"It was with a trusty servant I left Elizabeth to join my father in London, who had come over from his long exile in the train of King William. Upon my arrival, I was received with rapture by my beloved parent, and introduced to my sovereign. Proper masters were engaged to finish my education. As soon as I was thought ready, I received a captain's commission in the army, and set out with my regiment for Ireland. I was present at the battle of the Boyne where my uncle fell, he having joined the army of James; and my father became, by this event, the represent-

ative of the family. Being in favour with the court, the attainder was reversed. I rose rapidly, and had important trusts committed to my charge, which required my utmost vigilance. My mind was so occupied with public affairs, that I had little time for indulging in my own private feelings. I heard of the sufferings in Scotland, and wrote twice; but these letters appeared not to have reached, as I received no answer. I could not send a special messenger, as I was in another country, and had no one I could with confidence trust. I was also in hopes, from year to year, of being relieved, and coming in person; and thus twelve tedious years have rolled on."

Willie had just finished, when Helen's husband entered, and was introduced by her. Willie shook hands with him, but not with that cordiality he had done with the former. There was during tea a constraint which gradually wore off; and mutual confidence being restored, they were as open with each other and kind, as if they had long been friends. The minister said that he had papers in his possession which Elizabeth had left in Helen's charge, and which he and Helen had read, as Elizabeth had allowed; and mentioned the strange surmises he had regarding the connection his wife had with them. Willie listened in mute astonishment, and the conflict that was passing in his mind was strongly marked upon his open and generous countenance.

"It cannot be," he said at length; "for my uncle always declared that he had sent his child to France by a trusty agent, from whence he had letters of their safe arrival. He shewed these letters to the relations of his wife, my aunt-in-law, but never would inform them where he had placed her, or who the agent was. My aunt, who is still alive, has used every effort to learn its fate in vain, and still mourns the loss of her babe."

The minister afterwards walked over to the manse and brought the papers. Willie at once recognised the handwriting as that of his aunt. Rising, he embraced Helen, kissed her cheek, and owned her for his cousin. Next morning his servant was sent off express to H—— Castle, with a packet to his aunt, who had for several years resided there—having given up her fruitless search on the Continent. In a few days she arrived at the manse, and embraced Helen as her long-lost daughter. The scrap of paper she kissed again and again, as the means of her present happiness. The silken dress in which Helen was found, had been carefully preserved. She had sewed it with her own hand, and it had been last put on by herself; for Grizzel thought it too fine for her to wear. Not a doubt remained. Willie, the widow's son, joined the army again, and made a conspicuous figure in the wars of Queen Anne. Helen's mother took up her residence in the manse, and once more, in the close of her life, enjoyed that happiness in her grandchildren's infancy she had been denied in her own. The unfeigned piety and example of her daughter and her husband, gradually weaned her from her early faith, which had been much shaken in her melancholy hours, by the studies she had pursued to solace her grief. Till her death she was a devout member of her son-in-law's flock, and is yet remembered to have been heard talked of as the Good Lady.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE BRIDE OF BRAMBLEHAUGH

It has been stated by the greatest critics the world ever saw—whose names we would mention, if we did not wish to avoid interfering with the simplicity of our humble annals—that no fictitious character ought to be made at once virtuous and unfortunate; and the reason given for it is, that mankind, having a natural tendency to a belief of an adjustment, even in this world, of the claims of virtue and the deserts of vice, are displeased with a representation which at once overturns this belief and creates dissatisfaction with the ways of Providence. This may be very good criticism, and we have no wish to find fault with it as applied to works intended to produce a certain effect on the minds of readers; but, so long as Nature and Providence work with machinery whose secret springs are hid from our view, and evince—doubtless for wise purposes—a disregard of the adjustment of rewards and punishments for virtue and vice, we shall not want a higher authority than critics for exhibiting things as they are, and portraying on the page of truth, wet with unavailing tears, goodness that went to the grave, not only unrewarded, but struck down with griefs that should have dried the heart and grizzled the hairs of the wicked.

In a little haugh that runs parallel to the Tweed—at a part of its course not far from Peebles, and through which there creeps, over a bed of white pebbles, a little burn, whose voice is so small, except at certain places where a larger stone raises its “sweet anger” to the height of a tiny “buller,” that the lowest note of the goldfinch drowns it and charms it to silence—there stood, about the middle of the last century, a cottage, whose white walls and dark roof, with some white roses and honeysuckle flowering on its walls, bespoke the humble retreat of contentment and comfort. The place went by the name of Bramblehaugh, from the sides of the small burn being lined, for several miles, with the wild plant whose name has entered into the composition of that of the hollow or haugh where it grew. The sloping collateral ground was covered with shrubs and trees of various kinds, which harboured, in the summer months, a great collection of birds—the blackbird, the starling, the mavis, and others of the tuneful choir—whose notes rendered harmonious the secluded scene where they sang unmolested. The spot is one of those which, scattered sparingly over a wild country, woo the footsteps of lovers of nature, and, by a few months of their simple charms, regenerate the health, while they quicken and gratify the business-clouded fancies of the denizens of smoky towns.

The cottage we have now described was occupied by David Mearns, and his wife Elizabeth, called, by our national contraction, Betty. These individuals earned a livelihood, and nothing more, by the mode in which poor cotters in Scotland contrive to spin out an existence; the leading feature of which, contentment, the result of necessity, is often falsely denominated happiness by those whose positive pleasures, checked by a few misfortunes, are forgotten in the contemplation of a state of life almost entirely negative. Difficulties that cannot be overcome deaden the energies that have in vain been exerted to surmount them; and, when all efforts to

better our condition are relinquished, we acquire a credit for contentedness, which is only a forced adaptation of limited means to an unchangeable end. David Mearns, who had, in his younger days, been ruined by a high farm, had learned from misfortune what he would not have been very apt to have received from the much-applauded philosophy which is said to generate a disposition to be pleased with our lot. The bitterness of disappointment, and the wish to get beyond the reach of obligations he could not discharge, suggested the remedy of a reliance simply on his capability of earning a cotter's subsistence; and having procured a cheap lease of the little domicile of Bramblehaugh, he set himself down, with the partner of his hopes and misfortunes, to eat, with that simulated contentment we have noticed, the food of his hard labour, with the relish of health, and to extract from the lot thus forced upon him as much happiness as it would yield. The cottage and the small piece of ground attached to it, was the property of an old man, who having made a great deal of money by the very means that had failed in the hands of David Mearns, had purchased the property of Burnbank, lying on the side of the small rivulet already mentioned, and, in consequence, it was said, of Betty Mearns bearing the same name, (Cherrytrees,) though there was no relationship between them, had let to David the small premises at a low rent.

A single child had blessed the marriage of David Mearns and his wife—a daughter, called Euphemia, though generally, for the sake of brevity and kindliness, called Effie; an interesting girl, who, at the period we speak of, had arrived at the age of sixteen years. In a place where there were few to raise the rude standard of beauty formed in the minds of a limited country population, she was accounted “bonny”—a much-abused word, no doubt, in Scotland, but yet having a very fair and legitimate application to an interesting young creature, whose blue eyes, however little real town beauty they may have expressed or illuminated, gave out much tenderness and feeling, accompanied by that inexpressible look of pure, unaffected modesty, which is the first but the most difficult gesture of the female manner attempted to be imitated by those who are destitute of the feeling that produces it. An expression of pensiveness—perhaps the fruit of the early misfortunes of her parents operating on the tender mind of infancy, ever quick in catching, with instinctive sympathy, the feeling that saddens or enlivens the spirits of a mother—was seldom abroad from her countenance, imparting to it a deep interest, and, by suggesting a wish to relieve the cause of so early an indication of incipient melancholy, creating an instant friendship, which subsequent intercourse did not diminish.

Walter Cherrytrees, the Laird of Burnbank, a man approaching seventy years of age, had a daughter, Lucy, about the same age as Effie Mearns. He had lost his wife about fifteen years before; and—though a feeling of anxiousness often found its way to his heart, suggesting to his vacant mind, as the cure of his listlessness and the balm of his bereavement, another wife—he had for a long time been nearly equally poised between the hope of Lucy becoming his comfort in his old age, and the wish for a tender partner of pleasures which, without participation, lose their relish. His daughter, Lucy, was a sprightly, showy girl, who,

having got a good education, might, with the prospect she had of inheriting her father's property, have been entitled to look for a husband among the sons of the neighbouring proprietors, if her father's secluded mode of life, and plain, blunt manners, had not to a great extent limited her intercourse to a few acquaintances, by no means equal to him in point of wealth or status, however estimable they might have been in other respects. A more pleasant companion to the old Laird of Burnbank could not be found, from the one end of Bramblehaugh to the other, than David Mearns, his tenant, whose honesty and bluntness, set off by a fertility of simple anecdote, had charms for one of the same habits of thought and feeling, which all the disadvantages of his poverty could not counterbalance. The intimacy of the fathers produced, at a very early period, a friendship between the daughters, who, however, could not boast of the resemblance of thought and manners, and community of feeling, which formed the foundation of the attachment which existed between the parents.

This friendship was not exclusive of some acquaintanceships with the neighbouring young men and women, which, however, were in general mutual; neither of the two young maidens having formed any intimacy with another without her friend participating in the friendship. Among others, Lewis Campbell, the son of a neighbouring farmer, who had been a large creditor of David Mearns at the time of his failure, called sometimes at the cottage of Bramblehaugh; and was soon smitten with a strong love for Effie. They sometimes indulged in long walks by the side of the river.

We may anticipate, when we say that the hours spent in these excursions—in which the greatest beauties of external nature, and the strongest and purest emotions of two loving hearts, acting in co-operation and harmony, formed a present and a future such as poets dream of, and the world never realizes, but in momentary glimpses—were the happiest of these lovers. Effie's inseparable companion, Lucy, frequently met them as they sauntered along by the house of Burnbank; and the soft breathings of ardent affection were relieved by the gay and innocent prattle of the companions, who enjoyed, though in different degrees, the conversation and manners of the young lover. The simplicity and single-heartedness of Effie were entirely exclusive of a single thought unfavourable to an equal openness and frankness on the part of her companion, whom she had informed, in her artless way, of the state of her affections. But what might not have resulted from a mere acquaintanceship between Lucy and Effie's lover, was called forth by the pride of the former, whose spirit of emulation, excited by the good fortune of her poor friend, suggested a secret wish to alienate the affections of Lewis from her companion, and direct them to herself. The wish to be beloved, though the mere effect of emulation, is the surest of the artificial modes by which love itself is generated in the heart of the wisher; and Lucy soon became, unknown for a time to Effie, as much enamoured of young Lewis as was her unsuspecting friend.

The first intimation that Effie received of the state of Lucy's feelings towards her lover, was from Lewis himself. Sitting at a part of the haugh called the Cross Knowe, from the circumstance of an old Romish cruciform stone that stood on the top of a gentle elevation—a place much resorted to by the lovers—Lewis, unable to conceal a single thought or feeling from one who so well deserved his confidence, first told her of the perfidy of her friend.

"You are not so well supplied with sweethearts, Effie," he began, "as I am; for I can boast of two besides you."

"That speaks little in your favour, Lewie," replied she; "for, if it was my wish, I could hae a' the young men o' the haugh makin love to me frae mornin to e'en."

"That remark, Effie," said Lewis, "implies that I

have courted, or at least received marks of affection, from others besides you, while I was leading you to suppose that my heart was entirely yours. Now, that is not justified by what I said; for one may have sweethearts, and neither know nor acknowledge them as such."

"Maybe I am wrang, Lewie," said Effie; "but what was I to think but that the twa ither sweethearts ye mentioned were acknowledged by ye? It's no in the pocer o' my puir heart to conceive hoo a young woman could love ane that neither kened nor acknowledged her love. But I speak frae my ain simple, an' maybe worthless thoughts. The world's wide, an' haulds black an' fair, weak an' strong, heigh and laigh; an' wharfore no also hearts an' minds as different as their bodies? The birds of this haugh hae only their ain single luvies; but they're a' coloured alike that belong to ae kind. Would that it had been God's pleasure to mak mankind like thae bonny birds!"

"I fear, Effie," replied Lewis, "that a statement of mine, intended to be partly in jest, has been construed by you in such a manner as to produce to you pain. God is my witness that I am as single-hearted in my affection as the birds of this haugh; and gaudier colours, sweeter notes, and better scented bowers will never interfere with the love I bear to Effie Mearns."

"What meant ye, then, Lewie, by sayin ye had twa sweethearts besides Effie Mearns?" said she.

"That you shall immediately know," replied Lewis; "and you will think more highly of me when I shew you, by my revealing secrets, not indeed confided to me, but still secrets, that you have all my heart and the thoughts that it contains. The first of my other lovers you will not be jealous of, for she is old Lizzy Buchanan, or, as she calls herself, Buwhanan, my nurse, who loves me as well as you do, Effie; but the other, I fear, may create in you an unpleasant feeling of confidence misplaced, and friendship repaid by something like treachery. Surely I need say no more."

"Is it indeed sae, Lewie?" said she. "It's lang sin' I whispered—and my heart beat and my limbs trembled as I did it—in the ear o' Lucy Cherrytrees, that my puir, silly thoughts were never aff Lewie Campbell. And what think ye she said to me? She said I needna look far ayont Bramblehaugh for a bonnier and a brawer lover."

"Then," replied Lewis, "I am not much better off than you are; for she told me that your simplicity, she feared, was art, and that your poverty made any beauty you had; and she doubted if that bonny face was not a great snare for the ruin of a penniless lover."

"Sae, sae," said she, sighing deeply; "and has the fair face o' a life's friendship put on the looks o' the hypocrite at the very time when a greater confidence was required? I hae read in Laird Cherrytrees' books he is sae kind as lend me, many an example o' fause and faithless creatures, baith men and women, o' the world, o' the great cities that lie far ayont oor humble sphere; but little did I think that here, in Bramblehaugh, where oor bughts ken nae nicht-thieves, and oor hen-roosts nae reynards, there was ane, and that ane my friend, wha could smile in my face at the very moment she was tryin to ruin me in the eyes o' ane wha is dearest to me on earth."

As she thus poured forth her feelings with greater loquacity than she generally exhibited—being for the most part quiet and gentle—the tears flowed down her cheeks in great profusion, and she sobbed bitterly, in spite of all the efforts of Lewis to satisfy her that Lucy's endeavours to lessen her in his estimation were entirely fruitless.

"Apprehend nothing, dear Effie, from the discovered treachery of a false friend," said he, as he pressed her to his bosom. "It has less power with me than the whispers of that gentle burn have on the sleeping echoes of the Eagle's Rock that only answer to the voice of the tempest."

"It's no that, Lewie," replied she, wiping away her tears

"that gies me pain. I hae nae fear o' faith and troth that has been pledged, and better than pledged; for I hae seen it i' yer looks, and heard it i' the sounds o' yer deep-drawn sighs. Thae tears are for a broken friendship—for the return o' evil for guid—for the withered blossoms o' a bonny flower I hae cherished and watered, in the hope it wad yield me a sweet smell when I kissed its leaves i' the daffin o' youth or the kindness o' age. If it is sae sair to lose a friend, what, Lewie—what wad it be to lose a lover?"

"The very existence of great evils, Effie," said he, "makes us happy, in the thought that they are beyond our reach."

"But did I no think," said she, "that I was beyond the reach o' the pain o' experiencing the fauseness o' Lucy Cherrytrees—the very creature, o' a' ithers, I hae chosen as my bosom friend—to whom I confided a' my thochts and the very secret o' my love?"

"But it is an ill wind that blaws naeboddy guid, as they say, Effie," said Lewis. "I can better appreciate your goodness, now that I have experienced the faithlessness of another."

"An' if I hae lost a friend," replied Effie, "I am the mair sure o' my lover. Ye dinna ken, Lewie, hoo muckle this has raised you even in my mind, whar ye hae ay occupied the highest place. Ye hae rejected the offered love o' the braw heiress o' Burnbank, for the humble dochter o' David Mearns, wha earns his bread in the sweat o' his brow. Oh! what can a puir, penniless cottager's dochter gie, in return, to the man wha, for her sake, turns his back on a big ha', a thousand braid acres, an' a braw heiress?"

"Her simple, genuine, unsophisticated heart," replied Lewis, "with one unchangeable, devoted affection beating in its core. Were Burnbank Hall as big as the Parliament House, and Burnbank itself longer than the lands watered by the Brambleburn, and Lucy Cherrytrees as fair as our unfortunate Mary Stuart, I would not give my simple Effie, with no more property of her own than the bandeau that binds her fair locks, for Lucy Cherrytrees and all her lands."

The two lovers continued their evening walks, indulging in conversations which, embracing the subject of their affection, and anticipating the pleasures of their ultimate union, realized that fullest enjoyment of hope which is said to transcend possession. No notice was taken of their mutual sentiments on the subject of Lucy Cherrytrees' affection for Lewis, and her unjustifiable attempts to displace her old friend, to make room for herself in the heart of the contested object of their wishes.

Matters continued in this state for some time, Effie being regularly gratified by a visit from Lewis three times a-week. On one occasion a whole week passed without any intelligence of her lover. Her inquiries had produced no satisfactory explanation of the unusual occurrence; and Fancy, under the spell of the Genius of Fear, was busy in her vocation of drawing dark pictures of coming evil. At last she was told by her father, who had procured the intelligence from a friend of George Campbell, the father, that young Lewis had been suspected of an intention to marry the poor daughter of the cottager, David Mearns, and had been dispatched, without a minute's premonition, to an uncle, who was a merchant in Rio de Janeiro. No time had been given to him to write to Effie; and care had been taken to prevent him from sending her any intelligence while he remained at Liverpool, previous to his departure. The statement was corroborated by intelligence to the same effect, procured by one of Laird Cherrytrees' servants from one of the servants of George Campbell, who told it to Lucy, and who again told it to Effie, with tears in her eyes, which she took every care to conceal. The effect produced on the mind of Effie Mearns, by this unexpected misfortune, was proportioned to its magnitude, and the susceptibility of the feelings of the delicate individual on whom it operated. For many days she wept incessantly—refusing the ordinary

sustenance of a life which she now deemed of no importance to herself or to any one else. All attempts at comforting a bruised heart were—as they generally are in cases of disappointed love—unavailing; and the effects of time seemed only apparent in a quieter, though not in any degree less poignant sorrow. Every object kept alive the remembrance of the youth who had first made an impression on her heart, and whose image was graven on every spot of the neighbourhood, which had been consecrated by the exchange of a mutual passion. The scenes of their wanderings, hallowed as they had been in her memory, were now peopled with undefined terrors; and every time that she was forced abroad to take that air and exercise which latterly seemed indispensable to her existence, her sorrow received an accession of power from every tree under which they had sat, and every knove or dell where they had listened to the musical loves of the birds, as they exchanged their own in not less eloquent sighs.

The first circumstance that produced any effect on the mind of the disconsolate maiden, was a misfortune of another kind, which, realizing the old adage, seemed to follow with all due rapidity the footsteps of its precursor. Her mother, who sat on one side of the fire, while Effie occupied her usual seat in a corner of the cottage in the other, had been using all the force of her rude but impressive eloquence to get her daughter to adopt the means that were in her power for the amelioration of a grief which might render her childless.

"I am gettin auld, Effie," she said, "an' you are the only ane I can look to for administerin to yer faither an' to me that comfort we hae a richt to expect at the hands o' a dochter wha never yet was deficient in her duty. Our poverty, which winna be made any less severe, as ye may weel ken, by the income o' years, will mak yer attention to us mair necessary; an' it may even be—God meise the means!—that your weak hands may yet be required to work for the support o' yer auld parents. I hae lang intended to speak to you in this way, and it was only pity for my puir heart-broken Effie that put me aff frae day to day, in the expectation that either some news wad come frae Lewie, or that ye wad get consolation frae anither an' a higher source, to support ye for trials ye may yet hae to bear up against, for the sake o' them that brocht ye into the world. A' ithers means hae been tried to get ye to determine to live, an' no lay yersel down to dee, an' they havin failed, what can I do but try the last remedy in my power—to speak, as I hae noo dune, to yer guid sense, an' lay afore ye the duties o' a dutifu bairn, which are far aboon the thochts o' a disappointed love. Promise, now, my bonny Effie, that ye will try to gie up yer mournin, for the sake o' parents whase love for ye is nae less than Lewie Campbell's."

As Betty finished her impressive admonition to Effie, who acknowledged its force, and inwardly determined on complying with the request of her mother, an unusual noise at the door of the cottage startled her anxious ear. It seemed that a number of people were approaching the cottage, and the groans of one in deep distress and pain were mixed with the low talk of the crowd, who, from those inexpressible indications which the ear can catch and analyze ere the mind is conscious of the operation, seemed already to sympathise with one to whom they were bearing a grief. Roused by that anticipative fear of evil which all unfortunate people feel, Betty ran to the door, followed by her daughter, and opened it—to let in the mangled body of her husband; who, in felling an oak, on the property of Burnbank, had fallen under the weight of the tree, and got his leg broken, and one of his arms dislocated at the shoulder joint. He was conveyed, by the kind neighbours, to a bed; and, by the time they got him undressed, for the purpose of his wounds being submitted to the curative process of the

doctor, that individual arrived, and proceeded to perform the painful operation of setting the broken bones. The full effect of this misfortune to Effie and her mother was for a time suspended, by the call made upon them to relieve the sufferings of the father and husband; and it was not till the bustle ceased, and the neighbours (excepting two women, whose services, in addition to those of the wife and daughter, might still be required) went away, that they felt the full force of the gigantic evil that had befallen them, the consequences of which might extend through the remaining years of their existence.

A period of no less than eighteen months passed away, and David Mearns was still unable to do more than, with assistance, to rise from his bed, and sit, during a part of the day, by the fire, or at the window. During the whole of this time, he had been tended by his daughter with assiduous care. Her filial sympathies, called into active operation by the sorrows of her parent, filled up the void that had been made in her heart by the departure of her lover; and a new source of grief effected (however paradoxical it may seem) a change in the morbid melancholy to which she had been enslaved, which, although not for mental health or ease, was so much in favour of exertion and remedial exercise, that she came to present the appearance of one inclined to endeavour to sustain her sorrow, rather than resign herself to the fatal power of an irremediable woe. Among the visitors who took an interest in a family reduced by one stroke to want and all its attendant evils, Laird Cherrytrees evinced the strongest concern for the fate of his friend; and, by a timeous contribution of necessary assistance, ameliorated, in so far as man could, the unhappy condition of virtue under the load of misery. The many visits of the good old laird, and the long periods of time he passed by the bedside of the patient, enabled him to see and appreciate the devoted attention of Effie to her parent; and often, as she flew at the slightest indication of a wish for something to assuage pain, or remove the uneasiness produced by the long confinement, he would stop the current of his narrative, and fix his eyes on the kind maiden, so long as her tender office engaged her attention and feelings. These long looks, not unaccompanied at times with a deep sigh, were attributed, as they well might, to admiration and approbation of so much filial affection and devotedness exercised towards one whom the old laird respected above all his friends.

The visits of Laird Cherrytrees were at first twice or thrice a-week. His infirm body, already begun to exhibit the effects of old age, prevented him from walking; and such was the anxiety he felt for the unhappy patient, that he mounted his old pony, Donald, nearly as frail as his master, to enable him to administer consolation so much required. He came always at the same hour; Effie, who expected him, was often at the door, ready to receive him; and, while she held old Donald's head till he dismounted, welcomed her father's friend with so much sincerity and pleasure that if she had failed in her hostlership he would have felt a disappointment he would not have liked to express. Even when at a distance from the cottage, he strained his eyes to endeavour to catch a glimpse of the faithful attendant; and, if he did not see her, the rein of Donald was relaxed, and he was allowed to saunter along at his own pleasure, or even to eat grass by the road-side, (a luxury he delighted in from his having once belonged to a cadger,) so as to give Effie time to get to her post.

The three days of the week on which Laird Cherrytrees was in the habit of visiting David Mearns, were Monday, Thursday, and Saturday; and he seldom came without bringing something to the poor family—either some money for old Betty; some preserves, prepared by Lucy, for the invalid; or a book, or a flower from Burnbank garden, for Effie. When his conversation with David was finished—

and every day it seemed to get shorter and shorter, though there seemed no lack of either subjects or ideas—he commenced to talk with Effie, chiefly on the nature and contents of the books he brought her to read; and nothing seemed to delight him more than to sit in the large arm-chair by David's bedside, and hear Effie discoursing, *ex cathedra*, (on a three-footed stool at the foot of the bed, opposite to the Laird's chair,) with her characteristic simplicity and good sense, on the subjects he himself had suggested. But, notwithstanding all her efforts to appear well pleased in presence of the man who was supporting her family, her train of thoughts was often broken in upon by the recollections of Lewis Campbell, and she would sit for an hour at a time, with the eyes of the Laird fixed on her melancholy face, as if he had been all that time in mute cogitation, suggesting some remedy for her sorrow. His ideas and feelings seemed to be operated upon by the same power that ruled the mind of the maiden; for his face followed, in its changing expressions, the mutations of her countenance. Her melancholy seemed to be communicated by a glance of her watery eye, as the thought of Lewis entered her mind; and when she recovered from her gloomy reverie, a corresponding indication of relief lighted up the grey twinkling orbs of the old Laird. This custom of "glowr-in," for whole hours at a time, on the face of the sensitive girl, at first painful to her, became a matter of indifference; and the position and attitudes of the three individuals—Betty being generally engaged about the house—undergoing, while the Laird was present, no change, came to assume something like the natural properties of the parties, as if they had been fixtures, or lay figures for the study of a painter.

Every time the Laird came to the cottage, he extended the period of his stay, and, latterly, he did not stir till a servant from Burnbank, sent by Lucy, came to take him home. It seemed as if he could not get enough of "glowr-in;" for, latterly, all his occupation, which at first consisted of rational conversation, merged in that mute eloquence of the eye, or rather in that inebriation of the orb, "drinking of light," which lovers of sights, especially female countenances, are so fond of. The visits had been so regular, not a day being ever missed, that, as Effie held the stirrup till he mounted Donald, during all which time the process of "glowr-in" went on as regularly as at the bedside of David, she never thought of asking, and he never thought of stating, when he would call again. Time had stamped the act of calling with the impress of an unchangeable custom. The caseless clock of David's cottage was not more regular; the only change being that already observed—that the time of the Laird's stay gradually and gradually lengthened.

The homage paid by Effie to Laird Cherrytrees was, as may easily be conceived, the respect, attention, and kindness of an open-hearted girl, filled with gratitude to the preserver of the lives of her and her parents. Every evening she offered up, at her bedside, prayers for the preservation and happiness of the man but for whose kindness starvation might have overtaken the helpless invalid, and not much less helpless wife and daughter. In their prayers the "amen" of David and his wife was the most heartfelt expression of love and gratitude that ever came from the lips of mortal. This feeling, however, did not prevent David Mearns and Betty from sometimes indulging, in the absence of Effie, (in all likelihood giving freedom to her tears, as she sat in some favourite retreat of her absent lover,) in some remarks on the extraordinary conduct of Laird Cherrytrees. They soon saw through the secret, and resolved upon drawing him out; for which purpose, Effie was to be called away on the occasion of the next visit.

The Laird came as he used to do, took his seat, and resumed his gazing. Effie pleased him exceedingly, by an account she gave him of the last book he brought to her.

and, throwing himself back in the arm-chair, he seemed, for a time, wrapped in meditation. Effie obeyed, in the meantime, her mother's request, to come for a few minutes to the green to assist her in her work; and, when the Laird again applied his eyes to their accustomed vocation, he was surprised, but not (for once) displeased, at her disappearance. A great struggle now commenced between some wish and a restraint. He looked round the cottage, and then turned his eyes on David; acts which he repeated several times. Incipient syllables of words half formed, died away in his struggling throat. He moved restlessly in the large chair, and twirled his silver-headed cane in his hand. He even rose, went to the door, looked out, came back again, and took his seat without saying a word. Holding away his face from David, he at last made out a few words, uttered with great difficulty.

"She's a fine lassie, Effie," he said.

"A bonnier an' a better never was brocht up in Bramblehaugh, savin yer ain Lucy," replied David.

"Hoo auld is she noo?" said the Laird, still holding away his face.

"She will be nineteen come the time," replied David.

"It's a pity she's sae young," rejoined the Laird, with a great struggle, and making a noise with his cane, as if he had repented of his words and wished to drown them before they reached the ears of David.

"I dinna think sae, beggin yer Honour's pardon," replied David. "We need her assistance in this trial; an' I'm just thinkin o' some way she might use her hands—an' she's willing aneugh puir cratur—for oor assistance."

"Are ye no pleased wi' my assistance?" said the Laird, displeased at something in David's reply.

"Yer Honour has saved oor lives," replied David, feelingly, "an' it wad only be because we are ashamed o' yer guidness that we wad wish oor dochter to tak a part o' that burden aff ane wha is under nae obligation to serve us."

"If I hae been yer freend, ye hae been mine," said the Laird. "I hae got guid advices frae ye; an', even noo, I hae something to ask ye concernin mysel, that nae ither man i' the haugh could sae weel answer."

"What is that, yer Honour?" said David.

"What do ye think, David Mearns, I should do," said the Laird, moving about in the chair in evident perplexity, "if my dochter Lucy were to tak a husband an' leave Burnbank? I carena aboot fa'in into the hands o' Jenny Mucklewham, wha, for this some time past, has neither cleaned my buckles nor brushed my coat as I wad wish. She says I'm mair fashions; but that's a mere excuse."

"I hae seen alder men marry again," said David, thinking he would please the Laird, by giving him such an answer as he was clearly fishing for.

"Alder men, David, man!" replied the Laird, looking down at his person, and adjusting his wig. "Did I ask ye onything about my age? I wanted merely your advice, what I should do in certain circumstances, an' ye gie me a comparison for an answer.—Do ye think I should marry?"

"If yer Honour has ony wish in that way, I think ye should," said David.

"I never yet did wrang in following your advice, David Mearns," said the Laird.—"She's a fine lassie, Effie."

"Ou, ay," responded David, at a loss what more to say.

"Very fine," again said the Laird, turning his face partially from the window, so as the tail of his eye reached David's face, and waiting for something more.

David could, however, say nothing. The very circumstance of the Laird's wishing him to say something pertinent to the purpose already so broadly hinted at, prevented him from touching so delicate a subject; and, notwithstanding of another application of the tail of the Laird's eye, he was silent.

"Ye hae gien me ae advice, David," said the Laird, in despair of getting anything more out of David without a question: "could ye no tell me *nha* I should marry, man?" And having achieved this announcement, he rose and walked to the window.

"That's owre delicate a subject for me to gie an advice on, yer Honour," replied David. "The doo laes aside ninety-nine guid straes, an' taks the hundredth, though a crooked ane, for its nest. Ye maun judge for yersel."

"What say ye to yer ain Effie, then?" said the Laird, relieved at last from a dreadful burden.

"If yer Honour likes the lassie, an' she'll tak yer Honour, I can hae nae objections," replied David.

The Laird, who seemed twenty years younger after this declaration, took David by the hand, and shook it till the pain of his dislocated arm almost made him cry.

"Will ye speak to her aboot it, David?" said he, still holding his hand. "The best farm o' Burnbank will be your reward. Plead for me, David, my best friend. Tell Betty aboot it, and get her to use a mother's pooer. If I can trust my een, Effie doesna dislike me. If a' gaes weel, ye may hae Ravelrigg, or Braidacre, or Muirfield—onything that's in my pooer to gie, David." And the old lover, exhausted by the struggle and excitement he had suffered, sank back into the chair.

"I will do my best," replied David. And the old Laird sighed, and absolutely groaned with pure, unmixed satisfaction.

At the end of this scene, Effie and her mother came in. The damsel took her old seat on the three-footed stool at the foot of the bed; the eyes of the Laird sought again her face, where he thought they had a better sight now to rest. No more was spoken; enough for a day had been said and done; and, with a parting look to David, to keep him in remembrance of his promise, and a purse of money slipped into the hand of Betty, as a solvent of any obstacle that might exist in her mind, the lover went to the door to receive Donald from the soft hands of Effie, who, as was her custom, had gone out before him, to lead the old cadger to the door, and hold the bridle till he with an effort got into the saddle. The only difference Effie could observe in his departure this day, was a kind of mock-gallant wave of the hand, as he, with more than usual spirit, struck his spurless heels into Donald's sides, and tried to rise in the saddle, in response to the hobble of the old Highlander.

The Laird had been scarcely out of the house, when David had a communing with his wife, in absence of Effie, on the extraordinary intimation made by the old lover. Betty was agreeable to the match; but the tear came into her eye as she thought of the sacrifice poor Effie was to be called upon to make. Neither of them could answer for the consent of Effie, whose melancholy, though somewhat ameliorated, was little diminished, and whose recollections of Lewis Campbell were as vivid as they were on the day of his departure. When she returned from one of her solitary rambles, which fed her passion and increased her grief, she was delicately told of the intentions of Laird Cherrytrees. The announcement of the extraordinary intelligence produced an effect which neither her father nor mother could have anticipated. A quick operation of her mind placed before her all the affectionate acts of attention she had for years been in the habit of applying to the old friend of her father, and the preserver of their lives. Gratitude, operating in one of the most grateful hearts that ever beat in the bosom of mortal, had produced in her an exuberant kindness, a devotedness of a species of affection due by a child to its godfather, a playful freedom of the confidence of one who relied on the disparity of years for a license from even the suspicion of a possibility of any other relation existing between them,

that now came back upon her, loaded with self-reproach and shame, and attributing to her misconstrued attentions the extraordinary passion that had taken hold of the heart of the old Laird. She was totally unable to make any reply to her parents. The image of Lewis Campbell, never absent from her mind, assumed a new form, and swam in the tears which flowed from her eyes. The natural contrast between age and youth, love and gratitude, assumed its legitimate strength. The first feeling of her mind was, that she would suffer the death that had for a time been impending over her, and whose finger was already on her breaking heart, rather than comply with the wishes of her father and mother. They saw the struggle that was in her mind, and abstained from pressing what they had suggested. They did not ask her even to give her sentiments; but the silent tears that stole down her cheek and dropped in her lap from her drooping head, required no spoken commentary to tell them the extent of her grief, and the resolution at least of a heart that might entirely break, as it appeared to be breaking, but never could forget.

There was little sleep for the eyes of Effie on the succeeding night. Her sobs reached the ears of her parents, who, unable to yield her consolation, were obliged to leave her to wrestle with her grief; sending up a silent prayer to the Author of all good dispensations, that He might assuage the sorrow of one who had already, with exemplary patience, submitted to the rod of affliction. The sacredness of her feelings was too well appreciated by her parents to admit of any offer of counsel, where deep-seated affection, the work of mysterious instinct, stood in solemn derision of the vulgar ideas of this world's expediency. The struggle in her mind arose from the strength of her love, and the power of her filial devotion. No part of the attendant circumstances or probable consequences of her decision escaped her mind. She knew that she never could be happy as the wife of any other individual, even of suitable age, than Lewis Campbell. But this concerned only herself; and she knew, and trembled as she thought, that the result of her decision might be the destitution, the want, perhaps the death of her parents: their all depended on the breath of the man whom she, by the sign of her finger, might change from a friend to a foe; and she might thereby become the destroyer of those who gave her being.

The morning came, but brought neither sleep nor relief to the unhappy maiden. Her parents seemed inclined not to advert to the subject that day, but to let her struggle on with her own thoughts. The hour of the Laird's visit approached, and he was already on the road for the home of his beloved, whom his ardent fancy pictured standing smiling at the door, ready as usual to receive him and lead him into the house. Donald—who knew a reverie in his master better than he did himself, and did not fail to take advantage of it—ambled on with diminished speed. The Laird approached the cottage. No Effie was there. His bright visions took flight, and were succeeded by a cold shiver, the precursor of a gloomy train of ideas, which pictured a refusal and all its attendant horrors. He drew up the head of Donald, and even invited him to partake of the long grass which grew by the way-side. He counted the moments as Donald devoured the food; and, from time to time, lifted his eyes, to see if Effie was yet at the cottage door. She was not to be seen—and she had not been absent before for many months. His mind was unprepared for a refusal; the ground-swell of his previous excited fancy distracted him amidst the dead stillness of despair. He looked again, and for the last time that day. Effie was not yet there. He turned the head of the delighted, and no doubt astonished Donald, and quietly sought again the house of Burnbank.

The same procedure was gone through on the succeeding day. Laird Cherrytrees again proceeded to the

cottage of David Mearns; and, as he sauntered along, he thought it impossible that Effie should again be absent from her post. He was too good a man, and too conceited a lover, as all old lovers are, to allow his mind to dwell on the probable operation of necessity and the fear of injuring her father's patron, on the mind of the daughter; and yet a lurking, rebellious idea suggested that he would rather see Effie at the door, impelled by that cause, than absent altogether. His hopes again beat high, and Donald was pricked on to the goal of his wishes with an asperity he did not relish so well as a reverie. The spot was attained. Effie was still absent. Donald was again remitted to the long grass, and all the resources of a lover's mind were called up, to enable him to face the evil that awaited him. But all was in vain—he found it impossible to proceed.

"I am rejected," he muttered to himself, with a sigh; "a cottager's dochter has refused the Laird o' Burnbank; but her cauldness an' cruelty mak me like her the mair. Effie Mearns, Effie Mearns! hoo little do ye ken what commotion ye hae produced in this pair burstin heart! But, though ye winna hae me, I winna desert yer faither. Hame, Donald, to Burnbank." And, as he pulled up the bridle with his left hand, he wiped away the tears that had collected in his eyes, and, casting many a look back to the cottage, cantered slowly home.

These proceedings of the Laird had been noticed by Betty Mearns, from the window of the cottage, and she and David were at no loss to guess the cause of them. They knew his timid, sensitive disposition, and truly attributed his return to his not seeing Effie at the door, waiting for him as usual. Apprehensions now seized the good mother that the Laird might withdraw his attentions and assistance from the family, the result of which would be nothing but misery and ruin; as David's fractured limbs were yet far from being healed, and a long period must yet pass before he could earn a penny to keep in their lives. These fears were increased by a third and a fourth day having passed without a visit from the Laird, who had, notwithstanding, been seen reconnoitering as usual at a distance from the cottage. Effie herself saw how matters stood, and learned, from the looks of her father and mother, sentiments they seemed unwilling to declare. Her mind was still convulsed with the struggle of the antagonist duties, wishes, emotions, and fears, that rose in her mind; and the apprehensions of her parents, which she considered well-founded, added to her sorrow an additional source of anguish.

"This house," said David, at last overcome by his feelings, "has become mair like an hospital that has lost its mortification, than an honest man's cottage. Effie sits greetin an sabbin the hail day, an' you, Betty, look forward to starvation, wi' the gruesome face o' despair. I am unhappy mysel, besides being an invalid. What is this to end in? What are we to do? Hoo are we to live without meat, noo that Burnbank, guid man, has deserted us?"

"There has come naething frae Burnbank for five days," replied Betty; "an' the siller I got frae the guid auld man, the last time he was here, I payed awa i' the village for necessaries I had taen on afore we got that help. Oor giron winna haud oot lang against three mous; an', if Laird Cherrytrees bides awa muckle langer, I see naething for it but to beg."

The tear started to the eye of David. He looked at Effie. She wept, and sobbed, and covered her face with her hands.

"Effie, woman," said David, "a' this micht hae been averted if ye had just gane to the door an' welcomed the auld Laird, as ye were wont. He's a blate man, though a guid carl; an' he has, nae doot, thoct he was unwelcome when yer auld practice o' waitin for him was gien up."

"I tauld her that, David," said Betty, "and pressed her to gae o' the door, though it was only to gie the blate Laird

a glimpse o' her, whilk was a' he wanted to bring him in; but she only sabbed the mair. Unhappy hour she first saw that callant, wha may noo be dead or married for ought she kens!—an' yet for his sake maun a hail family dree the dule o' this day's misery. Effie, woman, can ye no forget ane wha hasna thocht ye worth the trouble o' tellin ye, by ae scrape o' his pen, whether he be i' the land o' the livin'?"

A sob was the only reply Effie could make to this appeal.

"I hae tauld Effie," said David, "what wad save us frae the ruin an' starvation that stare us i' the face; but my mind's made up to suffer to the end, though I should lie here wi' my broken banes, and dree the pains o' hunger, rather than force my dochter to marry a man against her ain choice. But, O Effie, woman, wad ye see yer puir faither, broken as he is in baith mind an' body, lie starvin here in his bed, wi' nae mair pöoer to earn a bite o' bread than the unspeaned bairn, and no mak a sacrifice to save him?"

"Ay, faither," replied Effie; "I wad dee to save ye."

"But deein winna save either him or me," said Betty. "Naething will hae that effect but yer agreein to be the leddy o' the braw hoose an' braid acres o' Burnbank. Wae's me! what a difference between that condition, wi' servants at yer nod, an' a' the comforts an' luxuries o' life at yer command, an', abune a'; the pooer o' makin happy yer auld faither and mother, an' this awfu prospect o' dreein the very warst-an' last o' a' the evils o' life—want an' auld age—ill-matched pair! Effie, woman, my bonny bairn, hae ye nae love in yer heart, but for Lewie Campbell? Wad ye, for his sake, see a' this misfortune fa' on the heads o' yer parents, whom, by the laws o' God an' man, ye are bound to honour, serve, and obey?"

It was easier for Effie to say she would die to save her parents, than that she would comply with the wish of her mother; but the feeling appeal of her parent increased her agony, which induced another paroxysm of hysterical sobs, the only answer she could yet make to her mother.

"Effie doesna care for either you or me, Betty," said David, "or she wad hae little hesitation aboot marryin a guid, fresh, clean, rich, auld man, to save her faither an' mother frae poverty an' starvation. I see nae great sacrifice i' the matter. Her young heart mayna rejoice i' the pleasures o' a daft love, but her guid sense will be gratified by a feelin o' duty far aboon the vain, frawart freits o' a silly, giddy, youthful passion. Let her refuse Laird Cherrytrees, an' when Lewie Campbell comes hame, the owrecome bread o' the funeral o' her faither may grace a waddin bought wi' the price o' his life."

"Dinna speak that way, faither," cried Effie, lifting up her hands; "I canna stand that. You said ye wadna force me, an' ye are forcin me. Oh, my puir heart, wha or what will support ye when grief for my parents turns me against ye? Faither, faither, when I am dead, Laird Cherrytrees will be again yer freend. A little time will do't: will ye no wait?"

"Hunger waits only eight days, as the sayin is," replied he, "an' ye'll live mair than that time, I hope an' trow. I will be dead afore ye, Effie, an' ye'll hae the consolation, as ye maybe drap a tear on the mossy grey stane that covers the Mearnses i' the kirkyard o' oor parish, to think, if ye shouldna like to say, in case ye nicht be heard—though thinkin an' speakin's a' ane to God—that 'that stane was lifted ten years suner than it might hae been, because I liked Lewie Campbell better than auld Laird Cherrytrees."

"An' it's no likely," said the mother, "that I wad be there to hear Effie mak sae waefu a speech. If I binna lyn wi' the Mearns, I'll be wi' the Cherrytrees o' Mossnook—nae relations o' the Burnbanks, though maybe as guid a family. But, afore I'm mixed wi' the dust o' that auld hoose, Effie—an' it mayna be lang—ye may join the twa

Cherrytrees, an' let the gravestanes o' the Mearns, as weel as the Mossnooks, lie yet a score years langer, without bein moved. It's a pity to disturb the lang grass. Its sough i' the nicht wind keeps the bats frae pickin the auld banes, an' maybe it may save your mother's, if ye send her there afore her time."

Effie's feelings could no longer withstand these appeals. Her sobbing ceased suddenly; and, starting up from her seat, she looked to the old clock that stood against the wall of the cottage. She noticed that it was upon the hour of the Laird's usual visit.

"It is twelve o'clock, faither," she said, firmly—"this hoor decides the fate o' Effie Mearns."

Walking to the door, she placed herself in the position she used to occupy when she intended to welcome her father's friend. Now she was to welcome a husband. Laird Cherrytrees was, as might have been expected, allowing Donald to take his liberty of the road-side, grazing while he was busy reconnoitering the cottage. The moment he saw the form of Effie standing where he had for several long days wished to see her, he pulled up Donald's bridle, with the alacrity of youth, and, striking his sides with his unarmed heels, made all the speed of a bridegroom to get to his bride. The sight of the object he had gazed upon so unceasingly for so long a time; and whom he had strained his eyes in vain to see during these eventful days, operated like a charm on the old lover. He discovered at first sight the red, swollen eyes of Effie; but he was too happy in thinking he had been successful, as he had no doubt he had, to meditate on the struggle which produced his bliss. Having taken a long draught of the fountain of his hopes and happiness, and feasted his eyes on the face of the maiden, who attempted to smile through her tears, which he did sitting on his horse, and, without speaking a word—for, loquacious in politics or rural economy, he was mute in love—he dismounted, while Effie, as usual, held the reins. He lost no time in getting into his chair, falling back into it like a breathless traveller who has at last attained the end of his journey. David and Betty, who construed Effie's conduct into a consent, took an early opportunity, while she was still at the door, of letting the happy Laird know that their daughter, as they conceived, was inclined to the match. The Laird received the intelligence as if it had been too much for mortal to bear. He was at first beyond the vulgar habit of speech. He sighed, turned his eyes in their sockets, groaned, and wrung his hands. On recovering himself, he exclaimed—

"Wha is she, Betty? Let me see the dear creature. David, ye'll hae Ravelrig; it's the best o' them a'. Whan is't to be, Betty? Ye maun fix the day; an' ye maun brak the thing to Lucy, and to Jenny Mucklewham; for I hae nae pooer. Let me see her—let me see the sweet creature this instant."

Effie, at the request of her mother, came in and resumed her seat on the three-footed stool. Her eyes were still swollen, and she looked sorrowfully at her father. The Laird fixed his eyes on her; but his loquacity was gone. He had not a word to say; but his "glowrin" was in some degree changed, being accompanied by a soft smile of self-complacency and contentment, and freed from the nervous irritability with which he used to solicit with his eyes a look from the object of his affections. His visit this day was shorter than it used to be. Next day, Betty was to visit Burnbank, to arrange for the marriage.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate girl resigned herself as a self-sacrifice into the hands of her mother. Bound with the silken bands of filial affection, she renounced all desire of exercising her own free-will, or indulging in those feelings of the female heart which are deemed so strong as to demand the sacrifice often of all other earthly considerations. The fate of Iphigenia has occupied the pens and tongues of

pitiful mortals for thousands of years. A lovely woman sacrificed for a fair wind, doomed to have the blood that mantled in the blushing cheeks of beauty sprinkled on the altar of a false religion, is a spectacle which the imagination cannot contemplate without a participation of the strongest sympathies of the heart; yet there are, in the common every-day world we now live in, many a scene in the act of being performed, where, though there is no bloodshed and no smoking altar exhibited, the sacrifice is not less than that of the Grecian victim. Our blessed, holy altar of matrimony is often, by the wayward feelings of man—for we here say nothing of vice or corrupt conduct—made more cruel than those of Moloch and Chiun. There is many a bloodless Iphigenia in those days, whose sufferings are unknown and unsung, because confined to the heart that broke over them and concealed them in death. The young, tender, and devoted female, who, for the love she bears to her parents, consents to intermarry with rich age, to embrace dry bones, to extend her sympathies to churlishness, caprice, and ill-nature, or, what is worse, to the asthmatic giggle of a superannuated love, while all the while her heart, cheated of its tribute and swelling with indignation, requires to be watched by her with vigilance and firmness, the cruelty of which she herself feels—presents a form of self-sacrifice possessing claims on the pity of mankind beyond those of the boasted self-immolation of ancient devotees.

The silence and dejection of our bride were construed, by her parents, into that seemly and becoming sedateness which sensible young women think it proper to assume on the eve of so important a change in their condition as marriage; while the happy bridegroom had come to that time of life when he is pleased with submission, though it be expressed through tears. No chemical menstruum has so much power in the dissolution of the hardest metals as the self-complacency of an old lover has in construing, according to his wishes, the actions, words, or looks of the young woman who is destined to be his bride. Silence and tears are expressive of happiness as well as of grief; and, so long as the desire of the ancient philosopher is uncomplained with by the gods, and there is no window to the heart, that organ in the young victim may break while the sexagenarian bridegroom is enjoying the imputed silent, restrained happiness of the object of his ill-timed affection.

The sadness and melancholy of the apparently-resigned Effie Mearns had no effect on the noise and show of the preparations for her marriage with her old lover. The marriages of old men are well known to be celebrated with higher bugle notes from the trumpet of fame than any others. A sumptuous dinner was to be given to the neighbouring lairds, and the cotters were to be fed and regaled on the green opposite to the mansion. Dancing and music were to add their charms to the gay scene; and it was even alleged that the light of a bonfire would lend its peculiar aid, in raising the joy of the guests, predisposed to hilarity by plenteous potations, to the proper height suited to the conquest of the old bridegroom over, at once, a young woman and old Time.

For days previous to the eventful one, Effie Mearns was not heard to open her lips. She looked on all the gay preparations for her marriage as if they had been the mournful acts of the undertaker employed in laying the silver trimming on the coffin lid of a lover. The bedside of her sick parent, who was still unable to rise, was the place where she sat "shrouded in silence." She heard the conversations of her father and mother about the progress of the preparations, without exhibiting so much interest as to shew that she understood them. Misgivings crossed the minds of the old couple, and brought tears to their eyes, as they contemplated the animated corpse that sat there, waiting the nod of the master of ceremonies, and ready to perform the part assigned to it in the forthcoming orgies of mournful joy;

but they had gone too far to recede, and it was even a subject of satisfaction to them that the period of the celebration was so near, for otherwise they might have had reason to fear that their daughter would not have survived the intermediate time. When the bridegroom called, his ears were alarmed by the voices of the parents, who saw the necessity of endeavouring to hide the condition of their daughter; and he was satisfied, if he got, free and unrestrained, "a feast of the eyes." His love was still expressed by silent gazing; for it was too deep in his old heart for either words or tears; if, indeed, there was moisture enough in the seat of his affection for the suppliancy of the *softest* expression of the soft passion.

The eventful day arrived. The marriage was to take place in the cottage, where David Mearns still lay confined to bed. The sick man wore a marriage favour attached to the breast of his shirt!—for Laird Cherrytrees would be contented with no less a demonstration of his participation in his unparalleled happiness. The still silent bride *submitted* passively to all the acts of her nimble dressers, whose laugh seemed to strike her ears like funeral bells; yet she tried—poor victim!—to smile, though the clouded beam came through a tear which, by its steadfastness, seemed to belong to the orb. The bridegroom came at the very instant when he ought to have come—the hand of the clock not having had time to leave the mark of notation. He was dressed in the style of his earliest days with cocked hat, laced coat, and a sky-blue vest, embroidered in the richest manner; while a new wig, ordered from the metropolis, imparted to him the freshness of youth. His cheek was flushed with the blood which joy had forced, for a moment, from where it was more needed, at the drying fountain of life; and his eye spoke a happiness which his parched tongue could not have achieved, without causing shame even to himself. Everything was new, spruce, perking, self-complacent. The clergyman next came, and all was prepared.

Throughout all this time and all these preparations, not the slightest change had been observed on the bride. After she was dressed, she took her seat again, silently by the side of her father's sickbed, where she sat like a statue. The ceremony was now to commence, and she stood up, when required by the clergyman, as if she obeyed the command of an executioner. It was noticed that she seemed to incline to be as near as possible to her father's bed; and her unwillingness or inability to come forward forced the clergyman and the bridegroom some paces from the situation they at first held. The ceremony proceeded till it came to that part where the consent of the parties is asked. The happy bridegroom pronounced his response, quick, sharp, and with an air of conceit, which brought a smile to the faces of the parties present. There was now a pause for the consent of the bride. All eyes were fixed on her death-like face. A severe struggle was going on in her bosom; yet her countenance was unmoved, and no one conjectured that she suffered more than sensitive females often do in her situation. The clergyman repeated his question. There was still a pause—the eyes of all were riveted on her. "I *canna*, I *canna*!" at last she exclaimed, in a voice of agony, and fell back on the bed—a corpse!

Six months after the death of Effie Mearns, Lucy Cherrytrees was married, without faint or swoon, to Lewis Campbell, who returned home, in spite of his reported death. The union was against the consent of the Laird, who soon died of either a broken heart or old age—no doctor could have told which.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE GIPSY LOVER.

"MARY, my dear," said Mrs Blair, approaching her daughter's bedside early one morning, (it was the morning of the fair of Bucklyvie in Stirlingshire, formerly a very important one,) "ye maun get up, and gang wi' yer brother to the fair the day. He's to sell the brown pony; and ye maun bring hame the siller, as he's gaun to Stirling after the fair, and winna be hame for a day or twa, and there's a bill to pay the morn."

Delighted with the mission, Mary instantly arose and dressed herself; and, when she had done so, broad Scotland could not have produced a more lovely or more captivating face and figure. Mary Blair was about nineteen years of age, and, though not tall of stature, her form was perfect in its symmetry, while her countenance beamed with gentleness and love. Many were the suitors who sought to win her heart; but "there was ane, a secret ane," who stood between them and her affections, and rendered all their efforts fruitless. But none knew who this one was; nor did any know even that her love was already disposed of. She durst not avow it; for the favoured lover was of a race with any of the individuals of which it would have been reckoned foul disgrace to have held communion of any kind. This was not her opinion; but it was the opinion of the world, and she was so far compelled to bow to it as to keep close locked up in her heart the secret of her love.

Mary's mother, who was a widow, rented a small farm in Stirlingshire, and was in comparatively easy circumstances. She held the land on reasonable terms; and the judicious management of her only son, a fine young man of about five-and-twenty, enabled her to make the most of it, and to live, if not in affluence, at least in plenty.

On the occasion with which our story opens, Mary was mounted on the pony which it was intended should be sold; and, accompanied by her brother, who walked by her side, they set out for Bucklyvie at a suitable hour in the morning. The young maiden, who had never been at a fair before, was in high spirits at the prospect of being gratified by the sight of such a scene; every now and then playfully urging on her pony, in order to put her brother to his speed, and to laugh at his efforts to keep pace with her. This emulation soon brought them to their destination. On arriving at the scene of the fair, the unsophisticated girl was delighted with the joyous bustle and confusion which it exhibited. The shows, the music, the tents—everything pleased her, because everything was new to her; but, above all, was she pleased and flattered by the attention shewn her by the numerous acquaintances whom she met. These she encountered at every turn; and, being a universal favourite, every one insisted on presenting her with a *fairing*, until she was literally loaded with gifts of various kinds. Having remained in the crowd all the forenoon, and having seen all that was worth seeing, Mary was conducted by her brother to the house of a friend, where he left her until he should dispose of the pony, and return with the proceeds.

It was some time before he came back; and, when he did,

it was to say that he had sold the animal, but would not receive the price till towards the afternoon; and that his sister must, of necessity, wait till then. Mary was alarmed by the delay; for it would thus be dark before she could reach home, and her own fears, and her mother's last injunctions, warned her to be home with daylight. She mentioned her uneasiness on this subject to her brother.

"But there's no help for it, Mary," was his reply; "and, besides, you have nothing to fear. Duncan M'Donald will see you safely home."

On this proposal, Mary made no remark. To the escort of M'Donald she made no objection to her brother, whom she knew to entertain a very different opinion of him from what she did. He was one of her numerous lovers, and, being in good circumstances, his addresses were favoured by her brother. But Mary herself—over and above the reason already assigned for her rejecting the suits of her numerous wooers, and of M'Donald amongst the rest—had an invincible aversion to him, on account of his coarse manners, and fierce, irascible temper; but her gentleness rendering her unwilling to have any difference with her brother on this subject, she made no objection to his proposal of M'Donald accompanying her.

In the course of the evening, Mary's brother again called, and handed over to her the price of the pony, which he had received; telling her, at the same time, that M'Donald would call for her at eight o'clock. It was now about seven.

The hour appointed came, but M'Donald came not with it. Another half hour passed away, and still he did not appear. Mary became restlessly and miserably impatient. Her host, who was an intimate friend of herself and her family, perceiving her uneasiness, proposed to her to accept the convoy of his nephew, (a young man of excellent character, who lived in the immediate neighbourhood,) and to wait no longer on M'Donald. With this proposal Mary thankfully closed, as she was anxious to get home; knowing that her mother would be in wretchedness till she returned. She was, besides, by no means displeased to escape the company of M'Donald. Her host's nephew was accordingly sent for; and, when he came, he, with great good will, undertook to see her safely home. In a few minutes after, the two set out, and had proceeded for the distance of about a mile or so, when they heard some one shouting behind them; and, turning round, they saw a man running towards them at his utmost speed. It was M'Donald. He was the worse of liquor—considerably so—and in a state of furious excitement. On coming close up to Mary and her companion, the ruffian, without saying a word, instantly knocked the latter down with a bludgeon which he carried. He then seized Mary rudely by the arm, and was dragging her onwards, saying that *he* would see her home; but she resisted, and, upbraiding him with the brutal act which he had just committed, refused to proceed with him.

"You won't go with *me*, then?" he said, fiercely confronting her.

"No, Duncan, I will not," replied Mary; "you have done a cruel and unmanly thing, and I will have no more of your company."

“So be it,” said M'Donald, turning on his heel; “but, Mary, if you do not dearly rue this yet”—saying which, he left her, and went off in the direction whence he had come.

On M'Donald's departure, Mary ran towards her wounded companion—his head being severely cut—and kneeling down beside him, tenderly raised him, and asked if he was much hurt. The young man, who had by this time recovered from the stunning effects of the blow, replied that he did not think he was, and instantly rose to his feet. At this instant two persons came up—a man and his wife. They lived within a mile of Mary's mother's, were decent people, and well known both to Mary and her companion. To these people she related what had occurred. The whole were then about to proceed on their way, when Mary insisted that her companion should return home, saying that she was now in perfectly safe hands. The young man for some time peremptorily refused to leave her; but, as she as peremptorily insisted that he should—for his face was streaming with blood, and he was otherwise greatly enfeebled by the severity of the blow he had received—he at length consented, and, bidding her good night, returned to Bucklyvie. Mary and her new escort now resumed their journey, and proceeded without any interruption until they arrived at a place called the Tinkers' Cove, when Mary proposed that they should there strike off the road, and take the short cut across the burn.

To this proposal her companions would by no means agree; alleging it to be unsafe to pass by the bivouac of the tinkers after nightfall—for we need hardly say that the place took its name from being a favourite resort of the gipsy race. We will not say that Mary did not expect this objection on the part of her companions, far less shall we say that she did not hope for it at any rate. Mary, in truth, both expected and desired the refusal of her friends to take the “short cut” with her; and we need not say, therefore, that her disappointment on the occasion was but small. Did she then insist on taking this “short cut” alone? She did—and there was a reason for it.

Shortly after parting with her companions—for here she did part with them—she came on the encampment of the gipsies, as it lay directly in her route. It was situated in a sheltered and compact hollow, of which one side was formed by a wall of living rock. At the moment of her approach, the tinkers' fire was blazing brightly; and before it were seated two persons, father and son. The former was the principal or chief of the gang who just now occupied the Tinkers' Cove; none of whom, however, were present at this moment, excepting the two spoken of. His name was Wilson; and, notwithstanding his profession and mode of life, which might be supposed to have imparted an equivocal, if not absolutely unamiable expression to his countenance and manner, his appearance was venerable in a high degree, and the tones of his voice at once mild and cheerful. He was, in truth, a kind-hearted old man, and one who would wrong no one. His son, again, was a handsome young lad, of about three-and-twenty, and, though born and bred a gipsy, possessed but little, either in habit or disposition, in common with the race from which he sprung. His manners were gentle; his spirit generous and elevated; and his affections warm and sincere. Young Wilson, in short, did not move in the sphere for which nature had designed him. Gipsy as he was, however, he was Mary's favoured lover. The secret is out, good reader—George Wilson, the tinker, was the chosen, over all others, of Mary Blair. Often had they sported together, when they were children, on the banks of the burn—for Geordie had come with his father and his party to the glen with the cuckoo and the green leaf for fifteen summers; and the thoughts of him, when absent, was the sunshine of Mary's soul. On her approach, on the occasion of which we have been speaking, old Wilson arose, and, taking her kindly by

the hand, said, with some surprise at her appearance at that late hour in so lonely a place—

‘Whereaway noo, Mary, my dear? What in a' the world has brocht you this way, at this time o' nicht?’

Mary, blushing as she spoke, informed him of her case; but said nothing of the motive which had directed her route by the “Tinkers' Cove.” It could hardly be expected that she should. There was one present, however, who guessed it, as might have been conjectured by his sparkling eye and the blush that overspread his fine expressive countenance.

“Then, Geordie,” said the old man, addressing his son, “ye'll see Mary safely owre the burn—and mind the crossin, for it's an ugly place in the dark.”

We need not say how joyfully young Wilson acceded to his father's proposal, nor need we say with what satisfaction Mary Blair concurred in it.

In a few minutes after, Mary and her gipsy lover set off, and, in somewhere about a quarter of an hour, arrived at the “crossin” to which the old man had so specially alluded. And it was not without reason that he had made such allusion, for the place was, indeed, rather a dangerous one in the dark—and it was so at this moment. The burn, at the particular spot alluded to, was crossed by two felled trees, stripped of their branches and laid parallel from side to side. The depth below was considerable—somewhere, perhaps, about twenty feet; and it was not the less formidable, probably, that it was almost dry, being covered at bottom with large stones and fragments of rock, instead of water.

On the side of the burn opposite that on which Mary and her lover approached it on the occasion of which we are speaking, the bank rose with great abruptness to a considerable height, and up this acclivity wound the steep, narrow path which conducted to and from the rude bridge already described. On reaching this bridge, George took Mary by the hand, and having, with great care and tenderness, conducted her safely to the opposite side, he bade her good night, as she had now only to ascend the path alluded to, and to proceed a few hundred yards afterwards, to reach her mother's house.

On parting with Mary, George recrossed the burn, and was bounding away on his return to the bivouac of his friends, when his progress was suddenly and fearfully arrested by a piercing shriek, which was instantly followed by a heavy fall, as if of some one precipitated into the hollow of the burn. Frantic with horror—for he had no doubt it was Mary who had fallen—he flew wildly back to the bridge, looked down into the abyss beneath, and found his worst fears confirmed. There, in the bottom of the ravine, amongst the stones and rocks, lay the form of his beloved Mary. Distracted with the horrifying sight, young Wilson was in an instant by the side of the unfortunate girl, and in the next her head was resting on his knee, and her face bedewed with his tears. But Mary was insensible to the sympathies of her lover. All consciousness had fled. Her injuries were of the most serious kind. In his distraction and helplessness, young Wilson called out for assistance; and his cries, though by mere chance, were heard. One of his own party—a young man about his own age, and who, moreover, happened to be provided with a lighted lantern being at the moment in search of a stray pony—was within hearing. He flew to the spot, and was quickly by the side of his friend. With the assistance of this person, the unfortunate girl, who was still insensible, was carried up to the level ground above.

But how could she have fallen? said young Wilson's companion, after being told by the latter that he had seen her safely across the bridge. “It's not so *very* dark, and I'm sure she knew the path well. I canna understand how she should have lost her footing on the path.”

“Nor I either,” replied Wilson, with a mingled air of wildness and thoughtfulness. “Nor I either—nor I either,” he repeated, with fierce energy. Then, gazing steadily but

silently in the face of his friend for a second—his countenance, meanwhile, expressive of some violent internal workings—he burst out loudly with—“I have it! I have it, Sandy!”—which was the name of his associate—“Mary’s been murdered—she has been thrown down—and that villain M’Donald has done it! I saw him pass about half an hour since; and, just as I was parting with Mary, I heard a rustling amongst the branches above us. It must have been he. Oh, but I will have sweet revenge! Dearly shall the villain rue this.” And, without saying more, he bounded alongst the bridge, ascended the path on the opposite side with the speed of a chamois, and there, hidden amongst the brushwood, did indeed find M’Donald, who, by the fatality which so frequently attends the commission of crime, still lingered on the scene of his guilt, although he might have escaped, at least for the time. But it is supposed that he had desired to return by the way which he had come; and that he was waiting for the disappearance of young Wilson, whose position at the bridge prevented him.

Be this as it may, in the place described the latter found him, when, springing on him with the ferocity of a tiger, he accused him of having thrown Mary from the height. The ruffian in his drunkenness admitted the fact—with some confused qualification about a want of intention to injure her.

“Unintentionally or not, you ruffian, you have murdered her, and dearly shall you pay for it!” shouted Wilson, fiercely; and, in the next instant, he dashed him to the earth—for young Wilson was an uncommonly powerful man—and, seizing him by the throat, would have strangled him on the spot. But another thought suddenly struck him. He loosened his hold, and, seizing M’Donald (who was now almost wholly incapable of resistance, from the process of suffocation he had undergone) by one of his legs, he dragged him down the path to the bridge. On arriving there with him, Wilson called out, in a voice hoarse with agitation and excitement, to his friend to bring him the cord which he carried. It was to halter the pony of which the latter had been in quest. The cord was brought. Wilson, quick as thought, took a turn of it round the logs which formed the bridge, made a running noose at the other end, forced the latter over the head of his miserable victim, and precipitating him from the bridge, exhibited him suspended from it by the neck, and almost immediately over the identical spot where Mary had fallen.

The whole was the work of but a very few minutes. When the tragedy was completed, Wilson and his friend carried Mary home. She was still breathing, but still insensible. On the following morning she expired; but, long ere this, the fire at the gipsy encampment at the Tinkers’ Cove was quenched, their canvass tents struck, and the inhabitants of those tents many miles away; and neither the cuckoo nor the green leaf ever again brought George Wilson or any of his party back to the verdant holms of Gartnavaran.

When the morning sun arose, it shone on the lifeless body of Macdonald, still suspended in the air; and great was the horror of the neighbourhood at the dreadful spectacle; but, when the truth came to be known, all allowed that it was a just and well-merited retribution.

PROOF POSITIVE.

THE families of John Brown and Thomas Moffat were near and dear neighbours. They had been so for many years. John was a master wright in the village of — in the west country; and, though in but a small and homely way of business, had contrived to scrape together several hundred pounds. He was thus a *bein* body, and was, moreover, a decent, honest man. Thomas, again, was an equally respectable sort of a person; but he was not so well to do in the world

as John. He had quite enough to live upon, and to live comfortably; but nothing more—there was not a penny over. Thomas was a weaver, and owned a four-loom shop.

We have spoken at the outset of the *families* of these two worthies, but are not quite sure if this be perfectly correct; for neither of them had any children, nor any other relative living with them. Their households consisted only of themselves and their better halves—namely, Mrs Brown and Mrs Moffat—two decent, well-doing women. These two good matrons lived on the same friendly footing as their husbands; and the situations of their respective houses enabled them to cultivate this amiable understanding to the utmost, and to enjoy each other’s society to the full. The access to their respective domiciles was by the same passage—an interior one; and their outer doors directly confronted each other. Thus pleasantly and commodiously situated, there was a constant interchange of visits between them. In truth, each was to be found in the house of her neighbour almost as often as in her own. It was a pleasant thing to see this neighbourly and Christian love.

We have said that neither John Brown nor Thomas Moffat had any children—neither had they, although both had been married for a good many years. To the former, this circumstance—namely, the having no offspring—was a source of great regret. He would have given the world to have had a little Brown to dandle on his knee, to be the stay of his house and the inheritor of his possessions. It was a very natural feeling for a man who had something to leave.

On this score, Mr Moffat had some sensations too, occasionally; but they were not altogether so strong as those of his friend, John Brown—for he had no possessions to transmit to his posterity; yet, he did often wish that he had an heir, if not to his fortunes, at least to his virtues. A little Moffat would have been very acceptable to him. He would have made him, he often thought, one of the best weavers in the county. In all these longings after this particular blessing, the worthy spouses of these worthy men fully participated. But it was to no purpose; it was a thing, apparently, not destined to be. Yet they were all near the fruition—we cannot say of their hopes, for they had long ceased to have any hopes on the subject—but of their desires; for, lo! unto each was a male child born; and, singular enough, almost at the same moment of time. But we must go a little into detail on this particular; it is necessary to our story; in fact, it would be no story at all unless we did so.

Well, then, on a certain evening, just about ten of the clock, both Mrs Brown and Mrs Moffat severally contributed an instalment of their debt to the state, in the shape of a thumping boy. The same professional lady attended on both. This worthy person being of opinion that Mrs Brown’s kitchen was the more comfortable and warm of the two—that is, that it was more so than Mrs Moffat’s—and knowing the intimacy that subsisted between the latter and her neighbour, did not hesitate to run with Mrs Moffat’s infant, the instant it was born, into the said kitchen, for the reason already assigned. The little squaller of Mrs Brown had been brought there also just a second before. Here the infants were hurriedly consigned, by the midwife, to the care of two good neighbours, who had volunteered their services on the occasion, while she herself hastened to bestow the necessary attention on their mothers.

The two worthy matrons on whom the charge was devolved of fitting the youngsters to make a creditable first appearance on the stage of life, were not wanting in their duty. They bustled about most actively—soused the little fellows in a tub of warm water—screamed, splashed, laughed, and scuttled away, with the greatest delight and good-will imaginable, and finally ended by decking out the little strangers in their first finery. But these two good women both laughed and screamed a great deal more than was

necessary. There was an unnatural elevation in their joy. They, in short, exhibited most unequivocal symptoms of having partaken a little too largely in the hospitalities of the occasion. They had evidently taken a superfluous cup; but it was excusable under all the circumstances—the more especially that it did not hinder them doing every justice to their precious charges, in the way of tending and dressing them. This latter operation they had just completed, when in bounced the happy, the delighted John Brown. He had been abroad when the joyous event above related had taken place; but had just been informed of it. In he bounced then, we say, with a face radiant with joy, and demanded to see his young representative.

“Here it’s, Mr Brown!” shouted *both* the women; each at the same time thrusting on him her own particular charge.

“What!” exclaimed John in amazement—“*two* o’ them! Are they baith mine?”

“No, no—just ane o’ them; and *this* is it, and *this* is it,” screamed again *both* the women, and each still pressing on him the infant she carried. The fact was, that, being somewhat oblivious, from the cause already hinted at, neither of them knew whose child it was she had, whether Brown’s or Moffat’s; and, to increase the perplexity of the case, the infants were as like as two peas.

“Mrs Rhind, I believe ye’ve lost yer reason,” said one of the women, addressing the other indignantly; “do ye no mind it was Mr Brown’s wean that was gien to me?”

“No, indeed, I do not,” replied the person appealed to, with at least equal confidence, and fully more resentment; “but I mind weel aneuch it was Mr Moffat’s, and ye ought to be ashamed o’ yersel to say onything else. Mr Brown’s wean was gien to *me*, and that I’ll uphaud till the day o’ my death.”

We leave the reader to judge of poor Johnny Brown’s feelings during this extraordinary altercation. He will readily believe they could not be very pleasant. It was, in truth, a most strange and most distressing predicament; and Johnny felt it to be so. Entertaining, however, a pretty sanguine hope that the midwife would be able to clear up the mystery, Johnny—who, in the meantime, stoutly refused to accept of either of the children—desired her to be instantly sent for. When she came, Johnny asked her if she would be good enough to tell him which of these children was his; but, before she could make any reply—

“Didna ye gie’t to me?” “Didna ye gie’t to me?” screamingly interposed the two nurses.

“Hold your tongues, will ye,” exclaimed John, angrily, “and let me get my wean oot o’ yer hands, if it be possible.” Then, more calmly—“Can ye tell me, Mrs Somerville, whilk o’ thae bairns is mine? It’s a queer business this,” he added, with a dismal expression of countenance. But John’s query, even in the case of Mrs Somerville, was one more easily put than answered. The conflicting appeals of the two assistants had sadly shaken her confidence, at no time very strong, in her ability to decide the point; and, to John’s great horror, *she* too looked a little perplexed, and candidly confessed “that she really couldna just precesely tell; that she was sae hurried at the time, and sae muckle taen up wi’ their mithers,” &c. &c. In short, it appeared she could give no information whatever on the subject; for, be it observed, she, too, honest woman, was a trifle confused with the various “wish-ye-joys” and “good-lucks” which she had drunk during the evening.

In the meantime, a violent altercation was going on between the two nurses, on the great question at issue. In this the midwife—who had finally fastened on one of the children as being, she was certain, Mr Brown’s—gradually joined, and there was every appearance of a general engagement taking place, when Mr Moffat presented himself, and, not knowing the untoward state of matters, demanded a

sight of *his* son and heir. But there was no such a thing for him; no child was offered to Mr Moffat; the lot was reserved for Mr Brown, to whom, it was still insisted, it belonged, entire as it stood.

“Is there *nane* o’ them mine?” said Mr Moffat, in amazement, after he had once or twice asked in vain which of the two children were his.

His friend, Mr Brown, answered the query, by telling him how matters stood. Mr Moffat, who was a singularly good-natured man, and withal a bit of a wag, was tickled with the oddness of the circumstance, and proposed that each should take a child upon chance, and leave it to the development of their features at a future period, to discover their identity through the medium of family likeness. Mr Brown—who, it will be recollected, had considerable property—did not, by any means, relish the idea of the possibility of leaving his money to the child of another, while it was beyond all doubt he had one of his own; yet, as matters stood, this was an exceedingly probable contingency. With regard to development of feature, that was but a vague and uncertain issue, and not at all to be depended on. Mr Brown felt all this; and, feeling all this, he at first peremptorily and sulkily refused to accede to Mr Moffat’s proposal, but insisted on having his own child and no other. All quite right and perfectly natural this of Mr Brown; but how was it to be done? It was evident, as we have already said quite enough to shew, that neither midwife nor nurses could possibly tell which was which of the children; and further inquiry, in place of tending to clear matters up, only made them worse, by discovering that the children, during the operations of washing and dressing by their nurses, had changed hands a dozen times; so that all trace of their respective origins was thus completely lost. The confusion, in fact, was irretrievable. It was long, however, before the distressed Mr Brown could be induced to consider the case as hopeless. He ran despairingly with the children, backwards and forwards, between the two mothers, to see, as nothing else would do, if natural instinct would discover the lawful owners of the living property, and help him to separate the claimants on his paternity. But in vain. Mere instinct, it appeared, could not do this; and the mothers, till he himself produced them, had never seen their offspring, so that neither could they identify them by recollection.

The case, therefore, was perfectly hopeless; and John Brown at length, though reluctantly, acknowledged that it was so. In this frame of mind, he listened more patiently to a repetition of the proposal which his less concerned friend, Mr Moffat, had formerly made him. To this proposal the latter now added that, in trusting to the future development of the children’s features for settling the point at issue, there was one feature on which he relied more than all the rest. This was the nose. And truly Mr Moffat had good grounds for the remark; for his friend Mr Brown’s nose was one of the very largest dimensions. It was in truth, a magnificent article—a huge, curved proboscis, built elaborately after the regular Roman fashion. It could instantly have been recognised by any one who had ever seen it, even once amongst ten thousand noses. There was no mistaking it, under whatever circumstances it might appear. Now, Mr Moffat’s nose, again, was after a very different model. It was a little, cocked-up snout—very little, and very much cocked—so much so as always to tempt you, when you saw it, to hang your hat upon it. Here, then, was an admirable sign—marked, distinctive, striking, and palpable—by which to ascertain the respective paternities of the infants, when they should have grown up a little; for it was presumed that, if Nature formed them in any way at all after the fashion of their papas, she would especially recollect the nose. *There*, it was thought, there would surely be a resemblance, if in nothing else. The matter being finally placed on this footing, it was agreed

that the children should be appropriated by a decision directed by hazard. It was accordingly so done—the way being as follows :—

One of the women present retired into an adjoining closet. She having done this, another placed her hand on one of the unconscious babes, and called out—

“Wha’s wean is this?”

The reply from the person in the closet—and who, of course, did not know which of the children was indicated—was, “Mr Brown’s.”

This settled the affair; the remaining child being, of course, Moffat’s. Each now took possession of the infant which chance had, in this strange manner, thrown upon his hands; after which—all present having been previously enjoined secrecy in the affair, as it was one so very ridiculous—Moffat retired to his own house, with his share of the booty; leaving his neighbour, Brown, to find what satisfaction he might in his.

For a long while after this, the secrecy imposed on those who were privy to the odd incident just recorded was very faithfully kept—as a feeling of shame of their own conduct made them do so; and no one but those immediately concerned knew anything at all about it. But much did the neighbourhood marvel, as the children grew up, at the strange resemblance which Mr Moffat’s son began to bear to Deacon Brown, (we forgot to say before that he was a deacon,) and, *vice versa*, the very astounding likeness which the countenance of young Brown commenced exhibiting to that of Thomas Moffat. Everybody was struck with these cross-purposes in simulation, and everybody wondered how, in all the world, they happened. They could not explain it; but we can, and so could the reader, we dare say; for he will, we have no doubt, at once conjecture that the chance which directed the destinations of the children, as already described, had quartered each on the wrong papa—that, in short, Johnny Brown had got his neighbour’s son and heir, and that his neighbour had got his. Such, in truth, was the fact—a fact now appearing more and more manifest every day, and leaving no doubt whatever that a decidedly wrong move had been made in the destinies of little Tommy Moffat, who should have been little Johnny Brown, with the certain prospect of inheriting, at his father’s death, some six or eight hundred pounds, whereas he was now likely to succeed only to a few crazy weaving looms. Perhaps, however, his actual father, resorting to the understood condition on which the children were appropriated, would have remedied this, by recognising his own nose on the countenance of the boy, and leaving him, after all, his successor. Perhaps, we say, he would have done this—nay, it is very probable he would; but, in the meantime, the good Deacon died, without having said or done any single thing to impugn the claims of the little pug-nosed urchin who passed as his son, to be his heir; and it will readily be believed that Moffat, who felt a suspicion, amounting almost to conviction, that the saddle was on the wrong horse, said as little. He naturally wished his son well. The misfortune, therefore, of him who should have been Johnny Brown, junior, was apparently now without remedy. He must be content with the four-loom shop, instead of the eight hundred pounds. It was a hard case.

In the meantime, Tommy the Misnamed’s nose grew apace, and carried, in its length and breadth, undeniable warranty of his lineage. But of what avail to him were its noble proportions? They developed themselves in vain. In vain the bridge rose with a curve like a leather cutter’s knife—in vain the ample nostrils distended—in vain, in short, did nature now labour at that important feature on Tommy’s face. It was toil and material quite thrown away. There had been a time when it might have done him good service; but not now. The nose of the unwitting usurper of his rights also got on, too, in the mean-

time, and, equally faithful to its prototype, began to take a decided direction upwards. It first shot straight out, and then took the heavenward bend with a graceful curl; and was thus as distinct and undeniable a testimony to its originator as Tommy’s was to his.

Thus, however, time passed on, and the lads both grew up; but, as they did so, the mistake with regard to their allotment at their birth became so palpable to those concerned in that affair—we mean the midwife and her two assistants—that their consciences smote them, and urged them so strongly with a sense of the injustice to which their inattention had exposed the son of the departed Deacon, that they resolved to keep the secret no longer, but to give him a hint of the affair. This was accordingly done. The young man was greatly surprised at the story, and said, to those who gave him the information, he had often, indeed, been told of his strong resemblance to Deacon Brown, but had never before been aware or had suspected that there was such good reason for it.

Losing no time in communicating to his friends the history of his real paternity, of which he had thus so unexpectedly obtained possession, he was advised by them all to try what the law could do for him in reinstating him in his own; each adding, that they had no doubt his nose alone would insure him success.

Encouraged by these assurances, the young man did finally determine on bringing the question and his nose together into a judicial court. He, in short, resolved, mainly on the strength of this organ—in which he was over and over again told he might have every confidence—to have his identity decided by the laws of his country, and, of course, his claims along with it. The opposite party—he of the cock nose—naturally enough resisted this attempt to oust him; and the consequence was, that the matter did actually go into court. It was a new and curious case. The midwife and her assistants swore to the facts of the disputed identity of the infants at their birth, and to the mode finally adopted of adjusting it; adding their firm belief that an erroneous distinction had been made. All the other witnesses for the plaintiff swore to his nose, stating it to be an exact copy of the late Deacon’s very remarkable proboscis. The learned counsel for the plaintiff expatiated on his client’s nose, and pressed it, in an eloquent and energetic speech, on the notice of the judge and jury; *wiping*, at the same time, the cocked-up stump of the defendant with successful irony. The judge, in summing up, dwelt on the plaintiff’s nose, calling on the jury to observe that it was an important and prominent feature in the case; and, finally, the jury found the nose—collaterally supported as it was by other circumstances—as a good and sufficient ground for finding a verdict in favour of the plaintiff, which they accordingly did, when the latter and his nose left the court in great triumph, amidst the acclamations of a crowd of sympathizing friends.

Young Brown was in due time served heir to his father, and succeeded to possessions amounting altogether, in money and property, to somewhere about a thousand pounds; which sum he always afterwards maintained was the value of his nose.

THE MISTAKE.

“O Tam, Tam! ye’ll break my heart, and tha’ll be seen ere lang,” was the exclamation of a pretty girl, the “servant lass” of a certain worthy minister whose manse was not at the distance of a hundred miles from Edinburgh. “Ye’ll break my heart,” she repeated, at the same time stooping down to lift some clothes which were spread out to bleach or dry on a small circular spot of grass in the middle of the garden behind the house. The reader will, of course,

imagine that such expressions as these, uttered, as they were, with a long-drawn sigh by a young and good-looking girl, could have reference only to some affair of the heart; and that the "Tam" thus pathetically and tenderly apostrophized, must be the favoured swain, albeit he seemed to be somewhat cruel in his love. We say the reader will naturally infer all this—and reluctant are we to spoil so pretty a little piece of sentiment; but it must be done, if we would speak truth, and truth we will speak at all hazards. This adherence to veracity, then, compels us to say that Lizzy Lumsden's apostrophe was addressed, not to a lover, but to a goat—yes, to a goat—a pet goat of the minister's, which had found its way into the garden, and had left its foot-prints on the snow-white linen which Lizzy had been labouring to purify; and it was the discovery of these "marks of the beast," whose name, by the way, was Tom, that had elicited the explanation with which our story opens. But great events oft spring from trivial things; and the incident we are about to record is another striking proof of the fact. We must, however, begin at the beginning. Be it known to the reader, then, that Lizzy Lumsden had been wooed, and was at this time fairly won, by a loving swain of the name of John Stobie. John was the "minister's man;" a decent fellow, and particularly useful to a gentleman of limited income, as he could turn his hand to anything, and was very tolerably successful in everything he attempted. In fact, John was invaluable. Now, John loved Lizzy with a sincere affection; and perhaps it was but a proof of this, that he was not a little jealous. Lizzy, as we have hinted, was a fresh, blooming country lass, and withal lively and sportive—a disposition in which she sometimes indulged at the expense of John's equanimity; for she certainly was wicked enough sometimes to take a delight in teasing him. Add to this, that half the lads in the country were running after her, and it will be allowed that John was not without reasonable grounds of uneasiness in the matter of his affections. But of all those who sought to find favour in her eyes, there was not one whom he so thoroughly dreaded and detested as a certain Thomas Dowie, a jobber at country work, whom the minister often employed in delving and trenching the glebe. He strongly suspected this person of an underhand attempt to supplant him in the good graces of Lizzy. And perhaps he had some reason; for Tom was a good-looking lad, and he had often seen him, or thought he had seen him—which is quite the same thing to persons in love—playing the agreeable to his affianced. This he would at the time have resented; but he was not altogether so blinded by his jealousy as not to see that his grounds of quarrel were not sufficiently good to warrant his interference. He therefore contented himself with "nursing his wrath to keep it warm," and with maintaining a sharp look-out on the movements of his supposed rival, Tam Dowie. Now, it behoves us, in justice to the said Thomas Dowie, to say that the suspicions of John Stobie were wholly unfounded, and that he had never, in word or deed, tampered with the fidelity of Lizzy Lumsden, or made the slightest attempt to divert her affections from that very irritable and jealous person. It is true Thomas thought her a very pretty girl, and in every respect a very nice creature; but he had never aspired to her love—never thought of it—for he knew the footing on which she and his neighbour, John, stood, and that there was every probability of its being a marriage, and that very soon.

Having mentioned these particulars, we recur to the incident with which we commenced. It happened, on that occasion, and at that particular moment—that is, the particular moment when Lizzy expressed herself in the way set forth at the outset—that John Stobie was at work delving a piece of ground on the outside of the garden wall on one side, and that Thomas Dowie was employed in

digging a trench on the outside of the wall on the other side. All three were thus within a few yards of each other, in a straight line, although unaware of their vicinity, in consequence of the intervening walls, which hid them from each other. It was, besides, nearly dark, rendering objects, at even a very short distance, indistinct. Thus situated, it will not appear surprising that Lizzy's apostrophe to "Tam" should have been distinctly heard both by Stobie and Dowie. They did hear it, and neither of them thinking at the moment of the goat, great was the sensation which it created in their minds; but as different was it as it was great. John instantly paused in his work, even while his spade was half buried in the soil, and grew as pale as death. His lips quivered, his head grew giddy. Oh, who shall describe the agony of that dreadful moment, when he heard the faithless Lizzy, forgetful of her vows and promises, declare a secret passion for another, and that other—oh, unendurable thought!—Tam Dowie—the very man above all others whom he feared and hated! The idea was maddening. He felt his blood boiling and whirling in his veins. But it was lucky he had made the discovery in time—thus philosophically reasoned John Stobie with himself—just in time to save himself from an unhappy connection. "Nae thanks, however, to Tam Dowie for that. It wasna his faut that he wasna made miserable for life; and it *was* his faut that he was now suffering what he suffered." It was to him he was indebted for the annihilation of all his dearest hopes. It was to him, and him alone, he owed the blight which had thus suddenly come over his happiness. The transition from disappointment to revenge was an easy and a natural one; and John, on the instant, determined to balance his account with his successful rival by the aid of the latter. Clenching his teeth together, in a paroxysm of rage—

"Confound me," he muttered to himself, "if I dinna gie the villain his kail through the reek for this! I'll draw him owre the whins, or my name's no John Stobie. I'll lay him on the breadth o' his back for ae month at ony rate, if there's a stick in a' the parish 'll do't."

So saying, John, who resolved that his vengeance should be as prompt and summary as severe, grasped a stout piece of paling that happened to be within his reach, and hurried away to a certain spot, which he knew his supposed rival must pass on his way home; and here lying perdu, he resolved to await his coming; and, when he should come, to gratify him with a taste of his paling.

To return to the intended but unconscious victim of John's vengeance. We have said that Lizzy's unguarded apostrophe had been productive of very different effects on the feelings of these two worthies. Tam it raised to the third heaven—his face became suffused with a glow of delight, and his teeth were laid bare with the broad grin of satisfaction, by which the joy of his heart was expressed. He was, in truth, thrown into raptures by the tender admission of the fair maiden, which had just fallen on his entranced ear. It was more than he had ever dared to hope for, and little, little had he been aware of the deep impression which his charms had made on the susceptible bosom of Lizzy Lumsden. He had never dreamt of it till this moment. But now—oh, happiness inexpressible!—he found he had been mistaken, and that he himself was, after all, the darling, though secret object of Lizzy's affections. Tom felt, indeed, some qualms at the idea of interfering with John Stobie's claims in the matter. But was this consideration sufficient to induce him to see Lizzy dying by inches for love of him? By no means. He was by far too tender-hearted for that. come of it what would, he determined not to see the girl miserable, if he could help it. The confession of an attachment to him, besides, had created a corresponding feeling on his part, and one so strong as to counter-balance all other considerations. Tom, in short, determined

to follow up his advantage, and to make Lizzy a happy woman, by declaring that their love was reciprocal. Acting on the spur of the moment on this determination—for he generously resolved that Lizzy should not remain a moment in ignorance of the happiness in store for her—he thrust his head over the wall, with a most captivating smile on his countenance, to have a tête-à-tête with Lizzy; but Lizzy was gone, and was nowhere to be seen. This was a disappointment; but he consoled himself for it, by resolving to try and see her before he left for the night; and, as it was now about time to drop work, he instantly set about this charitable purpose.

Going round to the kitchen window, he tapped at it, and then stared in through the glass, with the most winning look he could assume, and with the air of one who feels assured that he is a welcome visiter.

Lizzy was surprised at the visit—it being a liberty and an indication of familiarity which she could not think she had ever given Tom any reason to believe would be agreeable to her. She, therefore, looked all the surprise she felt, and, banging up the window, vehemently asked Tom, in an angry tone, what he wanted. Tom, in his turn, was rather surprised at this reception; but, attributing it to maidenly coyness, he only tried to look more engaging. He, however, said nothing—not a word. The truth is, he did not know how or where to begin; but, trusting, or rather having no doubt, that Lizzy would perfectly understand what he would say if he could, he continued smirking and staring at her, with the most tender and gracious look he could assume. Tom, himself, might have thought his appearance at this moment very interesting and very captivating, but to Lizzy he looked very like a fool, and there is no doubt the resemblance was exceedingly striking.

Provoked by his stupidity, and losing all patience with his obstinate silence, Lizzy angrily asked her lover what he wanted; and again her lover merely grinned a reply. Finding it hopeless to elicit from him the purpose of his visit, Lizzy ordered him instantly to decamp, or she would, she said, throw a pail of water about him. Not believing for an instant that she was earnest, Tom still maintained his ground and his grin. Lizzy could stand it no longer. She lifted up a small tub of almost boiling water, in which she had been washing the tea dishes when her lover first appeared, soused it about his ears, pulled down the window, and closed the shutters.

On receiving this extraordinary treatment from his supposed sweetheart, the drenched lover stared at the shut window in amazement, and then began to trudge away homewards, in a very downcast and melancholy mood, tormenting himself with new speculations as to the cause of this extraordinary change, and moralizing in his peculiar way on the mutability of woman's affections, and of all the affairs of life. He had even begun a soliloquy on the cause of his unhappiness, when, just as he was about to clear a thicket of whins through which he had to pass, he was felled to the ground by a tremendous blow from a bludgeon on the back of the head. The stroke, however, though severe, and sufficient to take him from his feet, was not yet violent enough to deprive him of his senses. He recovered his perpendicular in an instant, and, in the same instant, confronted his assailant, who, we need hardly say, was John Stobie, in an attitude that spoke forcibly of contemplated resistance. Tom, in fact, shewed fight; and the consequence was a long and deadly struggle, in which the faces of the combatants suffered severely. It was some time before Tom Dowie could possibly conjecture what he had been attacked for; but this was finally made manifest to him by the broken and breathless exclamations with which John Stobie ever and anon accompanied the blows which he directed at his person. These exclamations charged him with treacherously seeking to win Lizzy's favour, knowing

the said favour to belong, by right of priority and of conquest, to John Stobie; and shewing the fact of his antagonist's villany to be indisputable, by referring to Lizzy's speech in the garden. For some time the issue of the contest was doubtful; but at length the superior prowess of Tom prevailed—and so effectually, that the other belligerent fairly took to his heels, but not without carrying with him a couple of black eyes and a nose of greatly increased dimensions. Tom was also provided with a similar set of graces, and retired from the field with them in his entire possession.

In the meantime, little did Lizzy, the unwitting cause of all this fighting and evil-mindedness, dream of the mischief which she had occasioned; and, we need hardly say, still less, if possible, did the poor goat know of the share he had in it. But in this happy ignorance the former was not now long to remain. Not that she was soon to know precisely how she had come to be the cause of such unchristian like doings as those we have recorded, but that she was quickly to gather, by inference from certain circumstances, that she had, by some means or other to her unknown, destroyed the peace of mind of Johnny Stobie.

Fresh from the field of his glory, and his countenance ornamented in the way we have described, that person now rushed into the kitchen of the manse, where was Lizzy Lumsden. Horror-struck at his appearance, and yet unable to refrain from laughing at the odd mixture of the ludicrous with the tragic which it exhibited, Lizzy inquired, in a tone and with a manner which was but little calculated to mollify John's present feelings—"What in a' the world is the matter? What has happened?" John made no reply; but he threw a look at her that ought to have annihilated her where she stood. It was meant to tell her that she was a vile and faithless woman. But, in place of doing this, it only made her laugh the louder. She could not help it, for her life, much as she really did feel for the battered condition of the unfortunate youth.

At length she said, with more gravity than she had hitherto been able to command—

"Hae ye been fechtin, John?"

John had again recourse to the look of expression; but, on this occasion, condescended also to speak:—

"Yes, I hae been fechtin," he said, sternly. "Wad ye like to ken what it was for?"

"I'm nae way curious," replied Lizzy, saucily—offended at John's unwonted manner.

"No—I dare say no," replied John. "I fancy ye think the less ye hear about it the better."

"Indeed, I'm just o' that mind, John," said Lizzy, carelessly.

"Ye're a fause-hearted woman," replied John, emphatically, nettled at her cool effrontery, as he deemed it "and little credit hae ye by this nicht's wark, tak my word for that—it says little for ye."

"Oh, then, I'm thinkin it should say less for you, John, wi' thae fearfu e'en o' yours. Man, ye're just a fricht to be seen."

"An' wha has the wyte o' that, ye faithless woman that ye are?" demanded John, triumphantly.

"Them that made ye that way, nae doot. But wherein hae I been faithless to ye, my man, John?" replied Lizzy, laughing, and proceeding with her work.

"Ye deceitful woman that ye are!" exclaimed John, in the utmost indignation, "do ye mean to tell me to my face that ye dinna ken? Do ye mean to say that ye're unconscious o' haein gien me ony offence; that ye haena been deceivin me; and, while ye war gien me yer hand, gien yer heart to anither? But it's a Gude's mercy I hae fand ye oot in time. Mind, Lizzy," he added, with a manner which he meant to be awfully impressive, "I've dune wi' ye frae this nicht henceforth. Ye shall never

noo be wife o' mine. That's a owre; so you and Tam Dowie may buckle to whan ye like—and the sooner ye gang and seek consolation frae him the better."

Lizzy, as well she might, was confounded by this solemn objurcation, of which she could by no means conjecture the cause; nor would her maidenly pride permit her to ask any explanation, or to gratify John by any attempt at doing away the erroneous impressions under which she saw he laboured, although she could not conceive in what these impressions had originated. She merely, therefore, blushed slightly for an instant on being thus assailed, and replied, with a toss of her head—that she did not see that the losing of him (meaning, of course, the aforesaid John Stobie) was a matter wherein she needed the consolation of anybody; it was but a small affair—not worth speaking about; and added—

"But, if I needed consolation o' any kind, I dinna ken if I could gang to a better hand than Tam Dowie." Lizzy had discovered this was a sore point; so she probed it.

This reply was altogether too insulting a one to admit of any answer. The easy effrontery of it—the cold-blooded, bare-faced heartlessness which it discovered—in truth, deprived John altogether of the power of speech. He, therefore, though he thought much, said nothing, but, taking up a candle, retired to the little out-house where he slept. But, alas! it was not to sleep that John retired—it was to think on the treachery of womankind, and of Lizzy Lumsden in particular. John, in truth, passed a miserable night. He tossed and tumbled during the long hours of darkness, and hung weeping and groaning over the ruins of his air-built castles of happiness. John's peace of mind, in short, was gone—irrecoverably gone.

We have shewn that the cruelly-deceived lover slept not a wink during the whole of this unhappy night; and we have now to add, that neither did Lizzy; for she was by no means so indifferent to John's feelings as she had affected to be; and an intense anxiety and painful curiosity to know the meaning of his mysterious upbraidings tormented her during the whole night. She thought of all she had said and done, as far back as her memory could carry her, to see if she could discover anything that could possibly have given rise to the strangely-altered temper of her lover towards her; but she could discover nothing—nothing whatever. But of all the puzzling circumstances in this puzzling affair, by far the most obscure and perplexing to Lizzy was John's combat; for he had said nothing to lead her to infer that the fight had been on her account. But what for had he fought?—and who, in all the world, had he fought with? These were enigmas, of which Lizzy vainly sought a solution. She could make nothing of them; or, indeed, of any other point in the whole affair. All was mystery and perplexity.

Thus passed the night away with the two lovers; and, when morning came, it found them precisely in the same frame of mind—the one bemoaning his blighted prospects of felicity, and the other suffering from intense and painful anxiety of mind.

On the morning following the night on which he had made the discovery of Lizzy's faithlessness, and on which he had fought with his supposed rival, he found himself in a violent fever, occasioned at once by distress of body and mind. For three entire days thereafter, John kept his bed, where he was repeatedly visited by his worthy master, the minister, who had a very sincere regard for him, having always found him a faithful and honest servant. The former, however, beginning to suspect that his "man's" illness was a disease of the mind, determined on ascertaining the point—not from an idle curiosity, but with the benevolent intention of offering such comfort and consolation as his official character called on him to administer to the afflicted. Acting on this charitable resolution, the

worthy pastor, on the occasion of visiting John on the evening of the third day of his confinement, after mentioning to the latter his suspicion that there was something weighing on his mind, put the question directly to him. John for some time evaded a reply; but at length fairly confessed that it was so; following up the said confession with a circumstantial account of all that had happened; exposing, in all its enormity, the faithless conduct of Lizzy; and quoting, with due emphasis, the expressions used in the garden, that had at once betrayed and confirmed her guilt.

When John had concluded, the worthy minister—who was perfectly aware of the attachment subsisting between his man and his maid, and who knew that they were soon to have been married, he having been consulted on the subject, and given it his hearty concurrence—remarked, that it was certainly a very strange circumstance; that he could not have believed that Lizzy, of whom he had always entertained the highest opinion, could have been guilty of such improper conduct. "But," added the worthy man, "have you ever, John, asked Lizzy for any explanation of the matter. It is possible there may be some mistake—some misunderstanding."

John said he never had asked any explanation; that he had not thought it necessary, as the case appeared but too plain as it stood.

The minister admitted that the case seemed a strong one; but added, that there could be no harm in hearing what Lizzy had to say on the subject. Stepping into the house, he brought Lizzy into the presence of the suffering victim of her infidelity.

"Lizzy," said the minister, gravely, and in an impressive tone, "John here, I am sorry to say, has some serious charges against you—charges greatly affecting your moral character—but which I am yet unwilling to believe. He accuses you of having deceived him, of having tampered with his dearest feelings, and given those affections to another which you had led him to believe were his alone. Is this true, Lizzy? *Can this be true?*"

John, who had turned his face to the wall when Lizzy came in, gave an audible groan at this stage of the proceedings—as much as to say, "Too true, alas!"

Lizzy, however, with a look of perfect innocence, utterly denied the *fact*.

John groaned again; but now said, with great energy—"Ask her, sir, if she didna say yon—ask her if she didna say yon in the garden, on Monday nicht."

"What *yon*, John?" inquired the minister, who had forgotten the particular piece of evidence to which his man alluded—or rather, perhaps, the particular phraseology in which it was couched.

"Ask her, sir," replied John, indignantly, "ask her if she didna say to herself, on Monday night, in the garden—'O Tam, Tam! ye'll break my heart, and that'll be seen ere lang;' meaning, of course, Tam Dowie."

"Yes. Well, Lizzy," said the minister, "did you use these expressions at the time and place mentioned, and with reference to Thomas Dowie?"

Lizzy thought for a moment, then burst into a loud laugh, and said—

"Oh! I daresay I did; but, dear me, sir, I meant the goat—oor ain goat, Tam—wha had been abusin' a' my claes wi' his dirty feet."

The minister laughed, and John stared in amazement. Need we say more? All was made up, and the two lovers were afterwards married.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE RAID OF ROXBURGH

It is an old saying, as to the origin of which a good deal of controversy has taken place among quotation hunters, that him whom Jupiter wishes to destroy, he first deprives of reason; and, doubtless, it is a noble maxim, containing much knowledge of mankind, and indicating, in a few words of startling import, that imprudence is the author of the greater part of our misfortunes. The quotation, however, carries more than this; for it implies that the imprudence which proves prejudicial to our interests and happiness in this world, results from the attempted gratification of some ungovernable passion, which blinds us to the view of what is good for us, and drives us on through the dark valley of vice, until we are destroyed in the gulf of misery which lies yawning at its termination. This moral is often exhibited by the actions of the deluded votaries of sin; and one memorable instance we are now to submit to our readers, where the effects of evil passions not only proved destructive to an individual, but injurious to the community over which he enjoyed a jurisdiction.

In the town of Roxburgh, there lived, a long time ago, a young man of the name of George Belford, by trade a cattle-dealer, but who sometimes joined to that more extensive business, the occupation of killing the animals he could not sell, and retailing their carcasses in a shop in the town, which, in consequence of not being a freeman, he kept under the name of another person. Belford, though apparently a very plain and simple man, was ambitious of being known only as pursuing the more respectable part of the craft of procuring food for his fellow-men—a pride he derived from his ancestors, who were Yorkshire graziers, and plumed themselves on their never condescending, except for their own private use, to invert the nature of their business, by killing in place of rearing.

Belford, though possessed of this little failing of pride, was a good, honest fellow—as big as a giant, as simple as a child, and, if a pair of ruddy cheeks are of any importance to beauty, as fair as the fisherman whom Sappho loved, but who would not return the love of the little brown poetess. He was one of those people who generally disappear in a country in the progress of the art of getting rich—a person who lived more for others than himself, reversing the original law of self-love, and endeavouring to do as much good to his friends and acquaintances as was in his power; while his broad, good-humoured cheeks and ready laugh carried on a continual warfare against their melancholy, and plainly told that he himself did not know what the long, liquid, lugubrious word was meant to convey. The good nature he disseminated amongst all his acquaintances, was not so much a consequence of wit or humour—for he was too blunt and simple to have much of either—as of his unchangeable equability of temper—his openness, candour, and honesty—his perfect contentedness, and readiness to contribute to whatever might conduce to the happiness of those around him.

Such people as George Belford may truly be said to be benefactors of mankind. Ever happy themselves, they are the cause of much of that happiness that is in others. The

laugh of pure good-nature, disregarding the mere impulses of artificial humour, forces its way to the heart of lank melancholy, and makes the hypochondriac gather up his leathery cheeks into a reluctant smile. To few are awarded the blessings of simplicity and good-nature to the extent enjoyed by Belford; for, indeed, it must be admitted that it is not often that, amidst the depraving effects of worldly interests and seductions, the heart of man is kept pure enough to be pleased at all times with himself and his own actions. But, in proportion as these children of nature are scarce, they are, by all good men, the more prized; and Belford was, accordingly, sought after by both young and old—the one to enjoy his laugh, from youthful sympathy, and the other to court an oblivion of cares amidst the effusions of a harmless merriment.

Not very distant from the place where Belford carried on his business, there lived an old widow woman of the name of Pringle, who had a daughter called Lucy, an interesting girl of about eighteen years of age. To this young woman great court was paid by the young men of the town, in consequence of her amiable character and engaging appearance. The dutiful and kind attentions she bestowed on her aged parent, was a theme of praise to the neighbours, and a subject of envy to mothers who had not experienced similar regard from their children. The frailty of her parent, who had long been in tender health, had, no doubt, strengthened the sympathies of Lucy; but the kindness she extended to her mother was only a concentration of that feeling of universal good-will and friendship which she felt for all with whom she was acquainted. The sweetness of her manners; her imperturbable good-nature; her kind offices, ready on every occasion and for every friend; the softness and gentleness of her speech and conduct; her total freedom from vanity or self-will—all set off by beauty of no ordinary kind—obtained for this young maiden the universal favour of the inhabitants, the affection of her friends, the loves of the young men, and the emulation, untainted by envy, of the young women.

As a good daughter generally makes a faithful and obedient wife, it was not to be wondered at that Lucy Pringle had many admirers. Among these might be reckoned George Belford, who held the first place in her affections. Her heart was also solicited by no less a personage than the youngest bailie of Roxburgh, called Walter Paxton, a man the very reverse of his less illustrious but more favoured rival. Paxton had been in London; and it was even said he had visited Paris—a journey, in those days, of no less importance, and reflecting nearly as great honour on those who had the good fortune to have accomplished it, as a voyage to China in these space-annihilating times.

In these foreign excursions, Paxton had laid down his Scotch manners and Scotch accent, and received, in exchange, those of England. His Scotch honesty, if he ever possessed any, was left behind him at Paris. His temperance he had parted with before he left his country; having, perhaps, considered it as a vulgar appendage in a place like Paris, where licentiousness had, even at that early period, begun to ape the legalized and respectable character of a household virtue. The conduct of one who made vicious indulgences a system formed on authority, could not

fail to cause much speculation in a small town which had only yet known the crimes which follow the chariot of war. Paxton was, therefore, soon pointed out as a profligate, who erected for his private sacrifices an altar to vicious pleasures of every kind which could for a moment gratify a depraved appetite. But the most remarkable part of his character, was his total want of feeling for the miseries of those who attempted to oppose the front of a virtuous resolution against the gratification of his desires. Every man or woman that came in the way of his pleasure, was set down as his enemy; and such was the perversity of his mind, that the hatred he nourished against the often unconscious disturbers of his pleasures, was considered by him as legitimate and proper as if it had been directed towards public criminals. His revenge was deadly, fruitful of endless expedients, and apparently insatiable. The person who incurred his displeasure might well be called unfortunate; for, while the powers of injury are innumerable, and the desire of inflicting pain constant and unremitting, it is difficult, if not impossible, even in highly civilized times, for the destined victim of a disciplined avenger to escape the snares laid for his destruction.

It may well be wondered at, that such a man as Walter Paxton should ever have filled the situation of magistrate in such a country as Scotland; but it is much to be feared that his country, though boasting of the possession of a good stock of private morals, has never, at any time, been remarkable for the purity of its official characters. Indeed, a poor country runs always a great risk of having its public stations occupied by bad men. The power of money is felt there with greater effect; and bribery and poverty are only the counterparts of public venality and corruption. What is applicable to the higher departments of the state is, in this respect, not unsuited to the insignificant dominations of town magistracies. Paxton's money, assuming the form of a golden key, opened for him the doors of the Council Chamber of Roxburgh, which, otherwise, would have been shut against his open and flagrant breaches of public morals and private obligations. The patron of vice sat in the chair of judgment; and it would be difficult to condemn it as a virtue, or censure it as a crime, that the vices which he openly practised, and encouraged his fellow citizens to commit, were punished by him with a severity which deserved the character of cruelty. It may well be supposed that his punishments were not applied to check vice: they were the mere result of a natural love of witnessing pain, whether that was experienced in the victim of the arm of the law, or that of the private avenger of his own fancied wrongs.

Paxton had seen and admired Lucy Pringle, as he passed from his house to the Council Chamber. He had no sooner felt the power of her charms, than he set to work to devise some mode of obtaining an interview with the young woman. Though a man of unprincipled character, he had no objections to a wife; and such was the effect produced on him by the appearance of this artless girl, that he had serious thoughts of marrying her, provided he ascertained that, upon an interview, her conversation and manners accorded with her appearance, and that he succeeded in gaining her affections. Such, however, was the bad character of the man, that, even when he intended good, nobody would believe that he was bent on anything but evil; and, as he intended, in this instance, first to gain her affections, and then to declare his honourable purpose, he found an obstacle in his own character, which was productive of such effects as a bad reputation generally is found to be. He first resorted to his power of external charming, by decking himself out with his most showy apparel, exhibiting some of those gems he had purchased when abroad, and filling the air through which he conveyed his precious body, with sweet effluvia of costly perfumes. To these flimsy attributes

of wealth and fantastic conceit, he endeavoured, as he passed the house of the unconscious widow, to attract the attention of her daughter; but he had yet to learn that a woman might be found out of Paris who could distinguish between external ornaments and internal worth—the things which adorn the human body, and the qualities that sanctify and elevate the human heart—the fabrics of man, and the work of the Almighty. All his efforts only tended to make the innocent girl avert from him her eyes. What he fancied would produce admiration and love, only excited disapprobation. Too amiable to nourish ideas of indignation at what she conceived to be impudence, she contented herself with awarding to a man who could not appreciate her gentleness, the simple boon of pity. Her imperturbable ease, and apparent unconsciousness of being even an object of his attention, stung him with greater pain than could have been the effect of the strongest expressions of disgust and anger; and so, indeed, it ever is, that he who can bear reproach is seldom proof against the keener weapons of neglect.

Finding every endeavour to attract the attention of the young girl unavailing, Paxton one day, while loitering about the neighbourhood to catch an opportunity of at least feasting his eyes on her person, observed that the house in which the old widow lived was ticketed for sale. A thought struck him, that he might purchase the dwelling, and trust to the connection which would thereby be produced between landlord and tenant for the means of an introduction to the object of his affections, if not of the acquisition of a power over the fortunes of the unprotected inmates which he could turn to an advantageous account. The boldness of the man set at defiance the common difficulties and obstructions that stood in the way of the accomplishment of his objects. Having inquired who the landlord of the dwelling was, he waited upon him, struck an immediate bargain, and purchased the house, with the condition of having a right to the rent for the current half-year, which was about expiring. The reason why the seller disposed of the dwelling was, that he could not get payment of his rent from the poor widow; and his sympathy for her and Lucy prevented him from turning them out. The motive of the purchaser, again, was in truth, the object of the seller. The poorer the tenant, the worse for the one, the better for the other. It is seldom, indeed, that the views of contracting parties are so nicely fitted; yet how different were the aims of the two individuals!

Lucy's kind friend and lover, George Belford, was the first person who heard of the sale of her mother's house; and, knowing the character of Paxton, as well as his endeavours to get introduced to his interesting companion, and altogether ignorant of his real intentions, he hurried to her residence to communicate the disagreeable intelligence, with such consoling and cheering observations as his simple heart enabled him to make. When the unwelcome intelligence was made known, the poor widow conceived she saw at once, without the aid of prophetic vision, what was the object and what would likely be the consequence of this transaction. She acknowledged that she would not be able to pay her half-year's rent; and to sue for indulgence to a person of so bad a character, was what her spirit, broken as it was with age and poverty, would not permit her to do. These dim prospects roused the feelings of the gentle maiden, who, throwing her arms round her mother's neck, wept and ejaculated with fervour—

"The warld, mither, is to me at least—though you are lang past the poore o' helpin yersel—open and free for the winnin. If I've been the cause o' this misfortune, I may also be the cure; and thae hands may mak amends for the ills that hae been caused by my unworthy face. If men thocht nae mair o' me than I do o' mysel, they would save me muckle pain, and themselves nae sma' trouble; but there is at least ae consolation we hae in oor poverty—and that is, whatever misfortunes may come o' my blue een,

which men concern themselves mair about than they hae ony richt in my opinion to do, there's nane can ever come o' my heart, which will ever justify my sayin wi' yer auld prophet Esdras, that, o' a' the flowers o' the earth, ye hae chosen to yersel ae lily, and o' a' the fowls that are created ye hae still left ye ae dove. I will work, my dear mither, for oor support, an' my arm will wax strong when I think I am workin oot oor liberation frae the wiles o' a villain."

"Lucy, Lucy," replied the grateful and tender motner, "ye are indeed to me the ae lily and the ae dove; but the frosts o' winter may nip the aye, and the ruthless hawk is aye on the still and noiseless wing, watchin for the ither. That unworthy magistrate may be to you the ruthless hawk, and yet a mother's fears ought not to cast a doubt on the faith o' a dochter in whose heart the grain o' evil seed that was sawn in Adam's in the beginning has shewn fewer tokens o' its murky blumes, than my experience has ever seen. But, kind and guid as ye hae been to me, your remedy for oor threatened evil is indeed an evil itsel; for what though I hae bread and independence, if I want my Lucy—a few years, it may be days, will sever us for ever, and the moments that are in mercy still allowed us, may surely be unclouded by separation. Your wark could do but little for our support, and God be praised I hae a higher trust—ay, even that o' the son o' Sirach, wha said—'I have had but little labour, and have gotten unto me much rest.' Our guid freend, George, may yield us some assistance against the schemes o' this man, whose loins are girded with the fine gold o' Aphaz, but whose heart has nae mair o' the qualities o' the beryl than its hardness."

"My guid auld freend," replied George—"an' I wish I could ca' ye by some mair kindly name—I can ony gie ye the advice I tak to mysel—keep up the spirit, an' the body will tak care o' itsel. My freends seek me to kill their care by my guid humour; and, accustomed to that way o' curin melancholy, I kenna how to heal the sorrows o' them wha are beyond that remedy. But what I tuk I may weel gie. I am also ane o' Paxton's victims. I hae twa fauts: the aye is that I love Lucy, and the ither that I'm not a free-man o' the town. But let him try his hand. He may ruin me; but it's no in the power o' mere man to brak the heart that's in love. Dry up your tears. In heaven ye hae a Freend wha is stronger than a' the enemies o' earth, and even in that scene o' strife ye hae also ae freend."

"George, ye're a pair comforter," cried Lucy, looking at him, wistfully. "Our trust in heaven we needna be reminded o'. The silent night, and my mother's prayers, in which I join, as we kneel before we commit oorsels to His keeping, are guid remembrancers o' the faith we hae in the greatest o' a' the freends o' unhappy mortals. You hae added to oor sorrows, George. I dinna blame ye; but my heart smites me sair when I think that you are also to suffer for my worthless sake. The mither that bare me, and the man wha loves me—my only freends on earth! Is it possible—can it be in the ways o' heaven—that I, a pair, helpless creature, can be the cause o' ruining them I wad gladly dee to save?"

Overcome by these feelings, she burst into tears, and hung upon the neck of her mother. There was now a silence in the cottage; for there was a sacredness in the love and sorrow of the young girl that bound up the mouths of both her mother and lover. The old woman, pushing her gently away, recommended again faith in heaven.

"You shall not be the cause o' our ruin, Lucy," she continued. "Sae fair a vessel was never yet made the instrument o' wrath against the guid. The daughter o' Merari did weaken Holofernes with the beauty o' her countenance, her anointed eyebrows, and the tire that bound her hair; and that weakness was verily the death o' the tyrant. The Lord made beauty the instrument o' the destruction o' him wha sought it unlawfully; and that bonny face, peradven-

ture as fair as Judith's, may be the cause o' ruin to ane wha is less than the general o' the army o' Assur."

"But Judith did dress for Holofernes," said Lucy, innocently. "She put sandals upon her feet, and put about her her bracelets, and her chains, and her rings, and her ear-rings, and all her ornaments, and decked herself bravely, to find favour in his sight. These things I never did; and, if the fond thocht is false, that oot o' this evil guid may come, I am guiltless o' claimin the affections o' this man."

"And therefore is it that I think ye are an instrument in the hands o' the Almighty," said the mother; "for, though He sometimes worketh with evil instruments, He delighteth 'in the first fruits of holy things.' It's ane o' the chosen punishments o' the wicked that their eyes inflame at the sight o' 'the sacrifice of sanctification,' and their hearts burn at the thought o' the righteousness o' them they seek after for evil. This man canna bear the sight o' the virtuous love that warms the pure hearts o' you, my bairns; and so would he pollute the temple wi' the gluttonous and impure gods o' Egypt. But his ain gods will devour him; for, will I not say with Cyrus, 'Seest thou not how much they eat and drink every day?'"

"Now you have spoken my sentiments," said George. "Let the wicked go on. Heed them nae mair than ye do the blast that blows by ye, and spends its force on the face o' the rock, only to lie quietly and dee in the valley. He canna harm ye, Lucy—neither can he harm me; for, if he tak frae me my shop, and fine me in the freedom fees, I will work to replace my loss; and, if you only smile on me, I will hae my reward. So will Paxton hae his. The people o' Roxburgh will be roused against him for oppression, and he'll hae faes around him, within him, and aboon him."

"Let him do his warst," cried Lucy, deeply affected by George's sentiments, and flinging herself on his neck. "With my mither as our counsellor, you as my friend and lover, and God as the protector o' us a', we may be as the face o' that rock ye hae mentioned, and the winds that break upon it may change into the silence o' the valley o' peace."

The hint thrown out by Belford, in his reply to the widow, had some foundation in truth; for, one day when Paxton was parading before Lucy's door, his ears were greeted with George's good-natured laugh; which—though not directed towards him—having resulted from a conversation in which he was engaged with some neighbours, the haughty bailie conceived to have been intended to cast ridicule upon him, and lower him in the estimation of the public. He had known previously that Belford was Lucy's lover, and it may be imagined that little more was required to call forth the usual indications of his malignant spirit. He soon discovered that Belford's shop was within the royalty; and that the person in whose name the business was carried on, had no interest in the profits, but was a mere servant in the employment of Belford, and receiving from him wages in that capacity. In these circumstances, his quick eye soon saw that Belford was liable to a prosecution for infringing on the rights of the burgh; and he resolved, though not till he saw the issue of his suit with Lucy, to prosecute him for damages, and interdict the further prosecution of his business within the burgh.

Some time after the purchase of the house, the new landlord called at Widow Pringle's, with the object of feeling his way, and laying a proper foundation for putting forward his suit. He found Lucy sitting by her mother reading to her a portion of Scripture; and, with his usual impudence, disregarding the impression which he knew his former conduct must have produced on his hearers, accosted them thus—

"You will be aware, my good lady, that you are now my tenant; and I am glad, indeed, that Providence has placed you under a protection which cannot fail to be of importance to age, when that, as your former landlord tells

me, is allied to poverty. He sold to me the house because you could not pay his rent; and, as I have often heard of your worth, I could not think of allowing you to be brought under the griping exactions of a purchaser who would not want his money; and therefore took upon myself the risk of a purchase, that I might have it in my power to give you that indulgence of which you stand in need."

The poor woman lifted up her eyes, and directed them, in the fulness of curiosity, on the face of the speaker. She was for a moment thrown off her guard, and was about to reply thankfully to this speech of proffered kindness, when she met the looks of her daughter, who did not seem to participate in her feelings. She, therefore, gently bowed her head, and said that she had received from her former landlord great indulgence, and had no reason to speak of him otherwise than with gratitude.

Not in any degree put out of countenance by the dry remark of the widow, Paxton proceeded—

"I do not admire pretences in any one; and empty promises are like early buds, which have drawn too liberally on the beams of an early sun. I wish to shew you that I am sincere; and have accordingly written out a paper, which I have now in my hands, whereby I will agree to your paying your next rent at any time before the feast of St John, which will give you ample time; and, if I get it then, it will be equally convenient for me. It will be necessary that you sign the paper, agreeing to pay the rent at that period; and I will even promise that this indulgence will not be exclusive of an additional one, if you shall, when the day of payment comes, require it.

Paxton knew well the answer that would be given to his request—viz. that the old woman could not write; and that answer was accordingly given. Prepared for this, he asked the name of the old woman, and was apparently pleased to hear that it was the same as her daughter's. He then promptly said, that the young woman could adhibit to the document the name of the mother. Lucy saw no objection to this; and her mother having requested to hear the paper read, and stated that she saw nothing in it that could be turned to her disadvantage, her daughter wrote under it the words Lucy Pringle, as her mother's name—forgetful, simple girl, that it was also her own, and she, being the writer of it, must be held to be the true subscriber.

The moment the paper was signed, Paxton seized it eagerly and put it into his pocket. He then endeavoured to direct to him the attention of Lucy; but he still failed to make the slightest impression on her. His fervent glances fell on a piece of marble; his eloquent language was repelled by cold, yet suitable and well-bred remarks. He could neither excite her admiration nor rouse her anger; and the exasperation such neglect produces in proud minds was gradually gaining ground upon him, notwithstanding the determination he had made before he entered, to withstand all temptations to anger or reproach; yet what he most felt, was the want of a proper subject of complaint, for such was the elevation of mind of the humble girl, that she did not stoop to shew that she considered him worthy even of her anger. The accession of his love, and the workings of hurt pride, were reciprocal; but the passion of the moment overcame him, and he taxed the young woman with ingratitude and want of feeling for the interests of her mother, whom he had benefited by the paper he had accepted at her hands.

Even this charge did not produce any effect on the philosophic Lucy. She coldly answered that, where there was no favour solicited, no gratitude was due for an obligation conferred, when the party apparently favoured could put a construction on the gift different from that which the giver claimed. Yet she admitted that she was grateful for his proffered kindness, and would not adopt the uncharitable construction until she saw what time would prove in favour

of his declared wish to do good to her parent. This sensible and well-timed remark again threw Paxton off his guard, and he felt inclined, like the wolf in the fable, to force upon the innocent lamb the indictment of which he was the originator and the judge. At this moment Belford came in, and Lucy thanked heaven for the relief. The simple, good-humoured lover felt no indignation against Paxton—for he saw no danger in his attempts to win the affections of Lucy; and the milk of human kindness flowed so plentifully in his veins, that he could harbour no hatred even against an enemy. He accosted Paxton at once with his usual salutation:—

"I am glad, yer Honour," said he, "that ye hae expressed yersel kindly to my twa unprotected freends, wha are truly worthy o' yer best regard. The auld widow was afraid ye would be to her a harsh landlord; but I tauld her to keep up her spirits, for God protects his ain—as we say on the hills, the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb; and what reason could yer Honour hae for oppressing twa defenceless women, wha never injured ye? The wolf is only cruel because he is hungry—the fu' lion has nae anger; and it's weel kenned yer Honour's rich. I think nae ill o' ony o' God's creatures; but, though I were to be deceived in this instance, I can e'en mend the faut, by paying the next half year's rent mysel. I would think mysel weel paid, by a smile o' that bonny face o' Lucy's, though I ken she never expects ony return for sic a favour, but a smile o' mine—a pair reward indeed, and to her a waefu bargain."

As George spoke, he laughed in Lucy's face; and she, notwithstanding the presence of Paxton, gave him in return a melancholy smile. The contrast between her reception of George's compliments and that of his own, stung him with jealousy and vexation. The good-nature of Belford, it was impossible to get over. There was not afforded a single peg on which to hang the charge of a fault. As the angry waves chafe themselves on the still and often smiling banks on which they dash, Paxton's anger increased in proportion to the ease and good-humour with which he was treated. The innocence and simplicity of the lamb incensed the wolf more than his hunger chafed him. He felt himself under the unfavourable operation of a contrast, with innocence on the one side and villany on the other. He attempted to restrain his feelings, but found that what his tongue concealed his fiery eye and trembling hand exposed, and, darting on Belford a glance of deep hatred, he suddenly left the house.

Next day, Belford received a summons, at the instance of the magistrates, to make payment of a large sum of damages, asserted to have been occasioned to the town by the colusive possession he, an unfreeman, had had of a shop within the royalty, under the name of another person; and to desist in future from carrying on his business in that quarter, or in any other place situated within the burgh privileges. This step was the act of Paxton, who saw that, unless he disabled Belford, he could derive no advantages from having purchased the property; because the latter, by affording his promised assistance to the widow and daughter, would operate as a valve to save the effects of his pressure. In this he would serve two objects: he would revenge himself on the good-natured Belford, who had done him the grievous injury of forestalling the affections of the interesting Lucy, and whose laughing face and contentedness spoke a satire on his morose and dark manners, and disturbed mind; he would also be more sure of his lively victim, who, unprotected by her lover, would fall into his hands, a prey of necessity and villany.

Belford was not much disconcerted by this proceeding of Paxton's. He could not fail to see that it was a piece of gratuitous spleen; but it is doubtful if his open and unsuspecting mind comprehended the whole extent of the profligate scheme. He viewed the prosecution as a mis

fortune which could not be alleviated by mourning over it; and, having appointed a man of business to defend him, continued the ordinary well-contented tenor of his way, keeping before his eyes continually the happy day, not far distant, when he would be enabled to make Lucy Pringle his wife. His attentions to her were unremitting; and it was his usual practice to take her to witness the amusements of the times, among which the fairs of Roxburgh held a prominent place, in consequence of the great influx of the English, who came there for the double purpose of enjoying themselves and carrying on traffic. On the next of these occasions, Belford and Lucy had resorted to that part of the town where the tents were erected, and the greatest concourse of people had collected.

The scene of the fair was of the most stirring character; and, indeed, it might safely be alleged that the Roxburgh fairs of those days were the finest specimens of merry-making in the kingdom. The proximity to the more civilized country of England gave the town an advantage over all the others in the kingdom in this respect; and mountebanks of all grades—including rope-dancers, posture-makers, morris-dancers, mimes, merryandrews and jugglers—performed their feats and evolutions, and played off their tricks and fooleries, in the midst of admiring multitudes. Plays, too, were enacted, by what were termed the English vagabonds; and Scottish minstrels, excited by the emulation produced by the foreign performers of the histrionic art, strained their memories and their lungs to gather around them those crowds without which all the genius of improvisation could avail them nothing.

As Belford and Lucy stood in the middle of this gay, noisy, motley scene, they saw a large party of the English, who had come from Roxburgh Castle, mixing with the retainers of that powerful Earl of March who in those days imitated the style and grandeur of a king. Between these parties there existed old deep-rooted prejudices, the smouldering fires of old enmity, ready, in a moment, to burst forth on the application of a passing blast. Many of the English were intoxicated, and applied to the Scotch many degrading epithets, which were answered by others of an equally aggravating kind. The consequence was what might have been expected. A scuffle ensued, in the midst of which Belford was separated from his terrified companion, and implicated in the broil, by receiving a severe blow in the face, which stung him with so much pain that he involuntarily pressed forward to seize the person who had inflicted it. At the very moment when he had come up to his enemy, an Englishman, who had been also pursuing him for a similar purpose, stabbed the stranger to the heart, and he fell in the arms of Belford, who, getting the dead victim of another person's crime thus forced upon his charge, trembled to contemplate the consequences of being thought to be himself the perpetrator of a murder. To add to his embarrassment and distress, the persons who gathered around him discovered the murdered man to be an esquire of the Earl of March; and a loud shout of revenge broke from the infuriated populace.

As Belford stood with the corpse leaning on his breast, Lucy Pringle came running up, breathless and terrified, and at her side appeared Paxton, who had watched the moment of separation of her and Belford, with the view of attaching her to him; but she, excited by the danger in which her lover was placed, and tortured by the importunities of her tormentor, repulsed him with more than ordinary spirit. At that moment a shout arose, and many voices bawled out that Belford had killed March's equery. Lucy screamed and ran forward, and Paxton accompanied her, crying, with a loud voice, which mixed strangely with the shrieks of the maiden, to seize Belford, the murderer, on his, a magistrate's authority. The scene was wild and impressive. The head of the dead man hung over Belford's arm. The

blood from the corpse had sprung up into his face, where grief, terror, and despair strove for mastery. Lucy bounded forward and hung upon his neck; and Paxton, dragging her away, still cried to the crowd to secure the murderer. In the midst of this extraordinary scene, March's followers rushed forward and relieved Belford of his burden. The crowd now split into two parties. One division, headed by Paxton, insisted on Belford being the murderer; but another division, which was the stronger, maintained that the perpetrator was an Englishman. A scuffle again ensued, and an uproar of a fearful kind filled the town with terror and dismay.

In the confusion produced by the contention of the two parties, Belford escaped, followed by Lucy, who had kept her eye upon him wherever he went. They met at the turn of a narrow lane, up which they hastened, and were soon out of sight of the men whom Paxton had instructed to guard his rival. By the time they reached home, the noise had, to a great extent, ceased; and a number of people from the crowd hurried forward to inform Belford that the people of the town were now all satisfied that the person who had committed the murder was an Englishman. His sword, wet with blood, had been secured, though the culprit had found refuge in Roxburgh Castle. Belford himself had no sword; and this circumstance tended in a great measure to satisfy the people that he was entirely innocent of the crime. Paxton was said to be in a great rage when the crowd turned against him, and many went so far as to accuse him of a wish to implicate an innocent man against whom he bore a grudge, on a charge of the commission of a crime of which the united voice of the public declared him innocent.

This affair died away. The public authorities made no inquiries after Belford; but indelible traces of the effect of the affray were left on the revengeful heart of his persecutor, and rendered visible by the fury with which he now pushed on the civil action against the man who had never injured him. He had heard that Belford and Lucy were soon to be united; and, in order to secure the judgment of the town-clerk in his favour, and within the earliest possible time that the forms of court would permit, bribed him, by sending to his wife a handsome present of plate. He was determined that, whether he secured the object of his affection or not, she should never insult him by becoming the wife of another.

Paxton, in the midst of his love and rage, had, however, penetration enough to enable him to foresee obstacles in the accomplishment of his designs against the fortunes and liberty of his rival. The debt brought out against him he might be able to pay; and, if he could also free Lucy of her obligation to him for the rent, they might bid him defiance, defeat his schemes of love and revenge, and become united and happy in spite of his efforts to entail upon them misery. He resolved, therefore, on having an alternative scheme of persecution. He had not forgotten the affair of the murder, and had been devising various modes of turning it to account against his rival. He knew that, in consequence of the universal good opinion that Belford enjoyed in the town and country, and of the prevailing belief that he was entirely innocent of the crime, he could not dare to indict him before the southern justiciar for murder. The public prosecutor had, indeed, already satisfied himself that no blame attached to Belford, who, independently of his excellent character, had no ground of quarrel with March's esquire, and wore no weapon by which the death-blow could have been dealt. Another scheme was, therefore, resorted to.

It had been surmised in the town that March had been greatly incensed at the murder of his favourite, and was anxious to discover the author of the crime. Paxton heard the report, and proceeded to take advantage of his official situation in communicating with the Earl.

He got up a number of written statements, by various individuals, tending to make out that Belford was the author of the crime. One person stated that the esquire had struck Belford, which was the fact, and that the latter was seen to follow his victim, who, in a moment after, fell. Many spoke to the blood seen on Belford, and to his having received the dead body in his arms as it fell; and some were bribed to say they saw the blow struck by the hand of Belford himself. These concocted instruments were dispatched by Paxton to the Earl, with a letter, stating that he himself was satisfied that Belford was the man who had deprived the Earl of his favourite retainer, and recommending to him to send and take vengeance on the culprit, who would otherwise escape, as the public authorities had refused to punish him.

Leaving this communication to work its expected effects, Paxton, still inflamed with his passion for Lucy, took every opportunity of calling at the widow's house, to speak of repairs, or any other invented subject which might afford a pretence for a visit. Belford he often met, and was surprised to find him not only apparently oblivious of his unfriendly conduct on the occasion of the murder, but retaining his good humour, and by no means disposed to charge him with his inimical designs. This only tended to increase his anger. In a short time decree was pronounced against Belford, ordaining him to pay one hundred and fifty merks of damages, and interdicting and prohibiting him from "breaking or vending fleshes, within burgh, in all time coming." Unable to pay this large sum, the debtor was thrown into jail; and his persecutor saw with exultation the ground clear for his attack upon the unfortunate girl, who was now inconsolable for the loss of her lover.

The prosecution of poor Belford having been conducted in name of the town, Paxton thought that his hand in it would not be observed. On the day after his apprehension, he accordingly called at the house of the widow, under the pretence of intimating to her that the feast of St John approached, to which period he had indulged her in the payment of her rent. The old woman, who had been trusting to Belford to pay for her this small sum, with tears in her eyes for the fate of her friend, and the consequent misfortunes which that fate was likely to entail on her and her daughter, told him that she would not be in a situation to satisfy his demand for some time longer, and requested another period of indulgence.

"I hae nae reason," she said, "to complain o' the ways o' Him who has protected me for sae many years. Though I and my dochter hae suffered meikle sorrow, I winna say wi' Job that the Lord shall not visit me every morning, and try me every moment—for misfortunes are his visits and his trials, and my heart, as weel as my dochter's, has experienced the sanctifying sweets o' tribulation. Though our guid freend George Belford is in the custody o' the scribes, I shall yet trust in his means o' savin us; for, though the fig-tree was struck dead, and did wither, because it carried nothing but leaves, the fruit o' his charity is only bound up for a season in the frosts o' an unlawfu persecution, which Justice will, in God's own time, melt wi' her summer smiles."

"If it is to Belford you trust, my good woman," said Paxton, "your faith is in a broken reed; for I understand that his effects, when sold, as they are shortly to be, will not pay the debt he owes to the town for the unwarrantable encroachment he made on the burgh privileges: but, as I had no hand in his prosecution, I should like to be accessory to his liberation. I bear no ill will to him; and, if your daughter Lucy would call at my house to-morrow evening, I shall, in the meantime, try and devise some plan for his benefit, and communicate the result of my deliberations to her, that she may lend a hand in the good work,

and free the man who is also to benefit me by paying me your rent."

This wily speech, made for the purpose of drawing Lucy to his house, threw the old woman off her guard. She recommended her daughter to go; and the latter, anxious to contribute to the liberation of her lover, promised to wait on him at the time stated; and the dissembler departed in high hopes of reaping the benefit of his multifarious schemes for bringing ruin on an innocent girl and her honourable lover. Lucy had, however, formed a resolution, in her own mind, first to see Belford before visiting Paxton. She expected no great assistance in the way of advice from her unsuspecting lover; but she wished to know from his own lips the state of his affairs, and the probability, if any existed, of his power to extricate himself from prison, and her and her mother from the tender mercies of her dishonourable admirer.

Next morning, accordingly, Lucy having offered up a prayer to the Author of all mercies for the success of her mission, went to the jail to ask permission to see her lover. She was told by the jailor that she could not be admitted, as he had got particular instructions from Bailie Paxton not to allow her in particular to see the prisoner. This communication satisfied the unfortunate girl that the imprisonment of Belford was a part of the plan laid by Paxton to get her within his power. She hesitated now about trusting herself, unprotected, within the walls of his house; but her courage, which resulted from conscious rectitude, was, as she thought, greater than his, which was grounded on villany; the physical weakness of a female form was not greater than the moral palsy of a remorse-stricken heart; and the proud attitude of innocence carried a power which vice has often been forced to feel and acknowledge. Such were the sentiments which induced the high-minded maiden to visit her enemy in his own den.

In the evening she went at the hour appointed. She was astonished to find, on knocking at the gate, that the servants had been sent out of the way. Paxton himself opened the gate, and held out his hand to welcome her, with all the sweetness which he was capable of assuming. The room into which he led her was, like his person, arrayed and perfumed, so as best to set off the contrast of luxury and humble poverty. Yet how ignorant often are conceited men, who plume themselves on their knowledge of weak women, of the true and natural springs of the human heart! Lucy sighed for a cottage of which George Belford would be the humble lord; and the glittering splendour with which her eyes were attempted to be glaucoured, seemed to her only the gold and silver scales of the serpent, which nature has arrayed in deceptive beauty. The lover commenced his operations by handing Lucy a chair, and seating himself by her side.

"If you knew," he began, "my charming maiden, how much pain you have produced to me since first I saw you, I would dare to hope that she who has received so many of nature's gifts, and cannot be presumed to want pity, would extend a kind and assuasive hand—even as the royal touch is applied in mercy to the cure of otherwise irremediable diseases—to alleviate my misery."

"It was my understanding, sir," replied Lucy, with a voice and manner which indicated that the speech of Paxton had been heard unheeded, "that oor meeting this day concerned an unfortunate man now confined in the jail o' Roxburgh, and whase liberty concerns my happiness and my mither's independence. I dinna choose to use either my tongue or my ears in ony ither behalf; and if it's no your inclination or interest to abide by the subject in hand, I can gae the road I cam, and trust to a higher Power for the succour o' the distressed."

"Your interest in this vulgar man," said Paxton, biting

his lips, but still master of himself, "but ill becomes your beauty and understanding, and the fame of both, in a town where beauty has carried off the prize from its neighbouring burghs. If his liberation is sought so anxiously by you, that he may be able to pay your mother's rent—which he may as well do in prison—this object may be gained by a shorter process; for you have only to smile upon me, and the debt is discharged: yea, a kindness suitable to my love would be received by me, your devoted lover, as a recompense for the house itself, which would be welcome to your mother as her exclusive property for life."

"I have another and a more important interest in George Belford's liberation than the payment of my mother's rent," replied Lucy, "though, doubtless, that, to a daughter who loves her parent, as duty requires, is of no small avail."

"It is, perhaps, of more avail than you are aware of," said Paxton, getting angry at her hinted attachment to Belford; "for you know, my proud beauty, that you yourself are my debtor. I hold a document, signed by your hand and bearing your name, for payment of my rent. The jail of Roxburgh" (attempting to laugh) "would be an unsuitable place for the residence of a beauty."

"There would, at least, be no rent demanded from me there," replied Lucy, naturally, though without any intention to be sarcastic.

"A truce to these unfriendly observations," cried Paxton. "I love you, Lucy, as never man loved. Say you will favour my suit, and Belford shall be free, your rent discharged, and your mother made happy for her life. You shall be mistress of my heart and fortunes—my wife—the regulator of my actions—and the dispenser of my happiness. Unbend, I entreat"—throwing himself on his knees and endeavouring to kiss her hand—"these unseemly frowns, which deform a face fairer than an angel's, and reward me with one moment's bliss for months of misery and anguish."

This warm appeal produced no effect upon the high-minded maiden. Though she believed Paxton's mention of a wife to be a mere attempt to engage her favour, she acted no part of affected resentment, exhibited no starts or emotion of any kind, but, rising calmly, said, that he himself had now given the signal for her departure. A collected courtesy, as she receded, evinced her superiority to an exhibition of offended pride, and cut her lover to the heart, who expected no result from his suit but kindness or anger. Her coolness was a neglect which roused him beyond a proper command of himself; and Lucy, seeing the storm gathering, quickly opened the door, and, before he recovered himself, escaped to the street.

The effect of this interview was to introduce into Paxton's mind a desire for revenge. His fair means having failed, he bethought himself of the resources of force. The jailor of Roxburgh was one of his creatures; and, if he had Lucy fairly under the keeping of his iron grasp, she would be within his power, and there was to his mind a pleasure in the contemplation of having free access to her under the very roof where his rival was confined. He had a few days to wait until the arrival of the day of payment of the rent stipulated in Lucy's obligation, which he had so treacherously got her to sign. He would then bribe the town-clerk to give him an expeditious decree, and the consummation of his wishes would be complete.

His intention was carried into effect. A decree was pronounced in a short time against Lucy Pringle, to make payment to Walter Paxton of the rent of the house occupied by her mother. No intimation of this step was ever made to Lucy; for, although the law requires what is technically called a citation to be given to a debtor before any judgment can pass against him, Paxton had taken care, by getting the officer to put the citation into his hands, to prevent it ever reaching those of Lucy. One night, as she sat by her mother's side, reading to her a chapter of her favourite

prophet, two officers entered the house, and exhibited to the unfortunate inmates a warrant for committing the person of Lucy Pringle to the jail of Roxburgh.

"It is not my daughter," ejaculated the old woman, "who is avin the rent of this dwellin. I took the hoose, and it is meet that the burden should fa' on the back o' her who became bound to bear it. The auld sinner, who is to be made acceptable to the Lord through the furnace o' adversity, will be a gainer by this judgment; and her prayers, like Jeremiah's, will be heard frae a low dungeon. Mak me your prisoner; affliction and misery, and wormwood and gall, are for the eild, who can dree the bale and dule o' worldly punishments; but leave, oh, leave to the young, the fair, and the innocent, the light o' that sun which only in the heyday o' youth shews nae shadow on the dial o' their pleasures. Ye are auld men yersels, and surely ken that adversity brings frae the auld heart prayers, and frae the young a curse. To the ane a prison is a tabernacle, to the ither a Gehennah. Judge, for the sake o' heaven—judge the fatherless, and hear the appeal o' the widow."

As the poor old woman uttered these sentiments with the revived spirit of a dead enthusiasm, she held forth her hands in a beseeching attitude to the messengers; but they were requested to spend no time in negotiation, and, without giving more time than allowed Lucy to throw a cloak over her, they hurried her away, regardless of the fall of the old mother, who came to the ground with a loud scream, as she saw her daughter—her last stay and support—carried away to a jail.

Lucy having been safely lodged in prison, and put under the custody of a man whose office depended on obeying the commands of Paxton, and who was otherwise well paid for pandering to his purposes, was, as Paxton thought, in a fair way for being brought to reason on the absurdity of her choice, in preferring a boor to a gentleman. Another attempt, by fair means, to get her to bestow upon him some part of her regard, he conceived might, after she had felt the horrors of a jail, rendered more terrible by the efforts of the jailor, be attended with success; but it was necessary to allow her indignation to subside (he had still to learn that her only feeling was pity) before he presented himself to renew his suit. In the meantime, his communication to the Earl of March would, perhaps, have the effect of getting rid of Belford, whose confinement was now becoming a theme of conversation, and a subject of sympathy. March's retainers could easily be let into the jail, under the pretence of breaking it open; and the fierce customs of those days would leave the poor prisoner little chance of escaping from them with his life.

It was indeed true that March did intend to act upon the information given by Paxton; but not, perhaps, in the way the latter contemplated. His Lordship had secretly set on foot a rigid system of inquiry as to the murderer of his esquire. Regular communications were made to him by his emissaries, and the whole history of the persecution of Belford and Lucy had reached him, as connected with the impeachment of the former by Paxton, as the guilty person of whom March was in search. The result of his inquiries was, that his esquire was killed by the English, and that Paxton could not fail, as a magistrate, to know this as well as himself. The schemes of the bailie were laid bare, and the anger of the Earl against the slayers of his esquire was only equalled by his disgust at the villany of Paxton, who had endeavoured to direct a nobleman's vengeance against an innocent citizen, to gratify a base object. These conclusions were, of course, kept secret from Paxton, and indeed from every inhabitant of Roxburgh; the Earl's designs being inconsistent with their discovery to any one not connected with their accomplishment.

The situation of Lucy in prison was made as uncomfortable as the cruelty of the jailor could effect, by the aid of

a wicked invention. Her couch was on the floor, and she had not covering sufficient to protect her from the gusts of wind that found their way through the grating, which afforded her a dim light to assist her in her devotions. Her food was stinted, and her only drink brackish water, brought from a distance, that its impurity might be undoubted. The conduct of the jailor was intentionally brutal. The object of all this cruelty was to set off, by contrast, the blessings which were promised her by her persecuting admirer; but she bore all with the determination and equanimity of a saint. Her unbounded confidence in a rectifying and requiting Providence, sustained her through all; and she received Paxton, when he had summoned up courage to call, not only without any appearance of ill-nature, but with something like an indication of that good breeding and amenity of temper which she always exhibited, and which he ever felt bitterly, as a satire on his conduct and a mockery of his designs.

The fair usually held at the feast of St Lawrence now approached, and Paxton fixed upon that day to bring his resolutions regarding Lucy to a crisis. On that day, accordingly, he repaired to the jail. On his way thither he was pointed at by various of the citizens, who had begun to see through the schemes of their civic dignitary; but the pride of the man construed the marks of attention into the demonstrations of respect. As he turned the corner of the street where the jail stood, he saw Lucy's mother sitting weeping on a stone at a small distance from the place of confinement of her daughter, and so as probably to be in the view of the lonely prisoner, as she looked through the small grated hole that afforded a scanty light to her dungeon. Every now and then the old mother turned her longing eyes up to the small aperture, and the tears stole down her cheeks as she thought of the persecutions to which her daughter was exposed. Spurned from the prison door by the creature of her persecutor, she had sat down there to gratify the yearnings of a mother's heart, by feasting her eyes on the black castellated tenement that contained all that was dear to her on earth. Several people standing by seemed to know the cause of her sorrows; but the dreaded power of the magistrate prevented them from exhibiting their sympathy.

"Stop, sir!" cried the mother, as she started up and seized the magistrate by the hem of the cloak in which he was wrapped. "Whither fliest thee, 'as the eagle that hasteth to eat?' Give me up my dochter, wha is under the iron keys of thine iniquity. It is I wha am your debtor, and here I sit to wait my entry into that house which was never intended for keepin the sun frae the cheeks o' youth and innocence. Tak me, or tak us baith. The just shall live, and the unjust shall perish. These are the words of the prophet—hear and tremble. Give me my dochter—my bairn—my support and consolation on earth; and I will pray for ye wi' the expirin breath o' a Christian."

And she clung to him, in spite of his endeavours to shake her off. Several of the neighbours gazed on the extraordinary scene, and the magistrate, angry and ashamed, by a hurried effort flung her from him. In the struggle she fell on her knees, and in this attitude cried, holding up her hands—

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree clean bare, clean bare; and with withered leaves has he made it, and cast it away. Men, men of Roxburgh, where is your auld spirit? Is there nae justice i' the land? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. The widowed mother has cried in vain for her bairn, and the Council Chaumer o' Roxburgh is turned to the judgment ha' o' Nicamor.

The concluding part of her speech was cried in a loud voice broken by sobs, and pierced Paxton's ear, as he hurried away like the sting of an adder; but it rather goaded him

on his career than called up conscience, and, turning up a by-lane, he reached the jail door unobserved by the people.

On entering, he was greeted by his prisoner with the usual tokens of an unbroken temper and perfect calmness; but, as he began to approach her with a familiarity which her knowledge of his character made her fear, her spirit rose to the pitch of virtuous enthusiasm, and she stood boldly up in defence of her dearest rights.

"They tell us," cried she, "that the defence o' weak woman lies in the heart o' man. So thought I, and up to this hour I hae acted on the maxim. I trusted to it when I treated your rudeness with gentleness, and your boldness with a calm confidence. I was wrang. Stand aff, or ye may learn that I trust to another defence than the generosity o' oor natural protectors."

"You may rue this haughtiness, madam," he said, "long before you reap the benefit of your affected pride. You have spurned my love, rejected me as a husband, defied me as a just creditor, and insulted me as a magistrate. What does all this deserve?"

"What it merits," responded Lucy—"what an honest man will say it merits, when he kens I never asked yer love, never made ye my creditor, and never refused honour to ye as a magistrate, till ye dishonoured yoursel."

"Again and again more insults, in place of love!" cried he. "But a kiss, they say, extracts all the poison out of a woman's heart."

"And sometimes sends power into her arm," replied she, retiring farther back, and seizing an iron bar that stood in the corner of the jail. "This," she continued, "was forged as an instrument o' oppression; but I may find in its hardness mair o' a woman's defence than lies in man's heart. Offer me the rudeness that will turn ae hair o' my locks, and ye may ken the strength o' a woman whan she has to defend her honour."

"A heroine! a heroine!" exclaimed the magistrate, rushing forward to seize the bar. A severe stroke on the arm rendered him furious. He cried loudly for the jailor; but at this moment a loud shout was heard from the street—people were running in all directions—the clash of arms resounded from various quarters—and the screams of people, apparently dying, struck the ear of the astonished Paxton. Letting go his hold of Lucy, he stood and listened. A huge battering-ram struck the prison door, making the walls of the crazy house shake from their foundation. Loud cries of "March!" rent the air, and the whole town seemed to be in a state of intestine war. The prison-door gave way, and a party of March's men entered the cell where Lucy stood, contemplating the craven face of her unfortunate lover. Her clothes were torn, and a part of the blood which had flown from his wound besmeared her lovely face. The scene told all that was required to the soldiers. They instantly seized the culprit, and, having carried him down to the street, the mob, who, by this time, had got possession of the whole story, and become infuriated, inflicted on him such wounds that he died within a few hours.

The horrors of the sacking of Roxburgh have become matter of history; but it remains for us to chronicle the marriage and happiness of George Belford and Lucy Pringle.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SCOTTISH HUNTERS OF HUDSON'S BAY.

THE gloom of a boisterous winter evening was settling over one of the wild, inhospitable tracts which lie to the north of the St Lawrence. The earth, far as the eye could reach, was covered, to the depth of many feet, by a continuous sheet of frozen snow; over which the bellying clouds, heavily charged with the materials of a fresh storm, hung in terrible array, fold beyond fold, as they descended on every side to mingle with the distant horizon. On the one hand, a frozen lake, deeply buried, like all the rest of the landscape, stretched its flat, unvaried surface for leagues along the waste; on the other, a winding shore, covered with stunted trees and bushes, alternately advanced into the level, in the form of low, long promontories, or retired into little hollow bays, edged with rock, and overhung by thickets of pine. All was sublimely wild and desolate. The piercing north wind went whistling in sudden gusts along the frozen surface of the lake, dashing against each other the stiff, brittle branches of the underwood, and shaking off their icicles, or whirling the lighter snow into huge columns, that ever and anon went stalking along the waste like giants, and seemed at times to thrust their foreheads into the very clouds. Not a single human habitation—not so much as the wigwam of an Indian, or aught that could give evidence of even the occasional visits of man—could be seen in the whole frozen circle, from the centre to the horizon. All seemed alike uninhabitable and uninhabited—a dreary unpeopled desert, the undisputed domain of solitude and winter.

And yet, on this dismal evening, the landscape was enlivened by two human figures. They were mounted on a rude sledge, drawn by four large dogs, that now, as the evening began to darken, were urging their way at full speed across one of the wider bays of the lake. The keen, penetrating wind blew right a-head, so intensely chill that it felt to the naked hand like a stream of ice; and the travellers, who were seated, with their backs to the blast, on the front part of the car, and who from time to time half turned their heads to direct the course of the dogs, drew closer and closer together as they felt their limbs stiffening, and a drowsy torpor stealing over all their faculties, under the deadening influence of the cold. They were dressed from head to foot in the skins of wild animals, with hoods, like those worn by the Esquimaux, projecting over their faces, and long strips of some thick, coarse fur wrapped in a spiral fashion round their limbs. One of them—a robust, dark-complexioned young man, rather above the middle size—had an Indian blanket bound round his shoulders; the other—who, though tall and well-made, was of a rather slighter form, and much less deeply bronzed by the climate—was closely enveloped in the folds of a Scotch plaid.

“I am afraid, Sandy, it's all over with us,” said Innes Cameron, the fairer and handsomer of the two; “I have been dead asleep for the last ten minutes—ah, me! and dreaming of Scotland too, and of one I shall never, never see more. Do you think there can be any chance of our yet reaching the log-house?”

“I have been more than half asleep too,” said Sandy

Munro, the more robust traveller, “and my feet are ice to the ankles; but, if we can hold out for barely one quarter of an hour longer, we are safe. Pine Creek Point is quite at hand—see how it stretches black across the snow yonder, not four hundred yards away; and, hearken! you may hear the wind whistling through the branches. There is a little bay beyond it, and the log-house is at the bottom of the bay. Just strive and keep up for a few minutes longer, Innes, and we shall get over this night with all the rest.”

The sledge reached the promontory, and entered the wood. It was thick and dark; and there was a rustling and crackling on every side, as the dogs went bounding among the underwood—their ears and tails erected, and opening from time to time in quick, sharp barkings, sure indications that they deemed themselves near the close of their journey. The trees began to open; and, descending an abrupt ice declivity, the travellers found themselves on the edge of a narrow creek, that went winding into the interior, between steep banks laden with huge piles of snow, which, hollowed by the blast into a thousand fantastic forms, hung bellying over the level. A log-house, buried half-way to the eaves in front, and overtopped by an immense wreath behind—resembling some hapless vessel in the act of foundering—occupied an inflection of the bank opposite the promontory; and, in a few minutes, the travellers had crossed the creek, and stood fronting the door.

“Ah, no kindly smoke comes frae the lum, Innes,” said Sandy, leaping out of the car; “all dark, too, as midnight at Yule; but we maun just bestir ourselves and get up a blaze. Do exert yourself, my bonny man, or we shall perish yet. Unfasten the dogs, an' be sure you hang up the harness out of their reach, or the puir hungry wratches will eat it up, every snap, afore morning. Unfasten the door, too, and get out our driest skins an' driest tinder; and I, meanwhile, shall provide you with brushwood enough to keep up a bonfire till morning.”

He seized an axe, and began to ply lustily among the underwood; while his neighbour unharnessed the dogs, and, clearing the door, entered the log-house, which soon began to throw up a thick steam through the snow. We shall take the liberty of following him. The apartment was about ten feet square; the walls formed of undressed logs, and the roof of shingles. The snow peeped in a hundred different places through the interstices; and a multitude of huge icicles, the effects of a late partial thaw, hung half way down from the ceiling to the floor, and now glistened in the light as the flames rose gaily on the hearth. The dogs were whining and pawing in a corner, impatient for their evening repast. In a few minutes Sandy had half-filled the apartment with brushwood, and then set himself to assist his companion, who seemed but indifferently skilled in the culinary art, in preparing supper, which consisted mostly of frozen fish and biscuit, relished by a dram of excellent rum. It was soon smoking on the floor, and, with the assistance of the dogs, soon discussed; and the two fur-gatherers sat indulging in the genial heat, with the long dark evening before them, and neither of them in the least disposed to retire to the bed of brushwood and skins which they had formed on the floor, immediately behind them.

"We are strange, changeable creatures," said Sandy—"the bairn sticks to us a' life lang; an' if we dinna laugh an' cry just in the ae breath, it's no that the feelings dinna vary, but that the pride o' consistency winna always let us shew what we feel. Little mair nor an hour ago we were baith perishing in the bitter cauld, half resigned to die that we might escape frae our misery, and noo here we are as happy as if there were no such things as death or hardship i' the world. Man, what a bonny fire! I could maist forget that I was a puir Hudson's-Bay fur-gatherer, an' that kindly Scotland was four thousand miles awa."

"What," said his companion, "could have induced a steady, sensible fellow like you, Sandy, to indenture with the Company? 'Tis easy to divine what brought most of our comrades here—they resemble David's associates in the cave of Adullum; but you, who could have been neither in debt nor distress, and who are always so much the reverse of discontented—I could never guess what brought you. Come, now, let us have your story; the night is long and tedious, and I know not how we could pass it to better purpose."

"But I do," replied Sandy. "My story is nae story ava. I am but a rude man amang rude men like myself; but you, Innes, what could hae brought you here? You are a gentleman an' a scholar, though ye hae but sma' skill, maybe, in niffering brandy an' glass beads for the skins o' fougarts; an' your story, no a vera gay one I fear, will hae a' the interest o' an auld ballad. It's but fair, however, that ye should hae mine, such as it is, first. But draw just a wee bittie out o' the draught; for there's a cauld, bitter win' soughin ben frae the door—an' only hear how the storm rages arout!"

"There's a curious prejudice," continued Sandy, "among our country folks, an', I suppose, among the folks o' every other country besides, against some particular handicrafts. It's foolish in maist cases. The souters o' Selkirk were gallant fellows; an', had a' our Scottish knights fought half as weel at Flodden, our country would hae lost a battle less; an' yet you canna but ken how our auld poets, o' the time—Dunbar, an' Kennedy, an' Davie Lindsay—ridicule the puir souters. They say that, once on a time, the vera deil himsel wadna keep company wi' ane o' them till he had first got the puir man to wash himsel. Noo, the prejudice against tailors is hardly less strong in our ain days; an' yet a tailor may be a stalwart fallow, an' bear a manly heart. I'm no sure, had it no been for this prejudice, that I would noo hae been a fur-gatherer on the shores o' Hudson's Bay."

"Would to Heaven," exclaimed his companion, interrupting him, "that I had been bred a tailor! I'm mistaken if any such prejudice would have sent me across the Atlantic."

"We can be a' wise enough on our neebor's weaknesses, Innes," said Sandy; "but to the story."

"I come frae a sea-port town in the north o' Scotland, no twenty miles frae Inverness, your ain bonny half Hieland, half Lowland home. My father, who had married late in life, was an old grey-headed man from the time I first remember him. He had a sma' family; an', in his anxiety to see us a' doing for oursels, I was apprenticed to a tailor in my tenth year. Weel do I mind wi' what a disconsolate feeling I left the twa cows I used to herd on a bonny brae-side speckled wi' gowans an' butter-cups, to be crumpled down on the corner o' a board hardly bigger than an apron, amang shreds an' patches o' a' the colours o' the rainbow, wi' an outlook through a dusty window on the side wa's o' an auld warehouse. An' then my comrades were such queer fallows, fu o' a droll, little, wee sort o' conceit that could ride on the neck o' a new button, an' a world o' fashious bits o' tricks, naething sae guid as the tricks o' a jackanapes, but every grain as

wicked; an' aften hae they played them aff on the puir simple laddie. There are nane o' oor craftsfolks, Innes, but hae some peculiarity to mark them that grows up oot o' their profession, an' there's nae class mair marked than the class I belong to."

"I have read Lamb on the melancholy of tailors," said Innes, "and remember laughing heartily at the quaint humour of some of his remarks; but I never wasted a thought on the subject after laying him down."

"Ah, Lamb, wi' a' his bonny, bairn-like humour an' simplicity," said Sandy, "is but a Cockney feelosopher after a', an' kent naething o' the matter. Melancholy o' tailors, forsooth! Why, man, a Hieland tailor is aye the heartiest cock. an' has aye the maist auld stories in the parish. But I maun gie you the feelosophy o' the thing at some ither time. —I got on but ill wi' my companions," continued Sandy; "an' the roytous laddies outside used to jibe me wi' no being a man sax years afore I ceased being a boy. Is it no hard that tailors should lose the reputation o' manhood through a stupid misconception o' the sense o' an auld-waird author? He tells us the tailor canna make a man, just in the spirit that Burns tells us a king canna make an honest man. An', instead o' the pith o' the remark being brought to bear on the beau an' the coxcomb, wha never separate the human creature frae his dress, it's brought, oot o' sheer misapprehension, to bear against the puir artisan."

"I see, Sandy," said Innes, with a smile, "you are still influenced by *l'esprit de corps*. If you once get back to Scotland, you will take to your old trade, and die a master tailor."

"I wish to goodness I were there to try!" replied Sandy. "But the story lags wofully. I got on as I best could—longing sadly, i' the lang bonny days o' simmer, to be oot among the rocks o' the Sutors or on the sea, an' in winter, thinking o' the Bay o' Udoll, wi' its wild ducks an' its swans, an' o' the gran fun I could hae amang them wi' my auld pistol—whan my master employed an auld ae-legged sodger to work wi' him as a journeyman. He was a real fine fellow, save that he liked the drap drink a wee owre weel, maybe; an' he had wandered owre half the world. He had been in Egypt wi' Abercromby, an' at Corunna wi' Moore, an' o'er a' Spain an' at Waterloo wi' Wellington, an' in mony a land an' in mony a fight besides; and noo he had come hame wi' a snug pension, an' a budget o' first-rate fine stories, that made the ears tingle an' the heart beat higher, to live an' die amang his freends. Oh, the delight I have taen in that man's company! Why, Innes, at pension time, though I never cared muckle for drink for its ain sake, I have listened to his stories i' the public-house till I have felt my head spinning round like a tap, an' my feet hae barely saired to carry me hame. I have charged Bonaparty's Invincibles wi' him, fifty an' fifty times, an' helped him to carry off Moore frae beside the thorn bush where he fell, an' scaled wi' him the breach at St Sebastian; an', in short, sae filled was I wi' the spirit o' the sodger, that, had the wars no been owre, I would hae broken my indentures, an' gane awa to break heads an' see foreign countries. As it was, however, I learned to like my employment ten times waur nor ever, an' to break a head, noo an' then, amang the town prentices. Spite o' my close, in-door employment, I had grown stalwart an' strong; an' I mind, on ae occasion, beating twa young fallows who had twitted me on being but a *ninth*. Weel, the term o' my apprenticeship cam till an end at last; an', flinging awa my thimble wi' a jerk, and sending my needle after it like an arrow, I determined on seeing the world." "My crony, the auld veteran, advised me to enter the army I was formed baith in mind an' body, he said, for a sodger; an' if I took but care—a thing he never could do himsel—I might dee a sergeant. But whatever love I might hae for a guid fecht, I had nane for the parade,

an' my thorough dread and detestation o' the halberds o'er-mastered any little ambition I might hae indulged in when I dreamt o' a battle. I thoct o' a voyage to Greenland—o' gangin a-sodgering wi' Lord Byron to Greece—o' emigrating to New South Wales or the Cape—o' turning a farmer in the backwoods—o' indenturing for a Jamaica overseer—o' going oot to Mexica for a miner—ay, an' o' fiftyither plans besides—whan an adverteesement o' the Hudson's-Bay Company caught my notice an' determined me at once. I needa tell ye what the Directors promised to active young men: a paradise o' a country to live in—the fun o' hunting and fishing frae Monday to Saturday nicht for our only wark, an' pocketfu's o' money for our pay. I blessed my stars, an' closed wi' the agent at ance. An' noo, here I am, Innes, in the seventh year o' my service—no that meikle disposed to contemn my auld profession, an' mair nor half tired o' hunting, fishing, and seeing the world. But just twa months mair, my boy, an' I am free. An' noo, may I no expect your story in turn?"

The wind, which had been rising since nightfall, now began to howl around the log-house and through the neighbouring woods, like the roar of the sea in a storm. There was an incessant creaking among the beams of the roof, and the very floor at times seemed to rise and fall under the foot, like the deck of a vessel, which, after having lain stranded on the beach, has just begun to float. The storm which had been so long impending burst out in all its fury, and for some time the two fur-gatherers, impressed by a feeling of natural awe, sat listening to it in silence. The sounds rose and fell by intervals—at times sinking into a deep, sullen roar, when all was comparatively still around; at times swelling into thunder. In a pause of the blast, Sandy rose and flung open the door. Day had sunk more than two hours before, and there was no moon, but there was a strong flare of greenish-coloured light on the snow that served to discover the extreme dreariness of the scene; and through a *bore* in the far north, resembling, as Sandy said, the opening of a dark lantern, he could see that, beyond the cloud, the heavens were all a-flame with the aurora borealis. Earth and sky seemed mingled; the snow, loose and fluctuating, and tossing its immense wreaths to the hurricane, resembled the sea in a storm, when the waves run highest; the ice, though so deeply covered before, lay in some places dark and bare, while in others, beneath the precipices, the drift had accumulated over it to the depth of many fathoms. Again the blast came roaring onwards with the fury of a tornado, and Sandy shut and bolted the door.

"Ane o' the maist frightfu nights, Innes," he said, "I ever saw in America. It will be weel if we're no baith buried a hunder feet deep afore morning, wi' the log-house for our coffin. The like happened, aboot twenty years syne, at Badger Hollow, where twa puir cheilds were covered up till their sculls had grown white aneath their bannets. But, though alane an' in the desert, we're no oot o' the reach o' Providence yet."

"Ah, no, my poor friend," said Innes, "I do not feel in these days that life is highly desirable; but nature shrinks from dissolution, and I am still fain to live on. A poet, Sandy, would view our situation at present with something like complacency; but I am afraid he would deem your story, amusing as it is, little in keeping with the scene around us, and a night so terrible as this. I can scarcely ask a tailor if he remembers the little bit in 'Thalaba,' where the cave of the Lapland sorceress is described? The long night of half a year has closed, and wastes of eternal snow are stretching around; while in the midst, beside her feeble light that seems lost in the gloom of the cavern, the sorceress is seated, ever drawing out and out from the revolving distaff the golden thread of destiny."

"I mind better," replied Sandy, "Jamie Hogg's wild story o' my brother craftsman, Allan Gordon an' hoo he

wintered at the Pole in the cabin o' a whomilt Greenland-man, wi' Nannie an' a rum cask for his companions. Dear me, hoo the roarings o' the bears outside used to amaze the puir cheild every time he was foolish enough to let himsel grow sober! But, Gudesake, Innes, what's that?"

There was something sufficiently frightful in the interruption. A fearfully prolonged howl was heard outside, mingling with the hurricane, and, in a moment after, the snorting and pawing of some animal at the door. Sandy snatched up his musket, hastily examined the pan, to ascertain that his powder had escaped the damp, and, setting it on full cock, pointed it to the place where the noises proceeded. Innes armed himself with a hunting spear. The sounds were repeated, but in a less frightful tone: they were occasioned evidently by a dog whining for admittance. "Some puir brute," said Sandy, "who has lost his master." And, opening the door, a large Newfoundland dog came rushing into the hut. With more than brute sagacity, he flung himself at the feet of the fur-gatherers, as if imploring protection and assistance; and then, springing up and laying hold of the skirts of Sandy's blanket, he began to tug him violently towards the door.

"Let us follow the animal," said Innes; "it may be the means of rescuing a fellow-creature from destruction; his master, I am convinced, is perishing in the snow."

"I shall not fail you, Innes," exclaimed Sandy; and, hastily wrapping their plaids around them, and snatching up the one a loaded musket, the other a bottle of spirits, the fur-gatherers plunged fearlessly into the storm and the darkness.

A greenish-coloured light still glimmered faintly from the north, through the thick drift and the falling snow, too faint indeed to enable them to catch the outlines of surrounding objects, but sufficient to shew them the dog moving over the ice a few yards before them, like a little black cloud. They followed hard in his track towards the bottom of the creek. The steep banks on either hand contracted as they advanced, till at length they could see their shagged summits high above them in the darkness, and could hear the storm raging in the pines, though it had become comparatively calm in the shelter below. The creek at length terminated in a semicircular recess, surrounded by a steep wall of precipices. The dog bounded forward to a fissure in the rock—and there, at the edge of a huge wreath of snow, which half shut up the entrance, lay what seemed, in the uncertain light, the dead body of a man. The dog howled piteously over it, breathed hard in the face, and then looked up imploringly to the fur-gatherers. Innes leaped over the wreath followed by Sandy, and, on raising up the body found, though the extremities were stiff and cold as the ice on which it lay, that life was not yet extinct.

"Some unlucky huntsman," said Sandy; "we maun carry him, Innes, to the log-house; life is sweet even among the deserts o' Hudson's Bay." The perishing hunter muttered a few broken syllables, like a man in the confusion of a dream.

"It grows dark, Catharine," he said, "and I am sick at heart and cold."

"Puir, puir fallow!" exclaimed Sandy—"he's thinking o' his wife or sweetheart; but he'll no perish this time, Innes, if we can help it. Pity, man, for the car an' dogs; but minutes are precious, an' we maun just lug him wi' us as we best may." Rolling their plaids around the almost lifeless stranger, the fur-gatherers bore him away over the ice, the dog leaping and barking with very joy before them; and in less than half an hour they had all reached the log-house.

The means of restoring suspended animation with which the casualties of so many Hudson's-Bay winters had made Sandy well acquainted, were resorted to on this occasion with complete success; and the stranger gradually recovered. He proved to be one of the most trusted and influential of

the Company's managers—a native of Scotland, and much loved and respected among the inferior retainers of the settlement, for an obliging disposition and great rectitude of principle. He was a keen sportsman, and had left his place of residence in the morning, on a solitary hunting excursion, accompanied only by his dog. But, trusting to his youth and strength, the enthusiasm of the hunter had drawn him mile after mile from home; and, on the breaking out of the storm, he had lost his way among the interminable bays and creeks of the lake. On his recovery, he was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, and meant all that he said. He was, perhaps, not much afraid to die, he remarked, but then he had many inducements to live, and there were more than himself who had a stake in his life, and who would feel grateful to his preservers.

"Compose yourself," said Innes; "you have been strangely tried to-night, and your spirits are still much flurried. Set yourself to sleep, for never had man more need; and my companion and I shall watch beside you during the night. Remember you are our patient, and entirely under our control." The manager good-humouredly acquiesced in the prescription, and in a few minutes after was fast asleep.

"Noo, Innes," said Sandy, "as there's to be no bed for us to-night, you maunna forget that you're pledged to me for your story. Remember, my bonny man, our bargain when ye got mine."

"I do remember," replied Innes; "but I well know you will be both tired and sleepy ere I have done."

"I have long had a liking for you, Sandy," continued Innes—"I knew you from the first to be a man of a different cast from any of our fellows; and, ever since I saw you take part with the poor Indian, whom the two drunken Irishmen attempted to rob of his rum and his wife, I have wished for your friendship. It is not good for man to be alone, and I have been by much too solitary since I entered with the Company. You were, when in Scotland, the victim of a silly prejudice against an humble, but honest calling, but you could have lived in it notwithstanding, had not a love for wandering drawn you abroad. I, on the contrary—though, like the hare with many friends, I was a favourite with every one—was literally starved out of it. My father was a gentleman farmer, not thirty miles from Inverness, whom the high war prices of cattle and grain had raised from comparative poverty to sudden, though short-lived affluence. No man could be more sanguine in his hopes for his children. He had three boys, and all of us were educated for the liberal professions, in the full belief that we were all destined to rise in the world, and become eminent. Alas! my brother, the divine, died of a broken heart, a poor overtoiled usher in an English academy; my brother, the doctor, perished in Greenland, where he had gone as the surgeon of a whaler, after waiting on for years in the hope of some better appointment; and here am I, a lawyer—prepared to practise, as soon as we get courts established among the red men of Hudson's Bay. But I anticipate. I am not sure nature ever intended that I should stand high as a scholar; but I was no trifler, and so passed through the classes with tolerable *eclat*. I am not at all convinced, either, that I possess the capabilities of a first-rate lawyer; but I am certain I have seen men rise in the world with not more knowledge, and with, perhaps, even less judgment to direct it. What I chiefly wanted, I suspect, was a genius for the knavish parts of the profession. Will you believe me when I say I have known as much actual crime committed in the office of a pettifogging country lawyer as I ever saw tried in a Sheriff Court. Oh, what finished rascality have I not seen skulking under shelter of the statute-book!—what remorseless blackening of character, for the sake of a paltry fee!—what endless breaches of promise!—what shameless betrayals of trust!—what reckless waste of property! Sandy Munro, I am a poor Hudson's-Bay fur-gatherer, and can indulge in no other hope

than that I shall one day lay my bones at the side of some nameless creek or jungle; but rather that, a thousand, thousand times, than affluence, and influence, and respectability—aye, respectability—through the wretched means by which I have seen all these secured!"

"You are an honest cheild, Innes," said Sandy, grasping him by the hand. "I have had a regard for you ever since I first saw you; an' the mair I ken o' you the mair my respect rises."

"My father," continued Innes, "was respectably connected; I had a turn for dress, a tolerably genteel figure, and was fond of female society; and, during the four years I served with the lawyer in Inverness, I found myself a welcome guest in all the more respectable circles of the place. Scarcely a tea-drinking or dancing party was got up among the *elite* of the burgh, but I was sure of an invitation. I danced, played on the flute, handed round the tea and the sweetmeats—all *par excellence*—and was quite an adept in the art of speaking a great deal without saying anything. In short, I became a most accomplished trifler—an effect, perhaps, of my very imperfect love of my profession. The men who rise to eminence, you know, rarely begin their course as fine fellows; and, were it not for a circumstance to which I owe more of my happiness and more of my misery than to any other, I would have had to attribute my failure in life less to an untoward destiny than to the dissipation of this period. But I was taught diligence by the very means through which most young people are *untaught* it. I fell in love. There was a pretty, simple lassie, the daughter of one of the bailies of the place, whom I used frequently to meet with in our evening parties, and with whose appearance I was mightily taken from the moment I first saw her. She united, in a rare degree, all the elegance of the young lady with all the simplicity of the child; and, with better sense than falls to the share of nineteen twentieths of her sex, was more devoid than any one I ever knew of their characteristic cunning. You have heard, I dare say, that young ladies are anxious about getting husbands; but, trust me, it is all a mistake. The anxiety is too natural a one to be experienced by so artificial a personage as the mere young lady. It is not persons but things she longs after—settlements, not sweethearts. I have had a hundred young-lady friends who liked my youth and gentility, and who used to dance, and romp, and chat with me, with all the good will possible, but who thought as little of me as a sweetheart as if I were one of themselves. Thoughts of that tender class were to be reserved for some rich Indian, with a complexion the colour of a drum-head, and a liver like a plum-pudding. This bonny lassie, however, was born—poor thing!—with natural feelings. We met, and learned to like one another—we sang and laughed together—talked of scenery and the *belles lettres*—and, in short, lost our hearts to one another ere we so much as dreamed that we had hearts to lose. You must be in love, Sandy, ere all I could tell you could give you adequate notions of the happiness I have enjoyed with that bonny, kind-hearted lassie. Love, I have said, taught me diligence. I applied to my profession anew, determined to be a lawyer, and the husband of Catharine. I waded through whole tomes of black-letter statutes, studied my way over forty folios of decisions, and did what I suppose no one ever did before—read Grigor on the game-laws. Not half-a-dozen practitioners in the country could draw out a deed of settlement with equal adroitness—not one succeeded in putting fewer double meanings into a will. My master used to consult me on conveyancing; and when, at the expiry of my term, I left his office and set up for myself, you will not wonder it was with the hope that my at least average acquirements would secure for me an average portion of success. You will see how that hope was realized. "The father of my sweetheart was, as I have said, an

Inverness baillie ; he was extensively engaged in trade, and all deemed him a rising man ; but the case was otherwise. An unlucky speculation, and the unexpected failure of a friend, involved him in ruin ; and I saw his office shut up not three weeks after I had opened my own. A week after brought me the intelligence of my father's death. He had been sinking in the world for years before ; getting, much against his will, into arrears with every one ; and now, immediately on his death, all his effects were seized by the laird. He was an easy-tempered, obliging man—credulous and confiding—and hence, perhaps, his misfortunes. You will deem me cold and selfish, Sandy, to speak in this way of my father ; and yet, believe me, I felt as a son ought to feel ; but repeated blows have a stupifying effect, and I can now tell you, with scarcely a twinge, of hopes blighted and friends lost. All my hopes of rising by my profession soon failed me. No one entered my office. Though not without some confidence in my acquirements, as you may see, I have ever had a sort of shamefaced bashfulness about me, that has done me infinite harm. People were afraid to trust their cases with one who seemed to mistrust himself—the forward, the impudent, and the unprincipled carried off all the employment, and I was left to starve.”

“Honest, unlucky cheild !” ejaculated Sandy, with a profound yawn. “One might guess, by the way ye bargain wi’ the Indians, that ye hae a vast deal owre little brass for makin a fortune by the law. But what came o’ your puir simple lassie, Innes, when her father broke ?”

“Ah, dear, good girl,” replies Innes, “with all her simplicity, she was, by much, better fitted for making her way through the world than her lover. She was highly accomplished, drew beautifully, read Chateaubriand in the original, and had a pretty taste for music. Through the recommendation of a friend, she was engaged as governess in the family of a Highland proprietor, in which, when I left Scotland, she continued to be employed—well, I trust, for her own happiness—usefully, I am sure, for others. I shall forget many things, Sandy, ere I forget the day I passed with her on the green top of *Tomnahurich*, ere we parted, as it proved, for ever. You know that beautiful hill—the queen of all our Highland *Tomhans*—with the long winding canal on the one side, and the bratling Ness on the other, and surrounded by an assemblage of the loveliest hills that ever dressed in purple and blue. It was a beautiful day in early spring, an the sun shone cheerily on a hundred white cottages at our feet, each looking out from its own little thicket of birch and laburnum, and on the distant town, with its smoke-wreath resting over it, and its two old steeples rising through. The world was busy all around us : we could see the ploughman following his team, and the mariner warping onward his vessel ; the hum of eager occupation came swelling with the breeze from the far-off streets—and yet there was I, a poor supernumerary among the millions of my countrymen, parting almost broken-hearted from her whom I loved better than myself, just because there was no employment for me. Oh, the agony of that parting ! But ’tis past, Sandy, and ’tis but folly thus to recall it. No one, as I have already told you, ever thought of entering my office—no one, save my landlord and the old woman with whom I lived ; and you may believe there was little of comfort in their visits. I was in arrears to the one for rent, and to the other for lodging. So far was I reduced, that, in passing through the old woman’s room, I have been fain to take a potato from off her platter, and that single potato has formed my meal for the time. On one occasion I was for two days together without food.”

“Goodness ! gracious !” exclaimed Sandy—“what came o’ a’ the grand freends that used to gie ye the teas and suppers ? Had they nae bowels ava ?”

“I would sooner have starved, Sandy, than have made my wants known to the best of them. But there was one

on whom I had a nearer claim, to whom I applied in vain ; a brother of my father—a close old hunk, who, though he had realized thousands as a ship-broker in London, had not heart enough to part with a shilling for the benefit of his poor nephew. But I believe the wretched man was well-nigh as unkind to himself as he was to me, and, in the midst of his wealth, fared nearly as ill. You are getting sleepy, Sandy, and I daresay ’tis little wonder you should ; but I find a melancholy satisfaction in thus retracing the untoward events of the past, which I am certain I could not feel, did conscience whisper that my misfortunes were in any great degree owing to myself. Well, but to conclude. I became squalid and shabby ; all the ladies sent me to Coventry, and all the gentlemen spurned me as a fellow of no spirit. I had mistaken my profession, it was said ; and blockheads, who had been guiltless of a single new idea all their lives long, used to repeat from one another that my father, in making a wretched lawyer of me, had spoilt a good ploughman. I could bear no longer. The Hudson’s-Bay Company had an agent, you know, at Inverness. I called on him one evening after a day of fasting and miserable low spirits—and now here I am in the second year of my service with the Company.”

“But hoo, Innes, man,” inquired Sandy, “could ye hae found heart to leave Scotland, without seeing the puir lassie, your sweetheart ? Do ye ken aught o’ her noo ?”

“Know of her !” exclaimed Innes ; “alas ! I too surely know I have lost her. The last thing but one that I did, ere I sailed from Stromness, was to write her, to say how I had fallen from all my hopes regarding her, and to bid her forget me ; the very last thing I did was to cry over a kind, cheerful letter, which had followed me all the way from Inverness, and in which she urged me to keep up my heart, for that all would yet be well with us. Little did she know, when writing it, what I was on the eve of becoming—a poor vagabond fur-gatherer on the wild shores of Hudson’s Bay. Dear, generous girl ! I trust she is happy.”

“May I ask,” said the manager, who, unknown to the two fur-gatherers, had lain awake for some time, listening to the narrative, “may I ask if you are not Innes Cameron, late of Inverness, only surviving son of Colin Cameron of Glendocharry, and nephew of the lately deceased Malachi Cameron, of Upper Thames Street, London ?”

“I am that Innes Cameron,” said the fur-gatherer ; “and so my poor old uncle is dead ?”

“And having died intestate,” continued the manager, “you, as heir-at-law, succeed to his entire estate, personal and real, consisting of a property of a few hundred acres in the vicinity of Inverness, and twenty thousand pounds vested in the three per cents. A considerable remittance from London has been waiting you for the last month, at the Hawk River Settlement, and, what you will deem very handsome in the circumstances, a free discharge from the Company for your five remaining years’ servitude. I am acting manager at the River, and to my care the whole has been committed.”

Innes seemed astounded by the intelligence ; his gayer companion leaped up and performed a somerset on the floor.

“Innes, Innes, Innes !” he exclaimed—“why are ye no dancing ?—why are ye no dancing ? Did I no ken ye were born to be a gentleman ? I maun hae a double glass to drink luck to ye ; and I’m sure the manager winna say no-Goodness, man, it’s the best news I have heard in America yet !”

Morning at length broke—a calm, clear morning, for the clouds had passed away with the storm, and the travellers, after sharing in an ample, though not very delicate repast, prepared to set out on their journey. The dogs were harnessed, and the car laden. The manager, who, from

the fatigue and exhaustion of the previous night, still felt indisposed, was mounted in front; the two fur-gatherers were lacing on their snow-shoes to follow on foot. At length the sun rose far to the south, through a deep frosty haze, that seemed to swaddle the horizon with a broad belt of russet, and the travellers set out in the direction of a distant promontory of the lake. The snow all around, the woods that rose thick over the level, the overhanging banks of the lake, the hills in the far distance, were all bathed in one rich glow of crimson, that more than emulated the blush of a summer's evening at sunset; the shadows of the travellers, as they stretched for many fathoms across the lake, had each a moon-like halo round the head, like the glory in an old painting; and the very air, laden with frost rhyme, sparkled to the sun, like the gold water of the chemist. The scene was altogether strangely, I had almost said unnaturally beautiful; it was one of those which, once seen, are never forgotten.

"You have been silent, Innes," said Sandy, "for the last half hour, an' look as wae an' anxious as if some terrible mischanter had befallen ye. I'll wad the best quid in my spleuchan, ye hae been thinking about Catharine Roberts, an' o' your chance o' finding her single. I'd advise ye, man, just for fear o' a disappointment, to marry the manager's sister: she's ane o' the best, bonny lassies I ever saw, an' plays strathspeys an' pibrochs like an angel. Oh, had ye but heard her at 'Lochaber no more,' an' the 'Flowers o' the Forest,' ye wad hae grat like a bairn, as I did. Dear me, but she's a fine lassie! Had I as many thousands as ye hae, Innes, I wad marry her mysel."

"How came you to hear her music?" asked Innes, in a tone that shewed he took but little interest in the query.

"Ah, there's a story belongs to that question," replied Sandy. "It's about a month or twa mair nor a twelve-month noo, sin' Tam M'Intyre an' I set out frae Racoon Settlement, on ane o' the weariest an' maist desperate journeys I have yet taen in America. About Christmas a huntsman, in passing the settlement, tauld us there was to be a gran' ball on New Year's Day at the Hawk River, an' that there were to be four Scotch lassies at it, who had come owre the simmer afore, forbye a bonny young leddie, the manager's sister. The river, ye ken, is no mickle aboon twa hundred miles frae Racoon Settlement, an' Tam M'Intyre an' I, who for five years hadna seen a living creature liker a woman than an Indian squaw, resolved on going to the ball, to see the lassies. We yoked our sledges on a snell frosty morning, set out across the great lake, an' reached the log-house at Bear's Point about dark. We got up a rousing fire, an' drunk maybe a glass or twa extra owre our cracks about Scotland an' the lassies; but I'll tak my aith on't there was neither o' us meikle the waur. But, however it happened, about midnight we baith awakened mair nor half scomfist, an' there was the roof in a bright lowe aboon our heads. M'Intyre singed a' his whiskers an' eebrees in getting out; I was luckier, an' escaped wi' the loss only o' my blanket an' our twa days' provisions. But we just couldna help it; an', yokin our dogs by the light o' the burnin, off we set, weel aware that we wad baith miss our breakfasts or we reached the Hawk River. We travelled a' that day an' a' the next night, the dogs hearty an' strong, pur brutes, for we had been lucky enough to get the hinder half o' a black fox in a trap—the other half had been eaten by the wolves; but oursel, Innes, were like to famish. When morning came, we were within thirty miles o' the Hawk River. There was little wind, but the frost burned like het iron. I canna remember a sneller morning. M'Intyre had to thaw his nose three times, an' my chin an' ears had twice got as hard as bits o' stockfish. We had rubbed off a' the skin in trying to mak the blood circulate, an' baith our faces had so swelled out o' the size, an' shape, an' colour o' humanity, that, when we reached

the settlement, we were fain to stea. into an outside hut, just that the lassies mightna see us. Man, but it was a sair begeck! The ball night came, an' we were still uglier than ever, an' I thought I would hae gane daft wi' vexation. We could hear the noise o' the fiddles, an' the dancin—an' that was just a'. M'Intyre had some thoughts o' hanging himsel oot o' spite. Just when we were at the warst, however, a genteel tap comes to the door; an' there there was a smart bonny lassie wi' a message to us frae her mistress, the manager's sister. We were asked down, she said; her mistress, hearing o' our misluck, an' that we had baith come frae the north country, had got up a snug little supper for us, where there would be none to ferlie at us, an' was noo waiting our coming. Was this no kind, Innes? I made a veil o' my plaid as I best could, M'Intyre muffled himself up in a napkin, an' aff we went to the manager's. But, O man! sic kindness frae sae sweet a leddy! She sang an' played till us—an' weel did it set her to do baith; an' mixed up our toddy for us—for we were gey blate, as ye may think; an', on taking our leave, she shook han's wi' us as gin we had been her equals. I've never been fule enough to be in love, Innes—begging your pardon for saying sae—but I feel I could lay down my life for that bonny lassie ony day. Weel, but kindness is a kindly thing!"

"What is the young lady's name?" inquired Innes, with some eagerness, as a sudden thought came across him. "Her brother, I think, calls her Catharine."

"Ah, no your Catharine, though," said Sandy; "the manager's name is Pringle, ye ken, an' that's no Roberts."

"I am a fool," replied Innes, with a sigh; "and you see it, Sandy."

The tract pursued by the party, which had hitherto lain along the edge of the lake, now ascended the steep wooded bank which hung over it, and, after winding for several miles through a series of shaggy thickets, with here and there an intervening swamp, opened into an extensive plain. A few straggling clumps of copsewood served to enliven the otherwise unvaried surface, and, in the far distance, there was a range of snowy hills that seemed to rise directly over a deep narrow valley in which the plain terminated. There was no wind, and a column of smoke, which issued from the centre of a distant wood, arose majestically in the clear sunshine, till reaching a lighter stratum of air, it spread out equally on every side, like the foliage of a stately tree.

"Some Indian settlement," said the manager. "There is much of beauty in this wild scene, Mr Cameron—beauty merging into the sublime; and the poor red men, its sole inhabitants, form exactly the sort of figures one would choose to introduce into such a landscape. I am now much more a lover of such scenes than before my sister joined me."

"A taste for the wild and savage seems to be an acquired one," remarked Innes; "a taste for the beautiful is natural. Certainly the first comes later in life to the individual, and it is scarcely ever found among the uneducated. One of the finest wild scenes in Ross-shire—a deep, rocky ravine, overhung with wood, and with a turbulent Highland stream roaring through it—is known by all the country-folks in the neighbourhood by the name of the Ugly Burn."

"The remark chimes in with my experience," said the manager. "I ever admired the beautiful; but it was Catharine who first taught me to admire the sublime. There is a savagely wild scene before us, where I can now spend whole hours in the fine summer evenings, but which I used to regard, only a few years ago, as positively a disagreeable one. But such scenes make ever the deepest impression, whether the mind be cultivated or no."

"Ay, Mr Pringle," remarked Sandy; "an' frae that I draw my main consolation for having spent sae mony o' my best years in gathering skins for a wheen London merchants."

"How?" inquired the manager.

"Why, I just find that I am to bring hame wi me recollections and impressions enough to ser' me a' my life after; recollections o' mony a desert prairie, an' mony a fearful storm—o' encounters wi' wild beasts an' wild men—o' a' that we deem hardship noo, but which we will find it pleasure to dwell on afterwards."

"Thank you for the remark, Sandy!" said Innes; "I find I am to bring home with me something of that kind, too."

Towards the close of the day, the course of the travellers had lain along the banks of the river; the waters were bound, from side to side, with a broad belt of ice, but, at the rapids, they could hear them growling beneath, like a wild beast in its den; and, just as the evening was beginning to darken, they descended into a deep hollow, surrounded by immense precipices and overhung by trees, into the upper part of which the stream precipitated itself in one unbroken sheet of foam, which had resisted the extremest influence of the frost. Innes thought he had never before seen a scene of wilder or more savage grandeur. There was a lofty amphitheatre of rock all around; the centre was occupied by a dark mossy basin, in which the waters boiled and bubbled as in a huge caldron; a broad, level strip, edged with trees and bushes, lay immediately under the precipices; and, directly beneath the cataract, there was a fantastic assemblage of tall riven peaks, laden with icicles, that seemed in the gloom a conclave of giants. A deep, gloomy cavern, whose echoes answered incessantly to the roar of the torrent, opened behind and under it; while, immediately in front, there rose a large circular mound, roughened with a multitude of lesser hillocks, and now wrapt up, like all the rest of the landscape, in a deep covering of snow.

"'Tis an Indian burying-place," said the manager, pointing to the mound; "wild and savage, you see, as the people who have chosen it for their final resting-place. These hillocks are sepulchral cairns. My sister spends most of her summer evenings here—for we are now little more than a mile from the settlement; and she has taught me to be well nigh as fond of it as herself. Should she die in this country, I am pledged to lay her among the poor Indians. There are strange stories among them of yonder cave and cataract—the one is a place of purification, they say; the other, a way to the land of spirits. I am certain you will feel much interest, Mr Cameron, in discussing with Catharine what she terms the beginnings of mythology, as illustrated by this place. She has naturally an original and highly vigorous mind, and her father (by the way, she is but a half-sister of mine) spared no pains in cultivating it. But now that we have gained the ridge, yonder is the settlement; see—that higher light comes from Catharine's window. Trust me, you may calculate on her warmest gratitude for what her brother owes you."

Hawk-River Settlement is situated in the middle of a valley, surrounded by low, swelling hills, with a river in front, and a deep pine-wood behind. It forms a small straggling village, composed mostly of log-houses, with a range of stone and lime buildings—the store-places of the Company—rising in the centre. On reaching the manager's house—a handsome erection of two stories—Innes and his companion were shewn into a small, but very neat parlour. There were books, musical instruments, and drawings. The very arrangement of the furniture shewed the delicate and nicely-regulated taste of an accomplished female. The shutters were fast barred, there were candles burning on a neat mahogany table, and the cheerful wood-fire glowed through the bars of a grate, and threw up a broad powerful flame that, in the intense frost, roared in the chimney.

"Ah," said Innes to the manager, "your neat, Scotch-looking parlour brings Scotland to my mind, and my old evening parties; it reminds me, too, that a dress of skins is not quite the fittest for meeting a young lady in. Can you not indulge me with a change of dress?"

"Ah! how stupid I am," replied the manager, "not to have thought of that! Attribute it all to my eagerness to introduce you to Catharine. There is a whole chestful of clothes from London waiting you below. Come this way. We shall join you, Sandy, in less than twenty minutes, when Mr Cameron has made his toilet; and Catharine, meanwhile, will find what amusement for you she can." On their return, Catharine and the fur-gatherer were engaged in conversation.

She was a lady of about two and twenty; paler of cheek and sparer of form than she had been once; for there was an indescribable something in her expression that served to tell of sufferings long endured, and exertions painfully protracted; but she was still eminently beautiful; and there was an air of mingled spirit and good-nature in the light of her fine black eyes, and the smile that seemed lurking about her mouth, that might well be termed fascinating. Sandy had evidently felt its influence ere his companion entered the room.

"And what," eagerly inquired the lady, as the manager opened the door, "is the name of your companion—the man to whom, with you, my brave, warm-hearted countryman, I owe the life of my brother?"

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated Innes, springing forward, "can it be possible?—Catharine Roberts! the best, truest, dearest of all my friends!"

"Innes Cameron!" exclaimed Catharine. And in one moment of intense, life-invigorating joy, whole years of suffering were forgotten. But why lengthen a story rapidly hastening to its conclusion, in the vain attempt to describe what, from its very nature, must always elude description? Never was there a happier evening passed on the shores of Hudson's Bay.

It has long since become a truism that, when fortune ceases to persecute a man, his story ceases to interest. It was certainly so with Innes Cameron and his story. Few men could be happier than he for the two months he remained at Hawk-River Settlement. When, however, the ice broke up, and vessel after vessel began to arrive from Europe, he had become happier still; and when, about the middle of summer, he sailed for Stromness in the good ship Falcon, accompanied by Miss Roberts and his old comrade, Sandy, there was yet a further accession to his happiness. An old file of Inverness newspapers, from which I manage to extract a good deal of amusement in the long winter evenings—for no one writes more pleasingly than Carruthers—shews me that his enjoyments were not wholly full, until after his arrival in Scotland, when he was married, says the paper, "at Belville Cottage, by the Rev. Dr Rose, to the beautiful and highly accomplished Miss Catharine Roberts." I find, in a more recent number of the same newspaper, a very neat description of a masonic procession in one of our northern towns. "There is, to a native of Scotland," says the editor, "something very pleasing in the contemplation of a goodly assemblage of Scotchmen, powerful in muscle and sinew—suited either to repulse or invade—to preserve the fame of their country or to extend it; and this feeling was of general experience among the people of Sutorcreek on Friday last. After the brethren had paraded the streets, they returned to their lodge, where dinner was prepared for them, and where, after choosing Mr Alexander Munro, late of Hudson's Bay, as their master for the ensuing year, they spent the evening in meet cordiality." And here my story ends. The lives of a country gentleman, of superior talent and worth, and a shrewd, honest mechanic—varied only by those migrations which the Vicar of Wakefield describes—migrations from the blue room to the brown, or from the workshop to the street—however redolent of happiness and comfort to themselves, furnish the writer with but little scope for either narrative or description.

THE WEDDING.

ON a certain vacation day of August—of which I have still a vivid recollection—I fished in Darr Water; and with so much success that night had gathered over me ere I was aware. I was at this moment fully fifteen miles from home, in a locality unmarked by one single feature of civilization; for here neither plough, nor sickle, nor spade had ever made an impression. For anything I knew to the contrary, there was not a human habitation nearer than ten miles. I was loaded down to the very earth with fish, and not a little fatigued by the forenoon's travel and sport. It behoved me, however, at all events and risks, to set my face homewards; and, although I might have followed the Darr till it united with the Clyde, and thus made my way with a certainty home at last, yet I preferred retracing my steps, and saving at least a dozen of miles of mountain travel. But the mist was close and crawly, lying before me in damp, danky obscurity; and the wind, which during the day had amounted to a breeze, was now wrapt up, and put to rest in a wet blanket. All was still, except the voice of the plover, myre-snipe, and peese-weep. The moss or moor, or something partaking of the nature of both, and rightly neither, was lone, uniform, and unmarked; it was like sailing without star or compass over the Pacific. Meanwhile, day—which seemed to be desirous of accelerating its departure—disappeared, and I was left alone in my wilderness. I could not even lie down to rest; for the spongy earth gave up its moisture in jets and squirts. I hurried on, however, following my breath, which smoked like a furnace amidst the mountain mist; and trailing my fish, in a large *bag*, after me. I had killed somewhere about sixteen dozen. At last I gained a small stream, and, as I have an instinctive liking for all manner of streams, I was led by the ear along its course, till I found myself in a close ravine or dell, surrounded on each hand by steep, grassy ascents, scars, and rocks. I kept by the voice of the water, which now fell more contractedly over gullet and precipice, till at last, to my infinite delight, I heard, or thought I heard, the bark of a dog; and, in a few seconds, one of these faithful animals occupied the steep above me, giving audible intimation of my unlooked-for presence. The shepherd's voice followed hard behind; and I never was happier in my life than on the recognition of a fellow-creature. My tale was soon told, and as readily understood and believed. To travel home on such a night was out of the question, so I was conducted to the shepherd's sheiling—to that covert in the wilderness in which there is more downright shelter, comfort, and happiness than in town palaces; for comfort and happiness are inmates of the bosom rather than of the home.

My entrance was welcomed by the shepherd's wife and an only daughter. There was likewise a young lad, of about twelve years, who was the younger of two sons, the elder being dead. Servants there were none; for, where all serve themselves, there is no need of what the Americans call "helps." Nothing could exceed the kind hospitalities of this family—the very dogs, with a couple of young puppies, gathered round me. They licked the wet from my legs and clothes, and seemed sufficiently satisfied even with a *look* of approbation. My supper was the uncelebrated, but unequalled Dumfriesshire feast, champit potatoes. I slept soundly till morning; and, after a breakfast of porridge—"Scotland's halesome food"—and learning that the young and beautiful woman, the shepherd's daughter, was to be married on Saturday eight days—I bent my way homewards, to hear and bear merited reproof for the anxiety which my absence (which was, however, luckily attributed to a stolen visit to an aunt), had occasioned.

Saturday eight days dawned, and by this time I had resumed my fishing preceptor and companion, *Willie*

Herdeman, to accompany me to the mountains, thinking to decoy him, as it were, to the neighbourhood of the wedding, and there to treat him with a view of the happy party and blooming bride. I kept my own secret—and we were within a mile of the sheiling ere I disclosed it. It was then about two o'clock, and, so far as we could guess, precisely the marriage dinner hour. Willie, who was an old soldier, had no objection to join in the merriment, nor to drink a glass to the future happiness of the young folks. So on we trudged, our lines rolled up, and our fishing-wallet (for baskets we had none) properly adjusted. We soon caught the descending stream—and, at a pretty sharp turning, came, all at once, within view of the hospitable cottage; but, to our surprise, there was was neither noise nor cavalcade—all was desolation and silence around. The very dogs rather seemed to challenge than to invite our advance, and neither smoke nor bustle indicated any preparation. At first I thought that I had mistaken my way, and was upon the point of entering to ascertain the fact, when the shepherd presented himself in the door-way. I then could hear the voice of mourning—"Rachel weeping" within, and the boy lying across a half-demolished hay-rick, crying and sobbing as if his heart would burst. The face of the shepherd was blank and awful—it was as if by a sudden concussion of the brain he had lost all recollection of the past. He stood leaning against both lintels of the door, and neither advanced nor retreated. At last, hearing the voice of lamentation wax louder and louder behind him, he turned suddenly round and disappeared. Impressed with the belief that something terrible had happened, but not knowing the nature or extent of it, I advanced to the boy, with whom, as a fellow-fisher in the mountain streams, I had made up an acquaintance at the former meeting, and, taking him firmly by the shoulder, endeavoured to turn his face towards me; but he kept it concealed in the hay, and refused either commiseration or comfort. The very dogs seemed aware of the calamity, and one of them howled mournfully from the corner of a peat-stack adjoining. At last a woman, with whom I was totally unacquainted, emerged from the door-way and informed us of the cause of all this lamentation. She had been sent for as a relation from a distance, and had only arrived a few hours before. The particulars were as follows:—Two days previous to the day set apart for the marriage, the young, light-hearted, and blooming bride had been employed in building a rick or stack of bog-hay, for winter-fodder to the cow. She was in the act of completing the erection, and standing on the contracted apex, when her foot slipped and she fell head foremost, and at once dislocated her neck. Had there been immediate medical assistance (as had been injudiciously communicated to the family) the fatal accident might have been remedied; but, alas! there was not, and, long ere surgical aid could be procured, the ill-fated bride had ceased to breathe!

The first thought of the household had been directed towards the bridegroom, who had, ever since the fatal tidings, lost his reason and become apparently fatuous, ever and anon insisting that the wedding should take place "for a' that!"

We did not deem it proper, nor would it have been so, to inflict our presence upon such a household. And for months after, I never slept without dreaming of this incident, and of the distressed family—of whose future fortunes I know nothing further.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

ROSEALLAN'S DAUGHTER.

THE old strength of Roseallan cannot now boast even a site on the face of the earth ; for (so at least says tradition) the waters of the Whitadder run over the place where it reared its proud turrets. It is sad enough to look upon the green grass, and contemplate, with a heart beating with the feelings that respond to antiquarian reminiscences, the velvet covering of nature spread over the place where chivalry, love, and hospitality claimed the base-court, the bower, and the banqueting hall ; but green grass, though long, and whistling in the winds of winter, carries not to the sensitive mind the feeling of mournful change and desolation suggested by the murmuring stream, as, rolling over the site of an old castle, it speaks its eloquent anger and triumph over the proud structures of man. So long as there is apparent to the eye a place where the cherished object of memory might, without violence to the ordinary conditions of nature, have stood, the plastic Fancy asserts instantly her constructive power, and sets before the eye of the mind a structure that satisfies all our historical associations ; but the moment we see the favoured place occupied by a running water, vindicating apparently a right to an eternal and unchangeable course, the many-coloured goddess takes fright, and refuses to obey the behest of the will that wishes her to compete with nature in the work of creation. We have stated a tradition, and we do not answer for it. There may be doubts now about the precise locality of the old strength of Roseallan, but there are none in regard to the fact of its last proprietor having been Sir Gilbert Rollo, a favourite of King James V., who saw no better mode of rewarding his loyal subject for important services than by giving him a grant of the castle and domains, upon the old feudal tenure of ward-holding. This the King was enabled to do, from the property having fallen to the crown by the constructive rebellion of its former proprietor, whose name we have not been able to discover. Sir Gilbert Rollo had a wife and one daughter, the latter of whom was called Matilda. According to the account contained in some letters still extant in the possession of a branch of the family, this young lady was possessed of charms of so extraordinary a nature as to make her famous throughout "broad Scotland." Having little faith in verbal descriptions as a mean of conveying to the mind of one who has not seen the original any adequate idea of those peculiar qualities of form, colour, proportion, and expression that go to form what is called female beauty, we will not transcribe the elaborate account of her perfections which we have had the privilege of perusing. We content ourselves with stating, what will give a far better notion of her excellence, that there can be no doubt of the fact of her having been famous throughout Scotland at that period as the fairest woman in the kingdom. It has been stated that Queen Mary shewed her picture to some of her French followers, with a view to impress upon their minds that, beautiful as she was, her country had produced one even transcending her—though some have asserted that the picture which hung in Mary's bedroom was that of a daughter of Crichton of Brunston. We cannot reconcile the different statements ;

but it is enough for our purpose that Matilda Rollo was supposed to be entitled to compete for this distinction.

Sir Gilbert and Lady Rollo were stanch Catholics of the primary church. They gratified King James, by extending their hatred to all those who shewed any disposition to favour the partial Reformation effected by Henry VIII. of England ; whose law of the Six Articles was then a subject of bitter contention among all parties, both in England and Scotland. This religious prejudice was of greater importance in the family of Roseallan Castle than as a mere question of faith. It interfered with the success of a suitor for the hand of Matilda—an English knight, of the name of Sir Thomas Courtney. This individual, who was much famed on the English side of the Borders for his knightly bearing, manly proportions, and beauty of person, was ambitious of carrying off the fairest woman of Scotland ; as well from an ardent passion with which he was inflamed, as from the pride of having to boast among his English compeers of being the possessor of so inestimable a jewel as the "Rose of Roseallan." His suit had been favoured for a time by Matilda's father, but had been discharged as soon as it was known that the lover of Matilda was an admirer of Henry's new system of religious reformation. This determination on the part of her parents was not disagreeable to the daughter, who had never been able to see, in the proud stateliness of the handsome Englishman, those softer qualities which could enable him to respond to the high aspirations and impassioned feelings of what she conceived to be genuine romantic love.

For a considerable period, Sir Thomas had not been a visiter at Roseallan. He had, however, left a deputy in the person of Bertha Maitland, who had been Matilda's nurse, and was still retained in the family as a favoured domestic. A favourer of the religious tenets of the new English Reformers, she had looked favourably on the suit of the lover ; and there was reason to suppose that English gold, as well as English principles of religion, had been employed to gain over her interest in behalf of the Englishman. Her efforts had been sedulously devoted to the excitement of some feeling of attachment on the part of Matilda ; but, as women can only excite love in their female companions by rivalry, her praises went for nothing more than an old woman's garrulity. Matilda felt it impossible to give her affections to her English suitor, and was glad to take refuge behind the commands of her father, never to see him and never to listen to his high-flown professions of passion.

Many other suitors sought the favour of the far-famed Rose of Roseallan. They were of the highest of the land—many of them the courtiers of King James ; and the rules and canons of love-making, taken from the old romances—"Amadis de Gaul" and others—were learned by heart, and acted on by tongue and eyes. But all was in vain. There was not a single individual among all those who resorted to Roseallan, not even Sir George Douglas, (who had been favoured by her father,) that had been able to excite the least spark of affection in the bosom of the fair object of their suit. The circumstance was remarkable, but not the less true ; and the difficulty could not be solved by the ordinary expedients. Though the most beautiful woman in Scotland at that time, she was the humblest ; and no

rejected lover could lay his bad fortune to the account of pride, or solace his self-love by an imputed arrogance of beauty. The perfect disengagement (so far as could be observed) of her affections, kept up the hopes of her English admirer, who learned everything that took place at the castle, through the medium of his hired agent. The mediations of Bertha were kept up; but her praises had, by repetition, become tiresome, and fell upon the ear of her fair mistress like the tuneless notes of the birds that, unfitted to be of the choir of the forest, chirped on the old walls of Roseallan.

The castle was so situated that one end of it was almost washed by the waters of the Whitadder. A small bridge was thrown over the river, and communicated with a deep wood on the other side, then called the Satyr's Hall. In this wood, and towards the end of the bridge, was a small bower, which had been built for the sake of Matilda, and in which she often sat during the heat of the mid-day sun, listening to the songs of the birds, or reading some of the old romances and ballads of Scotland, which she loved with the devotion of the heart. It seemed to be in the imaginary world of these narratives that she had found the lover who defied the efforts of so many suitors to obtain a place in her affections. Her rapt fancy, occupied in the contemplation of some form which it had painted with all the fond colours of exaggerated beauty, carried her away from the ordinary thoughts and feelings of life. Yet it was not all imagination: she did not carry her romance so far as to uphold that no man of mere flesh and blood, however well put together, and however well decorated by the smiles of nature, (the artificial ornaments of fashion she valued not,) could satisfy the heart that had enshrined within it those hallowed images of a beautiful creative imagination. One who knew human nature and the habits of thinking and acting of imaginative females, would have discovered, in this love of the fair inhabitants of her own Elysium, the true reason of her apparent coldness towards the most beautiful and accomplished men of her time; but they would have suspected that the form of beauty she thus cherished had some foundation in nature; and that—though an excited fancy engages in its service the young female heart, and, having limned for it an ideal object to contemplate, ceases not till it engages for the image the most pure and sometimes the strongest affections of the heart—there is still a substratum in reality to which all may be referred. So was it with Matilda Rollo. One day, when sitting in her bower, she had fallen asleep with a volume of Italian poems in her hand. She had been busy culling roses—the bower was strewn with them; and the sun sent his rays past the window and entrance of the retreat, as if to avoid an interruption of her repose. She was, however, interrupted by another cause; and, looking up, she saw the face of a man gazing steadfastly upon her through the window. Alarmed, she started up—the individual disappeared; but the beauty of his countenance, which transcended anything she had ever seen on earth, or dreamed of in the grandest of her rapt imaginations, left an impression on her which she never forgot. She was supplied with a form of beauty on which her fancy might luxuriate, and to which she would refer all the descriptions in her favourite works; nor did she fail in this—for, though she could not discover who the individual was, and did not see him again, she cherished the beloved image as a treasure, and, day and night, in her fanciful musings and in her dreams, she delighted to contemplate the beauty of her imaginary lover.

One morning Bertha accosted her young mistress in such a manner as to excite her curiosity.

"The cushat doesna use to coo when the owl flies," said she. "Heard ye, my young lady, the sounds last night in the beechwood?"

"The owl is generally busy there at night," replied Ma-

tilda. "I went to sleep early, and never waked till morning, when I heard the wind booming like a moon-baying spaniel through the forest. It had begun before you slept; but you know, Bertha, you find often a magic virtue in night sounds that no one else has the wits to discover."

"A lover's flute has mair virtue in it for young maidens than for auld witches," replied the other, looking knowingly. "Sir George Douglas has tried his looks and his speech upon you; his success may, peradventure, be greater through the means o' music, the lover's charm."

"I understand you not, good Bertha," replied Matilda; "you do not mean to say that Sir George Douglas was bold enough to serenade me in that house into which he might have entered, and, by a father's authority, claimed my attention."

"If it wasna Sir George, ye can maybe tell me wha it was," replied the old nurse, looking cunningly into the face of Matilda.

"I can tell ye nothing, Bertha, for I heard nothing," said the other.

This conversation, which was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Rollo, roused the curiosity of Matilda, who, ignorant of the interest felt by Bertha in the suit of the English lover, did not observe in her words or manner any wish to acquire information, but only a simple badinage on a subject of love. She trusted her nurse implicitly as her best friend, and sought her counsel often in those moments of unhappiness when her mother interrupted the imaginative course of her life, by some effort to get her affections fixed on a proud baron or a courtly knight. The consolations of Bertha were ever ready; and her innocent and unsuspecting friend did not observe, in the nurse's zealous efforts to confirm her against the marriage plans of her mother, the anxious workings of the concealed and paid deputy of a lover also rejected. She intended to have questioned her farther about the sounds in the wood; but that day did not afford an opportunity for the gratification of her wish. Left to her own imagination, she concluded that some of her lovers had presumed to address her after the Spanish form of the evening serenade; and, while she resolved upon listening on the following evening, she was determined to take no notice of the importunities of her impassioned lover.

The evening set in with great beauty. The full moon rose high in the heavens, in which there was not discernible the thinnest wreath of vapour to form a resting-place for the eye, as it wandered among the endless regions of pure illuminated æther. The bright queen, paramount over all, engrossed the whole hemisphere, reducing the twinkling stars to the dimensions of small straws of distant provinces, whose smallness increased the splendour of her august majesty. The stillness of nature suggested the idea of a general worship of the presiding genius of the night. Every wind was stilled, and even the Whitadder seemed to glide along with a greater smoothness than usual; while its singing, mellow voice seemed as if it rejoiced in the bright reflection of the gay queen of the heavens it held in its bosom. It was now about nine o'clock. Matilda was sitting at the casement of her apartment, overlooking the stream—her eyes were fixed on the beautiful scene; the towers of Roseallan threw over a part of the river a shadow, at the farther extremity of which, and, as it were, at the point of the eastern turret, the round form of the moon, like a bright silver salver, lay still in the bosom of the water. A little beyond this striking object, stood her bower in the wood; and so bright was the flood of light that penetrated every part of the forest, that she saw the door and window of the romantic retreat so perfectly that she could have detected the entrance of the august Oberon, or even Piggwiggan himself, if either of them could have left their revels on the greensward, in that auspicious night, to favour her bower with a visit. The scene was so inviting that she would have been tempted to wander



ROSEALLAN'S DAUGHTER.

over the bridge into the wood, if the information of Bertha had not pointed out to her the danger.

As she continued her gaze on the beautiful scene, her attention was claimed by the form of a man gliding between the trees in the wood. He came forward to the edge of the river, and stood in a contemplative attitude, with his arm resting on the branch of an old beech, and his head directed in such a way as to suggest the idea that he was looking towards the casement of Matilda's apartment. On seeing him take this attitude, she retired back, to prevent her white dress from attracting his attention. A slight examination satisfied her that he was an individual below the rank of life in which she moved. He was of great height and commanding aspect; but his dress was that of the son of a free farmer of that time, being composed of the rough doublet, bound with a broad leather belt, and the slouched hat, made of thick plaits of coarse straw, and ornamented with a black ribbon tied round the junction of the rim and the crown. Though worn by the inferior orders, the dress was a noble one, imparting to the wearer an air of robust strength, with that easy carelessness and rude grace which forms the *dignité* of the freeborn son of the mountain. It was only the general outline of his appearance and dress which Matilda could thus discover through the light of the moon; but she saw enough to excite her attention, and she continued to notice his motions.

The stranger stood in the same attitude of mute contemplation for a considerable time, his face still directed toward the same part of the building, in spite of the powerful claims on his eye and attention that were put forth by the splendid scene around him with the round figure of the moon shining in the waters at his feet. At length he took his arm from the branch of the old beech, and, turning round, slowly directed his steps towards Matilda's wood-bower, into which he entered, bending his tall person to enable him to get in at the door—a circumstance that satisfied Matilda of his great height, as her father—a very tall man—could enter without that preliminary. All was for a time still and silent; the gentle rippling of the Whitadder deriving from the absence of any other sound a distinctness which, in its turn, added to the depth of the quiet of sleeping nature. A soft sound began to rise in low strains of sweet music, coming apparently from the bower. It was the voice of a man, modulated into the tones of the pathetic expression of heartfelt sentiment; the air was slow, and filled with cadences which brought down the voice to the lowest note; the words—pronounced in the low tone of the music, and run together by the fluent character of the melody which accompanied them—could not be distinguished; but the effect of the plaintive sounds, co-operating with the silence of night, and the extraordinary scene of lunar splendour exhibited by earth and heaven, was felt by Matilda as the nearest approximation she had yet experienced to the realization of her imaginative creations. The music continued for some time, and then ceased at the termination of one of the deep cadences, prolonged apparently for the purpose of expressing a finale. The individual came out of the bower, and stood again on the side of the river—the shadow of his tall figure fell on the ground like the reflection of the beech on which he leant; he continued his gaze for some time in dead silence, and then, turning, disappeared in the wood.

Matilda was unable, after all the consideration she could bestow on the subject, to come to any conclusion satisfactory to herself, as to either the identity of the individual, or the object he had in view. During the night, the scene, which had been deeply impressed on her mind, was verified by the power of fancy; and there was a certain romance about it which recommended it to her heart. In the morning she questioned Bertha, to whom she confided her every secret.

"I am perplexed, Bertha," she began; "you asked me yesterday if I had heard any sounds in the Satyr's Hall, and I have that question now to put to you. The man that sings in my bower must have some other object in view than gratifying his own ears or those of the night birds with his plaintive melody. What means it, Bertha? Come, my good friend, unravel the mystery, and the grateful thanks of your Matilda will reward you."

"If the throstle hen kens nae the mottled lover that sings to her, what other bird o' the wood can come to the knowledge?" answered Bertha. "I'm owre auld a bird to ken noo the notes o' a lover, or to tell a moulted feather frae the new plume; but, as far as my auld een would carry, your night friend looked mair curiously at the east tower o' Roseallan than men generally do at grey wa's in the light o' the moon. He's as tall, at ony rate, as Sir Thomas, and I thocht there was only ae man o' his height in the land where he sojourns. But I think I could unmask his secrecy."

Bertha looked to see the effect of her allusion to her principal; but she got no encouragement.

"Whoever he may be," answered Matilda, "he is a very different kind of individual from Sir George Douglas; nor is it Sir Thomas Courtney. The melody is too sweet for the execution of an English throat. He is a Scotchman; probably some of my Edinburgh courtly lovers, in the disguise of a free son of the mountains. I cannot listen to his strains; but you can safely approach the bower, and may, as you yourself have proffered, ascertain for me who and what he is."

"My young lady's wish is Bertha's command," answered the old woman; "watch me with your hazel eyes, over the white bridge, this night at nine. If he comes again, he shall not go away unknown."

When the evening came, Matilda was again at her casement. The night was as beautiful as the preceding one; but there was a thin halo round the moon that gave her a softer aspect; and the diminished sound of the mellow ripple of the Whitadder seemed to indicate that there was a zephyr abroad whose presence could be detected only by that delicate test. About the hour of nine, she saw the thin figure of old Bertha, rolled up in a cloak, steal silently from a postern of the east wall, and creep slowly down to the end of the light, airy bridge that spanned, with its pure white arms, the bosom of the river. Stretching forth her bony hand, she seized the rail, and, having got a firm footing, walked with slow steps along the planks. Her progress was slow, nervous, and unsteady. Matilda was solicitous for her safety; for she had never seen Bertha venture along the bridge at night, and she herself seldom crossed it after nightfall, even with the aid of a resplendent moon. Her attention was fixed upon her to the exclusion of all notice of any proceedings on the other side of the stream. The old woman had got to the middle of the bridge, and Matilda saw with horror her supposed faithful friend fall. Starting from her seat, she rushed down, and in an instant was at the end of the bridge. Seizing the rail, she hurried along, and found the body of the nurse lying extended on the planks, apparently senseless, though she had merely experienced an ordinary fall, the result of a stumble. Bending down, the anxious girl was proceeding to lift her up, when she was, in an instant, seized by the arms of a strong man, and hurried away to the farther end of the bridge. Stunned by this sudden seizure, succeeding as it did the anxiety under which she laboured for her nurse, she was unable even to scream, and lay in the arms of the person that bore her away, helpless and nearly senseless. When she recovered herself so far as to be conscious of her situation, she found she was in the wood, and heard the sound of the voices of several men, among whom she thought she observed the disguised figure of a gentleman.

They had wrapped a large cloak round her, and were in the act of putting her on the back of a jennet that stood ready saddled and bridled, when the man that held her was struck to the ground by some one that came behind him. He lay senseless at her feet; a second one shared his fate in an instant; and a third, after dealing a treacherous blow on the head of her deliverer, flung himself on a horse that stood alongside of the jennet, and galloped off at the top of his speed. Meanwhile, she was again seized by another man, and soon found herself reclining in her own bower.

"The feet o' the remaining horses," said a voice at her feet, "are raisin the echoes o' the Satyr's Wood. The spoilers have recovered and have fled after their master, who is, by this time, by the side o' the Tweed. Hoo fares Matilda Rollo? Can it be excused by high birth and beauty that the salvation o' their possessor frae the arms o' an English Reformer cam frae the courage o' the good fortune o' ane that daurna lift his face to ask forgiveness for doin the duty o' a fellow-creature?"

"Whoever you are," cried Matilda, as she recovered, "you have done little in saving me, if Bertha Maitland lies drowned in the Whitadder; and that blood that flows down your face may be the dear price of my safety." And she started to her feet, as if she were to fly to save her friend.

"Content yersel, fair leddie," said the individual who still knelt at her feet; "my wound is sma', and as to your auld nurse, I saw her rise without a helpin hand, and, like the stunned bird, shake her feathers, and return to Roseallan wi' a steadier step than when she wiled ve owre the bridge."

The last words were pronounced with that irresolution which resulted from a fear of a false impeachment, and were not heard or understood by Matilda, who, made easy on the subject of her solicitude, now contemplated the individual who had saved her. The blood flowed profusely over his face, yet she could perceive that he was the same person whom she had seen on the previous night; and the estimate she had then made of his character was realized. But a new source of curiosity and interest was now opened to her. She recognised in his countenance, which was formed after the finest model that ever came from the pencil of Apelles or the chisel of Praxiteles, the original of the image which she had so often, in that bower, called up to the contemplation of a fancy excited by the reading of "Amadis" or "Cavalcante." She was surprised and confused; her mind recurred back to former times; a floating vision crossed her fancy; she fixed her eyes on the beautiful, though blood-stained countenance of her protector, and, blushing to the ears, threw them again on the ground. Her confusion prevented her from speaking, as well as from rising to return to the Castle; and the doubt which clung to her mind, whether all the extraordinary proceedings of the last ten minutes were not a dream, added to her irresolution and increased her embarrassment. A thought roused her suddenly to a sense of her position. Bertha would report her danger at the castle, and her father, with attendants, would instantly be in search of her, and in pursuit of the fugitives. Starting up, she made confusedly for the entrance of the bower; but the hem of her garment was held by her deliverer, who implored for a moment's delay.

"A second time have I been blessed," he ejaculated, as he wiped the blood from his face "Three years have passed sin' chance led me to look in at the window o' this wood-bower, where, gracious heaven! I saw the fair maiden o' Roseallan in the beauty o' a calm sleep. On this heather-bench, which was strewn wi' roses, her head rested; a book had fa'en frae her left hand, and her right was spread among the flowing curls o' auburn hair that spread owre her neck and bosom. She dreamed, dootless, o' some happy lover; for, ever and anon, the smile played on her lips, and a tear struggled frae beneath the closed lids, and trickled down

her cheeks. The vision enchanted me—I gazed, and could have gazed for ever. Matilda Rollo, you awoke, and saw my face as it disappeared from the window; but, heaven have mercy on me! I have never awoke frae that hour! Wi' the might o' that enchantment, I wrestled as became an humble admirer o' what fate had put beyond my reach—but it was in vain, and I sought relief frae the new scenes o' Northumberland, while my brother tended a widowed mother. Fate has brought me again to the neighbourhood o' Roseallan; but duty must—ay, shall drive me again far away."

A sudden recollection glanced on the mind of Matilda; she threw her eyes upon his countenance, the origin of all her day-dreams, and quickly, and as if in terror, withdrew them. A slight struggle released her from his gentle hold, she sprang out of the bower, and, with trembling steps, sought quickly the bridge, along which she hurried to the castle, where she sought instantly the chamber of Bertha. She found the old woman on her knees, at her evening's devotion.

"Ah! my leddie!" ejaculated the nurse, "why did ye leave me to seek my way back owre the brig, without the helpin hand o' your love and assistance? I was stunned sair by the fa', but I heard a sound o' voices as I recovered. I looked for you, and thought ye had returned to your apartment, whar I intended to have sought ye, after offering up my prayers to our Lady for my deliverance."

"Sore stunned you must have been, good Bertha," said Matilda, "when you did not see my peril. Surely it is impossible. Did you not see your own Matilda carried off by men? Yet, why do I put that question? Surely it is sufficient to satisfy me that my dear friend was insensible and ignorant of my fate, when I see her occupied in prayer, in place of rousing my father to my rescue."

"Carried awa by men, child!" ejaculated the nurse, "and me ignorant o' the base treachery! By'r Lady, I'm petrified! Whar were you carried, and wha were the ruffians? Kenned ye ony o' them? Doubtless, some o' our Holyrude knights in disguise. Speak, love, and relieve the beating heart o' your auld freend."

Matilda took Bertha up to her chamber, and recounted to her, in the confidence of love and friendship, all that had occurred to her—not even excepting the interview she had had in the wood-bower with her unknown but interesting deliverer.

"It was indeed he," she continued, "whose angelic countenance has so long hovered over me in my hours of retirement and in my dreams. He said he first saw me sleeping in my bower, and he spoke truth; for you must recollect, Bertha, of my having informed you, at the time, years ago, of my terror on awakening and finding a human countenance staring in upon me through the window. My confusion prevented me from recognising him; but his countenance had got into my mind by the power of its beauty, while my memory sometimes let go the connection between the image which subsequently waxed so vivid, and the occasion by which it became a part of my thoughts. Oh, long have I cherished it, long assumed it as the face of the beatified hero of my histories, often limned it in air by the pregnant pencil of my fancy, dreamed of it, and wept as the light of day chased away the beloved form, and left me only in its place the things of ordinary life, the countenances of the knightly wooers of Holyrood!"

"An' wha is he," inquired Bertha, "wha thus shoves his head into leddies' bowers, and sae timeously saves them frae the hands o' kidnappers?"

"I know not, good Bertha," answered Matilda. "He is humble, and knows as well as I know that he and I never can be united. Already has duty taken him hence, and again is he to force himself far from me. I may never see him more. Would that I had never seen him, or were fated to see him ever!"

"Deliverer and spoiler are alike unkennd, then," said Bertha. "Hae ye nae suspicion o' the treacherous catives?" she added, looking searchingly into Matilda's face.

"None," replied the other. "I heard them not; but, Bertha, my best and truest friend, you must endeavour to learn for me some intelligence of my deliverer; for, though he cannot ever stand in any other relation to me, I could wish to know something of one whose image I have treasured up in my heart, even as a miser does the number that forms the index of his wealth. The widow loves the grave of her departed husband, and bedews it with tears, and carries away with her again the image of him she leaves to the worms: he is to me as the entombed lover; life and death are not more distant than the pride of the Rollos and the humility of the poor, but his name may become as the graven letters of the monumental stone: I may weep over it."

"Auld age is a puir scout, my Matilda," replied Bertha. "Ance I have failed in my commission, and a watery grave in the Whitadder had nearly been my reward. Tak the advice o' cild, and seek neither his name nor nativity. The duty ye owe to the pride and power o' the braw house o' Roseallan must ever prevent ye frae being his wedded wife; and, if it is ordained that ye must forget him, ye will banish him from your mind the mair easily that ye ken nae mair o' him than ye do o' the bird that birrs past ye in the wood—that it has a bonny feather in its tail."

"Ah, Bertha, that ignorance will not be to me bliss," said Matilda, sighing; "but, in the meantime, I must hasten to my mother, and tell her of the danger I have escaped."

"And o' the lover that saved ye, guileless simpleton!" said Bertha, seizing her by the arm. "The Whitadder leads nae mair certainly to the Tweed, than will the story o' yer danger lead to the discovery o' him ye are ashamed to acknowledge as a lover. Darkness waukens the owl, an' yer mystery will open the eyes o' Lady Rollo. Let the bird sleep, or its scream will mak the wood ring."

Matilda saw, so far as she herself was concerned, the prudence of secrecy, and was about to take leave of Bertha for the night, when Lady Rollo entered and informed her daughter that Sir George Douglas of Haughhead had arrived to pay his addresses to her, and that she behoved to be in a proper state for meeting him in the morning at the first meal. Having delivered her command, the proud dame retired, leaving her daughter to the many distracting reflections suggested by all the conflicting and painful events of the evening. She retired to her couch, where she was to resign herself to the domination of that rapt fancy that had so long led the train of her thoughts, and regulated the affections of her heart. Sleep forsook her pillow, or came only for short intervals, with the Genius of Dreams in his train. Waking or slumbering, the image of the unknown youth who had made such an impression upon her heart, by the extraordinary deputed power of an imagination ever active in painting in bright colours all his perfections, was before her eyes. The higher these perfections and the brighter the beauties, the greater was the pain and the deeper the sobs of anguish that were wrung from her heart, by the conviction that her love was destined only to simulate the cankerworm that eats into the heart of the flower and makes it perish.

Next day, she was compelled, with ner hazel eyes still dimmed with tears, to meet Sir George Douglas, a man she had every reason to hate, as well from his proud assumption of a right to her affections, as from the mean and inconsistent mode of mediation he resorted to, and which she had learned from her mother that morning—by bribing her parents with large promises of a tempting dowry. With her feelings never kindly affected towards him, her heart burning with the thoughts of another, and her prejudices excited by the information she received from her

mother, she conducted herself towards the knight with a *hauteur* that called forth his hurt pride and the indignation of her parents. After breakfast, she retired to her apartment, to feast her eyes with the vision of her bower and her unknown lover, while her angry parents closeted themselves for a conference on the subject of Sir George's splendid offer, and the conduct of their daughter. Wrought up to a pitch of excitement, by the united feelings of anger and ambition, they came to the critical determination of submitting her entirely to the power and discretion of Douglas, who, if he chose to wed her upon the sanction of their consent, might, if he chose, dispense with that of the principal party interested. The project was instantly submitted to Douglas, a hard and unfeeling man, who, determined to possess Matilda upon any terms, closed readily with the offer, and a day was fixed at the end of a month for the marriage.

These preliminaries settled, Lady Rollo repaired to Matilda's apartment, where she found her with her head resting on her hand, and her eyes fixed on the wood-bower, where she had conjured up the beautiful image of her unknown lover.

"Thy conduct this day, Matilda," she began, "towards one of the gayest and richest knights of our land, the confidant of King James, and our especial friend and favourite, requireth the chastisement of the reproof of parental authority; but we have witnessed too long this pride of beauty in thee, (which disdaineth the loves of mortals, and seduceth thee and thy heart into the airy regions of profitless romance,) to remain contented now with mere words of argument, persuasion, or reproach. The day of these is by, with the hopes of the many lovers thou hast turned away from the gates of Roseallan; and the time for action—maugre thy wishes or thy prejudices—hath approached. Sir George Douglas is destined to be thy husband, and the day after the next feast of our church is thy appointed bridal day, whereunto thou hadst best prepare thyself with as much grace and favour as thou mayest be able to call up into thy fair face."

Saying these words, Lady Rollo retired hurriedly, as if with the view of avoiding a reply, or witnessing the sudden effects of her announcement. The words had fallen upon her daughter's heart like the announcement of a doom, and closed up the fountains of her tears. She sat riveted to the chair, incapable of speech, or even of thought. On partially recovering her senses, she found Bertha standing before her. Rising in a paroxysm of struggling emotion, she flung her arms round the neck of the old nurse, and burst into a fit of hysterical weeping. The choking sobs seemed to come from the inmost recesses of her heart, and the burning tears, forcing the closed issues of their fountains, flowed down her cheeks, and dropped on the neck of her confidant. Bertha heard the intelligence, as it was communicated in detached syllables, in silence; and, having placed the unhappy maiden on her chair, sank into a train of thinking, which her young friend attributed to a sympathetic sorrow for her sufferings. The voice of Lady Rollo prevented the expected consolation; and, obeying the command of her mistress, Bertha left the apartment, promising to return soon again. The day passed, and Matilda, unable to join the company in the western wing of the castle, remained in her apartment, sunk in despondency, and at times verging on the bleak province of despair.

Heedless of the gloom that overhung the minds of mortals, the bright moon rose again in the evening with undiminished splendour, throwing her silver beams over the tear-bedewed face of the sorrowful maiden, whose weeping was increased by the contrast of nature's loveliness. She sat again at the casement; her eyes wandered heavily over the scene that lay like a fair painting spread before her; the long, dark shadows of the wood, lying by the side of

bright, moonlit plots of greensward, with their spangles of dew glittering like diamonds, reminded her of the checkered scenes of life, into the depth of one of the gloomiest of which she was now sunk; and her pain was increased as she felt herself, by the power of fate, contemplating again her wood-bower, which stood fair in the broad light of the moon. A sound struck her ears and called forth her attention. It was that of a lute, and came in dying notes from a distance in the wood. Gradually increasing in distinctness, it seemed to come nearer and nearer; and now she recognised the air that was sung by her preserver on that night when she discovered him. The sound ceased suddenly, and she saw the figure of her preserver emerge from a thick part of the wood and pass into her bower. The same plaintive air was again raised, and spread around in soft mellifluous strains, suggesting the union, by some process unknown to metaphysical analysis, of light and sound—so connected and blended were the feelings produced by the soft beams of the moon and the sounds of the lute. The blessed sensation passed over her racked nerves like the odorous incense of the altar on the excited sensibility of the bleeding victim; her eyes and ears were versant with heaven, while her thoughts were claimed by the evil workings of bad angels; her heart swelled with the conflicting emotions, and a fresh burst of tears afforded her a temporary relief. Her paroxysm over, the soft sounds fell again upon her ear. Retaining her breath to drink deeper of the draught, she heard the notes gradually diminishing, as if the performer were retiring in the wood. He had left the bower unobserved; and the silence that now reigned around announced that he was gone.

For seven successive nights the music in the wood-bower had assuaged the sufferings of the respective days; but for three nights there had been nothing heard but the cry of the screech owl, and the moon had been illuminating other lands. The period of her sacrifice was drawing nearer and nearer, and the cloud of her sorrow was gradually becoming deeper and darker.

"'Tis now three nights since he was in the wood," she said to Bertha. "My silence and inattention have but ill repaid his services and his passion. The sound of his lute has been to me the voice of hope breaking through the clouds of despair. O Bertha! my sense of duty to my parents and the honour of the old house of Roseallan has so nearly perished amidst this persecution, that I could now feel it no crime to throw myself into his arms, and seek in humble worth the protection I cannot procure in the castle of Roseallan's master."

"Wisely spoken, my bonny bairn," replied Bertha. "My auld blude boils wi' the passion o' youth, and drives frae my heart the gratitude I owe to the proud master and mistress o' Roseallan, as I witness this persecution o' the bonniest and the best o' Scotland's daughters. The arms o' George Templeton, the archer, the son o' the widow of Mosscairn, can send an arrow beyond the cast o' the best archer o' the Borders; and may weel defend (were he again in health) her for whom the proudest o' Scotland's knights would send the last shaft into the heart o' his rival."

"Is that the name of my preserver, Bertha?" ejaculated Matilda, in surprise. "How came you by your knowledge? Speak, and relieve me, that I may be certain that I know to whom I owe my life or my honour; and to whom I—unworthy, thankless, ungrateful being that I am!—have not yet vouchsafed one solitary look or word of thanks or gratitude. But what said you of his health? He was wounded for me—ha! Has adverse fate another evil in store for a daughter of affliction?"

"For your sake, my bairn, I traced out this man," replied the old nurse; "but, oh, that I should hae to add anither sorrow to the wo-worn child o' my early affection! He is ill. A wound he received in the wood has become, by ill

treatment and exposure, the heart o' a fever that has eaten into the seat o' life."

"And he will die for me—killed by the second and severest wound, of ingratitude!" cried Matilda, starting up in violent emotion. "With death on him, received in my defence, has he nightly visited the bower of his ungrateful mistress, who never, even by the movement of her evening lamp, shewed that she heard his strains or understood their meaning. That countenance, streaming with blood, yet beautiful through his life's stream flowing for me, will haunt me through the short span that misery may allow me. Would to God that I had returned one token as a mark of my gratitude, if not of my love! Bertha, I must see this man, who holds in his hands the issues of my destiny."

"An' ye will, guid child," answered the nurse; "but, should death deprive ye o' this refuge, we may think o' some ither means o' savin ye frae this forced match wi' this high Catholic knight o' Haughhead, wha persecuted the Reformers as muckle as he does his lovers. Sir Thomas Courtney—whom your father has banned frae Roseallan—shews as muckle mercy to the Catholics as he does fair-seeming love to his lass-lemans. But are you able to wander to Mosscairn, child?"

"A bleeding head did not keep him from my wood-bower," replied Matilda—"a bleeding heart shall not prevent me from seeing him before he dies."

This resolution on the part of Matilda, though it did not meet with the entire approbation of Bertha, was adhered to; but no opportunity occurred for putting it into execution. Every hour, in the meantime, added to her unhappiness. Sir George Douglas had returned to Edinburgh, to make preparations for the marriage; her mother watched her, to detect what she termed the trick of simulated illness; and her father, who was led by her mother, seemed determined to carry their cruel scheme into execution. Tortured throughout the day, the moon, now late in rising, afforded her no solace at night; the scene from the castle was changed from lightness to darkness; the screeching of night birds came, in the fitful blasts, in place of the melody of her lover's lute; and the dreary view called up by the power of association, the picture of her lover lying on a death-bed, paying, by the torture of death, the dreadful penalty of having dared to love one above his degree.

After a suitable inspection, her mother had, as she thought, discovered that there existed no illness about her to prevent her from taking her usual airing, and Bertha, who had apparently some purpose in view, came and urged her to walk as far as the Monks' Mound, a green hillock that stood on the borders of the property of Roseallan. They accordingly set out. The day was not propitious; lazy clouds lay sleeping on the sides of the hills, and wreaths of mist floated along like shadows, assuming grotesque forms and suggesting resemblances to aerial beings in the act of superintending the operations of mortals; the wind was hushed to the gentlest zephyr; and the sun, obscured by the masses of sleeping clouds, was not able even to indicate the part of the heavens where he was. Nature, "dowie and wae," seemed to have shrouded herself in the pall of mourning, and the feathered tribes, overcome by the instinctive sympathy, were mute, and covered among the branches of the trees, as if they had borrowed the habits of the wingless, tuneless reptiles that crawled among the rank grass that covered the ground of the wood. The couple wandered along slowly, Matilda resting on the arm of the nurse. They came to the Monks' Mound and sat down. The burying-ground of the monastery of Dominicans lay on their right hand, and they could see the tomb-stones rearing their grey, moss-covered heads over the turf-dike that surrounded the consecrated ground.

"See ye the little thatched house at the foot o' Lincleugh hill yonder?" said Bertha, after some moments of solemn

silence, and holding out her shrivelled hand. "The smoke frae its auld lum is curling among the mist clouds; but there's a darker mist within, and nae sun to send a flaught through it."

"I see it well," replied Matilda, in a melancholy voice; "and, humble as it is, and gloomy as it may be in its interior, I could even seek there the peace I cannot find in the proud towers of Roseallan. There are no forced marriages under roofs of thatch."

"Ay, but there is death in the cottage as well as in the bonniest ha'," muttered Bertha, ominously.

Matilda looked into the face of her nurse, who continued to gaze in the direction of the cottage of Lincleugh.

"The mist blinds my auld een," she continued as she passed her hand over her eyes. "The hour is come, and there should be tokens o' gatherin there—yet I see naething."

Matilda looked again inquiringly into her face.

"Young een are sharp," said she again, "and now the mist is rowin awa frae the side o' Lincleugh and breakin into wreaths in the valley. Look again, Matilda, and tell me what ye see."

"The removal of the mist," replied Matilda, directing her eyes to the cottage, "has revealed a cluster of people dressed in black standing round the door of the cottage."

"Ay, I'm right," replied Bertha, straining her eyes to see the mourners; "the hour is near, and see the sextons stand there in Death's Croft, like twa gowls, looking into the grave they have this moment finished."

Matilda intuitively turned her eyes to the burying-ground that went under the name of Death's Croft.

"You seem to know something more of this funeral than we of the Castle generally learn of the fate of the distant cottagers," said she.

"They're lifin," said the nurse, overlooking Matilda's remark "and the train moves to Death's Croft."

"Round and round
The unseen hand
Turns the fate
O' mortal man:
A screech at birth,
A grain at even—
The flesh to earth,
The soul to heaven."

"Who is dead?" asked Matilda, as she fixed her eyes on the procession.

Bertha was silent. The procession reached Death's Croft, and, in a short time, the rattling of the stones and earth on the coffin lid was distinctly heard. Matilda shuddered as the hollow sounds met her ear, and Bertha crooned the lines of poetry she had already repeated. The rattling sound ceased, and the loud clap of the spade indicated the approaching termination of the work. The mourners gradually departed, and the sextons, having finished their work, returned to the monastery.

"Come, come, noo," said Bertha, "we've seen enough—the flesh to earth, the soul to Heaven. A's dune—let us return to Roseallan."

"The inhabitant of that narrow cell has the advantage of me," muttered Matilda, sadly, as she rose to return home. "The marriage with the Redeemer is not forced, and the union endureth for ever."

Bertha, who remained silent, hastened home, and, old as she was, several times outwalked her weak and melancholy companion. When they arrived, they went direct to the apartment of Matilda, where they were met by Lady Rollo, who congratulated her daughter upon her increasing ability to go through, with the necessary decorum, the ceremony of the marriage. As soon as she retired, Matilda flung herself on her couch, and burst into tears.

"There is only one individual who can save me from this dreadful fate," she cried. "Bertha, it is borne in upon my

mind that I cannot endure this trial. Death or madness will be the alternative doom of the forced bride of the knight of Haughhead. What of George Templeton? Did you not promise to assist me to inquire for his health? Were we not to visit him when my strength permitted? Tell me, tell me—have you heard how he is?"

"He is weel, my bairn," replied Bertha; "better than either you or me."

"Bless you! bless you, dear Bertha!" cried Matilda, rising and flinging her arms round the neck of the old woman; "then there is some chance left for me. I may yet be saved from that dreadful doom; I would trust to the honour of that man who has already saved it with my life. Ah, if he is well, I may expect again to hear these dulcet sounds which thrill through my frame, and soften, by their sweet tones, the grief that sits like a relentless tyrant on my heart. When, Bertha, shall we visit him?"

"We hae already visited him," replied the nurse, with a strange meaning in her eye. "Did ye no see him this day, bairn, laid by the side o' his father, among the saft mould o' Death's Croft?"

"What mean you, Bertha?" replied Matilda. "There is a strange light in your eye; I never before saw your face wear that expression. Ah! another doom impends over me—I see the opening cloud from which the thunder is to burst on my poor head. Why look thus upon me, nurse? Is there a humour in your seriousness?—for you laugh not. Read the doom backwards, and do not incur from your Matilda the imputation of inflicting a cruel torture on her who has hung at your breast."

"It was to save pain to my beloved Matilda," replied the nurse, with a peculiar tone, "that I led ye hame before I told ye that the corpse ye this day saw laid in the grave, in Death's Croft, was that o' George Templeton."

Conscious of the effect that would be produced by this announcement, the old woman held out her arms to receive the falling maiden. With a loud scream she fainted, and, forcing her way through the arms of the nurse, fell on the floor with a loud crash. The sound brought up her mother. As Matilda recovered, she looked about her wildly; her eyes recoiling from the face of her mother, on which was depicted a smile of incredulity, and seeking Bertha's, on which she found an expression equally painful. There was no refuge on either side; and, as the image of her dead lover rose on her fancy, she felt, in the consciousness of the utter ruin of all her hopes, the stinging reproof of a tender conscience, that charged her with cruelty to the devoted being who, in defending her honour, lost his life.

"All this will not impose upon me, Matilda," said her mother. "Thou wert well to-day, when thou didst walk forth; and this well-acted fit is intended to remove the impression I entertain of your perfect ability to perform the engagement your father and I have made for your benefit. Mark me, maiden!—I will not heed thee more, if thy simulation were as well acted as that of the wise King of Utica." And, saying these words, she abruptly departed, leaving Matilda still scarcely sensible of what was going on around her. The cruel dame called the nurse after her, and the miserable girl was left to wrestle with her secret and divulged griefs with the unaided powers of a mind broken down by her accumulated misfortunes. She lay extended on her couch; and fancy, deriving new energies from the impulse of feeling, became busy in the portrayal of the form of her lover, whom she had, as she was satisfied, killed. She recurred to the scene in the bower, with his beautiful countenance streaming with blood; his visits to her bower afterwards—when he must have been suffering the first approaches of that disease that proved fatal to him; and, above all, her heartless conduct in not even condescending to notice this tribute of devotion in one who had saved her life

She lay under the agony of these thoughts till it was after nightfall, when the gloom of her mind increased as the shades of darkness spread around her. She felt that she could suffer the agonizing thoughts no longer, and, starting up and throwing over her shoulders a night-cloak, she hurried out of the castle. She found herself intuitively taking the way to Death's Croft. The night was getting dark, and there was a hollow gousty wind blowing among the trees, and whistling among the whins and tall grass that lay in her path. Heedless of all obstructions, and insensible to danger, she wandered along, and soon found herself at the side of the turf dike that surrounded the place of the dead. Surmounting this slight obstacle, she groped her way among the tombstones, starting occasionally as a gust of wind made the long grass rustle by her side, or produced a hollow sound from the reverberation of some hollow cenotaph. After considerable labour, she came to a new-made grave, and endeavoured to satisfy herself that there was not another equally new among the many *tumuli* that raised their green bosoms around her. On a stone at the foot of the grave she sat down, and wrapped the folds of the mantle round her, to keep from her tender frame the chill night winds. She rose and knelt down upon the new-made grave, the green sods of which she bedewed with her tears. The spot was doubly hallowed by recollections and self-criminations, and she could not, for a longer period than was consistent with her safety, drag herself away from it. Throwing herself on the grass in a paroxysm of grief, she kissed the sods, and, crying bitterly, rose and mournfully sought the path that led to that home where a new misery awaited her. She wandered slowly along; and, as she approached the castle, saw with dismay a light shining in her chamber. Her mother, she concluded, was there, and would, by her absence, get all her suspicions fortified, that her illness was merely assumed. She stood for a moment, and paused, irresolute how to proceed—terrified to enter the house, yet unknowing whither to go. A voice struck her ear—it was that of Bertha; and, looking round, she saw her old nurse in close conversation with a man who had on the very dress worn by the individual who formerly endeavoured to carry her off, and who, she suspected, was no other than Sir Thomas Courtney. What could this mean? Was it possible that Bertha was in the interest of the man who had attempted to force her affections, by retaining possession of her person? The question was an extraordinary one, and startled her. She stood and looked for a moment. The man observed her and retreated, while Bertha stealthily sought the castle by a back entry. Her suspicion increased, and, hurrying home, she threw herself on a couch. She was thus beset on every hand. Her lover was dead and in his grave, and all left behind seemed to be against her. There appeared to be no refuge from the fate that awaited her. The marriage day was on the wing, and would soon cast the cloud of its dark pinion on the turrets of Roseallan. Her reliance on Bertha was changed to the poignant suspicion of treachery. Her mind recurred to the scene on the bridge, which she suspected was a part of her scheme to get her into the hands of the English Reformer, whose tenets, she thought, Bertha secretly favoured. Thus had she lost both friend and lover—the one by death, the other by infidelity; and she could scarcely tell which was most painful to her—such is the anguish felt on the discovery of the falsehood of friendship. Her mother's cruel and unjust reproof rung in her ears; her father was obdurate; her lover proud, determined, and, worse than all, filled with what he called an ardent love, and which she looked upon as a loathing, ribald passion, the indications of which she would fly as she would the embrace of the twisting serpent. Pained to the inmost recesses of her spirits, she could get no relief from tears; her dry, glowing eyes looked unutterable anguish; and a feverish heat pervaded her system, rendering her restless

and miserable. She flung herself on her bed, where she lay tortured by her conflicting thoughts. Her mother did not again visit her, and Bertha remained absent, apparently from shame. A domestic obeyed her call, and administered the few necessaries she required. The night was passed in great anguish, and the morrow's light brought no assuagement of her pain. The domestic who waited upon her, told her that Sir George Douglas had arrived at the castle with a party, and that her mother expected her presence in the hall next day. Bertha, she said, was indisposed, and could not attend her; but she would, in the meantime, supply her place. The day passed with no variation; there was no relief from the hope of succour; and her mind, dark and foreboding, sunk into a state of gloomy melancholy. The night came on, and threw the physical shades of gloom into a mind darkened with the misery of despair. As she lay in this state, she thought she heard the sound of a lute; and, rising, she placed herself at the window. The night was still, and the moon, which had not for some time been visible, was sending forth faint beams before she set. The scene was composed and pleasant, and brought to her mind recollections that added to her griefs. She fixed her eye on the wood, and observed a figure passing between the trees. It was too indistinct to enable her to know who it was. A dark dress, unrelieved by any mixture of colours, suggested the idea of Bertha's friend, Sir Thomas Courtney. A new source of curiosity now arose in the individual playing (in, however, as she thought, a very indifferent manner) the tune that used to be played by her lover. The sounds went to her heart; but suspicion of treachery accompanied them, and fired her with as much anger as her gentle nature was capable of, against this new scheme to wile her from the castle. At this moment, her mother and father entered.

"We have got again, in the wood-bower, a lover," cried the father. "I insist, Matilda, that thou dost tell me who it is."

"I do not know, father," replied Matilda.

"Is it he with whom you attempted to elope that night when Bertha fell on the bridge?" asked the mother.

"I never attempted to elope," answered the maiden, weeping; "but I was attempted to be carried off by some one in disguise, and the man that is now in my bower may be he, but I know not."

"Sir Thomas Courtney!" cried the mother.

The father rushed out of the room. The sounds of voices were heard in the base-court, and that of George Douglas was pre-eminent. A shot was heard. Matilda looked out at the window, and saw some servants carrying the body of a wounded man across the bridge. Lights were brought, and some one called out the name of Templeton the archer. Matilda flew out of the room and was in an instant in the ballium. She looked in the face of the wounded man. It was George Templeton. He opened his eyes and fixed them on her face, took her hand into his, pressed it, sighed, and expired.

Some days afterwards, Matilda Rollo was led, dressed by the hands of her mother, into the presence of the priest, who was to unite her and Sir George Douglas. When asked if she consented to receive the knight as her husband, she burst into a loud laugh. Her reason had fled; she was ever afterwards a maniac, and was tended by Bertha Maitland, who, sitting in the wood-bower, often contemplated, with feelings we will not attempt to describe, the unhappy victim of her treachery.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FLOSHEND INN

ABOUT the middle of last century, and previous to it, the truly national trade of carrying the pack was, as doubtless many of our readers know, both much more general and respectable than it now is. It did not then, by any means, occupy the low place in the scale of traffic to which modern pride, and perhaps modern improvement, have reduced it. At the period to which we allude, those engaged in this trade were, for the most part, men of good substance and of unimpeachable character; trustworthy, and, in their humble sphere, highly respectable—circumstances which, doubtless, imparted to their calling the consideration which it then enjoyed. The reason lies on the surface: the trade was then both a more extensive and a more important one than it is now, and required a much greater capital; for there being then none of those rapid and commodious conveyances for transporting merchandise from place to place which are now everywhere to be met with, the greater part of this business was then done by the packmen, who combined the two characters of merchants and carriers; and in this double capacity supplied many of the shops of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and other large towns, with English manufactures. Those, therefore, who would conceive of the packman of old, an indifferently-clad and equivocal-looking fellow, with a wooden box on his back, containing his whole stock, would form a very erroneous idea of the peripatetic merchant. Their conception would not, in truth, represent the man at all. The packman of yore kept two or three horses, and these he loaded with his merchandise, to the value often of several thousand pounds; and thus he perambulated the country, passing between Scotland and England, conveying the goods of the one to the other; and thus maintaining the commercial intercourse of the two kingdoms.

About the year 1746, this trade had arrived at so great a height, that the high road to England by Gretna Green was thronged with those engaged in it, going to and returning from the sister kingdom with their loaded ponies; and a merry and bustling time of it they kept at the Floschend Inn. This hostelry, now extinct, was long a favourite resort of these packmen, or pack-carriers, as they were more generally or more properly called. It was situated on the Scotch side of the Borders, near to Gretna Green, and was kept by a very civil and obliging person, of the luminous name of John Gas—a little, fat, good-humoured, landlord-looking body, with a countenance strongly expressive of his comfortable condition—having a capital business, and being very much at his ease, both in mind and body. His house was a favourite resort of the pack-carriers—and for good reasons. It was the last inn of any note on the Scotch side, and was, of consequence, the first they came to on re-entering their native country from their expeditions into England. The quarters, besides, were in themselves excellent; the accommodations were good; and the fare abundant, reasonable, and of the first quality—especially the liquor, that great *sine qua non* of good cheer. In addition to all this, John Gas himself was the very pink of landlords; humorous, kind, attentive, and obliging; possessing that valuable quality of

being able to stand almost any given quantity of drink, which enabled him to distribute his presence and his company over any number of successive guests. Fresh as a bedewed daisy, and steady as a wave-beaten rock, he was always forthcoming, whatever might have been the amount of previous duty he had performed; and what might remain yet to do he always overtook, and executed with credit to himself, and satisfaction to his customers—no instance having been known of his having been placed *hors de combat*, either by ale-cup or brandy-bottle. With such claims on public patronage, it was no wonder that his house secured so large a share of the custom of the itinerant merchants of the time; who, so much did they appreciate the comforts of the Floschend Inn, and so much were they alive to the merits of its host, that they would not rest, foul or fair, dark or light, anywhere within ten miles of it. A dozen of them were thus frequently assembled together at the same time under the hospitable roof; and, being all known to each other, they formed, on such occasions, a merry corps—spending freely, and sitting down all together at the same table. A more amusing or more entertaining company could, perhaps, nowhere be found; for they were all shrewd, intelligent men—their profession and their wandering lives putting them in possession of a vast store of curious adventure and anecdote, and throwing many sights in their way which escape the local fixtures of the human race. Naturally of a gossiping turn, a propensity made particularly evident when they chanced to meet together in such a way as we have described, they were in the habit of amusing each other with narratives of what they had seen and heard that was strange, and enlivening the evening by merry tale and jest.

It was somewhere about the month of March in the year 1750, that a knot of these worthies, consisting of seven or eight, was assembled in the cheerful kitchen of the Floschend Inn—an apartment they preferred for its superior comfort, its blazing fire, and its freedom from all restraint. Some of the guests present on this occasion were on their way to England; others had just returned from it, with packs of Manchester goods and large bales of Kendal leather. These last, and all other descriptions of merchandise which his pack-carrier customers brought, were stowed in a large room in the inn, which the landlord had very judiciously and very properly appropriated for this purpose; while the horses that bore them were comfortably quartered in the commodious and well-ordered stables. They were seated on either side of the fire, with a small round table between them; on which stood a circle of glasses; in the centre a smoking jug, whose contents may be readily guessed; and close by the table was the landlord, doing the honours of the occasion—that is, making the brandy-toddy, and filling the glasses of his guests. The master of ceremonies was in great glee, being precisely in his element, the situation of all others in which he most delighted—a bowl of good liquor before him, a set of merry good friends around him, and the prospect of a neat, snug reckoning in perspective. The conversation amongst the guests was general; but it might have been observed that one of the party had got the ear of the landlord, and was telling him, in an under-tone, some curious story; for the latter, with head inclined towards the facetious narrator,

was chuckling and smirking at every turn of the humorous tale. At length a sudden roar of laughter at once announced its consummation, and attracted towards himself the general attention of the company.

"What's that, mine host?" was an inquiry put by three or four at once. "Something guid, I warrant; for that was a hearty ane." The speaker meant Mr Gas's laugh. "What was't?"

"It's a story," replied he—the tears still standing in his eyes—"that Andrew, here, has been telling me, aboot the minister o' Kirkfodden and his servant lass—and a very guid ane it is. Andrew, will I tell it?" he added, turning round to the person who had told him the story.

"Surely, surely," replied Andrew; "let it gang to the general guid."

"Aweel, friends," said mine host, now confronting his auditors, "the minister o' Kirkfodden, ye maun ken, is, though a clergyman, a droll sort o' body, and very fond o' a curious story, and still fonder o' a guid joke—and no a whit the waur is he o' that; for he is a guid, worthy man, as I mysel ken. The minister had a servant lass they ca'ed Jenny Waterstone—a young, guid-lookin, decent, active quean; and she had a sweetheart o' the name o' David Widrow—a neighbouring ploughman lad, a very decent chield in his way—wha used to come skulkin aboot the manse at nights, to get a sicht and a word o' Jenny, without ony objection on the part o' the minister, wha believed it to be, as it really was, an honourable courtship on baith sides. Ae nicht, being later in his garden than usual—indeed, until it got pretty dark—the minister's attention was suddenly attracted by a loud whisperin on the ither side o' the garden wa', just opposite to where he stood. He listened a moment, an' soon discovered that the whisperers were David Widrow an' his servant, an' overheard, as the nicht was uncommonly lown, the following conversation between the lovin pair:—

'I fear, Jenny,' said David, 'that the minister winna be owre weel pleased to see me comin sae often aboot the hoose.'

'I dinna think he'll be ill pleased,' replied Jenny. 'He's no ane o' that kind.'

'Still,' said David, 'I had better let the nicht fa', noo an' then, before I come; and then he'll no see me mair than four times a-week or sae. He canna count that bein very troublesome.'

'Just as ye like, David,' said she.

'But hoo am I to let ye ken I'm here?' inquired the lover.

'Ye can just gie a rap at the kitchen window, an' I'll come oot to ye,' replied the girl.

'Very weel,' said David; 'I'll come and rap at the back window the morn's nicht.'

'Do sae,' replied she; 'an', if I canna get oot to ye at the moment, just step into the barn till I come. I'll leave the door open for ye.'

This matter arranged, the lovers parted, little suspecting who had overheard them; and the minister went into the house. On the following evening, a little after dark, the doctor, closely wrapped up in a plaid belonging to his serving man, slipped oot, an', stealin up behind the hoose till he cam to the kitchen window, gave the preconcerted signal, by gently tapping on it with his fingers. Jenny, who was employed at the moment in bottlin off a sma' cask o' choice strong ale for his ain particular use, immediately answered the ca', raised the window, an' put oot her head.

'Is that you, David?' said she.

'Yes,' said the minister, in a whisper so gentle as to prevent her recognising his voice.

'I canna get to ye at present,' said Jenny; 'for I'm engaged bottlin some ale, an' maun put it a' past before I

gang oot; the minister's waitin till I tak it up the stair; but love maks clever hands, as they say, an' I'll gie ye something to keep ye frae wearyin, in the meantime, till I come.' Sayin this, she handed him oot a bottle o' the ale, an' a basket, containin some cakes an' cheese. 'Now,' said she, 'tak thae awa to the barn wi' ye, David, an' tak a bite an' a soup till I come.' And she drew down the window and resumed her work. The minister, without sayin a word, retired wi' his booty, and placed it in a dark corner at a little distance. In a short time he again returned to the window, an' again rapped. The window was promptly thrown up, an' Jenny's head thrust oot.

'Can ye gie's anither bottle, Jenny?' said the minister, speaking as low as before, and disguising his voice as well as he could.

'Anither bottle, David!' exclaimed Jenny, in surprise. "Gude save us frae a' evil! hae ye finished a hail bottle already? My troth, that's clever wark! But I canna gie ye anither the nicht, David. It's a' put past. Besides, ye hae aneuch for ae nicht.'

'Weel, weel,' said the minister; 'come oot as sune as ye can, Jenny.' And he again slippit awa.

Thinkin, noo, that he couldna carry the joke farther wi' safety, as there was great risk o' the real David appearin, the minister slippit into the house, threw off his plaid, and went to a little back window that was immediately over the kitchen one, from which he could, by a little cautious management, both see and overhear, unobserved, all that should pass between Jenny and her lover, when *he* came on the stage. Nor had he to wait long for this. In a few minutes after he had taken his station, he saw David come round the corner of the house, and steal, with cautious steps, towards the kitchen window. He rapped. The window was raised; but evidently wi' some impatience.

'Gude bless me, Davie! are ye there again already?' said Jenny, somewhat testily. 'Dear me, man, can ye no hae patience a bit? I'll come to ye immediately.' And, without waitin for any answer, she again banged down the window.

David was confounded at this treatment; but, as Jenny had gien him nae time to mak ony remark for her edification, he made one or two for his ain.

'Here *again!*' he said, muttering to himself—'here *already!* Can I no hae patience!' Then, after a pause—'What does the woman mean? What *can* she mean?'

This was a question, however, which Jenny herself only could explain, and for this explanation David had to wait with what patience he could conveniently spare. But he certainly hadna to tarry lang; for, in twa or three minutes after, a soft, low voice was heard saying—

'Whar are ye, David?'

'Here,' quoth David, in the same cautious voice.

'Dear me, man,' said Jenny, 'what was a' yer hurry? I'm sure ae rap at the window was as guid as twenty. Ye might hae been sure I wad come to ye as sune as I could.'

'Hurry, Jenny! What do ye mean? I was only ance at the window,' replied David. 'Ye surely canna ca' that impatience.'

'Ye're fou, Davie—that's plain,' said Jenny. 'The bottle o' ale has gane to yer head, and ye've forgotten. Nae wonder; it wasna sma' beer, I warrant ye, but real double stoot. Catch the minister drinkin onything else! Thae black-coats ken what's guid for them.' And, without waitin for ony answer, she proceeded:—'But whar hae ye left the basket, Davie? Is't in the barn?'

'Jenny,' said David—now perfectly bewildered by all this, to him, wholly incomprehensible raving—'ye say I'm fou; but, if I'm no greatly mistaen, ye're the fouest o' the twa.' And he peered into her face to see how far appearances would confirm his conjectures.

'Awa wi' ye, ye stupid gowk!' said Jenny, pushing him good-naturedly from her. 'Ye're just as fou's the Baltic—that's plain. But tell me, man, whar ye put the basket; for it may be missed. I houpe ye haena forgotten that too?'

'Jenny,' replied David, now somewhat mair sincerely, 'will ye tell me at ance what ye mean? What bottles o' ale and baskets are ye speakin' about?'

'Ha! ha! Like as ye dinna ken!' said Jenny, looking archly, and giving her lover another push. 'That's a guid ane! To drink my ale, and eat my bread and cheese, and then deny it!'

I leave you, guid freends, (said the narrator here,) to conjecture what were David's feelings, and to conceive what were his looks, while Jenny was thus charging him with ingratitude. I'll no attempt a description o' them. A' this time the minister was lookin' owre his window, richt abune the lovers, and heard every word o' what they said; but he kept quiet till the argument should come to a crisis. In the meantime the conversation between the lovers proceeded.

'Jenny,' said David, in reply to her last remark, 'ye're either daft or fou—and that's the end o't. Sae let us speak about something else if ye can.'

'Do ye mean to say, David,' replied Jenny—now getting somewhat serious too, and a little surprised, in her turn, at seeing the perfect composure of her lover, and the utter unconsciousness expressed on his countenance—'do ye mean to say that I didna gie ye a bottle o' ale and a basket o' bread and cheese oot o' the window there, aboot a quarter o' an hour syne?'

'Never saw them, nor heard o' them,' replied David, with great coolness.

'Ta! nonsense, man!' said Jenny, with impatient credulity. 'And did ye no come and seek anither? and did ye no come three or four times to the window?'

'Naething o' the kind,' replied David, briefly, but with the same calmness and composure as before. 'I never got a bottle o' ale an' a basket o' bread frae ye oot o' that window; I never sought anither frae ye; and I hae been only ance at that window this blessed nicht.'

There was nae resisting belief to a disclaimer sae coolly, sae calmly, and sae pointedly made; and Jenny acknowledged this by immediately exclaiming, in the utmost dismay and alarm—

'Lord preserve me, then! wha was't that got them, and whar are they?'

Her queries were instantly answered.

'It was me that got them, Jenny; and they're owre in yon corner yonder,' said the minister, in a loud whisper, and now thrusting his head oot o' the window.

Jenny looked up for an instant in horror, uttered a loud scream, and fled. David looked up, too, for a second, and then set after her as fast as he could berr; leavin' the facetious, but worthy minister in convulsions o' laughter.

And that, my freends, (here said the merry landlord,) is the story o' the minister o' Kirkfodden and his servant lass, as tauld to me by my guid freen, Andrew, here"—layin' his hand kindly on the shoulder of the person he alluded to. The narrator was rewarded for his story, or rather for his manner of telling it—for in this art he excelled—by a continued roar of laughter from his auditory. When this had subsided—

"Come now," he said, "put in yer glasses. The best story's no the waur o' a weetin. It looks as weel again through a glass o' toddy."

The invitation thus humorously given was at once obeyed. In a twinkling a circle of empty glasses, like a *garde du corps*, surrounded the bowl, and were soon replenished, with a dexterity and skill which long practice alone could have given the artist. His well-practised hand and arm skimmed the ponderous vessel as lightly over the glasses as if it had

been a cream-pot; filling each of the latter as it went along to exactly the same height—not a drop in or over—with a precision that was truly beautiful to behold.

The glasses, which had been thus scientifically filled, having been again emptied, the landlord suddenly fixed his look on another of his guests, who was sitting up in one of the furthest corners, by the fireside, and to whom his attention had been directed by observing him musing and smiling at intervals, as if tickled by the suggestions of his imagination. He rightly took them for symptoms of a story, and acted upon this impression.

"James," he said, addressing the person alluded to, who was at the moment gazing abstractedly on the fire, "if I'm no mistaen, ye hae something to tell that might amuse us. Ye're lookin' like it, at ony rate, if that smirk at the corner o' yer mouth has ony intelligence in't."

James turned round, and, with a smile that was gradually acquiring breadth, said that he was "thinkin' aboot Tam Brodie and the kirm."

"I was sure o't," exclaimed the landlord, triumphantly. "What aboot Tam and the kirm, James?"

"There's little in't," replied the other; "but I'll tell it for the guid o' the company." And he immediately went on. "I dare say the maist o' ye here ken Tam Brodie o' the Broomhouse; and them that dinna may noo learn that he's a sma' farmer, as weel as unco sma' man, in a certain part o' Annandale. He is in but very indifferent circumstances, and has, on the whole, a sair struggle wi' the world; but this is no to hinder him, as hoo should it, frae haein a maist extraordinary fondness for cream; but it ought to hinder him frae takin every opportunity, which he does, o' his wife's bein oot o' the way, to steal frae his ain kirm, to the serious detriment o' his ain interest. His wife entertains the same opinion; for she's obliged to watch him like a cat; and, when she does catch him at the forbidden vessel, or discovers that he has been there—which she often does, by the ring aboot his mouth, when she has come so suddenly on him as no to gie him time to remove the evidence—she does pepper him sweetly wi' the first thing that comes to her haun; for she's a trimmer, though a weel-behaved, hard-working woman. A' her watchfulness, however, and a' the wappins she could gie her husband, could neither cure him o' his propensity, nor prevent him indulgin' it whenever he thought he could do it wi'oot bein detected.

It happened ae day, that Mrs Brodie had some errand to a neighbouring farm-house, which she behoved to execute personally. Having dressed herself a little better than ordinary for this purpose, she cam to her husband, who was at the moment delvin in the kailyard behind the house, told him where she was gaun, and desired him to look after the weans till her return. This task, Tam, of course, readily undertook, and continued to delve awa as composedly as if his wife's proposed absence had suggested no other idea to him. He, in short, looked as innocent of a sinister purpose as a man could do; although at that very moment the cunning little rascal's mind was fu' o' the idea o' makin a dive at the kirm, the moment his wife's back was turned. And he soon made these evil intentions manifest enough. While his wife was speakin' to him, leavin' the bairns in his charge, Tam never raised his head, but continued delvin awa wi' great assiduity. He was, in fact, afraid to lift his head, for fear that his wife should discover his joy on his countenance, and tak some means o' bafflin his designs. Although, however, he didna raise his head while she was speakin' to him, he did it the instant she left him. While continuin bent as if in the act o' workin, he looked after her till she disappeared down a brae, at the distance o' aboot a hundred yards, when he stood erect, stuck his spade in the ground, and went wi' deliberate step into the hoose. This deliberation, however, did not proceed so much from a consciousness of security

as to prevent exciting the suspicion o' his ain weans, whom he did not wish to trust with the secret o' his intended depredations on the kirn, for fear they should tell their mother, as, had they known it, they certainly would—perhaps not deliberately, but they would blab it. This risk, therefore, he resolved not to run. On entering the kitchen whar the weans war, to the number o' three or four—

'What keeps ye a' in the hoose sic a nice bonny day as this?' said he; 'awa and play yersels in the yard for a wee; and, as I'm wearied and gaun to rest mysel, ye can come and tell me whan ye see yer mither comin. Ye can see her, ye ken, frae the tap o' the yard a lang way aff. Noo,' he said, addressin the last o' the urchins, as they scampered oot, in obedience to their father's commands, 'noo, mind and let me ken *the moment* your mother comes in sight.' The boy promised, and rushed out after his brothers and sisters. The coast was now clear; Tam's progress thus far was triumphant. He had never had before sae fair a field for operations, and he felt all the satisfaction that his happy situation was capable of affording.

Havin got the weans oot, he advanced to the door, shut it, and, to prevent any unseasonable intrusion, locked it—at least he thocht he had done so, but the bolt had missed. Unaware of this circumstance, he proceeded to his operations with a feeling of perfect security. Havin gone into the room where the kirn was, he lifted the large stone by which the lid was kept down and placed it on the floor. This done, he lifted the lid itself, and next the clean white cloth which is usually thrown first on the mouth of the vessel. These all removed, the glorious substance appeared—thick, rich, and yellow. The glutton gazed on it a moment with a rapturous eye; but there was no time to be lost. He had provided himself with a small tin jug. This he now dipped into the delicious semi-fluid mass, raised it to his lips, and quaffed it off as fast as its consistency would admit. Again he dipped and again he swilled; and, to make everything as comfortable as possible, he next drew a chair to the kirn, sat down on it, stretched out his legs, and in this luxurious and deliberate attitude proceeded with his debauch. While in the act of pouring down his throat the fifth or sixth jug, with his head thrown back, his eye—though half closed, from an overpowering sense of enjoyment—caught a glimpse of a castle o' cakes and a plate filled wi' rolls o' fresh butter, that stood on the upper shelf of a cupboard fastened high upon the wa' in ane o' the corners o' the apartment. The sight was tempting; for he felt at that moment somewhat hungry, and he thocht, besides, the cakes and butter would eat delightfully wi' the cream—and there is little doot they would. Filled wi' this new idea, he rose frae his chair, and approached the cupboard wi' the intention o' sackin it; but it was owre high for him. (He was a very little man.) This however, he was perfectly aware o'. So he took a stool in his hand, placed it, and mounted; but was still several inches from the mark. Finding this, he descended, put another stool on the top o' the first, and, on again mounting, found himself just barely within reach o' the prize. By seizing, however, a fast hold o' ane o' the shelves o' the cupboard by one hand, he found he could raise himsel up sufficiently high to accomplish the purposed robbery wi' the ither. Discovering this, he grasped the shelf, and was just in the act o' raisin himsel up by its means, when the stool on which he was standin (he had stood owre near the end o't) suddenly canted up and left him suspended to the cupboard shelf; for he held on like grim death, kickin and spurrin awa in a vain attempt to recover his footin. This was a state o' things that couldna continue long; either he must come doon himsel, or the cupboard must come doon along wi' him—and the latter was the upshot. Down came the cupboard; wi' everything that was in it—and it was filled wi' cheeny and crystal—smash on the floor wi' a dreadful crash, and Tam below it. There wasna a hail glass, cup, or plate left; and the rows o' butter were rollin in a' directions through

the floor. Here was a pretty business; and the pair culprit knew it. Cantin away the cupboard frae aboon him, he slowly rose (for he was not at all much hurt) to his feet, infinitely mair distressed wi' fear for his wife's vengeance than wi' regret for his ain loss. At this instant—that is, just as he had gained his feet and was lookin ruefully down on the wreck he had occasioned—ane o' his bairns cam runnin to the door, and bawled out the delightful intelligence—

'Faither, my mother's comin!'

The horrible announcement roused him from his reverie and instantly put him on the alert. He had presence o' mind enuch left to recollect that the cupboard wasna a' he had to answer for. There was the kirn, which, in its present denuded state, told an ugly tale. He flew to remedy this. He snatched up the towel, spread it over the mouth o't, lifted the huge stone with which all had been secured, dashed it down—on what? on the lid? No, in his hurry and confusion he forgot the lid. On the towel—and down went towel and stone into the kirn, and the latter with such force as fairly knocked out the bottom, and sent the whole contents streamin owre the floor. At this particularly felicitous moment, his wife entered the outer door, when the first thing she met was the colly dog wi' a row o' the fresh butter in his mouth. In ordinary circumstances, this wad hae been a provokin aneuch sight to her, but a glimpse at the same instant o' the dreadful ruin within made it appear but a sma' matter indeed. On enterin on the scene o' devastation she fand the culprit standing almost senseless and speechless wi' terror and horror, and every other stupifyin feeling that can be named, in the middle o' the ruins he had created, and up to the shoe-mouth in cream.

'An awfu business this, Maggy,' he said, in a sepulchral voice. It was a' he got leave to say; for, in the next moment, he was felled wi' the stroke o' a besom; and when he resumed his feet, which he did almost instantly, he took to his heels, and didna venture hame again till wife and weans were a' lang in their beds. Tam neer touched the kirn after this.

"And here," said the narrator, "ends my story o' Tam Brodie and the kirn."

"An' a very guid ane it is," rejoined the landlord, taking off a cold half glass of punch that stood before him. 'I ken Tam o' the Broomhouse as weel as I ken ony ane here, and it's just as like him as can be. William,' added mine host, now turning and addressing another member of the company—a quiet, mild-looking man, whom one could not *a priori*, have suspected of being a joker—"that's nearly as guid a ane as the Blue Bonnet. Do ye mind that story?" William shook his head and smiled.

"I mind it weel aneuch," he replied; "but it was rather a serious affair—at least it micht hae been sae, and I'm no fond o' recollectin't."

"Nonsense, man; nae harm cam o't," said the other; "and it was harmlessly meant."

"But it micht hae been a bad business," said William.

"But it *wasna*," said mine host; "and, as I dinna believe there's ane here that ever heard the story, I wish ye wad let me tell it."

"It's no worth tellin'," said the other.

"I'll tak my chance o' that," replied the landlord; "if it's counted worthless, I'll tak the wyte o't. Do ye gie me leave?"

"A wilfu man man hae his ain way—do as you like," rejoined William Brydon, affecting a chariness he did not altogether feel.

Thus regularly licensed, the narrator began:—

"About twa or three years syne, there used to come about this house o' mine a wee bit whupper-snapper body o' an English bagman. An impudent, upsettin brat he was, although no muckle higher than that table. The favourite theme o' this wee ill-tongued rascal—for he had a vile ane—was abusin Scotland, an' a' that war in't, for a parcel o'

sneakin, hungry, beggarly loons. This was his constant talk wherever he was, and whaever he might be amang. I didna mind him mysel; for the cratur wasna a bad customer, and he was, besides, such a wretched-lookin body—I mean as to size and figure, for he was aye weel aneuch put on—that puttin a haun to him was oot o' the question. Ye couldna hae blawn upon him, but ye wad hae been in for murder, or culpable homicide at the very least. But, although I keepit a calm sough wi' him, and didna mind his abusive jabberin, it wasna sae wi' everybody; and there was nane bore it waur than oor freend William Brydon here, wha aften forgethered wi' him in this hoose. William couldna endure the cratur, and mony a sair wrangle they had wi' the tongue; but the Englishman's was by far the glibbest, though William's was the weightier. It chanced that William and the little gabby Englishman met here, both on their way to England, ae day sune after the execution o' the rebels in Carlisle—a time whan the Scots, as ye a' dootless ken, war in unco bad odour throuthout a' England, and especially in Carlisle, whar the feelin ran sae high that no person wearin ony piece o' dress which smelt in the least o' Scotland was safe in the streets. And wha was sae vindictive against the rascally rebels, as he ca'd them, as oor wee bagman? 'Headin and hangin's owre guid for the villains,' he wad say. 'They should be roasted before a slow fire, like sae mony shouthers o' mutton.' Oh, he had a bitter spite at them! It was aboot this time, as I said, that he and oor freend here met in my hoose—and, as usual, they had a tremendous yokin; but it was, on this occasion, a' aboot the rebels; for this was the thing uppermost in the wee bagman's mind at the time. It was a grand catch for him, and he made the maist o't. In short, a' his abuse now took this particular direction.

Notwithstanding William and the bagman's constant quarrelin, and their mutual dislike o' each ither, they aye drank thegither whan they met, and whiles took guid scours o't, and lang sederunts; but it wasna for love, ye'll readily believe, they sat thegither: na, na, it was for the purpose o' gettin a guid worryin at ane anither; so that they may be said to hae sought each ither's company oot o' a kind o' lovin hatred to ane anither. In the afternoon o' which I'm speakin, the twa, as usual, drank and quarreled; but I was surprised to find, towards the end o' their sederunt, that oor freend here, instead o' gettin angrier, as he used to do, as the contest drew towards a close, grew aye the calmer; and, what astonished me still mair, suddenly shewed a strong disposition to curry favour with his antagonist, and actually so far succeeded, by dint o' soothin words, as to induce the bagman to extend the hand o' friendship and good fellowship to him—swearing that William was, after all, a devilish good fellow, for a Scotchman. The bagman, however, was by this time, pretty weel on by the head; and this micht hae had some share in producing this new-born kindness for the Scotchman. However this may be, being both anxious to get on to Carlisle that night, they agreed—such good freends had they thus suddenly become—to travel together. This settled, their horses were brought to the door. William's packs had been sent on before, and he had hired ane o' my horses to carry him into Carlisle. Just as they were gaun oot the passage there, to the door to mount, William hings back a bit, lettin the bagman gang on before him, and whispers into my ear—

'I'll play that pockpuddin a pliskie yet. Hae ye such a thing as an auld broad bonnet aboot ye, that ye could lend me?' Little dreamin what he was gaun to do with it, I replied I had; and runnin into the kitchen here, I took down frae a nail ane that I used to wear when gaun aboot the garden, and gave it to him. William took it, rowed it up, and thrust it in his pocket, without sayin a word, and, in three minutes after, the twa war aff.

On arrivin within aboot a mile o' Carlisle, Willie proposed to the bagman that they should go into a public-house that

was on the road-side, and hae something before they entered the toon, as they required to part a wee on this side o't—William havin, he said, some sma' business to do aff the road. To this proposal the Englishman readily agreed, and in they gaed, leavin their horses at the door. Here William plied the bagman—nothing loth, for he was a drucken wee rascal—wi' brandy till he began to wink, and no to be perfectly certain which end o' him was uppermost. Having reduced him to this condition, his friend proposed that they should be moving, when they both got up for that purpose.

'Where's my 'at? said the bagman, turnin round to look for the article he named.

'Here it's, man,' said William, coming behind him and clapping the bonnet on his head.

'Thank you, friend!' replied the bagman, generously believin that, as he felt *something* put upon his head, it must be his hat; and, thus theekit, he walked to the door and mounted his horse, as grave and composed as if a' was right, and rode off wi' William along side o' him. They hadna ridden far, however, when his friend, for obvious reasons, desirous of being quit o' his companion, said he was sorry that they maun now part, he requirin, as he told him before, to turn off the road a bit. On this they shook hands and parted. The bagman hadna proceeded far wi' the notorious badge o' Scotland—the broad blue bonnet—on his head, till he found himself, he could not conceive how, an object of marked attention to a' the passers by. At length, as he approached the town, this attention became gradually more and more alarming, and began at the same time to be accompanied by such symptoms as plainly evinced that it was not of a pleasant character.

Popular notice, the bagman very weel saw, he had attained by some means or other; but he also saw as weel that this by no means meant popular admiration; for in every face that was turned towards him there was an angry scowl. Amazed and confounded at being thus so strangely and disagreeably marked, the poor little Englishman looked first at his legs and then at his horse, leaning forward for this purpose, and then examined his own outer man all over, to see if he could discern anything wrong with either, that might account for his sudden elevation in the public mind; but he found nothing—all was right, and the little bagman was more perplexed than ever. He rode on, however—as what else could he do?—and at length entered the town. Here the general attention became still more strikingly marked: people stood on the streets and stared broadly at him; and, when he had passed, looked after him, and shook their heads. At length matters came to a crisis. This approached by occasional cries of 'Doon wi' the rebel!' 'Doon wi' the Scotch cut-throat!' 'Hang the robber!' 'Head him! Head him!' If confounded before, the little bagman was now ten times more so. These terms could never apply to him, and yet they were most palpably directed to him. What on earth could it mean? To be taken, too, for a character which of all others he most abhorred. It was unaccountable—most extraordinary. In the meantime, both the cries and the crowd increased, till the latter at length fairly surrounded the little bagman and his horse, and peremptorily arrested his progress, still shouting, but with greater ferocity, 'Down with the rebel!'

'Good people,' said the perplexed and terrified cratur, 'what do you mean? Hear me for a moment. I'm no rebel. I detest them as much as you can do. I am an Englishman—a born Englishman.'

'Yes, when it suits your purpose, ye cowardly Scotch dog!' exclaimed one of the crowd, advancing towards him, and seizing him by a leg.

'We know you too well by your head-mark,' said a second, bustling forward to have a share in forcibly dismounting the wee bagman; a measure which was now evidently contemplated, if not determined on, by the crowd

'Yes, yes!' shouted a third—'he has the mark of the beast on him. Down with him! down with him! He can't deny the blue bonnet. Down with it and the head that's in it!' Seeing all eyes at this moment directed to that part of his person where a hat should have been, the wee bagman instinctively clapped his hand on his head. It felt strange! There was no superstructure—all was bare and flat. He pulled off the mysterious covering, and beheld with horror and amazement a large, broad, Scotch, blue bonnet, the size of a cart wheel, with a red knob, like an overgrown cherry, in the centre o't.

'Ay, where got ye that? where got ye that?' exclaimed some one frae the crowd. But, though the question was put, no answer was permitted to the questioned. In the next instant he was on his back on the street, kicking and struggling amongst the feet of his assailants, who applied the latter to all parts o' his person wi' a rapidity and vigour o' execution that threatened, and certainly would hae extinguished the wee life o' him, if he hadna been rescued a trifle on this side o't by a guard o' sodgers, whom the alarm had brought to the spot.

Battered, bruised, speechless, and his face streaming wi' blood, the unfortunate bit bagman was now conveyed to the guard-house, and from thence, after he had somewhat recovered, to prison, under the same suspicion which had procured him such rough treatment from the mob. So that, to appearance, as they werena very nice in thae times, he was saved frae a violent death only to be subjected to anither; frae bein kicked into the other world to be hanged: and o' this opinion the wee bagman was himsel for some time, for the authorities o' Carlisle war at that time excessively loyal, and wadna cared muckle to hae hanged him on chance. As it was, however, he was kept in jail for a week, when his innocence having been so clearly established that the most loyal of his judges couldna deny it, he was set at liberty—though wi' a grudge, for they wad still fain hae hanged him—wi' a caution never to wear a blue bannet in Carlisle again.

"The wee bagman," added the landlord, "has never come this way since, and I fancy now never will. Come, freends," continued he, "shute in your glasses—the drink's gettin cauld; and," he said, edging the mouth of the bowl slopingly towards him, so as to afford him a view of its contents, "there's a gay drap in't yet." Then, with that forethought which was a very remarkable and praiseworthy trait in his character—"Betty," he cried out to a servant girl, "keep the kettle boilin'."

His call for the glasses of his friends being promptly obeyed, they were as promptly refilled, and, it is but doing justice to the honest men assembled on this occasion to state, were as speedily emptied again. This done—

"Mr Gas," said Walter Gibson, one of the most extensive traders and most respectable men in the company—"Mr Gas," he said—for they all addressed him as their chairman—"these are a' queer aneuch stories in their way that hae been tell't the nicht; but I'm no sure if there's ony o' them better than the story o' Sandy M'Gill and his mither." The landlord cocked his ears.

"And what story's that, Watty?" he said. "I never heard it."

"It's no the waur o' that, however," said Watty drily.

"No a grain," replied the other, with one of his good-natured laughs; "but let us judge for oursels."

"I'll do that," quoth Walter; and he immediately began:—"Twa or three years ago, as ye a' ken, Lord Drumlanrig, son o' the Duke o' Queensbery, raised a regiment for what was ca'ed the Holland service. His Lordship's headquarters, during the recruitin for the corps, was Dumfries, where he used to beat up on the market-days. Amongst those who were enlisted on ane o' thae occasions, was a young lad o' the name o' Sandy M'Gill—a joiner to

trade. Sandy was a handsome, good-looking young man—very smart and clever, and possessed of a good education; that is, he wrote and figured weel.

On the regiment being completed, it was embodied at Dunse, and then drilled for some time. It was then marched to Leith, Sandy M'Gill an' a', where it was to be embarked for Amsterdam. Two days after the regiment had left Dunse, Lord Drumlanrig, mounted on horseback, and attended by a servant, also mounted, set out from Dumfries to join his regiment at Leith, whence he meant to sail with it for Holland. On approachin the Nether Mill, his Lordship was recognised, while yet at some distance, by an auld blacksmith o' the name o' William Thamson.

'There,' said he, to a bit lively, hardy-looking auld wife—it was Widow M'Gill—"there's Lord Drumlanrig comin' forrit."

'Is that him?' quoth the auld wife; 'feth an' I maun speak to him then! He's taen awa my puir Sandy for a sodger.'

And she ran into the middle o' the road, and, ere Lord Drumlanrig was aware, she had his horse by the bridle exclaimin—

'Please yer Lordship, ye maun stop and speak to me a wee. I hae something to say to ye.'

'What is it, my good woman?' said his Lordship, smiling good-naturedly; 'but I'm in a great hurry, and you must not detain me a moment.'

'What I want to speak to yer Lordship about,' replied Widow M'Gill, taking nae notice o' his Lordship's impatience, 'is this: ye hae taen awa my puir son, Sandy, for a sodger, an' I'm like to break my heart about him.'

'There's nae guid reason for that in the world, my honest woman,' said his Lordship; 'as he'll be better wi' me than lyin at hame here, scartin the porridge pots.'

'I'm no sure o' that, my Lord, unless ye look weel to him and tak him under yer special care. Ye'll fin' him weel wordy o't; for, although I say it that sudena say it, he's a clever, weel-inclined lad.'

'I've nae doot o't, honest woman, nae doot o't,' said his Lordship, now endeavouring to move on; 'and, you may depend on't, I'll see that he gets every justice.' And he made another attempt to get on.

'Na, na, my Lord,' said the widow, perceiving his efforts to get quit of her, 'I wanna let ye gang that way—I hae something mair to say to ye yet; but, as I see a' the neebors glowrin at us, ye'll just come doon and step into the hoose wi' me a minute, and I'll tell ye there a' I hae to say.'

'Really, really, my good woman,' said his Lordship, in great alarm at this threat o' further detention, 'it is impossible—I cannot on any account—I am indeed in a great hurry, and exceedingly anxious to get forrit.'

'Deil-ma-care, my Lord!—the deil a fit o' ye'll stir till ye come in wi' me a bit—on that I'm determined.' And she took a still firmer hand o' the bridle.

'Some ither time, my guid woman,' said his Lordship, despairingly.

'Na, na, nae time like the present, my Lord,' replied the widow.

Seein now that, unless he had recourse to some violence—which it was neither his nature nor desire to have—it was useless to contend wi' the resolute auld wife, his Lordship dismounted, though, ye may believe, wi' a very bad grace, gave his horse to his servant to haud, and went in wi' Widow M'Gill to her little cot. On enterin the hoose, his Lordship made anither desperate effort to prevail on the widow to shorten his detention.

'Now, my guid woman,' he said, 'let me beg o' you to say quickly what ye hae to say, for I really will not be detained.'

'No twa minnits, no twa minnits, my Lord,' said the widow, dustin, wi' great activity, wi' her apron, a chair for his Lordship to sit down upon.

'No, no; I really will not sit down,' said his Lordship, determinedly. 'I'll hear what you hae to say standin.'

'But ye *maun* sit, my Lord,' replied the widow, wi' equal resolution. 'A bonny thing it wad be, you to come into my hoose, an' gang oot again without sittin doun. Na, na, that maunna be said. Doun, my Lord, ye maun sit.' And, seein that he would only increase his ain delay by resistance, doun, to be sure, his Lordship did sit. 'Noo, my Lord,' says the widow, 'I'm sure the deil a morsel o' breakfast ye hae gotten the day yet—for it's no' aboon seven o'clock; sae ye'll just tak a mouthfu wi' me.'

At this horrid proposal his Lordship sprang frae his chair—for he was noo fairly driven at bay—and made for the door; but the widow was as clever in the heels as he was. She sprang after him, an', before he could gain the door, had him fast by the tails o' the coat, exclaimin, as she pu'ed him back—

'Deil a fit o' ye, my Lord,'s gaun oot o' this hoose till ye taste my bread an' cheese. I'se haud yè fast, I warrant.'

Regardless o' her threats, his Lordship still pressed for the door; but the stieve auld wife held on wi' a determined an' nae feckless grip, an' he couldna mak it oot, without efforts that might do her an injury. Seein this, an' seein, at the same time, the ludicrousness o' the struggle, his Lordship at length gied in, an' returned to his seat. In a twinklin the active auld wife had a table before him, covered wi' bread, butter, and cheese, and a large jug o' sweet milk.

'Noo, my Lord, see an' tak a mouthfu. It's but hamely rare to put before a Lord; but it's gien wi' hearty guid will, an' that maun mak amends.'

His Lordship good-naturedly took a little of what was put before him. While doin this, the auld wife kept up a runnin fire o' sma' talk.

'Noo, my Lord, ye'll be guid to my son. He's an honest man's bairn, but his faither's dead an' gane mony a year syne; an' mony a lonely seat an' sair heart has fa'en to my share sin syne; but I aye looked forward to findin a comforter an' supporter in my only son, in my auld age; but noo he's taen frae me too, an' a' is desolation an' darkness around me.'

Here the puir widow, whose maternal feelings, thus excited by the picture she had drawn o' her ain loneliness, had suddenly and totally changed her character, or rather had brocht oot its real qualities, which were, after a', those o' a kind an' feelin heart, raised the corner o' her apron to her eyes an' wiped awa an involuntary tear. His Lordship, notwithstanding o' the provokin predicament in which he was, feelin much affected by the widow's lamentations, thus simply expressed, took oot a memorandum-book frae his pocket, an' havin inquired her son's name, and the name o' the place o' her residence, wrote them doun. He next asked if she knew in whose company he was.

'Captain Dooglas,' replied the widow—'Captain Dooglas they ca' him.' Then becomin querist in turn—'Do ye ken what sort o' a man he is, my Lord?'

'Oh, an excellent man, my guid woman,' said his Lordship. 'Your son could not be under a better fellow.' And his Lordship noted doun this circumstance also, wi' the name o' Sandy's captain.

Havin dune this, he replaced his memorandum-book in his pocket, an' rose frae his seat, the widow noo offerin nae farther resistance; an' havin placed, unperceived as he thought, a couple o' guineas on the table, was aboot to leave the hoose, after shakin his hostess kindly by the hand—for his Lordship was noo rather tickled wi' the adventure a'thegither—an' promisin to see to the interests o' her son, when the widow, gettin her ee on the coin, snatched it up, an' was forcin it back on its original possessor, exclaimin—

'Na, na, my Lord—I'll tak nae siller for kindness. A' that I want is that ye wad be guid to my puir Sandy, whan he's far awa frae his hame an' his freends. Be kind till him, my Lord, an' tak the widow's blessin in return.' An' she was

pressin the money back on his Lordship, when he ran frae her got oot o' the hoose, an' was aboot to mount his horse, when to his unutterable horror, he heard the widow exclaimin—'Gude guide me! I hae a' this time forgotten your servant, my Lord—an' he'll be hungry aneuch, too, puir fallow! I hae nae doot.' An' she ran an' seized his horse next by the bridle. 'Come doun, lad, an' come in by a bit, an' tak a mouthfu. His Lordship, I'm sure, 'll wait twa or three minnits on ye without grudgin't; for the puir maun be fed as weel as the rich, the man as weel as his maister.'

'No, no, no. For God's sake, my guid woman, let us be gone,' exclaimed his Lordship, in an implorin voice, and noo beginnin to think he wad never get oot o' the auld wife's hands.

'Na, troth, my Lord, I'll no let him go. The lad *maun* hae a mouthfu o' meat.'

'Then, in heaven's name,' said his Lordship, 'if ye will hae him tak something, bring't oot till him here, and dinna tak him aff his horse.'

Complyin wi' this request, the very first she had complied wi', the auld wife ran in to the house—his Lordship, while she was there, tellin his servant to put at ance into his pocket whatever she brought—and brought oot a quantity o' bread and cheese, which the man disposed of as his master had desired him.

The coast being now clear, his Lordship, after again shakin hands wi' the auld wife, and promisin to keep an ee on her son, put spurs to his horse, and darted aff at full speed, as delighted wi' his liberty as if he had escaped frae a highwayman; but, fast as he gaed, it was some seconds before he got oot o' hearin o' the auld wife's voice, bawlin after him—'Noo, my Lord, dinna forget Sandy, dinna forget Sandy M'Gill.'

On gaining some distance, both master and man drew bridle and laughed heartily at the adventure wi' the auld wife o' the Nether Mill.

Aweel, shortly after, his Lordship embarked for Holland with a part of his regiment—the remainder, amongst which was Sandy M'Gill, proceeding in another vessel—and arrived there, as did the whole corps, in due time, and without any accident.

Some days after the landin, Lord Drumlanrig, at parade one forenoon, after speakin and laughin for a few minutes wi' Captain Douglas in front o' the line, went up to a certain guid-lookin young sodger in that officer's company, and, callin him out frae his comrades, asked him his name.

'Sandy M'Gill, my Lord,' replied the young man, touchin his hat, and somewhat surprised at bein singled out in this way.

'Exactly,' said his Lordship. 'Well, Sandy, I breakfasted in your mother's house on my way frae Dumfries to Edinburgh, just before I left Scotland; and a kind, hearty old woman she is, I assure you.'

'I wonder, my Lord,' said Sandy, blushing, 'that my mother could hae had the impudence to tak your Lordship into her puir sooty house.'

'It was no impudence at all, Sandy—nae such thing. It was oot o' kindness to me and affection for you. The breakfast, however, was an excellent one, and gien wi' a hearty welcome and richt guid wull. But I promised yer mother, Sandy,' continued his Lordship, 'to look after ye, and I mean to do sae. Can you write any?'

Sandy said he could.

'Can you figure?'

Another reply in the affirmative.

'Can ye shew me your handwriting? Have ye any specimens upon you?'

Sandy pulled out of his pocket some scraps o' paper that exhibited his fist. His Lordship looked at them, and said the writing was very guid—that it wad do very weel. 'Now, then, Sandy,' he added, 'I'll tell ye what I mean to do for

you, to begin wi' ; there's anither serjeant wanted for your company, and I hae desired Captain Douglas to appoint you. You will get a suit o' claes frae the store, and there's five guineas to you to purchase necessaries, and I hae nae doot ye'll turn out a guid and brave sodger.'

Sandy endeavoured to express his gratitude for the sudden and unexpected fortune ; but he couldna. Nor, though he had been able, did his Lordship gie him an opportunity ; for, anticipating the lad's embarrassment, he walked awa the moment he had dune speakin.

Next day, Sandy appeared in the uniform o' a non-commissioned officer ; and, being now on the road to promotion, returned, at the conclusion o' the war, to his native place, a captain ; attributin a' his guid fortune to the breakfast which his mother gae to Lord Drumlanrig at the Nether Mill."

"A weel, it is really curious hoo things turn oot sometimes," said lang Jamie Turner, on the conclusion o' the foregoing story—very curious. D'it ye ever hear, Mr Gas," continued Jamie, now addressing his landlord, "hoo Jock Tinwald, a son o' Andrew Tinwald's o' Shaw Hill, recovered forty guineas he once lost at the Candlemas Fair o' Dumfries?"

"No," said Mr Gas, looking with interest at the speaker. "I never heard that ane."

"It was a gay clever ane," said Jamie Turner, and, without further preface, he proceeded to relate the following adventure :—

"On a certain Candlemas Fair, some twa or three years back, and Tinwald o' Shaw Hill, sent his son, Jock, to Dumfries, wi' forty guineas in a net purse in his pocket, to purchase a couple of good draught horses. Jock wasna lang in the fair until he fell in wi' twa horses that appeared to be o' precisely the description he wanted. He inquired their price, found it wasna far beyond the mark, and, finally, after some chaffering, struck a bargain with the seller. This done, the young farmer put his hand into his pocket, to bring out the net purse with the forty guineas. He started and looked pale. It was not in the pocket in which he thought—nay, in which he was certain he had put it. He searched another, and another, and another, with distraction in his looks. It was in none of them—it was lost, gone! He had been robbed. Of this there was no doubt. Poor Jock was in despair, but it was an evil without a remedy ; for he had not the smallest notion when, where, or by whom he had been plundered. There was, therefore, no help for it ; and, feeling this, Jock repaired to a public house, drowned the recollection of his loss in brandy, and went home at night penniless, horseless, and drunk.

Six months after this, the Rude Fair of Dumfries came round ; an', in the thick an' the thrang o' this fair, might hae been seen the braid shouthers an' the round, healthfu', guid-natured face o' Jock Tinwald. But surely he'll tak care this time how he mingles wi' the crood, or at least keep a sharp ee on his neeboors. Not he. There he is, pushin an' jostlin awa in the heart o' the very densest mass, wi' an apparent regardlessness o' consequences which is most amazing, considerin the loss he sustained on a former occasion. Nay, not only is he doin this, but he is ostentatiously displayin a purse apparently as well filled as the last one. This does, indeed, seem the extreme of folly. But it only seems so. It is not without a reason. Jock is not so unguarded as he appears. The truth is, he is just now practising a ruse which he is not without hope may help him to the recovery o' his forty guineas.

The purse which Jock is so openly sporting is filled not with gold, but with copper. It contains, in short, instead of guineas, a quantity of farthings, and is thus ostentatiously displayed in the hope of attracting the notice of the light-fingered gentleman who had relieved him on the former occasion—and with what promise of success may be guessed frae the following incident.

On Tinwald's first entering the scene o the fair, he was

marked by two persons of very equivocal appearance who were hovering about.

'That,' said ane o' them, nudging his neebor wi' his elbow, and inclinin his head towards Tinwald—'that's the flat I did at the last Candlemas Fair. The easiest handled guse I ever cam across.'

'What wad ye think o' our tryin him again?' said the speaker's neebor.

'Wi' a' my heart,' replied the other. 'He's but a saft ane ; but I fear he'll no hae anything on him this time.'

At this instant the fears of the pair of pickpockets on this score were relieved by a sight of Jock's purse. It caught their eyes in a moment, and they viewed it with a delight which gentlemen of their profession alone can know. They felt as sure of it as if it were already in their pockets. Dropping all other speculation, therefore, they now commenced dogging Jock, who was fishing away with his purse through the crowd, like an angler with his fly, for the thief of his guineas or some of his gang, whom he had a pretty shrewd notion would not be far off. Jock, however, took care to keep the exhibition of his purse within bounds. He took care not to make an over frequent or suspicious display of it, only occasionally, and then returning it to a certain side pocket of easy access. There was nothing, therefore, which Tinwald was at this moment so anxious for as to feel a hand in the said pocket ; and this was a gratification which he was not long denied. A hand was introduced, he felt it, and, turning quickly round, he seized the person to whom it belonged.

'I ken ye, freen,' said Jock to his prisoner, in a low whisper—'I ken ye perfectly weel. It was you that robbed me o' forty guineas in a green net purse at the last Candlemas Fair.' (All this was said by Jock at a venture, but by chance was true.) 'Now, I say, let me hae the money back quietly and I'll tak nae mair notice o' the matter ; but, an' ye dinna, I'll immediately gie the alarm an' hae ye apprehended. Sae tak yer choice, freen. But, mind, there's a rope round your neck : it's hanging at the very least.'

'Let me go, then, and follow me,' replied the depreddator, briefly, and in the same low tone that he had been addressed.

Jock loosed his grasp, and keeping close behind his man, who immediately began threadin his way oot o' the crood, followed him till they had cleared it ; when, dreadin a sudden bolt, he cam up close beside him ; an' thus the two held on their way, till they cam to a retired part o' the market place, when the thief suddenly stopped, an', plungin his hand into his bosom, drew oot a leathern bag, from which he counted into the astonished young farmer's hand forty golden guineas. Jock, confounded at his own success, could scarcely believe his eyes when he looked at the precious deposit in his hand ; and, in the fulness o' his joy, insisted on giein the thief half-a-mutchkin o' brandy on the head o't. This, however, the latter declined, and, in an instant after, disappeared in the crowd ; an' Jock never saw mair o him. An' sae ends my story, freens," added lang Jamie Turner.

"An', by my feth, a richt guid ane—a real clever ane," said the landlord, as he filled glasses round, and, rising on his little, short legs, drank to each and all of the company "a soun sleep an' a blyth waukenin." In two or three minutes more, the kitchen of the Floschend Inn was cleared of its tenants, and, for that night at any rate, no more was heard in it the sounds of revelry, nor the accompanying glee of the gibe, or jest, or merry tale.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. IV.—THE HEIRESS OF INSANITY.

AMIDST the many evils incident to humanity, it may well be questioned whether there is any calamity entitled to the denomination of fortuitous, so appalling in its magnitude and effects as hereditary madness. All language breaks down and becomes feeble in the effort to give any description of it, which, however aided by figures of thought or speech, can convey a truer or a stronger idea of its horrors than can be produced from the bare contemplation of the subject, as it is presented to ordinary minds. It is not, however, after the disease has laid hold of its victim, and reason is hurled from her throne, that the form of the calamity, however it may harrow the feelings of beholders, presents its strongest claims upon the sympathies of mankind. There is reason to suppose, though we know little of the *true* feelings of insane persons, that the *heir expectant* is a much more miserable creature than the *heir in possession*. The tendency of the human mind to apprehend evil—even where it is distant, and entirely out of the view of all moral calculation—is well known, and cannot be better exemplified than by the effect produced in the minds of healthy individuals, by a continued perusal of medical books. In the case of heirs of insanity, if we were to calculate the intensity of misery produced by the apprehension of their natural hereditary enemy—by the increase of *risk* over the ordinary chance of any disease capable of producing fear of its onset—we would arrive at an amount of pain under which human nature would sink and expire. Fortunately for these children of misfortune, the proportion does not hold equally in both cases; but, after making all the allowances that may be required, a sum of misery remains to him who sees his brothers and sisters cut down before him by the sword, which, when suspended, is hung like that of Damocles, over his head, sufficient to make us wonder at the ways of Providence, which tempers the blast to the shorn lamb. Our wonder is increased, when we know that these unfortunates derive from their very calamity a susceptibility which often shrinks from the first breath of misfortune. Doubtless the amount of pain and apprehension experienced is dreadful, as the case I am about to describe sufficiently shews; but the question is difficult to be solved, how nature works in the production of a result so strange as that such a misfortune can at all be borne.

For many years I attended, as medical adviser, the family of Mr Warden, who, having renounced business as a merchant, in which he had amassed a large fortune, retired to a country seat about two miles from town, where he intended to pass the remainder of his life. He had other reasons for this retirement besides the ordinary love of ease in advanced age; for a misfortune of an extraordinary nature had befallen his family, which, though absolutely beyond the powers of mitigation possessed by the art of man, might at least be rendered less insupportable, by being removed from the reach of the officious sympathy of a gazing world. This misfortune was no other than the appearance in his family of a most inveterate and unsparing hereditary in-

sanity—an evil which seems to stand in solemn mockery of triumph over all the other extraordinary visitations of heaven. He had married his wife in ignorance of a circumstance which, however, might not, although he had been aware of it, have overcome his affection or determination to wed—the insanity of her mother and grandfather, besides that of several collaterals. The disease had not appeared in her till she had arrived at an advanced age; but, at the period of Mr Warden's retirement, she was confined in a private asylum, where there were also two of her daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, young women who could at one time boast of very considerable personal attractions and mental accomplishments. I had witnessed the first out-breakings of the disease in the youngest daughter, Mary; and having been thence led to make inquiry into the history of their mother's relations, soon saw the danger (immediately afterwards realized) which impended over the whole members of the family. Elizabeth, who was about nineteen years of age, was seized after her sister; and then the mother shared the fate she had unconsciously been the means of producing to her daughters.

It was with considerable difficulty that I could prevail upon Mr Warden to consent to the removal of his wife, from the house she had rendered to him a sanctuary of peace and happiness; but the violent type of her disease reconciled him to a step which, when it was first proposed to him, appeared to be beyond the powers of his resolution and will. I consulted the good of the unfortunate individuals themselves in suggesting the place of their confinement; but there were others whose peculiar situation demanded imperatively the absence of the living monuments of that fate which impended, with threatening aspect, like the stone of Tantalus, over their own devoted heads; and the very spectacle of which, embodied in the madness of dear friends, might be the means of stimulating the hereditary poison which lurked in their bosoms. Two other daughters remained in the house with their father after the removal of their mother and sisters; one of them, named Martha, of a saturnine temperament, and very liable to share the fate of her sisters; and the other, Isabella, the most beautiful and accomplished of the family, and one of the most extraordinary young ladies I have ever met with. I received from the unfortunate father—whose solicitude for the health of his two remaining daughters was proportioned to the grief he had experienced in the loss of the others—the most anxious instructions to do all that could be done for their safety and preservation from the hereditary evil, which, like an insidious serpent, lay coiled up in their vitals, ready to start into living action on the application of any extraordinary cause of disturbance. The one, Martha, I had, from the beginning, little hope of being able to save from the fate of her sisters, who, previous to their seizure, exhibited fewer of the signs of hereditary insanity than could be by the most unobservant person have been detected in her dull eye, which seemed to prefer resting on inanity to obeying intelligent impulses, or in her fits of melancholy and abstraction, into which, even in the midst of conversation, she was continually in the habit of falling. My anticipations were too soon realized: about two years after the removal of the mother, the fourth victim was added to this implacable power, and Isabella, the re-

maining daughter, was all that was left to the father of one of the finest families in that part of the country.

A calamity like that which I have here plainly stated, produces a feeling of surprise greater than might be expected from what in this country is by no means an unfrequent occurrence. Every effort is taken, and naturally resorted to, for the purpose of concealing the ravages made by our national scourge, serofula, on the minds and bodies of the inhabitants of this kingdom, where the demon seems to hold his high court. I am satisfied that I am much within the mark when I say, that not one victim out of ten is ever known to the public as being under the dominion of this fell power. Parents who have large families, have, besides their natural wish, a deep interest in the concealment of a fact which, in addition to rendering their daughters unmarried, often makes them objects of pity. In my experience, I have known instances where sons and daughters, upon being consigned to a madhouse, have been represented as sent to foreign parts; and, where the fact of the disease will not otherwise conceal, some scheme is generally devised for giving it a false name, so that the credit of the family may remain unaffected by the disparaging and destructive influence of this *fama malissima* which attaches to it. I say nothing of the effects produced by this system of concealment on the fortunes and happiness of the individuals who, in ignorance, are united to the relatives of the unfortunate beings. That is a question of social polity. I mean merely to give a reason why the extraordinary fate of the family of Mr Warden may excite a feeling of surprise, which would not interfere with the province of pity, if the frequency of such an effect, from a cause in daily operation, were better known.

The remaining daughter of Mr Warden was, as I have said, a very extraordinary young woman. I am not confident of my powers of presenting an adequate description of her; for, independently of her peculiar natural attributes, the unusual, if not fearful situation in which she was placed, reared up in her emotions and feelings of a factitious nature, which modified her original disposition, and produced a kind of being apart from ordinary mortals, and very difficult to be described or understood. She inherited from her mother a very tall, commanding person, remarkably handsome and well formed. The saturnine constitution which prevailed, more or less, throughout the family, had fallen also, though not to an equal extent with her sisters, to her lot; but, in place of producing the dark melancholy aspect which I had observed in the rest of the family, it imparted to her merely a paleness which contrasted remarkably with an eye in which the enthusiasm of the inspiration of genius seemed to be continually burning. Her face was a regular oval; and every feature, from the eyebrows to the lips, seemed to have received the last touch of the fastidious hand which had resolved upon producing the most perfect effort of the chisel. In endeavouring to give some idea of the beauty of this young woman, I am only afraid of appearing to depart from the sober reason which should regulate the burin employed to delineate the every-day truth of life. I cannot be going too far, however, when I say that I never saw what appeared to me a more perfect model of the female countenance—comprehending, as I do by that phrase, the physical lineaments, and that continual and inexpressible modification of them produced by a highly intellectual and sentimental mind, moulding them into forms suited to its own inherent sense of beauty. The chance of the occurrence of so perfect a co-ordination and agreement between the highest conditions of the moral and physical attributes of human nature must be small indeed, when I am constrained to admit that I never, before or since, saw any individual in which I could say I had found them in such absolute perfection.

The enthusiasm of this young lady, which imparted to

her thoughts and feelings a high tone and an impassioned character, was, however, nearly allied to the excitement which, taking another form, had produced the insanity of her family. The thin partition which separates genius from madness has been often noticed, and, in this instance, it seemed as if the one might be seen passing into the other. She had exhibited an early taste for poetry of that kind which accorded with the bold and intellectual cast of her mind; and I often remarked, as I conversed with her, that her ordinary speech, when it embraced an exalted subject, presented many of the features of the expression of genius. She was in the habit, as she confessed to me, of sending fugitive pieces to the public prints; and I have seen some of her effusions on which great praise was bestowed by those who were entirely ignorant of the writer, and which appeared to myself to be beautiful in a very eminent degree. Her imagination was remarkably vivid and strong, and the excitability of her feelings so tender and acute, that she was continually suffering the greatest pain from the slightest occurrences, at the very time that she was exposed to misfortunes, nearly unparalleled in point of extent, as well as the peculiarity of their kind.

I witnessed successively the effects produced upon the mind of one so peculiarly constituted, by the calamities which befell her mother and sisters, all of whom she loved with even greater enthusiasm than she displayed in the expression of the most cherished of her feelings. The hereditary poison carried in the veins of her mother, had been very industriously concealed from the daughters; and when Mary first exhibited the undoubted symptoms of the disease, Isabella looked upon the circumstance, in the midst of her grief, as altogether unconnected with any taint of the blood. When Elizabeth experienced the fate of Mary, her mind, quick and keen in the search of causes of extraordinary events, began to work, and she soon saw the extent of the awful truth, which, in a short time after, was confirmed by the madness of her mother and of her remaining sister, Martha. It seemed to me to be extraordinary that one so constituted could have withstood, as she did, the fearful onset of these repeated misfortunes; but, though they did not cause that madness they exemplified, they produced a state of mind perhaps not less painful, either to the victim herself or those who were forced to witness the workings of a settled conviction, accompanied with a continual apprehension, of following the fate of the other members of her family.

At Mr Warden's request, I regularly visited, twice a-week, this interesting and unfortunate creature. The effect produced on her by the fates of the other members of the family, was not attempted by her to be concealed. She spoke openly to her father and to me of the probability, nay, certainty, of becoming a victim to the same relentless power, which she said she felt, though in a dormant state, within the *penetralia* of her own constitution. I myself was conscious that she spoke the truth; but, if I had been called upon to say why I was of that opinion, I am not certain if I could have given any other reason for my belief, than simply that the enthusiasm of her mind, though not greater than that of individuals of genius, came unfortunately in aid of the presumption against her, arising from the hereditary taint. Mr Warden was secretly of the same opinion; but the thought of seeing a creature so highly, indeed wonderfully gifted with personal and mental beauties and accomplishments, changed, as her sisters had been, into the raving maniac or drivelling idiot, (for in both these types the disease had shewn itself in the others,) transcended apparently all his remaining powers of endurance, and he confessed to me, with tears in his eyes, that, if Isabella followed the fate of her sisters, he was afraid he would be driven to the extremity of attempting his own life. His entreaties to me were incessant, that I should devote as great a portion of my

time as was in my power towards endeavouring so to regulate the personal and mental functions of his daughter, as to ward from him and her the calamities they respectively dreaded. I felt too much anxiety and interest for the interesting object herself—whose conversation delighted me, while her elevated sentiments and manners dignified human nature itself—to require entreaties to quicken my professional energies in her behalf; but I knew too well how little was in my power, and I could plainly see that the penetrating mind of the young lady herself placed no great reliance on human powers, to rescue her from the perilous situation in which she was placed.

Her greatest danger lay in that perturbation of mind under which she laboured, from the excited state of her feelings. I have known instances of violent grief having the effect of stimulating a dormant mania. In the present instance, the grief Miss Warden experienced on the access of her family calamity, was of the peculiar character of the remaining victim who sees before his eyes the process of the immolation of his colleagues, at the moment he is listening to hear the knell of his own condemnation to a similar fate. Terror being generally a more powerful disturbing cause than grief, is often able to expel, for a time, the latter feeling from the mind, and I have always found it a stronger agent in the excitement of this hereditary disease. So long, therefore, as the apprehension of a similar fate occupied the mind of my patient, I had reason to tremble every day for an attack; and my first efforts were naturally directed towards producing a conviction that, so long as the ordinary state of the body and mind could be kept up—the one free from any derangement of its economy, and the other tranquil and natural—every hope might reasonably be indulged of being able to perpetuate an exemption from the calamity she feared. I produced to her many instances, occurring in my own practice, and collected from medical books, of several members of a family being saved out of the most inveterate cases of confirmed hereditary insanity; and, indeed, in the very worst and most aggravated visitations, I had often remarked the curious fact, that there is generally an exemption to some extent, if it should be limited even to one solitary individual. I added, that I had been often led to meditate on this striking example of the providence of Fate in the midst of the sternest of its vindications; and, though I could not pretend to account for it, on any principle that would be received as satisfactory by professional men, I could rely upon it with sufficient confidence, to enable me to impress my opinions with the seal of undoubted sincerity, when I led her to believe that she had every reason to expect the desired exemption, if she followed my precepts in keeping up an equanimity of mind, and ordinary health of the body.

“I fear,” she replied, shaking her head, “when you ask from me the condition of keeping this mind tranquil, you desire what these illuminated eyes declare never can be conceded, by that which, alas! has not the gift to bestow. The ardent enthusiasm of my mind, and my morbid excitability, are, I much fear, only the symptoms of the presence within me of the same spirit that, once roused, dethroned the reason of my poor sisters and mother, and consigned them to the dismal cells where they now lie, weeping and tearing their hair, and yet unconscious of the extent of their calamity. I do not doubt your word when you tell me that you have often seen members of a family spared from the most inveterate visitations of this disease; but I cannot place much faith on what I do not understand, even were I further to admit that there may be some reason for supposing the existence of a law against the occurrence of that ‘fell swoop’ which clears root and branch, the entire stock, and leaves not a leaf to tell where the tree grew. Faith in a good Providence rather prompts the question, Why should I be saved, to transmit misery to my descendants?”

But my heart, with an impatient pulse, decides the question of my fate. I feel that I must obey the power that exerts its fearful dominion over our house. The illumination of my fancy, when it is fired with the enthusiasm of a burning spirit, appears to me often as the first flash of the scorching light, thrown forward by the Fiend, to blind reason and make her a more easy prey. I know you are my friend; and I claim the privilege of asking you to tell me frankly when my enemy comes, rather than deceive me by assurances that he who is sent by a higher power will never come. Oh! who knows what it is to have reason to doubt his reason!”

The eloquence she thus displayed in her conversation had generally the effect of silencing, for a time, my prosaic arguments; but I persevered in my humane endeavours; and even the conversations in which I engaged with her blunted, in some degree, the edge of her fears, by making the subject familiar to her, and thus reduced the perturbation which a silent brooding over an apprehended ill might have increased. I plainly saw that my efforts to draw her from the subject which occupied her mind were unavailing, and might even be productive of bad effects, and therefore never shrunk from the task of fairly meeting her impassioned arguments with an open and unrestrained explication of my thoughts in opposition to her views. The natural enthusiasm and activity of her mind sometimes carried her away to her favourite subjects of poetry and painting, and afforded her some relief from the apprehension that haunted her so unremittingly; but the dominant feeling was sure again to resume its authority as soon as the fit of enthusiasm had ended on the performance which had exhausted her new-born energies.

In common with all individuals of enthusiastic temperaments, I found her often in alternate extremes of high feeling and deep despondency—two states of the mind which, I am inclined to think, exist almost always as counterparts of equal though antagonist powers, and are seldom if ever found (at least as habits) separate and unconnected. One day, a supernatural yet delightful buoyancy, adding an additional charm to beauties of the first order, would have triumphed over her apprehensions, and forced her to give egress to her high-toned feelings in some exquisite lines of poetry, or in the flights of a spirited and sparkling conversation, which charmed and enchained the ear of the individual who was fortunate enough to be her companion at that auspicious time. In the evening, again, of the same day, the genius would have been found fled, and her sombre spirit brooding over the prevailing feeling of apprehension, which seemed, while this state of her mind lasted, to have the power of marshalling all her thoughts and feelings, and imparting to them the atrabilious hue of its own darkness.

One evening when I called, her father informed me that she had, during the forepart of the day, exhibited, to some individuals who delighted in her company, great powers of sprightly and fascinating conversation; and some of them had confessed to him that they did not conceive that it was even in the power of inspiration to paint, with the endless colours of fancy—varying the tints and blending the delicate hues into one beautiful whole—the various subjects introduced and spoken on, in the matchless manner she had that day exhibited. The tear of pity followed close on the look of pride, as the unfortunate father added, that I would find her altogether changed. I went into the room where she was sitting, and saw at once that she was in one of her deepest fits of dejection, with her accustomed relentless apprehension exercising over her its usual influence. Her brow was leant upon her left hand, and before her lay a sheet of paper containing some writing, over which she was passing occasionally the fingers of her right hand, on which some brilliant gems shone brightly, as they presented, by the motions, different angles to the light. She started as I entered but welcomed me kindly when she discovered

who it was that had thus disturbed her reverie. I asked her what she was studying so intensely.

"This forenoon," she replied, "after the departure of some visitors, I took advantage of an inspiration which my conversation with them had produced, and sat down and composed a piece which I intended for ——'s Magazine. After it was finished, my thoughts took a sudden turn, and became entirely absorbed in the contemplation of the condition of my mother and sisters, sitting listless and miserable in their places of confinement. I have thought of this melancholy subject day and night for a long period; but I do not recollect of ever having presented to me with the same startling and terrific interest the question—Why am I, one out of five, alone exempted from this hereditary fate? I cannot describe to you the feeling which accompanied this self-put interrogation. So strong was the conviction upon me that I must submit, if I am not already subjected to the grasp of the same power, that I even applied to myself the term 'fool,' and laughed a hideous laugh at the weak and imbecile confidence I sometimes place in the hope of escaping my destiny. The frightful train of thought has continued to this hour. I am doubtful of myself, and have been trying to discover in this paper some traces of a wandering mind. Will you read it, and tell me honestly, if you find in any part of the composition a change in the sentiment, or the want of a link in the chain of thought. I know I can trust you as a friend, and the reasons for my fears are too strong to justify any suspicion that I am hypochondriac or morbidly fanciful."

I examined her eye as she continued her speech; but saw nothing to create any alarm. I received from her hands the paper, and found her composition to be a very beautiful impassioned description of the various sympathies that exist throughout nature, ranged according to their powers, and ending in an ascending scale with *love*. The subject was delicately and beautifully handled; and the only thing which I could discover as being peculiar in the composition, viewed as coming from her, whose pieces I had often read with delight, was that it embraced a subject she had generally shewn a wish to avoid. I took no notice of this peculiarity, and confined my remarks to the manner in which the piece was handled. I had no difficulty in assuring her that the spirit of the composition was continued uniformly throughout, without lapse or failing, and that, whatever turn her feelings might have taken during the time occupied in the work, no trace could be discovered in the piece itself of any falling off of the spirit and sentiment which dictated the first noble line of it. With a view to change the current of her thoughts, I enlarged on the many beauties which the performance undoubtedly exhibited, and assured her that the power she so much dreaded would have no easy task to perform, in breaking up a mind in which the elements of strength were as well marked as those of taste and beauty.

"You know I held your promise," she said, with an air of sombre satisfaction, "that you would watch the changes of my mind, and inform me honestly of those turns of which we are often entirely unconscious, though they exhibit the first struggles of the frightened intellect, as it shrinks from the aspect of the dreadful enemy of reason. I am assured, by what you say, that *he* is not yet come; though I fear the visit is only delayed. When will this cease? What I am for ever feeling, all the powers of inspiration could but faintly delineate. What I have suffered within this hour, I defy the most pregnant fancy to shadow forth, even doubtfully. Need I say more than that I was under the conviction that I was as my sisters and mother are? My terrors produced the confusion they feared. I scanned that paper till the words reeled before my eyes, and sense, reason, and intelligence were lost in the whirlpool of a fancied madness. I held out my hands and looked around me for aid;

but my fevered imagination could discover nothing but the tenanted cells of that place of confinement where those nearest and dearest to me lie in agony and tears, and whither I fancied myself dragged, helpless and powerless, from the binding ropes by which my arms were confined. Now I feel a modified relief again—and thus am I doomed to an endless succession of periods of enthusiasm, and fits of melancholy and terror."

I was not in any degree surprised at this eloquent description of her feelings; for I have seen instances of individuals of sober habits of thought, who, under the fear of hereditary insanity to which they were exposed, fancied, on certain occasions, that they were truly under the power of their enemy. But I do not think I ever had a patient who possessed so many claims on my feelings as this child of genius and misfortune exhibited with such unconscious power. An adverse fate had furnished a *reason* for her apprehension which a stoic philosopher, in the midst of all his triumph over the feelings of human nature, could not have disregarded; while her susceptibility, the very offspring of her dangerous constitution, and itself the parent of so many of the exquisite beauties of her character, kept her continually either on the stretch of an enthusiastic excitement, which made near approaches to the state she dreaded, or on the rack of a false conviction that she was deranged, or about to lose her reason. I felt acutely the misery of her situation; and, as she sat silently before me, after having poured forth, with the volubility of her genius, the speech I have here copied, I felt myself restrained, by some powerful feeling I could not describe, from arraying the cold arguments of reason against the impulses of a feeling lying, perhaps, deeper in human nature than the boasted results of our coolest judgments. I could not, however, allow this opportunity to escape of impressing her with a proper sense of the fallacy of those indications which she had mistaken for the beginnings of the disease she so much feared, and of satisfying her of a circumstance she was entirely ignorant of—viz., that madness carried with it no conviction of its presence; but rather, on the contrary, a scepticism of the actual condition of the patient, and a false confidence of the possession of reason. This latter circumstance, which she received at once upon my authority opened up to her mind some new views of her condition. She saw, at once, the impossibility of her being able to judge of the change she anticipated; and trembled to think that she might go mad and not know that she was in the same melancholy situation as her sisters and mother. I replied to her statements on this subject, that she might rather consider it an amelioration of her condition to be ignorant of the nature of her calamity—a proposition to which she yielded a qualified assent; while the fearful doubt which it threw over all the workings of her consciousness seemed to add to the misery of her feelings.

The new views of her situation which she drew from the information thus procured, changed materially the aspect of her mind. She seemed to give up that continual watch over the rise and progress of her thoughts she had persisted in for a long period of time; but the fear of becoming mad did not abate in any perceptible degree. I noticed, however, some time afterwards, that, in place of shewing an anxiety to speak upon the subject which occupied her mind, and produced in her so much alarm, she shrunk from the slightest allusion to it. She gave up entirely all mention of her mother and sisters, and did not even ask me how they were. It appeared as if she wished the melancholy catastrophe concealed, and all mention of it suspended or renounced. I was much at a loss to account for this change; but I thought she now saw the propriety of banishing from her mind all thoughts of the fearful subject which had so long occupied it—a circumstance of the utmost importance to her ultimate safety;

and I was hopeful that, if she kept herself actively occupied by her mental pursuits, she might escape the fate which impended over her. I mentioned the subject of this favourable aspect of his daughter's situation to Mr Warden, but was informed by him that, while he was also well pleased with the change that had passed over her, he was inclined to attribute it to a different cause. I now ascertained that an English gentleman, of considerable fortune, had some time before been introduced to the house, and having been struck (as indeed every individual was who saw her) with her transcendent beauty and accomplishments, had paid her great homage. I had met the individual at the house; and, on casting my mind backwards on some circumstances that had occurred in my presence, I became satisfied that Mr Gordon had for some time been enamoured of her; and also that she had regarded him with tokens of greater favour than she had awarded to many visitors who seemed to vie with each other in their claims on the attention of one so highly gifted with the powers of communicating delight to all around her. I did not forget in my reminiscences the subject of the literary composition which I had so much admired, and which had been to herself the cause of so much mental disquietude. It occurred to me that the occasion on which that piece was composed had been the first impulse of her affection—a change from her prior state of mind, sufficiently great to produce the illusion of a supposed madness under which she laboured.

On the occasion of my next interview with her, I enjoyed the advantage of possessing this key to her feelings. I found her engaged in copying a miniature, which she excused herself for not exhibiting to me. I could now trace with considerable certainty the operations of her mind. She had clearly contracted an affection for Mr Gordon, against her own solemn resolutions. In her prior conversations with me, she did not hesitate to avow her determination never to enter into the state of marriage—reprehending warmly the impolicy and cruelty of entailing upon a husband and a family all the effects of a hereditary calamity, which ought to be terminated in one generation. These were the dictates of a wise judgment; but her extreme susceptibility had not been consulted when she formed these sentiments and resolutions. The appearance of Mr Gordon a gentleman well calculated to call forth the affections of one who had so much love to bestow, had produced an effect which subverted all her principles of conduct, and even overcame, at least for a time, her dreadful terror of becoming a victim to her relentless family disease. I now saw plainly the reason why she avoided the subject which used to form the topic of our conversation. While her mind was unoccupied with a stronger feeling, the former terror reigned supreme and all-powerful; but, after the heart had taken up the cause of nature and instinct, against the factitious fears of a too susceptible mind, the right of domination was transferred to another and a gentler tyrant, whose sway was necessarily exclusive of any other power. Her spirits now seemed to be in the highest altitudes of her extremest enthusiasm; and, while I experienced all that delight I had so often felt in the conversation of one so peculiarly gifted, I wished from my heart that this new cause of excitement might not be changed into an evil, the effects of which might reach far beyond my worst anticipations.

Some time afterwards she sent for me. I called, and found her confined to her room. She was in one of her gloomy moods, appeared pale and spiritless, and was clearly again under her relentless apprehension. She beckoned me to sit near her.

"There is in our sex," she said, in a slow and tremulous voice, "a delicacy which covers up and conceals—as the pigeon does by its wing, its wounded side—that feeling which is the most natural affection of the heart. A woman

will not confess her love, till it be either gratified or overcome. A week ago I was in the situation of others of my sex, who have felt this peculiarity of female affection. You found me on your last visit copying a miniature; but no power on earth could have dragged from me then the admission that my heart had anticipated my pencil, and treasured up the lineaments of that face. Since that day a change has come over my mind. When was it that a woman was destined to tremble at her own love? When were the workings of conscience directed against the purest passion of human nature? When did a woman drag from her heart, in opposition to the antagonist energies of her nature, that most sacred of all secrets, for the very purpose of destroying it by that poison it shrinks from, and fears most as its natural enemy—the breath of popular opinion? You may well conceive the state of a woman's mind when she thus confesses an affection, which, in its still youthful vigour, clings to the heart and will not quit it. You have seen Mr Gordon, and may have perceived that he was worthy of the love of the fairest and best of our sex; but his powers over the heart of woman may be best known from the fact, that he overturned for a time the resolutions of years, and banished from my mind all those feelings and sentiments which have arisen from the circumstances of my extraordinary situation, and been cherished and nourished by my enthusiasm as well as by reason. The new impulse staggered me by the sweet intoxication of its instinctive power. Like a criminal, I secreted the gift of nature as a thing stolen from man. My conscience rebelled against the authority of my heart; and my health has suffered from the struggle."

She paused, apparently with the view of recovering strength to proceed with her extraordinary communication. I conceived that I now possessed an opportunity of declaring my opinion, that marriage, in place of stimulating the lurking mania, has rather a tendency to subdue it. I have always found celibates more exposed to an attack of hereditary madness than married individuals—a fact which may not be considered consistent with the beneficence of Providence, in so far as it tempts to a perpetuation of this fearful entail; but we have little authority to speak of final causes, while we remain so ignorant as we are of the true secret of the most common of the acts of nature. I, therefore, conscientiously assured her, that, by entering into a state of marriage with a man, and under circumstances, calculated to make her happy, (which, however, I did not recommend,) she had many additional chances of avoiding the fate of her sisters. My opinion did not seem to have much weight with her.

"Then," said she, "I would at least have but a chance or two more added to a case nearly desperate. I cannot listen to an argument whose conclusion is so impotent. The original fact is insuperable. I cannot conceal from myself, that I carry in the same veins that throb with this unfortunate love, the subtle living principle of mania, ready and eager to seize the opportunity of the first cerebral disturbance (and marriage itself might produce that) to unseat reason and drive the economy of the mind into anarchy, rebellion, and ruin. Mr Gordon has had the art to make me love him; but I am betrothed to a fate which may assert its prior right, and drag me from his arms, a maniac. The very love which I have felt and still feel for this generous stranger, rebels against the cruel purpose of allying him to a calamity of such a fearful magnitude; and is it not enough that I carry the demon coiled up in my own brain, but I must send down through my blood to descendants, for generations, its hereditary poison, to madden innocent, unconscious beings, and quicken their tongues to vain cursings of their cruel, selfish ancestress? I have expressed these sentiments to you before; and, O God! how was it that, in the intoxication of a new feeling, I, for a time, forgot them."

But they rose upon me in my first calm moment; and the greatest power that ever inspired the pen which has often delineated to your declared satisfaction my enthusiastic emotions, would quail at the task of conveying a shadow of the agony I endured in the struggle between my feelings and my reason. My altered looks have more eloquence than my speech, and the madness I have so long feared may tell with its Babel tongue what reason renounces in despair."

I asked her whether Mr Gordon had declared himself to her, and whether he knew of the peculiar position of her family.

"Great delicacy," she replied, "has prevented him hitherto, heaven be praised! from declaring to me in words the state of his heart. He asked me, (doubtless the device of a delicate lover,) to copy his miniature for him. Every trace of my pencil was reflected by my heart. I rose from my work to tremble at the change which had come over me; I saw the danger into which I was rushing, dragging with me an unconscious victim to the shrine of our family Moloch, and called up fortitude enough to request my father to convey to him the original and the copy. He is, comparatively, a stranger in these parts, and may be, as I think he is, ignorant of the misfortune that haunts our unhappy house. This idea stung me reproachfully. I looked upon myself as a deceiver, occupied in throwing the toils round the body of a generous, unsuspecting victim. I was conscious of being incapable of proceeding to any serious extent without informing him of the danger that awaited him; but I shuddered as I thought that his heart might already be committed in ignorance of what should have been communicated on the very threshold of his affection; but, oh! how fervently have I returned thanks to heaven for the timely interference, for his safety and mine, of the powers of my better judgment! Now at least the paramount evil shall be eschewed, whatever may become of this heart; and, oh! better that it should break with the grief of my own stifled passion, than with the agony of a husband looking with eyes that know not the relief of tears on the insane heirs of a mad mother."

There was, generally, in all the conversations of this young woman, such a mixing up of strong feelings and rational arguments, that I was always at a loss to answer her in such a way as to yield satisfaction either to myself or her. No reason appeared of much importance to her, unless, like her own thoughts, it was accompanied with the necessary garnish of feeling or sentiment. In the present instance, I was in greater difficulty than I had ever felt in her presence. Her own arguments against marriage were, besides being deeply rooted in her mind, too well founded in reason to admit of my conscientiously endeavouring to refute them; and, besides, I had no right to implicate, by my interference, the rights and happiness of a third individual, Mr Gordon, who had perhaps a greater interest in the affair than the lady herself. On the other hand, I too plainly perceived that her heart was affected by a strong passion; and, from what I knew of her mental constitution, I was satisfied that the greatest danger, both to her mind and body, must inevitably result from an affection of so peculiar a nature remaining ungratified; or rather being attempted, by the struggles of an opposing reason, to be stifled in the heart itself. The excitement produced by such a conflict, or the depression consequent upon the death of the passion, was sufficient to realize the anticipated danger of her hereditary disease. There was thus great reason for the apprehension of evil on either side; and I felt that all that I could safely do in her behalf was to endeavour to keep her mind as calm as possible, and wait the issues of time, either in affording her new lights, or in carrying off the deep impression apparently made on her heart by one whose avocations might require his absence from that part of the country. I endeavoured, accordingly, to impress her with

the expediency of keeping her mind occupied; and recommended to her several subjects for the employment of her pen, in executing which she would find relief from the morbid thoughts that occupied her mind.

On calling two days afterwards, I understood from her father that Mr Gordon had construed the return of his miniature and the copy through the hands of her parent as an indication that she did not regard him favourably, and had accordingly returned on the previous day to England. This fact had been communicated to her by her father. I was unable to form any probable guess of the effect this would produce on a mind so peculiarly constituted. Her father seemed to be rather well pleased at the circumstance, and was resolved not to allow his daughter to be again exposed to the action of feelings which seemed to threaten the overthrow of her reason. I was inclined to be of opinion that the absence of Mr Gordon might prove beneficial; but I was doubtful of the mode of his withdrawal, which, being imputed to a rejection by one whose heart was altogether occupied by a strong passion for him, might produce a feeling of having acted cruelly and ungratefully—a state of the female mind too favourable to the increase of an affection.

Upon my entering the apartment, my fears were partially realized. She was confined to bed. She was ill: a high pulse, flushed face, and restless eyes betokened an excitement of the system of the greatest danger to one so peculiarly situated.

"My father has informed me," she said, almost immediately on recognising me, "that Mr Gordon is gone to England. This has produced in me a mixed feeling of satisfaction and regret. I am pleased I have escaped the danger I so much dreaded, of visiting on the heads of others and perpetuating a calamity that ought to end in one generation; but I am grieved to think that my motives should have been misconstrued by one I cannot but love and admire. He has imputed, doubtless, to a feeling of unworthy pride and disdain what ought to have been attributed to affection and generosity; but he is innocent of any wish to misconstrue my conduct or depreciate my motives; and he is now, perhaps, suffering the pangs of a rejected and despised affection, at the very moment when I am tortured by the thought of being considered ungrateful and cruel to the object on whom my heart still dotes. Was ever mortal exposed to such ingeniously-contrived misery? Is there no mode by which this can be remedied? Is it not possible yet to convey to him the true cause of my rejection of his proffered suit—that it was affection itself that rose in arms against the cruelty I meditated against a noble, generous-minded man? Were he satisfied of this, my mind would be relieved; and the burning fever that threatens to stimulate the poison of my hereditary disease, may be quenched before reason is precipitated from her throne. You are my friend, you are also my doctor; in both capacities, I ask you, I implore you, to devise some means of taking from my brain this burden which threatens to crush it to ruins as bleak and terrible as the fragments of that melancholy wreck which has overtaken the minds of my mother and sisters. Know you the part of England to which he has gone? His father's seat is near the Borders. He may be there. What can I suggest? I cannot ask my father to write to him—I cannot write myself. Relieve me of the thought of devising a remedy for this pressing evil. There are many things which the kindness of friends can supply, when no powers are left to us to help ourselves; and I rely on your friendship, which I have ever found sincere and unchangeable."

I told her that I would consider of some means of relieving her mind from the burden which lay upon it. She seized my hand as I replied, and pressed it fervently, as if she meant, by that mode of expression of her feelings, to

impress me with the deep importance of the commission with which she had intrusted me. I was somewhat at a loss for a proper construction of her conduct. I was aware of the effect which a sense of ingratitude would produce upon a mind so generous as hers, and so fraught with the nicest delicacies of the most elevated of her sex; and yet I secretly imagined, that there was present, as an additional cause of unhappiness, the regret of the lover at the loss of the object of her affections—a thought that bore in upon me, in spite of all the faith I had in the sincerity of her views regarding marriage, and in the generosity of those sentiments that dictated the wish to avoid implicating another in the calamity to which she was exposed. I went and consulted with her father whether her extraordinary wish should be complied with. He was not partial to an exposure of the misfortunes of his family, and asked me whether I thought any danger might result to his daughter from a refusal of her request. I answered that I thought every reasonable measure should be taken to allay the excitement of her mind; and, seeing that the circumstance of their family calamity was already well known, and probably even in the knowledge of Mr Gordon himself, no great evil could accrue from this divulgement; while, if I were enabled to declare to her upon my sincerity that her wish had been fulfilled, great hopes might be entertained of the sedative effects of time restoring her to her wonted condition of mind and body. My answer was satisfactory; but he suggested that the communication should not be made in writing, but at a personal interview with Mr Gordon, who would come from his father's, in Cumberland, upon a short notice that his presence was requested in this quarter. I concurred in this suggestion, and undertook to make the necessary explanations.

I accordingly wrote to Mr Gordon, requesting him to take the trouble of visiting me within as short a period as his avocations would permit, and, in the meantime, I called again upon my patient. She was still very feverish, and her excitement had not in any degree abated. She asked me, the moment I entered, whether I had taken any measure for the relief of her mind. I answered that I had written for Mr Gordon to visit me, and expected him in a few days, when I would make the necessary communication to him personally.

"I am beholden to you," she cried, "in a life of thanks and blessings, for this exhibition of your friendship. Why should your profession limit its range to the use of physical medicaments? You have done more for the return of my health by this application of a moral remedy, than if you had prescribed for me all the secrets of your dispensary. My conscience shall be relieved, and I can, as I have hitherto done, reflect with pleasure on that nobility of sentiment which it is my pride to retain sacred and uninjured amidst all the perils of a bad world, and which, if it ever perish, I could wish to fall in the ruins of the mind itself. But what if he wish to see me, and cast over me again the charm which has produced all this misery? Counsel me freely. Can I trust myself in his presence, even with the guard of that frightful knowledge he is soon to receive? Why should I tremble at the intercourse of liberal sentiment with the man I still admire, when it shall be understood that we cannot be united? Is not this a weakness unworthy of me, which I should endeavour to overcome, as an enemy to the happiness I might experience in the society of so noble a man? Yet I know best the powers of my own mind and heart. Hitherto I have relied upon the dictates of my own judgment, which has never failed me even in the emergency of love. Will you tell me" (looking anxiously in my face) "whether Mr Gordon wishes again to see Isabella Warden?"

I informed her that I would comply with her request. I was now rather confirmed in my former idea, that love

still held an ascendancy over her judgment, however she might flatter herself that she had conquered the insidious power. On returning home, I found a letter from Mr Gordon, saying he would visit me within two days. He came accordingly, apparently with better will than I had to ask him. He suspected that the object I had in view was in some degree connected with the family of Mr Warden; and Love had lent him the use of his wings. After being seated, I opened to him, by a preliminary statement, the subject of my communication, and, as I proceeded with my interesting recital—recounting the calamity which had befallen Mr Warden's family, the beauty and noble-mindedness of Isabella, her reason for rejecting his suit, and her request that he should be made aware of that reason—I watched carefully the effect produced on him. I perceived nothing but satisfaction on his countenance as I approached the delicate part of my narrative, and was surprised to hear him state, in answer, that he was all along well aware of the calamity under which Mr Warden's family laboured; but that such was the effect produced on his mind by the transcendent beauty, great mental parts, delightful manners, and nobility of mind of Miss Warden, that he had resolved, in the event of his suit being accepted, to run all hazards, and marry this incomparable woman. It was scarcely necessary for me to ascertain, by a question, whether he wished to see her. His affection for her, he declared, was stronger than ever.

Within a few hours after, I called on Isabella. I communicated to her the import of the conversation I had had with Mr Gordon. My statement produced in her mind a great conflict of feelings; and I never had greater reason to fear the effects of her excitement than I had on that occasion.

"How is this heart to be resolved?" she said, with great anxiety of countenance, and an agitation that shook her delicate frame. "The reasons and arguments of years of meditation seem to lose in my mind their accumulated force, and I tremble at a change over which I have no control. My mental efforts are palsied by the sense of what I owe to the man who has said he will dare all the evils that accompany my fate, and, for my worthless sake, risk the mighty stake of his happiness for life. His love for me was nothing to this declared resolution. What shall aid my judgment in resisting the force of one generous heart on another? You know, sir, my sentiments on marriage. Shall I depute you to request him *not* to ask to see me?—say, my friend, shall I supplicate his return instantly to Cumberland? Yet, O God! what a reward would that be for such unparalleled generosity of soul!—I must, I feel I must, *thank* him. Surely so poor a boon as thanks cannot make me bankrupt in my prudential resolves. But I can deliver to you no message. You have heard me—I have scarcely heard myself. Oh, my poor heart!—break—break, or be resolved!"

As she concluded this speech, which seemed to be merely the outspoken workings of her mind, in its efforts to come to some conclusion, she reclined backwards, much exhausted. I could easily perceive the bent of her inclinations. I gazed upon the beautiful victim of a state of mental constitution and feelings in all respects so extraordinary. I saw plainly that she loved ardently, and that her love had all but conquered those determinations against marriage that had resulted as well from her morbid fancies as from her legitimate conclusions of prudence and high-mindedness. I never saw one, and may never again see one, in the same position. She looked upon me as if I were the arbiter of her fate; her beautiful countenance exhibited all the traces of mental agony; and the piteous and supplicatory glances of her black eyes, as she occasionally withdrew them from my face, fixed them on the ground, and lifted them again to beseech, with their mute eloquence of prayer my assist-

ance in resolving her extraordinary doubt—went to my very soul. I was now, however, better prepared for answering her, because I now saw that there was less danger in restraining an affection so strong as hers, than in gratifying it by a union with the man of her affections.

“Your heart, Isabella,” said I, taking up her last words, “shall not break. It shall be bound up with the cords of a pure affection—a sanctified love. You must give Mr Gordon something else than thanks for coming from Cumberland to renew a suit that you had rejected without a word of explanation. He is, indeed, a noble individual, and calculated to make you happy.”

“You fill me with shuddering apprehensions,” she cried, hysterically. “What is this? Are all the resolutions of a life crumbling down in the view of a trembling, inane, palsied consciousness? Is love stronger than the convictions of the last victim of five wedded to our family Genius of Evil? But does he know that I am the last of five? Are you sure that that generous man knows the dreadful truth? Speak, my friend—assure me of that—there is in it some secret medicinal balm whose virtues I feel stealing about this aching heart.”

“He knows all, Isabella,” replied I, “and will venture all for the great love he bears to her he conceives to be the noblest of her sex. Excuse me—I use his words. Flattery belongs not to my profession.”

As I said these words, her excitement seemed to abate, and she reclined gently on the couch on which she sat, with her eyes fixed on the wall of the apartment, and her face exhibiting the traces of a soft pensiveness, mixed with an expression of a pleasant resignation to some power she had resisted and could no longer resist. She remained in this position for some time, and I waited the issue of the workings of her peculiar mind. At last she turned and fixed her eyes upon my countenance. A clear tear had collected, and stood glistening, like a pearl on a ball of jet. She held out her hand and placed it in mine.

“Shall it be?” she said, in a voice that sounded in my ear like soft music; and the tear fell with the words.

I paused in my reply, not from any doubt of what I ought to say, but because I felt the extraordinary power over the future fortunes of so beautiful a creature, placed in my hands, as a responsibility entirely new to me, and, therefore, more serious than that to which we are accustomed in our position as medical advisers. She appeared to drink up my very looks—she wished and feared, anticipated and trembled—the blood came and went, and the tear started and dried up, as the two antagonist emotions alternated their energies over her heart.

“Isabella,” said I, holding her hand, “you attempted what was beyond the power of even a cold-hearted, calculating woman, and far more beyond the power of one so gifted as you are with the finer sensibilities and susceptibilities of the female heart. You were made for love, and you might as well try to live without the nourishment of nature, as to choke the natural passion which glows in your heart with the appliance of a cold result of judgment. Sorely, Isabella, have you miscalculated the powers of female affection.”

“Alas! it is true!” she muttered, with a deep-drawn sigh, and reclining her head again upon the couch pillow. “In this hour do I feel the vanity of all my accumulated resolutions of many years. I thought I was fighting for the cause of humanity, for the well-being of generations to come, for the diminution of physical evil, for God’s goodness and man’s benefit. Where—where are all my high aspirations now? Alas! how nearly allied are the greatest virtue and the greatest weakness! I had thought my cause an affair of the heart; but, ah! there was a power there before the one I placed in it as sovereign ruler—and now I feel its paramount strength.”

She sighed deeply as she told the issue of all her high and noble purposes. Turning her eyes again upon me—

“When is he to call?” she asked, with a blush that spread up over her temples.

“When I give him notice,” replied I.

“And when will that be?” she added, with a naïvete that forced a smile from me, which she instantly observed, and then tried to correct herself.

“I mean—I mean,” she continued, with a broken voice, and a renewal of her blush—“when do you think I should see him—if—if—it is your opinion that I *should*—that it is *proper* for me to see him?”

And her breast heaved with convulsive energy as she again threw a doubt over the fulfilment of her destiny. At that moment Mr Gordon entered along with her father. I was not prepared for this; but Mr Gordon’s passion had mastered his judgment, and he could not wait the issue of my interview. Rushing forward, he fell on his knees before the couch. Isabella lifted her head. It fell on the bosom of her lover. Distinct sobs burst from her bosom. The triumph of nature was complete—their tears mixed, and heaving respirations told eloquently the workings of their hearts. Taking Mr Warden suddenly by the arm, I hurried him out of the room.

In the afternoon, I called again, and dined with the family. An entire change had come over the mind of Isabella. The struggle over, and nature having triumphed, she was like one relieved from bondage and captivity, and brought out to luxuriate in the rays of the sun and the sweets of natural liberty. Her brilliant fancy, bursting from behind the cloud which had shaded its splendour, exhibited all the gay and shining lights of her extraordinary genius. One by one, every subject started was taken up and rolled in the stream of effulgence that poured from her imagination, and made to reflect the varied hues, like precious stones turned in the sunbeams, so as to bring all the angles into luminous and never-ceasing changes of reflection. Capturing with ease the minds of all, she led us where she pleased—into academic groves, poetic gardens, and Elysian bowers; and, infusing into us the spirit by which she was herself animated, transformed us for a time into new beings, gifted with new powers and new susceptibilities of enjoyment. Such are the effects of genius. I gazed upon the lovely enchantress with admiration. Mr Gordon’s eye was illuminated with delight; and her father’s countenance, though occasionally shaded with doubts as to the true import or effect of such elevation of spirits and powers of fancy, exhibited the pleasure and satisfaction of a fond parent. Why do I dwell on this scene? Some time afterwards, Mr Gordon led Miss Warden to the altar. They lived at the house of Mr Warden, I continued to be their family surgeon, and often witnessed the happiness of their union, which was never disturbed by any attack of the disease, which had produced so much terror to the heiress of insanity. They never had any children—a circumstance which reconciled her more and more to the marriage condition, and did not diminish the happiness of her husband.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE TRIUMPH OF INDUSTRY

It may be doubted whether any country, ancient or modern, ever presented the features exhibited by Great Britain. Almost every other country has, from the beginning, possessed either an agricultural or commercial character—at least a character in which the ascendancy of one of these interests has been so well marked, that the manners and customs of the people have been regulated by it—shewing either family pride or the love of mercantile wealth as the predominating sentiment or motive of action. This country is, perhaps, passing from one of these states to the other—once a land of chivalry, it is becoming, as Bonaparte said, a country of merchants, and may at present be said to be in that situation in which a new power arising from a new estimate of the social *optimum* (riches) is busy fighting with the old regulating sentiment of what was considered the *greatest good*, (family honour,) and, we may hope, in the act of overcoming it. The pride of *honesty* and *goodness* is alone the legitimate sentiment of human nature, on which fallen man has any title to plume himself; and it will be a happy day for this country, when to him who says, “I had a grandfather who was an honest man,” shall be awarded the palm of superiority over him who boasts of having a forbear who was a knight. We may all of us see the incorporated personification of this struggle well represented by the jealousy of the two great towns, Edinburgh and Glasgow, which respectively claim and boast of the presiding genii of mercantile prosperity and baronial pride. Whatever may be said of the merits of the question of superiority, there can be no doubt of at least this one fact in the argument, that, while the *prim* scions of nobility are perhaps diminishing, at all events not increasing, either in numbers, honours, or wealth, the sons of commerce are, year after year, multiplying in a ratio that is wonderful, and vindicating with a force that is every day increasing their right to as high a scale in the moral world as honour, industry, and integrity can achieve. We are led to make these remarks by the *morale* of a story which we are now to lay before our readers—involving the question of the comparative value of family pride and honest industry, as these were exhibited in two natives of these respective towns; and, moreover, deciding it on what we think fair principles of justice. So, without farther preface, we say that, a good number of years since, there lived in the barony of Gorbals, which may now be considered as a part of Glasgow, two widows who had for a long time been near neighbours, and, on that account, as well, perhaps, as from the sympathy of equal poverty, became intimate companions or gossips. The one was called Marion Gemmel, and the other Mrs Douglas. Simple as these designations are, there may yet be observed in their forms that difference which even poverty struggles to discover and mark as an indication of some distinction of birth or breeding, where humble want would seem to level all. The distinction, though made by the neighbours in mere words of address, was, however, derived from a difference of sentiment and manners in the individuals. Mrs Douglas was in reduced circumstances, while Widow Gemmel had never been higher

than she then was. The former was the daughter of an Edinburgh writer, who boasted of some relationship to the Grahams of Kincardine, though a genealogical tree of no ordinary ramifications would have scarcely sufficed to point out the precise degree. He died as poor as the tribe to which he belonged (notwithstanding of all their sordid fleecing of the lieges) generally do, leaving nothing to his daughter but a vague idea of a relationship to a once great family, without the ability of satisfying herself where her honour lay—whether in the main stem of the tree, or on the tip of some collateral twig, which had descended so far down as to take root again in the earth. She had married, when very young, one of her father's clerks, a person of the name of Douglas, whose noble name had served to set him a-climbing (in his day-dreams) the same genealogical tree, which he found anything but that with the *golden* branches, which, Virgil says, stands in the vestibule of Satan's dominions. Urged on by his professional love of litigation and his hereditary family ambition, he instituted a claim for the property of Kilquhandy, which lies in Lanarkshire, and was once possessed by a person of the name of Douglas, to whom he thought himself related; but he died just when he had set the case fairly agoing, and left his widow and one child to get themselves placed on the *green table*, and prosecute their family rights in the best manner they could.

After her husband died, Mrs Douglas was reduced to great poverty. Neither her father nor husband left her any means of livelihood. Some friends took so much interest in her unfortunate condition, as to get her daughter placed on the *poors*'-roll of the Court of Session, as claimant of Kilquhandy, in place of her father; and the process was left to proceed with that degree of speed with which all poor people's law pleas are conducted by “the agents of the poor.” As many years behoved to pass before this plea could be brought to a termination, and as she and her daughter were utterly destitute of the means of life, she had left her “process” in the hands of her agents, and proceeded to the Gorbals to supplicate some relief from a relation of her mother's, who lived in that quarter. In this she partially succeeded; but the boon of alms was given in the humiliating form of in-door work, furnished from a neighbouring manufactory; so that the daughter and widow of a writer, and the mother of the claimant of the property of Kilquhandy, was reduced to the necessity of applying herself to manual labour for procuring the necessary support for herself and daughter. Though, however, an “operative” in the Gorbals of Glasgow, she was never herself, nor did she wish any of her gossips to be, for an instant oblivious of the height from which she had fallen; and continually contrived to keep up a floating knowledge of the two great and important truths—first, that she was the daughter and widow of an *Edinburgh* writer; and, secondly, that she was the mother of the claimant of Kilquhandy.

Next door to Mrs Douglas lived the humble widow, Gemmel, who, originally the daughter, subsequently the wife, and now the mother of an operative, had never known either the ups or downs of life. Without any ambition to rise higher than the lowly situation in which fate had placed her, she was freed from the fears of falling, because she had

no distance to fall. When her husband (who occupied a situation in the same manufactory from which Mrs Douglas received her in-door work) died, she was supported by the proprietor by getting work, until her only son came to be able to fill the place of his father. Gifted with simple manners, and that strong common sense which is often strongest in its natural state, and, like the rock crystal, is only dimmed and weakened by grinding, she possessed, as well as her genteel neighbour, a species of pride, peculiar to the humble votary of contented industry. If her neighbour was proud of her connection with men of family and of the law, she upheld the plea of the working bees against that of the unproductive drones; in opposition to the assumed superiority of Edinburgh over Glasgow, she maintained the cause of the filling hive, against the paper nests of the furacious and predatory wasps; and that the mother of an industrious operative (her son) was a more honourable and more useful personage than the tutorial mother of the green-table claimant of a property to which, perhaps, she had no right.

The two widows, having thus certain personal claims to importance and utility to support and argue, lived in a kind of pacific state of restrained war. Their intercourse was, apparently, friendly; yet there was always a ground swell, resulting from some commotion of the day before; and, though there never appeared any broken waves, there was never an absolute calm. An under current of affection between the son and daughter had, however, for some time been flowing more evenly than is generally the case with the course of true love, and seemed to be altogether independent of the troubles at the surface. An intimacy had ripened into an affection; and William and Margaret, disregarding, or not comprehending the scope of their mothers' disputations on the subject of their comparative importance, found all the inequalities of birth and prospects levelled, by the sympathy of two young hearts. It was in vain that she was told that she was the representative of the Douglasses of Kilquhandy, and herself the claimant of that valuable estate; for, so long as she saw her mother engaged in the same occupation as the mother of her companion, she could not doubt that she was acting within her station when she thus disposed of her affections. The two were, indeed, suited for each other by Nature; who, disregarding the factitious circumstance of birth, had bestowed upon them equally her very best favours—having awarded to them both all the physical attributes requisite for forming agreeable persons, and that love and respect for virtue which is the foundation of all good. If left free to pursue the path of humble industry, they could not fail, with the sentiments they possessed, of arriving at independence and happiness; but it is not always that the framers of good intentions, or the possessors of virtuous sentiments and amiable feelings, are left in this world to work out the condition of their own independent existence, freed from the restraints and trammels imposed on them by others, who arrogate over them a natural or factitious right of authority.

The intimacy of these two companions, or rather lovers, was not unknown to both their mothers. William's parent was favourable to the connection, because she saw that, while her son was gradually rising in the confidence of his employer, and would soon be able to maintain a wife, he could nowhere find a more virtuous or amiable helpmate than the interesting daughter of her neighbour. She had, however, her own doubts whether the proud scion of an honourable family would be favourable to the match—and these were well justified by the sentiments of that individual. Mrs Douglas was decidedly against the connection, and had long viewed it with unpleasant feelings. She had been bold enough to discountenance, openly, the approaches of other lovers of the same grade, and, among the rest, one William Gibson, a companion of William's; but the friendly intercourse she kept up with her nearest neighbour had

hitherto prevented her from alluding to the circumstance of this attachment, which produced to her so much pain. She was not sure of trusting, altogether, to the duty of her daughter, or to the result of her efforts to work upon her feelings, by laying before her plans of future greatness, and filling her with the hope of getting her paternal inheritance through a successful issue of her law-plea. She, therefore, resolved upon approaching the subject in some collateral way, in her first conversation with her neighbour. Having prepared herself, by conjuring up all the ideas she thought herself entitled to entertain of her birthrights and prospects, and contrasting them with the humble, or, as she called them, mean condition of those with whom she had thus, by contrary fate, been forced for a time to associate, she invited herself to take tea with her friend, (by courtesy,) and soon entered upon the important subject.

"I have been obliged to take the strong hand with your son's companion, William Gibson," said she to Marion, pretending utter ignorance of William's courtship. "Your Glasgow folks" (attempting to smile) "are brave wooers; and some of the moneyed merchants may be excused for trying to mix their wealth with the honours of our Edinburghers; but it is a very—truly a very different thing—when operatives, such as William Gibson, imitate their masters, and pay court to a young maiden of blood, merely because, alas! her poor mother is in reduced circumstances. I put a rapid stop to that affair, however, and I presume the young man will never have the assurance to repeat his bold project, or indeed to visit again my humble, but, I hope, temporary home."

"What said ye to William Gibson?" replied Marion, looking with some amazement on the bold author of an innuendo that struck her so closely. "Did ye tell him that Glasgow bluid is no sae clear as the honourable stream that warms the veins and nerves the pen-driving hands o' the folks o' Edinburgh?"

"Perhaps I did, Marion," said Mrs Douglas; "but that is a subject on which we seldom agree. After Edinburgh became the seat o' the court, (for, in former times, the kings held their courts in various parts of the kingdom,) there cannot be a doubt that the inhabitants underwent a great change. The Canongate, and a great part of the High Street, and even some parts of the Cowgate, were inhabited by knights and nobles, who not only served as a stock for the honourable race who afterwards, and even yet inhabit that city, but taught the inhabitants genteel manners, and infused into their minds *high feelings*. From that stock came both my husband and father. Glasgow was never the seat o' a court. The kings never went near it—your first and last king was the god of lucre; and where then is the wonder that you are inferior to us in everything that goes to make a genteel member of society? I will never be contented with less than an Edinburgh gentleman for Margaret Douglas."

"If ye want *thin* bluid—that is, I fancy, clear and pure bluid—in the veins o' Margaret's lover," replied Marion, "ye are quite richt to hae recourse to a pair Edinburgh gentleman, and then she's sure o' arrivin at the high office o' fillin pirms i' the Gorbals o' Glasgow, as her mither has done afore her. They say that foul bluid runs back i' the veins o' nobility—yours hasna sent ye muckle forrit. If you had married a Glasgow weaver when ye buckled wi' Mr Douglas, ye might hae been the mistress o' a hunder servants, and ridin in yer carriage; but then the carriage would hae wanted a coat o' arms—and wha would sit in a carriage wi' a plain panel?"

"I and my daughter, Marion," said Mrs Douglas, "have even yet a better chance of ridin in a carriage with a coat of arms, (by and through my having been married to a gentleman,) than by Margaret's marriage with an operative."

"That will be when ye get Kilquhandy, I fancy," replied Marion, smiling. "That's been a lang plea. Thae agents for the *pair* are lang o' gettin the awmous frae the deep pouches o' the Lords. But ye forget, Mrs Douglas, that, if William Gibson, or any o' his *equals*, ever did (and it's no unlikely) rise to the ability o' gi'en your dochter, Peggy, a coach, he would be the proud master o' his ain fortune, and no ae inch o' his elevation would be gained by standin on the tap o' a *green table*."

"There is no dishonour, Marion," said Mrs Douglas—"for I will not quarrel with you, though you are going beyond the bounds of civility—there's no dishonour in begging a staff wherewith to assert your paternal rights. When Margaret gets Kilquhandy, she will pay the court the fees out of her rents, and" (smiling knowingly) "there may be something to spare for doing good to a *poor friend*. You know what I mean, Marion."

"Ou ay," replied Marion; "ye mean that, because you are a beggar, I should be ane too; but, sae lang as the thick and foul Glasgow bluid that runs in the veins o' my William makes his heart beat wi' the luv he bears to his mither, and the pride o' honesty and independence, I'll hae nae need o' alms frae the rents o' Kilquhandy. But when do ye tak *possession*, Mrs Douglas?" (smiling.)

"When the Lords decide in my favour, Marion," said the other, seriously; "and then it will be time enough for Margaret looking out for a husband among the neighbouring lairds. A Graham or a Douglas would be preferable; I would like to keep up the name and lineage. You should look out for some decent wife for William, Marion; for he, you know, has no estate to wait for. *His hands are his fortune*; and a wife, by joining hers, may make twenty fingers—and the more tools the better. I told William Gibson that he should get a *working wife*, and the same advice applies to your William. I know no greater curse to a tradesman than a genteel wife, and no greater curse to a genteel wife than a tradesman. Genteel blood and common blood will not run together. An Arabian blood and the English plough-drawer are ill-mated, and make a crooked furrow."

"The furrows o' Kilquhandy will be even enough, I fancy," replied Marion, somewhat nettled at the degrading tendency of these remarks. "They say better a crooked furrow than a ravelled pirn—meanin, I fancy, that ill-ploughed land is better than a dangerous trade; and wishin you muckle guid o' Kilquhandy and a guid husband to Margaret, I'll e'en let William choice a wife for himsel, remindin him o' the auld proverb, that the man wha sits on the silk goun-tail o' the wife wha's tocher bought it, never sits easy. The tradesman wha maks his siller and buys his wife, is a king; and he wha buys his siller, by makin his body the price o' the purchase, is a slave."

The conversation of the two widows here ended; and Mrs Douglas went home in the conviction that she had laid a good foundation for putting an end to the ignoble attachment which her daughter had formed for the humble operative. When she went in, she found Margaret sitting by the fire; and told her, with the abruptness of a full-charged mind, that she had been in, arranging with Marion Gemmel the best way of putting an entire stop to the intimacy that still (notwithstanding of all her exertions to end it) existed between her and the son of a weaver, and a weaver himself. She told her that Widow Gemmel also saw the impropriety of a match between her son and one who carried in her veins the blood of two honourable families, and who, at that very moment, was a competitor for the wide domain of Kilquhandy, if not the fee-simple proprietor, seeing that a decision was expected in the case immediately, and might already be pronounced. The unhappy girl replied nothing to her mother, who, she knew, was a stern, tyrannical woman; but her duty and fears did

not prevent her from heaving a deep sigh, as she contemplated this new barrier, which the mother of her lover had assisted in rearing against the happiness of her son. She had appointed to meet William on the following night, on the banks of the Clyde, at a thorn-hedge, which stood for many a year on the green which is now occupied by the beautiful street called Carlton Place; and all the impassioned thoughts she had been busy clothing with the never-varying words of a lover, were changed for fearful anticipations of evil, if not for a fancied declaration of William, who, as a dutiful son, might sacrifice her to the obligations which were due to a parent.

Next night she hastened to the appointed place, where she found her lover waiting for her, dressed, as was his custom, in his best suit—a tribute of respect, which the purity of his love suggested, as due to one whom he reckoned as his superior.

"Did you not tell me, William," said she, as he received her in his arms, "that your mother was favourable to our affection; and who could have doubted the truth of a statement which appeared so consistent with all reasonable expectation? That my mother should be against us was natural, because she expects that I am to be a fine lady, and mistress of a great estate; but I never could have supposed that my expected good fortune could have formed a reason for *your* mother endeavouring to prevent her son from marrying one who has such prospects."

"You speak in parables, Margaret," replied the youth; "I hae heard naething o' this frae my mother, wha conceals frae her son nae mair than he keeps frae her—and that is naething. Your mother never hinted at our attachment, though, doubtless, it's mair than likely she thought she hit it a deadly blow, by saying she had rejected the suit o' William Gibson, wha wasna fit to be the husband o' her wha is yet to be leddie o' Kilquhandy, and the wife o' a Douglas or a Graham. Gibson told me, an hour ago, that she called on his mother and repeated the same statement to her—my name being used for his. This is just a complaisant way o' tellin us a' that ye're no fitted for the wife o' a tradesman, and maun become the prize (and a valuable prize ye will be) o' some o' the gentles o' the land. It canna be denied, Margaret, that your mother is against us."

"Ah, I know that too well," cried Margaret. "And who, then, can be *for* us with effect? If *your* mother, William, were *against* your attachment to me, *what* would you do? There is a question; and, before you answer it, consider that your reply will regulate the conduct and fate of Margaret Douglas. I love and cherish my parent, as in duty bound and by feeling led; but all the affection I have ever felt and shewn to my mother, falls immeasurably short of the love I have seen cherished by you towards honest Marion Gemmel. The strength of your affection for your mother and for me, will tell you, in the language of heart-burning pain, what it is to disobey the one or to lose the other. Say, speak with your accustomed boldness and generosity—my fate is in your hands."

"Ah, Margaret, Margaret," replied he, "the question you hae put to me, is a hard, a cruel, a difficult one. Ye hae placed me between love an' duty—I might say, though it be not the language o' ordinary life, between misery and happiness, death and life. I canna answer ye. The question has come upon me wi' the suddenness and effect o' the shinin levin. I am confused and bewildered between the choice o' being a guid son, at a' hazards, cherishin and comforting an aged parent, wha has reared me and defended me amidst the storms o' adversity; and being a happy lover, repayin the affection o' Margaret Douglas wi' a love as strong as her ain. Yet, Margaret, bewildered as I am by your question, I fear I wadna be lang in seein the clear path o' my duty; but I canna think on't—and God be praised there's nae necessity that I should, at this moment, place our happiness or misery upon a choice which neither you nor I

may be called upon to make! We will wait. Your mother may relent; and let us hope the best."

"My mother will never relent, William," said Margaret, beginning to weep; "you have said you would not be long in seeing the clear path of your duty. I understand you, William. A son's affection is a duty—love is only a sentiment. You have decided for me my destiny. Is it not so?"

William remained for some time silent. Taking her in his arms and pressing her to his bosom, as if he were relieving a feeling of pain by the pressure, he said, in a voice which indicated strong emotion—

"I confess it—I confess it, Margaret." Were I put on my choice, I would turn frae her whase thoughts are my thoughts, whase life is my life—my love—my true; my faithfu Margaret—and leave her, wi' a sorrow-smitten heart and a watery ee, to lift up frae the earth, whar she had stooped to reclaim my duty, that time-worn parent wha was the first to learn me that there was a God abune a', whase strongest command is to honour your father and your mother, that your days may be lang upon the earth. Ye hae wrung this frae me, Margaret, yet it is due to ye; and, oh, may He wha has issued that command, see meet sae to dispose the circumstances of our lives as to enable us to fulfil it without sacrificing the object o' our love!"

"I thank you, I thank you, William!" cried Margaret, still hanging on his bosom. "You have decided my fate. You have renounced me, by saying I am bound to renounce you. You only dream a fond vision, when you hope for a change favourable to our wishes. By night and by day my mother wearies me by querulous regrets and sharp commands, and I am answerable for a heavy load of pain and misery, which my disobedience has placed upon her heart. She says I shall not be yours; my heart says I cannot; you say I ought not; and heaven confirms them all. Farewell!"

"Stay, Margaret," cried he, as he seized her convulsively. "Why did you not tell me before that your mother was against our attachment? It was a cruel question, because ye gae me nae time for a communion wi' my ain heart."

"So much the better," cried she. "It is your judgment that has spoken—and that is the truest monitor. We may meet, William—we cannot avoid each other; but, if you respect me, speak not again to me of love."

They parted with heavy hearts, and cheeks suffused with tears. The extraordinary and sudden change that had come over an attachment so cherished and hallowed, struck the young man with grief and astonishment. He had himself been partly the cause of the sudden resolution taken by the young woman; and, while he partially blamed himself for the rashness he had displayed, in deciding on the feelings and resolutions of another, and that individual the dearest to him on earth, he felt the swelling heart and the glowing cheek of the sacrificer to virtue and duty, and, pleased with himself, admired by the same motive and ratio the noble and generous-minded creature, who had copied to the letter his code of duty, and sacrificed an affection for a lover, to the duty to a parent. He loved her a thousand times more for this extraordinary resolution, and prayed silently, as he walked in the light of the moon, whose image was reflected on the Clyde which rolled by his side, for the interposition, in behalf of such unexampled virtue, of that divine Power which could illumine the dark waters, and make them reflect the images of the pure tenants of the sky.

For a considerable length of time after this meeting, the youthful couple had no meetings and few interviews. William applied himself assiduously to his business. His abilities, steadiness, and honesty were highly appreciated by his employer, who raised him to the important charge of foreman in the manufactory, in the place of the former official, who, about this time, died. This change in his cir-

cumstances was nearly as sudden and unexpected as that which had passed over the condition of his affections; and, while it pleased him for the sake of his mother, whom he could now render happy and comfortable, it pained him for the sake of her whom he would have rejoiced to have made a participator, along with his parent, in the fruits of his worldly prosperity. He had now nearly £100 a-year—a large income for one of his age; and rendered larger by the prudence which dictated the careful appropriation of it for present good and future benefit. While thus fortune smiled on the family of the Gemmels, she gloomed sternly on their unfortunate neighbour, whose law-suit still hung on the tender mercies of the priests of the green altar which Poverty rears to Justice—the agents of the poor—and whose abilities to work diminished daily by the influence of age. She heard of the prosperity of William with a sigh of envy which her high notions of family honour changed into an expression of contempt. As yet, however, the die was not cast, and Kilquhandy depended on the throw. Margaret trembled, sighed, and was silent.

Some time after this period, the postman called at the house of Mrs Douglas, and delivered a letter, bearing the Edinburgh post-mark. It had been long looked for, and contained the dreadful intelligence that Lord R—— had decided the question of the right of proprietorship of Kilquhandy in favour of John Douglas of Netherbrae, who was found to be the nearest male heir. Thus, by one blow, was driven from under her hopes the prop that had supported them, as well as upheld her contempt of the votaries of industry, for a period of not less than ten long years of poverty and distress. The immediate effect of this announcement upon the peculiarly-framed mind of this tender victim of family pride, was a swoon, from which she was recovered by the kind exertions of Marion Gemmel, in aid of the less efficacious assistance of the weeping daughter. In a state of hopelessness and misery she was put to bed, and was soon attacked by a slow fever, resulting from the excitement on her nervous system produced by the sudden change from a sustaining hope to a dark despair. At the time she was seized, she was struggling for the small earnings which were to serve, as they say, "day and way"—in equally expressive words, she was "from hand to mouth"—the proceeds of a day's labour being required for the same day's sustenance; so that, without a provision for illness, she was thrown entirely upon the assistance of friends, who now, that her case was lost, and she was classed irrevocably among the unfortunate, shewed no great wish to assist one who was in the habit of despising the votaries of industry, even when she needed the assistance which that industry enabled them to yield.

In this state of distress and want, William Gemmel was the foremost to yield her help and consolation. A portion of his earnings was freely applied to relieve the wants of the two children of misfortune, while his daily presence and soothing conversation were added, with a view to alleviate those griefs which the means of living alone have not the power of lifting from the burdened heart. The feeling which dictated this generosity, kindness, and attention was far removed from the selfishness which might have discovered in the distresses of the mother the means of producing a change in her sentiments towards the proposed lover of her daughter. It was the mere effusion of a kind and generous heart, which would have rejected the slightest whisper of a selfish motive, as unworthy of its cherished principles of openness, singleness, and honesty. Eating from her daughter's hand, who sat in front of her bed, those necessities and comforts chiefly provided by her good friend, who sat also there, and fed his eyes with the bashful yet grateful looks of her who yet occupied his heart, the mother, obeying for a moment the imperative power of gratitude, looked first at the one and then at the other, while reluctant tears chased each other down her cheeks. A mixed feeling of gratitude,

which contemplated the young man's kindness; selfishness, which discovered that he could maintain a wife, and that wife's mother; and pride, which, with eyes askance, still saw the fading fields of the property she had lost—occupied her mind.

"Margaret," she said, while the tears continued to flow, "your honour is not affected by this unjust decision, and the blood of two great families still flows in your veins. No court of law can take from you these rights; but, alas! I am beginning to find, when it is almost too late, that there is something more required for life and happiness than armorial bearings and genealogical trees. This bite of bread is imperatively demanded by nature—and who supplies it? One who has earned it by the sweat of his brow. Alas! it is so. No Graham, no Douglas, has, for the sake of our family, wet these parched lips with a drop of wine from their cellars, or filled my mouth with a crust of bread from their groaning larder. The task of supporting a scion of their stock has devolved on one who, perhaps, knows not the name, surname, and occupation (I mean trade) of his grandfather. Poverty and disappointment have worn out my nobility, and I could almost take revenge on my creed of honour by—by"—(looking sorrowfully, and at last bursting into tears)—"by gratifying the natural feelings of gratitude, and giving my Margaret to the antagonist ranks of the votaries of industry. Kiss her, William Gemmel, and claim therein the reward of your kindness."

William heard these words as notes of inspiration. He looked confused and amazed; but the blushing and averted face of the gentle Margaret called up his gallantry and passion in aid of the request of the mother. He claimed the granted privilege; and deeper blushes succeeded, as if to provoke a repetition of the pleasure. At this moment the postman entered the house and delivered another letter from Edinburgh, the postage of which was paid by their benefactor. The invalid seized it with clutching and trembling fingers. She could scarcely unfold it for agitation. Her eye scanned its contents greedily and nervously.

"It is not all lost," she cried, in a voice choked with surprise and pleasure. "Another cast for honour, justice, and Kilquhandy! The star of the glory of the Douglas shall yet be on the ascendant, and irradiate the gloom of poverty and the dark frown of misfortune."

As she uttered these words, she folded up the letter hastily, placed it in her bosom, and fell back, as if exhausted by the delirium of pleasure, upon her pillow. She spoke only a few words to William, who sat in astonishment at the bedside. Her thoughts had taken a new direction, and dreams of future greatness again occupied her mind. Her benefactor was not now needed, at least for consolation. He cast an inquiring look at Margaret, as if he feared the effect of this new intelligence upon their opening fortunes. She understood the look, and responded to it fearfully but expressively. Rising, he bade the mother adieu without being answered, and, shaking hands with Margaret, retired.

At his next visit, he found that matters had undergone a change. The old hope had been revived. The case was laid before the whole fifteen for their decision; the question was, therefore, again suspended in the scales of justice, (that is, doubt,) and the visions of the litigant again rose upon the rapt eye of the day-dreamer. Mrs Douglas was cured by the intelligence she had received; and, just in proportion as her hopes of family grandeur arose, the feelings of gratitude to her benefactor diminished, and, with them, all thoughts of ever making William Gemmel her son-in-law. The indications she had exhibited, while stretched on her bed of sickness, of a favourable disposition towards the two young people, were not voluntary—they were wrung from her by misfortune, and a short-lived spite against her elevated friends, who left her to the mercies of the poor she despised; but now, when she had partly re-

covered her former condition, and saw again the broad acres of Kilquhandy before her admiring eyes, she relapsed into the same state of mind and feelings she formerly possessed. All this was apparent to the young man, who, struck with the curious living example of selfish mutability and ingratitude, (perhaps the first he had seen,) read the first lesson of the experience of a bad world; but the page presented to him was perused with all the scepticism of the fondness of youth clinging to dreams of ideal goodness and beatitude; and he required the voice of Margaret to give him absolute satisfaction. He took the first opportunity of the mother leaving them for a few minutes, to get the information he feared.

"Your mother is changed, Margaret," said he, fearful of his own words. "Her kindness to me is gane; and mine to her is forgotten. What is the meaning o' this? Is the kiss o' reconciliation she gave me as a free boon, and the pledge o' a love which she approved, to be treated as the street-salutation o' affected friendship? Has she changed, Margaret?—tell me, has she repented?"

"She has, alas! she has!" replied she, putting her hands on her face. "The day after the letter from Edinburgh arrived, she forbade my future intercourse with you; and said that she permitted or courted your freedom" (blushing, and holding away her face) "as the payment of the debt of gratitude she owed you. Oh! why am I forced to speak against her who gave me birth, and whose failings my love and duty would conceal from all other ears! Yet I cannot resist—she said you would get *no more*—ay, and that your payment was ample and enough. To you alone do I tell this humiliating circumstance, which pains me as much as the refusal itself."

"I see it owre weel, Margaret," said the young man. "There's anither cast o' thae fatal dice o' the lawyers for Kilquhandy. Let it be cast. Time will bring aboot that as it does mair important throws; and I could hope—will I confess it?—ay, why should I deny it?—I could hope that the cast will be *against ye!* Then I would hae anither chance for my Margaret, wha never can be mine but as the victim o' poverty. This is a strange, maybe a selfish wish; but your mother has herself learned me the alphabet o' the selfishness o', I fear, a wicked world; and I only, after a', wish what I know to be the wish o' my Margaret, and what will mair conduce to her happiness than the braid lands and costly mansion o' Kilquhandy."

"I could, indeed, William, wish to continue poor," said the girl, "if poverty is the only dowry that will buy you."

"Let us hope, then," said he, "that this law-plea will gang against ye by the voices o' a' the fifteen!"

"That is not *my* hope," said Mrs Douglas, as she entered the house and heard the last words of the young man. "That is not *my* wish;" (rising in anger;) "but it is the wish of all my low-born acquaintances, whom my hard fate has forced me to associate with in this town, where wheels, and pirms, and looms are the only "*heirlooms*" which descendants fight about in courts of law. Envy—sheer, salt-blooded envy—is the source and fountain of this wish for my beggary; but, thanks to heaven! there is not one of the fifteen who comes from the Saltmarket; and there is not one who does not appreciate the rights of gentle blood."

At this moment, Marion Gemmel, who, as she passed, heard a high voice in the house where she knew her son was, entered.

"And you are against me too!" cried the still infuriated woman, casting a red and angry glance at her honest neighbour.

"If I am against you, Mrs Douglas," replied Marion, who did not know to what she alluded, "why did I tend you, and feed you, and nurse you, when you lay on that bed there, without friends, without health, and without the common necessaries o' life?"

"Oh, yes," cried the other, "these are the kindnesses

the vulgar like to exercise towards the fallen great. Let the child of family and misfortune once come down to the earth, and the groveling creatures who looked at him in the heavens with envy, will flap their wings round him, and feed him with *pity*. Your son has declared a wish that my daughter may not get Kilquhandy. That, too, is the secret wish of his mother. But we may cheat you all; ay, and I may yet look from the shining windows of that mansion, and see the upturned eye of envy, red with spite, but with less power in its fire than was ever possessed by the tear of officious, hateful, vulgar *pity*."

"You are angry, mother," whispered Margaret, ashamed of her mother's sentiments, and especially her ingratitude to her two benefactors, who stood and heard with good-nature this rhapsody.

"And I have even my doubts of you, girl," said the mother, turning upon her daughter. "You, too, have tasted the carrion of the owl's nest, and have got your mountain tastes corrupted; but I will cure you on the eyries of Kilquhandy."

This scene interrupted, for some time, the visits of her kind neighbours; but they entertained against her no spite, and commenced again shewing her their usual kindness. William and Margaret seldom met; but their love for each other remained unimpaired, if it did not rather increase. He pursued, with unexampled assiduity, his business; and, as his employer was getting aged and infirm, he came by degrees to be intrusted with all the important parts of the concern, and also the secrets of the counting-house. His salary was increased, and hopes held out to him by his kind master, that he might ultimately get a share in the establishment, as a further and suitable reward for those services which had contributed so much to the benefit of its interests. These things were communicated to his delighted mother, and came naturally to the ears of Margaret and her mother—the former of whom sighed with stifled expectation and love, and the latter compared the prosperity of a weaver with the success of the honourable claimant of a patrimonial estate. Exaggeration itself is shamed by the changes of fickle fortune. One day when this fallen gentlewoman was busy in her humble occupation, and expressing, as she wrought, her sentiments of the injustice of fate in awarding to her vulgar neighbour plenty, and to her who deserved and had a right to affluence, nothing but poverty, a gentleman from Edinburgh entered suddenly, and, holding out his hand, wished her joy o' Kilquhandy! The Court, by one of a majority, had overturned the decision of Lord R—, and declared Margaret Douglas as the rightful heiress of that property, with its messuages, its woods, its plantations, its mosses, muirs, mines, and minerals, and all the other verbose appurtenances of old estates. The effect of the joy produced by this sudden announcement was nearly assimilated to that of the former sorrow—she sunk upon the chair almost in a state of insensibility; but the consciousness to which she awakened was a new and regenerated life; and no expressions could do justice to the exuberance of her unrestrained joy. The news spread far and wide. Old friends, who had disregarded her, flocked to see her and wish her happiness. Between and the period when she should get possession, which, in consequence of an appeal to the House of Lords having been entered by John Douglas of Netherbrae, could only be procured by an application to the Court, she did nothing but sit and receive visitors, and act, by anticipation, the dowager lady of Kilquhandy. In all this exhibition Marion Gemmel and her son were not seen. They had visited her and aided her in her distress, and they were not needed in her prosperity. The change was a death-blow to the hopes of William; but he applied himself only the more assiduously to the labours of his business.

What is called "interim execution" having been granted by the Lords, a day was appointed for the heiress and her mother taking possession of the estate. A carriage was in readiness at the door of the humble dwelling, to carry them to the mansion, and several high relations now condescended to accompany them in a second coach which stood immediately behind the other. The neighbours assembled in a crowd; they were greeted by the smiles of the gratified lady; and the coaches went off at full speed, amidst the cheers of the admiring populace.

The scene was now changed. Mrs Douglas and her daughter having taken up their residence in the large mansion, as proprietors of an extended property, were soon courted by the neighbouring landowners, nobility, and gentry; and suitors in abundance were not awaiting to the fair heiress. The reaction of the pressed spring of family pride shewed now its power in large parties of gay visitors who ate up the rents of Kilquhandy, ample as they were, and gave, in return, the exuberant price of their honourable countenance. Marion Gemmel, and her laborious and dutiful son, formed an unfavourable contrast to these companions and guests, and, doubtless, occupied a small space in the mind of the dowager, though there is good reason to suppose that the image of her first, and yet sole acknowledged lover, exercised more power over the imagination of the heiress herself, than the floating forms of gaudy and empty elegance who paraded in state the drawing-room of the mansion of Kilquhandy.

In the meantime, the changes of fortune were still in progress beyond the scene where she had exhibited so extraordinary an instance of her versatility. William Gemmel's master died and left him sole heir of his wealth and business. He had had no near heirs, and preferred worth and affection to the claims of remote kindred. His money amounted to upwards of £110,000, and his business was itself a mine of wealth. Upon this occasion, the only demonstration of a consciousness of the possession of riches made by the fortunate youth, was the renunciation of the little cottage in the Gorbals, and the removal of his mother to the large house which had been occupied by the deceased proprietor. Their good fortune did not find its way to the ears of the inhabitants of Kilquhandy; but the situation of her humble neighbours had not altogether passed from the mind of the proud dowager. Secretly resolved upon mortifying the pride of Marion Gemmel and her son, she one day, while riding round the country, stopped her carriage at the door of the little dwelling where she had so often sat and meditated on the grandeur which she had now attained. Her footman rapped at the door; a strange face shewed itself.

"Is Marion Gemmel, or her son, William, within?" asked the dowager.

"They dinna live here noo," answered the person—an old woman. "An awfu change has happened to them; and they're no what they were when they lived in this comfortable hoose."

"What!" cried the lady, led astray by the enigmatical answer—"have they been ejected from their humble dwelling? Where do they live? Would you, good woman, convey a little money to William Gemmel, and say it is sent to the poor of Gorbals, by Mrs Douglas of Kilquhandy; and" (she muttered to herself) "he and his mother may claim it under that designation?"

"Ou, ay," replied the woman. "I'll do that; though, maybe, I hae as muckle need o't as they wha are honoured by the name o' the pair."

"You may claim a part of it yourself, then," said the lady, as she handed to the woman a handful of shillings, in which the yellow faces of two guineas appeared, as if dropped there by the carelessness of proud wealth. "Drive on, John!" cried the dowager of Kilquhandy; and away

dashed the gay equipage in which the gratified lady rolled from side to side, as she thought of the victory she had gained over her poor friends, who had once supported her in her distress.

The old woman took the alms to William Gemmel, retaining to herself one of the guineas and the half of the shillings. She told the favoured beggar, that it was sent to him by Mrs Douglas of Kilquhandy—she forgot to say it was for the poor. The good-natured man smiled, and returned the gift to the poor woman, who blessed the day she had seen so fine a lady and so generous a friend.

A month had scarcely elapsed, when the Lord Chancellor, at that time Lord L——, having taken up the case, involving the right to the property of Kilquhandy, upon the appeal of John Douglas of Netherbrae, overturned the decision of the Court, came back to the opinion entertained by Lord R——, and pronounced the true proprietor to be the appellant, John Douglas. In a very short time, Mrs Douglas and her daughter were served with a writ of ejection, and the whole furniture in the house was poided for the bygone rents, which had been so recklessly spent. She had only time to save a few pieces of silver plate, and removed immediately with her daughter to Edinburgh, where she took up her residence in Lady Lawson's Wynd, far enough from the former scene of her poverty and sudden fortune. These changes were all noticed by William Gemmel; who, now in possession of a large fortune, felt a delicacy, which overcame for a time his love, in preventing him (though he had once been in Edinburgh) from calling at the residence of the unfortunate couple, and paining the mother of Margaret by the blush of merited shame.

Meanwhile, John Douglas of Netherbrae, having a good property of his own, resolved upon selling Kilquhandy, as soon as his title to it could be completed. It was accordingly advertised in all the newspapers, and the sale was to take place in the Glasgow Tontine, on a day fixed.

Sometime after this, and while Mrs Douglas and her daughter were still entirely ignorant of either the good fortune of their old friend or the fate of the property which they could not bear the pain of inquiring after, they were waited upon by Mr William Gemmel, who had travelled from Glasgow for the express purpose of seeing them. The mother held away her head as he entered, and Margaret rose, suffused with blushes, to shake her visiter by the hand. He knew too well the situation in which they were placed, to dwell on the past circumstances of their lives; but it was necessary that he should know the extent of their knowledge regarding his fortunes and the fate of the property.

"I hae come to offer you again my humble services," said he, "and to request your return to your auld friends in the west. I may hae it in my power to benefit you, if your situation demands and your feelings will permit my officious interference."

"We are obliged to you, Mr Gemmel," said the mother; "we have again been unfortunate. How has Fortune treated you and Marion? You have left your old dwelling—I hope the change has not been for the worse, and that your situation under Mr —— has been improved, by further marks of the generosity of that good man."

"My situation is indeed improved," replied William; "and I could wish to shew you and Margaret that I hae the power as weel as the will to do guid to my auld friends. We will say naething o' what has come and gane; and, if you will trust yourself to my guidance, and winna be offended by my offers o' assistance, I will certify you against a' reproach, and a' reference to the things that Time has a right to lock past, in the recesses whar he places the things o' ither years, and a' the ten days' wonders o' the universe. Will ye accompany me to Glasgow? Here is a coach at the door ready to receive us. Say the word, and say it frankly."

"Could you procure for me a way of living," said the mother, "less laborious than that to which my necessity formerly forced me to apply myself?"

"I think I can," replied William; "maybe something better suited to your station and bodily abilities, may be got. You hae little here to care for"—(looking round on the empty room)—"just lock the door and let us gang on the instant."

Mrs Douglas, humbled by her misfortunes, agreed to accompany him at the end of the space of an hour. The period passed, and the three friends were seated in the hired coach which stood waiting them at the door. The driver had got his instructions, and drove forward with great speed; while, under the pretence of preventing the gratification of the curiosity of gazers, the blinds were put up, and all were, apparently, resigned to the conviction that their route was towards Glasgow. After a long drive, during which the ladies had been supplied with refreshments, from a small repository of comforts provided by the kindness of their guide, the coach stopped suddenly, the blinds were taken down, the door opened, and the travellers were landed at the foot of the broad steps of the superb entrance to the mansion of Kilquhandy. A servant, who had been in the house during the residence of the late temporary proprietors, and who smiled to see again his old mistress, led the way to the drawing-room, followed by the ladies, who stared at each other, at their companion, at the servant, around them, above them, everywhere, in mute amazement. Not a word was said by Mr Gemmel or the servant; all seemed to be dumb show, as they walked forwards, under the influence, as it appeared, of a secret spell of enchantment. Arrived at the drawing-room, chairs were set for them by the servant, who looked as grave and demure as if he had been entirely ignorant that Kilquhandy had been sold, or of any of the circumstances which had occurred since he last saw the face of his old mistress. Mrs Douglas looked at him, as if for explanation; but he took no notice of her; and Mr Gemmel's face was as difficult to read. After this dumb show had been acted, and the party were seated, Mr Gemmel ordered the servant to serve up refreshments. The order was quickly obeyed, and, to the astonishment of the ladies, they saw their favourite lunch served up in their old familiar dishes and table apparatus, in the way formerly followed by their directions, when they resided in the house. While all this was performing, Mr Gemmel still maintained his silence, and the servant his demure gravity; while the ladies, repressed by some feeling which they themselves could not perhaps have explained, refrained from asking an explanation.

When the servant had retired, and Mr Gemmel was about to speak, Mrs Douglas started to her feet. A thought had struck her, and her manner indicated anger and suspicion.

"Is it thus, Mr Gemmel," said she, "that you love to sport with misfortune, and shew in mock appearances of reality the extent of our loss, by the measure of our disappointment, at wakening to the consciousness that this house, these grounds, and that furniture, which were once ours, are now the property of Mr John Douglas of Netherbrae, our bitter foe? But this is revenge, and a paltry revenge, of my refusal of Margaret as your wife, and perhaps of my gift to you in behalf of the poor of Gorbals, among whom you thought yourself intended to be included. You have well avenged yourself; and now, sir, how are we to get back to the humble dwelling of misfortune, from which you have brought us to view the memorials of our misfortune and misery?"

Saying this, she took her daughter by the arm, and was in the act of hurrying out of a place which suggested to her so many recollections of misery and pain, when Mr Gemmel seized her, and made her again be seated.

"Madam," said he, "it is now a long time sin' we were first acquainted, and scarcely a less period sin' I loved yer daughter, Margaret, as ye weel ken. Though a humble operative, I marked wi' a keen and never-failing eye, every turn o' your life, and every revolution o' your fortune. I heard ye a thousand times despise, wi' the contempt o' the high born o' this land—far mair removed frae a natural connection with or sympathy for the puir o' God's creatures, than the celestial king of China is frae the humblest rice-grower o' his dominions—the toils and the rewards o' honest industry, by which our land has waxed great among the nations o' the earth. Will I say that I smiled at it—that I pitied ye—and that, for the love I bore to your daughter, I sorrowed for it? I did them a'—and mair than a'; for I resolved, wi' the courage that springs frae a reliance on an honest heart and willing hands, to make ye blush for having cast upon the first o' our cities, my native Glasgow—the staple commodity o' our morals, honest industry—the noblest work o' God, an honest man—that contempt and contumely that still lurks like an envious fiend in the bosoms o' the great, in spite o' the efforts they mak to shew a hollow and contemptible sympathy for the creatures they grind and despise. I succeeded; your law-plea went on; your pride—excuse me, madam—continued; your contempt for Glasgow and its foul blooded operatives, diminished not. And what was I doing during that time? I was working out, quietly, soberly, and confidently, the condition o' the success o' God's best boon—a love o' independence earned by *one's self*, and not inherited by the rights o' mouldy parchment frae an ancestor wha, peradventure, got his lands by a Border raid, nae better than a highway robbery. I say, madam, I succeeded; for my master said that I was an honest man, a good son, and a steady workman, and he rewarded me, as every good master, I hope and trust, will ever do. I succeeded him, and became richer than I ever hoped to be. You were also rich, but knew not o' my good fortune; for, when ye got this property o' Kilquhandy, ye forgot puir Widow Gemmel and her son the weaver, and returned to the Gorbals to mak a display o' your wealth by sending to me a sum for the puir o' Gorbals—in other words, to mysel. And what next? Your property—like the maist o' that which depends on auld Latin charters, sae confused that the proprietors dinna ken by them what their ancestors took in a foraging expedition against their neighbours, from what was truly bought—took wings and flew awa; while men that had the foundation o' an honest acquisition to rest on, remained. You became a beggar—I continued rich—this property was in the market—and my heart was in the keeping o' your daughter, Margaret. I bought it, and this house, thae braid acres and braw lawns, this furniture, and that servant, whase face has this day sae nobly dune its duty, are a' the property o' William Gemmel, your humble servant." He paused and looked at the two ladies, who, still farther removed from the land-marks of daily experience and ordinary life, knew not how to look or what to say. "And what is mair," continued he, "they are a' at the service o' Margaret Douglas, if the family pride o' her mither will let her become again mistress o' Kilquhandy, under the name of Mistress Gemmel." He paused again, and waited for an answer. "Will you reject me now," he continued, "as the husband of your daughter, Mrs Douglas?"

Mrs Douglas remained for a moment silent. A deep blush suffused her face, and her heart beat so as almost to be heard by him who had so powerfully moved it. An hysterical emotion passed over her frame, and, bursting into a loud paroxysm of sobs, she flew forward and flung herself at the feet of her benefactor.

"Excuse me, excuse me, Mr Gemmel!" she cried, while the blush of shame and the emotions of gratitude and joy

were still visible. "I treated you unkindly—cruelly. My thoughts run back, and shew me the torturing contrast between the conduct of the presumptuous and conceited gentlewoman and the humble and virtuous operative of the Gorbals. I see the triumph of honest industry over the hollow pride of high-sounding lineage. My gratitude chokes me. I can only find relief from the position I now occupy, at the feet of my best benefactor, my truest friend, yet once my despised and abused neighbour."

She burst again into tears, and would not, for a time, rise from her humble position. Margaret was sitting looking on—she was also in tears; and Mr Gemmel himself, struggling to raise the humble supplicant from the ground, could not restrain the indication of a full heart.

"Rise, madam," he said—"the pride o' honest industry is not like that o' lineage. It requires nae humiliation—nae bending o' the knee—nae upturning o' the eye o' supplication. It glories rather in the straight back, the weel-supported head, and the firm eye o' a reliance on a sound heart. Rise, rise!"

"It is good," said she, rising, "that I have something to give to him who despises that which the great thirst after, as the false god Chium groaned for sacrifices—humiliation. Take her, my dear, kind benefactor; and, oh, may she prove to you a suitable return for the unexampled goodness you have this day heaped on those who so little deserved it!"

Margaret was in an instant in the arms of her lover, who overcome by the pleasure of pressing to his bosom the creature he had so long thought of, dreamed of, sighed for, and despaired of, raised his hand to his eyes to conceal the effect produced upon him by the consummation of his happiness.

The door now opened, and Marion Gemmel entered. She wore still the same old-fashioned clothes she was in the habit of wearing when the mother of the humble operative. The meeting was strange and altogether beyond description; Mrs Douglas was again under the influence of an overwhelming shame. All her former conduct lay open before her, and she could have fallen into the earth—so much more does one female feel from the infliction of a look of just retribution thrown on her by another, than from the same punishment awarded by a man. But Marion was kind-hearted, and relieved her by asking, in her old, homely way—

"Hoo hae ye been this mony a day, Mrs Douglas, and my auld favourite, Peggy? How happy I am to see ye, now that we a' hae got quit o' the pirns o' the Gorbals!"

"We must not despise the *pirns*, mother," said Mr Gemmel; "for we are more indebted to their *birr* in bringing us here than to that o' the carriage wheels."

Saying this, he seized the opportunity to laugh. The simple charm cured all. Shame fled, and joy returned. In half-an-hour all were as free as they ever were. The party set out to examine the fine property of Kilquhandy; and, as Mrs Douglas described all the beauties of the lost and regained paradise, she wept for very joy. When they returned, the women set about the preparations for the marriage—a task that delighted them greatly. The couple were proclaimed next Sunday, and married the day after; and the Gemmels of Kilquhandy were as respected a family as any of the old stocks that had flourished since the days of the black Douglas.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

"It's in vain to struggle langer wi' the stream, Elleanor—I canna do it. My strength is worn out, and my spirit exhausted, in the weary strife. The current o' adversity is owre strong for me, Elleanor; sae I maun just yield to it, and allow it to overwhelm me."

"Oh, dinna say that, James—dinna say that," replied the young and beautiful wife of the unfortunate man who gave utterance to this desponding language. "Dinna say that, my James," she said, throwing her arms around his neck, and gazing in his face with a look at once of sorrow and affection. "There's better days in store for us; and haena we, in the meantime, the love o' each other's hearts to compensate for the want o' world's gear?"

James Williamson did not repel the endearments of his wife, nor reject the consolation which she would offer; for, moody and stern as his misfortunes had rendered him, to her he was still the same kind and gentle being he had ever been; Elleanor he still loved, as he had ever done, with the most devoted affection; and it was, in truth, the reflection that he had involved her in his miseries and sufferings that gave to his feelings at this moment the bitterness and poignancy which rendered them so intolerable.

James Williamson and Elleanor Dennistoun had been married but a few months; yet, in that short time, irretrievable ruin had overtaken them in so far as regarded their worldly circumstances. An unfortunate speculation in grain, into which Williamson, who was a small farmer in Berwickshire, had rashly entered, involved him in difficulties, from which he felt it to be all but impossible he should ever be able to extricate himself. Bankruptcy, with all its appalling consequences, ejection from his farm, and a total bereavement of all he had in the world, stared him in the face, and drove him to despair.

On the occasion to which the opening of our story refers, Williamson had just received a letter from an importunate creditor, threatening that a caption, which he had against him for £150, would certainly be put in force within three days, if the amount, with interest and expenses, were not then paid; and thus was added to his other miseries the dread of a jail—to poor Williamson one of the most disgraceful and appalling visitations which it was in the power of misfortune to inflict.

It was, then, on returning home after receiving this letter, that Williamson, who had hoped, notwithstanding the desperate state of his affairs, that, if time were given him, he might possibly have weathered the storm, gave utterance to the language of despair in which we have represented him indulging. He had, a few days before, solicited time from the creditor who was now threatening him with extreme measures, and the refusal of this indulgence had deprived him of all heart and all hope.

Williamson, as we have said, did not reject the consolation which his gentle and affectionate wife offered him in his affliction. He returned her caresses with the same tenderness with which they were bestowed, and acknowledged her words of comfort with a look of kind regard; but it was accompanied by a faint smile of incredulity, which

their vagueness, when opposed to the stern and positive evils towards which they were directed, could not but excite.

"We have, indeed, the love o' each other's hearts, my Elleanor, to console us," replied Williamson, "and I value yours as the greatest treasure on earth; but what will it avail us in our contest with the world? It canna shield us frae the storm o' adversity, nor avert the evils that are threatenin us."

"No, James," said Elleanor—"it can do neither; but it can help us to endure them; and I hope things are no sae bad but that they may yet mend wi' us."

Her husband shook his head; but it was some time before he made any reply. At length—

"Elleanor," he said, "I hae hitherto concealed frae ye the extent and urgency o' the evils which threaten us—and I hae dune this oot o' tenderness to you; but I think it now necessary that you should know all, and know the worst, that, in case any part of my future conduct may stand in need o' an apology, ye may hae ane to refer to."

"What do ye mean, James? what do ye mean, my ain dear James?" exclaimed Elleanor, alarmed at the ambiguity of her husband's language, which seemed to point at some desperate proceeding. "What do ye mean?" she said, again embracing him, and now bursting into an agony of tears. "Surely misfortune's no gaun to gar ye forget yersel, or to drive ye to do onything that's unworthy o' ye?"

"Oh, no, no, my Elleanor, have no fear of that," replied the husband, smiling, but embracing her tenderly; then, waving any further discussion on the subject, he proceeded to inform her precisely of the situation in which he stood, and concluded by throwing down the letter which threatened him with instant and summary proceedings, saying, as he did so—

"And ye see, Elleanor, they'll not only leave us houseless and landless; but they'll hae me dragged to a prison like a thief or a murderer. That I canna stand. A' but *that* I think I might bear. But that I canna, I *winna* encounter."

Elleanor took up and read the letter which her husband threw down; and when she had done so—

"Aweel, James, even in a jail we can be happy in each other. They'll alloo me to gae wi' ye, I fancy. But dinna ye think yer uncle would lend ye as much as pay this debt, as it seems the maist pressin?"

"I doot it, I doot it very much," replied Williamson. "for there's little o' the milk o' human kindness in him. But I may try him. It's our last and only chance. If that fails"—Here the speaker stopped short, and left the sentence unfinished.

The application to Williamson's uncle alluded to, was made on the following day; but it was made in vain. He would give no assistance. On returning home from his fruitless mission to his relatives, Williamson threw down his bonnet, and, addressing his wife—

"Well, Elleanor," he said, "the die is cast. The last throw is thrown, and it has turned up a blank. It is just as I expected: my uncle winna advance me a penny, and to-morrow I maun gang to jail—that is," he said, after a pause, "if I war fule aneuch to wait till they took me. I'll gie up a' to the last penny, but no' my liberty. *That* they shanna tak frae me, if I can help it."

Williamson now proceeded to explain to his wife that it

was his intention to go out of the way for some time; and in the propriety of this measure he succeeded in obtaining her acquiescence. The arrangements consequent on this contemplated proceeding were—that Elleanor should go to reside with an aunt of hers, with whom she was a great favourite, and with whom, her father and mother being both dead, she had lived previous to and at the time of her marriage; and that a certain confidential friend of Williamson's should look after his interests in the proceedings of his creditors, and, in the meantime, take charge of his effects. All this being adjusted, Williamson, early on the third morning after the day on which our story opens, arose. It was the last he was to see from the windows of his pleasant little dwelling at Woodlee; for his landlord was his largest creditor, and would, as a matter of course, eject him, and seize upon his stock and farming implements. This landlord, Williamson had never seen. He was too great a man to admit of his holding any direct personal correspondence with his tenants, especially with one so humble as James Williamson. He was a lord—Lord Allenton.

It was with his factor, then, that Williamson had had always to deal; and, from his previous experience of this gentleman's official practice, he felt that he had but little lenity to expect in that quarter. Good reason, then, had the unfortunate man to mutter to himself, as he did, on looking abroad on the beautiful and peaceful scene which his window overlooked, on the morning to which we allude, that it was the last time he should behold it from the same situation. Having affectionately embraced his wife, and repeated for the thousandth time a promise to write to her often, and to return to her the moment his affairs permitted, Williamson bade her farewell, and set out to proceed to Glasgow, where it had been previously arranged he should reside until such an adjustment of his matters had taken place as should secure his personal safety. This, however, was an affair not so easily accomplished—or rather it was one which could not be accomplished. The factor of Lord Allenton, who found himself considerably short of the arrears due by Williamson, stood out, and would give no quarter. All the other creditors were satisfied; but he remained obstinate, and would listen to no proposals of compromise. In the meantime, Williamson, faithful to his promise to his wife, had written to her frequently, and always in the most affectionate terms; but his letters gradually became more desponding, as time passed away without bringing a final adjustment of his affairs, and kept him in hopeless and listless indolence, at a distance from all he held dear. From the language of despondency, poor Williamson at length employed that of despair, and exhibited, in the following letter, a consummation resulting from that feeling, for which his unfortunate wife was but little prepared.

“My dearest, dearest Elleanor,—The intelligence which this letter will convey to you, will distract you. I feel, I know it will; but I trust the hopeless state of my affairs will plead my apology. I have enlisted, Elleanor. I have taken up the musket. I saw nothing else for it. I could not return to you; or, if I did, and escaped a prison, which is not likely, I could not have supported you in the ease and comfort which you now enjoy, with your kind aunt, and from which I should reckon it a cruelty to withdraw you—a consequence that would result from my return. Believe me, my dearest Elleanor, that whatever changes may take place in my circumstances or condition, none shall ever occur in the feelings I entertain towards you. These will remain unaltered through all the vicissitudes of life, let these vicissitudes be what they may.”

Much in a similar strain with this followed, including many regretful references to their once happy abode at Woodlee, which the writer expressed a fear he might never again behold. Williamson then proceeded to detail to his wife various particulars relative to his new duties informed her

of the number of his regiment, and concluded by assuring her that he would regularly inform her of everything that occurred to him, of the smallest interest.

It would serve little purpose to describe the feelings of Elleanor on reading this, to her, most heart-rending letter. Her first idea was to fly to her husband, and to share with him all the dangers and privations to which his new life might expose him; but from this resolution she was, although not without great difficulty, dissuaded by her aunt. Nor would the efforts of that relative in this way have been successful, had they not been seconded by the earnest entreaties of her husband himself that she would at no time think of taking such a step. He had feared that she would insist on joining him; and, shocked at the idea of her being exposed to the hardships and humiliations of a soldier's wife, had cautioned her against entertaining for an instant the thought of becoming one otherwise than in name.

At this point of our story, an interval of three years occurs, during which no change had taken place in the fortunes of either Williamson or his wife. The former still continued in the army, and the latter still remained with her aunt. Although no change, however, had taken place in Williamson's fortunes in this time, many had taken place in the localities of his residence. He had been moved with his corps from one destination to another; and was, when we resume our tale, at the seat of war in the Netherlands.

Williamson had, by this time, seen some service. He had been in two or three engagements; and, although he had distinguished himself by his bravery, had hitherto escaped uninjured. But it was not in the field alone that he had made himself remarkable; he enjoyed an equal reputation for steadiness and orderly conduct in quarters. In the meantime, the hostile spirit of the nations of Europe was coming to a crisis; a mighty consummation was at hand. On the plains of Waterloo, the power, and greatness, and glory of Napoleon, were about to be overthrown and trodden in the dust.

It is well known that, for some time previous to that tremendous battle, a general feeling prevailed over all Europe, that a great and decisive struggle was approaching: that a day of deadly strife, such as the world had never seen, was about to dawn on the mighty hosts of armed men, who were hurriedly converging, from various and distant lands, towards that point which destiny had marked for the last and closing scene of Europe's long continued and sanguinary warfare.

One of the atoms, in this huge mass of humanity, on hostile purpose intent, was James Williamson. He was quartered with his regiment in Brussels, and with that regiment marched out to battle on the memorable morning of the fight of Quatre Bras. Two days afterwards, he was in the “ranks of death,” mustered on the field of Waterloo. Leaving him here, to share in the fatigues and dangers of that sanguinary day, we shall attach ourselves to a personage whom we hope to render no less worthy of our sympathy and interest.

On the morning of the day on which the battle of Waterloo was fought, a young woman, a stranger, who had just arrived in Brussels, was seen hurrying distractedly through the streets, inquiring of every one she met, if they could tell her where she would find the —th regiment. None could inform her, because none knew the language in which she addressed them. It was English. At length, however she ascertained that the regiment she sought had left Brussels two days before, and that it was at that moment on the field of Waterloo, where the mighty contest had already begun, as was ominously intimated by the distant roar of cannon, to which her informant called her attention at the moment he spoke. The young woman listened for an instant to the appalling sound of the artillery, whose thunders rolled onwards, in an unintermitting succession of dull and

heavy peals—and she grew pale as she listened; but it was not the paleness of a timid or a shrinking spirit. It was the effect of a deep, an agitating sympathy for those who were exposed to the perils of the day, associated with distracting fears for the safety of one, in particular, who was a sharer in those dangers.

Having, as we have said, listened for a moment to the roar of the cannon, the young woman hurriedly inquired for the road that led to the field of battle. It was pointed out to her. She immediately availed herself of the information, and hastened on towards Waterloo. But she had not gone far, ere she encountered sights that might well have appalled a stouter heart than hers. These were waggons filled with wounded soldiers, being conveyed from the field of battle to Brussels. On some of these Death had already set his seal; the fatal impress of which might be marked on their livid and ghastly countenances, or traced in the total prostration of their vital energies. Others, again, whose wounds were not mortal, yet dreadfully severe, exhibited that languid, sickly, fainting look, which betokens the extremity of bodily suffering. All, all was appalling to behold, and it did appal the lonely and unprotected young woman on whose sight it now fell, and who was hurrying on to the fearful source from whence all this misery proceeded; but it did not for a moment shake the resolution which urged her on the course she was pursuing, nor make her swerve from the purpose which prompted her daring adventure.

As she neared the field of strife, she heard—

“The cannon's roar,
Nearer, clearer, deadlier than before.”

Nor was this alone the only indication of her near approach to the scene of the mighty contest. Dismantled cannon, and broken arms of various kinds, intermingled with military caps, and fragments of military accoutrements, met her at every step, and told of partial combats between the remoter parties of the hostile armies. Here and there, too, a dead body intimated in language still more unequivocal the horrid work that was going forward. Undismayed by these appalling sounds, our heroine held on her way, till at length the great scene of strife itself—the field of Waterloo, covered with its tens of thousands of fighting men engaged in mortal combat—burst, in all its wild and fearful magnificence, on her view, and till she found herself getting involved in the movements of the troops. On discovering this last circumstance, she left the road, and struck through some fields on the left, for the purpose of gaining a solitary knoll at some distance, that seemed at once to be out of the way of the movements of the hostile armies, and to promise a complete view of the field of battle. Having gained this eminence, she sat down, and gazed, with awe-stricken eye and beating heart, on the tremendous scene before her. But how vain, how idle, was at least one of the objects for which she now so intently scanned the field of battle! It was to see if she could, by any sign or circumstance, discover the position of the —th regiment. She had earnestly and eagerly asked every party, nay, every individual she had met as she came along, if they could tell her where the —th regiment was. None could inform her, and most laughed at the absurdity of the inquiry. Idle, therefore, and vain in the last degree, it will be seen, was now her attempt to distinguish, amongst so many thousands, and these, too, constantly changing their positions, that particular corps in which she seemed so interested, and which, moreover, she had no outward mark whatever by which to distinguish it, even were it otherwise possible. While thus situated, and thus hopelessly employed, the young woman was suddenly startled, by hearing the moaning of a person in distress, at no great distance from where she sat. She instantly arose, looked around her, and discovered a wounded soldier lying on the ground, half concealed by some brushwood—which shelter he had evidently sought before he fell. On

hearing these sounds, and seeing the prostrate warrior, all the woman rose within her, and she hurried to the assistance of the sufferer. He proved to be a British officer. He was severely wounded, and in the last stage of exhaustion. On seeing the condition of the apparently dying soldier, our heroine, instinctively impressed with a confidence in the invigorating and refreshing effects of a little cold water in such a case as that before her, instantly snatched up the wounded man's cap, and, hurrying to a brook that was hard by, filled it with the simple element. This, on returning to the sufferer, she sprinkled gently on his pallid countenance, and with it bathed his burning forehead. The beneficial effects of the cooling application were made immediately apparent. The wounded man opened his eyes, and, after gazing for a moment, with a look of bewilderment, on the fair countenance that was wistfully and sympathizingly hanging over him, muttered the word “water.”

Again his ministering angel, who had been thus so strangely sent to his relief, hastened to the brook, and returned with another supply of that element which was now so highly prized. Raising him gently up, she held the water to his parched lips. The wounded man drank greedily, and was instantly restored to consciousness, and to a state of comparative vigour. He now sat up, and was able to express the gratitude he felt to the fair stranger, whom heaven seemed to have sent thus opportunely to his aid. But that fair stranger's benevolent ministrations did not terminate with those acts of kindness already mentioned. She did more. She took a shawl from her shoulders, tore it into strips, and with these bound up the soldier's bleeding wounds. After all this had been done, and the latter had so far recovered as to be able to express all he felt—

“Who, in heaven's name,” he said, addressing his fair friend, “who, in heaven's name, are you? Where are you from? and what on earth brought you here?”

The young woman blushed, and smilingly replied—“I am from Scotland, sir.”

“From Scotland!” exclaimed the wounded officer. “My own dear native land! From Scotland are you, my guardian angel? Then, indeed, is this extraordinary circumstance complete. The gentle hand that has administered to my relief in my sad necessities—that has, under God, restored me to life, and saved me from perishing on the field—is that of a countrywoman.”

Having said this, he again asked her what had brought her into such a dangerous neighbourhood. The young woman replied, that her husband was in the —th regiment, and that she had come there to watch for him, that, in case he should be wounded, she might be at hand to aid him, and to attend on him.

The wounded officer appreciated all the heroism, the tender and ardent affection, which this declaration indicated; but he could not refrain from smiling at the simplicity of character which it also discovered. A young woman venturing alone towards a battle-field, to be in readiness to administer relief to a wounded husband, whom she had not the slightest chance of meeting with—where, of many thousands, he was but one, and these spread over a field of many miles in extent—seemed to him, as it really was, the very extreme of uncalculating love. Of all this, however, the wounded officer took no notice. He rightly conceived that any remark on it would be ungracious, and he therefore made none; but he resolved, if he could by any means prevent it, that he would not permit her to expose herself any further in so hopeless a pursuit; and a circumstance at this instant occurred, which, singularly enough, brought that about which he, in his present circumstances, could only desire. Descrying a British waggon with wounded passing on the road (which was at the distance of about a quarter of a mile) towards Brussels, he requested his guardian angel, as he called our heroine, to do him one

other act of kindness, by going down to the road, and informing the escort by which the waggon was accompanied, of his condition, and desiring that a party should be sent to remove him. The escort of the waggon was composed of a party of the—th—of that regiment which the fair messenger had so anxiously and vainly inquired for. She approached it. She waved to the party to stop. They obeyed the signal; but looked with amazement at the person who made it. To see a young female in such a situation, and alone, was, to the soldiers, matter of inexpressible surprise. The young woman leaped a small ditch that separated the road from the field. She had scarcely done so, when one of the soldiers who formed the escort suddenly threw down his musket, and, rushing wildly towards her, enfolded her in his arms; exclaiming, in a transport of mingled joy and surprise—

“Heavens! Eleanor, Eleanor! my own dear Eleanor!”

“James!” exclaimed Elleonor, (the secret is now out, good reader—it was indeed Elleonor, and no other,) in a voice faint with emotion; and, without adding another word, she flung herself, in an ecstasy of speechless happiness, on her husband’s neck.

“What on earth brought you here, Eleanor? and, above all, what on earth brought you here at such a time as this?” said her husband, after the first transports of their meeting had subsided, and looking her affectionately in the face while he spoke.

Eleanor blushed and looked down. There were too many witnesses present, too many eyes upon her, to allow her to explain herself; but she said shortly, and in a tone so low as not to be heard by any one but him for whom the information was intended—“It was to take care of you, James, in case anything should have happened you.” James acknowledged the devoted affection of his wife by a smile and gentle pressure of her hand.

Williamson would now have pressed his wife for a history of her journey, and proceedings connected with it, but was at the moment prevented, by her stating the mission on which she came from the wounded officer, and her urging that immediate assistance should be sent him. The request was instantly complied with. A party, of which her husband was one, proceeded, accompanied by Eleanor, to where he officer lay. None of the soldiers knew him personally; but Williamson thought he had seen the countenance somewhere before, but when, where, or in what circumstances, he could not at all recollect. On this subject, however, he made no remark. The wounded officer, on being told by Eleanor that she had found her husband, expressed the utmost satisfaction with the very singular circumstance; and, on the latter’s being pointed out to him, took him kindly by the hand, and informed him, and all the others present, how much he was indebted to his wife for her most opportune and friendly aid.

“I shall always consider,” he said, “the aid which she afforded me as having been the means of saving my life; and it shall be my first care, on arriving at Brussels, to see that the important service is as fully acknowledged as it is already appreciated.”

Nothing more of any interest at this moment passed. The wounded officer, who was a young and handsome man, with the air and manner of a person of high birth and breeding, was removed to the waggon; in which proceeding Williamson was especially anxious and careful to subject him to as little suffering as possible; and, soon after, the whole party resumed their march, and in a few hours afterwards reached Brussels in safety. On their arrival there, the young officer, who had yet only announced himself as a captain in the—d regiment of infantry, without adding his name, was conveyed, by his own desire, to a hotel, where, on parting with Williamson, he desired him to call on him on the following forenoon; having ascertained previously that

the party to which the former belonged had duties assigned them which would prevent their returning to the field; and that, therefore, this would be fully in Williamson’s power. He also requested that the wife of the latter should accompany him on the occasion of his visit. With these requests Williamson promised compliance in his own name, and in that of his wife, who had not, of course, accompanied the party that conveyed the wounded man into the bedroom which he was to occupy, but waited her husband’s return on the street.

In the meantime, intelligence of the victory of Waterloo had reached the city, and a scene of wild excitement and confusion followed that it is more easy to conceive than describe. Every street and alley, every tavern, every house of entertainment, of lesser as well as larger note, filled, during the night, with stragglers from the army, and private houses with the wounded. So great, indeed, was the confusion and turmoil on the following day—these having rather increased than diminished—that both Williamson and Eleanor began to think of abandoning all idea of fulfilling their promise to wait on the wounded officer of the—d; and to this they were induced by recollecting that he had omitted to give them his name, and they to ask it, and by learning that the house in which he had taken up his quarters was filled with persons of a similar rank, and in a similar condition. Indeed, Eleanor had all along been against troubling him further; saying, that, in doing what she did for him, she had merely discharged a duty, and that she neither expected nor desired any reward but what her own feelings afforded her. Her husband, however, ultimately came to the resolution of making the promised visit, which, on reflection, it appeared to him it would be ungracious to withhold, and finally prevailed on his wife to accompany him. On arriving at the hotel, they found, as they expected, from the want of the name of the officer whom they sought, great difficulty in finding him, owing to the great number of other officers who were in the house, and more especially from the rather odd circumstance of there being no less than other three wounded captains of the same regiment in the hotel at the very moment. By dint of frequent inquiry, however, and the exercise of some perseverance in the pursuit they at last found the person they wanted. He was stretched upon a couch or sofa, and was in such spirits as shewed that his wounds, though they might be, and certainly were, of a very serious character, were yet by no means mortal, nor even dangerous. Having expressed the utmost delight at seeing his visiter—

“Now, my guardian angel,” he said, smiling, and addressing Eleanor, “what can I do for you that will sufficiently express the gratitude I feel for the assistance you rendered me yesterday?”

Eleanor blushing replied, that she wanted no reward—that such was not her motive for what she did—and that she was perfectly satisfied with the reflection that she had aided a fellow-creature in the hour of his need.

“Yes, yes,” said the captain, smiling; “all very well, my kind, good lady; but, though that may satisfy you, it will not satisfy me. By the way,” he abruptly added, “I believe I have never yet told you who I am. I forgot to give you my address. My name is Allenton, I”——

“Allenton, sir!” here hurriedly interrupted Williamson. “Excuse me, sir. Are you the Hon. Captain James Allenton, son of Lord Allenton?”

“The same, my good fellow,” replied Captain Allenton, with a smile and a look of some surprise. “Do you know me, or any of my friends in Berwickshire, in Scotland?”

“That I do, sir; I know your father well, and I knew you too when a boy—that is to say, I know your father as an humble tenant may know a great landlord, and you as his son.”

“Why, this is odd,” said Captain Allenton; “very odd.

You were a tenant of my father's, then. Pray, where did you live?"

"At Woodlee, sir," replied Williamson.

"Ah, I recollect the place well. A beautiful spot."

"It is, sir," said Williamson, with a sigh, which was responded to by his wife. "Would I were there again! Many a happy day I have spent in it."

"And why did you leave it, my good fellow?" inquired Captain Allenton, in a friendly tone.

Williamson answered the question by briefly recapitulating certain of those particulars of his history which are already before the reader.

When he had done, Captain Allenton, after thinking for some little time, asked him, directing the question by a look at the same time to his wife, whether he would like to be again set down at Woodlee.

"Oh, sir, nothing on earth we would like so well as that," exclaimed Eleanor; "but that's out o' the question now."

"Perhaps not," said Captain Allenton, musingly. Then added, after a pause—"I think I could manage that matter for you, if you really wish it; and I'll do it. Leave the affair in my hands."

Need we pursue our story beyond this point? We feel that we need not. A consummation, the reader will see, is at hand, and the sooner we now arrive at it the better.

Captain Allenton procured Williamson's discharge—this was his first step—and nearly at the same time presented him with a remission of the debt due to his father—paid his and his wife's passage to Scotland—got them reinstated at Woodlee—stocked their farm—advanced money to Williamson to discharge all his old debts—and, in short, set him once more fairly agoing in the world. Williamson prospered. He entered into no more speculations, but stuck steadily to the business of his farm, and was contented with its slow but comparatively certain return. Captain Allenton in time became Lord Allenton; and when he did so, and settled down a married man and sedate country gentleman at Merlin Castle, he was a frequent caller at Woodlee, and on such occasions took much pleasure in reminding Eleanor of their first acquaintance on the field of Waterloo.

RINGAN OLIVER.

THERE is, perhaps, no traditionary history so popular in Jed Forest as that of Ringan Oliver of Smailcleughfoot. Ringan was one of the champions of the Covenant—one of those stern, devoted worthies to whom Scotland owes so much of its civil and religious liberty. He was a man of uncommon strength and courage, excelling in every athletic exercise, but especially in that of the broadsword, in which he might be said to be almost matchless. It is reported of him, that he measured nearly a yard across the shoulders, being otherwise well built in proportion; and also that, when an old man, he could have taken up in the wield of his arm a ten half-fu' boll of barley, and thrown it on a horse's back with the utmost ease. Of his early life there are comparatively few anecdotes preserved; but it would appear that he was all along a steady and active supporter of his party; for it is well known that he fought in many, if not in all of the battles wherein his misused country asserted its disposition never to submit to misrule and tyranny. At the skirmish of Drumclog he fought side by side with Hackston of Rathillet, and Hall of Haughead, and won their especial applause by his bravery; and at Bothwell Bridge he was one of the three hundred who, under Hackston and Hall, so well contested the passage, and for a while withstood the repeated efforts of Monmouth's army. In this service, besides being severely wounded, he had his hip joint dislocated, but was saved from falling

into the hands of the enemy by the exertions of his friends. In the long and relentless persecution to which the Covenanters were subjected by this unfortunate battle, Ringan, like many others, was a proscribed fugitive. While under hiding, he was much in the company of his friend Hall—a man to whose character his own, in many points, closely approximated, and with whose family, at a subsequent period, he was connected by marriage. The fate of Hall is well known. He lost his life at Queensferry, in defending himself when about to be taken by the governor of Blackness. He had parted from Ringan only a short while before this happened; and bitterly, bitterly did the latter ever afterwards regret his being from the side of a friend to whom he was so much attached, in his hour of need. But in those days, when oppression and slaughter made such cruel mastery of an afflicted country, the regrets of friendship were particularly unavailing.

The dark period of crime and bloodshed at length ended in the Revolution; and Ringan, whose principles forbade him to remain idle while the good work was unfinished, again girt on his sword and gave his services to the army that was sent to oppose the rebellion of Dundee. He was at the battle of Killiecrankie, where he greatly distinguished himself, killing, as it is said, all that came before him. In the disastrous defeat and dispersion of Mackay's army which followed, he and a small party of friends, by keeping together, made good their retreat, and reached Dunkeld next morning a little after daybreak. Here a circumstance occurred which sufficiently proves that Ringan lacked nothing of the true spirit of chivalry—a quality, by the way, for which the Covenanters were not much celebrated—their fighting not being for personal honour, but for the establishment of what they considered to be the true kingdom of Christ, and the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism. The party had halted at a friend's house in the town, for the purpose of taking some refreshment, and had just seated themselves at table, when their ears were regaled by a proclamation made on the street opposite their window. It was bawled forth, in tones of fire and brimstone, from the leathern lungs of an ancient, smoke-dried Highland drummer, and ran as follows:—

"Ochilow, an' a petter ochilow! This is to pe kiving notice to all it may pe concerning, that Rory Dhu Mhore, of ta clan Donochy, will pe keeping ta crown of ta causeway, in ta town of Tunkeld, for wan hour an muore; an' he is tesiring it civilly to pe known, that, if there pe any canting, poohooing, psalm-singing, Whig repellerion in ta town, let him pe so bould as to pe coming forth from his holes, an' looking ta said Rory Dhu in ta face; an' ta said Rory Dhu hereby kives promise to pe so flery condescending as to pe cutting ta same filthy Whig loon shorter py ta lugs, for ta honour of King Shames. Ochilow! Cot save King Shames!"

Weary, dispirited, and satiated with carnage as he was, this ridiculous challenge was so uniformly insulting in its tenor, that Ringan did not for a moment hesitate in resolving to answer it. His friends left no argument untried to dissuade him from his purpose; they represented to him what madness it was for men in their condition to notice every foolish bravado; also, what small chance he would have of anything like fair play, in a place so decidedly in favour of a barbarous enemy; and, these means failing, they made fast the door, in hopes to restrain him by personal force;—but all was in vain—his determination was fixed, not to be shaken.

"My friends," said he, rising, and grasping his sword, "let me out, I beseech you. I must and will fight with this Philistine. God do so to me and more also, if I do not either humble this proud boaster, or he shall humble me."

The words had not been well spoken, before the speaker

had made his way through the window, and in a few moments more had confronted the challenger, who was parading the street a few paces in rear of the old drummer. The challenger, it may be remarked, was a Highlandman among a thousand. To a gigantic stature and a Herculean make, he added the reputation of being one of the best swordsmen of his day, having slain more men in single fight than he was years old. He was, besides, a personage of the most ferocious air and aspect; and, as he now appeared in all his accoutrements, striding along and bearing himself so proudly, with his head thrown back, and his turned up nose scornfully snuffing the morning wind, the sight might well have appalled any Christian that had the least regard for the thing called self-preservation.

"Diaoul! fwat may she pe that will pe approaching, in such ways and manners, before a Highland shentlemans?" asked Rory Dhu Mhore, of the clan Donochy—already snorting with choler at sight of an antagonist.

"I am," said Ringan, calmly, "the soldier of King William, our temporal deliverer, and the servant, however unworthy, of King Christ, our Spiritual Redeemer; and here I stand to bid you make good your proud and profane boasting."

"Fhery goot, intee," returned Rory Dhu, writhing his grim features into a sneer of the most haughty contempt; "fhery goot, intee. You were after suppering at Killiecrankie, and now you are after a breakfast at Dunkeld. And you shall have it!" roared the speaker, drawing his sword, and brandishing it round his head. "Come on, you everlasting Lowland baist, and I will pe kiving your carrion to the crows of the airth."

Thus menaced, Ringan lost not a moment in drawing in his turn; and the combat commenced. For some time its issue appeared somewhat doubtful. With regard to both strength and skill, the parties were well matched; but the Highlandman, besides being the fresher of the two, had retained his target—the use of which gave him, in the long run, no small advantage. Ringan soon became aware of the oversight he had been guilty of in fighting upon an unequal footing; but it was now too late to remonstrate. In all his battles he had never, by individual prowess, been so hard bested. The longer he fought, the more was he sensible the day went against him. Both he and his enemy were wounded; but his own wounds were the most severe, and he experienced so much faintness that, ultimately, he was able only to protract the contest by yielding ground, and warding off the fast-coming blows. His friends saw his condition, and their hopes grew faint; but when at length they saw his antagonist bear so hard upon him as to bring him to his knee, they gave up his fate as decided. But in this they were happily mistaken; for, while every eye was strained to see him receive the finishing blow, the fortune of the war, by one of those circumstances which so frequently baffle foresight, was instantaneously reversed. In his eagerness to finish the work, the Highlandman had for a moment forgot to preserve his defensive; and the Borderer, who had been watching for this as his last chance, summoned all his lagging vigour, and directed a thrust at a part of his opponent's body left uncovered by the target; which thrust proved effectual, the steel piercing him through the entrails. On receiving the fatal wound, and so unexpectedly, Rory Dhu Mhore, of the clan Donochy, uttered a loud abrupt roar, like that of a stricken ox, sprang several feet upwards into the air, and then tumbled down upon the causeway, a dying man. A yell of mingled grief and rage, for the fall of their champion, burst from such of the spectators as were his friends; and, as it was accompanied by a general rush towards the immediate scene of contest, it is likely that the victor would have been butchered on the spot, had not his fellows been on the alert, and ready at the instant to surround him and bear him back to their quarters—a service which they accomplished

with some difficulty, and no small danger. To have prolonged their stay in Dunkeld, under the existing circumstances, would have been madness. The party, therefore, after Ringan's wounds had been hastily dressed, and his strength recruited by some slight refreshment, left the house by a back door, gained the Tay unobserved, and, getting across in a chance boat, took the road to Perth without molestation. It is more than probable, however, that the fugitives would not have been allowed to escape so easily, had not the intelligence just been received in Dunkeld of the fall of Lord Dundee—a circumstance more adverse to the hopes of the Jacobites than if his victory had been a defeat.

The wounds which Ringan had received in the duel did not prevent him from immediately joining the Cameronian regiment, under the gallant Cleland, nor from returning with it to Dunkeld, within the brief period of three weeks, to act a conspicuous part in the defence of that place against the forces of Colonel Cannan, Dundee's successor. But the memory of this action, in which a handful of brave men withstood, and eventually repulsed, an army above five times their own number, occupies a brilliant page in the page of history.

After the liberties of his country had been fully secured, Ringan returned home, to spend the remainder of his life in the bosom of his family, and in the undisturbed exercise of the duties of his religion. He resided at Smailcleuchfoot—a small farm which he held of Lord Douglas, distant three miles from Jedburgh, and half a mile from Ferniehirst, then the seat of the Marquis of Lothian. In his retirement or the "sylvan Jed," the old Covenanter was not more famed for his feats as a warrior than he was respected as a most intelligent man, whose integrity was unimpeachable. His character did not escape the notice of his neighbour the Marquis, who not only held him in high estimation, but frequently sought his counsel in affairs of the greatest moment. This friendship, however, was ultimately destined to prove the source of the brave old man's ruin. The Marquis, on being called to London by some pressing business, sent for Ringan before his departure, and, shewing him a room in Ferniehirst Castle wherein lay his most valuable papers, gave him the key thereof, and told him that he left it to his exclusive keeping during his absence. This honorary trust he accepted; but soon had reason to think that it was not without its perils. No sooner was the Marquis gone, than his son and heir, who, it would appear, was a very different man from his father, came to Ringan, and peremptorily demanded the key. It needs scarcely be said that this demand was met by a respectful but decided refusal. The young man, however, was unwilling to be said nay; he entreated, threatened, and even mistook his man so far as to proffer bribes; but all was to no purpose—Ringan was by no means to be wrought upon; he turned away from the unprincipled supplicant, with only a look of indignant contempt. Time wore away—the Marquis returned, and found that he had not misplaced his confidence. Everything in the strong room remained in the exact condition in which he had left it. In restoring the key to its owner, and receiving his acknowledgments, the old man made no mention of the applications wherewith he had been insulted in the discharge of his trust; for he considered that such a disclosure, however consistent it might be with duty, could not be made without wounding the feelings of a father.

Shortly after this event, the old nobleman died, and was succeeded in his titles and estates by his son. The new Marquis, who had never for a moment forgot the contumacy of Ringan in the matter of the key, now determined upon the gratification of his revenge; and the contiguity of the Covenanter's farm to the baronial residence, rendered this task comparatively easy of accomplishment. Incited by their lord, the vassals of Ferniehirst commenced a regular

series of insults and injuries, not only to the old man in person, but to all that belonged to him. For a long time Ringan bore this bad treatment patiently, resenting it neither by word nor deed. He knew that it was in vain for him to attempt contending with so powerful an adversary, and thought to disarm his malice by non-resistance. But in this he was mistaken; his forbearance produced only fresh and aggravated persecution. At last it fell out, on a harvest day, that the Marquis, having gathered together a company of his retainers, with horses and hounds, crossed the Jed, and chose for a hunting ground Ringan's field of barley; the grain being dead ripe, and ready for the sickle. This outrage was not to be borne. Ringan went to the huntsmen, and civilly, but firmly, told them to desist from hunting in his field, as they were utterly destroying his crop.

"And pray, Father Greybeard," asked the person who acted as chief huntsman, "are you to prescribe limits to where my Lord Marquis is to sport, and where he is not? Let me give you a small piece of advice, my old hero—carry yourself home, and look to the preservation of your health, by keeping your feet warm and your pate rather cool."

To this talk the old man made reply, that he was unaccustomed to jesting; that in what he requested of them there was nothing unreasonable; and he concluded by saying that, if they persisted in the destruction of his corn, he would certainly shoot their dogs.

"Foh! go home and pray, you old canting scoundrel," cried the huntsman. "Shoot our dogs, indeed! I'll tell you what, if you persist much longer in insulting gentlemen, we will hunt you to your old haunts—the hills."

This provocation was far too gross for the spirit of the old man to brook. He retired into the house, and, returning with his gun, instantly put his threat in execution, by shooting two of the hounds. In having driven him to the commission of this act, the huntsmen had attained their purpose; they, therefore, now departed, uttering vows of deep vengeance. The Marquis rode directly to the sheriff of the county, and complained that he had been interrupted in his field-sports by an old Cameronian rascal, who had given him insulting language, and shot two of his best dogs. A summons was immediately issued for Ringan to appear and answer for his misdemeanour at the sheriff-court; but he refused to comply; "for," said he, "I have done no wrong; I am accused neither by my God nor my conscience. What I did was done in defence of my lawful property, and I am resolved to abide by the issue, whether it be for veal or wo."

The offender proving thus contumacious, the next thing to be done was to prepare a warrant for his apprehension, and for bringing him to justice by force. But in this course an unforeseen difficulty presented itself—no sheriff's officer could be found that would undertake to put the warrant in execution, it being well known that the old man would never suffer personal restraint without making a stout resistance. In this dilemma the sheriff could think of no plan of proceeding against the accused party so feasible as that of employing against him his accuser. He accordingly lodged the warrant in the hands of the Marquis, telling him to secure the old rebel at all events. "If one man," said the sheriff, "be insufficient for the purpose, take two; if two cannot do the business, take three, take ten, take fifty, take a hundred if you will; but secure him, alive or dead." Thus authorized and encouraged, the Marquis hastily collected and armed a large party of his friends and vassals, and set about the instant execution of his enterprise. Ringan, meanwhile, had seen the storm gathering around him: and now that it was about to burst on his defenceless grey head, he felt no dismay. His friends would have advised him to seek safety in flight; but this he refused, saying—"I fled not from danger when I was young and

desirous of living, and shall I flee now, when I am old and ready for the grave? He charged his advisers that they were upon no account to take any part in his quarrel, as their doing so could serve little purpose, and would infallibly be the means of drawing down vengeance upon themselves. Accordingly, when the Marquis and his little army were seen approaching Smaileughfoot, Ringan's friends and family—none of the latter being able to lend him any assistance—retired from the house, and stationed themselves on the top of a high scaur immediately opposite, where they might witness the issue of the contest. The old man was not, however, left altogether alone; he had an auxiliary in the person of a devoted maid-servant, whom no entreaties could induce to desert her loved and revered master in the time of need. With her help he secured the door and windows, putting the house into as good a state of defence as circumstances would admit of. He next collected together all the firearms in his possession—these consisting of two or three old rusty muskets, and as many horse pistols—and instructed the maid in the process of loading them. These preparations had scarcely been made before his assailants were close at hand. They halted at a short distance in front of the house; and, on his presenting himself at a window, Sir John Rutherford—a friend of the Marquis, acting as leader and spokesman of the party—summoned him to surrender himself their prisoner, otherwise, by virtue of the sheriff's warrant, they would proceed to take him by force of arms.

"Sirs," said Ringan, "you shall have my answer in few words. I will surrender my liberty to no one so long as I can defend it, or at least till you can make it appear that I have been guilty of a breach of the laws of my country. But this you cannot do, for I have done no wrong to any one, and therefore protest against all your proceedings as oppressive and cruel."

"Hillo, hillo!—none of your preaching, old fellow," cried Sir John. "You are going to favour us with a new act and testimony. In a word, do you surrender yourself our prisoner, or do you not?"

"I do not," was the reply, given in a firm tone. "I am ready, God supporting me, to defend myself to the last extremity."

"Forward, then, my friends!" cried Sir John. "Let us burst open the door, and drag the old canting thief out by the ears."

In obedience to this command, the besiegers had advanced a few steps, when the besieged presented his musket, and told them to approach the door at their peril.

"The old rebel resists the course of justice—shoot him, friends!" cried Sir John Rutherford; and he had not the words well uttered when half-a-score of carabines flashed and their contents rattled through the window at which the old man was stationed.

"Bad ball practice for so many," coolly remarked the veteran, as, levelling his musket, he fired in his turn, and with such narrow effect that the bullet carried away one of the curls of Sir John Rutherford's wig.

Actual hostilities having thus commenced, both the attack and the defence were, from this time forward, carried on with unabating vigour. Shower after shower of bullets rattled and rang through the windows: one detachment of the besiegers attempting to burst open the door, and another to set fire to the roof; but the efforts of neither were attended with success—the door being of trusty oak, and the thatch of the roof too damp to burn. The besieged, on their part, were no less active than their assailants; while, to their strength, they were certainly both more skilful and determined. The maid supplied her master with loaded guns; and he kept up so brisk and well-directed a fire, that his enemies were repulsed in every attempt they made to effect an ingress by the windows, or those parts of the

house that were of themselves the least defensible. How long this unequal warfare might have lasted, it is hard to say, had not the course of events been precipitated by the fate of Ringan's faithful assistant. The old man had cautioned the maid against exposing herself within the range of the enemy's guns, telling her to keep always close behind him; but, in her zeal to render him good service, this caution was neglected—a bullet pierced her heart—she uttered but one sigh, and fell dead at his feet. All the veteran warrior's self-possession now forsook him: he instantly adopted the desperate resolution of opposing himself to the dastardly murderers in an open field; of being fully avenged, or—he did not care which—of perishing in the attempt. Grasping his broadsword in one hand, and a heavy axe in the other, he undid the door, and was in the act of springing forth, when—his foot having got entangled in a rope which had been used in fastening a bolt—he fell, and, ere he could recover himself, a ruffianly wretch of the name of Allan, a tinker, struck him on the head with a forehammer—the blow stunning him and breaking his jawbone. To remove his weapons and bind his hands was now the work of a moment; and it was attended with neither difficulty nor danger, as he was past making the least resistance. When his senses began to recover, his eyes opened first upon the Marquis, who, probably fearing he had carried his revenge too far, was bending over his victim, and wiping the blood from his face, in order to ascertain the extent of his injury. Instantly the old man darted on his oppressor a look of stern reproach, and, spurning him from him with his foot, told him that he could endure his hatred but not his kindness. The victors now led their prisoner away, and, as they crossed the Jed at Ferniehirst Mill, where there is a fine well, the old man, feeling faint from his loss of blood, begged for a little of the water.

"Poor Ringan!" cried the Marquis, half in pity, half in mockery—"give him a drink, by all means—perhaps it may help to cool his choler."

"Young man," said the captive, with dignity, "I am in your power, and your childish taunts cannot, therefore, insult me. You have finished your day's work, and I cannot help saying, that it has been a day's work more befitting a butcher than a Scottish nobleman. It is well that your father is in his grave; he has been spared from witnessing his son's degeneracy."

The rest of Ringan's story shall be briefly told. He was conveyed to Jedburgh, and from thence to Edinburgh, where he was imprisoned in the Tolbooth. After a confinement of eight years, he was at length released, but so much altered in appearance, that they who had known him well in his better days, could not now recognise him. He survived the date of his release only a few years, and died in a house in the Crosscauseway, Edinburgh, in 1736. He was buried among the martyrs in Greyfriars' churchyard.

It may not be displeasing to add, that Ringan left behind him a son named Robert, who was a child at the time of his father's capture, and who, after he had grown a man, met with Allan the tinker at the well near Ferniehirst Mill. Robert had long tracked the old fellow, with a desire to inflict on him that punishment which the station of his father's other enemies placed it beyond his power to inflict. The tinker was sitting at the side of the small well, with his wallet open before him, a female companion alongside of him, and in the act of enjoying that "feast of liberty" in which all strollers so much delight.

"Meantime, far hind, out owre the lee,
Fu' snug, in a glen whar nane could see,
Thir twa, in kindly sport and glee,
Cut frac a new cheese a whang."

And, every now and then, the old gaberlunzie was trilling, in an old, broken, but still joyous voice, some of the old wits that, in his younger days, were composed on the great

religious contest in which he had taken a part. Again he applied to his wallet; and he did not hesitate, old as he was, to have occasional recourse to the lips of her who sat beside him.

"The preeing was guid, it pleased them baith;
To loe her for aye he gave his aith;
Quo scho, 'To leave thee I will be laith,
My winsome gaberlunzie man.'"

The scene roused the blood of Robert, who thought of the treacherous and cruel part the old sinner before him had played on that melancholy occasion, when his father's misfortunes were crowned with the last and greatest of his evils. Stepping forward, he accosted the loving couple, and deliberately took his seat by the side of the well, from which his father had, on that memorable day, been denied a drink of its pure water.

"Ha! callant!" cried Allan, "I hae seen the time when a drap o' that water was prayed for by an auld, cantie Cameronian, as if it had belanged to that spring o' life they thought nane had ony richt to drink frae but themselves. But the deil a drap o't he got, the auld prayin rynk; and his wizzened craig was left to wheeze forth his prayers, or curses on the heads o' them wha fought for the guid cause o' the kirk and 'the man.'"

"What was the name o' the prayin rynk, as ye ca' him?" said Robert.

"Wha hasna heard o' Ringan Oliver, the Cameronian?" replied Allan. "Faith, an' he was nae feckless smaik that, either in bane, limb, or lire. How he did drive his lang iron kevel into the wames o' the troopers, and murgeoned his Cameronian aiths as he saw their smolt spirits scour awa to heaven like fire flaughts! But it was braw to see the auld scoundrel worry wi' drouth on the day when he couldna get a drink frae that wall to cool his burnin craig."

"Stand up, my freen," said Robert, rising in great wrath, and, taking the old beggar's stick, put it into his hands. "Stand up. A man that's no owre auld to love and lee, is no owre auld to fecht in his ain defence."

The sturdy carle sought his feet, and, clutching his burly knotted piece of oak, asked the plea of battle.

"I am Ringan Oliver's son," cried Robert, while his eyes flashed a fire that told his deadly revenge.

"And a stalwart warlock ye are," replied the tinker; "but, auld as I am, I'll mense my staff against yours yet, for the memory o' that auld Cameronian wolf."

And he did not wait for the onset of his younger foe, but dealt a heavy blow on the head of Robert, who was, in the meantime, laid hold of by the gipsy quean behind. His youth and vigour, however, were too much for his opponents. The first sturdy blow brought the beggar to his knees; and, while he was rising, Robert put the woman *hors de combat*, and then returned to wreak his vengeance on his principal enemy. This he did with so much address and stern determination, that he left him lying on the ground all but dead.

Thus was one of the enemies of his father punished; and often did Robert try to get some satisfaction for the old man's wrongs from those who had a greater share in his misfortunes; but in this he never succeeded. They lay beyond his reach; and the chief workman, to whom so much responsibility attached itself, was allowed to go free. Such, alas, is the way of the world! It only remains to be said, that the old champion's broadsword—a true Andrew Ferrara—is still preserved. It is at present in the possession of his collateral descendant, Mr James Veitch of Inchbonny, by Jedburgh, the self-taught natural philosopher.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DESTITUTE.

It was one of the coldest nights, for the season, I had been out in; the wind blew from the north-west—not strong, but with a keenness that pierced me to the bone, and made me turn my head aside to shelter my face from it. I was well protected against the utmost inclemency of the season, by all that the weaver and tailor could provide for man's comfort—my mind had been full of enjoyment for the last few hours—I was hurrying to a comfortable home—all was calculated to make me happy; yet, shrinking from the cold, a shade of melancholy came over me, as I practically felt the misery of those who, ill-provided for the encounter, were suffering from the bitter blast. In this frame of mind I had proceeded through several streets of the city, when a faint sob fell upon my ear. I started and looked around. The hour was late—scarcely a person was upon the streets, the watchmen alone were pacing their weary rounds, shivering under their extra clothing. I could see no one from whom the sound might have proceeded. Thinking I was deceived, I was on the point of passing on, when the same sound again, but more faintly, claimed my attention. I turned to the spot from whence it came. That it proceeded from intensity of suffering, I had no doubt. Drawing more near, I could hear deep sighs, as if some one were weeping in secret; and, guided by the sounds, I at length discovered, in the dark shade of a stair-foot, a female figure, lying extended on the steps, cold and wretched, and thus giving these eloquent expressions of her misery. That it was one of the melancholy victims of vice and dissipation, I had no doubt; yet my heart smote me as I thought of leaving her, perhaps to die.

“Poor creature!” said I, “why do you lie weeping there? You will die by the cold and severity of the weather. Why do you not go home?”

“Alas, sir!” said she, with an air of modesty that shook my first opinion, “I have no home, I have no friend on earth. I am a destitute creature, whose sorrows are nearly past. Do not think ill of me. I am poor, but not wicked.” Her tears choked her utterance. My heart bled for her, but I was at a loss what to do, for I thought of the censorious world, which is so fond of putting the worst construction on actions it cannot appreciate. As I stood irresolute, the watchman came up, and, in an insulting manner, ordered us to be gone, or he would take us to the watchhouse. I was immediately relieved from my dilemma.

“Take this unfortunate girl with you,” said I, “or she must perish.”

“Very likely,” said he, with an incredulous grin. “You desire me to take her to the watchhouse—has she robbed you, or what has she done to merit my care?”

“I wish you to save her life,” replied I.

“I cannot take her unless you commit and go with her,” said he, sarcastically.

“Do you know her?” I inquired. He held his lantern to her face.

“No,” he replied—“I never saw her in my life before.”

Struck by the first sight I got of the object of my solicitude, I looked at her narrowly. She appeared to be about twenty years of age, and had the appearance of being pretty;

but her face was pale, wasted to a shadow, and shrunk by famine; her slender person was bent together by the intense cold; and she was so thinly clad, that I was astonished she had resisted the blast for a couple of hours. On hearing what had passed between the watchman and me, she sank upon her knees, and implored us to leave her to her fate rather than send her to the watchhouse. The stern guardian of the night seemed to think there was something uncommon in her manner, and was moved. I endeavoured to soothe her fears—told her that I was only actuated by humanity—had no other way of serving her for the night—and that it was too untimely an hour to find for her a lodging. She, at length, gave a reluctant consent. I took off my warm greatcoat, wrapped it round her fragile form, and, taking her arm, moved along through the silent streets. She sobbed bitterly as we proceeded, but said nothing. We entered the watchhouse; and, as she cast her eyes on its inmates, she clung to my arm, fearful I should leave her. The lieutenant on duty inquired what charge I had to make against the female. I briefly told him the circumstances of the case, and said I would with pleasure pay any expense that was incurred on her account. He rang for the female housekeeper. I resumed my coat, bade her good night, said I would call in the morning to see her, and hurried home.

The image of this unfortunate girl haunted me in my dreams the whole night. I was walking with her in sunny meadows and bowers, the happiest of men—anon, I beheld her plunged in want, while I, unable to relieve her, felt yet bound to her by a tie I could not break. Our sufferings seemed mutual. We were struggling in a desolate waste amidst endless wreaths of snow, on the point of sinking, when my sufferings awoke me, stiff with cold. I had, in my disturbed sleep, partially uncovered myself. It was still long until day. I resumed my position, and waited anxiously for dawn, while a thousand fancies floated through my mind. Morning came; I rose, and, having breakfasted, proceeded to the office, to inquire after the unfortunate stranger thus unaccountably placed under my charge, and learn the cause of her destitution. The housekeeper told me that she was very ill—unable to leave her bed; that she had been with her, less or more, during the whole night; and that she had fainted when placed in the warm bedroom, and had been with difficulty restored to animation; that her stomach refused nourishment for a considerable time; that her mind wandered as if she were in a fever; and that, at present, she was in a troubled sleep, muttering and weeping. Much concerned at this account, and resolved not to be humane by halves, I went to a medical friend, and, having related the whole circumstances to him as far as I knew them, he cheerfully accompanied me to the object of our compassion, whom we found in a high fever and unconscious of all around her. During the forenoon she was removed to the public hospital, where she remained in a precarious state for several weeks. I saw her every day once; and, as she became convalescent, contributed to her recovery by my attentions and assurances of every aid and protection I had it in my power to bestow. Sometimes she would weep and thank me, in a voice so soft and gentle that it came over my soul like music; while her smile of gratitude had a charm for me I had never before ex-

perienced. I felt more pleasure in the half hour I visited her in her recovery, than I thought it was possible for me to enjoy in this world of sorrow. My first embarrassment was how to dispose of her when she left the hospital, which she was now nearly able to do. I had not as yet heard her story, nor did I know who she was, further than that her name was Mary Monro; but I could perceive, from the delicacy of her manners and address, that she had been unaccustomed to move among the lower grades of life. A crowded hospital is no place for confidential conversation, and I had not as yet put any inquiries to her as to her former life, or the cause of her present misfortunes; but this I resolved to do when she was stronger, and a favourable opportunity presented itself. Having no female relative in Edinburgh to whom I could apply, I had recourse to my landlady, who, after some hesitation and numerous scruples, went and paid her a visit. Upon her return, I was pleased to find that she was as much, if not more interested about her than I was, and proposed, of her own accord, to bring her home, if I would remunerate her for any expense she might incur. I cheerfully agreed to the proposition; and, next forenoon, Mary was an inmate with me in the same house. During the same evening we were all seated at tea in my small parlour, as happy as gratitude and good actions could make us; and she, at my request, gave us her story.

“Alas, sir! misery and I have but newly become acquainted. Twelve months are scarcely past since I thought it could never be my portion to suffer a thousandth part of what I have endured; for I knew want and privation only by name, and have wept for the misery of others who were not nearly so destitute as I was on that dreadful night when your humanity rescued me from death. I really, then, did wish to die; for I was alone in the world—helpless; and humanity, I thought, had fled from the breasts of men. My bosom was the abode of despair. The religious principles instilled into me by my sainted mother, alone withheld me from self-destruction. My sinful impatience urged me to shorten my sufferings; but my better thoughts ever returned, in the words of my blessed parent—‘What are a few days of suffering here on earth, to be compared to an eternity of misery; or years of guilty pleasure, to endless wrath? The eye of God is on all his creatures, beaming sympathy, or flaring anger; and He will, in his good time, do that which is right.’ Thus was my parent my guide and counsellor in my extreme need, although she lies buried and forgot by all but me.

My father was born in Edinburgh, the son of a merchant, who intended him for one of the learned professions, and educated him accordingly; but his inclinations were all to a seafaring life. He left his home against the wish or knowledge of his parents, and went to sea, where, unaided, he rose rapidly to be captain of a vessel which traded between Liverpool and the different seaports of America. He continued to prosper, and, while he was yet a young man, he sailed his own ship. In one of his voyages home from America, the convoy of which the *Betsy*, his vessel, was one, was overtaken and dispersed by a storm off the coast of Ireland, in which several of them perished. The *Betsy* weathered the gale, with very little damage, and was again making for her destination, when my father perceived from the deck, as the morning dawned, the wreck of a vessel drifting at a considerable distance, and apparently without any person on board. Urged by humanity, he altered his course, bore down upon the wreck, lowered his boat and rowed on board; but what a sight met his eyes! Several of the crew were still on deck, but all beyond his aid, having died lashed to different parts of the wreck. She was completely water-logged; and my father, thinking there was no living person on board, was on the point of leaving her, when a faint sigh or moan fell on his ear—making a strange contrast with the silence of death

that reigned around—as if uttered by some one on board the wooden Golgotha. The sound startled him. Once more he examined the livid corpses around, and was satisfied it could not have proceeded from them. He thought he had been deceived by a morbid imagination, when again the same sound was distinctly heard, coming apparently from the cabin, the skylight of which had been broken in the storm. He looked down, but saw nothing save a watery waste, in which floated broken furniture, fragments of finery, and other memorials of the vanity of life. Conscience he was not deceived, yet astonished how a human being could be in life below, he made his way into the cabin, where he could perceive no one, until, after examining the upper berths, he found an old gentleman, apparently dead, but still warm, and, alongside of him, a young female, from whom the moans had proceeded, and, to all appearance, at the point of death. Both were removed to the deck as promptly as circumstances would admit. Life was found not yet extinct in the old man, and the lady appeared to revive. They were taken on board the *Betsy*, and, by careful nursing, restored to life.

They were father and daughter. I need not say their gratitude to my father was unbounded. The gentleman was a rich merchant of Philadelphia, who was on his way to Britain, to visit the home of his youth, and see once more, before he died, the friends whom death had spared. Between the daughter and her deliverer an attachment arose, to which her father was not averse; and they were wed. The object of your bounty was the only child of this marriage. My father, as his wife’s possessions lay principally there, settled in Philadelphia until the death of his father-in-law, which happened in the third year of their marriage, when my father became rich and independent; but his whole mind and affections being in Scotland, the land of his fathers, he sold off all his American possessions, and returned to his native country, where I was born, in the fifth year of their marriage. My mother, who was of a delicate constitution, dedicated her whole attention to my education, until I was deprived of her by death in my twelfth year. (Excuse these tears, for her image is now before me.) We had resided for the greater part of this time at a delightful and sequestered spot on the banks of the Esk, within view of the sea. Well do I remember these scenes; and even now I think I see my father sitting in our garden, with my dear departed mother by his side, while I would busy myself running from walk to walk, plucking the gayest flowers for them, or sitting at their feet, listening to their conversation, or amusing them with my prattle.

In this period of happiness, joy, and peace—alas! gone, never to return—I was often surprised, and could scarce restrain my tears at what I witnessed. My mother had no love for the sea, further than as it added to the beauty of a landscape in which it was the principal object. The delightful scene lay like a panorama before us, and stretched around in all its varying, but never-tiring beauties. To the east lay the fertile valleys and gently-swelling green hills of the Lothians, studded with villas. Before us lay the shining Frith of Forth, with its capacious mouth, and the romantic and populous shores of Fife, with its town-studded margin skirting the waves. To the west, mountain appeared to tower over mountain, as they died away in the distant Grampians and Pentland Hills, which begirt and bounded the view. To the left was the capital, like a jewel in rich setting, surrounded by inferior gems, all glittering in the soft and sober sun of autumn. As we sat, full of admiration and enjoyment, a vessel would pass down the Frith, glittering in the sunbeams—its canvass swelling to the western breeze, and gliding away like a thing of life; and then would my father gaze, like a lover upon his mistress—his whole soul in his eyes—and follow her, absorbed in deep musing, while

sighs would escape him, and the meek, blue eyes of my mother would fill with tears, as she gazed with solicitude in his face, until, overcome by her emotion, her head sank on his bosom. Then again would he start, as if awakened from a dream, clasp her in his arms, and soothe her to quietude ; ejaculating—

‘Agnes, my love, what is the matter? Why these tears? What can cause you uneasiness?—name it, and, if man can, I will remove it. Do you regret leaving America?—do you think the scenes around Philadelphia more lovely than these? Then I will return, rather than witness or cause you an hour’s regret.’

‘Oh, no, William,’ was her answer ; ‘no scene on earth is more dear to me than this—with you and my Mary, a desert would be a garden ; but I fear you sacrifice too much of your own enjoyment for my happiness. You regret—I can read in your looks, as you gaze upon that vessel—your not being on board of her. You love me, but you also love the sea, and—but excuse me, my love—I am a foolish woman.’

‘Is my Agnes jealous as she sees me look upon my first love at a distance?’ was his reply. ‘Is not she a noble creature, and worthy of the admiration of all who look upon her? Is she not like a stately bride, robed in white, moving in silence, to meet her beloved? But, much as I admire her, and though I am indebted to her alone for my present happiness, I shall never, for her, leave my Agnes.’

It was to such domestic scenes of happiness as these—terminated by the death of my indulgent mother—that I have ever looked back with a mingled sensation of pleasure and regret. Alas, sir ! she died ; and, for many months, my father was the prey of the bitterest anguish. I was never from his side, for he felt a consolation in mingling his tears with mine ; but the abode of former happiness soon became a painful residence. Where everything around recalled the memory of the departed saint, their beauties had withered away ; the individual who had prized and stamped value upon them, now mouldered in the silent tomb ; and, though the summer had returned in all its splendour, it only deepened my father’s gloom. He left the banks of the Esk, and took a furnished lodging in Queen Street, where his grief gradually began to subside into a gentle melancholy. Still comparatively a young man, in his thirty-sixth year, idleness became irksome to him ; and, now that he had lost the society of his beloved Agnes, having no relations alive that he knew of—for he was an only son, and his parents had died while he was at sea—he disposed of our house and garden on the Esk, and we set off for Liverpool, where he was both well-known and esteemed before his marriage. His object was to get as far as possible from the scenes of his former happiness. We at length arrived at Liverpool, and hired a villa upon the banks of the Mersey ; but we felt no enjoyment, for there the tedium became unbearable to my father, and he began to join in the society of the merchants, his former acquaintances, and, having capital to a great amount at his command, he soon entered into all the spirit of commercial enterprise. I now felt exceedingly lonely, for I had but little of his company ; but I complained not, for he was kind to me as ever, and the tedium of his absence produced a keener relish of his endeared society. Yet young, and with strong affections, I sighed for society congenial to my own age, and fell into a lowness of spirits which alarmed him for my health, whereupon numerous small parties of the sons and daughters of the merchants were formed to amuse me, and I soon entered into their amusements with all the fervour of youth.

It was towards the end of summer, when the weather was delightful, that one of the merchants, who had a pleasure yacht, proposed an excursion in the Irish Channel for a few days. I was invited, and began my preparations, anxiously anticipating the greatest enjoyment, as my father

was to be of the party, and I inherited a love for the sea. We started, at the appointed time, in health and spirits. It was the middle of August ; the weather was mild and serene ; our hearts swelled with delight ; and, as we glided along the coast, covered with the profusion of autumn, and here and there enlivened by the busy reapers, we wearied not of the delightful moving panorama. Before twilight began to darken into shade, we landed at the country residence of the proprietor of the yacht, where we remained for the night ; and so much had we enjoyed the day’s amusement, that it was proposed, and cheerfully agreed to by all, that we should continue our excursion further than we had intended at setting out. Next morning, accordingly, we sailed for the Isle of Man, standing across the channel with a delightful breeze. The whole ocean around, gently undulated, lay like an extensive meadow covered with hay ready for the mower. There was just swell enough to prevent the liquid expanse from being monotonous to the eye ; and we lounged upon the deck, listening to the songs we sung by turns, or the melody of the German flutes, which several of the young gentlemen had brought to vary our enjoyment. Such was the situation of our happy party, when we reached mid-channel, and were gazing on the rugged mountains of the Isle of Man. All at once it fell dead calm, and we lay listlessly upon the water, our sails hanging from the masts—our disappointment great as had been our former enjoyment ; and several peevish expressions were making way among us, while the heat of the sun forced us below, to shelter ourselves from his rays. The day slowly crept away ; yet we dreaded the approach of night, for none of us were prepared for it, having no intention of being on the water after nightfall. Anon the wind rose from an unfavourable quarter, the sky was overcast and gloomy, the darkness became intense, the rain began to pour in torrents, the small vessel to pitch, and all of us became sick and (the wind having increased to a severe storm) alarmed for our safety. My father, who was the only person on board, except the three men who navigated the yacht, that knew anything of a ship, came below, to assure us there was no danger ; but I could perceive by his countenance that he was ill at ease, and, my heart sinking within me, I could scarce restrain my tears, while I endeavoured to look composed, lest I might add to his anxiety. He staid only a few minutes below, and again went on deck, from whence I could hear his beloved voice, above the roaring of the winds and waves, giving his orders to the men. My companions were in tears ; faint sobs and pious ejaculations had come in place of song and music. The contrast was striking : our gay dresses mocked our situation ; what had engrossed our whole attention for days before, was now rumbled and soiled without regret ; and, alarmed as I was, the moral struck deep into my soul, as I poured out a prayer to the Father of Mercies for his gracious interference to deliver us from our perilous situation. Several miserable hours thus passed over our heads, and my father came not again below, for the storm was unabated. At length day began to dispel the utter darkness of the night, yet no cheering ray shone upon us ; for the sky was dark and dismal, and we caught only fitful glances of it through the skylight of the cabin, when the waves that were continually throwing their spray over it subsided. Oh, how I longed to get to the top of the hatchway, to get one look of my father before we perished !—for I had given up all hope of escape, and became so much resigned, that even the lamentations of my companions, which were dying away from mere exhaustion, ceased to affect me. Several times I made the attempt to reach the deck ; but found it impossible for me to keep my footing ; and, having been severely bruised by my endeavours, I lay quiet and hopeless. At length the wind began to subside ; and, in a short time, my father came to us, with the joyful tidings that he hoped all danger was past. I sank

into his embrace, overpowered by my sensations; and hope once more enlightened the countenances of the party. My father was so much fatigued by the exertions of the night, that I requested him to lay himself down and take some rest; but he said he would wait until we made the land, which was at no great distance. We ascertained that we had, during the night, been driven past the Isle of Man, and were now only a few leagues from the coast of Galloway. Anxious to be away from the cabin, where we had endured so much from mental anguish, we hastened to the deck. It was now between eight and nine in the morning; the sun was bright, and shone upon the green hills of Galloway and the sea around us, as if his face had never been overcast by a storm. About ten o'clock we all landed at a beautiful little village called Garlieston, which is situate at the bottom of a small bay, a few miles from the county town of Wigton. Here we were with difficulty put up, for there was but one inn in the place; but we were so happy to be once more on the firm ground, that we were not over fastidious about our accommodation. My father, who looked pale and fatigued, threw off his wet dress, and retired to rest himself for a few hours; and it was agreed by all that we should leave again on the following morning; yet, so much alarmed were the greater number of us, that, could coaches of any kind have been obtained within forty miles, we would not have ventured again upon the sea.

Toward evening my father joined the company of our fellow-voyagers; but he looked weak and fatigued, and did not remain any time with them. Meanwhile, as the weather had become favourable and the wind fair, it was agreed that we should depart next morning. Anxious for my parent, I retired with him; and to all my inquiries he answered, he was only a little fatigued; but these answers did not satisfy me; for, after I lay down to sleep, vague undefined fears oppressed my mind; and when a disturbed slumber came over me, I was haunted by frightful dreams, which threw me into a kind of *monomania*. I awoke, I saw my father standing by my bedside—I was certain of it—I spoke to him, but he did not answer. I attempted to rise—I changed my position—he vanished from my sight, and I shook with fear. That it was an illusion of my senses, I have no doubt; but the impression it made was terrible. The first blushes of morning were just tinging the water in the bay; all was still as death; the deep shadows of Eager-ness and Crugleton gave force and grandeur to the landscape; our yacht and two small sloops were just beginning to float with the rising tide. I looked out, and endeavoured to enjoy the lovely prospect that lay before me; but the vision I had seen oppressed my mind. I hastily dressed myself, to go to my father's room; but, fearful of disturbing him at so early an hour, I sat down at my window and gave way to a passion of tears. I felt ashamed of my weakness; for, at this time, I had no defined cause of grief; but I dreaded future evil, and, in indulging in those fears, I felt I was preparing myself for what I had to meet. My mind became less oppressed—my heart beat lighter—I became more composed, and offered up my morning sacrifice to my Creator with a cheerful heart. When I entered my father's room, I was shocked to see the change one night had made on him. His face was flushed, and his eye heavy. I took his hand in mine—it was hot as a live coal; his pulse beat as if it would have burst the veins; he grasped my hand, as I stooped to kiss his forehead, and said—

‘Mary, I am very ill—send for a surgeon.’

These were the only words he spoke in reason for several days. When I returned to his room, after giving the necessary orders, his mind was wandering—he was unconscious of all around—and I, with a sorrowful heart, took farewell of my companions in this unfortunate voyage. When I saw them depart, I felt as if alone in the world—all around were strangers; but I had no leisure for selfish reflections

for my distressed parent engrossed all my thoughts. As I watched by his bed, I found that all his thoughts, in his delirium, ran on the banks of the Esk, and my dear departed mother. I was his Agnes. He would converse for hours, holding my hand, while my tears flowed, to hear the scenes recounted I had so much enjoyed in the company of my sainted mother. Then he would observe my tears, in spite of my endeavours at their concealment, and, ceasing to speak for a few moments, would say, fretfully—

‘Agnes, why do you weep? I am not going to sea again. Death shall only part us. Sing me a song, my love—the song I first heard you sing—nay, do not sing, for my head aches terribly.’

Thus did days and nights pass, and the surgeon gave me no hopes of his recovery. At length his reason returned—the fever abated—and he gradually began to recover. As soon as we could remove with safety, a postchaise was procured from the nearest town, and we set off for Liverpool by easy stages. His health was soon completely restored, and he entered into business with renewed energy. But misfortunes now began to come thick upon us; for one of those panics that so often occur in commerce caused the failure of a bank in which my father was a partner, whereby more than the half of his wealth was at once swept away. Although I did all I could to console him, this loss preyed upon his spirits for several months. I knew not at the time how deeply he was engaged in commerce; but I knew that the sum he had lost was a fortune in itself. Yet we were rich; and, had he not been engaged in an extensive speculation, we might have been happy; but that also failed, and another merchant, who was joined in it along with him, became bankrupt; so that almost every thousand he could command was swept away. Our delightful villa, on the banks of the Mersey, was sold, our establishment broken up, and we retired to a more humble abode. This change I regretted not, further than as it affected my father, whose spirits, for a time, were so completely sunk, that he would sit in silence for hours, gazing upon vacancy; and, when his eyes met mine, as I looked in anxiety upon him, he would burst into tears, dash his clenched hands upon his forehead, and groan aloud. If I attempted to appear cheerful his gloom increased, so that I knew not how to act. He never left the house, no one called upon us, and we appeared to be utterly forgot or shunned by all our former gay friends. This I knew preyed much upon my father's mind; but how to remedy it I knew not; for, whether they shunned us through delicacy of feeling, or selfishness, my heart revolted from the thought of waiting upon them to request them to visit my disconsolate parent, and rescue him from his anguish. In this my dilemma, I waited upon the clergyman under whose ministry we had lived since our arrival in England. He received me with a warmth of kindness I shall never forget, gave me hope and joy, accompanied me home to my parent, and, most humanely, and as became a Christian pastor, poured the balm of consolation on his wounded spirit. Once more my beloved parent resumed his wonted frame of mind, and he sighed only when he spoke of my future prospects of life—ruined, he thought for ever, by his imprudence. No longer the courted, flattered, and invited Mary, I was scarcely recognised by those who had been most assiduous in their attentions to me. Often a bitter pang and feeling came over me; anger, shame, and regret struggled in my breast; the cold recognitions of some, and the marked shunning of others, struck me to the soul; but pity for those who could thus wound the feelings of the unfortunate, reclaimed me to a better frame of mind, and, by frugal management and economy, I contrived to struggle against adversity—an effort in which I was aided by a servant whom we had brought from Scotland—a worthy girl, who loved us for our own sakes, and would not have left us had our poverty been abject.

One afternoon I was seated at the piano-forte, playing over a few favourite airs, to soothe my father's melancholy, when the bell was rung by a stranger, whom I could hear inquiring if Captain Monro was at home, and disengaged. We looked at each other in surprise; for he had never been called captain since his marriage with my mother, and there were very few who knew he had ever been in the seafaring profession. The girl answered the stranger's inquiry—

'There is no one of that name lives here,' said she; 'but Mr Monro is at home, if you wish to see him.'

'I hope it is the same,' the stranger replied. 'Be so kind as go to your master, and say that Billy Thomson would esteem it a particular favour if he would see him for a few minutes.'

The stranger was immediately admitted, when the most graceful figure of a man I had ever seen entered the room. He stood, for a few moments, looking intently at my father, who gazed as fixedly at him. A faint shade of recollection stole over his face. The stranger first broke silence.

'No, I am not deceived,' said he; 'it is my worthy captain; although much altered, I cannot be mistaken. Do you not remember little Scottish Bill, whom you took, when a destitute creature, and was a father to, in the Betsy? Excuse my boldness; but I could not resist calling to see and thank my noble captain.'

A glow of pleasure came over my father's countenance, to which it had long been a stranger; he shook Billy's hand with a heartiness that brought a blush into his manly countenance. He remained with us to supper, and I rejoiced in his company. My father forgot his sorrows in the society of Captain Thomson; for the destitute sailor boy of the Betsy was now captain of a large vessel trading from the port of London, and had only arrived at Liverpool two days before, with a cargo of cotton. It was by accident he had heard of our being in Liverpool; and, having heard of the misfortunes of my father, had resolved upon making an early call; but, with a feeling that did him honour, he never spoke of the causes of our grief, save when my father reverted to them himself, and then the delicacy of his allusions gained my esteem. The night passed on with a rapidity that astonished us, who had for months been enslaved by melancholy and chagrin. Every evening, during the time his vessel remained at Liverpool, he was our guest. My father, in his company, forgot his misfortunes, becoming, what he had formerly been, full of energy; and several projects were formed by them to retrieve our lost estate. As for myself, I forgot, in his company, all my sorrows. His attentions, humble and sincere, acting on one who had been slighted and shunned, produced in me a new feeling, which took entire possession of my breast. I felt dull and unhappy if he was half-an-hour later in calling than usual—my heart fluttered in my breast when the door bell announced a visiter—I could not think of the Clarendon's sailing and his departure without tears. All this, I flattered myself, arose from filial sympathy; for what was my father to do when Billy Thomson was gone? What was Mary to do? That, I tried to make myself believe, was nothing. He had never spoken of love, neither dared I think of it. No one cared for the ruined in fortune, but seemed to avoid them; now I regretted the loss of means; for I felt that, had I been as wealthy as I was twelve months before, Captain Thomson would have declared his sentiments for me. Little did I at this time know my Billy's thoughts: so humble were they, that he had been struggling in vain against the love he had for his old captain's daughter, nor dared to think of me otherwise than as a companion far above his hopes. Ruined as our fortunes were, he had the same esteem and respect for my father as when he was his humble sea boy. The most melancholy and pleasant day of my life was the evening before he sailed. Well do I recollect it. He stayed with us until the even-

ing was far spent, and it appeared that something far more heavy seemed to weigh upon his mind than the thought of a sailor's farewell. Twenty times I had seen him put his hand into his pocket, and then withdraw it, as if irresolute and confused. As my eye met his, I was also confused, and could not restrain my agitation. At length he rose to depart—my father rose also; I could not at this moment have stood without support—my excitement was terrible—they stood with their hands ready to join, perhaps for the last time.

'Be not offended, my worthy captain, at my presumption,' said our dear friend, at last; 'I would have done it sooner, but, fearful of your anger, I have delayed it to the last.'

My ears tingled—I hid my face in my hands.

'You cannot,' replied my father, 'give me offence, my noble fellow; for your heart is in the right place. What were you going to request, that I can oblige by bestowing?'

'I thank you for the assurance you have given me,' replied the other. 'It has eased my mind of a load that has been on it for many days. Accept this'—(drawing from his pocket a bundle of bank bills)—'accept this, then, my dear sir. It is a part only of my earnings, for all which I am indebted to your generosity and paternal instruction. It may be the means of once more placing you in affluence, when you can repay me.'

The tears ran down the face of my parent—I sobbed aloud.

'No, Billy, no,' said he. 'I never will, my noble fellow—my more than son. I do not require it; and, if I did, I know where to apply. God bless you!—fare-you-well!—good night!'

And, overpowered by his feelings, he rushed from the room and left us together. Neither of us could speak. Captain Thomson stood overpowered by disappointment—I by my feelings, and with a heart choked by gratitude and admiration. At length he seated himself by my side and took my trembling hand in his.

'Miss Monro,' he said, 'I fear I have offended you and your father by my boldness; but I do, from my heart, assure you nothing on earth was farther from my intention.'

'Captain Thomson,' I replied, 'I as firmly believe you; and I can only thank you with my tears for your attentions to my father. I hope,' (and I hesitated as I proceeded,) 'if we do not meet again, you will at least correspond with us—I mean him—my father.'

'Were it not the hope of again seeing you and your father,' replied he, 'I would be most unhappy; for I have never, until now, known what true happiness is. May I be so bold as hope you will not refuse to accept from me a small token of gratitude for the pleasure I have enjoyed in the company of you and your father?'

He paused, and took an elegant gold watch from his pocket, and gave it me. I could not refuse the bauble; for everything that was his had a value in my eyes. I took a locket from my neck and gave it him in return.

'Captain,' said I, 'we must make an exchange; for I owe you more for your kindness to my father than any debt of gratitude you may owe him.'

He took my hand in his with a gentle pressure—it thrilled to my heart—I knew not if I had returned it. He pressed my hand to his lips—I did not withdraw it—the blood mounted to my face, and my eyes sunk upon the ground. He saw my emotion, and, fearful of having given offence, he dropped my hand, and, begging pardon for his presumption, bade me adieu. As soon as he was gone, I felt far more lonely than I had ever done in my life. I sat and wept—my hand still held the watch—I placed it in my bosom, and felt as if it cooled it and soothed my grief. Never until this moment of his departure had I dared to own to myself how much I loved him. All that

had ever occurred since our first meeting, arose to my recollection. A thousand little incidents that I had overlooked at the time, now appeared to my love-sick thoughts convincing proofs that I was not indifferent to him. I at length retired to rest, composed, if not happy; for I had almost persuaded myself that Billy loved me.

Next morning, when I awoke, I examined the gift, so dear to me on the giver's account. It had an elegant neck-chain and seals attached. On one was engraved, 'Forget-me-not; on another, two rose-buds engraved, and 'Severed, we perish.' I dressed myself with a lighter heart than I had ever done, and entered the breakfast room, where my father was waiting for me—a thing he had not done before for many a day. Our whole discourse was of Billy—a subject he never tired of dwelling upon, or I of listening to. Our time began to pass more cheerfully. A few days after Billy was gone, during which I had occupied myself in making a keepsake paper for my watch, I took out a piece of silk, to place that I had made in its stead; and, oh! how my heart leaped for joy when under it I saw engraved the following curious words!—

'That place—dear offering—shall be yours,
Which covers my affection's seat;
And all thy minutes shall be hours,
Till on her breast I hear thee beat.'

My father witnessed my joyful surprise, as I concluded reading the words that filled my heart with peace and rapture. He asked the cause. Blushing, I handed the watch to him: he laid it down, and kissed my forehead.

'Mary, my love,' said he, 'I approve your choice; Billy is worthy of you, were we even far more wealthy than we ever were. May you be happy and long blessed in each other!'

I sunk upon his bosom, and wept for joy. Oh, that I had died in that happy hour! Then, I had a lover whom I could esteem, and a father whom I loved and honoured. Now, I am alone and desolate."

Here poor Mary hid her face in her handkerchief and wept. After a short interval of silence, she put her hand into her bosom, and, after some little difficulty, brought out a small silken bag, in which were the watch and the two seals, attached by a blue ribbon; but the gold chain was gone. It was a valuable watch.

"Why do you not wind it up, Mary?" said my landlady.

"Madam," replied she, "I never have wound it up since I received the sad intelligence that the ear of him who hoped to hear it beat on my bosom, is now shut to all earthly sounds."

She then proceeded—

"My father now began to look after his affairs with an energy I thought he never would have been capable of again. Gloom forsook his brow, and cheerfulness was once more the inhabitant of our humble roof. I loved home better now than I had ever done in the days of our prosperity; for it was now quiet and domestic. We were not constrained by formal attentions, either of false friends, flatterers, or the worshippers of wealth; and the bondage imposed by imperious fashion, more galling than could be borne were it imposed by any throned tyrant, was happily removed. It was about a month after the departure of Billy, and we had not received any letter from him. I had become anxious and fearful at this long delay—dinner-hour was close at hand—my father, who had been out all day, was not yet arrived—I was amusing myself, to pass the time, making impressions with sealing-wax of Billy's seals. Already had I consumed almost a stick of wax, when my father arrived: joy was beaming on his face; he, as was his wont, kissed me, and hung over me with a fonder embrace than he had for some time done.

'Mary,' said he, 'I have good news for you. I hope my child will yet be an object of cupidity-to mercenary lovers;

but none but Billy shall ever have the blessing of your father—mind that, Mary.'

And he patted my cheek. Never, since the last illness of my mother, had I seen him in such spirits. He had that day received a letter from one of his agents in South America, with the welcome intelligence, that, after a long delay, and keeping the goods warehoused, he had been enabled to dispose of what was not injured, at a price considerably above the invoice; so much so, that there would be little or no loss in the transaction. The amount in goods and specie had been sent by the same vessel which brought the notice. He had also received a letter from Captain Thomson, enclosing one for me; and I was now in full a partaker of my parent's happiness; for, although I rejoiced in his good fortune, it did not convey that thrilling sensation to my mind which the sight of Billy's letter effected like a spell. Whether, after my father had seen the watch, he had written to Billy, approving our love, I know not; but the letter I now read, contained an ample declaration, and requested an answer of hope, at least, before he sailed from London for the West Indies. It was not in my nature to play the coquette. I wrote him an answer, which did not entirely meet my father's approval; but I could not, in my first letter, say more; and, indeed, this had cost me much care and labour. I wrote several drafts before I could please myself; they were all either too bold for a maiden, or there was some expression too cold and indifferent; the sentiments that arose in my mind, I feared, he would have thought forward; and I ended in a kind of medium, which neither pleased my father nor myself. We were now far above the fear of want; the goods and specie realised above seven thousand pounds; my father looked forward to a handsome sum when the affairs of the bank were finally wound up—and they were in rapid progress. Though he never before had valued money, my parent became again eager in commerce; but, cautious as he had become in his adventures, he sustained a second loss, which, though to a comparatively small amount, completely disgusted him. He became again taciturn and abstracted. In vain I entreated him to make known to me the thoughts that oppressed him; he always evaded my endearments and requests, until we received letters that the Clarendon had arrived safe at London, and that Captain Thomson would pay us a visit in a few days. We sat conversing about the pleasure we should both enjoy in Captain Thomson's company; and my father took my hand—

'Mary,' said he, 'you have for some time been anxious to know what I have been revolving in my mind. I am now going to inform you. It will, I have no doubt, give you pain; but I am resolved, for it is for our mutual advantage, and will give me pain as well as you. I am yet, comparatively, a young man, and feel ashamed to waste my energies in idleness. Now that fortune has turned her back upon me ashore, I have resolved to go again to sea. If Captain Thomson will agree, we will purchase a vessel, and go to the South Sea fishing, one voyage before your marriage. My mind is made up. I cannot endure to think you should be a bride with a less portion than I once intended you should have; and, having tried my luck in land transactions, and found I have none, I will again try the sea.'

The tears started into my eyes as he spoke; I felt a chill pervade my frame; and I could not utter a word. To be dashed thus from the pinnacle of anticipated joy, to the depths of disappointment, and so unexpectedly, was too much for my frame, and I sank down in a state of insensibility. When I was restored to consciousness, my father was bending over me, with anguish in his look, wringing his hands and groaning.

'Wretched man, he cried, 'I have killed my child. Mary, my love!—O Mary! awake to life, for your father's sake, or he will go distracted!'

For some minutes I felt my brain quite bewildered ; but the fearful truth too soon burst upon me, and a flood of tears eased my bursting heart. I knew my father's firmness of resolution ; and by this conduct I might embitter the moments of his departure, and fill the days of his absence with regret ; so, with a voice scarcely audible, I bade him good night ; but the struggle in my mind I could not conceal, for my looks were full of unutterable wo. As soon as I reached my bedroom, I sank upon my knees and poured out my whole soul for aid and direction in this my extremity. Gradually I became more composed ; and I had been so weakened by the conflict in my mind, that, when I retired to bed, I soon fell into a quiet sleep, in which I dreamed that I was in the same ship with Billy and my father, sailing among islands covered with flowers and verdure, amid the songs of innumerable birds of the gayest plumage, while the breezes from the land breathed around me the richest perfumes. My bosom heaved with gladness, for Billy enjoyed along with me the beauteous scene. We stood, with his arm supporting me, upon the deck ; and still away we glided through the tranquil sea, my father smiling upon us as we leaned upon the bulwarks of the vessel ; and everything beamed pleasure. I wished to land upon one of those delightful islands ; but I was told that they were the abode of savages, who never failed to kill and devour any stranger who might land among them. These were the islands of false hopes ; but I was told we should soon reach the islands of rational enjoyment ; so we glided along, and approached a number of other islands, where there seemed nothing to captivate the senses. All was still and serene—no gaudy bird fluttered among the branches of the trees—the simple song of the lark, high in mid-air, rung around—the gale that reached us from the shore had a bracing effect, that roused all the energies of my breast, and I felt a thrill of emotion quite different from that lethargic, sickly pleasure I had felt in the former scene. Suddenly my dream changed: the vessel had disappeared—neither my father nor Billy were by my side—I was alone, weary and faint, in the middle of a trackless waste ; I could support my sinking frame no further ; in despair I had laid myself down at the foot of a rock to die, when my mother appeared and guided my steps from the scene of desolation to our beloved home on the banks of the Esk. I awoke with my mind more composed than I could have hoped when I retired to rest. After my morning's devotion, I joined my father at the breakfast table. He looked anxiously in my face.

'Mary,' he said, 'you have been weeping ; I could expect no other, for the intimation I gave last night was to you as sudden as unexpected, and the more severe as for a time 't may deprive you of the company of both father and lover. But you know, my love, a sailor's wife must lay her account with the occasional long absences of her husband ? I give you my word, if Billy is the least averse to my proposal, I shall not urge, or think the worse of him on that account ; but go I will myself, and shall not depart with the heavier heart, that I leave you in his keeping. I am at present in treaty for a vessel adapted for the voyage, and only wait her arrival to conclude the transaction.' By a strenuous effort, I restrained my tears.

'Father,' said I, 'you are far more competent to judge for yourself than I am ; but do not, on my account, risk the dangers of the sea. I have no wish to be rich ; already we have more than enough for my ambition ; and Billy would not prize me the more were I worth millions ; but, if you think you would be happier at sea, I will not complain ; your happiness is dearer to me than my own, and I will not think so well of my Billy as I do, if he will not accompany you to shield you from harm.'

Here my assumed fortitude forsook me, and I sunk upon his breast. The worst was over. By and by the idea

became more familiar and, before Billy's arrival, I could converse upon it with composure. At length he arrived ; our vows were plighted ; and, arm in arm, we listened to the accents of our mutual love ; but the idea of our parting so soon threw a shade of sadness into our discourse ; and, had he urged our marriage before his departure, I could not have refused. My father, however, thought it better that it should be deferred until their return, when it was resolved that both should quit the sea for ever. I could perceive that Billy went solely upon my father's account, and the esteem he had for him, rather than any predilection he himself had for the voyage. He saw also that I wished him to go ; for, although I never had said so to him, he could read my approval in my melancholy smile. At length the dreaded day came round—the day on which I bade adieu to all I held dear on earth. Melancholy, and with a feeling of utter loneliness, I returned home, to offer up my prayers for their safety, and weep for their absence in secret. What added to the forlornness of my situation was, that Betsy Campbell, the girl I mentioned before that had been in the family so long, even before the death of my mother, had married a Scottish sailor, and gone back to Scotland to reside. Here was no one to whom I could unburden my mind. All the money both could command, was embarked in the purchase and outfit of the vessel, except three hundred pounds, that were left in a banker's hands for my use during their absence. The time passed heavily. I received their last letters, dated Rio Janeiro ; and their voyage had been prosperous up to this time. The last letter I ever received was dated about eighteen months since. Time passed, and I felt so dull and cheerless in the house, that I sold off the furniture, and deposited the money in the same banker's where my cash was, and boarded myself with a widow lady, whose daughters were my companions. About three months since, the banking house failed in which my money was placed, and a rumour was current in Liverpool, that the Endeavour had been lost in a storm, and all on board had perished. I was now nearly in a state of distraction. I was plunged in poverty all the money I had in the world was ten sovereigns. The manners of my landlady, which had been most attentive, bordering upon obsequiousness, were now completely changed—she became harsh and unfeeling—feared I would become a burden upon her, and even hinted as much. Overpowered by anguish as I was, I paid what had run of my month's board, and left the house. I had made up my mind to proceed to Scotland and find out Betsy, who lived with her parents at Musselburgh ; and, to defray the expense, and raise as much money as I could, I parted with all my trinkets and the chain of my watch, and embarked in the steamer for Glasgow. Our passage was very stormy ; and I was so sick that, even after our arrival in Glasgow, I was unable to look after my luggage. When I inquired for it, after the bustle of landing was over, it was nowhere to be found. Some one had carried off all I had in the world, save a few shillings that I had in my purse. I remained two days in Glasgow, during which the police used every exertion to trace my lost property in vain. I had scarce sufficient left to pay my passage to Edinburgh by the canal. Broken-hearted and penniless, I had arrived late in the evening of that dreadful night in which you found me. During the day, I had sat weeping with my face buried in my handkerchief, and cast many an anxious glance upon my fellow-passengers ; but there was not one in the boat to whom I could find courage enough to appeal for aid. The weather was so cold and boisterous, that none were travelling that could avoid it. All that were present were either rude and noisy, or appeared steeped in poverty equal to my own. I was too weak and spent to proceed to Musselburgh at the late hour of our arrival. I had not tasted food that day. I attempted to walk the

street, inclement as it was; for where could a penniless wretch find a shelter? Even its streets were denied me; for I was ordered off them, in a voice that made me tremble, by more than one of the police who witnessed my lingering and languid steps. To avoid their rudeness, I had retired into the shade of the stair-foot where you found me, as I thought, to die; and, were it not for the hope that still clings to my bosom, that the report of the loss of the Endeavour is false, I care not how soon I may follow my mother. You may think me foolish; but the wretched will cling to trifles. My mother, in my dream, rescued me from the wilderness in which I had sunk."

Now that I was possessed of the history of her I had so essentially obliged, my mind was relieved from a load of concern I had felt upon her account. My income is but limited, and I have, therefore, but scanty means of doing the good with it I would wish; but, after thanking her for the interest we had felt in the narrative of her sufferings, I cheered the mourner by the assurance, that I would exert myself in arranging her affairs, and procuring, if possible, authentic information regarding the Endeavour. Once more I restored hope to her breast. She wished to proceed to Musselburgh, to live with Betsy; but, at my request, she agreed to remain where she was for a time, until I had either succeeded in my inquiries or failed. If it was proved that the Endeavour was lost, she, as heir to her father, was entitled to the insurance; and, in either case, she was rich.

Next morning I wrote off to a friend in Liverpool, begging him to make the necessary inquiries regarding the Endeavour, and the probable composition the banking house would pay. I also wrote to the Glasgow police, desiring them to offer a reward, and advertise the trunk which Miss Monro had lost from the Liverpool steamer. In course of post, I received the agreeable intelligence, that the trunk lay in the office, having been taken from the steam-boat by a gentleman of the same name, who was going to the Highlands, and did not perceive his mistake until he had reached home, when he had returned it with a letter of apology. I called upon Mary with the welcome intelligence. She wept for joy at its recovery, more for the papers it contained and the good omen it brought, than any value she set upon it individually, much as that value was to her in her present circumstances. It was several days past due before I received an answer to my Liverpool letter. It also was most favourable. The dividend the bank would pay was so trifling that it was scarce worthy of inquiry; but there were authentic letters in town, that the Endeavour of Liverpool was spoke with on the coast of Chili, all well and full fished, and was looked for in a few days. A monarch might have envied me the receipt of this letter. I hurried to Mary to break the joyful intelligence, and never shall I forget the look of pleasure she gave me. When I entered the house, she was seated on a couch, in a kind of dreamy cogitation; but, having been for some days in the habit of watching my eyes, to try if she could catch any sign of good intelligence, she started up as I entered, from the mere impulse of that sympathy which, like the electric fluid, passes unseen, and is only traced in its effects. Though the usual freck of a bearer of good news was, in spite of an effort to throw off all false colours, busy with my face and eyes, she read my thoughts, and, rushing forward, fell upon my neck.

"It is—it is," she exclaimed—"you cannot conceal it—it is good intelligence you have to communicate to me. Would you, if you had it to bestow, withhold life from the dying!"

I said, nothing, but, lifting up her head with my left hand, shewed her the letter I held secretly in my right. She seized the letter, and was struggling with a nervous tremor that prevented her opening it

"The Endeavour is safe, and a full ship, and all is well," I cried.

She fell down senseless on the floor, with the letter grasped firmly in her hand. Returning consciousness came like the soft beams of the sun on the eyes of one who has been confined in a dungeon for many years, bringing with it the stores of a happy memory, and the bright visions of a pregnant hope. She turned her eyes on me, and, after looking for some time, burst into a loud hysterical sound of mixed laughter and sobbing, and then became dissolved in tears, through which she looked her silent gratitude to heaven. I have lived long in the world; but I never felt the full extent of pure earthly bliss till that moment. I know of no feeling that approaches that inexpressible glow of charity, crowned with success, and requited by the tear-filled eye of gratitude, innocence, and virtue. Its intensity and purity are both of heaven; no one who has felt it can remain in the bondage of sin; yet how many are there, whom sin has unfitted for the reception of the blessing? Oh, how I envied Billy the happiness in store for him!

After being a little recovered, she wrote a letter to her father and one for Billy, which I enclosed in a packet for my friend, to be delivered as soon as the Endeavour reached the port. In about three weeks after, as I sat at tea with Mary, a chaise and four drove up to the door. Mary started to her feet, and immediately sunk into my arms as pale as death. At the same moment, her father and lover rushed into the room. They looked angry and surprised, and snatched her from my arms. I found I was now but an intruder, and, taking my hat, bade them good night. Early next morning, Billy called upon me with a thousand apologies, which were not required. I breakfasted with the party in one of the principal hotels of the city. In the forenoon, my landlady was more than happy. The grateful Mary had overrated her kindness to her father and Billy. When I called at one for my lunch, as usual, she was out with the bride purchasing dresses for the wedding. At dinner she was at the table with us. Mary's father and Billy insisted that, although now well stricken in years, she should be bride's maid to Mary, and I best man to Billy. I had as little inclination to refuse as my landlady, and was nearly as well pleased; for, next to being happy ourselves, is the pleasure of making others happy around us. Captain Monro told me, after dinner, that he was now resolved to live and die on the banks of the Esk, that his ashes might mingle with those of his departed Agnes. On the following day, a happier group never left Edinburgh, than reached the banks of the Esk that day, in search of a residence. We found the old abode of Mary—"To Let or Sell," in large characters over the gate. It was at once purchased, and taken possession of as soon as furnished. During this delay, the captain, with Billy and his young wife, were on their marriage jaunt. I was for several days completely occupied with painters and cabinet-makers, and now all has settled down into the quiet of domestic life.

I am still a welcome guest, and am much importuned to take up my abode entirely with these friends; but I cannot think of change. Save in Edinburgh, I would be in a desert; but there is one room, the key of which I gave Mary to keep for me, where, for one night in the week, at least, the old bachelor may be found.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SALMON-FISHER OF UDOLL.

IN the autumn of 1759, the Bay of Udoll, an arm of the sea which intersects the southern shore of the Frith of Cromarty, was occupied by two large salmon weirs, the property of one Allan Thomson, a native of the province of Moray, who had settled in this part of the country a few months before. He was a thin, athletic, raw-boned man, of about five feet ten, well-nigh in his thirtieth year, but apparently younger; erect and clean-limbed, with a set of handsome features, bright intelligent eyes, and a profusion of dark brown hair, curling around an ample expanse of forehead. For the first twenty years of his life, he had lived about a farmhouse, tending cattle when a boy, and guiding the plough when he had grown up; he then travelled into England, where he wrought about seven years as a common labourer. A novelist would scarcely make choice of such a person for the hero of a tale; but men are to be estimated rather by the size and colour of their minds, than the complexion of their circumstances; and this ploughman and labourer of the north was by no means a very common man. For the latter half of his life, he had pursued, in all his undertakings, one main design. He saw his brother rustics tied down by circumstance—that destiny of vulgar minds—to a youth of toil and dependence, and an old age of destitution and wretchedness; and, with a force of character which, had he been placed at his outset on what may be termed the table-land of fortune, would have raised him to a higher pinnacle, he persisted in adding shilling to shilling and pound to pound, not in the sordid spirit of the miser, but in the hope that his little hoard might yet serve him as a kind of stepping-stone, in rising to a more comfortable place in society. Nor were his desires fixed very high; for, convinced that independence and the happiness which springs from situation in life lie within the reach of the frugal farmer of sixty or eighty acres, he moulded his ambition on the conviction; and scarcely looked beyond the period at which he anticipated his savings would enable him to take his place among the humbler tenantry of the country.

Our firths and estuaries, at this period, abounded with salmon—one of the earliest exports of the kingdom; but, from the low state into which commerce had sunk in the northern districts, and the irregularity of the communication kept up between them and the sister kingdom, by far the greater part caught on our shores were consumed by the inhabitants. And so little were they deemed a luxury, that it was by no means uncommon, it is said, for servants to stipulate with their masters that they should not have to diet on salmon oftener than thrice a-week. Thomson, however, had seen quite enough, when in England, to convince him, that, meanly as they were esteemed by his countryfolks, they might be rendered the staple of a profitable trade; and, removing to the vicinity of Cromarty, for the facilities it afforded in trading to the capital, he launched boldly into the speculation. He erected his two weirs with his own hands; built himself a cottage of sods on the gorge of a little ravine, sprinkled over with bushes of alder and hazel; entered into correspondence with a London

merchant, whom he engaged as his agent; and began to export his fish by two large sloops, which plied, at this period, between the neighbouring port and the capital. His fishings were abundant, and his agent an honest one; and he soon began to realize the sums he had expended in establishing himself in the trade.

Could any one anticipate that a story of fondly-cherished, but hapless attachment—of one heart blighted for ever, and another fatally broken—was to follow such an introduction?

The first season of Thomson's speculation had come to a close; winter set in; and, with scarcely a single acquaintance among the people in the neighbourhood, and little to employ him, he had to draw for amusement on his own resources alone. He had formed, when a boy, a taste for reading; and might now be found, in the long evenings, hanging over a book, beside the fire; by day, he went sauntering among the fields, calculating on the advantages of every agricultural improvement; or attended the fairs and trysts of the country, to speculate on the profits of the drover and cattle-feeder, and make himself acquainted with all the little mysteries of bargain-making.

There holds, early in November, a famous cattle market in the ancient barony of Ferintosh; and Thomson had set out to attend it. The morning was clear and frosty, and he felt buoyant of heart and limb, as, passing westwards along the shore, he saw the huge Ben-Wevis towering darker and more loftily over the Frith as he advanced; or turned aside, from time to time, to explore some ancient burying-ground or Danish encampment. There is not a tract of country of equal extent in the three kingdoms, where antiquities of this class lie thicker than in that northern strip of the parish of Resolis which bounds on the Cromarty Frith. The old castle of Craig House, a venerable, time-shattered building, detained him, amid its broken arches, for hours; and he was only reminded of the ultimate object of his journey, when, on surveying the moor from the upper bartizan, he saw that the groups of men and cattle which, since morning, had been mottling in succession the track leading to the fair, were all gone out of sight; and that, far as the eye could reach, not a human figure was to be seen. The whole population of the country seemed to have gone to the fair. He quitted the ruins, and, after walking smartly over the heathy ridge to the west, and through the long birch-wood of Kinbeakie, he reached about mid-day the little straggling village at which the market holds.

Thomson had never before attended a thoroughly Highland market; and the scene now presented was wholly new to him. The area it occupied was an irregular opening in the middle of the village, broken by ruts, and dung-hills, and heaps of stone. In front of the little turf-houses on either side, there was a row of booths, constructed mostly of poles and blankets, in which much whisky, and a few of the simpler articles of foreign merchandise, were sold. In the middle of the open space, there were carts and benches, laden with the rude manufactures of the country—Highland brogues and blankets; bowls and platters of beech; a species of horse and cattle harness, formed of the twisted twigs of birch; bundles of split fir, for lath and torches; and hair tackle and nets, for fishermen. Nearly seven thousand

persons, male and female, thronged the area, bustling and busy, and in continual motion, like the tides and eddies of two rivers at their confluence. There were countrywomen, with their shaggy little horses, laden with cheese and butter; Highlanders from the far hills, with droves of sheep and cattle; shoemakers and weavers, from the neighbouring villages, with bales of webs and wallets of shoes; farmers and fishermen, engaged as it chanced in buying or selling; bevy of bonny lasses, attired in their gayest; ploughmen and mechanics; drovers, butchers, and herd-boys. Whisky flowed abundantly, whether bargain-makers bought or sold, or friends met or parted; and, as the day wore later, the confusion and bustle of the crowd increased. A Highland tryst, even in the present age, rarely passes without witnessing a fray; and the Highlanders, seventy years ago, were of more combative dispositions than they are now; but Thomson, who had neither friend nor enemy among the thousands around him, neither quarreled himself, nor interfered in the quarrels of others. He merely stood and looked on, as a European would among the frays of one of the great fairs of Bagdad or Astracan.

He was passing through the crowd, towards evening, in front of one of the dingier cottages, when a sudden burst of oaths and exclamations rose from within, and the inmates came pouring out pell-mell at the door, to throttle and pummel one another, in inextricable confusion. A grey-headed old man, of great apparent strength, who seemed by far the most formidable of the combatants, was engaged in desperate battle with two young fellows from the remote Highlands, while all the others were matched man to man. Thomson, whose residence in England had taught him very different notions of fair play and the ring, was on the eve of forgetting his caution and interfering; but the interference proved unnecessary. Ere he had stepped up to the combatants, the old man, with a vigour little lessened by age, had shaken off both his opponents; and, though they stood glaring at him like tiger cats, neither of them seemed in the least inclined to renew the attack.

“Twa mean, pitiful kerns,” exclaimed the old man, “to tak odds against ane auld enough to be their faither! an’ that too after burning my loof wi’ the het airn! But I hae noited their twa heads thegither! Sic a trick!—to bid me stir up the fire, after they had heated the wrang end o’ the poker! Deil but I hae a guid mind to gie them baith mair o’t yet!”

Ere he could make good his threat, however, his daughter, a delicate-looking girl of nineteen, came rushing up to him through the crowd. “Father!” she exclaimed, “dearest father! let us away. For my sake, if not your own, let these wild men alone; they always carry knives; and, besides, you will bring all of their clan upon you that are at the tryst, and you will be murdered.”

“No muckle danger frae that, Lillias,” said the old man. “I hae little fear frae ony ane o’ them; an’, if they come by twasome, I hae my friends here too. The ill deedy wratches, to blister a’ my loof wi’ the poker! But come awa, lassie; your advice is, I daresay, best, after a’.”

The old man quitted the place with his daughter; and, for the time, Thomson saw no more of him. As the night approached, the Highlanders became more noisy and turbulent; they drank, and disputed, and drove their very bargains at the dirk’s point; and, as the salmon-fisher passed through the village for the last time, he could see the waving of bludgeons, and hear the formidable war-cry of one of the clans, with the equally formidable, “Hilloa! help for Cromarty!” echoing on every side of him. He kept coolly on his way, however, without waiting the result; and, while yet several miles from the shores of Udoll, daylight had departed, and the moon at full had risen, red and huge in the frosty atmosphere, over the bleak hill of Nigg

He had reached the burn of Newhall—a small stream, which, after winding for several miles between its double row of alders, and its thickets of gorse and hazel, falls into the upper part of the Bay—and was cautiously picking his way, by the light of the moon, along a narrow pathway which winds among the bushes. There are few places in the country of worse repute among believers in the supernatural than the burn of Newhall; and its character, seventy years ago, was even worse than it is at present. Witch meetings without number have been held on its banks, and dead lights have been seen hovering over its deeper pools. Sportsmen have charged their fowling-pieces with silver when crossing it in the night-time; and I remember an old man who never approached it after dark without fixing a bayonet on the head of his staff. Thomson, however, was but little influenced by the beliefs of the period; and he was passing under the shadow of the alders, with more of this world than of the other in his thoughts, when the silence was suddenly broken by a burst of threats and exclamations, as if several men had fallen a-fighting, scarcely fifty yards away, without any preliminary quarrel; and, with the gruffer noises, there mingled the shrieks and entreaties of a female. Thomson grasped his stick and sprang forward. He reached an opening among the bushes, and saw in the imperfect light the old robust Lowlander of the previous fray attacked by two men armed with bludgeons, and defending himself manfully with his staff. The old man’s daughter, who had clung round the knees of one of the ruffians, was already thrown to the ground and trampled under foot. An exclamation of wrath and horror burst from the high-spirited fisherman, as, rushing upon the fellow like a tiger from its jungle, he caught the stroke aimed at him on his stick, and with a sidelong blow on the temple, felled him to the ground. At the instant he fell, a gigantic Highlander leaped from among the bushes, and, raising his huge arm, discharged a tremendous blow at the head of the fisherman, who, though taken unawares and at a disadvantage, succeeded, notwithstanding, in transferring it to his left shoulder, where it fell broken and weak. A desperate, but brief combat, ensued. The ferocity and ponderous strength of the Celt, found their more than match in the cool, vigilant skill, and leopard-like agility of the Lowland Scot; for the latter, after discharging a storm of blows on the head, face, and shoulders of the giant, until he staggered, at length struck his bludgeon out of his hand, and prostrated his whole huge length, by dashing his stick end-long against his breast. At nearly the same moment the burly old farmer, who had grappled with his antagonist, had succeeded in flinging him, stunned and senseless, against the gnarled root of an alder; and the three ruffians—for the first had not yet recovered—lay stretched on the grass. Ere they could secure them, however, a shrill whistle was heard echoing from among the alders, scarcely a hundred yards away. “We had better get home,” said Thomson to the old man, “ere these fellows are reinforced by their brother ruffians in the wood.” And, supporting the maiden with his one hand, and grasping his stick with the other, he plunged among the bushes in the direction of the path, and, gaining it, passed onward, lightly and hurriedly, with his charge; the old man followed more heavily behind; and, in somewhat less than an hour after, they were all seated beside the hearth of the latter, in the farm-house of Meikle Farness.

It is now more than forty years since the last stone of the very foundation has disappeared; but the little grassy eminence on which the house stood, may still be seen. There is a deep-wooded ravine behind, which, after winding through the table-land of the parish, like a huge crooked furrow—the bed evidently of some antediluvian stream—opens far below to the sea; an undulating tract of field and moor—with, here and there, a thicket of bushes, and, here

and there, a heap of stone—spreads in front. When I last looked on the scene, 'twas in the evening of a pleasant day in June. One half the eminence was bathed in the red light of the setting sun—the other lay brown and dark in the shadow. A flock of sheep were scattered over the sunny side; the herd-boy sat on the top, solacing his leisure with a music famous in the pastoral history of Scotland, but now well-nigh exploded—that of the *stock and horn*; and the air seemed filled with its echoes. I stood picturing to myself the appearance of the place, ere all the inmates of this evening, young and old, had gone to the churchyard, and left no successors behind them; and, as I sighed over the vanity of human hopes, I could almost fancy I saw an apparition of the cottage rising on the knoll. I could see the dark turf walls; the little square windows, barred below and glazed above; the straw roof, embossed with moss and stone-crop; and, high over head, the row of venerable elms, with their gnarled trunks and twisted branches that rose out of the garden wall. Fancy gives an interest to all her pictures—yes, even when the subject is but an humble cottage; and when we think of human enjoyment—of the pride of strength and the light of beauty—in connection with a few mouldering and nameless bones hidden deep from the sun, there is a sad poetry in the contrast which rarely fails to affect the heart. It is now two thousand years since Horace sung of the security of the lowly, and the unfluctuating nature of their enjoyments; and every year of the two thousand has been adding proof to proof that the poet, when he chose his theme, must have thrown aside his philosophy. But the inmates of the farm-house thought little this evening of coming misfortune—nor would it have been well if they had; their sorrow was neither heightened nor hastened by their joy.

Old William Stewart, the farmer, was one of a class well-nigh worn out in the southern Lowlands, even at this period; but which still comprised in the northern districts no inconsiderable portion of the people; and which must always obtain in countries only partially civilized and little amenable to the laws. Man is a fighting animal from very instinct; and his second nature, custom, mightily improves the propensity. A person naturally courageous, who has defended himself successfully in half-a-dozen different frays, will, very probably, begin the seventh himself; and there are few who have fought often and well for safety and the right, who have not at length learned to love fighting for its own sake. The old farmer had been a man of war from his youth. He had fought at fairs, and trysts, and weddings, and funerals; and, without one ill-natured or malignant element in his composition, had broken more heads than any two men in the country-side. His late quarrel at the tryst, and the much more serious affair among the bushes, had arisen out of this disposition; for, though well-nigh in his sixtieth year, he was still as warlike in his habits as ever. Thomson sat fronting him beside the fire, admiring his muscular frame, huge limbs, and immense structure of bone. Age had grizzled his hair and furrowed his cheeks and forehead; but all the great strength, and well-nigh all the activity of his youth, it had left him still. His wife, a sharp-featured, little woman, seemed little interested in either the details of his adventure or his guest, whom he described as the "brave, hardy chield, wha had beaten twasome at the cudgel—the vera littlest o' them as big as himsel."

"Och, guidman," was her concluding remark, "ye aye stick to the auld trade, bad though it be; an' I'm feared that, or ye mend, ye maun be aulder yet. I'm sure ye ne'er made your ain money o't."

"Nane o' yer nonsense," rejoined the farmer—"bring butt the bottle an' your best cheese."

"The guidwife an' I dinna aye agree," continued the old man, turning to Thomson. "She's baith near-gaun an'

new-fangled; an' I like aye to hae routh o' a' things, an' to live just as my faithers did afore me. Why sould I bother my head wi' *improvidments*, as they ca' them? The country's gane clean gite wi' pride, Thomson? Naething less sairs folk noo, forsooth, than carts wi' wheels to them; an' it's no' a fortnight syne sin' little Sandy Martin, the trifling cat, jeered me for yoking my owsen to the plough by the tail. What ither did they get tails for?"

Thomson had not sufficiently studied the grand argument of design in this special instance, to hazard a reply.

"The times hae gane clean oot o' joint," continued the old man. "The law has come a' the length o' Cromarty noo; an' for breaking the head o' an impudent fallow ane runs the risk o' being sent aff to the plantations. Faith, I wish oor Parliamenters had mair sense. What do they ken about us or oor country? Diel haet difference do they mak atween the shire o' Cromarty an' the shire o' Lunnon; just as if we could be as quiet beside the red-wud Hielanmen here, as they can be beside the Queen. Na, na—naething like a guid cudgel;—little wad their law hae done for me at the burn o' Newhall the nicht."

Thomson found the character of the old man quite a study in its way; and that of his wife—a very different, and, in the main, inferior sort of person, for she was mean-spirited and a niggard—quite a study too. But by far the most interesting inmate of the cottage was the old man's daughter—the child of a former marriage. She was a pale, delicate, blue-eyed girl, who, without possessing much positive beauty of feature, had that expression of mingled thought and tenderness which attracts more powerfully than beauty itself. She spoke but little—that little, however, was expressive of gratitude and kindness to the deliverer of her father—sentiments which, in the breast of a girl so gentle, so timid, so disposed to shrink from the roughnesses of active courage, and yet so conscious of her need of a protector, must have mingled with a feeling of admiration at finding, in the powerful champion of the recent fray, a modest, sensible, young man, of manners nearly as quiet and unobtrusive as her own. She dreamed that night of Thomson, and her first thought, as she awakened next morning, was whether, as her father had urged, he was to be a frequent visiter at Meikle Farness. But an entire week passed away, and she saw no more of him.

He was sitting one evening in his cottage, poring over a book—a huge fire of brushwood was blazing against the earthen wall, filling the upper part of the single rude chamber of which the cottage consisted with a dense cloud of smoke, and glancing brightly on the few rude implements which occupied the lower—when the door suddenly opened, and the farmer of Meikle Farness entered, accompanied by his daughter.

"Ha! Allan, man," he said, extending his large hand and grasping that of the fisherman; "if you winna come an' see us, we maun just come an' see you. Lillias an' mysel were afraid the guidwife had frightened you awa—for she's a near-gaun sort o' body, an' maybe no owre kind spoken; but ye maun just come an' see us whiles, an' no mind her. Except at counting-time, I never mind her mysel." Thomson accommodated his visiters with seats. "Yer life maun be a gay lonely ane here, in this eerie bit o' a glen," remarked the old man, after they had conversed for some time on indifferent subjects; "but I see ye dinna want company a'thegither, such as it is"—his eye glancing as he spoke over a set of deal shelves, occupied by some sixty or seventy volumes. "Lillias there has a liking for that kind o' company too, an' spends some days mair o' her time amang her books than the guidwife or mysel would wish."

Lillias blushed at the charge, and hung down her head; it gave, however, a new turn to the conversation; and Thomson was gratified to find that the quiet, gentle girl, who seemed so much interested in him, and whose gratitude

to him, expressed in a language less equivocal than any spoken one, he felt to be so delicious a compliment, possessed a cultivated mind and a superior understanding. She had lived, under the roof of her father, in a little paradise of thoughts and imaginations, the spontaneous growth of her own mind; and, as she grew up to womanhood, she had recourse to the companionship of books—for in books only could she find thoughts and imaginations of a kindred character,

It is rarely that the female mind educates itself. The genius of the sex is rather fine than robust; it partakes rather of the delicacy of the myrtle than the strength of the oak; and care and culture seem essential to its full development. Who ever heard of a female Burns or Bloomfield? And yet there have been instances, though rare, of women working their way from the lower levels of intellect to well-nigh the highest—not wholly unassisted, 'tis true—the age must be a cultivated one, and there must be opportunities of observation; but, if not wholly unassisted, with helps so slender, that the second order of masculine minds would find them wholly inefficient. There is a quickness of perception and facility of adaptation in the better class of female minds—an ability of catching the tone of whatever is good from the sounding of a single note, if I may so express myself, which we almost never meet with in the mind of man. Lillias was a favourable specimen of the better and more intellectual order of women; but she was yet very young, and the process of self-cultivation carrying on in her mind was still incomplete. And Thomson found that the charm of her society arose scarcely more from her partial knowledge than from her partial ignorance. The following night saw him seated by her side in the farmhouse of Meikle Farness; and scarcely a week passed during the winter in which he did not spend at least one evening in her company.

Who is it that has not experienced the charm of female conversation—that poetry of feeling which develops all of tenderness and all of imagination that lies hidden in our nature? When following the ordinary concerns of life, or engaged in its more active businesses, many of the better faculties of our minds seem overlaid; there is little of feeling and nothing of fancy; and those sympathies which should bind us to the good and fair of nature, lie repressed and inactive. But in the society of an intelligent and virtuous female there is a charm that removes the pressure. Through the force of sympathy, we throw our intellects for the time into the female mould; our tastes assimilate to the tastes of our companion; our feelings keep pace with hers; our sensibilities become nicer, and our imaginations more expansive; and, though the powers of our mind may not much excel, in kind or degree, those of the great bulk of mankind, we are sensible that, for the time, we experience some of the feelings of genius. How many common men have not female society and the fervour of youthful passion sublimed into poets! I am convinced the Greeks displayed as much sound philosophy as good taste in representing their muses as beautiful women.

Thomson had formerly been but an admirer of the poets—he now became a poet; and, had his fate been a kindlier one, he might perhaps have attained a middle place among at least the minor professors of the incommunicable art. He was walking with Lillias one evening through the wooded ravine. It was early in April, and the day had combined the loveliest smiles of spring with the fiercer blasts of winter. There was snow in the hollows; but, where the sweeping sides of the dell reclined to the south, the violet and the primrose were opening to the sun. The drops of a recent shower were still hanging on the half-expanded buds, and the streamlet was yet red and turbid; but the sun, nigh at his setting, was streaming in golden glory along the field, and a lark was caroling high in the air, as if its day were

but begun. Lillias, pointed to the bird, diminished almost to a speck, but relieved by the red light against a minute cloudlet.

“Happy little creature!” she exclaimed—“does it not seem rather a thing of heaven than of earth? Does not its song frae the cloud mind you of the hymn heard by the shepherds! The blast is but just owre, an’ a few minutes syne it lay cowering and chittering in its nest; but its sorrows are a’ gane, an’ its heart rejoices in the bonny blink, without ae thought o’ the storm that has passed, or the night that comes on. Were you a poet, Allan, like any o’ your two namesakes—he o’ “The Seasons,” or he o’ “The Gentle Shepherd?”—I would ask you for a song on that bonny burdie.” Next time the friends met, Thomson produced the following verses.

TO THE LARK.

Sweet minstrel of the April cloud!
Dweller the flowers among!
Would that my heart were formed like thine,
And tun'd like thine my song!
Not to the earth, like earth's low gifts
Thy soothing strain is given;
It comes a voice from middle sky,
A solace breath'd from heaven.

Thine is the morn; and when the sun
Sinks peaceful in the west,
The mild light of departing day
Purples thy happy breast.
And, ah! though all beneath that sun
Dire pains and sorrows dwell,
Rarely they visit, short they stay,
Where thou hast built thy cell.

When wild winds rave, and snows descend,
And dark clouds gather fast,
And on the surf-encircled shore
The seaman's bark is cast—
Long human grief survives the storm,
But thou, thrice happy bird!
No sooner has it passed away,
Than, lo! thy voice is heard.

When ill is present, grief is thine;
It flies, and thou art free;
But, ah! can aught achieve for man
What nature does for thee!
Man grieves amid the bursting storm;
When smiles, the calm he grieves;
Nor cease his woes, nor sinks his plaint,
Till dust his dust receives.

As the latter month of spring came on, the fisherman again betook himself to his wears, and nearly a fortnight passed in which he saw none of the inmates of the farmhouse. Nothing is so efficient as absence, whether self-imposed or the result of circumstances, in convincing a lover that he is truly such, and in teaching him how to estimate the strength of his attachment. Thomson had sat, night after night, beside Lillias Stewart, delighted with the delicacy of her taste and the originality and beauty of her ideas—delighted, too, to watch the still partially developed faculties of her mind, shooting forth and expanding into bud and blossom under the fostering influence of his own more matured powers. But the pleasure which arises from the interchange of idea and the contemplation of mental beauty, or the interest which every thinking mind must feel in marking the aspirations of a superior intellect towards its proper destiny, is not love; and it was only now that Thomson ascertained the true scope and nature of his feelings.

“She is already my *friend*,” thought he; “if my schemes prosper, I shall be in a few years what her father is now; and may then ask her whether she will not be *more*. Till then, however, she shall be my friend, and my friend only; I find I love her too well to make her the wife of either a poor, unsettled speculator, or still poorer labourer.”

He renewed his visits to the farm-house, and saw, with

a discernment quickened by his feelings, that his mistress had made a discovery with regard to her own affections somewhat similar to his, and at a somewhat earlier period. She herself could have, perhaps, fixed the date of it by referring to that of their acquaintance. He imparted to her his scheme, and the uncertainties which attended it, with his determination, were he unsuccessful in his designs, to do battle with the evils of penury and dependence without a companion; and, though she felt that she could deem it a happiness to make common cause with him even in such a contest, she knew how to appreciate his motives, and loved him all the more for them. Never, perhaps, in the whole history of the passion, were there two lovers happier in their hopes and each other. But there was a cloud gathering over them.

Thomson had never been an especial favourite with the stepmother of Lillias. She had formed plans of her own for the settlement of her daughter, with which the attentions of the salmon-fisher threatened materially to interfere. And there was a total want of sympathy between them besides. Even William, though he still retained a sort of rough regard for him, had begun to look askance on his intimacy with Lillias;—his avowed love, too, for the modern, gave no little offence. The farm of Meikle Farness was obsolete enough in its usages and modes of tillage, to have formed no uninteresting study to the antiquary. Towards autumn, when the fields vary most in colour, it resembled a rudely executed chart of some large island—so irregular were the patches which composed it, and so broken on every side by a surrounding sea of moor, that here and there went winding into the interior in long river-like strips, or expanded within, into friths and lakes. In one corner there stood a heap of stones, in another a thicket of furze—here a piece of bog, there a broken bank of clay. The implements with which the old man laboured in his fields, were as primitive in their appearance as the fields themselves—there was the one-stilted plough, the wooden-toothed harrow, and the basket-woven cart, with its rollers of wood. With these, too, there was the usual misproportion on the farm, to its extent, of lean, inefficient cattle, four half-starved animals performing, with incredible effort, the work of one. Thomson would fain have induced the old man, who was evidently sinking in the world, to have recourse to a better system—but he gained wondrous little by his advice. And there was another cause which operated still more decidedly against him: a wealthy young farmer in the neighbourhood had been, for the last few months, not a little diligent in his attentions to Lillias. He had lent the old man, at the preceding term, a considerable sum of money; and had ingratiated himself with the stepmother, by chiming in on all occasions with her humour, and by a present or two besides. Under the auspices of both parents, therefore, he had now paid his addresses to Lillias; and, on meeting with a repulse, had stirred them both up against Thomson.

The fisherman was engaged one evening in fishing his nets; the ebb was that of a stream tide, and the bottom of almost the entire Bay lay exposed to the light of the setting sun, save that a river-like strip of water wound through the midst. He had brought his gun with him, in the hope of finding a seal or otter asleep on the outer banks; but there were none this evening; and, laying down his piece against one of the poles of the wear, he was employed in capturing a fine salmon that went darting like a bird from side to side of the inner enclosure, when he heard some one hailing him by name from outside the nets. He looked up, and saw three men, one of whom he recognised as the young farmer who was paying his addresses to Lillias, approaching from the opposite side of the Bay. They were all apparently much in liquor, and came staggering towards him in a zig-zag track along the sands. A suspicion crossed his mind that he might find them other

than friendly; and, coming out of the enclosure, where, from the narrowness of the space and the depth of the water, he would have lain much at their mercy, he employed himself in picking off the patches of sea-weed that adhered to the nets, when they came up to him and assailed him with a torrent of threats and reproaches. He pursued his occupation with the utmost coolness, turning round, from time to time, to repay their abuse by some cutting repartee. His assailants discovered they were to gain little in this sort of contest; and Thomson found in turn that they were much less disguised in liquor than he had at first supposed, or than they seemed desirous to make it appear. In reply to one of his more cutting sarcasms, the tallest of the three, a ruffian-looking fellow, leaped forward and struck him on the face; and in a moment he had returned the blow with such hearty good-will that the fellow was dashed against one of the poles. The other two rushed in to close with him. He seized his gun, and springing out from beside the nets to the open bank, dealt the farmer, with the butt-end, a tremendous blow on the face, which prostrated him in an instant; and then cocking the piece and presenting it, he commanded the other two, on peril of their lives, to stand aloof. Odds of weapons, when there is courage to avail oneself of them, forms a thorough counterbalance to odds of number. After an engagement of a brief half minute, Thomson's assailants left him in quiet possession of the field; and he found, on his way home, that he could trace their route by the blood of the young farmer. There went abroad an exaggerated and very erroneous edition of the story, highly unfavourable to the salmon-fisher; and he received an intimation, shortly after, that his visits at the farm-house were no longer expected. But the intimation came not from Lillias.

The second year of his speculation had well-nigh come to a close, and, in calculating on the quantum of his shipments and the state of the markets, he could deem it a more successful one than even the first. But his agent seemed to be assuming a new and worse character: he either substituted promises and apologies for his usual remittances, or neglected writing altogether; and, as the fisherman was employed one day in dismantling his wears for the season, his worst fears were realized by the astounding intelligence that the embarrassments of the merchant had at length terminated in a final suspension of payments!

"There," said he, with a coolness which partook in its nature in no slight degree of that insensibility of pain and injury which follows a violent blow—"there go well-nigh all the hard-earned savings of twelve years, and all my hopes of happiness with Lillias!" He gathered up his utensils with an automaton-like carefulness, and, throwing them over his shoulders, struck across the sands in the direction of the cottage. "I must see *her*," he said, "once more, and bid her farewell." His heart swelled to his throat at the thought; but, as if ashamed of his weakness, he struck his foot firmly against the sand, and proudly raising himself to his full height, quickened his pace. He reached the door, and, looking wistfully, as he raised the latch, in the direction of the farm-house, his eye caught a female figure coming towards the cottage through the bushes of the ravine. "'Tis poor Lillias!" he exclaimed. "Can she already have heard that I am unfortunate, and that we must part?" He went up to her, and, as he pressed her hand between both his, she burst into tears.

It was a sad meeting—meetings must ever be such when the parties that compose them bring each a separate grief, which becomes common when imparted.

"I cannot tell you," said Lillias to her lover, "how unhappy I am. My stepmother has not much love to bestow on any one; and so, though it be in her power to deprive me of the quiet I value so much, I care comparatively little for her resentment. Why should I not? She is

interested in no one but herself. As for Simpson, I can despise without hating him; wasps sting, just because it is their nature, and some people seem born in the same way, to be mean-spirited and despicable. But my poor father, who has been so kind to me, and who has so much heart about him—his displeasure has the bitterness of death to me. And then he is so wildly and unjustly angry with you. Simpson has got him, by some means, into his power—I know not how; my stepmother annoys him continually; and, from the state of irritation in which he is kept, he is saying and doing the most violent things imaginable, and making me so unhappy by his threats." And she again burst into tears.

Thomson had but little of comfort to impart to her. Indeed he could afterwards wonder at the indifference with which he beheld her tears, and the coolness with which he communicated to her the story of his disaster. But he had not yet recovered his natural tone of feeling. Who has not observed that, while, in men of an inferior and weaker cast, any sudden and overwhelming misfortune unsettles their whole minds, and all is storm and uproar, in minds of a superior order, when subjected to the same ordeal, there takes place a kind of freezing, hardening process, under which they maintain at least apparent coolness and self-possession? Grief acts as a powerful solvent to the one class—to the other it is as the waters of a petrifying spring.

"Alas, my Lillias!" said the fisherman, "we have not been born for happiness and each other. We must part—each of us to struggle with our respective evils. Call up all your strength of mind—the much in your character that has as yet lain unemployed—and so despicable a thing as Simpson will not dare to annoy you. You may yet meet with a man worthy of you; some one who will love you as well as—as one who can at least appreciate your value, and who will deserve you better." As he spoke, and his mistress listened in silence and in tears, William Stewart burst in upon them through the bushes; and with a countenance flushed and a frame tremulous with passion, assailed the fisherman with a torrent of threats and reproaches. He even raised his hand. The prudence of Thomson gave way under the provocation. Ere the blow had descended, he had locked the farmer in his grasp, and with an exertion of strength which scarcely a giant would be capable of in a moment of less excitement, he raised him from the earth, and forced him against the grassy side of the ravine, where he held him despite of his efforts. A shriek from Lillias recalled him to the command of himself. "William Stewart," he said, quitting his hold and stepping back, "you are an old man, and the father of Lillias." The farmer rose slowly and collectedly, with a flushed cheek but a quiet eye, as if all his anger had evaporated in the struggle, and, turning to his daughter—

"Come, Lillias, my lassie," he said, laying hold of her arm, "I have been too hasty—I have been in the wrong." And so they parted.

Winter came on, and Thomson was again left to the solitude of his cottage, with only his books and his own thoughts to employ him. He found little amusement or comfort in either; he could think of only Lillias—that she loved and was yet lost to him.

"Generous, and affectionate, and confiding," he has said, when thinking of her, "I know she would willingly share with me in my poverty; but ill would I repay her kindness in demanding of her such a sacrifice. Besides, how could I endure to see her subjected to the privations of a destiny so humble as mine? The same heaven that seems to have ordained me to labour and to be unsuccessful, has given me a mind not to be broken by either toil or disappointment; but keenly and bitterly would I feel the evils of both, were she to be equally exposed. I must strive to forget her, or think of her only as my friend." And, indulging in such

thoughts as these, and repeating and re-repeating similar resolutions—only, however, to find them unavailing—winter, with its long, dreary nights, and its days of languour and inactivity, passed heavily away. But it passed.

He was sitting beside his fire, one evening late in February, when a gentle knock was heard at the door. He started up, and, drawing back the bar, William Stewart entered the apartment.

"Allan," said the old man, "I have come to have some conversation with you, and would have come sooner, but pride and shame kept me back. I fear I have been much to blame."

Thomson motioned him to a seat, and sat down beside him.

"Farmer," he said, "since we cannot recall the past, we had, perhaps, better forget it."

The old man bent forward his head till it rested almost on his knee, and for a few moments remained silent.

"I fear, Allan, I have been much to blame," he at length reiterated. "Ye maun come an' see Lillias. She is ill, very ill—an' I fear no very like to get better." Thomson was stunned by the intelligence, and answered he scarcely knew what. "She has never been richt hersel," continued the old man, "sin' the unlucky day, when you an' I met in the burn here; but for the last month she has been little out o' her bed. Since mornin there has been a great change on her, an' she wishes to see you. I fear we havena meikle time to spare, an' had better gang." Thomson followed him in silence.

They reached the farm-house of Meikle Farness, and entered the chamber where the maiden lay. A bright fire of brushwood threw a flickering gloom on the floor and rafters, and their shadows, as they advanced, seemed dancing on the walls. Close beside the bed there was a small table, bearing a lighted candle, and with a Bible lying open upon it, at that chapter of Corinthians in which the Apostle assures us that the dead shall rise and the mortal put on immortality. Lillias half sat, half reclined, in the upper part of the bed. Her thin and wasted features had already the stiff rigidity of death, her cheeks and lips were colourless, and, though the blaze seemed to dance and flicker on her half-closed eyes, they served no longer to intimate to the departing spirit the existence of external things.

"Ah, my Lillias!" exclaimed Thomson, as he bent over her, his heart swelling with an intense agony. "Alas! has it come to this!"

His well-known voice served to recall her, as from the precincts of another world. A faint melancholy smile passed over her features, and she held out her hand.

"I was afraid," she said, in a voice sweet and gentle as ever, though scarcely audible through extreme weakness, "I was afraid that I was never to see you more. Draw nearer—there is a darkness coming over me, and I hear but imperfectly. I may now say with a propriety which no one will challenge, what I durst not have said before. Need I tell you that you were the dearest of all my friends—the only man I ever loved—the man whose lot, however low and unprosperous, I would have deemed it a happiness to be invited to share? I do not, however—I cannot reproach you. I depart and for ever; but, oh, let not a single thought of me render you unhappy; my few years of life have not been without their pleasures, and I go to a better and brighter world. I am weak and cannot say more; but let me hear you speak. Read to me the eighth chapter of Romans."

Thomson, with a voice tremulous and faltering through emotion, read the chapter. Ere he had made an end, the maiden had again sunk into the state of apparent insensibility out of which she had been so lately awakened though, occasionally, a faint pressure of his hand, which she still retained, shewed him that she was not unconscious

of his presence. At length, however, there was a total relaxation of the grasp—the cold damp of the stiffening palm struck a chill to his heart—there was a fluttering of the pulse, a glazing of the eye—the breast ceased to heave, the heart to beat—the silver cord parted in twain, and the golden bowl was broken. Thomson contemplated, for a moment, the body of his mistress, and, striking his hand against his forehead, rushed out of the apartment.

He attended her funeral—he heard the earth falling heavy and hollow on the coffin-lid—he saw the green sod placed over her grave—he witnessed the irrepressible anguish of her father, and the sad regret of her friends—and all this without shedding a tear. He was turning to depart, when some one thrust a letter into his hand; he opened it almost mechanically. It contained a considerable sum of money, and a few lines from his agent, stating, that, in consequence of a favourable change in his circumstances, he had been enabled to satisfy all his creditors. Thomson crumpled up the bills in his hand. He felt as if his heart stood still in his breast; a noise seemed ringing in his ears; a mist cloud appeared as if rising out of the earth and darkening round him. He was caught, when falling, by old William Stewart, and, on awakening to consciousness and the memory of the past, found himself in his arms. He lived for about ten years after, a laborious and speculative man, ready to oblige, and successful in all his designs. And no one deemed him unhappy. It was observed, however, that his dark brown hair was soon mingled with masses of grey, and that his tread became heavy and his frame bent. It was remarked, too, that, when attacked by a lingering epidemic, which passed over well-nigh the whole country, he of all the people was the only one that sank under it.

COMPENSATION

It is curious to contemplate the various modes by which people attempt to obtain *triumphs* over each other in this bad world. Some conceive that the very best way is to punish their enemies; some, again, take the Christian doctrine of holding up “the other cheek;” and some are of opinion, that there is no such thing at all as the luxury of a real, *bona fide*, lasting, and unqualified triumph to be had by one man over another. Let us see. We think that the case of simple Walter Wylie, who was, for a long time, so well known in the town of Inverkeithing for his peculiar manner of bringing out his sage philosophy of life, after the pawky form of some packmen, who, when they are satisfied they have a *real* good article to shew, affect a simplicity and scarcity of words of laudation, the very opposite of the verbose and stately declamation by which they endeavour to dispose of their general stock. The quality of Walter’s moral and political commodities, was clearly indicated by the *quantum* of simple naivetè infused into his speech and countenance, while in the act of narration—his effort at the more pure degrees of simplicity being in exact proportion to the estimate—never a wrong one—which he himself made of the excellence of the communication his peculiar inspiration enabled him to produce. His shop, in the High Street of Inverkeithing, in which he sold a variety of those commodities which are necessary for the sustenance of the human corporation, brought him more clearly into public notice. Directly opposed to honest Walter, (as he was styled by the people,) both in manners and locality, was William Harrison, who carried on the same kind of business, in a shop on the other side of the street. The ordinary rivalry existed between them, and they took their different modes of recommending themselves to their customers—the one, Harrison, by a most verbose and figurative sign-

board, and a most loquacious speech, and the other by his peculiar simplicity of enunciation and publication of the qualities of his wares. The former was both a philosophical and a practical rogue. The latter, again, was as honest as steel; and his honesty and simple humour combined, made him be beloved by all that knew him; while his rival, who bore to his simple friend a most inveterate spite, was mortally hated for his roguery throughout the whole burgh.

Now, it happened that Harrison, with a view to two objects—*first*, the gratification of his never-sleeping spirit of roguery; and, *secondly*, the ruin, or at least the inconvenience, of simple Walter—bought up, from a neighbouring rogue, a debt alleged to be due by Walter, but which the latter had truly paid, though he had neglected to get it cancelled or discharged, by a probative receipt. It amounted to about £100; and Harrison paid for it only about £5, with a condition of paying the cedent £5 more, in the event of the entire sum being wrung out of the simple Walter, by the wrenching wheel of a horning. As soon as Walter heard that his rival and enemy Harrison had bought up the false debt, he knew, by an instinct which had nothing wonderful about it, that he was committed for a tough fight; but he retained his equanimity, and even his simple naivetè hung about his mouth and small twinkling eyes, in the same manner as if no horning or any such thunderbolt of Jove, had been in the act of being forged against him. One day his enemy came into his shop.

“Mr Wylie,” said he, with a most pert loquacity, and holding up the horning in his hand, “I have a piece of paper here, in which there is the name of Walter Wylie, as debtor to me in the sum of £100. I think you had better pay me at present, for I do not wish to let the debt lie, and ruin you by allowing a large sum of interest to run up against you.”

“I thank ye,” replied simple Walter, with an obsequious bow, and then proceeded with the business in which he was engaged. Harrison waited, expecting his debt; but Walter continued his operations. “I winna tak the present o’ your interest,” again said Walter; “ye needna wait. And as for your horning, it wadna row up three pounds o’ my sugar. You are as welcome to it as to the interest.”

This answer produced a laugh among the customers against Harrison, who, swearing he would have a caption and apprehend Walter the next day, walked out to instruct his agent to put his threat into execution. He had scarcely gone, when several of his (Harrison’s) creditors—for he himself was great as a debtor—arrested in Walter’s hands the false debt due to Harrison, so as to secure it to themselves. The simple Walter was astonished at all this parade about a debt that he had already paid; but he never lost his simple naivetè or his temper, and was determined to go to jail as meekly as a lamb. Meanwhile, the inhabitants heard of the expected incarceration of their favourite, and insisted upon his defeating the schemes of his enemy, by resisting, according to law, his unjust demands; but Walter, with a good-natured smile, said that he trusted all to the ways of Providence.

Next morning, Walter, altogether unconcerned about his apprehension, went forth to take his walk in the green fields, according to his custom, although it might be to take his breakfast in the old Tolbooth, which frowned upon him as he passed. He had wandered a little way in the country, when he thought he observed two men slipping along behind a thorn hedge, as if they wished to escape detection; and, impelled by curiosity, he slipped along the other side of the same hedge upon his hands and his feet, and, having seen the men deposit something in the side of a neighbouring dike, squatted down as if he had been shot dead, and lay there as still as death until the men went away. Up then rose Walter, and, going cautiously, look-

ing around him again and again as he crept along, he came to the hole in the dike, and, having examined it, found lying there a large bundle of bank-notes, amounting to no less than £500. Putting the money into his pocket, he, by one leap, got to the middle of the road, when, having folded his hands behind his back and struck up a very merry tune, he continued his walk, with a slow and comfortable composure, which was pleasant to see. Several people passed him; and, as he was never heard to whistle before, they wondered mightily that simple Walter should whistle so merry a tune, and, more so, on the morning of that day when he was to be put into prison. When he went a little farther, still whistling and sauntering, with a very easy and pleasant carelessness, whom does he meet? Why, no other than William Harrison, flying along the road like a madman, calling out if any one had seen two blackguard-looking men on the way; for that his shop had been robbed during the night, and all the money he had in the world taken out of it and carried away.

"I saw the blackguards," replied Walter. "They're awa doun by Gibson's loan yonder, as fast as if a messenger wi' a hornin and caption was at their heels."

And he again whistled his tune—a circumstance that struck Harrison, who had never heard him whistle before, with as much surprise as his announcement; but he had no time to wonder or reply, and away he shot like a pursuing messenger, while Walter walked into the town, and opened his shop, wherein he deposited the £500, and proceeded to serve his customers with as much simplicity and good humour as ever.

The news of the loss sustained by Harrison went like wild-fire throughout the burgh; and every one wondered that a man who owed so much money should have had so large a sum as £500 in the house at one time; and it was suspected that he intended to fly the country with the money as soon as he could wring the false debt out of simple Watty. Every inquiry was made after the robbers, but they could not be traced; and now Harrison, made savage by his loss and the allusion made by Watty about the messenger, got his caption frae Edinburgh by a special messenger, and sent to apprehend Walter for the false debt.

"I have a caption against you, Mr Wylie," said the messenger, as he entered. "Will you pay the debt, or go with me?"

"If you'll wait," replied Watty, with the greatest simplicity, "till I weigh this pound o' sugar to Jenny Gilchrist, I'll tak a step wi' ye as far as the jail."

And, proceeding to serve his customer, he indulged in some of his dry jokes in the very same way he used to do; and, when he had finished, called up his wife to serve the shop, and walked with great composure away with the messenger to that place of *squalor* and squalid misery. He was, in due form, entered in the jailor's books, and deposited in the old black building, as a jail-bird, where, if he chose, he might whistle as gaily as he did in the morning when he went out to hear the larks singing in the clouds, to which celestial residence he had so unexpectedly accompanied them. The news now spread far and wide that Walter Wylie was in prison, and many efforts were made to get him to pay the debt at once and gain his liberty; but Walter knew himself what he was about; and, having thus ascertained how far Harrison would go, he sent for a writer, and, having given him instructions and a part of the £500 to pay his expenses, got out in a few days on what the *honest* men of the law call a suspension and liberation.

Some time afterwards, Harrison himself having lost all his money, was put into jail at the instance of one of his creditors, who was enraged at the scheme he had resorted to for defrauding them; and there he lay in the very same room in which Watty had been deposited. Harrison's creditor was a good and godly man, and, like Walter, was

an elder of the church; and the people pitied him greatly for the loss he was likely to sustain through the rogue who had thus cheated so many poor people. His debt was £50; and, to the wonder and amazement of all the inhabitants, he got full payment from Walter Wylie, whereupon Harrison was immediately let out of prison.

No sooner was it known that Walter had paid one debt of Harrison's, than another creditor apprehended the rogue, and lodged him again in jail. He was allowed to lie there for a considerable time, when Watty again came forward and paid this debt also—whereupon he was again allowed to escape. A third creditor followed the example of the two others, and the rogue was again committed to durance; but this time Watty allowed him to remain for a longer time, and then paid the debt, that he might deal out his punishment in due proportions. A fourth time the rogue was apprehended, and a fifth and a sixth time, and, upon each of these occasions, he was allowed to remain for as long a time as Watty thought might produce as much pain as it was his intention to inflict. Altogether Harrison had thus lain about eight months in prison. His debts were now all paid, and the whole sum of £500 exhausted—having been honestly divided among those creditors whose debts were just, and who required them for the support of their wives and children. No part of the £500 was kept to answer the false debt claimed against Watty, because he had secured himself against that demand by getting assignments to the debts he paid, whereby he might *plead* compensation against his persecutor. Thus had he, in his own quiet way, saved himself, punished a rogue, and brought peace and comfort to the homes of a number of deserving men, whose debts otherwise would never have been paid.

The wonder produced by this extraordinary proceeding, on the part of Watty, was unparalleled; and what nobody could comprehend, they were surely entitled to wonder at. Some thought the simple creature mad, and his friends tried to interfere to prevent so reckless a squandering of his means.

"I am surprised, Mr Wylie," said his clergyman to him, one day, in the presence of a number of people who were collected in the shop—"I am surprised at this proceeding of yours, which has spread far and wide throughout the country. If your motive be a secret, I will not ask it from thee; but, if it is a fair and legitimate question, I would make bold to put it to thee, as one of my flock and an elder of our church."

"There is nae secret about it, sir," replied Watty, with his accustomed simplicity. "We are told to do guid to them wha hate us, and *pay* for them wha despitefully persecute us." And he leered a grotesque look of simple cajolery in the face of the godly man.

"I fear thou misquotest the holy book, Mr Wylie," replied the minister. "We are asked to *pray* for our enemies; but not to *pay* for them."

"Ay! ay!" ejaculated Watty, in surprise. "Is it possible that that single letter 'r' should hae cost a pair, simple body £500?"

The minister stared and the people wondered; but, up to this day, none ever knew why simple Walter Wylie paid the debts of his enemy Harrison.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MOUNTAIN STORM.

For several days the wind had been easterly, with an intense frost. At last, however, the weather subsided into a calm and dense fog, under which, at mid-day, it was difficult to find one's way amidst those mountain tracts along which, in general, my route lay. The grass and heath were absolutely loaded with hoar frost. My cheeks became encompassed by a powdered covering; my breath was intensely visible, and floated and lingered about my face with an oppressive and almost suffocating density. No sun, moon, or star had appeared for upwards of forty-eight hours; when, according to my preconceived plan, I reached the farm town of Burnfoot. I was now in the centre of Queensberry Hills, the most notable sheep pasturage in the south of Scotland. It was about three o'clock of the 15th day of January, when, under a cheerful welcome from the guidwife, I rested my pack (for, be it known, I belong to this class of peripatetic merchants) upon the meal ark, disengaged my arms from the leather straps by which the pack was suspended from my shoulders, and proceeded to light my pipe at the blazing peat-fire. Refreshments, such as are best suited to the packman's drouth, were soon and amply supplied, and I had the happiness of seeing my old acquaintances (for I visited Burnfoot twice a-year, on my going and coming from Glasgow to Manchester) drop in from their several avocations, one after another, and all truly rejoiced to behold my face, and still more delighted to inspect the treasure and the wonders of "the pack." At last the guidman himself suspended his plaid from the mid-door head, put off his shoes and leggings, assumed his slippers, together with his prescriptive seat at the head or upper end of the langsettle. The guidwife, returning *butt* from bedding the youngest of some half-score of children, welcomed her husband with a look of the most genuine affection. She put a little creepy stool under his feet, felt that his clothes were not wet, scolded the dogs to a respectful distance, and inspired the peats into a double blaze. The oldest daughter, now "woman grown," sat combing the hoar frost from her raven locks, and looking out from beneath beautifully arched and bushy eyebrows upon the interesting addition which had been made to the meal ark. Some half-a-score of healthy lads and lasses occupied the bench ayont the fire, o'er-canopied by sheep-skins, aprons, stockings, and footless hose. The dogs, after various and somewhat noisy differences had been adjusted, fell into order and position around the hearth, enjoying the warmth, and licking, peacefully and carefully, the wet from their sides. The cat, by this time, had made a returning motion from the cupboard head, from which she had been watching the arrangements and movements beneath. As this appeared to "Help" to be an infringement of the terms of armistice and of the frontier laws, he sprang with eagerness over the hearth. Pussy, finding it dangerous, under this sudden and somewhat unexpected movement, "*dare terga*," instantly drew up her whole body into an attitude, not only of defence, but defiance; curving herself into a bristling crescent, with the head of a dragon attached to it, and, with one horrid hiss and sputter, compelled Help first to hesitate and then to retreat.

"Three paces back the youth retired,
And saved himself from harm."

The guidwife, however—who seemed not unaccustomed to such demonstrations, and who manifestly acted on the humane principle of assisting the weaker, by assailing the stronger combatant—gave Help such demonstrations of her intentions, as at once reduced matters to the *status quo ante bellum*. (I have as good a right to scholarship as my brother packman, Plato, who carried oil to Egypt.) Thus peace and good order being restored, the treasures of my burden became an immediate and a universal subject of inquiry. I was compelled, nothing loath, to unstrap my various packages, and disclose to view all the varied treasures of the spindle and loom. Shawls were spread out into enormous display, with central, and corner, and border ornaments, the most amazing and the most fashionable; waistcoat-pieces of every stripe and figure, from the straight line to the circle, of every hue and colouring which the rainbow exhibits, were unfolded in the presence and under the scrutinizing thumb of many purchasers. The guidwife herself half coaxed and half scolded a fine remnant of Flanders lace, of most tempting aspect, out of the guidman's reluctant pocket. The very dogs seemed anxious to be accommodated, and applied their noses to some unopened bales, with a knowing look of inquiry. Things were proceeding in this manner, when the door opened, and there entered a young man of the most prepossessing appearance; in fact, what Burns terms a "strapping youth." I would observe that, at his entrance, the daughter's eye (of whom I have formerly made mention) immediately kindled into an expression of the most universal kindness and benevolence. Hitherto she had taken but a limited interest in what was going on; but now she became the most prominent figure in the group—whilst the mother dusted a chair for the welcome stranger with her apron, and the guidman welcomed him with a—

"Come away, Willie Wilson, an' tak a seat. The nicht's gay dark an' dreary. I wonder hoo ye cleared the Whitstane Cleugh and the Side Scaur, man, on sic an eerie nicht."

"Indeed," responded the stranger, casting a look, in the meantime, towards the guidman's buxom, and, indeed, lovely daughter—"indeed, it's an unco fearfu nicht—sic a mist and sic a cauld I hae seldom if ever encountered; but I dinna ken hoo it was—I couldna rest at hame till I had tellt ye a' the news o' the last Langhom market."

"Ay, ay," interrupted the guidwife; "the last Langhom market, man, is an auld tale noo, I trow. Na, na, yer mither's son camna here on sic a nicht, and at sic an hour, on sic an unmeaning errand"—finishing her sentence, however, by a whisper into Willie's ear, which brought a deeper red into his cheek, and seemed to operate in a similar manner on the apparently deeply engaged daughter.

"But, Watty," continued my fair purchaser, "you *must* give me this Bible a little cheaper—it's owre dear, man—heard ever onybody o' five white shillings gien for a Bible, and it only a New Testament, after a'—it's baith a sin an' a shame, Watty!"

After some suitable reluctance, I was on the point of

reducing the price by a single sixpence, when Willie Wilson advanced towards the pack, and, at once taking up the book and the conversation—

“Owre dear, Jessie, my dear!—it’s the word o’ God, ye ken—his ain precious word; and I’ll e’en mak ye a present o’ the book, at Watty’s ain price. Ye ken he maun live, as we a’ do, by his trade.”

The money was instantly paid down from a purse pretty well filled; for William Wilson was the son of a wealthy and much respected sheep-farmer in the neighbourhood, and had had his name *once* called in the kirk, along with that of “Janet Harkness of Burnfoot, both in this parish.”

“Hoot, noo, bairns,” rejoined the mother; “ye’re baith wrang—that Bible winna do ava. Ye maun hae a big ha’ Bible to take the buik wi’, and worship the God o’ yer fathers night an’ morning, as they hae dune afore ye; and Watty will bring ye ane frae Glasgow the next time he comes roun; and it will, maybe, be usefu, ye ken, in *anither way*.”

“Tout, mither, wi’ yer nonsense,” interrupted the conscious bride; “I never liked to see my name and age marked and pointed out to onybody on oor muckle Bible; sae just had yer tongue, mither, and tak a present frae William and me,” added she, blushing deeply, “o’ that big printed Testament. The minister, ye ken, seldom meddles wi’ the auld Bible, unless it be a bit o’ the psalms; and yer cen now are no sae gleg as they were whan ye were married to my faither there.”

The father, overcome by this well-timed and well-directed evidence of goodness, piety, and filial affection, rose from his seat on the lang settle, and, with tears in his eyes, pronounced a most fervent benediction over the shoulders of his child.

“O God in heaven, bless and preserve my dear Jessie” said he—his child’s tears now falling fast and faster. “Oh, may the God of thy fathers make thee happy—thee and thine—him there and his!—and when thy mother’s grey hairs and mine are laid and hid in the dust, mayst thou have children, such as thy fond and dutiful self, to bless and comfort, to rejoice and support thy heart!”

There was not, by this time, a dry eye in the family; and, as a painful silence was on the point of succeeding to this outbreaking of nature, the venerable parent slowly and deliberately took down the big ha’ Bible from its bole in the wall, and, placing it on the lang-settle table, he proceeded to family worship with the usual solemn prefatory annunciation—“Let us worship God.”

Love, filial affection, and piety—what a noble, what a beautiful triumvirate! By means of these, Scotland has rendered herself comparatively great, independent, and happy. These are the graces which, in beautiful union, have protected her liberties, sweetened her enjoyments, and exalted her head amongst the nations, and which, over all, have cast an expression and a feature irresistibly winning and nationally characteristic. It is over such scenes as the kitchen fireside of Burnfoot, now presented, that the soul hovers with ever-awakening and ever-intenser delight; that, even amidst the coldness, and unconcern, and irreligion of an iron age, the mind, at least at intervals, is redeemed into ecstasy, and feels, in spite of habit, and example, and deadened apprehensions, that there is a beauty in pure and virgin love, a depth in genuine and spontaneous filial regard, and an impulse in communion with Him that is most high, which, even when taken separately, are hallowing, sacred, and elevating; but which, when blended and softened down into one great and leading feature, prove incontestably that man is, in his origin and unalloyed nature, but a little lower than the angels.

Such was the aspect of matters in this sequestered and sanctified dwelling, when the house seemed, all at once, to be smitten, like Job’s, at the four corners. The soot fell in showers into the grate; the rafters creaked; the dust

descended; every door in the house rattled on its sneck and hinges; and the very dogs sprung at once from their slumbers and barked. There was something so awful in the suddenness and violence of the commotion, that the prayer was abruptly and suddenly brought to a conclusion.

“Ay, fearfu, sirs!” were John Harkness’ first words when springing to his feet; “but there is an awfu nicht. Open the outer door, Jamie, and let us see what it is like.” The outer door was opened; but the drift burst in with such a suffocating swirl, that a strong lad who encountered it, reeled and gasped for breath.

“The hogs!” exclaimed the guidman, “and the gimmers!—where did ye leave them, Jamie?”

“In Capleslacks,” was the answer, “by east the Dod. The wind has set in frae the nor-east, and fifty score o’ sheep, if this continue, will never see the morning.”

But what was to be done?

“The wind blew as ’twould blawn its last,”

and the whole atmosphere was one almost solid wreath of penetrating snow: when you thrust forth your hand into the open air, it was as if you had perforated an iceberg. Burnfoot stands at the convergence of two mountain glens, adown one of which the tempest came as from a funnel—collected, compressed, irresistible. There was a momentary look of suspense—every one eyeing the rest with an expression of indecision and utter helplessness. The young couple, by some law of affinity, stood together in a corner. The shepherd lads, with Jamie Hogg at their head, were employed in adjusting plaids to their persons. The guidman had already resumed his leggings, and the dogs were all exceedingly excited—amazed at this unexpected movement, but perfectly resolved to do their duty.

“Jamie,” said the guidman, “you and I will try to mak oor way by the Head Scaur to Capleyetts, where the main hirsle was left; and Will, Tam, and Geordie will see after the hogs and gimmers ayont the Dod.”

“I, too,” exclaimed a voice from the corner, over which, however, a fair hand was pressed, and which was therefore but indistinctly heard—“I will—(canna ye let me speak, Jessie!)—I will not, I shall not be left behind—I will accompany the guidman, and do what I can to seek and to save.”

“Indeed, and indeed, my dear James, ye can do nae guid—ye dinna ken the grun like my faither; and there’s mony a kittle step, forby the Head Scaur; and, the Lord be wi’ us! on sic a nicht too.” So saying, she clasped her betrothed firmly around the neck, and absolutely compelled him to relinquish his purpose. Having gained this one object, the fair and affectionate bride rushed across the room to her father, and falling down on her knees, grasped him by the legs, and exclaimed—

“O mither, mither! come and help me—come and help me! faither, my dear faither, let Jamie Hogg gang, and the rest; they are young, ye ken, and as weel aquent as yersel wi’ the ly o’ the glens; but this is no a nicht for the faither o’ a family to risk his life to save his substance. O faither, faither! I am soon, ye ken, to leave you and bonny Burnfoot—grant me, oh, grant me this one, this last request!”

The mother sat all this while, wringing her hands and exclaiming—

“Ay, ay, Jenny, get him to stay, get him to stay!”

The father answered not a word, but, making a sign to Hogg, and whistling on Help, and at the same time kissing his *now* all but fainting child, he rushed out of the door, (as Mrs Harkness said,) “like a fey man,” and he and his companion, with a suitable accompaniment of dogs, were almost instantly invisible. The three other lads, suitably armed and accompanied, followed the example set to them; and the guidwife, the two lovers, five or six younger branches, and the female servants of the family, with myself, remained at home in a state of anxiety and suspense which can be better conceived than expressed.

"The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,"

with a force and a stroke loud and painful in the extreme, struck first ten, then eleven, then twelve; but there was no return: again and again were voices heard commingling with the tempest's rush; again and again did the outer door seem to move backwards on its hinges; but nothing entered, save the shrill pipe of the blast, accompanied by the comminuted drift, which penetrated through every seam and cranny. This state of uncertainty was awful—even the ascertained reality of death, partial or universal, had perhaps less of soul-benumbing cold in it than this inconceivable suspense. It required Willie Wilson's utmost efforts and mine to keep the frantic women from madly rushing into the drift; and the voice of lamentation was sad and loud amongst the children and the servant lasses—each of the latter class lamented, indeed, the fate of all, but there was always an under prayer offered up for the safety of Geordie, or Will, or Jamie, in particular. At last the three lads who had encompassed the Dod, arrived—alive, indeed, but almost breathless and frozen to death. They had, however, surmounted incredible difficulties, and had succeeded in placing their hirsels in a position of comparative security; but where were Jamie Hogg and the guidman? The violence of the storm had nothing abated, the snow was every moment accumulating, and the danger and difficulty increasing tenfold. Spirits, heat, and friction gradually restored the three lads to their senses, and to the kind attentions of their several favourites of the female order; but *there* sat the mother and the daughter, whilst the father was either, in all probability, dead or dying. The very thought was distracting; and, accordingly, the young bride, now turning to her lover with a look of inexpressible anguish, exclaimed—

"O Willie! my ain dear Willie! ye maun gang, after a'—ye maun gang this instant," (Willie was on his feet and plaided whilst yet the sentence was unfinished.) "and try to rescue my dear, dear faither from this awfu and untimely end; but tak care, oh, tak care, o' the big scaur, and keep far west by Caplecleuch, and maybe ye'll meet them coming back that way." These last words were lost in the drift, whilst Willie Wilson, with his faithful follower, Rover, were penetrating, and flouncing, and floundering their way towards the place pointed out.

In about half-an-hour after this, the howl and scratch of a dog were heard at the door-back, and Help immediately rushed in, the welcome forerunner of his master and Hogg. They had, indeed, had a fearful struggle, and fearful wanderings; but, in endeavouring to avoid the dangerous, because precipitous Head Scour, they had wandered from the track, and from the object of their travel; and, after having been inclined, once or twice, to lie down and take a rest—(the deceitful messenger of death)—they had at last got upon the track of Caple Water; and, by keeping to its windings—which they had often traced, at the risk of being drowned—they had at last weathered the old cham'er, the byre, and peat-stack, and were now, thank God! within "bigget wa's."

But where, alas! was Willie Wilson? Him, in consequence of their deviations, they had missed; and over him, thus exposed, the tempest was still renewing, at intervals, its hurricane gusts. There was one scream heard, such as would have penetrated the heart of a tiger, and all was still. There she lay, the beauteous, but now marble bride; her head reposing on her mother's lap—her lips pale as the snow-drop—her eyes fixed and soulless—her cheek without a tint—and her mouth half-open and breathless. Long, long was the withdrawal; again and again was the dram-glass applied to the mouth, to catch the first expiration of returning breath; ere the frame began to quiver, the hands to move, the lips and cheeks to colour, and the eyes to indicate the approaching return to reason and perception.

"I have killed him, I have killed him!" were the first frantic accents. "I have murdered, murdered my dear Willie! It was me that sent him—forced him—compelled him out—out into the drift—the cold, cold drift. Away!" added the maniac—"away! I'll go after him—I'll perish with him—where he lies, there will I lie, and there will I be buried. What! is there none of ye that will make an effort to save a perishing—a choking—oh, my God! a suffocating man?"

Hereupon she again sank backwards, and was prevented from falling by the arms of a father.

"O my child!" said parental love and affection—"O my dear wean!—oh, be patient!—God is guid—He has preserved us all—He will not desert *him* in the hour of his need—He neither slumbers nor sleeps—His hand is not shortened that He cannot save—and what He can, He will—He never deserted any that trusted in him. O my child! my bairn—my first born!—be patient—be patient. There—there—there is a scratch at the door-back—it is Rover."

And to be sure Rover it was; but Rover in despair. His faithful companion and friend only entered the house to solicit immediate aid—he ran round and round, looking up into the face of every one with an expression of the most imploring anxiety. The poor frantic girl sprung from her father's embrace, and clung to the neck of the well-known cur—she absolutely kissed him—(oh, to what will not love, omnipotent, virtuous love, descend!)—then rising in renewed recollection, she sat herself down on the long settle beside her father, and burst into loud and passionate grief.

It was now manifest to all that something must be attempted, else the young farmer must perish. Hogg, though awfully exhausted, was the first to volunteer a new excursion. The whole band were at once on their feet; but Jessie now clung to her father, as she had formerly done to her lover, and would not let him go—indeed, the guidman was in no danger of putting his purpose into effect, for he could scarcely stand on his feet. He sat, or rather fell down, consequently, beside his daughter, and continued in constant prayer and supplication at the throne of grace. The daughter listened, and said she was comforted—the voyagers were again on their way—the tempest had somewhat abated—the moon had once or twice shone out—and there was now a greater chance of success in their undertaking.

How we all contrived to exist during an interval of about two hours, I cannot say; but this I know, that the endurance of this second trial was worse than the first, to all but the sweet bride herself. Her mind had now taken a more calm and religious view of the case. She repeated, at intervals and pauses in her father's ejaculatory prayer—

"Yes—oh, yes—*His* will—His holy will be done! The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away—blessed be the name of the Lord for ever! We shall meet again—oh, yes—where the weary are at rest.

"A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore
Where death-divided friends at last
Shall meet, to part no more."

O father, is not that a gracious saying, and worthy of all acceptance!"

At length the door opened, and in walked William Wilson.

The reader needs scarcely to be told that the sagacious dog had left his master floundered, and unable to extricate himself in a snow wreath; that the same faithful guide had taken the searchers to the spot, where they found Wilson just in the act of falling into a sleep—from which, indeed, but for the providential sagacity of his dog, he had never wakened; and that, by means of some spirits which they had taken in a bottle, they completely restored and conducted him home.

Lives there one with soul so dead"

as not now to image the happy meeting betwixt bride and bridegroom; and, above all, the influence which this trial had upon the happiness and religious character of their future married and prosperous lot?

It is, indeed, long since I have laid aside the pack—to which, after a good education, I had taken, from a wandering propensity—and taken up my residence in the flourishing village of Thornhill, Dumfriesshire; living, at first, on the profits of my shop, and now retired on my little, but, to me, ample competency; but I still have great pleasure in paying a yearly visit to my friends of Mitchelslacks, and in recalling with them, over a comfortable meal, the interesting incidents of the snow storm, 1794.

THE MEDAL.

THE good effects resulting from a laudable emulation, are observable in all the affairs of life. It is the true principle of progression and improvement; and, though it may change its form and its name, is apparent throughout all the stages of man's progress. The spirit of competition at school is among its first indications, and, under the name of emulation, it is highly valued as a means of acquiring superiority; but the same power is apparent in ambition,

"That last and strongest tyrant of the heart;

and between these two—the first and last of our active powers—how many forms of the same inspiring principle might be discovered! But the twofold spirit of good and evil is apparent in all things; and, while much good has resulted from the common system of stimulating the emulation of the young, there is unfortunately a danger attending it, resulting from an infirmity in our nature, but which may be diminished in proportion as it is made known. Our meaning and moral will be made apparent from the following genuine narrative of a distinguished *élève* who (and there are many such) assimilated the medal of scholastic merit to the badge of the warrior, acquired at the termination of a campaign. As the one is given for "deeds of glory done," when no more is expected of the veteran, the other was viewed as a final triumph; and vanity, taking the place of exertion, urged the successful scholar to the brink of ruin.

I was educated in a Scottish university, where prizes were distributed to the most distinguished students in each class at the termination of the session. The most distinguished prize was a gold medal, value ten guineas, the gift of a departed *élève*, and awarded to the best scholar in the mathematical class. Having a natural turn or bias for mathematical pursuits, I applied myself night and day to the attainment of this my object of ambition; and this, too, at the expense and neglect of all the other classes which I attended. I was a very imperfect Latin scholar, I knew almost nothing of Greek, and held the unscientific reasoning of logic and moral philosophy in great contempt. By great labour, and after a severe competition, I succeeded in attaining the distinction at which I aimed, and saw myself blazoned in several newspapers as the holder of this distinguishing badge. My great chum at college was a Mr Donald Ferguson, a lad of a staid and persevering disposition, of a well-balanced and judicious mind, and without any talents, *apparently*, which bespoke future distinction. We had been friends and companions at school—our parents were friends before us—and, although we differed materially in disposition, this did not prevent the closest and most affectionate intercourse. Oh! such recollections as now rush upon my mind!—

"Dear happy scenes of innocence and ease—
Scenes of my youth, when every sport could please!"

Ferguson and I spent whole days together in the solitude of nature, with nothing but the deep blue and fleecy white over head; the stunted thorn and the croaking raven above; and the brawling brook and trout-dimpled pool before us. In all games of activity, I had the start of Ferguson, and was always first chosen at "King o' Cantilon," "the dools," and "shinty;" but he had the advantage again of me in feats of strength and precision of eye—in the quoits and putting-stone. But I am wandering from my purpose, and forgetting my narrative.

Ferguson would often admonish me that I was giving offence to several professors, in order to gain the good opinion of one, and that the applause which my medal would procure for me might be too dearly bought at the expense of every other department of study. I took all this in good part, but without altering, in the least, my conduct, as I answered that my friend was making a virtue of necessity, and recommending that course of obscure diligence to me which he by nature was destined to pursue.

In consequence of the *eclat* of the medal, I had an invitation to make one of a pleasure party to Roslin, and had the happiness of being introduced to some young ladies, who had previously expressed to my friend Ferguson a wish to make my acquaintance. We spent a most delightful day—

"Midst Roslin's bowers sae bright and bonny,
And a' the sweets o' Hawthornden."

The ladies were young, bright, and beautiful, light of heart, and delightfully pleasing in manners and conversation. I had not been, previously, accustomed to such fascinating society; and I felt that kind of intoxication which youth, innocence, and strong passion only can feel. I was all day *off* my feet, and gave way to every manner of fun, frolic, and foolery, to shew that, though I was an immense philosopher, I was still a man in every pulse and vein. There was in this happy group one divine countenance; an eye so blue, and so soft, and so penetrating—lips that moved in meaning, and held every instant communication of the most electric character, with a little playful, almost wily dimple, which gave the most varied fascination to a cheek of sunshine and almost rosy hue. Her form

"Was fresher than the morning rose
When the dew wets its leaves—unstained and pure
As is the lily or the mountain snow."

In a word, as you will easily perceive, I was captivated; and could do nothing all the ensuing night but toss and think, and think and toss, till nature at last steeped me anew, not in forgetfulness, but in all the motley, medley joys and gambols of Roslin. I had now become a student of divinity; but all study was with me at an end. No party of young people—particularly where young ladies were concerned—could be held without me; and I had the very great misfortune to be talked of by them as monstrous clever. The young lady to whom I had so long paid particular attention, and at whose house (that of the widow of a respected clergyman of the Church of Scotland) I had long been a habitual and a welcome guest, at last consented to receive me in future in the light of a lover. We walked it, talked it, and laughed it from morning to night, "as other lovers do," and scarcely thought of either the past or the future, being so completely engrossed with the present. Time flew by on angel wings, fleeting as bright, and the period of my examination, previous to my receiving license, at last approached. I had all the while a secret misgiving that I would not stand a trial, in the Presbytery of Edinburgh in particular; but I had no other residence for several years, and, consequently, no other way of becoming a licentiate. As good fortune would have it, the mother of my betrothed, through her interest with the Duke of Queensberry's factor, had every chance of procuring me a presentation the moment I was qualified to accept of it; and both she and her daughter would as soon have dreamt

that I would fail in opening my eyes as in obtaining the indispensable requisite of a license. What I had anticipated however, actually took place: I was found so deficient in the classics of Greece and Rome, that my license was delayed, and I was remitted for twelve months to my studies. This was a degree of disgrace and degradation which altogether unmanned me. I could not face my beloved Mary, or her mother, or any of my own friends and acquaintances, under such circumstances. Sleep fled my eyes, and my mind became unhinged. Existence itself became a positive, insupportable misery. I fled to the mountains; but they, through all their glens and streams, had tongues that syllabled beloved names, which I wished, were it possible, to forget. Wherever I went, the horrors of the past were ever present. People seemed to me to stop and point the finger of scorn at me from every street and door-way. At last, in a fit of despair, I rashly resolved on self-destruction, and plunged headlong into Leith harbour. I have the sound of the waters still in my ears, and that sound will, I verily believe, remain till that of the last trumpet shall mingle with it. When I awoke from seeming nonentity, I was surrounded by many and unknown faces; and my passage back to life was more terrific and painful by far than my exit. I had been for some time in a warm bed, and undergoing the means of resuscitation. "Much kinder," thought I, "had ye been to let me go." My name, parentage, &c., having been ascertained, my father was written to, and I was kept in close custody till his arrival. My father was a respectable farmer in Dumfriesshire, and immediately hurried me away to my native glen. My mother met me with tears; but they were those of sympathy and affection, and one word of reproach she never uttered. I became gradually more and more calm; but at times the thoughts of the paradise which I had lost, and the hell I had earned, would throw me absolutely into convulsions. The calmness which gathered over my soul was not that of resignation—it was the settled gloom of despair. Religion was talked of and pressed upon me; but as yet I had no settled views on that subject. I neither believed nor disbelieved: I was willing, when the subject obtruded itself upon my thoughts, to get rid of it the best way I could. At last my melancholy gradually undermined a naturally good constitution, and it was manifest to my medical adviser that I was verging towards that degree of weakness and decay which, under various distinctive appellations, is sure to terminate in death. A change of scene was urged, and I was hurried away to Saturns Point, that I might inhale the sea breeze, and be interested in new objects. This measure was at first partially successful; but, happening to see a newspaper one day, in which the settlement of my more steady companion in the very church which I had once destined for myself was mentioned, and reading in the very same page a notice of his marriage with my beloved Mary, I became immediately frantic. For years my mind was so far unhinged that a person was appointed to watch my motions, and guard me from self-destruction. "Oh, that cursed medal!" was I heard again and again to exclaim; "it is to this I have to trace my every wo." What I endured during this dark and fearful night, no power of fancy can image, no pen can describe. *Horresco-referens.*

As God would have it, the person who was thus associated with me night and day was religiously disposed, and took occasion, when opportunity served, to lead my mind to serious subjects—to talk of eternity, immortality, heaven, and hell. Often did I kick against the pricks, and strive to resume my former indifference; but it would not do. The very possibility of such awful truths was terrific. I awoke all at once, as it were, to a sense of my imminent danger. I found that I was sleeping on a parapet, from which to fall was certain death. I fled with all possible speed to the

only city of refuge—to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. I grasped the truths of the gospel with the energy of a dying creature. I hugged the very Bible to my bosom, and read it night and day. Our conversations were protracted, and, to me, ultimately delightful. I found that there was mercy even to the *chief* of sinners, and I regarded myself as personally referred to in the gracious intimation. With the perception and cultivation of gospel truth, my health gradually rallied, and my mind assumed a more balanced attitude. It was about this time that my father died, and the superintendence of a pretty extensive sheep farm naturally devolved upon me. This avocation, uncongenial as it was to my college pursuits and feelings, still occupied my attention, and withdrew me from reflections of no very pleasing nature. In cultivating, or rather in renewing my acquaintance with the soil, and with its productions, vegetable as well as animal, I felt that I was placed as it were in the outer vestibule of God's temple. Into the holy of holies, through the blessed mediation, I had already been introduced, and it gave me pleasure to behold the outer, as well as to contemplate the inner courts of so stupendous an erection. "The shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. My sheep hear my voice. He shall separate the sheep from the goats. The streams that run amongst the hills. Mount Carmel, Mount Zion, Mount Horeb." These and similar expressions, in which the Jewish Scriptures, in particular, abound, came home to my newly renovated, and, I trust, regenerated perceptions, with a vividness and a force formerly unknown. I seemed to myself to be a dweller on the mountains of Jacob and amongst the tents of Israel, as my flocks scattered themselves on the hill side, or pursued the green pasturage by the streams of waters. There was a harmony and correspondence betwixt the seen and the unseen, the present and the past, the temporal and the spiritual life, of which I every day became more and more aware.

About this time we received intimation of the death of my father's brother, who had gone, early in life, to Kingston, in Jamaica, and had, by prosperous adventures as a merchant, realized a considerable sum of money. After various delays and much speculation, the residue of his fortune, together with his will, was transmitted home, and I found myself, as my father's heir-male, entitled to upwards of £10,000. My mother had already greatly declined, indeed she never fully rallied after my father's death; and on the very day on which the papers respecting the inheritance arrived, I had to perform the last sad duties to one of the best of parents. Alas! that ever my unhappy conduct should have occasioned pain and anxiety in a bosom where pure affection and undefiled religion habitually resided! I had the consolation, however, to receive my mother's blessing in her parting breath, and to hear her construe my misconduct and misfortunes into merciful dispensations of a wise Providence, who is ever bringing good out of seeming evil.

"And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression."

The lease of the farm having expired in a year after this, I did not think of continuing on a spot which suggested so many recollections connected with the departed; so I at once removed to furnished lodgings in Edinburgh, and gradually renewed my acquaintance with a few of my still surviving friends. Amongst these was the mother of my Mary, who informed me that her daughter was now a widow and without family, and was expected in a month or two to return to her old fireside from the Manse of ——. I do not know how it was, but I trembled all over at this information, and an image, which had for so long a time been almost obliterated from my memory, now rose before me in all its original loveliness. The two months appeared to me two twelvemonths, till I again saw, and renewed my acquaintance with the only woman whom my soul had ever loved. Mu-

tual explanations took place: she had married my friend Ferguson, under the impression that, if not dead, I was confined in a lunatic asylum; and had only consented, after all, at the earnest request of her mother. It was but yesterday that we had a most delightful drive to Roslin, where I renewed my addresses, and have been accepted. I have taken a neat cottage near Hawthornden, where I mean to spend with Mary the remainder of my days, if not in the fervour of young love, at least in the more enduring, perhaps, and more rational endearments of mutual affection, friendship, and esteem. The medal which was the foundation of all my sufferings, I have at this moment suspended before me, in my study, that I may be ever reminded of that false step which, but for the interposition of Providence, might have ruined both soul and body for ever. If it shall be in God's providence that I am blessed with any pledges of affection by my dear Mary, I shall endeavour to save them from the danger which I so narrowly escaped; yet, so strangely commingled are the good and bad things of life—so very delicately are the fine threads that go to form the web of our moral system connected and interlaced—that it requires a hand finer than mere man's to remove some of the dingy lines, so as to restore to the whole that beauty it possessed when spread in the garden of Eden. If we take from the noble steed the emulation that may hurry him over the precipice, we will see him distanced at the next St Leger. Must we, then, secure the good, and run the risk of the attendant evil? The answer does not seem difficult. Let emulation be by all means encouraged; but let all teachers and parents impress upon the minds of the fortunate competitors, the true value of the prize won. And whilst efforts are made in one direction, let it ever be remembered that a *useful* education comprehends *breadth* as well as *length*; and that the departments which have been neglected may prove, in future life, those of the most essential value in promoting success and securing happiness.

PEAT-CASTING TIME.

IN the olden times, there were certain fixed occasions when frolic and labour went hand in hand—when professional duty and kind-hearted glee mutually kissed each other. The "rocking" mentioned by Burns—

"On Fastening's E'en we had a rocking"—

I still see in the dim and hazy distance of the past. It is only under the refractive medium of vigorous recollection that I can again bring up to view (as the Witch of Endor did Saul) those images that have been reposing, "'midst the wreck of things that were," for more than fifty years. Yet my early boyhood was familiar with these social senile and juvenile festivities. There still sits Janet Smith, in her toy-mutch and check-apron, projecting at intervals the well filled spindle into the distance. Beside her is Isabel Kirk, elongating and twirling the yet unbound thread. Nanny Nivison occupies a *creepy* on the further side of the fire, (making the third Fate!) with her scars. Around, and on bed sides, are seated Lizzy Gibson, with her favoured lad; Tam Kirkpatrick, with his Joe Jean on his knee; Rob Paton the stirk-herd; and your humble servant. And "now the crack gaes round, and who so wilful as to put it by?" The story of past times; the report of recent love-matches and miscarriages, the gleeful song, bursting unbid from the young heart, swelling forth in beauty and in brightness like the waters from the rock of Meribah; the occasional female remonstrance against certain *welcome* impertinences, in shape of, "Come now, Tam—nane o' yer nonsense." "Will! I say, be peaceable, and behave yersel afore folk. 'Od, ye'll squeeze the very breath out o' a body."

"Till in a social glass o' strunt,
They parted off careering

On sic a night."

"Ye've heard a liting at our ewes-milking."

How few of the present generation have ever heard of this "liting," except in song! It is the gayest and sunniest season of the year. The young lambs, in their sportive whiteness, are coursing it, and bleating it, responsive to their dams, on the hill above. The old ewes on the plain are marching—

"The labour much of man and dog"—

to the pen or fold. The response to the clear-toned bleat of their woolly progeny is given, anon and anon, in a short, broken, low bass. It is the raven conversing with the jack-daw!—all is bustle, excitement, and badinage.

"Weer up that ewe, Jenny lass. Wha kens but her woo may yet be a blanket for you and ye ken wha, to sleep in!"

"Haud yer tongue, Tammie, and gang hame to yer books and yer schooling. Troth, it will be twa days ere the craws dirty your kirk rigin!"

Wouf, wouf, wouf!—hee, hee, hee!—hoch, hoch, hoch!—there *in* they go, and *in* they are, their horny heads wedged over each other, and a trio of stout, well-made damsels, with petticoats tied up "*a la breeches*," tugging away at their well-filled dugs.

"Troth, Jenny, that ewe will waur ye; 'od, I think ye hae gotten haud o' the auld tup himsel. He's as powerfu, let me tell ye, as auld Francie, wham ye kissed sae snug last nicht ayont the peat-mou."

"Troth, at weel, Tam, ye're a fearfu liar. They wad be fonder than I am o' cock birds wha wad gie tippence for the stite o' a howlet."

"Howlet here, howlet there, Jenny, ye ken weel his auld brass will buy you a new pan."

At this crisis the crack becomes general and inaudible from its universality, mixed as it is with the bleating of ewes, the barking of dogs, together with the singing of herd-laddies and of your humble servant.

Harvest is a blythe time! May all the charms of "Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on him" who shall first invent a reaping machine! The best of all reaping machines is "the human *arm* divine," whether brawny and muscular, or soft and rounded. The old woman of sixty sits all year long at her domestic occupations—you would deem her incapable of any out-door exertions; but, at the sound of the harvest-horn, she renews her youth, and sallies forth into the harvest-field, with hook over shoulder, and a heart buoyant with the spirit of the season, to take her place and drive her rig with the youngest there. The half-grown boy and girl of fourteen are mingled up in duty and in frolic, in jest and jibe, and jeer and laugh, with the stoutest and the most matured. Mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, and, above and beyond all, "lads and lasses, lovers gay!" mix and mingle in one united band, for honest labour and exquisite enjoyment; and when at last the joyous kirk is won—when the maiden of straw is borne aloft and in triumph, to adorn for twelve months the wall of the farmer's ben—when the rich and cooling curds and cream have been ram-horn-spooned into as many mouths as there are persons in the "toun"—then comes the mighty and long-anticipated festival, the roasted ox, the stewed sheep, the big pot enriched with the cheering and inebriating draught, the punch dealt about in ladles and in jugs, the inspiring fiddle, the maddening reel, and the Highland fling.

"We cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear to us!"

Hay harvest, too, had its soft and delicate tints, resembling those of the grain harvest. As the upper rainbow curves and glows with fainter colouring around the interior and the brighter, so did the hay harvest of yore anticipate and prefigure, as it were, the other. The hay todded to the sun;

the barefooted lass, her locks floating in the breeze, her cheeks redolent of youth and her eyes of joy, scattering or collecting, carting or ricking the sweetly-scented meadow produce, under a June sun and a blue sky!

"Oh, to feel as I have felt,
Or be what I have been!

the favoured lover, namely, of that youthful purity, now in its fourteenth summer—myself as pure and all unthinking of aught but affection the most intense and feelings the most soft and unaccountable.

'Ah, little did thy mother think,
That day she cradled thee,
What lands thou hadst to travel in,
What death thou hadst to deal!"

Poor Jeanie Johnston! I have seen her, only a few weeks ago, during the sittings of the General Assembly, sunk in poverty, emaciated by disease, the wife of an old soldier, himself disabled from work, tenanted a dark hovel in Pipe's Close, Castle Hill of Edinburgh.

In the upper district of Dumfriesshire—the land of my birth, and of all those early associations which cling to me as the mistletoe to the oak, and which are equally hallowed with that druidical exorcism—there are no coals, but a superabundance of moss; consequently, peat-fires are very generally still, and were, at the time of which I speak, universally made use of; and a peat-fire, on a cold frosty night of winter, when every star is glinting and goggling through the blue, or when the tempest raves, and

"There's no a star in a' the cary"—

is by no means to be despised. To be sure, it is short-lived—but then it kindles soon; it does not, it is true, entertain us with fantastic and playful jets of flame—but then its light is full, united, and steady; the heat which it sends out on all sides is superior to that of coals. Wood is sullen and sulky, whether in its log or faggot form. It eats away into itself, in a cancer ignition. But the blazing peat—

"The bleezing ingle and the clean hearth-stane"—

is the very soul of cheerfulness and comfort. But then peats must be prepared. They do not grow in hedges, nor vegetate in meadows. They must be cut from the black and consolidated moss; and a peculiarly-constructed spade, with a sharp edge and crooked ear, must be made use of for that purpose; and into the field of operation must be brought, at casting-time, the spademen with their spades; and the barrowmen, and women, boys, and girls, with their barrows; and the breakfast sowans, with their creamy milk, cut and crossed into circles and squares; and the dinner stew, with its sappy potatoes and gusty-onioned mutton fragments; and the rest at noon, with its active sports and feats of agility, and, in particular, with its jumps from the moss-brow into the soft, marshy substance beneath—and thereby hangs my tale, which shall be as short and simple as possible.

One of the loveliest visions of my boyhood is Nancy Morrison. She was a year or so older than me; but we went and returned from school together. She was the only daughter of a poor widow woman, who supported herself, in a romantic glen on the skirts of the Queensberry Hills, by bleaching or whitening webs. In those days the alkalis and acids had not yet superseded the slower progress of whitening green linen by soap-boiling, tramping, and alternate drying in the sun, and wetting with pure running water. Many is the time and oft, that Nanny and I have wielded the watering-pan, in this fairy, sunny glen, all day long. Whilst the humble-bee boomed past us, the mavis occupied the thorn-tree, and the mother of Nanny employed herself in some more laborious department of the same process, Nanny and I have set us down on the greensward—in-tenaci gramine—played at chucks, "head him and cross him," or some such amusement. At school, Nanny had ever a faithful defender and avenger in me; and I have even

purloined apples and gooseberries from the castle garden—and all for the love I bore "to my Nanny O!"

I know not that any one has rightly described a first love. It is not the love of man and woman, though that be fervent and terrible—it is not the love of mere boy and girlhood, though that be disinterested and engrossing—but it is the love of the period of life which unites the two. "Is there a man whose blood is warm within him" who does not recollect it? Is there a woman who has passed through the novitiate of fifteen, who has not still a distinct impression of the feeling of which I speak. It is not sexual, and yet it can only exist betwixt the sexes. It is the sweetest delusion under which the soul of a created being can pass. It is modest, timid, retiring, bashful; yet, in absence of the adored—in seclusion, in meditation, and in dreams—it is bold, resolute, and determined. There is no plan, no design, no right conception of cause; yet the effect is sure and the bliss perfect. Oh, for one hour—one little hour—from the thousands which I have idled, sported, dreamed away in the company of my darling school-companion Nancy!

Will Mather was about two years older than Nancy—a fine youth, attending the same school, and evidently an admirer of Nancy. Mine was the love of comparative boyhood; but his was a passion gradually ripening (as the charms of Nancy budded into womanhood) into a manly and matrimonial feeling. I loved the girl merely as such—his eye, his heart, his whole soul were in his future bride. Marriage in no shape ever entered into my computations; but his eager look and heaving bosom bespoke the definite purpose—he anticipated felicity. I don't know exactly why, but I was never jealous of Will Mather—we were companions; and he was high-souled and generous, and stood my friend in many perilous quarrels. I knew that my pathway in life was to be afar from that in which Nancy and Will were likely to walk; and I felt in my heart that, dear as this beautiful rose-bud was to me, I was not man enough—I was not peasant enough to wear it in my bosom. Had Nancy on any occasion turned round to be kissed by me, I would have fled over muir and dale, to avoid her presence—and yet I had often a great desire to obtain that favour. Once indeed, and only once, did I obtain, or rather steal it. She was sitting beside a bird's nest, the young ones of which she was feeding and cherishing—for the parent birds, by the rapacity of a cat, had recently perished. As the little bills were expanding to receive their food, her countenance beamed with pity and benevolence. I never saw even her so lovely—so, in a moment, I had her round the neck, and clung to her lips with the tenacity of a creature drowning. But, feeling at once the awkwardness of my position, I took to my heels, becoming immediately invisible amidst the surrounding brushwood.

Such was "Will Mather," and such was "Nancy Morrison" at the period of which I am speaking. We must now advance about two or three years in our chronology, and find Will possessed of a piece of information which bore materially on his future fortunes. Will was an illegitimate child. His mother had kept the secret so well that he did not know his father, though he had frequently urged her to reveal to him privately all that she knew of his parentage. In conversing, too, with Nancy, his now-affianced bride, he had expressed similar wishes; whilst she, with a becoming and feminine modesty, had urged him not to press an aged parent on so delicate a point. At last the old woman was taken seriously ill, and, on her death-bed and at midnight, revealed to her son the secret of his birth. He was the son of a proprietor in the parish, and a much respected man. The youth, so soon as he had closed his mother's eyes, hurried off, amidst the darkness, to the abode of his father, and, entering by a window, was in his father's bed-chamber and over his body ere he was fully awake.

John Scott!" said the son, in a firm and terrible tone, grasping his parent meantime convulsively round the neck—"John Scott of Auchincleuch, *I am thy son!*"

The conscience-stricken culprit, being taken by surprise, and almost imagining this a supernatural intimation from heaven, exclaimed, in trembling accents—

"But who are you that makes this avowment?"

"I am thy son, father—oh, I am thy son!"

Will could no more; for his heart was full, and his tears dropped hot and heavy on a father's face.

"Yes," replied the parent, after a convulsive solemn sob—(O heaven! thou art just!)—"Yes, thou *art* indeed my son—my long-denied and ill-used boy—whom the fear of the world's scorn has tempted me, against all the yearnings of my better nature, to use so unjustly. But come to my bosom—to a father's bosom *now*, for I know that voice too well to distrust thee."

In a few months after this interesting disclosure, John Scott was numbered with his fathers, and Will Scott (no longer Mather) became Laird of Auchincleuch.

Poor Nancy was at first somewhat distressed at this discovery, which put her betrothed in a position to expect a higher or genteeler match. But there was no cause of alarm. Will was true to the back bone, and would as soon have burnt his Bible as have sacrificed his future bride. After much pressing for an early day, on the part of the lover, it was agreed, at last, that the marriage should take place at "Peat-Casting Time," and that Nancy should, for the last time, assist at the casting of her mother's peats.

I wish I could stop here, or at least proceed to give you an account of the happy nuptials of Will Scott and Nancy Morrison, the handsomest couple in the parish of Closeburn. But it may not be! These eyes, which are still filled (though it is forty-eight years since) with tears, and this pen, which trembles as I proceed, must attest and record the catastrophe.

Nancy, the beautiful bride, and I, (for I was now on the point of leaving school for college,) agreed to have a jump for the last time, (often had we jumped before,) from a suitable moss brow.

"My frolicsome days will sune be owre," she cried, laughing; "the guidwife of Auchincleuch will hae something else to do than jump frae the moss-brow; and, while my name is Nancy Morrison, I'll hail the dules, or jump wi' the best o' my auld playmates."

"Weel dune, Nancy!" cried I; "you are now to be the wife o' the Laird o' Auchincleuch, when your jumping days will be at an end, and I am soon to be sent to college, where the only jump I may get may be from the top of a pile of old black-letter folios—no half sae guid a point of advantage as the moss-brow."

"There's the Laird o' Auchincleuch coming," cried Peggy Chalmers, one of the peat-casters, who was standing aside, along with several others. "He's nae langer the daft Will Mather, wha liked a jump as weel as the blythest swankie o' the barn-yard. Siller maks sair changes; and yet, wha wad exchange the Will Scott of Auchincleuch, your rich bridegroom, Nancy, for the Will Mather, your auld lover? Dinna tempt Providence, my hinny! The Laird winna like to see his bride jumpin frae knowe to knowe like a daft giglet, within a week o' her marriage."

"Tut!" cried Nancy, bursting out into a loud laugh; "see, he's awa round by the Craw Plantin, and winna see us—and whar's the harm if he did? Come now, Tammie, just ae spring and the last, and I'll wad ye my kame against your cravat, that I beat ye by the length o' my marriage slipper."

"Weel dune, Nancy!" cried several of the peat-casters, who, leaning on their spades, stood and looked at us with pleasure and approbation. The Laird had, as Nancy said, crossed over by what was called the Craw Plantin, and was

now out of sight. To make the affair more ludicrous—for we were all bent on fun—Nancy took out, from among her high-built locks of auburn hair, her comb—a present from her lover—and impledged it in the hands of Billy Watson, along with my cravat, which I had taken off and handed to the umpire.

"Here is a better moss-brow," cried one at a distance—and so to be sure it was, for it was much higher than the one we had fixed upon, and the landing place was soft and elastic. Our practice was, always to jump together, so that the points of the toes could be measured when both the competitors' feet were still fixed in the moss. We mounted the moss-brow. I was in high spirits, and Nancy could scarcely contain herself, for pure, boisterous, laughing glee. I went off, but the mad girl could not follow, for she was still holding her sides and laughing immoderately. I asked her what she laughed at. She could not tell. She was under the influence of one of those extraordinary cackinations that sometimes convulse our diaphragms without our being able to tell why, and certainly without our being able to put a stop to them. Her face was flushed, and the fire of her glee shone bright in her eye. I took my position again. "Now!" cried I; and away we flew, and stuck deeply in the soft and spongy moss. I stood with my feet in the ground, that the umpire might come and mark the distance. A loud scream broke on my ear. I looked round, and, dreadful sight! I saw Nancy lying extended on the ground, with the blood pouring out at her mouth in a large stream. She had burst a blood vessel. The fit of laughing which preceded her effort to leap, had, in all likelihood, distended her delicate veins, and predisposed her to the unhappy result.

The loud scream had attracted the notice of the bridegroom, who came running from the back of the Craw Plantin. The sight appalled and stupified him. He cried for explanation, and ran forward to his dead or dying bride, in wild confusion. Several voices essayed an explanation, but none were intelligible. I was as unable as the rest to satisfy the unhappy man; but, though we could not speak intelligibly, we could act, and several of us lifted her up. This step sealed her fate. The change in her position produced another stream of blood. She opened her eyes once, and fixed them for a moment on Will Scott. She then closed them, and for ever.

I saw poor Nancy carried home. Will Scott, who upheld her head, fainted before he proceeded twenty yards, and I was obliged to take his place. I was almost as unfit for the task as himself—for I reproached myself as the cause of her death. I have lived long. Will the image of that procession ever pass from my mind? The blood-stained moss-ground—the bleeding body—the trailing clothes—the unbound locks, are all before me. I can proceed no further. Would that I could stop the current of my thoughts as easily as that of this feathered chronicler of sorrow! But—

"There is a silent sorrow here,
A grief I'll ne'er impart;
It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear
But it consumes my heart."

I have taken up my pen to add, that Will Mather still remains a bachelor, and that, on every visit I make to Dumfriesshire, I take my dinner, *solus cum solo*, at Auchincleuch, and that many tears are annually shed, over a snug bottle, for poor Nancy.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SPORTSMAN OF OUTFIELDHAUGH.

THE old property of Eyrymount—belonging to a sept of the Græmes that had at a former period emigrated to that locality, not far from the Borders of Scotland, and possessed, at the time we speak of, by Hugo Græme, a man somewhat advanced in years—was (for it has latterly been broken down into small portions) one of the finest small possessions of a commoner that could be seen in the fairest part of Scotland. Compact, and divided into two portions—one of the richest arable soil, and another, where the mansion-house stood, of planted ground, adorned by green trees and flowering shrubs—it was just that kind of property which, filling the purse and pleasing the eye, a man of sense and a lover of nature would choose to occupy and draw the rents of. The proprietor of this fine retreat—Hugo, of the fourth generation of these Græmes—was the very worst kind of man that could have been placed upon such an estate; for he held that kind of middle station between the exclusive great and the not exclusive, which, producing discontentment with what is in one's power, and generating an ambition seldom realized, neutralizes all the advantages of independence, and changes the gifts of Providence into gilded evils. The property was too small to enable him to cope with those whom he wished to associate with, while it was too extensive to admit of its proprietor being classed with many of the neighbouring lairds. Yet his pride struggled with the physical impossibilities with which the limited nature of Eyrymount surrounded him; and his life for many years had been occupied by a series of efforts to make up, by art and diplomacy, what could not be wrung from his patrimonial inheritance. His wife, Madam Græme—as she was styled by the neighbours, from her possession of a pride equal to, if not transcending that of her husband—was the daughter of a rich banker, who, after her marriage, lost his wealth, and, of course, the charm which procured for him the enviable title of father-in-law to Hugo Græme of Eyrymount, the fourth lineal heir of the southern sept of the Græmes. The pride which had been generated in the bosom of the young lady by expectation, was not relinquished with her hope of succeeding to a fortune that had taken to itself “the wings of the morning.” Bringing in this way no riches to her husband, she did not leave behind her the evils which generally attend them and often survive them; and the hundred thousand pounds she expected to succeed to, though now in the pockets of other people, and feeding a pride of a more legitimate kind in the bosoms of the possessors, founded that kind of claim to honour which a ragged heir of a thousand acres which have been out of his family for fifty years, thinks he has a right to assume, from the mere circumstance of his grandfather having been the laird. The pride of the master and mistress of Eyrymount, strong in the original stems, was strengthened, but not, like the forest crab-apple, improved, by the mutual ingrafture of connubial sympathy; and they strained and pulled together in their efforts to stretch the income of Eyrymount into the means of supporting a state to which it was inadequate.

An only child—a female, of considerable pretensions to beauty, simple and humble and highly interesting in her

manners, and called, after her mother, Dione, a title of which Madam Græme was very proud—added considerably to the pride of the haughty couple. They expected “to turn her to account,” and had already fixed their eyes on an old rich nabob, called Benjamin Rice, who had taken up his residence at Pansey Lodge, in the neighbourhood, as a very suitable and easy kind of person, who would likely have no objection to enter without much struggle into the matrimonial noose. They never thought of consulting Dione on the subject; for, though they did not dispute that she had “some interest” in the affair, they took for granted that, as one of the family, she was solicitous for the enhancement of its fortunes, and would at once sell herself for the good of the Græmes of Eyrymount. The nabob was not averse, at least in the first instance, to partake of the fine dinners, served up as a costly kind of bait at Eyrymount House. The dyspepsia, which, along with his rupees, he had caught in India, made him nice in the selection of his food and wine; and no cost was spared by the fortune-hunting Amphytrions, to procure for him whatever might please his palate. Neither had the nabob any disinclination to feast his eyes on the fair face of Dione, who received his looks and attentions very much in the way that children do that emetic Indian shrub, called ipecacuanha. The tyranny of her proud mother, however, prevented her from shewing symptoms of displeasure, when she felt herself subjected to his scrutiny; and, as yet, no hint had been given that he was selected as the man who was to make her “happy for life.”

Next to the getting off of the fair Dione in a carriage and four, and repairing his fortunes with the fortune of her husband, Hugo Græme had long sighed for getting back the merk-land of Outfieldhaugh, formerly a part of Eyrymount, and very foolishly, as he thought, given off from the estate, by his grandfather, Murdoch Græme, to a favourite friend, at a small yearly feu of only a pound sterling. This property was now a very pretty place; having been, by the first feu, embellished by plantations and fanciful shrubs, which, in the course of time, had grown up and covered the high parts with an umbrageous clothing of variegated hues, which glittered in the setting sun with a splendour which could too well be seen from the windows of Eyrymount. The envied place had been taken from the main estate in the most awkward and provoking manner possible; for, in place of being, what its name implied, an outfield, it lay in the very bosom of Eyrymount, and was composed of the best land of the property, besides enjoying the finest prospect on any part of the estate. Beyond all, it was for ever in the eye of the gazer from the casements of the old house; and the original feeling of regret was embittered by a daily accession of displeasure, as strangers at Eyrymount pointed out to the laird the beautiful spot, and asked whether it formed part of the old domain.

The fault committed by Murdoch Græme, had been attempted to be cured by Hector Græme, the father of Hugo who did everything in his power to prevail upon the proprietor of Outfieldhaugh to dispose of it again to him, whereby the integration of the old estate would be effected, while another property could easily be procured to the satisfaction of the seller, who had no family feelings or prejudices to gratify, by clinging to his possession. These efforts

however, had proved vain; for the proprietor of Outfieldhaugh was just as fond of his merk-land as Græme was of his larger possessions; and did not hesitate to get angry, as he was well entitled to do, when solicited to part with his property, to gratify a family pride he despised, because, perhaps, he had no family of his own of which he could be otherwise than ashamed. The wish which had actuated Hector Græme through life was transmitted to his son on his deathbed; particular directions having been given in his will that his heir should be upon the watch, night and day, to pounce upon Outfieldhaugh, and reincorporate it with the main estate, and a hint added, that there was no occasion for being over scrupulous as to the mode by which that great object should be accomplished. This hint was only the advice which Hector himself had followed.

"Honesty has nothing to do with the getting back of what should never have been given away," said the dying man to Hugo, who sat by his bedside after the clergyman had departed. "I have examined all the rights, charters, infestments, retours, and what not, and held them up to the light, to see if I could detect what the lawyers call 'erasures'; but, though I never could see daylight through them, your quicker eyes may be more successful. There's a clause in them, binding the heirs of Outfieldhaugh to lend the charters to us as the superiors. I forced a loan of the title-deeds upon that clause, and had a good fire in my library, which I looked at often, and then at the charter again, and then at the fire again; but—but—but"—And with these words on his tongue, old Hector Græme, who was called the honest laird of Eyrymount, expired.

The recommendation of old Hector was not lost upon Hugo, who recollected, particularly, the hint about the library fire; but a slight legal education he had received in his youth taught him that, as the charters had been registered at Edinburgh, the library fire could not aid him in getting back Outfieldhaugh. After he became satisfied of this, but not before, he "disdained," as he said, "to reacquire the property in the manner recommended by old Hector, who knew nothing about the act 1617; besides, how could he get the titles, without an obligation to redeliver them 'within a reasonable time and under a suitable penalty?'" He resolved upon another plan; but whether it was less dishonest than the speedy mode recommended by old Hector, and affected to be despised by him, may be safely left to the judgment of the world. This much may be said for Hector's project—that he had the merit of philosophizing; for, though the qualities of phlogiston had already been pretty well ascertained, the effects of its application to the rights of another person's property had not often been examined, except by the anti-philosophical fifteen who sit in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and who foolishly allowed themselves to be led by musty acts of parliament and old precedents. The mode adopted by Hugo, again, was purely empirical, and, besides, suggested to him by a change having taken place in the proprietorship of Outfieldhaugh.

Some time previous to our historical era, the proprietor of the envied property died, without children and without any settlement. His heir-at-law was a poor hind, called Nashon Heatherton—a name given to him by his father, who believed that a Scripture appellation, taken *ad aperturam bibliorum*, or chance opening of the Bible, would be attended with luck—a belief well justified by the result. Nashon had got little or no education, and, though a remarkably good-looking, stalwarth countryman, was accounted shy, if not simple—an idea, however, derived merely from his appearance, which denoted no great mental vigour, though the truth was, that he had more wit than his neighbours, being only "shy of using it," and having a perverse pleasure in leading people astray, while he enjoyed the unprofitable errors that were continually made, in imputing to him a facility of being imposed upon. The intelligence

that the hind, Nashon Heatherton, had succeeded to Outfieldhaugh, produced, apparently, greatly more effect upon the public, who were not to benefit by it to the extent of a farthing, than upon the "fortunate youth" himself; who, when the attorney told him of his luck, replied, with a smile, that "he had nae faith in lawyers, an' wad be cautious in takin possession o' an estate, till he was satisfied he was the true heir." Nashon had no intention of being very difficult to be satisfied on the point of right; but some who did not understand the vein of his humour, said he was an idiot who could not distinguish good from evil.

When Nashon Heatherton took possession of Outfieldhaugh—a step he adopted without the necessity of the application of force, contrary to the ideas entertained by his neighbours—he was waited upon by his superior, Hugo Græme, who went for the express purpose of taking the dimensions and properties of the new proprietor, with a view to his ulterior schemes, which he had been remodelling from the instant he heard of the devolution of the envied right on an obscure, illiterate, and simple hind.

"I am come, sir," said Hugo, as he entered the hall of Outfieldhaugh, and accosted Nashon, who was sitting in the finely furnished apartment, occupied in "glowrin frae him"—"I am come to wish you joy of a possession which has come to you without expectation; and, therefore, must yield you pleasure, greater and of a different kind, than acquisitions of property generally do, even to heirs."

"I haena felt it yet," replied Nashon, looking up to Græme with a curious, arch expression of face. "The auld hoosekeeper, Esther Maclean, has been cryin a' day about the beauties o' the place; but she says there's nae conies on't, sae there can be little amusement either for me or Birseer, wha sits growlin there because he's no at his auld quarters at Conybarns."

"We have more foxes than conies in these quarters," replied Græme, struck with the cause of complaint stated *in limine* by the new proprietor.

"I suppose sae," replied Nashon, eyeing Græme expressively; "there's nae want o' them in ony quarter; but they're easily got quit o'; for, whar there's nae *fules*, there's nae foxes. We had nane o' them at Conybarns."

"You seem to have a grateful recollection of that place," said Græme. "Old Langbane, the laird of it, would, I understand, sell it. You should purchase it."

"I hae aneugh o' property," replied Nashon, "when I hae Outfieldhaugh—maybe owre muckle."

"You do not understand me," said Græme. "I mean, that you should sell Outfieldhaugh, and buy Conybarns with the price."

"That wadna be ill to do," said Nashon; "for they say the laird of Eyrymount has a keen ee to the place; but dinna ye think I should just be doin wi't? There's owre muckle wood on't, but that can be easily mended wi' a guid axe; an' I can get a breed o' conies frae Conybarns."

"Useful improvements," said Græme, staring at Nashon, and unable to ascertain whether he was an idiot or a wag.

"I hae ither changes i' my head," replied Nashon, "if I could be at the trouble o' bringin them oot. I like a stir about a place. There's some fine waterfa's i' the dell yonder; but what's a waterfa without a mill? Folk rin after thae things, an' seem to like the noise o' the dashin waters; but hoo muckle mair noise wad there be if there was a guid birlin spinnin mill alangside o' them? Besides, there's some life about a mill—the swearin o' the men spinners, the screighin o' the hizzies, their love-makins i' the green haughs, their penny waddins i' the ale-houses. It's thae things that mak a country place lightsome. I wonder that Eyrymount hasna mair sense than to keep his place sae quiet. I'll shew him an example."

"That may not suit his taste," replied Græme, at a loss

what to say; for he had some suspicions that Nashon knew him, and the introduction of himself was now made a difficult matter.

"It's impossible, sir," said Nashon: "would it no suit his taste to mak siller? They say he spends weel; and, while his waters are rinnin to the sea, withoot ca'in a single mill, he may rin dry—unless, indeed, Benjamin Rice marries his bonny dochter, Dione."

"I am thinking Esther Maclean has been giving you the news of the place," said Græme, trying to smile, but unable to get beyond a grin.

"Ou ay, the cratur has been trying to amuse me," said Nashon; "for she couldna bear, she said, to see me sittin i' the middle o' this big ha', lookin frae me. an' thinkin o' the huntin o' the conies o' Conybarns; but when the mills are set again we'll hae something to keep us oot o' langer. I may, peradventure, think too o' some tanneries. It's a pity to lose sae muckle oak bark; an' Jamie Skinner, the leather-merchant o' Peebles, says he could sell as many skins as I could gie him."

"But you forget, Mr Heatherton," said Græme, beginning to lose temper, "that you have only a servitude to a limited extent over the Well Burn, and will not be entitled to destroy the purity of the water."

"But water doesna rin up the brae, sir," replied Nashon. "I'm below Erymount, an' my neebors below me winna object. But, after a', I think o' mony things I never execute."

"I hope you will think twice about these things," said Græme. "I merely called in, as a neighbour, to wish you 'oy. Good morning!"

"Guid mornin, sir!" replied Nashon, without rising from his chair. "That's Erymount himsel," he continued, after Græme had departed, "if Esther's account o' him be correct. Isna that the laird o' Erymount, Esther?" said he to Esther Maclean, as she entered.

"The very man," replied Esther. "Was he wantin to buy Outfieldhaugh frae ye?"

"Ou ay," replied Nashon; "but I tauld him I intended to build spinnin mills an' tanneries on the Well Burn."

"An' do ye intend to spoil yer estate in that way?" said Esther.

"It's no very likely," replied Nashon. "The value o' Outfieldhaugh lies in its woods an' waterfa's; an', though I pretended to like the whin muirs o' Conybarns better, it was only to bring the laird oot, an' see if ye were richt in what ye tauld me. I think ye're nearly as wise as mysel."

While Nashon and Esther Maclean were thus comparing notes, Hugo Græme returned to Erymount, and had a conference with his lady on the character of the new proprietor of Outfieldhaugh.

"What kind of a boor have you found this new proprietor of your old estate?" said the lady, as he entered. "Is he simple enough to sell, or wild enough to dissipate it by incurring debt?"

"He is either the most arch rogue or the greatest fool I ever met in my life," replied Græme. "I intended to introduce myself after the first salutation; but the idiot began talking about Erymount as if he thought I were some one else, and said such things as entirely prevented me from making the declaration. His housekeeper is old Esther Maclean, whom he has retained; and she, who bears us no good feeling, has told him everything he requires to know to put him on his guard against us—that is, I mean, if he has wit enough to take advantage of it; for I doubt yet if he is not a born idiot. He talked about hunting conies, and building spinning-mills on the Well Burn, like a madman; yet, if he knew whom he was talking to, there was a sense in his madness which I do not much like."

"Did you ask him if he would sell Outfieldhaugh?" inquired the lady.

"I did," answered Græme; "and his answer was a question—'Dinna ye think I should just be doin wi't?' What could you make of a person who could return such an answer to a plain question?"

"But you say he talked of hunting," said the lady. "That is a very good way, as you well know, of getting into debt."

"Yes, but it depends on the game," replied Græme—"cony-hunting, with an old hairy terrier he calls Birsey, will not ruin him, even if he found any conies on Outfieldhaugh, which I defy him to do."

"But the spirit of Nimrod," replied the lady, "extends to every kind of game, whether real statutory game, conies, or pigeons. Give him a smack of reynard, and the despicable cony will soon be left to its burrow."

"If he has wit enough to distinguish between a fox and a rabbit," said Græme—"which, however, I doubt. Every effort must, no doubt, be tried. Outfieldhaugh must be got, by force or stealth. It must be Dione's dowry, when she is wedded to Benjamin Rice; and when he dies, as he must soon do, if one can have any faith in his gamboge-coloured skin, we shall have our patrimonial estate entire; and his large fortune to dash away with in successful competition with Sir James Featherstone of Cockairney, Sir George Becket of Turfhall, and all our sporting neighbours, who at present outstrip us in the race of pleasure, and excel us in the court of fashion. The question is—How is this to be accomplished? 'He that dares well fares well,' as the saying is; and I think we cannot do better than try to inoculate this piece of untenanted spiritless flesh with a little of the blood of Nimrod and Pollux. Hunting and horse-racing comprehend within themselves all sorts of expensive dissipation. If he joins our Soho Club, he will require money. I will lend it, if I should borrow it for that purpose; and I know the nature of an adjudication."

"The project sounds well," said the lady; "but I must see the cony-hunter myself, for women are better judges of men, than men are of their neighbours. I will give him a dinner, if you will give him a present of a hunter. We must blow the soap-bell before it flies and bursts."

"If you are to make a *belle* of him, you must indeed prepare plenty of soap," said Græme, smiling at the cleverness of a vile pun. "But, without a joke, he is a good-looking boor, were he washed. A cake of soap with your invitation card might be of some importance. It is the *alpha* of the education of a gentleman, and we must begin at the beginning."

This conversation was overheard by the gentle Dione, who was, in no small degree, interested in the affair propounded by her parents. She now knew, for certain, their intentions in regard to the disposal of her hand; and, while her judgment disapproved of their scheme, which was unfair towards the simple-minded (so she termed him) Heatherton, and cruel to herself, her feelings rebelled against a union with the gamboge-coloured old Indian, who had already ogled her into a sympathetic jaundice. The process of her thoughts was extremely favourable to calling forth a strong interest in favour of Nashon, whom she had never seen, but whom she figured to herself as a plain, good-looking man, (as indeed he was,) whose simplicity was about to be taken advantage of, for her sake, by his property being unjustly wrested from him and given to her, as a dowry, on the occasion of her marriage with a man she hated. Simple as she herself was, she felt inclined to counteract these ambitious and unjustifiable intentions; and, if Nashon Heatherton had been known to her, and in any way worthy of her affections, she would (so she theorised) have thrown herself into the arms of the new laird of Outfieldhaugh, saved him from ruin, and herself from an interminable grief.

The intensity of her feelings, called up by what she had overheard, and inflamed by the workings of her own mind, drove her into the surrounding woods of Erymount where

she might weep unobserved; and the excited state of her feelings sought relief by the natural means of speaking out her thoughts. She was overheard by Nashon. They spoke. An explanation took place, and that sympathy which follows often on mutual knowledge, led the way to love. He learned from her her own unhappy position, and the intentions of her father to ruin him, for the purpose of securing Outfieldhaugh. Proceeding homewards, he thus monologized:—

“An’ sac Eyrymount wants to ride me to the devil, that he may get Outfieldhaugh! He maun be ignorant o’ the siller I got as the auld laird’s executor, besides the estate as his heir. Let him remain in his ignorance, an’ we’ll see wha will ride langest an’ wha’ll keep strongest. My neck has as mony liths in’t as Eyrymount’s craig; an’, if he canna get Outfieldhaugh except by stretchin mine, I’ll no’ get his dochter Dione without gien his a thrav. Can onybody blame me? Am I no fechtin him wi’ his ain weapons? and, besides, are we no strugglin for the same object—the junction o’ the twa estates that hae been owre lang separated?”

Continuing his train of thought farther than we think it necessary to record it, Nashon arrived at Outfieldhaugh House, at the door of which he met Esther Maclean, who presented to him a face so full of expression, that the ideas seemed to be struggling in all parts of it to get down to her mouth for vent. It was clear that something pertaining to the Eyrymount family had occurred during the few hours’ absence of her master; for few other subjects could have produced such a mute loquacity as her moving wrinkles exhibited as Nashon entered.

“Your threat to big spinnin mills on the Well Burn has biggit your respectability, guid sir,” she exclaimed. “Read that, and then tak a turn into the stable.”

Esther handed to Nashon, as she spoke, a letter from Madame Græme, finely perfumed, the sight and smell of which produced a convulsion in the old simple frame of mind of the quondam hind, which he did not care about exhibiting even to Esther. The application of his large coarse fingers to the *single drop* of scented green wax with which the note was sealed, produced a mysterious kind of feeling of awe without a visible cause, which was entirely new to him; and the great array of Cupids and roses stamped on the margin of the fine hot-pressed paper, completed the effect of this mute Ariel from the regions of high life. The note was as follows:—

“Mr and Mrs Græme of Eyrymount present their respects to Mr Nashon Heatherton, and request the honour of his company to dinner at Eyrymount, on Wednesday se’night, the 15th instant, at five o’ clock.”

On the other side of the note were a few lines, in another and a bolder hand, to this effect:—

“Mr Græme, who has had already the honour of conversing with Mr Heatherton, presumes upon his character of feudal superior of Outfieldhaugh, to mark the introduction of a new vassal by some trifling consideration; and therefore, and as the Soho Club meet for the purpose of paying their respects to Mr Reynard to-morrow at the Shaking Bridge over the Hazel Burn, he requests Mr Heatherton’s acceptance of his favourite hunter, Springall, and the pleasure of his company at the chase.”

“My auld maister wad hae tauld me what was in the letter,” said Esther, turning up her eyes expressively into the face of Nashon.

“An’ yer new ane winna refuse ye the pleasure,” answered Nashon. “The braw folk o’ Eyrymount have invited me to dinner on Wednesday se’night, and sent me a hunter, for the chase, the morn, at the Shakin Bridge.”

“An’ will ye gang?” said Esther.

“Surely,” replied Nashon—“ordinary politeness seems to demand it; but what will I do for a huntin dress?”

“Yer ancestor’s scarlet coat winna disgrace his heir,” replied Esther. “It’s up i’ the leather kist, i’ the blue parlour yonder; an’ I’ll mak oot to get a len’ o’ a pair o’ boots frae Squire Hawthorn’s butler, wha’ll never let on the thing to his maister.”

Nashon smiled at the idea of borrowing a pair of boots; but pride had not yet in him attained that height which enables its votaries to look down with contempt on the obligation of a loan, and he chose to sport Squire Hawthorn’s boots and Squire Græme’s horse in the meantime, to gratify an object which would require still greater sacrifices. Next day, accordingly, he appeared at the rendezvous, where he in a short time was accosted by Eyrymount, who was accompanied by the proprietor of the under part of the neophyte’s habiliments.

“You will find this sport better than cony-hunting, Mr Heatherton,” said Eyrymount, laughing.

“Ou ay,” replied Nashon; “but I fear it’s mair expensive I may become owre fond o’t, an’ the rents o’ Outfieldhaugh may scarcely haud agen the expense.”

“You cannot complain yet,” said Eyrymount, looking significantly at Springall.

“I should think not,” said Squire Hawthorn, looking as significantly at the boots.

“No,” replied Nashon, drawing up his leg a little, but immediately throwing it down again, with a jerk of the stirrup—“but I ken my weakness. I had nae less than nine terriers, ance, at Conybarns—a perfect pack; an’ I wadna wonder to see me hae as mony fox-hounds—ay, an’ maybe as mony hunters. I fear, Eyrymount, I maun lay a’ that cost at your door.”

“There’s no sound on earth like the tally-ho!” cried Eyrymount, delighted with Nashon’s views, which seemed to coincide so well with his own. “You will be a true son of Nimrod, an’ may carry away the gree of the hunting-cup of the southern sept of the Græmes.”

“I like baith the drinkin-horn an’ the tootin-horn,” said Nashon; “an’ will empty the ane an’ fill the other as weel’s ony fox-hunter i’ the kingdom.”

“Bravo! I have not been mistaken in you,” cried Græme.

“The grey lark flees highest o’ a’ the singin tribe,” replied Nashon, “an’ the bright gooldie the lowest. Ye canna ken a man frae his coat, ony mair than ye can tell whether a cat is a guid hunter frae the colour o’ her skin.”

“You are right,” said Squire Hawthorn; “neither can you know a man from his boots.”

“If they’re borrowed, ye can say that he’s a cautious, savin chiel wha wears them,” replied Nashon; “but, if they’re bought an’ no paid,” (with a significant look at Hawthorn, who was known to be deep in debt,) “ye can say he’s an ass. Is the horn no sounded yet? I’m keen to set aff. My bluid’s getting warm wi’ the thought o’ the throw aff an’ the hark on. Ho! he! ho! tantivy! tantivy!”

And Nashon cracked his whip as he thus emulated, by a loud bellow, the spirit of the huntsman.

The chase began, and was continued with great spirit. Reynard displayed his usual tact; and the hounds, Squire Hawthorn’s pack, were in fine blood. Nashon’s tally-ho was heard ringing loudest in the woods; his horse was the finest of the company; and he scoured on like the wind, heedless of the laugh that was attempted to be raised against him by Hawthorn, who had told several of his friends, that Springall, which once belonged to him, knew the touch of the heel of his old boots, and, if they did not take care, would carry the clown in at the death, and shame the whole Soho Club. This sportive sally was successful in more ways than one; for, while its humour was well calculated to produce cachination, there was a ratiocination in it which was calculated to produce a lugubrious reaction; for, to the surprise and discomfiture of all the huntsmen, Nashon Heatherton was the only individual who was

in at the death—a feat, doubtless, as much owing to the speed of Springall as to the dauntlessness of the rider, who, however, displayed great power of horsemanship and surprising presence of mind, on grounds of great difficulty and danger.

In the evening the club enjoyed the hospitality of the proprietor of Nashon's underfittings; and, although the borrower had, during the day, suffered the gibes of the young foxhunter, he did not think that either these or the relation in which that part of his dress stood to the lender, disqualified him from eating his meat or drinking his wine. That he would be dubbed the butt of the company, he knew before he went; but he felt himself under the obligations of a peculiar humour, that ruled him with a power paramount to other considerations; and, in the present instance, that humour was itself subservient to objects of ambition of high import—motives that led him to overlook the temporary buzz of an innocuous raillery on the part of men who were fast going to a destruction which he was taking active means to avoid. He, therefore, put on the appearance of enjoying the fox-hunters' peculiar mode of draining the cup of pleasure to the dregs, laughed, sang, drank, and even essayed, on one or two occasions, a sturdy oath. His strength, robust health, and unsubdued constitution, enabled him to cope with the strongest of these Tricongii in their own element, wine; and when the *great cup* was brought in—which was generally when all parties were in that intermediate state between sense and forgetfulness which demanded in charity a total finisher, to send them to entire oblivion and rest—he was as sober as a judge. A quarter of an hour after the emptying of that fearful goblet, the fox-hunters around him, who had been high in their humour of drawing “rises” out of him, according to the slang of aquatic sportsmen, or “baiting the badger,” in their more appropriate dialect, fell at his feet, singing as they descended, “with a hey ho chevy!” and all groaning in rough chorus. He alone sat immovable, laughing at the sleeping pack who had been, during the night, following him with their deep mouths, and baying forth their humour. Where were they now? Their game had become their whipper-in, though they were unconscious of his whip. He took Græme's hand as he slept, and shook it as that of his father-in-law to be, and wished him joy of Outfieldhaugh. He then mounted Springall, and sought his home and his bed.

On the day appointed, Nashon, dressed and scented in great style, dined at Eyrymount. There were present several fox-hunters, Benjamin Rice, and others of the neighbours—none of all whom came up to Nashon in brilliancy or smell. They seemed all delighted and amused with the grotesque figure, excepting Dione, who stared at him in sorrow and disappointment; for she could not conceive how so sudden a transformation from simplicity to gaudy glitter and bad taste, could have taken place on one who appeared to be gifted with prudence and good sense. She feared the hunter had turned his brain, and that her father and mother were in a fair way of seeing their scheme accomplished. Her pride was, moreover, hurt, when she saw the man whom she had begun to love, made a laughing-stock to a whole company, including the hated Benjamin Rice, who was himself exquisitely fitted for filling the high office so unaccountably occupied by the plain and cautious Nashon Heatherton. Nor was she better pleased with his conversation, which, while his old Scotch was retained by necessity, was directed towards subjects which she thought he despised—the interminable hunt, the turf, the dog-kennel, and the wassail chamber.

“I am told, Mr Heatherton,” said Benjamin Rice, “that you were in at the death at the last hunt, and that you stood the great cup better than any one of the company.”

“Ou ay,” replied Nashon—“I hae turned a great sports-

man, thanks to Eyrymount! an' no a bad hand at the bottle. I'm at present on terms wi' Gib Cowper, the horse-jockey, for twa famous hunters, as guid, I think, as Springall. They're baith by Bellerophon, real bluids; but he asks twa hunder guineas for them, an' that I think is owre muckle; I offered him a hunder and ninety.”

“Where are they to be seen?” inquired Græme.

“I dinna ken,” replied Nashon. “He brought them to Outfieldhaugh; but wadna leave them in my stable, till we bargained. He said he would ca' again. I hae been offered Lord Luxmore's pack, too, at four hunder guineas, fifty head, that is about four guineas a dog—owre muckle dinna ye think, Eyrymount?”

“I don't think so,” said Eyrymount—“I'll run halves with you.”

“I'll consider o't,” said Nashon. “His Lordship said he wad see me again. We'll better no seem owre anxious—we may mak a better bargain, especially as they say he needs money.”

“Is it possible,” whispered Hawthorn to Eyrymount, “that the borrower of my old boots has any serious intention of keeping a pack?”

“I do not doubt it,” replied Eyrymount.

“Poor simpleton!” said Dione to herself, with a sigh, as she looked on the ruddy cheeks and open countenance of her grotesquely dressed lover—“has he fallen into the very snare I unwittingly pointed out to him?”

“You are the most spirited laird that Outfieldhaugh ever saw, Mr Heatherton,” said Madame Græme. “It is a great pleasure to have a neighbour like you alongside of us.”

“An' I'm as weel pleased wi' the high-spirited Eyrymount,” said Nashon—“we'll dash awa nicely together.”

“Saw you ever such a fool, Miss Græme?” whispered Benjamin. “He will soon dash through Outfieldhaugh. If he had ploughed the salt seas, and endured the blisters of a tropical sun for his money, as I have done, he would know better how to guide it.”

Dione intuitively turned her face from the orange-coloured Indian, towards the rose-coloured youth, and sighed.

“Are you to be present at the steeple-chase, on the 19th?” said Eyrymount to Nashon.

“Surely,” replied he, readily. “I canna resist a steeple-chase. I ken nae sport like that mixture o' rinnin, louping, manoeuvring, jockeyin, tumblin, an' brak-neck feats o' horsemanship. It's right glorious. If life had naething better to offer us, as a reward, for a' we are doomed to suffer between the cradle and the grave, a guid steeple-chase wad be aneugh to mak us a' wish to live our lives owre again. What are the rules?—will Springall be admitted?”

“No; he is beyond the age,” replied Græme; “but Hawthorn will sell ye Copperbottom.”

“Weel, I'll ca' the morn an' see Copper,” said Nashon. “If I buy, I'll ride him mysel—I'll trust nae jockey. If I win, I'll gie the gentlemen o' the Soho Club a chance for the prize again, by another steeple-chase, the day after the next county races, whereat, by-the-by, I wad like to hae a sweat for the gowd cup, as a guid way o' bringin a person into notice, especially whar ane is his ain jockey, as I wad be, wearin a green silk jacket as livery. Hoo gran' it wad be to hear the leddies cryin, ‘Success to the green!’—bettin their gowd pins on his comin up in guid time to the winnin post, and then shakin hands wi' the victor, wi' a thousand gratulations on his success!”

“Do my ears deceive me,” said Dione to herself, “as my eyes seemed to do when I saw the piebald character of his dress? How powerful is pride, when it is stimulated in the hidden recesses of the mind of the peasant, by the magic wand of fortune! Alas! alas! my choice is now between a foolish beggar and a heartless nabob.”

The effect produced by Nashon on the whole company assembled at Eyrymount, was extraordinary. The master

and mistress were delighted with him, and devoted him, in their imaginations, to a speedy immolation on the altar of the god of folly; the members of the Soho Club already marked him out as a good pigeon, whose tail-feathers would enable them to fly yet a little longer in the high regions of fashion; Dione sighed for a lost lover and ruined simpleton; and Benjamin Rice counted, in his imagination, his guineas, and congratulated himself on a gout that prevented him from engaging in sports that might tend to dissipate them, along with the remnant of a ruined constitution, which sack, and sago pudding, and panado, could scarcely support.

Nashon bought Copperbottom, ran him, carried the prize, and sold him next day for ten pounds of profit; on which great occasion he informed his housekeeper, Esther Maclean, that he intended to entertain the whole Soho Club at Outfieldhaugh—a communication that produced a mixed feeling of terror and wonder, on the part of the old housekeeper, which she had no words adequately to express. She wished him to be genteel, and like the other gentlemen of the neighbourhood; but she had heard hints, that he was getting fast into the vortex of a sportsman's dissipation; and the intelligence that he was to entertain the "Soho"—equal, in her estimation, to dining the Cham of Tartary and his staff—confirmed the report, and filled her with sorrow and regret. All her efforts to dissuade her master from his purpose, were unavailing: cards were issued to forty gentlemen; the question put by Esther, where he was to find the necessary service of table apparatus, the wine, the cooks, and the waiters, required to be answered; and he was at no loss for an answer on a subject he had deeply considered. Mounting Springall, he hastened away to a town at some considerable distance, and procured an estimate, from an innkeeper, of the expense of his projected entertainment. The innkeeper undertook to supply everything, with livery servants, unknown to the company, and keep his engagement a profound secret, for so much a-head. The entertainment went off in great style; Nashon presided, with all the manners of a thorough-bred blood sportsman—drank, sang, and talked of races and steeple-chases, with all the slang and spirit of the craft. The wine, the plate, the service, the servants in livery, and all the appurtenances of a great establishment, apparently belonging to the merry master of the revels, were of the best kind, and produced universal admiration. The spirit and bounty of Nashon were extolled to the utmost, and Squire Hawthorn admitted, in a whisper to Græme, that the loan of the boots had been amply repaid. Nashon again drank them all out. The extent of the potations made no change on the expense, and a folly that was never to be repeated might be carried with impunity to the confines of madness.

Next morning, after encountering the lugubrious face of Esther Maclean, who saw in the hired servants and the broken dishes and glasses all the worst symptoms of approaching ruin, Nashon went out to enjoy the refreshing breezes that swept along the Well Burn; and, at her beloved spot, the Monks' Well, he found Dione Græme, sitting wrapped in meditation.

"Do I see," said Dione, as he approached her, "the same individual I met on this spot on a former occasion, when I thought his unpolished prudence and good sense would have enabled him to profit by a disclosure I made without intention?"

"The very same—Nashon Heatherton," replied he; "wi' nae change in him, except it be that he is, if possible, still mair prudent and far wiser than he was on that eventfu' day."

"I know you are a riddle, sir," said Dione—"a charade I cannot solve. Do not the neighbours say, what I have partially witnessed, that you are inebriated with the spirit of the fox-hunter, and fast riding to ruin, at the nod and by the example of my father, who, however, is making his folly subservient to his purpose of ruining you?"

"A' true, my bonny Dione," replied Nashon. "Nae-body can be blamed for sayin' what I wish him to think. They say, and you suppose, that I am ridin' to the devil but will ye believe me when I tell you that I am only ridin' to *you*? If you'll tak me as I stand, and marry me in spite o' your faither an' mither, I'll gie up my mad pranks, and sit quietly down, as a douce, sensible man, whose greatest ambition and highest pleasure would be to minister to the comfort and happiness o' Dione Græme."

"My father and mother will never consent to that," replied Dione. "It was only this morning that my mother urged me to receive more kindly, or rather less unkindly, the addresses of Benjamin Rice; but how can it be that your behaving as a fool can ever come in place of the consent of my parents, or procure me for your wife, even if I were favourably affected towards you?"

"If you will tell me that you love me and will become my wife, provided I get your faither and mither's consent to our union," replied Nashon, "I will tell you the wisdom o' my folly, an' explain my riddle—that, in place o' ridin' to the deevil, I am ridin' to Dione."

"I must believe the evidence of my senses," replied Dione. "I have already given you reason to suppose that I was well affected towards you; but, if Benjamin Rice has disgusted me, Nashon Heatherton has terrified me; and I must first see an amendment of your conduct before I pledge myself to what may be my ruin."

"Time tries whinstanes, Dione," replied Nashon; "an' my folly is no quite sae hardened an' perverse. If ye gang sae muckle by the evidence o' yer senses, I hae nae objection to mak them the test o' my conduct, when a' its pairts are seen thegither, an' my motives for actin as I now do can be properly understood. Will ye be kind to me, Dione, till I prove mysel' the same prudent Nashon Heatherton you first thought me?"

"Most certainly," replied Dione; "for it is my wish to respect you and"—

"Love you," said Nashon, making out her sentence. "Dione Græme, if ye wad only repeat, wi' thae bonny lips, the words I hae now uttered, I wad soon change the wish into the thing wished for; an', what is mair, I wad mak your love the handmaiden o' your respect, whilk, being an act o' the judgment, whose laws are eternal, is mair necessary to the happiness o' a marriage than the love o' the fickle thing they ca' the heart, whilk beats fast and slow wi' the changes o' wind and weather."

"Would that my respect were already equal to my—my—feeling for you!" said Dione, blushing.

"The mair appropriate word ye hae now blinked," said Nashon, "wad hae been mair pleasant to me; but I maun be content wi' your thoughts till I shew mysel' mair worthy o' their bein' revealed. The morn's the race-day, an' my steeple-chase prize is to be run for the day after. Ye may smile as ye like, but the laugh may yet be on the other side. Ye see how grave I can be when I speak o' serious things. I understand your faither has bought a fine new tandem for the occasion. We gae forward merrily—dashin' awa in fine style. Dinna we, Dione?"

"And where it is to end I know not," replied she. "My father, I understand, is merely an extravagant man, who will soon see the end of his fortune; for I have heard he has been already applying to Mr Langbane, the rich laird of Conybarns, for a loan of money; but, as for you, there is a mystery about your extravagance which I cannot penetrate—though this much I can easily understand, that he who trusts himself upon a stormy sea in an open boat, may miscalculate the power of his own resources in saving him from a watery grave."

Nashon laughed at the fears of Dione, and, before they parted, assumed the boldness of sealing the protestations of his affection, and the sincerity of his views of ultimate

prudence and amendment, by a kiss, which, though it produced a blush extending from bandeau to tucker, was, in the end, forgiven with such a sweetness of expression and so modest a demeanour, that a stoic could not have resisted the impulse which stimulated the thief to a repetition of the petty larceny.

Nashon's subsequent proceedings were of the same character as those already detailed. He attended the races in a borrowed tandem, without hinting anything concerning the proprietorship of what was presumed to be his own. His generosity in being the contributor of the prize of the next steeple-chase was lauded by all those who got a chance for winning it. Dinners followed at Eyrymount and other places; and Nashon, following in the wake of Græme, though sometimes leading the way, appeared to be fast hurrying to the gulf which awaits the victims of passions whose gratification holds no proportion to the means of supporting a dissolute life. A year passed on, during which a great deal of money was spent by Græme, and not a little by Nashon, whose resources from the funds he got as executor of the proprietor of Outfieldhaugh were, however, more than sufficient for a much greater expenditure. In the midst of this dissipation he was repeatedly attempted to be reclaimed by those who wished him well, and, among others, his old master, Langbane, had many interviews with him, with a view of producing some salutary sense of the imprudence of his conduct.

"I hae warned you," said the old miser, "an' my warnins are nae beetles' sangs i' the auld wa's o' spæin wives. But the truth o' our proverbs works out in spite o' a' the warnins o' Solomon; an' I think we hae aye that says, 'Set a beggar on horseback an' he'll ride to the deevil.' I hae seen that verified often i' my day; and anither o' the same kind—'Reek comes aye down again, however high it flees'—is just as pithy and pertinent to your case. I never mak an apology for giein a man a guid advice; because, if he taks the poker an' drives me out o' his house, he just verifies another guid auld sayin—'He that comes atween a fule an' his ruin, is like him wha interferes atween a man an' his wife—he's sure o' the reddin straik.'"

"But ye needna be afraid o' my poker, guid friend," replied Nashon, laughing. "I tak a' ye hae said in guid part, though I fear ye wadna come sae weel aff at Eyrymount."

"I believe if I wad lend him the three thousand pounds he wants me to advance to him," said Langbane, with a smile, "I might say anything I liked to him."

"An' will ye lend him the money?" inquired Nashon, anxiously.

"I wad rather borrow yours, were it for nae ither object than to keep it for ye," replied Langbane.

"A joke has sometimes mair wisdom in't than the pulpit oration o' a greetin minister," replied Nashon. "I hae nae great confidence i' my power o' keepin thegither the five thousand pounds I hae yet o' my executry: an', if Eyrymount wad tak the loan frae me, I would tak a mortgage owre Eyrymount as my security; but I hae guid reason to think he winna borrow frae his ain vassal. What wad ye think o' my giein you the siller, an' lettin you lend it to him in your name, you giein me an assignation to the debt?"

"As your friend, Nashon, an' wishin to keep thegither siller whose wings are fast fledgin; I hae nae objection to your plan," replied Langbane. "I hae only ae remark to mak—Wha is to draw the interest? for, if I assign the debt to ye, I canna tak the interest, an' then it will come out that ye are the creditor."

"Muckle will come and gae afore my interest is due an' payable," replied Nashon. "I hae every faith in ye. Here is a check on my banker for three thousand pounds. Eyrymount, ye ken, pays the expense o' the lawyers' papers."

"Ye're as weel up to thae things as I am," replied Langbane. "There's only ae thing ye dinna seem to ken."

"What is that?" inquired Nashon.

"There's a sma commission paid generally to negotiators o' lent siller," said the miser. "I'll only charge ye a half per cent."

"Weel, ye'll get it," said Nashon, "after ye work for't. There's nae commission paid aforehand."

"That's true, too," replied Langbane. "Ye'll be a proud man wi' a bond owre Eyrymount."

And Langbane left Nashon, with the view of going direct to Eyrymount, to tell him that he was now willing to lend him the money he required. The transaction was very soon finished. Langbane got a mortgage over the property of Eyrymount, and assigned it over to Nashon, who locked it past in his coffers, along with the title-deeds of his property and the documents of his remaining cash.

After Eyrymount got this large sum, he increased still farther his expenditure; while Nashon, having, to some extent, gained his object, shewed indications of a wish to draw up. Eyrymount noticed this, and appeared displeased, asking Nashon his reason for not joining him in the prosecution of his schemes of pleasure. Nashon replied, that his money was done; an answer which the other apparently expected, and with which he seemed delighted.

"I have an overplus of ready cash just now," he said. "What is the use of money but to purchase with it the pleasures which this life holds out in such profusion to those who are willing to buy? Take a couple of thousands from me, and give me your note of hand for it; a mere piece of form, you are aware, as I never would put it to execution, relying, as I do implicitly, on your honour for repayment."

"What interest wad ye be expectin for't?" said Nashon.

"Oh, a bagatelle. Say five per cent.," replied the other.

"Very weel," said Nashon, who knew that Eyrymount was paying himself five per cent. for the same money to Langbane. "I carena though I lighten ye o' the twa thousand; but I see nae source o' repayin't, save frae the flesh an' banes o' Outfieldhaugh."

"Things will have gone far, and many changes been effected in us and our friendships, ere that issue could take place," replied the other, who went to bring the money.

The transaction was instantly closed; the bill was given at a day's date, and seized by Eyrymount, as would have been the titles to Outfieldhaugh, if destined to the library fire, their hereditary enemy. The same course of life was pursued by him, and Nashon still kept up, for a time, the appearance of going through, with all due rapidity, the two thousand pounds he had thus borrowed from his friend. The thousand pounds that had been left in Eyrymount's hands. of the sum he had borrowed from Langbane, was not sufficient to keep him going for any length of time, and application was, therefore, made to the same source for two thousand more. Nashon supplied the cash, which was, in fact, just the two thousand pounds he had got from Eyrymount; and Langbane's mortgage over the Eyrymount estate was assigned to him in the same way as the former.

Having waited until he thought a great part of this second loan was spent, Nashon, who had had, in the meantime, several meetings with Dione, at the Monks' Well, was informed by her, that her father and mother were now begun to press the marriage between her and Benjamin Rice so urgently that she must either consent, or submit to be treated as a rebel to their authority, and an alien from their affections and interests.

"You shall never marry Benjamin Rice," said Nashon.

"And whom shall I marry then?" said the unhappy girl, who had made her communication to him in tears—"a ruined spendthrift, who has borrowed two thousand from my father and thereby placed himself and his property in the power of one who, as I told you, had originally in his view the seizure of an old part of his estate? Where is all your wisdom now? Alas! how foolish I have been to put any faith

in the professions of one who is incapable of avoiding a danger pointed out to his open eyes! To marry Benjamin Rice is misery, if not death—to marry you is wretchedness and shame, besides rebellion against the commands of my parents."

"Calm yersel, Dione," said Nashon "I shall go instantly and ask your father's consent to our marriage."

"If an objection existed formerly to your procuring that consent," replied Dione, still weeping, "think ye that is removed by your being now in poverty, and my father's debtor?"

"We'll lat alane thae subtle questions, my Dione," said Nashon, "an' try our mettle. Your father is my friend. Do we no ride thegither, drink thegither, an' laugh thegither? Why should he refuse me his dochter, if he gives me his confidence? He never rides, drinks, or laughs wi' Benjamin Rice. I'll awa to him, an' try him. A faint heart never wan sae fair a lady as Dione Græme."

Nashon accordingly opened the subject to Eyrymount.

"I hae been thinkin' o' takin a wife," he began, "to see an' reclaim me, an' keep me frae ruin, and Outfieldhaugh fare the hammer."

"Whom have you in contemplation?" said Eyrymount, fearfully apprehensive that he was after a rich heiress, whose fortune would relieve him and his property from difficulties.

"I hae been thinkin' o' twa or three," replied Nashon. "Conybarns' dochter, ye ken, will be a rich cratur, though she's neither a lily o' the valley nor a rose o' Sharon."

"She has the king's evil," rejoined Eyrymount, whose objection to this match was apparent.

"I thank ye for the intelligence," replied Nashon. "What say ye to yer ain Dione, provided I could get her consent?"

"My Dione!" cried Eyrymount, in surprise and pride. "Allow me to tell you, Mr Nashon Heatherton, that I do not intend to marry my daughter to my vassal and my debtor; I am surprised at the confidence that enabled you to propose so ridiculous a project, though I am glad the secret has come out. It has been for this that you have been dashing forth so brilliantly; expecting, no doubt, that, by covering the coarse metal of your original uneducated condition by the tinsel of fashion, you could produce an impression upon the heart of my daughter. Thus you repay me for my kindness in taking you out, introducing you to society, and even filling your pocket with my money, which, by the by, I will now thank you to repay."

"I canna pay you," replied Nashon; "the money is gane—at least I hae nane o't. Ye maun just wait till I save it oot o' the rents o' my property."

"I will do no such thing," said Eyrymount, who thought it was now time to quarrel; "I must have either a mortgage, or an adjudication, which is just a legal mortgage. Take your choice."

"I winna meddle wi't," replied Nashon; "a wilfu man maun hae his way. I think ye should just gie me Dione, an' that wad settle a'; an', besides, it wad bring the twa properties thegither."

"A man that cannot refrain from impertinence, should not trust himself in other people's houses," cried the incensed Eyrymount. "I request your instant departure."

"You'll maybe ca' on me some day sune," said Nashon, quietly, as he took his hat; "I will be happy to see you at Outfieldhaugh."

"You will soon see my deputy, at any rate," said Eyrymount.

"I am much obliged to ye," said Nashon, and retired, with a very low bow.

Eyrymount, who thought his proceedings ripe, instructed his agent to raise an action of adjudication against Nashon, whereby Outfieldhaugh might be forcibly mortgaged to him,

in security of his two thousand pounds. The agent proceeded with all speed to comply with the commands of his client; and, on a subsequent day, a messenger-at-arms called at Outfieldhaugh, accompanied by his witnesses, for the purpose of serving, as it is termed, or, in plainer language, of giving a copy of the summons to the debtor.

"This is what the lawyers ca' an adjudication?" said Nashon.

"Yes," replied the messenger, gruffly.

"Can ae messenger serve twa maisters?" said Nashon.

"Yes," replied the man.

"Weel," said Nashon, "will ye tak a step owre to Eyrymount, an' deliver to the laird o' that property this requisition."

"Certainly, sir," replied the messenger, taking the paper and reading it. "I see it is a requisition to pay you £5000, contained in two bonds, by Eyrymount, to Murdoch Langbane, and assigned by him to you. It should properly be intimated by a notary, and one of my concurrents has that qualification, though now greatly reduced."

"See that it's legally dune," said Nashon. "My agent, Gilbert Shortpage, drew it up, an' I warrant it correct."

"It shall be done instantly," said the messenger, who filled up the notary's name in the paper, and departed to execute his new and unexpected commission.

At the time the messenger rapped at the gate of Eyrymount, Græme and his lady were occupied in talking about the prospect they now had of seizing upon Outfieldhaugh.

"About this time the ambitious Nashon will be receiving my summons of adjudication," said Græme.

"A much more suitable gift, from his superior, than Dione Græme," said Madam.

"What is this, sir?" said Græme to the messenger, who had just opened the door of the apartment.

"A requisition, your Honour," replied the messenger.

"From whom?" said Græme.

"Nashon Heatherton," replied the messenger.

"A requisition for delay, I fancy," said Græme. "Ha! ha! ha! He is too late. The law must take its course. Go tell him I cannot comply with it."

"Would not your Honour better read it?" said the messenger.

"Oh, the usual cant, I presume," said Græme, opening the paper and glancing over it.—"What is this?" he added, letting go the paper, and falling back on his chair.

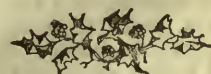
"What is the matter?" cried Madam, taking up the document, and flying for a smelling-bottle at the same time.

"It is, madam," said the messenger, while she applied the salts to her husband's nose, "a requisition for payment of £5000, due to Mr Heatherton, as assignee of Mr Langbane."

"Heaven have mercy on us!" cried she, while she continued her efforts to restore her husband.

The messenger and his men departed, and left Eyrymount and his wife to the full anguish of their critical situation.

The news of this proceeding got wind, and reached the ears of Benjamin Rice, who thought it prudent to suspend his visits to Eyrymount. Græme had now the prospect of losing not only Outfieldhaugh, but his own patrimonial estate. What could he do but give Dione to Nashon? This he did. The couple were married; the two properties were afterwards conjoined; and the sportsman of Outfieldhaugh distanced all his competitors.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DREAM.

THE war of reason against the prejudices of superstition has been a long one. It followed on the heels of the crusades of superstition against reason. How different the spirit, tactics, and results of the two! Cruelty, injustice, blood, the burning-stake, and an *increase* of the strength of the persecuted, on the one side; on the other, argument, persuasion, and, at the worst, a harmless satire, with the almost *total extinction* of the cowardly foe, who, having no refuge but in the dark recesses of ignorance, required only to be brought to light to suffer extermination. Auguries and divinations ruled the world for two thousand years, and were put an end to by the Christian faith, which left untouched the power of witches, ghosts, and dreams. The first of these, notwithstanding all the probation of King James, have perished; the second, maugre the arguments of Johnson, have left this earth; but the third, which has had a thousand supporters between Artemant Milesius and Lord Monboddo, still retain some authority in the world. We support them not; but we subscribe to the opinion of Peter Bayle, who stated, in reference to the reality of the dream of the Spanish Jesuit Maldonat—there are many things appertaining to dreams, which have troubled and perplexed strong spirits more than they have been ever willing to confess. We are now to add one instance more to those of which the same author has said the world is almost already full—but we again protest against the inference of our own belief in oneirology.

About half-way between the towns of Hamilton and Glasgow, there stand, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the highway, and on the left as you approach the latter place, the remains of what was once a small farm-house. It is now long since the last inhabitant left this little humble domicile, whose handful of ruins would perhaps excite but little attention from the passer by, were they not so delightfully and conspicuously situated. They stand on the very extremity and summit of a beautiful green promontory, of considerable height, that projects into and overlooks a lovely strath, skirted with wood, and through which winds one of the prettiest and best trouting streams in Scotland. The situation, therefore, of these humble ruins invests them with an interest which would by no means attach to them were they situated in a less romantic locality.

Of the farm-house of which we speak there now remain only one of the gables, and a portion of the side-walls; but, if your curiosity tempt you to further investigation, you may still trace the limits of the little *kail-yard* which lay immediately behind it; and, struggling for an obscure existence with the rude bramble which has now usurped the place of the homely but civilized vegetation of the little garden, may be seen a solitary rose, the last and almost only trace of its former cultivation. The little garden, in short, is now all but obliterated, and can only be distinguished by the low irregular green mound—once its wall—that forms the boundary of its limits.

There is nothing in all this, perhaps, to excite any particular interest; for we have rarely any sympathy for the humble and the lowly. In the case of such vestiges of by-gone days as those alluded to, it is only the ruined castle, the half-filled moat, and the crumbling walls of mighty masonry, |

that excite our curiosity, and set our imagination to work—not the handful of loose stones that once formed the cottage of the obscure peasant, not the little rudely-cultivated patch that formed his Eden. These are by far too commonplace and too undignified to attract a moment's notice, or to excite a moment's interest. Yet the cottage has its tale as well as the castle—and we will presently shew that it is so.

About the year 1760, the farm-house of which we have spoken was inhabited by John Edmonstone—a man of excellent character, and who, humble as his station was, had contrived, in the course of a long life of industry and economy, to scrape together a very considerable sum of money, besides a good deal of property invested in stock, such as cattle, grain, farming implements, &c. The former—namely, the cash—according to the good old custom of Scotland, amongst John's class, was stowed into a stocking-foot, which again was stowed into a certain hole in the wall, known only to the members of the family. But, ignoble and odd as this depository may seem, it yet contained no inconsiderable treasure, and that not a whit the worse or less valuable for the homeliness of its abode. In one end of the stocking aforesaid, was a bulbous swelling, as large as a well-sized fist. This contained a tempting store of bright and shining guineas, to the number of about, perhaps, 250. These being at once confined and secured by a string tightly tied round the stocking, produced the appearance above alluded to. Next followed, but in the same general depository—namely, the stocking—a huge conglomeration of crowns, half-crowns, and shillings, to the amount of about £50 more, which were also secured by a tight ligature—thus giving, if there had been but another link or two to the stocking, something the appearance of a string of sausages.

At the period of our story, John Edmonstone was a widower, with two daughters—the one, at this time, about twenty, the other some four or five years older. They were both unmarried, and lived with their father. Jane Edmonstone, the younger of the two, was a very pretty and interesting looking girl. Her sister Mary did not possess such striking personal advantages; but this was amply compensated by a pleasant manner and a kind and gentle disposition. For many years these relatives lived happily together, in their little, lonely cottage at Braehead. They led a sober, industrious, and pious life; for, duly as evening came round, the “big ha' Bible” was placed on the kitchen table, and, by the light of a clean and well-trimmed lamp, aided by the blaze of a cheerful fire, John read aloud to his daughters from the sacred page. But the best regulated life must have an end, as well as the most reckless and abandoned—John was suddenly seized with a mortal illness, of which he shortly died, leaving his two daughters sole and equal inheritors of his wealth. The death of their father was a grievous calamity to the two unprotected girls; for they were without relations—at least, there were none near them—though certainly not without those who wished them well, as they were universally respected in their own neighbourhood, both on their father's account and their own. Yet did they feel, on the death of their only parent, a sense of loneliness and of inability to cope with the world, which at once alarmed and dispirited them, notwithstand-

ing the considerable resources which their father's industry and economy had secured to them. Nor did their local situation tend to lessen the former feeling; for it was a solitary one—the house in which they lived being at a considerable distance from any other habitation. The neighbourhood in which they resided, moreover, was a loose one. It was filled with coal-miners and coal-carters—the latter, in particular, a brutal, ruffian race; and to all these the poor solitary women believed it to be well known, as it certainly was to a great many of them, that their father had left them money, and that it was in the house; and thus, to their other fears, was added the dread of their dwelling being broken into, and themselves robbed and murdered.

It was while living in this state of feverish alarm and utter helplessness—for they found they could not conduct the business of the farm—and about a fortnight after the death of their father, that Jane, the youngest of the sisters, suddenly awoke, early in the morning, from a troubled sleep, and sprung from her bed in an agony of terror and affright, exclaiming, as she hurried on her clothes—

“O Mary, Mary! we'll stay here no longer. Not another day—not another day. I'll go into Glasgow this forenoon, and consult with our uncle about selling off, and removing into the city. We will not stay here, Mary, to be robbed and murdered.”

“I am as uneasy remaining here as you can be, Jane,” replied her sister, now more than ever alarmed by the latter's wild looks and unusual excitement; “but what is the meaning of this sudden outcry?”

“It does not matter, it does not matter, Mary,” said Jane, in great agitation, and still hurrying on her clothes; “but I'll go in this day to Glasgow, and consult our uncle.” And, without vouchsafing any explanation of the cause of this sudden determination, so peremptorily expressed, she shortly afterwards took a hasty breakfast, and, in a few minutes more, was on the road to Glasgow, a distance of from four to five miles.

The uncle whom Jane proposed to consult on this occasion, was a brother of her mother's, named James Davidson. He was in poor circumstances, and had been so all his life; and, whether from this or some other cause, he had never stood high in the favour of his brother-in-law. He was a hard-featured old man, stern and morose, and without any of that patient forbearance of disposition and manner which gives to age so pleasing and amiable a character. Davidson, as we have said, was poor. He had never been able to improve his circumstances, or to rise above the condition of a labourer. There he started, and there he was still. Nor did his eldest son promise to be more fortunate in the world. He inherited his father's disposition, which was an unhappy one; was idly inclined; and, somehow or other, could never gain the good-will of any one. Neither Jane nor Mary Edmonstone had ever seen much of their uncle; their father's dislike to him prevented this. Neither did they know much about his circumstances or character; the same cause preventing all intercourse between the families. They, in short, only knew of their uncle's existence by his frequent applications to their father for the loan of money, which he invariably refused. Still, he was their uncle, and the nearest relation they had, and, in their present circumstances, they naturally looked on him as the fittest person to consult regarding their affairs, their wishes, and intentions. These Jane now laid before the old man, who received her kindly, notwithstanding his usual asperity of manner; telling him, at the same time, that she and her sister were resolved, at all hazards, and at whatever loss, to sell off at Braehead and take up their residence in Glasgow; “for,” said she, “we are day and night in danger of our lives yonder; and besides, we are wholly unable to conduct our father's business—buying and selling cattle—or to manage the affairs of the farm. These are things that we

cannot do—and neither need we, as we have enough to live upon without it. All that we want is safety.”

The old man heard her patiently, and it was some time before he made any reply. At length he said—

“Yes, enough to live upon, I daresay you have. How much did your father leave, Jane?—in money, I mean?”

“Somewhere about three hundred pounds,” replied his niece.

“A good round sum,” said the old man, “to be all in hard money. And is it all past you—all in the house?”

“All.”

Davidson thought for a moment. Then—“Well, I'll tell you what it is, Jane,” he said: “I do not at all approve of your leaving Braehead. If you do so, you throw yourselves at once upon your little capital, which will not last you very long in a town like this, where all would be going out and nothing coming in—and where would you be when it was exhausted? Now, your byres and farm in the country are a certain source of emolument to you; and, by keeping these, you will make a decent maintenance of it, without encroaching on the funds left you by your father. My advice to you then, Jane, is by all means to remain where you are. Hire persons to do your heavy out-of-door work; and, as the distance is not great, I will come out myself, once or twice a-week, and assist you with both my personal services and advice.”

“Thank you, uncle!” replied his niece; “but we really cannot remain at Braehead, on any account. I would not remain in it another week for any consideration.”

“No! what for, Jane? What are you afraid of?” said her uncle.

“Of being murdered,” replied Jane; “and I have but too good reason to fear it.”

“Nonsense, Jane. Who would murder you? What ridiculous fears are these?”

“But I have a reason, though, for fearing it, uncle,” replied his niece, with emphasis.

“Reason!—what reason can you have, but your own idle and absurd fears?”

“Yet, I have though, uncle,” said Jane, pertinaciously, but appearing somewhat confused and embarrassed.

“What do you mean, girl?” said her uncle, fixing his keen grey eye upon her countenance, scrutinizingly; for he observed her embarrassment. “What is this reason of yours for so unreasonable a fear?”

“Well, uncle, I'll tell you what it is at once,” replied Jane: “I had a most frightful dream last night. I dreamt that a soldier—a tall, fierce-looking man—broke into our house in the middle of the night, with a drawn bayonet in his hand; that he murdered my sister before my eyes—I saw her blood streaming on the floor; and that, having done this, he seized me by the hair of the head, and was about to plunge his bayonet into my heart when I awoke. It was a horrible dream, uncle, and has made such an impression on me—it was so fearfully true—that I cannot think of abiding longer in the house. It was this frightful dream that urged me in to see you to-day. I have not told my sister of it; for it would put her distracted.”

Jane's uncle listened patiently, but with a smile of contemptuous incredulity, to the strange dream of his niece; and, when she had done—

“Pho, pho! what stuff!” he said—“what absurd stuff! How can you be so silly, girl, as even to speak seriously, let alone putting any faith in such nonsense as this?”

“I cannot help it,” interrupted Jane.

“Well, well—perhaps you cannot,” continued Davidson; “but it is not the less ridiculous for that; and, if it were known, it would certainly get you laughed at. Pay no attention to such trash, Jane. Think no more of it; but return to Braehead, and proceed with your usual occupations, and I will come out in a day or two, to see how you get on.” To this, he added the advice which he had already given





THE DREAM

and in nearly the same words; but in vain. Nothing could drive the girl from her purpose—from her determination to leave Braehead. Finding this—

“Well, then,” said her uncle, “at least remain where you are for a day or two, when I will come out and assist you in your arrangements, and in the disposal of your effects—you cannot manage these matters yourselves.”

To this proposal Jane yielded a reluctant consent; but repeated her determination to leave the place as soon as possible, and to come in to Glasgow to reside.

On this understanding, then—viz., that Jane and her sister should remain at Braehead until their uncle came out—the former returned home, when she told Mary of all that had passed, excepting what related to her dream, to which, for the reason which she herself assigned, she carefully avoided all allusion. By a very strange coincidence, however, but, though strange, by no means unprecedented, the considerate caution of Jane, in the particular just spoken of, was soon after rendered unavailing. On the very next morning, the elder sister awoke in an exactly similar state of perturbation with that in which Mary had arisen on that preceding, exclaiming—

“O Jane, Jane! I have had a frightful dream.”

“What was it, Mary?” inquired her sister, in great alarm; recollecting her own frightful vision.

“O Jane!” replied the former, still trembling with terror, “I dreamt that a person in the dress of a soldier broke in at our back window, and murdered us both. O God! it was horrible! I think I yet see you on the floor there, struggling with your murderer, who held a naked dagger in his hand, with which he had already stabbed you in several places.”

“Gracious God protect us!” exclaimed Jane, leaping to the floor in a state of alarm exceeding even that of her sister. “This is dreadful!—Oh, these are fearful warnings! It can no longer be doubted—it can no longer be doubted. O Mary, Mary! I dreamt precisely the same thing last night; and it was that, though I did not tell you, that hurried me in to our uncle yesterday. I told him of my dream; but he treated it with contempt. He will surely now acknowledge that it is a warning not to be slighted.”

We need not interrupt our narrative at this point by stopping to describe further Jane’s feelings on hearing of this strange and appalling repetition of her own frightful vision. These feelings were dreadful. She grew pale as death, and shook like an aspen leaf. On their first terrors subsiding a little, the two sisters began to consult as to what they should do to avoid the horrible fate with which they now had no doubt they were threatened; and finally resolved that, if their uncle did not appear on that day, or indeed whether he appeared or not, that they would, on the next, remove to Glasgow; taking with them all their ready money and whatever other things they could conveniently remove, and leave the rest, for a time, under the charge of a neighbouring farmer, who had been an intimate friend of their father’s. They, in short, resolved that, in any event, they would remain only one other night at Braehead.

Before proceeding further with our story, we would beg the reader to observe, that the circumstances we are now relating occurred in the year 1760, in the month of January. It was a winter of great severity, and remarkable for the amazing quantity of snow that fell; but one of the wildest days of that wild season was the 21st day of the month above named. It was the same day in which the scene between the two sisters which we have just related occurred.

The storm, bearing huge drifts of snow on its wings, which had been raging all day, increased as night approached; and, when darkness had fallen upon the earth, it became tremendous. The trees around the little cottage of Braehead bent before the wind like willow wands; and loud and wild, nay, even appalling, was the rushing sound of the storm amongst the leafless branches. The snow, too, was

whirling all around, in immense dense masses, and overwhelming every object whose height they surpassed in their cumbrous layers of white. It was in truth a fearful night, and such a one as no person long exposed to it could possibly have survived. Dreadful night it was to the lonely traveller, who was seeking a distant refuge, and whose urgencies required that he should do battle with the storm; and many a harrowing tale was afterwards told of the shepherd and wayfarer who had perished in the terrible night of the 21st of January 1760.

While the tempest is thus howling about the little lonely cottage of Braehead, and the huge wreaths of snow are blocking up door and window, what are its two solitary inmates about? There they are, the two unprotected women—all their previous fears increased tenfold by the awful sounds without, and their sense of loneliness and helplessness deepened into unendurable intensity. There they are, we say, sitting by their fire, pale and trembling, one on each side of the chimney—for they are afraid to go to bed—listening in silent awe to the raging of the storm.

It was only at long intervals that the two sisters exchanged words on this dreary night, and then it was little more than a brief exclamation or remark, excited by some sudden and violent gust that swept over their little cottage, or roared amongst the trees with a fury exceeding the general tenor of the storm. To bed they could not think of going. They, therefore, continued by the fire, where they sat almost without moving for many hours.

It was now late, perhaps about twelve o’clock, and the storm was at its height, when the fears of the two lonely sisters were suddenly wrought up to a horrible climax, by a loud rapping at the door, which, again, was instantly followed by the sound of a voice imploring admittance. In the first moment of alarm, the women leapt from their seats and flew to different corners of the apartment, screaming hideously, having no doubt that their fatal dream was now about to be realized. From this terror, however, they were gradually in some measure relieved by the supplicatory language and tones of the person seeking admittance.

“For God’s sake, open the door!” he said—for it was the voice of a man—“or I must perish. I have already travelled fifteen miles in the storm, and am now so benumbed and exhausted that I cannot move another step. Open the door, I say, if you have the smallest spark of humanity in you, and give me shelter till daylight.”

Somewhat reassured by these appeals, which had in them so little of a hostile character, and to which circumstances gave so truthful a complexion, Jane, the younger of the two sisters, asked the elder, in a low voice, what they should do. “Shall we admit him?” she said; “for it really seems to be a person in distress, and it would be cruel to refuse him shelter in such a night as this. We could never forgive ourselves, Mary, if the poor man should perish in the storm.”

“It is true, Jane,” replied her sister—“we could not indeed. We will admit him, and trust the result to God. He will not allow a deed of charity and benevolence to be turned into an instrument of crime.” Saying this, Mary approached the door, and, placing her hand on the bar, put one other query ere she undid it. “Are you,” she said, addressing the person without—“are you really in the situation you represent yourself to be?”

“Before God, I am!” replied the voice from without, emphatically. “Admit me, for heaven’s sake! You have nothing to fear from me.”

In the next instant, the bolt was withdrawn, the door flew open, and in walked a man in the garb of a soldier. The brass plate on his cap glittered in the light of the lamp held by the younger sister, who stood at some distance from the door, and from beneath the greatcoat he wore peeped the dreaded red livery of the king. One fearful and

simultaneous shriek from the sisters, as they fled frantically into the interior of the house, told of this horrid realization of their dreams. The soldier, in the meantime, walked into the kitchen; but any one who should at this instant have marked his countenance, would have seen very little in it to indicate the fell purpose for which there seemed good reason to fear he had come. He was, in truth, a young, handsome, and singularly good-looking man, with a face expressive of great good-nature and mildness of disposition. Little regarding these indications of a character so different from that which occupied their minds, the sisters continued to express their horror and alarm in wild shrieks, and in the most piteous appeals for mercy. On their bent knees they implored it; offering all they had, if their lives were only spared. The soldier, benumbed and exhausted though he was, seemed to forget his own sufferings in contemplating what he appeared to consider as a most extraordinary and unaccountable scene—the terrified sisters on their knees, imploring his mercy.

“Good women,” he at length said, “what is the meaning of this? What are you afraid of? Is there anything in my appearance so dreadful as to excite this extraordinary alarm. If there be, I never knew it before; and am very sorry to find it out now. I am sure I intend you no harm—none in the world. God forbid I should! I am but too grateful to you for having opened your door to me; and but too happy to get near this cheerful fire.”

Again somewhat calmed by these friendly expressions, so different from what they had expected, the sisters ceased their frantic cries for mercy; and, though yet far from being reconciled to their tremendous visitor, they became a little more composed, when the soldier, perceiving the effects of his disclamations, followed them up by repeated assurances of the perfect innocence of his intentions, and of the perfectly accidental and harmless nature of his visit. These asseverations, delivered, as they were, in a mild and conciliatory tone, eventually induced the sisters not only to look with less alarm on their unwelcome guest, but to desire him to take a seat by the fire. We will not say, however, that this act of kindness was dictated by pure benevolence. We will not say that it was not done more with a view to disarm their still dreaded visitor of any hostile intentions he might entertain towards them, than from any feeling of compassion. Be this as it may, however, the soldier, after throwing off his snow-covered great-coat, gladly availed himself of the invitation of his hostesses, and sat him down before the fire.

“Now, my good friends,” he said, after having warmed himself a little, and having still further abated the terrors of the sisters by more kind and gentle words, “will you be so good as tell me why you were so much afraid of me when I first entered the house?—for I cannot understand it—seeing that you yourselves opened the door, and of your own accord, and must, therefore, have been prepared to see somebody or other. Was it my cap and red coat that frightened you so? Come, tell me now, candidly.”

The sisters looked to each other with a faint smile, and an air of embarrassment; but with an expression of inquiry which said as plainly as an unspoken expression could say it—“Shall we tell him?”

Their guest perceived their difficulty, and saw very clearly that there was something to explain—something that they did not altogether like to avow. Observing this—

“Come, now, out with it!” he said, laughingly, “and, depend upon it, I shall not be the least offended, however uncomplimentary it may be to myself.”

“Well, then,” said the younger sister, “I will tell you. Both my sister and I dreamt, very lately, that a soldier came into this house here, as you have done, and murdered us. We both dreamt the same dream at different times, and without its being previously known to either of us.

Now, you’ll allow that there was little wonder that we should have been so much alarmed at your appearance.”

“Odd enough,” said the soldier, laughing, “but, in my opinion, very particular nonsense. Had you dreamt of a soldier coming to court you, it would have been a much more likely thing, and you would have had a better chance of seeing it realized, I should think, than that he should have come to murder you.”

“But why were you abroad in such a night as this, and at such an hour?” inquired the elder sister, whose fears, as well as those of Jane, were by no means entirely allayed by this familiarity. “Where were you going to, and whence came you?”

“Why, I’ll tell you all about that, mistress,” replied the soldier, “when I have filled this pipe.” And he proceeded to the operation of which he spoke. When he had done, and had expired a whiff or two—“Now, I’ll tell you,” he said, “how it happens that I am out in such an infernal night as this. Depend upon it, it was not with my will. I belong to the 50th Regiment, now stationed in Glasgow, and have been absent on furlough, seeing my poor old mother, in the south country, where she resides. I had not seen her, poor soul! for several years; and, as she was unwilling to part with me again, I was obliged to stay with her to the last moment of my time. My furlough expired yesterday, and I was anxious to get on to quarters before it was out; for we have got a devil of a fellow in our commanding officer—and this is the reason why I was so late upon the road in such a night. I wanted to save my distance, and avoid a bother-ing. But it wouldn’t do—I was obliged to knock under.

“I found poor mother,” went on the soldier, “in much better circumstances than I expected to find her; for my father left her in great poverty and with a large family; but a rather curious occurrence gave her a lift in the world in her own humble way, about a couple of years ago, of which she still reaps the benefit. Mother, you see, is a very pious woman, and she attributes it all to Providence, saying that it was the divine interference in her behalf. However this may be, it was a very simple affair, and all natural enough.

“In mother’s neighbourhood, you see—she lives in a remote parish in the south of Scotland—there resides a fellow of the name of Tweedie—Tom Tweedie. Tom is a cattle-dealer to business, and is well to pass in the world—a lively, active, bustling little scamp he is, and extremely fond of a practical joke, in which he often indulges at the expense of his neighbours. Amongst those who suffer most severely by his waggery, is a good-natured man of the name of Brydon—Peter Brydon, a farmer who lives close by him, that is, at the distance of about a mile or so. Well, on this person, who is his favourite butt, Tweedie has played innumerable tricks; all, indeed, of a harmless character, but some of them sufficiently annoying. Either for want of opportunity, or, what is more likely, from want of genius, Peter never could accomplish any retaliation—a circumstance which tended greatly to increase the fever of agitation in which Tweedie’s superior dexterity and ingenuity in the way of practical joking constantly kept him. At length, however, chance threw in Peter’s way what he considered an excellent opportunity of annoying his mischievous neighbour in turn.

“Passing the gable of Tweedie’s house one morning, pretty early, on horseback, (the road he was travelling led close by it,) Peter saw a huge wooden dish of oat-meal porridge smoking on the top of the wall of the house-yard. It was intended for the breakfast of the family, and had been put out there to cool. On seeing the dish of porridge, Peter, struck with a bright idea, instantly drew bridle and, after contemplating it for an instant, rode up to it, and, having previously looked carefully around him to see that nobody marked his motions, he lifted the dish from its

place, porridge and all, placed it before him on the saddle, brought his plaid over it, so as to conceal it, and rode off rejoicing with his prize. Well, you see, it happens that my mother's house lies close by the road on which he had to travel, and at the distance of about a mile from the place where the robbery had been committed. Now, it struck Peter that he could not do better than leave the dish of porridge there, where he knew there was a houseful of children, who would clear all out in a twinkling; but he did not know—for my mother had carefully concealed her poverty from her neighbours—how seasonable would be the supply which he now proposed to bring them. On that morning, the children had no breakfast of their own to take. There was not a morsel in the house to give them. Having made up his mind as to the disposal of the dish of porridge, Peter made directly up to my mother's door, and, without dismounting, rapped with the but-end of his whip. My mother came out.

"'Here,' said Peter, handing down the stolen mess; 'here's a dish of porridge I have brought for the children's breakfast.'

"'Porridge!' exclaimed my mother, in amazement, and at the same time blushing deeply, from a conviction that her poverty had been detected; 'how, in all the world, came you to think of bringing porridge to me, Mr Brydon?'

"This was a question which Peter had but little inclination to answer. He therefore waved it.

"'Hoot, hoot, guidwife,' he replied, 'what does that signify? There they are—that's enough—and a capital mess, I warrant ye, your young anes will find them. So let them fa' to wark as fast's they like, and meikle guid may't do them! It'll save you the trouble, at any rate, guidwife, of making a breakfast of your own.'

"My mother having now no doubt that her neighbour knew of her destitute condition, of which, however, he, in reality, knew nothing, and that his gift was one of pure benevolence, raising the corner of her apron to her eyes, thanked him with such expressions of humble gratitude as gave him full information regarding that she thought he already knew—her straitened circumstances. Peter made no remark, at the time, on my mother's confessions of poverty, and said little or nothing in reply to what she addressed to him, but rode on his way.

"Well, it happened that, on this very day, my mother went to Tweedie's house, with some yarn she had been spinning for his wife, who occasionally employed her in that way, when the latter, amongst other things, informed her of the robbery of the porridge; adding, however, that she cared little about the mess, and only regretted the loss of her dish, which, she said, was an excellent one of its kind.

"'If they would only bring me the basin back,' she said, 'they are welcome, whoever took it, to its contents.'

"The blood rushed to my mother's face. She remained for some moments in silent confusion; but at length said—her face as red as crimson—

"'Mrs Tweedie, your dish is safe—it is in my house; but the porridge is gone.'

"'In your house, Mrs Johnston!'—(that is my mother's name)—'my basin in your house! How does that happen?' replied Mrs Tweedie, with a look of surprise, and something like displeasure.

"My mother detailed the circumstances as already related; and, thinking herself compelled to acknowledge her poverty as an apology for having made use of the porridge, she fairly stated her condition; saying, amongst other things, that, when it came, she had not a morsel in the house.

"Mrs Tweedie rated my mother for not having told her before of her situation, and concluded by promising that neither she nor her children should ever again want a meal as long as she had one to give them; and she instantly loaded her with as many potatoes as she could carry home. Her husband, who was present on this occa-

sion, enjoyed the joke exceedingly, and gave the chosen victim of his own wit, Brydon, great credit for his trick. He further expressed himself highly pleased that the latter had taken the dish of porridge to my mother, seeing that she stood so much in need of them. To make a long story short," added the soldier, "both Tweedie and Brydon, who were good kind-hearted men, from this moment that my mother's necessities were thus so strangely made known to them, took her under their especial patronage.

"On the following day, Brydon sent her as much meal and potatoes as lasted her a month; each of them took one of my brothers into their service; their wives gave her as much spinning as she could execute; and a compliment of provisions, sometimes of one kind and sometimes of another, has been sent her alternately and regularly ever since by the two benevolent jokers. From that day to this, old mother has never been in want; and when speaking of the occurrence, says, that the day on which Peter Brydon brought the dish of stolen porridge to her door was the luckiest in her life."

Here the soldier finished his story and his pipe together. Both the matter of his little tale and his manner of telling it tended considerably to calm the apprehensions of his hostesses, and to disabuse them, in spite of their dream, of much of the unfavourable opinion they had entertained of his intentions. Still, however, they felt by no means secure, and would even yet have readily given the half, perhaps the whole of the money in the house, to have been quit of him. Nor were the fears that yet remained lessened by their having discovered, which they had not done for some time after he had entered, that he wore his bayonet by his side. On this formidable weapon the two poor women looked with inexpressible horror; having a strong feeling of apprehension that it was the dreadful instrument by which their destruction was to be accomplished and their dream fulfilled. Now, too, the sisters detected the fellow occasionally glancing around the house, with a most suspicious look, as if calculating on future operations. He now, also, began to put questions that greatly alarmed them—such as, Was there nobody in the house but themselves? How far distant was the nearest house? and guessing, with an apparently assumed air of jocularly, that their father (they had informed him of his death) had left them a good round sum in some corner or other? In short, his behaviour altogether began again to grow extremely suspicious; and, perceiving this, the sisters' fears returned with all their original force.

In the meantime, the storm without, so far from abating, had increased; the dreary, rushing sound of the trees became fiercer and louder, and the fitful gusts of wind more frequent and furious. It was now about one o'clock of the morning, when, actuated by the same motives which had induced them to ask their terrible guest to sit by the fire—namely, to disarm him, by kindness, of any evil design he might entertain towards them—the sisters now offered the soldier some refreshment. He gladly accepted the offer. Food was placed before him, and he ate heartily. When he had done, one of the sisters told him that there was a spare bed in a closet to which she pointed, and that he might go to it if he chose. With this offer he also gladly closed, and immediately retired.

The sisters, well pleased to have got their guest thus disposed of—thinking it something like a sign of harmless intention on his part—determined to sit themselves by the fire throughout the remainder of the night. They were, then, thus sitting, and it might be about one hour after the soldier had retired, listening with feverish watchfulness to every sound, when they suddenly heard a noise, as if of some one forcing the door. At first the poor horrified women thought it was some unusual sound produced by the storms but, on listening again, there was no doubt of the appalling

fact. They heard distinctly the working of an iron instrument, and the creaking of the door from its pressure. The wretched women leaped from their seats, and again their wild shrieks were heard rising above the noise of the tempest without. Awakened by their alarming cries—for he had been fast asleep—the soldier started from his bed, calling out, as he hurried on his clothes—

“What the devil is the matter now? By heaven! you are all mad.”

“Oh, you know but too well what is the matter,” replied one of the sisters, in a voice faint and almost inarticulate with excessive terror. “You know but too well what is the matter. These are some of the other murderers of your gang forcing open the door. O God! in mercy receive our souls!”

“My gang forcing the door! What the devil do you mean?” replied the soldier, emerging from the closet. Then, after an instant—“By heaven! it is so far true. There is some one breaking in, sure enough.”

Saying this, he drew his bayonet and ran to the door; but, ere he gained it, it was forced open, and two men were in the act of entering, one behind the other. On seeing the soldier, the foremost presented a pistol to his head, and drew the trigger—but a click of the lock was the only result. It missed fire. In the next instant the soldier's bayonet was through the ruffian's body, and he fell, when he who was behind him immediately fled. The soldier pursued him; but, after running several hundred yards, gave up the chase as hopeless, and returned to the house, where he found, to his great surprise, that the man whom he had stabbed, and whom he thought he had killed outright, had disappeared, and was nowhere to be seen.

On entering the house—“Well, my good women,” said the soldier, “are you now satisfied of the sincerity of my intentions towards you? Why, I think I have saved your lives, in place of taking them.”

“You have! you have!” exclaimed both the sisters at once. “And, oh, how thankful are we to God, who alone could have sent you here to protect us on this dreadful night!”

“It certainly was as well for you that I was here,” replied the soldier, modestly; “but have you any idea of who the villains could be?”

“None in the least,” said the younger sister; “but this neighbourhood is filled with bad characters, and we have no doubt it was some of them—for all of them know, we believe, that our father left us a little money. We have always dreaded this.”

“In that case,” said the soldier, “I would advise you to leave this directly, and go to some place of greater safety.”

The sisters told him that they had, for some time, meant to do so, and that they intended going to Glasgow to reside.

What subsequently passed, on this eventful night, between the sisters and their gallant protector, we will detail as briefly as we can, in order to get at a more interesting part of our story. Having again secured the door, the soldier sat with his hostesses by the fire till daylight, when, having previously partaken of a plentiful breakfast, he prepared to take the road. Just as he was about to leave the house, the youngest sister approached him, and, after again expressing her gratitude for the protection he had afforded them, slipped ten guineas into his hand. The soldier looked at the glittering coins for an instant, with a significant smile, then, laying them down on a table that stood by—

“Not a farthing,” he said—“not a farthing shall I take. I consider myself sufficiently paid by the shelter you afforded me. I was bound to protect you while under your roof. By admitting me last night you saved my life—and I have saved yours; so accounts are clear between us. This, at any rate,” he added, laughingly, “will balance them.” And, soldier-like, he flung his arms around Jane's neck,

and, ere she was aware, had robbed her of half-a-dozen hearty kisses.

This theft committed, he ran out of the door; but was almost immediately after called back again, by the elder sister, who, on his return, informed him, that, as Jane intended going into Glasgow on that day, to inform her uncle of what had happened, and to make arrangements for their instant removal from Braehead, she thought her sister could not do better than avail herself of his company to the city, and go in with him just now. “Besides,” she said, “I should like you to see our uncle, if you would be so good as take a step that length with Jane, as you will be able to give a better account of the occurrences of last night than she can, and may better convince him of the necessity of our leaving this instantly. Indeed, I do not know if he would believe our story at all, of being attacked last night, unless you were to corroborate it. He would think it was just an invention to get away, as he knows of our anxiety to leave this.”

The soldier was delighted with the proposal, and did not attempt to conceal the satisfaction he felt at having Jane, who, as we have already said, was a very pretty girl, for a companion into the city.

In a few minutes Jane was prepared for the journey, and in a very few more she and the young soldier were upon the road; and, as the storm had now entirely subsided, they got on without much difficulty. What conversation passed between them on this occasion, we know not, and can only conjecture from the result, which will be shortly laid before the reader. That it was of a description, however, very agreeable to both, there can be no doubt.

In the meantime, our business is to follow them into Glasgow, where they arrived in little more than a couple of hours.

On reaching her uncle's with her companion, Jane was greatly disappointed, and rather surprised, to learn from one of her little cousins—its mother being out of the way at the moment—that Davidson was not at home, that he had gone to the country on the previous night, and had not yet returned.

“Then, where's your brother?” inquired Jane.

“He's gone to the country, too,” said the child.

“Is he with your father?”

“Yes.”

“Did he go last night also?”

“Yes.”

“And don't you know where they went to, or when they will be home?”

The child could not tell.

At this moment the mother of the child came in, and at once accounted for the absence of her husband and son, by saying that they had got work at a distance of some miles from the town, naming the place, and that she expected them home that day, although she could not say when.

As the days were short, and her uncle's return uncertain, Jane resolved on going straight home again, and proposing to her sister that they should, for that night at any rate, remove, taking all their money along with them, to the friend of their father's already alluded to, whose name was Anderson. And this step the sisters accordingly took.

Leaving them thus disposed of for a short time, we shall return to their uncle's house in Glasgow; and, by doing so, we shall find there some things of a very extraordinary character occurring. Shortly after Jane had left her uncle's, that person came home; but he returned a very different man from what he had set out. Strong, hale, and erect, though somewhat stricken in years, when he went away, he now appeared, as he approached his own house, ghastly pale, bent nearly double, and dreadfully weak and exhausted. He seemed, in short, to be suffering from some excruciating pain. He could hardly get along without supporting himself

by the walls of the houses he passed. On entering his own house, he went directly to bed, without speaking to any one, further than telling his wife that he was very ill—that he had received a severe injury by falling down amongst some loose timber, a pointed piece of which, he said, had penetrated his chest. His wife, in great alarm, proposed sending instantly for a surgeon; but this the wounded man would by no means allow—saying, that his wound, though painful, was not, he thought, very serious, and that he had no doubt he would soon recover. A few hours afterwards, however, feeling himself getting much worse, he not only allowed, but desired that a surgeon should be sent for. One was immediately procured. On examining the wound, he inquired of Davidson how he had met with it. He was told, in reply, the same story which we have just related.

“That cannot be true,” said the surgeon. “Your wound has not been inflicted by a splinter of wood, but by a sharp, three-edged instrument. It is a clean wound, and has all the appearance of having been inflicted with a bayonet or some such weapon. Indeed, I feel quite assured of this, whatever may be your motives for concealing it.”

Davidson repeated his asseverations of having come by his injury by falling on a pointed piece of wood.

“Well, well, sir, my business is not how or by what means your wound has been inflicted, but how it is to be cured.” (During this time he was examining the injury.) “But I fear,” he added, “it is beyond my skill, or that of any other human being. Your wound, I have every reason to think, is mortal.”

“Do you think so?” said the patient, with great calmness and composure.

“I certainly do,” replied the surgeon, “and I think it my duty to tell you that, if you have any worldly affairs to settle, the sooner you set about it the better.”

The patient made no reply for some time, but seemed absorbed in thought. At length he said—

“Could you, sir, procure me a visit from a clergyman? I know none myself, and it may be of consequence that I should see one. I have something of importance to communicate.”

The surgeon readily undertook to bring such a person as the dying man desired to see, and immediately departed for that purpose, having previously promised, at the earnest request of the sufferer himself, that he would return along with him. “I wish to have you both together,” he said—“it will be better that there are two.”

In less than half an hour after, the surgeon returned with one of the clergymen of the city. The moment they entered, Davidson requested the former to shut the door, and to see that it was properly secured. This done, he requested them to draw near him, when he began, in a low voice, the astounding confession that it was he who had attempted to break into the house of his nieces, and that it was he whom the soldier had stabbed on that occasion. All this, indeed, the surgeon had previously suspected—for he had heard of the attempted robbery, and of one of the ruffians having been stabbed with a bayonet by a soldier, but did not, till now, know anything of the relationship of the parties. Thus much the dying man confessed; but he would not say, though pressed to tell, who was his associate in the crime. This person, however, was subsequently ascertained, beyond all doubt, to have been his son, as he never came home, nor was ever afterwards seen or heard of by any one who knew him. Having made this confession, the wretched man expired, and that even before one word of intercession could be offered up in his behalf by the attending clergyman.

Having brought this incident to a close, we return to the two sisters, who were now residing with their father's friend, Anderson. This worthy man now took an active interest in their affairs; and, approving of their original

intention of removing to Glasgow, did all he could to further their views in this respect, by selling off the cattle, farming utensils, &c., and stock of every kind.

Some days after their settlement in Glasgow, their friend Anderson called on them, and remarked, in the course of conversation with them, that he thought, now that they were all snug and safe, something ought to be done for the soldier, to whom they owed, not only a great part of their little fortune, but, in all probability, their lives. At this moment the young soldier entered. During the conversation that followed, Mr Anderson discovered that the young man would willingly be quit of the army. This discovery he kept in recollection; and, when the soldier left them, he proposed to the sisters to purchase his discharge, and to do so without his knowledge. This was accordingly done on the very next day; and in three weeks afterwards, Henry Johnston (which was the young soldier's name) and Jane Edmonstone were united in the bands of holy wedlock. The former, whose dislike of the army, it subsequently appeared, applied only to its subordinate situation—more definitely speaking, to the condition of a private—soon after purchased a lieutenant's commission with part of his wife's money, and finally died a lieutenant-colonel, leaving behind him the reputation of a good man and a gallant soldier.

PAYING OF DEBTS.

As there are many ways of contracting debts, so there are many ways of liquidating them. Good honest people know only of the true legitimate mode of “coming down with the dust,” and getting a receipt upon a proper stamp. Simple-hearted beings! how little do they know of the ways of the world or the subtleties of man! The scheme of the *cessio*, whereby, as by a well-filled sponge, thousands of pounds may be liquidated in a day, or the exquisite device of the *negative oath*, by which a debt may be paid in a few minutes—both beautiful expedients—are equally unknown to them; but there are other modes of discharging debts not so well known or so much resorted to as those we have now mentioned—and one of these we will now lay before our readers, with the assurance that the facts are absolutely true.

In the town of ———, (if the cap does not fit, do not put it on,) a poor woman, whose maiden name was Finlayson, and who had a daughter married to an industrious tradesman, named Gibb, died of a putrescent fever. Her son-in-law had been for some time out of employment, and all his earnings had been consumed during that unproductive period. He had no money, and his mother-in-law had left not a farthing. Who then was to bury her? The parish would not interfere, because the deceased's brother, an *undertaker* in the same town, and a very rich man, was the very person apparently pointed out, by nature and circumstances, to do the last offices to his dead sister. But the brother was not bound by law to bury his sister, and natural affection had no influence with him, as well from an original hardness of heart, as from the citadel of the passions having been laid hold of and occupied by the love of filthy lucre. He would not undertake the funeral of his sister. It is a fact—we pledge ourselves for it—he would not furnish a coffin to her, except upon one condition, and that was that the poor industrious daughter's husband should become bound to pay her uncle the price of the “dead-kist” for his own sister. Much time was occupied in the negotiation, and poor Gibb was subjected to the heart-rending condition of seeing his wife's mother lying, beyond “nature's time,” a corpse in his house, while he was wrangling with her miserable wretch of a brother

about the conditions on which he would furnish the coffin. It was at last arranged. Gibb granted his obligation—the coffin came—the old woman was put into her “fir-fecket” and buried, and the £3: 15s., as the price of the box, became a debt. Thus, poor Gibb must pay or go to jail. In the first place, he collected, from all quarters, three thousand six hundred pieces of the current coin of Great Britain, called farthings. These he carefully tied up in a leather-bag, and, taking with him two trusty sooth-fast witnesses, away he went, like a bold and independent man, to pay his debt. He chose a very particular time for his visit, the hour of *lifting* of a very rich burgher, whose funeral, conducted by the creditor, was to take place that day.

“I’m come to pay my debt, Mr Finlayson,” said Gibb, stepping forward to the undertaker, who was dressing himself for the funeral.

“I’m glad o’ that, John,” replied the other, “as weel for yer ain sake as mine, for nae man can haud up his head in society, if he’s awin a single farthing.”

“An’ far less if he is awin three thousand six hundred,” said John, with a chuckle and a shake of the bag.

“Feth, an’ ye’re a perfect Cocker, John,” rejoined the undertaker. “I daresay that is just the number in £3: 15s.; but come away, man—ye see I’ve ae stocking on and another aff. It wants twenty minutes o’ the hour, and Bailie Adamson maunna lie a minute after the liftin time.”

“Your sister lay a week after nature’s time,” responded Gibb. “I am here to pay my debt, and have nae concern wi’ the funeral o’ Bailie Adamson, wha wouldna hae paid a single farthing for me, let alane three thousand six hundred, if he had been leevin and I had been starvin.”

“Weel, weel,” cried Finlayson, impatiently, “come awa, come awa. Here’s a stamp, and I’ll write the receipt. We’ll sune knock it aff. Ane’s fingers are nimbler at writin receipts than signing bills.”

And he set about getting pen and ink in a great hurry, with one leg still bare, and the stocking on the other half rolled down. The receipt was written and lay unsigned on the table, till the money was counted.

“Noo, noo, John—down wi’ the dust, lad, as quick as ye like,” said the old hunk.

Gibb obeyed. The bag was thrown with a loud noise upon the table. The undertaker started at the extraordinary sound.

“What’s this, man?” said he.

“My debt,” calmly replied John, proceeding at the same time gravely to open the bag, and pour the three thousand four hundred farthings upon the table, to the great surprise of the creditor, who could not at first comprehend the nature of the transaction.

“There’s ane,” said John, taking up a farthing, and laying it carefully on the farthest corner of the table, as if he intended to cover the entire board in the progress of his laborious enumeration.

“There’s twa,” he was proceeding, when the creditor, on recovering himself, stopped him.

“What’s this o’t?” said he, getting angry, as the truth became more apparent—“what do you mean, sir?”

“To pay my debt, in the current coin o’ the realm,” was the answer.

“It’s no a lawfu tender,” cried the undertaker. “Besides, I hae nae time to stand and see ye count that bagfu o’ bodles. I canna wait. Tak them awa, and bring me the usual respectable circulating medium o’ the country, and ye’ll get yer receipt.”

“I hereby offer ye, in presence o’ these witnesses, payment o’ my debt, in the king’s coin,” rejoined the determined debtor. “I am ready to proceed with my enumeration.—There’s three.”

“I canna submit to this now,” cried the undertaker, in

an impatient tone. “The hour o’ Bailie Adamson’s funeral is at hand. They’re waiting for me. Come back in the afternoon, and we’ll no cast out about the kind o’ coin. I’ll gie ye a discount for respectable looking cash.”

“I want nae discount,” rejoined John.

“But I canna even speak about it at present, man,” replied the other. “See, there’s a message frae the widow. Come, come—tak awa the bag, and come again in the afternoon.”

And he breathlessly proceeded in his operation of dressing; muttering deep curses as he drew on the reluctant clothes, and stamping about the floor in a state of great excitement. John remained immoveable, with the fourth farthing between his finger and thumb.

“Do you refuse payment o’ yer debt, sir?” said he, with a provoking gravity.

“Curse your farthings!” cried the undertaker, now getting to the height of fury, as he looked for articles of dress he had, in his confusion and anger, mislaid, and went raging through the room like one demented.

“Mrs Adamson has sent for ye, Mr Finlayson,” said the servant, now entering.

“Will ye no tak payment o’ yer debt, sir?” rejoined Gibb, in a softer tone.

“May the big-horned Mahoun tak you and your debt thegither!” vociferated the now completely roused undertaker. “I’ll hae nane o’t. Awa wi’ ye!” And, twisting his cravat round his throat, he hurried out of the house.

The witnesses heard the declaration. John gathered up his coins and proceeded home. In a week after, he was cited before the bailies for payment of the debt. He appeared with his witnesses. The *nature* of the debt was set forth, and, indeed, the bailie had heard of the infamous transaction previously, and was predisposed to favour the defender.

“Are you due the pursuer the price of this coffin?” said the judge, to Gibb.

“In order to get my mother-in-law buried,” replied Gibb, “I did become bound to pay to her brother, the pursuer, the price of the coffin. I offered him payment, and I am ready to prove that he refused it.”

“Is this true, Mr Finlayson?” asked the judge.

“Partly, and partly no,” replied the creditor. “He insulted me by offering me a bagfu o’ farthings—no a legal tender for sic a sum.”

“And you refused the king’s coin?” rejoined the judge. “What say the witnesses?”

The witnesses were examined, and swore that Finlayson not only refused the farthings, but the debt itself.

“I am bound to receive the evidence of these men,” said the judge, addressing the pursuer. “It is indeed partly corroborated by your own statement. I say nothing of the extraordinary nature of the debt itself—that lies between you and your conscience; but you have refused the king’s coin in payment of your claim; and this would be enough, although it were unsupported by the fact that (perhaps in anger—I care not) you refused the debt altogether. No man is bound to offer payment of a debt twice, and I therefore discharge the defender, and declare that this coffin debt no longer exists.”

A clap of hands from the people in the court followed this sentence, and John Gibb was congratulated by many on the result of his ingenuity.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

A CHRONICLE OF THE DEATH OF JAMES III.

IN these enlightened times, when man has become so wise that he thinks he knows everything, it is a practice with writers of legends which border on the supernatural, to give a plausible solution of any difficulty which occurs, and to reconcile, if possible, all mysterious appearances with the ascertained and familiar ways of God's providence. We are very far from discountenancing the study of physical causes, recommended by Lord Bacon, and followed now-a-days with so much zeal, and, we might say, with so much impatience of what was at one time called the wisdom of the world; but we may very humbly remark, that, as its extremes transcend truth, the stickler for the old philosophy and the exclusive supporter of the new are equally wide of their aim, if they think that these respective studies comprehend severally all the ways of Providence. The votary of superstition, who trembles at an omen, is not farther distant from the path to eternal and immutable truth, than is the conceited biped who, with rule and compass, dynamics, and differential calculus, thinks he can measure and define all the powers of nature. How little is it known to him who makes the *visible* the measure of nature's existence and power, that every step he makes, or thinks he makes in his progress, the farther he removes from the great landmarks of those great truths on which is founded our holy religion. James III. was killed in open day: who killed him? History is mute; but tradition is eloquent, and fearfully impressive. The reign of this unfortunate monarch was marked by more rebellion and murder than any period of the same extent in the history of Scotland. Other reigns exhibited perhaps more attacks on the part of England—more battles and greater devastation; but the period we have mentioned stands unrivalled for intestine commotion, faction, rebellion, plotting, and counterplotting, and all the other effects that flow from a weakly exercised authority, on the part of a king, over subjects the greater part of whom, trained to arms and tournaments, and taught to hate and despise humane attainments, could find no relief from the ennui of idleness, but in the stir of strife, whether exercised against their external enemies or their internal competitors who stood in the way of their ambition. Many have been the complaints which Scotland has made against the invasions of England, and the sordid views of the English monarchs, which produced them; but little has been said against the renegade conduct of many of her sons, who, with matricidal views, endeavoured to put an end to her independence as a nation, by leaguings with her enemies and corrupting the loyalty of their brethren. It may be doubted whether the successive treasons and rebellions of Mar, Douglas, and Albany, and their consequent alliances with the King of England, did not produce more evil to Scotland than ever resulted from the unaided invasions of all the English monarchs together; yet, such is the inconsistency of man, that, even at this day, the cadets and scions of these renegade families presume upon the honours of their birth, and get their presumption admitted and countenanced by those who would despise the industrious benefactor of his country.

There cannot be a doubt that it was entirely owing to the weakness of the third James, that the noble enemies of order and justice, the high barons, wrought so much evil to their country. A late historian, of some beauty of diction, and great command of historical erudition, but perhaps deficient in what is called the philosophy of history, has endeavoured to support James against the censures of Leslie and Buchanan; but his own narrative disproves his arguments, and leaves the responsibility of a nation's sorrow at the debit of the weakness, favouritism, and tergiversation of that unfortunate king. The rebellion at Lauder—where his favourites, Crichton the mason, Rogers the musician, and Ireland the man of letters or rather of magic, were hanged over the buttress of the bridge—was entirely produced by the disappointment of the lords, who saw their places at court occupied by mechanics, while they, too much inclined for tumult at any rate, were left without civil distinctions and employments to occupy their minds and incline them to peace. But, although the weakness of James may have formed an excuse for the nobles to rise against him, what shall be said for the conduct of his son, James IV., who headed the subsequent rebellion against his own father, which ended so mournfully at the battle of Sauchie Burn? It was unnecessary to add the cry of public reprobation to the voice of a crying conscience: the Prince conceived himself to have been the murderer of his father, and never had a day's rest or happiness on earth after the mysterious death which his rebellious conduct had produced.

We have outlived the days of superstition, and we do not, we dare not believe what has been handed down to us on the subject of this self-imputed parricide—but we are at liberty, as veracious chroniclers of tradition, to narrate what were at one time supposed to be the ways of a mysterious Providence, in punishing the unfilial conduct of a son, who, after experiencing the unlimited kindness of a parent, took into his hand arms, which, by another, though unknown hand, were used against that parent's life. Let the sceptical sons of modern philosophy repudiate our narrative, as their sublime knowledge of the workings of physical powers inclines them to shut their eyes against the dark obscure beyond. We profess to believe that mere *darkness* is not exclusive of existences, and that, though light may be necessary to enable us to see what is permitted us to see by the decree of Him who made us, there is also ordained an alternation of darkness, whose dominion being coextensive with the light, carries a borrowed conviction of existences, which, extended by analogy to unknown things and regions, may make us abate our scepticism and humble our pride of knowledge.

When the nobles who had committed the daring acts of rebellion and murder at the Bridge of Lauder—among whom were Lords Gray and Hailes, the Master of Hume, and Shaw of Sauchie—found that the King was not inclined to extend to them letters of pardon, they set about devising a scheme whereby they might force that safety, to themselves and their property, which they had not been able to procure by entreaty and supplication. Their plan was subtle in its nature, and dexterously executed; but, like all schemes of a similar kind, failed of that success which the high hopes of political schemers point to, as the mean of their eleva-

tion to rank and power. They resolved upon taking advantage of the youth and versatility of the young Prince, James Duke of Rothsay, and, endeavouring to overcome his sentiments of filial love and duty, by the engrossing passion of political ambition, get him to join them in their designs against the power and authority of his father. By setting, in this way, the son against the parent, they would give weight and power to their faction, and take away the responsibility and guilt of rebellious leaders, which could not attach to operations commanded by the heir-apparent of the throne. Unfortunately the disposition of the young Prince was predisposed to the reception of the insidious whisperings of ambition. All the faculties of his mind were in a high degree precocious; and his sentiments kept pace with his intellectual powers, in suggesting wishes which his abilities might gratify, and which his prudence was not able to suppress. These tendencies had, it is supposed, been noticed by the rebellious schemers, who, with the example of a prior Duke of Rothsay before them, could not well have calculated upon overcoming the instinctive feelings of a son, without some indications that these were weaker than they are even generally found to be in the sons of kings.

This plan was begun to be put into execution, by getting the Prince prevailed upon to visit the Castle of Stirling, at that time under the governorship of Shaw of Sauchie. He had no sooner arrived, than a great display was made by the lords, who were assembled there for the purpose of the most obsequious homage and the most impassioned affection, with the view of stimulating those feelings of a desire of power, which already had vindicated too much force in his youthful mind. A banquet was prepared, in honour of the heir-apparent, at which there were assembled almost all those nobles who stood in fear of his father, from having had a participation in the murder of the favourites at Lauder. The most fulsome flattery was poured into his youthful ear; and the conduct of his father in resigning himself to the studies of astrology and to the power of the professors of that occult science, treated with a levity which bordered on derision and laughter. This was the true chord to strike in the heart of the Prince, who, filled with the highest enthusiasm of chivalry, despised, as worthy of the supreme contempt of an honourable man at arms, and far more of a king, all such applications of the human intellect. He did not hesitate to declare, in the midst of the nobles, that he did not approve of the conduct of his father, who ought, as he thought, to have cultivated the knowledge of arms, and left witchcraft to old wives, and astrology to old men. These sentiments were lauded by the company; and the young man, buoyed up with the conceit of a knowledge superior to that of his father, seemed to be far advanced in the preparation he was undergoing for bolder sentiments and unfilial resolutions. Well may philosophers lament the evil nature of man. Few criminal purposes can be suggested to the human heart, without finding in its hidden recesses some chord which, with eldritch notes, gives a response often unknown to the will, but affording good proof that the attuning and predisposing power of an evil angel has been at work in that organ of the sentiments of the salvation or perdition of mortals.

When the designing nobles saw that the young Prince was so far prepared for their purposes, they got him engaged, under the cover of a recess of the great hall, in a conversation with some of the leaders, and, in particular, with Gray and Hume, who took the active part in the demoralization of the youth. The plan adopted by Gray, in conducting the conversation, was the result of experience, and the very triumph of cunning. He had noticed the self-complacent smile of the flattered Prince, when the elder nobles conceded to him their opinion, and deferred a subtle point to the analyzing powers of his boyish judgment; and he took advantage of the weakness of vanity, to forward his schemes of ambition.

"Your Highness has doubtless been informed," said the arch diplomatist to the royal boy, "of the reason why your royal father hath refused to us, in this last parliament, the satisfaction of an act of pardon for our conduct at Lauder, now five years old—notwithstanding that we have been all that time in his power, and have not been troubled with any trial for our crime or misdemeanour."

"I have understood," said the Prince, "that my father's imprisonment and misfortunes originated from the affair at Lauder. Is not that a good enough reason for refusing the pardon?"

"When I tell thee, young Prince," said Gray, "that at Lauder the King lost his architect, his musician, his astrologer, and magician, all of whom I assisted in hanging over the buttress of Lauder Bridge, will your Highness remain longer of opinion, that our refusal of a pardon is owing to the imprisonment of the King?"

"No, my Lord," replied the Prince—"I believe I must renounce that opinion upon second thoughts; and I do it upon my recollection of what I have seen and heard of my father's sorrow for the fate of his favourites, and resentment against their executioners. He sigheth by night and by day for his brave and stately draughtsman, Earl Cochrane, his sweet-toned Rogers, and his erudite Ireland. I do, on my conscience, believe, he sorrows more for these men than for his own imprisonment."

"And doth your Highness approve or condemn our conduct, in hanging these favourites over Lauder Bridge?" said Hume.

"Why, I think a rope was too good for them, and a pardon not enough for the executioners," replied the Prince; "you should have had a bounty on each head of the varlets. If my exchequer were not so empty, I would award ye a recompense myself. But I have heard that some of ye played into the hands of Gloucester, Albany, and Douglas, in that affair of Lauder. What say ye?"

"Thou hast been deceived," said Gray. "Archibald Bell-the-Cat was, doubtless, for the English King, but we stood true to our country. It was the favourites alone we wanted to punish—and we did punish them—an act which apparently, thy father is determined not to forgive. What then are we to do? Wilt thou, the heir-apparent, stand aside and see those who freed thy father from the shackles of favouritism, and saved our country from the domination of a court of mechanics, consigned to a cruel punishment, or, what is worse, to the terrors of Damocles?"

"Never!" cried the fiery youth; "I applaud your conduct, and could recommend to you some more work of the same kind; for my father has got another court of mechanics. Scarcely a nobleman is allowed to approach him. The Archbishop of St Andrew's, Schevez, has not forgotten his rudiments of astrology he learned from Spernicus a Louvaine—for the teaching of the King keeps up his own knowledge; and Cochrane, Rogers, Hemmil, Torphichen, Leonard, and Preston, whom you so beautifully suspended over the old bridge, have been replaced by others, no less elevated in their birth, and no less learned in the arts. My father is lost. Scotland is ruled by the stars. The birth of every year hath its horoscope. Chivalry declineth in the land. The glory of the Bruce is forgotten. There is much work before me, and I wish it were well begun, for I cannot doubt that by your services it will be well ended."

"Thou speakest like the wisdom of the oldest of us," said Gray; "and I am urged, by some of the concluding words of thy speech, to put a question to your Highness—yet I tremble at my own boldness."

"Speak, good Gray," said the Prince; "my father will not pardon you and your associates, after your work of good service is finished—I will pardon thee before thou beginnest."

"Is it the opinion of your Highness," said the wily Baron,

"that a king who is ruled by the stars, (the moon as a *fixed* one not excepted,) is fit to govern this kingdom, which has heretofore obeyed the statutes of parliament and the sword of the knight?"

"Upon the honour of my order of knighthood," cried the Prince, "thy question goeth home into the heart and marrow of the matter, and my answer shall not be behind it: I opine not."

"And doth not the situation in which we stand," said Hume—"we, the greater number of the nobles in the land, liable every instant to forfeit our lives to an aspect of the heavens, to be hanged for hanging the favourites of the King, five years ago—render it imperative on us to seek in the spirited and knightly heir-apparent, a substitute for him who is declared unfit to rule without danger to the country and ruin to us?"

"Assuredly," answered the flattered Prince. "If the King is not deposed, you will be deposed, and I shall be scandalized by the sight of a star-gazing King, and a host of dangling nobles, at the end of ropes not so fine as the silk cords of Cochrane the mason's tent, which he requested for the special convenience of his noble craig. What will ye?"

"That thou shouldst head our party," said Gray, "and be our king in place of thy father, who is unfit to govern this kingdom, and unwilling to pardon his friends."

"I object not," replied the Prince. "The King my father can be cared for tenderly. Let him be sent to my palace of Rothsay, where he can gaze on the heavens from sunset to sunrise, and send me daily an astrological express, to enable me to govern the kingdom by this heavenly wisdom."

"All hail, our King!" now cried the voices of a hundred knights and nobles, who, on a signal, had hurried from the table, and surrounded the Prince. "All hail, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, and our lawful sovereign!"

And the whole assemblage kneeled before the young Prince, who received the homage with every feeling of gratified pride.

While this extraordinary scene was in the course of being enacted in the midst of a brilliant assemblage and the eulogistic flattery of the interested actors, James felt no compunctions of broken filial duty and ruptured affection. Swelled with the pride of his new and suddenly-acquired honour, the thought of the price at which its confirmation must be bought—the deposition and degradation of an upright and humane, though weak king, and that king his father—never interfered with the flow of his gratified and excited feelings. Everything was now grand, hilarious, and hopeful; and a far vista of wise legislative, and noble knightly achievements, claimed the rapt eye of his mind, when his attention could be taken off the brilliant scene before him. His experience of the mind of man and the operations of fate did not inform him that there is a mysterious agreement between the one and the other, whereby their results are mutually and wonderfully magnified, and the individual who studies himself is brought to tremble at the height of joy, as the precursor of a cause ready to plunge him into the depths of melancholy anticipation and sorrow. We are told that kings are great examples in the hands of a teaching Providence, and hence our authority for approaching with greater confidence than we could do in relation to ordinary individuals the cause of the change that awaited the feelings and aspirations of the young Prince on the night of his anticipated honour.

About twelve o'clock he was attended to his chamber, the royal apartment of the castle, by Shaw of Sauchie, the governor, and several of the nobles, who, after conversing with him for some time, left him, locking the door after them as they departed—a measure they explained to him as being necessary for his own safety in the midst of so much dissension and distrust as prevailed at that time

among the nobility. The circumstance did not alarm the royal prisoner, though he could not but think it strange that, on the first night of his installation, his palace should be converted into a gaol, and the king of his country should be the gaol-bird of the seneschal of one of his own castles. Free of all sense of personal danger, he contemplated the temporary privation of his liberty rather with a disposition to being amused than annoyed, and lay down to court that rest which joy, equally as sorrow, banishes from the pillow of mortals. His thoughts took now a direction the very reverse of what they had followed during the day. The image of his deceased mother, Queen Margaret, forced itself on his mind. Her pious, reserved, and meek manners, with her devotion to her consort and her affection to her eldest son, all sanctified and made more lovely and interesting by her death, softened his heart and filled his eyes with the tears of a son's love; while his undutiful conduct that night, in agreeing to the dethronement of his father, silently censured, as it appeared to be, by her gentle spirit, called up a feeling of remorse which wrung his heart with pain, and added to the tears which he was already shedding in profusion. If left to his choice, he would now have undone what he had been so ready to perform at the request of factious and interested men; and, if the door of his apartment had not been locked, the strength of his feelings might have urged him to seek for safety and forgiveness at the feet of his injured parent.

The hour was far advanced, but the restlessness of his fevered fancy still prevented all rest. The apartment was dark, no attendant was within call, and he was necessitated, though a king, to yield obedience to a power which no mortal can resist; the feelings of love, sorrow, regret, remorse, and repentance—as applicable to the parent who was lying in a royal sepulchre, and to another who was virtually, in so far as regarded his intention, deposed and degraded—alternated, became stronger, decayed, and revived again, with a painful and harassing vacillation. He heard the warder call two o'clock; again all was silent as before, and his thoughts were about to fall into the same painful train, when he heard the iron bar of the door of his apartment gently drawn, and saw enter the figure of an old man, with a long grey beard, a grey cloak, which reached to his feet and was bound by a blue belt, and holding in his hand a taper, which, glimmering with a fitful light, exposed very imperfectly the strange and fearful looking object who held it. James' eyes were fixed upon him intensely, and the lustreless orbs of his visiter repaid the look with as intent a gaze, and made a thrill of superstitious terror run over his body. The figure continued the gaze as it approached the bed, which, having reached, it stood silent, holding up the lamp in the face of the trembling youth, and apparently taking care not to change the set of its features, or the direction or manner of its look. This attitude enabled James to scan narrowly the features of the individual: they appeared to be somewhat sinister, though he could not say where the precise expression lay, or what it truly was—seriousness seemed to degenerate into sternness, and that again into malignity, which was again relieved by some features of kindness and patronizing protection. A deep scar on the right cheek, and what by doctors is called a staphylomatic eye, in consequence of its resemblance to a white grape, had a great share in the production of the uncertain expression which was so difficult to read. Having thus stood for some time at the side of the bed, looking into the face of the Prince, and holding the glimmering lamp so as to suit its imperfect vision, the figure lifted solemnly its left hand, and, in a low and somewhat guttural tone of voice, said—

"What is the duty of a son to a parent, of a subject to a king, of a creature to the Creator?"

James was silent; the question was threefold, and im-

plied censure, which, co-operating with his fear prevented reply.

"What doth he deserve," proceeded the figure, "who disobeyeth his parent, deposeth his king, and rebelleth against the laws of God?"

The terror of an apparition working on a predisposed mind was every moment receiving an augmentation of strength; and the young Prince, in place of replying, grasped the bed-clothes firmly round him, and eyed the speaker with nervous looks.

"Thou answerest not," continued the speaker—"and why? Pride and self-approbation are gifted with the loquacity of the joy which, they say, chattereth only when the sun shineth; but wisdom is represented by the owl, whose reign is in the still hours of night. Yesterday thou couldst speak of being a king—ay, a king over thy father and thy father's subjects—and a king in the verity of traitors tongues thou art; yet where is thy authority, when even the tongue of royalty cleaveth slavishly to the parched mouth of the conscience-stricken, and preventeth thee from seizing these dry bones" (holding forth his hands) "and consigning this head of grey hairs to the Heading Hill of Stirling? The king or the prince who is enslaved by his conscience, oweth the duties of vilenage to the worst and hardest of masters. The chain is forging, the forge is in action, the hammer and the anvil hold in their embrace the connecting links of a king's bondage. The eagle flies o'er Shihallion to-day, and to-morrow the spurning pinions quiver in the grasp of the hand. The exulting swelling heart of virtue hath not yet collapsed. There is time to rouse thyself and throw off the tyrant whose power thou feelest even now. Return to thy allegiance. Love and obey thy father; aid him against his foes. Refuse—and be thrice miserably damned."

The figure turned and retreated from the bed. The door was opened, shut and locked. Nothing was to be seen and nothing heard. Roused from his fear, James sprung up and cried—

"Whether of mortal mould, or a mere borrower on occasion of our rude forms of earth, return, and say whence thy commission and of what import? If a mere messenger of man, I'll heed thee not; but, if thou'lt give me proof that James of Scotland, my royal father, enjoys the protection of the King of All, I'll on the instant renounce my new-born honours, hail him king, thee my good angel, and be once more plain James of Rothsay."

No answer was returned to the call of the Prince; he listened for a time at the door of the apartment, and, hearing no sound, returned to bed, where, after tossing about for several hours, he fell into a sound sleep. Towards morning he dreamed that the figure again visited him and communed with him on the crime of filial disobedience—the fancied apparition and the supposed conversation being in the dream so clearly developed that, when he awoke, he felt the greatest difficulty in endeavouring to segregate the real from the imaginary appearances. He had even doubts whether he had actually seen the figure, or whether the first scene was not that of a dream as well as the second; and he knew of no mode other than that of having recourse to simple conviction of satisfying himself on this interesting point. He was not contented with the proof afforded by his consciousness, the very *ne plus ultra* of human probation, and resolved on making an application to the warder, with the view of getting some confirmation of the evidence of his senses.

He had scarcely made this resolution, when Governor Shaw unlocked the door and entered the apartment. Full of the thoughts he had been indulging and canvassing with so much anxiety since he arose, the Prince told his visitor what he thought he had seen during the night, but candidly admitted that he had had also a vision in a dream approach-

ing so nearly to the reality of the waking sense, that he could not take upon him to say that the first appearance was *undoubtedly* a real natural exhibition of a mortal existence. The governor listened with great attention, and anxiously inquired what was the subject of the conversation that passed between him and the old man. The Prince narrated to him as nearly as possible the words used by the figure, and admitted that he himself had no power to reply, till after the visiter was gone and the door locked. Shaw was evidently much moved by the recital; and, in a confused and hurried manner, endeavoured to convince James that he had had a visit of nightmare—an affection with which he was probably, in consequence of his extreme youth, as yet unacquainted, but a mysterious operation of nature, quite sufficient to produce in a young and fervent mind that semi-consciousness of reality which had apparently perplexed him so much. He recommended to him to banish the affair from his mind, and, above all, to say nothing of it to the warlike nobles in the castle, whose very objection to the rule of his father was founded on the latter's faith in dreams, auguries, and astrological nostrums—a true sign of a weak intellect.

This latter part of the governor's statement, which was delivered with much gravity, produced a great effect upon the mind of James, whose contempt of his father's occult, astrological, and oneirocritical practices, was the cause of his disobedience as well as its apology. He trembled at the thought of incurring, on his own part, the censure which had been heaped on his parent, and felt anxious to escape precipitately from the subject he had broached, as well as from his own thoughts, which, mixing up reality and imagination in inextricable confusion, produced nothing but doubt, irresolution, and anxiety. If he had been anxious, on the entry of Shaw, to tell him the wonders of the night, he was now more anxious to undo what he had done, and remove from the mind of the governor any suspicion that he inherited from his father his hairbrained propensity to believe in dreams and divinations. Changing the style of his speech, as well as the expression of his countenance, he attempted to make light of his nocturnal adventure, and laughed off the clinging belief with an effort which was not unnoticed by his wily visiter. The power of early prejudices in overcoming the convictions of truth, effected a partial triumph; but there still clung to the mind of the youth a feeling of a struggling conviction, which his forced laugh and his expressed contempt of all supernatural beliefs had little power to effect. He felt, however, the necessity of maintaining absolute silence on a subject so intimately connected with his dispute with his father, and Shaw undertook to say nothing of the occurrence, which he affected to think had been properly treated by the noble mind of the young Prince.

The scheme of this unnatural rebellion being persevered in with great determination and asperity, a court was held next day in the Castle of Stirling, where all the ceremonies of a royal levee were gone through with studied state and affected etiquette. The Earl of Argyle was reinstated in the office of Chancellor, which had been conferred by his father on Elphinston, Bishop of Aberdeen. A negotiation was opened with the English King, Henry VII., who, having had a dispute with the old King as to the restoration of Berwick, very readily entered into the views of the son, and agreed to grant passports to his ambassadors, the Bishops of Glasgow and Dunkeld, the Earl of Argyle, Lords Lyle and Hailes, with the Master of Hume, who were, in fact, the heads of the rebellious party. The boldness of these proceedings, quadrating with the weakness of the King's actions, spread disaffection among the people of Scotland, far and wide, and it was soon rumoured that the monarch, afraid of the disposition of his subjects towards the south, had proceeded to Aberdeen, and issued orders for the array

of Strathearn and Angus, and all his friends in the north who still retained their allegiance. If the son soon found himself at the head of a large force in the south, the father was as successful in the north. Athole, Huntly, Crawford, and Lindsay of Byres, joined his standard; and to these were soon added Buchan, Errol, Glamis, Forbes, and Kilmours—so that the two ends of the kingdom were completely arrayed against each other, and the antagonist forces were headed by a father and a son.

The monarch having thus vacated the capital and be-taken himself to the north, an opportunity was held out to the son to lay siege to the Castle of Edinburgh; and orders were given to the troops to proceed in that direction. During all this time the mind of the Prince had been kept up by the insidious counsels of the rebel lords, who represented the unfilial work in which he was engaged as conducive to the benefit of the kingdom which would receive the blessings of his wise legislation. The youth was flattered by these statements; and the details of an army, by occupying his thoughts, banished from his recollection the night scene of the Castle of Stirling, which, as time aided the efforts of his sceptical wishes, gradually appeared to assume more and more the character of a false and delusive dream. Meanwhile, Hume and Hailes, and others who had been sent as ambassadors to England, returned with intelligence that Henry was favourable to their cause—a circumstance which still farther flattered the vanity of the youth, and prevented him from giving way to the feelings of instinctive duty and affection towards his father. Proceeding gradually forward, the rebel army came to Blackness, near Linlithgow, where they encamped.

The army of the King, in the meantime, came up, and the unusual sight was exhibited of two parts of a nation, headed by a father and a son, contending for a throne, arrayed against each other, with reciprocal feelings of enmity and views of mortal conflict. The benevolent heart of the father relented, and terms of accommodation, as prepared by Huntly and Errol, were sanctioned by his signature, but prevented from being properly submitted to the son, by the rash conduct of Buchan, who thought he would be able to extinguish the rebellion by one blow. A skirmish was the consequence, in which the Earl gained some advantage; but, though the triumph was magnified into a victory, the rebel forces were as strong as ever, while the sight of kindred blood on the swords of the warriors of either side of the field sickened the hearts of brave men, who, in other circumstances, would have been fired by the token of an advantage over an enemy. The wish for an accommodation was increased on the side of the King and his troops, and the former terms of accommodation were submitted to the rebel Prince, who was still under the leading-strings of the arch traitors by whom he had been led into this unseemly and unnatural position.

The terms of accommodation were extremely favourable to the insurgent forces, as, without exacting any condition but that of laying down their arms, the King agreed to admit them to favour and grant them pardons for present and bygone offences; yet great dissension existed amongst the rebels on the subject of the acceptance of the offer of peace, and the Prince, urged on by Gray, in whom he had the greatest confidence, headed the party who were inclined to stand out.

"I for one," said the youth, "receive nothing by these terms but the mighty boon of forgiveness, which will neither add to my honours nor contribute to my ambition. By being the friend of my royal father, I may be gratified by getting a view of Venus through his astrolabe; but I would rather, upon the honour of a knight, be his lieutenant in the government of this part of the planet Earth called Scotland. It is clear that my father is as unfit to rule the kingdom as was the father of the former holder of my title

of Duke of Rothsay, Robert the Third, who made his son lieutenant-general—and why should I be debarred from what is my natural and legitimate right? It will be for the good of you all that I am appointed to that office, in so much as the friendship of a ruler invested with all the power is better than the pardon of a king who has none."

These sentiments were opposed by many of the lords, and, in particular, by the Earl of Argyll.

"By these terms of accommodation," said he, "we get all we have been fighting for, or can expect from a victory gained through the blood of our countrymen and kinsmen—a free pardon for the execution of the favourites at the bridge of Lauder, and a restoration to the favour and confidence of the King. We cannot force a lieutenancy in favour of the Prince who is at present our king, otherwise than by committing his royal father to close confinement—for what self-denying ordinance could prevent a sane and free king, not deposed by his subjects, from exercising his authority in opposition to that of a lieutenant forced upon him against his will and acting against his wishes? The crown, as surely as a coffin, will come to one prince by the course of nature, and better wait for a regular inheritance, than anticipate a right by rebellion, spoliation, and force."

Other arguments were used by other nobles, and the convention retired to their tents without coming to any determination. The night was clear and beautiful: the sky shone with cerulean brightness; a clear, full moon shot her silvery rays "over tower and tree;" and every twinkling star in the blue firmament seemed to rejoice in the opportunity of getting its weak beam thrown upon the green earth, and adding its small mite to the general exuberance of the smiles of the whole heavenly host. The noise of the convention of angry nobles having ceased, and the men, wearied by bearing arms all day, having retired to rest, there was nothing to disturb the silence which reigned co-ordinately with the serene light, and made the scene more impressively beautiful. When left to himself, the young Prince felt the contrast between the appearance of nature, thus arrayed in her fairest smiles, and beautified by calmness and composure, and the position of a father and a son, lying in wait for an opportunity of engaging in the strife of war, and of even shedding each other's blood, by the vicarious hands of those they were leading on to the fight of kindred against kindred. His heart softened; the feelings of nature returned for a time, and vindicated the authority they should never have lost. His versatility was exclusive of a permanent establishment in his bosom of affection and duty, but it was, as it generally is, a pledge of the strength of the reigning emotion, for the time, which, in proportion to the shortness of its duration, was intense in its action and engrossing in its extent. Having thrown himself on his couch, he resigned himself to the influence of these feelings; the poetical enthusiasm which is generated by a contemplation of nature in her beautiful moods, and, in his instance, called forth by a survey (through the opening of his tent) of the shining heavens and the sleeping earth, came in aid of the instinctive emotions which occupied his bosom; and he could not restrain the expression of what he felt.

"I have sat on the knee of him against whom I am arrayed in preparation for mortal fight, and I have seen the tear rise in his eye, as, looking first at me, and then at my departed mother, (bless her pure spirit, which dwelleth in that æther!) he felt proud of the pledge of their loves, and hopeful of the virtues of a good king, to succeed him when he died. What would have been his emotions, if he had been told by some of his occult divinations, that the boy he cherished and wept over, would lift his hand against his life, and endeavour to pluck the crown from his living head? How dreadful, at this moment, appears to me my position and my conduct! Almost in my view, my

parent lays his head on the pillow of a field tent, uncertain whether his son and his son's friends may permit him to awake again, to view the beauties of that moon, and all that she discovers to the eye of man. Heavens! and I, conscious of my ingratitude, know its baneful effects on a parent's mind, and yet do not rise instantly and throw myself at his feet! Cruel versatility of nature, under which I stand accursed! Where shall I find the elements of consistency, the true parent of happiness? Alas! I obey only the impulses of constitution. Would that, at this auspicious moment, I had an opportunity of acquiring again the matter of these terms of peace! The feelings of a son, roused by conscience, would suggest an eloquence before which all the specious views and paradoxes of Gray and Hume would disappear, like vapours before the light of that shining queen of the heavens."

He lifted his eyes as he spoke, to look again at the bright moon, and saw before him, palpable to his waking intelligence, the identical figure which had appeared to him in the Castle of Stirling. The light brought out his form in full perfection, and a long shadow thrown upon the floor of the tent gave an additional evidence of his presence; the scar upon his cheek, and the staphylomatic orb, were apparent, and proved his identity; and his look and manner indicated a purpose similar to that he had announced on the occasion of his prior appearance.

"He whom the gods wish to destroy," said the figure, "is first by them deprived of reason; and thy disregard of my counsel sheweth that thou art bent on thy own ruin. Thy father lieth there"—(pointing his finger)—"I will lead thee to his tent; and, see! there lieth beside thee on that couch a sword. What need of more? Why not in pity end his woes and life together? That bright moon will glory in the sight of a son imbruing his hand in the blood of a parent—her light will be incarnadined by the running stream of life—but water will wash the hands of the parricide. Come, follow! Dost thou hesitate? Why, then, this warlike array?"

"Fiend or angel," cried the Prince—"which art thou? Are the counsels of heaven couched in irony, or am I advised by a messenger of hell? Give thy thoughts another and a clearer form, and satisfy me that thou art well commissioned for the counsel of youth, and I will hail thee friend. Of sage advisers, with hair as white as thine, and speech as strange, circuitous, and wild, I have enough—my soul is torn by their contests for the mastership of my royal will. I'd give an earldom of ten thousand acres for ten words winged with the wisdom of above. Speak!—what art thou?"

"All that is good comes from the skies," replied the man; "and mortals, to attain it, are not required to trust alone to the vicarious powers which live in that blue light of the moon's silver glory. The triumph of God's wisdom soundeth through man's heart. Thou hast heard it and heeded it not. The soft and solemn notes of goodness, suited to the gravity of knowledge that tendeth to salvation, have not awakened thee; and the harsh tones of stimulating irony have, as a last resource, been tried on the obdurate heart of filial disobedience. Why more? Hast thou forgot our meeting in the Castle of Stirling? Renounce thy vain speculations in the origin of my mission and the nature of this form, which, thou seest, casteth a shadow on the ground, and listen to the counsel which is independent of the tongue of man or angel that pronounceth it. Agree to thy father's terms; hasten to his bosom, fall on it, weep away the dregs of thy disobedience, and rejoice in the composing and healing virtues of the fatted calf."

Having said these words, the figure glided quickly out of the tent; and, though James immediately rose and followed, he could see no trace of the extraordinary being who thus haunted him, and counselled him, apparently for his good. He called some of his attendants, and asked of them if they

had seen any person leave his tent; but they answered in the negative; and, though he personally searched among the tents, and even visited the camp of the sutlers, he could find no trace of the mysterious counsellor. He returned to his tent, and again threw himself on his couch. This vision was at least no dream. All the powers of Shaw, and all the sceptical raillery of those who laughed his father's credulous belief in dreams and divinations to scorn, could not, he was satisfied, drive from his mind the effects produced by the appearance and language of this extraordinary visiter. He began to think that the wisdom of his father, whose maxim was, that there is more in nature than man's shallow philosophy can fathom, was truer and better lore than the self-sufficient and profane knowledge of his noble advisers; and, though he had no evidence that the figure was an unincorporated essence, but rather suspected that it was made of flesh and blood like himself, there was an impressiveness and solemnity in his thoughts and manner of delivering them, which justified the maxim he had himself delivered, that wisdom may come from heaven by other means than the mediation of celestial messengers. The train of reflections which followed were grave and sage; the feelings of a son who had injured his father and wished to make amends, acquired an ascendancy where they should never have lost their power, and a resolution to agree on the morn to the terms of accommodation offered, and thus obey the counsel of the mysterious visiter, was formed before slumber overtook his distracted mind.

Early in the morning, the council of nobles again met, and the discussions were resumed as to the expediency of accepting the offers of peace. The Prince sat listening to the arguments in a mood of gloomy abstraction, from which he appeared to struggle to get free, and, at last starting up, he put an end to the strife of contending tongues by delivering solemnly his changed opinion.

"We have all heard," he said, "that there is great wisdom in night counsel—(*consilium in nocte*)—forgive me—I do not say in dreams, or visions, or consultations of the heavens, but in the weighing of rational arguments in the balance of the judgment, when there is no disturbing cause to shake the scales, and no prejudice to add a false weight to the deductions of a biased reasoning. I stand in a position different from you all. You are fighting against your King, I against my father. You are seeking what is offered to you by the terms in question; I am fighting for what death or superannuation alone can bestow—a king's crown or a vicegerent's tiara; and I am offered what I scarcely deserve—an indulgent father's forgiveness and affection. Why should I hesitate, when, by standing out, I may lose the crown and my father's love, while, by acquiescing, I insure the one at present, and retain the other by a sure expectancy? The words of Argyle have sat on my heart all night. If I live till my father die, a crown and a coffin are equally certain to me; and I shall put on the one and lie down in the other with feelings better befitting the heir of a kingdom on earth and one in heaven, by acting as becometh a good son, than those that can result from a consciousness of disobedience. Our commissioners, therefore, have my authority for agreeing to the terms of peace."

This speech, so different from the one of the previous day, was received with loud murmurs of dissatisfaction from the leading rebels, who calculated with certainty on the steadiness of a youth who, having been untrue to his father, might safely have been suspected of a tendency to a dangerous vacillation as regarded his new colleagues. The numbers on the side of the Prince were, however, great—perhaps, amounting to a majority—so that the discontented nobles were obliged to suppress their chagrin, and permit the commissioners to go through the ceremony of accepting the terms of accommodation. The treaty was, therefore, concluded in the course of the day.

The monarch, acting upon the supposition that everything was amicably settled, withdrew his army and retired back upon Edinburgh, where, in the excess of his gratitude to those who had brought about a result so beneficial to the kingdom and so gratifying to the feelings of a father, he bestowed upon several of the nobles and knights substantial marks of his royal favour. The Earl of Crawford was created Duke of Montrose, Lord Kilmaurs was raised to the rank of Earl Glencairn, and the lairds of Balmamoon, Lag, Balyard, and others, received grants of land. All was settled, as the weak but good monarch thought, amicably and lastingly. Yet how vain are the anticipations of mortals! At the very time when a species of jubilee was celebrating in Edinburgh on the reorganization of the court and the restoration of peace and tranquillity, the uncompromising rebel lords were triumphing in another victory over the mind and sentiments of the Prince. The versatile youth having survived the solemn impression made on his mind by his nocturnal counsellor, was as ready as ever to listen to the rebellious advice of the nobles, who, trusting to their power over him, had secretly kept together the army, which they had merely cantoned in various parts of the south. The Monarch had scarcely rested himself in the Castle of Edinburgh, when he was informed that the same fierce faction had resumed their ambitious schemes, and were again assembled, with the Prince at their head, in more formidable array than before.

The instant this intelligence reached Edinburgh, the King's friends who had remained in the city, urged him to reassemble his army without delay, and put a total end to the insurrection by a quick and decisive blow. The loyal nobles were active in their measures, and collected, in a very short time, their retainers; while summonses were issued to all those who had returned home, and, especially, the lords of the north, to assemble their clans and meet the King's troops at Stirling, whither his Majesty intended to repair in person. The commands were most readily obeyed; the popularity of the cause of the father against the son was very great, and had considerably increased since the breach of faith which the latter and his rebel colleagues had displayed in not adhering to the late solemn treaty; and, in a very short time, the royal army exhibited an enlargement of its ranks, which justified expectations of a speedy settlement of this unnatural strife. Abandoning the Castle of Edinburgh, the monarch approached Stirling, where, having placed himself at the head of his army, he met and attacked with considerable spirit the forces of his son, which, having dispersed, he forced them across the Forth, and immediately after demanded admittance into his Castle of Stirling. This request was refused by Shaw, the governor; and, before preparations could be made for forcing a surrender, or, indeed, before a decision was come to whether an attack should, in the circumstances, be resorted to, intelligence was brought that the antagonist forces had reassembled and were encamped in strong array on the level plain above the bridge of the Torwood.

Upon hearing this intelligence, the monarch immediately advanced against the insurgents; and, having no longer any faith in the breakers of solemn covenants, encountered them on a track of ground known at present by the name of Little Canglar, situated upon the east side of a small brook called Sauchie Burn, about two miles from Stirling, and one from the field of Bannockburn. The royal army was drawn up in three divisions, under the advice of Lord Lindsay—the first composed of the northern clans, under Athole and Huntly, forming an advance of Highlandmen, armed with bows, daggers, swords, and targets; the rear division, consisting of Westland and Stirling men, under Menteith, Erskine, and Graham; and the main battle, composed of burghers and commons, being led by the King himself. On the right of the King, who was splendidly

armed, and rode a tall grey horse presented to him by Lord Lindsay, was that venerable warrior and the Earl of Crawford, commanding a noble body of cavalry, consisting of the chivalry of Fife and Angus; while on his left Lord Ruthven, with the men of Strathearn and Stormont, formed a body of nearly five thousand spearmen. On the other hand, the rebel lords formed themselves also into three battles; the first division, composed of the hardy spearmen of East Lothian and Merse, being led by Lord Hailes and the Master of Hume; the second, formed of Galwegians and the hardy Borderers of Liddesdale and Annandale, being led by Lord Gray; while the middle, composed of the rebel lords, was led by the Prince, whose mind, recurring again to the vision of Stirling and Blackness, was torn with remorse, and compelled him to seek some relief—alas! how small could the means afford!—by issuing an order that no one should dare, in the ensuing conflict, to lay violent hands on his father.

A shower of arrows (as usual) began the battle, and did little execution on either side; and it was not till the Borderers, with that steady and determined valour which practice in war from their infancy enabled them to turn to so good account, advanced and attacked the royal army, that the serious work of the engagement could be said to have begun. But the beginning was more like an ending than the incipient skirmishing of men not yet warmed into the heat of strife. The onset was terrible, and the slaughter so great, that the Earls of Huntly and Menteith retreated in confusion upon the main body, commanded by the King, and threw it into an alarm from which it did not recover. After making a desperate stand, the royal forces began to waver; and the tumult having reached the spot where the King was stationed, he was implored by his attendant lords not to run the risk of death, which would bring ruin on their cause, but to leave the field while yet he had any chance of doing so with safety. The monarch consented reluctantly, and, while his nobles continued the battle, put spurs to his horse, and fled at full speed through the village of Bannockburn. On crossing the Bannock, at a hamlet called Milltown, he came suddenly upon a woman drawing water, who, surprised and terrified by the sight of an armed horseman, threw down her pitcher and flew into her house. The noise terrified the noble steed, which, flying off and swerving to a side, cast his rider. The King fell heavily with his armour bearing him to the ground, and, being much bruised by the concussion, swooned and lay senseless on the earth. He was instantly carried into a miller's cottage by people who knew nothing of his rank, but, compassionating his distress, treated him with great humanity.

Having put the unfortunate monarch to bed, the inmates of the house brought him such cordials as their poverty could command. In a short time he opened his eyes, and earnestly requested the presence of a priest.

"Who are you," inquired the good woman who attended him, "that we may tell who it is that requires the assistance of the holy man?"

"Alas! I was your Sovereign this morning," replied he.

On this the poor woman ran out of the cottage, wringing her hands, and calling aloud for some one to come and confess the King.

"I will confess him," answered an old man in a grey cloak, tied round the waist with a blue sash. "Where is his Majesty?"

The woman led him to the house, where the Monarch was found lying on a flock-bed, with a coarse cloth thrown over him, in an obscure corner of the room. The old man knelt down, and asked him tenderly what ailed him, and whether he thought that, by the aid of medical remedies, he might recover? The King assured him there was no hope, and begged the supposed priest to receive his confession—whereupon the old man, bending over him, under

pretence of discharging his holy office, drew a dagger, and stabbed the unresisting victim to the heart; repeating deliberately his thrusts, till he thought life was extinct.

On hearing of the death of his father, James was inconsolable. He ordered all search to be made for the murderer. No trace of him could be found—the only evidence that could be procured against him, was the description of his person by the old woman of the cottage, and the dagger with which the deed had been committed. The woman was taken before James, that he might receive the evidence with his own ears. The room in which he led the evidence was purposely darkened. The dreadful state of mind into which the *quasi* parricide was cast, exhibiting alternately remorse, terror, grief, and shame, would have consigned him to absolute seclusion, had he not thought that he would make some amends for his crime, by endeavouring to discover the murderer of his parent. He threatened the most exemplary vengeance; and, while he sat wrapped in gloom, in an apartment darkened almost to night, his emissaries were active on every hand, in endeavouring to find some clue to the murder. The old woman was placed before the King, and the dagger put into his hands.

“What is this?” he exclaimed, as he looked at the instrument, which still retained upon its blade the blood of his father’s heart. “God’s mercy! It is my own dagger!—ay, that very dagger I wore and lost upon that dreadful day!”

The words were uttered in a low tone, and rendered, by the King’s dreadful excitement, unintelligible. Partly recovering himself, he cast his eyes on the woman and the two courtiers that sat beside, and seeing them occupied in arranging the materials for taking down the precognition, he thrust the dagger among the folds of his robes, and sat and trembled, as if the finger of an avenging God was pointing him out to the world as the murderer of his father. He was several times on the point of swooning, as he thought he observed Lord Gray, who was present, following with his eye his extraordinary motions, and searching with a keen look for the dagger.

“We had better have the dagger for the woman to speak to,” said Gray. “Your Majesty hath examined it, I opine.”

“Proceed with the precognition, my Lord,” said James, hesitatingly. “I shall retain the dagger, and examine it in private. My grief chokes me. I cannot put the questions. Proceed, my Lord.”

The King trembled as he uttered these words, and Gray and the other courtier looked at each other, as if they held a mental colloquy as to his strange conduct. They proceeded in the examination of the woman, in which they went over several incidents already communicated.

“Are you sure the dagger was that carried by the old priest who stabbed the King?” said Gray.

“I’m sure it is,” answered the woman. “It fell frae him as he hastened out o’ the cottage. It was the bluid on’t that first tauld me o’ his cruel act; for I thought the King’s granes cam frae the pains o’ his distress.”

“You got a good sight of the old man then, I presume,” continued Gray.

“A far better sight than thae closed shutters will allow me to hae o’ his Majesty, wha sits there,” replied she.

James started, and looked fearfully at the witness.

“Describe the man,” said Gray.

“He was a tall man,” replied she, “dressed in a lang grey cloak, which was bound round the middle by a blue belt. I observed a deep scar on his right cheek, and his left ee was like a white grape.”

This description, which was exactly that of James’ night visiter, came upon him like the ghost of his murdered father. He fainted. Lord Gray ran to his assistance; and, as he supported him, the dagger fell out from among the folds of the robes. James remained insensible for some

time. As he recovered, his eye fell upon the blood-stained instrument that was now in the hands of Gray; and, stretching out his right hand, he convulsively seized it, took it from the Baron, and again secreted it in the folds of his robes. His manner was wild and confused.

“Take away that woman,” he cried; “she has no more to say; and, if she had, I am not in a condition to hear it. She talks strange things about a man that hath a gash on his cheek and an eye like a grape. I cannot listen to these things. The words burn my brain. She must be a sorceress. I shall have her sent to the stake.”

“She is an honest dame, your Majesty,” said the other courtiers, “and beareth an excellent reputation where she resideth.”

“Thou liest!” cried the King. “Take her away! take her away! I must be alone. These windows are not darkened enough. Hath the smith forged my penance-belt? See to it, Gray. My soul crieth for pain, as he who hath been burnt crieth for fire to cure the pain of fire. I did not lose my dagger at Sauchie. It was a lie forged by a renegade. I have it still, and will shew it thee on the morrow. Let me rest. This brain requireth repose.”

The lords hurried away the witness, and left the King to his meditations. He was seized with one of those extraordinary fits of terror and remorse that afterwards visited him at regular intervals. When the fit left him, he summoned up courage to publish an account of the person who killed the King, and offered a large reward for his apprehension. In this description, he followed the account of the woman as well as his own experience; the fearful marks were set forth with great care; and no one doubted but that an individual, so strangely pointed out by nature, as differing from other men, would be instantly seized and brought before the throne. While this hope was vigorous, the King was in misery. He feared a meeting with the mysterious being who had tracked him in his rebellious course. Every sound roused him and made him tremble. But the time passed, and the hope died. No such person was ever seen or heard of; and James was left, during the remainder of his life, to the terrors of a conscience that never slept. We do not pretend to reconcile the conduct of this mysterious personage in first dissuading the Prince from opposing his father, and then killing the latter with the former’s dagger; but James himself put a construction upon it, which accorded with the state of his mind and feelings. He wore around him, ever after, an iron chain, as penance for being the cause of the death of his father, conceiving that Providence followed that extraordinary course we have detailed, for punishing him for his filial disobedience. Some say the same figure appeared to him before he went to Flodden. A reference to our story, “The Apparition of Flodden Field,”—may clear up this point. The legends are clearly connected, and make one history. They are, however, both equally mysterious and obscure. In both the figures boded for good, and yet evil came. They were fearful demonstrations of a secret power, that worketh “in strange ways.” Inscrutable at the time, the mystery has never been cleared up. We have done something—yet how much remains in darkness?



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SANDY MURRAY, THE LEGACY-HUNTER.

WE know not how the legacy-hunters of Rome succeeded in their attempts to catch the old gudgeons styled *Thynni*—a species of delicate fish, of *very short life*, in great request among epicures—but, if we can judge from the circumstance of Horace having dedicated the fifth satire of his second book to the description of the various arts and practices resorted to in his day by the lovers of legacies, the trade of fortune-hunting flourished among the ancients as beautifully as it does in our land. But we have a strong suspicion that the ancients were not very well up to the trade. Horace, with all his cleverness, gives us very little insight into the mysteries of the craft. He seems to hold, that the *hæredipetæ*—the deathbed cormorants of his time—could do little more than take upon them the commissions of the old hunks whom they wished to catch, and make themselves serviceable to him in every way suitable to his humour; and, doubtless, this contains a great part of the secret of the art; yet a pawky Scotchman could have put the old satirist up to many a beautiful trick of fortune-angling, which would have made his little grey eye twinkle, as prettily as ever did the smiles of Mæcenas. He tells a story of one Nasica, who offered an old miser, Coranus, his daughter in a present, with a view to get him to leave him his fortune—perhaps the best device that ever a Roman fortune-hunter had the art to resort to; but Coranus saw through the wile, and, while he took the maiden, gave her father a secret and confidential perusal of his will, wherein the name of Nasica was not even mentioned; and Coranus laughed heartily at Nasica's disappointment. But we have a better story, equally true, where a pawky Scotchman attempted to force his way to the dry heart of a rich old grandam, not by offering to give her, according to the plan of Nasica, a present of his son, but by offering to take from her, and treat kindly, a *friend*, more dear to old women than man or woman. That friend will appear by and by; and sorry are we to say that so masterly a stroke of Scotch policy should have been attended with no better success than the artful scheme of the Roman. But to our story.

A shrewd, cunning, little rascal—but, withal, a pleasant, laughing, good-humoured one—was Sandy Murray of Kelso—dead many years ago—but still alive in our memory. His figure, without being positively deformed, was an odd one to look at. It was short and thickset, and surmounted by a round, baboon-featured countenance, with a little cocked-up projection in the centre, which its owner called a nose, and which, in this capacity, he supplied with huge quantities of snuff; keeping it always thickly begrimed with the superfluous applications—a circumstance which by no means added to his personal charms. His face, too, which was of a deep Spanish brown, possessed the peculiar quality of always appearing greasy and dirty, however often it might be washed—this operation seeming to have little or no effect in clearing up its dusky hues. Sandy's prevailing characteristic was good humour: he was constantly laughing; and it was impossible even to look on his odd, squat little figure, and round, dirty, grinning countenance, lighted up as it was with a pair of small, twinkling, smirking,

cunning eyes, without laughing too. To produce this effect, it was not necessary that Sandy should speak a word—it was quite enough to look at him.

Sandy's mental qualifications were—a great fund of original humour, or mother-wit, as it is sometimes called; a good deal of tact in managing his own interests; a great deal of small cunning; and, we are sorry to say it, a pretty considerable dash of duplicity. It was a great pity, these last dark spots in his character: without them he would have had much more of our sympathies; but so it was, and we dare not do otherwise than represent him as he really was. We must add, however, that there was a something about him, altogether, that, let him do what he liked, you could entertain no serious feeling of resentment towards him. There was so much humour in his cunning, and so much of the ludicrous in his duplicity, that it was impossible to get angry with him, even with the knowledge of a flagrant and recent instance of his insincerity.

Amongst Sandy's more marked failings, was a devoted attachment to the gill stoup. He drank like a fish, drank at all hours and seasons, and to any extent that might be supplied him. He was thus in a constant state of muzziness. When in this condition, he had a strange propensity to shouting, to giving voice to his feelings of excitement. He indulged much in short, abrupt yells, and spoke in sudden screams, emitted in shrill, cracked tones. Sandy, in short, was, out and out, an original; and having thus placed him, as we imagine, pretty fairly before the reader, we shall proceed to conduct him through two or three passages in his life, which form the subject of these pages; promising that his age was somewhere about fifty—that he was, or rather had been originally, a weaver to business: we say originally, for, at the period we take up his history, he had all but abandoned the loom, which, indeed, had never at any time accorded well with his mercurial genius. He preferred, infinitely, the stirring life of a Jack-of-all trades, for which his versatile talents peculiarly qualified him. He, in fact, could and would do any thing for a day's pay: trim your garden, erect you a new hen-house, drive your cart if you had one, build you a dry-dike, and thatch a barn. But Sandy sometimes took to higher pursuits: he was a frequent contractor for bits of road, either to make or repair, and for other public jobs of a similar character. These are particulars which we should have given before; but better late than never.

Sandy, it will readily be believed, notwithstanding the versatility of his genius, was by no means in very flourishing circumstances as regards the circulating medium. Of this commodity he was always distressingly scarce; but he had prospects of a certain kind, that promised, if he could only succeed in carrying matters on smoothly, to throw something pretty considerable into his famished exchequer. These prospects were the anticipated death of a near relation, and the anticipated bequest to him, in that event, of some two or three hundred pounds.

This relation, whose name was Anne Gilmour, was an old woman, a childless widow, who lived by herself in a small cottage, in a remote and sequestered spot, at the distance of about a mile from the town of Kelso. Nanny was a personage of strange, mysterious character, and was more than half sus-

pected of occasional underhand dealings with the Evil One. Nothing directly bespeaking such a connection could positively be laid to her charge. There was no distinct instance of her having ever exercised a supernatural power; but it was pretty generally believed, for all that, that she possessed it. This was a part of Nanny's character which, for obvious reasons, Sandy—a frequent visitor of hers—by no means liked; for he entertained a wholesome dread of all persons and things connected with witchery, in which he was a firm believer. But the inducement held out by the hope of becoming Nanny's heir was stronger than his fears, and urged him at once to encounter and support the trials to which his necessary correspondence with her, in pursuance of this object, exposed him. But Sandy had other difficulties than this to struggle with: there were rivals in the field—half a dozen of them—all striving, by extraordinary assiduity and attention, to cut out Sandy, and each other too, in Nanny's good graces, and to get hold of her hoards of half-crowns and shillings—in which shape, it was believed, was the greater part, if not the whole, of her wealth. It, therefore, required all Sandy's tact to enable him to keep his ground amongst so many competitors, whose wits, moreover, were sharpened to the finest edge by the exciting object of competition. But Sandy pursued an excellent line of policy: he coaxed, and he wheedled, and he sympathised, and he comforted, and he joked, all with such an admirable resemblance of sincerity and good faith, that he distanced all his rivals, and stood decidedly the prime favourite of Nanny Gilmour. Sandy's prospects, in short, were capital—all but certain; and much did Sandy, who knew it well, inwardly rejoice thereat. An interminable vista of gills opened up to his delighted optics, and a delicious hazy futurity of drunkenness threw its congenial atmosphere around—making up, altogether, to Sandy's eyes, a vision of surpassing beatitude. But things turn out very strangely in this world sometimes, and curious truths frequently come in the place of fond delusions: a striking instance of this now falls in our way.

Calling one evening on Nanny Gilmour, Sandy was very much gratified by the extreme kindness of her manner towards him. It was much greater than usual. There was, too, an air of confiding familiarity in all she said and did, together with a singular peculiarity and amplitude of meaning, which convinced Sandy that a crisis was at hand—that she was about to disclose some secrets respecting her hidden treasures, and, amongst these, that he was destined one day to become their lawful lord. He had no doubt, in short, from her manner on this eventful evening, that, if Nanny was not actually going to hand him over her cash on the spot, she was at least going to tell him that it would certainly one day be his and no one's else. Under this impression, Sandy got amazingly happy. He thought he actually heard the jingling of the fine old massive half-crowns, and that he felt them weighing down his coat pockets. His feelings were most delightful. His little twinkling eyes sparkled with rapture, and he grinned the satisfaction which he could not with propriety openly express. He fancied, we have said, that he saw a consummation approaching. He was not mistaken. After some time, Nanny Gilmour took him by the hand with a friendly grasp, and thus addressed him:—

“Sandy Murray, ye've aye been a kind freen to me.” Sandy smiled, or rather grinned, in his usual way, shook his head, and said, he “hadna been half sae kind's he should hae been; that, had it been in his power, he wad hae dune ten times mair; that he really had a wonderfu respect for her; he kent nane that he liked better.”

“I weel believe ye, Sandy,” continued Nanny; “and I'm sure your regard for me canna surpass mine for you, Sandy, because I've seen in a' your conduct to me that ye hae been disinterested.”

“Just maist particularly sae, Nanny,” interrupted Sandy,

catching the old woman by the hand, in the enthusiasm of the moment, and, in the fulness of his heart, pressing it affectionately. “Just maist particularly sae; I'm nane o' yer selfish kind, Nanny, that barter their friendship for filthy lucre; that canna do a kindness without expectin a return—Gude forgie them! Na, na—Sandy Murray's no the man for that. Disinterested friendship, or nane, for him—that's his motto, Nanny.”

“Ay, Sandy,” quoth Nanny; “but how few o' your kind do we find in this selfish world! There's been a number o' folk gaun about me, as ye ken; but, my certy, ye'll see a bonny skailin o' them when they come to ken the truth. They hae been a' mistaen; but it was nane o' my business to put them richt.” Sandy here tried to look as grave and disinterested as he could, and to conceal the satisfaction he really felt; for he naturally enough understood what Nanny had said, to mean, that he was to be her sole heir, and that it was from this circumstance the disappointment of his rivals was to arise. Nanny went on—“It'll sune be seen, Sandy, wha loved me for my ain sake, and wha for the sake o' what they *thocht* I had.” This “*thocht I had*” rather startled Sandy a little; but, though he looked something—he could not help it—he said nothing. “It'll no be you, Sandy, however, the discovery 'ill hae ony effeck on. Ye're far owre true a freen for that.” Sandy did not know very well what to make of these compliments; they seemed of rather ambiguous meaning. “Ye'll staun by me to the last, and ye'll get yer reward.” Sandy's spirits rose again. It was all right yet. “Yes, ye'll get yer reward—I'll promise ye that.” Here Sandy thought it necessary to protest against his having any eye to reward of any kind; adding, that such a thought had never for a moment entered his mind. “I believe it,” said Nanny; “but, nevertheless, ye'll get it—ay, ye'll get it. Providence never allows a guid deed to go unrewarded.” Sandy did not altogether like this spiritual allusion. He would rather it had been a little more in the temporal way. He would, in short, rather have taken Nanny's own guarantee. “Now, Sandy, listen to me,” continued Nanny, laying her hand impressively on Sandy's knee, “I'm gaun to tell ye a secret that 'ill gar some folk look gayan queer”—Sandy laughed, but began to weary for Nanny's coming to the point—“and that secret 'ill be fand in the favour I'm gaun to ask o' ye, Sandy.”

“Anything in my power,” muttered Sandy, who was now in instant expectation of hearing himself named Nanny's heir. “I'm sure it wad gie me such pleasure—mak me sae happy,” &c.

“I'm sure o' that, Sandy—I'm sure o' that; and it was countin on yer friendship that made me fix on you to assist me in my straits; for I kent ye wad do't wi' richt guid will. But ye'll guide it weel Sandy—ye'll guide it weel, when I'm awa. I ken that.”

Here Nanny's feelings overcame her, and she raised the corner of her apron to her eyes. Sandy, though delighted with this, the broadest hint he had yet got, was puzzled what reply to make; for he felt that he could not, in plain terms, refer, in his answer, to Nanny's cash, since Nanny's own reference, though sufficiently intelligible, was yet obscure and equivocal. He, therefore, contented himself with saying that—

“He hoped that he wad never mak a bad use o' onything she was pleased to entrust him wi'.”

“I'm sure ye winna, I'm sure ye winna,” continued Nanny. “Weel, then, Sandy, after mony a lang and weary thocht on the matter, and after weighin carefully the claims o' a' them that ca' themsels my freens, I hae come to the determination” (Sandy was gaspin for breath) “o' bequeathin to you, Sandy, at my death,” (Sandy's excitement was increasing to a painful height,) “as a mark o' my regard for and confidence in you, and as a proof o' my

gratitude for a' your past kindnesses—I say, Sandy, that, for thae considerations, I hae determined on leaving to you my puir black cat, Tibby, there!”

And Nanny again clapped the corner of her apron to her eyes. Her black cat! A legacy of a black cat! And was this the end of it? Were Sandy's high-wrought expectations to be gratified so far only as they could be gratified by the bequest of a black cat? It appeared so; and, oh! that we possessed some extraordinary power of delineation that would approach nearer to the fact than language, 'o describe the looks and feelings of the mortified legatee, when he found the aperture through which he had been peeping at that elysium which he hoped so soon to enter, darkened, stopped up with a black cat! Having no such power, however, at command, and despairing of any combination of words producing the effect we would desire, we leave it to the reader's imagination to picture forth the look of utter dismay with which Sandy Murray heard of the extraordinary bequest that was intended him. He said nothing, however. He couldn't—he was speechless. In the meantime, Nanny, apparently too much engrossed by her own feelings to notice his dismay, went on with still more comforting intelligence:—

“Noo, Sandy, my man,” she said, “ye maun consider that I hae especially favoured you in consigning Tibby to your care; for mony a ane, I daresay, has had an ee upon the puir beast, and has courted me in the hope o' gettin her; but I hae cheated them a', and sair will be their disappointment. But I hae mair to speak to ye aboot yet, Sandy.” Sandy once more cocked his ears. A little reflection had so far reconciled him to the legacy of the black cat as to determine him to conceal his mortification, in the hope that, by humouring Nanny in this particular, he might yet attain the great object of his wishes. “I hae mair to speak to ye aboot yet, Sandy. I hae the favour to speak aboot. Trusting in you as a friend, I mean to ask your help, in confidence, in a thing I wadna just like a' the world to ken. Could ye assist me onyway, think ye, Sandy, in gettin on the parish?”

“On the parish, Nanny!” shouted Sandy, in a tone of deep despair, and with a look of ludicrous amazement—his fortitude and self-command being quite unequal to this most unexpected announcement of poverty, where he had confidently deemed there was wealth. “Gude save us! the parish, Nanny!” he went on; “what need, in the name o' a' that's extraordinary, hae ye o' the parish? Haena ye walth o' your ain?—mair than 'll keep ye in ease a' yer days?”

“It's a mistak, Sandy, it's a mistak,” replied Nanny, gravely; “I believe folk hae thocht sae, but, to my sorrow, they hae been wrang. Whar was I to get money? Whar, in a' the world, was I to get money? It's weel kent that my guidman has been dead thae twenty years; and it couldna be expekkit that the sma' matter he left me at his death was to last me till now. It wad be unreasonable. Na, na, Sandy—the ne'er a penny past me hae I. The last half-croon I had was changed yesterday; and whar I'm to get the next is mair than I can tell. Sae ye see, Sandy, I haena thocht o' comin on the parish till it was full time—till there was nae ither resource left me.”

“It's a bad business,” replied Sandy, gravely, “and's what I'm sure naebody ever dreamt o'. Everybody thoeth ye had pecks o' siller. Gude save us! it's an awfu owreturn this.”

“Oh I'm sure it's nae disappointment to you, Sandy—ye're owre disinterested a freen for that.”

Ou, no,” grumphed Sandy; “but, heth, I'm sittin owre late, Nanny—I was forgettin how the nicht was gaun. Guid nicht to ye, Nanny! guid nicht!” And he bounced from his chair, and hurried to the door.

“Will ye mind to speak to the minister aboot gettin me on the parish?” shouted Nanny after him.

“Ou, ay,” replied Sandy, drily, and still hurrying out.

“And whan'll ye come for the cat, Sandy?” bawled out Nanny.

“The morn,” roared Sandy back, but in a tone and with a manner that indicated pretty plainly that *the morn* which should see Sandy coming for the cat, was likely to be rather a distant one. Sandy had now got fairly clear of the house, and, directing his steps homewards, had already entered on a series of cogitations regarding the events of the evening. These he opened with a preliminary round of unconnected curses, not loud but deep, on Nanny Gilmour. Having expended these, his reflections became, if not more connected, at least more composed and methodical.

“Ay,” he muttered to himself, after a long pause, during which he had been thinking too intensely of his disappointment to give utterance to his feelings—“my feth, but this is a bonny begunk! Wha ever wad hae dreamt o't? Me as sure o' the half-croons as if I had them in my pouch—the very sound o' their clinkin was in my lugs—an' to be bilked o' them this way, after cuddlin up the auld deevil just to the giein point! It's a sair trial! No a boddle! Oh, no!—the deil a ane! It's just Sandy's auld luck. But catch me darkenin her door again. An' as for her black cat!”

Here Sandy, finding himself utterly unable to find language strong enough to express his contempt of the cat, finished the sentence by a simultaneous shake of his head and his fist, which, when translated, meant, if he had had the said black cat in his power at that moment, he would rather have astonished her by some proceeding or another.

Leaving Sandy now to pursue his way homewards, and to the indulgence of such reflections as those we have put upon record, we shall return for a moment to Nanny Gilmour, to see what is going on there. On entering, we find the old woman seated on a chair before her own fire, gazing thoughtfully on the embers, with her arms folded across her breast. On her withered countenance there is a faint smile, accompanied by a sort of humorous expression, which might indicate either the contemplation or accomplishment of some piece of waggery. After sitting for some time in this attitude, the old woman suddenly gave way to a decided laugh—hearty, but not loud. The peristrepthic picture revolving before her mind's eye, had evidently turned up something irresistibly ludicrous; and its further effect was to urge her to express the thoughts which it suggested.

“My troth, I think I hae settled him, at ony rate! The dirty, drunken, selfish body! My word,” continued Nanny, now chuckling with increased glee, “he'll no come here in a hurry again, houndin after my bits o' bawbees. The parish and the black cat hae dune for Sandy.” And Nanny laughed outright at her own cunning, in having thus thrown him off the scent; for such was the sole design of the part she had acted towards that worthy; and, as we have seen, it had been successful.

Having made this digression, and thereby given the reader a piece of information of which it was necessary he should be possessed, we return to our hero, Sandy. As Nanny had conjectured, Sandy was fairly cured of his fortune-hunting. For some days he never looked near her—nor would he, when he did, but for a circumstance which we will now proceed to detail.

In going home at nights, immediately after the occurrences which we have described, Sandy, whose way brought him in view of Nanny's cottage, though it lay at a considerable distance, observed a light always burning to a very late hour, in one of her small windows. This was an unusual thing, and, being an unusual thing, it attracted Sandy's notice in a very particular manner. Being on these occasions—that is, when going home—generally half-seas-over, his practice was to stand upon the road, and contemplate Nanny's light, for a long time, with a face of drunken perplexity

Who could say precisely what was passing through that muddled head, as its owner stared with dazed and lack-lustre eye, at the shining phenomenon, or lighted penny candle—as the reader chooses—in Nanny's window? No one—it was impossible. Yet it was evident that the said lighted candle afforded matter of deep and serious cogitation to Sandy; for, in the fulness of his thoughts on the subject, and in the incapacity of his tongue to give utterance to these thoughts, he stood nodding his head at Nanny's light, accompanying the motion occasionally by some abortive attempts at speech. He would willingly have spoken, if he could; but some half-dozen gills forbade it. The light, in short, had excited his curiosity to a very annoying pitch—to so high a pitch that he, one night, when he was fully drunker than usual, determined on diverging from his road, on an exploratory expedition. In other words, he determined on stealing up to Nanny's cottage, and having a peep through the lighted window, to see what she was about. This Sandy would have done before, but that he stood in awe of Nanny's reputation for underhand dealings with a certain personage who shall be nameless, and to whom we before alluded. This consideration had hitherto deterred him, as we have said, from the bold measure which he now contemplated; but an extra supply of stimulant had furnished him, on this occasion, with the necessary degree of courage, and this accession of courage prompted the attempt. After gazing on the light for a little time, on the particular night in question, Sandy boldly commenced his march towards it, by striking off the road, and taking his way through some fields that lay between and the cottage. To a man in Sandy's peculiar condition, the route was by no means an easy one. Sandy found that it was not. He fell fifty times—sometimes into a hedge, and sometimes into a ditch. He had great difficulty, too, in getting over the dikes; or rather, perhaps, in getting on them. He had none whatever in getting off; for he generally descended by the run. After performing innumerable feats of this and a similar kind, Sandy succeeded in gaining the little *kail-yard*, situated immediately behind Nanny's cottage. This he entered; and, as it was now plain sailing, soon found himself close upon the object of his curiosity, which he approached on tiptoe, and with as little noise as possible. Having reached the window, which was a very small one, consisting of only two little panes of glass, Sandy placed his face gently against one of them, shaded his right eye with his hand, and sent his vision, like a shot, as it were, into the interior of the apartment, through an unguarded opening in a little white curtain on the inside, which was intended to prevent the gratification of such impertinent and prying curiosity. But the opening alluded to, rendered 't unavailing for this purpose. The whole apartment was laid open to Sandy's gaze; and extraordinary was the sight that presented itself to that adventurous worthy. On a small table, close by the fire, was an immense number of piles of silver coin, of various denominations, and, amongst these, a large quantity of the half-crowns which had taken such a hold of Sandy's imagination. Seated at this table, with spectacles on nose, and busily employed, apparently, in assorting these coins, and classifying them according to their value, was Nanny Gilmour. She was overhauling her hoards—that was clear; and Sandy had caught her in the act. The effect this astounding sight had upon Sandy, it would not be easy to describe. His respiration became thick and difficult, and his eye—the particular eye that was employed in viewing the treasure within, the other being shut—stood fixed immovably in its socket, glaring with fierce eagerness on the dazzling display of Nanny's hoarded coin. Sandy himself felt, in the meantime, as if he could have darted through the little window, and clutched in his intense grasp the glittering wealth that lay before him. He felt a sudden itchiness all over him, and actually, but un-

consciously, licked his lips, as if he were looking on some turn-out of tempting edibles. On recovering a little composure, and beginning to breathe a little more freely—

Oh, ye auld deceivin sinner!" muttered Sandy to himself—"I hae catched ye now; and my name's no Sandy Murray if I dinna come roun' ye yet. I'll mak a guid use o' this night's discovery, or blame me. What an ass I was to believe ye, ye wizened miserable wretch! But I aye jaloused ye. The parish!—'od, ye could buy the parish, ye auld limmer, in place o' coming on't as a pauper. Nanny, my woman," added Sandy, emphatically, though under breath, after a pause, "your black cat 'll get a mutchkin o' sweet milk frae me every day. I'll mak it weel waired siller, if I'm no mistaen."

In the meantime, Nanny, unconscious of the supervision which Sandy was exercising over her proceedings, was going on diligently with her work of assorting the coin, and, in connection with this process, lifted a certain small leathern bag from the floor, and placed it on the table before her. Having done this, she proceeded to undo the string or thong with which it was secured, and then, inverting the bag, poured out its contents, a torrent of guineas, on the table. On the secret onlooker, this display of gold—for all the other riches on the table were in silver—had a sudden and most extraordinary effect. Forgetting in an instant where he was, and the circumstances in which he was placed, and unable to restrain the feelings which the gorgeous sight excited, Sandy, on beholding it, emitted a yell of surprise and delight, from a similar uncontrollable impulse with that which caused the fatal exclamation of Tam O'Shanter in Alloway Kirk. In the next instant, Sandy was invisible. How?—had he cut and run? No, he had not. He had sunk into the bowels of the earth. Down he had gone, with the rapidity of a flash of lightning. Sandy was swallowed up by a draw-well. Explain. We will. Immediately beneath the window at which Sandy had placed himself, there was a draw-well—fortunately not a very deep one; and, on the decayed boards which covered this well, Sandy, who either knew nothing of its being there, or had forgotten the circumstance, had been standing, during the whole time he had been superintending Nanny's operations. The boards, at any time unable to carry much weight, had been but barely able to support Sandy in a quiescent state, and were wholly unequal to the task of bearing him in a state of excitement. Now, Sandy, unaware of the particular and precarious nature of his footing, had accompanied the yell just mentioned with the corresponding action of a vigorous leap; and the consequences were what we have described. Down went the boards, and down went Sandy into somewhere about five feet of fine cool spring water. But Sandy did not perform this operation without making it known that he felt rather unpleasant. On getting his head above water, after making the first plunge, he emitted sundry roars of a most hideous and appalling tone. Greatly alarmed by these dreadful noises, and guessing what had happened, though totally unaware of who the victim was, Nanny, after having hurriedly thrust her treasure into a place of concealment, hastened to the scene of Sandy's disaster, with a candle in her hand.

"Lord preserve me! Sandy Murray, is that you?" she said, peering down into the well, where Sandy was standing up to the chin in water. "How on a' the earth cam ye there? What war ye seekin hereawa?"

If guid intentions, Nanny," replied Sandy, "war considered as they ocht to be, this wadna hae happened. I hae na been able to get rest in my bed since I saw you, neither nicht nor day, for thinkin o' your unhappy state, and I was just comin to ca' upon you, to talk owre matters wi' you again, and, in doin this, I mistook my way, and this has been the upshot, or rather doon-shot o't. But Lord's sake, woman, try and get me oot o' this; for my teeth are gau-

like a pair o' nutcrackers. Sax inches deeper, an' it wad hae been a' owre wi' Sandy Murray. But he wad hae died in a guid cause—comin to succour the distressed."

"That is a comfort, to be sure," said Nanny; "but we maun see an' get ye oot some way or anither, for I warrant ye're no owre comfortable there."

"Feth, ye may say that," replied Sandy. "It's as cauld quarters as ever I was in. This water's no Welsh flannel, Nanny!"

"Na, troth it," said Nanny.

"If there had been a soup whisky in't, I wadna hae cared sae muckle," said Sandy; "I could hae been takin a toothfu, in the meantime, just to keep my head abune."

"But how, in Gude's name, am I to get ye oot, Sandy?" exclaimed Nanny, now becoming alive to the difficulty of this operation; for the well, though not deep in water, was of considerable depth, taking the dry and the wet together; and Sandy's weight was no trifle.

"Hae ye nae sic a thing as a lether aboot ye, Nanny?" said Sandy.

"No ane," replied Nanny; "but I'll tell ye what I'll do—I'll tak haud o' ye by the coat-neck, Sandy, and ye'll catch by the sides as weel as ye can, an' I'll try an' help ye oot that way."

"Catch by the sides!" said Sandy, eyeing the smooth walls of solid masonry by which the well was lined. "I wad need cats' claws to do that, Nanny. It's as smooth's a plastered wa'!"

"But ye maun try, Sandy;—there's nae ither way that I ken o'!"—And Nanny, kneeling, stretched her arm down into the well, and, seizing Sandy by the collar, called upon him to second her efforts by taking what holds he could get. Obeying the directions given him, Sandy fastened on the side of the well like a limpet; where, notwithstanding his despair of finding such accommodation, he did discover certain openings and crevices, which promised to be of essential service to him—and they were. By their aid, and Nanny's together—she holding stoutly by his coat-neck the while—Sandy was fast emerging from the well, and had got his nose on a level with the surface of the ground, when a treacherous projection, to which he had trusted for his last and greatest effort, gave way, and down he went again, with a tremendous plunge, into his old quarters—Nanny's strength being wholly unable to counteract his proneness to descend.

"Waugh! phroo, phroo, phroo!" shouted Sandy, on getting his mouth clear again of the water. "Am I to be drowned here, like a rat or a blin kittlin? Phroo, phroo! I'm gettin as stiff's a poker. Grip again, Nanny—grip again, and let's try't ance mair. If I dinna mak it oot this time, it's a' owre wi' Sandy Murray."

Doing as she was desired, Nanny again seized Sandy by the collar, again Sandy fastened on the wall, and, this time, their united efforts were crowned with complete success. After a desperate struggle—during which Sandy was more than once in imminent danger of returning whence he came—he was fairly and safely landed on *terra firma*. On this consummation taking place, Sandy proposed going into the house; but this was a proposal which Nanny, for obvious reasons, by no means approved of. Sandy, for no less obvious reasons, rather pressed the point; but Nanny was firm, and insisted that he should immediately run home and change his clothes. Sandy declared that he cared not for that, if he could only do her a service, and that he wanted to speak about. Nanny said it was mair than his life was worth, and that she would by no means permit so dear a friend to remain another moment in the situation he was in. Finding himself effectually foiled by the dexterous fencing of the old woman, Sandy reluctantly gave up the point, and, saying that he would call on the following day, shook Nanny by the hand with a cordiality which he intended as an expression of the in-

tensity of his feelings, and of the warmth and sincerity of his friendship, and took his departure. Faithful to his promise, and keener than ever on the hunt after Nanny's half-crowns, his scent being now sure, Sandy called on Nanny on the following day. This call Nanny expected; for she had a shrewd guess of the facts of the case, as regarded Sandy's clandestine visit on the previous night. She had no doubt, in short, that he had seen what she was about on that occasion; and as little doubt had she, that he would immediately renew his *disinterested* attentions to her. She was not mistaken. With a grave, sympathizing face, as long as a fiddle-back, Sandy entered, and, taking a seat—

"O Nanny, my woman," he said, "but I am wae for ye! I'm just distressed beyond measure aboot ye. To think that you wha hae been a' yer days accustomed to decency and comfort, should be driven, in yer auld days, to throw yersel on the parish, and to leeve on its miserable pittance! I declare it maks me greet"—and Sandy "really wiped his eyes as he said this—"it's awfu, it's distressin. I canna think o't"—and Sandy wept again. "But ye'll no want a freen as lang as ye hae me; and as such, Nanny," continued Sandy, "I'm gaun to ask a favour o' ye, which ye maunna refuse."

"What's that?" said Nanny.

"It's just that ye wad let me tak that puir beast hame wi' me"—pointing to the celebrated black cat—"that I may hae something o' yours to shew kindness to. Puir thing, puir thing!" he went on, apostrophizing the unconscious animal, and at the same time stroking it gently with his hand; "ye'se no want yer mouthfu o' milk wi' me, nor onything else that I can gie ye. I'll aye *respect* ye for yer mistress's sake."

This was a proposition which Nanny was not altogether prepared for; but, having no particular regard for the cat, and being, besides, curious to see how far her visiter's cunning would carry him, it was one to which she at once acceded; and, when Sandy went away, which he did soon after, it was in company with Nanny Gilmour's black cat, which he carried securely under his arm, in the firm belief that he carried a powerful agent in influencing the destiny of Nanny's half-crowns. Sandy, in short, believed that, in securing the cat, he was securing a friend at court; and, under this impression, he determined on treating her with every degree of attention.

Sandy, however, had not gone far with his precious burden, when she began to shew symptoms of entire disapproval of the change of place which was thus forced upon her. These symptoms consisted in certain vigorous twistings and writhings, which, as she was rather a powerful animal, and particularly well armed about the paws, every one of her claws being like a large-sized fish-hook, Sandy had considerable difficulty in subduing. He had to stop repeatedly on the road, to determine the question, which the cat seemed resolved to bring to issue, of who should be master; and he only succeeded in establishing his own superiority, on each occasion, after a severe contest, in which his hands were dreadfully torn up by the claws of his insurgent protegée. Sandy would fain have given Tibby the *coup de grace* at once, by a gentle squeeze on the throat; but, deeming her now an effective instrument for working out his own good fortune, he not only forbore this extreme proceeding, but held her with a death's gripe, lest she should escape from him. For some time after one of those contests of which we have spoken, Tibby remained as quiet as if she were lying at a mouse-hole, and Sandy congratulated himself on having accomplished a decisive victory over her rebellious propensities. Deceitful calm!—premature congratulation!—Tibby had but been meditating more determined proceedings. These proceedings she now opened by a mew of deep, deliberate ferocity; at the same time displaying a mouthful of teeth, in perfect correspondence with

her claws—long, sharp, and curved. She next wheeled herself adroitly round on her back, and, after two or three violent struggles, succeeded in getting up the length of Sandy's face, which she immediately red-lined in a very picturesque manner; Sandy, in the meanwhile, endeavouring to abbreviate her operations by some desperate pulling at her tail, which, however, had the effect only of increasing the ferocity of her holds. All this, however, was but the work of an instant. In the next, the cat had cleared a passage by Sandy's shoulder, leapt on the ground, and bolted. And now commenced one of the finest runs perhaps that the annals of sporting can produce. Bleeding and disfigured as he was, Sandy immediately gave chase. He would not lose the cat for the world. It was a legacy he was chasing, not a cat; and his exertions were proportioned to the object. The start at the outset was a fair one. It was in an open field, and Tibby had the lead by about a dozen yards, gained by the time which Sandy took to cross the ditch and go through the hedge which separated the said field from the road. The open ground being gained, however, the chase exhibited a very animated and impressive spectacle. Sandy was not naturally very well constructed for running; nature apparently never having intended him for such violent exercise, if one might judge by the extreme shortness of his legs, and the immense breadth of his feet; but he got on amazingly, nevertheless, his extreme eagerness and anxiety to overtake his prey supplying, in a great measure, his deficiencies in physical adaptation.

Notwithstanding all Sandy's efforts, however, it was evident that Tibby was fast distancing him; and Sandy himself, becoming aware of this, involuntarily added threats and coaxings, addressed of course to the object of his pursuit, to the exertions he was making. These he intermingled with sundry unintelligible and almost unrecordable exclamations, uttered in his loudest key.

"Hoo, hoo! wheeou! hurra! hist, hist! ha, ha!—stop, ye brute! stop, ye black brute! or I'll knock the harns out o' ye; stop! or I'll tak the nine lives o' ye. Haou! heeou! puir pussy! puir pussy! Tibby, Tibby! poos, poos, poos, puir pussy! puir pussy!"

Regardless of these insidious attempts to work upon her feelings, Tibby held vigorously on her way, and Sandy did the best he could to hold on his. But the pair were not long permitted to keep all the fun to themselves. Sandy had, in the course of the run, committed sundry trespasses, and this had the effect of bringing sundry farmers and farm-servants after him, from different points, all shouting and hallooing, in tones of the fiercest anger, and joining in pursuit of the trespasser. Still, this was not all. Several dogs, one after the other, came also on the stage, from various quarters, and most cordially seconded Sandy's views, in endeavouring to overtake Tibby. By and by, the numbers of both dogs and men greatly increased, until there was at length what might be fairly reckoned a very full field. The sight was now altogether really a grand one. First, came Tibby, now raised and distracted with terror; next, came a troop of collies, yelping and howling most vociferously; next, came the principal personage himself, Sandy, bare-headed, for he had lost his hat, with a face as red as a north-west moon, and blowing like a grampus; and, lastly, came a dozen or two of farm-servants, labourers, colliers, &c. &c., whom the exciting sight of the chase had induced to join it. Scarcely any of these knew what the running was for; but this did not hinder them adding to the animation of the scene, by an unintermitting series of whoops and yells, and shouts of all sorts, and in every imaginable tone. Those, again, who did know the specific object of the chase—at least in so far that Sandy was in pursuit of a black cat, although for what purpose they could not conjecture—kindly encouraged him by the legitimate tally-hos of the sporting community.

In the meantime, wholly absorbed by his eagerness to secure Tibby, which he felt to be all but the same thing as securing his legacy—or, at least, that the loss of her, or her sustaining any injury, would be fatal to his hopes—Sandy paid no heed to the immense escort which had thus so suddenly grown, as it were, around him, but continued the chase, shouting and addressing Tibby, at intervals, in the way already described. But Sandy's task, all along an arduous one, was now ten times more so; for he had not only to maintain his speed, but to make the most desperate efforts to keep the dogs from rushing in upon Tibby, and settling the business at once, by worrying her on the spot. This was tremendous exercise, and it was not rendered a whit more pleasant or easy by the absolute necessity there was for accompanying it with incessant shouting, and screaming, and threatening, in order to render the deterring system more effectual. Nor was the ferment to which we have alluded, at all lessened by the circumstance that no one could tell his neighbour what had happened, or what was going on. All was mystery and perplexity. "It's Sandy Murray after a black cat," was, indeed, frequently to be heard; but this conveyed little or no information, and was besides so absurd and inadequate an explanation of such a tremendous turn-out, that it was considered no explanation at all. Nobody, in fact, believed it. Nor were those who actually saw Sandy in hot pursuit of Tibby, much farther forward on the score of intelligence; for the natural questions, "Whose cat is it?" "What does he want with the cat?" "What can he mean by chasing the cat?" were still to be answered; and without these answers, their information was incomplete.

In the meantime, however, matters were gradually coming, of their own accord, to a crisis with Tibby. At one particular part of her progress, she was intercepted and surrounded by the mob. A ring was formed around her, and a course of treatment commenced, amidst the most tremendous shouting and laughter, which it was impossible she could long survive. A score or two of cudgels were on the alert, in every direction, to greet her, the moment she came within their reach; while those who had no sticks performed the operation with their feet, and not less effectually. Poor Tibby was thus placed in a dreadful situation. Flying wildly round the ring, she essayed all points, with the view of effecting an egress, but in vain—the phalanx was as close as a stone wall; and, instead of getting out, in making these attempts, she only brought down on herself the thwack of a cudgel, which laid her sprawling for a second in the mud, or received a kick, which sent her clean over to the other side of the ring.

But what was the unfortunate animal's guardian doing all this time? What was Sandy about? Was he making no attempts to rescue Tibby from the hands and feet of her ruthless persecutors? He was. Sandy was not wanting in his duty at this interesting crisis—this terrible moment. He also was in the centre of the ring, around which he was running, nearly as madly as the cat, in vain endeavours to get her into his possession, and to protect her from the merciless violence of her assailants.

"Let alane the puir brute, ye blackguards! Every thump ye gie that cat's a pound oot o' my pouch; and if ye kill her, it's twa hunner pound dead to me, if it's a penny. Haud y'r hauns, ye cruel monsters! Let alane the cat, will ye! What harm has the puir beast done ye?" shouted Sandy, till he was hoarse, as he distractedly flew from side to side of the fatal ring, in his futile attempts to arrest the system of persecution under which Tibby was suffering.

But this was a state of matters which could not last long. Neither did it. The unhappy cat, although she had had fifty lives, instead of nine, could not have saved the tenth part of one of them. In less than ten minutes after Tibby

had been surrounded in the way described, she was rendered incapable of further effort, and only occasionally feebly moving a leg, or emitting a scarcely audible mew, impassively permitted herself to be knocked about, at the will and pleasure of her tormentors. But Tibby was not now the only object of the mischievous spirit of the mob; Sandy came in also for his share of what was going. He had said some offensive things, and the consequence was, a series of insidious attacks on his person, such as pulling his coat-tails, tripping up his heels, and shoving him about in that lively, perpetual-motion sort of manner, which is called putting through the mill. This was treatment, however, to which Sandy was not, by any means, disposed to submit quietly. He resisted—he gave battle; and the consequence was, a severe, but most unequal contest, in which Sandy received a couple of black eyes, and had his coat torn nearly to shreds off his back. The finale was at hand. The crowd, which had been gradually contracting round Sandy and the expiring cat, now fairly closed in upon them, with the most dreadful shouts and yells. Tibby was trampled under foot, and the last spark of life that remained in her miserable, draggled carcass, was extinguished. Sandy, in the meantime, had been also floored, and was in a fair way of sharing the fate of his cat, when a body of constables forced their way into the crowd, and saved him from the last result, by making him prisoner. Having been placed upon his pins, Sandy was conducted before a magistrate, to undergo judicial precognition as to the disturbance into which the town had been thrown, and of which it appeared he was the sole cause. On his being presented to the magistrate, Sandy's appearance greatly surprised and not a little amused that worthy person; and, to say truth, it was by no means prepossessing, as the reader will readily conceive, from the picture we have already drawn of his battered and dismantled condition.

"Well, sir," said the magistrate, doing the best he could to assume a becoming official gravity, "what is this you have been about, creating tumult, and disturbing the peace of the town?"

"Please your Honour, sir," replied Sandy, "it was just a black cat, sir—a black cat, that"—

"A what, sir?" interrupted the magistrate.

"A black cat, sir," repeated Sandy, more emphatically; "it was just a black cat that was the cause o't a'; and such another job I haena had this while, nor will I forget it in a hurry. See, yer Honour, sir, what a pair o' een I hae gotten, yer Honour—and see," he continued, and now looking wofully down at the fragment of a coat which still affectionately clung to him, "there's a' that's left me o' a guid fustian-coat, that wasna a preen the waur o' the wear whan this collyshangy began."

Here the magistrate, thinking—and the reader, we dare say, will agree with him—that Sandy was speaking somewhat irrelevantly, interposed, and insisting on his keeping closer to the point, succeeded in eliciting from him the history of the cat. In giving this history, however, Sandy concealed the real motives for his pertinacity in the chase, attributing it solely to his esteem and respect for the "puir beast's worthy mistress, whom he had lang kent, and for whom he had the regard o' a brither."

Having given this explanation, Sandy was dismissed, with a caution never to try cat-hunting in the town again; and a hint that, if he would indulge in such recreations, he must choose a place where they would create neither disturbance nor annoyance.

Arriving at this point in our history of Sandy Murray and the black cat, we pause a little, to join that worthy person in a few reflections which he made on his way home on the subject of the day's occurrences, and on his own particular position.

In the first place, it struck Sandy as odd, and as rather

hard in its way, that he should have been exposed to so much suffering, toil, and damage for so simple a thing as taking charge of a cat, and that so mighty a stir should have arisen out of so trivial a circumstance as the escape of that cat. But so it was. Who could deny it? In the next place, Sandy began to think that legacy-hunting, even in the case of an "auld wife" like Nanny Gilmour, either was not so easy a thing as he had imagined it, or that his own particular efforts, in that way, were under the ban of some evil spirit or other; for, in the little active practice he had had in this line of business, he had been first nearly drowned, and now as nearly murdered; and, to crown all, he was removed farther than ever from his object, he believed, by the violent and untimely death of Tibby. And this "untoward" event was the next subject of Sandy's inward cogitation. How was he to face Nanny Gilmour?—how inform her of the death of her favourite? She would disinherit him instantly, and without remorse. This was all but certain; and Sandy felt convinced that it was so. What was to be done? Sandy thought intensely for a few seconds. An idea struck him. He thought again. "Od, I'll try it. Nae harm in that, ony way." What will he try? What is it there's "nae harm in?" Why, in palming another cat on Nanny, for her own—another black cat. To this resolution, then, Sandy came, and he determined forthwith to act on it.

Sandy, however, found it a more difficult thing to fall in with Tibby's likeness than he had imagined. There were plenty of black cats to be found; but, unfortunately, Tibby had had a white ring on her tail, within about an inch of the tip, and, slight as this peculiarity was, there was not a single black cat of Sandy's acquaintance who possessed it; and he felt that, unless the animal he should select did possess it, a detection of the imposition would certainly take place; for he had no doubt that Nanny was familiar with almost every hair on Tibby's body. Here, then, was a serious difficulty; and for some days, during which he had not dared to venture near Nanny Gilmour, it was one which he could by no means get the better of. He could see no black cat with a white ring about its tail, although with eager and critical eye did Sandy scan every black cat that came in his way, or within the scope of his vision. In truth, he was constantly on the look-out, constantly on the alert, to discover such an animal as would perfectly suit his purposes; but in vain. At length chance did for Sandy what all his vigilance could not accomplish. Returning one evening, towards dark, from a certain piece of road-jobbing, he saw a cat perched on the wall of a gentleman's garden. He stopped, and looked at the animal; his particular interest at the moment inducing him to do this to every cat he fell in with—and, lo! it was black, the much desiderated colour—black as jet. Sandy's eye glistened as he looked on it. He approached nearer, gently and stealthily—and, lo! again, it had a white ring round the tail. It was in all respects, in shape, size, and mark, the very picture of the deceased Tibby. Glorious! delightful! Sandy's respiration became difficult, and his heart beat fast with intense eagerness to get possession of this singularly happy representation of Nanny's murdered favourite. But how was this to be done? It was a ticklish affair; for the cat was evidently a shy one—remarkably so. She had wined even at the distant and very cautious advances which Sandy had already made; and from the attitude she assumed, it was beyond doubt that she would bolt at the very next movement he made. Sandy saw this, and fully appreciated the extreme criticalness of his position; and, doing so, he remained for some minutes stock-still—his eye fixed with intense glare on his victim, as if he would charm her by its power from her high place on the garden wall, or fasten her to the spot where she sat. But no such effect arising, Sandy commenced in a low voice the soothing system, at

the same time gradually extending his hand, and gently moving it up and down as if in the act of stroking her back.

"Puir thing, puir pussy!" he said, in his blandest tones—"that's a bonny cratur; that's a bonny beasty noo; puir pussy, puir pussy!" And, while practising this insidious cajolery, Sandy was gradually lessening his distance, and without producing any very palpable alarm on the part of the object of his blandishments. Encouraged by this quiescence, but trembling with intense anxiety for the finale, Sandy continued his approaches and his wheedling, till he arrived close under the wall on which the cat was seated. But here another difficulty presented itself. The top of the wall was, at least, three feet above Sandy's reach. This was serious; but, and it is literal speaking, not insurmountable. There were facilities for climbing—projecting stones and crevices; and Sandy resolved to avail himself of them. Acting on this resolution, he commenced his ascent, "puir-pussying" and "bonny-beasting" all the time, with the most winning gentleness. The cat remained still; or, at worst, exhibited only very slight symptoms of disapproval of Sandy's proceedings. Sandy advanced. He was within a foot of her—he was within six inches—he was within grasp of her. He extended his hand with the gentlest motion possible. He clutched—the cat started back. Sandy advanced again; again extended his hand, and again essayed a grasp. The cat evaded it by a short, but quick retreat, backwards—not along the wall, but down the sloping glass-roof of a green-house. Sandy raised himself further up. His bust was now above the top of the wall, and he was afraid he might be seen from within—from the house or the garden—but it was now pretty dark, and he saw, moreover, that there was no one in the garden at the time; so he did not consider his danger from discovery very imminent. He, therefore, raised himself still higher, and finally gained the top of the wall, on which he hung, on nice balance, by the middle. The cat, in the meantime, was gradually receding down the glass-roof of the green-house—a proceeding which required a corresponding stretch inwards, on the part of her pursuer. In making this stretch, Sandy went considerably over the roof of the green-house; but, knowing that it presented but very indifferent support, he was extremely cautious. He clung firmly by the wall. It was now, however, neck or nothing. The cat was now fully a yard off. Another inch or two, and she was irrecoverably out of his grasp. Sandy saw the nice predicament, and he gave the cat up for lost. Still, a bold and rapid movement might remedy all—might still give his intended victim to his longing arms. Sandy saw this, too, and determined to adventure it. Seizing the top of the wall with his left hand, and stretching himself out as far as he could with safety, he gradually extended his right arm, for the purpose of making a sudden and rapid sweep at "pussy's" fore legs. His position was taken—his attitude admirable—his distance calculated. There was now only the bold and dexterous grasp to be made. It was made; and—Sandy caught her?—No;—and Sandy went right down through the glass roof of the green-house, with a tremendous crash, carrying down with him half an acre of glass, and, in his further descent, some dozen flower-pots; crushing to death, or fearfully mangling and disfiguring, the plants they contained—some rare and valuable exotics.

The noise attending Sandy's performances on this occasion was, as will readily be believed, very great—so great, indeed, was it, that it was distinctly heard at the house; and, being heard there, it created an alarm that instantly brought the master and half-a-dozen servants, footmen, gardeners, butler, and errand-boy to the spot. The immense gap in the roof of the greenhouse, occasioned by Sandy's descent through it, immediately shewed those persons *where* the mischief had happened; and then opening the door of the said green-house, and rushing into it in a body, which they did,

quickly shewed them *who* had done it. There they found Sandy, lying like an overgrown Cupid among roses, bundled up in the midst of a forest of precious dahlias—the said dahlias, all of those immediately around him, at any rate, being crushed, smashed, and deflowered, in a most shocking manner. The scene of ruin and devastation, altogether, which Sandy had occasioned, was, in short, really most appalling to behold: and it did both appal and enrage those who now beheld it. The master and his men, with simultaneous movement, flung themselves on Sandy, with the utmost ferocity, and each seizing such part of his garments as they could conveniently catch, dragged him out into the garden; when, having placed him on his legs, Sandy, not being, on the whole, much the worse for his adventure, and having regularly collared him, they conducted him in procession to the house, under a firm conviction that he had come "on evil purpose intent;" and, under a determination equally firm with the conviction, that he should be brought to condign punishment for his meditated crime. Sandy was escorted into town, and, as chance would have it, was conducted before the identical magistrate into whose presence he had been ushered on a former and somewhat similar occasion. The magistrate was greatly surprised to see Sandy again, and more so to find that he was now brought before him on a charge of house-breaking; (glass-breaking would have been fully more correct;) or, at least, with evident intention of committing this heinous crime.

"Well, sir," said the magistrate, sternly, but addressing him in words *nearly* the same as before, on the accusatory statement against Sandy being made, "what do you say to this?"

"Please your Honour, sir," said Sandy, replying in *precisely* the same words as he had used on the occasion alluded to, "it was just a black cat, sir—a black cat, that"—

"What! a black cat again, sir!" interrupted the magistrate in great surprise, and with no small indignation in his manner. "Come, come, sir—this won't do. The black cat did very well on a former occasion, but it'll stand you in no good stead on the present, I rather suspect. Fully too much of black cats this, sir."

At this stage of the proceedings, Sandy most earnestly requested a patient hearing. It was granted him, when he entered on a detail of all the circumstances connected with his night's adventure, including a partial explanation of his position with Nanny Gilmour, (yet keeping his thumb on the will,) with a degree of candour and simplicity that not only carried conviction of his innocence of any burglarious intentions to all who heard him, but elicited from them frequent bursts of loud and unrestrainable laughter.

Sandy's fair character, too, at least on the score of honesty, stood him in good stead on this occasion, and, co-operating with his own story, finally procured him a full and honourable acquittal; the worthy magistrate having previously advised him to give up at once, and for good and all, the hunting of black cats, and to trust to some other means of serving his friend.

Of all this, Nanny had never heard a word; but she was still as determined as ever to outwit her friend. In a short time, Sandy was informed she was dead, and went with high hopes to hear the reading of the will. If not generous, Nanny shewed herself to have been just; for she "bequeathed unto Alexander Murray, her especial friend, twenty five shillings yearly, to enable him to supply Tibby with a sufficient quantity of milk, during all the days and years of her natural life."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

PARENTAL DISCIPLINE.

THE plan of strict discipline, and the unsparing application of the rod of correction, as recommended by Solomon and many of the Grecian sages, long maintained its ascendancy in the schools and in families, without even so much as a single doubt being thrown, by querulous innovators, on its superiority and excellence; but, like all other ancient rules and systems, it was, about the middle of the last century, subjected to the heat of the crucible of modern wisdom, and found to be spurious, or, at least, loaded with alloy. From this imagined triumph, various opinions have resulted. Some think that correction hardens and destroys the feelings of youth, and sharpens the edge of the relish for indulgences; others, that rewards and punishments should be alternated; others, that the application of either should be regulated by the nature of the children, who vary in their dispositions as they do in their forms. We do not choose to pronounce our opinion theoretically on the soundness of any of these views. Aiming at the high object of portraying life as it is, theory is not our province; but we miscalculate the sentiments of the public, if we do not please them better, by laying before them a practical example of the point before us, than by speculating on the mutable truth of crucified theories. It may probably be, that some of the older inhabitants of Newcastle may recollect of an old double house that stood at the furthest end of Gateshead, and attracted the attention of the passenger by the row of Flemish windows that jutted out from the roof, by its clear white-washed walls, and two green-painted outer doors, that stood along-side of each other, as if placed in such juxtaposition, for the convenience of the two occupants, whose friendship would not admit of greater division. The house was taken down many years ago, and, doubtless, has little chance of being chronicled for future reminiscences, otherwise than by our endeavour to associate it with a chapter of the science of morals, the materials for which were furnished by the life and conduct of its inhabitants.

The eastern division of this double mansion was occupied by Mr William Waterford, and the western by Mr John Tyneham, two cousins, and both merchants; who, having realized competent fortunes, had retired to spend the remainder of their lives in the enjoyment of peace, and the interchange of those offices of friendship which the dry details of business had for a time interrupted. The former of the two was a widower, and had one son, named Henry; the latter was still blessed with the partner of his life, and had also an only son, whose name was Richard. The friendship of the parents, which had lasted many years, perhaps received (by a curious law of our nature) some accession of force and steadfastness, from what might, at first view, be deemed destructive of the feelings of that affection—viz., a temperately sustained difference of opinion on many general subjects, the arguments produced by which infused life and vigour into their conversation, and prevented the sickening influence of the dull insipidity of continual assentation—the greatest bane of friendship.

There was, in particular, one point on which their different sentiments were reduced to a practical application to

life; and that was, the best method of rearing and educating their sons. Their views on this subject, derived from different sources, were *toto cælo* different. Mr Waterford was a strong advocate for holding the reins of authority over children, so loose, that their perception of the curb might not check the growth of those faculties and sentiments which, though sometimes tending to evil, have so much good mixed with them that there is more, in the end, gained by their free development, than could ever result from their stinted condition. The introduction into the young mind of cold prudential maxims, under the name of virtue, produced, he said, cunning, the parent of all weak vices; while, to give free license to the spirit of liberty and daring, produced a consciousness of strength, and a love of generous sentiments, which would, in the end, work out its own condition of honesty and virtue. To keep a youth bound up from all gratifications, was only to feed his appetite for evil, to clothe vice with the gaudy robes which imagination weaves for all prohibited things, and to give power to the spring which would, in the time of manhood, start with a force proportioned to the pressure, and dislocate and destroy the virtuous constitution of the mind. He argued not for a free license to evil, or an encouragement to the sowing of youth's wild oats, with a view to a good harvest of the *civilized* grain; but, so long as there appeared no morbid appetite for vice, he would be slow to prevent, by stern authority, or to punish with severity, those errors and faults which, being incident to youth, might, by the distaste they are calculated to produce, prevent or check the progress towards crime.

On the other hand, Mr Tyneham agreed with Solomon—"Withhold not correction from the child." "Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell." He was a great disciplinarian—a great advocate for a severe moral code for the mind, and a stout rod for the back of youth. The more firmly, he said, a young person was bound up and prevented from falling into youthful errors, and the more severely he was punished for the commission of faults, however venial, the more inexcusable his conduct would appear to himself, and the greater the terror of a repetition of that for which he was punished. In this way only could the sometimes indistinct lines of demarcation between virtue and vice be indelibly traced in the youthful mind, and in this way alone could the necessary and proper foundations of conscience be laid in the heart. He did not deny that the love of pleasurable indulgences might for a time be increased, by being checked by the relentless curb of authority, which would allow of no improper gratification; but he contended that, if the restraint could be continued until it was supplied by the sanctions of reason and mature prudence, the habit of self-denial—the great conservator of morality and virtue—would take its seat of authority, and regulate the actions of the man with as much precision and success, as those of the boy had been moulded by the rod of correction.

Such were the different theoretical views entertained by the two neighbours, on the rearing of children; and many an argument they had upon their comparative soundness and applicability to the practice of life. But, as generally happens in matters of theory, neither could produce any

effect upon the other; and, as they had each a physical subject in the form of a son, to work upon, and could thereby test by experience the soundness of their respective doctrines, it was natural that they should have recourse to a vindication of their opinions, and a furtherance of their paternal interests, by training their sons according to their respective views of what would be for his benefit. Henry Waterford and Richard Tyneham were accordingly placed under those respective systems of training: the former (though he had good lessons of virtue read to him) being allowed the greatest latitude in his sports, diversions, and outbursts of his exuberant spirits; the latter again having his line of conduct and bearing mapped out to him with critical precision, while the figure of the birch was delineated at every turn, to shew what he had to expect if he departed one inch from the statutory direction. The father of the one, well pleased to know that his son had learned his task, did not refuse a smile to a recital (set forth with the glee of youthful ardour) of some daring exploit, performed by him and his companions, and for having a hand in which, his colleague next door was, at the very moment, suffering punishment, and sending forth his cries to interrupt the mirth of the narrator.

The first effects of these systems were soon apparent in the manners and dispositions of the two youths. Both, being clever, made fair progress in their studies, and it was not in this respect that any great difference could be discovered. The manumitted Waterford was open, free, and easy in his manners—equally ready with his reply to a grandfather as to one of his own age and standing. He shewed no great anxiety for amusement, because it was not denied him, and seemed to enter upon his youthful frolics and excesses as matters of course—taking them naturally and easily, as occasions presented themselves—without hurry or precipitation in their commencement, and without fear in their termination. If a mistake was committed, or an injury inflicted, provided the error were not of a very serious nature, he took to his father's house for protection, which he was sure to find, if fortitude and spirit expiated the offence; and, fortified by confession and absolution, he was ready and willing for the same project on any future occasion which might present itself, and for which he could *wail*, seeing he was not forbidden to take advantage of it at any time. His companion, young Tyneham, on the other hand, was bashful and retired in the presence of grown up individuals, and, while under the eye, or near the residence, of his parents, cautious, timid, and prudent; but, having few opportunities for relaxation or amusement, he was always keen, eager, and even impatient, to get his companions to join him in some sport, or (what he was not averse to) some devilry, which suited the humour or fancy of a mind rioting in the freedom of a temporary manumission. Once engaged in a sortie against the peaceful lieges, or in a *melée* of school foes, he generally went too far, from the reaction of the too much pressed spring, and committed greater faults and excesses than his young friend, to whom the scene and enjoyment were more matters of course and permission. More personal evidences of irregularities, and a greater number of complaints, generally attended the conviction of poor Tyneham, than reached the eyes or the ears of his companion's indulgent parent; and a cursory observer, judging from these evidences, and the frequency of the application of the instrument of punishment, would have pronounced the carefully watched and corrected Tyneham a much more vicious youth than the indulged Waterford.

These effects of the two opposite systems of training seemed to justify the views of Mr Waterford, who did not fail to claim his advantage, as well for the sake of victory as with the friendly view of prevailing upon Mr Tyneham to relax a discipline which was ruining his son.

"You are ingenuous enough," he said to his friend, "to

admit, that Richard has committed many more faults of late than Henry, and must now see the bad effects of your rigid system of discipline. By denying him the gratification of an excursion on the water, you compelled him to take, by stealth, Mr Bently's boat, which, by being improperly moored, was washed away by the sea and lost; by keeping his pocket always empty, and denying him ordinary indulgences of the appetite, you forced him over Mr Warden's garden wall in the presence of my son, who said he would not be at the trouble of climbing for what he could get so easily at home; by your castigations, you have generated in him fear, which has produced secrecy, which has given birth to cunning, which makes him cheat his companions, till they are roused to hate and punish him; by the same operation, you have stimulated his passions of anger and spite, the true sources of the battles in which he is engaged. I speak thus strongly because I am your friend. Relax your discipline, and you will cure the evil you have produced."

"I do not admit that all these effects have flowed from my discipline," answered Mr Tyneham, "though I am sorry to say that my son has required the rod, and still requires it much oftener, and seems to acknowledge its efficacy much less than I could have anticipated. His dogged, secret look, which is as new to our family as it is repulsive to my nature, and some instances of concealed revenge, have pained me exceedingly, but nothing has passed unpunished; I have done my duty as a parent; I do not yet give up my point; I have hopes in reserve, and time will try."

"A frosted bud never produced a fair blossom or good fruit," replied Mr Waterford, with some air of triumph. "The effect of time upon it is only to rot it and fill it with worms."

"And out of these sometimes come beautiful winged creatures," said the other, smiling.

"Which fly away, and never return," said his friend. "Richard will not bear your correction much longer. He will take wing."

"A clipped one will not carry him far," replied Mr Tyneham. "But, seriously, I yet hope well of my son. Notwithstanding of the present adverse appearances, I have great faith in the adage—'as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.' Time and a cord will deprive the sapling of its bounding reaction; and, as the juices dry up, the stiffening and correcting powers of maturity will make a straight, and, I hope, a beautiful tree."

Time, which was here appealed to, is never slow in its test. The same characteristics continued to be exhibited by the two youths even after they had left school and been (as they soon afterwards were) apprenticed to merchants in Newcastle. They still remained great companions—young Waterford pleased his friend by his openness, frankness, and generosity, and, above all, by the readiness he exhibited to enter into any whims or caprices, however questionable or improper, which restraint had produced in the other, and which he called liberty; while Tyneham was necessary to his friend by his continued desire to snatch every opportunity of devising ingenious modes of libertinism for the gratification of both, and especially the former, who, however well he liked pleasure, could not be at the trouble to invent the mode of varying its aspect and giving a dash of piquancy to its cloying sweetness. By the common intercourse of their fathers with a Mr Swainson, who lived in the town, and had a charming daughter named Diana, the two companions became visitors at that gentleman's house and (we might almost say, of course) suitors of the lady, who was accounted the fairest, as she was, in fact, the most amiable young female in Newcastle or Gateshead. They had both about the same time been struck with a passion for the young lady; but in this instance they maintained their secret—each pretending to the other that

he merely admired Diana Swainson, and defied the vulgar restraining bonds of mawkish love. It would have been difficult to say which of the two was the more ardent in his secret breathings of uncontrollable affection, or the more boisterous in his open, and, of course, feigned defiance of its power.

In consequence of Mr. Swainson's extreme intimacy with the fathers of the two young men who were in the continual habit of frequenting his house, he was privy to the somewhat extraordinary trials which the two parents had made of their adverse plans of bringing up their sons. They had both displayed so much power of persuasion in their arguments, that he was often hung up fairly in the balance of doubt. In these arguments the delicacy of the parents, in presence of a third party, limited them to the *a priori* question; for any reference to the *actual* behaviour or the *real* dispositions of the youths would have produced personalities which, however much the friends themselves might have excused, if kept within the bounds of friendship, could never have been tolerated in the presence of another. Having been early interested in the question, Mr. Swainson had kept his eye upon the young men; and now that he was pretty well assured that they were both admirers, if not lovers of his daughter, whose natural goodness rendered all factitious modes of training useless, he was more deeply interested in the issue of the trial than he ever could have been as a theoretical speculator on the principles of human nature.

So far as Mr Swainson's experience yet went, he was inclined to believe that young Waterford was the more honest and generous youth. He admired his unflinching eye, his frankness, his easy manners, and his total want of anything like secrecy, even in regard to those personal improprieties which, having been discovered, might have been supposed to call for concealment. His admission of faults and errors took the pleasing appearance of ingenuousness, one of the most amiable traits in the features of the character of fallen man; and Mr Swainson was not slow to admire what is deemed too rare, and what was exhibited (with the difference in the degree of veniality of the thing admitted) in such perfection in his amiable and virtuous daughter. Qualities almost the very reverse were observed by him in young Tyneham: an unsteady, furtive eye; closeness; secrecy; uneasiness; extreme sensitiveness, when bantered about his peccadillos; and a forwardness in exculpation which outran the probation of truth. These were the results of his personal observation; for as to what he heard, he was bound to confess that neither of the young men seemed to have much to boast of on the point of prudence, if, indeed, they were not both liable to the charge of being gay, dissolute, wild, and improvident.

Making every allowance for their youth and inexperience, Mr Swainson was inclined to give his two young friends a much fairer trial. Nothing could give him more satisfaction than the circumstance of finding one of them worthy of his daughter, who, he could perceive, gave indications of a partiality for him who, in the meantime, was also his favourite—young Waterford. In pursuance of his purpose of probation, he invited them to dinner, along with a young man, his nephew, of the name of William Somers. They had previously often dined in his house, along with their parents, on which occasions he could easily observe the working of the two modes of training: the manumitted youth exhibiting the same ease and confidence, confessing with the same fearlessness his free conduct, and vindicating his right to an equal portion of liquor, with the same boldness he could have exhibited had his parents been absent; while his friend measured his conduct and his words, appeared to feel the weight of the incubus of authority, spoke little and drank none. Now that they were to be beyond the authority of their parents, their conduct would be better devel-

oped and easier marked; and Mr Swainson continued his observation. All his former experiences were confirmed. The presence of Diana, with the pure, dignified, bland look of virtue, and that unconscious power of female beauty which is incapable of analysis or explanation, but felt as irresistible, threw the spell of admiration and restraint on the spirited youths, and kept them, while she remained, slaves to etiquette, and worshippers of the forms of devotion to beauty. When she departed, the charm was broken. Waterford discoursed of his parties, the amount of liquor consumed at them, and the consequences of their joviality—of his billiard-room failures and successes, of a street row, in which he had an active hand the evening before, and of many other exploits of spirit, washing down every finished period with a glass of wine, and appealing to Tyneham for a confirmation of what he said. These appeals were not relished by the latter, who seemed pained when the subjects were broached by his friend, and gave him many nods, hints, and touches of the foot, to get him to remain silent. He observed great caution in his drinking, and persisted so long in his prudent policy of not *coming out* in presence of his host, that the latter resolved upon leaving the nephew to do the honours of the table, from whom he would not fail to get a true report of all the proceedings of the evening.

Mr Swainson was no sooner gone, than young Tyneham took the lead. He was the point of the attraction and repulsion of the wine bottles; and encouraged his friends to larger potations. He became joyous and bacchanalian.

"I love your uncle, Somers," he cried, "as a high-pressure engine loves the removal of the valve of liberty. I do abominate all manner of restraint. When Ovid, the poet of love, said that all that was wanted for the license and liberty of the spirit of the votary of luxury, were night, and wine, and love, he forgot the absence of a father or an old host. The days are gone when, as Homer says, wine made even old men dance against their will; but they will come again, when I am old, and no longer fear parental authority. Would that old Swainson had been my father!—for, next to dancing under wine himself, is the disappearing of an old host from the company of youth. His good sense this night is worthy of all admiration."

"He would observe something new in you if he were to return," said Waterford. "He does not know you so well as I do. We had better call him in to see you in your new dress."

"I care not *now*," cried the heated youth. "Why should I? The artificer tries gold and silver, as old Theognis says, by the test of fire; but a man of sense testeth the mind of his neighbour by the touchstone of wine—*vinum animi speculum*—wine is the looking-glass of the mind."

"Your mirror will reflect some strange things to-morrow morning, then," said Waterford; "for I see you are in a fair way for a scour, *dans les rucs*, or what our better language calls a rig and a row."

"Thou sayest well, Waterford," said the other; "yet with wine I require no monitor to whisper in my ear, enjoyment. What is the order of the night? If we are for the billiard-room, we must try and find what the ancients could not—a *measure* for our wine. My hand is steady yet—see"—(holding up a glass)—"and my eye knows its mark, and is even bolder and truer than when our host was present. To him one glass, another to Die, and let us up and out while we have spirit enough to illuminate the night, steadiness to gain our billiard points, and pluck to act the *roué*."

They sallied out, and went into a billiard-room, where they played with blacklegs, and were cheated. They then went to drown the recollection of their loss in more wine, got intoxicated, came forth, and, quarreling with every person they met, were soon in the heart of a street riot, laying about

them with the recklessness of inebriety, and suffering the thick blows of an angry mob. By an unconscious movement, they approached the house of their host, with the mob still following them, and forcing them at intervals to turn and submit again to the degradation of a fight with the dregs of society. Opposite to the house, there was a full stop: the fury of the people, roused to the utmost height by the contemptuous manner of the gentlemen, was expressed by loud cries of vengeance; and several acquaintances having interfered in behalf of the companions, a general *melée* commenced, and was proceeding with determination, when Mr Swainson, roused by the noise, opened his window, and witnessed the degrading scene. At this moment, he saw obscurely two individuals approach his door: they were the two fathers of the youths, who, alarmed at the absence of their sons, had come from Gateshead to call at Mr Swainson's for the purpose of taking them home. The battle was raging with great fury, and he now observed that the two fathers at that moment ascertained, by inquiry, that their sons, whom they had come to seek, were the chief instigators of the disturbers, and likely to be the greatest sufferers.

The scene now became doubly interesting and insufferably painful to him who charged himself with the fault of leaving the young men to the free use of his wine. He strained his eyes to observe the proceedings, and would have gone down to assist the parents, but he was undressed. The fathers instantly rushed forward among the fighting crowd, and exerted, in their progress forward, an authority which was not recognised by the furious populace. The light of a neighbouring lamp shewed the faces of the young men streaming with blood, and the uplifted hands of the parents entreating and forcing alternately the people to get forward. They succeeded. Mr Waterford seized his son, who knew him. Mr Tyneham was in the act of laying hold of his son, who did not know him, when, dreadful sight! the infuriated young man aimed a blow at the head of his parent, and laid him at his feet. The relationship was known to some of the bystanders; and such was the effect produced on the minds of a wild and raging populace, when a cry was raised that he had struck his father, that the riot was quelled in an instant, and every threatening arm hung by the side of its breathless and awe-struck possessor. All this scene was witnessed by Mr Swainson from the window. When he saw Mr Tyneham fall by the hand of his son, he uttered a piercing cry, and rushed down, naked as he was, to the street. The wounded father, who was, however, more stunned by the blow than really hurt, was carried into the house, and soon recovered. The young men proceeded homewards; Mr Tyneham followed some time after; the people dispersed; and all was again silence and darkness.

Next morning, Mr Swainson awoke to a painful recollection of the proceedings of the previous night, which he thought in a great measure attributable to himself. At breakfast, he lamented the melancholy occurrence to Diana, whose tender affection for her parent suggested the comforting reflection, that his having left the young men when they were yet sober, relieved him from the responsibility he attached to himself.

"The trial now," he said, "is surely complete. Mr Tyneham and Mr Waterford agreed, when their sons were quite young, to make them the subjects of a practical proof of the efficacy of two different modes of training and education. The former enforced a rigid discipline, following Solomon—

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; and the latter wrought by kindness and indulgence. So far, neither has been successful; but one has signally and fatally failed. By William Somers' account, it was Richard Tyneham who encouraged them to drink, led them to a billiard-room, from that to a tavern, then precipitated them, by a blow inflicted on a passenger, into a street riot, and wound up the

whole by doing that which is said to deserve the curse of God—lifting his hand against the parent whom he was bound to honour, reverence, and obey—'Accursed of heaven shall he be who striketh his father or his mother.' Both of these young men have paid addresses to you, my child, and I was hopeful that the son of one of my oldest and most respected friends might have proved worthy of the love and hand of my Diana. Neither of them is worthy of so virtuous and fair a creature. Do I read an assent in that blue eye? A secret tear is not the usual sign of my Die's accordance with the sentiments of her parent."

"Did you not say, my dear father," replied the timid girl, as she cast down her eyes, that were suffused by the tears noticed by the parent—"did you not say that it was Richard Tyneham who urged his companions to drink, and encouraged and led them on?"

"I did, my love," replied the father, who knew the meaning of her look, and the tendency of her artless question; "but Henry Waterford was led on, and joined heart and hand in the adventure. He, besides, seems to boast of his dissipation—an act which, when limited to peccadillos, I construed at one time into ingenuousness; his friend has, at least, the merit of being ashamed of his vice. I do not mean to say that Waterford is not the better of the two; but the best of the good is not good enough for you, my child; the better of two bad, is a choice for the bad."

"But may not Henry repent and reform, father?" continued the fond and artless Diana.

"They may both reform, my love," answered the father.

"But I mean Henry Waterford in particular," said she. "You know *he* did not strike his father."

"That is small praise, Diana," said the other, smiling at the equivocal success of the fond apologist, and rising to prepare for a visit to his two friends; "but I am myself to experiment this morning, and I can speak with more certainty of a recovery after I have seen my patients."

Mr Swainson proceeded to the dwellings of his friends. Mr Waterford was standing at the door, and welcomed him kindly, but with a look of sadness.

"I take blame to myself," said Mr Swainson, "for that unfortunate affair of last night; and cannot rest till I know how Mr Tyneham is. I am also anxious to know, from the lips of your son, how the affair commenced."

"Mr Tyneham, I am glad to say, was not hurt," replied the other. "Henry is not yet out of bed. You may go up and give him a lecture for his bad behaviour."

"Is it not too late now to begin the preventive system of discipline?" replied Mr Swainson. "Is it possible that at last you have become a convert to Mr Tyneham's doctrine?"

"My son has not yet struck *me*," said the other, significantly.

Mr Swainson shook his head and proceeded up stairs. He found the youth in bed, reading a book of amusement.

"Ha! this is reversing the forms of etiquette, Mr Swainson," said he. "The guest should call for the Amphytrion, and tell him how his wine smacked and operated; yet it was not your wine that produced the row. By the jolly rosy god! it was a good one—more scientific punishing I have not seen for many a day. I made the workies spin like bobbins; a washing in the Tyne could not have made the colliers whiter or cleaner than I did by my pummeling. See! my hands are black yet, with the coal-dust of the rascals. But I have not done with him. By the box-master of old good Castor! I have vowed vengeance against the whole caste of the unwashed."

Mr Swainson looked at the youth in amazement; but his object was merely to study, not to reprove.

"I do not approve of these sentiments, Henry," said Mr Swainson.

"Neither do I altogether," replied the youth; "but, if you

had been abused as I was, your blood might have got a little warm. The only thing I am really vexed for, however, is the loss of the money. Would you believe it, sir, that the very blacklegs that cheated us joined the black faces who abused us, and thrashed their very victims? By heavens! it is not easy to bear."

"Is this the *only* thing you are sorry for, Mr Waterford?" said Mr Swainson, looking him full in the face.

"Why! there's nobody hurt," said the youth—"I mean seriously hurt. Mr Tyneham should not have come before Dick when he was blind with drink and passion; but the old boy is nothing the worse for the blind blow. How is Die? I thought I saw her peeping like a frightened mouse out of one of the loop-holes of your house: the fighting had sobered me by that time, and I'm glad of it, for I would not have liked to have done to my father what Dick did to his."

"I do not think that Diana could approve of these proceedings," said the other, significantly.

"Ho! a woman never thinks the less of a man for a bit of spirit," said the youth. "Recollect, my dear sir, we were forced to fight—our lives depended upon our courage and self-defence. I think I am casuist enough to satisfy Die that our fault was a very venial one."

"Indeed!" said Mr Swainson—"then I presume you may be again in the same situation."

"Not unlikely," said the other. "I have no wish for it abstractly. It was Dick that led the way—I only followed. I should certainly not be disinclined to have my revenge; the blacklegs must not be allowed to escape with both booty and a whole skin. I intend to call down upon Die to-day. She *must* forgive me."

"I believe my daughter is to be out the greater part of the day," said Mr Swainson. "I must go and see how Mr Tyneham is."

"He was nothing but a little stunned, I assure you," said the young man. "It was quite natural."

"The blow or the stunning?" said Mr Swainson.

"Both, both," said the youth. "It was natural for Dick to make at all and sundry around him, and he did not know his father, and it was quite natural, you know, for a person to be stunned by a blow, if it was severe enough."

"A very natural solution, Henry," said Mr Swainson, taking up his hat. "Your humble servant—I proceed to Mr Tyneham's."

He accordingly went into that gentleman's house. The sight presented was grievous and melancholy. The father sat by the parlour fire with his brow upon his hand, and the mother sat opposite to him with her eyes fixed upon her sorrowing husband. The latter looked up as his friend entered, and again replaced his head in the same position. Mr Swainson felt the sacredness of his sorrow.

"This is a melancholy business," said he. "We cannot now speak of the efficacy of early discipline."

"I trusted to Solomon," said Mr Tyneham, still holding his head on his hand, "and find he was only a man. There is One greater than he, and his ways are like the passage of a bird in the air. It darts past us. The place from which it came, its destination, its power of flight, its motive and object, are unknown."

"We know at least that His ways are good," said the mother. "The cloud produces the rainbow with its many colours, and the worm gives birth to the butterfly whose wing is tinged with the hues of that radiant arch. This affair may produce amendment in our son."

"I renounce him, I renounce him!" said the father, trying to keep down his struggling heart.

"Where is Richard, madam?" said Mr Swainson.

"He is still in bed," answered the mother, "and refuses to come down."

"I wish to see him," said the other. "Shall I proceed to his bedroom?"

"I wish you would," replied she. "I have seen strong symptoms of amendment in him to-day. He will speak more freely to you than to me, who am forced to reprove and condemn with tears which seem to melt him and choke his efforts at the expression of conciliating penitence."

Mr Swainson proceeded to the young man's chamber. He was, as stated, in bed. His face was turned to the wall. A book bound like a Bible lay beside him, and sobs burst from him, which, as Mr Swainson proceeded forwards, he endeavoured to repress. He turned his head slightly round, and, having observed who his visiter was, relapsed into his former position.

"You need not turn away your head from me, Richard," said the good man. "I do not come to reprove you, but simply to ascertain what are your sentiments of the proceedings of last night. I wish, for your sake and your father's, that you would speak to me freely. You will find me a good comforter, but a bad disciplinarian."

The young man made no reply, but buried his face in his hands and sobbed aloud.

"Am I to take these symptoms for signs of sorrow and penitence?" said Mr Swainson.

"They are inadequate expressions," said he, "of what I am at this moment suffering. I have never been happy—I am now miserable. Since ever I recollect, there has been a war within me between the two powers of duty and inclination; and I have been seriously examining the state of my heart, and, upon reflection, I am surprised that, judging from the burning pain which has followed all my transgressions against the authority of my father and mother, I should ever have sinned more than *once*: the grief and agony which followed my first departure from my father's precepts, seems at this moment to overbalance all the stolen pleasures I have since enjoyed. Every transgression has doubled the pain of remorse; as every new link was added to the chain, the long, heavy, clanking appendage increased its power of galling my wrung withers, till the last addition has sent the iron into the red flesh, and made me cry like Job in agony to my God. You may have noticed that my looks were timid, furtive, and painful, and may have construed these indications against me. Yet they were for me. In place of being the indications of the secret dissembler who conceals the last act of vice, from mere fear of discovery, while he is planning another, they were the symptoms of a disapproving conscience, which, fortified for years by a father's precepts and discipline, avenged itself by producing the pains of fear, disquietude, and remorse. These things were *felt* only—they were not studied or analyzed by self-examination. But the hour has come; its shadow is on my heart. Great God! Was ever a sleeping sinner roused from his lethargy by such means? Was it necessary for my salvation that I should *lift my rebellious hand against my father?*"

These last words were uttered in a choking voice, while he again hid his face in his hands.

"It seems that it was by that great Power deemed necessary," said Mr Swainson. "But you are so far excusable: you did not know that it was your parent."

"No, no—thank ye, thank ye!" cried the youth, turning round and seizing Mr Swainson's hand; "I was not conscious of my dreadful act. It is known, then, and acknowledged that I knew him not: is it so? You have taken from my bosom a load of misery. Tell, oh, tell my father! will you, my worthy, kind friend, satisfy my father of that redeeming truth?"

"I will," replied the other; "but I hope enough remains for the food of repentance and amendment."

"Abundance, abundance," cried the youth. "This is not a sudden change. It is the completion of a long preparation, which has been, unknown to myself, working in my heart. Every departure invested my father's precepts with

an addition of authority. I have struggled against them long; but now, vanquished and overcome by the accumulated powers, I have fallen; and, God is my judge, I never more shall transgress against my father or Him."

"Then, Richard," said Mr Swainson, "I shall make up your peace with your parents. It must be left to yourself to make up your peace with Heaven."

"This shall assist me," he said, seizing the book that lay beside him.

Mr Swainson paused, and there was silence for a few minutes.

"And there is another," said the youth, "in whose eyes I could wish to find forgiveness and favour."

"Who is that?" inquired the other.

"Diana Swainson," said Richard, while the tear started to his eye. "But" (faltering) "this is not a time for the expression of my sentiments. I may, however, wish and beseech forgiveness. Mistake me not," (he continued, after a pause,) "that tear is still one of remorse."

"And so it should be," replied Mr Swainson. "We must not interfere with thee, sacred Power! Let some years of probation pass over our heads, and I may become your advocate with my daughter."

"Blessed hour of wretchedness!" exclaimed the youth. "Hasten, my worthy friend, to my father. Tell what you have heard, and what you have seen—assured that my words and my tears come equally from my heart. All I ask is time. Let him grant me one trial on this new condition; and, if I fail, let him cast me off for ever."

Mr Swainson promised compliance, and proceeded again to the father, who still sat in the same desponding attitude—resisting, apparently, the attempts of his wife to get him to view the misfortune as not so irremediable as he seemed to think it.

"You said, my dear friend," said Mr Swainson, as he entered, "that the ways of God are dark and mysterious; but the expression you used seemed to imply, that we are ignorant of his designs as well as the ways of working them. Yet this is not so. We know that His designs are good, and I have now been a witness of the truth of the observation. Your son is changed. He says that all his life has been an unhappy struggle against your precepts; that he resigns the contest, overcome and vanquished by the force of the remorse produced by the unconscious, yet salutary act of last night; and promises that, if he be allowed one trial, he will prove the sincerity of his repentance."

"Is it possible," said the father, lifting up his head, "that he acknowledges, at this late hour, the force of my early precepts? That accords with my hopes and intentions, and rouses me from my despondency, which has been produced as much by having my whole life made a false theoretical dream, a lie, as by the proceeding itself, which I believe was unconscious."

"I told you as much myself, my dear husband," said Mrs Tyneham.

"No, my love," replied he; "you only said he was penitent. Every sinner is at times penitent. The other world is paved with the good intentions of sinners. That affected me not; but when I am given to understand that he corroborates my philosophical anticipations, proves my theoretical positions, and vindicates the wisdom of Solomon, I am roused and filled with hope. He shall have his own time, my good friend."

The mother hastened up stairs, to convey the intelligence to her son; and Mr Swainson returned home, meditating all the way on the extraordinary scenes he had witnessed. He had often heard it stated that the maxim of Solomon was questionable—that children by chastisement were hardened, and by restraint made more keen for vicious indulgences; and, up to this hour, the instance before him seemed to carry with it some confirmation of the doubt.

But moral maxims, which have received the stamp of the approbation of ages, often conceal truths of great importance under doubtful appearances. The philosophy of this famous apophthegm was now apparent. The wild horse chafes the bit, and, as he chafes, snuffs the desert air, and defies his rider; but the broken courser chafes only to feel the vanity of the effort, and to resign his power into the hands of his master. When he reached home, he found Diana dressing to go out. He saw at once the propriety of making his faithful daughter acquainted with his sentiments of her lovers. He, therefore, related to her accurately everything he had seen and heard; and, as he proceeded, noticed, with pain, the heaving bosom which struggled to retain the sentiments of an early, a first affection, even in opposition to a kind father's undoubted opinion of the turpitude of its object.

"You will thus see," he continued, "how my estimate of the characters and dispositions of our friends has changed, since our last interview. Richard Tyneham has a conscience conformed by early precept, and roused by a sense of duty. Henry Waterford has none. There is no spring in him of virtuous movement; and the natural moral gravitation of vice must sink him. I wish you to promise, my dear Die, that you will not have any intercourse, beyond that of formal recognition, with any of these youths, until a fair time of probation has tested their morality and prudence."

A burst of tears and restrained emotion, startled the fond parent, and proved to him, too truly, that his daughter's affection for Waterford was stronger than he had imagined.

"You know, my dear child," said the father, taking her to his bosom, "that I was myself partial to young Waterford; but would my lovely patroness of goodness and comely sentiment wish her father to place his white lily among thorns—to choke the green and tender stems of virtue he has taken so long to nourish and protect, by the rank shoots of the deadly night shade? Your danger, your emotion, your inestimable value, call forth the eloquence of a plain man, and make an anxious and doting father trust his sense to the hyperbolic language of excited nature. You must conquer this misplaced love, Diana."

"Father!" said the weeping girl, as she lifted her head from his bosom, and looked endearingly in his face, "you taught my infant lips to whisper the first principles of learning, and instill into my heart the rudiments of that virtue I adore above earthly things. Can you, father—father—can you teach *not to love?*"

"It is a hard question, my Diana," replied he, "and can best be answered by another. Will you put yourself into my hands?"

"Yes, yes!" ejaculated the dutiful daughter; "I will—*heart and all.*"

"Excellent creature!" cried he, with emotion. "The tears of a bereaved husband's tenderness are a fitting medium through which to contemplate the duty of a daughter. You were never so like my departed Edith as now."

Moved by the recollections suggested by this scene, Mr Swainson led his still weeping daughter to a couch; and, having requested her to compose herself, sought hurriedly, in the recesses of his chamber, the portrait of his wife—the cure and solace of all his worldly affliction, as well as the sedative temperer of his few remaining joys.

By the request and advice of her father, Diana kept herself aloof from both her young friends. Some time after the period of these circumstances, Mr Swainson was waited upon by Mr Waterford and Mr Tyneham.

"We have a request to submit to you," said the latter. "We know that you feel an interest in the success of our sons. It was by your mediation that I became reconciled to Richard, and his friend Henry was ever with you a favourite. Mr Waterford has suggested to me, that it is now time that

both the young men should begin business on their own account. Their indentures are expired, and we may anticipate that the cares and duties of responsible merchants may exclude and occupy the places of those vices and follies we have had so much reason to deplore. As a preliminary to this, they must have a cash credit to a fair extent; and it has occurred to me, that it might form a motive for prudence and caution, if some other person than the father should be security for the son. With this view, it is proposed that I and another—say yourself, as an old friend—should be security for Henry Waterford, and that Mr Waterford and you should do the same friendly office for my son—each of us, as principals, guaranteeing you against any loss, by a back letter of the same date with the bond."

This proposition was reasonable, and nothing more than the proposers had a right, from old friendship, to demand; it was, besides, safe, as the two fathers could not fail to protect Mr Swainson, as cautioner, against all risk. It, however, in some degree, took Mr Swainson by surprise; and, as he had, three weeks before, become security for £5000, for his brother, George Swainson, a coal-contractor in the neighbourhood, he required time to think of it. The request was fair, and the friends departed. Mr Swainson pondered over the subject; and, swayed by the certainty of safety, and the peculiar relation that subsisted between his daughter and the young men, consented. Next day, he called upon his friends, and told them his resolution. The purpose was carried into effect, and the two bonds, for a very considerable amount, were prepared some time after, and signed.

The two young men commenced immediately as general merchants, on their separate account. The influence of their fathers soon got them established; and to all appearances they would succeed. However much they became occupied with the details of business, neither of them for a moment forgot the amiable object of his passion, whose studied distance only served to increase the flame; but they took very different means of producing an impression which might lead the way to their happiness. They were less together now than formerly, and knew little of each other's proceedings—a circumstance as favourable to the reformed Tyneham's affection, as it was to his morals and mercantile prosperity. Waterford was too little conscious of having done anything improper in the estimation of Diana, to attribute her change of manner to the spirited display of fighting he made opposite to her father's house—an exhibition which ought, he thought, to have raised him in her opinion. Her distance was mere coyness, which never resists importunate love. He was, therefore, always on the watch to see her, or to speak to her; called at the house; waylaid her in her walks; wrote love epistles, as rapturous as the elegies of Propertius; and thus and otherwise mis-spent his time, neglected his business, and sacrificed his best interests.

Tyneham, on the other hand, knew well, and lamented deeply, the cause of Diana's changed manner towards him; but he recollected, with comfort, that her father had promised that, if he amended and shewed himself worthy of his confidence and her love, (at least that was the old man's meaning,) he would procure the parent as an advocate in his favour. His good sense and delicacy, therefore, suggested a strict restraint upon his motions, and the expression of his feelings: he never visited the house but when he knew the father was within, shewed a distant respect for his daughter, avoided the places of her amusements and the paths of her solitary walks, saluted her formally when chance threw her in his way, and devoted all his time and attention to the duties of his increasing business. Often when thus sedulously occupied, he detected a deep involuntary sigh struggling from his breast; but he knew his duty, and persevered for victory. These different proceedings were

noticed by Diana and her father—the latter of whom admired the conduct of his favourite, and augured from it the happiest results, while the former, condemning secretly the importunity of her assiduous and bold lover as equally destitute of delicacy and prudence, had learned more of the art of ceasing to love from the lover himself, than she did from her constituted teacher into whose hands she had committed the training of her heart.

While thus noticing the progress of his neophytes, Mr Swainson was struck with sudden dismay, by the intelligence of the failure of his brother, who, having been disappointed in finding coal in some pits he had sunk to a great depth and at a great expense, was obliged to stop, and declare himself insolvent. A great part of the old man's fortune was thus swept away—he was called upon to pay up the £5000 contained in his bond—and felt, as he obeyed the stern command of the creditor, that he was parting with the independence and the happiness of her for whom alone he had any wish to remain longer upon earth. He was so much affected by this loss, that he was for a long time confined to bed, where he derived, from the amiable and devoted creature he thought he had ruined, the consolation which sustained his sinking heart, and probably saved his life. After he recovered, he saw that he was now no longer in a situation for running a similar risk, and resolved, in justice to Diana and himself, to call up the bonds he had signed with his two friends in behalf of their sons. He, accordingly, sat down and wrote a letter, detailing his loss, and stating that he was compelled to request his name to be cancelled from the securities. He had adopted the very mode of precipitating that misfortune he wished to avoid. Mr Waterford could not procure another name in place of that of the withdrawing cautioner; the bank called up the money; the principal debtor, young Waterford, had become embarrassed, and could not pay; his father had involved himself secretly in behalf of his son, to an extent which would ruin him and could not relieve Mr Swainson in terms of his back-letter—so that the whole sum in the bond required to be paid by Mr Tyneham and Mr Swainson equally. The news of the failure of Waterford having transpired, it was discovered that the young man had absconded, leaving an immense mass of debt contracted chiefly by high and dissolute living, and other fruits of a dissipation and libertinism of which he never had conscience enough to discover or feel the impropriety or the shame. Among the debts left by the fugitive, there was not found even the amount of a single pound due to his old companion, Richard Tyneham, whose success in business was as signal as was the imprudence and recklessness of his friend.

This second disaster bowed down the head of good Mr Swainson even to the earth. To pay his share of Waterford's bond would require not only the remaining money he was possessed of, but a part of the price of his house, which he would require to sell. Worn by age, whose powers of depression and weakness were outdone by the crushing and breaking energies of misfortune, and the deadening influence of the prospect of poverty and want in his old age, besides destitution to an unprotected daughter in an evil world, he almost sank under the united pressure of his sorrows. Again confined to bed, he felt the utter helplessness of his condition; while the tears of his daughter—the tribute of sympathy alone—(for selfishness had no province in her devoted heart)—suggesting self-ermination and regret, failed of their wonted effect of solace and comfort.

"Do not grieve for me, father," said the distressed girl, on the day previous to that appointed for the payment of the remainder of his means. "I have a fortune in those accomplishments which I received from your affection and providence; and I would also say, grieve not for yourself, for these same means shall be employed—by efforts conti-

"Two beautiful boys as ever I saw," answered the wife; but one of them is dead, and the mother is very weak."

While this and some other conversation passed between the farmer and his wife, the man and the woman were busy whispering at the other end of the house; but they at length approached the hearth and partook of some refreshment which had been prepared for them. The farmer offered the female, for the remainder of the night, the use of their only other bed; but both the man and the woman objected to this proposition—saying, that they preferred to sit by the hearth and attend to their mistress, and requesting that their hosts should retire to it themselves. This they did, and soon both fell into a sound sleep. Helen awoke about two hours afterwards, and, to her astonishment, found that neither of the two attendants was in the cottage. She arose and went to the bed of the sick lady, who lay apparently in a deep and troubled sleep, with the babe in her bosom. She looked for the body of its brother; but it was gone. She felt alarmed, and gently awaking Simon, in a whisper told him to arise. He was soon dressed, and, on going out, found that the strangers were gone, the horses were away, and with them everything that had been brought, even to the dress the lady had worn upon her arrival. In great anxiety they approached the bed: the lady still appeared in a deep sleep; her breathing was heavy and laborious; every attempt to awaken her was in vain; her eyes were opened and closed unconsciously, and without a word of utterance.

"Surely," said Helen, with clasped hands, "that woman hasna poisoned the puir young creature wi' that mixture she requested me to gie her just before I ca'ed you into the house. She said it was to compose her to sleep. She had offered it to the lady hersel, who, being afraid o' her, wadna taste it. Then she gave me the cup, and I offered it. O Simon! what a piteous look she threw upon me, as she said, 'From you I will take anything; you, I know, will not do me harm'—and she drank it from my hands. Surely, surely, I am not guilty of her blood, if death was in that cup!"

Here the poor woman sank upon the side of the bed in a passion of tears, while Simon stood the image of horror, gazing alternately upon his wife and the unconscious lady in the bed. Sinking upon his knees, he prayed for counsel in this hour of distress, and his mind became more calm and collected.

"Helen," said he, "you will not be afraid to stay by the poor young creature while I go and catch Mally, and ride as fast as she can carry me to the manse, and bring the minister, who is a skilful man, and who, perhaps, may be able to do something for the sufferer; at least, he will advise us what is best for us to do in this hour of need."

"I will, indeed, be eerie," answered Helen—"very eerie; but do mak all the haste ye can, and I will tent baith mother and bairn until ye return."

In a very short time, the farmer was on his way to the manse, and soon, along with the minister, on his return to his cottage; but, before they arrived, the victim had breathed her last sigh.

Helen was at the door, weeping and wringing her hands. She blamed herself as being the cause of the young mother's death; nor was it until after the minister had prayed, and assured her that no guilt could attach to her, that she became composed. On his way to the cottage, the farmer had informed him of every circumstance, as far as it had happened under his own eye:—That the young lady had been very ill; that the female appeared expert at her duty, and kept Helen as much at a distance from her patient as she could; that the young creature wished her much to be near her, as if she had something to communicate; but the attendant always told her, in a harsh manner, that it was improper for her to speak, and found always some excuse to send her

from the bedside; that the lady appeared to be in great awe of her; and that the first boy, the one that was alive, Helen kept at the hearth until the other came; that she heard it cry once, and inquired what it was, when the assistant said it was also a boy, but dead, and she threw it from her upon the bed; that, after a time, she took a vial from her pocket, and poured it into a cup, requesting the lady to drink it, as it was a composing draught, but she put it away from her; and that the poor murdered creature was persuaded by Helen to accept it at her hands.

The minister having drawn up a circumstantial detail of all the circumstances as narrated, bade the sorrowing couple adieu, and departed, to send one of his maids to assist Helen, and to stay with her through the day. He vowed to make the horrid transaction as public as possible, in hopes of discovering the two wretches and their employer, and promised to call in the evening, and direct what was further to be done. He rode direct to Mid-Calder; and, on inquiry at the hostlerie, if any such travellers had been there the day before, found that they had passed through the town, only stopping to bait their horses, and no particular attention had been paid to them by the landlord of the house. Here his inquiries necessarily terminated. In the meantime, Helen and her assistant had been employed laying out the corpse of the murdered woman, and tending the orphan boy. Tied by a silken cord, a curious gold ring of massive workmanship was suspended from her neck, and lay resting upon her bosom.

"A true-love-gift," ejaculated Helen, "an exchange o' plighted faiths. Dearly had you loved the giver, for, even in sore distress and death, it lay upon thy bosom. Cruelly has your love been requited; but rest in peace—your sorrows are past. I will keep this for your babe, and, as soon as he can speak, I will tell him where I found it. I fear it will be a' I will ever be able to inform him of either father or mother." She then placed the ring in her own bosom, until she could shew it to her husband; renewed her offices to the dead; took the babe in her lap, and, weeping over it, resolved, as she thought of its desolate state, without a relation in the world, that, so long as she had life, she would be a parent to it—for death had been a spoiler in her own family of three sons, all of whom it had been her misfortune to bury.

The minister arrived again in the evening. They shewed him the ring, and told where it had been found. He examined it closely; but there were neither armorial bearings nor cypher upon it, to lead even to a guess of the person to whom it had belonged—yet the make and chasing were peculiar, and might lead a person who had once examined it to remember it. The mother was interred; the babe, baptized by the name of William, put out to nurse; and the usual routine of the cottage once more restored. The boy grew up under the roof of his kind protectors. To his education the minister paid particular attention, and was proud of his pupil—for William Wallace, as he was called, did honour to the labour bestowed upon him. He was quick to learn, yet his mind was not given to literary pursuits—for he delighted in feats of strife, and dwelt with rapture on the feats of the warrior. Sir William Wallace was the hero of his youthful imagination—and he longed to be of man's stature, only that he might be a soldier. Thus years rolled on: William was now eighteen years of age; the labour of the farm, in which he engaged, was irksome to him; yet he restrained his inclinations, and toiled on for his benefactors, who had both become so frail that they required his aid. By the time he arrived at his twentieth year, his foster parents died within a few months of each other, and left him possessor of their little wealth. When spring returned, he made known to his benefactor, the minister, his resolution of leaving the moor and going into the busy world. The stock was turned into cash, and

William, bidding a long adieu to the scenes of his youth, set off for the capital, accompanied by the prayers of the good man for his success. Since the death of his protectors he had worn his mother's ring, and he had a vague hope that it might, by some way or other, lead to a discovery of his parents, and enable him to avenge her murder. All the mild lessons of his teacher upon this point had been vain. His mind dwelt with a gloomy satisfaction upon a just retribution. At times his feelings rose to agony—the idea that the guilty individual might be his own parent, often flashed across his mind and made him love his ignorance; but, nature prevailing, his wonted desire recurred again, and, musing thus, he rode on towards Edinburgh, now with the reins resting upon his horse's neck; and then, when urged by his troubled mind, urging forward his steed. He stopped at the borders of the moor, and turned towards the scenes so dear to him, where he had passed what of his life had gone by in innocence and peace. For the first time, he felt alone in the world; and a few involuntary tears fell from his eyes—a token of regret due to the memory of departed worth, and a pleasing recollection of scenes endeared to him by many tender associations. Thus in pensive meditation he rode on, undetermined as to his future mode of life. Prior to his setting out, everything had appeared to his imagination of easy execution; but now he began to encounter difficulties he had never dreamed of before; and the sight of Edinburgh, which he reached before nightfall, did not diminish them. The vastness of the city overpowered him; the stateliness of the buildings appeared to him the work of giants; and he almost shrank from entering it, through a feeling of his own littleness. In his approach, his eyes had been constantly fixed upon the buildings of the Castle, perched high above the town, and crowning the almost circular, bold, and craggy rocks on which it stands. Along the line of houses to the East, that stretched farther than his eye could trace, the setting sun threw his departing rays, and innumerable windows glanced like burnished gold; while the diadem-shaped spire of St Giles', towering above all, in the centre, seemed to proclaim her the queen of cities. With all the impatience of youth, he urged on his horse, expecting to see all the inhabitants of so fair a place themselves fair. But scarce had he entered the West-Port Gate when his feelings were shocked to witness, on every side, squalid misery and wretchedness, and every token of poverty and vice. He put up for the night at one of the many inns of the Grassmarket; and, revolving in his mind what he had already seen, retired to bed.

Early next morning, he arose, dressed, and sallied forth to gratify his curiosity; but, with no one to whom he could communicate the feelings that every new object awakened, he felt solitary among the surrounding crowds. On the second day after his arrival, as he walked in the Meadows, he observed, among the crowd of well-dressed pedestrians that thronged the walks, an elderly gentleman, who eyed him with marked attention. William's curiosity was excited, and he threw himself again in his way. The old gentleman bowed.

"I beg pardon," said he—"may I be so bold as to request your name?—for I feel as if you and I had not now met for the first time. Yet it cannot be; for it is now above twenty years since that time, and you do not appear to be more than that time old."

"My name is William Wallace," answered William, with a beating heart. "I never had the honour to see you until to-day."

"Wallace? Wallace?" said the old gentleman, musing. "No—my friend's name was not Wallace; we were both of Monro's regiment—his name was Seaton; but the likeness was so strong that you must excuse me for addressing you."

William's heart sank—he remained silent for a few minutes—his face was alternately flushed and pale—a new train of ideas crowded upon his mind—he wished to speak, but he could not find utterance—wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and went through the other forms of confusion and bashfulness. His new acquaintance looked upon him, much surprised at his emotion; and, with an energy bordering on violence, seized his hand.

"Young man," said he, "that ring was once the property of my friend: how came you by it? He valued it above all things, nor would he have parted with it but with life. At this moment, I almost think the last long twenty years of my life a dream, and that I am still a captain in Monro's regiment. You must come and dine with me, and explain how this came into your possession."

"With pleasure," replied William. "It is a sad account I have to give, and I am most impatient to learn something of its possessor. Alas! I fear I must feel too great an interest in him."

"The early friend I allude to," replied the old man, "was an honour to his country. A braver or more generous heart, no officer in the army possessed. This you will acknowledge when I have told you all. Alas! poor Seaton! shall I ever see you again?"

Thus conversing, they reached the house of Colonel Gordon, one of the principal flats of a house in the High Street. After they had dined, William gave a distinct account of his birth and the death of his mother, and a modest outline of himself. His hearer listened to him with the greatest interest, only interrupting him at the account of his mother's death by an exclamation of horror.

"Henry Seaton," he cried, "had no hand in this, I could pledge my head for him. I am strongly impressed, young man, with the idea, that my friend has been cruelly injured, and his generous heart wounded past recovery by this deed of darkness. Savage monsters! worse than demons! would to God I had you in my power!" And he walked about the room in a state of violent excitement. "William," said he again, "I have no doubt you are the son of Henry Seaton, my more than brother; and, so far as is in my power, I shall assist you in the discovery of your parents, and avenge the murder of your mother. I shall now give you my story:—I was an ensign in Monro's regiment of Scots, serving in Flanders, when your father (for I have no doubt that he was such) joined us, early in the spring of the year 1706, a short time before the battle of Ramillies. We were both of the same company, and of congenial minds; so that we soon became bosom friends, and were ever as much as possible in each other's society. In battle we fought side by side, without being jealous of each other's fame. In our first battle, that of Ramillies, the Scots had more than their share of the loss, and I had the misfortune to be shot in the leg early in the action. When I fell, your father saved me from the sword of the enemy, and bore me out of the line at the hazard of his own life; for we were, at the time, pressed by a strong division of the French. I soon recovered, and joined the ranks, when our friendship, if possible, was stronger than ever. At the battle of Oudenard, where we drove the French from their trenches, your father led on his men, over the works, with too much eagerness, and was not supported for a time, as the enemy sprung a mine and made the ditch impassable, killing and wounding a great many of the advancing column. Bravely did he and his handful of Scots stand their ground, surrounded and overwhelmed by numbers; but they were dropping fast, for they fought hand to hand, and they were so pressed by the enemy, and hemmed in, that they could not fire, for fear of killing their own men. I saw the perilous situation of my friend; with the greatest efforts, I and a few noble countrymen got clambered up to their rescue. At our arrival, there were not more than six of

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The minister having drawn up a circumstantial detail of all the circumstances as narrated, bade the sorrowing couple adieu, and departed, to send one of his maids to assist Helen, and to stay with her through the day. He vowed to make the horrid transaction as public as possible, in hopes of discovering the two wretches and their employer, and promised to call in the evening, and direct what was further to be done. He rode direct to Mid-Calder; and, on inquiry at the hostlerie, if any such travellers had been there the day before, found that they had passed through the town, only stopping to bait their horses, and no particular attention had been paid to them by the landlord of the house. Here his inquiries necessarily terminated. In the meantime, Helen and her assistant had been employed laying out the corpse of the murdered woman, and tending the orphan boy. Tied by a silken cord, a curious gold ring of massive workmanship was suspended from her neck, and lay resting upon her bosom.

"A true-love-gift," ejaculated Helen, "an exchange o' plighted faiths. Dearly had you loved the giver, for, even in sore distress and death, it lay upon thy bosom. Cruelly has your love been requited; but rest in peace—your sorrows are past. I will keep this for your babe, and, as soon as he can speak, I will tell him where I found it. I fear it will be a' I will ever be able to inform him of either father or mother." She then placed the ring in her own bosom, until she could shew it to her husband; renewed her offices to the dead; took the babe in her lap, and, weeping over it, resolved, as she thought of its desolate state, without a relation in the world, that, so long as she had life, she would be a parent to it—for death had been a spoiler in her own family of three sons, all of whom it had been her misfortune to bury.

The minister arrived again in the evening. They shewed him the ring, and told where it had been found. He examined it closely; but there were neither armorial bearings nor cypher upon it, to lead even to a guess of the person to whom it had belonged—yet the make and chasing were peculiar, and might lead a person who had once examined it to remember it. The mother was interred; the babe, baptized by the name of William, put out to nurse; and the usual routine of the cottage once more restored. The boy grew up under the roof of his kind protectors. To his education the minister paid particular attention, and was proud of his pupil—for William Wallace, as he was called, did honour to the labour bestowed upon him. He was quick to learn, yet his mind was not given to literary pursuits—for he delighted in feats of strife, and dwelt with rapture on the feats of the warrior. Sir William Wallace was the hero of his youthful imagination—and he longed to be of man's stature, only that he might be a soldier. Thus years rolled on: William was now eighteen years of age; the labour of the farm, in which he engaged, was irksome to him; yet he restrained his inclinations, and toiled on for his benefactors, who had both become so frail that they required his aid. By the time he arrived at his twentieth year, his foster parents died within a few months of each other, and left him possessor of their little wealth. When spring returned, he made known to his benefactor, the minister, his resolution of leaving the moor and going into the busy world. The stock was turned into cash, and

William, bidding a long adieu to the scenes of his youth, set off for the capital, accompanied by the prayers of the good man for his success. Since the death of his protectors he had worn his mother's ring, and he had a vague hope that it might, by some way or other, lead to a discovery of his parents, and enable him to avenge her murder. All the mild lessons of his teacher upon this point had been vain. His mind dwelt with a gloomy satisfaction upon a just retribution. At times his feelings rose to agony—the idea that the guilty individual might be his own parent, often flashed across his mind and made him love his ignorance; but, nature prevailing, his wonted desire recurred again, and, musing thus, he rode on towards Edinburgh, now with the reins resting upon his horse's neck; and then, when urged by his troubled mind, urging forward his steed. He stopped at the borders of the moor, and turned towards the scenes so dear to him, where he had passed what of his life had gone by in innocence and peace. For the first time, he felt alone in the world; and a few involuntary tears fell from his eyes—a token of regret due to the memory of departed worth, and a pleasing recollection of scenes endeared to him by many tender associations. Thus in pensive meditation he rode on, undetermined as to his future mode of life. Prior to his setting out, everything had appeared to his imagination of easy execution; but now he began to encounter difficulties he had never dreamed of before; and the sight of Edinburgh, which he reached before nightfall, did not diminish them. The vastness of the city overpowered him; and the stateliness of the buildings appeared to him the work of giants; and he almost shrank from entering it, through a feeling of his own littleness. In his approach, his eyes had been constantly fixed upon the buildings of the Castle, perched high above the town, and crowning the almost circular, bold, and craggy rocks on which it stands. Along the line of houses to the East, that stretched farther than his eye could trace, the setting sun threw his departing rays, and innumerable windows glanced like burnished gold; while the diadem-shaped spire of St Giles', towering above all, in the centre, seemed to proclaim her the queen of cities. With all the impatience of youth, he urged on his horse, expecting to see all the inhabitants of so fair a place themselves fair. But scarce had he entered the West-Port Gate when his feelings were shocked to witness, on every side, squalid misery and wretchedness, and every token of poverty and vice. He put up for the night at one of the many inns of the Grassmarket; and, revolving in his mind what he had already seen, retired to bed.

Early next morning, he arose, dressed, and sallied forth to gratify his curiosity; but, with no one to whom he could communicate the feelings that every new object awakened, he felt solitary among the surrounding crowds. On the second day after his arrival, as he walked in the Meadows, he observed, among the crowd of well-dressed pedestrians that thronged the walks, an elderly gentleman, who eyed him with marked attention. William's curiosity was excited, and he threw himself again in his way. The old gentleman bowed.

"I beg pardon," said he—"may I be so bold as to request your name?—for I feel as if you and I had not now met for the first time. Yet it cannot be; for it is now above twenty years since that time, and you do not appear to be more than that time old."

"My name is William Wallace," answered William, with a beating heart. "I never had the honour to see you until to-day."

"Wallace? Wallace?" said the old gentleman, musing. "No—my friend's name was not Wallace; we were both of Monro's regiment—his name was Seaton; but the likeness was so strong that you must excuse me for addressing you."

William's heart sank—he remained silent for a few minutes—his face was alternately flushed and pale—a new train of ideas crowded upon his mind—he wished to speak, but he could not find utterance—wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and went through the other forms of confusion and bashfulness. His new acquaintance looked upon him, much surprised at his emotion; and, with an energy bordering on violence, seized his hand.

"Young man," said he, "that ring was once the property of my friend: how came you by it? He valued it above all things, nor would he have parted with it but with life. At this moment, I almost think the last long twenty years of my life a dream, and that I am still a captain in Monro's regiment. You must come and dine with me, and explain how this came into your possession."

"With pleasure," replied William. "It is a sad account I have to give, and I am most impatient to learn something of its possessor. Alas! I fear I must feel too great an interest in him."

"The early friend I allude to," replied the old man, "was an honour to his country. A braver or more generous heart, no officer in the army possessed. This you will acknowledge when I have told you all. Alas! poor Seaton! shall I ever see you again?"

Thus conversing, they reached the house of Colonel Gordon, one of the principal flats of a house in the High Street. After they had dined, William gave a distinct account of his birth and the death of his mother, and a modest outline of himself. His hearer listened to him with the greatest interest, only interrupting him at the account of his mother's death by an exclamation of horror.

"Henry Seaton," he cried, "had no hand in this, I could pledge my head for him. I am strongly impressed, young man, with the idea, that my friend has been cruelly injured, and his generous heart wounded past recovery by this deed of darkness. Savage monsters! worse than demons! would to God I had you in my power!" And he walked about the room in a state of violent excitement. "William," said he again, "I have no doubt you are the son of Henry Seaton, my more than brother; and, so far as is in my power, I shall assist you in the discovery of your parents, and avenge the murder of your mother. I shall now give you my story:—I was an ensign in Monro's regiment of Scots, serving in Flanders, when your father (for I have no doubt that he was such) joined us, early in the spring of the year 1706, a short time before the battle of Ramilies. We were both of the same company, and of congenial minds; so that we soon became bosom friends, and were ever as much as possible in each other's society. In battle we fought side by side, without being jealous of each other's fame. In our first battle, that of Ramilies, the Scots had more than their share of the loss, and I had the misfortune to be shot in the leg early in the action. When I fell, your father saved me from the sword of the enemy, and bore me out of the line at the hazard of his own life; for we were, at the time, pressed by a strong division of the French. I soon recovered, and joined the ranks, when our friendship, if possible, was stronger than ever. At the battle of Oudenard, where we drove the French from their trenches, your father led on his men, over the works, with too much eagerness, and was not supported for a time, as the enemy sprung a mine and made the ditch impassable, killing and wounding a great many of the advancing column. Bravely did he and his handful of Scots stand their ground, surrounded and overwhelmed by numbers; but they were dropping fast, for they fought hand to hand, and they were so pressed by the enemy, and hemmed in, that they could not fire, for fear of killing their own men. I saw the perilous situation of my friend; with the greatest efforts, I and a few noble countrymen got clambered up to their rescue. At our arrival, there were not more than six of

them upon their feet—all were covered with wounds and spent with fatigue. Your father still raged like a lion in the toils—all swords were aimed at him—he seemed invulnerable. I had reached his side, when a severe wound laid him insensible at my feet; but I stood over him, and, backed by my brave followers, we fought till the French gave way before the numbers of our troops that had forced the works and poured in on every side. I raised him up—the blood streamed from his side—he appeared to be dead—his eyes were closed—I placed my hand upon his breast—all appeared still—then mournfully I supported his head on my knee, and saw his eyelids move, and then a faint heaving of the breast. I snatched the canteen of a dead soldier that lay by my side; there was some wine in it; I applied it to his lips—he opened his eyes.”

“‘Edward,’ said he, ‘I thank you. I fear my career of glory is run. I hope we have beat the enemy. I die content. Farewell!’ And he sank again into insensibility.

“All this had passed in the course of a couple of minutes. The enemy had made a fresh stand, and were forcing our troops back upon the intrenchments. I gently laid him down, and, rallying the men who were retreating, again forced them back. The enemy began to give way in all directions, and we followed up our advantage until the order for ceasing the pursuit was given. For a time I had forgot everything, in the impetuosity of battle; but, after rallying my company, and marching back to our camp, I took a file of men, and proceeded to the spot where I had left my friend. I looked for some time in vain. So active had been the work of the pillagers that followed the camp, that the dead and the dying had been stripped; and by the countenance alone could one discover a friend from a foe. I examined every face amidst a heap of dead bodies, and discovered my friend. Life was not yet extinct. I had him removed to my tent, and went for a surgeon, who examined and dressed his wound, but gave me no hopes of his recovery. He was carefully removed into Oudenard, where our hospitals were established, and for some days his life was despaired of; but youth and a good constitution prevailed, and he again bade fair for life and happiness. As soon as he was enabled to converse, I was at my usual place by his bedside, when, after thanking me for his preservation, he expressed the deepest sorrow for the loss of his ring, which had been torn from his finger by the pillagers.

“I had, until now, scarcely paid any attention to this bauble; but remembered, when he spoke of it, of having seen at all times a ring upon his finger. I expressed my concern at his loss, but said, that it ought not to give him so much concern, at a time when a miraculously spared life called for his gratitude to God.

“‘I value it next to life itself,’ was his reply, ‘for it was the gift of my mother, and had been in our family for ages. Publish among the sutlers, my good friend, that fifty dollars will be given for the ring, upon its delivery to me; and twenty dollars to any one who will give information that will lead to its recovery.’

“I promised, and left him, consoled with the hopes of again getting the jewel; yet I could not help thinking my friend too profuse in his offer. I immediately published in the camp, a reward of ten dollars for the ring, or five for any information to lead to its recovery, and next morning the ring was delivered, and the ten dollars paid to one of the fiends in human shape, that, like vultures, follow in the track of war. My fingers itched to cut the ruffian down; but I restrained myself. I paid him the promised reward with a hearty curse—the word of a soldier is sacred; and it was at this time that I examined the bauble so minutely, that I never can forget it. I never saw joy more vividly expressed than when he placed it upon his emaciated finger, and said I had given him a medicine that would quickly recover him.

“‘Shade of my sainted mother,’ he ejaculated, ‘I have still thy latest gift, and it shall be parted with only with my latest breath.’ And he kissed it fervently as he spoke.

“In the course of a few weeks, he was convalescent, and again joined the regiment. Each officer had received one step of promotion, and our duties went on in the usual routine, though we were principally occupied in foraging parties. It was the depth of winter, and provisions were scarce. Henry had the command of a strong foraging party; and, on one occasion, he came in his route to a large farmhouse, where he hoped to obtain supplies. Approaching the house, he heard cries of distress and supplication in female voices. He put his men into rapid motion, and rushed forward alone. Passing a thick fence, he saw a party of Dutch soldiers, who had anticipated him, and some of whom were at the door, guarding it; but the greater part were within the house. The cries became more piteous and piercing. He drew his sword and rushed past the sentinels at the door, who attempted to prevent him; but the view of his men coming up unnerved them. A scene of horror met his eyes: the male inmates of the house were bound, and soldiers were standing over them, ready to plunge their bayonets into their bosoms at the least movement, while others were proceeding to acts of violence towards the females. With a voice of thunder, he commanded them to desist, and, seizing the officer, hurled him from the terrified and fainting daughter of the farmer. The Dutchman, in rage, drew and made a furious lunge at him, which he parried; and his men entering at the same time, they drove the others out of the house. My friend, in French, requested the Dutchman to follow his men; but he refused, and challenged him to single combat, for the insult he said he had received at his hands—adding some opprobrious epithets, which roused the choler of the brave Englishman. In an instant, they were engaged hand to hand; but short was the strife—the Dutchman fell dead on the scene of his violence, and his men returned to the camp, and made a complaint against Monro’s regiment, which was like to have led to some serious consequences; but, after your father stating the circumstances to the colonel, the latter waited upon the Duke of Marlborough, and we heard no more of the affair.

“The last action we were in together, we both escaped unhurt; yet it was the bloodiest one we had ever been in. Of all the honours of Malplaquet, the Monroes had their full share; for, although the Duke did not like the Scots, and used at times to throw a sarcasm at their country, he always gave them a situation of danger, either from dislike or a reliance on their courage. About twelve months after Malplaquet, your father left the service and retired into France. Peace was now evidently at hand, and an armistice had been agreed upon and signed by several of the allies of the English; and our gallant leader was now in disgrace. Much as Henry Seaton and I esteemed each other in all other points, we had no fellowship in politics. I was and am a Whig; he, a Tory of the first water—a devoted adherent of the exiled family; yet, high as parties ran at this time in cities, we had no differences in the camp, where each respected his neighbour’s opinion, nor overvalued his own. The last letter I received from him was about twelve months after we parted. It was dated St Germain’s. He said, and in a mysterious sort of way, half-earnest, half-jest, that, in a short time, we might meet, to try the force of our different opinions. I, at the time, only laughed at it, and returned, for answer, that I had no doubt we would both do our best, and leave the issue to the Disposer of events. Soon after, Mar’s ill-concerted rebellion took place, in which I have no doubt your father was an active agent; but I have, since this last letter, lost all trace of him. Your being born in the year ’16 would lead me to suppose that he must have

married your mother about the time of the Rebellion, either in Scotland or France."

That Henry Seaton was his father, William earnestly prayed; but how was he to ascertain this fact? He knew not; neither could his kind host assist him. The lapse of time was so great, that, in all probability, he was dead; and, with a mind worse at ease than it had ever been, he took leave of the Colonel, promising to call again in the forenoon of the following day, to consult what steps he should take to follow out the information he had so unexpectedly acquired. He reached the inn, and retired to rest; but sleep had fled his pillow. A thousand ideas crowded his mind; method after method was canvassed, each for a time offering assured success, but, upon more mature consideration, being rejected. Day dawned, and found him as unresolved as when he left Colonel Gordon. As soon as it was consistent with propriety, he waited upon the Colonel, by whom he was greeted heartily.

"Well, tell me," said he, "the fruit of your invention for tracing out your father, and I will tell you what has occurred to me as the best mode of procedure?"

William, without hesitation, told the state of his mind, and his utter inability to think of any feasible plan, from his ignorance of the world and its ways.

"Poor fellow! I do not wonder at what you tell me," replied the Colonel. "Before many years go over your head, you and the world will be better acquainted. My own opinion is, that you must forthwith proceed to France, where you will find many of the adherents of the Stuarts. The young Charles Edward is easy of access to Scotchmen, for he is anxious to make adherents; and I have no doubt that he, or others of his followers, will be able to give you every information about Henry Seaton. But you must beware how you acquit yourself, lest they cajole you into their party; for, if your father be alive and acknowledge you, the trial will be greater than you are aware, to resist him."

"I will at once follow your wise counsel," replied William. "I trust—nay, my heart tells me I shall be successful. Of my ever being an adherent of the Stuart family, I have no fears. Before that can happen, I must first forget all I have ever learned, from my first dawn of reason, up to this present moment. The first tears of sorrow I ever shed were for the woes of others, drawn forth by the tale of the sufferings of my foster parent's father, who suffered for the cause of truth, near the very spot where I now lodge. The worthy minister to whom I am indebted for all the learning I possess, had also some share in my politics. Nay, do not smile, when I say he had political opinions. He spiritualized everything. Nebuchadnezzar was a type of the Stuart family. The Babylonish king, driven out from men, was only an emblem of their expulsion, during the time of the Commonwealth, and his being restored was only the fortune of Charles II.; but, as he continued in idolatry after his restoration, so did Charles, after his subscribing the Covenant at Scone; and, as Nebuchadnezzar's family were destroyed, so are the Stuarts cut off from the throne for ever. To the whole of this, I do not subscribe; but my aversion to the family of the Stuarts, I can never overcome."

"My young friend," replied the Colonel, "I am not one to quarrel with any one for his opinion; but I rejoice to find we are of one mind. I will accompany you to Leith, and we will make inquiries if there is any vessel there likely soon to sail for France."

They accordingly proceeded to Leith, where they found there was a brig to sail in the course of a week or two for Bourdeaux, to bring home a cargo of wine. There were also several vessels to sail in a few days, for different ports in Holland; but the Colonel advised William to agree with the captain of the vessel for Bourdeaux—which he did; and,

having never seen the sea but at a distance, nor a vessel in his life, his friend, to oblige him, lingered on the shore, and examined them with him. In this manner, the time passed. They dined in Leith, and again walked about the shore, enjoying the delightful scene. The shades of evening were beginning to approach, when they resumed their way back to the city. They had reached about half-way to the Abbey-Hill, when two men rushed from behind the fence, and, presenting pistols to their breasts, demanded their money or their lives.

"Ho, my good fellows, not so fast!" exclaimed the Colonel, and drew his sword. William did the same. One of the villains fired, and wounded the Colonel in the right shoulder. William, at the same moment, plunged his sword into his side, and he fell. The other ruffian fled, pursued by William; but he escaped. He then hastened to his friend, who stood leaning against the wall, with the wounded robber beside him. William inquired if he was much injured.

"No, Seaton," he said. "I believe it is only a flesh wound, for I can wield my sword yet." And he raised it up, and pointing it at the breast of the fallen wretch, who lay groaning at his feet—"We must secure him," said the Colonel; "and, at the same time, be on our guard against his cowardly associate. If he could walk, I would know how to act with him; but I am not going to carry the base carion. Indeed, my arm bleeds, and is getting stiff; otherwise I would dispatch him where he lies, and save the hangman his labour."

"For the love of God, do not dispatch me!" cried the man. "I will try to walk; I would not be cut off so suddenly. In mercy, spare me, even for a few hours. I am unfit to die; yet I feel life ebbing fast."

He rose to his feet, but was sinking again, when William's pity overcoming his anger, he supported him. The wretch looked in his face, uttered a scream of horror, and sank senseless in his arms. He looked to the Colonel in astonishment. The latter looked narrowly into the face of the robber, passed his hand across his forehead, and mused, as if recalling something to his memory, but spake not.

Two men now came up to them, and assisted them to carry the body to the nearest house, where a surgeon was sent for, and intimation given to the authorities, who were all in a state of the greatest alacrity—stimulated, doubtless, by the Porteous mob, which had taken place only a few months before. Until the surgeon arrived, William, by the directions of the Colonel, bound up his shoulder. What the Colonel called a scratch, appeared to him a serious wound; for the ball had passed through the muscle of his arm. They proceeded to stanch the blood which flowed from the side of their prisoner, when the surgeon arrived; who, after having examined it, at once declared it mortal, and that the man had not many hours to live. After some time, he succeeded in restoring sensibility to the sufferer. He opened his eyes—fixed them on William, who was assisting the surgeon in his efforts—a fearful change came over him—he groaned, and, clasping his hands, shrieked, and closed them again. A sudden recollection had come over the Colonel.

"I cannot be mistaken," said he: "I have seen him before; but when or where I cannot say, unless he was one of my company in Monro's regiment."

At the mention of Monro's regiment, the wretched man shuddered—his eye fell upon the ring upon William's hand, as he held up the candle by the bedside—the sweat stood in large drops upon his forehead—he would have started up, but was restrained.

"Nay, then, since I am discovered," he cried, "I will confess all to you, my injured and betrayed master. I see the Colonel recollects me; but I am surprised you do not remember your old servant, Alick Brown."

"Who was your master?" exclaimed William, in surprise.

"Captain Henry Seaton—yourself," said the man. "I cannot be mistaken. That ring—your height and countenance. You are, I am happy to see, much improved since I last saw you—time appears to have made no change."

"Know you aught of Henry Seaton?" demanded the Colonel; while William stood mute in astonishment and surprise.

"If this is not my old master whom I see," said the man, "who can he be? My mind is filled with guilt and remorse. Die I must, either of this wound, or by the law—for me there is no hope here or hereafter." And he groaned and ground his teeth in despair, while the surgeon bade him prepare for death, as he had but a few hours to live. The officers entered, and claimed him as their prisoner. The villain once more arose in his mind. "Ha!" he exclaimed, "I have bilked you yet. I have a sufficient bail in my side to rescue me out of your hands." The effort to speak now became more difficult; his voice sank into whispers; he appeared to be dying. Remorse again roused him; and, turning his head, he inquired who William was? The Colonel told him. He became more dreadfully agitated, and groaned in anguish, till the officers of justice looked upon him in horror.

"I can doubt no longer," he cried. "It is too true. There is a God that governs all! Mercy, mercy! How shall I appear before Him, covered with the blood of his creatures? Let me perform the only act now in my power—to atone for the past. Young man, you are the son of my noble and injured master. After he left the army in Flanders, I accompanied him to France, where he lived on terms of great intimacy with the royal exiles and their followers for several months; at the end of which time, he and two other gentlemen, accompanied by me, set out for Scotland on a secret mission to the disaffected, preparatory to the preconcerted rising. We remained concealed for several months, in the houses of those whom we knew to be adherents to the cause we were embarked in. At the house of Lord Somerville we remained for a long time, where my master won the affections of his daughter, and proposed for her; but his Lordship objected to their union at that time, on account of the unsettled state of affairs. With the consent of Helen, they were, however, privately married; and soon after we set out for Aboyne, and joined in the unfortunate affair. He was slightly wounded at Sheriffmuir, but escaped by my assistance, and got safe to our camp. The Prince and the Earl of Mar embarked when all hopes of success were cut off, and I was sent back to the house of his wife's father, to bring her to her husband, who had remained concealed in the Highlands, during the severity of the winter. It was arranged, through me, that, as soon as he had received remittances from France, I was to conduct her to the coast of Argyle, by Glasgow and the Clyde. It was far on in the summer before he could get all the arrangements made. His wife, who expected in a few weeks to be confined, and concealed her situation with difficulty, became most urgent. Early in the month of September, she escaped unseen from her father's house, and joined me at the appointed place, accompanied by a fiend in woman's shape, the agent whom I had employed to carry on our intercourse. She had been a follower of the camp, and, by the little service for which I paid her well, had won the confidence of the simple Helen. We rode as fast as the lady's circumstances would admit, only halting twice for a short time, in secret places. It was then that the devil first assailed me in the person of this woman. She told me what a quantity of money and jewels the lady had in her valise, and how easy it would be to get all into our possession. I shuddered at the very idea, and threatened to shoot her upon the spot. She laughed and said it was

all a jest; but it took hold of my mind during the course of our journey, and she judged by my looks, I suppose, that I was now more fit for her purpose. We conversed about it; the idea became familiar; but I shuddered at blood. She said there would be none shed. Still I could not consent—neither was I sufficiently averse. The poor lady was taken ill as we passed through the moor. You know the rest. As we stood at the cottage door, the pious discourse of the farmer tortured me past endurance. I was several times on the point of rushing into the cottage, and guarding my lady from the fiend; but my evil genius prevailed. When we entered and got the unsuspecting couple to their bed, my tempter smiled, and whispered "All is safe." I shuddered, and inquired what she meant.

"Oh, nothing," she replied. "The lady cannot recover; the woman of the house has given her a composing draught. She will never awake. The money and jewels are our own."

And cautiously she displayed before me more gold than I had ever seen. I could not think of parting with it. We carried off all that had belonged to my mistress, even her body-clothes and the body of the dead babe, resolved to shew it to my master, and impose upon him by saying that his wife had died in childbed, and that we had left her to be buried by the clergyman. Our object in this was to do away all suspicion of unfair play. Our excuse for not seeing the body interred was haste to inform him, and prevent inquiries that might lead to his discovery. On the day after we left the cabin, I found my master at the appointed place, in the utmost anxiety for the arrival of his wife. Every hour of delay was attended by the utmost danger. A government cruiser had been seen on the coast; and there were fears that the small vessel might be discovered. Oh, moment that has ever since embittered my life! The agony he endured no human tongue can describe. He was in a state of distraction. I, with a guilty officiousness, displayed her wardrobe. He turned from it in an agony. The dead body of the babe he kissed and pressed to his bosom. Low groans had as yet only escaped him; but suddenly, to my alarm, he resolved to go with me and die on her grave. I trembled and felt a faintness come over me—for I was then young in guilt. My associate, hardened and inventive, began to urge the folly of the attempt. He pushed her from him with violence, and would have set out; but at that moment word was given that the cruiser was in sight, as if bearing for the land. Two friends and some of the crew seized him, and by force hurried him on board the vessel, and set sail. I felt as if reprieved from death, and did not go on board; for I dreaded the presence of my injured master. We returned to Glasgow, where we remained for a few weeks, rioting on the fruits of our guilt. One morning when I awoke after a debauch, I found my companion fled, and all the gold and valuables gone. I arose in a state of distraction, ran to the port in quest of her; but in vain—no vessel had sailed. I proceeded to Greenock; on the way I got traces of her, and dogged her at every turn. My mind took a new direction as I followed her. I looked upon her now as a fiend that had led me to ruin, and left me, loaded with guilt, to die under the pangs of poverty and an awakened conscience. My mind was distracted. Holding up my hands to heaven, I vowed vengeance, and cursed and swore in such a manner that people on the road turned and looked at me, and thought me mad. I was mad; but it was the madness of passion that burned in my brain, and the stings of conscience that pierced my heart. I paused several times in my pursuit. I was told by one traveller that the woman I sought was not a mile from me, that she was sitting by the road-side drinking ardent spirits alone, and muttering strange words to herself. Ha! thought I, conscience is busy with her too, and she drinks to drown its dreadful

voice. "Shall I kill her?" I said to myself. My heart yearned for her blood. Why should I deny it? I felt that I required that satisfaction to enable me to live a little longer upon earth. So much was my frenzy roused, that I pictured to myself a total impossibility to live and breathe if I did not feel the satisfaction of having visited on that woman's head the evil she brought on that sweet lady who died by her hands. Then did her beautiful face beam before me in full contrast with that of the hag who had led me to ruin, to misery, to hell. Every thought inflamed me more and more, and on I flew to the relief of my burning brain. Wretch! How little did I think that, even in meditating her death, who deserved that punishment, I was only adding more and more power to my burning conscience? But all calculation of future accidents died amidst my thirst of vengeance. Breathless I hurried on. I had a dagger in my hand ready for the work of death. At a turn of a beech wood, I saw her sitting by the road-side. She was drinking spirits; and, as I approached, I heard her muttering strange words—yet she was not intoxicated. She was only under the power of the demons that ruled her. Her back was to me, and she knew not of my approach. I saw her take out the money and jewels she had stolen from me, and for which, by her advice, I had sold my soul to Satan. The sight again brought before me the horrid crime I had committed. I saw the sweet lady before me, extended in the grasp of death; and conscience, with a thousand fangs, tore at my heart. I grasped the dagger firmer and firmer as she counted the money, and wrought myself up to the pitch of a demon's fury. I advanced quietly. She burst into a loud laugh as she finished the counting of the gold. "Ha, ha, ha!" she cried—"I have"—she would have said "outwitted him," but my dagger fixed the word in her death-closed jaws. I struck her to the heart through her back, and the word "outwitted" died in her throat. She lay at my feet a corpse. I threw the body in a ditch, and took up the money and jewels for which I had sold my soul. I would have cast them away; but the devil again danced in the faces of the gold coins. I put them in my pocket. The gold again corrupted me. I drowned my conscience in drink at the next inn. I fled into England, where I have lived by rapine ever since, until the other day, when I returned to Scotland to meet the fate I so well deserve, from the hands of the son of those I had injured. Of my old-master I have never heard anything. If he is alive, he is still in France."

Life seemed only to have been prolonged until he had made the horrid disclosure; for he fell into convulsions and expired, soon after the Colonel, whose wound had become stiff and painful, had left the house. Next morning, William visited his friend, and was grieved to find that he was rather feverish. His wound was still painful. The occurrence of the proceeding evening occupied both their minds. William had no doubt of his being the lawful son of Henry Seaton by Miss Somerville; but was as much in doubt as to whether his father was alive as ever. In a few days, the Colonel was enabled to leave his bedroom, and became convalescent. He urged the propriety of William's proceeding to France in quest of his father; and, as the vessel was not yet to sail for a few days, he resolved to pay a visit to his friend, the minister, to inform him of his intentions, and relate the history of his mother's murderers. The Colonel would have accompanied him; but he could not ride. He rode along to the manse, with feelings very different from those with which he had left it. The worthy minister rejoiced to see him, and held up his pious hands at the horrid recital. He approved of William's determination of going in quest of his father, and, after paying a visit to his mother's and foster parents' graves, he once more mounted to return to Edinburgh. As he rode slowly along, musing upon the wayward fate of his parents,

unconscious of all around, he was roused by the tread of horses' feet behind him. He looked back, and saw a gentleman attended by a servant in livery approaching. He roused himself, and put his horse off the slow pace at which he had been going. The stranger and he saluted each other, and entered into conversation upon indifferent subjects. At length they became interested in each other, and found that they were both on the eve of sailing for France in the same vessel. The stranger requested to have the pleasure of knowing the name of his fellow-traveller.

"Seaton," said William, "is my name."

"Seaton, Seaton," said the other—"I am surprised I did not recognise you before. I thought we had met before; but your youth made me always doubt the truth of my surmises. Colonel Henry Seaton was an intimate acquaintance of mine—have I the pleasure of seeing his son?"

"I hope you have," replied William. "Pray, sir, when saw you him last? Was he in good health?"

"It is some time since I left France," said the other. "At that time he was in his ordinary health; but not more cheerful than usual—always grave and sad as ever."

"Thank God!" cried William; "he is, I trust, then, still alive." And he pressed the stranger's hand with a warmth that surprised him. "Where do you mean to stay," resumed William, "until the vessel sails?"

"I have no relations," replied he, "in Edinburgh. I meant to stay in an inn in the Canongate, where I have lived before; but it is all one to me—I may as well tarry in the White Hart with you."

When they arrived, William sent a cadie to give notice to Colonel Gordon that he was arrived in town; but was detained upon business with a stranger, to whom he would be happy to introduce him, as he was an acquaintance of his father's, and had seen him within the last few years. Soon after dinner, they were all seated at their wine, and deep in conversation. The stranger had been, from what he said, well acquainted with the exiled party in France, and, more particularly, with Colonel Seaton; but he knew nothing of his history, further than that he had lost a beloved wife and child at the time of his expatriation, and had, both by friends here and every other means, endeavoured in vain to get any information of where she was buried, or what had become of a faithful servant who had not embarked with him in the confusion of his flight—that on this account he was often oppressed by a lowness of spirits, and had many suspicions that all had not been as it ought to have been. This subject discussed, they would have had recourse to politics; but each seemed cautious of betraying his opinions, and the stranger, who did not seem to relish much some of the sentiments that occasionally escaped the Colonel, appeared to be a Tory. After the Colonel departed, the conversation of William and Mr Graham—for this was the gentleman's name—became more pointed, and it appeared that he was on business connected with the exiles. He had assumed that William was of his own way of thinking in politics, and was evidently much disappointed when he discovered that he was not. He became much more reserved, but not less attached to him; for William gave him a general outline of his misfortunes and early education, and they parted for the night with the best opinion of each other. Next morning both proceeded to Leith, where Graham expected to find a messenger from the north with a packet of letters for him. When they reached Leith, they found that the messenger had arrived on the previous day, and was waiting for Mr Graham, who, having several persons to visit in the neighbourhood, William and he parted, agreeing to meet in the Colonel's to supper. They met in the evening.

"I have been making some inquiries," said Mr Graham, "about Colonel Henry Seaton, on your account, and am

happy to say that he is well. I fear I shall not have the pleasure of your company to France. I have every reason to believe that he is now in Scotland, or will be very soon. Excuse me if I am not more particular. I shall, I hope, tomorrow, or at least before the vessel sails, be able to give you more particular information. I can rely, I think, upon your honour, that no harm shall come from my confidence."

Both thanked him for the interest he took, and the good news he had communicated. They parted for the night, all in the best spirits—William anticipating the joy he should feel at the sight of his parent, and the Colonel anxious to see his old friend. Afterwards Mr Graham and William occasionally met. Their evenings were spent with the Colonel, and all party discussion carefully avoided. On the evening of the fourth day after Mr Graham's last information, William had begun to fear that the vessel might sail before any certainty could be obtained; and he was in doubt whether to proceed with her or remain. Upon Mr Graham's arrival, which was later than usual, he went directly up to William—

"I have good news for you," said he. "Colonel Seaton is at present in Scotland—somewhere in Inverness-shire. He is the bearer of intelligence that will render it unnecessary for me to proceed at present to France. I am, I confess, much disappointed; but you, I perceive, are not."

"From my soul I thank you," said William. "Where shall I find my father?"

"That is more than I can tell you," answered the other—"I cannot even tell the name he has at present assumed; all I know is, that he is the bearer of intelligence from the Prince that crushes for a time our sanguine hopes. The fickle and promise-breaking Louis has again deceived us. The Prince, and the lukewarm, timid part of his adherents, the worshippers of the ascendant, refuse to act without his powerful aid. His concurrence we have, and a prospect of future aid at a more convenient season, but, bah! for a Frenchman's promise! I am off from ever taking a leading part again. I will wait the convenient season. I may be led, but shall never lead again. He does not deserve a crown that will not dare for it; nor does he deserve the hearts of a generous people that would not dare everything to free them from the yoke of a foreign tyrant. Excuse me, gentlemen—I go too far, and am giving you offence; but I assure you it is not meant. My heart is full of bitterness, and I forget what I say."

The Colonel, whose blood had begun to inflame when Graham checked himself, cooled and felt rather gratified at the intelligence thus so unexpectedly communicated. He felt for a generous mind crossed in its favourite object, however much he thought that mind misled, from education and early prejudice, and assured him he had already forgot his expressions. A different turn was given to the conversation, by William's continued inquiries after his father. Graham meant to set off for the north in a few days, for a secret meeting of the heads of the disaffected, at which Colonel Seaton was to communicate the message he had to them from France. He offered to be William's guide. The Colonel, whose shoulder was now quite well, requested to accompany them; and on the Monday morning after, they crossed at Kinghorn and proceeded by the most direct route, passing through Perthshire to the Highlands. They arrived at Glengarry, and found that Colonel Seaton was at the time on a visit, with the chief, to Glenelg, but would be back on the following day. There were a number of visitors at the castle, with all whom Graham was on the most intimate terms. Gordon and William were introduced, and the latter was most cordially received, from the strong resemblance he bore to his father. They got a guide to conduct them to see the beautiful scenery around the house, and they were amusing themselves admiring the grandeur of the mountain scenes, when the guide said, pointing to a bend in the road—

"Gentlemen, there is Glengarry."

They looked towards the spot, and could perceive two persons on horseback, approaching in earnest conversation. William's heart beat quick—the reins almost dropped from his hand—he felt giddy, and his temples throbbed as if they would have burst. They approached—they bowed to each other—William's eyes were fixed upon the countenance of his father, who returned his gaze, but neither spoke a word. The Colonel said, in answer to the polite salutation, that he and his young friend had had the honour to accompany Mr Graham on a visit.

"Has Graham come back so soon?" he said, with surprise. "I feared as much; but, gentlemen, you are kindly welcome." And he shook hands with them.

"Macdonald, what is this?" he said, turning to Seaton, who was absorbed in thought. "Here is a youthful counterpart of yourself!"

"My father!" exclaimed William, as he leaped from his horse, and clasped his leg, leaning his face upon it, and bedewing it with his tears.

"Young man," said Seaton, coldly, "you are mistaken; I have no son." William lifted his hands in an imploring manner, and the ring met his father's eye. "Good heavens! what do I see!" he exclaimed, and sank forward, overpowered by his feelings, upon his horse's neck. The chief and the Colonel raised him up—the tears were streaming from his eyes. "A thousand painful remembrances," said he, "have quite unmanned me. Young man, you just now called me father—where, for mercy's sake tell me, did you get that ring?"

"It was found on the bosom of my dead mother," faltered William.

"Then you are my son!"

And the next moment they were locked in each other's embrace. The chief and Gordon were moved. They passed their hands hastily across their eyes.

"Dear father," said William, "have you forgot your old friend and associate in arms—my best of friends?"

Seaton for the first time looked to him, and, extending his disengaged hand, grasped the Colonel's; saying—

"Excuse me, Gordon—I am now too happy. I have found a son and a brother."

They walked to the castle, and William detailed to his father his mournful story. Often had he to stop, to allow his father to give vent to his anguish.

"Ah, I often feared," said he, "that my Helen had been hardly dealt with; but this I never did suspect. Cursed villain! and, oh! my poor murdered Helen!"

They returned to the castle. It was agreed that Seaton should still retain the name of Macdonald, until the Colonel should obtain, through the influence of his friends, a pardon for him. He also had lost all hopes of success for the Prince, and wished to enjoy the company of his son, visit the grave of his beloved wife, and, at death, be buried by her side. All was obtained; and Henry Seaton lived for many years, blessed in the society of his son, who studied the law, at the suggestion of the Colonel, and became distinguished in his profession.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MISER OF NEWABBEY.

In the pretty little village of Newabbey, in the south of Scotland, there lived one of those individuals which society sometimes casts up, as the sea does its secret monsters, formed apparently for no other purpose than to shew how curiously operose nature can be in her productions, though mankind, ever in search for final causes, may attempt to wrest out of their eccentricities some moral to suit their self-love, and, by producing a contrast, elevate themselves in the scale of moral or physical beings. That strange person, Cuthbert Grandison—or, as he was generally termed, Cubby Grindstane, by the corruptive ingenuity of his neighbours—occupied a small mud cottage near the centre of the village we have mentioned. He was considerably advanced in age, and, having come to Newabbey at a late period of his life, the people in that part of the country knew little of his history—a circumstance they regretted in proportion to the interest excited by the strange habits of the individual. He was in person a little man; extremely spare; with a sharp, keen, hungry look; a grey hawk's eye, which, like the cat's, seemed to enjoy the best vision collaterally, for the pupil was almost always at the junction of the eyelids. On his back there was a large hump, which, having the only rotundity which his spare body presented, gave him the appearance of a skeleton carrying a lump of beef; and, as his mode of walking was quick and hurried, a quaint fancy could not resist the additional suggestion, that he was running home with it in order to satisfy the hunger that shone through his fleshless form. The extraordinary appearance of such a wild and grotesque-looking individual, in so small a village, could not fail to produce the usual speculation among the high-mitched gossips, who, having in vain made inquiries and exerted their wits as to his origin, directed their attention to his habits, and especially to the mode in which he earned his livelihood—for no one could say he was ever seen to beg. But they were not much more successful in these secondary inquiries and investigations; because, (although it was certain that he had a signboard, exhibiting the characters, "Cuthbert Grandison, Cobbler"—an unusual and somewhat affected and gratuitous depreciation of the votary of St Crispin—and sometimes sat at his small window, perforating soles with his awl, and filling up the holes with "tackets,") no one in the village employed him, and he never condescended to ask any one for work. If his operations thus afforded no proper clue to his means of life, his conversation was, if possible, still more sterile; for, in place of associating with the other "snabs" of the village, or joining the quidnuncs who assembled in Widow Cruikshanks, to drink beer and "twine political arguments"—a much harder labour than their day's work, though they thought it a recreation—he locked himself, and another individual, now to be mentioned, into the house at an early hour of the evening, and refused to open it again to however urgent a visiter.

The other individual who lived in Cuthbert's house, was no other than a daughter, about eighteen years of age, called Jean, as unlike her grotesque and mysterious parent as any of God's creatures could be; though every effort was

exerted, on his part, to make her as silent and incommunicative as himself. She appeared to have received no education; her dress was of the most wretched kind; and it was even alleged by the neighbours, whose espionage extended even to the calculation of the quantity of meal and milk purchased for the support of the father and the daughter, that she did not get sufficient food. These circumstances regarding the girl were the more readily remarked, that, as all admitted, Jean, or, as she was familiarly called, Jeanie Grandison, would, if she had been treated like other individuals of her age, have excelled the greater number of young women of the village, not only in personal appearance, but in the qualities of her mind and heart. She apparently stood in great awe of her strange parent, and uniformly rejected all solicitations, on the part of the villagers, to join them in their sports, or partake of their little entertainments. The story of the mysterious treatment to which she was subjected, excited the sympathies of the neighbours; and her own amiable manners and meek deportment, exhibiting the indications of a crushed spirit, riveted the regard which had been first elicited by her apparent misfortunes.

The studied seclusion which Grindstane observed, and seemed determined to vindicate against all attempts on the part of the neighbours to "draw him out," rendered it difficult to obtain any insight into the domestic economy of his strange domicile; and accident, at last, brought about what might otherwise not have been easily accomplished. It was observed that, for a considerable time, his daughter had been ailing. She made no complaints to any one; but the quick eye of sympathy soon discovered what was apparently attempted to be concealed. The wife of John Monilaws, a grocer and meal-dealer, from whom Jeanie bought the small portion of provisions her father required, observed and noticed the change that had taken place upon her, and urged her to reveal her complaint, and apply to the surgeon of the village for relief. She smiled sorrowfully at the exhibition of a sympathy to which she was so much a stranger, and which she was not permitted to avail herself of; thanked Mrs Monilaws for her kind intentions; and assured her she was not much out of her usual condition of health. Two days afterwards, the good dame was astonished by the grotesque appearance of the mysterious Cubby himself, standing by the side of her counter. It was seldom he was to be seen, far less spoken to; and, as she looked on the man whom report had invested with attributes of an unusual kind, a shiver came over her, which the presence of her husband, who, having seen Cubby enter the shop, followed him from mere curiosity, was required to counteract.

"I want to buy some bread," said he, slowly.

"What kind?" said Mrs Monilaws.

"A kind I hae aften asked Jeanie to get," replied he; "but my een are never blessed wi' the sight o't."

"Ye may hae't, if we hae't, Cuthbert Grindstane," said John.

"Hae ye ony auld weathered bread," said he, "that has seen the sun for a week, and fules winna buy frae ye?"

"Ay hae we," replied the mistress—"owre muckle o' that. There's some our John is to boil up for the pigs. It's moulded as green as turf-sod. But ychae nae pigs, Cuthbert?"

"Pigs anew—pigs anew," replied he. "What's the price o' that?"

"It's scarce worth anything," replied the honest woman.

"It's seldom I sell whinstanes covered wi' green moss. Ye may hae't a'thegither for a penny."

"That's owre muckle, guid woman," said Cubby. "A bawbee, eke a farthin, is the hail value o't. I'll gie nae mair."

"I dinna deal in farthings," replied she.

"Dinna deal in farthings!" ejaculated Cubby with surprise. "Is a farthin no the fourth part o' yer ain price o' a' that bread, sufficient to keep a moderate man for a week?"

"He would be a very moderate man that wad eat it," said John. "I was even dootin if I wad hurt the stomach o' my pigs wi't, though boiled in whey."

"Whey!" ejaculated Cubby again—"do ye gie yer pigs whey? They maun hae a routhy sty. Will ye hae my bode?"

"Ye may tak it for naething," said the mistress. "Hoo is Jeanie?—she was complainin last time I saw her."

"Complainin!" said he, as he with the greatest avidity seized the bread, and stuffed it into his pockets. "Did the lassie complain? What did she complain o'? No surely that she didna get her meat." And he looked fearfully and inquiringly into the face of Mrs Monilaws.

"She looked in an ailing way," said the mistress; "an' I thought she was ill."

"She's owre fat—an ill complaint," replied he, apparently wishing to get away.

"I dinna see that," said Mrs Monilaws.

"But I baith see't an' feel't," replied he with a grin.

"Guid nicht."

"I pity the puir lassie," said Mrs Monilaws, after Cubby went away, "wha's doomed to live wi' that man. That's a puir supper for the stomach o' an unweel cratur; an' I've a' my doots if she's no at this moment confined to her strae bed. Is there nae way o' gettin her out o' his hands? The Laird o' Cubbertscroft wants a servant, an' I promised to get ane to him. Jeanie wad answer better than ony other lass in a' Newabbey, but I canna see her to speak to her; for, though she comes here, naebody can gae to her."

"There seemed to be something strange," replied John, "in Cubby's manner, when ye asked him about Jeanie. If he gaes lang his ain errands, an' she doesna mak her appearance, I'll conclude, frac what I hae seen an' heard, that there's something wrang. That man has the heart to starve ane o' God's creatures—ay, his ain dochter—to death. What mortal could live on that meat he has taen hame wi' him this nicht? Keep an ee on them, Marion; an', if Jeanie doesna sune shew hersel, I'll mak sma' scruple in visitin the lion's den."

Some days afterwards, Cubby again made his appearance at the counter of John Monilaws; and there being no more old bread for him, he struck a long contested bargain about some "fuisted" meal, that had been long in the shop, and for which he offered far beneath its real value; but Mrs Monilaws, thinking him poor and miserable, accepted his offer, though she had scarcely done so when she repented of her generosity, for she immediately concluded that her kindness was a species of cruelty, in so far as she was accessory to sending, in all likelihood to an invalid, food that was not suited even to a robust beggar. As he greedily grasped, and carried away like a thief, the article he had purchased, she asked again for his daughter; but she got less satisfaction on this occasion, than even on the last, for his only answer was—"What's the use o' speerin for weel folk?" The suspicions of Mrs Monilaws were roused, rather than allayed, by this answer, and the manner in which it was delivered, and she lost no time in telling her husband, that he might get some of the neighbours to ac-

company him, and go and inquire for the young girl, who, if ill, ought to be taken from the house; or, if well, might be feed—whether old Grindstane was agreeable or not—for the service at Cubbertscroft.

At the moment that Mrs Monilaws and her husband were engaged talking about this strange individual and his daughter, Carey Cuthbert—the third son of William Cuthbert of Cuthbert's, or, as it was called, Cubbertscroft, a fine property in the neighbourhood—entered the shop, with a message from Mrs Cuthbert, for articles for the use of the family, and a request to know if any suitable servant had yet been procured by Mrs Monilaws. This young man, who was about eighteen years of age, was reputed by his parents as unfit for sustaining, even so far as a third son might sustain, the honour and respectability of the Cuthberts of Cubbertscroft. He was represented as being so dull that he would learn nothing; and, at the same time, so fond of associating with inferior people, that he could scarcely have been recognised, either from his conversation or manners, as the son of a gentleman. His bluntness, kindness, and humility, however, pleased all those with whom his father did not wish him to associate. With many of the humble inhabitants of Newabbey he was on the most familiar footing; and nothing pleased him better than to get into the village, where, on every side, he could find companions of the grade that suited his (as his father termed it) depraved taste. In these humbler societies, however, Carey learned what perhaps he would not have done from the Greek and Latin books which, at school, were eternally in his hands, and never in his head. Like most other individuals, whether fools or wits, he had a genius of his own; and, as the worms on which the mole feeds are larger and fatter than the flying insects that form the food of the swallow, humility, and a taste for the common sense that, like water, is best and purest the farther down you go, may be vindicated on the grand principle of utility and interest. We do not give a young man of eighteen credit for an *a priori* knowledge that his interests lay in searching among the humble for that "lear" that could not be got among the sons of the great; but we may safely assert, that nature had placed in him an instinctive liking for the simple and the natural, and he might soon perceive, without any spirit of divination, that, by following nature as his guide, he might arrive at a more satisfactory termination of his journey, than his horse-racing brothers, William and George, who were fast flying through their father's estate. He had nearly already, however, been given up as untractable; his speech, as his mother said, had been Scotch from the first lisp; his ideas had been of the earth, from the first moment he crawled upon it; and the servants his companions, from the time he was able to escape, by the aid of his own feet, from the nursery.

As soon as Carey had delivered his message, he conceived he had thrown off the servitude imposed upon him by his mother, who considered him of no other use than to carry a verbal communication to the village. Entertaining a very different opinion of Carey's powers, John Monilaws told him of the strange conduct of Cubby Grindstane, (whom he also well knew, as indeed every person in the neighbourhood,) in endeavouring to conceal the illness of his daughter, who was the individual to be recommended to his mother as a servant. Carey confessed he thought the conduct of Cubby very suspicious, and, with a knowing look, hinted that it had been long his intention to endeavour to ascertain something more of the old cobbler than the people of Newabbey yet knew.

"It is just you callants," said John, "wha are best at thae things. When I was like ye, there wasna a house tap in a' Newabbey I didna ken as weel as the sparrows that biggit their nests in them. There are queerer sights seen i' the world, by lookin down than by lookin up, for a' that

astronomers may say on the subject. It was I that discovered Marion Muschet killin her new-born bairn wi' a pack-thread. I saw her through her ain skylight; an', though I had nae power to speak, I had plenty o' pith i' my legs; but, fule that I was, I forgot that, lang afore I could get assistance, the pack-thread wad hae dunc its wark. Sae it was—the face o' the bairn was as blue as my bannet, when, by my means, it was discovered."

"An' muckle ye got for yer sky-larkin," said Mrs Monilaws. "Ye hanged the puir woman, an' got the name o' Skylight Johnnie, whilk ye hae carried about wi' ye ever since, and will do till the day ye dee."

"Ay, Marion," answered the good-natured husband, "I hae taen nane o' thae flights sin' I married ye. Ye keep me weel down. I suffered weel i' my young days for lookin down; but I fear I wad suffer mair noo for lookin up. But the deil's no buried i' Kirkaldy, if I wadna hae a blink through Cubby Grindstane's skylight, were my legs as soople as Mr Carey Cuthbert's there, an' I had nae wife on my back."

Carey looked and smiled, and said nothing; but his mind was not so inactive as his tongue.

"Ye wad be nearer yer purpose, John," said Marion, "if ye wad tak wi' ye oor neebor, John Willison, a godly elder o' the kirk, an' gae bauldly in at the door. John will tak wi' him prayers, an' ye some o' my jellies. I never kenned ony guid come by a skylight—except, maybe, Widow Gairdner's; wha was sittin ae nicht, thinkin whar she wad get her supper; an', as she thought, an' thought, an' was nae better or fu'er for thinkin, a man fell frae the roof at her feet, an', throwin frae him sixteen gowd guineas wi' pure fear, flew out at the door as if Beelzebub an' a' his angels had been after him. Widow Gairdner got her supper that nicht. Naebody ever asked for the guineas; but it was weel kenned frae whase hoose they were stown."

"Ah, Marion, Marion," said John, laughing; "an' sae ye forget yer ain mither's skylight, through whilk I used to gae to court ye."

"An' I do nae sic things, John," replied Mrs Monilaws, jocularly; "ye never brocht sixteen gowd guineas wi' ye when ye cam doon through my mither's skylight, to court her dochter."

This conversation was not lost upon Carey Cuthbert, although he said nothing. He laughed heartily at the dry humour of the honest, happy couple, and went to visit his other friends in the village. In the afternoon, he was seen studying like a painter the form and appearance of old Grindstane's house, and did not leave the village till the evening. As soon as it was sufficiently dark, he repaired again to the old black domicile; and having during daylight taken his eye-draughts, he tried if he could observe what was going on in the inside of the house from the small window in the side-wall, or from a small round hole in the gable. Both apertures were, however, completely closed, the greatest care having apparently been taken, not only to shut the crazy shutters, but to stuff up the holes with pieces of rags, and to cover up all with a cloth hung from the inside so as to cover all the interior part of the windows. Carey saw, however, enough to satisfy him that the inmates had not retired to rest; for there was light in the cottage, and he thought he observed that it moved as if some one were carrying a lamp from one part of the interior to another. He heard no sounds; for the individual who moved the light walked softly, as if he wished to avoid making any disturbance.

"We hae nae hope upon earth," said Carey to himself, quaintly; "I maun tak for ance my mither's counsel, an' soar—though, I fear, crawlin on thatched roofs is no the kind o' ambition she wants me to flee at."

With these words, and a smile on his face, Carey went along, and, by the aid of a tree, mounted to the top of the

house adjacent to Cubby's. Resisting a strong temptation to peep into the interior of this house, which presented a very clear, open, and convenient skylight, through which many secrets might have been discovered, he slipped softly along, and laid himself on the thatch of Cubby's house, with his feet in the spout, and his head on the small aperture, covered with one pane of yelked glass, through which, if any light had been in the interior, he could very easily have seen all that went on in the inside of the cottage. All, however, was dark as pitch—a circumstance which appeared to him somewhat strange, as he was certain he had seen light in the house before he mounted; but to be accounted for sufficiently easily, by supposing that the light had been extinguished during the time he had been occupied in getting up. He had no hopes now of seeing anything that night; but, as he was there at any rate, (so he argued,) he might as well rest himself a little, after the fatigues of a day spent running about in various directions, and he might perhaps hear something, if he could see nothing; a mode of acquiring knowledge he had less objection to than to the ocular exercises on printed paper, so much recommended by his parents and Dominic Blackletter—a creature he hated.

Having lain quietly for some time, he heard, very distinctly, hollow moans, coming from the lower part of the house. They were of the most unearthly kind he had ever heard, suggesting, as they struck the pained ear, the idea of some one suffering the last pangs of mortal agony. These were mixed, or alternated, with occasional harsh objurgatory notes, coming from another person, apparently a man, and supposed, by Carey, to be Cubby Grandison himself. These were followed by a scream, which appeared to be stifled towards its conclusion, as if some one had applied a cloth or other obstruction to the mouth of the individual giving vent to the unbearable agony. The scream marked the individual as a female, and Carey set her down as the unfortunate daughter of whom he had heard John Monilaws and his wife talking in the fore part of the day. These sounds continued for a considerable time. The groans, the objurgations, the scream stifled as before, succeeded each other; and then, for a time, a deep silence reigned throughout the interior, only to be interrupted again, by a repetition of the same sounds. At last, a louder scream than any he had yet heard, burst from the mouth of the sufferer, and, in an instant, a noise, as of some one falling over chairs, was heard, and then a sudden stifling of the scream, accompanied by the objurgatory and menacing voice of a man, whose anger seemed to increase with the necessity of an increase of his efforts to stop the complaint of the sufferer. This scream was the last that Carey heard. A deep silence again reigned, and a full quarter of an hour passed without any indications being perceived of the presence of a living person in the cottage.

Having waited for a considerable time without hearing anything further, Carey concluded that the suffering individual had been suffocated, and was on the eve of getting down to give an alarm. His attention was again arrested by a new phenomenon. A light was now observable through the chinks of an apparent partition between the skylight and the under or main part of the house, an unusual occurrence in Scotch cottages, which have generally no garret, or any other apartment than what extends from roof to ceiling. A noise was now heard, as of some one trying to open a locked door. Success attended his efforts and, in a little time, a small door, sufficient to let in the body of a man in a crawling posture, opened, and discovered the face and upper part of the body of Cuthbert Grandison, holding in his hands a small cruise, which sent forth a doubtful, glimmering light, scarcely sufficient to do more than shew the high bones and grey eye of the strange individual who held it. The door being opened he placed

the cruise into the small apartment into which it led, whereby Carey was enabled to see the nature of the place, and its extraordinary contents. As he surveyed them, he shook with terror, and was once afraid that his perturbation would discover him. The apartment was a place in the form of a small garret, extending to about a half the size of the under apartment of the cottage; and seemed to have been formed after the house was built, for the purpose to which it was devoted. Casting his eye around and round, what struck the fearful observer first, was a skeleton of a human being, lying extended along the floor, and half enveloped in the darkness, which the glimmering taper only partially illuminated. It had been the first human skeleton Carey had ever seen; and the circumstances under which he now beheld it, shining principally by the borrowed light of its bleached bones, and suggesting some mysterious connection between the being whose physical system it once supported, and the extraordinary individual who held this strange piece of household furniture, rendered the sight appalling and horripilant. On a chest at the other side of the apartment lay another skeleton, apparently that of a new-born child, whose tiny shanks, worm-like finger bones, and small head, formed a striking and painful contrast to its full-grown companion—suggesting the probability of some kindred blood having once warmed the sapless bones, and some kindred fate having dried it up, leaving these dry tokens as the only monument of their sorrows and misfortunes. Around on all sides were large packages cased with iron, and sitting on a small hook attached to the wall near the ceiling was another inhabitant of this living cemetery, which, from the singularity of its aspect, its silence, and its locality, excited as much terror in Carey as even the skeleton. This was no other than a large grey owl, sitting as demure as grimalkin, with its goggle eyes at their utmost stretch, glaring in the light of the taper like fiery balls, and rolling as if in anger at being interrupted by the intruder in its enjoyment of eating a mouse, which, dead and mangled, was firmly clenched in its claws. The few minutes that served Carey to examine these extraordinary appearances, whose reality he doubted against all the clearness of his rubbed eyes, enabled Cuthbert Grandison to crawl into the place, through the limited aperture opening in its side. The moment he got in, he shut the door carefully, and threw his eyes up to the pane of glass through which Carey was looking, without, however, observing him, as he instantly drew back his head. When Carey again directed his eyes to the object of his curiosity and awe, he was lying prostrate by the side of the bones of the larger skeleton. He then rose up, threw a look of recognition to the owl, who went on with his repast, heedless of the ceremony with which he had been honoured. The necromantic appearance, attitude, and acts of the hunch-backed living skeleton, who thus stood as it were in the midst of the dead, communing with them by a secret and mysterious power, realized in the mind of the neophyte all the stories he had heard and read of the wonderful and the terrific. The subsequent conduct of the performer was not less extraordinary. His ceremonies and operations occupied a full hour. Everything was noticed by Carey; and, if what we have attempted to describe produced wonder, what we have at present abstained from narrating, from a regard to what is due to the importance of other circumstances waiting for detail, was not calculated to lessen that feeling.

Carey having got down again from the roof top, hurried away home at the top of his speed; for he had staid too long, and was certain of a scold from his parents, for having been seduced into low practices, by the vulgar inhabitants of the village. A confusion in the house, produced by a pouncing having been that day executed, but removed by payment of the debt which had been incurred by the eldest son, William,

and corroborated by the indulgent father, saved him from the abuse which awaited him. Though young, he had sense enough to see the folly of the proceedings of his father and brothers, and sighed as he retired to his couch, in the anticipation of a greater evil impending over the house of Cuthbert, than the humble-mindedness of its third son. The anticipated misfortunes of his father, and the recollection of the extraordinary sights he had witnessed from the roof top of Cubby Grandison, kept him awake during the greater part of the night. His meditations took various turns. The abuse to which he was daily exposed at the hands of his parents and brothers, produced an ambition of shewing himself worthy of their regard, and even of saving them from the ruin that seemed to await them; but the schemes whereby that was to be accomplished, formed in a youthful mind, fell far short of the wishes which produced them. In the morning, he was duly catechised as to the cause of his being so late in coming home; but he chose rather to be subjected to the suspicion of having been in the company of Sandy Ferrier the smith, or Geordie Mactubbie the cooper, or any other humble, but witty denizen of Newabbey, whose laugh caught his ready sympathies, than divulge the secrets of his evening's adventures, on the house top of Cubby Grindstane the cobbler.

Next day it was absolutely necessary—so at least thought Carey Cuthbert—that he should again see John Monilaws, about his mother's servant, though he had no new commission from her to execute, connected with that affair; and giving Gideon Blackletter and his Greek and Latin books the slip, he hastened again to Newabbey, now become a much more interesting place than Cubbertscroft.

"Ye've got nae intelligence yet, I fancy, Mrs Monilaws, about my mither's servant?" he said, as he entered the shop of the gaucy dealer in many wares.

"No yet, Mr Carey," replied she. "There's been a consultation atween Elder Willison an' John, as to the time o' their visit to Cubby's den, as they ca' it. They're speakin o' four o'clock. They want a stout young chiel wi' them, for fear o' accidents. As you're a little interested i' the affair, an' fond o' sights, maybe ye may condescend to accompany them?"

"I've nae objections," answered Carey. "Is there any other livin creature supposed to be i' the house, but Cubby an' his dochter?"

"No," answered the mistress, "if indeed ane o' thae twa even be livin: but few folk can tell muckle aboot the inside o' Cubby Grindstane's house, for he has a way o' meetin visitors at the door, an', stanin richt i' the gap, speaks them fair, an' gets them awa as sun as he can."

"Was he ever married, ken ye?" said Carey, "or did ye ever hear o' ony ither body that lived wi' him?"

"I dinna ken," replied she. "He hasna had a wife sin he cam to Newabbey."

"Is his dochter Jeanie, wham ye intend for my mither's servant, like her father?" said Carey.

"As unlike as ony twa creatures can be," replied Mrs Monilaws. "He's a hunchbacked scarecrow, an' she's a bonny young lassie, whase beauty, a' the ill usage and starvation she has suffered, hasna been able to tak the blume frae; but muckle, I fear, that blume winna stand muckle langer, if indeed death hasna already blawn the witherin gouch o' his breath on't. But this day will expose a' the secrets o' the inside o' that house."

"I see nae great reason," replied Carey, "for supposin there's ony great secret aboot it."

"What maks him keep a'budy oot, then, Mr Carey, man?" said the mistress. "What gies him that side-look, that fearfu girn, an' his slouchin walk? What maintains him?—for he works nane; and why winna Jeanie speak abune her breath when she sees him, or answer, when he's awa, ony question aboot him or his hoose?"

"A' prejudice, Mrs Monilaws," replied Carey; "auld wive's wind eggs, hatched, nae doot, by a covey o' them, as they sit thegither till they clock. The puir man doesna want to be fashed wi' a set o' meddlin neebors."

At four o'clock, Elder Willison, John Monilaws, and Carey, went to the house of Cubby Grindstane. The door was locked. They knocked, and asked admittance.

"What want ye?" said a rough voice from within.

"We hae some shoes to get mended," said John Monilaws.

"I'm ill, an' no in a mendin way the day," replied Cubby. "Gang awa to Jamie Goodawls."

"Jamie has owre muckle to do, and tauld us to gang to Cubby Grindstane," said the godly elder.

"My awl's my ain," said Cubby, in worse humour; "an' sae lang as it's no thirled to the soles o' men, I'm free frae the power o' their bodies. Awa wi' ye!"

"You're in my district, Cubby," said the elder, "an' I hae the command o' Mr Singer, oor minister, to ca' upon ye, and inquire for the state o' yer soul, whilk, to reverse yer puir pun, is, we fear, owre closely thirled to yer *all*. Yer dochter has also a soul to be saved; and Mr Singer says he never saw you or her i' the kirk."

"Weel, if I dinna trouble him, he has nae richt to trouble me," replied Cubby. "I say again, awa wi' ye! The law says a man's hoose is his castle, an' it says true."

"That's an unfortunate allusion," whispered Carey to John Monilaws. "Castles are made to be attacked."

"An' to be defended," answered Cubby, who had overheard the remark.

Carey applied his powerful back to the crazy door, and, in an instant, threw it open, overturning at the back of it a number of pieces of old furniture, placed as props or defences, to prevent its being opened. The party entered, and, in an instant, were in the middle of the cottage, which was in two divisions—one end being occupied by a small truckle bed, on which a human body lay extended; and the other, which Carey remarked was under the small garret where he had observed the nocturnal rites, presented nothing but a few broken stools; some straw in one corner, over which a dirty sheet and a blanket were spread; a fire, with about as much live coal in it as a hand might hold, as well for quantity as activity of heat; a small cupboard, with a padlock on it of twice the value of the article it guarded, presenting some bones that had once, and while another's property, been covered with roasted meat, and seemed by their whiteness to have been four or five times boiled, with the remnant of the fuisted meal purchased from Mrs Monilaws.

"This is a strange way," said Cubby, as he went to what might have been called the butt end of the cottage—"this is a strange fashion o' bringin the word o' God to folk that dinna want it."

"We are tauld," replied the elder, "to strive for the repentance o' sinners."

"Ay, but ye're no tauld to brak open folks' doors, to force them to repent," replied Cubby. "Besides, Mr Willison, whar's the shoon Jamie Goodawl said he couldna mend, and sent ye to me wi'? Amang sins to be repented o', a lee is a very guid aone to begin wi'."

"Hoo's Jeanie, yer dochter?" said the elder, who was fairly caught by Cubby.

"What should ail her?" said Cubby, looking suspiciously, and moving between them and the other apartment.

"That's just what we want to ken," said John Monilaws, pushing Cubby a litle to the side, and moving slowly into the other division, followed by the elder and Carey.

The sight that here presented itself to them, as they approached the small truckle bed, and folded down the top of the only blanket that covered the body of a female, was of the most wretched and pitiful character. It was with the greatest

difficulty that John Monilaws could recognise the features of Jeanie Grandison, (for such the invalid was,) reduced, by the ill-matched pair, famine and disease, to the last stage of existence. The bloom which Mrs Monilaws feared for was indeed withered, and the stalk which supported the flower attenuated to a fibre. Pale as a corpse, and emaciated beyond the lowest state of body that keeps burning the lamp of life, it appeared doubtful, in the absence of motion, whether she should be classed among living mortals. The approach of strangers seemed to produce no effect upon her; for her eyelids, which about half covered the glazed orbs, remained stationary, and no symptoms of breathing could be discovered. At the side of the bed, stood a three-footed stool, on which was placed a tin tankard, containing some cold water, and a small bowl, with about an ounce of cold porridge (made, no doubt, of part of the meal seen in the press) in the bottom of it, no part of which seemed marked by the rusty iron spoon that lay alongside of the dish.

"Why did ye say to my wife, Cubby, that that lassie was weel, when it's scarcely possible to observe in her a spark o' life?"

"And what guid wad it hae dune to hae said she was ill?" replied Cubby. "I canna pay for possets an' puddins recommended by auld wives; an' a doctor is far ayont my degree or ability."

"Ye micht hae begged assistance, then," said John. "Naebody wad hae refused a bite or a sup to ane o' God's creatures, lyin at the point o' death."

"The folk hereabout," replied Cubby, "are owre proud o' their bites and sups, no to come an' enjoy the luxury o' seein their charity applied, and gettin their lugs lined wi' the return o' gratitude. A house fu' o' folk, an' a pouch wi' three farthings i' the corner o't, dinna sort weel thegither. Besides, what mair can any sick body get than meat and drink?"

"An' do ye ca' that meat and drink?" said John, pointing to the porridge and water.

"What wad you ca' it?" replied Cubby, grinnin. "I wish I may get nae waur to comfort me when I come to dee."

"If the fear of expense," said Carey, "has prevented ye frae lettin the neebors ken o' yer daughter's illness, wadna the same cause hae prevented ye frae tellin o' her death? A funeral costs siller—what wad ye hae dune wi' the body?"

Cubby seemed moved by this question, and eyed the speaker suspiciously and fearfully.

"What's that to ye, callant?" he said at last. "A man's nae great mechanic wha canna ca' thegither four white deals; and they that carry to the grave dinna trouble aye by coming back to ask for their fare, as other carriers do."

"She'll no be ill to carry, puir thing," said John Monilaws. "The only weight about her will be that o' death, whilk they say is great even in a bird. Whar does her mither lie?"

"Whar should she lie?" replied Cubby, again put into a state of agitation, remarked particularly by Carey. "Think ye she's no in her grave?"

"I hae little doot o' that, Cubby," said the other; "but I hope puir Jeanie hears naething o' a' this."

On looking at the invalid, all parties were surprised to see her looking up in their faces, apparently comprehending every word they said.

"Ye're better, I think, Jeanie," said John.

"I dinna ken," replied the poor maiden. "Ask my faither. I can say naething about mysel. He'll answer for me."

"Hae ye been gettin ony meat except this crowdy an' Adam's wine?" again said the other.

"My faither kens best what kind o' wine I hae been gettin," replied she.

"Wine!" ejaculated Cubby—"God, keep me an' my house frae sic extravagance! Mair souls an' siller hao been drooned in that liquor than in the Dead Sea, whilk hauds Sodom and Gomorah."

"An' some bodies hae been saved wi't," said John, taking out a small bottle and a glass, and emptying some wine, which, by holding up the poor invalid, he endeavoured to prevail upon her to taste.

Cubby turned up his eyes and his hands to heaven. Jeanie looked fearfully at her father, and refused to taste the wine, though her lips were as withered leaves.

"The taste o't will never leave her mouth," ejaculated Cubby. "Awa wi' you an' your wine! Is my bairn to be corrupted, an' her faither lookin on? What can be expected o' ane wha has swallowed three hail pennies at ae gulp? God hae mercy on us!"

"You seem to want yer dochter dead," said the elder. "The Lord has sent us thae things to be used, and no abused. Paul says, 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.'"

"I'll no tak that," replied Cubby, "on the faith o' ane wha said he cam here wi' shune to mend, when his true errand was to corrupt the stomach o' my dochter. Paul had mair sense than learn folk thae evil habits."

"Shew me a Bible, an' I'll point ye out the passage," said the elder.

"I may thank the Bible," replied Cubby; "for the auld ane I ance had, an' whilk I sauld for half-a-crown to Geordie Bookless o' Dumfries, kept me an' Jeanie livin for five weeks—sae I hae naething to say against that guid buik; but I haena been able to buy a second. Ye may noo gang yer ways. Ye see that neither yer wine nor yer text is o' ony use in this house."

"Will you alloo her to tak anything else, then, Cubby, if my wife sends it to ye?" said John Monilaws.

"It's no often ye hear o' a puir penniless cratur like me refusin anything that wad save his stock o' three guid farthings. I wad tak ony gift but luxuries, provided the giver didna want entrance to my house; but that's impossible. A' that gie think they hae a richt to enter yer house as they like. Sae I dispense wi' yer gifts. Awa wi' you and them baith!"

"It's in vain to fecht wi' him," whispered Carey into the ear of John Monilaws. "It's clear the lassie will dee if she's no removed. I'll haud Cubby, if you an' the elder will lift the truckie-bed bodily, an' carry the lassie an' it thegither into yer ain house."

This communication was approved of, and conveyed to the elder. A sign was given by Carey, who instantly seized Cubby by the shoulders; while, the door being opened, the two others lifted with the greatest ease the small couch, and, to the great surprise of the neighbours, who rejoiced in the proceeding, carried it with the poor victim into John's nouse, where the humane mistress, who had a liking for Jeanie, received her with pleasure, and proceeded to contribute to her ease and recovery. The greatest terror was evinced by Cubby on being let free from the powerful grasp of Carey. He flew out of the house like one distracted, (yet locking, even in his hurry, the door,) forced himself through the crowd into John Monilaws' house, and, by threats, imprecations, supplications, and even bribes, endeavoured to get possession of his daughter. His conduct appeared to the people inexplicable. The starvation of his daughter, and the affection (for what else could it be that produced his anxiety?) that suggested such means of regaining possession of her, appeared inconsistent; and if the sanity of the individual had not, by his conversation, been well established, he would have been considered a madman. His violence arose to such a pitch that it was found necessary to guard the door; and it was only after some feigned attempt to break into his own house, which seemed to

terrify him even more than the detention of his daughter, that he was forced home, and the poor girl was left unmolested under the charge of Mrs Monilaws.

Meanwhile, Jeanie, being kindly treated and attended by a surgeon, recovered with a quickness proportioned to the powers of reaction of a youthful constitution, acting on a system once more restored to the enjoyment of what Dr Leechman called the *non-naturals*. Her natural beauty, which had never yet got fair play, began to shew itself; and her simple and timid manners, produced by the dreadful tyranny under which she had lived, excited a deep interest in her protectors and preservers. She never, however, could be prevailed upon to speak of her father, or of anything connected with the house. A shudder passed over her when his name was mentioned; and she expressed an anxiety either to be put beyond his power or again restored to him, an alternative which was not well understood by her protectors, but sufficiently explained by the dangers to which she would be exposed if she were made accessible to him when he was under the influence of the fits of terror, excitement, and anxiety, he had exhibited already on more than one occasion, and, perhaps, partly to be accounted for by some secret cause which she could not be prevailed upon to divulge. She was quite agreeable to go to Cubbertscroft as a servant; and it was arranged that she should accordingly proceed there as soon as she had totally recovered. Grieved for her want of education, Mrs Monilaws procured, for her instruction in reading and writing, the services of the village schoolmaster, who attended her daily after she was able for the exercise, and was much gratified by the rapid progress she made (for she was of quick parts) under his zealous tuition.

During all this period, Jeanie Grandison was regularly visited by Carey Cuthbert, whose interest in her, though he had not then seen her, commenced from the eventful evening when he made the awful discoveries we have partly detailed, through her father's skylight: and had increased from the moment he saw the first tint of the bloom of returning health on her pallid cheek, and heard the sounds of her clear melodious voice, though exercised only in the expressions of the sentiments of a half-broken, timid, yet grateful heart. When properly restored to health, Jeanie was sent out under the protection of John Monilaws and Carey, (who, however, left them before he approached the house,) to Cubbertscroft, where she entered upon her service. Nothing was said to any one of her parentage; all that was told to Mrs Cuthbert or the other servants, being, that she had, after having come to Mrs Monilaws to be engaged, been seized with a fever, which prevented her sooner from entering upon her service. This caution had been observed in accordance with Jeanie's own wish; but her curious history reached the ears of one of the servants, and very soon became known to the family, who did not treat her any better, because she was reputed to be the daughter of one already notorious in that part of the country for squalid beggary and extraordinary and mysterious conduct. Mrs Cuthbert, an unfeeling woman, whose contempt was measured by the humbleness of the birth, circumstances, and education of every one around her, treated her harshly—not hesitating, in her moods of spleen and passion, to taunt her with her father's abject poverty, and her own origin. The protection and kindness she received from Carey, were limited by his want of opportunity and power; but the early interest he felt in her soon assumed a new character, and an affection, pure and honourable as the heart that entertained it, took possession of him, with all the energy of a youthful passion. The opportunities he had of conversing with her, were stolen from the watchful surveillance of his parents; who, acquainted with his habits of humble companionship, had threatened to turn him from the house if he did not renounce them; but, as the mountains, piled

by the daring hand of Titan, are not able to stop the mountain stream, many devices were fallen upon by Carey, to give vent to a passion whose course, though proverbially crooked, is also proverbially irresistible. When Jeanie was supposed to be visiting her friends in Newabbey—a place she dared not enter—she was along with Carey, in the Wolf's Brake, a very retired place in the neighbourhood, where they conceived they were perfectly safe from the disturbance of their enemies; but they were discovered by Carey's parents, who cruelly dismissed them both from the house. Carey was true to his love; and they proceeded together to the village, where they were received by John Monilaws and his wife, to whom they related their strange story, with kindness. Some time afterwards, they were married, and Carey paid little attention to the remarks of the neighbours, who could not see "hoo the young gentleman, without a trade in his hand," was to support himself and a wife. Even John Monilaws thought the match, in the meantime, imprudent, and recommended that it should be postponed until Carey had learned some trade or profession. Carey smiled in reply, and thought of what he had seen from the sky-light of his father-in-law's cottage.

In a short time it was currently reported, that the laird of Cubbertscroft was over head and ears in debt, and that the property was to be brought to the hammer. This news was soon but too well corroborated by large printed bills, posted in various parts of the county, advertising the sale of the property of Cubbertscroft, in the town-hall of Dumfries, on a day and hour set forth. One of these fell into the hands of Carey. He sallied out of the house; and, it being at the time dark, he sought, and forcibly entered the dark and dismal habitation of Cubby Grindstane, now his father-in-law.

"Ken ye the law against hamesucken, sir?" said Cubby, recognising him.

"I do," said Carey; "but it is a subtle point wi' the lawyers hoo strong a rap (intended to let folk hear ye, but haein the by effect o' openin the door) amounts to forcible entry. I cam to ask hoo ye are, Cubby Grindstane."

"A' sort o' impudence," said Cubby, "is comprehended by that cant. If folk want to borrow frae ye, (whilk, God be praised! I'm far ayont,) if they want to steal yer time, if they want to see what's i' yer hoose, or what's intended to be in yer stomach, they aye cloak their intentions wi' askin hoo ye are—the maist unmeanin o' a' questions. Gang yer ways the way ye cam, sir; an' I'll send ye a weekly bulletin o' my health."

"Bulletins hae been issued aboot the health o' folk o' less consequence," said Carey, pointing his finger to the small garret.

"What mean ye, sir?" said Cubby, staring at him with his eyes at their full stretch, and shewing signs of great agitation.

"Sit down, Cubby," said Carey—"I want to speak to ye, for a short time, rationally an' quietly. I hae nae ill intentions towards ye; an', if ye're discreet, ye'll find me a mair sicker freen than a safe fae."

Cubby hesitated to sit down. He had never been seen in that position when any one was in his house; for he found he got any people who had been lucky enough to get in, out again, more readily by keeping on his legs.

"I'm no used sittin wi' strangers," said he.

Carey again lifted his finger to the roof of the house, and Cubby's agitation increased. Trembling from head to foot, he at last sat down on a three-footed stool, opposite to Carey.

"Hae ye heard any news o' late?" began Carey.

"I'm no i' the way o' hearin news," replied Cubby, "an' care little for the world's clavers besides."

"But when things concern oorsels," said Carey, "we maun care aboot them."

"What mean ye?" said Cubby.

"It's said," replied Carey, looking at him attentively, "that in a hoose no a hunder miles frae the sma' village o' Newabbey, there lie the banes o' a woman an' a bairn, whose coffins never saw the mortclaithe o' ony parish, or filled the graves o' ony buryin place. When deaths are concealed, suspicions o' murder are aye rife; an' I hae heard it even said that simple concealment itsel, at least in ae case, is a guid, if no the only proof o' wilfu slaughter."

"What hae I to do wi' that, sir?" said Cubby, whose agitation still increased.

"Silence!" said Carey, holding up his hand to the roof—"ye may at least hear the gossip o' the village. The banes are in the hoose o' an auld cobbler; an' it's also said, that, in the place whar they lie, there is an extraordinary collection o' a miser's treasure, filling nae fewer than five big kists, strongly clasped wi' bands o' iron, to protect the gowd guineas, nae less in amount than fifteen thousand pounds. To mak the story mair wonderfu', the gossips hae added to the inhabitants o' the strange hoose, a grey owl—nae doot, an invention o' their ain brains."

"It's a' an invention thegither," ejaculated Cubby, rising from his seat, and trying to walk through the apartment, which, however, his trembling and agitation prevented him from doing, otherwise than by a zig zag motion, from one side to another.

"I think sae mysel," said Carey; "but we'll see." And he rose and seized, in an instant, a ladder used by Cubby, for the purpose of mounting to his Golgotha.

"Hauld, sir!" cried the frantic Cubby, as he flew and seized Carey by the legs, falling at the same time on his knees, and turning up his grey eyes, now, like his own owl's darting forth fire. "What is this ye're aboot? Wha are ye? What ken ye o' thae dark things?—I mean there is naething there. Hauld, sir! or ye'll kill an auld man wha might be yer faither." And he fell on the floor, groaning and rolling about, like one in a convulsion.

"I will lay down this ladder," said Carey, "if you will rise, an' sit down, an' speak to me on certain subjects that concern me an' you."

"I will, I will," replied Cubby, recovering slightly "I'll sit quietly an' hear ye speak o' anything but thae village gossips. Nae lamb will be mair peaceable; an'—an' ye'll hae something too—to tak wi' ye when ye gae awa."

"Ye mean ane o' yer three guid farthings, I suppose?" said Carey, with a smile.

"Ay, I'll mak it a gowd guinea," said the other, with an effort like to choke him.

"Weel, let that alane," said Carey; "we'll maybe mak it mair. Ye now see that I ken a' the secret that lies i' that garret. I hae seen it wi' my ain een, an' heard it frae yer dochter, wha is noo my lawfu married wife—a guid match to her, seein I am the third son o' William Cuthbert o' Cubbertscroft."

"My dochter married to ane o' the Cubberts o' Cubbertscroft!" ejaculated Cubby. "Then hae the twa stocks at last joined. Heaven be praised!"

"It is clear, then," continued Carey, "that you are completely in my power. On going to Gilbert Sleuthie, the fiscal o' the county, an' layin my statement afore him, his first step will be to seize the banes an' the gowd. Ye will be tried for the murder o' the unhappy beings whose bodies they ance supported; an', whether ye be guilty or innocent, ye'll hae some difficulty o' gettin oot o' the hands o' the law the fifteen thousand guineas I saw ye count wi' my ain een; an', even were ye to get it back, it will spread throughout the country that Cubby Grindstane has £15,000, an' a' the stouthrievors o' the country will be on ye like bluid-hounds, to ease ye o' the burden o' keepin't."

"But ye'll no gang to Gilbert Sleuthie, the fiscal?" cried Cubby rising again into one of his paroxysms of terror, and seizing Carey by the knees. "It's no in the heart o' ane

wi' that face o' yours to ruin a puir auld man wha you say is your faither-in-law. I ken ye winna do't. The guinea I'll mak twa, an' maybe a half mair. Say ye winna gang, an' I'll mak it three. Mercy! mercy!"

With the greatest difficulty Carey got him to let go the firm grasp he had of his legs; and which he seemed inclined to hold till he got his request granted.

"It isna by ony sic bribes as thae, Cuthbert Grandison, that I will be diverted frae my purpose."

"What will please ye, then?" cried Cubby, earnestly.

"A condition for yer ain benefit," replied Carey. "Have ye no sense enough to see that the money ye hoard in thae kists yields ye nae interest, and, besides, rins the risk o' bein taen frae ye the very moment it's kenned (an' it's already suspected) ye ha'e't."

A groan was all the answer Cubby could give; for denying the money was now out of the question.

"Now I am to put you on a plan," continued Carey, "wharby ye may get a guid return for yer money, an' nae man can tak it frae ye."

Another groan evinced the agony of the sufferer.

"Here," continued Carey, taking from his pocket the advertisement of Cubbertscroft. "Here is my father's property for sale on Wednesday next. It will, in all likelihood, be thrown awa. Tak yer siller to the bank o' Dumfries, an' lodge it there, then gang to the Hall, an' buy Cubbertscroft; an' wha will venture to rin awa wi' that frae ye?"

"But ye are wrang about the siller," cried Cubby—"there's no sae muckle o't as ye say."

"I will count it mysel," cried Carey, pointing to the ladder. "I heard you count it before."

"Weel, weel," replied Cubby, "I'll think o' what ye've said."

"I'll wait yer answer the morn," said Carey. "If ye dinna agree, I write instantly to Sleuthie."

Carey then left him; but, with the determination of watching the house during the night, to prevent any attempt at removing the chests.

"Mercy on me!" said Cubby to himself, when Carey went out, "what am I to do? I canna remove thae kists, an' whar can I tak them. My secret's oot; an', whether that callant tells Sleuthie or no, it's clear I canna keep langer this siller in a thatched cottage. Let me see—buy Cubbertscroft, the property o' the freens o' my mither, whase name I bear? Aften hae I heard her say, puir cratur! that she couldna live an' see Cubbertscroft sauld and gien awa to strangers; and noo that is aboot to be—at a time, too, when, strange to say! my dochter is married to a Cubbert—the callant's no far wrang. The banes o' my wife an' bairn, wham I couldna find in my heart to bury, hae kept my gowd lang safe frae the ee o' my dochter; but they may noo lead Sleuthie to my coffers. What's to be done? My gowd! my gowd! I canna pairt we ye; for ye are dearer to me than my heart's blude. But, if it wad pain me to gie ye awa for land whilk has nae king's face on't, what wad I feel to hae ye taen frae me by force! I canna bear that thought. Buy Cubbertscroft! Cubby Grindstane gie awa his gowd for Cubbertscroft!—awfu thought! But it was my mither's wish—an' better land than naething. I maun think mair on't."

Carey called next day, and again laid before the old man the danger of not complying with his request. Cubby himself had been shaken fearfully during the night with the terror of losing altogether his wealth; and the arguments of Carey almost decided him. He said he would consider again of it, and if he came to the conclusion of buying Cubbertscroft, he would be at the place of sale on the day and hour appointed. Carey left him, and continued his watch at night. About twelve o'clock he observed a cart and a horse standing at the door of the cottage; and when all the inhabitants of

the village were at rest, he observed the miser carrying out his coffers and placing them on the cart. He allowed him to proceed. The cart was loaded; and, in a short time, he saw it take the road to Dumfries. He followed close behind, and was surprised to find that Cubby drove straight up to the house of the cashier of the principal bank of the town. By knocking hard, he roused the servants; in a little time the banker came out, the cart was unloaded, and a transaction finished.

The day arrived on which the sale of Cubbertscroft was to take place. A great number of people was collected. Carey was there, and he was surprised to find his father; who, however, had attended with the hope of getting some friend to buy in the property on his account. The two looked at each other without speaking. John Monilaws was also present, as well as some others of the inhabitants of Newabbey. The auctioneer mounted into his desk; and £12,000 had been offered for the property by a neighbouring laird, who wished to incorporate it with his own land. Some other individuals bade, and the bodes had arrived at £14,000—no one being inclined to go beyond it. At this moment the door of the room opened, with a harsh noise, and the people looked around, to observe the cause of the interruption. Cubby Grindstane entered. A feeling of surprise ran through the crowd. John Monilaws stared, and Carey smiled. Stepping forward, Cubby watched the voice of the auctioneer. The latter called out £14,000.

"Five shillings mair!" cried Cubby.

"You must make it five pounds, sir," said the auctioneer.

"Aweel, aweel, then," said Cubby—"let it be five pounds."

The surprise of the people increased to wonder. Every one whispered to his neighbour—"Is he mad? Why does the auctioneer take his bode?" No one bade higher, and the hammer fell.

"Are you able to find caution, sir?" said the auctioneer.

"No," replied Cubby.

"Why did you bid for the land, then?" rejoined the other.

"Because I wanted it," replied Cubby. "Will ye no tak the siller in place o' caution."

"Assuredly," replied the auctioneer, smiling—"where is it?"

"There, said Cubby, "is the banker's check for £14,000. The moment I get a complete right to the land, ye may hae the siller."

The bargain was, accordingly, soon arranged and, to the surprise of all that part of the country, Cuthbert Grandison became the laird of Cubbertscroft. His feelings subsequently underwent some change for the better, and he took home his daughter Jeanie and her husband, to live with him in the mansion-house, where, however, he still exhibited a great portion of his original avarice. He soon died, and the property was left to Jeanie. Carey Cuthbert had, by the right of courtesy, all the power of the property. He received with welcome his father and mother, and maintained them during their lives in the mansion-house from which they had formerly expelled him, and from which their own extravagance had driven themselves.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE CONTRAST OF WIVES.

In the absence of that finely-adjusted balance of power which ought to be found in the state of marriage, it becomes a nice question, whether less evil results from an over-stretched domination on the part of the husband, or from his due submission or subjugation to an authority exercised by her, and carried farther than is generally deemed consistent with the delicacy of her sex, or the situation in which she is placed. Connected with this question is that which comprises the comparative evil arising from a superabundance or deficiency of the intellectual powers of the wife. We are too well aware of the uselessness, as well as the impracticability, of solving such speculative questions, to say a single word on either side of the vexed argument to which they have given rise; but we will be within our province, and probably not beyond the wishes of our readers, if we lay before them a *case of real life*, involving a solution of the question in one exemplary instance, where the "grey mare" is not only found to be the "better horse," but where, by her powers of judicious leading, she saves not only herself but her partner from the dangers of a rough road and a precipitous course. In those good days of old Scotland, when the corporation hall formed the theatre wherein was enacted the great play (comedy, if you please) of "Burgh Ambition," the influence of petticoat power extended its secret workings behind the green curtain, and often regulated all the actions of the performers in a manner which was not only totally concealed from the spectators, but even from the moving puppets themselves. In one instance—that to which we have referred—this secret authority transpired, and in a manner so ludicrous that it deserves to be recorded. The Incorporation of Dyers and Scourers of Perth (at the time of which we speak a considerable fraternity) had a deacon and boxmaster; the former named Murdoch Waldie, and the latter Andrew Todd. Their names still figure in the old books of the corporation, if these are not gone astray; and there is, or was, an entry in these same books, connected with the reign of the two worthies, which, illustrative and probative as it is of our story, we shall have occasion to lay before our readers. Well—to proceed in historical order—the worthy boxmaster had been married for a number of years. He might be about fifty years of age, was of small stature, very bland and affable in his manners, of an easy disposition, but, withal, as ambitious of fame as any of the aspirants for office in his corporation. Endowed by nature with very inadequate powers of judgment, he experienced no want of the powers of speech, which was as fluent as a shallow mind could make it; and he had, besides, a species of humour about him, which owed its existence rather to the simplicity and *bonhomie* of his nature, than to the more ordinary source of a perception of the ludicrous. As almost every want is remedied by some equipollent surrogation which strangely often supplies its place, Andrew Todd was *sensible* of his want of mental powers; and thus he exhibited that sense of a *want of sense*, which is often more valuable than sense itself, in so far as the modesty with which it is accompanied leads the individual to seek the assistance of good advisers, by which he sometimes sur-

passes, in the race of life, conceited wiseacres. We do not say that he married Mrs Jean Todd merely because he saw she was endowed with greater powers than himself; but it is certain, that, after he came to appreciate the extent of her understanding, he had the prudence to take every advantage of her excellent sense and judgment, as well in the private affairs of his business, as in the public concerns of the corporation treasurership, with which he came, by her means, to be invested. This was not only advantageous to his pecuniary interests, but congenial to his feelings, as—getting quit, in this way, of the trouble of thinking, a most laborious operation to him, and generally very ill executed, if not altogether bungled—he was left at liberty to indulge his speech and humour; two powers which had nothing more to do with judgment or even common sense, than with the sublimated spirit of genius itself.

His wife, Mrs Jean, was, as partly hinted, the very opposite of her husband. She was a large, stout, gaucy woman, at least twice as big as her mate. She had been, early in life, considerably pitted with the small-pox, enough of the traces of which were still left to give her that sturdy, hardy aspect they generally impart; while a strong and somewhat rough voice, agreeing well with her other attributes, gave her ideas and sentiments an apparent breadth and weight, which, added to their own sterling qualities, could not fail to produce a considerable effect even on men of strong minds, and to give her a decided advantage over her sex. Her original powers of mind were strengthened by reading—an occupation in which, as it required silence, her husband very seldom engaged; and, what few women are able to accomplish, she never allowed this favourite habit to interfere with the regulation of her domestic economy, or of the actions of her husband. Bold and masculine, however, as she was, she was a kind-hearted woman; and, having no family to her husband, she was a warm friend, a ready adviser to all her female acquaintances, and a charitable giver to those who, after a strict and very stern investigation, she thought worthy of her assistance.

The deacon of the incorporation again, Murdoch Waldie, was a man of a very different cast from the boxmaster. He was a person of considerable parts; but his conceit, which led him to conceive himself cleverer than nature had made him, produced often all the consequences which result from a deficiency of mental parts. Proud and domineering, he loved to rule his corporation with dignity and authority; while his love of official show and domestic parade rendered him extravagant and made him poor, notwithstanding of a good trade, which he carried on with great success. In his choice of a wife, there might have been perceived the tendency of his peculiar disposition; for he married a beauty who qualified his love of authority by an affected softness, gentleness, and meekness, and his self-conceit, by shewing herself inferior to him in understanding, as indeed she was, though she excelled him in another quality, which more than supplied its place. What with his business, his deaconship, his chain, his gold-headed cane, and his fair wife, dressed in the gaudy colours of his own dying, Deacon Waldie was an important personage in those times, when to be high in a corporation was to be in the enjoyment of the truest elevation to which human nature, in this world, could aspire.

Vain, showy, gaudy, and frivolous, Mrs Deacon Waldie held the same position to Mrs Todd that the boxmaster did to her husband. She had no sense or power to rule her husband, who, indeed, would not have submitted to female authority; but she had what Mrs Todd wanted, and what served her purpose equally well, and that was cunning—the signal quality of small, weak minds, and the very curse of the whole race of man and woman. This insidious power enabled her to detect her husband's failings, as well as to profit by them—and hence her affectation of total subjugation to his high will and authority, and her tame system of according and assenting to everything he said or did, whether right or wrong. But in all this, her selfish cunning had a part; because, while she pretended to love him, and dote on him, and prize him beyond all mortals, her adulation, her blandishments, and submission were accompanied or followed always by *petitions*. She contrived to have hardihood enough to make the most unreasonable requests, and to shew that she was too sensitive, too fragile, and too weak, to bear a refusal. If her suit was rejected, she flung herself upon the haughty deacon's bosom, and sobbed; and what deacon could withstand the appeal of beauty in tears? The sight was the very personification of the triumph of his pride and dignity. The chain of his official authority, and the arms of a praying, supplicating, weeping wife, hanging at the same time around his proud neck, were the very counterparts of each other. His love of subjugation bent, as it often does, his own head; and cunning enjoyed its greatest triumph in overcoming one, by turning his own weapons against himself.

The contrast which we have thus exhibited between these two couples, is that of real every-day life. The characters of too many married parties partake, more or less, of the qualities possessed by those we have now mentioned; but how strangely do apparent contrasts often meet in grotesque resemblances? Mrs Todd ruled her husband, and he knew it; but Mrs Waldie ruled her husband, and he was ignorant of it: while the one followed her occupation for her own and her husband's good, and the other was bent (unconsciously, it may be) on her own and her husband's ruin.

These two couples were on the most intimate terms—the circumstance of the two husbands being office-bearers of the same corporation having increased an intimacy which had been of considerable duration. But there was little respect felt for her showy friends on the part of the wife of the minor official, who probably saw that their extravagance was fast driving them to ruin. This foresight was soon verified. The demands of Mrs Deacon Waldie were not limited to her own wants and wishes—they were extended to those of her friends. Her father, trusting to the reputation of her husband's deaconship, had occasion for his security to the extent of £200; and she was fixed upon as the instrument to wring, by her usual artifice, out of her proud lord and master, not only his own name to the bond, but also that of some of his friends, to be procured through his means and intercession. She had, for a considerable time, been occupied zealously in endeavouring to accomplish her object—bringing into full contrast her husband's proud domination, and her innocent and interesting weakness and timidity, and shewing, as she hung round his neck, her helplessness and insignificance, at the very moment when she was exercising more power than ever was arrogated by the boxmaster's wife in all her female tyranny. She succeeded in her scheme, and Waldie consented—but only as a king grants the prayer of a petition—not only to give his own name to the bill, but to endeavour to get that of Mr Andrew Todd. Tears of thankfulness, and a full acknowledgment of his great power over her, was the reward offered and granted for this great condescension and unparalleled favour. But it was more easy for Mrs Waldie to ask and give thanks and tears, and for her husband to vouchsafe his own name as

cautioner, than for him to get out of the clutches of Mr. Jean Todd the consent of her husband. The deacon knew how his brother-official was ruled by his wife, and lustily despised the white-livered caitiff for his pusillanimity.

"I canna promise, Mrs Deacon Waldie," said he to his wife, according to the fashion of address that suited his dignity—"I canna promise to get the boxmaster to gie his name to yer father's bond. He's sae completely, puir cratur! under the power an' direction o' a woman, that he daurna tak sae muckle liberty wi' his ain. The woman brocht him naething when he married her, but the iron rod o' authority by which she rules him; and yet, strange to say, he seems to like her the better for a' the stern dominion she exercises ovr him."

"That's a fault, I'm sure, ye canna charge me wi'," replied his wife.

"No, Margaret," said the deacon—"you dare not presume to dictate to me; and, to do you justice, you never attempted it; but I began ye fair. I shewed you at first the proper conduct o' a husband towards his wife—firm but kind; and the duty o' a wife towards a husband—obedient and loving; and it was weel that you had the sense to understand me, and the good nature to comply wi my wishes; for, if I had seen the least glimpse o' an inclination to rule me or force me into yer measures, there wad sune hae been rebellion in the hoose o' Deacon Waldie. The consequences o' a wife's domination are weel exemplified in the case o' that contemptible man whose assistance we now require. He daurna assist a friend. His wife is cash-keeper, conscience-keeper, housekeeper, and, by and by, she may be boxkeeper, to the entire disgrace o' oor trade, wha, though they live by women, (for men never employ dyers,) wouldna relish to acknowledge the authority o' a female boxmaster. When a man resigns himsel to the authority o' a wife, he is dune for a' guid to himsel as weel as his neebors."

"Ye canna, my dear Murdoch," said the soft wife, "look upon a tame husband, wha submits to the rule o' a wife, wi' mair contempt and ill favour than I do upon the virago wha presumes to reverse the order o' nature, and wrest the authority frae the lord o' the creation."

"You gie a fine turn to the sentiment, Margaret," replied the gratified deacon. "I am anxious (but it is my ain free will) to do yer faither this service; and I will try, for ance, if I canna fecht Mrs Jean Todd wi' her ain weapons. The boxmaster's no dead to shame; and surely, if there's ony power on earth whereby the blush can be brought to the face o' man, it's the power o' being in a condition to tell him to that very face he is *hen-pecked*. The very word has a spur and a neb in't to rouse him to the vindication o' the rights o' man. I was aye afraid o't; and, God be thanked! I hae escaped even the very chance o' its application to me."

"You forgot, my love, that you hae also *me* to thank for that happiness," said the wife.

"No—it is mysel, it is mysel," cried the proud lord of his own household. "It lies in my native sense o' the rights o' our superior sex, and my firmness o' purpose in keeping the reins tight upon ye. You hae only the merit o' no rebellion; but even your rebellion I would hae sune laid."

"I fancy, then," said Mrs Waldie, gently, "it wil be your intention and pleasure to see the boxmaster immediately."

"No, Mrs Waldie," replied the deacon, a little touched; "not *immediately*, but by and by."

The deacon, however, did almost immediately wait upon the boxmaster, and got him to adjourn to a tavern in the Lawnmarket, at that time much frequented by the members of the incorporation. They had scarcely seated themselves when the superior official opened his subject.

"I am a frank man, Mr Todd," began he, "and I winna

hesitate to tell ye, at ance, that I want a favour frae ye. Will ye join me in security for my father-in-law to the extent o' twa hunder pounds?"

The boxmaster paused, and thought of the stern chamberlain at home. He was inclined to assist his deacon, who was a person of great importance in his eyes; but he saw the danger which might result from his going out of his province, and acting upon what he conceived to be right. His pause was at once understood by the deacon, whose keenness to make a dash at the supposed obstacle to his suit, arose from his contempt of his friend's pusillanimous conduct, and his desire to attain the object of his request.

"I can read your thoughts, Mr Todd," said he, as the boxmaster still paused and seemed irresolute and confused. "You *wish* to serve, but you daurna. Mrs Todd winna let ye allow the counsel o' yer own heart. This is a delicate subject; but I am your friend, and would wish to redeem ye frae the slavery o' a woman's (and otherwise, I grant, a guid and a sensible woman's) domination in matters wherein she has nae legitimate authority."

He waited the effect of this speech, which was a kind of touchstone.

"I see nae delicacy in a subject," replied the boxmaster, "whar there's nae secrecy. Hoo does it come to be known that my wife is my counsellor and adviser? Because I mak nae secret o' what I hae nae reason to be ashamed o'. I dinna ken hoo you feel, Mr Waldie, but I think it's the pleasentest thing on earth to be, as it were, compelled to alloo yersel to be taen care o', an' defended, an' nursed, an' petted, an' ruled, by a guid wife. In my opinion, to be loved by a wife is only the half o' oor richt. Ony woman may love a man—it's a woman's *trade* to love; but when you see a dear cratur takin the pains an' trouble o' governin' a' yer actions—ay and as it were, even yer very thoughts—lookin' wi' a keen and carefu ee after yer maist minute affairs, regulatin yer conduct, keepin yer siller, directin yer financial, domestic, personal, private, and public operations; an', in short, *thinkin* for ye—hoo is it possible for a man to see sae muckle care ta'en wi' him and his concerns without bein filled wi' gratitude and affection to her wha labours sae officiously for his guid?"

"Mr Andrew Todd," said the deacon, impatiently, "you are describin ane o' the maist pitifu' an' contemptible spirits that ever warmed the scaly body o' a reptile that has nae sting. What man wi' a spark o' independence in his breast would think o' resignin his judgment into the hands o' a woman? They are guid cratur in their ain place, an' baith interestin an' usefu when they are occupied in conductin the affairs o' their houses, obeyin the commands o' their husbands, an' ministerin to his slichtest wishes, as if every look were an act o' parliament; but, to stoop to mak a woman a counsellor, to gie her a vote in the great council o' the noble thoughts o' man's divine mind! Unheard o' humiliation! Why, man, a woman is only the twenty-fourth part o' a man, sein we hae, as the doctors say, twenty-four ribs; an' we hae the authority o' Scripture for sayin that, at the very best, she is only a help to man. She was, besides, the beginnin o' a' evil. An' yet this fractional thing, this help, this unlucky author o' the waes o' mortals, ye dignify an' raise up into the very place an' power o' yer inheritance frae Adam; reversin the order o' nature, degradin our noble sex, an' makin laughin-stocks o' a' married men."

"I'm no sure if there's muckle practical truth in a' this, deacon," said Andrew, smiling good-naturedly. "Suppose, for an instant, that, besides the satisfaction and pleasure I derive frae nestlin safely in the arms o' my wife's judgment, and courin aneath her protectin wing—whilk gies me, sometimes, a flap I like as weel as her kindest embrace—I hae discovered that her thoughts and reflections are a thousand times better than the boxmaster's—what sae ye to that, deacon? I hae seen an oaken tree twenty-four times

bigger than its parent, an' yet a it ever had to thank the auld stock for was an acorn. Sae, in place o' only bein a twenty-fourth part, as you say, o' man, I am satisfied I hae scarcely a twenty-fourth part o' my wife's mind; and will onybody tell me, that a wise counsellor should be rejected, because she happens to be dressed in petticoats?"

"Yes, Mr Todd, I will tell you that," replied the deacon. "The private sodger has dootless often a mind superior to the general's; but he maun still keep the ranks. Mind is naething in this affair—station is everything. Look at Mrs Margaret Waldie—a cleverer cratur doesna exist—that is, in her ain way; but did she ever dare to counsel me? Did she ever presume to sway, or alter, in the slightest degree, the decrees o' my judgment? Na; she has owre muckle respect for the status and respectability o' her lord and maister. Rouse yersel, Andrew; tak example by me, man; act as your kind heart prompts in this friendly affair; and join me in the bond, whereby you'll incur nae danger."

"I am anxious to oblige ye, deacon," said Andrew; "but I scarcely think it wad be a gratefu part in me to repay a' Mrs Jean Todd's care o' me for twenty years, by actin, in this affair, upon my ain individual and responsible judgment. I might anger her, and she might withdraw frae me her countenance and protection: I might as weel lose the licht o' the sun. Ye dinna understand me, deacon; ye are made to command—I to obey. Pressure brings out the power o' the spring, and a' my happiness in life is produced and brought oot by the weight o' the judgment and authority o' Mrs Jean Todd. Her very mind seems to hae passed into mine; and I feel, when I'm thinkin her thoughts, a satisfaction I never feel when my ain are passin, like unbidden ghaists, through my mind. But surely I hae some excuse: is she no a noble cratur? How she maks a body shake wi' the sound o' her voice, and the solidity o' her thoughts! and hoo beautifully she softens doun the impression o' her authority, by restorin, wi' a half-severe, half-kind sort o' a smile, peculiar to hersel, the confidence she frightened awa by the mere force o' her superior intellect!"

"How beautifully, in short, Andrew," said the deacon, "are you *hen-pecked!*—that is the very soul and marrow o' a' ye hae uttered."

"Ay; and I glory to be pecked by such a *hen!*" cried Andrew, with sparkling eyes, and a real and unsophisticated appearance of triumph.

The deacon, notwithstanding of his anxiety to get the bond signed, laughed outright at this tremendous sally of the boxmaster's enthusiasm of servitude; but it was a laugh of derision, and he forgot that he was himself daily losing more feathers, by a silent process of pecculation going on under his wing, than were taken from Andrew by the conservative operation of his wife's billing and cooing.

"Then I suppose you will not refuse my request," said the deacon, "sein you glory in the *hen-peckin* it may produce. Seriously, will you comply wi' my request?"

"Seriously, deacon, I am inclined to oblige ye," replied Andrew, "if I could get Mrs Jean to agree to it. I'll try her this very night. I can say nae mair."

The deacon could make no more of him. He went home and reported the result of the negociation to his wife, who despaired of success; but overpowered her husband with thanks for what he had done. She had a secret wish that he should do more—viz., call upon Mrs Jean Todd herself, and solicit her. The difficulty of accomplishing this was to herself apparent; but she was determined to carry her point in some way or another; so she straightway began to weep bitterly, crying that her father would be ruined; but never hinting any remedy for her distress. This paroxysm of affected grief produced its usual effect upon the proud husband; who, hard as a rock when attempted to be dictated to, was as weak as a child when

attacked with tears, and an apparent helpless subjugation to his high will. He took the weeping wife in his arms, and asked her what more he could do to assist her father in this emergency.

"There's only ae way," said she, wiping her eyes. "There's just ae remedy for our case."

"What is it, my love?" said the deacon.

"I canna mention't," said the cunning wife. "It's against a' the high and proud feelins o' yer noble nature."

"But we are sometimes obliged to sacrifice our feelins," said the gratified deacon. "Speak, my dear Margaret; ye ken wha ye're speakin to. What is yer remedy?"

"It's to ca' upon Mrs Jean Todd yersel," said she, holding away her head, while another burst of tears overtook her voluntarily.

The deacon started back in amazement. The request was against all the feelings of his nature. The proud stickler for marital rule was in an extraordinary position: first, his wife was governing him at that moment, unknown to himself; and, secondly, he was requested to sue, at the feet of a woman, for liberty to her husband to act as he chose.

"Margaret," said the deacon, "you, I'm sure, dinna ask me to overturn, at ae blow, a' the principles o' my life, conversation, and conduct?"

"Na, Murdoch," said she, throwing her arms round his neck, and weeping again—"na, na; I dinna ask ye."

"But ye maybe wish it, my dear Peggy," replied he, whimpering. "Necessity is a great power: maybe ye feel compelled to wish it."

"Maybe I do," said the wife, with another burst.

"Weel, Peggy, dry up yer tears, my love," said the conquered lord; "I'll awa to Mrs Jean Todd."

And he was as good as his word. Away he went, to recognise that authority in a wife which he so heartily despised, and to which he was himself, at the very moment, bowing his head. He took the bill with him, with the view of taking advantage of a compliance upon the instant, as he feared the effects of a night's reconsideration. He found the couple in a curious position. They were sitting, one on each side of the fire. Mrs Jean Todd had on her spectacles; but her book was lying on the table. Mr Todd was apparently doing nothing; but he was thinking more deeply, and with more difficulty, than was his partner, who was occupied doubtless in digesting what she had been reading. Mr Todd was, in truth, at that very moment, in the very act of endeavouring to call up courage to tell his wife the import of the deacon's request, and to make some attempt at supporting his petition. A few words had passed previous to the entry of the deacon.

"I had a lang sederunt wi' our worthy deacon the day," said Andrew. "He's no an ill body, the deacon. I canna forget the trouble he took on my appointment to the honourable office o' boxmaster."

"It was I that made ye boxmaster, Andrew," said Mrs Jean Todd. "I commanded the suffrages o' the hail corporation. Deacon Waldie couldna hae opposed me. I was at the blind side o' the electors, through their wives; and what man could hae dared to compete wi' the electors' wives when they were determined to vote for me? The deacon professes to laugh at *our* authority. Puir man!—he forgets, or doesna see, that there's no a man in the hail corporation wha is mair ruled, and mair dangerously ruled, by his wife, than he is. She'll ruin him; and that ye'll sune see. Nae tradesman could stand her extravagance; and, I understand, she cunningly contrives to get him to assist *her* friends, and to despise and disregard his ain. Hoo different is my conduct! Your friends, Andrew, I hae assisted; and the only thing I ever left to your unassisted judgment, was the benefitin o' mine."

This sensible speech had, as the sun does the fire, extinguished Andrew's mental cogitations, and put out his courage. A silence had reigned for several minutes, when Mr Deacon Waldie entered. Drawing in a chair, he commenced—

"The boxmaster would doubtless be tellin ye, madam," said he, "that I wanted a sma' favour aff him. My wife's father requires a bill for intromissions the noo to the extent of twa hunder pounds, and the employers insist upon twa securities. They micht hae been content wi' mysel; but, seein they hae refused my single name, I hae asked Andrew to gie his, as a mere matter o' form, along wi' my ain. I dinna doot" (looking into Mrs Jean Todd's face, and attempting to laugh) "that ye may hae *some* influence wi' the boxmaster. He's quite *against* it," (looking to Andrew, and winking—a device observed by the quick-eyed dame,) "though there's nae danger; and I hae, therefore come at ance to the fountain-head o' a' authority. Just say to the boxmaster, that he ought sae far to oblige a freend; and the bill, which I hae here in my hand, will be signed in an instant."

This speech was understood in an instant by Mrs Jean Todd. The manner of her husband previous to the entry of the deacon—the deacon's visit so soon after the meeting, his speech, his wink, and altogether—satisfied her that her husband was inclined to sign the bill, and that they had laid their heads together to accomplish their object by the manœuvre to which they had thus resorted. Her pride and honesty made her despise these underhand and crooked schemes; but her prudence prevented her from shewing either her penetration or her feelings. There was one thing, however, which she was determined not to countenance. She knew that Deacon Waldie despised, and, indeed, openly, and at all times, and often in her own presence, denounced the husband who allowed himself to be dictated to by his wife; and now he was in the very act of proving that her husband was worthy of that denouncement, and that she herself was the individual who, by exercising authority over her husband, had degraded him, and rendered him the subject of the deacon's scorn. This hurt her beyond bearing; but she was determined that she should not recognise this imputed authority. At the same time, she could not allow her husband to be ruined; and the question was, how she should act in these trying circumstances? Her quick mind was soon at work. For some time she contrived to prevent an awkward silence from sitting down upon them and producing embarrassment; and this she accomplished by putting a few insignificant questions to the deacon regarding his father-in-law, while she was deliberating with herself what she was to do, and how she was to escape from the dilemma in which she was placed.

In the first place, she caught her husband's eye, through which the charm of her authority could generally be very easily sent. She endeavoured to retain his glance, and to shew that she was decidedly opposed to this scheme, and saw through all its bearings. Without altogether losing this hold of Andrew, she directed a prudent and cautious speech to the ears of the Deacon.

"I winna affect, Mr Deacon Waldie," said she, "notwithstanding I hae often heard yer sentiments on the subject o' the authority o' wives—I winna affect either to be ignorant o' my husband's affairs, or to be careless o' what concerns baith him and me. I will say further, that I dinna hesitate to gie him a guid advice when I think he requires it; for out o' many counsellors comes wisdom; and, as Solomon says, 'every purpose is established by counsel.' Though 'a good wife,' says the same wise man, 'layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands holdeth the distaff,' her business doesna finish there; for he adds, that 'the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no fear of spoil.' But there's a limit to a wife's interference.

You say my husband has already declared his opinion"—(looking at Andrew)—"why then should I be asked to overturn the resolution o' his ain mind and judgment? If my advice had been asked in time, it would hae been given; but I canna think o' endeavourin to overrule my master, when ance his mind is made up and his resolution fixed."

She rose as she finished this judicious speech, and left the room, kindly bidding the deacon good night. Both the men were surprised. The deacon was chagrined. The boxmaster was left in great doubt and perplexity. Both had great cause; for the first was caught in his own snare, and the latter had had thrown upon him a superabundance of power and authority in forming his own judgments that he never got awarded to him before. The deacon was determined not to lose his ground. *The dame had left the matter in the hands of the boxmaster.* That was a great point gained; and he accordingly set about to convince Andrew that he was left at liberty to do as he chose. But the worthy boxmaster had very great doubts and scruples upon the subject, and wished to follow Mrs Jean, to consult her in private. To this again the deacon could not give his consent; but continued to pour into the ears of the irresolute boxmaster all the arguments he could muster, to satisfy him that the construction he had put upon Mrs Jean Todd's speech was favourable to the exercise of his liberty, at least in this case. The position was scarcely denied by Andrew; but he could not get out of his mind the expression of his wife's eye. He had read in it a denial and a reproof. At the same time, he could not reconcile it with her speech, which was entirely different from anything of the kind he had ever witnessed. Her opinions were always ready and decided; and he never saw her shrink from declaring a difference of sentiment, when she entertained an opinion different from his. Why then did she in this instance depart from her ordinary course? The question was difficult to answer. It seemed that she *did actually* in a manner leave it to himself. The deacon seemed to be right in his construction; and his arguments were almost unanswerable.

"If," said he, "Mrs Jean Todd had been hostile to this measure, would she not have declared it *manfully*, as is her uniform practice in similar cases?"

The boxmaster could not answer the question satisfactorily; and the deacon, continuing his arguments, persuasions, promises, and flatteries, at last got the victim to put his name to the bill. Upon the instant the door opened, and Mrs Jean Todd appeared before them. She went forward to the table, and laid her hand upon the document.

"Is that your signature, sir?" said she, looking calmly at her husband.

"Ou, ay—I believe, yes—I did put my name to that paper," replied Andrew, in great agitation; "but I thoct ye left me to do as I chose when ye gaed out. If ye didna want me to sign it, ye shouldna hae left the room."

"A bill is no a bindin document," continued she, without seeming to attend to what the boxmaster said, "until it be delivered. It's no delivered sae lang as it is in my hands; an' never will be delivered by me sae lang as I recollect the words o' the wise man o' the east, wha said—'If thou be surety for thy friend, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth.' Yet this paper is no my property. The stamp is yours, though my husband's name is still his." Turning to the boxmaster, who was shaking and retaining his breath with pure fear—"Do ye stand by this, sir," said she, in a commanding voice, which increased his fear, "or do ye repent o't?"

"I repent o't," replied Andrew, with dry lips, and a gurgling of the throat, as if he had been on the eve of choking.

"Then, I fancy," continued Mrs Jean Tod, "ye would like yer name back again?"

"Ou ay—surely," replied Andrew.

"Well, then," said she, as she with the greatest coolness took up her scissors that hung by her side, and with affected precision cut away his name; "there it is"—handing it to him. And turning to the deacon—"The rest is yours, sir—I hae nae richt to meddle wi' yer name—there's yer paper"—returning to him the mutilated bill.

At this operation the deacon stared with a stupified look of wonder and contempt. He had never before seen so cool an example of female rule and marital weakness; and his pride, his selfishness, and his spite were all roused and interested by the extraordinary sight. He was too much affected for indulging in a vulgar expression of feelings which could not adequately be expressed by mere language. Taking up his hat, and casting upon the boxmaster a look of sovereign contempt, and upon Mrs Jean Todd one of anger, he bowed as low as a deacon ought to do, and left the room. The circumstance produced no very unpleasant consequences to either the boxmaster or his wife. She, no doubt, reproved him for his stupidity; but the point of her wrath was turned away, by the repentance and soft words of her husband, who promised never to do the like again. He had, besides, some defence, arising out of her dubious conduct, which, though quite easily understood, he could not well comprehend. The naivete of his statement, that "she shouldna hae left him unprotected," was quite enough to have mollified a much sterner woman than Mrs Jean Todd, and during that same night they were a far happier couple than Deacon Waldie and his fair spouse.

When the Deacon went home, and reported the extraordinary proceeding to his obedient wife, the grief it occasioned was in some degree overcome, on the part of the husband, by the favourable contrast it enabled him to form between the boxmaster and his wife, and him and his obedient spouse. Mrs Waldie did all in her power to aid the operation; but she did not forget the bill, which her father was pressing hard to procure.

"Surely every man's no under the rule o' his wife," said she, with a view to leading to another cautioner.

"No, God be thanked!" said the deacon—"there are *some* independent men i' the world, besides mysel. Every husband's no *hen-pecked*. Every man that has a wife doesna 'glory' in being 'pecked by *such* a hen.'"

"There's William M'Gillavry," said the sly wife, in a soft and unassuming tone. "*He* is independent o' his wife."

"Do ye mean, Peggy, that I should ask him to sign the bill?"

"Na," replied she, "I dinna say that; I merely meant that he was an independent man like you, wha, if *ye* asked him to do it, wouldna refuse on such a ground as the want o' consent o' his wife. Oh, what will my puir father do? I canna live if he is in sorrow and perplexity." (Weeping.) "I saw William M'Gillavry yesterday. He asked kindly for ye. Ye haena visited him for a lang time. Twa husbands sae like each other, might meet oftener, and twa wives, wha agree in the ae grand point o' submittin to the authority o' their lords and masters, might, wi' advantage, be greater gossips than we hae been."

"Might I try William, think ye, Margaret?" said he.

"My puir advice canna be o' muckle avail to ye," said she; "ye ken best yersel; but I think, *if* he were asked, he wadna refuse the sma' favour."

"I see you wish me to try him, Peggy," said he—"and I *will* try him."

Away hastened the deacon to William M'Gillavry. He found him at home, and, as a deacon, was well received. Having opened the subject to him, he found that M'Gillavry was not inclined to become cautioner, unless he got put into his hands some security, that, in the event of his being called upon to pay the money, he might, in the

end, be safe. This proposition was not expected by the deacon, who did not possess any portable security that he could give. He endeavoured to get his friend to be satisfied with his own obligation, to keep him scathless against all the effects of his obligation; but the other would not agree to this, and, pretending to be called away by some one, left the room for a little, promising to be back instantly. In the meantime, the deacon heard a conflict of words in an adjoining apartment, in the course of which several half sentences met his ear. The wordy war was between William M'Gillavry and his wife. Her notes were shrill and high, and repeatedly she said—"Get my brother John's bill frae him"—"that will do"—"he, puir fallow! canna pay't, at ony rate, and I want to save him frae the hands o' the law." The deacon did not understand this broken conversation; but he could easily perceive that his friend was taking the advice of his wife. The words of old Fleming's ballad of evil wives came into his mind:—

"An evil wyfe is the werst aught
That ony man can haif,
For he may never sit in saught
Unless he be hir sklauif."

As he muttered the last words, forgetful of his own case, his friend entered.

"My wife's brither," said he, "has a bill in your corporation's box for £250. You can impledge that in my hands, and I'll sign yer father-in-law's security."

"The corporation's property's no mine," answered the deacon; "I hae, besides, nae power owre't—the bill's i' the box, an' Mr Andrew Tod has the key."

"I ken that," replied the other, (who was a dishonest man,) with a knowing wink; "but ye can easily get haud o' the paper, an' I'll gie ye a back letter that I winna use't unless I'm obliged to pay yer father-in-law's debt. Naebody will ever hear o't."

The proposition did not altogether please the deacon, who, though very far from being an upright man, did not care about his frailty being known to another. He said he would think of what had passed between them, and came away. His wife, when he came home, was waiting in the greatest anxiety. Her father had called in the meantime, and told her, that, if he did not get the bill immediately, with two good names upon it, he would be put in jail. This alarmed his daughter, who, if she could save her father, cared little for the ruin of her husband. She heard with deep anguish the announcement of another disappointment. Having been weeping before he came in, her eyes were red and swollen, and the bad intelligence again struck the fountain of her tears, and made her weep and moan bitterly. The deacon was moved at the picture of distress. He had not told her William M'Gillavry's proposition, but only simply that he had refused, unless adequate security were put into his hands. His wife's grief wrung from him every satisfaction he could bestow; for he could not stand and witness the sorrow of his tender and obedient partner, while there remained any chance of ameliorating her anguish.

"There is ae way, Peggy, o' gettin this affair managed," said he, at last.

"What is that?" said she, looking up, and throwing back her curls, which, amidst all her grief, were never forgot.

"William M'Gillavry's wife's brother," said he, "is awin our corporation £250; and his bill for that sum is in our corporation box. He says he would sign the bill to your father, if I gave him his brother-in-law's bill to hauld in security; but I'm no quite sure if that wad be honest."

"Thae things lie far out o' a weak woman's way," said she. "We haena the power o' mind possessed by you men; but, if I were entitled to speak a word on the subject, I would say there was nae dishonesty whar there was nae wrang. Ye ken the signin o' my father's bill's a mere form; and, if William M'Gillavry's brither-in-law's bill were taen

out o' the box, it would just be put back again. Correct me, my dear Murdoch, if ye think me wrang."

"I dinna think ye're far wrang, Peggy," said the deacon; "but hoo is William M'Gillavry's brither-in-law's bill to be got out o' our corporation box? There's the difficulty—and I needna ask a woman how that's to be got owre."

"Na, Murdoch—ye needna ask me that question," replied the wife. "It's far beyond the reach o' my puir brain; but, if it's in the power o' ony mortal man to say how a difficulty o' that kind's to be mastered, it is in that o' Murdoch Waldie. Maybe ye may gie't a cast through yer powerfu mind. Oh! if ye saw my distractit faither! He left me just as you cam in, wi' the tears o' sorrow rinnin doun his auld cheeks. Will ye think o't, my dear Murdoch?" (embracing him.) "What's weel intended canna be wrang; and what's planned by a mind like yours canna fail."

"I couldna get the key frae Andrew Todd," said the gratified deacon, "unless I told him an untruth."

"A lee for guid has been justified," said the wife. "Rahab was approved for hiding the spies, and denyin their presence; but I couldna ask ye to imitate Rahab. I hae nae richt to dictate to my husband."

"But wouldna ye wish me, my dear Peggy, to stretch a point to get yer faither's tears dried up, and yer ain stopped? Dinna hesitate, Peggy—speak yer mind bauldly—I'll forgie ye."

"Ou ay," whimpered the gentle dame. "If Rahab was justified, sae will Murdoch Waldie be forgiven."

"Weel—I'll try the boxmaster again," said the deacon.

Next day, accordingly, he threw himself in the way of Mr Andrew Todd. The boxmaster had been in the corporation hall, and was returning home to deposit the key of the box in the place where he kept it. The deacon got him inveigled into a public house, where, when they had seated themselves, he saw that Mr Todd was blushing scarlet, doubtless at the recollection of the scene thar had taken place the day before.

"Ye needna be ashamed, Andrew," said the deacon, "at the conduct of Mrs Jean Todd. Ye werena to blame—I assolzie ye. Think nae mair o't. You can just sign a fresh bill. I'll buy the stamp round the corner at Dickson's, an' we can draw it out here."

"I beg yer pardon," replied Andrew; "I maunna get into that scrape again. I'll never resist the authority o' Mrs Jean Todd mair on earth. To her I owe my boxmastership—my trade—my status—my health—my happiness—and a' that's worth livin for in this evil world; and she will never hae it to say again, that I'm no gratefu for the care she taks o' me, and the love she bears to me. Let the warld say, if they like, that I am hen-pecked—I dinna care."

"Weel, weel," replied the deacon; "we were speakin o' bills. Are ye quite sure that ye haena allowed the days o' grace in Templeton's bill to expire? There's indorsers there; and if it is as I suspect, ye've lost recourse, and may be liable for the debt."

"Merely on us!" cried the terrified Andrew. "It's impossible. Dinna say't. Let me count." (Using his fingers.) "Count, deacon—count, man."

"I think we had better see the bill itsel," cried the deacon. "Where's the key?"

"Here it is," replied the simple boxmaster, taking it out.

"Give it to me," said the deacon, taking it out of Andrew's hand—"we'll sune see if the bill's past due."

Waldie hurried out of the room, telling Andrew, as he went out, that he would come back, and inform him how the fact stood. The mind of the boxmaster was now too much occupied about the danger of having allowed the days of grace to pass without intimation to the indorsers on the bill, to have an space left for doubting the honesty of the

deacon. The suspicion of having been cajoled never approached him; he sat and sipped the liquor that lay before him, occupied all the time in a brown study, with the thought continually rising—"What will Mrs Jean Todd say to my stupidity, in making myself responsible for the amount of Templeton's bill? It will ruin me; and a' her care and prudence will in an instant be scattered to the winds." He still sat expecting the deacon to return with the required information. Half an hour passed, and no deacon came; but a messenger came with a note, stating that all was quite safe, and that, as something had occurred to prevent the writer from returning to the tavern, he had sent that intelligence, to ease his mind, and that he would return the key in the course of the day. Andrew's mind was relieved by this statement; he paid the tavern-keeper for the liquor, and went away, to resume his ordinary occupations.

At dinner-time he went home; and, during the meal, he began talking again about Deacon Waldie.

"After a', said he, "he is a guid cratur, the deacon. After the usage he got here last nicht, wha could hae thocht he wad hae taen ony interest in my affairs?"

"Ye dinna require an assistant," replied Mrs Jean Todd, "sae lang as I live."

"That's true," replied Andrew; "but the deacon has dune for me what ye couldna hae dune."

"What is that?" inquired the wife.

"He apprised me o' the danger I stood in," replied the boxmaster, "anent Templeton's bill, that's in the corporation box. I had forgotten the date o' its becomin due, and he brocht it to my mind. A's safe yet."

The very word "bill" made Mrs Todd prick up her ears.

"I hae lang thocht," replied she, "that yer corporation papers, at least yer bills, which require greater care than the rest, should be placed here, under my protection. The circumstance that has occurred this day proves that I am richt. Let us awa to the hall this instant, and bring hame a' the papers that are valuable, and for which you may be responsible. Is the key on the hook?"

"No; but I'm on the hook," muttered Andrew to himself, as he began for the first time to suspect he had been duped. "No," said he aloud.

"Give it to me, then," said she. "It will be in yer pocket, dootless."

Andrew began to exhibit symptoms of fear, which were in an instant perceived and understood by the quick-eyed dame, who was accustomed to *look* for indications of that kind. She saw that something was wrong. He remained silent, and his agitation increased as she fixed upon him her piercing, relentless eye.

"Give me the key, man," said she, in an angry tone.

He still remained silent; his agitation increased, and he trembled in every limb.

"There's something wrang, Andrew," said she. "Tell me what it is. I'm no angry. By tryin to conceal it, ye may ruin us baith; by tellin me, we may hae a chance o' bein saved. Come, now, has Deacon Waldie the key?"

"Ay," said Andrew, in a low tone. "He asked me for't, to see if the bill was past due, and said he would come back wi't; but he never made his appearance."

The good dame said not a word. She saw the necessity for promptitude, and, running to her bedroom, hurriedly dressed herself. In a few minutes she was on her way to the corporation hall. In a few minutes more she arrived; and, having got admittance, placed herself in a recess, where the incorporation box was deposited, and so disposed herself as that she might see whether any person interfered with the treasury. In a short time, Deacon Waldie entered the hall, and, with secret furtive steps, approached the box. He looked about him, but did not perceive the dame, who, as she saw him approach, retired back farther into the recess. He took out the key and applied it to the

lock. It was now time for Mrs Todd to save her husband. Starting quickly out of the recess, she walked solemnly and dignifiedly up to the official, before whom she presented herself with a low curtsy.

"How are you, Mr Deacon Waldie?" said she, repeating her curtsy, and looking at him with an eye that pierced him to the heart.

The deacon, who was a great stickler for etiquette, felt himself, as he saw the dame curtsying before him, compelled to return the compliment; but the consciousness of guilt, the cutting satire of the dame's courteous demeanour, the surprise at seeing her there, and his fear of being exposed, all operated so strongly, that his bow was checked, and transformed into a low cringe, making him appear only half his natural size; while the consciousness of rectitude and the superiority of virtue swelled out the breast of his silent accuser, and added apparently to her physical proportions. Recovering himself in some degree—

"I was just about to examine our corporation papers," said he, irresolutely. "I like to assist Mr Todd in his official capacity, while you keep him right in his private affairs."

"Between the twa," replied the dame, without changing her countenance, "he maun be weel taen care o'."

As she said this, she quietly and deliberately took the key out of the lock; and into a large red cloth pocket which hung alongside of a pair of scissors, with which the deacon was already well acquainted, (having tested their sharpness,) she deposited the important instrument. She then made another low curtsy.

"Guid day to ye, Mr Deacon Waldie!" she said, as she departed—"mak my best respects to Mrs Deacon Waldie, and to her worthy father."

The deacon stood stiff with amazement, looking after the erect, dignified figure of Mrs Jean Todd, as she walked slowly along the hall of the incorporation to the door.

He looked off in the best way he could; but she, with erect body and noble carriage, directed her steps homeward, where she found her husband in a state of intense fear and anxiety, both on account of the danger he was exposed to, and of the meeting that was about to take place with his wife. On the latter account, there might apparently have been little reason for apprehension; for their meetings were very unlike those mentioned in the old song—

"Then up scho gate-ane mekle rung,
And the gudeman he maid to the door;
Quoth he, 'Deme, I sall hald my tung,
For an we fecht, I ll get the woir.'"

Her mode of conducting her rule was different *toto cælo*. She walked into the house with the same erect carriage she usually exhibited, especially when upon duty, and closing the door after her, without using any such jealous precaution as turning the key in the lock—a mode of enforcing the conjugal authority she despised—she went up to the table where her husband sat with his hand upon his brow. That flag of distress she paid little attention to; for she had often before seen Andrew endeavour to make her own pity plead the cause of his imprudence.

"Here is the key of the treasury-box, Mr Todd," said she.

Andrew was greatly relieved; but wonder took the place of his fear, for he could not conceive how his wife could so soon have got the key out of the hands of the deacon—and yet for certain the key was before his eyes.

"See you that ring?" continued the dame, holding out a steel key-hoop on which were hung a score of keys, shining as bright as silver, from the eternal motion to which they were exposed in the red pocket of their mistress.

"Ay, weel do I see it," replied Andrew, "and weel do I ken't. It is by that magic ring that a' my guids and

gear are girded and prevented frae fa'in into the staves o' that bankruptcy and ruin I threatened this day to bring upon them."

The dame replied nothing to the remark of her husband, though she was inwardly well pleased to see him penitent; but, opening the spring clasp, she deliberately placed the treasury-box key upon the ring, along with the score of others that had hung there for a score of years. She did not deign to accompany this act by a single word of objurgation. Her faith rested altogether upon the ring, and to have tried to add to the security it afforded her, by impressing her husband with a deeper sense of his imprudence, appeared to her to be sheer supererogation. Opening the entrance to her red "pouch," she consigned, with a suitable admonitory jingle, the whole bunch to the keeping of that huge conservatory of the virtues of "hussyskep." She then resumed her ordinary duties, and Andrew was delighted to have "got off," as he inwardly termed his relief, with so easily-borne a reproof of his weakness and imprudence.

The circumstances we have here narrated became, some time after, known to the public, through what channel it would be difficult to say, although it is not improbable that the boxmaster, vain of the protecting care of his wife, had given some hint of it, which, having been taken advantage of by Deacon Waldie's enemies, gave rise to reports, and latterly to a true exposition of the whole affair. The effect of such a transaction upon the credit of any man, could not fail to be ruinous. In a very short time, Deacon Waldie became suspected and shunned—no one would trust him, few would deal with him; and, before the termination of the period of his deaconship, he failed—falling thus a victim to that female domination he so much dreaded, and for submitting to which he so much despised his friend the boxmaster.

The fate of Mr Todd was signally different. At the end of the period of his office, there was a special meeting called of the trade, for the purpose of making a vote of thanks to their official, for saving the incorporation box from spoliation; and presenting him with a small piece of plate, in commemoration of his services. This was a delicate matter. The members knew well to whom they owed the obligation; but they could not, in a public hall, declare that their boxmaster was assisted in his official capacity by his wife, and, therefore, they resolved upon taking no notice of the *real boxmaster*; who, however, like all good wives, would be gratified by the notice that was taken of her husband. The vote of thanks was, accordingly, moved by the chairman, and supported by a very good speech. Mr Todd rose to reply:—

"Gentlemen," he said, "ye maunna think that I am sae blind as no to see what is yer true meanin, concealed, though it be, under this thick veil of courtesy and delicate regard to my feelings. Ye want to try to conceal frae me that ye ken how muckle baith you and I are obliged to a sensible and discreet woman; and ye hae twa reasons for this. *first*, ye dinna like to acknowledge that ye are indebted to a woman for savin frae the hands o' the spoiler the incorporation box; and, *secondly*, ye dinna like to say that yer boxmaster is under the kindly care and protection o' his guidwife. Now, as to the first, I leave it in yer ain hands; but as to the second, I will free ye frae a delicacy and difficulty, for I here acknowledge and declare, wi' pride and pleasure, that Mrs. Jean Todd is my counsellor and adviser in a' my affairs, baith public and private; and mony a time she has kept me frae that ruin whilk my ain wit and wisdom never could hae saved me frae. I dinna need to say that it was that admirable woman who saved the incorporation box: the thing is already owre the town, and dootless kened to ye a', and I warrant ye also to yer wives. Why, then, should I accept o' honour I never wrought for, and couldna hae merited by a the power and skill o'

my pair abilities? 'The labourer is worthy o' his hire. 'Honour to him to whom honour is due.' I therefore move that the thanks ye intended for me should be offered to Mrs Jean Todd—to whom also, wi' your permission, I would suggest that the piece o' silverplate should be presented."

This speech produced much laughter throughout the hall. Some humorous member relished the idea, and, standing up, seconded the boxmaster's motion.

"A' our difficulty has vanished," he began; "and glad am I to see that the honour we intended for the *real* conservator o' our corporation-box may be, through the noble spirit o' our *nominal* boxmaster, communicated without the intervention o' a deputy. I second Mr Todd's motion, because I admire his spirit, and because I rejoice in an opportunity of doing justice to thae great conservators o' our sex—the strong-minded, gaucy, thrifty, and loving wives o' Scotland, to whom our very nation (if it were kened) awes the character it has acquired owre the face o' the earth, for its prudence, its honesty, and its trust-worthiness. Weel do I ken that the dear craturs hae suffered for their exertions in the cause o' our sex, and their authority has been attempted to be put an end to by drunken caitiffs, wha, wantin the nobility o' mind to admire and *serve* wham they canna equal, blaw up their pot-companions against petticoat authority, by dubbin them *hen-pecked*, forgettin, the wretched craturs, that that very hen supplies often the egg, at least clocks to preserve it for future increase. The very men the dear craturs feed, and clothe, and protect, and cherish, sing in the pot-houses that they want their liberty—

"'Becaus their wifs hes maistery,
That they dar nawayis cheip;
Bot gif it be in privity,
Quhan their wifs are in sleip."

And, while the sang is birrin through the fumes o' the ale, thae very wives are busy toilin to hae the singers weel fed, cled, and cared for, in a' their concerns. What a noble example, on the other side o' the question, has Mr Todd this day exhibited! Wives are generally honoured through their husbands. He shall be honoured through his wife. What I hae said, I believe will meet wi' the approbation o' this meetin; but I'm no sae sure o' the success o' what comes—because I propose to tak a sma' liberty wi' the English language, and, by a kind o' a trope or figure o' speech, to keep the name, while we boldly change the thing. I'm weel aware that our minutes bear that *Mr Todd* is our boxmaster; but we ken better than that, and we, whase trade it is to change colours, can hae nae difficulty in reconcilin the tints. I therefore move, as an amendment, that the piece o' plate be presented at once to Mrs Jean Todd, *our boxmaster*."

The suggestion took; the humour was relished; the minutes were altered; the name of Mrs. Jean Todd was substituted for Mr. John Todd; and the books of the incorporation bore, and bear to this day, that the plate had been presented to Mrs. Jean Todd, "*their boxmaster*," as a memorial of the gratitude of the trade for her exertions in saving the incorporation's treasury.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SNUFF-MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

THE snuff-miller of Ballochgreen, Walter Morrison, was one of the crustiest old fellows we have ever had the misfortune to meet. Gruff, stern, surly, and morose, he was the terror of his neighbourhood—the dread of all who came in contact with him; for, besides possessing this unhappy temper, he was a man of immense stature, and great bodily strength—qualities which, combined with the former, made him altogether a most formidable person. Nobody, in fact, who had the smallest grain of prudence in their composition, or who had the smallest regard for their own personal safety, would ever think of quarreling with him. If they did, they would certainly come off but second best; for old Walter struck in a minute, and generally floored his customer at the very first off-go. This propensity to settle arguments by the reasoning of the fist, had cost Walter good round sums on frequent occasions, in the shapes of damages and *solutiums* to the parties injured; but the habit was incurable. The disposition to strike, to have recourse to violence in all cases of opposition, or indeed of provocation of any sort, was perfectly unconquerable. The only effect of the prosecutions he was subjected to, from time to time, for his assaults, was to render him more cautious as to the when and where of his castigations, and to make him prefer the absence of witnesses when he would indulge in the recreation of pounding an offender.

Now, although of this unhappy temperament, Walter had not the apology of adversity, or of straitened circumstances, to plead for it. He was rich, very rich, and this wealth he had realized by prosecuting the business of a snuff-miller, which he carried on to a large extent. In his family affairs and relations, Walter had not been so fortunate. He had had many children; but all of them had died prematurely, excepting one. This one was a daughter, Margaret—a pretty, lively, and most amiable girl. Like other young women, Margaret was fond of a little gaiety, of mingling in society, and not averse to the attentions of her equals of the other sex; but these were enjoyments from which she was almost wholly debarred, by the cross-grained temper of her father, who, without assigning any reason for it, would neither allow her to go abroad, nor permit those whom she might wish to see to visit her. He would permit of no visitations, no parties at his house, and, above all things, of no one who might stand in the relation of a lover to his daughter. He could not endure the thoughts of her marrying; and, on this account, entertained a most particular aversion to the visits of young men, which, under these circumstances, never took place but when they could be made without the knowledge of the old boy. It was not necessary, however, that such correspondence as this should be concealed from the mother. Partaking little of her husband's nature, she wished her daughter to see as much of society as possible, and greatly disapproved of the unnatural restraint under which she was kept, and, most particularly, of her being denied all intercourse with the respectable young men of the neighbourhood, amongst whom she knew more than one whom she would gladly have seen the husband of her daughter. The consequence

of this sympathy of feeling between mother and daughter, was a confederacy, which had for its principal object to defeat the vigilance of Walter, in the matter of paying and receiving visits. But even the conjoined ingenuity of mother and daughter was not able to effect much in this way, after all, especially in the branch of giving parties; for the old boy was constantly in the way, rarely from home and yet it was only on these occasions that Margaret and her mother could dare to bring any one to the house; and even then, the proceedings required to be cleverly gone through, as Walter's absences were generally very short; and, if he had come in upon them, there would, to a certainty, have been mischief. If, therefore, tea was adventured on, on any of these occasions, it was edifying to see with what celerity the equipage was put down and removed. It was like magic. In an instant the table was covered with cups, saucers, &c., and in the same space of time were they swept away. Heigh! presto! begone! and there was not a fragment or vestige of the tea equipage or its appurtenances to be seen. This celerity of motion and expertness of action, we need hardly say, the mother and daughter had acquired by living under a constant terror of sudden irruptions from Walter, who, had he come in during the act of tea-drinking, would have been very apt to have pelted the cups and saucers at the heads of the visitors.

In proportion, then, to the strictness of the surveillance under which Walter kept his wife and daughter, was, as the reader will readily believe, their joy and satisfaction when any circumstance occurred which, by taking him from home for a night, secured them in one evening's entire and uncontrolled freedom. Of these they always availed themselves to give a party, composed of their most intimate friends; and they were generally very merry doings. There was abundance to eat and drink, together with all the other essentials to passing a happy and cheerful hour—music being often added, and the carpet occasionally lifted for a dance. Such opportunities for these enjoyments, however, were of rare occurrence—very rare; still they did happen sometimes, as we will now proceed more fully to instruct.

It chanced, once upon a time, that Walter Morrison was summoned to attend the circuit court, in the county town, as a jurymen. Now, the county town was distant from Walter's house somewhere about thirty miles; and their being no coach communication between the two places, he must, of necessity, perform the journey on his own pony—circumstances these which seemed to his wife and daughter calculated to secure his absence for one entire day and night at any rate; and great was the secret rejoicing of the two ladies at the delightful prospect. They determined to make the most of it; and, with this view, held frequent private conferences together, to resolve upon and adjust proceedings. It was some time (these consultations being entered into two or three days previous to Walter's departure) before they could determine precisely what to make of the approaching day of grace; but it was at length agreed that they should, as usual, give a party; with this difference, however, that it should be confined to young men—a few of the most respectable of that class amongst their neighbours. This choice of the material of the proposed

company, was the choice of Mrs Morrison, and was, no doubt suggested to the worthy woman by the natural desire of seeing her daughter put as much in the way as possible of meeting with a suitable partner. Whatever might have been her motives, however, such were the description of persons whom she proposed to entertain on the day of her husband's absence, and to her decision her daughter Margaret offered no objection. This settled, invitations, in the name of Mrs Morrison and her daughter, were quietly conveyed to some half-dozen young bachelors of their acquaintance, on the day preceding that on which Walter was to set out on his journey. This invitation bore, that the ladies would be most happy of the party addressed's company to tea on the following night at six o'clock; and the bearer of these messages was desired to hint, in each case, that Mr Morrison would be from home on the evening in question. This may seem to have been a superfluous and unnecessary piece of information; but it was by no means so, in reality—and the ladies knew this. They knew that nobody would come unless they were assured that Morrison *was* out of the way; and, moreover, some of them would have liked to have been assured also that he would be kept there—at least while they were under his roof; for every one of those who were invited on this occasion knew of and entertained the most profound respect for old Walter's prowess and ferocity. They would as soon have faced a Russian bear as have faced the old boy in any situation, or under any circumstances which might provoke his displeasure. The addenda, then, to the invitation of which we have spoken, it will be seen, was not at all without its use; in fact, it was necessary, to account for there being any party at all.

The invitations distributed, and all accepted, which they at once were—for both Mrs Morrison and her daughter were highly esteemed—such preparations as could be made, without catching the eye of Walter, were immediately commenced, and carried on with great vigour and spirit. But this circumspection was not long necessary. The morning of Mr Morrison's departure came; and on that morning he departed accordingly, looking as grim, when he mounted his pony, as one of the old warriors in Westminster Abbey, or some ancient German baron setting out on a throat-cutting expedition. The unhappy person on whose case he was going to sit in judgment was to be pitied, if any faith is to be put in looks; for he was the very personification of all that is merciless, and severe, and unforgiving. However, away he went, and the coast was clear for Margaret and her mother, who, on that event taking place, lost no time in completing their preparations. These preparations were, in the present instance, on a considerable scale, as it was determined to make a night of it—one of the merriest and happiest that had been seen. And to contribute to the accomplishment of this object, a fiddler was engaged, and a dance contemplated. For this purpose, the largest room in the house was selected; but there was considerable difficulty in preparing it for the occasion, on account of its being filled with large bags or sacks of snuff, which, for want of convenient stowage elsewhere, had been stowed in here to await transportation to the city on the following day. These unseemly incumbrances, however, were got rid of. The snuff-bags were crammed into every corner into which they would cram. A lot of them were thrust in below a bed that stood in a recess in the room; other parcels were stowed into the presses and closets that opened into the apartment—until the whole were fairly disposed of and out of sight. The reader may here imagine that we are more minute in our notice of these snuff-bags than there is any occasion for; but he will find, by and by, that they have more to do with our story than he would at present readily believe. However, to proceed. All preparations for the impending entertainment having been completed,

the two ladies, mother and daughter, and two female relatives who were living in the house, but of whom we forgot to speak before, attired in their best, awaited the arrival of their guests, in joyous anticipation of a merry and pleasant evening. And with equal happy anticipation their guests came. With countenances beaming with satisfaction, they popped rapidly in, one after the other, until the whole were assembled to the number of seven guests. The men were all bachelors, of course, and, if not all positively young, were, at least, the very oldest of them what may be called youngish. Such as they were, however, here they were, all seated around Mrs Morrison's tea-table; and a livelier, more facetious, or more hilarious little party, you could not have met anywhere. Every one was in higher spirits than another, and the laugh and the jest went merrily round, along with the tea and the toast. By and by, however, the sober and sedate joys of the tea-table gave way to a more noisy and obstreperous mirth. There came the drinking of healths, and the singing of songs, and all the other sights and sounds of a particularly happy and a particularly merry party. But, alas! who shall guarantee the continuance of any earthly felicity?—or who shall say to himself, of this I am secure? No one. None. At the moment Mrs Morrison's party had attained the zenith of their hilarity—just when they had begun really and truly to enjoy the spirit of the evening—a sudden scream from Margaret, who was, at the moment, in a situation to command a view of the short avenue that led up to the house, instantly arrested the mirth of the revellers, and threw them into the greatest alarm. They were soon made aware of the cause.

"My father! my father!" cried Miss Morrison, in the most dreadful agitation. "Oh, mother, mother! there's my father!"

"Your father, Miss Morrison! why, on our word, that is no joke, and that your friends will find, unless they make clean heels for it!" cried her mother, running in the greatest alarm to the window, to judge for herself of the alleged fact. The proceeding established the accuracy of her daughter's report. There, to be sure, was old Crusty, jogging leisurely up the avenue, and looking, if possible, crustier than ever. It was an appalling sight. What on earth had brought him home so soon? How, in all the world, had he accomplished so great a distance in so short a time? These were questions pertinent and curious enough, but which there was no time just now to propound or inquire into. The great and instant business in hand was escape, evasion, dispersion, concealment, avoidance, refuge—all or any of the expedients by which danger may be eschewed. This every one felt—but how was it to be done? There was no getting *out* of the house; for, from the house there was no egress excepting by the front door, and of this the old boy had the full command, so far as view went, as he rode up the avenue. Escape from the house, therefore, was impossible. The discovery of this fact, and the imminence of their peril, had all the effect on the party which might be expected. The ferment amongst them was extreme. They flew in all directions, like a parcel of rats amongst whom a terrier has been suddenly let loose, with blind and desperate eagerness, in search of holes and corners wherein to hide their devoted heads; but their distracted hurry and dreadful trepidation prevented all chance of success; and the only effect of their extreme anxiety to escape, was to keep them running confusedly up and down the room, crossing and recrossing each other, as if engaged in some strange, mad, irregular country dance. In the midst of this tremendous hurryburry stood the mother and daughter, with outstretched arms, endeavouring to catch the fugitives as they flew distractedly past them, in order to direct them to places of concealment; for, though greatly agitated themselves, they yet retained presence of mind sufficient to enable them at once to

recollect the various localities where they might be stowed, and to assist in so disposing of them. This the mother and daughter, after much exertion and much trouble, finally accomplished. A couple they packed below the bed, an individual they stuffed into a press, another they thrust into a closet, a third they squeezed into a locker, and so on, until all were removed out of sight; having previously required of each, in the most earnest manner, as they deposited him, not to make the slightest motion or noise in his place of concealment. Fortunately for Mrs Morrison and her refugees, old Crusty was in no great hurry to enter the house. He went to the stable with his pony, and with his own hand unsaddled him and rubbed him down. These operations performed, he further waited until he had seen the pony furnished with, and until he had seen him drink a pail of meal and water which he had ordered for him—proceedings these, on the part of old Walter, which gave his wife and daughter ample time, not only to pack away their friends, but to remove from the apartment every trace of the evening's festivities.

On matters being made all quiet, Mrs Morrison and her daughter took up seams apiece, placed a couple of chairs in the window, and, looking as demure as possible, commenced sewing with great apparent assiduity. They had not been thus employed a second, however, when, in despite of all the cautions they had given their concealed friends as to maintaining a perfect stillness in their several retreats, they were alarmed by strange noises suddenly arising at one and the same time in each and all of the depositories of the members of their party. These noises resembled those that proceed from persons struggling fiercely to suppress some overmastering convulsion. It might be either a laugh, a cough, or a sneeze. It could not be a laugh, however; for, in their present situation, there was very little to laugh at. Neither could it be a cough; for how should they be all inclined to cough at the same time? For the same reason it couldn't be a sneeze. But it could, though—and good and sufficient cause was there for it, and for the simultaneousness of feeling, as shall be shortly explained. In the meantime—to proceed methodically to our catastrophe—greatly alarmed by these threatened outbursts of sound, Mrs Morrison and her daughter, availing themselves of the instant of time that was yet left them before the appearance of papa, hastened to make the tour of their hidden friends, in order to warn them again of the necessity of maintaining a dead silence. In pursuance of this duty, Margaret opened the door of a closet two or three inches, in which was one of the noisiest of the party, and was about to beseech him to keep quiet, when she was rendered incapable of doing so, by the strangeness of the attitude and condition in which she found him. He was holding his nose firmly with his finger and thumb, and was almost black in the face with the violent efforts he was making to suppress a sneeze, that was relentlessly insisting on being distinctly expressed. But his face was not only discoloured by these severe efforts. It was also frightfully distorted by the agonies of the resistance which he was practising. He was making the most hideous grimaces.

"What is the matter, Mr Wilson?" whispered Margaret, in the greatest alarm, on seeing the condition of the sufferer. But the sufferer could not answer the question. He durst neither let go his nose nor open his mouth. He, however, finally got out, piecemeal, and by sudden jerks, the words, "The—snuff—the—snuff—oh!"

To a stranger, a person unacquainted with a certain particular, these words would have conveyed but little intelligence. To Margaret, they spoke volumes. They instantly flashed a bright and startling light on her comprehension. The closet into which the unfortunate sufferer was squeezed, was crammed full of sacks of snuff; and, from the smallness of the place, and its particular interior arrangement, his nose was forcibly held right over, or rather thrust into the midst

of at least a couple of hundred weights of black rappee; and powerful was the exhalation it emitted. The consequences were what we have described. It was a most unhappy predicament for all concerned; and, to render matters worse, every one of the gentlemen were placed in a precisely similar situation, and exposed to the same irresistible sneeze-provoking influence—there being snuff-bags in every one of their places of concealment; and the general result was, that one and all were seized with, and struggling, as if between death and life, to counteract the strong agonizing propensity to sneeze, which was threatening to tear their very heads asunder. But there was no help for it. It was too late to remedy the evil. The sufferers could not be relieved; for, at this moment, the old man's feet were heard upon the stair. In the next, he had entered the room. He was looking most appallingly grim. But there was nothing apparently wrong. The room was all orderly, and his wife and daughter were demurely seated at their seams. Even the sneezers were quiet; for they had become aware of the dreaded presence of Walter Morrison; but the effort must have been a dreadful one. Of the feelings of the mother and daughter at this critical, this tremendous moment, we leave the reader to judge. He will conceive what they were much more readily and more correctly than we could describe them; but we may say that they were most distressing, most agonizing; for they knew the snuff was in operation, and they feared, if they did not know also, where it would all end. They both struggled hard, however, to conceal their agitation from Walter, and to appear as cheerful and easy as possible; but in this they did not altogether succeed. He saw, at once, that there was something wrong, although he could not conceive what it was. He made no remark, however, on the subject; but sat down, and, to the great horror of both mother and daughter, desired that some supper might be brought him. Here, then, was the certain prospect of a sederunt; and that, too, under a full conviction that the sneezing of the refugees could not possibly be much longer suppressed. It was a most appalling predicament, and was one, besides, which the two unfortunate ladies had by no means anticipated; for they had not reckoned on Walter remaining an instant in the room. They thought he would have gone down immediately to the mill, to see what was going on there, as had been his invariable custom, on returning home, after ever so short an absence. But the Fates, in this instance, had ordered it otherwise. Down Walter sat, and supper Walter ordered. Up to this instant, not the slightest noise was emitted in any of the concealments. Their occupants were behaving admirably—heroically; although it must have been at the expense of great bodily suffering. But, alas! for poor human nature! When undergoing unremitting torture, a crisis must come. A point must be attained, beyond which it can no farther endure. This crisis was fast approaching, in the present case, in despite of all the sufferers themselves could do to postpone it. The first indications of the impending storm manifested themselves in certain short, abrupt, stifled sputterings. On hearing the first of these ominous sounds, which both mother and daughter knew to be sure preludes to more open sternutations—to be, in truth, the grumbling of Mount Etna previous to an eruption—they exchanged looks of horror, and both instantly commenced coughing as loudly as they could, in order to drown the incipient noises which were now fast rising around them in all quarters. The expedient, added to some vigorous shuffling of the feet, to which they had also recourse, succeeded, for a time, in preventing Walter's attention being attracted by the mysterious sounds in the apartment. But this could not last long. Neither it did. An open, undisguised, and tremendous sneeze, from a press, at length succeeded.

"What's that?" growled Walter, dropping his knife and

fork, which he was now in the act of plying, and starting fiercely to his feet—"what's that?" he repeated, looking hard at the place whence the extraordinary noise came. But he was left no time for further remark. Another sneeze, equally loud and vigorous, sounded the alarm in another quarter. He turned quickly round to this new scene of mystery. Another and another followed, all of determined character and sonorous tone, in various directions, keeping him wheeling round as if on a pivot, until he found that almost every receptacle in the apartment was occupied by a sneezer; but who they were, or how they had got there, was beyond his comprehension—nor had he yet directly asked. Perhaps the truth had flashed upon him. In the meantime, the sneezing, in place of terminating with the single sternutations already emitted, continued with increasing animation and spirit. It became now, in fact, general round the whole apartment, somewhat resembling the running fire of a regiment on a field day. The propensity had become uncontrollable, and, in despite of all considerations, behoved to be given way to. In the midst of all this sneezing stood Walter Morrison—an incarnation of amazement, anger, and revenge. Still he had neither said nor done anything; never asked the meaning of what he heard; nor given utterance to any exclamation or remark beyond the "What's that" already mentioned. He was evidently thinking what he should do—where he should begin, and how. His silence was portentous. At length he seemed to have made up his mind. Seizing an immense cudgel which stood in one of the corners of the apartment, he proceeded to one of the closets, flung open the door, and, catching the unfortunate sneezer it contained by the collar, dragged him, still sneezing violently, into the middle of the apartment.

"Where the devil are you from, sir?" shouted Walter, in his most ferocious tones; and, at the same time, brandishing his stick over the head of his victim. "Who or what brought you here?"

The person questioned would have willingly answered; but he could not—the fit of sneezing was still on him; and all he could do, therefore, was to look appealingly in the face of his interrogator, to deliver some abortive attempts at speaking, and then to give way to another hearty peal of sneezing. Walter could thus make nothing of him, as a conversable being, but he could as a punishable—and to this purpose he was about to proceed to apply him, when the other sneezers, sympathetically affected by the predicament of their unhappy associate, and in momentary expectation of sharing his fate, began to sneeze their way out of their respective holes and other places of concealment. Two sneezing heads emerged from beneath the bed—another sneezing head was thrust out of a press—another out of a closet; where they kept nodding and sneezing, and looking with dismal countenances on the appalling scene before them, without uttering, or being able to utter a word, or daring to venture further. The exhibition was a most ludicrous one, and would have excited the risibility of any man but Walter Morrison; but on him it produced no such result. The sudden protrusion of the nodding and sneezing heads, however, had one good effect: it distracted his attention from the unfortunate man whom he held in his grasp. In the number of the sneezers was their safety. This person, availing himself of Walter's momentary inattention, eluded his grasp, and, bolting from the room, rushed sneezing out of the house. The other sneezers, seeing the success of this bold measure, instantly determined on doing so likewise; they made a simultaneous rush to the door. Walter, in the meantime, having abandoned all idea of selecting individuals, directed his vengeance against the whole body generally and indiscriminately; and, in pursuance of this particular line of tactics, stood by with his stick, and showered his blows, without aim, but with abundance of

vigour, in amongst the flying sneezers. This part of the exhibition, however, was but of short duration; the latter soon got out of the apartment, and finally escaped, rushing in a string from the house, and maintaining, the while, a running fire, amongst the whole line, of that unhappy sneezing to which so large a share of the misfortunes of the evening were owing. And thus closed the tea-party of the snuff-miller's daughter.

THE INTERRUPTED CEREMONY.

HENRY MERTON was a young man of prepossessing appearance, lively disposition, and agreeable manners. A liberal education had put him in possession of all the accomplishments becoming his position in society, which was highly respectable; and a generous nature and honourable spirit completed his claims to the esteem and respect of all who knew him. Henry Merton's father was a merchant in Glasgow, and reputed wealthy. His concerns were extensive, his credit unbounded, and his character of the highest respectability. Mr Merton was, in short, one of the most eminent men in the city. On completing his education, the youth was apprenticed to a writer in Glasgow—it being his father's wish that he should follow the profession of the law as an advocate; but he wisely considered it a necessary preliminary step that his son should acquire, in the experience of a writer's office, a knowledge of the practical details of law proceedings before entering into the higher departments of the profession. In the views of his father, both present and future, the son himself cordially concurred. He had a strong inclination for the bar, and early discovered talents that promised to render him one of its most conspicuous and eminent members. In truth, few young men have started in life with fairer prospects, or who could have been warranted in indulging more sanguine hopes of success, than Henry Merton. On serving out his apprenticeship in Glasgow, the young man was sent to Edinburgh, to complete his legal education in the office of one of the most eminent advocates in that city.

While thus situated, Henry, who was now in his twenty-first year, became acquainted with a young lady of the name of Alice Morlington, the daughter of a gentleman of considerable landed property, who resided in Stirlingshire, and was, when Henry first became acquainted with her completing her education in Edinburgh. The two first saw each other at the house of a mutual friend; and from that moment, both felt that they had seen the person whom they could, if they did not already, love above all others. With these feelings, the acquaintance of the young pair soon ripened into intimacy, and that, again, speedily passed into love—a love as passionate and devoted as ever warmed the heart of two human beings. In the more ordinary cases of persons situated as they were with regard to their attachment to each other, the youth of the parties, and the still more important circumstance, that they had no resources of their own to look to, would render all idea of their marrying, the very extreme of imprudence and folly. But in their case there was fortune on both sides. Alice's father could give his daughter £10,000; and Henry's father, there was no doubt, could, with ease, give his son at least an equal sum, if circumstances should require and warrant any such advance. Under these circumstances, then, it will not seem so preposterous that the young pair contemplated an immediate union, and that they did not anticipate any objection on the part of their parents. They felt there could be none on the score of ineligibility as regarded each other. In fortune, and in their respective positions in society, they were equal. There was, in short, no discrepancies in their case to be reconciled, no difficul-

ties to be got over, save and except the consent of their parents; and this, they had no doubt, would readily be accorded them. In the meantime—that is, for about two years after their first acquaintance—Alice and Henry were content to remain as lovers; and in this relationship the latter visited Alice, with the full consent of her father, at his country seat, a beautiful and romantic residence in the shire already named. Here the young pair spent several happy weeks together, during the summers of 1753 and 1754—for of so old a date is our story—enjoying all the felicity which a virtuous attachment, and the unrestrained enjoyment of each other's society, were capable of affording. They wandered, side by side, with their hands locked together, by the woods and waters of Bargardine, breathing to each other vows of constancy and love, and looking forward, with bounding hearts, to the greater happiness that was yet in store for them.

At the end of the period just mentioned, Henry, on returning to Edinburgh from a visit to Bargardine, wrote to his father, whom he had long previously advised of his attachment to Alice, requesting his consent to their union. This consent he readily obtained; when a correspondence immediately took place between all the parties concerned, including Alice's father, which ended in a final adjustment of all preliminaries, and in the settlement of the day on which the marriage should take place. That day was named at the distance of a month. Amongst other arrangements made on this occasion was, that the young couple should take up house in Edinburgh after their marriage, that city being the purposed scene of Henry's future career; and this house Henry took upon himself the charge of furnishing. This, however, was an undertaking in which Henry, of course, could do nothing without the assistance of his father; but that, he knew, he had only to ask to obtain. He, accordingly, wrote to him for the necessary means, and relying, as he was aware he well might, on his father's ability and willingness to aid him, confidently expected that the next post would bring him the desired remittance. What was poor Henry's surprise and disappointment then, when, after a delay of three days, which alone was matter at once of great uneasiness and astonishment to him, he received, instead of the expected funds, the following painfully mysterious communication!

"MY DEAR HENRY,—I duly received your letter, and would have answered it in course, but delayed, for reasons which will afterwards appear. I am afraid we have been too hasty in the matter of your marriage. I wish things had not gone so far yet. The truth is, I have received some very bad accounts of my last shipments for the West Indies, and have been disappointed of remittances from that quarter. You must, therefore, have patience for a few days longer, when I shall again write you, and hope to enclose, at the same time, an order for the amount you want.—I am, DEAR HENRY," &c.

We leave the reader to conceive with what feelings Henry read this most alarming and most distressing communication, and he will readily believe that the poignancy of these feelings was not lessened by its being wholly unexpected. The possibility of his father's being *unable* to supply him with what money he might want, had never for a moment entered into his mind. It was a misfortune he had never contemplated—never dreamt of. He believed him—as everybody else did—to be one of the wealthiest men in Glasgow; and undoubtedly he was, if remunerating returns could have been warranted for all his adventures; but, as this could not be, he was still within reach of the stroke of adversity. Much, however, as Henry felt on this occasion, he sanguinely hoped that his father's second letter would amply compensate for the first, by its good tidings; and, in this hope, he waited patiently for its arrival. At length the anxiously looked for letter came. Henry opened it

with trembling hand, and read. It communicated his father's bankruptcy!

On reading this distressing letter, which at once dispelled all his fond dreams of coming bliss, Henry threw himself down into a chair. His face was pale as death; his lips white as unstained paper; and an overwhelming sense of misery came over him, that prevented him for some time fully comprehending the extent of his misfortune. He saw, however, plainly enough, with fatal distinctness, that that misfortune included the loss of Alice—the greatest, the most distracting of all the evils which his father's reverses could entail upon him. Had these reverses not involved this misery, he could have looked on their consequences, so far as regarded himself, with a steady eye and unflinching heart—for he felt conscious of possessing talents that would enable him to make his own way in the world; but to lose Alice, to forego all the felicity which he had promised himself from their contemplated union, was more than he could bear. To see the cup of bliss thus unexpectedly dashed from his hand, at the moment he was about to raise it to his lips, was a trial of fortitude to which he found himself unequal. It almost unsettled his reason. He started from his seat, paced up and down his room in violent agitation, and struck his forehead, from time to time, with the forcible energy of despair. He suddenly paused. A thought had occurred to him. He gazed fixedly on the floor for a few seconds, with his hand pressed on his burning brow. *The* thought urged itself more and more forcibly on his contemplation. It presented all its aspects to his mind's eye. It assumed shape and consistency, and was finally adopted; and, in the same instant, the resolution to execute it was formed. Desperate and fatal resolution!

Henry Merton determined to conceal from both Alice's father and Alice herself the bankruptcy of his father, and to allow the marriage to proceed in their ignorance of the fact. But, dishonourable and indefensible as was this determination—a determination so inconsistent with the general character of him who had formed it, as rendered it one of those striking moral anomalies in human nature, which so frequently occur to startle and astound us, and to overturn all previous calculation—but both dishonourable and indefensible, we say, as was this determination of Henry Merton's, it was wholly untinged by the baseness of pecuniary avarice. He cared not for Alice's fortune; he wanted none of it: it was Alice herself—it was Alice alone he desired to secure; and it was this desire, unmingled with any other, that, in an unfortunate moment, overturned all those principles by which it had hitherto been his pride to square all his actions. But there was much more to do to complete the contemplated work of deception. If the marriage was still to take place, there was a house to furnish, and a variety of disbursements of various kinds to make; a number of small items of expense, small individually, but considerable in the aggregate, to be incurred; and Henry had not a guinea to meet them. It was within a week, too, of the day fixed for the marriage, and it was not Henry's interest to have it delayed. In delay there was danger of discoveries taking place—indeed, certainty; for the failure of Henry's father could not but soon reach the ears of Mr Morlington, through some channel or other. In truth, it was matter of marvel, every day that passed, that the intelligence had not reached him. All this Henry knew well; but he was prepared. He had matured his plans, and provided for contingencies. He had no money, but he had thought of a way of obtaining it. Henry started one night for Glasgow, with little more in his purse than paid the expenses of his journey. He returned on the following night with £450 in his pocket. Had he procured it from his father, or by his father's means? No; he had never even called on his father. Some friend, then. No; he had seen no friend. How, then, or from whom had he it? That will appear by the sequel.

Henry, as we have said, returned to Edinburgh with £450 in his pocket, and instantly began purchasing furniture for his new house. But there was a singular change in Henry's demeanour—a change that was not fully accounted for by the known causes of uneasiness under which he laboured. His look was now wild and haggard. He was morbidly nervous too; he started and shook on the slightest sudden sound, and seemed to wince under the casual gaze of the passer by, if protracted but for an instant. There was, in short, a degree of feverish alarm expressed in everything he said and did, that indicated but too plainly a distracted and tortured mind. No less remarkable than any of the other singular parts of his conduct, was the mystery in which he seemed to desire to involve both his own identity and his transactions with the different tradesmen whom he employed; and, above all, the reluctance with which he gave up his name—never doing this as long and as often as it was possible to avoid it. Having completed the furnishing of his house, which he effected in an incredibly short space of time, Henry wrote to Alice, informing her that “everything was ready,” and accompanied the letter by a handsome marriage ring, a necklace of beautiful workmanship, and a pair of superb ear-rings. This letter was replied to in course, by Alice, who poured out in that reply, almost unknowingly and involuntarily, all the joyous feelings with which her approaching happiness inspired her. The letter was a compound of mingled playfulness and tenderness. She threatened to subject the house to a severe scrutiny, and to cashier the master of her household, if she found anything amiss or in bad taste. To any one situated as Henry was at this moment, but without the causes of secret misery which were his, such a letter as this would have been a source of exquisite delight; but to him it brought no such pleasurable feelings. There was a counteracting power, against which no joy could prevail. On reading the letter of his betrothed, Henry sighed deeply—nay, it was a groan, a groan of anguish—folded it up with a melancholy and disturbed air, and put it in his pocket. It had not had the power to excite even one faint smile of satisfaction; but seemed, on the contrary, only to have added a deeper shade of sadness to a countenance already strongly marked by such indication of a broken spirit.

At length the day of Henry Merton's marriage with Alice Morlington arrived, and nothing had yet transpired to discover to the bride's father the actual position of his intended son-in-law. It had been arranged that the ceremony should take place in the house in Edinburgh, in which the young people intended to reside; and for this purpose, the bride, her father, and a young lady who was to act as bridesmaid, came to town on the previous night. Henry, who had been duly advised of their coming, was waiting, with a friend, for their arrival. They came; and, notwithstanding the efforts which the former made to display the happiness which he ought to have felt, his changed, embarrassed, and distracted look did not long escape the observation of his intended bride.

On the following day, the wedding guests mustered in Merton's house; and the laugh, and the joke, and the mirth, and the banter, usual on such occasions, were not wanting on this. Henry made some attempts to join in the spirit of the hour, and to appear as light-hearted as his apparently happy position demanded; but it was in vain. There was an utter prostration of soul, an utter wretchedness of feeling, which no degree of felicity could overcome, and no effort conceal. It did not, however, attract any very particular observation, or, if it was noticed, it only called forth some bantering remark. The party was now waiting the arrival of the clergyman who was to unite the young couple. He came; and, after a short interval, there was a general move towards the centre of the floor. The ceremony was about to be performed. At this instant, a loud and startling

knock, or rather series of knocks, rapid and fierce, was heard at the door. On the ear of the unhappy bridegroom, they struck like the knell of death. A faintness came over him, and he would have fallen where he stood, but for the aid of the person who was next him. It was a strange and singular effect these knocks had, and, to those present, most unaccountable. But, strange as it was, it was not without a reason. Henry had a presentiment of evil. What he had all along dreaded, all along lived in terror of, he felt convinced was now about to happen. In the meantime, the rude summons was answered. The door was opened, and loud, sharp, and harsh voices were heard in the passage, and the name of Henry Merton was more than once distinctly repeated.

“But you can't see him,” the girl who answered the door was heard to say.

“But we *must* see him, my girl,” was the rejoinder, in a gruff, peremptory voice.

“He's engaged. There is company with him. There is a marriage in the house, and you *cannot* see him,” replied the girl.

“It's no use saying more about it, my lass,” was responded in the same decisive voice; “we *shall* and *will* see him—so shew us where he is at once.” And the speaker turned round and beckoned two men who accompanied him, but who still stood in the doorway, to enter. They obeyed.

“Stop, stop, then!” said the girl, seeing the men were determined on having an interview with her master; “and I'll tell him to come out to you.” And she tripped into the room where the marriage party was assembled; but the three equivocal and uncourteous visitors were close behind her.

They had not chosen to observe any ceremony in their proceedings. On their entering, the principal of the three advanced to Henry Merton, who was standing in the midst of his assembled friends in a sort of stupor, and seemingly quite unconscious of what was passing, and, touching him on the shoulder—

“You are my prisoner,” he said. “I apprehend you, in the king's name, on a charge of forgery; and here is my warrant”—producing and holding out in his hand a slip of paper, partly written and partly printed.

One simultaneous cry of horror and amazement burst from the listeners to this dreadful announcement; but there was one whose expression of agony rose above them all, and spoke of a despair and wretchedness which none but that one could feel. It was Alice Morlington. Her frantic cries, as she endeavoured to reach Henry—which she was prevented doing by her father and her other friends—to fling her arms around him, to hinder him being taken away, were dreadful and heart-rending. But her strength was not equal to the struggle. She finally sank senseless into the arms of the bridesmaid, and, in this piteous condition, was carried out of the apartment. But how was the unfortunate bridegroom conducting himself during this trying scene? He was standing immovable; fixed as a statue; his countenance cadaverous; his lips glued together; his eye wild and unsettled. From the moment the officers of justice entered, he neither spoke nor moved; neither expressed, by sign nor word, what were his feelings on this dreadful occasion; but stood motionless, speechless, and apparently lost in the mazes of a frightful bewilderment. Horror, despair, had benumbed every faculty, and left him in possession only of a vague, stupifying consciousness of the dreadful situation in which he stood. This scene, however, could not be of long continuance. Neither was it. The officers intimated to their prisoner that he must accompany them, and moved towards the door, preceded by the latter, who mechanically obeyed the intimation given him, but still without speaking, or making any sign

indicative of a sense of his situation. In the next instant the party, with their prisoner, had left the house, and, in a moment after, the wheels of a chaise were heard rattling away in the distance.

The harrowing sequel of our tale is soon given. Henry Merton had forged a bill on his former employer in Glasgow, a respectable solicitor, in the vain hope that he might be able to retire it, from the funds which he calculated his marriage would put him in possession of, before it became due; but the forgery had been detected, and the consequences we have in part seen. The inevitable remainder followed; for the laws were then administered with sanguinary ferocity. Henry Merton was tried, convicted, and executed. It was endeavoured to conceal this horrid issue of the unfortunate young man's guilt from his scarcely less unfortunate betrothed; but, by some means or other, she learned it all; and the same week that witnessed the ignominious death of her Henry, saw her cut off in the bloom and pride of youth and beauty, deposited within the precincts of the silent tomb.

THE HEIRESS OF BALGOWAN.

THE Laird of Balgowan, at the period of our story, was a widower, with an only child, Edith, the heiress, then in her eighteenth year. In this girl all the laird's affections were centred. She was the apple of his eye, the delight of his heart, the idol of his adoration: and there was, indeed, little wonder that she should; for Edith was "beautiful exceedingly," and gentle and warm-hearted—equally fair in mind as in form.

On Edith's return from Edinburgh, where she had been sent by her father to complete her education, and where she had resided for several years for this purpose, the laird celebrated the event by giving an entertainment to a large party of friends. These consisted chiefly of neighbouring proprietors of about the laird's own standing in society; but amongst them were some of the more respectable of his own tenants, with, as was the custom of the times, in such merry-makings in the country, their wives, sons, and daughters. Of those of the second description of persons present on this festive occasion, was a young man of the name of George Lennox, the son of a very worthy, but a very poor man, who rented a small farm from the laird. George himself was a handsome youth, of prepossessing mein, mild demeanour, and gentle and affectionate nature. But his situation in life was of the humblest class. He was but the son of a small farmer—earning a moderate subsistence by the labour of his hands—lowly in station, and unambitious in hopes.

On the night of the festival which celebrated Edith's return to Balgowan, George, as we have said, was amongst the revellers; but, feeling awed in the presence of so many of his superiors, as he considered some of those present, he modestly sought as much retirement as the place and circumstances would admit of, and remained rather an unobtrusive spectator of the revelries of the night than a partaker in them. But George had other thoughts than those that belonged exclusively to the scene, and another object than the revellers filled his corporeal as well as mental eye.

His gaze was fixed on Edith. And how was it that hers was so often turned stealthily on George Lennox?—and how was it that she blushed and averted her head when their eyes met, and that she seemed almost unconscious of the attentions of the young men of higher pretensions who were around her? Could it be that the youthful and accomplished heiress of Balgowan loved the son of the humble farmer?—that she preferred him, with all his poverty and simplicity of manners, to infinitely wealthier suitors? It could be so, and it was so.

George and Edith had been playmates in their childhood, when neither dreamt or knew anything of love. Often had they pulled wild flowers together—often, together, "paddled in the burn." They were then, in short, inseparable; their infantine years precluding all discriminations of rank either on their own parts, or that of their guardians. But time passed on, and the hour of separation came. They parted. Ellen was sent to Edinburgh, for the purpose already mentioned; and George was called to enter on that life of labour which was his inheritance.

Although the young pair parted with regret, neither yet knew of what nature was the tie which bound their hearts together. This was a secret to be afterwards revealed.

Again years rolled on; and the heiress of Balgowan, who had left home a child, returned to it a woman. But even in absence, the germs of that attachment of whose very existence she was wholly unconscious, had sprung forth, and "had grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength." She could not herself tell how it was, that she so often thought, while at a distance from him, of her humble playmate; nor could she account for the circumstance of George Lennox obtruding himself so often in her dreams. Her return to Balgowan disclosed the secret. George and she met by accident on the very day of that occurrence and just as she was making towards her father's house after her arrival. She was alone. They met; and in that moment of meeting, the true position in which they stood with regard to each other was made manifest to both, almost without sign or word. Both felt, and felt for the first time, the true character of their attachment. The affection of childhood was, by an easy transition, converted in a moment into the strong, passionate, and ardent love of youth. But their relative worldly positions, with regard to each other, were now to be more carefully defined, and their limits observed. George Lennox, the poor farmer's son, was not to be named in the same breath with the heiress of Balgowan, still less to aspire to her hand. Their intercourse, therefore, if any, must of necessity be clandestine; for the proud laird of many scores of broad acres would not brook connection with one who earned his livelihood by the labour of his hands, and who owned no portion of this world's wealth.

It was all unconscious, therefore, of the mutual attachment of George Lennox and his daughter, that the Laird of Balgowan invited the former to the festival which welcomed her return.

We have said that the intercourse of the lovers, if any, must now be clandestine. But this was a course which the sense of propriety would permit neither of them to pursue, nor even to think of.

George had determined at once to relieve Edith from the pain and embarrassment which his near vicinity, he believed, must occasion her, and himself of the corresponding feelings of which her vicinity to him was equally the source, by going abroad; and so prompt was he in his purpose, and so resolute on its execution, that he had fixed the morning following the celebration of Edith's return to Balgowan as that of his departure. Of this he had apprized her, and, while he did so, besought her to favour him with a parting interview. Edith consented; and it was finally fixed that they should meet, for a few minutes, at a certain old oak tree that stood on a small level plat of green, close by the river of Smerby, which ran past the house of Balgowan, at the distance of a few hundred yards. It was arranged, too, that Edith should come accompanied by a certain confidential female domestic, to whom she had entrusted the secret of her attachment. The hour fixed was eleven o'clock, being the same night on which the entertainment was given by the Laird of Balgowan.

In the meantime, (to revert to that circumstance,) "the dance gaed through the lighted ha," and all was mirth and

revelry; for the fiddle had struck up, and the dancers had taken to their feet, and beautiful, transcendently beautiful, looked the young heiress in the gay and graceful dress which she had donned for the joyous scene, and light and graceful was her step as she glided through the mazes of the dance.

The idol of the night, she was surrounded with worshippers, who eagerly sought her smiles, and coveted, as a precious thing, the glance of her soft blue eye. But Edith had neither smiles nor glances to bestow on those by whom they were just now solicited. Her thoughts were elsewhere, and all her sympathies absorbed by one engrossing feeling. One object alone filled her mind, and around this single object all her associations clung. However wide or far apart their origin, there they were sure at last to terminate; concentrated, as it were, by a mental lens. This object was George Lennox.

It was yet but an early hour of the evening when George, who, as we have already said, took little or no part in the revelries of the night, stole unperceived, or at least unheeded, out of the apartment in which they were held. But he did not do this before exchanging a significant look with Edith. It was a slight and momentary glance, unmarked by any but themselves; yet to both it seemed perfectly intelligible.

On quitting the apartment which was the scene of the night's festivities, George hastened down to the river side. His purpose was to cross it; for his father's house was on the opposite side, and he was now going thither, to get a trinket—a gold ring or brooch—which he intended to present to Edith at their parting, as a token of his love, and as a symbol by which she might remember him when the giver was far away in a foreign land. He passed by well-known stepping-stones, the river being now considerably swollen by recent rains. Having reached home, George sought out the love-gift he intended to give away, changed his dress, and employed himself in various little matters connected with his intended departure, till the hour appointed for meeting with Edith approached. On its near arrival, he left the house, and retraced his steps towards the ford of the Smerby, which he soon reached; but was not a little startled by its now extremely swollen and turbid appearance. It had increased greatly since he had passed it a few hours before, and was now roaring "frae bank to brae." George eyed for a moment, with something of awe and hesitation, the boiling and eddy stream, and, approaching close to its edge, looked intently, for a few seconds, in the line of the stepping stones, or rather where he believed them to be; but they were now wholly invisible. He saw, however, what he conceived to be the ripple made by the stones on the surface of the water; and, trusting to this as a guide, as he was determined at all hazards to cross, he boldly leapt on the first. His calculation had been accurate; for he stood securely on the very centre of the stone, though up nearly to his middle in water. On gaining this step, he planted one end of a long pole or branch, with which he had previously provided himself, firmly on the bottom of the stream beneath him, and prepared for a second step, although, even as he stood, he had some difficulty in resisting the force of the current, which broke on him with a rushing sound, and made him swing and totter on his feet. Seemingly unaware of his own danger, or at least unappalled by it, George made another deliberate step, then another, and another, and each time succeeded in obtaining a footing; but his peril was now greatly increased; for the water gained in depth and force as he advanced. He was now on the centre stone; and here, at length, and for the first time, he seemed to become fully aware of his danger, and of the jeopardy he was in; for it was long before he attempted to make another step, and he appeared, meanwhile, to be struggling hard to maintain the position he had

gained. The rash and daring adventurer now looked earnestly and anxiously for the ripple which should indicate the position of the next stepping stone; but, alas! there was no ripple to be seen. The water was here too deep. It was flowing past rapidly; but smooth and undisturbed. George thought, however, he saw a slight irregularity on the surface, and this, he again thought, must be occasioned by the stone beneath. He had no doubt of it. It was just over the place where he knew the stone to be. To make more sure of this, however, he would have felt for it with his stick previously to stepping on it; but he could not take the latter for an instant from the duty it was performing—namely, that of supporting him against the force of the current. He was, therefore, obliged to trust, in some measure, to conjecture; but he had perfect confidence in its accuracy, and unhesitatingly stepped out. Fatal confidence! One piercing cry, one heavy plunge, announced the dreadful issue of poor George's daring and foolhardy undertaking. But what wild shriek was that which responded to the death-cry of George Lennox from the opposite bank of the river? And, more appalling still, what plunge is that which is again heard in the deep and dark waters of the Smerby? Who was it that rushed wildly to the edge of the river, and, reckless of all consequences, leapt into the boiling current, after the ill-fated youth who had just fallen in? It was Edith Ritchie, the heiress of Balgowan. She had witnessed the dreadful catastrophe which had befallen her lover, and this was the hapless result.

Little recking of what was passing without, the dance was still going on merrily at Balgowan. The windows were still blazing with light, and the lively strains of the fiddle had lost none of their energy or glee. Edith had been missed from the scene of the festivity; but, as her absence had been but short, nothing was thought of it, and no inquiries were made; but, suddenly, loud and wailing cries from without, cries of strange and fearful import, struck on the ears of the revellers. The dancers stopped in the dance; the musicians ceased their strains; and each looking at the other in alarm, asked what was the matter. None could tell. The wailings from without increased. Domestic ran to and fro. Guests hurried to the door. The banquet hall was deserted; and rapidly and breathlessly were questions as to the meaning of this sudden alarm, bandied from one to another; for all felt assured that something dreadful, of whatever nature it might be, had occurred. All uncertainty, however, in this matter was soon to be set at rest. A small group of persons were seen approaching the house with slow and measured pace. They came nearer, and, as they did so, they appeared to divide into two distinct groups, each of which bore along a temporary bier. On these biers lay two dead bodies. They were those of George Lennox, and Edith Ritchie, the young and beautiful heiress of Balgowan. Like a bride she lay in her festive dress and wreathed hair, lovely even in death.

The bodies of the two lovers had been found close to each other, a little way down, at an abrupt turn of the river. They were subsequently laid side by side in one grave; and the stone with the two hearts transfixed by one arrow, marks the spot which holds their remains.



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AND OF SCOTLAND

THE TWO SAILORS.

ONE dark and cloudy evening in September, two young men were seen walking on the road that winds so beautifully along the shore of the Solway, below the mouth of the Nith, between the quay and Caerlaverock. The summit of Criffel was hidden in clouds; the sky was dark and threatening; and the shrieking of the sea-fowl, and the whitening crests of the waves, as they broke before the freshening breeze, gave warning that a storm was at hand. At some distance, a two-masted boat, or wherry, as it is there called, lay on the beach, half afloat in the rising tide; and a boy sat on the green bank near, apparently watching her.

The two men appeared, by their dress, to be sailors. They were both in the prime of life, and remarkably handsome; but their countenances were of very different expressions. The one, whose short, crisp hair curled over a forehead embrowned by exposure to the elements, had the frank, bold, joyous look which we love to recognise as a characteristic of the class of men to which he belonged; the other, his superior in face and figure, as well as his senior in years, had a deep-set dark eye, whose very smile was ominous of the storm of evil passions and tempers within. Their conversation was loud and earnest, and was carried on in tones of considerable occasional excitement; the violent motion of their hands, and the increasing loudness of their voices, gave token that passion was beginning to usurp the throne of prudence—till at last, the elder of the two, stung to madness by some observation of his companion, suddenly raised his hand, and struck him a blow on the head, which made him stagger for some paces. Quick as lightning, however, he recovered himself, and rushed to avenge the blow. A short and violent struggle ensued; and then the younger, whom we shall call Richard Goldie, sat astride the prostrate body of his antagonist, panting with violent exertion, and with his knees pinioning the arms of the other to the ground; while the latter, exhausted with his exertions, made feeble and ineffectual struggles to rise.

"Let me rise," said he, at last, in a sullen tone; "you need not be afraid."

"Afraid!" replied the other, with a contemptuous laugh; "it was ill set a born and bred Nithsdale man to fear a mongrel of a foreigner. Rise up, man—rise up; ye brought it on yersel. I wadna cared for yer sharp words, or yer ill tongue, had ye but keptit yer han's aff. But dinna look sae dour-like, man. Ye needna be cast doon aboot it; it was a fair stand-up fecht, an' ye did yer best. Come, gie's yer han', an' we'll think nae mair o't?"

"Richie Goldie," said Cummin, rejecting the proffered hand, and drawing back, as if he thought its touch would be contamination, while his eye flashed with vindictive fire—"Richie Goldie, hear me. When we were boys at school together, you were like a serpent in my eyes. Since we left it, you have always crossed my path, like the east wind, to blight, and blast, and wither all the flowers that lay in it. You have stood between me and my love; and now you have struck me to the earth, and wounded me, when fallen, with your taunts and sarcasms. You have roused the slumbering devil within me, and, before he sleeps again,

you shall bitterly repent this day's work: you shall find the mongrel foreigner is no mongrel in his revenge!"

"Dinna talk that fearfu gate," said Goldie, laughing; "ye'll mak a body think ye're clean demented—speakin o' revenge, and lookin at a man as if ye wished yer een war dagers. I wish ye a better temper an' a kinder heart. I fear neither you nor yer revenge; an', as we *maun* gang this trip thegither, just put yer revenge in yer pouch, an' let's 'gree an' be freens."

So saying, he sprang into the boat, which was now rocking in the tide, and, rewarding the boy for his trouble, and followed in sullen silence by Cummin, he hauled aft the sheets, and in a few minutes the boat was dancing over the waves towards Annan.

It is now necessary that we should introduce the two heroes of our tale more particularly to the reader, which we will endeavour to do as concisely as possible. Edward Cummin's mother was an Italian, who had accompanied a family of rank to England in the capacity of lady's-maid. She was a beautiful woman, of warm and violent passions, and, for her station in life, remarkably well-informed and clever. Her mistress had a high opinion of her, and thought she was throwing herself away when she asked permission to marry her master's gardener; but, finding that her arguments to dissuade her from the connection were ineffectual, she gave her consent to it, and did all in her power to render her favourite's married state a comfortable one. For seven years the Cummins lived a happy and industrious life together—the only fruit of their union being a boy, the Edward of our story. He was an uncommonly handsome child, and was very much noticed by the family at the hall, from whom he received the rudiments of an excellent education, and acquired manners and habits superior to his station. He was the idol of his parents; but his father—a sensible, steady Scotchman—did not allow his partiality to blind him to his son's faults, and was firm and steady in his correction of them; while the mother, with foolish and mistaken fondness, endeavoured on all occasions to conceal his failings, and soothed and caressed when she ought to have checked and punished him. The consequence was, that young Edward soon learned to fear his father, and to despise his mother—and dissimulation and hypocrisy were the natural consequences of such contradictory management. At this time, circumstances obliged the family to leave the hall, and settle on the Continent—the estate was sold, and Cummin, being deprived of his situation, returned, with his family, to his native place. Here their nearest neighbours were the Goldies; and a considerable degree of intimacy arose between the two families. The boys, Richard Goldie and Edward Cummin, were sent, during the winter months, to the same school, where a great deal of apparent friendship subsisted between them. But, on Edward's part, it was all seeming—for he was a hypocrite by nature, and, to suit his own purposes, could fawn, and cringe, and flatter, with an air, at the same time, of bold off-hand independence; and it was his interest to keep on good terms with Richard Goldie, who, though younger than himself, was more active and hardy, and who really *was*, what *he* pretended to be, courageous and independent. But, in his heart Edward hated his high-spirited companion: it was

gall and wormwood to his proud and vindictive spirit to notice the evident partiality shewn towards Richard by his companions, and the coolness and avoidance evinced towards himself. Several circumstances at last transpired, which served to open Richard Goldie's eyes to the true character of his pretended friend; and a coolness arose between them, which, though it never proceeded to an open rupture, for some time put a stop to the closeness of their intimacy. Years passed, and the young men both adopted the sea for a profession, and sailed for some time together in the same vessel—an American trader, "hailing" from Dumfries. Here, as at school, though both equally active in the performance of their duties, Richard Goldie's frank and generous disposition rendered him a favourite with the rest of the crew, while Cummin in vain strove to make himself popular—he always was, or fancied himself to be, an object of distrust and aversion. Towards Goldie he maintained the same apparently friendly and kindly bearing, while he was storing up bitter feelings against him in his heart. It was strange that, with growing though concealed hatred on the one side, and with want of confidence on the other, these two young men should have continued to associate, and to keep up a companionship, which it only depended upon themselves to discontinue; but so it was. They had learned from the same books; they had sported beneath the same roof; they had risen from boyhood to manhood together; and they could not, though so different in disposition, entirely sever the links with which early associations had bound them together. In the neighbourhood of Kelton lived an old fisherman, whose daughter was one of the loveliest girls in the district. Our two companions, being near neighbours of old Grey, were very constant in their attentions to him: they managed his boat for him, helped him to mend his nets, and made themselves useful in every possible way. Some of the neighbours insinuated that all this kindness proceeded less from a regard for the old man than from a wish to conciliate his pretty daughter. That, however, was matter of doubt; and old Grey took the "benefit of the doubt," and the compliment to himself. While flattering the father, however, they were both very assiduous in their attentions to the daughter, and each in turn fancied that he was the object of her exclusive regard. But Ellen Grey was as sensible as she was lovely, and had met with so much passing admiration, and knew so well what value to put upon it, that she was but little affected by this additional proof of her power. She liked both the young men as pleasant companions, but had, as yet, shewn no decided partiality for either. She was perfectly well aware that they both admired her, and she was gratified by their attentions—as was that pretty woman would not have been?—but the only use she made of her influence over them, was to restrain their angry passions, and to keep up friendly feelings between them. Of the two, Cummin was the most calculated to please the eye and attract the fancy of a young and inexperienced girl; for, besides being more strikingly handsome than Goldie, in his intercourse with the softer sex he had successfully studied the art of concealing and glossing over all the worse qualities of his nature. Goldie, on the contrary, was frank and open to all alike; he was manly and independent in his address to females, and never stooped to flattery or dissimulation. Things went on in this uncertain way for some time, till the young men, wearied of sailing backwards and forwards to and from America, resolved to vary the scene, by making a voyage to India. Although they both felt that friendship was with them but a name, yet they had become so united by habit and early association, that they could not make up their minds to separate, and accordingly agreed to "enter" on board the same ship.

The evening on which our story commences, was the one fixed upon for their departure. Goldie had been to Annan, the day previous, to ascertain the time of the steam-boat's

sailing for Liverpool, and had borrowed a boat from a friend of his father's there, in which he and Cummin were to return. They had passed the afternoon together at old Grey's, and Cummin fancied that Ellen smiled more kindly upon his rival than upon himself. She immediately, with the quickness of woman's tact, perceived and endeavoured to remove the impression—but in vain; and, in so doing, excited the jealous feelings of Goldie. They left the house in gloomy silence; but had not proceeded far before their irritated feelings found vent in words—few, and cautious, and half-suppressed at first, but gradually increasing in loudness, and energy, and bitterness, till the result was the struggle we have already described. Cummin's face, as he sat beside Goldie in the stern-sheets of the boat, was a true index to the black and vindictive passions that boiled within his heart. His glaring eye, set teeth, clenched hand, and heavy breathing, told too plainly what was passing within. A child might have read his secret on his brow—and yet he was too great a coward to utter it. He sat brooding over his wrath, and nourishing dark thoughts of hatred and revenge against his unconscious companion, whose momentary anger had passed away, and left no trace behind it.

"Ye're as quiet's a sittin' hen, Ned," said he; "I doot ye're hatchin' mischief. Dinna tak on sae, man; let bygones be bygones, an' think nae mair about it."

Cummin's first flush of rage had by this time passed away, and he began to think of the expediency of appearing to be reconciled to Goldie—for he knew that it was only by treachery and cunning he could hope to gratify his longing for revenge. He, therefore, in reply to Richard's speech, grasped him warmly by the hand, and said—

"Do not think so ill of me, Richard, as to suppose that I bear you any ill-will on account of what has passed. The words I utter'd in my passion I am sorry for and disclaim, now that I am cool. I was angry—very angry, certainly; but that is past. How can you wonder that I am sad and silent, when you remember that we may never return to the 'bonny banks o' Nith?' We are going among strangers, and into strange lands: let us not forget our old friendship—let us always be friends as well as countrymen."

"That's said like a true Scot, at a' rates," replied Goldie. "What w' yer English lingo and yer grand words, ye talk for a' the world like a prented buik; it does a body's lugs guid to listen t'ye. Ay, 'shouter's the word in the Highlands, an' we'll tak it for our by-word." And the warm-hearted, generous lad shook him heartily by the hand.

Next day, they took their passage in the steamer for Liverpool, and from thence made the best of their way to London. There they were soon picked up by one of the "crimps," on the look-out for men for the outward-bound Indiamen, and, in the course of a few days, were shipped on board the Briton—a vessel of twelve hundred tons. Here everything was strange to them, and they were subjected to a course of discipline to which they had not before been accustomed. They both proved themselves to be smart, active young fellows, and good seamen; but at first Cummin was a greater favourite than Goldie—for he was too cunning and time-serving to commit himself in any way; while the latter, always in the habit of speaking out his mind boldly and freely, frequently got himself into trouble by his forgetfulness of forms, and by the bluntness of his remarks. In a short time, however, they each appeared in their true colours, and the scale was turned in favour of Goldie, whose frank and open manners, and straightforward fearless confidence, established him in the general good opinion of his officers and messmates; while, on the other hand, the mean cunning spirit of Cummin, becoming daily more apparent, rendered him an object of contempt and avoidance to the latter. This change in the opinion of his shipmates

rankled deep in the heart of the vindictive Cummin; and, forgetting that he himself was the cause of it, he attributed all to the influence of the detested Goldie. A circumstance soon occurred which served to add fuel to the fire of evil passions that lay smouldering in his heart. The ship was within a few degrees of the equator, when one day a strange sail was seen ahead, which proved to be a "homeward-bounder." The captain immediately determined to board her, and gave his orders accordingly to the chief mate.

"Midshipman! tell the sailmaker to make a bag for the letters, and pass the word fore and aft that a bag is going to be made up for England. First cutters, clean themselves!"

The breeze was light, and gradually dying away; and, as the stranger was still at a considerable distance, orders were given to "pipe to dinner," and for the cutter's crew to come up as soon as they had dined, to lower the boat down. In a short time, the coxswain of the boat—a fine, active, young north-country man—came up with three of his crew, two of whom were stationed at the tackle-fall, to lower the boat, while the coxswain, with the other man, jumped in to be lowered down in her. One of the men at the "falls" was Cummin; lowering away, quickly and carelessly, he allowed the rope to run too quickly round the "cleat," and, not being able to check it again, he was obliged to let go "by the run." The consequence was, that the stern of the boat was plunged into the water, while the bow hung suspended in the other tackle—the men were thrown out, and the poor coxswain, not being able to swim, made two or three ineffectual struggles, and sank to rise no more. The accident was so sudden and unexpected, and there was so little apparent danger—for the water was as smooth as a mill-pond, and the poor fellow was within arm's length almost of the boat's gunnel—that he was gone almost before an alarm was given. The men were all below at dinner; but ill news flies fast—in a moment there was a rush to the hatchways, each hurrying to get on deck. Goldie was one of the first up, and, rushing aft on the poop, he exclaimed, "Where is he?" and hardly waiting for an answer, sprung over the taffel into the water, a height of twenty feet, and dived after the sinking man; but in vain—the poor fellow was gone beyond recall. The captain reprimanded Cummin severely for his carelessness, degraded him from his station as topman, made him a "sweeper," and stopped his allowance of grog. Goldie was publicly praised on the quarterdeck for his spirited conduct, and received a handsome present from the captain, besides being promoted to the station of boatswain's mate at the first opportunity. This was a bitter potion for the moody and jealous spirit of Cummin; and he brooded day and night over his fancied wrongs.—The ship was now rapidly approaching the "line," and the crew had been for some time anticipating with great glee the day of fun and license which was in store for them. The old stagers amused themselves with practising upon the credulity of those comparatively fresh-water sailors, who had never been to the southward of the equator; and strange and mysterious were the notions which many of the latter formed of the dreaded "line," from the contradictory accounts they heard. Some imagined that it was a rope drawn across the sea, which could not be cut without the permission of the old king of the waves; others were gulled into the belief that there was a large tree growing out of the water, to which the ship was to be made fast, until the necessary ceremonies were gone through. But their doubts on the subject were soon to be changed into certainty. The officer of the deck one day made his report to the captain—

"The sun's up, sir."

"What is the latitude?"

"Fifty minutes north, sir."

"Very well—make it twelve o'clock."

"Strike eight bells, quartermaster!" And away went the

old fellow "forward," to strike the bell, brimful of the intelligence he had just overheard; and in two minutes it was known all over the ship, that, if the breeze held, they would cross the "line" before morning.

"There it is at last," muttered one of the middies, who had been for some minutes apparently straining his eyes through a three-foot "Dollond," and who, knowing he was within ear-shot of a knot of young cadets, *muttered* loud enough to be overheard.

"What is it?" said a young Irishman.

"The line, to be sure—the equinoctial line—which we have been so anxiously looking for."

In the meantime, great was the bustle among all the old hands on board. Paint and tar were in constant requisition. A deputation had waited some days before upon the lady passengers, requesting from them some of their cast-off wearing-apparel, as the crew expected "Mrs Neptune" to honour them with a visit in a few days, and wished to have a change of raiment in readiness for her, as she would most likely be wet and cold with her long cruise upon the water. A list had been drawn up, ready for presentation to Neptune, on his arrival, of all those who were, for the first time, crossing the line; and those of the passengers who were unwilling to undergo the ceremonies attendant upon being made "freemen of the line," had expressed their readiness to pay the customary exempting tribute, under the salutary dread of the razors, of three degrees of comparison, which were duly brandished before their eyes.

Towards evening, the breeze gradually decreased; the clouds were tinged with all the gorgeous hues of a tropical sunset, assuming every variety of strange and grotesque appearances; and the water reflected back their image, if possible, with increased splendour. As far as the eye could reach, nothing was visible but the glassy, undulating surface of the sea, partially rippled by the "cat's paws" which played over it. The ship was gliding slowly over the smooth expanse of water—her large sails flapping heavily against the masts, as the sea rose and fell, and her smaller canvas just swelling in the breeze, and lending its feeble aid to urge her onwards; the passengers were taking their evening lounge on the poop and quarter-deck; while the ship's "band" were "discoursing eloquent music" for their amusement; and the crew were scattered in groups about the forecabin and waist. Just as the dusk of evening began to render objects obscure and indistinct, the *look-out* on the forecabin called out—

'A light right ahead, sir!'

"Very well, my boy; keep your eye upon it, and let me know if we near it."

In a short time, the man exclaimed—"The light is close aboard of us, sir!" and, at the same moment, a bugle note was heard, and a glimmering light appeared, which gradually enlarged, throwing a broad, blue, unearthly glare over the fore part of the ship, till the smallest rope was as visible as in broad daylight; while a loud, confused, roaring noise was heard, and a stentorian voice shouted, apparently from the sea—

"Ho! the ship, ahoy!"

"Hollo!" replied the officer.

"What ship is that?"

"The Honourable Company's ship Briton."

"Ah! my old friend, Captain Oakum!—welcome back again! I am too busy to come on board just now; but I will pay you a visit to-morrow forenoon. Be sure to have everything ready for me, for I have a great deal of work on my hands just now.—Good night!"

"Good night!"

Again the bugle note was heard; and then the car of his watery Majesty—looking to vulgar and unpoetic eyes very

like a lighted tar-barrel—floated slowly astern, throwing a flickering glare over the sails, as it passed; while the “band” almost knocked down what little of the breeze was left, with their counter-blast of “Rule Britannia,” which they puffed away with all their might and main, till the car of Neptune sank beneath the sea.

“Come forward,” said a middie to the cadets near him, just before the *car* dropped astern, “come forward, and see Neptune’s car; it is worth your while to look at the old boy, whisking along at the tail of half-a-score of dolphins, with a poop-light, as big as a full-moon, blazing over his stern; you can see him quite plain from the fore-castle.” And away they all ran, helter-skelter, towards the fore-castle—the middie knowingly allowing the young aspirants for military distinction to get ahead of him, and bolting under the fore-castle, while they ran thundering up the ladder. They had hardly reached the upper step, before a slight sprinkling from aloft made them look upwards; and, while they were gaping, open-mouthed, in wonder from whence the rain could proceed, as not a cloud was to be seen, they had soon reason to think that a water-spout had burst over their heads; for, splash, splash, splash—bucketful after bucketful of water was poured on their devoted heads, from the “foretop.” As soon as they recovered from the momentary shock and surprise, they made a precipitate retreat, amid roars of laughter from all parts of the ship, in which they were fain to join, to conceal their mortification.

All was now quiet for the night; the “band” had played “God save the King;” the watch had been called; and the captain’s steward had announced, “Spirits on the table, sir.”

“I had no idea, Captain Oakum,” said one of the passengers at the “cuddy” table, “that Neptune was such a dashing blade, with his flourish of trumpets and car of flame. I shall feel a greater respect for him in future. Does he always announce his approach in such style?”

“No; he sometimes does it by deputy. Last voyage, I was walking the quarter-deck with some of my passengers, when we were all startled by seeing a figure, in white, come flying down out of the maintop. It fluttered its wings for a while, and then alighted on the deck, close before us; touched its hat, and delivered a letter into my hands; and then—whisk! before we had time to look round us, it was flying up into the mizzentop. The figure in white was one of the topmen—intended, I suppose, to represent Mercury; and the letter was from the king of the sea, announcing his approach. The men had rove a couple of ‘whips’ from the main and mizenmast-heads, and the end of each being made fast round ‘Mr Mercury’s’ waist, he was lowered from the one top, and ‘run up’ into the other.”

“Capital! It must have been rather startling, in the dusk of evening, to see such a strange sea-bird alight at your feet.”

The next morning, as soon as the decks were washed, preparations were made for the approaching ceremony. The jolly-boat was got in from the stern, and secured at the gang-way, from which a long party-coloured pole projected, announcing that this was “Neptune’s free-and-easy shaving-shop.” All the “scuppers” of the upper deck were stopped, and the pumps were kept in constant motion, till the lee-side of the deck was afloat, and the jolly-boat full to the “gunnel.” An old sail was drawn across the fore part of the ship’s “waist,” like the curtain of a theatre, to conceal the actors in the approaching ceremony, while making their necessary preparations. There was an air of bustling and eager mystery among all the old hands, which, to the uninitiated, gave rise to vague and unpleasant feelings of fear. It was in vain they strained their eyes to penetrate the mysteries of the sanctum concealed by the provoking curtain, from behind which, sundry notes of preparation were heard, mixed with disjointed ejaculations—such as “A touch more

black, Jem.” “How does my scraper sit?” “Where’s my nose?”—and so on. All was bustle and animation; the carpenter’s gang converting an old gun-carriage into a triumphal car; the gunner preparing flags for its decoration; his mates busy, with their paint-brushes, bedaubing the tars who were to act as sea-horses; and the charioteer preparing and fitting on Neptune’s livery. At length, all was ready for the reception of the king of the sea.

“On deck, there!” shouted the man at the mast-head.

“Hollo!” replied the officer of the watch.

“A strange sail right ahead, sir.”

“Very well, my boy. Can you make out what she is?”

“She looks small, sir; not bigger than a boat.”

The officer made his report to the captain, who kindly entered into the spirit of the thing, to gratify the men, and desired to be informed when the boat was near the ship.

“We are nearing the boat fast, sir.” And the captain made his appearance on deck, to reconnoitre the approaching stranger.

“Ship, ahoy!” roared a voice ahead; “lay your maintop-sail to the mast, and give us a rope for the boat.”

“Fore-castle, there!—a rope for the boat! Let go the maintop bow-line! Square away the mainyard, after-guard!” bawled the officer of the deck.

In the meantime, the unfortunates who had never crossed the line were driven below; the “gratings” were laid on fore and aft, and sentries were stationed at the hatchways, to prevent escape.

A bugle-note was now heard murdering the “Conquering Hero,” who soon made his appearance in person, over the bows, and stood for a moment in a graceful attitude on the night-head, where he really cut quite an imposing figure, with his robe of sheep-skins, and flowing beard of “oakum,” and grasping in his extended hand a trident, with a fine fish on its prongs. A few minutes after he had descended into the “waist,” the screen we before mentioned was withdrawn, and the procession moved on. First came the ship’s musicians, fantastically dressed for the occasion, and playing “Rule Britannia” with all their might and main; next came the triumphal car, surmounted by a canopy decorated with flags of all nations, under which were seated Neptune, Amphitrite, or Mrs Nep., as Jack calls her, and a little Triton; and, immediately in the rear, followed the *suite*, consisting of the barber, doctor, clerk, and about a dozen half-naked and party-coloured demi-gods, who acted as water-bailiffs. Each of these gentlemen merits a particular description; for they were all great men in their way. The doctor wore an immense floured wig, and an uncommonly long unwholesome looking nose, and over all a rusty piece of tarpaulin, pinched into three corners, to represent a hat; under his arm he carried his family medicine-chest, the lid of which was open, and displayed to view pills and powders of all shapes, sizes, and colours, in great profusion; and in his hand he carried a large bottle, labelled, “Neptune’s elixir.” The barber carried, slung over his arm, his shaving-box, (a large tar bucket,) with brushes to correspond; the pouch in the front of his apron was filled with little etceteras, such as boxes of *grease* for the hair, *powder* for the teeth, &c.; and in his hand he brandished three razors, each about three feet long—one made of smooth iron hoop, the next about as genteel as a hand-saw, and the third, meant for particular favourites, with teeth grinning at each other, half an inch apart, more or less. The clerk, or scribe, was a dandy of the first water: he had on a small *razée* hat, which looked as if it had been forced up on one side by an immense crop of oakum curls which sprouted most luxuriantly from under one of the rims. His whiskers were pointed to the wind with the greatest nicety; and from behind his ear peeped the quill, his badge of office; while a little inkstand dangled at his button-hole. The tips of his nose and ears were almost hidden by a most magnificently

stiff collar, and his chin nestled in a bed of frill, made to match the collar of the best *foolscap*. All these gentlemen wore *long togs*.*

On came the pageant: Neptune's sheep-skins and trident looked very majestic; Amphitrite, a tall high cheek-boned Scotch "topman," with the assistance of a little red paint and oakum locks, and arrayed cap-a-pee, in cabin finery, made a very passable representation of a she monster; the barber brandished his razors; the scribe paraded his list, and every now and then made use of an old frying-pan, with the bottom knocked out of it, for a quizzing-glass; the jack-tars, who acted as sea-horses, pranced as uncouthly as jack-asses; and the coachman, seated on the fore part of the car, and proud of his livery and shoulder-knots, cracked his whip, d—d his horses for *tubbers*, and, *singing out* to them, "Hard a-port!" contrived to *weather* the after hatchway, and then *bear up* round the "capstan," where, with a graceful pull up of the reins, very much like a strong pull at the main-brace, and an "A vast there!" to his obedient cattle, he stopped the car. The captain was standing under the poop-awning, in readiness to receive his Majesty, who welcomed him most graciously to his dominions.

"Glad to see you once more, Captain Oakum!" said he; "it warms the cockles of my heart to fall in with an old friend; and my wife here and I both wants comfort of some kind, after our long morning ride over the water; the cold air is apt to give one a cold in the stomach." The doctor immediately stepped forward with his bottle, and presented it to his Majesty. "No, no," said he—"none of your doctor's stuff for *me*; keep that for my children; Captain Oakum knows my complaint of old."

The captain laughed, and his steward, taking the hint, produced a bottle containing a different kind of *elixir*, which old Neptune seemed to quaff with peculiar relish. A glass was then offered to Amphitrite, who pretended to reject it, and tried to blush, in vain.

"Come, come—none of that 'ere humbug, old gal," said the King; "tip it over; it'll do you good." And away it went, where many of its fellows had gone before.

"Ah!" said she, smacking her lips with unqueenlike gusto, "glorious stuff to drive out a cold!"

The whole of the suit were immediately seized with the same complaint, and all required the application of the same remedy.

"I understand, Captain Oakum, you have a good many of my children on board."

"Yes, a few; I hope you will treat them kindly?"

"Oh, leave that to me, sir; I'll give none on them more nor they deserves."

He then thrust out his trident to the captain's steward, with a graceful air, as if he meant to impale him; but it was only for the purpose of presenting the fish on its prongs, as an addition to his honour the captain's dinner.

"I wish it war better; but we've had a sad sickly season down below, and all the dolphins and bonitos are on the doctor's list with *influenzie*."

During this interview, the men were all standing near the gangway, armed with buckets of water, wet swabs, &c., impatient for the commencement of the fun.

"But I must wish you good morning, Captain Oakum; I have no time to lose. I have two or three other ships to board this morning."

"Good morning!"

The band struck up "Off she goes"—"Carry on, you lubbers!" said the coachman—crack went the whip—off pranced the horses—and away whirled the car, which no sooner approached the gangway, than the procession was greeted with torrents of water, and his "godship" was half smothered in his own element. After gasping for breath,

and shaking off the superfluous moisture, Neptune and the fair Amphitrite took their station on "the booms," to superintend the operations of the day. The clerk handed to his Majesty a list of his new subjects, who were recommended to his peculiar attention.

"Richard Goldie is the first on the list," said Neptune; "send him up!" And away scampered the Tritons, (or constables,) who were naked to the waist, the upper parts of their bodies being hideously painted, fantastic-looking caps on their heads, and short painted staves in their hands. The main-hatch "grating" was lifted, and up came our friend Richard, blindfolded, between two constables, laughing and joking with his captors as he came along. As soon as he made his appearance, Neptune exclaimed—

"Who have we got here? I ought to know the cut of that younker's jib. Ay, I'm blowed if it isn't the same that was cruising about the other day after a drowning shipmate. One of the right sort that. Just put my mark upon him—give him a touch of the tar brush, and let him go."

Almost untouched, Richard was allowed to escape forward, where he immediately equipped himself with a wet "swab," and prepared to follow the example of those around him.

"Edward Cummin! Bring Edward Cummin!"

And Cummin made his appearance, escorted as Goldie had been, with a face almost as white as the handkerchief that blinded his eyes, and shivering with anticipation. The attendant Tritons seated him on the edge of the jolly-boat at the gangway; and the barber, turning to Neptune, and holding up his three razors, said—

"Please your Honour, which?"

"Let us hear first what he has to say for himself," said Neptune.

"Where do you come from?"

"From Scot—oo! oo!" said the poor fellow, as the barber thrust a well-filled tar-brush into his mouth.

"How long is it since you left it?"

But Cummin had gained experience; he set his teeth, pressed his lips together, and sat, a ludicrous picture of fear, mixed with desperate resolution.

"A close Scot, I see," said Neptune; "give him some soap, to soften his *fizzog*, and teach him to open his mouth. Shave him clean."

The barber lathered his victim's cheeks with tar, which he *dabbed* on without much regard for his feelings; while the Tritons, with their hands in his hair, *tugged* his head about in the proper direction. The operation was performed with the "favourite's" razor, which left the furrows of its *fine* edge upon his cheeks. The doctor was standing by with his vial of tar-water, and his box of indescribable pills, ready to take advantage of every involuntary gasp of the poor patient. At last, after daubing his hair with rancid grease, "to make it grow," the bandage was suddenly taken from his eyes, and he was thrown backward into the boat; and left floundering among the tarry water, till some charitable hand dragged him out. Half drowned and half blinded, Cummin staggered forwards, blessing his stars that his torments were over; but, alas! he soon found that he had escaped from the fangs of the torturing few, only to encounter the tender mercies of the vindictive many. Groans and hisses from all quarters gave token of the dislike in which he was held—bucketfuls of water were dashed in his face, and a rope drawn suddenly across the deck tripped up his feet, and he floundered on the deck at the mercy of his tormentors, who, whenever he attempted to rise, dashed torrents of water upon him, and half-buried him in wet "swabs." Mad with rage and mortification, wearied and exhausted, Cummin at last reached the fore-castle, where he sat down for a while, to recover breath and strength.

"Come, Cummin, man," shouted Goldie to him—"come an' join the sport!"

* Coats.

There was something in Goldie's joyous and laughing tone which jarred upon Cummin's excited feelings—it seemed to him like an insult, that his companion should be so merry and happy, while he was sitting, like an evil spirit, scowling on the scene of mirth before him. He made no reply to Goldie, but muttered to himself—"Laugh on, my young cock of the walk; you shall pay dearly for your fun." From that day, Cummin became an altered man in manner: he no longer attempted to conceal his dislike to Goldie, but on all occasions did his utmost to thwart and annoy him. He used to pace up and down the deck, in gloomy silence, while the rest of the crew were sleeping around him; and dark and deadly were the thoughts that crowded through his brain. He felt that he was disliked and avoided by all his companions, and, attributing their estrangement to the arts and influence of Goldie, over and over again did he vow bitter revenge against him. But how was his revenge to be gratified? There was the rub. He was too much of a coward to attack him openly, and feared to attempt any secret mischief, as he knew that he would be immediately suspected as the author of it; for his hatred to Goldie had, by this time, been remarked throughout the ship, where, it was equally obvious, Goldie had no other enemy. But, while he is meditating mischief, we must go on with our story.

When the Briton arrived in Madras Roads, several vessels were lying at anchor there; and one of them, a small merchantman, had her foretopsail loose, and "blue-peter" flying. This was the Columbine, a Liverpool ship, which was expected to sail that night about twelve o'clock. As Cummin stood on the fore-castle in the evening, after the hammocks were piped down, looking gloomily at that vessel, his countenance suddenly brightened up. He rubbed his hands together, and laughed aloud; then checking himself, and looking cautiously round, to see whether any one was near him, he dived below. At midnight, the Columbine "got under way," and stood to sea.

Next morning, while washing decks, the officer of the deck called out—"Midshipman! I don't see Cummin; send him up."

"Cummin!—Richard Cummin!" was echoed round the decks; but no Richard Cummin appeared.

The hands were called out to muster; Cummin did not answer to his name. Strict search was made for him, but he was nowhere to be found. The first and most natural conclusion was, that he had deserted to the Columbine; but it was too late now to ascertain. But that belief was a good deal shaken, when one of the men, who happened to have been awake at eleven o'clock the night before, said that he had heard a loud splash in the water, and ran immediately to the "port" to look out; but all was silent again; and, if it was, as he now supposed, Cummin, he must have gone down immediately. He did not give the alarm at the time, for he was half asleep when he heard the noise, and thought he must have been mistaken. While the man was giving this evidence on the quarter-deck, up came Goldie with a piece of paper, which he had found on the pillow of his hammock, on which were scrawled the following words:—"Richie, I must put an end to this life of misery and mortification; when I am gone, perhaps you will think more kindly of me. I was wicked enough to talk of revenge. I leave my chest and all my traps to you. Be kind to my poor mother, for the sake of your unhappy ship-mate." It was now evident to all, that the poor fellow, whose dejection and reserve had been long noticed, had committed suicide; and, much as he was disliked, his disappearance cast a gloom over the ship's company for some days. Goldie grieved sincerely for him, now that he was gone—all his violence, all his tempers were forgotten, and Richard only thought of him as the friend of his boyhood,

and the companion of his early days; and he was much affected by the kindly feeling manifested in his note.

We must now transport ourselves, for a while, on board the Columbine, and follow Edward Cummin and his fortunes. On the night of the Briton's arrival in Madras Roads, Cummin, who was a capital swimmer, dropped unperceived under the bows of the Columbine, about an hour before she got "under way," and climbed into the "head" by a rope that was hanging overboard. He passed the lookout on the fore-castle; but the man, being half asleep, took him for one of the ship's company. He then dived down the main hatchway, and concealed himself in the "heart" of one of the cable tiers, where he remained undiscovered during the day. Next night, when all was quiet, he stole up on the gun-deck, and was in the act of helping himself out of one of the bread-bags there, when a man of the mess, who happened to be awake, seized him as a thief, and dragged him on the upper-deck.

"Bring a light, quartermaster!" said the mate; "let us see who this skulking thief is!—Hollo!" continued he, starting back with surprise—"who the deuce have we got here? Where did you spring from?"

"I came up from the cable tier, to get something to eat, sir; I was very hungry."

"Out of the cable tier! But how did you get into the cable tier?"

"I swam"—

"Swam into the cable tier! You must be a clever fellow! Come, none of your tricks upon travellers—tell the truth at once."

"I was going to tell you when you stopped me, sir. I am a Briton."

"Well, what has that to do with it?"

"Why, sir, I was tired of being one."

"Tired of being a Briton, and swam into the cable tier! What do you mean?"

"Why, sir, that I was one of the crew of the Briton, the Indiaman that lay next you in the Roads, and I cut and run from her, and got on board of you, just before you got under way."

"Here's a pretty business!—but we must make the best of a bad bargain;—I suppose you're one of the Company's hard ones."

The Columbine was short-handed, having lost several men at Madras, and the captain, though he blustered a little when he first heard the story, was in his heart pleased to have got such an unexpected addition to his crew; and, after a short time, Cummin, behaving satisfactorily, was rated able-seaman on the ship's books. On the Columbine's arrival at Liverpool, Cummin immediately set off homeward, and made his appearance at Kelton again, about eight months after he had left it, much to the surprise of his parents. He told a long and affecting story of his sufferings on board the Briton, and of the illness and death of poor Goldie, who had fallen a victim at sea, he said, to cholera. After the death of his friend, driven to desperation by the ill usage he was exposed to, he determined to run from his ship on the first opportunity, and had, accordingly, deserted, as before stated. He spoke, on all occasions, in the warmest terms, of Goldie's great kindness to him, and expressed the utmost regret at his loss. The sad news was a death-blow to the poor old Goldies, who never recovered from the effects of it, and who, broken-hearted and repining, fell easy victims, a few weeks afterwards, to an epidemic then raging. Ellen Grey mourned deeply and sincerely for Richard Goldie; she had always liked him as an agreeable companion, and respected him as an amiable and steady character; and, though, at first, she had given the preference to the plausible Cummin, yet, before they parted, Richie's good qualities had so much gained upon her better sense that she had begun to experience that

kind of partiality towards him which might, in time, have ripened into a warmer feeling. With the quick eye of jealous rivalry, Cummin had noticed this change in her feelings, almost before she was conscious of it herself. He had never really loved her; his object in appearing to do so, had been to annoy Goldie; but the wound thus given to his vanity had rankled in his heart, to the exclusion of every other feeling, but that of a wish to punish her for her defection.

He now renewed his intimacy with old Grey, and was doubly assiduous in his attentions towards him. He had become, apparently, quite an altered character—that is, he had become a more finished hypocrite; he had learned to calm his temper and to smooth his brow, and appeared, on all occasions, so steady and industrious, that the old man began to feel the kindest regard towards him; and pointed him out to his daughter's attention as a pattern for the young men around, and one who would make a steady and respectable husband. There was, at first, however, a changeableness in his manner towards Ellen, that puzzled and surprised her: at times, he was almost servilely obsequious in his attentions towards her; at others, when he thought himself unobserved, she was startled by the malevolent expression of his countenance, and by the derisive smile that played round his lips as he gazed upon her. Cummin noticed the unfavourable impression he was making, and became more guarded in his behaviour; he redoubled his attentions, and never allowed a shade of unpleasant feeling to be visible on his brow. His perseverance had the desired effect of reviving her old partiality, and, in an evil hour, she consented to become his wife. The morning after their wedding he had disappeared, and had never since been heard of. A deserted bride, she was left in all the misery of uncertainty respecting his fate or his intentions, and in utter ignorance to what cause she could impute the cool contempt with which it appeared he had treated her from the moment of their union.

But we must return to our friend Richard Goldie. Nothing particular occurred during the remainder of the voyage of the Briton, until their arrival in China, where, in consequence of a dispute with the authorities, the ships were detained for several months, and a year elapsed before they returned to England. As soon as he had received his pay, Richard set off for Liverpool, from whence he proceeded by steam to Annan. When his foot was fairly planted on the soil of Dumfriesshire, and his face was turned homewards, Richard could not restrain the exuberance of his spirits. He laughed, he sang, he ran, he waved his hat, and was guilty of all those extravagances which could only be excused in a young sailor just let loose; and which, had they been witnessed by others of cooler temperament, would have been looked upon as the freaks of a madman. Then he began to think of Kelton, of his parents, and of bonny Ellen Grey; and with thoughts of her came a sad recollection of poor Cummin, and a kind of flattering notion that the latter had had good cause for his jealousy on the night of their quarrel, when Ellen, every feature of whose face and every note of whose voice were vividly present to his memory, smiled so sweetly upon him, and bid him take care of himself “for a' our sakes.”

It was late in the evening when he approached Kelton, on his way homewards; and he resolved to give the Greys a call as he went past. At length he saw the well-known cottage, and a flush came over his brow when he recognised Ellen sitting at the door. He hastened forward to greet her; but, instead of the friendly reception he had anticipated, he was surprised and mortified to see her start up with a faint scream, and avert her eyes with looks of horror and alarm.

“Ellen!” exclaimed he—“hae ye forgotten me? What gars ye turn awa yer head, as though ye'd seen a hogle? Am I sae changed that ye dinna ken yer auld friend,

Richie Goldie?” And he advanced to take her hand. The girl started from his touch with a cold shudder, and muttered—

“Is it no gane yet?”

“What is't ye're speakin' o', Ellen; there's nought here but yersel an' me? Can ye no speak to me: it sets ye ill to turn the cauld shouter to an auld fren?”

The girl now looked at him for a moment fearfully over her shoulder, and exclaimed, with a start of joy—

“Heth! I believe it's himsel!”

“Why, wha else did ye tak me for, Ellen?”

“For yer wraith, Richie; they tell't me ye were dead?”

“And wha tell't ye sic a lee?”

“He tell't me sae himsel.”

“And wha was he?”

“Ned Cummin: he said he saw ye dec.”

“Ned Cummin! Why the lassie's head's in a creel. Ned drowned himsel, puir chiel! in Madras Roads; and mony a sair thocht has it gien me that we war unfreens when we parted.”

“Weel, Richie, a' I ken is that it's Gude's truth that Ned Cummin tell't me ye were dead—an' I believed him.” And the tears gushed from her eyes as she said so. “But come ben the hoose, and see my faither.”

Old Grey was at first as much alarmed as his daughter at the apparition, as he thought it, of Richard Goldie; for they both were infected with the superstition of the country, and firmly believed in the doctrine of wraiths, bogles, and other supernatural appearances.

“An', noo,” said the old man, “that we ken that ye're yersel an' no yer wraith, sit doon an' tell us a' that's happened ye sin' ye gae awa.”

“I hae nae time 'enow,” said Richard; “I maun awa hame; for I haena seen my ain fouk yet—mair's the shame but I'll come back the morn's morn, an' gie ye my cracks.”

“But, Richie, my man, hae ye no heard—d'ye no ken,” said the old man, hesitatingly.

“What's happened?” cried Goldie, alarmed. “Are they no a' weel at hame?”

“They heard ye were dead, Richie; an' ye ken, they aye said that ye war the life o' their hearts—they were never like the same folk again; the grass o' Caerlav'rock kirk-yard is green abune their heads.”

Goldie was staggered by this unexpected and distressing intelligence; he had loved his parents with the fondest affection, and the hope of cheering and supporting them in their declining years had been the mainspring of his activity and industry. He covered his face with his hands, and remained for some moments silent; and, at last, with a sudden outburst of grief, exclaimed—

“Gane! baith gane! an' I am left alane, without a leevin fren, or a roof to shelter me!”

“Ye'se no want either, Richie, as lang's I'm to the fore. Come, bide whar ye are; ye'll ay be welcome for the sake o' langsyne. I hae aften wished, and I ance thocht that oor Ellen an' you might come thegither; but it wasna to be.”

“An' what for can it no be?” said Richie, forgetting his recent loss for the moment, and looking at Ellen. But she burst into tears, and left the room.

Goldie, surprised at her emotion, asked the reason of it; and the old man, in explanation, told him the story we have already related, and expressed his surprise at Cummin's conduct, and his wonder as to what could be his motive for such deception.

“What for did he tell us ye were dead, Ritchie?”

“I see it a' noo,” said Richard: “when I struck him to the ground, he swore he would hae revenge—an' sair revenge has he taen. My puir faither an' mither! What had they dune?” And the poor fellow hung down his head and sobbed aloud.

“But what could hae garr'd him leave oor Ellen?”

"Oh, he kent that I liked Ellen, and jaloused that she thoct mair o' me than o' himsel; an' he just married her, to spite me, and to be revenged upon her for slighting him at first. But there's a time for a' things; if I get a grip on him, he's repent it."

It was long before Goldie was able to bear up against the disappointment of all his fondest hopes; and when the first violence of his grief was past, the springiness and buoyancy of his disposition seemed to have left him entirely. He became grave and thoughtful, a smile was scarcely ever seen to brighten his countenance, and he went about his usual occupations with a sort of dogged indifference, as if it mattered not to him how they were performed, and as if they were to him a mere mechanical and tiresome duty. Yet he loved Ellen Grey as fondly as ever; but she was now, though deserted, the wife of another, and he assumed a coldness of manner, to conceal the warm feelings which still reigned but too powerfully in his breast. He was reserved, because he felt a kind of painful pleasure in brooding in silence over his sorrows. In thinking of his poor parents, and of Ellen Grey, who might have been his wife, but for another, he would mutter threats of retaliation upon the cold-blooded villain who had caused him so much misery. He would fain have left a place which, much as he loved it, only kept awake so many painful recollections, had he not been withheld from doing so by a strong feeling of gratitude to old Grey, who was now unable to work for his own subsistence, and depended almost entirely upon him for his daily support. Ellen, herself, who was much liked in the neighbourhood, and whose story had excited much interest among the neighbouring gentry, obtained a good deal of employment as a dress-maker, which enabled her not only to assist in the support of her father, but likewise to procure many luxuries for him which he otherwise could not have obtained. At length, after lingering for some months in a state of gradual decay, the old man died, and Goldie, after having seen Ellen comfortably settled in a neighbouring family, took an affectionate farewell of her, and went to Liverpool in search of employment. No accounts had been heard of Cummin, although nearly two years had elapsed since his disappearance; and Goldie, who could not forget his love for Ellen Grey, was kept in a state of most unpleasant uncertainty.

Richard had been for a short time in Liverpool, and was walking one day on the Clarence Dock as some carts were being unloaded. The horse in one of them took fright at some passing object, and dashed off at full speed. A sailor, who was standing on the dock, ran forward and attempted to stop it; but was instantly knocked down with great violence, and the wheel of the cart passed over his head. Richard, who was close to the spot, hastened to his assistance; and was horrified at the sight that met his eyes. The poor fellow was senseless; his arm appeared to be broken, and his face, dreadfully disfigured, was covered with gore and dust. Richard raised his head on a log of wood lying near, loosened his collar, and, a crowd instantly collecting, requested some of them to run for the nearest doctor. He then, with the assistance of some of the bystanders, conveyed the poor sufferer into one of the houses near, where he lay, for some time, panting and groaning; but apparently quite insensible.

After they had all gone, the wounded man turned to Richard, and, looking in his face, gave a heavy sigh.

"Are ye in much pain?" said Goldie.

"Pain of mind more than pain of body, Richard Goldie," replied the man, in feeble and imperfect accents. "Do you not know me?"

"Mercifu powers!" exclaimed Richie; "sure it canna be Ned Cummin?"

"It is Edward Cummin, Richie, your false friend, your once bitter enemy, that lies bruised, and crushed, and

broken-spirited before you. Can you forgive me?—can you forgive a dying and a penitent man?"

"Ned Cummin," said Richard, "ye hae dune me grievous wrang; an' I'll no deny that, if I had met ye in health and strength, our meetin wadna been a peaceable ane; but the hand o' heaven has stricken ye sair; an'—yes!—I forgie ye wi' a' my heart; an', oh! may ye meet wi' forgiveness where it'll do ye mair guid!"

"Thanks, dear Richie!—this is more than I deserved. Now I shall die happy."

"Ye maunna speak ony mair Ned; ye heard what the doctor said."

"But I *must* speak, Richie, while time is allowed me. You know well, and, if you don't, I feel that I cannot live long. Oh, that a few years were allowed me, to prove my repentance sincere! But I feel that is not to be. Death is before me, Richie, and I see things in a very different light now. You were always better than me: you were frank, and open, and confiding; I was a proud, revengeful hypocrite; and I hated you because I always *felt* myself to be one when you were near me. When you struck me to the earth, the feeling of revenge was aroused within me; but it was long before I could contrive how to gratify it. At last, I thought of Ellen Grey; I knew you loved her, and I fancied she had deserted me for you; I determined to be revenged upon you both. I wooed and won, and then deserted her; and, with a refinement in cruelty, I left her in her ignorance, that you yourself might prove to her how basely she had been deceived. Hugging myself in the success of my wicked schemes, I went on board a man-of-war, from which I was discharged a few weeks ago. But the terrors of an accusing conscience went with me, and I was miserable; and I had resolved to return homewards, when the accident occurred which has brought us together. Richard, I am dying! Cruel and revengeful as I have been, can you still forgive me?"

"I do, I do, from my heart," sobbed Richard, greatly affected.

"Bless you for saying so!—Now leave me to my own thoughts, that I may endeavour to make my peace with heaven."

Next morning Edward Cummin was no more. Goldie was with him in his last moments, and was gratified by the conviction that he departed in a happy frame of mind. After having attended the remains to their last home, he gave up his intention of going abroad, and turned his steps homeward. Having arrived, he sought Ellen, and communicated to her the sad news. At first she was much shocked and affected; but her affection for Cummin had been considerably shaken by his contemptuous indifference and long absence; and when she heard what were his motives for deceiving and deserting her, she had difficulty in suppressing her indignation. Richard Goldie got a berth on board one of the small coasting sloops, and, by his steadiness and activity, so recommended himself to the owners, that he was made master of her, the former one being shifted into a new vessel. His love for Ellen was as strong as ever, and now all obstacles to their union having been removed, they were soon afterwards wedded—a union very different from the former marriage into which Ellen had been betrayed.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

HUME AND THE GOVERNOR OF BERWICK.

It has been asserted by at least one historian, that it has been observed, that the inhabitants of towns which have undergone a cruel siege, and experienced all the horrors of storm and pillage, have retained for ages the traces of the effects of their sufferings, in a detestation of war, indications of pusillanimity, and decline of trade. If there be any truth in this observation, what caitiffs must the inhabitants of Berwick be! No town in the world has been so often exposed to the "ills that wait on the red chariot of war;" for Picts, Romans, Danes, Saxons, English, and Scotch have, in their turn, wasted their rage and their strength upon her broken ribs. Her boasted "barre," (barrier,) from which her name, Barrewick, is derived, has never been able to save her effectually, either from her enemies of land or water. From the reign of Osbert, the king of Northumberland, down to the time when Lord Sidmouth saw treason in her big guns, she has been devoted to the harpies of foreign and intestine war and discord. Yet who shall say, that the hearts or spirits of the inhabitants of this extraordinary town lost either blood or buoyancy from their misfortunes? No sooner were her bulwarks raised than they appeared renescent; the inhabitants defended the new fortifications with a spirit that received a salient power from the depression produced by the demolition of the old; and her ships, that one day were shattered by engines of war, sailed in a state of repair with the next fair wind, to fetch from distant ports articles of merchandise, not seldom for those who were fighting or had fought against her liberties. Such was Berwick; and her sons of to-day inherit too much of the nobility and generosity of her old children, to find fault with us for telling them a tale which, while it exhibits some shades of the warlike spirit of their ancestors, shews also that war and citizen warriors have their foibles, and are not always exempt from the harmless laugh that does the heart more good than the touch of an old spear.

The Lord Hume of the latter period of the seventeenth century, had a natural son, Patrick, an arch rogue, inheriting the fire of the blood of the Humes, along with that which burnt in the black eyes of the gipsies of Yetholm. He was brought up by his father; and, true to the principles of his education, would acknowledge no patrons of the heart, save the three ruling powers of love, laughter, and war—Cupid, Momus, and Mars—a trio chosen from all the gods, (the remainder being sent to Hades,) as being alone worthy of the worship of a gentleman. How Patrick got acquainted, and, far less, how he got in love with the Mayor of Berwick's daughter, Isabella, we cannot say, nor need antiquarians try to discover; for where there was a Southron to be slain or a lady to be won, Patrick Hume cared no more for bar, buttress, battlement, fire, or water, than did Jove for his own thunder cloud, under the shade of which he courted the daughter of Inachus. Letting alone the recondite subject of "love's beginning," we shall tread safer ground in stating, that the affection had been very materially increased on both sides by the walls of Berwick; for, although Patrick was a greater despiser of for-

tifications, he had felt, in the affair of his love for Isabella, the fair daughter of the Mayor of Berwick, that there is no getting a damsel through a *loop hole*, though there might be poured as much sentimental and pathetic speech and sigh-breath through the invidious opening, as ever passed through the free air that fills the breeze under the trysting thorn.

What we have now said requires the explanation, that at the period of our story, the town of Berwick belonged to the English; and the Mayor, being himself either an Englishman, or connected by strong ties of relationship with the English, had a strong antipathy towards the Scottish Border raiders, whom he denominated as gentlemen-robbers, headed by the noble robber Hume. But, above all, he hated Young Patrick—into whose veins, he said, there had been poured the distilled raid-venom and love-poison of all the gentlemen-scaumers that ever infested the Borders. The origin of this hatred had some connection with an affair of the Newmilne, belonging to Berwick; the dam-dike of which, Patrick alleged, prevented the salmon from getting up the river, and hence destroyed all his angling sport, as well as that of all the noblemen and gentlemen that resorted to the river for the purpose of practising the "gentle art." He had therefore threatened to pull it down, to let up the fish; and sounded his threat in the ears of the indignant Mayor, in terms that were, peradventure, made stronger and bitterer by the thought that dikes and walls were his greatest bane upon earth: by the walls of Berwick the Mayor kept from his arms the fair Isabella, and by the dam-dike of Newmilne the same Mayor deprived him of the pleasure of angling. Was such power on the part of a Mayor to be borne by the high-spirited youth who had been trained to look upon mason-work as a mere stimulant to love or war—a thing that raised the value of what it enclosed by the opposition it offered to the young blood that raged for entrance? The youth thought not. He vowed that he would neither lose his Isabella nor his salmon; and, as fate would have it, the old Mayor had heard the vow, and vowed also that young Patrick should lose both.

Having fished one day to no purpose, in consequence of the obstruction of "that most accursed of all dam-dikes, the Newmilne dike," as Patrick styled it, he threw down his rod, and lay down upon the bank of the river, to wait the hour when the moon should summon and lighten him to the loop-hole in the other of his hated obstructions, the walls of Berwick—where that evening he expected to meet his beloved Isabella, and commune with her in the eloquent language of their mutual passion. The bright luminary burst in the midst of his reveries from behind an autumn cloud, and flashed a long silver beam upon the rolling waters. He started to his feet.

"It is beyond my time," he said, self-accusingly. "My Isabella is on Berwick Wall, and I am still lingering here by the banks of the river, three miles from where my love and honour require me to be. The loiterer in love is a laggard in war; and shame on the Hume who is either!"

In a short time the young Hume was standing beneath a buttress of the old walls of the town, looking earnestly through a small opening, in which he expected to see the face of the fair daughter of the Mayor.

"Art there at last, love?" said he, in a soft voice, as he

saw, with palpitating heart, the pretty but arch face of the bewitching heiress of all the wealth of the old burgher lord peering through the aperture. "What, in the name of him who got his wings in the lap of Venus, and useth them to this hour as cleverly as doth our pretty messenger of Spring, hath kept thee, wench?"

"Ha! ha! hush! hush, man!" responded she, whose spirit equalled that of the boldest Hume that ever headed a raid. "Thou'rt the laggard. I've waited for thee an hour, until I've sighed this little love-bole into an oven-heat, waiting thee, thou lover of broken troth! Some gipsy queen in Haugh of the Tweed hath wooed thee out of thy affection for thy Isabel; and now thou askest what hath kept me. Ha! ha! Good—for a Hume."

"The moon cheated me, and went skulking under a cloud," responded Hume.

"And the cloud threw thy love in the shade," added quickly the gay girl. "Methought love kept his own dial, and was independent of sun or moon. What if a rebel vapour cometh over the queen of heaven that night thou art to make me free? My hope of liberty, I fancy, would be clouded; and I would be remitted again to the care of Captain Wallace, who keepeth the town and the Mayor's daughter from the spoiling arms of the robber Humes."

"Ha! ha!" replied he—"thy father wanteth not a Mayor's wits, Isabella, in offering thee as a prize to the Governor of the town. Excellent device, i'faith! The old burgher lord knew he could not keep thee, mad-cap wench as thou art, from a hated Hume's arms, unless he gave the Captain an interest as a *lover* in guarding thee, like a piece of the old wall of Berwick."

"And therein thou'rt well complimented," replied she; "for my father could not get, in all Berwick, a man that could keep me from thee, but he who guardeth town, and Mayor, and maiden together. Since the Governor, as a lover, got charge of me, I am more firmly caged than ever was the old countess, who was so long confined in the grated wing-cage of the old castle. When art thou to free me from the Governor's love and surveillance, good Patrick? If what I have now to tell thee hath no power to quicken thy wits and nerve thine arm, thou art indeed thyself no better than one of those stones, to which, in thy wit, thou hast likened me. Know'st that a day is fixed for Captain Wallace being my *legal* governor?"

"Ha!" cried Hume, in agitation. "This soundeth differently from the playful hammer of thy wit, Bell. What day is fixed? Thou hast fired me with high purposes."

"How high tower they?" cried the maiden, laughing. "Do they reach thy former threat, to pull down the Newmilne dam-dike, and let *up* the salmon, in revenge for the letting *down* of the Mayor's daughter?"

"Another time for thy wit, Bell," replied Patrick, in a more serious tone. "Thou hast put to flight my spirits. The grey owl meditation is flapping his dingy wing over my heart. The time—the time—when is the day?"

"This day se'ennight," answered Isabel. "Hush! hush! here cometh the Governor, blowing like a Tweedmouth grampus, fresh from the German Sea, in full run after a lady-fish of the queen of rivers."

And now Hume heard the hoarse voice of the redoubted Governor, Captain Wallace—that fat overgrown *bellygerent* son of Mars, so famous, in his day, for vaunting of feats of arms, at Bothwell, (where he never was,) over the Mayor's wine, and in presence of his fair daughter, whom he thus courted after the manner of the noble Moor, with a slight difference as to the truth of his feats scarce worth mentioning. It appeared to Hume, as he listened, that Wallace, and the Mayor, who was with him, had sallied out, after the fourth bottle, in search of Isabel—a suspicion verified by the speech of the warlike Captain.

"Did I not tell thee, Mr Mayor," said the Governor, in a

voice that reverberated among the walls, and fell distinctly on Hume's ear, "that she would be about the fortifications? Ha!—anything appertaining to war delighteth the fair creature as much as it did that rare author, Will Shakspeare's Desdemona. If I had been as black as the Moor—ay, or as the devil himself—my prowess at Bothwell would have given this person of mine, albeit somewhat enlarged, the properties of beauty in the eyes of noble-spirited women—so much do our bodies borrow from the qualities of our souls."

"Where is she?" rejoined the Mayor. "I like not that love of the fortifications. It is the outside of the walls she loves. See, she flies, conscience-smitten. I like not this, my noble Captain—see, there is Patrick Hume beyond the wall. If thou hast courage, drive thy pike through that loop, and, peradventure, ye may blind a Hume for life."

"I like to strike a man fair—body to body—as we did on the Bridge of Bothwell," responded the Captain. "Ha! ha! Give me the loop-hole of a good bilbo-thrust, out of which the soul wings its flight in a comfortable manner. Nevertheless, to please my noble friend the Mayor, and to get quit of a rival, I may" (lowering his voice to a whisper) "as well kill him in the way thou hast propounded; but I assure thee, upon my honour, I would much rather have the fellow before me, without the intervention of these plaguy walls, that come thus in the way and march of one's valour. There goes!"

On looking up, Hume saw the Captain's bilbo thrusting manfully through the night air, as if it would pierce the night gnomes and spirits that love to hang over old battlements. Taking out his handkerchief, he wrapped it round his hand, and seizing the point of the sword, gave it a jerk, which (and the consequent terror) disengaged it from the hand of the pot-valiant hero of Bothwell. A shout of fear was heard from within.

"Stop! stop! mine good Mr Mayor!" cried the Captain to the Mayor, who had begun to fly; "I do not see, as yet any very great, that is, serious cause of apprehension; but, I forget, thou wert not at Bothwell. By my honour, I've done for him! He hath carried off my sword in his body. Was it Patrick Hume, saidst thou? Then is he dead as my grandmother, and no more shall he follow after my betrothed, or threaten thee with the downfall of the Newmilne dam-dike. All I sorrow for is my good sword, which, but for that accursed loop, I might have redrawn from his vile carcase, and thus saved my property at the same time that I gave the carrion crows of old Berwick a dinner."

"Ah! but he's a devil that Hume," responded the Mayor. "Long has he hounded after my daughter Bell; and, though it is now likely near an end with him, I should not like to come in the way of the dying tiger. Let us home."

The sound of the retreating warriors brought back Hume to the loop-hole, to see if Isabel was still there, to whom he was anxious to propose a plan, whereby he might (with the gay romp's most cheerful good-will and hearty co-operation) carry her off from the contaminating embrace of the pot-valiant Governor, with whom she was to be wed on that day se'ennight. He waited a long time, but no Isabel came. He suspected that the Mayor, after having caught her speaking to him, (Hume,) his most inveterate foe, would, as he had often done before, lock her up, and set the noble Captain as a guard upon his lady-love. Cursing his unlucky fate, that brought them out to interrupt his converse with the mistress of his heart, and prevent the arrangement of an elopement, he bent the Captain's bilbo hilt to point, till it rebounded with a loud twang, and stepping away up the Tweed, fell into a deep meditation as to the manner by which he should secure Isabel. As he went along, his eye fell upon that source of so much contention between the men of Berwick and the border barons, the dam-dike of the Newmilne, and against which the Lord Hume, as well as

himself and many of the neighbouring knights and lairds, had vowed destruction. A thought flashed across his mind, and his eye sparkled in the moon-beam, as brightly as did the Captain's sword, which he still held in his hand.

"I have hit it!" he cried, as he clapped his hand on his limb, and the sound echoed back from the mill-walls. "For spearing a salmon or a Southron, dissolving that old foolish tenure between a proprietor and his cattle, or cutting the tie of forced duty between a rich old Mayor and his daughter, where shall the bastard of Hume be equalled on the Borders? My fair Bell, thou wouldst spring with the elasticity of this bent blade, and dance like these moon-beams in the Tweed, if thou wert in the knowledge of this thought that now tickles the wild fancy of thy lover, whom thou equallest in all that belongeth to the gay heart and the bounding spirit."

Occupied with these thoughts, Patrick went home to the castle of the Humes; and, next morning, he bent his way to Foulden, where he sought Lord Ross's bailie, James Sinclair, a man who had a very hearty spite against the obstruction to the passage of the Tweed salmon. With him he communed for a considerable time, and thereafter he proceeded to Paxton and to others of the gentlemen in the vicinity. The subject of these interviews will perhaps best be explained by the following placard, which appeared in various parts of Berwick in two days thereafter:—

"On Friday last, the tenant of Newmilne, belonging to the toun of Baricke, gave information to our honourable Mayor, who has communicated the same to our gallant Góvernour, Captain Wallace, that the Lord Hume and other the Scotch gentlemen, our neighbours, do, on Monday next, intend to be at the Newmilne aforesaid, by tenn of the clock of the morninge; and that they had summoned their tenants to be then and there present, alsoe, to assist in the breaking downe and demolishing the dam of the said Newmilne; and that the Lord Ross his bailiffe of Foulden had given out in speeches, that he was desired to summon the said Lord Ross, his tenants, and inhabitants of Foulden baronry, to be then and there aiding and assisting them, alsoe, for better effecting the same: Whereupon, it is necessary, that, at a ringing of a belle, our tounsmen, headed by our Mayor, and directed by the warlike genius of Captain Wallace, should proceed to the said Newmilne, and give battle in defence of the said dike, which is indispensable to the existence of the toun's property. God save the Mayor!"

The effect produced by this proclamation was rapid and stirring. The English, at that period, had contrived to raise a strong prejudice in the minds of the Berwick burghers against the Border Scots; and the intelligence that the daring robbers intended to demolish their property, inflamed them to the high point of resolution to fight under their valorous Captain, while one stone of the dike remained on another, and one drop of blood was left in their bodies. Hume, who had a greater part in the occasion of these preparations than had been made apparent, got secret intelligence of all that was going on within the town; but none of his vigils at the loop-hole were rewarded with a sight of his spirited Isabel, who, he understood, had been confined in her father's house since the night on which she had been discovered upon the wall. Meanwhile, the preparations for the defence of the town's property proceeded; and, on the Monday morning, a bell, whose loud tongue spoke "war's alarms," sounded over town and walls, spreading fear among the timid, and rousing in the noble breasts of the valorous proud and swelling resolutions to give battle to the Border robbers, in the style of their ancestors. Ever since the first announcement, they had been drilled by the Captain, whose loud command of voice, proud bearing, bent back, (bent in self-defence against the counterpoise of his stomach,) and martial strut, filled them with great awe of

his power, and great confidence in his abilities. Many hundred people, "on horse and foote," (we use the language of our old chronicle,) "were gathered together, considerably armed with swordes, pistolles, firelocks, blunderbushes, foalingpieces, bowes and arrowes of the tyme of the first Edward, and uther powerful ammunition, fit to resist the ryot of the Scotch; and away they marched to the newe miln, with Mr Mayor and the Governor, (a verrie terrible man of war—to be married the morn to the Mayor's dochter Isabel, if he come back with lyffe,) and the sergeants with their halberts, and constables with their staves, going before them." In front, there was beat some thundering engines of warlike music, which was cut occasionally by sharp screams of small fifes, blown into by the burgh's amateurs of that lively musical machine. Altogether, the cavalcade presented many appearances of a stern and warlike nature, which might well have prevented the Scotch raiders from proceeding with their felonious intention of driving down the obstruction to the salmon, and forced them to remain content with the angling of trout and parr. The "verrie sight" of the brave Wallace was deemed sufficient by those who followed him, "to put an end to the fraye before it was begunne."

This extraordinary cavalcade was seen passing along the road by Patrick Hume, who had, with his companions, retired behind some brushwood, the better to enjoy the sight. The warriors passed on, and every now and then the loud voice of the captain was heard commanding and exhorting his troops to keep up their courage for the coming strife. When the last file was disappearing, Hume and his companions made the woods resound with a loud laugh, and, starting up, and crying, "For Berwick, ho!" they hurried away in the direction of the town, which the Governor, in his anxiety to form a large assemblage, had left without a guard. Meanwhile the burgher army pushed on for Newmilne; "and, when they came there," (says the chronicle,) "they pitched their camp; and nae doubt butt they were well disciplined, seeing theye had the advantage of the Captaine's training, with the great blessing attour of weapons suitable—viz. rusty ould swordes and pistolles; and they continued about three or foure houres on the bankes and about the milne: still there was noe appearance of the Scotch coming to fecht with them." For a long time the captain was solemn and quiet; but when it appeared that the Scots "were not to come to shew fecht," he got as wordy as a blank-verse poet, and stood up in the face of a neighbouring wood, from which it was expected the enemy would emanate, and called upon the cowards (as he styled them) to come out "and dare to touche one stone of the milne dam-dike."

"Did I not tell thee, Mr Mayor," he cried, "that I killed Patrick Hume? If not, where is he now, and he the Lord Ross of Foulden, and he of Paxton, and all the rest of the Border heroes? Come forth from thy wood recesses, if there be as much pluck in thee as will enable thee to meet the fire of the eye of the Governor of Berwick! Ha! ha! The rascals must have been at Bothwell, where, doubtless, they felt the pith of this arm. There goeth the disadvantage of bravery! The devil a man will encounter one whose name is terrible, and I fear I may never have the luxury of a good fight again. This day I expected to have fleshed my good sword. To-morrow is my wedding day. How glorious would it have been to have made it also a day of victory! I could almost hack these unconscious trees for very spite, and to give my sword the exercise it lacketh."

And he swung his falchion from side to side, cutting off the tops of the young firs, just as if they had been men's heads; but no Scotchman made his appearance. The whole bells of Berwick now began to swing and ring as if the town had been invaded; and messengers, breathless and pant-

ing, arrived at the camp, and communicated the intelligence that the Bastard of Hume had, with a body of men, got entrance to the Mayor's house, by shewing the guard the Governor's sword, and carried off Isabel, the Mayor's daughter, who was more willing to go than to stay. The route of the fugitives was distinctly laid down, and it was represented by the messengers that, by crossing over a couple of miles, they had every chance of overtaking them and reclaiming the disobedient maid. The recommendation was instantly seized by the distracted Mayor, and a shout of the burgher forces, and an accompanying peal from the drums and fifes, shewed the desire of the men to fulfil the wish of their master. The captain's spirit was changed. He burned to reclaim his bride; but he feared the Bastard of Hume, whose prowess was acknowledged far and wide from the Borders. Shame did what could not have been accomplished by love; and, putting himself, with a mock warlike air, at the head of the troops, away he posted as fast as sixteen stone of beef, penetrated by alternate currents of fear, shame, and valour, would permit. The musical instruments of war were hushed; and as the forces hurried on, panting and breathing, not a voice was heard but the occasional vaults of the captain, who found it necessary to conceal his fear by these running shots of assumed valour. As fate would have it, the Berwickers came up with the Bastard's party, who, with the gay and laughing Isabel in the midst of them, were seated, as they thought securely, in the old Berwick wood, enjoying some wine, which she, with wise providence, had handed to one of the men as a refreshment when they should be beyond danger. The sounds of merriment struck on the ear of the invaders; they stopped, and thought it safer, in the first instance, to reconnoitre—a step highly eulogised by the Captain, who seemed to want breath as well from the toil of the chase as from some misgivings of his valour, which had come, like qualms of sickness, over his stout heart.

"Ha! traitor!" cried the Mayor, "the device of sending us to Newmilne will not avail thee. Give me my daughter, traitor!" addressing himself to the Bastard, who stood now in the front of the party, all prepared for a tough defence.

"In either of two events thou shalt have her," cried Hume—"if thou canst take her, or if she is willing to go with thee."

"No, no!" cried the sprightly maid herself, coming boldly forward. "I love my father and the good citizens of Berwick, and none of them shall lose a drop of their blood for Isabel. If we are to have battle, let it be between the two lovers who claim my hand. By the honour of a Mayor's daughter, I shall be his who gaineth the day! Stand forward, Patrick Hume and Governor Wallace."

"Bravo!" shouted the burghers, delighted with a scheme that smacked so sweetly of justice and safety.

All eyes were now turned on the Captain; and Isabel, delighted with her scheme, was seen concealing her face with the corner of her cloak, to suppress her laughter. The Captain saw, however, neither justice nor safety in the scheme, and, edging near the Mayor, whispered into his ear his intention not to fight. Palpable indications of fear were escaping from his trembling limbs, and the hero of Bothwell was on the eve of being discovered. Hume was prepared—he stood, sword in hand, ready for the combat.

"Come forward, Captain!" cried the Bastard.

"Come forward!" resounded from Isabel, and a hundred voices of the burghers.

"I am the Governor of Berwick," answered the hero, in a trembling voice, keeping the body of the Mayor between him and Hume. "As the servant of the King, I dare not" (panting) "run the risk of reducing my authority—by—by—engaging, I say by committing myself in single combat, like a knight errant, for a runaway dam el. It comporteth not with my dignity—hegh—hegh—I say I cannot come down

from the height of my glory at Bothwell, by committing myself in a love brawl. But ye are my men—hegh—hegh—ye are bound to fight when I command. Do your duty—on, on, I say, to the rescue."

"We want not the wench," responded many voices. "He that will not fight for his love, deserves to lose her for his cowardice." "Resign her, good Mayor," cried others. "Give the damsel her choice," added others. "Bravo, good fellows!" cried Bell, in the midst of her laughter; and a shout from Hume's men rewarded her spirit. The enthusiasm was caught by the Berwickers, some of whom, observing certain indications thrown out by Isabel, ran forward and got from her a flagon of good wine. The vessel was handed from one to another. "Hurra for Hume!" shouted the Berwickers. The tables were turned. All, to a man, were with Isabel and her partner. The Mayor had sense enough to see his position. In any way he was to lose his daughter, and he heartily despised the coward that would not fight for his love.

"Hume," he cried, standing forward, "come hither; and, Isabel, approach the side of thy father."

The laughing damsel ran forward, and, perceiving her absolute safety, flung herself on her father's neck, and hung there, amidst the continued shouts of the men.


"Forgive me, forgive me, father!" cried she. "My choice is justified by my love, and the characters of my lovers. The one is a coward, the other a brave youth. Hume's intentions are honourable, and I may be the respected wife of one of noble blood."

"I forgive thee, Bell," answered the father. And he took her hand and placed it in Hume's. "Come, Captain, forgive her too, and let us all be friends."

He looked round for the Captain, and all the party looked also; but the hero was gone. He had mounted a white Rosinante, as thin as he was fat, and was busy striking her protruding bones with his sword, to propel her on to Berwick, where he thought he would be more safe than where he was. The figure he made in his retreat—his large swelled body on the lean jade, like a tun of wine on a gantress—his anxiety to get off—his receding position—his flight after such a day of vaunting—all conspired to render the sight ludicrous in the extreme. One general burst of laughter filled the air; but the Captain held on his course, and never stopped till he arrived at Berwick. That day Hume and Isabel were wed—and a happy day it was for the Berwickers; who, in place of fighting, were occupied in drinking the healths of the couple. The device of Hume, in sending them to the Newmilne, was admired for its ingenuity; and all Berwick rung with the praises of Hume and his fair spouse. Regular entries were made in the council books, of the expedition to the Newmilne, "where they braided the Scottes to come and fecht them, butte the cowardes never appeared." But it was deemed prudent to say nothing therein of Hume's trick, which, doubtless, might have reduced the amount of bravery which it was necessary should appear, for the honour of the town.



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