

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.

DEER-STALKERS OF GLENSKIACH.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE vindictive wrath of Grumach Gordon against his daughter, for having thoughtlessly introduced his enemy into the very strong-hold of the clansmen, vented itself after the departure of Alaster in bitter and deep reproaches. But Moina, with the patient reverence of a

daughter for a parent, even under the influence of passion or mistake, answered not again, but when her father's wrath began to cool, occasionally edged in a word of mild and explanatory remonstrance.

Grumach, however, had a strong spice of military craft, such as it was, as well as of suspicion in his character, naturally acquired during the marauding life which he had led for thirty years ; and having laid his plans in consequence of the discovery of his retreat, and consulted over them with John of Leask, he took a few hours' rest, and by the grey light of the morning his men had already descended the ravine under the hill, within which their women were left behind, and were cautiously marching in the hollow towards the small loch, or pool, before-mentioned, being completely screened from the view of the sentinel stationed on the knoll, by the thick brushwood beyond which Alaster had been led the night previous.

Meanwhile the small company at the bothy had also roused itself at cock-crowing, and all were preparing for their departure.

“ He's a teevil o' a troublesome body that,”

growled Morrouch M'Combich, impatiently, at Farquhar, as he waited on the adjustment of the various bandages and bucklings with which the legs and wings of that wounded Samaritan were encumbered, through the kind attention of the Macrabine women, on whom the crafty henchman had contrived to pass himself as a clansman from Lochaw, who had fallen in with a skirmishing party from the wars; "tamn her plaisters an' poluses, an' her potæcaries' ointment! but deel be licked," he continued, as looking askance, he next observed the invalid comforting his heart with a lump of the good-wife's oaten bannock, and a gulp of her aquavitæ. "Deel be in her maw, but she sets her sickness uncommonly; for it hasna got near to the vital parts o' her stomach yet. Lauchey, come awa."

The whole four were soon on their way as far as they knew it, at least they were tramping, according to the direction of their host, through the soft heath of a stripe of moor; for they now found themselves on an open part of what was still called the forest. The high ground only was covered with the elm and Scotch pine-fir, whose

dark prickly tops intercepted the bright rays of the morning sun, which now began to peep pleasantly over the irregular summit of the Grampians. Alaster wondered that he could not as yet recognize the country, though he was certain that the small loch, the knoll, and his men, could not be far distant.

“ And so her nainsel’s honour an’ pleasure, has said her swear, that she shall hae a pook at the skirts an’ a fleg at the flanks o’ thae traitor whigs an’ preachical covenant-men,” said Morrough M’Combich to Alaster, in his ordinary elegant English, as they went along almost at a Highland trot. “ Pipers an’ piobrachds ! Dorlachs an’ skene-occles ! but this present would pe a sweet spot for a bit comhraig brulzie. Got pless us ! put I wuss the wars were here just the noo. Deel hauds my haunds that I dinna draw my clymore, an’ kill that limping body wi’ the bandages afore my breakfast, just for a practice.”

“ Put your fingers in your ain mouth, an’ try your teeth on your ain thumb till the time comes, friend,” said Farquhar, in answer ; “ I’ll warrant ye’ll get practice enough before Mon-

trose an' his men cross the Firth of Forth, or beat Johnny Urie beyond the border."

"Hoolagh! What's that?" suddenly shouted the enthusiastic Athol-man.

"What? Oigh! heard ye the whistle an' a clatter o' claymores too, as sure's death?" screamed his companion.

"Heugh! heugh!" again whooped Morrouch, running forward, "see ye there! rin, lads—here's a maist pleasant tuasaid just anoth our nose. Got pless the wars an' the rumours! Rin, ye deevils. Lauchey, what are ye swithering at?"

"Whilk side will ye take in the stramash," said his neighbour Highlander coolly, and drawing out his broadsword.

"Ony side, it pleasures his honour here," said Morrouch, "teevil may care! haste ye! or the fight 'll be o'er, an' we'll no get a stroke struck!"

With this, all the four ran with speed to where they had heard a whistle, and then a shout, and now observed under the knoll, which the hip of the fir-covered height on their left now revealed, Alaster's men confusedly engaged with the deer-stalkers, who having come upon

them by surprise, from their superior knowledge of the *locale*, the former evidently fought at a disadvantage, and some of them already began to give way.

“ Follow me, friends !—behind the knoll !” cried Alaster to his new acquaintances.

“ It’s tamn’d round about though,” said the eager M’Combich.

“ A Graham ! a Graham !” shouted Alaster after the Highland custom, as he and his friends joined the fray.

This seasonable reinforcement soon turned the fortune of this irregular contest, and Alaster’s men, shouting in answer for joy of the well-timed return of their leader, at once drove back the Gordons beyond the recess in the knoll. The Highlanders, on both sides, were so well-acquainted with their weapons, that only one man of the deer-stalkers was killed, and but few wounds had as yet been received, when, contrary to his wish, Alaster was sought out by, and soon found himself engaged hand to hand with Grumach himself. The reiver chief eyed his antagonist with intense fury when they met, his look plainly intimating his joy in the op-

portunity of revenging the affront of his former defeat. As they joined swords, the attention of Alaster was momentarily arrested by a screaming cry emanating from among the fires on the hill behind his enemy, which overlooked the little holm where the fight had taken place, for, according to custom, some women and children of the reivers were witnesses of the fray ;—and he even imagined that he heard the shriek of Moina, as she saw him about to spill the blood of her father.

The effect of this discovery had nearly cost the youth his life, for the old chief pressed hard upon him, seeing him stand entirely on the defensive, and he had to retreat three or four paces to avoid the eager vengeance of the old man. Recovering in an instant after his presence of mind, however, his strength and courage once more came fully to his aid ; and succeeding by the superior vigour of his arm, in turning aside his adversary's sword, he sprang in upon him, and wresting the weapon out of his hand, the old man fell with the shock, and lay a second time at Alaster's feet, panting

for breath, and in dumb astonishment, at so unusual an occurrence.

By this time the other clansmen had fled on all sides, being hard pressed, in particular by Morrouch M'Combich, whose enthusiastic valour, in spite of a slight wound in the face, was quite disappointed at the shortness of so agreeable an exercise, as this fray afforded him "just for practice." The whole of the Gordons, except two, and their leader, had found refuge among the irregular rocks which faced the woody hills on which the women were placed; and now Farquhar, by his master's order, proceeded with alacrity to bind behind them the hands, not only of the two common prisoners; but those of the veteran chieftain himself. The great object of his expedition being thus happily accomplished, in a way to leave the ultimate determination of the fate of the leader of the deer-stalkers to his noble employer, with whom Alaster could easily intercede for his safety; putting his men in order, he was soon again on his march back, towards the castle of Braemar.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE morning sun, which seldom at this season had so early dispelled the mists that crowned the many heads of the great range of the Grampians, now began to peep in glowing brightness over the rugged heights to the east of Blair Athol, as Alaster and his men tramped cheerily on in their march through the forest. Keeping the higher ground from which they had occasionally picturesque peeps through among the trees, of the windings of the Dee, as here, comparatively in its infancy, the stream brawled beneath among rugged rocks, or swirled

round and settled into linns and pools, through the broken tanglements of its irregular current; the Highland party next dived into the dark depths of the wood, in order the more speedily to get to the castle of Braemar.

Grumach Gordon, and the other two prisoners, bound and disarmed, trudged on in the centre of the party, in dogged silence,—and with looks of dark and vindictive gloom. The two strangers, namely Morrouch M'Combich and his companion, chose also to accompany Alaster to Braemar castle, as there they expected to meet with some gathering of the clans, who were likely to have by this time assembled to join the rising in the north under the gallant Montrose.

The further conversation of this redoubtable clansman, as, sticking close by the side of our hero while on the march, he continued to feed the fancy of the youth with glowing pictures of the pleasures of war, the glories of victory, and the prospects of plunder, was to the latter exceedingly exhilarating. Upon the matter of the spulzie to be obtained in the wars, Morrouch dwelt with sincere gusto, especially when they

should come to have the good fortune of gutting the houses of the rich burghers of Aberdeen or Dundee, or haply of the wealthy merchants of Glasgow in the west, who had all taken up the cause of the covenant, with the most unaccountable wrongheaded wilfulness—evidently that, under Providence, the brave followers of Montrose might have no lack of booty when they should have left their bare hills to fight in so good a cause. This cause was no other than that of Royal Charlie himself, who in addition would shower upon them ultimately many honours and promotions; their perfect success under their gallant leader, being a thing not to be spoken of with the slightest doubt.

While our hero and Morrough, with sundry subsidiary listeners, were engaged in this gratifying discourse, emerging out from the thicket of the wood, and coming upon a heathy ridge, where the view of the hilly, picturesque country, from Braemar to Kildrummy, opened out on all sides, the ears of the party were refreshed by a distant strain of the bagpipe, which, far in the vale beneath them, came up at the moment with great effect from the sweeping

entrances of the glen, and which, playing a wild martial piobrachd, touched the very souls of the errant Highlanders. Hasting to the top of the ridge, they observed the blue bonnets, dark tartan jackets, and short feile-begs of a considerable body of men, who, carrying the standard of the Stewarts of Appin, and armed only with target and claymore, dirk and skene-dhu, after the ancient fashion, were winding along the hollow with evident pride and picturesque regularity.

“Lamh Dhia Sinn ! Oh, clory an’ praise, see ye that ?” cried Morrouch in an ecstasy—“Deevil almighty ! what a creat army !—a hunder a thoosand gallant shentlemans frae the braes o’ Appin, marching, like a Bannockburn to the great wars an’ the rumours ! Hoigh ! Got tamn ! —rin, lads, an see the clory !”

In short the effect of this animating sight, not only upon the enthusiastic Morrouch M’Com-bich, but upon Alaster himself and the whole of the party, aware as they were of the destination of so gallant a gathering, is scarcely to be described. But when, as the party came more fully into view, another piper joined the former,

and each in all the pride of his profession, blew into the drones of the instrument, while his cheeks were almost split with the exertion, and the skirl of their warlike music echoed up and along the glen, until the very walls of old Kil-drummy seemed to send back the sound, Mor-rouch could stand it no longer, but drawing his claymore, and flourishing it round his head, he danced and capered, and “whoogh’d,” and whooped, in his enthusiasm, until Alaster’s whole party catching the infection, as they came to the brow of the height, set up one simultaneous halloo, waving their bonnets in acclamation, to the gathering in the glen. Even the prisoners, and old Grumach himself, joined in the shout ;—and when the clan in the hollow, thinking that this was another legion collected in the same cause, answered with all the enthusiasm of the Gael, this spontaneous slogan of the coming war,—the sound of so many human voices in the wilderness, joining in the simultaneous hurra ! as it echoed away in the wild passes towards the mountains, had an effect that was positively sublime.

“Oigh ! Got be a clory, Laughey ! did ye

ever hear such a beautification?" exclaimed Morrouch in a rapture to his neighbour. "Draw your sword, ye deevil, for the honour o' Montrose, an' look like a sodger marching to the pleasurement o' the wars, Hoigh!——tamn her!"

Turning the angle of the ridge soon after, the dark turrets of Braemar castle next came into view, rising tall and warlike beyond the windings of the Dee, and by the time Alaster and his men rounded the heavy hill which rises close behind it, various other parties of the Gael from different districts in the neighbourhood, began to shew themselves successively to the delighted spectators, as with picturesque effect, they issued from the different passes in the glens, or poured down the green sides of the surrounding hills. Drawing near in tolerable order, the strains of their different bagpipes, mingling in wild and exciting discordance, as the sounds echoed from the distance,—had, to the enthusiastic Highlanders, a peculiarly stirring if not striking effect.

A proud youth had Alaster Graham been all day, while proceeding through the woods at the

head of his own small company, but as all greatness is comparative, *his* shrunk almost into nothing, in his own estimation, as, coming in with his few followers, he witnessed the pride of the Gaelic chieftains marching at the head of their compact legions of wild clansmen. Never had he seen so animating a sight, as he now witnessed in the strath of Braemar.

Even the castle itself, which still stands upon a slight rising ground, within a few hundred yards of the Dee, and is merely a tall, black, and somewhat triangular building, with its pepper-box turrets, toppling from the corners beneath the chimneys, and an antique round tower with a screw stair-case shooting up in the inner angle, where one part of the building appears awkwardly stuck against the other, seemed to look down with a natural Highland pride upon the brave array, who now made the scene so stirring all round it.

Alaster, on his arrival, could scarcely make his way through the crowd which surrounded the Earl ; and his own importance was sadly damped, as, on announcing his return, and naming his prisoners, he received a hasty com-

mand to see them attended to a place of security, and to wait until the Earl should have leisure to give his attention to this matter.

Meantime the usual preparation for the hospitable entertainment of the chieftains and people, caused great bustle among the numerous underlings of the castle, and as every kind of gathering forms an excuse for getting up that glorious species of mountaineer enjoyment, a Highland feast, nothing was now omitted that use and wont had made sacred to a cheerful parting banquet, before the clans, now assembling at Braemar, took their departure to join the brave Montrose. Several oxen, sheep, red deer, and kids, the servants were roasting whole for the use of the guests, and more than one gréat pot-full of poultry and game, were already stewing in the kitchens, and at the rear of the castle. A great fire was kindled on the lawn, round the gnarled trunk of an old oak, according to ancient custom, which oak was appropriately called the trunk of the feast, and at this fire the largest beeves were roasting on wooden stakes, and now sent forth a peculiarly tempting savour. Within the best apartment

of the castle two tables were covered for the Earl and his principal guests, while his common retainers without lent handy assistance to the servants employed on the green, in setting up such temporary erections for the accommodation of the inferior clansmen as the occasion admitted of.

While all were occupied in different ways, Alaster was, with his prisoners, hastily summoned into the presence of the Earl of Mar. In an upper chamber of the castle, a plain square apartment, sat his lordship, surrounded by a close group of Gaelic chiefs, mixed with his own retainers, whose warlike appearance and stern nobleness of mien, as they eyed our youth and his men, formed a scene that was strikingly, though unpretendingly imposing. Its effect was greatly heightened by the presence of old Grumach Gordon, who slightly bound, bare-headed, and disarmed, and with a look more of defiance than humility, strode boldly up toward the centre of the group.

“Bring you me a single prisoner, young man?” said the Earl, sternly.

“ Yes, my lord, with only two others ; but I bring you Grumach the reiver, himself.”

“ And could he not have been disposed of without being led like a tethered bull into our own presence ? Is there not a Donjon beneath the level of the sward that surrounds this castle, which might be fit lodging for this audacious despoiler ? But you seem to have a request to prefer. If so, speak it.”

“ It is, that Grumach Gordon may be set at liberty. Nay, start not, my lord,” said Alaster, “ he is willing to join the brave Montrose in the wars, and to take with him the whole Gordons and Macrabins of Glenskiach.”

“ Alaster, you are but a young man,” replied the Earl, eyeing the youth with a meaning look ; “ claymores have been drawn, and blood has been spilt in the wood, and yet you have brought me this old man’s crafty head upon his own shoulders. I like not this impolitic humanity.”

“ Dhia gledh sinn !” exclaimed the prisoner, losing all restraint on his tongue, “ is my two ears to hear this spoken to an unfortunate chieftain of the ancient clan of the Gordons ? Gen-

tlemen, Stewarts and Macdonalds," he continued, addressing himself to the assembled chiefs, "will you stand there and see a duine-wasal and a Gordon treated thus? Will you coolly allow an old man to be beholden to and reproached with the cruel humanity of a boy?"

The chiefs crowded round and spoke apart to the Earl, who after further questioning with Alaster, said aloud—

"Old man, upon condition of your departing with these gallant chieftains to join the noble Montrose, you are free."

The old man bowed his grey head in token of assent.

"Gille-coise," added the Earl to his henchman, "let not a Gordon remain longer in bonds in my presence, and let them partake of the festivities which none shall be denied who are within my walls this day."

With evident feelings of remaining vindictiveness and wounded pride, the old man was conducted from the presence of the Earl, with whom Alaster, however, remained, and being introduced to the chiefs was very soon also appointed

to a command under one of them, in the army destined to join the forces of Montrose.

As the day advanced the feast was set in the manner which has so often been described ; with the usual rude but imposing magnificence, in the hall, and clumsy plenty on the green, in front of the castle. Within, the Earl presided in all the glory of feudal state, the pipers playing during the whole time of the repast, exhilarating strains of warlike music, which, however deafening to modern ears, certainly took nothing from the keenness of the appetites of the ravenous Highlanders. In the evening, when the wine and whiskey began to take effect, the chiefs and lairds, beginning to snap their fingers and thump the table to the lively strains of their pipers, could keep no longer on their seats, and a dance, the usual sequel of such good cheer, was from right to left called for ; until the word being carried to the green without, numbers of men and women incontinently rushed into the hall, and in five minutes' time, one of the great tables was completely cleared away, its seats were moved to the walls, and lairds and ladies prepared for the dance.

CHAPTER IX.

THE dames of the household at Braemar castle, as well as all who lived near, knowing the humour and manner of a Highland feast, and that all festive gatherings in their glens must end either with a dance or a fight, if not with both, had dressed themselves in their best in readiness for the merry exercise; and the shew of healthy beauty that now graced the hall, filled the oldest of the men present with that pleasure as well as pride, which such a sight, in the moment of exhilaration, is calculated to produce upon the warm-hearted inhabitants

of the cold mountains of the north. Some parley, however, took place before the dance began, while the ladies of the Earl's household were led into the hall, and as Alaster stood up with other youths, and looked at the rosy countenances of the Highland damsels, seeking to find a partner, he caught a glimpse of a half-concealed face in the rear of the throng, that sent the blood more quickly from his heart. He scarcely could believe his eyes, yet the impression upon himself convinced him he had made no mistake. Pushing his way through among the others, towards the more obscure part of the hall near the entrance, he soon found the interesting object that had attracted him, and in short, before he was able to speak from surprise, he had pressed the hand frankly put into his, of his little enthusiastic maiden of the forest, Moina Gordon.

“I have followed my father,” she said, “all the way hither to Braemar, and you, Alaster, have procured his freedom. I must thank you, although *he* does not.”

“God bless thy fair looks, my pretty Moina,” he said, caressingly, as they stood behind backs, “but come, I want thee—hark !”

“ Who leads off the dance ? ” the Earl of Mar called out, good-humouredly, as Alaster was speaking,—at the same time rising from his seat at the top of the hall.

Several of the chiefs and ladies now crowded round him. “ No ! ” he added aloud, in answer to the suggestion of one of them, “ there shall be no distinction of ranks in this night’s Ceum-siubhail. The chief shall foot it with the damsel of the sheiling, and the proudest lady in Braemar castle shall not refuse to beck to the bow of the bonneted lad, who has a light heel and quick ear for reel or strathspey. Come !—where is Alaster Graham, my handsome forester ? Alaster ! ” he continued, as the latter came forward, “ you shall begin the dance ; choose you a partner first, and not the proudest dame here shall refuse your challenge.”

The few Highland dames present stood round, admiring the youth, as he bowed in answer to the speech of the Earl, each expecting to have the triumph of being selected for his partner ; but he, passing the whole of them by, and stepping to the lower end of the hall, brought from among the crowd of lowly damsels, a modest

figure of simple beauty, in the slender person of Moina Gordon.

Manifesting much reluctance to come forward thus publicly, Moina struggled for a moment with her lover, for Alaster had employed some gallant freedom in urging her to lead the dance, and to proceed with him towards the centre of the hall; when, as all eyes were now directed to her, the brooch which fastened her plaid or sagum of striped stuff, gave way, and the garment falling on his arm, exposed her person to the view of all.

The close dress which enclosed the bust of the blushing girl was actually of silk, and the dark-green tartan of the clan of the Gordons being the ancient Carac-chalamh, or jupe of the Lowlands, was made nearly like the spencer of later times, but terminated in a picturesque bodice of red stuff, very much in the style of those worn by the Swiss girls at this day. A short petticoat of light blue mankey, with laced sandals of tanned deer-skin on her feet, and stockings of red and white diceing on her legs, composed the dress of the lower part of her person; and her thick fair hair, bound with a sprig

of a bright species of myrtle, all shewed, that, seated by the banks of some clear pool, before she came to the castle, the Highland maiden had taken no small pains with her toilet, with a natural view to the admiration of him whom she had followed thus far.

A titter of female curiosity and a toss of the head among the dames at the upper end of the hall, was the consequence of Alaster's choice, but soon, as the floor was filled, the call of the Earl to his pipers, with their exhilarating preludes as they puffed and tuned their instruments, adjusting the branching drones over their shoulders with all the consequence of their important vocation,—added not a little to the general festive excitement.

“ Play up ‘ The Graham’s Gathering, at the lucky rock in Strathspey ’—or no, let it be ‘ *Thogail mam bo*—for the Mac Farlanes,’ ” cried the Earl—“ ‘ We come through the drift to drive the prey,’ ” he added, translating into English that popular air—“ *that* is most appropriate to the morrow’s duties. Play, lads! play!—the piobrachd, first at least, for a prelude to the lighter music.”

As the dance afterwards went on, and was deeply enjoyed by the animated youngsters, Grumach Gordon slipped in from among the crowd without, his old heart kindling with all the enthusiasm of youth at the sound of the Strathspey and the sight of the company; when watching the gleeful agility of the dancers, he perceived among the very foremost, his constant conqueror, Alaster Graham. But what was his astonishment, when, on looking further, he saw that youth, handing round and setting, in the greatest familiarity as his partner, with his own daughter, Moina Gordon. Placing himself on a bench behind the company, the old man sat gazing under his grey bushy eyebrows, at the happy pair, while various passions contended in his mind—involuntary admiration for so handsome a couple, which he could not repress, was mixed with dark and vengeful wrath, still burning against the youth, and a confusion of plans for the punishment of his thoughtless and wilful daughter.

The lovers, however, enjoyed themselves unconsciously, the whole evening, and danced together the threesome reel, and the quar-

tette Strathspey, the lightsome Highland horn-pipe of the Shan-trius ; and footed, with their respective Gaelic names, and in the true Gaelic style, the forward step and the setting step, the tripping cross-springs and the graceful cuartage or turning step, in a manner surpassing all others of the best mountaineer dancers present. The scowling ire of old Grumach himself began to be lost in his parental pride, and extorted admiration ; and when the Earl and Glen-leg of Athol, took a turn round the hall, attracted from their seats by their sympathy with the evident enjoyment of the dancers, the old man came forth from his obscure recess, and threw himself in the way of hearing their conversation.

“ By my faith, a likely couple ! ” exclaimed the Earl, as he contemplated the two now left almost alone in the middle of the hall, “ who can this tasteful little maiden be, whom I have admired all night ? for she is neither dighted and dizened like the stately dames of Braemar, nor is she at all like the humble nigheans of the glens.”

“ What think your lordship, if she be the daughter of the veteran forest-reiver of Glen-

skiach ? Nay, I am certain of it," answered the Laird of Glen-leg, " for I observed them talking together as father and daughter may talk, and the maiden's apparel befits the notions of the old man, who still, even though hiding in the dens of the forest, calls himself a chief of the old Gordons of Morven."

" Ha ! is that the case ?" cried the Earl ; " now I see the meaning of the galliard's lenity to the wild deer-stalkers, and his anxious pleading for this audacious old man. By my sooth, there is not a buck that tosses his branching antlers in the woods of Athol but this youth would give to the pot of the hunters, for one soft word of the reiver's young fawn. See how they smile upon each other, and twist and twine together in the dannsadh. But I will raise an obstacle between them, as high and as hard to get over, as the black rock of Aviernoch. It must not be that the slightest sprinkling of the blood of Braemar shall ever join the contaminate current that flows in the veins of the reiver broken-men of my own forest."

" She never shall ! never shall !" exclaimed a hoarse voice from behind, and in a tone that

sounded through the hall above even the loud notes of the bagpipes. In another instant the aged cearnach presented himself in an attitude of dogged pride facing the Earl.

“No!” he repeated, “I say no! never shall the ancient blood of my people mix with the base blood of a mongrel bastard, even though he be a bye-blow of the proud house of Mar! Nay, start not, haughty Earl. I have said it! I am a ruined man, and your prisoner mayhap, but my name is Grumach Gordon!”

The Earl turned his astonished look from the old man, and cast it with stern scorn towards the chief beside him.

“Cur of a wood-thief, speakest thou thus to the Earl of Mar’s face?” exclaimed Glen-leg, and instantly grasping the plaid of old Gordon with his left hand, as he drew his long biodag with the other, he seemed about to stab the reiver on the spot.

“Bastard! sayest thou, old man?” next cried Alaster, also bursting in among the crowd that grouped around, the dance being now completely interrupted: “Your pardon, chieftain,” he added, putting up the arm of Glen-

leg, "it is *I* that ought to have the privilege of avenging the insult to myself and the Earl. I have twice saved the life of this ungrateful cearnach, but it is now forfeited. Bastard ! hah !" and drawing his dirk, while he grasped the reiver's throat, he held the weapon gleaming over his head.

His uplifted arm was again prevented by the bye-standers, for the whole festivity, as was by no means unusual in the Highlands, had turned in an instant into a scene of terrible uproar, there being Gordons present, besides those that rushed into the hall on hearing of the quarrel, and there were M'Donalds, and Macleans, and Grahams, and Stewarts. And now a wild Babel of loud Gaelic tongues sounded through the apartment. In another moment claymores and skene-dhus gleamed in the grasp of several uplifted hands ; the lights plucked from the walls and carried towards the crowd in the centre, served to shew the glances of scorn or defiance that were thrown from many a swarthy countenance.

"Pieugh ! Hieugh ! Teevil Almighty, tamn her soul !" cried a well-known voice, somewhat

profanely, as flourishing high his drawn claymore, and bursting into the middle of the crowd, Morrough M'Combich became obstreperously conspicuous. "Cot tamn! will her nainsel's clory thrapple the auld man that marched wi' us through the wood, and will shentlemans stand by an' stick ane anither in the cuts, in the laird's ha', when we're a' gaun to the pleasurements o' the wars an' rumours?—Oigh!"

"Who is this savage?" said the Earl, to Glen-leg, his attention for the moment being completely diverted from the main fray by the odd manner of the intruder.

"Her nainsel be a shentlemans!"—affirmed Morrough, briskly answering for himself as he again brandished his claymore. "Cot be neist us! will your lordship's clory let the puir deer-stalker pody be worried like an auld tupe in him's nain castle! when shentlemans are marching like pleasant lambs to the clorification o' the wars o' Montrose?—Oigh! Pieugh! let go her craig!—" he shouted to Alaster, "or faith she'll split her wezon wi' her ain skenedhu, tamn her!"

This ludicrous, yet characteristic speech had

a wonderful power over all present, at least it gave the fierce spirits of the Highlanders a moment for thought, a great advantage gained over those who are just about slaying each other; but while Alaster and the reiver stood respectively eyeing one another in their wrath, the attention of all was attracted by a third object. In short, close as the crowd in the hall which had swelled with the rising quarrel was, Highland gallantry, on the outside of the circle within which the Earl stood, was displayed in readily giving way to facilitate the intreated introduction of Moina Gordon.

The electrical effect of the first words, and even of the simple presence of the Highland maiden, as she now stood like the angel of peace in the centre of the excited crowd, can only be conceived by those who have witnessed the power of woman over the rugged spirits of men. The very sound of her soft feminine voice, as, in the affecting tone of entreaty, and using the poetic phraseology of her native Gaelic, she begged for peace on all sides, and especially for protection to her father, was followed by a spontaneous murmur of assent and admiration.

“Forgive, my Lord,” she said at length, kneeling at the feet of the Earl, “excuse and forgive the hasty words of an ancient clansman, who, though forced by oppression to make for himself a den in the forest, like the hunted prey of the strong, and to seek a living like the fowls of the air, who build their nests unbidden in the green boughs of Braemar woods, cannot forget that he once held broad lands in the craggy isles of the west, or that proud blood flows in his veins. And oh ! if it please your Lordship’s honour, do not let this youth and he swear this bitter vengeance,—for in the wars of the Lowlands to which they are going, heads enow will be laid low in the dust, though the brave sons of the mountains draw not their swords to sheath them in each other’s bosoms.”

“Rise, maiden,” said the Earl to her, in the most kindly tone. “There is more good sense in thy simple words, than all of us together have now manifested, and a music in thy voice that well may move men from the most ruthless purposes. For *thy* sake, damsel, I will myself unsay my hasty words, for truly though thou

hast a rough and ill-mannered father, it were small disgrace, I think, to the proudest blood in my hall, to be joined to such a gentle spirit as thine."

"And forgive, too, *my* angry threats, my Lord," said Alaster, also bending on his knee, "for though the language of the vindictive reiver, whom I have brought from the forest, is hard to bear, yet for this maiden's sake I am most willing to forget and forgive."

"Old man, see you that sight?" cried the Earl, pointing to the kneeling pair—"shall I bless them both before you go to the wars, and promise them happy days together, and happier nights when he returns from the Lowlands with victory and honours?—Say it, sullen carle!"

"No!" shouted the old man, his sharp voice sounding through the silent hall, like the angry croak of a demon. "No! Earl of Mar. I shall never say it! Though the maiden is my own daughter, and the pride of my heart, I would sooner lay her head in the kirk-yard of Crathy, than I would give her to the arms of the man who has brandished his weapon over me as my conqueror; no, Lord of Mar,—there has blood

been between us, and more is yet to flow. The steel is cold that divides us, and its fiery gleam only can bring heat again. Nay, frown not, lairds and chiefs,—I am a Gordon, and my lost honour must be retrieved by blood,—red blood ! On the heath it must be spilt ! I have seen it in my sleep,—my dreams are sanguine with it,—the spirit of vengeance hath spoken it.—The day of feud is to come, even if it should be to me and mine a day of bitterness and of woe.”

The whole company were startled into a superstitious awe, by the wild energy of this speech, and in the silence which followed, the fearful word *woe*, was either repeated by some voice from the further recesses of the hall, or at least it echoed ominously from the vaulted roof above them. Its immediate effect upon the excited senses of the Highland maiden, drew the attention of all who stood round. Rising up with hands clasped together, her uplifted eyes seemed to express a strange sentiment, and shot from them the lightning of intense mental distress, mixed evidently with the dark apprehensions of coming sorrow ; when, shaking off the myrtle wreath that bound her yellow hair, and allow-

ing it to fall over her neck and shoulders as she turned suddenly towards the astonished Alaster, she uttered something between a suppressed scream and a sob of sadness,—and while the bystanders made way for her on each side, she flung her long locks hastily behind her and rushed wildly out of the hall.

The crowd of men soon closed in, and a buzz of Gaelic voices, after the first silence, again rose round, for the seeds of some future feud seemed evidently to have been sown by the very example of a vengeful spirit set by the sullen deer-stalker. Whatever should be the end of the various controversies now raised among the guests in the castle, the evening festivity was completely disturbed, and during the confusion that prevailed, Alaster stole out to give vent to his feelings, and, if possible, to obtain a parting word with Moina Gordon.

CHAPTER X.

THE buzz of mirth and homely enjoyment without the castle of Braemar, was much greater and infinitely farther extended than the more dignified and passionate controversies into which the pleasures of the evening had now turned, within its walls. The great beacon of the feast was still burning brightly on the lawn, its gnarled trunk not being yet entirely consumed, and its red light shone with enlivening effect upon the weather-beaten countenances of the hardy mountaineers, who sat in groups

around it, telling their tales of local creach or superstition, or drawing imaginative pictures of the coming war. Various other fires burned in different places, on the slopes where the Highlandmen had been entertained; groups were dancing to the bagpipe near the bonfires, whose red light was reflected in the still waters of the Dee beneath, and the hum of festive enjoyment and universal occupation throughout the valley, or up behind the castle, with the different sights and sounds which struck the several senses of the observer, had an effect of picturesque and romantic confusion.

The mind of Alaster began to recover its composure, and even to partake of the general hilarity as he wandered through this animated scene. He knew, however, that it was not in the crowd or amongst the dancers, that he need seek for his enthusiastic Highland maiden. Turning up therefore towards the rear of the castle, he wandered musingly along the side of a small burn which issued from a narrow opening in the braes above, and before he had proceeded a few steps Moina Gordon stood directly in his path. About to speak to her familiarly as before,

Alaster was awed by the elevation of her manner, as, stepping two paces back, she prepared to address him.

“You have done me wrong, Alaster,” she said in a tone of complaint, “you have done me much wrong, however unwittingly. It was not to exhibit myself with you in the halls of Braemar castle, that I travelled through the forest after my captive father, and you know how reluctantly I was persuaded to be your partner in the dance, without time to ask leave of the chafed old man. But it is *I* who am to blame! Alas, that bitter imprecation! how it rings in my ears still! I must not hear you speak. I must not see you again. You have drawn your brand against my father to-night, in the face of your vow, and your token; and his wild curse, in return, portends sadness and woe.”

Alaster stood petrified by this striking summing up, and more by the elevation of manner with which it was delivered, unable for a few moments to offer a reply. “Your reproachful conclusion, Moina,” he at length said, “follows an event which neither of us could have foreseen. It is not such as you who, being present

on such a night as this, would have been allowed to keep aloof from the dance in the castle."

She only continued to look sadly in his face.

"Moina," he continued, "I had been no man could I have heard that hated word in silence. Yet, though I spoke in haste, I would not have touched a hair of your father's head. Will you not forgive me, Moina Gordon?"

She put her hand hesitatingly into his.

"Moina," he said, evidently suppressing his rising pride, "powerful is the feeling in my bosom towards yourself, that causes me to bear as I have done with that vindictive old man. Unworthy is he, methinks, of such a daughter."

"Alaster," she said solemnly, "that is not language that I can listen to. But if you have any feeling towards me, ah! let me intreat that, for *my* sake, going as you both are to follow to the wars, when meeting together in the long march, or fighting side by side on the field of slaughter, you will still keep your vow towards my poor father."

"So help me, Heaven!—but only for your sake, Moina."

"There is much sadness, mingled with the

happiness of this night," was her plaintive reply, "and something weighs heavy on my spirits, and still rings in my ears, as if it were the dread echo of my father's curse."

But few words more were spoken on either side; the reconciliation between them did not seem quite perfect, yet the bright eyes of the Highland maiden had evidently lost no portion of their lustre, as Alaster gazed on them by the red light of the sinking fires, and their final farewell was as soft, yet a thousand times more affecting, than the last long note of the shepherd's pipe, which is often heard at eve by the eager listener, as it sweeps down the wild glen in the solitudes of Inveronoch.

A dead silence and stillness soon spread over the hitherto busy scene on the slopes of Braemar, and reigned in the crowded stone-chambers of the castle, as the Gael of every degree refreshed themselves with a few hours' deep slumber to fit them for the morrow's long march. The mustering of the clans in the morning on the green lawn, was exceedingly picturesque, though not quite so regular on this occasion, as a review in Hyde-park is at the present day;

nor was it without an amusing mixture of Highland swearing, clannish pride, clamour and enthusiasm. The women of the neighbourhood, and others who had followed the “braw lads” thus far, were particularly troublesome to the leaders and chiefs, diverting greatly the attention of the men from their public duty, as the seductive sex have ever been accused of doing.

Of all the men of war, who on this interesting morning were distracted by cares of this sort, none was harder put to it than our valiant friend Morrough M‘Combich, who, having on the previous night picked up a dancing acquaintance with a tall Kimmer of the glen, who professed to have known him years before, (of which, however, the honest Highlander had no distinct recollection,) became so desperately loving, towards the time of parting, that Morrough’s patience could hardly endure it.

“Ogh,—oigh!—pless her pody, forbye her sowl, Morrough,” simpered the wily kimmer, as she stuck to the skirts of the Highland hero, up and down—“an’ so she’s gaun to the great wars, an’ the foes, an’ the slaughter; an’ maybe she’ll ne’er come back to Braemar or Blair-Athol. Ochon, och aree! puir Morrough.”

“ Tuish, whisht !—pless her sowl too,” whispered Morrough hastily—“ noo—there’s my thumb, an’ so gang to the glen, for here’s the cornels an’ the machors an’ the duineusals—an’ the pipers are skirling on the trones—pieugh ! let me gang, for we’re aff this moment to the wars an’ rumours.”

“ But what’ll her nainsel pring me frae the Lowlans’ when she comes pack frae the clory’s o’ the wars?” inquired the persevering kimmer, with true Highland greed. “ She maun pring her a plaid o’ silk an’ a gown o’ procade, forbye a gowpen o’ goold to fling in her lap, an’ a for-pet o’ silver—an’ oo’h put she’ll pe a praw ledy then,” added the kimmer, spreading out her petticoats to illustrate her meaning, “ walking like a carline afore her nain door.”

“ Oogh, aye,” said Morrough, answering the unreasonable expectations of his joe, with a “ pleasurement” of Highland flattery ; “ she’ll pe sure to pring her pags fu’ o’ goold an’ moun-tains o’ silver.”

“ An’ a proach for her preast,” rejoined the kimmer eagerly, “ a shinkling proach, as praid as the moon,—an’ grand rings for her fingers,

an' shining puckles for her shoes, an' a whorl o' laumer peads for her neck. Oigh ! put she'll pe a praw ledy then, when she's gaun afore Mass-John to pe marriet."

"Oogh, aye, to pe surely," said Morrough, soothingly. "Noo, just gang doon the glen, fore there's the lairds an' the cornals."

"An' are ye gaun to the wars an' the Low-lans, an' maybe she'll ne'er come pack ava. Hieugh ! whee !"—and the kimmer set up a Highland howl, and let fall a shower of mercenary tears.

"Whisht ! hieugh ! tamn her sowl," growled Morrough, quite afflicted with the woman's noise, "will she skirl there ! louder than Donald Dreigh's bagpipes. Hoot ! haud her greet, Got tamn ! an' gang hame, till an honest shentlemans march, wi' a peace an' a pleasurement to the clory o' the wars an' rumours."

The warlike skirl of the bagpipes, as Morrough irreverently, though somewhat truly, denominated the music of that melodious instrument, was now set up from so many quarters, that it was evident a general movement was about to take place, and the word being given

from left to right, a coercive separation was effected between Morrough and his lady-love, to the great relief of the valiant hero, who forthwith prepared himself for the proud sublimities of a real march to the wars. The whoops and hieughs in giving the word of command to the few musketeers whom the laird of Glen-leg had been able to muster, as with great ostentation they were exercised under the adjutantcy of a veteran Dalgetty of the day, would, along with the manner they were answered, be somewhat amusing could they be witnessed by the military elegantiarum of the Horse Guards of our times; but seemed quite astonishing and admirable to the general array of the Gael, who trusting more to the broadsword than any other weapon, could hardly be persuaded even to handle the longbow and its arrows, which seemed cumbersome to carry across the hills, however well they might answer for bringing down the fox or the wild deer in the surrounding forests.

It was a gallant sight to the women and old people assembled in the neighbouring heights, to witness this formidable squadron put in mo-

tion, though the whole, sub-divided under many petty but proud leaders, did not amount to a thousand Highlanders. The short, but loud word of command to the men, repeated in sequence by many consequential officers; with the succeeding bursts of bagpipe-music, as the companies marched off, had a particularly pleasing and picturesque effect, answered as they were by the echoes from the hills; and now the whole moved towards the heights behind the castle, and were soon lost beyond their ridges or amongst the woods, while murmurs of grief, at this last sight of their friends, and many blessings and prayers for safety, broke the stillness that again began to reign on the slopes of Braemar.

On a low knoll that skirted the forest sat Moina, alone, and watched the small company of the Gordons, that was led by her father, and a larger body, at the head of which appeared the tall figure of Alaster Graham, as they successively descended beyond the ridge and were lost to her view, with feelings that we need not describe. When all was over, and the green vallies beneath were again without an inhabi-

tant, rising, and joining a few of her people who waited, at a distance, she proceeded silently back through the wood towards the deserted Clachan of Glenskiach.

CHAPTER XI.

37

THE fate of two or three individuals, through a series of incidents, in which we have had opportunity of slightly touching upon the ancient manners of the Gael, being all we aim at in our simple story, no further allusion to the historical events of the period is made, than is absolutely necessary to the tracing of the main catastrophe, for the truth of which we have at least the veritable testimony of tale-telling tradition.

It was after the welcome reinforcement received from Athol and Braemar, mentioned in

the last chapter, that the Highland army who followed the fortunes of Montrose, achieved in various parts of the north, (before descending into the Lowlands of Fifeshire and Stirling,) those brilliant, but unsatisfactory exploits which are so well known in Scottish history. But if the campaign was glorious to those who count such things a glory, it was fatiguing and harassing to a degree that none but hardy mountaineers could have endured, and none but those who are acquainted with the nature of their rugged country can understand or appreciate. The victories of Inverlochy, of Alderne, and of Alford, the herrying of Argyleshire and the sacking of Dundee, could scarcely make up for the terrible toils encountered in climbing the bleak precipices of the west, in wading through drifts of snow among the mountains, during the depths of winter, where the poor Highlanders were often scarcely able to see the tops of each other's bonnets, or in starving for days together while manœuvring and retreating to avoid Baillie and Urry, on the barren braes of Badenoch. These scenes, and the incidents to which they gave rise, will long be remembered in inter-

resting tradition, and continue to be sung in Scottish song ; but it was a memorable revenge that Argyle took for the hasty herrying of his country, by plundering the estates of another aged earl ; and while the picturesque ruins that mark the spot where these transactions took place, are mouldering into decay, the wild and melancholy music of these glens will long commemorate the lamentable burning of “ The bonny house of Airlie.”—But to return to our tale.

Months had passed away, and the fitful rumour of the distant war had come in snatches of contradictory exaggeration and episodes of sad personal history, to the anxious ears of the few women and others still remaining in the deserted baille of Glenskiach, within the forest. But the battle of Inverlochy, fought comparatively in their own neighbourhood, brought consequences which the simple females of the wood could not have foreseen ; and which carried sad anxiety at least to one interesting bosom. Some there were, who had returned to the forest from the war without glory, and with hearts burning with envy and

disappointment ; and vows were heard by the solitary Highland maiden, uttered in fancied secrecy, and over dirks touched with blood, which horrified her simple feelings, and caused her ultimately to form resolves, such as love only could dictate, and noble enthusiasm only could undertake. In a short time after this, Montrose's army, with his Irish allies, again advanced from the north, on their march towards the Lowlands, and a second and more fatal scattering again took place of those who had hitherto dwelt within the woody solitudes of Braemar.

It was already the afternoon of a clear sunny day in spring, when a single youth, footing his way over the Highland hills towards Montrose's camp, on attaining a height on the eastern ridge of the wild mountains of Cairn Gorm, first obtained a distant view of the much-desired object of his solitary march. Pleasantly to the glowing fancy of the youth, lay the white tents of the army—along the side of a stream in the green strath beneath him ; and warlike did the whole array appear, however irregular in its fortified disposal, when, as

he descended the hills, he could distinguish the red standard of Scotland's lion fluttering over Montrose's tent, and above the principal points of the encampment. A small but much valued squadron of horse—which the care-worn leader of this ill-to-manage host had still been able to preserve attached to himself, were exercising with picturesque effect on the slope in front of the camp, and an irregular mass of sutler followers and their baggage, hovered in a dense body among the cottages and in the woodland immediately in its rear. Picquets and scattered sentinels of the Gael guarded the exterior passes towards the stream, and this being a spot where Montrose allowed his wearied troops a few days of repose, a bustle of careless merriment seemed over the camp, and various groups of idling Highlanders lay basking on a bank in the afternoon's sun.

The heart of the stripling beat quick with pleasure as he surveyed all these stirring features of the war, of which he had often heard among the inland glens of Aberdeenshire, out of which he was now emerging almost for the first time. But as he looked abroad over the tents, his

mind was occupied with emotions regarding some who he knew were there unconscious of his approach, that filled him with a multitude of mixed anxieties. What these anxieties consisted of, will appear in the sequel ; but as the youth had still a considerable space of hilly land to travel over, before he could reach the camp, we will transfer our attention for a little to some of those engaged for the day on duty under Montrose, at a point which this young stranger was likely to pass.

Our old friend, Morrough M'Combich, had followed his gallant leader faithfully, and borne the brunt of the war bravely until this day : though he had done many deeds of arms for which he had been praised of course, and received many kind promises of preferment, which would no doubt some day be fulfilled, and though a perfect gentleman, like most of the Highlanders, yet had he never hitherto got further than the honourable station of a full private. This, however, being the complaint of many similar gentlemen,—the leaders of the expedition having a prejudice that the officers should not outnumber the men—Morrough

had, as yet, contented himself as he could; but it being his turn this afternoon to mount guard at a pass beside the stream, he was agreeably surprised to find in the person of his neighbour sentinel, his old acquaintance Colin M'Crone, whom he had met at Braemar, still also in his original station, and when the whoops and whoofs of the formal corporal, who had left them at their post, had passed clean away, they took the opportunity of a little soldierly gossip, being now able to speak from experience about the pleasurements of the wars and rumours.

“Got pless us! Clory an’ praise put she’s glad to see her, Colin! Oigh, man! here, take a snuff o’ the sneeshing,” said Morrough, offering the other with friendly animation a comforting refreshment for his nose. “Pieugh! what for did she never see her afore in the wars?”

“Oigh! tamn her wars an’ the pleasurements,” said the other, sulkily. “Naething for the sporan (purse), an’ little for the nose, put a lang march an’ a hungry cuts, frae Strathspey to Strathbogie. Feigh! tamn her wars!” he repeated, bitterly, and with a Highland grunt.

“ Oigh ! it’s a mèeserable greusome war to be surely,” said Morrough, his countenance lengthening to reciprocate the discontent ; “ her vera houghs an’ hurdies are wauked wi’ the cauld an’ the weet, till her skin is as hard as a tanner’s apron, an’ her vera meat for her wame is naething ava but a starve an’ a Brust.”

“ But the spuilzie,” said the other, comfortingly, “ surely her nainsel got a claught o’ the spuilzie, an’ a birl o’ the siller in the rieving o’ Dundee, forbye the herrying in the glens o’ Argyle.”

“ Oigh ! Teevil a plack ! tamn her conscience !” exclaimed Morrough, chafed into spleen at the very thought. “ No a silk nor a procade for the kimmer o’ Braemar, nor a silver tester to her pouch the size o’ a herring-scale, nor a taback for her cheek, to pe a comfortment on the march ; but a three days’ hunger on the braes o’ Badenoch, till her pelly be clapped to her pack like a Gyptian mummy—her nòse be frozen amang the snaw, as red as her garters, an’ the hairy dorloch on her puir shoothers, as fu’ o’ wind as her toom wame ;”

and as the eloquent Highlander thus spoke, he laid his hand with more pathos than elegance, upon that part of his body, which according to the celebrated Roman fable, had once occasion to make a sad complaint against its servant members.

“An’ what’ll she do when she goes to the Lowlands if she be sae prave?” inquired the other.

“She’s no there yet,” said Morrough, winking an eye. “Teevil hauds me frae crossing the burn this vera night, an’ marching back like a shentleman to the braes o’ Blair Athol. Oigh ! what a pleasurement to see Glen-leg again, an’ the braw kimmer o’ Braemar.”

“But if her nainsel gang to the Lowlands, maybe she’ll pe made an offisher, or a corporal, or a machor, or maybe a captain—a whole captain, like Alaster Graham. Pieugh ! she disna ken what a great man she may be in the wars o’ the Lowlands.”

“Do ye really think sic a thought o’ me, Maister M’Crone?” said Morrough, delighted, and willing to give Highland flattery in return for flattery, “an’ I wadna’ wuss but the Marcoss

would himsel make a creat man o' you too, Maister M'Crone; for ye're a likely lad, an there's mony promotions in the armies, since that tam'd auld rascal, Grumach Gordon the reiver, was clean kicked out o' the clari-ments o' the wars. Hieugh! an' maybe when she grows a captain, an' hersel a cornal, she'll get a silk an' a sattin in the Lowlands yet, an' a praw proach like the muin, to stick in the preast o' her gausey kimmer at Braemar. Hieugh! clorification!"

"Stand to your arms, Maister Morrough! stand to your arms—here's a stranger just at the lines. Cot tamn! look at the chield,—her legs are but short, yet she's louped the purn like a sheltly."

"The chield! did ye say," said Morrough, scornfully, as he observed the stripling stranger who now approached, "a perfect callant; without a peard to her face or feile-beg to her hurdies, pieugh!—whoe coes there? shentle-mans! speak the word o' the wars, or she's a tead man,—tamn her!"

"A friend," said the stripling, in a thin boyish voice, and the back of his hand laid

to his bonnet, more with the grace of a lady's page than the manner of a soldier.

"The King, or the Covenant, this moment! afore she's shot like a plover," bawled Morrough, with redoubled valour. "Colin, stand to your cuns an' face the enemy, hieugh!"

"The King, and the gallant Montrose," exclaimed the youth boldly, and still approaching nearer. "I come to your camp as a volunteer to the wars."

"Clorifications! Oigh!" screamed the other with constitutional enthusiasm, "a praw poy an' a clean leg like a chief's son, an' a sma' foot like a maiden; but no knee or a hough to be seen at the skin, like a mountain soger, although she has a bit sporan frae her waist," he added, surveying the youth from head to foot, and perceiving that he wore not the Gaelic kilt, or feilebeg, or rather short petticoat, as the English call this picturesque relic of the Roman dress, but his limbs clad with the trews, or trousers of red-barred tartan—a privilege of costume upon which few would then venture. On his head was the low military bonnet ornamented with a drooping black feather, which so well sets off

a handsome face; a tartan short coat, in which the loyal red colour predominated, shewed the youth's person to much advantage, particularly with the aid of the long Highland breacan or hunting-plaid thrown over the left shoulder, and twisted gracefully round the waist,—its fringed folds hanging partly in front and partly covering the biodag or dirk, whose silver-mounted hilt just peeped out under the plaid, and on the right thigh. A short broad-sword buckled on the contrary side of the youth, shewed that though he had no pistol in his belt, he was as well equipped for the war as many others of the army were at that period.

“An what'll her honour pe wanting in the camp o' the warriors, young man?” inquired Morrough, with somewhat of a Bobadil manner, willing to magnify as he ought the high and responsible office of sentinel outpost. “Her nainsel daurna let her pass one foot into the great camp o' the King's army, until she knows the why an' the wherefore; stand to your arms, Colin, my lad—hoop!”—

“I want to see the Marquis of Montrose.”—

said the youth, with a modest mixture of boldness and trepidation.

“Eagh! Oigh! the Marcoss! the great glory o’ the Marcoss herself! *you* want to see the proud Montrose? pieugh poy! it’s a perfect impossiblement. She’ll take aff your head for the speaking o’t.”

“I will pass on into the camp, if you please,” said the stripling, about to go on.

“Cot tamn!—will she offer to pravo the king’s sentry in her ain camp? What’s your piziness, young man, and where do ye come frae?—petter answer me quietly, an’ wi a hale skin.”

“I come from the west, beyond Blair Athol, and my business is with the Marquis of Montrose.”

“Frae the wast—beyond Blair Athol,” repeated Morrough, hastily, and then whispering to his neighbour as if he had made some great discovery. “An’ what may her honour’s piziness be wi’ his clory the Marcoss, if she’ll tell her pleasurement?”

“My business I can only tell to the Lord

Montrose himself," said the youth, becoming indignant at this idle parley.

"Then if she'll no tell her piziness, she'll gie the word o' the night," said Morrough, clapping the butt-end of the long Spanish musket, which the out-posts of the camp were then allowed to carry, and standing bolt-upright in the most soldierly manner.

"I know no word," said the youth, simply; "besides, it is not night, until the sun sinks much further behind Ben-cruaghan."

"She disna ken the word? an' she comes frae the wast beyont Ben-Lawers? Hieugh! I see it as plain as a parsnip—a spy, a vile traitor spy, frae the crafty Argyle. I'll take her to Montrose this very minute—an' tell his lordship's honour how I fund her out. Oigh! her fortune's made for this—captains an' cornals—spuilzie and promotions. I saw wi' a corner o' my ee, that this land-louping youngster had the very walk o' a spy—as she lap o'er the purn. Come awa, young man. If I dinna bring you to the Marcoss's honour, my name's no Morrough M'Combich."

After some further whispering with his com-

rade, about his meditated temporary breach of military discipline, away went Morrough, accompanied by the stripling, chuckling over this mare's nest which he had just found, and thinking in his Highland ignorance, as the Lowland Scotch would say, but with perfect confidence, that this adventure was to be the means of his immediate favour and preferment.

CHAPTER XII.

THE camp of Montrose, like many other things in life, appeared to the stripling, who now was led through it, and saw it in detail, to much less advantage than when he had seen its picturesque effect from an elevated distance, as he descended the heights of Cairn Gorm. A part of the little army being quartered in the village behind, it was by no means extensive; the common tents, rudely formed, tattered and dilapidated, bore all the marks of a long and toilsome campaign; the men who wandered about, or were busily employed round several

fires, cooking their evening meal, had, to our youth's fancy, an ill-appointed, if not haggard look; and even the tent of Montrose himself, with the Scottish standard waving over it, which in the distance had had an effect so princely and imposing, now, when seen closely with its numerous strings and pins stuck in the ground, and its inelegant proppings and tawdry stripes of red and blue, appeared to the imaginative beholder absolutely mean as well as comfortless.

Yet when our youth turned his eyes from the rude conveniences with which this hardy army were obliged to be contented, and observed the veteran faces and proud bearing of many of the Highland chieftains and gentlemen, who walked in pairs, or stood in groups around Montrose's tent, and while he tried with cautious anxiety to obtain a sight of one particular individual, who might, he thought, be among them, their stern countenances, weather-beaten as they were, and their warlike bearing, tended to raise his mind above the circumstantial, and to direct it to the moral greatness of what he saw around him. While

occupied with these thoughts he found himself the gaze of the groups of officers near, and was awakened into attention by the characteristic parley of his conductor with the sentinels who stood without Montrose's tent.

“She has piziness wi' the Marcoss, an' she *will* see his honour's clory,” said Morrough,—
“noo—what'll she say to that? an' here's her prisoner—cot tamn! let her pass.”

The sentinel, a Caithness man, seemed astonished at the southern Highlander's audacity, and without another word the elated and confident Morrough—pulling aside the hanging canvass of the tent, and pushing his companion with little ceremony within, in another instant both stood in the presence of the celebrated leader of the northern rising, and terror of the covenanters. Our youth had barely time to cast his eyes round the interior of the tent.

At a small folding table covered with papers, sat Montrose himself. A lumber of arms, cloaks, caps, helmets, flagons, and travelling conveniences, lay partly on the bare ground, and partly on a sort of temporary beaufet behind him, and a small couch of great simplicity

of form, occupied the opposite side of the tent. While the impudent Morrough, now somewhat chopfallen from the effect of his own forwardness, was making with corresponding servility a double Highland bow, the Marquis, lifting his head from the papers before him, and throwing himself back on his chair, with much dignity as he surveyed the intruders, asked Morrough sharply what he desired of him.

“Your lordship’s honour’s clorification,” began Morrough, with a graceful supernumerary scrape of his foot, “was a shentleman sentry this plessed afternoon at the pass beside the purn, when up comes this poy wi’ the preeks, an’ wanted to come into the camp to your lordship’s clory—but she couldna’ gie’ the password, nor nought else for a verification—an’ so her nainsel found out that she was frae the wast, ayont Ben-Lawers, an’ pecause she was sure that she was naething but a spy frae Argyle, an’ a covenanter repellion, she just brought her to your lordship’s clory—thinking to be surely that her nainsel will get a promotion for her pains.”

“Very satisfactory, Mr. Sentinel,” said the

Marquis, slightly smiling, and seeing at once through the matter, habituated as he was to the unreasonable claims constantly set up by his Gaelic followers. “Come you from Argyleshire, young man?” he added, addressing the youth.

“No, my Lord—only from the neighbourhood of Braemar.”

“I thought so. And your business with me?”

“Merely to join your lordship’s army as a volunteer—but”—and the strange youth, hesitating, gave a look towards Morrough.

“You may return to your duty, sentinel,” said the Marquis to Morrough, “I shall keep in memory this service.”

“Will it be a captain, or a cornal, or a serjeant-machor, that her nainsel will pe made?” said Morrough, standing now bolt-upright for a last effort. “She would just like the assurement afore she gaes back; for it’s no every day that she stands in the noble presence o’ the great Marcoss o’ the wars.”

“Return to your duty, Sir,” said Montrose, sternly, and turning towards the youth, while

Morrough, muttering a disappointed hieugh ! and a “ tamn her sowl ” or two, made off towards his post beside the stream.

“ Now, young man, speak freely,” said the Marquis.

“ In wishing to join your Lordship’s army for the present,” said the youth, “ my chief object, I confess, is, by such humble efforts as I may have opportunity of, to prevent strife between certain persons who have lately left this camp, and some who yet remain in it. If your Lordship commands me, I shall state all I know, but the persons in question being related to myself, and those for whom I am interested, it may perhaps be unnecessary for me to explain further than,—that the apprehended quarrel is connected with the recent dismissal or disaffection, of certain men of the Gordon’s clan, who are known in the neighbourhood of Braemar, and some of whom, having incurred your Lordship’s displeasure in the war, through the representation, as is alleged, of certain persons now in your Lordship’s camp,—a feud is held against the latter, and it is the bloodshed medi-

tated in consequence, that I am anxious to prevent."

"Your design is most laudable, and still more remarkable for so mere a youth," said the Marquis, interested with the speech of the stripling; "but I confess I do not distinctly recollect the circumstance to which you allude. You will do well to be more explicit."

"It was, as I am informed, at the battle of Inverlochy, that in the distribution of commands on the right and left wings of your army, your Lordship was pleased to appoint a young soldier to a post near the centre, which was supposed to be the right of certain of the Gordon's clansmen, and particularly of one of their chiefs, who, thinking himself injured, and looking with envy upon the good-fortune of the young soldier I speak of—"

"His name?" said the Marquis, interrupting.

"His name, my Lord Marquis, is,—I believe is," said the stripling, hesitating, and colouring slightly, "Alaster Graham."

"Oh,—go on, young man, and speak up."

"Offended at the preference thus given over an ancient chief," continued the youth, "the

latter and his men, when the attack began, rebelliously refused to draw a sword, and while the young soldier, for his bravery that day, was raised by your Lordship to the command of a company, and is now called Captain Graham, Grumach of Braemar, and several of his men, were dismissed with disgrace. Is not this, my lord, a sufficient ground of feud between Highland gentlemen?"

"But that stubborn forest-riever cannot mean to pursue his feud against one of my bravest soldiers while the war lasts?" rejoined the Marquis. "If he do, and if he attempt to make disturbance in my camp, I shall cause his head to be—"

"Surely your Lordship will consider that Grumach Gordon is an old man?" interrupted the youth, with such unconscious earnestness of manner as to surprise the Marquis. "Your Lordship will pardon my presumption," he added, checking himself; "but methinks, even as a humble volunteer in your army, I might, as the parties are known to me, be the means of preventing any hostile meeting between them, should your Lordship grant me such li-

berty to pass and repass in the camp, as my own good intentions, and even my life, may answer for. This, my Lord Marquis," said the youth, with a manner that almost rose into nobleness, "this is my humble request."

"You are a very extraordinary young man," said the Marquis, interested and prepossessed beyond accounting for, as he threw himself back, and cast a curious glance over the graceful figure of the stripling, who now stood uncovered in his presence. "Your request is granted. Go and come as you please while we tarry in this valley—for there is no treachery in your unsuspicious years, and no double-dealing in that impassioned look. Draw near, youth, for you must have a sign for your safety. When you pass the outposts of the camp at any time, should you be detained and questioned, whisper into the ear of the chief of the guard, the single word *Cothrom-feinne*,* and that will guarantee my favour for you by night or by day."

* An expression well known among the Highlanders—literally *the equal combat of the Fingallians*, who only asked a fair battle without favour.

“Go, youth,” continued Montrose, after a moment’s pause, “thou hast access to me, if necessary, at any moment. Would that older and wiser men around me had more of thy generosity and singleness of heart.”

The obeisance of the stripling, as he left the tent, had in it the embarrassment of struggling feelings, evidently including gratitude and admiration of the gallant leader of the expedition; which further excited the interest of Montrose; and, as he turned away his fair face to go, the eyes of the youthful mountaineer seemed to the observing nobleman to be blinded with tears.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE sun had for some time sunk behind the range of mountains which sent up their peaky tops into the clouds far to the south and westward of Montrose's position, and grey evening was melting into indistinct shadows and brown masses, the various romantic points of the open landscape round the camp, as the stripling, whose adventures we have now to trace, made his way towards its western extremity. Still alone and anxious to avoid observation, he proceeded on behind the rows of tents, and, though a stranger,

seemed at no loss as to the quarter on which his anxieties rested.

That small portion of the southern clansmen, which, by the courtesy of war and in imitation of more regular troops, was sometimes called a regiment, and of part of which Alaster Graham, by the agreeable flattery of title, was now called the captain, was encamped on the right flank. The tent of our youthful centurion was easily distinguished from those of the common men around it by its superior size and the red standard which waved above it; which, though torn and rather awry in its position, still fluttered with all the ragged pride of northern independence, in the cold breeze of the evening. The feelings with which the stripling looked towards that tent, and watched every figure whom he could distinguish near it, it is not our business now in so many words to explain.

Passing this tent however, and proceeding towards the sentinel who was posted nearest to it, beside the stream, our youth addressed to the man a few firm words in his native Gaelic; after which, retreating to-

wards higher ground, he took up a position for himself, on the dry bank under a rocky height, which served to protect the flank of the encampment. A young moon was already beginning to fling her indistinct beam over this softened portion of the Highland landscape; and, certain of his own intent, the youth seated himself on the bank, where unloosing the folds of his hunting plaid, and throwing it around him to protect himself from the chill breeze which now blew in fitful gusts off the overlooking mountains of Cairn Gorm, he seemed prepared to wait for some expected event with all the patience of a solitary mountaineer.

Although a glance wascast occasionally towards the tent of Alaster Graham, as well as over the busy scene throughout the extent of the camp, and a low sigh would sometimes escape the bosom of our youth, while he sat on the knoll, his general attention was given entirely to one direction of the surrounding prospect. As the slender moon above,—frequently obscured as it was by the coming clouds, that flitted uncertainly with the breeze over this stormy northern sky,—occasionally shone out with charming

brilliancy on the sloping level, between the stream we have mentioned and the hills beyond, the youth as he watched, ever and anon kept his eye on the plain and on the mouth of a narrow gorge or pass in the mountains, through which he had himself come to the camp on his way from Braemar.

Quite prepared for a lengthened watch, or for resuming it again on the succeeding day, the youth still kept his eyes turned towards the gorge in the hills, yet sometimes glancing round to Alaster's tent, when, apparently to his own surprise, he already observed two men issuing from the direction of the pass. The strangers, coming forth, proceeded straight across the plain, towards that part of the camp which he immediately overlooked, and this before he had sat half an hour upon the bank. Refixing his plaid in military fashion, and slowly descending from the heights, the youth addressed a few words again to the sentinel, and then went forward to throw himself in the way of the coming strangers.

"It's a fresh night and a blasty, Sir Warrior," said the first of the men, (if we may be allowed

to translate what was spoken in Gaelic,) to our youth, as he walked to and fro with seeming carelessness near the sentinel. "But it's kindly weather and favourable for the campaign," continued the speaker, trying to bespeak favour for his own design; "the evening piobrachd has not yet sounded through the valley, and perhaps we can have admission into the camp, as we are also for the King and the gallant Montrose."

"Mean you to join the army on the march to the Lowlands, gentlemen?" inquired the youth sharply.

The two men looked at each other as if uncertain what reply to make. "No," said the second, stepping forward and speaking with blunt boldness, "we merely would speak with an officer of your camp, one Alaster Graham. Bring us to him, youth, if ever you expect to be a laureled soldier."

"Know you so little of the orders of our general, as to make such a request of the officer on the outpost?" said the youth readily; "my life would answer for such a dereliction of duty. But if you have any message for Captain Graham, such as a soldier may carry to

his comrade, I will answer for its safe transmission."

"You are a gentleman, I perceive, young Sir."

"I may not be called aught else, or be scorned with impunity," said the stripling proudly, and slapping with his hand the basket-hilt of his broadsword; "'*Nemo me impune lacessit*,' our Scottish motto, that is embroidered on the standard which floats above these tents, is also mine."

"You can carry a message then of honourable quarrel," said the man, stooping down and speaking in the stripling's ear with hoarse animation,—“a challenge, youth! a challenge to fight! on the sward of Strathfeagan.—Tell Alaster Graham!—tell him, that Grumach Gordon, whom he knows well, sends him his glove of battle and his bitter defiance—are you afraid, boy?”—added the man, throwing back his head while he grasped the arm of the youth, and discovering by the dim moonlight, the ferocious features of John of Leask. “Ha! you have never yet seen blood spilt—but there *must* be blood! heart's blood!—Alaster Graham and two of his

friends, are challenged to the combat with the same number in the next glen; tell him the message, youth, as you are a gentleman."

"And does his wrath burn so hotly that he cannot stifle its flame till the war is over?" said the stripling, shrinking instinctively from the ruffianly glance of the man's eyes.

"Not a day!—not an hour, if it were possible," croaked John of Leask, "and *I* also am included in the deep injuries of Grumach Gordon, who is now watching our return under the hill behind. Youth, officer of the night, we send the challenge and defiance *by you*."

"And dare you try to make me the bearer of *treason* and provocation?"—said the stripling; his self-possession now completely recovered. "Think you that we were unaware of your treasonable and unreasonable hatred against the bravest soldier in a camp where all are brave? Ho, sentinel, there!—come hither! I desire you to state before these strangers, the private orders to the outposts of the camp."

"That a treasonable design being suspected," said the sentinel, after an instant, "to introduce private feud among the army, and in

particular to offer vindictive provocation to the gallant Captain Graham, it is the Marquess's orders that no one be admitted into the camp, and no message whatever be received anent such feud; and that shaft or bullet be not spared, against any who may persist in attempting to forward such broil and brulzie."

The two strangers looked at each other in astonishment, upon finding that their design was known in the camp.

"And *I* am here to see these orders executed," said the youth, boldly, as he stood out in the moonlight. "Go back, whence you came, men of Braemar! and learn that the brave lords engaged in this noble cause, know both how to protect the honour, and save the blood of their best officers."

"Then I leave with you, youth, the eternal defiance both of Grumach Gordon and John Gordon of Leask, against the upstart forester, Alaster Graham," said the challengers, "and hear you—my curse and ban upon his constant good-fortune!" Saying this the implacable reiver and his companion turned to depart, and

leaping the stream, they at once made their way back towards the mountains.

Our outpost stripling, somewhat agitated by this scene, was still standing in the same spot after the departure of the strangers, watching the shadows of the receding men in the moonlight as they proceeded with all the speed of those who were anxious to deliver their tidings, across the pleasant level before him, when his attention was roused by the tread of feet near, and the approach of a file of men, to change the sentinel, caused him instinctively to shift his position, and to retire again upwards towards the bank.

Seating himself here once more, to consider what next he should do, unromantic nature in the shape of her common wants, which the anxieties of the evening had hitherto caused him to neglect, now came over the heart of our youth with clamorous urgency; and the enthusiastic volunteer of unknown wars began to be exceedingly at a loss how to procure a meal for his hunger. As for rest, that was easily arranged in a dry night, for the heath on the crag was remarkably soft, the lee-side of the

height was most comfortably warm, and the plaid he wore was an ample covering as he lay on the heath under "the sweet heavens," for this roving mountaineer. But his light store of barley-cakes had long been exhausted, and being unable to crop like a kid the fragrant herbage of the bank, he, in spite of his anxiety of mind, began to look wistfully towards the fading fires of the camp, as he thought of a necessary refreshment.

As he again sat up ruminating on all things likely in his circumstances, the sound of the night-piobrachd came pleasantly over his ear, from the midst of the camp which the gallant pipers before Montrose's tent, much prouder men than the leader of the host himself, made to "skirl," with warlike wildness up the valley of Strathfeagan. Music, however rude, if the composition of nature, is a sure awakener of poetic emotions, and sad yet pleasing recollections of the forest of Braemar were beginning to steal over the fancy of the youth, when his regretful cogitations were disturbed by a measured tread of steps mounting the knoll on which he rested. In two minutes more the sentinel from whom he had recently parted,

stood before him, and touching his bonnet in military fashion, intimated, in two words, that his presence was earnestly requested within the tent of Captain Graham.

The very sound of the name caused a start and an emotion in the bosom of the youth—he hesitated at first, and would have excused himself, but the request seemed so nearly akin to a command, that refusal would evidently have excited suspicion. Occupied with various thoughts, which need not be explained, the stripling, rising and adjusting his plaid and his side-arms, instantly followed the sentinel towards that tent, which he had so often watched in the early part of the evening.

When the canvass was drawn aside which opened into the interior of the tent, Alaster was discovered seated pensively beside a chest, which, elevated on some logs, served for a table; a burning splinter of pine-wood, fastened to the spike of a steel target that lay on the chest, served for a candle or torch, and shewed the usual confusion of arms, accoutrements, and simple conveniences, required by an officer of Alaster's condition. By the wavering and spit-

ting glare of this light, the youthful features of the captain, surmounted by his dark locks, appeared handsome and expressive as ever, but thin and tinged with gravity ; and the air of dignity with which he rose on the entrance of the stranger, with other circumstances of consciousness on the part of the latter, made the stripling disposed to shrink into the obscurest corner of the tent.

“ Not knowing to whom I am indebted for your well-meant service, young Sir,” Alaster said, rising, “ I have begged of you to come to me, and explain the reason of a zeal as singular as it is unobtrusive. Whatever may be the source of this attempted challenge, of which I have just heard, a soldier may not with honour to himself approve of its being turned from him. Pray speak, youth : I shall not be ready to blame so gallant a stripling.”

“ ’Twas not for your sake only, Sir—it was for the sake also of ——”

“ Heavens—what is this ? Do I hear aright ? can this really be the voice that has ever been music to my ears. Moina !—my sweet, heroic Moina ! I should know you in spite of the most

artful disguise that ever masquer invented. And think you," he added, coming forward, and taking her shrinking hand, "you could by those dark locks hung over your own yellow hair, and by this warlike and boyish artificial costume, conceal yourself from me? Nay, blush not, nor look reproachfully on me for discovering you by that soft voice that so often charmed me in the forest of Glenskiach. I *will* speak now in the warmth of my heart, when my heart's love, who is ever in my thoughts, comes to refresh my spirit, amid the toils of the camp, and the harassing scenes of remorseless war."

"Oh, Alaster," she said, all the woman now melting in her voice, and into the tears that acknowledged his grateful caress—"had you heard the bitter vows against you that *I* have heard, and suffered the anxiety that I have suffered, both I confess on your account and that of my hot-tempered father, you would excuse the adoption of this unseemly disguise, and forgive the forwardness of a lonely maiden, who has no friend to act a manly part for her: no one who will step forth to prevent those who are dearer to her than her own life, from imbruing

their hands in each other's blood, and from leaving her to sing the orphan's or the widow's lament of dooll and dolour, amid the deserted wilds of Glenskiach."

As she spoke, a paleness overspread her features, her plumed bonnet fell from her hand, a faintness had come over her feminine heart, from the agitation of the interview, and the long want of refreshment, and to his great embarrassment, she seemed ready to swoon at his feet. Unwilling to call for assistance, he sat her down gently on a seat, and by means of such simple cordials as he had at hand, at length recovered his agitated Highland maiden, who looked more charming as the colour again returned to her cheek, and as he succeeded in soothing her modest feelings into forgetfulness of her unseemly disguise.

Calling in his servant Farquhar, who, notwithstanding his peering curiosity, could make out nothing of who was his master's guest, such refreshment was procured as the camp afforded, and never did a meal eat more sweetly than this, that was partaken by those two in Montrose's camp. As she sat opposite to him, by the

military chest, on which their simple refreshment was set, her ruddy fair face contrasting oddly with the dark locks with which she had disguised it, and her animation returning with the enjoyment of his society, she explained how that she had travelled on foot to the town of Aberdeen, to purchase her present disguise, by which she had been enabled to get into the camp; and how that John of Leask, the most untamably ferocious of all the exile Gordons, continually stirred up her father to the seeking of that revenge, which otherwise he might have been persuaded to forego.

In such discourse did our young soldier and the Highland maiden enjoy each other's society for more than an hour, and never did lovers sit alone in the night-watch with more chaste and heart-relieving happiness. Much gentle argument passed between them on the subject of the maiden's anxious fears for the safety of both Alaster and her father, to which was opposed his perfect confidence in his good-fortune and his own strength and dexterity, should circumstances again force him to meet the riever-chief in unwilling hostility. Praising Moina for her

adroit management in warding off a challenge which his honour would have obliged him to accept, whatever might have been the consequences, Alaster succeeded in persuading the anxious maiden out of her fears; and representing to her simplicity the danger as well as delicacy of her remaining longer near the camp in her present disguise, he advised her to leave the whole matter to Providence and his own good sword, and instantly to return to her people in Braemar,—at which place he hoped soon again to meet her, when he came back from the plains of the Lowlands, with those honours and rewards which ever are the recompense of the brave.

Many pleasing anticipations of joys to come,—not, however, without that intruding pang of indefinite apprehension, which so often in this world casts a cloud over our dearest visions of future bliss—followed in the bosom of Moina, this sanguine speech of the mountaineer soldier; and the hour for changing the sentinels being now at hand, she rose to take her departure. Dwelling still, however, as the youth accompanied her without, upon the delicious illusions of their several fancies,—when they

should live together, as married lovers have lived, and roam together among the romantic vallies of Braemar—they soon arrived at the craggy height where she had formerly rested, and when they came to the burn, or streamlet, which bounded the camp, so that their final parting was at hand, standing at opposite sides of the stream, in the dim moonlight, and kissing the tokens of gold, which hung at each of their bosoms, they blessed one another in the sight of Heaven,—and prayed for his protection until they should again meet in joy when the war was over.

As they separated at length—on Moina's part, with a sigh of mingled hope and apprehension, and on the part of both, with all the lingering reluctance of lovers,—Moina, however, secretly resolved, that notwithstanding the youth's confidence in himself, she would, retaining her present dress, tarry in the neighbourhood for a few days longer, until the army and Alaster had fairly marched from the valley of Strathfeagen.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE day succeeding the night-scene sketched in the preceding chapter, was one of that sad and gloomy character, which even in the hilly north, where such days are comparatively common, had its effect upon the spirits of the hardy mountaineers, now lying inactive in this ill-appointed camp. The gusty breeze of the previous night had died away, and the morning rose with a gray and sullen gloom. A heavy rain, which fell during the night, completely drenched the mossy ground on which most of the tents were erected. Hill nor mountain

was not to be seen, and the dense fog, which scarcely enabled those in the centre to discern the boundaries of the camp, dropped a soaking "weat" the whole of the day, while an unwholesome thickness was in the air, and a threatening blackness hid the sky.

The state of the atmosphere, operating at first by a slightly disappointing feeling upon Montrose himself, from some plans he had formed for the day, began, as the afternoon advanced, to have a more serious effect upon him, causing a train of thought, such as *will* obtrude upon the most vigorous minds; particularly if, like that of this gallant, but unfortunate warrior, a dash of poetic elevation may help to ennoble it, while it opens to its more acute perceptions, a thousand sources of inward suffering. Though continually successful, and now partly on his way towards the richer valleys of the Lowlands, victory itself had not yet reconciled the Marquis to the irreparable loss of his gallant companion, Lord Gordon; and the uncertainties of life, of success, and of fame, struck upon his heart on this particular morning, with ominous impres-

sion ; as if an involuntary revelation had been made to him of his own ultimate fate. Numbers of his men, as usual, had deserted him for the time, after the battle of Alford ; the clans that subsequently joined his standard, when he descended into the plains, had as yet given him no indication of their favourable intentions, and the thick mist of this dull day, hid from his anxious observation even the dim outlines of the distant hills, down which, if nothing unfortunate had happened, ought now to be descending an important reinforcement.

But the whole day passed gloomy and uncomfortable, and no intimations came of the expected clansmen. The discomfort of their situation, as they lingered unemployed in the midst of an unsheltered and marshy strath, began to affect the minds of the eager Highlanders ; and towards evening their impatience to begone to the south became audible to their officers in sullen and ill-suppressed murmurs. This feeling of discontent, Captain Graham himself began to partake of, in a way for which he could not account, particularly in the latter part of the day, and as evening gathered round

in thick obscurity over the cloudy mountains of Cairn Gorm ; for that melancholy which had gradually been approaching his mind all day, buoyant as it had been by the thoughts of his Moina, fell now with involuntary heaviness over his heart, as if some coming event was casting its dark shadow before, and as if the very air which he breathed, and the low whisperings of the wind which now came sighing down the valley, while the dim moon began to rise in the stormy sky, meant to warn him of some approaching evil.

As the succeeding night advanced, the breeze greatly and unexpectedly increased, and was heard to moan with an *eiry* expression through the scattered birch-wood behind the camp, or to swirl in gusty thuds through the passes of the hills ; but from the comparative calm in the camp itself, it seemed that the storm was raging in the upper air only, and driving the clouds speedily towards the ominous airt of the Lowlands. Then strange and solemn thoughts would cross the mind of Alaster, as he gazed athwart the dim plain, and the dread fancies of the invisible world seemed to gather round him,

which either in their secret joy or their indefinite apprehension, hallow the visions of superstition by connecting them with immortality, and give ignorance itself a body and a use, if not even a pleasure, which knowledge, with all her flatteries, often fails to communicate. Whether it was the dim Bodach-Glass of the moonlight that haunted his spirit this strange night, or the inexplicable Twaish or second-sight of the Gael, that pointed its airy finger into the vista of futurity, Alaster thought he saw himself far away in the Lowlands, and Moina Gordon sitting solitary in the wilds of Braemar, musing sadly and anxiously concerning him,—watching every rumour of the war that came from beyond the Grampians, and praying for his safe return as only a maiden prays for him she loves, until a sad foreboding began to cling to his fancy, that the dark form of destiny had interposed between them, and that he was never more to see her in life.

But the shrill and stirring sound of the pibroch of the night, as it struck up its warlike note in the bosom of the camp, and mingled in the distance with the stormy breeze of the hills,

awaked him from his reverie, and presently after, the tall figure of a man, who, wrapped in his plaid, had been strolling meditatively alone behind the tents, came close up, and seemed to wish to address him. Alaster stepped forward, impressed by the dignified bearing of the figure, and instantly was saluted by the Marquess of Montrose himself.

A few short sentences passed between them, in which the Marquess complimented the courage and conduct of his youthful officer, and alluding with pride more than with blame to the impatience of his men to be led forward to the Lowlands, and to his disappointment of the expected reinforcement, for which he had vainly looked the whole of the day, added rather abruptly,—

“Graham, you know the passes of these mountains; at least you can tell the route by which the Macalisters are likely to come?”

“I do, my Lord Marquess,” said the youth, proud of the confidence with which he was treated; “and what knowledge I lack, can well be supplied by the gilly who has attended me throughout the campaign, should your

Lordship honour me so far as to allow me to start forth from this valley so soon as day-light breaks, to reconnoitre from such points in the hills as we are acquainted with, and bring you the first tidings of the Macalisters' coming."

"You shall go, Sir," said Montrose, pleased with the ready zeal of Alaster, "and I doubt not good tidings shall sit on your brow before the day is far spent. But whom else will you take with you? for I am told you have enemies, who may be in this very neighbourhood. That volunteer stripling, who lately joined us in the camp, shall accompany you, if his youthful limbs are not too delicate for climbing the steepes of Cairn Gorm. A-propos, Mr. Graham, where is he? I have not seen him all day."

"He is, my Lord Marquess, I believe—" said Alaster, slightly confused—"but excuse me, it were unnecessary to take him to the hills."

"And is he then not in the camp?"

"No, my Lord."

"Graham," said the Marquess, after a moment's thought, and laying his hand familiarly on Alaster's shoulder, "something from the first struck me about that handsome volunteer,

that I could not explain to myself—I see it all now. Nay, disguise it not, though you could ; 'tis a soldier's fortune to love and be loved. The pretty stripling, in the bonnet and trews, was a woman !”

“ I confess it was the case, my Lord,” said Alaster, after a short pause of deliberation, “ but I was not the encourager of the maiden's adventure, nor, suffer me to say, has the affair aught to do with my duty to your Lordship and my King.”

“ Alas ! young man,” replied the Marquess thoughtfully, and stepping back while he surveyed Alaster's person,—various matters in his own experience at the moment crossing his recollection, “ how little know you of yourself if you think that the affairs of the heart have nothing to do with our ambitions and our aims ! Mr. Graham,” he added, “ upon second thoughts, it may be better that you should not leave the camp ; a meaner messenger can effect this service, and I have too much to do for you in fair strife, when we get to the Lowlands, to allow you to run any risks among these hills.”

“ My Lord Marquess,” said the youth, with

animation, as his hand caught the basket head of his claymore, "may I not be trusted with my own defence, after the honour your Lordship has deigned to confer upon me? Besides, it would be doing me an obligation, to allow me to relieve your anxieties, instead of remaining thus inactive in the camp."

"Then do as you will," said Montrose, "but at least take two men to accompany you, and if you see the Macalisters or the Macalpins, from the summits of Cairn Gorm, return at once; but you may advertise me of your tidings, by causing your servant to blow a blast on your forester's horn, when you come to the brow of that hill above the stream."

"All the camp shall hear it, and all the valley shall echo it," replied Alaster, with pride, "from Beantanard to Glenhouraghan."

"Farewell then, Captain Graham," said the Marquess, kindly, "and whatever befalls you within or without the camp, remember that I hold your life and safety in no slight value."

The weight that had lain on Alaster's spirits all day was dispelled for a time by this interview with his brave chieftain. In spite of him-

self, however, it returned again when he had retired to rest, and as, unable to sleep, he lay and listened to the low moaning of the wind, which swept down the valley, and its buzzing sound, as it whistled round the tent over his head, and thought again of his Moina, and of the romantic glens of Braemar. Anon sleep would come over him indefinitely, although he thought he was waking, and dim forms appeared to his superstitious fancy to hover round his low couch; and then, in the changes of his dream, Moina Gordon seemed to breathe upon his cheek, as she did on that night when she first loosed the thongs that bound him, while she smiled seductively as at first. But again their fond whisper seemed to be interrupted by the brattle of the red-deer rushing past among the boughs of the forest, and then the loud slogan of the Gordons came echoing, as he thought, from the inner coiries of the glens, and the flashing eyes of Grumach, her father, seemed to glare upon him; but as he continued to gaze on the angry countenance of the old man, his grey hairs gradually dropped off, and, to his horror, a grinning skull supplied its

place,—and then weeping and lamentation rose on the night-wind, and the piercing coronach boomed wildly in his dreaming ear ; and while he seemed to listen to the sound until he almost wept on his hard pillow, the forms melted away into confusion, till all was lost in deep but uneasy sleep.

CHAPTER XV.

THE broad rim of the morning sun was barely peeping over the summit of Benheuigh, and throwing his gleaming rays along the sloping valley of Strathfeaghan, as Alaster and his men—that is, Farquhar and Morrough M'Com-bich—leaped the small streamlet that bounded the straggling camp of the Highland army, and set forth upon their reconnoitring expedition. The plain over which they next passed was better for travelling than Alaster had expected, for the wind had dried the ground considerably ; the present morning was fair and

sunny, and the fancies of the night having been dispelled by the cheering light of a new day, the travellers footed their way towards the hills, with all the delighted agility of mountaineers, and feelings which reminded them of those happy mornings bygone, when they had so often gone out to the sport in the interesting wilds of Braemar.

The long valley of Strathfeaghan, with the crowded tents of the army, soon lay like a small green stripe beneath the travellers, as the three mounted the hills like goats, and scrambled their way through the rugged passes towards those points in the mountains that enabled them to overlook the glens beyond. At length as the day advanced, and as they drew near to a pleasant brow of soft green furze, Morrough began, as usual, to feel an uncommon gnawing about his stomach, and thought it full time to remind his leader, that although when a man became a gentleman, he seemed also to acquire the faculty of living without food, yet that that was an attribute which it did not seem likely that *he* should ever acquire. Alaster, however, having kept Mr. Murrough at much distance

since he had come to his dignity, the latter was obliged to have his words well ordered and few, when he dared to speak to the captain.

“Pleasement, your Captainship’s glorification,” said Morrough, as he came forward with the back of his hand to his bonnet, and meaning to be exceedingly polite, as well as to speak his best English—“there’s a bread an’ a cheese in the wallet, an’ a drap o’ Jock Barley-corn’s bluid in the searrag; the bannocks I’ve brought frae the clachan are capital gude for the hungerment o’ the hills; and as for the usquebaugh, it’s a perfect sin no’ to drink it just on this pleasant spot—for ye see, begging your excuses for the freedom o’ the parley, to tell you the naked truth, Captain, whatever may be your honour’s case, my stomach is no’ made of pat-metal, and I *must* eat.”

“Deevil pe in your craving wame,” said Farquhar, “pulling the impudent remonstrant aside, “canna ye wait till the Captain gie us the word o’ the fuglement. Never heed her croaking pelly, your honour’s pleasure,” he added to Alāster, “ye may just be used by this time wi’ Morrough’s grumbling cuts.”

“ Truly, lads, the belly is a beggar that sometimes will take no denial,” said Alaster, entering into the humour of his petitioner, “ particularly when he is carried over mountains like these, the air of which makes him more clamorous than it is always convenient to satisfy. But it is well that you have not forgotten the provant, and if you’ll just wait ’till we get to the brow of the heights yonder, I shall myself be glad to break bread with you.”

“ Hieugh ! pless her honourable clory,” exclaimed Morrough, snapping his fingers, and running towards the brow of the pass. “ I kent her pleasurement wadna’ starve the puir lads on the march, as lang as there was a bannock in the pouch, or a prochans-making o’ meal in the poke—pieugh ! Farquhar, boy, her maister’ll soon gar her bock the bag, for a’ her stinginess.”

A brisk foot-trot of a few minutes brought them all to the upper end of the pass, where, on an inviting bank of soft heath and herbage they sat themselves, and many a good “ whang” of their homely bread and other provant, served to stay that pleasantest of healthy appetites ;

and with the pungent seasoning of a hearty dram of the pure cordial of the Highlander, administered from the searrag, to add caloric to their necessary draught of the cold spring that dribbled from the rocks, made a meal more sweet to the three mountaineers, than is often eaten off gold in the halls of the south.

“Whisht! gie’ her a pardonment—please her honour,” exclaimed Morrough, as he bolted the last indifferently masticated mouthful;—“huish—did ye na’ hear a sound?”

“What sound?” said Farquhar, surlily, beginning to be jealous; “what’ll she pe hearing noo? just as if she had a langer lug than her petters.”

“I’ll swallow the steel sken-ocle on my hip like a cheese-paring,” he added, jumping up, “if I didna’ hear a piper’s piobrachd doon the glen. Oigh! it’ll be the Macalisters, as sure’s a gun.”

The party all rose and followed Murrough towards a shelving point on the height; but though they sometimes imagined they heard the reedy sound of the bagpipe, coming on the breeze from the far distance beneath, as yet

they could see nothing of any approaching band. As they went forward, however, and valley and glen spread out successively beneath them, the sight of his native hills in the distance, together with the effects of his exhilarating refreshment, made Morrough quite wild with delight, and sometimes screaming with joy, he became almost unmanageable.

“Oigh ! plessings and clories !” he exclaimed to his servitor companion ; “ what would she gie to set her feet on the gowan that grows this vera morening on the braes o’ Apine, or even adown the bonnie howms o’ Braemar ? I say, Farquhar, my man, speer at her honour’s Captainship, if we may take a start athort the braes, just to get ae smack o’ the braw kimmer that wends ayont the castle—hieugh ! if I just had her in my oxter this precious minute.”

“ Face about and turn to the left, lads,” said Graham, as they came to the angle of the mountain. “ There is no appearance of the Macalisters, at least from this point, and we must take the other pass in our way back towards Strathfeaghan, for be our tidings what they may, we

must take care to be in the camp again before sunset."

"Och! och! hear ye that, Farquhar, lad?" said Murrough, chop-fallen, as he reluctantly complied with the unwelcome order. "Och—och! I see it, as plain's a parritch, she maun joost turn her back on the bonnie Highland mountains, like a banishment,—for she's gaun to the Lowlands to get her death, and she'll never see the kimmer o' Braemar ony more."

The pathetic sentiment, uttered by the honest Highlander, was not confined entirely to himself or his servitor friend. Even he who gave this command complied with it, in his own person, with a feeling of regret and disappointment. That feeling was deepened as he continued to walk on in silence; and now the afternoon began to lower, and a grey mist to overspread the sky, while the bare and bleak hills among which the party travelled, began next to assume that solemn hue, in their purple and sterile wildness, which communicates its tinge of poetic melancholy to the imaginative mountaineer of the dismal north. The involuntary suggestions of the foregoing night again

came across the thoughts of Alaster with a sort of prophetic sadness; his mind became acutely sensitive with its own reflections, until the very rocks that frowned over his head, and the glens and ravines that winded beneath the narrow passes along which he encircled the wild mountains, seemed to send up strange whisperings to his ears, or at least to his fancy.

At length Alaster and his followers came to the point from which he was to have sounded his horn, had he obtained a sight of the expected reinforcement, but this spot he was obliged to leave behind him without any note to announce his approach to the camp. They soon after descended into a little glen, which terminated in the gorge that led to the plain where Montrose's army lay. Following the course of the brook which winded along the bottom of the glen, while he mused on the ill success of his day's adventure, Alaster cast his eyes accidentally towards the rocks beyond the brook, when he perceived three men whispering together quite near him, and proceeding as if to intercept his passage through the gorge. A hasty exclamation broke from his own men on

their observing this; and a second glance served to shew him the stern and embrowned countenances of Grumach Gordon, John of Leask, and another well-known reiver from Glenskiach, whom Alaster could not name. Perceiving that they were observed, old Gordon took a few racing steps down the bank, leaped the stream, and was instantly followed by his two companions, who, with himself, had been dismissed with disgrace from Montrose's army, and now seeming to rejoice in the success of their watchful dodging of the youth as he returned, by which they expected to gratify their burning thirst for revenge.

A sensation, very unusual to his bold and buoyant spirit, shot through the mind of Alaster, in the mood he was, on observing this. Casting his eyes from the savage countenances of those who stood before him, round upon the silent and lonely glen in which they were, he felt as if the saddening fancies which had oppressed him all the previous day and night were now in some manner about to be realized. But there was no time for reflection. The father of his Moina stood here in his path, pale with long-

treasured malice,—his eyes flashing with rage and the anticipation of immediate revenge. Before Alaster came quite near to the men, three long claymores already gleamed in the red rays of the sinking sun, which ominously seemed at the moment to be withdrawing his light from the glen.

“Draw you three swords against one man, gentlemen?” said Alaster, quietly, as he came up. “This looks warlike, and somewhat hasty in such a spot as this.”

“Are there not three of you too?” said Grumach Gordon, answering in Gaelic, with a triumphant scowl, “and is not the green sod as good in one place as another to settle a bitter quarrel upon?”

“The quarrel is of your seeking, not mine, Grumach Gordon,” said Alaster, in his usual calm tone, “and you wrong yourself as well as me in thus pursuing me with a vengeful spirit, for I have never injured you.”

“Hah!—never injured me!” repeated the old man, as he exchanged looks with John of Leask. “Hear you this insulting speech of my mortal enemy?—but he is no true man,

and fears to meet me on a fair field, for all his boast and his glaumorie. I see it now well, audacious youth," continued the riever, rising in wrath, "when the devil with whom you deal, and who has hitherto given you the victory, deserts you under the broad light of day, you dare not face me—you are a coward!"

A pang passed through the heart of Alaster, as this intolerable expression was uttered, and as he observed the triumphant sneers of the other Gordons; but he remembered his vow to the gentle Moina, renewed so recently in his own tent, and felt the gold token at his breast, as if it burned over his heart. "Grumach Gordon," he said, "I am an officer in the service of my country; I charge you in the king's name, to let me and my followers pass to the camp in peace."

"May my good claymore be broken over my head, and may I be proclaimed a coward like yourself, if I have not a fall with you ere we part, on this very sod, and if I see not your blood reeking on my blade this night, though my own life should be the forfeit!"

"Old man," said Alaster, solemnly, "I bear from you what I would bear from no man.

I offer you peace and conciliation. I charge you for your own sake, whose blood I would not willingly spill, for the sake of your gentle orphan daughter, to think what you do."

The mention of this word, *his daughter*, seemed to rouse the old man's rage beyond endurance. "Villain! viper! scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "You have stolen my daughter from me—you have bewitched and decoyed by your arts, the child of my bosom—she has fled from me, and you have ruined her. Draw, or I will plunge my sword to the hilt, in your deceitful breast. Here, Leask!—swear with me!—swear that the earth on which we tread, shall drink the blood of one of us—or shall hide one corpse in its dark womb, to be made so even here before the morning."

As soon as these words were uttered by the old man, the whole three deer-stalkers took one step forward, and looking up to Heaven, with their naked blades raised aloft, they next, according to the Gaelic custom upon solemn occasions, thrust the points of them together into the earth at their feet.

"Maister," said Farquhar, aside, and coming forward with a look of solemn excitement, "my

dream's rede: this is to be a bloody night; I heard the death-croak all day among the hills, and it is even now in my ears. There are some appointed to die who are here, and some whom we see not now—but I will stand by you till the last.”

“ There's a wreath come across my een,” said Morrough, next, and looking solemnly towards the sky, “ I see it in the lift. But I'll lose my life in this glen afore I hear her glory an' honour ca'd a shame an' a coward. Here's my claymore for't,” he added, drawing, “ an' there's three gude men of us to the wild reivers.”

“ Shall I take your life with your own sword in the scabbard?” cried Grumach, gnashing his teeth, and offering his point at Alaster's breast.

“ You will rue this, Grumach Gordon, and I will rue it too,” said Alaster, as he deliberately drew his claymore. “ But I see there is a freedom before us both, and fate must be fulfilled.”

As their blades crossed, the old reiver lounged furiously at first, but as if suddenly recollect-

ing former trials of the same kind, he next fought with caution, and death and life seemed to be well believed by all to hang upon their several exertions.

“Is it not three to three?” said Leask, savagely, eying Alaster’s men. “Though ye are servitors and wretches, yet here’s at you for your master’s sake, and Heaven help the last of a side!” In another instant the whole six persons were struggling together in mortal combat.

Confident in his own strength and dexterity, and anxious to spare the life of the father of his Moina, Alaster, as formerly, fought on the defensive, though he never found his old enemy so vigorous or so determined as he now was. Pursuing this mode, he unconsciously retreated a few paces towards the rocks behind him, when, as he parried with some difficulty the vigorous sword of his opponent, his attention was arrested by a sudden cry from one of the combatants, and he observed Farquhar drop in agony on the sod, while the savage John of Leask drew the blade of his long claymore slowly from out the body of his faithful ser-

vant. The shock of this sight had scarcely passed, when he felt the same sword ring against his own target, as with looks of tenfold ferocity the wild reiver joined his arm in double charge with that of Grumach Gordon. The necessity of exertion, now added new nerve to the arm of the young soldier, and dashing at both with terrible strength, he by a single back-stroke, which almost carried the head from the shoulders of his new opponent, laid John of Leask dead at his feet.

The old chieftain now drew back in astonishment, and as both for an instant took breath, Alaster observed Morrough M'Combich grappling with his antagonist, the blood streaming plentifully from his bare knee; and as they struggled, the former tumbled disabled into the dry bed of the stream, while the latter, regardless of his immediate antagonist, or thinking him dead, came forward menacingly, and soon joined his vindictive sword to that of Grumach Gordon.

The fight was again renewed, the two against one, and soon appeared to look serious to Alaster, for his climbing of the hills all day

had tired him long before this combat was forced on him, and his strength he found could not much longer avail him against two comparatively fresh men. Forced to retreat towards the rock, he was fighting with his back near it with determined bravery, when, as he was making a spring against one of his adversaries, the attention of all was suddenly arrested by a screaming cry from the height above, and in another instant, the quick footsteps of some one descending the bank were heard nearly behind where Alaster struggled in this unequal battle. A second piercing scream echoed down the lonely glen, and immediately after, the sheathed blade of some interfering stranger was vainly interposing between the infuriated combatants.

“For mercy’s sake cease!” faintly screamed a third time the same shrill voice; but in the eagerness of the strife none seemed to know it but the amazed Alaster, upon whose heart it now struck so as almost to render him powerless, while the distracted stranger in the bonnet and trews, threw herself before him as if determined to receive on her own slender body

the furious blows desperately aimed at her lover.

“Beware! — chieftain, beware!” shouted Alaster, from a sudden apprehension, as he struggled terribly in the midst of the confusion.

“Curse you! whoever you are—that would deprive me of my revenge,” cried the infuriated Grumach—“*there*—take the steel—’twill may be serve you both!” and at the same instant, his long sword-blade passed sheer through the body of Moina Gordon, wounding even her lover beyond, whose body she thus shielded with her own.—Another second had scarcely passed, when, as Alaster caught on his left arm the sinking maiden, his other opponent, taking advantage of this circumstance, succeeded in burying his sword deep in the exposed side of the unfortunate youth, who staggering back, holding Moina in his arms, supported himself against the rock that had frowned over this fatal combat.

“Hold me up, Alaster—my dear Alaster, hold me up—till I speak,” murmured the faint voice of the Highland maiden,—“surely it was not by the hand of my own father that I have received my death,”—and she tried to stop

with her trembling hand the blood that gushed from her bosom.

A few moments passed in perfect silence, as the old man stood gazing on both, and almost gasping for breath, from his late desperate exertion. Something struck him, however, in the sound of the last voice,—and drawing near to gaze in the face of the drooping maiden, still hanging in Alaster's arms, and both supported by the rock, his countenance assumed an expression such as may not be described, as he shouted, or rather croaked, in an agony of horror—

“Mercy of Heaven! what is this?—is this Moina?—my orphan child, Moina—that I have stabbed with my own hand?” and the old man absolutely howled aloud in despairing consternation.

“I told you, you would rue this fatal day, Grumach Gordon,” said Alaster, faintly, —“see you what you have done to your much wronged child? It was she who, forced by your own vindictive vows, to adopt this unseemly garb, prevented you from carrying an unreasonable revenge into the very camp of Montrose,—while I have been a constant peace-

maker between you and your enemies for her sake. Now, we are both requited,—for our hearts' blood mingles together on the green sod of this valley—and we shall be buried together,”—he added, straining the dying maiden to his bosom—“buried in one grave in bonnie Glentowart, and lie together cold and quiet—for this is a sadder day for you, Grumach, than it is even for us !”

Need we dwell upon the petrified look of the old man, as he still gazed in the blanched countenance of his dying daughter, while all the circumstances of his unquenchable revenge crowded upon his thoughts, from the first prediction of woe in the cave within the forest, to the impressive curse which rose in the festive hall of Braemar. As he grasped the clammy hand of the maiden—his scream of sorrow was absolutely heart-rending.--Then when laying his ear close to her face, he heard her whisper of sincere forgiveness—and received her touching filial blessing—he covered his face with his bloody hands, and stamping on the earth in the bitterness of his grief, called upon Heaven in its mercy to strike him dead on the spot.

“ Alaster, — my dear, — faithful friend,” said Moina, now looking up, — “ bear me, if you can, to the brook, and lave my brow with the cool stream—for oh ! I am faint, and death is at my heart. Now—alas ! you seem weak, too—but do not look so sadly on me—we shall meet again hereafter !”

He was barely able to assist her to the brook, and to lave her pale face in the stream, while he hung over her and kissed her warm lips ; then with a breaking heart he watched over her, and both their lives seemed fast ebbing together.

“ Embrace me, Alaster, once more,” she whispered, “ and bless me before I die—ah !—dear—dear friend—alas ! is this to be the end of all our hopes and our love ?”

As the dying lovers thus communed together, the old man sat on a stone near, watching both in the dumb stupidity of despairing grief, while the remaining reiver ran and told the news to the outer sentinels of the camp. The wounded Morrough next crawled from the bed of the stream where he had for some time lain, and startled the deep silence of the narrow glen in which all this was acted, by the howl of bitter lamenta-

tion which burst from his warm heart on witnessing the fate of his beloved captain. Darkness now began to gather over the valley as the lovers still comforted each other on the verge of death, but before the moonlight had fairly penetrated to the depths of the glen, the struggling spirit of the Highland maiden had fled for ever.

The news of the catastrophe having soon spread in the camp, a party of Highland gentlemen instantly proceeded to the pass, anxious for the life of their brave comrade, whom they wished at once to carry to his tent. But no intreaty could prevail on Alaster to separate himself, while he continued to breathe, from the body of his deceased love, and a small sheiling near, received for the present both the living and the dead. Here he lay beside the corpse for the remainder of the night, but as long as life remained the unhappy youth persisted in refusing either to allow his wounds to be dressed or to permit the body of his Moina to be removed out of his sight, but continuing, while he had strength, to mourn over her, to kiss her cold brow, and to talk to her as if she

was still able to hear him, he murmured constantly of meeting her in a better world, until, on the following morning, before the sun had scattered the mists from the top of Cairn Gorm, his own spirit had joined hers in the dim mansions of eternity.

The regret, or rather grief even of Montrose himself, for the loss of his handsome and promising officer, he gave expression to in some stanzas still extant, said to be written by his own hand.

The Highland army now marched from Strathfeaghan, and the bodies of Alaster and of Moina Gordon were carried back to the castle of Braemar. It was a morning of sad and affecting excitement, that, when the cold remains of these two lovers, were "lifted" amid a bewailing crowd from all the hills round, to be borne to that grave in which they had desired to be buried together. A sad sight it was, and a sore reflection it afforded, to all the young hearts then present, who can fancy the delights which true love might bring, could its course, ever in this world, be expected to run smooth ; and the piercing scream of the loud coronach

of sorrow, and the wild and affecting strains of the bagpipes, as the bodies were carried up the strath of the Dee to the lonely burying-ground of Cronan, had such effect on the mountaineer multitude, that cailach or maiden, whoever heard it, never, it is said, could forget it more.

All that further belongs to our legend—besides the well-known fate of the unfortunate Montrose,—is, that Morrough M'Combich, having partially recovered of his wounds, was afterwards killed in the bloody field of Kilsyth, in the Lowlands. As for the wretched Grumach Gordon, the cause of this whole tragedy, become quite deranged from grief and remorse, he lived for some time, more like a wild-beast than a man, among the goats and the eagles in the fastnesses of Blair Athol; and now, when many high names of the time have long been forgotten, the tragical tale of the brave forester and his Highland maiden, is still told or sung with tears and moralizing, among the solitary glens of Braemar.

THE PAINTER.

A SICILIAN TALE.

BY JOHN GALT.

Mine honour is my life ; both grow in one ;
Take honour from me, and my life is done.

SHAKSPEARE.

ABOUT a league distant on the left side of the road which leads from Naples to Salerno, stand the ruins of a considerable villa. The gardens had been formed in terraces on the mountain behind ; the walls of them still exist, and the

spacious stairs by which they were severally connected, are proofs that it had been once the abode of taste and opulence. On the higher garden, a copious spring gushes out from the earth, and descends into the valley, leaping from terrace to terrace, and diffusing, as it descends, a fresh and beautiful verdure along the margin of its whole course. The peasants of the neighbourhood say, that a fountain, ornamented with statues, formerly stood where the spring now issues, and that the water was brought underground in pipes from a small lake among the hills—perhaps it still comes in that manner, but however this may be, few situations have been chosen, with a happier respect for the local genius.

This once delightful mansion originally belonged to the Bellochi family,—and was the favourite residence of the last count of the race, —a nobleman possessed of many elegant accomplishments, and amiable qualities.

He had visited England, and was much attached to the subjects and the manners of that nation. His house was open in consequence to the English travellers, and when any of the

friends he had known in London visited Bellavista, as the villa was called, no limit was set to his hospitality. He accompanied them himself to the numerous monuments of antiquity between Pœstum and the metropolis, as well as to the wonders of Vesuvius, and the relics of the exhumated cities, and he deservedly became celebrated alike for his munificence, his eloquence, and friendship.

One day, a large party of gentlemen, among whom were several of his most esteemed English friends, were received by the count with his customary kindness. He had but that day returned from Sicily, where he had, a few months before, married a lady of noble birth and extraordinary beauty. His house had not yet been opened for the reception of his friends, but still he was so delighted with the strangers, that, notwithstanding the want of preparation, he invited them to remain, promising as an inducement, that although from the condition of his own household, he could not accommodate them with beds, he would himself ride with them to a monastery, on the road to Naples, and,

by his influence with the friars, secure them a hospitable reception there.

It happened in the evening, that on reaching the convent, several other travellers, bound for Pœstum, had sought lodgings for the night, and the count's friends could not be received as he had expected. To lighten the chagrin of disappointment, he accordingly at once resolved to accompany them to Naples, and sent back his servant Francesco to the villa, to apprise the countess of his intention, and not to expect him that night.

It was near midnight before Francesco reached the villa; the other servants being fatigued with the day's hard labour, in bringing the luggage from the vessel which had brought them from Palermo, and with the unexpected bustle occasioned by the strangers, were all asleep when he arrived, and he was in consequence obliged to let himself in by a window.

On almost any other occasion this would not have happened; for the count had in his service a Sicilian painter, Salmano, who was employed in decorating some of the chambers—

a man of rare gifts, and who had a particular taste for watching the tints and shadows of the moonlight for suggestions in his profession. But he too, being this night exhausted and weary, had foregone his nightly vigils. Nor was it a circumstance to attract notice, for he was a man advanced in life, of a pale and slender appearance, indicative of some constitutional infirmity. It was, indeed, a wonder among the domestics how one, so evidently of a feeble frame, could night after night pass so many cold and solitary hours studying the glimpses of the moon on the landscape, or the shadows of the statues in the gallery.

Before day-break old Agatha, who had been the nurse, and was the favourite attendant of the countess, was suddenly roused by her lady coming into her apartment in the wildest and most distracted manner. She was still undressed; her long hair fell in loose tresses on her shoulders. She bore a lamp in her right hand, and shook her left, and gazed as if she had come from some frightful discovery.

Agatha was awake by her entrance, but astonishment at the sight before her rendered her

unable to speak, and she lay looking at the Countess, who exclaimed with the voice of agony—

“ I fear—I fear—yet cannot I give utterance to the horror. I blush like a guilty wretch, and yet in what of shame have I been guilty—have I but dreamt! O Heaven! drive from me the imagination with which I am beset.”

Agatha, terrified at these exclamations, raised herself, and entreated her lady to be composed, and not to repine too much at the absence of her lord.

“ He will,” said she, “ be here by times in the morning, and you must not think of this frolic in that way. I beseech you, my dear lady, to be calm. Though the Count were dead, you could not be in greater affliction.”

“ To me he is dead,” cried the Countess, “ to me he is lost—and I am lost. Call up the household,—I am not yet mad.”

With these wild words she hastened back to her apartment, and Agatha, trembling, dressed herself, and went to call the servants; but when she reached the landing-place of the

great stairs, she found Francesco standing there as if he had been watching.

“How does the Countess?” he inquired with a confident look which, however, Agatha did not observe, particularly at the moment, but replied—

“She is woefully sad; it is very strange that she should be so sad—where is the Count?”

“He is gone,” said Francesco, “on to Naples, and sent me back to tell the Countess. Does she suspect?”

“How!” cried Agatha, surprised at the cunning leer of the fellow, “what should she suspect?”

“I could not inform her,” replied Francesco, confusedly, “she was asleep.”

“Asleep, Francesco! How knew you that?”

“She made no answer when I knocked at her door.”

“Knocked! did you dare disturb her?”

A momentary shudder shook the whole frame of old Agatha, and she looked with a curious

suspicion at Francesco, who said, in evident embarrassment—

“ Why do you look at me in that manner ? perhaps she did not hear ? ”

“ She must have heard you—audacious !—but why is she in such distress ? ”

“ Is she distressed ? ” replied Francesco. “ Do you then think she will be angry when she sees me ? The door was open, and I thought she knew my voice. ”

“ Dared you to enter ? ”

“ In truth, Agatha, I did. ” And, in saying these words, Francesco hastily descended the stairs in evident terror and alarm. Agatha remained immoveable, and, bursting into tears, exclaimed—

“ There is some mystery—horrible mystery. Oh ! could she be——a lady so chaste, so excelling in love to her Lord. ”—

She was interrupted by Salmano, the painter, who at this moment entered, and to whom she said briskly—

“ What seek you here ?—this is about the time you were wont to go to bed. ”

“ I have risen to see the dawn, ” replied the

artist. "Last night I was fatigued, and early went to sleep. But go to your lady—she is very ill."

"She only grieves that the Count has, so thoughtlessly, not returned;" and she looked eagerly at Salmano.

"Has nothing else happened to her?"

"Do you then think that she has some other cause for sorrow?"

"I hope no other: but she looks as one that I should give ducats to have for my model as Lucretia, escaped from Tarquin."

"Her grief is natural. The first night in a strange land to be so deserted!"

"No, no, it comes of a deeper wound."

"Why think you so?" sighed Salmano.

"The painter's skill," replied the artist, "instructs him to discern the mind in the face. I never saw her in such anguish before. It may, however, be as you say. But tell Francesco to come to me betimes. The day is beginning to dawn, and I want him in my study. The fellow has a lascivious look, with such a sober air, that he assists my fancy—as I

am painting Susannah and the Elders—he is an elder.”

Agatha made no answer, but with sadness in her eyes left him, and the painter went to his study; soon after Francesco, as desired, entered.

“How now!” said Salmano, “you keep me idling.”

Francesco, with sullenness, replied,

“I am not hired to be a Jewish priest—I have my master’s business.”

“He said that when I wanted you, all your other duties should be suspended.”

“But I have business in Naples.”

“Does not the Count return this morning?”

“How should I know?”

Salmano looked at him steadily for nearly a minute, and then said,

“You have a masterly command of yourself. But, fellow, there is trouble and fear in your eye; what guilt have you committed? what have you done that your presumptuous hopes may not yet be concealed?”

“You amaze me, Sir,” replied Francesco with awe.

The painter laid down his easel from his thumb, and taking up his hat, said,

“I am here but professionally, and am not of a prying disposition; but you have done, or I mistake much, some guilty deed, to which some wild hope is attached.”

With these words he walked into the garden, and before Francesco had time to recollect himself, Agatha came into the room, saying, “I thought Salmano was here.” At these words Francesco stepped forwards, and taking her by the wrist said, in a whisper,

“I do not like that painter.”

“No!”

“If we were in some secret place, I could tell you something, Agatha.”

“Well.”

“Agatha, you are knowing, observant, and prudent; but I wish we were in some room less exposed. How did the painter look when you saw him first?”

“He deplored the grief of the Countess.”

“He was not stirring when I returned. Artists are men of subtle craft. When I returned last night, I went to my lady’s room—”

“Daring shame—I told her so!”

“How did she look when you told her?”

“Like Paulina, in the picture there, when told that her lover was not the god Anubis.”

“It may be good, Agatha, for the painter to turn on me. These men of art do other things at night than catch moonlight shadows; but be cautious;” and he suddenly left the apartment, while Agatha, in great perplexity, said aloud to herself, after thinking some time—

“My fears first fell on him; he is of that complexion, and I have seen him looking intemperately at her. Salmano, too, but not like him—here in his study, she may be seen among his goddesses; and when he looks at her the most ardently, it is as a student pondering over his book. I should as soon expect to see him bedded with Diana; but the rank look of yon insinuating wolf makes conviction, even in my doubts.”

By this time the household were all afoot, and some remarkable apprehension appeared to infect them all with distrust of each other. The painter was deeply affected; he could not resume his pencil, but walked alone in the gardens, and shunned every body. Agatha,

noticing him from the window, went to him, and said,

“ You were not formerly inclined to walk in the garden. Days are not your time of study ; but you walk too much in the night. Night is the season of sleep, and none trespass on its lonely hours, but those afflicted with guilt or love.”

“ My profession,” replied the painter, “ requires that I should study the varieties of light and shade.”

“ Cannot you, then, be content with sunshine?”

“ It is my taste, Agatha ; my genius prompts me to study the moonlight.”

“ What is that genius, Signor ? I hear of it, but none in the house can tell me what it is.”

“ It may not be easily explained,” replied the artist ; “ but some have a keener relish of one thing more than of another of their neighbour’s. Some are charmed by the ear, and some by the eye. The senses are the gates of the mind, and genius enters by the most frequented, or that which is best constructed.”

Agatha paused thoughtfully ; for though aged, she was shrewd and wary. She then said,

“ Genius then makes men prone to find and to seize their means of enjoyment, and as you forego your rest to hunt midnight shadows, or rise in company, forgetting who may be present, and bid a fair lady bend her head aslant, as she would look from a picture ; some other, by the difference of his genius, would equally, without decorum, seize on his means of pleasure.”

“ You are wonderfully metaphysical,” said Salmano. “ I did not think you were so much of a philosopher. But why are you so suddenly changed, and so earnestly ?”

Agatha, without noticing his question, inquired, seriously—

“ How came you to be stirring this morning at two, and yet, when I met you at day-break, you said that you had but just risen ?”

“ I told you,” replied Salmano, “ the truth.”

“ Was ever such a robbery committed !” cried Agatha, with an accent of grief.

"Am I suspected of a theft?" replied the painter.

"O! no, it was not done by you—I could pawn myself for your integrity;" and she instantly quitted the astonished artist and fled, in tears, into the house. Soon after Francesco came into the garden; he had plainly no business there; but he sought the painter, who, on perceiving him, went straight towards him, and said, severely,

"A crime has been committed last night!"

"I know it," replied Francesco. "Do you blame me?"

"Are you afraid, mannerless dog, that I should? But, if I could persuade the world of my skill, there would not be wanting evidence to do so—the forehead mark is plain upon you."

"Shall I be ruined by your fancies?"

The painter, indignant at hearing his art so contemned, said, with greater energy,

"Lewd epicure, it is not for thee to know the scrutiny of the painter—ay, or the holy purposes to which his art may minister. The painter's pencil can teach like the poet's pen,

and feelings, faithfully limned, instruct the mind, and improve the heart. Go, menial ; go and be punished."

... Francesco was thunderstruck, and slunk, abashed, from his presence. Soon after the Countess sent for the painter, and as he entered the house, he met her confessor coming from her. He would have spoken to the priest, but the old man was in tears, and turned from him. On approaching the Countess, he found her seated alone, in sublime serenity—a passion of sorrow, that could only take expression in a calm—a calm like the stillness of death.

"I pray you, Salmano, take the command of this ill-fated mansion—place sentinels at the gate, men you can trust. Let no one pass till my lord returns. See that Francesco do not escape. O, serpent ! that could so invade the Eden of my wedded faith. I can no more !" and with these words, she stabbed herself, and instantly expired !

A terrific cry from Salmano brought many of the servants into the room, and among them Francesco. To him the painter solemnly said, "Her heavenly spirit is away like a poor fright-

ened bird, appealing to the Heavens against the hand that plundered its early nest. Rouse thee, thou wretch ! there is no vision here !" More he would have added ; but in that moment Francesco seized the dagger, and pausing, as if he hoped some one would arrest his hand, plunged it, disappointed, into his own heart.

THE
LAIDLAWS AND THE SCOTTS.

A BORDER TRADITION.

BY THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

CHAPTER I.

Thieves a', thieves a',
Frae Annadale haughs to Tiverton ha',
Set your backs unto the wa',
Raise your brands an' bang them a',
Then drive their cattle frae the shaw—
Thieves a', thieves a'.

Scraps.

IT is well known, through all the south of Scotland, that there was once a powerful clan of

the surname of Laidlaw, settled in the upper parts of Teviotdale, about the sources of the river Borthwick. Craik was their chief place of abode, but they had likewise all the land in its vicinity, which they held of Scott, of Branxholm, on a curious tenure, still preserved by one of their descendants, of

“Twenty stotis, twenty steris,
Twenty domperis, twenty deris,
Twenty coggaris, twenty meris,
Twenty men all the yeris.”

And for this they were to have in possession, from year to year, as long as this motley rental was paid,

“All the Craik and Cribbie Law,
Evil Rigg and Metishawe,
Craig’s Hope and Berrye-beile,
Wolf Cleuch and Kaiphill-sheelee,
With lefe to hunt, and lefe to brewe,
Lefe to delfe and lefe to plew,
Lefe to steile, and lefe to strayne,
But never lefe to gif agayn.”

This is written in a sort of pass-book, that being the only lease given or required, and on it there are many subsequent markings, quite unintelligible ; but there is a codicil, with a

date of 1537, bearing, that instead of twenty men to be at the laird's call every day of the year, they were to have fifty men at three days' warning. Of this curious document I have no copy, but it proves that the Laidlaws were a clan of considerable power at that time, and every family of the name in Scotland can trace their origin from Craik, or its vicinity, to this day. Of their final ejection from that place, there remains among the people the following tradition:—

The Laidlaws were known to be a subordinate clan, brought and sustained there by the lairds of Buccleuch. Of course they acknowledged no other chief. But they had always a head of their own name, who led them to the field. It appears, that for ages this chief's name continued to be William; and it is generally still the name of the eldest sons, or elder branches of families.

Well, it happened in the course of a great east-border feud, that one of these Williams, the captain of the Laidlaws, slew a lady with his own hand, who was making her escape with the family heir. It was a rash deed, done in a

moment, and dearly repented. The mortally-wounded lady turned her dying eyes upon her ruthless assassin, proclaimed a curse and woful doom upon him, and from that moment Laidlaw's peace of mind was gone for ever. He was a man advanced in years, having several grown sons and daughters, and on the very day of his return home to Craik, he resigned the leader's sword and casque to his son William, testifying his resolution of living a life of humility and repentance. It was in vain that his sons and brethren represented to him that it was the chance of war to a mortal enemy, who had slain a number of their own near relations; he only answered them by internal groans, and beckoning to be left in silence.

A short time after this, as Laidlaw was walking at even, down by the partings of Borthwick, he perceived a lady coming from his own house toward him, with a babe in her arms. He did not like her appearance, for she came toward him with such a slow and stately gait, and therefore he changed his course, and took another road home. He walked up the side of the burn where it joins the river, but again

perceiving her meeting him there, he turned downward, and took a road that lay between two fields of corn. In the mean time she glided across the field, and advanced to meet him on that path likewise.

Laidlaw did not exactly like to make a break through the corn, for fear of a woman, though he felt a strong disposition to do so; he therefore put on a resolution, and met her. When she came nigh, she beckoned to him, as one who wished to be addressed; but when he looked at her, he saw that he looked upon the face of a corpse. He saw the wound upon her breast, and then he knew her; and the babe appeared to be dead also. This was too much for the old man. He tried to move off, but could do nothing but stumble and fall; and constantly as he lifted his eyes towards home, he perceived her before him, till at last, losing all power, he wrapt his head in his plaid and threw himself down; and in that position he was found by his sons, about midnight, quite insensible.

He told them next day what he had seen, assuring them that his end was nigh at hand,

he having had a visit from beyond the grave ; and he charged all his sons, leaving it as a command to them and theirs for ever, never to lift a hand against either a woman or child, whatever might be the motive or provocation. Sacredly was this precept kept by the Laidlaws, and many pleasant instances are there on record, of their exertions in behalf of their vow. But at this time old Laidlaw's horrors were but beginning ; for his state of mind became such, that he was never left alone, either by day or night, but this apparition of the lady and child appeared to him ; and at length, when kept constantly in society, it appeared to those that were with him, as well as himself. It was now judged by all requisite to speak to the phantom, but, strange as it may appear, not one of the clan ever could muster resolution at the moment to do it, till the old goodwife of Craik did it herself, asking the lady, in the name of the Most High, what was her business with her and her household ?

“ I must go where I am commissioned, and do as I am bid,” said the phantom.

“Have you any thing to tell us?” said the goodwife, fearfully.

“Yes,” said the apparition, “I have to inform your husband there, who thinks he has left the lands of Oxnam and Kail without an heir, and without an inhabitant, that in spite of all he hath done, these lands shall still be possessed by the rightful owners. And while he thinks the Laidlaws are secure in their ample possessions, I have to inform him, that ere the fourth generation from himself pass away, there shall not be one of the name left in their present habitations.”

“Well, the will of the Lord be done!” said the goodwife. “And who is to effect this?”

“I will effect it,” said the apparition, lifting her pale hand, and shaking it terrifically in the view of the old woman, and, having done this, she glided away, not by the door, but into the closet where the old couple slept. From that day forth, though the lady and child were reported to have been occasionally seen, yet her visits were neither so frequent nor obvious; but no Laidlaw durst ever more enter that closet. Even the goodwife, with all her

courage, durst never follow the spirit into that recess, and as they believed it still to be an inhabitant of the house, their minds were so much overpowered with awe, that they left it altogether, removing to the place where the farmhouse at present stands.

This singular event, to which it is now the fashion to refuse belief, at all events served to imbue the character of the Laidlaws with a tinge of superstition, deepening the sombre hues even of that age of imaginary terrors. Their character, as warriors, was a little marked with ferocity, but invincible bravery and determination none could deny to them; but in all that related to beings of a supernatural order, they ultimately became the slaves of alarm and distraction, and by degrees there was scarcely a dell in all their remote glens, that was not believed to be the haunt of some particular spirit, or even of whole hordes of them; and a woman with a child in her arms, would at any time, even at noon-day, have caused a Laidlaw to turn out of his way.

Shortly after the period that the above narrated event happened, a bellandine, or reiving

expedition, was proclaimed by the laird, and fifty Laidlaws hastened to his standard. To the great joy of the clan, old Will went at the head of the Laidlaws once more ; but, as will appear in the sequel, this proved a dear reiving to them. The men having mustered with considerable strength, they set forth against the rebel Douglass, when a most desperate engagement occurred, at a place called Kirkmyllie. The Laidlaws were led by the laird's eldest son, a young knight of great bravery. They formed his right-hand troop, and at the beginning of the fray, they broke in upon the Angus men with such fury, that they could not be supported by the rest of the army, until they were surrounded, and a great number of them cut off. Sir John Johnston, Buccleuch's brother-in-law, came up first to the rescue, but he came too late. His brave nephew had fallen. Elliot of Lariston had also fallen, as well as old William of Craik himself, with one half of his whole company. The latter wrought such prodigies of desperate valour that day, and appeared so reckless, that it was manifestly his wish to fall on the field of fame, and yet to sell his life as

dear as he could. He was buried on the same field, with thirteen of his kinsmen on either hand, but I have never yet been able to discover where this field of Kirkmylie is situated.

Fatal as this intrepid onset proved to the heroes that made the assault, it had the effect of turning the day completely against the Douglasses. The shock that it gave their left wing was so rapidly followed up by the Johnstons, that it was broken ere ever Buccleuch had begun the attack on the other, and the Douglasses were put down with great slaughter. The knight of Buccleuch received great praise from his sovereign for this exploit, and also extensive grants of land, which were far better; and as the Laidlaws had suffered so severely with his beloved son, they became greater favourites than ever. Their present captain was lame, having been wounded in the battle with the Douglasses, and the clan was led by his uncle, Wat of Eelrig, commonly called *Gurly Wat*, from his fierce, unbending temper.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER this, the Laidlaws finding that they were become favourite vassals of their chief, and deeming themselves necessary ones, they became troublesome and overbearing neighbours, and many complaints were lodged at Branhholm Castle against them. Among others, there was a bitter animosity rose between them and the Scotts of Hawpasby, who were at that time near kinsmen to the chief, and threats and broken heads were matters of daily occurrence. This must have been a considerable time subsequent to the death of the first William Laidlaw men-

tioned ; as the head, or principal tacksman, was then actually the fourth from him. But as every thing was prospering with the clan, the ghost's prophecy had worn out of mind.

Now it so happened at this time, that though there was peace on the border nominally, yet frays, on a small scale, were never more frequent ; and, among others, the Laidlaws made a desperate moonlight raid into Cumberland, and drove from thirty to forty fine bullocks from the lands of Musgrave of Longwell. Musgrave complained to the English warden, who gave him men, and ordered a pursuit, and these troopers traced the cattle till they came to the house of Walter Scott, of Hawpasby, whom they charged with the theft, threatening to carry off himself and every thing that he possessed. Scott declared himself true man and leel, and proffered, if one of Musgrave's beasts was found with him, to yield up to them all the cattle he possessed. But it so happened, that either through chance or design, two of the cattle were actually found on the lands of Hawpasby.

On this discovery being made, Scott fell to

accusing the Laidlaws, and assured the Englishmen that they were the thieves, else those cattle could not have been there; and proffering, at the same time, to assist Musgrave in the recovery of his own. Musgrave shewed him an order from Scroop, signed by a depute of the Lord Maxwell's, to reive, herry, burn and destroy the thieves, wherever they were found. This pleased Hawpasby exceedingly, as he thought he now had a fair and safe opportunity of rooting out his inveterate foes, or, at all events, of herrying them completely. So he took Musgrave in, and told him that they were a hardy and dangerous race, who kept a watch over their herds and flocks every night; that at the sound of a horn, an hundred men would appear, well armed, in the course of half an hour; and that it was, therefore, absolutely necessary to deal with them by stratagem. "But I know a secret," added Scott, "that is not known to every one, and will take in hand to drive every watcher from his charge, before eleven at night, and then your men and my own must be expeditious, and leave not one hoof or horn on all the fair possessions of the Laidlaws."

The proposal pleased the Englishmen well, the neighbouring Scotts were called together, and joined with the pursuers, and after dark they marched off in a body—Walter Scott of Hawpasby going about a mile before them, to clear off the watchers, as he had promised. First clothing himself in a white sheet from head to foot, he then tied a white gauze napkin over his face, put a woman's kerchief on his head, and took a pillow below his arm for a baby. This last was said to have been a masterpiece of its kind. It had a piece of white tape worked strait round it for a neck, a child's cap on its head, and, with its smooth, white face, was as feasible a ghost of a bairn as could well be conceived. They went to the farthest watcher first, on the east end of the Crib-law. His name was Alexander, who, as soon as he saw this unearthly looking lady and child approaching him in the bright moonlight, left his charge and fled like a wild deer, uttering exclamations of horror and short fervent prayers all the way. Scott likewise ran, keeping as it were between him and the house, which drove the poor fellow away on the wings of terror nobody

knew where, for though many were the sublime sounds heard and forms seen by the Laidlaws in the cloud of mist or the moonlight glen, yet all this only made their hairs stand on end, or excited to a strain of devotion; but the ghost of a lady and a child, was to them the acmé of every thing horrible in nature, the bane and terror of their whole race; and some say, though I hardly believe it, that the poor scared man ran on to the end of his life, without looking back to craik, or any thing that belonged to him.

The Englishmen and their allies now seized on this forestand of cattle, and drove them off to the southward. The next watcher they found on a spot which has often been pointed out to the writer of this. It was near to the point where the farms of Wolf-Cleugh Craik and Craik Hope now meet. His name was David Laidlaw, one of the stoutest and bravest of his race, but a man well advanced in years. When this old borderer perceived the gigantic and hideous form of the lady and child approaching, he was seized with the same indescribable terror as his relative, and casting every thing from

him ran towards the valley in the utmost terror. Tooting-horn, sword, and all were left behind, and in the plenitude of his fear, instead of running homeward, he ran in the contrary direction, not knowing what he did. But this was not the way the ghost wanted him to run, because in doing so he came infallibly upon the drove, and would of course discover and disarrange the whole plans of the English.

In order to prevent this the ghost now exerted itself with all its might, to keep between David Laidlaw and the Aittes Burn, which the drove was then crossing; but in doing this, it overshoot the mark, for though David was the prey of superstition, he was a man of shrewd common sense, and on climbing a brae on the south side of the cleuch that falls into Aittes Burn, something struck David's organs of hearing, which riveted him in one moment to the spot. This was no less a phenomenon than the sound of the ghost's puffing and blowing at a furious rate. "Hurray!" cried David Laidlaw (his fear changing into the height of rage and indignation). "Hurray! D—n——nan it," shouted he again, and springing down the brae,

like a bolt of lightning, he came full drive on the object of his former terror, with such force, that he overthrew, down hill, the ghost and himself at the same time.

The affair now became exceedingly serious; desperate and deadly struggle commenced, but Laidlaw being unarmed and stripped, had the advantage. Hawpasby endeavoured again and again to draw his sword, and by these efforts lost the chances of his superior strength and youth, for David clung to him so closely, that he could make no use of his arms. At length the incensed yeoman pinned Scott to the earth, and fixed on his throat with both hands, inso-much that he had only time and power to call out in a half stifled voice, "It is I, David Laidlaw, it is I." But these were the last words he ever spoke, for Laidlaw handled him so roughly, and clutched him so hard about the thorax and windpipe, that he died in a few minutes after the other quitted hold of him.

By this time the cry of war was raised, and bullocks' horns sounded loud and long from the top of every hill. David now hasted back to his charge, and found his plaid, his sword, and

his sounding horn, but the cattle which he watched had entirely disappeared. Great was his perplexity and his indignation, for he never perceived the enormity of his neighbours' offence till then. So far from being sorry at having killed the ghost, he now wished him alive only that he might kill him over again. The Laidlaws assembled to the amount of one hundred and twelve, pursued the prey, and on their way, at the head of Raphy-grain, met with a body of the Scotts, returning under Scott of Langshaw. They attacked this body at once, and slew Langshaw and other seven, nor would one of them have made their escape if the inveterate Laidlaws had had time to pursue them. The Englishmen being deserted by the Scotts, as soon as they entered the border territory under the protection of the Lord Maxwell, fell an easy prey to the incensed Laidlaws. The skirmish was fought at a place called to this day the Bloody-sike, where but a few were slain on either side, for the Englishmen being taken at a disadvantage soon fled. The Laidlaws had likewise been joined by a body of Potts, about the break of day.

Musgrave himself was taken prisoner, whom they carried to Craig Hope, and because he would not make over to them a right to all the cattle they had taken from him, and as many more, they cut off his head, and buried him on the hill. The Scotts afterwards raised a huge cairn over his grave.

Great then was the outcry against the Laidlaws, both by the Scotts and the English borderers. Two gentlemen of the name of Scott had been slain, both of them related to Buccleuch, and one of them to the house of Thirlstone likewise, and the whole clan cried for vengeance. The cause was heard by the great and judicious Sir Walter, who strove hard to save his old faithful and hardy vassals, and, citing their original bargain, of

“ Leave to steal and leave to strain,
But never leave to give again ;”

he fairly told his kinsmen that “ he judged them the greatest aggressors, and if the Laidlaws had acted as they had done in joining with the English foragers to herry his own vassals, he would have punished them severely, but it

was against his maxims of border government to punish any set of men for defending their own.

But the English nobles raised such an outcry against Sir Walter, at court, that he was actually taken into custody, by King James the Sixth as I believe, and compelled, not only to give David Laidlaw up to the English, but to turn the whole clan from off his territories. He is reported to have expostulated and striven hard against this arrangement, but was at last compelled to submit, and the whole sept was dismissed from Buccleuch's property, after possessing it as long as he had done himself. He suffered no man, however, to molest them, and they being men rich in flocks and herds, they scattered themselves over the neighbouring counties, and took extensive possessions from other proprietors, but all of them, to this day, trace their origin from Borthwick-head. The clan is numerous and respectable, and are still generally noted for hot, violent tempers, and uncommon strength and agility of frame.

Thus was the prediction of the ghost literally fulfilled in all its parts; for in the course of

the fourth generation there was not one of the Laidlaws left in their former extensive possessions. And as to the ghost having effected it, that was certainly not literally fulfilled; but the whole bore such an analogy to the first superstitious belief; and the death of Hawpasby, who personated the ghost, being one of the primary causes of their dismissal, it must, upon the whole, be allowed, that few prophecies have been more fully and satisfactorily unaccomplished.

The Scotts got possession of their lands, and retain a part of them to the present time, but for nearly a century no Laidlaw was admitted on the property. Still there seems to have existed a bond of friendship between the chief and his old trusty vassals; for it is certain, when that same Sir Walter, who expelled them, raised a regiment to assist the prince of Orange against the Spaniards, that fifty of the Laidlaws at once joined his standard as usual, though all from the lands of other gentlemen.

After the death of the Duke of Monmouth, however, and the great convulsions that then shook the kingdom, a few families again got

possessions under their old hereditary chief; still it is quite apparent that they are not half so numerous on that extensive property as the adjoining districts to the northward. The whole of them still cleave to the pastoral life—as the learned say, *Multis terribilis cavito multos*.

THE
BRIDAL OF BORTHWICK.

BY D. M. MOIR.*

“ Dear, leave thy home, and come with me,
That scorn the world for love of thee ;
Thou shalt have wool, thou shalt have silk,
Thou shalt have honey, wine and milk ;
Thou shalt have all, for all is due
Where thoughts are free and love is true.”

Earl of Pembroke.

LADY JEMIMA DE BORTHWICK was not more remarkable for her bearing than for her strong passions. Descended from a long line of high progenitors, she had perhaps allowed over-

* The Delta of Blackwood's Magazine, and author of "Maunsie Waugh," Poems, &c.

much, the consciousness of her nobility to hold in abeyance the milder and more feminine graces of her nature. This aristocratic disposition, let it, however, in charity be acknowledged, was never allowed to display itself in tyrannous orders or actions, but left itself to be inferred from her haughty reserve, the splendour of her usual attire, and her strict attention to preserve her children from vulgar contamination.

Had fortune established them somewhat lower in the scale of society, this secluding system of their parent might perhaps have cost them more than it was their lot to feel; for the lawns and gardens, around the fine castle of Borthwick, afforded them sufficient scope for air and exercise.

At the time of our little narrative, Lord De Borthwick was abroad at the court of France, at the head of an embassy from Holyrood; and his lady kept herself almost shut up within the walls of the castle, one of the most splendid and redoubtable structures of the kind in all Scotland, whether considered as a place of residence or defence; though the value of a home,

in those troubled times, was estimated less by its comfort than its security. Human foresight, however, is frail; for, notwithstanding its being almost surrounded by a rivulet named the Gore, denying access, save by a perron of stone, raised to the height of the first storey, and thence communicating by a drawbridge with the gate of the tower, it did not prevent the very simple accident which is the basis of the following little tale.

Not only was the old family-nurse prohibited from carrying the children beyond the grounds in the immediate neighbourhood of the castle, but they were never, on any account, permitted to go out without her attendance. It chanced, however, that the orchard-gate had been one day left open, and while the nurse, seated in the shade of a large cherry-tree, was amusing Margery, the eldest daughter, with some verses of an old song, as she plied her needle-work, Lilian, the younger of the two, in her frolicksome chase of a butterfly, made her way out at it. The day was fine, and all the air musical with birds. The nurse sang, and the young lady listened; but when Lilian was missed

and called for—Lilian was no where to be found.

Conscious of her lady's impetuous temper, and terrified for the consequences of her own indiscretion, the old nurse lost the only chance of regaining her strayed charge, by making the affair known, and calling in the domestics to her assistance. Two hours were suffered to elapse in fruitless search; the gardens—the shrubberies—the parks—nay, even the apartments of the castle itself had all to no purpose been gone through, ere, approaching the focus of their dismay, Margery at length burst from the side of the old woman, and running with tears in her eyes to the chamber of her mother, told her that Lilian was no where to be found.

The abruptness of the disclosure threw the unfortunate lady, as might have been anticipated, into a severe swoon, from which she was not for a considerable time, and with some difficulty recovered. Then, indeed, did a commotion commence, worthy of traditional record; for the alarm-bells were set a jingling so sincerely in earnest, that they were answered from

the towers of Crichton Castle on the one hand, and Oxenford on the other. The steeds were hurried from their stalls, and twenty serving-men were in a few minutes mounted, and scouring the country in every direction; the bugles of one party responding to the bugles of another, and thus keeping up a chain of observation and intelligence. Every half hour a message was sent up to the warden, to learn if any one was seen returning from among the hills with happy tidings; but noon matured into afternoon, and afternoon waned into evening; in purple and gold the sun was descending behind the summits of the western Pentlands, and the bat was already abroad flapping his leathern wings, ere, one after another, dropped in jaded steed and man, without having gained trace or intelligence of the lost child.

This was a grievous calamity for the house of Borthwick; and they judge harshly of its lady, who suppose that under the dazzling and proud exterior, dwelt none of the natural affections peculiar to a mother. The opposite may be assevered to have been the fact, for the distraction of her mind amounted almost to in-

sanity ; the regards which she had been accustomed to withhold from the great mass of society, finding their almost only outlet in maternal tenderness. Day after day passed over, and day after day search was repeated in vain. Rewards were offered, but no one ever came forward to claim them ; and when Lord de Borthwick returned from abroad, he found his fair little Lilian vanished, no one knew where, and his lady, with the whole household, in mourning.

Year after year came to pass away, and Lilian de Borthwick was as one who had never been, except in the unsatisfied recollection of her parents. It was concluded, either that she had wandered into the woods, and losing herself in their recesses, perished of hunger, or had fallen into some of the streams in attempting to find her way back to the castle. It was long afterwards discovered, however, the truth of the story ran in neither of these channels.

II.

Though the time when the gipsies, or wandering Egyptians, first appeared in Scotland, be not

exactly ascertained, the earliest authenticated notice of them hitherto met with, is in a letter of James the Fourth, to the King of Denmark, soliciting the extension of his royal uncle's munificence to a party of them, who were travelling back to their native country on the banks of the Nile.

At the period of our narrative they had multiplied to a considerable extent, and overrun in an especial manner the districts in the south-east of Scotland; having at Kirkyetholm, in Roxburghshire—a village embosomed among the Cheviot-hills—a kind of general rendezvous. This place the vagrant tribe considered as their head-quarters, and, better to bring a people who acknowledged no claims of birthright or citizenship within the pale of justice, the Lords in Council had granted particular powers to the head of their clan, under the style of Lord and Earl of Little Egypt. Nor were the wandering community without their especial utility, at a time, and in a country, where regular merchants were not to be met with, save in the towns and cities, for though notoriously given to petty plunder, and consequently

under a particular public surveillance, they atoned for this, in some measure, by acting as tinkers, and carrying about articles of crockery, selling gewgaws and finery to the swain, wherewith to woo and win the affections of his rustic Dulcinea; or, peradventure, making to many the present time happy, by prophesying lustily of future happiness.

Now, however little it might have been suspected by the noble family of Borthwick at the time, a female of this tribe, and none other, was the kidnapper of fair little Lilian. Having been perambulating the country in quest of customers for her small wares, she chanced to be resting on a large stone under a chesnut-tree by the way side, when the child, only three years old, came tottering out, in her glee, from the gate of the orchard. Such a prize had never before awakened the pilfering propensities of the gipsy woman, the child being wrapt up in a scarlet mantle, lined with costly furs, and profusely covered with gold embroidery. As it were a bird drawn by fascination into the jaws of the snake, the heedless child made directly towards the spot where the woman sate. No

one seemed to follow ; and, gazing with a quick heedful glance around, she perceived that no one was near ; so, thoughtless of consequences, and without having time to reflect, farther than that a prize was in her power, if she chose to take advantage of her good fortune, she snatched up the little creature in her arms, enveloped her in her ample duffle cloak, and away as fast as she could fly with her burden to the nearest covert of the forest.

No doubt aware that the child was a scion of the proud tree of Borthwick, and that its abstraction might draw down not only destruction on her own head, but involve the destinies of her whole tribe, it is scarcely to be supposed that the gipsy had any other object in view, than to possess herself of the splendid mantle, thrown around the child. So, after hurrying on for some little distance into the woods, yet not farther than that Lilian, if brought to the margin, might regain her way home, she endeavoured to undo the clasps which fastened the mantle ; but, after repeated trials, found her efforts unavailing. It was only now that darker purposes flashed athwart the mind of the

Egyptian ; and, taking out a large knife from her pocket, she threatened instantly to imbrue her hands in the blood of the poor child, if she did not promise to remain quiet. She tried and tried in vain, for numerous clasps were secured in a way she knew not to unrivet ; and her eastern nature enkindling to a degree of rage, while muttering some dark mysterious curses, she almost resolved on taking away the life of the innocent,—for the fastenings could not be cut asunder, without materially deteriorating the value of her prize. But, even in the darkest and most malignant heart, there are some nooks accessible to the touches of nature—some kindly speck in the blasted wilderness of the human bosom, with its singing bird, and its spring, and its palm tree :—so when Lilian cast up her bright blue eye, craving the mercy and compassion of the savage, the hard knots of her swarthy brow relaxed ; the scintillations of her dark flashing eyes abated ; and, threatening the child on the peril of its life to make any outcry, she snatched her again up into her arms, and pursued her way to the hills, through the by-paths of the forest.

III.

The summer sun was now high in heaven, and the gipsy was far on the road towards Kelso, though she kept carefully aloof from public observation, by threading many “a bosky bourne, and busky dell;” now making directly to some mountainous point among the Lammer-muir hills, and now winding circuitously around the far-scattered farm-steadings. Often, from the top of rising grounds, did she stop to listen, and to look back in the direction of Borthwick Castle; but neither sight nor sound conveyed to her a token of alarm or pursuit. Weary and worn out with her burden, and her hurried journey, she came to a rivulet which gurgled pleasantly under some ash-trees, and here, seeing no trace of human habitation nearer than a villge some two miles distant, she laid down Lilian on the grass, that she might wash and refresh herself.

Fatigue, terror and anxiety had so overcome the gentle child, that in a little she fell into a sound sleep, from which she did not awaken as the Egyptian conveyed her to the screen of a

blaeberry bush ; for the sun was fierce and scorching, and there was not a cloud on the face of the blue sky. Scarcely had she done this, when her ear was suddenly alarmed by the trampling of horses, and climbing a little way up one of the trees, she perceived a party ascending the nearest brae. What could she do ? To alarm the child was now too late ; for in awaking it suddenly, it was most likely that a sense of its situation might cause it to scream, and bring the horsemen directly upon her ; — to escape from the copse was impossible ; — and she immediately found that she had nothing for it but to provide for her own safety, by creeping into a large hole in a sand bank, half-hidden by the tangled branches of the sloe and bramble.

Scarcely had she got securely into her hiding-place, when the riders approached. It was, however, none of the scouring parties of Lady de Borthwick, but the Lady Abbess of Coldingham, who had been across the Frith of Forth, conducting some sacerdotal business at Dumfermline, and was now on her homeward route, attended by three of the lay-brothers of

the convent. Engaged in conversation, they had almost passed the copse, when the last of the train, beholding the scarlet tinge of the child's mantle under one of the bushes, reined up his horse, made a signal for the party to halt, and, dismounting, found little Lilian fast asleep. As no one was to be seen around, the abbess commanded the child to be carried forward along with them, promising that it should be carefully attended to, until such traces might be discovered as might lead to its restoration.

Scotland was, at that remote period, divided into a great many almost distinct compartments, from the pernicious prevalence of the feudal system—a system which rendered proximity of lordship an almost certain plea for discord and disturbance, hostile aggression, and hostile retaliation. On these accounts, there was little commerce or connection between the baronies of Borthwick and Consland, and those lying farther south; the districts skirting the sea having a more natural communication with the populous coast of Fifeshire; while the border counties formed a link of union among themselves to make incursions into the northern

parts of England, or resist the predatory attacks of the powerful families of Scroope, Howard, and Percy.

Whatever might have been the cause—and probably this was the true one—the asylum of Lilian never was discovered; and she was suffered to grow up in the seclusion of the cloister, like a violet in the shade. All the knowledge and learning of the times were, however, duly propounded to her; for the abbess, to her credit be it spoken, took a pride in her young charge, who, when she had attained to her fifteenth year, was a perfect model of feminine beauty. To her external loveliness she added the endearing additions of a spirit the most affable and benign; a heart overflowing with feelings of sympathy, and a sensibility to the charms of external nature, illustrative of all that is excellent and generous. She looked on all living things, as if she derived pleasure from the sight; and, by the charms of her temper and person, stole away the affections of all that looked on her.

About this time, Sir David Seaton, a young and valiant knight, arrived from East Lothian, on some matter of business, and, in his conver-

sations with the Lady Abbess in the guest hall, was smitten with the loveliness of the fair foundling, who sat at work in one of the window-niches. The severe rules of the place forbade any formal introduction, and courtesy prevented his making those approaches which affection eagerly dictated to him, and Sir David departed without opportunity of exchanging a word with the beautiful stranger.

But the genius of true love is fruitful in inventions, and the business of the young knight's mission, it was soon found, could not be settled at a single interview; so, in a short time, without more leave's-asking than a beneficent glance from the bright blue eyes of Lilian, he ventured on breaking the ice of restraint between them. Circumstances paved the way for one another; subject introduced subject, and interview led to interview. Still, it may be sworn, that even the unworldly abbess herself began to suspect, that mettle more attractive than the settlement of some trifling difference concerning the feu-tenure of some church lands, led the young scion of Seaton such a frequent dance, though scarcely could she allow herself to suppose, that the

heir of a powerful and ancient family could honourably fix his affections on a foundling, who had no escutcheon of nobility to boast of, save that of nature in her fair face and fame.

In this, however, she mistook; for not only had Sir David Seaton placed his affections on the lovely, homeless Lilian, but he had secretly vowed within his own soul, in the fervour of youthful passion, that none other but she should share his house and heart. But a tremendous barrier opposed itself between them—for how was he to obtain the consent of his family and relations—proud of their rich blood and high pedigree—to his union with a girl, who could not reckon ancestry back the length of her own parents? The jealousy of the lady abbess, kindled but too late, had by this time denied him access to the convent; but as the old song goes, “ True love will venture in, where it dare not well be seen,” and had before this established a channel of communication; so Lilian was the plighted mistress of the young lord of Seaton.

IV.

While the young knight and the fair Lilian were thus basking in the secret sunshine of their loves, it so happened that the Baron of Borthwick took up his abode at Winton House for a few days. Here he was nobly feasted and entertained by his host, who, having been left in early minority by the death of his father, had now attained to an age when he was deemed capable to take the management of his extensive estates; and it was on this occasion that, one evening, after the wine cup had circulated freely, the old Lord, in recalling early times, spoke of his juvenile intimacy with the deceased Sir Hugh Seaton, and of many extraordinary rencontres which had mishapped between them. Among other things, he spoke of a famous deer-chase, in which several riders and a number of horses had lost their lives, and when, after all the dogs were done up, Sir Hugh held the buck by the antlers, till he himself despatched him with the whinyard. “But, my dear young friend,” he said, “there is a story, that above all concerns you. Perhaps you may not be

aware of the paction entered into, on our words of honour, that our families should be united, provided the one possessed a son, and the other a daughter?"

It may easily be supposed, the effect which this disclosure had on the heart of the young knight, for never, till that moment, had he been made aware of the existence of such an agreement; and he knew too well the character of old Lord De Borthwick, to conceive him capable of jesting on such a subject. He was completely overtaken unawares, and at a loss what to think; for however rash he might deem his parent, for having become a party to such an unnatural agreement, yet did he hold his memory in such reverence, as to reckon any act of disobedience on his own part not only unallowable, but sacrilegious. Then rose the form of fair Lilian to the eye of his mind; and he was tossed in a sea of troubles. Could he think of abandoning one so beautiful in form, and so pure in heart; whose affections he had wooed, and won; and who was willing to leave all, and follow his fortunes! He wist not what to think, for well he knew, that, backed by the

whole host of his relations, Lord De Borthwick would call upon him to redeem the pledge, which had been sacredly given. So when, next morning, he bade farewell to the party of the old baron, at the gate facing towards his town of Ormiston, he shook him cordially by the hand, saying,—“ Would to Heaven your discovery of yesterday had been made to me somewhat earlier, my Lord ; nevertheless, I shall endeavour in all things to conduct myself as becometh a real and spotless knight ; and, as in all things I have been solicitous to follow the dictations of him, who hath gone to a better world, so far as honourably in me lies, his will in this matter also shall not be forgotten.”

Chafed in his mind, and depressed in spirit, finding it impossible to reconcile this contest between honour and duty that now followed; it is easier to imagine than describe the state into which the gallant young knight was thrown. A few restless days, and almost phrenzied nights, passed over him, and driven to the verge of despair, he at length determined to unbosom himself to Lilian, and abide by her decision, whatever that might be. On the one hand, he

was called upon to ratify the paction of a father whom he tenderly loved in life ; whose memory he revered, and whose wishes commanded his most implicit regard ; but to verify the old adage about “ the course of true love,” &c. these wishes could not be fulfilled without doing violence to his most deeply-cherished feelings, and injustice to her who had exchanged vows of mutual affection, and whose loveliness and virtue tended so greatly to enhance the magnitude of the sacrifice.

No sooner, however, was the noble-hearted Lilian made aware of what had been disclosed, than she heroically forestalled him in his application ; and whatever the resolution might have cost her, she bore up against the threatened troubles, and suffered not her sorrows to appear. She wrote to him a long epistle, conjuring him, by the sincerity of the love he had once professed, to cherish hope no longer—to forget that such a being as herself existed, and faithfully to obey the sacred duty he owed to the memory of his beloved parent. “ In me,” she added, “ you might have found a humble follower of your fortunes, but not such

a wife as the high blood of Seaton calls for, and your merits claim. Think not of it—think not of me one moment longer. Unless you consider my nature to be as base as my origin is obscure—unless you wish me to believe that Sir David Seaton can prefer his own selfish gratifications to the high and holy commands, ratified by the honour of a parent, and entailed on him as a sacred duty to obey, you will see me no longer, nor venture to delude mine ear, or your own heart with vain sophisms. The die is cast. Farewell for ever! let our next meeting be in Heaven. While I live, my prayers for your welfare and happiness shall duly ascend; and when I die, I shall—'tis the only earthly recompence I demand—I shall expect that you shed a single tear into my closing grave.

“For the last time, farewell, farewell! and remember this, that had you not been true to the injunctions of your father, you never could have been true to me. Should you consider my poor loss as at all a sacrifice, console yourself with the truth that filial piety demanded it. Secure from the tumults of the vain world, my days—and may they be few!—will glide over

in peace, and, from thoughts dedicated to Heaven, the only earthly claim will be my constant prayer that Sir David Seaton and the wife of his bosom be happy and prosperous !”

Terrible was the struggle between love and duty in the bosom of our hero ; and had the extremest danger that ever mortal heroism encountered, been sufficient to have given him a chance of extricating himself from his difficulty, most gladly would he have encountered the peril. But, on the one side, lay his heart and his vow ; on the other side, an obligation, which his holiest feelings shamed him to regard. The dead could not arise to cancel this command ; but the living had heroically left him, not only free, but had strenuously urged its fulfilment. What could he do ? After allowing his heart to be almost rent asunder, he at length submitted to the solicitations of his relatives ; and may it be added, of his still too dear Lilian ;—conscious of the awful sacrifice she was making for his sake, in voluntarily devoting her blooming years to a heartless nunnery ; and that, in ratifying his father’s paction, he was sacrificing all his chances of earthly

happiness, by uniting himself to a woman he had scarcely ever beheld.

V.

It is a hard thing to go a-wooing against the will, and to make those lip-professions, which the heart has little share in. But circumstances reduced young Sir David Seaton to this dilemma; and after having paid formally due court to Margery the elder daughter of the house of Borthwick, marriage matters were soon arranged, the bridal day appointed, and magnificent preparations made for celebrating the union of two such powerful families. Could credit be attached to traditional report, such a display of grandeur and magnificence had seldom been witnessed in this country: many of the nobility, with suitable attendance, convening together, in honour of the joyous festival, from remote quarters; lord, lady, waiting-page, guard, and squire of low degree, bedizened out in all the gorgeous extravagance of the times, with gold on gown and doublet, down even to the bits of

their bridle-reins, and the housings of their saddles. So that for some days anterior to the expected ceremony, arrival after arrival caused the halls of Borthwick to overflow, and added to the cheer of wine and wassail.

On the arrival of the cavalcade in attendance on the bridegroom, the whole party sat down to a grand *dejeuné*, in which, according to the fashion of the times, more substantial viands were mingled with rich wines, delicious fruits, confections, and lighter articles of fare; and remained at board till near mid-day, the appointed hour of the marriage-ceremony, which was to be performed in the chapel of the castle, by the holy abbot of Seaton, who had accompanied his relative and patron.

Attended by the ladies of the party, Lady de Borthwick had previously to this retired, to observe that every thing had been fittingly ordered, and to exhibit her magnificent arrangements. The admiration of all was, however, particularly elicited, on surveying the decorations and furnitures of the bridal chamber. The walls were gorgeously covered with the finest

arras tapestry, and the floors were carpeted with stuffs of the most superb Turkish manufacture. Censers, full of the most rare exotics, distributed their incense around ; and the hangings of the couch were purple satin, looped up with tasselage of gold. In short, nothing could be added, even in fancy, to the superb magnificence of the place, which resembled more the enchanted bower of an oriental tale, than a habitation destined to be occupied by two beings, inhaling the breath of frail mortality. So the maidens and waiting-women, who stood lining the passages as old Lady Jemima and her train passed along, expecting praise for this tasteful exertion of their handywork, and, peradventure, largess from her guests, were not baffled in their expectations : but, in a few moments, a wild scream summoned the whole posse to attendance on their mistress.

And what, it will immediately be asked, caused this so sudden alarm of the old lady ? It was this :—On pulling aside the silken curtains of the couch, to display an embroidered coverlet, in which her maternal pride especially delighted, she beheld, spread over it,

the identical bandekine, or eastern mantle, which was around the shoulders of her little Lilian, when she had disappeared for ever ! She could not mistake it, for its peer was scarcely to be found within the three Lothians ; having been brought from Constantinople by a Jewish merchant, on order of Queen Margaret, by whom it was presented to Lady de Borthwick, as a birth-gift, at the baptism of her younger daughter. Externally it was of the finest scarlet velvet, starred over with gems and gold ; and, on the inside, lined with furs of the rarest.

Alarmed at this sudden and inexplicable indisposition of their hostess, the ladies crowded around her, and supported her from sinking on the floor, by bearing her away to a seat.

“ What is the matter, what is the matter ? ” eagerly inquired they all, as they hung around her, unlacing her boddice, and throwing open the casements for fresh air.

“ The mantle,—the mantle ! ”—was all she was able to exclaim ; and then fainted away.

“ It was I,” said a stranger, stepping forth from the band of maidens, and putting aside

the white veil in which her head and shoulders were shrouded. "Oh, heavens! what have I done. In my simple way, I intended a peace-offering, and lo! I have brought anguish." The eyes of the whole group were instantly turned upon her. Never had any one beheld a countenance more radiantly beautiful—and no one had ever seen it before.

Lilian had always known that her fate was wrapt in darkness, but she had long given up the hope, that the mystery of her origin was ever to be developed. She was now, however, as one on whom a meteor-light flashes at midnight; and she felt as if the moment had arrived, when the riddle was likely to be solved. But let us turn a little back, and account for the unexpected appearance of the fair foundling at this time and place.

VI.

Nature is above all; and, though its dictates may be stifled, they can never be eradicated, for in them we live, and move, and have our being. Lilian was doomed to acquiesce in the

truth of this apothegm, when, in the solitude of the convent, she heard of the day fixed for the union of the houses of Borthwick and Seaton. In the enthusiasm of her passion, she had reckoned on having nobly subdued all selfish considerations, and triumphed in the resolution which had taught her to sacrifice the chances of her own happiness at the shrine of the man she loved. Though yet but on the verge of womanhood, with a sunshining world beckoning to enjoyment, she had acquired fortitude enough to let herself be shut out from its pleasures; “but surely,” thought she to herself, “now when I know that to him I am as I had never been—that the marriage-day is fixed, and the heart and hand of Sir David Seaton devoted to another—it may be allowed me for a moment to look on the happiness I cannot share, and call a silent blessing down on the heads of the bridegroom and his bride.” When the heart is willing to be led, slender is the sophism that will convince it; and, satisfied with the purity and innocence of her motives, the seemingly stoical, but, in sad truth, disconsolate Lilian, secretly bade adieu to the walls of Colding-

hame-convent ; and by such a bribe to the handmaidens of Borthwick as her slender means admitted, she gained access as an assistant in the preparations for the marriage ceremony. She had arrived on the evening before ; and when, on the morning of the bridal, the last finishing was given to the gorgeous chamber, she lingered for a moment behind the rest, and, dashing aside a hasty tear, spread out above the coverlet her magnificent childish mantle—'twas all on earth she had to give—and departed.

All that she now lingered for was a parting glance at the happy pair, before she shut out the world and its feelings from her for ever ; when the accident happened which led to this digression.

“ It was I,” said Lilian, stepping modestly forward, almost trembling at the notice she had drawn upon herself, and at the turbulence of emotion she had excited without knowing how.

“ And, in Heaven’s name, who art thou ?” asked Lady de Borthwick, recovering from her swoon, as she anxiously rose from her chair, and came forward to scrutinize her features.

“ It must be—it must be she,” she exclaimed. “ I see—feel—know it all. The same bright flaxen hair, the same bright blue eyes, the straight nose, and the small mouth of the line of De Borthwick. It is—it is my own, my dear, long-lost Lilian !” and with these words, in an agony of parental tenderness, she rushed forward, and threw her arms around her neck, as she clasped her to her bosom.

The news spread like wildfire through the castle, and all were electrified to hear that, in one of the bower-maidens, Lady de Borthwick had discovered her long-lost child. It was no time for ceremonials, and there was a general rush of exultation towards the bridal chamber ; nor among the last was Sir David Seaton, from whose cheek the sunshine even of a bridal-day had been scarcely sufficient to drive the clouds.

“ Where is she—where is my affianced sister ?” said he, as he made his way through the crowd. Lilian was at the moment standing with her back towards the entrance-door, and the tones of his voice thrilled through every nerve, making her feel as if she could have shrunk into the earth with agitation and de-

light ; but as Sir David stepped forward to embrace her, she turned half round, lifted up her eyes, and her look indicated what could not be expressed.

Ancient romancers would have called in some mysterious operation of the laws of nature to assist the lovers on such an occasion ; but if, like Niobe of old, Sir David was not actually metamorphosed into a statue, it may of a verity be declared that he looked like one. He stood absorbed in amazement—his brain whirled round, and all about him seemed but the phantasma of a perplexing dream. At length, heaving a deep sigh, and leaning his brow on his hand,—

“ Ah, Lilian, Lilian,” he said, “ how unworthy am I of thy regard or commiseration. Thou hast rescued me from a gulph of perdition and disgrace ! Had my regard to honour been as pure as thy affection has been devoted, less had been my compunction and self-abasement at this hour. As it is, for the regard I bear, and have borne to thee, I will live single, or wed none other. I have tarnished the fair name of Seaton, and will leave this land for ever !”

If the astonishment of the group had been formerly great, it was now carried to an inexplicable pitch; for not only was the acquaintance of Sir David Seaton with the fair stranger acknowledged, but his love for her also made manifest. How matters should terminate was not quite so plain.

“Not so fast,” exclaimed Sir Gregory de Murray, when Sir David had made an end of speaking, “Heaven orders all for the best, though man is oft-times so froward in thwarting its purposes, and, in this matter, let us acknowledge the interposition of a particular providence. I trust the occasion will prove one of unmingled enjoyment to all; and that those who have been long united in heart shall now in hand be also united. But let us adjourn from this scene of confusion to the hall.”

When all the party were arranged round Sir Gregory de Murray in the hall, he continued his address. He said, that “with all respect to the living and the dead, he could not but consider the affiancing of children, yet unborn, as at best unnatural, even though dictated by the best and purest motives; as, though hands

might be in their power to bestow, it did not follow that they could transfer hearts along with them."

"My Lord and Lady de Borthwick," he added, turning to and addressing them, "when, after wooing the affections of your fair daughter Margery, I sued for her hand, your courteous answer informed me, that had not this obstacle stood in the way of our alliance, none other could have possibly obstructed it. Luckily it is now in our power to rectify such an unfortunate mistake. That obstacle is now to be removed. Though, woe me, my fair cousin hath come forward to-day decked out as the bride of another, I can forgive, nay, admire this exertion of filial duty; and, if still I hold respect in the eyes of my once plighted, and still too dear, fair friend—"

"Nay, hold, more than enough, my gallant knight," said old Lord de Borthwick, "I have felt deeply, trust me, the injustice of depriving you of your lady-love, and my daughter of the object of her choice. But the long-plighted vow—the long-plighted vow—how could I get over it? Thanks be to Heaven, that has not

only afforded a remedy, but that in the restoration of my long-lost child. Margery, come forth, my sweetest, and acknowledge if you are dissatisfied with the change?" Margery was handed forth, but a deep blush was her only answer, and not an ineloquent one.

Sir David Seaton then gallantly stepped forward, and, taking hold of her hand, placed it within that of Sir Gregory de Murray. "I have been the unfortunate, though, I assure you, unsuspecting cause of impeding a union which I pray Heaven to bless. To you, Sir Gregory, I relinquish all claims—I resign the hand, and the heart, something tells me, you have already won."

The Abbot of Seaton was now summoned in to proceed with, what he had no expectations of, a double ceremonial, which he confessed seemed brought about as by an especial interposition of Providence.

"Thanks, holy Father," said Sir David, "for your kind good-will." Then, turning towards Lady de Borthwick, he added, "But, my Lady de Borthwick, I fear you will reckon me cruel. You have, but now, recovered a long-

lost child, and I would, even on the instant, deprive you of her. What says mine own injured Lilian?"

Lilian said nothing, but casting her eyes on the ground, let silence tell all that was necessary.

At the altar of the little chapel stood a double pair, and over the shoulders of Lilian, her mother threw the scarlet mantle, which was destined to have exercised such remarkable powers over her fortune, saying,—

“With that scarlet mantle I lost a daughter, and now—”

Sir David Seaton concluded the sentence by adding,—

“By that same scarlet mantle I have won a bride.”

THE UNGUARDED HOUR.

BY JOHN GALT.

Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud
Without our special wonder !

Macbeth.

MANY proverbial expressions are founded on experience. "The unguarded hour" is one of them ; and it has become so common, that few of those who oftenest employ it, are aware of the mystery to which it alludes. It conveys the belief, that mankind are each protected by a supernal guardian. It implies, also, that the

angel at times quits his post, and that in the interim, "the unguarded hour," the defenceless mortal is liable to be assailed by the insidious temptations of the universal adversary. Whether this impressive thesis be an hypothesis, or an apocalypse, it baffles the human understanding. It cannot be rejected as altogether earthly, and of mortal imagination, nor accepted as divine and of celestial descent. But it is not my present purpose to examine the evidence on either side; I have only to describe a series of seeming accidents, calculated to enforce the doctrine, by the circumstances in which their advent took place, and to awaken at once solemnity, wonder, and dread.

"Many years ago," said a friend, "when detained by indisposition in a small village in Hungary, a discovery was one morning made, by which the superstition of the simple inhabitants was greatly excited. It had been a custom, from time immemorial, when the judge in office travelled through the country, to dispense justice, that as often as he came to Panigstein, and I believe it was only once in a course of the cycle of the moon, every nineteen years, and at the

change, that he held a free assize in the open air, near the Martyrs' Cross, an ancient monument which stands alone on the solitude of the moor, at the distance of a bow-shot or more from the church. The cause of this venerable ceremony being held at that particular spot, was never satisfactorily explained, but it originated either in a prediction which had been delivered by the martyr, or on some incident connected with his doom. On every occasion, when the Court was held at this spot, the inhabitants were summoned, in the name of Heaven, to harken to the list of offenders which the magistrate of the district openly placed in the hands of the judge, and all such as could bear witness to aught regarding them, were commanded to come forward and do so.

“ Although then but in shattered health, this remarkable ceremony, which chanced while I was at Panigstein, induced me to be present among the crowd of spectators when the judge was expected to arrive. The day was grey and silent ; the sun was not invisible, but his dim orb hung in the firmament with an obscure lack-lustre sickliness, and all the landscape, and every

living thing, seemed overcast and dejected. The ensigns of judgment which marked the place of administration, added to the solemnity of the scene; and the magistrate, to augment the gloom, had ordered a lofty new and black gallows to be raised at a little distance from where the benches and table for the court had been constructed.

“ Among other impressive customs connected with the free assize, is one of unknown antiquity. The magistrate, in preparing the list of offenders for the judge, is not allowed to divulge to any person the names of the criminals intended to be accused; and it is alleged, that this has a religious influence on the morals of the people, no one being aware how his conduct may have been noted, nor of what he may be found charged with in the list. The crisis is, in consequence, very awful to all. On the occasion when I was there, it was not anticipated that any particular crime would be divulged, and it was thought rather odd that the magistrate should have ordered the gallows to be erected; indeed, in the opinion of the people, the calendar was clear, so peaceful and free from all violence

had been the country from the former assize, nineteen years previous.

“ The magistrate I knew very well ; he had sometimes invited me to his house ; was a gentleman in great esteem with the immediate villagers. From small beginnings, he had raised an ample fortune, was famed for the strictest integrity, and distinguished for great benevolence and a holy purity of life. It was thought by many that there was some degree of affectation in his singular piety, for in his youth he had been less austere, and he had put on his sanctity somewhat suddenly, in consequence of an event which, though distressing in itself, could not be said to affect him more than any other in the town.

“ It was a murder committed exactly nineteen years before the very morning when the assize was held. No trace of the assassin had been discovered, and that circumstance, together with the worth of the victim, had produced a strong impression on every one ; but on none more than this magistrate, whose faithful servant the victim had long been. The crime was mysterious, for the man was poor, and it excited universal sur-

prise that one who, in his condition, had been so much respected, should ever have provoked a doom so sudden and inexplicable. Time had greatly mitigated the recollection of the occurrence ; it was almost forgotten by every body but by the widow, and the charitable master, who, with his family, constantly endeavoured to soften, with unavailing sympathy, her grief. She, however, became old and crazed, and, when pointed out to me, was a spectacle of extreme misery. She was standing near the Martyrs' Cross, against which, owing to my weakness, I was then leaning, and, although she appeared sullen, and perusing the ground, I observed her eyes vividly glancing with supernatural vigilance. She was as something wild and fierce, ready to leap upon its prey, and watching for the moment. But I had not much time to notice her, for the sound of trumpets proclaimed the approach of the magistrate, attended by his officers, and soon after a movement in the multitude also announced the coming of the judge.

“ When he had taken his seat on the judicial bench, and the lawyers had placed themselves at the table, the trumpet sounded a solemn peal

three times, and the magistrate, with a roll in his hand, advanced. At the same instant the widow rushed, with a shriek like the oracular Pythia in her extacy, and placed herself at the side of the magistrate, as he presented the roll to the judge. The multitude was silent, and I felt as if the functions of my breathing were suspended.

“ ‘The judge rose, and standing up, unrolled the paper, which, with an audible voice, and religious thankfulness, he declared was clear.

“ ‘No, no,’ cried the impassioned and vehement widow, ‘it is not so, it has not my husband’s death.’

“ ‘True!’ exclaimed the magistrate, ‘I have forgotten it,—the deed was done so long ago, nineteen years ago—how was it possible I could forget the unguarded hour?’

“ ‘The words were repeated by every voice I believe in the multitude in succession, and the sound was fearful. ‘The unguarded hour?’ said the judge to himself, looking towards the magistrate calmly, as if the question had scarcely more meaning than when uttered in echo by the crowd.

“ ‘ Yes,’ cried the widow aloud, ‘ his guardian angel was then away,’ and she concluded, by accusing the magistrate, her own benefactor, and the gracious master of her deceased husband, as the murderer.

“ ‘ She has been long, almost ever since the fatal event, in a state of insanity,’ said the magistrate to the judge; and turning to his officers, bade them take the helpless creature away.

“ ‘ I will not go,—I will have justice,’ she exclaimed, wrestling with the officers, as they attempted to remove her. The crowd remained as if frozen into silence.

“ ‘ Good woman,’ said the judge compassionately,—‘ you know not what you say.’

“ ‘ I do, I do: let me be heard,’ was her wild reply; and the multitude in the same instant cried out, ‘ let her be heard—let her be heard.’

“ ‘ This is a vexatious business,’ said the judge to the magistrate, ‘ for the charter by which the assize is held at this place, obliges me to receive the charge, and I cannot depart from its ordinances, nor is her evident insanity a valid

reason to reject the accusation. Good woman, why do you persist in this extravagance: there is no evidence to sustain the charge?"

" 'There is, if you will listen,' she impatiently again cried, and with earnest gestures and surprising eloquence, endeavoured by innumerable coincidences, that she had remarked in the conduct of the magistrate, to shew the grounds of her sudden suspicion.

" During the whole time that she continued speaking, the spectators listened with the greediest ears, and before she had finished her impassioned appeal, it was manifest that they were all convinced that the magistrate was indeed the murderer. The judge listened to all she said with intense attention, but the accused maintained his wonted equanimity. I was astonished that he could do so, for some of her reasons, though far from probability, were of the most touching and pathetic kind; doubtless all she said was void of evidence; still, however, it was fearfully impressive, and I could not myself withstand its energy. When she had rather exhausted her strength, than finished what she had to say, the judge replied solemnly,

“ ‘Protect us, Heaven, from having aught to conceal from such vigilance—this is thy work, and comes not within the possibilities of human law! There is reason, according to the charter, that a regular trial should be proceeded with, and therefore let the indictment be prepared.’

“ The feelings of the multitude were excited to the utmost, and took utterance in a loud shout, not of joy or of gladness, but a deep, solemn, and awful sound, whose might and majesty were portentously increased by the distant low hollow echo of the hills. The accused stood a statue of consternation for a moment. I looked at him with indescribable emotion, but the paleness which overspread his complexion vanished, and he appeared as serene and self-collected as before.

“ While the papers were being written, I observed the judge speaking to the poor woman, and I heard him sympathizingly inquire respecting the age of her husband, his general appearance, and the manner in which he was dressed, to which she gave brief but distinct answers, as if the living presence of the murder-

ed man had been seen actually before her. She was, however, impatient at the judge's questions, and answered him peevishly, forgetting the respect due to his dignity ; indeed the questions, at the time, seemed to me frivolous, I could not discern their propriety, nor why so grave an officer, the representative of the emperor and king, should so far lose all consciousness of the place and the occasion, as to speak to her in the manner he was doing. He asked, for example, the colour of her husband's hair, and she answered black, and that he wore his cap gallantly doffed ; then after some other inquiries as insignificant, he spoke of his coat, and the colour of it, but she lost temper, and after telling him it was blue and his vest red, entreated he would not probe her wounded remembrance with matters of that kind.

“ In the meantime the magistrate was engaged with an advocate who was perfectly convinced, and so expressed himself, that the trial would soon be safely over. Altogether the scene was most singular, but the passion of the crowd was become appalling, and I was fearful lest the magistrate should be made the victim of some

outrage Himself calm, and certain that no evidence could sully him, he was yet visibly disturbed ; and I saw him once or twice start, and shudder—no doubt amazed, that such a delirious accusation should have been so strangely imagined against him.

“ When all the requisite forms were completed, he was directed to place himself at the bar ; and the judge, according to the charter, called him by name to answer to God, who was there present, for the crime of which he was accused. At that moment, and before he could reply, the sun darted a bright and golden ray upon the forehead of the judge, and made it shine as if he had been crowned with a halo. All the spectators were witnesses to this glorious symbol ; and I could scarcely control my trembling limbs, so much did it shake my whole frame.

“ The accused was evidently affected, but he had such mastery of himself, that he answered with firmness, ‘ NOT GUILTY.’

“ A pause of some time ensued, and then the widow was requested to come forward with her

evidence. She advanced, and suddenly cried, 'I have but these tears.'

"The advocate with whom the accused had been consulting, rose, and animadverting on the insanity of the charge, demanded an acquittal.

" 'Stop,' said the judge solemnly, 'the order and provisions of the charter have not yet been all fulfilled—bid the trumpets sound thrice.'

"The silence of the multitude was dreadful; the trumpets sounded, and the judge, rising from his seat, reverentially uncovered his hoary head, and said, with a voice of the lowliest humility—

" 'Heaven, send forth thy witness.'

"I looked at the dismayed prisoner; he was pale, but serene. The judge then resumed his seat, and the advocate again rose—

" 'I demand,' said he, 'the acquittal of the accused.'

"Another short pause ensued, and the judge rising, cast his sight to a distance, and said—

" 'Make way for the witness.'

“ ‘What witness!’ cried the prisoner, in visible trepidation.

“ ‘That man in the blue coat—he with his cap on the one side—make way for him—he with the red waistcoat.’

“ ‘It is himself that comes,’ cried the widow with an exulting shout ; and all the spectators looked back towards the spot where they expected to behold the witness, but they saw no one ; and when they had again turned their eyes to the bar, the accused had fainted. This confirmed the amazed spectators, and the judge knelt down with devotion, and, raising his hands to Heaven, prayed and did homage to divine justice. The wretched criminal was left lying on the ground, for all present at the same moment uncovered their heads, and with tears and awe joined in worship with the judge. A more affecting scene was never witnessed ; and when the adoration was ended, the guilty man, awakened from his trance, rose, and confessed the crime.

“ ‘I seek not mercy,’ said he, ‘I have enjoyed it too long—yet my offence is not of an atrocious dye—it was but a hasty blow. Yes,

the hand of Heaven is so visible here, that I dare not ask remission, even if my hidden misery were not punishment enough—there, take me—be now no more delay. The gallows is ready, and mercy dare not in this place contend with justice.’ ”



THE CHEATERIE PACKMAN.

BY LEITCH RITCHIE.*

The beings of the mind are not of clay.

BYRON.

It was yet pretty early in the morning when I arrived at the inn of Skreigh, and never having been in that part of the country before, my heart misgave me at the appearance of the house, and I thought that surely I had mistaken the road, an awful idea to a man who had walked twelve miles before breakfast! It was a huge, grey, dismantled edifice, standing alone

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in a wild country, and presenting evident traces of a time when the *bawbees* of the traveller might have procured him lodgings within its walls for a longer period than suited his convenience. On entering the parlour, although the “base uses” to which this ancient mansion had returned were clearly indicated by certain gill-stoups scattered about the dirty tables, yet the extraordinary size of the room, the lowness of the walls, and the scantiness of the furniture, kept up in my mind the associations which had been suggested by the exterior; and it was not till the aroma of tea, and the still more “fragrant lunt” of a Finnan haddie had saluted my senses, that the visions of the olden time fled from my eyes.

While busy with my breakfast, another traveller came into the room. He had a pack on his back and an ell-wand in his hand, and appeared to be one of those travelling philanthropists—answering to the pedlars of the south—who carry into the holes and corners of the sylvan world the luxuries of the city. Our scene being on the *best* side of the Tweed, I need not say that the body had a sharp eye, an

oily face, and a God-fearing look. He sat down over against me, upon one of the tables, to rest his pack, and from his shining shoes and orderly apparel, I judged that he had passed the night in the house, and was waiting to pay his score, and fare forth again upon his journey. There was, notwithstanding, a singular expression of fatigue on his yellow countenance. A common observer would have guessed that he had been brim-*fou* over night, and had risen before he had quite slept off the effects; but to me, who am curious in such matters, there appeared a something in his face which invested with a moral dignity an expression that would otherwise have been ludicrous or pitiable.

Ever and anon he turned a longing eye upon the Finnan haddie, but as often edged himself with a jerk farther away from the temptation; and whenever the landlady came into the room, his remonstrances on her delay, at first delivered in a moaning, heart-broken tone, became at last absolutely cankered. The honest wife, however, appeared determined to extend the hospitality of breakfast to her guest, and made

sundry lame excuses for not “bringing ben his score,” while she was occupied in displaying upon my table, with the most tempting liberality, the various good things that constitute a Scottish breakfast.

“Are you not for breakfasting, good man,” said I, at length, “before you go forth this morning?”

“No, please God,” said he, with almost a jump, “no carnal comfort shall pass my lips on this side the mill of Warlock!”

“The mill of Warlock!” repeated I, with surprise, “that should be at least twelve miles from this—and I can tell you, my friend, it is not pleasant travelling so far on an empty stomach. If you have any urgent reason for an abstinence that we of the kirk of Scotland attach no merit to, you should not have loitered in bed till this hour of the morning.”

The packman, at my reproof, put on a kind of *blate* look, but his features gathering gradually into solemnity—

“Sir,” said he, “I *have* urgent reasons for my conduct, and while this weary wife is

making out my score, I will, if you desire it, tell you the story." Having eagerly signified my assent, the packman wiped his glistening forehead, and with a heavy sigh began to discourse as follows:—

"Aweel, Sir—it was at this time yesterday morning I arrived at the mill of Warlock. The miller was out, and his wife, glad of the opportunity, rampauged over my pack like one demented. She made me turn out every article in my aught, and kept me bargaining about this and that, and flyting by the hour about the price; and after all it came to pass that the jaud (God forgive me!) wanted naething of more value than three ells of ribbon! You may be sure that I was not that pleased; and what with fatigue, and what with my vexation, while I was measuring the ribbon, and the wife sklanting round at the looking-glass, I just clipped—by mistake like—a half ell short. Aweel, ye'll say that was just naething after the fash I had had, and moreover I stoutly refused the second glass of whiskey she offered me to the douroch; and so, shouldering

my pack again, I took the way in an evil hour, to the Inn of Skreigh.

“ It was late at night when I arrived here, and I had been on my legs all day, so that you may think my heart warmed to the auld biggin, and I looked forward to naething waur than a cozy seat by the ingle-side, or chat with the landlady—a douce woman, Sir, and not ay so slow as the now, foul fa’ her ! (God forgive me !) forbye, maybe, a half mutchin—or twa : and all these things of a truth I had. Not that I exceeded the second stoup, a practice which I hold to be *contra bonos mores*—but ye’ll no understand Latin ? ye’ll be from the south ? Aweel—but there was something mair, ye ken, quite as necessary for a Christian traveller and a wearied man ; and at last, with a great gaunt, I speered at the serving hizzie for my bed-room.

“ ‘ Bed-room,’ quo’ she, ‘ ye’ll no be ganging to sleep here the night ?’

“ ‘ Atweel,’ said the mistress, ‘ I am unco wae, but every room in the house is fu. Hout ! it’s but a step to the town—no abune twal miles and a bittock—and ye ken every inch of

the way as weel as the brass nails on your ellwand.' I wish I may be forgi'en for the passion they put me intill ! To think of sending me out such a gait my lane, and near the sma' hours !

“ ‘ O ye jaud ! ’ cried I, ‘ if the gudeman was no in the yird the night, ye would crawl till a different tune ! ’ and with that such a hulloaloo was raised amang us, that at last the folks began to put in their shouthers at the door in their sarks to speer what was the matter.

“ ‘ Aweel, aweel, ’ said the landlady, in the hinder end, quite forfaughten, ‘ a wilfu’ man maun hae his way. There is but ae room in the house where there is no a living soul, and it’s naething but an auld lumber-room. However, if you can pass the time with another half mutchin while Jenny and me rig up the bed, it will be as much at your service as a decenter place.’ And so, having gotten the battle, I sat myself down again, and Jenny brought in the other stoup—ye’ll be saying that was the third ; but there’s nae rule without an exception, and moreover ye ken, ‘ three’s ay canny.’

“ At last and at length I got into my bed-

room, and it was no that ill-looking at all. It was a good sizable room, with a few sticks of old furniture, forbye a large old-fashioned bed. I laid my pack down, as is my custom, by the bed-side, and after saying my prayers, put out the candle and tumbled in.

“Aweel, Sir, whether it was owing to my being over fatigued, or to the third stoup in defiance of the proverb being no canny, I know not, but for the life of me I could not sleep. The bed was not a bad bed, it was roomy and convenient, and there was not a whish in the house, and not a stime of light in the room. I counted over my bargains for the day, and half wished I had not made the mistake with the miller’s wife; I put my hand out at the stock of the bed and felt my pack, amusing myself by thinking what was this lump and that; but still I could not sleep. Then by degrees my other senses, as well as the touch, wearied of being awake and doing nothing—fiend tak them—(God forgive me!) sought employment. I listened, as if in spite of myself, to hear whether there was any thing stirring in the house, and looked out of the

curtains to see if any light came through the window chinks. Not a whish—not a stime ! Then I said my prayers over again, and began to wish grievously that the creature had her half ell of ribbon. Then my nose must needs be in the hobble, and I thought I felt a smell. It was not that bad a smell, but it was a smell I did not know, and therefore did not like. The air seemed close—feverish ; I threw off the bed-clothes, and began to puff and pant. Oh, I did wish then that I had never seen the physiog of the miller's wife !

“ I began to be afraid. The entire silence seemed strange, the utter darkness more strange, and the strange smell stranger than all. I at first grasped at the bed-clothes, and pulled them over my head ; but I had bottled in the smell with me, and, rendered intolerable by the heat, it seemed like the very essence of typhus. I threw off the clothes again in a fright, and felt persuaded that I was just in the act of taking some awful fever. I would have given the world to have been able to rise and open the window, but the world would have been offered me in vain to do such a thing.

I contented myself with flapping the sheet like a fan, and throwing my arms abroad to catch the wind.

“My right hand, which was towards the stock of the bed, constantly lighted upon my pack, but my left could feel naething at all, save that there was a space between the bed and the wall. At last, leaning more over in that direction than heretofore, my hand encountered something a little lower than the surface of the bed, and I snatched it back with a smothered cry. I knew no more than the man in the moon what the something was, but it sent a tingle through my frame, and I felt the sweat begin to break over my brow. I would have turned to the other side, but I felt as heavy to my own muscles as if I had been made of lead; and besides, a fearful curiosity nailed me to the spot. I persuaded myself that it was from this part of the bed that the smell arose. Soon, however, with a sudden desperation, I plunged my hand again into the terrible abyss, and it rested upon a cauld, stiff, clammy face !

“Now, Sir, I would have you to ken, that although I cannot wrestle with the hidden sym-

pathies of nature, I am not easily frightened. If the stoutest robber that ever wore breeks—ay, or ran bare, for there be such in the Hielands, was to lay a finger on my pack, I would haud on like grim death ; and it is not to tell, that I can flyte about ae bawbee with the dourest wife in the country-side ; but och, and alas ! to see me at that moment, on the braid of my back, with my eyes shut, my teeth set, and one hand on the physiog of a corp ! The greatest pain I endured was from the trembling of my body, for the motion forced my hand into closer connection with the horrors of its resting-place ; while I had no more power to withdraw it than if it had been in the thumb-screws.

“ And there I lay, Sir, with my eyes steeked, as if with screw-nails, my brain wandering and confused, and whole rivers of sweat spouting down my body, till at times I thought I had got fou, and was lying sleeping in a ditch. To tell you the history of my thoughts at that time is impossible ; but the miller’s wife, woe be upon her ! she rode me like the night-hag. I think I must have been asleep a part of the time, for I imagined that the wearisome half ell

of ribbon was tied about my neck, like a halter, and that I was on the eve of being choked. I ken not how long I tholed this torment ; but at last I heard voices and sounds, as if the sheriffs' officers of hell were about me, and in a sudden agony of great fear, I opened my eyes.

“ It was broad morning ; the sun was shining into the room ; and the landlady and her lasses were riving my hand from the face of the corpse. After casting a bewildered glance around, it was on that fearful object my eyes rested, and I recognised the remains of an old serving lass, who it seems died the day before, and was huddled into that room, to be out of the way of the company.”

At this moment the landlady entered the room with his score, and while the packman sat wiping his brow, entered upon her defence.

“ Ye ken, Sir,” said she, “ that ye *wad* sleep in the house, and a wilfu' man maun hae his way ; but gin ye had lain still, like an honest body, wi' a clean conscience, and no gaen ram-paunging about wi' your hands where ye had no business, the feint a harm it would hae done ye !” The packman only answered with a

glance of ire, as he thundered down the bawbees upon the table, and turning one last look upon the Finnan haddie, groaned deeply, and went forth upon his journey.

THE BOGLE O' THE BRAE.

A QUEER COURTING STORY.

BY THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

A fearful light shot past my een,
And stifled voices gaffed ;
Then a glowring bogle grinn'd at me,
I shook wi' fright, and swarf'd.
So I'll gang nae mair a courting,
A courting in the night ;
And I'll gang nae mair a courting,
Though the moon be shining bright.
—So I'll gang nae mair a courting.

Scraps.

“ AFTER a', Jock, I think we shouldnae gang to the courting the night.”

“ Weel, that beats a' that I ever heard ! after trysting me to come sae far ! I am sure the project was nane o' mine, but ane o' your making

up, an' I wad like to ken what has happened that has made you alter your mind sae strangely."

"Why the truth is then, Jock, that I hae been hearing tell o' some dashing young chaps, wha hae lately been visiting the lassie o' the Brae, an' therefore I'm no that unco sure about them. I hae nae muckle time to lissen to lasses that gentlemen are aye hingin' about."

"Daft gowk! Heard ever ony body sic a silly insinuation? It is a little-worth bargain in the market that there are naebody looking after but yoursel', an' to take a distaste at a lass because another admires her, appears to me to be rather against nature. Lasses were made to be admired an' courtit. They ken that, an' they like it. In fact, they have nae power to resist it, for if they were ever sae averse to the company o' gentlemen, they canna, in common civility, prevent their visits, an' just barefacedly bid them gang about their business an' no come back again. Na, na, Davie, siccan whimsies winna do. It will only make them a wee the waur to court, an' we'll hae the mair fun in winning them to oursels. For as to doubting

the genuine virtue and purity o' the lasses o' the Brae, I could just as soon doubt my own idiosincracy."

"Eh? Your own ideo—what? Plague on ye wi' your lang words an' far langer speeches! But after a', Jock, I think we *should not* gang to the courting the night."

"Weel an' I think we *should* gang; an' I am determined to gang mysel whether you gang or no. I dinna understand this change! What for do ye lay sic an emphasis on should not? I hope it isna the bogle you are alluding to?"

"You have heard tell o't, then?"

"To be sure I have. But do you think I'm such a fool as to believe in a nonentity?"

"Eh? A nonentity? What's that?"

"It is an ideal being without existence, like your bogle, Davie; an' I really wonder how a good, religious, decent lad like you can believe in sic a delusion as that the Brae is hauntit by a bogle."

"There are some things that a man canna help believing, Jock, no wi' the help of a' the philosophy in the warld crammed into him. An' therefore I shall say nae mair but this,

that I think we wad be wiser to stay where we are, an' no gang to the courting the night, till we hear mair about things."

"Na, na, Davie, I'm no gaun to be put off that gate. Ye hae ventit twa very heavy insinuations against the lasses o' the Brae. First, that they are taking themselves up wi' grand gentlemen, and neist, that their house is hauntit wi' a ghost; an' I say these are baith very cruel insinuations. Ye should remember that the slightest stain on a young woman's character is unco ill to wash out again."

"What can I help it, Jock? It wasna frae ony ill design that I said sae, but what I ken to be true I *will* say. I say then that there *are* gentlemen hovering about these lasses wha *canna be* wanting them for wives—make o' that what you will. An' I say further that *there is* a bogle about their house, for I saw it mysel', an' got a devil of a gliff wi't too. Ay, sic a fleg that I hae never been sae right sinsyne. Even a lang nebbit word, wi' a bogly sound like a nonentity, gars me start."

"Ha! ha! ha! that's precious! That is quite superlative! Come, tell us a' about it, man.

This is grand ! I *did* hear lately that the place was hauntit by a ghaist, an' that the twa auld folks were terrified amaisht out o' their wits about, but that the lasses thought it a fine ploy. An' it is quite weel understood to be ane o' their sweethearts dressed up like a corpse in a white sheet to keep the other lads away on the Friday nights."

"Do you say sae, Jock. If I wist that to be true I wad gie that ghaist sic a drubbing as a ghaist never got out o' the ill place. For d'ye ken it used me waur than a dog? An' since ye hae put that in my head, I will not tell a word o' the story till I try that ghaist's mettle aince mair. If you will stand by me, Jock, I'll grip in on it, an' be it a spirit or be it a mortal creature, I shall put its energies to the proof."

"Gie me your hand, brave neighbour. That's spoken like a man ! Stand by you, man ! I'll never bid you stand by *me*, for I'll gang afore ye a' the gate, an' as I ken weel that a' the bogles that appear to wooers are naething but scarecrows, wi' ae swapp o' my staff I'll let you see me ding your bogle heels-o'er-head an' walk

straight on to the delicious joys o' smiling beauty."

Davie, without more ado took down his plaid and hazel staff, and with his bonnet drawn down over his brow in a sort of determined manner, jogged off with his amorous companion. Davie was convinced he had been imposed on, and was this night resolved to work his way to bonny Barbary Bell against the opposition of spirits and men.

Barbary was the eldest but one of old Farmer Bell's daughters. He was a yeoman of old and respectable standing, but his farm was small, and his income, in these piping times of peace, still smaller. Consequently his daughters were neither ladies nor hizzies. They wrought all their father's work out and in; dressed like ladies on the Sundays—drank tea once a year with the parish minister and his family—read their bibles chapter about on the Sabbath evenings—were healthy, comely, and amorous—the toasts of all the young shepherds, joiners, masons, and even tailors of the parish; submitted to be courted at least one night in the week, and when young gentlemen or principal far-

mers' sons came to see them, the heaps of oatmeal cakes, scones, butter, cheese, and ham that loaded the table were truly tremendous, while to all these dainty and rare articles the blithe, healthy, and hard-wrought lasses were the best customers. It did one's heart good to see them, and it was supposed did delight the heart of every one except their mother, who wanted always to have them so genteel and mince-mouthed before company.

“Ye need na fash to halve that scone, mother, hand it just by to me as it is.”

“Dear lassie, ye eat as gin ye hadna seen meat the day.”

Such was the family, and such the lasses of the Brae, to whom our two shepherds were this night going a wooing. They were lasses that far surpassed all the others of the district, for lightness of heart, good humour, and a restless, and rather mischievous, jocularly.

“What was the bogle like, that ye saw at the Brae, Davie?”

“It is not easy to tell what it was like. It appeared first to me, at a distance, like a man o' fire, as if he had been made of a thin lowe.

Then he came bolting forward, girning an' glowring as if he wad hae swallowed me up. Then away back again, sae far that I could hardly ken him. I gaed round an' round the house, trying a' parts to get in; for when ane has a real sweetheart, it is hard to be worn back frae her. I assure you, I was nae easily cowed, but I saw enough that night to hae put the maist part o' folks out o' their reason."

"All a trick, Davie—a mere trick o' leger-demain, carried on wi' the lasses an' their sweethearts, for fun. They are capable of ony harmless trick in the world, thae lasses. We shall see. We shall see."

"I was fairly driven frae the field at last. But yet I hae some jealousings that it was a trick. For when I was at the very desperatest, an' praying like mad, I am almaist certain I heard some bursts o' suppressed laughter. It is the thought o' that which puts me mad, an' gars me yearn to have a hand-shaking wi' the ghaist. If it be a man, I'll nip his windpipe to him; if a woman, I's no say what I'll do. But if it be a spirit—a shadow without a real substance—why man canna contend wi' it."

“Not by strength o’ arm, but by the supreme might o’ knowledge and learning he may. Now you were talking of praying, which I suppose had no effect. Whereas I am in possession of the mighty words that can lay any spirit.”

“Then, Jock, ye hae ane o’ the greatest treasures in the world, and we are safe. Pray, will you teach me the sentence?”

“Recite the words after me, then. *In te Domine speravi.* What do you laugh at?”

“I laugh to hear you ca’ing the spirit an in-tae’d-dominie. It is not the least like a dominie. But we are drawing near to the spot, now, an’ if my een dinna deceive me, yonder it is beginning to glimmer. Now, Jock, take you the lead, as you promised, an’ face the in-tae’d dominie.”

Jock, with a gallant swagger of his arm, took the lead, but his breath was manifestly cutting, through apprehension. In the ascent towards the house, one loses sight of it, until he emerges all at once on the verge of a platform, about fifty paces from the door. From this verge our two shepherds cautiously set up their heads, right in front of the old house. The

night was pitch-dark, and the windows all closed ; but nearly where they judged the door ought to have been, they perceived a dim, glimmering light. “ Now, yon’s it—yon’s it”—whispered Davie to his companion ; “ yon is the very spot where it rose from upon me. Yon is the individual fiery guardian-angel of the lasses. But dinna be dauntit, Jock, for it will be astonished when it hears itsel’ ca’d an in-tae’d dominie. Now, let us advance with caution, an’ keep a good ee, for ere ever we ken what we are about, it will be on us like a fiery dragon.”

“ Do you think—we had not better—retreat for a little—and—keep a due distance—till we see ?”

“ No, no,” said Davie, determined to see the furthest possible ; “ push on ; remember, that it is only a trick—a mere trick of legerdemain, contrived by the lasses and their sweethearts, to keep rivals at a distance. We must not be humbugged this way.”

Thus admonished, and half pushed forward by Davie, who was resolved to fathom the phenomenon, Jock advanced, step by step, keeping his head very high, and breathing somewhat

short, Davie still encouraging him on with cheering words. "Pray move on a little faster, Jock; an' keep in mind the laying words; I hae a great deal to lippen to them."

At this moment, the dim light rushed forward upon them, and there stood up immediately before Jock, a hideous sight indeed. There was the evident appearance of a female corpse, dressed in dead-clothes, with its white eyes turned up, its white lips grinning far apart, and its pale hand clenched, and waved in a threatening attitude; while, at the same time, the whole form of the apparition was involved in a ball of thin flame. Now, though it necessarily takes some little time to describe this, the whole was the operation of a moment—of the twinkling of an eye. Jock uttered a short, horrific roar, exactly resembling that of a Highland bullock, and throwing himself backward with maniac force upon Davie, he overthrew him down the steep, and fell right above him. He was so grievously hurt, he could not rise, but there he lay, rolling and exclaiming, "Plague on your coward heart! for I'm a killed man! Murdered, smashed, broozled!

Wae worth a' thy bragging an' thy lang-nebbit words, an' lang-tailed sentences, for great words an' great actions never gang thegither !”

“ What gruing an' shivering is a' that,” cried the other, “ ye heartless blockhead ? get up an' come away, for I'm lamed, an' mad, an' just in a key to face the devil ! Jock ! Jock ! I say, what ails ye ? Speak ; are ye dead, or only felled ? What, naething but groans ! As the L— is my life, I believe the chap's deeing in good earnest. Hilloa ! Hilloa ! Lights here ! Lights an' water ! There's a man murdered ! Murder ! Murder i' the howe this night !”

Out went the lambent light, and then there was a great bustle about the house, and a confused noise, as of women's voices and men's voices mixed, and among the rest a suppressed one, that he heard, saying, “ That's Davie Dinlap's voice. I hope naething bad may hae happened to him.” The lasses came running with lights, and bonny Barbara foremost. “ Take care, and keep your distance,” cried Davie, “ for I'm an eeritated man, sairly hurt, an' my neighbour's killed. Wha are ye ? Are ye the ghaist again ?”

“Na, na, Davie; I’m nae ghaist, but genuine flesh and blood, in the form o’ your ain Barbary o’ the Brae. What’s the matter?”

“O, the matter, lassie? Ye will ower soon see what’s the matter. Here is ae man murdered, an’ another deadly wounded. Look at Jock Guidwood o’ the Coglee, there he is lying stiff. An’ then, look at me.”

The eye follows aye the heart. Barbara looked first at Davie, and uttered a loud scream, for he was covered with blood, but hardly ever deigned to look at Jock, who was lying rigid on the green. Her sisters gathered about them, and, assisted by two genteel young men, they carried Jock quite stiff and insensible into a bed in a hay-loft, for fear of disturbing the old farmer and his wife, who had retired to rest. One of the young gentleman took on him the management of the hapless wooer’s case; and first he blew some powdered ginger up the nose, which had the effect of making him sneeze slightly, but he only opened his eyes, stared wildly about him, and then died again. Still the young gentleman treated the sufferer only with a degree of levity, as if sensible there was

no danger ; and, calling for a pipe, he forced some tobacco-smoke down the deceased's throat, which forced him to come alive, to prevent himself being suffocated. He did not, however, come to his right senses all that night ; but the next morning, after sunrise, he took his plaid about him, and with a face as white as a clout made off for home, without bidding the lasses of the Brae good-morrow. He never went more back there to court, nor would he ever after so much as smile when Davie mentioned the intae'd dominie to him.

Not so with Davie, who clung to his beloved Barbara, notwithstanding the mystery that surrounded her. He was not much wounded, being only cut a little on the hand and cheek, and having besides bled plentifully at the nose, so that after he was washed he was whole, or nearly so. He was confounded and distressed beyond measure at what he had seen, yet it was out of his power to believe any evil of Barbara. He intreated her, as she valued his esteem, to explain to him the mystery of the apparition that night, but she put him off with dark hints and insinuations, assuring him at the same

time that she would explain it all to him as soon as she comprehended it herself. She told him further in confidence that there would be more news about it still, and that of a more serious description.

The word now spread like lightning that the Brae was haunted by a malevolent spirit, which caused a great sensation through the district, and many were the unfeasible stories that were circulated about the Bells. That a murder had been committed was naturally and generally admitted, but then there was nobody missing.

Among others, Mrs. Curror of Dogdean, and her daughters, got hold of it, and made grand stories out of it. At one time the mother was a witch, and surrounded by wicked spirits. At another time there was a certain young lady, who had been very ill, and confined to her room for some weeks, and though no grown-up woman thereabouts was a-missing, what was to hinder the apparition from being the ghost of a baby. They did not see why the ghost of a bairn should not be as big as the biggest woman in the parish. Such insinuations as

these and many more, were marrow to the bones of Mrs. and the Misses Curror.

Mrs. Curror was a widow lady, and had likewise four daughters, far richer, far prouder, and a great deal idler than the lasses of the Brae. Nevertheless, at all kirns, weddings, dancing-school, and charity-balls, it so happened that the lasses of the Brae were far more in demand, and one or other of them uniformly taken to the top of every country-dance, because in truth they were far more lovely and amorous and had a double proportion of glee and animation. There were, moreover, flocks of wooers constantly running to the Brae, while at Dogdean one was a great rarity. The consequence was that the Currors hated their rivals with a perfect hatred, and from morn to night their chief concern was now the making commentaries on the story of the ghost, and a very bad story they made of it.

Well, but it so chanced that a wooer *did* come one night to Dogdean, a handsome, swaggering, little fellow, and quite an Adonis in beauty. He told his errand briefly and without hesitation, saying he was come to court Miss

Alice Curror, if there were no particular objections. He was a joiner, he added, by profession, a first-rate workman, and his name was John Laidlaw. As the old mother knew his father well, as honest a man as ever lived, and—in short the young wooer was not only made welcome but caressed exceedingly, and never was Miss Alice Curror seen to walk through the house with such an air as she did that night. It was quite supreme, for there was conscious dignity and satisfaction in it, and when the old mother went to her bed and left the two lovers by themselves, she gave Jock Laidlaw a good-humoured wink, and bade him sit near her. Now this young buck needed no such hint, for at the very first he began with a flirtation that had something suspicious in it, and really began to use freedoms with Miss Alice, even before her mother and sisters, which no other lover would have used but himself, and which, perhaps, no other maiden in the parish would have admitted. But that my fair and fastidious readers may not be in the least degree shocked, it is best to tell them at once that this handsome and dashing wooer

was no other than Miss Jane Bell of the Brae come to hear the blemishes of her own character, and those of her mother, and sisters-- she did so with a vengeance! For it was the theme in which Miss Alice delighted, and in the most vituperative slander of them did she spend the greater part of the night. The young and blooming coxcomb, had, however, attained the means of a severe retaliation, and Jane Bell went home in the morning highly delighted with her courting expedition.

This was on the Friday night, and on the evening of the Monday following, there was a dance and supper, on account of some charity, where the rival damsels all met together. Miss Alice was never seen so gay, she smiled, tossed her head at the lasses of the Brae, and talked of wooers and of forsaken maidens, and it was remarked that the name of John Laidlaw was often heard pronounced with considerable emphasis when there did not seem any very prominent reasons for such pronunciation. In short, the handsome young wooer had made such an impression on Miss Alice Currer, that she was half crazy with reflections and antici-

pations of delight, until supper-time that the malicious Jane Bell took care to place herself close by her side. But at every friendly remark made by Miss Jane, the other threw up her nose in disdain with a "hum," or a "haye indeed," and mentioned to her left-hand neighbour that appearances were *certainly* very much against some people just now; and then asked what was the common punishment inflicted for *fanticide*.

At length Jane o' the Brae said to her very seriously, in a whisper, "I am really sorry for your behaviour the night, Miss Alice, an' perfectly ashamed o't. How can ye gang ower the name o' Jock Laidlaw, when it is sae weel kend to a' that's here, what kind o' night you and he spent on Friday night last?"

Miss Alice's lips turned into a deathly paleness, and her eyes fixed in her head, while her exulting rival followed up her threat with a minute description of all that passed between them, as well she could, and all the scandalous things that she had said of herself and sisters. Miss Alice's proud and silly heart could not stand this exposure made to her detested rival,

her form grew rigid, and all that she was capable of doing was swallowing down great gulps of air, the muscles of her throat being apparently convulsed.

“Aye, it is ower true an’ far ower weel kend, I fear,” continued Jane. “He tauld me a’ about it, and I believe has afore this time tauld every lass in the parish, for I observed them a’ smirting and laughing as ye were gaun ower an’ ower his name. But if ye had heard how he was laughin’ at you! An’ goodness forgie us!—he said that—but it surely couldna be true. Ay that—,” here the malicious Jane whispered something into Miss Alice’s ear. Nature could support no more. Miss Alice was supping, or rather had been supping minced collops out of a broth-plate, with a cast metal spoon plated over with tin, rather a heavy and substantial implement. On hearing the insidious sentence she sprung to her feet, her tall spare form appearing taller than ordinary, and dashing the yettlin spoon down on the plate and the minced collops, till both were scattered in flinders, she ran to the door,

screaming out a deep and hysterical ban on the whole male creation.

The company were dumbfounded ! thunder-struck ! Not one of them had heard a word that Miss Jane Bell had said in a serious and apparent friendly whisper, and of course they imagined her to have been seized by a temporary fit of lunacy of the most violent sort. Her mother and three sisters hurried out after her in great dismay, and supported her home.

But the adventures of this ominous night were but beginning. The road down to Dog-dean is by the side of a hazel copse, on the right hand, which extends almost close to the door. When the ladies came within twenty paces of the door, they perceived a dim light as if deep in the wood. The mother observed it first, and said in a whisper, "Bairns, what's yon?"

"It is a light," said one.

"You need not tell me that," rejoined the old dame. "But what can a light be doing there at sic a time o' night as this? I wish it may not be something uncanny."

"Lord forbid !" said the other daughters ;

but there was no time for further observation, for out of that dim light the devil came rushing upon them like a tremendous lion, all on flame, his fierce blood-shot eyes rolling most furiously.

“Yell!” quoth the mother, and “yell!” screamed the daughters, all with one squall. Down they tumbled together, and over and over in a tangled heap, they rolled, never letting one yell abide another, until at last they landed all in a coil on their own little parlour floor.

Unluckily at that moment in rushed Girzy Blake the kitchen maid, with a light. The effects of a sudden light on terror-stricken people are well known. Every one of them fainted, and there were all the five lying stretched on the floor, with their faces upwards, some shivering and grasping the carpet, others lying stiff and rigid as if in death.

Now Girzy was not deeply concerned about her five mistresses, for she liked them very ill, and cared not if they were all dead in good earnest, but she weened that it behoved her to do something in such an emergency. As the only expedient that struck her obtuse head, she first stuffed all their noses with peppermint, and followed that by clashing large pailfuls

of cold water on them, all the while speaking without intermission to herself or rather to them.

“Od, I’s outhar gar ye come to yoursels or else drown ye. Ye may depend on that! gin the pump keep but gaun, I’s gife a slockening. Tak’ ye that, lass, I sall gar your petticoats haud. Haw but it is a strange business this. I wish ane o’ you wad come about at ony rate to help me to streek the rest.”

Thus went Girzy, while running to the pump and back again, and giving pailful about, to the fainted, till the room was fairly turned into a little loch, and the house was totally immersed in water. But Girzy wanted it deeper, still wisely conjecturing, that if she could once get it to run in at their mouths and their ears, then they would be obliged to recover or do worse.

Miss Alice herself was now the first who came to her senses, the former agitation having prevented the fright from the appearance of the devil, impressing her so deeply. At first she began to splash and swatter like a young whale left in shoal water, but at length, she sat fairly up among the liquid element, and stared around her with a face of terror. When Girzy perceived this token of returning anima-

tion, she ran for other two pails of water, and lashed it, about a gallon at a time, on the face and bosom of Miss Alice, whose screams much resembled the cries of a mawkin when being worried by dogs, though in inverse proportion, the latter always waxing weaker and weaker, but her's growing louder at every baptism, till enough to waken the dead.

It is needless to describe the whole process of their recovery, and how, one by one, they arose from their watery bed, with all the dismay and confusion that followed. These every one must fancy for himself, and suppose all the five in the eastern room denuded of their wet apparel, and snug in bed, with many sighs, and "oh!—oh!—oh's!" often repeated, and some low and fearful remarks on the strange apparition they had seen, and the small glow-worm light from which it seemed to proceed. Alice spoke not a word good or bad, her heart was broken, and her character, as she conceived, entirely ruined, by the trick played her by Jane Bell.

The old farm-house of Dogdean was like many others in that country. It had a front-

door with a room on each hand, and a back door that led into the kitchen, and out to the offices. The bed-room in which they now were, was the one next to the wood, and its window had no shutters, but a screen fell down inside of a thin texture like a wire-sieve, and while the five ladies were all thus lying, under deep apprehensions, the mother observed a dim light that partially illuminated the room. She raised her head, and called aloud on her Maker's name, and in an instant all the five heads were popped over the beds. They perceived, with trembling dread, that something was approaching the window, of a supernatural kind, but they had no time for observation, before the ghost of a lady appeared inside. It was the same apparition which appeared to Jock and Davie, at the Brae, and had so nearly been the death of them both, and as it has been described already, it is needless to repeat the definition. It was a most appalling and terrific spectre, and the impression that it made was consonant to its hideous appearance. Over the beds tumbled the five maidens, in the most dreadful dismay. The mother was the

first at the door, but the others pressed so hard upon her, that she could not get it opened, and every one was calling louder than another, “ the bogle o’ the Brae ! the bogle o’ the Brae ! ” the hindermost was absolutely screaming and reaving on the shoulders of the rest.

As they effected their escape through the kitchen, Girzy joined them, and all the six forlorn females scampered through the yard and over the dunghills, to the dismay and degradation of their fair and well-turned limbs. They took shelter in the stable, where they huddled together in a stall, and cried aloud, for the servants and cottagers who soon gathered about them, bringing them blankets and plaids in the dark to keep them from the cold, until it was at length resolved, that, with old Andrew Geddes at their head, they would all go in a body and once more take possession of the premises.

Andrew was a tall, thin man, with hair and eye-brows as white as snow. He did not want courage, yet he would not believe there was any thing supernatural in the house, but that some vagary had entered into the women’s heads, for he remarked that “ nae body could tell

what wad whiles enter a woman's head," so at the head of eleven men and women, he led the way across the yard. As he approached the door he perceived a small dim light within it, and was beginning to make some remarks on the circumstances, when the apparition of the lady again appeared close before him. It was a sight that nobody could stand, for there it stood once more with its white turned-out eyes, its raised shaking hand, and its grinning lips, when in another instant a gigantic figure rushed from the kitchen door behind the ghost. This latter carried its head in its left hand, and in its right, a bloody sword with which it struck at the former apparition. The pale figure shrieked and vanished; the whole was momentary, but hideous in the extreme.

There is nothing so dangerous to an invading party as a hasty surprise in front. Andrew had conducted his array by a circuitous rout through the dung-yard to avoid a vile puddle in the middle of it, commonly called the midden hole, but the force with which he threw himself back on the second rank, and that on the others, landed the whole party in this hole to-

gether, almost right above each other, Andrew having the good fortune to fall uppermost. He neither prayed nor praised, nor repeated any portion of scripture, but as with his long legs he made stepping stones of his prostrate companions, he said, "Ye ken, Sirs, this beats a'. Eh? It's nae joking ava this. Na."

All fled from the premises that instant, leaving the house deserted and the door open. Mrs. Curror and her daughters fled to the parsonage, at which they did not arrive till after midnight, and then in woful plight. Indeed such a set of woe-begone and wretched figures as admit not of description. The parson was greatly troubled, believing that some manœuvre had been effected toward an extensive robbery. All however were agreeably deceived, for next morning they found every thing safe and in its proper place, and no marks of depredation. But nothing could induce Mrs. Curror and daughters to return to Dogdean. They retained it only for two years longer, and then gave it up to Adam Blaikley, who still possesses it.

There has been no ghost-story in my remembrance save the wife of Lochmabar, which

caused a greater sensation than this, principally owing to a family having been fairly chased away by the spirit from their habitation, which caused people to say that that family had been conscious of some great guilt. But how it should have left one family who seemed to disregard it, and fasten upon another which it at once overthrew and dislodged—that was an anomaly in the annals of diablerie which could not be accounted for. I have only to add, that Davie Dinlap was shortly after this married to his beloved Barbary of the Brae, and the *real* John Laidlaw, the joiner, to her sister the wicked Jane Bell, who in her courting expedition had, it seems, taken her sweetheart's name.

One edition of this story after another came to my ears, but, for my part, I could not comprehend it in the least degree, taking it merely for an illusion, or some fairy vision not to be accounted for. And yet the testimony of two responsible shepherds had some weight with it. But Jock Laidlaw, the joiner, being a relation of my own, as the greater part of the Laidlaws are, I rode seven miles off my road in April,

1828, to visit him. He was working at a distance from home, but I found his wife and baby. She is an uncommonly fine woman, a perfect picture of health and good-humour, but in spite of all the insinuations I could use, she kept wide of the ghost-story, eyeing from time to time, with a sly look, as if she suspected the purport of my visit. However, as she really appeared glad to see me, so, with the kindness and condescension always inherent in a fine woman, she had not the heart to let me go without my errand, though not till we were in the workshop, where my horse was standing, would she begin. I must give the story in her own words, which, to me, had a peculiar zest, owing to their candour and simplicity.

“Ye see, Sir, the truth is, that the matter was keepit a profound secret on account of the Currenors, but as you livesae far frae them, there is nae danger o’ them having it frae you.” (It was all that she knew about it.) “But ye see the story is a very simple one. It happened that hairst that twa young clarks o’ thelaw” (writers’ clerks I supposed,) “came into our country for a month or sae to fish troots, an’ shoot fowls, an’

they war fine handsome chaps, wi' a great deal o' smeddum in them. They never gaed by us lasses, neither on the hay-field or hairst-rig, without some jaw passing. I was the greatest hempy for them, an' said mony a mad-like queer thing to them, that put them quite daft wi' delight, an' then it was naething but 'Miss Jane' that, an' 'Miss Jane' this, and 'Miss Jane' every thing. Ilka matter was referred to me, and we had fine gaffawing wi' the cheils, for they were free, hearty fallows, na' nae scrubs, an' likit the lasses excessively. Then they were every day sending us something, great creelfu's o' troots, black cocks, an' muirfools, an' fizzans, and whawps, an' paetricks, an' great bunches o' muirsnipes, till at last my father was needcessitattit to ax them to their tea.

“Well, ye see they came, for they likit weel to be wi' us lasses; an' for our parts, we were perfectly delighted wi' them, for they were twa *real* queer ones, an' had sae mony quirks an' nick-nacks an' handicraft tricks wi' them. An' among other things, they had what they ca'd a Majic Lanthorn.”

“Oho!” says I, “I see where away all is to end now.”

“Ay, now the secret’s out,” continued she; “but I maun tell you it a’, for, oh! we had grand sport wi’t. Ye see, the first night they tried it on us in a dark barn; we coudna keep our countenances down ava. Sikan awsome figures came glowming forret on us, that they gart us shiver, an’ squeel, an’ hide our faces, an’ some o’ us ran away awthegither. I stood it out, wi’ muckle ado, an’ at length came into them out o’ the darkness, wawling like a wulcat, an’ the tears rinning down o’er my cheeks. ‘Well, Miss Jane,’ every ane cried, ‘what think you of it? What think you of it, Miss Jane? Eh, tell us.’

“‘I’ll just tell ye, maisters, what I think of it. Had I no kend that ye were here, an’ were doing it by a handicraft trick, it wad fairly hae dung me out o’ my judgement. An’ in this country, where we a’ believe in ghaists, an’ spirits, ye may pit as mony fo’ks daft as ever ye like. Naw, oh! if ye’ll but keep it a sincere secret, we’ll hae sic sport on Friday nights, when the lads come, for there are a great deal o’ idle chaps come here whase backs we wad rather see than their faces. If ye’ll come here on the Friday

nights, we'll gie some o' the chields a gliff that they'll no soon forget, an' I'll help you a' that I can we' that spiritual apparawtus mysel.'

"Weel, ye see the clarkso' the law were quite delighted wi' the project themsels, for as I said they likit to be wi' us lasses on ony pretence, but my sisters shook their heads an' lookit rather jumm on't; for my part I had made up my mind to Jock Laidlaw, but some o' them hadna made up their's, nor hae they found time to make them up yet. So, the twa clerks o' the law came wi' their apparawtus, an' I watched at the garret window to gie them the word when ony body kithed. Weel, the very first night we put a tailor sae daft, that they had to blister his head, an' pit him on nettle broth. An' the very neist Friday's night, we had nearly killed twa nice shepherd-lads clean out; sae we were obliged, for our ain credit, to debar the magic thing frae the house, an' pit down the sport.

"But the twa comical clarks of the law finding out frae oursels, an' partly frae others, the great malice that the Currors held against us, resolved, afore they gaed awa, to be revenged on them. I didna discourage the trick, but laughed rather

heartily at the conception, and farther than that our family had no hand in it. Save on the night of the ball, after I had fairly put Miss Alice into the extericks, they took their apparawtus to Dogdean, an' gae them a fearfu' drubbing. What wi' the plashing o' cauld water, an' the midden hole, they hae been made a laughin'-stock o' aye sinsyne, an' they're likely now to gang a' auld maids to their graves. I believe the last wooer Miss Alice had was mysel, an' I ga'e her a gager's towzle, but she never kens o' the trick, nor ever shall."

On my asking how they could transport their apparatus so easily from place to place, she said the whole was not larger than a pair of bagpipes, for that the screen was as fine as a lady's veil. And thus was I forced to draw out my fine ghost-story, from a palpable and simple deduction effected from natural and artificial causes, a conclusion which I have never hitherto reached, and with which I was neither satisfied nor pleased.

THE BOOK OF LIFE.

BY JOHN GALT.

Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.

SHAKSPEARE.

—THE story is in itself singular, and when you have heard how strangely the coincidences dovetail themselves together, you will not be surprised that I should hold such opinions. It was some time about Lammas, after leaving the University, I had taken a short botanical

excursion among the mountains, and was returning home. Do not look so incredulous, it is no phantastical imagination of a young enthusiastic student, but a sober narrative, embracing many years.

*five time
repeated many
times*
The weather had for some time before been uncommonly wet, every brook and stream was swollen far beyond its banks, the meadows were flooded, and the river itself was increased to a raging Hellespont, insomuch, that the ferry was only practicable for an hour before and after high tide.

The day was showery and stormy, by which I was detained at the inn until late in the afternoon, so that it was dark before I reached the ferry-house, and the tide did not serve for safe crossing until midnight. I was therefore obliged to sit by the fire and wait the time, a circumstance which gave me some uneasiness, for the ferryman was old and infirm, and Dick, his son, who usually attended the boat during the night, happened to be then absent, the day having been such, that it was not expected any travellers would seek to pass over that night.

The presence of Dick was not, however, ab-

| solutely necessary, for the boat swung from side to side by a rope anchored in the middle of the stream, and, on account of the strong current, another rope had been stretched across, by which passengers could draw themselves over, without assistance: an easy task to those who had the sleight of it but it was not so to me, who still wore my arm in a sling.

While sitting at the fire-side conversing with the ferryman and his wife, a smart, good-looking country lad, with a recruit's cockade in his hat, came in, accompanied by a young woman who was far advanced in pregnancy. They were told the state of the ferry, and that, unless the recruit undertook to conduct the boat himself, they must wait the return of Dick.

They had been only that day married, and were on their way to join a detachment of the regiment in which Ralph Nocton, as the recruit was called, had that evening enlisted, the parish officers having obliged him to marry the girl. Whatever might have been their former love and intimacy, they were not many minutes in the house when he became sullen and morose towards her; nor was she more amiable towards

him. He said little, but he often looked at her with an indignant eye, as she reproached him for having so rashly enlisted, to abandon her and his unborn baby, assuring him that she would never part from him while life and power lasted.

Though it could not be denied that she possessed both beauty and an attractive person, there was yet a silly vixen humour about her, ill-calculated to conciliate. I did not, therefore, wonder to hear that Nocton had married her with reluctance ; I only regretted that the parish-officers were so inaccessible to commiseration, and so void of conscience, as to be guilty of rendering the poor fellow miserable for life, to avert the hazard of the child becoming a burden on the parish.

The ferryman and his wife endeavoured to reconcile them to their lot ; and the recruit, who appeared to be naturally reckless and generous, seemed willing to be appeased ; but his weak companion was capricious and pettish. On one occasion, when a sudden shower beat hard against the window, she cried out with

little regard to decorum, that she would go no further that night.

“ You may do as you please, Mary Blake,” said Nocton, “ but go I must, for the detachment marches to-morrow morning. It was only to give you time to prepare to come with me, that the captain consented to let me remain so late in town.”

She, however, only remonstrated bitterly at his cruelty, in forcing her to travel in her condition, and in such weather. Nocton refused to listen to her, but told her somewhat doggedly, more so than was consistent with the habitual cheerful cast of his physiognomy, that “ although he had already been ruined by her, he trusted she had not the power to make him a deserter.” He then went out, and remained some time alone. When he returned, his appearance was surprisingly changed; his face was of an ashy paleness; his eyes bright, febrile, and eager, and his lip quivered as he said,

“ Come, Mary, I can wait no longer; the boat is ready, the river is not so wild, and the rain is over.”

In vain she protested ; he was firm ; and she had no option, but either to go, or to be left behind. The old ferryman accompanied them to the boat, saw them embark, and gave the recruit some instructions how to manage the ropes, as it was still rather early in the tide. On returning into the house, he remarked facetiously to his wife,

“ I can never see why young men should be always blamed, and all pity reserved for the damsels.”

At this moment a rattling shower of rain and hail burst like a platoon of small shot on the window, and a flash of vivid lightning was followed by one of the most tremendous peals of thunder I have ever heard.

“ Hark !” cried the old woman startling, “ was not that a shriek ?”

We listened, but the cry was not repeated ; we rushed to the door, but no other sound was heard but the raging of the river, and the roar of the sea-waves breaking on the bar.

Dick soon after came home, and the boat having swung back to her station, I embarked with him, and reached the opposite inn, where

I soon went to bed. Scarcely had I laid my head on the pillow, when a sudden inexplicable terror fell upon me; I shook with an unknown horror; I was, as it were, conscious that some invisible being was hovering beside me, and could hardly muster fortitude enough to refrain from rousing the house. At last I fell asleep; it was perturbed and unsound; strange dreams and vague fears scared me awake, and in them were dreadful images of a soldier murdering a female, and open graves, and gibbet-irons swinging in the wind. My remembrance has no parallel to such another night.

In the morning, the cloud on my spirit was gone, and I rose at my accustomed hour, and cheerily resumed my journey. It was a bright morning, all things were glittering and fresh in the rising sun, the recruit and his damsel were entirely forgotten, and I thought no more of them.

But when the night returned next year, I was seized with an unaccountable dejection; it weighed me down; I tried to shake it off, but was unable; the mind was diseased, and could

no more by resolution shake off its discomfort, than the body by activity can expel a fever. I retired to my bed greatly depressed, but nevertheless I fell asleep. At midnight, however, I was summoned to awake by a hideous and indefinable terror; it was the same vague consciousness of some invisible visitor being near that I had once before experienced, as I have described, and I again recollected Noc-ton and Mary Blake: in the same instant I saw—for I cannot now believe that it was less than apparitional—the unhappy pair reproaching one another. As I looked, questioning the integrity of my sight, the wretched bride turned round and looked at me. How shall I express my horror, when, for the ruddy beauty which she once possessed, I beheld the charnel visage of a skull. I started up and cried aloud with such alarming vehemence, that the whole inmates of the house, with lights in their hands, were instantly in the room—shame would not let me tell what I had seen, and, endeavouring to laugh, I accused the night-mare of the disturbance.

This happened while I was at a watering-

place on the west coast. I was living in a boarding-house with several strangers ; among them was a tall pale German gentleman, of a grave impressive physiognomy. He was the most intelligent and shrewdest observer I have ever met with, and he had to a singular degree the gift of a discerning spirit. In the morning when we rose from the breakfast-table, he took me by the arm, and led me out upon the lawn in front of the house ; and when we were at some distance from the rest of the company, said,

“ Excuse me, Sir, for I must ask an impertinent question. Was it indeed the dream of the night-mare that alarmed you last night ?”

“ I have no objection to answer you freely ; but tell me first, why you ask such a question ?”

“ It is but reasonable. I had a friend who was a painter ; none ever possessed an imagination which discerned better how nature in her mysteries should appear. One of his pictures was the scene of Brutus, when his evil genius summoned him to Philippi, and, strange to tell, you bear some resemblance to the painted

Brutus. When, with the others, I broke into your room last night, you looked so like the Brutus in his picture, that I could have sworn you were amazed with the vision of a ghost."

I related to him what I have now done to you.

"It is wonderful," said he; "what inconceivable sympathy hath linked you to the fate of these unhappy persons. There is something more in this renewed visitation than the phantasma of a dream."

The remark smote me with an uncomfortable sensation of dread, and for a short time my flesh crawled as it were upon my bones. But the impression soon wore off, and was again entirely forgotten.

When the anniversary again returned, I was seized with the same heaviness and objectless horror of mind; it hung upon me with bodings and auguries until I went to bed, and then, after my first sleep, I was a third time aroused by another fit of the same inscrutable panic. On this occasion, however, the vision was different. I beheld only Nocton, pale and wounded, stretched on a bed, and on the cover-

let lay a pair of new epaulettes, as if just unfolded from a paper.

For seven years I was thus annually afflicted. The vision in each was different, but I saw no more of Mary Blake. On the fourth occasion, I beheld Nocton sitting in the uniform of an aide-de-camp at a table, with the customary tokens of conviviality before him; it was only part of a scene, such as one beholds in a mirror.

On the fifth occasion, he appeared to be ascending, sword in hand, the rampart of a battery; the sun was setting behind him, and the shadows and forms of a strange land, with the domes and pagodas of an oriental country, lay in wide extent around; it was as a picture, but far more vivid than painting can exhibit.

On the sixth time, he appeared again stretched upon a couch; his complexion was sullen, not from wounds, but disease, and there appeared at his bed-side the figure of a general officer, with a star at his breast, with whose conversation he appeared pleased, though languid.

But on the seventh and last occasion, on which the horrors of the visions were repeated, I saw

him on horse-back in a field of battle ; and while I looked at him, he was struck on the face by a sabre, and the blood flowed down upon his regimentals.

Years passed after this, during which I had none of these dismal exhibitions. My mind and memory resumed their healthful tone. I recollected, without these intervening years of oblivion, Nocton and Mary Blake, occasionally, as one thinks of things past, and I told my friends of the curious periodical returns of the visitations to me as a remarkable metaphysical phenomenon. By an odd coincidence, it so happened, that my German friend was always present when I related my dreams. He, in the intervals, sometimes spoke to me of them, but my answers were vague, for my reminiscences were imperfect. It was not so with him. All I told he distinctly recorded and preserved in a book, wherein he wrote down the minutest things that I had witnessed in my visions. I do not mention his name, because he is a modest and retiring man, in bad health, and who has long sequestered himself from company. His rank, however, is so distinguished, that his name could

not be stated without the hazard of exposing him to impertinent curiosity. But to proceed.

Exactly fourteen years—twice seven it was—I remember well, because for the first seven I had been haunted as I have described, and for the other seven I had been placed in my living. At the end of that period of fourteen years, my German friend paid me a visit here. He came in the forenoon, and we spent an agreeable day together, for he was a man of much recondite knowledge. I have seen none so wonderfully possessed of all sorts of occult learning.

He was an astrologer of the true kind, for in him it was not a pretence, but a science; he scorned horoscopes and fortune-tellers, with the just derision of a philosopher, but he had a beautiful conception of the reciprocal dependencies of nature. He affected not to penetrate to causes, but he spoke of effects with a luminous and religious eloquence. He described to me how the tides followed the phases of the moon; but he denied the Newtonian notion, that they were caused by the procession of the lunar changes. He explained to me, that when the sun entered Aries, and the other signs of the

Zodiac, how his progression could be traced on this earth by the development of plants and flowers, and the passions, diseases, and affections of animals and man; but that the stars were more than the celestial signs of these terrestrial phenomena, he ridiculed as the conception of theory.

His learning in the curious art of alchemy was equally sublime. He laughed at the fancy of an immortal elixir, and his notion of the mythology of the philosopher's stone was the very essence and spirituality of ethics. The elixir of immortality he described to me as an allegory, which, from its component parts, emblems of talents, and virtues, only shewed that perseverance, industry, good-will, and a gift from God were the requisite ingredients necessary to attain renown. His knowledge of the philosopher's stone was still more beautiful. He referred to the writings of the Rosicrucians, whose secrets were crouched in artificial symbols, to prove that the sages of that sect were not the fools whom the lesser wise of later days would represent them. The self-denial, the patience, the humility, the trusting in God,

the treasuring of time by lamp and calculation, which the venerable alchymists recommended, he used to say, were the only elements which constitute the conduct of the youth that would attain to riches and honour; and these different stages which are illuminated in the alchymical volumes as descriptive of stages in the process of making the stone, were but hieroglyphical devices to explain the effects of well-applied human virtue and industry.

To me it was amazing to what clear simplicity he reduced all things, and on what a variety of subjects his bright and splendid fancy threw a fair and affecting light. All those demi-sciences—physiognomy, palmistry, scaleology, &c., even magic and witchcraft, obtained from his interpretations a philosophical credibility.

In disquisitions on these subjects we spent the anniversary. He had by them enlarged the periphery of my comprehension; he had added to my knowledge, and inspired me with a profounder respect for himself.

He was an accomplished musician, in the remotest, if I may use the expression, depths of the art. His performance on the piano-forte

was simple, heavy, and seemingly the labour of an unpractised hand, but his expression was beyond all epithet, exquisite and solemn ; his airs were grave, devotional, and pathetic, consisting of the simplest harmonic combinations ; but they were wonderful : every note was a portion of an invocation ; every melody the voice of a passion or a feeling supplied with elocution.

We had spent the day in the fields, where he illustrated his astrological opinions by appeals to plants, and leaves, and flowers, and other attributes of the season, with such delightful perspicuity, that no time can efface from the registers of my memory the substance of his discourses. In the evening, he delighted me with his miraculous music, and, as the night advanced, I was almost persuaded that he was one of those extraordinary men who are said sometimes to acquire communion with spirits, and dominion over demons.

Just as we were about to sit down to our frugal supper, literally or philosophically so, as if it had been served for Zeno himself, Dick, the son of the old ferry-man, who by this time

was some years dead, came to the door, and requested to speak with me in private. Of course I obeyed, when he informed me that he had brought across the ferry that night a gentleman officer, from a far country, who was in bad health, and whom he could not accommodate properly in the ferry-house.

“The inn,” said Dick, “is too far off, for he is lame, and has an open wound in the thigh. I have therefore ventured to bring him here, sure that you will be glad to give him a bed for the night. His servant tells me that he was esteemed the bravest officer in all the service of the Mysore of India.”

It was impossible to resist this appeal. I went to the door where the gentleman was waiting, and with true-heartedness expressed how great my satisfaction would be if my house could afford him any comfort.

I took him in with me to the room where my German friend was sitting. I was much pleased with the gentleness and unaffected simplicity of his manners.

He was a handsome middle-aged man—his person was robust and well formed—his fea-

tures had been originally handsome, but they were disfigured by a scar, which had materially changed their symmetry. His conversation was not distinguished by any remarkable intelligence, but after the high intellectual excitement which I had enjoyed all day with my philosophical companion, it was agreeable and gentlemanly.

Several times during supper, something came across my mind as if I had seen him before, but I could neither recollect when nor where ; and I observed that more than once he looked at me, as if under the influence of some research in his memory. At last, I observed that his eyes were dimmed with tears, which assured me that he then recollected me. But I considered it a duty of hospitality not to inquire aught concerning him more than he was pleased to tell himself.

In the mean time my German friend, I perceived, was watching us both, but suddenly he ceased to be interested, and appeared absorbed in thought, while good manners required me to make some efforts to entertain my guest. This led to some inquiry concerning the scene of his

services, and he told us that he had been many years in India.

“On this day eight years ago,” said he, “I was in the battle of Borupknow, where I received the wound which has so disfigured me in the face.”

At that moment I accidentally threw my eyes upon my German friend—the look which he gave me in answer, caused me to shudder from head to foot, and I began to ruminate of Nocton the recruit, and Mary Blake, while my friend continued the conversation in a light desultory manner, as it would have seemed to any stranger; but to me it was awful and oracular. He spoke to the stranger on all manner of topics, but ever and anon he brought him back, as if without design, to speak of the accidents of fortune which had befallen him on the anniversary of that day, giving it as a reason for his curious remarks, that most men observed anniversaries, time and experience having taught them to notice, that there were curious coincidences with respect to times, and places, and individuals, — things, which of themselves form part of the great demonstra-

tion of the wisdom and skill displayed in the construction, not only of the mechanical, but the moral world, shewing that each was a portion of one and the same thing.

“I have been,” said he to the stranger, “an observer and recorder of such things. I have my book of registration here in this house; I will fetch it from my bed-chamber, and we shall see in what other things, as far as your fortunes have been concerned, how it corresponds with the accidents of your life on this anniversary.”

I observed that the stranger paled a little at this proposal, and said, with an affectation of carelessness, while he was evidently disturbed, that he would see it in the morning. But the philosopher was too intent upon his purpose to forbear. I know not what came upon me, but I urged him to bring the book. This visibly disconcerted the stranger still more, and his emotion became, as it were, a motive which induced me, in a peremptory manner, to require the production of the book, for I felt that strange horror, so often experienced, returning upon me; and was constrained by an irresistible impulse, to seek an explanation of the circum-

stances by which I had for so many years suffered such an eclipse of mind. The stranger seeing how intent both of us were, desisted from his wish to procrastinate the curious disclosure which my friend said he could make ; but it was evident he was not at ease. Indeed, he was so much the reverse, that when the German went for his book, he again proposed to retire, and only consented to abide at my jocular entreaty, until he should learn what his future fortunes were to be, by the truth of what would be told him of the past.

My friend soon returned with the book. It was a remarkable volume, covered with vellum, shut with three brazen clasps, secured by a lock of curious construction. Altogether it was a strange, antique, and necromantic-looking volume. The corner was studded with knobs of brass, with a small mirror in the centre, round which were inscribed, in Teutonic characters, words to the effect, " I WILL SHEW THEE THYSELF." Before unlocking the clasp, my friend gave the book to the stranger, explained some of the emblematic devices which adorned the cover, and particularly the

words of the motto that surrounded the little mirror.

Whether it was from design, or that the symbols required it, the explanations of my friend were mystical and abstruse ; and I could see that they produced an effect on the stranger, so strong that it was evident he could with difficulty maintain his self-possession. The colour entirely faded from his countenance ; he became wan and cadaverous, and his hand shook violently as he returned the volume to the philosopher, who, on receiving it back, said,—

“ There are things in this volume which may not be revealed to every eye, yet to those who may not discover to what they relate, they will seem trivial notations.”

He then applied the key to the lock, and unclosed the volume. My stranger guest began to breathe hard and audibly. The German turned over the vellum leaves, searchingly and carefully. At last he found his record and description of my last vision, which he read aloud. It was not only minute in the main circumstances in which I had seen Nocton, but

it contained an account of many things, the still life, as it is called, of the picture, which I had forgotten, and among other particulars, a picturesque account of the old General whom I saw standing at the bed-side.

“By all that’s holy,” cried the stranger, “it is old Crippington himself!—the queue of his hair was, as you say, always crooked, owing to a habit he had of pulling it when vexed—where could you find the description of all this?”

I was petrified; I sat motionless as a statue, but a fearful vibration thrilled through my whole frame.

My friend looked back in his book, and found the description of my sixth vision. It contained the particulars of the crises of battle, in which, as the stranger described, he had received the wound in his face. It affected him less than the other, but still the effect upon him was impressive.

The record of the fifth vision produced a more visible alarm. The description was vivid to an extreme degree,—the appearance of Nocton, sword in hand, on the rampart—the animation of the assault, and the gorgeous

landscape of domes and pagodas, was limned with words as vividly as a painter could have made the scene. The stranger seemed to forget his anxiety, and was delighted with the reminiscences which the description recalled.

But when the record of the fourth vision was read, wherein Nocton was described as sitting in the regimentals of an aid-de-camp, at a convivial table, he exclaimed, as if unconscious of his words,—

“It was on that night I had first the honour of dining with the general.”

The inexorable philosopher proceeded, and read what I had told him of Nocton, stretched pale and wounded on a bed, with new epaulettes spread on the coverlet, as if just unfolded from a paper. The stranger started from his seat, and cried, with a hollow and fearful voice,—

“This is the book of life.”

The German turned over to the second vision, which he read slowly and mournfully, especially the description of my own feelings, when I beheld the charnel visage of Mary Blake. The stranger, who had risen from his seat, and was

panting with horror, cried out with a shrill halloo, as it were,

“ On that night I was sitting in my tent, methought her spirit came and reproached me.”

I could not speak, but my German friend rose from his seat, and holding the volume in his left hand, touched it with his right, and looking sternly at the stranger, said,—

“ In this volume, and in your own conscience, are the evidences which prove that you are Ralph Nocton, and that on this night, twice seven years ago, you murdered Mary Blake.”

The miserable stranger lost all self-command, and, staggering from the spot, fell.—

THE THREE KEARNEYS.

A TALE OF THE DOMINIE.*

BY ANDREW PICKEN.

CHAPTER I.

How happy might the wise and virtuous live
Wer't not for wicked hearts that prowl the earth,
To turn its bliss to misery.

Scraps.

It was a sad gliff that, that I once got by
an affair that occurred in the Irish country while

* "The machinery of 'The Dominie's Legacy' is soon described—a benevolent and well-informed Scottish village

I took up my abode there, and it put my nerves more out of the way than I can well describe, now as I am only recollecting the matter as a bye-past fact. But such a sight as a father and two sons, an old grey-headed man, and I may say his whole family, going all together, as I saw them go past my door, and in my view, and that of thousands, is such as I hope never to see the like of again; although I do not think that the world is growing better in these last days, half so fast as I could wish it should. Indeed, I am of opinion, that the world must still be a bad world, for all the pains that have been taken with it, else such things could never have happened as I am now musing over, and which makes my heart ache to think of. If any one wishes to know what the affair was,

schoolmaster becomes independent, by the means of a property left him by one of his pupils, and is thereby enabled to gratify a favourite propensity to ramble on foot throughout the country, a habit in which he had previously indulged as much as possible during the recesses of his school avocations. Tales, for the most part connected with the incident and character he is supposed to encounter in these peregrinations, he bequeathed to a friend for publication, and hence the title of the work," &c.—*Westminster Review*, Vol. XIII.

let them sit down with me, and I will tell them as well as I can the whole story.

It was, while I was living within the interior precincts of the flaunting city of Dublin, in the Irish kingdom, that I first began seriously to make my observations on things in general : so wandering to and fro to observe the city, as much as possible, at a distance, rather than in its inner embraces, my walks lay often in those southern environs of the place, that spread off so pleasantly towards the green sloping hills, joining the King's county, which the Irish, in their usual boastful phraseology, choose to dignify by the name of the Dublin mountains. On that side of the city, and on a pleasant elevation, is situated the healthy village of Harold's Cross, and beyond the village towards the said mountains, appear the picturesque policies of Robert Shawfield, Esq., of the Warren, some time a representative in parliament for the Irish metropolis.

Now there lived by the road side beyond Harold's Cross, and near to the fine domain of the Warren, an elderly man and woman, of the name of Kearney, who had two strapping

sons living at home with them. These young men bore, however, rather a ne'er-do-well character, and in fact the whole of the Kearneys were known extensively round, as a suspicious and troublesome sort of people. Yet were they, after all, rather well liked and applauded, by their own sort of rabbling clan-jamfrey of the neighbourhood, more, for aught I know, because they neither feared God nor regarded man, than for any good or commendable qualities. The old woman (her name was Judith, or rather Judy, as the people called her) was well named after that strong-stomached amazon who cut off the head of the man with whom she went to consort herself, as we read of in the Apocrypha ; for she was known all round to be a perfect born devil, and like many other of the parents of the Irish youth, able to bring up her sons in the practice of all manner of malice and wickedness. We cannot say that the old man was quite as bad as his amiable helpmate, (for without doubt, she, as her neighbours would say, was "a sweet nut,") and it was even affirmed that he had occasionally in his life manifested sundry symptoms of a reckless

sort of Irish generosity. Besides, the father of this hopeful family had no imagination to invent a wicked plot, yet still he was of a dour and dogged turn, had within him a deep spirit of suspicion and of vengeance, and if he deserved not the praise of having the head to conceive, it could not be denied that he had the hand to execute, the darkest scheme of guilt and cruelty.

In adverting to the subject of the perfectibility of man, particularly in Ireland, it hath always appeared to me an exceedingly wise and reasonable proposal, that in order to purify the character of the Irish youth of the lower orders, we should begin by shooting all the parents with a cannon; at least this was the plan of a most reasonable and humane person, who lived about the times of the celebrated Irish Dean, and who had more wisdom than I think it at all convenient to pretend to. But not being versed in metaphysics so as to entitle me to insist upon the execution of this sensible project, the story leads me simply to observe, that at least the young Kearneys of whom we are now speaking, could not be expected to imbibe much of the

spirit of godliness and honesty, from the walk and conversation of such parents.

Accordingly, "the boys," were persons of what philosophers would call, "a mixed character," that is to say, they had the usual semi-barbarous virtues of the Irish mountaineer, generous, hospitable, and warm towards those whom they chose for the moment to delight in, but savage and selfish when the fit was over. Still, however, they were rather handsome boys, had the wild and roving eye, of the southern Hibernian, with the shewy, spluttering and sploring manner of the ordinary native. A full share of the bad dispositions of mankind, they certainly had inherited, to qualify them for villains; yet still it must have been by their amiable parents alone that these youths were fully instructed in the mystery of iniquity.

The Kearneys had a cow, which lived abroad about the neighbourhood, and some half a dozen pigs, who lived at home with the family. How the pigs got their living, or indeed the Kearneys themselves, was by no means clearly made out by the most sagacious of the people in the cabins around. But as for the

cow, it was no secret, that although an honest and discreet-looking brute, as needed be, she was universally allowed to be a common interloper and a thief, getting her living wherever she could, or rather wherever she was driven, and bringing disgrace and a blush upon all the well-disposed cows, from Harold's Cross to the Dublin mountains. This cow was a constant subject of eyesore and dispute throughout the neighbourhood, and in particular by the servants and retainers of Mr. Shawfield, of the Warren, for the grass which grew so rich upon the broad meadows of his estate, she had always been peculiarly fond of; and to this predilection the four Kearneys never were known to have made the smallest objection. Mr. Shawfield himself, who knew the character of the Kearneys well, issued several strong proclamations against them and their cow, but to these, they were too audacious to pay any attention; and as for his own people whose duty it was to have curbed or punished such doings, they stood too much in awe of the Kearneys themselves, to take any active side against them.

At this time there lived in the neighbour-

hood, and on the further side of the Warren demesne, a widow woman, who, together with her two daughters, then living at home with her, were held in much favour by the squire, the father of the girls having been long a faithful domestic of the family, and the widow and children being uniformly industrious, and deserving. This woman excited some envy in the neighbourhood, not only from the decided favour shewn to her by the squire, but from the way in which she chose to bring up her daughters, whom it was thought she was rearing with a cleanliness very much above their condition. But this neighbourly envy began insensibly to merge into admiration and respect, as the girls grew to womanhood; for though they all lived in much isolation in their cottage near the foot of the Dublin mountains, they were so decidedly superior to all the young women around, that they tacitly came to be held up for a pattern, and one of them, the eldest, began to be quite distinguished and talked of for her beauty.

It was not for a long time known who was the favoured one of all those that now eagerly

sought the company of Mattie Connor, and the secret was first discovered by the attentive Mr. Shawfield himself, who, with the virtuous anxiety of a benevolent landlord, kept a sharp watch over the fate of a dependent of so interesting a character. He recognized by accident, but with perfect approval, the lover of Mattie, in the person of an active young fellow, the son of one of his most respected tenants ; and he secretly resolved, if the youth continued to act as praiseworthy as he had begun, to make him an object of his favour and promotion. This he was the more disposed to do, as Owen Lambert, the young man, had, of his own accord, shewn a firmness and a spirit in resisting the provoking freedoms of the Kearneys, such as no one but himself had ventured to attempt. The first thing, therefore, Mr. Shawfield did, was to make Owen Lambert his grieve or park-ranger, entrusting him with the charge of the whole of his policies, and directing his attention, particularly, to the wanton and insulting intrusions of the Kearneys and others, who made repeated depredations on his property.

This new situation, thus conferred upon Lambert, rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the whole of the Kearneys, who saw in his spirit and indefatigable activity, an obstacle and a check, of no trifling power, to their hindrance in their various impudent proceedings. It happened also, about this time, that the eldest of the two younger Kearneys (his name was Pat) having thought fit, as was seldom the case, to accept of a few days' labour on a farm beyond the Warren, and near to the clean cottage of the widow, set his eyes, for the first time, to take particular notice of her, upon the handsome and happy Mattie Connor, and getting at once into a natural sort of savage love, boldly and ardently tried for Mattie's acquaintance.

The reception that Pat Kearney's audacious addresses received from so a gentle a spirit as Mattie need not be described, particularly as both sisters had been well warned against such company by their mother, the quiet and careful widow of the cottage. The spirit of Kearney was of course too radically bad, and his ignorance too much approaching to ruffian bar-

barism, to enable him to see or account for, with any thing like fairness, the cause and the reasonableness of his decided repulse. So he brooded over his mortification with a sour and grudgeful gloom; and being, like most bad youths, the pet of his mother, to that amiable lady he soon imparted the cause of his sullen looks and his bitter chagrin.

The peculiar curse of conscious wickedness was no new thing to the mother of the Kearneys, that is, the continual dread of being avoided by the good, and the abiding sense that they deserve to be avoided. Amid, therefore, her envious wrath at the gentle and inoffensive widow of the cottage, the beldam had the sagacity to conclude, that some one must be favoured with the love of Mattie Connor, and a thought having crossed the suspicious brooding of the moment, a strong curiosity took fast hold of her, to know if the person could possibly be the squire's active and daring confident, Owen Lambert. Disdaining to make inquiries of the neighbours, most of whom avoided much familiarity with her or with her dreaded family, she, with the indefinite purpose and dogged perse-

verance of a malevolent spirit, went night after night, for several trials, to ascertain of a surety, for her inward satisfaction, whether Owen Lambert actually was the youth who, as she had learned, was frequently seen, under the cloud of night, to steal from the lone cottage where Mattie and her mother dwelt.

It so happened, that for several nights at this time, Owen Lambert's duty had prevented him from seeing his Mattie, but on the fourth or fifth he appeared to gladden all the inmates of the cottage, and to carry to his sweetheart the pleasing news of the squire's perfect approbation of their union, and of his having given orders for the preparation of a comfortable cottage for their reception, which stood near the centre of the policies of the warren, and which was expected to be ready for them in less than a fortnight. After partaking of some refreshment with the kind inmates of the cottage, Lambert took his leave, intending to proceed towards home, but Mattie slipped out to be his convoy through the field towards the lane, from the natural wish to enjoy a little talk by them-

selves, and the parting embrace of him who was so soon to be her own for ever.

As they crossed the field which led towards the road, their whisper, so interesting to both, was somewhat interrupted by their accidentally observing a shapeless figure, moving, or rather stealing along, by the fence beside them. There was scarcely any moon, the figure was in the shadow just by the hedge, and the place being lonesome, and no thoroughfare near, so unexpected an apparition, filled both the youth and his betrothed with some apprehension. As they drew near to the stile that parted them from the road, Lambert stood still, determined to wait until the figure would come up, and to address to it the usual challenge of civility.

“ God save you, friend !” was his natural address, as the woman came up, after the manner of the common people in the country parts of Ireland.

“ God save you kindly !” was the hypocritical response of the mother of the Kearneys, and when she came up, and the dull moonbeam discovered the features of the well-known and detested old woman, a shuddering feeling came

involuntarily over both of the lovers, from an apprehension that there was something which boded no good to either, in this her unexpected presence and observation.

"It is far from Harold's Cross for you to be at this hour, Mrs. Kearney," said Lambert, civilly, "but may be ye have lost your way as ye crossed from the mountains. It's a darkish night sure, for all the pretension of a moon."

"Mind the moulahan at your side, and never mind me, Mr. Lambert," said the old woman, saucily, as she stepped over the stile; "and there's moon enough yet to light me to Harold's Cross if I want to go, but sure ye's both can see to kiss by the moon's glimmer that shews at night where the bog is blackest, although ye's may be may have less light than will serve you to keep the four corners of the Warren free from cute cattle, that ken the differ between the squire's grass and the cotter's cabbage." Thus saying, the old woman went muttering away, and before the lovers could recover their momentary surprise, she was lost in the dark winding of the narrow lane.

"There is something that I do not like fore-

bodes me about that wicked old woman," said Mattie Connor, laying her hand with alarm on her breast. "I wish no sad thing be yet to happen us, Owen," she added, looking anxiously in the young man's countenance.

"Pooh, never fear, my jewel, Mattie," said Lambert, gaily, and soon by further expostulation, he succeeded in quelling the fears of his anxious lass. Thus with their usual tenderness they parted for the night, forgetting in pleasanter thoughts this ill-boding encounter.

On the same night three fine sheep were stolen from the flock in the Warren Park, and when the old woman arrived at home, she found her sons washing carefully the blood from off their hands; the supper that already fried on the cottage fire, was seasoned with the full tale of her discovery, and sundry taunts and hints, and half-intimated threatenings, addressed to her sons, that made the eyes of the three men flash with a fiendish expression, sadly predicted what was afterwards to be consummated.

CHAPTER II.

SEVERAL weeks after this, however, passed quietly away, and now Owen Lambert and Mattie Connor were married and happy, and living in the pleasant honeymoon of their union in the pretty cottage that had been prepared for them in the middle of the Warren policy. The whole neighbourhood seemed disposed to rejoice in their union, from Harold's Cross to the Dublin mountains, excepting, indeed, the Kearney family, whose envy and malice exceeded all bounds, and only wanted an occasion to break out into some deed which should glut

and gratify the infernal spirit to which these wretched people had now entirely given way. This feeling of demoniac hate was aggravated, if possible, by the very forbearance, clemency, and advocacy in their favour with the squire, of the sensible and considerate grieve of the warren; and by their being made sensible that he had fully traced the theft of the three sheep to them, and had partly concealed it, and partly taken the blame of their loss upon himself, on account of his temporary absence from the grounds at the time—he wishing, if possible, by fair means and faithful vigilance in future, to prevent, if possible, any further cause of difference between the Kearneys and his master.

But all this cautious and indulgent conduct only served to deepen the hatred of the infatuated family, whose malignant spirit seemed to brood day and night over the provoking good conduct, and still more provoking success of the attentive grieve. The praises which the people of the neighbourhood lavished on the young couple for their looks, as they now appeared in their well-saved clothes of a Sunday, walking arm in arm so lovingly past the Kearneys' very

door, to and from the Protestant church in Harold's Cross, was like wormwood to the envious spirit of the three men, and stung them to madness as it was weekly repeated in their ears. Yet with all their malice, the natural dread with which cowardly vice always regards open-fronted virtue and manly good conduct, together with the firm threatening of the squire, so awed the Kearneys, that they dared not drive their cow into the parks of the warren as they were used to do, and made them waver in their half-formed purposes of vengeful audacity. But the cow now being expelled from every field and enclosure round, began to be much in want of grass, and to give a stinted measure of the dairy produce, which made the old woman murmur and mutter at the vigilant grieve, and soon to taunt her hopeful "boys" for their cowardly meanness to think of paying for cow's grass so long as there was so much of it growing rich upon the meadows "of the warren beyant," which might give them all many a meal of good milk for nothing, if it was not for their own chicken-hearted pusillanimity, the devil save them."

It was not hard to advise "the boys," to any outrage which might give provocation to the favoured grieve, so on the morning of the next day, the two in person openly drove their vexatious cow into one of the very best parks of the warren. By the orders of the grieve, if obeyed to the letter, he might at once have pointed the cow, and left the Kearneys to seek their remedy; but having been warned to take care of proceeding to any extremity against such dangerous persons, by the foreboding anxiety of his anxious young wife, he only drove the cow from the park, and even went in person on the same evening to the Kearneys' cottage, to expostulate with them against persisting in proceedings so likely to bring trouble and ruin upon themselves. When he entered their cabin, he unfortunately found no one at home but the hardened old woman, and to his earnest and almost beseeching warning, of what would be the sure result to her husband and sons, if they desisted not from their insulting trespasses, she only replied with a taunting sneer, and a heap of reproaches upon "the garsoon," for his persevering zeal in the execution of his duty.

Two days more had not passed over, when the cow was again found grazing in the same park, and was forthwith driven to the poind, after the whole affair had been laid before the squire. Determined no longer to submit to these repeated outrages, Mr. Shawfield resolved to follow out and punish this last offence with the utmost rigour, particularly as it had been accompanied by a wanton breaking of his fences, such as never before had been attempted, and of which his faithful griever had himself managed to be the eye-witness. Besides, therefore, putting the Kearneys to the usual expences of the poind, which they paid with dark and uncompunctious reluctance, provoked by their saucy and threatening manner, the squire further resolved to make an example of this family, and accordingly summoned the father and eldest son to a court in Dublin, to answer to the charge of a wanton trespass, the griever being of course the chief, yet reluctant witness against them.

The news of the approaching trial of the Kearneys, when it came cautiously to the ears of the young wife of the griever, filled her with

an involuntary and anxious apprehension. She feared something she knew not what ; she wished the trial was over, and yet she scarcely knew why ; for Mr. Shawfield had given her assurances of the utmost favour and protection to her deserving husband, and had himself called to see her, and to give her his word to that effect. Still as the day drew near, when Owen Lambert was to go into Dublin, she could not divest herself of her foreboding anxiety, for dreadful reports had come to her ears of the horrible threatenings that the Kearneys had been heard to utter against the humane yet vigilant youth. The personal situation of the young wife now helped to increase her tendency to nervous anxiety, and though by day her mind was soothed by argument and assurance, by night her fancy was haunted with every sort of terrifying image. She had often heard, with a feminine shudder, of the dreadful atrocities of Irish revenge, committed in the wild parts of her unfortunate country, and whenever she tried to sleep, as she lay at midnight, listening for sound or tread without her lonely cottage, dark horrors, burnings, and

murders, haunted her disturbed slumbers; but when she was awoke by some startling shriek of her imaginary terrors, and found Owen sleeping placidly by her side, she would clasp him to her bosom, with the thankful fondness of a wife, and thus fall asleep, again uttering murmurs of gratitude to Heaven for his safety.

CHAPTER III.

AT length the day arrived, previous to the one appointed for the hearing of the charge against the Kearneys, and some reports having been current that this pestiferous family were likely from hence to be forced entirely from the neighbourhood, gave confidence and spirits to the anxious wife, so that the day wore over with unusual comfort. In the afternoon the young couple were visited at their cottage by Widow Connor, Mattie's mother, who staid with them till after nightfall, and the evening was spent with affectionate and gay hilarity.

At length, the mother-in-law rose to depart, and Owen rose also, in order to accompany her, at least part of the way, across the fields towards her cottage. But when he went to the door, and opening it, looked out upon the dark sky, and across the obscure fields as far as he could see, and heard the low wind sighing through the sweeping planting, and the murmur of the distant river which hummed beyond the warren, a pulse of involuntary dread struck at his heart, and he felt this night a reluctance to entrust himself without, such as he never before remembered to have come over him. But he did not express any thing to indicate this in the presence of his wife, although he went without and looked round, and came in again, and appeared thoughtful and restless, and did not move for some time after the widow had intimated her intention to leave the cottage.

His wife was somewhat struck with his manner, and at first made an objection to his going to her mother, which he, in the spirit of hospitable courage, would by no means listen to ; so her former fears having by this time been much dispelled, she made little opposition, and

with an affectionate look in her face as he parted from her, away he went to be convoy to the widow, with many charges from Mattie, that if he observed nothing which might require his presence without, he should speedily return, to enjoy his rest and her advice, before what was to take place on the following day.

Lambert had not gone far from the door across the fields, the young wife being left in the cottage alone, when the thought smote her, that she ought not to have allowed her Owen to leave his own home at night, at least until the trial was over. An ominous dread now came over her concerning him, and she began to feel an anxiety for his safety, that became perfectly intolerable. All the usual reasonings in such circumstances, she called in to check the intensity of her uneasy apprehensions, as she waited with impatience in the empty dwelling, and listened eagerly, trying to hear his distant footsteps. An hour—two hours, passed entirely away and still she listened, until she could audibly hear the hard beating of her own heart, but no other sound was there to indicate his coming, or to relieve the dreadful horror of her

fevered imaginings. She went out from the cottage door with the lamp in her hand. It cast a feeble and limited glance towards the dark meadows, but all lay shrouded in silence and obscurity, and him whom she looked for, came not. As it wore towards midnight, without his making his appearance, the young woman sat like a statue, in the midst of her terrors, or paced about the cottage in incipient distraction. She next seized the little cloak that hung by the wall, and throwing it round her, rushed into the dark fields to seek for her husband.

She wandered some way over the wet grass, and still she could see no one, but sometimes, as she stopped to listen, she thought she could hear the voices of men in the dark distance, and clamours and struggling sounds seemed to come over her eager ear, and again she thought she could even distinguish faint shrieks and low groans, carried upon the tell-tale wings of the passing blast. But this reality or fancy was too much for her nerves to bear, and she stood for a time stock still in the meadow. The cold wind of midnight now blew chill in her face, and nameless

terrors came with more than freezing power over her heart, until becoming alarmed lest she should faint beside the planting, she made a great effort to retrace her steps, and with much difficulty was barely able to reach her empty and disconsolate dwelling.

It is not for me to attempt to describe how the poor young woman got over this dreadful night. But hour after hour passed like ages away, and when daylight came without the return of her Owen, she lost the sense of her distress in the relief of overpowering insensibility. In this state was Mattie Lambert found by a neighbour, who came to inquire for her husband before his going to Dublin to attend the much-talked-of trial of the Kearneys.

Mr. Shawfield at this time was living in his house in Dublin, and being much interested in the present business, from the repeated annoyances of the Kearneys, was early in court on this morning of the trial, or rather of the simple exhibition of a charge to which they were bound over to appear, and took his seat on the bench near the magistrates for the hearing. The case was soon called, but though he

had observed the Kearneys to be early in court, his faithful grieve had not yet made his appearance. Something unknown might have prevented the witness's early attendance, and the squire got the case put off till a late hour in the day, and now he became seriously uneasy, for still Owen Lambert appeared not. The magistrate was now ready for this last case, and, unable to delay the hearing, went somewhat into the charge in the case—but on the principal witness being again repeatedly called in court, still the grieve appeared not.

The anxious squire looked among the crowd in vain, and an impudent sneer was manifest in the countenances of the three Kearneys, their beldam-mother, who stood behind, regarding with laughter the aldermen on the bench. While the court now consulted as to the propriety of dismissing this case for want of evidence, the elder of the Kearneys looking towards the bench, and smiling saucily as he turned towards the squire, uttered this strange and impertinent speech,—

“Robert Shawfield, Esq. M. P.—where is the fine witness that ye were to have brought to

swear against me and my boys. If ye have him, why don't he come forward?"

The pain that Mr. Shawfield felt at the impertinence of this speech, was nought to the thought that struck him at the moment, as he gazed severely in the face of the taunting old man.

"I request that these three men," said he, "may be instantly taken into custody, under the charge at least of stealing from off my property three sheep, which I shall prove by other witnesses besides him who was to have appeared this morning against them. Heaven grant that they may have no greater guilt than this last to account for, both to God and man!"

The words had scarcely been spoken, when a messenger arrived from the warren to inform the squire, that the griever, having left his cottage on the previous night, had never returned; and that search having been made for him every where, no traces of him were to be found, but that certain marks of a struggle had been observed on the side of a bank, and strong suspicions were every where abroad, that the unfortunate man had met with a cruel death by the

hands of these Kearneys, who had long used open threatenings against him. The horror of the master and friend of the deserving grieve, and of the whole court at hearing this intelligence, need not be dwelt upon. Warrants were granted on the instant, both to make search for the body and to investigate carefully the marks and appearances of every thing that should be found within the cottage of the Kearneys, which might furnish any evidence concerning the murder.

It was a melancholy, and a tedious work the search that took place for the lifeless body of the unfortunate young man. The cry was so unusual, and the sensation so great, that voluntary parties were formed of the people around, to assist in the search, both for the sad satisfaction of the distracted widow, if she could be recovered—for the poor creature was by this time insensible to all around her—and to find legal evidence against the ruthless murderers. Every ditch was raked for many miles round, every pool and pond was dragged from Harold's Cross to the Dublin mountains, every spadeful of earth that had been recently dug up, was

moved and tried below the surface, but still all in vain. Whether the body of the grieve had been thrown into the stream that run beyond the warren, and might have been carried towards the sea before the search commenced, or whether it could have been buried under the sands at the bottom, which prevented its ever being traced, or how else it could have been disposed of was never known, but the wretched widow never had the satisfaction of seeing even the mangled corpse of him, of whom she constantly raved, nor was there legal proof exhibited of the actual murder,—for the body of Lambert was never found.

An alarming feeling came over all who knew of this murder, lest, after all, the Kearneys should, for want of evidence, be suffered to escape; for although during the search, an ax had been found in their cottage, from which the blood was imperfectly cleaned, and whereon still stuck some of the clotted hair of the victim of their cruelty; and though the marks of shoes and the print of the ribbed corderoy of a heavily set down knee, corresponding with these articles worn by the Kearneys, appeared on that spot in the warren,

where an evident struggle had taken place, yet the body never having been produced, with other legal defects in the evidence, gave alarming indication to the people round, that the crafty Kearneys would yet get free of the capital charge. But the eye of Heaven, that neither slumbers nor sleeps, had seen, during the darkness, what no human eye but those engaged in the murder had been suffered to witness, and had decreed that such atrocity should not escape its punishment; and the law itself contained a clause which embraced the whole of those to whom vengeance was due. The malice of the Kearneys had been so invetrate, particularly since the pointing of their cow, and so openly manifested to all the neighbourhood, that it furnished out of their own mouths the means of their condemnation; not for the actual crime which might not clearly have been brought home to them, but for a deliberate *conspiracy* to murder, of which there existed abundance of evidence. Upon this point then the whole were arraigned, and though, from some circumstance, the old woman, who was well understood to have instigated the whole, was reluctantly acquitted,

the three men, namely, the father and his two sons, were tried and condemned to suffer on the very spot beyond Harold's Cross, where the horrid deed was supposed to have been perpetrated.

CHAPTER IV.

I AM now come to speak of that sickening gliff that came over my heart, at the sight which I witnessed one morning as I sat at my window, in the long suburban street as you go towards Harold's Cross, from the city of Dublin. It was a quiet close morning, and drawing towards noon, when I sat musing at my window, as I say, and thinking within myself of God's goodness and man's deceits, for the day was Monday, and certain things came soothingly over my thoughts, which I had heard in the house of prayer, during the solemnities of the previous

day's worship. Surely, said I, goodness and mercy hath still followed me all my life long, even into this discontented kingdom of the Irish, and as to the wickedness of the wicked, which is wrought in secret places of the earth, I have still been preserved, even from knowing the depth and the breadth thereof.

I was communing with myself in this comforting way, and so abstract in my inward meditation, that I did not pay any attention, although I partly saw the people beginning to lift their windows all round, and those on the street beneath, running hastily from that end of the suburb, to which my back was all the while turned. I have been often called stupid, and so I am, when any thing takes my thoughts away into meditative abstraction; so I never troubled myself to turn round my head, until the clatter of an host of horses' feet came over my ears from behind, and a wild cry of "the Kearneys! the Kearneys!" accompanied the sudden rising of the surrounding windows.

What a strange and impressive cavalcade was this, which, with the immense and horrified crowd that followed it, was now almost under

my very window. There were horsemen behind and horsemen before, but no music, or sound such as usually accompanies a military spectacle, and the buzz and murmur that ran through the multitude had an awfulness in it, as if it were the low and deep voice of justice herself, and seemed to have the sternness mixed with the horror, of a generally awarded and righteous sentence of death. There was something very dreadful in the arrangement of the cavalcade. Behind the first troop of military, came three vehicles of the lowest sort used as conveyances in Ireland, called jingles ; which being a species of double car, upon springs, are considerably elevated above the heads of the people. The first of these carried a temporary gallows, which was to be erected on the spot where the murder had been committed ; the last contained three coffins ; and in the centre jingle sat the wretched men, the execrated objects of this horrid preparation.

“ Lord save us,” said I, as I surveyed the whole, “ but it is an awful sight, to see a father and his two sons carted off together to their death,” two of them young and even handsome

men, and, together with the father, such as you never could have supposed, from their looks, to be capable of committing so atrocious a deed. The three sat together in the jingle, with a bare-headed priest placed between each, and holding a crucifix close to their faces. They were all dressed in black, their arms pinioned to their sides, with the white caps of execution on their heads, and the ropes already hanging from their bared necks. The wanness of death already gave their countenances a blanched cadaverousness, which was absolutely fearful to behold ; the young men, in particular, seemed quite overcome with the horror of guilt and of their situation, and had lost all power over themselves, so that as the vehicle jolted slowly on to their death, their heads wagged backwards and forwards with every motion, and when they ventured to try to look before or behind, their eye fixed on the great frightful gallows, rumbling on in their view, on which they were about to be suspended by the neck, and behind came the row of coffins, which already gaped for their corpses. The crowd that moved on at their side looked up in their languid countenances with

impressions, such as could not easily be effaced, and the only sounds that were heard, besides the suppressed murmur of the people, was a startling howl, which now and then burst from a band of women, who followed the car bearing the coffins, among which was the wretched wife of one, and mother of two of the men whom she was, with characteristic hardiness, now following to the gibbet.

The melancholy procession passed away from before my eyes, and the occasional howl of the women came with sickening impression over my ears, as the whole moved off in the distance, and as I reflected upon the miserable end of all incorrigible workers of iniquity. I was afterward told by those who witnessed the execution, that the hardened old wretch, who had urged her family into the commission of these atrocities, had the heart to stand at the gallows' foot, while that husband and these two sons, which constituted all her earthly ties, were for the crimes to which she had encouraged them, struggling in the agonies which launched them into eternity.

But the most painful part of this whole tragedy related to the unfortunate widow of the

murdered grieve, whom her terrible misfortune had entirely bereft of her senses, and for whom the sympathetic squire made ample provision, as a confirmed and hopeless lunatic. The broken-hearted widow took her unfortunate daughter back to her cottage, and willingly aided in the delusion into which the poor creature had gradually fallen; that Owen Lambert was still attending the trial of the Kearneys, from which he was hourly expected to return. Whenever, therefore, the morning was fine, the interesting maniac went forth and sat patiently on a stone at the door, to wait, as she said, until her Owen came home from Dublin.

Curiosity, and that melancholy interest with which unmerited misfortune is always invested, led me one day to swerve off my way as I went to the Dublin mountains, to try if I could see her. Sure enough, as the people there say, I did see this pretty and demented young widow, sitting as usual in the sunshine at the cottage-door, and singing sillily to herself, as she carelessly knitted some trifling article. When she perceived me she rose, and looking anxiously in

my face, came forward to meet me. "Begging your pardon, Sir," she said in the liquid softness of the Dublin *patois*, and curtseying as she drew near, "did your honour come from Dublin this morning?"

"I did," said I sadly, observing the poor thing's look of melancholy anxiety.

"May be, Sir," she continued, "you can tell me something of one Owen Lambert, that's there at the trial.—Ah, he is long, long, of coming!"

"So he is," said I, "but you'll see him by-and-by."

"Will I?" she said, a gleam of joy coming over her features. "Alas! but I am weary, weary, so long waiting to meet him."

"Are you?" I said, forgetting, in my pity, the poor girl's insanity. "God help you! broken-heart,—but you will meet him I doubt not, in a better world!"

THE END.

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