

FRESH LIGHT UPON THE SUBJECT.

GRANT.—Stop for one moment, Clifford, till we ring for fresh candles, or we shall be in darkness before you have uttered five sentences more.

DOMINIE.—Stay, sir, I'll run to the kitchen for them myself. Preserve me ! the less time we keep Mr. Clifford's poor lassie in such misery the better.

Mr. Macpherson soon returned with the new lights, set them down on the table, and drawing in his chair, put his elbows upon his knees, placed his cheeks firmly in the palms of his hands, and sat with his eyes eagerly fixed upon Clifford's countenance, with the most ludicrous expression of earnestness. Clifford resumed as follows.

LEGEND OF CHIRSTY ROSS CONTINUED.

THE morning's dawn brought back the returning footstep of Sarah. She brought with her Chirsty's travelling-box with most of the things it contained.

"See," said she, as she set down the box, "I have kept my word. So long as you behave, you shall find me disposed to treat you well. I know that you have been quiet all night, and, therefore, we shall try you for to-day with your hands unmuffled. But mind!" added the old woman with a fearful expression of eye,— "if you *should* change for the worse, there are worse punishments for you than this leathern glove."

"I thank you," said Chirsty, meekly; "I think you will have no occasion to resort to any such. I hope my uncle will be here to-day, and that a

few moments of conversation with him will satisfy him that you may be released from any farther trouble with me."

"Your uncle!" cried Sarah, with an uncouth laugh: "But we shall see.—Meanwhile, here comes water for you, and, by and bye, you shall have breakfast."

A little black-looking sharp eyed girl now entered with a pitcher, basins, and towels. Sarah stood by to watch how her charge conducted herself, and, when the toilet was completed, the bed was made up, and the things removed, and soon afterwards breakfast was brought her, together with a common fir chair, and a small table, and when she had finished her meal, she was again left to her own solitary meditations.

No sooner was all quiet, than Chirsty arose for the purpose of looking out of the window, that she might try at least to gain some knowledge of her position. She discovered that the walls of the building were extremely thick, that the window was powerfully barred with iron, and that a wooden shade projected over it from above, so as entirely to shut out any direct view outwards. By placing the chair near the window, however, and standing

upon it, she commanded a limited view downwards between the sole and the lower edge of the wooden projection, and from this she was enabled to satisfy herself, that her chamber was on one side of a narrow square court, for she saw the lower part of the buildings that inclosed the three other sides of it. Guessing from the windows that came within her view below, the court was surrounded with cells similar to her own, the startling fact now arose in her mind, that she had thus in one minute made herself as much acquainted with all the objects on which she could bring her eyes to bear from this her place of confinement, as she could do were she to occupy it for half a century. There was something chilling in the reflection, and her soul naturally began to pant in a tenfold degree for liberty. But that day passed away, and the next, and the next, and no kind uncle came to relieve her.

“Is there no message from my uncle?” said she, at last, as Sarah came to her one morning.

“None!” said the old woman, somewhat more gruffly than usual.

“I would fain write a letter to him,” said Chirsty.

“I see no use in that,” said Sarah, quitting the cell hastily, as if to avoid farther question.

She did not see the old woman again for several days. Nancy, the little girl already mentioned, attended on her at the usual hours. In vain she tried to prevail on her to procure her writing materials. Her answer was, that she had no means of doing so. She asked for books or work, but the girl's answer was the same. At length old Sarah appeared again.

"Any intelligence from my uncle, good Sarah?" said Chirsty.

"None!" replied her keeper, in the same tone she had used before.

"Then, I beseech you give me the means of communicating with him by letter," said she, earnestly.

"Tush, I tell you it would be of no use," replied Sarah.

"Nay, give me but pen, ink, and paper, and let me try," said Chirsty. "I am sure he would never allow me to be one moment here, if he could only see and converse with me. Oh! if I could but see him for five minutes, this harassing captivity would be at an end."

"Well, then!" said Sarah, after a silence of some moments, during which she appeared to be

weighing circumstances in her mind. "Well, then, you shall see un. But see how you behave! Follow me, then, and I shall bring you to your uncle."

"Oh, thank you, thank you! a thousand and a thousand times!" cried Chirsty, almost embracing the old woman in the height of her joy. "Depend upon it, I shall satisfy you as to my behaviour."

Sarah now opened the door of the cell, and Chirsty followed her. Even the small additional motion of her limbs, which she now enjoyed, was luxury to her, after the narrow bounds to which she had been confined. The old woman led her along the passage for a considerable way, down one flight of steps, along another passage, to the very end of it, and there she stopped opposite a door, secured by little more than the ordinary fastenings used to any private chamber. Sarah opened it, and desired Chirsty to enter. The light of Heaven was permitted to pass fully in at the window, and she rushed forward to meet her uncle's embrace. But ere she had gone two steps into the room, her eyes caught a spectacle that effectually arrested her.

“ Merciful Providence, my poor uncle !” she faintly cried ; and, tottering towards a pallet-bed that was near to her, she sank down on the side of it, and gazed with grief and with horror on the miserable object before her.

Seated in a wooden elbow chair, she did indeed behold her uncle ; but he was there as a mere piece of animated clay. His hair, which always used to be so nicely trimmed and powdered, now hung in long white untamed locks over a countenance so yellow and emaciated as to be absolutely fearful to look upon. Part of it fell over the eyes, which were seen within it like two bits of yellow glass, motionless and void of all speculation. The under jaw hung forward and the tongue lolled out, as if all muscular power was lost. An old Indian dressing-gown, which Chirsty remembered to have been his pride, as having been presented to him by a great rajah, and as being made of the most valuable stuff that Cashmere could produce, but now begrimed by every species of filth, covered his person. A broad band of girth was passed around his breast, under his arms, and attached to the back of his chair, to prevent his weakness or his involuntary motions from precipitating him on

the floor. His feet were both occupied in drumming upon the ground, and his hands were extended before him, with the fingers continually crawling like reptiles on his knees, whilst he was ceaselessly emitting a low muttering whine, that never moulded itself into words. The very first glance she had of him, convinced Chirsty that her poor uncle was in the last stage of confirmed and hopeless idiocy.

“What would a letter have done, think ye, to such a clod as that 'ere?” demanded the unfeeling wretch Sarah, or what will you make of un, now you have seen un?”

“My poor unhappy uncle!” said Chirsty, starting from her seat and going fondly towards him, and weeping over him; “how sadly indeed hast thou been changed! When, alas! did this awful affliction fall upon him? But why has he been removed from his own comfortable home to such a place as this?”

“Such a place as this, quotha!” cried Sarah. “Why, what sort of a place would ye have un in? There is not a more comfortabler room in the whole house. And see, if I didn't bring down that 'ere old wardrobe, that we might have sum-

mat to hold un's things in ; though I must say," added she, in an under tone, " that he hasn't much left now that's worth the caring for."

" But why has he been removed to such an establishment as this?" said Chirsty. " Surely, surely, his malady, helpless and unoffending as it has rendered him, could have given no disturbance in his own house, why then has he been torn from it ? and how could his wife have agreed to treatment so cruel and so unnecessary?"

" His wife!" exclaimed Sarah with a laugh. " It was his wife who sent un here ; and surely his wife has the most natral right to judge what's best for un."

" Horrible!" exclaimed Chirsty, " his wife! There must be some horrible villainy under all this."

" What!" exclaimed Sarah. " What is there horrible in a gay woman like her ridding her house of such a filthy slaving mummy as this? He would be a pretty ornament truly, to grace some of the rich *Mrs. Ross's splendid routes*, as I now and then see the papers call them. Besides, she pays well for his board here, and it is our interest not to let un die."

“ Rich !” exclaimed Chirsty indignantly. “ Her riches are my uncle’s riches ; and if one spark of Christian feeling yet remained in her bosom, she ought to have employed them in relieving, so far as they could relieve, this most heavy affliction of a just and wise Providence.”

“ It’s not for me to stand argufying with you here, Miss,” said Sarah, in a tone of displeasure that led Chirsty to fear a coming storm. “ Come, you see you have gotten all the good out of un you can ; so you may as well leave un and go quietly back to your cell.”

“ For the love of your Redeemer, and as you hope for mercy !” cried Chirsty, throwing herself on her knees before her keeper, “ force me not to quit my uncle ! To him I owe more than the duty of a child to a parent. Yield but to me the charitable boon of allowing me to watch by him, and to attend to him day and night, and you will render me so happy that I shall cheerfully and voluntarily submit to my present cruel confinement, without once inquiring by whose order it comes, or ever seeking to establish how unnecessarily it has been inflicted upon me. Oh ! grant me but this, and may blessings be showered down upon you.”

“ I must think about it,” gruffly replied Sarah. “ In the meantime, you must back to your cell for this day at least. So bid un goodbye for this bout. We shall see how you behave, and we shall talk more of the matter to-morrow.”

“ Chirsty rose from her knees; and seeing that it was only through submissive obedience that she could hope to obtain what she so ardently wished, she went to her uncle, and taking up his unconscious hand, she kissed it, watered it with her tears, and then slowly left the apartment, and returned to her cell, where she was locked up as before.

She was no sooner left to herself, than so many circumstances and reflections occurred to her mind, that it had enough of occupation. She now remembered that after having had regular letters from her uncle for a considerable time, they had all at once ceased. But as the irregularity of Indian correspondence was even more common in those days, than it is now, she had regretted this as arising from unfortunate accident, without being very much surprised at it. But much as she had had reason to believe that her aunt was a heartless selfish woman, she never could have imagined

that she could have been guilty of conduct so unfeeling towards the unhappy man from whose affection she now derived all that wealth which it appeared she was spending so gaily. As to herself, a moment's thought was enough to convince her that she owed her present confinement more to the malice than to the care of her aunt. She remembered that the only communication from India that contained the intimation that she was about to return to Britain, as well as the name of the ship in which she was to sail, also conveyed the full assurance of the perfect restoration of her mind from its temporary malady. The person who knew to what ship to send for her on her arrival, therefore must necessarily have known that she required no such treatment as that to which she had been so wickedly subjected. Villainy of the darkest dye, therefore, had been at work against her ; and where or how it might end she trembled to think. But the thought of her poor uncle's melancholy situation banished every other consideration from her mind ; and all her thoughts and wishes were now concentrated in the desire she felt to stay by him, and to watch over him to the last. The very idea of such a self-devotion being

balm to her lacerated heart, as affording her the luxury of indulging that deep gratitude with which his unvarying kindness towards her had always filled her, and which she never hoped to have had any opportunity of repaying. She failed not, therefore, to employ all her meekness and all her eloquence to persuade Sarah to grant her request; and as the gentle drop by frequent repetition will at last wear through the hardest flint, so by repeated appeals to the best of the few feelings which that callous-hearted creature possessed, she at last succeeded in obtaining a limited permission to visit her uncle, which was extended by degrees so far, that she ultimately came to be allowed to go to his chamber in the morning, and to remain with him till he was laid to rest at night, when she was removed for the purpose of being locked up in her own cell. In this employment Chirsty forgot her confinement altogether, and weeks, months, nay even years rolled away with no other occupation but that and her devotions. There were times when she even flattered herself that the unremitting attention which she paid to him was not without some material advantage to his general state. She even thought she saw some





Design'd & Etched by William Lloyd, Sculp.

CHIRSTY ROSS.

see page 179, Vol. II.

amendment, in a seeming approach to a certain degree of consciousness. Words, though altogether incoherent and unconnected, would now and then break from him, as if he was following out and giving utterance to some musing dream ; and on such occasions she would hang over him with anxious fondness and intense interest, with the hope of catching their meaning. Then she could distinctly perceive that at such times his glassy eyes, which were usually directed upon vacancy, would fix themselves upon her, assume a strange and unwonted animation, as if the dormant spirit had arisen for a moment and come to the windows of its earthly house, to look out upon her,—but alas ! when she turned slowly away, to try its powers, there was no corresponding motion of the head to maintain the proper direction and level of the eyes towards their object, and she would weep at the cruel failure of her hopes that followed.

It did happen, however, that one day whilst she was sitting by her uncle, earnestly engaged in trying such experiments as these, with the sunshine strong upon her face, his lack-lustre eyes being fixed in her direction, they seemed slowly to gather a spark of the fire of intelligence, which went on

gradually increasing like the light of dawn, till suddenly they received such an animating illumination as this earth does when the blessed orb of day bursts from behind a cloud ; and as all nature then rejoices under the warm influence of his rays, so was the fond heart of his niece gladdened when, as she moved her face slowly from its position, and to this side and to that, the eyes of the nabob followed all her motions with a growing expression, that speedily began to spread itself with a faint glow over his hitherto frozen features. The lolling tongue retreated within the orifice of the mouth, the under jaw was drawn up, and the teeth were pressed together as if with the increasing earnestness of the gaze. His niece, with more than that degree of intensity of absorption of attention with which an alchemist might be supposed to have watched for the projection of the golden harvest of his hopes, seized a hand of her uncle in each of her's, and sat poring into his eyes, and over every feature of his face in breathless expectation.

“ Chirsty Ross,” said he, at length, slowly and distinctly, and in a manner that left no doubt that the words were not accidental.

“ My dear, dear uncle, you know me then at

last!" cried the happy girl, warmly embracing him, and sobbing upon his bosom. "Thank God! thank God that you know me!"

"Chirsty," said the nabob again, "why did you not write to me sooner? Why was you silent for a whole winter? I have been rash, perhaps. But what is done cannot be undone, and we must e'en make the best of it now. Yet, if you had only but written to me Chirsty my love, things might have been different."

"Oh, this is too heart-rending!" cried his niece, yielding to an ungovernable paroxysm of grief.

"How could you forget to write to me, Chirsty?" continued her uncle. "The woman, to be sure, is not so bad a woman, after all—but you and I were so happy here alone together. But I have been a fool, Chirsty—yet she is your aunt, and my wife, so we must e'en submit, and make the best of it."

"Gracious Providence support me in this trying hour!" cried Chirsty, fervently.

"What!" cried the nabob, in a voice louder than she could have supposed his exhausted state could have admitted of. "What! is the ship to sail for Calcutta so soon? May the God of all

goodness be with you then Chirsty my love! Keep up your spirits, my sweet girl, you will come home to me soon with a husband and pagodas in plenty. But forget not to write often to me. Your failing in that has already worked evil enough to us both."

"Oh, my dear, dear uncle!" cried Chirsty, quite overpowered by her feelings, and sobbing audibly.

"Nay, cry not so bitterly, my dear child," said the nabob. "Trust me we shall meet again. And if we should not meet again here—if it should please God to remove me from this world ere you return, our sound Christian hope assures us, that we shall meet in another and a better. But, hold!" cried he, with a more than natural energy, that seemed to be produced by some sudden and great organic change in his system. "The anchor is up—quick, aboard, aboard! God for ever bless and guard you, my love! my Chirsty!—farewell! Ha! the gallant ship, see how her sails swell with the breeze!—she goes—she goes merrily. But—but—how comes this sudden darkness over me? She is gone!—all is gone!—gone!—go—o—oh!" and his words terminated in a long deep groan.

Chirsty hastily dried up her tears, and anxiously

scanned her uncle's face. His spirit had once more retreated from his glassy eyes—his face had again become deadly pale—his hands were cold, and their pulses had ceased. She shrieked aloud until help came, but it was too late—her uncle was dead.

Chirsty was no sooner made certain that all was over with her poor uncle, than her nervous feelings, which had been screwed up to the racking pitch by this trying scene, gave way, and she fell in a swoon, that terminated in a repetition of that feverish attack which she had had in India, upon which delirium supervened; and when, after a period of nearly three weeks, she was again sensible of the return of reason, she found herself lying in bed with her hands muffled, as they had been the first night she had slept in the asylum. She awaked from a long, tranquil, and refreshing sleep; and little Nancy, who was seated by her bedside, immediately ran off for Sarah, who came directly.

“Aye,” said that hideous creature, after surveying her countenance attentively, “she seems quiet enough now. The fit has gone off for this bout.”

“I have been very ill,” said Chirsty, faintly, “but now, thank God, I am better.”

“ You have given me trouble enough i'facks,” said Sarah. “ But here is something that the doctor ordered you to drink, take this, and try to sleep again.”

Christy readily swallowed what was given to her, fell asleep, and was soon well enough to quit her bed, and to be restored to that degree of freedom of person, within her cell, that she had enjoyed before the discovery that her uncle was under the same roof with herself. She was even allowed to go down, once a-day, for an hour, attended by Sarah, to breathe the open air, and to walk backwards and forwards in the narrow well of a court, that was formed by that wing of the building which contained her cell. But this indulgence did little to relieve the insufferable tedium that seized upon her, now that the only object capable of interesting her had been removed. Her mind now recurred, with augmented force, to all the horrors of her iniquitous confinement. She resolved to try whether she could not move the compassion of her female Cerberus.

“ Now that my uncle is gone,” said she one day calmly to Sarah, “ my confinement becomes so much more cruel and unnecessary, that I am sure

you must feel for me. You have now known enough of me during the long period I have been under your care, to be sufficiently aware that there never were any grounds for placing me in an asylum of this kind. If then I am shut up here for no other cause than that I may not give offence to Mrs. Ross by crossing her path, I am quite willing to give any security that may be asked of me that I will go down directly to live with my friends in Ross-shire, and that she shall never see or be troubled with me more."

"What!" exclaimed the wretch, who listened to her; "What!—and lose the good board which that worthy woman, your aunt, pays for you? No, no!—Enough that we have already lost that which she paid for that mummy of a husband of hers.—Yet, after all, he lived longer than one might have thought un like to have done. But you—an we but take care of you—you may long be a sure annual rent to us!"

"Can nothing move you?" said Chirsty, with a despairing look.

"No," said the wretch, with an iron grin. "I am not to be flattered from my trust. But what said you? No grounds for placing you here,

quotha! Was it not but the other day, that, strong as I am, it took all my power to hold ye down. Ha! ha! ha! The surest sign of madness is the belief that you are not mad."

"Then must my hope be in the Lord alone," said Chirsty, in a desponding tone. "But oh! if you would have me live, let me have books or work, or writing or drawing materials, or this painfully irksome confinement must soon kill me."

"No, no," said Sarah, shaking her head, "no, no. Writing or drawing materials might be used to send tales out beyond these walls, and books might be used as paper—aye, and work might answer the same end. Therefore content yourself, content yourself, child. I'll do all for you that such a feeling heart as mine can do for a poor fellow-creetur robbed of reason, as you have been. But I must fulfil the duty I am paid for."

It happened that the very next day after this, as Chirsty sat with her eyes cast down on the floor of her cell, some small glittering body attracted her notice, and on stooping to pick it up, to her great joy she discovered that it was a needle, which had probably dropped from the sleeve of little Nancy, who usually waited on her. She

secured the treasure about her person, as of infinite value, and the possession of it gave rise to a train of reflection that ended in the formation of a scheme for ultimately producing her liberation, which henceforward engrossed all her attention. Provided as she had thus so fortunately been with a needle, she was yet destitute of thread. But her necessity instantly made her think of using her long black hair, with which she resolved immediately to undertake the laborious task of embroidering the outline of her melancholy story on a cambric handkerchief, with the hope that some means might occur to her of thereby communicating the place of her confinement to her friends in Scotland. Eagerly did she sit down to begin the task, but she wept when she discovered, what she had not hitherto been aware of, that the first two or three hairs which she pulled were of a white as pure as that of the handkerchief which was to be the field of her work. Her miseries, however, had not as yet done all the work of age upon her raven tresses; for, enough still remained of a silken and glossy jet to have embroidered a whole volume. Such were her feelings at the time, however, that, dreading the change that might yet take place, she

knew not how quickly, she rent forth such a quantity of the precious material as might, at least, secure the completion of her purpose, and having carefully secreted it, she went to work with an eagerness that seemed to promise to lend her a new existence; and, indeed, the occupation and the hope it yielded her, kept her up under all her afflictions for the months and months that elapsed ere she stealthily brought her work to a conclusion.

And after it was finished her heart sank within her, for occupation was at an end, and now her dread arose that the work would be fruitless; for where was the hope, in her circumstances, that she might ever find a messenger fit to be entrusted with such a charge. Whilst employed in the work, her mind was tranquillized. But now it was thrown into a state of continued nervous excitement, which could not but have a tendency to wear it out. It did happen that, in her way down by the various passages and stairs that led to the little court whither she was daily summoned for exercise, she sometimes, though very rarely, met with strangers passing upwards to visit some unfortunate friend or relative. With none of these dared she to have communicated verbally; and if

she had so dared, a word from her stern keeper to strangers in such a place, would have turned the most sober expression of perfect sanity into the semblance of the mere utterance of hopeless madness. But if she could in any way manage to put her embroidered history into feeling and charitable hands, she trusted that the curiosity at least of the individual might save it from being either exposed or destroyed, and if so, hope might be interwoven with its living threads. Each time that her cell was opened, therefore, to allow her to descend to the little court, her heart beat high. But, alas! day after day, and week after week, passed away, and no one came at the fortunate minute.

At length, as she was one day descending one of the flights of stairs, with Sarah close behind her, she met with an old gentleman having a particular lameness in one leg, who was limping up with a crutch. He stood aside to allow her to pass, and the pity, not unmingled with admiration, that seemed to animate his face as he earnestly looked upon her, made her almost accuse herself of folly for not having boldly risked the venture of putting the handkerchief into his hands. But a little thought told her, that, if she had done so, all her labour

and all her hopes would have been utterly wrecked, —for she remembered that the keen eyes of Sarah had been close at her elbow, and detection would have been certain. Several other individuals passed her at different times, but the countenance of none of them gave her sufficient confidence to trust them, even if an opportunity had been afforded her, and every day her nervous excitement and irritability grew more and more distressing.

It happened one day, however, that as she was moving along a passage, she heard and recognised the particular *stump* of the lame gentleman whom she had formerly met. She could not be mistaken, —and it was then entering on the lowest step of a flight, down which she was about to turn. She was then a pace or two ahead of Sarah, and contriving to lengthen her stride as she approached the turn at the stairs, she passed a keeper who was hurrying on to open the various locks of a cell which the stranger he was conducting was about to visit. Thus it was that, by fortunate accident, she was brought alone and unseen into contact with the gentleman for a few brief but precious moments. Nerved up by the importance of the act, she expanded her handkerchief before him, to shew what

it contained,—put it into his hand,—and with an imploring look that spoke volumes, she signed to him to conceal it, and as she passed him by, she quickly whispered him :

“ Hide it now !—read it at home—and, oh ! for mercy’s sake, act upon it.”

Taken thus by surprise, the stranger held it for a moment in his hand, and turned to look after her who gave it him. Sarah appeared whilst he was still standing thus. Chirsty stood on the lowest step, and looked up to him in breathless and motionless dread.

“ What stand ye there for ?” cried Sarah roughly to her, as she was descending.

The stranger seemed to recover his self-possession—He quietly returned the salutation which Sarah gave him, and wiping his face with the handkerchief, as if it had been his own, pulled forth for that purpose, he thrust it deep into his bosom, and began again to climb the steps.—Chirsty, overpowered by her feelings, leaned for a moment against the wall.

“ What’s the matter with ye ?” cried Sarah, impatiently.

“ Nothing, nothing, good Sarah !” said Chirsty,

“ only a sudden qualm of sickness, but it has gone off now ;” and so saying, she pursued her way with tottering steps.

If Chirsty was subjected to anxious excitement before she had thus disposed of her broidered history, how much greater were her nervous agitations, her eternal tossings between hope and fear, from the moment she had thus committed it to the stranger? Had he betrayed her? nay, if he had, she must have heard of it from Sarah, or gathered it from the harsher treatment with which she must have been visited. He must have been so far her friend. But, admitting all this, whether he would have charity enough to act upon his knowledge of the facts it contained, or whether he would treat it as the mere pseudo-rational statement of a maniac, were matters of doubt, that agonized her by night as well as by day. She slept not,—she ate not, and her brain grew lighter and lighter every day. She became sensible of this. A most unconquerable dread came upon her, that even admitting that the stranger was doing all he could to inform her friends of her unhappy situation, her senses would be undermined before they could come to her relief, and, as time

wore on, and hope grew fainter and duller, she began to yield herself up to despair, which gradually threw its damp and suffocating clouds over her soul.

Whilst she was in this gloomy state, she happened one day to think of the needle, which she had now so much reason to fear had been but uselessly employed; and the horrible idea crossed her mind, that even such a small instrument as it might readily enough produce death, and that thus there was yet another and a more certain way in which it might be made to effect her deliverance from her present imprisonment. She immediately drew it forth from the skirt of her gown, where she had concealed it. She looked at it for some moments with a steady but agitated gaze; and then, earnestly imploring Heaven for aid in the fearful struggle she was undergoing, she started up, with a resolution acquired from above, and threw it from the window of her cell, that such wicked thoughts of self-destruction might never again be produced by it; and then, on her knees, she poured out her humble and submissive aspirations of thanks.

And now despondency gave way to resolution,

and she at length determined to take the first opportunity of making a desperate attempt to effect her escape. But to produce even a hope of success, she saw that it would be necessary to use much preliminary artifice.

It was the more easy for her to employ this effectually, that hope had hitherto made her behaviour so mild and so submissive, that all suspicion on the part of her Argus-eyed keeper had been for a long time put to rest. Recollecting what Sarah had said to her as to the important source of revenue which hung on the preservation of her life, she began by complaining of that for which she had, indeed, no inconsiderable grounds of truth, that her health was suffering deeply from want of pure air and exercise. This was touching Sarah in the very point where she was most assailable. She, of herself, proposed to extend Chirsty's walk to a garden belonging to the place, to the existence of which she had more than once heard her refer. Next day, accordingly, she was taken from her cell, and conducted by Sarah and Nancy down through the same passages, and by the same flights of stairs with which she was already so familiar; but instead of being led into the small court

which had hitherto been the utmost extent to which freedom had been permitted her, she was ushered into a large and highwalled orchard or garden, quite umbrageous with fruit-trees, and thickly intermixed with shrubs. Who can fancy, with any approach to the reality, the delight which Chirsty felt whilst wandering among the blossoming shades of this, to her absolutely, celestial spot, after the years of confinement which she had undergone? She leaped—she skipped—she threw her arms about, and laughed as if she had really been the poor unsettled maniac who might have required the restraint she had been so long kept under. She poured out her thanks to Sarah with strange volubility; and as she was guilty of no excess that could alarm her keeper, she was not only readily permitted to remain there for a considerable time under her watchful eye, but she was returned to her cell with a promise, that she should be permitted to revisit the garden daily.

The effect of this leniency and indulgence was a renovated state of health, perfectly wonderful in itself, and highly gratifying to Sarah. But although the spirits of the patient rose from the blessed influence of a more frequent intercourse

with the sun and the sky, her anxious mind was still deeply possessed with the sad conviction that every day made the hope of help from her friends in Scotland less and less probable. Her determination to attempt an escape, therefore, strengthened with the improvement and increase of her physical energies. She never made the round of the garden, without scanning every part of its inclosure with scrupulous care. In the course of this daily examination, she one day discovered that a half-witted lad, employed in nailing up the fruit trees, had carelessly left his light hand-ladder leaning against the wall, in a corner, where it was in a certain degree hid by a buttress, and as she saw it in the same spot the next day, she became satisfied that it was for the present unwanted and forgotten. The very thought of this, as a means for getting over the wall, brought her ingenuity into play; and as she at once saw that any attempt at escape in broad daylight must necessarily be unsuccessful, she began to work upon her keeper to procure a change of the mid-day hour of airing to that of evening. As the garden was used at all times of the day as a place of exercise for the less violent patients, she occasionally encountered them during her walks.

She therefore pretended to be seized with an unconquerable alarm at their uncouth appearance, and she declared that it was impossible for her longer to avail herself of the privilege which she enjoyed.

“ I feel all your kindness to me, unfortunate creature that I am ;” said she, in a tone of despondency, to Sarah, one day, when she came as usual to take her out. “ But I cannot bear to have my path crossed by those melancholy objects ; and, since it is Heaven’s will that I am so condemned to misery in this world, the sooner I am relieved by death, and dismissed to a happier, the better.”

“ No, no,” said Sarah, who was fully alive to the important improvement of Chirsty’s health, from the change of system already pursued with her. “ We must not let ye die,—we can’t afford that,—so walk out you shall. And, since you are frightened by the sight of them ’ere creeturs, we shall walk in the cool of the evening, when they are all locked up.”

“ Thank you, thank you, Sarah,” said Chirsty, overjoyed at the success of this first part of her scheme.

Anxiously did Chirsty look every evening as she returned to the garden to ascertain whether the ladder was still in its place, for she was obliged to allow one or two nights to pass that she might use certain management with Sarah to ensure something like a probability of success. Under pretence of giving greater exercise to her limbs, she began to jump and dance with Nancy. Some time afterwards she proposed to play a game of hide and seek with her. These sports were renewed for several evenings, so that Sarah was not only lulled into perfect security, but, hard as she was by nature, she was even so much amused by the merriment of the little girl, who was her niece, that Chirsty easily contrived that each successive evening should prolong their sports, until she one night succeeded in remaining in the garden till twilight had almost become darkness. Then it was that she wound up all her energies to make her attempt.

“ Well, well,” said she carelessly, “ I am almost tired now, Nancy ; but come, I will give you one chance more ; ”—and off she went by way of hiding again among the bushes.

But no sooner was she out of sight, than forcing her way through the thicket, she darted down a

long alley with the speed of a hare, mounted the ladder to the top of the wall, drew it up after her, and letting it down on the other side, she was beyond the hated precincts of the asylum before Sarah or the little Nancy had begun to suspect that she was gone. Already did her hopes bound over all intermediate obstacles, and transport her in imagination to her father's humble dwelling at Tain. Finding herself in a lane, with the garden wall on one hand, and another equally high on the opposite side, she sprang forward without knowing whither she went. Loud screams and shouts came from within the garden. On she ran wildly until she was terror-struck for a moment, arrested, and by hearing cries of alarm, and beholding the flaring of lights in the very direction in which she was running. The loud baying of the great dog also reached her ears from the same quarter. Winged by fear, she was thus forced to double back, and bethinking her of the ladder, she rapidly retraced her steps to the spot where she had left it. Taking it hastily down from the garden wall, she dragged it across the lane with the intention of applying it to that on the other side. Whilst her trembling hands were in the act of doing this, the harsh iron

screams of Sarah came all of a sudden loudly up the lane from the opposite direction to that in which Chirsty had first attempted to fly. A postern-door of the garden had given the old woman egress at about fifty yards below. Dreadful was now the nervous agitation of poor Chirsty. Her utmost strength was necessary to rear the ladder, light as it was, against the wall. She did succeed, however. Her enraged and baffled keeper was toiling up to her with her wide mouth, uttering shrieks and imprecations that might have well been called infernal. Chirsty climbed the ladder with a palsy in all her joints. She was already on the top of the wall, —one moment more would have enabled her to pull the ladder up beyond the reach of the infuriated dwarf, and she had succeeded in raising it a considerable way from the ground, when the uncouth monster reached the spot, and clutching at the lower end of it with her long hands, she with one powerful jerk, not only dragged it down, but she so destroyed the equilibrium of the unfortunate fugitive, that she fell from the top of the wall into the lane, where the hideous countenance and demoniac eyes of Sarah frowned and glared over her, and the horrible laugh of triumph, and the blasphem-

mous denunciations of vengeance and punishment which the monster uttered, rang in her ears ere she was borne off senseless to the asylum.

You are doubtless desirous to know something of the history of poor Charles Græme, who, as you may remember, left India for the purpose of following Chirsty Ross to England? I shall shortly tell you, that on reaching Britain, he made ineffectual inquiries for her at her uncle's residence. Mrs. Ross denied having ever seen or heard of her. He did find out her Indian maid; but from the little that she told him, he could make out no clue to lead to the discovery of her mistress. And after many ineffectual attempts, repeatedly made for months, he at length yielded to the advice of his friends, and returned to India, where he vainly endeavoured to eradicate the sorrow of his heart by fresh and intense occupation.

After the lapse of a good many years, accident led a gentleman to visit a noble friend of his, who was proprietor of a fine estate and residence in Ross-shire. The roads thereabouts were then so bad for wheeled carriages, that, tired of the slowness of his progress and of the jolting of his vehicle, he left it at an inn, to come after him at its own

rate by a somewhat circuitous route, and mounting his servant's horse, he set off unattended. Following the directions he received from the people of the house, he took what was called the shortest way, hoping that he might yet save his distance so far as to reach his friend's house to a late dinner. Many was the long Scottish mile of ground which he travelled over, however; and still as he interrogated the peasants whom he met with, he found that the way before him seemed rather to be lengthening than diminishing. His horse began to manifest great symptoms of fatigue, and as the night was settling down very fast, he was glad to meet with a man who pointed out to him a track leading by the sea-shore, which, as he assured him, would save him several miles of distance. At the same time he told him, that he would require to push on smartly, so as to reach a certain ford at the mouth of a river, before the flowing tide should render it quite impracticable. Stimulated by this information, and being, moreover, impatient to get to his journey's end, he put spurs to his horse and galloped on as fast as the tired animal could go.

He had not proceeded very far, when a vivid flash of forked lightning blazed amid the obscurity

that brooded over the sea, and a tremendous peal of thunder rent the air. The waves, which were gradually rising upon the beach, seemed every moment to swell more proudly, and to toss their snowy crests higher, and suddenly a deluge of rain began to be poured from the gathered clouds. The somewhat delicate traveller wished himself again within his old box of a carriage in defiance of its jolting, but now, both in mercy to himself and to the animal he rode, he was compelled to force the poor creature on to an accelerated pace, that they might the sooner reach some place of shelter. As if fully aware of the necessity of exertion, his horse bore him with tolerable rapidity for two or three miles amidst the lightning and rain, and the thunder that at times deafened the sound of the advancing waves, till, as the darkness was just about to become complete, he dimly descried the huge mass of an ancient building rising before him from a low peninsula; and, on further investigation, he discovered that he had reached the river of which the peasant had spoken. A very cursory examination only was necessary to assure him that the stream was already so swollen by the rain and the tide as to take away all hope of his

being able to ford. The river was a raging torrent, and the roar of its conflict with the swelling tide, was a terrific addition to the horrors of the storm. The gentleman had no alternative left, therefore, but to look for hospitality in the adjoining building.

Having dismounted then, he led his horse in at a gateway; and, having discovered a dilapidated out-house, with a half entire roof, he contrived to fasten the animal by the bridle to a rusty iron hook that projected out of the wall. He then made his way across a court-yard so covered with tall docks and nettles as very much to discourage any hope which he might have previously entertained of finding inhabitants within the edifice; but, as he groped his way towards the great door of the huge pile, he was cheered by beholding a light that glimmered through the unglazed and broken casements of what appeared to be a large apartment about two stories up, whence he distinctly heard the singing of a woman's voice. Somewhat encouraged by this circumstance, and guided by the faint gleam, he tried the ponderous old oaken door, but he found that it was firmly secured within. He was about to apply his hand

to a large rusty iron knocker that hung upon it, when his attention was arrested by a wild laugh which echoed through the apartments above, died away, and was again more than once repeated with strange, sudden, and incomprehensible changes. Some of those superstitious feelings of which his infancy had largely partaken, for a moment seized upon him, and he doubted whether the building was not tenanted by beings with whom those of this world could not dare to have intercourse. But a little thought, and a little more attention to the voice, soon reassured him against any thing supernatural, and he then began to question himself whether he might not be about to rouse some body of lawless banditti or smugglers who might have taken possession of that which was evidently a ruined castle, as a place for their retreat or rendezvous. Was it prudent to proceed? But he was a man who never feared danger in youth; and, now that youth was long past with him, certain bitter disappointments he had met with in early life, and the consequent sorrow which his heart had ever since endured, rendered him now much too careless about mere existence ever to allow any anxiety regarding that

to influence his conduct, even if the deluge of rain which was then falling had not been enough to stimulate the faintest heart to the bold determination of making good an entrance at all hazards. Raising the knocker, therefore, he made a furious appeal to those within. But whether it was that the roar of the thunder, the rumbling of the river, the booming of the waves, and the continued splash of the rain, combined to drown his efforts, or to render the inmates deaf to his summons, he found it necessary to repeat his loud larum several times ere his ear caught the sound of a step descending the stair from above.

The stair was included in one of those curious thin round towers which are so frequently seen rising from the side of the doorway of these old Scottish castles, and a small window about half a story up seemed to have been placed there to enable the appearance of all applicants for entrance to be well reconnoitred before admission should be granted to them, whilst a small round arrow or musket hole on a level with their heads, enabled them to be easily and successfully assailed from below, if they were likely to be at all troublesome. A flaring light streamed suddenly out from the small

window above, and threw a partial and fitful gleam over a part of the dripping weeds of the wet courtyard. It proceeded from a lighted torch of bog-fir, and the stranger's attention was instantly arrested by the apparition that brandished it aloft with a bare extended arm. It was a woman, whose countenance, though wasted, and tarnished, and rendered wiry as it were, by exposure to weather, yet exhibited features of the noblest character, so that even a momentary glance at them and the dark eyes that flashed from them with a wild expression, as the torch which she held forth threw back its flickering light upon them, convinced the stranger that they must have been once beautiful.

“Who comes at this unseasonable hour to these my castle gates?” demanded the woman, in a haughty tone.

“A single traveller overtaken by night and by this pelting rain,” replied the stranger, “from which, with your kind permission, he would fain find a temporary shelter.”

“Aha!” exclaimed the woman again, with a curious expression of extreme and cunning caution, “dost think that these gates of mine ever turn upon their hinges to admit any guests but those who

come in their gilt coaches,—aye, and with their running footmen and out-riders too?”

“ I doubt not what you say,” replied the stranger; “ but I am at this moment acting the part of my own out-rider ; I left my carriage to go by another road, whilst I came on this way on horse-back. Pray, good madam, send down one of your people, and his inspection of my horse, which I have used the freedom to tie up in your stable, will no doubt satisfy you.”

“ My people ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ” exclaimed she laughing wildly, “ you look to be a gentleman, though, Heaven knows, looks are never to be trusted in this deceitful world. But I will see you nearer,”—and having disappeared from the window, he heard her step descending the lower flight of the stair. After a few moments of a pause, the heavy bolts were withdrawn, and the door was slowly opened to about one-third of its extent. Although prepared to behold something rather extraordinary, the gentleman was absolutely startled by the appearance of the woman who now stood before him. He had already seen her countenance, but now he could perceive that her hair was exceedingly long and untamed, and whilst the greater

part of it was white or grizzled, as if from premature failure, it still contained what, if properly dressed, might have been called tresses of the most beautiful glossy black, and the strange effect of this unnatural intermixture of the livery of youth and of age, was heightened by the wild combination of such fantastical wreaths of heather and sea-weed, mingled with sea-birds' feathers, as insanity is usually so fond of adopting by way of finery. Her arms were bare to the shoulders, and her bust was but imperfectly covered by a coarse canvass shirt. A red flannel petticoat that descended to her knees, and which was confined at the waist by a broad leathern belt, was the only other piece of drapery that she wore. She stood before the stranger exhibiting the wrecks of a form of the most exquisite mould, and her whole appearance betraying the fact, that whatever the soul that animated it might have once been, its reason was now obscured by the darkness arising from confirmed derangement.

“Enter my castle, sweet sir!” said the maniac in a gentle and subdued voice, and at the same time curtsying with a grace which might have better befitted the attire of a court than that which she wore. “Enter my castle, and I will speedily

usher you up to the grand banqueting-room. But stay," added she with a sudden and wild change of manner, after he had obeyed her invitation, "I must make my gates secure against the wretches, they might find me out even here. Bolt!—bolt!—bolt!—there my brave bolts," she continued, changing her speech into a chant, as if addressing them in incantation,—

" Keep your wards,
Be faithful guards,—
And you master-key,
Great warden shall be ;

To defend me from force and from traitorie.

Come along, sir," continued she, again changing to a wild mood ; "this way—I have a pride and a pleasure in personally attending on so distinguished a guest, as your whole appearance and manners declare you to be."

The gentleman followed his conductress up the half-ruined screw stair, which here and there exhibited fearful chasms, from the entire absence of two or three successive steps, over which she skipped without the least hesitation, whilst he was obliged to thrust his nails into the crevices of the wall to hoist himself over the difficulty. But after he had ascended two flights, he came to a landing-place

where there was a door-way entering into that large hall, from which he had first heard the voice of the maniac. Into this she led the way, and as he was about to follow her, you may imagine his astonishment when I tell you he discovered that the whole flooring was gone except the bare oaken beams, and the apartments below being in the same state, his eyes stretched uninterruptedly downwards till vision was lost in the impenetrable darkness of the dungeons below. But his conductress hesitated not a moment, and went onwards from beam to beam, with as much indifference as she would have walked across a paved court, until she gained the great hearth, which, with a small portion of the planking in its vicinity, was still entire, and where a fire of wood was burning under the huge projecting chimney.

“Come, sir,” said the maniac, smiling courteously, “never mind your wet boots; don’t stand upon ceremony I pray you,—your long ride and the state of the weather are sufficient apologies. Here is a seat by the fire for you.”

She then busied herself in placing an old rotten-looking chair, which appeared to have once had a back, and which seemed to have belonged to the

castle in its better days, whilst she seated herself on an opposite stool, and began to arrange her head-gear, to run her taper fingers, with nails on them like eagle's talons, through her long hair, and to twist it round into certain curls that had now probably become natural from the art and care which had once been bestowed upon them. Meanwhile the stranger, after bracing up his nerves and steady-ing his head, and balancing his person, with some difficulty and hazard accomplished the perilous pas-sage.

“ You must be hungry, sir, after your ride,” said the maniac, in the same mild tone. “ I was about to sup when you came in. Perhaps you will have no ob-jections to join me.” And then suddenly changing in her tone, and bursting into an uncouth laugh, as she looked into a pot that hung simmering over the fire—“ ha !—ha !—ha !—hah !—see !—the water has boiled well. The lightening has helped to do that for me. I am the favoured one ! The very elements are my cooks ! Hah ! did you see where it came again ? flash—zigzag—zigzag. Now 'tis time to mix the pudding,” and, thrusting her hand into a large square hole in the wall, she dragged out, first a bag of oatmeal, and then a small wooden

vessel full of salt, and with an earnestness which for the time absorbed her attention from every thing else, she proceeded to put the ingredients into the pot, and to stir them about with a large wooden spoon.

“ Now for my silver dish !” said she again, as she pulled forth a pewter basin from the same recess in the wall. “ Well is it for me that my gates are watched and warded, else would robbers soon carry off this rare treasure of my castle. See here now—ha ! ha ! ha ! let us begin the feast.” And as she said so, she filled the pewter basin from the pot, by means of the wooden spoon, and set it between them on an old box turned upside down, and drawing forth a couple of pewter spoons from her curious cupboard, she handed one to the stranger.

“ Hah !” said she sternly, as she broke into a more violent state of excitement than she had hitherto exhibited, “ do you see that mark ?” And as she said this, she drew with her forefinger a line of division across the surface of the mess that stood between them—“ That’s your half and this is mine ; so take care what you do, for I’ll have no foul play—men *can* cheat !—but I’m hungry,

and I must have my food ; so see to it that you eat no more than what is your own."

The mind of the traveller was too much filled with this strange and distressing scene to admit of his appetite leading him to infringe on the rule thus prescribed to him, even if the food itself had been much more inviting than it really was ; on the contrary, he had hardly eat a third part of his way up to the boundary line, when he found that his hostess had scrupulously given it a straight edge upon her side.

"Come!" said she, in an angry tone of voice, quite different from any she had hitherto used ; "eat up your share! do you think I want it? Come—there is no poison in it. - Come! come!"

"I do, I do," said the gentleman, pretending to eat ; and every now and then contriving to throw unobserved a large spoonful down between the beams ; until, partly by eating, and partly by this occasional manœuvre, he at last succeeded in emptying the dish.

"Now, sir!" said the maniac, resuming all the quiet and decorous demeanour of a well-bred woman, "a little gentle exercise after supper con-

duces to good repose. I shall be happy to give you my hand for a minuet."

Pushing back the seats they had occupied, she seized the stranger's hand, and took her position beside him on the hearth. He offered no opposition to her proposal; and she immediately began to sing with great brilliancy and effect that minuet so well known to our grandsires and grandmothers under the name of the *Minuet de la Cour*. Following the example of his entertainer, the gentleman was obliged to make his preliminary bows corresponding to her preliminary courtesies; and had any eye looked upon the couple as they were thus employed, it might have been naturally enough supposed that he danced with some handsome lady of quality, disguised in a fancy dress, so perfectly did the grace of her attitudes assimilate themselves to the various movements of the minuet. But the gentleman had not altogether calculated the nature of his present undertaking. The spot of terra firma on which the dance commenced was by no means large enough for the extent of one-tenth part of the figure of the minuet; and a less bold man than he would have felt anything but tranquillity of mind, when his insane partner,

giving him her hand, glided with him over the beams, amidst the half light that proceeded from the decaying embers, like some spirit from the other world. But if this was alarming, what were his feelings, when, after the slow part of the minuet was over, she began to carol the sprightly gavot which follows it, with a clear voice, that made the lofty vaulted roof ring again, whilst she darted off and called to him to follow. So indeed he found himself compelled to do; but whilst he, at the risk of his life, contented himself with keeping up something like a semblance of the figure, he was astonished and appalled to see his partner go through the whole dance with all that activity which might have been exhibited on a common floor by the ablest professional dancer. Though he felt not for himself, his hair actually stood on end as he looked with trembling upon her, whom he expected every moment to see disappear from his eyes into that abyss of darkness that lay below; and great was his relief from anxiety, when the dance was at last terminated on the hearth-stone where it began.

“And now, gentle sir,” said the maniac, “you are doubtless well prepared for your night’s repose

after this healthful exercise. Let me see that your sleeping apartment is ready."

Had the roaring elements without permitted the stranger to have again ventured abroad, he saw that he could not have possessed himself of the keys of the outer door, without the employment of force, which his feeling heart never could have allowed him to have attempted. He therefore sat patiently waiting until his hostess crossed the beams, and went into a small stone closet opening in the wall, whence she speedily returned, and lifting a lighted brand of bog-fir from the fire, she presented it to him with the same air as if she had been putting a silver candlestick, with a wax-candle in it, into his hand; and taking up another for herself, she, with all the delicacy of the most refined lady, wished him a good night, and retired into a room on the other side of the hall similar to that which she had indicated to him. Before retreating to his dormitory, the gentleman took the precaution to rake the fire together, and to add to it one or two pieces of wood, which were piled up in the chimney near it, so as to keep up a certain degree of light in the place. He then moved

across the beams to the stone closet, where he found a heap of ferns nicely spread over heather; and putting his cloak on, which had by this time become tolerably dry, he lay quietly down to try to procure a little repose.

He had not lain long until he was awakened by several rats running over him, and on looking out at the open door which gave him a view into the large apartment, he beheld swarms of these creatures gamboling about on the beams. Whilst he was lying watching their motions, he was surprised to perceive his hostess crawling silently forth on hands and knees from the small place she had occupied. Suddenly she sprang upon the rats with all the agility of a cat,—flew after them hither and thither, with wild and frantic yells, leaping at the walls in such a manner that she absolutely seemed to scramble up a portion of their height in the eagerness of her pursuit. The chase lasted until all the rats had disappeared, but ere it terminated, several of them had fallen victims to her wonderful expertness in capturing them. Proceeding then to the hearth, she seated herself on the stool by the fire, in a state of great excitement, and, inserting her long nails into them, she

stripped off their skins one after the other with inconceivable expedition, and as she did so, she rose up from time to time and suspended the bleeding reptiles on tenter-hooks on one side of the chimney among many others which the stranger had not till then observed, whilst she attached their skins to a similar set of hooks on the other side of the fire, amongst a corresponding number of trophies of the same kind.

“ This is for my winter beef,” said she in a wild soliloquy, “ and this is for my winter cloak!” This she repeated as every new occasion required, till all were stowed away. After which the furious fit seemed to subside ; and soon afterwards she retired to her bed, where she lay so quiet as to give no more disturbance to her stranger guest, till both were roused by the early dawn.

The morning was a smiling one, and as if she had partaken of its peaceful nature, she was again in one of her gentle lady-like humours.

“ Will you walk, sweet sir?” said she to her guest, with a profound courtesy. “ Will you walk forth to see the morning sun kissing the opening flowers and drinking up the dew-drops from their lips?— This way,” continued she, as she ushered him

down the broken stair, and silently opened the locks and bolts of the outer door.

“ I thank you most sincerely for your hospitality, Madam,” said the traveller to her whilst she was carefully locking the door behind her. “ I must now bid you farewell. I see my horse has had the good sense to break out from his stable during the night to feed on yonder rich bank of grass, so that he must be well enough refreshed by this time to be able to finish my journey.”

“ What,” exclaimed the maniac with a sudden transition to her highest pitch of excitement, and with great rapidity of utterance, “ are *you* going to leave me too? Did you not come to this my castle to woo me for your bride? And are you going to leave me too? But I forget,—I forget,” continued she, sinking into a low thoughtful tone of feeling, whilst tears came rushing to her eyes and rolled down her cheeks. “ I must not forget that I am pledged in my own mind. There was but one that ever truly loved me, and him I lost by being true to a base deceiver.”

“ What said you ?” exclaimed the stranger with intense interest.

“ I say that men are deceivers !” cried she with

her wildest tone and gesture ; and then becoming gradually calm, she went on singing with great pathos,—

“ Sigh no more ladies,
Ladies sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot on sea and one on shore.——

Yes ! yes ! on sea !—how many vows did that false man of the sea utter ! and how cruelly did he break them on shore !”

“ What do I hear !” exclaimed the gentleman. “ The very song !—the very song we so often sang in duet together at Calcutta !”

“ Calcutta !” cried the maniac, earnestly seizing his wrist, and in a tone of deep feeling ; “ yes, I sang that song often at Calcutta, with one who tenderly loved me. How often do I think on that !”

“ Merciful powers !” cried the stranger, as he suddenly observed a small Indian wrought ring on the little finger of that hand by which she had for a moment held his ; “ by all that is wonderful, it is the ring ! the very ring ! Let me see that ring !”

“ No !” said the maniac, in a high, haughty,

and determined manner ; it shall never be touched by you nor any one else. *He* gave it to me—I have worn it—I have preserved it through all my miserable sufferings, and it shall go with me,” added she, fervently kissing it ; “ it shall go with me to my cold cold grave.”

“ Stop, stop !” cried the gentleman, as she was turning away from him ; “ avoid me not ! I am he who gave it you !”

“ You !” cried she, stopping suddenly in her retreat, drawing herself up to her full height, and looking back upon him with an air of the most sovereign contempt ; “ you Charles Græme !—Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !—you Charles Græme !—His face was fair, and with the expression of an angel—your’s is sallow, withered, and wrinkled, like that of a baboon,—his hair was lovely as the beams of the morning sun,—your’s is white, as the eternal snow of the Himala ;—his form was like that of the Grecian Apollo,—your’s is like that of winter. Go, traitorous man ! I have had enough of falsehood ! Come not near me ! Chirsty Ross will wed no one now but Charles Græme or the grave !”

In an instant she darted from his sight, before he was aware of her intention, and she disappeared

among the ruins. In the wildest state of agitation he rushed after her. He thought he heard a faint shriek, but he vainly sought her with unremitting solicitude for some hours. Believing at length that she must have got into the interior of the building, by some secret passage known only to herself, he unwillingly gave up his search, and the sea having now ebbed, and the flood in the river having somewhat subsided, he mounted his horse—with some difficulty crossed the ford—and, oppressed with sorrowful thoughts, he slowly made his way to the castle of his noble friend, to whom he confided his sad tale. From him he learned much that was new to him. A cambric handkerchief, embroidered with Chirsty's story, had found its way to her friends, who, after many difficulties, succeeded in rescuing her from her confinement. But alas! they found her not till her sufferings had rendered her a confirmed maniac. For a time she felt soothed by the kindness shewn her by her afflicted parents; and during the short time they lived, she amused herself, by wandering harmlessly about the scenes of her childhood. But, when her father and mother were both dead, and all her other relatives being like-

wise gone, or removed, she abandoned her home, and took up her abode in the ruinous building, of which she was for the most part left in undisturbed possession. Such was the melancholy outline of her history.

But Charles Græme was too feelingly alive to her unhappy situation to delay one moment in attempting to find her, that he might spend the remainder of his life in watching over and protecting her. Next day, therefore, assisted by his friends' people, he made his way into the ruins, and sought every part of them. But he sought in vain. Every thing remained as when he had left them on the previous morning, and although the door was locked, the bolts in the inside were not fastened, showing that the wretched inhabitant had not returned.

But the mystery was cleared up towards mid-day by a fisherman, who, as he was landing from his boat, found her lifeless body on the sands, where it had been left by the receding tide. The supposition was that she had been drowned in attempting to ford the swollen river, immediately after the scene of her parting with Charles Græme.