THE

OLD BACHELOR

IN THE

OLD SCOTTISH VILLAGE.

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CHAPTER I.

RETURN AND SETTLEMENT.

It is a law of human nature that a man, however long he may have been abroad, and however comfortable his foreign residence may be, is yet drawn back by old affection to his native spot, there to spend the evening of his life. It is wisely ordained by God, in the constitution of our being, that this should be so, as the gentlest and best natural preparation for a man to die. Such an one as I have supposed comes back to the place of his boyhood, not doubting he shall be happy as of yore. He has abundance of wealth, let us say; but where are the friends and companions of his childhood? He loves the place still, and cannot leave it; but no where else could such a profound solemnizing sense of the vanity of human life, in itself, fall and dwell on his heart. This, mingled with the tender recollections of early boyhood, induces a state of mind, which, by resignation and the hope of meeting his long-lost friends, fits a man more than any other mere natural influence for "shuffling off this mortal coil." Graciously, then, has Providence implanted within us this desire of returning to the place of our childhood, especially in our declining years, that being thereby made to feel how valueless this world is in itself, and to yearn after those dear

ones who are gone before us, our own preparation for going hence also may be made with sweet composure. Such were the feelings that brought me home to my native Village, after a life of activity in various places elsewhere; and such was my tender disappointment and regret when I did come back. But the perfect preparation to die, however much helped by these natural means, is still from God alone: May he grant it to me, of his grace!

One of my first visits was to the church-yard of my fathers. Ah! how glad was I to find things unchanged there, save that the graves of my kindred were all sunk to the hard green level of the natural earth. The old head-stone of the "Portioners" of our family, besides being swayed and sunk to one side, was all over-grown with scurf, so that I could scarcely read the names of my grandfather and grandmother, and their numerous children, many of whom "died in infancy." My first thought was to have it replaced with a new stone, bearing my own father and mother's names, and the names of my brothers and sisters; but not being able to determine in my own mind what lapse of time is sufficient to give us a right to blot away the old generation from the eyes of men, and put the new in its stead, and as there was not room for both on the tomb-stone which I proposed, I came to the resolution of letting things remain just as they were, contented with having our burial-place marked out, however rudely. The truth is, I have no craving whatever for having the dear old family names stuck up on gaudy tablets, which in nine cases out of ten are meant to set forth the importance of the living, rather than be memorials of the dead. As for your "cemeteries" in the *Pere-la-Chaise* style, where a man may do Hervey's Meditations in a Flower-Garden, and among the Tombs, at one and the same time, I cannot away with them. And save us from utilitarianism, as well as vanity, in kirk-yards! Why, the very next village burial-place to our own (I have been there, too, looking for the last resting-place of an early friend) has got a fine new wall round it. This might

pass; but the spirit of trim utility has invaded the interior also, and I was shocked to find that all the graves had been levelled, and the whole yard dug over, and sown out with new grass. The particular grave which I went to seek was, of course, no more to be found. And the general effect of all this finical uniformity was, that the forcible lesson of our uncertain life, drawn from the varied and contrasted sizes of a hundred visible graves—the span-long infant *seen* lying by the full-grown man—was levelled down into one dull blank of vague and unimpressive conjecture. As for the epitaphs of our church-yards in general, whether in town or country, the less that is said of them the better. Where anything beyond the mere registry of names and dates is attempted, we have generally a wordy pomp of indiscriminate and fulsome eulogy. But we can hardly wonder that epitaphs in general are ill written, for this kind of composition is a very peculiar and difficult one. It may almost be called a distinct Art. Its fine principle demands that sorrow and suffering, however strongly set forth, should yet be chastened and subdued to repose, and hope, and Christian peace. In its right spirit it is nearly allied to the Greek sculpture. In Wordsworth's Essay on Epitaphs, we have a delicately philosophical exposition of the principles which should guide the artist (why not call him so?) in these most difficult compositions. If this literature of the heart were better understood, and more cultivated as an Art, how impressive might be the voice of instructed sorrow on our monumental stones. I do not hesitate to say this; for though the pomp of mausoleums is anything but pleasing to me, I agree with Markland in thinking that inscriptions on them, by being well done, might help not a little the cause of pious instruction. In the middle of our kirk-yard stands the Parish Kirk, more than a century old. Apart, among its own coeval decayed trees at one extremity of the burying-ground, is a much more ancient and venerable building, "The Old Chapel," the early worshipping-place of our fathers, but now a hoary mouldering ruin. Dear old place! There it stands, losing its artificial lineaments,

and fading away by assimilation into the natural landscape where it is, or rather almost *is not*. With what delicacy of feeling, and exquisite cadence of simple words, has Wordsworth described this gentle process of assimilation, in which Nature fashions the fragments of falling edifices, feathering them over with graceful fringes of green, and softening them down from the abrupt and ruined artificial into a continuation of her own mild, living, and eternal elements :—

> "Dying insensibly away
> From human thoughts and purposes,
> It seemed, wall, window, roof, and tower,
> To yield to some transforming power,
> And blend with the surrounding trees."

But I leave our church-yard for the present.

And courage, now! I must not mope away all at once into the mere contemplative sentimentalist: So, let us have a little action. What shall it be? Well then, here is our old family mansion going to wreck; let me rebuild it, and make a nice thing of it. So rebuild it I did, and I made a very nice thing of it indeed: For though it was in the Village, it was out of it too, being central and self-contained in its own little domain of grounds. I was happy in all this work, and it graduated my fall from active to retired life, shading me nicely off as I came down. And now I lay down this general lesson—listen brother Bachelors:—To no other class of men, perhaps, is happiness more shy and difficult of attainment, than to those who, after having passed a methodical and industrious life, retire with a competency to the perfect leisure of a country retreat. It may be recommended to all who look forward to this *otium cum dignitate*—this sort of poetical justice to their diligent youth and laborious manhood—that they ought to buy a place in the country which requires to be "made," instead of indulging themselves at once with a finished property. The pleasing care of watching daily and yearly improvement, and of reporting progress, will let their spirits gently down from the extreme of healthful activity to the extreme of unemployed repose; and then the consciousness of having

themselves comparatively fashioned the snuggery they are settled in, will secure them a zest in the enjoyment of it. Such calculations as these enter largely into the Art of Living, which is a very great art indeed.

My cottage, garden, and paddock, and all appurtenances, being tolerably complete, I took my only sister, elderly and unmarried, to keep house for me. I find we shall suit each other. Moreover, there are no nice distinctions of society here to annoy us; but all is frankness, cordiality, and ease. Unhappy the poor wight who claims to be in a sphere above his own native level, without having his claim distinctly allowed. His natural fellows, above whom he aspires to be, hate and laugh at him; while his ambitious longings make him no less afraid and incapable of mixing cordially among them. He thus belongs to no order of men whatever, and loses the best enjoyment of human life, dwelling for ever in an amphibious border of doubt and mistrust. He is like Milton's lion in the Creation: his fore-parts are pawing to get free, and be up; while his hind-quarters stick fast in the clod. Sister Mary and I are not troubled with these social distresses. So, here we are pretty happy upon the whole.

But I am anticipating a little. For I ought first to mention, that in a good library I laid in one very fair stock of means for keeping ourselves self-contained and independent in our own enjoyment, should the spirit of exclusive circles ever invade this retired hamlet. And then I have my newspapers, too. And, as I am somewhat given to general remarks, I beg to say that no man can thoroughly enjoy the luxury of a newspaper except in his own house, in his own quiet room, and after such preparation of drawing the curtains, stirring the fire, &c., as Cowper describes so admirably. If he lives a retired life in the country, so much the better for his relish of the thing; and better still if he braces his nerves with a walk to the Post-office, and puts his own newspaper in his pocket. Hogarth's Politician would never have burnt a hole in his hat, in his absorbed intensity of enjoyment, elsewhere than by his own fire-side. I have known some

men quite nervous and fidgety in the anticipated pleasure of perusal, not able to cast an eye even on the advertisements till they had shut every press in the room, and put every book in its proper place, and thrust their hands into their pockets again and again, to fix down their minds to the positive and absolute certainty that they had not lost their tooth-pick, their pencil, their penknife, their purse, and their bunch of keys. Poor old chaps! This is the very *hysteria* of doting method—must I, too, come to this? Must I, Oh! must I be—godfather to a flannel button? Well-a-day! But I'm not bound to confess more just now than that, when I sit down to my newspaper in the winter evening, I like to see everything around me clean and clear, tidy and trim: And Mary knows her duty to be as quiet as a church mouse.

We got into our new domicile about the middle of September; but before I had all my nicknacks within sorted to my proper mind, it was the end of December. The ruminating leisure of the Old Bachelor in the old Scottish Village began thus with the New Year.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SCOTTISH PEOPLE.

THE Scotch are a peculiar people. Strong are the lights of their national character, and deep the shadows. From the earliest times they seem to have been grave and enthusiastic, impatient of the interference of strangers, steady in their old attachments, and slow in forming new ones. This was already their character when they were roused to oppose the systematic attempts of Edward I. to subdue their liberties; and, in reaction, there can be no doubt that this time of peculiar peril and exerted patriotism helped strongly to fix the leading features of the people. Danger taught them suspicion, and caution, and watchfulness; and the frequent sore defeats which their little bands had to endure, in a protracted struggle with well-appointed and superior numbers, mixed a wild pathos with the stern and

short breathings of vengeance vowed anew. Brief intervals of enjoyment, the more fervently enjoyed because beset by a thousand calls to renewed toil, and ever liable to be mingled with regrets for the past, and the sense of still coming danger; the grave and thoughtful consideration of grey-headed sires, mingled with the forebodings of old women, and relieved by the inspiration of minstrels, and by the fierce jest and careless farewell of the young warrior, poignant from the brooding heart, but flung recklessly forth to cheat the fears of his aged parent, or the maiden of his love,—all this may account in part for the expression of our early national temper, in which humour, and pathos, and resolve are so curiously blent. In later times, if we look to the general character of the Scotch, in connexion with the external mode of the Christian faith to which they cling, we find them strongly intellectual, and impatient of anything like a spiritual yoke. The English are a reserved people: The gesticulations of the Continental races are an abomination to them: They are shy in displaying the softer part of our nature: Their peculiar humour is often nothing more than pathos checked, curbed, and turned queerly aside by their sense of shame at being caught giving way tender-heartedly. Such being the national temperament, no wonder the English took kindly to the Reformation, with its soberer ritual, and less ostentatious outward show of emotional worship. If the English are reserved, the Scotch are still more so; and hence at the Reformation they proceeded much farther than their southern neighbours in reducing their religious ordinances to a severe simplicity. The attempt of England, in the time of the Stuarts, to impose Episcopacy upon Scotland, besides being in the first place directly at variance with the wishes of the latter nation, awoke the remembrance of former attempts from the same quarter to impose a civil government; and thus Episcopacy became doubly associated with the idea of tyranny, making the Scotch cling still more closely to their own form of worship. We can easily see how these great national circumstances gave strength, and sturdiness, and religious enthusiasm to the Scottish character; and it

is no less easy to see that they were likely to cause and confirm the leading national faults: These are a want of courtesy and softness in the expression of even their best affections; suspicion and illiberality in their estimate of strangers, and of such as differ from them in their set opinions and modes of living; disputatious habits; pride and self-sufficiency. In matters of religion these faults are often carried to an offensive pitch. So determined are the Scotch to discard everything like outward ceremonial observance in their worship, and keep their ground aloof from Popery and Prelacy, that they will hardly allow themselves to be decent in the House of Prayer: Only listen in country parishes to the clamorous confabulations of the deaf old people around the pulpit ere the clergyman comes in; look to the half of the worshippers taking their seats so soon as the minister gives any hint by the turn of his style, or the inflected cadence of his voice, that he is drawing towards the close of his prayer; see the half-dozens that are leaving the church before the conclusion of the service, and the dozens who are seizing their hats, and brushing them with their elbows during the last blessing, the end of which they seem impatiently to wait for as the signal to clap them on their heads. And then the rage of the Scotch for preaching —nothing but preaching! Why, the very days of their Sacraments are called the "preaching days." I mean merely to say that they lay far too much stress on the intellectual gratification of hearing clever preaching, compared with the far more important part of Sanctuary duty, namely, prayer and praise. And then every village has its bell-wether or two of orthodoxy and heterodoxy; and there in the church the heckler or weaver, who aspires to lead the sense of the place, lies with his chin fixed on his two fists on the board before him, gaping and grinning from his maud, to catch the speaker, if he can, stumbling on the borders of the "unsound." And then how the village does ring with it next day, if anything bold and out of the beaten track has been said by the minister! And in this way the spiritual leadership of these bell-wethers is maintained; and at every settlement of a pastor in the place,

of course they have the parish at the wag of their disputatious and convincing forefinger. Such are some of the leading characteristics, good and bad, of the Scottish people, especially in their simple and unsophisticated villages. They have all the harsh and unamiable peculiarities I have mentioned; but then, again, they are sober and industrious, and only seem to keep more firmly in the indurated grain of their temper the stamp of religious discipline, the impress of Heaven. I will just add, in the way of general praise, that to see the old men, on a bright evening of the still Sabbath, in their light-blue coats and broad-striped waistcoats, sitting in their southern gardens on the low beds of camomile, with the Bible in their hands, their old eyes filled with mild seriousness, blent with the sun-light of the sweet summer-tide, is one of the most pleasing pictures of human life: And many a time with profound awe have I seen the peace of their cottages within, and the solemn reverence of young and old, when some grey-haired patriarch has gathered himself up in his bed, and, ere he died, blessed his children.

CHAPTER III.

OUR NEIGHBOURS.

THE strength and staple of the character of our Village lay in the small proprietors, styled variously Cock-lairds, Bonnet-lairds, Portioners, Feuars. Their little pendicles of land were held of a nobleman, whose ancestors had their feudal castle in the neighbourhood of the Village, or, to speak more properly, in the neighbourhood of whose feudal castle the Village had originally been built. Those who had enough to support themselves and their families on their "quarter," "husband," or "cot" lands, generally lived by farming their own small poffle—which, by the way, they did very ill; others, again, who had only a few stripes of possession in the run-rig crofts, added the trade of village blacksmith or joiner to the produce of their feus. The race was an honest, sturdy, harsh, and sternly Calvinistic one; doing little obeisance to the neighbouring gen-

try, and being much given to Dissent. Their chief indulgences were a horn of ale when the Village common was let for the summer, and the rental of the preceding season divided; a general gaudeamus at the New Year; and the humours of their annual Fair. So much for our Cocklairds, who had dusty old parchments in dusty old trunks.

When I first left my home, a stripling, to push my fortune, what a great thing was our Fair! Not to speak of the goodly muster of trampers, randies, tinkers, jugglers, tinselled tumblers, and every picturesque curiosity of the human kind, we had our barn-dance in day-light, with its brisk *hoo! hoo!* and many a ringing smack of a kiss on the cherry-cheeked damsels, astonishing the array of an ordinary with its deray extraordinary over the way all the merry day. From all the dales around came the rattling lads to see the lambs and the lasses, with a sheep's eye for both; and when the market left the hill, our little town was choke full. Most of our rural fairs in the south of Scotland have declined within the last forty years, from a gradual change of trade and manners. There is now a shoemaker in every village, and the annual fair is now no longer the necessary resort for the fatherly purchaser of single-soled-out-steeks for six ramping young loons, three of them with him, and three of them herding to-day—but to see the races to-morrow. The weaver's trade has in many places passed away, like the metaphor of his own shuttle; and the gash goodwife has no longer her stall of the snow-white "se'enteen-hunder" linen. Pewter has supplanted the ram's horn cutty; and the glib-tongued Ruthvens (*Scoticé*, Ribbons) from Selkirk, with their freckled curly-headed imps, tramp no longer to our fairs. The trade of the village cooper is gone to "staps:" his bent thumbs and his bickers are missed on the green: the tinman has dished him. There is also less frank roughness now in village manners; less hauling and slapping and buying of ribbons for Jenny at the fair; shier attempts now in the rural lad to put his budding manhood to the proof, by "linking with" his sweatheart before the people in general, and before his father and sly-laughing sisters in

particular. Such is that new, but not more innocent thing, called delicacy, which is gaining ground everywhere, and thinning our fairs. Our Fair is thus declining, I find, from a general alteration in rural modes, since I first went away. And our Village is becoming less independent upon the whole, from the Portioners selling their little properties to the bigger lairds around; while the purchase-money, somehow or other, generally contrives to make itself wings and fly away.

Our immediate neighbours on the right hand were two old people, brother and sister, neither of whom had ever been married. Old John had been a shepherd in his youth, and having made a little money, came, in his declining years, with his sister Peggy to our Village. Professional habits, however, still kept the mastery over him. He was an amateur assistant at all the sheep-washings and sheep-shearings round; he was early astir among the lambs at the annual Fair; and it was his delight to sit in his small garden of a summer evening, looking at the sunny hills where he had spent his prime, trying with his "prospect" to ken the sheep nibbling on their clear ridges. His "tittie" was a lean sharp little body, with an eye to this world; and as she was by far the cleverer of the two, and had Johnie completely at her command, she made him bind in the harvest time, and thrash in the winter, to keep their little cruise of oil from failing. By no means, however, did Johnie like the barn; and often might you hear the sound of his flail intermit, and see the old thrasher, with his red Kilmarnock on, of a yellow frosty morning, lean out his gun over the half-door, and, with a ringing pigeon-rousing thud, send a peppering shower of hail along the stack-yard, and, sallying forth, fill a whole "wecht" with the corn-eating sparrows, half of them as dead as a door-nail, and half of them fluttering and gasping out their little lives at their bloody beaks, yet with here and there a cock-bird pert in his pangs, that dared to peck at his horny thumb. This was an amusement which Johnie liked greatly better than the flail; and he had this apology for the relaxation, that he was fur-

nishing Peggy with materials for a sparrow-pie. Then came the winter evening, and he played at draughts with an old crony, or slumbered in his arm-chair—taking care, however, always to waken when his potato or onion, which he had roasting in the outskirts of the fire, was precisely ready. Meanwhile the cat purred; and Peggy span, purring and singing also, or, when she was in the humour for it, telling stories of ghosts and fairies to a ring of breathless, close-huddled children, with whom she was quite an oracle. Sometimes also, though not very often, she allowed them a game at Blind-Harry, till their noise made her cross, and she dismissed them summarily. The Sabbath-day invariably saw Peggy and Johnie seated together at church. One Sunday, the old boy had forgot his spectacles. Maggie, after first surveying the text herself, handed the Bible to her "billie" with her left hand, the thumb nail being stuck down half-angrily into the latter clause of the verse, more immediately under consideration; while with her right she transferred the spectacles (a pair of that old-fashioned kind without handles, which sit pinchingly on the bridge of the nose, making him or her who reads aloud twang the conventicle dismally through the droning member)—these spectacles, I say, she transferred from her own nose, and, in half-testy impatience at his forgetfulness, stuck them at once by the shortest cut on Johnie's, leaving him nothing whatever to do in this process of conveyancing save implicitly to acquiesce.

The next dweller on the right was an elderly widow, who lived alone. Her means were scanty; but her meek economy made them not only sufficient, but almost easy and elegant. She came to live in our Village about the close of the summer just gone by. I saw her first thus:—Passing one day through a small hamlet, about a mile distant from our own, I entered a cottage for a draught of water, and was aware at once that I was in the "house of mourning." An elderly female, in the garb of a widow, was sitting near the fire, her hands clasped together and resting on her knee, her head sunk on her

breast, and her whole body rocking under silent but heavy sorrow. Two aged women sat calmly smoking their pipes, one on each side of her; a third matron, with soft tread, was going about the floor doing household matters. Save the slight noise she made, and the low purring of the cat sleeping on an open Bible at the sunny pane, and the far-off hum of the Village children, with the occasional chirp of a sparrow from the thatch, not a sound disturbed the still house, till the next heavy sigh of the mourner was heard. As I stood a moment, sorry at having intruded, I observed the presence of Death. A beam of the sun, which was now far down in the west, came in at the small lattice, illumining a nosegay of flowers that stood on the clean whitewashed sill, and struck into the bed, where beneath the snow-white linen sheets was seen the form of a body, stretched out from head to feet in the fixed composure of the dead. As the matron (probably a kind neighbour of the bereaved mourner) advanced to me in silence, but with a questioning look, I quietly begged of her a little water. After I had drunk, she pointed to that bed, and gave me to understand, in a few low words, that the only son of a widowed mother was there lying asleep in Jesus. Some ten days after, as I was passing in the evening through the same hamlet, I could not refrain from calling again at that cottage, to see if that bereaved mother was pretty composed in spirit. I found her now quite alone, sitting on her knees before an open trunk, apparently engaged in reading a letter. The trunk seemed half-filled with papers; and a heap of letters, some of them folded and some open, were lying by her side. So intent was she upon the perusal of the one she held in her hands, that she never noticed my entrance, but sat evidently entranced in grief; for the tears were raining from her eyes, and pattered as they fell thickly on the paper before her. As I had no right to intermeddle with her sacred sorrow, I slid unperceived from the apartment. At the door I met the same matron who, a few days before, had told me of that widow's bereavement; and as I questioned her now a little farther, she gave me some particulars of the deceased

youth. He was a scholar of great promise, and his genius and virtues had won the friendship of many distinguished Professors who had corresponded with him. In return for the good education his parents had bestowed upon him, he had become the natural stay of his widowed mother, and was providing for her liberally, when consumption seized him and took him away from her. The letter which she was now reading was one of the many letters full of respect and attachment, written to her late accomplished son by some of the most distinguished men of the day; and there she had sat on her knees reading (so said her sympathizing neighbour) a whole day, without tasting food, or allowing herself to be interrupted, totally absorbed in these sadly-pleasing memorials of her departed son's worth. After his funeral she came to live in our Village, and I was happy to have such a neighbour.

Our immediate neighbour on the left hand was an old weaver, of the name of Peter Stirling, who had no great wits, but plenty of sons and daughters. Like many of his craft, he was quite up to bee-skeps, canaries, and church music. The primitive simple-minded old man died a few days ago. I saw his latter end. It was peace. What struck me particularly, was his innocent way of bequeathing his property. It consisted chiefly of a yard full of fine ash trees, and a vast number of bee-hives. His children were at his bed-side, and he thus settled among them the division of his chattels:—"You'll take tree about, and bee about; and see that there be no dispeace at my decease, for I'm going home." The concluding words of this simple will and testament struck me as rather singular, but they were solemn and affecting.

Touching upon death-beds, I may say generally that, although, in the reverential fear of humanity, there is a wish rather than otherwise not to witness the parting moment, still there is a sort of hankering desire also to see how the spirit bears itself in the last push of nature. It is probably some such desire as this, carried to a morbid degree, which makes many men (like George Selwyn) devoted amateurs at executions. From my own pro-

fessional experience I would say that, in nine cases out of ten, people die perfectly resigned and composed. It is also curious to note how the ruling passion shews itself in death, whether more or less strongly. "*A tête d'armée*," were the last words of Napoleon, who "had put harness on to die." "It's growing dark, boys, you may go home!" were the last sweet considerate breathings of good old Rector Adam of Edinburgh, who thought he was in his school. In our old-fashioned Village, when a person is at the point of death, some elder is always sent for to sing a psalm. The 20th Psalm is generally selected on such occasions. The tremulous, mournful chaunt of the women is very affecting, especially on a still, sunny, summer afternoon, when it seems such a harsh and unnatural dispensation to die. Still more affecting is the last gleam of reviving conscious life which the psalm rekindles in the glazed eye of him or her for whom it is sung, and who knows its significance. Happy, they, however, who have these last consolations of clinging Christian friendship. "Old Jemmy," the beggar, died the other day, and lay for hours in a straw-shed, till it could be settled where, how, and at whose expense he was to be buried. And yet the Kings of farthest Ind would travel hither, and lay their sceptres at "Old Jemmy's" feet, if he would only come back and tell them of that "Other World" he had seen.

Beyond old Peter Stirling's dwelling was the Crown Inn, the only hostelrie of the Village. Mine hostess would sell no liquor after a certain hour in the evening; and to nobody would she give it on the Sabbath-day, except to such as she considered wayfaring people, who really needed it by way of "refreshment"—for that's the canny word our good Calvinistic Scotch use to designate a Sabbath dram. Jenny of the Crown, in her Doric simplicity, was quite a character. In very early life she was courted by a young fellow of rather doubtful character. Reverence for the minister being all in all in those simple days, Jenny consulted her pastor whether or not she should take her suitor, all her friends being against the match. This was rather delicate ground, and the minister could not of course

take it upon him precisely to say; but he asked so many searching questions regarding her wooer that Jenny saw what he meant, and declared she would never have him. This was on a Saturday. On the Monday following she was back at the Manse to tell the minister that the Sabbath bell, as she came to the Kirk on the preceding day, had rung "Tak him, Jenny! Tak him, Jenny!" so distinctly in her ears, that if a voice had spoken the words they could not have been plainer; she had, therefore, the clearest call of Providence to take her lover. So the thing was settled. Jenny's husband turned out ill. He died, however, about a year after their marriage, leaving her with an only son. In the second year of her widowhood she took our Crown Inn, and began to prosper. Her simple worth made her respected, and her curious primitiveness was quite attractive. Two spruce young chaps, passing one hot day through the Village, stepped into the Crown to have a glass of beer. There seemed to be nobody in the house; but the door of the "ben" being open, they entered the neat little apartment, with its well-sanded floor, and its walls garnished with the four pictures of the Seasons, Maggie Lauder dancing to the Ranter, and the Death of Nelson, done upon glass. Having stood for a moment, and no owner of the house yet appearing, one of our dandies, finding there was neither bell-rope nor hand-bell in the place, took up a well-burnished gill-stoup that stood on the table, and fetched two or three good raps. Thus summoned, a tidy little wifikie made her appearance from the "but," and pinching the extended haunches of her gown with the thumb and forefinger of each hand respectively, as she executed a profound and old-fashioned curtsy, modestly inquired — "Was ye duntin', bodies?" This was Jenny, and such was her Doric style. It is almost unnecessary to say that, though she did very well upon the whole, she had many sore rubs in her way of life; but the unvarying philosophy of the contented creature was, "Never mind, we'll a' be brawly yet!" Such was Jenny's saying in every difficulty and trial. Meantime her son grew up, and was a fine lad.

Having got a good education, he went abroad and throve. The first token of his well-doing was a locket which he sent home to his mother, with some of his hair in it, and having her own well-remembered words, by way of inscription, round it, "We'll a' be brawly yet!" Money followed in regular instalments from the virtuous young man, till his worthy parent had more than enough. And now the youth is on his way home with a good competency, to take his mother to himself—and shall they not be "brawly?"

A queer old humorist lived in a queer old cottage, in the outskirts of our Village. He had travelled much in the East, and had made money as a merchant in Smyrna. Being a native of our parish, and a bachelor, he came to close his mortal chapter where it began. I need scarcely say that, like so many of his class, he was fidgety, testy, and troublesome; but a lover of fair play withal, warm-hearted, and benevolent. At bottom, too, he was a thoroughly religious man. He and I were getting on uncommonly well together, when, greatly to my sorrow, he took ill and died, only a few months after we had become acquainted. An odd incident befel him on his death-bed; and I must relate it, as illustrative of his character:—A thief made his way into his cottage one midnight, and entered his dying chamber to steal—for he was counted rich as a Nabob. There was a light burning in the room. "What do you want, friend?" was the testy demand of our disturbed old gentleman. "Your money, and your jewels," said the thief. "O! you are there, are you? Very well. Just look at these poor old legs of mine *(thrusting out his emaciated members from beneath the bed-clothes)*. Nay, lay hold of them—feel them—so, you must be perfectly convinced in your own mind, now, that I cannot go into the next apartment where my money is. Come, then, take me on your back, and carry me there." Saying this, the old chap, dying though he was, actually rose and got out of bed. The thief drew back with a look of ghastly surprise. "Hark ye! son of woman born," continued the old gentleman emphatically, as he sat him down on the front of the bed, and raised his fore-finger

with warning solemnity, "I am far on my way to Eternity —and you are coming on behind me. You are here to steal certain trash of mine? Come, now, you must do better than that: Draw near: Here is this bad old heart of mine: Stand forward: Reach me now your thievish hand into this inveterate bosom of mine: O! do but steal—rob—plunder from it Covetousness, Lust, Anger, and every other lingering bad passion, and send me lighter on my way: O! do this, and you shall have all my gold! You shake your head? You cannot? Here, then, friend —I am anything but heavy—you must take me on your back." The thief could not stand this. He fell down on his knees, and begged the old man's forgiveness. "Are you really in want?" asked the eccentric invalid. "I am," was the reply, "but I deserve to be so, for I have been dissipated and idle; but God help me! I think I am a changed man." "Take this key, then," said our dying friend; "open my desk in the next room there *(pointing to the door)*; you will find a purse of gold in it; bring it to me." The thief did so. "Take that," said the worthy humorist, and he served out his gold liberally into the thief's trembling hand. With tears in his eyes the poor penitent again fell on his knees, and craved a blessing on the dying man. He was about to retire. "Nay, friend, you must help me into my bed first," said the old gentleman; "it is anything but reasonable that I be raised up at midnight in this sort of manner." Accordingly, the thief lifted the old man up in his arms, and put him into the bed. "Now, brother worm," said the queer but wise old patient, "I asked this last piece of service for your own good, as well as mine. You will be nothing the worse of having felt the weight and worth of an armful of poor, sinful, dying clay. It will help you to keep in mind your good resolutions. Christ be with you! In his own gracious words, 'Go, and sin no more.'"

It is unpleasant to have to believe it, and say it; but there is scarcely a village that has not its free-thinker. Pride of intellect is generally the root of this infidelity. The melancholy process of its growth may be stated thus:—

If the man, being of a somewhat vigorous and daring spirit, finds he can despise many narrow distinctions of opinion in those among whom he dwells, he is naturally thrown into opposition. The tenacity with which his neighbours cling to their set modes of religious profession leads him, in the wantonness of superior freedom, into bold licences in questioning the value of their formulas. This is dangerous work, however, for himself; for his incessant challenging and despising of the adjuncts of religion gradually hurts his reverence for the thing itself; and loving to astonish his weaker bretheren by appearing even more latitudinarian than he really is, he is apt to end in actually becoming what he would have himself appear to be. If his neighbours treat him with any bitterness of fear and dislike, and exclusion, for his freer notions, he sets it down to cant; and the very strictness with which they hold by Christianity induces him by degrees to regard it with distaste as a faith only for the vulgar such as they, and by no means a faith for enlarged minds. Hatred and opposition to religion are the next natural stages of his heart's perversion.—One of my near neighbours was a person of this stamp; and, from all I could learn, such had been the growth of his scepticism. He was a plasterer and house-painter by trade; but he had cultivated his faculties above his station, especially in the Fine Arts; and so, indulging that pride of intellect of which I have been speaking, he thought himself entitled to despise the main body of his fellow-villagers. Latterly, to help himself against some gastric pains, and a certain nervous depression of spirits—and, I verily believe also, to assist his conversational powers, in which he had much self-complacency; and that he might be thought a man of genius, like Coleridge and De Quincey—he took to opium: That indulgence so cowardly—as if, in the great discipline of life, any man, deserving the name of a man, would shirk pain and sorrow in any such paltry way! Only think of Job skulking off into the mean refuge of opium, instead of meeting his Chastener face to face—now yielding despairingly, and now fiercely self-vindicating, in the awful

fluxes and refluxes of his agonized human heart; ay, but still a Heaven-facing wrestler, till he came out of his great tribulation a disciplined, enlarged, and better man! I need scarcely add that the end of our poor plasterer was a very miserable one.

I have already alluded to our worthy minister. A fine white-headed old man was he, who did not wrangle in Church Courts, but ministered faithfully to his people, and was greatly beloved of them. Many a quiet game at backgammon had he and I of an evening. By the way, I have often smiled at the inconsistency of the Scotch, who readily allow their clergymen to play at some games both at home and abroad; while they would hold the minister mad, or something worse, who should venture on other sports, though not a whit more exceptionable. To angle and curl, for instance, are quite clerical in Scotland; but the shooting minister, though the stubble-field or the hill-side is certainly a less roistering place than the rink, is an abomination. He may play at backgammon, though chance is predominant in the game, and no great skill necessary; but wo be to him if he meddle with cards (the Devil's books!), though the game is far less a game of chance than backgammon—chance being in the eyes of the common objectors to cards the test of their perniciousness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAIRY CHANGELING.

In a rude retired house, more out of our Village than in it, wonned a shy peculiar man—the victim of superstition. The "Silent People" are now wavering away over the dim edge of Belief, but thirty or forty years ago there was scarcely an old wife in our Village who had not seen the Fairies by moonlight on the green ferny braes. Sandy Brunton, the thin hero of my present notice, was a Fairy Changeling. His mother was one day shearing in the harvest field. She had left her plump rosy-cheeked infant lying asleep in her shawl at

one of the stooks on the head-rig. When she went to give him suck she found him gone, and a pale, pining, fleshless thing put in his place. Never again did she see her own little Sandy; and so she was fain to suckle the substituted Sandy, though she and all her neighbours looked upon him as a Fairy. The boy grew up, the only child of his now widowed mother; and whether it was that the mysterious awe with which he was generally regarded repressed the genial confidence of social nature within him, or whether it was his peculiar temperament, he was shy and taciturn, and never played with other boys. When he reached man's estate, his dispositions seemed in no wise altered. But though silent and strange, he was quite harmless, living quietly with his mother, whom he supported by his steady labour in a whin-stone quarry about a couple of miles from the Village: There he worked all alone, furnishing metal for the roads of the district. He was away by the earliest dawn, and did not return till the twilight. It was remarked that he was almost never seen in daylight, as he never went to kirk or market, or any place of public amusement. Only in the grey of the morning or the evening was the tall thin man, with his long elf-locks and rapid strides, going to his daily work, or returning from it, espied even by his fellow-villagers. Sandy had been kind to an orphan cousin, the only relative he had on earth besides his mother. This cousin went to America and prospered. He was grateful; and having it in his power to offer a piece of land to Sandy, he pressed him with urgent kindness to emigrate. This was a thing altogether to our forlorn hero's mind; but his mother was now so frail that he could not attempt transplanting her, and so he resisted the offer. He made it a point of duty to keep the matter hid from the old woman; but she learned it from having accidentally got hold of the letters that passed to and from her son on the subject, and thus came farther to know that it was Sandy's determination to make for that better situation in America so soon as she was dead. Naturally querulous, the poor old body was instantly seized with a new complaint of age. She saw

that her son's filial piety would not allow him to root her up from her native hearth at her time of life, but that he would wait till she was gathered to her fathers before he himself went abroad. All this she saw, and was unhappy. The more her son gave her proofs of his love, the more did she give vent to her regret at being an obstacle in the way of his better fortune. She was loath to die and leave him yet (for she had long ago ceased to think of him as a Changeling); and yet she wished to be away, lest he should grow weary of her. The more he walked softly and spoke gently, the more did she peevishly think he was doing so, not from the heart, but from a decent sense of outward duty. Not joint-racking rhumatism, nor white-bloated dropsy, nor bloody issue, nor torpid palsy, halving the body between life and death, could have been a malady like this malady of the heart to that poor old mother. One night her moaning querulousness on the subject rose to an unusual pitch. "I will end the matter, then," said her son, and starting up he took down from its place the big Ha'-Bible of his fathers. He opened it at the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, and laying his hand on the Fifth Commandment, swore by Almighty God, that neither while his mother lived, nor after her death, would he ever go to America. "Now, let us have peace on that subject!" he added. The poor old creature was overawed by this solemnity of self-denial. She never again alluded to the subject, but she groaned inwardly only the more deeply because she had thus tempted her son to forswear and miss a good lot after her death. These preying thoughts soon brought her to her grave. Often did the wish to be in America now cross the poor Changeling's heart; but he dismissed the feeling, and only made for his quarry in the morning with more vehement strides than before. From the baulked wish of years, however, and the now utter desolation of his life, his heart and health sunk, and he was laid upon his death-bed. As I had been a physician in the course of my life, and had sometimes to see my fellow-villagers in their extremities of distress, when there was no other medical man at hand, I witnessed

Sandy's close. It was rather a peculiar one. The minister had said a prayer over the dying man. He looked us, one after the other, steadfastly in the face, till a tear expressive of his gratitude gathered in his eye. "I was going to say that the world had not used me very kindly; but, my good friends, you half make me think I must be wrong," said the poor fellow with touching pathos, and turned his face to the wall, as if to die. At this moment, a sweet voice behind me asked how he was. Not having heard the entrance of any one, I was startled, and on looking round there was a beautiful young lady with us. The cause of her visit, I learned afterwards, was this:— She was the only child of Sir Thomas Ruthven, one of our county gentlemen, who lived about two miles from our Village. When a girl, she was crossing a river in a boat, near her father's house. It was considerably swollen, and the frail old ferryman had warned her against the attempt. She was a high-mettled lass, however, and insisted on being taken across. The strength of the current was too much for the feeble rower, and swept the party down, till the boat was upset in the rocky gullet of a narrow stream. The boatman clung to his vessel, and being fortunately drifted into smooth shallow water, managed to get out. As for Miss Ruthven, she was whirled down the rapids into a deep pool, where she would inevitably have perished, had not Sandy Brunton seen her from his quarry on the bank of the river. Swift of foot as a red-deer, he sprang with terrific leaps to the rescue, and being a swimmer lean and strong, he was in the very heart of the raging river in a few minutes, and succeeded in saving Miss Ruthven. Boundless was the gratitude of her family; but Sandy would accept of no guerdon, and kept quite shy and aloof from their attempts to do him good. Only he was communicative and pleased when the grateful young lady herself called to see his mother and him, which she often did; and he was always observed to take a sly peep at her from his quarry when she passed that way: His heart yearned after the beautiful child he had saved. This was now the day of his death. To-morrow Miss Ruthven

was to be married to a young knight of the district; but hearing of Sandy's extreme illness, she came to see her deliverer for the last time. She was now at his bedside. At the sound of her sweet voice he sat up in his bed. "Let me kiss your hand!" he said. Her hand was given him, and he kissed it with the profoundest emotion. "My child! my good child! may the blessing of the Heaven of Heavens be on your beautiful head!" he exclaimed; and resigning Miss Ruthven's hand, he laid himself gently back upon the pillow, and breathed his last. The virgin closed his eyes.

CHAPTER V.

FATHER AND SON.

One midnight, about the end of January, I was alarmed by the violent ringing of the Kirk bell. Hearing at the same time voices without, I started up, drew on my clothes, and went out. The villagers were forth in all directions, running with lanterns in their hands, many of them being also armed with sticks, flails, pitchforks, and guns. "Come awa, Jock, man!" cried the mason to his sturdy neighbour, the ditcher. "Stop till I grind my sword," was Jock's reply, as he held his rusty relic of Killiecrankie vigorously to the smithy grind-stone. "To the kirk-yard, lads!" was now the word, and thither the people ran. I followed. The cause and the result of this unusual disturbance may be stated thus: I begin at the beginning:—

One of the patriarchs of our Village was a blue-bonneted, rig-and-fur-hosed, stern old Feuar, Andrew Sword by name. Somewhat late in life he had married a woman a good deal younger than himself, and had an only son by her. Betwixt the natural harshness of the father and the indiscriminate fondness of the mother, the boy was sadly spoilt. As he grew up he followed wild courses, till at length, having wasted not a little of his father's substance, he went off to America. Poverty and distress overtook him there, and subdued his spirit; and bethinking him of his father's house, he made his way back to this country, and reached

his native Village, penniless, faint of heart, and feeble of body—for he had been ill of jaundice for several weeks. Passing by the church-yard, he observed, as he looked over the wall, a number of people round a grave; and uncovered at the head of it stood his own father as chief mourner. "Woe's me, then!" murmured the youth, as he staggered forward and leant looking over the wall, "it must be my mother's burial!" The grave was now covered, and the mourners retired into the church, his father with them—for it was the Monday after the Sacrament in the parish. The bell was tolled, and public worship began. When all the people were in, young Sword hastened to the new-made grave, and flinging himself down upon it, he kissed the wet sod at the head of it again and again, in a passion of repentance and sorrow, groaning out "My mother! Oh! my mother!" He arose at length, and, touched with a new sense of his need of the Word of God, he made his way by a back door through the aisle of the chief heritor of the parish up to the family gallery, and nobody being in it, he sat down unobserved in a back seat. In spite of his sorrow of heart, and his desire to listen to the man of God, the excessive fatigue which he had undergone for a series of weeks overcame him, and he fell fast asleep. When he awoke, all was silent in the church; and it was beginning to grow dark, the days being still short. Trying the back door by which he had entered, he found it locked, and as it was well studded with big nails, and altogether a very strong one, he knew he could never burst it open; so here he was a prisoner, and might perhaps have to remain so till next Sabbath should come round, the church and church-yard being in a very retired place. Meantime, however, he took a peep through a small grated window of the aisle, and saw an old woman, with a bundle of sticks on her back, drawing towards the church-yard. She came very near him, and leant her back against the low wall of enclosure, letting her sticks rest on the top of it. Young Sword cried to her with all his might. She must have heard him, for she turned round instantly and looked over the wall. Again he cried

to her. Whereupon the old body drew her burden on her back with such haste that she almost lost her balance, and then hobbled away to all appearance greatly terrified. The poor young man's only hope now was, that when the light of morning came, he might be able to leap or clamber down from the gallery (which was the only one in the church) into the body of the house, and make his way out by breaking one of the windows, if no better could be. With this as his best prospect of deliverance, and still very forlorn and unhappy, he groped his way back through the cold clammy marbles of the dead; and getting into the gallery of the church again, he stretched himself along one of the seats, there to spend the night, and fell asleep once more. It might be midnight when he awoke. There were echoing steps in the church, and human voices; and by the light of a lantern which one of them carried he saw, when he rose up, the forms of two men. "Who's there?" he demanded. One of the men held up the lantern towards the gallery; but when he saw the unnaturally yellow face looking down upon him, instead of replying, he took to his heels, followed by his neighbour; and in the excess of their terror, heightened by the midnight skies flashing out sheet lightning, both of them laid hold of the bell-rope at the same time, and began to toll the Kirk bell. They were two villagers whose duty it was for the night to watch the grave of Andrew Sword's wife, the vile practice of lifting dead bodies for the surgeons being then common. No sooner was the bell heard in the Village than, as already stated, the people rushed to the church-yard, it being well known that the two men were there on the watch, and nobody doubting that the body-snatchers were upon them. But first, from the neighbouring Manse, came the minister's man, Thomas Jeffrey by name, upon the scene of alarm, and demanded the cause of such untimely ringing.

"O! Tam Jaffray, Tam Jaffray, sic a night's in this kirk-yard!" cried one of the terrified watchmen in reply, but still pulling at the bell. "The yellow dead are rising frae their graves! They're a' in the Kirk! Eh! look at that lightning! It's the Last Day, Tam! Let's a' to our

ain places!" So saying, the poor man ran to his family burying-ground, which was not far off, and in his extremity of fear threw himself down on his face beside his father's grave, flinging his arm over it.

Meantime, young Sword, hearing the noise without, had made his way back to the aisle door, and was now knocking loudly on it, begging to be let out. The minister's man got the key, and opened it accordingly; the more courageous of the two villagers who had been on the watch holding him by the skirts of his coat with one hand, while he advanced his lantern with the other. Out walked the captive; his two deliverers falling back in horror, and one of them actually doubling down on his knees, on seeing the yellow-visaged being come forth. Wishing to enter into no explanation, Sword had light enough from their lantern to make his way straight to the church-yard wall. They recovered courage, however, as they saw him making off; and "Stop the resurrectionist! stop the resurrectionist," was their cry as he leapt over the dike. No sooner had he done so than he was smitten with a stick and felled to the earth by the foremost of the alarmed villagers, who came rushing on with a light in his hand: This was his own father. Instantly there was a crowd around the prostrate youth, and they now began to pity his condition, and to be afraid that he was killed. One or two even went the length of muttering through their teeth to this effect—"Somebody shouldna hae been sae rash the day, I think." By this time the minister was on the spot; and had the poor lad conveyed into the Manse, several of the villagers going with him. The usual restoratives were tried, and young Sword began to recover. Over him stood his own father, wringing his hands in an agony of remorse and parental affection, for he now saw it was his own son whom he had thus struck to the ground. "To lift my hand against my own poor boy's life!" he exclaimed, "and that, too, on the very day when the mother that loved him so has been laid in the dust! But I knew him not! I knew you not, my man! I heard the cry against you, and took you for one of those vile ones who won't let our

dead lie in their graves! My bairn, let me wipe away this blood!" And the old man wiped away with his napkin the clots of blood from his child's swollen eyebrow and cheek-bone; and his sturdy and harsh nature giving way altogether, he ended by falling on his son's neck and kissing him. "It was a just blow, and given on a just night," said that son meekly. And they retired home in peace together. Young Sword's nature is fairly changed, and father and son promise now to be a comfort to each other.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR VILLAGE "INNOCENTS."

IDIOTS have often oddities of faculty and accomplishment beyond the reach of the sane. One twirls a barn-door key on his thumb, with a sow-hoof hung to it by a leathern string: And twirling it so—and only while he twirls it—he can tell you how many verses there are in every chapter of the Bible. A second can crow you as 'twere any cock, so clear and true, he fetches challenge and defiance from every farm-yard within ear-shot round. A third can blow any given time on a cow-horn, and never seem to draw breath. A fourth has a sprig of rue here, and mint there, laid in at every penitential psalm sung at every execution in seven shires round, for the last forty years. And so on.

Every village has its contingent of crazy people. Among the various "poor innocents" of ours, one deserves notice for a singular specialty of accomplishment, such as I have been speaking of. I mean daft Jock Gray. Well known was Jock throughout the Border counties of Roxburgh, Selkirk, and Peebles, for his "wood-notes wild" as a singer; but chiefly for his uncommon powers of mimicking the pulpit elocution of our various clergy. A more peculiar couple than he and old Johnie his father never crossed the Yarrow or the Tweed, or peeled a braxy bone at Williamslee. The father was one of the very smallest of men, but one of the Truest Bluest of Covenanting Scotland's "True Blue;" and being thus, almost of course, an

Old Light Anti-burgher, he was compelled to toddle to the sacraments of this denomination many a weary mile, their congregations being very thin-sown throughout the south of Scotland. As he made it a point of conscience not to miss one of these solemn occasions in the three counties already referred to, he was seen far and wide on his periodical tramps along the Scottish Border; while, moreover, twice a-year, he ascended to the metropolis to sit down under Paxton or M'Crie, with feelings akin to those of the old Hebrew who went yearly up to the Passover at Jerusalem. In all such pious pilgrimages his son, Jock, was his constant attendant, or rather follower: Here marched the old little Presbyterian in front, often with the Bible in his hand; never failing in his track, but always fifty yards or so behind, daft Jock, bare-headed, brought up the rear: Wherever old Johnie was seen, daft Jock was not far behind: Wherever daft Jock was seen, old Johnie was not far before. If any passing stranger bestowed a penny on the poor idiot, he immediately trotted up to his sire with his unvarying "Father, there's a penny," and having deposited it with the old man, who never begged himself, but yet never declined any offerings thus vouchsafed to Jock, he immediately fell back again to his proper place in the rear with the utmost deference. At night, on their way, they drew to stated places of sojourn, where some shepherd Gaius of the hills, or village elder, or most commonly some pious sympathetic matron "had them" (as John Bunyan phrases it) to a decent bed in the "bauks" after supper: But never before the ordinance of family worship was observed, at which little Johnie never failed to act as priest, his spritual gifts being great, and his desire to exercise them not small. Many a knotty argument in the Bostonian divinity, and many a fierce pressing of the Covenant on the lukewarm disciples of these degenerate times, varied throughout the evening the tongue-doughty championship of the tough old Seceder. So moving was the unction of his discourse, in the way of enforcing duty on the careless, that on one occasion a cripple of an old woman, who had listened to his Saturday

evening denunciations, broke out against herself with such harrowing outcries of remorse for having too readily found in her lameness an excuse for not attending the Meeting-house, that the old man was obliged to "change his hand," and give her some comfort. Nothing, however, would satisfy her but to be at public worship next day; and old Johnie, for lack of better vehicle, had to wheel her in a wheelbarrow to the neighbouring sanctuary. The two as they went thus, with bare-headed Jock not behind as usual, but pulling away in front by a rope attached to the barrow, would make a very curious picture: The "natural" hauling away with many superfluous demonstrations of pith, his wild unsteady eye not untouched with a wicked twinkle of waggery, as if he had a great mind to upset the old wife, contrasted with the forced and pinched gravity of his other features, straitened by the consciousness of his austere father's near presence on the Sabbath-day; the earnest thankful face of the conveyed cripple; and the serious look of uncommon duty in the old mannie staggering along between the trams of the barrow, formed altogether a singular composition of the ludicrous, the solemn, and the pathetic. Though Jock assisted on this occasion in going to public worship, and was certainly kept by his father pretty regular in his attendance, he liked much better to wander about the villages and farm-houses than be confined in the Meeting-house. He generally made his escape, I am grieved to admit, while his father was debating theology with his nightly entertainers, and was commonly to be found about the nearest smithy, mimicking the ministers of the neighbourhood to a host of rustic admirers. He was always sure, however, to be back for his share of supper, and to turn into bed with his father. Sometimes in their wanderings they did not fare so well, being belated in the fells, where having lost their way, they were obliged to lie all night among the heather. On one occasion, having promised to return for the night to a farm-house on the Leithen, from Peebles, whither they had gone to hear a sermon, a heavy mist came on in the evening, and as they did not make

their appearance long after the proper time, the worthy farmer of the place thought it his duty to look for them with lanterns along the moorland path. By dint of hollaing among the hills, Jock and his father were at last found lying lovingly in each other's arms, like the Babes in the Wood, behind a juniper bush: Such affection had the two for each other. Old Johnie died first; and the poor "innocent," heart-stricken from that hour, went maundering about his father's grave, and pined away, and very soon followed his parent to the dust.

I must notice another of our "innocents;" she being a maniac, however, and not an idiot. Poor Menie Bell! A beautiful girl was Menie! Going into our church-yard one day late in the gloaming, I heard the low, sweet, melancholy warbling of some bird, as I thought, in one of the dim shaded corners of the burying-ground. I was rather surprised, as it was past the hour for the music of our birds. On approaching to look at the grave of a peculiar acquaintance of my own, who was buried there, I beheld a female figure kneeling beside it, and evidently in the act of planting flowers upon it. She it was, too, who was singing like a bird. Up she started, as I advanced, and glided away with a shy wild look. It was Menie Bell—poor Menie! But let me tell how she lost her wits:—Her mother, a widow of our Village, was milking her cow one evening in the dusk, when Menie, her only child, a lass of about sixteen, who had been at service, came hastily in, fell on her neck, and exclaiming "Mother! mother!" fainted away. The cause of it was this:—One or two articles had disappeared in her master's house, under somewhat suspicious circumstances; the poor lassie was blamed for it, and was turned off. Thus broken of heart, she came to her mother. Scarcely was she away from her service, when the missing things were found, and her innocence clearly discovered. Every apology and expression of regret was offered to her by her late employers, and eager was their desire to have her back again. But it was too late. The poor thing's mind was affected by the affront, and she became a moping

lunatic. As she gradually grew a little more settled and composed, she was employed to tend the Village cows, which were pastured for the summer in one general body on a coarse wide common which extended away up to a set of woody hills. In this lonely service, Menie learned to imitate the singing of all the birds she heard in the moor-lands, and among the woods that skirted the mountains. The little black-cap, certainly one of the very sweetest of these choristers, was her especial favourite; and it was after the manner of the black-cap she was singing when I went into the church-yard on the evening referred to. A bull grazed among the Village cows. One afternoon he suddenly attacked poor Menie, and had her down among his feet, when a young gentlemen, who lived in a solitary manner in a retired cottage among the hills, saw it as he was crossing the common, and hasted to rescue the girl. He assailed the bull at once in the most fearless manner with a simple stick which he happened to be carrying, and drew the ferocious brute away from Menie, and full upon himself. The result of this encounter was fatal to the gallant young man. He was dreadfully gored and trampled; and before some labourers, who were working in a distant field, could hear Menie's cries for help —for she had not been much hurt, and was now running towards them shrieking piteously—and could get to the spot and drive off the bull, her deliverer's own life was almost gone. By his faint directions, the labourers bore him to his cottage. A medical man was then sought for; and as there was no other about our Village at the time, I was hurried away to see him. He would let me do nothing for him, however, till I had destroyed all his papers. He then gave me instructions to have him buried in the most sequestered corner of our church-yard. No attempt was to be made to find out his relatives: He wished to pass from earth without leaving one trace of him behind. As he had taken his cottage furnished, he had no property in the shape of furniture to dispose of: His only goods were his clothes and his money, and a mourning ring which he wore. After defraying the expenses of his funeral, and

paying his servant's wages, and his house rent, I was to give the rest of his money, and all his clothes, one-half to the poor girl whose life he had saved, and the other half to the paupers of our Village. He made me, as his executor in these matters, accept his mourning ring. Scarcely had he signified his wish on these points, when he died. In all respects I fulfilled his last injunctions; and he was buried in a shaded corner of our church-yard accordingly, where lie the bones of such unknown wayfaring strangers as have died suddenly in our parish. I may mention here that I afterwards found out who the unfortunate young man was. He had been an officer in the army. He had often shewn himself to be thoroughly brave. But in one of those sudden unaccountable moods which come over the stoutest hearts, he had flinched from his post in an important crisis of battle. He could not stand the result, and fled from the service. His hiding-place was in our quiet hills. Poor fellow! what heavy years he must have had of it! But the manner of his death proved he was no coward. I may add, that he was an Englishman, and a remarkably fine-looking young man. And now for Menie:—Those who know the strange caprices of insanity will not be surprised to learn that the hurt which she got on the melancholy occasion referred to, and the excitement which it gave to her nervous system, had a salutary effect upon her mind, and almost restored her for a time to perfect reason. She still continued, however, shy and reserved. Gradually again her faculties became clouded. In reason, however, and in mental alienation, never did the sense of gratitude to her young deliverer leave the poor girl's heart. Constantly was she hovering about his grave, when she thought none saw her. Nettle, nor hemlock, nor any other unsightly weed had leave to grow there. Nor slug, nor snail, nor foul slimy worm was permitted to crawl there. In spring she planted snow-drops, primroses, daisies, and violets all about his place of rest; and she watered them every evening in the dry summer months. Ay, and at the shiest hours of midnight were the low plaintive warblings of the poor "natural," "innocent" Bird of Gratitude

heard over the young Englishman's grave, in that meek lonely nook of our church-yard.

"Daft Davie" must be chronicled also. His *penchant*, and his "small peculiar" of accomplishment, were likewise of a kirk-yard kind. Whenever there was a grave to be dug, Davie was the asthmatic old sexton's right-hand man. We know from "Hamlet," "The Grave," "The Bride of Lammermoor," &c., that the classic character of the sexton is a hard-grained one. This character is true to nature. But I would add to it, that your village grave-digger has all the oddities of idleness and dissipation in his neighbourhood for "helps" on burial occasions. "Daft Davie" was the one great indispensable of this class in our church-yard. In his train there was always a squad of boys. Besides the mere ploy, if the corpse was to come from a distance, they had the additional prospect of horses to hold, with the pleasures of a ride and remunerative halfpence. And there around the grave, aye as the fat friable earth was thrown out by the groaning old sexton, down bent the truant urchins, taking up handfuls of it, to see if the particles crumbled, disparted, and stirred with something almost like a creeping motion in the hand: If they did so, then it was the dust of the wicked, which, according to their popular belief, never could lie still for a moment. Meanwhile, "Daft Davie," by an inalienable monopoly of prerogative, was taking charge of the bones. All that were thrown out were carefully cleaned by him, and laid scrupulously together: First the yellow shanks, crossing each other; and over them the surmounting skull, which the creature not only cleaned, but even did his best to polish, that on the burial day it might be "decent-like" —so he phrased it. Inside the skull he put all the small splinters. The other bones were arranged by the sides of the central heap. And thus they were found on the funeral day, to the satisfaction of relatives, lying, in the graphic language of the Psalmist, like "cleft wood" at the grave's mouth. To ring the minute peals of the Kirk bell, as the bier approached, was Davie's crowning triumph; and, as he had learned to do the thing skilfully, he was

always indulged with the bell-rope. This indulgence proved fatal to himself at last, bringing him to a very characteristic end. The burial was that of a rich old gentleman of the parish, who had made rather a figure in the world. There was no thought that Davie could go wrong in the matter, and so the bell was entrusted to him as usual. The notion, however, seems somehow to have got into his weak brain, that here was a great man to be rung for, and that he must ring with a difference. He did not comprehend, at the same time, that greater pomp and solemnity must lie in greater slowness, but took the contrary idea; and so, when the intimation that the funeral was coming in sight was given him, he began to pull with might and main, tolling furiously. People were coming running to stop him, when the iron tongue of the bell, which had been known to be loose for some time, fell, half-a-stone in weight, on the poor old idiot's bald bare head, and killed him on the spot. "Strange!" said an inveterate punster of the Presbytery, at their next meeting, "that a man should be killed by a mere *lapsus linguæ!*"

CHAPTER VII.

SPRING IN THE COUNTRY.

The older I grow, the faster, I find, does time slip away from me. But I am happier, upon the whole, now than ever I was before. Youth is restless, tumultuous, and dissatisfied; always longing for something yet to come, rushing into and through pleasure with such vehemence as to confound its own perceptions of it, and then sinking into deep but undefined melancholy. We are wiser as we grow older—sipping enjoyment more leisurely, and tasting it with a nicer relish; altogether more equable and more easy. Be mine the old age described by Cicero with all his Asiatic softness and fulness, "*Quiete et pure et eleganter actæ ætatis placida ac lenis senectus!*" Better still, in the words of THE BOOK, "The hoary head is a crown of

glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness:" May that crown in due time be mine!

Our frugal and quiet dinner over, I generally betake myself to my Library, there to ruminate through the twilight hour—the sweetest hour to me of all the twenty-four. Poised on my chair, and looking through my southern window, I cannot tell what a soothing calm it gives me to watch the rooks coming home from their sea-side foraging to their inland roost in the ancient woods. High and silent in the yellow light they float into ken in long, sparse, and intermitting trains; and straightway sail out of view onwards. Successful quest, contentment, home, peace, and sleep, are all associated in that lofty, direct, and quiet flight. And then, how delicious the idlesse, as twilight darkens, of balancing our poker; and watching faces in the fire; and listening to the intermittent flapping of the flame, or the hoarse angry fizz of the white jets of gas, that curl and catch the keen momentary flame, as they come out in fat puffs from the frying bitumen of the cleft coal; and building our castles in the air! With regard to seeing faces in the fire, I believe I have the involuntary faculty as strong as any other man has. Some, however, can see anything they wish in the very blankest object they steadfastly look upon. The late Dr Macnish told me that, when he happened to be sitting smoking amidst other smokers, in that state of pleasing listlessness which the luxury of tobacco engenders, he used to see through the cloudy fumes that curled trailingly through the room faces moping and mowing, with huge noses and peaked chins, in every form of the grotesque. The ludicrous distress of the Barber of Gottingen was first conceived, as he looked through these pipe-born picturesque mists. It is recorded of one of our eminent painters, that he had the same power of observing visages on a damp wall, where the paint was beginning to peel off; and he filled his portfolio with studies made in this singular manner. I myself have often noticed the swarming hints to shaping fancy which such a wall presents. But there are more wonderful examples still of the faculty of which I have been speaking. Without the help of any

suggestion whatever from any external object on which he might be gazing, that sweet strange enthusiast, the painter Blake, had the power, sometimes voluntary and sometimes involuntary, of calling up a face, and seeing it with his bodily eyes projected in palpable semblance on the air, or on the wall before him: And it often remained steadfast to his actual organs of sight, till he took down its features on his canvass. That singular, headlong, *abandonné* creature, Benvenuto Cellini, when lying in a jail, saw the thick atmosphere of his nightly cell peopled with thronging visages of supernatural visitants, open and clear to his bodily eye. That no less strange being, Jerome Cardan, in his Autobiographical Confessions, states that he had the same faculty; not an involuntary disease (as in the celebrated case of Nicolai), but an active power, subject to his will. Of all the suggestive haunts of the face-watcher, however, none is like the half-ruddy, half-white embers of a fire of wood, when you are in that right gloaming mood which is the best master of ekeing out into perfect forms the queer miniatures that rise on the brooding eye. But ha! down goes the bridge of the nose, and the filmy torso quivers and sinks into nothing!

Would I had Blake's faculty, and something more, namely, the power of calling up the faces of the dead, as they appeared when living. And let us have their full-length figures, too; ay, and their dresses. How delightful thus to bring up our ancestors, pair by pair, back to Adam and Eve; making them pass over before us in our evening chamber, like the shadows of Banquo's unborn line. Two hundred ancestors, with their respective spouses, by the father's side, and as many by the mother's, would carry us back to our First Parents. How curiously pleasing to note the family resemblances, now lost, and now re-appearing in the varied countenances of the back-stretching generations; now soft and meek in the mild light of civilization, now bold and picturesquely wild out of the strange depths of savage life, with a fir-tree smell from their native woods. A word or two of their respective histories, as they defiled past us, how it would enhance the charm. Let them

know, too, before whom they are passing, so that we may see what sort of regards they bend down upon us. But lo! now the General Father and Mother. What a broad, ripe, serene, and gracious composure of love about them. O! could that Mother of us all be but permitted to make a pilgrimage over the earth, to see her many sons and daughters! How kindly would the kings and queens of the world entreat her in their palaces; how affectionately would her outcast children of the wilderness give her honey and milk, and wash her feet! No thought of the many woes she brought upon us! No reproaches! Nothing but love! So generous is the soul of this world!

The most uncomfortable weather on earth is the breaking up of a snow storm at a lonely farm-house in the country, on a cold and clayey bottom. The sickly feeling of reading a book by the fire in the forenoon could still be endured, were there a book to read; but there is not a fresh page in the house. Out then you must sally, but what to do? The hills are cheerlessly spotted; the unmelted snow is still lying up the furrows with indentations, like the backbone of a red herring; a cold blashy rain is driven from the spongy west by a wind that would certainly blow you away, did not your feet stick fast in the mud, as you wade along the sludgy road. Determined to have some exercise, you set your face winkingly against the storm, and make for the black Scotch firs on the hill side. Finding no shelter, you return to the farm soaked to the skin, and the leather of your shoes like boiled tripe. Hearing the fanners at work in the barn, you make for the stir; and winking against the stour as you bolt in, step up to the ankles in chaff, which sticks to you like a bur. The dusty atmosphere clings lovingly to you, and in a trice you are cased in drab. The luxury of clean dry clothes is now fairly earned; the change is truly an enjoyment, and doubly so in helping you to loiter away an hour. But would, would the evening were come! Such were the leading features of a late visit I paid to a farming acquaintance some three miles off from our Village. I don't like such visits at all, now. I confess myself afraid

of unused bedrooms, glazed curtains, and cold sheets. Ah! I fear I am getting old.

Forgetting his character, January is sometimes singularly mild. He was so this year, till near his close. The thermometer has been standing occasionally at 60°; crocuses and other spring flowers are out; and the gooseberry bushes are quite green. There were few haws last autumn, but the small birds have had no lack of food; and in consequence of this, and the mildness of the season, they are exceedingly numerous. Many are the flocks of linnets that rise ever and anon from the bare stubbles with their wings thin-twinkling in the pale glint of the wintry sun, or sit drowsily churming on the tops of the trees in the still soft-dropping days. The worst of this sort of weather is, that we have strong dashes of rain every other morning; down go the rivers tumbling brown; and the over-soaked soil spews out water at every pore. Bad the country, but worse the town, in such weather. Oh! the cheerless shed-ward flight from its dun shower, vile hybrid betwixt rain and soot! Oh! the fierce fulzie of its gutter-flood! Oh! the swallowing of its raw fuzzy fog and smoke carded together, which you might gather in your hands like wool, put on the distaff, and spin into petticoats for the Dorcas Society! Upon the whole, though winter is slipping gently away, I cannot but sigh for a fortnight of good black frost to break down the stubborn glebe, to kill myriads of noxious insects that infest the soil, to check the contagion of fever, and give us a bonspiel or two to brace our nerves, which are almost melted into a dew by this weeping weather. The present moon, we are told by the knowing ones, has a bad appearance: It is pitiful to see her pale and watery sickle struggling through the great blotches of clouds that so often possess the firmament. Unless the weather clear up gradually, and dry the ground by degrees, we can hardly have a permanent frost: It can't fix its fangs when the earth is so full of moisture. But ha! lightning and thunder at this season of the year! All the day we had a preternaturally clear yellowish gleam in the skies, with ranges of towered and battlemented clouds

in the south, garrisoned, I doubt not, with showers and winged gusts which will let loose their archery on us ere the morrow be by.

The morrow dawned. All was mildness. But it was the still, muffled, brooding mildness of a shrew, who comes smiling forth upon the world (as Washington Irving somewhere says) after playing the lioness in her own house. Out of this ominous stillness burst wild-winged winter, with its whirling blasts of soft snow, dimming the very wind, and blinding and sealing up the eyes of the world. The evening was dry, with a hard penetrative air. How frore the frost at night, with what Thomson calls "its hooked salts!" O'er the pool (to use another of his expressions of the subtlest delicacy) it "breathed a blue film." In the morning,

> "How cold, how clear, how marvellously keen,
> The effluence from yonder mountain's head!"

But what does "*effluence*" mean, Master? Nothing that mere mortal eyes ever saw, Gentle Inquirer; though to the "vision and faculty divine" of William Wordsworth it is as gross and palpable as the reek of a fen. In the afternoon, streamings of cloudy hair all round the horizon, now pale as paper, and now of a copper cast, foretold the eddying blasts that issued at night. And so January closed in full style of vindicated character.

February is the most comfortless month in the calendar. This year we have had all its worst characteristics—plashy fields, through which the plough could not go; miry roads; battering rains and melting snows, that spit in your face, and make you pucker your cheeks, as you bend down your head and lean to the blast; brown swollen floods, enriched with the mould of many a fertile haugh; fat lazy mists as thick as buttermilk, that feed those barking catarrhs, and fill the rotten kirk-yards; anon a levy of winds from the four hinges of heaven, that tirl the kirks, and whelm the stranded navies, while the cross blue lightning plays fugleman to the elements, and the jammed thunders thicken the uproar, and Boreas, whistling through the tumult, slings about his hitting hail in all directions. All these

things we have had this February in rapid succession, or rather intermingled turmoil. Let us not be ungrateful, however: The spirit of Spring can't be kept wholly down: We have also had the lark twinkling up in the clear slanting drops of the scattered cloud; the thrush at his song on the topmost twig of the tree; the usual complement of crocuses and snow-drops; and, when the black-blue cloud, with its white streaming drift, seen coming over the mountains, had devoured the darkened landscape, and thinned away, we have had thousands and thousands of hanging or falling drops lighted into crystal by the glassy sunshine of not-to-be-mistaken Spring.

March was considered by the Romans the first month of the year; and certainly, if the clime of Italy in those days was at all like ours now, we are not surprised at their bestowing the honours of primogeniture on March. January is the very dead of winter. As for February, though we have the snow-drop then, and the crocus, and occasional sunny days worthy of Spring; yet sleety blasts, whitening one side of the furrow, and cleaving with a blue-white rough crust to the northern side of the barren pine, are its more common characteristics; if we miss that dry withering East wind after frost and snow, which is worst of all. Worst of all, indeed! What a time of it! How the ewes pine on the hard, grizzly, snow-icy hills! And what a bitter reception for the staggering trembling lambkin, prematurely dropped on the frozen turf! Ourie ruffled Robin, how in all the world does he fend? His legs seem longer and slenderer, and his neck shorter than ever. Poor fellow! mother Earth is as hard to him as the nether millstone: With all her many *banks* she won't discount his *bill* for a single worm. He would pawn his red waistcoat for a trifle of spiders. Where, how, and when he and all his feathery kind get their little dinners, and in what holes and bores they find their bed at night, the God of Providence only knows! The very soul is nipped out of the young wheats and grasses, half brown half blae among the frosty clods. The Harrow, with all his rusty teeth chattering in his head, is crying to the Plough to move on;

but the Plough cannot budge, and is falling sadly behind with his *share* of the work. Curling is still the rage: Everything curls as well as the frost-bound mason, red from the quarry—the unfrozen as well as the frozen face of the lake; the smoke; the ladies' noses; and the very greens, as if in sympathy with the "skips" who are to eat them. The dun thick vicious skies keep spitting out snow, helping the sandy stour to seal up your eyes with many a gritty wink; but so adust is the air, and the ground, the snow is parched up as it falls, and never appears. Here and there a bit of the old snow, under a drab great-coat of dust, altogether one of the most miserable remnants in nature, may be detected about the road-sides. O! for the "dew-dropping South" to melt and wash away that cankered, shrivelling, frosty bitterness out of the firmament! Nay, give us even the clear, open, manly hostility of Boreas, puffing away all the dun wrinkled vapours, and sweeping the glassy heavens like a curler's besom, and bracing more than he blights! The fellow may take us redly by the nose; but the vigour of blood is there, for our hearts are yet warm. Would he but blow with all the round of his Norland cheeks, and drive away that sulky, searing howl of Cardinal Eurus! At present men, women, and children go creeping about like parish starvelings, with peevish tempers, and drops at their pale-blue noses. Nay, the whole Earth—clod, blade, branch, bird, beast, and human being—looks as if you could take it between your finger and thumb, and rub it down into a few dry powdery pinches of Lundyfoot.

From the dark frost-crusted shell of the chrysalis Winter, forth issues March with wide flashing wings of sunshine and breezy shadows. The rivers rushing

"O'er their schistus beds"

wear a greenish look; and being choke full of water, have a strong fresh gush and gurgle, which it invigorates a man's animal spirits to hear and look upon. Or let him stand by the ocean and behold the hues, green as grass, driven by the shuddering breeze over the swirling brine;

till, coming from the mountains far inland, a black cloud of streaming hail, with a misty *avant-courier* thin and white and spray-like in the rays of the sun, goes down across the waters,

"Darkening the sea."

Or, Gentle Reader, did you ever stand by the *embouchure* of the Nith, and see the Solway coming running in, under a stiff South-wester in March, with a breast-work of waters three feet high, hollow-roaring, fresh-sparkling, with a mane of swarming, frying, winking, lisping froth, white

"As snow thrice bolted by the northern blast?"

What strength! what freshness!

Whether on the mountain top, or by the brimming river of the valley filling its grassy banks, or standing on the fresh sea shore, there is a vigour and bustle on the cloudy brow of March, which carries into the heart of a man the sympathetic feeling of the first bold revival of the year. The birds, too, have burst out. Sitting with his exquisitely speckled breast to the dewy light of morning and evening, the thrush is now in full song. The glimmering lark is up through the skirts of the sunny shower, higher and higher into the molten and most ethereal blue of the newly-washed heavens. But listen to Thomas Warton:—

"Fraught with a transient, frozen shower,
If a cloud should haply lower,
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,
Mute on a sudden is the lark;
But when gleams the sun again
O'er the pearl-besprinkled plain,
And from behind his watery vail
Looks through the thin descending hail,
She mounts, and, lessening to the sight,
Salutes the blithe return of light,
And high her tuneful track pursues
'Mid the dim rainbow's scattered hues."

Now is the time for the angler to bring forth his gear, and make all those nice preparations in which there is so much pleasure, as the hopeful prelude of pleasant days to come, in the renewal of his quiet craft.

If there is no melted snow in the streams, fly-fishing for trout may begin with April. Their food being then scarce, they take greedily. At midsummer, when the waters are low, and real flies of all kinds abundant, and the trout, in consequence, nice, capricious, and shy, attention to varieties of the artificial fly, delicate tackle, and far fine fishing, are indispensable. Not so in early Spring. Common gear, common skill, and any common fly—say hare lug and bunting wing as a staple hook—will do very well. Having no intention to go into the mysteries of the craft, I merely add this word of advice to the neophyte:—The young angler almost always defeats himself by excess of eagerness to get the best of the river. He dashes to the water-side, putting up his rod all the while as he stumbles over the rushes; but no sooner is he ready to cast in than he sees, a little above him, a whirling eddy which he must first secure. But no—he cannot begin yet: that stream farther up how tempting! There he must lay on. A few hurried imperfect throws is all he can there afford, for his greedy eye has caught a point of advantage above him yet; so up he runs, wasting the precious hour of "take," and absolutely doing nothing but galloping like a madman. Now, your old stager, the moment he coolly reaches the brink of the river, falls to work, and fills his basket ere the eager novice just mentioned has given himself the chance of a nibble. Please bear this in mind, Master Raw-at-the-Rod. By the way, there is a sad falling-off, within these twenty years, of the yellow or common trout in our burns. Those modern drains in the sheep-walks among the hills bring down the rainy floods in one hasty gush; sweep the channels of the burns to one uniform shallow level; destroy the breeding-pools; but, more than all, upturn, and tear away, and put an end to the spawn by their violence. The greater use of lime in modern agriculture has done not a little to hurt the trout, but the sheep drains are their chief enemies.

Pleasant is the plough, going up the high green slope of the lea field, and laying over, like a coil of rope, the

regular furrows, glittering in the sun. Quoth Christopher North :—

"You have seen a single strong horse ploughing up hill. How he sets his brisket to it, and snuves along, as the lines of *clean dirt* fall in beautiful regularity from the gliding share."

Yes, we have seen it, O! Christopher; we have seen your perfect picture. "*Clean dirt*" proves the poet. But list how Burns sings to his "Auld Mare Maggie":—

"Thou never braindg't, and fecht, and flisket,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
And spread abreed thy weel-filled brisket
Wi' pith and power;
Till spritty knowes wad *rair't and riskit*,
An' *slypet owre*."

Who does not hear, in those three words first marked in *italics*, the very cutting of the grass roots? The two last marked words express, beyond the power of any other language, the perfect unbroken laying-over of the sleek wet furrow. Such is our Scottish Ploughman's piercing intensity of phrase.

And down in yon fat holm, see how "Piers Plowman" bends as he buries his plough up to the beam in the rich brown friable mould. Following him with unequal steps, half in the furrow and half out of it, his shoes heavy and shauchled with balls of clay, stumbles along the little truant from school, intently looking down. What is he seeking? O! nothing less than a Queen Anne farthing. Eager in the perfect popular faith that only three were coined, that two of them are already secure in the possession of somebody, that the third is lost, and that now to find it were a fortune, he is out in quest of the old bodle. He is partly allured also by the short rusty gun lying slily between the stilts, ready to have a hit at the gulls, as, fresh and white from the brine of the sea, they twinkle as they half hover and half alight on the wormy glebe behind, but, wild and shy, are ever scared away by the half-turned head of the quiet watchful ploughman, "looking before and after," and shrilly scream as they go wheeling right and left. But ha! a coin, a coin! Snatching it up with a beating heart, little Satchel rubs it on his corduroys, and makes

up his mind to take £10,000 for it. Ah! 'tis only a button, wanting the eye. He tosses it away, attempting a careless whistle to hide his mortification. *Perge, puer!*

And merrily carols the "Farmer's Boy," stumbling over the dun clods with his raking harrows, which ever and anon in their jumping hitch send off thin puffs of stour adown the wind! And blithely chants the damsel carrying the seed to the white-sheeted sower, earnestly, measuredly stalking along, scattering the hopeful corn, like a thin white dust in the windy light, over the brown upland! And the whooping and laughing of children rings in the clear air, as they gather the early tussilago in the dry furrows, or seek the striped snail-cups on the broomy braes, and the first primroses by the mossy roots of the aged thorn! And every bush is rough with buds! And sweet are the glimmerings of green light through the waving willows by the water-courses! And merrily do the mazy midges dance in the glinting vistas! And all the opening year is full of "the beauty of promise!"

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO EDINBURGH.

A man never looks more sheepish than when he has taken a tender leave of his friends two or three times the same day, failing to get a seat on every successive coach as it passes, and has to come back again, and back again, with his carpet bags, under the gaze of the whole neighbours round. Sympathy dies, and "farewell" becomes ludicrous, under such an iteration. My advice to such a one is, to get down on his hands and knees, and push on in this posture of a dromedary, with all his bags and bundles laid over his back like pack-saddles, rather than turn back again the fifth or sixth time. Such was my own serio-comic predicament, one day about the middle of April, on my proposed way to visit Edinburgh. Whether or not I would have done the dromedary in the

evening, I do not take it upon me precisely to say. It was luckier for me that I got off by the last coach of the day.

I had not seen Edinburgh for twenty long years. Many cities of the earth had I seen in that time; but beyond them all to me now was "mine own romantic town," as well in its own immediate beauty, as in the fine range of scenery, far and near, which it commands. Walking one morning towards the Mound from the west end of Princes Street, close by the railing on the garden side, I caught glimpses from time to time of the marble-like beauties of the Institution, seen through the pensile waving foliage of the young trees in the fresh morning. The whiteness of sculptured pillars seen through the greenness of leaves! The perfection of Art seen through the tenderest loveliness of Nature! How graceful! How beautiful! Yet I am forced to say of Edinburgh, with all its architectural distinctions, that there is a want of imposing grandeur about it. The New Town is surpassingly fair; but there is far too much of regularity, division, and dissipation of effect about it, for commanding greatness. The only vast and overawing feature of the City is the backbone of the Old Town, from the Castle down to Holyrood, seen from the Calton with all its evening lights, or in the smokeless air of the clear morning. Such a far grouping of the most irregular and daring piles, in every form of jags on the enormous spine, is absolutely tremendous. Arthur's Seat deserves especial notice. I have seen no hill so perfect of beauty. It is like a vase—look at it from all points, and you have the same unique symmetry of form. The suffusion of sunny air on its lofty shoulders on a clear April day, and the ethereal blue of the heavens above its grey rocks, are exquisite.

Extending my walks for miles around and beyond the suburbs, I was struck with the character of the folk as harsh, dry, and ungenial, almost to repulsiveness. I believe we may say generally, that the country people who live within two or three miles of a large city have less character about them—less intelligence on the one hand,

and less amiable simplicity on the other—than any other class of society. They have neither city cultivation nor rural kindness. The multitude of strangers whom they daily see passing by, and the suspicion of prowlers from the near city, while they want the defence which the city yields, make them distrustful and churlish, and altogether so inhospitable that they will scarcely give you a draught of water, or answer you a simple question. The very children seem affected by the same unfortunate situation. They are never seen playing at games that belong either to town or country. Those boards threatening prosecution to trespassers, which meet the eye at every corner of a field or plantation within six miles of the city, restrict the wandering feet of these unhappy youngsters, whether in quest of daisies or snail-cups, and cramp the free play of their young hearts with the ever anxious fear of offence.

The "Modern Athenians" are a people of great intelligence; but somewhat sharp and narrow, and, from the prevailing forensic practice of the place, added to the national love of ratiocination, altogether too dialectic. The English beat them hollow in the art of conversation. Of course, I speak generally. I do not mean, for instance, to say that such a man as Lord Jeffrey, with his copiousness of fancy and feeling, fresh-drawn from the eloquent vigour of the present day, yet softened and chastened down with the lingering amenities of the old *regime* of manner, is inferior to any Southron in this great art. To glance rapidly from subject to subject—when the theme has run considerably far from its starting point, not to call it back by any violent logical precision, but to pass easily into some collateral topic—not to bend and turn the flow of talk for the purpose of getting launched on it some prepared witticism—not to hold the stream of discourse back by anecdotes and stories, save to give it rich momentary pauses, and a consequent brisker circulation—to draw out others rather than to display one's-self—such are some of the best qualifications, negative and positive, of an accomplished talker. From the disputatious habits of the Scotch, I repeat, they

are, generally speaking, not the most pleasant men in conversation. I might generalise this remark still farther, and say that, upon the whole, logicians are not happy in the ordinary colloquies of life. On the same principle it is that the Latin language, which is of an elaborate, balanced, antithetical, and stately construction, admirably fitted for declamation and argument, is not easy and rapid enough for comedy. I speak under favour of Horace and Terence, who are fellows certainly glib and supple to admiration, while their compeers are turning the salient corners of wit like crocodiles, or three-ringed armadilloes. Even with all the wonders which Nature can do in such cases, we can scarcely conceive a courtship carried on in the Latin tongue. One of the most accomplished of our moderns in conversation was Sheridan. His peculiar skill lay in the power of bending, without in the least degree seeming to bend, the conversation for the purpose of adapting it to some of his polished witticisms, which he had always in store in his quiver. He has got credit, at least, for consummate tact in this respect; though the very circumstance that he has got credit for it proves that his art was perceived, and, therefore, not altogether perfect. Perfect, indeed, such an art can never be, as no determined twist in talk can take place without instantly hurting a most instinctive sense in cultivated men. Johnson's sturdy powers of talk are well known, but at times he must have been an intolerable bore. For reach and variety, Burke was fully his match. Sharpe and Mackintosh shone well in conversation. In high rapt imaginative monologue, Coleridge was more like an angel than one of the sons of men: Never, of the dwellers on earth, was there such an ethereal inhabitant of that splendid border-land, composite of sun and morning mist, and peopled with myriad gleams of beautiful and heroic shapes, which lies between the province of distinct poetry and the philosophy of Plato. As one who unites the sharpest logical precision with the most discursive ease, De Quincey, the celebrated Opium-Eater, is a great master of talk. He is lively with the lively, but wo be to the disputatious opponent who thinks to cover

anything like a dogmatic retreat beneath a cloud of loose dispersed no-meanings! He may flutter away to the uttermost twig of the many-branched tree of discourse; still the mild, though terrible, "But—" of De Quincey has him back again to the very first fork of the matter where he diverged, and a logical tenpenny nail driven mercilessly through his ear, and nailing him to the main trunk, ends the affair. One of the most rapid, comprehensive, and yet minute talkers in ancient or modern times, was Buonaparte. I say minute, only in the sense in which a master of epic poetry is minute and graphic. He seized on such small things as are symbolical, or symptomatic, or representative of vast and eternal elements. He had the sublime art of settling generic distinctions by simple specific things. With what imperatorial grandeur did Napoleon advance up at once to the very heart of his subject-matter; strip away its disguises and weaknesses to right and left; and bring to light at once, and lay bare at his feet, the very unsophisticated, elementary question itself! All great characters have a uniqueness and totality about them. How completely the same were the style of Buonaparte's battles, and the style of his talk! To pour the whole column of his might into the central point of his opponent, to stagger his very heart, and then cut him off in detail,—such were the simple and sublime tactics of this great fighter and great talker.

Perhaps in no city of the world are there fewer oddities of incident and character to be met with than in Edinburgh. The habits of domestic life are so strict, the fortunes generally are so limited, well-defined, and exactly lived up to, and the legal acumen of the place is so sharp and prevailing, that humorists and queer impostors cannot do there at all. In London, again, there is a boundless profusion of wealth. Thousands of the possessors of it have grown rich without education; they are not admitted into what is called good society; but, feeling their own independence, they are therefore the more determined to snap their fingers at the smooth usages of the world, and show the value of their money, and get at least some sort of enjoy-

ment, by indulging in all the freaks and whims of extravagance. On this fat, sappy, money-oozing, easy trunk of social life, be sure parasitical fungi of every size and shape —quacks, beggars, thieves, and all sorts of moral curiosities —cannot fail to stick and thrive. Grant to London many other allurements to this class of creepers and clingers, I would yet say, generally, that in cities where there are plenty of rich, vulgar, independent people, oddities of incident and character are most abundantly to be met with.

I was much struck with the "Parliament House." The amount of legal talent, general literary accomplishment, and gentlemanly bearing in the Scottish Bench and Bar, and Society of Writers to the Signet, is surely very great.

In the University there is little theoretic enthusiasm, but much practical vigour. The Professors, in general, seem plain, clear-minded men, who attend to matter more than to manner. The elocution of two of them, however, impressed me very much—I mean Chalmers and Wilson. The breathless, hurried impetuosity of the former, while at the same time his weight of meaning and feeling ever and anon presses down his heart and voice to a harsh whispering—as a deep-laden chariot grinds on its axle—has a somewhat uncouth, but very powerful effect. Moreover, he is a man of a broad, candid, and loveable nature. Of Professor Wilson as a literary man, why need I speak? Those "*Noctes*" alone shew him to be the most Shaksperian spirit of the age—energic to create, and prodigal to cast forth (magnificent spendthrift!) more shapes of beauty, shifting in the lights of love and pity, like shot silk or the peacock's neck; more forms of terror, grotesquely wild or solemnly awful; more august imagery drawn from Heaven above and Hell underneath, and from all this intermediate goodly frame of things; more heroic criticism; more profound philosophy, than any other man of his time: And all in a style so wholly fresh and new! What a remarkable work is the "Recreations of Christopher North!" "Remarkable" we may well call it; but "work" is not the right name for a product, which is more like the easy spontaneous expansion of a plant into its leaves and flowery

bells, by the very process of unconscious growing, than the elaborated result of directed and exerted powers. Take the very first page that opens by chance, and here is a many-sided man (you feel at once, as you smile well-pleased); yes, a man wide, and open, and fearless as the day, without one corner or cranny in all his character (you murmur as you are drawn on by the sweet suction of the Charmer); yes, no mere By-ends of inclination, but the whole man—now riotously headlong in glee; now thoughtful and solemn, large of reverent discourse, "looking before and after," with all the sweetest by-plays of humanity, with every reconciling softness of charity (you inwardly add): Yes, a Shakspearian capaciousness and serenity of soul are here; sympathies for everything, and without end; Humour and Pathos lying in each other's arms—for they are ever of cognate birth; Fun doing leap-frog over the head of Philosophy; Pity, soft milky nursling, lying in the lap of Terror; Beauty (with her sweet glistening coming on before) stealing on remorseful Horror, struggling and toiling through his "hell of sleep;" while around and over every vivid embodiment of human passion and feeling is cast the very prodigality of Nature's scenery, lovely or desolate, as the setting of the human picture, by this frank and ungrudging Genius. The plain and simple truth is, take him body and soul, Wilson, though he has not cast his writings (how very small a part they are of the whole man!) in so artistic and permanent a form as many others, is the highest man of genius of our day. But now for his elocution:—His reading or recitation of poetry, with those long, heart-drawn, lingering, slow-expiring tones, solemn as a cathedral chaunt, is altogether like some piece of sacred service. The style of it seems, on first hearing, to be modulated on Wordsworth's hollow guttural sing-song; but, while it cleans out the man's whole heart and soul with its searching, thorough, deep-going tide into all the hollow channels and recesses of meaning, fully better than Wordsworth's, it has, at the same time, a far more enthusiastic and majestic sweep. Dear, fat "Jemmy Thomson

O !" though he let it be said of himself in his own Castle of Indolence,

" And much he loathed to write, ne cared to repeat,"

had more of the fervour of the poet in him in his recitation than in any other demonstration of the man—*minus* the pen in his fist. When he recited, nothing could be heard but a few broken guttural fragments of the thing in hand —I should rather say the thing *in mouth*—working away in his throat. Now all this deep-swelling, obstructed, heart-choked ado round about the *pomum Adami*, was very fine in the dear fat fellow; but so far it was a defect. It is the power of Wilson that, while there is the same terrific ado between the heart and the throat, the organs of accommodation, though filled to the brim, and labouring heavily in their vast plethora, yet command a full and magnificent utterance. Colley Cibber says, " When Dryden brought his play of Amphitrion to the stage, I heard him give it his first reading to the actors, in which, though it is true he delivered the plain sense of every period, yet the whole was in so cold, so flat, and unaffecting a manner, that I am afraid of not being believed when I affirm it. On the contrary, Lee, far his inferior in poetry, was so pathetic a reader of his own scenes, that I have been informed by an actor who was present, that while Lee was reading to Major Mohun at a rehearsal, Mohun in the warmth of his admiration threw down his part and said, ' Unless I were able to play it as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it ?' " This is certainly a very fair illustration of the fact that a man's elocution is no test of his genius. And yet it must be qualified so far by the circumstance that Lee, though far inferior to Dryden in the complete whole of his mind, had yet a warmer fervour of imagination. Impressive elocution seems to depend very much on this heat of temperament.

There is no bustle of enterprise about the Edinburgh Theatre; but it is evidently a well-regulated establishment, yielding at all times judicious entertainment to the public. My visits to it were more frequent than my sober sister

Mary could have imagined. The truth is, I was very much struck with three actors there and then acting: I mean T. P. Cooke; Charles Young; and William Murray, the worthy Manager of the Theatre.

Down bears "*Long Tom*" (T. P. Cooke) upon us, the very man we have seen a thousand times in our mind's eye—thanks to Smollett, and Cooper, and Marryatt, and Michael Scott! But no; I am elaborately wrong at once, for we have not a moment's time to think of the creations of these gallant fellows, or to calculate whether or not we have got a right representative before us, all our sympathies being at once seized by Tom individual, to the utter non-existence of Tom generic. His rolling unsteadiness on *terra firma*, kept up with fine verisimilitude; his magnificent pigtail between his shoulders, yet managed without ostentation; his thumb on his nose, his wiping of his mouth, his tucking up of his trousers, all moderately resorted to, and never once thought of as mere professional garnish, but entirely lost sight of as the natural uses of the man; the heroic beauty of his person; every motion of every limb easy from consciousness of power, and not merely trained to sailor-like graces, but naturally imbued, nay drenched with salt-water propensities; the sultry smile that lights the rich bronze of his manly countenance, drawing double effect from his rare box of ivory; the careless ease with which he handles his telescope, but the intense and far gaze of his whole spirit over the wide sea; his strong and mellow voice, with its long emphasis curtailed at once to a slovenly huddled falsetto indistinctness, bearing a curious assimilation to the whole manners of the tar; his jokes; his songs; his native simplicity; his whole heart in a hornpipe; his enthusiasm and manly pathos; his dallying with danger; his entire grappling with it,—all these, and far more, stamp "*Long Tom*" one of the noblest fellows that ever trode the British stage: And we glory in the sight of him. But the praise of T. P. Cooke is not yet half told; for though great as a sailor, his *forte* is in pantomimic exertion. I set Ducrow indeed in a much higher range of pantomime, where, probably, he

will never be approached by man born of woman; for who, to take but one instance, ever saw anything like the intense instantaneous attitude into which he throws himself as the Egyptian archer, when the line of precision seems to cut the hollow of his back in twain, and his whole soul looks out after the winged vengeance,

"As it would pierce a hundred thousand hearts?"

But the delicate beauty of his frame, and the divine associations connected with his pantomimic representations, give Ducrow the air of something more than mortal; and we are left in all fairness to hail T. P. Cooke as by far the best representative we have seen of the common power of man's noble body. His tightening of his whole frame for the mortal combat; that strict winding up of every faculty of strength, till he is calm—indifferent—cloyed with his own very excess of vigour; his terrific comeliness as he parts the hair on his manly forehead, and smiles in the face of his enemy as he makes bare his arm; the perilous carelessness with which he commences the fight, till the wound up steel-spring within him begins vehemently to uncoil itself, and he leaps with demoniacal energy on his foe—and were his foe Demigorgon itself, down it must go beneath the strokes and strokes of that swift arm,—in all this lies Cooke's chief mastery; and it is perhaps the highest test of his excellence, that he raises in the minds of the spectators the idea of something vast and indefinite, even beyond his own sublime exertions.

Young was more an accomplished artist than a man of genius. In genteel comedy, as well as in tragedy, he was a finished actor. His Benedict was a most graceful performance. But his Iago and his Brutus were his finest parts. By far the most pathetic representation I ever saw on the stage was his Brutus. There is something inexpressibly touching in the sorrow of a spirit so grave and considerate; and Young's steady muscular face, and calm heroic bearing, with the gentle melancholy of his somewhat monotonous cadences, gave us the perfect personifi-

cation of this noblest Roman of them all, and prepared us gradually for the awful weight of his dignified sorrow:

"Now is that noble vessel full of grief."

Never, till it was brought out to me by Charles Young, had I felt the peculiar delicacy of that characteristic of the generous Roman, given by our great dramatist:—

"Countrymen,
My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me."

Such are almost the last words of Brutus: How exquisitely indicative of his disinterested, heroic, loving, and loveable nature!

In its massive stolidity, Liston's face was unendurably ludicrous. Power was a jewel of fun. O! the richness of his "*Irish Tutor!*" His face, when on the point of being detected, no man can speak of aright. His absurd perplexity; his overcrowing love of his "sustem;" his glory in Irish mischief, so intense that he rejoiced in his own very detection; the puckered crowfoot round his eye, every wrinkle of which was a channel giving in drollery to that eye, which winked with its brimming fulness, till the overflowing laughter ran incontinently out of it; the whole mingled with a dash of determination to "bother" his "boy" a little farther, made up altogether such a rich amalgam of expression as I never saw. William Murray of Edinburgh, however, is a much greater actor than either Liston or Power. Indeed, in his line he is the finest player of his age. Irresistible in farce, he is also a master in genuine comedy. Perhaps I might even say generally, that that contained and temperate exercise of mirth, which marks the line of the higher comedy, is, in almost all cases, the best requisite for the successful representation even of farce. In this distinguished performer, the first qualities that strike us—or rather that prevent us being struck at all—are the natural ease and gentlemanly bearing that follow on with his part, free from the common ambition of making a great impression at the very first. He knows

how to be self-denied, which is the soul especially of wit, where the principle of division is essentially requisite, according to the poet's exquisite conception of

> ———"Young-eyed, healthful Wit,
> Whose jewels in his crisped hair
> Are placed *each other's beams to share;*"

whilst a huddled accumulation destroys the whole effect:

> "Men doubt, because so thick they stand in the sky,
> If those be stars that paint the galaxy."

Murray is in no uneasy haste to distinguish himself, and though ever and anon "his wanton spirits look out at every joint," he knows how and why to repress his exuberant power; so that even his lowest range of characters, without losing any of their essential drollery, are raised above the level of the mere vulgar, having that degree of the *beau ideal* which distinguishes Miss Edgeworth's delineations of the Irish peasantry, or the Author of Waverley's pictures of the humblest Scotch. But the chief point gained by this gradual subordination of mirth, is that feeling in the audience of sincerity in the representation, which, added to its contrasting effect, completes the overwhelming impression, when the actor, feeling the right moment of his climax, gives himself up body and soul to the possessing Fury of fun, his face one glorious ferment of glee, his whole animal economy supple and reeling with the overflowing intoxication—the whole house the while melted down into loosened laughter.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOUNT OF COMMUNION.

It was now about the dead hour of the night. The moon was withdrawn behind a huge cloud, which filled all the south from east to west. The air was thick and warm, and exceedingly still. All at once that great cloud, or rather rampart of clouds, was disparted as with the stroke of some potent rod, disclosing through the widening rift an ebon gulf of the firmament, in which there was a sprinkling of stars sharp and sparkling—blue-white diamond points

of spiritual lustre. Gradually they grew pale, and almost fainted away, as the light of the coming moon was cast in among them; and immediately her clear globe itself came slowly sailing into the dark depth of the opened heavens. I saw the valleys and the silent hills; and there, distinct as by day, were the rude Table and seats of stone at my feet, as I stood on the Mount of Communion. But ha! two of these seats were now occupied by the figures of two men, who leant forward with their elbows on the Table, their foreheads resting on their hands, as we see men reverentially do, who have just partaken of the holy Supper. Simultaneously they withdrew, each the arm on which leant his head; and, sitting upright, I saw their faces, faces of grave and manly beauty, severely calm, yet totally untouched by any shade of sorrow. Suddenly, as if one spirit moved them both, they broke forth into singing. Their voices at first were like the voices of spirits that mourn for the days of earth; yet it was soon felt that no melancholy was there, but the thrilling tones of profound hope and of waiting for some great end: altogether the effect was strangely sweet. Would I could remember the words of the hymn they sung! During the singing of it, two or three ghostly shapes, with eager countenances, came gliding onwards, as if drawn by the psalm; but they paused at some distance, yet near enough to show me there was a wild trouble in their faces, as they bent forward listening. Suddenly, as if scared away, the visionary things flitted off, and were whirled away into a neighbouring pine wood, that seemed to yawn for them, while the tops of the trees moaned heavily. The trees, however, were soon calm again; and not a sound disturbed the uninterrupted hymn. As it proceeded, a female form, staid and serene, came floating near in a moment, and took her seat on one of the stones, beside the two who sung. Another majestic shadow came onwards, and bowed his head reverentially, standing at a little distance, like one who waits in proud modesty. His visage was a very remarkable one; sable masses of hair lay thick and curling on his broad forehead; the boldness of a lion was in every lineament, yet tem-

pered with grace and love, as he stood with his large dark eyes fixed on the three who sung—for the female ghost had joined in the anthem. They ceased and he advanced. "Hail, brethren of hope!" he exclaimed. "Happy are ye, Edward Gordon, and Alexander M'Cubine!* What though your strangled bodies lie where they were slain, resting not in the peace of your fathers' consecrated graves, hallowed are the solemn trees beneath which your bones are laid; very dear is the place in your country's eyes. The tombs of her Covenant Martyrs are part of the very Constitution of Scotland; nay, they belong to the wide world of mankind: They are part of that great Foundation of Example on which rest the faith and patience of the saints. On earth your names live in sweet memorial. Happy are ye! And thou, too, Helen Walker,† great is thy praise above women!"

"My son!" said the Image of the Woman, in a voice somewhat severe, "enough for us all that we wait in hope of the resurrection. They have raised a monument above my dust, simply for doing a sister's duty. Is that virtue now so rare in the land of my fathers, that it is wondered at and admired as a thing out of course? You, too, my son, have your monumental glories: I am permitted to know you: You are the sweet Poet of our native land. Fear not, my son! No more tears, no more sorrow! Those struggling spots of care are washed away from thy forehead for ever; and all is serene there now, clear as from the refiner's furnace! Blessed be He in the shadow of whose wings we wait!"

"Amen!" exclaimed the Martyrs of the Covenant.

"Amen!" murmured the Ghost of BURNS; and bowing his head low before Helen Walker, she kissed his brow as with the kiss of a mother. There were tears in his eyes, and his noble shape trembled greatly as he lifted himself

* The bodies of the martyrs, Edward Gordon and Alexander M'Cubine, lie near Irongray church-yard, in Galloway.

† Helen Walker, the prototype of Jeanie Deans, is buried in Irongray church-yard. The Author of Waverley erected a stone with a suitable inscription over her dust.

up; but they were the trembling and tears of gratitude and immortal gladness.

GHOST OF E. GORDON.

Tremble not, son of renown! Whether from a sense of duty, or from the mere instinctive promptings of a full heart, you have conferred a vast benefit on your country. The manners of the past can never wholly pass away from the respect of the present, so long as thy verse lives; and on this sympathy are founded patriotism and national character. Thou hast sanctified humble life in Scotland, and lifted it up to the reverential regards of the loftiest. In one common love of thy name, men become more strictly a brotherhood.

GHOST OF A. M'CUBINE.

Yes, our National Poet is a guardian at once the sternest and sweetest of the ancient spirit and independence of Scotland, and of her dear old simplicities. He is worth a thousand laws and statutes to preserve our public virtue. He is a compelling power on the side of nature to bind our nobles and peasants under every circle and sign of Heaven, by every sweet and solemn recollection, to their fatherland of Scotland; bringing them back by leading-strings of love that cannot be resisted to their native streams, which have murmured in his verse through their hearts during all the long years of their unavoidable absence. He has magnified our country through all ages to come, and to all nations. He has brought out the character of our peasantry, and raised and kept them up to a level of moral respect beyond the example of any other people; and by this his eternal vindication of their native worth has smoothed down the offensive gradations of society, and fused all classes of our countrymen into one happy amalgam of mutual honour and love. The man who has done all this is worth "riches fineless" to a country. The gems and the most fine gold, enough

"To ransom great kings from captivity,"

could not buy us such a man!

GHOST OF BURNS.

Little praise is mine, O! shadows of true-hearted men. Somewhat from a sense of duty, more from a vain love of praise, most of all from the relief of giving vent to fulness, were those songs issued, which I will not now call idle. God gave me the faculty; this is no praise of mine. Scotland gave me the things ready fashioned to represent and fix in the sympathies of my countrymen; this is to me small praise indeed. The glory is hers, rather: it is yours, O! spirits of just men; it is thine, O! heroic woman, who acted from a regard to duty, and from habit, without which a man may have a thousand generous impulses, but without which he cannot properly be a man. With what did Scotland furnish me from time immemorial? With victories set in blood—with the memory of her independence: with the character of her sons and daughters, simple as water, but strong as the waterfall: with her song, surely never composed by mortal man, but spilt from the overflowing soul of Sorrow or Gladness: with her music twin-born, say rather one with her song: with her Fairy belief, the most delicately beautiful mythology in the history of the human mind, and strangely contrasted with the rugged character of her people, a people of sturt and strife: with her heroic faith—with the graves of her headless martyrs, in green shaw or on grim moor, visited by many a slip of sunshine streaming from the cloud in the still afternoon; solemn at morn and even, though the birds sing in the memorial guardian trees, and the young polished leaves, liquored with dewy sunshine, dance there lightly enough—for why should the place be sad? Who can rehearse the whole? All this and a thousandfold more than I can tell, was the vast inheritance of the heart bequeathed me by my fathers. The only wonder is, that so few have been the national poets of Scotland.

GHOST OF E. GORDON.

We must look for no more of them. Despite all the lessons of her great-hearted sons that have already lived, everything is changing in this land.

GHOST OF H. WALKER.

Alas! much for the worse.

GHOST OF A. M'CUBINE.

The national character is fast breaking up. Every thing old is despised: Every thing new is sought after.

GHOST OF E. GORDON.

Here is our Sister Spirit: On this Mount of Communion was I that night, when in the days of her flesh she came to pray upon this holy Table for strength from God: And God gave her strength to go and redeem a sister's life. There are no such deep and solemn beginnings of a work now: The Bible is more and more flung aside, as political pages are more and more read.

GHOST OF A. M'CUBINE.

The clank of machinery is fast drowning the Sabbath psalm.

GHOST OF BURNS.

What next, and in natural generation, from all this? Infidelity. O! fearful vacuum of the human heart! O! what to this are all the darts of that hollow-smiter Death! Cruel, cruel Doubt, quenching in dust the vast life of the heart of the world, with all its hopes! Man—he does a bit of Mammon's work, in the social system, like a well-adjusted, well-oiled wheel; and is then—simply nothing: Woman—why, she sings a song, and dances a measure, and shakes down her long black hair, and feeds an infant, and embroiders a vest with the shining little needles of family love; and then lies down with a clod of the valley in her mouth, and the clay-worm, with its fat purple rings, riots on her smooth cheek—and this is the end of that beautiful thing called a Woman: So says Infidelity. Would I were permitted to speak to the sons of men! Not rashly should it be now, but on contrite knees!

GHOST OF E. GORDON.

Yet how little would you be heard! Many a man now is

wiser in his own eyes than Moses and the Prophets, much more than one rising from the dead. A pert and shallow philosophy has usurped the place of Bible Instruction. Happier far even the days in which we two martyred brethren lived! Less liberty there might be, but chains for the body only made the soul more strong and free. There might be less knowledge, but there was more Belief. And without Heavenly Belief what is man? An empty shell. By Belief the old Worthies of Scotland grew up: And their deeds live embalmed in their own rough salt.

GHOST OF H. WALKER.

If I might speak a little, O! just and eloquent spirits, I would say that the existence of kindred colonies beyond the sea, and the facility with which so many of our children can go thither and find a new way of life, are doing much to break up the national character of Scotland, and make her sons displeased with what she yields them. If a man is in adversity now, instead of fixing his heart on some great pattern of industry, and patience, and faith, in the family of his fathers, he curses his land and leaves it for ever. Exaggerated stories of success in those far climes are kept incessantly floating among our humble people, breeding discontent with their lot, making them careless of everything, and thus totally undoing the old ties of country.

At this moment four other ghosts came gliding onward to the top of the hill. Three came first, side by side. The form in the middle was that of a beautiful virgin, holy sweet of countenance. On one hand of her, was a reverend sire; on the other, a stately yellow-haired youth, in whose face fierce daring was subdued by austere gravity. She that came after the three was a woman of years, in whose aspect, haughty by nature, there was an eager sorrow, like as of one who pursued them, yearning to overtake them, and be reconciled. "My mother!" exclaimed the young man when he reached the Table; and turning round, he let the pursuing woman kiss him, which she did

with a passionate affection. He then smiled upon the damsel, and sunk and vanished below the central stone. And his mother turned, and went on her own way with a pathetic resignation. The other two went also—that reverend father; and that virgin so fair to look upon, radiant creature, whose hair was spun from glory!

"Who are these?" asked Helen Walker.

"If you know their story, tell her, Son of Song," said the Sprite of Gordon.

GHOST OF BURNS.

Philip Ernly was the only son of his widowed mother, and the last hope of a decayed but proud old house. His early youth was wayward and wild, and his mother had little joy in him. Being of a fierce temper, he joined some captains in hunting down the Covenanters in Galloway. In this he was encouraged by his mother, who, having lost her own husband, a High Church Royalist, in the wars of Charles I., hated the Presbyterians with a perfect hatred.

One day young Ernly was smitten down in a fight with a body of the Whigs, and, his own party being routed, he was left for dead in the moorlands. He revived, however, and when consciousness returned, he found himself lying on a couch of heath in a rocky cave, ministered to by a beautiful young damsel. The cavern was thronged with the umbered faces of severe men.

"The worship of the living God has retouched him to life," said a venerable man of milder aspect than the rest, and evidently a Christian pastor: For, in that rude Sanctuary, they had been engaged in praise and prayer.

"He is fit to be removed now," said the Virgin of the Cave, "but it must be done gently. Is the litter ready?"

"And who are you, merciful young one," asked the wounded youth, "who so carest for me?"

"The daughter of the minister who baptised you," answered an austere old patriarch, leaving the damsel herself no time to reply.

"The daughter of that Father in God—look at him

here and tremble!—whom your cruel mother drove from his holy place," answered another still sterner head of the Covenant.

"Your own preserver," replied a third more meekly, "who, seeking our wounded in the wild, found you, our enemy, lying low, and in compassion took you in. May the Grace of God deal with your heart accordingly!"

A rude litter was now brought in, and the wounded cavalier was put into it.

"Just say the word, Sirs," hoarsely whispered one of the men to whom was assigned the task of carrying him; "just say the word, and over the rock he goes, never more to vex the chosen of the Lord!"

"Peace! you know not what manner of spirit you are of!" was the virgin's prompt rebuke. "For His sake who said these gracious words, bear the young man to his mother's house: And O! see you do it softly. There is something good in that face and head."

"Say you so of me?" exclaimed young Ernly faintly.

"God be with you, Philip, my son!" ejaculated the old Pastor, the maiden's father, bowing over the litter. "Little can I say, my heart is so full at seeing you here thus!"

Young Ernly was taken home accordingly. His mind, though coarse and hard, was susceptible of good impressions; and as it was a long time before his wounds were healed, he had leisure for reflection. He rose from his bed at last, softened of heart, determined to protect instead of persecuting his outcast brethren, and clear and strong in this purpose, that no other woman on earth but that Maid of the Cave should be his wife. He sought her accordingly in the wilderness; and when she saw the deep sincerity of his changed spirit, she loved him, and plighted her troth to him. Thus was Mary Hume his betrothed bride.

Wroth and grieved was the Dame of Ernly when she heard of this betrothal. She consulted with Ralph Boyd, a distant kinsman, but who, in male succession, was next heir of entail to Ernly, after her son Philip. Boyd was subtle, cautious, selfish, and coldly cruel. By his advice

and assistance, a relative, high in influence at Court, was made to interest himself in the fortunes of young Ernly, and he got him a good appointment in the army abroad. Philip took it gladly, for he saw that, in the dilapidated state of the family affairs, he could not marry till he had done something for himself. His mother hoped that distance and absence would wean his heart from the poor proscribed Covenanter, Mary Hume. He himself vowed to the maiden that this should never be so: And she believed him: And he was worthy of her trust.

After two years' service abroad, the young soldier got leave of absence to see his mother. Ralph Boyd heard that he was coming; and as he knew that Philip had remained faithful to his love, he feared the marriage might take place immediately. This, for his own selfish ends, Boyd was determined if possible to prevent. Nay, could he but thwart Ernly in this his first but deep and entire devotion of the heart, the chances were that Philip would never love or marry another woman. Full of this calculation, Boyd secretly prevailed on a savage Captain who was stationed in the district for the purpose of keeping down the non-conformists, to seize Mary Hume at once, and have her summarily executed as a recusant Covenanter. "Let this bold stroke be struck," said the treacherous kinsman Boyd to himself, "and Philip Ernly will plunge into some deed of despair, and die; and I am Lord of Ernly. The stroke must be struck ere he reach Scotland."

Thick and sultry was the autumn day when Philip Ernly drew near his father's towers. As he approached the narrow frith that ran up into the woods of his native valley, he saw knots of people and stragglers, with pale and eager faces, and faltering steps, running towards a point on one of its high banks. He made for the same point, and learning from one of the country people what was going on down on the sea-sands below, he sprung like a wild deer into and over the woody face of the bank, tearing his way down through the thick hard-grown stunted copsewood, which the switching salt sea-winds

had shaven up trim and close as with a hedger's bill-hook. He was now on the shingle below. Before him on the sandy beach was a party of dragoons drawn up, facing the tide that was fast flowing in. In that tide was a tall stake, and to that stake was bound a fair young creature: She, Ernly already knew, was his own Mary Hume. The waters were coming up to her neck; her beautiful hair floated dishevelled on the rising swell; but with a sweet clear voice she was singing the psalm,

"Lord, from the depths to thee I cried;"

and a lustre from Heaven shone down upon her. In another minute's space young Ernly had rushed past the soldiers, had dashed into the frith, and had reached the virgin.

"I'm here, Mary!" he exclaimed.

With frantic vehemence he tore at the stake, but could not move it. He tore at the cords that bound her, but could not loose them. The water was now up to her lips.

"One kiss, then, holy virgin!" he said, and kissed her accordingly.

"And now before God, and those earthly witnesses, I take you for my wife." And the youth held up his hands over her in attestation, vow, and prayer.

"My husband, my Philip!" ejaculated the drowning bride, "make for the other side, for they will do thee harm. Weep not for me. Christ go with thee!"

The clouds were now thick and black above; a moaning, whirling wind came out of them; the billows began to rise on the darkened water with white curly manes; and in another minute they were foaming away over that beautiful young Christian head.

A terrible look did Philip Ernly cast out upon that soldiery. They were now galloping and reeling madly about on the sands, for many of them had been made drunk for the merciless occasion. Their sabres glimmered, and their carbines glinted ominously below the cloud. Groans, and cries, and loud lamentations rose from the woody bank behind them; from the rocky shore on the

of a lady was seen there at midnight: So they said. Haunted, indeed, the Mount was: It was mother-haunted. One Sabbath morning the Widow of Ernly was found kneeling on the top of it, her hands clasped together, and her face laid upon that central Table of stone, above her son's dust. She was dead. She had died in the act of prayer.

"You can guess now, O! Sister Shade," added the Appearance of Burns, "that the ghosts we saw here, as they parted, were Philip Ernly and his mother, and Mary Hume and her father. But ha! I smell the breath of morning. Away! away! We shall meet here again."

The two Martyrs, with their Sister Spirit, linked hand in hand, glided away on noiseless feet towards Irongray church-yard. The Ghost of the Bard sprung aloft in another direction; wings of majesty flew out from his shoulders as he went onwards; his form waxed gradually clearer and brighter, till at last he became red as the meteor that ploughs the dark ether of the autumnal night. He closed his wings and descended upon Dumfries.

I felt my eyes dazzled and aching from gazing after the Poet's burning flight; whereupon I awoke, and found I had fallen asleep by the evening fire in my snug little Library. I had turned my face to my lamp; and it was this, and not the fiery flight of the Bard, that had awaked me. The peculiar style of my dream may have been prompted by certain old traditionary things I had seen and heard in Galloway, where I had lately been on a visit. But I could not help smiling at the incongruities of my visionary interlocutors.

CHAPTER X.

SUMMER SAUNTERINGS.

In these late years we certainly have not had the right proportion of those soft-dropping days which marked the Mays of my boyhood—so green, so balmy fresh. The

May of this year has been as dry and dusty as an antiquary; the crimped and downy leaf of the budding beech scarcely ventured from its brown scaly shell; while the ash, always a slow but manly fellow—most gracefully beautiful, however, in his season—stood as grey and sullen as a six weeks' frost. June is now the May of our year; or rather she is

"April and May and June commingled into one:"

so young is she, so tender; and yet so lush and leafy. A few days ago the Sun drove back the frosty clouds,

"And turned his face to the dew-dropping south."

All at once the pith of the year burst out; pleasant to the eye swayed the long heavy saplings; the cows, with their silky spotted sides as sleek as butter, waded ankle-deep in the flowery grass; frogs jumped about; and black snails had their evening walks.

Who does not remember the caustic denouncement by Sterne of the cant of criticism? Were it merely as a symptom of affectation in the individual who uses it, most richly would it still deserve the scorn of Shandy; but when we see it blighting and blasting Literature and the Fine Arts, as it has so often done, it deserves still less to be spared. The cant of criticism has been especially pernicious in the fine department of painting. Nothing but the "Old Masters" will go down with a certain set of monomaniacs, who would give any sum for a piece of spurious canvass, palmed off upon their ignorance on the banks of the Tiber or the Arno, while they would turn up their noses at a piece of genuine inspiration on the banks of the Thames or the Tweed. This mania, then, has fulfilled the double office of evil, by leading to the admiration of much trash, merely because it was foreign and passed for old, and by leading to an equal undervaluing of what was good, merely because it was new and of home production—thereby leading to a great discouragement of our native painters. From this cause, and from other circumstances, "the serene and silent Art" has of late been too much neglected in this country; and though Wilkie, and Allan, and Thom-

son have produced things that will live for ever in their immortal beauty, they have hardly yet convinced the country of the possibility and the policy of reviving the genius of the "Old Masters" in her own gifted sons, simply by yielding them a due share of her praise and her patronage. Two or three years ago, this beautiful Art in Scotland seemed near its extinction. Not that we had not a few worthies whose fame was imperishable, and a few devoted young men whom no neglect could keep down; but, upon the whole, so cold was the cloud of neglect under which the Art was kept, that gradually every star of enthusiasm must have gone out alone, without lending from its golden urn new light to new luminaries. It was pitiful to see so many fine ardent young men haunting all the summer the regions of Beauty, by hill, and sliding stream, and ancient wood, and "chasms and watery depths," and grey eldritch ruins nodding to the moon; and presenting next spring on the walls of the Scottish Academy their composite dreams of loveliness to a country which carelessly admired, and bought nothing at all. Now, however, our Associations for the Encouragement of Painting are changing the state of matters altogether. Our young artists are stimulated to unusual exertions by the proud consciousness that their meritorious labours can no longer be overlooked or unrewarded; while the circumstance, that many pictures are yearly finding their way into every province of the country, is tending still more widely to diffuse a love of this divine Art, and is thus more than renewing the patronage by which our own native Muse of Painting shall for ever be upheld. Full of the buoyant confidence drawn from this new order of things, I have been happy to meet this summer, in our valley, many a young artist in quest of the Beautiful; and being something of a sketcher myself, every such meeting has been very much to my mind. "My lines have fallen to me in pleasant places." Sweet are our shy sequestered nooks of rural beauty. Nothing have we here of the portraiture of Nature in her savage and tempest-hurried aspects; nothing of that extent of landscape which, in its far reaches of serene diffusion, fills

the mind with something even beyond a sense of the Beautiful, swelling almost into the Sublime of endless repose, as we see in the ineffable pictures of Claude Lorraine. But we have shrubby rock; and tree-fringed waterfall; and sleeping pool; and herds of cattle sauntering with glittering horns through the far-in sunny glades of the old birchen wood, with its white thwarting stems; and antlers peeping from the sylvan puzzle; and homeless gipsies in grassy lane, or on heathy common, in the clear smokeless air o' the summer morning, following the panniered asses with their swarthy brood; and low lonely mill; and simple cottage, by ferny hill or flowery shaw; and every thing quiet and picturesque in the most bashful retirements of Beauty. Rich particularly are our autumnal afternoons, when the Sun, the great Archer and Painter, has laid aside his fierce summer arrows, and assumed rather his glorious palette, sending down, from among and behind the flushing clouds, falling lights of ineffable softness on dappled hills, and groves touched "with illumined ravishment." And thus I dwell in green and quiet places, dear to that

> "Soul-soothing Art, which morning, noontide, even,
> Do serve with all their changeful pageantry."

I am quite a boy still as to birds' nests, taking great delight in finding them, and in visiting them from time to time, to see how they get on. My morning walk generally takes me round the whole set of them. What with corbies, cats, weasels, magpies, owls, and boys herding cows and cuddies, sorry am I to say that eighty per cent. of all the nests I know are harried. I find the yellow-hammer, or yorling, still the prevailing bird, notwithstanding the murderous prejudice which exists against it in Scotland:

> "Half a paddock, half a toad,
> Half a yellow yorling,
> Cries for a drap o' the deil's bluid
> Every Monday morning:"

Harmless as this doggrel verse may appear, and composed though it probably was by some silly nursery-maid, it has been death to tens of thousands of poor yorlings.

In virtue of it the boys, in many parts of Scotland, think they are doing God service in harrying and spangwhewing the gorlings of the pretty yellow-hammer. Its melancholy note, as it sits in a listless, ruffled, drowsy heap on the branch, and the bloody-looking spots and streaky threads on its eggs, are strong confirmations to the boy of its unholy appetite. Still, our yorlings abound.

Sallying forth in the dewy morning, I generally take up the meadow, making for the dizzying shimmer of the moist black mill-wheel through its beard of spray, seen far up in the side of the valley. How rich that carpet of green sward, blent with yellow buttercups and white daisies! Better even than the ingenious Hay, does Nature know the laws of harmonious colouring; and so let every man who wishes to be a student of this Art, at once Useful and Fine, take his lessons in the unmolested wildernesses of tangled bloom, where Nature plays at will her unpruned virgin fancies. Sauntering up the thorny primrose brae, how bracing to get upon the whinny common, with its plots of close-nibbled aromatic sward clouded with purple wild-thyme, and spotted white with close-sticking fungous balls—to be rotten dun smoky dust, in shrivelled skinny bladders, beneath the crushing foot of Autumn. Then rest thee awhile by the Butter Well, watching its mackarel-coloured glimmerings; and the little cones of sand in its bottom, ever made and unmade before the upbubbling mouths of its many-veined feeding springs; and the black little beetles, silver-glancing as, half-turned on their edge, they dart athwart its glassy depths; and the "water-clearers" on the top ever shooting inwards from the broad-bladed grass, heavy with pearly drops, which keeps its brink so cold and fresh. From the Butter Well pass we over to the burn, and saunter up the woody glen to our Linn which, besides the roaring, is otherwise also a "lion" in its way. Here a curious and unsuspected revelation of some green fairy nook, with its central rock fringed with lady-fern, and overhung with the pensile boughs of hazel and sweet-breathed birch; there an opening glade, with its banks of glistening woods hanging far up in the still

sunshine, and dipping their green feet in the crystal stream that slides away below; anon a gorge of rifted rocks, where the struggling waters, working in the very spirit of the grotesque and the terrible, have eaten their tortured way for centuries, and now boil, and howl, and hiss far down in their cold sunless chasms, leaving above them the memorial of their eddying toil for ages, in the jagged snouts and monstrous horns of the wave-cleft rocks that butt at each other near from side to side with their cold black furrowed brows, fringed with drooping ferns and ever-dripping mosses; and lastly, surmounting the whole, a very pretty cascade—such is our Linn. Let those who love to see the "silver lining" of the Beautiful drawn over the dark of the Terrible, stand especially one hour of moonlight in that cold and stunning hall of stone, which looks from above to the "Seat" below, and see the moonlight, faint as a dream, fall with many a silvering touch on the black and haggard sides of that aisle of living stone, and, spilling far down its lapsing gleams, kiss with restless flickerings the foamy neck of the thundering torrent that, rioting like a maniac far beneath in its sunken bed, smites the throbbing rocks.

What a sultry dimness in the sunny noon, "dark with excessive bright!" How quiet our Village! Yonder grey old beggar, the last remnant of the American war, tottering mealily from door to door, deepens, instead of disturbing the repose. So do yon band of gipsies from Yetholm, loitering on the Village green, with their pottery ware drawn up in glistening battalions and hollow squares; their patch-eyed bull-terrier, and wire-haired grew, sleeping in the sun beside them; their tame jackdaw standing on one leg, a snipped and serrated collar of scarlet cloth round his neck, his head set a-cock, and the film drawn over one eye, half in listlessness, and half in the meditation of mischief; and their horse and donkeys depasturing in the distance: Curly freckled imps are fighting in the panniers; the grown-up son is making a besom; the grown-up daughter, black but comely, plump and ripe, is making a dinner; the mother is stuffing a sack with parti-

coloured rags; the father lies outstretched on his back, his right hand idle in his hairy bosom, his hat, bedizened with a pipe and a peacock's feather, drawn down over his face to shield him from the vertical sun, and his whole animal economy sunk and simmering in thick gross sleep. A shy and taciturn tribe they are: Not even do their children, by the usual free-masonry of nature, ever consort and play with the children of the Village.

As we grow old, everything in this world seems to be degenerating. The scaur over which, in my boyhood, I thought no man could pass without being "gathered to his fathers" in the most literal sense of the scriptural expression (being dashed to pieces), seems to me now a very trifling affair; the river beneath is shrunk to a streamlet; and the salmon in it is below *par*. I was going to add that the very thunder had come down in the gamut, and that its lightning could no longer sourly lord it even over a keg of "that poor creature, small beer;" when all at once the disparaged element begged to be heard in its own defence. *Peccavi! O! Boanerges, peccavi!* What an evening we had of it last week! Scarcely could the jaws of Night, opening with her black gulfy mouth over the southern hills, devour back the lightnings which she kept belching incessantly forth. Never did I see such a revelation of fire in my mortal years. Sublime it was and beautiful beyond words. From east to west the whole heavens opened up every minute in one wide blaze; with zig-zag veins of intensest blue scribbling it up and down; and falling "blobs" of fire, like Roman candles, relieved against the crimson, or faint lilac flag of flame, that filled the world with its momentary wavings. The East blew great mouthfuls of fire upon the West, the West blew it back upon the East. And then there were streams and cataracts of conflagration, and I don't know what all; and —and—where am I at? Faith I scarcely know: It was a comely night, that's all:

> "And this is in the night: most glorious night!
> Thou wert not sent for slumber; let me be
> A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
> A portion of the tempest and of thee!"

Had not the levin flashed me out of all method, I should have begun by saying that the first big drops, preluding the thunder, fell about six o'clock in the evening. Then came the thunder itself, and kept rolling away at intervals for hours. But the lightning was the flower of the flock. Though, probably, the farmer will give the palm (well-freshened) to the rain which has watered his thirsty pasture-lands, and will help to "publish" his barley, and swell his potatoes, and make his turnips cock. The weather, before the thunder, was grim and sweltering as "the hot breath of a lion's den."

"Noon gleamed on the lake, noon glowed on the fell."

What a sultry haze on the hills! What a crackling of whins on the sun-dried braes! What a wiping of travellers' brows in the close sandy lanes! Cows and children took to the rivers. The grasshopper pittered for a moment, and then was dumb. But now the air is cool, serene, and beautiful.

We have established an Archers' Club in our dale, and really it gives us a very pretty and pleasant pastime. Who can ever forget that beautiful description in "The Betrothed," of a party of fair ladies hawking? Many such a dream have I had; but never have I seen the graceful reality, and probably never will, as this ancient sport seems for ever, like one of its own haggards, "whistled down the wind." No matter: I have lived to see the growing revival of a sport more beautiful still; for certainly of all pictures set in sweet accompaniments ("apples of gold in pictures of silver"), that of a mingled party of archers, ladies and their knights, in a green meadow at the golden sunset of the summer-tide, is the very finest that man can see. Not so varied, perhaps, as the attitudes of the human body in skating, those displayed in archery are, if possible, more exquisitely graceful; while they admit the boldness —say the sublimity—of intense precision, which cannot be marked off in the naturally round, sweeping, and sinuous play of skating. I say sublimity of the bowyer's attitudes; and any one who has seen Ducrow in the

Egyptian Archer, or the statue of the Delphian Archer-god,

"Who trod the impalpable and burning sky,"

lightnings in his eye,

"And in his nostril beautiful disdain,"

will readily grant the term sublimity. But let not my fair friends think the exercise is therefore all too bold for them; for, as I said before, it is also exquisitely graceful; and a beautiful lady clad in green, tossing back her ringlets as she steps forward to let loose her shaft, and then slightly bent forward in radiant expectation, or perhaps shading her brow with her hand the better to watch the flight of her arrow, is beautiful indeed. Such is archery in itself. And then it is associated to us with the picturesque days of the olden time, Robin Hood and the greenwood tree, and Chevy Chace, when Percy rued his vow—

"His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer days to take."

So, belt thee, Beauty, and join us. Of course, the Blind Archer Boy will come with thee, and "spare no arrows." Let our young members look to it, who take from thee the perfume of "Cytherea's breath." For myself, a poor old "slippered pantaloon," I must be content, in a colder vein, to see thee

"Such as Diana by the sandy shore
Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus green."

Amen—since it may not be otherwise now!

After tea, I again betake myself to my Library, where the London papers are handed in to me. I confess myself one of those who read them from beginning to end, finding the character of John Bull in every thing—even in the advertisements, and lists of latest patents. Soho! what have we here? Wo! wo! the Last of the Milkmaids.

"Will ye gang to the ewe-bughts, Marion?"—*Burns.*
"And the milkmaid singeth blithe."—*Milton.*
"I've heard the lilting at our ewes' milking."—*Flowers of the Forest.*

All very pretty and sweet in its day—or rather its gloaming—this lilting and singing by bught and loaning, but

its end draws nigh. First went the age of Chivalry, yet leaving Burke (which was something) to pronounce its funeral oration. The age of the Picturesque is following fast. Parnassus has been taken by a Joint-Stock Company of Graziers, to feed goats and asses. The Fairy Queen is dead; shrouded in a yard of cotton stuff made by the spinning-jenny, and by that other piece of new improved machinery, *the souls and bodies of British children*, for which DEATH alone holds the patent; and buried under an iron safe to save her sweet body from the scientific surgeons. The Utilitarians have carried the day, and their age draws on to its prime. The very milkmaids are doomed: Their "occupation's gone": Their song must give place to a screw: They perish by a piece of machinery: To the "Last of the Goths," the "Last of the Mohicans," the "Last Man," and the "Last Rose of Summer," we must now add the "Last of the Milkmaids"—though she too is the "Last Rose of Summer"—and not a poet is left in this prosaic age to dirge her departure. Lasses on a thousand hills, sorry am I to submit to you the following odious announcement from a late list of English patents:—

"William Blurton of Field Hall, Stafford, gentleman, for an improved method of, and apparatus for, extracting milk from cows and other animals."

Shade of Theocritus, only think of this! The rosy fingers of Cicely Sweetheart superseded by an apparatus! An apparatus, too, not for milking, but for "*extracting milk!*" What a phrase! What a harsh unspontaneous phrase! From cows and "*other animals!*" Tigresses, I presume, not excepted; as doubtless Mr Blurton must have drawn and drunk the hot milk of the tigress, ere he could find in his heart to make war on the Queen of Curds and Cream. He a "*gentleman*," and yet seek to curtail the glories of Dorothy Draggletail! The "milk of human kindness" cannot be in his composition: Hard must his heart be as an old Dutch cheese. No more in the dim gloaming of the fresh summer-tide, shall the village lads leave their quoits and putting-stone on the dewy green,

and sneakingly draw to the stile beyond which is the "smell of dairy," and the streaming sound of the milking pail, and the rough cropping tongues of the feeding kine that on the "knot-grass dew-besprent"

"Their audible supper take."

No more shall Cupid clap his little wings as he hops from horn to horn of the patient cow, from beyond whose strutted udder looks the laughing face of Peggy, blown and blooming like a peony-rose, as she shoots a glance and a word at Patie, that make his ears tingle, and almost knock him from the stile where half blate, half forward, he waits to hand over the heavy pail, and—something better. Off goes the Boy-god at the sound of the screws of Mr Blurton's apparatus, and takes refuge in the barley-mow. But how in all the world is this apparatus to be fixed and applied? I presume the smith of the village is to be Milker-General of the parish kine. But a truce to this trifling. Mr Blurton may burn his machinery. Does he really think that his scheme will go down the throat of the public, like curds and cream in their season? We shall have a rebellion of the milkmaids ere his plan be allowed to put living fingers to flight, and Deborah Draw-nipple be brought to a discount. We have no doubt the Staffordshire lasses have already hoisted the churn-staff, and wo to Mr Blurton! As in the battles of Ossian, the ghosts of a thousand Strephons, led on by the Gentle Shepherd, shall swell the fray against him; and once more the "bouncing Amazons" shall be victorious. Well for Mr Blurton that the Bull of Phalaris roars only in the Mythology. But they will drown him in goat-whey, or squeeze him to death in a cheese-press.

One of my latest evening recreations, is to hear sister Mary sing one or two of our old Scottish songs. Her voice is somewhat cracked and shrill; but her heart is in the thing, and that's enough for me. How perfectly the same in their character are the precious old ballads of Scotland, and her old national airs. Could any man give us the literary history of those ballads, what a curious

revelation it would be. Many, or most of them, I doubt not, might be traced to men who were no poets at all in the ordinary sense of the term; but who, overburdened with some weight of feeling, could contain themselves no longer, and found a vent for their hearts in some rude but passionate rhyme, every phrase of which became "a motto of the heart" to a whole community of equal sympathies, and so was not likely to perish. The varied fortunes of the Scottish people; their clanship and Border wars; their deep religious feeling; their pastoral simplicities; their singular Fairy mythology; and, in later times, their loyal but unfortunate devotion to the House of Stewart, with all its issues of heroic pity for the Chevalier, and gloomy indignation against the House of Hanover,—in all these we have the surest natural elements of a remarkable body of national song. To the same strongly impulsive origin may easily be referred our old Scottish music, with its deep and ineffaceable stamps of peculiarity. The only wonder in this case is, who had the art to embody the national feeling in a composition so difficult as that of music. To Rizzio have been ascribed many of our ancient melodies; but very foolishly, I think: For what sympathy could a soft refined Italian have with the spirit of old Scotland, rude in all things—her pastoral life, her indignation, her triumph, her dirge? I could sooner believe that such melodies were never composed at all, but were breathed forth from the unseen Genius of the Land, by moor, or glen, or stormy cairn, and caught by the ear and heart of half-dreaming inspired shepherd, and fixed in his soul for ever, thence again to be given out as a legacy to fire or soften his countrymen throughout all the generations of the future, never forgetful of the "Auld Scottish Glory." Whatever may be the origin of our Scottish music, its rare value is now universally admitted; and it will remain throughout all time as a body of melody more distinctly expressive of the varied genius of the people among whom it sprung, or, in other words, more intensely national, than any other body of music to which human hearts have listened.

After our simple family devotions are over, I usually

saunter forth to see the night. How still the stillness of the midsummer evening! The villagers are all a-bed. The last tremblings of the curlew's wild bravura have just died away over the distant fells into the dim and silent night. Nothing is now heard but the momentary hum of the beetle wheeling past, and, softened in the distance, the *craik* of the rail from the thick dewy clover of the darkening valley. The bat is also abroad, and the heavy moths, and the owl musing over the corn fields; but, instead of breaking, they only solemnize the stillness. The antique houses of the hamlet stand as in a dream, and the trees gathered round the embowered church as in a swooning trance. In such a night and in such an hour, the church bell, untouched of mortal hands, has been heard to toll drowsily. I feel a softening and sinking of the spirit; and hear the beating of my heart as if I were afraid of something, I know not what, just about to come out of the yawning stillness. Hurriedly I glide into the house, and bolt the door. And, when I lie down and compose myself on my bed, the fears of death creep over me.

CHAPTER XI.

A VILLAGE TRAGEDY.

A YOUNG man of the name of Edgar, the son of a farmer, not far from our Village, betrayed to shame a girl of the name of Agnes Redford, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. He would have married the injured maiden; but in this he was determinedly opposed by her relatives, and especially by her only brother, betwixt whom and Edgar an inveterate hostility had, from various causes, been growing up since their earliest boyhood. Upon this Edgar left his home, and went abroad. After remaining some years in foreign parts, he returned to Scotland, and proposed staying in Edinburgh a week or two before going to his native county. While there, he went one evening to the house of a young man, originally from the same district with himself. Scarcely had he taken his seat in his

friend's little parlour, when Agnes Redford's brother entered. Recognising Edgar, he advanced to him with a face black with wrath, and denouncing him as a villain, declared he would not sit in his company for a moment; and, to make good his declaration, he turned on his heel and left the house. The violent spirit of Edgar was stung to madness by this insult, which was aggravated by the fact that two or three young men, some of them strangers to him, were present. He sprung up; craved their leave for a moment that he might follow and call Mr Redford back; and sallying out of the house, without his hat, overtook his aggressor on the street, tapped him on the shoulder, and thus addressed him with a grim smile:—"Come now, my good friend, I must have you back, gently to unsay me a word or two. With your leave now! Come! Come, Sir, or by all that's fixed, this night your blood shall wash out the imputation!"

"This hour—this very minute of mortal time," replied Redford in a hoarse compressed whisper, "my soul craves to grapple with you, and put our mutual affair to a mortal arbitrement. Hark ye, Edgar, you are a stranger in this city, I presume, and cannot reasonably be expected to provide yourself easily with a second; moreover, who would second such a villain? Now, will you follow me this moment to my lodgings, and accept from my hand one of a pair of pistols; and then let us, without further formality, retire to a convenient place, and there do ourselves a pleasure and a justice? I am a-weary of living under the same sun with you; and if I can shed your foul blood beneath yonder chaste stars of night, I would willingly die for it the next moment. Dare you follow me—and quickly, before those fellows think of looking after us?"

To Edgar's boiling heart of indignation it was no hard task to follow, and Redford's proposal was immediately carried into execution. I must notice particularly, that, as the parties were about to leave Redford's house, a letter was put into Redford's hand. Observing that it was from his mother, and bore the outward notification of mourning, he craved Edgar's permission to read it, which he did

with a twinkling in his eye, and a working as of deep grief in the muscles of his face; but in a minute he violently crushed the letter, put it in his pocket, and turning anew to his opponent said grimly, "I think we are all ready now." And now I shall only state generally that, within an hour from the first provocation of the evening, this irregular duel was settled, and left Redford shot through the body by his antagonist. No sooner did Edgar see him fall than horror and remorse seized him; he ran to the prostrate youth and attempted to raise him up; but durst not offer pity or ask forgiveness, though his heart panted to do it. The wounded man rejected his assistance, waving him off, and thus faintly said:—"Now, mine enemy! I will tell you—that you may sooner feel the curse of God, which shall for ever cling to you round about—that letter from my mother which you saw me read, informed me of the death of that sister Agnes whom I loved so much, and who—Oh God!—never recovered from your villany! And my heart-broken father, he too must perish forsooth, and all for you! And he perished. Off, fiend! nor mock me! You shall not triumph so! You shall not see me die!" So saying, the wounded youth, who was lying on his back, with his pale writhen features upturned, and now dimly seen in the twilight, threw himself round with a convulsive effort, and pressed the ground with his face. In a fearful agony stood Edgar, wringing his hands, not knowing whether again to attempt raising his victim, or to run to the city for a surgeon. The former he at length did, and found no resistance, for alas! Redford was dead. The appearance of two or three individuals now making towards the bloody spot, which was in the suburbs of the town, and to which, in all probability, they were drawn by the report of the pistols, roused Edgar for the first time to a sense of his own danger. He left the ground, dashed through the fields, and, without distinctly calculating his route, instinctively turned towards his native district. By and bye he began to consider what course of procedure he should follow, and resolved at last to go straight to his friends in the South of Scotland,

and, after having made one or two necessary arrangements with them, seek the nearest seaport, and try to escape to America. The moon by this time was up, and lighted him on his way. But there was no peace to his heart. The cold glittering leaves on the trees, struck with a momentary gust as he passed, made him start and look about; and the shadowy foot and figure of the midnight lover, coming round from the back window of the lonely cottage, was to his alarmed apprehension the avenger of blood at hand. As he looked far along the glittering road, the black fir trees upon the edge of the moor were like men coming running down to meet him; and the baying of the watch-dog, and the distant hoof of the traveller's horse, heard now and then as he listened, seemed all in the way of pursuit and vengeance. Morning came, and to the weary fugitive, as he left the road and struck into the open country, was agreeably grey and soft; but the sun arose upon him in the forenoon, shining from between the glassy glistering clouds with far greater heat than he does from a pure blue sky. Edgar had now crossed many a broad acre of the weary moorlands, when he came to a long morass which barred his straightforward way. He was fain to drink here from a dull pool overgrown with paddockpipe, and black with tadpoles. He then threw himself down on the sunny side of some long reeds, and fell fast asleep.

He was awakened by the screaming of lapwings, and the noise of a neighbouring bittern; and felt himself oppressed with a throbbing headach, and with nausea, caused, no doubt, by anxiety of mind and bodily fatigue, and by the sun's having beat upon him while he lay asleep. He arose; but finding himself quite unable to pursue his way, he again threw himself down on a small airy brow of land to get what breeze might be stirring abroad. There were several patches of people at work digging peats in the moss, and one party now sat down very near him to their dinner. One of them, a young woman, had passed so close to him as to be able to guess from his countenance that he was unwell; and in a few minutes she came to

him with some food, of which, to satisfy her kindness rather than his own hunger, he ate a little. The air changed in the afternoon, and streaming clouds of hail crossed over that wild country; yet he lay still. Party after party left the moss, and yet he was there. He made indeed a show of leaving the place at a quick step, to disappoint the fears of the people who had seen him at noon, and who, as they again came near to gather up their clothes, were evidently perplexed on his account, which they showed, by looking first towards him, and then at each other. It was all he could do to get quite out of their sight beyond a little eminence, and there once more he lay down in utter prostration of mind and body. Twilight began to darken upon the pools of that desolate place. There, however, poor Edgar still lay; and he lay all the night. At dawn he arose somewhat better, and went on. In the afternoon he had reached our Village, and was passing through it, when, being thirsty, he entered a cottage to get a draught of water. There was a hushed solemnity in the little apartment into which, with the familiarity of Scottish villages, he did not hesitate to enter; and observing the face of the clock covered up with a white napkin, he knew by this token that there was death in the house. A kind-looking elderly woman whispered in his ear, as she gave him a porringer of water with a little oatmeal sprinkled on it, that the only daughter of the house, a fine young woman, was lying "a-corpse." Without noticing his presence, and indeed with her face half hid in her hand, her elbow leaning on her knee, and drawing occasionally a heavy sigh, sat another elderly female, whom Edgar took for the bereaved mother of the damsel. After lingering a moment in the sacred quiet of the house of mourning, he turned to go out, and was met in the narrow passage which led to the door by a man with the coffin, on the lid of which he read, as it was pushed up to his very face, "AGNES REDFORD, aged 22." His heart was smitten cold. With knees trembling against each other, he tried to pass, but could not for want of room; and as the coffin was not to be withdrawn in accommoda-

tion to him, he was forced to go back again into the interior of the cottage. The afflicted mother raised her head at the hollow sound of the coffin, as it grated against the walls of the narrow entrance; and observing Edgar, she started up with a piercing look of recognition. "Take him away—take him away," she cried, as she pressed her face down on a bed covered with white linen, beneath which the outstretched form of her dead child was seen to lie. Edgar stood aghast. Here was the mother of the maiden whom he had destroyed, driven from the home of her better days into the humblest dwelling of poverty, probably from his own first stab to the peace of her family. Moreover, he was fearfully conscious of another bloody wo which he had just brought down on that poor mother's heart, though as yet she knew nothing of it. Staggering and reeling, he turned to depart; but the strength of nature failed him, and he fell on the floor. He was raised up, but was evidently in some severe fit. The surgeon was at hand, and came. As it was impossible to remove the unfortunate youth from the house in his present state, he was lifted into a bed in another small apartment. There he lay delirious, in a burning fever, with some violent inflammatory action about the brain; and there, in the necessity of circumstances, he must continue to lie.

Agnes Redford was buried next day, that is to say, the day after Edgar took ill in her mother's house. Mrs Redford was a right-minded woman; and, whatever her feelings towards Edgar might be, she ministered to him in his alarming illness, and gave every accommodation in her power to his relatives, who, being informed of his situation, had to be in her house to wait upon him. They were very desirous to have him removed, but it could not yet be done. In every interval of his delirium the unhappy young man kept asking, "Am I in her house?—Is he come yet?" evidently referring to the coming of Redford's body. And, when any stir was heard in the main apartment of the cottage, he raised himself half up, and, with features sharpening thin, listened with intense

eagerness. The Tragedy deepened and darkened. Intelligence was brought to Mrs Redford of her son's death, and the circumstances under which he was killed; and by and bye his body was brought home to her in its coffin, ready for the grave. Wo's me for this new childless widow! Who may tell her hour and power of sorrow! As for Edgar, so morbidly acute was his ear, in the expectancy of his haunted spirit, that he heard the bringing in of the coffin; and he cried out, "That's he! He is come!" It was dreadful to hear him. And he trembled so violently, that his bed shook under him. To aggravate if possible the dismal affair, the officers of justice had traced the man-slayer, and were now waiting the chance of his recovery, in order to seize him. Young Redford was buried next day beside his sister Agnes. It was proposed by Edgar's relatives that the day following they should remove him to where they dwelt, about a couple of miles off; and the medical adviser, on being made acquainted with some of the very peculiar circumstances of the case, gave his consent that it should be done. It was destined to be otherwise. That very night, as Mrs Redford was sitting by her fireside, her head bowed to her breast, in the profound depth of a sorrow which had no utterance, and with a female neighbour or two sitting beside her, in the dim and silent house, the door of the chamber was opened, and Edgar, who had been left for a little while alone, in consequence of his having to all appearance fallen into a deep sleep, was seen coming in with some of his clothes on, his countenance the countenance of death, at once wildered and eager-bent. Ere the horror-stricken women could rise up, he half fell and half flung himself at Mrs Redford's feet. "Pardon! pardon! pardon!" This was his piercing cry, and he kissed with passionate vehemence the feet of the poor woman whom he had injured so grievously. She clasped her hands when she saw him, gave a shriek, and fainted away. Help was soon got. Edgar had died on the spot. Mrs Redford recovered from her swoon. But she walked

softly the few remaining days of her mortal life, and went bowing down to the grave. She died within a year after the death of her children.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR VILLAGE CHILDREN.

In its beautiful combination of the natural, the moral, and the Christian, no sight to me is sweeter than the baptism of children. The cordiality of the assistant maidens; the blushing, downcast, fond happiness of the recovered and thankful mother; the manly earnestness of the father, conscious that the weight of duty lies with him, and standing forth in the eye of God and man to take it solemnly upon him; the white-robed babe gently moved in his arms, its face upheld to Christ, many little dimplings thereon—the first instinctive motions of the mysterious spirit within, and its half-closed blue young eyes moistly gleaming; the pure symbolical water, taking the heart away to the Blood of Calvary; the holy servant of the living God sprinkling it, in cleansing emblem; and the impressed attention of the deeply sympathising people,—all this hallows and endears to us the gracious sacrament of admitting another new-born lamb of life into the fold of the Good Shepherd. I saw lately two peculiar varieties of baptism, still more touching than the usual mode of the ordinance. In one of the cases, the widowed mother, whose husband had died before the birth of her child, held up the infant herself, and took the vows upon her. It was very affecting. In the other instance, the father was on his death-bed when his babe was born. He desired to have it baptized before he died, and the holy rite was hastened on accordingly. The mother would not be gainsaid in the matter; but strengthening herself as with a supernatural strength, she left her own apartment to be present with her husband on the solemn occasion. She herself put their infant into his arms. Lying on his back he held it across his bosom in the bed, till the sacrament was finished.

When he moved his head in token that he took the vows upon him (ah!—"should God spare his life"), I saw that young mother, pale as death from child-bed, and standing as she was on the very verge of widowhood, yet composed and still, almost awful in her beauty of holiness, bow her head also, reverentially conscious that she was one with her husband in all things; that, his spirit being just about to depart, the vows were in truth laid upon her; and that she took them upon herself accordingly. The dying father then kissed his child, and murmured a blessing upon it, naming its name, as it was taken from him by his wife; and, with his dim glazed eyes still fondly following them, he yielded up the ghost. It is in scenes like these, in lowly cottages, that the best points of the Scottish character are fairly brought out.

In almost every case of disease gradually leading to death, there is (as I have already remarked) a perfect resignation in the sufferer. Children show this holy contentedness even more than those of mature life; often displaying at the same time an intelligence about spiritual things which is altogether extraordinary, being more like a direct instillation of wisdom from the gracious Spirit above, than the natural result of early instruction and precocious apprehension. Wonderful things do these dying bairns say. I have seen this strikingly exemplified, of late, in a little boy, the only child of a poor widow who lives near our Village. Dependent from his earliest infancy on her industry, he had to be much alone in his childhood, both at home, and lying wrapped up in some warm corner of the field, while she was busy working for him. A patient composure grew up in him accordingly, and being one of those natures that won't spoil even by a mother's great fondness, he was early wise and good. The poor little fellow is now pining away, conscious that he is so, and quite intelligent about the future world, and all the while soothing his mother by his holy sayings. I saw him the other day, and noticed for the first time in his face a strong resemblance to his grandfather, whom I had known. A family likeness often misses a generation or two, and re-

appears in a new generation of descendants; and whether it be that the attenuation of decay, and the earnestness of suffering, bring down the plump happy round of the young face somewhat nearer to the meagre lineaments of old age, I have often observed dying children become more and more like their grandfathers. So was it with the boy of whom I am speaking. And there lay the dear child, pale and meek, palm to palm on his patient bosom; often looking down and wondering at his little feet almost touching the bottom of his bed—for, as his mother more than once remarked to me, "he had shot out" since he lay down.

The coming in of children's games in their respective seasons is like the coming of the swallows—instinctively, all at once, nobody knows how. There blows the March wind, licking up the moisture of the earth; and there go the "bools" and the "peeries," just as of yore, without the slightest pre-arrangement among the callants. And the same of other sports. I find the games of the children here just as they were in my boyhood, save that they seem to me to be less vigorously pursued than of old. But age has aye this trick of undervaluing the present. There is a complete deficit, however, in one great department of amusement; I mean the telling of stories about witches, brownies, fairies, kelpies, bogles, wraiths, ghosts, and all their fraternity, with the omens of magpies, hirpling hares, and so forth. The great Belief of our grandmothers is fairly *hors de combat* before the birch of the "Schoolmaster." Even the Comet is "no go" now-a-days in anything but literal speed of travel: Not an urchin but can tell you from his "Lessons on Objects" all about the very harmless Peripatetic: As for the "pestilence and war" which of old he was supposed to shake from his "horrid hair," the Mistress of the Boarding-school has fairly combed them out; and her young monkeys of minxes, having first of all playfully Mesmerised the hairy gentleman, have done up those flaming locks of his in curling-papers torn from the *Penny Magazine*, and have put the old dotard of Prophetic Danger fairly a-bed.

There is thus far less fear in boyhood now-a-days, but thus also there is far less of that stimulating food which nourishes so well the great imaginative faculty. Mad dogs still keep their place, however. Nay, the decay of the thin Supernaturals has left our friend *Rabies* in spicier stimulus than ever to the prurient fancy of fear-fascinated childhood. *Query*—does this account for the unusually great number of cases of hydrophobia which we have had of late years? In the entertainment drawn from light reading, how great are the facilities in the present day, compared with the resources of village children when I was a boy! Chambers' cheap publications are in every house now. And yet I often think the very abundance of books injures by cloying the young appetite of curiosity. The sharpest and boldest intellects are those which have been sparingly nurtured, and not crammed with books in childhood. O! for the days when Jamie Mabon visited our Village twice a-year with his basket of "A Pennyworth of Wit," "Sleeping Beauty," "The Fisherman's Garland," "George Buchanan," "John Cheap, the Chapman," "Tam Hickathrift," (a monstrous strong chap), "Leper the Tailor," "Sinbad," "Aladdin," "Jack the Gaint-killer, the "Seven Champions of Christendom," and so on through the whole of that dear old library of pamphlet worthies! There's Chambers for you, and all the Cheap Chapmen (except Jock)—give me back Jamie and his Basket! And look how the same thing works in producing literature. The very facilities of publication in newspapers and magazines which the young men of the present day have, is one main cause of so much triviality in our modern writings. Our authorlings pitch upon a certain current key at once; and wanting the sustenance of quiet, deep, patient, and maturing meditation, they seldom get beyond their first early clevernesses. How different the state of matters in the bold fresh era of Queen Elizabeth, for instance! Not a dramatist of that wonderful age but, girded up in the silent struggles of self-conscious self-relying genius, came out all at once upon the world with some terrible tragedy, rioting in the very lust of

power: No smooth Album verses, no precocious stanzas in the Poet's Corner of newspapers heralded the way of that tremendous Brotherhood: Not a man of them but burst out (as some one said of Swift) like the Irish Rebellion, forty thousand strong.

The parish schools of Scotland are not quite what they ought to be, and what they might easily be made, were the teachers better paid, and the standard of qualifications raised; but upon the whole they are wonderfully well. Let the system be improved, but not materially changed. Of all the pompous follies which this pragmatical age has given birth to, I detest and fear none so much as the bringing together of large masses of our British children into overgrown schools, for the purpose of what is called intellectual and moral training. "If a principle is good for anything," says Benjamin Franklin, "go through with it." Let us go through with this principle of modern education: Let us take for granted that what is good in any one case, is good in all: Let us suppose the whole of our British youth taught in such a manner, and where is the man that would bless himself for the result? Nay, lives there the man who would venture on such an experiment? Were it tried, we should miss a generation of men. For now I come to my point. The question by no means admits of demonstration; but, if I know human nature at all, I make bold to say that, instead of a society of men, indomitable lovers of freedom, ardent and enthusiastic, and blent into one harmonious whole from every variety and contrast of individual character, we should, by the discipline referred to, have a country of pedants—call them not men!—tame and dull as a Dutch canal; having no strength of individual character; ready, from the habits of incessant monitorship and exact simultaneous movements, to follow a few leaders in the most important affairs of human life, and therefore ready to be slaves; expert at the formulas of morality and religion, but totally incapable, from the blunted sensibilities of a drilled life, of kindling with the flame of holy inspiration. God forbid that our children should so be taught and trained! Let us leave

their immortal spirits freedom and leisure to fall back on their own ruminating depths of wonder and curiosity; let them not be made machines and automata by that dreary process which overlays and smothers the earliest promptings of the self-enquiring mind, the first feelings of self-reliance, by a weight of cut-and-dry information crammed in and down upon them, and by the weary necessity of moving dependently in the routine of the squares and parallelograms of a vast school, where the mass is everything and the individual unit nothing. Our good old parish schools have it in their constitution to give teaching and training enough, while at the same time they let the vigorous springs of individual character in each and all of our village pupils have perfect play. And O! the glories of the fireside and the parental knee for teaching religion in its deep and sacred modesty, unhurt by the sturt and strife of classes going by rote, and good by rivalship! The fine, trembling tender-heartedness of religious childhood is destroyed amidst the confident bustle of multitudes, with their ostentatious displays of holy knowledge, sentiments, and feelings: Thoughtful, reverent, solemn minds can scarcely there be nurtured. Notwithstanding all the boasted wisdom of the present age, I subscribe to the rule of the Ancients, that the first five or six years of childhood should be wholly exempt from any stated tasks of the mind—that the body may be laying up its stores of health; that curiosity, the spring of all mental exertion, may be acquiring the habit of spontaneous healthy exercise; and that the bloom of young sensibility may not be rubbed off by a forced process of endeavouring to teach ere the child is competent to learn.

Having watched the growth of the young mind a good deal, I am less and less in love with precocity, which, indeed, is often a mere manifestation of disease—the disease of a very fine but very weak nervous organization. Your young Rosciuses, and all your wonders of that kind, generally end in the feeblest of common-place. There is no law, however, precise and absolute in the matter. The difference of age at which men attain maturity of intellect,

and even of imagination, is very striking. The tumultuous heat of youth has certainly given birth to many of the noblest things in music, painting, and poetry; but no less fine productions have sprung from the ripeness of years. Chatterton wrote all his beautiful things, exhausted all the hopes of life, and saw nothing better than death at the early age of eighteen. Burns and Byron died in their thirty-seventh year, and I think the strength of their genius was over. Raffaelle, after filling the world with divine beauty, perished also at thirty-seven; Mozart earlier: These might have produced still greater works. On the other hand, Handel was forty-eight before he "gave the world assurance of a man." Dryden came up to London from the provinces, dressed in Norwich drugget, somewhat above the age of thirty, and did not even then know that he could write a line of poetry: Yet what towering vigour and swinging ease all at once in "Glorious John!" Milton had indeed written his Comus at twenty-six; but blind, and "fallen on evil days and evil tongues," he was upwards of fifty when he began his great work. Cowper knew not his own might till he was far beyond thirty, and his Task was not written till about his fiftieth year. Sir Walter Scott was also upwards of thirty before he published his Minstrelsy, and all his greatness was yet to come.

Near us live, a blind boy on the one side, and a deaf and dumb lad on the other. They have all the characteristic qualities which their respective defects usually give rise to. For it may be laid down as a general remark, that the blind are almost always composed and cheerful, while the deaf and dumb are of an irritable and violent temperament. The variety of shades which the keen eye of the latter detects in the features of those with whom they associate for the time, and the meaning of which they cannot always interpret, makes them naturally suspicious; while the laugh or the horror which their imperfect attempts at utterance inspire in the chance stranger, tends to make them angry at mankind. By this means a quick and violent temper may be nourished, while the difficulty

of making themselves understood gives a strong dash of impatience to the whole character. Add to this, that they are not tamed down by forlorn dependence like the blind, as they can go whithersoever they will, and help themselves to what they want. Moreover, they are not softened by music and the sweet amenities of the human voice.

So far as native temperament can be modified by circumstances, I have observed that the second son of a family is generally more spunky than the elder brother, the first-born of the house. The early sense of a greater responsibility, in being so far the expected monitor, guide, and protector of his younger brother, and in having his parents' injunctions laid on him, and their confidence placed in him, accordingly, naturally induces a thoughtful gravity in the first-born. The second boy gets more of his own way, and finding his elder brother has the prerogative of trust, he seeks and wins his distinction in a different line, and becomes an equal favourite by his frolics. In families of wealth and title, the difference I have noticed is generally brought most clearly out. The elder son here has a still graver weight of conscious privilege and duty, and the younger a still livelier conviction that he is nothing if not spirited.

I saw the rising generation of our Village used this spring after a manner, very old-fashioned it seems, but quite new to me. I have already alluded to our run-rig crofts. According to an old popular fancy, the rigs, lying one into another in this queer fashion, keep each other warm. Be this as it may, it is not easy ploughing them, and keeping within the marches at the same time. An old Laird of the place, Laird Grippy by title and name, taking advantage of this natural difficulty, plagued all his neighbours by "gripping in." He was a litigious old sinner, however, who had constantly two or three law pleas forcing their choked way from Court to Court through a jungle of answers and condescendences, duplies, reclamations, &c., &c., &c.; and so his neighbours were fain to suffer his encroachments rather than have any words with him. Even the "Birley-men" (borough-law-men), the

great Court of Equity of the Village, could make nothing of the Laird. At last, however, other people's rigs began to disappear altogether; and so the thing was not to be borne any longer. A Land-Surveyor was appointed accordingly to set the march-stones anew; and this, be sure, was a great business in the Village. All the old were present with their recollections of the "ancient landmarks," and all the boys were ordered to attend. When, after disputations many and tough, the main matter of the day was accomplished, three old men laid hold of a couple of boys each, knocked their heads together, and their noses till they bled again, and then pulled their ears, and cuffed and kicked them soundly; the little fellows roaring all the while like bull-calves, with looks of infinite terror at this unreasonable and incomprehensible cruelty in their usually sedate seniors. "And now, my lads," cried one of the old chaps, letting his brace of victims go, "you'll no forget the setting o' the march-stanes!" The thing was thus explained at once. And I beg to commend it as a practical illustration to our Professors of Logic and Moral Philosophy, when treating of Attention and Memory.

CHAPTER XIII.

FLORENCE ARNOT.

A BEAUTIFUL child, of the name of Florence Arnot, dwelt with her grandfather, old Laird Arnot, about a bow-shot from our Village. In his youth the Laird had fallen in love with the daughter of a West India planter who came to reside in this neighbourhood. She, again, was attached to a young squire of the district, and a match was arranged betwixt them. A quarrel, however, took place between her lover and her father, and the match was broken off. Moreover, her father died suddenly, leaving her in much poorer circumstances than even he himself supposed; and Arnot's suit being now pressed and accepted, a marriage took place accordingly. It turned out an unfortunate one. After giving birth to a son, Mrs Arnot, whose heart

had remained devoted to her first betrothed, even while she was bestowing her hand upon another, began to be troubled in mind; and the somewhat harsh and narrow temper of her husband did not mend the matter by any gentle soothing. She grew worse, and was put into a private Madhouse in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile her son grew up, and showed the most determined predilection for painting. Being a fiery fellow, he ran riot over all his father's close restraints, and crowned his escapades by making his way to Italy in the most romantic fashion, and settling in Rome as a painter. He throve amazingly, being able in his art. In the second year of his stay in Rome, he married a beautiful Italian. In eleven months thereafter she presented him with Florence Arnot, but alas! the mother herself died of puerperal fever. Up grew young Florence, the fairest child on earth, the very apple of her father's eye. She was now twelve years old, and rarely accomplished, when he too died, bequeathing her, with a small sum of money, to her Scottish grandfather's care. And thus little Florence came to our Village. The Laird was a good deal perplexed about her coming, fearing, no doubt, that somehow or other the thing would break sadly in upon his old-fashioned ways. He happened to fall sick, however, a few days before the child arrived; and when she came, being of a nature at once spirited and affectionate, she set herself to tend him day and night. She managed his little household; she put a spirit of elegance and beauty into everything; she was about him continually; she became to him, in her lustrous foreign loveliness and the exquisite tenderness of her ministrations of love, the very dream of an Angel of Light sent down from Heaven to comfort him. Ill though he was, the old man was constrained every now and then to sit up in his bed and look at her with a kind of awe, as she went about his house with steps of order and grace; wondering at first whether it was a vision which he beheld, and then enchanted to think such a creature was really his own. And when she saw him sitting up, she ran to him and flung her arms about his neck and kissed him; and the

old Laird almost sobbed with joy, as he laid down his head again on the pillow, his heart being so knit to the child. Being an acquaintance of his, I went repeatedly to see him in his illness; and so little Florence became my friend. The Laird got round again, and was altogether a new and enlarged man, every right vent of his heart being now open, fresh, and strong; so well had that dear child worked upon his nature. Of course he cast about in every possible way to pleasure her—he gave her a little farm of green leas with lambs upon it; he gave her skeps of bees; he gave her a flower garden, and an apple tree; he gave her a pony, called Shagrem, to ride upon, and a silver-mounted whip; he gave her a dog, and a cow, and a young kid, and I don't know what all, besides: And, if necessary, the old Laird would have given her his very life. And thus little Florence was very well set up in the world. And every now and then came she tripping over the sunny croft to see my sister and myself; one day bringing us a piece of honey-comb, or a basket of mushrooms which she had gathered for us in the old pasture field; another day, coming as a shepherdess, with her rye-straw hat on, her crook and pipe in her hand, to tell us of her farm, and have us away with her, to see her lambs, and taste her dairy. And in the summer gloamings, she played to us on her harp, singing as she played; for she was skilled in music, and had brought her harp with her from Italy. In everything she said or did, there was some freakish fanciful accompaniment of grace to the beautifully clear spirit of duty which ran through the life of this foreign little lass.

I had observed for some days that Florence was more pensive than usual, when, on going one evening to visit the Medical Superintendent of the Asylum where her grandmother was boarded, I saw the girl playing on her harp before one of the grated windows of the house; while inside stood an elderly lady, of a worn and faded countenance, listening to the music, and looking intently down at the little minstrel: This, I learned the same night, was Mrs Arnot: Florence had been playing to her for some days, morning and evening. Whether from the

influence of the music, or from some natural change in her malady, Mrs Arnot was soon afterwards restored to reason, and requested her husband to come and see her. He did so; and finding her in her right mind, prayed her to return with him to her home. This, however, she refused to do, saying that she never loved him, and had never been a proper wife to him; that, notwithstanding this, he had treated her generously, giving her a liberal maintenance in her present place; that she was altogether unworthy to come into his house; that she was about to die; and that she would meet death in the chamber where she had spent the greater part of her life. "Then I will bring a friend to you," said her husband; and he brought to her the damsel Florence, accordingly. "She is your grand-daughter," said the old man, "the only child of our departed son: Let her be with you, to comfort you, to the day of your death." "What! my son's child?" exclaimed the lady, "my own grand-daughter, that has been so piously at my melancholy window? Come to me, my young dove—come to me, my own lamb!" And saying this, she kissed little Florence many a time; and long and wistful was the gaze with which she scanned the features of the beautiful girl. "But why," turning to her husband, she asked, "why did you not make my Keeper explain to me that the child was my grand-daughter? Why keep back the dear cherub so long from my heart and love? She would have done me good—she has done so, even as it is." "It was your son's own desire," replied the Laird: "We have acted up to his injunctions precisely." So saying, he opened and read a Letter from their dying son (the last he had written), in which all his wishes touching his daughter Florence were fully set forth: Her Italian relatives had prayed hard to keep her with themselves; but he had resisted their importunities, being determined to send her to Scotland, for this among many other reasons, that he wished the damsel to soothe his mother, and try to make her well by playing on her harp to her: In reference to this playing, the Letter said, "Let not my poor dear mother know, for some

time at least, that Florence is her grand-daughter. Well do I know the darkest courses of man's spirit. To make my mother long for the child from day to day, to make her eagerly and even anxiously guess who she is, and why she comes to harp to her, may, independently of the damsel's soothing song, help her to mark the interchanges of day and night—to calculate—to note points of interest; and may thus help to make her thoughts run in channels of distinction, and may thus help to break up the wild continuity of madness into the defined and affixed periods of feeling and reason." "My own wise and good son!" exclaimed Mrs Arnot, when she had heard the Letter read. A restoration to sanity of mind is often the immediate forerunner of dissolution, and it was already evident that Mrs Arnot's apprehensions of her own approaching death were too well founded. From an unwillingness to part with Florence, while at the same time she could not think of making the child stay with her in the Asylum, but chiefly from a necessary conformity to the regulations of the Institution, she consented at last to be taken to her husband's house. There she prepared for her end. Florence sat in the bed with her, her young arms often around her neck, as she answered a thousand things to the never-ending affectionate questions of the dying lady. And day and night never did that grandmother cease to caress the beautiful child that sat beside her, so excited was her heart, now that its native issues of love were set free. And she made the damsel sew her shroud, as she sat beside her. Death came the sooner that her heart was feverishly overweighed by the very excess of her affection for Florence. The little maiden, as was her wont, was one still evening singing an anthem by her grandmother's bedside, touching her harp to the hymn, when the dying lady's voice was heard feebly joining in it. In that last holy effort her spirit had passed away. I need say nothing more of Florence Arnot: She is now the wonder, and pride, and love of all the country round.

CHAPTER XIV.

LIEUTENANT CRABBE.

One evening about midsummer, being in Edinburgh, I was passing at a somewhat late hour along one of the crowded streets in the Old Town, when I was tapped on the shoulder from behind; and, on looking round, a bare-headed man, dressed in a night-gown, thus abruptly questioned me:—"Did you ever, Sir, thank God for preserving your reason?" "Why—I don't know—never formally, perhaps," was my somewhat hesitating reply to this strange question. "Then do it now," he rejoined, "for I have lost mine." So saying, he bowed to me with a wild unsteady fervour, and wheeling round withdrew from me at a rapid pace. As he seemed to be labouring under some frenzy, and might need to be looked after, I followed him. This I did for the farther reason, that I had seen him before under circumstances which caused me rather to dislike him. It was thus:—On my final return to Scotland, I found my beloved father and mother dead. On the day of my last leaving them, to go abroad, they had accompanied me along the footpath by the side of a little burn which led from our Village up some green glens and valleys to the Mail road about two miles off. On our way we had sat together for a while by the side of a deep pool; and there they had parted from me, turning back, while I went forward on my journey alone. On getting home, it was one of my first duties, melancholy and yet pleasing, to seek the green spot where I had last sat with my dear parents, and there fling myself down, and let Memory have her fill. On reaching the place, I found it occupied by a stranger. I withdrew, and returned the following evening. The sacred spot was again occupied by the same stranger, whom I felt myself now the more disposed to dislike for his coarse red face, his ill-shaped bald head (for he sat looking into his hat), and the undignified precaution of his coat-skirts carefully drawn aside to let him sit on his outspread handkerchief. This second night also I withdrew,

disappointed. I came a third night, and found a continuance of the interruption. The same individual was on the same spot, muttering to himself, and chucking pebbles into the dark pool of the burn immediately before him. I retired, almost cursing him in my heart; and came no more back to the place. Now, in the frenzied man who accosted me, as already mentioned, on the street by night, I recognised at once the individual who had so interrupted me some fourteen months before in the lonely glen by the side of the burn; and, as I had conceived a dislike to him unreasonably, and probably in the very midst of his sorrows, I now felt it the more to be my duty to look after him in his afflicted condition. I was following him accordingly, when a woman, advanced in life, came rushing up to meet him, and laying hold of him, cried loudly for assistance. This was easily found in such a place—indeed, the street was already beginning to be excited on his account; and the poor man was, without delay, forcibly carried back to her house, where, on my following, I learned that he was a lodger with the woman, that he was sick of a brain fever, and that, during a brief interval in her watching of him, he had made his escape down stairs, and had got upon the street. I was now deeply interested in the poor fellow, and determined to see him again the following morning, which I did, and found him much worse. On making inquiry at the woman of the house respecting him, she told me that he had no relatives in this country, though he was a Scotchman; that he was a half-pay military officer; that he did not seem to want money; and that he was a generous, good man. She added, moreover, that he had lodged in her house two months; and that, previous to his illness, he had spoken of a friend whom he expected every day to visit him from a distant part of the country, to make arrangements for their going together to the Continent.

In two days more, Lieutenant Crabbe (such, I learned, was his name and commission) died; and, by a curious dispensation of Providence, I ordered the funeral, and laid

in the grave the head of the man whom, only a few months before, I had almost cursed as a disgusting fellow. The alien mourners had withdrawn from the sodded grave, and I had just paid the sexton for this last office to poor Crabbe, when the woman in whose house he had died advanced with a young man, who had the air of a military officer. "That's the gentleman, Sir," said the woman, pointing to myself.

"Very well, good woman," said the stranger youth, whose tones were those of an Englishman, and whose voice, as he spoke, seemed touched with deep sorrow, "I will see you again, within an hour, at your house, and settle all matters." The woman, who had doubtless come to show him the church-yard, hereupon retired; and the young Englishman, coming up to me, grasped me kindly by the hand: "So, Sir," said he, "you have fulfilled my office here, which would to God I had been in time to do myself for my poor friend! You did not know him, I believe?"

"No," I answered.

"A nobler heart," returned the youth, "never beat in the frame of a man. He has been most unhappy, poor fellow, in his relatives."

"I am sorrow to hear it," I could only reply.

"If I could honour you in any way," rejoined the youth, "which your heart cares for, beyond its own joy, in acting the part which you have acted towards my poor friend, I would delight to honour you. You are at least entitled to some information about the deceased: I will give it to you in a way which will best show you his character. I have some letters here in my pocket, which I brought with me, that he might explain something to me, which they all, more or less, contain, relative to a piece of special business; from one of them I will read an extract, relative to his early history, and the miserable occasion on which he found his long-lost father, whom, after patient efforts to trace his parents, he was at length directed to seek in one of your villages in the south of

Scotland." The particular letter was selected, and the young Englishman, over the grave of his friend, read thus :—

'I could have wept tears of blood, on finding things as they were with the unhappy old man who is indeed my father. I shall speak to you now as I would commune with my own heart; but yet it must be in mild terms, lest I be unfilial: is not this sorrowful work? From the very little which I knew of myself ere I came to this country, and from information which I have gathered within these two weeks from the old clergyman of this village, it appears that my mother died a few days after giving me birth, and that my uncle, who had never been satisfied with the marriage, took me, when very young, from my father, whose unhappy peculiarities led him readily to resign me, gave me my mother's name, and carried me with him to Holland, where he was a merchant. He was very kind to me in my youth; and, when I was of a proper age, he bought me a commission in the British army, in which I have served, as you know, for nearly ten years, and which, you also know, I was obliged to leave, in consequence of a wound in one of my ankles, which, subject to occasional swelling, has rendered me quite unfit for travel. My uncle died about three years ago, and left me heir to his effects, which were considerable. Nothing in his papers led me to suppose that my father might yet be living; but I learned the fact from a confidential friend of his, who communicated it to me, not very wisely, perhaps, since he could not tell me even my real name. Bitterly condemning my uncle's cruel policy, which had not allowed him to hold any intercourse whatever with my father, I hastened over to this country, with no certain hope of success in finding out whose I was, beyond what my knowledge that I bore my mother's name led me to entertain. Yet I had my own romance connected with the pursuit. I said to myself, that I might have young sisters, who should be glad to own me, unworthy though I was; I might bring comfort to a good old man, who, like another patriarch, was to fall

upon my neck and weep for joy like a little child. Every night I was on board, hasting to this country, I saw my dream-sisters, so kind, so beautiful. They washed my feet; they looked at the scars of my wounds; they were proud of me, for having been a soldier; and leant on my arm as we went to church, before all the people, who were lingering in the sunny church-yard: And the good old man, our father, went before us, often looking back to see that we were near behind, accommodating his step to show that he too was one of the party, though he did his best to appear self-denied.

'After getting the clew, as mentioned in my last letter to you, I took a seat in the Mail, which I was told would pass at a little distance from the village whither I was bound. Would to God I had set out the day before, that so I might have prevented a horrid matter! The coach was stopped for me at a little bridge, that I might get out; the village, about a couple of miles off, was pointed out to me; and I was advised to follow a small footpath, which led along by a rivulet, as being the nearest way to the place in question. Twilight was now beginning to deepen among the elms that skirted the path into which I had struck; and, in this softest hour of nature, I had no other thought than that I was drawing near a home of peace. I know not whether the glen which I was traversing could have raised such indescribable emotions within me, had I not guessed that scenes were before me which my childhood must have often seen; but every successive revelation of the pass down which I was going—pool after pool ringed by night insects, and shot athwart on the surface by those diverging lines, so fine, so rapid, which may be the sport too of invisible insects—stream after stream, with its enamelled manes of cool green velvet, which anon twined themselves out of sight beneath the rooted brakes—one shy green nook in the bank after another, overwaved by the long pensile boughs of trees, and fringed with many a border of blent wild flowers,—all this made me start, as at the melancholy recurrence of long-forgotten dreams: And when the blue heron rose from the stream where it

had been wading, and with slow flagging wing crossed and re-crossed the water, and then went up the darkened valley to seek its lone haunt by the mountain spring, I was sure I had seen the very same scene, and the very same bird, some time in my life before. My dear Stanley, you cannot guess why I dwell so long on these circumstances: For it pierces my very heart with anguish to tell the coming contrast to my hopes, and to these peaceful accompaniments of outward nature! It must be told:—

'I had not walked more than a mile down the valley, when I heard feeble cries for assistance, as of some one in the last extremity, drowning in the stream. I made what haste I could, and, on getting round a sloping headland of the bank, which shot forward to the edge of the rounding water, I found myself close upon a company of fellows, habited like Christmas mummers, apparently amusing themselves with the struggles of a person in the water, who, ever as he secured a footing, and got his head above, was again pushed down by his cruel assailants. I was upon them ere they were aware, and reached one fellow, who seemed particularly active, a stout thwack with my ratan, from which, however, recovering, he took to his heels, followed by his associates. My next business was to relieve the object of their cruelty; but this was no easy task, for, being probably by this time quite exhausted, he had yielded to the current, and, ere I could reach him, was rolled down into a large black pool. He was on the point of sinking for ever, when I caught hold of him—good God! an old man!—by his grey hair, and drew him out upon the bank, where he lay to all appearance quite dead. Using such means as were in my power to assist in restoring suspended animation, I succeeded so well that ere long the poor old body showed symptoms of returning life. I looked round me in this emergency, but there was neither house nor living person to be seen; so what could I do, but take the bare-headed old man on my back, and carry him to the village, which I knew was not far off. And there, who should I find him to be, but my own father!

'To you, Stanley, I can say every thing which I dare whisper to my own heart; but this is a matter which even my own private bosom tries to eschew. It seems—it seems, the unhappy old man is narrow-hearted—a miser, as they term it here; and that for some petty thefts he was subjected by some fellows of the village to the aforementioned ducking. I know well, Stanley, you will not despise me for all this; nor because I must now wear my own name of Crabbe, which I am determined, in justice to that unhappy old father, henceforth to do. On the contrary, you will only advise me well how to win upon his harder nature, and bring him round to more liberal habits. The following scheme for this purpose struck me one evening, as I sat 'chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy' beside the pool whence I rescued the poor old man. For indeed —indeed, I must grapple with the realities of the moral evil, however painful or disgusting. That being is my father; and no one can tell how much his nature may have been warped and kept perverse by the loss of the proper objects of natural affection: Is it not my bounden duty, then, to be found to him, and, by my constant presence, to open his heart, which has been too much constringed by his lonely situation? I will hedge him round, in the first place, from insults: I will live with him, in his own house, all at my expense; and our household economy shall be as liberal as my finances will permit: I will give much money in charity, and make him the dispenser of it; for our best feelings are improved by outward practice: Whenever I may be honoured by an invitation to a good man's table, the slightest hint to bring him with me shall be taken advantage of; and he *shall* go, that the civilities of honourable men may help his self-respect, and thereby his virtue. Now, may God aid me in this moral experiment, to make the poor old man doubly mine own!'

"From this extract," said the young Englishman, carefully folding up his deceased friend's letter, "you will see something of the exalted nature of poor Ramsay—Crabbe I should say. I may here mention, that the death of the

old man, which took place not many weeks after the brutalities referred to were inflicted upon him, and which, in all likelihood, was hastened by that infliction, never allowed his son to put in practice those institutes of moral discipline which he had devised to repair and beautify the degraded fountain of his life. I doubt not, this miserable end of his parent, and the sense of his own utter loneliness in respect to kindred, preyed upon the generous soldier, and helped to bring on that delirium of fever, which so soon turned his large heart into dust and oblivion. Peace be with his ashes, and everlasting honour wait upon his name! To-morrow morning, Sir," continued the youth, "I set out again for England, and I should like to bear your name along with me, coupled with the memory which shall never leave me, of your disinterested kindness towards my late friend. I talk little of thanks, for I hold you well repaid by the consciousness of having done the last duties of humanity for a brave and good man."

According to the Englishman's request, I gave him my name, and received his in return; and shaking hands over the grave of poor Crabbe, we parted.

"So, then," said I to myself, as I left the church-yard, "it appears, that at the very moment when this generous soldier was meditating a wise moral plan to win his debased parent to honour and salvation, at that very moment I was allowing my heart to entertain a groundless feeling of dislike to him." My second more pleasing reflection was, that this unmanly prejudice had easily given way. How could it less, under the awful presence of Death, who is the great Apostle of human charity? Moreover, from the whole matter I have derived this important lesson for myself,—never to allow a hasty opinion, drawn from little peculiarities of manner or appearance, to make me decide unfavourably against this or that man, who, for aught I really know, may be worthy of unqualified esteem.

CHAPTER XV.

"BUY A BROOM?"

SECTION I.

ONE beautiful afternoon, about the beginning of the barley and wheat harvest, Frederick Hume arose from his desk, where for several hours he had been plodding at his studies, and, to unbend himself a little, went to his window, which commanded a view of our Village. A stillness almost like that of the Sabbath reigned over the hamlet, for the busy season had called the youngsters forth to the field, the sunburnt sickleman and his fair partner. Boys and girls were away to glean: and none were left but a few young children who were playing quietly on the green; two or three ancient grannams who sat spinning at their doors in the rich sunlight; and here and there a happy young mother, exempted by the duties of nurse from the harvest toils. A single frail octogenarian, who, in hobbling to the almost deserted smithy, had paused, with the curiosity of age, to look long beneath his upraised arm after the stranger horseman, who was just going out of sight at the extremity of the Village, completed the picture of quiet life which our student was now contemplating. After raising the window, and setting open the door, to win into his little apartment the liquid coolness which was nestling among the green fibrous leaves around the casement, he was again standing looking towards the hamlet, when, hearing a light foot approach the door of his study, he turned round, and a young female stranger was before him. On seeing him, she paused at the threshold, made a sort of reverence, and seemed willing to retire. From her dark complexion, and her peculiar dress, especially the head-gear, which consisted merely of a spotted handkerchief wound round her black locks, Hume guessed at once that she was a foreigner; and he was confirmed in this supposition when, on his advancing and asking, "What do you wish, my good girl?" she held for-

ward a light broom, and said, in a quick short foreign accent, "Buy a Broom?"

"Pray what is the use of it, my good lass?" said Frederick, in that mood in which a man, conscious that he has finished a dry lesson to some purpose, is very ready to indulge in a little badinage and light banter.

"For beard-shaving," answered the girl in the same vein, stroking his chin once or twice with her broom, as if with a shaving brush.

"Most literally an *argumentum ad hominem* to make me buy," said the scholar; "so what is the price, fair stranger?"

"No, no," said the girl, in quick reaction from her playful mood, whilst a tear started in her dark lustrous eye; "but they bid me come: they say you are a doctor: and if you will be kind and follow me to my poor brother, you shall have many brooms."

On inquiring distinctly what the girl meant, our student was given to understand, that her only brother, who had come with her as a harper to this country, had fallen sick at a gentleman's house about a mile off, and that she, on learning Mr Frederick Hume was the only person within many miles who could pretend to medical skill, had come herself to take him to her poor Antonio. After learning farther the symptoms of the lad's illness, the young surgeon took his lancets and some simple medicine, and readily followed the girl, who led the way to a neat villa, which, as Frederick had heard, was the residence of an Italian of the name of Romelli. He had been an officer in the French service, and had come to this country with other prisoners; but, instead of returning home on an exchange being made, he chose to continue in Scotland with his only daughter, who had come over to him from Italy, and who, Frederick had heard, was a young lady of surpassing beauty. Following his conductress to Romelli's house, Hume was shown into a room, where, reclining upon a sofa, was a boy, apparently about sixteen years of age, the features of whose pale face instantly testified him to be brother to the maid with the

broom. He was ministered to by a lovely damsel, Signora Romelli herself, who seemed to be watching him with the softest care. At the head of the sofa stood the harp of the wandering boy.

"I presumed, Sir," said the beautiful hostess, turning to Hume, "to hint that perhaps you might easily be found, and that certainly you would be very willing to take a little trouble in such a case as this. The affectionate sister has not been long in bringing you."

Frederick bowed to Miss Romelli, and then turned to the boy: "What is the matter with you, my little fellow?" said he, advancing to the patient.

"Nothing," was the boy's answer; and immediately he rose up and went to the window from which he gazed, heedless of every one in the apartment.

"I am afraid the lad is still very unwell," said Signora Romelli; "only look how pale he is."

Hume first looked at the boy's sister, to assure himself what was the natural healthy hue of these swarthy strangers; then turning to the boy himself, he could not but observe how much the wanness of his face differed from the life-bloom which glowed in her dark-brown cheek. His eye at the same time burned with arrowy tips of restless lustre, such as are kindled by heetic fever. He resisted, however, all advances on the part of our surgeon to inquire farther into his state of health, impatiently declaring that he was now quite well; then resuming his harp, and taking his sister by the hand, he seemed in haste to be gone.

"My father is not at home," said the young lady of the house to Hume; "nevertheless, they must abide here all night, for I can easily see that boy is unable to travel farther this evening: And besides, they are of my own native country. Use your prerogative, Sir, and don't let him go."

In spite of the surgeon's persuasions, however, and heedless of Signora Romelli, and his own sister, who joined in the remonstrance against his departure, the lad would go; although at the same time he declared there was no other place where he wished particularly to be. "He is a

capricious boy to reject your excellent kindness," said Frederick to Miss Romelli; "and I doubt not he will treat in the same way a proposal I have to make. With your leave, however, I must try to win him, with his sister, to our house all night, lest he grow worse and need medical aid." From the unhappy appearance of the young musician, this proposal seemed so good, that it was readily acquiesced in by his sister, and by Signora Romelli, provided the boy himself could be brought to accede to it, which, to their joyful surprise, he did most readily, so soon as it was signified to him.

The affectionate sister gratefully kissed the hand of her kind hostess. As for the boy himself, with a look half of anger, he took the former by the arm and drew her hastily away, as if he grudged this expression of her gratitude. He had not moved many paces forward, however, till, quitting his sister's side, he turned, and taking Signora Romelli's hand, he kissed it fervently, with tears, and at the same time bade the Virgin Mother of Heaven bless her.

Struck with the remarkable manner of the boy, our student tried to engage him in conversation by the way, but he found him shy and taciturn in the extreme; and as he had already shown himself capricious, he now evinced an equal obstinacy in refusing to allow either of his companions to carry his harp, which being somewhat large, seemed not well proportioned to the condition of the bearer, who, besides being manifestly unwell, was also of a light small make. From the sister, who seemed of a frank and obliging temper, Frederick learned some particulars of their earlier history and present mode of life. Her name, she said, was Charlotte Cardo, and her brother's Antonio Cardo. They were twins, and the only surviving children of a clergyman in Italy, who had been dead for two years. Their mother died a few hours after giving them birth. "After the loss of our father," added the maiden, "we had no one to care much for us; yet I would have dwelt all the days of my life near their beloved graves, had not my brother, who is of a restless and unhappy temperament, resolved to wander in this country. How could

I stay alone? How could I let him go alone? So a harp was bought for him; and now every day, from village to village, and up and down among the pleasant cots, he plays to the kind folk, and I follow him with my brooms. We have been a year in this country, and I know not when we shall return home, for Antonio says he cannot yet tell me." Hume having expressed his surprise that she could talk English so well after such a short residence in this country, she explained, by informing him, that both her brother and herself had been taught the language so carefully by their father, that they could talk it pretty fluently before they left Italy. During the brief narrative of his sister, the lad, Antonio, kept his eye intensely upon her, as if ready to check every point of explanation; but Charlotte ended her short statement without any interruption on his part, and again his eye became self-contained and indifferent.

The next expression of the boy's character was no less singular and unexpected. On observing a company of reapers, in a field by the way-side, taking their brief mid-afternoon rest, he advanced to the gate, opposite which they were seated, and unslinging his harp, began to play, filling up the sweetly dotted outline of the instrumental music with his own low but rich vocal song. After the first preamble, he nodded to his sister, and instantly her loud and thrilling voice turned magnificently into the same strain. On first view of the musician and his party, the rude young swains of the field, for favour, no doubt, in their mistresses' eyes, began to play off their rough wit; but in another minute these bolts were forgotten, and the loud daffing of the whole company was completely hushed. At first the song was grave and lofty; but by degrees it began to kindle into a more airy strain, till, as it waxed fast and mirthful, the harvest maids began to look knowingly to their partners, who, taking the hint, sprang to their feet, hauled up their sweet abettors, were mated in a moment, and commenced a dance among the stubble, so brisk, that the tall harvest of spiky wheat, standing by, rustled and nodded to them on its golden rods. Aged

gleaners stood up from their bowing task, and listened to the sweet music; while the young came running from all parts of the field, and throwing down their handfuls, began madly to caper and to mix with the more regular dance. The old grey bandsters, as they stood rubbing out in their hands ears of the fine grain, smiled as much under the general sympathy, as from a consciousness of their own superior wisdom above such follies. Even the overseer himself, who stood back silently, was, for a minute or two, not scandalized at such proceedings, which were converting a time of repose for his weary labourers into furious exertions, unfitting them for the remaining work of the day. Consideration, anger, remonstrance, were soon, however, mantling on his face, and he came forward; but he was anticipated, for the principal minstrel, who, with something like a smile on his countenance, had seen at first the quick influence of his music on the swinkt labourers of the sweltering day, had gradually grown dark and severe in his look, and now stopping his song all at once, he refitted his harp to his shoulder, and walked away without looking for guerdon, and heedless of the rustic swains, who shouted after him and waved their rye-straw hats.

With the greatest good-humour our young surgeon had indulged, to the very top of their bent, this musical frolic of the two foreigners, sitting down by the wayside till it was fairly over; and now he resumed his way with them. Antonio was silent and shy as before; but the manner in which he looked round him over the beautiful country, showed that his spirit was touched with its glad scenes. All the western sky was like an inflamed sea of glass, where the sun was tracking it with his fervid and unallayed wheels. Beneath his golden light lay the glad lands, from right to left white all over with harvest; thousands were plying in the fields; sickles were seen glinting on the far yellow uplands; and nearer were heard the reapers' song, and the gleaners calling to each other to lay down their handfuls in the furrows.

The road now led our party by an orchard where boys were up in the trees shaking down the fruit. The little

fellows, all joyous in their vacation from school, were tugging with might and main at and among the cleft branches; their sisters below gathered the apples in baskets; whilst the happy father, walking about with his wife, decided their appeals as to the comparative beauty of individual apples. Allured by the sound of the fruit hopping on the ground, two or three stray waifs had left off their gleaning in a neighbouring field; and the ragged little urchins were down on their hands and knees, thrusting their heads through holes in the hedge which separated the orchard from the road. One of them having been caught behind the ear by the stump of a thorn, found it impossible to draw back his head, and in this predicament he had to bawl for assistance. This drew the attention of the lady; and, after the roaring little rogue had been released, the whole party were summoned to the gate, and blessed with a share of the bounties of the year, which the kind mistress of the orchard dispensed to them through means of her own dear little almoners. Whether it was that he liked the benevolence of this scene, or whether he was reminded of his own beautiful Italy, or from whatever other affection, the young harper again took his harp, and waked those wild and dipping touches, which seem more like a sweet preamble than a full strain. He again accompanied it with his voice, and his sister did the same. The young girls laid down their baskets of fruit, and drew to the gate; the trees had rest for a while from shaking, while the fair-haired boys, with faces flushed and glowing from their autumnal exercise, looked out in wonder from between the clefts of the boughs. When the song ceased, the lady offered money; but neither of the minstrels would accept it. On the contrary, Antonio took his sister by the hand, and hurried her away from the gate, ere one of the children could bring the basket of fruit for which she had run, to give a largesse from it to the strangers. Frederick, after talking a few minutes to the lady and gentleman, and telling them how he had fallen in with the foreigners, followed and overtook his companions, just as they had come in sight of Greenwells Cottage, where he

resided. "Yonder is our house now, just beyond the Village," said Frederick, advancing to them. "The old lady I live with will be very kind to you; and you must stay with her for a few days, and give her music, which she loves. What say you, pretty Charlotte?" Antonio here stepped in between his sister and Hume, and said with quick emphasis, "I will go with you, Sir, and I will let Charlotte follow me."

On arriving at the Cottage, Frederick introduced the strangers to his relative, Mrs Mather, with whom he resided, and who, on learning their circumstances, kindly received them as her guests. They would have taken their departure next day; but in this they were resisted by the charitable old lady, who farther won their promise that they would stay with her for at least a week. Ere the expiry of that time, whether from the caprice or benevolence of her nature, or from her especial liking for Charlotte, who had gained rapidly upon her affections, Mrs Mather had conceived the design of adopting the two Italians, and preparing them for situations worthy of their good descent; and she was confirmed in her purpose when, on breaking the matter to Frederick Hume, it met with his entire concurrence. The next step was to gain the consent of Antonio, which might be no easy matter, as he seemed a strange and impracticable boy; but, somewhat to the surprise of Frederick, no sooner was the proposal made to him, than he heartily agreed to it. As for his sister, independently of her dislike to a wandering life, and her growing attachment to Mrs Mather, her brother's will was in all cases her law. It was then settled that Charlotte should be confidential companion to the old lady, to read to her at night, and assist her in making dresses for the poor, among whom she had a number of retainers; while Antonio should be sent to the Rev. Mr Baillie's, a clergyman, a few miles off, to board with him, and finish his education, which had been neglected since his father's death, that so he might be fitted for a liberal profession. Proud though Mrs Mather was of this scheme, her self-complacency was not without one abatement, in the cold

and doubtful manner in which Miss Pearce nodded to the old lady's statement and explanation of her plan.

As this woman, Miss Pearce, had it in her power, ere long, grievously to affect the fortunes of young Hume, she must be noticed here somewhat fully. She was the only daughter of a half-pay captain, whose death left her with a trifling annuity, and a small house in our Village. After the death of her husband, a wealthy retired merchant, who had spent the last years of his life at Greenwells, Mrs Mather, having no family, began to cast about for a companion, and Miss Pearce was soon found out to be one of those indispensable parasitical maidens that old dowager ladies impress into active service, in the seasons of raspberries, and the elder-vintages; hold long consultations with on the eve of entertainments; retain as their own especial butt in company, and a fag partner at whist when a better fourth hand is wanting; cherish and moralize with when the party is over; and, finally, would not dismiss, though one were to rise from the dead to bid it be done. In addition to these implied qualifications, the amiable creature was a monopolist in ailments; and, of course, careless about the complaints of others, of which, indeed, when within reach of Mrs Mather's sympathy, she seemed to be jealous. In her person she was lean and scraggy, with a hard brown face, kiln-dried by nervous headachs: Her nose was so sharp it might have cleft a hailstone. When Frederick Hume was thrown a helpless orphan on the world, and Mrs Mather, who was a distant relative of his mother, proposed to take him to herself, and bring him up as her own son, Miss Pearce, though she could not set her face directly against such a charitable arrangement, yet laboured to modify it by a counter proposition, that the boy should be provided for, but by no means brought to the Cottage. She was then, however, only in the dawn of favour with her patroness, and her opinion being over-ruled, the boy was brought home to Mrs Mather, and daily grew in her affections. During his childhood, Miss Pearce advanced steadily in favour, and she was too jealous of divided influence, and

too Jesuitical in her perseverance, not to improve every opportunity of challenging and modifying the growing affection of Mrs Mather for her adopted son, whose bold and frank nature was endearing him to every one. When this would not do, she began to change her battery, and tried by a new show of kindness to make a party in the young *élève* himself, whom yet she thoroughly hated. Whether it was, however, that he knew her enmity, and never forgave her for having once or twice secretly and severely pricked him with pins, or, whether, with the quick instinct of childhood, which knows in a moment, and despises, the kind notice bestowed upon it for the sake of currying favour with parents and guardians, he virtually set down Pearce's new attentions to such a motive, certain it is, if he did not positively hate her, he never once stroked her purring vanity; and she, on the other hand, was, from his indifference, confirmed in her dislike. As Frederick grew up, he had many opportunities of shaking Miss Pearce's influence with Mrs Mather; but, as he thought her despicable merely, and not dangerous, he was too magnanimous to molest her. Moreover, in the scheme of family life, it often happens that what was at first a jarring element becomes by and bye a constituent part of the general harmony; and from this it might be that Hume not only continued to endure Miss Pearce, but even loved her with the affection of habit.

One might have supposed that, long before the time to which our narrative now refers, Miss Pearce would have been tired of intrigue, and would have known the folly of being jealous in the favour which she had proved exactly, and from which she knew so little was ever to be won or lost; but petty intrigue, merely for its own sake, and small selfish arrangements of circumstances, even where nothing was to be gained, constituted the very breath of Miss Pearce's nostrils; and, therefore, it is not to be wondered at, that, when Mrs Mather stated her design of adopting the two Italians, as already mentioned, she heard it with that umph, and nod, which express, not that a thing has been assented to, but merely that it has been literally and

distinctly heard. Her objections were entered under a masked battery. She began by praising Mrs Mather's unbounded benevolence of heart. She hoped they would be grateful; they could not be too grateful; nay, they could never be grateful enough. She allowed the conversation to take a general turn, then tried to control it gradually to her own purpose, and found an opportunity of relating, as if accidentally, how a certain lady, whom once she knew, had been ruined by a foreign *protegée* whom she had unwisely cherished. She touched upon swindling, and vagrants; and alluded obscurely to the Legislature, and the Alien Act. Notwithstanding all such hints, however, the thing was settled in the affirmative: The boy Antonio was sent to stay with Mr Baillie, and his sister remained with Mrs Mather.

The regularity and certainty of Charlotte's new mode of life subdued the roving qualities which her character might have slightly acquired, and which soon give a corresponding wildness to the features. Her dark beauty remained quick and expressive; but it was softened down under an English dress, and tamed by the meek offices of our country's excellent morality: Her eye was still drunk with light, as when morning comes upon the streams; but it waited and took commands from the looks of her mild patroness. The footstep of the reclaimed wanderer, so impulsive, prompt, and airy, became now also gracefully soft, as she went about the house gently, under a sober domestic economy. In health she became Mrs Mather's delight, and still more so when the infirmities of the good old lady required delicate attentions: Like the glorious Una of Spenser's Fairy Queen, the kind eyes of this Italian girl, even amidst affliction, "made a light in a shady place."

Frederick Hume failed not to wait upon Signora Romelli, and inform her that his minstrel-patient was quite well, on the morning after the day when he was ill in her house. From this call, a friendly intercourse naturally grew up between the two families; and, ere the fall of the season, Signor Romelli and his daughter were at least once every week at Greenwells Cottage, to the huge dismay of Miss

Pearce, but the delight of our young surgeon, who began deeply to love the beautiful Julia Romelli. She was taller and fairer than the maid Cardo; her locks were nut-brown; her eye was a rich compromise betwixt the raven and the blue dove, a deep violet,

——————"like Pandora's eye,
When first it darkened with immortal life."

She was quick, capricious, proud; bold in her pouting displeasure, which was like a glancing day of sunshine and stormy showers. But then she was ardent in her friendships, and very benevolent; ready, withal, nay in haste, to confess her faults, in which case her *amende honorable*, and her prayer for pardon, were perfectly irresistible. A heart of her ambition, and so difficult to be won, insensibly exalted her in the eyes of the dashing and manly Frederick; and without thinking of it, he just loved her the more because she was a conquest worthy of boldest youth. We infer that the fair Julia kept shy and aloof, and at the same time that her lover was only the more determined to make her his, from the circumstance that, in a few months, he had condescended to calculate how he stood in her father's affections, and was studious to accommodate himself to the manner of the Signor, who was grave in his deportment, and almost saturnine, seldom moved to smiles, and never to laughter; and who, though he could talk fluently, and with eloquence, seemed, in general, to wear some severe constraint upon his spirit.

SECTION II.

THINGS were in this position when the winter session came round, which called Frederick Hume to Edinburgh, to prosecute his medical studies. The following summer he continued in town studying botany; and, after making a tour through the Highlands of Scotland, it was about the middle of autumn ere he returned to Greenwells Cottage.

He found Charlotte Cardo improved in beauty and accomplishments, and advanced in favour with every one who knew her; even Miss Pearce herself condescended to patronise her publicly and privately. But what pleased

him most of all, was to find that Julia Romelli was still a frequent visitor at the Cottage. The season of harvest, too, had given a vacation to Mr Baillie's scholars, and Antonio Cardo was now at home beside his sister; and the harp and the song of the Italian twins were not forgotten when the sweet gloaming came on. Deeply occupied in spirit though Hume was with thoughts of his fair and shy Signora, he was yet constrained to notice the abrupt and strange manifestations of Antonio's character, which broke out from time to time, mocking the quiet tenor of his ordinary behaviour. According to his reverend tutor's statement, he had been a very diligent scholar; and he testified it thus far, that he talked English with great force and propriety. With the boys of his own age he had consorted little, and seemed to take no delight in conversing with any one; though now and then he would talk a few minutes to the old men of the Village, and sometimes to the children. He was now equally taciturn at Mrs Mather's; but occasionally he broke forth, expressing himself in rapid and earnest eloquence, and showing a wonderful power of illustrating any point. From his manner altogether towards Miss Romelli, his devoted attentions at one time, and at another his proud shyness; and from his haughty refusal, on one occasion, to play on the harp when Hume wished to dance with that lady, Frederick could not but guess that he was a rival candidate for Julia's love. But the most striking and unaccountable demonstration of the boy's character, was the visible paleness which came over his face, the current—the restless flow—of his small features, and the impatience of his attitudes, now shrinking, and now swelling into bold and almost threatening pantomime, whenever Signor Romelli came near him. Visibly, too, he was often seen to start when he heard his countryman's deep voice: He spoke to Romelli always with an eloquent *empressement* in his tone, as if his thoughts were crowding with his crowding blood: He looked him eagerly in the face: He went round about him, like an anxious dog.

One night the Signor, more open and talkative than usual,

had told two or three stories of the sea, when Antonio, who had listened, with a sharp visage, and his whole spirit peering from his eyes, came forward, and sitting down on the carpet before his countryman, looked up in his face, and said, "I will now tell you a legend of the sea, Captain Romelli."

Cardo's Legend.

A rude Captain in the South Seas had murdered his mate, an excellent youth, for pretended disobedience of orders; and for this crime God sent the black-winged overtaking tempest, which beat his ship to pieces, and he was cast alone upon a desert island. It was night when he recovered from his drenched dream, and sat down on a green bank above the sea-marge, to reflect on his situation. The storm-racks had fled away; the moon came peering round above the world of seas, and up through the cold clear wilderness of heaven; the dark tree-tops of the forest, which grew down to the very sands, waved in the silver night. But neither this beauty after the tempest, which should have touched his heart with grateful hope, nor the sense of his deliverance, nor yet the subduing influence of hunger, could soften that mariner's soul; he sat till morning, unrepentant of his murder, hardening his heart, kicking against the pricks. About sunrise he climbed up into a tall tree, to look around him. The island, so far as he could see on all sides, seemed one wild and fenceless forest; but there was a high hill, swathed in golden sunlight, perhaps three or four miles inland, which, if he could reach and climb it, would give him a wide prospect, and perhaps show him some inhabited district. To make for this hill, he descended from the tree, and struck into the forest. Daylight had never followed man's axe into that primeval wood. It was full of enormous trees, of old prodigious growth, bursting into wild gums, and rough all over with parasitical plants, and fungi of every colour, like monstrous livers; whilst up and down the trunks ran strange painted birds, pecking into the bark with their hard bills, and dotting the still air with their multi-

tudinous little blows: Deeper from the engulphed navel of the wood came the solitary cries of more sequestered birds. Onward went the wicked Captain, with little caution, however, because he never doubted that he should easily find the mountain; but rough and impervious thickets turned him so oft and so far aside, that gradually he forgot his proposed track, and became quite bewildered. In this perplexity, he again climbed a high tree, to discover the bearing of the hill; but it was no longer to be seen. Nothing was before him and around him but a boundless expanse of tree-tops, which, under a sky now darkened to a twilight, began to moan and surge like a sea. Descending in haste, he tried to retrace his steps; but this it was out of his power distinctly to do, and he only went deeper into the wood, which began to slope downwards perceptibly. Darkness, in the meantime, thickened among the trees, which were seen standing far ben, as in a dream, crooked in their trunks, like the bodies of old men, and altogether unlike the trees of an upper world. Every thing was ominously still, till all at once the millions of leaves were shaken, as if with small eddying bubbles of wind. Forthwith came the tempest. The jagged lightning lanced the forest-gulfs with its swift and perilous beauty; whilst overhead the thunder was crushed and jammed through the broken heavens, making the living rafters of the forest to quiver like reeds. Whether real or imaginary, the wicked Captain thought that he heard, at the same time, the roar of wild beasts, and saw the darkness spotted with their fiery eyes; and to save himself from them, he climbed up into a tree, and sat in its mossy clefts. As the storm above and beneath ranged away, and again drew nearer and nearer, with awful alternations, the heart of the wicked Captain began to whirl within him, tugged at by immediate horrors, and the sense of ultimate consequences, from his helpless situation. In his agony, he twisted himself from branch to branch, like a monkey, braiding his legs, and making rings with his arms; at the same time crying out about his crime, and babbling a sort of delirious repentance. In a moment the tempest was over-blown, and

every thing hushed, as if the Heavens wished to listen to his contrition. But it was no contrition, nothing but a jumble of fear and blasphemy; such a babbling as a man might make if he were drunk with the Devil's tears, gathered, as they come glittering like mineral drops down the murky rocks of Damnation, in bottles made of the tough hearts of old vindictive queens.—Holy Mother! Do you hear me, Signor Romelli? By the Holy Mother of Grace! you and I, Signor, think he ought to have repented sincerely, do we not?—Well, what next? God does not despise any working of the sinner's heart, when allied, even most remotely, to repentance; and because the wicked Captain had felt the first tearings of remorseful fear, God sent to him, from the white land of sinless children, the young little Cherub of Pity. And when the wicked Captain lifted up his eyes and looked into the forest, he saw far off, as at the end of a long vista, the radiant Child coming on in naked light; and drawing near, the young Being whispered to him, that he would lead him out of the forest, and bring a ship for him, if he would go home, and on his knees confess his crime to the aged parents of the youth whom he had murdered, and be to them as a son for the only son whom they had lost. The wicked Captain readily vowed to perform these conditions, and so the Babe of Pity led him out of the forest, and taking him to a high promontory above the sea-shore, bade him look to the sea: And the promised ship was seen hanging like a patch of sunshine on the far blue rim of the waters. As it came on and came near, the heart of the wicked Captain was again hardened within him, and he determined not to perform his vow.

"Your heart has again waxed obdurate," said the Figure, who still lived before him like a white little dial in the sun; "and I will now turn the ship away, for I have her helm in my hand. Look now, and tell me what thou seest in the sea." The wicked Captain looked for the ship, but it had melted away from off the waters; and

when he turned, in his fury, to lay hold of the White Babe, it was vanished too.

"Come back to me, thou imp," cried the hungry blasphemer, whilst his face waxed grim with wild passions, "or I will hurl this dagger at the face of the Almighty." So saying, he drew a sharp clear dagger from his side, and pointing it upwards, threw it with all his might against the heavens. It was now the breathless noontide hour: not a breeze was stirring in the forest skirts or on beaked promontory. But, all at once, a whirling spiral blast of wind came down from the zenith, and catching that impious poniard, took it away glittering up into the blue bosom of the firmament. Struck with a new horror, despite his hardened heart, the wicked Captain stood looking up to heaven after his dagger, when there fell upon his face five great drops of blood, as if from the five wounds of Christ. And in the same minute, as he was trying to wipe away this Baptism of Wrath, he reeled and fell from the lofty promontory where he stood into the sea, into the arms of the youth whom he had murdered and thrown overboard, and whose corpse had been brought hither by the tides and the wandering winds. So the wicked Captain sunk for ever in the waters.

"Now, Signor Romelli," said the boy Antonio, after a brief pause, "what do you think of my Legend?"

Ere an answer could be returned, a broad sheet of lightning flashed in at the window (for the sky all day had been thick and sultry); and instantly it was followed by a tremendous peal of thunder, which doubly startled the company sitting in the twilight room.

"Get up, foolish boy," said Romelli, his deep voice a little tremulous, whilst at the same time he struck Antonio gently with his foot. Not more quickly did the disguised Prince of Evil, as represented by Milton, start up into his proper shape at the touch of Ithuriel's spear, than did the young Italian spring up at the touch of Romelli's foot. His very stature seemed dilated, and his attitude was

angry and menacing, as for a moment he bent towards the Signor; but its dangerous outline was softened by the darkness, so that it was not distinctly observed; and next moment the youth drew back with this remark, "By Jove! Captain, there was a flash from the very South Sea island in question! What a coincidence! what a demonstration was there! and O! what a glorious mirror plate might be cut from that sheet of fire, for the murderer to see himself in! Thank God, none of us have been in the South Seas, like the wicked Captain in the Legend!"

There was no further reply to this, and Signor Romelli was silent and unusually pale during the remainder of the evening. After waiting one hour, during which there followed no more thunder and lightning, and then a second hour till the moon was up, he arose with his daughter and went home.

SECTION III.

AGAIN the season came round which called Frederick Hume to town for another session, to finish his medical studies, and get his degree as a physician; and once more he prepared to take a tender leave of his Julia, whom he loved more than fame or life. Overcome by his deep passion, he confessed it all to the maiden; and when he caught her trembling at his declaration, how could she explain her emotion otherwise than by confessing, despite her pride, that their love was mutual? or answer for it better than by pledging her troth for ever, in return for his vow of constancy?

About Christmas, Antonio Cardo came from Mr Baillie's to spend a few holidays at Greenwells Cottage. One night Signora Romelli gravely assumed the character of a prophetic improvisatrice, and told the future fortunes of Mrs Mather's household. "And now," said she to Antonio, "come forward young harper; you look there for all the world as if you were about to be set down for a murderer." The boy started and went out; but in a few minutes he returned, and flinging himself on his knees before Miss Romelli, he prayed her, for the love of Heaven, to reverse

her ungentle prophecy. "Up, foolish boy," said Julia; "why, you look indeed as if your conscience were fairly measured, as if the red cap fitted you. Well, Antonio, you are either waggish or simple to an uncommon stretch." The boy rose with a groan, and Julia's father entering the room at this moment, he took up a small knife from the table, and shaking it at the Signor, said, in a voice trembling with emotion, "Your foolish daughter, Sir, says that I am to be a murderer." On no answer being returned, he bit the handle of the knife for a moment, and then laid it down.

Next evening, there was a party at the Cottage, and Julia Romelli was there. During a dance, Antonio, who had refused to play on the harp, sat moodily in a corner, watching the graceful Signora, and lowering against the smiles of her partner; heedless at the same time of his sister, who, when she stopped near him in the dance, gently chid him one while, and then, smiling in her happy mood with a tearful glance, which asked him to share her joy, patted him below the chin, and bade him rise and jig it merrily. Miss Romelli saw the sisterly love of Charlotte; and, in her good-nature, a little while after, she made up to the youth, and speaking to him as if he were merely a bashful timid school-boy, insisted upon his taking part in the dance. "Prithee, do not think me quite a boy," said he in return. Signora, as the best rejoinder, repeated her invitation, upon which he started up, and flinging his arms with mad violence around her neck, kissed her before the whole company. Julia disengaged herself, blushing. There was bridling on the part of the ladies; hearty laughter and cheers from old bachelors; and some of the young gallants looked very high, and ready to call the offender to account. Signor Romelli appeared graver and moodier than usual after the strange salutation. Poor Charlotte hung down her head, and gradually withdrew from the room. As for the culprit himself, he walked haughtily out, and was followed by Mrs Mather, who took him to task in another apartment. The amiable Miss Pearce had likewise followed, to approve her former

prophecy of trouble from such guests; but her patroness was not in the vein for tolerating officious wisdom, and so, forestalling that virgin's charitable purpose, she turned her to the right about in a moment.

"And now, mad boy," demanded the old lady, "what meant you by such an outrageous solecism? For my sake, what did you mean, Antonio Cardo?"

"Kind and gracious lady," he replied," "do not question me just now. But if you would have me saved from perdition, bind me hand and foot, and send me far away over seas and lands."

"If this is all you have to say for yourself," returned Mrs Mather, "it is certainly a very pretty speech; though it is far above my comprehension. No—no, the thing was a breach of good manners; but I don't exactly see that your precious soul is endangered, or that you need be sent to Botany Bay for stealing a bit kiss—doubtless your first offence."

"Well, my excellent apologist," said Antonio, "if you will bring Signora Julia hither, I will ask her forgiveness perhaps."

"You are a very foolish young man indeed," returned the old lady, who was one of those persons whose way it is, without abating from their real good-nature, to rise in their demands or reproaches when any thing like concession has been made. "I say it—a very foolish boy; and I have a great mind to let the young lady be angry at you for ever; and so I don't think I shall either bring her or send her."

Cardo knew very well that these words of his hostess, as she left the apartment, implied any thing but a decisive negative; and he sat waiting the entrance of Miss Romelli, who, in a few minutes, made her appearance accordingly, with Mrs Mather. "Now, my most gracious Madam," said the youth, rising and turning to the latter, "you must give us leave for a brief while, for I have something particular to say to this young lady." Mrs Mather looked to Signora. "O! yes, by all means," said Julia,

"do according to his request, and let me hear this wonderful secret."

When Mrs Mather had retired, the boy Cardo advanced, and said to Miss Romelli, in a voice trembling with emotion, "Will you judge me, fair Italian, and condemn me by cold-hearted rules? If you do, I ask ten thousand pardons for my rudeness to-night."

"And pray, Sir, what right have I to give dispensations beyond the laws of prudent society?"

"O! let me vary my question then, beautiful woman," said the passionate boy, flinging himself on his knees before her—"Can you forgive my deep soul for loving you to madness, Julia Romelli?"

"Shall I laugh at you for a very foolish boy, or shall I bid you rise at once, if you would not have me leave the apartment as quickly? Now, Sir, that you are up (for you seem to dread the imputation of boyhood), let me tell you, when I spoke of the laws of society, I gave you no liberty to suppose that my own maidenly feeling would be more liberal than such laws. The truth is, I have nothing farther to say or hear, unless you sent for me to ask pardon for your breach of good manners, in which case, I readily allow, I mistook you so much as heedlessly to give you some provocation. As for the offence itself, really you seem so very foolish that I know not whether I do right in saying (with a smile) that it was not by any means very grievous."

"Is that all? Is that all?" exclaimed the Italian boy. "No—no; you must let my heart love you, and you must love me in return. O! if you value your father's life, and your own peace, and if you would save me from perdition, you must become my wife, lady!"

"Why, Sir, I do think it were charity to believe you have lost your reason: You are most foolish else. I will not stay to debate your boyish proposal; but, young Sir —Antonio Cardo I think is your name—can you—"

"Mother in Heaven!" interrupted Cardo, "do you think so? only think so? Why, my sister's name is Charlotte

Cardo, and I do think she is a lady. You will say, Are we not dependent? Yes, to that: for a certain overwhelming reason I have allowed it for a little while; but soon the whole shall be accounted for."

"Condescend not for me, Sir," said Julia, "to vindicate your dignity or pride: I have no right, nor am I disposed, to offend either."

"Perhaps not, young lady. But be wise and wary as you list, cold and cruel, I shall only love you the more, or plague you with my demon: there are but two alternatives; and I must be miserable in either, I am afraid."

"Sir," said Julia angrily, and walking away, "I will pay you the only compliment I can reasonably bestow upon you, by telling you that your conduct obliges me to discontinue my visits in future at this house."

"One moment—stay then, Signora," cried Antonio, stepping between her and the door: "Listen to me this once: Mrs Mather loves you dearly, and so does Frederick Hume, and so does Charlotte Cardo, and so does ——. Well, so do you also delight to visit at this house. Never for me, then, shall you forego that delight; never for me shall the three excellent persons I have just named forego your glad presence. I will leave this house for ever to-morrow morning, nor plague you more."

"I must now do you justice," said the fair Italian; "and though you certainly speak like a foolish boy, I will not urge this, but address you as a frank, open-minded, honourable man, and tell you at once that my affections are already engaged, and my vow of constancy made to another."

"Enough said, Signora Romelli: I can guess who that highly favoured youth is: and I will say there is not a nobler heart than his in all the earth. Forgive me, Madam, and let me not detain you any longer."

The lady withdrew, and Antonio, locking the door, paced hurriedly up and down the apartment.

Signor Romelli in the meantime had retired from the house. "By Heaven!" said he to himself, as he strode up and down the moonlit bank of a neighbouring stream, "this

boy, Cardo, knows it all—whether from prophetic divination, or whether the sea hath given up her dead to denounce me. I will as soon believe that those brains of his, hot and seething though they are, could produce the literal dagger which his hand seems always in the act of clutching, as that they could frame that celebrated Sea-legend, without some horrid collusion. Well, 'tis passing strange! But the imp seems daily ripening for some disclosure, or for some act of vengeance, and I must forestall him in both. How shall it be done? Stay now, let me see—he is nearly mad, that must be allowed by all—well, then, can't I get a professional verdict to that effect? Hold! is not Stewart, the principal physician of the Lunatic Asylum in the neighbouring town, a suitor of my daughter: I can easily see that he is bold and unprincipled, and the other consulting doctors are old wives. Well, may I not possess Stewart with the belief that my daughter loves this Antonio Cardo, and get him to have the necessary formula of warrant made out for the removal of the boy to the Madhouse, in virtue of his late strange behaviour, which, to the common authorities, will amply justify a charge of lunacy? Stewart, I think, will do it in the faith that my daughter will never give herself to one that has been in Bedlam; and I, for my share, shall gain the security, that whatever Cardo may hint or declare in future, relative to what I think he knows of me, will be readily ascribed to a taint of remaining madness. Let us only have him, for however short a time, in that redoubted place, and it will serve Stewart's purpose and mine; but if the horrid sympathy of the house drive him actually crazy, so much the better. Stewart is at present in the Cottage, and why may not the thing be carried into effect this very night?"

Romelli lost no time in making his representations to Stewart, who, hearing the Signor's professions in his favour relative to Julia's love, if Cardo could be morally blackballed, gave in without hesitation to the wicked scheme. Mrs Mather, overcome by the explanations of the Doctor, and by the dread of having a madman in her house, was constrained to accede to it also; and she charitably under-

took to detain Charlotte in a remote part of the house, till the usual warrant should be got ready, and her brother should be carried off, which was to be done as quietly as possible. The door, however, of the room in which he had locked himself had to be forced, as he could not be prevailed upon to open it; and ere the constables, who were employed in the affair, could do this, and overcome the resistance which he offered to their attempts to seize him, the whole house had been alarmed, and crowded to see what was the matter. Charlotte, when she saw her brother in custody, uttered a piercing shriek, and fell in a swoon to the ground: Some of the ladies retired with her; others, with compassion, drew around the hapless boy; while Stewart, who was a bold and callous tactician, would not attend the unhappy sister till he had enforced the necessity of sending the brother to the Madhouse.

"Ha!" cried poor Antonio, at mention of this horrid destination; and a convulsive shudder ran through his frame. He turned a rueful glance on Julia Romelli, and trembled as if his slight body would be shaken to pieces. "So, you ruffians," he said at length, "you have crushed my poor sister down to the earth; and all for what? Where is my broken flower? Well, she is better hence. Lead on! And, gentlemen, I am not very mad perhaps! Look to Charlotte, and tell her I have escaped: Anything but ——Lead him out then, away with him!" He bowed to the company with a kind of wild, reeling energy; and was led away manacled.

SECTION IV.

MUCH, indeed, was Frederick Hume surprised and shocked to hear from Mrs Mather's next letter of Antonio's fate; and he determined to visit the country as soon as possible, for the express purpose of seeing the poor Italian boy. A few weeks after this, he was sitting in his apartment one evening with two or three of his College chums, when his landlady announced to him that a young lady was in another room waiting to see him. "Who can it possibly be?" said Frederick, rising and following the

mistress of the house. "Ah! you are a lucky dog, Hume," observed one of his companions. "Some very fond, faithful, or despairing sheperdess," said a second.

Little did these gay chaps know the cause of such a visit, for it was poor Charlotte Cardo herself; and no sooner did she see Frederick, than grasping his proffered hand, she fell on her knees, and looking him wistfully in the face, cried, "Oh! my poor brother! have mercy on me, good Sir, and help him."

"My child!" said Hume, raising her, "I am afraid I can do little for him; but I will lose no time now in seeing him. Can I do anything for him in the meantime?"

"I do not know, Sir," said Charlotte, confusedly; aware, probably for the first time, that she had undertaken a foolish journey.

"And have you come all this way, Charlotte, for my poor help?"

"O! speak not, Mr Hume, of miles, or hundreds of miles, in such a case, if you can do anything for us. I am told there are great physicians in this city. Perhaps you know them, and perhaps"—— She stopped short.

"Well, my good girl," said Frederick, clapping her on the shoulder, "for your sisterly love, every thing shall be done for your brother that man can do. I will see him myself first, and that ere long; and then I will consult on his case with one or two eminent doctors, friends of mine."

"God bless you, Sir, all the days of your life!" said the Italian girl, sobbing almost hysterically from her full heart: "I have no other friend on earth that I can seriously trust; they are all hollow, or foolish in their kindness."

"Does Mrs Mather know of this pious journey of yours, Charlotte?" asked Frederick.

"Forgive me, Sir—she tried very much to dissuade me, and bade me write if I chose—but, pardon me, I thought it better——"

"To see me personally, you would say? Well, Charlotte, you argue fairly that letters are but second-rate advocates; though, to do myself justice, I think, in such

a case as this of your brother's illness, the mere representation of the thing was enough to make me do my very utmost. Now, Charlotte, that you may not be ultimately disappointed, let me warn you——" The maiden here looked so piteously, that he was fain to add, "Well, I have good hopes that he may soon recover."

To this Charlotte answered nothing; for, in the natural sophistry of the heart under an overwhelming wish, she durst not appear confident, lest she should again provoke the doubts of her medical Aristarch; as if the evil were not, when she had not heard it literally expressed by another. Yet still, when Hume tried to change the conversation, by asking indifferent questions, she brought it back to the subject which engrossed her heart, by citing instances of some who had been confined as lunatics, though they were not such, and of others who had gradually recovered their reason. The issue of the interview was, that Frederick promised he would make a point of being at Greenwells in little more than a week.

In less than ten days Hume visited Antonio in his cell, and found the poor boy lying lowly in his straw, and chained, because, as the Keeper explained, he had made the most desperate efforts to get out. He arose, as Hume entered, and, with a suspicious look, demanded, "Are you also come to spy out the nakedness of the land?"

"Do you not know me, Antonio?" asked Frederick, kindly.

"I think I do," answered the boy, with a faint smile; "but do you know me under this sad change of affairs?"

"You have not been very well, I understand?" said Hume.

"No doubt you were given to understand so," was the answer; "but if you will request that official gentleman to retire for a little, I shall undeceive you."

Frederick did so; and the Keeper having withdrawn accordingly, the poor patient, with a tear in his eye, looked eagerly at Hume, and said, "Are you, too, against me? Holy Virgin! will you also leave me here, and go and tell the world I am truly mad?"

"Well, my good boy," said Frederick, "you must be very quiet, and you will soon give the lie to the charge. I am glad to see you as you are."

"God in Heaven! to be sure, Sir: As you say, very quiet I must be; and reason good; and all that! Let me tell you, Dr Hume, you have not a good method with madmen. Nothing manages them so well as grave banter, half-angry and half-yielding; or stern and unmitigated awe, which overrules them as the lower range of the creation is controlled by the 'human face divine.' You may try these methods with me, if you think me *bona fide* insane. But, O! rather hear me, Sir, this once, and give me justice: take for granted that I am in my right mind: affect neither kindness nor menace in your words; but speak with me as man to man, and then you shall not lose perhaps the only opportunity of saving my body and my spirit from this unhallowed coercion, for I may soon be ill enough."

"Whatever you have to state," returned Hume, "I will in the first place hear you without interruption."

"I readily grant," said the supposed maniac, "that you have good reason to believe me insane, and that it is a very difficult thing for you to be satisfied of the contrary. On the other hand, it is no easy matter for me, chafed and tortured as I have been by my horrid confinement, to refrain from the 'winged words' of an indignant spirit. But I will try to be calm and consistent, and you must try to be unprejudiced and discriminating. You see, Sir, I go to work scarcely like a lunatic, since I have sense and reason to provide allowance for preliminary difficulties."

"Very well; tell me what you wish, good Antonio: what can I do for you?"

"Either you have little tact, Dr Hume, or you still think me mad, since you speak in that peculiar tone of voice—I know it well. The God of Heaven help me in my words at this time, that I may not speak from my full and burning heart, and you misinterpret me!"

"My dear fellow, Antonio Cardo," said Frederick, with

kind earnestness, "for your own sake, and for your sister Charlotte's sake, I will not leave this part of the country, till I have thoroughly sifted the cause and reasonableness of your confinement; yet you must allow me to do the thing with prudence. I may not be able to get you released to-night; but, as I said before, I am disposed this very moment to hear and judge what you have to propose or state. I think you ought not to be suspicious of me now."

"Ave Maria!" said Antonio, "Holy Virgin of Grace! you have sent one wise and honourable man to my wretched cell, and I think my hour of deliverance must now be at hand. What shall I say to you, Dr Hume? What argument shall I try, to lay fast a foundation on which your faith in my sanity may be built? For O! assuredly, beneath the gracious eye of Heaven, there cannot be a fitter temple for Charity to dwell in. The truth is, Frederick Hume, I may at times in my life have felt the madness of whirling and intense passion; and I have a horrid fear that my days shall close in darkness, in pits which I dare not name, in dreams, the dark alienation of the mind. I am thus candid, the better to assure you that my soul at present is self-possessed and compact, of firm and wholesome service. Think, too, that I have leapt against my cage till my heart has been well-nigh breaking; that my spirit, from feverish irritability, has been a furnace seven times heated, in the next alternation of feelings, to be overwhelmed by a suffocating calmness. Remember that I have lived for months amidst those horrid cries which thicken the air of this place; and, above all, that I know well I should not be here. Such things may make me mad at times; but say, am not I tolerably well, every drawback considered?"

"Good God!" answered Frederick, "what then could be their purpose or meaning in this confinement of yours?"

"My heart, Dr Hume, is ready to cast out corresponding flames with your indignant question; but I will be calm, and not commit myself, because I still

think God hath brought round a gracious hour and a just man. What shall I say to you again? Try me by any process of logic. Shall it be an *argumentum ad hominem*, as my kind old tutor styles it? Shall I reason on my present situation, and tell you that things are not well managed in this place? The treatment is too uniform, and general, and unmodified; whereas, by a proper scale, the patient should be led from one degree of liberty to another, according to his good behaviour, that so he might calculate, that so he might exercise and strengthen his reason, that so he might respect himself, and gradually improve. Now, Sir, judge me aright. Nature, in dread apprehension, sets me far above vanity; and I will ask you, Have I not uttered deep wisdom? You have not detected aught like the disjointed fervour of lunacy in my speech? My thoughts are not abrupt and whirling; but well attempered, and softly shaded, as the coming-on of sleep."

"By my soul, Cardo," said Frederick, "I think you have been most grossly abused."

"Have I not? have I not?"

"Whose doing was this? and can you guess why it was?" asked Hume.

"I owe it to Romelli and Stewart," answered Antonio: "The wherefore I know not, unless it be that I have loved too ardently, and shall never cease to love Signora Romelli. Go away, Sir, and be like the rest of the world; leave me here to perish, for you, too, love the maiden, and may be offended at my passion."

"It is my business, in the first instance," answered Hume, "to follow common humanity and justice. I will instantly overhaul this damnable oppression, and call the above men to tax. You must be quiet in the meantime."

"O! let it not be long, then! let it not be long! let it not be long! If you knew how my good angel, young Charlotte Cardo, has made me hope for your coming! If you knew how I have counted the weeks, the days, the hours, the minutes, for you! How my heart has beat

loudly at every sound for you, from morning till night darkened above my rustling straw, and all for your coming! And in the tedious night-watches too, when my soul longed in vain to rest for a little while beyond the double gates of horn and ivory, in the weary land of Morpheus! Merciful sleep! Merciful sleep! how many worn and ghostlike spirits yearn and cry to be within the dreamy girdle of thy enchanted land! Let them in, O God! The body's fever and the mind's fever; calentures of the brain and careerings of the pulse; wrath and revenge; and apprehension and trembling; fears of death that visit me in the night when I lie here; terror to be alone, lest indeed I lose my reason; and Oh! hope deferred; and then outwardly, around me day and night, beleaguering the issues of my soul, and making me mad by the mere dint of habit, wild laughter unfathomed by reason, sharp cries, 'as fast as mill-wheels strike,' shrieking groans as from the hurt mandrake, muddy blasphemies, enough to turn the sweet red blood of the hearer into black infatuation and despair,—add all these precious ingredients to the boiling heart of pride within, and what have you got? Oh! something worse than a witch's cauldron, boiling 'thick and slab,' and casting up the smeared scums of Hell! And such, Sir, has been my lot here; and therefore I pray that God may put swift gracious thoughts for me into your heart! O! let it not be long; for the knowledge of hope will make me only the more irritable, and it will be very dangerous for me if that hope be deferred. I will amuse myself counting off bundles of straw till you visit me again; if you do not die, as I am afraid you may, ere you can free me."

"Now then, I must take my leave of you, Antonio, as it is needless for me to say any thing farther at this time."

"For the love of the sweet Virgin Mother, Frederick Hume," said the Italian boy, throwing himself down among his straw with a violence which made his chains rattle, "speak comfort to my sister, who has pitched her tent and set down her soul's rest within the shadow of one unhappy boy's heart. I shall sleep none to-night. Fare-

well, and think upon me!" He nestled with his head in the straw, and Frederick Hume left the unhappy place.

SECTION V.

THE Keeper of the Asylum had either been convinced of Cardo's lunacy, or had been bribed to make his reports to that effect; and Hume, when he entered the poor boy's cell, had no doubt whatever that the thing was as represented; but now he was fully convinced of the contrary, and proceeded without delay to challenge the wicked or foolish affair. Had the first movers of it thought that he was to be in the country so soon, they would probably have taken care not to let him visit Antonio privately; and they were not a little startled when Hume entered his strong remonstrance, and declared that the boy had been most unjustifiably confined. As for Romelli, his ends were already in a great measure served, and so he cared little farther about the matter. Stewart, who was jealous of Hume's professional character and his present interference, made a show as if he would gainsay him to the very uttermost. The other consulting physicians, nettled, no doubt, that their grave wisdom should be impugned by a stripling, were in a disposition sooner to fortify themselves in injustice, than to see and acknowledge the truth, were it made as plain as day to them. When they heard, however, that Hume was determined to make a representation of the case to the Magistrates of the place, and to visit the Institution again ere long, with one or two of the principal Edinburgh physicians, they were somewhat alarmed. At length Stewart, from his uneasy consciousness of the truth of what Frederick had stated, resolved that Cardo should have an opportunity of making his escape, which would save himself the shame of being publicly obliged to yield to Hume's interference.

About a week after the interview in the Asylum betwixt Antonio and our young doctor, Miss Pearce, Signor Romelli, and his daughter (for the Signor had excused himself pretty well to Frederick), and two or three more, were sitting one evening in Mrs Mather's parlour. The candles had just

been lighted. Immediately the door opened, and admitted a young man bare-headed, and in worn attire. As he came slowly forward, he waved his hand mournfully, and attempted to speak; but seemed, from emotion, unable to do so. He was now seen to be Antonio Cardo; though he had grown so tall of late, and was so very pale, he was not easily recognised. There was a tear in his eye, a slight dilatation of his nostril, and a quivering all round his mouth, like one whose honour has been doubted, and who has just come from trial and danger, and indignant victory. Were an idiot to gain reason and high intellect, and be seen walking stately with wise men, who would not weep at the sublime sight? Nor is it without awful interest that we behold a man composed and serene, after coming out of a dark dream of insanity, the fine light of reason exhaling from the unsettled chaos of his eye, and a tear there, the last witness of the unaccountable struggle. Some of the young ladies, who now saw Antonio Cardo, had been talking of him a little before, and styling him "poor unhappy creature;" but no sooner did he appear before them, redeemed, as they thought him to be, from the Madhouse, graceful and beautifully pale as he was, than he gained the yearning respect of all, and was a prouder object to every heart than a bridegroom from his chamber. He advanced slowly without speaking, and sat down on a sofa like a wayfaring man wearied out with his journey. Charlotte entered the room. "There he is at last!" cried she, when she saw him; and throwing herself upon his neck, she swooned away, overcome with joy. Kindly for a while did God hold her spirit entranced, that she might not be agonized at her brother's sudden and strange departure. For Antonio at this moment observing Signor Romelli, whom his weak and dazzled eyes had not seen till now, laid his sister, like an indifferent thing, upon the sofa, started forward, and pointing with his finger to Romelli, whispered deeply, "Have I found you, O! mine enemy? Take care of that man, good people, or my soul shall tear him to pieces."

Like an unreclaimed savage, the boy ground his teeth

as he hung for a moment in his threatening attitude; but he was seen to be working under some strong restraint, till all at once he rushed out of the house, and was lost in the dark night. Days, weeks, and months passed away, and still he came not; nor had his friends heard anything of him. During the summer, every young beggar lad that came to Greenwells Cottage, was keenly scrutinized by poor Charlotte Cardo; and every day she went to the top of a green hill in the neighbourhood, to look for travellers coming along the road, or over the open moor. But all her anxiety was in vain; Antonio came not, and she began to droop. In the house, she walked softly with downcast eyes; she was silent and kind, and very shy, though every one loved her. Amidst gay company, she scarcely seemed to know where she was, sitting motionless on her chair, or obligingly playing to the dance without ever seeming to be wearied. To every one that kindly requested her to take part in the amusement, she answered by a shake of the head and a faint smile.

Besides sorrow for her brother's unaccountable absence, another passion, which no one suspected, was beginning to prey upon the heart of this Italian maiden; and no sooner did she hear Frederick Hume, about the beginning of autumn, propose to go in a few weeks to Paris, there to remain during the winter, than she declined so fast in her health, that in a short time she could scarcely walk about the house. Observing with infinite regret her increasing feebleness, Frederick humanely resolved to defer his journey till he should see the issue of her illness; and, in the meantime, he procured for her the best medical attendance, determined to do every thing which human skill could do for the beautiful alien. By the advice of his medical friends, in accordance with his own view of the case, he would have sent her to her native Italy; but this she over-ruled, declaring she would be buried in Mrs Mather's own aisle.

"Can none of you tell me," said she one day to Frederick, who was alone with her in the room, as she sat upon the sofa, "what has become of my poor harper?"

To be sure, Charlotte," he answered; "I know very well where he is. He is off to Italy for a while, and will take care of himself for your sake, that you may rely upon."

"You are a kind gentleman, Sir," returned the maiden; "but it will not do. Yet what boots such a life as mine? Let me die. You will be happy with the beautiful Signora Romelli when I am gone, and then she will be assured that I cannot envy her."

As she said this, she covered her face with one hand, whilst she extended the other. It was pale as a lily bleached with rains; and well could Frederick see that the narrow blue rings of Death, her bridegroom, were on the attenuated fingers. He took the hand and gently kissed it, bidding her be of good cheer, and saying she must take care of her life for her brother's sake. At this the maiden, not without a little irritable violence, hastily withdrew her hand, and used it to assist in hiding the tears which began to burst through between the fingers of the other. Trembling succeeded, and a violent heaving of the heart, such as threatened to rend her beautiful body in pieces. At this delicate moment Mrs Mather entered the room, and hastened to her assistance.

One afternoon about a week after this, an eminent doctor from the neighbouring town, who generally attended the maiden, took Frederick Hume aside, and in answer to his inquiries regarding her appearance that day, said, "There is but one possible way, Hume, of saving that girl's life."

"For God's sake, name it!" returned Frederick.

"You will be surprised, perhaps shocked, Dr Hume," continued the other physician; "but it is my duty to tell it to you. Well, then, that Italian girl is dying of love for you."

"Whom do you mean, Sir? Not Charlotte Cardo?" said Frederick, afraid of the conviction which had flashed upon him.

"I cannot be wrong, Frederick," replied the other. "Mrs Mather hinted the thing to me a week ago. I myself

have seen it from the manner of the girl, and her emotion in your presence, compared with her manner when I visited her without your being with me. To-day she spoke of you under a slight degree of delirium; and when she recovered, I made her confess the whole to me."

"You have at least done well to tell me," said Hume, anxiously. "But what must be done?"

"Why, Sir, as the mere physician in this case, my opinion generally, and without any reference to other circumstances, is, that you must formally make the damsel your bride this very night, if you would give her a chance for life. To remove her preying suspense, and the dread of losing you, may calm her spirit, and lead to ultimate recovery."

"You are an honest, but severe counsellor," said Frederick, shaking his medical friend by the hand with desperate energy; "but, for God's sake, go not away till you tell me what is to be done. Were myself merely the sacrifice, I would not hesitate one moment—nor perhaps think it a sacrifice. But I stand pledged to another lady —to Miss Romelli. And now, how can I act? Can there not be at least a little delay—say for a week?"

"I think not, Sir. No, assuredly. But—"

"Sir?" demanded Frederick, eagerly interrupting him: "Speak to me, Sir, and propose something: I have entire confidence in your wisdom."

"I was merely about to remark," continued the uncompromising physician, "that it is indeed a puzzling case."

"The worst of it is," said Hume, "Miss Romelli is at least fifty miles hence, with her father at bathing-quarters; and I ought, by all means, to see her and be ruled by her in this matter. Such is certainly my duty."

"Much may be said on both sides," briefly remarked the physician, who, most abstractly conscientious in his professional character, would not advise against the means of saving his patient's life.

"I will bear the blame then," said Hume, after a short but intense pause." I cannot see that orphan-child perish,

without my attempting to save her. Miss Romelli, I trust, will either be proud or magnanimous, and so—the sooner the ceremony is performed the better."

The next point was to break the proposal to Mrs Mather; but, besides her wish to see Miss Romelli become the wife of Frederick, she was scandalized at the idea of his marrying a girl, whom, with all her affection for Charlotte, she hesitated not at this time to style a wandering gipsy. "Prithee, Madam," said Frederick, bitterly, "do not so speak of my wife that is to be; but go prepare for this wedding of ours."

"Never, never," replied the old lady: "it is all vile art in the hussy to inveigle you into a snare, I can see that."

"Nevertheless, the thing shall be done," returned Hume firmly. "And I must tell you, Madam, without any reference to my interest in her, that you are doing gross injustice to the poor girl, and mocking a bruised heart."

"It may be so, Sir," said Mrs Mather, haughtily: "and, moreover, you may do as you list; but you shall not have my countenance at least."

Accordingly, the old lady left the Cottage without delay, and took refuge at the house of a friend, about six miles off, determined there to stay till bridegroom and bride should leave her own dwelling. Meanwhile, Frederick was not disconcerted; but with almost unnatural decision summoned Miss Pearce, and one or two maids from the neighbouring Village, to prepare his bride, and attend her at the strange nuptials. He was too manly to fulfil the letter, without regarding the fine spirit of his sacrifice; and, accordingly, he took every precaution not to let Charlotte know that Mrs Mather had left the house, because the marriage was against her wish. Miss Pearce, when she learned the flight of her patroness, began to remonstrate against having any part in the transaction; but Hume drew her aside, and spoke to her emphatically as follows:—"Why, Miss Pearce, what means this? You know you have been a very obliging madam for a score of years or so, vastly obliging indeed, never wanting for a moment with your

excellent appliances, a most discreet time-server. You know very well, too, what reason I have to dislike you. I shall soon control Mrs Mather. By my soul! then, you shall now do as I bid you, or be cashiered for ever. Moreover, a word to the wise: you are getting very sharp in the elbows now, you know, and ought to be very thankful for one chance more. So you shall be bride's-maid this evening; and if you enact the thing discreetly, and catch every little prophetic rite and omen by the forelock, why who knows but your own turn may be next: Think of the late luck of your next door neighbour, that fat overwhelming sexagenarian; and despair not. I am peremptory, Miss Pearce, if you please."

The poor creature had not spirit to resist Hume's determination of manner, which she easily recognised through his moody and (but that he knew her to be the Pearce) insolent address. She prepared to obey him; yet making, like a staunch Jesuit, her mental reservations, and storing up his obnoxious language to be avenged, should an opportunity ever occur.

And now the small company of bridal guests were assembled in the lighted hall. Frederick Hume stood by his bride Charlotte Cardo, and took her by the trembling hand. The ceremony was performed by a Justice of the Peace, because, owing to the hasty preparation, it could not be done according to the forms of the Church. During the brief repeating of the marriage obligations, there were death and fire mingled in the bride's eye; her heart was heard by all present beating,

"Even as a madman beats upon a drum;"

and no sooner was the marriage fully declared, than she sprung forward, threw her arms around Frederick's neck, kissed him with wild energy, and exclaimed, "O! my own husband!" There was a faint and fluttering sound, like the echo of her passionate exclamation, as she sunk back upon the sofa, before which she had been standing; the lord of life came reeling down from the bright round throne of the eye; her eyelid flickered for a moment; her

lips moved, but nothing was heard—yet it was easily interpreted to be a wordless blessing for her beloved one before her, by the smile which lay upon her placid upturned face, like moonlight upon marble. Thus died Charlotte Cardo, and Frederick Hume was a husband and a widower in the same moment of time.

SECTION VI.

WITH decent and manly composure Frederick ordered the preparations for the funeral of his short-lived spouse; and Mrs Mather, having returned home truly affected at the fate of Charlotte, repentant of her own last harshness to the dying maid, and touched with a sense of Frederick's noble behaviour, gave ample permission to the youth to lay the body of his Italian wife in their family aisle, which was done accordingly, three days after her death. Frederick laid her head in the grave, and continued in deep mourning for her.

According to decent forms, Dr Hume would willingly enough have abstained for some time from explanations with Signora Romelli about their engagement; but, according to the spirit of his pledge, and his true affection for that lady, which had been virtually unaltered even while he most openly compromised it, he wrote to Julia a few days after the funeral, stating the whole circumstances, asking her pardon if he had wronged her, declaring his inalienable affection for her, yet modestly alleging that he had first broken his vow, and that he was at her mercy whether or not she would still be bound to him by hers. Such was Frederick's letter to Julia, which, had it been in time, she would have kissed with tears, a moment angry, yet soon honouring her lover the more for the difficult and humane part he had acted; but ere the letter reached its destination, Julia Romelli was lost to him for ever. Dr Stewart, who, as already stated, was Hume's rival, had engaged Miss Pearce in his interest, to do every thing she could by remote hint and open statement to advance his suit with Signora Romelli; and we can easily suppose that this intermediate party, from her dislike to Frederick,

and her jealousy of Julia's favour with Mrs Mather, was not idle in her new office. On the very evening of Charlotte Cardo's marriage and death, she sought an interview with Stewart; reminded him of Miss Romelli's pride; advised him, without losing a moment, to wait upon that lady and urge his own respectful claims in contrast with Hume's ill usage; and tendered a letter, already written, for Stewart to carry with him to Julia, in which, under the character of a friend, jealous of Miss Romelli's honour, she stated the fact of Hume's having married Charlotte Cardo, without mentioning the qualifying circumstances, or stating that the rival bride was already dead. Stewart was mean enough to follow this crooked policy to the utmost: The she-devil, Pearce, had calculated too justly on poor Julia's proud heart: He pressed his suit, was accepted by the Italian maid in her fit of indignation against Frederick, and they were married privately in great haste.

Hume got no answer from Julia, but in a few days he heard of her marriage—and felt that he was cut off for ever from the hopes of life: For he had loved passionately, and with his whole being.

Days, weeks, months of agony passed over him. One while he cursed the pride and cruelty of Julia (for he knew not the part which Miss Pearce had acted); and he made a vow in his soul, for his own peace of mind, never again to see her in this mortal life. Then he was disposed to curse the memory of Charlotte Cardo, but his heart was too magnanimous to let him long give way to this feeling. On the contrary, to keep down such thoughts, and to be strictly and severely just, he got Mrs Mather's consent to let a table-stone be placed in her aisle, with this inscription, "CHARLOTTE CARDO, WIFE TO DR FREDERICK HUME."

One day the youth went alone to the church-yard, to see the tablet for the first time after its erection. As he bent over it, filled with a multitude of hurrying thoughts, a strain of solemn music burst upon his ear, and, on looking up, there was Antonio Cardo within the

door of the aisle, playing upon an organ. He was bare-headed, and tears glittered in his eyes, which were upturned with a wild pathos, as, in accompaniment with the rolling organ, he chanted the following dirge:—

The stars that shine o'er day's decline may tell the hour of love,
The balmy whisper in the leaves, the golden moon above;
But vain the hour of softest power: the noon is dark to thee,
My sister and my faithful one!—And Oh! her death to me!

In sickness, aye, I cried for her—her beauty and her kiss:
For her my soul was loath to leave so fair a world as this:
And glad was I when day's soft gold again upon me fell,
And the sweetest voice in all the earth said, "Brother, art thou well?"

She led me where the voice of streams the leafy forest fills,
She led me where the white sheep go o'er the shining turfy hills;
And when the gloom upon me fell, O! she, the fairest beam,
Led forth, with silver leading-strings, my soul from its dark dream.

Now, sailing by, the butterfly may through the lattice peer,
To tell the prime of summer-time, the glory of the year;
But ne'er for her: to death her eyes have given up their trust,
And I cannot reach her in the grave to clear them from the dust.

But in the skies her pearly eyes the Mother-Maid hath kissed,
And she hath dipped her sainted foot in the sunshine of the blessed.
Eternal peace her ashes keep, who loved me through the past!
And may good Christ my spirit take to be with hers at last!

With a softened heart Frederick listened to the strain; but, after it had ceased, and Antonio had kissed his sister's name upon the stone, he could not refrain, in an alternation of sterner feeling, from saying, "By Heaven! most unhappy wanderer, the thing is all your own doing: Your folly has ruined us all."

The Italian answered not, save by throwing himself down on the ground, and kissing Frederick's feet.

"Rise up, Sir," said Hume, angrily; "I like not your demonstrations: I like nothing beyond common sense and feeling. As for yourself, I know you not: I do not know what character you are of, or any thing about your family."

"By the Holy Mother! you shall soon know me then," said Cardo, springing proudly up: "Promise to meet me here on Saturday night at twelve o'clock, and you shall see me then no longer the weak boy you have spurned, but

one that can be strong and do justice. Do you promise to meet me?"

"How am I interested in your scheme of justice?" demanded Frederick.

"You do not fear me, Sir?" asked the Italian in return. "Surely the man that so honoured Charlotte Cardo as you have done, need not fear me."

"Why, Sir," said Frederick, "to tell you a circumstance which you have no right to know, in these late days I do not hold my life of more value than a box of grasshoppers."

"You can have no scruple then to meet me," said Cardo. "And you may have some wish to hear me explain a few circumstances relative to our family, my own character, and the cause of my late absence. You shall also learn something about Signor Romelli. Have I your sure promise to meet me then at this place?"

"I care not though I do," answered Hume, "since I am weary of every thing common under the sun, and especially since it is a very pretty hour for a man to speculate a little in."

"You are too careless by half for my purpose," said the Italian.

"Faith, not so," returned Frederick: "Nay, my good friend, I will on my knees on this stone swear to meet you. Well, did you say on Saturday?"

"This is mere moody trifling all, Dr Hume; but no matter, I will ere then give you a memento to mind Saturday night: hour—twelve o'clock."

"You go home with me in the interim, I presume?" said Frederick: "You have played the truant from school too long."

"Farewell! and remember your promise," answered Antonio: "I do not go with you at present." He accordingly hasted away from Frederick, without answering his farther inquiries.

On the forenoon of the following Saturday, Hume received a note from Cardo, reminding him of his engagement at twelve o'clock that night; which, to do Frederick

justice, he had not forgotten, and which he had resolved to fulfil, chiefly from the excellent motive of seeing the poor Italian lad again, and offering to put him in some other respectable situation in life, if he did not choose to pursue his classical studies. A considerable while before the appointed hour our Doctor took the way to the church-yard, which was about a quarter of a mile from Mrs Mather's house. The belated moon was rising in the east, in an inflamed sphere, as of spilt wine and blood; and the light of her red-barred face tinged the dark tops of the yews, which stood bristling like angry feathers around the church-yard, at the gate of which Hume was now arrived. The owl came sailing by his head on muffled wing, and flew about musing over the graves. The next minute Frederick was startled at hearing the reports of two pistols, one a little after the other; and making his way towards the quarter whence the sounds had come, he was led to his own aisle. On looking through its grated door—Heavens of Mercy! what saw he within? There was Signor Romelli on his knees before the tombstone, and Antonio Cardo holding him fast by the neck. To Hume's surprise there seemed to be some new inscription on the stone. To this Cardo was pointing with the one hand, whilst he held Romelli with the other; and at the same time a dark-lantern had been so placed upon the table, that its light fell directly upon the letters of the inscription.

"Read aloud, Sir, for the behoof of all, or you die this moment," cried Cardo sternly, and flourishing a sort of dagger-knife above the bare head of his prostrate countryman. Romelli stared upon the writing, but sat silent. "You cannot see them plainly, perhaps," said the vindictive Antonio. "There is dust on the stone and in the letters, but we shall cleanse them for you." So saying, he drew a white napkin from his pocket, dipped it in the blood that was flowing profusely from Romelli's throat, and wiped the stone with it. "Read!" was again the stern mandate. Romelli looked ghastly, kept his eyes fixed upon the stone, but said nothing: And there was

a dogged determination in his look, which told that he would die like a fox, without murmur or word. "I will read for you then," said Cardo:—"IN MEMORY OF HUGO MARLI, WHO PERISHED IN THE SOUTH SEAS."—"Now, tell me, red-handed Hell-fiend, how perished the youth?" A very slight groan, and a harder breathing, was all the answer from the prostrate Italian. "Well then, I am Antonio Marli—the last of my race—the brother of thy victim—his avenger—thy—prove the title there, and find Hell!" The last vengeful words gurgled in his throat; but his hand was nothing paralysed, for, lifting high the dagger, he struck it, crashing and glutting itself, down through the skull and brains of the prostrate wretch, to the very hilt. The handle of the dagger, which was shaped like a cross, gave a grotesque tufted appearance to the head, and consorted well with the horrid expression of the features, which were first gathered up into one welked knot of ugly writhen delirium, and then slowly fell back into their proper places, and were gradually settled into the rigidity of death. The body inclined forward against the stone, upon the edge of which stuck the chin, unnaturally raised; and the face, half lighted by the lantern, and adorned by the handle-cross towering above it, looked over the tablet towards the door—a ghastly picture.

Antonio Marli (let him now wear the name, thus horribly authenticated), with a red smile, as if his countenance shone from the mouth of a furnace, turned to Hume, who, deprecating the violence he witnessed, had made desperate efforts to break into the aisle, and thus grimly spoke to him, "So, thou art there, thou glorious faithful one? Thou shalt live in the Kingdom-to-come with the Marlis! Come in, bird, into the house!" continued he, curving his fore-finger, and beckoning to Frederick with it; "come in, and join the committee!" A change came over his face in a moment, he unlocked the door, threw it open, dragged out the body of Romelli with awful fury; then turning to Hume, tried to speak, but could not, from violent emotion. He continued for a minute merely

pointing to the body; but at length he said, "So, there it is out: I would not have its blood mingle with my sister's ashes."

"Most murderous wretch," cried Frederick, grappling with him, "how durst you call me to witness this?"

"Sir, I thought your good opinion of some value, and I called you to see me approve myself a man of justice."

"A wild beast thou! say a fiend rather; but thou shalt answer for it."

"Ha!" cried Marli, with desperate energy, casting himself free from Hume's hold—"Hear me, now my brother: Go, weep for the tiger torn of the lion; but give not your sympathy to that carrion, for he was a wretch whose heart-strings might, unscathed, have tied up the forked bundles of lightning, so callous were they, so wicked, so callous. For your wife's sake, my sister, do not. Moreover, you must leave this country instantly; and for your kindness to my Charlotte I will go with you wherever you go, and be your slave till death, because in that I shall be honouring her."

"A discreet travelling companion, forsooth!" returned Hume.

"Harkye! like fire and water I can be a good servant; but my mastery, if your negative to my proposal put it upon me, may be equally dangerous."

"Granted—in matters of Italian assassination," said Frederick. "But, suppose, Sir, this very moment I dispute your mastery? Suppose I tell you that even now my eye is upon you, and that I do not mean to let you leave the church-yard without a desperate effort on my part to secure your person?"

"I shall not stay at present," said Cardo, "to show you how easily I can defy you, armed as I am. Let us come to the point. You love Signora Romelli, and she loves you? Well. But, for her vile father's sake, you shall never marry her. She shall never sit a bride on the throne of your heart, which my sister Charlotte could not sit on: She shall never be happy as a wife, where my sister Charlotte could not be happy as a wife. Nay, she shall

never win and wear for you the comely garment of marriage, which my sister Charlotte won and wore. I will flee this instant, and you will be suspected of Romelli's murder. I have put things in such a train, that suspicion must naturally fall upon you. No one, save yourself, and another whom I can trust, has seen me in this visit to your neighbourhood. The deed has been done with your own pistol and dagger, with which, besides the key to open the aisle door, my knowledge of Mrs Mather's premises enabled me secretly to provide myself a few nights ago. If you think it could serve you aught in a Court of Justice to produce my card of to-day, inviting you hither, look at it again, and see that it is not signed. Moreover, on a more careful glance, you will find it a fair imitation of your own hand-writing, so that it would instantly be declared a poor *ex post facto* contrivance of your own. That dead dog was honoured likewise with a note of invitation; but I took care to put such dangerous hints in it, that he would not fail to burn it as soon as read. Moreover, on your way hither, you met two villagers, who, by a shrewd contrivance of mine, which it is needless at present to explain, were drawn to the road, notwithstanding the late hour, and who could not fail to recognise you, though they might not speak. Now, Sir, do you see how you are beleaguered? You can hardly escape a condemning verdict. And even were it 'NOT PROVEN,' still the lurking suspicion against you, which such a niggardly acquittal implies, would for ever prevent the fine-souled Julia Romelli becoming your wife. Now for your alternative of choice:—Shall I leave you—and will you stay—to be confounded in this country? Or will you not rather flee with me instantly, where both of us shall be safe; and where, because you so honoured and tried to save the twin-sister of my being, my beloved one, I will tame my pride, and my powers, to be with you day and night as your companion and friend?"

"I have listened to you pretty well, you must allow," said Hume, "and I have come to the conclusion that your ingenuity and finesse are admirable; but what a pity

they should all go for nothing! To show you what an overweening fool you are, I will constrain myself to tell you, that Julia Romelli is already married to Dr Stewart, in consequence of my choosing a bride elsewhere. Now, Sir, seeing what my connexion with your family has already gained for me, can you still urge it upon me, as a very important acquisition, to secure your devoted and worshipful attendance? Faugh! your hand smells rankly: I won't taste the bread you have touched!"

At this announcement of Miss Romelli's marriage, Marli gave a sort of involuntary scream. With trembling earnestness he then drew forth his bloody handkerchief, tied one end round his neck, and proffered the other to Dr Hume, with the following words:—"Is it so? Is Julia lost to you? I knew not of this: and now I do not rejoice. But take the napkin, and lead me away to justice: Take it, Sir, if you wish any triumph over our family. By the souls of all my race! I will follow you as quietly as a lamb, for you have suffered too much already from the Marlis. Not one hair of your noble head shall for this murder come into danger. Not one breath of suspicion shall fall on your cloudless name. Had the law seized you, by my soul's being! I would not have let you die, though I wished you never to get Julia Romelli for your wife. As it now is, you shall not for a moment be impeached. Lead me away."

Hume was puzzled what step now to take. He could have no wish to see Marli perish on the scaffold, even though he was a murderer; nor that he himself should indirectly share the ignominy, from having been so allied to the family. But, then, on the other hand, though life might now be of little value to him, he would not have his honour called in question, nor his name linked with the suspicion of having had anything to do with such a deed of murder, which might certainly happen to him were the real assassin to escape. He was, besides, though of a very ardent temperament, a man of a wise and well-constituted heart, and could not but think that Marli should be directly responsible to the laws of a just country

for his bloody act. In something like a compromise betwixt these feelings, he said, "I will endeavour to keep the blame from myself, and fix it upon the proper culprit. Should you make your escape, I will defend myself as well as possible."

"So the die is cast against me!" said Marli, who, notwithstanding the sincere spirit of his surrender, had perhaps clung to the hope that Hume might yet be disposed to save him, by leaving the country with him for ever. "But I will abide it. Take me now in tow, for I am impatient to grapple with my fate."

"Not at all," said Frederick, refusing the handkerchief caring not for the outrageous effect of which the wild spirit of Marli seemed studious, in proposing the use of this bloody leading-string. He went close, however, by the side of the Italian, determined now to lay hold on him should he offer to escape. This, however, Antonio did not attempt; but, going quietly with Hume to the Village, he himself roused the constables, stated to them his crime, and put himself under their care, to convey him to the jail of the neighbouring town, which was done without delay.

SECTION VII.

MARLI was found guilty of Romelli's murder, and was condemned to be executed in the church-yard where the murder was committed—a place of execution certainly new and remarkable. Frederick Hume, according to a solemn promise which he had made to Marli, when one day he visited him in jail before his trial, again waited on him in his cell a few days before the appointed time of execution. The Italian boy was sitting on his low pallet-bed, apparently in deep abstraction, and he sat for a minute after Frederick entered. His face was calm, and clearly pale, as if it had come out of the refiner's furnace; but his dark hair was raised a little above one of his temples, as if disordered by the wind; and there was an awful shadow and a trouble in the inner rooms of his eye. So soon as Hume named him, he arose, and advancing, kissed

his visitor on the cheek, exclaiming earnestly, "My brother! my brother!"

"Well, then, my poor Antonio Marli," said Hume, much moved, "I trust you repent of your crime?"

"Why? and wherefore?" answered the prisoner, with a gesture of impatience. "But you shall hear me: When you were last in the jail with me, I was not in the vein for explanations; but now you shall hear and judge of Romelli's deserts. I would make you a prince, Sir, if I could; but I have no other way of giving you honour, than by unfolding myself a little to you, which I would do were the confession to show my heart one molten Hell. My father, who, as you have already heard, was a clergyman in the north of Italy, was one stormy evening returning home through a small village, about a mile from our house, when he heard a poor sailor begging a lodging for the night, which was refused him. My good old father, remembering that he himself had a son a seaman, who might come to equal want, brought the sailor home with him, gave him food and dry raiment, and made him sit with us by the parlour fire. The man was of a talkative disposition; and being, moreover, cheered by the wine which was given him, he began voluntarily to tell us of his having been lately shipwrecked. 'And how could it be otherwise?' continued he; 'how could that ship thrive? You shall hear why she could not, for I know the whole story. Well, before sailing from Genoa, on our last voyage, our captain, who was a widower, had fallen in love with a young lady. Now, it so happened that his mate, a fine young chap, liked the same damsel; and she, in return, preferred him to the sulky captain, who, in consequence, was mightily huffed, and took every opportunity, after we had sailed from port, of venting his spleen against his rival. One day, being becalmed in the South Seas, near a beautiful green island abounding in wild game, the captain with a small party went on shore, to have some sport in shooting kangaroos. To the surprise of every one the young mate was allowed to go with us; and glad was he, for he was a lad of mettle, and delighted in all sorts of

fun. But no sooner had we landed, than the captain turned to him, and said peremptorily, 'Now, Sir, you watch the boat till we return.' Poor fellow, he knew his duty, though he felt the mean revenge; and folding his arms, he turned quickly round with his face from us, which was burning with anger, and began to hum a tune. After we had pursued our amusement for some hours in the woods, we returned to the boat, and were surprised to find that the mate was not beside it. We saw him, however, about a hundred yards off (for he had probably been allured from his charge by seeing some game not far away), hasting towards us. The captain, trembling with malignant eagerness, ordered us all into the boat in a moment, and made us pull away as fast as possible from the poor young fellow, who, loudly demanding not to be left in such a wild place, dashed into the sea, and swam after us. Be sure all of us used our oars with as little effect as possible, to let him make his leeway. This he soon did, and took hold of the edge of the boat; but the cruel captain drew his hanger, and cut through his fingers, and he fell back into the sea. 'You disobeyed my orders, Sir, in not staying beside the boat,' cried the heartless savage, whom every soul of us would gladly have tossed overboard, though the instinct of discipline kept us quiet. The poor mate cast a bitter and reproachful glance at the boat, folded his arms, and diving down into the waters, was never more seen. How could the ship, that bore us with the monster, be blessed after such doings? She was beat to pieces on the coast of Sicily, and the captain and I alone escaped. He used me very scurvily thereafter, and I am not ashamed to tell his misdeeds. But it was a pity for the good ship, the Arrow.' 'O God! hold fast my head!' exclaimed my father, on hearing the name of the vessel—'If—if—but tell me the captain's name.' 'Romelli.' 'And the mate's?' 'Hugo Marli—a blithe sailor!' 'My Hugo! my own boy!' cried my father, and the old man's head sunk down upon his breast. Never shall I forget the wild strange manner in which our sailor-guest at this caught hold of the liquor that was standing on the table,

drunk it all out of the bottle, and then fled from the house, leaving me alone, a little boy, to raise and comfort my father. In a few days the old man died of a broken heart, and I was left alone with my twin-sister Charlotte. Day and night I thought of Hugo, the gay and gallant sailor-boy that all the maids of Italy loved; my father's pride; who brought presents for Charlotte from far lands; and taught me to fish for minnows in the brook, and to pipe upon the jointed stems of the green wheat: And all this was at an end for ever, and my father's heart was broken! Therefore the desire of revenge grew up, and widened with my soul from day to day. I found a medium through which I traced all Romelli's movements: After the wreck of his own ship, the Arrow, he had joined the French service. When I learned that he was a prisoner in this country, I determined to pay him a visit. My father had left a small sum of money; but now it was nearly expended, having supported Charlotte and myself scarcely a year in the house of our maternal uncle, and we were likely soon to be entirely dependent upon him. On expressing my determination to go to England with my sister, I saw that he was very willing to get quit of us; and to make sure of our removal, he bought me a harp, and paid our passage to this country."

"Allow me to ask," interrupted Hume—"Did Charlotte know this wild purpose of yours?"

"No; she was staying with our aunt for a while when the above scene with the sailor took place, and my father was dead ere she knew of his illness. The thoughts of revenge which had already occurred to me made me conceal the true cause of my father's death; or, perhaps, to speak more strictly, although it was well known that his having heard of his son Hugo's fate struck the old man to the grave, yet I took care not to reveal through what channel the news had come, or the cruel mode of my brother's death. Had Charlotte known what was within me, she would have tried incessantly to break my purpose; but she could not possibly know it, and, as my will was her law in such matters, she readily followed me to this country.

No sooner had we landed, than I made her vow never to reveal our true name or distinct place of abode till I gave her leave: And, in the meantime, we assumed our mother's name of Cardo. I led the way to Scotland, gradually drawing near my victim, whose place of stay I had taken care to ascertain in Italy through the same means by which I had hitherto watched his movements. To make my soundings, I got into Romelli's house under a feigned sickness. When you saw me first, I had in truth no complaint, save that the nearness of my man had made my heart palpitate so deeply that a degree of irritable fever came over me. The fair Julia was too kind and tender: I fell madly in love with her: I almost forgot my stern duty of revenge. You cannot guess the choking struggles between my two master passions. Yielding so far to the softer one, I compromised my pride in another point, and consented to be a dependent of Mrs Mather. By Heaven! I was not born with a soul to wait at palace doors: I would have rejoiced, under other circumstances, to live with my sister free as the pretty little finches that hunt the bearded seeds of autumn; but love and revenge, mingled or separately, imposed it upon me to accede to your charity and Mrs Mather's, that I might be near the two Romellis. In her playful mood, perhaps, Julia one evening prophesied that I should become a murderer. You cannot conceive the impression this made upon me. I had begun to flag in my first great purpose, but now again I thought myself decreed to be an avenger; and, to avoid stabbing Romelli that very night in your house, I had to keep myself literally away from him. Now, judge me, my friend, Was it not by him that I was shut up in a Madhouse? Yet, for your sake, and Mrs Mather's, and Charlotte's, and Julia's, and perhaps mine own (for I have been too weak), again I refrained from slaying him in your house; nay, I left the place and neighbourhood altogether, and went to London. I engaged to sing and play in an opera-house, and made enough of money. My heart again grew up dangerous and revengeful. I returned to Scotland to pay Mrs Mather for having kept us, to

send Charlotte to a sea-port, whence a ship was to sail for the Continent on a given day, then to call Romelli to account, and thereafter to join my sister a few hours before the vessel sailed. On my arrival in your neighbourhood, to make preliminary inquiries, I called at the house of a young woman, who was Mrs Mather's servant when I first came to the Cottage; but who about a year afterwards went home to take care of her mother, a blind old woman. So, then, Charlotte was dead! My sister Charlotte! My young Charlotte Marli! And all in my most precious absence! I learned it all, and your own noble generosity: But nothing of Julia's marriage with Stewart, which my informant, in her remote dwelling, had doubtless not yet heard of. All this might change my line of politics. In the first place, I imposed secrecy as to my arrival on my young hostess, who readily promised to observe it, in virtue of having loved me for my music. I had now to concert not only how best to strike Romelli, but, at the same time, how to prevent for ever your marriage with Julia. You know my double scheme in one. The brother of my hostess had, in former years, been an organist; and one day I took his instrument, which the affectionate lass had carefully kept for his sake, and went to the remote church-yard to play a dirge over Charlotte's grave. You were there, and I found it an excellent opportunity of forwarding my scheme, by making you promise to meet me afterwards in the aisle; which you did, when Signor Romelli happened to be there. Ha! ha! how came he there, the foolish man? Before naming to you the precise night of our threefold meeting, I had been prudent enough to find out that the excellent Signor had just come home from some jaunt, and in all probability would not again, for at least a few days, leave his house. To make sure, however, I instantly forwarded to him my letter of invitation. How expressed? how signed? I remembered well (for nothing of that dreadful night will ever pass from my mind) the sailor's name whose story broke my father's heart. So, under his name, I scrawled

a letter to Romelli, stating, that if the Signor would know the immediate danger in which he stood in consequence of certain things which once happened in a boat in the South Seas, when he was captain of the Arrow, and if he would not have these points now brought publicly to light, he must meet the writer alone, at the door of the given aisle, on Saturday night, precisely at eleven o'clock. I was much afraid that he would guess the true writer of the letter, and so would not come. However, about ten o'clock on the appointed night, I crouched me down, with a dark-lantern in my pocket, beneath Charlotte's tomb-stone, upon which, I may here mention, I had got a mason from the Village, for a large bribe, to put a slight inscription relative to my brother, which he secretly executed between Friday evening and the dawn of Saturday. Almost contrary to my expectations, Romelli came, but, I think, somewhat after the hour appointed, with a dark-lantern in his hand; and, finding the door of the aisle open, he advanced into the interior, and began, I suppose, to read the inscription, which, to heighten the effect of my revenge, as already stated, I had caused to be written the preceding night. In a moment I started up, and ordered him to fall down on his knees, and confess his crimes; but, instead of obeying me, no sooner did he see who I was than he drew a pistol and shot at me, missing me, however. My turn was next, and I missed not him. He fell: I locked the aisle door that you might see through the grating, but not interfere. I had him now beneath my will and power. You know the rest. Hugo Marli is avenged—and I am willing to die."

Such were the prisoner Marli's explanations, partly won by the cross-examinations of Hume, but in general given continuously, and of his own accord.

"And now, Frederick Hume," continued Antonio, after a long pause of mutual silence, "you alone, of all the human race, are dear to me; will you promise to lay my head in the grave, notwithstanding all the ill Charlotte and I have done you?"

"Bethink you of some other reasonable request, and I will do it for you to the uttermost," answered Frederick; "you know what you have asked is impossible."

"No, no," cried Marli, impatiently; "you shall lay me beside my sister in your own aisle."

"Antonio Marli," returned Frederick solemnly, "must I remind you of your sad sentence?"

"O ho! you mean the dissection—the precious carnival for Dr Pry and his pupils?" said the Italian, laughing grimly. "But if I can accomplish the half—if I can get quit of the claim of the law in that respect, would you so bury me, my brother?"

"Talk not of this any more," said Hume, not comprehending what the prisoner meant; "but cry for the purifying mercy of Heaven ere you die."

"You are from the point, Sir," replied Antonio; "but hear me: I will leave one request in a letter to you after my death, if you will promise, and swear—nay, merely promise (for I know your honour in all things), to fulfil the same."

"Let me hear it, and judge," said Hume.

"I will not," said the Italian; but yet my request shall be simple, and your accomplishment of it very easy. Moreover, it shall be offensive neither to your country's laws, nor to your own wise mind. Give me this one promise, and I die in peace."

"Be it so then," said Frederick; "I will do your request."

"Then leave me—leave me for ever!" cried Marli. "But if my heart, and my body, and all my soul, could be fashioned into one blessing, they would descend upon thy head and thy heart, and all thy outgoings, thou young man among a million. Oh! my last brother on earth!" So saying, Antonio sprung upon Frederick's neck, and sobbed aloud like a little child; and so overcome was Frederick by the sense of his own unhappiness, but chiefly by pity for the fate of the poor Italian boy, in whose heart generosity was strongly mingled with worse passions, that he gave way to the infectious sorrow; and for many mi-

nutes the two young men mingled their tears, as if they had been the children of one mother. At length Marli tore himself away, and flung himself down with his face upon his low bed.

SECTION VIII.

THE very next day word was brought to Frederick Hume, that the Italian had killed himself in prison by striking his head against the walls of his cell; and, at the same time, the following letter was put into Hume's hands:—

"I claim your promise. I forbore distinctly stating to you my purpose last night, because I knew you would tease me with warnings and exhortations, which, with all my respect for you, could no more have stayed me in my antique appropriation of myself, than you could make a rain-proof garment from the torn wings of beautiful butterflies. Did you think my soul could afford to give such a spectacle to gaping boors? Well, we must be buried in the first instance (for the law and the surgeon have lost our limbs) among nettles, in unconsecrated ground, at a respectful distance from Christian bones, in the churchyard of this town. But now for my request, and your vow to fulfil it: I demand that you raise my body by night, and take it to your aisle, and bury it beside Charlotte Marli's beautiful body. This request, I think, implies nothing contrary to the laws of your country, or which can startle a wise heart free from paltry superstitions about the last rites of suicides. Moreover, you can do the thing with great secrecy. Then shall I rest in peace beside her whom my soul loved, and we shall rise together at the Last Day: And you shall be blessed for ever, for her sake and for my sake. Farewell, my brother.

"ANTONIO MARLI."

Hume prepared without delay to obey this letter, and providing himself with six men from the Village, on whose secrecy he could rely, he caused three of them by night to dig up the body of Marli from the grave-yard where it had been buried, whilst the other three, in the meanwhile,

prepared another grave for it in Mrs Mather's aisle, as near as possible to his sister Charlotte's. The complexion of the black tragic night suited well this strange work. Frederick himself superintended the work of exhumation, which was done by the light of dark-lanterns. Happily it was accomplished without interruption. Leaving two of his men carefully to close up the empty grave, Hume, along with the third, accompanied the cart, which took Marli's body, wrapped in a sheet, to the other churchyard. There it was interred anew beside his sister's remains, and the grave being filled up to a precise level, the superfluous earth was carefully removed, so that, without a very narrow inspection, it could not be known that this new burial had taken place. Thus was Antonio Marli's singular request faithfully accomplished.

Next morning Frederick visited the aisle, to see that all was right. The history of the Marlis, and their late living existence, and his own share in their strange destinies, seemed to him all a dream; yet there were their tombs before him, and prostrate in heart from recurring recollections of their fate and his own so deeply intervolved, he remained one last bitter hour beside the graves of these wild and passionate children of the South.

Julia Romelli heard, too late, how she had been imposed upon, in reference to Hume's supposed inconstancy of affection; but, for their mutual peace of mind, she determined never to see him more, and never to exchange explanations with him. As for Frederick, he too had resolved to observe the same forbearance. But, though Julia could be thus self-denied, she was not the less inwardly racked, as she reflected on her own unhappy rashness. Her father's murder was a dreadful aggravation to her distress; and, to make matters still worse, she was harshly treated by her husband, Stewart, who was conscious, probably, that his wife had never loved him. The loss of her first-born boy, who was drowned in a well, brought the terrible consummation. Poor Julia went mad; and night after night (for her brutal husband cared little for her) she might be seen, when the image of the full moon

was shining down in the bottom of the well, sitting on its brink, and inviting the passers-by to come and see her white little boy swimming in the water. From week to week she grew more violent in her insanity, and, after many years of woful alienation, she ended her days in that very cell where Antonio Marli had once lain.

Stricken of heart, and finding no longer any pleasure in the repose of home, Frederick Hume went abroad. Being in France when Napoleon returned from Elba, he crossed the frontier to the Netherlands, joined the British army as a volunteer, and courting death, fell in the Battle of Waterloo.

CHAPTER XVI.

AUTUMN.

AUTUMN, in the usual allegorical picture—a fat motherly-looking dame, with a sickle in her right hand, and a wheat sheaf or a horn of Plenty upraised in her left, and mounted on her shoulder like a musket—gives us but a poor representation of the multiform exhilarations of that delightful season. The corn, and the wine, and the oil are so far indicated thereby. But where are the whirring gorcocks, crowing so wildly triumphant; where the deep-blooming heather of the mountain side, powdering the sportsman's ankles with rich coloured dust; where the antlered king of the red deer, scornful of the stalker, hanging high and far in the weather-gleam of the North, magnificent, momentary, as he streeks the natural, living, untanned, unsophisticated buckskin of his loins away over a hundred hill-tops in the wild Highlands of Braemar; where the transparent purity and dry healthfulness of the autumnal atmosphere; where the pellucid stream sliding and sleeping away velvet green under the trees, with the little fishes poised in it, as in crystal air; where the fine wires, half revealed in long glimmerings, of the floating gossamer, in the meek sunny day—not so agreeable, however, when they break, invisible but felt, over the bridge of your nose; where the soft streams of pencilled light, lacing divergingly

the glistering clouds of the western afternoon, and falling like a silent kiss on the far ancient pine-wood; where the shoulder of the green distant hill, steeped in the sunny brightness of evening, beautiful as the shoulder of Pelops; where the orange-necked wheat, nodding and shaking before the rustling din of the merry reapers coming on; where the "rantin' kirn;" where the many-coloured beauty of the autumnal woods; where the Harvest Moon?

Poets and poetesses of all kinds, from Charlotte Smith upwards and downwards, have tried their hand at the Harvest Moon; but none of them—not even Homer himself—has reached the perfect glory of that fair ordinance of the night. Pollok has attempted it thus:—

> "It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood;
> The corn fields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
> Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand;
> And all the winds slept soundly; nature seemed,
> In silent contemplation, to adore
> Its Maker: now and then the aged leaf
> Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground;
> And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
> On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high,
> With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly thought,
> Conversing with itself."

There is considerable breadth of repose in this picture, but it gives us little notion of the Harvest Moon. And why, in the name of all the Unities, did the author add the following as part of the same scene?

> "Vesper looked forth
> From out her western hermitage, and smiled;
> And up the east unclouded rode the moon
> With all her stars, gazing on earth intense,
> As if she saw some wonder walking there."

This sacrifices utterly the fine contiguities of time and place; and confuses the first unique picture by adding another, which, if Pollok had even intended continuity, as he evidently does not, should at least have preceded what he gives as the first. Tried by the "serene and silent art," no painter could bring them both upon the same canvass. The very word Vesper means to every heart a blue, or rosy, or orange-tawny sky in the west, with a single star. According to the high authority of Milton, in a fine scene in his Paradise Lost, of which this

passage from Pollok just serves to remind us, Hesperus and his starry host make a distinct picture, which lasts only

> ——— "till the moon,
> Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
> Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
> And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."

If Vesper in full glow be not compatible with the moon, according to the author of the "Course of Time," riding unclouded up the east, *a fortiori* it belongs not as a part to what I call his first scene, in which the world is flooded with moonlight. There is a farther confusion; for the moon "gazing on earth intense, as if she saw some wonder walking there"—which, though homely, yet expresses very well the still earnestness of moonlight—cannot be said of the moon riding up the east. In truth of nature, it is only when "riding near her highest noon," that our own feelings—which we give to inanimate things, and take back again—ascribe to the moon an earnest gaze upon our world. Pollok is thus trebly wrong. He gives two pictures, where only one was intended; he puts the second first, and the first second; and he ascribes to the moon in the one, (namely, an intense gaze upon the earth) what in truth of nature belongs to the moon in the other.

While I am upon these Night Pieces, I may notice an equal confusion of a star-light scene by Byron: Indeed I may remark of Byron generally, that he not unfrequently spoils his picture by giving us adjuncts which belong to it as it may be seen at another time, but which, strictly speaking, are not parts of it as it is before us for the time being. Here is the instance to which I specially refer at present:—

> "It was the night—and Lara's glassy stream
> The stars are studding, each with imaged beam;
> So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
> And yet they glide like happiness away;
> Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
> The immortal lights that live along the sky:
> Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
> And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
> Such in her Chaplet infant Dian wove,
> And Innocence would offer to her love."

These pretty lines about the flowers have nothing to do with the starlight picture. How, at such a time of night, could the fair flowers on the banks of the stream be seen? Not being seen, they have, strictly speaking, no existence whatever. To describe their beauty here, mingles the divided portraiture of night with circumstances which belong only to the light of day. *Ut Pictura Poesis*—remember that, ye Sons of the Morning!

I confess an occasional drowsiness, as I sit in my leathern chair in my Library, under the still monotony of the sunny afternoons of Autumn. Not a sound comes near me to disturb me; and there I nap, till the shadow of some bird shooting past the sunny window startles my filmy eye, like a flash of lightning, and I awake. The only drawback from my delight in the harvest season is, that there is so much pressing work to do, and everybody is so busy, that I feel almost ashamed to saunter about, doing nothing. In the time of the shearing, our Village is quite deserted. Knowing this, the pedlars come not near us then; nor wandering tinkers; nor singing sailors (if their hoarse brassy bray, softened only by the squirting out of tobacco juice, can be called singing); nor beggars of any degree: So our hamlet in harvest is a perfect picture of still life. The only waif we have had to break our autumnal quiet this year is a penny orator of the district, who goes about lecturing against the Institutions of the country. And certainly it is one of the most pitiful sights in nature to see the small demagogue riding on his donkey through the ripe rich corn-fields of our valleys, on his atrabilious way to the next village, there to pour his morbid soul into the ears of the quiet, religious cottars, when they shall have come home at evening from their day's work of manly industry, and rouse them to the miserable belief that they are the veriest serfs and slaves of the oppressed and groaning earth. The redundant horn of yellow Plenty is an abomination to his eyes; and fain would this blasted ear of humanity eat up every golden spike of autumn, like his hungry mildewed congeners in Pharaoh's Dream. The sweep of the lusty

scytheman, laying down by his porridge-fed mastery the rustling oats, full of new porridge for evermore for himself and his family—ten by the "big Ha-Bible" register—sets our little Socialist angrily a-cock; and O! (says the sinner's soul) that every swath were priests and peers! The merry song of the sunny lasses, peeling the harvest rig with their sweethearts, jars on him like the very sharpening of the shears of Atropos; and tearing the provincial pot-house print, in which he has just been reading the fulsome praises of his own eloquence, he stops his ill-conditioned lugs with it, not to hear the lilt of the lasses; and kicking his lean cuddy into a canter, makes off from the music of happy rural life, as if chased by the Pestilence; till, attempting a ditch in his frenzy of flight, he is tumbled into a standing pool, as green in its mantling filth as his own jaundiced liver.

Armed with my microscope, many an autumnal hour do I spend in the woods and moorland places, pursuing my entomological recreations. So multitudinous are the points of study and amusement in this world of tiny myriads, that I need not attempt even to touch on them. Just one word on spiders. All the world knows how pugnacious they are: Under no circumstances whatever can they meet each other without fighting. Whoever wishes to see their battles may easily manage it thus:—Let him, any fine August or September morning, when the hedges and bushes are swarming with their webs, lift one, web and all, with a twig, and let it down softly by its thread on the centre of another web, where sits a fellow its likely match in point of size; and to it they go immediately. If a fly or any other proper bait be dropped into the web, and four or five other spiders be brought to the prey, the battle rages like Waterloo. The lean red spider with long legs beats all the rest hollow. In their rage their bodies shiver, like the feathers of the amorous or threatening turkey-cock.

Having no dislike to the coming-on of winter, October is to me the most delightful month of the year. To say nothing of the beauty of the woods at that season, my

favourite month is very often a dry one, sufficiently warm, and yet with a fine bracing air that makes exercise delightful. And then what noble exercise for you in your sporting jacket! To saunter through the rustling woodlands; to stalk across the stubble field, yellow with the last glare of day; to skirt the loin of the hill, and, overleaping the dike, tumble away among the ferns, and reach your door just as the great red round moon comes up in the east, how invigorating! I say nothing of the clear fire within, and the new Magazine just laid on your table. Moreover, October is associated with the glad consummation of harvest-home, and all the fat blessings of the year —not forgetting the brewing of brown-stout. Altogether, October is a manly jolly fellow; and that Spencer knew right well, as thus appears:—

> "Then came October, full of merry glee;
> For yet his noule was totty of the must,
> Which he was treading in the wine fat's sea;
> And of the joyous oil whose gentle gust
> Made him so frolic."

What fine quaint picturesque old words these are! But Oh! the dismal look of a wet October, and a late harvest! The central figure of the dreary picture is the farmer, on the first dry breezy evening that comes after a fortnight's incessant rain in the end of the month, bending and looking through his black bean field, sticking sodden to the ground in every stook, slimy with slugs, all going to slaver, and losing the sprouted pulse from every open pod. The miry hunters riding homeward sink to the fetlocks, as they cross the deep clayey country. The husbandman turns cheerlessly to the higher lands. The small birds, starting from his feet, shriek adown the wind in the watery evening light. The green and yellow (both in one) glint of the oats, tussled by the wind on the edge of the waste, with the chaff of every top pickle (thrashed out by the windy blasts that have contrived to blow in every interval of the rain) shimmering thin and white to his level eye, fluctuates away before him. They won't be ripe and ready yet for a fortnight to come.

In quantity and quality there is always, of course, a

natural correspondence between the wild and home fruit of the season. So the wild, like the home, is very abundant this year upon the whole. Haws, however, are rather scanty. Indeed, the hawthorn is a capricious and delicate plant in this respect, and seldom yields a very full crop. Even in seasons when the flower (chivalrously called "Lady's Meat") covers the long line of hedges as with a snowy sheet, and delights every nose of sensibility in the parish, we are by no means sure of a harvest of haws entirely correspondent; as the blossom, with the first set of the fruit, is exceedingly tender. Well do the boys know the fat ones. Hips (called in some parts of Scotland jupes) are a fair yield this harvest, whether smooth or hairy, hard or buttery. That all-devouring *gourmand*, the school-boy, who crams every crudity into his maw, from the sour mouth-screwing crab up (though *down* in literal position) to the Swedish turnip, sweetened by the frost, riots in the luxury of the hip, caring not how much the downy seeds may canker and chap the wicks of his mouth, and render his nails an annoyance in scratching his neck. See the little urchin slily watching the exit of the "lang" cart from the stackyard; then jumping in from behind, he takes his seat on the cross-bench, or ventures to stand erect by the help of the pitch-fork, his black, dirt-barkened little feet overcrept by earwigs, beetles, and long-legged spinners, the living and hither-and-thither-running residuum of the last cart-load of peas; till, when the half-cleared field is reached, Flibbertigibbet, who ought all the while to be "gathering," bolts through a slap in the hedge, and is down upon the buttery hips in the Whitelea braes. Our hedge-rows, sandy banks, and wild stony places, are quite black with brambles this autumn. Clean them from the worms of the thousand-and-one flies that feed on them, and they are capital for jelly and jam; and for painting children's faces, as we see every day in the by-lanes around our Village. The bramble is called in Roxburghshire *(honi soit qui mal y pense)* "Lady's Garters." There, however, the land being mostly a stiff clay, it thrives poorly. It loves a sharp sandy soil, and especially those

ough stony knowes in the middle of fields, where also in he warm still sunny days of harvest you startle the whir- ing partridge, and see her feathers where she has been luttering in the stour, and where you hear the whins, with their opening capsules, crackling on the sun-dried braes. Blaeberries were abundant this year, and ripe in the beginning of July. The barberry bears a fair crop. In my boyish days this bush was called gule-tree; and we made yellow ink of it, to give a variety of flourish to our valentines to the little lasses—from whom we got pins in return to be played for at tee-totum. Ill fares the poor gean-tree by the road-side, torn down and dismantled in all its branches by the Village urchins, bent at once on provender and "papes." Scarcely ever does its fruit see the first blush of red. A guinea for a ripe black gean within three miles of a country school! The juniper is a scarce bush; but it has plenty of fruit this year—green, red, and black, on the different exposures of its close- matted evergreen branches. In my days of childhood, I had a sort of religious regard for the juniper, from the "coals of juniper" mentioned in Scripture along with "sharp arrows of the mighty;" and also from the cir- cumstance that I had never seen the berries till they were brought me by my grannie, who plucked them on a remote hill side, as she came from a Cameronian sacrament. So far as eating them was concerned, their resinous tang of fir helped my veneration, and I never got beyond chewing one or two. I am compelled to add, however, that my reverence for the holy berries was considerably abated, when I found out that the sly old wife had popped a dozen or two of them into her own whisky bottle, to give it the flavour of gin. Crabs are not so plentiful as might have been expected; and (as Johnson said of Churchhill) their spontaneous abundance being their only virtue, they are below notice this season. But look at the seed of the ash —how thick! The light green bunches of it, relieved against the somewhat darker verdure of the leaf, make it well seen, and the whole thing has a very rich effect. The pods of the pea-tree *(laburnum)* hang from every branch

in clusters. When ripe, the peas are glossy black as jet, and are much sought after by bits of country lasses for making necklaces of beads—for the little monkeys have early notions of finery. They are unsafe to be meddled with, however, as they are very poisonous. It is worthy of remark that, come good year or bad year, the pea-tree never fails to have loads of depending flowers as thick as swarms of bees a-skepping; and the fruit is always equally abundant. Of all plants, and shrubs, and trees, in garden and field, and on the mountain sides, none is to be compared in this respect with the prolific pea-tree. It is one of Nature's richest gifts to adorn our hedge-rows. The wood, I may add, is extremely beautiful, and that the turner knows right well. The rowan-tree, the Beauty of the hills, and the terror of witches, is red all over with berries this autumn. May she ever see her fair blushing face in the sleeping crystal of the mountain pool! Her berries are also for beads. The boor-tree, famous for bullet-guns, bored with a red-hot old spindle, and tow-charged, in the days of boyhood, is also very rich this autumn with her small black-purple berries. "Miss Jeanie" would not take the "Laird o' Cockpen," when she was making the "elder-flower wine;" let him try her again in this the time of the elder-berry vintage—she is herself *elder* now, and has had time to think better of his offer; not to say that a sip of the richer berry may have softened her heart. Never had the "bummie" such a "summer high in bliss" as this year among the honied flowers of the lime. The autumn of its fruit is not less exuberant: The ground where it grows is quite littered with the small round seed. The broom is all over black with its thin pods: *Plantagenet*, more swainlike than kinglike, has coined his glory of summer bullion into a bushel of peas. Mushrooms in their fairy rings in the rich old unploughed pastures, are a fair crop this season. By the way, when does the mushroom come first? Tom Campbell in his "Rainbow" says:—

> "The earth to thee its incense yields,
> The lark thy welcome sings,
> When, glittering in the freshened fields,
> The snowy mushroom springs."

Now, the lark ceases to sing early in July; and I rather think, Thomas, the mushroom is rarely seen till August—what say you? But I refer the matter to William Wordsworth, that master martinet of poetical accuracy. Meanwhile, having thrown Thomas this metaphorical nut to crack, I go on to the literal nuts; and I beg to say that their white young clusters are almost the loveliest fruit that grows in glen or shaw. Now, however, they are glossy brown, and lots of them. So mask yourself, gentle swain, in the most tattered gear you can muster (buckskin breeches, if you have them), as recommended in the said William Wordsworth's poem of "Nutting," and, bag and crook in hand, sally forth with your Ladylove, bedizzened like Otway's witch in the "Orphan;" and Pan speed you! And if any lurker, on the "Spy System" among the bushes, hear you drawing a simile from the hazels among which you are in praise of your sweetheart's eyes, why, he can only take you at worst for King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid: So, still speed you! Sloes, being harsh and salivating in their sourness, are almost always plentiful; for Dame Nature is a queer old economist, giving us fine things sparingly, but lots of the coarse. But ah! Flibbertigibbet aforesaid delights in the sloe. No matter how deceptively that blue-purple down, or rather film, of seeming ripeness veils the sullen green of harsh immaturity—it's all one to "Ill Tam." Away he goes with his pocketful, whooping through the dry stubble fields to the village cow-herd boy on the common, who, smitten with the eager hope of company in his cheerless waiting-on, perks up his head out of his dirty-brown maud from beyond the bielding heap of divots; starts up with an answering holla; and comes running over the bent to meet his welcome crony, the rush-cap on his head nodding like a mandarin's, and his doggie with its ears laid back in the wind gambolling on before. Straightway the fire of whins and dry barren thistles is set agoing, and sends up what Æschylus calls "its beard of flame," better seen by its wavering smoke-topped flicker than by its gleams of colour, deadened in the daylight; and the roast

of sputtering sloes—with an eke of beans and potatoes, which provident little Patie has in store—is more to our genial worthies, sitting on their hunkers, and nuzzling and fingering among the ashes, than Ossian's "Feast of Shells." And thus they feast till the day begins to decline: And then they run to the distant road to ask the passing traveller what o'clock it is; and, in the fearless necessities of rude nature, the question is popped, whether the passer-by be a charioted buck of seven seals, or a trudging hind who hangs out a crooked sixpence, a simple spotted shell, or a bit of polished parrot-coal by an affectionate twine of his grandmother's hair. Then come the hoar mornings of November frost, and the sloes begin to crack, and are really not so bad; and "Ill Tam" has another day at Eildon hills. He finishes the ploy by tearing and wearing his corduroys, up trees and down "slidders," to very reasonable tatters; and thus the light of knowledge is let in by many and wide holes upon his mother at night that her son "has been out;" and her patience being worn out as well as his breeks, a good sound thrashing winds up the day to Thomas. Anything like a full crop of acorns is a very rare harvest indeed. This year, however, they are "plenty as blackberries;" and now that the air is beginning to smell of winter, they are popping down upon your head wherever you go, clean, glossy, and slightly ribbed in their brown and white. They must have been better to eat in the Golden Age than now, or the stomachs of our simple sires must have been more easily pleased than those of their degenerate and luxurious sons; for hang me from an oak branch! if I could eat an acorn, so harsh and stringently tasteful of the tannin, even to see the Lion lie down with the Lamb. So my Age of Gold is not likely to get beyond pinchbeck. But swine can eat acorns, though Old Bachelors are not so innocent. And therefore I advise all my country friends, after the wants of the nurseryman are served, to turn the snouts of their pigs among the mast, or have it gathered by the bairnies and flung into the trough. The porkers grunt almost graciously over it, and it helps to give that fine

flavour to the flesh which touches the tongue so racily in the wild boar ham.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIANA CLEMENT.

SECTION I.

After travelling a couple of years abroad, Hinton Douglas came to London with Captain Bucke, who, from the protracted consequences of severe wounds, had been obliged to quit the army. By the most generous exertions Bucke had saved the life of Douglas in the Bay of Naples, when on the point of perishing in the waters; and from this circumstance a strong mutual attachment had grown up. It was now the Captain's intention to stay for some time in London, under medical care; and then come and spend his days, on half-pay, at his native village, which had this farther recommendation to him as a final place of sojourn, that it was very near the residence of his friend Hinton Douglas, who eagerly pressed him to this mode of life. The village in question was our own "Old Scottish Village." In the meantime, Bucke was advised by a friend in London to take up his quiet abode as a boarder with Mrs Clement, the widow of a physician, who had left her in rather straitened circumstances with an only daughter, Miss Diana Clement. This young lady had been abroad, in quality of governess, it was believed, to a French Marchioness, and was, therefore, highly accomplished.

After seeing his friend Bucke thus comfortably settled for the time, Hinton Douglas set out for Scotland, where, after arranging his affairs and gaining the sweet consent of Miss Marjory Russell to become his wife next spring, he returned to London to superintend the winding up of the mercantile affairs of an uncle, who had left him a large accession to his fortune. To avoid the temptations of fashionable life, and apply himself to business, and, moreover, to be near his friend the Captain, he determined to live privately at Mrs Clement's during the months he had to

stay in the City; and accordingly he became an inmate of her house.

SECTION II

CAPTAIN BUCKE, although a very worthy fellow, was elderly, ugly, old-fashioned, ungainly, and, therefore, had no business to fall in love with Miss Diana Clement, which he did, however. She paid all his attentions with a quizzical return. This, Douglas, who had observed the matter, ascribed at first to a mere girlish thoughtlessness on her part, in natural correspondence with her very youthful look. She was tall and slender, and appeared like one who had grown up to womanhood before her proper years. A cloud of sunny ringlets broke upon a brow of transparent beauty. Her cheek was embalmed with the finest hues of life, which shone through like bright tinctured spirits, and seemed at all times scarce repressed from flaming and coursing all over her face. Douglas soon saw, however, that she was girlish only in appearance; and for many reasons he began to be very much struck with this beautiful young woman. Judging from the nature of the speculations upon which she sometimes entered, such appeared to him the force and daring of her character, that her present life, to his instinctive notion, seemed like a mere retirement from bold and comprehensive deeds; and, in connexion with this, her abstruse studies, uncommon to females, appeared a farther preparation for something great, beyond her present mode of life, which did not at all seem suited to her. Her mother, as if she had been a servant in her own house, paid entire deference and submission to Diana. She lived in the most retired manner; and, besides the Captain, seemed to have no admirers, except a young man of the name of Jenkins, the son of a great merchant in the City, who, apparently of the same ardent temperament with the lady herself, could not hide his violent attachment to her.

SECTION III.

ONE evening, whilst Douglas was at supper alone, he

heard a loud cry of "Mercy on us!" from the sleeping apartment of the Captain, who generally retired at a very early hour; and in another moment the door was burst open, and in rushed Bucke in his breeches and night-cap, with a candle in his hand, snorting like a horse fastened on by a lion, and looking amazed round over his shoulder at —— but nothing followed him.

"In the name of all the saints, Douglas, what is the meaning of this?" cried the terrified soldier, who was a perfect martyr and victim to all sorts of superstitious fears.

"Of what?" demanded Douglas, starting up.

"Every noise of every demon in darkness," said Bucke, "these three or four nights—every midnight—round about my bed—here and there, and——" He stopped short, as Miss Clement and her mother entered, alarmed at his first loud exclamation. The young lady had heard his complaint; she rung a bell, and her old yellow French serving-man made his appearance.

"Vaulpas," said Diana, with perfect calmness, "you are a ventriloquist. Give us all the noises with which you have plagued Captain Bucke for some nights past."

With singular alacrity, as if he had not been at all in fault, the old fellow filled the room with a thousand shifting, low, fiendish whisperings.

"Your reason, Sir, for all this?" demanded Diana.

"Madam," said Vaulpas, with lisping meekness, "I saw this noble soldier afflicted with that tendency to hypochondriasis which is often the bane of lofty hearts; and remembering the doctrine of my former master, the great Dr Vaudeville (here Diana started as if shocked with electricity), that a real alarm is often the best cure of melancholia, I have dared to practise on this brave gentleman, who, I doubt not, will from this hour recover the vigour of his spirit."

The thing was thus explained in a minute, in that provoking way, too, which left no room for offence or rebuke; and the poor Captain stood convicted of childish cowardice before the very woman for whose good opinion of his valour he would have taken a lion by the beard.

He was so confounded that he stood still for a space, altogether forgetful of his outer man; then remembering his midnight appearance, he tore the nightcap from his head in an agony of vexation, made a rush towards the door, but fell down in a fit of apoplexy. The shock, fortunately, proved not fatal; but it was followed by paralysis, which kept the poor fellow for months to his bed, during which time, it is almost needless to say, Douglas watched him like a brother. Early in the spring he was nearly well; and Hinton, leaving him, proceeded to Scotland, to prepare for his approaching marriage.

SECTION IV.

One day, about a week before his intended nuptials, Douglas received a letter from Bucke, stating that he was now completely well; that he had been made happy in the heart and hand of Miss Clement, who was now his wife; that he had taken a cottage in Dumfries-shire, where he was now fairly settled; and, in conclusion, eagerly requesting Douglas to ride over and dine with them on a given day, when he wished to have his advice in a very urgent matter. This was no hard matter for Douglas to do, seeing his own bride elect, Marjory Russell, lived in the same part of Dumfries-shire. He went accordingly, and was received by Mrs Bucke (Diana herself), somewhat eager at first in her manner, and pale in her singular beauty, but withal very modest, and, in a few minutes, quite at her ease, and brilliant as usual. She apologised for the absence of the Captain, by stating that he had been unexpectedly summoned that forenoon to attend the last moments of a relative whom he had found by chance in that district; but, in all likelihood, he would be home that night; if not, a card would be sent from him to Mr Douglas, at an early hour in the evening, stating the business for which Bucke had urged him to come, and distinctly explaining in what his instant services were needed. Douglas accordingly dined with Mrs Bucke, who, immediately after dinner, craved his opinion as to the respective qualities of two sorts of home-made wine,

about which a bet, she said, was pending betwixt the Captain and herself. Douglas' decision was knowingly given. She was sorry to say it was in the Captain's favour; then retiring to prepare him tea, she left him alone with his wine and the newspapers of the day, which were brought in, addressed to "Thomas Bucke, Esq., Solway Cottage, Dumfries, N.B." Ere long Hinton was overcome by a pleasant drowsiness. His head nodded, and gradually rose more slowly from his breast, over which his arms were folded. The sparry embers of the fire appeared to him gradually lengthened to misty bars, and reeled and rose to the place of the wall, while the wall took the place of the roof. In another minute, he was in a deep sleep.

The door was slowly opened: in looked Diana Clement herself. At sight of the slumbering youth, forward to him she shot in her perilous beauty. "So ho! Hinton Douglas," exclaimed she, "what hast thou to say for thyself, that thou so mockest the awful stillness of the dead? Ha! Hinton Douglas, when shalt thou marry the beautiful Miss Marjory Russell? We must leave our country, it seems; and is it not ordained that thou shalt go with us? Thou hast drunk of our drowsy wine-cup, and must sleep a sleep!" She summoned Vaulpas, who came instantly. "Vaulpas, are you ready? he is secured."

"It shall be done," said her servant; "yet, Madam, allow me——"

"Go, Sir," cried the beautiful creature, flaming up and stamping; "yet hold—a word: you wish me to go to France? You did your utmost to drive Bucke from our house by fear and shame, lest I might stoop to marry him, and be for ever kept in this country?"

"Pardon me, my dear young Madam; I did it not less because it became not the mother of such a lady to live by such means: I wished them all gone, indeed."

"Yet you could not guess," said Diana, "that I chose such an ostensible mode of life, merely to avoid suspicion. Well, then, you wish me to go to Paris, and all the cities of the world, to win more jewels; for your desire of gold

is hungry as the grave. And now that you feel I know you thoroughly, have you confidence in my discernment in other matters?"

"Wonderful lady!" cried Vaulpas. "Had my great master, Vaudeville, followed your wisdom, from the first moment that he won your heart in London, as implicitly as his love of wealth was great, instead of coming to the block as a felon, he might have roamed with you through the world, till every costly stone was your own. I obey you, lady—I rejoice that you escaped—I glory to have become your servant. Let me follow you to death! But now, in all humility, permit me to ask, why will you encumber yourself with two such fantastic children as Jenkins and this drowsy Douglas?"

"Vaulpas!" answered the lady, "I know you to be wholly faithful; and in this matter you shall be satisfied wholly. Well, then, why have I left London, and come to this western coast of Scotland? First, because I found out that those Dutch hounds of justice were in quest of us in the Metropolis; and, secondly, because, having learned all about this intended marriage of Douglas, I would give anything less than immortal life to thwart it: I came to thwart it, and it shall be thwarted. And why? Because I hate that Marjory Russell, his betrothed. And why, again? Because she dared to cross me eternally, when we were at school together in London; nay, brought a charge against me which compelled me to leave it. Moreover, my father, a profound but quiet man, was practising successfully in Liverpool. Her father, also a physician, came, and with his shallow, showy popularities, monopolized the field. My father then settled in London. Thither also came Russell. The former rivalship ripened into enmity; and in public my father was insulted by his opponent, and being of a retiring spirit, nursed the wound in secret, and died of a broken heart. Guess, then, how I hate such a family, which has so outfaced a better! But I will plague them! And this Hinton Douglas, too, for their sakes! The marriage shall never go on! I stop it for ever! You look enquiringly farther, I see: Well

then, my means and instruments are these:—Jenkins somehow learned that I had taken this cottage; he followed me with his eternal addresses, came near the coast with some ship of his father's, proffered me much money, and said he would take me to any part of the world I liked, provided there I would become his wife. I have weighed his proposals: I find it will be necessary for our safety to leave this country for a while. I have imitated admirably the handwriting of Bucke, our pretended lord and master, and got this boy Douglas in my power. We will go with Jenkins. He will do to Douglas what I wish—he will go whithersoever I wish—he will return whenever I wish: What more would you have? You shall go with me, Vaulpas. Mark, now, your duty:—This morning I saw Jenkins' ship stand into our Frith with the full tide, but now he must be far out again with the ebb; for he durst not, even for me, anchor on the bare sands till another flow. At the small Inn down by the sea shore, he said he would wait for me all day, lest I should wish to see him preparatory to my going with him, to which I have already agreed. So, then, I do wish to see him, that we may get Douglas instantly conveyed on board his ship. Vaulpas, go immediately to Dumfries, and order a post-chaise to be ready at our gate in less than an hour." Vaulpas retired, and Miss Clement continued to walk up and down the apartment.

SECTION V.

In a short time Vaulpas returned, and said that the chaise was ready; and Miss Clement, after giving him strict injunctions to keep the door securely locked till her return, glanced quickly down an avenue, and getting into the carriage, which was waiting at the bottom of it, ordered the coachman to drive at full speed to the little Inn down the shore, which, with a significant nod, he professed to know very well. After following the main road for two or three miles, he turned into a soft hollow by-path leading down to the sea sands, which now lay broad and white behind the far-retreating tide, with here and there a

stranded punt or brig on the edge of the mazy river, which had entirely lost the appearance of a fresh-water stream, and crept diffusely down the oozy flat. To avoid the double rows of broken stakes, which ran from the highest water-mark a hundred yards or so across the sands, the chaise was kept upon the shingly border, between the softer shore and the sea-pink sward, and went forward at a moderate pace, till it was drawn up before a low house snugly set beneath the shelter of a yard of old trees, that grew forward almost to the very beach; and the driver, alighting, told the lady this was Joe Martin's Anchor. After ordering him to wait for her, Miss Clement advanced to the door of the house, and meeting the landlord, demanded if Captain Jenkins was there? He answered in the affirmative, and opened the door of an apartment whence came a strong gust of tobacco and spirituous fumes; and Miss Clement, following close behind, without ceremony, was at once in the presence of Jenkins, who was leaning moodily on a bacchanalian table. Opposite to him sat two men, who seemed bold and rough seamen, in the tarnished dress of officers, and whose brown faces, evidently inflamed by the libations which they had been making, wore also a sulky and menacing expression. "A damsel in the wind!" cried one of these men, as he was the first to observe the lady enter; and relaxing his features a little, he stared upon her with impudent familiarity. Meanwhile, Jenkins had observed Miss Clement, and had started up; reeling a little, he turned to his companions, "My brave Lieutenants," said he, "will you give us sea-room for a few minutes' space? This lady comes to settle the argument in your favour; and to-morrow we stand out whithersoever the hearts of my gallant fellows shall bear away."

"Jenkins," said the lady, "I like not this scented cabin of yours; I would walk half an hour with you on the free sands: follow me when you have cooled your head with water."

With nothing save the down of boyhood on his cheek, though he might be nearly thirty years of age, Jenkins'

face was in other respects also of a delicate style of beauty. But now its smoothness was broken up with streaks like the channels of scalding tears; there were blue rings below his eyes, and his eyes were muddy and red—all betokening evil passions and low indulgence. Pathetically, as if under a sense of his debasement, he looked in the face of Miss Clement, after her implied rebuke, and left the room apparently in haste to obey her. She then walked out upon the hard white sands, and up by the side of the river, where in a few minutes he joined her.

"Are you the man," said she, confronting him as he came up to her, "who wished me, for his own sake, to leave my native country? Nay, are you capable of guiding me aright, Captain Jenkins, if I take your arm along this bank?"

"I understand you, young lady," was his answer.

"Those cups, Sir," rejoined Miss Clement, "shall be forgiven, even though you more than half expected to see me here to-night; but on this condition, that you use not one phrase of nautical jargon during our present interview, which must be a very serious one. Prithee, now, affect not that same bluntness."

"I shall be blunt enough," said he, "to bid you not be whimsical and capricious, but listen to me aright. It is you that have made me what I am at present; and if I know myself at all, it is you, Diana, that can lead me back to better things."

"I will not speak or promise rashly," was her return. "For some purpose you have traced me to this part of the country. Now, though I spoke of going with you to-morrow, I must yet hear your purpose more distinctly. If you think my present caution no bad pledge of my sincerity, tell me, in the first place, what you are, and what is this commission of yours."

"Need I remind you, Miss Clement," replied Jenkins, "that I had robbed my father of immense sums, all for your sake; and that, after you had promised to embark with me, you allowed that fellow Douglas, for some reason or other, to draw you down hither?"

"He shall be within reach of your revenge, ere long," said Diana; "nay this very night. Go on."

"For my good old father's sake," proceeded Jenkins, "and for the sake of another one, I had not the heart to sail then, as I intended. That father was still willing to take back his only son. Let Miss Clement answer for that other one in the same style, and say that she is ready to go with me to-night."

"Let me remind you, Jenkins, of the point proposed—this commission of yours?"

"Well, then, thou most beautiful Infanta, suppose the *Shark* to be one of my father's ships, and that somehow I have contrived to man her with my own fellows, and to become myself their Captain."

"A literal pirate, I presume you mean?" said Diana.

"By my soul! yes," was the youth's reply; "and I shall soon find a fitter ship; there are thousands on the ocean for the winning. I have a friend a pirate in the Greek seas, who has invited me thither."

"Your scheme now, excellent Captain, so far as I am concerned?" demanded the maiden.

"You shall hang with me on the cloudy rim of the wild sea!" exclaimed Jenkins. "I will be your sea-knight for ever! Or, if you so command, I will but use our ship to take us to any shore which you shall name; and there, for your sake, give her up for ever to my sulky Lieutenants."

"So! here is a young gentleman of the name of Jenkins," said Miss Clement, "who is not ashamed to style himself a lawless buccaneer (while yet he knows not the profession); who acknowledges that his subordinates are sulky (for a little by-sailing on this coast, I presume); and who, despite all this, has yet the effrontery to invite me on board his ship, as if it were my best alternative!"

"Ha! here is Diana of the Ephesians, and I must make for her the silver shrines!" exclaimed Jenkins, with a bitter smile. "By my soul, then!" continued he, grasping the lady's arm, and whispering in her ear, "it is thy wisest course, Diana Clement."

"How mean you, Sir?" was her quick demand.

"Because the lady in question," he replied, "once knew a French refugee physician, who, besides pharmacy and freethinking, taught her the art of stealing diamonds —because a hundred jewellers would this moment give a great price for her detection. If I judge thee, Madam, an uncommon spirit, and as high above affectation as the starry Ship of Heaven is above that sooty coal-boat docked before us in the sand, why should I mince the matter?"

"Why do you stand off, my dear Jenkins?" keenly whispered Diana, her countenance flaming, and her whole frame shuddering under rigid spasms. "Give me that pistol from thy belt, and I will shoot thee through the head and the heart, thou admirable caitiff!"

"Do you take my proposals, young lady? or shall I turn recreant from my ship, and hunt thy life?"

"This is a night of unparalleled sincerity, Mr Jenkins," said the damsel to this, "and, therefore, I will unfold myself a little farther to you. I am not, Sir, as you suppose, a refugee in this part of the country. I came hither for revenge: and I shall have enough of it ere to-morrow night, in one shape or another—for you have made me fearless (I give you thanks, once in my life!). I will go with you, Jenkins, on one condition, which I scruple not to name, because in this I am not more wicked, but only more sincere, than the world in general. This Hinton Douglas I never loved, as perchance you may have supposed. My great object was revenge; and I refused then to sail with you, because I had vowed to ease my heart of him and his?"

"And may I ask, thou remarkable woman, why he was the object of thy hatred?" said Jenkins.

"No, Sir," was the answer, "you may not ask—you need not ask—you shall not! I will not satisfy you there —I will not feign a cause to cheat your present thought, which I know very well, and which I despise. Listen to me, rather, and weigh that one condition, if you are indeed sincere in wishing me to sail with you. Hinton

Douglas is at this moment lying in my house, in one of those dead sleeps which you have seen. Will you take him on board to-night? and do the same by me to-morrow night? till when I must be occupied in making arrangements for our voyage."

"By yon chaste moon!" said Jenkins, "this is all too complicated and too refined for my poor wits. But suppose we take him on board, what then?"

"If you will have my stern wish," Diana said, "keep him fast bound in your hold till your vessel be blown to pieces, which, trust me, shall be ere long. Or if you grow weary of so detaining him, and he refuse to become one of your crew, then sell him for a slave to the Algerines—or get him in any way so bestowed that he may never revisit this kingdom more."

"Before my soul, Madam, what were you saying? Did you talk of this Douglas becoming one of my crew? or did you say he is to be captain under your own management?"

"Why, what a sorry fellow thou art, after all, Jenkins! I should have imagined, now, thy pride wished exactly such a trial, that thou mightest show thyself one not to be overcome on all hands by Diana Clement, and a paltry lad like this Douglas. But, if you have a mind, we shall throw him overboard the very first night, ere he have time to win the sailors' hearts from their true allegiance."

"But suppose you give us the slip to-morrow night?" said the young man.

"Prithee, now," returned Miss Clement, "don't teach me bad lessons. Why, then, set him on shore again; and what harm is done? Moreover, to avenge thee of my false promise, tell him how I abused him with a wicked sleep, and set him to hunt me down in virtue of this, and that charge of thine own from Goldsmiths' Hall."

"I will obey thee in all things, lady, for thou art wiser than I am" said Jenkins, after a short pause.

"Now, then, to the execution of our purpose," said Miss Clement. "The coachman must be detained for an

hour or two in yon same house, where, I can judge from the colour of his nose, it will be no hard matter to make him willingly abide; and, in the meantime, we two, with one or both of your Lieutenants—lest our victim should awake—shall set off with the chaise for our sleepy luggage. You shall drive us, Captain. And—let me see—yes—both your Lieutenants must go, that I may not need to come back with you. Is there anything farther, Mr Jenkins, which you wish to have explained?"

"Let us walk a little, Diana," he replied. "We have abundance of leisure, for the tide will not be up till midnight. Our *Shark* shall then be in the Frith; and some of my fellows in their boat will be looking out for us, so we'll have an opportunity of getting our cargo safely on board."

"Bravely said, my dear Captain," was the lady's return; "but the coachman may take offence at such a long detention, and the sooner the young dreamer is brought down to the sea-side the better. Will the landlord not stickle about letting him into his house?"

"Not he, by his Anchor!" said Jenkins. "Yet we'll make arrangements to keep him out of the way. Nay, so soon as we can persuade the coachman to unyoke his horses and put them into the stable, we shall endeavour to have both landlord and driver so plied that they shall soon be unable to interfere with us. When all is ready otherwise, I myself can again yoke the horses. Come, sweet Di, come with me!"

All this was done easily; and Douglas, whose sleep was still unbroken, was brought down to the Anchor Inn.

SECTION VI.

Hinton Douglas awoke from his sleep; but, after lying still awhile with his eyes fully open, he could see no light whatever; and he knew not at all where he was. A cold stiffness all over him, with pains about his neck, and the touch of a damp floor beside him, made him perceive that he was not in a bed, as he had at first supposed. He was impressed, at the same time, with the conviction that he

had been roughly handled in his sleep, and that he had heard loud and external noises as of shouting and obstreperous singing, which, though mingling with his dream with the quickest accommodation, had yet eventually waked him. A strong fume of ardent spirits, which he now perceived all around him, might have helped his awakening. Miss Clement and the sleepy wine he now dimly recollected. This was enough to make him fear the worst; and he started up to ascertain, if possible, where he really was. Groping onward cautiously, he came in contact with something like a barrel, and on either side of it he found more of them, and farther to one side he felt bottles piled among saw-dust; all which led him to suppose that he was in some low cellar. He was moving round the place in quest of the door, when a number of voices broke out in some contiguous apartment, evidently in threatening parley with some other voices heard farther away. Immediately there was a violent beating, mingled with loud cries, and the report of two or three pistols. Hinton stood still for a moment, expecting the din to cease; but it increased furiously, and with double earnestness he now sought his way out. At this moment a light came in upon him through a number of small chinks, thus shewing him the door; but, on advancing to it, he found it fast locked; yet, from the circumstance of its admitting the light so well, he judged it so frail that he might easily burst it open. Before attempting this, however, he looked through a small aperture, and saw two women half dressed, one of them with a candle in her hand, and two or three children, huddled together among some casks in a sort of passage, screaming more vehemently at every renewal of the farther din. Then came a great crash, testifying that some door had given way. A voice was heard, in which Douglas recognised the harsh tones of Captain Bucke; and shouting, "What, ho! Bucke!" Hinton instantly burst through the frail cellar door, and passing the women and children, who glared on him, and cowered to the very ground when they saw him, he made his way into a sort of front room, and was just in time to strike down the

arm of a man levelling a pistol at Bucke, who, without his hat, was heading a party at another door of the apartment. The pistol, thus diverted from its right aim, sent its contents down into the floor; but the fellow drew another, and turned round bitterly upon his new assailant, showing the face of Jenkins himself, writhing like a fury. At sight of Douglas, he ground his teeth; but in a moment he was seized from behind, and rendered unable to fulfil his vindictive purpose. One awful point, however, he attained, despite the constraint against which he struggled like a demon—he managed to turn the pistol against his own life, and shooting himself through the body, was dead in a moment. There was a fellow by the side of Jenkins, when Douglas entered, brandishing a cutlass with the maddest flourishes; but, as he was more than half drunk, Bucke's party had no difficulty in overpowering him. Another, who completed the list of armed defenders of the place, sat in a corner, hammering away at his flint, till, observing Jenkins shot, he started up, reeling, and, with a hideous scowl, levelled and attempted to fire at Douglas; but his pistol would not go off, and he was immediately secured.

"Your servant, Mr Douglas," said Bucke; "there is no time at present for farther greeting. Where is this mad host of the Anchor, who has so resisted the warrant of a magistrate?"

"Here he is," said one of the party, "lying dead drunk on a bench."

At this moment a new alarm was given, that there was a ship in the Frith, and a boat near the shore, and eight or ten fellows ready to land.

"We must make fast the door," cried Bucke; and instantly he himself put a bench behind it, while some added tables and other heavy furniture, and rolled a large barrel of liquor forward as a rear fortification.

"For life's sake, gentlemen," said Bucke, "keep out of the line of windows and doors, to avoid their shot. Now get ready what arms you have, and don't waste your

fire foolishly; let us patiently bide their onslaught, till they have spent themselves a little."

Voices came near—the door was tried—admittance was demanded; and, when this was refused, the door was attacked with great fury. Bucke now raised his voice, and asked the meaning of this assault.

"We want our captain and our lieutenants," was the hoarse reply from without.

"Your captain has shot himself," cried Bucke; "and as for your lieutenants, they are our prisoners, and shall be, in spite of you."

A savage yell from the pirates answered this declaration: there was a renewed and more vehement attack upon the door; and it seemed on the point of giving way to the pieces of rock with which it was now battered, when Bucke, having in a whisper ordered the half of his party to follow him, whilst the rest should keep their fire as a reserve, advanced as nearly as possible to the door, and giving the word, his section fired through it upon the assailants without, who received it with an angry howl, mingled, however, with groans and cries of death, which testified that it had taken deadly effect. An intermission of the assault followed; the two lieutenants and the body of their captain were again demanded; and the party promised that, on this restitution, they would immediately draw off. They were refused, however, a second time.

"And now," said Bucke, "load again all of you, till I remove that stuff; and then we shall sally out upon them. What can they be about now, that they are so quiet? Either they are sheering off, or it is an ominous calm before some new storm."

Ere the preparations were fully made for breaking out, a far-off shout was heard, mingled with the dashing of the sea, which told that the assailants were embarked, and away in their boat; but in the same minute a strong smell of fire was perceived, and the flames were heard beginning to crackle about the roof of the house.

"The ruffians have set us on fire," said Bucke. "De-

liberately, now, gentlemen; but yet we must be very quick in getting out the inmates, for the wind is high, and things will burn rapidly. Rouse the landlord some of you. Call his wife. Bid them secure their money, if they have any. Has he children? Let us first open a way, and see that the coast is clear." This was done; and the seamen were found gone, having their dead or wounded with them.

The landlord and his family, and a few of his effects, were got safely out, and lodged in a grassy hollow at a proper distance from the house.

"Jenkins' body?" remarked Douglas, looking to Bucke, and both rushed away humanely to rescue it from the flames. As they got to the door, a gun was heard from the ship, which was nearly opposite in the Frith, and in the same moment they were covered with a drift of sand ploughed up by the shot, which was heard, in upward recoil, shearing through the boughs of the trees behind the house. They paused, and looked at each other. A second bang!—a second shot passed crashing through the house. A third—a fourth—rent the walls to their very foundations, and the whole fabric fell in; and the flame, which had now reached the spirituous liquors, rose over all, in one bright pyramid. To heighten the confusion of the scene, a chaise, with two horses tied behind it, which had come with Bucke and his party, and had been stationed about a hundred yards above the Anchor Inn, came now rattling down the shore, dragged by a young horse, which, having taken fright at the fire, came dashing on, despite the animals behind, and its own more sober yoke-fellow—despite, moreover, the resistance of the dismounted coachman, who, true to his hold of the reins, allowed himself, as he yet cried loudly for help, to be hauled along by the side of the plunging and snorting brute. The horses which were fastened behind the carriage took the thing at first pretty quietly, and followed with heads and necks outstretched, till, gradually roused by the jolting vehicle before them, and coming near the central point of alarm, they swerved from the noise of the cannon on the one side, and the blazing house on the other, and bursting their fastenings,

galloped madly over the sands. At the same time, the coachman was obliged to relinquish his hold, and the chaise went soon out of sight at a furious rate, still pursued, however, by the faithful driver.

Douglas and Bucke were looking at the ship, which was now fast bearing down the white Frith. A distinct flash was seen from her side, and in the twink of an eye the shore was again torn up not more than five yards from their feet.

"She has a long arm, I'll warrant her," observed Bucke; "but I think we shall have no more of her. As for her poor captain's body, I suspect it is needless now to think of getting it."

"A handful of black ashes is all that remains of him," said Douglas." "His rite of sepulture has been in keeping with his wild and fanciful character and life, I believe."

On returning to the main party, and finding all unhurt, —"It is wonderful that it is so," said the Captain. "Let us thank God:" And, accordingly, the soldier said a short prayer, which, though given in rather a blunt military style, was yet honestly sincere. They then found that their prisoners had escaped. Finally, it was settled that for the remainder of the night the whole of them should repair together to the next inn, which was only a mile or two distant. Meanwhile, Bucke was tying a red-spotted handkerchief round his head as a substitute for his hat, which somehow he had lost, and the want of which (for he was very careful of his health) he was beginning to be at leisure now to feel sorely.

"Come, you curly-headed little rogue, I have taken a fancy for you," said the Captain, sitting down to get one of Landlord Martin's children on his back; and the varlet, probably from the quick tact of childhood, which saw that he was a presiding master of safety among them all, instantly left his mother, and sprawled manfully up upon the soldado's back, who arose with his burden. The party then set forward, with Bucke in the van—a curious figure, clipped as his head was with the red-spotted handkerchief, whose confinement of his hair gave double sway

to his large red nose; whilst ever and anon he stood still, violently to shake the little urchin on his back, who, finding himself quite at home, was springing and spurring at a great rate, and at the same time taking improper liberties with the Captain's whiskers.

They reached the inn, and gained admittance. The kind-hearted Bucke saw the children fed and carefully put to bed; then whispering to Douglas that he had still duties to do ere the morning, but that he would join him there at breakfast, he left the house.

SECTION VII.

"BEING now quite well," said Bucke, next morning, explaining to Douglas how he had been led to interfere so timeously on the preceding night at the Anchor Inn, "I left London, and took my way home to my native village. I came by Dumfries, there to pause on my road, and spend a few days with an old friend. I was out yesterday, rambling about an old castle at some distance, and evening coming on me in my reveries, I made a cut through the fields to bring me to the main road. After I had proceeded a considerable way, I found myself unexpectedly in a shrubbery before a neat little cottage. Somebody says that 'truth is stranger than fiction'—mark what follows:—Hearing the opening of the door, I stepped back behind a tall bush that I might cause no alarm; and whom should I see look out but Diana Clement herself, with a lamp in her hand, which shewed me her face distinctly? Ere I could recover from my astonishment, out came somebody, carried by two fellows, one of whom I saw was Jenkins. The light enabled me to recognise him; and Diana having once or twice advanced her lamp near the face of the person thus borne out, I saw and knew your features; and as they appeared to me to be very pale, I thought you were dead. From a brief conversation which ensued between Clement and Jenkins, I learned that you were to be taken down to Martin's Anchor, there to lie till midnight, and then to be taken on board some ship. The lady then re-

tired into the house with her lamp; and Jenkins and his associate carried you down an avenue, and put you into a chaise at the foot of it. This I saw, having cautiously followed them. Knowing already where they were going to take you to, I hastened to a Magistrate in Dumfries, and stated enough of the matter to him to make him see the necessity of issuing a warrant for the apprehension of Jenkins and his companion, and the recovery of your body, it being my firm belief that you had been murdered by Jenkins, and that your body was to be taken out to sea, and then thrown overboard, that no traces of you might ever be found. Accordingly, I joined the officers who bore the warrant; and two or three more men with fire-arms having been added to our party, in the belief that we had smugglers to deal with, we hastened down to Martin's, and were in good time. We were stoutly resisted—but you know the rest."

Douglas, in his turn, stated to Bucke how he had been decoyed by the letter, and by what means he had been cast into that deep sleep, all of which, doubtless, had been contrived by Diana Clement.

"But wherefore?" asked the Captain: "Can you guess a reason for it?"

"Scarcely," answered Douglas; "but we shall have her to-day, if possible, and know all. And, by the way, we ought immediately to go before a Magistrate and state the strange affairs of the night. Jenkins' death is a serious matter. Has she been long in this part of the country, can you tell me? Do you think she took this cottage for the mere purpose of more conveniently managing this mysterious plot?"

"Probably she did," replied Bucke; "but I know nothing distinctly. Indeed, I merely knew that she was away from London. But now let us take Martin and the rest of our party with us, and go to the Magistrate."

SECTION VIII.

It remains now only to say what became of Diana Cle-

ment, after her plan of revenge against Hinton Douglas, or rather against Marjory Russell, had been so signally defeated.

When Captain Bucke left the inn on the night, or rather morning, of Douglas' rescue, he went straight to her house, and, having given his name, and said that he had matters of life and death to communicate to Miss Clement, he gained admittance. He was shewn into a room by his old friend Vaulpas; and here Diana herself, her face awfully pale, came shooting rapidly forward, and met him with, "Your errand, Sir?"

"Ere Bucke, who was startled, could reply, she burst into a long fit of laughter, and then sat down exhausted on a sofa.

"Madam—Madam," said the soldier, evidently much offended, "Mr Jenkins has shot himself: Hinton Douglas is not on board a ship: I presume I need not say anything farther?"

Up started the lady, her whole frame in a moment changed from the relaxation of laughter to a locked and intense energy. She looked at Bucke with such earnestness that her face grew thin and sharp. Then came trembling; but she hurried through the room, as if making a violent effort to check her emotion and appear at ease.

"Prithee, Mr Bucke," said she, stopping full before him, "remove that handkerchief from your head, else the god of the thunder himself shall not hinder me from yet expiring with laughter. We shall then speak of certain matters."

The Captain could only feel his ears tingling and his nose growing redder, as with fumbling hands he hastened to untie from his head the spotted napkin, which his generous haste to see Miss Clement had kept him from remembering to take off.

"Now, Sir," said Diana, "I think you spoke of Mr Jenkins?"

"Madam—young lady," said Bucke eagerly, "I took care, last night, to hide your being in the matter; but we must soon be before a Magistrate, and there being now leisure

for examinations, things must come out against you. Needs there more to enforce the necessity of your fleeing instantly? If you be in want of money, I can at this moment"——. He paused, for the lady was beginning again to tremble; and her trembling increased to the most violent heaving of her bosom, till a flood of tears came to her relief, and she gradually grew calm.

"Mr Bucke—generous soldier!" said she then eagerly, with a quivering voice, "mistake me not: arrows and death could not so have moved me: I have wept to find one thoroughly generous man."

"Lady, praise me not," said Bucke. Had I acted justly last night, I should have ordered you to be seized immediately, thinking, as I did, that Douglas had been murdered in your house. But I thought if we secured Jenkins it would be better if you escaped; yet I am ashamed of having done so."

"I think, Sir," said the young woman, with a keen glance, "that you have no wish to parade your good qualities; therefore my self-love dares not abate from your praise. Will you accept this ring, as a very slight token that I estimate you aright? I shall have pleasure, whatever be my fate, in"——. She paused.

"Madam—beautiful young creature!" returned Bucke, taking the proffered ring, and kissing it, "I might be allowed to say, perhaps—but no, you must flee instantly! Can I help you in this matter? Shall I haste to Dumfries, and have a chaise ready for you?"

"No, Sir," she answered, "your kind services in my behalf are ended. With the assistance of Vaulpas, the rest is easy. Stay, Sir; I thank you still for asking me no questions, as I would scorn to have any farther explanations from you, about those two young men, Jenkins and Douglas. Farewell!" She waved her hand like a queen, and Bucke felt himself constrained instantly to withdraw. And he saw Diana Clement no more.

She fled immediately from this country, and got to Paris in the character of a French lady. Ere long she became a brilliant singer in one of the Parisian opera-

houses, and a dictatress in many a coterie of bold free-thinkers. After running, however, a brief splendid career, leading captive the proudest nobles by the witcheries of her magnificent spirit, she embraced the Catholic religion, while yet young, became a devotee, and died the Abbess of her convent.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY LIBRARY.

None but a retired Old Bachelor in the country knows the perfect blessedness of his Books. The coming-on of winter, with all its sharp discomforts and sad associations, is to me rather than otherwise the very spring-time of cheerfulness, for the sake of the ruddy flickering gleams of the first evening fire on my old leathern chair of tarnished red morocco, and the walls of my snug little Sanctum, arrayed with the Sages. Here am I: "My mind to me a kingdom is—" I say it, or sing it, *ex cathedrâ*.

Over my volumes, and my portfolios of prints, I have caught myself of late at scraps of notes, annotations, and so forth. Thus:—

REMORSE.

"Dit the door again, if ye daur!" cried one of our Village mothers angrily to one of her children, a fine little boy, who had played some small mischievous prank, and was making off from her to school. That very day he was accidentally drowned, and so he never darkened his mother's door again. Great and true had been her love to him, as to all her other children; but never, Oh! never, would that angry exclamation of hers out of her mind. What would she give now, had she never uttered it! O! what would she not give, had her last expression to her poor perished boy been one of gentleness and love! She was a heart-broken woman from that hour, going about her house like one in a bewildered dream.

"BRUMMAGEM."

A broken-down Bagman was one of our Village characters. One day, as was much his wont, he was doing a bit of the soft on some feeling occasion. The schoolmaster complimented him on his tender-heartedness. "Wait till my mother die," was the pathetic return, "and you'll see grief in style—grief in style!"

TRUE LOVE.

A gallant young soldier had his affianced bride in our Village. He lost a leg, an arm, and an eye at Waterloo; besides being otherwise scarred about the face. As soon as he was able to write, he wrote, offering to let the poor girl withdraw her plighted troth, as he was now only a piece of a man. "No," was her true-hearted answer, "so long as there is as much of you left as will hold your soul."

THE GERMAN HEART.

From the brief notices given by Tacitus of the great German family, living wild in their native woods, the women chaste and the men lovers of justice and freedom, it is evident that even then as savages they were a noble stock. Well has it been for the fortunes of mankind that they burst their bounds, and overran the Roman world. The leading characteristic of the German family, above all other great sections of the human race, is PITY. The exercise of this godlike quality—embracing reverence for the female sex, and all the play of the domestic affections—has given a new tone and temper to the world, wherever the German influence has been felt. Honour to our blue-eyed, fair-haired Saxon fathers! Take Luther as a sample of the true German character: What a lion in his daring; and yet what a woman, what a child, in his ever-flowing tears of tenderness and love!

THE JEWS.

Nothing so remarkably shews the deadness of heart that has come upon the outcast nation of the Jews, as their

total want of music and poetry in their forlorn condition. Who does not remember the pathetic song of Rebecca in Ivanhoe? Yet the whole world of letters for centuries shews us no such hymn, breathed from the sorrowful heart of a real Jewess, mourning over the degradation of her people. The thing is more striking, because originally the Hebrew mind was highly endowed, and gifted especially with sublime powers of poetry. These the Babylonish captivity could not extinguish, but they seem now entirely gone. The habits of life long peculiar to the Jews are certainly destructive of the "vision and the faculty divine;" but it were hard to say whether the mere circumstance of exile from their father-land be favourable, or otherwise, to the development of a poetical spirit among them. It might tame their fire, but should produce intense pathos. Their peculiar habits of life, however, as already remarked, seem to have wholly deadened them to the lofty or tender inspiration of the Muses. What a descent (as remarked by Coleridge) from the "Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth!" of Isaiah, to the "Old clo?" of a Saffron-Hill Jew old-clothes-man!

MANSIE WAUCH.

Wide, deep, and true is the mirror held up by broad-fronted Burns in the very face of Scottish nature and life; and yet he has almost completely missed those many peculiar features of the national character and manners which are brought out so inimitably in Mansie Wauch. Mansie himself is perfect as a portraiture: What an exquisite compound of conceit, cowardice, gossiping silliness, pawkiness, candour, kindly affections, and good Christian principle—the whole amalgam, with no violent contrasts, with no gross exaggerations, beautifully blent down into verisimilitude, presenting to us a unique hero at once ludicrous and loveable! And how admirably in keeping with the central autobiographer are the characters and scenes which revolve around his needle! Totally different is the whole delineation from the broad, strong, national characteristics,

rough and ready, hit off by Burns; but yet equally true to nature, and thoroughly Scottish.

HOGG'S "KILMENY."

Such a shepherd as he of "Ettrick" never fed his flock upon the green hill side. For still, pure, serene, untroubled, entranced, unearthly beauty, there is not only nothing to be compared with his ballad of "Kilmeny," but nothing even like it in any language. The Elysian Fields of the Ancients, as illustrated by that divine creature Virgil, are beautiful indeed; but they correspond with the Heaven of our Christian faith, and have not at all that mysterious connexion with earth, that conception of purity in the flesh—still mortal flesh though abstracted from this mortal world—and that surrender back to the ways of men, of earthly creatures, awhile withdrawn in a happy swoon to some land far off, no man knows where, which are the peculiar charm of the mythology of Fairyland. By what philosophy of sweet and soothing compensation to the human spirit the "silver lining" of this soft creed was *sub*-induced under the austere terrors of Odin, which wrapped round about with gloom the hearts of northern men, it were interesting to inquire. Beautiful indications, and gleams, and snatches of Fairyland, are given in our old Minstrelsy; but Hogg in his "Kilmeny," laying asleep the senses in "a dream which is not all a dream," has given us the most serenely continuous picture of that ineffable clime, fusing it by a new art of his own with the blissful feelings of feminine purity and innocence—virginity unstained in the thought, and unblemished in the flesh. By this strangely beautiful poem alone, had he written nothing else, our "Shepherd" would for ever have placed himself among the poets,

"Serene creators of immortal things."

MARIE-ANTOINETTE AND MIRABEAU.

What a noble scene for the dramatist would be the secret meeting by night in the Garden of St. Cloud, be-

tween Marie-Antoinette, the Queen of France, and that giant of the Revolution, Mirabeau. Hers, as well remarked by Carlyle, was a high imperial heart, which instinctively knew the great men she might trust, and drew them to her. Her colloquy in that Garden with Mirabeau at the very turning point—the very cardinal hinge—of the Revolution, has never been revealed; but it were worthy of the highest genius to imagine and tell us how she charmed the "wild submitted Titan" at the very right moment when proudly conscious, and satisfied with the consciousness, of his own amorphous strength, which he had blindly wooed the Revolution for the very pleasure of aimlessly, so it be but grandly, indulging, he was now taken with the magnificent desire of saving, by his sole arm, the Monarchy he himself had so nearly destroyed. How he met the lofty rebukes, and heart-touching appeals, and soothing trust of his Queen, with eloquent apologies, and far-seeing rapid plans of loyal policy, yet with a generous provision for the liberty he loved; and wound up the interview, big with the fate of nations, by kissing the Queenly hand, and saying with enthusiasm, "Madame, the Monarchy is saved;" and plunged away from her into the dark night to turn words into instantaneous actions, would task even a Shakspeare fully to portray—who would give the subject a still more intense interest by prophetic indications of the over-wearied failing life of that gigantic man on whom the fate of his King and this his lovely high-spirited Queen, to say nothing of monarchy and nations, was thus made to hang.

THE HEART OF NAPOLEON.

The following curious circumstance was stated to me on good authority:—When the body of Napoleon was opened at St. Helena, his heart was taken out, and, preparatory to its final destination, put in a basin of spirits and water, and left for the night on a table in the bed-room of the medical man who had charge of the matter. In the course of the night, the Doctor was awakened from a light slumber by a heavy splash from the basin, and starting up

alarmed, he rested on his elbow, and by the light of a taper looked eagerly round the apartment before he should spring from bed. Not the shadow of an intruder was to be seen. What had moved the basin? Had that mighty heart, scorning to be quelled even by death, regained some of its terrible energies? Was it still leaping with life? Ha! catching the appearance of something moving in the corner of the room, he saw the heart of Buonaparte going into a hole in the wall; and jumping from bed, was just in time to seize and rescue it from the teeth of a rat. The blood of Ahab was licked up by dogs. And it is recorded by Bishop Burnet that, after the body of Charles II. had been disembowelled, the servants of that licentious and heartless palace, utterly regardless of dead Royalty, emptied their basins, containing some of the inward parts and the fatty matter of the entrails, into an open sewer, and many of the clotted lumps were seen for days sticking to a grate over the mouth of a drain into which the sewer ran. How nearly had a still more marked visitation come on the remains of Napoleon—to have his heart eaten by rats!

TRAGEDY.

There are two kinds of Tragedy. In the one the catastrophe may be said to be gratuitous or incidental, inasmuch as it is the result of circumstances which evolve themselves with many an interchange of hope and fear, and which often seem to be on the point of bringing out a happy consummation, when all at once they are overfilled with struggling labours, and cast out the woful births of despair and death. Romeo and Juliet is a fine example of this species of tragic result; which is an infinitely affecting one, as it might easily have been avoided by a slight change in the circumstances preceding the catastrophe: Youth and beauty and love are cut off at the very moment, and by the very means, of coming joy: How sad! The other kind of Tragedy is where the rueful end is foreseen from the very first as a thing inevitable.

"I see as from a tower the end of all."

The Bride of Lammermoor (making no distinction for the

present between prose and poetry) is an example of this species of Tragedy. The old prophecy at the outset is itself sufficient to weigh down the heart with the entire certainty of a baleful end. How uneasy in their light, how unnaturally lustrous, how fearful are the gleams and flashes of young love relieved against that heavy gloom of impending fate! Such are the loves of the Master of Ravenswood and his Lucy. Tragedy, with these solemn pre-determined issues, is altogether of a higher order than the first-mentioned kind. On a similar, but more stern, because religious, principle of Destiny, most of the Greek Tragedies are composed. Beauty and youth, all affection and all pleasure, are remorselessly given up by the austere Masters of that old drama to feed the hungry and close-upgathering spindle of inexorable Fate. This is the deepest and most spirit-quelling style of the Tragic Muse.

It is indispensable to a great tragedy that it have one overmastering passion running through it; and the catastrophe must be brought about by passion and character, and not by mere circumstance and incident, as in melodrame. If incident and plot are wanting, however, the play cannot be of the highest order, whatever may be the power of the main passion that pervades it. This we know from "Timon of Athens," which having no plot properly so called, and no incidents but such as are obviously contrived in successive gradations to draw out the one character of the piece, is more like a dramatised satire than a regular tragedy. Of all known plays, "King Lear" is most absorbingly interesting in its combination of leading passion, multiplicity of characters, varying fortunes—kept in due subordination to the main one, and surprising evolutions of plot: The sphere of action is broader and more varied; the language more wild and poetic; the characters of greater diversity, from the simplest on to the most startling and almost lawlessly unnatural; the strokes and turns of the chief and the subordinate interests more numerous, rapid, and striking, than in any other play: We have in it all the bustle and excitement of the most romantic novel; everything at the same time being tributary to, and losing

itself in that great gulf-stream of overbearing passion which runs through this prodigious drama, sucking everything into its own mælstrom. In all these great respects in one, "King Lear" is the foremost of tragedies.

We may say, then, that there are two farther styles of Tragedy: The one as exemplified in "Timon of Athens," and the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles, where the simple interest is like the growth of the palm-tree—all stem, and few or no side branches; the other, as represented by "King Lear," where the gigantic stock is also multitudinously mighty in circumstantial boughs, all of them, to the uttermost twig and leaf, tossing and tearing themselves in one frantic vitality of filial unison with the terrible stress of the parent trunk, bending and groaning to the very earth in the tragic tempest.

DEATH.

The two-fold image of Death, full of loathsome terrors, and yet a sweet sleep to the world-wearied head, is exquisitely portrayed in the following sonnet by Wordsworth:—

> "Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne
> Which mist and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
> Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
> But all the steps and ground about were strown
> With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
> Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
> Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud
> 'Thou art our King, O Death! to thee we groan.'
> I seemed to mount those steps; the vapours gave
> Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
> Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
> With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
> Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
> A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!"

The blent unity of this crowded conception, crowning ghastliness and terror with serene repose, is beyond the power of painting, except in a series. How striking the multitudinous type! Death is not seen within his cloud: his essential form of terror is unknown. But round about the base of his throne lie scattered all the well-known dishonours of the grave; and in the midst of the dead are

the living looking eagerly unto that cloud, and conscious of their king, Death. High above the rottenness and fears of mortality, even there where the throne itself of Death should be, in or above the cloud, there is—no Death at all! Nothing but a Beauty laid in a sweet sleep, looking up to heaven, and yet drawing pleasing remembrances from the days of earth—most lovely emblem of our immortal hopes!

THE PICTURESQUE.

In poetry there are two kinds of the picturesque: They may be termed the graphic picturesque, and the diffusive picturesque. In the former a single word often makes the whole picture, in the latter a host of rich circumstances are brought together from every province of Imagination to make it. The former is the nobler and more difficult species of writing. Dante is the greatest master of the former, Spencer of the latter.

SELF-DENIAL IN POETRY.

Does that man deserve the name of an architect who huddles many beautiful parts together in the form of an aggregate building, yet without one simple plan of proportions preserving the whole in subserviency to the necessary utility of the structure? Tried by this rule, how many of our poets, who are exquisite at lines and stanzas, yet deserve not the title of poets at all. Shelley is a great master of beautiful words and images; but we defy any man to trace any grand outline—any frame-work—any ossification, in many of what are called his leading poems. All is a splendid confusion of beauty, intervolved and interminable. Self-denial is the greatest virtue in poetry. How succinct, for instance, is Milton's description of the Lazar-house; where Shelley, in his weakness of over-ambition, would have given us every form and feature of nosology. How simple and few, but how characteristic, are the paintings which Eneas beheld in the Carthaginian Temple, significant of the Trojan war. A lesser genius than Virgil's would have given us a whole gallery of pictures. Thom-

son's Castle of Indolence, in reference to this sort of self-denial, is perhaps the most perfect poem in any language. The subject-matter is necessarily vague and illimitable; and therefore the highest praise is his that he has kept it within distinctive bounds—sharp, clear, and decisive in all its edges, as a square tower in the pure morning air. What a world of glimpsing, unsubstantial dreams, would the author of "Alastor" have given us from such a theme.

NOTIONS OF DEITY ENTERTAINED BY THE ANCIENTS.

That just and fine sense of moral purity, which was by no means wanting to the classic nations of antiquity, was strangely inconsistent with their notion and reverence of their gods, who, according to their universally believed legends, were monsters of all impurity. Strange, that the same mind which could perceive the beauty of virtue, could form to itself the idea of a Divinity otherwise than the very embodied essence of that virtue, nay, the very reverse of it!

GREEK BEAUTY.

Nothing so strikingly illustrates that pervading sense and love of Beauty characteristic of the Greek mind as the fact that the rude and terrific grandeur of the drama, as raised almost wholly and at once by Æschylus to the rank of a new Art, and therefore likely to be stamped enduringly on the national heart, was yet by the very next poet, Sophocles, almost the contemporary of Æschylus himself, subdued down to the most perfect model of polished gradations and chastened beauty.

MURDER.

Irish murders, in general, are mere indiscriminate butcheries: There is no character in them. Scotch murders, on the other hand, which are fortunately rare, have almost always something profound and awful both in the feelings and circumstances connected with them. The morbid anatomy of a Scotch murderer's heart is in most

cases a fearfully interesting thing. It has been remarked that the great proportion of murders are committed in winter. The absence of soothing natural beauty; the congenial desolation of the season; the longer darkness of the nights, so favourable to mischief; the souring effects of cold upon the animal frame; and the greater privations in winter of irregular and desperate men,—all these points put together may help to account for what I believe is a fact, namely, that more murders are committed in winter than in all the rest of the year taken collectively.

PECULIAR POWER OF POETRY.

Looking over my portfolio of Martin's Illustrations of Paradise Lost, I feel my preconceived notions of Milton's sublime and beautiful localities completely outraged. So is it in ninety-nine out of a hundred instances of such illustrations: so difficult is it for Painting to illustrate Poetry. The millions of susceptible readers who have read Paradise Lost, have every one of them the most distinct conception of the poet's places; yet were each reader able to portray with the pencil his own impressions of them, we should have millions of totally different representations. Such is the wonderful plastic power of true poetry in adapting one picture to millions of minds. It is clear and palpable to all of them, yet different to each: it is distinctly one, yet no less distinctly multiform.

DRESS.

I can easily understand the principle on which Sculpture, in its necessarily limited range, rejects all but the most simple drapery, as tending to hide the essential forms of Beauty. Yet in painting how picturesque and characteristic is dress, and also in poetry. It is no less so in common life. Cowper, by one touch at the coat, beyond the trick of a thousand tailors, thus hits off the picture of an honest manly Englishman:—

> ——— "Coat close-buttoned to the chin,
> Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within."

What a strong hearty port—hearty alike to friend and

foe—does the single circumstance of the close-buttoned coat betoken. And then the broad cloth, fine West-of-England, utterly contemptuous of the swallow-tail, full and flowing in the skirts, how significant of a sturdy John Bull. Not a word more is necessary to complete the portraiture: No need to tell us that he wears top-boots and a broad-brimmed hat: There he stands before us, the perfect picture of a perfect Englishman.

LITERARY STYLE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Southey has remarked that the English language can never degenerate so long as our present translation of the Scriptures is read as it ought to be, such is its noble simplicity. Under a reverential impression of the divine importance of Holy Writ, I am not fond of speaking of it as a mere composition of language; but I may be permitted to remark, that the heroic grandeur of the following brief verse is unequalled in any literature that I know:—

1 Chron., xii. 8., "And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David, into the hold to the wilderness, men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains."

What a picture! A whole Iliad of heroes is crowded before us in these few simple words. Or rather, I should say, the total effect is beyond the reach of the pictorial art. The visages and shapes majestic in light and shadow in the rock-ribbed den of the wilderness could be given on the canvass; but nothing but the plastic power of poetry (the above verse is of the highest order of poetry) could lighten the darkly-congregated and proscribed cave with the sweet contrasted relief of the wild roes without, unbeleaguered and free on the green range of the unmolested hills.

Take again the following description of the land of Canaan:—

Deut. viii., 7, 8, 9, "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten

and art full, then shalt thou bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee."

How simple, yet how picturesquely graphic, and comprehensive of all earthly blessings, are these few words.

DRYDEN'S VERSIFICATION.

The broken trailing heroic rhymes of Shelley and Keats, and others of that modern school, are much worse on the one hand, than the clinking antithetical couplet, ever terminating the sense, which is the monotonous fault of the Pope school, is on the other. The great charm of Dryden is that he mixes a little of both styles, carrying, however, his own peculiar vigour triumphantly through the whole, and still farther diversifying his restless strength by swinging Alexandrines. To begin with a couple of nicely-balanced musical lines—to break gradually into new and less measured paces—to push his warming protracted strength through a series of crabbed couplets, broken here and there, and intervolved, or at least running into each other—to hang in recovering pauses, conscious of his might, and gathering in his flowing reins—and to finish the climax of his tumultuous power with a couplet, or a pair of couplets, of exquisite melody,—such is a very common style with Dryden. The mingled fire and sweetness of Homer rushes on and comes to soft pauses in a similar way. Virgil has much of the same power; though his extreme love of beauty makes him not unfrequently timid in letting out his strength with rugged and rapid effect, and prompts him to recover and balance himself in graceful ease before he has given us a full hearty swing. The effect of those long rushing climaxes, when we feel the often cross, boiling, turbulent currents, yet bearing us breastingly forward, and gradually working us out into smooth soft water, is very fine; and therein, as already remarked, lies the vast power of Dryden as a master of heroic rhyme. His Fables are almost the finest poems in any language, at least so far as versification is concerned.

INSTINCT OF PROFESSIONAL HABIT.

The author of "St. Ronan's Well" thus describes the

effects which the re-appearance of Tyrrel, after a long absence, produced upon some of the inmates of the Cleikum Inn, who thought that they saw in him the ghost of a murdered man:—"The two maidens took refuge in the darksome den entitled their bedroom, *whilst the hump-backed postilion fled like the wind into the stable, and with professional instinct began, in the extremity of his terror, to saddle a horse.*" I have marked thus in italics what, in its combination of humour and philosophy, I think is one of the finest strokes in the writings of Scott. The humour makes us smile gravely; and the philosophy gives us one of the most curious illustrations of what our great author calls professional instinct—that bond which keeps men of low natures faithful to their secular duties; but which, as a rational rule of conduct, is only a slight grade above the mere disciplined instinct of a dog or a horse: In this blind clinging of the poor postilion to external use and wont, lay all his virtue and all his hope of safety.

RAFFAELLE'S CARTOONS.

Here are prints from the Cartoons of Raffaelle. These Cartoons are perhaps the divinest emanations of the human mind. In Homer's celebrated night-scene there is the following description, which I give as translated by a distinguished modern critic:—

> "But as when the stars of heaven, around the shining moon,
> Shine beautiful, when the air is windless,
> And all the eminences appear, and pinnacles of their heights,
> And groves, and the immeasurable firmament expands from below,
> And all the stars are seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart."

The second notice of the stars here is not a needless repetition of the first, nor yet does it give us a second and new starry scene: The two notices are only expressions of the same scene in its progressive adaptation to the soul of the gazer, dilating to his dilating gaze, as he looks long and steadily at the high and sustained calmness of the firmament. The shepherd, who is put forward as the representative of the poet, in his first glance sees the common beauty of the night, then the illumined places of the earth; the interfused harmony betwixt earth and heaven

again wins back his eye and spirit to the upper glory, till to his fixed and rapt contemplation the whole ether seems boundlessly widening with its multiplying stars. His happiness is not, as Pope translates it, that of the swain who "blesses the useful light," but the sublimed emotion of one who gazes on the repose of majestic simplicity—

> "A presence that disturbs us with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts."

So is it with him who views the sublime creations of Raffaelle. They may strike him at first sight, or not; but it is the supreme test of their excellence that they never cease to expand to the expanding soul of the beholder, but continue to fill up the measure of the capacity which they themselves create. In our painter's Madonnas we see at first a female head of modest and downcast beauty, but soon the vision becomes intensified: A creature is before us, we know not and care not whether of humble or high estate, and of what era or country it never once enters into our minds to think; we see in that brow the many thoughts of her who was constrained to watch with reverential expectation the looks and doings of her wonderful Babe, the gratitude of the favoured one, the awful humility of her who was overshadowed with the power of the Highest. On the same principle the Cartoons of Raffaelle are excellent; for, though they admit not of the same rigid exclusion of the dissimilar which marks the perfect heavens, or the undivided representations of his own Madonnas, and though the harmonising use of their illustrative figures (how many and varied they are, too!) impresses on us at once the distinct meaning of each picture, yet such is the calm and contained demonstration of power, even in their strongest features, that their glory is at first only half revealed. Violent pain, mental or bodily, is tempered by heroic resistance, by grandeur, by native sweetness; Pity waits upon Terror; Horror is quenched in Beauty:

> "Calm pleasures there abide, majestic pains."

And while his lovely forms have all the celestial purity of

the Grecian creations of art, over them is breathed that refining moral air which belongs alone to the Christian faith. That dignified putting-forth of power, of which I have spoken, how remarkable in the Apostle when he has smitten the Sorcerer with blindness. It is even more so in Peter, and in his brethren, who stand around in stately and austere composure, whilst at their feet is Ananias, curbed down at once beneath the crushing conquest of death. But herein is the true sublime: The severe and unexerted attitude of the denouncing Apostle, and the absence of wonder at his own stupendous privilege, exalt the inherent nature of faith, and of that Almighty power which, though called down by man, yet depends not on any human display. And thus the glory of Raffaelle, as a painter, is deep, quiet, and unobtrusive, coming forth only gradually on the expanding soul of the sympathetic beholder.

The arrangement and management of his books is a great matter with the Old Bachelor, whether he sort them according to size of volume and harmony of binding, or according to departments of subject-matter and his own method of reading. First, in my first "indispensable" shelf, in the range of general literature, stand Shakspeare, Don Quixote (Motteux' translation, which is the best), Boswell's Life of Johnson, and Lockhart's Life of Scott. One never wearies of reading these four books. They form a library of themselves. Nay, Shakspeare himself does so. He is endlessly fresh and new: For it is characteristic of a first-rate poet, of this kind and compass, that, open him as oft as we may, we always find something that we never felt and appreciated fully before: One day we are in one mood, and another in another; and so, according to our respective moods, will be the vivid force with which congenial expressions of the poet strike us for the time being: And thus it is that these expressions seem new to us, though in literal fact we may have read them hundreds of times before, ay, and may also literally have borne them in our memories.

One parting word, Brother Bachelor, in reference to your Library:—You have retired, I presume, like myself, to "adjust your mantle ere you fall." Have with you then, in addition to THE BOOK, or rather in connexion with it, as complete a set as possible of the Old English Divines. They constitute a wondrous circle and cycle of hallowed literature: We have in them all that it is finest in imagination, reasoning, meditation, worship—all that can strengthen, and purify, and delight, and elevate the intellectual, moral, and religious nature of man. And ever as you read, and ever as you humbly hope you are growing better, bless that holy institution of a Church which has furnished you with such weapons of celestial temper, drawn from the armoury of the living God, to fight the good fight, and win immortal life.

CHAPTER XIX.

APOLOGY FOR ARTHUR BONNINGTON.

DR CALVERT, a medical practitioner in Our Village, a fine young man, died suddenly this autumn. He and I being on very intimate terms, he left me his literary MSS., to do with them what I thought best. One piece, however, he enjoined me to publish, as it referred to matters of fact, and went to vindicate the memory of a dear friend of his own, lately deceased: The following is the piece referred to:—

APOLOGY FOR ARTHUR BONNINGTON.

PART I.

ONE summer evening, being on a pedestrian excursion in the south of Scotland, I was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm, and made for shelter to a small village inn. I was on the point of entering it, when the voice of some one crying bitterly behind me made me pause and turn: It was a bareheaded, barefooted little boy, who came running along the twilight road. I questioned him of the cause of his crying, and he said he was frightened by the

thunder. He had been sent, he farther told me, to a town some miles off, to get a surgeon for a gentleman who had fallen from his horse; but he could not get one, as the only practitioner of the place was not at home, nor would be at home that night. On hearing this, I instantly determined to follow the boy, and see the hurt person, to whom I might be of some service. Despite the storm, we went on till we reached a small range of thatched cottages, near which, the boy told me, the accident happened; and a horse tied at the door of one of them led us at once to the proper place. On entering, I saw my patient, a man apparently about thirty years of age, leaning back pale and exhausted upon a bed, and ministered to by a woman far advanced in life, whose appearance indicated that she had seen better days. I introduced myself as a graduate in medicine, who, having heard of the accident, and their messenger's want of success in procuring the aid of a surgeon, had volunteered his services if necessary. The unfortunate gentleman, on hearing this, sat up and allowed me to examine his hurts, which I did carefully. Having done so, I bound up his head, which I found bruised on one side, almost to a fracture, and cut by the stones of the road, upon which he had fallen. The storm had now subsided, and my patient, contrary to my advice and the earnest entreaties of his hostess, expressed his determination to ride home without delay, as his house was distant only three miles. After giving the little messenger, who lived in the next cottage, his due guerdon, he turned to the kind old woman who fluttered over his departure with an earnest blessing, and an entreaty to know of his welfare on the morrow, and said to her:—"I will not offend you by speaking of remuneration, but God bless you for your kindness. I will see you often. Yet, meanwhile, may I request to know to whose motherly care I have been so much indebted at this time?"

"I was proud of the name of Bonnington," was the old woman's answer, "when I was a wife, and the mother of my own Harry and Emily; but they are all gone from me long ago."

At this her wounded guest started as if he had been struck to the heart with a barbed arrow, and trembling violently, he turned half round imploringly to me; then fixing his gaze on the old woman before him, he gasped forth:—"Good God! what has brought me into this house! Do you know who I am, my kind hostess?"

"I think not, Sir. But I am afraid you are yet very unwell."

"No wonder, no wonder, if you be indeed his mother—that boy Harry Bonnington's. Dare you guess who is in your house this moment?"

"Mysterious Providence!" said the woman, returning his gaze with equal intensity, "who is this one before me?"

"My name was Hastings once, do you know me now?" cried my patient, sinking back on a chair, and covering his face with his left hand, whilst he extended the other. "There is the bloody right hand," he added, "which made you childless."

There was here a deep pause. The unhappy man sat with both his hands upon his face. Before him stood the bereaved mother, perplexed in the extreme, yet evidently struggling to overcome her strong emotions.

"If God has brought about this meeting, fatal man to me," she at length said, "let us each be wiser and better by it. This cannot be without perfect repentance and forgiveness, and we must mind our respective parts. What would you have me say to you else?"

"In truth, I do not know," was his answer. "I could tell you, indeed, why my face has long been pale; but it is more becoming in me to go out of your presence without any parade of repentance. It was an awful deed, thou poor mother! But yet the blow that has ruined us all was not meant for him."

"So she told me, my child Emily, when she pleaded for you before this heart, and gave a mitigated name to your offence. We are two in a strange relation to each other; but if both of us may find the same mild Judge in Heaven

at last, why should we farther distress each other on earth? Yours is the remorse for guilty rashness, and mine is the sore bereavement."

"Will you give me a pledge of your forgiveness?" asked he eagerly.

"Name it," said the woman, evidently surprised.

"I have no mother," proceeded the unhappy gentleman, "and never knew a true mother's care, I have no relatives, I am a desolate man; and would have you become a mother even to me. And if I might be something like a son to you, it would give me a taste of happiness; and I owe you the duty a thousand times. I have wealth enough, and I think I could fulfil some offices of kind attention. Now, if you judge me aright, if you care not over much for the opinion of the world, if your heart can bear the sad memorial which my presence must ever be, will you become a mother to me? Will you give me a chance for a little joy, by allowing me to redress somewhat the wrongs I have done you, in cutting off the natural stay of your age?"

"You are strangely generous," said Mrs Bonnington, after a pause; "yet I believe not the less truly so. Your proposal, however, is so striking, that I confess myself afraid to take it."

"I dare not urge you farther at this time," said the young man; "but will you permit me to see you again ere long, and renew my request?"

"God's best peace be with you, Sir!" said the old woman, in a kind voice, yet not answering his question directly.

"Amen!" said the unhappy gentleman, and added nothing farther, beyond taking a simple leave of his hostess, who followed us to the door, and assisted me in helping him to his horse.

"And now," said he turning to me with a kind smile, "what must be done with you? whither shall we dismiss you?"

"I believe I must see you safely home," was my reply;

"or, in other words, I must tax your hospitality for a night. My name is Calvert, and, if you please, Doctor is a good travelling addition."

"My name is Bremner," said my companion, "and we are brothers, it seems, in the profession. But I trust you will never need my services as you have kindly given me yours to-night. As for your proposal to accompany me home, it is exactly what I wished; and I trust we shall not part so soon."

I made it my farther duty, as we proceeded, to keep my hand upon his horse's bridle, lest any of the occasional flashes which were yet visible far off might provoke the spirited animal to any sudden plunge, which his rider, in his present exhausted state, was less able to guard against; and in this way we went on till we reached Mountcoin, the place of Bremner's residence.

On the morrow, instead of taking leave of my new friend, I agreed to stay with him a month; before the expiry of which term, I had the pleasure of seeing Mrs Bonnington's first scruples yield to his generous solicitations, and her rest set up for life at his house. It was a heart-touching sight to see him act towards her in all respects like a good son; and his attentions were specially valuable, as her health was very feeble.

On the evening previous to the proposed day of my departure from Mountcoin, Dr Bremner voluntarily opened up to me the following particulars of his life.

PART II.

Of my parentage I can say nothing: a mystery overhangs my childhood, which I have sought in vain to clear up. There is nothing more common than to hear it remarked, "How short seems our bypast life!" but to me, Sir, the days of my boyhood appear so far remote, that they seem to belong to some other earlier existence. Such are my farthest recollections of a sunny world of yore, and of my being led out into the pleasant fields by some kind playmate, of whom I remember only the little feet that went before me. Would I could forget these early passages

altogether, or knew them more distinctly! Sometimes my spirit is so earnest, and, as I think, so near falling into the proper train of pursuing them, that in my anxiety—I may call it my agony—the perspiration stands upon my brow. I see the dim something before me, yet never can overtake or unmask it:

"You might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream."

The first point in my childhood which I clearly remember is, that I was sitting alone plucking the blossoms from a fine bush of budding broom, when a crow alighted near my feet, and carried off a large worm. Then came a woman, whose face I cannot recall, with a small red shoe in her hand, which she put upon one of my feet; and then she took me up. Probably it had fallen off by the way, and I had been set down on the grass till she went back to seek it.

The next point, and that to which I can follow back my continuous recollections, is my being in a room with an elderly lady, who took great pains to amuse me by giving me little books of pictures, and explaining them to me. The appearance of this patroness of my early youth I have from that day clearly remembered, and it seems to have been impressed upon me in rather a whimsical way: On the lady's cheek was a small spot streaked with those wavy threads of red, to which immoderate sorrow, or indulgence, or natural decay, often attenuates the tints of a florid beauty: A leaf had fallen from one of my little books, and I remember my asking a scarlet thread from her cheek to sew it into its proper place.

I omit farther record of my boyhood as common and uninteresting, and advance to deeper and more perilous details.

One evening, in the eighteenth summer of my age, I was crossing on horseback a river about twenty miles from home, when the animal on which I rode was mastered by the force of the current, which was heavily flooded from previous rains; and horse and rider were rolled down in the strong stream.

From the first rush and thunder of waters in my soul, a dim blank was over me till I awoke to a confused sense of what had befallen me, and of my now being kindly ministered to. To this succeeded a heavy sleep, which must have lasted during the night, for when I next distinctly awoke, the light of the sun through a green curtain fell with a fine haze upon my face as I lay upon an unknown bed. "It is morning," said I to myself, as I lay still, trying to remember how I had come thither. I was interrupted in my calculation by the entrance of a good-looking man, apparently a farmer, who, after satisfying himself that I was fairly awake, began to congratulate me on my escape from drowning in the river, and then told me, in answer to my enquiry, that I had been saved by a young niece of his own, who having seen the failure of my horse, watched me as I was rolled down the river, till, on my being borne near the bank where she was, she rushed in and drew me out at the peril of her own life. "Your horse perished," he added, "but this is nothing since you yourself are safe. I must now go for our young surgeon, for, do you know, you have got an ugly gash on your head against some rock in the water, and it is needful now to have it dressed." My host retired for a few minutes, and then returned, followed by a fair young creature, with salve and bandages for my head. He introduced her to me as his niece, Emily Bonnington, who had saved my life. After I had fervently thanked my young preserver, I submitted to her farther kindness, and she bound up my head with the tenderest care. I was then left alone, under the recommendation of my kind host that I should try, if possible, to sleep again, as I felt a violent throbbing in my head; and accordingly I lay back upon my bed, trying to compose myself anew to slumber. What was it that invested my lovely preserver with such an interest to me as I lay for hours, sleeping none, but thinking only of her? Love, sudden love, it could not be; for my heart was inalienably devoted to another. Nor yet could the strongest gratitude exhaust my mysterious regard for that young woman, Emily Bonnington. Had I seen that face

of hers before? I could not say that I had; yet it haunted me less in reference to late things, than to a cloud of early remembrances which came over me. About noon I arose, and joined my host in a short walk through his fields. In the afternoon I had an opportunity of questioning Emily Bonnington a little farther as to my preservation; and the graceful modesty with which she recounted the particulars, bettered the sweet impressions which her beauty was calculated to make. In accordance with my host's kind entreaties, I agreed to stay with him till the morrow, resolved then to take a seat homeward in the Mail, which passed by near his house at an early hour.

This night, after I had slept, as I thought, for several hours, I awoke from confused dreams with an over-laboured spirit. My ears had not yet got quite rid of yesterday's watery visitation, and I felt my head heavy and aching. To relieve myself a little, I arose and went to the window, and opened it to taste the pure breath of the night. The moon was shining clearly down from the zenith, and no cloud stained her blue noon. The stars were aloof and fainting from her glorious presence. My attention was, however, soon drawn from the beautiful face of heaven by a low whispering beneath me, and looking down, I saw Emily Bonnington come round in front of the house with a young man.

"Fear not, Emily," I heard him say, "I'll rejoice in you before the whole world."

"Enough for me," was her low sweet reply, "that I have staked my all on your own good opinion—honour the trust."

The youth now bade her passionately adieu. She returned it evidently with the most confiding affection; and, after she had watched him for some time as he hasted away through the green dewy parks, she turned with a low murmuring exclamation, and retired behind the house. Had I not known that young man, an interview like this, which I had undesignedly witnessed, so common betwixt lovers, might not have given me a thought beyond the moment; but I had at once recognised the youth, and

what I knew of him made me anxious and unhappy in calculating the probable consequences of such a love to my beautiful preserver. He was a young man of the name of Julius Wardrop, the only son of an old squire, who had an estate a few miles from Mountcoin, and another near where Emily Bonnington resided with her uncle. I knew him to be unprincipled.

In the morning, when I saw Miss Bonnington alone for a few minutes before my departure to join the Mail, I could not resist giving her one vague general caution. I took a ring from my finger, and pressed her to keep it as a slight *memento* that I wished to be grateful.

"I will keep it," said she, taking the gem, "and be proud when I look at it to remember that Heaven made me the instrument of saving the life of a worthy young gentleman."

"May it be the ring of an elder brother," said I; "and may the memory which it recalls of thine own noble heroism fortify thy soul to challenge and defeat the betrayer, should any one, presuming on his wealth or his wiles, ever tempt thy excellent honour!"

To this appeal, which living and present apprehension made me utter with much solemnity, young Emily answered only with a keen look, and I bade her adieu.

After finishing my medical studies at the University of Edinburgh, the liberality of my patroness, Mrs Hastings, who had been left with a handsome jointure by an old antiquary, allowed me to visit the medical schools of Dublin and London, where I spent a year or so. On my way home from the latter city, the Mail left me at an inn about ten miles from Mountcoin, where I resolved to stay all night, purposing to walk home early on the morrow. After I had rested awhile from the fatigue of travelling, I walked out on a balcony from one of the windows of the inn to enjoy the beautiful summer evening, which had been freshened by a thick shower. As I stood before the window, I saw a carriage advancing along the highway with great rapidity, the harness glittering in the sun, and the glimmering wheels raising a mist which was left be-

hind in a long trail. Onward the carriage came, and having been drawn up before the door of the inn, Julius Wardrop stepped from it, and turning, handed out a young lady, in whom, to my infinite surprise and horror, I recognised my own beloved Catherine Sinton. I say "horror," for the air of necessary gallantry with which Wardrop did his devoir; the confiding tenderness with which the lady leaned on his arm; and that peculiar softened and mellowed halo of beauty, of which the saffron robe is the emblem, and which, shadowing the warm and blushing brow, weighing the eyelid, and heightening the blooming honours of the cheek, leaves us never to mistake a young bride, carried to my heart, as with a stroke of lightning, that the lady was lost to me for ever, and was become the wife of another. No sooner were Wardrop and his young —(well, it must be so!)—his young wife fairly into the inn, than I hurried down stairs, not having magnanimity enough to stay an hour near so fearfully-interesting a party; and took my road homeward, my crowding thoughts unable to arrange themselves, but my whole heart swallowed up in the overwhelming conviction that I had indeed lost my Catherine. She was the daughter of a gentleman in this neighbourhood, and I had loved her for many years with a growing passion, which, however, I never revealed to her; but this I had determined to do without farther delay, and my departure from London was hastened for this very purpose, as I could endure my absence from her no longer. So then I was too late! So then Catherine was lost to me for ever! With the burden of these bitter thoughts upon me, I wandered homewards, I know not how. I was not, however, so selfish in my own loss as altogether to forget Miss Bonnington, and my heart boiled with double indignation against Wardrop, as I could not but think that he must have deceived and forsaken poor Emily. Were we to enquire curiously for motives, the emphasis which I laid on this part of his misconduct, might perhaps argue that my heart, on account of its own private feelings, was eager to find a just cause of anger against him.

The very next day, by chance, I met Emily's uncle, as he was on his way to a distant fair, and, on my enquiring for the damsel, he gave me to understand that she had now left him; and this he did with such a sorrowful reluctance, that I dreaded the worst. He seemed angry, when I attempted to follow up my enquiries a little farther, though I did it as incidentally as possible; but when I apologized, by stating the deep interest I took in my beautiful preserver, whom, in her joy or her sorrow, I could not but be bound now and then to see, I saw the tear start in his eye, and, after a pause, he said:—"She may be in sorrow, poor child, for aught we know, though God forbid! The truth is, Sir, she left us some three months ago, and we cannot find her. We have had two letters from her, however, in both of which she says she is well, asks pardon for her strange departure, begs our forbearance for a little longer, and promises soon to return to us without dishonour. Would to Heaven that day were come, my little Emily!" I was on the point of mentioning my suspicions, from what I guessed of her love for Wardrop; but I refrained, because I might be under some mistake, and because, even in the event of my suspicions being just, I thought it better not to precipitate matters, by directing the interference of her fiery kinsman. I contented myself with asking if he would permit and authorize me to find her for him? "God bless you! yes, yes," was his answer; and clapping spurs to his horse, he galloped off to hide his agitation.

Thus I resolved to seek Miss Bonnington without delay, anxious to redeem her gently from any error. I think there was no priggish impertinence in this wish of mine to interfere. I would but warn her of Wardrop's marriage, and leave it to her own good sense to do or avoid the rest. Having learned that he had gone back with his bride to Edinburgh, I followed, determined to make him tell me where Emily was (for I doubted not that under his auspices she had left her uncle's friendly roof), and, moreover, to let him know that I would do my utmost to save her from his farther villany. The accumulated grief and in-

dignation of my spirit threw me into a violent fever a few hours after my arrival in Edinburgh, and it was nearly a month ere I was again able to walk out. The very first evening after quitting my chamber, I saw, by chance, in the dim twilight, Emily Bonnington walking alone in an obscure street, forlorn and wo-begone, pale of countenance, slow and irregular in her step. She did not seem to recoguise me as I passed by; and why did I pass by without addressing her? Oh, God! I wanted to see if she had not become one of those miserable women who give their beauty and their embraces for hire. She walked forward, however, without offering, or meeting with, interruption, and I followed, till, as she was about to be admitted into a house in a mean part of the city, I touched her on the shoulder from behind, announced my name, and asked if I might talk with her for a few minutes.

"Certainly, Sir, in virtue of former acquaintanceship," replied she, with proud alacrity.

We were accordingly ushered, by a woman of decent appearance, into a small room, when Miss Bonnington, turning to me with a somewhat peremptory look, as if, without delay, to know my business, I felt myself obliged to state at once for what reason I had sought her. She was angry, and haughtily rejected my plea that I saw her unfortunate.

"If so," she said, "my misfortunes are my own, and of my own free choice. I must be rid of your ring," she continued, "for I see that, in virtue of my having accepted it, you think yourself warranted in very unnecessary interference." Suiting the action to the words, she drew it forth from a small box into which it had been carefully put, and was about to throw it into the fire, when I interposed. "Pause—hear me for one moment, Miss Bonnington," I cried. "I am newly redeemed from the gates of death, and my heart, when I saw you, could not be so callous as not to prompt me to follow you, and ask whether you are unhappy. But I will leave you this instant, if you will still preserve that little pledge."

Her trembling pause, and the big blinding tears that,

despite her efforts to be firm, began to drop fast from her eyes, were a prelude to the subdued and softened heart, which thus burst out into sad flow:—"God knows, Mr Hastings, I have much need to keep it, since it is the only little pledge left of my own self-respect. You must leave me, Sir; I am dishonoured, ah! me, enough. I cannot endure your kind cares. But remember, Sir, I am not dishonoured as you perhaps suppose. Hark! hark! there comes Wardrop, my cruel——O, no! no! But he promised to be here to-night, and what must be done with you?" Ere I could turn from the maid, the door of the room was burst open, and I was suddenly assailed and struck down by a blow from behind. I recovered myself, yet reeling, but was again struck down. A second time I rose—a knife came to my hand with fatal facility—through mists, and the blood which came over my temples, I saw my own arm raised vehemently aloft—I heard the greedy knife gashing the side of that woman's seducer.

"If you are dishonoured, so are you avenged!" I remember to have cried, panting. I cleared the mist and blood from my eyes. A loud shriek was in my ears. Emily had fainted, and fallen back on a chair. The face of my prostrate antagonist had been towards the door—he was now turning round to look for Emily, and I was horrified to see the bright blue eye of a stranger youth quivering in death.

"Help me to my sister!" I heard him cry, with an awful look to me of pathetic reproach. I was petrified; I could not move. With an energy that made the purple drops of life spirt and bubble from his side, he raised himself up, and twisting himself twice round, was at the feet of Emily. He clasped them to his bosom, and kissed her ankles convulsively, with a fearful energy of love. Again he panted forth the name of his sister; then turned upon me his eye, in which death was mingled with a curse. I was brooking the last look which still glared, stiffening, against me, when, in a moment recollecting myself, I sprung to his ear, crying aloud that I was not his sister's seducer. It was too late. There was no motion of doubt

or belief. The film of death had fallen for ever on his eye. And judge me, Calvert, friend of mine, if the cloud of eclipse did not then fall on my heart, which no time shall lift or blot away! You may wonder; but I remember all these particulars distinctly, for I was calm in despair: I see the whole thing by night and day like a dark phantasmagoria: I have gone over the particulars, in my mind's eye, a thousand times, winning each one to its proper place, and arranging the whole like a dance, till the order is at length fixed inalienably before me. I think my cries brought the mistress of the house into the room; and I think it was the voice of her reproaches that first induced me to flee, which I did more from horror at my deed, than fear from my responsibility. I descended a stair, and hasted along the crowded streets. Every eye seemed intent upon me; and I heard the sound of men's feet, as if hurrying away to some judgment, some great verdict against me. The coaches seemed to be rolling along the night streets with greater speed and a louder sound of wheels than usual; and they were filled, methought, with men who were in haste on my account. Lamps and torches, as I passed, flashed brightly in my face, as if for the wicked purpose of detection; and every motion of the thronged metropolis seemed instinct with earnestness in relation to my bloody offence. Without any formal choice of route, I made my escape from the city by a south road, merely because I had happened to fall upon it most readily. Three or four miles away from the last din of the town, I sat me down on a green bank, weary and bewildered, and there fell fast asleep. I must have slept for several hours, for when I sat down I saw the moon broad and red coming up above the horizon, and when I awoke she was riding high and clear. I have often wondered how, in my weakness after late fever, I could stand such fatigue and exposure; but such is the fact, that, despite these untoward circumstances, I gained, upon the whole, my bodily strength very fast. When I awoke, as already stated, I was pretty calm in spirit, and could calculate the plan of my flight. I was

sorry that, in a weak mood, I had been induced to flee at all, which would be construed into an absconding from justice, and would thus bear the face of the worst guilt, and I had some thoughts of returning back to the city and surrendering myself up; but again I thought it better to go home and explain my unhappy predicament to Mrs Hastings, and there quietly abide the pursuit of the law.

On reaching Mountcoin, I learned that Mrs Hastings had the day before set out to see me on a third visit since my fever began, and that, moreover, she meant to proceed onwards to Glasgow, there to stay for a few weeks. Scarcely had a day gone by when, as I had hourly anticipated, I was apprehended at Mountcoin for the murder of Mr Harry Bonnington, and conveyed to jail in Edinburgh.

In the course of a few months, my trial came on. The main witness in the case was the landlady of the house in which I committed the rash deed. According to her deposition, the deceased (Harry Bonnington) came furiously into her house on the evening in question, and she saw him knock me down violently, and the blood spring from my head. She saw nothing farther, having retreated to her own apartment in great alarm. Emily Bonnington was named as a witness; but, alas! alas! she was dead —I presume of a broken heart. This was a thing to make my heart grow old in an hour! And then there was the second awful explanation, made in the course of the trial (with farther particulars of which I won't trouble you), that I had slain that brother of hers, a brave and manly sailor-boy, at the very moment when, with a brother's piercing love, he had found out his unhappy sister's retreat, to win her back from the spoiler! Under circumstances, it would seem, of strong palliation, a verdict of Manslaughter merely was found against me, and my sentence was three months' imprisonment. So soon as my confinement was over, I went to wait on Mrs Hastings, with a confusion of feelings, in reference to her, which I cannot well express. About a week after my first lodgement in jail, I had written to her, explaining my unhappy

situation, and praying her to come and see me; in answer to which I received a letter from her, stating that she could not comply with my wish; adding, moreover, that I was not her son, that my real name was Bremner, that she had bought me, when I was a child, from my mother, a vagrant woman, who was unable to support me, that she had done very much for me, but that I had testified my wild blood by my late horrible act, and that she was determined to countenance me no longer. With this letter of hers in my hand, I now made my way, without ceremony, to her presence, and thus bitterly began:—"So, Madam, in addition to your many excellent lessons, which have yet been insufficient to reclaim my savage nature, you must now teach me where to find this worshipful mother of mine."

"My son! my own son, still!" cried she, weeping and embracing me. "It was those greedy interested relatives of mine who made me write that cruel letter. O! say you forgive me, Edward, for you have been indeed a kind son to me!"

Whatever may be the force of blood, there is at least equal power in long habits of reverence and affection; and now, in my turn, I embraced and forgave at once the weak, but kind old lady. "But yet," said I, with severe solemnity, "there is something strange and awful in this relation of mine to an unknown mother, who may yet be alive, and whose name at least, if you cannot instruct me how to find her, I am determined henceforth to bear, to honour the being who gave me a body and a spirit. But, O! there must be more—far more! You have blessed me, lady, with good instruction, for which I thank you. But you must now instruct me how to find that true mother of my life; and it must be my sacred duty to take care of her, for perhaps——By Heaven! you have done grievously wrong, Madam! Perhaps——Who knows what may be her habits? Now, speak quickly—where am I to seek her?"

There was a pause. Mrs Hastings seemed alarmed at the earnestness of my manner and her own responsibility;

but when I repeated my question with somewhat of sternness, she replied, meekly, that she knew nothing of the woman—that she had not seen her for fifteen years. She owned, moreover, with tears, that she had made it one condition of keeping me as her own son, that my wretched mother was not to see me more than once a-year, and that she was never to make known her relationship to me; wherefore, as she had not come to see me during all these fifteen years, it might be inferred she was dead long ago. I had to assent to this conclusion. But when Mrs Hastings, weakly and with little tact, promised at this moment to do anything for me, and to leave me, when she died, all her substance, I declared it my purpose to make my own way in the world, and never to keep her property from her natural heirs.

Accordingly, in a few weeks, I proceeded to sea, in the capacity of a surgeon's mate, after taking an affectionate leave of my kind old patroness, and promising to open a punctual correspondence with her, and in all respects to be her son, save in so far as regarded my name, and the ultimate possession of her property. I was soon advanced in my new occupation, and at length, after several years of hard service, was appointed physician to a military hospital in the Isle of Wight, where I remained till about six months ago, when I was summoned to attend the death-bed of Mrs Hastings. According to my former resolution, I would accept none of her property in bequest, save this mansion, which she forced me to take as a pledge of my gratitude for the comforts which, in my boyhood, I had experienced therein. And here, having lately given up my professional duties, and retired on half-pay, I mean to spend the remainder of my life. I have lived here for three months now in almost perfect solitude. No one seeks my company, for it is generally reported, I believe, that I am fearfully distressed in mind for the murder (grant the term) which I committed in my youth. Nor is this altogether an idle report; for though I have forgot, in a great measure, Catherine Sinton, and others whom I loved as the friends of my youth, that boy Harry Bonning-

ton haunts my soul day and night. I have travelled in many lands, "seen many men and many cities," been in sea-fights many a one; yet, in spite of all change of place, in spite of every circumstance most likely to render a man callous, the guilty rashness of that early blow of mine troubles me still.

PART III.

ABOUT an hour after Dr Bremner had finished his narrative, we were standing together, looking from a window, to observe the complexion of the night, and calculate what kind of a day we were likely to have on the morrow, as I was then to take my departure. Looking down the old avenue which led up to the house, I caught, through the lights and shadows of the moonlit trees, a view of something black and indistinct coming moving onwards. I pointed it out to Dr Bremner, and we watched its approach till it began to shape itself, distinctly shewing a village hearse, drawn by a single ass, on which rode an old man, and attended by two females. Surprised and horrified, we gazed irresistibly on this strange phenomenon as it came slowly forward, and was stayed beneath our window; but still more were we struck when the driver alighted, and, with the assistance of the two women, proceeded to remove something from the inside of the vehicle, which we instantly saw was a human being in life, but apparently faint and sick. We waited till the unhappy figure was carried forward to the door, and then ran down stairs to see what this uncommon visitation might mean. The person thus brought was a woman. She was so faint that she could not speak; but the man who conducted the hearse told us that she was a stranger, who had fallen very sick at a village about three miles distant, and that she cried so much to see Dr Hastings, or Bremner, saying she could not die in peace till she had seen him, and made a clean confession to him, that the good folk of the village were fain to yoke the very hearse, and with an ass too, because every cart and horse of the village were away for lime for the new house of a gentleman lately arrived from

the West Indies. After the unhappy woman had revived a little from some cordials which were administered to her, she asked for Dr Bremner, and beckoned him to draw near.

"Well, my good woman, here I am," said my friend, stooping to listen to her communications.

"Send quickly," said she, in a low, but earnest tone, "for an old woman of the name of Mrs Bonnington: You must be brought together: She lives in a cottage three miles hence, at the foot of Eildon hills."

"Why, I can inform you," answered Bremner, "that she is in this very house at present."

"You know it all, then!" cried the woman, with a sort of scream, and almost starting up. "Have mercy on me, Arthur Bonnington! It was I, indeed, that stole you away when a child; but you have found your true mother, Mrs Bonnington!"

The face of my friend at this grew ghastly white; he turned round in silence to me with a look of fearful deprecation; then pointing with his forefinger to the woman, who lay covering her face with her hands, he said to me, after a long pause, "Did you hear that, Calvert?"

"Hold, good woman," said I, willing to believe the whole an error, "there must be some mistake here. You are in Dr Bremner's house, and this is Dr Bremner."

Through her first show of fear and repentance broke the malignity of a fierce woman, and I had this answer returned me:—"So, Sir, you are a wise one, and would challenge my pretensions to speak in this fine house of theirs; but, perhaps, with all your wisdom, Sir, you do not know, as I know, that there is a large mole on his left shoulder there, which be the pledge that I have had it in my power to vex them all, and that it was I myself who gave him that very name of Bremner, which you seem to rate so highly!" Here Bremner took me forcibly by the coat, and pulled me with him into another apartment; and there, by the light of the moon, he proceeded to uncover his shoulder. "Look," said he, with a ghastly smile, as he showed me indeed a large mole upon it; "what do you think of that now?"

"I know not," I exclaimed, "either what to think or say."

"So," rejoined he, after a horrid pause, during which he glared upon me for my answer, "so, my name is Bonnington, after all! Say? Why, can't you say it is a most glorious name?—certainly a good deal longer than Hastings or Bremner! And, for my new crest, O! beyond all question, I am entitled to wear the bloody dagger in a dexter. Who can deny me that—or, at least, a knife, if the dagger be not appropriate? I have done excellent good service in my day, with the knife, it seems. My own sister! my own brother, too!" Here he fell into some low muttering calculations, from which at length recovering, he pushed me violently out of the apartment, saying, "Calvert, you must leave me for a while to my penance."

Immediately I went to the servants who were tending the unhappy author of all this mischief, and strictly enjoined them to keep the circumstances of the evening secret from Mrs Bonnington, whose very weak state of health made it dangerous for her to hear them. Returning to the door of the room in which I had left Dr Bremner (now Bonnington), I listened; but all was quiet within, save that I heard his loud and measured breathing, as of a victim dressed and laid out bound, numbering the moments till the appointed time of sacrifice. Being unwilling to break in upon him, I retired to another chamber, and threw myself down upon a bed. About daybreak I was startled by a shrill outcry from Mrs Bonnington's room, which made me haste to see what was the matter; and, on entering her chamber, there I beheld that woman, the evil genius of this family, who, in her malignant wish to triumph over a former rival (I write from after knowledge), had crawled from her own sick pallet, to fasten upon Mrs Bonnington's ear, and instil into her heart the poisonous tale of her fratricidal son.

"Come to me quickly, Mr Calvert," cried the unhappy mother. "Oh! they have broken my heart; for they have bid me go and see the man that murdered Harry Bonnington, and claim him for my son. But I will go—

I will go! And I must bid him be at peace; for, Oh! he cannot be well! But I'll not believe it—my heart cannot! Away, fast, fast, Mr Calvert, and bid him come to me in peace, and we'll say nothing about that matter! Where is he? where is he? He is not so kind as my Harry, or he would come fast to me! But he cannot be well! O! take away that vile woman, and bring Arthur to me before I die!"

In my indignation, I turned to drive the hag, like a wild beast, out of the room; but, conscious of her wickedness, she had quitted her post, at which, as I entered, I saw her holding back the curtain, leaning over the pillow, and, more hideous than a nightmare, brooding over Mrs Bonnington's repose: She was now retreating out of the apartment. I then hasted into the next room to seek Dr Arthur Bonnington, and found him, dimly seen in the blear dawn, sitting on a chair, his shoulder still bare, his look and attitude the very same as when, some hours before, I left him there. I advanced, and told him that his mother already knew he was her son, and that she wished to see him instantly. He sat for several minutes gazing on me intensely, yet without seeming to apprehend the purport of my communication, when his mother, hastily attired, entered, and, exclaiming with a shriek, "I know it all, my son!" threw herself upon his neck. Wildly she then began to look for the mark of recognition on his shoulder, whilst he sat perfectly passive; and, when it was found, she laid her head down on his shoulder for a moment, then looked narrowly into his face, and then passionately kissed his cheek many a time, crying out, "There's no blood here—it's all a lie!" till, her strength being exhausted, she fainted away. At this her unhappy son was roused from his apathy, and lifting her up in his arms with desperate energy, he carried her to her own chamber, where she soon recovered from her swoon. But the fit was succeeded by a sort of nervous delirium, which, as it continued, accompanied with fever, threatened ere long to sink her to the grave. With attention unremitting, with deep anxiety, did her son now watch her, feeling

her pulse from time to time, and looking incessantly at his watch.

"I hope," he said, turning to me, "this will not last long, both for her own gentle sake, and because I wish her to be calm and clear, that she may answer me some questions relative to that child, Emily Bonnington. My own sister! my preserver! By day and night! but these same Heavens above our heads are very wondrous in their ordinations, so to bring us together! Hark ye, Calvert; so soon as that most dear old woman is a little better, I'll leave her to your care, till I go to London and meet Wardrop. I have some excellent brief words to say to him about that sister of mine. He is there, I know: and, by the eternal Heavens of Justice! I'll now grapple with him. Be he in prosperity, I'll burst into his rooms. Be he in the wild chattering madhouse—for, set it down in your tablets, there is not a man, however high and haughty, but may be traced into mean situations and followed unto humble thoughts—through every interval in his malady, through the joints and chinks of the black and blasted harness that invests his soul from moral responsibility, shall I yet find a way to reach his spirit. O! I'll sift the tumultuous revelations of the madman for every grain of truth relative to that Emily. I trust I shall find him at least a mighty and eloquent villain. Would to Heaven he were beautiful and persuasive as a Demigod; so might I believe our Emily was not a light giddy maiden, to be destroyed by a common deluder!"

I tried to remonstrate with him against this proposed journey to London, arguing that it could only heap fresh calamities on his own head.

"And pray, Sir, what am I?" was his answer; "or what is my life, that I should nurture myself delicately? Now, speak not to me, Sir, unless you can bring *her* before me alive, that I may bid her weep no more, nor think of her dishonour any more. My beautiful preserver! And I to be——Well, well, would we could wash these hands!"

"It is at least better," I returned, wishing to suggest a

mitigation of the case, "that she has died before knowing the full extent of the evil."

"But you cannot tell me," he said, "why young Harry Bonnington is lying in his blood, killed by his own brother! Surely, surely there is no good reason for that! There came the bold boy, like a young dragon, to fight against his sister's destroyer! I was there, too, to guard our Emily from dishonour; and yet I slew her best friend! Now, before the just Heavens, shew me the moral of that! God knows, I would give a round entire world for the life and love of that bright-haired boy! O! had he but known who I was, and for what I was there!—Well, well, they must sleep on!"

Mrs Bonnington recovered so much, that she was able to tell her son many things regarding his sister Emily, and his ill-starred brother; and this she did voluntarily, to his great satisfaction, for though he was eager to gain such information, he was yet unwilling to afflict his sick mother by questions on so sorrowful a subject. Gradually again she grew worse, and now the hour of her dissolution began to draw nigh. Her son sat by her bedside, watching the faint smile that lightened over her pallid features, as she lay gazing upon him. He laid his fingers softly upon her brow, and put aside a lock of her hair; whilst her head was raised half up, as if to meet and acknowledge this sacred touch of filial love.

"My own mother! my true mother!" said he, in a low mournful tone, "are you going to leave me so soon?"

With a convulsive shudder she turned her eyes from him; but in a moment again her face was towards him, and starting up, she threw herself upon his neck, crying out, "Come near to me, my first-born one—and let them all go—my long-lost boy! And tell your mother how it has fared with you in the hard world! Here am I to you—Oh!" Her voice failed, her eyelid twinkled, and in another minute her heart, with all its love, was turned to ashes.

In the interval betwixt Mrs Bonnington's death and

funeral, I set myself to question the woman who was the original cause of all this evil, and who was now so well that she could stand examination, without the charge of inhumanity being brought against me. It is impossible to say distinctly in what mood of mind she was, in reference to her evil doings against this family, unless we can suppose a spirit of malignant triumph compatible with a mixture of penitent remorse for the means used to gratify such a spirit. The burden of her confession was as follows:—In her early life, she was courted and seduced, under promise of marriage, by Dr Bonnington's father, who cast her off, and married another. This set her upon thoughts of vengeance, and, as the most effectual way of embittering the life of her who had superseded her in his affections, she stole away her first-born son. In her deep purpose of revenge, she had concerted her measures coolly, and had taken provisions to a remote cave in a wood, whither she fled with the child, and where she abode for many weeks, without once leaving it, till the heat of pursuit and search was over. She then made her way to Glasgow, where, some months afterwards, as she was begging with the child by the river side, he was seen and coveted by Mrs Hastings, who had no children of her own. To this lady she willingly disposed of young Bonnington, under the name of Edward Bremner; declaring, of course, at the same time, that he was her own son. The conditions of this surrender were, that he should take the name of Hastings, and that she should be allowed to visit him at Mountcoin once every year; but that she was never to claim relationship with him, or mention his real name. After giving up the child, she had lived in Glasgow, without once leaving it, till lately, when, believing her health irrecoverably gone, she began to feel the terrors of conscience, and set out to seek Mrs Bonnington, that she might restore to her her long-lost child, if mother and son were yet alive. She was the more confirmed in her purpose, when, on making enquiries in the neighbourhood of the place where Mrs Bonnington formerly lived, she

learned how her fortunes had waned after the death of her husband, and by what an unhappy fate she had lost her children.

Such was the purport of the explanations given me by this wretched woman, who, while she professed penitence, could not altogether forbear expressions of triumph over her rival in early love; and whose last haste to bring mother and son together was, if chiefly to make reparation to Mrs Bonnington, yet not without a wish at the same time, as I was led to calculate from the circumstance of her midnight visit to Mrs Bonnington's bedside, mortally to stab that mother's peace, by shewing her that her son was a fratricide. I could not refrain from giving vent to my indignation against her. "But look at me now," she said, interrupting me, "a homeless wretch—every way degraded. And what was I once? In hope, in station of life, in beauty, in innocence, equal to my rival. I had parents, and brothers, and sisters, who loved me; but they cast me off when I was betrayed to shame and ruin. Do you wonder, then, that I sought the satisfaction of vengeance? Ha! and have I not won it? Answer me there!"

Without attempting to palliate the guilty rashness of my friend, Dr Arthur Bonnington, or the malignant vengeance of her who stole him away in boyhood, it must yet be acknowledged that the first cause of all this ill lay in the crime of his father, who spoilt this woman's young heart, and prepared it for its vindictive purpose—a crime which entailed wo on his own innocent family, and cut off his own lineal name from the earth. But thus it is, that the great Tribunal of Justice above "of our pleasant vices makes whips to scourge us;" ay, and visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.

I may here remark, that Dr Bonnington caused this wretched woman to be attended in his own house with the utmost care, not sparing to procure for her the best medical skill which the neighbouring town could give; that ere long she completely recovered; and that he dismissed her with a very considerable sum of money, enjoin-

ing her strictly, however, to quit that part of the country, and never presume again to appear in his sight.

On the third day after Mrs Bonnington's funeral, I prepared to leave Mountcoin.

"So," said Dr Bonnington, "you are going from me too? I am like a man left alone in a theatre when the bustle is over, the music and the company gone, and the lights burning low. Calvert, I am now literally left alone; and Darkness, I suppose, in this sorrowful house of mine, must be the burier of the dead. My mother has told me, too, that Wardrop himself is off this mortal stage; so I have missed some little work which might have kept me for a while from the fearful thoughts that must now hunt me down. I am very glad, however, that the poor dear child Emily believed herself in reality his wife; even though the marriage was a sham trick on his part. Madness itself, I think, shall not deprive me of that satisfaction. Yet Oh! my beautiful and sorely-hurt sister! my Emily Bonnington! my young-hearted preserver! She has left me for ever! And my mother has left her first-born! And that boy Harry Bonnington, the most innocent, and most sadly wronged of us all! O! that I had known him as my brother but for one year! And God be my judge, would I not fold my arms and lie down in the dust of death for him, if again he might be let up in his shining youth to the sweet sunlight of this world! Day and night, day and night, shall I cry upon him, but he will never come to me at all! Calvert, Calvert, you have approached too near me; no one prospers or lives that has been with me but a day; I am accursed of God; you have touched the plague, and cannot live!"

About five months after his mother's death, I visited Dr Bonnington again at Mountcoin. "I shall be with you anon, Calvert," was his first salutation to me as I entered the room where he was sitting. "One moment now—suppose you are my brother Harry—well, where's the knife?—Give me grace and leave now, and don't interrupt me for a little while, John Calvert. I shall soon see

it all. Or suppose I had not met Emily that night on the street." And on he thus went, arranging and confusing, and again arranging circumstances, by which he might have been prevented slaying his brother—that fearful never-ending process, which by day and in the night-watches keeps a man feverish and irritable, till whirling madness overmasters his dried brain—that process, which to the outcast spirits must be the very worst mode of Hell.

I shall proceed no farther with my unhappy record, but merely state that Dr Bonnington died within a year from the time when I first met him.

And now why have I entered upon this defence? Why have I opened the sacred cabinet of private friendship, and given the story of his life to the public? Assuredly I have not done it merely to make up a tale for

> "knitters in the sun,
> And the free maids that weave the thread with bones."

But I have heard it foully hinted that my late friend, as a jealous rival, slew his own brother, &c. &c. And surely I have done right in thus publicly stating the main circumstances of his life, that his memory may never henceforth be cast out to the shameless dogs of Calumny and Disrespect.

Now I solemnly swear, that I have set forth the particulars of Dr Arthur Bonnington's life, partly as I witnessed them myself, and partly as he communicated them to me, to the best of my recollection: So help me God!

JOHN CALVERT.

CHAPTER XX.

CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

SPENCER does Usher of the White Rod to November thus:—

> Next was November; he full gross and fat,
> As fed with lard, and that right well might seem;
> For he had been a-fatting hogs of late,
> That yet his brows with sweat did reek and steam;
> And yet the season was full sharp and breem.
> In planting eke he took no small delight.

So sings the Bard of Mulla. And now what a comfortable fellow is this November, and how unlike that self-hanging and drowning which is laid to his charge! Why, the chap has just been killing his pigs, and is as fat and greasy as Parson Trulliber. How his nose "glitters with ungodly dew!" Moreover, the season is sharp and wholesome for his blood; and he has the exercise of planting his trees besides, to keep his appetite in trim. In addition to all this, his stackyard has just been thatched and his potatoes binged, and October has brewed a brown browst for him; so what has he to care for? Really, a better-conditioned fellow, outwardly, than this November cannot well be imagined. He is the very Cock of the Calendar. And then what sports he has! To the moorlands with his greyhounds, over the thistly stubbles with his gun, to the high hoar echoing wood with his fox-hounds, off is he under the glint of morn, with a light heart and a pocket-pistol. The moon guides him home, and he sleeps in Elysium.

It seems to me, on looking back to my boyhood, that not a winter then passed without a magnificent snow-storm, and a month's frost as hard as the nether millstone. Then were the days of snow-battles, and of snow-men as large as Gog and Magog, staring afar with their eyes of smithy danders, and slowly pining through half the spring in their discoloured consumption. Then were the days of raffles among idle masons for a sow or an eight-day clock —pleasant to the boys who picked up the balls when the snow was gone, to run them into leaden pistols to fire on the thick-coming days of Salamanca, Vittoria, & Co. I was just going to sigh over the degeneracy of our modern Decembers, when there came a Frost, worthy of the most pucker-browed, blue-nosed of his ancestors that ever painted upon glass, or candied over a mill-wheel, bearded with icicles like a he-goat. An old withered chronicler, whose own face was as rough as a frosty drove-road, or the puddled passage of a cattle-admitting gate, remarked to me that we have not had such a black frost since "the ninety-nine." Whether old Anno Domini be

right or not I can't exactly say, as my own memory does not reach the hog-score of so remote a tee. But this I will say, that a bolder clearer fortnight, with here and there a stringent night that might have turned the Watery King of the Tee-totallers into a pillar of ice, I never rejoiced to live through. The passion for ice here is as keen as the ice itself. Everybody curls, or skates, or slides; nor do we miss the pikestaff, so plain in the simile. At the skreigh-o'-day,

"When hens begin to mutter on the bauks,"

the Village schoolboy, rubbing his eyes, demands of his early dad if the ice will bear, and jumping at the affirmative, however grudgingly given, fumbles his shivering way into his thin corduroys, dons his leather-heeled stockings, and clatters forth in his clogs; his unkempt half-starved hair, unconscious of Macassar, standing out on his head like the ill-conditioned coat of a lean, farrow, family cow, hide-bound on dry fodder, as she comes forth to water at the frosty reeking well, not unbesmirched from the dropping outskirts of the hen-roost in the byre. The icicle at the thatched eaves gives him the first assurance of the frost; he plucks a pillar, and shaking the discoloured drop from its nose, engendered from the dirty rotten thatch, he sucks away at his barley-sugar, hoarsely cracking and braying with his heel the curious white ice, waved and wrought like a pale Scotch pebble, in every horse-foot print in the gnarled road, to try its strength and quality, and guess if the more distant slide will bear. Porridge-strengthened, he has an hour at the old quarry-hole before the school goes in; and the dismissal at the droop of day sends him to the remoter cauld; not forgetting, however, to fetch a circuit by the mill, to thrust his hands into the happer for a gowpen of groats, or lie half an hour in the seedy killogie with the fire-feeding kilnman, if perchance he may vouchsafe him a roasted potato. Then off to the ice is he till all the stars be out; nor crunches he the crisp spangles of the frosty meadows with his homeward-hieing feet, till the cow-horn of the Village has blown

supper-time. Nor is this the last of him for the day. We catch another glimpse of the little rogue, as with halfpenny candle depending from his fore-finger-end, according to the graphic picture of Cowper, he takes every yard-long slide on his way home along the street, till, trying it on one foot, down he comes with a whack, and crushes little dippie into a thousand clots; then gathering himself up, makes the most of his limping leg to cover the disaster of the candle, and roars his way home, and is packed off to bed for his pains by the light of a spunk. But let us not be too hard on the little dog. His elders and betters like the ice as well as he. The thatcher on the north side of the frosty house—the coldest object in creation—clanks his arms on his sides at the foot of his ladder, to raise a glow; looks wistfully up at his unshaven work; and bears aloft on his poised head a batch of rimy divots, like a bee-skep, which it will be death to manipulate. But now the wind ruffling his unfinished straw takes him so snelly by the nose, that he is fain to look over his shoulder at half-a-dozen roistering masons, red from the quarry, who, glorying in the happy idleness of impossible work in such weather, are on their way to the loch, and call him to come down. Half shaking him from his ladder, as he sticks his knife deep in the thatch, they have him off with them at last, blinking the evening certainty of his wife's displeasure. But what is he worse than others? The shoemaker's wax won't work, and what can Crispin do but curl? The tailor has left his carpet shoes, and is out upon tramps; true to his profession, the butcher nicks the hog; and the cadger breaks a metaphorical egg. "In days o' frost," says the song—

> "In days o' frost, wi' writer chiels
> Ae letter does for twa;
> And doctors let their patients live
> Until it comes a thaw."

So writers and doctors are there too, and eke the minister; and thus the poor thatcher's apology is made up, as turned to the orange-tawny west, where the horizon, steaming as with hot discoloured sand, foretells a morrow

of still intenser frost, he soberly reflects his way homeward to his wife, and at last ventures to whistle. But, alas for him! his wife has no dinner for him—how can she have? Snatching a bannock to munch at his leisure, he is off from her in a pet, and away to the smithy, the evening howf of the choice spirits of the Village. The white and ruddy gleam of the keen, frost-fed, frizzled flame, edged with sulphurous blue, dazzles him as he opens the two halves of the door; shines on a dozen advertisements snugly fixed on the upper half with the bent tips of horse-nails, the refuse of shoeing; and brings out in interesting *chiaro-scuro* the black rafters far back, where the remnant wings of what were once owls, and bats, and swallows, hang nailed and extended. Vulcan is bowing away and crooning at his handle tipped with smooth cow-horn turned upwards, and watching two be-spectacled seniors playing at draughts on the hearth. Here a knot of masons are vastly improving upon the rink of the day. There a set of chaps are at Blind-Harry, ready each in his turn to lend a hand at the fore-hammer, till the finished horse-shoe is flung hissing and hollow-thundering into the bubbling trough. Yonder is a little fellow in the corner, as yet innocent of his first shot, but vastly ambitious of taking a vizzy along the gun, which he finds ready in a nook for the raffle of a ewe-milk cheese on the morrow; and venturing to draw the trigger with a thumping heart, he feels he could have done a cushie. Beyond the draught-players are a set of urchins, on a narrow seat with three legs, fighting, and sprawling, and squealing, till Vulcan, his face waxing red as a nail-string with wrath, as he bends lower on his blast, sends the whole soul of Æolus through his quivering, dancing fire, and blows a tempest of sparks into the flushed begrimed faces of the unruly young rascals, who spring from the settle; and kicking the draught-board with half its men into the trough, as they scatter away, they achieve their escape from the smithy. A leash of horses, to have their shoes sharpened, now fill the place; and Burnewin', getting ill-natured from the quantity of work to do, and giving pithy tokens

that his hand is encumbered with company, our poor thatcher is again driven to his shifts, and can make nothing more of it than just slink away home, and get darkling into bed without facing his wife, who, to justify her plea, takes care to let him hear her bustling and working like a Fury far later than usual, as if the whole maintenance of the household now lay upon her industrious shoulder.

A brisk walk in the morning, what time the sun comes up the eastern horizon like a great red globe of fire, and flames on every facing window along the western valley; a hearty breakfast; family prayers; three hours in my Library; another "constitutional" in the somewhat mellower noon; an early old-fashioned dinner, to which the concocting genius of a Brillat-Savarin or a Ude could lend no improving sauce; another stout evening walk among the brown forest leaves, along the coarse chapped stubbles and stony moors, over the ferny skirts of the hill, and home by the old quarry hole, making my way through its withered, empty, cankered thistles, and its dry, hollow, rattling skeleton kexes, bent all the while on the pleasure of starting a hare; tea, talk, reading, or backgammon, with sister Mary; another spell in my Library; a look at the starry night; supper; devotion; bed,—such is the Old Bachelor's cheerful Winter Day.

Listen again to Spencer: Thus he sings of December:—

> "And after him came next the chill December;
> Yet he through merry feastings which he made,
> And great bonfires did not the cold remember;
> His Saviour's birth his mind so much did glad.
> Upon a shaggy-bearded goat he rode,
> The same wherewith Dan Jove in tender years,
> They say, was nourished by the Ieian maid;
> And in his hand a broad deep bowle he bears,
> Of which he freely drinks a health to all his peers."

The feasting, the goodly punch-bowl, and the rousing fire, are all cordially characteristic of December. And then our Village children have "Barring-out Day," "Guisarts," "Cake-day," and "Hansel Monday"—this last, however, belonging to the New Year. In Scotland, however, we have not yet learned to link our grateful happiness

with any outward religious observance of the most blessed natal day that ever dawned on earth, as is done in England, where even yet (though more so in the olden time) the very season is considered sacredly wholesome against all unnatural harms:—

> "Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes,
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singèth all night long:
> And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to harm,
> So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

The last hour of the last day of the year is waning away. Born in the confluence of two Eternities, in that measured space called Time, let me thank my great Maker that He has given me a rational life, and that a very fair allotment of joy and sorrow has been cut out for me from the great web of human circumstances. Yes, let us all be thankful for sorrow as well as for joy; for without it where were charity and love, and all those affections that make the human family so interesting in the Universe of God? Without it, how could we value aright that Incarnation of Deity, by which our Great Father has at once provided a remedy for our fall, a perfect motive for us to love Him eternally, and a means of our being able to hold intimate and endearing communion with Him for ever as one of ourselves—our own Elder Brother? May every successive New Year find us all growing fitter and fitter for that great communion! Amen!

THE END.

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