

# THE CLUB-BOOK:

BEING

ORIGINAL TALES,

&c.

BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE DOMINIE'S LEGACY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# THE CLUB-BOOK.

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## THE FATAL WHISPER.

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BY MR. GALT.

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“ Oh the curse of marriage !  
That we can call these delicate creatures ours  
And not their appetites ! I'd rather be a toad  
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon  
Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
For others use.”

OTHELLO.

THE Marina was crowded with company, and the most distinguished of the Palermitan nobility in open carriages were enjoying the gaiety of the summer evening, and the refresh-

ing air that breathed gently from the bay. I had seated myself on the stone bench which runs along the dwarf wall, with my back to the sea, enjoying the active and cheerful scene, when a capuchin friar took a place beside me.

He was a middle-aged man, with a pensive cast of countenance, and evidently suffering from infirmity. His appearance, without being remarkable, had less ecclesiastical gravity than is commonly observable among the monks.

In reply to some incidental question which I happened to address to him, he replied in English, and immediately rose and went away. Next evening I seated myself on the same spot; he also returned and again sat down beside me. In that way our acquaintance began and grew to intimacy.

But I will relate his story as he told it. At the time it interested me greatly, and often has it since returned upon my recollection with an indescribable sense of sadness, arising more from the feelings which the incidents awakened than the apparent sensibility with which he described them. The remains of a military manner regulated the tone of his voice, and he



spoke of them with as much fortitude as if he had been describing the adventures of a campaign in which an old companion had perished. His voice was firm, but there was a restraint in the utterance that made the tale impressive, and, without pain, deeply affecting.

It was indeed singular, and I more than once intimated that he had awakened my curiosity ; but it was not till one evening when I happened to inquire how long he had worn the garb of a friar, that he deemed me worthy of his confidence.

“ It is convenient,” said he, “ but it is not on that account I have assumed it ;” and then he abruptly added, as if the restraint he had put upon himself had suddenly given way, “ I much prefer the convent to any other lodging. The friars are sedate and good men ; and, although they know I am a protestant, they never trouble me with any sort of religious controversy.”

Though accustomed to his thoughtful physiognomy, it seemed to me that in saying this the cast of his countenance underwent a change, and that he looked more than I had ever before remarked, like one whom adversity had touched

with no gentle hand ; after a momentary pause he began his story :—

On the return of the army from Alexandria, said he, the transport in which I had embarked with several other officers, became leaky, and we bore away for Messina to repair, or to obtain another vessel. On entering the port, being under quarantine, the passengers disembarked at the Lazaretto, where they found apartments, and were too happy in taking possession of them, after the vile Egyptian rooms and the discomfort we had suffered in the transport.

The person who attended to receive our daily orders sometimes brought the English newspapers ; I read them with an oppressive eagerness, expecting to hear something of my friends, but to me they were ever barren ; all my companions, one after the other, met with some little notice or paragraph which gave them pleasure, but none such ever appeared to me.

The dullness of the Lazaretto, a square court with a cemetery in the area, would of itself have affected the spirits of most men ; but the silence

of the newspapers towards me seemed more ominous of misfortune, and filled my imagination with apprehensions and vague fears to which neither name nor other cause could be assigned. When the period of the quarantine was complete, and all my companions were joyous at being released, I was irresistibly depressed, and, in answer to their raillery, could only tell that some unaccountable burden weighed upon my spirits, and would not be shaken off by any resolution.

On the day we were at liberty we dined together, and had several English officers, then in the garrison, as guests. In the evening we all went to the theatre; the house was crowded. Every box was engaged, which obliged us to take places in the pit. You are aware that owing to the subdivision of the benches in the Sicilian theatres, it sometimes happens that a party is unavoidably separated, the seats being occupied at intervals by other individuals. This took place that night; my friends were dispersed in different parts of the house, and I was by myself in one of the sittings at the end of the last bench.

I had not been long seated when several other officers came in, with a gentleman in plain clothes, whom, as I overheard in the course of his conversation with them, had only that afternoon arrived by the packet from England. He had been the school-fellow of one of the officers, with whom he was gay and free, telling him of their old companions, and also of his own exploits since they had left Eton. Among other things he mentioned that the cause of his coming abroad was an intrigue, in which he had been engaged with a married lady. It had been discovered by the landlady of an inn on the Bath road, who had threatened to disclose the affair to the friends of his paramour. "But," said he, "I bought her silence, and have for a few months come out of the way." The name of the lady he did not disclose, indeed refused, but boasted of his success, and of the long time that the guilty intercourse had continued.

This story attracted my particular attention, and yet there was nothing in the circumstances calculated to make any very lasting impression, save only the art and craft of

the lady, which he described with contempt and derision, as the result of her experience in deception.

On returning to the hotel from the theatre, which I did alone, before the opera was over, I found, with letters from my wife, a bundle of newspapers. Maria had been for some time, she said, unwell, and had been advised to try the Bath waters ; it had, however, so happened that my mother had also been seized with a dangerous illness, which obliged my wife to go hastily to London, where, after waiting some time, she was again advised to return to Bath.

As the letter was written with her wonted tenderness and spirit, I could not but admire the ardour of that filial affection, which was so like the earnestness of her love for myself ; but when I was about to take up one of the newspapers—it strangely, suddenly, and fearfully flashed across my mind, that there was something extraordinary in that journey. In a word, I was wounded with a pang of jealousy, and shook for a time like the aspen. And yet my heart acknowledged that never was a woman more simple in all her



ways than Maria—more pure in heart and spirit—more enthusiastic in her affections. The thought, as it crossed my imagination, was as a black demon passing between me and the heavens, eclipsing the unclouded sun. Still I could not reason myself from the horror of the suspicion, which, like an envenomed dart, rankled in my bosom. It seemed as if the augury which had previously darkened my spirit was confirmed—I arose from my seat—I traversed the room in distraction, and abandoned myself, without reason, to the wildest imaginations.

When I had for some time given scope to the full force of the dreadful passion which had so demoniacally possessed me, the cloud passed from my understanding, and I became more calm. I felt even repugnance at myself for having done such injury to my wife in thought, and remorse, like drops of molten sulphur for the injustice, dropped in greater anguish than fire upon my heart. I soon after again grew more rational, and calmly opened the paper.

For some time nothing interesting attracted my notice, but among the gossiping paragraphs I discovered two lines evidently inserted by au-

thority, for there was a tint of satire in them praising the filial devotion of the lady of a gallant officer then with the army in Egypt, and how, though herself an invalid, she had made a journey to London to comfort his aged mother, who was less in need of consolation than herself.

This sentence was as a shower of bullets in my bosom. The paroxysm of jealousy returned, barbed with a hateful possibility. But I may spare you and myself the description of an agony which language can never express. That too, however, after a time, also subsided. I again had recourse to another number of the newspaper, and in it there was a dignified answer to the slander implied in the wording and markings of the paragraph that had so disturbed me.

But it failed to soothe, for the gentleman had described the craft of his paramour.

This made my case worse — no adequate idea can be given of my thoughts that night. I retired to my own chamber—I wept, I vowed the hoarsest revenge. But what could I do—what proof had I to charge my rival with hav-

ing dishonoured my family? Him I could not even address. The night was spent in a whirlwind, and I could bring myself to no determination.

At day-break I went to a convent, where I had then a friend, who, under the name of Anselmo, had long resided there. I had known him when, previously to the Egyptian expedition, I had been quartered in Messina; he was a sensible, sedate character, possessed of a judicious knowledge of the world. To him I confided my hideous apprehensions—and when I had ended the impassioned narrative, he remained for some time thoughtful, and then said—

“Go to your hotel, let no one have any cause to suspect your fears, and come back to me in the afternoon, by which time I shall be prepared to offer you some advice.”

I did as he suggested — fortunately my companions, in the gaiety of their spirits, had resolved to visit the environs. I feigned a head-ache, declined to go with them, and thus was left undisturbed.

Whether father Anselmo had in the mean-



time consulted with any friend on my unhappy case, was not disclosed, but when, at the time appointed, I returned to the convent, I met him at the portal, as he was taking leave of another elderly friar, who, as I entered, eyed me with a melancholy look. I passed, however, on, and was immediately followed by Anselmo, who, instead of conducting me back to his cell, led me into the chapel, which at the time was empty.—It is a gorgeous sanctuary; the shrines and monuments numerous, and though the lighted altars sent forth a dim splendour, there was something in the air and aspect of the place which weighed upon my heart as if the tranquillity which reigned around had been palpable.

When we had walked in silence to a confessional, which stood at the east end of the chapel, near the high altar, Father Anselmo went into the chair—"I am not," said he, "so ingrained with our religion as to deem this an occasion that will not sanction the indecorum—kneel to me as if you were a penitent, and I will answer you as sincerely as if the sin which has brought us here were of your own com-

mission. Kneel, no one will then interrupt us, if your agitation master your fortitude."

I knelt, scarce knowing what I did. When I had bent forward about a minute to the aurical of the confessional, Father Anselmo said—

"There is a cause to justify you to suspect."

I groaned with anguish, and could make no reply.

"But let no one still suspect the secret of your heart—write to your wife as if you never questioned her fidelity—go home with all the speed you can, but before you see her—go to the inn where the discovery was made. The landlady was bribed to silence—a better price will unlock her tongue—and your own sagacity will then direct you what should be done, if it should prove the adulteress was your wife."

"She shall die," cried I aloud, starting in an agony on my feet—at that instant the newly arrived stranger with his friend the officer entered the church—I cannot describe the tempest of my soul at that moment.

"It is him," I exclaimed—pointing him out to the friar.

"Compose yourself," was his answer. "Let us

question him—I am calmer than you: leave the business to me.”

Father Anselmo then went towards the stranger, and his friend, and addressed them as strangers, pointing out to their attention several of the altar-pieces which were considered distinguished specimens of art; I followed close behind him, but said nothing, nor was I capable of joining two sentences—I attempted, however, to enter into conversation with the officer who accompanied the stranger. What he must have thought of me I can now well imagine,—my tongue at the time gave utterance to words which had no connection with my mind. Father Anselmo afterwards inquired what I had been saying—I had no remembrance of it, but he mentioned that he had several times observed the officer turn round abruptly, and look at me with an apprehensive eye.

Father Anselmo himself, in the mean time, was particularly courteous to the stranger, and after we had taken a turn or two in the chapel, I grew more collected, and went closer to him. Immediately I perceived that he changed his manner; his eyes became vivid and

searching, and in conducting the stranger along the side-altars to look at the pictures particularly, he frequently cast upon him a sudden glance, especially when he observed his attention arrested by any remarkable figure among the female saints. But the stranger inspected them all with equal indifference.

Father Anselmo then affected to be a critic, and discoursed of the colouring of the several pictures with the affectation of a Cicerone. It seemed to me that his object in this was to ascertain if the taste of the stranger preferred any particular colour, but in this too he failed. He could derive nothing to assist his curious metaphysical investigation, for I soon perceived that his endeavour was to find out some key to the associations of the stranger's mind, such as skilful players at the game of Twenty Questions sometimes obtain—and are thereby enabled to discover the most occult thoughts of their antagonists.

The stranger and the officer his companion then went away.

“I suspect,” said Father Anselmo, as they left the church, “that you are disturbing your-

self without cause. The intrigue which that gentleman has accidentally disclosed, has been but a young man's folly—he has no remorse for what he has done. The woman deserves not your anxiety, if she prove your wife; she must be bad, and their connection has been a mere animal indulgence, which leaves no sting of guilt behind. I have tried him by all these pictures, and even in the one there of the Roman lady listening to the preaching of the young priest, who became enamoured of her, and who resisted the temptation because she was married; but he was not in the slightest degree moved, even though I interpreted the legend as much like the story you had overheard as possible. Think, therefore, no more of any offence towards yourself in this affair, but go home and get the fact proved, as soon as possible, to be rid of one that must be familiar with voluptuousness.”

The words of Father Anselmo seemed oracular. I knew not their import, nor the mode of his reflection, though I comprehended the scope of both. It was, however, impossible that I could, by any resolution, shake off the



love which I cherished for Maria. I recalled to mind her beauty and simplicity, and that graceful piety so unlike the gross ardour that the stranger had described ; but the storm of my jealousy was over, and a deep and exquisite sorrow took possession of my bosom. Why, however, attempt to describe an anguish that must be felt, not imagined, and which threatens to return as the remembrance is refreshed, by recalling the visible circumstances in which it was first experienced ? Endeavour to conceive for yourself, and when you have done so with all the powers of your imagination, how faint and feeble will it be to the reality of what I suffered.

Two days after I left my fellow passengers, and returned to England by the same packet that had brought out the destroyer of my peace. Immediately on my arrival at Falmouth, I set off for the inn where the iniquity had taken place.

Having been then for several years absent from England, I affected a curiosity respecting the domestic occurrences of the kingdom which was not felt, and perceiving that there was no

bustle in the house, on pretence of conversing with the landlady on these topics, I begged her to make tea for me. In the course of her doing so, my conversation was wild and desultory, and several times I observed her suddenly gaze at me. Gradually I brought the various subjects I had affected to speak of to a point, and then I earnestly told her, and with considerable emotion, that I had some cause for jealousy, and that she must excuse the distraction of mind with which she saw me agitated.

Having thus interested her feelings, I then turned the conversation with all my ingenuity on the time, and finally the place of guilt, relating several circumstances which the stranger, Sir Mandeville Webster, had mentioned concerning the discovery, and in which she had borne a part, even to the sum by which he had purchased her silence. Her emotion increasing to amazement and alarm, convinced me that he had told no untrue tale, but still she only affected to grieve in sympathy for my distress. I was, however, satisfied with the testimony of my witness, and as to have offered her money for a more circumstantial disclosure would have

been improper, I abruptly quitted her and proceeded directly to London. The expiring embers of affection for Maria prevented me from disclosing my name, feebly hoping that some explicable mistake might possibly yet be discovered.

My reception by Maria was with all the flutter and fondness of pure and fervent affection. Oh, Heavens! but her blandishments were as the foldings of a serpent—my anguish more dreadful than the agonies of Laocoon!—but I stifled my disgust. She spoke of her children with the admiration of a mother. She brought them to me with delight, but I discerned that she once or twice looked at me with a strange speculation in her eyes. In all, save in those disastrous glances, she was what she had ever been, but my heart, though not altogether alienated, was perplexed, and its throbs were as the stings of scorpions.

Craft and cunning were never so perfectly performed as on that fatal morning. It was impossible to look upon her with suspicion. Innocence was in all her gestures; but once I saw her hastily turn her head to conceal a



sudden gush of tears. After this, could I doubt? I flung my love to the winds.

A brief embarrassed pause took place for a moment; without saying a word, I ordered the nursery-maid to convey the children to their grandmother, and then sternly remained in silence till they were gone. Maria sat pale and amazed; she asked no question—perhaps was unable. She saw the children depart without emotion and without caress. Never was detected guilt so visibly confounded.

When the carriage, with the children and the servant had left the house, I then said, with a stern voice, but my heart wept blood from every pore, “Madam, answer me a few questions.”

She made no reply, but I continued—

“When did you become acquainted with Sir Mandeville Webster?”

She made no reply.

“Was it in your journey between Bath and London?”

She made no reply.

“Answer me, unhappy woman; I would, for your own sake, spare you from the tongues of

the world,—answer me !”—and in saying these words, I rose ; she, at the same time, also started up, and extending her arms in frenzy, burst into a wild, demoniac fit of mirthless laughter, so shrill, so hideous, so unlike all human sound, that I shudder with horror as I think of it. Then suddenly pausing, she looked solemnly at me for a moment, and dropped senseless on the floor.

Humanity, and some feeling of withered tenderness would not allow me to leave her till her maid, with the assistance of the other women, had recalled her senses. But as soon as I observed the dawn of returning reason, I left the house, and proceeded to her father's, where I found his lordship at home, in his library alone. I hastened into his presence, but as I entered the room, my feelings overcame me, and I threw myself on his shoulder, unable to speak.

After this paroxysm had subsided he requested me to be seated, and, I thought with an air of coldness and distance, inquired what so agitated me, and when I had returned to England.

His manner was additional proof—it was as if he knew and connived at the guilt. He is acquainted with my dishonour, I inwardly said, but his regard for a child, to whom he was ever devoted, has made him take her part. The thought passed through my mind like electricity and nerved me to be firm. Accordingly, collecting myself, I told him what I had the misfortune to learn. I told him all—how it accidentally first reached my hearing in the theatre, to the examination of the landlady, and the dreadful scene I had just witnessed.

During the whole recital he sat as silent as his daughter, but it was the silence of attention, and, not like her's, of consternation—for he was a calm self-sustained character, seldom off his guard, and shrewd in his knowledge of mankind.

When I had closed my wild story, he made no remark, but rising, walked several times accross the library—I conceived that he was meditating what reply to make, and waited with resolution, at last he stopped opposite to me and said emphatically,

“This is a strange business—It is not impossible to be true”—at this expression I saw

his countenance change, and a tear rush into his eyes, which he hastily wiped away.

The sight of that most respectable, and in all things serene, and self-possessed old man so affected, touched me with exquisite pity—I rose, and being now certain that nothing could change the woeful fact, I said abruptly that while I remained in town my home would be at my mother’s with the children, but that the unfortunate Maria would require his care.

“You have lost no time since your arrival,” replied he, a little proudly, as I thought, “but I will call on you in the course of the day.”

We then parted. There was nothing in this sad interview to make me question what I had heard ; but on the contrary, a strong confirmation of the justice of my jealousy. It was a spur in the side of my intent, to have the legal preliminaries for a divorce instituted without delay.

By this time agitation had exhausted my strength, in so much that when I reached my mother’s house I was seriously indisposed, and the children with their gladness and innocent caresses augmented my dejection. My mother

was not at home ; the maid had described to her the frame of mind in which she had seen me, and the old lady had instantly gone to my house—I was not, however, acquainted with this circumstance at the time, and concluded that her absence was in consequence of her reluctance to see me, forgetting, in that disconsolate moment, that the mother's heart ever prompts her to fly to her offspring in distress. But a deplorable fatality was upon me, and every thing that took place on that eventful day ministered to the sharpening of my affliction.

After waiting some time for the return of Lady Osprey, I called in the nursery-maid and learnt where she had gone. With boiling veins, and a head incapable of combining two thoughts, I resolved to go in quest of her, but in that crisis she returned ; on reaching my house, she was informed that Maria had left it in a hackney-coach without saying where she intended to go. The servants were all alarmed, and no one could give the slightest clue to the mysterious passion in which, after so long an absence, I had returned.

I then told her ladyship of the discovery, and

at the same time Lord Baronsdale was announced—he too had been at my house, and had been informed of the manner in which Maria had withdrawn herself.—His look was firm but stern, he had summoned all his fortitude, and while it was evident that his spirit was writhing with a thousand wounds, his countenance had an air of resolution and sadness.

“Let us not,” said he, “waste time in idle talk, your happiness and mine are equally at stake; I have thought on all you have told me; there may be some error—and we must begin the investigation a-new. I have a post-chaise at the door—you must go with me to that landlady—she shall not earn her bribe from our credulity.”

I made no answer, but seized my hat to accompany him in an instant,—he wrung his hands with emotion; another messenger was first despatched to my house, and also to his 'lordship's, to ascertain if Maria had returned—but they brought back no tidings.

We then resolved to proceed in the chaise, and reached the inn early in the evening, where, in passing to a parlour, we met Maria!—I had before this received proof enough, but the sight



of her there crowned the evidence—Why had she come to that house? I had not mentioned any thing to her of my having been there. By what miraculous accident had she come, and for what other purpose than to deal with the bribed landlady? rushed in frenzy on my mind.

Before I had time to make any remark Maria pulled the bell, and requested the presence of the landlady, and on her entrance demanded with a steady voice if she was the Mistress Osprey of whom she had spoken to me.

The good woman, before answering, looked confused, and then said, hesitatingly, that she was not, and I exclaimed with indignation—

“These tricks, Maria, will serve you no longer. How came you here?—by what instinct have you thought of this house? How much was your bribe?—Sir Mandeville Webster’s was a hundred guineas.”

Maria made no answer, she only looked at me, but the landlady started at the name of Sir Mandeville, and I turned to Lord Baronsdale.

“It would not be expensive,” said I, “to get any evidence desired from this woman.”

“ You are right,” said his lordship, with a sigh, and covered his face with his handkerchief, exclaiming with great fervour, “ Oh, Maria, to what devil have you sold yourself?—to look so innocent—to be so plausible!—and—”

“ You are not satisfied?” was her reply. “ Let Osprey take the woman in his chaise and proceed with her to Bath ; and, my lord, till I am proved guilty, give me your protection ; I will go with you.”

The energy with which this was said, strengthened the impression which so many circumstances had made. It was unlike the gentle and retiring Maria to shew herself so decisive.

The journey to Bath was arranged as she proposed ; the landlady at first made some scruple, but it was stifled by the words “ you must,” from Maria.

We travelled all night, but slowly, as it was desired, or rather ordered, by Maria, that we should not reach Bath till an advanced hour in the morning, and that no opportunity should be afforded for her to have any further commu-



nication with the landlady. I was spell-bound—I could not divine her intent—but she appeared animated by some extraordinary purpose, and she never once appeared to notice me.

When we reached Bath, instead of proceeding to any hotel, she directed the chaise to a particular house in Pultney Street, and our's to follow. On reaching the door, the instant that it was opened, she directed her father to come in with her, and the landlady and I to follow. She then, with the same apparent equanimity, ordered the servant to bid Lady Heatherstone, his mistress, come to her for a single moment—we were still standing when the lady entered.

The landlady, on seeing her ladyship, started, and turning suddenly to me, before any other could utter a word, said, with an agitated voice, “This is the Mistress Osprey.”

The lady instantly turned pale, and gazing at the landlady, whom she at once recognized, said—

“You mistake, I am Lady Heatherstone.”

“Oh, why did you add the guilt of falsehood to your sin!” cried the contrite landlady; “you told me yourself your name, on the vile

morning of that night when you and this other lady stopped at our house."

Lady Heatherstone rejoined—"You are in some mistake ; but what does this mean ?—why, ladies and gentlemen, are you here, and what is the object of these questions ?"

Lord Baronsdale said nothing, but, with his mouth pursed, seemed waiting some result.

"Madam," after a momentary pause, said I, "when I last saw your friend, Sir Mandeville Webster—"

"Oh, Webster ! do you know him ?" was her exclamation of astonishment, and she flung herself on a sofa, and covered her face with her hands.

I rushed towards Maria to catch her in my embrace, but her spirit was gone—I had only her corpse in my arms.

From that hour I have but existed—our unhappy children are both dead. Had they lived, perhaps, I might have endeavoured to resume my profession, but the eldest only survived a year, and the second scarcely another. Since that time I have been but a breathing thing—an abstract of humanity—and the solitude of

the cloister has been my home. Had we possessed any such asylum in England I had not come to Sicily. But it matters not—all places are now alike to me.



# THE SLEEPLESS WOMAN.

---

BY WILLIAM JERDAN.\*

---

## CHAPTER I.

“Blessed be he that first invented sleep, for it covers a man all over like a mantle.”

*Sancho Panza, passim.*

HEAVILY set in massive brass, whose rich and ingenious carving was tarnished and dull, a ponderous lamp swung from a ceiling blackened by its smoke. Every thing in the room spoke of time, but of time that had known no

\* Editor of The Literary Gazette, &c. &c. &c.

change. Knights, whose armour was, at the latest, of two centuries back—ladies, in dresses from which their descendants started in dismay—looked out from the discoloured tapestry; and the floor, dark with age, added to the gloom. Beside the hearth, whose fire, from the rain beating down the huge chimney, burnt every moment dimmer, sat two old domestics. The man in a scarlet gown, and a belt, from which hung a heavy bunch of keys, was the seneschal; and opposite was his wife, in a brown silk dress, and a string of ebony beads, which she was busily employed in counting. Between them was a small antique oak table, where a flask and two bell-mouthed glasses appeared temptations which, it must be owned, somewhat interrupted the telling of the beads. In the centre of the chamber stood an immense hearse-like bed; the purple velvet curtains swept to the ground, and at each corner drooped a large plume of black ostrich-feathers. On this bed lay a little withered old man, apparently in the last extremity of age, and very close upon the border of death. His spare form was hidden in an ample black robe, fastened

round the waist with a white girdle, on which were graved strange characters in red ; and on his breast was a white square, covered with stars and signs wrought in gold. The old man's face was ghastly pale, and rendered yet paler by the contrast of his black scull-cap, which was drawn down even to his gray and shagged eyebrows. But the features were restless ; and the small keen eyes, though fast losing their brightness, were full of anxiety. The wind shook the tall narrow windows, and howled in the old trees of the avenue ; at every fresh gust, the Baron's impatience seemed to increase—for what we are telling relates to the Baron de Launaye.

“ 'Tis a rough night,” muttered he ; “ but Adolphe is as rough a rider—and a dangerous road ; but I am the first De Launaye who ever drew bridle for that. And then my summons—it was sure to reach him ; ay, though alone, in the midnight bower of the mistress whose name and his suspicion had never coupled together even in a dream—even though consciousness were drowned in the crimson flowing of the wine—though sleeping as men sleep after battle,



pillowed on the body of their deadliest enemy, or of their nearest and dearest friend—my summons would be borne on his inmost soul. But will he come, at the bidding of his dying uncle?—will Adolphe, he, the only human being whom I ever loved—will he or will he not come!”

The question was answered even at the moment it was breathed. The horn at the castle-gate was blown impatiently—the fall of the drawbridge was heard—a moment’s pause, and a light foot sprang up the oaken staircase with all the speed of haste and youth. The door opened, and in rushed a young cavalier. The white plumes of his cap were drenched with wet—the diamond clasp that fastened them was dim with damp—but his bright auburn hair glistened with the rain-drops. Hastily flinging his riding cloak, heavy with moisture, to the ground, the stranger sprang to the bed-side. A gleam of human love, of human joy, passed over the old man’s face, as, tenderly and gently, his nephew asked of his tidings, and expressed such hopes as affection hopes when hope there is none.



“ Child of my love,” murmured the dying Baron, “ for whose sake only I have ever given one thought to the things of earth, bear yet a moment with the feeble wretch who but a brief while will stand between you and the title of your ancestors and wealth. Many a prince of your mother’s house would think his kingdom overpaid if purchased by its half. You are young—I never was—my heart, even in boyhood, was old with premature knowledge. You have that beauty, the want of which has made my life a curse—you have that strength of body, the want of which has paralysed my strength of mind. I have doubted if happiness dwells on this evil earth—I will not doubt, when I hope for yours. You will hear me called necromancer: out on the base fools who malign that which they understand not, and would bring down the lofty aim of science, the glorious dream of virtue, to their own low level! You will hear me called miser: Adolphe, have you ever found me so?”

“ My father—my more than father!” passionately exclaimed the young man, hiding his face on the pillow, as if ashamed of the violence

of mortal grief, in the presence of one so soon to be immortal.

“ Adolphe,” continued his uncle, “ you have heard, though not from me—for I sought not to weigh down your ardent mind with all that has pressed upon me with the burden of hopelessness, and long has the knowledge been mine—that the fetters of clay are too heavy for the spirit. Your young hand was fitter for the lance than the crucible; and the bridle-rein would have been ill exchanged for the lettered scroll. But something I know of that future, into which even the sage can look but dimly. Adolphe, the only question I asked was for thee! Alas! the vanity of such wisdom! It has told of danger that menaces, but not of the skill that avoids. My child evil came into the world with woman, and in her is bound up the evil of your destiny. Vain as the glance they throw on the polished steel of their mirror—false as the vow they make for the pleasure of breaking—inconstant as the wind, which changes from point to point, and for whose change no philosophy hath ever discovered a cause: shun them, Adolphe, as

you would disloyalty to your king, flight from your enemy, or falsehood to your friend."

The old man's voice became inaudible, and his head sank on Adolphe's shoulder:—"Margarita, water—or, Jacques, give me the wine." The youth tried to pour a few drops into the Baron's mouth. The dying man motioned back the glass, and, looking in the cavalier's face with a strong expression of affection and anxiety, muttered something of "woman" and "danger"—"bright," "eyes," "bright," "beware"—these were his last broken words. He expired.

## CHAPTER II.

CONTRARY to the charitable expectations of his neighbours, the Baron de Launaye was buried with all the rites of the church ; the holy water was sprinkled on the corse, and the holy psalm sung over the coffin. A marble tablet marked his grave ; and there the moonlight slept as lovingly as ever it did on the sinless tomb of saint or martyr. The new Baron de Launaye lamented his uncle's death in a very singular manner, for he was his heir—and the young and the rich have not much time for regret. But Adolphe (he was remarkable from

a child for his memory) could not forget the kindness—and more than kindness—the love that his uncle had lavished on the little orphan, who noble and penniless at the age of five years, was left dependent on his bounty. However, sorrow cannot—indeed nothing in this world can—last for ever. Adolphe's grief became first only sad; next, melancholy; thirdly, calm; and, fourthly, settled down into a respectful remembrance, and a resolve to bear his uncle's last words in mind. Indeed, the muttered, vague and uncertain prediction quite haunted him.

“I am sure,” said he, in one of his many pondering moods, “I am sure my past experience confirms his words. I never got into a scrape but a woman was the cause. I had been in my outset at court, page to the Duke Forté d'Imhault, and, gone with him on that splendid embassy to Russia, had he not been displeased with my awkwardness in fastening the duchess's sandal.”

And he laughed as he said this: who in the world could guess, why the loss of his appointment should make the young baron laugh!

“ And then, who caused the duel between me and my Pylades, the Marquess de Lusignan, but that little jilt, Mdlle. Laure? However, my sword only grazed his arm: he wore an exquisite blue silk scarf, and we were better friends than ever. Oh, my uncle was right: women were born to be our torment.”

Still was this conviction impressed on his mind like a duty. Yet he could not help thinking that a few bright eyes would light up the old hall better than the huge brazen lamps which now served to make darkness visible. From thinking of the pleasantness of such an illumination, he began to think of its difficulties; and the difficulties of the project soon referred only to the place. One thought suggests another; and from thinking how many obstacles opposed the introduction of bright eyes and sweet smiles into the castle, he arrived at the conclusion, how easily they were to be obtained in other parts.

To say the truth, Paris became daily more familiar to his mind's eye; and, as he justly observed, staying at the dull old castle could do his uncle no good, and he was quite sure it did himself none. Now, in spite of philanthropy,



people are not so very fond of doing good gratuitously ; but, to be sure, such doctrines were not so much discussed in those days as they are in ours, though the practice was about the same. Sometimes he argued with himself, “ it is as well to be out of harm’s way ; ”—and the prediction and a cold shudder came together. But we are ready enough to dare the danger we do not know ; and though a few years of Parisian life had placed the nephew’s early on a level with the uncle’s late experience, touching the evil inherent in womanhood, nevertheless Adolphe supposed their bad qualities might be borne, at all events, better than the dulness of the Château de Launaye.

One day riding with his bridle on his horse’s neck, meditating whether his next ride should not be direct to Paris, a most uncommon spectacle in that unfrequented part of the country attracted his attention. This was a large lumbering coach, drawn by six horses, whose rich harness and housings bore the crest in gold—a lynx rampant. A very natural curiosity (by the by, all curiosity is natural enough), made him look in at the window. Was there ever a face half so beautiful as that of the girl who,

like himself, actuated by natural curiosity, looked out as he looked in? The black silk wimple was drawn over her head, but allowed a very red upper lip—an exquisite Grecian nose—and a most brilliant pair of eyes, to be seen. Our young cavalier sat as if he had been stupified. This is a very common effect of love at first. It goes off, however—so it did with Adolphe. His first act on recovering his senses was to gallop after the coach. He spurred on, and caught a second glance of the most radiant orbs that ever revolved in light. Large, soft, clear, and hazel, as those of a robin—they were bright and piercing as those of a falcon. Certainly De Launaye had never seen such eyes before, or at least none that ever took such an effect upon him.

He ate no dinner that day—walked by moonlight on the terrace—and the only thing which excited his attention was the seneschal's information, that the Marquise de Surville and her grand-daughter were come to stay for some months at their château.

“ They could not have done that in the late Baron's time—the Lord be good unto his soul !” And the old man forthwith commenced the history of some mysterious feud between the two

families, in which the deceased Baron Godfred had finally remained victor.

To this tedious narrative of ancient enmities, Adolphe was little inclined to listen. "A name and an estate are all our ancestors have a right to leave behind them. The saints preserve us from a legacy of their foes! Nothing could be worse,—except their friends."

The next morning the Baron arranged his suit of sables with unusual care, though it must be confessed he always took care enough.

"Pray Heaven the Marquise may be of my way of thinking respecting the quarrels of our forefathers! Some old ladies have terrible memories," were Adolphe's uppermost ideas as he rode over the draw-bridge at the Château de Surville, which had been promptly lowered to his summons;—their only neighbour, he had thought it but courteous to offer his personal respects. How much more cheerful did the saloon, with its hangings of sea-green silk, worked in gold, seem than his own hall, encumbered with the dusty trophies of his ancestors. To be sure, the young Baron was not at that moment a very fair judge; for the first thing

that met him on his entrance was a glance from the same pair of large bright eyes which had been haunting him for the last four and twenty hours.

The grandmother was as stern a looking old gentlewoman as ever had knights in armour for ancestors: still, her eyes, also bright, clear, and piercing, somewhat resembled those of her grand-daughter. On the rest of her face time had wrought "strange disfeatures." She was silent; and, after the first compliments, resumed the volume she had been reading on the Baron's appearance. It was a small book, bound in black velvet, with gold clasps, richly wrought. Adolphe took it for granted it was her Breviary; and inwardly concluded how respectable is that piety in an old woman which leaves the young one under her charge quite at liberty! The visitor's whole attention was soon devoted to the oriel window where sat the beautiful Clotilde de Surville. The Baron de Launaye piqued himself on fastidious taste in women and horses: he had had some experience in both. But Clotilde was faultless. There she leant, with the splendour of day full upon her face; it fell upon

her pure complexion like joy upon the heart, and the sunbeams glittered amid the thick ringlets till every curl was edged with gold. Her dress alone seemed capable of improvement ; but it is as well to leave something to the imagination, and there was ample food for Adolphe's, in picturing the change that would be wrought upon Clotilde by a Parisian milliner. "This comes," thought he, "of being brought up in an old German castle."

For very shame he at last rose ; when, with a grim change of countenance, meant for a smile, the marquise asked him to stay dinner. It is a remark not the less true for being old (though now-a-days opinions are all on the change), that love-making is a thing "to hear, and not to tell." We shall therefore leave the progress of the wooing, and come to the *dénouement*, which was the most proper possible, viz. marriage. Adolphe had been the most devoted of lovers, and Clotilde had given him a great deal of modest encouragement ; that is, her bright eyes had often wandered in search of his, and the moment they had found them, had dropped to the ground ; and whenever he entered the room,



a blush had come into her cheek, like the light into the pearl, filling it with the sweet hues of the rose. Never did love-affair proceed more prosperously. The old seneschal was the only person who grumbled. He begged leave to remind the young Baron, that it was not shewing proper respect to his ancestors not to take up their quarrels.

“But things are altered since the days when lances were attached to every legacy,” returned Adolphe.

“We are altering every thing now-a-days,” replied the old man; “I don’t see, however, that we are a bit the better off.”

“I, at all events, expect happiness,” replied his master, “in this change of my condition.”

“Ay, ay, so we all do before we are married: what we find after, there is no use in saying, for two reasons; first, you would not believe me; secondly, my wife might hear what I’m telling.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the young Baron, “the caution that marriage teaches! If it were only for the prudence I should acquire, it would be worth my while to marry.”



“Alas ! rashness never yet wanted a reason. My poor young master ! the old marquise and her dark-eyed grand-daughter have taken you in completely.”

“Taken me in !” ejaculated De Launaye, angrily ; “why, you old fool, were this a mere match of interest, I might thank my stars for such a lucky chance. Young, beautiful, high-born, and rich, Clotilde has but to appear at the court, and insure a much higher alliance than mine. What motive could they have ?”

“I do not know ; bnt when I don’t know people’s motives, I always suppose the worst,” replied the obstinate Dominique.

“Charitable,” laughed his master.

“And besides,” resumed the seneschal, “the old marquise plagued her husband into the grave ; and I dare say her grand-daughter means to do as much for you.”

“A novel reason, at all events, for taking a husband,” said De Launaye, “in order that you may plague him to death afterwards.”

## CHAPTER III.

WELL, the wedding-day arrived at last. De Launaye could have found some fault with his bride's costume, but for her face. There was a stiffness in the rigid white satin, and the ruff was at least two inches too high—indeed, he did not see any necessity for the ruff at all; they had been quite out, some years, at Paris. However, he said nothing, remembering that a former hint on the subject of dress had not been so successful as its merits deserved. He had insinuated, and that in a compliment too, a little lowering of the ruff before, as a mere act

of justice to the ivory throat, when Clotilde had rejoined, answering in a tone which before marriage was gentle reproof, (a few months after it would have sounded like reproach,) that she hoped "the Baron de Launaye would prefer propriety in his wife to display." The sense of the speech was forgotten in its sentiment; a very usual occurrence, by the by. However, the bride looked most beautiful; her clear, dark eyes swam in light—the liquid brilliancy of happiness—the brightness, but not the sadness, of tears. The ceremony was over, the priest and the marquise had given their blessings; the latter also added some excellent advice, which was not listened to with all the attention it deserved. The young couple went to their own castle in a new and huge coach, every one of whose six horses wore white and silver favours. Neighbours they had none, but a grand feast was given to the domestics; and Dominique, at his master's express orders, broached a pipe of Bourdeaux. "I can't make my vassals," said De Launaye, "as happy as myself; but I can

make them drunk, and that is something towards it."

The day darkened into night; and here, according to all regular precedents in romance, hero and heroine ought to be left to themselves; but there never yet was a rule without an exception. However, to infringe upon established custom as little as possible, we will enter into no details of how pretty the bride looked in her nightcap, but proceed forthwith to the baron's first sleep. He dreamt that the sun suddenly shone into his chamber. Dazzled by the glare, he awoke, and found the bright eyes of his bride gazing tenderly on his face. Weary as he was, still he remembered how uncourteous it would be to lie sleeping while she was so wide awake, and he forthwith roused himself as well as he could. Many persons say they can't sleep in a strange bed; perhaps this might be the case with his bride: and in new situations people should have all possible allowance made for them.

They rose early the following morning, the Baroness bright-eyed and blooming as usual, the baron pale and abattu. They wandered

through the castle: De Launaye told of his uncle's prediction.

"How careful I must be of you," said the bride, smiling. "I shall be quite jealous."

Night came, and again Adolphe was wakened from his first sleep by Clotilde's bright eyes. The third night arrived and human nature could bear no more.

"Good God, my dearest!" exclaimed the husband, "do you never sleep?"

"Sleep!" replied Clotilde, opening her large bright eyes, till they were even twice their usual size and brightness. "Sleep!—one of my noble race, sleep? I never slept in my life."

"She never sleeps!" ejaculated the Baron, sinking back on his pillow in horror and exhaustion.

It had been settled that the young couple should forthwith visit Paris—thither they at once proceeded. The beauty of the Baroness produced a most marvellous sensation, even in that city of sensations. Nothing was heard of for a week but the enchanting eyes of the Baroness de Launaye—a diamond necklace of a new

pattern was invented in her honour, and called *aux beaux yeux de Clotilde*.

“Those eyes,” said a prince of the blood, whose taste in such matters had been cultivated by some years of continual practice, “those eyes of Mde. de Launaye will rob many of our young gallants of their rest.”

“Very true,” briefly replied her husband.

Well, the Baroness shone like a meteor in every scene, while the Baron accompanied her, the spectre of his former self. Sallow, emaciated, every body said he was going into a consumption. Still, it was quite delightful to witness the devotedness of his wife—she could scarcely bear him a moment out of her sight.

At length they left Paris, accompanied by a gay party, for their château. But brilliant as were these guests, nothing distracted the Baroness’s attention from her husband, whose declining health became every hour more alarming. One day, however, the young Chevalier de Ronsarde—he, the conqueror of a thousand hearts—the besieger of a thousand more—whose conversation was that happy mixture of flattery and scandal which is the *beau idéal* of dialogue,



—engrossed Mde. de Launaye's attention; and her husband took the opportunity of slipping away unobserved. He hastened into a gloomy avenue—the cedars, black with time and age, met like night, overhead, and far and dark did their shadows fall on the still and deep lake beside. Worn, haggard, with a timorous and hurried, yet light step, the young Baron might have been taken for one of his own ancestors, permitted for a brief period to revisit his home on earth, but invested with the ghastliness and the gloom of the grave.

“She never sleeps!” exclaimed the miserable Adolphe—“she never sleeps! day and night her large bright eyes eat like fire into my heart.” He paused, and rested for support against the trunk of one of the old cedars. “Oh, my uncle, why did not your prophecy, when it warned me against danger, tell me distinctly in what the danger consisted? To have a wife who never sleeps! Dark and quiet lake, how I envy the stillness of your depths—the shadows which rest upon your waves!”

At this moment a breath of wind blew a branch aside—a sunbeam fell upon the Baron's

face; he took it for the eyes of his wife. Alas! his remedy lay temptingly before him—the still, the profound, the shadowy lake. De Launaye took one plunge—it was into eternity. Two days he was missing—the third his lifeless body floated on the heavy waters. The Baron de Launaye had committed suicide, and the bright-eyed Baroness was left a disconsolate widow.

Such is the tale recorded in the annals of the house of De Launaye. Some believe it entirely, justly observing, there is nothing too extraordinary to happen. Others (for there always will be people who affect to be wiser than their neighbours) say that the story is an ingenious allegory—and that the real secret of the Sleepless Lady was jealousy. Now, if a jealous wife can't drive a man out of his mind and into a lake, we do not know what can!

# DRAMATIC SCENES

FOUNDED ON

VICTOR HUGO'S CELEBRATED TRAGEDY OF HERNANI.

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BY LORD FRANCIS LEVESON GOWER.\*

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## SCENE.

*An open Court in Sarragossa. On the left, the walls of the house of SILVA, with a balcony; on the right, houses and streets. Here and there an occasional light in the windows.*

*Enter DON CARLOS, with DON SANCHEZ, DON MATTHIAS, and DON RICARDO, Courtiers, wrapped in long cloaks.*

DON CARLOS.

This is the place! My heart beats high. No light  
Yet in her lattice—all beside are bright.

\* Author of the translation of Goëthe's Faust, the Camp of Wallenstein, Poems, &c. &c.

All but the one in which I wish, in vain,  
To see her taper.\*

DON SANCHEZ.

Let us speak again  
Of that same traitor who deserved to die ;  
And yet your Highness suffered him to fly,  
And thereby cheat the hangman.

DON CARLOS.

As you say.

DON MATHIAS.

May be, the bandits' chief?

DON CARLOS.

Perhaps he may.  
The chief or not, no leader e'er was seen,  
No king, of prouder gait or lordlier mien.

DON SANCHEZ.

His name?

DON CARLOS.

Er—Fer—Some name which ends in i.

\* The previous part of the drama is chiefly occupied by the efforts of DON CARLOS, King of Spain, (afterwards Charles, fifth Emperor,) to obtain the love of DONNA SOL DE SILVA, whom her aged kinsman and guardian, the DUC DE SILVA, means to wed—but both rivalled by HERNANI, at present a bandit chief. The following scenes commence by a second attempt of the king to obtain, by imitating the signal of her lover, an interview with the lady.

DON SANCHEZ.

Perhaps Hernani?

DON CARLOS.

Yes.

DON SANCHEZ.

'Tis he!

DON MATHIAS.

'Tis he!

DON SANCHEZ.

And can your Highness what he said recal?

\* \* \* \*

DON CARLOS.

This is not the point which makes the strife;

I want the gallant's mistress—not his life.

Two windows dark. With what a lingering gait

Old Time can shuffle on to those who wait!

The moment we enjoy, his step is fleet.

*[The last light in the window is extinguished.]*

The last is out, and darkness rules the street.

*[Turning to DONNA SOL's window.]*

Accursed lattice, when will you be bright?

Shine out, fair star, and dissipate the night.

Has it struck twelve?

DON RICARDO.

'Twill soon.

DON CARLOS.

We must proceed

To work, or others may prevent the deed.

[*A light appears in DONNA SOL's window.*

Look, see, her shadow crossed the glass but now.  
Day never dawned upon the mountain's brow  
More gladly welcome. Let us make her hear  
The expected signal. Yet the fair may fear  
Our numbers. Gentlemen, retire aside,  
And watch the other. Thus shall we divide  
The lovers, Your's the robber, mine the bride.

DON RICARDO.

A fair arrangement!

DON CARLOS.

If he comes, one thrust,—  
Lunge out, and lay the hero in the dust.  
While he lies bleeding, I shall seize the fair,  
And carry off. Thus we dispose the pair.  
And yet the man is brave, so thrust with skill,  
Give him enough to quiet, not to kill.

[*The Lords disperse. When they are gone, DON CARLOS claps his hands three times. At the third time the window opens, and DONNA SOL appears at the balcony.*

DONNA SOL (*on the balcony*).

Hernani!

DON CARLOS.

I am lost, if I reply.

DONNA SOL.

I come.

[*She shuts the window, and presently comes out of the door, with a lamp in her hand. DON*



CARLOS *advances precipitately towards her;*

DONNA SOL *drops her lamp.*

Oh, Heavens! another's step! I fly.

DON CARLOS (*detaining her*).

Lady—

DONNA SOL.

That voice too!

DON CARLOS.

Can that voice appear

Less amorous than the one you wish to hear?

That voice is but a lover's and a king's.

DONNA SOL.

The king!

DON CARLOS.

Command him. At your feet he flings

His wealth, his crown, his power to smite and save:

The king commands, but Carlos is your slave.

DONNA SOL.

Hernani! Help.

DON CARLOS.

How justly she complains!

The hand is not a bandit's who detains!

DONNA SOL.

The bandit is yourself. That royal brow,

Does it not blush, as mine for you does now?

Are these the exploits which exalt your name?

At midnight, to invade a lady's fame?

Yield to the bandit, king; if men were graced,

Not as their birth, but as their virtues placed

Their separate rank—if honour drew the line—  
His were the sceptre, and the poniard thine.

DON CARLOS.

Madam—

DONNA SOL.

My father's lineage you forget ;  
He was a count.

DON CARLOS.

He was. And I can set  
On that fair brow a ducal coronet.

DONNA SOL.

Hence, Carlos. There is nought between us two—  
My aged father shed his blood for you,  
And, jealous of that blood, his daughter's pride  
The favorite scorns—aspires not to the bride.

DON CARLOS.

Come, bright attraction, then, my throne to share—  
My queen, my empress.

DONNA SOL.

No. I see the snare.  
Besides, to speak the truth, were you apart,  
Another is the sovereign of my heart.  
Hernani reigns there ; gladly I withdraw  
With him far from the world and the world's law,  
To share his destiny where'er he goes—  
Privation, hunger, thirst, pursuit of foes ;  
Preferring, while I cling to him alone,  
His love, his toils, his miseries, to a throne.

DON CARLOS.

I envy him.

DONNA SOL.

Him, whom your law through Spain  
Pursues?

DON CARLOS.

He loves, and is beloved again.  
I am alone. An angel shares his lot.  
You hate me then?

DONNA SOL.

My Lord, I love you not.

DON CARLOS (*seizing her with violence*).

What matters then?

DONNA SOL.

My Lord, my Lord, beware.

Reflect on what I am, and what you are.  
Think that contending beauty swells the throng  
Which through your palace chambers files along;  
Whate'er their rank, their title, or their name,  
When the king wooes, they find a mutual flame.  
What has my love, my exile got from Heaven?  
To you Castille and Arragon were given;  
With Murcia, Leon, and ten kingdoms more;  
Flanders' rich fields, the Indies' golden shore—  
An empire so expansive, on its breast,  
The sun, descending, never sinks to rest.  
Having all this, you fain would tear his bride,  
His one possession, from Hernani's side!

[*Throws herself on her knees before him.*]

DON CARLOS.

I'll hear no more. Forego to strive in vain,  
My Indies are all your's. I'll give my Spain,  
To win that hand! [Still keeping his hold of her.

DONNA SOL (*snatches the dagger from his belt*).

Of all you have to grant,  
This poniard is the only gift I want.  
Advance one step, I kill myself and you.  
Help!

DON CARLOS.

Silence—

DONNA SOL.

Help! the deed is short to do.

DON CARLOS.

You trifle with my weakness. No delay;  
I have three friends can force you to obey.

*Enter HERNANI suddenly.*

HERNANI (*appearing behind the King*).

One you forget; and one who will pursue  
Your steps much closer than those three can do.

[*The King turns round, and discovers HERNANI motionless behind him. DONNA SOL rushes into his arms.*

DONNA SOL.

Hernani, save me from him!

HERNANI.

Never fear.

DON CARLOS.

Monterey!—Are my friends too far to hear?

How could they let this chief of gipsies by?  
Sanchez! my friends!

HERNANI.

All at my mercy lie.

Expect no succour from their powerless swords;  
With sixty bandits I can match your lords,  
Each of the sixty worth the three and you.  
The quarrel now remains between us two.  
With violent hand to force a lady's will  
Was not a wise man's deed, King of Castille:—  
It was a coward's!

DON CARLOS.

Can I stoop so low—

A bandit's taunts to answer?

HERNANI.

Well I know

My rank, but insult joined to injury brings  
The subjects to a level with their kings.  
Know ye the man before whose haughty brow  
Your own must quail, whose grasp detains ye now?  
My father earned a traitor's doom from thine—  
I hate ye. You disgraced my name and line—  
I hate ye. In my love you cross my path—  
I hate ye. Hate ye with a rival's wrath;  
And yet this evening hate had found repose;—  
I sought but her, and would have fled my foes.  
Don Carlos, 'tis in vain to rail or fret,  
I hold ye in the very snare you set;

Powerless to stir, surrounded and at bay,  
What will you do?

DON CARLOS.

You question me,—away!

HERNANI.

None of ignoble rank shall raise the sword  
To snatch the task of vengeance from their lord;  
No blade but mine that royal blood shall spill.  
Defend yourself. [*Draws his sword.*]

DON CARLOS.

I am your Sovereign. Kill,  
Strike, but no duel.

HERNANI.

If I think aright,  
That blade was crossed with mine but yesternight.

DON CARLOS.

It was. Your name I knew not, and my own  
You guessed not. But at present both are known.  
I know the robber—you the king, to-day.

HERNANI.

Perhaps—

DON CARLOS.

No duel, murder me you may,

HERNANI.

With men like us, can names be sacred made?  
Defend yourself!

DON CARLOS.

Assassin, to your trade!

[HERNANI retreats, DON CARLOS eyeing him.]



You think then, bandits, that your cut-throat bands  
Can spread unchecked their rapine o'er my lands ;  
And, stained with murder, be allowed to start  
On a new course, the generous victors' part ;  
That we betrayed will deign, to save our lives,  
With our good swords to cross your butcher knives ?  
Your crimes pursue ye, fly them how ye will.  
Duels with you ! Assassin ! Strike, and kill !

[HERNANI *gloomily fingers the hilt of his sword  
for a moment ; then turning suddenly towards  
the King, shivers the blade against the  
pavement.*

HERNANI.

Depart. We meet upon a future day,  
On fairer terms.

DON CARLOS.

'Tis well, I must away.  
The judge, the fiscal, and the hangman too,  
Ere night return, may have their work to do ;  
Then shall you feel my vengeance for the past.

HERNANI.

Vengeance is lame, but she arrives at last.

DON CARLOS.

Oh, that such waist a bandit's arm should clasp !

HERNANI.

Remember, thou art in the bandit's grasp.  
The future Cæsar of a subject land  
Is small and weak, and trembling in this hand ;

And I can crush, if close that hand be prest,  
Thy eagle's egg in its imperial nest.

DON CARLOS.

Do so.

HERNANI.

Away. And for your safety's sake,  
From rovers of my band, this mantle take.

*[He throws his cloak over the King's shoulders.]*

No vengeance shall anticipate my own.

Away. I keep thee for myself alone.

*[Exit DON CARLOS.]*

DONNA SOL.

Now let us fly.

HERNANI.

The task befits thee well,  
To gather firmness as the tempests swell;  
Around me still, companion, wife, and friend,  
To cling in fond endurance to the end:  
'Tis worthy of that firm and trusting heart.  
But heaven above! for me to play that part!—  
To drag her on, without regret or fear!  
My time is past, the scaffold frowns too near.

DONNA SOL.

How say you?

HERNANI.

This great monarch, whom I braved,  
Will seek his life by whom his own was saved.  
He flies. Already at his palace gate  
He calls around the minions of his state—

His guards, his lords, his hangmen.

DONNA SOL.

Thou wilt die !

Dispatch ! dispatch ! Together let us fly.

HERNANI.

Together ? No ! that hour is past for flight.  
Dearest, when first thy beauty met my sight,  
I offered, for the love which bade me live,  
Wretch that I was, what misery had to give—  
My wood, my stream, my mountain. Bolder grown,  
By thy compassion to an outlaw shewn,  
The outlaw's meal beneath the forest shade,  
The outlaw's couch far in the greenwood glade,  
I offered. Though to both that couch be free,  
I keep the scaffold's couch reserved for me.

DONNA SOL.

And yet you promised !

HERNANI (*falling on his knees*).

Angel, in his hour,

Pursued by vengeance and oppressed by power—  
Even in this hour, when death prepares to close  
In shame and pain a destiny of woes—  
Yes, I, who from the world proscribed and cast,  
Have nursed one dark remembrance of the past,  
E'en from my birth in sorrow's garment clad,  
Have cause to smile—and reason to be glad.  
For you have loved the outlaw, and have shed  
Your whispered blessings on his forfeit head.

DONNA SOL.

Let me go with you.

HERNANI.

No. I will not rend  
From its fair stem the flower as I descend.  
Go. I have smelt its perfume. Go—resume  
All that this grasp has brushed away of bloom.  
Wed the old man,—believe that ne’er we met ;  
I seek my shade—be happy, and forget !

DONNA SOL.

No, I go with you. What can e’er atone  
For your desertion ?

HERNANI.

Let me fly alone.

DONNA SOL (*despairingly* ; HERNANI *on the threshold*).  
You fly me ? Was it then for this I cast  
All at your feet, to be repulsed at last ?  
Can he, for whom I braved my fate, deny  
All that remains,—the bliss with him to die ?

HERNANI.

Banished—proscribed—contagious.

DONNA SOL.

Rather say  
Ungrateful—thankless !

HERNANI.

No, not that. I stay—  
You wish it. Let me seek these arms again ;  
And till these arms release me, I remain.

Forget our fortune and our foes to-night ;  
 Sit on this stone above me, bend thy sight  
 On mine, and flood me with its dazzling light.  
 Speak, and enchant me. Dearest, is't not sweet  
 To love, and see the loved one at thy feet ;  
 Thus to be two, where not a third is nigh ;  
 To the night air, while others sleep, to sigh ?  
 Here, on thy breast, let my repose be found,  
 My love, my beauty !

[*The sound of the distant tocsin is heard.*

DONNA SOL (*rising*).

'Tis the tocsin's sound !

Hear'st thou the tocsin ?

HERNANI.

'Tis our marriage bell ;

And these are notes of bridal joy, which swell  
 On the night breeze.

DONNA SOL.

Rise ! fly ! the town is bright,

Like sudden day.

HERNANI.

The marriage torches' light.

Come to these arms !

*Enter a MOUNTAINEER, sword in hand.*

MOUNTAINEER.

My Lord ! my Lord ! the foe  
 Musters his force ; whole squadrons make a show  
 Already in the place.

HERNANI (*rising*).

What cause to fear?

*Shouts without.*

Death to the chief!

HERNANI.

Thy sword! the chief is here.

(*To DONNA SOL.*)

Adieu, then!

DONNA SOL.

By the open wicket fly.

Adieu! Remember, if you fall, I die,

HERNANI.

One kiss—

DONNA SOL.

Be quick, then, ere your time be past.

HERNANI (*kissing her forehead*).

Alas! it is my first.

DONNA SOL.

Perhaps your last.

*Exit* HERNANI. DONNA SOL *falls upon a bench.*

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SCENE.

*The Castle of Silva, in Arragon. A gallery of portraits of the Silva family; armour hung up between each portrait.*

DONNA SOL, *dressed in white, standing by a table.*

DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA *seated in an arm-chair.*

DON RUY.

To-day my niece that name with one supplies,  
Which speaks of loftier rank and dearer ties.

But am I pardoned?

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Oh ! that this desire

Which fills the heart of frozen age with fire ;  
This love, which re-invigorates the mind,  
Should leave the body cold and dull behind.  
When, as I muse my garden glades along,  
Some shepherd youth disturbs me with his song,  
Whose sound from the green field can reach my bowers,  
Thus I apostrophize my crumbling towers,  
My ducal dungeon keep, my loop-holed wall,  
My woods, my harvests—I would give ye all;

Would give the fields my swarm of vassals tills—  
Would give my flocks upon a thousand hills—  
Would give the ancestors, who watch intent,  
Chiding my slowness, for a son's descent  
Among them, and expect him even now—  
For that same peasant's hut and youthful brow.  
For round that brow, unscored by age's lines,  
The dark locks cluster, and beneath it shines  
An eye like thine ; and thou may'st well behold,  
And say that man is young, and this is old.  
Thus to myself I speak, and speak it true :  
All, to be young, and fair, and gay as you,  
All would I give. I dream! *I* young and gay,  
Who to the tomb am doomed to lead the way!

DONNA SOL.

Who knows?

DON RUY.

Ye trust not that the youthful tribe  
Can feel the constant love their words describe.  
Let but a lady listen and believe,  
They laugh to see her die, or live to grieve.  
These birds of amorous note and gaudy wing  
Can moult their passions like their plumes in spring :  
The old, whose notes are tuneless, hues less bright,  
Are steadier to their nests and in their flight.  
Time on our furrowed brow the graver's part  
May play—he writes no wrinkles on the heart.

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With all a bridegroom's love, a father's pride,  
I love thee, and an hundred ways beside :—  
I love thee as we love the flowers—the skies—  
Earth's breathing perfumes, heaven's enchanting dyes ;  
And when they step, so graceful yet so free,  
The aspect of that stainless brow, I see,  
That heaven seems opening as I gaze on thee.

DONNA SOL.

Alas !

DON RUY.

And mark ; the reasoning world approves,  
When towards an honoured grave an old man moves,  
If woman deign his useless age to tend,  
And smooth his progress to his journey's end.—  
It is an angel's task, and thou shalt be  
That angel, in a woman's form, to me.

DONNA SOL.

You may survive, and I the example give  
To die. Youth has no privilege to live.

DON RUY.

Truce to such dark discussions ! I must chide  
My child. This day is one of joy and pride ;  
E'en to the altar now, this hour invites,  
And you not ready for the sacred rites.  
I count the tedious moments : quick, prepare  
Your marriage toilet.

DONNA SOL.

There is time to spare.

*Enter PAGE.*

DON RUY.

Not so—(*to the PAGE*) What now?

PAGE.

A stranger at your door  
Is waiting, your roof's shelter to implore:—  
A pilgrim.

DON RUY.

Give him shelter, food, and rest;  
Good fortune ever enters with a guest.  
Brings he no news? What say they of the band  
Of lawless robbers, who infest the land  
With their rebellious crew?

PAGE.

Their end is near,  
And vengeance has cut short their chief's career—  
Hernani's.

DONNA SOL (*aside*).

Heavens!

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*Same Scene—DON RUY seated alone.*

*Enter HERNANI, disguised as a Pilgrim.*

HERNANI.

To all beneath this roof who rest,  
Welfare and peace!

DON RUY.

The same attend my guest.  
A pilgrim?

HERNANI.

Yes.

DON RUY.

Then I presume your way  
Led by Armillas?

HERNANI.

Rumour of a fray  
Deterred me.

DON RUY.

With the routed robber's band?

HERNANI.

I know not.

DON RUY.

He who holds their chief command,  
Know'st thou his fate? Hernani's?

HERNANI.

Who is he?

DON RUY.

Thou know'st him not? For others, then, shall be  
The thousand crowns his forfeit head shall bring  
This long-unpunished rebel to his king.  
And if towards Madrid your steps you bend,  
You yet may see the hangman make his end.

HERNANI.

I do not go there.

DON RUY.

He is doomed to die.  
He takes his head who chooses.

HERNANI (*aside*).

Let him try.

DON RUY.

Where leads thy path ?

HERNANI.

My Lord, it leads me now

To Sarragossa's town.

DON RUY.

Perhaps a vow.

And to what saint ? Our Lady ?

HERNANI.

To the last,—

Our Lady of the Pillar.

DON RUY.

He is past

All hope of good who falters, or who faints,  
Ere he redeems his pledges to the saints.  
Thy vow accomplished, hast thou no desire  
But just to see the pillar, and retire ?

HERNANI.

Yes ; I would see the altar torches shine  
Around our Lady's image in her shrine ;  
The golden lamps which light, with fitful flame,  
The solemn vault.

DON RUY.

'Tis well, my friend. Your name ?

Ruy de Silva's mine. Oh, you may spare  
The pains to hide what you would not declare ;



None in De Silva's house shall claim the right  
To drag a stranger's secret into light.  
You ask a refuge?

HERNANI.

Yes.

DON RUY.

No thanks from you:

To him who trusts my honour, mine are due.  
Rest, and be welcome; I would do the same  
For Satan, if God sent him here by name.

*Enter DONNA SOL, in bridal array, with Pages, Valets,  
and Ladies: before her is borne, on a cushion, a  
casket of diamonds, which is then deposited on the  
table. HERNANI, thunderstruck, gazes on DONNA  
SOL.*

DON RUY.

Come, kneel to my Madonna; for to-day  
She sheds good fortune round on all who pray.  
No ring, my careless bride? No marriage crown?

HERNANI (*in a voice of thunder*).

A crown! Who wants a thousand crowns paid down?

[*He tears off his Pilgrim's gown, and appears  
in his original costume.*

I am Hernani!

DONNA SOL.

Heavens! Alive?

HERNANI.

'Tis true!

I am the man your blood-hounds all pursue;

I own no common title, but am proud  
To speak Hernani's dreaded name aloud—  
The convict! Take this forfeit head; 'twill pay  
More than your marriage feast shall cost to-day.  
Bind me!—But no, 'twere useless; for a chain  
Is round me, which I cannot break.

DON RUY.

'Tis plain

My guest is mad.

HERNANI.

A price is on his head.

DONNA SOL.

Oh, heed him not.

HERNANI.

What I have said, is said.

DON RUY.

A thousand crowns! My friend, the sum is great;  
My people may be tempted.

HERNANI.

Why debate?

Yield me.

DON RUY.

Be silent.

DONNA SOL (*aside to HERNANI*).

For my sake, restrain

This madness.

HERNANI.

I must join the bridal train.

A bride, Lord Duke, waits me, as well as you—  
Not quite so fair as yours, but quite as true—  
Death ! Do none stir ?

DONNA SOL.

Hernani ! for my sake——

HERNANI.

A thousand crowns, my masters ! Come and take.  
A thousand crowns ! Come, gain it while you can :  
Remember, riches make the slave a man.  
You shrink !

DON RUY.

Some cause for shrinking may be shewn,  
For he who touched your head would risk his own.  
Wert thou Hernani—wert thou, in his stead,  
The incarnate fiend—if empires for thy head  
Were offered, in the place of paltry gold—  
If for such price as this thy life were sold,  
Here thou wert safe, as in the court of heaven,  
By which the charge to guard thee has been given ;  
And let me perish, if the hand of power  
Shall harm one hair of yours. Within an hour,  
My niece we marry. To your room !—I go  
To close my castle gates against a foe. [Exit.

*DONNA SOL goes towards the door, as if to follow her Attendants ; then, when the DUKE has disappeared, returns anxiously to HERNANI.*

HERNANI.

Accept my compliments on your array ;  
Your toilet charms me more than I can say—  
No foil, no tinsel here—all fair and brave.

[*Examining the casket.*]

He dare not play you false, so near his grave.  
Nought missing? Necklace—ear-rings—every thing—  
The ducal coronet—the golden ring !  
How like his love—so faithful, deep, and true—  
This casket seems !

DONNA SOL (*taking a dagger from the casket*).

You have not searched it through.

Behold this dagger, which I chose alone  
Of all the gifts—among the rest, a throne—  
Which the King offered, which for you I spurned—  
You, my accuser !

HERNANI (*at her feet*).

Reason has returned.

Oh, let me wipe these bitter tears away—  
Tears, which my folly caused, my blood shall pay.

DONNA SOL.

Hernani ! still I love you ; and forgive,  
Because I love.

HERNANI.

That pardon bids me live.  
But e'en thy love and thy forgiveness bring  
No balm to soothe my self-reproaches' sting.

Oh, I could watch thee, were it but to trace  
The spot thy footstep pressed, and kiss the place.

DONNA SOL.

To think the memory of my love so frail,  
That force could bend, or misery make me quail,  
And narrow this free bosom to a cell,  
Where any image but thine own might dwell.

HERNANI.

Oh, I blasphemed and raved ! Alas ! were I  
The object of a madman's blasphemy,  
I should discard the wretch, whose passion takes  
Its life and spirit from the wounds it makes.

DONNA SOL.

Oh, you have ceased to love !

HERNANI.

My soul, my heart,  
Are thine. Then blame me not that I depart.  
'Tis for thy sake alone I wish to fly.

DONNA SOL.

I shall not blame thee. I shall only die.

HERNANI.

Die ! and for me !

DONNA SOL.

For whom, if not for you ?

HERNANI.

Again you weep—and who shall make *me* rue,

Who cause those tears? You will forgive again,  
And who my depth of anguish can explain,  
To see the tear-drop dim that eye, whose blaze  
Is all on which I love, and live to gaze?  
Oh! had I worlds, these worlds were all for you.

DONNA SOL.

You are my master, generous, brave, and true.

HERNANI.

Could we but love too much, how could I bless  
My fate to perish of that love's excess!

DONNA SOL.

Thine, and for ever! Heaven, attest my vow!

HERNANI.

Oh! that thy poniard could but strike me now!

DONNA SOL.

Heaven will be angry with these words of ill.

HERNANI.

Let it unite, if it refuse to kill.

Come to these arms, I yield me to its will.

*Enter DON RUY GOMEZ.*

DON RUY.

And this is hospitality's reward?

And this the guest whose life I went to guard?

Foolish old man! for this array thy power—

Up drawbridge, bolt the portal, man the tower!—

Select an harness fit for age to wear,

Such as the strength of sixty years can bear—



Prepare to fight, to die, to starve, to burn—  
 Brave all the worst—to meet with this return !  
 Yes, I have walked for sixty years of time,  
 No dull observer in a world of crime—  
 Have seen men live accursed, and die unblest—  
 Sin unrestrained, and perish unconfessed—  
 Sforza and Borgia both, the world's disgrace,  
 Have seen, and Luther, who now holds their place—  
 But never saw the criminal who dared  
 Insult the roof whose very rights he shared ;—  
 This is not of my time. We live to view  
 Crimes which no former ages ever knew ;  
 Moors and Castillians, sprung this man from you ?

*[Appealing to the portraits.]*

Lords of De Silva, fathers of my race,  
 Listen, and hear me ; if my rage embrace  
 Rash counsels,—if with vice's name I brand  
 The virtue of the open heart and hand,  
 Forgive me.

HERNANI.

If to man was ever given  
 To meet with noble brow the glance of heaven ;  
 If ever heart betrayed the noble line  
 From which it sprung, that brow and heart are thine.  
 I stand a culprit here, with nought to say  
 Or do but face my judgment as I may.  
 I shared the shelter of your roof—I tried  
 To spoil your treasure—to seduce your bride.

I have my blood to offer.—When 'tis shed,  
Wipe but your blade, and think not of the dead.

DONNA SOL.

De Silva, hold.—The crime was mine alone.

HERNANI.

Wait, lady, wait. This hour I claim my own.  
I would employ the moments which remain—  
My last—not to extenuate, but to explain :  
Believe a dying culprit. Be secure,  
De Silva ; I am guilty, she is pure.

DONNA SOL.

Mine was the crime ; I love him.—Yes, 'twas I—  
I love him.

DON RUY (*furious*).

Woman, you shall see him die.

[*Trumpets without.*

*Enter* PAGE.

DON RUY.

What noise was that ?

PAGE.

A herald, Sir, demands  
Admission for King Carlos and his bands  
Within your gates.

DON RUY.

Obeys the king's commands.

[*Exit* PAGE.]

DONNA SOL.

He's lost !

[DON RUY goes to one of the portraits (his own), and, pressing a secret spring, a concealed door is discovered in the wall.

DON RUY.

You enter here.

HERNANI.

I hold my life

At your disposal, and, to close our strife,

Strike when you will.

[He enters the secret door. DON RUY presses the spring, and the portrait resumes its natural position.

DONNA SOL.

Oh, spare that life to-day !

PAGE entering.

My Lord, the King.

*Enter DON CARLOS, followed by numerous armed Men ; DONNA SOL lowers her veil.*

DON CARLOS.

How comes it, cousin, pray,  
That when your sovereign seeks De Silva's hall,  
Your bolts are drawn, your archers on the wall,  
To hear my herald waste his breath beneath ?  
I thought your sword was rusting in its sheath,

And find it ready from that sheath to start—  
'Tis somewhat late to play this youthful part.—  
Wear I the turban?—Answer, do I spring  
From Moorish race?—am I a Christian King,  
Carlos? or do I bear a Pagan name,  
Mahom Boabdil, that I bear this shame?

DON RUY.

My Lord—

DON CARLOS (*to his Attendants*).

Seize all the castle gates, and take  
The keys. Is this the fashion you would wake  
The ghost of dead rebellions, and renew  
Old treasons? Know, the King is waking too,  
Ready rebellion's progress to arrest,  
And crush its leaders in their mountain nest.

DON RUY.

None of De Silva's line was ever found  
A traitor.

DON CARLOS.

Speak me out! or to the ground  
Each stone of your eleven towers I raze.  
There lives one spark of old rebellion's blaze—  
The bandit chief survives! Who hides him now?  
Who guards the rebel? Rebel duke, 'tis thou!

DON RUY.

It is.

DON CARLOS.

'Tis well. His head or thine must fall—  
Or his, or thine, shall grace thy castle wall.  
Hear'st thou, my cousin?

DON RUY.

You shall be content,  
My Lord, if that be all.

DON CARLOS.

Oh, you repent ;  
Produce the rebel.

DON RUY (*leads the King to the most ancient of  
the portraits.*)

In that reverend face  
Behold the father of De Silva's race,  
Silvius ; in Rome he filled the Consul's place.  
Three times. (Your patience for such honoured names.)  
This second, was grand master of St. James  
And Calatrava ; his strong limbs sustained  
Armour which ours would sink beneath. He gained  
Thirty pitched fields, and took, as legends tell,  
Three hundred standards from the Infidel ;  
And from the Moorish king Motril, in war  
Won Antiquera, Suez, and Nijar,  
And then died poor.

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This reverend brow,

This was my sire's—the greatest, though the last :  
The Moors his friend had taken, and made fast—

Alvar Giron. What did my father then?  
 He went to seek him with six hundred men ;—  
 He cut in stone an image of Alvar,  
 Cunningly carved, and dragged it to the war ;  
 He vowed a vow, to yield no inch of ground  
 Until that image of itself turned round ;  
 He reached Alvar—he saved him—and his line  
 Was old De Silva's, and his name was mine—  
 Ruy Gomez.

DON CARLOS.

Drag me from his lurking-place  
 The Traitor !

DON RUY (*leads the King to the portrait behind  
 which HERNANI is concealed*).

Sir, Your Highness does me grace ;  
 This, the last portrait, bears my form and name,  
 And you would write this motto on its frame :—  
 “ This last, sprung from the noblest and the best,  
 “ Betrayed his plighted faith, and sold his guest.”

DON CARLOS (*retiring, somewhat disconcerted*).  
 I shall abate your house. Strong-holds like these  
 I hate.

DON RUY.

Your Highness can afford to please  
 Your fancy.

DON CARLOS.

I shall raze its towers, and sow  
 Their place with flax-seed.



DON RUY.

Better that should grow,  
And mark and mock the desolated spot,  
Than falsehood's stain should be De Silva's lot ;  
Is it not true, sirs ?—I appeal to you.

*[appealing to the portraits.]*

DON CARLOS.

His head is mine ; you promised—

DON RUY.

One of two—

Take this.

DON CARLOS.

You wear my long indulgence out !  
Produce the wretch you shelter.

DON RUY.

Can you doubt

My word ?

DON CARLOS *(to his men)*.

Explore each tower, cave, and cell.

DON RUY.

My Lord, my dungeon keeps a secret well,  
Like me ; and it may pass your power to bring  
To light our mysteries.

DON CARLOS.

I am your King.

DON RUY.

Until these towers are levelled to the plain,

Just as you threatened, and their master slain,  
Your Highness can learn nothing.

DON CARLOS.

All is vain ;  
Menace and prayer alike. Give me his head,  
The bandit, or your castle.

DON RUY.

I have said.

DON CARLOS.

Two heads instead of one then. 'Tis my will.  
Arrest the duke there !

DONNA SOL (*tearing off her veil, rushes between  
the King, the Duke, and Guards*).

Carlos of Castille !

You are a wicked king !

DON CARLOS.

This lady here !

DONNA SOL.

You bear no Spanish heart.

DON CARLOS.

You are severe  
Upon your sovereign. - 'Tis to you I owe  
This rage—from you the faults you censure flow ;  
Where'er your power extends, you rule our fate—  
You make a demon of the man you hate ;  
Had'st thou been kind, enchantress, I were great,  
The tiger now, whose angry roar can thrill  
Your ear, had been the lion of Castille.

Yet, I obey—(*To the Duke*). My cousin, I respect  
Your scruples, and permit you to protect  
Your castle's inmate. Set yourself at rest—  
Betray your sovereign, and defend your guest.  
I take one hostage only from your hall—  
Your niece.

DON RUY.

One only?

DONNA SOL.

Me!

DON RUY.

And this is all!

The generous victor! Boon without compare!  
The heart to torture and the head to spare!  
Great Grace!

DON CARLOS.

The traitor, or the lady? Choose—  
One I must have.

DON RUY.

But one you can. Then use  
Your pleasure.

[*The King approaches DONNA SOL; she takes  
refuge with DON RUY.*

DONNA SOL.

Save me!—Wretched, it must be—  
Me or my uncle. Let it fall on me.  
I follow, Sir.

DON CARLOS.

I triumph in the thought ;  
This fair one to her senses shall be brought.

[DONNA SOL goes to the casket, and taking from  
it the dagger, hides it in her girdle.

What hides she there ?

DONNA SOL.

A jewel which I prize.

DON CARLOS.

Shew it.

DONNA SOL.

Another time, Sir.

[DONNA SOL gives her hand to DON CARLOS,  
and prepares to follow him ; DON RUY, having  
stood some moments overwhelmed in grief,  
turns round suddenly.

DON RUY.

Earth and skies !

Since honour nor compassion can prevail—  
Ye trophied chambers, walls hung round with mail—  
Ye banners, seamed with scars of conflict, fall,  
And crush the oppressor in my father's hall !  
Leave me my child, my last, my only good !

DON CARLOS.

My prisoner, then !

DON RUY.

Respect De Silva's blood.

*[Going towards the concealed door, he turns again to the portraits.]*

Hide me from these ! They stop me on my path !

*[Again he advances towards the secret door, then turning to the King.]*

You will ?

DON CARLOS.

Yes.

*[The Duke raises his trembling hand to the secret spring, then falls at the King's feet.]*

DON RUY.

Let my life assuage your wrath.

DON CARLOS.

Your niece shall.

DON RUY *(rising)*.

Take her ; let my honour live

Stainless.

DON CARLOS.

Farewell.

DON RUY.

God keep you, and forgive !

*[Exit the King, with DONNA SOL and Attendants. As soon as they are gone, DON RUY seizes two swords, measures them, and lays them on the table ; then he goes to the portrait, presses the secret spring, and the door opens.]*

Come forth !

*Enter HERNANI.*

Don Carlos is beyond my walls,  
Vengeance remains, and reparation calls.  
Choose—and choose quickly ! Can it be with fright  
Your young hand shakes ?

HERNANI.

Old man, we may not fight.

DON RUY.

Why ! are you frightened ? Is your rank and grade  
Too humble ? For a wrong received, my blade  
Shall cross a slave's.

HERNANI.

Old man——

DON RUY.

You cannot fly,  
Young man ; prepare to kill me, or to die.

HERNANI.

Granted—to die ! My life I owe to you ;  
Spite of myself, you saved it—take your due.

DON RUY.

Blame but yourself alone, then. Time runs fast—  
Pronounce your prayer.

HERNANI.

To you I make my last.

DON RUY.

Make it to Heaven.



HERNANI.

To thee, to thee, old man.

Kill by what mode you please—strike how you can—  
But do not, while the blow impends, deny  
The last sole boon—to see her, ere I die.

DON RUY.

To see her !

HERNANI.

Let me hear her voice's tone ;  
At least, that voice but once, and once alone.  
You shall be there ; I will not speak, nor move :  
Then strike me as I listen.

DON RUY.

Saints above !  
Is that retreat so deep, that he has heard  
Nothing of what was spoken ?

HERNANI.

Not a word.

DON RUY.

To save your life, I was compelled to bring  
An hostage, in my niece, to——

HERNANI.

Whom ?

DON RUY.

The King.

HERNANI.

The King ! He loves her ! and obtains by force  
All she refused his prayer.

DON RUY.

My horse! my horse!  
Gather my vassals for pursuit!

HERNANI.

Attend.

Slow vengeance is the surest to its end.  
I am your property; but you may still  
Employ the man you have a right to kill—  
To grant my share of vengeance were but just.  
For this one boon I bow me to the dust,  
And kiss your feet. When he whom both pursue  
Has died for us, then I will die for you.

DON RUY.

Will you submit, as now, your blood to shed?

HERNANI.

I swear it.

DON RUY.

By what oath?

HERNANI.

My father's head.

DON RUY.

Will you remember this some future day?

HERNANI.

Listen. Accept this horn. Betide what may,  
Whene'er it please you to exert your power,  
Whate'er the time or place, to name my hour—  
Come, and be welcome. Sound this horn, and then  
'Tis done.

DON RUY.

Your hand. (*Addressing the portraits.*) Bear witness, ancient men !  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE.

*The Tomb of CHARLEMAGNE, in  
Aix-la-Chapelle.*

*Night.*

DON CARLOS *and* DON RICARDO, *a Courtier (wrapped  
in cloaks).*

DON RICARDO (*with a lantern in his hand*).  
This is the place.

DON CARLOS.

'Tis here the traitor band  
Meet, to be crushed at once beneath this hand.  
My friend, the Elector, lends the appropriate stage  
For treason's foul designs and faction's rage ;  
Murder breathes freely in a catacomb,  
And loves to whet her dagger on a tomb.  
These gallants, still so ready with their knives,  
Are playing somewhat high—they stake their lives.  
Faith ! they do well, in these sepulchral caves  
To hatch their crimes ;—the journey to their graves

Will be the shorter. Do these caves extend  
Far under ground ?

DON RICARDO.

My Lord, before they end  
They reach the fort.

DON CARLOS.

Too distant to explore.  
Read me the list of traitors' names once more.

\* \* \* Am I sure ?

The College meets, but is their choice secure ?  
And when it fixes the imperial crown,  
What signal speaks the election to the town ?

DON RICARDO.

The cannon's thunder : one for Saxony—  
Two for the Frenchman—for your Highness, three.

DON CARLOS.

This is the hour the traitors meet. Away !—  
Give me the key.—Three cannon shots, you say ?

[DON RICARDO *bows assent, and retires.*

DON CARLOS *alone.*

Great Charlemagne's shade, the mighty and the just !  
I sue for pardon to thy hallowed dust,  
That human aims and passion's voice presume  
To pierce the sacred silence of thy tomb.  
Yet must I force it. (*He places the key in the door of  
the tomb.*) Heavens ! if he should rise,  
And glare upon me with his lifeless eyes !—

If this sepulchral cell disclose the dead  
Erect, and walking with a measured tread !  
If I should enter there—to reappear  
The strong limb palsied, dark locks blanched with  
fear !  
I brave it ! (*Noise of footsteps.*) Whence that noise ?  
Who dare invade—  
Who but myself, the rest of such a shade ?  
*[The noise approaches.*  
I had forgot—my murderers seek their prey.

*[He enters the tomb, and closes the door after him.  
Enter several of the Conspirators, among which are the  
Duke of Gotha and Don Ruy de Silva, all muffled in  
long cloaks, and slouched hats ; each takes the hand  
of his neighbour.*

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Who's there ?

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

A friend.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

The saints direct our way.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

'Tis well : we all are gathered. But the night  
Is round and o'er us—darkness waits the light.

*[The Conspirators seat themselves in a semicircle  
on the tombs ; they then light their torches.*



DUKE OF GOTHA.

Carlos of Spain, my friends, seeks to assume  
The imperial purple.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Carlos seeks his tomb.

DUKE OF GOTHA (*throws down his torch, and  
stamps upon it.*)

Quenched be his light, as now I quench this fire;  
And as this torch expires, let him expire!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

How many daggers shall the sentence need?

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

One arm, one blade, one blow, to do the deed.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

Who strikes it?

ALL.

I!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

All will! one only may.

Let us decide the choice by lot, and pray.

[*The Conspirators write their names on their  
tablets, and having rolled up the paper, throw  
it into an urn.*]

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

May the elect have faith in God on high;  
Strike like a Gentile—like an Hebrew die!  
Let him be fit to strike with fire and steel,  
Sing at the stake, and laugh upon the wheel—

Resigned alike to perish and to kill.

[*Draws a name from the urn.*

ALL.

What name ?

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Hernani !

HERNANI (*appearing from the crowd*).

Fortune aids my will !

Aim of my soul, and object of my vow,

Pursued and won, Revenge ! I hold thee now.

DON RUY (*aside to HERNANI*).

Grant me this office.

HERNANI.

No, upon my life,

Fortune and I have been too long at strife ;

'Tis the first time I learn her smiles to know.

DON RUY.

My lands, my fortune, for this single blow !

HERNANI.

I will not.

DUKE OF GOTH.

Aged man ! your arm might fail.

DON RUY.

Away ! the soul and spirit may prevail

Where the flesh falters ; judge not by the sheath,

Rusted and worn, the blade which lies beneath.

(*To HERNANI.*)

Remember, thou art mine, whose wish you scorn ;

Grant me but this, and I return this horn.

HERNANI.

My life, old man ! and what have I to prize  
In life? My father's blood for vengeance cries.  
No; I prefer revenge! Wouldst thou restore  
Her?

DON RUY.

Never : take this horn.

HERNANI.

No more, no more;  
My chase is done. Lord Duke, leave me my prey.

DON RUY.

Cursed be the man who bears the prize away!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Brother! this very evening it were well—

HERNANI.

Fear not. I know to do the work of hell  
Without a tutor, Sir.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Let treason fall

Upon the traitor. Counts and Barons, all !  
If this man perish ere he do the deed,  
We swear, in turn, to die or to succeed?

ALL.

We swear !

DUKE OF GOTH.

On what?

DON RUY (*holds up the hilt of his sword*).

The cross I hold on high.

ALL.

Unshrived and unrepenting let him die!

*[The distant sound of cannon-shot is heard: all remain silent. The door of the tomb opens, and DON CARLOS appears upon the threshold—a second shot is heard—and then a third.]*

DON CARLOS.

Back, gentlemen! an Emperor's tomb is near!

Your words have reached a living Emperor's ear!

*[The Conspirators extinguish their torches.]*

Silence and night? How soon my voice can drive

The swarm to the recesses of its hive!

Strike, if you dare! an Emperor's blood shall flow:

Forward! an Emperor's breast invites the blow.

But now your torches gleamed with bloody light;

My breath has quenched the murderous glare in night.

Yet let your failing eyes in fear confess,

That I can kindle more than I suppress.

*[He strikes the iron door with a key; on which signal, the dark subterranean passages are immediately filled with Soldiers, bearing torches and arms.]*

Mount now, my falcons; mount, and strike your prey;

Light up the cave, and drag the tribe to day;

Surround, and seize for treason to the state.

HERNANI.

'Tis Charles the fifth. I thought 'twas Charles the Great!

Alone, he looked it: circled with that ring  
Of guards, he stands an ordinary king.

[*The Conspirators are surrounded, and disarmed.*

*Enter DONNA SOL.*

DONNA SOL.

The Emperor, Soldiers! And are we, too, me—  
Hernani?

HERNANI.

Well.

DON RUY.

I am not noticed yet.

[DONNA SOL approaches HERNANI; he retires.

HERNANI.

Madam?

DONNA SOL (*shewing the dagger*).

I have it still!

HERNANI.

My love, my bride!

DON CARLOS.

Be silent all the rest, and stand aside.

Gotha the Saxon, Lara of Castille,

What came ye here to practise? good or ill?

HERNANI (*stepping forward*).

A simple errand. To achieve your fall;

To write Belshazzar's sentence on the wall;

To give to Cæsar what was Cæsar's due.

DON CARLOS.

You traitor, Silva.

DON RUY.

Which, Sir, of us two

Is traitor ?

HERNANI.

Well his proud ambition thrives ;  
He has his wish—the empire and our lives.  
He wears the purple in good time. Its train  
Will drink the blood-drop in without a stain.

DON CARLOS.

Cousin De Silva, facts have been revealed  
Which dim the ancient blazon on your shield.  
Bethink thee, treason is a fearful thing.

DON RUY.

Crime follows crime. From Rodericks, Julians spring.

DON CARLOS.

Seize all the nobles ! I would strike the crest.

*[The nobles step out from the cave, and are immediately surrounded.]*

DONNA SOL.

He's safe.

HERNANI (*coming forward*).

I claim my rank among the rest.  
And since precedence to the scaffold leads,  
The serf eludes the axe, the noble bleeds ;  
And since the outlaw's head is now too low  
To meet the blade, I lift it to the blow.  
Duke of Segovia and Cordova too ;  
The God who gives the crown, and gave it you,



Made me, Count Albatera and De Gor,  
 Marquis Monroy, and many a title more,  
 Grand master of Avis; men call me John  
 The exile, the proscribed of Arragon.  
 Thy sire pronounced on mine the traitor's doom,  
 And wrapt the annals of our race in gloom;  
 You have the scaffold, and the poniard we;  
 Heaven made me duke, but exile set me free,  
 To roam the mountains with a bandit train;  
 Since I have sharpened there my blade in vain,  
 And bathed its temper in the mountain spring,  
 Thus I assume my rank. *[Puts on his hat.*

Our heads, oh King!  
 E'en while about to fall, may claim their right,  
 Thus to be covered in their sovereign's sight.  
 Grandees of Spain! whate'er your name and race,  
 'Tis John of Arragon who claims his place;  
 And if your scaffolds have not room for all,  
 Enlarge them, let our heads have space to fall.

DON CARLOS.

I heard this story once, but had forgot.

HERNANI.

Kings may forget; but 'tis the sufferer's lot  
 To bear through life the dark offence in mind,  
 Which on the offenders leaves no trace behind.

DONNA SOL (*kneeling to CARLOS*).

Oh! pardon, gracious Sire! Forgive, or strike  
 Both with one blow, and punish both alike—

My Love, my Lord, my Husband—I but live  
In him—Die with him. Pity, and forgive.  
Oh! turn not with a dark design those eyes  
Towards me.

DON CARLOS.

Duchess of Segovia, rise.  
Countess of Albatera. (*To HERNANI.*) You must string  
Your other titles.

HERNANI.

Who speaks thus? The King?

DON CARLOS.

No. 'Tis the Emperor.

DONNA SOL.

Heavens!

DON CARLOS (*to HERNANI*).

Behold your bride.

HERNANI.

Just God!

DON CARLOS (*to DON RUY*).

Our cousin looks dissatisfied,  
But Arragon with Silva well may wed.

DON RUY.

It is not that.

HERNANI.

How all my hate has fled!

[*Throws away his dagger.*]

DONNA SOL.

My Lord!

HERNANI.

My bride ! This heart, with love untold,  
Burns to thy beauty !

DON CARLOS.

Mine henceforth be cold.

Suffer the spirit you have vexed in vain  
So long, to be itself once more, and reign,  
Thy love the Empire, and thy mistress Spain.  
Don John, thy heart is worthy of the line  
From which it springs. [To DONNA SOL.

And worthy too of thine.

[*Placing the Order of the Golden Fleece round*

HERNANI'S neck.

Receive this gift, to rank and virtue due :  
Knight of the Fleece, be faithful, brave, and true :  
But round your neck a nobler chain you bear,  
Which kings bestow not—which I cannot wear—  
The two arms of a loved and loving bride.  
Away. Be thine the bliss to kings denied.  
For your associates here, I know them not ;  
Their crimes are pardoned, and their names forgot.  
I give this lesson from an infant throne.

CONSPIRATORS (*kneeling to him*).

Long may he live !

DON RUY.

I stand condemned alone.

DON CARLOS.

And I !

DON RUY (*aside*).

But I, like him, have not forgiven.

HERNANI.

Who thus can change our hearts?

ALL.

Protect him, Heaven.

Honour to Charles the Fifth!

DON CARLOS (*turning to the tomb*).

To Charles the Great!

Leave me alone with him. (*All retire, DON CARLOS alone.*)

Guide of my fate!

My great example! Wilt thou shed thy grace  
On him who seeks but to pursue thy trace?  
I stood alone against an empire, tost  
On faction's wildest waves, and almost lost;  
The Dane to punish, and the Pope to pay—  
The Turk and Luther barred alike my way—  
The Doge and Francis marked me for their prey.  
A thousand poniards, half-concealed in night,  
Device to snare, and menace to affright.  
For counsel and for aid to thee I cried,  
And not in vain—thy regal voice replied,  
How I might brave the threat, avoid the snare,—  
Thy word was mercy—thy advice, to spare.

SCENE.

*Sarragossa. A terrace and garden, in the Palace, with a balustrade, and steps leading down into the garden. Sound of music in the distance. Here and there Masks walking about.*

*Night.*

*Enter DON SANCHEZ, DON MATHIAS, & DON RICARDO.*

DON RICARDO.

Joy to the happy pair, who wed to-night!  
Each casement in the town is thronged and bright.

DON SANCHEZ.

'Tis well ; for never for a feast more gay  
Did marriage torches imitate the day ;  
And never yet did summer's midnight air  
Play in the tresses of a bride more fair.

DON MATHIAS.

How fares the ancient Duke? Does he not bid  
His last attendants nail his coffin-lid?

DON SANCHEZ.

Nay : jest not on that subject, nor deride  
That stern old man—he doted on the bride.  
His hairs, which sixty years had turned to gray,  
Were blanched to snowy whiteness in a day.

DON RICARDO.

He has not since been seen, as is declared,  
In Sarragossa.

DON MATHIAS.

He may well be spared.  
Pastrana, in his coffin and his shroud,  
Would match but poorly with this gaudy croud.

DON RICARDO.

Marked ye, but now, amid the fair array  
Of dress, and dancing plumes, and colours gay,  
A spectre, which by yonder balustrade  
Looked darkly down, and marred the masquerade?

DON SANCHEZ.

I saw it well.

DON RICARDO.

What was it?

DON SANCHEZ.

I could trace  
Prancasio's shape.

DON RICARDO.

Not so. It hides its face  
Still with its mask.



DON MATHIAS.

'Twas Soma's frowning brow !

DON SANCHEZ.

Not so ; for Soma spoke to me but now.

DON RICARDO.

It comes again ! What can the spectre be ?

*Enter a black Domino, who slowly crosses the stage.*

*All turn, and look on him.*

If e'er the grave can set its inmates free,  
Such is their step.

DON MATHIAS (*addressing the Mask*).

Fair masquer !—(*the Mask turns round.*) By my soul,

His eyes are kindled like a living coal !

DON SANCHEZ.

If 'tis the devil, or the devil's sire,

He meets his match. (*The Mask stops, and looks fixedly on him.*) His eyes are balls of fire !

[*The Mask slowly descendst he staircase, followed by the eyes of the whole company.*]

DON RICARDO.

In truth, the vision spreads a gloom around.

DON MATHIAS.

Faith, it might fright us in a church-yard's ground !

DON SANCHEZ.

It comes, obedient to some wizard's spell,  
To see our revels, and return to hell.

DON MATHIAS.

Well, we shall know to-morrow.

DON SANCHEZ.

Look, I pray ;

It moves !

DON RICARDO.

The gloomy phantom stalks away.

DON MATHIAS.

Where glides it ?

DON SANCHEZ.

Through the portal, down the stair.

'Tis strange !

DON MATHIAS.

No more.—Here come the bridal pair.

*Enter HERNANI and DONNA SOL, hand in hand, followed by Masks, Lords and Ladies, Pages, &c.*

DON SANCHEZ.

'Tis midnight ; and 'tis fit that we pursue  
The example of the ghost, and vanish too.

*[Exeunt all but HERNANI and DONNA SOL.]*

DONNA SOL.

Dearest ! at length they leave us. By yon moon,  
It should be late.

HERNANI.

And can it come too soon—  
The hour that frees us from the listening crowd,  
To breathe our sighs, so long suppressed, aloud ?

DONNA SOL.

The noise disturbed me. Must we not confess,  
Rejoicing stuns the sense of happiness?

HERNANI.

'Tis true ; for happiness is kin to rest,  
And writes its lessons slowly on the breast.  
When busy pleasure strews its path with flowers,  
Or breaks the silence of its quiet bowers,  
It flies ; and if it smile, its smile appears  
Far less allied to laughter than to tears.

DONNA SOL.

Yet in your eyes its smile is sunny day.

*[He motions to her to follow him.]*

Remain awhile.

HERNANI.

I am your slave—delay—  
Do as thou wilt—all that thou dost is well ;  
My soul is all obedience to thy spell.  
It burns ; yet bid the fierce volcano still  
Its fires—they sink, subservient to thy will.  
Its gulfs shall close, its lavas check their tide,  
And spring's young verdure clothe the crater's side.

DONNA SOL.

Your kindness brings my woman's heart to shame,  
Hernani of my heart !

HERNANI.

Forbear that name !

Oh, be that sound forbidden and forgot,  
Which wakes the memory of an exile's lot !

I knew him once. Hernani!—'twas a dream!—  
His eye glared fiercely, like a poniard's gleam—  
Son of the mountain and the night! a vow  
Of blood and vengeance written on his brow—  
Proscribed—I cannot recognize him now!  
I mix in festivals—I join the ring  
Of glittering nobles, nearest to the King—  
I walk with nobles—am a noble's son—  
Thy love, thy husband! John of Arragon!—  
Am blest!

DONNA SOL.

And I!

HERNANI.

Why should I bear in mind  
The tattered garments that I leave behind?  
In mourning to my palace I repair,  
An angel of the Lord awaits me there.  
I bid the fallen column's shaft aspire—  
On my ancestral hearth I light its fire—  
I ope its casements to the wind, which sports  
Mid the rank herbage of its grass-grown courts—  
I weed that herbage from the creviced stone,  
And seat my house's honour on its throne:  
My king restores me to each ancient right—  
My seat in council, and my crest in fight.  
Come, then, in blushing beauty, come, my bride,  
Lay the sad memory of the past aside—  
That past is all unsaid, unseen, undone;  
I start afresh, a glorious course to run.

I know not if 'tis madness fires my breast—  
I love you—I possess you—and am blest !

DONNA SOL.

How well, upon the glossy velvet's shade,  
This collar looks !

HERNANI.

The King was so arrayed.

DONNA SOL.

I marked *him* not. 'Tis not the velvet's fold,  
'Tis you that give its lustre to the gold.  
Oh, you are fit to be the Order's chief !  
One moment yet—I weep, but not with grief.  
One little moment, to indulge the sight  
With the rich beauty of the summer night.  
The harp is silent, and the torch is dim—  
Night and ourselves together. To the brim  
The cup of our felicity is filled.  
Each sound is mute—each harsh sensation stilled.  
Dost not thou think, that e'en, while nature sleeps,  
Some power its amorous vigils o'er us keeps ?  
No cloud in heaven : while all around repose,  
Come taste with me the fragrance of the rose,  
Which loads the night-air with its musky breath,  
While all around is still as nature's death.  
E'en as you spoke—and gentle words were those  
Spoken by you—the silver moon uprose.  
How that mysterious union of a ray,  
With your impassioned accents, made its way

Straight to my heart ! I could have wished to die  
In that pale moonlight, and while thou wert by.

HERNANI.

Thy words are music, and thy strain of love  
Is borrowed from the choir of heaven above.

DONNA SOL.

Night is too silent—darkness too profound.  
Oh, for a star to shine, a voice to sound—  
To raise some sudden strain of music now,  
Suited to night !

HERNANI.

Capricious girl ! your vow  
Was poured for silence, and to be released  
From the thronged tumult of the marriage feast.

DONNA SOL.

Yes ; but a bird, to carol in the field—  
A nightingale, in moss and shade concealed—  
A distant flute—for music's stream can roll  
To soothe the heart, and harmonize the soul—  
Oh, 'twould be bliss to listen !

[*Sound of a horn in the distance.*

I am heard !

HERNANI (*shuddering*).

Oh, misery !

DONNA SOL.

Sure some angel caught my word.  
'Twas thy good angel !

HERNANI (*bitterly*).

Surely—Hark, again !

DONNA SOL.

That was your horn! How well I know the strain!

HERNANI.

My horn?

DONNA SOL.

Do you, then, share this serenade?

HERNANI.

Share it?—I do.

DONNA SOL.

Thou music of the glade—

How I prefer thee to the festal sound

To which the dancer's giddy train goes round.

Then 'tis your horn, whose voice, like your's, I know.

[*Horn sounds again.*]

HERNANI.

The tiger roaring for his prey below.

DONNA SOL.

Juan, that sound with rapture bids me glow.

HERNANI.

Call me Hernani; I must reassume

That fatal name of vengeance and of gloom.

DONNA SOL.

How say you?

HERNANI.

That old man—

DONNA SOL.

Why glares your eye?



HERNANI.

How in the darkness he stands laughing by !  
Dost thou not mark ?

DONNA SOL.

What is't you bid me see ?

What man ?

HERNANI.

The stern old man.

DONNA SOL.

Upon my knee,  
To learn this secret of your soul, I pray.

HERNANI.

My oath—

DONNA SOL.

Your oath ?

HERNANI.

What can I do or say ?  
Let me spare *her*. 'Twas nothing, my beloved.

DONNA SOL.

And yet you spoke.

HERNANI.

My mind was strangely moved.  
I am not well—'twill pass—Be not afraid.

DONNA SOL.

Shall I not bid my servant to your aid ?

[*Horn sounds again.*]

HERNANI.

He summons, and will have me ! Hark ! again—  
I ought to strike—Alas !

DONNA SOL.

You writhe with pain.

HERNANI.

An ancient wound—I thought my strength restored.  
It opens. (*Aside.*) She *must* leave me. My adored,  
Listen. That casket which in days less blest  
I bore about me—

DONNA SOL.

I divine the rest:—

What would you with the casket?

HERNANI.

It contains

A phial, which will serve to end my pains;  
Go seek it.

DONNA SOL.

I am gone.

[*Exit.*

HERNANI (*alone*).

And what remains

Of my young joys?—He comes to blast them all.

The fatal finger shines upon the wall.

How my fate mocks me with its bitter smile!

He comes not;—were I but deceived the while.

*Enter the MASK.*

MASK (*in a sepulchral tone*).

“Whene’er it please you to exert your power—

“Whate’er the time and place, to name my hour—

“Come, and be welcome. Sound this horn, and then

“’Tis done.” Remember that those ancient men

Heard and attest the vow. Thy father's head,  
The pledge thou gavest—thy witness, the dead.  
Is't done?

HERNANI.

'Tis he.

MASK.

I seek thee in thy bower  
Of bliss, to tell thee 'tis arrived—the hour.  
I find thee unabsolved.

HERNANI.

What wouldst thou do?

MASK.

Dagger or poison, choose between the two—  
I have them here. Together we will stray  
On our long path.

HERNANI.

So be it.

MASK.

Let us pray.

HERNANI.

What matters?

MASK.

Which?

HERNANI.

The poison.

MASK (*presenting a phial*).

Reach and take;

Drink, and leave some for me.

HERNANI.

For pity's sake,  
To-morrow ! If thou play'st a human part—  
If heaven with human blood has warmed thy heart—  
If, in its mercy, it delay e'en now  
To write the words " For ever" on thy brow—  
If e'er on thee the bliss supreme was shed,  
To love in youth, and her you loved to wed—  
If ever woman trembled in thy arms—  
If ever passion's voice, or beauty's charms,  
To soothe thine ear, or glad thine eye, were known—  
Wait till to-morrow—then demand thy own !

MASK.

Wait till to-morrow ! Yes, you reason well—  
This hour, this instant, sounds thy funeral knell.  
How shall I speed, who may not wait till morn ?  
When I am vanished, who shall sound this horn ?  
Alone to seek my place of refuge ?—No.  
Young man, together to the tomb we go.

HERNANI.

Demon, I free me from the bonds of hell ;  
I will not follow.

MASK.

So I thought. 'Tis well—  
No living witness to thy vow. The dead  
Alone record that pledge—thy father's head.  
'Tis little—nothing—reckless youth may slight  
A vow so trivial, and a pledge so light.

HERNANI.

My father! how I tremble at that name.

MASK.

'Tis only treason, perjury and shame.

HERNANI.

Pastrana!

MASK.

Since the elder sons of Spain  
Can sport with oaths, and make their promise vain,  
Farewell.

HERNANI.

Remain. Remorseless in thy wrath,  
Thus at the gate of heaven to cross my path!  
[*He takes the phial.*]

*Enter DONNA SOL (without seeing the MASK).*

DONNA SOL.

I cannot find that casket.

HERNANI (*aside*).

Heaven above!

Now to return.

DONNA SOL.

My presence moves my love.  
There's something in thy hand arrests my eye—  
Shines in your grasp—what is it?—quick reply.  
[*The Domino unmasks, and discovers DON RUY.*]  
'Tis poison! some strange secret unrevealed;—  
I am deceived.

HERNANI.

Oh! were it still concealed.

My life is his who saved it. 'Twas my vow ;  
And Silva comes to claim the forfeit now.

DONNA SOL.

To me, and not to Silva, you belong.

(*To DON RUY.*)

Your compact binds not ; passion makes me strong—  
I will defend him 'gainst the powers of man.

DON RUY.

Against his oath, defend him if you can.

DONNA SOL.

What oath ?

HERNANI.

I swore it.

DONNA SOL.

No, it cannot be.

'Twas crime—'twas treason—madness—you are free.

DON RUY.

Away !

[*DONNA SOL seeks to detain HERNANI.*

HERNANI.

My father heard, and will attest  
The oath he claims. Then leave me to my rest.

DONNA SOL (*to DON RUY*).

Tear him from me ? Oh, you had better wring  
Their young from tigers couching for their spring.

You know me not. For long the part I tried,  
Of maiden shame, and innocence and pride,  
And pity for your impotence and age  
Restrained me. Dread me now, inspired with rage—  
See'st thou this poniard? Dread, old man, the steel—  
What the eye threatens, know, the heart shall feel.  
Dread me !

*(She throws away the dagger.)*

Ah ! no, misfortune makes me wild.  
Hear me, Don Ruy, thy niece, almost thy child.  
Oh ! spare her husband ! Pity and forgive ;  
Grant me his life, and suffer both to live.  
I am a woman, feeble, weak, and frail—  
The spirit rises, but the flesh will fail.

DON RUY.

Lady—

DONNA SOL.

Forgive us both. You once were kind—  
You cannot take him, and leave me behind,  
I perish when on him you deal the blow—  
I love him so !

DON RUY.

Too much.

HERNANI

Your eyes overflow.

DONNA SOL.

You shall not perish. Grant him but a day,  
And I will love you too.



DON RUY.

Perhaps you may ;

And after him !

[HERNANI approaches the phial to his lips, she throws herself on his arm.

DONNA SOL.

Oh ! hear me—yet delay.

DON RUY.

The grave is yawning, and his hour will strike—  
I cannot wait.

DONNA SOL.

Have I deserved to die ?

HERNANI.

Oh ! she distracts my senses with that cry !

DONNA SOL.

Thou know'st I have a thousand things to say—  
When I have said them, then—

DON RUY.

I cannot stay.

[She seizes the phial.

DONNA SOL.

I have it !

DON RUY.

Since two women here I find,  
I must go hence, to seek for men in mind  
As well as outward form. You speak us fair,  
When by the blood from which you spring you swear.  
I go, to tell your sire how well you keep  
Your compacts.

HERNANI (*to DONNA SOL*).

Stay. Alas ! Wouldst thou not weep  
Tears of more burning anguish e'en than now,  
To see dishonour written on my brow ;  
To see me through the world a traitor driven,  
By its just scorn ? By all our hopes of heaven,  
Restore that dark elixir ?

DONNA SOL (*drinks the poison*).

Now I can !

DON RUY.

'Twas, then, for her ?

HERNANI.

Behold'st thou, aged man ?

DONNA SOL.

Blame not my act—I have reserved thy share—

HERNANI.

Alas !

DONNA SOL.

Thou wouldst not have endured to spare  
My portion. Thou, weak man, canst not divine  
How love the daughters of De Silva's line.  
I drink the first, and am at rest. Proceed,  
Drink if thou wilt.

HERNANI.

What demon urged the deed ?

DONNA SOL.

It was thy will.

HERNANI.

Such dreadful death to brave !

DONNA SOL.

How so?

HERNANI.

That philtre leads thee to thy grave.

DONNA SOL.

Was not this head to sleep upon thy breast  
To-night? What matters where it sinks to rest?

HERNANI.

My father, thy revenge is just—that I  
Forget. [*He approaches the phial again to his lips.*

DONNA SOL (*throws herself upon him*).

Forbear! forbear! 'Tis hard to die—  
This poison lives, and round the heart it hangs,  
Like a fell serpent with a thousand fangs.  
Oh, drink it not. Alas! I could not tell  
That earthly pain could match the fires of hell—  
He drinks!

HERNANI (*drinks, and throws away the phial*).

'Tis done.

DONNA SOL.

Come, then, to meet thy fate—  
Come to these arms. Is not the torture great?

HERNANI.

Not so.

DONNA SOL.

Behold, our marriage couch is spread.  
Am I not pale, for one so lately wed?  
Be calm. I suffer less. Our wings expand

T'wards the blest regions of a happier land—  
Together let us seek that world so fair—  
One kiss—and one alone.

DON RUY.

Despair! Despair!

HERNANI.

Blest be the heaven, which from my birth pursued  
My life with misery, and in blood imbrued—  
For it permits me, ere I part, to press  
My lips to thine, and die on thy caress.

DON RUY.

They still are happy!

HERNANI.

Donna Sol, 'tis night.

Dost thou still suffer?

DONNA SOL.

No.

HERNANI.

See'st thou the light?

DONNA SOL.

Not yet—

HERNANI.

I see it.

[*Dies.*]

DON RUY.

Dead!

DONNA SOL.

Not so, we rest.

He sleeps. He's mine—we love, and we are blest.

This is our marriage couch. What happier spot

Can the world shew? Lord Duke, disturb us not.

*[Her voice gradually sinks.]*

Turn thee towards me—nearer yet—'tis well.

Thus, let us rest.—

*[Dies.]*

DON RUY.

Both dead!—Receive me, hell!

*[Kills himself.]*



# GOWDEN GIBBIE.

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BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

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## CHAPTER I.

“ Though here they scrape, an’ squeeze, an’ growl,  
Their worthless nievefu’ of a soul  
May in some future carcase howl,  
                    The forests fright,  
Or in some day-detesting owl  
                    May shun the light.”

BURNS.

IN a border county, which for the present must be nameless, where the cultivated ground joins the natural pasture-land, there lived a



man some five-and-forty years ago, whose sole pleasure was to see his flocks increase, his crops flourish, markets rise, and money come in. This man was an only son, and had survived his parents. When a babe in his mother's bosom the minister of the parish spilt water on his face, quoted scripture, and, with a grave look, said, "Gilbert," but the peasantry of the district possessed a power in baptism, even beyond that of the church, and scarcely waiting till the child became a man, young and old hailed him by the name of "Gowden Gibbie."

The church is uninspired in matters of human concernment and character, and throws away the fine names of the land upon the inglorious and the unworthy. We have Cæsars without courage—Alarics without ferocity, and Michael Angelos without genius. The peasantry bestow names with a more discerning spirit—in the name they express the man and hit his character with equal skill and sagacity—and so it fared with Gilbert. The to-name stamped his image in body and soul, and as his whole hope of fame is through it alone, I shall allow it to remain, without meaning

any irreverence towards the church, by adopting a name which it did not bestow.

Now Gowden Gibbie was a very remarkable person, and when the world is wise enough to love the social biography of men who neither fight battles nor write books, but whose character and ample means influence the countryside where they live, then will the name of Gibbie be heard of in the land, and quoted upon 'Change; and the sculptor's chisel and the painter's brush will be employed on his looks. He was in truth a singular man; woman he regarded as an expensive idol, on whose altar man offered up his soul, and, what was worse, his substance. He conceived that she was made purposely to invade man's repose,—pillage his purse, and, by her changeable mood and changeable variety, convert this green and pleasant earth into a sort of supplemental purgatory. Woman came not within his scheme of household prudence, and he therefore dismissed her from his whole system of in-door and out-door economy, and intrusted the entire management of his estate to the wisdom and frugality of man. Yet he was not one of those sordid

sinners who love to sit and flourish like a potatoe on a heap of dung. He was a man active and stirring and cleanly, who loved a bright fire and a well swept hearth—a soft bed, and something comfortable for supper;—who wore a well-brushed coat, and shining silver buckles in his shoes, and could crack a pleasant joke and chaunt a cheerful song, as well as any woman-worshipper in the whole district.

How Gowden Gibbie continued to keep his establishment pure and shining, and well arranged, without the help of woman's hand, is a secret which I am loath to reveal. I have no wish to teach other parsimonious creatures, with which the land is swarming, an art which they would gladly know;—e'en let them hew a system out of the rough, like our border luminary. A broom, it is true, could be had for the cutting, and pure water ran past the door free of all expense; but these useful and meritorious servants never work of their own accord,—and yet they must have been frequently employed, for his house was as smooth, and orderly, and clean, as if it had been under the care of a woman on trial for a wife, or a whole committee

of experienced and fastidious spinsters. Of his well ordered house, he indeed made no boast; yet, it was surmised that he felt some little pride in his domestic skill, for once on a time he exhibited the interior of his abode to two staid ladies, and said, as he handed them out of the house, “now you have seen how weel a body can do without the help of that captious creature, woman!”

As he grew old, the love of gain grew with Gowden Gibbie also, and became a passion which, like the serpent-rod of the prophet, devoured all other feelings. Money was his mistress, nay, his goddess, and he bowed himself day and night at the feet of this golden Dalilah. The sound of silver was in his ears far sweeter than music, and when he saw gold, his eyes sparkled, and he discoursed of its value and of its uses like one inspired. On all other topics, save that of gain, he talked calmly and coldly, but on it he was rapt, eloquent, and imaginative. When a boy at school, he loved to read of troy-weight, by which silver and gold were weighed, and moreover, he thought it unfair to multiply two figures together without

producing something, and boldly seceded from Dilworth and Cocker, and said, "twice nought's one!" He carried the same poetic principle of increase into all his speculations.

Yet it must not be imagined that he shut his eyes to the light of knowledge, or was unacquainted with those stores of pleasure and information, which the geniuses of his country had accumulated. He was a lover of poetry, and I have heard him repeat, nay chaunt, with visible emotion the description of Susan Pye.

"On every finger she wears a ring,  
On her middle finger she has three,  
With as much gold above her eye  
As would buy a baron's land to me."

He would, he said, that the country swarmed with such meritorious damsels; but where, he inquired, would be found such windfalls except in song?

In scripture knowledge Gibbie was likewise great, and had by heart the whole chapter concerning the molten calf. He could lecture too on the surpassing splendour of Solomon's temple—on the floors of silver and ceilings of pure

gold ; and hold forth, like any young episcopalian divine, on whose sight the glory of a cathedral was dawning, concerning the wings of the cherubim, and the untold talents of beaten gold which the fabric took. But the account of the golden statue which the king of Babylon placed on the plain of Dura, and called on all people to fall down and worship, he considered the choicest passage in scripture. He was of opinion that Solomon's wealth was a sure proof of his wisdom ; but then, what were all the riches of the men of Israel compared to those of the Babylonian ? The colossal size and vast weight of the Syrian idol filled his imagination, and he exhausted his arithmetical knowledge, including the supplemental discovery of "twice nought's one !" in an attempt to calculate the actual number of spade guineas which it would have produced.

To the information which poetry and scripture thus opened to him, he added knowledge from darker and less certain sources. With all the traditions of his native land which wore a golden hue, Gowden Gibbie was acquainted. Of every tower razed, or castle suddenly de-



molished, he had note, and could guess in what choked-up well or undiscovered dungeon the old governors had hid their wealth. He had some suspicions too that the legend did not much err, which gave to those treasures a dragon or a devil for a keeper, and he frequently lamented the obduracy of the fiend which kept the money from circulating, and making an honest interest. Of the wealth too which the earth concealed in her bosom he had most magnificent ideas, and declared that the Mammon of Milton was well acquainted with the natural treasures of creation when he reared the palace of Lucifer. Every rivulet with yellow sand had its source, he believed, in a vein of gold, and every hill was in his fancy one of nature's strong boxes filled with unsum-mable treasure. Of ladies with golden locks, of streams with golden sands, and of suns with golden beams, he loved to sing. At the age of forty the throne of all other passions and feelings was vacated in his bosom to make way for the demon of lucre, who, large as the image on the plains of Dura, sat triumphing over him, heart and soul.



## CHAPTER II.

Now, it came to pass, one fine summer's day, nigh sunset, that Gowden Gibbie was walking amongst his glens and hills, looking at his flocks, and calculating the highest possible produce of carcase and fleece. He loved to wander there, for in the days of the commons' king, James the Fifth, mines had been sunk, and the wimble of the explorer had gone deep into the hills. Tradition supplied what history had forgotten, and spoke of the cart and the car-loads of golden ore which the royal speculator extracted and converted into broad bonnet pieces.

Civil war had come in the days of his daughter—the miners were dispersed or slain—the folly or the policy of the victors closed up the veins of wealth which wisdom had opened, and time had effaced and the plough had obliterated all traces of the miner's pick and spade. One little spring well, at which the miners drank and washed their ore, was still pointed out by the peasantry, and there Gowden Gibbie loved to sit and to drink also. He was now on his way to the well, and thinking as he went on the gold which the hill had yielded and the fountain had washed,—he looked up and saw that a stranger was before him.

A man sat by the miners' well, stricken somewhat in years, with an abundance of white hair, partly covered by a species of turban or bonnet; his shoes were dusty with travelling—he carried a strong pike-staff in one hand, and with the other sipped water from the little spring. Gowden Gibbie noted this sipping of water from the palm of the hand amongst his maxims of practical thrift, and advanced slowly towards the stranger.

The wanderer spoke first. “There is a

treasure here, friend—e'en one of the best treasures of Providence. This little well is unto me as the melted silver, and this hill, on which the setting sun is shining, glows like unto the fine and the fused gold."

Gibbie gloried in words such as these—he looked wistfully on the stranger, and thought him either the spirit of one of the old miners returned to take another glance at the seams of gold, or a man endowed with that profitable sort of knowledge, which points, like the diviner's hazel-rod, to concealed treasures. He looked on the well, and thought it had a very silvery-like sparkle—he looked on the hill, where the sun still lingered, and thought that it looked yellower than he had ever seen it; and he looked on the old man, and thought that in his eye there was a consciousness that gold was in the land.

"Gold, did ye say?" quoth Gowden Gibbie; "ay, I'll warrant there's that, and of the purest—and no sae deep down neither—though I cannot say that I ever found any, and deeply have I dug. Mines were here of old, and metal, precious metal, was found of a surety.

A grand queen of some far-off land had a chain made on't—a load, I'm told, more fit for a horse than a hussy—it was a present, and that was warst, from ane of our auld-warld kings, and therefore a clear loss to the country ; but touching the hill ?”

“ Ay ! touching the hill,” said the stranger, fixing his keen eyes on Gowden Gibbie, “ there are stories can be told of it would make the deaf hear. But ye were about to speak of it—say on.”

“ Indeed, friend,” quoth Gilbert, “ I have nought to say concerning it—the hill is no worse than other hills—green in summer and brown in winter. How many score of sheep think ye now it will feed ?”

The stranger sprung to his feet. “ Gowden Gibbie,” he cried, “ thou art a sordid person, and knowest not the blessing which this hill contains. See ! the golden sunbeam loves to linger on its summit—trow ye that it is not attracted there by the precious metal ? The sun is a wise planet—he loves to shine where there are rare stones of vast prize, and where there are veins of

liquid gold circulating through the earth, even as life's-blood circulates in the human body."

"I have ye now! I have ye now!" shouted Gibbie; "O! precious man! O! worthy stranger! Every word ye speak is as dropped honey. Liquid gold! I like the words, and weel can I support them. Listen to me this way. The very teeth of my sheep, which graze on this hill, are gilt as with gold, while the teeth of all those which graze on the other hills are as white as ivory. I'll warrant there's liquid gold in the hill. A sermon on the sinfulness of riches will not drive it out of my head."

The stranger looked on Gibbie for a minute's space or so, during which he seemed to take careful measure of his contracted soul. "All this is no news to me," he said. "When I dwelt on the banks of the Tigris, some seventy years ago, this hill of thine was well known. We called it the Golden Hill. Meikle have I heard the Cham of Tartary speak concerning it, as well as his second cousin the Sultan Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan. The crown which he wore was made from its gold."

“No but the like of that now!” exclaimed Gibbie; “who could have dreamed of that? The Khan of Tartary to ken of my hill? and his cousin,—said ye his cousin? to have his crown made out of our native gowd! And seventy years since ye dwelt on the Tigris! Wow, man, but ye look fresh and hale! The land must be favourable to poor human nature—not like this termagant country, which freezes and drowns us, and then whips us away in the pride of life, and sends us to the dowie churchyard and no a penny in our pocket.”

“Peace—peace,” said the stranger, holding up his head. “Ye multiply vain words, and sport with precious time; mark what I say. This hill furnished gold to the wise men of other days, and would do so again, were wise men to make the trial. All that it produces savours of the precious metal which it contains. The grass which covers it has a yellow hue, and the teeth of the sheep which it feeds are plated with pure gold. But its ore is not like that of other mines. The gold which circulates in its veins is melted, and may not be extracted by ordinary means. Dig the pit—sink the



shaft—form the gallery—bring out the glittering treasure to the air and try to wash and purify it, and lo ! it will slide away like water through the miner's sieve, and mingle again with the moist elements—it is liquid gold—how often shall I repeat it. Yet wisdom can do much and patience can do more, and the charms which the Sultan Cream-Cann-Categorie Coolie Khan taught me can do more than both. But I am wasting my time on a man dull and obtuse, whose sordid soul knows no better way of gathering gain than by the fleece of the sheep and the pound of tarry wool. I must begone, far have I come—farther have I to go—I am old, wearied, thirsty, hungry, all the portable gold which this hill contains is not in my sight as precious as a mouthful of supper and a cup of pleasant drink.”

Gowden Gibbie had listened to sermons, but never to a sermon such as this. His sense of immediate loss was swallowed up by the hope of immense future profit—he conceived that the stranger was master of the secret of persuading the hill to give up its gold, and that he had the resistless charm taught by the



incomparable Sultan Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan, a long name which he loved to pronounce—there seemed a spell in the sound. With the hope of obtaining the magic key which would unlock the whole treasure of mammon, he took the stranger by the hand as firmly as a well filled purse, and said, “Such a story as yours! nay, but we may not part! come home with me;—ye shall have a mouthful of supper and something to drink, we can talk atween hands of the treasures of this hill, and of the wisdom required to obtain it.”

The stranger uttered not a word, but followed his new acquaintance.

“Aweel now,” said Gibbie, as he led the way to his house, “this art of yours is truly wonderful. And ye learned it on the Tigris, did ye, seventy years since? Ye cannot well be less than eighty years old—ye are a wonderful body—ye take a long step, and set down your foot like a pavior’s rammer.”

“Eighty years old,” replied the wise man from the Tigris—“when I saw eighty years, these snow-locks were black as the wing of

the raven. Many a sad day have I seen, and many a king's reign on the earth since then. And so this is your house—beneath its lintel I may not enter, till I have said six several prayers. Three for protection from the snares of man, and three for protection from the wiles of women. I have suffered sadly in my time from both.”

“Say the three first, if ye like,” said Gibbie, with a chuckling smile—“the three latter are needless. Woman's foot has not crossed my threshold these fifteen years, and never shall, till I am stiff and stretched. She is a capricious and an expensive creature—has arts and ways a weak man like me canna well withstand.”

“You are a fortunate person,” said this wise man of the east, “and I am fortunate in having found you.”

“Now,” said Gibbie to his guest, as soon as he was seated, “ye maun ken that it is but to the wise and the prudent I lift my door-latch, and spread on my table the fulness of my house. Cursed be he who shuts his heart

and closes his door on knowledge such as yours. Sup of that dish—it is porridge made of the best of corn and pure water;—a primitive and a wholesome dish. Drink also of that milk, from which with a careful hand the cream has been removed; it is a patriarchal beverage, and has the sanction of scripture. I never pour stimulating liquors into the veins of my guests, nor give them spiced and drugged food to shut up the sweet sympathies of human nature.”

“You are wise and you are prudent,” said the stranger. He tried a spoonful of porridge and seemed to swallow thistles—then threw the spoon down, and instantly said, “Is the moon risen?—look and see.”

Gowden Gibbie was glad to see his guest forbear his supper; he thought this inquiry concerning the moon looked like a commencement on the matter of the gold; he hastened to the door and cried, “O! a moon, a glorious moon, as bright as gold and as round as a guinea—she is scarce a hand’s breadth aboon the hill: as ye have done with supper ye may come and

see her ; she gleams on the summit of the hill like a new gilt weather-cock."

"The very thing I want," said the stranger ;  
"come in, take your seat : now look at me."

With a quiet and a curious look did Gibbie of the Golden-hill regard the stranger, who thus addressed him : "I have work to do in a far land before yon moon sinks into the sea, and my words must necessarily be few and my stay short. I would fain requite your hospitality by teaching you what I have never before taught man—the hidden mystery of obtaining liquid gold. Have ye any beehives ?"

Gibbie stared—but answered—"Half a dozen, and thriving ones—wherefore d'ye ask ?"

"Because," said the other, "they gather gold from the flowers of the hill—Did you never taste of the honey yourself?"

"Never but once," answered Gibbie, "and that was when I had a sore cough. Swallowing honey is like drinking silver—it is half a crown the chappin, market price—deil a penny less."

“It is not only swallowing silver,” replied the stranger, “but it is swallowing gold—that I could easily prove—however, let it pass, and now attend. I can teach you the way to draw gold from the hill, as readily as blood can be drawn by leach or lancet from a man’s body, an art which I learned, it matters not how.”

“Not one brass bodle,” said Gowden Gibbie; “it is a good art which teaches valuable knowledge, and must come from a pure source, I have made up my mind anent that.”

“That shortens our work,” said the other. “Well, I learned the art from the Sultan Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan—who is a heathen prince, and as I thought you were a religious man, ye might be scrupulous concerning the sources.”

“Me religious!” exclaimed Gibbie, “and scrupulous too! na—na—religion shall never mar the making of pure gold, though the fiend himself hold the crucible to melt it—na! na! I am soft of heart, it may be—and am sometimes led by the tenderness of my nature into expensive acts of hospitality—

and even at a fair, or some such occasion, I have squandered a whole gray groat without remorse—yet I was never weak on the devout side. It's a sad matter to give away, as they do besouth the stream there, the tenth of a man's wealth to a spurred and booted divine, when a short prayer, and a bawbee prudently given, might do the needful for the future state. I'm saying—the tithe of this golden hill of ours will be a bonnie penny?"

"The tithe will be immense," replied the other—"but my secret, to be effectual, must be secretly wrought;—the church cannot—nay, must not know, what we are about, else the whole spell will be as moonshine."

"I see! I see!" cried Gowden Gibbie—"I have ye now—I have ye now—it's a deep one!—it will do—it will do—not that I am averse to let the church have her regular dues, ye see; but when one really can keep gold from her clutch, it's rendering her a christian service—for she is so rich, and so puffed up, that I am not so sure but they are her kindest friends who keep her cup from running over."

"Peace, peace!" exclaimed the stranger,



“truce tō these vain words, this is work that may not be done lightly. Whatever I say must be done willingly, one murmur and the spell is dissolved and your fortune crossed. Have fortitude, and ye shall be richer than Solomon; murmur or complain, and be as ye are now. These are the conditions, and they are not hard ones.”

“Proceed,” cried Gowden Gibbie, “I think I can stand it. Richer than Solomon! what a bribe! But bide ye, friend, will ye need any gold in the experiment? It’s a scarce article, and hard to get, and now I think on’t there’s a law against melting down his majesty’s image.”

“Thy gold is as dross, and thou art as a grain of dust!” exclaimed this strange magician, looking at his entertainer sternly; “do as I bid you, and beware murmuring; and mark me, should you desire to speak to me, say Ulack, I am known by that name at the court of Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan, in the land of Bassarabia.”

“O, Ulack, wonderous Ulack,” said Gibbie; “bear with me, I pray you, remember that my



patience has never been sobered down by woman, and that I have hitherto enjoyed my own free will."

"I forgive you," said Ulack, "though it might have been better for the accomplishment of our undertaking, hadst thou been disciplined by the matrimonial curb; now's the time, put more fuel on the fire,—more, more; ay, that will do, though more may be necessary before we have done."

"It is the heat of summer," muttered Gibbie to himself, "and a large fire is really sinful, but the golden hill shall pay for this wastery."

"Confound your dirty turf," cried Ulack, as Gibbie began to place peats on the hearth, "dost grudge the dried wood and the kindest coal to make sacrifice to the powers of the mine?"

"Lord, what a waster," murmured the other; "but when pure gold will come running upon me like a river, I shouldna grudge some wee expence, yet making a fire of dried wood is like burning bank notes." Ulack held up his hand, and Gibbie's lips ceased moving.

The fire, composed solely of fine dry wood,

soon brightened up. Ulack took out a small bottle, dropt seven drops of liquid upon the flame, and said, "Cut seven collops, and no more, from the middle of that ham which hangs so brown in the chimney; knowledge such as mine cannot be transferred without fitting sacrifice."

Gibbie took a sharp knife, cut deep, and spared not, mentally cursing the expensiveness of the secret, and resolving to eat the chief share himself.

"Carefully and properly done," continued Ulack; "now, dress them on the embers, and place them on the table with bread and salt."

Gibbie laid the collops on the glowing embers of his precious wood-fire, cooked them to a turn, and set them smoking and savoury on the table along with bread and salt.

"Fill that vessel with pure ale," said the magician, "the true offspring of barley and hops."

"He will drink me out and eat me out of house and inheritance," groaned Gowden Gibbie; "but the hill shall make amends, I shall draw the gowd from it as I draw ale with this

spigot and fosset; yet after a', what's a bite and sup compared to a secret such as his."

He drew the ale, and placing it on the table went on. "There! better never foamed in silver or horn, I brewed it with my own hands, and full seven years has it stood untouched; see what a head it carries; I never had the heart to tap it before. But be ye man or magician, beware how ye drink it, it's as strong as gunpowder. D'ye no think now, but surely ye ken best, that water would have done as weel? No that I grudge ale, only water is sae handy, and there it runs past my door pure as melted silver."

"Peace! peace!" said Ulack, setting at the same time the flagon to his mouth. With slow and protracted satisfaction he drained it dry, wiped the foam from his lips, gathered breath and said, "Water for lead, ale for copper, whisky for silver, but brandy for pure gold. Such is my creed, and such is the true spirit of my spell. Water! I love water, give me water, I love it for its purity and drink it for its own sake, stronger liquor I drink for the sake of others, so give me water?"

“I’m thinking now,” said Gibbie, pondering hurriedly over the scale of gain which Ulack described, “I’m thinking now that something warmer and more comforting would suit better with your season of life. Water is chilly, ale confuses the brain and begets dullness, wine is good, but it is wholly out of the question, it never crossed my lips, whisky burns like devouring fire, and moreover only produces silver, but brandy ! I have some brandy, that is a blessing, will the spell suffer from its being smuggled ?”

“Ay, surely,” answered Ulack, “that is a diminution of its virtue ; but we must e’en use the more on’t—that however I am willing to do, so produce the smuggler’s gardevine, which stands in the nook of your chamber beside the oaken chest, where your bills and bonds are kept ; be handy and let us have it—time flies.”

Away went Gibbie to his secret chamber, and groping out the gardavine muttered, as he returned, “This man Ulack knows all things. I wonder now if he could construct a magic trap to catch coined gold and rights of estates, as easily as he can gather in this subterranean

harvest of the natural riches of the earth. That would be a secret worth knowing ; I could afford to treat him well in such an undertaking ; it would raise the value of money in the land—the rate of interest would rise.”

“ Come, come, thou parsimonious reptile !” shouted Ulack, “ thou wilt lose present gain, imagining future profit. Come, come, the art is an innocent art, it only steals riches from the lap of opulent nature according to scriptural permission : and were I to try to turn the strength of my art to such evil purposes as suit thy sordid views, few would be my days, and sudden would be my doom.”

“ Ulack !” cried Gibbie, “ man who knows all things ! forgive me, for I but thought it, and unwise thoughts will rise with the wisest.”

“ Fill that cup with brandy : see that ye spill not one drop, and yet the cup must be full.”

Gowden Gibbie poured in the liquor with a look of such undissembled sorrow that the drops seemed to be coming from his heart. “ It is enough,” said Ulack ; “ now place it on the board beside these smoking collops, and ask

a blessing, for all must be done reverently." Gowden Gibbie asked a blessing, a thing not common with him, and as the last words died on his lips he stretched out his eager hands to the bread and meat.

"All on that board," said Ulack, "yea, and much more, is necessary for the furtherance of your fortune; it is required to complete the spell. Eat up and drink up thy wealth, if thou wilt. Your table is an exact symbol of success in this matter. It is heaped, and the cup is running over: in like manner will gold come with an overflow. But for every mouthful of that food which ye eat, and every drop of that liquor which ye drink, so will ye lose in proportion of the blessing which will come upon you. Half of that cup of brandy, and half these collops,—and savoury they are—would cost you half the gold of the hill. This is a matter of undisputed calculation—and I remember what befel the wise Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan, in the first of his wonderful experiments."

"Ulack," cried Gibbie, interrupting him,



“I believe—I submit—it seems a plain parable. Bless me, but this knowledge is a mysterious thing! I can make oaten cake and fair spring water serve my turn.”

“I make you welcome to the pure water and the wholesome bread,” said Ulack, “it is well with us that our work permits thee such viands. I am, alas! under another dispensation, and am obliged, by virtue of my undertaking, to drink, contrary to the wishes of nature, of the liquid called brandy.” He took up the cup and emptied it at one breathing. “Alas!” continued he, “that I should have to open my mouth thus wide for others’ good, and swallow what will harm me to bring good fortune to a stranger: but what is, is; and what must be, will be; I must eat too, by a similar dispensation.” He took up a knife and fork, and collop after collop disappeared,—he crowned the whole with a second flowing bumper of brandy.

The patience of Gowden Gibbie began to give way—the large promises and the serious swallow of Ulack were weighed in the balance, and nothing could be more nicely adjusted—



the present loss was certain, the future gain unsure; he could suffer no longer.

“Ulack, or whatever they call thee,” said Gibbie, “bite about is fair play all the world over,—ye are drinking my ale like ditch-water, gulping my brandy, and swallowing gude hung meat, by the Scotch pound, and all under pretence of making my fortune. If ye can do me good, do it in the devil’s name, that I should take his name atween christened lips! and no sit and swallow my hard-won inheritance up.”

“That’s one whole year added to the period of the fulfilment of the spell,” said Ulack. “Did I not warn thee against murmuring and repining? You love gold—your life is dedicated to the service of mammon—thou wouldst willingly pawn thy everlasting soul, in the acquirement of wealth! Yet, in gaining it, thou wilt not be as patient as thou art in shearing the fleece, or in pressing the cheese; thy sinful repining has lengthened the time of the spell to two years instead of one.” And having uttered this additional oracle, he helped himself to a third glass.

“O, Ulack,” exclaimed Gibbie, in exquisite

bitterness of soul, "drink as ye like, eat as ye like, but tell me, I entreat you, what you are going to do with the empty bee-hive, which you have taken from its place and set on the floor beside you,—gracious me! will you waste the brandy on a senseless slip of plaited straw. Na! I am ruined now, ruined now."

Ulack, who had poured some brandy into the empty hive, and shaken it round with great anxiety, looked up and said, "That's another year added to the spell, it was lately two, now it is three. O man! man! how foolishly dost thou put thy foot into the fountain of thy fortune! go on."

"I beseech you, Ulack," said Gibbie, "to bear with me, and be merciful. Bear with the impatience of a poor pennyless mortal, who would fain turn his groat into a guinea, in a quiet and honest way."

"Pennyless mortal!" said Ulack, with a sneer, "dost thou think, man, that I don't know Gowden Gibbie? thou art as well known at the foot of Caucasus, and on the plains of Tadmor, as thou art in thy native vale. Did not Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan say to me, on the Scottish

border lives one whom men call Gowden Gibbie, a sordid and miserly mortal, and yet owner of the hill which contains the liquid gold? He hath of bills and bonds three thousand pounds and odd, contained in a black print bible, in an oaken chest, and in the same room which holds the said chest, stands another strong box, which belonged of old to an English abbot, in token of which, a mitre and cross are carved on the lid,—there hath he stowed away, full fifteen hundred spade guineas. Go to him, and work out this grand spell, which is to suck the solid gold out of the earth; thou wilt readily know him, he is called the churl and the miser, yet hath fortune placed him upon this splendid inheritance. Go to, man, don't talk of being pennyless to me!"

Sorely grieved, Gowden Gibbie, when he heard this accurate inventory recited of his wealth, a shadow of suspicion over-clouded for a moment his brow; he thought, "can this man have gained his knowledge by magic, or by personal examination?" and he looked on Ulack as if he would have looked him through; but his long white hair, sun-burned complexion,

and patriarchal look, baffled all surmises, and he was lost in wonder at such unheard-of knowledge.

Ulack seemed now to think that it was time to shift the scene of operations; he lifted the empty hive and said, "The hour is at hand, bring brandy and bring ale, and take that spade and come with me, and see that ye walk in my shadow, and stop when I stop. Time is, and time comes not again."

At this moment the latch was raised, when a strange man, hot with running, came in and said, "He's gaun gear, gaun gear, gude advice canna haud him; he winna shoot oure the twalt hour; he grips at the blankets, and cries out about the gear he maun leave; he's lying with a bag o' gowd in his hand and another at his head, and casting it awa in handfuls. I'm ill awa when spade guineas are fleeing. Come, for gudesake come; d'ye think the man's breath will stay your time; come, can ye no come, and say a soothing word or sae, by way o' prayer; ye ken he's ay charmed with your words."

Gibbie looked earnestly in the face of this

eager messenger, and said, "Wha may ye be now, and wha is the man that ye summons me to see, with such a clamorous tongue? It canna be that auld Sicker Sawney is going at last?"

"My certa lad," said the intruder, "ye Sicker Sawney weel, can ye no gie douce fowk their ain christened name? My master's name is Alexander Moneys, an auld name and a respected, moreover he's portioner of Gripan-tauk, which his name has held since the persecution, and I'm his familiar servant and they call me New-come-John."

Gibbie was sorely puzzled; he seized Ulack by the sleeve, and led him aside. "There's brandy in the bottle, there's water on the fire, and sugar in the aumrie, make yourself a cheerer, and let this thing stand oure till I return. This man, whom we call Sicker Sawney, is a perfect mint of money, maist as rich as our hill; he has gowd in hohsens, and hoards as auld as sax kings' reigns. I have seen it! I have seen it! The distance is but twa miles, and I shall miss a glorious pose, for I ken he will gie it all to me, wha kens the way to keep it thegether. He is casting it frae him



like a tree shedding leaves in November, just like fanners blawing awa chaff, and I maun rin to the gathering."

Ulack grew angry. "I have said that the hour is come. The planetary hour which my great master Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan taught me, is at hand, and death will stay his dart and woman suspend her will, but the moment of fate cannot be put off; come, walk in my shadow, and stop when I stop; this work must be begun and finished within the hour, else woe be to us both."

Gibbie rubbed his hands in gladness, and cried, "It will do yet, it will do yet, friend. New-come-John, what's your name, you ken the laird surely canna take his departure before grey-day light; come now, tell me the truth, what says the doctor?" and he slipped a piece of silver into his hand.

"'Deed, gudeman," said the messenger, "there's twa doctors and a lawyer yonder, and the minister of the parish is on the road, but his heart's hale, and his ee's bright, and if ye should have your prayers to say afore ye leave your ain house, ye can remember

my poor master in them. I dare say that'll pass muster where prayers are of avail."

"That will do, Ulack, that will do," said Gibbie. "Now, friend, ye'll just remain here a short hour, and I'm yere servant. But ye'll want company. Bauldy, my bairn, Bauldy, my pet, come hither, ye are wanted."

At this summons a human form, which had hitherto escaped the eye of Ulack, began to rouse and bestir himself in the wide chimney corner, where he lay curled up like a snake amongst empty sacks, and broom and shelling-seeds. His rough, bushy, and uncombed hair, hung about his eyes and ears in true dreamy disorder, his feet and legs were bare, and his close-fitted dress, made of coarse gray plaiden, so suited with his complexion, that clothes and man seemed all of a piece, with the exception of his eyes, which were wild and shining, and touched with harmless insanity. Bauldy sprung suddenly to his feet, shook dust and slumber from him, came forward, looked on Ulack, and on New-come-John, gave a chuckling laugh and cried, "Wha's fool now, wha's fool now, could ye no lie still in your snug graves



down bye yonder, but ye maun come and pu' peaceable fowk out o' their beds, in the douse hour of the night."

"Bauldy, my bairn, Bauldy, my pet," said Gibbie, in a soothing tone, "these men are living; they were never in the grave, nor yet dead."

"No dead!" cried Bauldy, with a wild laugh, "then the faut lies in the hemp, and the laxity o' the tow; I dreamed that the tane was hanged for murder, and the tother for stealing sheep. But they mauna mind me, they mauna mind me; I sometimes think that I am dead myself, and yet I jalouse again I'm living; feel ye that?" and without more ado he gave the messenger called New-come-John such a punch in the ribs, as made him stagger.

"O! never mind him, never mind the harmless innocent," said Gowden Gibbie, "but sit ye down, and make the time short with a cheerer of brandy, and be sure and dinna cross poor Bauldy, for, gomerall though he be, he has a strong arm and a ready hand: and hear ye me—as ye would answer for committing sins, on no account give him one drop of brandy, for besides being wastery, it will stir him up,

and make him terrible to be seen. 'I shall be back within the hour, and then we can hie away to Gripantauk."

"Wha's fool now? wha's fool," said Bauldy, seating himself by the hearth, and spreading his palms upon both knees by the side of New-come-John.

They had only reached the threshold, when Ulack said, "Sordid peasant, thou wilt undo all—cast all coin out of thy pocket—the presence of metal, which has been debased in the dirty toils of traffic, will cause the liquid gold to remain unfrozen in the hill till doomsday." This was a cheerful assurance to Gowden Gibbie, who was not without some secret misgivings concerning the motives of his companion. Away he went with a lightened heart, treading circumspectly in the shadow of Ulack, and making a penny spin from his finger and thumb, into the little rill which skirted the foot of the hill of Promise. "Aye, now," said the disciple of Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan, "the spell will work freely."

## CHAPTER III.

THEY soon reached the hill ; the moon looked over its summit, and shot a faint light down its side, touching a rock here, and a bush there, gilding the dewy backs of the reposing sheep, and dancing in the bickering stream which, rising in the miser's well, was soon lost to sight in a thick wood, whence its din, as it leaped from rock to rock, was diffused for miles around. Up they climbed over part of the hill, and halting by the well, Ulack drew a circle, half in moonshine and half in shadow, the diameter and more of the hive, and pointing to

the spade, motioned with his feet and hand for Gibbie to dig. He dug a hole three feet deep, laying the earth on one side, and the circular sod on the other. Ulack suddenly laying his hand on Gibbie's arm, whispered, "Look at the moon; she says, proceed! the stars give their consent—one planet indeed seems a little unwilling; there is a time for all things, and the time is come for us. O! Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-CoolieKhan, these seven dervishes of Damascus, the seven wise men of Mount Ararat, be propitious and prosper this wondrous labour!" So saying, he placed the old hive carefully in the bottom of the hole, filled it round with earth, which he kneaded carefully in, and replaced the circular turf so neatly, that the whole seemed undisturbed ground.

Much marvelled Gowden Gibbie when he saw all this; he looked as he was bid, at both moon and stars, but in his sight they shone as usual; there was not the least appearance of consciousness about them. He was afraid to speak, lest he should undo the spell, and looked anxiously at his companion, who performed the whole affair orderly and with a grave compo-

sure. "The work's done, and done discreetly," said Ulack, "all that is wanting is time, and time will come. Aye! art thou there? that's right too; its no for nought that ye come. Gibbie, dare ye look where I look? Yon little dark creature, three span high, with a tail like a flail, and eyes like lighted candles, is my little familiar demon of the mine; he is compelled to stand watch and ward over one experiment, even in his own despite; shall I motion him nearer? for it's unsafe to speak to him."

"He is near enough," said Gibbie, in a visible tremour; "yet I canna just say that I see him."

"Then I forbode dissapointment in this spell," said the magician; "but there is a charm for it yet; drink that, then look and tell me what thou seest," and he held him out a cup of ale.

Gibbie allowed the drink to run slowly down; for a stranger, he observed, should aye walk a new road leisurely. Taking his mouth from the cup, he shook his head, and said, "I see just what I saw before, unless, indeed, yon thing

which I would take for the shadow of the saugh-bush, should be the emissary."

"That's better, but it won't do yet; I must raise it higher," said Ulack, repeating the charm in stronger materials—"drink that, and look on the sky, and tell me what thou seest; we must try heaven, since earth refuses;" and he held out a cup of brandy.

With a sore heart and a discomposed brow, Gibbie emptied the cup, which held half a pint, and looked at the sky with all his might, for the brandy was strong, and the ale was far from weak, and his eyes were inclined to be giddy.

"I see two moons," said Gibbie, "one horned, and the other cowed—and the stars seem dancing Highland reels."

"That will do for the sky," said Ulack, "take the tother cup, and then look at the earth."

Gibbie did as he was bid, and exclaimed, "The earth, her hills, are running round, and the streams are gaun backwards, and all is bright as if ten thousand Will-o-Wisps were skelping away at gig and reel. I think I can see the Familiar of the mine now."



“The spell is sound, and sure, and complete,” exclaimed Ulack, “so sit down with me, and listen to my words.”

Gibbie sat willingly down, for he was unable to stand quite steady, and his companion thus addressed him: “Rejoice, Gilbert, whom men call Gowden Gibbie, for the time when that name will be amply earned is close at hand. This hill, as I partly intimated before, is as full of liquid gold as the cell of the bee in October is full of honey; gold grows in the grass, shines in the flowers, and glitters in the running streams, visible to all. I have, as Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan directed, prepared the charm and cast a sinless spell. I have placed a charmed hive in the bosom of the hill, which will be filled with such treasure as shall enrich thee. The first year the drops will be hanging as thickly in it as drops of dew in the bosom of a rose.”

Gowden Gibbie opened his eyes in wonder, till the disks expanded as wide as saucers; he poured brandy into a glass, and holding it out said, “O! wondrous man, drink, drink; tell me what will be on the second year,—drink, drink.”



“ At the end of the second year,” said Ulack, “ the coagulated gold will be as thick in the hive as combs of honey when the season of flowers is over.”

Gibbie filled the glass again with brandy, and exclaimed, “ Marvellous ! marvellous ! drink, I entreat you, drink. I never heard so sweet a story. Gold as plentiful as honeycomb ! coagulated gold ! a grand expression, and means lumps, I’ll warrant—goud in gowpins.”

“ Even so,” said Ulack, doing at the same time needful reverence to the proffered brandy ; “ at the end of the third year the hive will be filled with pure and portable treasure-gold, fit for the crucible and the mint-press—all metal and no dross.”

“ O man ! marvellous man !” exclaimed Gibbie, “ will ye no drink ?—take another draught of the brandy—and are ye sure now that all this will come to pass ? O ! I’ll long remember the name of Ulack and Prince Cream-Cann-Camsterie-Cannie-Cann—they are my benefactors !”

He poured out another, the sole remaining glass of brandy. Ulack, steadying himself as

well as he could, said, with some interruptions of hiccapping,—“Thou art an impatient believer in the Golden Mystery, and hast already lost two years’ enjoyment of this treasure—tempt not thy fortune further, lest peradventure seven years be added to the three. Listen to the law of my great master, Prince Cream—why need I repeat his sacred name so often in a sinful and blinded land like this. Listen, I say, to the law. Touch not the magic hive—tell to no one—write to no one—sign to no one—whisper to no one—swear to no one, and sing to no one, that such a matter exists, till three years, three hours, and three minutes are come and gone, and then take seven strong men with you—dig up—carry home, and enjoy thy treasure. Disobey, and the spell which gathers the gold will dissolve and produce nothing, as surely as I swallow this brandy.” He drank the liquor, threw down the glass, seized Gibbie by the hand, and wringing it till the blood nearly started from beneath the nails, added, “Farewell, I go to a far land, perchance I may not see thee again; and yet I think on’t, I may. Make gold, hoard gold, and work thyself out

of thy own door with it, even as bees work themselves out of their hives with honey. Farewell, Lord Gilbert of the Golden Hill." And away he went with a hasty and unsteady step, and was seen no more.

Homewards went Gowden Gibbie, looking frequently back at the hill, which rose round and bright in the beams of the moon, nor did he fail to think a little of his friend Ulack. His thoughts dwelt much on the weakness of this eastern magician, in coming with a valuable secret all the way from Tadmor in the wilderness, for the purpose of enriching a perfect stranger: he broke into loud and uncontrollable laughter, and cried, "Well, Ulack, ye are a prince at casting spells, nor are ye deficient in the art of dram-drinking; but wow, man, ye are mentally soft, and in worldly matters but a mere goose, and can nae mair haud the candle to Gowden Gibbie than a paddock can chaunt like a laverock. There's a wondrous soft place in that wise head now of yours; and I dare say Prince Cream-Cann-Scuttle-Cann is marvellously deficient in the same place. But here's my ain house. What

can be the matter? there's a light in the windows equal to twenty candles, and a reek coming out at the lum-head as thick as a corn sack; and there's daft Bauldy bleezing away and singing! —what's to happen next?" A tremor took his knees, and he could scarcely make his way to his own threshold.

Gibbie held up his hands when he entered. A chair and two stools were on the fire, and already in flame; a large bacon-ham lay above them, and all united to raise a blaze which ascended half way up the chimney. The table was set on the middle of the floor, and on the top of that sat poor Bauldy—an old rusty sword girded round him, a pewter basin on his head, and a pot-stick in his hand, and with a look which he imagined to be regal, for he had assumed some state, he was performing the part of a king with all his might. An empty brandy-bottle lay at his side, and explained the cause of all this inattention. Gibbie displayed unlooked-for patience. "Bauldy, my bairn—Bauldy, my dow, what's the meaning of all this, and where's New-come-John?" The

answer returned was the following verse :—

“King Archibald sat on his high throne,  
With nobles at his knee,  
There came a man and cried ‘a boon,  
Crowned king, I crave of thee;  
It’s a’ to grip twa traitors strang  
And hang them on a tree.’”

“But, Bauldy, my bairn—Bauldy, my dow,”  
said Gibbie in his softest tone; “come down  
hinnie, and tell me all about this. Ye ken I  
maun hie awa to the dying portioner. I’m  
owre lang here already.”

Bauldy, however, only continued his ballad—

“‘Go, take them, take them,’ said the king,  
And high he held his hand,  
‘And hang them up among the crows,  
For one by wicked hand,  
And one by sinful tongue, hath robbed  
The liegemen of my land.’”

Gibbie began to lose all patience—“Come  
down, ye born gomeral,” he exclaimed, “and  
don’t sit crooning there in the middle of all this  
mischief. Lord! an it were na that the blessed  
hive will pay sweetly for a’, I wad gang as de-

mented as thy daft sell. Come down, I say ! and saddle my horse, and let me owre the hill to the sick and dying sinner." It was all in vain, he only sung the louder, but in a different spirit.

"The bit's in his lip,  
And the spur in his flank,  
He is running in foam  
Where the rushes are rank ;  
And he that sits on him  
May spur him in pride,  
He has gold in his pockets  
And well may he ride."

"O! I have ye now !, I have ye now ! poor kindly innocent !" cried Gowden Gibbie ; " I am harried out of house and hall, and all by that flaffing gar-me-trow New-come-John."

Away he now flew to his private chamber—found the door wrenched from the hinges—a candle burning, and his large oaken chest standing with its lid as open as the door of a change-house. "O! my bonnie bonnet-pieces, and my braw bonds !" groaned Gibbie, with growing agony of soul, "evil hands have been upon you ; but praise be blest, the sheepskin's safe—



but my golden nest ! my real, little, weel hained  
hive of minted gowd has ta'en wing. O ! its  
like robbing the kirk and waur—the kirk can  
cover the disaster with the ready garment of  
faith, but what will supply the place of three  
hundred and fifteen gude gowden Ann Stuarts ?  
Now let me see ; has the reiver found his way  
to my secret hoard—to my Abr'am's bosom, as I  
call it, where I fly for consolation when wool  
falls in price ? Na, na, he has nae found thee  
out—the eye would be a gleg ane that could  
find out my mysterious pose in the floor with a  
lid of hewn stone. Ay, ay, it's safe, and the  
skaith, though dreadful enough to justify sui-  
cide, can be amended, and will be amended in  
three years. Ah ! Ulack, my kind and con-  
scientious Ulack, this comes of scoffing at thee  
and thy simplicity. What a luck that I didna  
gang awa to see my auld leal friend of Gripan-  
tauket ! God, but he would have given me a  
hearing ! and scored me out of his will, and  
that would have been worse. But an ever I  
can meet with that scamp, who called himself  
New-come-John, see an he disna get acquaint



with the jails of Dumfries or Carlisle, for I wot-nae which is nearest."

Gowden Gibbie set his house in order, sent a tale through the land that he had been robbed of all he had ; he called it one thousand, and romance called it three, and added, the way that it had been accomplished was by filling the faithful Bauldy fou with brandy. " Yet I'm na sure," quoth he to himself, " but this loss may be productive of gain. I can drive a harder bargain with the mercy of mankind. I'm the unfortunate person whose house was plundered of all he possessed—give him a tearing penny-worth, dinna beat him down in his price, ye may come to want yoursel. Conscience ! but I think this hardship will prove a benefit, only let one keep a calm sough about the extent of my loss."

## CHAPTER IV.

HAPPINESS was again restored to the dwelling of Gowden Gibbie, and fortune seemed willing to mark him out for her own, and plant her banner on his threshold. His chief solace lay with the charmed hive on the hill, and all losses seemed trivial compared to the coming deluge of gain. The happy man sat, or walked, always rapt and inspired. The whole world seemed like a treasure-chest, of which he had accidentally found the key, and he was ever opening it in imagination, and envying the unsumma-

ble contents. But no splendid palaces, no magnificent dresses, no bevy of servants, nor even the presence of ladies of high or low degree, appeared in these pictures of enjoyment, which his fancy loved to paint; he saw only heaps of money and bars of gold, by the light of a little lamp which he held in his own hand, while Bauldy kept watch and ward with the brandy-bottle, far from the reach of his hand. The music, which he imagined he heard, was the sound of his patent locks as he undid them with the key—no additional dish appeared on his table, no extra fuel was added to the fire; his narrow soul did not expand with his fortune, but seemed, like a snail, to retreat within its sordid shell.

Eyes are hurt by excess of light, and hearts may be injured by an overflow of happiness, and so it seemed to fare with Gowden Gibbie. The impatience of his nature, like an internal fire, was silently consuming him. He counted the months and the days, and thought the year would never be done. He longed to examine the charmed hive, to give a hint to the world how rich he would soon become; and he loved

to wander around the hill, and nigh the miner's well, and say to himself: "Three years, three years, and one of these flown.—O! happy, happy, Gibbie! thy name's no be for nought. Now the drops of gold will be hanging in the hive like dew-drops in the bosom of the rose. O! I mind the words, weel; and then when the second year is come, and gone, the coagulated gold will be hanging as thick and gross as the honeycomb; and oh! three years—seven men to carry thee hame, my beloved treasure—gold—nothing but pure gold, fit for the crucible and the mint. I mind the wrds weel."

The work of the world required to be done meanwhile—there came lambs to sell, sheep to shear, and wool to take to market, and that intercourse to maintain with society, which causes wealth to increase and enables man to live. Gowden Gibbie went to a lamb-fair. The place was far from his house—bargains were not easy to make—money was obstinate in coming in, and the sun was set two hours or more before he reached the limits of his own ground. His road lay among pastoral hills, and he so con-

trived it, that he approached within sight of the miner's well—a place he loved much to muse upon. His horse—for he was mounted—enjoyed the luxury of his own free will, for neither spur nor whip had the rider—spurs were expensive, and causing the horse to start and prance, consumed shoes. To a whip, some of the same objections applied; and the animal, conscious of the miserable provender which lay in its rack at home, took a mouthful of tender grass here, and another mouthful there; and when it came to the rivulet bank, where the sward was green and plentiful, it fairly stood still and began to supper itself. Gibbie, struck with his unarmed heels, coaxed and clapped and urged; but his horse made no other acknowledgment to his words than a hasty switch of its tail, and a resenting kick of its heels. “The mickle devil may drive ye for me!” exclaimed Gibbie, losing all patience—he had not well spoken the words, till a sharp blow from some unseen hand made the horse spring a fathom forward, and away it went at the gallop.

When his horse slackened in its speed, the rider looked behind to see who had struck

this unceremonious blow, and saw a man in a close-buttoned suit of raven gray, a hat and plume, and a cloak, which streamed over his horse's rump, riding close behind him. His emotion was little short of trembling when he beheld this equestrian apparition; for the road was private, and led no where but to his own house—and, moreover, was lonely, and had earned an indifferent name of old; in short, it had the reputation of being haunted. To add to the embarrassment of Gibbie, the stranger began to sing a rough and swaggering song—his strong harsh voice disturbed the cows and scared the sheep—these were the words:—

#### HOBBIE HALL.

##### I.

My name is Hobbie Hall,  
Yield or die, yield or die,  
My name is Hobbie Hall,  
Yield or die.  
My name is Hobbie Hall,  
And I rob both great and small,  
But my neck must pay for all—  
Yield or die!



## II.

There is red gold on the road,  
Yield or die, yield or die,  
There is red gold on the road,  
Yield or die.  
There is red gold on the road,  
Look on these pieces broad,  
I have robbed a priest, by God—  
Yield or die !

## III.

All have heard of Hobbie Hall,  
Yield or die, yield or die,  
All have heard of Hobbie Hall,  
Yield or die.  
With craped face and whistling ball  
He has fortune at his call,  
By the Lord, he's lord of all !  
Yield or die !

The stranger having concluded this rough and irreverent ditty, moved his horse hastily forward, and thus accosted Gowden Gibbie : “A fair good even to thee, friend—how go markets ?”

To this interrogation Gibbie answered : “E en indifferent—very indifferent ;” and he urged on his horse, willing to get rid of one whom he regarded as an uncannie customer.

“Wool, how sells it ? mutton, what is the price ?” inquired the stranger.



“Alack-a-day,” answered Gibbie, “no one speculates now, either in money or in wool; and as for the penny siller, they haud a grip on’t like a hawk by a hen chicken. I have nae turned coin to-day, and have been obliged to take this bye-road home to escape the standing grievance of toll-bars.”

The stranger said sharply, “I heard gold chink in thy pocket as thou rodest from the brook—but fear not, I am no coveter of gold.”

“O, Hobbie Hall!” exclaimed Gibbie, “I am a poor miserable creature—I was robbed of a thousand gold guineas by a cunning limmer, who called himself New-come-John—and all that I have in the wide world, is the auld horse I ride on, and half a score of ewes—and may be a piece of silver, or aiblins gold, but they are baith keepsakes of my mother’s—sad memorials, Hobbie Hall—and I’m sure ye’ll spare them.”

It was now the stranger’s turn to make exclamations:—“Why, thou goose,” said he, “Hobbie Hall is the hero of an old song, and his bones have dropt from the gibbet a century

ago. I am a peaceable wayfarer, and a stranger too, and am come to seek a man called Gilbert of the Golden Hill, whom the peasants called Gowden Gibbie—a name well known in Crim Tartary and Cochin China, and at the court of the Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan, in the centre of Bassarabia.”

Gibbie sat perpendicularly on his saddle—put on a look of consequence, and muttered to himself, “It is a brother in craft with my magician Ulack, and I’ll wager comes charged with some message anent the hiving of the liquid gold. Friend,” said he aloud, “I am he whom ye seek. I am Gilbert of the Golden Hill, commonly called Gowden Gibbie—known, for ought I know, in Crim Tartary and Cochin China, and at the court of Prince Cream-Cann-Cattagorie-Cooli Khan—what is your will with me?”

The traveller drew his rein, stared on Gowden Gibbie, and exclaimed, “Impossible! accustomed as I am to things marvellous, I cannot believe an assertion so incredible. What, *thou!* thou with a sorry horse—threadbare dress, squalid looks, covetous eyes, and soul base and

sordid? *Thou*, a muckworm, crawling on the dunghill of creation—*thou* the lord of the Golden Hill! I cannot believe it, though I can believe much.”

“Believe or no, even as thou wilt,” said Gilbert, “I was born beside the hill, nursed beside the hill, and educated beside the hill; more than that, my father left me the hill, and many a score of sheep, and many a thousand lambs, and many a fleece of fair wool, have I sold off the hill, and by and attour the hill’s mine, and shall be mine, if all the Chams of Cream Tartary and Cochin China had sworn to the contrary.”

The stranger took off his hat, bowed to his horse’s mane, and said, with a tone of humility, “Lord of the Hill of Liquid Gold, I do thee honour; and I greet thee from a tried friend and true, Ulack the chief magician at the court of Prince Cream-Cann-Categorie-Coolie Khan of Bassarabia.”

“Ulack!” said Gibbie, “what, my own old, wise, prudent friend Ulack—and how fares he?”

“As well as he wishes,” replied the traveller. “Alas, his whole thoughts are on the advancement of mysterial science, and for the advantage

of others. Besides the art of extracting liquid gold, he has discovered the art of extracting liquid diamonds, and is now somewhere in the centre of India making the liquid gems come from the earth like melted glass from the furnace. He wears a shirt of sackcloth girt with a rope of hair, goes barefooted, drinks water and eats pulse—ye would scarcely know him from a skeleton; he will kill himself, but then he knows it is for the good of mankind.”

“Aweel,” said Gibbie, “I have no doubt that Providence has a wise purpose in’t, and that premature death here, will bring surer happiness hereafter. I’m thinking y’ell have something to say to me from our worthy friend Ulack, and as we cannot well find a quieter place than his, ye may e’en say your say here.”

“That I would, gladly,” replied the messenger, “for I am on a journey of moment, but I cannot deliver the message any where else than on the spot where the spell was wrought, wherever that may be.”

“I wonder,” muttered Gibbie to himself, “if the message maun be extracted by means of

roasted collops and cupfulls of brandy. Well then, friend," he added aloud, "that was at my own fireside, and we are nae sae far from it; here's the house."

He halted at the door and shouted, "Bauldy, my bonnie man! Bauldy, my dow! come out and stable the stranger's horse. Have ye ridden him all the way from Cochin China?"

"Some three thousand and odd miles," replied the stranger; "swam several friths—a mere trifle, and necessary to moisten the dust on his hoofs."

The door now opened, and out came Bauldy; he fixed his eyes on the stranger, who sat fair and visible in the clear moonlight, and instead of taking his horse or helping him to dismount, he sung out,

"‘O welcome,’ said King Archibald,  
‘Come fill the cup with wine,  
And thou shalt drink thy ladye love,  
And I will pledge thee mine.’  
A belted knight cried, ‘Nay, my liege,’  
A belted knight cried, ‘Nay,  
His ladye-love is sordid gold——’”

"There's a hole i' the ballad however," con-

tinued Bauldy, "and its a pity, for it's a prime ane, and was made langsyne when there were reivers in the land;" he paused a moment and cried, "now I can manage it! but will you no come in, light, and venture in, light, and venture in?" and seizing the bridle of the horse the stranger dismounted and strode into the house, not unwilling, it would seem, to escape from the curious and searching looks with which the other regarded him.

Bauldy now seized his master by the arm, and dragged him, with many a wink and nod towards the stable. "Gibbie," he whispered, "I'm na sae daft as ye trow, or as I gar folk believe; gang cannilie into the secret chamer, and bolt yersel in, and haud by Abram's bosom like grim death, else ye'll be harried; that's New-come-John—leave him to me, I'll manage him brawly. D'ye want to hang him, or never to see him mair? I say hang—I never saw a man hanged in my life."

"O never let me see him mair, Bauldy, my bairn! we'se no hang him, Bauldy, my dow; but are ye sure ye can manage him?"

Bauldy waved his master away, and whistling loudly secured the horses in the stable, and putting the key in his pocket returned into the house.



## CHAPTER V.

A CLEAR fire sparkled on the hearth of Gilbert's dwelling, a little lamp added its slender light to the glare of the fire, and there sat the stranger with apparent complacency. Bauldy drew in a chair and sat down beside him, laying his hands as he laid his, and putting on the same kind of circumspect and suspicious look. "A capital pair, a capital pair," said Bauldy; "now which is the fool and which is the knave?—Aha! that's a queer quaston."

"Bauldy, my bairn, Bauldy, my dow," said the other, "will ye bid your master come? time presses, business urges, and I maun be gone."

"Ye'll never see my master, as ye call him,

mair," answered the other; "he's now in Abram's bosom."

"Dead!" exclaimed the stranger, "that cannot be."

"As dead," quoth Bauldy, "as your master Gripantauket was, when ye were New-come-John. Aha! is that a sair place?"

The traveller started up and said, "Damnation, d'ye know me?" and looked about undecided what to do.

"Know ye!" said Bauldy, "and wherefore no? I never saw the face once that I know not again, and my master kens ye too, and what's waur, the gallows will ken ye, and I want ye hanged. I never saw a man hanged in my life."

The stranger had by this time reached the threshold; "My horse," he said.

"Aye, your honour's horse," answered Bauldy.

"I say, my horse, fool," said the other.

"And I say, your horse, knave," responded Bauldy; "the key of the stable door's in my pouch—y'ell have some skill and strength to get it."

The stranger now grasped Bauldy by the

collar ; Bauldy seized him in return. A short struggle ensued, when the stranger received such a fall as seemed to crush his whole frame.

“ Wha’s fool now ? ” shouted Bauldy, “ wha’s fool now ? New-come-John, lie ye there ; ye ken what ye did among my master’s gowd lang syne ; but, deil as ye are, rise and rin, for my master is gone for Simon Brodie, the shepherd, and his three sons, and ye will be grabbed and neckished.”

The fallen man started to his feet, and fled like quicksilver, and Bauldy returned singing to his fireside, and cried, “ Come out, master, come out, and take charge of your house, and let me be daft again ; this wisdom is a painful garment—motely is the pleasanter wear.”

“ Bauldy, my dow—Bauldy, my bairn,” said Gibbie, making his appearance, “ I shall make a man of thee for this.”

“ That’s mair than a better hand could do,” said Bauldy. “ I wad rather ye wad make my bed, ell deep of straw, and lay three sacks aboon me.”

“ It shall be done,” answered Gibbie.

These attempts on the treasure of Gibbie

were now talked of far and wide ; some pitied him for his wealth, and some called him sordid, and all declared that he would of a surety bury his gold in some lonely place, and die and leave the secret undivulged. This belief received strong confirmation, when it was told that he loved to wander on one of his hills by moonlight, and that on Sunday he was frequently seen sitting by the miner's well, and looking wistfully to a little green knoll, which rose like a wart from the ascent of the hill. There rumour said he had buried his treasure ; and there, or near there, he was sought by those who desired to find him. All this was not unknown to that numerous class of industrious men, to whom eastern Ulack and his comrades belonged, and Gowden Gibbie was marked out as a subject that came nicely within a certain circuit of country, which the society resolved to make experiments on. One of the number, a southern by birth, and a stranger, made a memorandum of the marks of his intended victim, and, instructed by Ulack, known afterwards, in the Newgate Calendar, by the name of Gypsey Geordie, and by his comrade

New-Come-John, alias John Crombie, he departed on his mission.

Great was the alarm of Gowden Gibbie, as he took his customary stroll one moonlight night, to see a man start up from the ground within throw of a quoit from the place where his treasure-hive was hid. "What wantest thou here, friend, among my sheep, at this hour?" said Gibbie. "Ye're here for nae gude?"

"Curse thy sheep and thee both," said the southron, "I want thy gold—where is it hid?—shew me the box—here's the key that will open it." And he held a handsome pistol, with a patent lock and hair-trigger, within an inch of Gibbie's nose. "Shew me thy gold, I say, else I shall pull this little ticklish piece of iron, called a trigger."

With many a sigh and many a groan poor Gibbie took his way to the spot where the hive was hid, and turned to his enemy and said, "Ye will spoil a grand experiment—this hill is full of liquid gold as an orange is of moisture, and a wise man hath come from a far land to teach me how to obtain it. The secret will not be ripe for disclosure this long twelvemonth

yet ; I hope ye'll no persist, for it will spoil a grand experiment."

"Aye, aye ; a likely tale, but it won't pass muster, master," said the other ; "you can't come the romantic over me, as ye did with New-Come-John. Stir—shake your pins—dig up the dust—or dam'me—" and he menaced him with the pistol.

Thus urged and endangered, poor Gibbie dug up the hive, turn it round and round, and cried, "There, I tauld that ye wad spoil a grand experiment ; the golden combs are coagulating, as I'm a ruined sinner. O wilful, sinful man ! the riches of Solomon's temple were but a trifle to the treasures which this hill contains, and which this charmed hive would have gathered. In another year it would have been filled with solid gold, instead of these gathering drops. O ye have muckle to answer for ! Now life's nought ;" and he threw himself resolutely down, and refused all comfort, replying to the repeated inquiries of the robber, "Shoot me, shoot me—life's no worth a brass bodle now—shoot me, put me out of pain !"

"Confound my body, and smash my limbs !"



muttered his assailant, replacing his pistol in his pocket, "this can be no sharp-witted miser—he is the parish fool, by gemini, and I have come fifty miles and odd to rob a born idiot! A hive of treasure and bees which gathered gold? I never heard the like on't—I'll be sweetly laughed at in the profession, if this gets wind. Friend," he added, touching Gibbie with his foot, "can ye keep a secret?"

"Eh, what will ye give me?" answered Gibbie.

"This is a Scotch fool now," said the other, "not so far gone in his wits as we in the south; there's half a guinea for thee—and stay, a word of advice—shave thy head, wear a clay cap, and keep at home in the full of the moon." So saying he went away.

When Gibbie returned home, he sat down and wept, and Bauldy sat beside him and laughed. Men came far and near to hear his wonderful story, and many went away shaking their heads and saying, "Heard ever a Christian lug sic a leesome-looking tale, as that of the Charmed Hive and the Liquid Gold? Hence-



forth let us call him Gowden Gibbie nae mair  
—let his name be Goose Gibbie.”

The new name stuck, and both are inscribed on his grave-stone in the parish kirk-yard where he lies, side by side with his friend and servant Bauldy, who, by reflecting persons who draw morals from men's lives, came afterwards to be called King Archibald.

THE  
DEER-STALKERS OF GLENSKIACH.

A HIGHLAND LEGEND.

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BY ANDREW PICKEN.

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CHAPTER I

The red roe bounds swift through the wilds of Braemar ;  
The war-cry sounds sharp from the crags of Glenshee ;  
But where nature blooms sweetest, the heart may break  
    soonest,  
And Love's tales are aye saddest in vales like Strathdee.  
*Scraps.*

ABOUT the middle of the seventeenth century,  
before civil improvement had penetrated into  
the fastnesses of the north, the Highlands of  
Scotland were in all respects in that wild state,

from which constantly arose circumstances and incidents that are at least very different from the common routine of modern life. Feudal clanship was still in its vigour. To the lawless tribes of the Scottish mountains and forests, life was a mixture of romance and barbarism, of enthusiastic devotion to their adored chiefs, and of liberty as perfect as that of the noble savage himself, who roams the wilds at will, and gratifies his love or his vengeance by his own dexterity, or the strength of his arm.

And yet, as is well known, Highlanders have to this day a tinge of melancholy in their characters. Nature is often grand and impressive around them; but the impression, though deep, and poetical from its wildness, is generally cheerless in its solemnity, and bleak and rugged in its very grandeur. The inconstant sky of these foggy regions adds often a darker gloom to the effect of the bold scenery of their mountains, and to the impressive stillness of their sweeping flats of red heath; but when the sun *does* shine with summer clearness upon their romantic hills, and opens out the mysteries of their green glens; when his cheering beams become

reflected from their glorious lochs and their still waters in the hollows, the heart of the roving Highlander leaps with joy, and he thinks his own country the most charming on earth.

Much of the Scottish scenery, beneath its mountains, consists, even to this day, of a picturesque mixture of scattered woodlands, rocky hills, and green glades, which still bear the general name of forests, although considerably changed since the times of which we write, by being denuded of the national fir or pine-trees, of which these woods were chiefly composed. The forests of Athol and of Glenmore, of Abernethy and Braemar, have long been celebrated as the great fastnesses of the Highlands, where, in times of public strife, domestic feud, or unsuccessful rebellion, the hardy Celts of the hill could set at defiance all search as well as all regular warlike attack. It is with the last of these, namely, the ancient forest of Braemar, that our simple tale has chiefly to do.

The great Mar-forest, now maintaining little of its former character, situated in the middle of Aberdeenshire, and extending some forty miles along the banks of the Scottish Dee, is

sufficiently diversified in its interior scenery and surface, to afford excellent shelter and concealment, for all who chose to lead a lawless life within its bosom, or whom crime or misfortune had driven from their homes, and from circumstances more akin to comfort and civilization. At the time we speak of, it belonged to John, the eighth Earl of Mar,\* and, like other Scottish forests in the neighbourhood, was well stocked with game of various sorts, now comparatively scarce in the Highlands; particularly with the well known red deer of the north, that browsing on the sweet herbage of its dells and coires, bounded in multitudes amongst its ancient oaks, its dark Scots firs, and its tangled brushwood. The hunting of the deer, the dun wolf, the badger and the boar, was, from the remotest period, as is well known, a favourite diversion of the Highland chieftains, and indeed of all Scotsmen, from the king downwards.

But poaching being an ancient amusement as

\* For several of the particulars on which this tale is founded, the author is indebted to the talented Ettrick Shepherd, the indefatigable collector of Scottish traditions, and a worthy coadjutor of our club.

well as legitimate hunting, it was not to be supposed that the fat bucks who ran wild in these woods should not prove a great temptation to ruined lairds and other inferior gentlemen, who never had much to boast of save their ancient lineage, and to sundry other hungry Highlanders, who, from various causes, were driven into a sort of exile, in the heart of their own country. Accordingly, in these days, there were not wanting numbers of brave fellows who loved the free air of the forest, and delighted exceedingly in game and venison; and who, possessing a quick eye, and a strong arm for drawing a bow, contrived to live at free quarters in the woods of Braemar and Athol, chiefly upon the savoury food which they hunted by day, or such other God-sends as their reiver skill and their good claymores might procure them by night.

Although this forest had, from time immemorial, afforded an asylum and support to certain marauders, black-mail men, and deer-stalkers, and although it was the owner's conviction that, to his own foresters, such gentry would always form part of the game to be hunted in his woods, yet some accounts that he had heard



concerning their number and audacity, about the time our story commences, induced him to give special heed to the subject, and try to prevent his good red deer from being more common to the use of others than to himself or his people. At this time there lived with him in the castle of Braemar, a youth, named Alaster Graham, or, as he was frequently called, Alaster the Sassenach, from his having been brought up in the Lowlands, and to him the earl determined to intrust the care of checking the constant incursions on his interesting live-stock in the woods.

This youth, had already made himself remarkable for uncommon strength, as well as for the perfect fearlessness with which he undertook enterprises and performed feats, which even to the hardy Highlanders of these glens seemed quite wonderful. Taller than common, the person of Alaster was yet exceedingly well formed, and built with athletic firmness, and his superiority in the usual martial exercise of the time soon procured him a high place in the respect of the other retainers of the earl. Being often employed, not only in deer-hunting with his patron or kinsman, but in making inroads upon the



reivers that burrowed in the heart of the wood, he had established a sort of out-post in a cave which was very peculiarly situated, and was accessible only by a single and secret pass, from which he gave the deer-stalkers great and constant annoyance.

It soon came to be understood that some relationship subsisted between Alaster and the Earl, but what that relationship precisely was, never was certainly known. Some said he was his illegitimate son, the consequence of a youthful amour with a fair cousin of the present countess, who bore the name of Graham; others said no, but so it was, that the earl had a great favour for him, and appointed him a sort of ranger of his immense forests. Nothing could be more to the taste of Alaster than this office; for hunting the fox, or pursuing the red deer were both his delight; and the very squabbles and contentions with the poaching marauders who infested the wood, contributed to the romantic excitement of his employment, and afforded many opportunities for exhibiting that personal prowess for which he had become famous far and near.

In those days, however, personal strength and undaunted courage were no rarity any where, least of all were they scarce among the wild freebooters of the Scottish forests; and there was in particular an excluded covey of the Gordons that had established itself within the recesses of the great wood of Braemar, which consisted of men as remarkable for their desperate courage and strength, as for the lawless life they were accustomed to lead. Among these, their chieftain, Grumach Gordon, though now beyond middle age, was a man well fitted to lead a band of broken men who were often engaged in fierce encounters with similar marauders, and whose broad claymores seldom were suffered long to remain inactive on the thighs of the wearers.

It so happened that Alaster Graham had never for a long period been able to fall in with any number of these Gordons, nor would he believe either in the plenty in which they were reported to live, nor the strength and courage which he had often heard most provokingly attributed to old Grumach their chief, or the bold and brave John of Leask, his rough and

undaunting kinsman. One day, however, strolling on foot-deep into the recesses of the forest, accompanied only by his man Farquhar, Alaster came unexpectedly upon the indications of human habitations. Pursuing their tract, the wanderers soon perceived a pleasant opening, beyond which, at the head of the glen, was ranged a snug congregation of habitations which made a sort of baille, or hamlet in the wood; and from the wattled chimneys of which rose, at the moment, such volumes of smoke as shewed pretty clearly that the people within neither wanted warmth nor food. A savoury scent of the well known venison came temptingly over the senses of the hungry travellers, as, late in the day, they came upon this woodland den of the Gordons, and Alaster soon found that he had more than one appetite to gratify, before he was likely to leave this comfortable spot.

“Where are you going, maister, and what are you behoving to do?” said Farquhar, his gilly or servant, “surely ye’re not gaun into the vera tod’s hole, wi’ your een wide open?”

“Would you have me to shirk like a Lowlander, from a gang of deer-stealers,” said

Alaster, "while I have a claymore on my hip? Poogh, Farquhar! If you're fear'd, man, go back to the old rock aboon the burn, or to the chimney cheek o' the Mar Castle; but as for me, since I've come so far, faith I'll have a tussle wi' the greedy Gordons o' the wood—Humph! what a fine smell of venison!—devil do them good o't!"

"Lord-sake, maister, dinna gang straight into the lion's den," replied the gilly, holding the other by the plaid, "if ye do, ye'll ne'er get another sight o' the tappy turrets o' the auld Castles of Kildrummy, or Braemar, an' I'll never get another waimfu' o' steev brochan at the laird's ha'—haud back, maister!—there's life an' death on't."

"I'll just see first what's inside of that braw bigging that reeks like a killogie," said the bold young forest-ranger, striding forward. In another instant he had opened the low door of the rude building, and the two found themselves at once in a warm and roomy apartment.

"*Kimerhashen*—there's fouth and routh here," said Alaster, as he drew himself up to his length on getting within the dwelling, and looking up

saw the ceiling of the house thickly hung with red-deer hams, while the smell of the savoury mess, which was cooking in a large pot that hung over the fire, had a particular temptation in it. Nor less so was the sight of a quantity of dried malt at the farther end of the house, which was in preparation for brewing, and mayhap for distilling the peculiar beverage of the hardy Highlanders. A good-looking woman stood by the fire, paying due attention to the potful of venison-stew, which sent forth so pleasing an odour through the sheiling, and three or four bare-houghed Highlanders lounged near the fire, or scoured their weapons at the farther window. They all seemed startled by the entrance of the strangers, but the men only looked darkly at each other without offering any other than a very slight civility, while the good woman, dropping her ladle and a Highland curtesy at the same time, politely offered Alaster Graham a three-legged stool on which to rest himself, until she might learn the errand which had brought so buirdly a young fellow to the dwelling.

A mutual glance between the men and our

hero, shewed him in an instant that some of them knew him, and declining the low seat offered by the cailach, he determined, by some brief observation, at once to decide the nature of his reception. Casting his eye upwards again at the tiers of brown hams above him, the sight of which galled both his pride of place, and reproached his vigilance, he said, with a mixture of defiance and sarcasm,—“ By my faith, lads, ye know where the Earl of Mar’s deer bounds, and can bring down a buck with arrow and bow, without giving yourself the trouble to inquire to whom it belongs. ’Tis well you can fare thus in the wood.”

“ Hoigh ! the fare’s weel enough,” said one of the men, saucily ; “ but the horned beasts that brattle through the forest dinna run in at the idle man’s door, an’ the black moor-cock that whirrs o’er the brake disna flee into the kail-pat of its own accord. But to whatever fare we hae in the wilds o’ Mar, the stranger is welcome that comes as a friend.”

“ As to friend or foe,” answered Graham, with fearless rashness, “ that must depend on the account you can give of how or where the



venison has been obtained, which makes this woodland hovel a store of greater plenty than the braid kitchen of the Earl of Mar's castle. I eat not stolen meat, nor do I even bend my houghs to sit in the company of katerin knaves. Whence came all this venison?"

"Oigh, oigh, Mr. Sassenach!" answered the Highlander, coolly; "whenever ye can tell a stag's horn frae a steer's stump, an' a Highland shentleman wi' a claymore to keep off the braggarts, frae the laird's loon that disna ken how to speak civility when he goes a roving through the woods among better men, I'll answer the query—but not till then."

The brawny Gael had scarcely got these words out of his mouth, when Alaster, regardless of all consequences, took two strides up to the speaker, and seizing him by the throat, commanded him in a tone of authority which struck the others with astonishment, instantly to inform him explicitly how he had obtained the store of venison that he saw around him.

The Highlander, who was no other than the John Gordon, usually called John of Leask, of whom our bold youth had often heard, not



doubting that the imperious intruder had a strong party without, who waited to second the quarrel that he seemed to be raising, thought fit for the present to lower his tone, and civilly informing the stranger that he was not the master there, assured him that the inquiry would soon be answered to his satisfaction.

The house in which Alaster and these persons now were, was a large barn-shaped building, which served for a sort of hall or place of public meeting and entertainment for the marauders of the forest, as well as a general store-house for their provision, and a distillery for the manufacture of the aqua, with which they occasionally regaled themselves in no very stinted measure. While the foregoing altercation was proceeding, one of the men had stepped out under cover of the smoke of the large fire which burned near the farther end, to apprise their leader, Grumach Gordon, of what was going forward. Hastily buckling on his broad sword, the veteran chief rushed into the barn or rural hall of his people, and was absolutely petrified with astonishment, on perceiving a single youth of little more than nineteen, with a strong grasp collaring his kins-

man, while the hardy John of Leask seemed to quail before him.

“Gad a-mercy! what’s this? a pig man—that’s but a gilly—thrappling at the throat of John o’ Leask! Aff hands! Got tamn! A young whelp frae the dugs will think to worry an old stag!”

“Tell me, if you are master, who kidnapped the red deer whose houghs and hams are ranged in scores over our heads?” demanded Alaster, throwing the man he had held by the collar from him.

“Phugh-ooh! is that it?” said old Gordon, disdainfully. “I’ll tell you what it is, young man, I’ve shot a deer before the pricst made the holy cross on your brazen brow, when ye were a squalling brat an’ a plague to your minnie; an’ I’ll eat the wholesome venison of the forest when ye are supping sour crowdy at the far end of some puir laird’s table: so dinna come here to speer saucy questions at the clan of the Gordons; for better men than you hae gotten an answer in cauld steel, that made a sad hole in their stomachs. Therefore just take an

auld man's hint, an' dinna put your finger in the tod's mouth when he's angry !”

“Do you refuse to give any explanation to me, Sir ?” cried Alaster, “who demand it in the name of the Earl of Mar himself, the noble owner of this forest, in which you have taken up your residence unbidden, and without paying kane or coin for the favourable shelter of these boughs and beilds? Do you refuse to answer where you obtain this store of venison? or to promise to quit with your followers this wood? Answer me !”

“Go to a paper court at Dun-eiden\* and seek for answers to such questions,” said the old marauder, doggedly ; “but don't think to come into a Highland forest and speer the catechism at honest deer-stalkers wi' swords by their sides. And as for the Earl of Mar, if he grudges a red buck now and then to Highland shentlemen, living civilly in the wood, tell him from me, that Grumach Gordon and his men will neither answer buff nor sty to his backspeerings, an' that I care not a doit for him or his beardless messengers.”

\* Edinburgh.

“Who are you, old fellow?” said Alaster scarcely able to refrain from springing like a tiger on the reiver chief—“that dares to speak thus to the noble Earl of Mar, and to me his relative and representative. By the hilt of this sword that is ready to leap out of its scabbard, you and your thievish clan shall pay for this day’s insult !”

“For God’s sake, master—have a care what you say,” whispered Farquhar, his trusty gilly, in the youth’s ear. “Remember we are only two, and see how these wild Gordons crowd around and grin defiance upon us, perceiving that we are entirely in their power.”

“I demand again a civil message and a repentant promise to the Earl of Mar, before I stir from this spot,” vociferated Alaster, with the recklessness of an undaunted spirit, and paying no attention to the prudent warning of his servant.

“Kill the saucy Sassenach !” shouted several voices, for the whole company of the Gordons had by this time crowded into the house, and already stood eager for a fray.

“By the soul of my father, you are not

likely to stir far from the spot, young man, if you beard us thus!" cried the old chieftain, drawing his broad sword—"and as for the Earl of Mar, your kinsman, or your master, I am a shentleman born, Sir, as well as you or he, an' Grumach Gordon has as cood plood in his veins as either of you—an' I defy you and the Earl and all your clan! since you provoke me;—for the Gordons o' the Mar-wood will never run like wild does frae the Sassenachs o' the vallies—now hear ye that, young man?"

"Then since you've sworn," said Alaster, stepping forward fiercely, "I swear too, by the black crag of Glen-dearg that bounds this forest, that whenever we next meet beyond the stones of Sharnock, where the deer browses on the slopes of Cairntoul, the whizzing bullet from the long guns of my clan, or the broad arrow that never misses its aim, shall drink the blood of the wild thieves of the wood—hear ye that, old man?"

"Ye shall never see that day, nor the morn's light, since ye *will* beard the fox in his ain den," said Grumach Gordon, gnashing his teeth with rage, as he clenched his sword, and

in two minutes after the two adversaries, followed by the crowd of the threatening Gordons, were without on the sod and preparing for the combat. It was in vain that the cool and experienced Farquhar attempted to dissuade his master from fighting such a cock as Grumach upon his own dunghill; by the reasonable representation, that if he even slew the stalker chief, both their lives should pay for it in an instant after, by the fury of his enraged men, who now, as well as the women of the hamlet, crowded round to witness the strife. Meantime, when the wives and daughters of the forest-reivers observed the tall figure and fine form of so mere a youth as Alaster was, as he stood up to fight their chief, some apprehension was entertained for their own leader, and not a little anxiety was in the minds of some, lest the uncertain fortune of bloody strife should cause so fine a fellow perhaps to be carried out of the forest a mangled corpse.

But the fury of the chieftain could now suffer no restraint, and the courage of Alaster would suffer as little question, so, to it they



went, while the shouts and yells of the anxious Gordons in encouragement of their champion, made the scene almost hideous, particularly to poor Farquhar, who stood by, holding his master's plaid, and his long fusee, with a look of dogged despair ; foreseeing with melancholy conviction, that whatever way the combat should end, this was the last day that either was likely to have to live.

A very few moments served to decide the combat. Alaster evidently kept on the defensive, while the older man trusting more to strength than swordsmanship, and being too much enraged to fight warily, was soon spent : so that with an ease, a self-command, and a degree of strength that was imputed by the superstitious spectators to nothing else than witchcraft, the young man first wounding and then disarming his adversary, laid the proud reiver chieftain sprawling at his feet.

The enraged men who had been spectators, now, as Farquhar had foreseen, rushed in upon Alaster ; and John of Leask getting behind him first threw a long plaid round his body, and then with the assistance of others, bound him



with cords, and parting him from his reluctant gilly, who in vain attempted resistance, they dragged the youth thus strongly bound into a small hovel, and throwing him down upon a heap of fern, left him with an emphatic intimation that he had not long to live, but that Grumach Gordon was the man who should pronounce his doom.

## CHAPTER II.

IN a low and narrow outhouse, but built, or rather inclosed, partly in the recumbent rock in an angle of the glen, lay Alaster Graham, bound as he was, and rested for a time in perfect tranquillity of mind ; for, as for death, come when it might, he thought little of it,—and in short, such was his nature that any sort of fear regarding himself was a sensation to which he was perfectly a stranger. The tightened cords, however, that bound his arms and limbs began to render him exceedingly uneasy, and die or live, another sensation added to his pain, which was no other

than the common gnawing of hunger, but which, in a healthy youth, who had eaten nothing since grey morning, now began to be extremely intense and troublesome.

“They cannot mean to leave me here to perish by starvation!” murmured the poor fellow to himself as he lay and swallowed down the water that rushed into his mouth, as the savoury smell of game and venison was occasionally wafted across his sense by the wind that whistled through the crevices of the hovel.

“Shall I call aloud for food?” he continued, as he listened to the tread of the sentinel placed over him, who paced slowly backwards and forwards without. “No,” he added bitterly—and making a strong effort to ease his arms, “though I now see clearly their meaning; but I shall die first, after my heart has been eaten out of my breast with the pinching of gaunt starvation. Oh! if I were only free of these cursed bonds, the mother that bore me should never have to lament that her bold son, who so imprudently trusted himself among these wild Ishmaelites, should die like a dog for want of a morsel of meat.”

Night now began to darken down, and still the unfortunate youth heard nothing but the measured step of his Celtic sentinel, the faint hum of distant voices in the baille, and the low whistling of the mountain wind, which came in irregular breezes through the surrounding openings of the forest. Hunger and exhaustion are provocatives of sleep, and imaginative melancholy brings on fantastic visions of indefinite troubles. But dreary woods and haggard phantoms in the shape of strange forest-spirits, their heads adorned with the antlers of the deer,—which first seemed to crowd around him with threatening aspect,—at length gave way, in the changes of his dream, to beauteous nymphs with soft voices and yellow hair streaming in the breeze—next a table covered with linen, whiter than the snow on Ben-lawers, seemed to be spread out under the tangled branches of the wood, and smoking dishes of savoury venison, offered by smiling maidens, presented a banquet that a king might envy. Still he seemed to struggle in vain to get free of his bonds, that he might partake thereof. Anon he thought he felt the cords and thongs gently unswathing from around

him, and the bands of sleep or of his pleasing dream gradually were removed from his excited imagination ; until feeling sensibly soft fingers touching his cramped arms, he opened his eyelids, and perceived a female form bending over him, her long locks of yellow hair touching his neck, and her warm breath almost moistening his cheek, as with gentle earnestness she busied herself unravelling the cords which bound him so closely.

For a moment he could not recollect where he was ; but the spitting light from a small rush lamp, that had been placed on one of the projecting stones which composed the rugged walls of the hovel, shewed him its shape and brought his situation to his memory, while his sense was saluted by the tempting odour of a dish of game that also smoked near him, and the form of the female imperfectly seen, by the dim light of the cruisy, shewed him the angel hand, which his dream had represented as providing a banquet for him in this wilderness—and which was awaking him from his deep sleep, by giving him freedom from his bonds. The female shrunk modestly from Alaster, when she saw him open his eyes, and retiring, and then

fetching forward the mess of venison, she looked kindly in his face as he sat up, and in a low voice, and in soft liquid Gaelic, bade him eat and be silent.

It was not until the hungry youth had swallowed a few mouthfuls of that food, which to one in his circumstances was more valuable than pearls, that his ardent appetite allowed him time to look that gratitude in the face of the Highland maiden, which he had neither words nor leisure to express. The girl smiled archly as she observed his healthy youthful voracity, but she seemed to watch, with the keen ear of a greyhound, for any sound that might give indication of interruption to her hazardous enterprise.

“Who are you, bonnie lass, that I dreamed of in my sleep, and that comes to me in the wood, and in the dark night with viands, more grateful than handfuls of gold; and with looks almost as sweet, to the sad and the foredoomed, as the kisses that seem to hang so temptingly on thy lips? Speak again,” added the youth as he paused in his repast, “that I may know that my dream is indeed gone, and that through thy means I am again awake to life and to liberty.”



“ Eat your meat, kind Sir, and drink your drink,” was the polite speech of the Highland maiden, as she brought forth a goodly caup filled with the forest liquor—“ and then I will speak all that I dare, and more mayhap—hush! this beverage has strength in it, and you may need it. Now, cut these other thongs that bind your limbs, and I will take nothing for your freedom and your life, which I have come to save at the hazard of my own, but your word, your simple promise, and the token of your troth, that you will spare, as you can, the deer-hunters of the forest—and above all, that you will protect, instead of seeking the life of my passionate father, Grumach Gordon.”

“ And is it really so, pretty maiden ?” said Alaster, gazing upon her with astonishment and admiration; for warlike exercises and woodland sports had hitherto so absorbed his attention, that he had scarcely ever till now looked fairly upon the face of a woman. “ It is a hard condition thou imposest upon me, and freedom itself should not purchase my consent to it, but that *thou* art interested, sweet girl,—but I will keep it for thy sake—here is my token ; but what is

thy name, maiden, that I may know thee, as the prettiest wood-nymph that haunts the forest of Mar?"

"My name is Moina, Sir,—alas! what a fate was to have been yours this night, but I saw how well you fought to-day, though it was with my own father; I saw you a stranger in the midst of the wild exiles of the forest, and I determined so save you—hist!—no, 'tis no one—now, are you ready?"

"I am," said Alaster, springing up, "but what fate was to have been mine? Tell me, sweet Moina, from what you have saved me."

"From death in the dark, without the brave man's recompense, and from a deep grave in the covert of the wood, where the warrior never plants his firm foot, nor sheds his tear for the fallen. There is a small party of the clan of Macrabin, that lurks among the rocks near the edge of the glen,—they have been sent for, Sir, and are to come here in the dead of the night, intending to be thy secret executioners."

"And where, for heaven's sake, is my glaiked gilly, Farquhar?"

Moina only shook her head with a look of

sad meaning—and then said earnestly, “Haste ! haste!—the lamp burns low, and the time wears apace—and if you do not get round the hill before the night-wind rises, these blood-hounds will scent you out. But you will mind your promise, Alaster ? alas ! and yet you are rashness itself.”

“Fear not, my sweet Moina, there is my token,” he said, taking from the goat-skin purse or sporan, which hung before him, a small pocket piece ; “it is old gold, and it is thin worn—but you are my deliverer—my guardian angel of the wood ; shall we break the coin between us as lovers do ?”

“I shall not say nay to your offered troth, brave youth,” she answered modestly, but looking up anxiously in his face ; and they broke the piece of gold between them—“it is at least,” she added, “for my father’s sake.”

“*This* must be for mine then, Moina,” he said, throwing one arm in customary gallantry round her neck, and stooping his face close to that of the Highland maiden—“nay, be not unreasonably coy at such a moment as this ;” she trembled in his ardent grasp. “God bless

thee, my deliverer ! thy lips are sweeter than the blaeberries of the bank, and warmer than—”

“ Hush !—now, set forth by this opening ; be sure you keep the hill on your left, and your eye on the north star, when you can see it through among the trees, until you get to the great stone of Glen-durig, and then you will know your own way. Blessings on you, youth ! and safety.”

She watched the tall figure of Alaster, as he moved down the path betwixt her and the starry sky ; then passing softly the Highland sentinel, who was still sound asleep by the hovel, from the drink she had given him, Moina slipped quietly back to her little dormitory in the hamlet.

## CHAPTER III.

SCARCELY had Moina Gordon laid her head upon the low pillow of her chamber,—if the small apartment allotted to her deserves this name, and before sleep had visited her eyelids, when ruminating upon the events of the day, while her heart palpitated as she thought of the manly form and ardent words, at parting, of Alaster Graham, her fancy wandered after him in the path she had directed him through the wood; until something shot across her recollection, at length, that made her sit up in her bed in the alarm of the moment.

“Where was my silly memory?” she said to herself, almost in agony—“that I should have forgotten to warn him of these wild scouts. Should he fall in with Black Coll, or any of his men?—but that surely cannot be; besides, his gallant courage—alas! what do I say about a stranger, and my father’s enemy. Hark! there are the stealthy footsteps of those who were to have been his murderers—I have at least saved him from their bloody hands, and he is now hastening his way down Glen-skiach, free as the breeze that blows from Ben-aven, and strong as the oaks of Brae Mar.” Having said this, with all a maiden’s feelings over the first fancy of her heart, she kissed the broken piece of gold, given her in token of more than her father’s safety, and sinking on her pillow composed herself to sleep.

Meanwhile, every object that could be seen by the bright starlight, passed rapidly from the view of the vigorous traveller, as he strode hastily down the glen, or strath, that undulating in occasional irregularity of surface, and broken by clumps of stunted birch-trees, or spread out in patches of heath and grassy herbage, stretched



towards the hills of Breriach, beyond the Mar-forest and the Dee. An elevated and thick part of the wood skirting the strath or holm behind him, which he never before had passed,—the part of the country in which he found himself being entirely new to Alaster,—and a bend of the river, leaving a wild and rocky height between him and the northern sky, while heavy clouds began to obscure what little starlight he had—our midnight traveller became exceedingly puzzled to find his way. As the clumps of wood thickened round him, and the ground on which he trod became more irregular and boggy, he began to lose all certainty whether he ought to turn to the right hand or to the left ; or whether, in going forward, as his fancy led him in the dark, he was not returning back to the ground over which he had already passed. He stopped once or twice, and looked carefully round him for some point or object in the dark landscape on which his eye might rest ; but, well as he was accustomed to night-adventures, he could make out no guide from the indefinite masses of trees, or indistinct shapes of hills which surrounded him ; and as for the guiding

star of the north, above him, he looked upwards for her in vain.

“ I have often seen the broad face of the moon, looking pryingly down upon me and my men, when I did not want her officious illumination,” he said, somewhat surlily to himself, “ but she’ll be sure not to shew her bluff face to-night, when a glimmer of light might be a benefit to a lonesome wanderer, travelling in the night-watch, glad of his life. ’Twould be nothing strange if I should, after wearying myself to death in this wilderness, find myself again in the heart of the dangerous baille of Glen-skiach. Where on earth am I going?”

Youthful need, and the chill night-breeze, again began to overcome the vigour of the dispirited wanderer, and the drowsy sensations of the soldier on his midnight march almost overpowered him with sleep. It was small hardship to Alaster to make his couch of the heath among which he was plodding in the dark, and the first knoll that his drowsy eyes could detect in the obscurity became his resting-place. The situation, however, into which chance had thrown him, was more favourable for a look-out over

the dim landscape, than for safe concealment; and the habits of suspicion of a Highland leader's life in those days, had made watchfulness almost a second nature to Alaster, so that although he indulged a little drowsiness, as he rested, his hearing and even smelling senses, remained in sensitive readiness for any alarm.

Casting his half-shut eyes, ever and anon as he sat, towards that part of the night horizon which was most open, and had the greatest share of the dull starlight, he thought he could perceive something moving, which could not be single trees or any brushwood clump; for though almost asleep, he had a shrewd suspicion that trees did not travel even by night. He looked more eagerly, and then laid his ear to the ground, when he soon could plainly distinguish the short brisk motion of the Highland trot along the mossy earth, while the single figures of a company of men could, next after, be seen along the level, their heads bobbing up and down by their peculiar movement, between him and the sky.

“There is something ado in Glen-skiach this

night," he said to himself, as he rose hastily and adjusted the broad-sword that still hung at his belt. "I'll see what it is, if I should lose a drop of red blood for my pains"—and so saying, he strode on towards the higher part of the Glen, towards which the night party seemed hastily moving.

Before he could get near them, however, the strange men who seemed to trot along nearly in Indian file, had entered a pass between the brushwood and the rocks, where it was only by the acuteness of his hearing that Alaster, who dared not enter the same tract, was able to follow them. Determined, however, to make himself acquainted with the meaning of this night-march, anxiety and curiosity, with a natural love of adventure, soon drove off his drowsy feeling, and before the party again emerged forth into cleared ground, Alaster had got before it, and was gradually drawing nearer to ascertain, if possible, who were the men, and what was their purpose. "By the priest's mass and the prior's book!" he muttered, as he drew close upon the party, "there's death in that silence, and doom to some wretch in that mea-

sured tramp, for I see they have a bound prisoner." A light flashed across his mind, leading him to conclude that these must be the Macrabins with his man Farquhar, whose life they were going to take when they got him beyond the haunts of the Gordons, or who, in fetching thus far from his own people, they meant to tempt into treachery by an offer of mercy.

Various conjectures of this kind passed through his thoughts as he still strode forward, sometimes almost by the side, and at other times in the rear of the party. He now began to know where he was as the Highlandmen ascended to higher ground, for he heard the roar of running waters, and soon perceived the irregular windings of the Dee beneath him on the right, as those whom he watched seemed to be approaching its banks. Still they mounted as they drew near the river, and now the anxiety of Alaster became intense, as to what the party meant to do; for it was very evident the men had no intention of crossing the Dee, nor was it likely they should proceed much further, as they were evidently going out of the straight tract formerly pursued. Suddenly the

whole stopped when they came to the brow of a lofty bank, below which, at the distance of about an hundred and twenty feet of precipice, the dark waters of the Dee ran deep and black, scarcely reflecting a single star, which now appeared in the dull sky of the early morning.

The stout heart of the hardy youth began now almost to sicken on witnessing this, for a deed of blood seemed to him evidently in the contemplation of this night-band, and that in a form, to which fair death on the battle-field must be a joy and a boon. With some difficulty he was enabled to draw near to observe the result, and at the same time avoid discovering himself, but the effort required all his skill, from the exposed situation on which the whole now stood. After various attempts to approach them by creeping on his hands and knees, he in a few minutes succeeded, by getting under the brow of the precipice which overhung the river ; and scrambling among the short broom and rocks of this dangerous situation, he cautiously planted himself almost under the halted party.

When he put up his head over the bank, he could see that the whole consisted of ten men,



and one bound and unarmed; eight of them standing in rank a little back from the brow of the precipice; while two of them, apart, and nearer to the place of his concealment, seemed occupied in interrogating the prisoner.

“So ye’ll pe determined to pe dumb, an’ dogged, to pe sure?”—said a tall man with a cock’s feather in his bonnet (the Highland badge of a gentleman) to the terrified prisoner, and the speaker Alaster instantly knew by his voice to be John of Leask—“an’ ye’ll rather drink a dead man’s bellyfu’ o’ the black waters o’ the Dee, than tell us who cut the thongs an’ the hemp frae Alaster Graham this night?”

“I cannot tell though I would—that’s God’s truth”—said poor Farquhar, appalled at the prospect before him—“and I would not though I could,” he added, with Highland resolution.

The two Celtic leaders looked at each other in momentary uncertainty, as they stepped two paces aside: “By my soul there’s naething else but witchery an’ glaumory in it”—said the other, in the superstitious spirit of the times—“Gru-mach Gordon aye said, that nothing but warlock

spells could save that rash Sassenach callant—what shall we do?”

“Do? what would ye do, after coming all this way,” said John of Leask with dark ferocity, “but put a stane in his plaid, an’ gie him the prisoner’s douk in the black linn below. He’ll ne’er rise again like a mermaid out of the cauld waters, to tell the Earl of Mar where the red deer smokes in the Gordons’ pot, or where Alaster Graham was unbound by the witches—but hist! try if he’ll shew us the secret pass to the grey cove where the Mar’s men meet—life is sweet, and the bottom o’ the Dee is a cauld bed.”

The two went back to their wretched prisoner, and put to him another question or two, in words which our concealed hero could not distinctly hear, but evidently in vain; upon which, making a sign to the body of the men, they all came forward, and with strange cruelty proceeded to unloose his arms in preparing him for death, while they began to tie the plaid and a stone, fetched by one of them, round the doomed man’s neck.

While all this was going on, Alaster was

more occupied with a feeling of uncontrollable vengeance, than such horror as might have been expected from witnessing such a scene, and as usual, the recklessness of conscious valour to which all fear was a stranger, prevented him from exercising that prudence, which would have been resorted to by less daring spirits.

“ You will not speak the word then?” said John of Leask, dragging the unfortunate man forward to the edge—“ see you—there’s grim Death with his dart watching for you at the deep bottom of that crag—and you may already hear, if your ears are good, the water kelpies of the flood singing your death-song to the night-wind. If you have father or mother to greet for you when ye’re dead, better join the Gordons an’ the Macrabins o’ the wood, than sleep at the bottom o’ the cauld waters o’ the Dee.”

“ I’ve neither father nor mother to greet for me,” said the poor fellow, “ nor wife nor sister that loves me, but my braw young master, Alaster Graham, an’ he disna know the pass I am brought to this dismal night ; to be drowned like a dog under the cloud of darkness. Oh, if

he were here now !” and in the weakness of nature and the dread of his doom, a tear started into the eyes of the faithful Highlander, while he wrung his hands as he looked over the horrid precipice, beneath where he stood among the group of his executioners.

A shrill whistle, sounding from under the brow of the crag, startled the party with apprehension, at the moment they were lifting up Farquhar to throw him over into the linn ; and in another instant after, Alaster, with his drawn broad-sword in his hand, had sprung into the midst of the astonished Highlanders. Well did the doomed Farquhar know the figure and sword-hand of his master, the instant clash of swords aroused him to free himself from the intanglement of his plaid, and soon the fall of one of the foremost of the party, under Alaster’s arm, enabled him to possess himself of a weapon, and to join this strange and unequal contest.

The party had given way on the first onset of Alaster, conceiving, as by his preliminary whistle he intended they should, that there was a number more in ambush ready to join him ; but

in a few moments, seeing none other, they all began to press hard upon the two combatants, who, in spite of the most valorous efforts, were gradually driven back towards the edge of the precipice. Alaster now saw, as he often had before, the dangerous effects of rashly trusting to valour alone, and his imprudence in not at least taking up his position at first where the party should have been between himself and the river. It was, however, now too late, for the Highlandmen soon drove him and his single companion to the very edge, and as Alaster at last fought on the defensive only, against such numbers, although he had laid two dead at his feet, while struggling to protect himself from five or six swords, he saw poor Farquhar driven over the edge by one of them, for both fell together down the precipice, and in another instant, after some struggling and rustling among the brushwood of the steep bank, he heard a heavy plunge, as of one falling into the deep waters of the linn below. Making now a sudden and desperate effort, he grasped the foremost man with whom he was engaged, and dragged him with him down the fearful steep.



Here his great strength became the means of his own safety, for, disengaging himself from the grip of his antagonist as they rolled down the steep, he was enabled, by clinging to the short broom that grew among the crags, to arrest his progress ; and as he hung, he heard, first one and then another succeeding plunge into the dull waters far below him.

The wild shout of the deer-stalkers above him, struck upon his ears with an appalling sensation, as he hung over the precipice and clung to the broom with desperate efforts, and their still wilder lament over two of their companions who had been drowned in the Dee, besides the two whom his own sword had deprived of life above the bank ; but he thought sadly of his poor servant, who in spite of all his efforts seemed to have met his death beneath the black waters that now murmured softly far beneath him. He heard John of Leask and his men shortly after, withdraw from the scene of this unfortunate conflict, bearing away the bodies of their two companions, and soon finding the coast clear, by great exertion, and with danger as imminent as he had yet encountered,



he at length succeeded in again gaining safe footing on the summit of the precipice. Creeping under the brushwood that grew near the height, Alaster again laid himself down on the fragrant heath, and composing himself as well as he could, after so many troubles, he slept soundly until the sun had risen some height above the bald brow of the romantic summit of Loch-na-gar.

## CHAPTER IV.

“THERE can be no doubt but it was witchery and glaumory, that loosed the cords of Alaster the Sassenach last night,” was the cry among the Highland women in the forest-hamlet, or baille of Glenskiach, on the morning after the foregoing transactions, as they mourned over the bodies of those that had been slain; “and the powers of darkness,” said they in their song, “and the powers o’ the air, and the wild spirits o’ the wood, and the greengown fairies o’ the brakes, that dance in the moonlight, and sing madrigals to the north star—that ken whaure the storm is brewing behint Ben-aw, or whaure the ships are

to be sunk in the bay o' Dornoch; an' lay down their little ears to the sounding earth, and listen to the dead man's groan—an' laugh at the gurgle in his throat, as he drowns beneath the wave—it was they loosened the thongs frae the Sassenach's feet, an' threw glaumor o'er the sight o' Donald Gordon that watched at the door; an' saw nane enter, and nobody go out; and yet the prisoner was gane and his bands with him, and appeared at the brow o' the black rock aboon the Dee, an' fought wi' the strength o' seven devils, an' killed our braw hunter lads, and drowned them in the linn below—ochon! ochon! ochon—aree!"—And thus the wild lamentation rose and sounded through the woody valley of Glenskiach.

But a very different sound was heard in the great hall of the Castle of Braemar, upon the return of Alaster Graham, with the news of his adventure, and of the sad fate of his servant Farquhar. "We'll scour the woods of these greedy Gordons," was the universal cry, "until not a man of them shall remain, from the crags of Glen-vioch to the water o' Dee; and the wild Macrabins shall be rooted from the land,

from Ben-aw to Balmorral, and chased through the Mar-forest, like the bounding deer that flies before the shaft of the marksman—giving his flesh to the hungry hunter, and his branching antlers for a trophy of success.”

All was therefore bustle and preparation at the castle of Braemar, and thirty stout Highlanders, of different clans, were soon selected and appointed by the Earl himself under the command of Alaster, to take vengeance on the marauding reivers of the forest. “I have borne with these thievish deer-stalkers too long,” said the Earl, in a private interview with the youthful commander of the party, “and particularly with that vetern knave, Grumach Gordon. Root out him and his marauders from the heart of the forest, and if they resist, as they are likely to do—spare him and his, as little as they do the red stag of the wood :—dost thou hesitate ?”

“No, my lord,” said Alaster, “but the Gordons are an ancient and a noble clan, and spread far and wide over Scotland’s glens and vallies ; and Grumach is—”

“An old villain ! that dares me to the teeth !”, interrupted the Earl angrily. “Harkee, young

man—rid me of that forest plague, or look me not in the face again. What ! Thou wert not wont to blench at a drop of red blood, Alaster ! Remember, thou art the ranger of my good forest, and I know thou canst slice the head off a Highland reiver, as deftly as I can cut down a prickly thistle. Go !—thou knowest my thought.”

The youth bowed himself respectfully before the Earl and departed ; but as he went, the golden token that he wore upon his breast, felt as if it would turn its sharp edge into his own flesh, and the blue eyes of Moina Gordon seemed to beam on him, and to plead for mercy for father and for mother, in language which shot through every nerve of his frame. But he and his Highlanders were soon on the march, and as they moved along over moor and dale, and breathed the fresh breeze that swept down the heath from the cliffs of Cairntoul, the bold spirit of his men, and the excitement of the expedition were so delightful, that trusting to circumstances and his own strong arm, for the ultimate safety of his principal foe, he entered briskly the precincts of the forest of Mar, think-

ing less of war than of love, and less of the great object of his enterprise, than of the yellow locks of Moina Gordon.

A forest has, from time immemorial, been a favourite spot with chroniclers and tale-tellers, as the scene of all sorts of romantic adventures; but the great forests of Germany or of eastern France, the lofty pine-woods of the Pyrenees or the Alps, or the thick and venerable masses of vegetation, that afforded shelter for the military robbers on the banks of the Rhine, are very different from that wild mixture of low woodland, heath, and steep crag; green patches of herbage on which the deer browses, and black and dangerous bogs and marshes, which constitute the wilderness tract called a Highland forest. But though less magnificent and awful than the great German woods, or the lofty and endless forests of North America, these natural wildernesses of the Highlands of Scotland present a variety of feature, and a romance of effect and of situation, which has peculiar charms for the free rover of these wilds, and is the delight of the imaginative Celt of the north.

The party had not penetrated far into the



wood, when the sight of the deer bounding through the passes, and rushing in crowds along the open glades of the wilderness, with the occasional whirr of the game which started in coveys at their feet, stirred up the spirits of Alaster's followers for the chase, and instantly changed for a time all thoughts of the slogan of strife into the gay and cheerful halloo of the hunter.

Away they all soon went therefore, in scattered groups among the bushes, for a powerful Highland hunger having by this time entered their stomachs, from the effects of the morning's march, no effort of their youthful commander could restrain the eagerness of his men, stimulated as they were by so many potent excitements. But few guns being at this time possessed by the inhabitants of these northern regions, the bow and arrow were chiefly used for wounding at a distance, and the shafts that flew in every quarter around them as they rejoiced in the sport, soon provided the party with ample and substantial seasoning to the small portions of oatmeal which each man carried in a bag slung behind him.

The forest now rang with the shouts of the new deer-hunters, which became fainter to each group, as they receded from each other, and became hidden in the entangling intricacies of the wood. The delight of the hunt soon proved as seducing to Alaster, as it was to the most eager of his comrades; and cautious prudence being no part of his character, he, in the eagerness of the chase, lost all command of his men, and even knowledge where most of them were, three or four followers only being ultimately within sight, who made any answer to such calls as he now thought it safe to make, in this part of the forest. A noble buck, upon which he had fixed his eyes, having taken a direction separate from the others, he and those immediately near him were led to pursue it down an irregular bank beside a small stream, which wound its way through an open part of the wood, in order to get a fair shot at it; but it being no easy matter to follow such an animal "by speed of foot," Alaster was ultimately far parted from the main body, and deeply entangled in the depths of the wilderness.

By the time therefore that the buck fell

under the shafts of its eager followers, and the small group were proceeding to carry it away from the spot, the triumph of Alaster was not a little damped, on perceiving that he could form no idea of the direction which he now ought to take, and that the shrill sounds of his whistle, were only answered by the echoes that reverberated from the deep solitudes of the wood.

“Come along, Colin,” he said at length to the follower, who since Farquhar’s death had become his favourite, “lay the beast on thy shoulders, and let us turn up this bank: when we come to the higher and more open part of the wood, no doubt my thoughtless cearnachs will soon reply to the call of my whistle.”

The little company of four persons vigorously set forth and mounted the bank, the wild solitude echoing to their tread, and the rising autumnal breeze beginning to sweep with rustling freshness through the openings in the forest. But still no sign of living creature appeared, for the red deer themselves had been frightened off by the shouts of the whole party, the grey fox dared not to howl until night spread in indistinct darkness over the fastnesses

of the forest, and Alaster now began to hesitate, whether he would continue to mount to the highest ground near, for the chance of recovering his men; or whether, by returning to the stream below, and following its course, he should simply try to ascertain his position in the wood. After consulting for a few-moments with his men, he soon determined, as usual, on the bolder course, and perceiving a tract which led to an open spot on his right, he pursued it steadily, notwithstanding the weariness of his followers, convinced that he was drawing near to the very innermost recesses of these wilds.

“Deevil a leg can we lift mair,” grumbled one of his men to his neighbour, that their leader might hear him; “besides what is the use o’ this lowlander’s march, without a crowdy in the wame, or a snuff in the nose, when we’re famish’d wi’ the starve, an’ no a pan to make a broth o’ the beastie?” he added, looking ruefully to the dead buck under which the hindmost man began to waddle with weary discontent. “Just lay her down, Colin my lad, an’ tell the young duinuasal, she’ll no gang a foot farther.”

The man did not require a second hint to turn dogged, so throwing the buck with a bound on the sod, he refused to trudge another step, unless, as he said, “Master Alaster would let him comfort himself with a slice or two off the hurdies of the venison beast, whilk was needful now for their refreshment ;” besides, as the man argued, it being much easier for gentlemen hunters to carry their food in the place appropriated for it, than for each man to bear it on his neck like a lowland flesher.

The perils of the place and the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, began to be perceived by the youthful leader, thus separated from the body of his men, and obliged to take up his quarters at the close of the day in a part of the forest unknown to him, and where his few followers were every instant liable to be surrounded and cut off by the bold deer-stalkers, Gordons and Macrabins and all, who were intimate with every pass and turning within the bosom of the wood. “If we must stop and rest,” he said, looking round him, and seeing the necessity of giving way to circumstances, “it shall not be here; we must not in this expedition



sculk like cravens in the glen, for however small our numbers, I will never play any other than a bold game. See you, lads, yonder bushy rock that raises its tufted head like a black feather in the heart of the wood?—let us up to the top of the crags, and kindle our fire and roast our buck. It will be a candle to light the steps of our own men to find us ; for we shall raise a flame in the midst of the forest, that shall be seen even from the turrets of old Braemar.”

“ Lord-sake, Maister Alaster,” said an old Highlander, “ ye’ll no mean to light up a low here amang the trees, just to shew the wild Gordons, an’ a’ other reivers, frae Inverey to Abersnithak, that here we are four puir chields, that’ll no be a mouthful to thae worricows o’ the wud.”

“ Huisht, huisht, Donald !” said the youth familiarly, “ I know it’s ill speaking to a Highlandman with an empty stomach, but wait till you and I get a picking off the ribs of that dead venison, and a thow o’ heat from a cheerful bleeze before us, and I’ll warrant we’ll be able to look down frae the tap o’ that crag, on Grumach Gordon himsel an’ a’ his men. Up



lads! 'mount an' go,' as the Sassenach sang says."

Up the four mounted to the top of the craggy hill, and flint and steel being a part of their travelling equipment, in a few minutes the crackling fire began to cheer the weather-beaten faces of the Highlandmen, who smiled grimly with pleasure as they saw the smoke and blaze arise above the woods, while, like other travellers in the desert, they roasted collops cut off the venison, on the nearest embers, with which, ever and anon, they stayed their hunger. Besides this, they were not even without a drop of the clear dew, so specially a distillation of the mountains of the north, which one of them supplied, with little ceremony in the application, from the mouth-piece of a good sized bullock's horn, that was slung beneath the small sheepskin bag under his arm, and which latter held also a modicum of oaten meal, both being the constant companions, if possible, of a Highlandman's journey.

"Faith, lads, this same, is a comfort an' a consolation after our day's wark," said Colin

Macrone, to his two neighbours, as they sat gazing in the cheerful blaze of the fire.

“What wark?” said the third jeeringly, “I wonder what gude we’ve done for the auld Earl this day, wandering here in the woods just like what I’ve heard Mass John tell o’ Auld Dauvit, the king o’ the Chews, or Nebechud-neighbour, that was banished to the fields, an’ took up his quarters wi’ the prute peasts, for want o’ a decent lodgings. So here are we in the enemy’s land, cocked up on the tap o’ a coggly crag, just for a mark to be shot at like a capper-cuilzie, wi’ the long arrows o’ thae crafty Gordons. Faith, lads, ye’ve picked your last bane, an’ drank your last toothfu’, I’m thinking,” and in illustration of his grumbling remark, this learned Highlander took his last tug at a spaul of the venison which he held, and then threw the bone angrily into the fire.

“See you how gloriously the flame mounts, and illuminates the dark foliage of the forest, from Braemar to Glenskiach?” said Alaster with admiration, as he watched the effects of their fire on the reddened objects around. “The remainder of our lads cannot be far off, and they must

obey this signal beacon-light;—but rest you, my men, and I will watch;—for from this point, while our fire blazes, I can see the very birds as they go to their soft nests on the branches beneath us, and the cautious badger could not look out of his hole near, but I should know it.”

“Young callants are aye confident,” whispered the wise Highlander with a Gaelic “humph!” through his nose; a sound that was exceedingly expressive, to his approving companions—but as Highland shentlemen, of that day in particular, were nowise disturbed at the idea of losing their lives, “the night afore the morn” as they were wont to express it, taking their chance as usual, all now round the fire, excepting their leader, laid themselves down to sleep without the slightest anxiety.

It needs no Highland seer to tell, that the confidence natural to youth and a brave spirit, while it is sometimes the cause of surprising success, is by the ordinary operation of things much oftener the occasion of sad disaster. The foundation of it in Alaster on this occasion could not be expected to last long in any vigour, for overcoming sleep *will* deprive the sharpest eyes of their keenness, and the brightest blaze of

light to assist the sight in darkness, will die away, unless fed with materials not obtained without trouble even in a Highland wood. Accordingly the comfortable indolence occasioned by the heat of the fire, soon had the effect of dulling the exertion necessary to keep it in vigour; and as the flame before him began to get low, and the surrounding objects to become lost in the obscurity, the increasing difficulty of keeping his look-out with any intensity, caused the drowsy leader to seek for excuses for relaxing in his watchfulness, until he fairly began to nod at his post.

“Since the rest of my men have not made their appearance,” he said to himself, “we must each take our turn at this weary watch,” and then he shook by the shoulders each of the three who now snored beside him; but for the present that was a vain endeavour, for the philosophic mountaineers, having previously made up their minds to die or live, just as Providence might order it, seemed determined to give themselves no trouble, particularly during sleep, whether they were to rise again with their lives, or “pe killed the night like shentlemans.”

As a few brands still continued to crackle dimly on the fire, the near objects on the summit of the crag began to assume all shapes to the half-closed eyes of the watcher; the bushes and rocks became reddish black, and brownish grey, in their grotesque indistinctness; and the dark outline of the surrounding forest which he overlooked, appeared almost to unite with the dull starlight of the heavy midnight sky. Sometimes the weary watcher thought he heard the birds below as if whispering to each other among the bushes, and again he thought the red deer seemed to be clambering up the crag to obtain a heat from his fire; but he imagined at times that they almost had the faces of men, and appeared to nod with plumed heads instead of antlers of horn, as if the four-footed creatures were making signs to each other.

Suddenly as he gazed around in his watch, one of the short stumps of trees below on the crag began evidently to move, which greatly surprised him; and as he opened wider his eyes to observe this phenomena, the sprouting branches remaining on the object, began to look, the upper one first, exceedingly like the cock's feather on



the front of a Highland gentleman's bonnet, and then the branches below to resemble the end of a bow and the feathery heads of arrows. Next after, something like a nose projected from near the top, as the stump evidently moved upwards, and two shining things on each side began, like glow-worms, or like human eyes, to reflect the bedimmed light of the fire.

The drowsy watcher, as he sat, was puzzling his dreamy reason to account for so remarkable an occurrence, when suddenly he found himself seized on behind, evidently in the clutch of a wild beast, while half a dozen more stumps appeared to rise up from among the bushes around, and in another instant a shout was set up from the bottom of the crag, so hoarse and wild that it half stunned, half awaked him, into startled recollections, for in it he recognised the cathghairm or war-cry of the clan of the Gordons, which sounded up in a shout from the heart of the forest, while himself and his little party were surrounded by nearly twenty persons, and at once taken prisoner without a blow. A strong arm held him fast in its gripe behind, while another bound a cord around him ; and as, finding



it useless to resist, he cast his eyes round upon the face that, as one was tying his arms, grinned with a triumphant laugh upon him, he recognised, by the faint glare of the fire, the strongly marked features of old Grumach Gordon.

“Hagh!—agh!—she has her noo!” exclaimed the veteran deer-stalker, chuckling with joy as he pulled the cords round the body of the astonished youth.—“If the sassenach callant doesna mend her manners noo, she’ll ne’er see the auld castle o’ Braemar ony more.”

“Is that the chance ye give a brave man for his life? to bind his arms for fear he should harm you, and take his sword because you dare not meet it,” said Alaster, scowling in scorn on his adversary.

“We dinna feght incarnate deevils, an’ witchcraft, an’ glaumory,” said the chieftain knowingly; “the Gordons dinna deal wi’ the horned-ane, or kindle fires under the cloud of night, an’ mutter spells in the dark wood; but ye shall have your sword, young man, in broad daylight, for I have my revenge to take out of you, before ye leave the baille o’ Glenskiach. Forward, my lads, wi’ your prisoners!”

The four reluctant captives (for the other three of Alaster's party had been bound almost in their sleep) were led or rather dragged down the steep of the crag, at the bottom of which they were met by a number more of the Gordons and Macrabins, who placing them in the centre with another grin of satisfaction, the whole began to march forward in silence through the wood.

"Are ye leeving yet? or are ye dead, Donald?"—said Colin Macrone to his nearest neighbour, as they rustled their way through the bushes. "Bite your finger, man, an' try if ye be dreaming or waking."

"How can I bite my finger"—said the other sulkily—"when I canna put up a claw to scratch my ain head when it itches? not having the use o' my arms, as ye see, but left to stoitre through the wood in the dark, and trussed up wi' a tow, just like moor-hen for the spit—teevil take it!"

"Hoogh!—ye'll be hang't the morn, Donald, so never heed," rejoined his neighbour, consolingly; "but may be they'll do us the pleasure to shoot us, wi' poother an' lead. Oh! but

that would be a pleasant, an' a shentlemanly death, lads; but it's o'er gude for the likes o' us."

"It was a God's mercy, that we got sic a meal o' the venison, lads," said the third, in a low voice; "the collops were sae sweet when bristled in the fire last night. It's a meeserable uncomfortable thing, to be hang't wi' a hungry belly."

"Oigh!—may be we'll no be just hang't this time," said Colin, gaily—"see you how proudly maister Alaster walks, though he's girded round like a sauted ham?—odd, if I could only get my right hand up to pick my lug, or my twa fingers in my mouth to gie the reiver's whistle, I would try whether there's aught in the wood but wild cats an' badgers. I say, lads—whisper."

"What is't?" said the others—"huisht—they'll hear us."

"Let us all three set up a skraigh"—

"What fore, Colin? eh? Lord, they'll murder us."

"Deevil may care! better to be murdered decently at night, than to be hang't the morn's

morning. Set up a skraigh, I say, that may be heard to the very gates o' Braemar. There's some gude 'll come o't:—here goes, all at once, hoo-uigh !”

The screech with which the three Highlanders most unexpectedly disturbed the dead silence of the night, almost startled the very leaves on the trees, and roused the birds in their nests, as it echoed away in the dells of the forest—darkness itself seemed for a moment to give way to the sound, and strange noises to arise in the distance, which might indeed be the rustling of the red-deer or some other prowlers of the wood.

“The Lord pe near us ! Got tamm !—what's that ?” exclaimed old Grumach Gordon, and several others on the instant, as they stopped short in astonishment at the shout, “that's witchery an' glaumory again—kill the Marsmen, kill them at once !”

“Hui-uigh !”—shouted the Highlanders, a second time, in which their leader, taking the hint, now heartily joined, while the Gordons for an instant were perfectly paralyzed; and before the echo had died away in the distant hollows of the wood, a rustling was heard on the left of

the party, figures appeared to start out among the trees, and in another instant the partial silence was again disturbed by a broken and somewhat running shout, set up at no great distance, as if meant for an answer to the random screech of the Mars-men.

The Gordons appeared now to be in utter confusion, not knowing which way to turn, or whether to attack or defend themselves from the unseen enemy, if enemy it were—or whether to turn their swords upon their shouting prisoners, who seemed patiently to wait the issue of their strange experiment. A figure or two began to draw near. “Huragh for Braemar! and down with the reivers of the wood!” shouted Alaster, starting forth from the side of Grumach Gordon.

“Braemar! Braemar!” shouted also the strangers, who could not now be mistaken—and in a few moments a rush of them came close upon the position of the terrified Gordons.

“Braemar! Braemar!” answered, in return, the three prisoners in the centre of the party; taking advantage of the confusion, and rushing in a body against those who guarded them, they,



without a stroke being aimed at them, succeeded in forcing a passage towards their own party, who now began to fit shafts to their bow-strings, and prepare for a general combat in the dark.

The Mars-men, however, afraid of killing any of their own, rushed in among the Gordons sword in hand. The clashing of their weapons now sounded through the wood; the deer-reivers gave way every where, uncertain of the number of their assailants and hardly able even to distinguish each other, while the whole skirmish was rather an unmanly confusion than a creditable strife.

“Hold off! my men! come hither, and leave this disgraceful skirmishing, now as we are none of us longer prisoners,” shouted Alaster; “the Mars-men do not willingly meet their enemies in the dark, and if Grumach Gordon will leave me and my three comrades the claymores that they took from us, when they surprised us on the crag, we shall meet again in broad day, when I shall deliver to him the Earl of Mar’s pleasure, with good will to fight if that be necessary, but with better to spare the drawing of blood.”



“ I scorn to keep the arms of those who seem more in league with the black devil, than with the Earl of Mar himself,” said Grumach, throwing down the sword of Alaster on the sod, “ but blood only, if it can be spilt fairly on the field, shall satisfy the mind and avenge the affronts put upon me—Grumach Gordon. And so, young man, I bid thee heartily defiance. Come, lads, the Gordons will yet have their day with these men.”

Thus saying, the old reiver led off his men, while Alaster and his followers soon again stretched themselves on the dryest part of the bank : here the whole rested on their arms till the clear light of day shone down between the trees, and shewed to the first who were awake the beauty of several open copses in the surrounding forest.

## CHAPTER V.

THE morning was somewhat advanced, ere the Highland party in the wood could rouse themselves from the heavy slumbers that succeeded all the toilsome adventures of the previous day and night, and considerably farther ere the men were in readiness to resume their march towards the habitations of the reivers in Glenskiach. The ground on which they had slept for some hours, though soft, was damp and cold, the limbs of the sleepers when they wakened were stiff and ached with fatigue, the autumnal morning was raw and chill, and the

Farquharsons and M'Crones of whom the party was chiefly composed, stretched themselves and rubbed their benumbed arms and legs, as they looked around them in the silent and solitary forest, and curled their noses in each others faces with true Highland sulkiness and discontent. Not a fire was yet lighted to cheer them; for the green smoking wood, round which a few of them gathered, would not burn; the tall Scotch firs, under the prickly foliage of which they had lain, excluded the faint beams of the morning sun from the gloomy spot where they were crowded together; and the distant openings in the thick forest only served to let in upon the party a snell stream of mountain wind, which had completely parted with its caloric, as it passed over the snowy summits of Ben-nevis and Benaw.

“It’s tamn’d meeserable this!” said Colin M’Crone to his neighbour; the ludicrous curl, which drew up his nose as he spoke, elevating also the drop which hung at the point of it. “My houghs are caulder than my haunds, and my haunds, are caulder than my hurdies,” he added, essaying to rub his bare knees, which

the kilt he wore was not intended to cover, with his red fists, which never had known a glove; "Donald! shake the scarrag anoth your oxter, an' see if there be a drap o' the bluid o' barley left."

"Teevil a drap," growled Donald, shaking the empty flask. "An' the very snuff is frozen in the mull! Tamn the Gordons an' the Mac-rabins! I tell'd you, Colin, that we're waur aff here in the wud, than auld Nepechud-neighbour, when he gaed to live wi' the prute peasts—I'm saying, lads"—

"What is't ye'll say noo?" was the other's reply.

"She'll be a bad cheneral—that Alaster, I'm thinking," continued Donald, "to pring us into sic a place as this, wi' naething but cauld an' hunger; an' us made prisoners at our ain fire-side last night, without a stroke o' the claymore for the honour o' Braemar, an' to be march'd through the wud wi' a ropes about her middle, an' her haunds tied behint her back, like a veal calf—cot tamn!—It's not like the usage o' a shentlemans."

"What'll she mean to do then?" inquired

the other, his Highland suspicion also roused.

“Will she turn her back, an’ gae hame?”

“Noh—noh, indeed—but if she disna get a fleg at the Gordons, the day afore the morrow, she’ll may be begin to think her ain thocht.”

“Get up, lads!—up!” shouted a Farquharson, who acted as lieutenant under Alaster. “Forget you the work we have to do, before the sun that’s long before us doops behint the Grampians?”

“What wark, maister Lauchey?”—growled Donald askance, as the lieutenant passed him; but the musterer was too busy to heed the query—and too wise to notice the murmurs which in several places began to assume a mutinous appearance, among the grumbling groups of this rude encampment.

When the smoke of two or three fires began to ascend, however, and the Highlanders had got a few mouthfuls of the venison and game, which had been shot in abundance by the larger party, the day previous, they began to grin with satisfaction in each other’s faces, and to shew their restored good-humour, by sporting sundry gibes and jokes, which were much more enjoyed among themselves than they could be

by our southland readers; who albeit have but small relish for Highland wit, particularly through the medium of our attempted translation into such anglicised Scotch as might make it understood. Suffice it to say, that by the time the men had made and partaken of their various crowdys and oaten cakes, and their savoury stews of the flesh of the game, with a stiff dram of the indispensable usquebaugh, they found both their tempers and their valour greatly improved, and set forth towards the haunt of the Gordons in Glenskiach, with vigorous strides and high hopes of the issue of their expedition.

Coming soon after to an open part of the forest they mounted a rugged height, and Alaster surveyed with delight the romantic variety of the wild scenery before him, which on the right swept away over woods and glens towards the braes of Abernethy, and on his left the view became lost in the rugged fastnesses of the forest of Athol. He now began to understand with greater precision the localities of the extensive district of the Mar-wood, and was somewhat vexed that he should have been on the



previous night, surprised by the Gordon's men, at such a distance from the little valley or woody covert of Glenskiach.

Into one end of this glen—the party now began to descend; and various contending thoughts and undefined purposes by degrees occupied the mind of its youthful leader, as he surveyed, in occasional peeps through the covert, the distant windings of the Dee, and meditated on his night-adventure in the neighbourhood, and on all that interested him regarding Moina Gordon. His broodings became more and more serious, as he drew near to the spot where she dwelt, and as he thought of his own circumstances, as leader of a party sent for the express purpose of killing or banishing (a much more difficult matter) him whom he had vowed to protect, and who, whatever else he might be, was still the father of one becoming dearer to his thoughts every moment.

The small green plat, in front of the little assemblage of houses, or rather bothys, where the deer-reivers lived, now opened out in the wood in front of the party, and Alaster heard, with some concern, the bitter vows of his fol-

lowers as they approached the baille, of what they were determined to do with the lawless spoilers of the forest, so soon as, in a fair fray, they could get them within the strokes of their claymores. But no one as yet appeared near, not even a child played before the doors, or an old woman was seen to water her yarn or spread her clothes on the little green in front of the hamlet; nor had a single Gordon been observed or heard in the wood during the march of the morning.

There seemed something strange in the eyes of Alaster, if not ominous, in all this. Not even the slightest wreath of smoke seemed to curl from the wattled chimneys of the bothys as the party drew up in front, and it was evident that either the place was deserted by the deer-stalkers, or they had allowed their enemies to get thus near, in order the more effectually to entrap them by some concerted ambushade.

Taking with him Colin M'Crone and another, Alaster, however, left his party, and fearlessly entered, as before, the principal building of the baille.

A very different scene now presented itself,

in the interior of this barn-like house, from what he had witnessed on his former visit. All seemed waste and desolate. The fire was extinguished that had formerly blazed so cheerfully, although its embers were still warm on the floor; and instead of the numerous tiers of hams hanging overhead, the blackened rafters of the building were exposed bare and unsightly under the dark thatched roof, which could scarcely be distinguished by the dim light that entered through the well-stuffed windows. Some rude furniture, including several large pots and earthen vessels, were found in this and the other houses; but not a living creature was to be seen, save a pair of large black cats, who scarcely attempted to move, but sat staring with their green eyes upon the intruders, and in Alaster's apprehension, agreeable to the superstition of the period, had a look of ill omen with them, as if they represented the living spirit of a vengeance predicting desolation.

The whole party now took possession of the hamlet, at least for the present; and foreseeing that they might have a hungry enough time of it, before their present expedition was brought

to a close, they were determined to eat and drink while they had the opportunity : so, before many minutes had elapsed, the chimneys smoked as briskly as ever they had done for the Gordons, and the venison was soon after stewing and boiling on the several hearths of the bothys.

“ Shall we take up our quarters here, Maister, if ye please, or shall we not ? ” said Colin M’Crone to Alaster, as the latter sat thoughtfully by himself, after their meal was over. “ It’s a gude hame enough in the wud, an’ wha kens whare we may catch thae reiver-hunters ? The red deer are no half sae cunning, though may be they can rin faster, and we may chase them frae Abernethy to Aberdeen, wi’ nought but weary shanks an’ hungry hotchells for our pains.”

“ Wherever we go, we shall not remain here, Colin,” said his leader, soberly, “ within the heart of the snare that the Gordons have laid for us. Trust me, this unexpected manœuvre bodes no good to the success of our expedition. But we must even now be up, and setting forth : Up, my lads !—Up, and go again. There’s

many a step between the water of Durig, and the birks o' Braemar."

In a short time they were on the road again, or rather tramping through the brambly passes of the forest; two trusty men having in the meantime been despatched in different directions to obtain intelligence of the position and movements of the reivers. But every step they proceeded, the mind of Alaster became more and more uneasy, concerning the end and object of this strange expedition, in which he was acting so unwilling, and yet apparently so cruel and deceitful a part; and his feelings became, as he went, deeply affected by his constant meditations on the present fate and future destiny of his pretty deliverer, the maiden of the forest, Moina Gordon.

## CHAPTER VI.

As day closed in, Alaster Graham again halted his party, under the shelter of a green knoll, still further towards the verge of the forest, and near the border of a small lake, or rather stripe of deep water, such as is often found in the fastnesses of the Highlands. Having posted watchers, one on the knoll, and several others at proper points near, to prevent his being surprised while he arranged future operations, he allowed his men to stretch themselves on the heath, and take their rest. A single fire had been kindled in a sort of recess indented into the



knoll, and, as the men slept around, a succession of reflections bordering on sadness, occupied the moody and restless thoughts of the leader of the expedition.

What these thoughts referred to, needs little detail, when the circumstances of the youth are considered, in regard to his noble kinsman, who had sent him to root out the Gordons from the forest—to his future fame and fortune, which so much depended upon his fulfilling his present duty, should he be allowed to take a part in the war in the Lowlands, of which he had formerly heard some distant rumours, and even to his character with his men, over whom he had accepted the command in this expedition, and who were bitterly zealous against the reiver-chief, whom he had undertaken to expel or to kill, after having vowed to be his individual protector.

At the bottom of all this was a feeling, which was as usual painful, because it was encompassed with anxiety, and alloyed with untoward apprehension; and yet delightful, because it was new, and the novelty consisted in the romance of imagined perfection in woman, in a world where all else is imperfect. It was the heavenly dream of

impassioned affection, and fond friendship, where all else seemed to him coldness, self-interest, or avowed hate. Though strong and manly in person, the present was but the blossom of Alaster's life, and the novel sensation of love, mingling with grateful feelings to his pretty deliverer, came over his soul like touching music, amidst the solitudes of the Mar-forest, and became deepened with the increasing thoughtfulness of manhood, and the necessary anxieties and responsibilities of his situation.

As he sat thus meditating, the man placed at the top of the knoll descended hastily down, and assuming an air of some importance, when he drew near, as if he had a mystery to communicate, said in a half whisper,

“As sure's death ! captain, there's something yonder !”

“Where ?”

“Just beyont the cairn, on the brae-face ; come and see.”

Alaster mounted the knoll, and looked forth, with as much success as the hazy light would admit of, but could see nothing remarkable. “What was it you saw ?” he inquired sharply.

“It was a man, or it was a natural moving thing, or may be it was a ghaist,” said the simple Highlander.

“Poh! mind your duty. It is not ghosts you are to look out for,” said Alaster, rather peevishly.

“It’s the God’s truth,” said the man, indignant at his leader’s want of faith—“I saw it wi’ my een, moving amang the breckans aboon the loch. If it wasna for that blinking shred o’ a moon, ye would see it yoursel. But deel-bellicked, I’ll send a shaft through its wame, whatever it is,” added the man, setting his bow in order.

“You’ll do no such thing, without a challenge, and I giving the word,” said Alaster, unwilling to trust so much to the discretion of the Highlander.

This false alarm having disturbed his reflections, however, after descending to where his men slept in the hollow, he took a turn round the foot of the little hill, towards the margin of the small pool or lake, whose clear waters lay cold and still at the foot of the slope; and scarcely could be said to reflect the dim beam

from what the Highland sentinel had justly called a shred of a moon, which seemed to mock the wild landscape with her feint gleam of hazy light.

The silence was so perfect, in this open solitude of the forest, that every tread of Alaster's foot on the hollow sod, as he wandered some way towards the margin of the lake, under cover of the shadows of some straggling birch-trees, seemed to carry a loud and unwelcome echo, that gave note of his every step, to some distance round. As he looked forth over the light end of the pool, he plainly observed a long shadow move slowly beyond some brushwood between him and the shore. Stopping suddenly, the shadow also stopped, and he heard the low, but clear "ahem!" of a woman's voice proceed from a few paces' distance beyond the brushwood. A thought instantly struck him: and starting at once into the open moonlight, and passing the bushes, he perceived a female wrapped in the long plaid or sagum of the Highlands, her head covered with it as a hood, in the fashion of the north; and as she stood to await his approach, he soon discovered the well-remembered features of Moina Gordon.

“Come not a step nearer,” she said, holding up her hand, “unless you come to assure me, before Heaven, who looks down upon us, that you are not my father’s enemy, and the foe of my clan,—and that you mean to keep the vow you made to me, in your own hour of trouble.”

He said not a word, as he gazed on her for a moment with sudden excitement, but thrusting his hand into his bosom, and taking out the token which hung by a ribbon from his neck, he held it in the light of the moon; then kissing it fervently, he looked up to Heaven, and murmured an ejaculation, that the Great God who watched over them both would be pleased to send a sudden calamity upon him, if he kept not the vow which he now renewed.

The fervent solemnity of the action was so unexpected, and to the romantic Highland maiden seemed so noble, that clasping her hands together as she gazed, the tears rushed into her eyes, and in the passion of the moment unable to obtain from her any common salute, Alaster’s arm wound round her waist, and yielding passively to her feelings, she sobbed in his embrace.

“Then you are not my enemy, nor my fa-

ther's persecutor after all, Alaster," she said, looking up, as she dried her tears—"yet you have made us flee like the startled deer from the warm covey of Glenskiach; and the landless exiles of the old Gordons are hiding themselves in rocks and coves of the earth, from the face of him, who but for me would have been this night a buried corpse, within the untrodden recesses of the forest."

"I shall never bring, or suffer harm to you or yours, Moina," he said; "and I will this night give you proof of it, at the risk of my life, if you will shew me where I may meet your father and the men of his clan."

"What would you do, Alaster?"

"I would meet them singly in the confidence of the truce, which notwithstanding they have not sought; and I would speak to them as their comrade, and the friendly representative of the great Earl of Mar, my kinsman. Bring me to them, my pretty Moina, and I will sue even for friendship at thy father's hand, to second the love that is between thee and me."

"Ye shall ne'er say it again," she said blithely; "if ye will trust yourself to my guid-



ance, for the hunters are not far to seek, although ye know it not. There's a corner of my plaid, Alaster, if ye're in earnest, and come with me."

Taking her arm, and wrapping round him the end of the plaid which she had so frankly offered, according to the fashion between lovers in the north, Alaster suffered himself to be led along beyond the brushwood, until they completely lost sight of the knoll behind which his men were posted. The path which Moina followed wound round a low hill above the narrow lake, but after proceeding some way, deserting it, at an angle in the rocks, she entered a hollow way, or rather pass, which seemed to cut into the hill for some distance. After following for a space the windings of this gorge, suddenly the bank rose in a steep circle or bay, in their front, and their further progress was to all appearance completely prevented. Alaster naturally stopped short when they came to the foot of the bank, and looked round into the face of his guide for an explanation.

"It's pleasant company, and happy moments," he said smiling, "when young folks

lose their way in the wood. But do not be ashamed, Moina; the dim moonlight scarcely can get in between these banks, so it is no wonder you should mistake your road; but our walk will be the longer—come back.”

“Not so fast, Alaster. 'Think you the Gordons can lose their way in the Mar-forest? Hush! rest you here for an instant.”

Taking the end of the plaid which was held by her lover and throwing it again over her shoulder, she dipped into the shaded side of the ravine, mounted nimbly a few steps up the steep, by the side of a large tree, whose top barely rose over the bank above them, and spoke a few words in Gaelic to a head that seemed to be thrust out from the bank.

Descending again, she held out her hand, and said to Alaster, changing her tone, “Come Sir, mount, if that is your will.”

He climbed up the steep by the aid of the trunk of the tree, when after a little, following his guide as she made an opening among the bushes, their ascent seemed to wind into the face of the hill, and at the mouth of the pass Alaster perceived the grim face of a Gordon observing

him keenly from his sentinel station. The glare of firelight soon after struck upon his eyes, as he turned an elbow of the pass, and presently he perceived himself in an area of considerable extent within the hill, though the aperture above from which air and light came, was much narrowed at the top, and was surrounded by thick brambles and brushwood.

"Rest you here, for another moment," she said, as they stopped, "I will go and be your announcer;" but suddenly checking herself with hesitating agitation, she added—"Heaven grant that my father may not misinterpret my boldness!"

She tripped away, however, and was soon lost by a turning of the rock. This strange place of concealment appeared, as Alaster could see it, to consist partly of a cave, and partly of rude erections of split trees, laid across a sort of paling which almost covered in the exterior part of the area, and within which burned several small fires. Round these Alaster could perceive, through the interstices of such rude walls, the ruddy faces of the wives and children of the deer-stalkers. A loud noise of tongues

speaking in the high tone of wrath, within that part of the area which could not be seen from his present position, now arrested the attention of Alaster; he listened and heard his own name pronounced several times, in apparent fury, by a man, while the low and pleading tones of a woman's voice, evidently that of Moina Gordon, seemed endeavouring in vain to mollify the anger of the loud speaker. A moment's consideration shewed Alaster the cause; when instantly stepping forth past the corner of the crag, and stooping as he entered an opening, within which a fire blazed in the midst of a sort of cave, he stood boldly in the presence of Grumach Gordon.

The group, assembled in eager discussion in front of the fire that burned in the inner recesses of the cavern, started on seeing Alaster; and several of them drew their broadswords half out of their scabbards as he stepped forward within the entrance. The veteran chieftain himself appeared in the centre, his head bare, and the red fire-light glaring with striking effect on his weather-beaten features, as, excited by passion, he stood in an attitude calculated to in-

spire terror, over the drooping feminine figure of Moina his daughter.

“What!—is it so?—hah!”—was all that the old man was able to say in broken exclamations, as the tall form of Alaster strode fearlessly forward.

“Do you draw your weapons to a simple messenger, gentlemen?” said the latter, coolly, lifting his bonnet and bowing slightly, while his ruddy youthful features and curled raven hair, with his careless smile, as he thus stood exposed in the midst of his enemies, excited the involuntary admiration of all. “See you,” he added, stretching out his unarmed hands, “I come as a friend.”

“A friend!” repeated the leader of the deer-stalkers, with contemptuous wrath, “a spy! a spy, I say! and my daughter the abettor of the trick! But since you have a second time thrust your head into the lion’s mouth, young man, glaumory and sorcery itself shall not deliver you. John of Leask, what stand you there for?” added the angry chieftain, pointing towards the entrance, which was instantly filled up by the

scowling person addressed, and others of the reivers present.

“I have voluntarily put myself into your power,” said Alaster, calmly, looking round upon those who placed themselves behind him; “but I came with my own flag of truce, to bear a friendly message from myself in the name of the great John, Earl of Mar, under an assurance from this maiden that her father would take no advantage of my confidence.”

“Dared you give such an assurance to my worst enemy?” exclaimed the chief, menacingly, to the terrified girl.

“He is *not* our enemy, father—I know he is not. For Heaven’s sake, at least hear him!” cried Moina, again assuming her tone of entreaty.

“Although you and your people, Sir,” said Alaster, “have made the noble proprietor of this forest your enemy, by your long continued ravages upon the living produce of these wilds, and although he has sent me and my men to drive you thence with fire and sword, yet I would first entreat you in the language of friendship and justice, to leave the Mar-forest



in quietness without the spilling of blood ; for strife and bloodshed bring many woes, and the wandering reivers of the hills, however ancient their lineage, who shoot the roe because the dumb beast has no protection but its light foot, cannot cope with the proud lord, whose castle sends forth a thousand archers.”

“And is that thy proposal ? sassenach youth !” exclaimed the chieftain, scornfully. “Go back, and tell the Earl, that the forests of Scotland afford food and shelter for the hungry foxes, that find none but enemies in the smooth plains of the Lowlands, and also a bield for the birds of the air themselves, who in spite of the cold blasts of the winter winds, do yet carol in their branching bushes, under the sweet sun of summer :—and while they do so, Highland shentlemen, whom the mischances of fortune have driven to the woods like badgers, shall never want a seething of venison in their pot, while they can draw a bow. Here I have come, and the Earl of Mar knows it, and here will I abide over these brave men, while it is my pleasure, and my broad-sword can defend me.”

“Are there not the forests of Athol and of

Badenoch, of Glenmore and Abergeldy?" said Alaster, anxiously, "and why should you harry only the game of Braemar? Retreat, Grumach Gordon, I beseech you!—at least for a time I would not be thy enemy."

"Retreat!—the Gordons retreat!—and before thee! May the great God bring a curse upon——"

"Oh father! invoke not a curse upon us!" interrupted Moina. "Are we not already under the ban of Heaven, obliged to hide ourselves like for-driven thieves in the caves of the wood?"

"And from whom? from whom?—is it not from him there?" continued the old man with renewed rage—"from him whose sorceries have still delivered him out of the fang of my vengeance—from him who disarmed me before my own door!" and he gnashed his teeth at the thought,—“but vengeance I will have still. Go, sassenach, and take my deep defiance with you! Grumach Gordon shall retreat before no man!"

In vain did Moina entreat, or Alaster argue. Obstinate hostility and deadly revenge, still deepening and more heartily resolved, amazed

the understanding and saddened the hearts of the unsuccessful pleaders ; but when the anxious maiden heard her father swear in his wrath, that he would one day have the life of him who had conquered him in presence of his own family, and forced him from his warm covey in Glenskiach, to take refuge here among the rocks in the wood, she prayed audibly with tears in her eyes, that Heaven itself would interpose to protect from her father's rash anger, the stranger who now stood an ineffectual peace-maker in the midst of the group.

Instead of being mollified by the piety, or moved by the tears and beauty of his daughter, the old man standing forth in the centre, held up his clenched hand, and repeated with a hoarse voice, and all the solemnity of vengeful passion, his bloody oath.

“ It will be a woeful day for your own grey hairs, old man,” said the youth, with another species of solemnity, “ when that ungodly vow shall be fulfilled !—a day of woe it will be.”

“ A day of woe it will be,” repeated a shrill and tremulous voice, from the inner crevices of the cave,—and the palsied head of a very old

woman who now sat up from a rude couch behind the group, seemed for the first time to be giving eager attention to the scene.

“Oh ! do not say so, dear grandmother,” exclaimed Moina, in a tone of apprehensive agony, as she knelt beside the old woman.

The latter only shook her head sadly, as she contemplated the youthful features of her deceased daughter’s child, and laid her head quietly back on the couch.

“Holy Heavens !—I am under the powers of witchcraft !” exclaimed the chieftain wildly.

Alaster now turned to leave the cave, but his exit was sullenly opposed by John of Leask and the others, who stood between him and the entrance. An altercation, amounting almost to an uproar, now arose as to his being allowed to leave the retreat of the Gordons thus easily, with full power, as they averred, of making use of the knowledge thus cunningly obtained, through the simplicity of a thoughtless maiden, to come upon them in their strong-hold, and perhaps to drive them hence as he had obliged them to flee from Glenskiach. In vain he protested, that having taken no note as he came in

the obscure moonlight, of his way, he could not again find out the spot, and proposed to depart in any manner they should prescribe, whereby he might be rendered unable to make use of his local information. The darkest looks were exchanged between the infuriated Highlanders, and the darkest hints communicated as to the safest policy, of which the power they had gave them now the alternative. But when in answer to his appeal, as to the friendly manner in which he had thrown himself upon them in the character of a messenger—some one proposed that he should be blindfolded, and thus led out into a distant part of the forest, Alaster drew his long claymore, and retreating to an inner part of the cavern, seemed determined to sell his life at the dearest rate, rather than submit to such an indignity.

The hunters now grouped together near the entrance, in contentious, but whispering consultation, while Moina addressed a few words of anxious entreaty to Alaster, between whom and her father she went and returned several times. At length woman prevailed, and the brave representative of the noble house of Mar, con-

sented to suffer his eyes to be bandaged, so soon as he was brought outside of the bank, where he had first mounted behind the tree ; the only condition appended to this arrangement being, that his conductor should be a mere boy, and unarmed, and that he should not be taken, in his hooded state, more than ten minutes' walk from the place where the bandage should be put on.



## CHAPTER VI.

THERE was something in the situation of Alaster Graham, as he suffered himself to be led blindfolded through the narrow ravine or glen, up a diverging ascent, and over the surrounding broken and heathy ground, after he left the strong-hold of the deer-stalkers, that was painfully novel and not without a sense of degradation. Mingled with this, there were both sadness and anxiety. Sadness, mixed with feelings of delight, from certain speaking looks at parting, and the trembling pressure of a soft hand, stealthily conveyed into his, by

Moina Gordon ; and anxiety, always the effect of the spreading forth of the social affections, and the discovery of new channels of promised felicity. Musing over various matters of the present and the anticipated, Alaster forgot his ten-minutes' engagement, while proceeding onwards even blindfolded as he was, and the cunning urchin who led him along, seemed in no haste to apprise him of the lapse of time.

"Where, in the name of St. Andrew, are you taking me, boy?" he at length exclaimed, stopping suddenly, after nearly breaking his shins on a stone, in the uneven ground over which he was travelling.

"Hersel may take aff the brecham frae her een noo, I'm thinking," said the boy, archly.

Removing the bandage, Alaster, upon looking round, found himself in the thick of the forest again, and on turning himself towards the part that was most open, what of the country he could see by the dim light of the quarter-moon, was totally unknown to him.

"My good youth," he said to the boy, "as you have been the blind man's dog to me thus far, will you just tell me on which side of me

to turn, that I may soonest reach the little loch that lies in the hollow somewhere in this neighbourhood?"

"If her nainsel's honour and clory," said the boy, with a grin, turns her lug to the lown o' the brae, she'll maybe hear the tramp o' her ain feet the better; an' if she turns her nose to the way the wind comes, she'll maybe find the smell o' her ain peat-reek;" and with this impertinent reply, the giggling little villain made off to the left, and instantly darting behind the bushes, left our hero alone, and in no small perplexity.

"This is to be another night-wandering adventure in this wilderness, I see," said Alaster to himself, as he deliberated a few moments where he stood, then making his way towards the openest part, he strained his eyes to endeavour to decide by the appearance of the country before him, which course to pursue. But though aware that the boy, as instructed, must have led him into a part of the forest as perplexing as possible in relation to the locality from which he had just been conveyed, he hoped, by ascending the nearest height, to

discover some slight glare of light in the surrounding wild, to lead him to where his own fire burned under the knoll on which his men were posted.

The height that he ascended for this purpose, however, was so thickly covered with wood, and so broken and rugged, that he was soon obliged to descend where there was clearer footing ; but as yet he could make out no trace of the small loch which he sought, nor of any fire appearing throughout the dim peeps of opening in the straggling forest. As he continued to descend, he found the light becoming more and more obscure, and looking up, perceived that the moon was already down, and thick darkness was fast gathering round him. He now began to get somewhat timorous and to feel fatigue, as his footing became more and more uncertain, and, as involuntary fancies regarding deep lochs, pitfalls, and precipices, successively crossed his imagination.

“ It matters little, I can sleep till morning here, as well as among my own men,” he said, as he threw himself down on the rustling heath, but at the moment, the space before him being

somewhat open and level, he thought he had perceived a faint light. He looked earnestly, and was sure he observed a light like that of a fire, yet so dim was it that he could only see it at all, by looking for some moments steadily in one direction. It's very dimness, however, he thought, proved its reality, for had it been an *ignis fatuus*, the phosphoric fire of the bogs, it would have been ten times more brilliant and distinct. It might prove to be the faint gleam of his own fire by the knoll after all. He determined to rise and follow it as it was apparently so near.

It was not, however, until after nearly half an hour's further travelling over a species of ground that would have discouraged the heart of any but a mountaineer, that he reached a small highland cottage or shieling, which he now began to be certain must belong to some other portion of his enemies. Danger with him, however, was rather a recommendation than otherwise to any adventure, and stepping up boldly he knocked at the door of the cottage. It was opened by a middle aged woman, to

whom he briefly explained that he was a stranger who had lost his way in the forest.

While the good woman, with hospitable Highland civility, invited Alaster to enter, he had no sooner spoken in reply, than a voice within giving a preliminary "Eigh Oigh!" or two, immediately after, out jumped from a sort of crib, or wooden bedstead in the wall, a half-dressed figure, who throwing himself down on his knees embraced firmly the legs of our hero, at the same time uttering something between a howl and a scream of joyful recognition.

"And are you really still in the land of the living, Farquhar?" said Alaster, raising gently his resuscitated servant. "By the word of a Duine-uasal, I ken'd ye were hard to kill; but, in sooth, drowning's a death that some need have small dread of, while there's a handful o' hempseed to saw in the lowlands. God save ye all here!" he added, turning round and saluting the other inmates of the cottage.

"Pless us the night—an' pless us the morn," said the Highland woman, curtsying to Alaster, "but the strangers pe plenty the noo, an' the



shentleman's pe ganging fast through the wood, to the wars an' rumours."

"Wars and rumours!" repeated Alaster—observing more in detail the square forms and brown visages of two stalwart Highlanders, who, dressed in the gaudy tartan of the Stewart's clan, sat "beyond the reek" of the peat fire, that burned in the centre of the shieling.

"The praw stranger 'll pe for the wars too—na doot," said the woman to one of the Highlanders, as Alaster seated himself.

"To be surely—her nainsel's honour'll pe for the wars," answered the man aloud, with Highland flattery. "Kens she ought about them, if a pody may speer?" he added, addressing Alaster.

"No," said our hero simply; "I've heard of the wars in the low countries certainly, but what have we who live here on the hills to do with king or covenant. The king is now an Englishman, and knows nothing, or cares nothing for the braid Highlands, or the proud clans of the Gael; and as for the covenanters, it's my notion they like a preaching

better than a piobrachd ony day. I know of no wars worth the name."

- "Her nainsel maun pe as deaf as the grey crag o' Glencronaghen," said the Highlander, assuming a scornful superiority, "if she hasna heard the news. But maybe she'll pe a Campbell frae the wast, an' a seven-an' twenty half cousin o' the great Earl o' Argyle, wi' his plack scull-hoods, his skraighing sawm-singing for bye his preaching grunt,—pah!—pewh!"

"I really don't know what you mean, friend," was Alaster's reply; slightly offended, yet speaking with all the good-nature of a man of real courage.

"Then, her nainsel's honour and clory maun be just as ignoramus as a prute peast, for a' her braw biodag and her braid sporan," said the strange Highlander, jeeringly, as he glanced at the silver ornamented dirk by Alaster's side, and the ample tasseled purse that hung before him, "for a' the glens are ringing frae Lochgoil in the wast, to Johnny Groat's hoose at the world's end, wi' the blithe news o' the wars o' the gallant Montrose."

"If your news be true it's at least not very

politely communicated," said Alaster; "but truly, friend, I am so well disposed to a little civil warfare, that for your jeer I am quite ready to give you a taste of either biodag or claymore, long lance, or sken-dhu whenever your valiant braggartship shall choose, in fair daylight, come the morning."

"Pohoogh! oigh! hoot away, lad. Ye're a braw boy for the wars! an' my vera particular friend and lovier," shouted Morrough Mc Combich, standing up, "and I'll just beg your free pardon for my civil joke, an' there's my loof on't; for disna ae shentleman ken anither a' the worl' o'er? There," and he held out a hand of no Lilliputian dimensions, "just shake me by the fist, if ye dare, as the muckle de'il said to the lowlander."

Alaster, laughing at the odd humour of the fellow, could not refuse his proffered hand, and shaking it cordially, they sat down the closest of friends to discourse of "the wars and rumours;" which, news being such a rarity in these remote quarters, presented a theme of the most exhilarating interest to the youthful ambition of our hero.

“ It’s a tamn’d shame, an’ a conscionable confusion !” exclaimed the animated Gaelic stranger, ambitious to shew off the elegance of his English, while he eyed Alaster’s person from head to foot ; “ for such a buirdly galliard as her nainsel’s clory to be creeping about here like a moudiewort in the woods, when there’s claymores ringing far a-field ; yet here she’ll be herding wi’ the red-deer in the forest o’ Braemar like a cowardly hurcheon, while the great Montrose is marching to the battle,—bagpipes playing,—horses neighing,—trumpets blawing,—up wi’ the war cry ! *Tulach ard !* cries the Mackenzie ;—*Fraoch eilan !* cries Macdonald ;—*A dh’ aindeoin cotheireadh e !* cries Clan Rannald.—*Whoo ! hoop !*”—and jumping up on the floor, and flourishing his short stick, the man seemed about to run to the charge in the faces of his startled auditors, who sat staring on him in good-natured admiration.

“ *Hoigh ! poigh !*” shouted the same fellow again, slapping Alaster’s bare knee in the most irreverent manner, on observing the ruminating look of our hero—“ What’ll her honour’s clory

be musing aboot—when she sits there in the neuk, like a contemplation.”

“Never mind me, friend, but go on with your news of the war.”

“I ken brawly what’ll be in her honour’s thoughts,” continued the persevering Athol-man; “she’ll hae some sweetheart in the wood—some leman lass that keeps her frae her sleep at night, and rins between hersel’ an’ her wits by day. Fy! feigh!—a peticoat an’ a tonnag—a blue ee an’ a saft word, to keep a young fellow frae the wars,—when gude men are on the heather, an’ the slogan is sounding frae Lorn to Lochaber. Piewgh! fewgh!”

Although the enthusiasm of Morrough Mac Combich was somewhat too roistering and obstreperous for the quiet habits of our hero, he did not himself fail to catch a good portion of it during the remainder of the conversation; and even his invalid servant, Farquhar, half-drowned as he had been, and wounded, and still sore with bruises, began to caper on the floor, and to long exceedingly for a tilt at the psalm-singing men of the covenant. Though also the sheiling in which this chance assembly were



convened, belonged to the scattered clan of the Macrabines, also deer-stalkers of the wood, yet even when the name and quality of Alaster came to be known, the sacred law of hospitality kept all now met, in friendship for the remainder of the night; for our hero soon concluded, that it was in vain to seek his own party until he should have the benefit of the light of a new day.

After therefore eating together the friendly bread and salt, besides partaking of the good woman's store of goat's-milk cheese, cold venison and oaten bannocks—the whole seasoned with a tass of usquebaugh and a hearty pinch of Highland snuff by way of desert (a delicate luxury procured at the refined town of Aberdeen), the whole gathering became drowsy from the day's fatigue, and addressing themselves to sleep where they sat, each man began to dose as the red embers of the turf-fire sank away into darkness, and deep quietness soon resumed her reign over the surrounding solitudes of Braemar.

END OF VOL. II.

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