

WEIRD TALES

SCOTTISH

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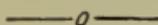
SCOTTISH



WILLIAM PATERSON

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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THE VISION OF CAMPBELL OF INVERAWE.

BY SIR THOMAS DICK LAJDER, BART.

PERHAPS you are all acquainted with the history of the Black Watch, which was afterwards formed into that gallant corps now immortalized by its actions as the Forty-Second Highlanders? General Stewart, of Garth, in his interesting account of the Highland Regiments, tells us that it was originally composed of independent companies, which were raised about 1725 or 1730. These were stationed in small bodies in different parts of the country, in order to preserve the peace of the Highlands. It was, in some sort, a great National Guard, and it was considered so great an honour to belong to it, that most of the privates were the sons of gentlemen or tenants. Most of them generally rode on horseback, and had gillies to carry their arms at all times, except when they were on parade or on duty. They were called *Freiceadan Dubh*, or the Black Watch, from the dark colour of their well-known regimental tartan, in opposition to the *Seider-Deargg*, or Red Soldiers, who were so named from the colour of their coats. You may probably remember the circumstance of their having been most unfairly marched to London, under the pretence that they were to be reviewed by the King,—of their

having been ordered abroad,—of their refusal to go,—of their having been moved, as if by one impulse pervading every indignant bosom among them, to make that most extraordinary and interesting march of retreat which they effected to Northampton,—of their having been ultimately brought under subjection,—and, finally, of their brave conduct in Flanders, from which country they returned in October 1745.

After their return to Great Britain, the Black Watch were ordered into Kent, instead of being sent into Scotland with the other troops under General Hawley, to act against those who had risen for Prince Charles. This arrangement probably arose entirely from great consideration and delicacy on the part of the Government, who, fully aware of the high honour of the individuals of the corps, never entertained the smallest doubt of their loyalty, but who felt the cruelty of exposing men to the dreadful alternative of fighting against their friends and relatives, many of whom were necessarily to be found in the ranks of the insurgents. There were, however, three additional companies raised in the Highlands, a little time before the return of the regiment from abroad. These were kept in Scotland, and however distressing to their feelings the duty was which they were called upon to perform, on the side for which they were enlisted, they did that duty most honourably. One of these was recruited and commanded by Duncan Campbell, Laird of Inverawe.

After various services in their own country during the period that the rest of the corps was abroad for the second time, these three companies were ordered

to embark, in March 1748, to join the regiment in Flanders. But the preliminaries of peace having been soon afterwards signed, the order was countersigned, and they were reduced.

During the time that Campbell of Inverawe's company was occupied in the unpleasant duty to which I have alluded, he had been on one occasion compelled to march into the district of Lorn, and to burn and destroy the houses and effects of a few small gentlemen, who were of that resolute description that they would have sacrificed all they had, and even life itself, rather than yield to what they held to be the government of an usurper. Having been thus led to pursue his route, in a certain direction, for many a mile, he happened, on his return, to be detained behind his men by some accidental circumstance, and having lost his way after nightfall, he wandered about alone for several hours, until he became considerably oppressed with hunger and fatigue. With the expectation of gathering some better knowledge of his way, he left the lower grounds, where the darkness of night had settled more deeply and decidedly down, and he climbed the side of a hill with the hope of benefiting, in some degree, by the half twilight which lingers longer upon these elevations, continuing to rest upon them sometimes for hours after it has altogether deserted their lower regions. With the dogged perseverance of one who labours on because he has no other alternative, he blindly pursued his haphazard course in a diagonal line along the abrupt face, always rising as he proceeded, until his way became every moment more and more difficult. The side of the

hill became steeper and steeper at every step, until he began to be satisfied that he had no chance of reaching its brow, except by retracing his steps, in order to discover some other means of ascending to it. To any such alternative as this he could by no means make up his mind. He cursed his own folly for allowing his company to march on without him. He uttered many a wish that he was with them. He felt sufficiently convinced that he had acted imprudently in having thus exposed himself alone, in the midst of a district which was yet reeking with the vengeance which his duty had compelled him so unwillingly to pour out upon it. But his courage was indomitable, and his way lay onwards, and onwards he without hesitation resolved to go.

He had not proceeded far, until high cliffs began to rear themselves over his head, whilst, from his very feet, perpendicular precipices shot down into the deep night that prevailed below. The goat or deer track that he followed became every moment more and more blocked up with stony fragments, until at length it offered one continuous series of dangerous steps, requiring his utmost care and attention to preserve him from a slip or fall that might have been fatal.

Whilst he was thus proceeding, with his whole attention occupied in self-preservation, he was suddenly challenged in Gaelic by a rough voice in his front.

“Who comes there?”

“A friend,” replied Inverawe, in the same language in which he was addressed.

“I am not sure of that,” said the same voice hoarsely and bitterly. “Is he alone?”

“He *is* alone,” said a voice a little way behind Inverawe; “we are quite safe.”

“Come on then, sir,” said the voice in front, “you have nothing to fear.”

“Fear!” cried Inverawe, in a tone which implied that any such feeling had ever been a stranger to him; “I fear nothing.”

“I know you to be a brave man, Inverawe!” said the man who now appeared in front of him. “Come on then without apprehension. You need not put your hand into the guard of your claymore, for no one here will harm you. But what strange chance has brought you here?”

“The loss of my way,” replied Inverawe. “But how do you come to know me so well?”

“It is no matter how I know you,” replied the other. “It is sufficient that I do know you, and know you to be a brave man, to whom, as such, I am prepared to do what kindness I can. What are your wants then, and what can I do for you?”

“My wants are, simply to find my lost way, and then to procure some food, of which I stand much in need,” replied Inverawe.

“Be at ease then, for I shall help you to both,” replied the person with whom he was conversing; “but methinks your last want requires to be first attended to, as the most urgent; so follow me, and look sharply to your footing.” Then, speaking in a louder tone to some individuals, who, though unseen, were posted somewhere in the obscurity to the rear of

Inverawe, he said, "Look well to your post, lads, I shall be with you by and by." And then again turning to Inverawe, he added—"Come on, sir; you must climb up this way; the ascent is steep, and you will require to use hands as well as feet. Goats were wont to be the only travellers here, and even they must have been hardy ones. But troublous times will often people the desert cliffs themselves with human beings, and scare the very eagle from her aerie, that she may yield her lodging to weary man.

Inverawe now began to clamber after his guide up a steep, tortuous, and dangerous ascent, where in some places they were compelled to pull up their bodies by the strength of their hands and arms. It lasted for some time; and he of the Black Watch, albeit well accustomed to such work, was beginning to be very weary of it, when at length they landed on a tolerably wide natural ledge, where Inverawe perceived that the cliffs that arose from the inner angle of it so overhung their base as to render it self-evident that all farther ascent in this direction was cut off by them. Rounding a huge fallen mass of rock, which lay poised on the very edge of the precipice, they came suddenly on a ravine, or rift, in the face of the cliff above, on climbing a few paces up which, they discovered the low, arched mouth of a cave, whence issued a faint gleam of light, and an odour of smoke. His guide stooped under the projection of the cliff that hung over it, and let himself down through the narrow entrance. Inverawe followed his example without fear, and found himself in a cavern of an irregular form, from ten to twenty feet in diameter.

This he discovered partly by the light of a fire of peats that smouldered near the entrance, and partially filled the place with smoke, but more perfectly by a torch of bog-fir which his guide immediately lighted. But he felt no curiosity about this, in comparison with that which he experienced in regard to the figure and features of his guide, with which he was intensely anxious to make himself acquainted.

He was a tall and remarkably fine looking man, considerably below middle age. He was dressed in a gray plaid and kilt, betokening disguise, but with the full complement of Highland armour about him. His hair hung in long black curls around his head. His face was very handsome, his nose aquiline, his mouth small and well formed, having its upper lip graced by a dark and well-trimmed moustache. His eyes, and his whole general expression, were extremely benignant. After scanning his face with great attention, Inverawe was satisfied that he never had seen him before, and he had ample opportunity of ascertaining the reverse, if it had been otherwise, for the man stood with the bog-fir torch blazing in his hand, as if he wished to give his guest the fullest advantage of it in his scrutiny of him, and then, as if guessing the conclusion to which that scrutiny had brought him, he at last began to speak.

“Ay,” said he calmly, “you are right, Inverawe. Your eyes have never beheld me until this moment. But I have seen you to my cost. I was looking on all the while that you and your men were burning and destroying my house, goods, and gear, this blessed morning, and *I* can never forget *you*.”

“I know you not, that is certain,” replied Inverawe; “and the cruel duty we were on to-day was so extensive in its operation, that I cannot even guess whom you are.”

“You shall never know it from me, Inverawe,” replied the other.

“And why not?” demanded Inverawe.

“From no fear for myself,” replied the stranger; “but because I would not add to that remorse, which you must feel, from being compelled to execute deeds which are as unworthy of you, as I know they are contrary to your generous and kindly nature. I have suffered from you deeply—deeply indeed have I suffered. But I look upon you but as an involuntary minister of the vengeance of a cruel Government, and perhaps as an agent in the hand of a just God, who would punish me for those sins and frailties which are inherent in my human nature. I blame not you, and I can have no feeling of anger against you, far less of revenge. Give me, then, the right hand of fellowship.”

“Willingly, most willingly!” said Inverawe, cordially shaking hands with him. “You are a noble, high-minded man; for certainly I can imagine what your feelings might have very naturally been against me, and I know that I am now in your power.”

“All I ask, Inverawe, is this,” continued the stranger; “that as I have been, and will continue to be, honourable towards you, you will be the same to me; and in asking that, I know that I am asking what is sure to be granted. The confidence in your honour which I have shown by bringing you here, will not be betrayed.”

“Never!” said Inverawe, with energy. “Never while I have life!”

“I know I can rely upon you,” said the stranger; “and now let me hasten to give you such refreshment as I possess. Sit down, I pray you, as near to the ground as possible; you will find that the smoke will annoy you less.”

Inverawe did as his host had recommended, and, seating himself on some heather which lay on the floor of the place, the stranger opened a wicker pannier that stood in a low recess, and speedily produced from it various articles of food, of no mean description, together with a bottle of French wine, and, spreading the viands before his guest, he seated himself by him, and they ate and drank together. They had little conversation; and the stranger no sooner saw that Inverawe’s hunger was satisfied, than he arose, and proposed that he should now guide him on his journey. Creeping from the hole, therefore, they descended the crags together, with all that care which the steepness of the declivity rendered necessary, until they came to the spot where they had first encountered each other, and then the stranger began to guide Inverawe onwards in the same direction he had been formerly pursuing.

They had not proceeded far, until they were challenged by voices among the rocks, showing that his host’s place of retreat was protected by sentinels in all quarters. His guide answered the challenge, and they then went on without molestation. After about an hour’s walk over very rugged ground, during which they wound over the mountain, and threaded

their way through various bogs and woods, that completely bewildered Inverawe, his guide suddenly brought him out upon a road which he well knew, and then shaking hands with him, and bidding him farewell, he dived again into the wood, and disappeared.

Inverawe rejoined his company at their night's quarters. They had spent an anxious time regarding him, during his absence, and they were clamorous in their inquiries as to what had become of him. He gave them an account of the circumstance of his losing his way; but he told them not a syllable of his adventure with the stranger, resolving that it should be for ever buried in his own bosom. There, however, it produced many a thought; and often did he earnestly hope, that chance might again bring him into contact with the man who had taken so noble a revenge of him—to whom he felt as an honest bankrupt might do towards his generous and forgiving creditor; and whose person and features he had engraven so deeply on his recollection, to be embalmed there amidst the warmest and kindest affections of his heart.

It was soon after the disbanding of his company, that Campbell of Inverawe returned to his own romantic territory, and to his ancient castle, standing in the midst of beautiful natural lawns, surrounded by wooded banks and knolls, lying at the north-western base of the mighty Ben-Cruachan. Speaking in a general way, the country around was thickly covered with oak and birch woods, giving double value, both in point of beauty and utility, to the rich,

glady pastures, which were seen to spread their verdant surface to the sun, along the course of the river Awe. Behind the gray towers of the building, broken rocks arose here and there, in bare masses, in the direction of the mountain ; whilst the blue expanse of Loch Etive stretched away from the eye towards the north-east, as well as to the west. To the south-west, the groves, and grassy slopes, were abruptly broken off by the perpendicular crags of the romantic ravine through which the river makes its way, to pour itself across the open haughs of Bunawe, and into Loch Etive. To sketch out the remainder of the neighbourhood, so that you may be fully aware of the nature of the country, which was the scene, where one of the most important circumstances of my tale took place, I may add, that about a mile above the ravine, the river has its origin from a long narrow arm of Loch Awe, which presents one of the most romantic ranges of scenery in Scotland. The lake in the bottom is there everywhere about eighty or an hundred yards wide only ; and whilst a bare, rocky mountain front, furrowed by many a misty cataract, rises sheer up out of the water on its western side, the steep, lofty, and rugged face of Cruachan shuts it in on the eastern side, forming the grand and wild pass of Brandera. Here the mountain exhibits every variety of picturesque form,—of prominent crag, and half-concealed hollow, among which the gray mists are continually playing and producing magical effects ; together with deep torrent beds, and innumerable waterfalls, thundering downwards unseen, save in glimpses, amid the thick copse which, generation

after generation, has sprung from the stools of those giant oaks, which were once permitted to rear their spreading heads, and to throw their bold arms freely abroad, athwart the rocky steeps that rear themselves so high up above, as to be softened by distance and air, till they almost melt from human vision.

Having thus put you in possession of the scenery, I shall now proceed to tell you, that Campbell of Inverawe, after his long absence from home on military duty, felt all the luxury of enjoyment which these his own quiet scenes could bestow. And his mind expanding to all his old friendships, he largely exercised all the hospitalities of life. Frequently did he fill the hall of his fathers with gay and merry feasters, and his own hilarious disposition always made him the very soul of the mirth that prevailed among them.

One one occasion, it happened that he had congregated a large party together. The wine circulated freely. The fire bickered on the hearth, and threw a cheerful blaze over the walls of the hall, reddening the very roof, and gleaming on the warlike weapons that hung around. The wine was good, the jests were merry, and the conversation sparkling, so that the guests were as loath to depart as their kind host was unwilling to let them go. His lady had retired to her chamber, but still they sat on, making the old building ring again with their jocund laughter. But all things must have an end. The parting cup, to their host's roof-tree, was proposed by a certain young man called George Campbell, and it was filled to the brim. But as all were on their legs to drain it, with

heart and good will, to the bottom, a rattling peal of thunder rolled directly over their heads. There was not a man of them that did not feel that the omen was appalling. Some hardy ones tried to laugh it off, as a salvo from heaven in homologation of their good wishes to the house of Inverawe. But the pleasantry went ill down with the rest. Servants were called for, horses were ordered, and out poured their owners to mount them,—when they were all surprised to see the heavens quite serene and tranquil. But not a word of remark was ventured by any one on this so very strange a circumstance. Their hospitable entertainer saw every man of them take his stirrup-cup; and they galloped away, one after the other.

After they were all gone, Inverawe paced about in the courtyard for some time, in sombre thought which stole involuntarily upon him. He then sought his way up-stairs, and, lifting an oaken chair towards the great hearth, where the billets had by this time begun to burn red and without flame, he sat down in it for a while, listlessly to ponder over the events of the evening. The weary servants had gladly stolen away to bed, and the whole castle was soon as silent as the grave. Not a sound was to be heard within the walls, but the dull, drowsy buzzing of a large fly, which the flickering light of a solitary lamp, left on the table, had prevented from retiring to some cranny of repose. The master of the mansion smiled for a moment, as the whimsical idea crossed him, that this tiny insect was perhaps the only thing of life which, at that time, kept watch with him within the castle.

Inverawe's thoughts reverted to the last toast which

had been given by his young friend Campbell, and the strange circumstances by which it had been accompanied. He had an only son, called Donald, a promising young man, who was the prop of his house, and to whose future career in life he looked forward with all a father's anxiety. He had been long accustomed to weave a silken tissue of anticipated happiness, and honours, for the young man, and to view him, in his mind's eye, as the father of many generations to come. The youth was at that time from home; and this was the very first moment of his life that the notion of there being any chance of his being one day left childless, had ever occurred to him. He tried to shake off these gloomy presentiments, but still they returned, and clung to him, with a force and pertinacity that no reason could conquer. He would fain have risen to go to his chamber, but he felt as if some powerful, though unseen hand, had held him down to his chair; and he continued to sit on, absorbed in contemplative musings on these gloomy and painful dreams, till the billets on the hearth had consumed themselves to their red embers.

Suddenly all such thoughts were put to flight from his mind. He distinctly heard the great outer door of the castle creak upon its hinges. He remembered, that although he had not locked it, he had shut it behind him when he came in. It now banged against its doorway, and sent a hollow sound echoing up the long turnpike stair. Faint, quick, and stealthy footsteps were then heard ascending. One or two other doors were moved in succession. The footsteps approached with cautious expedition. And as Inver-

awe listened with breathless attention, the door of the hall was thrust open, a human countenance appeared for an instant in the dusky aperture, and then a man, with a naked dirk in his hand, his clothes dripping wet, his long hair hanging streaming over his shoulders and half-veiling his glaring eyes and pale and haggard countenance, rushed in, and made straight up to him.

Inverawe started to his feet, drew his dirk, and prepared to defend himself from this unlooked-for attempt at assassination. But ere he had well plucked it forth from its sheath, the intruder assumed the attitude of a suppliant.

“For mercy’s sake pardon my unceremonious entrance, Inverawe!” said the stranger, in a hollow, husky, and exhausted voice. “And be not alarmed, for I come with no hostile intention against you or yours. I am an unfortunate wretch, who, in a sudden quarrel, have shed the blood of a fellow-creature. He was a man of Lorn. I have been hotly pursued by his friends, and though I have thrown those who are after me considerably out, during the long chase they have kept up, yet they are still pressing like blood-hounds on my track. To baffle them, if possible, I threw myself into the river, and swam across it; and I now claim that protection, and that hospitality, which no one ever failed to find within the house of Inverawe.”

“By Cruachan!” cried Inverawe, sheathing his dirk, and slapping it smartly with the open palm of his hand. “By Cruachan, I swear that you shall have both!”

Now, I must tell you, that this was considered as the most solemn pledge that a Campbell of Inverawe could give. Their war-cry was, "*Coar-a-Cruachan*," that is, "*Help from Cruachan*." And this expression had a double meaning, inasmuch as the word *Gruachan* had reference both to the mountain of that name, and to the hip where the dirk hung. To swear by *Cruachan*, therefore, and to strengthen the oath by slapping the dirk with the open palm, was to utter an oath, which must, under all circumstances, be for ever held inviolable.

"But tell me," said Inverawe, "how happened this unlucky affair?"

"We were all met to make merry at a wedding," replied the stranger, "when, as I was dancing with — But hold!—I hear voices! They approach the castle! I am lost if you do not hide me immediately."

"This way," said Inverawe, leading him to a certain obscure part of the hall. "Aid me to lift this trap. Now, down with ye and crouch there. They come."

Inverawe had barely time to drop the trap-door into its place, to resume his seat at the fire, and to affect to be in a deep sleep, when the voices and the sound of human footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. Three men entered the hall in reeking haste—claymores in hand. They rushed towards the fire-place, where he was sitting. Inverawe started up as if just awaked by the noise they made, and drew his dirk, as if to defend himself from their meditated attack.

"Ha!" cried he, with well-feigned surprise.

“Assassins! Then must I sell my life as dearly as I can.”

“Not assassins!” cried they. “We are not assassins, Inverawe. We crave your pardon for this apparently rude intrusion, but we are in pursuit of an assassin. We come to look for a man who has murdered another. Have we your permission to search for him?”

“Certainly,” said Inverawe, “wherever you please.”

“He cannot be here,” said one of the men. “I told you that he could not be here. Don’t you see plainly that he could not have come in here without awaking Inverawe. We lose time here. We had better on after our friends.”

“Depend on’t he has run up Loch Etive side,” said another of them.

“What are all these wet footsteps on the floor?” said the first of them that spoke. “He might have been here without Inverawe’s knowledge.”

“Don’t you see that Inverawe has had a feast, and that wine, and water, and whisky too, have been flowing in gallons in all directions?” said the second man. “See, there is a large pool of lost liquor. I verily believe that some of these footsteps are my own, made this moment, by walking accidentally through it. I tell you he never could have come here.”

“It is true that I have had a feast,” said Inverawe carelessly, “as you may see from the wrecks of it that still remain on the table.”

“I told you so,” said the second man. “We only

lose time here. If you had only been guided by my counsel, we might have been hard at his heels by this time, as well as the rest."

"Haste, then, let us go!" said the first man.

"Away! away! cried his companions; and, without waiting for further parley, they rushed out of the hall, and Inverawe heard, with some satisfaction, their footsteps hurrying down-stairs, and the shouts which they yelled forth after their companions growing fainter and fainter, until they were altogether lost in the direction of Loch Etive.

Inverawe was no sooner certain that they were fairly gone, without all risk of returning, than he proceeded, in the first place, to secure the outer door of the castle, and then returning to the hall, he went to the trap-door, and calling softly to the man concealed below, he desired him to aid him in raising it, by applying his strength to force it upwards, and thus their united strength enabled them speedily to open it, and to lift it up.

"Come forth now, unfortunate man," said Inverawe; "your pursuers are gone."

"I come," said the stranger, in his husky, hoarse voice, and as he raised himself from the trap-door, his haggard countenance, and his blood-shot eyes, that glared with the horror of his situation, half seen as they were through his long moist locks, chilled Inverawe's very heart as he looked upon him.

"Now, sir," said Inverawe, "you are safe for the present, your pursuers have passed on."

"Thanks! thanks!" replied the man; "I know not how sufficiently to thank you."

“Ay—all is so far well with you,” said Inverawe; “but concealment for you here is impossible. You must remove into a place of more certain safety, and no time is to be lost. At present you may remove without observation or suspicion; but no one can say how soon the search for you hereabouts may be renewed. Here,” continued he, setting before him some of the remains of the feast, which the tired servants had not removed from the sideboard; take what refreshment circumstances may allow, whilst I go for a basket, in which to carry food enough to last you during to-morrow. We must go to Ben Cruachan, with as much secrecy and expedition as we can.”

The stranger, thus left for a few minutes by himself, hastily devoured some of the viands, of which he had so much need, and having swallowed a full cup of wine, he was rejoined by Inverawe with a basket, into which he hastily packed some provisions, and, without a moment's delay, they quietly and stealthily quitted the hall and the castle, and the moment they found themselves in the open air, Inverawe led the way diagonally up the slope, on the western side of Ben Cruachan.

Their way was long, and their path rough, and they moved on through woods, and over rocks, without uttering a word. Many a half-expressed exclamation, indeed, burst involuntarily from the stranger, betraying a mind ill at ease with itself, and many a start did he give, as if he apprehended surprise from some lurking pursuer; and Inverawe shuddered to think, that the haggard appearance of the man, and these his guilty-like apprehensions, were more in accordance

with the accusation of murder, or unfair slaughter, which seemed to have been made against him, by the expressions of some of those who had come into the hall in search of him, than with the chance-medley killing of a man in an affray, which was the complexion he had himself wished to put on the matter. Be this as it might, however, his most solemn pledge had been given for his security, and accordingly he determined honourably to fulfil it, at all hazards to himself. His reflections, as he went with this man, were of anything but a pleasing nature.

After a long and painful walk, or rather race, for their pace had been more like that than walking, Inverawe began to climb up the abrupt face of Cruachan, till he came to that part of it which hangs over the northern entrance of the Pass of Brandera, where the river Awe breaks away from the end of the narrow branch of the lake; and there, after some scrambling, he led the stranger high up the face of the mountain, to a cave that yawned in the perpendicular cliff. The concealment here was perfect, for its mouth was masked in front by a cairn of large stones, which might have been accidentally accumulated by falling during successive ages from the rocks above, or perhaps artificially piled up there in memory of some person or event long since forgotten. It was, moreover, surrounded by trees of all sorts of growth; indeed, the universal wooding which prevailed over the surrounding features of nature, of itself rendered any object on the ground of the mountain-side difficult to be discovered by any creature that did not, like an eagle, mount into the

sky. In addition to this, the great elevation of the position added to the security of the place, and the ravine-seamed front of the perpendicular mountain of rock that guarded the western side of the pass, immediately opposite to the face of Cruachan, precluded all chance of observation from that quarter.

“This is not exactly the place where Campbell of Inverawe would wish to exercise his hospitality to any one who deigns to ask for his protection,” said the Laird, whilst he was engaged in striking a light; “but in your circumstances it is the best retreat in which I can extend it towards you. Here is a lamp; and I will leave this tinder-box, and this flask of oil with you. The cave is dry enough, and there is abundance of heather to be had around you. Use your lamp only when you may find it absolutely necessary so to do; for its light might betray you; and take care to show yourself as little as possible during the daylight of to-morrow. I have promised you protection by Cruachan, and by Cruachan you shall have it. You must be contented with this my assurance for the present, for your safety demands that I shall not see you again, until I can do so without observation, under the veil of to-morrow-night’s darkness. Till then, you must e’en do with such provisions as this basket contains, and you may reckon on my bringing a fresh supply with me when I return. Farewell, for I must hurry back, so as to escape discovery.”

“Thanks! thanks! kind Inverawe!” said the man, in a state of extreme agitation and excitement,—“a thousand thanks! But, must you—must you leave

me thus alone? Alone, for a whole night, on this wild mountain-side, with that yawning hole for my place of rest, and with nothing but the roar of these eternal cataracts, mingled with the wild howl of the wind through the pass to lull me to repose! That cairn, too!—may not that be a cairn which marks the spot where—where—where some murder has been done? Can you assure me that no ghosts ever haunt this wild place?”

“The soul that is free from all consciousness of guilt may hold patient, solitary, and fearless converse with ghost or goblin, even on such a wild mountain-side as this,” said Inverawe, somewhat impatiently. “But surely you cannot expect that my hospitality to you should require my sharing this mountain concealment with you? If you do, I must tell you, what common prudence ought to teach you, that if I were disposed to do so, nothing be could more unwise, as nothing could more certainly lead to your detection. My absence from home would create so much surprise and anxiety, that the whole country would turn out to seek for me, and their search for me could not fail to produce your discovery. Even now, I may be risking it by thus delaying to return.”

“True, true, Inverawe!” said the stranger, in a desponding tone, and apparently making a strong effort to command his feelings. “There is too much truth in what you say. I must steel myself up to this night. My safety, as you say, demands it. Yet ’tis a terrible trial! Would that the dawn were come! Is it far from day?”

“I hope it is, indeed,” replied Inverawe, “else

might my absence and all be discovered. It cannot, as yet, as I suppose, be much after midnight; but even that is late enough for me. I must borrow the swiftness of the roebuck to carry me back. So again I say farewell till to-morrow night."

Inverawe tarried not for an answer, but, darting off through the wood, he rapidly descended among the rocks, and then bounded over all the obstacles in his way, with a swiftness almost rivalling that of the animal he had alluded to; and so he reached his own door, in a space of time so short, as to be almost incredible. The fire in the hall had now sunk into white ashes. The lamp, which he had left burning, was now flickering in its last expiring efforts. He swallowed a single draught of wine to restore his exhausted strength, and then he stole to his chamber, and crept into bed, happy in the conviction that his lady, who was in a deep sleep, had never discovered that he had been absent.

The sleep that immediately fell upon Inverawe himself, was that of the most perfect unconsciousness of existence. He knew not, of course, how long it had lasted, nor was he in the least degree sensible of the cause or manner of its interruption. But he did awake, somehow or other; and then it was that he discovered, to his great wonder and astonishment, that the chamber which, on going to bed, he had left as dark as the most impenetrable night could make it, was now illuminated with a lambent light, of a bluish cast, which shone through the very curtains of his bed. A certain feeling of awe crept chillingly over him; for he was at once convinced that the light

was something very different from the dawn of morning. It became gradually more and more intense, till, through the thick drapery that surrounded him, he distinctly beheld the shadow of a human figure approaching his bed. He was a brave man; but he felt that every nerve and muscle of his frame was paralyzed, he knew not how. He watched the slow advance of the figure with motionless awe. The shadowy arm was extended, and the curtain was slowly and silently raised. The bluish light that so miraculously pervaded the chamber, then suddenly arose to a degree of splendour that was dazzling to his sight, and clearly defined the appalling object that now presented itself to his eyes. The face and figure were those of the very man who had formerly entertained him in the hole in the cliff on the mountain-side, in Lorn. He was wrapped in the same gray plaid, too. But those handsome features, which had made so deep an impression on the recollection of Inverawe, were now pale and fixed, as if all the pulses of life had ceased; and the raven locks, which hung curling around them, and the moustaches which once gave so much expression to his upper lip, now only served to increase the ghastliness of the hue of death that overspread his countenance, as well as that of the glaze of those immoveable eyes, which had then exhibited so much generous intelligence. Inverawe lay petrified, his expanded orbs devouring the spectacle before them. With noiseless action, the figure dropped one corner of the shadowy plaid in which it was enveloped, and displayed a gaping wound in its bosom, which appeared to pour out

rivers of blood. Its lips moved not ; yet it spoke—slowly, and in a hollow and sepulchral tone,—

“Inverawe!—blood must flow for blood ! Shield not the murderer !”

Slowly did the spectre drop the curtain ; and its shadow, seen through it, gradually faded away in the waning light, ere Inverawe could well gather together his routed faculties to his aid. He rubbed his eyes, started up in bed, leaned on his pillow, and brushed the curtain hastily aside. All was again dark and silent. Again he rubbed his eyes, and looked ; but again he looked into impenetrable night.

“It was a dream,” *thought*, rather than *said*, Inverawe ; “a horrible dream—but nevertheless it *was* a dream, curious in its coincidences, but not unnatural. Nay, it was most natural, that the strangest adventure of my past life should be recalled by the yet stranger occurrences of this night, and that both should thus link themselves confusedly and irrationally together during sleep. Pshaw ! It is absurd for a rational man to think of this illusion more. I’ll to sleep again.”

But sleep is one of those blessed conditions of human nature which cannot be controlled or commanded by the mere will. On the contrary, the very resolution to command it, is almost certain to put it to flight. The vision, or whatever else it might have been, haunted his imagination, and kept his thoughts so busily occupied, that he could not sleep. When his lady awaked in the morning, she found him lying fevered, restless, and unrefreshed. Her inquiries were anxious and affectionate ; but, by carelessly attribut-

ing his indisposition to the prolonged revelry of the previous evening, he at last succeeded in ridding himself of further question, and springing from his couch, he tried to banish all thought of the unpleasant dilemma into which he had been brought, by occupying himself actively in the business of the day.

He was so far successful for a time; but as night approached, his uncomfortable reflections and anticipations began again to crowd into his mind. He must fulfil his promise of visiting his guest of the cave, a guest whom he now could not help looking upon with horror as a foul murderer; and yet, if he disbelieved the reality of the previous night's visitation, there was no reason that he should so regard him more now, than he had done before. The difficulty of contriving the means of managing his visit, so that it should escape observation or suspicion on the part of his lady, or his domestics, was very considerable. His lady was that evening more than ordinarily solicitous about him, from the conviction that pressed upon her that he had had little or no sleep the previous night, and remarking his jaded appearance, she eagerly urged him to retire to bed at an early hour.

“My dearest,” said he affectionately, “I shall: but before I can do so, I have some otter-traps to set. Perhaps I had better go and finish that business now, while there is yet some twilight. Go you to your chamber, and retire to rest. I shall sleep all the sounder by and by, after breathing the fresh air of this balmy evening for an hour or so.”

The lady yielded to his persuasion, and she had no

sooner left him, than he took an opportunity of filling his basket with such provisions as he could appropriate for the stranger with the least possible chance of detection ; and putting a few of his otter-traps over all, by way of a blind, he sallied forth in the direction of the river. There he first most conscientiously made good his word, by planting his traps, and then, as it was by that time dark, he turned his steps up the side of Ben Cruachan, and made the best of his way towards the cliffs where the cave was situated. As he drew near to its mouth, he was in some degree alarmed by observing a light proceeding from it. He approached it with caution, and, on entering it, he beheld the stranger sitting in the farthest corner of it on the bed of heather, with his figure drawn up and compressed together, and his features painfully distorted, whilst his eyes were intently fixed on vacancy. For a moment Inverawe doubted whether some fit had not seized upon him ; but he started at the noise made by the entrance of his protector, and sprang up to meet him.

“ Oh, Inverawe,” said he, “ what a relief it is to behold you ! Oh, what a wretched weary time I have passed since you left me ! ”

“ I have brought you something to comfort you,” said Inverawe, so shocked with his haggard appearance and conscience-worn countenance, as almost to recoil from him. “ You know that I could not come sooner. You seem to be exhausted with watching. You had better take some of this wine.”

“ Oh, yes, yes, give me wine—a large cup of wine ! ” cried the stranger, wildly seizing the vessel

which Inverawe had filled, and swallowing its contents with avidity. "Oh, such a time as I have spent!"

"This place is quite secure," said Inverawe. "You have no cause for such anxiety, if you will only be prudent. But why do you keep this light burning? Did I not tell you it was most dangerous to do so. Some wandering or belated shepherd or huntsman might be guided hither by it, and if your retreat should be once discovered, your certain destruction must follow."

"I could not remain in darkness," replied the stranger, with a cold shudder; "it was agonizing to do so! Horrid shapes continually haunted me,—horrid, horrid shapes? Even the shutting of my eyes could not exclude them. Oh, such a night as last! Never have I before endured anything so horrible."

"You must take your own way, then," said Inverawe, as he spread out the contents of the basket before him. "I am sorry that I can do nothing better for you, but this is the best fare I could provide for you, without exciting suspicion in my own house. Stay—here is a blanket, to help to make your bed somewhat more comfortable. And now, I must hurry away. Yet, before I go, let me once more caution you about the light. Perhaps I had better make all secure, by taking the lamp with me."

"Oh no! no! no! no!" cried the stranger, his eyes glaring like those of a maniac, while he rushed towards the lamp and seized it up, and clasped it within his arms. "No, nothing shall rend it from

me! I will sacrifice my life to preserve it. What! would you leave me to another long, long, and dreadful night? Would you leave me to utter darkness and despair?"

"Leave you I must," replied Inverawe; "and if you will keep the lamp, you must do so at your own risk. But your thoughts must be dreadful thoughts indeed, so to disturb you. If conscious guilt be the cause of them, I can only advise you to confess yourself humbly to your Creator, and to pray for his forgiveness."

Without waiting for a reply, Inverawe left the cave, and made the best of his way home. On reaching his apartment, he found his lady awake.

"You have been a long time absent, Inverawe," said she anxiously.

"I have, my love," replied he carelessly; "the delicious air of this night induced me to stay out longer than I had intended; but I hope I shall sleep all the better for it."

Exhausted as he was by fatigue of body and mind, as well as worn out by want of rest, Inverawe did fall asleep immediately, and his sleep was sound and deep. For aught he knew, it might have lasted for some hours, when again, as on the previous night, he was awaked, he could not tell how. The curtains of his bed were drawn close, but the same uncouth blue light which pervaded the apartment on the former night, now again rendered them quite transparent. To convince himself that he was awake, Inverawe looked round upon his wife. Even at this early stage, the light was sufficiently bright to enable him

distinctly to see his lady's features as her head lay in calm repose on the pillow beside him. He turned again towards the side of the bed, and his eyes were dazzled by the sudden increase of light, produced by the curtain being raised, as before, by the extended hand of the spectre. The same well-remembered features were there, pale, fixed, and corpse-like; but the expression of the brow, and bloodless lips, was more stern than it was on the previous night. Again the spectre dropped the fold of the filmy plaid that covered the bosom, and displayed the yawning gash, which continued to pour out rivers of blood. The spectacle was horrible, and Inverawe's very arteries were frozen up. Again it spoke in a deep, hollow tone, whilst its lips moved not.

“Inverawe! My first visit has been fruitless!—Once more I come to warn you that blood must flow for blood. No longer shield the murderer! Force me not to appear again, when all warning will be vain!”

Inverawe made an effort to question it. His parched mouth, and dried and stiffened tongue, refused to do their office. The curtain fell, and the light in the room, as well as the shadow of the figure, began to wane away. He struggled to spring out of bed, but his nerves and muscles refused to obey his will, until it was gone, and all was again darkness. The moment that his powers returned to him, he dashed back the curtain, threw himself from the bed, and searched through the room, with outstretched arms; yet, bold and desperate as he was, he almost feared that they might embrace the cold and bloody figure which he had beheld. His search, however,

was vain, and, utterly confused and confounded, he returned to bed with his very heart as cold as ice. Fortunately, his lady had lain perfectly undisturbed, and amidst his own horror, and amidst all his own agonizing agitation of thought, he felt thankful that she had escaped sharing in the terrors to which he had been subjected. As on the former night, he tried to persuade himself that all that had passed was nothing more than a dream; but all the reasoning powers he possessed were ineffectual in removing from his mind the conviction that now laid hold of it, that it really was a spirit that had appeared to him. Sleep was banished from his eyelids for the remainder of the night; and never before had he so anxiously longed for daybreak. It came at last; and soon afterwards his lady awaked.

“Inverawe,” said she, tenderly and anxiously addressing him, “you are ill—very ill. What, in the name of all goodness, is the matter with you? Your worn-out looks tell me that something terrible has occurred to you. Your late excursion of last night has something mysterious about it. You were not wont thus to have concealment from me—from me your affectionate wife! What is it that preys upon your mind?—I must know it.”

“Promise me, upon the honour of Inverawe’s wife,” said he, now seeing that concealment from her was no longer practicable; “promise me on that honour which is pure and unsullied as the snow, that you will not divulge what I have to tell you, and your curiosity shall be satisfied.”

With a look of intense and apprehensive interest,

the lady promised what he desired, and then Inverawe communicated to her every circumstance that had occurred to him. She was struck dumb and petrified by the narration; but she had no sooner gathered sufficient nerve to speak, than she earnestly entreated him to have nothing to do in concealing the guilty stranger.

“Let not this awful warning, now given you for the second time, be neglected,” said she. “Send for the officers of justice without delay, and give up the murderer to be tried by the offended laws of his country. You know not what curse may fall upon you, for thus trying to arrest Heaven’s judgment on the guilty man. Oh, Inverawe, it is dreadful to think of it!”

“All this earnestness on your part, my love, is natural,” said Inverawe calmly. “But think of the solemn oath I have sworn;—you would not have Inverawe,—you would not have your husband,—break a pledge so solemnly given? Whatever may befall me *here*, I cannot so dishonour myself. Besides,” added he, “whilst, on the one hand, I know that he to whom I am so pledged is like myself, a man of flesh and blood, who, for anything I know to the contrary, may, after all, be really less guilty than unfortunate; I cannot even yet say with certainty, that I have not been the sport of dreams, naturally enough arising out of the strange circumstances to which I have been exposed. But were it otherwise, and that, contrary to all our accustomed rational belief, I have indeed been visited by a spirit, what proof have I that it is a spirit of health? What proof

have I that it may not be a spirit wickedly commissioned by the Father of lies to take this form, in order to seduce me into that breach of my pledge, which would for ever blacken the high name of Campbell of Inverawe, and doom myself to ceaseless remorse during the rest of my days? No, no, lady! —I must keep my solemn vow, whatever may befall me.”

The lady was silenced by these words from her husband, but her anxiety was not thereby allayed. It increased as night approached; and especially when Inverawe told her that he must again visit the man in the cave. During that day various rumours had reached him of people being afoot in search of a murderer, who was supposed to have found a place of concealment somewhere in that neighbourhood; and it was with some difficulty that he could suppress a hope that unconsciously arose within him, that he might be relieved from his pledge, and from his present most distressing and embarrassing position, by the accidental capture of him for whom they were searching. The duty of visiting the wretched man had now become oppressively painful to Inverawe,—and the painfulness of it was not decreased by the additional risk which he now ran of being detected. But Inverawe was not a man to abandon any duty for any such reasons. Having again privately made up his basket of provisions, therefore, and put his otter-traps over its contents, as formerly, he left the castle as twilight came on, and making his circuit by the riverside with yet more care and caution than before, he climbed along the side of Cruachan, and in due

course of time reached the mouth of the cave. The light was burning as before, and on entering the place, its inmate was sitting with a countenance and expression, if possible more haggard and terrific than he had exhibited on the previous night.

“Welcome!—welcome!” cried he, starting wildly up, and speaking in a frantic tone, as he rushed forward to seize Inverawe’s cold hand in both of his, that felt like heated iron,—“welcome, my guardian angel! All other good angels have fled from me now! And the bad!—oh!—but you will not leave me to-night? Oh, say that you will not leave me to-night!”

“I grieve to say that, for your own sake, I cannot gratify you,” replied Inverawe, withdrawing his hand involuntarily from the contamination of his touch, and shrinking back with horror from the glare of his frenzied and bloodshot eyes, though with a heart almost moved to pity for the wretch before him, whose very manhood seemed to have abandoned him. “It is vain to ask me to stay with you, as I have already frequently explained to you; but much more so now, that I have learned that there are men out searching for you in this neighbourhood, brought hither by the strong conviction that you are concealed somewhere hereabouts. This circumstance renders it imperatively necessary that you should no longer persevere in the perilous practice of burning your lamp, which exposes you to tenfold danger.”

“Talk not to me of danger!” exclaimed the man, in a dreadful state of excitement, and in a tone and words that seemed more like those of a raving mad-

man than anything else—"I must have light—I should go distracted if I had not light. Darkness would drive me to self-destruction! I tell you it is filled with horrible shapes. Even when I shut my eyes, the horrible spectre appears. Have pity!—have mercy on me, and stay with me but this one single night?—for even the light of the lamp itself cannot always banish the terrific spectre from before me!"

"Spectre!" cried Inverawe, shuddering with horror,—“what spectre?”

“Ay, the horrible spectre,” replied the man. And then suddenly starting back, with his hands stretched forth, as if to keep off some terrific shape that had instantaneously risen before him, and with his eyeballs glaring towards the dark opening of the cave, he shrieked out—“Hell and torments! ’tis there again,—there—there—see there!”

“I see nothing,” said Inverawe, with some difficulty retaining a proper command of himself. “But this is madness—absolute insanity. See, here is your food; I must leave you immediately.”

“Oh, do not go!” said the stranger, following Inverawe for a few steps towards the mouth of the cave, and entreating him in a subdued and abject tone. And then, just as his protector was about to make his exit, he again started back, and stood as if he had been transfixed, whilst, with his hands stretched out before him, and his eyes fearfully staring on the vacancy of the darkness that was beyond the cavern’s mouth, he again yelled out—“There! there!—see there!”

It must be honestly confessed that it was with no

very imperturbed state of nerves, that Inverawe committed himself to the obscurity of that night, to hurry homewards; and though no spectre appeared before his visual orbs, yet the harrowing spectacle which the guilty man had exhibited, and the allusion which he had made to the supposed spectre which he had seen in his imagination, kept that which he had himself beheld constantly floating before his mind's eye, during the whole of his way home; and he was not sorry, when he reached his own hall, to find his lady sitting by the fire waiting for his return. She was lonely and cheerless, and full of anxious thoughts regarding him; but her eye brightened up at his entrance, and she filled him a goblet of wine. Inverawe swallowed it greedily down,—gave her a brief and bare account of his evening's expedition,—and then they retired to their chamber.

On this occasion Inverawe silently took the precaution of bolting the door of the apartment; and, on going to bed, the lady, with great resolution of mind, determined within herself to keep off sleep, and to watch, so that she too might behold whatever apparition might appear; hoping that if the spectre which had so disturbed Inverawe should, after all, prove to be nothing but a dream, she might be able, from her own observation, to disabuse him of his fantasy. But it so happened that, notwithstanding all her precautions, and all her mental exertions to prevent it, she fell immediately into a most unaccountably deep sleep; and Inverawe himself, in spite of all his harassing and distressing thoughts, was speedily plunged into a similar state of utter unconsciousness.

Again, for this the third night, he was awaked by the same light streaming through the apartment, and rendering the curtain of his bed transparent by its wonderful illumination. Again he looked round on his wife, and beheld every feature of her face clearly displayed by its influence. She lay in the soundest and sweetest repose. His first impulse was to awake her, but he instantly checked himself, and felt grateful that she was thus to be saved from the contemplation of the terrific spectral appearance, the shadow of which he now observed gliding slowly towards the bed. The curtain was again raised. The same well-remembered figure and face appeared under the usual increased intensity of light. Again the filmy plaid was partially dropped, and the fearful gash in the bosom was exposed, as before, pouring out blood. Again the deep, hollow voice came from the motionless lips, but it was accompanied by a yet sterner expression of the eyes, and of the pale countenance.

“Inverawe! My warnings have been vain. The time is now past. Yet blood must flow for blood! The blood of the murderer might have been offered up—now your blood must flow for his! We meet once more at Ticonderoga!”

This last visitation of the apparition, accompanied as it was by a denunciation so terrible, had a yet more overwhelming effect upon Inverawe than either of those that preceded it. Bereft of all power over himself, he lay, conscious of existence it is true, but utterly incapable of commanding thought, much less of exercising action. Ere he could rally his intellect,

or his nervous energy, the spectre was gone ; and the apartment was dark. When his thoughts began to arise within him, they were of a more agonizing character than any which he had formerly experienced—" *Your blood must flow for his.*" These dreadful words still sounded in his ears, in the same deep, sepulchral tone in which they had been uttered. Do not suppose that one thought of himself ever crossed his mind. He thought of his son—that son, for whose welfare every desire of his life was concentrated,—that was *his blood*, against which he conceived this dread prophecy to be directed—that was *his blood* which he dreaded might flow. He shivered at the very thought. He recalled the strange circumstances which had attended the drinking of the toast to his roof-tree. His anxiety about his son was raised to a pitch, that converted his bed, for that night at least, into a bed of thorns. He slept not, yet all his tossings failed to awaken his lady, who slept as if she had been drenched with some soporiferous drug. The sun had no sooner darted his first rays through the casement, however, than she awaked as if from a most refreshing sleep. She looked round upon her husband, — observed his haggard and tortured expression,—and the whole recollection of what she previously knew having come upon her at once, she began vehemently to upbraid herself.

"I have slept," said she, in a tone of vexed self-reprehension. "After all my determination to the contrary, I have slept throughout the whole night ; and you have been again disturbed. Say ! what has happened ? Have you seen him again ?"

“I have seen him,” replied Inverawe in a subdued tone and manner—“I have seen him, and his appearance was terrible.”

“Say—tell me!—what passed?” exclaimed the lady earnestly. “Inverawe, I must know all.”

Inverawe would have fain eaten in his words. He would have especially wished to have left his wife in ignorance of the denunciation to which the apparition had given utterance. But he had not as yet recovered sufficient mastery over himself, to enable him to baffle the questioning of an acute woman. In a short time the whole truth was extracted from him; and now the lady, in a state of agitation that very much exceeded his, began to press upon him the necessity of giving up the criminal to justice. Her argument was long and energetic; and during the time that it occupied, he gradually resumed the full possession of himself.

“I have heard you, my love,” replied he calmly; “yet you have urged, and you can urge nothing which can persuade me to break my solemn pledge. The hitherto spotless honour of Inverawe shall never be tarnished in my person. Dreadful as is the curse which has been denounced upon me, I am still resolved to act as an honourable man. Yet I will do this much. I will again visit the man in the cave, and insist with him that he shall seek some other place of refuge. I have done enough for him. I have suffered enough on his account. He must go elsewhere. Perhaps I should have come to this resolve yesterday—the time, alas! *may now be past*. But, come what may, I am determined that the visit

of this night shall be the last that I shall pay to him. He must go elsewhere. Even his own safety requires that he shall do so—and mine! But no matter, he must seek some other asylum!”

Even this resolve—late though it might be, was, for the time, some consolation to the afflicted mind of his wife. Nay, it was in some degree matter of alleviation to his own sufferings. The broad sunlight of heaven, and the bustling action of the creatures of this world while all creation is awake, produces a wonderful effect upon the human mind, in relieving it from all those phantoms of anticipated evil which the silent shades of night are so apt to conjure up within it. Inverawe and his lady were less oppressed with gloomy thoughts during the day than might have been supposed possible. It is true that he often secretly repeated over the denunciation of the apparition, but even yet he would have fain persuaded himself, as he tried to persuade his wife, that he had been the sport of dreams, resulting from some morbid state of his system.

“Ticonderoga!” said he, “where is Ticonderoga? I know of no such place; nay, I never heard of any such place; and, in truth, I do not believe that any such place really exists on the face of this earth. Ticonderoga! A name so utterly unknown to me, and so strangely uncouth in itself, would lead me to believe that it is the coinage of my own distempered brain; and if so, then the whole must have been an illusion. Yet it is altogether unaccountable and inexplicable.”

Thus it was that Inverawe reasoned during that

day ; but as night again approached, it brought all its phantoms of the imagination along with it.

Inverawe, however, wound himself up to go through with that which he now considered as his last trial. Having filled his basket as before, he set off on his wonted circuitous route to the cave. As he went thither, he endeavoured to steel up his mind to assume that resolute tone with the stranger which he now felt to be absolutely necessary to rid himself of so troublesome and distressing a charge. Much as it did violence to his innate feelings of hospitality, to come to any such determination, he resolved to insist on his departure from the cave that very night, and he had no difficulty in persuading himself that his doing this would be the best line of safety he could prescribe for the stranger, seeing that, by the active use of his limbs during the remaining portion of it, he might well enough reach some distant place of concealment before daybreak. Full of such ideas, he pressed on towards the cave, that he might get him off with as little delay as possible. The light which had shone from its mouth upon former occasions was now absent, and Inverawe hailed the circumstance as a proof that the wretched man had at last become more rational. He approached the orifice in the cliff, and gently called him. His own voice alone was returned to him from the hollow bowels of the rock. All was so mysteriously silent, that an involuntary chill fell upon Inverawe. He repeated his call in a louder voice, but still there was no reply—no stir from within. A cold shudder crept over him, and for a moment he half expected to see issue from the black void before

him, that appalling apparition which had now three several times appeared by his bedside. A little thought enabled him to get rid of this temporary weakness. He recalled the last words of the spectre, and the strange uncouth name of Ticonderoga. If such a place had existence at all, it was there, and there only, that he could expect to behold him again. He became reassured, and all his wonted manliness returned to him. He struck a light, and crept into the cave. A short survey of its interior satisfied him that the stranger was gone. The blanket, the extinguished lamp, and some other things, lay there, but no other vestige of its recent inmate was to be seen. Inverawe felt relieved; he was saved from even the semblance of inhospitality. But the recollection of the apparition's last words recurred to him, and then everything around him seemed to whisper him that indeed *the time might now be past*. He began, most inconsistently, to wish that the stranger had still been there—nay, he almost hoped that he might yet be lingering about the neighbouring rocks or thickets. He sallied forth from the cave, and abandoning all his former caution, he shouted twice or thrice in succession, at the very top of his voice, but without obtaining any response, except that which came from the echoes of the cliffs, muffled as they were by the roar of the numerous cataracts of the mountain-side, and the howling blast that swept downward through the pass far below. For a moment he felt that if the stranger had been still in his power, he could have given him up to justice, to be dealt with as a murderer; but reason made him blush, by bringing back to him

his high and chivalric sense of honour in its fullest force, so that he turned to go homewards possessed with a very different train of thought. When his lady met him, she was eager in her inquiries, and deeply depressed when she learned that Inverawe had now lost all chance of delivering up the murderer.

“Alas!” said she, in an agony of tears, “*the time is now past.*”

“Do not allow this matter to distress you so, my love,” said Inverawe, endeavouring to soothe her into a calm, which he could by no means command for himself. “The more I think of it, the more I am persuaded that the whole has been a phantasm of the brain. Let us have a cup of wine, and laugh all such foolish fancies away ere we go to bed. This perplexing and distressing adventure has now passed by, and this night I hope to shake off all such vapours of the imagination.”

Inverawe had little sleep that night, but he was undisturbed by any reappearance of the apparition. Unknown to his wife, he made a circuitous excursion next day to Ben Cruachan, where a more accurate examination of the cave and its environs satisfied him that the stranger was indeed gone. And he was gone for ever, for Inverawe never afterwards saw him,—nor, indeed, did he ever again hear the slightest intelligence regarding him.

Days, weeks, and months rolled away, and by degrees the gloom which these extraordinary and portentous events had brought upon Inverawe, as well as upon his lady, began to be in a great degree dissipated. His son had long since returned home in

full health and vigour, and things fell gradually into their natural and usual course.

Inverawe was one night sitting in social converse with his wife and his son, and their friend, young George Campbell—the same individual who, as you may remember, was the giver of the toast of the roof-tree of Inverawe,—when a packet of letters was brought in, and handed to the Laird.

“What is all this?” exclaimed he quickly, breaking the seal, and hastily examining the contents. “Ha! the old Black Watch again! this *is* news indeed!”

“What?—what is it?” cried his lady.

“Glorious news!” cried Inverawe, rubbing his hands. “I am appointed to the majority of the Highlanders; and here is an ensign’s commission for you, young gentleman,” said he, addressing George Campbell. “And my friend Grant, who writes to me, tells me that he has got the lieutenant-colonelcy. What can be more delightful than the prospect of serving in such a corps, under the command of so old a friend?”

“Glorious!—glorious!” cried young George Campbell, jumping from his chair, and dancing through the room with joy.

“A bumper to the gallant Highlanders, and their brave commander!” cried Inverawe, filling the cups.

The toast was quaffed with enthusiasm. Young Inverawe alone seemed to feel that there was no joy in the cup for him.

“Would I had a commission too!” said he, in a tone of extreme vexation.

“Boy,” said Inverawe, gravely, “Your time is

coming. It will be well for you to stay at home to look after your mother. One of us two is enough in the field at once."

"Am I then to be doomed to sloth and idleness at home?" said Donald pettishly; "better put petticoats on me at once, and give me a distaff to wield."

"Speak not so, Donald," said his mother, in a trembling voice. "You are hardly old enough for such warlike undertakings; and, indeed, your father says what is but too true—for what could I do, were both of you to be torn from me?"

Donald said no more. The cup circulated. George Campbell was in high spirits, and full of happy anticipations.

"I hope we may soon be sent on service," said he exultingly.

"You may have service sooner than you dream of," said Inverawe, going on to gather the remainder of the contents of his packet. "Grant writes me here, that in consequence of the turn which matters are taking in America, he hopes every day for the arrival of an order for the regiment to embark. George, you and I must lose no time in making up our kits, for we must join the corps with all manner of expedition."

The parting between Inverawe and his lady was tender and touching. Donald bid his father farewell with less appearance of regret than his known affection for him would have led any one to have anticipated. There was even a certain smile of triumph on his countenance as he saw them depart. But his mother was too much overwhelmed by her own feelings, to notice anything regarding those of her son.

The meeting between Inverawe and his old brother officers was naturally a joyous one, and nothing could be more delightful than the warmth of the reception he met with from his long-trying friend Colonel Grant, now commanding officer of the corps.

“My dear fellow, Inverawe!” said he, cordially shaking him by the hand, “this happy circumstance of having got you amongst us again, is even more gratifying to me than my own promotion, and yet, let me tell you, the peculiar circumstances attending that were gratifying enough.”

“I need not assure you that the news of it were most gratifying to me,” replied Inverawe. “It doubled the happiness I felt, in getting the majority, to find that I was to serve under so old and so much valued a friend. But to what particular circumstances do you allude?”

“When the step was opened to me, by the promotion of Colonel Campbell to the command of the fifty-fourth regiment,” replied Colonel Grant, in a trembling voice, and with the tears beginning to swell in his eyes, “I was not a little surprised, and, as you will readily believe, pleased also, to be waited on by a deputation from the non-commissioned officers and privates of the corps, to make offer to me of a purse containing the sum necessary to purchase the lieutenant-colonelcy, which they had subscribed among themselves, and proposed to present to me, with the selfish view, as the noble fellows declared to me, of securing to themselves, as commanding officer, a man whom they all so much loved and respected! Campbell!—Inverawe!” continued he, with his voice faltering still

more from the swelling of his emotions, "I can never forget this, were I live to the age of Methuselah—I can never deserve it all—but—but—pshaw! my heart is too full to give utterance to my feelings, and I must e'en play the woman."

"Noble fellows indeed!" cried Inverawe, fully sympathizing with him in all he felt; "but by my faith they looked at the matter in its true light, when moved by selfish considerations, they were led so to act—for they well knew that you would be as a father to them."

"I shall ever be as a father to them whilst it pleases God to spare me," said the Colonel warmly, "and if ever I desert them while life remains, may I be blown from the mouth of a cannon!"

"What was the result of this matter then?" demanded Inverawe.

"Why, as it happened," replied the Colonel, "the promotion went in the regiment without purchase, so that I enjoyed all the pleasure of receiving this kind demonstration from my children, without taxing their pockets, or laying myself under an unpleasant pecuniary obligation to them, which might at times have had a tendency in some degree to paralyze me in the wholesome exercise of strict discipline. And we shall require to stick the more rigidly to that now, seeing that we are going on service."

"We *are* going on service then?" said Inverawe.

"We have this very evening received our orders for America," replied Colonel Grant; "and never did commanding officer go on service with more confidence in his men and officers than I do."

“And I may safely say that never did officers or men go on service with greater confidence in their commander than we shall do,” replied Inverawe, again shaking the Colonel heartily by the hand.

George Campbell was introduced by Inverawe to the particular notice of Colonel Grant, and by him to the rest of the officers, among whom he soon found himself at his ease. The time for their embarkation approached, and all was bustle and preparation amongst them. George had much to do, and it was with some difficulty, but with great inward delight, that he at last found himself complete in all his arms, trappings, and necessaries. The night previous to their going on board of the ships appointed to convey them to their place of destination, was a busy one for him, and he was still occupied, at a late hour, in his quarters, when he was surprised by a knock at his door.

“Come in !” cried George Campbell.

The door opened, and a young man entered, whose fatigued and soiled appearance showed that he had come off a long journey.

“Donald Campbell of Inverawe !” cried George, in utter astonishment ; and the young men were instantly in one another’s arms. “My dear fellow, what strange chance has brought you hither ?”

“I come to throw myself on your honour,” said Donald. “I come to throw myself on the honour of him whom I have ever held to be my dearest friend ; —on the honour of one who has never failed me hitherto, and who, if I mistake not, will not fail me now. Give me your solemn promise that you will

keep my counsel, and do your best to assist me in my present undertaking."

"Methinks you need hardly ask for my solemn promise," replied George Campbell; "for you might safely count on my best exertions to oblige you at all times. But what can I do for you? It would need to be something that may be quickly and immediately gone about, else I cannot stay to effect it. We embark to-morrow morning."

"You will not require to stay behind the rest, in order to do what I require of you," said Donald of Inverawe.

"I could not if I would," replied George Campbell.

"Do you go in the same ship with my father?" demanded young Inverawe.

"I wish I did," replied George Campbell; "but I regret to say that I go in a different vessel."

"So much the better for my purpose," replied young Inverawe eagerly. "You will be the better able to take me with you without my being discovered."

"Take you with me!" cried George Campbell, in great astonishment. "What in the name of wonder would you propose?"

"That which is perfectly reasonable," replied young Inverawe. "Do you think that I could sit quietly at home, whilst my father and you, and so many of my friends, are earning honour and glory abroad?" Ask yourself, George, what would you have done under my circumstances?"

"I have never thought as to how I might have acted, had I been so placed," replied George Camp-

bell, much perplexed. "But I have no relish for having any hand in aiding you to oppose the will of your father."

"No matter now, George, whether you have any relish for it or not," replied young Inverawe, smiling. "You have given me your promise that you will aid me, and you must now make the best of it. So come away. Let me see how you can best manage to get me aboard. I must not be seen by my father till we land in America, and then I shall enter as a volunteer."

"What will your father say then?" demanded George Campbell.

"Why, that the blood of Inverawe was too strong in me to be restrained," replied Donald. "Why, man, it is just what he would have done himself. He will be too proud of the spirit inherent in his house, which has impelled me to this act, ever to think of blaming me for it. Come, come, you have given me your word."

"I *have* given you my word," said George Campbell; "and I must honestly tell you that I wish I had been less precipitate. But having given it, I must in truth abide by it. It may be as you say, that your father will have more pride than pain in this matter, when he comes to know it. And then, as for myself, I shall be too happy to have you as my companion in so long a voyage. But come, let us have some refreshment, and then we can talk over the matter, and consider how your scheme may be best carried into effect."

The thing was easily enough arranged. Many of

the privates of the corps were gentlemen who had attendants of their own. There was nothing extraordinary, therefore, in an officer being so provided. A slight disguise was employed to alter Donald's appearance, so that he might escape detection from any one who had seen him before. Next morning he went on board in charge of some of Ensign George Campbell's baggage, and there he remained snugly until the expedition sailed.

The Highland regiment embarked full of enthusiasm, and it was ultimately landed at New York in the highest health and spirits. Colonel Stewart of Garth, in his interesting work, tells us, that they were caressed by all ranks and orders of men, but more particularly by the Indians. Those inhabitants of the wilds flocked from all quarters to see the strangers, as they were on their march to Albany, and the resemblance which they discovered between the Celtic dress and their own, inclining them to believe that they were of the same extraction as themselves, they hailed them as brothers. Orders were issued to treat the Indians kindly; but, although these were most generally and most cheerfully obeyed, instances did occur where gross acts of impropriety and harshness were exhibited towards them, and one of these I shall now mention.

A young Indian, of tall and handsome proportions, with that conscious air of equality which they all possess, came up to a group of the Highlanders who were resting themselves round a fire. An ignorant and mischievous fellow of the party, who much more merited the name of savage than him of the woods,

having heated the end of the stalk of a tobacco pipe, handed it, full of tobacco, with much mock solemnity to the young Indian,—who, in ignorance of the trick, was just about to take it into his hand, and to apply the heated end of it to his lips, when a young Highlander who was present, dashed it to the ground. The Indian started—looked tomahawks at the Highland youth, and might have used one too, had not he, with his glove on, taken up a portion of the broken pipe-stalk, and signing to the Indian to feel it, made him sensible of the kind and friendly service he had rendered him. The ferocious rage that lightened in the eye of the red man was at once extinguished. A mild and benignant sunshine succeeded it. He took the hand of the young Highlander, and pressed it to his heart; and then, darting a look of dignified contempt upon the poor creature who had been the author of this base and childish piece of knavery against him, he slowly, solemnly, and silently withdrew.

Whilst Major Campbell of Inverawe was on the march, his noble appearance seemed to make a strong impression on their Indian followers. For his part, he was peculiarly struck with the fine figure and graceful mien of a heroic-looking young warrior of the woods, who seemed to keep near to him, as if earnestly intent on holding intercourse with him. He encouraged his approach; and, conversing with him, as well as the young man's imperfect knowledge of English permitted him to do, he invited him, when they halted for refreshment, to partake of his hasty meal. The young Eagle Eye—for such was the

Indian's name in his own tribe—carried a rifle ; and Major Campbell having put some questions to him as to his skill in using it, his curiosity was so excited by all that the red man said of himself, that he resolved to put it to the proof. Having loaded his own piece, therefore, he proposed to his new Indian ally, to take a short circuit, to look for game, during the brief time that the men were allowed for rest, and one or two of the officers arose to accompany them. The Eagle Eye moved on before them with that silence, and with that dignified air, which marked the confidence which he had in his own powers. A walk of a few hundred yards from their line of march, brought them into a small open space of grassy ground, surrounded by thickets. Inverawe stopped by chance to adjust the buckle of his bandoleer, when the Eagle Eye, who happened at that moment to be some paces to the right of him, sprang on him like a falcon, and threw him to the ground. As he was in the very act of doing so, an arrow from the thicket in front of them pierced the Indian's shoulder, whilst he, almost at the same moment, levelled his rifle, fired it in the direction from whence the arrow came, and, rushing forward with a yell, plunged among the bushes. The whole of these circumstances passed so instantaneously, that Major Campbell's brother officers were confounded. But having assisted him to rise from the ground, they congratulated him on his escape from a danger which neither he nor they could as yet very well comprehend or explain. They were not long left in suspense, however, for the Eagle Eye soon reappeared, dragging from the thicket the body of an

Indian belonging to a hostile tribe. In an instant, the Eagle Eye exercised his scalping-knife, and possessed himself of the bloody trophy of his enemy. On examination, the ball from his rifle was discovered to have perforated the brain through the forehead of his victim. The mystery was explained. The young Eagle Eye had suddenly descried the lurking foe, deeply nestled among the bushes, and in the act of taking a deliberate aim at Inverawe. He had saved the Major's life at the imminent risk of his own, and that quick sight from which he had his name, had enabled his ready hand to take prompt and deadly vengeance for the wound he had received in doing so. The grateful Inverawe felt beggared in expressions of thanks to his Indian preserver. He and his friends extracted the arrow from the shoulder of the hero, poured spirits into the wound, and bound it up; and then, as they hastened back to join the troops, he entreated the Eagle Eye to tell him how he could recompense him.

"It is enough for me," replied the young Indian warrior, with dignified gravity of manner, mingled with becoming modesty, and in his broken language, the imperfections of which I shall not attempt to give you, though I shall endeavour to preserve the finer peculiarities of its poetical conceptions, — "it is enough for my youth to be suffered to live within the shadow of a chief, broad as that which the great rock spreads over the grassy surface of the Prairie; a chief among those who have come over the waters of the great salt lake, in number like that of the beavers of the mohawk, whose fathers were the brethren of

our fathers, though their hunting grounds are now so far apart. The tribe of the Eagle Eye has been broken. The pride of the foes of the Eagle Eye is swelled by a thousand scalps of his kindred. He is like a solitary tree that has escaped from the whirlwind that has levelled the forest. The Eagle Eye has no father—he is alone—make him thy son.”

“You shall be as a son to me!” said Inverawe, deeply affected by the many tender recollections of home which this appeal had awakened in his mind. “You shall never want such fatherly protection as I can give you. But I would fain have you ask some more instant and direct recompense from me, for having thus so nobly saved my life at the peril of your own. Is there nothing immediate that I can do for you? Gratify me by asking something.”

“The Eagle Eye will obey his father,” replied the Indian calmly. “One of your pale-faced tribe has deeply insulted your red son.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Inverawe, “find him out for me, and you shall forthwith see him punished to your heart’s content.”

“The cunning and cowardly kite is beneath the vengeance of the Eagle,” replied the Indian. “But there was a youth among your pale faces, who stood the red man’s friend. Him would I hold as my brother. Him would I bring with me beneath the shelter of my father, the great chief, that he may grow green and lofty under his protection.”

“You shall search me out that youth,” replied Inverawe, “and be assured he shall find a friend in me for your sake.”

The Eagle Eye, with great dignity, took the right hand of Inverawe between both of his, and pressed it forcibly to his heart. When they reached the ground where the men were halting, the Major despatched a non-commissioned officer with the Indian, to find out the young man, and to bring him immediately before him. They soon reappeared with him; and what was Inverawe's astonishment, when he lifted up his eyes, and beheld—his son!

It was exactly as Donald had himself prognosticated. Inverawe's heart was so filled with joy, in thus so unexpectedly beholding and embracing his boy, at the very moment when he had been dreaming that he was so far from him; and with pride in thinking of that brave spirit which had impelled him to follow him to America; as well as with deep gratification at the kind-hearted act which had thus caused him to be so strangely brought before him,—that no room was left within it for those gloomy thoughts which might have otherwise arisen there. He clasped him again and again to his bosom, whilst the Indian stood by as a calm spectator of the scene, his countenance unmoved by the feelings of sympathy that were working within him. Their first emotions were no sooner over, than Inverawe hurried Donald away to introduce him to the commanding-officer, and he was speedily admitted into the corps as a gentleman volunteer, with the promise of the first vacant ensigncy. It will easily be believed, that the strict ties which were thus formed between the Campbells of Inverawe and the noble Eagle Eye, were destined to increase every day. Under the direction of his

European friends, his wound was treated with the most tender care, and he was soon perfectly cured. The Eagle Eye deeply felt the kindness of his Highland father and brother; but, whether in happiness or in pain, in joy or in grief, his lofty countenance never betrayed those feelings which are so readily yielded to in civilised life. It was in vain that they tried to induce him to adopt European habits, or to domesticate him so far as to make him regularly participate in those comforts which are the fruits of civilisation. He adhered with pertinacity to his own customs, and looked down with barbarian dignity upon those of his hosts, which so widely differed from them; and when at any time he was induced to partake of them, it was with a lofty native politeness, which seemed to indicate that he did so more in compliment to those with whom he was associated, than from any gratification he received in his own person.

Circumstances, with which they or their commanding officer had nothing to do, had kept the Highlanders altogether out of action during the campaign of 1757, which had done so little for the glory of the British arms. But in the autumn of this year, Lord Loudon was recalled, and Lieutenant-General Abercromby succeeded to the command of the army. By this time, the Highlanders had received an accession of strength, by the arrival of seven hundred recruits from their native mountains; and the corps now numbered no less than thirteen hundred men, of size, figure, strength, and courage not easily to be matched. The British army in America now con-

sisted altogether of above twenty-two thousand regulars, and thirty thousand provincial troops, which last could not be classed under that character. The hopes of all were high, therefore, and active operations were immediately contemplated.

It was some little time before this, that Inverawe was spending an evening, *tête-a-tête*, with his friend Colonel Grant. The bottle was passing slowly but regularly between them, when, by some unaccountable change in their conversation, the subject of supernatural appearances came to be introduced. Colonel Grant protested against all belief in them. The recollection of the apparition which had three several times visited Inverawe, came back upon his mind, in form and colours so strong and forcible, that his cheeks grew pale, and a deep gloom overspread his brow; so much so, indeed, that it did not escape the observation of his friend. Colonel Grant rallied him, and asked him, jocularly, if *he* had ever seen a ghost.

“I declare I could almost fancy that you saw some spectre at this moment, Inverawe,” said he.

“Where?—how?—what?” cried Inverawe, darting his eyes into every corner of the room, with a degree of perturbation which the Colonel had never seen him display before.

“Nay,” said the Colonel, surprised into sudden gravity, “I cannot say either where or what; but I must confess that you seem to me as much disturbed at present as if you saw a spectre.”

“I cannot see *him* here,” said Inverawe, with an abstracted solemnity of tone and manner, that greatly

increased his friend's astonishment—"I cannot see *him* here. This is not the place where I am fated to behold *him*."

"*Him!*" exclaimed Colonel Grant, with growing anxiety—"him!—whom, I pray you? For Heaven's sake, tell me whom it is that you are fated to behold!"

"Pardon me," replied Inverawe, at length in some degree collecting his ideas, but speaking in a solemn tone. "An intense remembrance which came suddenly upon me, regarding strange circumstances which happened to myself, has betrayed me to talk of that which I would have rather avoided, and—and which cannot interest you, incredulous as you have declared yourself to be regarding all such supernatural visitations."

"Nay, you will pardon *me*, if you please," said the the Colonel eagerly; "for you have so wonderfully excited my curiosity, that I must e'en entreat you to satisfy me. What were these circumstances that happened to you?—tell me, I conjure you."

"It is with great pain," said Inverawe gravely, "that I enter upon them at all; for, although they still remain as fresh upon my mind as if they had happened yesterday, I would fain bury them, not only from all mankind, but from myself. And yet, perhaps, it may be as well that you should know them; for, strange as they are in themselves, they would yet be stranger in their fulfilment. Listen then attentively, and I shall tell you every thing, even to the very minutest thought that possessed me." And so he proceeded to narrate all that I have already told.

“Strange !” said the Colonel, after devouring the narrative with breathless attention,—“wonderfully strange indeed ! But these are airy phantoms of the brain, which we must not—nay, cannot allow to weigh with us, or to dwell upon our minds, else might we be bereft of reason itself, by permitting them to get mastery over us, and so might we unwittingly aid them in working out their own accomplishment. Help yourself to another cup of wine, Inverawe, and then let us change the subject for something of a more cheerful nature.”

But all cheerfulness had fled from Inverawe for that night, and the friends soon afterwards separated, to seek a repose, which he at least in vain tried to court to his pillow for many hours ; and when sleep did come at last, the figure of the murdered man floated to and fro in his dreams. But it did so, only the more to convince him of the wonderful difference between such faint visions of slumber, and that vivid spectral appearance which had formerly so terribly and deeply impressed itself upon his waking senses, in his own bed-chamber at Inverawe.

The conversation I have just repeated, together with Inverawe’s narrative, remained strongly engraven upon the recollection of Colonel Grant. The whole circumstances adhered to him so powerfully, that he almost felt as if he too had seen the apparition, and heard him utter his fatal words. He could not divest himself of a most intense solicitude about his friend’s future fate, which he could in no manner of way explain to his own rational satisfaction. But the active and bustling duties which

now called for his attention, in consequence of the approaching campaign, very speedily banished all such thoughts from his mind.

It was not long after this, that Colonel Grant was summoned by General Abercromby to meet the other commanding-officers of corps in a council of war. The council lasted for many hours, and when the Colonel came forth from it after it had broken up, he was observed to have a cloud upon his brow, and a certain air of serious anxiety about him, which was very much augmented by his meeting with his friend Inverawe.

“Well,” said Inverawe cheerfully to him, as Colonel Grant joined him and his other officers at mess, “I hope you have good news for us, Colonel, and that at last you can tell us that we are to march out of quarters on some piece of active service.”

“We are to march to-morrow,” replied the Colonel, with unusual gravity.

“Whither?” cried Inverawe eagerly. “Whither, if I may be permitted to ask?”

“We march to Lake George,” replied the Colonel, with a very manifest disposition to taciturnity.

“Pardon me,” said Inverawe; “perhaps I push my questions indiscreetly,—if so, forgive me.”

“No,” replied the Colonel, with assumed carelessness. “I have nothing which the good of the service requires me to conceal from you, Inverawe, nor, indeed, from any one here present. We march for Lake George, as I have already said; and there we are to be embarked in boats to proceed up the lake. Our object,” added he, in a deeper and somewhat

melancholy tone, — “our object is to attack Fort Defiance.”

“What sort of a place is it?” demanded one of the officers.

“A strong place, as I understand from the engineer who reconnoitred it,” replied the Colonel. “But these American fastnesses are so beset with forests, that no one can well judge of them till he is fairly within their entrenchments.”

“Then let us pledge this cup to our speedy possession of them!” exclaimed Inverawe joyously.

“With all my heart,” said the Colonel, filling his to the brim, but with a solemnity of countenance that sorted but ill with the cheerful shouts of mutual interchange of congratulation that arose around the table. “With all my heart, I drink the toast, and may we all be there alive to drink a cup of thanks for our success.”

“Father,” cried young Inverawe, in his keenness overlooking the Colonel’s ominous addition to the toast; “now father, these Frenchmen shall see what stuff Highlanders are made of!”

“They shall, my boy,” replied Inverawe. “Come, then, as I am master of the revels to-night, I call on you all to fill a brimmer. I give you *Highlanders shoulder to shoulder!*”

“Hurrah! — hurrah! — hurrah!” vociferated the whole officers present.

This was but the commencement of an evening of more than usual jollity. The spirits of all were up, and of all, none were so high in glee as those of Inverawe and his son. There was something, indeed,

which might have been almost said to have been strangely wild in the unwonted revelry of the father. Colonel Grant was the only individual present who did not seem to keep pace with the rest. The flask circulated with more than ordinary rapidity and frequency; but as the mirth which it created rose higher and higher, and especially with Inverawe and young Donald, Colonel Grant's thoughts seemed to sink deeper and deeper into gloomy speculation. If any one chanced so far to forget his own hilarity for a moment, as to observe the strange anomaly in his commanding-officer, it is probable that he attributed it to those cares which must necessarily arise in the mind of one with whom so much of the responsibility of the approaching contest must rest. He retired from the festive board at an early hour, leaving the others, who kept up their night's enjoyment as long as they could do so with decency. Inverawe and his son sat with them to the last; and all agreed, at parting, that they had been the life and soul of that evening's revel.

The next morning, the officers of the Highlanders were early astir, to get their men into order of march. Major Campbell of Inverawe was the most active man among them. General Abercromby's force upon this occasion consisted of about six thousand regulars, and nine thousand provincial troops, together with a small train of artillery. Before they moved off, the General rode along the line of troops, giving his directions to the field officers of each battalion in succession. When he came up to the Highlanders, he courteously accosted Colonel Grant and Major Campbell.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “we shall have toughish work of it ; for though the enemy have not had time to complete their defences, yet, I am told that, even in its present state, there are few places which are naturally likely to be of more troublesome entrance than we shall find—”

“Than we shall find *Fort Defiance*,” somewhat strangely interrupted Colonel Grant, with an emphasis which not a little surprised Inverawe, as coming from a man usually so polite. “Ay, I have heard, indeed, that Fort Defiance is naturally a strong place, General. But what will not Highlanders accomplish ! You may rely on it you shall have no cause to complain of the Black Watch !”

“I have no fear that I shall,” replied the General, betraying no symptom of having taking offence at the Colonel’s apparently unaccountable interruption. “I know that both you and your men will do your duty against Fort Defiance, or any other fort in America.”

“Fort Defiance is a bold name, General,” said Major Campbell, laughing.

“It is a bold name,” said the Colonel gravely.

“It is a vaunting name enough,” replied the General. “Yet I hope to meet you both alive and merry as conquerors within its works. Meanwhile, gentlemen, pray get your Highlanders under march for the boats with as little delay as possible.”

Not another word but the necessary words of command were now uttered. The regiment moved off steadily, and the embarkation on Lake George was

speedily effected, with the most perfect regularity and order, on the 5th of July 1758.

It must have been a beautiful sight indeed, to have beheld that immense flotilla of boats moving over the pellucid surface of that lovely sheet of water—not a sound proceeding from them save that of the oars, the unruffled bosom of the lake everywhere reflecting the serene sky of a July evening, together with all the charms of its bold and varied shores, and its romantic islands,—its stillness affording a strange prelude to that tempest of mortal contest which was about to ensue. Its breadth is about two miles—so that the boats nearly covered it from side to side. As they moved on, they were occasionally lost to the eyes of those who looked upon them from the shores, as they disappeared into the numerous channels formed by its islands, or were again discovered, as they emerged from these narrow straits. There were snatches of scenery, and many little circumstances in the features of nature around them, that called up the remembrance of their own Loch Awe to both the Laird of Inverawe and young Donald, as the sun went down; and the pensiveness arising from these home recollections, at such a time, kept both of them silent. At length, after a safe and easy, and, on the part of the enemy, an unobserved navigation, the boats reached the northern end of the lake early on the ensuing morning; and the landing having been effected without opposition, the troops were formed by General Abercromby into two parallel columns.

The order was given to advance; and the troops speedily came to an outpost of the enemy, which was

abandoned without a shot. But as they proceeded, the nature of the ground, encumbered as it was with trees, rendered the march of both lines uncertain and wavering, so that the columns soon began to interfere with each other ; and great confusion ensued. Whilst endeavouring to extend themselves, the right column, composed of the Highlanders and the Fifty-fifth Regiment, under the command of Lord Howe, fell in with a detachment of the enemy, which had got bewildered in the wood, just as they themselves had done. The British attacked them briskly, and a sharp contest followed. The enemy behaved gallantly ; and the Highlanders especially distinguished themselves. Young Donald of Inverawe, his bosom bounding with excitement, from the shouts of those engaged in the skirmish, rushed into the thickest part of the irregular *melée*, and performed such feats of prowess with his maiden claymore, that they might have done honour to an old and well-tried soldier. Excited yet more by his success, he became rash and unguarded, and being too forward in the pursuit among the trees—which had already broken the troops on both sides into small handfuls—he found himself suddenly engaged with three enemies at once. As he was just about to be overpowered by their united pressure upon him, a ball from a rifle stretched one of them lifeless before him, and in an instant afterwards, the Eagle Eye, whose accurate aim had directed it to its deadly errand, was flourishing his tomahawk over the head of another of his foes. It fell upon him—the skull was split open—the man rolled down on the ground a ghastly corpse ; and the third, that was left

opposed to young Inverawe, began to give way in terror before him. Urging fiercely upon this last foe, however, the youth ran him through with one tremendous thrust, and he too dropped dead.

Flushed with success, Donald Campbell was now about to continue the pursuit after some fugitives of the enemy, who came rushing past him, when, turning to call on his red brother and preserver, the Eagle Eye, to follow him, he beheld him stooping over one of his dead foes, in the act of scalping him. At that very moment he saw a French soldier approaching his Indian brother unperceived, with sword uplifted, and with the fell intent of hewing him down. Springing before the Eagle Eye, the young Inverawe prepared himself to receive the meditated stroke, warded it skilfully off, and then following in on his foe with a thrust, he penetrated him right through the breast, with a wound that was instantaneously mortal. The Eagle Eye was now as sensible that he owed his life to young Donald, as Donald could have been that his had been preserved by the Indian warrior. They stood for a moment gazing at each other, and then they embraced with an affection which the stern Eagle Eye had difficulty in veiling, and which young Inverawe could not conceal.

By this time the enemy were all cut to pieces, or put to flight. The joy of this unexpected victory was turned into mourning by the death of Lord Howe who had been unfortunately killed in the early part of this random engagement. His loss at such a time was greater than anything they had gained by this partial overthrow of the enemy. And you will easily

understand this, when I tell you that it was said of this young nobleman that he particularly distinguished himself by his courage, activity, and rigid observation of military discipline; and that he had so acquired the esteem and affection of the soldiers, by his generosity, sweetness of manners, and engaging address, that they assembled in groups around the hurried grave to which his venerated remains were consigned, and wept over it in deep and silent grief.

The troops having been much harrassed by this engagement, as well as by the troublesome nature of their march, General Abercromby, in consideration of the lateness of the hour, deemed it prudent to deliver them from the embarrassment of the woods, to march them back to the landing-place, which they reached early in the morning. They were then allowed the whole of the ensuing day and night for repose. But on the morning of the 8th of July, he rode up to the lines of the Highlanders, and saluting Colonel Grant and Major Campbell of Inverawe, "Gentlemen," said he, "I have just obtained information from some of the prisoners, that General Levi is advancing with three thousand men to reinforce, or succour,—a—a—a—to succour, I say—the garrison I wish to attack."

"What!" exclaimed Colonel Grant,—“to succour *Fort Defiance*, General? Then I presume you will move on directly, to strike the blow before they can arrive.”

"That is exactly my intention," replied General Abercromby.

"And now I must tell you confidentially, gentle-

men, that the present garrison consists of fully five thousand men, of whom the greater part are said to be French troops of the line, who, as I am informed, are stationed behind the traverses, with large trees lying everywhere felled in front of them. But I have sent forward an engineer to reconnoitre more strictly, and I trust I shall have his report before we shall have advanced as far as—as—”

“As Fort Defiance,” interrupted Colonel Grant. “Well, General, are we to be in the advance?”

“No,” replied the General. “As you and the Fifty-fifth have had all the fighting that has as yet fallen to our lot, I mean that you shall be in the reserve upon this occasion. The picquets will commence the assault, and they will be followed by the grenadiers, which will be in their turn supported by the battalions of the reserve. Nay, do not look mortified, Colonel;—you and your men will have a bellyfull of it before all is done, I promise you.”

With these words the General left them, and the columns moved on through the wood in the order he had signified to them. They had now possessed themselves of better guides, and they were thus enabled to make their march more direct, and as they had already cleared their front of enemies, the leading troops were soon up at the entrenchments. Here they were surprised to find a regular breast-work, nine or ten feet high, strongly defended with wall-pieces, and having a very impregnable *chevaux de frize*, whilst the whole ground in front was everywhere strewed thickly over with huge newly-felled oak trees for the distance of about a cannon-shot

from the walls. From behind the *chevaux de frize*, the enemy, in strong force, commenced a most galling and destructive fire upon the assailants, so as to render the works almost unapproachable, without certain destruction, especially without the artillery, which, from some accident, had not as yet been brought up. But the very danger they had to encounter seemed to give the British troops a more than human courage. Regardless of the hailstorm of bullets discharged on them with deliberate aim from behind the abattis, whilst they were fighting their laborious and painful way through the labyrinth of fallen trunks and branches that opposed their passage, they continued, column after column, to advance, dropping and thinning fearfully as they went.

The Highlanders beheld this slaughter that the enemy was making of their friends—their blood boiled within them. In vain Colonel Grant and Major Campbell galloped backwards and forwards along the line, using every command and every argument that official authority or reason could employ to restrain and to soothe them, till their time for action should arrive. With one tremendous shout they rushed forward from the reserve, and, cutting their way through the trees with their claymores, they were soon showing their plumed crests among the very foremost ranks of the assailants. But so murderous was the fire that fell upon them, that their black tufted bonnets were seen dropping in all directions, never to be again raised by the brave heads that bore them. Their loss before they gained the outward defences of the fort was fearful; but the

onset of those who survived was so overwhelming that it drove the enemy from these outworks, and compelled them to retreat within the body of the fort itself.

Now came the most dreadful part of this work of death. The garrison, protected by the works of the fort, mowed down the ranks of the besiegers with a yet more certain and unerring aim. Under the false report that these works were as yet incomplete, scaling ladders had been considered as unnecessary. The Highlanders, gnashing their teeth like raging tigers caught in the toils, endeavoured to clamber up the front of them, by rearing themselves on each other's shoulders, and by digging holes with their swords and bayonets in the face of the intrenchments. Some few succeeded, by such means, in gaining a footing on the top. But it was only to make themselves more conspicuous, and more certain marks for destruction; and they were no sooner seen, than their lifeless bodies, perforated by showers of bullets, were swept down upon their struggling comrades below. By repeated and multiplied exertions of this kind, Captain John Campbell succeeded in forcing his way entirely over the breastwork, at the head of a handful of men; but they also were instantly despatched by the multitude of bayonets by which they were assailed. For hours did these gallant men persevere in the repetition of such daring attempts as I have described—all, alas! with equal want of success, and with increasing slaughter, till General Abercromby ordered the retreat to be sounded. To this call, however, the Highlanders were deaf; and

it was not until Colonel Grant, after receiving three successive orders from the General, which he had failed in enforcing, threw himself among them, and literally drove them back from the works with his sword, that he could collect and bring away the small moiety that yet remained alive of that splendid regiment with which he had marched to the attack. More than one-half of the men, and two-thirds of the officers, were lying killed or wounded on that bloody field.

Colonel Grant had hardly gathered this remnant of his men together, when he hastened back over the ground where the contest had raged, to search eagerly for some of those whom he most dearly loved, and for the cause of whose absence from this hasty muster he trembled to inquire or investigate. The enemy, though victorious, had been too roughly handled to be tempted to a sally, for the mere purpose of annoying those who were peacefully engaged in the sad duty of carrying off their wounded or dying comrades. The Colonel was therefore enabled to make his way over the encumbered field without molestation, and with no other interruption than that which was presented to him by the prostrate trees, which, however, seemed to him to offer greater obstruction to his present impatience than they had done during his advance with his corps to the attack. The scene was strangely terrible! It might have been imagined by any one who looked upon that field, that all Nature, even the elements themselves, had been at strife. Slaughtered, and mutilated, and dying men lay in confused heaps, or scattered singly among the over-

thrown giants of the forest, those enormous trees which had been so recently rooted in the primeval soil, where they had stood for ages. Colonel Grant looked everywhere anxiously around him. Many were the familiar faces that he recognised, but their features were now so fixed by the last agonizing pang of a violent death, as cruelly, yet certainly, to assure him that *they* could never again in this world recognise him. The last spirited words of high and courageous hope, so recently uttered by many of them to him in their anticipation of triumph, still rang in his recollection, and as he tore his eyes away from them, the tears would burst over his manly cheeks as the thought arose in his mind, that words of theirs would never again reach his ears. He moved hurriedly on, endeavouring to suppress his feelings, but every now and then compelled to give way to them, till his attention was absorbingly attracted by descrying the dark form of an Indian, who was seated on his hams, beneath the arched trunk and boughs of a huge felled oak. It was the Eagle Eye.

He sat motionless as a bronze statue, with the drapery of his blanket hanging in deep folds from his shoulders. His features were grave and still, and apparently devoid of feeling; but his eyes were turned downward, and they were immoveably fixed on the countenance of a young man who lay stretched out a corpse before him. His head was supported between the knees of the red man, whilst the cold and stiffened fingers of him who was dead were firmly clasped between both his hands. The

body was that of young Donald Campbell of Inverawe.

“God help me!” cried the Colonel, clasping his hands and weeping bitterly. “God help me, what a spectacle!”

“Why should you weep, old man?” said the Eagle Eye, with imperturbable calmness. “My young brother has gone to the Great Spirit, like a great warrior as he was. Who among his tribe shall be ashamed of *him*? Who among warriors shall call *him* a woman? I could weep for him too did I not know that the Great Spirit has taken him to happiness, from which it were wicked in me to wish to have detained him for my own miserable gratification. But he is happy! He has gone to those fair, boundless, and plentiful hunting-grounds that lie beyond the great lake, where he will never know want, and where we, if our deeds be like his, will surely follow him. But till then the sunshine of the Eagle Eye has departed, and night must surround his footsteps, since the light of his pale-faced brother has departed!”

“This is too much!” said the Colonel, quite overwhelmed by his feelings. “Help me to bear off the body. It must not be left here.”

The Eagle Eye arose in silence, and gravely and solemnly assisted the Highlander who attended the Colonel to lift and bear away the body, and they had not thus proceeded more than a few paces in their retreat from the works, when the weeping eyes of the Highland commanding-officer and the eagle gaze of the red warrior were equally arrested at the same

moment by one and the same object. This was the manly and heroic form of Major Campbell of Inverawe. He sat on the ground desperately wounded, with his back partially supported against the body of his horse, which had been killed under him. His eye-balls were stretched from their sockets, and fixed upon vacancy, with an expression of terror greater than that with which death himself, riding triumphant as he was over that field of the slain, could have filled those of so brave a man. Colonel Grant was so overcome that he could not utter a word. He was convulsed by his emotions. The Eagle Eye laid down the body of Donald opposite to his father, and silently resumed his former position, with the youth's head between his knees. The father's eyes caught the motionless features of his son, and he started from his strange state of abstraction.

"My son!" murmured the wounded Inverawe. "So it is as I supposed—he is gone! But I shall soon be with you, boy. God in his mercy help and protect your poor mother!"

"Speak not thus, my dearest friend!" said Colonel Grant, making an effort to command himself, and hastening to support and comfort the wounded man; "trust me, you will yet do well. You must live for your poor wife's sake."

"No!" replied Inverawe, with deep solemnity. "My hour is come. In vain was it that your kind friendship and that of the brave Abercromby succeeded in deceiving me,—for I have seen *him*—I have seen *him* terribly,—and this is Ticonderoga!"

"Pardon me, my dear Inverawe, for a deception

which was so well intended," said the Colonel, much agitated. "It is indeed Ticonderoga as you say, but—but—believe me, that which now disturbs you was only some phantom of your brain, arising from loss of blood and weakness. Cheer up!—Come, man!—Come!—Inverawe! Merciful Heaven, he is gone!"



THE TAPESTRIED CHAMBER ;

OR,

THE LADY IN THE SACQUE.

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE following narrative is given from the pen, so far as memory permits, in the same character in which it was presented to the author's ear ; nor has he claim to further praise, or to be more deeply censured, than in proportion to the good or bad judgment which he has employed in selecting his materials, as he has studiously avoided any attempt at ornament which might interfere with the simplicity of the tale.

At the same time, it must be admitted that the particular class of stories which turns on the marvellous, possesses a stronger influence when told than when committed to print. The volume taken up at noonday, though rehearsing the same incidents, conveys a much more feeble impression than is achieved by the voice of the speaker on a circle of fireside auditors, who hang upon the narrative as the narrator details the minute incidents which serve to give it authenticity, and lowers his voice with an affectation of mystery while he approaches the fearful and wonderful part. It was with such advantages that the present writer heard the following events related, more than twenty years since, by the celebrated Miss Seward, of Litchfield, who, to her numerous

accomplishments, added, in a remarkable degree, the power of narrative in private conversation. In its present form the tale must necessarily lose all the interest which was attached to it, by the flexible voice and intelligent features of the gifted narrator. Yet still, read aloud, to an undoubting audience by the doubtful light of the closing evening, or, in silence, by a decaying taper, and amidst the solitude of a half-lighted apartment, it may redeem its character as a good ghost story. Miss Seward always affirmed that she had derived her information from an authentic source, although she suppressed the names of the two persons chiefly concerned. I will not avail myself of any particulars I may have since received concerning the localities of the detail, but suffer them to rest under the same general description in which they were first related to me ; and, for the same reason, I will not add to or diminish the narrative, by any circumstance, whether more or less material, but simply rehearse, as I heard it, a story of supernatural terror.

About the end of the American war, when the officers of Lord Cornwallis's army, which surrendered at Yorktown, and others, who had been made prisoners during the impolitic and ill-fated controversy, were returning to their own country, to relate their adventures, and repose themselves after their fatigues, there was amongst them a general officer, to whom Miss S. gave the name of Browne, but merely, as I understood, to save the inconvenience of introducing a nameless agent in the narrative. He was an officer of merit, as well as a gentleman of high consideration for family and attainments.

Some business had carried General Browne upon a tour through the western counties, when, in the conclusion of a morning stage, he found himself in the vicinity of a small country town, which presented a scene of uncommon beauty, and of a character peculiarly English.

The little town, with its stately old church, whose tower bore testimony to the devotion of ages long past, lay amidst pastures and corn-fields of small extent, but bounded and divided with hedgerow timber of great age and size. There were few marks of modern improvement. The environs of the place intimated neither the solitude of decay nor the bustle of novelty; the houses were old, but in good repair; and the beautiful little river murmured freely on its way to the left of the town, neither restrained by a dam, nor bordered by a towing-path.

Upon a gentle eminence, nearly a mile to the southward of the town, were seen, amongst many venerable oaks and tangled thickets, the turrets of a castle, as old as the wars of York and Lancaster, but which seemed to have received important alterations during the age of Elizabeth and her successor. It had not been a place of great size; but whatever accommodation it formerly afforded was, it must be supposed, still to be obtained within its walls; at least such was the inference which General Browne drew from observing the smoke arise merrily from several of the ancient wreathed and carved chimney-stalks. The wall of the park ran alongside of the highway for two or three hundred yards; and through the different points by which the eye found glimpses

into the woodland scenery, it seemed to be well stocked. Other points of view opened in succession; now a full one, of the front of the old castle, and now a side glimpse at its particular towers; the former rich in all the bizarrerie of the Elizabethan school, while the simple and solid strength of other parts of the building seemed to show that they had been raised more for defence than ostentation.

Delighted with the partial glimpses which he obtained of the castle through the woods and glades by which this ancient feudal fortress was surrounded, our military traveller was determined to inquire whether it might not deserve a nearer view, and whether it contained family pictures or other objects of curiosity worthy of a stranger's visit; when, leaving the vicinity of the park, he rolled through a clean and well-paved street, and stopped at the door of a well-frequented inn.

Before ordering horses to proceed on his journey, General Browne made inquiries concerning the proprietor of the chateau which had so attracted his admiration; and was equally surprised and pleased at hearing in reply a nobleman named, whom we shall call Lord Woodville. How fortunate! Much of Browne's early recollections, both at school and at college, had been connected with young Woodville, whom, by a few questions, he now ascertained to be the same with the owner of this fair domain. He had been raised to the peerage by the decease of his father a few months before, and, as the General learned from the landlord, the term of mourning being ended, was now taking possession of his paternal

estate, in the jovial season of merry autumn, accompanied by a select party of friends to enjoy the sports of a country famous for game.

This was delightful news to our traveller. Frank Woodville had been Richard Browne's fag at Eton, and his chosen intimate at Christ Church; their pleasures and their tasks had been the same; and the honest soldier's heart warmed to find his early friend in possession of so delightful a residence, and of an estate, as the landlord assured him with a nod and a wink, fully adequate to maintain and add to his dignity. Nothing was more natural than that the traveller should suspend a journey, which there was nothing to render hurried, to pay a visit to an old friend under such agreeable circumstances.

The fresh horses, therefore, had only the brief task of conveying the General's travelling carriage to Woodville Castle. A porter admitted them at a modern Gothic lodge, built in that style to correspond with the castle itself, and at the same time rang a bell to give warning of the approach of visitors. Apparently the sound of the bell had suspended the separation of the company, bent on the various amusements of the morning; for, on entering the court of the chateau, several young men were lounging about in their sporting dresses, looking at and criticising the dogs which the keepers held in readiness to attend their pastime. As General Browne alighted, the young lord came to the gate of the hall, and for an instant gazed, as at a stranger, upon the countenance of his friend, on which war, with its fatigues and its wounds, had made a great alteration. But the uncertainty

lasted no longer than till the visitor had spoken, and the hearty greeting which followed was such as can only be exchanged betwixt those who have passed together the merry days of careless boyhood or early youth.

“If I could have formed a wish, my dear Browne,” said Lord Woodville, “it would have been to have you here, of all men, upon this occasion, which my friends are good enough to hold as a sort of holiday. Do not think you have been unwatched during the years you have been absent from us. I have traced you through your dangers, your triumphs, your misfortunes, and was delighted to see that, whether in victory or defeat, the name of my old friend was always distinguished with applause.”

The General made a suitable reply, and congratulated his friend on his new dignities, and the possession of a place and domain so beautiful.

“Nay, you have seen nothing of it as yet,” said Lord Woodville, “and I trust you do not mean to leave us till you are better acquainted with it. It is true, I confess, that my present party is pretty large, and the old house, like other places of the kind, does not possess so much accommodation as the extent of the outward walls appears to promise. But we can give you a comfortable old-fashioned room, and I venture to suppose that your campaigns have taught you to be glad of worse quarters.”

The General shrugged his shoulders, and laughed. “I presume,” he said, “the worst apartment in your chateau is considerably superior to the old tobacco-cask, in which I was fain to take up my night’s

lodging when I was in the Bush, as the Virginians call it, with the light corps. There I lay, like Diogenes himself, so delighted with my covering from the elements, that I made a vain attempt to have it rolled on to my next quarters; but my commander for the time would give way to no such luxurious provision, and I took farewell of my beloved cask with tears in my eyes."

"Well, then, since you do not fear your quarters," said Lord Woodville, "you will stay with me a week at least. Of guns, dogs, fishing-rods, flies, and means of sport by sea and land, we have enough and to spare: you cannot pitch on an amusement but we will find the means of pursuing it. But if you prefer the gun and pointers, I will go with you myself, and see whether you have mended your shooting since you have been amongst the Indians of the back settlements."

The General gladly accepted his friendly host's proposal in all its points. After a morning of manly exercise, the company met at dinner, where it was the delight of Lord Woodville to conduce to the display of the high properties of his recovered friend, so as to recommend him to his guests, most of whom were persons of distinction. He led General Browne to speak of the scenes he had witnessed; and as every word marked alike the brave officer and the sensible man, who retained possession of his cool judgment under the most imminent dangers, the company looked upon the soldier with general respect, as on one who had proved himself possessed of an uncommon portion of personal courage,—that

attribute, of all others, of which everybody desires to be thought possessed.

The day at Woodville Castle ended as usual in such mansions. The hospitality stopped within the limits of good order. Music, in which the young lord was a proficient, succeeded to the circulation of the bottle; cards and billiards, for those who preferred such amusements, were in readiness; but the exercise of the morning required early hours, and not long after eleven o'clock the guests began to retire to their several apartments.

The young Lord himself conducted his friend, General Browne, to the chamber destined for him, which answered the description he had given of it, being comfortable, but old-fashioned. The bed was of the massive form used in the end of the seventeenth century, and the curtains of faded silk, heavily trimmed with tarnished gold. But then the sheets, pillows, and blankets looked delightful to the campaigner, when he thought of his "mansion, the cask." There was an air of gloom in the tapestry hangings, which, with their worn-out graces, curtained the walls of the little chamber, and gently undulated as the autumnal breeze found its way through the ancient lattice-window, which pattered and whistled as the air gained entrance. The toilet, too, with its mirror, turbaned, after the manner of the beginning of the century, with a coiffure of murrey-coloured silk, and its hundred strange-shaped boxes, providing for arrangements which had been obsolete for more than fifty years, had an antique, and in so far a melancholy, aspect. But nothing

could blaze more brightly and cheerfully than the two large wax candles; or if aught could rival them, it was the flaming bickering fagots in the chimney that sent at once their gleam and their warmth through the snug apartment, which, notwithstanding the general antiquity of its appearance, was not wanting in the least convenience that modern habits rendered either necessary or desirable.

“This is an old-fashioned sleeping apartment, General,” said the young lord; “but I hope you find nothing that makes you envy your old tobacco-cask.”

“I am not particular respecting my lodgings,” replied the General; “yet were I to make any choice, I would prefer this chamber by many degrees to the gayer and more modern rooms of your family mansion. Believe me, that when I unite its modern air of comfort with its venerable antiquity, and recollect that it is your lordship’s property, I shall feel in better quarters here, than if I were in the best hotel London could afford.”

“I trust—I have no doubt—that you will find yourself as comfortable as I wish you, my dear General,” said the young nobleman; and once more bidding his guest good-night, he shook him by the hand, and withdrew.

The General once more looked around him, and internally congratulating himself on his return to peaceful life, the comforts of which were endeared by the recollection of the hardships and dangers he had lately sustained, undressed himself, and prepared for a luxurious night’s rest.

Here, contrary to the custom of this species of tale, we leave the General in possession of his apartment until the next morning.

The company assembled for breakfast at an early hour, but without the appearance of General Browne, who seemed the guest that Lord Woodville was desirous of honouring above all whom his hospitality had assembled around him. He more than once expressed himself surprised at the General's absence, and at length sent a servant to make inquiry after him. The man brought back information that General Browne had been walking abroad since an early hour of the morning, in defiance of the weather, which was misty and ungenial.

"The custom of a soldier," said the young nobleman to his friends; "many of them acquire habitual vigilance, and cannot sleep after the early hour at which their duty usually commands them to be alert."

Yet the explanation which Lord Woodville thus offered to the company seemed hardly satisfactory to his own mind, and it was in a fit of silence and abstraction that he awaited the return of the General. It took place near an hour after the breakfast bell had rung. He looked fatigued and feverish. His hair—the powdering and arrangement of which was at this time one of the most important occupations of a man's whole day, and marked his fashion as much as, in the present time, the tying of a cravat, or the want of one—was dishevelled, uncurled, void of powder, and dank with dew. His clothes were huddled on with a careless negligence, remarkable in a military man, whose real or supposed duties are

usually held to include some attention to the toilet ; and his looks were haggard and ghastly in a peculiar degree.

“So you have stolen a march upon us this morning, my dear General,” said Lord Woodville ; “or you have not found your bed so much to your mind as I had hoped and you seemed to expect. How did you rest last night ?”

“Oh, excellently well ! remarkably well ! never better in my life,” said General Browne rapidly, and yet with an air of embarrassment which was obvious to his friend. He then hastily swallowed a cup of tea, and, neglecting or refusing whatever else was offered, seemed to fall into a fit of abstraction.

“You will take the gun to-day, General ?” said his friend and host, but had to repeat the question twice ere he received the abrupt answer, “No, my lord ; I am sorry I cannot have the opportunity of spending another day with your lordship : my post horses are ordered, and will be here directly.”

All who were present showed surprise, and Lord Woodville immediately replied, “Post horses, my good friend ! what can you possibly want with them, when you promised to stay with me quietly for at least a week ?”

“I believe,” said the General, obviously much embarrassed, “that I might, in the pleasure of my first meeting with your lordship, have said something about stopping here a few days ; but I have since found it altogether impossible.”

“This is very extraordinary,” answered the young nobleman. “You seemed quite disengaged yester-

day, and you cannot have had a summons to-day ; for our post has not come up from the town, and therefore you cannot have received any letters."

General Browne, without giving any further explanation, muttered something about indispensable business, and insisted on the absolute necessity of his departure in a manner which silenced all opposition on the part of his host, who saw that his resolution was taken, and forbore all further importunity.

"At least, however," he said, "permit me, my dear Browne, since go you will or must, to show you the view from the terrace, which the mist, that is now rising, will soon display."

He threw open a sash window, and stepped down upon the terrace as he spoke. The General followed him mechanically, but seemed little to attend to what his host was saying, as, looking across an extended and rich prospect, he pointed out the different objects worthy of observation. Thus they moved on till Lord Woodville had attained his purpose of drawing his guest entirely apart from the rest of the company, when, turning round upon him with an air of great solemnity, he addressed him thus :

"Richard Browne, my old and very dear friend, we are now alone. Let me conjure you to answer me, upon the word of a friend, and the honour of a soldier. How did you in reality rest during last night ?"

"Most wretchedly indeed, my lord," answered the General, in the same tone of solemnity ; "so miserably, that I would not run the risk of such a second night, not only for all the lands belonging to this

castle, but for all the country which I see from this elevated point of view."

"This is most extraordinary," said the young lord, as if speaking to himself; "then there must be something in the reports concerning that apartment." Again turning to the General, he said, "For God's sake, my dear friend, be candid with me, and let me know the disagreeable particulars which have befallen you under a roof where, with consent of the owner, you should have met nothing save comfort."

The General seemed distressed by this appeal, and paused a moment before he replied. "My dear lord," he at length said, "what happened to me last night is of a nature so peculiar and so unpleasant, that I could hardly bring myself to detail it even to your lordship, were it not that, independent of my wish to gratify any request of yours, I think that sincerity on my part may lead to some explanation about a circumstance equally painful and mysterious. To others, the communication I am about to make might place me in the light of a weak-minded, superstitious fool, who suffered his own imagination to delude and bewilder him; but you have known me in childhood and youth, and will not suspect me of having adopted in manhood the feelings and frailties from which my early years were free." Here he paused, and his friend replied:

"Do not doubt my perfect confidence in the truth of your communication, however strange it may be," replied Lord Woodville; "I know your firmness of disposition too well to suspect you could be made the object of imposition, and am aware that your honour

and your friendship will equally deter you from exaggerating whatever you may have witnessed."

"Well, then," said the General, "I will proceed with my story as well as I can, relying upon your candour, and yet distinctly feeling that I would rather face a battery than recall to my mind the odious recollections of last night."

He paused a second time, and then perceiving that Lord Woodville remained silent and in an attitude of attention, he commenced, though not without obvious reluctance, the history of his night adventures in the Tapestry Chamber.

"I undressed and went to bed so soon as your lordship left me yesterday evening; but the wood in the chimney, which nearly fronted my bed, blazed brightly and cheerfully, and, aided by a hundred exciting recollections of my childhood and youth, which had been recalled by the unexpected pleasure of meeting your lordship, prevented me from falling immediately asleep. I ought, however, to say that these reflections were all of a pleasant and agreeable kind, grounded on a sense of having for a time exchanged the labour, fatigues, and dangers of my profession, for the enjoyments of a peaceful life, and the reunion of those friendly and affectionate ties, which I had torn asunder at the rude summons of war.

"While such pleasing reflections were stealing over my mind, and gradually lulling me to slumber, I was suddenly aroused by a sound like that of the rustling of a silken gown, and the tapping of a pair of high-heeled shoes, as if a woman were walking in the

apartment. Ere I could draw the curtain to see what the matter was, the figure of a little woman passed between the bed and the fire. The back of this form was turned to me, and I could observe, from the shoulders and neck, it was that of an old woman, whose dress was an old-fashioned gown, which, I think, ladies call a *sacque*; that is, a sort of robe completely loose in the body, but gathered into broad plaits upon the neck and shoulders, which fall down to the ground, and terminate in a species of train.

“I thought the intrusion singular enough, but never harboured for a moment the idea that what I saw was anything more than the mortal form of some old woman about the establishment, who had a fancy to dress like her grandmother, and who, having perhaps (as your lordship mentioned that you were rather straitened for room) been dislodged from her chamber for my accommodation, had forgotten the circumstance, and returned by twelve to her old haunt. Under this persuasion, I moved myself in bed and coughed a little, to make the intruder sensible of my being in possession of the premises. She turned slowly round, but, gracious Heaven, my lord, what a countenance did she display to me! There was no longer any question what she was, or any thought of her being a living being. Upon a face which wore the fixed features of a corpse were imprinted the traces of the vilest and most hideous passions which had animated her while she lived. The body of some atrocious criminal seemed to have been given up from the grave, and the soul restored

from the penal fire, in order to form, for a space, an union with the ancient accomplice of its guilt. I started up in bed, and sat upright, supporting myself on my palms, as I gazed on this horrible spectre. The hag made, as it seemed, a single and swift stride to the bed where I lay, and squatted herself down upon it in precisely the same attitude which I had assumed in the extremity of horror, advancing her diabolical countenance within half a yard of mine, with a grin that seemed to intimate the malice and the derision of an incarnate fiend."

Here General Browne stopped, and wiped from his brow the cold perspiration with which the recollection of his horrible vision had covered it.

"My lord," he said, "I am no coward. I have been in all the mortal dangers incidental to my profession, and I may truly boast, that no man ever knew Richard Browne dishonour the sword he wears; but in these horrible circumstances, under the eyes, and, as it seemed, almost in the grasp of an incarnation of an evil spirit, all firmness forsook me, all manhood melted from me like wax in the furnace, and I felt my hair individually bristle. The current of my life-blood ceased to flow, and I sank back in a swoon, as very a victim to panic terror as ever was a village girl, or a child of ten years old. How long I lay in this condition I cannot pretend to guess.

"But I was roused by the castle clock striking one, so loud that it seemed as if it were in the very room. It was some time before I dared open my eyes, lest they should again encounter the horrible spectacle. When, however, I summoned courage to

look up, she was no longer visible. My first idea was to pull my bell, wake the servants, and remove to a garret or a hay-loft, to be ensured against a second visitation. Nay, I will confess the truth, that my resolution was altered, not by the shame of exposing myself, but by the fear that, as the bell-cord hung by the chimney, I might, in making my way to it, be again crossed by the fiendish hag, who, I figured to myself, might be still lurking about some corner of the apartment.

“I will not pretend to describe what hot and cold fever-fits tormented me for the rest of the night, through broken sleep, weary vigils, and that dubious state which forms the neutral ground between them. An hundred terrible objects appeared to haunt me; but there was the great difference betwixt the vision which I have described, and those which followed, that I knew the last to be deceptions of my own fancy and over-excited nerves.

“Day at last appeared, and I rose from my bed ill in health and humiliated in mind. I was ashamed of myself as a man and a soldier, and still more so, at feeling my own extreme desire to escape from the haunted apartment, which, however, conquered all other considerations; so that, huddling on my clothes with the most careless haste, I made my escape from your lordship’s mansion, to seek in the open air some relief to my nervous system, shaken as it was by this horrible encounter with a visitant, for such I must believe her, from the other world. Your lordship has now heard the cause of my discomposure, and of my sudden desire to leave your hospitable castle. In

other places I trust we may often meet ; but God protect me from ever spending a second night under that roof !”

Strange as the General's tale was, he spoke with such a deep air of conviction, that it cut short all the usual commentaries which are made on such stories. Lord Woodville never once asked him if he was sure he did not dream of the apparition, or suggested any of the possibilities by which it is fashionable to explain supernatural appearances, as wild vagaries of the fancy, or deceptions of the optic nerves. On the contrary, he seemed deeply impressed with the truth and reality of what he had heard ; and after a considerable pause, regretted, with much appearance of sincerity, that his early friend should in his house have suffered so severely.

“I am the more sorry for your pain, my dear Browne,” he continued, “that it is the unhappy, though most unexpected, result of an experiment of my own. You must know that, for my father and grandfather's time at least, the apartment which was assigned to you last night had been shut on account of reports that it was disturbed by supernatural sights and noises. When I came, a few weeks since, into possession of the estate, I thought the accommodation which the castle afforded for my friends was not extensive enough to permit the inhabitants of the invisible world to retain possession of a comfortable sleeping apartment. I therefore caused the Tapestry Chamber, as we call it, to be opened ; and, without destroying its air of antiquity, I had such new articles of furniture placed in it as became the modern times.

Yet as the opinion that the room was haunted very strongly prevailed among the domestics, and was also known in the neighbourhood and to many of my friends, I feared some prejudice might be entertained by the first occupant of the Tapestry Chamber, which might tend to revive the evil report which it had laboured under, and so disappoint my purpose of rendering it an useful part of the house. I must confess, my dear Browne, that your arrival yesterday, agreeable to me for a thousand reasons besides, seemed the most favourable opportunity of removing the unpleasant rumours which attached to the room, since your courage was indubitable, and your mind free of any pre-occupation on the subject. I could not, therefore, have chosen a more fitting subject for my experiment."

"Upon my life," said General Browne, somewhat hastily, "I am infinitely obliged to your lordship—very particularly indebted indeed. I am likely to remember for some time the consequences of the experiment, as your lordship is pleased to call it."

"Nay, now you are unjust, my dear friend," said Lord Woodville. "You have only to reflect for a single moment, in order to be convinced that I could not augur the possibility of the pain to which you have been so unhappily exposed. I was yesterday morning a complete sceptic on the subject of supernatural appearances. Nay, I am sure that had I told you what was said about that room, those very reports would have induced you, by your own choice, to select it for your accommodation. It was my misfortune, perhaps my error, but really cannot be

termed my fault, that you have been afflicted so strangely."

"Strangely indeed!" said the General, resuming his good temper; "and I acknowledge that I have no right to be offended with your lordship for treating me like what I used to think myself—a man of some firmness and courage. But I see my post horses are arrived, and I must not detain your lordship from your amusement."

"Nay, my old friend," said Lord Woodville, since you cannot stay with us another day, which, indeed, I can no longer urge, give me at least half an hour more. You used to love pictures and I have a gallery of portraits, some of them by Vandyke, representing ancestry to whom this property and castle formerly belonged. I think that several of them will strike you as possessing merit."

General Browne accepted the invitation, though somewhat unwillingly. It was evident he was not to breathe freely or at ease till he left Woodville Castle far behind him. He could not refuse his friend's invitation, however; and the less so, that he was a little ashamed of the peevishness which he had displayed towards his well-meaning entertainer.

The General, therefore, followed Lord Woodville through several rooms, into a long gallery hung with pictures, which the latter pointed out to his guest, telling the names, and giving some account of the personages whose portraits presented themselves in progression. General Browne was but little interested in the details which these accounts conveyed to him. They were, indeed, of the kind which are

usually found in an old family gallery. Here, was a cavalier who had ruined the estate in the royal cause; there, a fine lady who had reinstated it by contracting a match with a wealthy Roundhead. There, hung a gallant who had been in danger for corresponding with the exiled Court at Saint Germain's; here, one who had taken arms for William at the Revolution; and there, a third that had thrown his weight alternately into the scale of Whig and Tory.

While Lord Woodville was cramming these words into his guest's ear, "against the stomach of his sense," they gained the middle of the gallery, when he beheld General Browne suddenly start, and assume an attitude of the utmost surprise, not unmixed with fear, as his eyes were caught and suddenly riveted by a portrait of an old, old lady in a sacque, the fashionable dress of the end of the seventeenth century.

"There she is!" he exclaimed; "there she is, in form and features, though inferior in demoniac expression, to the accursed hag who visited me last night!"

"If that be the case," said the young nobleman, "there can remain no longer any doubt of the horrible reality of your apparition. That is the picture of a wretched ancestress of mine, of whose crimes a black and fearful catalogue is recorded in a family history in my charter-chest. The recital of them would be too horrible; it is enough to say, that in yon fatal apartment incest and unnatural murder were committed. I will restore it to the solitude to which the better judgment of those who preceded me had consigned it; and never shall any one, so long as I can prevent

it, be exposed to a repetition of the supernatural horrors which could shake such courage as yours."

Thus the friends, who had met with such glee, parted in a very different mood; Lord Woodville to command the Tapestry Chamber to be unmantled, and the door built up; and General Browne to seek in some less beautiful country, and with some less dignified friend, forgetfulness of the painful night which he had passed in Woodville Castle.



HIGHLAND SNOWSTORM.

BY JOHN WILSON

(“CHRISTOPHER NORTH”).

ONE family lived in Glencreran, and another in Glencoe—the families of two brothers—seldom visiting each other on working days, seldom meeting even on Sabbaths, for theirs was not the same parish kirk—seldom coming together on rural festivals or holidays, for in the Highlands now these are not so frequent as of yore; yet all these sweet seldoms, taken together, to loving hearts made a happy many, and thus, though each family passed its life in its own home, there were many invisible threads stretched out through the intermediate air, connecting the two dwellings together,—as the gossamer keeps floating from one tree to another, each with its own secret nest. And nest-like both dwellings were. *That* in Glencoe, built beneath a treeless but high-heathered rock,—lone in all storms,—with greensward and garden on a slope down to a rivulet, the clearest of the clear (oh! once woefully reddened!), and *growing*, so it seems, in the mosses of its own roof, and the huge stones that overshadow it, out of the earth. *That* in Glencreran more conspicuous, on a knoll among the pastoral meadows, midway between mountain and mountain, so that the grove which shelters it, except when the sun is shining high, is darkened

by their meeting shadows,—and dark indeed, even in the sunshine, for 'tis a low but wide-armed grove of old oak-like pines. A little farther down, and Glencreran is very sylvan ; but this dwelling is the highest up of all, the first you descend upon, near the foot of that wild hanging staircase between you and Glentive. And, except this old oak-like grove of pines, there is not a tree, and hardly a bush, on bank or brae, pasture or hay-field, though these are kept by many a rill, there mingling themselves into one stream, in a perpetual lustre that seems to be as native to the grass as its light is to the glow-worm. Such are the two huts, for they are huts and no more—and you may see them still, if you know how to discover the beautiful sights of nature from descriptions treasured in your heart, and if the spirit of change, now nowhere at rest on the earth, not even in its most solitary places, have not swept from the scenes the beautified, the humble but hereditary dwellings that ought to be allowed, in the fulness of the quiet time, to relapse back into the bosom of nature, through insensible and unperceived decay.

These huts belonged to brothers, and each had an only child,—a son and a daughter,—born on the same day, and now blooming on the verge of youth. A year ago, and they were but mere children ; but what wondrous growth of frame and spirit does nature at that season of life often present before our eyes ! So that we almost see the very change going on between morn and morn, and feel that these objects of our affection are daily brought closer to ourselves, by partaking daily more and more in all our most sacred

thoughts, in our cares and in our duties, and in knowledge of the sorrows as well as the joys of our common lot. Thus had these cousins grown up before their parents' eyes—Flora Macdonald, a name hallowed of yore, the fairest, and Ronald Cameron, the boldest of all the living flowers in Glencoe and Glencreran. It was now their seventeenth birthday, and never had a winter sun smiled more serenely over a knoll of snow. Flora, it had been agreed on, was to pass that day in Glencreran, and Ronald to meet her among the mountains, that he might bring her down the many precipitous passes to his parents' hut. It was the middle of February, and the snow had lain for weeks with all its drifts unchanged, so calm had been the weather and so continued the frost. At the same hour, known by horologe on the cliff touched by the finger of dawn, the happy creatures left each their own glen, and mile after mile of the smooth surface glided away past their feet, almost as the quiet water glides by the little boat that in favouring breezes walks merrily along the sea. And soon they met at the trysting place—a bank of birch trees beneath a cliff that takes its name from the eagles.

On their meeting, seemed not to them the whole of nature suddenly inspired with joy and beauty? Insects, unheard by them before, hummed and glittered in the air; from tree roots, where the snow was thin, little flowers, or herbs flower-like, now for the first time were seen looking out as if alive; the trees themselves seemed budding, as if it were already spring; and rare as in that rocky region are the birds of song, a faint trill for a moment touched their ears,

and the flutter of a wing, telling them that somewhere near there was preparation for a nest. Deep down beneath the snow they listened to the tinkle of rills unreached by the frost, and merry, thought they, was the music of these contented prisoners. Not Summer's self, in its deepest green, so beautiful had ever been to them before, as now the mild white of Winter; and as their eyes were lifted up to heaven, when had they ever seen before a sky of such perfect blue, a sun so gentle in its brightness, or altogether a week-day in any season so like a Sabbath in its stillness, so like a holiday in its joy? Lovers were they, although as yet they scarcely knew it; for from love only could have come such bliss as now was theirs,—a bliss, that while it beautified was felt to come from the skies.

Flora sang to Ronald many of her old songs, to those wild Gaelic airs that sound like the sighing of winds among fractured cliffs, or the branches of storm-tossed trees, when the subsiding tempest is about to let them rest. Monotonous music! but irresistible over the heart it has once awakened and enthralled, so sincere seems to be the mournfulness it breathes—a mournfulness brooding and feeding on the same note, that is at once its natural expression and sweetest aliment, of which the singer never wearieth in her dream, while her heart all the time is haunted by all that is most piteous,—by the faces of the dead in their paleness returning to the shades of life, only that once more they may pour from their fixed eyes those strange showers of unaccountable tears!

How merry were they between those mournful airs! How Flora trembled to see her lover's burning

brow and flashing eyes, as he told her tales of great battles fought in foreign lands, far across the sea—tales which he had drunk in with greedy ears from the old heroes scattered all over Lochaber and Badenoch, on the brink of the grave still garrulous of blood?

“The sun sat high in his meridian tower.”

But time had not been with the youthful lovers, and the blessed beings believed that 'twas but a little hour since beneath the Eagle Cliff they had met in the prime of the morn!

The boy starts to his feet, and his keen eye looks along the ready rifle—for his sires had all been famous deer-stalkers, and the passion of the chase was hereditary in his blood. Lo! a deer from Dalness, hound-driven, or sullenly astray, slowly bearing his antlers up the glen, then stopping for a moment to snuff the air, then away—away! The rifle-shot rings dully from the scarce echoing snow-cliffs, and the animal leaps aloft, struck by a certain but not sudden death-wound. Oh! for Fingal now to pull him down like a wolf! But labouring and lumbering heavily along, the snow spotted as he bounds with blood, the huge animal at last disappears round some rocks at the head of the glen. “Follow me, Flora!” the boy-hunter cries; and flinging down their plaids, they turn their bright faces to the mountain, and away up the long glen after the stricken deer. Fleet was the mountain girl; and Ronald, as he ever and anon looked back to wave her on, with pride admired her lightsome motion as she bounded along the snow.

Redder and redder grew that snow, and more heavily trampled, as they wined round the rocks. Yonder is the deer, staggering up the mountain, not half a mile off—now standing at bay, as if before his swimming eyes came Fingal, the terror of the forest, whose howl was known to all the echoes, and quailed the herd while their antlers were yet afar off. “Rest, Flora, rest! while I fly to him with my rifle, and shoot him through the heart!”

Up—up—up the interminable glen, that kept winding and winding round many a jutting promontory and many a castellated cliff, the red-deer kept dragging his gore-oozing bulk, sometimes almost within, and then for some hundreds of yards just beyond, rifle-shot; while the boy, maddened by the chase, pressed forwards, now all alone, nor any more looking behind for Flora, who had entirely disappeared; and thus he was hurried on for miles by the whirlwind of passion,—till at last he struck the noble quarry, and down sank the antlers in the snow, while the air was spurned by the convulsive beatings of feet. Then leaped Ronald upon the red-deer like a beast of prey, and lifted up a look of triumph to the mountain-tops.

Where is Flora! Her lover has forgotten her—and he is alone—nor knows it—he and the red-deer—an enormous animal, fast stiffening in the frost of death.

Some large flakes of snow are in the air, and they seem to waver and whirl, though an hour ago there was not a breath. Faster they fall and faster—the flakes are almost as large as leaves; and overhead

whence so suddenly has come that huge yellow cloud? "Flora, where are you? where are you, Flora?" and from the huge hide the boy leaps up, and sees that no Flora is at hand. But yonder is a moving speck, far off upon the snow. 'Tis she—'tis she; and again Ronald turns his eyes upon the quarry, and the heart of the hunter burns within him like a new-stirred fire. Shrill as the eagle's cry disturbed in his eerie, he sends a shout down the glen, and Flora, with cheeks pale and bright by fits, is at last by his side. Panting and speechless she stands, and then dizzily sinks on his breast. Her hair is ruffled by the wind that revives her, and her face all moistened by the snow-flakes, now not falling, but driven—for the day has undergone a dismal change, and all over the sky are now lowering savage symptoms of a fast-coming night-storm.

Bare is poor Flora's head, and sorely drenched her hair, that an hour or two ago glittered in the sunshine. Her shivering frame misses now the warmth of the plaid, which almost no cold can penetrate, and which had kept the vital current flowing freely in many a bitter blast. What would the miserable boy give now for the coverings lying far away, which, in his foolish passion, he flung down to chase that fatal deer? "Oh, Flora! if you would not fear to stay here by yourself, under the protection of God, who surely will not forsake you, soon will I go and come from the place where our plaids are lying; and under the shelter of the deer we may be able to outlive the hurricane,—you wrapped up in them,—and folded, O my dearest sister, in my arms!" "I will go with

you down the glen, Ronald!" and she left his breast, but, weak as a day-old lamb, tottered and sank down on the snow. The cold—intense as if the air were ice—had chilled her very heart, after the heat of that long race; and it was manifest that here she must be for the night—to live or to die. And the night seemed already come, so full was the lift of snow; while the glimmer every moment became gloomier, as if the day were expiring long before its time. Howling at a distance down the glen was heard a sea-born tempest from the Linnhe Loch, where now they both knew the tide was tumbling in, bringing with it sleet and snow-blasts from afar; and from the opposite quarter of the sky an inland tempest was raging to meet it, while every lesser glen had its own uproar, so that on all hands they were environed with death.

"I will go—and, till I return, leave you with God." "Go, Ronald!" And he went and came, as if he had been endowed with the raven's wings.

Miles away and miles back had he flown, and an hour had not been with his going and his coming; but what a dreary wretchedness meanwhile had been hers! She feared that she was dying—that the cold snowstorm was killing her—and that she would never more see Ronald, to say to him farewell. Soon as he was gone, all her courage had died. Alone, she feared death, and wept to think how hard it was for one so young thus miserably to die. He came, and her whole being was changed. Folded up in both the plaids, she felt resigned. "Oh! kiss me, kiss me, Ronald; for your love—great as it is—is not as

my love. You must never forget me, Ronald, when your poor Flora is dead."

Religion with these two young creatures was as clear as the light of the Sabbath day; and their belief in heaven just the same as in earth. The will of God they thought of just as they thought of their parents' will; and the same was their living obedience to its decrees. If she was to die, supported now by the presence of her brother, Flora was utterly resigned; if she was to live, her heart imaged to itself the very forms of her grateful worship. But all at once she closed her eyes, ceased breathing,—and, as the tempest howled and rumbled in the gloom that fell around them like blindness, Ronald almost sunk down, thinking that she was dead.

"Wretched sinner that I am—my wicked madness brought her here to die of cold!" And he smote his breast, and tore his hair, and feared to look up, lest the angry eye of God were looking on him through the storm.

All at once, without speaking a word, Ronald lifted Flora in his arms, and walked away up the glen, here almost narrowed into a pass. Distraction gave him supernatural strength, and her weight seemed that of a child. Some walls of what had once been a house, he had suddenly remembered, were but a short way off; whether or not they had any roof he had forgotten,—but the thought even of such a shelter seemed a thought of salvation. There it was—a snow-drift at the opening that had once been a door—snow up the holes once windows—the wood of the roof had been carried off for fuel, and the snow-flakes

were falling in, as if they would soon fill up the inside of the ruin. The snow in front was all trampled, as if by sheep; and carrying in his burden under the low lintel, he saw the place was filled with a flock that had foreknown the hurricane, and that, all huddled together, looked on him as on the shepherd, come to see how they were faring in the storm.

And a young shepherd he was, with a lamb apparently dying in his arms. All colour, all motion, all breath, seemed to be gone; and yet something convinced his heart that she was yet alive. The ruined hut was roofless, but across an angle of the walls some pine-branches had been flung, as a sort of shelter for the sheep or cattle that might repair thither in cruel weather—some pine-branches left by the wood-cutters, who had felled the few trees that once stood at the very head of the glen. Into that corner the snow-drift had not yet forced its way, and he sat down there, with Flora in the cherishing of his embrace, hoping that the warmth of his distracted heart might be felt by her, who was as cold as a corpse. The chill air was somewhat softened by the breath of the huddled flock, and the edge of the cutting wind blunted by the stones. It was a place in which it seemed possible that she might revive, miserable as it was with the mire-mixed snow, and almost as cold as one supposes the grave. And she did revive, and under the half-open lids the dim blue appeared to be not yet life-deserted. It was yet but the afternoon,—night-like though it was,—and he thought, as he breathed upon her lips, that a faint red

returned, and that they felt the kisses he dropt on them to drive death away.

“Oh! father, go seek for Ronald, for I dreamt to-night that he was perishing in the snow.” “Flora, fear not—God is with us.” “Wild swans, they say, are come to Loch Phoil. Let us go, Ronald, and see them; but no rifle—for why kill creatures said to be so beautiful?” Over them where they lay, bended down the pine-branch roof, as if it would give way beneath the increasing weight; but there it still hung, though the drift came over their feet, and up to their knees, and seemed stealing upwards to be their shroud. “Oh! I am overcome with drowsiness, and fain would be allowed to sleep. Who is disturbing me—and what noise is this in our house?” “Fear not, fear not, Flora,—God is with us.” “Mother! am I lying in your arms? My father surely is not in the storm. Oh, I have had a most dreadful dream!” and with such mutterings as these Flora relapsed again into that perilous sleep, which soon becomes that of death.

Night itself came, but Flora and Ronald knew it not; and both lay motionless in one snow-shroud. Many passions, though earth-born, heavenly all—pity, and grief, and love, and hope, and at last despair, had prostrated the strength they had so long supported; and the brave boy—who had been for some time feeble as a very child after a fever, with a mind confused and wandering, and in its perplexities sore afraid of some nameless ill—had submitted to lay down his head beside his Flora’s, and had soon become, like her, insensible to the night and all its storms.

Bright was the peat fire in the hut of Flora's parents in Glencoe,—and they were among the happiest of the humble happy, blessing this the birthday of their blameless child. They thought of her, singing her sweet songs by the fireside of the hut in Glencreran, and tender thoughts of her cousin Ronald were with them in their prayers. No warning came to their ears in the sigh or the howl; for fear it is that creates its own ghosts, and all its own ghost-like visitings; and they had seen their Flora, in the meekness of the morning, setting forth on her way over the quiet mountains, like a fawn to play. Sometimes too, Love, who starts at shadows as if they were of the grave, is strangely insensible to realities that might well inspire dismay. So was it now with the dwellers in the hut at the head of Glencreran. Their Ronald had left them in the morning,—night had come, and he and Flora were not there; but the day had been almost like a summer day, and in their infatuation they never doubted that the happy creatures had changed their minds, and that Flora had returned with him to Glencoe. Ronald had laughingly said that haply he might surprise the people in that glen by bringing back to them Flora on her birthday, and, strange though it afterwards seemed to her to be, that belief prevented one single fear from touching his mother's heart, and she and her husband that night lay down in untroubled sleep.

And what could have been done for them had they been told by some good or evil spirit that their children were in the clutches of such a night? As well seek for a single bark in the middle of the misty

main ! But the inland storm had been seen brewing among the mountains round King's House, and hut had communicated with hut, though far apart in regions where the traveller sees no symptoms of human life. Down through the long cliff-pass of Mealanumy, between Buchael-Etive and the Black Mount, towards the lone House of Dalness, that lies in everlasting shadows, went a band of shepherds, trampling their way across a hundred frozen streams. Dalness joined its strength, and then away over the drift-bridged chasms toiled that gathering, with their sheep-dogs scouring the loose snows in the van, Fingal the Red Reaver, with his head aloft on the look-out for deer, grimly eyeing the corrie where last he tasted blood. All "plaided in their tartan array," these shepherds laughed at the storm,—and hark, you hear the bagpipe play—the music the Highlanders love both in war and in peace.

"They think then of the owrie cattle,
And silly sheep ;"

and though they ken 'twill be a moonless night,—for the snowstorm will sweep her out of heaven,—up the mountain and down the glen they go, marking where flock and herd have betaken themselves ; and now, at midfall, unafraid of that blind hollow, they descend into the depth where once stood the old grove of pines. Following their dogs, who know their duties in their instinct, the band, without seeing it, are now close to that ruined hut. Why bark the sheep-dogs so?—and why howls Fingal, as if some spirit passed athwart the night ? He scents the dead body of the

boy who so often had shouted him on in the forest when the antlers went by ! Not dead—nor dead she who is on his bosom. Yet life in both is frozen—and will the red blood in their veins ever again be thawed ! Almost pitch dark is the roofless ruin ; and the frightened sheep know not what is that terrible shape that is howling there. But a man enters, and lifts up one of the bodies, giving it into the arms of those at the doorway, and then lifts up the other ; and by the flash of a rifle they see that it is Ronald Cameron and Flora Macdonald, seemingly both frozen to death. Some of those reeds that the shepherds burn in their huts are kindled, and in that small light they are assured that such are the corpses. But that noble dog knows that death is not there, and licks the face of Ronald, as if he would restore life to his eyes. Two of the shepherds know well how to fold the dying in their plaids,—how gentlest to carry them along ; for they had learnt it on the field of victorious battle, when, without stumbling over the dead and wounded, they bore away the shattered body, yet living, of the youthful warrior who had shown that of such a clan he was worthy to be the chief.

The storm was with them all the way down the glen ; nor could they have heard each others' voices had they spoke ; but mutely they shifted the burden from strong hand to hand, thinking of the hut in Glencoe, and of what would be felt there on their arrival with the dying or the dead. Blind people walk through what to them is the night of crowded day-streets, unpausing turn round corners, unhesitating

plunge down steep stairs, wind their way fearlessly through whirlwinds of life, and reach in their serenity, each one unharmed, his own obscure house. For God is with the blind. So is He with all who walk on walks of mercy. This saving band had no fear, therefore there was no danger, on the edge of the pit-fall or the cliff. They knew the countenances of the mountains, shown momentarily by ghastly gleamings through the fitful night, and the hollow sound of each particular stream beneath the snow, at places where in other weather there was a pool or a water-fall. The dip of the hills, in spite of the drifts, familiar to their feet, did not deceive them now ; and then the dogs, in their instinct, were guides that erred not : and as well as the shepherds knew it themselves, did Fingal know that they were anxious to reach Glencoe. He led the way as if he were in moonlight ; and often stood still when they were shifting their burden, and whined as if in grief. He knew where the bridges were—stones or logs ; and he rounded the marshes where at springs the wild fowl feed. And thus instinct, and reason, and faith, conducted the saving band along ; and now they are at Glencoe, and at the door of the hut.

To life were brought the dead ; and there, at midnight, sat they up like ghosts. Strange seemed they for a while to each others' eyes, and at each other they looked as if they had forgotten how dearly once they loved. Then, as if in holy fear, they gazed in each others' faces, thinking that they had awoke together in heaven. "Flora !" said Ronald,—and that sweet word, the first he had been able to speak,

reminded him of all that had passed, and he knew that the God in whom they had put their trust had sent them deliverance. Flora, too, knew her parents, who were on their knees; and she strove to rise up and kneel down beside them, but she was powerless as a broken reed; and when she thought to join with them in thanksgiving, her voice was gone. Still as death sat all the people in the hut, and one or two who were fathers were not ashamed to weep.



LEGEND OF THE DROPPING WELL.

BY HUGH MILLER.

“*Mop.*—Is it true, think you?

Aut.—Very true;—why should I carry lies abroad?”

WINTER'S TALE.

IN perusing in some of our older Gazetteers the half page devoted to Cromarty, we find that, among the natural curiosities of the place, there is a small cavern termed the Dropping Cave, famous for its stalactites and its petrifying springs. And though the progress of modern discovery has done much to lower the wonder, by rendering it merely one of thousands of the same class,—for even among the cliffs of the hill in which the cavern is perforated, there is scarcely a spring that has not its border of coral-like petrifications, and its moss and grass and nettle-stalks of marble,—the Dropping Cave may well be regarded as a curiosity still. It is hollowed, a few feet over the beach, in the face of one of the low precipices which skirt the entrance of the bay. From a crag which overhangs the opening there falls a perpetual drizzle, which, settling on the moss and lichens beneath, converts them into stone; and on entering the long narrow apartment within, there may be seen by the dim light of the entrance a series of springs, which filter through the solid rock above, descending in so continual a shower, that even in the sultriest days

of midsummer, when the earth is parched and the grass has become brown and withered, we may hear the eternal drop pattering against the rough stones of the bottom, or tinkling in the recess within, like the string of a harp struck to ascertain its tone. A stone flung into the interior, after rebounding from side to side of the rock, falls with a deep hollow plunge, as if thrown into the sea. Had the Dropping Cave been a cavern of Greece or Sicily, the classical mythology of these countries would have tenanted it with the goddess of rains and vapour.

The walk to the cave is one of the most agreeable in the vicinity of the town, especially in a fine morning of midsummer, an hour or so after the sun has risen out of the Firth. The path to it has been hollowed out of the hill-side by the feet of men and animals, and goes winding over rocks and stones—now in a hollow, now on a height, anon lost in the beach. In one of the recesses which open into the hill, a clump of forest-trees has sprung up, and, lifting their boughs to the edge of the precipice above, cover its rough iron features as if with a veil; while, from the shade below, a fine spring, dedicated in some remote age to “Our Ladye,” comes bubbling to the light with as pure and copious a stream as in the days of the priest and the pilgrim. We see the beach covered over with sea-shells and weeds, the cork buoys of the fishermen, and fragments of wrecks. The air is full of fragrance. Only look at yonder white patch in the hollow of the hill; ’tis a little city of flowers, a whole community of one species—the meadow-sweet. The fisherman scents it over the

water, as he rows homeward in the cool of the evening, a full half-mile from the shore. And see how the hill rises above us, roughened with heath and fern and foxglove, and crested a-top with a dark wood of fir. See how the beeches which have sprung up on the declivity recline in nearly the angle of the hill, so that their upper branches are only a few feet from the soil ; reminding us, in the midst of warmth and beauty, of the rough winds of winter and the blasting influence of the spray. The insect denizens of the heath and the wood are all on wing ; see, there is the red bee, and there the blue butterfly, and yonder the burnet-moth with its wings of vermilion, and the large bird-like dragon-fly, and a thousand others besides, all beautiful and all happy. And then the birds. But why attempt a description ? The materials of thought and imagination are scattered profusely around us ; the wood, the cliffs, and the spring—the flowers, the insects, and the birds—the shells, the broken fragments of wreck, and the distant sail—the sea, the sky, and the opposite land—are all tones of the great instrument, Nature, which need only to be awakened by the mind to yield its sweet music. And now we have reached the cave.

The Dropping Cave ninety years ago was a place of considerable interest ; but the continuous shower which converted into stone the plants and mosses on which it fell, and the dark recess which no one had attempted to penetrate, and of whose extent imagination had formed a thousand surmises, constituted some of merely the minor circumstances that had

rendered it such. Superstition had busied herself for ages before in making it a scene of wonders. Boatmen, when sailing along the shore in the night-time, had been startled by the apparition of a faint blue light, which seemed glimmering from its entrance :
 * * * the mermaid had been seen sitting on a rock a few yards before it, singing a low melancholy song, and combing her long yellow hair with her fingers ; and a man who had been engaged in fishing crabs among the rocks, and was returning late in the evening by the way of the cave, almost shared the fate of its moss and lichens, when, on looking up, he saw an old grey-headed man, with a beard that descended to his girdle, sitting in the opening, and gazing wistfully on the sea.

I find some of these circumstances of terror embodied in verse by the provincial poet whom I have quoted in an early chapter as an authority regarding the Cromarty tradition of Wallace ; and now, as then, I will avail myself of his description :—

“ When round the lonely shore
 The vex'd waves toil'd with deaf'ning roar,
 And Midnight, from her lazy wain,
 Heard wild winds roar and tides complain,
 And groaning woods and shrieking sprites ;—
 Strange sounds from thence, and fearful lights,
 Had caught the sailor's ear and eye,
 As drove his storm-press'd vessel by.

More fearful still, Tradition told
 Of that dread cave a story old—
 So very old, ages had pass'd
 Since he who made had told it last.
 'Twas thus it ran :—Of strange array
 An aged man, whose locks of gray,

Like hill stream, flow'd his shoulders o'er,
For three long days on that lone shore
Sat moveless as the rocks around,
Moaning in low unearthly sound ;
But whence he came, or why he stay'd,
None knew, and none to ask essay'd.
At length a lad drew near and spoke,
Craving reply. The figure shook
Like mirror'd shape on dimpling brook,
Or shadow flung on eddying smoke—
And the boy fled. The third day pass'd—
Fierce howl'd at night the angry blast
Brushing the waves ; wild shrieks of death
Were heard these bristling cliffs beneath,
And cries for aid. The morning light
Gleam'd on a scene of wild affright.
Where yawns the cave, the rugged shore
With many a corse lay cover'd o'er,
And many a gorgeous fragment show'd
How fair the bark the storm subdued."

There was a Cromarty mechanic of the last age, named Willie Millar, who used to relate a wonderful adventure which befell him in the cave. Willie was a man of fertile invention, fond of a good story, and zealous in the improvement of bad ones ; but his zeal was evil spoken of—the reformations he effected in this way being regarded as little better than sinful, and his finest inventions as downright lying. There was a smithy in the place, which, when he had become old and useless, was his favourite resort. He would take up his seat on the forge each evening, regularly as the evening came, and relate to a group of delighted but too incredulous youngsters, some new passage in his wonderful autobiography ; which, though it seemed long enough to stretch beyond the

flood, received new accessions every night. So little, indeed, had he in common with the small-minded class who, possessed of only a limited number of narratives and ideas, go over and over these as the hands of a clock pass continually over the same figures, that, with but one exception in favour of the adventure of the cave, he hardly ever told the same story twice.

There was a tradition current in Cromarty, that a townsman had once passed through the Dropping Cave, until he heard a pair of tongs rattle over his head on the hearth of a farmhouse of Navity, a district of the parish which lies fully three miles from the opening; and Willie, who was, it seems, as hard of belief in such matters as if he himself had never drawn on the credulity of others, resolved on testing the story by exploring the cave. He sewed sprigs of rowan and wych-elm in the hem of his waistcoat, thrust a Bible into one pocket and a bottle of gin into the other, and providing himself with a torch, and a staff of buckthorn which had been cut at the full of the moon, and dressed without the assistance of iron or steel, he set out for the cave on a morning of midsummer. It was evening ere he returned—his torch burnt out, and his clothes stained with mould and slime, and soaked with water.

After lighting the torch, he said, and taking a firm grasp of the staff, he plunged fearlessly into the gloom before him. The cavern narrowed and lowered as he proceeded; the floor, which was of a white stone resembling marble, was hollowed into cisterns, filled with a water so exceedingly pure that it sparkled to

the light like spirits in crystal, and from the roof there depended clusters of richly embossed icicles of white stone, like those which, during a severe frost, hang at the edge of a waterfall. The springs from above trickled along their channelled sides, and then tinkled into the cisterns, like rain from the eaves of a cottage after a thunder-shower. Perhaps he looked too curiously around him when remarking all this; for so it was, that at the ninth and last cistern he missed his footing, and, falling forwards shattered his bottle of gin against the side of the cave. The liquor ran into a little hollow of the marble, and, unwilling to lose what he regarded as very valuable, and what certainly had cost him some trouble and suffering to procure (for he had rowed half way across the Firth for it in terror of the customhouse and a cockling sea), he stooped down and drank till his breath failed him. Never was there better Nantz; and, pausing to recover himself, he stooped and drank, again and again. There were strange appearances when he rose. A circular rainbow had formed round his torch; there was a blue mist gathering in the hollows of the cave; the very roof and sides began to heave and reel, as if the living rock were a Flushing lugger riding on the ground-swell; and there was a low humming noise that came sounding from the interior, like that of bees in a hawthorn thicket on an evening of midsummer. Willie, however, had become much less timorous than at first, and, though he could not well account for the fact, much less disposed to wonder. And so on he went.

He found the cavern widen, and the roof rose so

high that the light reached only the snowy icicles which hung meteor-like over his head. The walls were formed of white stone, ridged and furrowed like pieces of drapery, and all before and around him there sparkled myriads of crystals, like dewdrops in a spring morning. The sound of his footsteps was echoed on either hand by a multitude of openings, in which the momentary gleam of his torch was reflected, as he passed, on sheets of water and ribs of rock, and which led, like so many arched corridors, still deeper into the bowels of the hill. Nor, independently of the continuous humming noise, were all the sounds of the cave those of echo. At one time he could hear the wind moaning through the trees of the wood above, and the scream of a hawk as if pouncing on its prey; then there was the deafening blast of a smith's bellows, and the clang of hammers on an anvil; and anon a deep hollow noise resembling the growling of a wild beast. All seemed terribly wild and unnatural; a breeze came moaning along the cave, and shook the marble drapery of the sides, as if it were formed of gauze or linen; the entire cave seemed turning round like the cylinder of an engine, till the floor stood upright and the adventurer fell heavily against it; and as the torch hissed and sputtered in the water, he could see by its expiring gleam that a full score of dark figures, as undefined as shadows by moonlight, were flitting around him in the blue mist which now came rolling in dense clouds from the interior. In a moment more all was darkness, and he lay insensible amid the chill damps of the cave.

The rest of the adventure wonderfully resembled a dream. On returning to consciousness, he found that the gloom around him had given place to a dim red twilight, which flickered along the sides and roof like the reflection of a distant fire. He rose, and grasping his staff staggered forward. "It is sunlight," thought he, "I shall find an opening among the rocks of Eathie, and return home over the hill." Instead, however, of the expected outlet, he found the passage terminate in a wonderful apartment, so vast in extent, that though an immense fire of pine-trees, whole and unbroken from root to branch, threw up a red wavering sheet of flame many yards in height, he could see in some places neither the walls nor the roof. A cataract, like that of Foyers during the long-continued rains of an open winter, descended in thunder from one of the sides, and presenting its broad undulating front of foam to the red gleam of the fire, again escaped into darkness through a wide broken-edged gulf at the bottom. The floor of the apartment appeared to be thickly strewed with human bones, half-burned and blood-stained, and gnawed as if by cannibals; and directly in front of the fire there was a low tomb-like erection of dark-coloured stone, full twenty yards in length, and roughened with grotesque hieroglyphics, like those of a Runic obelisk. An enormous mace of iron, crusted with rust and blood, reclined against the upper end; while a bugle of gold hung by a chain of the same metal from a column at the bottom. Willie seized the bugle, and winded a blast till the wide apartment shook with the din; the waters of the cataract disappeared, as if

arrested at their source ; and the ponderous cover of the tomb began to heave and crackle, and pass slowly over the edge, as if assailed by the terrific strength of some newly-awakened giant below. Willie again winded the bugle ; the cover heaved upwards, disclosing a corner of the chasm beneath ; and a hand covered with blood, and of such fearful magnitude as to resemble only the conceptions of Egyptian sculpture, was slowly stretched from the darkness towards the handle of the mace. Willie's resolution gave way, and, flinging down the horn, he rushed hurriedly towards the passage. A yell of blended grief and indignation burst from the tomb, as the immense cover again settled over it ; the cataract came dashing from its precipice with a heavier volume than before ; and a furious hurricane of mingled wind and spray that rushed howling from the interior, well-nigh dashed the adventurer against the sides of the rock. He succeeded, however, in gaining the passage, sick at heart and nearly petrified with terror ; a state of imperfect consciousness succeeded, like that of a feverish dream, in which he retained a sort of half conviction that he was lingering in the damps and darkness of the cave, obstinately and yet unwillingly ; and, on fully regaining his recollection, he found himself lying across the ninth cistern, with the fragments of the broken bottle on the one side, and his buck-thorn staff on the other. He could hear from the opening the dash of the advancing waves against the rocks, and on leaping to the beach below, found that his exploratory journey had occupied him a whole day.

The adventure of Willie Millar formed at one time one of the most popular traditions of Cromarty. It was current among the children not more than eighteen years ago, when the cave was explored a second time, but with a very different result, by a boy of the school in which the writer of these legends had the misfortune of being regarded as the greatest dunce and truant of his time. The character of Willie forms the best possible commentary on *his* story—the character of the boy may perhaps throw some little light on his. When in his twelfth year, he was by far the most inquisitive little fellow in the place. His curiosity was insatiable. He had broken his toys when a child, that he might see how they were constructed; and a watch which the owner had thoughtlessly placed within his reach, narrowly escaped sharing a similar fate. He dissected frogs and mice in the hope of discovering the seat of life; and when one day found dibbling at the edge of a spring, he said he was trying to penetrate to the source of water. His schoolmaster nicknamed him “The *Senachie*,” for the stories with which he beguiled his class-fellows of their tasks were without end or number; the neighbours called him *Philosopher*, for he could point out the star of the pole, with the Great Bear that continually walks round it; and he used to affirm that there might be people in the moon, and that the huge earth is only a planet. Having heard the legend of Willie Millar, he set out one day to explore the cave; and when he returned he had to tell that the legend was a mere legend, and that the cave, though not without its wonders, owed, like the great ones of

the earth, much of its celebrity to the fears and the ignorance of mankind.

In climbing into the vestibule of the recess, his eye was attracted by a piece of beautiful lacework, gemmed by the damps of the place, and that stretched over a hollow in one of the sides. It was not, however, a work of magic, but merely the web of a field-spider, that from its acquaintance with lines and angles, seemed to have discovered a royal road to geometry. The petrifying spring next attracted his notice. He saw the mosses hardening into limestone—the stems already congealed, and the upper shoots dying that they might become immortal. And there came into his mind the story of one Niobe, of whom he had read in a school-book, that, like the springs of the cave, wept herself into stone; and the story, too, of the half-man half-marble prince of the Arabian tale. “Strange,” thought the boy, “that these puny dwarfs of the vegetable kingdom should become rock and abide for ever, when its very giants, the chestnut trees of Etna and the cedars of Lebanon, moulder away in the deep solitude of their forests, and become dust or nothing.” Lighting his torch, he proceeded to examine the cavern. A few paces brought him to the first cistern. He found the white table of marble in which it is hollowed raised knee-height over the floor, and the surface fretted into little cavities by the continual dropping, like the surface of a thawing snow-wreath when beaten by a heavy shower. As he strided over the ledge, a drop from above extinguished his torch;—he groped his way back and rekindled it. He had seen the first cistern described

by the adventurer ; and of course all the others, with the immense apartment, the cataract, the tomb, the iron mace, and the golden bugle, lay in the darkness beyond. But, alas ! when he again stepped forward, instead of the eight other hollows he found the floor covered with one continuous pool, over which there rose fast-contracting walls and a descending roof ; and though he pressed onward amid the water that splashed below ; and the water that fell from above,—for his curiosity was unquenchable, and his clothes of a kind which could not be made worse,—it was only to find the rock closing hopelessly before him, after his shoulders had at once pressed against the opposite sides, and the icicles had passed through his hair. There was no possibility of turning round, and so, creeping backwards like a crab, he reached the first cistern, and in a moment after stood in the lighted part of the cave. His feelings on the occasion were less melancholy than those of the traveller who, when standing beside the two fountains of the Nile, “began in his sorrow to treat the inquiry concerning its source as the effort of a distempered fancy.” But next to the pleasure of erecting a system, is the pleasure of pulling one down ; and he felt it might be so even with regard to a piece of traditionary history. Besides, there was a newly-fledged thought which had come fluttering round him for the first time, that more than half consoled him under his disappointment. He remembered that when a child no story used to please him that was not both marvellous and true,—that a fact was as nothing to him disunited from the wonderful, nor the wonderful disunited from

fact. But the marvels of his childhood had been melting away, one after one—the ghost, and the wraith, and the fairy had all disappeared; and the wide world seemed to spread out before him a tame and barren region, where truth dwelt in the forms of commonplace, and in these only. He now felt for the first time that it was far otherwise; and that so craving an instinct, instead of perishing for lack of sustenance, would be fed as abundantly in the future by philosophy and the arts, as it had been in the past by active imaginations and a superstitious credulity.

The path which, immediately after losing itself on the beach where it passes the cave, rises by a kind of natural stair to the top of the precipices, continues to ascend till it reaches a spring of limpid water, which comes gushing out of the side of a bank covered with moss and daisies, and which for more than a century has been known to the townspeople by the name of Fiddler's Well. Its waters are said to be medicinal, and there is a pretty tradition still extant of the circumstance through which their virtues were first discovered, and to which the spring owes its name.

Two young men of the place, who were much attached to each other, were seized at nearly the same time by consumption. In one the progress of the disease was rapid—he died two short months after he was attacked by it; while the other, though wasted almost to a shadow, had yet strength enough left to follow the corpse of his companion to the grave. The name of the survivor was Fiddler—a name still common among the seafaring men of the town. On

the evening of the interment he felt oppressed and unhappy ; his imagination was haunted by a thousand feverish shapes of open graves with bones mouldering round their edges, and of coffins with the lids displaced ; and after he had fallen asleep, the images, which were still the same, became more ghastly and horrible. Towards morning, however, they had all vanished ; and he dreamed that he was walking alone by the sea-shore in a clear and beautiful day of summer. Suddenly, as he thought, some person stepped up behind, and whispered in his ear, in the voice of his deceased companion, “ Go on, Willie ; I shall meet you at *Stormy*.” There is a rock in the neighbourhood of Fiddler’s Well, so called, from the violence with which the sea beats against it when the wind blows strongly from the east. On hearing the voice he turned round, and seeing no one, he went on, as he thought, to the place named, in the hope of meeting his friend, and sat down on a bank to wait his coming ; but he waited long—lonely and dejected ; and then remembering that he for whom he waited was dead, he burst into tears. At this moment a large field-bee came humming from the west, and began to fly round his head. He raised his hand to brush it away ; it widened its circle, and then came humming into his ear as before. He raised his hand a second time, but the bee would not be scared off ; it hummed ceaselessly round and round him, until at length its murmurings seemed to be fashioned into words, articulated in the voice of his deceased companion. “ Dig, Willie, and drink ! ” it said ; “ Dig, Willie, and drink ! ” He accordingly

set himself to dig, and no sooner had he torn a sod out of the bank than a spring of clear water gushed from the hollow; and the bee taking a wider circle, and humming in a voice of triumph that seemed to emulate the sound of a distant trumpet, flew away. He looked after it, but as he looked the images of his dream began to mingle with those of the waking world; the scenery of the hill seemed obscured by a dark cloud, in the centre of which there glimmered a faint light; the rocks, the sea, the long declivity, faded into the cloud; and turning round he saw only a dark apartment, and the faint beams of morning shining in at a window. He rose, and after digging the well, drank of the water and recovered. And its virtues are still celebrated; for though the water be only simple water, it must be drunk in the morning, and as it gushes from the bank; and with pure air, exercise, and early rising for its auxiliaries, it continues to work cures.

WANDERING WILLIE'S TALE.

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

YE maun have heard of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, of that Ilk, who lived in these parts before the dear years. The country will lang mind him; and our fathers used to draw breath thick if ever they heard him named. He was out wi' the Hielandmen in Montrose's time; and again he has in the hills wi' Glencairn in the saxteen hundred and fifty-twa; and sae when King Charles the Second came in, wha was in sic favour as the Laird of Redgauntlet? He was knighted at Lonon court, wi' the King's ain sword; and being a red-hot prelatist, he came down here, rampaung like a lion, with commissions of lieutenancy (and of lunacy, for what I ken), to put down a' the Whigs and Covenanters in the country. Wild wark they made of it; for the Whigs were as dour as the Cavaliers were fierce, and it was which should first tire the other. Redgauntlet was aye for the strong hand; and his name is kend as wide in the country as Claverhouse's or Tam Dalyell's. Glen, nor dargle, nor mountain, nor cave, could hide the puir hill-folk when Redgauntlet was out with bugle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been sae mony deer. And troth when they fand them, they didna mak muckle mair ceremony than a Hielandman wi' a roebuck. It was just, "Will ye tak the test?"—if

not, "Make ready—present—fire!" and there lay the recusant.

Far and wide was Sir Robert hated and feared. Men thought he had a direct compact with Satan—that he was proof against steel—and that bullets happed aff his buff-coat like hailstones from a hearth—that he had a mear that would turn a hare on the side of Carrifragawns—and muckle to the same purpose, of whilk mair anon. The best blessing they wared on him was, "Deil scowp wi' Redgauntlet!" He wasna a bad maister to his ain folk though, and was weel aneugh liked by his tenants; and as for the lackies and troopers that raid out wi' him to the persecutions, as the Whigs caa'd those killing times, they wad hae drunken themsells blind to his health at ony time.

Now you are to ken that my gudesire lived on Redgauntlet's grund—they ca' the place Primrose-Knowe. We had lived on the grund, and under the Redgauntlets, since the riding days, and lang before. It was a pleasant bit; and I think the air is callerer and fresher there than ony where else in the country. It's a' deserted now; and I sat on the broken door-cheek three days since, and was glad I couldna see the plight the place was in; but that's a' wide o' the mark. There dwelt my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, a rambling, rattling chiel he had been in his young days, and could play weel on the pipes; he was famous at "Hoopers and Girders"—a' Cumberland couldna touch him at "Jockie Lattin"—and he had the finest finger for the back-lilt between Berwick and Carlisle. The like o' Steenie wasna the sort that

they made Whigs o'. And so he became a Tory, as they ca' it, which we now ca' Jacobites, just out of a kind of needcessity, that he might belang to some side or other. He had nae ill-will to the Whig bodies, and liked little to see the blude rin, though, being obliged to follow Sir Robert in hunting and hosting, watching and warding, he saw muckle mischief, and maybe did some, that he couldna avoid.

Now Steenie was a kind of favourite with his master, and kend a' the folks about the castle, and was often sent for to play the pipes when they were at their merriment. Auld Dugald MacCallum, the butler, that had followed Sir Robert through gude and ill, thick and thin, pool and stream, was specially fond of the pipes, and aye gae my gudesire his gude word wi' the Laird ; for Dougal could turn his master round his finger.

Weel, round came the Revolution, and it had like to have broken the hearts baith of Dougal and his master. But the change was not a'thegither sae great as they feared, and other folk thought for. The Whigs made an unco crawling what they wad do with their auld enemies, and in especial wi' Sir Robert Redgauntlet. But there were ower mony great folks dipped in the same doings, to mak a spick and span new warld. So Parliament passed it a' ower easy ; and Sir Robert, bating that he was held to hunting foxes instead of Covenanters, remained just the man he was. His revel was as loud, and his hall as weel lighted, as ever it had been, though maybe he lacked the fines of the Nonconformists, that used to come to stock his larder and cellar ; for it is certain he began

to be keener about the rents than his tenants used to find him before, and they behoved to be prompt to the rent-day, or else the Laird wasna pleased. And he was sic an awsome body, that naebody cared to anger him ; for the oaths he swore, and the rage that he used to get into, and the looks that he put on, made men sometimes think him a devil incarnate.

Weel, my gudesire was nae manager—no that he was a very great misguider—but he hadna the saving gift, and he got twa terms' rent in arrear. He got the first brash at Whitsunday put ower wi' fair word and piping ; but when Martinmas came, there was a summons from the grund officer to come wi' the rent on a day preceese, or else Steenie behoved to flit. Sair wark he had to get the siller ; but he was weel-freended, and at last he got the hail scraped thegither—a thousand merks—the maist of it was from a neighbour they caa'd Laurie Lapraik—a sly tod. Laurie had walth o' gear—could hunt wi' the hound and rin wi' the hare—and be Whig or Tory, saunt or sinner, as the wind stood. He was a professor in his Revolution warld, but he liked an orra sough of this world, and a tune on the pipes weel enough at a bytime ; and abune a', he thought he had gude security for the siller he lent my gudesire ower the stocking at Primrose-Knowe.

Away trots my gudesire to Redgauntlet Castle, wi' a heavy purse and a light heart, glad to be out of the Laird's danger. Weel, the first thing he learned at the castle was, that Sir Robert had fretted himself into a fit of the gout, because he did not appear before twelve o'clock. It wasna a'thegither for the sake of

the money, Dougal thought; but because he didna like to part wi' my gudesire aff the grund. Dougal was glad to see Steenie, and brought him into the great oak parlour, and there sat the Laird his leesome lane, excepting that he had beside him a great, ill-favoured jackanape, that was a special pet of his; a cankered beast it was, and mony an ill-natured trick it played—ill to please it was, and easily angered—ran about the h'ail castle, chattering and yowling, and pinching and biting folk, especially before ill weather, or disturbances in the State. Sir Robert caa'd it Major Weir, after the warlock that was burnt; and few folk liked either the name or the conditions of the creature—they thought there was something in it by ordinar—and my gudesire was not just easy in his mind when the door shut on him, and he saw himself in the room wi' naebody but the Laird, Dougal MacCallum, and the Major, a thing that hadna chanced to him before.

Sir Robert sat, or, I should say, lay in a great armed chair, wi' his grand velvet gown, and his feet on a cradlè; for he had baith gout and gravel, and his face looked as gash and ghastrly as Satan's. Major Weir sat opposite to him, in a red laced coat, and the Laird's wig on his head; and aye as Sir Robert girmed wi' pain, the jackanape girmed too, like a sheep's head between a pair of tangs—an ill-faured, fearsome couple they were. The Laird's buff coat was hung on a pin behind him, and his broad-sword and his pistols within reach; for he keepit up the auld fashion of having the weapons ready, and a horse saddled day and night, just as he used to do when he was able to

loup on horseback, and away after ony of the hill-folk he could get speerings of. Some said it was for fear of the Whigs taking vengeance, but I judge it was just his auld custom—he wasna gien to fear onything. The rental - book, wi' its black cover and brass clasps, was lying beside him; and a book of sculduddery sangs was put betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the goodman of Primrose-Knowe, as behind the hand with his maills and duties. Sir Robert gave my gudesire a look, as if he would have withered his heart in his bosom. Ye maun ken he had a way of bending his brows, that men saw the visible mark of a horse-shoe in his forehead, deep-dinted, as if it had been stamped there.

“Are ye come light-handed, ye son of a toom whistle?” said Sir Robert. “Zounds! if you are”—

My gudesire, with as gude a countenance as he could put on, made a leg, and placed the bag of money on the table wi' a dash, like a man that does something clever. The Laird drew it to him hastily—“Is it all here, Steenie, man?”

“Your honour will find it right,” said my gudesire.

“Here, Dougal,” said the Laird, “gie Steenie a tass of brandy down-stairs, till I count the siller and write the receipt.”

But they werena weel out of the room, when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garr'd the Castle rock! Back ran Dougal—in flew the livery-men—yell on yell gied the Laird, ilk ane mair awfu' than the ither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun

hirdy-girdy — naebody to say “come in,” or “gae out.” Terribly the Laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat ; and hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was aye the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plunged his swoln feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning. And folk say that it *did* bubble and sparkle like a seething cauldron. He flung the cup at Dougal’s head, and said ‘he had given him blood instead of burgundy ; and, sure aneugh, the lass washed clotted blood aff the carpet the neist day. The jackanape they caa’d Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master ; my gudesire’s head was like to turn—he forgot baith siller and receipt, and down-stairs he banged ; but as he ran, the shrieks came faint and fainter. There was a deep-drawn shivering groan, and word gaed through the Castle that the Laird was dead.

Weel, away came my gudesire, wi’ his finger in his mouth, and his best hope was, that Dougal had seen the money-bag, and heard the Laird speak of writing the receipt. The young Laird, now Sir John, came from Edinburgh, to see things put to rights. Sir John and his father never gree’d weel. Sir John had been bred an advocate, and afterwards sat in the last Scots Parliament and voted for the Union, having gotten, it was thought, a rug of the compensations— if his father could have come out of his grave, he would have brained him for it on his awn hearthstane. Some thought it was easier counting with the auld rough Knight than the fair-spoken young ane—but mair of that anon.

Dougal MacCallum, poor body, neither grat nor graned, but gaed about the house looking like a corpse, but directing, as was his duty, a' the order of the grand funeral. Now, Dougal looked aye waur and waur when night was coming, and was aye the last to gang to his bed, whilk was in a little round just opposite the chamber of dias, whilk his master occupied while he was living, and where he now lay in state, as they caa'd it, weel-a-day ! The night before the funeral, Dougal could keep his own counsel nae langer ; he came doun with his proud spirit, and fairly asked auld Hutcheon to sit in his room with him for an hour. When they were in the round, Dougal took ae tass of brandy to himsell, and gave another to Hutcheon, and wished him all health and lang life, and said that, for himsell, he wasna lang for this world ; for that, every night since Sir Robert's death, his silver call had sounded from the state chamber, just as it used to do at nights in his lifetime, to call Dougal to help to turn him in his bed. Dougal said, that being alone with the dead on that floor of the tower (for naebody cared to wake Sir Robert Redgauntlet like another corpse), he had never daured to answer the call, but that now his conscience checked him for neglecting his duty ; for, " though death breaks service," said MacCallum, " it shall never break my service to Sir Robert ; and I will answer his next whistle, so be you will stand by me, Hutcheon."

Hutcheon had nae will to the wark, but he had stood by Dougal in battle and broil, and he wad not fail him at this pinch ; so down the carles sat ower a

stoup of brandy, and Hutcheon, who was something of a clerk, would have read a chapter of the Bible; but Dougal would hear naething but a blaud of Davie Lindsay, whilk was the waur preparation.

When midnight came, and the house was quiet as the grave, sure aneugh the silver whistle sounded as sharp and shrill as if Sir Robert was blowing it, and up gat the twa auld-serving-men, and tottered into the room' where the dead man lay. Hutcheon saw aneuch at the first glance; for there were torches in the room, which showed him the foul fiend in his ain shape, sitting on the Laird's coffin! Over he cowped, as if he had been dead. He could not tell how lang he lay in a trance at the door, but when he gathered himself, he cried on his neighbour, and getting nae answer, raised the house, when Dougal was found lying dead within twa steps of the bed where his master's coffin was placed. As for the whistle, it was gaen anes and aye; but mony a time was it heard at the top of the house on the bartizan, and amang the auld chimneys and turrets, where the howlets have their nests. Sir John hushed the matter up, and the funeral passed over without mair bogle-wark.

But when a' was ower, and the Laird was beginning to settle his affairs, every tenant was called up for his arrears, and my gudesire for the full sum that stood against him in the rental-book. Weel, away he trots to the Castle, to tell his story, and there he is introduced to Sir John, sitting in his father's chair, in deep mourning, with weepers and hanging cravat, and a small walking rapier by his side, instead of the

auld broad-sword that had a hundredweight of steel about it, what with blade, chape, and basket-hilt. I have heard their communing so often tauld ower, that I almost think I was there mysell, though I couldna be born at the time. (In fact, Alan, my companion mimicked with a good deal of humour, the flattering, conciliating tone of the tenant's address, and the hypocritical melancholy of the Laird's reply. His grandfather, he said, had, while he spoke, his eye fixed on the rental-book, as if it were a mastiff-dog that he was afraid would spring up and bite him.)

"I wuss ye joy, sir, of the head seat, and the white loaf, and the braid lairdship. Your father was a kind man to friends and followers; muckle grace to you, Sir John, to fill his shoon—his boots, I suld say, for he seldom wore shoon, unless it were muils when he had the gout."

"Ay, Steenie," quoth the Laird, sighing deeply, and putting his napkin to his een, "his was a sudden call, and he will be missed in the country; no time to set his house in order—weel prepared Godward, no doubt, which is the root of the matter—but left us behind a tangled hesp to wind, Steenie.—Hem! hem! We maun go to business, Steenie; much to do, and little time to do it in."

Here he opened the fatal volume. I have heard of a thing they call Doomsday-book—I am clear it has been a rental of back-ganging tenants.

"Stephen," said Sir John, still in the same soft, sleekit tone of voice—"Stephen Stevenson, or Steenson, ye are down here for a year's rent behind the hand—due at last term."

Stephen. "Please yer honour, Sir John, I paid it to your father."

Sir John. "Ye took a receipt then, doubtless, Stephen; and can produce it?"

Stephen. "Indeed I hadna time, an it like your honour; for nae sooner had I set down the siller, and just as his honour Sir Robert, that's gaen, drew it till him to count it, and write out the receipt, he was ta'en wi' the pains that removed him."

"That was unlucky," said Sir John, after a pause, "but ye maybe paid it in the presence of somebody. I want but a *talis qualis* evidence, Stephen. I would go ower strictly to work with no poor man."

Stephen. "Troth, Sir John, there was naebody in the room but Dougal MacCallum, the butler. But, as your honour kens, he has e'en followed his auld master."

"Very unlucky again, Stephen," said Sir John, without altering his voice a single note. "The man to whom ye paid the money is dead—and the man who witnessed the payment is dead too—and the siller, which should have been to the fore, is neither seen nor heard tell of in the repositories. How am I to believe a' this?"

Stephen. "I dinna ken, yer honour; but there is a bit memorandum note of the very coins; for, God help me! I had to borrow out of twenty purses; and I am sure that ilka man there set down will take his grit oath for what purpose I borrowed the money."

Sir John. "I have little doubt ye *borrowed* the money, Steenie. It is the *payment* to my father that I want to have some proof of."

Stephen. "The siller maun be about the house, Sir John. And since yer honour never got it, and his honour that was canna have ta'en it wi' him, maybe some of the family may have seen it."

Sir John. "We will examine the servants, Stephen; that is but reasonable."

But lackey and lass, and page and groom, all denied stoutly that they had ever seen such a bag of money as my gudesire described. What was waur, he had unluckily not mentioned to any living soul of them his purpose of paying his rent. Ae quean had noticed something under his arm, but she took it for the pipes.

Sir John Redgauntlet ordered the servants out of the room, and then said to my gudesire, "Now, Steenie, ye see ye have fair play; and, as I have little doubt ye ken better where to find the siller than ony other body, I beg, in fair terms, and for your own sake, that you will end this fasherie; for Stephen, ye maun pay or flit."

"The Lord forgie your opinion," said Stephen, driven almost to his wit's end—"I am an honest man."

"So am I, Stephen," said his honour; "and so are all the folks in the house, I hope. But if there be a knave amongst us, it must be he that tells the story he cannot prove." He paused, and then added mair sternly, "If I understand your trick, sir, you want to take advantage of some malicious reports concerning things in this family, and particularly respecting my father's sudden death, thereby to cheat me out of the money, and perhaps take away my

character, by insinuating that I have received the rent I am demanding. Where do you suppose this money to be? I insist upon knowing."

My gudesire saw everything look sae muckle against him that he grew nearly desperate; however, he shifted from one foot to another, looked to every corner of the room, and made no answer.

"Speak out, sirrah," said the Laird, assuming a look of his father's, a very particular ane, which he had when he was angry; it seemed as if the wrinkles of his frown made that selfsame fearful shape of a horse's shoe in the middle of his brow;—"Speak out, sir! I *will* know your thoughts;—do you suppose that I have this money?"

"Far be it frae me to say so," said Stephen.

"Do you charge any of my people with having taken it?"

"I wad be laith to charge them that may be innocent," said my gudesire; "and if there be any one that is guilty, I have nae proof."

"Somewhere the money must be, if there is a word of truth in your story," said Sir John; "I ask where you think it is—and demand a correct answer?"

"In hell, if you *will* have my thoughts of it," said my gudesire, driven to extremity,—“in hell! with your father, his jackanape, and his silver whistle."

Down the stairs he ran (for the parlour was nae place for him after such a word), and he heard the Laird swearing blood and wounds behind him, as fast as ever did Sir Robert, and roaring for the bailie and the baron-officer.

Away rode my gudesire to his chief creditor (him

they caa'd Laurie Lapraik), to try if he could make anything out of him ; but when he tauld his story, he got but the warst word in his wame—thief, beggar, and dyvour were the safest terms ; and to the boot of these hard terms, Laurie brought up the auld story of his dipping his hand in the blood of God's saunts, just as if a tenant could have helped riding with the Laird, and that a laird like Sir Robert Redgauntlet. My gudesire was by this time far beyond the bounds of patience, and while he and Laurie were at deil speed the liars, he was wanchancie enough to abuse Lapraik's doctrine as weel as the man, and said things that garr'd folk's flesh grue that heard them ;—he wasna just himsell, and he had lived wi' a wild set in his day.

At last they parted, and my gudesire was to ride hame through the wood of Pitmurkie, that is a' fou of black firs, as they say. I ken the wood, but the firs may be black or white for what I can tell. At the entry of the wood there is a wild common, and on the edge of the common, a little lonely change-house, that was keepit then by an ostler-wife, they suld hae caa'd her Tibbie Faw, and there puir Steenie cried for a mutchkin of brandy, for he had had no refreshment the haill day. Tibbie was earnest wi' him to take a bite of meat, but he couldna think o't, nor would he take his foot out of the stirrup, and took off the brandy wholly at twa draughts, and named a toast at each :—the first was, the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and might he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-tenant ; and the second was, a health to Man's

Enemy, if he would but get him back the pock of siller, or tell him what came o't, for he saw the hail world was like to regard him as a thief and a cheat, and he took that waur than even the ruin of his house and hauld.

On he rode, little caring where. It was a dark night turned, and the trees made it yet darker, and he let the beast take its ain road through the wood; when, all of a' sudden, from tired and wearied that it was before; the nag began to spring, and flee, and stend, that my gudesire could hardly keep the saddle. Upon the whilk, a horseman, suddenly riding up beside him, said, "That's a mettle beast of yours, freend; will you sell him?" So saying, he touched the horse's neck with his riding-wand, and it fell into its auld heigh-ho of a stumbling trot. "But his spunk's soon out of him, I think," continued the stranger, "and that is like mony a man's courage, that thinks he wad do great things till he come to the proof.

My gudesire scarce listened to this, but spurred his horse, with "Gude e'en to you, freend."

But it's like the stranger was ane that doesna lightly yield his point; for, ride as Steenie liked, he was aye beside him at the selfsame pace. At last my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, grew half angry; and, to say the truth, half feared.

"What is it that ye want with me, freend?" he said, "If ye be a robber, I have nae money; if ye be a leal man, wanting company, I have nae heart to mirth or speaking; and if ye want to ken the road, I scarce ken it mysell."

“If you will tell me your grief,” said the stranger, “I am one that, though I have been sair miscaa’d in the world, am the only hand for helping my freends.”

So my gudesire, to ease his ain heart, mair than from any hope of help, told him the story from beginning to end.

“It’s a hard pinch,” said the stranger; “but I think I can help you.”

“If you could lend the money, sir, and take a lang day—I ken nae other help on earth,” said my gudesire.

“But there may be some under the earth,” said the stranger. “Come, I’ll be frank wi’ you; I could lend you the money on bond, but you would maybe scruple my terms. Now, I can tell you, that your auld Laird is disturbed in his grave by your curses, and the wailing of your family; and if you daur venture to go to see him, he will give you the receipt.”

My gudesire’s hair stood on end at this proposal, but he thought his companion might be some humorsome chield that was trying to frighten him, and might end with lending him the money. Besides, he was bauld wi’ brandy, and desperate wi’ distress; and he said, he had courage to go to the gate of hell, and a step farther, for that receipt. The stranger laughed.

Weel, they rode on through the thickest of the wood, when, all of a sudden, the horse stopped at the door of a great house; and, but that he knew the place was ten miles off, my father would have thought he was at Redgauntlet Castle. They rode into the outer court yard, through the muckle faulding yetts,

and aneath the auld portcullis ; and the whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons. They lap off, and my gudesire, as seemed to him, fastened his horse to the very ring he had tied him to that morning, when he gaed to wait on the young Sir John.

"God !" said my gudesire, "if Sir Robert's death be but a dream !"

He knocked at the ha' door just as he was wont, and his auld acquaintance, Dougal MacCallum,—just after his wont too,—came to open the door, and said, "Piper Steenie, are ye there, lad? Sir Robert has been crying for you."

My gudesire was like a man in a dream—he looked for the stranger, but he was gane for the time. At last he just tried to say, "Ha ! Dougal Driveower, are ye living? I thought ye had been dead."

"Never fash yoursell wi' me," said Dougal, "but look to yoursell ; and see ye tak naething frae onybody here, neither meat, drink, or siller, except just the receipt that is your ain."

So saying, he led the way out through halls and trances that were weel kend to my gudesire, and into the auld oak parlour ; and there was as much singing of profane sangs, and birling of red wine, and speaking blasphemy and sculdudry, as had ever been in Redgauntlet Castle when it was at the blithest.

But, Lord take us in keeping ! what a set of ghastly revellers they were that sat round that table ! My gudesire kend mony that had lang before gane to

their place, for often had he piped to the most part in the hall of Redgauntlet. There was the fierce Middleton, and the dissolute Rothes, and the crafty Lauderdale ; and Dalryell, with his bald head and a beard to his girdle ; and Earlshall, with Cameron's blude on his hand ; and wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr. Cargill's limbs till the blude sprung ; and Dumbarton Douglas, the twice-turned traitor baith to country and king. There was the Bluidy Advocate MacKenzie, who, for his worldly wit and wisdom, had been to the rest as a god. And there was Claverhouse, as beautiful as when he lived, with his long, dark, curled locks, streaming down over his laced buff-coat, and his left hand always on his right spule-blade, to hide the wound that the silver-bullet had made. He sat apart from them all, and looked at them with a melancholy, haughty countenance ; while the rest halloed, and sung, and laughed, that the room rang. But their smiles were fearfully contorted from time to time ; and their laughter passed into such wild sounds, as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his banes.

They that waited at the table were just the wicked serving-men and troopers, that had done their work and cruel bidding on earth. There was the Lang Lad of the Nethertown, that helped to take Argyle ; and the Bishop's summoner, that they called the Deil's Rattle-bag ; and the wicked guardsmen, in their laced-coats ; and the savage Highland Amorites, that shed blood like water ; and many a proud serving-man, haughty of heart and bloody of hand, cringing to the rich, and making them wickeder

than they would be ; grinding the poor to powder, when the rich had broken them to fragments. And mony, mony mair were coming and ganging, a' as busy in their vocation as if they had been alive.

Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in the midst of a' this fearful riot, cried, wi' a voice like thunder, on Steenie Piper, to come to the board-head where he was sitting ; his legs stretched out before him, and swathed up with flannel, with his holster pistols aside him, while the great broad-sword rested against his chair, just as my gudesire had seen him the last time upon earth—the very cushion for the jackanape was close to him, but the creature itsell was not there—it wasna its hour, it's likely ; for he heard them say as he came forward, "Is not the Major come yet?" And another answered, "The jackanape will be here betimes the morn." And when my gudesire came forward, Sir Robert, or his ghaist, or the devil in his likeness, said, "Weel, piper, hae ye settled wi' my son for the year's rent?"

With much ado my father gat breath to say, that Sir John would not settle without his honour's receipt.

"Ye shall hae that for a tune of the pipes, Steenie," said the appearance of Sir Robert. "Play us up, 'Weel hoddled, Luckie.'"

Now this was a tune my gudesire learned from a warlock, that heard it when they were worshipping Satan at their meetings ; and my gudesire had sometimes played it at the ranting suppers in Redgauntlet Castle, but never very willingly ; and now he grew cauld at the very name of it, and said, for excuse, he hadna his pipes wi' him.

“MacCallum, ye limb of Beelzebub,” said the fearfu’ Sir Robert, “bring Steenie the pipes that I am keeping for him !”

MacCallum brought a pair of pipes that might have served the piper of Donald of the Isles. But he gave my gudesire a nudge as he offered them ; and looking secretly and closely, Steenie saw that the chanter was of steel, and heated to a white heat ; so he had fair warning not to trust his fingers with it. So he excused himself again, and said he was faint and frightened, and had not wind aneugh to fill the bag.

“Then ye maun eat and drink, Steenie,” said the figure ; “for we do little else here ; and it’s ill speaking between a fou man and a fasting.”

Now these were the very words that the bloody Earl of Douglas said to keep the King’s messenger in hand, while he cut the head off MacLellan of Bombie, at the Threave Castle ; and that put Steenie mair and mair on his guard. So he spoke up like a man, and said he came neither to eat, or drink, or make minstrelsy ; but simply for his ain—to ken what was come o’ the money he had paid, and to get a discharge for it ; and he was so stout-hearted by this time, that he charged Sir Robert for conscience-sake—(he had no power to say the holy name)—and as he hoped for peace and rest, to spread no snares for him, but just to give him his ain.

The appearance gnashed its teeth and laughed, but it took from a large pocket-book the receipt, and handed it to Steenie. “There is your receipt, ye pitiful cur ; and for the money, my dog-whelp of a son may go look for it in the Cat’s Cradle.”

My gudesire uttered mony thanks, and was about to retire, when Sir Robert roared aloud, "Stop, though, thou sack-doudling son of a whore! I am not done with thee. HERE we do nothing for nothing; and you must return on this very day twelvemonth, to pay your master the homage that you owe me for my protection."

My father's tongue was loosed of a suddenty, and he said aloud, "I refer mysell to God's pleasure, and not to yours."

He had no sooner uttered the word than all was dark around him; and he sunk on the earth with such a sudden shock, that he lost both breath and sense.

How long Steenie lay there, he could not tell; but when he came to himsell, he was lying in the auld kirkyard of Redgauntlet parochine, just at the door of the family aisle, and the scutcheon of the auld knight, Sir Robert, hanging over his head. There was a deep morning fog on grass and grave-stane around him, and his horse was feeding quietly beside the minister's twa cows. Steenie would have thought the whole was a dream, but he had the receipt in his hand, fairly written and signed by the auld Laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain.

Sorely troubled in his mind, he left that dreary place, rode through the mist to Redgauntlet Castle, and with much ado he got speech of the Laird.

"Well, you dyvour bankrupt," was the first word, "have you brought me my rent?"

"No," answered my gudesire, "I have not; but

I have brought your honour Sir Robert's receipt for it."

"How, sirrah?—Sir Robert's receipt!—You told me he had not given you one."

"Will your honour please to see if that bit line is right?"

Sir John looked at every line, and at every letter, with much attention; and at last, at the date, which my gudesire had not observed, "*From my appointed place,*" he read, "*this twenty-fifth of November.*"—"What!—That is yesterday!—Villain, thou must have gone to hell for this!"

"I got it from your honour's father—whether he be in heaven or hell, I know not," said Steenie.

"I will delate you for a warlock to the Privy Council!" said Sir John. "I will send you to your master, the devil, with the help of a tar-barrel and a torch!"

"I intend to delate mysell to the Presbytery," said Steenie, "and tell them all I have seen last night, whilk are things fitter for them to judge of than a borrel man like me."

Sir John paused, composed himsell, and desired to hear the full history; and my gudesire told it him from point to point, as I have told it you—word for word, neither more or less.

Sir John was silent again for a long time, and at last he said, very composedly, "Steenie, this story of yours concerns the honour of many a noble family besides mine; and if it be a leasing-making, to keep yourself out of my danger, the least you can expect is to have a red-hot iron driven through your tongue,

and that will be as bad as scauding your fingers with a red-hot chanter. But yet it may be true, Steenie; and if the money cast up, I shall not know what to think of it. But where shall we find the Cat's Cradle? There are cats enough about the old house, but I think they kitten without the ceremony of bed or cradle."

"We were best ask Hutcheon," said my gudesire; "he kens a' the odd corners about as well as—another serving-man that is now gane, and that I wad not like to name."

Aweel, Hutcheon, when he was asked, told them, that a ruinous turret, lang disused, next to the clock-house, only accessible by a ladder, for the opening was on the outside, and far above the battlements, was called of old the Cat's Cradle.

"There will I go immediately," said Sir John; and he took (with what purpose, Heaven kens) one of his father's pistols from the hall-table, where they had lain since the night he died, and hastened to the battlements.

It was a dangerous place to climb, for the ladder was auld and frail, and wanted ane or twa rounds. However, up got Sir John, and entered at the turret door, where his body stopped the only little light that was in the bit turret. Something flees at him wi' a vengeance, maist dang him back ower—bang gaed the knight's pistol, and Hutcheon, that held the ladder, and my gudesire that stood beside him, hears a loud skelloch. A minute after, Sir John flings the body of the jackanape down to them, and cries that the siller is fund, and that they should come up and

help him. And there was the bag of siller sure aneugh, and mony orra things besides, that had been missing for mony a day. And Sir John, when he had ripped the turret weel, led my gudesire into the dining-parlour, and took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, and said he was sorry he should have doubted his word, and that he would hereafter be a good master to him, to make amends.

“And now, Steenie,” said Sir John, “although this vision of yours tends, on the whole, to my father’s credit, as an honest man, that he should, even after his death, desire to see justice done to a poor man like you, yet you are sensible that ill-dispositioned men might make bad constructions upon it, concerning his soul’s health. So, I think, we had better lay the haill dirdum on that ill-deedie creature, Major Weir, and say naething about your dream in the wood of Pitmurkie. You had taken ower muckle brandy to be very certain about onything; and, Steenie, this receipt” (his hand shook while he held it out),—“it’s but a queer kind of document, and we will do best, I think, to put it quietly in the fire.”

“Od, but for as queer as it is, it’s a’ the voucher I have for my rent,” said my gudesire, who was afraid, it may be, of losing the benefit of Sir Robert’s discharge.

“I will bear the contents to your credit in the rental-book, and give you a discharge under my own hand,” said Sir John, “and that on the spot. And, Steenie, if you can hold your tongue about this matter, you shall sit, from this term downward, at an easier rent.”

“Mony thanks to your honour,” said Steenie, who saw easily in what corner the wind was; “doubtless I will be conformable to all your honour’s commands; only I would willingly speak wi’ some powerful minister on the subject, for I do not like the sort of summons of appointment whilk your honour’s father—”

“Do not call the phantom my father!” said Sir John, interrupting him.

“Weel, then, the thing that was so like him,” said my gudesire; “he spoke of my coming back to him this time twelvemonth, and it’s a weight on my conscience.”

“Aweel, then,” said Sir John, “if you be so much distressed in mind, you may speak to our minister of the parish; he is a douce man, regards the honour of our family, and the mair that he may look for some patronage from me.”

“Wi’ that my gudesire readily agreed that the receipt should be burnt, and the Laird threw it into the chimney with his ain hand. Burn it would not for them, though; but away it flew up the lum, wi’ a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib.

My gudesire gaed down to the manse, and the minister, when he had heard the story, said it was his real opinion, that though my gudesire had gaen very far in tampering with dangerous matters, yet, as he had refused the devil’s arles (for such was the offer of meat and drink), and had refused to do homage by piping at his bidding, he hoped, that if he held a circumspect walk hereafter, Satan could take little

advantage by what was come and gane. And, indeed, my gudesire, of his ain accord, lang foreswore baith the pipes and the brandy; it was not even till the year was out, and the fatal day passed, that he would so much as take the fiddle, or drink usquebaugh or tippenny.

Sir John made up his story about the jackanape as he liked himsell; and some believe till this day there was no more in the matter than the filching nature of the brute. Indeed, ye'll no hinder some to threap, that it was nane o' the Auld Enemy that Dougal and my gudesire saw in the Laird's room, but only that wanchancy creature, the Major, capering on the coffin; and that as to the blawing on the Laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the Laird himsell, if no better. But heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife, after Sir John and her ain gudeman were baith in the moulds. And then, my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs, but not in his judgment or memory—at least nothing to speak of—was obliged to tell the real narrative to his freends, for the credit of his good name. He might else have been charged for a warlock.

THE HAUNTED SHIPS.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

“ Though my mind's not
Hoodwink'd with rustic marvels, I do think
There are more things in the grove, the air, the flood,
Yea, and the charnell'd earth, than that wise man,
Who walks so proud as if his form alone
Fill'd the wide temple of the universe,
Will let a frail mind say. I'd write i' the creed
O' the sagest head alive, that fearful forms,
Holy or reprobate, do page men's heels ;
That shapes, too horrid for our gaze, stand o'er
The murderer's dust, and for revenge glare up,
Even till the stars weep fire for very pity.”

ALONG the sea of Solway, romantic on the Scottish side, with its woodland, its bays, its cliffs, and headlands,—and interesting on the English side, with its many beautiful towns with their shadows on the water, rich pastures, safe harbours, and numerous ships,—there still linger many traditional stories of a maritime nature, most of them connected with superstitions singularly wild and unusual. To the curious these tales afford a rich fund of entertainment, from the many diversities of the same story ; some dry and barren, and stripped of all the embellishments of poetry ; others dressed out in all the riches of a superstitious belief and haunted imagination. In this they resemble the inland traditions of the peasants ; but many of the oral treasures of the Galwegian or the Cumbrian coast have the stamp of the Dane and

the Norseman upon them, and claim but a remote or faint affinity with the legitimate legends of Caledonia. Something like a rude prosaic outline of several of the most noted of the northern ballads, the adventures and depredations of the old ocean kings, still lends life to the evening tale; and, among others, the story of the Haunted Ships is still popular among the maritime peasantry.

One fine harvest evening, I went on board the shallop of Richard Faulder, of Allanbay; and, committing ourselves to the waters, we allowed a gentle wind from the east to waft us at its pleasure towards the Scottish coast. We passed the sharp promontory of Siddick; and skirting the land within a stone-cast, glided along the shore till we came within sight of the ruined Abbey of Sweetheart. The green mountain of Criffell ascended beside us; and the bleat of the flocks from its summit, together with the winding of the evening horn of the reapers, came softened into something like music over land and sea. We pushed our shallop into a deep and wooded bay, and sat silently looking on the serene beauty of the place. The moon glimmered in her rising through the tall shafts of the pines of Caerlaverock; and the sky, with scarce a cloud, showered down on wood, and headland, and bay, the twinkling beams of a thousand stars rendering every object visible. The tide, too, was coming with that swift and silent swell observable when the wind is gentle; the woody curves along the land were filling with the flood, till it touched the green branches of the drooping trees; while in the centre current the roll and the plunge of

a thousand pellocks told to the experienced fisherman that salmon were abundant.

As we looked, we saw an old man emerging from a path that winded to the shore through a grove of doddered hazel; he carried a half-net on his back, while behind him came a girl, bearing a small harpoon with which the fishers are remarkably dexterous in striking their prey. The senior seated himself on a large gray stone, which overlooked the bay, laid aside his bonnet, and submitted his bosom and neck to the refreshing sea breeze; and taking his harpoon from his attendant, sat with the gravity and composure of a spirit of the flood, with his ministering nymph behind him. We pushed our shallop to the shore, and soon stood at their side.

“This is old Mark Macmoran, the mariner, with his grand-daughter Barbara,” said Richard Faulder, in a whisper that had something of fear in it; “he knows every creek, and cavern, and quicksand, in Solway; has seen the Spectre Hound that haunts the Isle of Man; has heard him bark, and at every bark has seen a ship sink; and he has seen, too, the Haunted Ships in full sail; and, if all tales be true, he has sailed in them himself; he’s an awful person.”

Though I perceived in the communication of my friend something of the superstition of the sailor, I could not help thinking that common rumour had made a happy choice in singling out old Mark to maintain her intercourse with the invisible world. His hair, which seemed to have refused all intercourse with the comb, hung matted upon his shoulders; a kind of mantle, or rather blanket, pinned with a

wooden skewer round his neck, fell mid-leg down, concealing all his nether garments as far as a pair of hose, darned with yarn of all conceivable colours, and a pair of shoes, patched and repaired till nothing of the original structure remained, and clasped on his feet with two massy silver buckles. If the dress of the old man was rude and sordid, that of his granddaughter was gay, and even rich. She wore a boddice of fine wool, wrought round the bosom with alternate leaf and lily, and a kirtle of the same fabric, which, almost touching her white and delicate ankle, showed her snowy feet, so fairy-light and round that they scarcely seemed to touch the grass where she stood. Her hair, a natural ornament which woman seeks much to improve, was of bright glossy brown, and encumbered rather than adorned with a snood, set thick with marine productions, among which the small clear pearl found in the Solway was conspicuous. Nature had not trusted to a handsome shape, and a sylph-like air, for young Barbara's influence over the heart of man; but had bestowed a pair of large bright blue eyes, swimming in liquid light, so full of love, and gentleness, and joy, that all the sailors from Annan Water to far Saint Bees acknowledged their power, and sung songs about the bonnie lass of Mark Macmoran. She stood holding a small gaff-hook of polished steel in her hand, and seemed not dissatisfied with the glances I bestowed on her from time to time, and which I held more than requited by a single glance of those eyes which retained so many capricious hearts in subjection.

The tide, though rapidly augmenting, had not yet

filled the bay at our feet. The moon now streamed fairly over the tops of Caerlaverock pines, and showed the expanse of ocean dimpling and swelling, on which sloops and shallops came dancing, and displaying at every turn their extent of white sail against the beam of the moon. I looked on old Mark the Mariner, who, seated motionless on his gray stone, kept his eye fixed on the increasing waters with a look of seriousness and sorrow in which I saw little of the calculating spirit of a mere fisherman. Though he looked on the coming tide, his eyes seemed to dwell particularly on the black and decayed hulls of two vessels, which, half immersed in the quicksand, still addressed to every heart a tale of shipwreck and desolation. The tide wheeled and foamed around them; and creeping inch by inch up the side, at last fairly threw its waters over the top, and a long and hollow eddy showed the resistance which the liquid element received.

The moment they were fairly buried in the water, the old man clasped his hands together, and said, "Blessed be the tide that will break over and bury ye for ever! Sad to mariners, and sorrowful to maids and mothers, has the time been ye have choked up this deep and bonnie bay. For evil were you sent, and for evil have you continued. Every season finds from you its song of sorrow and wail, its funeral processions, and its shrouded corses. Woe to the land where the wood grew that made ye! Cursed be the axe that hewed ye on the mountains, the hands that joined ye together, the bay that ye first swam in, and the wind that wafted ye here! Seven times have ye

put my life in peril, three fair sons have ye swept from my side, and two bonnie grand-bairns; and now, even now, your waters foam and flash for my destruction, did I venture my infirm limbs in quest of food in your deadly bay. I see by that ripple and that foam, and hear by the sound and singing of your surge, that ye yearn for another victim; but it shall not be me nor mine."

Even as the old mariner addressed himself to the wrecked ships, a young man appeared at the southern extremity of the bay, holding his half-net in his hand, and hastening into the current. Mark rose, and shouted, and waved him back from a place which, to a person unacquainted with the dangers of the bay, real and superstitious, seemed sufficiently perilous: his grand-daughter, too, added her voice to his, and waved her white hands; but the more they strove, the faster advanced the peasant, till he stood to his middle in the water, while the tide increased every moment in depth and strength. "Andrew, Andrew," cried the young woman, in a voice quivering with emotion, "turn, turn, I tell you: oh, the Ships, the Haunted Ships!" But the appearance of a fine run of fish had more influence with the peasant than the voice of bonnie Barbara, and forward he dashed, net in hand. In a moment he was borne off his feet, and mingled like foam with the water, and hurried towards the fatal eddies which whirled and roared round the sunken ships. But he was a powerful young man, and an expert swimmer; he seized on one of the projecting ribs of the nearest hulk, and clinging to it with the grasp of despair, uttered yell

after yell, sustaining himself against the prodigious rush of the current.

From a shealing of turf and straw, within the pitch of a bar from the spot where we stood, came out an old woman bent with age, and leaning on a crutch. "I heard the voice of that lad Andrew Lammie; can the chield be drowning, that he skirls sae uncannilie?" said the old woman, seating herself on the ground, and looking earnestly at the water. "Ou ay," she continued, "he's doomed, he's doomed; heart and hand can never save him; boats, ropes, and man's strength and wit, all vain! vain! he's doomed, he's doomed!"

By this time I had thrown myself into the shallop, followed reluctantly by Richard Faulder, over whose courage and kindness of heart superstition had great power; and with one push from the shore, and some exertion in sculling, we came within a quoit-cast of the unfortunate fisherman. He stayed not to profit by our aid; for when he perceived us near, he uttered a piercing shriek of joy, and bounded towards us through the agitated element the full length of an oar. I saw him for a second on the surface of the water; but the eddying current sucked him down; and all I ever beheld of him again was his hand held above the flood, and clutching in agony at some imaginary aid. I sat gazing in horror on the vacant sea before us: but a breathing time before, a human being, full of youth, and strength, and hope, was there; his cries were still ringing in my ears, and echoing in the woods; and now nothing was seen or heard save the turbulent expanse of water, and the sound of its

chafing on the shores. We pushed back our shallop, and resumed our station on the cliff beside the old mariner and his descendant.

“Wherefore sought ye to peril your own lives fruitlessly?” said Mark, “in attempting to save the doomed. Whoso touches those infernal ships, never survives to tell the tale. Woe to the man who is found nigh them at midnight when the tide has subsided, and they arise in their former beauty, with fore-castle, and deck, and sail, and pennon, and shroud! Then is seen the streaming of lights along the water from their cabin windows, and then is heard the sound of mirth and the clamour of tongues, and the infernal whoop and halloo, and song, ringing far and wide. Woe to the man who comes nigh them!”

To all this my Allanbay companion listened with a breathless attention. I felt something touched with a superstition to which I partly believed I had seen one victim offered up; and I inquired of the old mariner, “How and when came these haunted ships there? To me they seem but the melancholy relics of some unhappy voyagers, and much more likely to warn people to shun destruction, than entice and delude them to it.”

“And so,” said the old man with a smile, which had more of sorrow in it than of mirth; “and so, young man, these black and shattered hulks seem to the eye of the multitude. But things are not what they seem; that water, a kind and convenient servant to the wants of man, which seems so smooth, and so dimpling, and so gentle, has swallowed up a

human soul even now ; and the place which it covers, so fair and so level, is a faithless quicksand, out of which none escape. Things are otherwise than they seem. Had you lived as long as I have had the sorrow to live ; had you seen the storms, and braved the perils, and endured the distresses which have befallen me ; had you sat gazing out on the dreary ocean at midnight on a haunted coast ; had you seen comrade after comrade, brother after brother, and son after son, swept away by the merciless ocean from your very side ; had you seen the shapes of friends, doomed to the wave and the quicksand, appearing to you in the dreams and visions of the night,—then would your mind have been prepared for crediting the maritime legends of mariners ; and the two haunted Danish ships would have had their terrors for you, as they have for all who sojourn on this coast.

“ Of the time and the cause of their destruction,” continued the old man, “ I know nothing certain : they have stood as you have seen them for uncounted time ; and while all other ships wrecked on this unhappy coast have gone to pieces, and rotted, and sunk away in a few years, these two haunted hulks have neither sunk in the quicksand, nor has a single spar or board been displaced. Maritime legend says, that two ships of Denmark having had permission, for a time, to work deeds of darkness and dolour on the deep, were at last condemned to the whirlpool and the sunken rock, and were wrecked in this bonnie bay, as a sign to seamen to be gentle and devout. The night when they were lost was a harvest evening of uncommon mildness and beauty ;

the sun had newly set ; the moon came brighter and brighter out ; and the reapers, laying their sickles at the root of the standing corn, stood on rock and bank, looking at the increasing magnitude of the waters, for sea and land were visible from Saint Bees to Barn-hourie. The sails of two vessels were soon seen bent for the Scottish coast ; and with a speed outrunning the swiftest ship, they approached the dangerous quicksands and headland of Borran Point. On the deck of the foremost ship not a living soul was seen, or shape, unless something in darkness and form resembling a human shadow could be called a shape, which flitted from extremity to extremity of the ship, with the appearance of trimming the sails, and directing the vessel's course. But the decks of its companion were crowded with human shapes ; the captain, and mate, and sailor, and cabin boy, all seemed there ; and from them the sound of mirth and minstrelsy echoed over land and water. The coast which they skirted along was one of extreme danger ; and the reapers shouted to warn them to beware of sandbank and rock ; but of this friendly counsel no notice was taken, except that a large and famished dog, which sat on the prow, answered every shout with a long, loud, and melancholy howl. The deep sand-bank of Carsethorn was expected to arrest the career of these desperate navigators ; but they passed, with the celerity of waterfowl, over an obstruction which had wrecked many pretty ships.

“ Old men shook their heads and departed, saying, ‘ We have seen the fiend sailing in a bottomless ship—let us go home and pray ’ ; but one young and wilful

man said, 'Fiend! I'll warrant it's nae fiend, but douce Janet Withershins, the witch, holding a carouse with some of her Cumberland cummers, and mickle red wine will be spilt atween them. Dod I would gladly have a toothfu'! I'll warrant it's nane o' your cauld sour slae-water like a bottle of Bailie Skrinkie's port, but right drap-o'-my-heart's-blood stuff, that would waken a body out of their last linen. I wonder where the cummers will anchor their craft?' 'And I'll vow,' said another rustic, 'the wine they quaff is none of your visionary drink, such as a drouthie body has dished out to his lips in a dream; nor is it shadowy and unsubstantial, like the vessels they sail in, which are made out of a cockle-shell or a cast-off slipper, or the paring of a seaman's right thumb-nail. I once got a hansel out of a witch's quaigh myself,—auld Marion Mathers, of Dustiefoot, whom they tried to bury in the old kirk-yard of Dunscore; but the cummer raise as fast as they laid her down, and nae where else would she lie but in the bonnie green kirk-yard of Kier, among douce and sponsible fowk. So I'll vow that the wine of a witch's cup is as fell liquor as ever did a kindly turn to a poor man's heart; and be they fiends, or be they witches, if they have red wine asteer, I'll risk a drouket sark for ae glorious tout on't.' 'Silence, ye sinners,' said the minister's son of a neighbouring parish, who united in his own person his father's lack of devotion with his mother's love of liquor. 'Whisht!—speak as if ye had the fear of something holy before ye. Let the vessels run their own way to destruction; who can stay the eastern wind, and

the current of the Solway sea? I can find ye Scripture warrant for that; so let them try their strength on Blawhooly rocks, and their might on the broad quicksand. There's a surf running there would knock the ribs together of a galley built by the imps of the pit, and commanded by the Prince of Darkness. Bonnilie and bravely they sail away there; but before the blast blows by they'll be wrecked; and red wine and strong brandy will be as rife as dyke-water, and we'll drink the health of bonnie Bell Blackness out of her left foot slipper.'

“The speech of the young profligate was applauded by several of his companions, and away they flew to the bay of Blawhooly, from whence they never returned. The two vessels were observed all at once to stop in the bosom of the bay, on the spot where their hulls now appear; the mirth and the minstrelsy waxed louder than ever; and the forms of maidens, with instruments of music and wine-cups in their hands, thronged the decks. A boat was lowered; and the same shadowy pilot who conducted the ships made it start towards the shore with the rapidity of lightning, and its head knocked against the bank where the four young men stood, who longed for the unblest drink. They leaped in with a laugh, and with a laugh were they welcomed on deck; wine cups were given to each, and as they raised them to their lips the vessels melted away beneath their feet; and one loud shriek, mingled with laughter still louder, was heard over land and water for many miles. Nothing more was heard or seen till the morning, when the crowd who came to the beach

saw with fear and wonder the two Haunted Ships, such as they now seem, masts and tackle gone ; nor mark, nor sign, by which their name, country, or destination could be known, was left remaining. Such is the tradition of the mariners ; and its truth has been attested by many families whose sons and whose fathers have been drowned in the haunted bay of Blawhooly.”

“ And trow ye,” said the old woman, who, attracted from her hut by the drowning cries of the young fisherman, had remained an auditor of the mariner’s legend,—“ and trow ye, Mark Macmoran, that the tale of the Haunted Ships is done ? I can say no to that. Mickle have mine ears heard ; but more mine eyes have witnessed since I came to dwell in this humble home by the side of the deep sea. I mind the night weel ; it was on Hallowmas-eve ; the nuts were cracked, and the apples were eaten, and spell and charm were tried at my fireside ; till, wearied with diving into the dark waves of futurity, the lads and lasses fairly took to the more visible blessings of kind words, tender clasps, and gentle courtship. Soft words in a maiden’s ear, and a kindlie kiss o’ her lip, were old-world matters to me, Mark Macmoran ; though I mean not to say that I have been free of the folly of daunerin and daffin with a youth in my day, and keeping tryst with him in dark and lonely places. However, as I say, these times of enjoyment were passed and gone with me,—the mair’s the pity that pleasure should fly sae fast away ; and as I could nae make sport I thought I should not mar any, so out I sauntered into the fresh cold air,

and sat down behind that old oak, and looked abroad on the wide sea. I had my ain sad thoughts, ye may think, at the time : it was in that very bay my blithe gudeman perished, with seven more in his company ; and on that very bank where ye see the waves leaping and foaming, I saw seven stately corsers streaked, but the dearest was the eighth. It was a woeful sight to me, a widow, with four bonnie boys, with nought to support them but these twa hands, and God's blessing, and a cow's grass. I have never liked to live out of sight of this bay since that time ; and mony's the moonlight night I sit looking on these watery mountains, and these waste shores ; it does my heart good, whatever it may do to my head. So ye see it was Hallowmas night ; and looking on sea and land sat I ; and my heart wandering to other thoughts soon made me forget my youthful company at hame. It might be near the howe hour of the night ; the tide was making, and its singing brought strange old-world stories with it ; and I thought on the dangers that sailors endure, the fates they meet with, and the fearful forms they see. My own blithe gudeman had seen sights that made him grave enough at times, though he aye tried to laugh them away.

“ Aweel, atween that very rock aneath us and the coming tide, I saw, or thought I saw, for the tale is so dream-like, that the whole might pass for a vision of the night,—I saw the form of a man ; his plaid was gray ; his face was gray ; and his hair, which hung low down till it nearly came to the middle of his back, was as white as the white sea-foam. He

began to howk and dig under the bank ; an' God be near me, thought I, this maun be the unblessed spirit of auld Adam Gowdgowpin, the miser, who is doomed to dig for shipwrecked treasure, and count how many millions are hidden for ever from man's enjoyment. The Form found something which in shape and hue seemed a left-foot slipper of brass ; so down to the tide he marched, and placing it on the water, whirled it thrice round ; and the infernal slipper dilated at every turn, till it became a bonnie barge with its sails bent, and on board leaped the form, and scudded swiftly away. He came to one of the Haunted Ships ; and striking it with his oar, a fair ship, with mast, and canvas, and mariners, started up ; he touched the other Haunted Ship, and produced the like transformation ; and away the three spectre ships bounded, leaving a track of fire behind them on the billows which was long unextinguished. Now was nae that a bonnie and a fearful sight to see beneath the light of the Hallowmas moon ? But the tale is far frae finished ; for mariners say that once a year, on a certain night, if ye stand on the Borran Point, ye will see the infernal shallows coming snoring through the Solway ; ye will hear the same laugh, and song, and mirth, and minstrelsy, which our ancestors heard ; see them bound over the sand-banks and sunken rocks like sea-gulls, cast their anchor in Blawhooly Bay, while the shadowy figure lowers down the boat, and augments their numbers with the four unhappy mortals to whose memory a stone stands in the kirkyard, with a sinking ship and a shoreless sea cut upon it. Then the

spectre ships vanish, and the drowning shriek of mortals, and the rejoicing laugh of fiends are heard ; and the old hulks are left as a memorial that the old spiritual kingdom has not departed from the earth. But I maun away, and trim my little cottage fire, and make it burn and blaze up bonnie, to warm the crickets, and my cold and crazy bones, that maun soon be laid aneath the green sod in the eerie kirk-yard." And away the old dame tottered to her cottage, secured the door on the inside, and soon the hearth-flame was seen to glimmer and gleam through the key-hole and window.

"I'll tell ye what," said the old mariner, in a subdued tone, and with a shrewd and suspicious glance of his eye after the old sibyl, "it's a word that may not very well be uttered, but there are many mistakes made in evening stories if old Moll Moray there, where she lives, knows not mickle more than she is willing to tell of the Haunted Ships, and their unhallowed mariners. She lives cannilie and quietly ; no one knows how she is fed or supported ; but her dress is aye whole, her cottage ever smokes, and her table lacks neither of wine, white and red, nor of fowl and fish, and white bread and brown. It was a dear scoff to Jock Matheson when he called old Moll the uncannie carline of Blawhooly : his boat ran round and round in the centre of the Solway,—everybody said it was enchanted,—and down it went head foremost ; and had nae Jock been a swimmer equal to a sheldrake, he would have fed the fish,—but I'll warrant it sobered the lad's speech ; and he never reckoned himself safe till he made

auld Moll the present of a new kirtle and a stone of cheese."

"O father," said his grand-daughter Barbara, "ye surely wrong poor old Mary Moray. What use could it be to an old woman like her, who has no wrongs to redress, no malice to work out against mankind, and nothing to seek of enjoyment save a cannie hour and a quiet grave,—what use could the fellowship of fiends, and the communion of evil spirits, be to her? I know Jenny Primrose puts rowan-tree above the door-head when she sees old Mary coming; I know the good wife of Kittlenaket wears rowan-berry leaves in the headband of her blue kirtle, and all for the sake of averting the unsonsie glance of Mary's right ee; and I know that the auld laird of Burntroutwater drives his seven cows to their pasture with a wand of witch-tree, to keep Mary from milking them. But what has all that to do with haunted shallops, visionary mariners, and bottomless boats? I have heard myself as pleasant a tale about the Haunted Ships and their unworldly crews, as any one would wish to hear in a winter evening. It was told me by young Benjie Macharg, one summer night, sitting on Arbigland Bank. The lad intended a sort of love meeting; but all that he could talk of was about smearing sheep and shearing sheep, and of the wife which the Norway elves of the Haunted Ships made for his uncle Sandie Macharg. And I shall tell ye the tale as the honest lad told it to me.

"Alexander Macharg, besides being the laird of three acres of peatmoss, two kale gardens, and the owner of seven good milch cows, a pair of horses,

and six pet sheep, was the husband of one of the handsomest women in seven parishes. Many a lad sighed the day he was bridged; and a Nithsdale laird and two Annandale moorland farmers drank themselves to their last linen, as well as their last shilling, through sorrow for her loss. But married was the dame; and home she was carried, to bear rule over her home and her husband, as an honest woman should. Now ye maun ken that, though the flesh-and-blood lovers of Alexander's bonnie wife all ceased to love and to sue her after she became another's, there were certain admirers who did not consider their claim at all abated, or their hopes lessened by the kirk's famous obstacle of matrimony. Ye have heard how the devout minister of Tinwald had a fair son carried away, and bedded against his liking to an unchristened bride, whom the elves and the fairies provided; ye have heard how the bonnie bride of the drunken laird of Soukitup was stolen by the fairies out at the back window of the bridal chamber, the time the bridegroom was groping his way to the chamber door; and ye have heard—but why need I multiply cases? such things in the ancient days were as common as candle-light. So ye'll no hinder certain water elves and sea fairies, who sometimes keep festival and summer mirth in these old haunted hulks, from falling in love with the weel-faired wife of Laird Macharg; and to their plots and contrivances they went how they might accomplish to sunder man and wife; and sundering such a man and such a wife was like sundering the green leaf from the summer, or the fragrance from the flower.

“So it fell on a time that Laird Macharg took his half-net on his back, and his steel spear in his hand, and down to Blawhooly Bay gade he, and into the water he went right between the two haunted hulks, and, placing his net, awaited the coming of the tide. The night, ye maun ken, was mirk, and the wind lowne, and the singing of the increasing waters among the shells and the peebles was heard for sundry miles. All at once lights began to glance and twinkle on board the two Haunted Ships from every hole and seam, and presently the sound as of a hatchet employed in squaring timber echoed far and wide. But if the toil of these unearthly workmen amazed the Laird, how much more was his amazement increased when a sharp shrill voice called out, ‘Ho! brother, what are you doing now?’ A voice still shriller responded from the other haunted ship, ‘I’m making a wife to Sandie Macharg!’ and a loud quavering laugh, running from ship to ship, and from bank to bank, told the joy they expected from their labour.

“Now the Laird, besides being a devout and a God-fearing man, was shrewd and bold; and in plot, and contrivance, and skill in conducting his designs, was fairly an overmatch for any dozen land elves. But the water elves are far more subtle; besides, their haunts and their dwellings being in the great deep, pursuit and detection is hopeless if they succeed in carrying their prey to the waves. But ye shall hear. Home flew the laird,—collected his family around the hearth,—spoke of the signs and the sins of the times, and talked of mortification and prayer

for averting calamity; and finally, taking his father's Bible, brass clasps, black print, and covered with calf-skin, from the shelf, he proceeded without let or stint to perform domestic worship. I should have told ye that he bolted and locked the door, shut up all inlet to the house, threw salt into the fire, and proceeded in every way like a man skilful in guarding against the plots of fairies and fiends. His wife looked on all this with wonder; but she saw something in her husband's looks that hindered her from intruding either question or advice, and a wise woman was she.

“Near the mid hour of the night the rush of a horse's feet was heard, and the sound of a rider leaping from its back, and a heavy knock came to the door, accompanied by a voice, saying, ‘The cummer drink's hot, and the knave bairn is expected at Laird Laurie's to-night; sae mount, gudewife, and come.’

“‘Preserve me!’ said the wife of Sandie Macharg; ‘that's news indeed! who could have thought it? the Laird has been heirless for seventeen years! Now Sandie, my man, fetch me my skirt and hood.’

“But he laid his arm round his wife's neck, and said, ‘If all the lairds in Galloway go heirless, over this door threshold shall you not stir to-night; and I have said, and I have sworn it: seek not to know why or wherefore—but, Lord, send us thy blessed mornlight.’ The wife looked for a moment in her husband's eyes, and desisted from further entreaty.

“‘But let us send a civil message to the gossips, Sandy; and had nae ye better say I am sair laid with

a sudden sickness? though its sinful-like to send the poor messenger a mile agate with a lie in his mouth without a glass of brandy.'

" 'To such a messenger, and to those who sent him, no apology is needed,' said the austere Laird, 'so let him depart.' And the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and the muttered imprecations of its rider on the churlish treatment he had experienced.

" 'Now Sandie, my lad,' said his wife, laying an arm particularly white and round about his neck as she spoke, 'are you not a queer man and a stern? I have been your wedded wife now these three years; and, beside my dower, have brought you three as bonnie bairns as ever smiled aneath a summer sun. O man, you a douce man, and fitter to be an elder than even Willie Greer himself,—I have the minister's ain word for't,—to put on these hard-hearted looks, and gang waving your arms that way, as if ye said, "I winna take the counsel of sic a hempie as you." I'm your ain leal wife, and will and maun have an explanation.'

" 'To all this Sandie Macharg replied, 'It is written—"Wives, obey your husbands;" but we have been stayed in our devotion, so let us pray;' and down he knelt. His wife knelt also, for she was as devout as bonnie; and beside them knelt their household, and all lights were extinguished.

" 'Now this beats a,' muttered his wife to herself; 'however, I shall be obedient for a time; but if I dinna ken what all this is for before the morn by sunket-time, my tongue is nae langer a tongue, nor my hands worth wearing.'

“The voice of her husband in prayer interrupted this mental soliloquy; and ardently did he beseech to be preserved from the wiles of the fiends, and the snares of Satan; ‘from witches, ghosts, goblins, elves, fairies, spunkies, and water-kelpies; from the spectre shallop of Solway; from spirits visible and invisible; from the Haunted Ships and their unearthly tenants; from maritime spirits that plotted against godly men, and fell in love with their wives’—

“‘Nay, but His presence be near us!’ said his wife in a low tone of dismay. ‘God guide my gude-man’s wits: I never heard such a prayer from human lips before. But Sandie, my man, Lord’s sake, rise: what fearful light is this?—barn, and byre, and stable, maun be in a blaze; and Hawkie and Hurley, —Doddie, and Cherrie, and Damson Plum, will be smooed with reek, and scorched with flame.’

“And a flood of light, but not so gross as a common fire, which ascended to heaven and filled all the court before the house, amply justified the good wife’s suspicions. But to the terrors of fire, Sandie was as immovable as he was to the imaginary groans of the barren wife of Laird Laurie; and he held his wife, and threatened the weight of his right hand—and it was a heavy one—to all who ventured abroad, or even unbolted the door. The neighing and prancing of horses, and the bellowing of cows, augmented the horrors of the night; and to any one who only heard the din, it seemed that the whole onstead was in a blaze, and horses and cattle perishing in the flame. All wiles, common or extraordinary, were put in practice to entice or force the

honest farmer and his wife to open the door ; and when the like success attended every new stratagem, silence for a little while ensued, and a long, loud, and shrilling laugh wound up the dramatic efforts of the night. In the morning, when Laird Macharg went to the door, he found standing against one of the pilasters a piece of black ship oak, rudely fashioned into something like human form, and which skilful people declared would have been clothed with seeming flesh and blood, and palmed upon him by elfin adroitness for his wife, had he admitted his visitants. A synod of wise men and women sat upon the woman of timber, and she was finally ordered to be devoured by fire, and that in the open air. A fire was soon made, and into it the elfin sculpture was tossed from the prongs of two pairs of pitchforks. The blaze that arose was awful to behold ; and hissings, and burstings, and loud cracklings, and strange noises, were heard in the midst of the flame ; and when the whole sank into ashes, a drinking cup of some precious metal was found ; and this cup, fashioned no doubt by elfin skill, but rendered harmless by the purification with fire, the sons and daughters of Sandie Macharg and his wife drink out of to this very day. Bless all bold men, say I, and obedient wives !”

THE UNKNOWN.

BY JOHN MACKAY WILSON.

IN the year 1785, a young and beautiful woman, whose dress and features bespoke her to be a native of Spain, was observed a few miles beyond Ponteland, on the road which leads to Rothbury. She appeared faint and weary; dimness was deepening over the lustre of her dark eyes, and their glance bespoke anxious misery. Her raiment was of the finest silk; but time had caused its colour to fade; and it hung around her a tattered robe—an ensign of present poverty and wretchedness, a ruined remnant of prouder days that were past. She walked feebly and slowly along, bearing in her arms an infant boy; and she was observed, at intervals, to sit down, press her pale lips to her child's cheek, and weep. Several peasants, who were returning from their labours in the fields, stood and spoke to her; but she gazed on them with wild looks of despair, and she answered them in a strange language which they did not understand.

“She has been a lady, poor thing,” said some of them.

“Ha!” said others, who had less charity in their breasts, “they have not all been ladies that wear tattered silk in strange fashions.”

Some inquired of her if she were hungry; if she wanted a lodging; or where she was going. But, like the mother of Thomas-à-Beckett, to all their

inquiries she answered them but in one word that they understood, and that word was "*Edinburgh!*"

Some said, "The poor creature is crazed"; and when she perceived that they comprehended her not, she waved her hand impatiently for them to depart, and pressing her child closer to her bosom, she bent her head over him and sighed. The peasants, believing from her gestures that she desired not their presence, left her, some pitying, all wondering. Within an hour some of them returned to the place where they had seen her, with the intent of offering her shelter for the night; but she was not to be found.

On the following morning, one Peter Thornton, a farmer, went into his stackyard before his servants were astir, and his attention being aroused by the weeping and wailing of a child, he hastened toward the spot from whence the sound proceeded. In a secluded corner of the yard he beheld a woman lying, as if asleep, upon some loose straw; and a child was weeping and uttering strange sounds of lamentation in her bosom. It was the lovely, but wretched-looking foreigner whom the peasants had seen on the evening before. Peter was a blunt, kind-hearted Scotsman: he resembled a piece of rich, though unpolished metal. He approached the forlorn stranger; and her strange dress, her youth, the stamp of misery that surrounded her, and the death-like expression of her features, moved him, as he gazed upon her and her child, almost to tears.

"Get up, woman," said he; "why do you lie there? Get up, and come wi' me; ye seem to be ill, and my wife will get ye something comfortable."

“But she spoke not, she moved not, though the child screamed louder at his presence. He called to her again; but still she remained motionless.

“Preserve us!” said he, somewhat alarmed, “what can have come owre the woman? I daresay she is in a trance! She sleeps sounder there in the open air, and upon the bare straw, wi’ her poor bairn crying like to break its heart upon her breast, than I could do on a feather bed, wi’ everything peace and quietness around me. Come, waken, woman!” he added; and he bent down and took her by the hand. But her fingers were stiff and cold—there was no sign of life upon her lips, neither was there breath in her nostrils.

“What is this!” exclaimed Peter, in a tone of horror—“a dead woman in my stackyard!—has there been murder at my door through the night? I’ll gie all that I am worth as a reward to find it out!” And leaving the child screaming by the side of its dead mother, he rushed breathless into the house, exclaiming—“Oh wife! wife—Jenny, woman!—I say, Jenny! get up! Here has been bloody wark at our door! What do ye think!—a dead woman lying in our stackyard, wi’ a bonny bairn screaming on her breast!”

“What’s that ye say, Peter!” cried his wife, starting up in terror; “a dead woman?—ye’re dreaming—ye’re not in earnest!”

“Haste ye! haste ye, Jenny!” he added; “it’s as true as that my name is Peter Thornton.”

She arose, and, with their household servants, accompanied him to where the dead body lay.

“Now,” added Peter, with a look which bespoke the troubled state of his feelings, “this will be a job for the crowner, an’ we’ll a’ have to be examined and cross-examined backward and forward, just as if we had killed the woman, or had anything to do wi’ her death. I would rather have lost five hundred pounds than that she had been found dead upon my stack-yard.”

“But, see,” said Jenny, after she had ascertained that the mother was really dead, and as she took up the child in her arms and kissed it—“see what a sweet, bonny, innocent-looking creature this is! And, poor thing, only to think that it should be left an orphan, and apparently in a foreign land, for I dinna understand a word that it greets and says.”

A coroner’s inquest was accordingly held upon the body, and a verdict of “*Found dead*” returned. Nothing was discovered about the person of the deceased which could throw light upon who she was. All the money she had had with her consisted of a small Spanish coin; but on her hand she wore a gemmed ring, of curious workmanship and considerable value, and also a plain marriage-ring. On the inside of the former were engraven the characters of C. F. *et* M. V.; and, within the latter, C. *et* M. F. The fashion of her dress was Spanish, and the few words of lamentation which her poor child could imperfectly utter were discovered to be in that language. There being small likelihood of discovering who the stranger had been, her orphan boy was about to be committed to the workhouse; but Mrs. Thornton had no children of her own, the motherless

little one had been three days under her care, and already her heart began to feel for him a mother's fondness.

"Peter," said she unto her husband, "I am not happy at the thought o' this poor bairn being sent to the workhouse. I'm sure he was born above such a condition. Death in taking his mother left him helpless and crying for help at our door, and I think it would be unnatural in us to withhold it. Now, as we have nae family o' our own, if ye'll bear the expense, I'm sure I'm willing to take the trouble o' bringing him up."

"Wi' a' my heart, Jenny, my dow," said Peter; "it was me that found the bairn, and if ye say, keep it, I say, keep it, too. His meat will never be missed; and it will be a worse year wi' us than ony we hae seen, when we canna get claes to his back."

"Peter," replied she, "I always said ye had a good heart; and, by this action, ye prove it to the world."

"I care not that!" said he, snapping the nail of his thumb upwards from his forefinger, "what the world may say or think about me, provided *you* and my conscience say that it is right that I hae done."

They, therefore, from that hour took the orphan as the child of their adoption; and they were most puzzled to decide by what name he should be called.

"It is perfectly evident to me," said the farmer, "from the letters on the rings, that his father's first name begun wi' a C, and his second wi' an F; but we could never be able to find out the outlandish

foreign words that they may stand for. We shall, therefore, just give him some decent Christian name."

"And what name more decent or respectable could we gie him than our own?" said Jenny. "Suppose we just call him Thornton—Peter Thornton!"

"No, no, gudewife," said he, "there must twa words go to the making o' that bargain; for though nobody would charge you wi' being his mother, the time may comè when folk would be wicked enough to hint that I was his faither; therefore I do not think it proper that he should tak my name. What say ye now, as it is probable that his faither's name begun wi' a C, if we were to call him Christopher; and as we found him in the month of May, we should gie him a surname after the month, and call him Christopher May. That, in my opinion, is a very bonny name; and I hae nae doubt that, if he be spared till those dark een o' his begin to look after the lasses, mony a ane o' them will be o' the same way o' thinking."

The child soon became reconciled to the change in his situation, and returned the kindness of his foster-mother with affection. She rejoiced as he gradually forgot the few words of Spanish which he at first lisped, and in their stead began to speak the language of the Borders. With delight in her eyes, she declared that "she had learned him his *mother tongue*, which he now spoke *as natural as life*, though, when she took him under her care, he could say nothing but some heathenish kind o' sounds, which nobody could mak any more sense o', than it was possible to do out o' the yammerin' o' an infant o' six months old."

As the orphan grew up, he became noted as the liveliest boy in the neighbourhood. He was the tallest of his age, and the most fearless. About three years after Peter Thornton had taken him under his protection, he sent him to school. But, lively as the orphan Christopher May was (for so we shall now call him), he by now means showed an aptness to learn. For five years, and he never rose higher than the middle of the class. The teacher was often wroth with the thoughtlessness of his pupil; and in his displeasure said—"It is nonsense, sirrah, to say that ye was ever a Spaniard. There is something like sense and stability o' character about the people o' Spain; but you—ye're a Frenchman!—a thoughtless, dancing, settle-to-nothing fool. Or, if ever ye were a Spaniard, ye belong to the family o' Don Quixote; his name would be found in the catalogue o' your great-grandfathers." Even Peter Thornton, though no scholar, was grieved when the teacher called upon him, and complained of the giddiness of his adopted son, and of the little progress which he made under his care.

"Christie, ye rascal ye," said Peter, stamping his foot, "what news are these your master tells o' ye? He says he's ashamed o' ye, and that ye'll never learn."

But even for his thoughtlessness, the kind heart of Jenny found an excuse.

"Dear me, gudeman," said she, "I wonder to hear the maister and ye talk; I am surprised that both o' ye haena mair sense. Do ye not tak into consideration that the bairn is learning in a foreign

language? Had his mother lived, he would hae spoken Spanish; and how can ye expect him to be as glib at the Scottish language as those that were learned—born I may say—to speak it from the breast?”

“True, Jenny,” answered Peter sagely, “I wasna thinking o’ that; but there may be something in’t. Maister,” added he, addressing the teacher, “ye mustna, therefore, be owre hard wi’ the laddie. He is a fine bairn, though he may be dull—and dull I canna think it possible he could be, if he would determine to learn.”

Christopher, however, was as wild on the playground as he was dull and thoughtless in the school-room. Every person admired the happy-hearted orphan. Good Jenny Thornton said that he had been a great comfort to her; and that all the care she had taken over him was more than repaid by the kindness and gratitude of his heart. They were evident in all he said, and all that he did. Peter also loved the boy; he said “Kit was an excellent laddie—for his part, indeed, he never saw his equal. He had now brought him up for nine years, and he could safely say that he never had occasion to raise a hand to him—indeed, he did not remember the time that ever he had had occasion to speak an angry word to him; and he declared that he should inherit all that he possessed, as though he had been his own son.”

Mrs. Thornton often showed to him the rings which had been taken from his mother’s fingers, with the inscriptions thereon; and on such occasions she would say—“Weel do I remember, hinny, when our

gudeman came running into the house one morning, shaking as though he had seen an apparition at midnight, and crying to me, quite out o' breath—' Rise—rise, Jenny!—here is the dead body o' a woman in our stackyard!' I canna tell ye what my feelings were when he said so. I wished not to believe him. But had I wakened, and found myself in a grave, I could not have gotten a greater fright. My heart louped to my throat, just as if it had gotten a sudden jirk with a person's whole might and strength! I dinna ken how I got my gown thrown on, for my teeth were chattering in my head—I shaked like a 'natomy! And when we did get to the stackyard, there was ye, like a dear wee lammie, mourning owre the breast o' yer dead mother, wi' yer bits o' handies pulling impatiently at her bonny black hair, kissing her cold lips, or pulling her by the gown, and crying and uttering words which we didna understand. And, oh, hinny, but your mother had been a weel-faured woman in her day!—I never saw her but a cold corpse, and I thought, even then, that I had never looked upon a bonnier face. She had evidently been a genteel person, but was sore, sore dejected. But she had two rings upon her fingers; one of them was a ring such as married women wear, the other was set wi' precious stones, which those who have seen them say, none but a duchess in this country could wear. Ye must examine them." And here Mrs. Thornton was in the habit of producing the rings which she had carefully locked away, wrapped up in twenty folds of paper, and secured in a housewife which folded together within

all. Then she would point out to him the initial letters, the C. F. and the M. V., and would add, "That has been your father and your mother's name when they were sweethearts—at least so our Peter says (and he is seldom wrong); but the little *e t* between them—I canna think what it stands for. O Christopher, my canny laddie, it is a pity but that ye would only endeavour to be a scholar, as ye are good otherwise, and then ye might be able to tell what the *e t* means. Who kens but it may throw some light upon your parentage; for, if ever ye discover who your parents were, it will be through the instrumentality o' these rings. Peter always says that (and, as I say, he is seldom wrong), and therefore I always keep them locked away, lest onything should come owre them; and when they are out o' the drawer, I never suffer them to be out o' my sight."

In the fulness of her heart Mrs. Thornton told this story at least four times in the year, almost in the same words, and always exhibiting the rings. Her kindly counsels, and the cogent reasons which she urged to Christopher why he should become a scholar, at length awoke his slumbering energies. For the first time, he stood dux of his class, and once there, he stood like a nail driven into a wall, which might not be removed. His teacher, who was a man of considerable knowledge and reading (though perhaps not what those calling themselves *learned* would call a man of *learning*—for *learned* is a very vague word, and is as frequently applied where real ignorance exists, as to real knowledge),—that teacher who had

formerly said that Christopher could not be a Spaniard, because that he had not solidity enough within him, now said that he believed he was one, and not a descendant of Don Quixote, but, if anybody, a descendant of *him* who gave the immortal Don "a local habitation and a name"; for he now predicted Christopher May would be a genius.

But though the orphan at length rose to the head of his class, and though he passed from one class to another, he was still the same wild, boisterous, and daring boy, when they ran shouting from the school, cap in hand, and waving it over their heads, like prisoners relieved from confinement. If there was a quarrel to decide in the whole school, the orphan Christopher was the umpire. If a weak boy, or a cowardly boy, was threatened by another, Christopher became his champion. If a sparrow's nest was to be robbed, to achieve which a tottering gable was to be climbed, he did the deed; yea, or when a football match was to be played on Fastern E'en (or, as it was there called, Pancake Tuesday), if the orphan once got the ball at his foot, no man could again touch it.

His birthday was not known; but he could scarce have completed his thirteenth year when his best friend died. Good, kind-hearted Jenny Thornton—than whom a better woman never breathed—was gathered with the dead; and her last request to her husband was, that he would continue to be the friend and protector of the poor orphan, and especially that he would take care of the rings which had been found upon his mother's hand. Now, Peter was so over-

whelmed with grief at the idea of being parted from her who, for ten years, had been dearer to him than his own existence, that he could scarce hear her dying words. He followed her coffin like a broken-hearted man; and he sobbed over her grave like a weaned child on the lap of its mother. But many months had not passed when it was evident that the orphan Christopher was the only sincere mourner for Jenny Thornton. The widower was still in the prime and strength of his days, being not more than two and forty. He was a prosperous man—one who had had a cheap farm and a good one; and it was believed that Peter was able to purchase the land which he rented. Many, indeed, said that the tenant was a better man than his master—by a “better man” meaning a richer man.

Fair maidens, therefore, and widows to boot, were anxious to obtain the vacant hand of the wealthy widower. Some said that Peter would never forget Jenny, and that he would never marry again, for that she had been to him a wife amongst a thousand; and they spoke of the bitterness of his grief.

“Ay,” said others, “but we ne’er like to see the tears run owre fast down the cheeks of a man. They show that the heart will soon drown its sorrow. Human nature is very frail; and a thing that we thought we would love *for ever* last year, we find that we only *occasionally remember* that we loved it this. If there be a real mourner for the loss of Mrs. Thornton, it’s the poor, foreign orphan laddie. Peter, notwithstanding all his greeting at the grave, will get another wife before twelve months go round.”

They who said so were in the right. Poor Jenny had not been in her grave eleven months and twenty days, when Peter led another Mrs. Thornton from the altar. When he had brought her home, he introduced to her the orphan Christopher.

“Now dear,” said he, “here is a laddie—none know whom he belongs to. I found him one morning, when he was a mere infant, screaming on the breast o’ his dead mother. Since then I have brought him up. My late wife was very fond o’ him—so, indeed was I; and it is my request that ye will be kind to him. Here,” added he, “are two rings which his mother had upon her fingers when I found her a cold corpse. Poor fellow, if anything ever enable him to discover who his parents were, it will be them, though there is but little chance that he ever will. However, I have been as a faither to him for more than ten years; and I trust, love, that ye will act towards him as a mother. Come forward, Christopher,” continued he, “and welcome your new mother.”

The boy came forward hanging his head, and bashfully stretched out his hand towards her; but the new-made Mrs. Thornton had his mother’s jewelled ring in her hand, and she observed him not. He stood with his eyes now bent upon the ground, now upon her, and again upon his mother’s ring, as she turned it round and round.

“Well,” said she, addressing her husband, and still turning it round as she spoke, “It is, indeed, a beautiful ring—a very beautiful ring!”

“I am glad ye think so,” said he; “she had been a bonny woman that wore it.”

She placed the ring upon her finger, she turned it round again, and gazed on it with admiration. "I should like to wear such a ring," she added.

"Why, hinny, and ye may wear it," said Peter; "for the ring is mine twenty times owre, whatever its value may be, considering what I have done for the laddie."

With an expression of countenance which might be described as something between a smile and a blush, or, as the people north the Tweed very aptly express it, with a "*smirk*," she slipped the ring upon her finger, saying that it fitted as well as though it had been made for her.

Passion flashed in the eyes of the orphan. His "new mother," as Peter styled her, had done what poor Jenny never ventured to do. He withdrew his hand which he had extended to greet her; and he was turning away sullenly, when his foster-father said, "Stop, Christopher, ye must not go away until ye have shaken hands with your mother. And he turned again, and once more extended to her his hand.

"Well," said she, addressing her husband, and putting forth two of her fingers to Christopher, "is it really possible that you have brought up this great boy? What a trouble he must have been—and expense too!"

"Oh, you are quite mistaken," said Peter; "Christopher never cost us the smallest trouble. I have been proud of him and pleased with him, since ever I took him under my roof; and, poor fellow, as to the expense that he has cost me, if I never had

seen his face I wouldna hae been a penny richer to-day, but very possibly poorer ; for he has very often amused me wi' his drollery, and keepit me in the house, when, but for him, I would have been down at Ponteland, or somewhere else, getting a glass wi' my neighbours."

Many weeks had not elapsed ere Christopher discovered that this protector who was dead had been succeeded by a living persecutor. A month had not passed when he was not permitted to enter the room where the second Mrs. Thornton sat. Before two went round, he was ordered to take his meals with the servants ; and he could do nothing with which a fault was not found. He had often, after scraping his shoes for five minutes together, to take them off and examine them, before he durst venture into the passage leading to the kitchen, which was now the only apartment in the house to which he had access.

Peter Thornton beheld the persecution which his adopted son endured ; and he expostulated with his better half, that she would treat him more kindly. But she answered him that he might have children enough of his own to provide for, without becoming a father to those of other people. Now, a stripling that is in love, generally says and does many foolish things which he does not wish to have recalled to his recollection after he has turned thirty ; but the middle-aged man who is so smitten, invariably acts much more foolishly than the stripling. I have smiled to see them combing up their few remaining locks, to cover their bald forehead, or carefully pulling away the gray hairs which appeared about their temples,

and all to appear young in the eyes of some widowed or matronly divinity. I do not exactly agree with the poet who says—

“ Love never strikes but once, that strikes at all ” ;

for I think, from nineteen to five and twenty, there are few men (or women either) who have not felt a particular sensation about their hearts which they took to be love, and felt it more than once too, and which ultimately would have become love but for particular circumstances which broke off the acquaintanceship ; and, before five and thirty, we forget that such a feeling had existed, and laugh at, or profess to have no patience with, those who are its victims. We should always remember, however, that it is not easy to put an old head upon young shoulders, and think of how we once felt and acted ourselves ; and to recollect, also, how happy, how miserable, we were in those days. Love is an abused word. Elderly people turn up their nostrils when they see it in print. They will hardly read a book where the word occurs. They will fling it away, and cry “ Stuff ! ” But, if they would look back upon their days of old, they would treat it with more respect. But the second love of your middle-aged men and women—call it *doting*, or call it by any other name, but do not call it love, for that it is not, and cannot be. Man never knows what love is, until he has experienced the worth of an affectionate wife, who for his sake would suffer all that the world's ills can inflict.

Now, Peter Thornton, though not an old man, and although his first wife had certainly been dear unto

him, yet he had a doting fondness for his second spouse, who obtained an ascendancy over him, and, to his surprise, left him no longer master of his own house.

But she bore to him a son ; and, after the birth of the child, his care over Christopher every day diminished. The orphan was given over to persecution—the hand of every one was raised against him ; and, finding that he had now no one to whom he could apply for redress, he lifted up his own hand in his defence. The serving-maids who ill-treated him, soon found him more than their equal ; and to the men-servants, when they used him roughly, he shook his head, threatening that he would soon be a match for them.

The coldness which Mrs. Thornton had at first manifested towards him, soon relapsed into perfect hatred. He was taken from the school ; and she hourly forced upon him the most menial offices. For hours together he was doomed to rock the cradle of her child, and was sure of being beaten the moment it awoke. Nor was this all—but when friends visited her, poor Christopher was compelled to wait at the table, at which he had once sat by the side of Jenny Thornton, and whoever might be the guests, he was first served. She even provoked her husband, until he lifted his hand and struck the orphan violently—forgetting the proverb, that “they should have light hands who strike other people’s bairns.” The boy looked upbraidingly in Peter’s face as he struck him for the first time, though he uttered no complaint ; but that very look whispered to his heart, “What

would Jenny have said had she seen this?" And Peter, repenting of what he did, turned away and wept. Yet a sin that is once committed is less difficult to commit again, and remorse becomes as an echo that is sinking faint. Having, therefore, once lifted his hand against the orphan—though he then wept for having done so—it was not long until the blows were repeated without compunction.

Christopher, however, was a strange boy,—perhaps what some would call a provoking one,—and often, when Mrs. Thornton pursued him from the house to chastise him, he would hastily climb upon the tops of the houses of the farm-servants, and sitting astride upon them, nod down to her triumphantly, as with threats she shook her hand in his face; and, smiling, sing—

“Loudon’s bonny woods and braes.”

But his favourite song on such occasions was the following, which, if it be not the exact words that he sang, embodies the sentiment—

Can I forget the woody braes
Where love and innocence foregather;
Where aft, in early summer days,
I’ve crooned a sang amang the heather?
Can I forget my father’s hearth—
My mother by the ingle spinnin’—
Their weel-pleased look to see the mirth
O’ a’ their bairnies round them rinnin’?

It was a waefu’ hour to me,
When I frae them an’ love departed:
The tear was in my mother’s ee—
My father blessed me—broken-hearted;

My aulder brithers took my hand,
 The younkers a' ran frae me greetin' !
 But, waur than this—I couldna stand
 My faithfu' lassie's farewell meetin' !

Can I forget her parting kiss,
 Her last fond look and true love token?
 Forget an hour sae dear as this !
 Forget !—the word shall ne'er be spoken !
 Forget !—na, though the foamin' sea,
 High hills and mony a sweepin' river,
 May lie between their hearth an' me,
 My heart shall be at hame for ever.

Now, when Christopher was pursued by his persecutor, he sought refuge on the house-tops, sitting upon them much after the fashion of a tailor, and carolling the song we have just quoted most merrily. Many, indeed, wondered that he, never having known the hearth of either a father or a mother, should have sung such a song ; but it was so, and the orphan delighted to sing it. Yet we often do many things for which we find it difficult to assign a reason. There was one amusing trait in the character of Christopher, and that was, that the more vehemently Mrs. Thornton scolded him, and the more bitter her imprecations against him became, so while he sat as a tailor on the house-top did his song wax louder and more loud, and his strain become merrier. We have heard women talk of being ready to eat the nails from their fingers with vexation ; and on such occasions Mrs. Thornton was so. But her anger did not amend the disposition of Christopher, though it often drew down upon him the indignation of her husband.

It has already been mentioned that he struck him

once ; and, having done so, he felt no repugnance to do it frequently. For it is only the first time that we commit a sin that we have the horror of its commission before us. The orphan now became like unto Ishmael ; for every man's hand was against him, and I might say every woman's too. Now, during the lifetime of Jenny, he had had everything his own way, and whatsoever he said was done ; some said that he was a spoiled child, and it was at least evident that his humour was never thwarted. This caused him to have the more enemies now ; and every menial on the farm of Peter Thornton became his persecutor. It is the common fate of all favourites—to-day they are treated with abject adulation, and to-morrow, if the sun which shone on them be clouded, no one thinks himself too low to look on them with disdain.

For more than three years Christopher's life became a scene of continued martyrdom. He was now, however, a tall and powerful young man of seventeen ; and many who had been in the habit of raising their hands against him, found it discreet to do so no more. But Mrs. Thornton was not of this number ; she found some cause to lift her hand and strike the orphan as often as he came into her presence. Even Peter, kind as he once had been, treated him almost as cruelly as his wife. It was not that he disliked him as she did ; but she had soured and fretted his disposition ; and, unconsciously to himself, from being the orphan's friend, he became his terror and tormentor.

But one day, when the violence of Mrs. Thornton far exceeded the bounds of endurance, Christopher

turned upon her, and, with the revenge of a Spaniard glistening in his eyes, grasped her by the throat. She screamed aloud for help, and her husband and the farm-servants rushed to her assistance.

“Back! back!” exclaimed Christopher—“woman, give me the rings! give me the rings!—they are mine, they were my mother’s.”

Peter sprang forward and grasped hold of him.

“Touch me not!” exclaimed the orphan; “I will be your slave no longer! Give me the rings—my mother’s rings!”

Peter stood aghast at the manner of the boy. His every look, his every action, bespoke desperation. He thrust his clenched hand towards Mr. Thornton, exclaiming, “Touch me not—the rings are mine—I will have them.”

“The meikle mischief confound ye!” exclaimed Peter, with a look of half fear and bewilderment, “what in a’ the world is the matter wi’ ye, Christopher?—is the laddie out o’ his head?”

“The rings! my mother’s rings!” cried the orphan; and, as he spoke, he grasped more violently the hand of Mrs. Thornton.”

“The like o’ that,” said Peter, “I never saw in my existence. In my opinion, the laddie is no in his right judgment.”

But Christopher tore the rings from the hands of Mrs. Thornton, exclaiming, “Farewell! farewell!”

“The like o’ that,” said Peter, in amazement, holding up his hands; “the laddie is surely daft!—follow him, some o’ ye!”

Mrs. Thornton sank down in hysterics. Her

husband endeavoured to soothe and restore her, and the men-servants followed Christopher. But it was an idle task. No one had rivalled him in speed of foot, and they could not overtake him.

“The time will come,” he cried, as he ran, “when Peter Thornton will repent his conduct towards me. Follow me not, for the first who shall lay a hand upon me shall die.”

The farm-servants who pursued him were awed by his manner; and after following him about a mile, turned back.

“Where can the laddie have gone to?” said Peter; “he never took ony o’ these fits in Jenny’s time. I hope, wife, that ye have done nothing to him that ye ought not to have done.”

“Me done to him!” she cried—“ye will bring up your beggars, and this is your reward.”

“Mrs. Thornton,” answered he, “I am amazed and astonished to behold this conduct in Christopher. For more than a dozen years he has been an inmate beneath my roof; seldom have I had to quarrel him, and never until you became my wife.”

The words between Peter and his better half grew loud and angry; but, instead of describing their matrimonial altercations, we shall follow the orphan Christopher.

But before accompanying him in his flight from the house of Peter Thornton, we shall go back a few years, and take up another part of his history.

There resided in the neighbourhood in which Christopher had been brought up one George Wilkinson, who had a daughter named Jessie. Christopher and

Jessie were schoolmates together; and when the other children ran hallooing from the school, they walked together, whispering, smiling at each other. It was strange that affection should have sprung up in such young hearts. But it was so.

Christopher became the one absorbing thought upon which the mind of Jessie dwelt; and she became the day-dream of his being. She was comparatively a child when he left the house of his foster-father—so was he; yet, although they became thus early parted, they forgot not each other. Young as she was, Jessie Wilkinson, lay on her bed and wept for the sake of poor Christopher. They indeed might be said to be but the tears of a child; yet they were tears which we can shed but once. Young as Jessie was, Christopher became the dream of her future existence. She remembered the happy days that they had passed together when the hawthorn was in blossom, or the bean was in the bloom, when they loitered together, side by side, and the air was pregnant with fragrance, while his hand would touch hers, and he would say "Jessie!" and look in her face and wonder what he meant to have said; and she would answer him, "Christopher!" Still did those days haunt the recollection of the simple girl; and as she grew in years and stature, his remembrance became the more entwined around her heart. When she had reached the age of womanhood, other wooers offered her their hand; but she thought of the boy that had first loved her; and to him her memory clung, as the evening dawn falleth on the hills. Her father was but a poor man; and when

many perceived the liking which Christopher May, the adopted son and supposed heir of the rich Peter Thornton, entertained for her, they said that nothing, or, at least no good, would proceed from their acquaintance. But they who so said did not truly judge of the heart of Jessie. She was one of those who can love but once, and that once must be for ever. In their early childhood, Christopher had become a part of her earliest affection, and she now found it impossible to forget him, or shake his remembrance from her bosom. It was certainly a girl's love, and elderly people will laugh at it; but why should they laugh? Had they the feelings which they once cherished—the feelings which were once dearest to them—the feelings without which they believed they could not exist?—and wherefore could they blame poor Jessie for remembering what they had forgot?

Many years passed, and no one heard of Christopher. Even Peter Thornton knew nothing of where he was, or what had become of him—the child of his adoption was lost to him. He heard his neighbours upbraid him with having treated the boy with cruelty; and Peter's heart was troubled. He reflected upon his wife for her conduct towards the orphan, and it gave rise to bickerings between them.

Hitherto we have spoken of the unknown orphan; we must now speak of an unknown soldier. At the battle of Salamanca, amongst the men who there distinguished themselves, there was a young sergeant, whose feats of valour attracted the notice of his superiors. Where the battle raged fiercest, there were

the effects of his arm made visible ; his impetuosity over all his enemies had attracted the notice of his superior officers. But in the moment of victory, when the streets were lined with dead, the young hero fell, covered with bayonet wounds. A field-officer, who had been an observer of his conduct, ordered a party of his men to attempt his rescue. The life of the young hero was long despaired of ; and when he recovered, several officers, in admiration of his courage, agreed to present him with a sword. It was beautifully ornamented, and bore the inscription—

“ Presented to Christopher May, sergeant in the — regiment of infantry, by several officers who were witnesses of the heroism he displayed at the battle of Salamanca.”

The sword was presented to him at the head of his regiment, and the officer who placed it in his hand addressed him, saying : “ Young soldier, the gallant bearing which you exhibited at Salamanca has excited the admiration of all who beheld it. The officers of your own regiment, therefore, and others, have deemed it their duty to present you with this sword, as a reward of merit, and a testimony of the admiration with which your heroism has inspired them. I have now the gratification of placing it in the hands of a brave man. Take it, and if your parents yet live, it will be a trophy of which they will be proud, and which your posterity will exhibit with admiration.”

“ My parents ! ” said the young soldier, with a sigh ; “ alas, sir ! I never knew one whom I could

call by the endearing name of father or of mother. I am an orphan—an unknown one. I believe I am not even an Englishman, but a native of the land for the freedom of which we now fight !”

“You are a Spaniard !” said the officer with surprise ; “it is impossible—neither your name nor features bespeak you to belong to this nation. But you say that you never knew your parents—what know you of your history ?”

“Little, indeed,” he replied ; and as he spoke, the officers gathered around him, and he continued : “I have been told that in the month of May, four and twenty years ago, the dead body of a woman was found in a farm-yard, about fifteen miles north of Newcastle. She was dressed in Spanish costume, and a child of about three years of age hung weeping on her bosom. I was that child ; and I have been told that the few words I could then lisp were Spanish. The kind-hearted wife of the honest Northumbrian who found me brought me up as her own child, and while she lived, I might almost have said I had a mother. But at her death, I found, indeed, that I had neither parent, kindred, nor country, but that I was in truth what some called me in derision—‘*The Unknown.*’ I entered the army, and have fought in defence of the land to which I believe I belong. This only do I know of my history, or of who or what I am.”

While the young sergeant spoke, every eye was bent upon him interestedly ; but there was one who was moved even to tears. He was an officer of middle age, named Major Ferguson. He

approached the gallant youth, and gazed earnestly in his face.

“You say that you were about three years old,” he said, “when you were found clinging to the breast of your mother: have you no remembrance of her—no recollection of the name by which you were then called?”

“None! none!” answered the other. “I sometimes fancy that, as the vague remembrance of a dream, I recollect clinging round my mother’s neck, and kissing her cold lips; but whether it indeed be remembrance, or merely the tale that has been often told me, I am uncertain. I often imagine, also, that her beautiful features yet live in my memory, though with the indistinctness of an ethereal being—like a vapour that is dying away on the far horizon; and I am uncertain also whether the fair vision that haunts me be indeed a dim remembrance of what my mother was, or a creation of my brain.”

The interest of the scene was heightened by the resemblance which Major Ferguson and the young sergeant bore to each other. All observed it—all expressed their surprise—and the Major in his turn began his tale.

“Your features, young man,” said he, “and your story, have drawn tears to the eyes of an old soldier. Thirty years ago I was in this country, and became an inmate in the house of a rich merchant in Madrid. His name was Valdez, and he had an only daughter called Maria. When I first beheld her, she was about nineteen, and a being more beautiful I had never seen—I have not seen. Affection sprang up

between us ; for it was impossible to look on her and not love. Her father, though he at first expressed some opposition to our wishes, on the ground of my being a Protestant, at length gave his consent, and Maria became my wife. For several months our happiness was a dream—as a summer sky where there is no cloud. But our days of felicity were of short continuance. We have all heard of the revengeful disposition of the Spanish people, and it was our lot to be its victims. I have said that it was impossible to look upon the face of Maria, and not love ; and many of the grandees and wealthiest citizens of Madrid sought her hand. Amongst the former was a nephew of an Inquisitor. He vowed to have his revenge—and he has had it. In the dead of night, a band of ruffians burst into the bed-chamber of Maria's father, and dragged him to the dungeons of the Inquisition. For several weeks we could find out nothing of what had become of him ; but his property was seized and confiscated, as though he had been a common felon. My wife was then the mother of an infant son, and I endeavoured to effect our concealment, until an opportunity of escaping to England might be found. We had approached within a hundred yards of the vessel, when a band of armed men rushed upon us. They overpowered me ; and while one party bore away my wife and child, others dragged me into a carriage, one holding a pistol to my breast, while another tied a bandage over my eyes. They continued to drive with furious rapidity for about six hours, when I was torn from the carriage, and dragged, between the ruffians, through numer-

ous winding passages. I heard the grating of locks, and the creaking of bolts, as they proceeded. Door succeeded door, groaning on their unwilling hinges, as they ascended stairs, and descended others, in an interminable labyrinth. Still the men who hurried me onward maintained a sullen silence; and no sound was heard, save the clashing of prison doors, and the sepulchral echo of their footsteps ringing through the surrounding dungeons. They at length stopped. A cord, suspended from a block in the roof, was fastened round my waist; and when one, turning a sort of windlass, which communicated with the other end of the cord, raised me several feet from the ground, his comrade drew a knife, and cut asunder the fastenings that bound my arms. While one, holding the handle of the machine, kept me hanging in the air, other two applied a key to a large square stone in the floor, which, aided by a spring, they with some difficulty raised, and revealed a yawning opening to a dungeon, yet deeper and more dismal than that which formed its entrance. The moment my hands were at liberty, I tore the bandage from my eyes, and perceiving, through the aid of a dim lamp that flickered in a corner of the vault, the horror of my situation, I struggled in desperation. But my threatenings and my groans were answered only by their hollow echoes, or the more dismal laughter of my assassins.

“‘Down! down!’ vociferated both voices to their companion, as the stone was raised; and, in a moment, I was plunged to the dark mouth of the dungeon. I uttered a cry of agony, louder and longer than the

rest ; and, as my body sunk into the abyss, I clutched its edge in despair. One of the ruffians sprang forward, and, blaspheming as he raised his foot, dashed his iron heels upon my fingers. Mine was the grasp of a dying man ; and, thrusting forward my right hand, I seized the ankle of the monster, who, attempting to kick me in the face, with my left I strengthened my hold, and my body plunging downward with the movement, dragged after me the wretch, who, uttering a piercing shriek, as his head dashed on the brink of the fearful dungeon, his weight wrested him from my grasp, and with an imprecation on his tongue he was plunged headlong into darkness, many fathoms deep. Startled by the cry of his comrade, the other sprang from the machine by which he was lowering me into the vault ; and I in consequence descended with the violence of a stone driven from a strong arm. But, before I reached the bottom, the cord by which I was hung was expended, and I swung in torture between the sides of the dungeon. In this state of agony I remained for several minutes, till one of the miscreants cutting the rope, I fell with my face upon the bloody and mangled body of their accomplice ; and the huge stone was placed over us, enveloping both in darkness, solid and substantial as the pit of wrath itself.

“ A paralysing feeling of horror and surprise, and the violence with which I fell upon the mangled body of my victim, for a time deprived me of all consciousness of my situation ; nor was it until the convulsive groans of the bleeding wretch beneath me recalled me in some measure to a sense of other miseries than my own, that a remembrance of the past, and a

feeling of the present, opened upon my mind, like the confused terror of a dismal dream. I rose slowly to my feet, and, disengaging myself from the rope by which I was suspended into the vault, endeavoured to look around the walls of my prison-house ; but all was dark as the grave. Recollecting the part sustained in seizing me by the wounded man, who still groaned and writhed at my feet, I darted fiercely upon him ; and hurling him from the ground, exclaimed, ‘Villain ! tell me or die !—where am I ? or by whom am I brought here ?’ A loud, long yell of terror, accompanied by violent and despairing struggles, like a wild beast tearing from the paws of a lion, was the only answer returned by the miserable being. And as the piteous and heart-piercing yell rang round the cavern, and its echoes, multiplying in darkness, at length died away, leaving silence more dolorous than ourselves, I felt as a man from the midst of a marriage-feast, suddenly thrust into the cells of Bedlam ; where, instead of the music of the harp and the lute, was the shriek and the clanking chains of insanity ; for bridal ornaments, the mad-man’s straw ; and for the gay dance, the convulsions of the maniac, and the sorrowful gestures of idiocy. Every feeling of indignation passed away—my blood grew cold—the skin moved upon my flesh—I again laid the wretched man on the damp earth, and fearfully groped to the opposite side of the dungeon.

“As I moved around, feeling through the dense darkness of my prison, I found it a vast square, its sides composed merely of the rude strata of earth or rock ; and measuring nearly six times the length of

my extended arms. As often as I moved, bones seemed to crackle beneath my feet; and a noise, like the falling of armour and the sounding of steel, accompanied the crumbling fragments. Once I stooped to ascertain the cause, and raising a heavy body, a part of it fell with a loud, hollow crash among my feet, leaving the lighter portion in my hands. It was a round bony substance, covered, and partly filled, with damp, cold dust. I was neither superstitious nor a coward; but, as I drew my hand around it, my body quivered, the hair upon my head moved, and my heart felt heavy. It was the form of a human skull. The damp dust had once been the temple of a living soul. My fingers entered the sockets of the eyes—the teeth fell in my hands—and the still fresh and dewy hair twined around it. I shuddered—it fell from my hands—the chill of death passed over me. The horrid conviction that I was immured in a living grave absorbed every other feeling; and smiting my brow in horror, I threw myself, with a groan, amidst the dead of other years.

“I again sprang to my feet, with the undetermined and confused wildness of despair. The mournful howlings of the assassin continued to render the horrid sepulchre still more horrible, and gave to its darkness a deeper ghostliness. Dead to every emotion of sympathy, stricken with dismal realities, and more terrible imaginations, yet burning for revenge, directed by the howlings of the miserable man, and hesitating to distinguish between them and their incessant echoes, stretching my hands before me, I again approached him, to extort a confession of the

cause and place of my imprisonment, or rather living burial. Vainly I raised him from the ground—threatening, soothing, and expostulation were alike unavailing. On hearing my voice, the miserable being shrieked with redoubled bitterness, plunged furiously, and gnashed his teeth, fastening them, in the extremity of his frenzy, in his own flesh. His fierce agony recalled to my bosom an emotion of pity; and, for a moment, forgetful of my own injuries and condition, I thought only of relieving his suffering; but my presence seemed to add new madness to his tortures; and he tore himself from my hold with the lamentable yells of a tormented mastiff, and the strength of a giant who, in the last throes of expiring nature, grapples with his conqueror. He reeled wildly a few paces, and fell, with a crash, upon the earth.

“Slowly and dismally the hours moved on, with no sound to measure their progress, save the audible beating of my own heart, and the death-like howling moan of my companion. As I leaned against the wall, counting these dismal divisions of time, which appeared thus fearfully to mete out the duration of my existence, through the black darkness, whose weight had become oppressive to my eyeballs, I beheld, far above me, on the opposite wall, a faint shadow, like the ghost of light, streaking its side, but so indistinct and imperfect, I knew not whether it was fancy or reality. With the earnestness of death, my eyes remained fixed on the ‘gloomy light’; and it threw into my bosom a hope dim as itself. Again I doubted its existence—deemed it a creation of my

brain; and groping along the damp floor, where my hand seemed passing over the ribs of a skeleton, I threw a loose fragment in the air, towards the point from whence the doubted glimmering proceeded; and perceived, for a moment, as it fell, the shadow of a substance. Then, springing forward to the spot, I gasped to inhale, with its feeble ray, one breath that was not agony.

“Thirst burned my lips, and, to cool them, they were pressed against the damp walls of the prison; but my tongue was still dry—my throat parched—and hunger began to prey upon me. While thus suffering, a faint light streamed from a narrow opening in the roof of the vault. Slowly a feeble lamp was lowered through the aperture, and descended within two or three feet of my head. A small basket, containing a portion of bread and a pitcher of water, suspended by a cord, was let down into the vault. I seized the pitcher, as I would have rushed upon liberty; and raising it to my lips, as the pure, grateful beverage allayed the fever of my thirst, I shed a solitary tear, and, in the midst of my misery, that tear was a tear of joy—like the morning-star gilding the horizon, when the surrounding heavens are wrapped in tempest. With it the feelings of the Christian and the man met in my bosom; and, bending over my fellow-sufferer, I applied the water to his lips. The poor wretch devoured the draught to its last drop with greediness.

“The presence and the unceasing groans of my companion—yea, the dungeon and darkness themselves—were forgotten in the one deadening and

bitter idea, that my wife and child were also captives, and in the power of ruffians. If any other thought was indulged a moment, it was longing for liberty, that I might fly to their rescue—and it was then only that I became again sensible of captivity; and my eyes once more sought the dubious gleam that stretched fitfully across the wall, becoming more evident to perception as I became inured to the surrounding blackness. Hope burned and brightened, as I traced the source of its dreamy shadows; and from thence weaved plans of escape, which, in the calculation of fancy, were already as performed; though, before reason and common possibilities, they would have perished as the dewy nets that, with the damps of an autumnal morning, overspread the hawthorn with their spangled lacework, and, before the rising sunbeam, shrink into nothing.

“But gradually my grief and despair subsided, and gave place to the cheering influence of hope, and the resolution of attempting my escape; and I rose to eat the bread and drink the water of captivity, to strengthen me for the task. For many hours, the presence of my companion had been forgotten; he still continued to howl, as one whom the horrors of an accusing conscience were withholding from the grasp of death; and I, roused from the reverie of my feelings and projects at the sound of his sufferings, hastened to apply water and morsels of bread to the lips of my perishing fellow-prisoner; for bread and water had been lowered into the vault.

“In order to carry my plan of escape into effect,

for the first time, aided by the lamp that was suspended over me, I gazed inquisitively, and with a feeling of dismay, around the Golgotha in which I was immured. There lay my hideous companion, the foam of pain and insanity gurgling from his mouth; beside him the skeleton of a mailed warrior, and around, the uncoffined bones of four others, partly covered with their armour, and

‘The brands yet rusted in their bony hands.’

“Although prepared for such a scene, I placed my hands before my eyes, shuddering at the thought of becoming as one of those—of being their companion while I lived—of lying down by the side of a skeleton to die! The horror of the idea fired anew my resolution, and added more than human strength to my arm. I again eagerly sought the direction of the doubtful gleam, which formerly filled me with hope; and was convinced that from thence an opening might be effected, if not to perfect liberty, to a sight of the blessed light of heaven, where freedom, I dreaded not, would easily be found. Filled with determination, which no obstacle could impede, I took one of the swords, which had lain by the side of its owner, untouched for ages, and with this instrument commenced the laborious and seemingly impossible task, of cutting out a flight of steps in the rude wall, and thereby gain the invisible aperture, from which something like light was seen to emanate. The ray proceeded from an extreme angle of the dungeon, and apparently at its utmost height. The materials on which I had to work were chiefly a hard

granite rock, and other lighter, but scarce more manageable strata.

“Several anxious and miserable weeks thus passed in sluggish succession. Half of my task was accomplished; and hope, with impatience, looked forward to its completion. I still divided my scanty meals with my companion, who, although recovered from the bruises occasioned by his fall, was become more horrible and fiend-like than before. As his body resumed its functions, his mind became the terrible imaginings of a guilty conscience. He had either lost or forgotten the power of walking upright, and prowled, howling around the dungeon on his hands and feet; while his dark bushy beard, and revolting aspect, gave him more the manner and appearance of a wild beast than a human being.

“Our portion of food being barely sufficient for the sustenance of one, hunger had long been added to the list of our sufferings; but particularly to those of the maniac. And, with the cunning peculiar to such unfortunates, he watched the return of the basket, which was daily lowered with provisions, and frequently before I—who, absorbed in the completion of my task, forgot or heeded not my jailer’s being within hearing—could descend to the ground, he would grasp the basket, swallow off the water at a draught, and hurry with the bread to a corner of the dungeon, thus leaving me without food for the next twenty-four hours.

“It was at the period when I had half completed my object that my companion, springing, as was his wont, upon the basket, before I could approach to

withhold him, I perceived he had drained off the contents of a goblet, in which a few drops of a dark coloured liquor still remained; and the pitcher of water was untouched. The wretched maniac had swallowed the draught but a few minutes, when, rolling himself together, his screams and contortions became more frightful than before, and increasing in virulence for an hour, he lay motionless a few seconds, gasping for breath; and springing suddenly to his feet, he gazed wistfully above and around him, with a look of extreme agony, and exclaiming, 'Heaven help me!' he rushed fiercely towards the wall in the opposite direction to where I was attempting to effect my escape, gave one furious pull at what appeared the solid rock, and with a groan, fell back and expired.

"When the horror occasioned by his death in some degree abated, the singularity of the manner in which he tore at the wall of the dungeon fixed my attention; and with almost frantic joy I perceived that a portion of the hitherto thought impenetrable rock had yielded several inches to his dying grasp. I hastily removed the body, and pulling eagerly at the unloosed fragment, it fell upon the ground, a rough unhewn lump of granite, leaving an opening of about two feet square in the rude rocky wall, from which it was so cut as to seem to feeling, and almost appearance, a solid part of it.

"My task was now abandoned. The gleam of light, which for weeks was to me an object of such intense interest, proceeded from a mere hairbreadth cleft in the rock. Taking up a sword which lay upon the ground, I drew my body into the aperture formed

by the removal of the piece of rock ; and creeping slowly on my hands and knees, groping with the weapon before me, I at length found the winding and dismal passage sufficiently lofty to permit me to stand erect. I seemed enveloped in an interminable cavern, now opening into spacious chambers, clothed with crystal ; again losing itself in low passages, or narrow chinks of the rock, and suddenly terminating in a slippery precipice, beneath which gurgling waters were heard to run. Hours and hours passed ; still I was groping onward, when I suddenly found my hopes cut off by the interposition of a precipice. I probed fearfully forward with the sword, but all was an unsubstantial void ; I drew it on each side, and there it met but the solid walls. I knelt, and reached down the sword to the length of my arm, but it touched nothing. In agony I dropped the weapon, by its sound to ascertain the depth, and, delighted, found it did not exceed eight or ten feet. I cautiously slid down, and groping around, again placed my hand upon the sword. Though my heart occasionally sank within me, yet the overcoming of each difficulty lent its inspiring aid to overcome its successor. Often every hope appeared extinct. Now I ascended, or again descended the dropping and crystallized rocks ; now crept into openings, which suddenly terminated, and turning again, anxiously listened to the sound of the rippling water as my only guide. Often, in spite of every precaution, I was stunned with a blow from the abrupt lowness of the roof, or suddenly plunged to the arms in the numerous pools, whose waters had been dark from their birth.

“Language cannot convey an idea of the accumulating horrors of my situation. Struggling with suffocation, with a feeling more awful than terror, and with despair, the agony of darkness must be *experienced* to be imagined.

“Still I moved on; and suddenly, when ready to sink wearied, fainting, hopeless, the glorious light of day streamed upon my sight. I bounded forward with a wild shout; but the magnificent sun, bursting from the eastern heavens, blinded my unaccustomed gaze.

“I again found that I was free—but my wife!—my child!—where were they? It was many years before that I learned that the nephew of the Inquisitor who had sought her hand, having died, she regained her liberty, and fled with our infant son to Scotland, to seek the home of her lost husband. Since then I have never heard of them again.”

When the Major had thus concluded his narrative—“Here,” said Christopher, “are two rings which were taken from the fingers of my mother—both bear inscriptions.”

The old officer gazed upon them. “They were hers—my Maria’s,” he exclaimed; “I myself placed them upon her fingers! Son of my Maria, thou art mine!”

The Major purchased a commission for his long-lost son; and when peace was proclaimed throughout Europe, they returned to Old Scotland together, where Christopher gave his sword as a memorial to his foster-father, Peter Thornton, and his hand to Jessie Wilkinson.

THE RESCUE.

MR. ROBERT BRUCE, originally descended from some branch of the ancient family of that name, was born, in humble circumstances, about the close of the last century, at Dumfries, in the south of Scotland, and was bred up to a seafaring life.

When about thirty years of age, to wit, in the year 1828, he was first mate on a bark trading between Liverpool and St. John's, New Brunswick.

On one of her voyages bound westward, being then some five or six weeks out, and having neared the eastern portion of the banks of Newfoundland, the captain and mate had been on deck at noon, taking an observation of the sun; after which they both descended to calculate their day's work.

The cabin, a small one, was immediately at the stern of the vessel, and the short stairway descending to it ran athwart-ships. Immediately opposite to this stairway, just beyond a small square landing, was the mate's state-room; and from that landing there were two doors, close to each other, the one opening aft into the cabin, the other, fronting the stairway, into the state-room. The desk in the state-room was in the forward part of it, close to the door; so that any one sitting at it and looking over his shoulder could see into the cabin.

The mate, absorbed in his calculation, which did

not result as he expected, varying considerably from the dead-reckoning, had not noticed the captain's motions. When he had completed his calculations, he called out, without looking round, "I make our latitude and longitude, so and so. Can that be right? How is yours?"

Receiving no reply, he repeated his question, glancing over his shoulder and perceiving, as he thought, the captain busy writing on his slate. Still no answer. Thereupon he rose; and, as he fronted the cabin-door, the figure he had mistaken for the captain raised its head and disclosed to the astonished mate the features of an entire stranger.

Bruce was no coward; but, as he met that fixed gaze looking directly at him in grave silence, and became assured that it was no one whom he had ever seen before, it was too much for him; and, instead of stopping to question the seeming intruder, he rushed upon deck in such evident alarm that it instantly attracted the captain's attention. "Why, Mr. Bruce," said the latter, "what in the world is the matter with you?"

"The matter, sir? Who is that at your desk?"

"No one that I know of."

"But there *is*, sir; there's a stranger there."

"A stranger! Why, man, you must be dreaming. You must have seen the steward there, or the second mate. Who else would venture down without orders?"

"But, sir, he was sitting in your arm-chair, fronting the door, writing on your slate. Then he looked up full in my face; and, if ever I saw a man plainly and distinctly in this world, I saw him."

“Him! Whom?”

“God knows, sir; I don’t. I saw a man, and a man I had never seen in my life before.”

“You must be going crazy, Mr. Bruce. A stranger, and we nearly six weeks out!”

“I know, sir; but then I saw him.”

“Go down and see who it is.”

Bruce hesitated. “I never was a believer in ghosts,” he said; “but, if the truth must be told, sir, I’d rather not face it alone.”

“Come, come, man. Go down at once, and don’t make a fool of yourself before the crew.”

“I hope you’ve always found me willing to do what’s reasonable,” Bruce replied, changing colour; “but if it’s all the same to you, sir, I’d rather we should both go down together.”

The captain descended the stairs, and the mate followed him. Nobody in the cabin! They examined the state-rooms. Not a soul to be found!

“Well, Mr. Bruce,” said the captain, “did not I tell you you had been dreaming?”

“It’s all very well to say so, sir; but if I didn’t see that man writing on your slate, may I never see my home and family again!”

“Ah! writing on the slate! Then it should be there still.” And the captain took it up.

“By God,” he exclaimed, “here’s something, sure enough! Is that your writing, Mr. Bruce?”

The mate took the slate; and there, in plain, legible characters, stood the words, “STEER TO THE NOR’-WEST.”

“Have you been trifling with me, sir?” added the captain, in a stern manner.

“On my word as a man and as a sailor, sir,” replied Bruce, “I know no more of this matter than you do. I have told you the exact truth.”

The captain sat down at his desk, the slate before him, in deep thought. At last, turning the slate over and pushing it toward Bruce, he said, “Write down, ‘Steer to the nor’west.’”

The mate complied; and the captain, after narrowly comparing the two handwritings, said, “Mr. Bruce, go and tell the second mate to come down here.”

He came; and, at the captain’s request, he also wrote the same words. So did the steward. So, in succession, did every man of the crew who could write at all. But not one of the various hands resembled, in any degree, the mysterious writing.

When the crew retired, the captain sat deep in thought. “Could any one have been stowed away?” at last he said. “The ship must be searched; and if I don’t find the fellow, he must be a good hand at hide-and-seek. Order up all hands.”

Every nook and corner of the vessel, from stem to stern, was thoroughly searched, and that with all the eagerness of excited curiosity,—for the report had gone out that a stranger had shown himself on board; but not a living soul beyond the crew and the officers was found.

Returning to the cabin after their fruitless search, “Mr. Bruce,” said the captain, “what the devil do you make of all this?”

“Can’t tell, sir. *I* saw the man write; *you* see the writing. There must be something in it.”

“Well, it would seem so. We have the wind free, and I have a great mind to keep her away and see what will come of it.”

“I surely would, sir, if I were in your place. It’s only a few hours lost, at the worst.”

“Well, we’ll see. Go on deck and give the course nor’west. And, Mr. Bruce,” he added, as the mate rose to go, “have a look-out aloft, and let it be a hand you can depend on.”

His orders were obeyed. About three o’clock the look-out reported an iceberg nearly ahead, and, shortly after, what he thought was a vessel of some kind close to it.

As they approached, the captain’s glass disclosed the fact that it was a dismantled ship apparently frozen to the ice, and with a good many human beings on it. Shortly after, they hove to, and sent out the boats to the relief of the sufferers.

It proved to be a vessel from Quebec, bound to Liverpool, with passengers on board. She had got entangled in the ice, and finally frozen fast, and had passed several weeks in a most critical situation. She was stove, her decks swept,—in fact, a mere wreck; all her provisions and almost all her water gone. Her crew and passengers had lost all hopes of being saved, and their gratitude for the unexpected rescue was proportionately great.

As one of the men who had been brought away in the third boat that had reached the wreck was ascending the ship’s side, the mate, catching a glimpse of his

face, started back in consternation. It was the very face he had seen, three or four hours before, looking up at him from the captain's desk.

At first he tried to persuade himself it might be fancy ; but the more he examined the man the more sure he became that he was right. Not only the face, but the person and the dress, exactly corresponded.

As soon as the exhausted crew and famished passengers were cared for, and the bark on her course again, the mate called the captain aside. "It seems that was not a ghost I saw to-day, sir ; the man's alive."

"What do you mean ? Who's alive ?"

"Why, sir, one of the passengers we have just saved is the same man I saw writing on your slate at noon. I would swear to it in a court of justice."

"Upon my word, Mr. Bruce," replied the captain, "this gets more and more singular. Let us go and see this man."

They found him in conversation with the captain of the rescued ship. They both came forward, and expressed, in the warmest terms, their gratitude for deliverance from a horrible fate,—slow-coming death by exposure and starvation.

The captain replied that he had but done what he was certain they would have done for him under the same circumstances, and asked them both to step down into the cabin. Then, turning to the passenger, he said, "I hope, sir, you will not think I am trifling with you ; but I would be much obliged to you if you would write a few words on this slate." And he handed him the slate, with that side up on which the mysterious writing was not. "I will do anything

you ask," replied the passenger; "but what shall I write?"

"A few words are all I want. Suppose you write, 'Steer to the nor'west.'"

The passenger, evidently puzzled to make out the motive for such a request, complied, however, with a smile. The captain took up the slate and examined it closely; then, stepping aside so as to conceal the slate from the passenger, he turned it over, and gave it to him again with the other side up.

"You say that is your handwriting?" said he.

"I need not say so," rejoined the other, looking at it, "for you saw me write it."

"And this?" said the captain, turning the slate over.

The man looked first at one writing, then at the other, quite confounded. At last, "What is the meaning of this?" said he. "I only wrote one of these. Who wrote the other?"

"That's more than I can tell you, sir. My mate here says you wrote it, sitting at this desk, at noon to-day."

The captain of the wreck and the passenger looked at each other, exchanging glances of intelligence and surprise; and the former asked the latter, "Did you dream that you wrote on this slate?"

"No, sir, not that I remember."

"You speak of dreaming," said the captain of the bark. "What was this gentleman about at noon to-day?"

"Captain," rejoined the other, "the whole thing is most mysterious and extraordinary; and I had

intended to speak to you about it as soon as we got a little quiet. This gentleman" (pointing to the passenger), "being much exhausted, fell into a heavy sleep, or what seemed such, some time before noon. After an hour or more he awoke, and said to me, 'Captain, we shall be relieved this very day.' When I asked him what reason he had for saying so, he replied that he had dreamed that he was on board a bark, and that she was coming to our rescue. He described her appearance and rig; and, to our utter astonishment, when your vessel hove in sight, she corresponded exactly to his description of her. We had not put much faith in what he said; yet still we hoped there might be something in it, for drowning men, you know, will catch at straws. As it has turned out, I cannot doubt that it was all arranged, in some incomprehensible way, by an overruling Providence, so that we might be saved. To Him be all thanks for His goodness to us."

"There is not a doubt," rejoined the other captain, "that the writing on the slate, let it have come there as it may, saved all your lives. I was steering at the time considerably south of west, and I altered my course to nor'west, and had a look-out aloft, to see what would come of it. But you say," he added, turning to the passenger, "that you did not dream of writing on a slate?"

"No, sir. I have no recollection whatever of doing so. I got the impression that the bark I saw in my dream was coming to rescue us; but *how* that impression came, I cannot tell. There is another very strange thing about it," he added. "Every

thing here on board seems to me quite familiar ; yet I am very sure I never was in your vessel before. It is all a puzzle to me. What did your mate see ?”

Thereupon Mr. Bruce related to them all the circumstances above detailed. The conclusion they finally arrived at was, that it was a special interposition of Providence to save them from what seemed a hopeless fate.

The above narrative was communicated to me by Captain J. S. Clarke, of the schooner *Julia Hallock*, who had it directly from Mr. Bruce himself. They sailed together for seventeen months, in the years 1836 and 1837 ; so that Captain Clarke had the story from the mate about eight years after the occurrence. He has since lost sight of him, and does not know whether he is yet alive. All he has heard of him since they were shipmates is, that he continued to trade to New Brunswick, that he became the master of the brig *Comet*, and that she was lost.

I asked Captain Clarke if he knew Bruce well, and what sort of man he was.

“ As truthful and straightforward a man,” he replied, “ as ever I met in all my life. We were as intimate as brothers ; and two men can’t be together, shut up for seventeen months in the same ship, without getting to know whether they can trust one another’s word or not. He always spoke of the circumstance in terms of reverence, as of an incident that seemed to bring him nearer to God and to another world. I’d stake my life upon it that he told me no lie.”

THE WITCH OF LAGGAN.

BY W. GRANT STEWART.

THE most formidable of all the powers conferred on a witch consists in the torture and destruction of human beings by infernal machination. There are various processes by which those hellish practices are accomplished, but the most common process is that invented and used by that eminent and distinguished witch, "*Crea Mhoir cun Drochdair*," who was burnt and worried at a stake at Inverness, about two centuries ago, for bewitching and keeping in torment the body of the Provost's son. Crea made an effigy of clay and other hellish ingredients, into which she stuck pins and other sharp instruments. This effigy of the Provost's son she placed on a spit at a large fire, and by these cantrips the hag communicated such agonizing torments to the young gentleman, that he must have had speedily fallen a victim to his sufferings, had it not been for the happy discovery made by means of a little grandchild of Crea Mhoir's, who divulged the whole secret to a little companion, for the small gratification of a piece of bread and cheese. But although Crea, honest woman, was long ago disposed of, to the great comfort and satisfaction of her countrymen, who naturally enough ascribed to her all the calamities which happened in the country during her lifetime, she left behind her the immortal fruits of her genius, for the benefit of her black

posterity, in those mischievous inventions practised by the witches of latter times, who understand the knack of torturing their unhappy contemporaries in all its branches, as exemplified in the cases of several worthies noticed in the sequel.

The next important power of a witch and a warlock consists in their control over air and water, whereby they raise most dreadful storms and hurricanes by sea and by land, and thus accomplish the destruction of many a valuable life, which otherwise might have been long spared. The following account of the loss of a most excellent gentleman exhibits too melancholy an instance of the success of their experiments in this way :—

“John Garve Macgillichallum of Razay was an ancient hero of great celebrity. Distinguished in the age in which he lived for the gallantry of his exploits, he has often been selected by the bard as the theme of his poems and songs. Alongst with a constitution of body naturally vigorous and powerful, Razay was gifted with all those noble qualities of the mind which a true hero is supposed to possess. And what reflected additional lustre on his character, was that he never failed to apply his talents and powers to the best uses. He was the active and inexorable enemy of the weird sisterhood, many of whom he was the auspicious instrument of sending to their ‘black inheritance’ much sooner than they either expected or desired. It was not therefore to be supposed, that, while those amiable actions endeared Razay to all good people, they were at all calculated to win him the regard of those infernal hags to whom he was so deadly a foe. As might be naturally expected,

they cherished towards him the most implacable thirst of revenge, and sought, with unremitting vigilance, for an opportunity of quenching it. That such an opportunity did unhappily occur, and that the meditated revenge of these hags was too well accomplished, will speedily appear from this melancholy story.

“It happened upon a time that Razay and a number of friends planned an expedition to the island of Lewis, for the purpose of hunting the deer of that place. They accordingly embarked on board the chieftain’s yacht, manned by the flower of the young men of Razay, and in a few hours they chased the fleet-bounding hart on the mountains of Lewis. Their sport proved excellent. Hart after hart, and hind after hind, were soon levelled to the ground by the unerring hand of Razay; and when night terminated the chase, they retired to their shooting quarters, where they spent the night with joviality and mirth, little dreaming of their melancholy fate in the morning.

“In the morning of next day, the chief of Razay and his followers rose with the sun, with the view of returning to Razay. The day was squally and occasionally boisterous, and the billows raged with great violence. But Razay was determined to cross the channel to his residence, and ordered his yacht to prepare for the voyage. The more cautious and less courageous of his suite, however, urged on him to defer the expedition till the weather should somewhat settle,—an advice which Razay, with a courage which knew no fear, rejected, and expressed his firm determination to proceed without delay. Probably

with a view to inspire his company with the necessary degree of courage to induce them all to concur in the undertaking, he adjourned with them to the ferry-house, where they had recourse to that supporter of spirits under every trial, the usquebaugh, a few bottles of which added vastly to the resolution of the company. Just as the party were disputing the practicability of the proposed adventure, an old woman, with wrinkled front, bending on a crutch, entered the ferry-house; and Razay, in the heat of argument, appealed to the old woman, whether the passage of the channel on such a day was not perfectly practicable and free from danger. The woman, without hesitation, replied in the affirmative, adding such observations, reflecting on their courage, as immediately silenced every opposition to the voyage; and, accordingly the whole party embarked in the yacht for Razay. But, alas! what were the consequences? No sooner were they abandoned to the mercy of the waves than the elements seemed to conspire to their destruction. All attempts to put back the vessel proved unavailing, and she was speedily driven out before the wind in the direction of Razay. The heroic chieftain laboured hard to animate his company, and to dispel the despair which began to seize them, by the most exemplary courage and resolution. He took charge of the helm, and in spite of the combined efforts of the sea, wind, and lightning, he kept the vessel steadily on her course towards the lofty point of Aird, in Skye. The drooping spirits of his crew began to revive, and hope began to smile upon them,—when lo! to their great astonishment, a large

cat was seen to climb the rigging. This cat was soon followed by another of equal size, and the last by a successor, until at length the shrouds, masts, and whole tackle were actually covered with them. Nor did the sight of all those cats, although he knew well enough their real character, intimidate the resolute Razay, until a large black cat, larger than any of the rest, appeared on the mast-head, as commander-in-chief of the whole legion. Razay, on observing him, instantly foresaw the result; he, however, determined to sell his life as dearly as possible, and immediately commanded an attack upon the cats; but, alas! it soon proved abortive. With a simultaneous effort the cats overturned the vessel on her leeward wale, and every soul on board was precipitated into a watery grave. Thus ended the glorious life of *Jan Garbh Macgillichallum* of Razay, to the lasting regret of the brave clan Leod and all good people, and to the great satisfaction of the abominable witches who thus accomplished his lamentable doom.

“The same day, another hero, celebrated for his hatred of witchcraft, was warming himself in his hunting hut, in the forest of Gaick, in Badenoch. His faithful hounds, fatigued with the morning chase, lay stretched on the turf by his side,—his gun, that would not miss, reclined in the neuk of the bothy,—the *skian dhu* of the sharp edge hung by his side, and these alone constituted his company. As the hunter sat listening to the howling storm as it whistled by, there entered at the door an apparently poor weather-beaten cat, shivering with cold, and

drenched to the skin. On observing her, the hairs of the dogs became erected bristles, and they immediately rose to attack the pitiable cat, which stood trembling at the door. 'Great hunter of the hills,' exclaims the poor-looking trembling cat, 'I claim your protection. I know your hatred to my craft, and perhaps it is just. Still spare, O spare a poor jaded wretch, who thus flies to you for protection from the cruelty and oppression of her sisterhood.' Moved to compassion by her eloquent address, and disdaining to take advantage of his greatest enemy in such a seemingly forlorn situation, he pacified his infuriated dogs, and desired her to come forward to the fire and warm herself. 'Nay,' says she, 'in the first place, you will please bind with this long hair those two furious hounds of yours, for I am afraid they will tear my poor hams to pieces. I pray you, therefore, my dear sir, that you would have the goodness to bind them together by the necks with this long hair.' But the curious nature of the hair induced the hunter to dissemble a little. Instead of having bound his dogs with it, as he pretended, he threw it across a beam of wood which connected the couple of the bothy. The witch then, supposing the dogs securely bound, approached the fire, and squatted herself down as if to dry herself. She had not sitten many minutes, when the hunter could easily discover a striking increase in her size, which he could not forbear remarking in a jocular manner to herself. 'A bad death to you, you nasty beast,' says the hunter; 'you are getting very large.' 'Ay, ay,' replied the cat equally jocosely, 'as my hairs

imbibe the heat, they naturally expand.' These jokes, however, were but a prelude to a more serious conversation. The cat still continuing her growth, had at length attained a most extraordinary size,—when, in the twinkling of an eye, she transformed herself into her proper likeness of the Goodwife of Laggan, and thus addressed him: 'Hunter of the Hills, your hour of reckoning is arrived. Behold me before you, the avowed champion of my devoted sisterhood, of whom Macgillichallum of Razay and you were always the most relentless enemies. But Razay is no more. His last breath is fled. He lies a lifeless corpse on the bottom of the main; and now, Hunter of the Hills, it is your turn.' With these words, assuming a most hideous and terrific appearance, she made a spring at the hunter. The two dogs, which she supposed securely bound by the infernal hair, sprung at her in her turn, and a most furious conflict ensued. The witch, thus unexpectedly attacked by the dogs, now began to repent of her temerity. '*Fasten, hair, fasten,*' she perpetually exclaimed, supposing the dogs to have been bound by the hair; and so effectually did the hair *fasten*, according to her order, that it at last snapt the beam in twain. At length, finding herself completely overpowered, she attempted a retreat, but so closely were the hounds fastened in her breasts, that it was with no small difficulty she could get herself disengaged from them. Screaming and shrieking, the Wife of Laggan dragged herself out of the house, trailing after the dogs, which were fastened in her so closely, that they never loosed

their hold until she demolished every tooth in their heads. Then metamorphosing herself into the likeness of a raven, she fled over the mountains in the direction of her home. The two faithful dogs, bleeding and exhausted, returned to their master, and, in the act of carressing his hand, both fell down and expired at his feet. Regretting their loss with a sorrow only known to the parent who weeps over the remains of departed children, he buried his devoted dogs, and returned home to his family. His wife was not in the house when he arrived, but she soon made her appearance. 'Where have you been, my love?' inquired the husband. 'Indeed,' replies she, 'I have been seeing the Goodwife of Laggan, who has been just seized with so severe an illness, that she is not expected to live for any time.' 'Ay! ay!' says he, 'what is the matter with the worthy woman?' 'She was all day absent in the moss at her peats,' replies the wife, 'and was seized with a sudden colic, in consequence of getting wet feet; and now all her friends and neighbours are expecting her demission.' 'Poor woman,' says the husband, 'I am sorry for her. Get me some dinner; it will be right that I should go and see her also.' Dinner being provided and despatched, the hunter immediately proceeded to the house of Laggan, where he found a great assemblage of neighbours mourning, with great sincerity, the approaching decease of a woman whom they all had hitherto esteemed virtuous. The hunter, walking up to the sick woman's bed in a rage, proportioned to the greatness of its cause, stripped the sick woman of all her coverings. A

shriek from the now exposed witch brought all the company around her. 'Behold,' says he, 'the object of your solicitude, who is nothing less than an infernal witch. To-day, she informs me, she was present at the death of the Laird of Razay, and only a few hours have elapsed since she attempted to make me share his fate. This night, however, she shall expiate her crime, by the forfeiture of her horrid life.' Relating to the company the whole circumstances of her attack upon him, which were too well corroborated by the conclusive marks she bore on her person, the whole company were perfectly convinced of her criminality; and the customary punishment was about to be inflicted on her, when the miserable wretch addressed them as follows: 'My ill-requited friends, spare an old acquaintance, already in the agonies of death, from any further mortal degradation. My crimes and my folly now stare me in the face, in their true colours; while my vile and perfidious seducer, the enemy of your temporal and spiritual interests, only laughs at me in my distress; and, as a reward for my fidelity to his interest, in seducing every thing that was amiable, and in destroying every thing that was good, he is now about to consign my soul to eternal misery. Let my example be a warning to all the people of the earth to shun the fatal rock on which I have split; and as a strong inducement for them to do so, I shall atone for my iniquity to the utmost of my ability, by detailing to you the awful history of my life.' Here the Wife of Laggan detailed at full length the way she was seduced into the service of the Evil One,—all the criminal adventures

in which she had been engaged, and ended with a particular account of the death of Macgillichallum of Razay, and her attack upon the hunter, and then expired.

“Meanwhile, a neighbour of the Wife of Laggan was returning home late at night from Strathdearn, where he had been upon some business, and had just entered the dreary forest of Monalea, in Badenoch, when he met a woman dressed in black, who ran with great speed, and inquired of the traveller, with great agitation, how far she was distant from the churchyard of Dalarossie, and if she could be there by twelve o’clock. The traveller told her she might, if she continued to go at the same pace that she did then. She then fled alongst the road, uttering the most desponding lamentations, and the traveller continued his road to Badenoch. He had not, however, walked many miles when he met a large black dog, which travelled past him with much velocity, as if upon the scent of a track or footsteps; and soon after he met another large black dog sweeping along in the same manner. The last dog, however, was scarcely past, when he met a stout black man on a fine fleet black courser, prancing along in the same direction after the dogs. ‘Pray,’ says the rider to the traveller, ‘did you meet a woman as you came along the hill?’ The traveller replied in the affirmative. ‘And did you meet a dog soon after?’ rejoined the rider. The traveller replied he did. ‘And,’ added the rider, ‘do you think the dog will overtake her ere she can reach the church of Dalarossie?’ ‘He will, at any rate, be very close upon her heels,’

answered the traveller. Each then took his own way. But before the traveller had got the length of Glenbanchar, the rider overtook him on his return, with the foresaid woman before him across the bow of his saddle, and one of the dogs fixed in her breast, and another in her thigh. 'Where did you overtake the woman?' inquired the traveller. 'Just as she was entering the churchyard of Dalarossie,' was his reply. On the traveller's return home, he heard of the fate of the unfortunate Wife of Laggan, which soon explained the nature of the company he had met on the road. It was, no doubt, the spirit of the Wife of Laggan flying for protection from the infernal spirits (to whom she had sold herself), to the churchyard of Dalarossie, which is so sacred a place, that a witch is immediately dissolved from all her ties with Satan, on making a pilgrimage to it, either dead or alive. But it seems the unhappy Wife of Laggan was a stage too late."

ALLAN MACTAVISH'S FISHING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THREE NIGHTS IN A LIFETIME."

IN a secluded nook of one of the wildest and most solitary parts of the Argyllshire coast, where it is washed by the Atlantic waters, there stood, some thirty years ago, the cottage of a Highland fisherman, whom we shall name Allan MacTavish. Its appearance was nearer that of the neat and carefully kept abodes of the peasantry on a Lowland gentleman's estate, than the slovenly hut of a northern fisherman. Some pains had been taken to form a little garden beside it, at the sheltering foot of the cliff; and these pains—screened as it was from all high winds, even from those blowing off the sea, at least in ordinary weather—had been attended with considerable success. Everything around the door was kept in extreme order; and the narrow strip of grass on which the sand had not encroached, served as a little bleaching-green to the fisherman's young and lovely Lowland wife, on which she was often to be seen spreading out her clothes, with her baby laid upon the grass beside her, while awaiting the return of her husband from his fishing; at which time it was her usual custom to repair to the beach, in order to assist him in carrying up his nets to the house.

Margaret Weir, the young wife of Allan, loved her

husband with a depth and intensity of affection which had led her to do as she had done—to violate filial duty for his sake ; but which could not teach her to forget the fault she had committed, or the parent whom she had deserted ; and the consciousness of her disobedience was with her in her happiest hour, to sink her heart as with a weight of lead. She was the only child of a wealthy farmer, originally from Ayrshire, who had come during his daughter's childhood, immediately after the death of his wife, to settle in Stirlingshire, not far from the Bridge of Allan. Andrew Weir was one of those who still retain, almost in all their original strictness, the peculiar tenets and ideas of the Cameronians, of whom there are many to be found at the present day in the wild and lonely districts of the south-western part of Scotland. His notions of family discipline, and of strict seclusion from those who held a different doctrine from his own, were extremely rigid ; yet, notwithstanding these, the affection which he had borne his daughter was very great, — nor had the harmony subsisting between them ever experienced any interruption, until the arrival of Allan MacTavish near their place of residence ; and his subsequent acquaintance with Margaret, first broke in upon the calm tenor of her life, by introducing sensations to which her heart had never before been awakened. The intimacy of his daughter with the young Highlander had continued for a considerable time ere Andrew Weir became aware of it ; for Margaret knew her father's prejudices too well to dare make him acquainted with her lover. It came to his knowledge

by accident, and his anger was proportionably great. In common with many of his countrymen, Andrew entertained an extreme dislike to Highlanders, which dislike, in the present instance, received tenfold confirmation from the circumstance of MacTavish being a Catholic. He would have considered himself as signing the warrant for his daughter's eternal perdition, had he not instantly forbidden all intercourse between them.

At this juncture, Allan's foster-brother died, and left him a small legacy; but with his death, at the same time ceased all the reasons for Allan's remaining absent from his own country. He contrived an interview with Margaret ere he should depart. It is needless to linger on an oft-told tale. The struggle between filial affection and all-powerful love in the heart of the unsophisticated girl, was severe and long continued; while the religious feelings in which she had been educated, contributed to swell the amount of reluctance and of terror with which she contemplated the step to which she was urged. But love at last prevailed. Margaret fled from her father's house with her lover. They instantly proceeded to Edinburgh, where they were married by a Catholic priest; and then sought the lonely solitudes of Allan's old Argyllshire mountains. But Margaret—so strict had been the filial obedience in which she was brought up, so severe the religious faith of her youth—could not find happiness the portion of her married life notwithstanding all the kindness of her husband, the loveliness of her infant, and the peacefulness of her home. The image of her gray-haired father going

down in his sorrow to a lonely grave, mourning, in bitterness of heart the sin and the falling-away of his only child, was ever before her eyes. She concealed from her husband the remorse which embittered her happiness ; but often, when his boat was on the sea, and she was alone in her little dwelling with her infant,—not a sight or a sound of a human being near,—nothing but the sea birds screaming from the cliffs, and the sea making wild music to their song, as it plashed and roared against the rocks that shut out the cove from the world—often at such an hour, would Margaret look back to the image of the cheerful farm-house in the green sunny holm by Allan water ;—to the blazing ingle, by whose side stood her old father's chair,—to the venerable form of that now forsaken father, as he opened “ the big Ha' Bible,” to begin the evening worship ; while she sat by his side, and the farm-servants formed a circle around. Alas ! her accustomed seat was empty now. The name of the undutiful daughter was heard no more in the dwelling of her childhood. Had she indeed still a father ? or had her guilty desertion not broken his heart, and sent him to a death-bed which no filial hand had smoothed ? Then would she press her baby to her heart, while the tears of bitter and fruitless repentance fell on its innocent face, and pray to God that her sin might not be visited on it ; nor be punished in her own person by a like instance of ingratitude in her own child. The return of her beloved husband might for a time dispel these miserable thoughts ; but still they came again when he left her—sometimes even when he was by her side. And

when, as often happened, his boat was out in rough and tempestuous weather, the anxiety and the terror of poor Margaret were indeed terrible. She seemed ever haunted by some mysterious dread of punishment through the means of her warmest affections—her husband or her child.

There came a bright sunny day in April, when the sun set calmly and cloudlessly, leaving a long train of light over the sea. Allan MacTavish went to his bed at sunset, bidding his wife awake him at eleven at night. It would be high tide in about an hour after that time, when his boat would be most easily floated off; and he, in company with the fishermen who lived in the neighbouring cottages, farther along the coast, were then to depart upon their expedition. Margaret determined accordingly to sit up until that hour, in order to obviate any danger of not waking in proper time, had she laid down to sleep. But as the night darkened in, and all became stillness and silence in the cottage, an unwonted drowsiness crept over her; in spite of all her efforts, her eyes closed—thoughts wavered before her mind in confusion and shapeless forms, till they gradually melted away into dreams; and leaning her head upon a chair beside the low stool on which she had seated herself, she sank into a profound sleep.

When at last she opened her eyes, which was with a sudden start, she perceived her husband standing on the floor, and nearly dressed. Casting her eyes towards a silver watch (the gift of Allan's foster-brother), which hung upon the wall, she perceived by the fire-light that it was after eleven; and hastily rose from her

seat, in that confusion of ideas which attends a hurried awakening from sleep.

"Margaret, dear," said her husband kindly, "what for did ye stay out of bed? I never knew it till I wakened, and saw ye sleeping there."

"Have I no' been i' my bed?" exclaimed Margaret, as she looked around her. "Ou, ay, I mind it a' noo. I just fell asleep sittin' aside the fire. An', Allan, whar are ye gaun e'en noo?"

"Where am I gaun?" returned Allan. "Where would I be gaun? Ye'er no awake yet, Margaret, dear. I'm for the boat, lass."

"The boat!" almost shrieked Margaret, as the recollection seemed to rush upon her; "the boat! Oh no, Allan, ye maunna' gang the nicht! No the nicht, Allan. Ye maunna gang!"

"Not gang to-night!" exclaimed he in astonishment. "And what for no?—I must gang in half an hour's time. And gang ye to your bed, hinny, and tak' a sleep."

"Oh, Allan," said Margaret, bursting into tears, "be guided by me, and tak' na' the boat the nicht, or we'se a' rue it."

"What's the matter, Margaret?" anxiously inquired he. "What's pitten that in yer head?"

"I had a dream e'en now, Allan," sobbed Margaret, "that warned me no to let ye gang. I fell asleep, and I dreamed that I was sittin' here, i' the ingle-neuk, an' on a sudden the door opened, and my auld faither cam' ben, and stood afore me; there whaur you're stannin', Allan. An' I thocht he leukit gey an' sternways at me; an' says he, 'Margaret,' says he, 'tell

your husband to bide at hame the nicht, and no gang to the fishin', or ye'll maybe rue it when ye canna' mend it.' And wi' that he turned roun', and gaed awa' again, or ever I had pooser to speak till him ; an' I startit up, and waukenet wi' the fricht. But do, Allan!" and Margarèt again burst into a flood of weeping : " it's na' for nocht that I've seen the auld man this nicht. Be ruled by the warnin' he gied me, and dinna gang to the fishin'."

" Hoots, bairn," exclaimed her husband, " your father liked na' me. It was mair like he wad warn ye no' to let me gang, to hinder me from some good than from ill. No, no, Margaret dear, gang I must, this night."

Margaret again wept, wrung her hands, and implored her husband not to go. But superstitious as every Highlander is, on this night it appeared that his wife's mysterious dream made no impression upon Allan MacTavish. His spirits, on the contrary, had seldom seemed so high or so excited. He led Margaret to the door ;—showed her the calm, clear sky, brilliant with stars, and the full spring-tide coming so tranquilly into the little bay ;—asked her with a kiss, if this were a night to let a dream frighten him from his fishing ; and without awaiting further remonstrance, strode to the place where his boat was moored ; and as he pushed it from the shore, turned his head, once more to utter a light and laughing farewell. " Gang to your bed, my bonny Peggy," he said, " and be up belyve the morn, to see the grand boat-load o' fish that I'll bring ye back."

Margaret stood upon the shore and watched his boat

as it doubled the headland, until, through the darkness, her straining eye could no longer discern it; heedless the while of the still advancing tide, that now laved her feet. She dried her tears, and looked up to the calm heaven, where not a cloud obscured the dark-blue bosom of night; till at last, half reassured by her husband's cheerful anticipations, half cheered by the serene aspect of the weather, she returned to the cottage, and after commending him in a fervent prayer to the protection of Heaven, she replenished the fire with peats, and lay down beside her child, where in a short time she fell into a tranquil sleep.

How long Margaret had slept she knew not; but it could not have been very long, for, except the fitful flashes of the fire-light, all was darkness in the cottage, when she was suddenly awakened by a loud and prolonged sound. She started up in bed, and listened, in an agony of apprehension that almost froze the blood in her veins. It was no dream,—no delusion,—she distinctly heard the loud wild howling of the awakened blast, raging overhead as though it would tear off the very roof of the cottage, and scatter it in its fury. She had sunk to sleep when all was stillness on earth and in heaven. She woke to a tumult as awful, as though all the winds had at once been set free from their cave, and despatched to waste their wrath upon the vexed bosom of the sea. But, deeper and more awful than the winds, there came another sound—the raging of the waters, as they rose in their might, and dashed themselves with a loud booming roar upon the cliffs. Margaret sprang from her bed, and, undressed as she was, rushed to the cottage door. The

instant she raised the latch, the force of the tempest dashed it open against the wall. She looked out into the night. A pitchy darkness now brooded over all things; every star seemed blotted from the face of heaven; but dimly through the gloom she could descry the white crests of the waves, as they surged and lashed the beach within a few yards of the cottage door. The tide had risen to a height almost unexampled on that coast, beneath the influence of a vernal storm; it had far overpassed its usual limits within the Cove of Craignavarroch; and on the rocks, beyond which it could not go, it was breaking high,—high overhead,—with a noise like thunder. Never was change in the weather more sudden and more complete. Margaret stood for a minute in speechless horror and dismay; then, rushing back into the cottage, she fell upon her knees, and held up her hands to heaven. “Lord God!” she exclaimed—“have mercy! have mercy!” She could not utter another word. She hid her face in her hands, and sobbed in agony.

Still the tempest raged, and the waves roared on. Margaret dressed herself, and carefully covered her infant, whose sweet sleep was unbroken by the fearful tumult. Again she went to the door, and stood, looking into the night, regardless of the wind, which drove a heavy rain against her face. She strained her ears to distinguish some sound,—some cry,—amid the pauses of the hurricane. As well might she have striven to distinguish the low music of the woodland bird, as the wildest shriek that ever broke from the lips of despair and anguish, in the midst of an uproar of the elements like that

through which she had dreamt of hearing it. But those from whom that sound must have come, were far—far beyond where her ear could catch their voices.

She closed the door, returned into the room, and knelt down again on the floor, burying her face and closing her ears, as if to shut out the noise of the tempest; while her whole frame shook with the gasping sobs which brought no tears to relieve her; and at every fresh howl of the blast, she shuddered and her limbs shrank closer together. She tried to pray,—but the words died upon her lips. She could not speak;—she could not even think;—she only felt as though she were all one nerve—one thrilling nerve—quivering beneath repeated and torturing pangs.

On a sudden the wind sunk,—completely sunk. For the space of three minutes there was not a breath heard to blow. Margaret raised her head, and listened. All was still. She was about to spring from the ground, when back—back it came again,—the hideous burst—the roaring bellow of the augmented hurricane, as though it had gained strength and fierceness from its brief repose! Back it came—shaking the very cottage walls, and rattling the door and little window as though it would burst them open; and Margaret flung herself forward again with a wild shriek, and clasped her hands over her ears again, to deaden the sound.

Then she started from the ground, as a thought struck her, which seemed to bring some faint gleam of hope. “I kenna whan the storm began,” said

she to herself. "He may never hae won farrer nor the houses ayont the craigs yonder ;—or they mae hae pitten back in time to get ashore there ; and he'll be bidin' the mornin's licht, and the fa'in' o' the wind, or he come back here again. Oh ay, that'll just be it ! Surely—surely that'll be it," she repeated, as if to assure herself of the truth of what she said. She took down the watch frain the nail on which it hung, and looked at it by the fire-light. The hand pointed to half-past two. "Oh ! will it never be day ?—will it never be licht again ?" she exclaimed as she replaced it, "that I may win yont the craigs, and see gin he be there." She went again to the door. All was darkness still, and wild uproar without. No gleam of light to announce the far distant dawn. A fresh burst of wind drove her back. "Oh !" she exclaimed, wringing her hands ; "oh ! gin he had been advised by me ! But the dochter that left her faither's gray hairs to mourn her, deserves na' a better lot. It was e'en owre muckle guidness to gie me a warnin' o' it."

The long dark hours of that terrible night dragged on—on—in all the torments, the unutterable torments of suspense. And if anything can aggravate these torments, it is enduring them amid darkness. There is something awfully indefinite at all times in the thick impenetrable gloom of night ; but when that gloom is armed with terrors, and big with dangers, to which the very impossibility of ascertaining their extent adds tenfold in the imagination, then it is that we truly feel the full amount of its awfulness. At last a faint dim glimmer of gray light began to

break over the tumbling waves. Again Margaret was at her cottage door. It was barely light enough to show her how mountainous were the billows that dashed and raved upon the shore,—how thick and heavy were the clouds that darkened the sky. The wind howled with unabated fury, and the rain drove against her by fits. She could just discern, by the faint daybreak, the white foam that marked the top of the waves, which were now ebbing from the bay; while a thick rib of sand and sea-weed upon the grass not far from the door, marked how fearfully high they had flowed through the night. She cast an eager glance towards the cliffs. Surely by this time it would be practicable to scramble along their base, and to reach the path on the shore to the fishermen's huts? She felt as though it were impossible to remain another instant in that state of terrible uncertainty. But then, her infant! She durst not carry it out by so hazardous a path, in the wet, cold, dark dawn; and should she leave it behind, it might wake and miss her! She turned distractedly into the room, and approached its bed. It was still in a sound and tranquil sleep; and with a desperate effort of resolution, she determined to make the attempt. She approached the door, and fastened her plaid firmly around her, ere she stepped upon her scarce distinguishable way.

At that moment, ere Margaret could cross the threshold, a strange sensation came across her. A cold air rushed past her, like that occasioned by the rapid approach and still more rapid passing of some indiscernible object. A dimness came over her sight;

it could not be said that she *saw*—but she *felt* as if something cold and wet had glided swiftly by her, with a scarce perceptible contact, into the house. A damp dew overspread her forehead; her limbs trembled and bent beneath her, as she instinctively turned round, and looked into the room which she had quitted. The light was so faint, that within the house it scarce vanquished the darkness; but a bright gleam flashing up from the fire, showed everything in the room distinctly for an instant's space; and by that gleam, Margaret beheld the figure of her husband standing within the door, pale, as it seemed to her, and dim, and shadowy, with the water dripping from his clothes and hair. The fire-flash sunk as instantaneously as it had shone, and all again was obscurity, as she dropped upon the floor in a swoon.

When the unhappy wife again opened her eyes, and recovered her perceptions of what was passing around her, she found herself laid in her own bed. The bright glorious sunshine was beaming in at the cottage window, as though to mock her desolation. Several women, from the neighbouring fishing village, were in the room; one of whom held in her arms, the infant of Margaret, whom she was endeavouring to soothe and quiet; and at the moment she raised her head, the door opened, and upon the self-same spot where she had that morning beheld his likeness stand, she saw the lifeless corpse of her drowned husband, borne in the arms of some of his comrades, who had with difficulty rescued it from the devouring waves; yet rescued it too late to save.

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