

TRADITIONARY STORIES
OF
OLD FAMILIES,
AND
LEGENDARY ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
FAMILY HISTORY.

WITH NOTES, HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL.

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&c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

It is seldom that the title-page of a new book conveys fully the meaning and aim of the author. As the plan of the present is something out of the common, and is intended to embrace and to bring before the general public many matters in the history of families and of individuals, which otherwise might have little chance of seeing the light, the author may, therefore, be permitted a few prefatory words.

Among those distinguished families in whom high descent and influential connections, running through the varieties of many generations, may cause a just pride in tracing lineage and history, there are,

in numerous instances, preserved in private archives, or even through the medium of colloquial tradition, many interesting facts, or remarkable incidents, arising out of the characters or fortunes of the men of the past, which, if given to the public in the requisite form, before they are lost to the world by the rapid changing of taste, and the death of their remaining depositaries, might be most illustrative of the great subject of human nature, and even convey valuable moral instruction. Besides this, there are, in old books and scarce tracts — such as only the patient antiquary or the ardent literary enthusiast can plod through, — as well as among the quaint poetry of the olden time, occasional hints of life and manners which, when filled up by the fancy and illustrated by the judgment, or even unrolled from their original dryness, like a mummy of antiquity, are to

us more interesting, from their basement in truth, than the most splendid illusions of mere invention.

If, in prosecuting a plan of this kind, and using the word "tradition" to designate our intent, it should be urged by any that we ought, in reference to family history, to amplify nothing, to extend nothing, but to confine ourselves to absolute recorded truth: — alas! (for the objection draws from us a moralising exclamation) how little of human life is put upon actual record, or even told from our fathers in traditionary story! The genealogists, if we are confined thus, are the true historians of the world. They say that we are born and die, marry and have children, inherit lands or titles, and transmit them to our posterity. But the tree of life hath a richer foliage than can be traced through the bald branches of a

pedigree: it hath blooming flowers and mellow fruit; it stands lofty in the plain, spreading its roots abroad; or it struggles with its own nature on the barren face of the rock; a canker-worm eats out its sap and destroys its branches, or the storm from the mountains tears it up by the roots. Thus, even the oaks of the forest have a moral history, and man judgeth of man, and of his thoughts and deeds, because mind and feeling know all things.

If the plan of giving life and muscle, where it can be done satisfactorily, to the dry skeleton of tradition, or of filling up by the fancy the meagre outline of ill-recorded history, required any apology, after what has been done by the great magician of our age, it would be found in the fact, that the most interesting circumstances affecting conduct and happiness are often passed over altogether, among the names and dates of the re-

cords of exterior and showy events ; or are handed down through generations, in the shape of brief hints or recollections, or treasured up as family secrets, or reach the world, perhaps, in short anecdotes, or mere surmises, where a world of anxiety, joy, or grief, is compressed into the compass of half a page, or rhymed off in a few stanzas of a forgotten ballad.

In turning our enquiries, then, into the wide field of family history, and penetrating under the surface of generally known fact, a mine is opened, but little wrought as yet, of such richness and variety as, particularly if aided by private communication, will well repay the labours of the *con amore* enquirer, and not be unworthy, as we think, of the encouragement of the public. Our plan, also, offers, in future volumes, to the living representatives of ancient families, and others, an opportunity of bringing out

much curious and always instructive matter, which might have little chance, otherwise, of obtaining the attention of the public. In his little experience, the author has already found that the most interesting circumstances of domestic biography, particularly when they imply suffering or misfortune, are often those that individuals consider in the light of family secrets, which they are the most reluctant to have known; and thus the world loses all the instruction of the warning or example of some painfully-earned experience. This delicacy, however, only adheres to certain minds; but where it does exist, it is easily provided for, in making use of its communications, by the simple plan of giving imaginary names and allusions where the nature of the case seems to require such concealment. The more modern fragments of family history, which may be chiefly of this sort,

we put into the mouth of the simple Dominie, who would travel a score of miles any day to learn an interesting fact ; yet would go twice the distance, if, by so doing, he might avoid giving any living mortal offence.

The stories in these two volumes are more confined to Scotland than the author had intended, could he have got his materials out of the hands of some to whom he unfortunately submitted them, in proper time for the present publication ; or had the English and Irish families entered with the same readiness into his views, that was done by his more facile countrymen of the North. Should the present, nevertheless, be encouraged, — however imperfect as a first experiment, — future volumes will, he trusts, show how much it is his own wish to avoid the charge of any national partiality.

To the early friends of this work, and

its plan, who, by patronising it in private, or by supplying information for the present, or offering it for future volumes, have encouraged him to the publication, the author begs to offer his best thanks; and when he mentions, among these, the names of the DUKE OF HAMILTON, the DUKE OF BEDFORD, the DUKE OF BUCCLEUGH, the DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND, the MARQUESS and MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, the EARL SPENCER, the EARL OF ERROL, the EARL OF GLASGOW, the EARL CADOGAN, the EARL MOUNT-NORRIS, the LORD CHANCELLOR, the VISCOUNT MELBOURNE, the LORD ADVOCATE OF SCOTLAND, the LORD LEVESON GOWER, the VISCOUNT MAHON, LORD PANMURE, LORD CARBERRY, the late lamented LORD DOVER, SIR CHARLES FORBES, BART., SIR JOHN FORBES, BART., GENERAL NATHANIEL FORBES, MR. FORBES of Newe, SIR JOHN HAY, BART.,

M.P., SIR MICHAEL SHAW STEWART, BART., M.P., PATRICK MAXWELL STEWART, M.P., the HON. D. G. HALLIBURTON, M.P., SIR ANDREW HALLIDAY, KNT., M.D., SIR DANIEL K. SANDFORD, KNT., ROBERT WALLACE, M.P., ROBERT GORDON, M.P., J. H. CALLANDER, M.P., EDWARD T. BAINBRIDGE, M.P., JOHN MAXWELL, M.P., JAMES EWING, M.P., JAMES OSWALD, M.P., J. A. MURRAY, M.P., MR. GORDON of Fyvie, MR. GORDON of Cairnbulg, MR. LOCKHART, MR. SOUTHEY, MR. THOMAS CAMPBELL, MR. WORDSWORTH, MR. MOORE, and others with whose names the public are hardly less familiar, he may be justified in anticipating some portion of success.

Many defects and "short comings" of his own conceptions are incident to an author's first step in any literary undertaking, however humble. But, not to be further egotistical where the sub-

ject will hardly bear it, we shall end our preface by the quaint "excusation" of the learned "prentar" of Boece's black-letter chronicles:—

" And in this wark that I have here assailzett
To bring to lycht, maist humely I exhort
Zow nobill reders, quhare that I have failzett,
In letter, sillabe, poyntis lang, or schort,
That ye will of your gentrice it support,
And take *the present* the best wyse ze may,
I sall do better (will God) *maybe* ane other day."

TRADITIONARY STORIES,

&c.

THE FORBESES AND THE GORDONS.

CHAPTER I.

IN essaying to collect together, and fill up into something of a readable form, the local and family traditions of our country, ere time and change shall have consigned the whole to regretted oblivion — like the “ruin’d wa’s and castles grey” that, while they stand and “nod to the moon,” help to attest their truth—the difficulty is where to begin, or to what name and lineage to give a seeming preference; where the field is so wide, and the materials so various, and often so difficult of access and collection. In going then—for the first—into the old names of the north, there is no reason why we should not commence with the great rival

families of the Forbeses and the Gordons; or rather that we should not confine ourselves for the present very much to the former, until time, and the further aid of the families themselves, shall enable us to do the latter some tolerable degree of justice.

Few of the Scottish families of ancient lineage, anxious as they are upon so important a subject, trace their family so far as to the antediluvians "afore the flude," and through Noah and the ark, even to Adam himself,—as was done in a good printed book by old Urquhart of Cromarty¹; nevertheless they do their best for that laudable purpose²: yet those who, like the Forbeses, have a sort of honourable scepticism towards truth, seldom go farther than the fabulous and ill recorded times, when surnames began to be given or taken with lands, or when the great Bastard of Normandy made many a robber a gentleman. Among the uncertainties, then, as to the name of the family of

¹ A *precious* book it must have been, and it is accordingly named by the author "The Jewel."

² See Note A. at the end of this Tradition.

Forbes, the greatest seems to be, whether their admitted descent from an ancient French family was that of Forbine, still known and existing on the Continent, or of De Bois, who came with many others into Scotland through a first emigration into the Irish country.

Even the first tradition regarding the Forbesees, however, is invested with romance. It is that they came from Ireland with the great Macdonald, who married one of the King of Ireland's daughters; and that after obtaining distinction in the reigns of William, absurdly called the Lion, and Alexander II. of Scotland, they were, as a clan, intrusted with the defence of the castle of Urquhart, in Murray, against the famous invasion of Edward I. Defending their honourable trust while life remained, the whole of the clansmen then in the garrison were put to the sword; and when, in the general massacre, every man was cut off, what humanity failed to effect superstition accomplished, and the governor's wife was saved. It was a notion of the time, that though any cruelty might lawfully be exercised towards

the quick and the living, to slay the unborn babe, and cut off the unchristened that never saw the sun, might be dangerous to the soul of him who did it; so the lady being in that condition, the ruthless soldiers stayed their hands, and the unhappy dame was allowed to depart without the smoking walls of the castle. Fleeing to Ireland from her unfortunate country, in first setting foot on a desolate part of the coast, the lady, in looking round her, is said to have exclaimed in Gaelic the single word "Ochonachar"—"Oh, woe is me!" and falling soon after into nature's pains, with that word she named her infant, because she said it was born in trouble. This Gaelic name is borne by Lord Forbes, the chief of the clan, until the present day.

When Ochonachar lived to become a man, he went back to his country to claim his own. But Robert Bruce, who now reigned over Scotland, having in the mean time assigned the Urquhart estate to the church, the castle being destroyed, he gave the young claimant the lands of Logie by the river Don; who thus

became the great progenitor of the numerous Forbeses of Donside, as well as of the several noble and influential families of the name, wide spread in Scotland and well known in history.

The Laird of Logie being settled in Strathdon, in hunting over his lands, says tradition, he killed a great bear, or beast, which had long been the terror of these parts. Hence, says the same authority, came the name of Forbear or Forbeast — soon contracted into Forbes — which, by the addition of the heraldic sign of three bears' heads, granted by the King for this gallant action, to be worn on the shield of Ochonachar and his posterity, and preserved as the arms of the family until this day, became the proper surname of this honourable house.

Of the branches into which the family spread, and the unions that it formed, and the castles built by its members throughout Scotland, it is not our intention here to speak; nor can we enumerate more than a few of the notable men of the clan, whose names yet live in the ro-

mantic traditions of the Scottish glens, or are woven in with the national history. There was Forbes of Drimminor, and Forbes of Cromertie, and Forbes of Kaithness, who fell into trouble with the bishop's daughter¹, and there was Sir John Forbes with the black lip, the proper and authentic founder of the family², and William Lord Forbes, called grey Willie; and Patrick Forbes of Corse, the good Bishop of Aberdeen³ and brother to William the first Laird of Craigievar⁴; and there was Black Arthur of Towie, that was killed at Tillyangus, after urging on the great and fatal quarrel of the Forbeses and the Gordons⁵, because John Lord Forbes had, by way of reconciliation, married Dame Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Huntley; and there was John Forbes "the white Laird of Brux;" and there was "the Gleid Laird of Brux," and "Tom of the Loch," and "Blae Willie," and Effie Forbes, married to William Gordon, called "Willie

¹ See Note B. at the end of this Tradition.

² Note C. ³ Note D. ⁴ Note E. ⁵ Note F

wi' the Head¹;" and there was "John out wi' the Sword;" and there was the preaching Laird of Pitnacaddell²; and "Forbes of Echt who went out to fecht³;" and "Big Sandie of Stradie;" and "Evil Duncan," the bastard of Drimminor; and there was "Forbes of Newe," that killed "the gudeman of Buchaam⁴;" and there was "the worthy Laird of Watertoun⁵;" and "Honest John of Newe," called "John o'blue Bonnets;" and Forbes of Dalnashandy⁶;" and many more than we can now advert to, branching out from the great chiefs of the name.⁷ Many is the brave man from those days to this who have tried their claymores by the side of the Don, or mustered to their war cry on the beacon hill of Loanach.⁸ —But to our present brief, yet characteristic, tale of the romantic origin of the Forbeses of Brux.

It was during those fiery and lawless times, when men quarrelled for little else than the pleasures and excitements of passion, and fought

¹ See Note G. ² Note H. ³ Note I. ⁴ Note K.

⁵ Note L. ⁶ Note M. ⁷ Note N. ⁸ Note O.

and gashed each other with deadly wounds because they had in reality little else to do, that a great feud was gotten up between two puissant Highland lairds; thus affording a good reason for their several followers hating sincerely, and being quite joyful at any opportunity of killing each other. One of these chiefs was the Laird of Brux, that property then belonging to the old clan of the Camerons; and the other was one Muat of Abergeldy, proprietor in those days of the extensive wilds of Braemar.

After much blood-spilling, however, and many destructive raids upon each other, the lairds, at length becoming tired of the feud, and professing a wish for its termination, agreed to meet, with a few of their followers, either to fight the quarrel out like men, and end it and themselves together, or to try if they could accomplish some sort of reconciliation. The place appointed was a narrow spot at the foot of the hill of Drumgouldrum — a heavy black mountain on the estate of Brux, near the Don; and the bargain was, that each party should consist of no more than twelve horse; so that, if fighting was to be the

consequence, the number of lives to be sacrificed should have this reasonable limitation.

The day of meeting came, and the Lady of Brux, being a high-souled woman, and deeply imbued with the valiant spirit of her clan, assisted that morning in arraying her husband and her three sons for the combat; urging them all the time to show themselves men this day, and worthy of their name, or never to return to her happy hallan more.

“Now there you are, my braw gude-man, and my brave and gallant lads,” she added, surveying the four, after she had buckled on their claymores: “the sun has already risen o’er the hill of Loanach, and the gillies can hardly hold your snorting steeds at the door; up! and at these bloody Muats, that so long have harried the valley of Stra-don, and stue their bearded heads from their bodies, as ye would the black and brizly thistles that grow rank and thick in Kildrummy kirkyard. Away, my men! to the fight of your clan; for, hear you! there is the piobrach of the Camerons,

already echoing wi' a skreid and a sound down the glen to bonnie Caervarliegh."

The old man kissed the cheek of his spirited dame, and the sons grasped the hand of their pretty sister Kate; for they all felt a solemnity at this taking of leave. A whole crowd of clansmen surrounded the door, as the laird and his sons and their eight more picked men mounted their steeds, and drank from the hand of the Lady of Brux a well filled and animating stirrup cup. A "skreid" of the bagpipe and a shout of the Camerons was all they waited for, and in five minutes more the valiant cavalcade had cleared the ballium of the castle, and the hoofs of their horses were ringing on the heathy sod, that brought them winding up the hill as they hastened towards the glen of Drumgoudrum.

When the Camerons got to the appointed spot, all was as yet silent in the narrow valley, and no creature appeared but the solitary goat browsing on the crags, or the occasional muir-cock that rose "whirring" from out the purple heath almost at their feet. They had not

tarried long, however, until a band of horsemen began to start out in their sight, as they wound slowly round the foot of the hill. "What means this?" cried the Cameron chief — "the beasts move heavily, and I see many more heads and shields than belong to twelve men: by my dirk, I think there's trick and treachery here."

As the horsemen drew on, the Camerons soon saw what was prepared for them. Abergeldy, with craven cunning, taking advantage of the loose terms of the bargain, had imitated the treacherous example of the Keiths at the Caithness chapel, and brought two men on each horse¹, making twenty-four men.

"Shall we fight or flee, lads?" said Brux, to try his men; "or shall we use a parley and a policy wi' the Braemar's-men, that try a treachery to get us upon a vantage? Consider well what you say, while ye have breath to speak; for there's red blood to run upon this heath, where two swords point to one breast."

"A Cameron 'll never flee afore a Muat,"

¹ See Note P. at the end of this Tradition.

said the men, making their swords gleam in the morning sun, "even if there were three claymores to one dirk, and there's little use in a policy or a parley to the wylie Abergeldy: so we'll fight while we can stand, and we'll die where we fight; and if the treacher gain the day, every brave Cameron will yet take a bitter revenge for his clan."

But few words were spoken on either side when the Muats came up; for dark looks and scowling determination already gave ominous indication of what was to follow. The Laird of Abergeldy first drew his sword, and with grim triumph and cold cruelty, advanced with his men up to Brux and his three sons. The twenty-four Braemar's men nearly surrounded the twelve Camerons, but the latter looked them and death undauntedly in the face, while shoulder to shoulder, and back to back, they fought one to two, with the earnest solemnity of felt desperation.

When Muat's two sons came opposite to the sons of Brux, death flashed with the fire from each other's swords; while the Laird of Mac-

fadden, a powerful man, assisted the former against the unfortunate Camerons. It was not long after the first onset ere the sword of Brux laid big Macfadden low, and his sons killed both of Muat's sons.

When the Braemar's-men saw their young chiefs fall, their rage became ferocious, and their whole strength was bent upon the four men of Brux. Long the youths defended their father's head, but at length they fell one by one, pierced with numerous wounds, until the remaining son saw the old man laid gashed and dead on the bloody sod at his feet. The sword of Muat, soon after this, struck down the last of the three gallant brothers, and with him the last of the brave band of the Camerons. The youth fell with a cry betwixt death and life that arose to the hills above, like a prophecy and a doom. He gave a dying glance towards the still sky above, as he thought of his father and kin slain beside him, and of that day's desolation to his house and name ; and the murmur for his mother that was breathed from his lips, and for his now orphan and unprotected sister.

Kate, ascended to heaven like a solemn petition, that was ominous of future vengeance and blood.

The last sigh of departing life was soon breathed by those who were not yet stiff in death, and, as the yellow hue of mortality came over their countenances, and the narrow glen resumed its usual lonely silence, the Muats who remained began to look strangely in each other's faces, like men conscious of a wicked action, and unable to bear the solemn but inaudible reproaches of the dead. Their slain companions and the Camerons were hastily huddled under the sod, where they all lie buried in that silent dell — Abergeldy alone and a few of his men returning to Braemar — and their graves and cairns are to be seen in the spot even unto the present time.

Thus a sad sight was that day seen by the unhappy widow of Brux; and thus ended, with a wailing and coronach, that arose loud and solemn beneath the hill of Loanach, the deadly and obstinate conflict of Drumgouldrum.

CHAP. II.

KATE CAMERON of Brux grew the bonniest lass that was known in all the valley of Strathdon. She had red lips, and a high brow, and an eye like the blink of the wild eagle, that gazes o'er the gloom of the Highland valleys from the lofty cliffs of Cairntoul. But her heart was buried in a dark thought — for she had the high spirit of her mother, and the deep mountaineer feeling of her brothers that were slain; and she vowed a vow, and registered it in heaven, that no man should ever gain her love but he who should avenge her father's and brothers' death.

The Lord of Forbes had three sons, brave and bold youths with manly hearts; and they all had been smitten with pretty Kate Cameron, as she sat modestly in her hood beside her mother in the ancient chapel of Kildrummy. But on none of them did the maiden deign to cast an eye, save on tall Rob with the curled hair;

but he was the youngest, and lith of limb, and never could hope to measure a claymore with the great grim Laird of Abergeldy.

But Kate Cameron's glance had shot into his soul, and long he watched her in Kildrummy kirk — and traced her very steps in the haughs of Strathdon — until deep musings took hold of his mind, and high purposes were begotten on his spirit. He watched her by day and he sought her by night, and he lingered for a glance of her passing form, among the pleasant avenues of Brux old castle. But love is sentimental, and its hopes are harassing; and the maiden of Brux seemed more illusive to his pursuit than the roe that he hunted in the woods of Alford.

“What makes you follow me, Rob Forbes?” she said one day, encountering him suddenly in the strath. “If ever you would speak to me out of my mother's ken, you must meet me by night, when the moon is up, by the cairns of my kin, in the dark glen of Drumgoudrum.”

“And will you then tryst me on that spot alone,” said the eager youth — “and will you

whisper with me where I can tell my tale, and breathe near my cheek your own sweet breath? For one word from those honied lips, where none can hear but the cushat of the glen—and one glance of that bonny black e'e, where none can see us but the bright lover's moon, I would meet all the grim and grisly spectres that ever haunted the gloomy dell of Drumgoudrum."

"I *will* meet you, Rob," she said—I *will* speak to you alone, and that this very night. Be sure you be there, at the upper end of the dell, by the time the moon's shadow passes into light, and you can see the red heather wave o'er my father's grave."

He reached forth his hands to seal the appointment; but the maiden's head towered up in high loftiness, like the eagle crest of Benvorlich, and she was off down the strath before he could speak, like the wild doe that passes through the forest in the gleaming glades of Inverury.

With a beating heart he waited for the night; and scarcely had the silver signal risen behind the hill, when he was seated on Macfad-

den's cairn, waiting for the living above the dead. Although for lovers to meet by moonlight, and in lonely places, was no more than the ordinary habit of the times, yet to appoint a spot so far from home, and withal so dreary and dread as this, young Forbes felt to be strange and superstitious. The cold wind whistled eerily down the glen, and as it murmured among the cliffs above his head, he thought it sounded like the sullen moan of the dead, who cried for vengeance beneath his feet.

At length the fanciful solemnity of his feelings was relieved by the appearance of a plaided figure coming round the hill above the shaded side of the glen. She stopped at a short distance from him, and looked down on the small hillocks that marked the resting place of the dead, as if the impressive associations of the place had quite overpowered any other feelings. — "Are you here, Rob Forbes?" she at length said, taking him at once by the arm, with the familiarity of energetic emotion. "Know you where we are? You are treading on the

very spot where my father and my three brave brothers spilled their hearts' blood."

The gleam of her eagle eye in his face, as she said this, penetrated into his heart, and though he tried, he could not speak.

"Rob," she continued — "from this glen, made for ever sacred by death and blood, I warn you never to think of me. I am young it's true, and I know and respect a noble youth; but I have vowed a vow to my father's manes, and to that Kate Cameron will make herself the sacrifice—were it to the most ill-favoured Grumach that ever avenged a father's death, and satisfied a mother's feelings for her three brave sons, that met their death on a sad and solemn spot like this."

"Kate," he said, ardently — "say but that you love me!—say but that I may hope to make you mine, and I will avenge you and your father's house, or spill my own last blood to the manes of the dead."

"Are you mad, Rob Forbes?" she exclaimed; "talk you with the madness of a boy? Shall the bravest men that ever drew sword

in the valley of Strathdon, and the stoutest hearts from Strathtay to Lochaber, quail at the name of Muat of Abergeldy — and *you* would lift the feeble arm of mere youth against him ! Go back, go back to the halls of Drimminor, and think from hence of some other maiden ; for my troth is pledged alone to a bloody hand, and heavy arm, that shall answer with a sure and a home-stroke the cry of revenge from this glen of the dead.”

She turned to retreat up the hill. He followed her with the eagerness of disappointed love and deep mortification. “ Scorn me you may,” he said, “ and flout me from my suit ; but — by this dirk that now gleams in the holy light of the moon, before one month passes round, I will either die by Muat’s hand, or bury it in his treacherous heart’s blood ! Now pledge me to this, Kate Cameron. Pledge my vow, ere you go, on this clear cold steel ; for either you shall be mine, and your house be revenged ere another moon shall have waned, or I will be a dim ghost in the cloudy halls of the Fin-galians.”

“ Now, bless thee for thy resolve, my gallant Forbes !” she said ; “ and I will pledge thee, not only on the steel — that is cold to love — but print the fairy’s charm where love should be sealed¹ ; for be thou mine in one little month, or be thou a sacrifice to my father’s manes, thou hast won the heart of thy own Kate Cameron.”

She drew the plaid back from her comely face ; she resigned her light form to his eager embrace ; and when he printed the warm kiss on her lips, the dissolved charm that had stifled youthful feeling seemed to awaken the green fairies of the moonlight, and the murmur of the winds over the hillocks of the dead appeared to breathe to them as they stood a soft whisper of love and victory.

¹ See Note Q. at the end of this Tradition.

CHAP. III.

"ROB FORBES of Drimminor is going to fight the auld Laird of Abergeldy," was the bruit up and down the valley of Strathdon, from old Corgarff to the pass of Alford; and all the clansmen prepared for the day, from Tomantoul to the bughts of Glentanner.

"It's a wild defiance and a luckless weird for Lord Forbes's youngest son," said the experienced; "for the gallant's but a youth, wi' a beardless mou', and a lith arm, and Muat's auld and strang, and weel used to the claymore, and he'll sned the callant's head off like the top of a syboe."

These were the sort of discouragements that Forbes got at every hand, when preparing night and day for his approaching trial. But though his frame was young and his arm was light, he had a bold heart to what he had undertaken; and love, that burned brightly in

his inner soul, gave him a hope that was worthy the chance of the sacrifice.

At length the great day arrived, and now the merry month of May had brought a shining green on the Highland glens, when the whole clan of the Forbeses mustered in Strathdon, to witness the fate of their brave young champion. The fight was to take place at the head of Glenbucket, and the appointed spot was the identical dell where John of Badenyone had lived and sung in former days; and the bards of the clans were there that day on the ground, to sing of the deeds of the fortunate victor. Six hundred and more warlike Forbeses marched up that morning by the streamlet of Glenbucket, and as many more of the Muats and Macfaddens came down through the pass from the stern wilds of Abergeldy. The whole glen was filled with the array, and the hills resounded with the piobrachs of the Forbeses, or the melodious variations of John of Badenyone.

The heart of Rob Forbes could not repress a daunting throb, as, arriving at the spot, he stepped forth into the area appointed for the

combat, and threw his eyes round the lines and ranks of the expectant multitude. It seemed to him like a day of execution, where he or Abergeldy were to be the sacrifice; and where above twelve hundred eyes were upon his every movement;—or it might be one of a victorious triumph, which was almost too much for his sanguinest hopes. The ceremonies of the preparation were as intensely solemn, as the grim looks of old Muat spoke cool and contemptuous defiance to his youthful adversary.

A conference was held between the assembled chiefs, who had each brought all this array of followers from an apprehension of treachery, which the character of Abergeldy made so justifiable. Here it was agreed that this single combat was to end completely the contention of the day; and both parties swore to stand by, without moving, while the battle lasted, and to retire when one of the champions should fall, without further interference or shedding of blood.

The combatants now stood forth, and all eyes admired the large buirdly figure and noble

bearing of the Lord of Forbes's youngest son, who ventured his life with the hardy Muat, and tried to win by battle-axe and sword a girl like Kate Cameron. His father and brothers left his side with many exhortations and advices as to his conduct, for the honour of his clan, while a low murmur of anxiety and encouragement ran through the thick line of the Forbeses. As the youth, stepping up to his adversary, turned his target before his body, and set his foot to the foot of Muat, he read in his dark eye the black glance of doom or victory; and, with "God and Kate Cameron!" in inward ejaculation, his battle-axe rung against the shield of his foe.

Long they fought with heavy strokes, and many a shout echoing from the hills behind told the varying feelings of the breathless multitude. At length, blood flowing fast, and their heavy targets being nearly broken to pieces, their battle-axes were thrown on the sod behind them, and the light flash of their long claymores told that the combat would take a quick termination. The swordsmanship was

admirable; and the struggle for life, honour, vengeance, and love, was almost too much for the anxieties of the spectators. Low murmurs now ran through the hosts, as each side appeared to gain the advantage, when, in one instant, while Strathdon seemed to triumph, the sword of Rob Forbes spun from his hand, and tossing like a feather high in the air, fell sprinkled with blood several yards behind him.

The Muats gave a yell that rent the skies, and the Forbeses stood confounded in silent consternation. But the smile on the face of the disarmed youth, as he stood back for an instant preparing for the result, seemed either the glow of undismayed hope, or the bitter expression of reckless despair. One moment, however, ended the uncertainty. In the instant Forbes's long dirk flashed in the sun, and he ran in like a lion to grapple with his adversary. By this time the veteran showed himself spent, and his glance in the face of his youthful foe was like the deadly glare of the infuriated tiger. In the desperate struggle both fell, Abergeldy underneath; for Forbes's strength seemed to increase

as it came to the crisis, and the next moment his long dirk was buried to the hilt in Muat's heart. He drew it out slowly as if impressed with the importance of his own act, while the grim carl bit the dust in death ; and, as he held it up in the air, streaming with blood, the shout of the Forbeses for their victorious clansman was heard beyond Glenbucket castle, to the very foot of Strathdon.

"To Brux! to Brux!" cried an hundred voices, and a rush was made with the youth in front, down the long valley towards the strath, while the shout of triumph and the scream of bagpipes almost deafened the clansmen who remained at Badenyone. Before they had arrived at the foot of the glen, a cry of joy was heard beyond the castle, on their road, and the widow of Brux, rushing forth to meet him, caught the victorious youth in her arms.

"Thou hast done it at length, my noble Forbes!" cried the lady, surveying with joy his bloody blade, "and my husband that's gone, and my braw sons, are at last avenged. Haste! haste! to the priest, my fortunate Kate. Nay,

blush not, for thou hast a gallant husband, that shall restore the honours of our house and clan. There, take my daughter! brave Rob Forbes," — she continued, "and you that are here, bring the priest while the gore is warm; for *this very night*, Kate, thou shalt lie in this youth's arms, *before Muat's blood shall dry on his victorious steel.*"¹

With race and gallop the priest was got, and that same night the feast and the wedding were held at Brux. The lads and lasses who gathered in flocks, danced gaily on the green under the pleasant avenue of the castle, and a happy bridal it was to bonny Kate Cameron, and her young and triumphant bridegroom.

So the Forbeses of that ilk became a numerous line from this time forth; and the songs that celebrated the day of Badenyone, and the loves of the first laird and his pretty wife, are not entirely forgotten in the strath of the clan, even until the present day.

¹ See note R. at the end of this tradition.

NOTES

TO THE TRADITION OF

THE FORBESES AND THE GORDONS.

 NOTE A. page 2.

THE zeal for tracing genealogy up towards Adam's days is pleasantly harmless, and was far from uncommon among the Highland chiefs. But the Gordons, ancient as their house is admitted to be, were not at all unreasonable in this enquiry, for the most antiquarian of them do not, as far as we can learn, go farther back than about the days of Alexander the Great, tracing their name from *Gordonia*, a city of Macedon, which they say once formed part of Alexander's dominions; and from thence, no doubt, the clan must have come!

The theories by which these grave controversies were occasionally supported, are sometimes characteristic. Our readers have no doubt heard the story of the two Highlanders, disputing whether the Macdonalds or the Macleans were the most ancient clan. The Maclean talked learnedly, and asserted that his clan lived long " afore the

flude," one of them getting a corner with Noah inside the ark. "Noah be d——d," said the other triumphantly — "when was it ever known that a *Macdonald* of the Isles hadna a boat of his own."

NOTE B. page 6.

Bishops, in those days, were allowed, it appears, to have wives as in our own; so Walter Forbes, attending on this dignitary, fell in love with his daughter; and there passed between them a degree of freedom which was not inconsistent also with the manners of the times. Fearing the bishop's wrath, the youth fled to Strathnaver, and forcibly possessed himself of the lands of Dromisos, then belonging to the bishop. The valiant churchman, however, hearing of this, soon gathered a number of men, and, setting out in person for Strathnaver, retook his lands from the ungrateful runaway.

Walter and the bishop's daughter being fled, continues the history, "left behind them their little son, and it being told her father, that the infant was his daughter's by Walter Forbes, the bishop caused immediately fence the court in the name of the child, who was called John Forbes, of whom is descended the house of Mackay, who is now Lord Rea, as that lord's old evidents do testifie; and the first right of the lands of Druiness does flow from this court act holden by the bishop in the child's name. This narration of the original of the house of Mackay, did relate to credible gentlemen, &c. Likewise I have seen their letters, written to the Lord Forbes, acknowledging him to be their chief, the subscription

being, Mackay alias Forbes; as they also bear our arms."—
Preface to Lumsden's Genealogy of the Forbeses.

NOTE C. page 6.

Sir John Forbes, called "Black Lip," had four legitimate sons. The oldest was Alexander, from whom is descended the present Lord Forbes. The second was William, the first of the house of Pitsligo. The third was John, the first of the Tolquhon branch of the family; and the fourth was Alaster, from whom came the family of Brux. Besides this, there were three sons of the Knight of the Black Lip, viz. 1st. Duncan of the house of Auchintoull;—2d. Malcolm of Culquharie;—the third was "John out wi' the sword," who died without succession.

The present Lord Forbes is of course the chief of the name, and Sir Charles Forbes of Newe and Edinglassie is the male representative of the amiable Lord Pitsligo, whose lands and title were forfeited for the part he took in the forty-five. Sir John Stuart Forbes of Pitsligo and Fettercairn, is sprung from a female branch of the same house, and the present Lord Rea is the head of the Mackays, whose name was originally Forbes, as stated above.

NOTE D. page 6.

The following ancient story is worthy of quotation, not only for its excellent moral, but as showing that the feelings and manners of our ancestors were not on all occa-

sions so barbarous as they are often represented. Were the same generosity oftener practised in our own refined days, the same prosperity to a whole family might oftener be the result.

Patrick Forbes of Corse, Bishop of Aberdeen, had two younger brothers. William the eldest entered into business, but was very unsuccessful. The bishop had frequently supplied him with money, but at last began to hold his hand. Upon a particular emergency William applied to him again for 1000 marks, and expecting a denial, told him he could give him security for repayment, if the sum were lent him. "If that is the case," the bishop said, "I will endeavour to find the money;" and upon this they parted. At the day appointed William Forbes came for the performance of his brother's promise. "I am ready," said the bishop, "but where is your surety?" William made this unexpected answer; "God Almighty is my bondsman in providence. He is the only security I have to offer."

So singular a reply of a despairing man smote the feelings of the bishop; and he thus replied; "It is the first time, certainly, that such a surety was ever offered to me; but since it is so, take the money, and may Almighty God your bondsman see that it does you good."

Away hastened the happy merchant with his money; and, embarking for Dantzic, the scene of the speculation he had in view, his bondsman was with him in all that he did, and he soon realised a considerable fortune. Next he married a lady of that country, brought her home to Scotland, and purchased, first the lands of Menny, and then the fair estate of Craigievar. Profiting by former experience, and finding that money produces itself, the Laird

of Craigievar still continued his merchandising in the city of Edinburgh; and, adding by degrees still more to his gains, he repaid the bishop all that he ever borrowed, and died a much richer man than he, being possessed not only of the above estates, but of the barony of Auchtertoul in Fife, and the baronies of Finhaven and Carriston.—See *Michell's Scotsman's Library, &c.*

This story will, perhaps, remind the reader of the one told of Swift. The satirical dean having to preach a charity sermon to which he had little good-will, from the opinion he had formed of his audience, said nothing of the subject until the sermon was ended. He then told them, that this was a mere matter of business, and as such he would talk of it. They knew as well as he, that they had certain poor to provide for, who looked to their purses. He then merely read them the text, which says, "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord" — and added, "if you approve of your security, down with your money." — With this he sent round the plate for collection.

NOTE E. page 6.

There is a romantic story about the noble old castle of Craigievar, (or the rock of Mar,) and of the manner in which it came into the possession, first of the Mortimers and then of the Forbeses, which we cannot make room for at present, to tell it as we could wish; so, like the seventeenth head of the Scots minister's sermon, we must reserve it for another and "a more convenient opportunity."

We may, however, mention, that of the three old castles

in this parish, there are two besides Craigievar that deserve mention, from the traditions attached to them. "The castle of Lenturk," says Sir John Sinclair, "now in ruins, is supposed to be older than either of the other two. It appears to have been built early in the sixteenth century. It has a large deep broad foss around it; and in those days has been a place of strength. It was probably built by Strachan of Lenturk, who in the reign of James V. unjustly accused John, master of Forbes, of high treason, which, though not proved, made him lose his head. Tradition bears, that in July 1645, William Forbes, of Skel-later, having no good will to — Irvin, then Laird of Lenturk, came down hither from Strathdon with his men, shut the laird up in his own donjon, lived at large in the castle and on the estate till the morning of the battle of Alford, when he went and joined Montrose against the Covenanters, who got a total defeat."

The other remarkable ruin besides these is that of the castle of Corse, built in 1581 by William Forbes, father of Patrick the Bishop of Aberdeen before mentioned. However high the character of this prelate is among the higher class of the Forbeses, his name is not without stigma among the more whiggish in the neighbourhood; for "tradition bears," adds Sir John Sinclair "and the common people still believe, that the devil visited the bishop in this castle, that the two quarrelled, and that his majesty of the "brimstone cutie" carried away with him the whole gable of the castle, on the stone stairs whereof they still pretend to point out his footsteps." — See *Statistics of Scotland*, vol. vi. p. 220.

NOTE F. page 6.

The most memorable event arising out of the long continued hatred of these great rival houses — besides the bloody slaughters of Tilliangus and Craibstane — was the barbarous burning at Corgarff Castle, in Strathdon, forming the subject of the well-known old ballad of Sir Adam Gordon of Achindown.

For the sake of the more southern reader, it may be acceptable to state, that, in the course of the contentions of these two families, which were sharpened by political animosities, the Gordons taking the side of the unfortunate Mary, in the time of her confinement in England, and the Forbesees that of James, her son — this Sir Adam Gordon sent a captain of the Ker family with a party of foot, to summon the castle of Corgarff in the queen's name. It happened unfortunately that Alexander Forbes, the owner and commander, was absent from home, and the parley from the walls between the captain and the lady was so provoking to the ungallant Ker, that after some angry recrimination, and, as the ballad has it, the firing of a couple of shots by the lady's own hand, from the castle wall, which only grazed the besieging captain's knee — he ordered his men to set fire to the castle, and burn to the death all who were in it.

At this moment there were twenty-seven persons within its tower, the lady included, who was a Campbell of the Calder branch. The terror and horror when the flames and smoke began to reach to the chambers of the besieged, and "the reek" to come up and smother mother and

children, are touched in the tradition with frightful truth. The unfortunate owner had, besides his lady, then great with child, three infant sons in the castle; and their dreadful situation, thus described in the ballad, we cannot avoid quoting: —

Loud, loud cried out the bonny son,
 Stood at the nurse's knee:
 "Gie o'er your house, my mother dear,
 The reek is smooing me."

"I would gie all my gold, my child,
 My silver and my fee,
 For ae blast of the western wind
 To blow the reek from thee."

* * * *

Then loud cried out the daughter dear,
 She was both neat and small —
 "O row me in a pair of sheets,
 And let me o'er the wall."

She row'd her in the sheets so white,
 And let her o'er the wall,
 But on the point of Gordon's spear
 She got a deadly fall.

O lovely, lovely was her face,
 Her cheeks were like the rose,
 And yellow was her ringlets fair,
 Through which the red blood flows.

But neither the cries of the unhappy inmates, nor the beauty of Forbes's daughter, could move the savage heart of Captain Ker, and the burning still went on.

So when the lady saw the flames,
Now bursting o'er her head,
She turn'd and kiss'd her children dear,
Then sank among the dead.

* * * *

O sad, sad looked Towie's lord
As he came o'er the lea,
He saw his castle in a flame
As far as he could see.

* * * *

Put on, put on, my trusty men!
And neither fleech nor flee,
The man that's last at Towie house
Shall ne'er get good from me.

Full fast they over hill and dale
Did neither stop nor stint,
But lang lang ere they reach'd the place,
Both lady and babes were burnt.

He wrung his hands and tore his hair,
And wept in grievous mood,
Cried, "Traitor, for this hellish deed,
Ye shall weep tears of blood."

Then fast the Gordon he pursued,
With many a bitter tear,
And in false Gordon's reeking blood
Revenged his lady dear.

The scene of this barbarous tragedy, which took place in the year 1551, is said in the ballad to be Towie Castle, an ancient ruin still standing near Towie old kirk, on a

high bank above the Don. But all the traditionary accounts of value agree that the scene was *Corgarff* Castle, considerably higher up the river, and, since the burning, entirely rebuilt. The present *Corgarff* was erected upon the site of the burnt and blackened ruin, about the beginning of the last century; and, in common with *Braemar*, and other old houses on the line of the military road, has, since the forty-five, been the property of the crown, and occupied by troops for the guarding of the Highlands. The cause of the confounding of the two castles seems to have been, that both formerly belonged to the same owner (a Forbes); but a MS. account of the unfortunate occurrence, which we have seen, in the handwriting of the father of the present Sir Charles Forbes, a gentleman who was extremely well acquainted with the ancient traditions of the neighbourhood, which states, that *Corgarff*, and not *Towie*, was the scene of the burning, would seem to us sufficiently decisive of the question.

This remarkable opposition, rivalry, and hatred, between two great and ancient clans, which has not entirely spent itself even at the present day, has been productive of more curious circumstances, and given rise to more illustrative tales, than we dare venture upon on this occasion. There is one short one, however, that we may give as it was told us by the present Sir John Hay, Bart., which is extremely characteristic of the manners of the times. Subsequent to the tragical affair at *Corgarff*, a meeting for reconciliation took place between a select number of the heads of the two houses, in the hall of an old castle in these parts, probably *Drimminor*.

After much argument, the difference being at length made up, and a reconciliation effected, both parties sat

down to a feast in the hall, provided by the Forbes's chief. The eating was ended, and the parties were at their drink — the clansmen being of equal numbers, and so mixed, as had been arranged, that every Forbes had a Gordon seated at his right hand.

"Now," said Gordon of Huntly to his neighbour chief, "as this business has been so satisfactorily settled, tell me if it had not been so, what it was your intention to have done."

"There would have been bloody work — bloody work," said Lord Forbes — "and *we* would have had the best of it. I will tell you: see, we are mixed one and one, Forbeses and Gordons. I had only to give a sign by the stroking down of my beard, thus, and every Forbes was to have drawn the skein from under his left arm, and stabbed to the heart his right hand man," and as he spoke, he suited the sign to the word, and stroked down his flowing beard."

"God Almighty!" exclaimed Huntly, "what is this?" — for in a moment a score of skeins were out, and flashing in the light of the pine torches held behind the guests. In another moment they were buried in as many hearts, for the Forbeses, whose eyes constantly watched their chief, mistaking this involuntary motion in the telling of his story for the agreed sign of death, struck their weapons into the bodies of the unsuspecting Gordons.

The chiefs looked at each other in silent consternation. At length Forbes said, "This is a sad tragedy we little expected—but what is done cannot be undone, and the blood that now flows on the floor of Drimminor will just help to sloaken the auld fire of Corgarff."

NOTE G. page 7.

"Willie wi' the head" is certainly among the most pleasant of the soubriquets that we have met with, connected with these times, the *having* of a head being a thing so remarkable and distinguishing in a man. But though the Forbesees had a "gleid laird" and a "white laird," and a "blae (reddish blue) laird"—they were not worse off than the kings of France and England. We have all heard of the French kings nicknamed the Bald, the Simple, the Fair, the Fat, the Stutterer, &c., and in England of the Bastard, the Red, the Lion-heart, Lackland, Longshanks, Crouchback, &c. This habit of passing by descriptive soubriquets prevails so much still in parts of Lancashire, and some of the northern counties of England, that several have been known actually to forget their christened names, and to deny them when enquired for by them. We shall tell our stories of this country trait some other day.

NOTE H. page 7.

Forbes of Pitnacaddel and his many eccentricities are still celebrated by tradition in Strathdon. The Laird was religiously inclined, and taking on to college education in his youth, besides being proprietor of a good estate, he became the minister of his own parish. But being, like King David, a valiant man, he determined that his clerical duties should not interfere with the "rights and reasons" of a Highland Laird; and he insisted on preaching in the full costume of the clan—philibeg and all, with a great

basket-hilted sword by his side. When taken to task for this innovation upon the regular canonicals of John Calvin—the time being long before the disarming act—he defended his conduct by three reasons, which were the following:—

1st. That though a preacher, he was a *gentleman*, and so entitled to wear arms, whenever and wherever he pleased.

2d. That he carried a sword because he knew how to use it; and

3d. That if any one doubted these premises, they might put him to the proof whenever they chose.

Such reasoning as this was decisive in the Highlands, especially when backed by “college lair” and a strong arm; and it appears to have been more successful than his assertions in his clerical calling; for, being an Ultra Calvinist, even unto the borders of Antinomianism, in inveighing from the pulpit against the heretical doctrine of “good works,” he is said to have exclaimed, “Ye will be *doing*! Fatt the deil can ye do?—*do!* and be daumned!”

We give this story on the authority of Mr. Logan, author of the Scottish Gael, who tells it with excellent Aberdeen “twang,” adding further, that the old papists and the cauldrie episcopalians of that time joined against the worthy laird, and made on him a *poem*, the burden of which was the following benevolent stanza—

A' the whiggs will go to hell,
Bonnie ladie, Highland ladie,
And Pitney he'll be there himsel',
My bonnie Highland ladie.

A sentiment which, in spite of the changes of times and meanings, many of the Forbeses, perhaps, would almost say or sing at this very day.

NOTE I. page 7.

If rhyming tradition is in aught to be believed, one valiant Forbes at least stood in great danger of being hanged, as we learn by the following pithy verses concerning the worthy Laird of Echt, and how he behaved himself in a certain serious situation :—

The laird of Echt,
Gaed out to fecht,
Against his prince and king, man,
But Barclay claught him by the neck
And fush him to Aberdeen, man.

So when he was in Aberdeen,
And on the Toubeeth* stairs, man,
He tura'd about and damn'd the Whiggs, —
Deil blaw them in the air, man !

It was a great pity that such a "pretty man," as the laird seems to have been, should have come to such an undignified consummation. If ever we get to the hills again, we shall try to learn more about him.

* Tolbooth or jail, generally furnished in Scotland with an outer stair, from which criminals were "turned off."

NOTE K. page 7.

The story of the "Black gun" and the "taking off" of the gudeman of Buchaam, is not very patent in Strathdon, although characteristic of the particular period. It is thus told:—

The Laird of Buchaam was a *gudeman*, in the eyes of every one, as it appears, but his own wife, who was probably much younger than he in years, for she seems to have had but little liking for him, and, in fact, to have encouraged in secret Forbes of Newe, who wanted to have her; but neither he nor she could contrive how to get rid of "the auld gudeman." To have picked a quarrel with him would not have been easy, for the old man was wise and wary, and watched carefully over his amorous wife. Newe, therefore, resolved boldly on the old plan of "taking off," for his love was impatient, and he could not wait.

Watching his opportunity, therefore, one morning when the laird's horse stood saddled for him at the door, as he and his wife Bessy were going to the kirk, taking his black gun in his hand, young Forbes planted himself at the back of a wall, hard by the gudeman's door, and, the moment he came out, fired, and shot him dead on the spot.

"Now it's done," he said, springing in over the wall; so going up to the door, and congratulating the new made widow, he whipped her upon the horse's back that waited, and then leaping on before her, away he carried her to the kirk of Strathdon, and they were married, says the tale, *that very day*, that no time might be lost, the minister not daring to refuse.

There was some sort of trial after this, but, by the assistance of his kinsman, Lord Forbes, Newe contrived to get off for a fine only ; for in those days it was no easy matter to hang a Highland laird, particularly if he belonged to a powerful clan. " Bessy of Buchaam " bears, at this time, as may be supposed, no very high character in Strathdon, for, according to some versions of the story, when she saw her old gudeman dead before the door, she is reported to have said to her ruthless paramour, in reference to a child that ran at her foot — " Since ye hae killed the auld cat, whatfore do ye no kill the kitten too ? "

The affair happened about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the " black gun " that did the deed remains in the possession of Sir Charles Forbes, Bart. of Newe, at this day. The farm of Buchaam, near Newe, is still remarkable for one of those subterraneous buildings or *eird houses*, well known in the Highlands, in which families used to hide during the troubles of former times.

NOTE L. page 7.

The character of one of the Forbesees of Waterton, besides another Forbes, that for his virtues was called " honest John of Newe," forms a pleasing contrast to that of the former, and illustrates the fact, that benevolence and sympathy were frequently exercised in the olden times, though we hear so much of savage deeds and irrational barbarity. Waterton, like other feudal lairds, having the power of pit and gallows on his land, had at one time, sentenced a man to be hanged for stealing his sheep. After keeping the poor man in confinement for some time,

he thought he had punished him sufficiently, and determined to let him go. When the dool-dealer, or hangman, got this order from the laird, he went to the place of the man's confinement, and told him that the gude laird, instead of hanging him as he deserved, had sent him a pardon, and so he might go about his business. The man, however, found his quarters so good, and his meat and drink so sure, that he refused to go, and made answer that if the laird would only not hang him, he was quite well where he was.

When "the man of the woodie" brought back this word to Waterton, he was puzzled for a time what to do. At length he said, "If the puir thief winna gang hame, just set the door open, and let him come and gae as he likes." This benevolent arrangement of the worthy laird is still commemorated by a proverb well known in Aberdeenshire:—"Ye may just go out and in when ye please, like Waterton's prisoner."

NOTE M. page 7.

There is an anecdote told of Nathaniel Forbes of Dalnhandy, who was a captain in the Earl of Mar's army in 1715, that is further characteristic of the times. In the same regiment with Forbes was a captain Macintosh, and three of his sons. One day, as the Macintoshes were amusing themselves with the game of throwing the stone, the father tried with the young men, and pitched a stone much farther than any of the three. Elated with this success, he, with an oath, challenged all the Forbeses on the Don to throw beyond that. Dalnhandy, on hearing this, took up the

stone, and with one fling threw it several yards beyond the elder Macintosh's mark. But so ardent had been his emulation for the honour of his clan, and so powerful his effort, that with the exertion the sinews of his legs strained out, until they burst both of his garters.

See *Donean Tourist*, p. 37.

NOTE N. page 7.

Among other traditional stories that are told concerning the Forbesees, there is one of the great personal strength exhibited by a man who lived among them in Strathdon. The man is usually named Machardy, and whether he was an illegitimate son of one of the clan, or how he came there is not known; but in feats of power and ferocity of character he was remarkable during a period when these were by no means rare in the Highlands.

On some festive occasion the Earl of Mar had invited from England a celebrated champion or pugilist, who by exhibiting his prowess before the clans might make amusement for his friends and the gentlemen round. Agreeably to the spirit of feudal authority, also, the earl sent forth a mandate, imposing a penalty on the whole surrounding country, unless a man could be produced to engage the English bravo. The Forbesees came forward, and offered Machardy; and at the day appointed he appeared at Kildrummy Castle, in the common kilt and bonnet of the Gael, his body being clothed only in a coarse flannel jerkin.

Seeing a man of low stature, and thus plainly apparelled, the Englishman spurned the Highlander with contempt;

laughing at his grotesque appearance. Every thing being prepared, however, and the spectators formed round, the combatants set to. One round of part boxing and part wrestling passed, and then another, in which the skill of the Englishman was superior, and the Highlander was twice laid on the ground. But the former was becoming careless and confident, while the latter was only warning for his great effort. On the third occasion, running in upon his antagonist after the negro method, the Highlander almost buried his head in the Englishman's stomach : grasping him round the body after this, he caught hold of his side with such firmness, as to break several of the ribs, until, in the struggle, bringing the contents away in his hand, he held the bleeding flesh aloft in the view of the spectators, shouting in wild Gaelic at his savage victory.

There is another story of a similar character told of the first proprietor of "the Inch" in Renfrewshire, which may illustrate the manner in which some of our ancestors obtained their lands. The king of the period being on a visit down Strathclyde, the lairds of the neighbourhood vied with each other in their efforts to entertain him. Among other sports provided, a champion from England was brought to the ground, who challenged all Renfrewshire to furnish a man who should wrestle with him ; and, in order to terrify any one from so hardy an attempt, proclaimed that a great fire should be kindled on the spot, and that he who was successful in throwing his opponent, should have the privilege of holding the vanquished's head in the bonfire until it was burnt.

Notwithstanding the terror of this dreadful alternative, a stout fellow of a miller, from the falls of the Cart, ac-

cepted the challenge. The place appointed was an island at the confluence of the two Cart rivers, a little above where they join with the Clyde, and near to the old Templar church of Inchinnan, where the bridge is now built. The day came, and the king was present. The bonfire already blazed in the picturesque island in the midst of the water; and the banks of both rivers were crowded with a vast concourse of spectators. The miller stood forward amidst the shouts of the multitude, and the great champion prepared for the set-to.

"What is this he has on him?" said the Englishman with contempt: "am I to wrestle with a man, or a wild savage? for, in fact, the crafty miller had prepared himself a dress of smooth leather, and his appearance was strange and grotesque in the extreme.

They set to with confidence—but when the champion tried to grasp his opponent, he could not with all his efforts get the least hold of him, for the cunning miller had got his leathern jerkin so fitted to his body, and made it so slippery with goose grease, that no hands could possibly get grips of him. The struggle was therefore of short duration, for the miller catching easily the Englishman's ostentatious drapery, lifted him like a sack of meal in his brawny arms, and threw him with a bang upon the green sod. The whole multitude shouted at the easy victory, and some would have had the braggart Englishman at once tossed into the fire.

But the miller was modest, as all men of merit are, and generously declined the barbarous proposal; and when the king asked him what reward he should give him for so rare a victory, he still more modestly made answer, that he would ask nothing to speak of from his gracious

majesty, for that a single *inch* of land would content him. At that time, the rich peninsula of land fronting the Clyde by Renfrew, now possessed by Mr. Speirs of that ilk, being surrounded by water on three sides, was known by the name of the King's Inch. This property the miller asked of the king, and a goodly inch it was, which was immediately granted to him; and so his heirs and assigns hold these lands (or ought to hold them) even until this present day.

NOTE O. page 7.

The hill of Lonach is a prominent and romantic object on the north side of the Don. Rising in the centre of the Forbeses' country, it has from time immemorial been the gathering spot or rallying place of the clan; its name being adopted as their war cry; and from its top often ascending the flame of the beacon light which called them to the gathering against their old enemies the Gordons.

All round this hill a curious superstition has long been or is still practised. On whichever side of it there happened a death, the corpse was never carried straight to the grave, without being first taken over the top of Lonach. When this toilsome ceremony was finished, a dead Forbes was then thought fit to be brought to the picturesque church yard of old Kildrummy.

Where the beacon formerly burned, namely, on the summit of this hill, which is 1200 feet above the level of the sea, now stands a picturesque object of a very different description: it is a pyramid of stone, about thirty feet

high, called Baronet's Cairn, erected *by the tenantry* of the present Sir Charles Forbes of Edenglassie, on whose property it is, in honour of his being raised to the dignity of a Baronet of the United Kingdom. This took place in 1823; and the enthusiastic attachment manifested on that occasion to a benevolent and considerate landlord, must have been, to such as Sir Charles, worth crowns and coronets.

NOTE P. page 11.

The doubling of men on one horse seems to have been a trick more than once resorted to in the Highlands; and the knowledge of it, in reference to the Muats and the Camerons, which we have but lately come to, spoils a very good story of a similar kind, that we intended to tell regarding the Keiths and the Clan-Gun, which happened at an old chapel in Caithness. We therefore subjoin the original ancient but bald account of that affair, given in a scarce tract called the "Conflicts of the Clans," and said to be written about 1620, by a Sir Robert Gordon.

"About the year of God 1478 there was some dissention in Catteyness betwixt the Keiths and the Clan-Gun. A meeting was appointed for their reconciliation, at the chappel of St. Tayre in Caithness, hard by Girnigo, with twelve horse on either side. The Cruner, (chieftain of the Clan-Gun) with the most part of his sons and chiefest kinsmen, came to the chappel, to the number of twelve; and, as they were within the chappel at their prayers, the Laird of Inverugy and Acrigell arrived there with twelve horse, and two men upon every horse; thinking it no

breach of trust to come twenty-four men, seeing they had twelve horses, as was appointed. So the twenty-four gentlemen rushed in at the door of the chappel, and invaded the Cruner and his company at unawares; who, nevertheless, made great resistance. In the end the Clan-Gun were *all slain*, with the most of these Keiths. Their blood may be seen at this day upon the walls within the chappel of St. Tayre, where they were slain. Afterwards, William Mackames (the Cruner his grand-child), in revenge of his grandfather, killed George Keith of Acrigell and his son, with ten of their men, at Drummoy in Sutherland, as they were travelling from Inverugye into Catteyness."

NOTE Q. page 21.

The potency of a kiss, as the seal of a vow or the dissolver of a charm, is well recognised in ancient superstitious faith. Tradition has preserved many stories of corpses rising at the pronouncing of certain words, and breaking some dark and injurious spell, by clasping in their wasted arms the terrified intruder into some unhallowed spot; and printing on warm and living lips the freezing kiss of corrupting death.

This is not the place to intrude instances; but, in referring to times when faith in spells and transformations affecting the living or the dead opened to the fancy a kingdom almost boundless, but now "dissolved" by knowledge, like a dream of infancy — we may just mention the strange tale preserved in the old ballad of Kemp Owyne, much resembling the mythological story of Perseus and Andromeda.

A "dove maiden" has a bad step-mother, who, notwithstanding that the maid serves her "with foot and hand," and "every thing that she could dee," considers the poor damsel to be in her way, and throws her "far ower Craigy's sea," saying —

"Lie you there, dove Isabel,
And all my sorrows lie with thee,
'Till Kemp Owyne come o'er the foam,
And borrows you with kisses three.
But let all the world do as they will,
Oh ! borrowed you shall never be."

The maid does not drown ; but, being saved by some fairy power, comes forth out of the ocean, transformed, however, into a monstrous creature, with tail and fins, and most untempting to any man's embraces, for

"Her breath grew strang, and her hair grew lang,
And twisted thrice about the tree ;
And all the people, far and near,
Thought that a savage beast was she."

From this desperate condition she was only to be released by three kisses. These the valorous Kemp Owyne, hearing of her miserable state, and coming to her relief, like another Perseus, from where he lived, far beyond the sea, successively gives the terrific mermaid, notwithstanding her wild looks and her unsavoury breath. In the course of these, the maid-monster gives him a belt, a ring, and a royal brand, which were to preserve him from danger ; only, however, on one condition, explained in this verse :—

“ Here is a royal brand, she said,
That I have found in the green sea ;
And while your body it is on,
Drawn shall your blood never be ;
But *if you touch me, tail or fin,*
I swear my brand your death shall be.”

This was, no doubt, a difficult business ; nevertheless
he entirely succeeds, and at the last salute

“ Her breath grew sweet, and her hair grew short,
And twisted nane about the tree ;
And smilingly she came about,
As fair a woman as fair could be.”

NOTE R. page 28.

A stone marking the spot where the fight took place is still called Clochmuat in memory of the battle, and is to be seen at Badenyone, near the head of Glenbucket. On the opposite side of the Don, and in a romantic valley, the old house or castle of Brux is still standing in a hidden situation ; and, like this whole strath, very much out of the beaten tract of tourists from the south. It is a plain building, with its outhouses, and is surrounded by avenues of fine old trees, which have a venerable if not striking effect in so secluded a situation among the hills. The large limbed remains of an old oak near the house is still pointed out under the name of the *dool tree*, where malefactors condemned by the laird were wont to be hanged, when feudal power conferred this “ privilege”

54 THE FORBESES AND THE GORDONS.

upon the Forbesees of Brux. The old house is still in the hands of this clan—the present proprietor being the Honourable Walter Forbes, second son of the present Lord Forbes. There is yet to be seen a curious effigy of Rob Forbes of Brux, the hero of our story, in the romantic old ruin of Kildrummy kirk.

The chief particulars of this tradition are given in the notes to a heroic “poem” called *THE DON*, published in Aberdeen; and every version of it agrees, that the lady of Brux insisted, against the scruples of the lovers, on their being married and “bedded” that night, ere the blood of her husband’s foe was washed from young Forbes’s hands, and before it had dried on his blade.

LADY BARBARA OF CARLOGHIE,
AND
THE JOHNSTONS OF FAIRLY.

A STORY OF THE DOMINIE.*

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOMINIE'S PROGRAMME.

IT was whilst living dull and solitary in my upland dwelling of Balgownie Brae, in the west of Scotland, and sliding listlessly on to-

* To those who have not met with a book called "The Dominie's Legacy," it may be necessary to state, that the idea is of a simple and benevolent old man — an abortive clergyman of the Kirk of Scotland, afterwards a teacher or dominie — who, becoming independent in his latter years, indulges his propensity for wandering about over the country, making his observations, and hearing and gathering old and quaint stories, in all of which the honest Dominie felt himself much interested. These he is supposed to write at his leisure, in his bachelor home; and not having the courage to publish them himself, leaves them to the author as a "legacy" for the edification of the world.

wards the evening of life, that I at one time took a plaintive thought concerning sundry events in my own history; and recalled, with an inward sadness, various illusory enchantments of my youthful days. In particular I reflected, in reference to those wanderings of mine, in the course of which I had gathered together so many records of by-gone good and evil, that there was one district of my country, to me associated with many interesting recollections, which I had not visited for above twenty moralizing and regretful years.

And yet, several times of late, I had ventured towards the exterior margin of this peculiar spot, and had traced out, by the help of fancy, the green holms of Ruar water; and even seen against the evening sky the embattled turrets of old Carloghie, rising venerable o'er its sweeping woods; reminding me of promising fancies that had ended in nothing, and hopes whose very recollection lay in the mists of oblivion. But more than a Pisgah sight of these well known haughs, it neither answered my pride, nor my prudence to take;

for, occurrences had happened to myself which deeply moved my feelings — and I would not be the first to seek out those who sought not me, nor run the hazard of meeting with one, whose presence could only stir up most painful thoughts. Many a tale I have told of the loves of others — and how the young were tried in regard to their heart's wishes, and the old were disappointed in the ambitions of life. But the simple egotisms of my own experience, and how I was vexed at the heart concerning a certain female, it does not become me to open out to the world.

The dismal time of the year was yet at its worst, for it was one dreary and dropping afternoon in the dark month of January, when these sombre musings came over my mind like a heavy cloud, reminding me of tendernesses long gone by, and anticipations of joy which had melted away like the summer's sleet, and left nothing behind them, but a yearning of the heart. As I looked at the leafless trees round my dwelling, through whose naked boughs the

cold wind of winter was mournfully whistling ; and bethought me of my barren bachelor sterility, left at this late time of life without an object on which to let out the sympathies of my nature ; and observed how the naked trees, like myself, stretched forth their bald arms towards the heavens, waiting for the genial days of spring life, which would soon return to them, but never again to me — the weakness of feeling broke out upon me, as it had been the dissolving clouds ; and, like Rachael in the Scripture, I wept for my children because they were not.

Anon, this weakness passed away, and I wiped with shame my solitary tears ; for I reflected, that unaviling regret was but one of Solomon's vanities ; seeing that it is not in the nature of Time's things to fill up the secret cravings of the affections. So, like others, I consoled myself in my sadness with the general discontent, and resolved that when the warm spring should again return, I would take up my wallet and my staff, and setting forth as I was wont, would once more venture to tread

the gowans by Fairly Burn, and explore the stately woods of sweet Carloghie.

The long winter at length passed over, and spring, as the song says, began to "cleed the birken shaw," when my time of travelling being come, I prepared to set forth with my face turned towards the pleasant south. The very evening, however, before my intended departure, considerations began to press upon my thoughts, which almost tended to change my whole resolves. What these considerations precisely consisted of, it were tedious to the reader, at present, to amplify. But they partook of that mixture of pride and delicay, which may exist between persons who have known each other long, from circumstances that grow out of the changes of things, we know not how, but which fate or fortune is constantly bringing about, to disappoint our auguries of what is to happen to ourselves.

I had nearly made up my mind against my journey to this quarter, when looking forth from my window, I perceived, to my surprise, the postman with his bag coming slowly up the

avenue. A sealed epistle was soon put into my hands, and I found myself addressed in the following unusual manner :—

“ Carloghie Castle, 1st May 17—

“ As there is a time, dear sir, for all things that are done in the world, so there ought to be a period, when reasons may be given for our darkest acts; and when I, at least, may take pen in hand, to solicit the kindly recollections of an old friend. It is due to you, and long has been, that I should explain in person various matters, that might appear mysterious in my conduct to you in former years.

“ This explanation I have much desired to give you, as I now have freely to confess. But there are reasons connected with a woman’s feelings, and the world’s circumstances, which may not themselves be easily explained; for we see not clearly what is required of us, and good and evil seem at times almost to change places.

“ For all this, if I am not wrong in my calculations concerning you, you will come hither

to see and speak to me. Come then to Carloghie, and that speedily, for all is past that we once dreamt of, and we may now converse as old friends, whose former acquaintance is forgotten by the world.

“Yours in kindness and esteem,

“MARION LOGAN.”

Never did fate send a lonely man, in the nick of time, a more welcome epistle, to skin over the sores of his private regrets, and restore his confidence in human virtue. All that night I could not sleep, and fresh morning had hardly raised the birds from their nests, when I was already on my pleasant road; for never were my nerves in better order for a long journey. Thus I trudged on o'er hill and dale, with my staff in my hand and my wallet from my shoulder, sometimes crooning to myself a song of my country; and as light of heart as a minstrel gaberlunzie. Two long summer's days had hardly won to an end, ere I descried on the horizon towards the western sky the picturesque turrets of Carloghie castle.

It was drawing towards noon of the following day, however, ere I arrived at the old-fashioned porter's lodge, where I had been directed to enquire concerning my early friend. Two or three sentences exchanged with the porteress, as I rested on my staff by her honeysuckle gate, let me into all that I sought to know regarding Marion's reasons for her conduct to me; and enabled me to waive, when we should meet, those circumstantial details which could not but be mutually painful. Never shall I blame man or woman for a becoming pride, even though their situation be humble and obscure, when I know it to be the foundation of so much virtue. At the time when Marion last communicated with me, she had been obliged to become a dependant upon the ancient noble family of Carloghie. All the members of the family were now scattered, or had fled for a time, as the way of the great is when they find themselves in trouble; and so Marion, with old Mr. Morrison the gardener, and two or three more superannuated servants,

were left in full charge of the old building and the domains.

The roses and lilies, and bushy brooms and sweetbriars, that margined the avenue which led me to the castle, refreshed my senses like a running nosegay; and when I got to the top of the mount, where the road elbowed round, the holms of Fairly lying quiet in the distance, appeared beneath me, where the stream winded beyond the woods, like a paradise of poetry and pleasant thoughts. Above the streamlet, upon the hill, I once had dreamt of taking up my abode, with Marion herself to be my daily society; but many a wishful dream I have had in my time, which came in the train of solacing fancies, delighting the present and gilding the future, but which vanished at last like the illusions of sleep. And Marion has, no doubt, had her fancies too, of social pleasures and a mother's joys. But times and things are no longer what they were, and here in the distance I could see the building that once was her father's mansion, all changed and altered by the hands of a stranger.

The Castle of Carloghie, to which I was drawing near, was grey and lofty like other feudal buildings, and had great towers and long chimneys, and broken battlements, and frowning arches, and grinning faces that peeped out of awkward corners, and strange outlandish effigies, that supported corbels of heavy Gothicism above your head — ugly creatures that were made by the Picts, at the time that King Kenneth conversed with the dragon — and so many doors there were to this patched bundle of buildings (besides the great entrance which I dared not attempt), that when I drew near and began to reconnoitre its endless intricacies, I could not make a choice by which of its many portals I should seek admittance to enquire for my friend. At length, finding myself gazed at by one of those idle boys, who are the natural vermin of great houses, I addressed the chap with becoming circumspection, and he led me to a door as lowly as he thought me entitled to, when ushering me into a stone passage, and duly handed me over to a powdered man, I

had hopes of getting at last to the ultimatum of my errand.

When the door of the apartment into which I was shown was shut upon me, my heart beat quick at the near anticipation of Marion's real presence, after the lapse of so many long years. And yet I ought not to say in strictness, that I had ever been absolutely in love with Marion Logan. The sentiment I entertained for her partook not of the earthly impatience of passion, but consisted rather of those quiet sympathies of nature, between persons of different sexes, which, mixing comfortably with heartfelt esteem, are rendered touching by time and individual meditation, and twine closer after all into the inner affections, than any more fiery and consuming agitation.

But agitation in reality was now fast coming over me; and as I waited in anxiety, while these thoughts rushed hastily through my mind, the stillness that reigned in the great castle, was to me almost painful. I could hear distinctly, even above the murmur of the summer wind without, the boom of the water-

fall, which I had passed in the hollow beyond the planting. At length the echo which followed the shutting of a door above my head, sounding through the arched passages, recalled my expectation. I heard a light foot trip down the stairs, and the door of my room being softly opened, I rose to meet the friend of my memory.

With some surprise I observed that she was dressed in black; a white muslin (something) with sable ornaments, was folded modestly from her neck; and for a head-dress she wore a black (something else), which, tastefully arranged, and tipped with spots of white satin, appeared almost affecting in its mournful simplicity, like the ermine emblems on a monument for departed youth. We stood and contemplated each other for a moment. Time had made a difference certainly; but that difference was such, as instead of injuring rather to enhance the force of a sentiment, which had been founded on something more than the ruddy flush of blooming years. Not an iota less however of the warmth of the

heart's feelings, shone in Marion's mild and speaking eye; and whatever her countenance had lost in its form and compactness, it had gained, at least to me, in sedate meaning and depth of expression.

After the shaking of hands, and the first steady look, and the enquiries and responses that let us hear once more the sound of each others voices, —

“ You will now admit, sir,” she said, after some few words “ that I had good reasons for adopting that painful resolution, which deprived me, as I believe, of your society, at the expense, I confess, of many feelings ; but which destines me to live and die in my present condition. What these reasons were, however, I have only partly told you ; for besides them, there were others which arose out of a chain of circumstances, that occurred to a member of the noble family with whom I had found an asylum, which converted by degrees what might have been only a postponement into an ultimate fixing of my worldly situation, and a full regulation of my destiny for life. Whether

the *historiettes* I allude to may be considered remarkable or not, to this noble house and others they have been of deep and melancholy interest, and I have myself been involved in them, in a way which I could neither foresee nor prevent. But come," she added, "let us not make ourselves melancholy over others' fates, while our own have included their share of disappointments; and while we talk as we go, I will show you the various *grandeurs* of this old mansion, and tell you something of the antient historicals of my lord's family."

CHAP. II.

THE old Castle of Carloghie, as we went through it, certainly presented altogether a strange mass of antiquarian inconsistencies. Like similar edifices of progressive erection, it might be said to form an instructive record of human greatness and infirmity. There was not wanting banqueting halls, and dancing halls, with high ceilings and long windows; and withdrawing-rooms of modern decoration; and state chambers of the olden time; and faded tapestry, and tattered velvet, and small dormitories, which *ought* to have been haunted; and narrow passages leading to nothing, unless it might be to the pepper-box turrets, which one feared to climb to; and which, toppling over a precipice of black tower, frowned over wood and hollow; overlooking a prospect without that refreshed the senses, and pleasantly recalled the weary imagination from the dry contemplations of musty antiquity.

And then, below, under the most ancient part of the castle, there were holes and dungeons within oaken doors, into which Marion and I feared to look; and dark recesses, and iron rings in the walls, which filled the mind with the most terrible fancies; whilst above all these were painted saloons with great gilded beams and carved faces — besides banners and bravery, and antique armour, and stained glass — which bespoke nothing but lordly was-sail and enjoyment. Many a heavy door my guide pushed open for me, and many a naked apartment of arched state or stony magnificence, she took me into, where we traced the past, and moralized the present; and where we saw much dusty grandeur, and many oaken inconveniences of quaint shapes and grotesque massiveness; which, like the obsolete spelling of an old book, taught, in uncouth terms, hard to decipher, lessons ever new and ever old, which time and nature puts in constant repetition.

But as Marion and I conversed over the tattered pictures in the upper chambers, among

many broken-down portraits of former lords of these domains, whose very names were becoming as obsolete as their features were dilapidated ; as I looked also at the ugly frights of beings, resembling nothing ever seen on the earth, which the artists of the olden time had carved in black hard-wood, to diversify living forms ; they seemed to bring to me the same evidence, as the grotesque sphinxes of ancient Persia or Egypt ;—that if the old father of the hour-glass is but a limited monarch, his dominions being constantly invaded by the shadows of oblivion — the human fancy is also limited ; experience continually circumscribing its fantastic dominion, by subjecting its wildnesses to a constant comparison with existing things.

What strange fancy could have come into my head, however, below stairs, when we came to a room whose walls were almost covered with more modern portraits ? They were of different sizes, and represented persons of the family who had died at all ages — from the chubby infant to the toothless old man. In contemplating all these round the apartment, the

idea of a church-yard became so unaccountably mixed up with the figures before me, that I was obliged to pass my hand over my eyes, and enquire internally the cause of this involuntary association. I could give no other reason for it than that, though seeming fresh and animated with life by the art of the limner, the personages on the walls were all dead and actually buried in the family vault near the old chapel of Carloghie; and it was the knowledge of this, no doubt, made me associate what I saw with the idea of a burying ground, wherein, of course, is to be seen, in irregular mixture, white urns, and smooth tablets for youth; and black and lettered monuments for the aged — full grown death, or wasted decrepitude, resting beside the child of a span long — all gone, and equally silent with the painted effigies before me. The scraps of individual history, which Marion was enabled to append to my observations on several of the personages in my view, carried in them that sort of interest with which we trace the fortunes of those who are born apparently to every ad-

vantage, and yet somehow come short of anticipated happiness.

Was I right in inferring, from all I could learn, that those enjoyed the most tranquil lives of whom the least was known to their posterity? I found at least that the historical circumstances preserved through tradition were nearly all of an unhappy or unfortunate species; for man is a being so discontented with his own lot, in his day, that he finds a consolation and a comfort in tracing and dwelling upon the sorrows of others, of those especially who are beyond the reach of calling for his help.

"Your eye has caught her at last," said Marion, rather abruptly, observing me contemplating the face of a female portrait, comparatively recently traced on the canvass. "I thought she would strike you; and yet you will not say she is so pretty as some of the others."

"There is nothing in that portrait that is at all striking," said I, looking again at the buxom figure of a young lady, whose face had more of the character of Rubens' women, than of that of a cold Madona — "unless it be the

crimson velvet robe, that so ambitiously wraps her bust; or the pearl tiara on her head, that gives her a look like Queen Cleopatra. This must have been a very high dame by her queen-like appearance. She seems even now to frown upon us, as if reproaching us for our familiarity."

Marion merely shook her head, sadly, as she contemplated the portrait, and stepped two paces back, as if the look made her uneasy. "Do you like her?" she said, rather hastily. "Portraits are a good channel for family history; sometimes also a good text, from which to preach moral lessons to the world."

"I *do* like her," I answered, "and yet I hardly know why, for beauty is certainly not the main characteristic of her face; nor can I read ought of her character in its mixed lineaments. She is a daughter, I perceive, of the house of Carloghie, and one of the most haughty of its females; but more I cannot guess. Who is she?"

"She is—but come away! we have been long enough in this room," said Marion hastily,

and hurrying me towards the door. "Follow me," she added; "and as we have talked of pictures, we will see if a painter can tell a history."

We descended again some long narrow stairs, and then turned off towards a different quarter of the castle. When we came to a little arched door, she stopped and hesitated, as if some thought had struck her to prevent her entrance.

"No," she said; "we will not enter now. It will be time enough when you have heard a tale about this lady, which I owe it to myself as well as you to tell, from the beginning. You may not think it interesting; perhaps it may even appear tedious, in the way I must narrate it, to show it out as it struck me; — but, whatever may be its defects, as a dramatic picture, there is in it a deep and solemn moral, evidenced by sufferings of which I have been the melancholy witness, and feelings which I shall not easily portray."

While we were thus speaking, the bell in the

western turret rang for dinner, with as much formality as if the whole family had been at home ; and after a simple repast, which I enjoyed much in the society of my valued friend, Marion thus began her tale of the family.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.**THE STORY.**

“ONE of the earliest things that I can remember,” began my narrator, “was the marriage day of the Earl, when he brought home to Carloghie Castle the high and haughty Lady Mary Bochlyvie. I was then but a child at my mother’s foot; and my memory only retains a dim confusion of carriages and horses prancing towards the castle; and white ribands, and gay dresses; and firing of guns that almost frightened me out of my wits; and shouting of the men, and amazement of the women, at all the grandeur and the bravery. Never, from that day to this, was there such a show in the Fairly Holms; for it was then the fashion for weddings and funerals at great houses to be celebrated with much eating, drinking, crowds,

and rejoicing. And so Lady Bochlyvie, being a great lady, to be brought home; and my lord being a proud man, and used to all manner of magnificence, ever since the King helped to ruin his grandfather; there was nothing but colours flying on the towers of Carloghie, and wine flowing in the great hall below; and all the gentry far and near were gathered to the celebration, to drink happiness and joy to my lord and my lady.

“ I remember the confusion of my little head at seeing all that I saw, and hearing all that I heard that day; and at the guns cracking at my ears, and the shouting and huzzaing; for the farmers and people were perfectly mad with joy at seeing the great folks come back to our own holms, and talked all manner of extravagance in their drink. And then, at night, such bonfires gleamed on every hill for miles round, in my young eyes — I think I see them still, blazing through the dimness of forty years !

“ But my father was a thoughtful man, and had experience of the world; and when he saw

all this obstreperous rejoicing, he shook his head with a stern countenance, and a rebuke in his look; and I heard him say to my mother, that, although it was not pleasant to prophesy sorrow in the midst of mirth, yet that the whitest stone threw the blackest shadow,—that this over boasting of present joy and anticipated happiness was perilous to the peace of high or low, and carried to him an ominous prediction for the uncertain future. The day passed over, however, as the happiest day must; and months ran away after that; and the rejoicing was almost as great, when a son and heir came to be surely anticipated, to inherit the great earldom of Carloghie. That my lady's bairn to come was to be a son, there could be no doubt; for my lord was a man who had always been used to have his own way, and to be crossed in a particular so important to his house was an event which of course was not to be thought of.

“ But when the time ripened, and the doctors were agog, and all the country were astir on so great an occasion, the Earl received a damper

in the page's news, which was almost too much for his spirit to bear. The expected son, who was destined to be christened in the names of all his ancestors, turned out to be only a daughter ! for which no name whatever had been made or provided.

“ Here was a business for an earl of the land ! It was perfectly cruel and distressing !

“ The worst of disappointments, however, time will soften down ; and a son and heir was again promised to the house of Carloghie. That promise was at length brought to maturity, and in the fulness of the period, ended also in a new disappointment, more trying — I may say more intolerable — even than the former. To be thus contradicted in his wishes a second time, was more than could be expected to be borne, by a man of my lord's disposition, with any thing like patience. My lady took ill health from trouble of mind, and my lord went abroad, and became misanthropical to the world.

“ Both might have become reconciled to these repeated misfortunes, had the little Ladies

Frances and Mary been cherubs of beauty, as great people's children, no doubt, ought to be. But though the Earl and his lady were passable to look at, the little girls were plain to a degree, and the nursery maids said they were perfect imps. The hopes of the parents again revived, however, for it was evident the Earl was going to have a large family. But the next child my lady had was also a daughter ! so all the calculations of the relatives, on both sides of the house, were entirely defeated, and the Earl was reduced to black despair.

“ It was certainly a fault for my lord to be so pertinacious ; but, from the old Lady Carloghie and others, he had always, from a child, had whatever he wished that money could purchase ; and as money had hitherto procured him every thing he desired, and he had never been so balked and thwarted before, it was no wonder he was a sad and disconsolate man. Other affairs of his household and his tenantry were at this time added to vex and worry my lord's mind ; and, as I have heard tell, he began, in the midst of his fret, to look around

him with astonishment, and ask himself if he were really a born earl, and a patrician of the realm, that he should thus be subjected to crosses and troubles, as if he had been nothing but a poor man.

“The expectation of children was now only a vexation to him, as the event he had set his heart on never took place; although my lady was now in good health, and they all lived dull and domestic here at the old castle. Accordingly, when my lady’s accouchement drew near, for the fourth time, my lord set off from this irksome neighbourhood, just to be out of the way of another disappointment. He was gone about London, or somewhere else, seeking consolation, as usual, in the spending of money, when, what was his surprise, one careless morning, to receive a letter through the common post-office, as if it were only a report of his factor, announcing to him nothing less than the actual birth of a son and heir!

“So sudden a dispelling of the clouds of misfortune was almost too much for his lordship’s nerves. He took post immediately to return

to his home ; and the rejoicings that took place at Carloghie Castle, on his arrival, were so great and long continued as almost to cause the death of the child whose birth had been the occasion of so sudden a change. Thus began the several bright years that, notwithstanding my father's ominous forebodings, continued for a considerable time to cheer the hearts of the Earl and his lady, and to enliven the whole neighbourhood of old Carloghie.

“ And so thus ends, I may say, the first epoch of this particular branch of our family history.”

CHAPTER II.

“ WHEN Lord William grew up—for this was the first of the names by which the male heir of the family had been christened—unlike, in particular, his two eldest sisters, the youth evinced a fine mind and a handsome face, with a constitution so fragile and delicate, that to his doting parents his health became a subject of constant solicitude. As for the girls,—particularly Lady Frances and Lady Mary—they were really, to speak the honest truth, as plain in all respects of the outward woman, as ever you would suppose it possible for a noble earl’s daughters to be. The eldest was scraggy to a degree, and had an ungainly figure, and features such as you will seldom see in a common farmer’s lassie. The second had high cheek bones, which my lady her mother said were far too Scotch; a skin freckled like a leopard, although the sun had seldom been suffered to shine upon it; and she had also

sandy red eye-lashes, which gave her face a very peculiar and far from agreeable expression. The third and youngest, Lady Barbara, though bluff and brown when a child, grew up a comely and attractive girl. This young lady, indeed, took very much the look of her brother, Lord William—having at least his dark penetrating eye, with the lofty and haughty bearing of her mother's side of the house. Consequently Lady Barbara was flattered much from contrast with her less favoured sisters, and by them she was regarded with a natural, almost a justifiable envy.

“ But the great attention of the family was, from his earliest years, lavished upon the young heir, who began to discover qualities, both mental and external, which well might excite the admiration of my lord and my lady. With a thin yet animated longish visage, an eye like a hawk, and a look expressive of that wilful sort of intellectuality which belongs to the finest scions of the aristocracy, Lord William was a youth of whom any lord in the land might well have been proud. I re-

member him when a boy—a pretty boy! riding like Jehu down the Fairly Holms, and calling upon the farmer lads to follow him in his gallop, as if he had been leading an army to battle. And yet, at that time, battling and warriorship seemed not to be in the youth's thoughts; but rather something that was not usual for a lord, namely, learning and scholarship, and pretty arts, as if he was to be nothing but a silly man to write books for dull people to abuse, or a learned clerk to teach homilies of philosophy; and then, to crown all, what should serve his wilful spirit after that, but he must take up the ambition to paint pictures, like a painter.

“ When my little lord got this fancy into his head, he filled the castle with a litter of limners' gear, paints and paint-brushes, and filthy oils, that smelled the rooms, dabbled the floors, and vexed the house-maids exceedingly. My lady his mother did not approve of these fancies; but he being delicate, besides being very clever, she had not the heart to cross him. And then he would leave his tutors and his hard words, and wander the woods with a crayon and a

book, and sit himself down on a cold stone or the root of a tree, drawing old walls and ruined turrets; or he would go down about the holms by the water's edge, and take effigies of common and plebeian things, such as cobble-boats, and ragged boys, and cart horses, and swine; which he would come and show at the castle, as if they had been high matters to be admired! Then he would make free to look at the farmer lads, and to be seen with his crayons and his paper, as if he had not been the son of my lord, and nothing but a common student, drawing trees and stumps for his living.

“ In these peculiar fancies, certainly, my lord was not aided or abetted by any at the castle; for his father frowned and spoke angry austerity; his lady mother beseeched and argued with him like a college professor; his eldest sisters looked stiff and scorning upon him and his drawings, and sometimes broke out and scolded him like perfect kail-women. All this, however, only roused in him a spirit of resistance, which, partly founded on the consciousness of his rank, partly on his haughty disposition, and

partly on the opinions which he was in process of imbibing, did not develope itself in the returning of argument, but in setting them all by his conduct at open defiance.

“In this sort of wilfulness, which was after all tolerably harmless, except on the score of letting down his dignity, Lord William at first stood alone in the house; but anon his youngest sister, whom he most resembled, by degrees began to join him in what he pled for, praised his talents, and defended his conduct; and at length broke loose herself, and followed him without in his eccentric ramblings. In the opinion of his mother and the rest, Lady Barbara now began to comport herself as unbecoming her father’s daughter, as the young lord did unlike an earl’s son. Parental or tutorial authority was now of little avail against the wild spirit of the brother and sister; and the domestic dignity of my lord’s family government became divided against itself in the insubordination of faction.

“To give you the philosophy of the matter,” continued Marion — “for there must be

philosophy in my tale, although I tell it, or truly it is nothing — there was a reason for the disobedient spirit of the two younger children, arising out of the sure workings of human nature. In common with very many in their high station, my lord and my lady made the chief virtue required of them and their children to consist of the proper *support of their dignity*, especially in the view of their obvious inferiors. Accordingly, from the first dawn of reason in their children, they never failed to take every opportunity of impressing upon their young minds, in the strongest language, the fact of their hereditary greatness, and of the infinite distance that there was by nature between them and all those by whom they were usually surrounded. As they grew in years, maxims of dignity and airs of state were taught and impressed upon the children of Lord Carloghie with incessant diligence and fastidious care, and became in truth the staple of that *family education*, which has of all others the greatest influence on the formation of character.

“But the anxiety of parents upon a favourite

point is extremely apt to defeat itself; by overdoing something with artificial means, which seems to them at the moment to be all in all. Thus, as is often done in the case of religion, by constantly worrying youth with one theme, they excite that feeling of irksomeness and disgust at the whole of a subject, which years only strengthens, by the law of association. Upon the elder ladies at Carloghie Castle, however, the watchfulness and jealousy of their parents, upon this incessant subject, and upon the constant study of an artificial manner before inferiors, had not this effect; no more than would, probably, forced religion have had upon the same species of minds; which, being of the mediocre, or rather beneath the mediocre species, all narrow opinions, flattering to self-love, were extremely suitable to them, and became bitter bigotry as fast as imbibed.

“The nobler and freer intellects of Lord William and his youngest sister, however, spurned these opinions, in proportion as they were carried beyond the common-sense apprehensions of simple minds; and, as they were

urged upon them on occasions unseasonable to the warm and generous feelings of youth, their untractable disregard to the reserves becoming their station, — having been *formed* by a system of restraints too early enforced, — was aggravated by constant and bigoted exhortation; and kindled, by the pressing of overstrained sentiments, often into silent yet resolute opposition.

“Had the Earl of Carloghie’s been a mushroom house, this jealous spirit might in some sort have been excused — at least it might be deemed only natural, according to the usual procedure of the world. But its existence in his case only shows, that a contracted mind feeding on pride, fastens, in all circumstances, on those mean aims and objects, which are suited to its own ignorant spirit and its narrow ideas. Thus, looking upon all beneath them in rank — at least if not redeemed by surpassing wealth — as beings of a different species from themselves, the noble parents taught this creed in every form to their children; and those of the latter, who could not receive it to the same extent as

themselves, were opposed and scorned, or at least lamented over as low-lived renegades from their noble house. Thus also, while parental indulgence, and the delicate state of his own health, preserved Lord William late from being sent to college, the foundation was laid for those artist ramblings and eccentric opinions, both on the part of himself and sister, which, as unfortunately their minds were quite different from those of my lord and my lady, ultimately ended, at least on the part of one of them, in the uncommon events of her history.

“ With Lord William, indeed, this spirit of unsuitable liberality, contrary to the will of my lord, would have doubtless been mellowed down by more extended observation, had time been allowed him to mix further with the world. But, alas for his haughty yet doting parents ! when just about sending him at last to the university, his health grew worse, and getting drenched in the woods one day in changeable weather — while in terror of his father he sat in the evening in his wet clothes — a fever was the consequence, which at once

threw the family into the most dreadful alarm. Their worst fears for him soon became too well verified; and though doctors were sent for, wherever money could procure the highest medical skill; and though his favourite sister never left him, nursing him by his bedside day and night, the efforts of man were of no avail; the prospect of a coronet could not save him; and in ten days after he was taken ill, handsome Lord William, the hope of his house, and the pride and boast of the Fairly Holms, lay a dead corse in the Gothic room, among the old standards and escutcheons here in Carloghie Castle.

“ Oh, what a voice of lamentation and weeping arose within the hoary walls of this dreary mansion! Oh, what a despair of heavy grief drowned in sorrow my lord and my lady! and oh, what a day was that, when his youthful body was taken to be buried in the great family vault in the old chapel! When the black hearse with the white plumes of virginity, and the yellow skulls that grinned on the dark panels, came down the long avenue from

Carloghie Castle ; and when the long cavalcade of mourning procession traversed his old haunts by the Ruar Water, as I stood and watched it again on the hill by my father's side, I saw the tears hop down the old man's cheek ; and I heard him murmur to himself these solemn words : ' Now is my prophecy o'er truly rede. This, I fear, is but the first act of the black tragedy, that, for the warning prostration of human presumption, is to follow the immoderate rejoicings that made the air ring again, and filled these haughs with boastful bravery, so shortly since, upon my good lord's wedding day.' "

CHAPTER III.

“CHANGE of place, and change of scene, and the sight of foreign parts and strange company, help to dissipate great folks’ grief; and so my lord and my lady, and all their retinue, at length returned again to old Carloghie. There came with them, or arrived soon after, a crowd of carriages, and various-sized wheeled vehicles, containing dukes, and earls, and other lords, and foreign counts with long names, and great ladies of old families and small means, and, in short, a well selected gathering of miscellaneous gentry.

“All this driving of coaches, and company-keeping at the castle, was, of course, to marry off my lord’s three daughters, who began to hang heavy on their parents’ hands, and made them exceedingly anxious for the time to come. In this laudable and most parental purpose, my lord and my lady were balked, however, in a

manner that looked as if they had been born to be unfortunate. In truth, with reference to the greater number of high born suitors, the looks of the two eldest girls were exceedingly against them.

“ Yet, in pains-taking expense upon this important business, my lord and lady were certainly in nothing to blame. They had dress-makers from London, and stay-makers from Paris, and milliners from all civilised foreign parts; and artists of the person to no end; and my lord, poor man, was like to be ruined and driven to the Continent, with nothing but the trouble and the cost thereof. Then there were paints and patches, got from all quarters, bearing all manner of foreign names; and French rouge, to make the ladies bloom like the rose; and scents and perfumes, to make them smell like Arabia; and pastes and poultices, to whiten their skins; and oils and dye-drugs, to recolour their hair — and the whole castle was like a warehouse with a litter of cosmetics.

“ But all would not do; and my lord’s grand dinners were eaten for naught; for the high

gentry dropped off one by one, without ever asking an interesting question; and so, like the daughter of Jephthah in the holy book, the ladies were left where they were, to stay at home in the castle, or to go out to the hills and bewail their virginity. With the two eldest ladies, this was particularly the case; and as for the youngest, though much better favoured, and every way more attractive, she was of a reckless and wild spirit, which seemed absolutely to frighten the men from any wavering purpose towards her. She was now, however, become a buxom and heroic-looking girl, with large black eyes and a towering head; and as her sisters, saving for some inferior match, were evidently laid upon the shelf, upon Lady Barbara were fixed the hopes of the family.

“ In all civilised communities of old aristocracy, it has ever been the practice for parents to look out matches for their daughters; it being well understood, that it is a matter with which the girls themselves have nothing to do. Yet, however orthodox this doctrine was in the

mind of the Earl, it quite disagreed with Lady Barbara's philosophy. She conceived, like all foolish young people, that likings and dislikings, in the case of matrimonial coupling, had something to do with the happiness of life—that these were in some cases to be thought of, as considerations even to be set against interest and ambition. In short, she had become an abettor of the dangerous doctrine, that greatness itself is not to be considered as entirely paramount to the romance-book feelings of plebeian nature.

“ These opinions might, as I said before, have been softened down into reason, by meeting them half way for argument's sake, or, on Barbara's part, by a further and more judicious view of the world. But the worthy Earl was a straight-forward man, and had no idea of that strange something, which argumentative people call human nature. Never having, therefore, been crossed in his whole life, unless it might be by Providence above, which makes little exception in favour of high lineage, he was not to be disputed with at this time of day,

especially by his own begotten children. Accordingly, the wilful spirit of Lady Barbara was met, in all things, by the most determined opposition; until, by the self-confidence of youth, and the fancy of persecution, this wilful spirit settled down, since her brother's death, into a distrust of the judgment, and a suspicion of the motives, of her own parents.

“ When, therefore, my lord had, with parental care, and much anxiety of mind, arranged satisfactorily for her the business of a husband, in the person of a nobleman of much wealth and undoubted family, Lady Barbara received the tidings with perfect astonishment; as if *her* will ought to have been adverted to, before the matter had gone so far. But my lord had mistaken the temper of his daughter, even if he was correct in his ideas of the precise state of obligation between parent and child. Independent, therefore, of her opinion of the noble person who had received permission to address her, she was strongly, if not insuperably, prejudiced against him, from the manner in which she conceived him to be forced upon her.

Never, therefore, did obstinate girl more effectually turn the back of her hand to an unwelcome lover, than Lady Barbara did to the bowing and beseeching Marquis of Brechin. She absolutely turned herself on her heel, and ran from him; and, taking to the stables down in the hollow, and saddling her pony, almost with her own hands, she set off to the woods like a hunter Diana.

“ You will allow, Mr. Balgownie,” continued Marion, “ that this was most dreadful conduct. Had Lady Barbara been nothing but a simple gentleman’s daughter, she might have been excused for this distaste at a disagreeable-looking man; for, to say the truth, the Marquis, notwithstanding his lands, was a worn-out lord, and had seen much service in this vile world in more ways, as I have heard, than it is necessary to express. Besides this, his lordship the marquis was but a thin whipping-post of a nobleman, with grey whiskers and lean legs, and, more like a French mounseer dried to a mummy, than an effectual husband for a bouncing lass like Lady Barbara. All these, I

say, might have been good reasons for the lady's conduct, had she been nothing but the child of a man of low degree. But for an earl's daughter to think of getting the man that she should like, or of refusing a marquis for any fault whatsoever, was a thing that was beyond the power of understanding."

"But what might be his lordship's age?" interrupted I, tired of sitting so long a mere listener; "for much, with young women, depends upon that."

"As to his age, replied Marion," it was not out of the way, as gentlemen go. He could not be more than forty years, which, you know, Mr. Balgownie, makes but a young man."

"Why, as to that, Mrs. Marion," said I, stroking my chin considerately, "youth itself is a matter of opinion, like other things; and I would be loth to predicate, on my own responsibility, upon so kittle a question, especially in reference to such a free-thinking young woman as this Lady Barbara is described to be. But was there nothing else at the root of young Madam's dislike; for I have always understood that, in

spite of romantic notions, with most ladies, after all, a marquis is a marquis."

"So he is," answered Marion; "and a high man too was the Marquis of Brechin; and you may call him young or not: but although his whiskers were grey, and his teeth were bad, either Lady Frances or Lady Mary would have jumped at him in a moment, like a cock at a gooseberry. However, as you enquire, there *was* something else at the root of Barbara's dislike, which, in fact, became the cause of unexpected events in her fortune, and may therefore require a few words of retrospective explanation."

Here Marion paused, and took a sip at her cordial; while I, refreshing my own attention with a hearty pinch of Edinburgh snuff, and settling myself on my chair, got her to proceed in her story, as in the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

“ IN the hollow beyond the house where my father dwelt, but nearly a mile farther from the Castle, there lived, near to the water’s edge, a thriving family of farming people, but no tenants of my lord’s; and the name of the old man was Robert Johnston.

“ This farmer was a plain person, and shrewd and sagacious, like most of his compeers; but his wife, who had been the widow of a poor minister of the kirk, was bold and ambitious, and continually stirred up the old man to efforts of gentility, which his good sense taught him as constantly to resist. Accordingly, in spite of the angry murmurings of this dame, he held his daughters determinedly to country work, instead of aiming to make them ladies, as his wife would have had him, and then married two of them to neighbouring farmers, where they were exceedingly comfortably settled in the world. Besides these two daughters, Robin Johnston

had a third unmarried, and also two sons ; and it is with the junior of these young men with which my tale comes particularly to have to do.

“The farmer’s daughters were all sonsy lasses ; gay, and ruddy, and healthy, and hearty, and nothing more ; but her two sons, particularly Jamie, were celebrated for their exterior in the whole country ; and certainly a pair of handsomer lads never could be seen riding of a market-day to Fairly fair, or walking on Sabbath to Fairly kirk. Ye may be sure all the lasses, from the brig of Douce to the Lochar braes, were setting their caps for the Johnstons of Fairly, and their mother at home was a proud woman, when she heard of the fame of her gallant sons. Some said they were to be married to this lass, and some said they were courting at that ; but after many flirtings and fleechings, and dancing at kirns, and spreeing at fairs, the eldest ran off with the tocherless daughter of a small laird, and their mother said their youngest should take nought else but a born lady.

“Certainly there would have been nothing

remarkable in that; for James, the handsomest of the two, was worth the ambition of the best bred girl, whose heart was to be taken by a well-faur'd youth, just made to please a woman's eye: and yet the lad was modest and discreet in all he did, and mild as a maiden on the priest's stool; and though his name was known, far and near, as 'bonny Jamie Johnston of the Fairly Holms,' he was no more conceited than his grey-headed father. Besides this, there was a judiciousness in his character, young as he was, which saved him from much of the nonsense of youth; and, though not averse to the mirth and sport of his time of life, a thoughtful contentment beamed from his eye, or shone, like mild sunshine, in his fair downy cheek, reminding every one of the steady solidity of his respected father.

"That this family should have been known to the inmates of Carloghie Castle, was neither unlikely nor remarkable, among the dull gossipings of a country place. But that Jamie Johnston should have become at any time the talk of the high ladies above stairs, or ever

come in contact with actual nobility, was an event beyond the compass of ordinary occurrences. Thus however, it was, and thus social impossibilities become reconciled with nature.

“It was during the ramblings of Lord William in the Fairly Holms, when that noble youth was yet in life, and following the fancies of an imaginative artist, that, struck with the beauty of the young peasant, he drew his face and figure, as he watched him whistling across the fields, or plying his boat in the Ruar water. Yet Lord William was too manly and really noble a character, thus to make free with the person of a fellow, without showing his brother youth the produce of his pencil, and offering him with frankness an occasional condescension. Seeing that the modest peasant had too much good sense to presume upon this freedom, Lord William went farther, talked with him, bathed with him in deep pools of the stream by themselves, and sketched his figure in every attitude that he fancied, as one of the finest specimens of rustic nature. Sometimes my Lord would have accompanied his young friend up towards

the old farmer's house ; but this generous freedom Johnston always waived, or resisted, with a grace that only raised him higher in Lord William's esteem.

“ Time, however, as I said before, brought new changes, at least as respected the fragile constitution of the heir of Carloghie ; for the spring weather had been cold and watery, and the summer that followed brought not summer's genial warmth ; so his state of health began to confine him much to home, and thus painting became again his only solace and amusement. From some romantic fancy, caught up from perusing some far-away poem—I believe it was called ‘ the Orlando Furioso,’—he had projected a design which represented certain knights combating in a forest, for which scene Carloghie woods were to furnish the local original, and Jamie Johnston was to stand for the principal figure. For this purpose, the young farmer was sent for to the Castle, where, many times dressed up like a belted knight, or stripped over the shoulders like a Roman cen-

turion, he was made to stand in character before the young lord.

“ This was a sort of exhibition of himself that was not, however, always to Johnston’s taste, though, clad as he was in knightly panoply, he laughed at times at the grand figure he made. Yet, if at any time he became restive, and showed his reluctance to sit or stand, one entreating look of the pale yet animated countenance of the young lord would at once reconcile him to any constraint that might contribute to the gratification of the noble youth. There was also at first some demur made to these practices by my lord and my lady; but so desponding had they become, concerning the health of their heir, that they resolved to cross him in nothing, but to indulge his humour without hinderance or question.

“ Of course, the ladies, his sisters, were much interested in the artist labours of their sickly brother; and Johnston the farmer’s son was thus frequently seen by them all; but Lady Barbara, in particular, as Lord William’s favourite, was more frequently than any of them admitted into the

scene of these sittings; and thus had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with the young peasant, in a way which brought after it most important consequences. As long as Lord William had strength remaining, he continued to labour at the pursuit that he loved; but nature at last gave way; no medical aid could save him, and death put an end to all his projects, and involved the whole neighbourhood in sorrow and gloom.

“ But when every thing was over, and the long absence of the family was ended, and Barbara had again returned with the rest to Carloghie, affectionate thoughts of her late brother renewed her grief, as she revisited his haunts, and contemplated his labours; and involuntarily, as it were, the idea of Jamie Johnston became associated with him, and with her most interesting recollections. Unfortunately, also, she had at this time nothing in the shape of variety to divert her mind from these wanderings; and thus the stately monotony of her life in the Castle, with the occasional peevishness of my lord and my lady, brought on by their

own heavy disappointment, often sent her for relief to those pleasant holms, where she had, in former years, so frequently strayed with her free-minded and intellectual brother.

“I know not exactly how it happened,” continued Marion, “but it must have been in the course of these ramblings that Lady Barbara again had speech of Jamie Johnson; and indeed, that she should have thought of him with interest, after what had passed at the Castle, and stopped to talk to him of the lamented youth, was far from surprising in her present state of mind. And yet, it was surely a very forward thing of her, if it was so—for Jamie Johnston was always considered as a judicious lad, that knew how to keep his distance from high gentry. But still, I really—”

Marion here seemed to pause for my observation, as if she found her philosophy fail her, in accounting for Barbara’s extraordinary conduct.

“Ye need not trouble yourself to use fine words of dictionary explanation about it,” said I; “for whether *he* spoke first, or *she* stood

to talk to him, after he had given her a hat as he passed, as it was nothing but his place to do, makes little matter to the story. Nature will be nature. I can give you Latin for it. But if ye must have it from me in the shape of philosophy, sorrow and disappointment are of a levelling effect, being found as well under the earl's coronet as under the beggar's hood; and the human heart is never so open to the renewal of joy, as just after the depression of some serious grief. So, you see, to use a plain similitude," I added, "just to keep us from growing sentimental; a sonsy widow is never so ready to take comfort in a new proposal, as after a hearty greet for a buried husband."

"For shame! Mr. Balgownie," she said, pretending to be angry, "to bring up to my face such a satirical illustration. I'll have nothing whatever said against the women. Besides, such an ill-devised remark at this moment is nothing but a most undeserved interruption."

"Well, well," said I, in a hen-pecked tone,

“do not let us argue, but go on with your story.”

“So, sir, as I was saying,” she went on, “the Castle of Carloghie was at this time but a dull and heartless place, and its stately forms and stiff observances must have been exceedingly irksome to a free-spirited girl. Then, her eldest sisters were as cold and formal in their manners as they were bigoted in their talk and plain in their looks; and they were so full of the high supererogations of propriety and dignity, and so domineered in this way over their younger sister, that there was positively no standing them. Besides, there had got into the service of the family, a while before this, a most disagreeable personage, in the shape of a governess to Lady Barbara—that was some time before I came into the castle. This old person was a perfect poker for stiffness, and sergeant-major for state, that worried the poor young lady to death with her airs and her restraint.

“It was for these very qualities, no doubt, that Miss Pinchbeck was as great a favourite with

the elder ladies, as she was detested by Lady Barbara, who laughed at her formality, mimicked her airs, and sometimes even set her authority at naught. So there was nothing but complaints made, and sides taken, and pouting and dispeace within the Castle; and my lady herself, who was constantly appealed to, was oftener the enemy than the friend of her thoughtless daughter. Thus the poor girl's mind was always sent back to lamenting thoughts of her late brother, who used to take her part in the family disputes, and then, whenever she got out, she would ride down to the holms, and talk of him, if she could, perhaps to bonnie Jamie Johnston.

“ In the middle of all this, who should come in, further to unsettle the lassie's mind, but my lord's favourite fop, and proposed son-in-law, the great Marquis of Brechin. So nothing would do my lord but Lady Barbara *must* have him; not that the earl was otherwise very particularly set upon the match, but because his daughter presumed to resist, and he was a man that was determined not to be crossed. For

the same reason it was, I have no doubt, that my lady joined with the earl, although she had no great opinion of the marquis ; and the elder ladies joined in the angry cry, just to show their authority over their sister Barbara. Indeed, I think they were all perfectly bewitched, to worry a young lady in the manner they did, as if they were determined to drive her to some unworthy rashness.

“ ‘ Why don’t you marry him yoursel, Lady Frances, since ye like him so well ? ’ Lady Babby was wont to say to her eldest sister. ‘ I am sure he would suit you better than me, wi’ his thin chafts, and his buck teeth ; besides, he’s nearer your ain age, and disna ken your ill temper. Or, Lady Mary, *ye* may take him, and praise him up when ye get him, and then ye’ll be a marchioness, and who but you ? But take him who likes, I’ll marry nane of your spindle-shanked lords.’—And so she would snap her thumbs at the whole o’ them. Did ye ever hear such frightful heresy !

“ But it was much worse than this, with my lord and my lady, who insisted upon her in a

way that was really terrible ; and so, the house being now only a misery to her, whenever any storm was raised, she took some opportunity of slipping out, and down she would go towards the holms of Fairly. There she would wander in romantic discontent ; and in these moods, the hearty and joyous laugh of the country maidens, as they went to milk their cows at even, or heaped their haycocks in the meadows beside the stream, filled her heart with strange yearnings, and made her almost envy the happy freedom of plebeian life.

“ All this that was going on in Lady Barbara’s mind had by no means escaped the observation of Mrs. Johnston of the Holm, the ambitious mother of young James Johnston. With the shrewd eye of experience, the farmer’s wife watched the motions and inferred the feelings of the wayward girl. In the course of her rides Barbara was in time induced to alight from her pony, and to rest, as she passed, in the farmhouse. The old woman was kind and insinuating. She saw that something oppressed the mind of her noble guest ; spoke to her feelings ;

and, Barbara's heart being full, she gave Mrs. Johnston sufficient of her confidence to let her see all that the dame desired, to complete her own observation. Here, to the distracted lassie, was a new resource from the persecution of home and her dread of the marquis; and here, in the farmer's comfortable parlour, the cool bowl of rich milk, and the wholesome niceties of the barn-door or the dairy, pressed upon her with country good-will, tasted sweeter by far, in the mood she was, than all the luxuries of her father's castle.

“ ‘Jamie,’ said the farmer's wife to her son, one day as they were left at home together — ‘there's promising prospects before thee, my man, or I'm mistaken — if thou but kens how to catch the sunny shower when it fa's; or to lift the golden egg when the guse lays it. Jamie, hast thou any spirit in thee? What would thou think o' Lady Babby of Carloghie?’ ”

“ ‘What is your meaning, mother?’ answered the youth, ‘and what is it you say? What has spirit to do with me and an earl's daughter?’ ”

“ ‘It has much to do with a clever man's

fortune, James; if you had only the spunk of your auld mither,' said the dame, 'who, though she be only a farmer's wife now, was once a gude minister's lady; and would set her cap yet, grey as she is, if she were a wanter, at the best laird in all the land, if he had only flung half the een at her, that bonnie Lady Barbara has done to thee.'

" 'Has done to me, mother!'

" 'Ay, just at thee! Jamie Johnston. Dost thou think I 'm blind? And if thou disna ken how to take the tide when it's flowing to thee, or to follow the gled when it whistles at thy ear, truly thou'll maybe rue it yet, and that perhaps o'er an empty trencher.'

" 'And would you really, mother, advise a country lad like me, that has been bred to nothing but the plough tail, to forget so egregiously the chisset he was staned in, as to make a fool of himself by ettling after a lord's lady? No, no, mother! I hope I know my own contentment better than that.'

" 'Weel, weel, James, my man, thou's not like me, auld as I am; and if thou has not the

heart to bid a bode for the silk gown, little matter than thou never get the sleeve o't. But I tell thee, that Lady Barbara, high-born as she is, has a maiden's notions o' thee, I can see that.'

" 'And ne'er mean her! though I say it; '—continued the dame, while her son mused—' for though thou wer'na mine, there's no a lad, frae Fairly Brig to Blanter Braes, has a face like thine, or a tighter leg to please a lady's ee. Na, thou needna frown at thy auld mother, Jamie Johnston. Would thou throw thyself away upon a common Jenny o' the loaning, who would keep thy nose to the grinding-stone all thy life, while thou might get for the seeking a lord's lady?'

" 'Pluck up a spirit, Jamie, lad!' added the cajoling old woman, clapping her son on the shoulder as he meditated on her words—'and never be blate to look at a high mark; and if thou just take thy mother's' advice, and play thy cards wi' a bold hand, who knows—there where thou sits, but thou may yet lead Lady Barbara to the haly kirk, wi' rosetted servants crowded behind thee!—Ay! thou

may yet drink the red wine in Carloghie Castle! wi' flunkies standing behind thy chair, and a lord's title above thy name!

" ' Jamie Johnston ! dinna spit sae spitefu' on the floor, and sneer sae loud at my words, for great ladies take strange fancies, and must have their will; and wha to say against it! Did not the Laird of Rowallan's widow marry the page that ran her messages? and did not Lord Dalgowdie's daughter run off with her own footman? I tell thee, lad, there's a horse-shoe in thy road, at this precious moment, as long as the tid is on the lady; and thy mother's bitter ban upon thee, if thou's no at the pains to pick it up !'

" ' But how did these unequal marriages turn out, mother?' said James, with serious elevation of tone and manner; ' you have not told me that; nor what was the real upshot of these ladies' whims. No, no, mother! you need not tell me, that the eagle on the eyry and the simple hen at the barn door will ever pair happily together. And false and foul would that heart be, that would take advantage of the

momentary discontent of a high-born lady, to wile her into a lowly nest like mine; where soon, like the noble bird upon the mountain, she would begin to flap her wings for her own rocks, and leave her humble mate to couple again with her own kind. But, more than that, the earl would disown her, and make two beings miserable in place of one, besides the sorrow and humiliation it would bring on a most noble house. Mother, I'll none on't! Never urge this flattery on me.'

" 'That's just the way; that faint heart speaks, that never won fair lady'—said the mother tauntingly. 'But fathers are not made of stone more than daughters; and after a blast and a breeze of lordly wrath, the earl would just do like other auld men, and dower his bonnie daughter, and bless his grandchildren, and slip to his grave when his time came; and then, my lad! thou would be a great man, and a lord!—*Think on't*, Jamie! *think on't*.'

"While the young man's mind was thus wrought upon by his mother at the farm-house, affairs were fast drawing to a crisis at Carloghie

Castle, partly by the injudicious obstinacy of the earl, and partly by the romantic self-delusion of the young lady. She still continued her visits to the farm, but now in a more clandestine and stolen manner; and in proportion as young Johnston seemed to avoid her, her passion for him increased, until she worked herself into the conclusion, so common to lovers, that, come what might, it was *impossible* for her to live without him.

“The old woman now found means to bring Lady Barbara and her son frequently together; and when the lady’s fondness for him was more fully observed, and more artfully fanned by his mother—when it was broadly urged upon himself, and his generosity was appealed to; this was taking him on his weak side indeed, and speaking to considerations which few men could resist. Besides, a real regard for the noble girl, though resisted at first, had now established a seat in his own breast; and when he witnessed her tears, and perceived her love—‘come what might’—as is the language of lovers, he determined to join his fate with hers.

A minister was not long in being persuaded to unite them, by the craft and influence of the old woman; and, advantage being taken of a long absence by Lady Barbara from the Castle—for she had fled to the farm-house after a quarrel about the Marquis—and also of the temporary absence from his home of the old farmer, who never would listen to a word of the match; young Johnston and Barbara were privately married.

“ Though the family at the Castle had been used to her freaks of late, all in it became alarmed at her long absence, when they found she did not return. The Earl repented of carrying his severity too far, blamed the envious old maids, her sisters, for working on his mind, and went in person to the farmer’s, where he heard she had taken refuge, to enquire kindly for his runaway daughter. Sympathy is indeed a wonderful thing, and sincere kindness is the golden key that opens at once the door of the generous heart. When Barbara saw the Earl, her father, stopping before the farmer’s door, and heard him again address her

as he had done when she was a child, her feelings relented with returning tenderness, and a pang shot into her innermost conscience, which told her she had done him a grievous wrong. He kissed her kindly, as if he had found a lost child again; spoke to her apologetically of what he had said to her at home, until her eyes streamed with tears to hear his condescension. He even sought to make it up with her, by voluntarily promising to be less austere in future, and then taking her into the carriage with him, brought her in love and kindness home to Carloghie Castle.

“A fortnight or more passed away after this, and what Barbara’s thoughts were may partly be guessed, for there were gay company came to the Castle; and there was now much feasting and riding about, and great attention was paid by all the gentles to her, as the bonniest lass and the favourite of the family, but the name of the Marquis was never mentioned. All this time she had not courage to tell her father what she had done; and though she wished at times to see her farmer husband, she

found no opportunity, and, in fact, for the present found herself happier than ever in her own father's house. At length a young lord, one of the Earl's high visitors, of great family, and every way like herself, began to pay marked addresses to her, and, soon after, formally demanded of her father the honour of her hand.

“ This she had no possible pretence to refuse — her new suitor being handsome, accomplished, high born, and rich ; and every one in the family envied her good fortune. All seemed now to be going on well, and Barbara became again almost the idol, as well as the hope of the house. A grand invitation was also given by the father of the young lord, her new suitor, for all at Carloghie to spend some weeks at his lordship's seat ; and great preparations began to be made to set out on the jaunt. Merchants and milliners were again in high employ ; and the painter who helped to teach my young lord that died, was sent for to take my Lady Barbara's picture. She sat for it, and the gentleman has often told me since, how uneasily and impatiently she seemed to sit, with her velvet

robe wrapped round her like a queen, and the tiara of pearls which my Lord had devised set in the midst of her glossy curls. You saw the picture in the room above. Alas ! that I should now have to tell such a tale."

CHAP. V.

“It was just at this time,” continued Marion, “when the failure of the banker brought on my father’s ruin, that primp Miss Pinchbeck was turned off, and I found an asylum with this noble family. I was chiefly, however, about the person of the Countess herself, and knew little of the mind of the youngest of the ladies. But Barbara again began to absent herself, and steal down towards the holms ; and Jamie Johnston had often been seen, hovering about the woods, with a pale face and an anxious look. Then strange whisperings took place among the servants, an unusual mystery was observable in their faces, and Lady Barbara, while I read her changing countenance, seemed evidently distracted by some inward trouble.

“At this time I was requested to stay in her chamber, and I heard her sometimes even cry out in her sleep, as if she laboured under some terrible apprehension. My lady became

alarmed, and commanded me to watch her narrowly; so I, suspecting nothing but a little waywardness, talked to her of all things to gain her confidence; and asked her, how she liked the young lord to whom she was soon to be married. Heavens! how fearful was the result of this! I remember well how she broke out in an hysterical laugh after my question, and, throwing her arms round my neck, asked me if I had never seen bonnie Jamie Johnston?

“ ‘O fie! Lady Barbara,’ said I to this extraordinary speech, ‘O fie, and for shame!—How can the like of you give your mouth to talk such words?’ So the matter passed away; and, simpleton as I was, I saw nothing in this but her usual free and thoughtless way of speaking. For this innocent judgment I cannot find fault with myself; for Jamie Johnston was the admiration of all the women for miles round; but indeed it was the great distance between her rank and his condition that during the whole of this period blinded us all.

“ One evening, near the supper bell, the young ladies and myself were all seated, dull

and silent, round the fire in the drawing-room, Ladies Frances and Mary occupied with their new dresses. But Barbara, in spite of the constant bantering of her sisters, seemed quite insensible to the grandeur that had been provided for her, and sat gazing into the fire, having got into one of her late fits of unfathomable abstraction. My Lord and my Lady were both in some other apartment. The house was then without company, and a strange and ominous silence seemed to reign, with a speaking prognostication through the Castle. Presently the door opened, and the Countess walked in, in her stiff and stately way; but when I looked up in her Ladyship's face, never have I seen so terrible an expression. She was as pale as a sheet, her mouth was half open, as if obeying the impulse of some sudden horror, and a ring of darkness appeared round her eyes, as if some inward suffering had forced them to assume their present unnatural position. She stalked up towards the fire, and, fixing her wild gaze on Lady Barbara, seemed for a moment to strive in vain for utterance.

“ ‘ Barbara ! ’ said she, at last, ‘ Barbara ! what — what is this I hear ! Answer me one question — tell me truly what I shall ask, and save or kill your distracted mother ! Has there any thing improper taken place between you and young Johnston, the farmer ? Are you, or are you not, his — his wife ? ’

“ The two ladies, Frances and Mary, rose simultaneously, and stood up like statues on hearing these words. My Lady herself seemed ready to faint ; but, holding by a chair, and then gathering up all her dignity, she awaited in terror the reply of the unfortunate girl.

“ Lady Barbara sat dumb, as if too suddenly taken. I thought I saw her begin to tremble, as she drooped her head for a moment on her breast, and, raising it again, the dim gleam of the fire-light gave a hue to her features that I never before saw upon a living countenance, as the dread-struck girl now gazed up in terror in her mother’s face. After a few moments of this dreadful silence, the unhappy lassie threw herself on her knees at my Lady’s feet.

“ ‘ I want no tears ! I will have no prayers ! ’

exclaimed Lady Carloghie, in a voice that appalled us all to the earth. 'Is it the case, I say, or is it not?'

"Oh, my Lady," said I, interposing, having barely recovered my own speech — "it is *not* the case! Such a vile report cannot be true. Lady Barbara is only frightened at the very idea. Give her a moment's time, and she will fully contradict it. Lady Barbara, my dear, why don't you speak?

" 'She is unable! quite unable!' cried the distracted lady. 'She is guilty! guilty of bringing ruin on herself and disgrace upon her family. I see it! I see it all!'

"No, my Lady! no," said I again, "it cannot be. Oh, Lady Barbara, speak up, and say, it is not true.

" '*Speak!* cried her sisters, crowding round. '*Speak, Barbara?* You cannot! you cannot, indeed, have done so dreadful a thing!'

"Lady Barbara merely covered her eyes with both hands as she kneeled, and burst out into tears.

"I looked on with horror! I thought I should

have swooned. The elder ladies started from her with a scream, and ran to support their mother. - Never did I witness so dreadful a scene!

“A short interval of silent consternation was sufficient to bring us back to our recollection, and then my lady began to speak. Approaching her daughter, who lay on the floor, she said, ‘Rise, young woman, and depart this instant! You are now no longer a daughter of mine, or a member of this ancient family. Take with you your plainest wearing apparel, such as becomes the station you have chosen for yourself—but not a robe nor a jewel that you hold as my child, or a single trinket that shall serve as a memorial that you ever belonged to this noble house. I wish you well, but from this day you are disowned for ever. I shall never hold converse with you more!’

“I shuddered as I stood by, hearing the poor young creature’s doom; and, wringing my hands as I looked down upon her, I joined my tears to those of her distracted sisters, while

the whole apartment sounded with the voice of lamentation.

“ ‘Mother,’ gasped Barbara, laying hold of my Lady’s robe, ‘you know not how I have been led into this. Will you cast me off entirely? Is every one to be happy and fortunate around me, and no word of kindness or forgiveness ever to be spoken to me?’

“ ‘Wretch! dare you speak of such a thing?’ croaked my Lady, in a tone that seemed to cut through my nerves, ‘how can you name the word forgiveness, after what you have done? And as for the villain who has insinuated himself into your mind, and taken advantage of your folly, to the bringing of this irreparable disgrace upon my family — the curse of a distracted and disappointed mother shall follow him — follow him, over the world, to his obscure and plebeian grave!’ — and the howl of her curse ended in a terrible burst of screaming grief.

“ ‘Oh, mother! my lady mother!’ exclaimed Barbara, holding up her hands in awful agony,

‘upon me shower your bitterest, your deepest reproach ; but curse not an unoffending young man, who used no arts with me, took no advantage of my weakness, but rather, almost with reluctance, consented to a measure, which seemed at the time necessary for my peace and happiness. But had my Lord not so urged the Marquis upon me ; had he treated me with the smallest degree of that kindness that he did after my rashness had for ever committed me with another, I should not now be a disowned outcast from my father’s house, and a weeping suppliant at your feet.’

“ ‘ And I spurn you from me, wretched girl,’ exclaimed the weeping lady, starting back. ‘ How dare you ! to *me*, the daughter of a race of earls, and in the presence of your noble and virtuous sisters, avow your unaccountable conduct, and incredible forwardness towards a common farmer ? Imagine you that the Earl, my husband, was to consult the whims of *your* wilfulness, when he urged upon you a match suitable to the honour of his family ? Had you even had patience, and not opposed

him as you did, my Lord never would have been cruel to his own child, to her to whom he once looked as the hope of his house. Oh, miserable, unhappy parents that we are! — Young woman, think! ah, think this moment what you have done. Have we not had a heavy enough trial in the early death of the heir of our house, and in the total disappointment of all those hopes, that were buried with Lord William in an untimely grave; but *you* must sever from us all that remained, and put the last hand to the breaking of your father's heart?

“ ‘ Now,’ she continue¹, after a long pause of weeping, ‘ I could have seen you this moment stretched in death at my feet. Now I could have borne that you should have been cut off from your family, by an honourable death, and your noble father could have followed your corpse, as he did that of your beautiful and high-minded brother, to the vault where he lies with an hundred ancestors. But to *know* you bring upon us this disgrace; to live *to see* any of the noble families of Bochlyvie and

Carloghie the labouring wife of a common hind ! I would rather a thousand times see you carried to your tomb, and your escutcheon nailed upon the great tower of this castle. Go away ! —tears or prayers are of no avail. You are lost to me and my house for ever !

“ ‘ And *you*, ungrateful woman,’ she added, turning to me in her passion — ‘ *you*, that have sat at my table, and eaten my bread, where were *you* all this while, that you could not see aught that was going on, until it came to this ; and this ruin was brought upon my family ? But ’tis too late to reflect now ! I cannot hear any of you. Take her away from my presence, and see that my orders regarding her apparel are strictly fulfilled.’

“ My Lady stood like the angel of terror, pointing towards the door, while I, ashamed and reproached, led the unhappy Barbara out of the room, without a sigh of sympathy being allowed her with any, or a last word exchanged with her astonished sisters. Scarcely able to support herself on her limbs, I almost carried her into her own chamber.

“ When we got to her apartment, I did not say a word for some time, but allowed her to ease her heart by a long flood of tears. At length she looked up in my face, and said, ‘ Marion, this is worse than I thought. I know I have done a foolish thing ; but do you think that the Earl has cast me off entirely, and will do nothing for James Johnston for my sake ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, Lady Barbara,’ said I, distressed more than I can tell for her, ‘ how could you have done such a thing as this ? to ruin yourself, and bring us all into this trouble ; or how can you expect the Earl or my Lady ever to notice you more, or do any thing else than let you take a full bite of the hard bridle that you have deceitfully thrust into your own mouth ? You little knew, when you did this act, how dear to a noble house like yours is the honour of the family, and that high dignity they have inherited from a long line of ancestors. Lady Barbara, you are now a disowned child, and can do nothing else but lay down your mind to your lot.’

“ ‘Then get me my cloak, Miss Marion,’ she said, rising, ‘and put me up two or three things in a bundle, and let me be gone. What do you wring your hands for? Do you think I am afraid to leave my father’s house, and be an honest wife to the man I love?’ ”

“ I rose and bustled about to hide my own tears, and put up a few things for her in a bundle. I gave it to her, and wrapped her cloak round her shoulders. ”

“ ‘How dreadfully still the Castle is!’ said she, with a slight shudder, as she stood as if reluctant to go. ”

“ ‘What of that?’ said I, ‘do not notice such a thing as that at an hour like this.’ ”

“ ‘But I *must* notice it,’ said she; ‘this stillness will kill me! ’Tis worse than when my poor brother was lying a corpse. Oh, if I could but hear my father’s voice, though I dare not see his face. Oh, if he would but scold me, and storm at me, as he did about the Marquis, I should almost be happy. But this dead silence, this dumb grief about me when I am put out of his door, will break my heart!’ ”

“ She took two or three paces about the room. ‘ I will go with you,’ said I, ‘ towards the holm. You cannot go alone at this hour,’ — and I went to get my cloak.

“ ‘ You shall *not*, Marion,’ said she, proudly, as she stopped in her walk. ‘ I have done this deed of my own will, and on my own feet shall I go, without friend or favour. But though I am turned out of my father’s house, and lords and ladies are my bitter foes, there is one still who will take my part, and in his arms I shall find refuge this night for the anxieties I have suffered as an earl’s daughter.’

“ ‘ But,’ she continued, after a few hard sobs, ‘ there’s my hand, Marion — there’s my hand — give me, if you think fit, the only blessing that I am to receive in parting for ever from my father’s house.’

“ Scarcely was I able for weeping to pronounce the blessing which she begged; when, rushing from me, she hastened down the back stairs; and the castle was so still all round, that I heard her steps on the gravel without, as they receded to a distance, until their sound died

away on the listening ear, that watched her melancholy flight from her home at Carloghie.

“ But as I stood without, a sound now rose from the passages beneath, that almost took away my senses, as I listened to it, coming from the chamber of my lord himself. I had heard him sorrow for my young lord’s death; I had heard his deep and choking murmur, when Lord William’s corpse was carried through the hall to the waiting hearse; but such a sound as this I never heard, coming up through the sobbings of an old man’s throat. Its stifled groan spoke of fatherly love, family pride, and future hope, all cut off for ever by one heavy stroke — all mingling to make one bitter draught.

My lady’s sobs now also rose low and broken, to add to those of her distressed lord; and their joint moan of parental agony was dreadful! I thought I should have fainted where I stood. — Oh, dear! I cannot tell any more.”

CHAP. VI.

BEING rather a soft-hearted man, and liable to be melted by female sympathetics, I confess I was so affected by this part of the story, that I did not choose further to disturb myself with any more of it that night, and deferred its continuation till the following day.

No doubt this effect upon me was enhanced by what I witnessed of Marion, who, in telling the latter part of her womanly tale, was so melted by her own recollections, that her tears fell like a perfect waterspout, and her voice became so desperately pathetic, that positively I was unable to stand it—so we both sat crying opposite to each other, like two silly old fools, as we no doubt were, and blowing our noses and wiping our eyes, as a boarding-school miss might do, over a witless novel. Worse than this, when I went to bed that night, I did nothing but dream of Lady Barbara and her mother; and as I lay in my lonely room in the great

empty old castle, I thought the stillness within and without at this dead hour of midnight was just like that which must have occurred when the young creature was sent adrift from her father's mansion.

In the morning when I rose, and we had discussed our comfortable and neatly-served breakfast, I insisted with Marion upon mounting again up to the room above, and refreshing my recollection by another look at that enticing portrait which she had at first shown me ; for the fancy, said I, is a deceitful vagrant, and is greatly helped towards truth by the witnessing of the senses. Besides, when I considered the whole matter, I was almost disposed to think, that Johnston, of whom I had once a good opinion, must have been after all a filthy fellow, to trepan, in spite of his natural good sense, a lady who was so far above his condition. But when I came to look again, at that seductive face, and to contemplate the expression of that large darkling eye, and to fancy the power of that sweet feminine mouth, as she might have smiled upon, and talked to the inexperienced

farmer lad, I thought of my own weakness in regard to the women, and of the fiery trials of poor human nature. So I dared not blame the foolish youth; for, what with the beauty, and what with the flattery of the rank, the temptation was more than mortal flesh could withstand.

Marion smiled when she saw what I thought, and, "since you are interested with their tale," said she, "come hither, and I will show you something more. This," she continued, opening the door of a cabinet, "is the picture I spoke of, which was painted by the dear Lord William that's gone, and there is the knight, with the silken scarf and the bended knee, with the unfinished lady standing over him; and whose face and figure make a true effigy of bonnie Jamie Johnston."

"Is that he?" said I, contemplating the manly, youthful countenance and shape on the picture shown me; "truly a pretty youth for a lady's eye; and if men were made knights for their personal looks, Jamie Johnston deserved spur and glaive, better, I dare say, than ere a

lord that has trod for many years the holms of Fairly. Little wonder that Lady Barbara's heart was taen; but come down stairs," I added, taking Marion's arm, "and let me hear the rest of the tale."

"I told you," continued Marion, when we were again seated, "that I was so dumfounded by the suddenness of Barbara's setting off, that for some minutes I had not the power of thought left me, but stood outside her chamber door, like one of the stone effigies on the great staircase, listening to the sad sound that I spoke of as affecting me so much, after her steps were lost under the soft covert of the planting. Awakening from my trance of concern, however, I determined to get my bonnet, and follow the poor thing at a distance, to watch what should happen to her, and to see, if I could, how she would be received at the holms of Fairly. I was soon on the lawn, and, my sooth! but she tried my legs and my wind too; as, almost out of breath from the exertion I was put to, she glided before me over the lawn, and through the planting, like a thought-

ful ghaist that touched not the earth, until she came out upon the open fields, and then I was able, by taking a nearer cut, to gain a little upon her. There was hardly as much moon as served to light us down the paths and across the ditches that lay in our way. Nevertheless we got quickly over the ground, at no great distance from each other, for the solitary lassie seemed so wrapped in thought that she never looked behind her; and I observed, that as she neared Johnston's farm-house she walked slower, as if she felt a reluctance, after all, to enter it in this forlorn condition.

“ When she got to the door, I saw the poor thing stop and hesitate, and survey the little bundle she carried in her hand, and then her present humble apparel, and lift her hand to knock, and withdraw it without being able; and then she went aside, and peeped distantly in at the window. A bright fire burnt cheerfully in the large kitchen, where the family were, as usual, assembled; and by going round to another window, and placing myself where my curiosity could be conveniently satisfied, I

am able to give a tolerable account of all that passed.

“ The old farmer appeared to have just arrived from a long journey; for as he sat by the fire opposite his son James, and disencumbered his legs of his riding gramashins, he gave various details regarding his relatives in the south, with whom I found he had been living while this whole affair was going on between his son and Lady Barbara. To his discourse, however, which was jocular and caustic, after the manner of his class, James replied only in brief and cold monosyllables; the youth’s mind being in fact taken up with other thoughts, and in meditating how he should break to the old man the news of a marriage, which, high as it was, he had good reason to dread that his father would by no means approve.

“ ‘ What is the matter with thee, James?’ said the old man, ‘ that thou lookest so serious and dull when I am just come home. Hast thou nothing to say to all I’ve told thee, man? No country news to give me in return? And why, James, did you not go to John War-

nock's kirk? The lasses were asking for thee kindly, and very ill pleased that thou was not there, for a pleasanter spree there has not been this twelvemonth within twenty miles of Fairly. Hast thou nothing to say to that either? I tell thee what, James, thou ought not to turn the side of thy head to John Warnock's daughters. There's better than thee would be proud of a pleasant word frae any o' them, either Peggy or Jenny.'

" ' And what would ye think, gudeman,' said his wife, now striking in, ' if there should be better than any farmer's daughter in the country side would be glad of a kind word from our Jamie. Na, ye needna sneer at me, gudeman. Ye'll may be see it come true yet.'

" ' What does the woman mean?' frowningly said the old man. ' Surely ye've not been urging on the lad when I was frae hame, to make a fool o' himsel' anent that senseless tale ye told me about Lady Barbara o' the Castle?'

" ' Troth I dinna need to set him on,' said his wife, shaking her head confidently. ' The lady hersel' has cast the tail o' her ee at Jamie,

or I'm mista'en. And what for no? Was not I, his mother, a minister's wife, and as weel born and bred, though I say it mysel', as any lady?'

" ' Hold your tongue, woman,' said the angry farmer— ' that I should be obliged to ban at your senseless babble the first hour I come back to my own house! Is it not enough that you would have spoiled my daughters, by bringing them up to be piano-playing ladies, helpless and handless, and nothing but dressed-up bundles of wants and wishes; but ye must also do your best to turn the head of my son, to land him in vexation and misery? Never,' added the old man, with a threatening earnestness, ' let me hear you or he moot or mince such words to me again, or I'll tell you more of my mind on't.'

" The mother and son were struck mute; and the latter, rising up from his seat, began to pace hastily about the kitchen. He then seated himself moodily on a settle at the farther side. The old man looked suspicious, and began to muse, while the unnatural and unpleasant

silence was unexpectedly broken by a low and timid knock at the door.

“ ‘What stranger can that be, at this time o’ night?’ said the old man. ‘Who is there?’ he called out, going mechanically towards the outer door.

“ ‘For heaven’s sake let me in,’ said the lady without, in a faint voice.

“ ‘Gudesake, it’s a woman!’ exclaimed the old man to himself. ‘What can this mean? Who are ye, and what’s your name, before I draw the bolt?’

“ ‘Oh! open the door, and don’t keep me here. I am Barbara, from the Castle.’

“ ‘From the Castle!’ repeated the farmer astonished; and while he spoke, James from within, hearing the words, started past him, and, drawing the bolt, the lady, drooping and exhausted, fell forward into his arms.

“ After a moment of mutual agitation, the young farmer brought her forward, and, supporting her to a chair, he set her down opposite the kitchen fire, while his father and mother looked on in silence.

“ ‘ It’s not possible that this is Lady Barbara of Carloghie ?’ said the farmer, surveying the humble apparel and dejected countenance of the reviving lady.

“ ‘ It’s just me, Mr. Johnston, — plain Barbara now,’ she said, rousing herself to ready determination. ‘ The Castle ha’ is no home for me this night, or henceforth either, though it gives free shelter to the birds of the air, who pair where they will throughout Carloghie woods, and build many a warm nest under its ancient turrets ; so I am come to take up my abode in your farm-house with them that have the best right to me, since I have chosen to myself this humble lot.’

“ ‘ If ye seek a shelter for the night, or a temporary refuge from any calamity, Lady Barbara, whatever be the reason, most welcome I make you to my poor dwelling,’ said the farmer ; ‘ but if you have disobeyed father or mother, and done aught unbecoming your high station, ye’ll excuse my plainness, but I will never countenance the child against the parent. James ! what freedom is that you use with the

lady? Gudewife, I ask you what is the meaning of all this?’

“ ‘ It’s a plain meaning, gudeman, and a braw fortune for our son,’ said the woman, triumphantly. ‘ What would ye think if youthfu’ love and heart’s wishes had ta’en the place of world’s greatness, and our Jamie and Lady Barbara were man and wife afore the minister, just by her ain choice and condescension ! Dear me, gudeman, what needs ye look so wild and wud at me? Though the lady’s come hame rather bare and disjasked even now, there’ll be red gold and green rigs coming wi’ her yet, for a gude tocher to our Jamie, as soon as the auld yerl, her father, gets his passion out.’

“ ‘ And dare you, woman, to tell me this tale ! and to have encouraged, when my back was turned, this miserable folly !’ exclaimed the old man, his honest indignation giving him a look that was almost terrific, as he strode up to and stood over the couring dame. ‘ Confound your senseless — your cursed ambition ! that would have ruined my daughters, who, by

my care and guidance have been suitably and happily married, and now *have* ruined my son, and destroyed the peace and prospects of a noble family—a family to whom I am under many obligations! Think you the Earl will ever forgive such an act as this? Think you I shall ever be able to look over my own door, from the suspicion of having been accessory to such upsetting treachery!—to the destruction of my own character, and of the peace and respectability even of my own family! *Me* be allied to the oldest nobility of the land! *You*, and your peasant connections and mine, to claim kindred with the noble house of Carloghie! Woman, I know not what to say to you! this misfortune will drive me mad!’—and, unable to proceed, he strode three or four times across the kitchen.

“ ‘It’s a great misfortune, indeed, and a sore mishanter, nae doubt,’ said the dame sneeringly, and recovering her impudent toss of the head, ‘for an honest man’s son to get a gentle wife,—and me, that was the widow of a reverend minister, to be blamed for——’

“ ‘Hold your peace, senseless wretch!’ inter-

rupted the farmer, passionately; ‘you know not what you have done! You know not the effects of your own folly, even as it respects these thoughtless young people, whom your advice ought to have saved from such an egregious imprudence. Condescension, indeed! it is *my son* that has condescended to place himself in a position where he must be looked down upon by those among whom he has thrust himself in presumptuous connection! while there is not a family of his own degree, between this and the brig of Berwick, but would have been blithe and happy to have counted him and his among their kindred,—to have made him a respected man in his station, and his wife a companion for his own sisters. But now, he is not only despised by the noble family, who would have otherwise respected him, but has divorced himself from the society of his own relations; for what fellowship can there be with my daughters and a daughter of the Earl of Carloghie? Young man! young man!’ he added, turning to his son, ‘you have shown less sense in this matter than I had given you credit for.’

“ ‘ Whatever may have been our imprudence, father,’ said James, in an agitated tone, ‘ you might consider in whose presence you are saying all this.’

“ ‘ It’s very true, James,’ said the old man, approaching Lady Barbara, ‘ it’s very true; but little did I think ever to have *had* such things to say. This is a sad folly, young lady! a sad and sair folly in your father’s child. And so you have been sent frae the castle at this time of night, and came here without friend or attendant, carrying a bit bundle in your hand like one of my hireling shearers. Lord help us! this is a puir way even for my son’s wife; to come hame to his house without bridal, or brewse, or minister’s presence; as if we were ashamed of our ain doings. What will our very neighbours say the morn, Lady Barbara?—and what must my lord, your father, think of a wedding-day like this for his favourite daughter?’

“ ‘ I am not my lord’s daughter now, Mr. Johnston,’ said the young lady, breaking into tears at the thoughts of her father, and at the

picture thus drawn of her wedding-day ; ‘ but if my lord had had more consideration for my feelings, and, instead of insisting, as he did, on my marriage with one I hated, had reasoned with me as you are now doing, I would never have disobeyed him as I did, for all the love I bore to your warm-hearted son, that’s my husband this night, and the sufferer for my sake. But I have now chosen another station, and if you will be my friend for James’s sake, and be to me in the place of my parents, who have indeed cast me off and disowned me, I will make to him an affectionate wife, and be to you an humble daughter.’

“ ‘ God forbid that I should refuse to be a father to thee, poor young thing ! even though my own son is in some measure the sacrifice,’ said the old man, melted at the manner in which she had thrown herself upon him. ‘ Yet I fear thou knowest little of what is actually before thee.’

“ ‘ There’s no fear o’ nothing,’ struck in the farmer’s wife, ‘ when Lady Barbara’s trunks, and trantlums, and grand dresses come the

morn frae the Castle—that'll be a pleasant ploy. Odd, I'll wait upon the flunky lads mysel'.'

“ ‘ There'll be no trunks coming to me, good dame,' said Barbara, with a bitter sigh: ‘ my father's word is a hard word, and all I bring is on my person, or contained in this little bundle.'

“ ‘ Ye'll no mean what ye say, Lady Barbara!' cried the farmer's wife, in consternation. ‘ They'll certainly send you your jewels, and your broaches, and your head-pinner, and your gold watch; forbye your silk damascenes and your manteel, and your velvet robe, and your calash, as ye're entitled, never speaking o' preen money, and pocket money, and marriage presents, to the boot, o' a gude mailing for our Jamie, even if ye *were* disown'd twenty times o'er. The bundle? my troth!' added she, taking it up, and looking at it with the utmost scorn, ‘ if ye bring my Jamie nae mair than that, it'll turn out a bonnie bargain for us, after a' 's done.'

“ ‘ And is this the way ye speak already, Mrs.

Johnston?’ said the young lady, in simple astonishment; and, adding no more, she sat looking at her new mother-in-law, as if beginning to awaken out of a fondly-indulged dream.

“ ‘Woman!’ said the old man to his dame, coming up between her and the humbled lady, ‘if it were not that you are my wife, and the mother of the lad that sinks with shame at what you say, never would you stay another night under my roof, for the degradation you are putting upon my family. Out, I say! out of my sight! till I discuss in calmness what remains to be said to this deluded young couple!’ Having said this with a determined stamp of his foot, the disappointed dame, in high wrath, was forced to withdraw into another apartment.

“ ‘I see too well how it has been, my lady,’ said the farmer, kindly and respectfully, when the dame had disappeared; ‘but dinna mind my foolish wife,—more foolish, I fear, than either of yourselves; for since this thing is done that cannot be undone, I will be your friend while you remain in my house, and

while you lay down your mind to your lot as my son's wife. And, James,' he added, addressing his son, 'do not give way to this feeling of shame: I know well your generous nature, and what is in your thought; but behave yourself as a man; look for nothing from the Earl, and you shall not want for the little substance that I have to give; or for my blessing, that will do you no harm, and the blessing of God, that addeth no sorrow!'

"This was too much for the feelings of the young man: I heard the sob that rose up in his throat, and saw the tears steal down his handsome countenance, as he looked in his father's forgiving face, and grasped in silence his offered hand. The farmer next respectfully offered the same salutation to Lady Barbara, who was for some time too much affected to speak.

" 'Oh! sir,' she said, 'though I may have acted foolishly to my family, your son is the choice of my heart, and the election of my fancy; and if you will only be our friend until we have fairly begun the world, you will tie us

to you for ever by the gratitude of children, and I will do my duty to my dear husband here, through every scene that belongs to our humble station. Nay, do not look so incredulous, sir. For his sake whom I have taken by the hand, I will lay aside all the notions of my former rank, and early and late I will, by labour or superintendence, strive to make him a useful and a suitable wife.'

" ' You speak delightfully and intend nobly, my dear young lady,' said the old man, much moved by her earnest enthusiasm; ' but do not deceive yourself with the glowing promises of your own fancy. Believe me, this pretty hand was never made for the labours of the dairy or the kitchen; nor are these sentiments of love-formed romance suited to the homely occupations of a farmer's wife. I do not wish to prophesy evil, but God grant that you may be in no other state of mind, when a twelvemonth or two have passed over our heads, and given you that time's experience of the difference between your former and present condition. But good night now; and may God bless you

again, and make you, in your own love, abundantly happy !’

“ He shook hands with both once more, and looked at them kindly and with fatherly affection; yet he parted from them upon the whole with a countenance of meaning melancholy, and shook his head mournfully as he left them together. The moment he shut the door behind him, I saw Barbara burst again into tears, and, with a wild ardour of womanly abandonment, throw herself passionately into her husband’s arms.

“ I was ashamed to watch any more, and, turning from the little window where I had been standing, I ran down the holm, crossed by the moonlight the Fairly burn, and, occupied with various feelings, I soon reached Carloghie planting, and got back to my own solitary apartment in the Castle.”

CHAP. VII.

“WHEEL, really it’s very extraordinary, Miss Marion,” said I, when she had proceeded thus far, “how ye got all these particulars of your uncommon story. And so, it is by peeping in at windows, and hearkening at chinks and openings while folks are talking, that ye study human nature, and get such intimate acquaintance with family affairs. Really, this lets in a gleam of light into my mind, that’s quite instructive; for I never could before make out how those sweet and edifying tales are made up, which are so pleasant to the reading of idle young ladies, and of old fools like myself, who have nothing else to do. Positively, Marion, if I had taken to the standing at the backs of doors, and looking in at keyholes myself, what a wonderful stock of stories might I not by this time have collected!”

“Is that all the thanks I get for sitting here entertaining you, at your own request, until

my very tongue is fatigued in my mouth, and as dry as a stick with long speaking," said Marion, contradicting herself on the instant, however, by a good sip of the ratafia before us. "Truly, Mr. Balgownie, if you examine me so particularly as to how I get at the necessary circumstantialities of my tale, you may as well put a padlock on my mouth at once. Na, na, sir, if ye go thus to tie up story-tellers that dive into the depths of family history, and other benefactors of mankind — the world will sink back into utter ignorance and darkness, and we will know no more of sensible affairs than the savages of Norawaw."

"Conscience me! Marion," said I, "you need not be so brisk and fluffy, and hop off in an instant all the way to Norway, for my civil joke. I know what it is to help out a story as well as my neighbours, and there's no doing without it, either for amusement or edification, as long as the world requires to know particularly the internals of things."

"That may be, sir, in the way of your dictionary philosophy," replied Marion, "but

there's no deception about my tale, which is as true, every word o' 't, as that ye've drank two glasses of ratafia for my one, which is no doubt a man's prerogative, like other matters of injustice. But as my story does not end with a marriage, as most o' the silly tales do, that are without a word of reasonable truth, and as the best o' 't is yet to come, I advise you to let me tell it my own way, and not to interrupt me again wi' any o' your ifs and ofs, or I'll turn as dumb and dour as one of the black effigies of the foolish virgins, that stands holding up her empty lamp, on the great staircase o' the Castle."

"It would certainly be a dreadful calamity for you to turn dumb now," said I, "after you have talked for so many years; and especially at this time, when I am so anxious to hear how Lady Barbara came on as the farmer's wife. But do not take a pet at my harmless satires, or let us argue as if we were in earnest, and ye shall have it all your own way, as the women should; so just proceed."

"When the news of what was done began

to be whispered down the holm," continued Marion, "and Lady Barbara was seen actually staying at the mailing, never had there in the memory of man, been such a sugh of clatter and astonishment sent up the Fairly Water, as went about this extraordinary affair round all the country-side. The talk went different ways, and few could tell the right o' 't. Some said they were not married at all, for they would not believe in a rank impossibility. Others said they *were*, for that Mrs. Johnston had told it with her own mouth; but a third party said it was only a scheme of Lady Barbara's to thraw the auld Earl, her father, about the Marquis; adding, that, whatever might have happened between her and Jamie Johnston, there would be black news heard o' 't some other day.

"As to our state at home at the Castle, it was really distressing. My lady kept her bed for three whole days, and fretted and distracted herself into a burning fever. Lady Mary went about wringing her hands, weeping constantly, and talking to herself about the degradation of

her family, until she threw herself into heavy fits of the hysterics; and Lady Frances, after first seeming half pleased at her sister's terrible downfall, began to join in the general lamentation, and then to throw on me the blame of the whole misfortune.

“ But the most pathetic consequences of this affair was the distressed state of my lord the Earl. For a whole week he never left his room, but sat mourning and sorrowing by himself, as if there had been a burial in the house; and then, when he came out at last, and began to take his walks about the grounds, as he was wont, his appearance was careless and demented, as if he hardly knew what he was about: he looked ten years older, and I assure you, his hair, instead of a mottled grey, that indicated vigour of years, had become white at the haffets from pure affliction. No doubt his lordship was vexed at himself, and sorely repented of his own strictness and sternness with poor Lady Barbara; but oh! to lose in this manner his beloved daughter, and to have the last hopes of his family so mortifyingly blasted,

was almost too much for his strength to bear. I remember him speaking to me one day in the garden, and asking me some questions about her, who now was constantly in his mind, and I declare his very voice seemed to be small and broken ; and, proud as was his nature, and high his dignity, he was hardly able, in talking of her, to refrain from tears.

“ As for Barbara, it was some time before I could make out how she was coming on at the mailing. But the neighbours soon began to give credit to the marriage; for there were various things happened, and symptoms appeared, which were not usually seen in these days about a farm-house. First, the cart came home, one day, with several lady-like matters from the nearest town, such as working-tables from the cabinet-maker’s, and garniture from the upholsterer’s, and various other genteelities for the spence and the parlour, which made wonderful transformations in the dwelling. Then there were workmen employed to paper up the rooms and filigree the doors ; besides a gardener to beautify the garden behind my

lady's chamber ; and, before the alterations were all finished, there was a curtain fixed up round the parlour windows, that the like was not any where but at the Castle itself.

“ All this aspiring might have been borne by the neighbours, if Mrs. Johnston had chosen to conduct herself with any sort of consideration. But it was evident that she was getting perfectly mad with pride and upsetting ; talked of nothing but her son, Mr. Johnston, Lady Barbara of the Castle, her daughter-in-law, and the great alliance with the Earl of Carloghie, who was soon to be quite reconciled to the match, and to make her and hers nothing but ladies and gentlemen. Even this might have been suffered ; for, as the neighbours said, words were but wind, and the auld wife was but a vaunting braggadocia ; but when she took them into the newly furnished apartments, and showed them the carpets to walk on, and the window screens to dim the light, and the bedstead that her son now slept on, grander, as they said, than any bailie's of the land, they were smitten to the heart with anger and envy ;

and though they praised them, no doubt, and held up their hands, they said within their minds that this would come to a prostration.

“ To add to all this, James Johnston himself began to aspire to a cleanliness above his station, — to shave three times in the week like a gentleman; and he next got a coat home from James Taylor, the tailor, the like of which was not to be seen in Fairly kirk. Some said he had also grown proud and uppish, and that even the old man, his father, held a higher head in the town on a market-day than formerly. But this I never could myself see, nor would I give it with any certification; and as for the minding of his work, and his general eidency, no man could be more diligent in the field and over the servants, night and morning, than the young man was.

“ As for Barbara, it was not known for a time to the neighbours how she did in her new situation; and the servants, when spoken to, just gave a chuckle, and said they could not say, but they never would wish a better mistress. Then she began to be wonderfully industrious,

and would be attending to every thing, though still dressed up in her own flowing and genty dress. Next she would bustle out towards the fields, upon some ladylike errand of fancied usefulness ; or might be seen of a morning feeding the poultry behind the house, with long kid gloves on her arms. Also she would, as was currently said, be often observed with silk stockings and high-heeled shoes, picking her steps among the puddles about the barn-door, and asking such questions at the servant lasses and the men, as gave the loons an extraordinary degree of giggling diversion. And then the hens and ducks began to know her, and ran cackling after her whenever she appeared without the door ; and it was quite a fun to see them and the geese ‘ quacking ’ at her tail, when her ladyship went out in her dimity wrapper, to gather the eggs of a morning.

“ But neither her husband nor his father seemed at all to encourage this extraordinary industry, but only suffered it for a time, merely to humour her harmless anxiety ; for the

old man, in particular, set the example of treating her with nothing but the greatest respect; and, indeed, she conducted herself so amiably, and seemed so desirous to accommodate herself to her new situation, that, never speaking of the love of her husband, who really doted upon her, she entirely won the hearts of all around.

“ But it was in the conduct of the dairy that her talents for her new employments were most conspicuous. From the milking-pail to the cheese-press she attended to every thing; buckled up her sleeves, and helped to separate the whey from the curds; tried the butter in the churn with her own finger; and judged the cleanness of the tubs by smelling at them with her own nose. This did all very well for a time, when the thing was new, and when the old woman treated her indulgently, rather as a lady amateur than a pupil. But when she began to be entrusted with the actual cares and responsibilities of the farm, and had, as was said, spoiled some churnings of milk, and caused the failure of several makings of butter; and,

when the old woman began to speak cross to her, and things to go wrong, she took the pet at the others, and at these low-lived plagues, and, retiring into her own chamber, began to think that farming was a very nasty employment for a lady.

“ Then she would survey herself in the little toilette glass in her chamber, that stood plaited all round with muslin, under the curtain which she had caused to be erected, and be horrified at the freckles that had come upon her face, and at the coarseness of her hands with this country work ; and vague recollections would come into her head, about matters which it was now only a discontent to think of.

“ But there were other little annoyances belonging to her new station, which, were it not that young people never think of any thing in the shape of consequences when they marry, Barbara should have been prepared for when she became Johnston’s wife. As yet she had seen only himself and his parents ; but there had never come in her way any other of his relations. When she began to appear dull,

therefore, about this time, James, in the innocence of his heart, and with a view to arouse her, sent an invitation to his two sisters, and their husbands, to his brother and spouse, and to some half-dozen aunts and cousins, to come to the Fairly Holm to a drinking of tea; being, as he meant it, a little social *doing*, or *shine*, in honour of his marriage. When all this was arranged in his own mind, and the invitations sent, he came in to her on the eve of the appointed day, to give her a pleasant surprise, by announcing what he had done.

“ ‘ Bless me, James,’ she said, speaking first when she saw him, ‘ what is all this baking of oaten bread, and scouring of pewter, and cleaning and preparation for? Your mother wo’n’t tell me; but it looks as if some great business was in progress.’

“ ‘ It’s no great business, Barbara,’ he said, ‘ although it is you that is principally concerned;’ and then he told her, with a smile of satisfaction, what he and his mother had been doing, and named all the people who were to make up this pleasant jollification.

“ ‘ And do you really, James,’ she said, ‘ expect me to figure among all this company?’

“ ‘ Certainly, my love — it is on your account they are bid ; and they are all dying to see you. Besides, it is necessary that we should look like married folk ; and I have often heard you say you would be delighted with the simple pleasures of the farmer’s fireside. And then, my dear, you will be the queen of the evening, and I will be so proud of you ; so you must condescend to be happy with my relatives, and make the tea, and do all the honours.’

“ ‘ Do the honours ! Me make tea to such a gathering ! I can’t make tea. I was never used to do it at home. It was the housekeeper made tea. I shall never get through : it would be better for me not to appear.’

“ ‘ Barbara ! could I have thought this !’ he said, alarmed. ‘ Would you really affront me before my friends ! Come, come,’ he added, coaxingly, ‘ do not be so shy of us ; and my mother will help you, and we will all serve you, if you will countenance our *doing*. So get

yourself ready, my lady love, and put on your flowered gown that makes you look so handsome, and pin up your hair in the way that sets you so well, and you will enjoy yourself even in the farmer's ha', depend upon it.'

"She made several other remarks that Johnston did not like, but at last gave a sort of parting consent; and James left her, to see after the remaining preparations. The ploy itself, however, when it came, did not turn out exactly what Barbara's curiosity had wished, or her fancy imagined, as I shall have occasion to set forth. But really this long talking," continued Marion, "is making me quite breathless; and I must wet my mouth with a sugar plum, and recruit my breath with a taste of the ratafia, before I go on to tell you what happened at the *shine*."

CHAP. VIII.

“THE habits of Lady Barbara were not, of course, so far overcome, as yet, as to induce her to be up in general with the farmer people; so on the morning of the ploy, ere daylight had fully spread over the Fairly Holms, the whole inmates but herself were already in activity, and, soon after, such a noise and bustle began to be set up in the house, as speedily roused her from her slumbers. At first, she could not understand the meaning of all this; but the din became of such a nature as to give her no slight note of intimation of what was going forward. The old woman had been first astir, and, setting to work, with the assistance of two stout country wenches, who neither restrained tongue nor *talons* on the occasion, the whole drove about the furniture and rattled the timber vessels at such a rate—screaming into laughter frequently at their own fun—that to have enjoyed any sleep under the same roof

with them, was beyond the power of nature, even if Morpheus had laid a double weight upon Barbara's eyelids.

“ Accordingly she rose betimes — not without previously contrasting, involuntarily, this vulgar noise at her ear with the aristocratic silence of her former chamber in the Castle; and, issuing forth from her little room, stared with surprise at the change that had already been effected. The large kitchen was stripped of its chief furniture, for what purpose she could not then make out; the parlour, and its elegancies of her own ordering, had been turned topsy-turvy, and the little spence, with all its corner cupboards, and quaint-looking wardrobes, was transformed into a store-room of abundant confusion. *Bings* of bread, both oaten and wheaten, and mountains of other eatables, already clad the tables, and occupied the great trenchers of solid pewter, that, round as the shield of Ajax, and scoured as bright as sand and whiting could make them, stood in a substantial phalanx athwart the apartment. Stone jars, filled with Scotland's liquor, with

big-bellied bottles, heavy with the red produce of the French plains, or the savoury strong waters of Holland, occupied every nook between the ample rations; while a motley confusion of punch-bowls, long-shanked glasses, pewter stoups, tin sconces for the walls, and great long-wicked tallow candles, absolutely alarmed Lady Barbara with the extent of the preparation. Instead of the ordinary inference from what she saw, of the full and plenty of a substantial farm-house, and the capacious appetites of its healthy visiters, there seemed heaped up before her provision sufficient to feed a garrison or an army, rather than for the civil entertainment for a few farmers and their wives, invited to a drinking of tea.

“ She would have asked some questions as to this; but her mother-in-law was so full of bustle that morning, and so big with orders to the red-armed lasses who scoured and scrubbed before her, that she evidently had not time to answer a word. Barbara, therefore, willing to make herself useful on the occasion, set about doing something herself, and even put her own

hand to several things that stood near her, to show her activity. The old dame smiled at this good-natured condescension ; but, winking to the servant lasses to observe, with her, the gloved hands of delicate kid with which her high-born daughter-in-law was invested, and the touching, tripping manner in which she went about every thing, she at length put an end to it by saying, in no very respectful tone, — ‘ Noo, that’s very nice, and very snodly done, Lady Barbara ; but ye see it’s no just in our way. Ye’ll excuse my plainness ; but ye ken the auld proverb, that “ muffled cats make puir hunters ; ” and so, nae disparagement to your intent, ye had better just slip back to your ain chaumer, and let the lasses and me work ; for, to tell you the plain truth, ye are only in our road. Na, lady, ye needna’ take ill what I say ; for it’s no for your white hands to try to meddle wi’ country wark.’

“ This was a style of language to which Lady Barbara was by no means accustomed, however true it might be in substance, and characteristic of her who spoke it. She therefore retired to

her room, pettish and affronted, and far from being in the best humour, to brood over her new circumstances, and the bad success of her attempts at humbling herself to the industry of her situation. Affection for her husband, however, and even respect for the old farmer, induced her to conceal, with some care, her thoughts; and thus the day wore over, while, with more curiosity than good spirits, she looked forward with impatience to the events of the ploy."

"It was yet hardly the hour when the great bell at the Castle was usually rung for dinner, when the rumble of a vehicle in the lane that led to the house, and a loud cackling noise at the door, indicated that some of the company had arrived. Female curiosity is confined to no rank; and Barbara, on hearing the sound, mounted up to a little bed-room in the attic, and planted herself at a window, well shaded by black thatch, gracefully fringed by the verdure, which finds nourishment on the roofs of farm-houses, to take a reconnoitring survey of the company. The first cargo, con-

sisting chiefly of women and children, under the protection of two spruce farmers, and brought in a market cart, from the jolting of which its inmates were protected by a most comfortable bedding of clean straw, had scarcely begun to jump from their vehicle, when a halloing of voices was heard in the distance, and a whole troop of heavy horsemen next appeared in the lane, who, galloping forward, soon surrounded the cart and the door.

“ This, however, was but the beginning of the cavalcade, consisting only of brisk young fellows, who, full of spirits, and willing to show their horsemanship before the women, as well as the stragglers, who began to assemble by the sides of the fields, rode a sort of *brewse*, in coming up to the farm-house, as is customary to do at the weddings in Scotland. Next after these came on, at a jogging trot, several older farmers and their wives, riding double, the woman’s right arm round the man, and her feet as they hung by the horse’s side shooting out and in, in no very graceful manner, with every heavy motion of

the broad-backed beast. Scarcely had these last began to alight, when, to Barbara's further astonishment, a large old-fashioned vehicle—a mongrel between a coach and a phaeton—came rumbling down the lane, containing somewhere about nine or a dozen persons, mostly women, absolutely heaped above one another; or, at least, seated three deep on each other's knees. Forward it came, through the crowd that was now assembling by the hedges, the women screaming with laughter at their own ridiculous appearance, as well as at the uncouth swearing of James Jeddart, the farmer, who, in sheer braggadocio, had undertaken, with a single horse, to drag this whole ark of people to the Fairly Holm, and who, to make the horse go under his unchristian load, slashed and thumped the unfortunate beast in a most inconsiderate manner.

“ By the time all this company had mustered round the door, Barbara stood contemplating the sight, in absolute consternation at the numbers; the whole lane, as far as she could see, appeared crowded like a fair, with beasts

and people; the babble of tongues and buzz of country congratulation was most diverting. To increase the *éclat*, the villagers and farm servants for miles round, hearing of the ploy, came in crowds to see the company; and, having heard much of Lady Barbara and the late wedding, many of them had brought guns and pistols to the ground, and, agreeably to the custom at country rejoicings, began now to startle the horses and frighten the women, by firing them at their ears, over the hedges; while loud huzzas and cheering accompanied the arrival of each fresh cavalcade.

“ ‘For mercy’s sake,’ said Lady Barbara to herself, as she stood at the window, ‘are the whole people of the country coming here to night to make a show of me in this barbarous manner? Tea-drinking call they it? this is worse than a London riot, or a Scotch meal-mob. No wonder I was alarmed. But let me listen to what they say.’

“ ‘Hoo are ye, Jenny;’ and ‘hoo’s a’ wi’ ye, Jocky;’ and ‘Bless my soul, is this you, Geordie, come to see Jamie Johnston’s

grand wife?'—were the common exclamations. 'Faith, lad, this is an honour that'll serve you to brag on for this twal'month and mair, through a' the fairs in the west o' Scotland. Drink tea and toddy wi' an Earl's daughter! and, maybe, dance a reel wi' her, and turn her an allemand o' the Highland fling! God! Robin, I wish we may ken oursels when we gae back. I'll hae bab at the bouter, ere a's done, as sure as the deel's a gentleman,' said Willie Wastle of the Gap, 'if there's a fiddle or a string o' cat's thairm to be had atween this and the brig o' Blawder.'

"What this last speech meant, Lady Barbara, happily for herself, did not then understand; although she comprehended enough of it, from several coarse allusions of country wit which she was just able to catch at her half open window, to determine her as to her own line of conduct for the evening; as the dresses of the women determined her also as to the style of her own appearance. The sight of these dresses, indeed, and various characteristic occurrences among the company at the door,

afforded her — as she was becoming critical, from the parties being now almost her own equals — a high treat of diversion. Scarlet petticoats of glazed durant, or of red flannel, prevailed most for that part of the dress; over which white aprons of flowered lawn, or lappets of the same material, hung from the head; flowing gowns of showy chintz, tucked up at the pocket holes to look genteel; and long streamers of yellow ribands, from bonnets just then admitted into fashion, by a most upsetting innovation in favour of this class, was the most general costume of the farmers' daughters. All had dressed with extraordinary pains for so great an occasion; while their mothers appeared in short cloaks of blue or scarlet cloth, their head-dresses consisting only of close pinner of white linen or lawn, tied up with a snood of silverised riband; a bonnet being a piece of grandeur that they were not disposed as yet to pretend to. As to the sisters-in-law of Lady Barbara, and others of the more substantial farmers' wives, they sported stiff gowns of lutestring silk, with ruffled cuffs above the

elbows, and grand stomachers of shining steel and green glass, which, like reflectors on a lighthouse, mightily dazzled the eyes of the beholders.

“ Whatever was the criticism of Lady Barbara on these matters, it was evident that the wearers themselves were exceedingly well satisfied with their respective appearances, and granted more hearty admiration to each others’ manky gowns and steel stomachers, than is usually awarded reciprocally to the robes and diamonds in a London drawing-room.

“ Then the farmers’ daughters joked with the young men with such hearty pleasure, in the opportunity of meeting them, and, when the latter offered their services in helping them from their vehicles, they threw themselves into their arms to be *jump* down, with such gay good will, and showed their legs, in descending, with such joyous coquetry, that Barbara knew not whether to be shocked at their freedom, or to envy a sort of enjoyment of which she was conscious she could not herself fully partake.

She might have thought better of all before

her, if she had not been so taken by surprise by the number of the company, and humbled by the circumstances in which she consciously stood, even certified to her own ears by the free remarks passed upon her. She was just forming several aristocratic resolutions in her own mind, when the door opened, and Johnston, her husband, stood at her elbow.

“ ‘ For heaven’s sake, James,’ she said, ‘ what means this crowd ! Are all these people your country cousins ? ’ ”

“ ‘ This must be my mother’s doing ; ’ he said, evidently affronted at seeing so vast a congregation ; ‘ but come down, my lady ; we are wanted. Here is my mother herself, clambering up stairs to seek us. ’ ”

“ ‘ James Johnston and Lady Babby,’ cried the dame, out of breath, ‘ is this a time to be courting and cooing up here, and the whole company at the door ? I’m not able to divide myself into twenty parts, and receive every body. ’ ”

“ ‘ Every body, indeed ! ’ said her son. ‘ Why, mother, you have asked the whole parish, and the next county. ’ ”

“ ‘ And a gude right,’ replied the dame, with a toss of her head. ‘ What’s the use o’ your grand marriage, James Johnston, if my noble daughter-in-law is to be kept like a nun and a curiosity out o’ the sight of our friends and blood relations? Na, na, Maister Jamie, it was a hiddlings wedding and a theiveless bedding wi’ you and Lady Babby; the whilk couldna be helped at the time, nae doubt, but there ne’er was a Johnston yet married out o’ the Fairly Holm, without the country round hearing o’ ’t wi’ a reasonable sound, and a *doing* and a *decency* to bring friends together; and a wedding dinner, forbye a wedding supper, and a screed o’ music; an’ a loup on the floor: and here there’s nought but a bit drinking o’ tea, and a mouthful o’ mutton-ham for the men, and a lick o’ jelly for the lasses, an’ a pickle parliament cakes for the weans, and a bicker o’ brandy to keep aff the colic, and, maybe, a thimbleful o’ warming hollands for the married women. My troth! what would ye hae? There ne’er shall a son o’ mine get leave to smuggle hame a wife to my fireside, as if the

minister hadna said a blessing on the bargain, and without friend or fraem to wish the young folks weel, or a drap o' drink drunken on the head o' 't, or the scrape o' a fiddle, or the shaking of a foot, nae mair than if it were the buckling o' a town's Jenny and a Tarbowton weaver. Na, na, Jamie Johnston, I'm neither ashamed o' kith nor kin: I'll hae nae sic doings in my family, never speaking o' our new connection wi' high nobility, and the great Earl o' Carloghie nae less.'

“‘I wish you would not speak so foolish, mother,’ said her son, withdrawing his eyes hastily from Barbara’s flushed countenance — ‘but tell me who you have really bid, besides my own sisters and brothers, for I hardly know the half of these people?’

“‘Do you think there was nane to bid but them?’ she said. ‘Is n’t there Robin Johnston o’ the Clayslap, and William Johnston o’ the Longriggs, and Gavin Johnston o’ the Burnfoot, wi’ their wives and dochters; the men gude gash farmers, and your father’s cousins, whom we couldna but hae. And is n’t there

Thomas Dobbie o' the Barnyards, and Allan Dobbie o' the Wetholms, and Saunders Whaup o' the Todeshole, and his twa dochters, my ain relations every one; and Willie Wastle o' the Whinside, and Jamie Jaup o' the Plash,—we couldna want him, he's sic a deevil; and Geordie Gowdie o' the Yellowlee, and Saunders Tupe o' the Pens, and David Dowart, and Miss Mally Dowart, and Miss Peggy Tupe, and Mrs. Clasher and her twa callants, I couldna help bidding them too; a pleasanter company ne'er met at a handling, and it *shall be* a handling, for there's plenty to gi'e them.'

“ ‘Lordsake, mother, have done,’ said her son, affronted before Barbara, yet almost laughing out at this formidable roll-call; ‘but I think ye might at least have consulted me before you brought hither such a million.’

“ ‘Hoot! it's just as cheap to hae a big doing as a little doing, when we're at it. But, bless me, Lady Barbara,’ exclaimed the dame suddenly, ‘I declare ye're no dressed! and here are the folk already in the house. Rin down, my sweet lady, and put on your damascene

gown, and your high cap, and make yoursel' up in your best. Jamie! how dare ye keep the lady parleyvooring here, and the company waiting for you baith, and wandering the house like a wheen shepherdless sheep?'

"With this the dame descended, accompanied by her son, to aid the old man in receiving the company; while, in no very good humour or spirits, Lady Barbara slipped round to her chamber.

"The shaking of hands below stairs, and the congratulations and enquiries of the farmers and their wives and families, were so loud, and often so free and boisterous, that the young man, and even his mother, were somewhat annoyed at it. 'But where's the lady? Why is Mrs. Johnston not here? What has become o' your wife?' were the exclamations echoed from so many mouths, and put in so many forms, that James himself was obliged to put a stop to them.

" 'Dear me, said Mrs. Clashter, 'but she's long o' coming out. Its *her* I came to see, more than aught else, and here we are looking

at ane anither like fools at a fair. A Gude-sake, what it is to be a lord's dochter !'

" ' Ay,' said Miss Mally Dowart, ' if ye claimed sib to as many lords and ladies as Lady Johnston does, Mrs. Clasher, ye would make yoursel' as scarce as ony body. But I'm thinking the Lady disna like her company overly weel, or she would have been here among us before this time.'

" ' Was n't it a wonderful lift for thae Johnstons,' said Mrs. Whaup in a whisper to the former, ' to get their son married into such a connection? It's enough to turn the callant's head. I can hardly believe it yet.'

" ' It's nae sic advantage as ye may think,' replied Mrs. Clasher; ' for the Earl has disowned the puir lassie out and out; neither stick nor stool will she e'er get frae him, as I am credibly told; and what then has the callant gotten, but a gentle doll to dandle, and no a plack wi' her as muckle as would buy paint for her cheeks. It's an ill bargain, Mrs. Whaup, take my word for 't, for a' Mrs. Johnston's braggadocio; and Jamie Johnston would hae

been muckle better wi' my niece, or any other decent farmer's dochter, wha's tocher was gude; weel would he hae got it, too, for troth he's a bonnie lad, and there's no a lass frae this to the Blae-hills but would hae jumped at him: but whisht! here she comes hersel'; whispered the gossip, as the spence door opened, and James Johnston was seen now leading forward his high-born lady, to receive the salutations of the company.

"'Is that a' your Lady Barbara?' exclaimed Mrs. Whaup, as she appeared. Is *that* her? a dowdy-looking thing, for as high as she hauds her head; and how noughtily she's dressed, wi' naething but a snood on her head, and a plain boddice like a waiting-maid: pooh! for your grand lady, whilk there's been sic a talk about! My dochter Dorty is a perfect queen to her.'

"These were the sort of exclamations with which Lady Barbara was received (in whispers to each other) by the generality of the women present. In truth, there was some cause for it, over and above the usual prevalence of certain well-known propensities; for Barbara, high-

born as she was, had her female feelings as well as the meanest of them ; and the sight, from the window, of the flaunting dresses and glaring colours of her plebeian associates, had made her resolve to doff even the common lutestring which she wore every day, and support the distinction to which she still felt herself entitled, by assuming, in the proper spirit of aristocratical contradiction, the plainest dress that her scanty wardrobe afforded.

“ The first view of her high daughter-in-law, coming thus forward without damascene gown or any thing, — a perfect contrast, in appearance, to the commonest farmer’s daughter present, almost took the sight from the eyes of the ambitious old woman. She held up her hands in chop-fallen consternation, and expressed her mortification in audible terms, that gave small promise, on her part, for the harmony of the evening. Even James, her husband, partial as he was, seemed annoyed at the contradictory spirit of this excessive plainness; and still more, afterwards, when she was set among the party, by the evident uneasiness displayed in her

manner, the critical glances she threw round her among the company, and the determined hauteur which she observed towards his mother and several of the elder women, their guests, as if she in vain tried to conquer a spirit that was inimical to any thing like amalgamation with her present circumstances.

CHAPTER IX.

"WELL, Miss Marion," I said, interrupting my narrator at this part of her story, "that last sentence of yours was flourishingly spoken, no doubt; and very like a composition in a fine printed book. But I'd rather ye would not lift your style so high, and deal in such rhetorical generalities, but tell me plain particulars of the why and the wherefore; for I'm exceedingly curious to know how so high-bred a young lady got on as hailfellow with farmer folk, at a country *doing*. I really never met wi' the like o't in any novel that ever I read."

"Weel, sir," continued Marion, "if ye will have the plain vulgarity of the ploy, as it must have appeared to one like Lady Barbara, lay aside your own gentility for a moment, while I show you how an earl's daughter must have viewed the coarse scenes of country life. In the first place, her ladyship was just a terror and a restraint to the whole company, from the moment she set her head in amongst this

gathering; for ne'er a bit could she let down her dignity;—although, I confess, she often tried it wi' a smile and a word to the farmer lasses, — the which, however, only came from her like force-meat out of a trussed pigeon.

“As for the folk, they all put on the gentility to imitate her; and the men were afraid to speak; and the women were ashamed to laugh, for fear of being vulgar; and so they sat stiff and anxious, just like poor relations at a will-reading; and, whenever Geordie Gowdie passed a joke, or Jamie Jaup pulled a face, as country folks will do at a gathering, to make fun for the lasses, or Willie Wastle set up a laugh, and showed his long tusks, then Lady Barbara would look grave, or grow red in the face; and so this would throw a damper of gentility o'er the company, like a wet blanket to chill the heat of honest mirth; for the wives would touch one another's elbows before they spoke, and the very auld men held their tongues in awe of her.

“But the funniest thing at the beginning of the night was about the tea-urn; for Jamie

Johnston, to please Lady Babby, behoved to send all the way to Edinburgh for a brass urn, to keep the water scalding hot for the masking of the tea. And so, as Lady Barbara had affronted the old woman, by dressing 'like a methodie,' to the disrespect of her company, the dame determined that her proud daughter-in-law should not have the place of honour at the handselling of the urn; but that *she* would be the leader of the feast, and make the tea herself.

"So you never saw any thing so grand and proud as the old woman was in her cocklety-coe cap wi' the pink ribands, seated as she were my lady behind the tea-urn, that buzzed and fuffed before her like a steam-engine. Such an invention for scalding water, and gentility, had never been seen in the country-side before; so it was no wonder that the young folks marvelled with amazement, and the old lady sat down with some trepidation to play a tea-drinking tune upon such a new-fangled instrument. Well, the new china was also set out, and planted in rows upon a mahogany server; and there were borrowed cups forbye, above a score; and such

a confusion and a jingling of crockery and pewter spoons, ye never heard; not to speak of the bings of short-bread and cakes, and the plates of mutton-ham that had been birsled for the occasion; and the mugs of jam, and jelly, and marmalade; and the trenchers of caraway seeds and sweeties—a perfect feast! It was dreadful how the old woman got through it: for the red-elbowed lassies that served and swat out and in were so awkward, and the house was so crowded, that the men said it was like nought but the kitchen of a kirk ale-house at a tent sacrament.

“ But about the urn, you see: the cock that lets out the water was rather stiff and ill to turn; and Mrs. Johnston, being awkward at managing such an engine, scalded her fingers till the tears came into her eyes, which made her try a new plan o’ ’t, rather than she would demean herself to make a complaint before the company. Well, getting Miss Mally Dowart to help her, she shifted the tea-pots beneath the cock, and every one had a hand, and the cups went round with a sort of hobble; for

the farmer lads, not being acquainted with high gentility, such as it was fit to enact before my lady, handed the eatables and drinkables with a scuffle of awkwardness, which made them dunt against one another and the table, and smash a cup or two of the new china. This untoward accident provoked Mrs. Johnston to lift her head and speak up; and so in the confusion she forgot the tea-urn and the turning of the cock, until the whole tea-board was in a swim wi' scalding water; so that the stream broke out at the handle, and ran like a Jordan into Mrs. Clashter's durant petticoat. The wife gave a squeel when she found the hot water coming through, so loud that ye might have heard her at Carloghie Castle; and the lads ran to stop the flood, and Geordie Gowdie turned over a plate of mutton-ham and sauce on Mrs. Whaup's silk gown, and a whole mug of bramble-berry jelly was spilt into Mally Dowart's lap; and as Saunders Whaup started up to assist his wife, he trampled on the dog's tail, and the beast yowled out wi' a howl that might have startled the very dead, and snapped at Thomas Dobbie

with a dreadful bite. At this the whole women got up in a consternation; ye never saw such a confusion; and Mr. Dobbie, whose leg was bitten, jump up on a chair wi' the fright, and fell o'er on the top of the whole women; and Jamie Jaup started up to kick the dog, and swore and cursed wi' a brazen oath, that this tირrivee was the devil's fracaw, and worse to quell than an Irish riot.

“ But what do you think was the conduct of Lady Babby in the midst of this stramash? I declare it was quite unconscionable. Instead of mourning for the mishanter, or helping to lay the din, she recovered her good humour in the moment of misfortune; and while some danced wi' the scalding water, and others shook their clothes from the eatables and the grease, and the lasses screamed louder than the howling of the dog, she took to herself such an enormous fit of laughter, that the very tears streamed down her cheeks, as if the whole had been nothing but a sport and a comedy.

“ And so it *did* seem a sport to the heedless of the company; for, as soon as the young

fellows saw Lady Barbara so overcome, they set up a guffaw that was like the neighing of a dozen horses. This again provoked the auld wife to such a degree, that, what wi' the pain o' her scalded fingers, and what wi' the affront o' the tea-urn, she lost her temper altogether, and fuffed up into a pet of flyting and ill manners, most indecorous and unladylike in a minister's widow. This only made Lady Babby laugh louder than before, until poor Jamie Johnston grew red in the face, and the whole party were put into a farce and a discomposure that was really most ridiculous.

“ At length James and the old man took up the rule of the handling ; and so some order was restored. The evil-doing dog was kicked out of the house with many opprobrious names. Thomas Dobbie's leg was inspected, and banded up wi' a diaculum plaster, the gravy was wiped off the silk gowns of the women, and all again were set down to drink their tea. But something was yet wrong in the harmony of the company ; for the prouder of the females did not like being laughed at, either by Lady Bar-

bara or by one another ; and so, wishing to behave themselves in her presence as befitted *ladies*, an unnatural gravity came o'er them all ; and, instead of carrying on the jollity of a country handling, they sat stiff and starched, nodding and bowing to each other like people at a funeral — high gentility being, as I said before, a thing they were not at all used to.

“ This conduct turned out a perfect embargo on the honours of the eatables ; for, watching Lady Barbara, and seeing her put her spoon in her tea-cup at the end of the first dish of tea, the most high-flown of the ladies put in their spoons also : this was imitated by the next in gentility, and so the whole ladies, with one accord, gave in their resignation at the end of the first act, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of Mrs. Johnston, to the manifest affronting of the grand tea-urn, and the discomfiture of the whole business. As for the men, some said they had got quite enough of scalding water ; but in truth they had a want of confidence in the urn, and a dread of the new china, not knowing in reality what might happen, so *they*

also broke out into an unanimous revolt; and although some took a spoonful of the marmalade and caraway-seed, and a few picked like a bird at the mutton-ham, the spirit of gentility had so shut up their mouths and stomachs, that no pressing had any effect upon them to speak of; which made the high bings of bread, and mountains of cheese and cakes, stand as it were in undiminished astonishment behind the urn, as if unable, any more than the discomfited old women, to account for this change of the times.

“ The farmer himself, however, began to see through things, and, determining to stand it no longer, called for the big-bellied bottles and greybeards of liquor, which, he had a shrewd guess, would soon banish the awe and overset the gentility. No sooner, then, had the cogniac been set upon the table, and the glasses begun to jingle, and the flavour of the hollands reached the noses of the women, than their eyes began to glisten, and the farmer lads to utter jokes, as if no earl’s daughter had been there to hear them. Then came the drinking of healths, and the complimentaries, and the

wishing of happiness to the new-married couple; but, though to the guests this might be a pleasant part of the ploy, to the parties most concerned it turned out nothing but a humiliation and an embarrassment. Some said, 'Lady Barbara, your health;' and others, for the higher gentility, said, 'Lady Johnston, your health; and I wish you much joy o' your comfortable marriage, and I'm happy to sit at your foothy fireside.'

The elder men, however, said little, — only called her plain Mrs. Johnston, and wished her a leal heart to her young goodman, and a married woman's joy in her new condition. This she might have borne, for its genuine good feeling, although it nevertheless went sorely against her ingrained aristocracy; but, when some began openly to class her with her disliked mother-in-law, saying, 'Young Mrs. Johnston, your health; and, old Mrs. Johnston, mickle success to you and your new connection;' and when Jamie Jaup, of the Plash, with a bumper up to his eye and a grin on his face, wished her ladyship and Mr. Johnston her gudeman 'thump-

ing luck and fat bairns,' and other coarse proverbial insinuations, as if her ladyship had been nothing but a common woman, Barbara's pride could stand it no longer ; but, first flushing red, and then turning white like an oaten cake, and next darting a scornful light with her eyes, and curling up her nostrils as if she felt an evil savour, she rose from her seat like the Queen of Sheba, and, never waiting for her husband's arm, turned her back upon the company, and sailed off to her own chamber.

“ Here was a second and severe mishanter, to happen in one night at this unfortunate drinking of tea. James Johnston got up, vexed and affronted, and off to her room, to take the pet out of his lady. But Barbara was too far gone for this, being already in tears of anger and humiliation ; and, having bolted the door on the inside to show her spirit, she was deaf to his entreaty, and would let none of them in. This, of course, next roused *his* spirit, according to the usual process between man and wife—as her conduct now had also roused the distaste, if not resentment, of the well-meaning farmers ; so that, by the time he returned to the com-

pany, and observed the side looks and whisperings with which he was received, he was by no means in the best humour with Barbara, or with the figure he himself cut at this marriage handling.

“ ‘ Dear me, Mr. Johnston, what’s the matter, that ye look sae blae,’ was William Wastle’s talk, whistling through his teeth, as James resumed his seat. ‘ Ye come back to us as if your nose had been bleeding. Has the dame given you the afront, and you no twa months married yet? Hoot man! dinna let your chafts fa’ about it. If you had been as lang tether’d as I have, ye would ne’er fash your thumb about the pouting and the petting o’ a young wife. She’ll come round again, as the bairn did that sickened at its parritch. It’s the nature o’ the women to take a bit tირrivee now and then, just to be petted, and made mickle o’.’

“ ‘ But that was a misleart speech of yours, James Jaup,’ said George Gowdie, carrying on the talk, ‘ to be said afore a born lady. It was no wonder that Lady Babby took it ill. Man, Jamie, ye hae no more command o’ your

tongue, than if you hadna a tooth to bite the end off't.

“ ‘Odsake, Gowdie, ye needna be so fierce,’ said Jamie Jaup. ‘What are we met here for, but to let our tongues wag? I wadna’ gi’e the value o’ a windlestrae to sit here primped and pricked up, as we have been a’ the time the het water was gaun round, and no get leave to speak a word out o’ our mouths, mair than we were sitting dummy at a preaching. Besides, how was I to ken that Mr. Johnstone’s grand wife wasna’ like another woman?’

“ ‘The chield talks very sensible,’ said Mrs. Whaup; ‘and I’ve often heard that lords and grand people were clean different frae other Christians. But whether Lady Babby be like another woman or no, she has married James Johnstone here, and ought not to turn her nose up at his friends at a handling, or take it ill what’s said when a drap of liquor loosens the tongue. It’s an auld proverb, that them that canna’ bear a dust on their sleeve shouldna’ cleek wi’ the miller; and them that canna take a joke and gi’e a joke, when honest folk are met,

maun just company wi' the cat till it learns to speak — that's my notion.'

" ' Weel, weel, gudewife,' said James's father good-humouredly, ' let's have no preaching about it. The lady's but young, and will get sense, nae doubt, lang before she's your age. Come, lads ! gi'e us another bock o' the bottle to keep us going. We have something else to do the night, than clavering here about family matters ;' and so he filled up bumpers round to his guests.

" ' That's right, gudeman,' said the old woman, starting up, and now recovering her good humour. ' 'Odsake, lads and lasses, what are ye about ? sitting there as mim as brides at a kirking. What did I bring you here for ? and what did I clear this kitchen for, but to set out the barn, where ye'll ha'e room for a reel ? Whisht ! dinna' ye hear the fiddler already drawing the hair o'er the thairm. Come, lads ! up and take the lasses out. Here James, lead ye aff Miss Mally Dowart, till Lady Babby comes out o' her strunts. Come, Jamie Jaup, take ye a cleek of Miss Jenny

Tupe. Ye'll make a braw couple on a floor-head, if ye dinna fa' wi' the capering. There now, lads and lasses ! to the barn wi' ye. Do ye think a son o' mine shall ever take a wife without a foot being shaken. The like was never heard o' in my family.'

" ' Bravo, gudewife ! ' cried Saunders Johnston, beginning to shuffle a step to the distant scrape of the fiddle. ' De'il a bit, but this Lady Babby has been nothing but a chain and a constraint on us ! Here, Thomas Dobbie, take ye Peggy Whaup by the arm : I'm thinking, however, ye'll dance but like a hen on a bauk wi' your bitten leg.'

" Joking and jeering in this pleasant manner, the whole company proceeded in pairs towards the barn ; and, as they entered, and proceeded in a grand promenade down the floor, the fiddler gave a flourish of elbow-grease music, the like of which had never been heard in the Fairly Holms ; and which so tickled the hearts of the country lasses, that they scarcely could refrain from walloping up into a Highland fling, without waiting for the ceremonies of the

squaring and the partnerships. Scarcely had the fiddlers, then, given their pins another jerk, when, striking up '*Off she goes!*' the company set off indeed, at such a rate that the very clay floor of the barn seemed to bob like a spring-board under the feet of the dancers.

" 'Up wi' 't, lads!' cried the old woman, snapping her thumbs to the time of the music, as she saw how the country lasses reeled, and wheeled, and set, and frisked, and so they did. "*Up wi' 't!*" and the young fellows capered like perfect mad; and Geordie Gowdie shuffled with his new pumps till the very pebbles flew out of the floor like shot, and Jamie Jaup cut a high St. George, taught him by the dancing-master of Tarbolton, and threw up his leg till it damaged the elbow of blind Tam Tryst, the fiddler, and almost stopped the music. Besides that, Thomas Dobbie, that the dog bit, his heart beginning to warm wi' the brandy and the catgut, behoved to take a fling wi' Miss Jenny Tupe, and hopped through the reel on one leg like a hen wi' a burnt foot, until he fell clean on the floor, as flat as a speldrin — ye never saw such fun !

“ Even James Johnston himsel’, married as he was, began now to be courted by the women, because of his good looks, and so he led off Miss Mally Dowart down a country dance, wi’ an air and a style that was like a perfect opera ; and now finding himself free from the restraint of Lady Babby, and the drop of brandy getting into his head, he began to take to the fun, as jovially as ever he had done at Gilgowie fair, until he was the merriest chield in the whole company. The bings of bread, and mountains of other eatables, of which I have before spoken, being carried into the barn, were now demolished in earnest, to the *lautions* of drink that went fast round the company. The old fellows began to clap the shoulders o’ the young lasses as they sat, like the tale of King Jamie when he acted the gaberlunzie ; and then they got up and danced wi’ them to the fiddler’s bow, while the hizzies themsel’s ‘ lap and flang’ wi’ as hearty good will as e’er did Nanny Cuttie-sark at Allowa’ Kirk. James Johnston’s mother was quite in her glory, and the other wives began to say, with

a toss of their heads, 'Deel a bit, but we ne'er began to enjoy oursels 'till that Lady Babby took the strunts, and left us !'

“ Meantime Barbara's pride began to cool, as she grew tired of the solitude of her own chamber. The cheering screed of the distant fiddle came over her ear with an unconscious exhilaration; the hearty shout of delighted laughter sounded home to her heart like the echo of a reproof; and, a slight twinge of jealousy now assisting the rising envy, she began to wish to see what her husband James and the company were doing. Accordingly, in the very height and hotness of the hilarity, while the mirth and fun grew fast and furious, she stole out of the house, and slipped in, by herself, at the far end of the barn.

“ The sight that now met her observation by no means tended ultimately to restore her good humour, however much it might gratify her curiosity. Indeed, the *coup d'œil* of the whole — you understand English French — was in Lady Barbara's mind truly a contrast to all she had ever in her former life seen of high

festivity; and Allan the painter, or the lad Davie Wilkie, might hae done some gude for themselves, had they been there to limn out the scene. A barn is but a bald building for a set *ballet*; and its unplastered walls and black rafters overhead will scarcely remind one of the gilded panels and carved cornices of an Earl's banqueting-hall. Neither could the half-score of long-wicked tallow candles, that, in goggling sconces of shining tin, were planted around, and, obedient to every waft of the intruding wind, swilled their grease plentifully below on the coat-necks of the men and the gowns of the women, be fitly compared with the crystal chandeliers and wax luminati of a London ball-room. As little, if I may go on with circumstantialia, could blind Thomas Tryst the fiddler, and his trusty secundem, with his staff hung from his button-hole, who laboured on the catgut from their high stance on a table at the far end of the barn, be exactly likened to Signior Crotchcatchi's band, which condescends to perform its high allegros at the scientific cotillons of

the nobility. Nevertheless, the whole was a most amusing sight to Lady Babby, at least for its novelty; and though on the tables round the barn, the motley hobble-show of pewter platters with their eatable remains, the towering stoups and black bottles filled with divers liquors, — the brass and iron candelabra dispensers of grease and light, — the cheeses like the moon, and the punch-bowls equal to the ocean, the latter surrounded by a phalanx of long-shanked glasses, green and white, which, like tall grenadiers, stood, as it were, watching the volumes of steam of the ‘reeking water,’ which rose from the bowls — though, I say, the effect, at a distance, of all this, might not be quite the same as that of the gold and silver idols of the table, and the high temples of classical confectionary, that, from a dazzling ground of white drapery, confuse the eye of taste at an aristocratic banquet; yet the hearty enjoyment which the crowd of noisy guests seemed to derive from their entertainment, was enough to provoke the envy as well as the astonishment of any truly patrician spirit.

“ ‘Is that really my husband?’ she said to herself, casting an eye of critical sobriety over the hilarious scene; ‘can that actually be James Johnston, for whom I have condescended until I hardly know myself—dancing like a wild satyr—in this rude and uproarious manner; and making such lover-like freedom with the country lasses?’ It was indeed he, and she could hardly believe her senses; but she found she must dissemble her thoughts, for now she began to be noticed by the company.

“ ‘Come awa’, Lady Barbara—Ye’re welcome back!’ cried several voices. ‘Weel, I am glad to see you, and thought ye would just come to again, if ye were let alane,’ said the old woman silyly. ‘Come ben, lady; better late than never!’ shouted Willie Wastle. ‘Hoogh! ye dinna ken the fun ye hae miss’d. Odsake my lady, maybe ye’ll take a reel wi’ us yet.’

“ The stately gravity with which Barbara received, in spite of her efforts, this boisterous kindness, somewhat chilled the gay freedom of the company; and the pleasure of the warmth

with which James Johnston took her hand, was greatly damped, on her part, by observing, from the shape of his eye, that, like the rest, he was, as the gentlefolks call it, a little *flushed*, or rather, as we might plainly say, *fuddled*, with the evening's liquor. Some ladies have great forbearance for their husbands, when they see them in this state; especially when it makes them extraordinary loving and good-humoured, as Mr. Johnston now was. But whether it is that the sins of a lord are more bearable by nature than those of a farmer, or that the love of a plebeian husband is less valuable than that of a high gentleman, both of which are probably true, Barbara was by no means in a humour to forgive either this peccadillo, or the numerous other little peccadilloes, of which it was likely in the course of the evening to become the occasion.

“ ‘Ye’re just come in time, Lady Babby,’ cried Robin Johnston, of the Clayslap, ‘We’re going to have a song. Here’s Miss Peggy Tupe, can sing the “Ewe bughts, Marion,” a beautiful chant about the wearing o’ the sheep;

or Thomas Dobbie there; he can give us "Gregor's Ghost," from end to end — it's very frightful and interesting. But maybe ye would like better the "Kebuckston Wedding," as more appropriate. Thomas Whaup, up ye wi' the "Kebuckston Wedding;" it's a pleasant song, made by Robin Tannahill, the Paisley weaver. Lady Babby will be quite delighted wi' 't.'

"The whole company, I may say, seconded the motion, except James Johnston himself, and perhaps Mrs. Claster the midwife, who, having been in her time housekeeper to the laird of Thinkail, had most correct notions of high gentility, and did not altogether approve of the weaver's song. Lady Barbara, however, I must say, was rather inclined to laugh; especially as Thomas Whaup's voice was of the proper cornkraik order; but when he came to the verse, so mellifluously descriptive of the good cheer at the wedding, —

'Wee Patie Brydie's to say the grace,
The body's aye ready at dredgies an' weddings,
An' Flunkey M'Fie, o' the Skiverton Place,
Is chosen to scuttle the pies an' the puddings;

For there 'll be plenty,
 O' ilka thing dainty,
 Baeth lang-kail, an' haggis, an' every thing fitting,
 Wi' luggies o' beer
 Our weezons to clear,
 So de'il fill his kyte, that gaes clung frae the meeting ;'

which he really screamed and shouted wi' a throat like a peacock ; she answered her husband's loud laugh at the fellow's vulgarity, with a black look that was like a cauld iron put down your back to stop the bleeding o' your nose¹ ; and it *did* stop poor Johnston's laugh as soon and as effectually.

“ However, to make a long story short, it was evident Lady Barbara did by no means enjoy herself, either then or during the rest of the evening, when the dancing again came on. For still she looked high and grave at the robustious fun of the farmer chields ; and sometimes she knit her brows, and spoke to her husband in a way that, some said, was extremely provoking. However, by the time they began

¹ A common custom in Scotland.

to dance ‘ Bab at the bouster,’ that desirable mixture of bobbing and kissing, several of the lads, having the drop in their heads, swore they would either make her descend from her dignity, and step through the reel to countenance them, like a decent farmer’s wife, or faith they would offer her a freedom that would maybe affront her.

“ Ye know the pleasant auld trip of ‘ *Bab at the bouster*’¹ where the lass or lad, as they dance round the ring, wi’ the soft pillow in their hand to kneel upon withal, sings, —

‘ Wha learned you to dance ?
 Bab at the bouster, Bab at the bouster —
 Wha learned you to dance ?
 Bab at the bouster brawly ;’

as merry a canticle as ever gave a blyth lass a fair opportunity of a country salute. So the youngest of the company were soon up and at it ; and, whenever a lad or a lass came to the kissing part, Tam Tryst, the fiddler, played a flourish of his bow, that was like a bar of the Seceder’s

¹ Bob at the bolster. See note A. at the end of this story.

Grace, and gart the lasses' hearts dunt and jump wi' a sweet and satisfactory appropriation. Well, when the bolster came to Miss Mally Dowart, she danced round wi' a pleasant smirk, and at last laid it down at James Johnston's feet, wi' as mickle modesty as ye may suppose. What Lady Babby thought at that instant is not for me to say ; but Mr. Johnston, as behoved him to do, put his arms round Miss Mally's neck, and gave her a smack upon the willing lips, that for grace and unction, and from such as him, might well be the envy of every woman in the room. This of course called *him* up next, when he danced round the ring like a Scotch Adonis, and many a sheep's eye was thrown under the lasses' curls, to see which o' them was likely to get the favour of his next salute. Who he took up I do not recollect ; but in the course of the dance, when the bolster came round to Jamie Jaup, of the Plash, there was a wicked devil seen looking out at the tail of his eye, that, together with the measure of drink that he had taken, seemed to promise to the company some fun or mischief.

“ Jamie shuffled wi’ his right leg round the ring, and round the ring, wi’ the pillow in his hand ; and some thought that he would have to take up auld Mrs. Johnston hersel’, and others expected him to make a trial at Luckie Clashter the midwife, when, before the tune came weel to the flourish, down he bobs the hassock at Lady Barbara’s feet. The whole room was in a consternation ; but Jamie Jaup, none afraid, planted himself on his knees on the pillow before the lady, and awaited the salute with gallant confidence. Lady Barbara drew back at the sight of this audacity, as if poor James Jaup had been a frightful wild orang, come from the woods to swallow her up ; but Jamie, nothing daunted, threw his arms round her ladyship’s neck, and nill ye, will ye, getting his face to her cheek, and, boring his way to her very mouth, gave her a smack of such voluptuous effect, that it echoed even to the rafters of the auld barn, and made Tam Tryst, the fiddler, give a double flourish of his thairm at the kittle point, such as never had been heard in the Fairly Holm.

“ This audacity brought to a crisis and a climax the whole concatenation of this eventful night. No sooner had the salute been thus rapaciously put upon my lady, than up she got with the air of an affronted Lucretia, and, merely throwing upon the company and her husband a look of patrician anger, away she walked in high dignity from the rich festivities of the barn.

“ Here, as you may suppose, was an end to ‘Bab at the bouster!’ The company now crowded round James Johnston and his mother; and what with this second affront put upon the company by the lady, and what with the injudicious impudence of Jamie Jaup, and what with the natural candour and confidence of strong liquor, young Mr. Johnston was by no means considered a well-used man.

“ In short, it was unanimously concluded, that Lady Johnston had not behaved at all as she ought; and if any body could have collected the wise sayings and sensible advices that were uttered upon the occasion, these would, no doubt, be found of great and lasting value

to the married world. But, amidst all this wisdom and shrewd argument, it was quite evident that the night was now at an end, and that this long-expected *doing* was quite over. The men began to talk thick, and the women's countenances to *open* out into a yawn; the lights burned dim, or floundered greasily in their unsavoury sockets; and so, with many kind good nights and hearty good wishes, among the farmer people, the barn was soon after cleared, and a *finalé* was put to this remarkable drinking of tea.¹

¹ See note B. at the end of this story.

CHAPTER X.

“ THE morning after the *doing* was by no means a pleasant one at the Fairly Holm; for, besides the lassitude of spirits, and racked appearance of every thing, that immediately follows a festivity among high or low, there had feelings been developed on the previous night, and inferences began to be drawn as to the future, which would not bear thinking of, and which filled all parties with doubt, if not alarm.

“ The spence, which had been used as a store-room for the provender of the ploy, and the parlour, which had lately been fitted up with yellow chintz curtains, not being yet in order, after the removals of the barn, the old woman had ventured to have the breakfast laid in the kitchen, according to the use and wont of the family before Lady Babby came into it. Her ladyship, however, did not make her appear-

ance; and when, upon Mrs. Johnston's going to fetch her, she came forth, and saw the old man and woman seated thus undignifiedly in the great kitchen, in view of the bare-legged servant maids, and partaking with their fingers a good dish of salt herrings and oaten bread, as a relish to their tea, her tender feelings were so shocked and affronted that she seemed almost ready to faint at the sight. To some words of apologetic consolation whispered by her husband, she only replied by a look of lofty astonishment, while a curl of conscious nobility rose upon her lip, and a flush of aristocratic shame mantled up to her eyes. 'Do you mean me to sit here among the common servants?' she said, with some haughtiness; 'I will breakfast only in my own bed-room.'

"The old man sat back in his great arm-chair when he heard this, and fixed, for a moment, his keen grey eye on her. 'Sit down, Lady Barbara,' he said, after a little; 'sit down here by me—I have somewhat to say to you.'

"Her proud glance lowered before the firm look of the old man. She turned round towards

her husband; but, with all James's love, she saw his brow knit into a manly sternness, before which a woman must always quail. Taking up a wooden-seated chair, and making it ring angrily upon the stone floor, as he set it for her, he waved his hand authoritatively, and motioned her to be seated.

“ ‘Young lady,’ said the old man firmly, when the servants were gone, ‘ what I have observed of you last night, and this morning, convinces me that all I feared concerning you is likely to come too true. You have brought yourself, lady, into a most trying predicament; most trying to one of your temper, and of your high up-bringing, as well as to the family you have come amongst. But remember, the act was your own; and, if you cannot lay down your mind better to the circumstances you have chosen, and to the habits and company of a decent farmer’s wife, as you now are; and expect nothing in service or occupation but what belongs to that plain station, you will find that you have sown a seed of sorrow that will bear

bitter fruit to yourself, and bring endless trouble to me and mine.'

" ' Trouble ! ' exclaimed the old woman, striking in with her scornful toss of the head, ' Hech, it'll bring nae trouble to me ! let it trouble wha likes. Before daughter-in-law, or son-in-law, shall bring scaith or scorn on my house, I'll ken what it's for. And, if Jamie there likes to mak himsel' a snivel and a snool afore his friends, to a washy-faced lady, be wha she likes, and darena' speak to her aboon his breath, at a decent handling, troth it's ne'er be me ! or I'll ken better what I do it for, as I said afore."

" ' Whisht ! whisht ! mother ! That is fast speaking,' said James, colouring for his mother's freedom.

" ' Hold your tongue, gudewife,' said the farmer himself, with a voice of authority ; ' you never know how to speak in reason.'

" ' Reason ! Troth, ye 'se no stap my mouth wi' your *reason* ! ' cried the undaunted dame. ' As if I didna' ken common 'havens ? There's my lady daughter-in-law, wi' her high crockets,

sitting looking at me, as if she felt an ill smell, and hasna' brought hame to her young gudeman as mickle tocher as a pair of lint sheets for her ain bed—and me to be sneered at and jeered at, that was a minister's wife, and nae runawa' ill-doer without plack or penny, but high airs and toom gentility ! Na ! I *will* speak up,' she cried out, recollecting on the instant a smothered difference of some days before : ' afore my daughter-in-law snorts and snifters at me and mine, she ought to bring as mickle frae her father's castle as will make brats and baby clouts to her first bairn.'

" The large dark eyes of Lady Barbara seemed to swell in her head, as she fixed them with a look of astonishment on the old woman ; but she seemed paralysed at the moment by scorn or surprise, and could at first not utter a word. The old man was about to interpose, and James had seized Barbara by the waist as she rose, intending to drag her from his enraged mother, when the young wife, mustering all her energy of scorn and pride, exclaimed with energy, —

“ ‘ *Now*, good woman, my eyes are fully opened to what I could not have believed was in human nature. *Now* I understand your true motives for all the arts that you used, when my mind was unhappy, to entrap me into circumstances, for which, I own, I feel myself very unfitted. James! husband! Take me away out of this house. With you I will bear poverty and the labour of my condition, but do not *you* reproach me with my father’s anger, and my own disowned destitution. Father-in-law, James, my dear James, spare, oh! spare this burning pride of birth that I feel—I feel—chokes the feelings of my bosom.’

“ The scene for a few moments was now dreadful. ‘ Wife!’ exclaimed the old man, ‘ sinful, mistaken woman, Lady Barbara is right, and you have let out sentiments at this moment that bring a disgrace upon humanity and upon us all. But *I* will protect this unhappy young lady; I and my son will see her treated with respect; and, if you ever utter towards her a word of reproach, on this subject, I will put upon you a punishment that you little dream of.’

“ Barbara was now sobbing out bitter tears, and, before the whole scene was ended, it was agreed that another farm should instantly be taken, that James and she might live entirely by themselves. For the means to do this in an effectual manner, Lady Barbara offered to forego her pride of nature, and to go to the castle and humble herself at her father’s feet.

“ To this proposal, however, neither James nor his father would for a moment listen, and, after much negotiation and many delays, and several months’ further disagreement with her disappointed mother-in-law, Lady Barbara, now in weakly health, and near her time of humble childbed, set off one blowy morning in autumn, seated beside her husband in a decent market vehicle, to take possession of their new farm of Green Braes.

I have shortened much this latter part of my story, in order to hasten to a new epoch in Lady Barbara’s history.

CHAPTER XI.

“ALAS! and is this what I have to call my own house at last?” said Lady Barbara, as she surveyed the whitewashed walls and low roofs inside the plain farm-house that was now to be her dwelling: “and is this the mean chamber where I am to sleep? and this the nursery for my humble offspring? Alas! I find now that I have less strength than I once imagined.”

“Green Braes was in truth a bare and bald place; and a cold blast from the east came up from the haughs of Ruar Water; and the whole plenishing that Johnston’s father enabled him to put into it, with all the little deceptions of would-be gentility, could not make it to show much for either pride or comfort: and, as to prosperity, a new farm makes a hard battle, and an empty house is ill to fill out of a light purse; and, though James was most industrious, and worked with his own hands like a very

slave, yet Barbara, being unused to Scotch economy, as well as to country work, was neither to be called happy in her altered condition, nor was she at all to be deemed a thrifty or a purpose-like farmer's wife. Thus things went on rather heavily, and the poor lady and Johnston sat down at noon to their coarsely-cooked meal, and often looked things in each other's faces that would not well bear expression in words.

“But the worst thing to Lady Babby was the expected ‘downlying,’ and the little anxieties of the baby-clothes, and the comforts, and the sending for the howdie, and the gossip of the gossips, and the spying of the nurses about a poor man's house, and the annoyances of the congratulations when all was over, and the mortifying *et ceteras* of a farming ‘accouchement.’ As she lay long and solitary in her in-lying bed, her weak heart yearning for many of the comforts which the pampered *servants* enjoyed at her father's castle, and recollected old days and youthful hopes; and considered that here she lay, a poor man's wife, without

even a poor woman's consolation, — for no mother came to see her with a mother's affection, and no helping sister sat by her bedside to give her a drink when her mouth was parched, or to do a kind turn for her or her baby, — the weakness of nature sank her proud spirit, and the regrets of repentance melted her heart, until solitary tears, bitter and hopeless, gave a temporary relief to her inward despondency.

“ Months and seasons passed away after this, and no notice was ever taken of James and his family by the haughty inmates of the Castle. The Earl, however, once met his father in the fields, and, with some strange remarks and half reproaches, such as great men will make upon poor men's affairs, made offer, as a condescending boon, of a farm to James Johnston in another part of the country.

“ When the old man heard the Earl's speech, and considered the interior drift of the proposal, his country manliness rose within him, and he rejected the offer with a proud spirit. He said, that if the Earl chose to disown his own child, because her nature would

not break at once into the ways of the great; as she had thrown herself in her passion upon his family, it should never be said that the Johnstons of Fairly thought of lands and mailins, tochers or titles, in doing a righteousness when the heart spoke its will; but as lang,' he added, 'as they had a rig of land, or a plack of silver, Lady Babby should be held independent as a poor man's wife.'

"When my Lord heard this, he was cut to the heart; for it is not agreeable to the great gentry to be outdone in virtue by a peasant man, and so a sore struggle took place between the father's affection and the Earl's pride; and the two old men wrangled with each other, and talked touching and bitter things; and spoke of each other's failings and each other's feelings, and what had been wrong done, and what could not be *undone*, until they wept like bairns, although the one was a lord, over the mutual regrets of disappointed parents.

"But the auld Earl found he had the worst o' 't; and, his heart melting deeply at the thoughts of his daughter, and in admiration of

the disinterestedness of the farmer and his son, he at last took out his pocket-book, and offered a bunch of bank notes to the astonished old man.

“ ‘ What am I to do with these, my Lord ? ’ said he, ‘ suppose I should take them. Do you mean the siller as a father’s present, in returning kindness, to his daughter and her baby ? ’

“ ‘ No, Robert Johnston, no ! ’ said the Earl, with a voice of much emotion ; for he remembered the proud resolves of his own lady : ‘ I can have no communication with my ruined daughter ; but I give it to your son, to plenish the mailing of Cauldknows, on condition that he and his wife instantly remove thither.’

“ ‘ As a bribe to get your disowned bairn out of the way of affronting your Lordship’s pride ? No, no, my Lord,’ said the farmer, firmly, ‘ I am a father as well as you ; and while you continue thus to resist the calls of nature, my son has incurred a greater misfortune in connecting himself with your family, than even your daughter has in coming into

mine. But it is truly a sad business this, after all,' he continued, 'since your Lordship will not relent of your unnatural cruelty: I am broken-hearted myself about this unfortunate marriage; but the difference is, that you have power of the remedy, and I have not; and permit me to tell your Lordship, that if your common sense doesna get the better of your family pride, to take a lesson from the changing wheel of the fortune of life, and place my son, for your daughter's sake, in a place and position where they both may be happy; we'll take no favour to buy up our independence; and my son and his unfortunate wife will dree the weird that their own folly and the world's hard-heartedness has put upon them.'

"The two old men parted with a cooled and doubtful cordiality; yet, the Earl having many yearnings towards his child, a great consultation was soon after held on the business, in the most private apartment of Carloghie Castle. But, to make a philosophy of the matter, — where the reasoning is weakly, and the narrow mind apt to be swayed by mean considerations of small

vanity, pride and its subsidiaries prove an overmatch for the dearest feelings of nature, that have been planted in our hearts, to help out the circumscribed sum of human happiness.

“ And so, a new prospect having lately opened out for the Earl’s next daughter, all the ladies cried out with one accord against their father’s ‘ weak ’ proposition in favour of their erring sister ; and when the old Lord talked, with emotion, of poor Babby’s humbled condition, and the probable ultimatum of some premature decline, and of the breaking of hearts, perhaps to a lowly grave, the Countess replied in a tone like the iron tongue of a metal bell, that it were better hearts break than families be degraded ; and that such a consummation was but the natural and inevitable course of things.

“ Meantime, affairs did not go on with much exhilaration, at the lonely and comfortless farm of Green Braes. There is a principle in human nature, especially during youth, that is neither virtue nor vice, but merely undefined passion,

which is extremely apt to turn into either, according as circumstances shall happen to sway it, or call it forth. This principle applied well, at this time, and after, both to James Johnston and his wife; and the struggle of their circumstances, and the peculiarity of their disappointments, at times quite soured their tempers, or corroded their feelings. They now occasionally (as married people will do in moments of irritation) dropped expressions to each other, and allowed looks to pass between them, which, though consisting well enough, as we know, with a solid under-stratum of wedded affection, were liable to be treasured up in the rankling mind, as indubitable evidences of a begun alienation. At all events, they may talk of love as they please, but it requires stronger affections than the world generally witnesses, to stand out long against the carking cares and heart-eating privations of obscure poverty; particularly to the proud spirit and luxurious habits of such as Lady Barbara; and it required more self-command than Johnston was master of, to resist the tendencies to discontent at his

peculiar situation, labouring hopelessly and ineffectually to supply one tenth of the wants and gratify the pressing desires of a born lady.

“Accordingly, if, on a market day, on meeting his former acquaintances, he made up for the reserved seclusion of his country home, by stealing a moment’s enjoyment of town sociality, it was nothing more than was to be expected; and if Lady Babby, at times, looking from out her dull window at Green Braes, sighed sadly at the equipages that she saw passing on the distant road, it was only what belonged to her time of life, and to the painful circumstantialia of her unnatural condition. Then, every day, when she rose, the first object that she could not avoid seeing was the wide-waving woods and noble parks of old Carloghie; while the peaked turrets of her father’s castle interrupted, with picturesque effect and stately feudality, the warm and gleaming rays of the cheerful morning.

“ ‘Whilk is the nearest way to the auld castle ayont, gudewife?’ said a travelling man one day, who came knocking at Lady Barbara’s

door, with country familiarity. "Thae gentle places hae sae many turnings and twinings, that I've gaen round it and round it these twa hours, an' the de'il a bit I ever get the nearer to't.

"Lady Barbara came to the door with her infant in her arms, and humbly pointed the way to the man. 'But what is that, friend, you have got in your cart?' she said, making an enquiry in her turn, surprised at what she saw.

"'Oo! what should it be,' said the carter, 'but some grandeur that'll be wanted at the great wedding!'

"'What wedding, honest man?'

"'Gude keep us! are ye a neighbour woman in this loaning, and hasna heard o' the grand wedding that's soon to be at my Lord's Castle. Isna Lady Mary, the sister of the poor misguided creature that ran off with the farmer, and was disowned to be sure, to be married in a week to the Marquis o' Brechin. The whole country is ringing wi' the news, and sic a preparation never was seen. New coaches, as big as a kirk, and new dresses to a score of

flunkies, wi' gold and silver lace and red scarlet, an' stripes an' strapples like the King's beef-eaters in Lunnon, forbye cocked hats as braid and blown-up as the auld cruisy o' the Marquis o' Granby on Jamie Tapple's sign, and white wigs to the rascals, like as many English bishops, an' a cavalry o' horses to draw the coaches, as many as would furnish out a regiment o' dragoons, an' rivers o' red wine for the lords to drink, and oceans o' beer, and strong swats, to swell out the wames o' the servants, an' fiddlers to play up in the banqueting ha', an' bonfires to be brunt on a' the heights around! — sic a preparation and sic a fizz has never been seen in the holms of Fairly.

“ ‘ And many nobility to attend, honest friend?’ said Barbara humbly, glad to interrupt the tedious garrulity of the speaker.

“ ‘ Nobility! mistress,’ said the man, astonished at her question; what should the like o' you or I ken about nobility? The whole House of Lords, as I hear tell, will be there! — dukes and earls, and great squires, and foreign counts wi' lang names — and a

band o' music that canna' speak English — an' flags flying frae every tower on the Castle; and trumpets sounding, and guns firing, an' sic a blowing and blasting o' breath an' cannon, it's worth a red guinea for the like o' you to hear and see it at a mile distance !'

"That's great news, indeed !' said poor Barbara, with a sigh; 'and here am I that learns nothing: but hear you aught, friend, of the dresses of the ladies ?'

" 'Hear I ?' said the talkative man, 'if I didna', I would be as deaf as John Stob's lead effigy. My wife'll no let me sleep at night for deaving me wi' 't. Flanners lace, and Holland lawn, Smyrna silk, an' Pampadoo satin, Indian pearls, and Golconda diamonds, bleezing on their breasts, or skinkling in their hair — it's no for me to talk o' what's aboon my comprehension, for the grandeur and the bravery is perfect unspeakable. But gude-day, honest woman; it'll be a high favour for a puir body like you to get a moment's glimpse o' such a gallant company.'

"It is of no use talking high didactics,"

continued my narrator of this tale ; “ for it is not in human nature to look on and witness, from the lowly stool of obscurity, the acclamations of triumph bestowed upon one’s splendid neighbour, without a painful twinge of the bitterness of humiliation. Her plain-looking sister to enjoy all this ! while Barbara, the handsomest of the family, was lingering away her life among carking cares and constant labour, in the dirt and dulness of despised and avoided poverty ! The more she meditated upon it, the worse she grew in her mind, until the thought almost turned her distracted.

“ But even the thought, that was so intolerable, was hardly so bad as the thing itself when it came ; particularly from the unexpected torment of remark with which it was accompanied. Men delight to exalt the exalted, and to depress the lowly ; and even draw upon their fancies, to add to the natural exaggerations of triumph or of misery. While the marriage and its festivities were in full *éclat*, officious neighbours dropped in to Green Braes to talk of it ; and spying gossips offered their imper-

inent condolences, until Barbara was almost driven from her poor dwelling ; and, annoyed by her evident vexation, and harassed by his own thoughts, James Johnston fled to the nearest town, and came home to his sighing wife late at night, his gloomy feelings deepened and exasperated by the dangerous excitement of dissipation.

CHAPTER XII.

“THE marriage of Lady Mary of Carloghie, from the numbers of gentles it brought to attend it, was followed by consequences to her disowned sister, Barbara, that never could have been foreseen by any party. For, amidst all the festivities of the high bridal, there crept about, among the lordly guests, a suppressed whisper of the extraordinary tale, that the youngest and handsomest daughter of the Earl of Carloghie, disowned by her family for an unequal match, was living within a few miles of her father’s castle, the laborious wife of a common farmer. Such a piece of real romance, actually transacted and existing so near them, possessed more interest for the high gentles that attended the wedding, than all the formal festivities of my lord’s castle.

“To such as they, indeed, all the show and the feasting had little novelty, and afforded but a trite and common-place pleasure ; while the

condition of a spirited and fine-looking lady, known, in fact, to many of them, living thus under the ban of her own family, and conducting herself virtuously in circumstances so uncongenial, became the theme of frequent and interesting conversation, and the subject of eager and mysterious enquiry.

“ Out of this circumstance, and the curiosity it eventually excited concerning her, among all who travelled to this part of the country, grew a species of annoyance to Barbara and her husband ; and a series of incidents, that aggravated all that was brewing in their minds, and brought to a crisis the several events of their fate. Since the marriage of her sister, whenever Lady Barbara came out from her door, to feed her poultry, or look after her cows, she encountered the gaze of some lurking loungee, who, attracted by the babbling gossip of the neighbourhood, watched eagerly to get a look of the noble and disowned farmer’s wife. The numbers thus attracted to the mailing of Green Braes were remarkable for so secluded a part of the country. Horses, with fine trappings,

were seen in waiting within a few fields of the house, while their owners lingered, and watched to gratify their curiosity; and even carriages stopped at the foot of the lane, and fine-dressed madams, talking many giggling remarks, strolled round the farm, to get a sight of the lady. Next, the officers of a regiment quartered in the nearest town made stolen parties, and got up secret adventures, to get view or speech of her; and it was even said that their colonel had sworn a loud oath one night, amidst the drunken dissipations of the mess-room, that, if money, or art, or love could accomplish it, he would try his powers, and gain some *éclat* by an affair with this high-born farmer's wife.

“ Even her own family began to partake of the prevailing curiosity; and though her mother, the Countess, would not hear of visiting her, I persuaded her sister, Lady Frances, to accompany me one day to the farm of Green Braes. We left the carriage about a mile from the spot; and, though determined not to enter under her roof, away we set off, to try if we could see her unobserved.

“It was harvest-time, and the fields were gay with reapers, and rich with shocks of new cut corn. We drew near to the house, and watched about. Presently a young woman issued from the back door, followed by a little girl, carrying a large wooden pitcher. ‘Can that be,’ said I, ‘the walk of a common peasant lass? for, whoever she is, she steps out with the grace and ease of a queen:’ and yet the female’s apron was up, appearing filled with something bulky, and in her left hand she bore also a small vessel. We observed further, and looked on with astonishment: it was Lady Barbara herself, carrying to the fields the reapers’ dinner.*

“Though freckled with the sun, and having a care-worn look, she was healthy, and handsomer than ever I had seen her; and, though engaged in this humble and almost menial service, she still carried the high crest of an earl’s daughter. There was no affectation of

* This incident, at least, we are permitted to advert to, as true of the Earl’s daughter on whose history our tale is founded.

finery about her. Her rich dark hair was parted on her forehead, and knotted high behind, with a velvet snood, like the common maidens of her country. A plain lawn kerchief, covering her shoulders, was crossed modestly on her bosom, instead of the velvet and pearls that had once blazed from it, with costly magnificence ; and her person, now setting into a married woman's fulness, was clad in plain gingham, like a decent farmer's wife.

“ We watched behind the hedge with beating bosoms ; for the recollections of childhood and the yearnings of nature began to come over the heart even of her hard and artificial sister ; and as for me, sympathy and interest for the young lady almost filled my eyes with tears, to see her thus strangely situated.

“ The reapers gathered round her when she came to the end of the rigs—not a rabble of ragged Irish, as in latter days have come a vermin over our Scottish plains ; but blithe and brawny lads and lasses of our ain kind, with light hearts and industrious hands, with whom it was no degradation to sit and eat upon a harvest field. Bless the recollection ! It was

a perfect picture, to see them all seated beside the shocks of corn, and Lady Barbara, like a modest queen, distributing round to them their simple food—most gratefully and respectfully received from hands like hers.

“ She sat down beside her husband on some sheaves of corn; and when he took off his hat, to ask a blessing on the repast, his thick black hair clustering round his sunburnt temples, and wiped with his sleeve the healthy perspiration from his brow; and looked fondly and gratefully in his Barbara’s face, as he took the bread and milk from her hands; I thought I never saw a handsomer rustic pair. They ate their meal with a pleasant countenance, and did not discourage the joke and jeer of rustic fun, that went round among the reapers; and as the latter rose to return to their work, I saw a tear steal down Barbara’s cheek, as, with some strange emotion, she gazed upon her husband; while, when the reapers had gone, he placed his arm kindly round her waist, as if to acknowledge, in love and kindness, that this was a moment of real happiness.

“ But human things are full of mystery ; and the happiness that I talk of, steals over us occasionally, in brief snatches, when we seek it not, and often is the ominous precursor of coming sorrow. When I saw this interesting scene in the field, I little knew what was soon after to take place.

“ Months after this again passed on, and some strange reports rose in the country, how that the whole Johnstons of Fairly and Green Braes were in some unknown and unspoken-of trouble. Then, unwonted men, along with the ordinary gay enquirers, were seen lurking and hiding about the latter farm, and loud and reproachful words next were heard by the servants passing between James and his lady wife. Some affirmed that apprehended ruin was mixed in the cup, and that James was becoming a desperate man ; and others said, that a tiff of jealousy had lighted the blaze. How it was exactly none could tell, but the old woman again came backwards and forwards, and took upon her authority, which none would allow ; and this only thickened the dark

pool of trouble, and made matters between them much worse. Neither was it known how Colonel Delap, of the Netherhaugh, managed to get acquainted with Lady Babby. But acquainted he was, although at first she banned him from the door ; and this, like most matters of love and sexuality, became the bitter bottoming of many sorrows.

“ The colonel, indeed, was a noble fellow, and, never speaking of the irresistible colour of his coat, had that smoothened tongue and forcible impudence which is a well-known part of the soldier’s calling, and was far beyond the country virtue of poor Jamie Johnston. Not but that Lady Barbara loved virtue like other people, yea, and had *practised it* vigorously until this very time ; but, alas and alack for human nature ! which is strong towards passion, and weak towards reason, and seldom can see the two ends of its own happiness !

“ A wicked scoundrel, no doubt, was Colonel Delap, to take advantage of the misery that at times sore pressed on Barbara’s heart, especially since the boasts and triumphs of her sister’s

wedding, and, by aggravating the natural discontent of her condition, in order to render the present relief and joy, with which he had baited his hook, more tempting, to plunge her, by its means, into deeper misery. But scoundrels are not scarce in this wicked world, to steal away, by their vile arts, the best part of the little happiness and virtue that is left in it.

“ One evening, at the twilight, when James Johnston was away at the town, and Lady Barbara was sitting crying to herself, over a complication of vexations which now seemed to crowd round her, a light tap was heard at the farm door, and the gay Colonel Delap humbly entered. He was dressed in coloured clothes, carried a small riding-whip in his hand, and appeared startled and distressed at the situation in which he found her. Her mother-in-law had just left her; and from something that had passed, in which they had mutually aggravated each other, her mind was left in a dreadful state of proud and resentful irritation.

“ At first she was inclined to look upon the colonel with suspicion, as come to spy into her

sorrows, or take advantage of her weakness. But it is the property of that strange negation to which we give this vague name of weakness, not to know its own qualities, or the side on which it is most sure to mislead itself; and so the colonel, by touching the proper string, and speaking to the lady's proudest feelings, contrived to gain her confidence, and then to work upon her in the usual manner of practised seducers.

“ ‘It is of no use your attempting to bear this longer,’ he said; ‘you have tried it, and you have failed; for the nature of things is against it, and the bare effort is ruining your health, and shortening your days. You talk of virtue, and of your husband’s love: every one talks of virtue, and of love, too; but ask you where they are, and the echo will answer, Where? — not, at least, among those who talk much of either.

“ ‘Hark ye, Lady Barbara,’ he went on; ‘would not the good uneducated peasant, whom a strange fate has made your husband, have as much love, and more, for the commonest wench

that scours your milk-pails, than he can pretend to you, the daughter of a half score earls? and if he loved you with a sentiment you can understand, could he have spoken to you as you say he did, this very morning? Lady, the real question is, whether you will choose to die an obscure and lingering death, by persisting in attempting a life that to you is an impossibility, or, by doing what is done every day, from less excusable causes and lighter temptations, live but ten — but *one year!* enjoying that world to which, in reality, you are now worse than dead.'

"He paused, and continued gazing in her eyes with all a soldier's impudence, and all a seducer's meaning. She saw the nature of his proposal, and started at it at first, like one contemplating an alarming possibility. He urged his suit in words more eloquent than I can repeat, with ardour trembling in his voice, and passion burning in his eye. But the possibility itself had been no stranger, after all, to Barbara's secret thoughts, amidst the contentions with her mother-in-law, and in spite of her wavering love for James Johnson, when

meditating, with roused passions, upon the mean vexations and dark prospects of her lowly condition. And when the colonel talked eagerly of divorce, and of marriage, after the first *fama* of the step had passed away, and, swearing at her feet the usual oaths, promised to devote his life and fortune to make her happy, and that amidst the pleasures and honours of her original condition, her eyes began to sparkle at the fascinating picture which he drew of a seducing world: the idea of yet coping with her proud sister, in circles where she knew she was entitled to triumph, was too much for the natural passions of the woman; and the ardent colonel soon saw that here the struggle was ended. The only condition she asked, after the fearful consent, was leave to go on her way and kiss her baby, then at nurse about a mile from the house.

“ The colonel promised every thing in the heat of his eloquence: but when he had got her outside the door, and they were mounted on the horses he had in waiting, pretending

alarm, he hurried her on by another road, which led direct to the Scottish metropolis.

“ Next day a distracted man, namely, James Johnston, was seen hastening, like one beside himself, between his deserted house at Green Braes and the Fairly Holm ; for now the hue and cry had got up in the neighbourhood, that Lady Barbara of Carloghie had stolen from her house, in the dead of the night, and run off to London with the gay and blackguard Colonel Delap.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ WITH few does the stream of life run in an even course. With most — metaphor aside — it is a confused succession of alternating sensations; sometimes dark and dull of hue, like the clouds of winter; at other times breaking out into the glowing splendour and bright illusions of a happy dream, in which life, for the moment, hurries on with feverish celerity, and time gallops like a race-horse, impelled by the ardour of present enjoyment.

“ But all dreams have their hour of awakening, and sometimes merge into strange turnings, which make that which was begun in bounding delight terminate in the gasping convulsions of horror and apprehension. What would you have me to tell of Lady Barbara? The history is stale, and the incidents common-place; because life is a repetition of follies and deceptions, and man will not profit by repeated example. The usual dream was dreamt by Lady Barbara,

while the colonel was believed ; and the usual disappointments suffered, when she found he had deceived her. At length, after many bickerings amidst fictitious gaiety, and many turns of fortune, with their corresponding feelings, and much surprise on the simple lady's part, that she found herself disappointed in so many ways, and that none whom she desired would now associate with her, the usual event took place between her and the colonel ; and having still some virtue left, to preserve her from the horrors to which he would have consigned her ; and harassed with thoughts of her husband and her child, down she plunged, all at once, into the deepest abyss of shame and despair.

“ Meantime, strange and sad changes had taken place at the Fairly Holms. The old man had died of a broken heart, after being turned out of his farm for going too far in helping of his unfortunate son ; and the old woman, living now, occasionally, in the deserted and neglected farm-house of Green Braes, was considered to be at times not quite right in her mind. As for James,” continued Marion, with a sigh, “ it is

a pain and a distress to me even now to speak of him. He went about the cauld rigs of the mailing, a perfect object of broken-down manhood, suffering, and despondency. The only consolation he appeared to take in life was in the nursing and tending of his little daughter. But Providence, in its mystery, seemed to have set its mark upon him; for even this last tie to the world was threatened next to be torn out of his shattered heart.

“The winter time had set in cauld and grim, and a lonely blackness seemed to brood over the neighbourhood of leafless Carloghie, when, one dark night, towards the middle watches, a solitary figure of a woman came stealing towards the farm-house of Green Braes. She was dressed richly for a pedestrian; yet there was in her appearance and manner an air of wild and reckless dilapidation. She sought the window where she saw a light burning. I need not say this was the once handsome and proud Lady Barbara of Carloghie.

“With hesitating steps and rising emotion, she drew near to the little window. There was

no screen, and she looked in as well as her blinded eyes would allow her. She saw her child lying on the bed, and James gazing in its flushed face; sometimes murmuring out a sob of sorrow, and then wetting with a feather the child's parched lips. He rose, and walked about the room, wringing his hands in silence. Suddenly he muttered something, with his eyes turned upwards, as if in ejaculation for the soul of his daughter; and then, his voice rising as his feelings became impassioned, he broke out into a loud and heart-cutting lamentation.

“ ‘ Oh ! if your misguided mother but saw you now, Mary Johnston,’ he said, ‘ this sight might perhaps melt her cruel heart. But she is far away, with them that never loved her as I have done; and now thou art her last saddest remembrancer, and cold death’s creeping up to thy young heart—and I am a bereft and broken-hearted man.’

“ He stopped suddenly, choked by his sorrow, and thought he heard a noise without. It was Barbara groping agitatedly for the latch of the

door. The sounds were low, but became sharp and abrupt, and the door moved as if the walking spirit of death sought hasty admission. In another instant the figure of a female wanderer stood before him, and the pale and haggard countenance of his own Barbara appeared, by the dim light of the small lamp, more like a deadly ghost than a living being.

“ ‘ It is indeed Barbara herself,’ she said, after gazing long and sadly in his altered countenance, come to lay her head beneath your feet, James Johnston, if ye’ll only let me acknowledge I’ve been your ruin, and kiss my bonnie bairn before she dies.’

“ ‘ The Lord prepare me for this trial,’ he said, staggering back to a seat: ‘ Babby, is it you come to me at this dread hour, when I called upon your spirit. Ye’ve wronged me sair, Lady Barbara; but I can refuse you nothing. There, in that bed, is your dying bairn.’

“ It would have melted a heart of the rock adamant to hear the sobbing screams of bitter grief with which the broken-hearted mother

and unfortunate lady bent over the face of her expiring child. ‘ James Johnston,’ she said, turning to her groaning husband, ‘ ye’ll no put me out at this door, till my puir bairn wins to her last rest.’

“ ‘ Till the breath’s out of Mary’s body,’ said James, ‘ ye may sit there and greet by her side; but ye’ve done us bitter wrong, Lady Babby, as ye truly say; and another night ye shall never bide under my roof.’

“ The two parents sat and watched the dying child, and, at times, between their sobs of sorrow, stole a nameless look at each other’s faces. At length, in the darkest hour that comes before the break of the morning, the pretty bairn gasped it last, and was relieved from the troubles of an uncertain world.

“ Nothing was said — nothing *could* be spoken, as the women that waited without came in to compose the limbs of the child. ‘ It’s over now, and my deed’s done,’ said Lady Barbara, rising. ‘ It is not fit that I should sit longer in an honest man’s house.’

“ With a steady step she walked towards the door; and, ere the light of morning had opened out fairly upon the breaking sky, her figure had vanished beyond the fields of the farm, and no one enquired whither she went.

CHAPTER XIV.

“PRIDE and propriety make strange resolves, working upon the dim perceptions of supposed expediency; as if any line of conduct could effectually bar out intruding evil, or that man could know what was really good for him in the present life.

“The funeral of the child passed quietly over, and men hardly knew what was in James Johnston’s mind. It was not even correctly ascertained that Lady Barbara was, for certain, in that part of the country. Some said they had seen her, and others affirmed that there was a mistake of the person; and many wondered what poor Johnston, in his present demented and stupified state of mind, would attempt to do.

“The Fairly kirkyard, where Mary Johnston was buried, is pleasantly situated a little above the Ruar Water, where the bridge crosses off towards Carloghie Castle. On the night after the funeral, James Johnston was a restless

man ; and when his friends looked in his pale face and wandering eye, they shook their heads, and said that it would be well if nothing fearful should happen. When the darkness came on, however, he found himself unable to stay in his house, and made his way towards the kirk-yard, to try to get relief by indulging his sorrow o'er his daughter's grave.

“ It was dark as pitch by the time he entered the little stile ; and, groping among the tombstones, he could not readily find the spot where his bairn lay. He had just found the green mould and the loose sods, when, seating himself down upon a broad stone, he saw something move between himself and the starless sky—but quite near, on the other side of the grave. ‘ Who is there ? ’ he called out, with some terror. ‘ Is there any one watching in this dreary kirkyard that can have griefs to bear equal to mine ? ’

“ ‘ Deeper—deeper, and sadder far, James Johnston ! ’ said a faint woman's voice : ‘ for the grief of guilt, and the bitterness of shame, are a heavier load on the crushed heart than aught

that can come of fair misfortune. But keep up your mind: you suffer not at least the pangs of remorse for having brought the virtuous into calamity.

“ ‘ Barbara,’ he said, affected into mildness by her penitent speech, ‘ I wish you had not come here, from wherever you came, to interrupt my communion with the harmless dead. My wounds are o’er green, and my mind o’er distraught, for meeting you so soon after what has happened.’

“ She sobbed bitterly as he spoke, but replied not, and both sat over the grave weeping in silence.

“ ‘ Will you not go, Lady Barbara?’ he said impatiently. ‘ You deserted me for those you loved better, when our bairn was in health, and my blood was warm towards you. Now the one lies cold at our feet, and the other is frozen to hope and the world; and you come here to embitter and disturb my most painful thoughts.’

“ She still did not seem able to make a reply, and the dead silence of the solitary church-

yard was only broken at intervals by her continued sobs.

“ ‘ Woman,’ he said, ‘ know you what you have done to me and mine ? Know you what ruin you have brought upon a whole family ? I will not call you adulteress, though well I might. Hence, unnatural mother, from this sacred spot ! Your stains are too black, your conduct too foul, to be recounted here among sinless mortality !’

“ ‘ Reproach and upbraid on, for I well deserve it,’ she said : ‘ I have wronged you, I know — irreparably wronged you, and ruined my own soul : but we have met here alone, o’er a common sorrow. I troubled not your house when my child was confined ; I stood behind backs like a stranger when her dear corpse passed me by ; I watched behind the wall when she was laid in the clay. May I not be suffered, here, in darkness and solitude, to weep tears of remorse on her innocent grave ?’

“ The plaintive tones of her well-known voice seemed to pierce him through : he gave a slight shudder as he looked across to her by

the dim star-light, and set his feet firmly against the infant's grave.

“ ‘ I do not bid you go,’ he said, in a changed tone ; ‘ you may weep with me, if you will, o’er the cold remains of the last tie that I had to this earth.’

“ ‘ And these ties I have been the means of breaking !’ she almost screamed. ‘ Oh, James ! if I should never speak to you more, let me now give words to my deep repentance, not for the misery I have brought upon myself, but for the woe and shame I have wrought to you, in requital for all your generous love : nay, do not interrupt me, but hear what I have to say ; for, for this, and to bless my dying child, I have travelled, in shame and grief, from the farthest end of the kingdom ; for this moment of penitent humility, before you, who have loved me in the only happy days I ever knew, ere I fell into the snare of a villain and my own proud heart, I have encountered degradation and poverty to the utmost point, and am now a spectacle and an outcast from all that were dear to me. Oh, James Johnston !’ she went on,

kneeling in agony on her child's grave, 'if ever you loved me before I made you wretched — if ever you thought towards me a kindly thought — if ever I was in better days your wedded wife, and lay by your side in peace and innocence, — receive now the assurance of my everlasting penitence, for all the wrong I have done to you and yours, and for the pain I have inflicted on your generous heart. I ask not you to forgive me; I ask never to speak to you in kindness more; but I ask you to believe, whatever may happen, that your poor Barbara, whatever she has done, never in reality loved any but you, — never knew what true misery was until that fatal hour she deserted you and her child.'

"As she stood now up near him, she thought his look had suddenly assumed a strange wildness, and he murmured to himself a few words which she could not make out.

" 'This is worst of all,' he at length said, — 'worst of all that has happened to me. Had you gone on in your career, and hardened your heart in iniquity, I might in time have forgotten

you; but to come back to me thus, and kneel at my feet, never to put the least of the blame on me, for all my harshness the morning before you left me — my weakness is not able to stand this, after all I have suffered. I see the end of it — it is just as I thought. The dead rest quietly when the breath is out. There is a time in this world when we neither can get back towards the past, nor go forward to encounter the future, — and my time is come.'

" 'James, what is that you say? whither do you mean to go?' and, as he answered her not, she involuntarily laid hold of him while he made towards the edge of the burying-ground.

" His look became now unsettled, and his manner restless; and, as she held him by the arm, she thought he felt cold, and trembled violently at her touch. She now followed him onwards among the tombstones, until they got outside the little churchyard. All this time he did not speak, and his manner still more began to fill her with alarm. 'James,' she said at length, 'for mercy's sake, where are you going down towards that dark water?'

“ ‘ Does not the bridge lead to Carloghie Castle?’ he said, sharply: “ I must go there, and see what the Earl says, now as you are come home again. Barbara,’ he added, his voice sinking into softness, ‘ do you remember the time when you and I used to wander by the water’s lip, in the sweet summer nights, near bonnie Carloghie, when the hayfield smelt so fresh, and the stream ran so clear past us, and the blackbird sang so melodiously in the woods, and you used to tell me all your tale, and look so lovingly in my face; and then at times, when we came behind the clumps of whitened hawthorn, I used to turn towards your sweet face, and clasp you thus,’—and as he spoke he threw his arms lovingly round her neck. ‘ Ah ! Colonel Delap!’ he exclaimed wildly, ‘ *he* has held you thus!—out, adulteress !’ and he thrust her from him, — ‘ hence ! from me, mocking hyena ! — destroyer of your innocent bairn ! — you are not bonnie Lady Barbara of Carloghie — you are not my love of the Fairly Holms—you are a wretched creature come to haunt me at my bairn’s grave!’ — and,

pausing, as his recollection seemed to return, his aguish shudder again shook him all over. ‘Oh, merciful Heaven! I wish I may be kept in my right senses!’

“ ‘This is the consummation of all,’ she said: ‘my poor husband’s reason is affected. Where are you going, James?’ she screamed out, holding him again: “Oh, is there no living soul here, to help me in this extremity!”

“ ‘I know where I am going, and where I ought to go,’ he said, low and hoarsely, ‘Hark! they whisper me to come, where my daughter dwells. Whisht, Barbara! what do you wring your hands for? Wasn’t I a kind husband to you? but dinna sob thus: I know you loved me once, and I loved you too, and love you — Christ forgive me — even yet. I’m not ashamed to tell it, although you have driven me to this. But I forgive you, lady, I forgive you before God!’ and, as he spoke, his voice rose with emotion to a sort of howl, while he stood gazing on her for a space with a melancholy wildness. ‘Oh! Barbara, if you knew what is in my heart at this bitter moment!’ he mur-

mured. ‘But come to my arms as you did langsyne, since I have forgiven you; and I will kiss your lips oncê more, as if none else had ever dwelt on them, and bid you farewell—a long farewell. Oh mercy! grant me mercy, Heaven!’

“He clasped her with a hasty and convulsive grasp. He hung upon her cheek and lips with a sort of ferocity of parting passion. He broke from her suddenly, and, spreading forth his arms towards the sky, as if in ejaculation, and then dashing in among the bushes that straggled towards the stream, was in an instant out of her sight.

She stood petrified for a moment looking after him, then flew down the bank; but he was gone. She would have made towards the bridge; but sudden terror deprived her of strength, and, stupified by her feelings, she sank down on the face of the hill. Unable to move, she tried to listen; but the short quick step had died away, and she could distinguish nothing but the still murmur of the stream, that rolled slow and black beneath her. She strained her

eyes in every direction, and thought she could distinguish a single figure moving on the bridge; but a black cloud seemed to come before her sight, and blinded her to the rest. Suddenly a murmuring sound was whisperingly borne on the night wind, as if it had been the last prayer of some dying man, and a heavy plunge into the dark waters echoed from the rocky banks down the stream, with an effect of unspeakable horror.

“ Mustering the strength of despair, Barbara rose, and rushed quickly forward. But she neither knew what she saw nor what she did; for, as she looked over the low ledge of the bridge into the bosom of the black Ruar, its waters seemed agitated by widening circles, from a deep pool, nearly beneath her, which whirled slowly towards the bank, and left the surface smooth as before, unreflecting a star.

Frightful screams of a woman's voice now rent the calm air of midnight; startling the death-like silence, and making the woods echo to Fairly Holms, with the wild cry of despair.

That fearful night, just as the darkness began to break into morning, a loud knocking was

heard at the Castle gate, and Lady Barbara was brought to Carloghie hall a raving maniac."

* * * *

When Marion had got to this point of her story, she wiped away a few tears of recollection, and then hurried me away down long stairs, and through several passages, to a little room below, which formerly, when at the door, she had declined entering. It was a little square chamber, with a small recess for a bed. This bedstead, and two old chairs, were all its furniture, saving that on the wall, opposite a loop-hole window, was a large black-framed picture. On that speaking canvass I read, with painful contemplation, the remainder of the tale.

A female figure — the altered shadow of the noble portrait that I had seen above — with sunken cheek and glazed eye, sat on one of the old chairs, gazing vacantly on the ground, and holding the folds of her lawn apron in her thin wasted fingers. One foot was extended a little out, and beside her lay a lock of auburn hair, tied with a worn piece of blue riband. After

contemplating, for a little, on the wan countenance of that interesting figure, an expression of despair that shall never fade from my recollection, I turned to Marion, and begged her to amplify, for my satisfaction, this melancholy sequel.

“This was the room, sir,” she answered, “in which the demented Lady Barbara was confined for more than ten dreary and frightful years. All that time I waited upon her — for death bides long from those who are anxious to die — while the tale of the lady confined in a darkened room of the lower tower of the castle caused a dread curiosity, and a breathless mystery of whispering concern, throughout the whole country.

“ ‘ Oh ! but he’s long a coming, long a coming for his bairn and me,’ she would sadly say, or rather sillily sing, as she plaited constantly, from end to end, in her fingers, the worn folds of her gown or apron, and beat time to her plaintive murmur with her extended foot. Then she would take up the lock of hair that was cut off James Johnston’s head, when he

was taken out of the pool of Ruar Water, and the scrap of blue riband that belonged to her baby, and twine them round her long fingers, as she would vary into wild verse, and croon, with resigned sadness, her melancholy carol, wherein she still called upon death to take her from her weary sorrow.

“ At length the dark night *did* end, and the bitter sorrow was choked in death; and, calling upon the spirit of her unfortunate husband and her cherub daughter, Lady Barbara one evening expired in my arms. The great vault of Carloghie did not receive her wasted corpse. By her own desire she was buried, like a plebeian, in Fairly kirkyard, beside the remains of James Johnston and her bairn.

“ Now, just let me take a greet to poor Lady Barbara’s memory,” said Marion, covering her face with her kerchief; “ I’m glad my tale is ended.”¹

¹ See Note C to this tradition.

NOTES

TO THE TRADITION OF

LADY BARBARA OF CARLOGHIE, AND
THE JOHNSTONS OF FAIRLY.

NOTE A, page 217.

WE do not observe that Ramsay, Burns, or any of the Scottish poets, nor even Sir Walter Scott, allude to this very common dance of their country, which has evidently descended from the upper orders, among whom it must have originally been a favourite, when manners were not so restrained as at present, even in the class who imported or invented this dance. It is quite evident that at one time kissing before company could not have been considered any *very* great enormity, as public salutations of friendship or ceremony have been practised at least since the apostles' days. At the present day, "Bob at the bolster" is a dance by no means unfrequent among young people, even of the middle orders, in many parts of the country, who, making it partly a sort of game, partly a dance, and partly an affair of love, go through it often

very gracefully, and find it, no doubt, from its peculiar opportunities, exceedingly interesting.

There may be some dances practised in England that resemble it; but, being myself unacquainted with them, it may be acceptable to state, that, unlike the common country dance, which begins with the full complement of persons, and ends by their dropping off until the last set, this commences by a single individual, generally the most forward of the young men, who, furnished with a pillow, or sometimes only a silk handkerchief, dances round the room, singing the words which we have set down in the text, in which the voices of the company occasionally join, until, the strain of the music (which is played to it) being ended, he spreads the pillow or kerchief at the feet of the partner whom he has in the mean time selected, who gracefully submits to a very chaste and pretty salute, either on the left cheek, if gentility and modesty are the order of the evening, or, more generally, if the profferer is acceptable, the ready lips are not far to seek. During the little struggle that sometimes takes place at this point, the knowing musician (if he can see, or if he be blind he generally can guess pretty well, by the laughter of the company, what is going on) gives a quaint flourish with his bow, at the happy moment, which is felt by all to be exceedingly appropriate and expressive.

The female thus honoured now rises, and, dancing round with her new partner, has the privilege of a second kiss by her own election, after the same manner, throwing herself down on her knees for it with the utmost good will; and thus it goes round until the whole circle of young persons is filled. When the company are all up, after a turn or two, holding each other's hand in a grand round,

as the French would say, the last called up being in the centre, the ring is gradually reduced in the same manner that it was formed; and thus other two rounds of pleasant pairing, with all their delightful preferences, open love and hearty hilarity, make this a species of dance too interesting to the young and happy, to be speedily suffered to fall into disuse.

NOTE B, page 222.

To a large portion of the public it may be necessary to apologise for the description we have chosen to give of the farmer's party, it being the prevailing creed of modern criticism, that whatever is characteristic in any class, otherwise than what is conventionally *approuvé* to be alluded to, or which does not come within the meaning of the amiable or the elevated, ought to be sedulously suppressed and veiled out of sight, for the sake of a fastidious refinement, that shrinks with distaste from every thing in life and nature that persons of superior polish might designate as *coarse* or *low*.

Not to say that these epithets are very differently applied by different minds and classes, and that the farmers by no means thought *themselves* acting with any particular coarseness or vulgarity; as it was the common mistake in reference to this that was a great means of leading our heroine into her present circumstances; and as it was a difference in perception between her and her new associates upon this very subject that was the cause of her present distaste at her company, as well as the root of her

future misfortunes; some portion of the coarseness, the vulgarity, and the freedom, as these would strike a mind like hers, form the main *point* in her story; and, in telling it, are essential to the completion of the picture.

To such elegant personages, therefore, as might even be of opinion that the paintings of Teniers and the poems of Burns are vulgar, and that the intense moral lessons of Hogarth are coarse and low, we must plead as our excuse the nature of our subject; its very moral, as well as consistency, depending upon a thorough understanding of the truth of the case, namely, of the real characteristics of a sphere of life, regarding which an earl's daughter was so likely to deceive herself.

If there are any who would suppose this scene to be overcharged, even in those farcical incidents which are represented as arising out of an unnatural aiming at gentility, to such we can only express our humble suspicion, that they are but little acquainted with the genuine manners of that coarse though valuable class of people, at least as they existed in Scotland not a great many years ago.

NOTE C, page 277.

For the reasons already hinted at in the Preface, there can be no notes, referring to any particular family, appended to illustrate Lady Barbara's melancholy story. Not a few occurrences, more or less similar to those here represented, are said to have happened in the course of the history of several old families, and may be within the knowledge of some who read these remarks. But, acting

on the rule, to which we mean to adhere, of violating no confidence, and giving, if possible, no occasion of offence, we can only say, that whatever foundation there is in fact for our story, farther than we have mentioned in the note at page 247., every name used, and every locality alluded to in the course of it, are entirely imaginary. Our aim, in developing the causes and results of a family misfortune of this kind, is too grave and serious to admit of the suspicion of administering to any thing like prying curiosity; and if we have not succeeded in impressing an important and solemn moral by our story, we have done less than we intended.

THE
THREE MAIDS OF LOUDON;
OR,
THE KENNEDIES OF MARSLIE, AND THE
NORMAN COUSINS.

A TRADITION OF AYRSHIRE, IN SCOTLAND.

CHAPTER I.

WHO has not heard of Loudon Castle, the boast of the ancient Campbells of Loudon?¹ Who has not sung, if he has a voice to sing, of "Loudon's bonnie woods and braes," which the milkmaid carols on the downs of Maybole, and the ploughman whistles by "the banks of Doun;" where the muse of Scotland descended from heaven, to throw over her tuneful and glorious ploughman the mantle of immortal inspiration!

¹ See Note A, at the end of this Tradition.

How may I tell an old tale of the pretty and far-famed maidens of Loudon, when gallant King Jamie, of Flodden-field memory, was yet in the gaiety and romance of his days; and when the lady of the castle was, for her matronly beauty, the boast of the Lowlands from Berwick on the borders to the Mearns Kirk. In truth, an old tale, like an old ballad, should be told in that measured and jaunty prose, which is not altogether without a seasoning of poetry, though laboured with less of the set carving of art.

The Lady of Loudon sat in her hall, or lofty tapestried chamber, in the old tower of the ancient castle, which overlooked the green and pleasant haughs of Galston. The noble dame had three ladies to wait in her hall, the daughters of three gallant gentlemen of the sweet shire of Ayr; and lovelier nymphs ne'er lifted a broidery stitch in lady's bower, than these pretty maidens of Loudon. The softened beams of the summer sun one day streamed rich and mellow through the stained glass of the long Gothic window of the upper chamber, as the

dame thus encouraged the industry of her damsels: —

“ Work on, work on, my pretty maids ! It delights me to see your white fingers, sweeping athwart the dark velvet ; and your ringleted heads laid evidently down on your silken seam ; so turn me the threads of gimp and gold, and ply as you can your broidery stitch ; for there will be brave days yet, in hall and greenwood, when these robes come forth to the light of day, and the king and his men come to visit us all, in this very old Castle of Loudon.”

An exclamation of delight at the pleasing anticipation, was echoed simultaneously from the three pretty maidens ; and their pleased mistress thus went on : —

“ It is at least delightful to me to see the sparkle of your youthful eyes, my maids,” she added, “ but what will you say, when you first hear the king’s horn, sounding up the Water of Irvine, as his gallant train, in their hunting sheen, come prancing up the long avenue ? and how will ye look upon his royal majesty himself, when he enters the gate of our ho-

noured dwelling, and alights from his charger in all his style and bravery. But do not be impatient, my little gentlewomen, it cannot now be long till the day arrives; for the fruits of summer are fast ripening on the slopes, and his majesty has given his royal word that he will visit my lord in his own bower, ere the corn grows yellow on the banks of Doun, or the plums are ripe on the marches of Clydesdale."

"Alack, my lady," said the gentle Euphemia Kennedy, the hope and pride of the Kennedies of Marslie, "I almost fear to look at the face of my own father, as he rides at the gatherings by Cassilis gate, or walks in the meetings of the knights, at the cross of Maybole. How, then, shall secluded maidens like us bear ourselves in the presence of a crowned king, amidst the eyes of all his noble followers, even though we have our lady's presence to embolden us?"

"Think not of that, my modest Euphemia," said the lady, "it is not the king's face you may be careful to look upon, with such a glance of feminine curiosity as becomes a

maiden to indulge herself in. His royal majesty's countenance, though kingly and commanding, is staid and sedate, if not even thoughtful and careworn withal; even amid his high feastings with his lords, and his gracious condescensions to such as your lord and me. But trust me, gentlewoman, it is little his royal eyes give heed to pretty maidens like you, waiting aloof in their lady's train. To him they seem, I ween, but like the cowering primroses that grow lowly in the valleys, which are, doubtless, pleasant to look on as he passes on his way, but which he is never likely to meet or see again."

"Truly, then, my lady," said the beautiful hazel-eyed Margaret Elphiston, "methinks we may all observe well the king himself, and his gallant lords and squires; simple and secluded though we have hitherto been, and that without dread or danger, as soon as the happy day shall come when he enters the walls of Loudon Castle."

"Nay, but, my pretty wood-pigeons," the lady added, "I will not say that there is no

danger in your thoughtless glances and simple admiration of all you may see in castle hall when the king comes. There are youthful forms clad in hunting bravery, and faces that indicate high lineage and lofty spirit, among the proud followers in the monarch's train; and there are ardent eyes, that gaze warmly on beauty, and see well the meaning of the blush that may mantle over a maiden's cheek; and there are bold hearts, that shun not adventure and daring when their lady-loves are to be sought and won. *These* are the faces, and *these* the forms, that there is danger in your giving your eyes to, my sweet nuns of the broidery chamber; so beware, and give heed to the counsel of experience, cold and stern though it often be; for I have known, by tale and tradition, of many warm hearts that have been broken, and I have even seen heads laid early in the dust, from the workings of that feeling so dear to a maiden's heart, which is yet so frequently the mother of bitter sorrow."

The maids, who lived with their lady in all the seclusion of the time, were made somewhat

serious and thoughtful by this last speech ; the tenour of which was corroborated by many a tragic history, told them among the tales of the winter evenings, which had often deeply affected their simple hearts. The ladies laboured on in silence, occupied severally with their own romantic and pathetic ruminations, when their lady thought fit again to interrupt their musing.

“ Nay, do not be too thoughtful, either, my maidens ; for love, dangerous though it be, has many pleasures to compensate its pains. The fondest affection is not always unfortunate, nor are warm hearts made entirely to be broken. So make yourselves cheerful in the sweet days of youth, and chant me a song altogether ; for we will be merry until the king comes.”

The voices of the maidens rose sweet and soft in their arched chamber, but they had not chanted more than a stanza or two of their simple song, running thus, —

“ Seven pretty sisters dwelt in a bower,
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down ;
 And they twined the silk, and they work'd the flower,
 Sing a hey-down, and a ho-down.

“ And they began for seven years’ wark,
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down,
 All for to make their dear loves a sark,
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down.

“ O three long years were pass’d and gone,
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down,
 And they had not finish’d a sleeve but one
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down.

O we’ll to the woods, and we’ll pull a rose,
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down;
 And up they sprang all at this propose,
 With a hey-down, and a ho-down;”

when the loud sound of a horn without startled their lady, and hushed the whole into instant silence. As they listened and looked in each other’s faces, the note rang through the distant woods, and reveberated away from the castle walls with a thousand prolonged echoes.

“ What can that mean?” exclaimed Lady Loudon: “ but rise up, my maidens, and stop your song; lay aside your work, and betake yourselves to your mirrors in the dressing-chamber; and you, Phemie Kennedy, fetch me my jewels forth, and put me on my velvet robe, for that is no common horn that sounds

so long and loftily, and echoes even beyond the braes of Mauchlin."

The youngest of the ladies then opened the casement, and descried two horsemen, in green and gold, riding proudly up the avenue, followed by their henchman with his horn; who ever and anon blew his announcing blast, until the whole had arrived within the walls of the castle. The lady soon descended into the vaulted banqueting room, whose long Gothic windows looked down upon the inner court — for the defensive architecture of the time would not allow of such apertures, for the admission of light, in the *exterior* walls of a feudal residence. From these windows she watched the entrance of the gallant knights; saw them alight from their well-caparisoned steeds; and soon Sir David Graham of Shorley, and Sir William Wedderburn of Wedderburn, were bowing low in her ladyship's presence.

"The king's gracious majesty, our royal and beloved master," said Sir William, "hath from the woods of Kilwinning¹, where he flies

¹ See Note B. at the end of this Tradition.

the falcon and pursues the deer, sent us forward to this castle, to greet your ladyship well, and to present his kingly gallantries, in her own hall, to the noble lady of Loudon."

"Say on, my valiant knights," said the dame; "never was message more welcome to lady, embowered at home among her maidens, than this from his royal majesty King James of Scotland."

"The king, by us, madam, bespeaks your ladyship's unceremonious hospitality to himself and his lords, on their ride through the rich lowlands of Ayrshire; for he hath killed a buck, with his own hands, in these haughs; and, though the warning is short, he hath vowed to taste its savoury flesh nowhere but in the hospitable halls of this noble castle."

"His majesty doth more honour to a country dame than I have words to express the sense of," said the lady: "but pray, sir knights, know ye where my own lord wends at this time, that I may send for him to receive the king, and share with me the honours intended for us here at Loudon?"

“Madam, we know right well,” said Sir William: “your lord rides with the king himself, and will be here anon; and here are the men already, bearing the buck that his majesty shot, forthwith to be committed to the hands of your ladyship’s servitors; and so we bid you, with all respect, farewell, until, in the space of an hour hence, we return again, in presence of the king, to taste with him your courteous hospitality.”

Having said this, and bowing low to the lady and her maidens, the gallant knights descended, and, remounting their steeds, they, with a parting blast of the henchman’s horn, which rung against the walls, and swelled forth among the woods, departed gaily again by the great gate of the castle.

“Now, haste ye, haste ye, my serving men all,” said the lady to those who came for her orders, in preparation for receiving the king; and great was the bustle within and without, and active were they all, from the highest to the lowest, ere the tables were covered in the banqueting-room; and the goblets and the silver

flagons were placed on the board, and the chairs and forms were set around, and the canopy of tapestry was arranged at the upper end, for the fitting entertainment of his majesty and his train. So, ere the sun had begun to decline low in the west, another horn was heard to sound in the distance, up Irvine Water, and the warder of the castle, from the centre tower, began to descry the nodding plumes and glittering casques of the king's followers, through among the trees that intervened between him and the ancient village of Mauchlin.

“Now, are ye ready, my pretty maids?” said the lady, good-humouredly, to her gentlewomen: “and does my robe hang now with grace, as it ought? for here comes the king and his men, and our best looks must not be to seek for on such a day as this. Think you this chain of gold, so richly frosted by that skilful Florentine, does not look somewhat too heavy over the dark brocade? You will say, no doubt, that the rich effect will compensate; yet, methinks the whiteness of these pearls makes almost too great a contrast with the deep

down of the velvet. Nay, excuse me, my sweet wenches, for dress and jewels give dignity, and help to make up for the inroads of time ; but, for all this robing and tiring, I almost envy you those pulpy soft skins, and fresh looks of youth : so be well content with the comparative plainness of your attire ; for your jimp waists and sparkling eyes are surer conquerors of gallant knights than gold or brocade. Come, ladies, I love to see you look your best, for all I say, on this happy occasion. It is not every summer's day that the king deigns to come to Loudon Castle."

CHAPTER II.

It was not long ere the gay cavalcade, glowing with health from their sylvan sport, and shining with the gorgeous bravery of the time, came cantering down the long avenue of Loudon. The king himself was marked conspicuously by the pride of his bearing and his martial look ; for all this seemed even to be set off by the comparative plainness of his well-fashioned attire, He was talking and laughing affably to the lord of Loudon, as they drew near ; and when the majestic train began to enter the gate, a blast of trumpets, in salutation, from within, rung from the castle walls, startling the echoes again in the woods without, and making more hearts dance with festive joy, besides those that beat in the youthful breasts of the three maids of the castle.

“ Alack for me !” said Lady Loudon to her nymphs, “ that I had so short a warning, and so little time for preparation for such a day

as this; for here are nobles and knights many a one, besides the king's majesty himself; and how shall we bestow them, when the feast is over, up and down in the narrow compass of this ancient building? But the king himself shall have the ordering of all, while it is his royal pleasure to honour us with his presence; so now, my ladies, are ye ready to attend me while I receive this gallant company?"

A flourish of horns, long and loud, announced again the entrance of the king into the great hall below. It was a brave and a blessed sight to see the romantic and still youthful James the Fourth, backed by his noble train, as they crowded the hall, lift his hunting-cap, with kingly grace, and salute the cheek of the handsome and blushing dame of Loudon, while her maidens, who attended in their lady's train, were unable to look up for fear they should meet the ardent gaze of the numerous eyes that from every lord and knight among the king's followers, were already fixed upon them.

"Health and kindly greeting, my noble lady!" said the king. "We have come upon your

hospitality right sharply and short-warned, with so many hungry men in our wake; but fortunate has been the chase, that hath given us this fair opportunity, and wholesome hath been the random wind that hath blown us and our hunting band towards the ancient turrets of Loudon."

"Welcome, thrice welcome, noble sire," said the lady, curtsying low. "It is but homely fare that we can offer your majesty, to what your kingly visit should in duty demand. For we have neither masks nor mummings of any sort ready, nor even minstrel pleasantries to entertain you withal. But such cheer as our old castle affords, or as can be found in the pleasant shire of Ayr, we hope your majesty will graciously accept, with our hearty loyal prayers and country welcome.

"Fairly and deftly spoken, my lady," said the king; "and truly such warm courtesy is no unwholesome condiment to make a chase dinner go sweetly down. Aha!" his majesty exclaimed, casting his eyes for the first time on the waiting ladies, "and be these the maids of

Loudon, of which I have heard so much. By my faith, madam, you keep pretty pigeons, leashed up here in the woodlands, while our court at Linlithgow is so near. Had we known before where our Ayrshire beauties were to be found in such perfection, we should not like our good Queen Margaret, at home, to be told where our hunting-quarters might ere now have been taken up. Let the fair gentlewomen be named to me, my lady. Methinks this must be the daughter of my good servant, Thomas Kennedy of Marslie.

“She is, my sire; and this, my soft-eyed Margaret Elphiston, and this, fair Ellen Boyd, only daughter of John Boyd of Gourlie. Do not blush so deeply, my country lambkins. But spare and excuse them, your gracious majesty. They are not used to a presence such as this.”

“In good sooth, madam,” said the king, as the blushing gentlewomen again retired behind their lady, “you have reason to be proud of such a train, though we dare not speak flatteringly before soft-hearted maidens, when so

many looks are upon them. And so, my good lords and younger gentlemen, we rede you well to make a covenant with your eyes at this present sitting; for, take our kingly word for it, it would be a safer ploy to hunt the deer on the craggy braes of Badenoch itself, than to let your thoughts wander into such entanglement as the capricious god might wind round you withal, by such wreathed smiles, as might be won from these pretty maids of Ayrshire."

The servitors soon announced that the savoury repast smoked on the board; and, the lords and ladies being duly set, the king's majesty at the head, and under the canopy of state that had been erected for him, the whole fell to with right good-will, to eat of the roasted buck and the other viands prepared in haste for this goodly company. It was a pleasant and merry time to all present, this day, at the hospitable board of the lord of Loudon; and greatly did the king enjoy his hearty good cheer, for he was then in the zenith of his happy reign, and the high enjoyment of his people's love.

I may not well attempt to describe the

pleasant jests and gleeful wit of his majesty and his nobles as they sat at board this merry night, or the graceful courtesies and compliments that passed between him and the delighted dame of Loudon. But the red wine flowed in streams from cup and flagon, and the king's eyes sparkled with happiness as he looked down the range of his barons and knights who sat around in hunting green; and, as he sometimes threw a hasty glance towards the modest maidens of Loudon, whom he still observed with pleased condescension, he would not suffer them or their mistress to leave for long his royal presence.

But the lady and her maidens now sat by the casement behind the chair where the king was set, and ever and anon discoursed among themselves, as to the names and bearing of the barons and knights, whom the earl was honoured to entertain at his table. And sundry there were among them of high lineage and proud name, who in that bright steel and fitting stole of the greenwood with which they delighted to follow their king, might well be called the

"Flowers of the Forest," which were afterwards so sadly to be "wede away" on the fatal battle-field of Flodden. But the ranks of the Scottish nobility, at this time, were better filled with blood and lineage than probably they have ever been since that unlucky day, when, scorning to desert their king even in his romantic folly, they laid down their lives bravely, for him who now sat gaily carousing among them.

"But tell me, my lady," said Euphemia Kennedy, "who are these two grim-looking middle-aged men, who sit below the Lord Cassilis; for, in sooth, I do not like the way that they seem to watch us with their eyes, and ever and anon keep whispering together."

"The nearest to us," replied the lady, "is Sir David Brodie of Framly, who contrives to follow the king, although his majesty is of too generous a nature to bear much love to a man so fond of the law's craft as this knight is known to be. The other, I trow, is that bold Sir Ralph Gilmour of Gilmourland, who, if report may be credited, had more to do with

the untimely end of the king's late father, than his majesty's brave and unsuspecting disposition would allow him easily to credit."

"There they gaze at us again," said Ellen Boyd: "perhaps it may be that I am to blame; but, truly, my lady, I like not the looks of these men."

"Think not of them: but is there no one else, my maidens," said her ladyship, slyly, "that you would care to enquire about in this gay company? Methinks there are youths at that small table by the crossing, that have had more stolen glances than any of the older nobles whom you have yet ventured to talk of. Nay, blush not so deeply; for I have seen *their* looks too, not less stolen and modest than your own; and curiosity deepens a woman's interest, which, methinks, it were safest at once to gratify. So ask me, ladies, what you want to know, and as a friend, and like a parent, I will shape you an answer."

"Then pardon our curiosity, my good lady of Loudon," said Euphemia Kennedy, "but truly we should be thankful to know, as inqui-

sitive spectators of a pageant and a revelry such as we may never see again, who be these three youths with the black matted locks and the foreign air. Their doublets are green, like the other gentles of Scotland, but their short cloaks are purple, like those worn by the high-born Frenchmen whom I have seen at the ridings at Maybole, as your ladyship might have noticed from the first, as they rode so gallantly by themselves, when the king and his train galloped up the long avenue towards the castle."

"Ha! and is it so," said her ladyship, "that these handsome foreigners, if I may call them so, have so early excited your maiden concern? Then, know, my girls, that these are the much talked-of Norman cousins, whom the queen of France sent over in the train of her own ambassador, because the boys were uncommonly handsome, and originally said to be of Scottish descent, and all their fathers were killed together in one battle. But, see, their countenances are turned towards us, and the ardent glances of their dark eyes

shoot keenly this way. Beware, my thoughtless maidens, how you turn your faces to observe them, for these are just such love-looks as I warned you to guard against, before I knew that it was so near the time when you would need my caution."

"A song! a song!" cried the king himself, aloud. "Pardon, my noble lady," he added, turning to the dame, "but our visit hither has been so random and unheralded, that minstrel or madrigal-singer there is none to attend us¹, and we must even among ourselves find music and ballad to heighten the joys of our evening's hilarity. Who will sing the king a song? No one among all my lords around? Then here, my gallant Norman cousins. The lute never comes amiss to your tasteful fingers, and your voices are dulcet like the strains of Italy. Come forth, and strike the tinkling lyre. By the rood, I could be poetical myself, to join you! Up, strike, I say! Apollo will aid you."¹

Without a word, the three handsome youths,

¹ See Note C. at the end of this Tradition.

who sat together among the younger Scottish squires of the party, stood modestly up, and, lutes having been readily put into their hands, taking two steps forward, they gracefully began to try the tune of their instruments, as they stood, with an air of foreign romance, like youthful troubadours, before the king. Their cloaks having been laid aside, they appeared in the green doublet and trunks seamed with gold, then usually worn by the Scottish nobility in their hunting excursions with the king. On their left sides hung suspended by a large linked chain of polished brass the short broad-bladed sword of the Norman fashion, with buck-horn handle mounted with gold, and under their right arms appeared suspended by a string of crimson silk the small hunting-horn which they used in the chase. Their black hair, though matted and thick before, hung over their shoulders behind in flowing ringlets; and although their youthful beards had hardly required sufficient body to allow of the peaked shape then coming into fashion, the curly mustachios over their upper lips were already full and thick, and

contrasted finely with the pearly teeth that, in the natural smile which this honourable notice from the king called forth, showed out beneath them. The whiteness of their bare and well-formed throats formed also a contrast to their black locks, and to the dark glances of their eyes, on which the light, as they came forward, now shone strongly; and verily these three youths, as they now stood in this high presence, were altogether such as were likely to make an impression on more callous hearts and less romantic fancies than belonged to any of the maids of Loudon.

The buzz of merriment and wassail was now suspended, and not a whisper was heard to the farthest corners of the hall, as the young Normans struck a light prelude on the lutes, to which their fingers seemed well accustomed; and, while all eyes were fixed upon them, the king, laying himself back in his state chair to listen, and the hearts of the maids throbbing with romantic feelings, the youths began this irregular roundelay:—

“ With lute and lyre
 A willing three,
 In hall or wold,
 Where'er we be,
 Of daring deeds,
 And fair beautie,
 We ready chaunt
 Our minstrelsie.

“ From far-off lands,
 In Normandie ;
 Across the wave
 Away came we.
 And we've left our homes,
 And fathers' towers,
 For ladies' bowers,
 Where'er they be.

“ To ride the greenwood,
 And chase the deer ;
 Or thrust the spear,
 In battles brave :
 Where glory leads
 We still shall be,
 A willing three,
 For ladies' love.

“ Or 'mid the hall's
 Bright revelrie,
 And gentle dames
 And minstrelsie :

Where love's bright eyes
Shine beaminglie,
In the North countrie,
We 'll strike the string."

"And is the strain ended?" said the king, as the three cousins, bowing low, stepped back to their seats. "By the mass! but it were well for our Scottish youths, if more of them went to the fair valleys of Normandy, to fit them well for a king's court, if there they might learn such strains as these. A health, my lords! let a health be drunk to these brave youths:—nay, fill it up, for they carry Scottish blood, and ancient blood, too, in their youthful veins; and we honour the divine Apollo himself, when we pledge, for their song, the troubadour cousins of Normandy."

It were not easy for me further to tell how the king's majesty, and his lords and knights, did this merry evening enjoy their cheer in the vaulted hall of Loudon Castle; and how they drank toasts to Andrew Largo and his gallant ship, which the king had built at great care and cost; and also to the noble knights who had

won spear and hauberk at the great jousting at the king's park by Stirling; nor can I well set forth with what gallant courtesies his royal majesty and all his barons did their parting obeisance for the night to their dignified hostess, as she and her ladies departed from the banquet-room; and with what pride her health was toasted by them all, and afterwards that of the three pretty maidens of Loudon. But at length and long all were retired to rest; for wine and wassail could no longer be enjoyed. Silence was within the old castle walls, from court yard to lofty warder; and the low wind, that breathed softly through the woods without, only soothed into deeper slumbers the weary visitors to Loudon.

The morning sun of a new day had risen some degrees above the eastern sweep of the Lammermuir Hills, ere the drowsy king had opened his casement, and taken his first look abroad towards the pleasant slopes of Mauchlin. Higher still did the sun dwell on Loudon woods, ere the morning's repast was ended by all, and the gay train had again

mounted their steeds; for the horn, calling to horse, had sounded abroad, and all were at length ready to set forth with the king, to fly a hawk while the day was young; for this was the sport appointed for the nonce, to pleasure the lord of these fair domains; and particularly Lady Loudon and her three damsels, whose waiting palfreys already pawed the ground in the inner court.

The lords and knights, whose spirited steeds also curveted round, were all fresh and gay for their morning's sport; but, though among them there were strong and warlike men — for who could surpass the valiant Scottish lords of the time in James's train, — yet were there none of them all who carried themselves with a more gallant bearing, than those three handsome cousins of Normandy. Truly the hearts of the Loudon maidens did leap within their fair bosoms, as, one by one, they were handed upon their palfreys, in the midst of this noble throng; and never pleasanter sound had smote their ears, than the long blast of the king's trumpets appeared, as the whole issued forth from the

western gate. Then the horses' hoofs of this gallant cavalcade resounded from the green sod, as they galloped down the pleasant strath that is overlooked by the turrets of Loudon Castle.

To tell how the day was spent by this noble company, as they flew the hawk through forest and meadow, and wended cheerily o'er dale and down, breathing health and perfume from Scotland's valleys, it is not for me fittingly to undertake: but the king and his party were pledged to the Douglas, to take their evening's rest in Bothwell Castle; so it behoved them at length to put a check upon their pastime, and forthwith to ride forward, to seek for their route by Clydesdale slopes, and to cross the stream by the fords of Rutherglen.

With many gallant courtesies, therefore, did the then romantic and gay King James, as the day advanced, take leave of his noble hosts and their followers, meaning to turn to the Clydesdale haughs. He wished Lady Loudon many a kindly good day; and, with speeches polite and of kingly grace, he hoped, in short, that her

ladyship, and her peerless maids, might soon be persuaded to grace his court, where he lived, in summer, by the clear wells of Linlithgow, or, in winter, at his own palace of Stirling. And so, with a lifting of plumed caps from many a proud head, and a long and loud blast from the hunting-horns, which again echoed in the greenwood and far off down the valleys, the ladies of Ayrshire, and all that were with them, parted regretfully from the king and his train, and turned their horses' heads once more in the direction of their own homes.

It was late in the summer's afternoon, when the three fair damsels, riding with their mistress, again descried the lofty towers of their castle. The small cavalcade wended slowly and wearily under its ancient walls; for the day was far spent, and their thoughts were of the regretful broodings of those who have just seen the hour of their long anticipations come and gone, and all its excitements passed away like a pleasing dream. And truly, to the secluded maidens of Loudon, all this would soon have been but as a tale that is told, had not certain small inci-

dents, during that day's sport, tended to deepen the impressions of the previous night, and to fix their thoughts on the romantic coincidence that had brought to their domicile and their very bridle reins, three such youths as the troubadour cousins of Normandy.

CHAPTER III.

AGAIN, after this, the maids of Loudon sat high in their lady's chamber, plying, as they were wont, their broidery toil; and sometimes looking down on the green haughs below, which spread out towards the winding Irvine stream. The day passed irksome and heavy of late; for, though the colours were rich over Loudon woods, and the autumn fruit hung ripe on the trees below, their lady seldom took them abroad; and an unusual dulness seemed to rest within the heavy stone ramparts of the castle. Sometimes the maids tried to entertain themselves with a chant, as formerly; but their voices died away in plaintive murmurings, or were stifled by their own musing reflections; for they involuntarily found themselves diverging into that romantic strain, and its words which had first touched their hearts, from the lutes of the Norman troubadours.

One day they were unusually silent and thoughtful, when, towards evening, a messenger hastily entered the chamber, having descended from the watch-tower overhead, to announce the approach of a troop of cavaliers, who, having turned from the road from the King's Well, seemed proceeding directly towards the castle. The horsemen soon drew near to the walls; but their gait was staid and tardy, and they came without sound of horn, or any other cheerful announcement. Yet they were knights and men of degree, as was to be seen as well by their bold bearing as by the equipment of their squires and henchmen; and when, at length, the lady and her maids descended, as in duty, to receive the guests, they found the fathers of two of the ladies, namely, Sir Thomas Kennedy of Marslie, and Sir John Boyd of the Grange, accompanied by the bold Lord of Tiverton, and those two other knights, namely, Sir David Brodie and Sir Ralph Gilmour, whom the maidens had remarked with so much distaste, on the night of the king's entertainment at Loudon.

A throbbing feeling of alarm stounded through the soft hearts of the Loudon maidens, as they encountered the bold gaze of the introduced knights, and received their ardent and confident courtesies. The event soon verified their thoughtful suspicions. The bald-headed baron of Tiverton, and the hard-featured knights, who had been smitten with the ladies' looks on their former visit, had come to pay their formal addresses, and the fathers of the maids to command consent. That night, however, but little was said, and the keen gaze of Euphemia Kennedy, as she watched her father's eye of beaming affection, sometimes fancied that his tone was more entreating than imperative, and, while he spoke to her the words of parental authority, she thought he contemplated her with a look of considerate melancholy.

An inference nearly similar was drawn by the other young gentlewomen, particularly on the following day, when the subject came more explicitly to be talked of in the presence of Lady Loudon; and a resigned consent was

almost drawn from them, from the very reluctance with which it seemed to be asked by their observant parents. When the maidens confessed to their fathers a repulsive feeling towards the elderly knights, one of whom was now a widower, and applied to their lady, with appealing looks, for her advocacy against this painful sacrifice, a struggle was manifested in the bosoms of all present, which showed more tenderness than decision, upon so important a question.

But, upon the retirement of the parents to give time for the ladies to reason the matter together, a hint was given by Lady Loudon herself, which soon determined the reluctant resolves of her sorrowful maidens. It regarded certain circumstances between these knights who now sued for their hands, and their own parents, which lay heavy at the heart of the latter, and of which the crafty men had taken advantage to force a consent, to which all parties agreed with painful and acknowledged reluctance.

“Indeed,” said the countess, anxiously and

almost compassionately reasoning with her maidens, after she had mentioned this weighing circumstance, "believe me, my sweet nymphs, the condition of us poor women, as the world rolls, is sadly passive as to the main event of our life's fortune; and, as I have often told you, I have seen in my day, that the miller's maid may be bride to her mated joe, and the barefooted lass that sings on the croft may cabin and crib with the man of her choice; but dowered dames have many claims, and rambling love is but a maker of ballads, to chaff and cheat poor maidens' hearts. So, dry at once those dropping tears, and banish the silly romance of your thoughts, for they that are born to sit in knightly halls must, as well as the lowest, take the good and the ill that belong to their degree."

When all was settled and arranged for at least a double, if not a triple, marriage, which was intended to be celebrated at Loudon Castle, the knights and squires forthwith departed, and left the three thoughtful maidens to prepare their minds as they might for their new

condition, their lady taking in charge the getting in readiness the buskings and the bravery that should be required, on the female part, to grace the great occasion.

Meantime as the day wore to a close, which had witnessed these important and trying concessions, the relief of solitude was eagerly sought by these artless girls, from the thoughts that naturally pressed upon their hearts, since their reluctant consent had been given; and each, nursing feelings in which she thought herself peculiar, seemed anxious to shun even the other's society. That hour, before the twilight, which it was customary for them to appropriate to a walk without the walls, when the evening was inviting, they this night enjoyed, in unwonted separation, in a little shrubbery which skirted the wood, and which at this season was most seductive to such as they, from its very wildness and thick irregularity. As they wandered in its labyrinth, the whole met by chance on a small terrace, near the wood, while deepening twilight began to sink into hazy grey the distant moorlands; and,

seeming at length relieved by again meeting, they sat down to murmur, in each other's hearing, as much of their several thoughts as modest maidens may be likely to entrust to such as themselves.

A word or two let fall by each — an echoed wish — a half-expressed sentiment — at once laid bare their several secret thoughts; and the minstrel cousins, the Norman youths, were what troubled, yet enchained, their individual meditations. The ready frankness of full hearts succeeded to their late maidenly distrust, and each confessed to the others, that, had her eyes never dwelt on the noble animation of *their* handsome countenances, and her ears never been charmed with their romantic melody, the dreams of her girlish fancy might have passed away like a pleasing slumber, and the marriage to which she was destined might have been submitted to without repugnance. But, having seen them, and listened to their romantic strains — having each received her individual whisper of love on some part of that joyous day, when the king flew the hawk

on the green woods of Loudon—how could they forget the dearest feeling of a maiden's heart, which, with coy emotion, had been tasted by each that delightful morning? One wished that she might only see them *once more* before her wedlock; another dreaded even seeing them again, before or after; and a third, praying that it were possible she could see them even this instant, thought in her eagerness that she could perceive white plumes waving, and green figures stealing even among the trees around them.

But darkness was fast deepening down over the landscape; the supper-bell already tinkled from the small turret of the castle; and, sighing to themselves as they rose together, the three maidens went slowly on to join their lady. They were winding round the white rose-bushes that clumped on the terrace, and about to step down a flight of steps, which descended towards the small wicket of the castle wall, when they thought they heard the sound of footsteps, and a cautious rustling among the boughs; and, before they could make an exclamation in their alarm, three plumed cavaliers sprang upon the

terrace, and in an instant they perceived that it was the Norman cousins themselves that kneeled at their feet.

The delight that bounded into the hearts of the maidens, as they beheld once more the ardent eyes of the youths beaming upon them, stifled the momentary feeling of alarm, and, twilight as it was, each bold Norman selected at once for his brief address, the maiden at whose bridle rein he had chosen to get opportunity of whispering his wishes on the day of the king's visit to Loudon.

"Pardon! pardon! fair ladies," was their first general exclamation; "for the king hath commanded us to the court of France, and already the ship waits in the port, which is to carry us away from Scotland's strand. The dames of France are courtly bred, and many a dark-eyed maiden sings to the lute of love, in the high châteaux of Normandy's plains; but, of all that dwell in the world wide, we will rather spend our life's blood for the peerless ladies of Loudon!"

Sad and embarrassing, though delightful to

all, was this short and agitated interview. Hurrried words and half refusals showed much and truly both love's warmth and heart's interest. But, like most of the stolen interviews of youthful attachment, it ended in little but a pleasingly painful disturbance of the feelings, which awakened sweet thoughts and sighing wishes, that were as baseless and indefinite as a passing cloud; for the ardent youths were quickly forced to depart, and the maidens were soon obliged to retire to their own heartless preparations and their sleepless pillows.

Day after day again passed slowly over; and in the meantime it was set and agreed that the marriage of Ellen Boyd with the lord of Tiverton should take place along with that of the other maidens, in the small chapel which then nearly joined the outer tower of the castle. Such an event as a triple marriage being celebrated on one occasion, and in one castle, caused a great sensation and rumour in the shire of Ayr; and a numerous concourse of lords and knights, and men of degree, from all parts adjacent, moved forwards to the spot to witness

the preparations. For, a general invitation was given to the gentry near, and great were the rejoicings and feastings intended to take place at the wedding of the three ladies of Loudon.

But sore and sad were the maidens' hearts, as they sat in their lady's high chamber; and many were the tears that they shed in secret, as they thought of those they were never more to see, and witnessed with a sigh all those splendid preparations. Meantime, rumours came successively to their ears, which sometimes spoke of an embassy to the court of France, and sometimes of a jousting which was to be held within the lists that were erected beneath the walls of the new palace of Linlithgow. Still nothing certain was known, especially to the women-kind who wended in the frontiers of Ayrshire, concerning the high movements of the king's majesty, and the pomps and occupations of his gay cavaliers; who served him abroad when it was his pleasure to command, or tilted and hunted on Scottish ground. Nothing, then, could the anxious maidens learn

of the Norman youths, to whom their secret thoughts sadly but vainly recurred, as the day drew nigh which was appointed for their dreaded nuptials.

Of that day and date, however, various debates had been held at Loudon castle; and still the maids had begged its postponement, although they could give little other reason for their repeated requests than their own undisguised reluctance to the marriage. They would not have had courage to offer a child's reason against a parent's will, had that will been shown with hearty decision. But, though they little understood marriage policy, they often thought that even their own fathers seemed at times to regard them with compassion; and one day they overheard a certain doughty visiter at the castle, one Sir Claud Nisbet, exclaim with an oath, that urging power and sealed parchments should never compel such a marriage as this, if there was a true man to be found within the bounds of Ayrshire, to lay on a stout stroke or break a head, in favour of the maidens about to be sacrificed.

But the time at last was fully set, and drew nigh, and nigh ; and now, in two days more, the maids of Loudon would be the wedded wives of the great gruesome Norland knights, and away they should be taken, for ever and aye, from the woods and glades of the sweet shire of Ayr.

What strange matter had been revealed to all the three during their last night's troubled sleep? — for, when they met together on that morning, something they had all to tell of what they had heard, or imagined to have been brought to their thoughts, during the night, which was by no means usual in their hours of rest. Was it a simple dream, the midnight wanderings of troubled thoughts, and the continuing vibrations of the chords of the day's anxieties? Or was it the night wind that had brought to their casement, while they slept, spiritual voices and fairy songs of some dreamy indefinite warning or intimation?

Yet, real sounds of pure minstrelsy they were sure they had heard, when all was silent and still in the castle ; and the strains were of the

same enchanting measure which was associated in their thoughts with the most romantic emotions, and with their first interesting recollections of the cousins of Normandy. Some had been awakened, and some had not, by the wild strains of this foreign melody; but something in the song about "days three," repeated and impressed till it could not be mistaken, seemed to have struck upon all their dreaming ears.

At length, when, comparing all their accounts, they could make out by their united recollections the words of the following mystic stanza, which they were convinced they heard sung at their casement while they slept, with a plaintive and solemn melody, —

" Days three! days three!
 Pretty maids of Loudon lea,
 Still delay your destinie,
 If that — can — be.

" Days three! days three!
 Let not yet this bridal be,
 And hope shall come from land or sea,
 Or Nor-man-die.

" Days three! days three," &c.

was sung over and over. And they repeated the words, and they conned the metre, until the whole strain came back to their memories; and they sung it together with thrilling nerves, and wept over it, as they sung, with involuntary and bursting emotion !

At length they thought they would attend to this mysterious minstrelsy, come from whence it might, and, by a united request for another day's delay, see what hope or hap might actually come of it. But when, with trembling hearts, they offered to apply for this further deferment, they were answered by a peremptory and almost angry refusal. How, indeed, could they expect so foolish an indulgence, and what good reason could they give, even for asking now so strange a boon ? The feast had already been prepared, and the guests, from far and near, were all invited. Besides, it had been arranged that the ceremony should take place after the guests had partaken of the entertainments, and, on the same morning, that a trial of tilting skill was to be held in the court of Bothwell Castle, at which the king

himself was expected to be present, and where most of the knights and nobles who were to be at Loudon intended to go, when they had seen the fair brides set off with their husbands.

To overcome all these obstacles, therefore, for the sake of a frivolous wish for a day's delay, might well appear a task, which was neither easy nor reasonable, and all in obedience to the mandate of a mystic dream and serenades of the night. But hope still whispered the maids to persevere, and they looked so sad, and pleaded so powerfully, that by the following day their fathers themselves became advocates for the gratification of their last wishes; and Lady Loudon undertook to prolong the feasting, and to mollify the impatience of the Norland knights, and to persuade even to consent to the concession the "feckless and fusionless" Baron of Tiverton.

CHAPTER IV.

At length the third day came, and was far advanced amidst sports and feastings—a day which was the last date of their vague hopes, and was likely to be the last which the maidens might ever spend in the sweet woodlands of Loudon. The knights that had gone to witness the tilting at Bothwell returned weary and late; but they brought no news that the maidens could hear, and seemed to talk apart in mysterious and suppressed murmurings. The banquet in the hall was again laid, and the evening set in with a repetition of the former feastings and libations. Mummings there were, also, to vary the entertainments, and music and dance in the great chamber, with quips and cranks, and quaint devices, of heathenish mythology, according to the pedantic fashion of the time, wherein were Loves and Cupids many a one, and Venus with her zone, and Hymen with his

torch, to grace the nuptials of the maidens of Loudon.

Yet still the evening passed away, and *they* were the least to be envied of the gay throng around, for no hope nor hap seemed to promise relief: and *there* was the burly priest, with book and rosary, who, by the morrow's dawn, was to cut off for ever their last yearning hopes connected with the romantic visit of their lovers of Normandy.

Midnight, still midnight, was fast drawing near, and the last of the mysterious three days was soon to be rung out by the small tinkle of the castle bell; and the very wassailers were becoming weary in the hall, and the song of the mummers was growing dull upon the ear; and nothing seemed to remain but resignation to their fate. Yet full well did the thoughtful maidens know, from their penetrating readings of their fathers' looks, that some necessity, of which they would have been well pleased to get rid, had compelled their parents into this enthrallment with the Norland knights. A sweet yet sad good night to all was just parting the

ladies from their fathers and friends around, when a confused noise was heard without, which soon turned into an audible trampling of horses' feet in the court-yard. In another instant, loud voices, in threatening tones, startled the ears of the astonished guests; and, before they could well get to their feet, a crowd of armed men rushed into the hall, and completely filled the apartment.

The weapons of the company were unsheathed in an instant: lights were extinguished, and tables were overthrown; for some sudden fury or violent impulse seemed to have deprived the intruders of all obedience to those whom they accompanied, who in vain endeavoured to obtain a hearing, and to restore order instead of this sudden confusion. The ladies screamed, and some rushed out; yet was their alarm more unexpected than painful; for, besides that such events as midnight quarrels, or inbreakings of wilful men upon private entertainments, were no very uncommon affairs in those times, the maidens had seen, in the midst of the tumult,

with a mixture of dread and joy, the waving plumes and raven locks of the Norman cousins. They heard them call upon the lord of Loudon, in a tone that had in it more of entreaty than defiance; but their voices were drowned in the clash of arms: a man in complete mail, and with a visor on his face, cleared the hall with a two-handed sword, which was feebly resisted by the Norland knights, on whom the armed men seemed to have little mercy; and presently, while the lord of Loudon and others were pent up in a corner, Sir David and Sir Ralph were seen extended on the floor, while the bald baron of Tiverton was begging for mercy.

“My father! my father!” exclaimed each of the maidens, as they rushed back through the crowded passage again towards the hall.

“Your fathers are safe, and *shall* be safe,” said a voice, softly: “be not alarmed, sweet ladies, but follow us;” and, the stranger putting an arm gently round Euphemia Kennedy, she easily recognised her own favourite of the Norman cousins, whom, along with the other

maidens, she instinctively accompanied, until they found themselves all in the back courtyard of the castle.

“What mean you, bold Norman, and where are you leading us?” enquired they, as they now saw the stars of night twinkling over them, and listened to the clang of arms, and the confusion of voices in the hall within.

“We mean nought but what is dictated by valour and love,” said the youth, proudly. “Hark! the hour of midnight struck by the tinkling bell above on the turret, rings out the third day, and brings the deliverer, that we sung you of, in the night watches. We shall neither wrong you nor our own honour. Approach and hasten, gallant friends; and here, sweet maids, are waiting steeds: the king shall justify this night’s adventure in halls which you shall joy to see. Will you trust yourselves, maidens, for a midnight ride, with your devoted knights from Normandy?”

But small persuasion required the maids, when they heard that all their fathers were safe, and that they were only to go to Bothwell

Castle. "By my sword and sooth," swore the tall man in armour, who had now joined the cousins, as he lifted the maids like infants, and placed them on their steeds, "but ye are three sweet morsels for true knights, and far too good for these craven caitiffs to whom we have just had the satisfaction of paying the old debt of a sound and wholesome skin-drubbing. So off, gentlemen, mount and go — as the song has it, for it is not safe to tarry here, and I would we were well through the black fords of Rutherglen."

The purple cloaks from the shoulders of the young Normans were hardly well fastened round the Loudon maids, when, before they had time to recover from their surprise, away they had passed through the postern gate, and were gaily trotting down the green levels below Galston. A clear starry sky gave the travellers their only light as they hurried along over moor and meadow, until they came to the dark ford of Rutherglen. But the way was long, and their steeds were spent; and the timorous hearts of the fair maidens began to give way as they

looked at the broad rolling waters of the Clyde, which, happy as they had all the way been, under the affectionate guidance of their Norman lovers, they could not help fearing to cross in the dark morning; and, not observing, as yet, any pursuit, they all made a halt, to get, for man and beast, a hasty refreshment.

But short time they tarried, however, and little could the maids of Loudon partake of the country cakes and the red wine that were liberally handed round among the armed men, at the door of the small hostelry by Rutherglen Ford. The sweat had hardly cooled on the sides of the panting steeds, when, as the daylight of morning began to break through the sober darkness, the troop essayed to push forward, and, bridle-rein to bridle-rein, they all plunged bravely into the broad and black waters of the Clyde. It was a struggle of female fear to the Loudon maids, after the other perils of this strange night, as the flowing waters in the middle of the river came up almost to their horses' necks; but the brave Normans were still by their sides, and their valiant com-

panions plunged on before ; and soon the whole, with a joyful shout, were mounting the opposite bank of the stream.

They had not ridden another league, when, by the clear, grey light of the advancing morning, they perceived distinctly a troop of armed cavaliers, galloping hastily on towards their road, and whom they soon perceived to be their pursuers from Loudon, who had crossed the Clyde at a pass farther down the river.

“ Spur on, spur on, my gallant friends ! ” cried the foremost of the Norman youths, “ for it were not well that good men’s blood were shed in this adventure ; and here is the proud baron of Loudon and his guests, coming on us to avenge our intrusive affront and midnight daring. But spare not, I pray you, bridle or spur. The king’s majesty alone must judge between us and those angry men, for all we have done in this hasty exploit, if we could once get safely within the walls of yonder old Castle of Bothwell.”

On and on both parties rode, and whip or spur was not idle ; but the beast on which one

of the maidens sat, was by this time sorely spent and weary, and hindered the others as they urged their speed; so that the cavaliers who followed, in a little time began quickly to gain close upon them. Both pursued and pursuers were now drawing close to the castle walls, when, the former unable to keep the lead from the state of their steeds and the renewed alarm of the Loudon maids, the latter, dashing on, came briskly up, and, being more numerous and less encumbered, instantly attempted to surround the Norman party.

“Resign, quickly resign, ye forward youths,” called out the baron of Loudon himself, “the fair and gentle spoil, which ye have, with more boldness than knightly breeding, so hastily stolen and carried away from my castle! If ye do not, here are strong arms and good swords shall deal you chastisement for robbing any guest of mine, in my own house at Loudon.”

“Talk you of chastisement, my high-spoken lord?” said Sir Claud Nisbet, the doughty knight in the mail and helmet, who had taken

so active a part in this whole expedition. "If that be the word which you are pleased to use to knights and gentlemen, for the sake of these hard-hearted Norland lairds, whom we thought we had already chastised enough for their base presumption, there shall be heads left on this greensward, before we forget your angry taunt, or give up what has cost us so much hard riding."

"Strike not, strike not, good gentlemen and knights!" cried Sir Thomas Kennedy, the anxious father of one of the maidens, — hastily interposing as the ready swords began to flash in the sun: — "here are fathers and daughters in opposite troops; and, besides, we must not offer to draw red blood, or deal blows, under the very walls of Bothwell, and in the open sight of the king's majesty!"

"By the mass, then, but ye shall not brag of numbers, at least!" exclaimed Sir Claud Nisbet again, without attending to the last address, and in answer to the taunt of some forward cavalier. A side stroke of his ready sword at once followed this defying speech, and, in

spite of the efforts for peace of the three Normans, and the fathers of the maidens, their angry companions had made an onset, and a dozen swords were already flashing and ringing against each other in hostile confusion, while the steeds on both sides pranced in the affray, and two of the three Norman cousins were soon also engaged hand to hand with the boasting followers of the baron of Loudon.

The sound of a horn blowing an alarm on the castle walls first disturbed the fury of this fierce and irregular skirmish, from which the maids of Loudon were hastily withdrawn under care of their fathers and the eldest of the Norman youths; and presently a crowd of gentlemen and nobles of the king's followers, who had been astir early, preparing for the chase, issuing hurriedly from out of the castle gate, rushed into the middle of the fray, and parted the combatants just as one or two had been seriously wounded. The whole cavalcade then were brought into Bothwell Castle, and a summons from the king, who had quickly descended

into the hall on hearing the news of the combat without, brought all parties, including the ashamed and terrified Loudon maidens, into the royal presence, that he might enquire into the matter.

CHAPTER V.

“WHAT means this early and numerous gathering, my lords and knights?” said the king, almost angry, as he looked round on the assemblage, “and this wild tumult and quarrelling under the very walls of your night’s domicile? And you here, my lord of Loudon? and fair maidens too? Verily this is an early hour for ladies to brush the dew. But how is this? Did not we hear that this very morn, these pretty nymphs were to have been married to good knights and barons in the fair halls of Loudon Castle?”

“’Tis true, my sire,” said the lord of Loudon; “and the banquet was over, and the priest and all were ready for the marriage, when, at dark midnight, these presumptuous youths, with armed men and squires of your royal train, burst in upon our high festivity, and stole away the pretty brides from the very arms of their waiting lords; so, having made

pursuit, and overtaking them as they drew near to this castle, they refused to give up their fair spoil, and only answered our demands by brandished blades and hard knocks, more like ruffians and marauders than knights and gentlemen."

"Truly," said the king, "this is a strange exploit; and yet, methinks, it were not easy to ravish away three pretty brides from so pleasant a ceremony as their own marriage, unless they were somewhat willing to be stolen. I must hear more particulars of this affair; for, sooth to say, it gave me some surprise to learn that my good knights of the Norland country, who seem to have come off with some blows and blood in this adventure, should have, at this time of day, been able to win the love of such pet lambkins as these maidens of Loudon. Tell me, Thomas Kennedy and John Boyd, is it really greed of the world's gear that has moved you to merchandise your daughters to these unlikely matches?"

"Far from it, my royal liege," said Sir Thomas Kennedy; "but, since your majesty

pleases to make me speak forth, there are secret bonds, and strained agreements, to which, from various incidents that happened in your late royal father's reign, we were induced to set our hands and seals in haste and extremity, but which were never expected to be exacted from us. And it was to save and settle on our names and families those fair lands and mailings, which were threatened from us by law and bond-paper, that we consented to give away our sweet daughters to these hard-thoughted men. But, truly, if your royal majesty, and the laws of the realm, could absolve us from these forgotten and originally ill-devised obligations, in whose meshes are included even the remaining maintenance of those fair maidens, we should most gladly see our daughters freed from this appointed marriage, and given to whomsoever your royal consideration, and their own hearty choice, should elect."

When the king had heard these and other explanatory particulars, he was astonished and enraged at the Norland knights; and swore

by the soul of his royal father, who was traitorously murdered, that such unwarrantable and crafty doings should never be suffered while he ruled the realm of Scotland. "And who," said he, "if these fair maids' destiny is thus unexpectedly placed in our power, are the brave knights who are worthy of the love or have won the hearts of the ladies of Loudon?"

Proudly stepped forth, in joyful confidence, the three youthful cousins of Normandy; and, drawing from their sides three bright weapons, whose gold chasings gleamed bright in the morning sun, now streaming through the long windows of the hall where this assembly stood round, they laid them respectfully at the king's feet.

"By these precious memorials of your majesty's favour, most gracious liege," said the foremost, "with which, for our poor skill in yesterday's trial, we were honoured by your majesty's own hands, we seek to win your royal grace and pardon for our boldness in this adventure, and our unwilling offence to the baron of Loudon. Far we would ride, and much we

would undertake of knightly deeds, for loyalty and love; but, had we not so fortunately won your kingly favour, in the glorious trial of yesterday's tourney, we never could have ventured upon this bold abduction, or now to ask the further boon of your royal will in our behalf, in respect of these peerless Loudon maidens."

"Nay, not so fast, my bold squires," said the king, in sly good humour; "for I swear by my sword, that the maids of Loudon shall never be yours, unless there be other consents than mine to such an important and romanceful arrangement. Go, each of you — take by the hand, and fetch us forward, one apiece of these shame-faced gentlewomen, who lurk so modestly behind backs, that I may see whether they can excuse their last night's naughtiness, and what they mean to say to your bold proposal."

The knights and nobles made way all round, as the Norman youths brought the ladies forth; and it gladdened the eyes of even the proud lord of Loudon himself, to witness this grace

ful and youthful coupling. "Step forward, and fear not, pretty maidens," said the king; "verily the Norland men had good heart, to think to pluck such flowers as you, out of our pleasant shire of Ayr. But, in sooth, yourselves had better taste in husbands. Is it then these brave Norman youths that have won the wishes of your own sweet hearts?"

The grace of the modest curtsy of the three, as they now stepped forward, the soft expression of their downcast eyes, as they kneeled before the king, and gave their hands to the Norman cousins, was a touching sight to all, and delightful to their fathers, who stood admiring behind.

"Then, if that be the case, I pray on you a blessing," cried the king. "Give me a sword; for these handsome Normans, now attached to our own soil, shall be good knights of this realm, and their peerless sweethearts, soon to be their wives, shall be the ladies, from this day, of broader lands than twice the extent even of Gilmourland or Marslie."

We may not dilate upon the merry ploys

that graced the nuptials of the three Norman youths, who, by a romantic abduction, still told of in Ayrshire, became the founders of a race of several families, taking different surnames, in the western shires, and possessing lands and heritages in various parts of Scotland.

But the good lady at home often told in the hall, and the valleys of Ayrshire long after rang with, many a pleasant tale and melodious song, that told of the loves of the Loudon maids and the three bold cousins of Normandy.¹

¹ See note D, at the end of this volume.

NOTES

TO THE TRADITION OF

THE THREE MAIDS OF LOUDON.

NOTE A, page 283.

LOUDON Castle, within four miles of Kilmarnock, in the west of Scotland, is, from its fine situation and imposing form, one of the most picturesque objects in this part of Scotland. It is in the heavy Gothic style used in the more ancient castles of the north; and, rising over a long sweep of venerable woods, overlooks a beautiful narrow strath, through which the Irvine gently winds, until, commencing, as we may say, at the little town of Galston, it opens gradually into the rich vale of Avendale, towards Strathaven. The present noble castle was built by the late Marquis of Hastings, shortly after his marriage with the wealthy heiress of Loudon; and within it is enclosed the tower of the old fabric, which his lordship's good taste would not suffer to be destroyed. The hall of the modern castle is singularly spacious, and striking in effect, and is ornamented by valuable paintings.

The rich strath which the castle overlooks, and a large portion of which, towards the stream, makes a great part of the demesne, forms an interesting contrast to the ex-

tensive flats of dark moss in the near neighbourhood, well known to sportsmen by the name of the Mearns Moor, and near the centre of which stands the comfortable inn of Kingswell, long the property of one of the Pickens of Ayrshire, who has kept it for many years with great credit and esteem. The strath we speak of is also contrasted with the undulating mossy fells of Mauchlin, beyond the Irvine, in the centre of which is Drumclog, the scene of the well-known battle between Claverhouse and the Covenanters. Overlooking this spot, and between it and Loudon Castle, rises out of the plain, in the fanciful form of a seal raising its head over undulating waters, the abrupt craggy eminence called Loudon Hill; and a little eastward is the small knoll called the Harelaw, on the side of which stands the small farm-house, the searching visit to which, by Graham of Claverhouse, became the immediate cause of the battle.

NOTE B, page 291.

At this time the ancient abbey of Kilwinning, on the west coast, the ruins of which stand so picturesquely on the flat shore in the present day, was in the height of its glory; and it was, probably, on one of his calls at that religious house, in the course of his hawking excursions (an exercise of which James the Fourth was exceedingly fond), that he paid this visit to Loudon Castle. The king, being as pious as he was brave, gave liberal gifts at the shrine of St. Winning, whose holy relics, preserved at the abbey, were then held in high estimation. The month of July, the richest of the year, was the usual period when the king chose to pay his visits to Ayrshire;

and his presence there, in July, 1498, is attested by the gifts he conferred, and the charters he confirmed of the broad lands then belonging to the abbey. In the curious accounts of the then Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, lately printed, giving the particular items of the king's expenses, we have an entry of fourteen shillings, paid by his majesty, in July, also of 1507, to the monks of Kilwinning, on the exhibition of the relics. This, at that time, must have been an exceedingly holy place; and near it was a fountain and a well, at which the saint originally slaked his thirst. This well, as Hoveden the monk gravely tells us, upon occasion of some battle fought on this strand, in 1184, ran red blood for eight days and nights. Kyle and Cunningham in these ancient times, if uncultivated and wild before the good John, Earl of Loudon, began an agricultural reformation in the early part of last century, was by no means behind the rest of Scotland in indolent sanctity; for, besides Kilwinning, and a convent of Cistercian monks, which formed the nucleus of the old village of Mauchlin, there was, nearer to Loudon, another holy spot, the ruins of which existed until lately, namely, a square of buildings, with turrets at the angles, in whose centre stood an ancient chapel, known by the name of Our Lady's Kirk of Kyle, which sent forth itinerant preachers, or "pardoners," over other parts of Scotland, and to which pardoners King James was in the habit of giving offerings.

NOTE C, page 305.

The fondness of James for music is evinced, not only by the personal proficiency he is said to have attained in

the science, but by his great liberality to his professional minstrels, and by the number which he kept in his court. By the treasurer's accounts, before referred to, which have been judiciously printed by Mr. Pitcairn, in his valuable collection of the criminal trials of those times, it appears that the king had not less than thirty-one minstrels in his pay, to whom he gave regular stated salaries, as there recorded. Besides his fondness for music, as evinced by the numerous entries of payments to minstrels of various denominations, his majesty gave great encouragement to tale-tellers and poets; and the entries of money to maister William Dunbar, as quarterly payments of his "pensioun," sufficiently refutes the calumny of his neglect of that poet. There are also several payments entered to Blind Harry, who was, no doubt, supported by the king. The *novelists* of that time are particularly spoken of as professional tale-tellers, as thus:—" *Item*, To Watschod the Tale-Tellare, and Widderspun the Tale-Tellare, togidder, 18 shillings." But, besides the regular minstrels, the king paid well for a good song, — even to common fiddlers, for singing a popular ballad or romance of the time, as thus:—" *Item*. To twa fithelaris that sang Graysteil to the king." The tales of those days were sometimes called jests, if they had a tolerable sprinkling of wit; and thus we have a clever "fallow" of the Wallaces, who could tell a joke:— April 5. 1491. "*Item*. To Wallasse that tells the geistis to the king." Besides these means of private recreation, the king had, as usual, "ane fule" (jester) who, besides his own jokes, sometimes brought monkeys, who, by their tricks, made diversion, thus:—" *Item*. To gentil John, the Inglise fule, that brought japis (apes) to the king at his command, 12 shillings."

Besides his jester, and the usual guisards or morris dancers of the times, with his minstrels, tale-tellers, &c., the king had a rope-dancer, who performed clever feats, an "Italian lass that dansit," an "Inglise payntour," that painted figures of the king and queen, and David Prat, another "payntour," constantly in his pay, with other artists; but there is an entry of a considerable sum to one "Patrick Johnson and his falowis that playit a play to the king in Lythgow." By the way, among the "tale-tellers" of that time, we have a *James Hog* named, as of this profession, who received money from the treasurer "to fee twa hors in *Eskdale* with the king's harness." No doubt this was a direct ancestor of the worthy author of the "Brownie of Bodsbeck."

NOTE D, page 349.

We are not able to trace, with any distinctness, the specific families of which the incident recorded in this tradition may have become the root. These young Normans were not unlikely to have been a branch of the Maules, or Melvilles, who, as recorded, originally came from Normandy, at different periods, and settled in various parts of Scotland. But the foundation of our story is so mere a hint, so bald a traditional allusion to a romantic abduction of three pretty maids from Loudon Castle, that we have no certainty even of the precise reign when the event may have taken place, though we have chosen to put it down for that of James the Fourth, as most probable. Leaving, therefore, any other question, we proceed to give a few historical and biographical outlines regarding the old family of Loudon.

How far back to trace this ancient house is not an easy question at the outset ; for it having branched from, or merged into, the old Crawfords, Mures, and Kennedies, of Ayrshire ; the Wallaces, of Craigie ; the Cunninghams, of Cunningham ; the Gordons, of Lochinvar ; the Campbells, of Lochawe, of Lawers, and Glenorchy, &c., it can only be said, that, if ancient lineage and baronial power is to be valued, its present noble representatives have possessed them in their ancestors in a very high degree, without even advertng to the late connection with the house of Moira.

In the reign of David the First, Loudon barony belonged, say the genealogists, to one Lambinus, father of the first that took the name of James de Loudon, who got a charter of these and other lands from Richard de Morville, then constable of Scotland, in the reign of King William the First. This baron had an only daughter, heiress of all his lands, who uniting with Sir Reginald Crawford, heritable sheriff of the county of Ayr, the arms of that family became then first quartered with her own.

For several generations after this the family of Loudon was named Crawford ; until another heiress, becoming representative of the family, namely, Susanna, only daughter of Sir Reginald, who was killed in the wars in 1303, having married Sir Duncan Campbell, grandson of Sir Colin More Campbell, knight of Lochawe, ancestor of the great house of Argyle, the Loudon family have been called Campbell, up to the well-known union of its last heiress and representative with the noble house of Moira.

To sketch a few historical particulars of the family. Sir Hugh Campbell, the eighth baron of Loudon, was one of the Scottish barons nominated to meet King James the

First at Durham, in 1423; and his son George became one of the hostages for the ransom of that estimable though unfortunate king. To pass over many others, Hugh Campbell was made a privy counsellor, and created a lord of parliament in 1601; and in 1633 the earldom was granted. This Earl was one of the commissioners from the Scottish army who settled with Charles the First the pacification of Berwick, in 1639.

The son of this Earl was the first who married into the ancient house of Montgomery, the Earls of Eglinton, in Ayrshire; and the third son of this last, an able soldier in George the Second's wars, after uniting with the Boyles, Earls of Glasgow, and the Mures of Rowallan, was killed as a general at the famous battle of Fontenoy.

The eldest brother of this last, namely, Hugh, third Earl of Loudon, after marrying a daughter of the celebrated Earl of Stair, enjoyed a very different species of popularity as a Scots privy counsellor, and a confidant of King William; but it was the nephew of this Earl, and son of the general killed at Fontenoy, namely, James Mure Campbell, fifth Earl of Loudon, who, by a union with the old family of M'Leod of Rasay, became the father of the last well-known heiress of Loudon, and now the Dowager Marchioness of Hastings.

The public acts of the lords of Loudon are matter of history. A few brief notices of some of their private acts belong more to the nature of this work. The frequent civil troubles of Scotland having kept Ayrshire constantly in a warlike attitude, its inhabitants being ever ready to take a part in public warfare, or in defence against local spoliation; its agricultural capacities were thus long shut up, and its useful energies but little tried.

Till the early part of last century, says a late writer, there was scarcely a trace of the least improvement; the farm-houses continued to be mere hovels, having an open hearth or fire-place in the midst of the floor, with the usual accompaniments of dunghill at the door, starving cattle, and a squalid population.

It was John, fourth Earl of Loudon, before adverted to, so famous for his deeds in the American war, who, by making of roads, &c., first introduced the spirit of improvement; but, as his lordship was but little at home, it was chiefly by the energy and talents of his mother, Margaret Dalrymple, daughter of the Earl of Stair, before mentioned, that these improvements were carried on and completed. "This uncommon and spirited woman," say the Chamberses, "who in her young days had adorned courts by her elegance, in her widowhood sat down in a solitary castle, amidst rudeness and ignorance, and, by great assiduity, encouraged, by precept and example, the agricultural improvements of the district." This example had its effect upon the neighbouring proprietors; and hence, of late years, the improved condition of Ayrshire. At that time the Campbells of Loudon lived chiefly at the castle of Sorn, on the river Ayr, about three miles from the town of Mauchlin; and 'the good lady of Sorn,' who lived in the practice of every benevolent virtue, as we believe, to the great age of ninety, has left her fame behind her all over Ayrshire, even unto the present day.

Circumscribed as we are for space, these brief notices would be incomplete, did we omit to say a word of the late amiable Marquis of Hastings. It is not for us, at this time of day, to add our panegyric on a nobleman so well known both in this and the Indian empire. But

there was one trait of his private character that, as having some reference to the fate of an unfortunate though obscure individual, ought not to be altogether passed over in silence.

The trait we speak of was that princely generosity of disposition, and ready sympathy with distress, whenever it came before him, that, particularly when the Earl was a young man, often led his lordship to inconvenience himself; and is even said to have been a great cause of private embarrassment. When Lord Moira lived in Dublin, there was then in his zenith Thomas Dermody, a drunken poet, of whom a few may have heard, as possessed of that sort of ready cleverness in writing verses, &c. which, without counterbalancing principle, good sense, or respectability of behaviour, does no good to its owner, and far less to the world. This man was constantly, through his debaucheries, getting into scrapes and difficulties, from which he as constantly contrived to relieve himself by begging effrontery, and chiefly through means of the most penitent and abject appeals to Lord Moira, his patron. Much money the good-natured Earl gave to this worthless man, by his own account (see *Dermody's Poems*), and we only mention the fact, as affording a contrast to the melancholy case of a far more interesting individual.

At the time when the Earl, having married the Countess of Loudon, came to reside in Ayrshire, there lived also in the west an obscure man, named Robert Tannahill, who had published a volume of fugitive poetry, and who is still but partially known in England as the author of the popular song of *Jessy the Flower of Dumblane*. When the cry of threatened invasion became likely to deprive Ayrshire for a time of the Earl of Moira, this humble

poet, thinking to recommend himself to a little patronage, to relieve him, if possible, from his uncongenial employment of a weaver, wrote the stirring song alluded to at the beginning of our tradition, which has since been incorporated into the local literature of the country. We have only room for the first stanza:—

“ Loudon’s bonnie woods and braes!
 I must leave them a’, lassie;
 Wha can thole when Briton’s faes
 Would gi’e to Britons law, lassie?
 Wha would shun the field of danger?
 Wha to Fame would live a stranger?
 Now when Freedom bids avenge her,
 Wha would shun her ca’, lassie?
 Loudon’s bonnie woods and braes
 Have seen our happy bridal days;
 And gentle Hope shall soothe thy waes,
 When I am far awa’, lassie.”

This song, set to music by a talented friend of the author, and sung before the Earl at a public dinner, given to him at Edinburgh, was greatly applauded, and the simple poet thought his fortune had commenced: but he soon felt himself wofully disappointed; for, having the shrinking modesty, at least, if not the power, of genius, he could not do like the Thomas Dermodies of the world; and though some little compliment, we believe, ultimately passed to him from Loudon, the Earl was never after much in this part of the country; and the poet sunk back into a disheartened despondency.

Time passed on, and still the unceasing toil of the eternal loom, and the filial burden of an infirm mother, served

to stifle the aspirations and sink the heart of the depressed poet. His first volume had had some success. His ambition was to get out a second edition of it, with a few cherished additions which he had composed at his labour. He went to Glasgow for the purpose, but no bookseller would venture to print it. He journeyed on to Greenock, to try it there, with no better success. He returned home, weary and dejected, to his mean dwelling and his toil. The disappointment and the state of his prospects took effect upon his mind. Poetry and poverty, a sensitive mind, and an infirm mother, whom he could not support as he wished, were too much for him, with only weaving for ever in prospect. After a sleepless night he crept from his bed, about five in the morning, and directed his steps to the canal near his home. No one was up, to observe his proceedings, or witness his agony of mind, as he stood, with a fatal intent, over the sluggish water. He plunged in, to terminate his sorrows and his life; and his body was found in a deep nook of the canal, pointed out as "Tannahill's hole" to this day.

There was no man left in the west of Scotland like the Marquis of Hastings, to whom he could have applied in his extremity; and thus, to the further shame of common humanity, perished, from sheer despair, the obscure author of the *Flower of Dumblane*.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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